

ELAG2003 WORKSHOP 3 AND REPORT

Branding and library identity – author and reporter Johan van Halm

I Report of workshop

The group (Anne Pasquier, Milos Petrovic and Johan van Halm) decided to formulate – after a careful discussion (based on the document following this report) – to formulate two messages, suggestions and one observation, partly because the already small group lost one member each day, because of other assignments.

a) **messages**

a1 Libraries must have a mission statement, slogan, vision, etc. for communications with its user community

a2 Staff working on technical issues tend to forget the marketing and branding of the product they have been designing (website, portal, library automation system, etc.). Therefore at least one of the team members should have a marketing or graphical design background

b) **suggestions**

b1 visibility is an important issue and visibility has to support branding; repetition and consistency are mandatory

b2 keep the message/branding simple: something powerful you can associate with the library. Examples: logo of the British Library or think about the €, which has done more, than anything else to create unity and pride

c) **observation**

Branding is also necessary to obtain funding in a competitive environment, as libraries or not indispensable and have to compete

II Discussion document

1. introduction

Purchasing decisions, like of an library system or an electronic information resource, are based on a combination of ratio and emotion (feeling, imago, sympathy, etc.) and branding plays an important role in affecting such emotions. This is more true for services than for (tangible) products and this explains why branding services is crucial.

Branding or establishing visibility on the Internet and other transmission channels seems to be critical in maintaining a strong international market presence. These days branding means “emotion”, imago and a brand gives a product or service a ‘face’. This is even more important, if we start to realize, that it is impossible to make objective judgments regarding a service.

We distinguish the following branding criteria for content products (see also “benefits”)

- accessibility or easiness to get access to content
- navigability or easiness to move around within the content provided, including linking backwards and forwards to other sources
- technical performance usually rated high by users
- customer service or easy linking from content to customer service areas
- consistent visual expression
- nature and quality of content, as well as add-on products and tools

2. Branding in an online environment

Rowley¹ states that

- it seems difficult to get branding in an online environment: you have only that one first screen
- there is a lack of awareness regarding brand recognition and corporate/organisation identity
- online branding has a legacy from other marketing channels, which have created brand recognition
- libraries and information providers are not good at it
- a brand encapsulates and reinforces a marketing message: so what is your message

3. Website elements important for branding

Website elements that communicate brand values and messages

- pictures
- date
- text
- colour
- shapes
- layout and combinations of images

4. Branding of a tangible product and a web service

The brand name is one of the five characteristics of a ‘tangible’ product²

- features (content per user group)
- packaging (books, videotapes, programmes, etc.)
- styling (appealing, colourful, visualization/graphics, mapping/grouping of buttons, well-designed)
- quality level (physical condition and accuracy range) and
- brand name (reputation of publisher, producer, aggregator)

5. Access choice and branding

¹ Rowley, J. Branding your library website. Update (CILIP), 2(2003)2(February)p. 45

² Philip Kotler, in “ ‘Marketing for Non-profit Organizations’ , Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, 1982, 2nd edition, p. 289” describes a product with core, tangible and augmented aspects. E.g. when using a library the core product is information, the tangible product is the form in which the core product is presented (format, etc.). The augmented product may include: timeliness of access, accuracy of information, easiness of use, friendliness of staff, etc. For a product to be excellent, all three products have to be of high quality.

Web-publishing confronts publishers and content owners with an access choice

- a) giving access via
 - via aggregator
 - host
 - subject-oriented portal
 - community portal or
- b) trying to build traffic direct to their own website.

QUESTIONS / ISSUES FOR THE WORKSHOP

What are the risks for an provider of having an intermediary to come between him/her and your library?

‘branding’ will be a big issue to build customer loyalty and therefore very important for libraries to survive, for marketing and funding purposes (they need visibility!)

Can good brands justify higher prices?

Are libraries able to keep an identity within a library network or digital libraries set-up, whereby the library’s name is often not easy to find, notably after entering an aggregators or producers’ screen/home page?

Jill Finney³, Director Strategic Marketing and Communications, The British Library states, that her library:
= has strengthened its brand by keeping its message simple
= can do marketing well, if its brand is powerful enough
and a brand goes hand-in-hand with image and logo.

³ Finney, J. Brand values at the BL. Update (CILIP), 2(2003)2(February)p.54-55