

Title: UsabilityNet Competitor Analysis
Document ID: IST-1999-29067-WP1/HFRG/TR/2.0
Date: 10/09/2001
Partner: HFRG
Authors: Dr J Kirakowski, A. Burke, R Whelan
Circulation: Public
Status: UsabilityNet Document

Purpose and revision history

This report was written to assist in setting up the UsabilityNet web site.

This revision is to demonstrate a case study of competitor analysis for web site development.

Version	Remarks
1.	'Niche' sites analysis not yet in place (for Conclusions section). Awaiting remarks from project review.
2.	Conclusions section written. Niche sites review abandoned. Comments from workshop included in conclusions. This document is now closed.
3.	Document tidied for public release on web site.

Table of Contents

Methodology	4
Results	5
The Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability.....	6
Graphics, Visualization & Usability (GVU) Center at Georgia Tech.....	7
Usability professionals association page	8
Usable Web	10
Usability First	11
Guide to Usability for Software Engineers	12
Microsoft Usability Research	13
The Usability Methods Toolbox.....	14
Web Usability OverSite	15
IBM Ease of Use.....	16
System Concepts.....	17
NBST Web Metrics.....	18
Usability Around the Globe: Resources	19
Universal Usability dot org	20
Conclusions.....	21
Appendix A: the TOP 10.....	22
Appendix B: Search Engines Used.....	23

Methodology

Using the following search engines, a list was drawn up of the top 10 usability sites which featured most frequently when searching with the keyword 'usability.'

LYCOS
HOTBOT
ALTAVISTA
EXCITE
GOOGLE
Yahoo!
DOGPILE
MICROSOFT
INFOSEEK/GO
ASKJEEVES
WEBCRAWLER
LOOKSMART
SEARCH
NORTHERN LIGHT

Up to 40 results from each engine were obtained, and a weighted average for each web site mentioned was computed. Sites which had different pages mentioned were only accepted once, at the most general (topmost) page, with the highest popularity figure for all the pages of that site.

The ten best sites as determined above were listed for further analysis.

Experts from the UsabilityNet consortium reviewed this list, and a further four sites were added on their combined recommendation.

No sites which belonged to members of UsabilityNet were included in the survey.

The sites were reviewed by one person, a usability expert with experience of web site design, who took screen shots of every page he reviewed.

The notes and screen shots were reviewed by two independent assessors, and their comments were added to the text.

A set of overhead transparencies were prepared from the screen shot bank, in order to demonstrate the salient points made in the text of this report, and a presentation was made to the UsabilityNet workshop. Points made during the discussion following the presentation were included in this report. The entire screen shot bank was available for consultation during the course of the UsabilityNet workshop.

In the body of this report, an expert-based assessment of the targeted sites is reported. The aim of the assessment was to see what kinds of resources the top ten sites featured or had pointers to.

A 'resource' means a description of a method, or procedure, or information about a tool or piece of software that could be used for the purpose of user centred design. It does not mean a service offered by a company, nor does it mean a discursive text on the philosophy of usability.

The top ten sites are listed in Appendix A

Search engines used are listed in Appendix B

Results

The following sites were in the top ten category and were the basis of the review:

1. The Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability
2. Graphics, Visualization & Usability (GVU) Center at Georgia Tech
3. Usability professionals; association page
4. Usable Web
5. Usability First
6. Guide to Usability for Software Engineers
7. Microsoft Usability Research
8. The Usability Methods Toolbox by James Hom
9. Web Usability Over-Site
10. IBM Ease of Use

The following sites were recommended by experts in the UsabilityNet project after the above list was circulated and were also included for the review:

1. System Concepts
2. NBST Web Metrics
3. Usability Around the Globe: Resources
4. Universal Usability dot org

The Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/>

This is Jakob Nielsen's site. On the front page you have the following headings:

Current column (date)

Invitation to subscribe to update notifications

Suggestion that regular readers pay \$2

List of previous columns

These are arranged in date order, with an informative title, and date. Columns which are considered by the web counter to be popular are underlined.

