



THE YOUNG PUBLISHERS NETWORK
THINKUBATOR

April 7, 2006

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VISION STATEMENT

We envision an online network of young Canadian publishing professionals—young people who are already working in the industry and those still trying to get into the industry. These individuals have a significant amount in common and are, in a sense, already a community. They are a community without a neighbourhood: this is the problem the Young Publishers Network seeks to solve.

Young publishers who already work in the industry will come to the site to post jobs and events, as well as seek information on job responsibilities and industry standards. They will visit the site to socialize with their peers from across Canada. Young publishers not yet employed in the industry will find the site an invaluable source of information directed specifically at their current and immanent career stages; they will be able to post questions, add comments on topics, and ultimately contribute to the very resource they are gathering information from.

Furthermore, the Young Publishers Network will act as a portal for publishing associations and educational programs beyond the Master of Publishing program (MPub) and Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing (CCSP). We will encourage other educational programs to use our site as a hub for their students to network with current and future publishing professionals. The current MPub students will have their own section of the site where they will post their papers and course content.

The network, using wiki technology, will be sustained by its users who will contribute to job postings, events listings, news updates, industry and education guides; and “Pub Talk,” a place to post fun topics for publishers.

HISTORY OF THE THINKUBATOR

The original Thinkubator was conceived as a group project during the 2000 Summer Publishing Workshops and was intended to serve as a site for alumni of the annual Web Publishing Workshop and the MPub program.

The initial idea of the Thinkubator was to create an online venue for industry professionals across Canada to discuss and ‘think’ about industry-related topics over the web.

This was reconceptualized in Spring 2004 by PubHub for their technology project as a “forum driven magazine” for the MPub community. The site was comprised of feature articles, project space, and course information for current students and a directory for current students, faculty, and alumni. It also had external links and a forum.

The Thinkubator did not generate as much traffic as the MPub had hoped, so last year Asterisk decided that a redesign of the site and a publicity campaign were necessary. They redesigned it as an online interaction arena for MPub alumni. Their secondary audience was current MPub students and their tertiary audience was MPub faculty.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- The Thinkubator already exists, and therefore there is already brand awareness
- We are part of our audience, so we understand what is needed
- Wide audience
- Enthusiastic, innovative team
- Use of a wiki for the basis of the site makes upkeep easy; anyone can edit and fix mistakes
- Wiki allows users to add content (job postings, events calendar, publishing related articles, etc.) which takes some of the load off of the administrator
- Audience (young Canadian publishers) are not targeted specifically by any other group
- Online, interactive format of site fits with new technology emerging in the publishing industry (the industry is beginning to move towards more of an online model, with emergence of ebooks and online journals)
- Strong community already exists through MPub alumni, and we want simply to expand that network online

Weaknesses

- Broad audience focus may be too ambitious
- None of us are highly skilled in web development
- Marketing the site may be difficult since we have no capital
- Need to have new content regularly to keep readers coming back
- May be too reliant on users as content providers
- Because the content is written by the audience, perhaps it will not have the authority/knowledge base that other publications (such as *Quill & Quire*) have.
- Maintenance issues

Opportunities

- Opportunity to become the place to go for Canadian students interested in publishing and employers interested in recruiting them
- Potential to create stronger links between the MPub and the Canadian industry
- Can be used as a recruitment tool for the MPub program
- Opportunity to create a community of young Canadian publishers
- Opportunity to run offline activities (such as lectures, book clubs, etc.) in the same way as the Society of Young Publishers in the UK

Threats

- The Thinkubator is difficult to find on the internet
- Danger of being seen as an MPub-specific site like the previous Thinkubator
- Individual young Canadian publishers may not be interested in hearing views of other young Canadian publishers
- Society of Young Publishers provides services for members worldwide—may be more appealing than Canadian-only forum

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

Determine the direction of the Young Publishers Network's Thinkubator site.

Strategy

- Research the previous Thinkubator's as well as existing community software on-line to determine strengths and weaknesses in relation to our wiki-based site, and choose the strongest, most self-maintaining way of creating the site.
- Decide the functions that we feel are necessary to the Thinkubator and figure out how these functions work with a wiki format by creating preliminary wire frames, lists of essential content, and scenarios of what young publishers would actually do when they arrive at the site.

Objective 2

Get the Thinkubator up and running by April 7th.

Strategy:

- Create very detailed design for the Thinkubator, making sure to test our designs on potential users. Work with Haig Armen and John Maxwell to create the actual website.

