RESEARCHES REGARDING THE ONLINE PRESENCE OF THE BIHOR COUNTY COMPANIES

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In this paper is presented a survey of companies' websites in Bihor county. The study aims at local companies whose scope of activity allows them to interact with the end-users – individuals and whose presence in the virtual environment is ensured by websites. Companies that own a website use it for different purposes: to communicate to the users information about the company, to promote its products and services offered, to offer potential clients the opportunity to purchase these products online, to interact with their clients. The website of a company ensure its constant presence and can be used as an instrument in the marketing strategy, as a meaning of identity development or growth of the brand exposure, as a support for relationships with potential buyers or as a way of achieving market research. But for the website to fulfill the purpose for which it was made it must give the needed importance to certain aspects. Research carried out reveals an intensified concern of the companies for creating their own websites, for communicating with potential clients from the virtual environment, but they do not give importance to issues related to updating the information, structure, appearance, purpose sites. Most companies use the website mainly for information. They give little importance to promotion, yet not realizing the benefits they might have. Less than one third of the websites analyzed offers the possibility of online orders.
Keywords: websites, Internet users, virtual environment, company's promotion, loyal clients
JEL codes: L81, C85

1. Introduction

The accelerated development of the Romanian technological environment led companies to an increasing concern about entering the virtual environment, communicating with potential clients in this environment.

A growing number of Internet users use it in order to search information by gvisiting websites and blogs. Therefore there is a growing trend of increased buyers to approach virtual environment at the expense of the traditional. In these circumstances, companies are forced to use online environment in order to initiate a dialogue with them, to be able to communicate the informational message, promotional or the intention of initiating a commercial exchange.

Enhancing virtual environment use by Romanian companies is the result of the influence exerted by companies that have tapped the domestic market from abroad and whose marketing practices include the use of this environment. Marketing strategies of the latter are successfully implemented, which has motivated domestic companies to take the risk of the online approach.

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its visitors information about the company, about its traded products, about providers, or about the financial situation.

But for the website to fulfill the purpose for which it was made it must give the needed importance to certain aspects. Thus, the homepage of the website influences in a large way the visitors' response to the entire website. The consistency of positioning the information presented - text, images or animations - it's absolutely or relative positioning –in the page, also the forms the positioning of information take, relative to each other - determines the user's range of how he considers the website relevant to its interests. The relationship created between the types of information can make the page attractive or can generate an overall inconsistency. The contextual factors also include technical aspects such as speed of loading and inclusion on the first page of items that require installation of new programs in order to be viewed by users, issues that, superficially treated, can determine users to stop viewing the website after a few seconds. The most common types of content are text, images, sounds and video. In order to achieve an attractive page, you must find the balance between them, because although the use of as many different elements as form on the content may attract the users attention, their excessive use generates a cluster of information. The information must be updated periodically to attract visitors, to make them return.

2. The premises of the research

In the research that I performed i started from the fact that:

1. There are companies that continue to be present in the virtual environment, even after their dissolution.
2. For many sites there are some problems related to the information updating.
3. There is a similarity of sites structure, of their appearance.
4. Most sites are intended mainly for information.
5. Most sites have elements of interaction with users

3. The research methodology

The sites analyzed in the research conducted were selected from a database composed at national level. The database used has a search engine that allows searches based on criteria such as name, location and domain, advanced searches based on the number of employees, turnover, profit, filtering of results based on: phone number or fax, e-mail, website, etc.

From the database, which can be accessed online at the www.listafirme.ro I extracted data in the table below. The data refer to the years 2007 and 2011, a range of five years, in order to see what changes have been in the concerns of companies from Bihor county to be visible on the web.

As observed in Table1, the completeness of general data about the companies is extremely high.

Table1 reveals a 7626 decrease in the number of active companies in 2011 in Bihor county, compared to 2007. The number of companies that have a website however is increasing, from 880 in 2007(3% of all companies) to 1.530 in 2011(8% of all companies). There has been a near doubling of their number, which shows increasing concerns of companies to be present in the virtual environment.

Table1: Total number of active companies in Bihor county between 2007 - 2011 and the completeness of the information for these

	Year 2007		Year 2011	
Number of companies in Bihor county	26.964		19.328	
Completeness of the information for companies				

	Year 2007		**Year 2011**	
Company data	*No.*	*Percentage*	*No.*	*Percentage*
Name	26.954	100%	19.328	100%
Address	25.394	94%	19.328	100%
Registry number	26.954	100%	19.328	100%
Fiscal code	26.954	99%	19.328	100%
NACE code	24.745	91%	19.328	100%
Social capital	18.455	68%	13.154	68%
Contact person	26.940	99%	19.328	100%
E-mail	1.573	5%	2.300	12%
Web	**880**	**3%**	**1.530**	**8%**

Information source: www.listafirme.ro

I have selected from the database used, using the search engine available, all the companies from Bihor County that have a website (1.530 companies). By checking the existence of these companies, in the year 2011, it was found that 6 of these websites were of dissolved companies, which haven't announced that they have dissolved nor withdrew their website. Therefore the selection of websites is represented by 1.524 companies.

