Knowing Your Online Readership, Organizing Your Communication

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Keynote Abstract

Many times a design choice has a deep impact onto future website management activities, which in their turn mean allocating resources. These choices are to be verified, confirmed or refused not only against design quality and hypotheses, but mostly against actual usages.

The actual usages of a website are of the utmost importance to infer and understand interests, goals and styles of users, and are to be interpreted in order to maintain, refine and enhance the website itself.

It is neither a one-off nor a one-way path, but a continuous dialogue among different people and stakeholders, requiring endless hypothesizing and testing of hypotheses (e.g.: did they leave that page soon because it wasn’t relevant to them, or because they found it so relevant to print it out for further reading? Did they leave the website after accessing that page because their interest was fully satisfied, or because they didn’t find anything useful? Is a page seldom accessed because it is not that interesting or because there is a cumbersome navigation? etc.). The answers to those questions force to re-think communication strategies, as well as all other design dimensions.

Moreover, an online application yields to many further exchanges, like buying, voting, subscribing, chatting, gambling, reserving, sending emails etc., activities that leave traces offering insights on our readership/users/clients, and need to be interpreted and to feed back into the website maintaining and improving processes.

An overview of strategies, focuses and analysis tools will be offered, together with some fresh examples of using those data in website evolution.