

MANAGING WEB CONTENT

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Abstract: User dissatisfaction with the existing Texas A&M University Libraries website was clearly indicated by a LibQual+ service quality assessment and underscored by follow-up focus groups. Criticisms of the website ranged from boring to “not intuitive” and difficult to navigate. Library staff groups were created to support an evolutionary approach to website development and improvement. This proved ineffective.

In 2001, redesign of the library’s website became an integral part of the library’s strategic plan. Things began to happen. Funded by a Texas Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant, a commitment was made to purchase and implement a content management system (CMS), a set of software tools that would provide the framework for distributed web content development and management. A diverse team with representatives from all areas of the libraries was brought together to implement this new library web presence. The hope was that, besides making the redesign happen, the Web Implementation Team (WIT) would build library-wide buy in for the project. WIT’s charge was to make key decisions regarding the selection of products to accomplish the redesign, stage the implementation process, develop templates for various web content, solicit and encourage feedback from library staff and users, and communicate progress to both groups.

WIT chose the content management system and developed a navigational paradigm for the site. It is currently coordinating the development of templates for the many different types of pages included on the site and gathering staff and end user feedback to refine and enhance the site. The expected launch date for the site is the Spring 2003 semester. Team members are currently providing leadership on a variety of task forces to guide further development of the web site and services such as portal management, virtual reference, knowledge bases, subject representation of web resources, FAQ management, marketing, and site analysis and metrics.

Outline based on PowerPoint presentation at the August 2003 ICAHIS meeting to be seen at:
http://konyvtar.univet.hu/icahis/proc/bedard_elemei/frame.htm

Overview

- Context and Background
- Charge and Goals for the Web Implementation Team (WIT)
- Expectations for the Content Management System (CMS)
- Implementation Progress
- “Before” and “After”

Context and Background

- Texas A&M University Libraries
 - Sterling C. Evans Library
 - West Campus Library
 - Cushing Memorial Library
 - Policy Sciences and Economics Library
 - Medical Sciences Library
- 5 libraries, 5 websites
- numerous departmental pages
- thousands of pages of content

Why Change?

- LibQual+ service quality assessment told us users wanted:
 - self sufficiency
 - more electronic resources
- Follow-up focus groups told us that the library website was:
 - boring

- not intuitive
- difficult to navigate
- Website as symbol of desired organizational changes

How to Change?

- Web redesign as strategic initiative in 2001
- Texas Infrastructure Fund grant
- Content Management System Purchase
- Web Implementation Team to lead and manage change process

Web Implementation Team

- Diverse team representing all areas of the University Libraries
- Members selected based on level of responsibility and role, not technical expertise
- Guide the development of the University Libraries' web presence
- Encourage team work and partnering across the libraries
- Work for organization-wide buy-in

WIT Charge

- Is responsible for the overall management of the University Libraries' website
- Has authority to make decisions regarding the content, selection and integration of new products, navigation and presentation, and workflow
- Is open to new ideas for content
- Will encourage innovation
- Will select content that is sustainable, can be integrated into the web environment, and meets organizational priorities

WIT Goals

- Enable
 - a web presence that is easy to use and conforms to what our focus groups told us
 - a framework and workflows that allow for consistency, predictability content creation without design/software expertise
 - a flexible framework for future growth
 - us to drive the software, work smarter and grow in a development environment
- Implement (decide and make it happen)
 - Personal customization portal capability
 - Integrated single presentation for all Libraries eliminating departmental approach
 - Federated searching software
 - Full text linking capability
 - Serials management service
 - Virtual reference software

Expectations for the Content Management System

- Connection tools to and from remote data stores
- Retrieval tools to pull information from remote websites
- Workflow tools to manage web content creation

- Metadata management tools to organize content and make use of it

Implementation Progress

- RFP and CMS selection
- Navigational paradigm for site
- Template identification and development
- Usability testing
- Coding deliverables for CMS integration team
- Metadata choice of Dublin Core Library Application
- Review existing web content: go, stay or migrate
- Coordination of implementation working groups
- Criteria for launch established/site released

WIT Working Groups

- Portal Management
- Virtual Reference
- Knowledge Management
- Subject Representation of Web Presented Resources
- Marketing
- FAQs
- Analytics and Statistics

New Working Groups

- Intranet
 - Identify all inward facing documents including forms, policies, minutes, etc. as well as internal library unit websites, resources and statistics appropriate for a University Libraries intranet.
 - Make recommendations to WIT regarding scope, organization, presentation and maintenance of the website
- Electronic Resources Policy
 - Consider policy issues regarding the presentation and access for electronic resources
- Electronic Resources Workflow
- Subject Pages

Before and After

- When does 1+1+1+1+1=1?
- Shift paradigm from library organization to end user information seeking behavior
- Soft launch
- Staff and user training initiatives
- Spring 2003 "hard" launch
- Feedback and changes

(Examples of each library's website before redesign, also 3 library department pages, then the new front entry, and screen shots of the e-resources by subject and services pages, and finally a portal template.)

Subject Pages

- Charge: Develop a template for subject pages, evaluate the training, share evolving knowledge of how to use the CMS, and discuss its potential
- Charge individual faculty with developing pages
- Create model for interdisciplinary pages
- Develop organizing principle for comprehensive page presentation
(Subject pages examples – two of the old ones and two templates)

Challenges

- Change: It used to be right here, and now I can't find anything!!
- Not working as intended: simultaneous catalogs search, authentication to portal, coding errors, consistency of language (spelling errors!) and presentation as result of integration of sites, hardware failures
- Navigation: site search, labels, and clutter

Next steps

- Review of user comments
 - Separate e-journals from e-books
 - Include alternate titles
 - URL aliases
 - Larger pop-up windows
 - Improve navigation
- Federated Searching/full text linking
- Virtual Reference
- Vignette v.7
- More subject pages/class guides/tutorials
- In depth usability study

Usability Group

- Charge:
 - Assess the usability of the current TAMU Libraries public facing website from the perspective of relevant user groups using multiple data collection and analysis techniques.
 - Make recommendations for specific changes to the website and present a plan for ongoing assessment.
- Design and release new version
- Do it all over again

The End