

Evaluation of Regional Web Portals

Vladimír Očenášek¹, Miloš Ulman², Jiří Vaněk², Edita Šilerová²

¹Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Czech Republic, e-mail: ocenasek@pef.czu.cz

²Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract. Evaluation of regional web portals is based on methods of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide. We evaluated 6 regional web portals using 12 parameters in area of content and services. From the five possible evaluated areas belonging to methodology of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide, we focused on the areas of content and services. We compared Czech web portals against Austrian and Swiss web portals. The highest number of points got Posázaví (welcome in the tourist region around the river Sázava (www.posazavi.com)), which obtained full score for immediate updates, searchable databases, newsletter subscription, event calendar and capabilities of GIS. Evaluation brings insight in matter of increasing attractiveness and website traffic of concerned portals, which would lead to increase in visitors of concerned regions.

Keywords: Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide, Rutgers – SKKU – E-Governance Performance Index, regional web portal, regional touristic headquarter, multilingual support, event calendar, searchable database, accommodation and event reservation

1 Introduction

There are many of different rankings in the world, which relate to information and communications technology. For example, United Nations e-Government survey evaluates expansion of e-government administration in 193 countries in the world every two years and publishes worldwide ranking of EGDI (e-government development index).

Since 2003 web portals of capitals of the largest countries in the world have been evaluated by - Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide (Holzer et al., 2014) every two years. This rating is organized by the "The E-Governance Institute" which is part of Rutgers University Newark. Prague (15 in) was included for the first time in 2007. Prague was ranked in excellent 2nd place in 2009, in the period 2011 - 2012 was in 4th place and in the period 2013 - 2014, Prague ranked 10th. (Pazderník, 2013). Our methods of evaluation are based on methods of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide, which is focused on regional web portals.

Copyright © 2015 for this paper by its authors. Copying permitted for private and academic purposes.

Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Agriculture, Food and Environment (HAICTA 2015), Kavala, Greece, 17-20 September, 2015.

2 Methods

Rutgers-SKKU E-Governance Performance Index is calculated during methods of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide. Regional web portals are evaluated based on predefined criteria of this index. The survey evaluates websites of municipalities in terms of privacy, usability, content, services, and citizen and social engagement, and ranks them on a global scale. The Rutgers-SKKU E-Governance Performance Index is calculated within methodology of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide.

The Regional web portals are evaluated based on predefined criteria of this index. The survey evaluates websites of municipalities in terms of privacy, usability, content, services, citizen and social engagement. Score differ based on type of the question. For „yes or no“ questions, it scales from 0 or 1 to 0 or 3 points in less and more important criteria, respectively and from 0 to 2 (even 3 in special cases) in questions where differentiation is possible.

We evaluated 6 regional web portals using 12 parameters in area of content and services. For instance, we evaluated whether web portal provides: online publications, multilingual access, GIS, calendar of events, searchable database of articles, accommodation reservation etc. All parameters are shown in the Table 1.

3 Results

Department of Information Technologies is interested in web rankings, importance of agrotourism and usage of map portals for a long time (Vaněk et al., 2011). In this article we compared Czech web portals against Austrian and Swiss web portals.

For evaluation of regional web portals, we chose two regional touristic headquarters (Tourist Authority South Moravia (www.ccrjm.cz), Tourist Authority South Bohemia (www.jccr.cz)), one regional touristic web (Posázaví - welcome in the tourist region around the river Sázava (www.posazavi.com)), two Austrian web portals, which represents cross-border cooperation between Austria and Czech republic (Genuine holidays on the farm in Austria (www.agroturistika-v-rakousku.cz), Austria – arrive and revive (www.austria.info/cz)) and official web of Switzerland Tourism Company (www.mojesvycarsko.com)).

From the five possible evaluated areas belonging to methodology of Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide, we focused on the areas of content and services.

In the area of content, we evaluated whether web portal contains:

- contact information for regional representation, municipalities, members of LAG (Local Action group), members of non-profit organization, suppliers, stores etc.
- books and publications online
- possibilities of GIS
- multilingual support

- event calendar

In the area of services, we evaluated whether web portal contains:

- newsletter subscription
- searchable database of articles, statistics and surveys
- message board
- FAQ section
- personalize the home page
- accommodation and event reservation
- frequency of website updates

Questions, score scale and evaluation are shown in Table 1.