Objective 3

Publicize the site to create a larger community and more traffic than the current Thinkubator has.

Strategy

- Compile a list of contacts to relevant educational programs, publishing associations, and firms across Canada and send out an email newsletter announcing the site, and post a Young Publishers Network article on Wikipedia that links from the page on "publishing."

AUDIENCE

Primary Audience

The Thinkubator's primary audience is students in Canadian publishing programs or in other programs who are interested in publishing, and other young people interested in publishing careers but are unsure of where to find information. This group of people are young, energetic, and eager to begin their careers. They reside in Canada, and many of them are currently in post-secondary education or have had some form of post-secondary education. They are interested in finding job postings from many publishing companies all in one place, and are interested in communicating with their peers who are also trying to break into the industry. They are interested in publishing-related issues and are often seeking peer advice and recommendations. They are very interested in networking with their peers and with publishing professionals.

Secondary Audience

The Thinkubator's secondary audience is publishing professionals from firms across Canada who are looking to hire new employees and know that the Thinkubator is a network of young, intelligent, eager young people interested in publishing. Also included in our secondary audience are professors of Canadian publishing programs who will be able to direct their students to this site.

Tertiary Audience

The Thinkubator's tertiary audience is current MPub students and MPub alumni. This group is made up of 18 people per year, and though they change annually, usually range in age from 22 to 35. They, like the primary audience, intend to or already do work in the publishing industry. For the current MPub students, there will be a link from the Thinkubator site to their own wiki site used for MPub course content. MPub students are a part of our primary audience, but also serve as a tertiary audience because they have their own "MPub" link to an MPub-specific wiki for class postings.

AUDIENCE SCENARIOS

Pamela

Pamela is 25 and lives in Charlottetown, PEI. She is currently attending Holland College getting a diploma in graphic design. Her dream job is to design book covers, but she has no idea how book designers get started. One of her professors suggests she look at the Young Publishers Network's Thinkubator webpage for information.

She types the URL into the address bar and waits as the page comes up. "The Young Publishers Network: Thinkubator," shouts the homepage banner. Pamela clicks on the "Jobs" link at the top of the screen and browses through some publishing jobs. She doesn't understand all the terms used in the postings, so she goes back to the "Home" page and clicks on "Industry." Here she finds information that various people have offered about different jobs, including what exactly these jobs entail and which firms offer good wages for freelancers.

She then returns to the home page and reads some of the most recent postings. She decides to create an account so she clicks on "Register" and inputs her details. After creating an account, she clicks on "Pub Talk" and creates a new post asking a question about getting into book cover design. Two days later she checks the site again and there are four comments from young publishers giving her tips about breaking into the industry, and about who she should contact. Pamela decides to subscribe to the RSS feed for "Jobs" and "Pub Talk" from the site so that she can stay updated and networked with this knowledgeable group of people.

Iva

Iva Cheung is a member of the MPub alumni, after completing her project report in December. She works at Douglas and McIntyre in Vancouver, BC and likes to stay connected to her MPub cohort and the cohorts from previous and subsequent years. She also likes to keep up-to-date on publishing news. She heard the 2005 cohort were redesigning the Thinkubator, so she checks out the site to see if it is still relevant to her. She reads the blurb about the YPN and is intrigued; she hopes that she too can be involved in networking with young professionals across Canada.

She reads the latest postings on the front page. One of them is an author reading event at the Vancouver Public Library. She decides to look at more publishing events and so clicks on the “Events” tab at the top of the page. Here she browses for events that are in Vancouver that interest her and notes the date and time in her diary. She then goes back to the homepage and clicks on the “Industry” tab to see what articles have been posted. She finds some people commenting on the role of the editor, so she adds her views, as a member of the industry. By adding to discussions, she is adding to a greater resource that serves young publishers in Canada.

A few days later, Iva decides to look in the “Industry” section under “Canadian Publishers” for articles about Douglas and McIntyre but there hasn’t been an article posted about them so she creates a new page about the company.

Jade

Jade is 23 years old. She is currently enrolled at Simon Fraser University in the Master of Publishing program. She comes to the Thinkubator primarily to post her notes from her presentation and compile group work online.

Jade first clicks on the “MPub” students link and posts her history presentation under the history course pages. She then goes back to the home page and, as it is the end of February, she clicks on the “Jobs” tab, looking for internship opportunities for the summer. She sees an internship posted by Book Press and takes down the details so she can send them her resume by email. Then as part of her internship research she goes to look for Toronto book publishers in the “Industry” guide so she can send out some applications.