At the foot of the page is a short history of the page giving statistics.

The page is not visually attractive, but it looks very busy, no graphics. It is written in clean html using css if you want it.

Each subsequent column or topic page has a short summary at the top (about 2 lines).

Many of the pages are reports of other people's work or presentations that agree with the author's view of the world. New pages seem to come out once every fortnight.

They are written in clear and direct language. Nielsen tends to use mathematics to prove that he is a real scientist. He has a racy, polemic style that sometimes verges on the self-parody. The value is in a sound-bite which appears to have some scientific legitimacy.

Graphics, Visualization & Usability (GVU) Center at Georgia Tech

<http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/>

This is the web site of an academic research university department. It seems to highlight latest ground-breaking research. The front page has an index on the left (frames are used) which is not very exciting. The body of the screen on the right is broken up into the following fields:

Research Spotlight

This field occupies the top of the screen, underneath, the rest of the fields are in two-column format. Clicking on this top field sends you to a nicely-formatted whole page summary of the research issue, written in accessible English, with links to more technical documents at the foot. The technical documents are... well... technical.

Upcoming events

by GVU staff. clicking on one of these gives you a photograph of the smiling staff member, where the events will take place, and a summary of what they are going to say. Sometimes short (3-4 lines) sometimes several screenfulls.

WWW User Surveys

These are well known surveys of the kinds of people involved in the net and what and where are they coming from. You can download previous surveys. This is one of the strong points of this web site, many people cite these surveys.

Masters in HCI

an announcement for their course.

News headlines

notice of congratulatory articles and mentions of GVU

Latest technical reports

a one liner giving the name of the technical report (usually quite informative, not gimmicky.) Click on a link and you get to the technical reports page. The article you clicked on is on the top of the screen, but if you scroll up or down you will see the rest of the listings on the technical reports page. Each report here is given its long title, author list, and then you can download an abstract, a pdf file, or a postscript file of the paper.

Going to the abstract gives you a summary and keywords, and links to pdf and postscript versions of the whole paper.

The technical reports are organised by year, and on the left hand side of the screen there is a frame index for each previous year (you get to the current year by default.)

I suspect these technical reports are also one of the strong points of this web site.

There is a long disclaimer at the foot of the page, and links to an FAQ and Feedback pages. The FAQ is about the site itself, concentrating of the GVU survey reports and a little on academic matters such as enrolling for courses.

The front page is moderately visually appealing but it concentrates on getting information across with some graphic leavening. It seems to be hand-written, with some java stuff to identify the user's browser. There is a good set of meta tags describing the contents right at the top of the page.

The value of this site is the hard technical data that can then be processed by popularisers for sound-bites and give scientific legitimacy to their analyses.

Usability professionals association page

<http://www.upassoc.org/>

I didn't understand initially what this page was doing in the top 9. However, statistics cannot lie. So here goes...

On the front screen, there is a contents column on the left and the rest of the screen is divided into a 'news' column in the centre, and on the right a column of sponsors, with their logos and people mentioned by name. Yes, each logo is a link to the web site of the sponsor.

There is also a link to Amazon.com at the top right of the page.

The news column has the following entries:

Link to the UPA Voice newsletter.

This is a pleasantly formatted and unfussy publication. You can tell you are in the newsletter because the left margin has changed appearance. It acts as an index, of course, not very cleverly. Most of the postings seem to be short and informative. Graphics are used a lot to break up the monotony.

Annual conference information

Statement about the Palm Beach ballot

Link to the UPA store

where you can buy stuff from previous years' conferences

Rent the UPA mailing list

You can send out your announcements by renting their mailing list. I wonder how one gets *off* this list?

Information about UPA and an exhortation to join it.

