
Oppgave 1 (Schulz): Analyse av eksisterende nettsteder

Analysis of Websites for DAISY and the print disabled

Kurs

INF5270

Person

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Our group decided to make a website for helping out DAISY users. DAISY stands for **D**igital **A**ccessible **I**nformation **S**ystem and it allows people who are blind, dyslexic, and otherwise “print disabled” access to reading material.

Searching Methods

The first place to start was where everyone goes to search, Google. Searching for “DAISY” in Google returns around 37 million hits. Some advertising outdoor products, one advertising a content management system, one talking about a movie, etc. However, the number two hit points to the DAISY Consortium, which is *very* relevant. I was able to use this web site as a jumping point to some other interesting sites, namely the Norwegian DAISY Consortium, which is discussed in-depth further below.

I also took a look at the “similar pages” to the DAISY Consortium. Many of these pages pointed to libraries for the blind. Some that were interesting included the Danish Library for the Blind and the U.K.'s National Library for the Blind. I also tried searching for “print disabled support,” but this only seemed to turn up pages detailing the current state of how much is not being done to help those with the this handicap.

At this point, I had a couple of good sites that I could use for content analysis, but I wanted to try one more place. I had known from previous attempts that Wikipedia had provided relevant links for other things that I was searching for, so I thought I would try my luck for this assignment that dealt with searching. Sure enough an entry exists and there are links there, but most point back to the DAISY Consortium. The remaining links point to unofficial players and have been marked as potential spam by the moderators at Wikipedia.

Content Analysis of the DAISY Consortium's Website

The DAISY Consortium has a lot of information and can serve different purposes depending on what you are looking for. The main web page is a bit confusing since it seems that all the ways of navigating are not symmetric. Regardless, things appear to be divided up in the following:

- News from the DAISY Consortium
- An Introduction to DAISY and the DAISY standard
- Becoming a member of the DAISY Consortium
- Current Projects
- Knowledge Net

There are multiple ways to get to this information. Via a “quick links” combo box, a banner at the top of the page, or by clicking in various boxes down below. It would seem the multiple ways of navigating is perhaps an aid for various accessibility methods. Though when I tried this using “VoiceOver” on my Mac, I could not

interact with the quick links or banner, but could hit all the other links. This could be my fault, not being an expert at using VoiceOver. There is also a search field and an option to log in to the website, and an option to print the current page. This is all part of the header for every page. In each section described below, navigation consists of a sidebar on the left with the major topics for that section (around 20% of the width), the rest is devoted to the actual text for the current section you are in. At the top of the page is a type of clickable “path” to show you which section you are in.

As mentioned above, there is an option to log in to the web site and you must be a member of the DAISY Consortium to be able to do this. From reading information on the website, it is not a cheap endeavor to join (around \$150 a year if you are an individual, much more if you are anything bigger). However, most of the information is available without logging in. The locking looks to be only on things that deal with internals of the DAISY Consortium. In the Knowledge Net, for example, only the training materials and some articles and papers are locked for anonymous users, everything else is available.

Speaking of the Knowledge Net, there is a lot of varied information about DAISY available in it. Information is divided into modules such as DAISY validators, DAISY projects, internationalization issues, and information about XML, XHTML, and CSS (since DAISY uses these standards). You can view modules by topic, sorted alphabetically, newly added, revised, or language. Choosing a module will present you with a sort of table of contents with a list of related modules. You can then browse through the module page-by-page in a slideshow-esque manner, though there is more information on each page than what is typically on a slide in a presentation. At first, it seems weird that this is how the information is presented, but when one accesses it with a screen reader, it feels like it is “just enough” information.

