Agility in tools can be pretty and deliver significant impact – ScienceDirect Topics

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Agenda

• The problem and understanding the opportunity
• Developing the solution (agile and pretty)
• Where are we now. Results (impact)
• Closing the loop with sales, marketing and editorial
The Problem.....

Book user experience not aligned with user needs
• Researchers often say they don’t use, or don’t know they are using books
• Books usually associated with static print product
• Use case for books and value proposition not clear

Leading to poor value perception with commercial buyers
• Book usage data often not compelling
• Faculty recommendations and endorsement low or uneven
• Books ‘nice to have’ not ‘must have’

Resulting in poor business outcomes
• Online book revenues stagnating and not offsetting print decline
• Books account for 8% of the content on ScienceDirect but only 3% of the usage
• Only 30% Penetration of books into ScienceDirect accounts
...and understanding the opportunity

Key themes we hear from customers

- Users are looking for answers – not necessarily journals or books
- Foundational content plays a big role in interdisciplinary research
- Books are a recognized way of quickly getting up to speed in a new subject

What the data tells us

- Usage data confirms what we heard: co-usage of books and journals and interdisciplinary content use
Developing the solution (agile and pretty - MVP)

1. Definitions extracted from Elsevier books.
2. Related terms with hyperlinks to explore.
3. Short extracts of the most relevant information that are often found deep within book chapters and links to the source books for further exploration.
4. Links to the Full Text
5. Optimized for SEO
Focus on metrics and a data driven approach leads to success

- Designs were optimized for key metrics: usage, and co-usage
- 2 streams for driving traffic: ScienceDirect journal articles or Google search
- Free layer of authoritative content = high SEO value = traffic driver
- Topic page elements were tracked and iterative refinements of the POC were made to the design using data driven techniques to optimize user engagement and conversion to ScienceDirect
Developing the solution (agile and pretty - MVP)

Focus on metrics and a data driven approach leads to success

**Example 1:** Rapid prototyping technique to optimize user engagement

- 2 week sprints to analyse results – iterate and refine
- Agile – learned quickly and failed fast
- A/B testing of different page layouts
- Conversion rates (CTR) grew from **2.5%** to **11.0%** in the POC
- Production environment - further **improved to 27%**

**Example 2:** Iterative SEO design to optimize Google traffic.

- Experimented with FT snippets length to optimize SEO
- 20% of traffic came from Google in POC and has now grown to 80% in production through refinement
- Google average ranking = 8.1 in March
Automated and Dynamic

- Topic Pages (TPs) use a set of **deep learning (ML) algorithms** to automatically extract relevant information and generate TPs the moment new concepts are added to the taxonomies.
- Topic Pages are updated automatically on a regular basis.

Comprehensive and Growing

- We search the entire **Elsevier corpus** of book content to find definitions and snippets.

Extensible and Scalable

- The algorithms can be trained against other content, concept types and other domains.

E2E Business Value

- We use the **analytics data** collected from TPs to feed **Sales enablement tools**. We will generate **editorial gap analyses** to inform commissioning strategy.
Where we are now: Impact

- **330K** - Topic Pages (TPs) in production
- **8.1** - average result ranking in Google
- **7.5M** - visits/month – 15% of all traffic to ScienceDirect
- **5.8M** - unique visitors in March = 10% of all Science Direct unique users
- **60%** - Return Visits
- **28%** - Book usage growth YTD
- **48%** - growth in co-usage YTD
- **85%** - users find Topic Pages useful
Closing the loop with sales, and editorial

- Developing sales enablement ‘value capture’ tools: Gap tool, co-usage tool
- Use Topic Pages to enhance the books value proposition
- Usage data to drive commissioning strategy
• pyramidal tracts
• lower motor neuron lesion
• event related potential
• wallerian degeneration
• ammonification
• matric potential
Thank You