The index on the left has things like the following, some of which are duplicated on the middle column contents:

Job bank

popular, I suspect. There is the standard index on the left (same as front page but in a different colour.) The centre column is the jobs listings, with a URL to the advertiser, date of posting, and location. On the right there are some rules and recommendations, and a list of other job sites to do with HCI.

Resources

The resources are gathered under the following headings:

Newsgroups

Conferences

HCI Resources

Organizations

Usability Testing Information

User Interface Design Style Guides

Web Design Style Guides

Miscellaneous Sites of Interest

Bibliographies & Recommended Reading

These tend to focus on URLs of 'lists of lists', but some useful pages giving resources are also indexed. The miscellaneous sites also includes a lot of hall of fame/shame entries and the bibliographic entries are all 'lists of lists.' All the links from here are external.

Consultants

For \$100 per year you can advertise your consultancy on this page. The list is quite long and sorted alphabetically!

Outreach

This is an interesting set of pages by Janice Anne Rohn. There is a menu on the left hand side, not the UPA pages menu, although there is a upa logo at the top. This menu lets you go to many screens, usually containing about one screenfull of information.

The topics are:

- Background (to the outreach program)
- Benefits (of usability - good stuff here!)
- Press information (including sound bites)
- Events (somewhat out of date)

Going to one topic still leaves the menu on the left, so you can navigate around the topics quite easily.

On the whole the page looks quite pretty but gives an air of disorganisation, as if nobody really is in charge. I gather nobody is, and the page suffers from poor updates. The page I was viewing was about a month old at least. Interestingly, the pages do NOT use frames: they use tables instead. No meta tags that I could see. Machine generated by some mickey-mouse clockwork toy that does not identify itself. HTML code nicely formatted, minimum of clutter.

The value of the home UPA page may be the jobs column, although some of the resources are better annotated than others. The value of the outreach page is I suspect the 'benefits' page. This is frequently asked for on UTEST at any rate.

Usable Web

<http://www.usableweb.com/>

“1227 links about web usability by Keith Instone”

This is designed to be a highly informative site. The WAMMI reference is quite old (1998). The basic page is split into two columns, the right hand column being slightly thinner.

On the left we have:

Topics

different kinds of topics are summarised, such as:

- methods

- design tips

- calendar of events

- strategic issues for web usability

- Issues

- profession (what you need to do as a web designing professional)

- technology (web technologies and their impact on usability.)

This is the main part of the page. Each of these is subdivided into a number of smaller sub-headings with a count of how many URLs there are for each reference. If you click on a main heading, you will get a list of URLs each of which go off-site. Some are more informatively described than others. If you click on a sub-heading, you again get a list of URLs that go off-site.

On the right we have

- What's new (very up-to-date!)

- Top Destinations

- Top Authors

Destinations and Authors seem to have a similar design philosophy. Top (?10) destinations and authors are listed on the front page. If you click on a destination or author, you get to another index of articles at that destination or by that author. Clicking on =that= URL sends you off site. The number of articles by each author or destination is also counted.

Interestingly, the top 10 that he lists bears no relationship to the top 10 we produced. Why is this, I wonder?

The whole page is very busy and crowded. The amount of information indexed is immense, but it is difficult to evaluate it. You could spend hours searching through stuff that was barely relevant or downright irrelevant. The site is designed for (1) HCI evaluation experts, and (2) web designers.

Instone says he spends at least 30 minutes personally evaluating each site before it goes into his database. I wonder how acceptable his categorisation system is?

The value of this site is the large number of links. The weak point is the lack of organisation and the uncritical acceptance of pages.

Usability First

<http://www.usabilityfirst.com/>

“your online guide to usability resources”

Unlike Usable Web and Alertbox, this front page looks quite uncluttered and has an element of 'aesthetic design' in it. It seems to be directed towards a fairly novice developer... of groupware?

Main entries in the index on the left are:

- introduction
- resources
- methods
- website design
- consulting
- groupware
- goms

There is a long-winded 'Introduction to Usability' which then links to a page of usability courses.

