

Content Management

MA Web Design and Content Planning

Course Co-ordinator: Tom Turner

Level: M Credit: 30

Introduction and Rationale:

This course introduces students who have studied, or are studying, the design of webpages and websites to the issues involved in planning and managing the content of large and small websites.

Aims:

The course takes an overview of the factors which influence decisions about managing the content and organization of large websites. Content is reviewed from a number of standpoints, including those of:

- users of websites ('consumers', 'visitors', 'staff', 'punters' etc)
- designers of websites ('producers', 'geeks', 'men', 'women' etc)
- financiers of websites ('bankers', 'business angels', 'VCs' etc)
- managers of websites ('nerds')
- critics of websites ('media', 'metrics', 'analytics' etc)

The focus is on undertaking *a critical appraisal of website content*, not on design or technology as such.

Learning Outcomes:

Students taking this course will learn to:

- Analyse and evaluate the content of websites.
- Appreciate the different perceptions and attitudes of content producers and content users.
- Debate alternative business models for supporting web content (sponsorship, advertising, subscriptions, etailing, IPOs, 'build it and flog it', etc).
- Understand the use of databases in managing web content.
- Design strategies for information architecture and navigation.
- Develop a search engine strategy.
- Understand copyright issues in relation to web publishing.

Indicative Content:

Usability and information architecture. Methods of website appraisal. Uses of server logs and other statistics. Reviews of 'Top Ten' website lists with regard to aesthetic, technical content and business model considerations. Uses of subwebs, databases and content management software for updating, editing and publishing web content. Search position optimisation. Copyright issues.

Main Learning and Teaching Activities:

The coursework will be organised as follows:

1. Introduction to course
2. Review of issues in study guide
3. Student-led seminars on selected topics

The student-led seminars will have the following format:

1. Presentation of topic by student
2. Illustration of topic by student using selected websites as examples
3. Verification/testing of topic presentation (either in class-time or study-time)

The topics for the student led seminars will be agreed according to the following principles

1. To achieved a balanced coverage of the issues
2. To meet the particular interests of class members

The seminar topics are like beads on a string. The 'string' is a type of website chosen by the student, at the start of the course, to which reference will be made throughout the course. Please note (1) if you change your mind about the type of website part way through the course, you can also change the website type (2) there is no harm in choosing a website which you will use for your Web Thesis Project. If you are a full-time student, this is a sensible thing to do. If you are a part-time student, you would be as well to choose a website type which interests you (eg a hobby). Examples of website types (1) photography websites [micropayment, equipment, galleries, etc] (2) Teaching websites [computer software, health, languages etc] (3) Retail Websites (4) Fine Art Websites (5) Religious Websites. The reasons for taking website types as examples are (1) to provide continuity for the seminars (2) to explore the many aspects of web content planning and management (3) to prepare for and/or support the Web Thesis Project.

The following list is provided as a typical set of weekly seminar topics. We will discuss it in the first session and agree what to consider: students are welcome to suggest alternative topics. The only mandatory seminar topic is the first item on the list.

1. The Vitruvian principles 'with due reference' to website content and as assessment criteria for website content
2. 'Business objectives' for the content of public sector websites (and/or The relevance of commerce to public sector websites)

3. 'Business objectives' for the content of private sector websites (and/or The relevance of public service to commercial websites)
4. 'Business plans' in relation to website content
5. The economics of eTailing vs retailing
6. Resource needs for websites (design, publication, marketing, management)
7. Search engine marketing/optimisation (approaches, techniques, budgets)
8. Content management software: shoe-string, low-mid-range, upper-mid-range, top-end
9. Content management: a survey of the job-market
10. A survey of websites and ezines relating to content management
11. Design theory - Christopher Jones and his successors
12. The Pattern Language approach to web content design
13. Content design: the graphics-led approach (inc discussion of software)
14. Content design: the technology-led approach (inc discussion of software)
15. Content design: the information-architecture-led approach (inc discussion of software)
16. Envisioning information
17. Designer's accounts of website content creation: examples, appraisal and analysis
18. Systematic testing procedures for website content
19. The geography of the World Wide Web: niches, habitats, linkage, etc

Assessment

The course will be assessed from the following:

Work	% of marks	length
Seminar paper(s) contributed to the class discussion	25%	1500 words
<p>A Topic Summary Report (Discussion Log) containing a summary of the topics reviewed by the class discussions in a format suitable for use by a web team. Typically, it will be a simple, functional, good-looking, easy-to-use, expandable website containing both text and graphics (submitted in .htm <i>or</i> .pdf format).</p> <p>Note: the Log must cover each of the seminar topics we deal with (not just your own papers!) and must contain (1) print research as well as web research, with references (2) points raised during class discussions</p>	75%	5000 words

Keytexts:

Schwartz, Evan, I *Webonomics* Penguin Books 0 75282 606 9

Anderson, C. *The Long Tail: How Endless Choice Is Creating Unlimited Demand* (Paperback) by Random House Business Books 2007 1844138518

Ian Graham *A pattern language for web usability* Pearson 2003 ISBN 0 201 78888-8

Other reading:

Amy Jo Kim *Community building on the web* Peachpit Press

Vise, D.A., *The Google Story* Pan Books; New Ed edition (1 Sep 2006) ISBN-10: 03304440055

Anthony, D., *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* 2007 ISBN-10: 1843546361

Esther Dyson *Release 2.1* Penguin Books

Evan Schwartz *Digital Darwinism* Penguin Books; ISBN: 0140286845

Frank Flore *e-Marketing strategies*

Jennifer Fleming *Case studies and interviews: Web Navigation: Designing the User Experience*

Louis Rosenfeld, Peter Morville *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* O'Reilly & Associates ISBN: 1565922824

Michael Wolff *Burn Rate* Orion

Steven Armstrong *Advertising on the internet*

Strunk, William Strunk Jr., E. B. White *The Elements of Style* Allyn & Bacon; ISBN: 020530902X

Timothy Paul Garrand *Writing for Multimedia and the Web* Focal Press; ISBN: 0240803817

W J Pardi *XML In Action* Microsoft Press