How to evaluate the usefulness of digital libraries and archives?
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Research Projects

Haute école de gestion de Genève
(Geneva School of Business Administration)

- ACCEPT
  - Swiss initiative – Creation of Swiss digital libraries
  - User-oriented evaluation of usability and usefulness of sub projects
Research Projects

- PECI
  - Methods to evaluate the usefulness of digital libraries and archives → online content and services

- Creation of an evaluation platform for usefulness aspects
  - Independent evaluation for online content and services
Context

- Increased interest in usefulness aspect for digital libraries
- «Build it and they will come» Approach
Usefulness

Goals Psychology Behavior

Interaction Affordances Language

Features Technology Algorithms

Indexing Structure Metadata

Tools Process Incentives

Users

Interface

Query Results

Engine

Content

Creators

Interaction Triptych Framework

Analysing and evaluating usefulness and usability in electronic information services, Tsakonas & Papatheodorou, Journal of Information Science, 2006;32
Usefulness Attributes

- Relevance
- Format
- Reliability
- Level
- Coverage
Usefulness Evaluation Methods

- Expert-oriented methods
  - Define standards

- User-oriented methods
  - Comparison of digital libraries
  - Define own standards
  - Questionnaires
Methodology

- Interviews
- Online questionnaire
- Logfiles analysis
Online Questionnaire

- Factual questions
- Usage (real vs. hypothetical)
- Attitude
- Satisfaction
- Needs
- User evaluation
User evaluation questions

Parameters
- Do you think that the content is available in an adequate format?
  - What formats do you prefer?

Dimensions
- Do you think that the coverage is wide?
- Do you think that the coverage should be wider?
- Do you think the coverage goes in depth?

Coverage
- Do you think that there should be more information and content about specific topics?
- Do you think the content is up to date?
- Do you think that the content is updated regularly?
- Do you think that there are new contents regularly?
- Do you think the content is complete?

Concept

Dimensions
- Format
- Coverage
- Reliability

Parameters
- Do you think that the content is relevant to your information?
User Evaluation

Reliability

Do you think that the creators of the content are clearly identified?
Do you think that the creators of content are of trust and reputation?
Do you trust the information you find?
Do you think that the content is correct?
Case Studies

- Professional portal of the historical sciences in Switzerland
  - Mission: facilitate exchange
- Harvesting databases of third parties
- Own content provided (news, events)
Recommendation:

Put more information,
make no selection for the users
Case studies

- Sound archives in Switzerland
  - Digitizing material because of preservation issues
- Copyright law obstacles
- Listening spots
Results – Sound Archives

- Marketing issues

- Recommendation:
  - Promote institution
  - Promote services
  - Better readability
Future Development

- Standardization of questionnaire on meso level
- Creation of an online platform
- Further testing with new partners
Questions?