

Memorandum

Introduction

This memo outlines the organization of the materials and discussions of the website r/twitch for a specific Twitch community. Findings from the online knowledge network are used to evaluate the current site map of r/twitch. Problems from this analysis are used to create a new site map for the information architecture of this community and provide a more organized interface and increase the ease of use.

Overview of Community

The r/twitch community consists of over 440K members of whom all can share content, discuss issues, and ask questions all in the effort to gain assistance with problems and lend available information. This community is not affiliated with the official Twitch community or network but rather consists of members of the Twitch community and audience.

Community Purposes

Features of this community of practice were discovered from the topic analysis and help illustrate the need for a redesign of the current site map. The goals and intentions of this community is to allow those who have questions or are curious about aspects that are involved in the act of streaming to be able to gain the information they need. These questions and curiosities revolve around specific topics that were identified from the topic analysis conducted.

Starting out as a streamer

Many in this community are seeking help and assistance in order to begin their streaming career. Others are seeking specific technical help with issues they are having with audio equipment, computer and video game problems, and even issues with the Twitch service.

Technical Issues

Issues regarding equipment and services are discussed in this community. Technical issues are addressed regarding audio and recording devices, recording software, Twitch service and policies, and computer and software components. Many in this community bring outside information to these discussions and are able to provide a more in depth analysis of the issues.

Description of Task

The methods used to attain the corpus from this community and the process implemented in order to analyze it are listed here.

Scraping

A Google Chrome plug in called Webscraper was used to scrape the r/twitch reddit pages of post title, post body text, and comment text.

Scrubbing

Scrubbing involved taking the scraped data and observing it first in the program Notepad. This was done in order to remove all line spacing issues and carriage returns that occurred throughout the data. The data was then entered into the program Antconc where a stoplist of specific words (such as articles and prepositions) were removed, leaving data that could be observed and analyzed more thoroughly.

Visualization

In order to gain insight into the topics that are involved in this community, I turned to the Python tool *R*. With *R* I was able to conduct a sentiment analysis which showed how users were discussing negative and positive aspects about features of Twitch, audio and video components, and interface and correspondence with audience members or followers. I also used gensem, another Python tool, which pulled five commonly occurring word styles and used this to help identify the five topics.

Site Mapping

To create the site maps, the website Lucidchart was used. This helped arrange shapes and organize the topics and navigation aspects of the site into a map. The advantage to using this tool is its ability to customize figures and allow for differentiation to be implemented among the elements.

Community and practices

The topic analysis of the corpus provided a foundation for the discussion and discourse methods occurring in this community as well as the types of topics being discussed. In undergoing the discourse of the community, members all have equal sharing capabilities and the affordance to interject their own opinions and thoughts on various topics. This allows a more flattened and less hierarchical organization among members which is conducive to asking for assistance and other's ability to provide their insights and opinions.

Most notably though from the sentiment analysis is that members talk negatively, and overall focused on, specific equipment and software/applications. In observing the concordance around negative words, they are routinely used to describe the condition, operation, and/or functionality of a specific equipment piece (such as a microphone, Twitch services, or recording software known as OBS).

Other Expertise

While many of the discussions revolve around equipment and methods that help streamers increase the viewers and content, the value added to the discourse of this community is the specific information, whether from personal experience or occupational knowledge, that individuals bring to these conversations. Specifically, individuals who have experience in audio recording are able to break down specific characteristics of different microphone types and brands, which is helpful for beginning streamers where they can map quality and price point in order to get the best product for their current status as a streamer. This is crucial information because a poor quality microphone may impede an individual's growth and ultimately not allow them to continue streaming due to lack of an audience who cannot understand what is being said.

