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Stokmans, M.J.W.

Published in:
7th International Conference on Arts and Cultural Management

Publication date:
2003

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Stokmans, M. J. W. (2003). Evaluating websites of cultural organisations. In *7th International Conference on Arts and Cultural Management: Proceedings on CD-rom of the 7th International Conference on Arts and Cultural Management* Unknown Publisher.

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Evaluating websites of cultural organizations

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Abstract

A website is a relatively easy and cheap promotional tool, lowering entry barriers for small, relative (financially) weak organizations. Therefore, Dutch central government stated that the opportunities offered by the internet to communicate to current and potential target audiences should be exploited. However, a recent research about websites of theaters suggested that most websites were just a stripped version of the seasonal brochure of the theater. In that case, most website visitors will be disappointed, since no effort is taken to exploit the unique characteristics of the internet. The main objectives of this study regard the development and application of an evaluation model that focuses on the opinions of visitors of a website of a theater?

The evaluative model makes use of three global criteria (Correspondence, Consistency, and Correctness) to evaluate five characteristics of a website (contents, structure, wording, presentation, and interactivity). This results in fifteen checkpoints that are used to analyze a website in detail and indicate what questions should be asked to visitors of a website. The evaluative model was illustrated by a case study about the website of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg*. 73 respondents participated in this research. This case study indicated that these checkpoints provide a thorough and structured instrument to evaluate websites. The evaluation pinpointed shortcomings and provided directions to improve the website.

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Introduction

In the Netherlands, cultural organizations have only recently embraced marketing techniques to attract visitors. As in other businesses, mass marketing communication techniques have dominated communication strategies until recently. Now the magic strategy seems to be 'one-to-one communication on the internet'. The fast penetration of the internet in the Netherlands occurred in a period in which cultural organizations were forced, by changes in cultural policy, to focus more on the number of participants. A website is a relatively easy and cheap promotional tool, lowering entry barriers for small, relative (financially) weak organizations. Therefore, Dutch central government stated that the opportunities offered by the internet to communicate to current and potential target audiences should be exploited (OcenW 1999).

Next to the large coverage, the internet has at least four unique characteristics compared to mass media. Firstly, a website provides continually assessable information that is up-to-date. Consumers can consult the website any time of the day and assume that the information presented is up-to-date. Secondly, the combination of text, visuals and sound offers the opportunity to present information in an appropriate and emotional attractive way. The structure of websites, especially the use of hyperlinks, offers the opportunity to present global as well as more detailed information, without presenting long texts. Thirdly, consumers are largely in control of the communication. Consumers take the initiative to communicate with the theatre, while in the case of traditional media the initiative is taken by the cultural organization. This implies that mainly people who are interested in the performances or services offered by the theatre will visit the website. Besides the initiative, a consumer is also in control of the information to which he/she is exposed to. A consumer predominantly determines what websites he/she is exposed to, the number of exposures, and the pacing of the

message. So, a consumer may select some parts of a site that is regarded as interesting and ignore other parts. Fourthly, the communication style is synchronic: The internet is an interactive medium. It offers the opportunity to reserve tickets or ask for more specific information about performances and services. And by making use of cookies, a website can deliver custom-made messages: The information presented matches the individual needs of a consumer.

Given these characteristics and the fact that a website is a relatively easy and cheap promotional tool, it is not surprising that a lot of theatres in the Netherlands provide information by means of a website. However, a recent research about the contents of websites of theatres (Broekhuizen & Huysmans, 2002) suggested that most websites are just a stripped version of the seasonal brochure. In that case, most internet users will be disappointed, since no effort is taken to exploit the unique characteristics of the internet (Ligos, 1998). The main objectives of this study regard the development and application of an evaluation model that focuses on the opinions of visitors of a website of a theater. In marketing communications terms this objective regard process goals of the communication (De Pelsmeaker et al, 2001). In the case of websites, process goals relate to the satisfaction with and the perceived value of the website. The focus of these goals is the message itself and not the attractiveness of the performances and services offered by a theatre.

At this time, a lot of models are available to evaluate websites. However, most models have a mix focus: some criteria regard coverage goals¹, while other criteria regard effectiveness goals² or process goals. In order to investigate process goals, the website should

¹ Coverage goals are formulated in terms of reach (for example, the number of target audience individuals exposed to the website).