The Resources page contains links to:

- Forums list contains reference to three discussion lists: healthcare, groupware, and goms. You are invited to join one.
- Bibliography contains jacket repros of some interesting books on usability, guess which ones.

Usability links page is somewhat light on links, and these again are to fairly discursive pages and 'lists of lists.'

Glossary of common terms.

The search engine seems quite useful, although you have to specify the domain under which you want to search, which is a little frustrating as I don't know how they classify their domains.

Methods

sends you to a screen of information, not very much there.
Selection of methods is quite limited:

- cognitive walkthrough
- focus groups
- GOMS
- prototyping
- task analysis
- usability inspection
- user testing

They seem to be keen on GOMS as it also occurs at their top level. Each of these pages is some moderately useful talk - heard it all before. There is a bibliography of 143 entries on GOMS, each entry seems to be an abstract in their database.

Website design

This is more advice and wordage. There are some good hints about how to write for the web called 'writing for usability.'

There is a very long section on Groupware which again is wordy. I suspect that this is one of the attractions of this site: somewhere that groupware trekkies can point to. Their GOMS collection is a niche activity and the friendly advice under website design is useful although repeated ad nauseam everywhere.

Guide to Usability for Software Engineers

<http://www.otal.umd.edu/guse/>

This page was developed as a project by the students of University of Maryland, Masters of Software Engineering, Fall 98, Usability Engineering class. The collection is intended for software engineers and usability engineering practitioners to find relevant resources on the Web.

The contents list is:

- Introduction
- Methodologies
- Management
- Standards
- Java UI Tools
- Other UI Tools
- Testing
- Metrics
- Formal methods
- Education
- Conferences

This list is given both on the left hand menu pane and in the centre pane. The visual style is a little oppressive but not unpleasant. Maybe a little old fashioned, generated by a machine from a database. The site hasn't been updated since 1999.

If you click on an entry, you get sent down a bit on the page to a slightly more expanded explanation of what the topic is about. If you then click on the topic itself, you get to a 'chapter' style page about that topic. Clicking on the left hand menu gets you straight to the 'chapter.'

Within each chapter there is an index at the top, and then a series of headings corresponding to the entries in the index. For instance, there is a reference to the MUSiC project under 'Methodologies.' The site being referenced is explained in about 8 lines, and an off-site link to that site is provided. You can just imagine a bunch of grad students getting their rocks off compiling something like this, thinking they were getting somewhere.

There are some interesting links to case studies under Management.

The structure of the page is quite nice, but does not look commercial or even very professional. The reason the page gets a high rating is because it seems to provide a balanced list of resources for developers as well as wannabe usability workers, ie, not just technical resources, but also usability stuff, and it is well organised. The structure, with explanations and comments instead of bare links is reassuring to the visitor, although the links themselves are fast decaying ('link rot'). I could imagine many courses on web design reference this page.

Microsoft Usability Research

<http://www.microsoft.com/usability/>

This certainly looks like a 'commercial' site with a banner across the top, which is largely duplicated by the entries in the centre of the page. The panel on the left is used for important messages. There does not seem to be that many graphics. The page has a somewhat compressed look about it.

The site seems to be about the group itself, how to sign up to be a tester, where to find the group, what the lab looks like and so on.

There is a section on usability publications, which lists publications made by various people associated with the group. A fair number of these are available on-line but off-site. This could be a useful resource, especially since it's Microsoft who tend not to participate in discussion lists, so here's where you'd go to find out what these guys are thinking.

There is a link to a rather more technically-orientated accessibility site.

I suspect the main reason for this page's popularity (apart from the Microsoft identity) is the access to the papers in the usability publications: these are reprints of stuff published elsewhere, so you can cite a journal or conference reference instead of a web site. The description of their usability labs is also useful to companies who want to say: 'this is what a usability lab should be like: the giants do it like this.'

The Usability Methods Toolbox

<http://www.best.com/~jthom/usability/>

It appears this site is being created by Mr Hom as part of his Master's thesis.

