

Building Quality Content on the Web

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Abstract:

The present paper discusses various factors that affect the quality of content on the web. It recommends paying proper attention to them and integrating with Web technology to build quality content on the web. It also presents various key points to be considered to achieve quality content on the web.

Key Words: Quality content, Web building, Web technology

Introduction:

Worldwide, Web developers are becoming much more concerned with the process of developing quality websites. Many organizations have already established specialized groups to assess and define the formal process of development. Certainly, quality systems certification is becoming more important. In software, quality and productivity just do not separate. They are part of the same thing. In software the defects are built-in. Understanding this is a pre-requisite to a plan for quality.

The problem with content?

Development of a high quality web site begins with content. Everything a web site contains and everything it conveys is related to the online public via its content. High quality images, original design, an informative collection of text, and well thought out HTML programming are all integral pieces that make up a great web site's content.

Everyone talks about it, but nobody agrees on what it is. And that's hardly surprising, since content is in the eye of the beholder, and there are so many different beholders: Some of us want pretty pictures, some want design specifications that would make engineers wince, and others want both in a single package. Defining the necessary content is the only part of the solution; the larger part involves figuring out how to making that content interesting to the audience and making it interesting, you shouldn't put information online until you clearly understand whom you want to attract and what you can say that will interest them.

What is Content?

Content is, in essence, any type or "unit" of digital information that is used to populate a page. It can be text, images, graphics, video, sound, etc. – or in other words- anything that is likely to be published across an inter- and/ or extranet. For a closer look at how content differs from a document, click [2]

According to Hart, Geoff [3], "Content encompasses a surprisingly large number of categories. The more familiar forms of content come in well- understood forms such as text, graphics and multimedia (most commonly sound or video), but content also includes a range of the more unusual things, like links to other pages, particularly search tools.

Definition of Quality:

Ben- Menachem [4] defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bare on its ability to satisfy given needs. Then he describes the attributes of quality as usability, efficiency, reliability, integrity, appropriateness, correctness, portability, reusability, testability, modifiability, understandability and interoperability. Another definition given by Besterfield [5], "Quality is a degree of excellence a product or service provides". And further explains that the information quality issues encompass sufficiency, timeliness, intellectual property, security, cyber crime, privacy, pollution, creativity and control and prevention.

Factors affecting the quality of content:

What is good quality content for a web site? We can usually recognize quality content when we see it. It is a total package deal; the words used the grammar, the presentation, and the supporting artwork. However, it is relatively easy to find out the factors, which affect quality of information rather than make the quality. These factors can be grouped as into two categories as controllable and uncontrollable.

Controllable Factors: Design Quality, Image Quality, Text Quality, Interactivity, and Private Testing

Uncontrollable Factors: Browser Variations, Platform Variations, Variable Graphic Capabilities

The Controllable factors, which affect the quality of content, are given below. It is indispensable to pay proper attention to these factors in order to achieve and built quality content on the web.

Meta- information:

Currency and methods of revision

Standardization of format

Arrangement

Scope of coverage

Audience

Authority

User support

Objectivity

Technical considerations

Accuracy

Feedback

Timeliness

Uniqueness

The effect of uncontrollable factors on quality of content can be reduced by the way of providing instructions at appropriate places. E.g. the site can be best viewed at 800*600 resolution, providing download links, etc.

Key Points to build quality content on the Web:

Planning: One must realize that running a website is a long – term process, not a series of short – term projects.

Content: The first suggestion is to use a style sheet and standard formats to collect the content. A style sheet is simply a list of words and phrases that you add to. Less is more: Stop rushing to publish all that badly written content

Audience: The way in which information is presented must be appropriate to its intended audience in terms of style and complexity of language and the ideas expressed.

Feedback: The best way to measure the quality and effectiveness of a web site is by examining the amount of traffic it receives. The server which hosts your web site can be set up to keep track of this traffic information. Human interaction, such as “communities” joined by email, chat, or message boards may be provided for enhanced interactions.

Metadata: Metadata is a web writing skill. It helps readers quickly find what they need. Choosing the right keyword metadata is absolutely critical to the success of web content.

Stay legal: Every effort should be made to stay legitimate and include only materials that have the rights to use. Copyright permission is essential for all the content of a web.

Maintenance: As most people who manage a web site will know, things change. And changes, improvements and enhancements to the website are usually a continuing effort.

Manpower: If you only have two web staff then you should only have a two- staff website.

Search Engines: Understanding the search: Engines and Directories are essential.

Discipline: Web publishing needs real discipline

Quality: Without quality content your visitors just don't stay, and never return. Poor quality information leads to poor quality decisions.

Web Technology for Building Quality Content on the Web

Several Web Technological tools are available at present to build quality content on the web. Some examples are given below:

Database: Access or SQL Database oriented Web design

CMS: Content Management System for updating the content of the Web

Web OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)

Virtual Library

Building quality content on the web is not difficult if proper attention is given to the controllable and uncontrolled factors as mentioned above and integrating them with the available Web technology.

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