² Effectiveness goals concern the interest in and preference for a cultural product, as well as the intention to participate, and actual participation.

be analyzed in detail and visitors of the website should be asked about their opinions of the site. In this study we will present a model to evaluate websites of theatres in terms of process goals. The model will be illustrated by an example of a theatre.

An evaluation model for a website of a theatre

Globally, process goals are about the information processing of the communication. The object of study is the website itself and focuses on the extent to which the execution of the website affects the information processing. In our opinion, the CCC-model of Renkema (1994; 2000) offers a framework in which a large number of aspects (of a text) can be evaluate systematically from the perspective of the user. The CCC-model was developed to determine the quality of informing texts. Since websites are in some way similar as well as different to informing texts, the model lacks probably criteria regarding the unique characteristics of a website such as interactivity and emotional attractiveness. Despite these shortcomings, we have the opinion that the CCC-model offers a useful starting point to evaluate websites systematically. In this study, the CCC-model will be extended in order to give in to the objections signaled.

The CCC-model states that a text should be evaluated by applying three criteria to five characteristics of a text. The three criteria are:

1. Correspondence: The extent to which the writer meets the reader of a text (Renkema, 2000). In other words: are the goals set by the theatre met and are the expectations held by visitors of the website met? From the perspective of marketing communication goals, this criterion is about process goals as well as effectiveness goals, since the goals of the writer and the expectations of the reader regard the opinions about the message as well

as opinions about the products and services offered. In this study we will only attend to the correspondence criteria in the light of process goals (opinions about the website).

2. **Consistency:** The extent to which the writer is consistent regarding his/her choices made (Renkema, 1999). When a choice is made, for example regarding the style of writing, or the extent of detail on a webpage, these choices affect the expectations of a visitor about the rest of the site. When these expectations are not met, the perceived quality of the website will decrease. Regarding this criterion, some precaution should be made. If choices made, are implemented too strictly (like copies) it may cause boredom and consequently decrease the emotional attractiveness of the site. This doesn't mean that consistency is not a useful criteria in evaluating websites. Small deviations are often regarded as surprising, however large deviations are evaluated negatively, because they are too distinct from the expectations. This implies that 'expectations' should be regarded as a range of possibilities; deviations are aloud if they fall within the "lattice of acceptance".
3. **Correctness:** The extent to which the writer obeys common rules of linguistic usage (Renkema, 1994). Websites are textual expressions and should meet rules of correct linguistic usage. However, websites are more than just textual expressions. Websites have unique characteristics and regarding some of these characteristics conventions emerge in the internet community. So, correctness of websites also accounts to the extent to which conventions set by the internet community are met. The problem with these conventions is that they can change very rapidly; what seems to be a custom at one time, can be regarded as old fashioned six months later. This problem can be solved by asking visitors' opinions if the websites deviates from what seems to be a convention at the time of the evaluation.

According to the CCC-model, these criteria should be applied to five types of characteristics of a text (Renkema, 2000). These five characteristics are discussed first. Next to these types of characteristics, a lot of website evaluation models mention interactivity and emotional attractiveness as important features. These two characteristics will also be considered in this evaluative model. The types of characteristics distinguished are:

1. **Type of text:** This characteristic refers to the global objective of the site. For some sites the main objective is to inform visitors as objectively and extensively as possible (for example the website of central government). Regarding website of theatres the global communicative objective is persuasion; create a favorable opinion about the theatre and its products and services. This global objective dictates globally what kind of information should be presented as well as how this information should be structured and presented. Since all websites of theatres have a mainly persuasive objective, this characteristic is not included in the model.
2. **Contents:** What information should be presented on the website. What topics and how much detail. In other words: *Do the contents of a site correspond with the expectations of visitors (relevance and quality)? Is the site consistent in its contents? Etc.*
3. **Structure.** Regarding websites, this characteristic refers to three aspects. Firstly, the overall structure of the site as it is often visualized in a sitemap. Secondly, it refers to the use of embedded links in the text or a picture. And thirdly, it refers to the structure of the text presented at one webpage. Important questions regarding this characteristic are: *Does the structure of the site correspond with the expectations of visitors? Is the site easy to navigate? Etc.*
4. **Wording:** This characteristic refers to the way in which the contents are formulated. In the case of websites, wording doesn't only refer to text but also to the use of visual and

audible material that are instrumental in the communication process. By instrumental we mean that the visuals and audible material contribute to the comprehensibility of the message.