There are a large number of methods mentioned on the left hand side of the screen, and a blurb about each. Nothing very precise, nothing very useful beyond an introductory level. Each method is summarised under the following headings

- What is it?
- How do I do it?
- When should I use this technique?
- Who can tell me more?

I seem to remember a similar scheme in the RESPECT and INUSE projects.

There is a bibliography which is precisely that: a list of books with all the usual suspects in there. The questionnaires section is rudimentary. There are a few web sites mentioned.

The main advantage of this site would seem to be the listing of methods. The weakness is the poor selection of methods and the lack of access to interesting methods and tools. The site also looks naff and its lack of visual attractiveness has been commented on elsewhere.

Web Usability OverSite

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bing/oversite/webuse.html>

This is another site which treats many things lightly. The design is not unpleasant, but it does not give a professional impression, more like a hobby site of lightly annotated links.

There is a list of topics treated on the left hand side, which indexes you through the page.

- Starting Points and Indices
- Case Studies and Reviews
- Conferences and Events
- Papers and Essays
- Research Findings
- Style Guides
- Alternative Browsers
- Graphics Optimization
- Navigation
- Text Readability
- Usability Testing
- Users With Disabilities
- Writing for the Web

If you click on one of these you get to a small descriptive paragraph and some links to 'resources.' Of course all you really get is an off-site link to more chitter. There are four case studies, each of them rather old (mid- 90s.)

I suspect the reason this site is high on the lists is because some attempt has been made at selection, even if sometimes misguided, and there is a mix of topics from the fairly technical to the fairly humanistic. In this it is like the Maryland student's web site (Guide to Usability for Software Engineers) but has more hope of being kept alive after graduation. It is less informative with comments and explanations than the Maryland site, and it shows signs of age.

IBM Ease of Use

http://www-3.ibm.com/ibm/easy/eou_ext.nsf/publish/558

A very busy looking site, clearly professionally developed, with banners over the top, neat and restrained use of graphics and some variety in colour and shape. The page is basically in three columns.

On the front page, on the right hand side, there's a 'whats new' and a 'highlights' section. What's new is mainly stories that glamourise IBM: an interview with one of their home-grown gurus, and a link to their booklist. Each book is presented with a picture of the cover and a small blurb about how important it is. 'Highlights' seems to dwell on conference presentations by the IBM usability group.

On the main part of the page in the centre, there are links to

Design
Stories
Services
Downloads
Conference

Of these, the Design is the section that has the most interesting stuff for prospecting usability engineers. Again this is patchy: there is a page about ISO standards, but each standard is summarised in about 50 words.

There are two notable pages references from the Design page:

Web Guidelines
Tools

Design/ Web Guidelines contains a set of pages which do the sort of thing we used to talk about in the RESPECT project: quite down-to-earth and usable in fact.

This site is one of the few which appears to offer a real tool in the Design/Tools section, although it turns out to be Lotus Domino based and they want to keep in touch with you to persuade you to purchase a copy. The rest of the tools are rather disappointingly low-level software development stuff, although there is also a 'web survey' tool which basically counts visitors to pages using cookie technology.

I suspect the reason for it's popularity is the IBM tag (duh...) as well as the fact that the web guidelines are actually quite good ('this is how IBM does it...'). I don't know how much takeup they get of their tools: it does not feel like a section of the site which does a roaring trade and the tools require too much investment in big IBM-think to be useful by small-town usability practitioners.

System Concepts

<http://www.system-concepts.com/>

This is a nicely laid out site with lots of space and a nice graphic to balance the layout. Although a lot of the stuff is quite frankly commercial in intent, the meat of the site is contained in a number of interesting papers and case studies which can be quite lengthy but nearly always informative, ie they tell you something that you didn't know or couldn't have guessed if you thought about it for more than three minutes.

At the foot of the page is a small DIY questionnaire on 'the most common complaint of computer users in your office.' Amusing and attractive.