As she is about to enter the industry, Jade wants to find out the latest news from her peers and therefore she clicks on the “Pub Talk” tab. Here she reads an article and subsequent commentary from different users who are discussing the use of grants in the Canadian publishing industry. From here she follows links out to different pages of the wiki which are not documented on the front page, and finds an interesting discussion about the top ten Canadian books of all time. She adds to this discussion, and also links this page to the “Pub Talk” page off the front page so that more people can easily find this topic.

Jade returns to the Thinkubator often, mostly to post things for classes in the “MPub” students link, but she also regularly sifts through the comments, finding conversations about the industry and about books and magazines in general. She always returns to the Thinkubator because she is always excited to see what she can find deep in the heart of the wiki.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE PLATFORM

The Thinkubator was reconceived as a wiki this year by John Maxwell, who set up the basic structure for students to post their assignments and notes from various courses. In redesigning the Thinkubator, apart from keeping a wiki for the current students, we wanted to widen the scope of the site to include other publishing students and young professionals. As our ideas developed, we decided that a wiki would be confusing and we moved away from the idea. We developed wire frames with static resources of career types and company types, a Canadian publishing directory, publishing information, education programs and related blogs to browse. We also created wire frames for forums, using the same categories as the previous Thinkubator: news, books, magazines, technology, design and miscellaneous. We were also going to have pages to post jobs and events. From our wire frames, John Maxwell suggested that we use a Plone format with a wiki built inside to get the best results for our site.

Plone is a user-friendly, powerful Content Management System, ideal as an intranet and extranet server as a document publishing system, a portal server, and a groupware tool for collaboration between separately located entities. John developed an initial Plone site, however our concept changed before we went any further.

We then met with Haig Armen, who convinced us, after a two hour meeting, that the site we were conceiving had already been done in previous years and that making the site into a wiki was a more innovative approach. Therefore the new Thinkubator for the Young Publishers Network will be a wiki resource site for new publishing professionals and students. There will be listings pages of jobs, events and news and these items will be displayed in reverse chronological order when people add their listing. We will have industry and education guides where people can add information that they think we will be relevant to our users. Finally, we will have an area for “Pub Talk,” for more casual publishing commentary and comments.

We used Wikipedia’s homepage as a template for ours; the homepage displays a welcome statement with a link to an expanded description of the site, as well as user instructions. The bulk of the homepage displays the latest discussion and latest resource posting. Moving away from Wikipedia’s design, our main navigation is displayed in tabs which run horizontally across the page. A search option will also be necessary, with the possibility of a link to create a new topic if one doesn’t already exist. However, we will try not to make the search engine overly case sensitive. Users will be able to log in and will have the option to create a profile for themselves on the wiki.

The content of the site will be entirely user-driven. However, we will begin to create the structure and will post some content within our categories to guide users in how the site should be used.

SITE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP

The reason for the redesign of the Thinkubator this year was mainly due to maintenance issues. The current Thinkubator generates little traffic and is cumbersome to maintain, since John Maxwell is the sole administrator of the website. In redesigning the Thinkubator with a wiki platform, we are essentially making the audience the administrators and believing in “radical trust”—trusting that more power given to the users will allow for better content and not total chaos. We are allowing automatic registration for anyone interested in the site, and are trusting these individuals to maintain the original mandate. The risks are that this will probably generate redundant user ID’s, and possibly a higher occurrence of vandalism. However, in doing this, the site will not need to be maintained by one administrator, but will be monitored by the members of the community who use it.

Commentary on Design Idea 2

We decided that the tabs depicted here would assist users in navigating through the site, but the secondary navigation (on the tabs) stands out more than the primary navigation of topics such as jobs, events etc., located on the right hand edge. This is a usability issue, and so navigation will be more effective by using tabs for the main topics and then giving the option to “add a post” on the front page of each topic. The “changed pages” will be linked through the “dates modified”, the profiles will be linked through the name of the user who modified the page, and the comments have been put on the same page as the post. We also decided to add tabs for two functions to run along the bottom of comments posted to the site: “history” links to a description of changes made in the section, and “edit page” allows a user to edit all comments.

Design Idea Two:



Commentary on Design Idea Three

On this design, Haig liked the idea of a unified colour palette and a differentiated logo. As we started to redesign for the final look, we decided to use a unified colour palette that stemmed from the line art from Design Idea One and to use different shades of grey for the tabs and banner.