5. **Presentation:** Refers to the way the message is dressed up. One should think about layout of a webpage as well as the colorful account of the contents (the use of adjectives), the use of color, visuals, and audible materials.
6. **Interactivity:** Regards the extent to which an action of visitors results in a reaction of the site or the organization. Interactivity encompasses not only the availability of a email address of the organization (about 82% of the websites of theatres gave a email address (Broekhuizen en Huysmans; 2002)), it also regards the use of cookies by means of which tailor-made information can be presented.
7. **Emotional attractiveness:** Emotional attractiveness regards the hedonic value of the site and has an effect on the frequency of exposure, what pages of the websites are viewed, and the pacing of the message. Regarding websites of theatres, the hedonic value of a site is also important in arousing motivation to process information about the shows. Performing arts have a hedonic value (Holbrook & Hirschman (1982). The information about these performances as well as the presentation of the information should appeal to these hedonic values in order to be effective (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; MacInnis et al. 1991). A site of a theatre is more attractive if it makes use of (background) music and visual material, such as a photo of the performing artists or a scene from the play, or a short film of highlights of the play. However, research of Broekhuizen en Huysmans (2002) indicate that most websites of theatres do not make use of these opportunities. Emotional attractiveness can be operationalized as: Is the overall website considered as amusing, entertaining, captivating or is it viewed as dull? This overall evaluation is the

result of all characteristics mentioned before. In our opinion, this evaluation is not a characteristic of the site (as are the other types of characteristics) but an opinion about the extent to which visitor's expectations are met. Consequently, it concerns the 'correspondence' criterion. A characteristic of a website that concerns similar questions is 'Presentation'. Consequently, emotional attractiveness will be dealt with under 'Presentation/ Correspondents'.

The characteristics 'wording' and 'presentation' cannot be distinguished unequivocally. This is also the case in the model of Renkema. In this study we will restrict 'wording' to all aspects of the site that contribute to the comprehensibility of the contents. Therewith, 'wording' is strictly related to the information on the website (presented in text, visuals and audible material).

Presentation regards all executional cues that are used to dress up the contents. This distinction indicates that it is not possible to state in general what questions about for example visuals should be regarded as question about wording (or presentation). That depends on the instrumentality of the visual; does it contribute to the comprehensibility of the message or is it used to dress up the message. This distinction is not objective but subjective.

In our CCC-model the three criteria are applied to the five remaining characteristics of a website. In doing so fifteen checkpoints are identified (see also Table 1). In Table 1 the number in each cell indicates what criterion is applied to what characteristic.

Table 1: Checkpoints to evaluate websites of theatres

	correspondence	consistence	correctness
contents	1	2	3
structure	4	5	6
wording	7	8	9
presentation	10	11	12
interactivity	13	14	15

Elaboration and application of the evaluation model

The elaboration of the model will be illustrated by means of a cases; the website of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* as it was active at spring 2002. This site presented similar information as their seasonal brochure. Compared to websites of other theatres, it is an extensive site; most items mentioned in the contents analysis of websites of theatres (Broekhuizen & Huymans, 2002) are present on this site.

The evaluation model indicates that characteristics of a site should be evaluated in terms of correspondence, consistency and correctness. Evaluations about correspondence should always be made by visitors of the website; they can indicate to what extent their expectations are met by the site. Regarding the criterion 'consistency', a researcher can make an initial evaluation. However, if inconsistencies are tracked down, they should be presented to visitors of the site in order to determine whether the inconsistency is evaluated positively (surprising, not annoying) or negatively (disturbing, annoying). Evaluation on correctness can be made by researchers themselves, assuming that a normative criterion is available (in terms of a convention of correct rules for language). If no normative criterion is available, a deviation from what seems to be the custom can be presented to visitors to be evaluated.

The website of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* was evaluated by 73 respondents. These respondents were selected by a random sample of an address file of people who received the electronic newsletter of the theatre. All respondents were familiar with the website of the theatre.

To pinpoint aspects of the site that should be improved, it is not sufficient to know the absolute magnitude of the evaluation. If an evaluation is below the scale midpoint (three on a five points scale), the aspect is probably insufficient. However, most people are somewhat reluctant to give low scores, unless they are really unsatisfied. To deal with this tendency, we

divided the sample in two groups of almost equal size; Respondents whose overall evaluation of the site was very positive versus those whose overall evaluation was less positive. This evaluation was asked for by means of a grade (expressed on a ten points scale, what is commonly used to express grades in the Netherlands). These grades indicate that, in general, respondents were positive about the site of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg: 2* respondents gave 9 points, 28 gave 8 points, 32 respondents gave 7 points, 5 gave 6 points and only one respondents gave 5 points. The two groups distinguished are 38 respondents who evaluated the site as 5 (inadequate) or 6 (adequate) and 30 respondents who evaluated the site as 7 and higher (satisfactory, good, and very good). If the average evaluation about a checkpoint differs significantly between the two groups, this aspect is eligible for improvement.

