

## Multimedia / New media

In the plenary session I've talked about multimedia and new media. Multimedia produces interactive experiences by using one or more types of media. You could say that multimedia could be defined as **the integration of text, graphics, animation, sound, and/or video.**

But when this media becomes interactive we talk about new media. New media lives on the internet and depends on its connectivity.

The advantages of integrating multimedia/new media in your communication is obvious.

- It provides a better user-experience.
- You connect more to your target audience
- And if activated you can obtain important feedback about the habits of your online visitors.

But new media depends on the internet and so depends on the basis of the internet, websites. Without websites the internet would be a melting pot of information that simply would be uncontrollable. Websites, they come in lots of different versions. We have community portals we have online shops we have information portals, we have company websites, personal sites like blogs and so many more. But all of them have to obey certain rules. ( show ebay, amazon, Wikipedia, facebook, Belgium.be, Sioen)

That's why I'm going to talk a little bit about websites. You yourself use a lot of websites and perhaps some of you even maintain some of them. When building a website certain rules are necessary. These rules can be split up in 3 parts.

Technical/security requirements.

- A website should use a Web standard for its coding. These standards are determined by W3C. Nowadays the XHTML 1.0 is most popular.
- The look and feel of a website should mainly be controlled by the use of CSS. Here you see a website with the CSS attached and when I remove it you will see that only text and images remain. (this technique allows multiple designs to be used with the same content.)
- A website should always look the same. Even on Firefox, Explorer, Opera,...
- Each website should be properly configured for GoogleBot. SEO everybody talks about it as it is a new science. Every now & then new companies arrive which preach that they are the best in SEO. By own experience I can say that SEO isn't that easy. But some steps can be made for a standard good score within Google. But if you really want to be number one, then this will cost lots of money on a regular basis.

Design/user experience requirements.

- The design or look and feel of a website also obeys to the rules that we mentioned in the plenary earlier this morning.
- Content and Design have to be in balance

- Less is more. Less text and if possible, more video and images. we all love watching tv why should we not prefer to watch a video of an interview instead of having to read one.
- The navigation of a website is it's backbone. A good structure will assure a good use experience.
- Don't abuse your download speed by using too much multimedia? Not everybody has a fibreoptic connection.
- Let your users speak, by means of a form or a forum. Build your own community.

#### Maintenance requirements.

- A site without the possibility of updating it is nowadays out of the question.
- CMS content management systems have to be in place to maintain and update the content within your websites. Only this assures that visitors come back and that your score within Google might increase.
- This CMS should be intuitive and easy to use, not everybody has a degree in IT.
- There are many off the shelf solutions but they don't always do what you need them to do. So when building your website with CMS you might need the help of IT specialist or company.
- But you also have a lot of free systems where the CMS-platform is free. For example/ Many blog sites have a good CMS and you don't have to pay anything. Here again there some restrictions. But you can go a long way to run your own personal website. Because of security reasons these systems are not favourable for large company and organisation websites.

If your website contains the majority of all of the points above then you are on your way to communicate effectively to a large amount of people. Not only in your country but world wide and every second of every minute of every hour of each day. This by far is the greatest advantage of new media.

Websites also gives us lots of feedback. For instance every hit click or download is registered. There is a lot of software that uses these logs to generate reports. But since a while now we can access these reports for free and this thanks to Google. Google Analytics is by far the best tool to analyze your statistics. You can even have a look at what impact you last mailing had. The system itself is super userfriendly and intuitive. You can use it in no time at all.

Another item of New Media is the E-Mailing. The advantages are known, it's fast, cost effective and delivers measurable results. You run the risk becoming SPAM but the more recent online applications like Emailgarage keep this at a minimum. And even better they give us the ability to get feedback about our Emailings. See PDF or online Emailings can be useful to advertise Newsletters, Events, Seminars,... and so on.