

Published by Prime Point Foundation and Chennai PR Club

PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Chief Editor **"Stakeholders demand information through websites"**

Today, Technology has changed the rules of games of many Institutions. The penetration of "Internet" has brought in new style of communication.

According to the latest statistics more than 1 billion users (17% penetration on the global population) of the world make use of the net, as against 50 million (4.5% penetration) in India.

Presently, every single business house is having a website. The expectations of the stakeholders are also on the increase. Because of the competition, the customers, investors and media have become 'information hungry'. 'Right to Information Act' of the Government enables the citizens to rightfully demand the information from the Government departments.

Private Sector today, enjoy more investment from the Banks, individual investors, Government, etc. than the investment of the promoters. Though 'Right to Information Act' does not apply to Private Sector organisations, Private Sector cannot hide themselves

from the responsibility of providing sufficient information to their stakeholders.

Importantly, four main stakeholders employees, customers, investors and media demand more information from the Private Sector organisations, to function as a watchdog. Some of the pro active companies have realized the current situation and provide adequate information to the stakeholders through their websites and improve their credibility and image.

It is a matter of serious concern, that many organisations do not provide adequate information in their websites. The responses from the companies for the queries raised through their websites are also poor.

We will be discussing some of the important aspects of maintenance of corporate websites, in this issue.

K. Srinivasan

prpoint@yahoo.com

PR-e-CISE – Inside this ezine

- An exclusive interview with Dr N Vijayaditya, on the National Portal of India
 - Interview with Mr Kiron Kasbekar, a leading web consultant
 - Rating of some Corporate websites
 - Extract of group discussions
 - PR Events in India and abroad
 - and more ...
-

PR-eXCLUSIVE – Mother of all portals – A gateway

Have you ever imagined a website which can provide a gateway to all your government related information? Few months



back, National Informatics Centre (NIC), the IT arm of Indian Government has launched a “National Portal” <http://www.india.gov.in> which can fulfill the maximum requirements of the countrymen.

Considered as the ‘Mother of all Indian Portals’, it is also likely to be the biggest portal in the world. Through this portal, one can enter more than 5000 websites of various Ministries of Union Government, State Governments, UTs, including Districts and blocks.

All the Central Acts from 1834, 50,000 plus Supreme Court judgements since 1950 (besides various other High Court judgements), verbatim proceedings of both the Houses of Parliament since 1991 are all available on a single click. Designed professionally with all usability concepts, this portal is attracting large number of visitors (22 million hits and 10 million page views per day)

In an exclusive interview to K. Srinivasan and N Satish of PR-e-Sense, Dr N Vijayaditya, Director General of National Informatics Centre, Delhi



through ‘video phone’ explained the purpose of this portal. Dr. Vijayaditya is one of the eminent IT experts of India and has been associated with the various Technology programmes / implementation of ICT solutions and e-Governance

applications to the Government. Dr. Vijayaditya is a simple and approachable person and we could get his interview within 24 hours of our request. Excerpts from his interview:

Q: What is the main purpose of this National Portal?

A: The purpose of this portal is to provide information to all the stakeholders round the clock on any subject, which the Government handles. You will find in the portal, four major segments viz. Citizen, Business, Overseas and Government. These segments provide various information to these stakeholders, including getting birth certificates, applying for passports, filing of tax returns, etc.



If you look at the content, you will find that everything will be on “end users’ perspective” and not on “Government’s perspective”.

This portal has vast collection of information / services (around ten terabytes of space), which can be accessed within two or three clicks.

Q: How this portal is maintained? How big this team is?

A: We have four teams. Viz content team, technology team, design team and quality assurance team. We have around 25 persons in these teams, in addition to supporting officials from NIC all over the country. Each Ministry and State Governments have one coordinator at Senior level to provide contents. Information is generated at every level and the portal is constantly updated.

Q: How do you ensure the quality and accuracy of contents?

A: We have an excellent coordination between the teams for contents and technology. When the pages are finalized, 'Quality Assurance team' conducts "Website security Audit". Every web page will be evaluated on various basic parameters like usability and performance, before being hosted. This ensures that the users get the right information at right time easily.

Q: How do you visualize the portal in another five years?

A: This is only the 'First version' of the portal. We are already working on the next version of the portal which will have the enhanced features like customization, personalization etc. and Portal shall continue to evolve.

We also have a system of regularly reviewing the feedbacks/suggestions received from the registered users and other visitors. All relevant suggestions

are considered either for implementation in the present version of the portal or inclusion in the subsequent versions.