The highest number of points (20 out of 27) got Posázaví (welcome in the tourist region around the river Sázava (www.posazavi.com)), which obtained full score for immediate updates, searchable databases, newsletter subscription, event calendar and capabilities of GIS.

The 2nd place went to official web of Switzerland Tourism Company (www.mojesvycarsko.com), which got 18 points out of maximal 27. This web portal stands out with its sophisticated booking system, capabilities of GIS and easy to use event calendar including various thematic categories (Family Trips, Cycling, Group excursions, Food and Wine etc.).

Some areas aren't adequately addressed, which is evident from the data in the table. The message board is available only on Posázaví portal, FAQ section and possibility of adapting the site aren't included on neither of them.

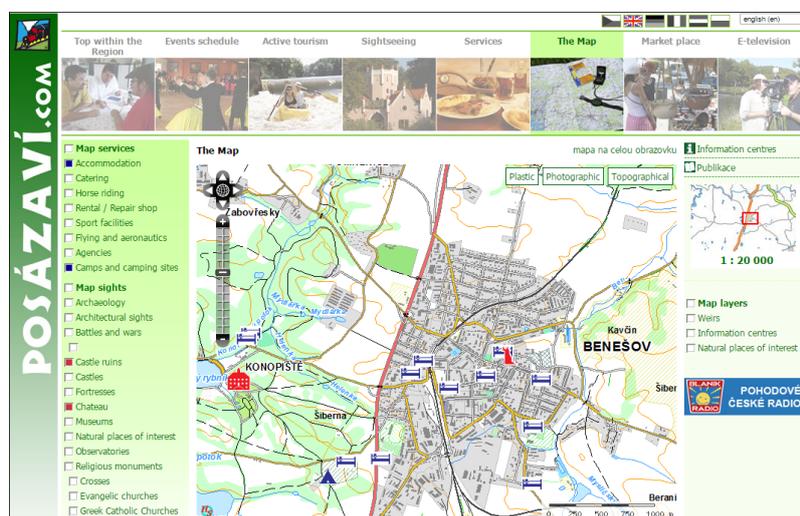


Fig. 1. Regional touristic web Posázaví (www.posazavi.com) – demonstration of possible object selection for map view – accommodation, camps and camping sites, castle ruins, chateau

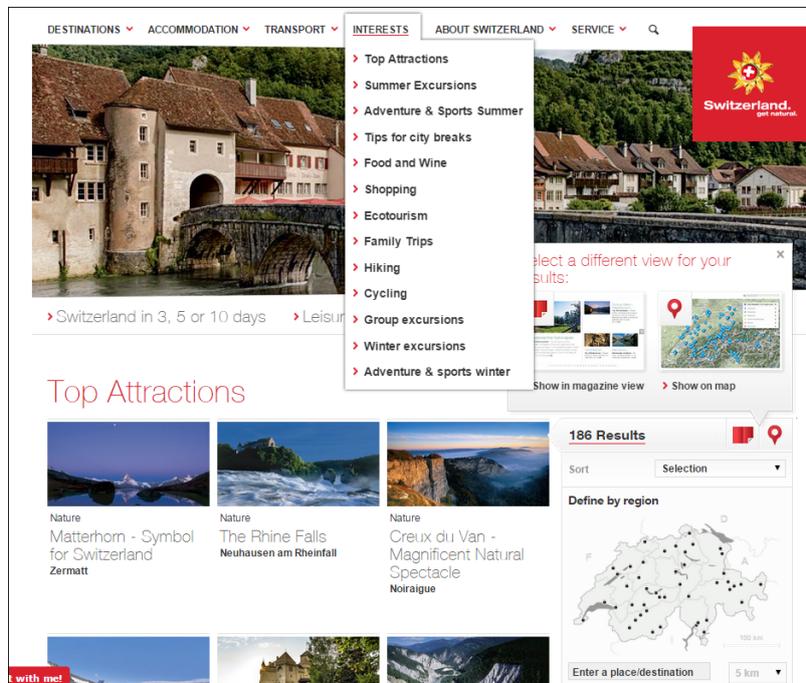


Fig. 2. Swiss touristic portal – menu of interests

Table 1. Evaluation Czech web portals against Austrian and Swiss web portals according to 12 parameters