You can browse categories of articles using the menu on the left. In the centre of the page you will find four or five articles which appear to be 'featured' for the edition. There is an informative title, an author, a summary, and a link to the proper thing on its own page.

Each article is led into slowly, so you can see a summary of what it's about and then when you click on the title, you get to the article itself, which (nearly?) always starts with a somewhat longer summary. At the end of the articles there are links of the sort 'if you enjoyed this, look at...'

There are some interesting case studies.

The page on standards is somewhat more sensible than others I have seen, although there is still disappointingly little on it: current status of 9241, 14915, display screen stuff and some articles.

Some pages, like those about their usability lab, are just sheer advertising for their services. However, the large amount of freebie stuff takes some of the sting away. The advantage of this site is the documented case studies and the articles, although I don't see them being cited much elsewhere, and their purely web identity makes them less than ideal for a references section in a paper. They can be useful for citations in presentations and workshops.

NBST Web Metrics

<http://zing.ncsl.nist.gov/~webmet/>

At last! a site which offers some real public-domain tools! Not that I think I'd want to use any of them. This is a relatively small site offering four tools, a registration option, and a somewhat technically orientated FAQ.

I did follow the trail of the Web CAT: Category Analysis Tool. This was interesting because when I sought INFO about the tool, it told me a whole load about how to use it, but not what it does! I finally found the description of the tool by clicking on the name of the tool, rather than seeking info about it. The information was good: the objectives were outlined, and the process was summarised. In fact, I might just download it anyway.

The tool description pages are very pleasantly laid out -- so long as you don't change the size of your typeface!

This is a useful site, but small. It is more technical than one might expect from a usability page. There are no usability tools as we know them on this page but there is something that does a theory-based evaluation.

The advantage of this site is that you can get your hands on tools that do things. The disadvantage is that there are very few of these and that they are, quite frankly, odd and out of the mainstream.

Usability Around the Globe: Resources

<http://webword.com/moving/global.html>

This is one of those busy sites with seemingly a lot of information, but when it comes to it, not that much. I note that it hasn't been updated for three months. Is this a crime?

There is a 'List of Resources' which is really nothing more than a series of articles about usability and the web. The links take you off site with little ado. The theme seems to be to try and concentrate on localisation issues.

There are a number of options at the bottom of the page. Visiting the moving web world index is one of them. This option consists of a series of articles, this time on-site, grouped by year. They have got special 'guest authors' to write 'columns' which are kept as separate pages. The titles of the columns are not that clear, and they are dated. It looks a bit like the Nielsen site, but multi-authored. Each column is interesting enough in its own way, but is not a usability resource, more of a statement of opinion by a mini-Jakob. At least Jakob's opinions are amusing to read.

I suppose the advantage of the site is the fact that it treats localisation issues. The disadvantage is the lack of substance on the site and the small signal:noise ratio (ie, lot of noise!)

Universal Usability dot org

<http://universalusability.org/index.html>

This is a site which Ben Shneiderman of the University of Maryland is a promoter of. The explanation of 'universal usability' is suitably grandiose. The page has a nice lemony column on the left which houses the contents and index, and a large back-and-white section in front of you. Use of graphics is limited.

There is a search engine that cannot find anything to do with 'questionnaire' and a section on 'universal usability'. The index on the left lists sections

- definition (aka 'what is universal usability')
- resources and publications
- discussion
- search
- conferences
- about us
- contact us
- universal usability policy

The definition section is a series of lectures by Shneiderman. Ok if you like that sort of thing. Each section invites you to read the following section, you can also do that by clicking on the menu on the left. There is also a printable version of the whole thing: in html, ascii text, or pdf. Sounds very much like his books, really.

