

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to evaluate the Benguet State University website according to web standards and description of the content of the site in terms of accuracy, currency, accessibility and other website features.

There were two groups of respondents in the study: 88 user-respondents (users) and the designer-respondents (designers). The web designer of the BSU website was also interviewed. The evaluation of the contents of the website was done with a questionnaire while the evaluation of the website was done with the Web Standard Checklist by Russ Weakley. The instruments were answered while browsing the BSU website.

The study was conducted in Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet from October 2007 to January 2008. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage.

Majority of the respondents were not frequent visitors of the BSU Website since they were visiting the website once a month only. While the website provides information about the university, it did not adhere to web standards and it lacked many features that would make it more user-friendly and more useful. It is also weak in terms of accuracy, currency, and accessibility. There is a need to improve the website and it is recommended

that the results of this study be considered. The internet has already become a convenient source of information especially among students who are the primary clients of the university. The BSU Website should therefore be enhanced as a medium for bringing information to the clients.



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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The World Wide Web can be a great place to be apprised on many topics from all over the world through information and data offered by different websites.

Websites are information systems that provide users knowledge, information, insights, goods and services through effective and efficient contents which are properly structured. They serve as bridges that connect users to a variety of experiences which may entertain, educate, or persuade them.

An academic institution, particularly a university, constructs a website that serves as an introduction of the university, as an interface to outside resources, as publisher of good works, and as data resources (McKenzie, 1997). The Benguet State University (BSU) Website has been developed under this premise.

However, there are web resources that are not very credible and that are poorly organized. This can be attributed to the fact that putting documents or uploading information to the web is easy, cheap or sometimes free, unregulated, and unmonitored. These things must be checked by those who are responsible for maintaining and developing websites especially university websites.

For BSU, checking these things will help avoid some problems that affect the users especially the students, faculty, and others in their search for information. However, unless one has a knowledge of website standards, site accuracy, web source credibility, relevance, currency, and website accessibility, it is difficult to determine whether or not a website is good, effective, efficient, reliable, and accessible.



It is therefore important to evaluate the BSU website to help improve, maintain, and develop a standard, accurate, educational, and accessible website with relevant, reliable, and current information. This will enable the students, faculty, and other users of the website to access BSU information at a minimum cost in a minimum period of time.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the BSU website?
2. Was the BSU website created based on web standards?
3. Does the BSU website meet the needs of its intended users?
4. What features of the BSU website do the BSU students and faculty members wish to have in the BSU website?

Objectives of the Study

This study evaluated the BSU website in terms of website standards, site statistics, and site content and structure.

Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. determine the profile of the BSU website;
2. determine if the BSU website adheres to web standards in terms of the following criteria:

- quality of code,
- degree of separation between content and presentation,
- accessibility for users,



- accessibility for devices,
- basic usability, and
- site management.

3. evaluate the attributes of the BSU website in terms of the following criteria:

- indication of the author's name or the site publisher on the website;
- purpose, clarity, relevance, accuracy, source credibility, and currency of the content;
- website accessibility and stability;
- design, organization and ease of navigation; and
- visibility and functionality of links on the website.

4. elicit suggestions from the BSU students and faculty members for the improvement of the BSU website.

Importance of the Study

An evaluation of an academic institution website will help in its improvement and redevelopment. It will provide insights to web publishers and web designers on whether or not the services and information offered in the website meet the needs of its intended audience.

The results of this study may be used by the web publishers and web designers in creating websites that are user-centric, timely, accessible, effective, efficient, and a website built based on web standards. This study may serve as their guide in maintaining or improving the website.



In addition, this may also help the web visitors especially the students, teachers and even researchers to evaluate a website in terms of the said criteria to avoid meeting some problems while surfing information on the web.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focused only on the official website of the Benguet State University (<http://www.bsu.edu.ph>). It was conducted from October 2007 to January 2008. Key informant interviews regarding the profile of the BSU website were conducted. The researcher also used the Web Standards Checklist by Russ Weakley for the evaluation of the BSU website by four web designers. A questionnaire formulated by the researcher was used as an instrument and it was answered by 88 respondents from BSU who answered the questionnaire while browsing the said website.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What is a Website?

A website is a collection of web pages consisting of information, images, videos and other digital assets that are hosted on one or several web server(s), usually accessible via the internet, cell phone or a LAN (Local Area Network). It is a publication which has an author(s), a purpose, and has a proper scope of information which must be truly understood by the intended user (Kirk, 1996).

Web Standards

According to the Web Standards Project Developer Education Committee (2002), web standards are technologies, established by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) and other standard bodies that are used to create and interpret web-based content. These technologies are designed to future-proof documents published on the web and to make those documents accessible to as many as possible.

A site built according to web standards should follow best practices (correct doctype, valid code, accessible code, semantically correct code, user-friendly URLs etc) and adhere to the following W3C standards (Max Design, 2006):

- *HTML 4.0* - HyperText Markup Language (HTML)
- *XML 1.0* - Extensible Markup Language (XML)
- *XHTML 1.0, 1.1, and Modularization*
- *CSS* - Cascading Style Sheets
- *DOM 1* - Document Object Model Level 1



In addition to using the above technologies, a document is said to adhere to web standards when it:

- consists of valid HTML or XHTML
- uses CSS instead of tables for layout
- is properly structured and semantically marked up
- works in any web browser

General Website Guidelines

Intention guidelines. According to Cubbins (2000), a website that states its purpose in the introduction or in the title gives you immediate information about the content. If the site follows its declared intent, a straightforward and coherent relationship exists between the Web Builder and the reader. This helps to create the site's credibility.

Determine the purpose of the website by looking closely at the content of the information. Some sites provide links to a page “About Our Organization” or a “Mission Statement”, detailing the purpose in creating the website. The purpose of other sites might not be obvious at first (UM Libraries, 2006).

Content guidelines. Content is the reason why people come to the web. Website content should be concise, well organized, and targeted at the intended users of the website (BRAINBOX Intelligent Web Development, 2007).

According to the UM Libraries (2006), the currency or regularity of updating information is vital for some types of information and not so important for others. For example, a website that provides historical information, such as the presidential papers of



George Washington do not have to be updated as often as compared to sites that provide news stories or stock market information.

