

“e-Content still emerging in Iran as necessity is low”

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

The content available through TV, radio, phone, multi-media CD/DVDs and Internet can be termed as e-Content. The search ability, tree menus or at least hyperlinks are what really make the e-Content different from the old printed ones in my opinion.

In practical usage, those contents that would normally be available in printed format but now can be found on monitor screens are called e-Content. This meaning now also covers websites, Web logs, e-papers and e-Learning in addition to offline CD materials.

Applications and games are not considered to be e-Content.

factfile

Population of the country: 72 millions
Total Number of Internet connections: 10 millions
Total Number of Telephone lines: 24 millions
Total number of Mobile connections/users: 43 millions
Total number of household having TV/cable TV: 90%
Total Number of PC installations: 10 millions
Total number of websites: 1 million website and Web logs with around 15 millions of pages
Total numbers of universities: 200
Percentage of literate population: 86%
Percentage of educated population: 16%
Percentage of youth population: 60%

5 pillars

of e-Content development in Iran

- ↳ Human resources
- ↳ Copyright issues
- ↳ Internet speed
- ↳ Cross media Thinking
- ↳ Profit

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

E-Content is still emerging in Iran. The necessity for e-Content is still low. Industries are using paperless systems but usually provide e-Content on their website while they still use the printed versions. People are developing e-Content mainly on Web logs, small personal websites and communities. e-Content can be copied much easier and weaknesses in copyright law enforcement limit the e-Content providers' profits which is a threat to e-Content development in Iran.

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.

E-culture and e-learning are the best developed areas of e-Content in Iran as development in these areas started sooner and was more needed and acceptable at the beginning of e-Content development in Iran.

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

Although e-Content is now being developed in all sectors, in the beginning government was the most aggressive sector. But nowadays, the civil society can be named as the most aggressive e-Content developer in Iran.

Q How would you describe the gradual progress of development of e-Content in your country in terms of its rise? Any timelines?

It started with the governmental websites and early web logs, then conversion of many books and high quality contents, especially poems and ancient books to e-Content. Web development has become a job and a hobby, social networks on the Internet have become more familiar to people

and now, the real online services are coming up in addition to e-Content.

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

- >> Development of governmental websites and portals which required outsourcing from small to medium IT corporations and made hundreds of small IT corporations powerful enough to develop e-Content on their own.
- >> Online blogging which is now becoming common in Iran and Iranian blogging websites with ease to use and friendly user interface, along with the need for an online diary and a way to online expressions has aggravated and is still influencing e-Content development in Iran.
- >> ICT papers including one daily, a few weekly and tens of monthly papers and magazines in addition to IT pages in all economical and general papers is another major e-Content development initiative in Iran.

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

- >> Dependency on the government among many small to medium companies which are mainly looking for governmental projects.
- >> Low Internet speed.
- >> Unauthorized software and content copy which, although against the law, is still common among end-users.

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.

The ICT infrastructure is in general more developed than e-Content in Iran. Many organizations, specially the governmental ones, have more ICT facilities and infrastructure than what they need and use the most up-to-date brand network servers and facilities for hosting a very low traffic to insufficient e-Content.

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

The government is taking care of the infrastructures. Private sectors are mainly doing projects for the government and then trying to create e-Content which could be sold well in Iranian market. US sanctions made using international SSL and credit cards almost impossible so Iranian CA and Iranian local credit cards are starting to become popular. People are using Internet and are creating e-Contents in the form of web logs and community pages. Almost all Iranians can easily go for a cell phone which supports GPRS Internet connection, but it will be very expensive. WiMax will be available early next year and DSL connections are already available at reasonable costs but low speeds of usually less than 1Mbps. Iran has just started developing ICT and a sudden rise in ICT development, acceptance and usage is predictable.

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

I see it bright and promising. E-Content development is growing as more and more people feel the need for it. Rise of Internet connections and the fact that now DSL connections are available at reasonable costs has included large number of youth population in the fold. Now e-Content is being developed and used all around

the country, even in the smallest towns and villages.

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?

TV, Internet and multimedia CD/DVDs are the most preferred mediums of e-Content at the moment but mobile/wireless is starting to become popular too

Best Practices

E-LEARNING

Learning Persian at home

A complete package including dialogue, grammar, movies, games and categorized language. It does not require any teacher and is totally self learning and it has been used in small towns and far villages with success. English is an international language required for being connected to the people on the Internet and fluency in this language helps people in narrowing the content gap among Iranians and the world.

OLC

Online Learning Center which has online courses and semi-offline courses with online teachers and learning tools. (Online, Online+CD+Book)
3. Tebyan e-school
Online courses for high school students. (Online)

Let me know Persian.

