

Evaluating the Usability of Sri Lankan University Websites

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With the internet as the backbone and websites for sharing information over the internet, information and communication technology has revolutionized the way businesses and individuals carry out tasks. To achieve its goals, a university, as an organization that develops knowledge for the world, need a functional website. According to a preliminary study conducted in January 2020, the majority of Sri Lankan university website users are not satisfied with the usability of their university websites, and these poorly designed websites don't provide necessary support for universities to compete with world-ranked universities. However, researchers were not focused in studying the usability of Sri Lankan university websites from the perspective of both website developers and website users. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the usability of Sri Lankan university websites from the perspective of website designers in order to identify issues with website development principles and standards by testing websites by automated website testing tools. In addition, the study aims to assess university web sites based on user feedback using a questionnaire-based evaluation method to evaluate the quality of the user experience on websites. As stated in the results, the overall usability score for the Sri Lankan university websites provided by the Web Page Analyzer tool is 43 and by the SEO toolbox is 58% respectively, according to the Pingdom tool the grade for the performance of Sri Lankan university websites is 69, the WAVE tool discussed existing web site errors, and it is critical to increase mobile-friendliness as Mobile User-friendly Testing tool. Confirming to the results of the questionnaire survey, the usability of Sri Lankan university websites is at an average level. Finally, the study recommends best practices for increasing the attractiveness, controllability, efficiency, helpfulness, and learnability of university websites in order to deliver a better user experience.

Keywords: Website Usability; Sri Lankan University Websites; Website Development Principles; Website Development Standards; User experience on Websites