Out of the 1.524 companies from Bihor county that have websites were selected 450. The selection of the 450 companies submitted to the research was made as follow:

1. There were grouped all the companies from Bihor county, whether they have or they don't have a website, in the following categories: manufacturing, services, trade and other.

Table2: Number of companies according to the type of activity

Activity	**Number of companies**	**Percentage**
Manufacturing	2.126	11%
Trade	1.933	10%
Services	15.076	78%
Other	193	1%
TOTAL	**19.328**	**100%**

2. Were selected companies that have websites taking into account the structure of the previous paragraph, as shown in the table below (Table3):

Tabel 3: Number of websites of the companies selected according to the type of activity

Activity	**Number of websites**	**Percentage**
Manufacturing	49	11%
Trade	45	10%
Services	351	78%
Other	5	1%
TOTAL	**450**	**100%**

4. Data analysis and interpretation

The results are summarized in the tables below:

No. companies registered in the database listed that have websites	No. existing Websites for dissolved companies	No. existing companies that have websites
1.530	6	1.524

Websites	Web sites that don't have updated the information	Web sites with similar structures	Purpose of the website			Sites that contain elements of interaction with users				
			Only for information	Only for promotion	Of information and promotion	total	a	b	c	d
450	324	401	81	63	306	320	86	45	89	51

a	The existence of contact forms as unique elements of interaction with users
b	Possibility of obtaining current information via newsletters (newsletters) and blogs
c	Possibility of making online orders
d	Possibility for users to interact both with company and to each other

The data collected revealed that:

-4% of the websites are of dossilved comapnies. They continue to exist because withdrawal of the website is omitted when they decide to withdrawal from the market. These circumstances affect negatively the consumer's perception, not so much on the company, that is not affected of this case since they ceased to exist as legal entities, but on the whole virtual representation of business organizations. Consumers adopt an attitude characterized by lack of generalized trust to the information provided by companies through their websites.

-72% of websites fail to periodically update the information. The offer submitted by the company on the website is different from the real one, meaning that, with the change of product offer details is omitted the transposition of these changes in their website, risulting in a lack of trust of potential customers. It is also affected consumer perception on the companies' professionalism and diminished their confidence in the whole information of the virtual environment. Updating the websites offer visitors reasons to return and show him the company's willingness to communicate to the public. A possible cause of this situation is the attitude of local companies towards the virtual environment, an withheld attitude due to the minimized importance given to online marketing.

-89% of websites have a similar structure. On the one hand, this similarity allows visitors to familiarize with presentation websites, which makes internet surfing easy where the internet user is visiting for the first time such a website. On the other hand, it creates problems when a company wants to differentiate itself in the virtual environment from its direct competitiors or from the whole virtual community of companies. The main role of a presentation website is to draw attention, to arouse interest and to trigger the desire to buy the product. From this perspective the presentation website is a form of promotion, and therefore must exhibit a distinctive identity of the company. Similarity between the websites of different companies is influenced also by the strategy they adopted. The copying strategy of some companies already

present in the market, whose design has proven to be a recipe for success, is really attractive especially for start-ups.

-18% of the websites are for informational purpose only. 14% of the websites are only for promotion. 68% of the websites have both informational and promotional content, in most cases is primarily informational content (83%). Therefore, for most companies the informative function is of major importance. Conpanies consider that this influences utmost the confidence that visitors give to the company, and the perception they form regarding to the seriousness of the company.

-71% of sites contain elements of interaction with users. Among these:

   -26.9% of the websites have contact forms on the first page, these being the only element of interaction with users

   -14.06% of the websites provide current information via informative bulletins (newsletters) and blogs

   -27.8% of the websites enable online ordering

   -15.9% of the websites can be found in public virtual spaces such as social networking and instant messaging programs. These sites allow both the exchange of information between the firm and users, and the development of virtual communities composed of visitors of those sites.

5. Conclusions

The consumers interest in the virtual environment is constantly growing, as evidenced by the rapid growth of internet use in the last years. But the pace at which companies approach the online environment is inferior to the one of the public. From 2007 till 2011 the percentage of the companies from Bihor county who have a website has changed from 3% to 8%.

Companies that own a website use it for different purposes: to communicate to the users information about the company, to promote its products and services offered, to offer potential clients the opportunity to purchase these products online. But a large number of companies don't give enough importance to regular updating of information, leading to a loss of confidence of their potential customers.

Most companies use the website mainly for information. They give little importance to promotion, yet not realizing the benefits they might have.

Less than one third of the websites analysed offers the possibility of online orders.

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