Besides close coordination with National Portal Coordinators, we are also interacting with major content providers in various segments like Industries associations like FICCI, etc., Academic Institutions and other specialised agencies to procure/subscribe to the special purpose content. We also intend to support Indian languages and introduce universal accessibility in the future versions of the portal. We are confident that through seamless integration and interface, we shall establish National Portal as the gateway to all information and single point access to all government information and services.

For more details, contact Ms Neeta Verma, Senior Technical Director at neeta@nic.in

How effective 'contact us' details in the websites? – A survey

In order to find out as to how quickly the companies respond to the enquiries submitted through the website forms or email ids available in 'contact us' page, the Editorial Team sent enquires to 15 leading Corporates. We requested them to inform us the USP of their site.

We could get immediate response (within 24 hours) only from two companies viz. IBM (India) and WIPRO. *PR-e-Sense* places on record the appreciations to Varsha (IBM) and Sanjeeth (WIPRO) for the quick response.

When we wrote to one of the leading Private Sector Banks enquiring the URL of their corporate Group website

covering all their Banking, Insurance, Mutual Fund and other business, (through the contact form), we received a prompt reply as follows :

quote

Greetings from xxxx Bank!
We will be unable to provide you the requested details.
Thank you for writing to us.

Regards,

xxxxxxxxxxx
Customer Service Officer
Xxxxxx Bank Limited

Unquote

We are awaiting to receive any acknowledgement/response from 12 other companies, even after the lapse of 25 days and a formal reminder!

PR-eXCLUSIVE –Look for web consultants and not designers

Mr. Kiron Kasbekar (56), is a well known name in the media industry. He has served as Editor of *The Economic Times*, Bombay; Business Editor of *The Times of India*; and Managing Editor of *Business India*. He involved himself in media design and database/software development since 1980s. And today, Kiron Kasbekar runs the country's premier web consultancy company, The Information Company Private Limited (TIC).



The company has designed and maintains the websites of industrial conglomerates like www.tata.com, (ranked by *Business Today* magazine as best website) www.adityabirla.com, www.murugappa.com and many other corporate websites.

Incorporated in 1999, TIC actually has three divisions – media & content, web solutions, and knowledge management systems. The media division runs one of the Asia's largest online magazine www.domainb.com, the public relations portal www.prdomain.com.

In an exclusive interview with Mr Sakthi Prasanna, of *PR-e-Sense*, Mr Kiron Kasbekar spoke about the importance of corporate websites and the designing aspects. Excerpts:

Q: Why is a website important for Indian corporates?

A : A corporate website is like a permanent ad campaign and exhibition for a company available to people across the world round the clock and every day of the year. In this sense, a website is more important than a major advertising campaign. Companies that have invested well in websites and

other online activities have reaped huge benefits from them, including wider reach for the corporate image and product marketing messages, market feedback, improved customer relationships, and reduced costs.

Q: How should a company select its website designer?

A: Companies should be looking for website consultants, not website designers. That is comparable with companies seeking top-rated advertising agencies instead of photographers or illustrators. A good website design is the culmination of the formulation of an online communication strategy, creating appropriate information architecture, working out a good content plan, creating a visual design that is in line with these things, and developing the right software to make the website effective.

A vendor must have competencies in all these areas – business/communication strategy, editorial expertise, visual design expertise and skills (which require much more than an ability to use graphics software), and good software experience and skills. Most vendors do not have this combination of competencies.

Q: Do you think Indian corporates are not willing to spend money on designing a good website? If yes, why?

A: I agree. It is penny-wise, pound-foolish attitude. Even big companies, entrust the website design to persons who know only html and graphics. Designing a good website requires strategic thinking and communication expertise well as a deep understanding of the internet as a medium. A website so needs strong editorial skills to ensure quality.

Mr Kiron Kasbekar can be ontacted at kiron.kasbekar@ticworks.com

PR –e- VIEW – Extract from discussion groups

Anuradha Roychowdhury, Godrej Industries Limited, Mumbai
an.roychowdhury@godrejinds.com

What is a bad design?

I can list a few 'bad' design features of some existing corporate websites (to be avoided):



1. The flash intro...this can be most time consuming and irritating feature of a website, especially when you are looking for info at a hurry.
2. Absence of locational details of the company (physical address and

contact details) raises questions on the authenticity of the company's existence

3. Giving quick facts on the company (most websites miss this)

4. Bad Navigation.. A topbar line showing progress or the sequence of pages really helps.

Look at the following websites: honeywell.com, raytheon.com, bcg.com, wachovia.com, intel.com and microsoft.com. Very good layouts and design.