Now we have indicated how potential shortcomings can be tracked down, we will discuss the evaluation of the website by examining each characteristic of a site mentioned in Table 1 on the three criteria Correspondence, Consistency, and Correctness.

Contents

Checkpoint 1, correspondence of the contents, relates to the extent to which the website contains information that is expected by visitors. This implies that the information presented should cover the important topics and should be of sufficient quality. The information that is probably expected by most visitors of the website of the theatre is the information presented in the seasonal brochure.

In order to ascertain the expectations of the visitors regarding the overall contents of the website, we asked whether the website should provide more, the same amount or less information than the seasonal brochure. There was no difference in information expected

between the two groups distinguished (Chi-square = 5.2; df = 3; $p > 0.05$). Of the overall sample, 51% had the opinion that the website should contain more information than the seasonal brochure, 39% thought that it should contain the similar information, and 5% believed that a website should contain less information than the seasonal brochure (6% of the respondents indicated no opinion). The main arguments for expecting more information were: A site can be updated at any time. Actual information about a show can be presented immediately. And a site has more space for background information. It is not restricted in its space as a brochure is. Since the website of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* presented the same information as its seasonal brochure, the site can be improved by providing more detailed and up-to-date information about the shows.

Next to this overall impression about the contents of the site, we asked the frequency of use for each hyperlinks separately and whether or not that part of the site provided sufficient information. For this paper we will only discuss these opinions about the homepage as an example. The homepage of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* presented a lot of newsflashes (at the right part of the screen, next to the hyperlinks to other parts of the site). The frequency in which these newsflashes were read did not differ between the groups distinguished (Chi-square = 2.6; df = 3; $p > 0.05$). Of all respondents, 12% indicated that they read these newsflashes (almost) every time they visited the site. 30% indicated to read these newsflashes regularly, 43 % indicated to read the newsflashes only occasionally, and 15% (almost) never read the newsflashes. Since most visitors did not read the newsflashes regularly, it is suggested that newsflashes, as presented on this site, are less appropriate to present on a homepage.

Next to the frequency of use, respondents were asked whether the homepage contained sufficient information. Again, the difference between the two groups of respondents was not

significant (Chi-square = 2.9; df = 3; $p > 0.05$). 2% of the respondents indicated that the homepage contained too much information, 80% regarded the information presented sufficient, and 4% said that too little information was presented on the homepage (15% stated no opinion).

Checkpoint 2, consistency of the contents, can be examined across webpages of the website, and within one webpage. These inconsistencies negatively affect the comprehensibility and credibility of the presented information and therewith the overall evaluation of the site. Insight into checkpoint 2 can be archived by systematically examining the site to check for inconsistencies in the information presented. If inconsistencies are tracked down, they should be fixed immediately.

In the case of the website of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg*, a few inconsistencies were noticed, which are probably most common if a website is combined with an electronic newsletter. In the newsletter an announcement was made of an extra performance as well as the possibility to reserve tickets on the website. However, if a visitor wanted to book tickets for this extra performance, information on the website indicated that the performance was sold out.

Checkpoint 3, correctness of the contents, refers to the idea that the information presented on a site should conform to the facts. Since information is outdated fast (van Driel 2003), one should check on regular basis whether the information is still actual and update the site on regular bases. As was indicated by visitors of the theatre website, one expected that information was updated (see checkpoint 1). This implies that any changes that occurred in the organization of the theatre, the performances offered, and information about the performances offered, should be reflected in changes in the contents of the website. Since visitors of websites recognize that information can be outdated very quickly (especially if the

information concerns performances offered by a theatre during a season), the date of the last update is usually presented to signal that the information is contemporary. A recent date signals correctness of the information and benefits the credibility of the information source, assuming that the information is factual correct.

In the case of the website of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg*, dates were only presented by the newsflashes presented on the homepage and not on other webpages. So this website can be improved by presenting the date of checking or updating the information on any webpage (or a message).

