USER GENERATED CONTENT (UGC)

Material on websites, and occasionally other media sources that is produced by the users of the website.
Concept

- Entered mainstream usage during 2005, and covers a range of technology medium.

- Instead of being the responsibility of the web creator/publisher/moderators, the general public audiences decide and direct the contents of a site.

- Always keeps the web content fresh and interesting.

- Could be used for:

  + Problem Processing               + Knowledge sharing
  + Gossip                           + Self-expression
  + Research                         + News
Types of UGC

Social Networks

Blogs
Types of UGC

Discussion boards and Forums

Image-based bulletin board
Types of UGC

Video/Art-sharing

Panoramio
Types of UGC

Minecraft

Spore
Why bother?

- Maintaining relationship between friends and followers
- Reach out and connect to other peers
- A desire to contribute and be an active part of a community
- A desire to share personal knowledge and opinion to others
- Achieving a certain level of fame
- Advertising/Promoting a product or service
- Notoriety (ex. Internet trolling)
Motivation and incentives

Motivation behind the contributing users can range from altruistic, to social, and to materialistic, but generally falls under two categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit incentives</th>
<th>Explicit incentives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Social-related</td>
<td>- Encourage user participation by tangible rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self-motivated</td>
<td>- For example, entry into a contest, or participating in order to win a coupon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A desire to be known, to gain fame</td>
<td>- Very costly for the content host to retain long-term contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cost the host site very little while maintaining vital growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Requires a sizeable existing community before this can be achieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Business Models today

Google Play Store & Apple App Store

- Maintains a list of professional and independent user generated apps and games for people to download

- Constantly updated with fresh content as users submit more apps

- Earns revenue by ads and sharing the profit with the app creators
- Steam Workshop provides a way for Steam users to create, find, and obtain user-created content and mods for games.

- Most contents are free, while premium contents must be paid in order to download

- Also has Steam Greenlight which, instead of having moderators do it, allows Steam users to determine which user-created games should be added to the service themselves.
Importance

Most frequently visited sites today are primarily user-generated, ex. Wikipedia, Facebook and YouTube.

Evolving web technologies give users better freedom to express themselves and connect with others.

Critical for sharing news and knowledge around the world.

With today’s web technology that can support content creation and self-publishing, any user can create and publish a program without the assistance of a company.

The fate of the Information Age is driven by everyone, the collaborative effort of the general public directs the future of the Web and the Internet.
CNN iReport

- Allows users to report news themselves.

- Allows users to discuss and express opinions on certain matters.

- Allows the news to be seen in different perspectives.

- Can cover anything interesting or underrated around the world that news reporter overlooked.

- Users can potentially give more accurate details of an event than news reporter if they happen to be near the location of the event.
Disadvantages

- Intrusion of personal information and privacy

- Moderation can get out-of-hand, web content can be abused if not moderated properly

- Sources could be unreliable and inaccurate

- Copyright infringement and other legal problems
Prospective Future

- UGC will be the main source of web and technology content

- The general public will be the main voice on any important matter (ex. news reporting, world events, politics etc.)

- Every user can contribute to drive the outlook of the Web and the Internet.

- New business models are centered around users to foster UGC (creating a “playing field” for them instead of creating materials for them to use)
Further reading

- Wikipedia ‘User-generated content’

- UGC Principles
  <http://www.ugcprinciples.com/>

- How to Use Contests and Giveaways to Get User-Generated Content
  <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/contests-user-generated-content/>

- Why User-Generated Content Is More Important Than You Think