



History of the IMGW websites development as a communication tool

Author: Prof. Mieczysław S. Ostojki
 Director General,
 Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, Poland



ABSTRACT

At the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (IMGW) until 2006 one official website www.imgw.pl was operational, where the information about the Institute and weather forecasts was placed. Following the Institute's management change in 2006 it was decided to separate the IMGW home page containing the information on the Institute from the other one displaying weather forecasts. Forecasts were moved to the new www.pogodynka.pl portal (pogoda = weather).

In the paper the reasons leading to launch two separate websites are discussed in detail, along with programme assumptions for the new weather portal. Hits were also analysed since its launching, that is from 6 November 2006 till 30 June 2010. Relationship between costs incurred during the above mentioned period and online advertising revenues were studied.

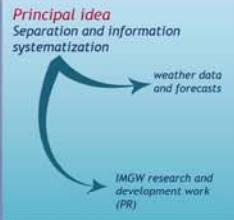
In the summary achievements are assessed (a large number of hits received as well as prestigious awards), and plans including programme assumptions are discussed. To illustrate the problem it should be stressed that our weather online reached in the middle of May 2010 almost 1 million hits daily and became the largest monothematic weather portal in Poland, while at the time of its launching it attracted several thousand impressions monthly only. It took just 2.5 years to finally pay off the costs involved. At the same time a discussion on placing ads on the home page of the state Institute has started.

At some times, the impact of the weather can be more serious than at others and may threaten the safety of life and property. Our online advice helps people to mitigate the effects of high-impact weather.

Key words



IMGW concept of communication



- numerical weather models and synoptic forecasts
 - hydro-meteorological forecast
 - biometeorological forecast
 - radar images
- 1st step
 development of communication tools
 dedicated website for water sports fans



Conclusion 1

- Website ought to:
- be user-friendly
 - consist of coherent and transparent information
 - contain systematized content
 - be readable and easy to comprehend
 - not confuse the reader
 - be reliable and easy to navigate

Conclusion 2

"The basis of effective communication is to maintain clear and comprehensible manner of information that is easily interpreted by recipients."
 The official IMGW Pogodynka Weather Service is a good example of the above mentioned quote.

Reformation of the primary IMGW communication tool - the "NEW POGODYNKA.PL"

- NEW POGODYNKA:**
 new layout and three thematic sections were introduced, so that a relevant message reached particular recipient:
- MEDIA:** consists of most important weather information issued as press release, prepared especially for the press, TV and web portals
 - COMMERCE:** detailed IMGW products and services catalogue
 - FOR YOU:** the best weather data presented in an interesting, transparent and comprehensible form



- Main reasons for a change:
- a need to advance the product
 - technology and information development
 - update to new communications standards
 - meet users expectations

Conclusion 3

Constant development of information technologies enforce adapting to new trends and user needs

Conclusion 4

In order to meet user expectations it is crucial to ask for their opinion. Only then the communication tool is effective.
 Methodological background:

- surveys
- interview
- observation
- research

More interaction, education and personalization

- authorial and readable graphics
 - new, simplified terminology and language
 - systematized and concise menu
 - product database synchronized with SMS system
 - additional animations
 - Content Management System (CMS) with remote access
 - new mechanisms of data processing.
- Personalization:
- forum
 - newsletter
 - meteorological blog
 - logging - with access to additional content
 - desktop applications
 - widgets



- Educational elements:
- meteorological calculator
 - vocabulary related to meteorology, hydrology, climatology and domains alike
 - Pogodynka's ABC for children
 - educational games "Mr SUNMAN"
 - Environmental section - educational campaign

Conclusion 5

Complex websites should be a priority in order to reach for a greater number of users.

Additional communication channels

SMS System

IMGW introduced a unique hydro-meteorological warning system in order to provide even faster communication with users.
 Warnings are the most important IMGW products which are available on the WWW.POGODYNKA.PL website.



Communication channels with users:

- websites
- LIGHT website version for cell phones
- several applications for mobile
- MMS/SMS / TVPogodynka
- free cell phones applications
- BULK SMS - mass messages informing about new mobile IMGW products

Modernization Plans:

- new weather products for aviation (radar maps for cell phones)
- products dedicated to farmers
- MMS forecast for drivers
- Beauty weather
- Healthy weather - forecast for the elderly
- specialized weather products

Conclusion 6

It is crucial to invest in new technologies and remember not to be afraid of changes. Mobile services are the only solution to achieve swift, innovative and sophisticated ways of communication.

Summary

In order to enhance the market position it is crucial to apply proper communication channels and tools. The below ranking growth chart is an example of such good practice.

Ranking growth



- Prizes:
- THE TERAZ POLSKA (POLAND NOW) 2010: Badge of Quality;
 - 2007 POLKO FAIR: Gold Medal;
 - BUSINESS FORUM 2008: Innovation award;
 - KOMPUTER ŚWIAT: Weather Service Ratings 1st place;
 - PANTHEON OF POLISH ECOLOGY: Nomination;
 - CLIENT LAUREL 2010: Weather Portals Category (golden emblem);
 - THE HIGHEST QUALITY INTERNATIONAL 2010: QJ Category (golden emblem).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Favorable conditions that ensure better communication:
- thematic division of topics
 - constant improvements of obsolete solutions
 - development of new communication tools
 - personalization and education for users
 - mobile communications channels - as an integral element of data dissemination

