

INTERNET INFORMATION RETRIEVAL - a solution for students



ABSTRACT

The objective of this research project was to evaluate searching methodologies used by undergraduate learners in searching for academic information, and to design an aid if required.

Only 32.2% of all learners in this study managed to find one piece of relevant information in 30 minutes without any assistance.

A tool called "Finder Of Information On The Internet" (FOIOTI, at www.mwe.co.za), was designed and tested by measuring searching success.

During this study the author found that most learners had little or no training on Internet usage; often worked on the Internet; could not specify their search properly; used very few of the operators offered by search engines and had a low success rate in finding relevant data.

The two final phases of experiments proved that FOIOTI, as a searching tool, was successful. During these two phases, 71.0% of the participants claimed that they found the specified information when using FOIOTI within 30 minutes.

BACKGROUND & LITERATURE

The literature indicated that it is essential that learners should be able to retrieve relevant information from electronic sources. However, it was also stated repeatedly that searching on the Internet using standard search engines is not an easy task.

It was also noted that a move was taking place away from traditional teaching methods to those with more learner involvement, making use of new computer and communication technologies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Both the literature survey and the early experiments indicated that **most IT/IS learners cannot use the Internet effectively as an academic source.**

Those that do use it, do not make effective use of operators, complain about low speeds, and in general find the information hunting experience de-motivating.

METHODOLOGY



To test the hypothesis, a population and sample was chosen.

A series of empirical experiments were then designed to test the ability of the sample to find relevant information on the Internet under controlled conditions.

After exposing the sample to FOIOTI, the experiment was repeated.

Success both before and after FOIOTI was measured to arrive at a conclusion.

EXAMPLE

Describe EXACTLY what you are looking for by typing one sentence in the spec box (a single word or even a short phrase is not good enough)

I need to find the qualifying time for the men's marathon for the 2004 Athens Olympics Spec box

Type one word from the spec box which is normally spelt with capital(s) Athens Olympics Caps box

Type two or three words from the spec box, which have a special meaning if they are used together (one space between each word). qualifying time Phrase box

Type two other words from the spec box (one word per box below), which describe your topic men's marathon Word boxes

ALL FIVE BOXES ABOVE MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE PROCEEDING!!

Select any one or more Search Engine(s) by clicking on the button(s)!

Google Excite Hotbot



Marathon Championships, which were held at the New York City Marathon on November 4, 2001. The qualifying window opened on January 1, 2002 and will close 30 days before the Olympic Trials race. The U.S. "A" standard is 2:20:00 for men and 2:39:59 for women. The U.S. "B" standard is 2:22:00 for men and 2:48:00 for women.

RESULTANT PUBLICATIONS

Weideman, M., Strümpfer, C. 2004. The effect of search engine keyword choice and demographic features on Internet searching success. *Information Technology and Libraries*: 23(2): 58-65. ISSN: 0730-9295.

Weideman, M. 2004. An empirical evaluation of one of the relationships between the user, search engines, metadata and websites in three-letter .com websites. *South African Journal of Information Management*. To be published in September 2004 issue.

Weideman, M. 2004. FOIOTI: An implementation of the conceptualist approach to Internet searching. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*. To be published in December 2004 issue.

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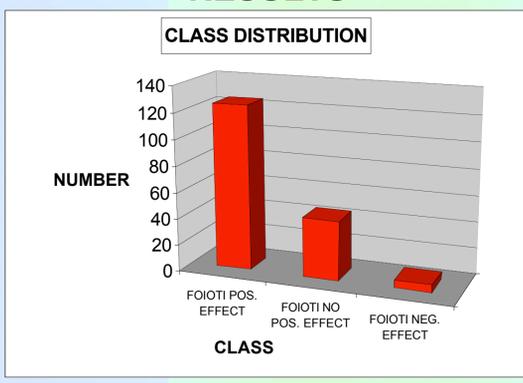
CONCLUSION

It was concluded that FOIOTI was successful:

One of the two major success indicators is the increase in the number of learners who found their information – it increased from 32.2% (without help) to 65.1% by using FOIOTI.

The other major indicator of success is a comparison of the number of learners who managed to increase, experience no effect or decrease their searching abilities through the use of FOIOTI. A total of 71.0% reported that FOIOTI enabled them to find information whereas they were unsuccessful before, 25.6% reported no positive change and only 3.4% claimed that they could not find information with FOIOTI, but did find it without the model.

RESULTS



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