Website Categorization Explained - Complete Guide For Your Business

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Great attention has been directed lately towards website categorization; a cybersecurity practice which has been around for a while, but it wasn't until recent times that it started to be increasingly used in marketing and business.

Website categorization is, in essence, the act of putting websites related by their content and function into similar categories. With that in mind, sites like Amazon and Ebay are grouped as Ecommerce sites; CNN, BBC and the likes are classified as news sites; Twitter and Facebook are tagged as social media sites, while Reddit and Quora are Forums (Message Boards) and so on.

However, what some people might not realize is that website categorization is a totally different ball game from Search Engine Optimization and Alexa rankings. Each is different and should be approached in that light - and not be confused.

Why is website categorization important?

No need to use fancy words – the internet is a rowdy place. The fact is, millions of websites are created daily without an official protocol to classify these websites into their various types.

The result?

An entangled web of domains, each setting off on their own path. If nothing is done to provide structure, chaos is inevitable. And businesses would ultimately bear the brunt of the disorderliness.

And this is what website categorization seeks to remedy. At the end of the day, with some form of categorization in place, the World Wide Web becomes easier to navigate and do business in while

ensuring it is easier to keep danger at bay.

How website categorization works

Before we dive deeper, keep this in mind:

When it comes to website categorization, there is no official taxonomy like you'll see in zoology or botany. Current categorizations are created by vendors or "standards" in a specific industry.

Anyway, the most widely used method of categorization used on the web is the IAB (Interactive Advertising Bureau for the United States, or Internet Advertising Bureau for the UK) format with about 400 categories.

The IAB standard was formed to meet the demands of the digital advertising industry. It was developed to provide a simple solution - make it easy for advertisers to determine where to place their ads.

So, healthcare providers could target visitors to healthcare websites with their ads or a golf accessory manufacturer would target visitors to a website for golf enthusiasts with ads thus ensuring businesses reach relevant websites only.

The reality is that there are tons of providers which offer these services out there. Another fact: not all service providers are created equally.

With extensive studies on the processes – top to bottom, it has been proven that satisfactory results are only guaranteed when existing and new domains are regularly examined and tested, in addition to the prompt and continuous updating of existing databases. Anything less wouldn't do.

In other words, providers that get promptings from a major cybersecurity incident before they add a site to their list of malicious sites or one that does their routine updates on fixed periods, say, weekly, or even monthly are a waste of your time and resources.

 What isn't?

A future-proof solution must combine the best of machine learning and human supervision. At the moment, nothing achieves this better than website categorization API tools. Why? Because these

tools simply emulate how a human would keenly go over a website albeit amplified with superpowers - a triple classification process that runs in real time and leaves nothing to chance.

Here is how our website categorization API works:

? **First Step: Crawling and Analysis of website**

Website crawlers would check websites thoroughly and then identify, store, and tentatively group website content into groups.

? **Second Step: Stored web content is analyzed**

The second stage of website categorization employs the power of machine learning. Here the tool based on "experiences" gathered from previous activities identifies patterns of similar content groups and then categorizes the website as either a social media website, malicious website, news website etc.

? **Updating the database**

Finally, we update our databases. Typically, as it happens, hourly or daily. It doesn't run over a day so you can be confident about the result.

Pretty impressive, right?

Now, you can also use this extremely on-the-spot process for the benefit of your business; whether in your advertising or marketing or other means.

How? There are lots of ways to do it. See them below.

How website categorization will benefit your business

A sophisticated website categorization tool can help your business in many ways due to its scale and accuracy.

Alright, here are some practical ways website categorization can help your business:

1. Preventing cyberattacks and protect you from costly repercussions

Cyberattacks are a real threat to businesses with web assets. Every business worth its name knows this. Sadly, for whatever reason, organizations still fall victim to cyberattacks that end with a trail of disastrous consequences.

Imagine all of your user's personal information data or company's closely guarded secrets, and the bad publicity that will arise from a security breach. Including costly legal and branding expenses.

