Usability Review of Corporate Websites: Case of Product Versus Service Sectors in Malaysia

Robert Jeyakumar Nathan, Multimedia University, Faculty of Business and Law, Melaka, Malaysia
Ibrahim Musah, Multimedia University, Melaka, Malaysia
Guru Dhillon, Multimedia University, Melaka, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Marketing and electronic commerce literature abound in criteria that contribute to the success of an online marketing website. Collectively, the factors that contribute to the success of a website are known as the usability factors of websites. This chapter discusses seven of these usability factors that affect the Overall Web Usability (OWU), mainly examining the online industry in Malaysia. The extent of online security technology used, users’ perception of online safety and security is also discussed. The chapter presents a comparative review of usability evaluations of websites from industries promoting and selling products online, versus websites of industries those promoting and selling services online. It presents a critical review of product-based websites usability versus service-based websites usability.

KEYWORDS

Automotive, Clarity of Goals in Websites, Download Speed, Friendliness of Website, Internet Marketing, Textile, Trustworthiness, Use of Colours and Design, Website Interactivity, Website Navigation

INTRODUCTION

The internet is a widespread information infrastructure which has massive impact in the daily life of people across the world. This is even more prevalent in business. Online marketing has become one of the vital ways to advertise a company’s products and services. While some internet giants conduct businesses purely in the virtual arena such as eBay and Alibaba. According to the International Telecommunication Union, the number of internet user in Europe and America increased 4-fold (Acharya & Albertini, 2014). Whereas, Asia increased about 6-fold in year 2015 as compared to the previous year. The Internet World Statistic indicates the number of Malaysian internet users grew dramatically from 15% to 68.6% in the year 2000 to year 2016 (Internetlivestats, 2016). This figure portrays the large influence of the Internet in the daily life of individuals and consumers.

Internet marketing is a pull medium. Conversely, other public medias such as television and radio push the marketing message to the reluctant recipients by interrupting their shows. These activities stimulate businesses to capture the online platform to promote their businesses. The effectiveness of online marketing of websites, however, can be differentiated from one business to another. Where in some cases internet marketing were successful while not so successful in others. The ultimate goal is to develop a marketing website that can draw consumers’ attention and achieve goals for increase online sales. Thus, web usability are those qualitative elements which allow users to easily, quickly and efficiently browse the content and fine what there are searching for.

Marketing and electronic commerce literatures abound in criteria that contribute to the success of an online marketing website. Collectively, the factors that contribute to the success of a website are
known as the usability factors of websites. This chapter discusses seven of these usability factors that affect the Overall Web Usability of some selected products and service web base industries (OWU). Firstly, Clarity of Goals in Website (CGW) refers to the degree that a website makes its goals clear and understandable to the intended audience. This is important in determining key objective for the website because it can help in generating income to the business. The website design must be aimed at attracting the maximum number of users, visitors, branding and generating transaction.

Secondly, Downloading Speed of Website (DSOW) refers to the amount of time taken to download a webpage. This plays a key role in the usability of the website. Internet users and a potential online customer have no time to wait for websites to download. Most users expect instant access to information access, hence waiting is not desirable. Thirdly, Ease of Web Navigation (EWN) means the extent of ease of navigating in a website. It relates to the website’s layout and structure, as well as navigational tools such as site map, site search, directory, and properly working hyperlinks. Followed by, Interactivity of Website (IOW) which means the extent to which users are able to conduct two-way interaction with a website. It relates to the responsiveness of a website to users’ actions within the website such as when users give feedback, changing quotations, online service selections, etc. The extent of online security technology used. Users’ perception of online safety and security, especially relating to users’ personal information online relates to the Trustworthiness of Website (TOW). Perceived risks associated with online transactions is the main reason that most consumers feel reluctant to purchase online. Thus, a website should have a secure payment system in order to increase the likelihood of consumers purchasing from the website. Lastly, the Use of Colour and Font (UCF) and Use of Graphics and Multimedia (UGM). These determine the suitability of colours, text font, graphics, videos and music in a website. The proper and suitable usage of desirable designs, fonts and multimedia in a website act as an attraction to online consumers (Wang, 2011). Responsive Web Design (RWD) is the latest topic in usability of website development. The evolution of the technological gadgets and the growing need to serving the disabled customers, has led to changes of the web interface. RWD is the ability of a company’s website to display in accuracy of its web pages on all devices. The content of webpages are resized and oriented to fit any screen including desktop, tablets and phones. While the opposite is also true where websites using too heavy graphics and multimedia may confuse users and potential online customers.

This chapter presents a comparison of usability evaluation of websites of products and services industries’. It presents a critical review of product-based websites usability versus service-based websites usability. The selected product and service industries for evaluation of their websites in this chapter are based on their sales volume, user traffic and popularity of these website among Malaysian consumers. Expert review is conducted by usability assessors from the centre of usability and ergonomics in Multimedia University Malaysia. Each assessor evaluated websites from one industry, hence altogether 8 web assessors contributed to the data collection of this study.

ONLINE PRODUCT INDUSTRIES WEBSITES

This section presents the usability evaluation of websites from 2 product-based industries. They include the textile and apparels industry; and fashion and accessories industry.

Textile and Apparels Industry

Textile and apparel industry can be defined as makers and sellers that covers great activities from the transformation of raw materials into fibres, yarns and fabrics that in turn enter the production (CollegeGrad, 2014). It can be categorized into two mains sectors which are upstream and downstream. The upstream sector (Textile) activities include fibre, yarn, fabrics and wet processing. Whereas the downstream sector (Apparels making) activities are processes of making garments and accessories such as zippers and buttons.
Related Content

Use of Web 2.0 Collaboration Technologies in Egyptian Public Universities: An Exploratory Study
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/use-web-collaboration-technologies-egyptian/76242?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/use-web-collaboration-technologies-egyptian/76242?camid=4v1a)

Knowledge Sharing Adoption Model Based on Artificial Neural Networks
[www.igi-global.com/article/knowledge-sharing-adoption-model-based/50301?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/knowledge-sharing-adoption-model-based/50301?camid=4v1a)
Automated Quantification of Eye Blink Rate Using VIOLA–JONES Algorithm
www.igi-global.com/article/automated-quantification-of-eye-blink-rate-using-violajones-algorithm/212762?camid=4v1a

Explaining the Underdevelopment of Rural E-Government: The Case of Romania
www.igi-global.com/chapter/explaining-underdevelopment-rural-government/76252?camid=4v1a