

# **ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHER'S PORTAL, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF WEB USABILITY**

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## **1. Context**

The Internet based on increasingly complex networks has a strong influence on communication processes. It is the society connected to network, also called the information society. The information society enhanced by ICTs - Information and Communication Technologies transforms the social and educational relations.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education launched the Teacher's Portal, which aims to encourage teachers' participation in educational communities and encourage the use of ICTs in the classroom. With the Portal, the teacher is able to identify and select appropriate situations to his/her school's reality, as well as to access new contents so as to transform, enrich and innovate his/her pedagogic practices. However, inserting ICTs in the school environment is still challenging and teachers' access to content portals is still restricted.

Therefore, the present study aimed to analyze the teacher's Portal from the usability assumptions, with the objective of redesign it in order to expand teachers' use of the Portal.

## **2 Method**

From the perspective of the theories of ergonomics and usability, the analysis and the restructuring of the Teacher's Portal was based on conventions presented by different specialists. Krug (2006) states that the conventions facilitate user's understanding of the system, reducing his/her effort to understand and improve his/her experience. However, according to Memory (2005), the people involved in the project are up to examine all solutions to a problem and decide on the use of these conventions, depending on the proposal and the needs specified in the project.

For the analysis of the Teacher's Portal it was considered other methods beyond the standards and conventions proposed by experts, such as:

- Free web tool Google Analytics, in order to obtain statistical information of users on using the portal;
- Forum engagement tool, where users have suggested what could be improved for the redesign of the Portal;
- Suggestions and criticisms from e-mails.

### **3 Results**

The analysis of the Portal created in 2008 was important because, from an initial vision afforded by the use of Google Analytics tool, it was observed that users abandoned the site quickly and hardly returned. Other aspects related to navigation and basic interface elements were observed:

- The navigation had many areas of clusters with few interactions with a view of other areas of the portal;
- The need of changing among links presentation structure of main access elements.
- Inconsistencies in the significance of the links in the content areas;
- Presentation of links in no featured content area;
- The lack of relevant content on the homepage.

After researching the tools, changes in the redesign have been applied, highlighting the improvements on the main portal navigation structure, where the structures between pages were maintained in order to facilitate user understanding and the enhancement of his/her experience through element layout consistency. It was also aimed at make more dynamic and interconnected navigation from the main menu tabs. In the homepage information was added information that took the splash screen character, since they present, currently, relevant information to the Portal information decision-making. Besides, regarding the homepage, it was placed a short presentation in the portal and what can be done from it. Furthermore, with the development of new layout we tried to minimize the use of blue color, trying to keep them only to link areas within the areas of content.

Changes made can be seen by accessing the e-address <http://portaldoprofessor.mec.gov.br/>

### **4 Conclusions**

This study was focused on the principles of web usability from theoretical foundation and the Teacher's Portal/MEC analysis. The process of analysis significantly contributed to the redesign of the portal. The axes adopted for the analysis, namely: page statement of objectives, information organization to reduce cognitive load,

eliminating ambiguities regarding the links and standardization of the colors were very relevant.

It is believed that the result will bring less frustration and more satisfaction to portal visitors as it sought to make information easier to find, and understood. And a greater chance to see them returning and contributing to the improvement of the virtual learning environment. However after the recommended implementations becomes necessary to reassess the interface to verify that the changes were effective.

A relevant aspect presented by this analysis was the clear relationship established from the theoretical framework. Data from Nielsen studies (2006) were perfectly applicable to the Teacher's Portal access context. Even though being different projects, application periods and different cultures.

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