Construction guidelines. For someone to be able to understand and easily access its content, the website must be designed so that the information seeker can move within a page, or from page to page, without getting lost or having to click again and again through layers of links to get to the substantive information (Cubbins, 2000).

Design, organization and ease of use are important considerations. Web sites can provide useful sources of information, but if they are slow to load, difficult to navigate, search or read, then their contribution or usefulness will be lost (UM Libraries, 2006).

Based on the BRAINBOX Intelligent Web Development report (2007), modern website construction techniques must be used to ensure that each page of the website consists of valid code that loads as quickly as possible.

Authority guidelines. Knowing about the author of a website through a provided email address is also useful to determine whether a site is reliable or not (Cubbins, 2006).

According to Kirk (1996), authorship is perhaps the major criterion used in evaluating information. When we look for information with some type of critical value, we want to know the basis of the authority with which the author speaks.

The publishing body also helps evaluate any kind of document you may be reading. In the print universe, this generally means that the author's manuscript has undergone screening in order to verify that it meets the standards or aims of the organization that serves as publisher.



Links functionality guidelines. Evaluation of a site also means evaluating the links that the Web Builder chooses to include. Links are part of the site's total content, and links to respectful and accurate websites are important to maintaining quality; however, a quality link may not benefit an otherwise disrespectful or inaccurate website beyond being merely a good link, and links to disrespectful or inaccurate sites are like citations to questionable printed material, reflecting poorly on the Web builder's choice of links (Cubbins, 2000).

Usability guidelines. The user's goal is not to use the computer or the website but to accomplish some task; to get information, be entertained or buy a product etc. However, the core idea of user-centered design is to always remember that we are designing for users and not ourselves; you are not the user and the users are not designers (Powell, 2002).

Here is a list of important site considerations according to Alohas Online:

1. Functionality

- The site contains all desired information.
- The site includes all desired methods of contact or interaction.

2. Navigation

- Site navigation is easily understood.
- All site areas can be reached with a minimum number of mouse clicks.

3. Consistency

- All of the site's content is consistent with the client's message.
- All of the site's design and graphic elements are consistent with the desired style for the site.



4. Accuracy

- Each link on every site page has been tested.
- Each programming element on the site has been tested for all anticipated user responses.
- All site elements have been checked for errors in spelling and grammar

5. Speed

- Each site page loads within the desired amount of time.
- All graphic elements have been optimized to load as quickly as possible.

6. Appearance

- The site's overall design is appropriate and appealing.
- All graphic elements are as attractive as possible for loading within the desired amount of time.

7. Browsers

- All site pages display correctly within Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

Criteria for Evaluating Websites

According to Kapoun (1997), you may have a web page that could be of value to your research through this list of criteria for evaluating websites:

- *Accuracy.* If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her.
- *Authority.* If your page lists the author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, .gov, .org, or .net).



- *Objectivity.* If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information.
- *Currency.* If your page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date.
- *Coverage.* If you can view the information properly--not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement.

The BSU Website

According to Macasieb (2000), the first BSU website was launched in January 2000 in the internet courtesy of the Belgian government through the Philippine Institutional University Cooperation (PIUC) Project. Benguet State University was one of the 8000 Universities in 200 countries, reviewed and ranked by web popularity, included in the 4 International Colleges & Universities higher education directory, an international education directory selecting and reviewing world-wide accredited Universities and Colleges.

Definition of Terms

Accessibility. It refers to the access to the web by everyone, regardless of disability. It also includes device independence, universal access, availability of information, performance speed, and ease of navigation.

Accuracy. How accurate or precise the information is.

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It is a system used for changing the appearance of HTML elements, by assigning styles to element types, self-defined classes of elements or individual instances.



Currency. It refers to the timeliness of articles being published (how current the information is).

Design consistency and ease of navigation. It refers to the easiness of surfing on a web page through proper arrangement of information and consistent pattern throughout the site.

Hyperlinks. It refers to the reference or navigation element in a document to another section of the same document, another document or a specified section of another document that automatically brings the referred information to the user.

Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML). It is widely used for adding structure to text documents.

Links. These are references to other documents within the same website (Internal link) or in another websites (External link) or web pages. Clicking on them may take you to another document.

Search engines. Search capability of a site where you can search for information needed by typing keywords inside the search box.

Site integrity. It refers to the stability of the website over time.

Visibility and functionality. This means that the links are clearly labeled, easy to read, distinguishable from the content, functional and not broken or dead.

Web browser. It refers to the interpreter of the website. It allows a user to access information quickly and easily provided on many web pages at many websites by navigating the links. Users often don't blame the browsers for simple errors instead they blame the websites. Examples of these are the Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape's Communicator, Navigator.



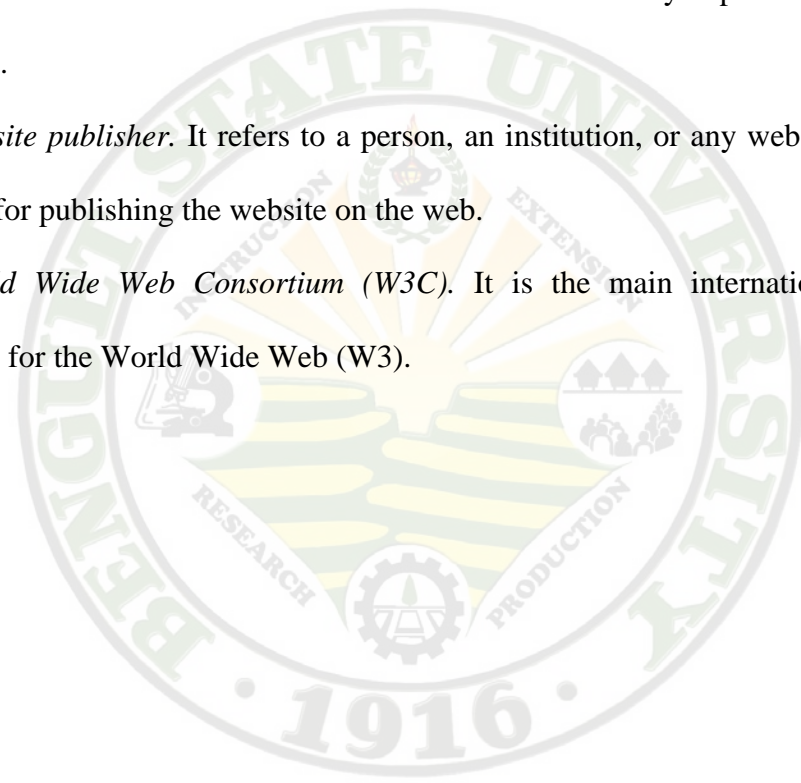
Webmaster. It is a person or an organization whose occupation is to design, to develop, to market, or to maintain websites.

