

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS: CASE STUDY**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the results of a case study of WWW information provision to a group of textile entrepreneurs in Botswana. The case study revolved around the practical application of Internet use in a developing country. The group that constituted the research population belonged to the Gaborone chapter of the Botswana Textile and Small Business Association (BOTSBOA). This chapter follows logically from the observations contained in the previous chapter, and was informed by some of the constraining factors that the researcher described there.

This chapter describes the summative evaluation of a prototype web site created to meet the information needs of the predominantly female, first-time WWW users who were also textile entrepreneurs. The research utilised an interdisciplinary approach to meeting the users' needs – needs which were determined on the basis of information science theory and fulfilled by means of the educational design processes that the researcher employed.

The researcher presented her results in the following two ways:

- (1) In the first instance, an analysis of responses to questions users were asked in the questionnaire that was used as part of the means to evaluate the web site.
- (2) In the second instance, the researcher used some of those information science criteria for information evaluation that Bontjies and Cronje (2000) recommend, namely accuracy, authority, and relevance.

In the next chapter, researcher will try to establish how well respondents answered the research questions and how this affected the evaluation.

## 5.2 Evaluation of the site by using a questionnaire

### 5.2.1 Knowledge of computers

Respondent entrepreneurs were asked to select those statements that best described their knowledge of computing. The table below indicates their responses.

**Table 343 Knowledge of computers**

Use of computers	True	False
I have never used a computer	60% (6)	40% (4)
I have basic knowledge of computers	40% (4)	60% (6)
I use computers often in my work		100% (10)
I have never used an ATM machine	40% (4)	80% (6)

I use it for e-mail		100% (10)
I use it for WWW		100% (10)
I use it for word processing	20% (2)	60% (4)
This is the first time I am using WWW	100% (10)	

It should be noted that this was the first time that respondents used the WWW. Sixty per cent had never used a computer, although 80% had used an ATM machine. Their ability to use their particular programme would be hindered by this lack of skill and experience in manipulating software and certain computer hardware features.

The results show that their computer skills were elementary. Sixty per cent of the sample had never used a computer before. One hundred percent of the respondents do not use a computer in their work. None had ever used e-mail. A limited number, 40%, had used a computer for word processing, while 60% had never used one at all.

### 5.2.3 Using electronic business information sources

Before the respondents could answer whether they had ever used a computer programme to access information on business, one of them asked what electronic business information was. They could only all respond after they had received the explanation that this referred to information from computers that would enable them to carry on their business more efficiently and effectively.

In response, **100% of the respondents** indicated that they had **never used a computer programme to access business information before**. This tallies with the response to

5.2.1 where those who had used a computer indicated that they had only used it for word processing. The closest some of the respondents had come to using a computer for business transaction was using an automated teller machine (ATM) to draw money from their bank accounts.

#### 5.2.4 *First impressions*

When they were asked what their first impressions of the web site were, all of the respondents (100%) felt that it **took too long to load**. The time of day at which the exercise was done (14:00) may have influenced this response as the Internet usually operates more slowly around this time.

All of the respondents (100%) felt the site was attractive and that it caught their attention.

The first page of the site that they would have seen is presented in Figure 7 below.



Figure 7 Opening page of the web site

**TEXTILE  
INFORMATION CENTRE**

Welcome to the home page of the Small Scale Textile Industry sector of the Small and medium Sized Enterprises (SMMEs). The purpose of this site is to provide current information for textile sector entrepreneurs. The site is based on the expressed needs of the textile sector entrepreneurs.

**A business information source for textile SMMEs in Botswana**

Sponsored by  
the University  
of Botswana

Designed and hosted by  
**INTOWER  
DESIGN**

- Home
- Textile Sector Information
- Government Aided Programmes
- Banking Services
- Textile Markets
- Consultants
- Business Plan
- Training
- Sources of Materials
- Forthcoming Events
- Our Contact Details
- Links to other related Sites

### 5.2.5 Index page

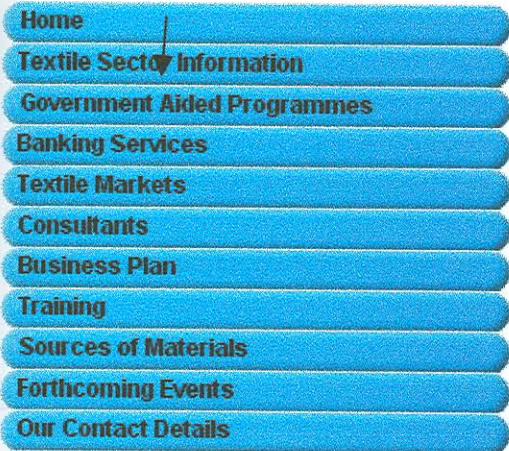
When questioned about how they responded to the index page (which also gives users directions as to where they might go), **100%** of the respondents felt that **the index page gave sufficient information.**

The researcher noted that the respondents also intently watched the site as it loaded. They became excited as they saw photographs of their colleagues appear on screen. They liked the bright coloured drapery that decorated the site and the pictures of their colleagues at a trade fair. Respondents pointed at the photographs in amusement as they recognised their colleagues. This connection helped them to feel at ease in the context of an otherwise new experience. It is important to note that none of the entrepreneurs felt frightened or scared of the technology. Their attitude could better be described as curious and expectant.

#### *5.2.6 Ease of use*

When they were questioned about how easy it was to use the site, **100%** of respondents indicated that it **was easy to move around the site**. Such an answer was more or less predictable since the researcher had built in an ongoing “tutorial” that explained each of the items in the index page and why it was there. In addition to this, every page a drop down menu with buttons representing each page.