question	scale	Tourist Authority South Moravia	Tourist Authority South Bohemia	Posázaví	Genuine holidays on the farm in Austria	Austria – arrive and revive	Switzerland Tourism Company
A	0,1	1	0	1	0	0	1
B	0,1,2,3	3	2	2	2	2	1
C	0,1,2	0	0	3	1	0	3
D	0,1	1	0	1	1	1	1
E	0,1,2,3	2	0	3	3	3	3
F	0,1,2	2	3	3	0	2	2
G	0,3	3	3	3	3	3	3
H	0,1,2	0	0	1	0	0	0
I	0,1,2	0	0	0	0	0	0
J	0,3	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0,1,2	2	0	0	2	2	2
L	0,1,2,3	1	1	3	1	2	2
Total points		15	9	20	13	15	18

Legend:

- A - Does the site provide information about regional representation, the municipality?
- B - Does the site offer documents, reports, or books (publications) online?
- C - Does the site have GIS capabilities?
- D - Does the site offer access in more than one language?
- E - Does the site offer a calendar of events?
- F - Does the site offer registration page newsletters?
- G - Does the site offer searchable databases of articles, surveys, statistics?
- H - Does the site provide a bulletin board for posting questions?
- I - Does the site provide a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) corner?
- J - Does the site allow users to customize the main city homepage?
- K - Does the site allow users to register accommodation, event?
- L - How often are the city's website updated?

4 Conclusion

Alongside the unofficial web portals, which points out a certain local attraction, official webs are made. An official site promotes certain geographical area, region or county. We devote our attention in this article to these web sites, evaluate them based

on selected criteria in order that these sites will improve and their next versions will offer more useful information and possibilities for users.

We used methods of “Rutgers-SKKU E-Governance Performance Index”, which is used for evaluating portals of government administration across the world (Gaulé, Žilinskas, 2013). This issue is starting to appear in bachelor’s projects and master’s thesis at Czech universities (Kotala, 2010).

We modified 12 parameters for evaluating regional web sites and used these parameters for evaluation of 6 regional portals. Czech, Austrian and one Swiss web portal were represented. Evaluation brings insight in matter of increasing attractiveness and website traffic of concerned portals, which would lead to increase in visitors of concerned regions.

As it turned out during our model usage, which took into account only two of the important areas (content and services), level of regional web portals significantly differ. Some criteria are fulfilled across the all sites, but some of them are partly or completely missing. Individual solutions therefore often prefer different criteria, thus providing different perspectives on the region and its issues. If all criteria were met, the informational content and thus even usefulness of the individual portals would rise. Theoretically, this would lead to a "content compatibility" of individual solutions, which would ultimately bring profit to users and consequently the visitors of their respective regions.

We will continue to pursue this issue in order to develop methods for evaluating the regional web portals.

Acknowledgments. The results and knowledge included herein have been obtained owing to support from the following institutional grants.

Internal grant agency of the Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, grant no. 20151053, “Development and use of information and communication technologies in rural areas”.

References

1. Gaulé, E., Žilinskas, G. E-Governance Development Factors in Lithuania: The Study of Municipal Websites. Kaunas University of Technology. 2013. *Viešoji politika ir administravimas issn 2029-2872* (online) public policy and administration, 1 / 2013, vol. 12, no 1, p. 80–93. ISSN 1648–2603.
2. Holzer, M., Zheng, Y., Manoharan, A., Shark, A. Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide - Sixth Global E-Governance Survey: A Longitudinal Assessment of Municipal Websites Throughout the World The E-Governance Institute. The E-Governance Institute National Center for Public Performance School of Public Affairs and Administration Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey-Campus at Newark. 2014. Printed in the United States of America. ISBN: 978-0-942942-28-6.
3. Kotala, M., Analysis and assesment of public administration web pages. Bachelor thesis. Brno. 2010. Faculty of Informatics, Masaryk University.

4. Pazderník, R., Validation of results of the Prague Municipal Parts Evaluation 2013 - In cooperation with A Special Project of Rutgers University School of Public Affairs & Administration and The Public Technology Institute. 2013. [online].
<http://www.prague-city.cz/Hodnoceni-webovych-stranek-22-mestskych-casti-Prahy.html> .
5. Vaněk, J., Brožová, I., Šimek, P., Jarolímek, J., Vogeltanzová, T., Červenková, E. 2011. Organic farms in the Czech Republic – Map Portal presentation opportunities. Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Czech Republic. *Plant and Soil Environment*, 57, pp. 565 – 570.