Web server. It is a computer program that stores information contained on websites. It sends information to a computer when a link on the website was clicked. Apache and Zeus are some examples of web servers.

Website. Set of interconnected web pages generally located on the same server, and prepared and maintained as a collection of information by a person, group, or an organization.

Website publisher. It refers to a person, an institution, or any web agency that is responsible for publishing the website on the web.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). It is the main international standards organization for the World Wide Web (W3).



METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

Benguet State University is an institution of higher education in La Trinidad, Benguet. It is the oldest institution among all state colleges and universities in the region. It has been a recipient of grants from local, regional, national, and international entities promoting information and communication technologies.

BSU has a total land area of 658.6250 hectares (Figure 1) and is five kilometers away from Baguio City, the educational center of Northern Luzon, Philippines. Since the study evaluated the BSU website using BSU facilities, it was chosen as the area of study just the same.

The study was conducted from October 2007 to January 2008.

Respondents of the Study

There were 92 respondents purposively chosen by the researcher. There were two groups of respondents: the designer-respondents referred to as designers and the user-respondents referred to as users in this study. Four were web designers/developers; one from AMA and three from NIIT. They have evaluated the website in terms of web standards as well as their experiences in web development.

The user-respondents (users) were 18 4th year Bachelor of Science in Development Communication students, 18 4th year Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students, 19 3rd year Bachelor of Science in Home Economics students, 16 4th year Bachelor of Science in Nursing students, 15 2nd year Bachelor in Elementary



Education students, and two faculty members from College of Agriculture and College of Nursing. They were expected to evaluate the website from the prospective target users who are at the same time insiders and therefore are in a position to make judgments where necessary.



Figure 1. Map of Benguet showing the locale of the study



Data Collection

A key informant interview regarding the profile of the BSU website was conducted. The researcher interviewed Ms. Julie Ann R. Dugat, the web designer of the BSU Website. The researcher used the Web Standards Checklist by Russ Weakley for the evaluation of the BSU website.

For the evaluation of the BSU website in terms of certain criteria, a questionnaire formulated by the researcher was used as an instrument answered by user-respondents while online. This was based on the different criteria and content elements for evaluating the authority, accuracy, relevance, purpose, clarity, currency, site statistics, site features, and accessibility of a website.

Data Gathered

The data gathered were on the profile of the BSU website; evaluation of the BSU website based on web standards; indication of the author's name or the site publisher; purpose, clarity, relevance, accuracy, credibility of source, and currency of the content; accessibility and stability of the website; design, organization and ease of navigation; visibility and functionality of links on the website; site statistics of the BSU website by the respondents (BSU students and faculty members); and suggested features for the BSU website by the said respondents.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed, and consolidated through descriptive statistics. Data from key informant interviews were presented in a narrative form.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the BSU Website

The URL address of the BSU website at the time of evaluation was <http://www.bsu.edu.ph>. The construction of the website was in 2003-2004 according to the designer, a computer maintenance officer of the BSU-ICT Division. As indicated in the home page of the website in Figure 2, it was copyrighted in 2005.

Contents. Figure 2 also shows the contents of the home page of the website as follows: name and address of the university, university logo, pictures depicting the different functions of the university, log-in form to the BSU web mail, current date, main menu bar, latest article, links to news archives, Google search tool box, logo of Adobe Reader, logo of Fedora, logo of Apache, and BSU contact details. In addition, there were two marquees running across the header: “Center of Excellence in Agriculture Education” and “The Regional State University of the Cordillera”.

Organization. The organization of information in the website as indicated in the main menu bar did not follow any hierarchical ordering. For example, there was a link for *Office of the President* and another for *Key University Offices*, which gave the impression that the Office of the President is not a key university office. Another example is a link for *Admission* and another for *Forms*, both of which actually led to admission forms.

Sources of contents. The contents of the site came from different units in the university. News articles usually came from UPAO (University Public Affairs Office). Apache was the web server of the site while Fedora was its operating system. The Adobe



Reader was the software used for downloadable files issued by the university such as application forms for entrance examinations, academic calendars etc.

