College Public Website

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Website Purpose

Web content has two primary objectives:

• Communicate knowledge to the reader

• Make the reader more likely to act based on this knowledge
Self-Service Nature

The web is a self-service environment, and self-service is about:

- Convenience
- Speed
- Price

Wayback – 1997 & 2001
Issues & Problems

• Contains hundreds of mini-sites designed with little or no thought as to how they connect to each other and to the site as a whole. As a result, the site is very difficult to navigate or find desired content.

• Reflects and describes the internal administrative organization instead of the visitor’s needs and viewpoint.
Issues & Problems

- Pages do not follow commonly accepted best practices for website design
- Most pages do not comply with existing College standards
- At any point in time there are over 2,000 broken links
- Some content is out-of-date or simply incorrect
- Some pages do not comply with ADA requirements
- Pages do not have a unified appearance

Public Website Status

**www.stfcc.edu**
- Type: Web Site Content Source
- Address: http://www.stfcc.edu
- Status: Idle
- Last Built: 8/20/2005 11:11:54 PM
- Health: 91%

Statistics
- Indexed: 7,719 Item(s)
- Failed to Index: 710 Item(s)
  - Not Found: 525 Item(s)
  - Access Denied: 92 Item(s)
  - Others Errors: 9 Item(s)
- Excluded by Rules: 00, 565 Item(s)

**users.stfcc.edu**
- Type: Web Site Content Source
- Address: http://users.stfcc.edu
- Status: Idle
- Last Built: 8/19/2005 13:09:16 PM
- Health: 92%

Statistics
- Indexed: 9,350 Item(s)
- Failed to Index: 755 Item(s)
  - Not Found: 659 Item(s)
  - Access Denied: 96 Item(s)
  - Others Errors: 75 Item(s)
- Excluded by Rules: 51, 713 Item(s)
**Project Purpose**

- Ensure the public website executes the web presence goals and objectives of College leadership
- Reinforce College identity through the website
- Establish a consistent “look and feel”
- Make it easier for organizational units to create and maintain attractive and functional websites

**What makes a good website?**

- Is it comprehensive and up-to-date?
- Is it well organized?
- Is it easy to navigate / find content?
- Are the presentation and graphics appropriate and functional?
- Does it meet the needs of the intended audience?
- Does the site “deliver the goods”?
Decision Areas

- Focus / Site Objectives
- Navigation
- Mandatory Elements
- Esthetics / Visual Design
- Web (Content) Management
- Consistency / Template Design
- Technology Management
Focus / Site Objectives

• Target Audience
  – Prospective Students
  – Students
  – Alumni / Donors
  – Community

• Image and Marketing
  – Branding
  – Available Educational Services

Focus / Site Objectives

• What are the web presence goals and objectives of College leadership?
Site Purpose

- College image and marketing
- Generate enrollments / revenue / opportunities from target audience

vs.

- Let faculty, staff, departments publish what they want

Alexa Rankings

St. Louis Community College

Site Stats for stlcc.edu:
- Traffic rank: 1,685
- Alexa rating: 128
- Page load time: 1 second
- Other sites that link to stlcc.edu:
  - stlcc.edu
  - stlcc.edu

People who visit this page also visit:
- University of Missouri - St. Louis
- Washington University in St. Louis
- St. Charles Community College
- Saint Louis University
-_Node University
- University of St. Louis
- St. Louis College of Pharmacy
- Southwest Missouri State University
- Underwood University
- Avila University
Decision Areas

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Navigation Basics

• Design the web navigation so:
  - Viewers can find what they need most in the fewest possible steps
  - The most important content is only a click or two away from the home page
Navigation

• What content is essential for visitors to immediately find?
• How do they find everything else?

