EDN205
ICT In The Classroom
Task One

Website Considerations Report

Introduction

In the past few years the advances in technology specifically with web-based technology has been astronomical. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the 2012-13 financial year "83% of persons were internet users" (Australian Government, 2013) which, with a population of over 23 million Australians, means that over 19 million people use the internet. This has run hand in hand with the fact that "The World Wide Web doubles in size roughly every 2-3 months" (Moss, Gunn, & Heller, 2006) Because of this huge need and advancement, website design has become almost a science in attracting their target audience, as if you don't have effective website design your users will look elsewhere to find what they need easily. As a website designer there are many factors you need to consider in making your website functional, easy to navigate and aesthetically pleasing as well as being mindful of the different copyright and privacy laws that you must abide by.
This report will be discussing the different key design and implementation issues that are at the forefront of designing a website, as well as the different website creation technologies that are available for your use. I will also be discussing the technology I chose to use for my own website and my reasons behind this. I have found that creating an educational website can be an extremely useful tool for teachers and I will lastly be offering some recommendations for any teachers with the goal of making their own site.

Research Results

There are many key design and implementation issues that as a website designer you would need to take into account. Some of these include; readability, typography, layout, accessibility, website navigation, credibility and copyright.

Copyright
One of the first and most important aspects of making a website or just going accessing the internet is that everything "posted to the web – whether it's text, images or music – has implicit copyright protection" (Gralla, 2002) This means that anything you would like to use that is already published on the internet you must first ask permission from the owner of the work and you must cite them as the source. With many licences, if your work is for educational, critical or as a citation you are normally within your rights to quote from the source however you cannot use the whole work, only excerpts. If when designing your website you wish to include information or images etc and are not granted permission another option is to link the information from your website by a hyperlink which allows the user to be redirected to the origin of the work so they are still able to access and see the information. One organisation that works alongside copyright to assist you with copyright terms and enabling you to share material is Creative Commons. You can obtain different licences through them according to your copyright needs. See http://creativecommons.org.au/

Accessibility
To make sure your website can be viewed by anyone who wishes to view it, no matter their race, culture, location, browser/hardware/software or whether they have a physical or mental disability you have to make it accessible. This means that you want your website to be able to be viewed in different formats and in different browsers. It also means that you need to know exactly where your target audience is likely to be from, for example if any of your target audience is from the Republic of Turkey, you would be unwise to create your website using Google Sites as any website created with this technology is banned and unable to be viewed in Turkey. Assuming at some stage that your website will be viewed by someone with either a hearing or visual impairment you need to adjust your site so it is accessible to them as well. This may mean that you are mindful of certain colours (being unable to distinguish between red and green is one of the most common colour visual impairments) or even simply making your text slightly bigger. If you have any audio or video with spoken information you may need to include subtitles or a transcript for those people with hearing impairments.

Credibility (C.R.A.P – Currency, Reliability, Authority and Purpose

To have an educational or informational website, the information you provide must be credible. You can check if your website or someone else's is by using the C.R.A.P test. This means checking that the information is 'Current'? I.e When was it last updated? If you are discussing technology and you are using a website or book last updated in 1986, it would not be considered current as it is too old and cannot factor in the huge amount of technological advancement that has happened since it was written. Is it 'Reliable'? I.e. Who wrote it? Can anyone edit the information? Many people use Wikipedia as a source however anyone can edit Wikipedia so it would not be considered reliable as you have no way of knowing who wrote the information. Does the information have 'Authority'? If the information is from a National Standards body (eg The Australian Federal Police, or the Australian Bureau of Statistics) then you know the information has authority. And lastly what is the 'Purpose' of the information? For example if the website requires you to sign up to a particular newsletter or buy a subscription, the purpose of the information is more about that than the raw data so wouldn't be good for an educational paper or website. One simple way to check for credibility or to make sure your website is credible is to include a list of references so you can see exactly where to information came from.

Privacy/Online Safety

It is extremely important to remember when using the internet or creating a website is that "anyone can be online." (Marlzorf, 2012) This means that anyone can view your web page, so any personal information or photos should be carefully considered before putting them on your website. As teachers, this is extremely important when putting children's pictures online (you MUST obtain parent's permission and preferably keep the children anonymous). If you have any issues with cybercrime/stalking/hacking etc in Australia contact the Police authority in your state who will work through the issue with the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC).

Website Design/Readability (Typography and Layout)

- **Typography**

The term Typography refers to fonts and the writing style that you use within your website. Your font should be easy to read, that means to try to avoid decorative/swirly fonts. It also means that the size of your font should be easy to read (not having to squint) and be able to distinguish between headings and paragraphs easily. Paragraphs should be kept short, and preferably not take up the whole width of the screen as it is easier to read if they are 15 words or less across. It is also extremely important to choose colours that are easy to read for your fonts. They must not be too light or faded against the background, but also not too bright that it can actually hurt your eyes to read them (eg. Neon colours against a black background)

- **Layout**

The layout of your website is extremely important as it can be a huge factor in the aesthetic likeness of your page as "The incorporation of visual content and applying aesthetic standards to web-based instruction can ultimately improve not only the visual appearance of course content but can also improve how learners react to and interact with the instruction." (David & Glore, 2012) They also state that "Users draw upon aesthetic factors to judge usability and credibility" (David & Glore, 2012) Having your layout simple and uncluttered is extremely important as you don't want to 'annoy' your visitors (this can be with scrolling script, flashing titles, stark/bright/contrasting/heady colours that make them want to look away, or music that doesn't suit) Having the layout of your pages similar within your site brings a sense of consistency and continuity which make it seem more professional. You want the most important information easily to find on the page and your images should directly related to the content.