There is also a lot of information about DAISY and the consortium in the “About Us” section. This includes the vision and mission statement of the consortium and the goals it wishes to achieve. Next, one can find information about how DAISY Talking Books (DTBs) work and a quick summary about how to create them. This is supplemented by links to the DAISY/NISO Structure Guidelines, a module in the Knowledge Net (described above). Continuing on, there is a FAQ covering questions about DAISY, standards, print disabled, and the Consortium itself. This is followed by a history of the Consortium, and then information about how to join. A list of current members (most with links to their pages). It then goes into various Consortium-only information. There is a link to Legal Policies which goes into a lot of legal information, some of which is locked. The organization structure area has pictures of the current elected members and staff along with meeting agendas (agendas are only available to members). Finally the DAISY Consortium strategy is available as the final link in the sidebar. It is also available in German, Spanish, French, and Japanese.

The “Standards” section provides access to the latest information about the DAISY/NISO standard (a much better name than the previous “ANSI/NISO Standard for Z39.86 Specification for the Digital Talking Book”). The standard is available as a PDF or an XHTML file (either downloadable or viewable online). There other sections her are for errata, future directions, issues, extensions, and a sample book.

To be complete, I will say a bit about the remaining sections. In the “Tools” section, there are links to various tools for creating new DAISY books, converting existing print books to DAISY, playback, and validation tools. The “News & Events” section provides an RSS-like feed of various press releases from the consortium and upcoming events, however the RSS functionality is not in place at this time. The “Support” section includes information on contacting the consortium and changing the accessibility of the site. The “Project” section explains what projects are being worked on, what has been completed, and sections for each of the current projects. Jumping to any of the current projects gives you more information about them, this could be on- or offsite.

I decided to also take a closer look at the [Norwegian DAISY Consortium](#). This is actually the Norwegian Audio and Braille Library (my translation of Norsk lyd- og blindskriftbibliotek). The Library has a long list of DAISY and braille books. There is also information on the DAISY software player AMIS. With information about installation and how to get the Norwegian language module installed. There is a search function for finding various books. A section for children where they can find books and reviews of books, with a corresponding area for adults as well. Teachers and aides who work with print disabled students also have an

area to help them out. There is a list of projects that the library is currently working on. It includes such things as getting DAISY-enabled versions of Aftenposten available. There is also information about DAISY translated to Norwegian bokmål. There are also a page with “Useful Links” that includes links to other libraries, the Union for Seeing-impaired Children, The Union for Seeing-impaired Academics, the Dyslexia Foundation of Norway, the Norwegian Foundation for the Blind and more.

I could talk a bit about the other libraries that I visited, but a lot of what is offered on them is similar to the Norwegian page, just in their own language.

Social Navigation

It could very well be that I ended up choosing poor sites for social navigation because there appears to be very little available. The DAISY Consortium seems to go out of the way to avoid providing any sort of direct social navigation. However, this could be because they are interested getting people to join the consortium and there may be more direct access once one is logged in. There are closed mailing lists that are only available to the members of the consortium, though experts may be invited to join some lists. They claim that there are some plans for a more general purpose DAISY mailing list in the near future, but it currently does not exist.

If one is not a member, the closest that you can get is clicking through to the “Contact Us” link and filling in various information about yourself, choosing a topic and typing a maximum 5 thousand character message. This is followed by a confirmation step to make sure that you are not a spam robot or giving false information. Joining the consortium is *not* completed easily on the site either, instead it is necessary to submit the request in both writing and via email. This could be because of the large sums of money required (up to \$30,000 for full membership).

As for indirect social navigation, this is provided in the Knowledge Net. The information presented there is from various people at various conferences. It is possible to get this information even if you were not at the conference where the information was originally presented.

One could consider donations to be a form of indirect social interaction as well, since you can influence where the money is spent. Donations, though, are handled in traditional snail mail approach. Perhaps because of the paperwork involved with the U.S. government's non-profit organization guidelines.

Some of the projects have requests for participation or review. These seem to be open to anyone, but you have to use the “Contact Us” link to join for most of the projects. Some of the responses to critiques in some projects are published as well. The project that seems most open to non-consortium members is the aptly-named DAISY for All project. Which aims to bring the technology to many asian and developing countries. However, this openness is only by virtue of the fact that they are behind the AMIS DAISY Reader which is an open source player. There appears to be a community of developers and users here that is at least somewhat active. Of course, at this point, we have ventured far off the main website.

