Recommendation for a “How-To” Webpage Describing Apple’s iTunes Store to be Added to the American Association of Retired Persons’ Website

for
The American Association of Retired Persons

by
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July 14, 2011
Table of Contents

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 3

Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 4

Background .......................................................................................................................... 4

AARP Website and User Analysis ....................................................................................... 4

Reasons for Recommendation ............................................................................................. 6

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 7

Recommendation ................................................................................................................. 7

References ............................................................................................................................. 8
Executive Summary

On its website, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) includes a section devoted to technology. While this section of the website contains a great amount of relevant information on cellular phones and PC management, it does not include a “how-to” webpage describing tactics for successfully navigating Apple’s iTunes Store.

The lack of this resource is significant because the iTunes Store is home to a wealth of music, movies, applications, audiobooks, and podcasts that would appeal to the users of our website. The diversity of media offered by the iTunes Store makes it one of the most convenient features of today’s up-and-coming technology, and our website’s users would appreciate its high level of personalization. Furthermore, the media offered by the iTunes Store would allow those of different generations to communicate on a deeper level. The users of our website could take full advantage of the iTunes Store’s multi-faceted nature if they were given the necessary information in a basic “how-to” format.

After being requested by the AARP to identify gaps in its website, analyses of the website and its users were conducted. For these analyses, approximately eight of our website’s articles and two external articles were examined. The results of these analyses revealed the diverse nature of our website’s audience and its need for a resource that offers a variety of media in an easily accessible format. Written in plain language and tailored to the needs of users who are not technologically proficient, an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage could open the door to efficient use of this resource.

Considering all of the information in this report, it is clear that the iTunes Store is a resource from which our website’s audience could benefit. I recommend that an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage be included on the AARP’s website.
Introduction

As requested by the AARP, I have analyzed our website and determined a sizable gap: our website lacks a “how-to” webpage describing successful navigation of Apple’s iTunes Store. In this report, the significance of the aforementioned resource will be demonstrated through a description of the iTunes Store’s multi-faceted nature and the way in which it could be useful to users of our website. This segment is followed by the results of an analysis of our website, in which the absence of an adequate description of Apple’s iTunes Store will be highlighted as a major gap. Following this website analysis is a discussion regarding the diversity of our online audience and the specific subset of users to which the iTunes Store “how-to” website will cater. Furthermore, specific reasons will be given to provide justification for this recommendation. From the information presented throughout the report, it will be evident that the inclusion of an Apple iTunes Store “how-to” webpage in our website is necessary.

Background

Since its inception in April 2003, Apple’s iTunes Store has evolved from a music vendor offering 200,000 songs to a diverse wealth of music, movies, applications (e.g. Facebook App, Weather+ App, etc.) audiobooks, and podcasts. Users can purchase iTunes gift cards from their nearest grocery store, favorite clothing shop, or even gas station and return home to instantly download media from the iTunes Store. With an appealing design and special features tailored specifically to each individual user (e.g. the “recommendations for you” section), the iTunes store is undoubtedly one of the most user-friendly features of contemporary technology.

With the wide range of entertainment options that the iTunes Store offers to users, it has quickly become one of the most popular technological resources for people of all ages. Moreover, its installation via an insertable CD allows it to be easily added as an application to PCs, Macs, and home computers. With its appeal to a diverse audience and easy implementation, the iTunes Store has (as creator Steve Jobs puts it) “no legal alternative that’s worth beans” (Borland, 2003).

The relevance of the iTunes Store to our website’s audience is expressed throughout this report. Although cellular phones and PC specifics are examined on our website, the iTunes Store is not given nearly enough attention. It is my recommendation that we include a “how-to” webpage describing successful navigation of this valuable resource on our website.

AARP Website and User Analysis

Upon request by the AARP, I have analyzed our website and its users. These analyses were conducted over a relatively short period of time, and approximately eight articles from our website were carefully examined. These articles provided insight into the technological preferences and needs of our website’s users. In addition to examining
our own website, two other websites supplied background and factual information about Apple’s iTunes Store. From the results of these analyses, it is clear that the addition of an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage to our website would give it a new technological dimension and provide our users with highly beneficial tips.

**AARP Website Results**

Catering to a wide range of users and a variety of interests, our website presents a large amount of diverse information. With its simple design and easily navigable nature, our website is accessible and appealing to its audience. Users can browse articles describing everything from work and retirement to travel and entertainment.

One particularly useful portion of our website is its technology section. Providing information on the latest innovations as well as various aspects of previously released technology, this part of the website is a truly effective tool for its users. After analyzing the “How-To Guide” section of the website, however, a serious gap was revealed: despite having guides for using PCs, social networking, and privacy and security, we offer no guide for using the iTunes Store. With the constant proliferation of new media on iTunes and Apple’s growing list of innovations (the iPod, iPod Touch, iPad, etc.), it is imperative that our website’s users understand how to use one of the most popular technological resources available to them.

