CONCEPT OF THE STRUCTURE OF A UNIVERSITY WEB SITE

Assist.Prof.Ph.D.Veselina Ivanova Nedeva

Technical College of Thracian University, 38 Gr.Ignatiev Str., 8600 Yambol, Bulgaria, phone:+359/46/66-91-81, e-mail:vnedeva@yahoo.com

Keywords: Web site, Structure of the sites, Internet marketing, student education.

The report is a part of a scientific research for the project "Internet marketing in the education" conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of education in 2003. A scientific research and analysis of the sites of the universities and colleges in Bulgaria about their possibilities for implementing Internet marketing has been conducted. The research unites 23 indexes between February 2003 and May 2004. One of the conclusions is that the structure of the site should correspond to particular requirements. This conclusion is based on the fact that there is certain type of information that should always be found on the web site in order to inform the present and prospective students. On the other hand, there should be a return pathway, which should be able to respond on the spot to the problems, questions and needs on the sites' visitors.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the report is to present a probable scheme of the pages in a university web site, which will be built accordingly to the principles of the Internet marketing and the flaws, based on the conducted research.

The marketing as a market philosophy of the enterprising, as a strategy and tactics of the behavior has its realization not only in the transfer of values, but also in the transfer of educational services. The theory and practice of the marketing in the scope of education is a subject of discussions, theories and disputes. The application of the Internet marketing in the sphere of the education services is not well studied. The schooling of the specialists in Bulgaria in most cases is conducted with the financial support of the difficult ministries, as in many other countries in East Europe. Besides that, usually these kinds of services are usually paid for, as well as the educational services in the private universities and colleges. Because of this the marketing principles and particularly the principles of the Internet marketing has their own place and application in the process of creation, development and service of the students.

2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Web site is the unit of the information in the system, united by the common sense and thematic, which can be found using the same Internet address [4]. The site is created in order to respond to the following needs of the university: allowing access to the informational DB of the university for the present and future students; maintaining connection with the visitors, which are the universities' potential clients; presenting data and information, which are of special importance to the site's visitors;

possibilities for conducting remote education; establishing connections with partners and sponsors; information about why to choose this particular university, what makes in outstanding and right for you.

The structure of the web site should take into consideration the tasks, which basic for the web-based system, presented in the site and the requirements of the marketing policy of the institution for higher education. The structure can be considered as a scheme as well as content, which is advisable to be maintained. The Web site includes the following basic pages: Main page, which subject is the strategic aim of the university, thus leading to raising its image; Prospective students; Students-hyper connection for distance education; History of the university; Structure of the university; Scientific researches and international co-operation; Library; Additional centers and sections, assisting the main activity; Forum; Alumni association; Version in English or other foreign language.

The first impressions are made with the main page of the university, which has to be constructed using the principles of informational architecture, meaning that it has to show the activities, in our case the provided by the university educational services. Its content has to be balanced. The screen area can be divided in to four main parts – basic content (70-80%), navigation (10-15%) and empty area (5-15%), advertisement (10-15%) [5]. It is recommended that its content is the following: Logo; The name of the university; Advertisement phrase; Date and Time; Navigational menu; News; Future projects and events; Representation of the university – study possibilities, advantages, uniqueness, contact address; Advertisements of sponsors and/or university partners; Site map; Search engine in the site; Data of the last review; Version in a foreign language.

The research of the services offered to the prospective students by the universities shows, that there is information that should always be maintained and renewed, so that the site can be helpful for the incoming students – statistics of the results from previous applicants, possibilities for downloading and saving the data in different formats and others. Complying with the conclusions drawn in [Fig.1.] on the pages for the prospective students there should always be:

- Statistics for the previous applicants for the past 3 years – minimum and maximum needed results for the different majors, presented in different formats – using tables, graphs, or as a PowerPoint presentations; number of applicants for one place; amount of received grants and scholarships, besides the one offered by the country; number of students living in dormitories and so on.

- Regulations, requirements and documents for application – package of documents, offering the possibility for download in different formats, on-line application, electronic request for application.