Mr T N Ashok Alstom Group, Delhi tn.ashok@power.alstom.com

On a top of the mind recall, I found the TATA website very good, packed with information and easy access to details. Good backgrounders on the company. Easy on the eye and easy to read, well written texts. Easy to go. Reliance website does have a lot of information but the arrangement is not that neat, Its cumbersome to surf its pages for information.

L and T is also good , good information, but the website is quite traditional and is not that eye catching. Not boasting, but our International website : www.alstom.com is amazing for the information that it displays which shows how

transparent we are . Our indian website :

www.alsto.co.in is also very informative. GE website is also very good and so also siemens for the informations that is available. Though we are talking about Corporate websites here, some of the



govt websites are amazing. The recently revamped power ministry website is excellent and also PIB website which gives you instant access to various ministries -- though not all ministries update their information, particularly finance ministry , where statistics are outdated.

Avinash Murkute, Pune avinash_m28@yahoo.com

I do agree that corporate websites are not optimized. May I add one



more point here, Corporate website must have feedback or contact us page. Everybody do have. Few customization like Name / Contact details / e-mail

field mandatory serves the purpose for proper follow-up. Last month students of one management institute of Pune studied 50 corporate web sites and found typos in 49 of them.

Content must be checked periodically and must be refreshing.

PR –e- VIEW – Extract from discussion groups

Mr Subir Ghosh, Editor, Newswatch India
newswatchindia@gmail.com

- Design: Avoid flashy stuff. The pun is very much there. Flash animations are most exasperating. Those look good all right, but don't add much value to the site. Keep such stuff for yuppie end-consumers.



- All press releases should be archived properly. If these are archived under a

Press Room section, all the more better. Do not lay too much stress on "XXX in the news". Most people are not interested in that.

- Contact details should be in a proper hierarchical order, if possible. The visitor should know who to contact for what. Be transparent: give both phone numbers as well as email addresses.
- Who should handle? The corp comm professionals any day. The techie's job is to make the

website. Period. Don't ever ask a techie's opinion about site features. Rather, hire a usability professional to ascertain whether your site is usable or not. If possible take three different opinions. Ensure that the site navigation system makes life easy for the visitor, and not the other way round.

- Keep a downloads section. Your company logos (in cdr/gif/jpg/tif formats), brochures (pdf preferably), annual reports (pdf/html/doc) must all be available there. I was only handling an invite to an event which was being co-sponsored by a big hotel. I needed the logo in CDR format, but the people in Delhi were of no use. I finally got it from the parent company's website (based in the US)
- Have a dedicated person for the website. Don't rely on the webmaster. Webmasters have their own opinions about what a site should be, and those might not augur well for your company.

Bhavna Dayal. Mumbai bhavnadayal@yahoo.com

The contents of a website are dependent on how the organization wants itself to be perceived as or positioned as! Some low profile organizations keep the information to only what is barely needed, while some like dynamic organizations like some IT companies like to be perceived as 'happening organizations'



with the latest technologies - web cast, etc online. But all the same, there are some golden rules which one and all must follow. The prime objective of a website being to apprise the viewer about the various products and services, that it must do in easy understandable terms. The contents must be clear and crisp to be absorbed by the reader. Too much information is not retained plus the flow is lost. One could use subheads or bullets to increase attention span.

PR –e- VIEW – Expert views

HR Mohan, Associate VP (Systems), The Hindu, Chennai
hrmohan@vsnl.com

Web Usability

The Web has become the window to the corporate houses and having a good corporate website is a must in this Internet Age. While the current web technologies provide excellent attractive / interactive features, a simple but usable website will be of more value to the users.



The users visit websites to seek information which is accurate, authentic and current. The features, which the users desire would include consistent and easier navigation, simple search, fast loading pages, meaningful and relevant content, contact details for further information. A site presented with the information architecture design principles in mind

will be highly productive, usable and enhance the user experiences.

The users tend to avoid sites which have distracting features like heavy and flashy images, multiple frames, drop-down and interactive menus, the need to use the plug-ins to access the information. In essence, the KISS principle *Keep It Short and Simple* applies to websites too.

