Boost User Engagement on Your Website (Session)

By
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About me:

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- SEO professional since 1995, pioneering search-engine friendly website design.
- Website usability & UX professional since 2002.
- Information architect since 1990.
But what’s really important to know:

Shari Thurow
What I recently learned:

Session agenda:

• PET (Persuasion, Emotion, Trust)
• User Engagement Dos & Don’ts
• Debunk Common Myths & Misconceptions
• Questions & Answers
If you check out some of the sample pages shown in this workshop, they might look different, or they may no longer exist.

The principles & guidelines that these examples illustrate are relevant long after they have changed.

This is a good idea, or this website implemented a user engagement best practice.

This is a bad idea; don’t do this; or this website did not implement an engagement best practice well.
**Usability / UX tests** that can help you monitor & increase the user engagement of your website.

**Tools** that can help you increase the user engagement of your website.

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**PET (PERSUASION, EMOTION, TRUST)**
PET Design™:

- **Trust techniques.** Establish credibility, provide assurances, & remove/minimize risk.

- **Emotion-based techniques.** Elicit desired emotional responses during website experiences.

- **Persuasion.** Trigger desired calls to action (CTAs).
USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #1: Before you can persuade, must establish trust.
16 trust markers:

- Credible organization
- Domain name
- Design quality
- Match existing knowledge
- FAQs / Support
- Citations
- Current content
- Extensive content
- Archives
- Links
- Physical address
- Policies that show trust
- Certifications & awards
- Testimonials
- Famous & common people
- Peer advice & service comments

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Match existing knowledge = validate user mental models:

- A **mental model** is an explanation of a person’s thought process about how something works, faithfully representing that person’s root motivations and their matching behaviors.
How would you turn on this light?
404. That’s an error.
The requested URL was not found on this server. That’s all we know.
USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #2: Learn & validate user mental models for labeling, placement, you-are-here cues, & content format.

Where people look:

- 90%
- 70%
- 50%
- 30%
- 40%
- 60%
- 80%
USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #3: Use the users’ language. Don’t put vague or confusing labels within navigation & main content.

According to usability guru Jakob Nielsen & Nielsen Norman Group, 77% of task failure is due to IA issues.

According to Human Factors International, over 80% of task failure is due to navigation & IA issues.
Does this page validate user mental models?

USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #4: Place formal navigational elements where users expect to see them. ALWAYS communicate visited / unvisited link status.
Boost User Engagement on Your Website

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USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #5: Library websites should have linkworthy & shareworthy content assets. Make content assets easy to link to & easy to share.

According to Cialdini’s 6 Principles of Persuasion:

- **Authority:** People follow the lead of credible, knowledgeable experts.

- Retrieved from: [https://www.influenceatwork.com/principles-of-persuasion/](https://www.influenceatwork.com/principles-of-persuasion/)
Some types of digital content assets:

- Reference
- FAQs, Q&As
- Coupons (codes)
- Articles
- Checklists
- Fact sheets
- Guides
- Quizzes
- Comparison charts
- White papers
- Tools
- Infographics
- Slideshows
- Videos
- Audio files
- Spreadsheets
- Presentations
- Links & resources
- Games

URLs (web addresses):

- What makes a URL sharable?
  - Targeting the most appropriate social media outlets
  - Placing “share” icons in the most appropriate places

- What makes a URL linkable?
  - Unique & valuable content
  - Clean & descriptive URL structure that is front loaded
  - Good title & heading
  - (Optional) subject tagline
  - Correct format
How to Lessen Allergy Symptoms

Pollen from grasses, trees, and weeds can trigger hay fever or seasonal allergies. You might be sneezing and have a runny or stuffy nose and itchy, watery eyes.

Here’s what you can do to manage your hay fever symptoms.

Play Video
Really good advice:

“Commit to consistent engagement on the social media platforms you chose to use, to the point of staying away from new social media platforms that you don’t have the resources to actively participate in.”
- Dr. Robert Cialdini, Author of *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*

If a site supports user mental models:

- Increases user confidence & satisfaction.

- “People are more likely to engage in a given behavior the less effort it requires. As numerous studies have indicated, high perceived effort is a major impediment to behavior change....”