- Majors and types of education with a hypertext from the Rulebook of the university; including distance education with a link for it – with the qualification characteristics of each major, realization possibilities, link with examples for bright careers; university catalogues with the possibility for download from the FTP server or looking them up in real time (catalogue with extensive audio and video
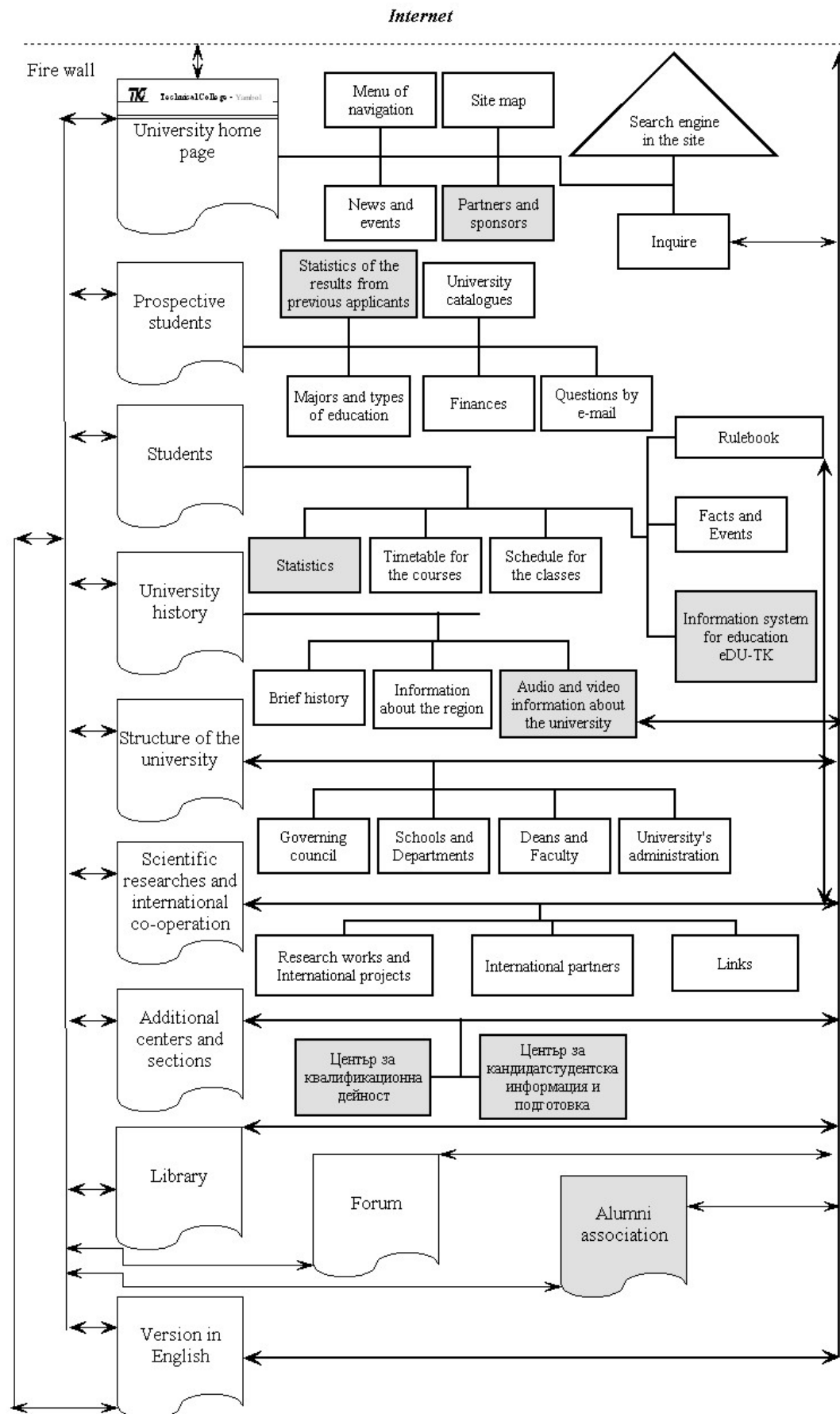
Internet

Fire wall

University home page

- Menu of navigation
- Site map
- Search engine in the site
- News and events
- Partners and sponsors
- Inquire

Prospective students

- Statistics of the results from previous applicants
- University catalogues
- Majors and types of education
- Finances
- Questions by e-mail

Students

- Rulebook
- Facts and Events
- Statistics
- Timetable for the courses
- Schedule for the classes
- Information system for education eDU-TK

University history

- Brief history
- Information about the region
- Audio and video information about the university

Structure of the university

- Governing council
- Schools and Departments
- Deans and Faculty
- University's administration

Scientific researches and international co-operation

- Research works and International projects
- International partners
- Links

Additional centers and sections

- Център за квалификационна дейност
- Център за кандидатстудентска информация и подготовка

Library

Forum

Alumni association

Version in English

Fig.1. Basic components of the University structure - existing   new

information, containing interviews with students and organizations, employing the students and so on); Masters and Ph.D. programs.

