

WEB DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

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UNDERSTANDING WEB PUBLISHING

INTRODUCTION

In these days of information society, traditional books, magazines, newspapers and journals are not the only sources of information any more. Electronic publications, which came with new technologies, create basis for fast and high quality information. Convenient storage, search and copying possibilities decidethe strength of this new media. Web publishing has become common in scientific publishing, where it has been argued that materials like books, magazines, journals, etc, are in the process of being replaced by electronic publishing. It is also becoming common to distribute books, magazines, and newspapers to consumers through the Internet, a market that is growing by millions each year (Tech Terms.Com, n.d.). Market research suggests that half of all magazines and newspaper circulation will be via digital delivery by the end of 2015 and that half of all reading in the in most part of the world will be done without paper by 2015. Web or electronic publishing is increasingly popular in works of fiction, as well as with scientific articles. Electronic publishers are able to provide quick gratification for late-night readers, books that customers might not be able to find in standard book retailers and so on and so forth. While the term "electronic publishing or Web publishing" is primarily used today to refer to the current offerings of online and Web-based publishers, the term has a history of being used to describe the development of new forms of production, distribution and user interaction in regard to computer-based production of text and other interactive media (Tech Terms.Com, n.d.). In this unit, we are going to have an overview of Web publishing.

What is Web Publishing?

Web publishing is also called online publishing. It is simply the process of publishing content on the Internet. It includes creating and uploading Web sites, updating Web pages and posting blogs online (Tech Terms.Com, n. d.). The published content may include text, images, videos and other types of media. It may be seen as the process of posting or publishing information on the Internet. It involves creating and uploading Web sites, restoring Web sites posting and commenting on blogs. All these may include videos, images, scripts, documentaries and other categories of media content. Web publishing is therefore, seen as the act of creating a Web domain in which information is shared with others that access the site. This can be done by creating a Web page and putting the desired information, ranging from books, newspapers, magazines, journal articles, etc.

Web publication is arranged computer information. In Web publishing, material is produced and stored electronically, rather than in print. Whenever users display, present or "post" any written, auditory or visual media on to the World Wide Web, it can be said they are "publishing" electronic content. Most traditional newspapers and magazines today publish in an electronic form on

the Web where access is typically “free” or available through a free membership. Frequently electronic publishing is referring to production of electronic books. It is however worthy to note that posting updates on social networking Web sites like Facebook and Twitter is generally not considered Web publishing. Instead, Web publishing generally refers to uploading content to unique Web sites. Then electronic publishing could mean:

a. production and distribution of new works, which are appearing for the first time in electronic format.

b. providing electronic text versions of previously published works

(such as classic literature, non-copyrighted material, or works that have entered the public domain), either online or on CDROM, or offering an electronic version of a book that is simultaneously being produced in print.

Electronic publications should have several important features:

i. Convenient navigation

ii. Information control

iii. Search possibilities

iv. Identification number (ISSN, ISBN, DOI, etc.).

Electronic publications are being registered in ISSN and ISBN agencies, just as in the traditional publications. They have to be registered independently from their “traditionally” published analogue.

Advantages of Web Publishing

There are several advantages of Web publishing; among them are:

Editing: Editing is a plus involved in online publishing. For the most part, editing should and does occur before the new issue goes online. However, we have all come across several typos in print documents of any kind that were not caught before the publication was sent off to the printer. In online publishing, there is no “final” product. Errors can be corrected in a matter of minutes or seconds even. This implies that even when the publication is already online, there is room for editing.

Traffic: Online publishing through blogs, lenses and article marketing are well known as tools for bringing traffic to your landing pages and/or home pages. This traffic is your viewing audience. The more traffic you get, the greater the opportunity you have to gain new members for your mailing lists, new subscribers for your blogs and lenses. The ultimate goal, of course, is to make more sales. These are just methods that often lead to sales. have to be registered independently from their “traditionally” published analogue.

