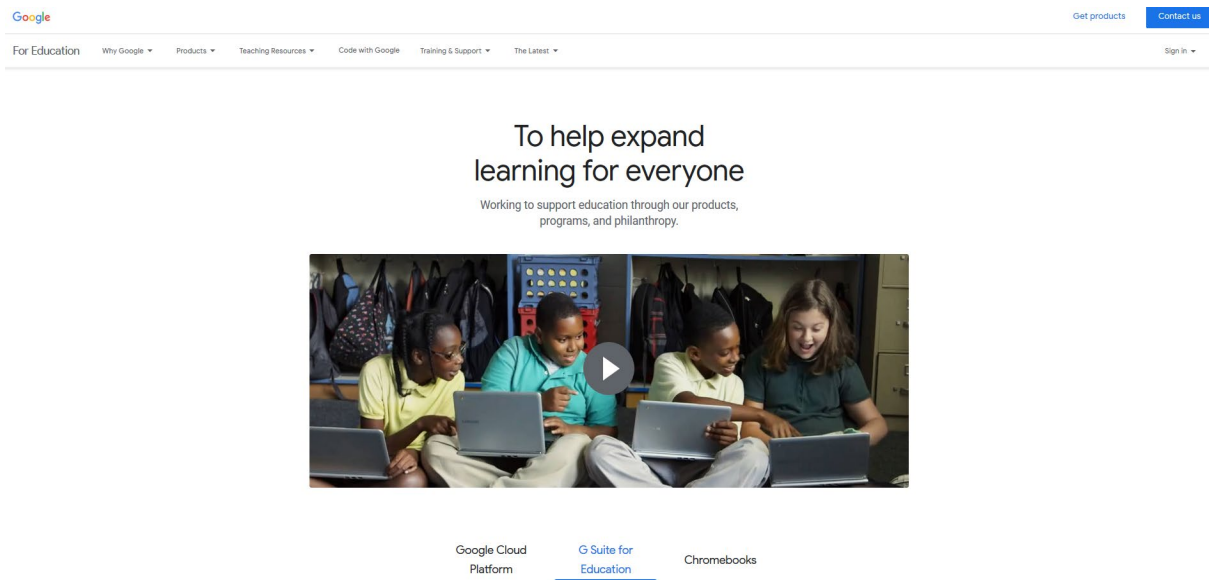


Assignment 1, Task 1, Website Evaluation



Website Title: Google for Education

Website URL: https://edu.google.com/?modal_active=none

Website Author/Webmaster: Google

Evaluation Contact Person: Billy J. Atkinson
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Goals and Learning Objectives:

The purpose of this project is to select an educational website and conduct an unbiased evaluation utilizing two evaluation instruments to provide the client with recommendations on improving their website. The selected evaluators will have the opportunity to identify specific improvements, if any, needed for the website using both instruments.

Website Description:

The website selected to conduct this evaluation was Google for Education, as it offers many services and products available for both the educator and the learner.

Purpose of Website:

The purpose of this website is to enhance and improve the learning experiences of both the educator and the learner. Google for Education offers many tools, products, and skills that can assist the learning community in developing a successful learning environment.

Intended Audience:

The intended audience for this website is anyone looking or needing services and products that can assist with managing, collaborating, data/knowledge sharing, and teaching resources. Google for Education offers services and products that are available for all ages, including K-12 institutions and higher education institutions.

Website Content:

The main categories for this website are listed below with a brief explanation of each category.

- For Education – Home button/page, which is an overview of all the services and products that this website offers. At any time, the user can click on “For Education” and it will bring the user back to the homepage.
- Why Google – This area gives a brief explanation on Google’s commitment, along with an explanation of the target audience. It further explains the privacy and security of the website. Another important aspect this area offers, is the numerous case studies of the institutions and business that utilize their services and products.
- Products – Selection menu of each of the products that are offered by Google for Education.
- Teaching Resources – The numerous resources created by google that are available for teachers to use. Total of 28 resources available in this section.
- Code with Google – Offers the many tools and resources available for personnel in the computer science field and the products offered to build and improve coding skills.
- Training and Support – Explains and offers guides and assistance in setting up products, how to use each of the products and resources, and provides support if help is needed.
- The Latest – Offers the latest and newest news and updates along with research and community information.