- Finances – tuition and probable other living expenses, which are complied with the economic situation of the region where the university is situated (with a link leading to a page with information about the region), dormitories (offering links to other pages), possibilities for grants and scholarships, university sponsors and partners, offering financial aid.

- Possibilities for asking questions using a pre-prepared from, which can be filled by the prospective student and can be send instantly. To show when an answer will be given to this request.

- Link to "Prospective students" forum, where you can chat and exchange information in real time with other students or prospective students.

The page for the students should contain all the information necessary for their proper education, with the following recommended structure: Statistics for the number and ration of the student in all the majors; Timetable for the courses in the semester – dates and times of classes, official and other holidays, vacations, exams; Schedule for the classes in the different majors; Link to the Information system for education; Link to the forum and appointing a forum moderator, responsible for any question or conflicts arisen in the chat rooms; Rulebook of the university; Events and facts from the student life.

It is recommended that there should be a separate page for history of the university, which will shortly present the basic moments in the development of the institution. There should be links about published articles about the university and its popularity; audio and video information about the university – graduations, visiting public figures, visiting international guests; hypertext or navigation towards the page of the city where the university is located; information about the region and the way of life there – financial support, free time, leisure, sport and cultural activities.

In the web page about the structure of the university there should be a representation of the university's administration, the governing council with a link to the Rule book of the university; deans and faculty; professors and their research projects; statistics about the age, sex and majors about the faculty; administration; research projects with a link for this page.

Web page for research project and international projects, containing the participation in international and national projects with a hypertext towards the official pages, where the projects and the companies sponsoring them are presented; Bulgarian and foreign universities, which work in co-operation and information about the joined projects; with hypertext for the official sites of the international partners.

The library can have its own separate site or page in the whole structure depending on the scale of the library. No matter of the way the library is presented in the Internet, there should always be information about its services – in real time or in its building, work schedule; administration and workers; services, which are offered; books, magazines, newspapers in the collection and which are used by the students

and the faculty; access to national and international data bases; multimedia – movies, CDs, DVDs, etc.

The structure and the hypertexts between the different pages in the site are developed. The basic pages in the web site with their structure and content are presented in the scheme (Fig.1). In different colors and figures are shown the existing pages and content; the ones, which are realized in the Web sites of the university but are incorrectly structured; proposals for new pages in the structure or the content.

3. CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the conducted activities we can conclude about the importance of the preliminary preparation of the structure and content, in order to gain maximum effectiveness from the maintenance and actualization of the site:

1. The structure and content should be subdued to the necessities of the presents and prospective students, which is in the basics of the marketing activity. This is essential moment in this stage, when we are gradually transferring towards continuing education and qualification of the people through their whole life.

2. Determining the target site visitors. Analysis of the visits.

3. Noting projects for future development of the Internet site – advertising campaign, advertising network and banner transfer, registration of search engines and so on.

4. REFERENCES:

[1] Недева,В.И., Възможности за провеждане на Интернет маркетинг на образователни услуги, Научна конференция с международно участие, Стара Загора 2003, 5-6.06.2003 год. ISBN 954-9329-03-8, том II, стр.141-145

[2] Недева,В.И., Информационни технологии за Web маркетинг на образователни услуги, Научна конференция с международно участие, Стара Загора 2003, 5-6.06.2003 год. ISBN 954-9329-03-8, том II, стр.39-43

[3]Панкрухина, А.П., Маркетинг образовательных услуг, on-line версия на

[4] http://mou.marketologi.ru/index.html, 20.04.2003

[5] http://ibusiness.ru/, 05.05.2004

[6] http://technology.monster.com/articles/infoarchitect/, Becoming an Information Architect, Sacha Cohen, (Work as a Web Site Strategist), Monster Contributing Writer, 05.05.2004