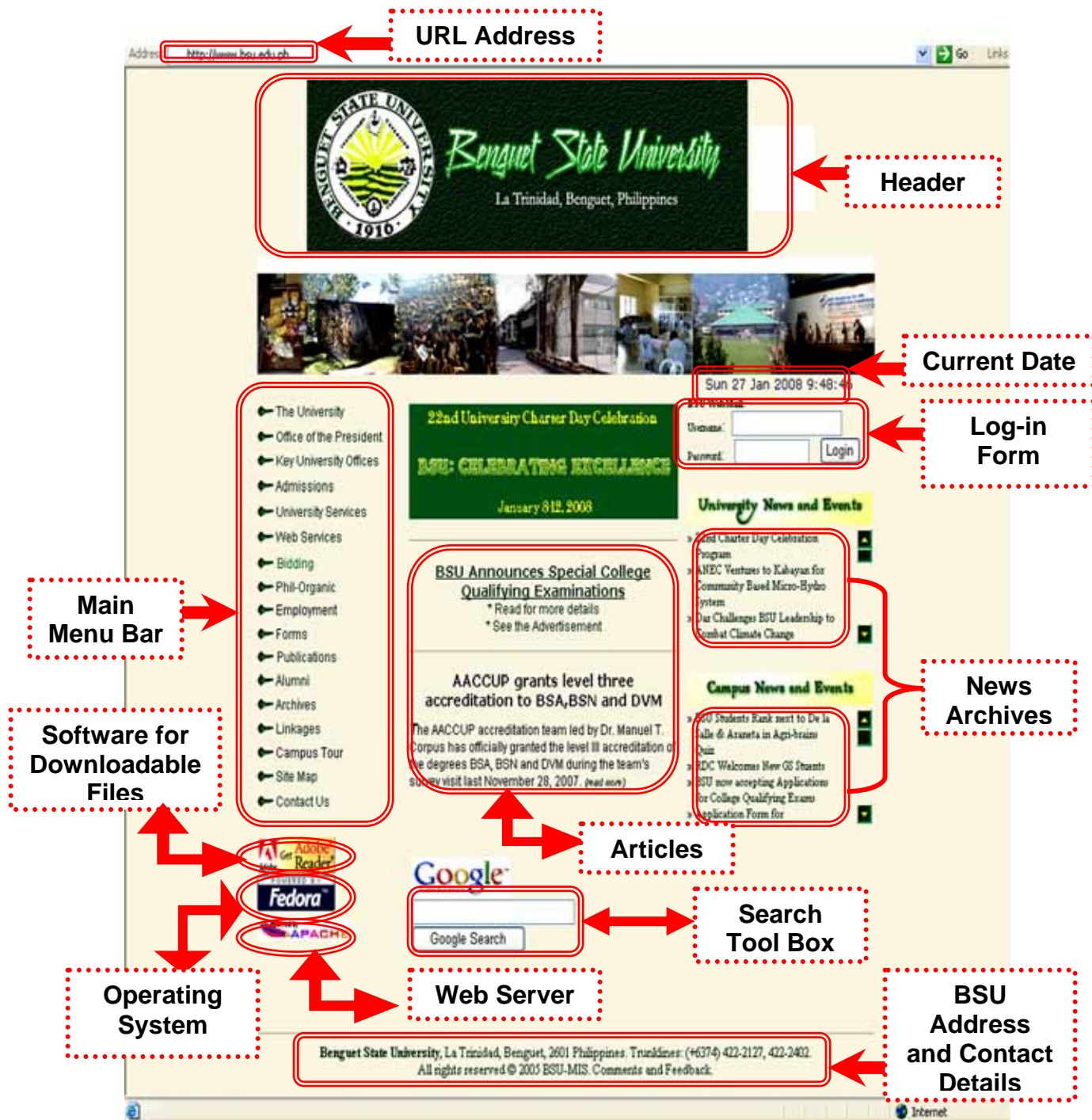


Figure 2. Home page of the BSU website showing different attributes



Figure 3 shows another page of the BSU website containing a news article. Compared to its home page, the main menu bar changed its position horizontally. The link *Key Offices* was featured at the left portion yet it had the same link found at the main menu bar.

The date of publication of the article was indicated with the name of its author. But there was no given date of last revision or last update of the website found in the web page. The font size of the picture caption was also bigger than the font size used in the article.



The image shows a screenshot of the Benguet State University website with several red annotations. At the top, the university's logo and name are displayed. Below this is a main menu with links like Home, The University, The University Key Offices, Academics, Admission, University Services, and Web Services. A secondary menu includes Publication, Archives, Forms, Linkages, Alumni, Site Map, and Contact Us. On the left, a 'Links' sidebar lists various university offices. The main content area features a news article titled 'AACUP grants level three accreditation to BSA, BSN' with a date of 'November 28, 2007'. The article text discusses the accreditation process and the role of the AACUP team. A photograph of the accreditation team is included, with a caption below it. At the bottom, there is a footer with contact information and a copyright notice.

Annotations:

- Main Menu Toolbar:** Points to the top navigation bar.
- Author(s) of Article:** Points to the AACUP accreditation team mentioned in the article.
- Source of Article:** Points to the AACUP accreditation team mentioned in the article.
- Date of Publication:** Points to the date 'November 28, 2007'.
- News Article:** Points to the main body of the article text.
- Image:** Points to the photograph of the accreditation team.
- Photo Caption:** Points to the text describing the accreditation team members.
- Links:** Points to the sidebar menu.

Figure 3. BSU web page containing news article



Frequency of site visits by users. Figure 4 shows that majority (78%) of the users visited the website once a month. Out of the 88 users, only five of them claimed that they visited the website twice a week. These users were 4th year Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students who were required to access the E-learning site provided by the BSU website and to log-in for their attendance.

However, there were 14 users (16%) who never visited the BSU website which means that it is only their first time to visit the site during the evaluation day. Seven of them were from the College of Nursing, six from the College of Home Economics and Technology, and one from the College of Teacher Education.

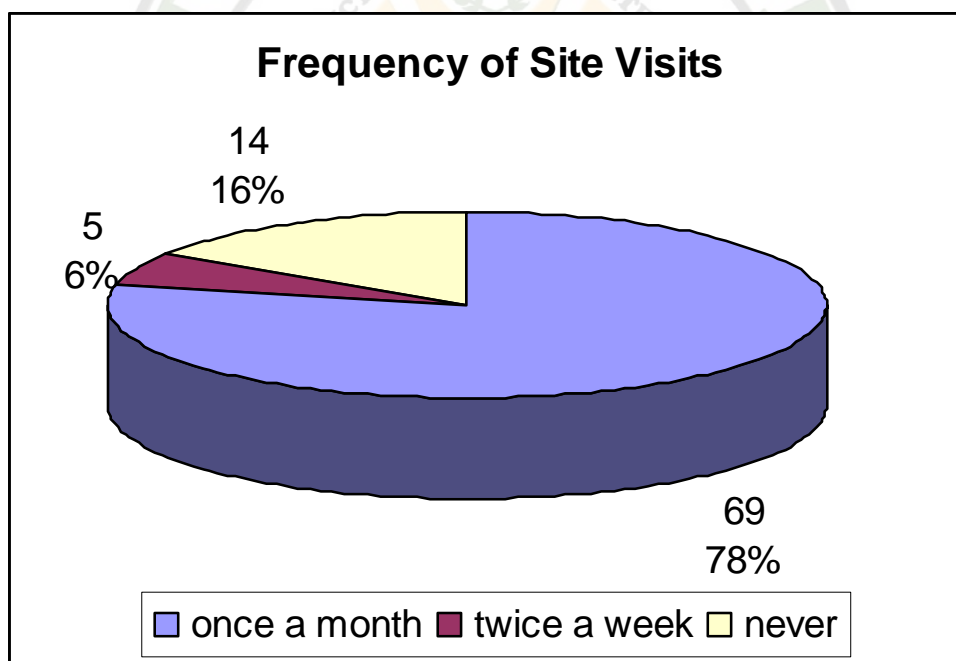


Figure 4. Frequency of site visits by users



Evaluation by Web Designers

One of the objectives of the study was to determine if the BSU website adhered to the web standards in terms of the following criteria: quality of the code, degree of separation between content and presentation, accessibility for users and devices, basic usability, and site management. The evaluation was done through a checklist which is presented in Table 1.

