

Digital Content Recommendations

Digital Content for Development, was the name of the international conclave that was organised by Digital Empowerment Foundation, late last year on the occasion of Manthan Award 2008. During the three day deliberation, more than 1500 participants from 17 countries participated across 13 categories of subjects to discuss various aspects

and implications of digital content and how the content and services delivery through different ICT tools could be the focus, if the developing countries have to look at economic development. Following are some of the major recommendations that came through which were also sent to line ministries for proactive consideration.

E-Content for Learning & Education

There are visible challenges before the nation which concerns the twin processes of e Learning and e-education. The issues to be addressed here is convergence of the Internet and learning, or Internet-enabled learning, the use of network technologies to create, foster, deliver, and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere. It is also about delivery of individualized, comprehensive, dynamic learning content in real time, aiding the development of communities of knowledge, linking learners and practitioners with experts.

Recommendations

- >> The focus has to be on spreading awareness, increasing interaction with the rural strata of society, and making technology more accessible
- >> The approach should cater faithfully the urban and rural populations
- >> There is need to promote e learning in the field of medicine and healthcare. There are benefits in programmes like digitized MBBS curriculum and making it available on websites and CD's
- >> Streamlining the methods of teaching through videos and live demonstra-

tions through the use of net is important

- >> There is need for new and effective ways of teaching for quality education, especially in the rural areas of the country. There is need to channelise the vast untamed talent of the educated youth
- >> Content should be presented in such a way so as to empower, engage and excite the teachers; content should be rigorously aligned with the curriculum and should be easy to understand. Content should be developed after audience analysis, should be cross medium and available anytime, anywhere
- >> Learning outcome and objectives to be defined and evaluated. Evaluating the content will require validating /evaluating the technology. There needs to have a scope for research in development and delivery of content
- >> ICT based content has to be capable of being LAN enabled, suitable to be TV broadcast, suitable for ITV and other new and emerging technologies with a stereovision
- >> Content should be child/ student friendly, scalable, culture specific, flexible, empowering the teachers, based on local context, and cost effective. Digital contents shall be taken from

the local surrounding, should be interactive

- >> Content needs to be interoperable, there has to be some mechanism of interaction between teachers and student on the digital content
- >> Standards should be defined taking the slow learners and students with special needs into consideration; e.g. W3g content is compliant for people with disabilities
- >> Following the constructivist approach, digital content should, be absorbing and, engage students and teachers to create their own lesson plans
- >> Content should be an enabler in vocational education, open software should be available to be dubbed in regional language. Skill reinforcement should be reflected in the content and its usages
- >> Content should be made bilingual- a common language and regional language
- >> Assessment needs to be evolved; therefore it should be continuous, frequent and comprehensive. Assessment should be as non-threatening as possible. While determining the assessment standards, various innovative tools should be employed e.g. portfolio based assessment, self assessment, peer assessment, etc.

Community broadcasting for addressing information content gaps

Community radio has tremendous potential as a type of radio service catering to the vast informational and entertainment needs of local communities. It has great scope in a country like India to promote democracy and transparency in the administrative system. It is one such bottom up ICT tool that can really bring community revolutions if used efficiently.

Recommendations

- >> There is great need of involvement of local people in this process
- >> Keeping the recorded content in the libraries for open access for all
- >> Emergency community radio schemes in times of natural disasters
- >> Technology to be user friendly
- >> Accessibility over the content for people with disabilities

Digital Content in Localisation and Inclusion

Technology cannot claim to have solved its purpose if it is unable to reach the local level and include as many in its fold as it can. Therefore, it has to break barriers which block its path of reaching out to as many as possible. There are many who are working towards the goal of making technology accessible to as many.

Recommendations

- >> Localisation has to become a priority for the government and e-governance initiatives
- >> Efforts towards dispensing education to physically handicap through recorded cassettes and other ways must be promoted
- >> Creating website in languages other than English is critical as there are large populations that do not understand English. For example, there are more than 2000 dialects and more than 40 million Internet users in India. There are various methods of creating e-content in local languages.
- >> There is more need of devising ways and means to include philanthropy activities through online platform for any person who wants to donate for a social cause.

Digital Panchayats and Constituencies

In a country where most of the population resides in villages, one cannot ignore the fact that empowering the villagers would lead to a developed India. Digital panchayats could be viable platforms to that end.

Recommendations

- >> Task of preparing the data base for villages should be done by the villagers themselves
- >> Emphasis must be laid on how connectivity and interaction among panchayats is necessary to share knowledge and experience, and how Internet is the most convenient media.
- >> The problem of transaction in regional languages must be addressed squarely
- >> Efforts should be extended to make a wish list for the development projects and making use of available funds with the help of a existing software like PLANPLUS which is available free of cost.
- >> A citizen data base should also be prepared for development planning. Here IT would come to help.

ICT for Water and Sanitation Management

Availability of water has become a matter of concern today and it is not for reasons not known to us. And so is the importance in devising ways and methods to address key water and sanitation issues using informative and communicative technologies. Here, the real issues are in assessment of ICT training needs for water practitioners and communities; innovative ICT applications for water and sanitation sector that can be delivered through ICT kiosks and mobile platforms; challenges is in Field testing; mechanisms for ICT enabled social audit of Govt.'s Water and Sanitation Programme including inputs from citizens.

