Project Reflection - SEO

Dear Professor Belli:

I began the semester full of excitement. This project has been a very extensive experience. Upon hearing about the project; it was quite challenging to come up with an idea. My first thought was to do a project about coding. Although coding is new to me, it is something I wanted to know more about. While coding is not easy to learn, software developers are offering many tools that teach coding through simple object oriented programming. As a result, consumers can now more easily acquire the skills to manipulate computer processes and create their own multimodalities. I initially thought this was something I could easily do and wanted to provide a brief overview. However, after doing some research I changed my mind. It wasn’t that I found it too challenging, but I felt that I wanted to research something that I could more identify with at this point in time.

My second thought was to research personal online branding. Not that I have a product or service to promote but I like the idea that branding is not just a way to attract and communicate with our audience but it affects our reputation. I wanted to show how people brand themselves online by expressing their interest, beliefs, ethos, values, talents and skills, and how social media plays a significant role in how our peers and employers perceive us. I am interested in this project because an online identity is a growing trend and is very important in today’s society. After posting my proposal and getting your feedback, it made me look deeper into what I wanted to achieve with this project. I realized that I was less interested in being a brand and more interested in the contributing factors that enhance websites. That’s when I actually found out there was something called search engine optimization (SEO).

It was the process of revision that got me to this topic and while there were moments when I thought that this is very tedious, I now find there is no limit to its value. I learned that it's okay to change direction or emphasis after analyzing the goal and benefits. The one true thing about revision is that it takes work. I have to be objective about my idea and then objective about my content. However, the feedback which I received from and my peers have really been valuable to the revision process. Above all, revision has allowed me to really take ownership for my writing. I can no longer want to accept or participate in superficial writing because I can get so much more out of an in depth work. The more I put in is the more I will get out and being proud of what I am achieving is a great feeling.

But what I found super helpful was my conferences with you and the feedback both on OpenLab and in class sessions. I truly admire your attention to detail and your thought process. Any struggles I have in class are simply because it has been a lot to do in so little time. That and my workload have made the project extra challenging but I feel that I am making good progress.

That being said, my next step was to find out exactly what SEO is. In simple terms, it’s the name given to the activity of optimizing a website so that it improves search engine ranking. From there I revised my proposal and posted it again. My main objective was firstly explain search engine optimization and the methods used to boost the frequency of a website results returned by a search engine in an effort to maximize user traffic to the site and secondly, show how to measure website success using indicators and analytic tools. As an interactive component of the project, I planned to select webpages, images, or video and track its ranking over a 4 or 5 week period and record any changes daily in a progress report, compare a competitor's ranking in a comparison report and create a webpage, image, or video and track its ranking daily over a 4 or 5 week period.

In addition to the above studies, I planned to include progress reports and create a presence on social media that I could actually check its ranking. Now it was time to create an eportfolio to house my project. Of course, I had used eportfolios before but never was I asked to customize it. This was my first experience at taking control of the presentation. For that, I went to the lab on the 6th floor for assistance. I would have the say the progress is slow for me because not knowing how I want it to look and coupled with not having enough time has been a handicap. Yes, I created several pages and optimized its appearance but I still want to do more with it. (I will give examples here).

My project is a working process and that doesn't mean that everything I have tried to do has completely worked out so far. My attempt to work with a client who would optimize their website did not work out mainly because the website was new and not fully functional. Initially I wanted to analyze the website and work with a client to improve the ranking. However, there really wasn’t enough time to make that happen with a new website. In addition, the target audiences were not regular internet users but specialized corporations. That led me to start a WordPress account and although not quite developed, I now have a presence.

My goal is to do much more with the WordPress account, OpenLab, and other sites. Although I do not have much experience when it comes to social media, I am certainly improving. You really have to try things and not be afraid. I think there is misconception among students that because you are still in school, you can’t have authority. But I am encouraged to represent myself, my opinions, and my passion. I don’t feel that I need thousands of followers but I know that I have something to say and social media will give me the platform to do so. I plan to join groups relevant to my interests and show off my strengths and area of interest.

As a result of the project, I have pushed myself further than before and yes although I need time to recover, I have grown beyond the imagination.