

Assignment 1 Discussion – Portals

Portals are constantly changing and offering patrons more and more options and features. Visit a variety of portals on the Internet. Evaluate the features that you found in these portals by describing how these features can be appropriately used in the educational/organizational learning setting.

According to Hofstetter (2006), “A portal is a website whose purpose is to provide access to other Web sites and services on the Internet” (p. 76). However, a portal is not the traditional static website where the user has no opportunity to define the content what he needs or wishes (Winkler, 2007). Portals can provide a manageable online experience where visitors could customize or personalize the content of the portal according to their roles, interests, or needs. Its main function is to become a single-point of access to comprehensible information for the user. Every portal is like a smaller version of the Internet itself. Winkler (2007) pointed out that portals contain the following key features: security, access to different data, transactions, search, publish content, and personal content. There are portals that target the entire Internet (horizontal portal or mega-portals) like Yahoo, and there are other portals that target specific audiences about a particular area of interest (vertical portal or vortals), like NCU learners site. Educational institutions can maximize the use of portals to consolidate crucial online services and information for their students, faculty, and staff (“The Power,” 2002), so students are actively involved in the school’s life.

The following portals have a Yahoo style content of categories with a light-weight text based page that loads quickly.

Portalhq.com is a portal of portals. It organizes the most popular portals by different categories. In addition, it provides a search form in which the user can choose among a list of the most popular search engines to do Internet search. This portal also offers the html codes to have a meta-search form, which any educator can use to have a search option in their personal website.

ifoyer.com is an internet gateway for the most popular and best websites with just 2-clicks away and free of ads. Websites are organized by categories and by alphabetical order. The trademark icons of the most popular sites of each category are displayed on page. The feature of no ads makes this portal ideal to be used in a classroom setting where students are not exposed to inappropriate ad contents.

myway.com is a mega-portal like Yahoo except there are no banners, pop-ups, video ads, direct marketing, or privacy concerns. It provides the visitor the option to personalized the portal and even integrate services from another provider. Once again, a portal free of ads with possible inappropriate content is ideal to be used in a school setting.

References:

Hofstetter, F. (2006). *Internet Literacy*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

The Power of Portals: More Colleges Create Web Services That Can Be Customized to Help Students and Professors. (2002). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 48(48). p.NA. Retrieved October 31, 2007, from Educator's Reference Complete via Gale.

Winkler, R. (n.d). *Portals – The All-In-One Super sites: Features, Functions, Definitions, Taxonomy*. Retrieved on November 3, 2007, from <http://atlanticwebfitters.ca/WhitePapers/WhatisaWebPortal/tabid/95/Default.aspx>