Design Idea Three:

The screenshot displays the Thinkubator website interface. At the top, the site name 'Thinkubator' is prominently displayed in a large, light-colored font. To its right, navigation links for 'Home', 'Log In', and 'RSS' are visible. The main content area is titled 'Comment Topic' and contains three placeholder comments, each with a subject line and a body of text. Below the comments, there is a form for adding a new comment, including a 'subject:' label, a text input field, and a larger text area. A green 'Add Comment' button is positioned at the bottom right of the form. On the right side of the page, a vertical sidebar contains several navigation links: 'Job Postings', 'Events', 'News', 'Industry Guides', 'Education Guides', and 'Pub Talk'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'Search:' label and a search input field. The overall design features a clean, modern aesthetic with a unified color palette and clear typography.

Branding and Usability Issues

The banner for the site was discussed, as the Thinkubator and the Young Publishers Network brands were competing in all of the initial designs. Since the website's URL will remain <http://thinkubator.ccsp.sfu.ca>, it seemed more important to keep the Thinkubator brand; therefore the Young Publishers Network became a tagline. Haig also suggested that we choose a font that looked more hand-drawn to tie in with the illustrations. The font chosen for the banner is called "Augie".

We decided that the word "Home" should be used instead of an icon to avoid any confusion for the user since icons have not been used anywhere else. The home page will always be the size of a browser window so that the whole page can be seen when it loads.

Haig also expressed concern about the boxiness of all three of our design ideas. With Haig's advice, the final look is more subtle with a two-third to one-third grid commonly known as the "golden mean." In order to achieve a more streamlined and harmonious look, we used a graduated colour scheme and rounded corners on separating boxes. Haig also suggested that to increase usability, the length of a line of text should be kept short to keep the reader's interest. Therefore text will be kept within the two-third area of our grid. Overall, the final look adheres more closely to industry standards for achieving maximum usability.

USABILITY TESTING

Wire Frames for Initial Plone Site

Once our content ideas had been established, we drew up our first batch of wire frames. The first round of testing was done on our group to make sure that everyone's ideas had been incorporated, and we did not make any significant changes from this testing.

After the first test, we then had other members of the MPub test the wire frames. Some were given scenarios, for example, to pretend they were coming to the website as an employer wanting to post a job. This allowed us to see if our categories of information were intuitively discernable. Other testers were just shown the wire frame and left to decide where on the website they wanted to go.

From this second round of testing, there were some minor changes. For example, in the job posting section, one user wanted to be able to sort job listings by geographic area. Another user wanted the search bar to be more prominent.

After we fixed these changes, another set of tests were done on users who would be in the same age range and technological range as some publishers who would come to our websites to post jobs and perhaps to participate in discussions. These testings went well and no changes were required.

Next we brought the wire frame sketches to our meeting with design consultant Haig Armen. However, because of our change in direction from a static, Plone-based website to a more flexible wiki-based site, we had to redesign this batch of wire frames.

Wire Frames for Wiki Site

With our new batch of wire frames, we set off to test fellow MPub students as well as friends outside of the MPub.

In our original wire frames, the listings were lined up down the middle of the screen (under the masthead) and the tabs were arranged along a sidebar. Based on usability testing with tester Erin, we found that the website was quite simple to navigate but needed to be a bit more clear. Overall the wire frames were understood and well-received. Erin found it simple to insert comments. However, there were several issues and functions to consider. For example, we needed to add a homepage link to the top of every page. The location of the sign-in button also needed to be more visible.

Other considerations were to make the wiki functions and options more comprehensive. For example, it would be useful to reach a wider public by making the edit page option more understandable. As a first-time user of a wiki page, Erin was unsure as to why or how exactly she would edit the entire page. It may be useful to add some explanation about this on the site.

FINAL DESIGN

The final look of the Thinkubator incorporates the best elements of our original three looks, as well as new concepts introduced by Haig Armen.

The final look uses a tab navigation system, a unified colour palette and a banner which ties in well with the line drawings. No logos (apart from the banner) are used, and a single navigation system has been created. History has been hidden within the wiki but is still accessible by clicking the date on a given posting. Each page uses significant white space, and maintains a clean, clear look.

The navigation system has been consolidated into one single line of tabs resting in the upper section of the page, above the line drawing. The tab system uses grey in a variety of tones. However, the look is brightened by magenta which is used as a highlight colour (the text of each tab turns magenta as you roll over it).

Magenta is also used as a link highlight colour. For instance on a given listing page, the author's name, the date, and the number of comments are listed in magenta alerting users to the fact that these elements are links to other pages.