Aesthetic usability effect:

- **Definition.** Users’ tendency to perceive attractive products as more usable. In other words, people tend to believe that websites that look better will work better.

- **Emotional response.** Users have a positive emotional response to a website’s visual design.

- **Usability/UX issues.** An attractive design (from users’ perspectives) can make users more forgiving of minor usability problems, but not of larger ones.

Adapted from: [https://www.nngroup.com/articles/aesthetic-usability-effect/](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/aesthetic-usability-effect/)
USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #6: Use a brand-perception usability test to learn how both users & site owners feel about a website design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USABILITY TEST NAME</th>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>FORMATIVE OR SUMMATIVE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand perception test</td>
<td>Brand message</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td>Identifies the feelings and attributes associated with a website or application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks test participants to circle the adjectives that best describe each mock-up / prototype.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Another variation is to show test participants two screenshots. Of the two, which is more (the following adjectives are examples):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional, reliable, dependable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cool, hip, cutting edge, state-of-the-art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sophisticated, polished, professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Warm, fuzzy, friendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strike a balance between:

User Expectations

Business Goals

Use color wisely:
Legibility tools:

- WebAIM Color Contrast Checker
  https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

- WebAIM Link Contrast Checker
  https://webaim.org/resources/linkcontrastchecker/

- ColorCube Brand Palette Color Accessibility Checker
  https://oomphinc.github.io/colorcube/#results-content

- Acart Communications Contrast Checker
  https://contrastchecker.com

Page speed tools:

- Compressor.io (graphic images)
  https://compressor.io/compress

- Imageresize.org (graphic images & PDFs)
  https://imageresize.org and https://imageresize.org/pdf-resize

- iLovePDF™ (PDFs)
  https://www.ilovepdf.com/compress_pdf

- Small PDF
  https://smallpdf.com/compress-pdf
USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #7: Use color psychology & color-palette tools to help you determine a website's formal color scheme.

Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-honigman/psychology-color-design-infographic_b_2516608.html
A good resource:

- https://color.adobe.com

Another good resource:

Boost User Engagement on Your Website

PERSUASION
Communicate prioritized calls to action (CTAs):

- What do you want users to do on your website?
  - Name 3 actions you want users to do on each page of your site
  - Put them in order of importance (1, 2, 3)
  - Create a visual hierarchy that communicates what you would like site visitors to do

- If you cannot instantaneously say what you want users to do on each page of the site? Then the CTAs are not obvious to users.

USER ENGAGEMENT TIP #8: Clearly define preferred CTAs per page type or template. Use placement, size, color, & clear labels to communicate a visual hierarchy.
Urgency Principle:

- Urgent situations cause users to suspend deliberate thought & to act quickly. (FOMO = Fear of Missing Out, the anticipated regret of not being able to seize an opportunity.)

Types of urgent situations on library sites:
- Exhibitions
- Author talks / presentations
- Films / movies
- Benefit events
- Membership events
- Hosting an event
- Classes / workshops

Some words that help increase urgency:
- Again
- Approaching
- Close
- Fast
- Hurry
- Instant
- Never
- Over
- Quick
- Rapidly
- Seconds
Key takeaways:

- **Trust comes first.** Before you can persuade, must establish trust.
- **Validate user mental models.** Learn & validate user mental models for labeling, placement, you-are-here cues, & content format.
- **Use the users’ language.** Don’t put vague or confusing labels within navigation & main content.
- **Navigation status.** Place formal navigational elements where users expect to see them. ALWAYS communicate visited / unvisited link status.

Key takeaways (cont’d):

- **Encourage linking & sharing.** Library websites should have linkworthy & shareworthy content assets. Make content assets easy to link to & easy to share.
- **Use brand perception tests.** Use a brand-perception usability test to learn how both users & site owners feel about a website design. Ongoing basis.
- **Use color wisely.** Use color psychology & color-palette tools to help you determine a website’s formal color scheme.
- **Clearly communicate & prioritize CTAs.** Clearly define preferred CTAs per page type or template. Use placement, size, color, & clear labels to communicate a visual hierarchy.
Thank you!

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