• How do members of our target audience try to find it?
• Usability testing only applies if you have something useable

Determining What Needs To Be In the Navigation

1. Create a list of sections for the website
2. Give them a hierarchy of importance
Main Navigation Examples

Multilevel Main Navigation
Special Subsites

Search

- Requires good metadata and well-written content
  - Title (metadata)
  - Description (metadata)
  - Meaningful text
  - Search phrases included in the text
- We currently have 130 pages titled “Untitled Document”
Search Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queries by Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results from past 7 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

735 Total queries

- boot
text
image
table
search
contact
header
testr
test1

St. Louis Community College

Decision Areas

- Focus / Site Objectives
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Mandatory Elements

• Legal notices
• Image and branding
  – College Logo, Name, Contact Info
• Site-wide navigation
  – What do you want to find fast?
  – Search available on every page?
  – Breadcrumbs?
• Accessibility compliance

Header and Footer
Decision Areas

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Site Visual Design

- Home page
- Main subject pages
- Lower level pages
- Pages with different legal requirements
Design Esthetics
Visual Design

• Home page
• Essential content pages
• Division/department pages
• Faculty/staff pages

• What do we do about “campus individuality” vs. “One College”

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Web Management

Web management is about understanding how people interact with content.

Web Content

Web content has two primary objectives:

- Communicate knowledge to the reader
- Make the reader more likely to act based on this knowledge
Content Management

• Kept correct?
  – Who is the owner of that content?
• Current?
  – Set time parameters on each page
• Appropriate?
  – Who is the approver?

Web Metrics

• Who went where?
• Did they find what they wanted?
• Is commonly accessed information easy to find, easy to get to?
• How are they accessing our site?
  – Browser & platform
  – Link, internal or external search
General Principles

- Management of content should be separated from day to day website operations management
- Development of content should be distributed to align with content ownership; content management controls should align with organizational structure
- College-wide common requirements should be provided centrally

Web Link Validator’s Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All links</td>
<td>39171</td>
<td>35421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>35421</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>3750</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good links</td>
<td>30080</td>
<td>92 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>404 not found</td>
<td>2839</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403 Forbidden</td>
<td>2270</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Internal error</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redirected links</td>
<td>1701</td>
<td>769</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page #290: [http://www.stcc.cc.mo.us/f/users/a/brother/web/search.html](http://www.stcc.cc.mo.us/f/users/a/brother/web/search.html)

1. Link: [http://www.stcc.cc.mo.us/f/users/a/brother/web/search.html](http://www.stcc.cc.mo.us/f/users/a/brother/web/search.html)
   - Error: 404 Not Found
   - Comment: Search engine comparison
Automate What You Can

- Broken link management
- Page expiration
- Audit trail / page archive
- Usage reports
- User workflow (approvals)
- Consistency (logo, graphics, mandatory elements, “look”)

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Consistency / Template Design

• Set standards for the main website and all subsites
• Standardize deployment by using templates enforced by technology (usually through a web content management system)
  – Ensures the site has a unified look and pages have all their required elements
  – Also allows rapid “refresh” of “look”

Consistency / Template Design

• Templates are created by a technical graphics designer who executes:
  – Branding / legal / mandatory elements
  – Site navigation design
  – Visual design
  – Create a few variations on the same theme for “user choice” for their subsite
• Companion objects are made available in an online library so department sites can “coordinate” with the overall “look and feel”
Consistency / Template Design

- A different set of templates will be needed for http://users.stlcc.edu sites
  - Faculty member
  - Staff member
  - Class information
  - Class work area

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Technology Management

• Technology manager should not be managing content
• Make it easy – install a WCMS (web content management system)
• Consolidate all public website publishing within the WCMS

Technical Support

• Training
• Graphics / photo preparation
• Conversion to other online formats (Acrobat, video, sound files)
• Deployment of special technologies
  - Flash
  - Streaming media
Plan for Action

✓ Focus / Site Objectives
✓ Navigation
✓ Mandatory Elements
✓ Esthetics / Visual Design
✓ Web (Content) Management
✓ Consistency / Template Design
✓ Technology Management