The site maintains a people-orientated look by using a unique line drawing on each section of the site. The homepage, news, events, jobs, industry, and education pages all have a unique image associated with them. The colour palette for each section is drawn from the given image.

It was agreed that boxes need to be used to subtly categorize content. However, a conscious effort has been made to ensure that these boxes are easy on the eye: they take up two-thirds of the screen and use a colour palette which is made up of transparencies of the colours used on the rest of the page.


On a comment specific page (i.e. where the original posting and comments associated with it are displayed in their entirety) a distinctive blue tone is used to differentiate comments from the original posting.

Home Page

RSS | home | mpub | help | login

Jobs Events News Industry Education Pub Talk

THE YOUNG PUBLISHERS NETWORK
THINKUBATOR



Welcome to the Young Publishers Network.
This site is a resource for students and young professionals.
Click [here](#) to read the instructions.

 SEARCH

Super Cool Event

Posted by [Jenn](#) [March 22, 2006](#)

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[5 comments](#)

Super Cool Event

Posted by [Jenn](#) [March 22, 2006](#)

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[5 comments](#)

Each section (jobs, events, news, industry, education, pub talk) has a slightly different design treatment for the general listings in the section as well as for the article and comments.

Example of a General Listings Page:

The screenshot shows the Thinkubator website interface. At the top right, there are links for 'RSS | home | mpub | help | logout'. Below this is the 'THE YOUNG PUBLISHERS NETWORK THINKUBATOR' logo. A navigation bar contains links for 'Jobs', 'Events', 'News', 'Industry', 'Education', and 'Pub Talk'. The 'Industry' link is highlighted. Below the navigation bar is a header image of two women talking, with the word 'Industry' written in white text. To the right of the image is a search bar with a 'SEARCH' button. The main content area features five distinct sections, each with a colored header, a paragraph of placeholder text, and a '5 comments' link:


- Industry News and Reviews** (grey header): Iduip et alisl ullaor susto ea feugue er se faccummod mod minim zrrillam iure moloreet volor in elenim vel dolum vulput iuscinisim vero ea accum alisl incil ea alit iusto exer alit vulla ad tetue et. 5 comments
- Canadian Publishing Organizations and Resources** (orange header): Iduip et alisl ullaor susto ea feugue er se faccummod mod minim zrrillam iure moloreet volor in elenim vel dolum vulput iuscinisim vero ea accum alisl incil ea alit iusto exer alit vulla ad tetue et. 5 comments
- Online Publishing Resources** (orange header): Iduip et alisl ullaor susto ea feugue er se faccummod mod minim zrrillam iure moloreet volor in elenim vel dolum vulput iuscinisim vero ea accum alisl incil ea alit iusto exer alit vulla ad tetue et. 5 comments
- Canadian Publishers** (blue header): Iduip et alisl ullaor susto ea feugue er se faccummod mod minim zrrillam iure moloreet volor in elenim vel dolum vulput iuscinisim vero ea accum alisl incil ea alit iusto exer alit vulla ad tetue et. 5 comments
- Job Descriptions** (brown header): Iduip et alisl ullaor susto ea feugue er se faccummod mod minim zrrillam iure moloreet volor in elenim vel dolum vulput iuscinisim vero ea accum alisl incil ea alit iusto exer alit vulla ad tetue et. 5 comments

Example of an Article Page:

RSS | home | mpub | help

Jobs Events News Industry Education Pub Talk

THE YOUNG PUBLISHERS NETWORK
THINKUBATOR



Events

welcome ainsley
[create profile](#)

SEARCH

Super Cool Event

Posted by [Jenn](#) [March 22, 2006](#)

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[comments](#)

[Edit this event](#)
[Add a comment](#)

Comments

Posted by [Caroline](#) [March 22, 2006](#)

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zzrit irit eugait in venim.

Add a comment

Subject

MARKETING

Since our vision included a strong marketing push to educational programs and publishing companies across Canada, we compiled a substantial list of emails. Our first step was to ask Jo-Anne Ray for her most up-to-date list of emails for MPub alumni. These people make up a large part of our audience as they already know about the Thinkubator from previous years and about its brand.

Next, we set about collecting emails from relevant educational programs and publishing companies across Canada. We had already compiled a list of educational programs whose members would potentially be interested in our website. We visited these sites to find the most relevant email address for sending our press release. We also visited a variety of book publishing and magazine publishing websites and collected email addresses from these sites. When looking for relevant emails, we tried to choose individuals on the masthead or employee list who were more likely to be “young publishers,” such as editorial assistants, publishing assistants, and other non-executive positions. We also targeted people who were in executive or human resources positions in the hopes that they might choose our website to advertise their job postings. In finding these emails, we tried to target both print and web publishers, and tried to come up with a comprehensive list of Canadian publishers that were representative of all the Canadian provinces.