Code and degree of separation between content and presentation. According to designers, the BSU website consisted of a valid HTML and CSS, which was used for all presentation aspects including fonts, images and color. They also indicated that the code was well structured and that it worked for any web browser. With these features, the website adhered to web standards as indicated by Max Design (2006).

However, they also noted that there were broken and dead links like the links *Employment* and *Campus Tour* which were not linked anywhere. It was also observed that loading was very slow. In terms of these features, the BSU website did not pass the standards.

Accessibility. The website did not adhere to web standards when it comes to accessibility for users because it did not use visible skip menus, descriptive link texts and accessible forms. However in terms of accessibility for devices, the website worked in any browser thus it passed web standards.

Basic usability. The links were clearly defined when visited and the link to home page was provided in all web pages thus favoring basic usability. However, the designers noticed that the links on the website were not underlined for easy distinction from the other contents of the site and site navigation was not easy to understand. This is attributed



to design inconsistencies like one where a page of the website contained so many links which were also found on other pages. This tended to confuse an ordinary user or visitor of the site. For example, if you clicked on the link *Phil-Organic*, it led you to the News and Updates web page which contained the links *Publications* and *RDE News Updates*. Since some of the links at the main menu bar had been removed or added to these web pages, there was no more link going back to the Phil-Organic web page. Users would be lost in the site especially if they were not familiar with shortcut navigation aids (if provided) such as *back*, *next*, *home*, *top*, *end* etc.

Site management. The website used a friendly URL which functioned even without “www”.

Other observations. The designers noticed that the left and right margins of the website were too large for a web page. Some texts also could not be read easily because of the font style used. The designers also noticed that a log-in form was provided in the home page of the website but there was no sign-up form. This indicates that users could not register. Furthermore, there was no comment box provided in the site where users can post their comments regarding the site.



Table 1. Adherence of BSU website to web standards according to web designers

CRITERIA	STANDARDS	YES	NO
Quality of the Code	Consists of valid HTML or (X)HTML and CSS	✓	
	Has well structured code	✓	
	Has no dead/broken links		✓
	Performs/loads fast		✓
Degree of Separation between Content and Presentation	Has CSS for all presentation aspects (fonts, color, images etc.)	✓	
Accessibility for Users	Has visible skip menus		✓
	Has descriptive link texts		✓
	Has accessible forms		✓
Accessibility for Devices	Website works in any browser	✓	
Basic Usability	Site's navigation easy to understand		✓
	Has underlined links		✓
	Has clearly defined links	✓	
	Provides a link to home page in every page in the site	✓	
Site Management	Has friendly URLs and functions even without "www"	✓	



Evaluation by Users

The users evaluated the BSU website in terms of content, accessibility, design, organization, and navigation.

Content. Table 2 shows that majority (60.23%) of the users thought that the purpose of the website was clear even though there was no *Mission* or *About Us* feature found on the website. This is the feature which usually details the purpose of a website. The web designer of the BSU website said that the main purpose of the website was to give information about the university- its services, events, products, and colleges.

Majority (78.41 %) of the users said that the page title and images used were appropriate for its content, that the language used was appropriate for the intended audience, that the links were relevant, and that the content of the site was free from errors. These are all positive attributes of a website.

However, half of the users observed that the articles in the BSU website were no longer current news at the time of evaluation. For example, the article shown in Figure 3 was all about the accreditation of some degree programs offered in BSU which occurred on November 28, 2007 and was published in the website January, 2008. The current news during the time of the evaluation was the University Charter Day.



Table 2. BSU site content attributes as evaluated by users

CRITERIA	YES		NO		NO ANSWER	
	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Purpose is clear	53	60.23 %	30	34.09%	5	5.68%
Page title is appropriate for the content	85	96.59%	3	3.41%	-	-
Images used are appropriate for the content	69	78.41%	16	18.18%	3	3.41%
Language used appropriate for the intended audience	81	92.05%	7	7.95%	-	-
Links are relevant	71	80.68%	16	18.18%	1	1.14%
Articles are up-to-date	43	48.86%	44	50.00%	1	1.14%
Content of the site is free from errors (spelling, grammar etc.)	67	76.14%	20	22.73%	1	1.14%



Website accessibility. Table 3 presents the evaluation of the BSU website by the users in terms of speed and accessibility of the website. Majority (53.41%) of the users have observed the fast access of the website during the evaluation. However, the speed of internet connection depends on the internet source provider which is sometimes affected by the location of the internet shop, and the number of users in that area (Anonymous, n.d.).

Majority (63.64%) of the users claimed that the website can be accessed anytime. However, there were some users and even designers who noticed that there were times the BSU website could not be accessed outside the campus and even inside the university. The BSU web designer explained that the site must have been under construction or updating during those times.

Table 3. BSU website accessibility as evaluated by the users

CRITERIA	YES		NO		NO ANSWER	
	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Modem speed is very slow when loading	40	45.45%	47	53.41%	1	1.14%
Site can be accessed anytime	56	63.64%	32	36.36%	-	-



Website design, organization, and ease of navigation. Table 4 presents that most (67.05%) of the users agreed that the website was well designed and organized. This is supported by a majority (71.59%) claim that it was easy to read and navigate but contrary to the response of the web designers who said that the site was not well organized, hard to understand and hard to navigate. These differences in the observation of the users and the evaluators can be attributed to differences in knowledge and exposure. The web designers are expected to know that there are better ways of web design and content organization for easier navigation.