Norwegian DAISY Consortium has a bit more available for indirect social navigation. There is a section called “Book Tips” where the library presents the month's theme and book. There is also a section where people who have checked-out books can give their recommendations. Some are short, some are quite involved. It also has an online form for submitting your own reviews. This functionality is also duplicated in the children's section, albeit with a bit more guidance. There are a number of reviews in both the adult and children's section. Even though there are all these reviews there is no way to indicate if the reviews that were written were helpful to people considering checking out the book. It appears there is some editorializing in some of the reviews. For example, at the bottom of a review for a book that was rated “Horrible,” one can find the following, “«Hvis du derimot tror det er Marius som hadde en dårlig dag og likevel vil lese boka så har vi den både på lyd og punkt.»” (*ibid*)

There is also a section for people working with children that are print disabled. There also is a FAQ here that

is generated by real questions asked to the person in charge of this area. There also are a couple of mailing lists available for people interested in this area, but the mailing lists seem to be announce-only. Otherwise, there are email addresses of several people, so while one cannot get direct social navigation on the main site, one can get it by emailing the people.

Discussion

Overall, the DAISY community is interesting. There are quite a few sites available for finding information about DAISY. There is also some help for finding books, software, or other necessary parts to allow people access to reading material.

One thing that is very interesting is the fact that, while there appears that there is some sort of community for the print disabled, it does not seem that most of them are using the web to communicate with each other. It seems that email is a more preferred way of interacting. Maybe print disabled people prefer to use an email client to ask questions? Maybe because the current level of web accessibility just does not allow these people to have as rich an experience as non-print disabled users? More research would need to be done to find out the truth.

One thing that does not really fall into the content analysis nor social navigation is the accessibility options that are available on these sites. Most have some sort of adjustment to make it easy to access. DAISY Consortium has a section that lets you alter the style sheet between a standard and a high contrast version, and adjust the layout to be fluid or dynamic, or if extra navigation help is available. It also lists the accesskeys for browsers that support that feature.

The Norwegian DAISY Consortium does not have a place to alter accessibility features like this. However, it does include the option of using a great screen reader for the Norwegian language. This was pretty impressive (at least to these American ears). It could handle things written in dialect and standard bokmål with ease, but got tripped up in English (though it pronounced “daisy” in a convincing “borrowed-from-English-but-I-am-taking-special-care-to say-it-correctly” way). Once one has activated the reader, there are various options available to control speed and what it will read. You can also make it work with a text version, though I did not give that a try.

As for our project, I think some of the information here is useful. It would certainly be worthwhile to have similar content from both of these web sites. Giving some information about DAISY, while at the same time offering people to review books and be able to mark how helpful the reviews are. I also noticed that there is not much available on either site for help in getting the players to work. This could be something that may be very helpful. The lack of social navigation on the websites is a bit distressing and I hope that does not mean that it is impossible, but rather just not tried yet. Finally, if we could get ahold of that Norwegian software reader, it would be neat, but I doubt that it is something that is free.

Referanser

«AMIS DAISY Reader»

AMIS Software Home Page

<http://amis.sourceforge.net/> [2007-02-17]

« Google »

Google

<http://google.com> [2007-02-15]

«U.K.'s National Library for the Blind»

U.K. National Library for the Blind

<http://nlb-online.org> [2007-02-15]

« DAISY for All project»

DAISY for ALL

<http://www.daisy-for-all.org/> [2007-02-17]

« DAISY Consortium»

DAISY: Digital Accessible Information SYstem (DAISY) Consortium

<http://www.daisy.org> [2007-02-15]

«Danish Library for the Blind»

Danish Library for the Blind (DBB)

<http://www.dbb.dk/English/default.asp> [2007-02-15]

«Norwegian DAISY Consortium»

Norwegian DAISY Consortium

<http://www.nlb.no> [2007-02-15]

«Wikipedia»

Wikipedia

<http://www.wikipedia.org> [2007-02-15]