Basically, our aim in collecting these emails was to cover as many Canadian publishing companies and educational programs as possible; in targeting our marketing email at a wide breadth of people in or interested in the industry, we felt that we had a better chance of connecting with many young publishers who would be interested in our network. In our marketing email, we made sure to request that the recipient forward our press release to people in their company or program who would benefit and be interested in visiting our site.

We have also posted an explanation of the Young Publishers Network on Wikipedia, and created links to this page from the general “publishing” page. We have added our URL to Wikipedia in these locations so that interested parties can connect with us directly.

While the results of this marketing push have yet to be seen, we hope that awareness of our site will infiltrate the publishing industry and create a self-perpetuating wiki website that promotes industry networking for new publishers.

Press Release Email:



For Immediate Release
April 3, 2006

New Website Launches Careers in Publishing

Vancouver—The Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing (CCSP) is announcing the launch of a networking website for young publishing professionals. The Thinkubator website will be the first of its kind in Canada, providing crucial information on educational programs, jobs and resources for the industry.

“The Young Publishers Network is providing an important vehicle for networking in Canadian publishing,” said Rowland Lorimer, head of the Masters in Publishing Program at CCSP. “Thinkubator allows students to make the transition from training to an established career in a vibrant and dynamic industry.”

The new site at <http://thinkubator.ccsp.sfu.ca> uses wiki technology. Students and professionals will build the site’s content by posting the latest news, job listings, trend reports and announcements about the industry.

As an innovative marketing platform, publishing associations and educational institutions are able to post information about their services and programs. As a networking tool, Thinkubator will also host job seekers’ profiles.

The website is expanding on a successful online communications hub for the community surrounding the CCSP—including students, faculty, alumni and associates. Started in 1995, graduates of SFU’s Masters in Publishing program are now working for book, magazine and Internet companies, as well as publishing associations and government agencies.

For more information, please contact:
John Maxwell, Assistant Professor
Simon Fraser University
Masters in Publishing Program
jmax@sfu.ca
(604) 291-5287

About the Young Publishers Network (YPN): A network of young professionals, students and others interested in Canadian publishing. Formed in 2006, the YPN was created by a group of students in the Master of Publishing program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. The YPN aims to make resources and information available to young people in the Canadian publishing industry. The YPN provides the community the opportunity to interact, network and share informational resources.

About the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing (CCSP): A teaching, research, innovation and information centre based at Simon Fraser University Vancouver’s Harbour Centre campus. Founded in 1987, the CCSP is a university/industry initiative dedicated to the development of publishing in Canada and internationally. It is advised by an industry board and emphasizes book, magazine and web publishing.

About the Masters in Publishing program (MPub): Canada’s only graduate degree program in the field, exists within the CCSP. Started in 1995, the program consists of applied and theoretical resources.

-END-

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY SOFTWARE RESEARCH

Prior to fully conceptualizing the Thinkubator website, we researched different types of community software to achieve a better understanding of what our redesign should incorporate.

In redesigning the Thinkubator, it was necessary to understand that feature overloads on websites are becoming a real issue in web design. It is better for websites to be simple, getting things done in a minimum number of steps. As if you confuse a user, you will lose them—nothing confuses users more than complex features.

Style and elegance can contribute significantly to a good user experience. Only features that provide a good user experience will be used; any feature that requires learning will only be adopted by a small fraction of users. Unused features are not only useless, they can slow down a user and diminish ease of use. It is more important to create a good user experience. Therefore in the redesign we should only include features that are used by our audience and we should make them simple to use.

Wikis make for a great, simple, and accessible publishing and content management platform. The editing process is simple, and the editing syntax can be learned quickly by non-technical individuals.

Forums

Spaces

<http://www.spacesinternational.com/index.html>

This is essentially what the current Thinkubator is, but for design students. It is a community for designers to exchange information and hosts design competitions. The site itself appears to require very little in administration or maintenance. Visiting members post articles of interest in the articles section. There is also a general discussion forum. It includes useful links, but no job listings which is a major oversight. Our site needs to give users more of a sense of direction, and even the current Thinkubator does a better job at this.