The Resources and publications section is interesting. There are five main sections:

- user communities
- tasks and activities
- hardware and software
- social and organisational systems
- approaches and methods

If you go into approaches and methods, for instance, you arrive at a page in which different kinds of approaches and methods are summarised, with links.

that is:

- 1.Design Methods
- 2.Empirical Research and Testing
- 3.Theory and Models of Behavior
- 4.Automatable Metrics/Software
- 5.Expert Reviews and Usability Evaluation
- 6.Guidelines Documents, Standards, and Processes

These are given without much explanation of what they are. When you go into one of them, you will find a series of abstracts of the resource, using a standard set of headers:

- description
- audience
- keywords
- details
- location
- related universal usability categories

Information is not great, but serves as a pointer to what is in the resource, which is of course off-site. At least the location is spelt out in detail so you can see where you're going.

The site seems to be well maintained and is up to date. There are two advantages of this site: (1) Shneiderman's vision statement in his 'universal usability' stuff, and then the nicely annotated links in the resources and methods section. The disadvantage is that these links are numerous, not very well edited, and there is not enough comforting informatin on site to let you make your mind up if its worth following them off site.

Conclusions

In summary, the following points characterise the really successful usability sites reviewed:

- They provide a wide variety of information, not only about usability topics but also other related areas, especially technical ones to do with the latest software and sometimes hardware (eg mobile computing) developments.
- They provide hard facts rather than opinions or ideas (statistics and results of surveys).
- They are full of references to published (non-web) work and the best of them contain a library of downloadable references that have found their way into print. There is still a problem with the persistence of information on the web, and a conference proceedings is considered to be more persistent than a web site when citing research results; there is also the question of the trust to be placed in a web-published report which may have not undergone any peer assessment.
- They point to useful things on the web but they also explain what they are pointing to and why this is a useful resource. Whereas some sites seem to make a point of the large number of resources they point to, in general, good sites include a lot of explanation so that the user understands at all times the rationale for selecting a link. Good sites seem to do a quality control over the links they choose, although in many cases the quality control mechanism could be vastly improved, and may reflect idiosyncratic editor's preferences.
- They have a pleasant non-commercial graphic presentation. Although some sites have a small amount of commercial banners, this is a notable exception on most of the good ones reviewed. There is also a difference between a 'commercial style' in-your-face presentation with a busy front page and a more restrained but informative front page presentation typical of many professional sites.

During the requirements workshop in Crete (May, 2001) the following points were raised by delegates in response to a selected presentation of the results of the survey. The really successful service support web site ought to exhibit the following features:

- Interactivity, not just a 'dump' of information rarely updated
- Accessibility of resources, it ought to contain or point to full resources that will enable a usability engineer to do their job
- UI Design, it ought to be well designed to show how good usability engineering can be
- Community aspects, it ought to involve users and offer services to users which build up the community of usability engineers.

Appendix A: the TOP 10

- 1) Alertbox: Jakob Nielsen's Column on Web Usability
www.useit.com/alertbox/
- 2) GVU: The Graphics, Visualization & Usability Center
<http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/>
- 3) Usability Professionals' Association...
<http://www.upassoc.org/>
- 4) Usable Web
<http://www.usableweb.com/>
- 5) Usability First..
<http://www.usabilityfirst.com/>
- 6) Testing methods and tools
<http://www.otal.umd.edu/guse/testing.html>
- 7) Microsoft Usability: Home Page
<http://www.microsoft.com/usability/>
- 8) Usability Methods Toolbox, The
<http://www.best.com/~jthom/usability/>
- 9) . Web Usability OverSite
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bing/oversite/webuse.html>
- 10) . IBM Ease of Use
http://www-3.ibm.com/ibm/easy/eou_ext.nsf/publish/558

Appendix B: Search Engines Used

The following search engines were used with the one keyword 'usability.'

LYCOS
HOTBOT
ALTAVISTA
EXCITE
GOOGLE
Yahoo!
DOGPILE
MICROSOFT
INFOSEEK/GO
ASKJEEVES
DIRECT HIT
WEBCRAWLER
LOOKSMART
SEARCH
NORTHERN LIGHT