

Formative Research Findings: How to Design Web Sites to Meet the Cancer Information Needs of Latino Audiences

Silvia Inéz Salazar, MPA, Holly A. Massett, PhD, Richard E. Manrow, PhD, William Killam, MA, and Sue K. Feldman
National Cancer Institute, Office of Communication and Education



Abstract

Latinos/Hispanics living in the United States experience higher cancer incidence and mortality rates that lead to health disparities. Latinos are one of the fastest growing Internet audiences that will reach 16 million users in 2007.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has conducted formative research to design a linguistically and culturally appropriate Spanish-language version of the main cancer.gov English language web site.

Purpose

To identify:

- Best practices from other Federal agencies in designing and building Spanish language web sites.
- The most important culturally and linguistically appropriate design elements for Latino internet audiences.
- Information architecture (IA), content organization, and language translation approaches.

Methodology

- ❖ A total of 10 in-depth one on one interviews with developers of other U.S. Federal agency Spanish language web sites.
- ❖ Conducted literature review.
- ❖ Focus groups with U.S. Latino internet users to explore design preferences and cancer information needs on the web.

Contact Information:

Silvia I. Salazar, MPA
Phone: 301.451.4070
Email: salazaris@mail.nih.gov

Top five most important issues to address when developing cancer information for Latino internet users

Name	Description
<i>Create equivalent user experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ User experience should be as comparable as possible to the English version of the site but not necessarily identical. ❖ Information and content should be prioritized to meet audience needs. For example, the most frequently asked question among users was "What is cancer?" ❖ Incorporate essential interactive features and functionality.
<i>Provide culturally relevant online experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use imagery that portrays Latino families. ❖ Include the function of toggling between Spanish and English sites. ❖ Address cultural perceptions such as the stigma of cancer, importance of family, and the role of health care providers as authority figures.
<i>Address language and translation issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Avoid computer aided translation. ❖ Identify language preferences for labels and categories. ❖ Writing style of the site should be less academic and written in plain language. ❖ Slight preference for the 6th grade reading level. ❖ Identify terminology that will be used consistently throughout the site.
<i>Redesign information architecture structure (IA)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Incorporate methods such as user centered research to identify IA structure - Organize information such as top level categories accordingly ❖ Prominently feature link to Spanish page on English home page.
<i>Customize graphic design elements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use saturated colors. ❖ Incorporate high level graphics. ❖ Incorporate themes into designs reflecting cultural values.