Mediabistro

<http://www.mediabistro.com>

This site has a wide range of services and forums for writers and people who work in the media such as job listings, course listings, and articles on who's who in the media world. It also offers a newsfeed that sends media-related stories from a wide range of sources (ie: *New York Post* and *The Guardian*). It is definitely a community builder because it offers events listings that people who belong to the site can attend for free.

Users can access most of the content for free, although you can sign in to become an avant-garde member and gain access to a wider range of articles, as well as listings of contacts for magazines and other publications that are very useful for freelance writers. This site is really making an effort to create a meeting place and hub for media people, but particularly freelance writers who do not always have social networks as part of their work environment. This is the type of community networking that we will aim for in creating the wiki Thinkubator.

Successful Publishing Blogs

Bookslut

<http://www.bookslut.com/blog/>

This site has been very successful in attracting traffic. Bookslut receives between 6,500 and 8,000 unique visitors per day, and 195,000 to 240,000 per month. It has been named one of the best sites by *Time Magazine* and *New York Times*, and has won two blog awards.

The website is organized into departments: features, reviews, columns, and blog. The “features” department includes interviews with authors, and “columns” is a section with opinions on things like book trends. Obviously, a site like this demands a lot of administration and maintenance. However, we may be able to imitate some aspects of the site for the YPN. It would be interesting if we could ask people to deliver their own reviews of books within a forum section.

The Olive Reader: The Weblog of Harper Perennial

<http://www.olivereader.com/>

This site is maintained by Harper Perennial’s editorial team. It includes links to publishing related blogs, as well as more random but interesting sites such as <http://gofugyourself.typepad.com/>. This presents an interesting way to have an online community for a publishing company. It demonstrates how blogs can be great marketing tools.

Blog for Words without Borders

<http://forums.wordswithoutborders.org/blog>

This blog is very well managed, with one person contributing for each country represented. It is an interesting source of international news on the publishing industry.

Group Blogs

The Blogging Alliance of Non Partisan Canadians

<http://www.nonpartisancanadians.org/index.shtml>

This site is a platform for all sorts of people who have any kind of opinion about Canadian politics. The parallel to the Canadian Young Publishers Network is that they all share a common interest.

Xanga.com

This is a blogging site that people can join to be part of a larger community to share journals and blogs online. It is a similar concept to myspace.com and attracts a lot of very young bloggers. It feels like a very social scene, but is not the thinking man’s blogosphere.

The Magazine Design Blog

<http://desktoppub.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=desktoppub&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fmagazinedesign.weblogsinc.com%2F>

There is a lot of advertising on this site, but it's another demonstration of a group of people coming together to discuss a certain topic. Perhaps the YPN should consider ways of getting professionals from all sectors of the publishing industry involved. Having more design-oriented links could be useful in this regard.

Typographica Blog

<http://desktoppub.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=desktoppub&zu=http%3A%2F%2Ftypographi.com%2F>

Similar idea as the magazine design blog; it is a good source of information on fonts.

Wikis

The most popular wikis, other than Wikipedia, seem to be dedicated to people interested in highly technical projects (programming languages, applications, etc.). Most of them also either looked like Wikipedia or they are not attractive (like the WikiWikiWeb).

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

A multilingual web-based free-content encyclopedia. It exists as a wiki, written collaboratively by volunteers, allowing most articles to be changed by anyone with access to a web browser and an internet connection. The project began on January 15, 2001, as a complement to the expert-written Nupedia and is now operated by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation. Wikipedia has more than 3,500,000 articles, including more than 1,002,000 in the English-language version.

WikiWikiWeb

<http://c2.com/cgi/wiki>

This site is a wiki whose focus is people, projects, and patterns in software development. The wiki is a composition system, a discussion medium, a repository, a mail system, and a tool for collaboration. It's a fun way of communicating asynchronously across the network.

MeatballWiki

<http://www.usemod.com/cgi-bin/mb.pl?MeatballWiki>

Meatball is a community of active practitioners striving to teach each other how to organize people using online tools. Members here are either community managers or are building supporting tools. It is used mostly as a teaching forum.

Homestarrunner Wiki

http://www.hrwiki.org/index.php/Main_Page

This is a flash website about several cartoon characters, and looks exactly like Wikipedia.

Wiki Travel

http://wikitravel.org/en/Main_Page

Wikitravel is a project to create a free, complete, up-to-date and reliable world-wide travel guide. So far they have 7,453 destination guides and other articles written and edited by Wikitravellers from around the globe. This page also looks exactly like Wikipedia.

WikiBooks

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main_Page

A collection of free, open-content textbooks that you can edit. There are 14,041 modules currently on the site. Again, looks exactly like Wikipedia.