While majority (77.27%) agreed that the main menu bar was consistent throughout the site, 19 users (21.59%) noticed that the main menu bar was not consistent. An inspection of the site indicated that indeed it was not consistent. For example, when a link at the main menu bar in the home page was clicked, it led to a page where some of the links in the main menu bar were removed or added.

Table 4. Design, organization, and ease of navigation of the BSU website

CRITERIA	YES		NO		NO ANSWER	
	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Site is well-designed and organized	59	67.05%	29	32.95%	-	-
Site content is easy to read and navigate	63	71.59%	24	27.27%	1	1.14%
Main menu toolbar is consistent throughout the site	68	77.27%	19	21.59%	1	1.14%



Majority (60.23%) of the users were able to distinguish the links that were functioning from those which were not functioning. Some dead links were found at the web pages of the Vice President for Administration, some links at the University Services page, *Employment*, and *Campus Tour* link at the main menu bar.

Table 5. Visibility and functionality of links

CRITERIA	YES		NO		NO ANSWER	
	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE	NO. (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Links are visible	53	60.23%	34	38.64%	1	1.14%
Dead/broken links	64	72.73%	24	27.27%	-	-

Suggested BSU Website Features to be Improved

Table 6 shows the features/attributes of the BSU website that should be improved as suggested by the users. Majority (72.73%) suggested that the dead/broken links be made functional.

Many (40.91%) suggested the incorporation of more graphics and also the increase of speed. However, these suggestions are contradictory because excessive graphics tend to slow down the loading of a website.



Table 6. Suggestions for the improvement of the BSU website

FEATURES	NUMBER (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Eliminate dead/broken links	64	72.73%
Add more graphics	36	40.91%
Increase speed	36	40.91%
Improve design/lay-out	24	27.27%
Use appropriate images	21	23.86%
Increase font size	15	17.05%
Update articles	9	10.23%
Change font style	7	7.95%

*Multiple responses

Suggested Features for the BSU Website

Table 7 shows the different website features suggested by the users for the BSU website to have.

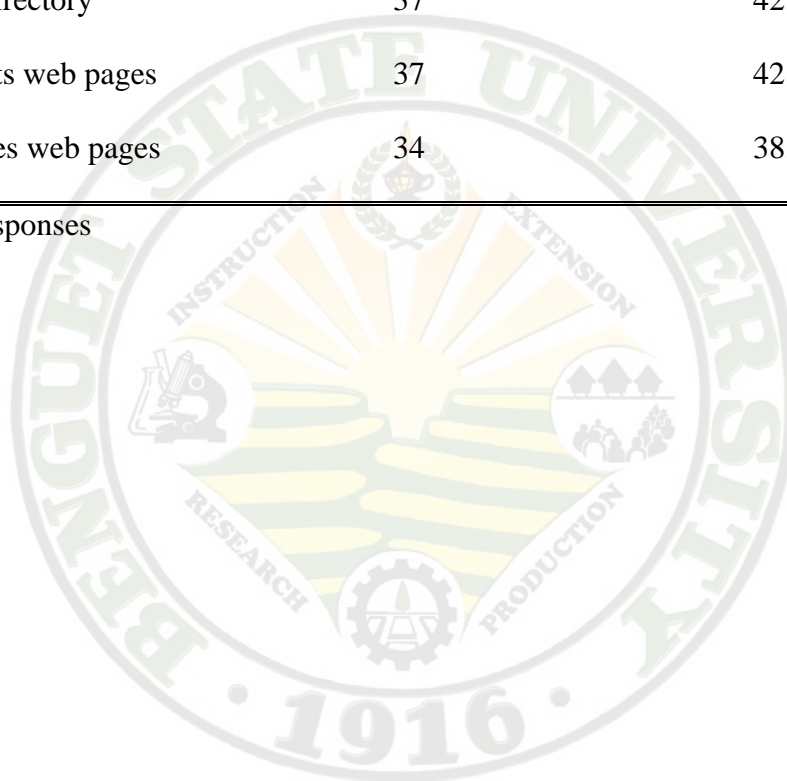
Out of 88 users, 65 or 73.86% suggested that a campus photo and video gallery must be included in the BSU website. This reflects that man indeed is visual by nature (Gur, 2002).

Majority of the users suggested that there should be a Campus Bulletin Box for announcements and a Message Board for the exchange of ideas/opinions.



Table 7. Suggested features for the BSU website

FEATURES	NUMBER (n=88)	PERCENTAGE
Campus Photo and Video Gallery	65	73.86%
Announcements (Campus Bulletin Box)	61	69.32%
Forum (Message Boards)	52	59.09%
BSU Map/Directory	37	42.05%
BSU Products web pages	37	42.05%
BSU Societies web pages	34	38.64%
*Multiple responses		



SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was conducted to evaluate the Benguet State University website according to web standards and to describe the content of the site in terms of, accuracy, currency, accessibility and other website features.

There were two groups of respondents used in the study: the user-respondents (users) and the designer-respondents (designers). The web designer of the BSU website was interviewed to know the profile of the said website. The evaluation of the contents of the website was done through a questionnaire distributed to 86 BSU students and two faculty members as users from five colleges with big population in the university - CA, CAS, CHET, CN, and CTE. The evaluation of the website according to web standards was done through the Web Standard Checklist by Russ Weakley, answered by four web developers/designers from NIIT and AMA. The users and designers answered the instrument while browsing the BSU website.

The data gathering for the study was conducted in Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet from October 2007 to January 2008, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. Qualitative data were presented in a narrative form.

The main purpose of the BSU website was to give information about the university - its services, colleges, products etc. This was agreed by the users though there was no *Mission Statement* or *About Us* feature, and products web pages provided by the site. Majority of the users said that they were visiting the website once a month only.



The site author and its contact details were not indicated in the website while the news articles in the site indicated the authors' names and the source of publication. The articles in the website were no longer current news and there was no given date of last update or last modification of the website. Only the date of publication was given in the news articles which have used appropriate language and images. These articles were also free from any errors as evaluated by the users and designers.

Majority of the users observed the fast access of the website during the time of evaluation but there were those who said that it can not be accessed anytime. According to the BSU Web Designer, it could not be accessed when it is under construction.