Unique Features:

The uniqueness of this website is that it offers services and products for all ages and professions. Almost anyone can find these products useful.

Methods/Instruments:

The two instruments used to evaluate Google for Education provided the evaluators the ability to identify specific improvements, if any, needed for the website. The first instrument used was the Small and Arnone’s Website Motivational Analysis Checklist (WebMAC) that was

created by Ruth V. Small & Marilyn P. Arnone, to assess websites used in education. According to Small and Arnone (2014), the WebMac instrument was created as most of the other instruments' available focus on content, functionality, or design, but does not focus on motivational qualities. The WebMac focuses on all these critical elements in evaluating and assessing the website.

To accurately complete the WebMac, the evaluator answered 32 questions and rated the level of agreement from 3 (strongly agree) to 0 (strongly disagree). For question that were not applicable, the evaluator rated those on a scale from 0 (benefits the website if included), to 2 (website better by not including). The scores were then transferred into four categories, simulating (S), meaningful (M), organized (O), and easy to use (E) as shown in figure 1 below. The final step was to add the simulating and meaningful scores together and the organized and easy to use scores together, then plot on the scoring grid table as shown in figure 2 below.

The other instrument used was the Arnone and Small's Content Validity Scale, which focused on validating the website content only, not the motivational qualities. The evaluators were required to answer a total of ten questions, ranking each question from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as shown in figure 3 below.

Evaluators:

I was responsible to begin this project by personally conducting an evaluation on the website. I am currently enrolled in the Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation program at Syracuse University School of Education. I currently hold a bachelor's degree in Homeland Security and a master's degree in management. I am very familiar with communication systems as this is my professional field in the United States Army for the past 20 years. I have no experience in conducting website evaluations and this is the first website evaluation that I have conducted.

The second evaluator is a 36-year-old graduate student that holds a bachelor's in sports and health science and two master's degrees, one in management and the other in security. She has 12 years of communication systems experience with the United States Army. This was the first opportunity she has had in conducting a website evaluation.

The third evaluator also has a college education with over 20 years of communication system experience with the United States Army. This was the first opportunity she has had in conducting a website evaluation.

Analysis:

I contacted each of the evaluators and requested the assistance on this project. Evaluator 2 was a verbal request and a hard copy of both instruments were provided. Evaluator 3 was contacted through email and the instruments were provided digitally. Both evaluators returned the results within 24 hours. After receiving the WebMac results from each of the evaluators, the results were recorded and compared using the charts provided by the WebMac evaluation instrument as shown in figure 1 and 2. The content validity scale did not have a chart so I

created one to record and compare the results from the evaluators as shown in figure 3. I did not provide an explanation of the instruments nor did I give my opinion of the website.

Synthesize:

Upon receiving the results from each of the Evaluators, I recorded and compared the results. I realized that I probably over scored the website in organization and easy-to-use as I selected and liked the website. Comparing the three results helped me view the website at a different perspective and realized that the website could have been better. For example, I was very familiar with the website so I did not need a search query, but for unfamiliar users, this option would have been helpful. Although all the evaluators had college degrees and over 10 years of communication experiences, they were all older adults, youngest being 36. This assisted me in realizing the importance of selecting future evaluators. Selecting a younger generation of students will probably give me a different perspective or results of the website due to the younger generation being more technology savvy.

Evaluation Results:

The results of the WebMac are listed below in figure 1 and 2. Evaluator 1 and 2 both evaluated the website as needing some improvement in the category of meaningful. Whereas evaluator 3 evaluated the website as needing some improvement in the category of easy to use. Both evaluator 2 and 3 concluded that this website was an “awesome website” and evaluator 1 concluded this website had a high expectation for success but had about an average in value as shown in figure 2.

