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Media Publication



Online Publishing Mini-Course

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Online Publishing Mini-Course

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Online Publishing

- For Scholars
- For Educators
- For Publishers
- For Communications Professionals

Online Publishing

Course Objective:

- To consider the basic issues involved in developing an online publishing *program*

Major Topics

- 1 - Planning to Meet the Needs of a Particular Organization or Audience
- 2 - Conceptualizing Online Publishing as an Educational Activity
- 3 - Developing Content and a Content Model

Major Topics

4 - Developing or Selecting Publishing and Content Management Tools

5 - Conducting a Program of Research and Evaluation to Guide Improvement

Introductions

- Course Staff
 - Gary Natriello
 - Brian Carolan
 - Michael Rennick
- Course Participants Survey

Logistics/Assumptions

- 4 Hour Meeting
- No Pre-Course Activities
- Post-Course Activities
- Emphasis on general issues and discussion today
- Specific information can be shared beyond today

1 - Planning to Meet the Needs of a Particular Organization or Audience

Developing an Online Publishing Program

Planning to Meet the Needs of a
Particular Organization or Audience

Defining the Audience(s)

- Who?
- How many are they?
- What do they do?
- What will they do with your content?
- What is the rhythm of their use?

Establishing & Redefining Goals

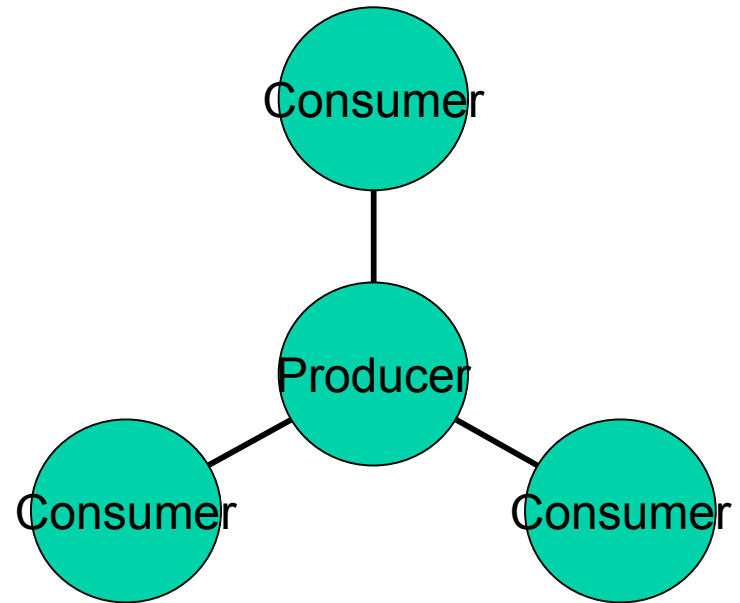
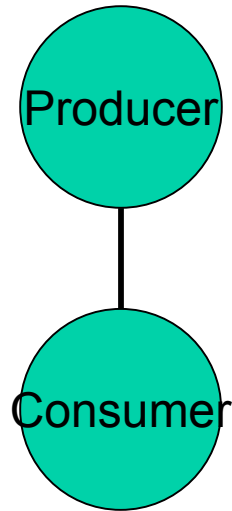
- Online publishing opportunities are very broad and diverse
- This makes it particularly important to have clear goals
- Flexibility: High risk with low cost

Sample Goals

- To make content available to students and others
- Create space where users can interact across content
- Complement a traditional publishing enterprise
- Produce revenue

Producers and Consumers:

Two different models of content distribution and consumption



Scholars/Researchers

- To make research available
 - To students
 - To colleagues
 - To members of the press
 - To the general searcher

Educators

- To prepare electronic texts for students
- Contexts:
 - Courses
 - Programs
 - Workshops
 - Outreach

Publishers

- Taking an existing publishing program online
 - Advantages: content available, development process in place
 - Dangers: locked into print program, need to satisfy immediate business demands
- Creating an online publishing program from scratch
 - Advantages: low-risk, can select from a wide-range of development tools
 - Dangers: lack of brand presence, revenue stream uncertain, unrecognized audience

Tensions

- Needs of sponsors vs. needs of audience
- Organizational support
- Competing audiences within same site
- Technological ability of audience

Audience

- What does usability mean for your audience?
- What is compelling about your content for them?
- What alternative sources do they have?
- Utility of your content to your audience has implications for your revenue prospects
- Moving information into the decision-making flow yields higher value to your audience and greater potential to generate revenue

Design Digression

- Audience needs - simplicity, predictability, clarity, speed,
- Web developer needs - complexity, novelty, flash, obsolescence,
- What do you need?

