INTERACTIVE HOMEPAGE OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: This paper presents how local orienteering club with the interactive homepage attract new members, and communicate with people interested in or involve with the club. Especially, the children and youth sector is presented. This communication way is important in the city, where orienteering places are around the city and surroundings. Orienteering really is a hobby for the whole family – a real sport for all who wants to promote physical activity with metal and social well-being. It can be practised almost anywhere in the world, in all kinds of terrain from parks to woods. A map and a compass, and suitable outdoor clothes are all you need to get started. Orienteers navigate their way round a with the map and compass. To reach orienteering places is challenging, especially for newcomers, as the physical activity place changes almost every time, otherwise orienteer's learns the terrain too well and the mental feedback is not so rewarding anymore. The interactive homepage of youth sector have eight items.

1   INTRODUCTION

The non-profit organisations exist because they can better provide, compared to business and public sector organisations, services and goods that, are difficult to charge on economically appropriate price (Barrett, Balloun & Weinstein 2005). Voluntary activities form the basis of the Finnish Sports culture and traditionally sports clubs are organised in non-profit associations (SLU 2006). Orienteering is a good example of physical activity, where the total amount of work needed to organise an orienteering exercise or competition is huge and challenging, including such thing as map-making and course setting, and therefore very seldom orienteering is economically profitable. And, at the same time, orienteering really is a hobby for the whole family – a real sport for all who wants to promote physical activity with metal and social well-being. It can be practised almost anywhere in the world, in all kinds of terrain from parks to woods. A map and a compass, and suitable outdoor clothes are all you need to get started. Orienteers navigate their way round a with the map and compass.(IOF 2006) Therefore, orienteering society has room for motivated and creative persons (Amabile 1998) in order to keep the sport going on.

In the last few decades, advances in information technologies and the adoption of the Internet in particular have attracted the attention of many academics and practitioners alike. Much of current research, however, is focused on for-profit organisations, and less emphasis has been placed on other organisational contexts, such as the non-profit sector. The purpose of this article is to analyse how orienteering club Turun Suunnistajat ry (TuS) with the interactive homepage (www.turunsuunnistajat.fi) attract new members, and communicate with people interested in or involve with the club (TuS 2006). This communication way is important in the city, where orienteering places are around the city and surroundings. To reach orienteering places is challenging, especially for newcomers, as the physical activity place changes almost every time, otherwise orienteer's learns the terrain too well and the mental feedback is not so rewarding anymore.

This paper focus on how the interactive homepage can promote the mission (Mullen 2006) of the club and support the voluntary work of club (Sawhney, Wolcott & Arroniz 2006). The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 gives an overview of TuS and the use and adaptation of information and communication technologies (ICT) in orienteering in general. Section 3 analyses the interactive homepage of TuS especially focusing on Youth sector. The

analysis is based on the instrument developed specially on Web portals quality measurement (Yang, Cai, Zhou & Zhou 2005). Section 4 suggest further development issues for the promoting orienteering and other sports clubs' mission in order to physical activity with mental and social well-being.

2 CASE CLUB AND ICT IN ORIENTEERING

TuS is a non-profit organisation with over 500 hundred members living in more than 20 different municipalities in Finland. Over 300 members have competition license of Finnish Orienteering Federation (SSL 2006). TuS's primary mission is to promote the sport of orienteering in Turku area. TuS is very active with a lot of trainings and activities in the region around Turku. TuS is one of the most colourful orienteering clubs at the moment and joining the club is easy. In the spring 2006 TuS achieved The Young Finland Association's Seal Club certificate for it's quality of activities for children and youth (Nuori_Suomi 2006).

TuS organisation is divided into four sectors: competitions, elite, youth, and exerciser sectors. Almost all the work is done on voluntary basis by club members, and the different sectors help each other. This kind of voluntary working is very traditional in Scandinavian sport and physical activity clubs. For example, in other Western European countries sport is organised more on company basis.

Information and communication technology (ICT) has brought significant changes in the structure and functioning of orienteering during the past decade. The core element of orienteering, map, is digitalized. From this follows that also course setting is digitalized. Indeed, the time taking system, *emit™* or *SportIdent™*, with time analysis of the competions are over ten years old. Combining digital map, on-line time taking and a Global Positioning System-based trucking system and software reveals the routes of runners as well as the differences between competitors online. This kind of system is already in use in some competitions. There are less and less secrets, if the system is fully utilised and especially the audience really may follow the race. Also very many administrative things such as registration for competition or information about different kind of activities are digitalized and moved into www-environment. Not to mentioned all kind of

normal registration and administrative systems used in the office work. We may conclude that the adoption of ICT in orienteering at least in the best clubs seems to be high. According to (Finn, Maher & Forster 2006) the non-profit organisations are in the beginning to position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities provided by ICT adoption. (Pinho & Macedo 2006) found that the existence of a favourable attitude towards the Internet was positively correlated with the perception of Internet benefit dimensions. It seems that the innovative and creative climate in orienteering society have managed to create an environment which support the whole sport (Hamm 2006). Explanation for this kind of team effect might lie partly in the military sport background of the sport and partly high educational level of the participants of the orienteering sport. Indeed, quite a many of orienteering are engineers.