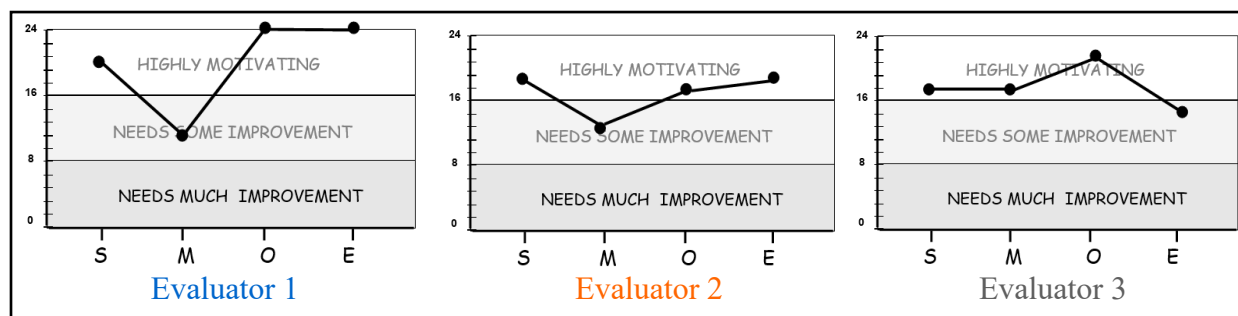


Figure 1

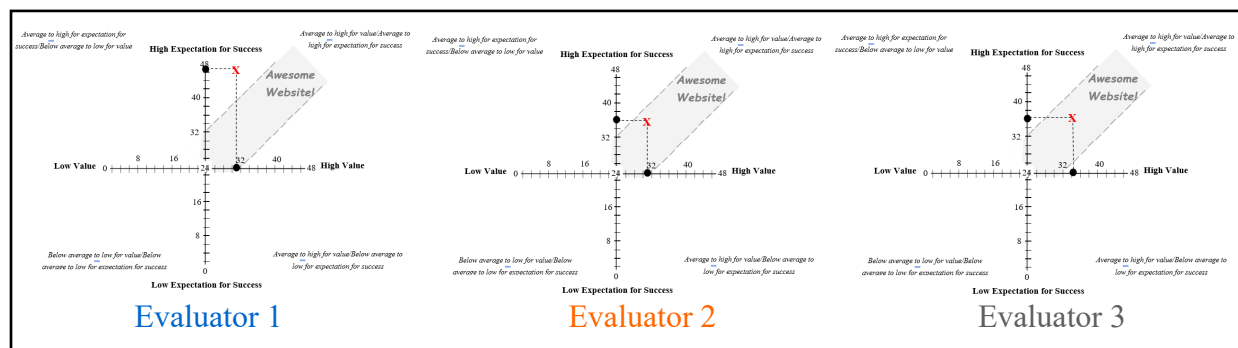


Figure 2

The results of the content validity scale are shown in figure 3. There were two major differences from this evaluation between the three evaluators. The first was question number two, evaluator 2 and 3 believed there was no way to contact the website author and evaluator 1 rated this question as 5, strongly agree that there was a way to contact the website author. The other major difference was question number 8, evaluator 1 rated this question as 1, strongly disagree that the website is free of bias. Both evaluator 1 & 2 rated this question as 4. All other questions did not have much of a discrepancy between the evaluators.

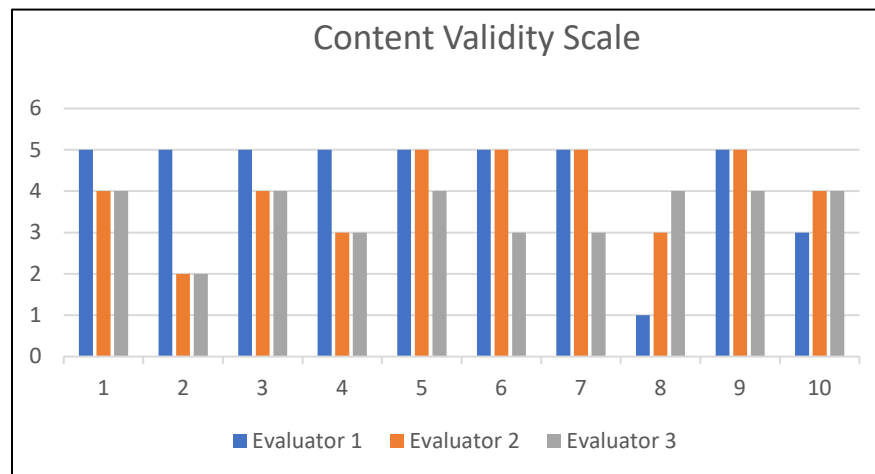


Figure 3

Interpretation of Results:

WebMac:

According to the WebMac evaluation, two out of the three evaluators considered the website to be an awesome website, the other evaluator missed this rating slightly. All three evaluators considered the simulating and organization of the website to be highly motivating. Evaluator 1 believed the website information was not unbiased and there was not an opportunity to participate and contribute ideas, giving a need some improvement in the meaningful category. Since I was evaluator 1, my reasoning was that the information and products on the website were only from google and at no time there was an opportunity to comment on the website. Evaluator 2 believed the website did not have a menu listing the content contained in the website and the information was not from credible sources, giving a need some improvement in the meaningful category. My assumption is that the evaluator expected to see a menu with all the site content, but this is not an option unless the user hovers over each major category within the website. My other assumption, is all the information on the website is provide by google, and the evaluator does not consider google as a creditable source. Evaluator 3 believed the website did not allow an opportunity to easily search for content throughout the website and that they did not always have control on what to see or display throughout the website at any given time. My assumption is since the website did not have a search query option, this made it difficult for unfamiliar users to search for content on the website. These were the major differences from the evaluators for the WebMac evaluation.

Simulating:

All three of the evaluators rated this area as highly motivating. Most of the questions were rated as “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”, with a few rated somewhat disagree due to the lack of interactivity and the lack of curiosity and exploration the website offers. For the most part, all three evaluators believed this website was stimulating.

Meaningful:

Evaluator 1 and 2 believed this website lacked meaningful information and that this portion of the website needs improvement. All three evaluators concluded that this website did not give the opportunity to communicate with the author. Evaluator 1 and 2 believed the information on the website was not provided from a creditable source. Evaluator 1 and 3 believed that the users were unable to contribute ideas to the website. Overall, the results indicated that this website needs to improve in this category.

Organized:

All three evaluators concluded that this website was very organized. The majority of the questions were rated as either “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”.

Easy-to-use:

Overall Evaluator 1 and 2 believed this website was easy-to-use. Evaluator 2 and 3 believed this website was not easy-to-use due to the lack of the search query and the lack of control on what to display. Besides the low rating in these two areas, all other questions were rated as either “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”.

Content validity scale:

According to the content validity scale evaluation, evaluator one believed the website was biased as it only contained information and products from google itself. Evaluators 2 and 3 believed the site did not have an opportunity to contact the author of the website. These were the two major differences from the evaluators on the content validity scale evaluation.

Recommendations:

After personally conducting an evaluation on this website, along with the results of the other two evaluators, the following are the recommendations to improve this website to attract and retain users.

1. Place a search query option to allow unfamiliar users of the website to easily locate information or products within the website.

2. Although there is a menu at the top to select the specific content of the website, the font is small, and the color does not stand out. Changing the font, size, or color can allow unfamiliar users to easily find additional site content.
3. Provide an option for user to contact the site author to provide either comments or feedback on the website. This will allow the website to listen and receive concerns and comments from their customers. The only current option is to contact google for additional information about a products and support.
4. Although there are several case studies from credible universities and schools, they are difficult to find for new users. Provide an easier opportunity for unfamiliar users to view the case studies to justify the creditability of the services and products offered by the website.
5. Provide an opportunity to compare services and products from other sources to provide an unbiased view on the services and products offered on the website. There are no other links provided on the website, besides google products.

Reflection:

After completing this project, I realized not only website content is important to individuals but also the organization and structure plays a critical role in attracting and retaining users and customers. There are a numerous number of tools and products on the world wide web that can assist the learning community. How those tools and products are displayed, shared, and offered on the world wide web is vital in attracting new users and retaining current users. Utilizing tools like the WebMac and the content validity scale can give website administrators and authors the ability to evaluate their website to improve the organization, content, and structure. Furthermore, I was able to view the different perspectives of two other individuals of what I thought was an amazing site. Using the evaluation tools, allowed me to identify some small issues with the website that can assist in improving the quality of the website I selected to evaluate.

References and Resources:

Instruments used for Website Evaluation:

1. Small and Arnone's Website Motivational Analysis Checklist (WebMAC)
2. Arnone and Small's Content Validity Scale

Website Evaluated:

Google for Education. (2019). Solutions built for teachers and students, Google for Education.

Retrieved from: https://edu.google.com/?modal_active=none

Other Resources:

Small, R. V., & Arnone, M. P. (2014). Webcheck: the websites evaluation instrument.

Knowledge Quest, 42(3), 58-63. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/docview/1472010352?accountid=14214>