Sustaining Online Publishing

- Mothership model
- Marketing other services
- Subscriptions
- Pay Per Item
- Advertising
- Sponsorship
- Content Syndication
- Hobby

Testing Assumptions

- Fortunately, online publishing allows you to learn a great deal about your audience with relatively little effort and expense
- This makes it easy to test the assumptions you are making about your audience
- You can experiment with different revenue possibilities

Key to Sustainability

- Minimize operating costs
- Integrate online publishing operations into other activities
- Keep technology costs under control
- Don't over invest
- Justify costs in terms of services to audience - grow the business, not the operation!

2 - Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- Why?
- Education is a powerful technology
- Education is increasingly attractive
- You already know how to do this

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- What does this mean?
 - For the way you think about your audience
 - For the way you think about your own activities

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- Consider your audience or readers as learners
 - What are their learning needs?
 - What are their learning styles?
 - What do you want them to learn?
 - What do they want to learn?
 - What lends itself to the online venue?

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- Consider yourself an educator
 - What do you have to teach?
 - Don't overlook the obvious
 - What are you teaching?
 - What are you learning?
 - What are you doing?

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- Employ traditional educational planning strategies
 - Identify learning goals and objectives
 - Specify scope and sequence
 - Consider diverse activities to meet the needs of diverse learners
 - Activate members of your audience as teachers and learners

Online Publishing as an Educational Activity

- Consider non-traditional possibilities
 - Less complete interaction
 - More continuous interaction
 - Less immediate feedback
 - More detailed feedback
 - Less flexibility to change course
 - More design control

Educational Approach

- Consider community education approaches for your online community
 - reaching entire online group
- Include focused formal educational opportunities
 - Workshops, classes, mini-lessons

Curriculum Frameworks

- Creation contexts
 - “Join me in my work”
- Transmission contexts
 - “We’re back in school”
- Application contexts
 - “Let me join you in your work”

Convergence Possibilities

- Teaching
- Scholarship
- Publishing

3 - Developing Content and a Content Model

Developing Content

- Online publishing changes only two things:

Space and Time

Space

- Space appears to be unlimited - a world of abundance without page limits
- Initially it appears that you can just keep adding
- But there is something that is limited - attention

Space

- Placement is also limited
- Direct access is limited
- The computer screen is very very small

A Design Digression

- Page Design
- Keeping things “above the fold”
- Scrolling vs. clicking?
- Standard placements
- Deep linking - virtues and dangers

Managing Space

- Managing space is more complex in online publishing
- The increased power and flexibility of linking mean that you have more power to do things wrong
- We don't have the hundreds of years of print conventions to count on and neither do readers

Managing Space

- Planning content with space management in mind is essential
- Following online trends is important
- Consistency is key

Time

- Like space, time initially appears unlimited
- You can publish a new “edition” every day or every hour
- You can run 24/7

- But in the online world the limits of time are very severe

Time

- Users have great expectations for the use of time online
- They are unlikely to give any one site a great deal of time
- There is more competition for reader time online
- Any time spent must be repaid

A Design Digression

- The competition is brutal
 - Yahoo loads in 7 seconds at 28.8
- Implications for you
 - avoid elaborate designs that require time to load
 - avoid flash and splash
 - avoid heavy graphics
 - segment content where possible - IHT example

Examples of Good Design

- News.Yahoo
- <http://news.yahoo.com/>
- A pure news site
- Easy to navigate, superb organization, loads fast
- Content from Reuters, AP, NYT, USA Today - all in one place

Good Design

- International Herald Tribune
- <http://iht.com>
- Superb content presentation
- Excellent use of JavaScript to enhance the reader's experience

Good Design

- New York Times
- <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Lots of content handled very well
- Great job of archiving
- Note the content collections

Good Design

- Washington Post
- <http://washingtonpost.com>
- Well organized
- Less extensive top level display than NYT

Good Design

- CNET: news.com
- <http://www.news.com>
- Very well organized
- Great design

Bad Design

- Slate
- <http://slate.msn.com>
- Great content, terrible design
- One notable feature - keeping material from past week available from home page

Bad Design

- Salon
- <http://www.salon.com>
- Difficult to find your way through all of the content
- Too many places where too many categories are presented to the reader

Bad Design

- Food TV
- <http://www.foodtv.com/>
- Very poorly organized
- Search is very effective so the user can ignore the rest of the site

Bad Design

- Martha Stewart
- <http://www.marthastewart.com>
- Hides most of the valuable content
- Looks pretty, but is not functional

Bad Design

- AERA
- <http://www.aera.net>
- “Where to begin?”
- “Hard to find content or anything else you might want.”