As can be inferred from the above, checkpoint 3 implies that the site is systematically examined on the correctness of the contents of the information, whether or not the contents is up-to-date, and the presents of the date of the last update. Any violations on checkpoint 3 damage the perceived quality of the site.

Structure

The CCC-model (see Table 1) indicates that the structure of the site should be evaluated in terms of: visitors' expectations regarding the structure (checkpoint 4), consistency in which structure elements are applied (checkpoint 5), and the extent to which conventions about structure are met (checkpoint 6). These checkpoints will be illustrated successively.

Checkpoint 4, expectations about the structure, can be operationalized as the expected coherence and the (psycho-)logical ordering of the information presented. A distinction can be made between structure elements regarding a text on a webpage and structure elements regarding the construction of the site. The structure of a particular webpage has an effect on the comprehensibility of the text as well as the attention paid to the text. Since the structure of the text on a particular webpage parallels the structure of a text block with similar contents

presented in the seasonal brochure, we assumed that no problems would occur. Because of the fact that respondents can be asked only a limited number of questions (Dillman, 1978), no questions regarding the structure of a text of a webpage were asked. Questions that could be asked are: What is your opinion about the order in which the information is presented within this webpage (indicate the webpage)? Response categories can be presented on a five points scale with the poles: chaotic - logical. Another example is: These information items are presented in this text block (mention the information items). What information item is the most interesting, according to you?

Next to the ordering of the information items within a webpage, the relation between the webpages that constitute the site regards checkpoint 4. Because of the fact that a website contains a large amount of information about different topics, the contents of the site are partitioned into sections and these sections can even be partitioned into subsections. Each section is assessable by means of a hyperlink and the ordering of the sections is often displayed in a sitemap.

In the case of the website of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg*, visitors' opinions concerning the expected ordering of the sections were asked for in terms of the extent to which (five points scale) the website is well-organized ([1] very well organized - [5] very poorly organized), logical ([1] very logical - [5] very illogical), and the easy in which information can be reached ([1] very easy - [5] very laborious (I have to click often, before reaching the information I was looking for)). Regarding these opinions significant differences were found between respondents who evaluated the site very positive and those who evaluated the site less positive (well-organized: $t = 3,03$; $df = 64$; $p < 0,05$, logical: $t = 2,97$; $df = 62$; $p < 0,05$, and easy to reach information: $t = 1,84$; $df = 62,007$; $p < 0,05$). The respondents who were very positive regarded it as better organized ($m = 1,90$, $s.d. = 0,41$), more logical ($m =$

1.93, s.d. 0.45), and easier to reach information ($m = 2.03$, s.d. 0.49) than those who evaluated the site less positive (well-organized: $m = 2.14$, s.d. 0.49; logical: $m = 2.31$, s.d. 0.58; easy to reach information: $m = 2.31$, s.d. 0.71). These results indicated that the ordering of the sections of the website was not optimal from the perspective of the visitors

Checkpoint 5 concerns the extent to which structure elements are consistently applied. This checkpoint is investigated by systematically looking for inconsistencies in the structure. These inconsistencies can be at the level of the text presented on one webpage or at the level of the ordering of webpages within the site. If inconsistencies are tracked down, one should ask visitors whether the inconsistency is evaluated positive (surprising, playful) or negative (annoying, interfering).

In the case of the website of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg*, no inconsistencies were tracked down. Webpages about similar topics (information about the performances for example) presented the same kind of information and the ordering of this information did not differ. Inconsistencies in the ordering of sections were relatively easy to track down since the website had only eight sections and only the sections regarding the program contained subsections (which were exactly the same in the ordering of the subsections).

Checkpoint 6 concerns the extent to which conventions about the structure of a website are met. Since conventions about the structure of a webpage or website are still in the making, deviations from these 'common practices' are not by definitions shortcomings of the site. However, if a site deviates from a common practice, one should ask visitors their opinion about this deviation. Common practices about the structure of a webpage, and the ordering of sections by means of hyperlinks are changing quickly. At the time of the research (spring 2002), a common layout of a webpage consisted of three fields (van Driel 2002). The first field is a bar at the top of the page in which icons were presented that referred to 'home', the

opportunity to print, and the opportunity to make contact to the organization (an envelope indicating the email address). This bar was always present, irrespective the webpage one was attending to. However, not all websites contain such a bar. Secondly, a small vertical field at the left of the webpage in which the hyperlinks were presented. If no bar was present at the top, the 'home' and 'contact' hyperlink were presented in this field. This left field was always present, irrespective the webpage one was attending to. And thirdly, the remaining right part of the webpage. In this field the information for that specific webpage was presented. Another common layout of a webpage is that the page was horizontally divided in two field: a small top field in which the hyperlinks were presented and that remains the same irrespective of the webpage one was attending to and a bottom field, in which the information for that specific webpage was presented.