Site Maps

Current Site Design

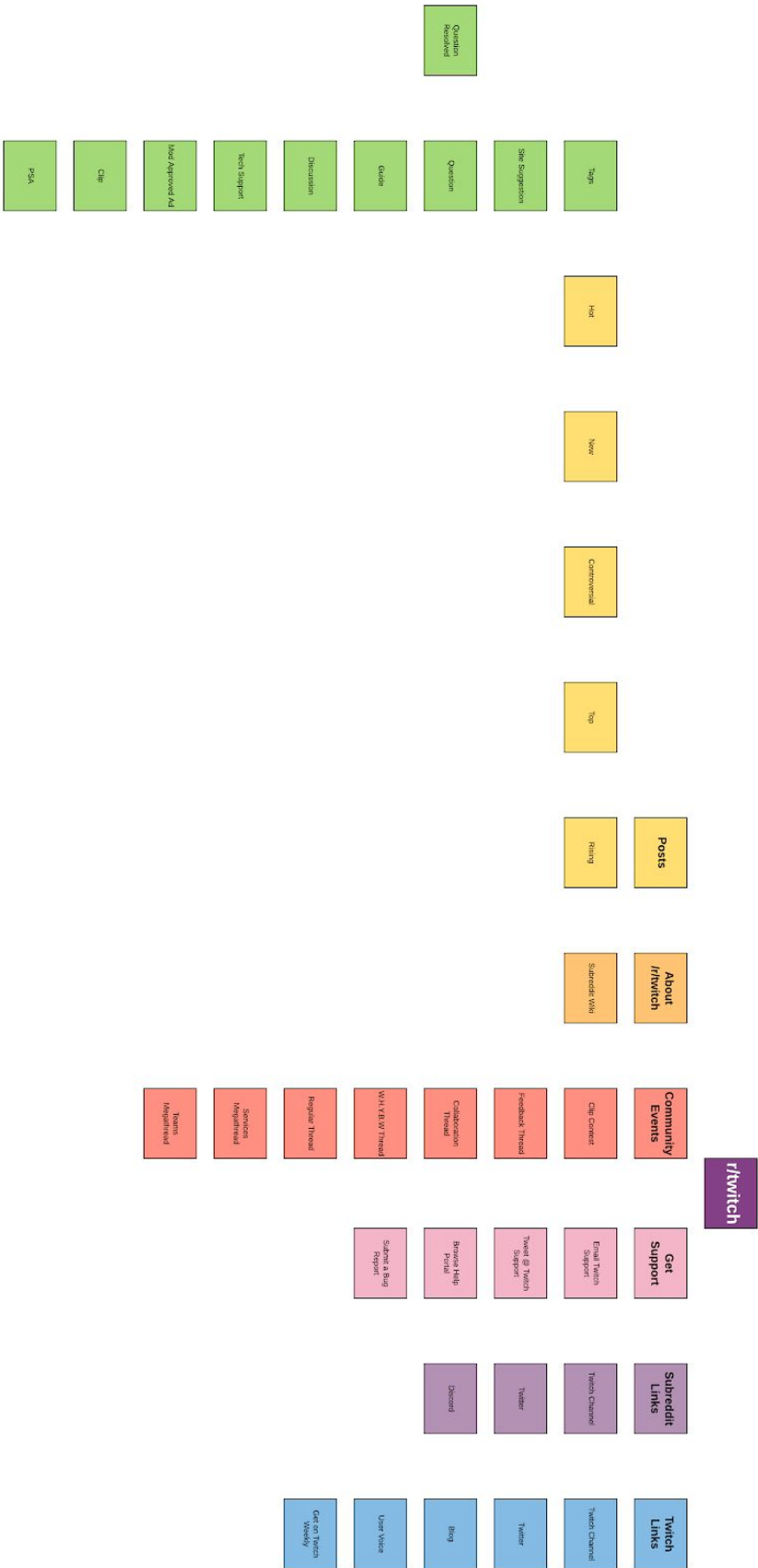
The current information architecture implemented into the functions of the r/twitch page limits new participants in discoverability and creates frustrations when attempting to look for something specific to fix a need. Most of this comes from the sites many resources and valuable features. The site has a navigation bar with drop down menus, each of which focuses on some aspect of the users needs or interests. However, these menus are dense with options and the verbage and language among the titles are not easily understood. For example, one titled "Get Support" delivers options to various resources that are used for submitting complaints.

A feature that is implemented in the current site map which I recommend to be used in the redesign, is tags which are used on the posts on the main feed of the page. These tags identify the type of information being discussed within each posts and is a strong component to information architecture already in place. These tags help users reading through identify the post and whether the information within is pertinent to them. This is something which will be useful in future categorization of topics within the site.

Redesign Site Map

In observing the complexity of the current site map, I propose a redesign that is focused on the needs and goals of the users who are coming to this site for help and assistance. My redesign simplifies the navigation bar by ordering the links based by tasks the users are looking to accomplish into four categories. In figure 2, these are organized into "Growing Your Channel", "Getting Started", "Technical Issues", and "Twitch Resources". By simplifying these categories, users will be more readily able to select among the four choices and then locate within each drop menu the resource that will best accomplish the goal of they are hoping to achieve.

Making this layout more structured has the added benefit of allowing a more straightforward and short hand navigation which can be more easily described in comments and posts. This will help others assisting to achieve the desired outcome more readily as well.



Redesign Site Map