Moreover, the links provided in the BSU website could not be easily distinguished from the texts in the website thus these should be underlined and clearly defined when visited as suggested by the users. There were some dead/broken links and these links should be eliminated according to the users.

The website's main menu tool bar was not consistent thus site navigation could not be easily understood. Some texts could not be read also because of the font size and font style used. The users suggested that these should be changed. The users also suggested that the website must minimize its margin to fit the browser space.

Majority of the users suggested a campus photo and video gallery for the BSU website. The other suggested features for the website to have are campus bulletin box, message boards (forums), and a web page for BSU Map and BSU products. Both groups of respondents also suggested that the design including margin, colors, images and graphics, or the lay-out of the website be changed or improved.



Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The BSU website has not shown authorship which is a major criterion used in evaluating information. This may indicate that the website is not a reliable source of information for not showing author's affiliations/contact details, and sponsors.
2. The said website did not adhere to web standards in terms of degree of separation between content and presentation, basic usability, and quality of the code.
3. The website is weak in terms of accuracy, currency, and accessibility.
4. Site needs more and properly designed navigation tools for better and easier access to information. It also needs to make all links functional and visible throughout the site.
5. Site needs interesting features, promotional activities, and more information that will interest, benefit, and invite users to visit the site.
6. Site needs to be improved in terms of web page design. There are many features that are not present.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions:

1. The website should provide contact information about the author.
2. The BSU website designer should follow the web standards in establishing the website for the accuracy, currency, accessibility, stability, links visibility and functionality, proper design, and ease of navigation throughout the website. These should include proper organization of information for better understanding.



3. The BSU web developers should always monitor and update the site if it is well functioning in order to avoid “under construction” pages and misleading information.
4. All links found in the website must function well, be visible, defined when visited, and distinct from any other texts found in the website.
5. The site’s margin must be minimized to fit its maximum window width; font size and font style be changed for better understanding; and the main menu tool bar must be consistent throughout the site for easy navigation.
6. The website should provide a sign-up form for the log-in form provided in the homepage of the website. The registration should be online with an added safety net to make sure that only members of BSU can register. Online registration is more convenient and will therefore encourage more to register and therefore improve interactive participation.
7. The *Campus Tour* link found at the main menu tool bar of the website must contain the web pages of the different colleges of the university and other services and utilities found within the university.
8. There must be a link for BSU Research Journals at the main menu tool bar.
9. A site visit-counter and a comment box should be provided in the website since visitors should be encouraged to give their feedback.
10. The web developers of the BSU website should put some other important features for the site especially an external link for a campus photo and video gallery, a web page for all the different products of BSU including not only food products but



also products of research, extension, and instruction in order to attain the real purpose of the BSU website.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Letters to the Respondents

Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

17 October 2007

Dear Evaluators,

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study entitled “Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website”.

In this connection, kindly fill up the questionnaire that will help the researcher to determine if the BSU website adheres to web standards. Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Rest assured that your answers will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Thank you very much and God Bless!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN, Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

14 January 2008

Dear Respondent,

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study entitled “Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website”.

In this connection, kindly fill up the questionnaire. Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Rest assured that your answers will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Thank you very much and God bless!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

18 December 2007

JULIE ANN R. DUGAT
Computer Maintenance-ICT Division
PIUC

Madam:

Seasons Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring in Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study titled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website."

In this connection, I would like to request your good office for an interview regarding the profile of the BSU website. Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Hoping for your immediate response regarding this matter.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN, Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department Of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

16 January 2008

MACARIO D. CADATAL Ph. D.
Dean
College of Agriculture

Sir:

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring in Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study titled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website."

In this connection, I would like to reserve 5 units at the CA Computer Laboratory room on the following dates:

January 17-18 (ThF),
January 21 (M),
January 23-25 (WThF), and
January 28-31 (M-Th), 2008 at 9:00 AM-12:00 PM for the said study.

Your participation on this study is very essential and highly appreciated.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

16 January 2008

MARY JANE L. LARUAN Ph. D.
Dean
College of Teacher Education

Madam:

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study entitled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website".

In this connection, I would like to reserve the CTE Computer Laboratory on January 18, 2007 at 9:00 AM -11:00AM for the study. Twenty (20) CTE students will be answering a questionnaire while browsing the said website.

Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Hoping for your immediate response regarding this matter.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

18 January 2008

CHRISANDO P. PAZA
Instructor
CAS-MPS

Sir:

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study titled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website".

In this connection, I would like to ask for permission if you would allow me to distribute my questionnaire to twenty (20) students from your class in the following schedules:

- January 22, 2008 (Tuesday) – 1:00 PM (BSN IV-B)
- January 23, 2008 (Wednesday) – 9:00 PM (BSIT IV-P₁)

Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Hoping for your immediate response regarding this matter.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

21 January 2008

MA. TERESA P. TEOFILO
Instructor
CAS-MPS

Madam:

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study titled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website".

In this connection, I would like to ask for permission if you would allow me to distribute my questionnaire to twenty (20) students from your class on January 23, 2008 (Wednesday) at 1:00 PM.

The students will be answering the questionnaire while browsing the said website.

Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Hoping for your immediate response regarding this matter.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



Benguet State University
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
Department of Extension Education and Development Communication
La Trinidad, Benguet

21 January 2008

VICENTE PANAGAN Jr.
Clinical Instructor
College of Nursing

Sir:

Greetings!

I am Renato C. Liclican, 4th year BS Development Communication student majoring Educational Communication and presently conducting my thesis study titled "Evaluation of the Benguet State University Website".

In this connection, I would like to inform you that you are one of the faculty members chosen to be one of my respondents for my study. Attached with this letter is the questionnaire which will be answered while browsing the BSU website.

Your cooperation in this study will be of great help to me and also to the university. Hoping for your immediate response regarding this matter.

God bless and thank you very much!

Respectfully yours,

RENATO C. LICLICAN
Researcher

Noted by:

MARIA LUZ D. FANG-ASAN Ph. D.
Adviser



QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: (optional): _____ College/Dept: _____
 Course and Year: _____ Date: _____

I. Attributes of the BSU Website

Instructions:

Check the corresponding box whether your answer is **YES** or **NO** to the following questions.

Please read and analyze the following questions carefully and answer it honestly.