The webpages of the website of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* were very similar to the webpage divided into three fields: a bar, a left field, and a right field. However, the email address to contact the theatre was presented at the bottom of the right field of the homepage. The information on the homepage was quite extensive (newsflashes about the performances were presented) and one had to scroll to arrive at the bottom of this webpage. Since the email address was presented at a right field, one had to return to the homepage whenever a question came to mind. So we asked the respondents about their opinion regarding the location of the email address; "Is it a logical location or not?" Regarding these opinions no significant differences were found between the respondents who evaluated the site very positive and those who evaluated the site less positive (Chi-square = 0.398; df = 2; $p > 0.05$). About 44% of all respondents indicated that the location of the email address was logical, about 30% regarded it as illogical, and about 26% had no opinion. Of the respondents who regarded the location as illogical, 52% had the opinion that the address should be presented at

the left field, 22% had the opinion it should be presented at the bar and 16% suggested another location.

Wording

Checkpoint 7 concerns the extent to which the text and the audile and visual materials are instrumental in the communication of the message. This checkpoint refers only to single webpages and not the website as a whole. Important keywords are: comprehensibility and conciseness. In the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* case, no audile material and only a few visuals were presented on the website. So, this checkpoint only regarded the text.

Checkpoint 7 was asked for by two questions: "Do you regard the linguistic usage of the webpages as [1] too simple or [5] too complex" (five points scale), and "Do you regard the linguistic usage of the webpages as [1] too conciseness or [5] too tedious" (five points scale). Regarding these opinions no significant differences were found between the respondents who evaluated the site very positive and those who evaluated the site less positive (simple: $t = -0.80$; $df = 64$; $p > 0.05$; conciseness: $t = 0.76$; $df = 62$; $p > 0.05$). Overall, the respondents regarded the webpages as simple or neither simple nor complex ($m = 2.20$, $s.d. = 0.40$) and conciseness or neither conciseness nor tedious ($m = 2.45$, $s.d. = 0.55$).

Checkpoint 8 refers to the consistency in 'wording' within and across webpages. In other words: are the webpages comparable in terms of comprehensibility and conciseness. This checkpoint can be evaluated by systematically analyzing the webpages. In our case, we did not use objective indices to compare the comprehensibility across webpages. We relied on the opinion of the researchers. In this case, this was only a minor shortcoming, since the kind of contents of most of the webpages was similar. This analysis revealed that the webpages were consistent in their wording. However, if inconsistencies were tracked down, they could be

presented to respondents to indicate whether these inconsistencies are evaluated as positively (surprising, playful) or negatively (annoying, interfering).

Checkpoint 9 is about the correctness of the syntax and use of words. This checkpoint should be evaluated by systematically checking the contents on this kind of mistakes.

Violations of checkpoint 9 always impair the perceived quality of the site. In our case no errors were observed.

Presentation

Checkpoint 10 indicates that the presentation should meet the expectations of the average visitor. This checkpoint regards the emotional attractiveness of the site as well as the extent to which executional cues are used to dress up the contents. Executional cues that are important in this context are: form of address, the extent to which adjectives are used, and the use of audible and visual material (use of colors, movement, illustrations, photo's, and film).

In the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* case, emotional attractiveness was asked for by one question: "Do you regard the site as [1] very attractive of [5] very unattractive (five points scale). Regarding emotional attractiveness a significant difference was found between the respondents who evaluated the site very positive and those who evaluated the site less positive ($t = 3.68$; $df = 55.39$; $p < 0.05$). The respondents who were very positive about the site regarded the site as more attractive ($m = 2.03$, $s.d = 0.33$) than those who evaluated the site less positive ($m = 2.49$, $s.d = 0.65$). These results indicate that the emotional attractiveness of the site should be improved.