It is easy: It is quite easy to learn how to publish electronically and necessary equipment can be obtained without difficulties. **It is much faster:** It can take months to publish traditional “paper” book; it is possible to publish electronically in days or even hours. **It is less expensive:** Once you have software and knowledge necessary for work, you can publish lots of various materials

without almost any additional costs. It can use multimedia and varying format options: An electronic book or e-journal can have a variety of multimedia elements to add to

The Web Design and Development Process

Web development follows some stages; let us quickly examine the stages:

Information Gathering: The first step in designing a successful Web site is to gather information. Many things need to be taken into consideration when the look and feel of your site is created. This first step is actually the most important one, as it involves a solid understanding of the company it is created for. It involves a good understanding of you. What your business goals and dreams are and how the Web can be utilised to help you achieve those goals. It is important that your Web designer start off by asking a lot of questions to help him understand your business and your needs in a Web site (Bolby, 2008).

Certain things to consider are:

- What is the purpose of the site?
- What do you hope to accomplish by building this Web site? Two

of the more common goals are either to make money or share information.

- Is there a specific group of people that will help you reach your goals? It is helpful to picture the “ideal” person you want to visit your web site. Consider their age, sex or interests; this will later help determine the best design style for your site.
- What kind of information will the target audience be looking for on your site?

Planning: Using the information gathered from phase one, it is time to put together a plan for your Web site. This is the point where a site map is developed. The site map is a list of all main topic areas of the site, as well as sub-topics, if applicable. This serves as a guide as to what content will be on the site, and is essential to developing a consistent, easy to understand navigational system. The end-user of the Web site (customers) must be kept in mind when designing your site. These are, after all, the people who will be learning about your service or buying your product. A good user interface creates an easy to navigate Web site and is the basis for this (Bolby, 2008). During the planning phase, your Web designer will also help you decide what technologies should be implemented. Elements such as interactive forms, ecommerce, flash, etc. are discussed when planning your Web site.

Design: Drawing from the information gathered up to this point, it is time to determine the look and feel of your site. Target audience is one of the key factors taken into consideration. A site aimed at teenagers, for example, will look much different from the one meant for a financial institution. As part of the design phase, it is also important to incorporate elements such as the company’s logo or colours to help strengthen the identity of your company on the Web site. Your Web designer will create one or more prototype designs for your Web site. This is typically a .jpg image of what the final design will look like. Often times, you will be sent an email with the mock-ups for your Web site, while other designers take it a step further by giving you access to a secure area of their Web site meant for customers to view work in progress (Bolby, 2008). Either way, your designer should allow you to view your project throughout the design and development stages. The most important reason for this is that it gives you the opportunity to

express your likes and dislikes on the site design. In this phase, communication between both you and your designer is crucial to ensure that the final Web site will match your needs and taste. It is important that you work closely with your designer, exchanging ideas, until you arrive at the final design for your Web site. Then development can begin.

Development: The developmental stage is the point where the Web site itself is created. At this time, your Web designer will take all of the individual graphic elements from the prototype and use them to create the actual, functional site. This is typically done by first developing the home page, followed by a “shell” for the interior pages. The shell serves as a template for the content pages of your site, as it contains the main navigational structure for the Web site. Once the shell has been created, your designer will take your content and distribute it throughout the site, in the appropriate areas. Elements such as interactive contact forms, flash animations or ecommerce shopping carts are implemented and made functional during this phase, as well. This entire time, your designer should continue to make your in-progress Web site available to you for viewing, so that you can suggest any additional changes or corrections you would like to have done. On the technical front, a successful Web site requires an understanding of front-end Web development. This involves writing valid XHTML / CSS code that complies with current Web standards, maximising functionality, as well as accessibility for as large an audience as possible (Bolby, 2008).

