Chapter 6
Development and Evaluation of a Methodology for Developing Marketing Websites

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses a research project that focused on the development of a new methodology for creating more effective websites for marketing purposes. After reviewing existing methodologies, it was noted that some key aspects were under-utilized, including user participation and “real interaction” (i.e. monitoring of user interaction with a prototype site). This situation can lead to deficiencies in the resulting website and hence user frustration. A study was carried out to examine various methodologies, from different disciplines, and their integration, to select the strongest aspects of the various methodologies to be combined into a new methodology. This methodology was assessed by interviews and a questionnaire. Proposed further research will develop a website describing the new methodology; incorporate a software tool to assist in tailoring the methodology to a particular project.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the development of a new methodology for developing websites for marketing purposes that meet the requirements of the users and designer simultaneously. These days, businesses are using the Internet as a tool to develop new and enhanced aspects of business, including vendor contact, provision of information, recruitment, customer service, research, entertainment and of course marketing and promotion. Ellsworth & Ellsworth(1997, pp. 51-52) declared that marketing on the WWW must “take place in reaction to interest from customers and other site visitors”. Therefore, the marketing website must “first attract customers to the page by providing services and information...
Development and Evaluation of a Methodology for Developing Marketing Websites

Successful marketing on the World Wide Web relies on careful use of appropriate methodologies to create an effective website, with expenditure of minimum time and money (Lazar, 2006).

The key principles behind designing a website are “to help people find the content they need quickly and to present content in the most readable format” (Mankelow, 2006, p.53). However, some people try to mimic successful sites by copying attractive images off the internet and they create their own website without the basic knowledge of design principles. Hence, the website will never have a kind of unity, since the graphics and the texts were written and created by different writers and designers, and it will “stay a jumble of loose parts, lacking coherence”. However, “If you make your own site, it is your work. It will radiate something of your personality, your preferences and your taste” (Hoekstra, 2000). To create an effective website, designers need to work with a specific methodology, which meets the requirements of the users and encourages them to revisit the website. The users need to feel comfortable, confident and satisfied while working with the website.

The informal and formal website development methodologies currently utilized include the following stages: establish the need, gather information, develop site, implement, maintain and usability test (Abels, White, & Hahn, 1998; Cunliffe, 2000; IBM, n.d; Vora, 1998). However, it is noted that formal methodologies are either not used in industry practice or are inadequate, since many users are still frequently frustrated and confused when using websites. The problems experienced relate especially to navigation, interactivity and downloading. “Users are frustrated because of an inability to find the information sought, disorganized pages and confusing information, pages under construction and disconnected links, the lack of navigation support and other problems” (Borges, Morales, & Rodriguez, 1998 p.137). Such problems negatively influence users’ confidence in the site and their desire to explore it: “the barriers imposed in the poorly designed interface and the user’s lack of trust or faith on the site will discourage further exploration of the site”(Borges, Morales, & Rodriguez, 2008).

The current methodologies (see Figure one) do not adequately support participative design