As the Net is being used by people of all age group (kids to elderly), people of different cultural & educational background and different skill levels of accessibility & disability problems, designing a good website to meet the expectations of all is a great challenge. The feedback from the users is a valuable input that every webmaster should look for in constantly improving the site and thereby the user experiences.

T Balamurugan, IT Consultant, Coimbatore bala@rock2b.com

Website Visibility -

The success of your corporate website is measured by number of visitors accessing your web pages. Having a knowledge management system (articles, white-papers, discussion forums, Mailing lists etc) available for public access related to the product/services you deal with in your website will highly improve your website visibility in Internet.



Another one important thing to do is creating website that are search engine friendly and search engine

conscious, This will highly help in showing what you want to show and hiding what you do not want to show while searched for information through any search engine (Google, Altavista, Yahoo etc)

Website Maintenance -

Whatever created needs a level of maintenance and up gradation. Technologies in Internet get outdated/updated in a very faster pace. Virtual / Shared hosting and dedicated server hosting purchased from service providers require comparatively very less maintenance work as compared to in-house hosting solution

PR –e- VIEW – Expert views

Ms Renu Kakkar, Vice President, (Corpcom), Apeejay Group, Bangalore - rkakkar@apeejaygroup.com

Corp com needs to be straightforward and clear on their vision on what it is they want to build - its like a corporate deciding whether they want an easily accessible fancy office address at Nariman Point or a sprawling premises in Navi Mumbai which also has employee living quarters.

Websites may be made by graphic designers but they cater to common people / visitors who need upto date information placed simply with a pleasant look n feel and easy to use features. Some of these visitors are media who will in any case call the corp com person for more (and more ..and more) so there can be a media room which basically houses whatis

called - BACKGROUNDS to all the company's products. If it's a listed company then its a ball game so I am not getting into that.



Of course corp com needs a lot of support in managing this and the management needs to be proactive. In fact I was quite surprised recently when one of our CEOs thought it fit to inform me that his London office number had changed and if the website could also reflect the same please..

PR –eMINENCE - Evaluation of some sites – A study

A team of experts along with Editorial team, under the guidance of Mr M M Selvakumar, a senior web Consultant at Chennai evaluated some of the websites of leading companies on the following parameters:

Website Design (10 Marks) : Look & Feel of the website, fonts, Colours, formatting, Usage of animation, Image size – optimization – alt tags

Services/Products/Events (10 Marks) : Product Updating Product ,description/ Information, Product Enquiry and contact information, Product Grievance, About us section (Board of Directors –must) Career

Web Usability (10 Marks): Easy Naavigation & Accessibility , Search Engine Popularity, Website name

popularity, link popularity, Site map
Avoid Intros

Investor Section (10 Marks): Investor News(like Board Meeting), Financial. Results (Yearly & Quarterly), Share Information – Share Values & Share History , BSE Registration Code, how to invest in the company

Media (10 Marks): Media Release , pictures of Executives and Logos, Ads, Contact Details , Contact Person, Media Reports, Quick Response

We are publishing our review for six of such sites in this issue. 5 Star denotes 'Excellent Rating', 4 Star - 'Very Good'; 3 star - 'Good'; 2 star - Average; and single star - Poor

Mr M M Selvakumar can be contacted at camioselva@hotmail.com

PR –eMINENCE - Evaluation of some sites – A study

www.ibm.com/in



Rating : ★★★★★

1. Well designed and good content management with Professional look. 😊
2. Product description and updates, grievance is given in the site
3. Resources tab for various related site links
4. country or region specific site home page is good
5. link for newsletter subscription

6. Good image optimization and alt tag 😊

1. Navigation is not properly organized – should come back to home page to visit other links
2. Site Map is available only for some sections



www.tcs.com



Rating : ★★★★★

- 😊 • Extremely well organized content in different sections
- All links are available in home page itself
- Good product description with complete details and case studies
- Simple and elegant design – good navigational structure
- Media room is resourceful with reports, contact info, etc
- Links to other related sites, group sites, brochures (Related Banner

Links give more hits to the site. For Example, in investor section, we can find link to 'go to media' and products page.)