Testing and Delivery: At this point, your Web designer will attend to the final details and test your Web site. They will test things such as the complete functionality of forms or other scripts, as well as last testing for last minute compatibility issues (viewing differences between different Web browsers), ensuring that your Web site is optimised to be viewed properly in the most recent browser versions. A good Web designer is one who is well versed in current standards for Web site design and development. The basic technologies currently used are XHTML and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). As part of testing, your designer should check to be sure that all of the code written for your Web site validates. Valid code means that your site meets the current Web development standards – this is helpful when checking for issues such as cross-browser compatibility as mentioned above (Bolby, 2008). Once you give your Web designer final approval, it is time to deliver the site. An FTP (File Transfer Protocol) programme is used to upload the Web site files to your server. Most Web designers offer domain name registration and Web hosting services as well. Once these accounts have been setup, and your Web site uploaded to the server, the site should be put through one last run-through. This is just precautionary, to confirm that all files have been uploaded correctly, and that the site continues to be fully functional (Bolby, 2008).

Maintenance: The development of your Web site is not necessarily over, though. One way to bring repeat visitors to your site is to offer new content on a regular basis. Most Web designers will be more than happy to continue working together with you, to update the information on your Web site. Many designers offer maintenance packages at reduced rates, based on how often you anticipate making changes or additions to your Web site (Bolby, 2008). If you prefer to be more hands on, and update your own content, there is something called a CMS (Content Management System) that can be implemented to your Web site. This is something that would be decided upon during the planning stage. With a CMS, your designer will utilise online software to develop a database driven site for you (Bolby, 2008). A Web site driven by a CMS gives you the ability to edit the content areas of the Web site yourself. You are given access to a back-end administrative area, where you can use an online text editor (similar to a mini version of Microsoft Word). You will be able to edit existing content this way or if you are feeling more

adventurous, you can even add new pages and content yourself. The possibilities are endless. It is really up to you as far as how comfortable you feel as far as updating your own Web site. Some people prefer to have all the control so that they can make updates to their own Web site the minute they decide to do so. Others prefer to hand off the Web site entirely, as they have enough tasks on-hand that are more important for them to handle directly. That is where the help of your Web designer comes in, once again, as they can take over the Web site maintenance for you. One less thing for you to do is always a good thing in these busy times (Bolby, 2008). Other maintenance type items include SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and SES (Search Engine Submission). This is the optimisation of your Web site with elements such as title, description and keyword tags which help your Web siteWord). You will be able to edit existing content this way or if you are feeling more adventurous, you can even add new pages and content yourself. The possibilities are endless. It is really up to you as far as how comfortable you feel as far as updating your own Web site. Some people prefer to have all the control so that they can make updates to their own Web site the minute they decide to do so. Others prefer to hand off the Web site entirely, as they have enough tasks on-hand that are more important for them to handle directly. That is where the help of your Web designer comes in, once again, as they can take over the Web site maintenance for you. One less thing for you to do is always a good thing in these busy times (Bolby, 2008). Other maintenance type items include SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and SES (Search Engine Submission). This is the optimisation of your Web site with elements such as title, description and keyword tags which help your Web siteWord). You will be able to edit existing content this way or if you are feeling more adventurous, you can even add new pages and content yourself. The possibilities are endless. It is really up to you as far as how comfortable you feel as far as updating your own Web site. Some people prefer to have all the control so that they can make updates to their own Web site the minute they decide to do so. Others prefer to hand off the Web site entirely, as they have enough tasks on-hand that are more important for them to handle directly. That is where the help of your Web designer comes in, once again, as they can take over the Web site maintenance for you. One less thing for you to do is always a good thing in these busy times (Bolby, 2008). Other maintenance type items include SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and SES (Search Engine Submission). This is the optimisation of your Web site with elements such as title, description and keyword tags which help your Web site achieve higher rankings in the search engines. The previously mentioned code validation is something that plays a vital role in SEO, as well (Bolby, 2008). There are a lot of details involved in optimising and submitting your Web site to the search engines. This is a very important step, because even though you now have a Web site, you need to make sure that people can find it (Bolby, 2008).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Explain the concept "Web publishing".*
- ii. What are the advantages of Web publishing?*
- iii. What are the disadvantages of Web publishing?*

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1. Posting updates on social networking sites like Facebook, 2goTwitter, etc. is not Web publishing. Discuss.*
- 2. Identify and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Web publishing.*

3. *Elaborately discuss the Web design and development process.*