**AARP Website User Results**

The AARP website serves an audience that is as diverse in its interests as it is in age. With regard to technology, our website’s users range from the technologically-savvy to those who are new to the technological world. For example, for users who have a relatively deep understanding of the smartphone and its applications, our website offers an article giving a thorough explanation of the smartphone’s ability to act as a remote control for one’s television (Kaye, 2011). Conversely, other articles such as one entitled “Making a Computer Easier to Use” are written in plain language and tailored to the needs of “new computer users” (Ellis, 2011).

The continuing proliferation of technological media in today’s society adds yet another dimension to the diversity of our website’s audience; while one user may read an e-book in his/her favorite coffee shop, another may watch videos and television shows from home. And from the articles featured on our website, it is clear that our users are struggling to find convenient methods of accessing all of these types of media. For example, in an article describing the process of taking out e-books from the library, Peter Svensson (2011) notes that “the selection of e-books is small, and the limited number of copies is frustrating.” Another article discusses the process of streaming television shows from the Internet through the television in one’s living room, highlighting several devices’ high costs of installation and their narrow selection of movies (Saltzman, 2010). Clearly, users of our website are searching for a user-friendly resource through which to access their favorite media. The iTunes Store provides both the accessibility that they need and the variety that they desire.
Given the diverse nature of our website’s users and their technological demands, it would be necessary to design a webpage basic enough for those who are not well-versed in technology to understand. In its iTunes Store “how-to” article, the AARP would be reaching out to those users who understand the basics of iTunes but are only beginning to navigate the iTunes Store. Just as the website offers a “how-to” webpage for using one’s PC or social networking, the iTunes Store “how-to” webpage would be written in plain language and tailored to the needs of users with little to no knowledge of the Store’s structure. Our previous “how-to” technology webpages have received positive comments from users; for example, our webpage entitled “How to Get Cash for Your Trash” providing tips on selling items using eBay and Craigslist was deemed “a really good piece of advice” by one user (Kaye, 2011). Because the iTunes Store’s “how-to” webpage would be structured in much the same manner as this webpage, it is highly likely that it would be equally (if not more) successful.

Reasons for Recommendation

There are several reasons why the addition of an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage to our website would be highly beneficial. A few of these reasons are included below.

Diversity of the iTunes Store’s Media

As the iTunes Store has gained popularity and users, the media that it offers have become increasingly diverse. Selling music, movies, applications, audiobooks, and podcasts, the iTunes Store plays the role of everything from a library to a movie store. Even within a specific type of media, there exists a wide variety of uses for the iTunes Store’s technology. For example, one AARP website user downloaded the SplashID Safe application, which allows the user to store and organize his/her usernames, passwords, PINs, and other account numbers in a secure place. Propounding the usefulness of this application, she commented that it “is truly [her] peripheral brain” (Musco, 2011). Other AARP users find the My TSA application to be more useful due to its ability to discover whether the Transportation Security Administration will allow a given item on an airplane (Martin, 2011). Clearly, the variety of media offered by the iTunes Store is perfectly matched with the wide range of our website’s users.

Encouragement of Communication Across Generations

Because the iTunes Store serves a wide range of people, it can be a vital tool for communicating across generations. For many of our website’s users, the use of products from the iTunes Store as means of connecting with their children and even grandchildren could be indispensable. One article on our website entitled “Music Across Generations” describes a situation in which music from the iTunes Store brought a father and daughter together: “a love of country music is one of their father-daughter connections. They share music from iPod to iPod and talk about it across continents” (Goyer, 2009). Here, it is clear that products purchased from the iTunes Store have helped to bring two people from different generations closer. Anecdotes
such as this are evidence that an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage would be a helpful resource for users of our website.

**High Level of Personalization**

Whereas the seemingly never-ending aisles of one’s local library or movie store may be intimidating, the iTunes Store contains a section which selects a subset of media that is personalized to each specific user. After making the purchase of one song, movie, application, audiobook, or podcast, iTunes automatically generates a group of similar selections that the user will more than likely enjoy. This type of convenience would surely appeal to the users of our website.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the iTunes Store is home to a large amount of media and is suitable for a wide range of people. It is a resource that could be particularly valuable to our website’s audience given its diverse nature. The addition of an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage to the our website would put many of our website’s users in a position to take advantage of the iTunes Store’s personalized nature and become more familiar with helpful technology.

**Recommendation**

After examining our website and its users, it is clear that an iTunes Store “how-to” webpage would be useful. The webpage would cater to beginning users who have little to no knowledge of the iTunes Store, and would thus be written in plain language with labeled visuals throughout. The addition of this webpage to our website would provide our users with basic knowledge of an invaluable technological resource.
References


