

Content Strategy – Content Types

written by CD | JANUARY 26, 2017

Content Strategy seems to revolve around at least nine types or concepts of content that I've come up with in the purposes they serve as part of a user experience. This is what I walked away with after our oldest, Tasha, tried to explain Content Strategy and Content Types to me which led me to a new view and interest in what purposes content can serve. Ideally, content can fulfill multiple functions especially when it comes to tone, voice and brand consistency.

Functional (or Navigational?) – enables use and navigation of the site – helps guide the user to the functions, information, products, services, ... they seek. There is no expectation or need for the user to retain any of this type of content that serves the purpose of getting you to the content you seek.

Facilitative (or Connective ?) – facilitates the user making connections to other people – either employees (consultants, teachers, advisors, coaches, sales, support, ...) or other users in various roles (peers, their students or customers, third party consultants, teachers, advisors, coaches, ...).

There is no expectation or need for the user to retain any of this type of content.

Informative (or Educational?) – provides the user with information they wish to know / educates the user by presenting information they wish or need to know. This is typically intended to be "sticky content" where the user wishes to retain some or all of the information presented.

Branding – to help establish and further brand, business, service entity recognition and association to help grow the audience, customer, partner base. This content may often exist in the forms of advertisements on other sites/media. Why do people remember brand names like Tide, Kleenex, Xerox, Ford, Nike, ... and what do they associate with those names?

Marketing – to attract and bring into the site and the business prospective users, clients, customers, partners, etc

Entertaining – while I can see the value of including some engaging entertainment in the above content types, entertainment is not their sole purpose. I could see that some content

may serve no other purpose than to entertain the user.

Retentative (ok I guess that's not really a word?) – All of the above content types/purposes can, if done effectively, also help facilitate having users find value in the site such that they wish to spend time on the site, return to the site, refer the site to others. Having engaging content that users connect and empathize with in addition to providing value can contribute to retention.

User Generated – If the site also facilitates user engagement in generating content, it can enable users of various roles to generate content of their own that contributes to the value of the site in one or more of the above purposes (e.g. it may facilitate connections between users of different roles teachers/students, coaches/clients, service providers/customers, ...) and may be reviewed by site editors (that could be employees or other users). It could also include user stories about their experience with products and services and how it helped them...

One-to-One (or Personalized) – At BroadVision in the 90s, we developed a strategy around delivering relevant, personalized content:

- Related content – content or items viewed or bought are often correlated to other items viewed or bought – hence the correlation increases the likelihood that you too will like this.
- People like me – people who have exhibited interests similar to you have also liked ...

Though the intent was/is good in terms of showing the most relevant content possible, the danger with this approach as it's been perfected is that it can drastically reduce the breadth of what you see to only those things that resonate with things you have clicked on, or people "like you" have clicked on before. This then can lead to strengthening of convictions and perspectives to an extreme as everything we see and read further validates an ever more narrow perspective. Most people don't realize that what they see on their news site or get as search results is very much tailored to who they are. AI is now making it possible for the front facing cameras in your computers, TVs, tablets and phones to recognize facial expressions and thereby determine your reactions to content and hence further tune what you are presented with...

See Also

- [Slideshare – Six Steps to Building a Content Strategy](#)
- [Content Marketing Institute Developing a Content Marketing Strategy](#)
- [Usability.gov – Content Strategy Basics](#)

- [UX Magazine – Content Strategy and UX – A Modern Love Story](#)
- [Wikipedia – Content strategy](#)
- [Forbes – 10 Fast Facts To Consider In Your Content Marketing Plans](#)
- [Forbes Communication Council – 14 Essential Elements Of A Strong Content Strategy](#)
- [Microsoft – Introduction to content types and content type publishing](#)
- [Inside Design – 10 UX copywriting tips for designers](#)
- [UX Planet – 16 Rules of Effective UX Writing](#)
- [Tubik Blog – UX Writing. Let User Interface Speak](#)
- [Book – The Language of Content Strategy](#)
- [Book – Managing Enterprise Content: A Unified Content Strategy \(Voices That Matter\)](#)
- [ABookApart – Content Strategy](#)
- [ABookApart – The Elements of Content Strategy](#)
- [10 Definitions of Content Strategy](#)