The evaluation of executional cues was asked for by four questions: "Do you regard the form of address [1] very suitable or [5] very unsuitable" (five points scale), "Do you regard the website as [1] very formal or [5] very informal" (five points scale), "Is the number of

visuals used satisfactory?" (five points scale: [1] too many visuals - [5] too few visuals), and "Do you believe that visuals and audile material have an added value to the website" (yes, no). Regarding these opinions no significant differences were found between the respondents who evaluated the site very positive and those who evaluated the site less positive (suitable: $t = -0.12$, $df = 64$, $p > 0,05$; formal: $t = -1.50$; $df = 63$; $p > 0.05$; number of visuals: $t = 1.04$; $df = 56$; $p > 0.05$; added value: Chi-square = 0.20; $df = 2$; $p > 0.05$). Overall, the respondents regarded the webpages as suitable ($m = 2.03$, $s.d. = 0.20$), neither formal nor informal ($m = 2.85$, $s.d. = 0.60$), containing sufficient or a few visuals ($m = 3.25$, $s.d. = 0.64$), and believed that visuals and audile material had an added value (yes: 61%; no: 30%; no opinion: 9%). These results indicate that the number of visuals presented is not appropriate; The evaluation of the use of visuals is just above the midpoint of the scale and most respondents value the use of visuals. Consequently, the site can be improved by using more visuals.

Checkpoint 11 refers tot the consistency in 'presentation' across webpages. Questions are for example: "Is the layout of the webpages comparable?", "Is the visual and audile quality of the webpages comparable?", "Is the use of colors consistent across webpages?". In our case, one inconsistency was found. It regarded the layout of the webpage indicated by 'your experience'. This webpage contained information for adolescents. Because of its inconsistency with the rest of the site, and the fact that most adults did never visit this page (adult are the main target group for the site), the theatre should consider dropping this link.

Checkpoint 12 regards the correctness of the presentation. For text this implies that no spelling or punctuation errors should be made. The presentation of the text and visuals should be clear, distinct, and sharp. Last but not least, it regards the speed at which the site and the different webpages come available. This checkpoint can be evaluated by systematically

reviewing the website on these aspects. In the case of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* only a few spelling errors were detected and those were corrected immediately.

Interactivity

Interactivity regards the extent to which a visitor's action results in a reaction of the site or the organization. Aspects of a site enclosing 'action - reaction' patterns are for example: hyperlinks, embedded links, email addresses, chat box as well as presenting personalized information.

Checkpoint 13 is about the extent to which visitors expect that these interactive aspects are available on the site. For the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* case no questions about the interactivity were asked, because of lack of space in the questionnaire. However, some overall evaluation of checkpoint 13 can be formulated. Firstly, the use of hyperlinks and embedded links. These links divide the total amount of information into small pieces of information. The amount of information presented on one webpage should not exceed the part that is visual, since visitors do not like to scroll (van Driel, 2003). On the homepage of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* several newsflashes were presented. However, they could not be viewed at one time; a visitor had to scroll. This suggests that too few embedded links were used on the homepage. Each headline of a newsflash could have been presented as a link. In that case, all headlines of the newsflashes could be viewed simultaneously. Respondents could be asked whether they preferred the present format or the one with embedded links.

Secondly, one should consider whether all topics that are relevant for visitors of the website, have its own hyperlink at the left field of the homepage. In the case of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* two potentially relevant topics are not presented as a

hyperlink: Friends of the theatre and 'links' referring to other theatre related sites. Thirdly, the website made no use of a chat box. Recent research indicates that visitors of theatre website appreciate such a chat box (Koopman, 2000). Respondents could be asked about their preference for such links.

Checkpoint 14 regards the consistency of the use of interactive aspects. For example: are all hyperlinks and embedded links signaled in the same way. In the case of the *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* this was not the case. Most of the time, underlining indicated a link. However, the color of the underlining differed, it could be light blue (homepage), dark blue (program), or pink (reservation).

Checkpoint 15 regards the correctness of the interactive aspects. For links, conventions have emerged. A link is signaled by means of an underlining (often in blue), and if the cursor hits the link the arrow changes in a hand. If an underlining is used (even in another color than blue) it may suggest that this is a link. In the case of the website of *Schouwburg en Concertzaal Tilburg* embedded and hyperlinks are indicated by an underlining. However, in one case an underlining in black was used, and that was not a link. This should be corrected as soon as possible.

Conclusion

The case study indicates that the guidelines provide a thorough and structured instrument to evaluate process objectives of websites. The evaluation pinpoints shortcomings and provides directions to improve the website.

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