



Pictures In Motion

Lisa L. Trager ♦ 29 William Street ♦ Hillsdale, NJ 07642

E-mail: lisa@picturesinmotion.net ♦ Phone: 201-722-8941

Date: October 6, 2006

Content Best Practices

Introduction

Developing content for your website is a very important element in the overall production of either your new or redesigned website. Whether you're starting out with a new site or you've known for a while that your online presence really needed a face-lift or complete overhaul, you've taken the first step in the right direction by hiring DHM. As professionals and experts in online marketing and website development, we will provide you with the expertise and knowledge to build a website that not only stands out from the crowd, but more importantly, one that defines who you are and how you can make the difference in the healthcare of your community.

Your online presence is perhaps the most important element within your marketing arsenal. Not only can you use it to give a personal face to patients and visitors, but the relevancy and timeliness of the information you publish can affect your organization's integrity as a leader in healthcare in your community. Therefore, we have put together a list of helpful hints to help you as your organization works to gather, organize, and select the right information to use on your new website.

Writing for Your Website

People approach the web differently than they do other mediums. Often the term "interactive" is used in conjunction with the Internet because one of the primary differences between the Internet and other forms of media like television is that it requires the person to participate and take an active role in its use. Where one can sit in front of a television or radio and be fed information, sitting in front of the computer will not give the person anything back unless they seek information.

The other element that will help new content developers think about online content is to understand why the word "web" was chosen to be part of the information sharing model of the Internet known as the World Wide Web*. The Web is in fact an analogy to a spider's web...where every strand is connected in a loose but organized structure. Unlike reading a book or watching a movie where there is a linear line from the beginning to end, on the Internet, the user defines the sequence of what they will be digesting based upon their interest and need.

So, the first question one must answer when preparing content for their site is who is coming to my site and why?

Note: The Internet and the World Wide Web are two different things. For more information about their similarities and differences, please visit:

http://www.webopedia.com/DidYouKnow/Internet/2002/Web_vs_Internet.asp

Good rules to consider when developing online content

1. Make information easy to find – set up a good information architecture as your “blueprint”
2. Think of content on higher level pages as a tease to bring users deeper within the site where more detailed information will be found
3. Do not duplicate information on multiple pages, however it’s OK to give links to specific information on multiple pages
4. Get more specific and provide more detailed information as user goes deeper within the site
5. Place links on pages to related information to draw user to areas they would not seek on their own

Leave corporate speak to the annual report...

Think of the Web as generally being a friendly and informal environment. We recommended that text be written in a welcoming and friendly style. If someone has taken the time to visit your site, let the warmth and caring attitude of your organization come through by speaking in the first person “we” rather than the more formal third person tone.

Write for the Medium

People read information online differently than if they were reading a book. Keep information concise and easy to scan. Most people today have little time to do extra things like visiting your site and are in a hurry. So, make it easy by providing a general overview of each area and perhaps bulleted lists with a one-sentence description that links to more specific areas of your site.

Provide answers that visitors will seek

On lower level pages, like Cardiology, which would be one of a number of medical services offered, keep information limited to that specialty. People want to know what distinguishes your hospital and specialists. What about their expertise, experience, and/or accomplishments stand out?

Visual tricks that work

There are visual tricks that also help to promote a doctor or service area. By providing a call-out* on the page, the user’s eye can be drawn to a link that acts as a tease to an article or press release about the service, doctor or technology related to that specialty.

Applications help with ROI

There are also other ways to use the medium to help facilitate your users taking action. Providing applications on your site for users to be able to Make an Appointment or Pre-register for hospital services is not only a great way to get ROI, but it also is seen by users as a convenience that will save them time.

*Call-outs are boxes on a page that are usually placed on the side of the page that are designed to stand out. They often give a one-sentence description and link to information found elsewhere on the site.