- Case studies given in almost all pages are extremely good
- 😊 Very simple – Creativity and professional look needed



www.infosys.com



Rating : ★★★★★

1. Lightweight site (less animation more text) 😊
2. Testimonial is provided in almost all pages This increases the credibility
3. Uniformity in site design and the related links are given.
4. Investor Section is more informative and comprehensive

5. Product info and description are also good. 😊

1. Very simple for a corporate site, more creativity can be employed in creating the pages
2. Font readability in some pages is poor (font size is very small)



PR –eMINENCE - Evaluation of some sites – A study

www.wipro.com

Rating :



1. Pleasant look and easy navigation
2. Use of more buttons in each section should be extremely appreciated and resembles to that of a media site
3. Categorization of products and info is good (Their Sectors has been given in a easy navigation)
4. Career section – given a special emphasis and as different site itself

5. Case studies given in almost all pages is extremely good
6. Care has been taken to ensure that the flash links are given separately as ordinary html links

1. Investors section is not informative

www.ril.com

Rating:



1. Download Library is good – Good contents
1. More animation and flash content – 'skip intro' is not available

2. No proper formatting or colour combination
3. Poor media room
4. Poor organisation of contents
5. Use of PDF links should be avoided

www.hll.com

Rating:



1. More of Product Based site - specifications to products and their application are impressive.
2. Good animated intro banner - (Good Animations and colourful banners)

1. No proper image optimization
2. Investor section is not too informative
3. Poor media room

PR –e - News - IFCC launched in India

Indian Forum of Corporate Communicators, (IFCC) came into being in August 2005, formed by a group of practicing professionals in leading corporates in the country. The



Forum already has over 150 corpcomm / Marcomm as members essentially drawn from the

corporate communicators fraternity in India. The Forum has been started keeping the interests of the Indian Corporate Communicators Community in mind.

The objective of the Forum is to make available Best Practices in communications management thus helping its members to meet international benchmarked business communication standards. The Forum firmly believes that this would endeavour to give corporate communicators its rightful place in the larger community of Indian professionals. The Forum besides being a platform today for information sharing amongst the professionals would strive to bring in programs and events that would enrich the corporate

communication function as such and act as a harbinger for newer processes and practices.

The Forum has four chapters and a pan India presence with more than 150 members across the country.

Mr Paresh Chaudhry (HLL) is the National President, Ms Nandini Goswami, (JM Morgan Stanley) is the National Vice President, Ms Swapna Bhandarkar (Hexaware) is the National Secretary, Linus Chettiar (ISec LTD) is the National Treasurer.

The Regional Chairpersons are:

Ms Meena Vaidyanathan (Honeywell) - North

Ms Salmoli Mukherji (The Park Hotels) East

Mr C.R.Kannan (SPIC) - South

The National Body representatives who are based in Mumbai are responsible for the Western Region..

For more details contact

Paresh

Paresh.Chaudhry@unilever.com

Nandini

Nandini.Goswami@jmmorganstanley.com

Have you joined the PR discussion groups?

Image Management Group – Second largest yahoo group on PR with 1250 plus global members. Click here

http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Image_Management/

PRpoint Group - The largest Indian group for PR/Corpcom/academic professionals with 550 plus members. Click here

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/prpoint/>

India Vision Group – The largest Indian group to discuss India Vision – around 800 Indian youth as members

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/India_Vision_2020/

PR eTTY - Relax – Allow the boss to speak first

A junior Software engineer, a senior Software engineer and their PM were on their way to a meeting. On their way through a park, they came across a wonder lamp. They rubbed the lamp and a ghost appeared. The ghost said, "Normally, one is granted three wishes

but as you are three, I will allow one wish each".

The eager Junior Software engineer shouted, "I want the first wish. I want to be in the Bahamas, on a fast boat and have no worries". "Pfufffff", and he had gone.

Now the Senior Software engineer could not keep quiet and shouted " I want to be in Florida with beautiful girls, plenty of food and cocktails". "Pfufffff", and he had also gone.

The PM calmly said," I want these two idiots back in the office after lunch at 2.00pm"

Moral of the story is: Always allow the bosses to speak first"

(Source: unknown)



PResentors of PReSENSE

Chief Editor and Publisher:
K. Srinivasan (Prime Point)

Editor:
P A Narrendiran (Blue Lotus PR)
Associate Editor:
S. Sakthi Prasanna (Brodeur India)
Editorial Board:
Meera R (Aspire Systems)
Satish N (Anna University)

Editorial Advisors
T N Ashok (Alstom)
Michael Driehorst, (The Lauerer Markin Group Inc. USA)
Arun Arora (GMR-DIAL)
Uma Bhushan (SIMSR)
R . Jai Krishna (Senior Journalist)

Feedback and contributions to:
ezinepresense@gmail.com

All the earlier issues may be downloaded from
www.primepointfoundation.org
