



Web as a Visual Communication System in an University Environment

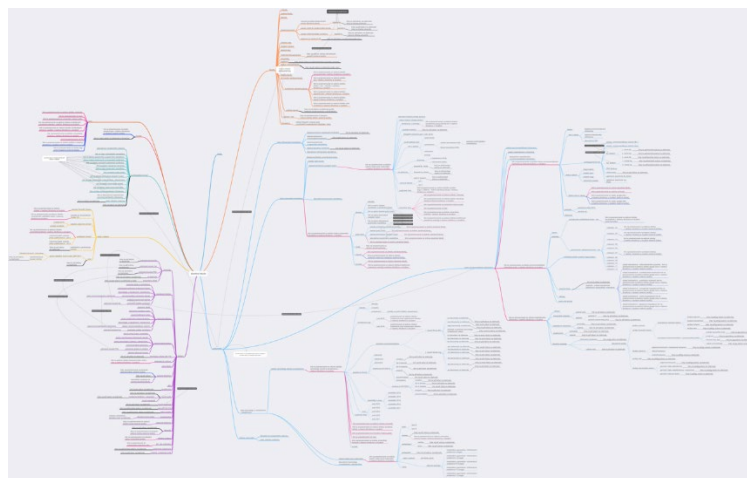
Impact Case Study

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Abstract

The thesis focuses on the issue of university websites in Slovakia. It surveys their content, clarity, and cognitive level of user experience. The website of the Technical University of Košice serves as an example for an in-dept analysis. Furthermore, the thesis studies and evaluates themes and templates available for the education sector. The main aim of this work is to build a template system that would be universal in its application and could be demonstrated by a specific academic institution. Its structure and design are based on acquired knowledge and own experience. Both system and methodology of the individual design elements are illustrated by sample subpages with real content. The last part of the work shows various design possibilities built upon the universal website system.





Summary of impact beyond academia

The dissertation contains most of the materials, that are provide by designers, to create a functional theme. The result of this work is the creation of a template that is not tied to a specific content management system (CMS - Content Management System) but is a comprehensive collection of styled components. It is a universal solution that does not limit the client, i.e. school, when choosing the back-end architecture of portal. This is an advantage especially for schools that already have existing portal and want to modernize it without the need for complete redesign. Therefore, the solution requires additional implementation over the content management system on the client side.

A template is made up of elements that can be combined as required to create complex pages in a unified visual style. The solution also contains preview pages, which are designed with emphasis on UX and serve the client as a guide/ inspiration in creating own portal. Technically these are HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and JavaScript files.

Non-standard solutions are most important in terms of adapting the content to specific user needs. Main advantages are the compactness of the system, simple and clean layout and the reduction of the number of separate websites of smaller units within the school hierarchy.

Underpinning research, context and summary of methodology

Main part of research was focused on a detailed mapping of the structure of the website of the Technical University in Košice, its faculties and their smaller units. Following by exploration of university websites abroad, supplemented as well by a survey in the area of pre-prepared solutions (templates, which have started to appear since 2010). Possible solutions (based on the gradually acquired knowledge) were then verified through the user survey of the selected target audience (online questionnaire filled in by a total of 110 high school and university students).

References produced by researcher from/during doctoral research

<https://tomaschova.netlify.app> (limited demo version)



Details of impact

library of elements (focused on specific needs of non-commercial University Environment) that can be combined as required to create complex pages in a unified visual style

solution not tied to a specific content management system

significant amount reduction of separate web sites of smaller units within the school hierarchy



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