User Groups and User Needs

This training session was developed in partnership by the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC) and the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

Why is it Important to Understand Your Users?
Reasons for User Analysis

• Can help with:
  • Advocacy
  • Collecting Decisions
  • Identifying metadata requirements
  • Defining preservation needs
  • Adhering to standards
  • Designing user access services

• (End) users are a subset of your stakeholders
  • Must consider other stakeholders too

OAIS Designated Communities

• Knowing your ‘Designated Community’ (DC) is essential for OAIS compliance

• OAIS standard requires that:
  • The Designated Community (DC) is scoped
  • Preserved info is understandable by the DC
  • The information is available to the DC in an authentic form

• Makes user needs analysis essential and impacts on:
  • Preservation decisions
  • Metadata and Documentation
  • Access provision
Types of User Groups

• How to define your user group(s)?
• One? Or more with different needs?
• You may consider defining your groups by:
  • Discipline
  • Sector
  • How the resources will be used
  • A particular age group
  • Location or language
  • Or as broad as the general public!

Understanding Their Needs

• Once user group(s) are defined, what do they need?
• Should consider issues such as:
  • Access
  • Reuse
  • Supporting documentation
  • Tools
• Then select methods for user analysis
  • What resources available?
  • What Qs you need answered?
  • What you users will respond to?
• This should be a regular process
Some Methods for User Analysis

Surveys

- Collection and analysis of the opinions/attitudes of a group by asking them answer a series of questions

Pros:
- Can reach a lot of people
- Can be posted online
- Relatively cheap and easy to put together
- Quantitative outputs that are easy to analyse

Cons
- Difficult to capture detailed info
- Unlikely to be representative of the user experience
- Reliant on those willing to spend time filling it in
Analytics

“The measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of web data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage” (Wikipedia)

• Pros
  • Can be collected automatically
  • Captures high level usage information for most users
  • Shows patterns of usage
  • Produces info that is easy to analyse

• Cons
  • Lacks qualitative responses
  • Not representative of the user experience
  • May be blocked by advanced users

Focus Groups/Workshops

• Bringing together small groups of users to describe and discuss their experiences and needs

• Pros
  • Direct interaction with users
  • Dive deeply into important issues
  • Capture multiple perspectives
  • Follow interesting discussions
  • Test out/generate new ideas

• Cons
  • Difficult/expensive to organise
  • Only users willing/able to attend
  • Easy to get off track
Interviews

A structured/semi-structured Q&A session with a user(s)

• **Pros**
  - Direct interaction with users
  - Able to dive deeply into important issues
  - Can tailor the session to the user
  - Can follow interesting answer threads

• **Cons**
  - Reaches a limited number of users
  - Not representative
  - Difficult to organise/identify right users
  - Can be intimidating for participants

Usability Testing

A technique for testing a product with users. Often by asking them to perform set tasks before answering questions.

• **Pros**
  - Feedback on functionality
  - Can compare user experiences
  - Quantitative and qualitative data

• **Cons**
  - Difficult/expensive to organise
  - May be hard to define useful tasks
  - Will reach a limited number of users
How User Analysis Can Be Utilized

Identifying Requirements

• Earlier the better!
• Help choosing a tool(s) for capture or curation e.g.
  • Capture Method
  • Quality Assurance
• Mode of access
  • Remote access through a browser
  • End user software for analysis
  • Access that includes built-in basic data analytics
Design and Functionality

• Earlier the better!
• Help choosing a tool(s) for capture or curation e.g.
  • Capture Method
  • Quality Assurance
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User Engagement

Provides a foundation for User Engagement activities. This can include:
• Measuring Current User Engagement
• Increase User Engagement
• Allow you to clearly state benefits of web archiving
• Increase awareness of web archiving