Don't be part of the statistics.

Preventing cyberattacks is far less of a hassle and it saves you tons of cash if you don't have to deal with its aftermath - if your business survives the incidence at all. So, instead, get ahead with website categorization and the perspective it brings to your cyber threat datasets and analyses with a few clicks and less spending.

Here is how:

Website categorization tools, when combined with other threat intelligence sources, can analyze a domain, check for multiple visits and access attempts from a specific URL and then determine if such URL is suspicious or possibly even malicious - be it fraud, phishing-, spyware-, or malware-related.

If you own a website today, especially one for a business that involves a lot of information exchange online, or you deal with financial transactions, website categorization should be on your to-do cybersecurity list so you can protect their business and customers by using website categorization capabilities to better identify and blacklist domains with incriminating activities.

2. Increase productivity

When you block your employees' access to certain irrelevant websites in your work environment, two things happen. For one, you drastically reduce the number of hours they waste on these sites when they should be doing their jobs. Secondly, the level of productivity automatically soars. Plus, you won't even have to bother yourself with peeping into their computers from over their shoulders.

While there are lots of content-filtering products in the market today, these tools are particularly insufficient in some areas. For starters, most of these tools are easy to bypass, then, secondly, it is not uncommon for them to erroneously block out useful websites. For these two reasons, website categorization can add perspective to content filtering tools if you would like to ensure your employees stay away from irrelevant websites and focus on their task thus increasing productivity.

Even a marginal gain in productivity far outweighs the investment.

3. Improve your Marketing results

For businesses that run ads, website categorization is an awesome marketing tool in this age of increased consumer data protection and privacy policy regulations. And just as important, it would save you lots of money too.

How?

Through contextual marketing.

Contextual marketing makes it possible for advertisers to place ads where they really matter. In digital advertising, relevancy is important in driving conversions and reducing ads cost and that is what contextual marketing gives you.

Here is a quick question:

Which of these ads do you think would receive the highest engagement and conversion: an advertisement promoting mortgages on a retirement and financial planning blog or the same ad promoting the same product on a college admission site? Most likely, the first because the audience there can relate better with the ads or better still, in need of the offer.

However, in practice, getting it right with contextual marketing requires skills, time, and tweaking aplenty. Things you might not have the luxury of.

With website categorization, it becomes much easier. Rather than relying on guesswork or trial and error, you can easily research at scale, find actual websites and web pages your audience visit the most, and build your customer profile effortlessly and more accurately. These benefits add up to a laser focused marketing minus the fluff.

4. Protecting your brand image

Let's face it: if you've put in a lot of work into creating a successful brand, you will attract people with anything but noble intentions along the way too.

So, it is important you protect all that hard work. And website categorization represents a reliable ally in this guise.

Okay, this is how it works:

Website categorization allows you to identify and determine impostors - websites that imitate your branding and are trying to deceive unsuspecting visitors into thinking they are the real deal. We can't begin to imagine the negative fallout on your brand if you allow miscreants to swindle users online while pretending to be you - in most cases, you won't even have an opportunity to present your case before your brand is "cancelled" in the court of public opinion.

Here is practical example:

Hackers create login pages and website clones that look like those of banks in phishing attacks. The aim here is to get users to enter their login details, which are then collected in the back end by the hackers and subsequently used to steal money from the account of users. So, in a bid to prevent this from happening as well as protecting their brands, banks invest in website categorization tools to check websites involved in this kind of activities.

With that backdrop, serious businesses don't waste time dilly-dallying; they get proactive via website categorization and ensure their brand is protected.

The Takeaway

The trend in using website categorization as a cybersecurity tool only is changing - nowadays, it is increasingly being used by businesses in their branding and marketing strategies with tremendous success.

There is really no "secret" to why it's been so effective other than it doing what it says on the can. Not only does it help make businesses aware of their weaknesses, but it also provides businesses with required capabilities to transform these weaknesses into strengths. And that's why website categorization is a genuine breath of fresh air.