Where does this leave us in terms of content?

- You needs lots and lots of content that is well structured and well organized to make good use of limited space and time
- You need a content development process

Content Development

- The more content you will produce, the more you need a well-structured development approach
- The more content you will make available to readers, the more you need a content model

Content Development

- Where will you get content?
- Write it yourself
- Invite authors, commission, assign students
- Engage readers
- Link to other sites
- Purchase content services

Structuring Content

- Developing a content model
- What is a content model?
- A standard way to structure content elements

Structuring Content

- Every article, paper, book, etc. has a set of more or less standard elements
- Least structured approach - every content item is treated as one element
- Move toward structuring - identifying more elements and handling them in a uniform way

Content Pyramid

--Title--

---Author---

--Publication Info--

---Short Description---

-----Abstract-----

-----Executive Summary-----

-----Full Text Body-----

-----References-----

-----Related Materials-----

Content Model

- No one correct approach
- Evolving meta-data standards
 - Dublin Core, SIF, GEM, DOD, etc.
- More elaborate models require more overhead
- Models should allow you to do what you want to do with the content

Working with Content

- Present - display in whole or part
- Analyze - learn how it is being used
- Archive - store for later use
- Manipulate - re-configure or re-use
- Exchange - export, import, share, trade, sell or buy

4 - Developing or Selecting Publishing and Content Management Tools

Tools

- Range from:
 - simple html pages
 - to
 - million dollar plus content management and publishing systems

Tools

- What influences what you will need?
- Size and scope of your effort
 - from a single scholar's web page to the publishing site of a multi-national publishing company
 - amount of content, frequency of publication, number of actors, expectations of audience, revenue potential, etc.

Tool Options

- Do it yourself Html pages
- Home organization services - university, corporation, etc.
- Commercial free services - isp's etc.

A Digression on IP

- Ownership of intellectual property is increasingly a concern
- Be sure to understand the ip implications of using any facility - who owns the content?

Tool Options

- Build your own or buy?
- Files vs. database organization
- Multiple tools vs. an integrated system
 - content mgmt, publishing, workgroup, etc.
- Services vs. software (asps vs. run your own)
- Proprietary vs. open source solutions

Tools Investment Considerations

- Cost of purchasing
 - Cost of operating
 - Cost of maintaining
 - Hardware costs
-
- Control technology costs - every dollar spent on technology is one less for content

5 - Conducting a Program of Research and Evaluation to Guide Improvement

Research

- On your audience
- On your content
- On your audience in interaction with your content

An Aside on Promotion

**“If you build it they will not
come.”**

An Aside on Promotion

- Strategies to Promote Your Online Publication:
 - Print Advertising/Advertise Content
 - Link to your own print publication
 - Position with Search Engines
 - E-mail newsletter

Special Challenge of the Invisible Web

- Content in databases is not readily accessible to search engines
- Design solutions - content collections on your home page to show major themes

Research

- Who are the members of your audience?
 - Membership models
 - Membership registration
 - Membership surveys
 - Individual movement on your publication site
 - Statistics on traffic - hits, page views, member visits, member visits over time
 - Problem reports, search data, etc.

TCR in 2002

- A look at one online education journal's audience

TRecord.org – 2002

Aggregate Stats for 2002

- Page Views For Entire Site 933,146
- New Users Added in 2002 23,425
- Total Memberships as 60,957
- Total on Email List as 30,684

What Were TCRecord.org Users Doing in 2002?

- Articles Viewed: 199,301
- Home Page: 81,462
- Collections: 74,638
- General Searches: 39,980
- PDF Files Downloaded: 33,751
- Articles Printed: 22,976

What Were TCRecord.org Users Doing in 2002?

- Journals: 12,188
- Collection Posts Read: 12,175
- Links to External Articles: 10,817
- Journals Search: 9,671
- Links to Amazon.com: 7,867
- Articles E-mailed to Friend: 5,166

What Were TCRecord.org Users Doing in 2002?

- Views of TCR Index: 3,698
- Content Posts Read: 3,613
- My Account: 2,487
- R and D Centers Viewed: 2,315
- Collection Posts: 168
- Content Posts: 138