**It is in your hands to establish the good quality, authorship, accuracy, currency, and accessibility of the BSU website.*

CRITERIA	ATTRIBUTES	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	
AUTHORITY AND ACCURACY	Site Publisher	Site publisher indicated?			
		Link to publisher's webpage provided?			
	Site Author	Author's name indicated?			
		Author's contact details provided?			
		Author's credentials/biography is available?			
		"COPYRIGHT" statement included?			
CONTENT	Purpose	Is purpose of the site clear?			
		"MISSION" statement or "ABOUT US" feature included?			
	Clarity and Relevance	Page title appropriate/descriptive of the content?			
		Images used appropriate for the content?			
		Language used appropriate for the intended audience?			
		Provided links relevant?			
	Currency	Date when article was placed on the web given?			
		Date of article's last revision given?			
		Date of article's last update and modification given?			
		Articles are up-to-date?			
			"WHAT'S NEW?" section included?		
	Accuracy and Correctness	Is it free from errors? (Spelling, grammar etc.)			
Bibliography/references were given?					



CRITERIA	QUESTION	YES	NO
<u>ACCESSIBILITY AND STABILITY</u>	Very slow to load?		
	“HELP” feature available?		
	Requires registration or password to access it?		
	Can you access the website anytime?		
<u>DESIGN, ORGANIZATION, AND NAVIGATION</u>	Well designed and organized?		
	Easy to read and navigate?		
	“SEARCH” feature/SITE MAP available?		
	Links visible and properly functioning?		
	Main Menu Toolbar consistent throughout the site?		

II. BSU Site Statistics and Features

- How often do you use or visit the BSU website? (Pls. check)
 - Always (when online)
 - Sometimes (when it is only needed)
 - Never (this is just your first time)
- What features do you want for the BSU website to have? (Pls. check)
 - Forum (Message Boards)
 - Campus Photo and Video Gallery
 - Announcements (Campus Bulletin Box)
 - BSU Societies/Groups/Clubs Web pages
 - BSU Colleges/Departments Web pages
 - BSU Products Web page
 - BSU Map/Directory
 - BSU News Publications Web pages
 - BSU Research Journals Web pages
 - Others (Pls. specify) _____
- What features/attributes do you hate in the BSU website?
 - Design/Layout
 - Font size
 - Font style
 - Speed
 - Unnecessary Images
 - Dead/broken (not functioning) Links
 - Articles
 - No graphics
 - Others (Pls. specify) _____

Comments/Suggestions:

Thank you very much! God bless always! RCLiclican



WEB STANDARD CHECKLIST

Name: _____

Agency/Company: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

Log on to <http://www.bsu.edu.ph>, the official website of Benguet State University and evaluate it through this checklist.

Check the corresponding box whether your answer is **YES** or **NO** to the following questions regarding the BSU website. Put your remarks after each item.

CRITERIA	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Quality of the Code	Used a correct Doctype?			
	Used a Character set?			
	Used valid (X) HTML?			
	Used valid CSS?			
	Used unnecessary classes or IDs?			
	Code well structured?			
	Have any broken links?			
	Performs fast in terms of speed/page size?			
	Have JavaScript errors?			
	<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>			
	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Degree of Separation between Content and Presentation	Used CSS for all presentation aspects (fonts, color, padding, borders etc)?			
	Are all decorative images in the CSS or do they appear in the (X) HTML?			
	<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>			



CRITERIA	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Accessibility for Users	"ALT" attributes used for all descriptive images?			
	Used relative units rather than absolute units for text size?			
	Used visible skip menus?			
	Used accessible forms?			
	Used accessible tables?			
	Is there sufficient color brightness/contrasts?			
	Link texts descriptive?			
<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>				
	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Accessibility for Devices	Does the site work acceptably across modern and older browsers?			
	Is the content accessible with CSS switched off or not supported?			
	Does the site work in text browsers such as Lynx?			
	Does the site work well when printed?			
	Does the site include detailed metadata?			
	Does the site work well in a range of browser window sizes?			
<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>				



CRITERIA	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Basic Usability	Is there a clear visual hierarchy?			
	Are heading levels easy to distinguish?			
	Site's navigation easy to understand?			
	Site's navigation consistent?			
	Used consistent and appropriate language?			
	Have a sitemap page and contact page? Are they easy to find?			
	For large sites, is there a search tool?			
	Is there a link to the home page on every page in the site?			
	Are links underlined?			
	Are visited links clearly defined?			
	<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>			
	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	REMARKS
Site Management	Have a meaningful and helpful 404 error page that works from any depth in the site?			
	Used friendly URLs?			
	URL functions even without "www"?			
	Have a favicon?			
	<i>Summary Remarks/Recommendations:</i>			


THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

<http://www.maxdesign.com.au/presentation/checklist.htm>




Appendix C. BSU Website Home Page

Address <http://www.bsu.edu.ph> Go Links



Benguet State University

La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines



Sun 27 Jan 2008 9:48:46

- ← The University
- ← Office of the President
- ← Key University Offices
- ← Admissions
- ← University Services
- ← Web Services
- ← Bidding
- ← Phil-Organic
- ← Employment
- ← Forms
- ← Publications
- ← Alumni
- ← Archives
- ← Linkages
- ← Campus Tour
- ← Site Map
- ← Contact Us

22nd University Charter Day Celebration

BSU: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

January 8-12, 2008

BSU Announces Special College Qualifying Examinations

* Read for more details
* See the Advertisement

AACCUP grants level three accreditation to BSA,BSN and DVM

The AACCUP accreditation team led by Dr. Manuel T. Corpus has officially granted the level III accreditation of the degrees BSA, BSN and DVM during the team's survey visit last November 28, 2007. [read more](#)

BSU WebMail:

Username:


Password:

University News and Events


- > 22nd Charter Day Celebration Program
- > ANEC Ventures to Kahayan for Community Based Micro-Hydro System
- > Dac Challenges BSU Leadership to Combat Climate Change

Campus News and Events


- > BSU Students Rank next to De la Salle & Ateneo in Agri-brains Quiz
- > RDC Welcomes New GS Students
- > BSU now accepting Applications for College Qualifying Exams
- > Application Form for




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Subdomains

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Internet