Bookshelved

<http://bookshelved.org/cgi-bin/wiki.pl>

Bookshelved is an online discussion dedicated to books, an online discussion where the primary topic is books read by the people who contribute. Bookshelved is a community of people brought together by a passion for learning in general, and learning from books (good, bad, or otherwise) in particular.

Publishing Wiki

<http://publishing.pbwiki.com/FrontPage?raw=1>

This site is sponsored by the Small Publishers Association of North America. Hopefully our site will not be like this, since there is absolutely no activity. The site looks essentially like an online wire frame or model for a forum site.

Online Journalism Review

<http://www.ojr.org/>

This last site is an interesting model. There are some ideas that we might want to take from here, although I'm not sure we want to take them all as is. There is a section for wikis and a section for articles and blogs that cannot be edited.

Writely.com

This is a wiki service that allows users to sign in for free and post documents on pages they create. Users can then share their documents with specific people or the entire web (similar to our wiki). The service is somewhat limited—it only accepts HTML format documents (converted from word and rtf) and pictures. I think that it can also save in PDF format but it wasn't very clear. Still, this site appears to have very limited design capabilities for users (which could be a good thing for our wiki in order to keep it consistent).

APPENDIX 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Alumni

Alumni refers to students who have successfully completed all courses in the Masters of Publishing Program at Simon Fraser University.

Asterisk

Asterisk were the MPub 2004-05 technology project group who redesigned Thinkubator with the alumni as their primary audience.

Audience

Refers to various groups of people who use the Thinkubator for different reasons and purposes. Our primary audience is young publishers, our secondary audience is MPub students and alumni, and our tertiary audience is publishing professionals.

Blog

A blog is a website in which items are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. Like other media, blogs often focus on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news. Some blogs function as online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic.

CCSP

CCSP stands for Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing. Founded in 1987, Simon Fraser University's Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing is a university/industry initiative dedicated to the development of publishing in Canada and internationally.

Current Students

Refers to students who are currently enrolled in the Masters of Publishing program.

Faculty

Refers to the professors and sessional instructors employed by the Masters of Publishing program.

Hub

A central point of interest, importance and activity.

MPub

North America's premier training ground for professional publishing, the Master of Publishing Program at SFU is a rigorous 16-month program of seminars, guest lectures, group projects, an internship and project report.

Network

A group of people who exchange information, contacts and experience about the publishing industry.

Portal

A website or service that offers a broad array of resources and services, such as forums, links and classifieds.

PubHub

The MPub 2003-04 Technology Project group.

Re-Brand

Changing a product or service from its current recognizable state to a new, very identified state that will allow the viewer or user to instantly recognize what the brand is and what it is about.

RSS

Short for Rich Site Summary, an XML format for syndicating web content. A website that wants to allow other sites to publish some of its content creates an RSS document and registers the document with an RSS publisher.

Society of Young Publishers (United Kingdom)

Established in 1949, the Society of Young Publishers is open to anyone in publishing or a related trade, or who is hoping to be soon. Originally intended for the 18 to 35 age group, over 35's can join as associate members. The SYP is a forum for discussion, a contact point and a source of information, and is run entirely by a voluntary committee. This site gives all the latest information on the activities of the Society, including speaker meetings, reading groups and social gatherings.

Thinkubator

The home of the Young Publishers Network that consists of a publishing directory, industry links, classifieds and a forum including reviews and events posting.

Usability

The measure of how easily something can be used. In terms of websites, it examines how well the functionality of the site users' needs, how the flow of the application fits users tasks, and how the flow of the application fits users' expectations.

Usage

This will be determined according to the site's posting levels and traffic statistics. The Young Publishers Network is concerned with increasing this usage and drawing a wider audience of young publishers instead of focusing on current students and alumni.

Users

The individual people who concern themselves with the information and resources found on the Thinkubator. They may use all or any part of the site and will still be considered users. Young Publishers across Canada will be our core users.

Wiki

A type of website that allows users to add and edit content easily and is especially suited for collaborative writing. The name is based on the Hawaiian term wiki, meaning "quick," "fast," or "to hasten."

Young Canadian Publishers

Young people who are already working in the industry and those who are still trying to get into industry, such as students or other interested parties.

Young Publishers Network

A network of young professionals, students and others interested in Canadian publishing. Formed in 2006, the YPN was created by a group of students in the Master of Publishing program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. The YPN aims to make resources and information available to young people in the Canadian publishing industry. The YPN provides the community the opportunity to interact, network and share informational resources.