3 THE INTERACTIVE HOMEPAGE OF TUS

Increasing numbers of non-profit organisations have set up material on their homepage as a way of providing users with information about their products or services. This section analysis the interactive homepage of TuS, special focus is on youth sector, with the instrument to measure user perceived service quality of homepage. The interactive homepage of youth sector have eight items: *youth news, group presentation, activity calendar, junior presentation, question of the week, youth activity, rules of the game*, and *contact information*. The analysis instrument is developed by (Yang et al. 2005) and it based on TAM-model (Davis 1989), which suggest that user's decision to adopt an IT is primary determined by their attitude toward usefulness and ease of use. (Yang et al. 2005) argues that their conceptual model provides a useful instrument for researchers who wish to measure the service quality of web portal (homepage) and for managers who want to improve their service performance. They argue that there are five quality dimensions of homepage: usability, usefulness of content, adequacy of information, accessibility, and interaction. In the following paragraphs we analyse TuS homepage with the special focus on youth sector with these dimensions (Yang et al. 2005). The emphasis in the analysis is in the fact that the members of the youth committee are totally voluntary workers.

Usability in the homepage context is related to user friendliness. The friendliness contains e.g. the following items: content layout and classification, web site structure, user interface, appearance and visual design, intuitiveness, readability, search facilities, and ease of navigation. Technical features belong also to usability dimensions. The TuS homepage is organised according to club's main sectors and activities. These are organised in six different menus in the upper edge of the main page. They are: *general* information of the club, arranging *competitions* to orienteers in other clubs, *elite* athletics, *youth*, and *links* (see Figure 1). The main layout of the page has three categories such as interactive part on the left, news in the middle, and logos and links of the co-operating partner on the right side. On the left side of the page is login link for the club members. From the menu available only for club member can be found several useful information about the club (Intranet and members own settings) and the possibilities to upload information and news into the homepage and update the activity calendar. Webmaster has his/her own menu to control the functionality of the homepage. On the left side of the homepage is also the calendar, which shows the weekly program of the whole club. News and calendar can easily sort by the activity or sector. The homepage is based on PHP-language and they use MySQL-database. PHP is an HTML-embedded scripting language. Much of its syntax is borrowed from C, Java and Perl with a couple of unique PHP-specific features thrown in. The goal of the language is to allow web developers to write dynamically generated pages quickly. PHP/MySQL makes the homepage easy, clear, and quick to download. The layout of the homepage is read from template folder, which makes customising quite easy. The functional and design code for the homepage are diverged. More detailed information about the technical can be found from the serves provider's homepage (Clubpage 2006). There is no search facility in TuS homepage as there still are less than one hundred pages overall, which is one rule of thumb for specific search facilities.

Figure 1: Content layout of TuS main page.

Usefulness of content refers to the value, reliability and accuracy of information. Every sector of the club, i.e. the voluntary workers or club members, are responsible to update the information related to their activities. For example, *Youth news* tell the recent happenings of the young athletes. It is like e-Newspaper and everybody may contribute the content. Especially, members of the youth committee are responsible to keep the information updated. The *group presentation* tells the general information how the youth sector operates. *Youth activity* and *rules of the game* presents the values behind the operation. The rules of the game are made up with children and their parents. These latter two items are partly focused on the promotion of the mission of the youth sector. *Activity calendar* tells all the activities of the club and it is possible to make inquiries based on year, month, category (elite runners, youth, hobbyist, all, and club house). The activity calendar also contains the maps of the city in order to help new comers to find the place of activity. The TuS homepage is updated almost daily, thanks to active club members.

Adequacy of information is concerned with completeness of information. The current homepage in at the moment one year old and there are over 200 submissions of the news. The completeness of the information is very much depending of the time, competence, and attitude of the club members (voluntary workers) to provide information to the homepage.

Accessibility refers to availability and responsiveness. Customers expect the online services to be available at all times and speedy on processes. The person in charge in the different sectors answers the questions as soon as possible regarding their work and other responsibilities. The main language of the TuS Homepage is Finnish, but as much as possible is also translated in English in order to higher the accessibility of the club among non-Finns.

Interaction involves three types of operations between: user and service provider, user and web site, and among peer users of similar services. The web master, voluntary worker) of the homepage is responsible person to communicate with the service provider. The web master helps the members to upload the information on the main menus. However, the idea is that the uploading of information is possible without any help. All the registered club members are allowed to upload news and activities for the calendar. In *junior presentation* every young athlete may have their own diary, guestbook, and collection of training hours to share

with others. *Question of the week* deals with the content of orienteering and there are three possible answers. The response is given weekly in face-to-face activity. This is one way to combine both the new media and traditional way doing and exercising orienteering. Furthermore, the homepage includes link to the e-Registration of competition as well as the links for the competitions and the local orienteering activities.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have presented how local orienteering club promote it's mission with the help of interactive homepage. The homepage was analysed with the help of five quality dimensions such as usability, usefulness of content, adequacy of information, accessibility, and interaction.

The usability lies heavily on content layout and technical functionality of the homepage. TuS homepage uses PHP/MySQL-combinaton which makes the homepage easy, clear, and quick to download. However, the service provider is a tiny company and the web master of TuS homepage works on voluntary basis. These two things make the service very vulnerable and have to take account in the future planning of the homepage. Usefulness of the content as well as the adequacy of the information and accessibility deeply depends on voluntary workers of the sector. This means that every sector have to understand also the power of new media to promote orienteering. Interaction depends a great deal on how useful and updated the information at the homepage is for both club members as well as newcomers. For non-profit organisation this is a challenge. However, if people are motivated and the tasks are not too demanding we think the interactive homepage works within the non-profit sector's organisation.

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