Website Navigation

Having your website easy to navigate through is one of the most important factors when making a website. Your navigation bar should be the same on each page and you should always be able to go back to the home page. If your website contains pages that are several screens long it can be a good idea to have another smaller navigation bar at the bottom to save the user having to scroll to the top each time they want to change pages. If your webpage is hard to navigate you will alienate the user and they will be less likely to visit your site again in the future.

Different Technology Research Results

I researched several different free web creation technologies and it took me quite a while to decide which one I wanted to use. I had never used any kind of web creation technology before as when I was in school we were

taught how to write html code. I began by reading reviews and assessing the different types of technologies before narrowing it down to; Wix, Weebly and Google Sites.

By looking on http://www.websitebuilderexpert.com/ I was able to see the different features in table form and compare the different we creation technologies easily. This particular site didn't actually feature Google Sites however because Google is such a popular search engine I wanted to research it myself. Some of my findings of the different web creations are below;

- **Wix.com** (www.wix.com)
  Wix was founded in 2006, and used to run with Adobe Flash but upgraded to HTML5. Quite easy to use, and you start with a free site and you can buy upgrades depending on the domain name and features you would like. Wix provides website templates with (functions, style, colour, text, background and buttons etc) or you can start from scratch and completely design your own. You can adjust your website using the Mobile Editor for easy mobile viewing, which with invention of smart phones is becoming extremely important. Wix also launched the App Market which enables users to use third-party apps in their websites such as music playlists, file management, photo feed and blogging etc.
- **Google Sites** (https://sites.google.com/)
  Google Sites was an upgrade of Google Pages using Jotspot technology, and was founded in 2008. Websites are free, and like Wix you can use their pre-built templates or you can start from scratch and design your own. Your website can be set to public where everyone can view it or private. One downside to Google Sites was that storage was limited. You were allowed 100MG of storage for a free account, however if you are a Google Apps user then you were allocated 100GB. Google Sites has limited store capabilities (which doesn't matter too much for an educational site) and also doesn't serve HTML pages so if you are trying to access them or files such as PDF's you have to download them. One interesting downside is because of an offensive comment on a Google Site, any websites that are made with Google Site technology are banned to the people of the Republic of Turkey.
- **Weebly** (www.weebly.com)
  Weebly was founded in 2006 and was named in TIME Magazine's '50 Best Websites of 2007'. Weebly sites are free and have the 'drag and drop' feature that makes building a website extremely easy. You have the option of a free account that you can use a subdomain name of you can buy an upgrade and a full domain name. Easy to develop stores through companies like Paypal and Authorize.net, and storage is unlimited which is an extremely useful feature. If you choose to buy upgrades more features are made available to you. A new technology with Weebly is called 'Weebly for Education' and is specifically for classroom teachers to make class websites where they can control student accounts, receive assignments online and keep parents up to date on what is going on in your classroom. I found this feature to be absolutely incredible and cannot recommend them enough.

After trying the different technologies I chose to use Weebly as I liked how easy and accessible it was and had a great range of features. Also because of the Weebly for Education feature (found at; https://education.weebly.com) I thought it best for teachers to use in their classroom.

My Website Compared to the Key Design and Implementation Features

Copyright: I included Creative Commons licenses on my website, and all my images belong to myself or my family so I have received direct permission to use them. I included several links to further information, and because it goes back to their original page there is no copyright infringement.

Accessibility: I have included headers and my text is not too small, I have also included captions on all my images that I used. I did not use green and red contrasting colours, where I have used red it is easily distinguishable from the background.

Credibility: All my links are to credible and relevant sources and I have included my source for my video just underneath. My website includes an 'About Me' page that tells you exactly of my qualifications and who the author of the site is.

Privacy/Online Safety: I had wanted to include a photo of myself and the kids I taught on the station near Broken Hill however decided against it, because I wanted to protect the kids from any kind of harm that putting their picture on the internet could bring.

Typography: My font styles are unique but still easy to read. They are also quite 'rustic' and 'natural' which suits the mood and feeling I was aiming for as this reflects me and my work well. My font isn't too small, and I have included big blocks of writing where it is easy to lose your spot.

Layout: The layout of my website is consistent throughout providing continuity for the user. Weebly had so many layouts that it took me a long time to find the one I wanted as I wanted something simple and fuss free with the navigation bar at the top so it was easy to locate. My colour scheme that I worked with was earthy, making use of the background 'cream' colour and adding a dark red that contrasted nicely.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for teachers who are thinking of creating a website for themselves or their class etc.

- Research the technology that you would like to use – remembering that all of them have specific uses, however the purpose built Education Websites through Weebly would be a fantastic start.
- Make sure you have a good understanding of the copyright laws so you do not come under scrutiny – use Creative Commons as a starting point for your understanding.
- Make sure your website design and navigation is simple and easy to use, as well as being accessible for everyone (take not of the key design and implementation issues!)
- Make sure your website is continuous and has a sense of continuity by using the same fonts and layouts between all the pages.
- Make sure you correctly reference and cite any authors or work that you have used, and where relevant or appropriate include hyperlinks to the origin of the work.
- Talk to other people who have made websites – other teachers and colleagues – and share your resources and information to the benefit of everyone!
- Make sure you make your online safety and privacy – and that of your students – your number one priority.

Conclusion:

In conclusion I have found that creating a website can be an extremely useful tool that I believe more teachers should take advantage of. Free web creation technologies make it very easy to create your own website according to your purpose and they offer you support when needed. This report has identified and described different key design and implementation issues for when you are creating a website and I have then addressed how I used these in my own website. There is so much information and so many great ideas and tools on the internet to help you create an amazing useful website that can be enjoyed and used by many.

References

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