Figure 8 Index page



#### 5.2.8 Content of site

All (100%) of the respondents felt that the **content was adequate**. They also felt that it met their specific needs. The researcher therefore concluded that no more content needed to be added to the site.

#### 5.2.9 Additional items on screen

**None of respondents had any suggestions about** how the information on the screen could have been more useful to them. Their responses therefore seem to confirm with their responses to the question in 5.2.6. The researcher therefore concluded that the site expressed what they had requested.

### 5.2.10 Additional information

On the question of what information they would have liked to see added to the site to make it more adequate for their needs respondents, they made the following remarks:

- It is adequate.
- We need more information on how to buy fabrics.
- We need more information on how to sell.

### 5.2.11 Improvements to the site

When questioned about what other information could be added to the site in order to improve its quality, respondents indicated that the current contents were adequate both in terms of quality and quantity. The respondents all answered together by saying “*e siame*”, a Setswana expression meaning, “It is fine.”

### 5.2.12 Occasions on which they would return to the site

The last question concerned the circumstances under which they would return to use this site. The following responses were received:

- Whenever I need information on markets (60%)
- When I want to advertise my goods (20%)
- When I need to know more about BOTSBOA activities (20%)



## 5.3 Observation

### 5.3.1 Control of the media

As they responded to the questions and examined the site, the respondents talked amongst themselves and asked one another questions about the site and what they were finding. It was gratifying to see the excitement as they clicked on the blue buttons that opened other pages and provided them with more information. Although they were all first-time users, the media did not intimidate them. They seemed to be in control of it.

### 5.3.1 Language

The fact that the site was presented in English did not seem to inconvenience the entrepreneurs to any noticeable extent. The entrepreneurs informally translated the English into Setswana for each other and proceeded to explore the site and the WWW through the links provided. The language factor (the use of English) was not a major deterrent but only another minor hurdle to be conquered towards trade and profit.

### 5.3.2 Learning abilities

The users proved to be quick learners. They were motivated to see how the Internet could solve their problems of access to information and how such information might improve their businesses processes and prospects.

### 5.3.4 *Sharing resources*

The *sharing* of computers in a group obviously helped these users to obtain maximum benefit from the technology. They became one another's lab technicians and instructors. The sharing did not deter them but enhanced the comradeship that made the exploration easier and more fruitful. (Communal sharing is, in any case, a highly regarded community value among African people)

### 5.3.5 *E-commerce*

Excitement about the prospects of actually being able to buy fabrics from China and France was short lived as users found that they could not do that without themselves having credit cards. Their excitement turned into disappointment and their hopes were dashed as they realised that none of them owned a credit cards.

## 5.4 An evaluation of site using information science criteria

This evaluation is presented in the format that is generally used in information science to evaluate information sources for accuracy, ease of use, currency, and authority.

Bontjies and Cronje (2000) recently added new criteria that may be used to evaluate web sites to the ones that they had previously listed (the traditional criteria): the

- **Authority**            Who is the author of this site and  
is he or she adequately qualified in this subject?

- **Purpose** Does the site fulfil the purpose for which it was created?
- **Accuracy** How accurate is the information contained in the site?
- **Currency** How often is the site updated?
- **Workability** How “user friendly” is the site?
- **Ease of use** How easy is it to use the site?
- **Connectivity** How easily does the site load?

#### 5.4.1 Authority

By “authority” we mean the intellectual authority of the person who has developed the content of the site. The researcher who is an experienced business librarian, and well grounded in information provision developed this site. It is the job of a business librarian to assess user needs and provide information to entrepreneurs and business students. The users of the site recognized the authority of the author. The users were furthermore comfortable with the author because they had become accustomed to her presence and her participation in their monthly meetings. It is customary however to state the credentials of the author on the site.

#### 5.4.2 Purpose of site

The purpose of the site is well stated in the first paragraph on the home page. Entrepreneurs understood that the site had been created to provide them with business information that would enhance their business activities, prospects, profitability and efficiency. It achieved all these goals. Users found the site more than adequate for their stated information needs and so the site fulfilled its purpose.

#### 5.4.3 Accuracy

The information provided on the site was accurate. It led users to places to which they could go to for more information – should they needed. The links to other sites worked effectively.

#### 5.4.4 Currency

The users were excited to find the dates of forthcoming regional trade fairs listed on the site because this gave them time to plan their business strategies and arrangements. The site did not however indicate the date of last update. That should be included.

#### 5.4.5 Workability

The site was not immediately useful for *all* the needs of the entrepreneurs. It provides information on where to trade but it does not facilitate the actual trading process (this factor was mentioned in an earlier chapter). Its utility for workers was thus diminished by this shortcoming. The utility of the site as a trading zone was further compounded by the fact that users needed credit cards to trade and they did not own any (although there was no barrier or obstacle in principle that prevented any of them from ultimately obtaining them).



#### *5.4.6 Ease of use*

The first-time users of the site found it easy to use. The presence of the index on all pages made navigation easy. Working in groups also made working with the site an easy and enjoyable experience.

#### *5.4.7 Connectivity*

None of the respondents had their own access to the Internet. In order to access the site, they would have to use the services of an information provider. This lack of connectivity may curtail use among this group of entrepreneurs.

### **5.5 Summary**

The practical experience of using the Internet showed that entrepreneurs were willing to use it in order to solve their business-related problems. Users were not deterred by the language used (English) or a new and essentially unfamiliar technology. Working in groups created a friendly environment in which users could ask their peers for help and discuss their findings with one another. The content of the site was accurate in so far as it covered the areas specified by the users. However, the immediacy that is created by Internet led to a disappointment when the users found that they could not trade over the Internet without possessing valid credit cards.