Interactive lessons for teaching and speaking in Persian (Farsi). It has also an introduction to Iranian culture and sight-seeing. (CD)

Tejarat e-banking

A multimedia introduction to e-Banking including demonstration and training for the general public. (CD)

E-GOVERNANCE

Green Government

Moving forward to a green government by using e-Solutions is the heart of this project. This project has been ordered by governmental organizations to the developer in order to help spread the idea of green government among the Iranian people and the government. Multimedia CD on the idea of green government for the Iranian people and the government. (CD)

Tadil

E-governance in civil engineering and governmental contracts based on an Iranian package called Tadil.

Imam Khomeini Relief foundation's e-Aids

e-Content and e-Services for those looking for aids or those looking to provide help.

Marriage/Divorce automation

E-governance in registration and processes of marriage and divorce in Iran based on local laws.

Hadish Movie making project management

e-Governance in movie making projects from the early plots to the project management in one package.

E-BUSINESS

MCI portal

Portal of the Iran's major telecommunication operator.

Vista Bazar

VistaBazar is a virtual bazaar in which everyone can sell and everyone can buy. It is the first e-commerce website in Iran designed for the general public with home businesses and specially women entrepreneurs in mind. Online and phone support are available besides help and tutorials not only for the buyers, but also for sellers on how to sell and how to write ads. I choose this system because it's totally free to join and use and only asks for 5% of the selling price from the seller which makes it a gateway for everyone trading in Iran and specially small/home business owners (even from this 5%, 1% is given to the buyer as a gift and it covers all the online card accepting dues too). Online marketing and sale is still a new concept in Iran but I hope this website be helpful in promoting online business and e-Commerce in Iran.

Mega e-Car portal

An e-Commerce portal for buying cars directly from major Iranian car producers.

Kiyan Noor all-in-one sales solution

An all-in-one solution for automation of huge shopping centers.

Tebyan e-business

An online e-Commerce website mainly selling cultural materials.

E-CULTURE

Noor comprehensive commentary collection

This title has more than 300 Islamic books which in summary includes 1419 volumes of cultural and religious information in one DVD. It provides useful research tools, advanced searches, detailed tree glossaries and different translations of holy Quran both vocal and in text. It helps include the clerics and religious students even more in the digital world and bridge the gap which could occur here. This software can be installed and run in three languages: English, Arabic and Farsi (Persian). It also includes by even providing tools for the general public such as listening to the holy Quran, memorization tools and listening to the translations.

Old Tehran

Pictures and data on the old Tehran in one multimedia CD.

Quran encyclopedia

A collection of hundreds of books and voices in one CD.

Persia Older than history
A look to Iranian history.

The great prophet multimedia
A multimedia about the prophet of Islam

E-ENTERTAINMENT

Resistance computer game
A 3D computer game with cultural and human rights in its vision. The story behind game is stopping the production of weapons of mass destruction in a 3D game play. The player has a team of three commanders with different skills which (s)he chooses to play as which of them at any time and the others simply follow her/him and help. 3D game development is new in Iran and many hope the entertainment business might be an accelerator in e-Solutions production, if it succeeds.

Cloob e-Society
The largest Iranian e-Society.

Hamsafar
An entertainment website and portal with thousands of members.

Amoo Zanjirbaaf
An offline computer game for the children.

Rescue the port strategic game
A strategic Iranian game.

E-SCIENCE

New energy sources
A multimedia on new energy sources.

Helicobacter Pillori
A multimedia on micro biology.

Saze 80
A software for civil engineers.

Brain anatomy
A multimedia on brain anatomy with original images.

Environmental courses for students
A multimedia on importance of environment protection.

E-HEALTH

Electronic Health Record Prototype
Prototype of an advanced health record system with

different layers from ministry of health to hospitals and health insurance providers.

The talking glove
Talking Glove helps people with speech difficulties. Different finger positions make different sounds and words. It is an instrument using human voice instead of music.

Hakim health records
A health record system for physicians.

Ravanyar
An online website on psychology with online consultancy and psychological help.

Tebyan e-Health
A website with health materials and tips.

E-INCLUSION

Library and Internet for the Persian blind
An innovation for the blind to be able to use Internet and e-Content. Using this special device, disabled people can read the screen by tip of their finger in addition to the conventional speech method. It mechanically displays

the Braille alphabet to be read by the blind. What makes this innovation even more important is the library and contents which are in companion with it. It's a real bridge on the content and digital gap for the Persian blind.

Nevisa e-book creator
An easy to use e-book creator.

Booria package
A software to control carpet design and creation. It can be connected to special hardware for small and home businesses too. It also has multimedia sections on carpet design and design aid tools.

Mobile software package
A cultural package of useful Islamic books in e-Content format which can attract people to mobile e-Content.

Rural e-Offices
Governmental e-Offices around the country which are located in rural areas with at least one computer and Internet connection. These offices provide postage and banking support to rural people in addition to an Internet connection.