Recommendations

- >> Use of local language in such areas should be adopted

- to increase local participation
- >> Data collection to be given most importance at the grass root level as this data is the base for macro analysis
- >> Knowledge updation is very essential
- >> Explaining people that use of technology would not end their work but will only assist them
- >> Improvement in the field of pilot projects required
- >> Objectives for which the data is being collected should be predetermined for better data management
- >> Use of sign language could be developed in this field
- >> Create more computer literates to spread awareness among the masses and provide computer and internet access to various villages
- >> Devise a data which compares the government's reports of work done and ground reality which exists

Digital Content in Culture and Entertainment

Technology can give a stimulus to efforts in the area of culture and entertainment. There are examples as to how ICT tools and digital content can help remote local culture and also provide entertainment to large sections of society. There are examples like those in Sri Lanka as to how ICT tools and digital content are being made use of for promoting culture.

Recommendations

- >> The already developed cultural web portals could be shared with UNESCO for possible support and sharing.
- >> It is now necessary to have a Local Area Portal which can be accessed by all. There should be amalgamation of all contents produced by the participant organisations and individuals for the common purpose of preserving and promoting different cultures.
- >> There is a need to develop a portal wherein the information about all Community Radio programmes at the South Asia level could be uploaded, including the content, so that it can be shared, listened to and modified according to the local needs. The portal will also highlight the common practices, experiences in sustaining the community radio, training modules and other relevant information/knowledge in relation to the CR initiatives.
- >> Local initiatives could be documented and shared across the globe so that the local innovations could be replicated. The Manthan Award platform is doing the same, but it can provide a platform wherein all these initiatives could be shared on a regular basis.
- >> The involvement of children in the process of gathering information about culture in which they are surrounded by is very important. This is in order to inculcate the sense of preservation in them since childhood. This idea has been very successful in Sri Lanka.

Digital Content in News and M Content

Digital content has a great role to play in news services delivery and mobile applications usage. Content can facilitate efforts by organizations in providing real time information to user customers and build a strong communication network between customers and sellers through the use of internet and mobile explain the relevance of such innovative technologies.

Recommendations

- >> Content on blogs must be relevant and must be capable of being understood by the layman in his language
- >> Bringing news to the people is not an easy task. There are various stumbling blocks in the path of making information reach the masses and bridge the digital divide
- >> ICT practice like spoken web must be promoted. This is an initiative to use the World Wide Web in the telecom sector. Service delivery is done to the rural population through a phone. The initiative voice website has been started because audio does not suffer from the bias of literacy.
- >> Efforts to break communication barriers between the government and citizens is must as it is very important to ensure communication between the two in a democracy
- >> Technology, if used in the right way, will not just provide news and information to large populations, but create a situation where people will have unlimited scope for being informed anywhere, anytime. We just need to make use of the high level of mobile penetration and make content through computers more accessible.

Digital Content in Health and Environment

The importance of ICT and digital content in health services delivery with affordable quality and accessible content and services is increasing each day. At the same time, the need is felt on overcoming time, geographical, economic and social limitations. Information Technology has the potential to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care in today's times. There are needs and goals that have to be achieved and also need to address the barriers that are hampering quality health services delivery.

Recommendations

- >> There should be sharing of database to enhance the functioning of the various organizations

- >> Government's funds can be saved by questioning the organizations on their working and informing the government about the progress in the work.
- >> Expenditure gets doubled when different organizations are working on the same problems. There can be some co-ordination to organise the working in a better way
- >> Money should be spent on creating awareness about health issues and a better environment
- >> There should be copyright of the data of the hospitals
- >> Very importantly, there should be negotiation with the vendor (in these cases corporate) to reduce implementation cost.
- >> The role of public- private partnership should be admired. Efforts should be made towards leveraging the potential in the private sector in telemedicine

Digital Content & Governance and Business

Governance and business go hand in hand and are the two most important driving forces for any country. ICT and digital content applications and methodologies have a key role to play in facilitating governance and business processes and in promotion of social entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

- >> Digital trends must address key governance challenges like geographical and physical distances in service delivery while narrowing down the gap between governing and governed
- >> Key areas of focus be on education, health, and administration
- >> Digital practices must enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of agriculture extension programmes, trade and dissemination of best practices
- >> Digital innovations must cater to the marginalized groups like those people living in forest like making them aware of their rights
- >> Such initiatives must have firm linkages in bringing about good e-governance with the purpose of promoting democracy, decentralization, electoral reforms, clean politics and accountable government
- >> Internet must be made innovative to create tremendous opportunities for a layman to become entrepreneurs while viewing the Internet as a fabulous market place, connecting buyers and sellers, and more effectively removing the middle players
- >> ICT enabled social entrepreneurship must serve rural people, even those who are unable to read and write with information regarding health, education, agriculture, etc. and provide low cost solution to many problems.
- >> ICT Social entrepreneurship must have scope to provide vital digital content services in agriculture and in overall primary sector
- >> Innovative ways is required in this domain like platform for people to book their bus tickets through online
- >> There should be more of E-bays, a platform which can help a layman turn into an entrepreneur with the help the Internet, Cell Bazaars, where the millions of users of mobile phone in Bangladesh can purchase and sell even their old products just by using the mobile, and ngpay.coms, India's largest mall on the mobile came as social entrepreneurial eye openers
- >> The challenge as to how technology can revolutionise lives by putting to use entrepreneurial abilities in combination with serving social causes

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Digital Madarsa

In bridging the digital divide, this ICT enabled madarsa in the heart of Jaipur in Rajasthan, has helped the girls become technology savvy who also create digital content