

“e-Content is mainly news driven in Colombia”

How would you define the meaning of e-Content in your country in terms of its true meaning and practical implication?

E-Content is mainly news driven in Colombia. Our largest online publisher - eltiempo.com - is the online version of the leading (if not monopolistic) daily newspaper.

factfile

Population of the country?
45,013,672 (2008)
Total no of Universities: 7 (National); 24 (Departmental); 38 (Private)
Total Number of Internet connections: 17,478,505 (2008)
Number of broadband users : 1,485,715 (2008)
Internet hosts in Colombia: 581,877 (2006)
No. of individuals with computers: 1,500,000
Total number of household having TV/cable TV: 4,590,000 (TV) / 575,280 (Cable Subscribers)
Literacy Rate: 91.3%
Number of telephone connections: 7,851,649 (2005)
Total number of mobile connections: 31 million (2007)
Percentage of literacy : 92.6% (2003)
Percentage of educated population: 92.6%

Sources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Colombia
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5 pillars

of e-Content development in Colombia

- ↳ Education
- ↳ Creativity
- ↳ Culture
- ↳ Exposure
- ↳ Infrastructure

Q What is the current status of e-Content in your country - across all industry and aspects.

As mentioned in the previous answer, e-Content is mainly news driven in our country. This means that there is not enough awareness of the importance, or the potential implications and benefits, of developing e-Content as a purpose. They are currently a consequence of the existing media outlets, not a goal or an end by itself.

Q What area of e-Content is best developed in your country? For example, e-health, e-biz, e-culture, e-gov, e-entertainment, e-learning, e-science, or e-inclusion.

I would have to say that the e-entertainment and e-culture categories are the best developed e in Colombia at the current time. This is led again by the leading publishers, which are newspapers and magazine groups. Bogota (our capital) is very diverse in terms of culture and entertainment, and several info-sites have been launched recently, in order to guarantee full information about cultural and entertainment activities for citizens. I would also mention the fact that Colombia is a big contributor to user generated content (ugc) sites such as hi5, MySpace, and Facebook.com - according to some published statistics, we are among the top 3 or 4 contributors to these sites in the Latin American region as a whole. The insight here is that - given the right tools - Colombians are prone to publishing contents generated by themselves, online.

Q Which sector in your country is more aggressive in developing e-Content - business or private sector; government or civil society?

Definitely the private sector, especially the leading media groups (TV, newspapers, magazines). With DFI (direct foreign investment) from countries such as Spain, Chile, and the USA, these media conglomerates understand where the future of communications lie, and invest accordingly.

Q Can you list the major initiatives, which influenced and aggravated the development of e-Content in your country?

One major event took place in 2006. Two large media groups, *Semana* (magazine publishers) and *el tiempo* (newspapers + private TV), had outsourced their commercial efforts for their Internet portals to terra networks for the last 5 years. On August 2006, they decided to split from terra, and begin commercial efforts on their

own. As a result, a strong race started between both groups to both generate and sell the best e-content sites on a wide variety of topics, mainly on information, culture, and entertainment. As a result of that, many medium-sized and small publishers had to "sharpen up" to be able to survive as e-content sites, selling advertising as their revenue model. This was a very healthy move for e-contents in general, and for online advertising as well.

Q How would you describe the major bottlenecks on the path of e-Content development in your country?

The major bottleneck is a paradigm that e-contents, digital media, and technology in general are for the upper class. Hence, the over-development of categories like entertainment and culture, and the under-development of categories like health, science, e-inclusion, e-business, e-government and e-learning.

Q In majority of the countries, e-Content development is significantly dependent on ICT infrastructure and ICT facilities. But, in some countries that are quite developed, ICT has become part of daily life and e-content development is primarily subjected to the initiatives of an individual/organization/government, etc. Whereas, in some countries, especially those, which are developing and under developed, e-content development is largely dependent on ICT infrastructure. What is the situation in your country? Please explain in detail.

E-content development is dependent on a few economic groups in our country. I do not believe that e-content development is largely dependent on ICT infrastructure. It is largely dependent on education and paradigm shifts regarding the interaction of the masses with technology.

Q How would you describe the ICT scenario in your country? Please describe in terms of infrastructure, penetration, acceptance and policies.

Two presidencies ago, there was a strong initiative from the government called "agenda de conectividad," or "connectivity agenda." The major aim of this initiative was to guarantee that people of all income-levels, especially children, would have access to computers and to the Internet. This gave the whole country a consciousness of the importance of technology and the Internet in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. With the entry of large multinational companies like telefonica (from Spain), infrastructure for connectivity has increased, and broadband penetration is increasing as prices to access the service decrease as well.

Q How do you see the future of e-Content development in your country?

The first step will be to sell the idea that developing e-content is important. The digital divide and content gap concepts will be useful in order to illustrate the importance. As in most underdeveloped nations, education comes next. We need to make sure that all children have access to education, and hence, to technology.

Once these elements are in place, we will start to see the rise of an e-content society, led by a generation that has been touched by the information society.

Q Please explain which medium is the most preferred medium for e-content development? Print? Or TV? Or Internet/Web? Or Radio? Or Mobile/Wireless? Or a combination of some of these?

I believe that the web is the preferred medium for e-content development because it is the natural space for it. As mobile devices evolve, these will naturally become the natural medium for e-content. Other household items, the refrigerator screen, will become excellent media for e-content deployment.