INTRODUCTIONS

Websites are a challenge to monitor and update, and ours is no exception. We often hear requests for features or updates and ways to make the website more efficient. We’ve been operating with fewer options so far because our current website features are limited.

This project is underway through a partnership between Marketing Communications and IT Services. We’ve also hired an outside consultant.

We want as many people on campus as possible to understand the process to modernize the website. We encourage questions and feedback to help make sure this process meets the university’s needs.

We’re currently in the second part of a three part process. The third part will be how to work with every department, college, major, and unit to make sure the information on the site is relevant and compliant, so we all come away with a wonderful website.

It’s also timely to look at this process now since we are currently undergoing a name change and other changes due to the realignment.

PRESENTATION

This project has been years in the making. One of the things being launched today is a microsite dedicated to this project. This presentation will be available, as well as other information going forward. (The presentation can be viewed at this link, and the microsite can be found at http://ipfw.edu/website-modernization.)

Key Issues

- 508 Accessibility: The government has mandated that every piece of content must be indexable by text readers and meet 508 compliance standards.
- Mobility: Our aim is to create an optimal user experience across all media.
- Focused and Improved Content: We will accomplish this using the new technology.
- New Technology Features: dotCMS implemented many of our features in 2008 and they have generally remained the same since then.
• Governance: How do we maintain all of our systems and standards to avoid being in the same place we are now five years down the line? IT Services will help provide training and curriculum to help the organization embrace the technology and create a positive experience going forward.

Deliverables
• As we receive the technology/building blocks from the vendor, we'll build them out in concert with all the units across campus.
• The project does not provide a system to flip a switch and turn on a new website. We'll be creating the content, but we will need the technology to be able to launch the new site.

Inspiration
• Bucknell: Highly visual design, provides access to a lot of information, scales to the size of the device used. Our current site has a lot of information above the fold that competes for attention.
• Loyola Marymount: Largely visual, scales to the device size. The background video could be a great way to showcase our campus.
• University of Cincinnati: Focuses on Visit, Apply, Give - would allow focus on recruitment, retention, and donations.
• Personas: dotCMS released this technology in the last year to allow content to be served up based on who you are. For example, a donor might see content related to giving, while a prospective student might see content related to enrollment. Over time, the experience becomes more personalized and seamless.

Design Documents
• All available at http://ipfw.edu/web-mod-rfp
• We want to make sure there's consistency and clarity within the units, and avoid as much redundancy as possible, while still meeting everyone's unique needs.
• We want to help dotCMS become a hub for other technologies we work with now to help make use of everything we have available.

Project Status and Timeline
• We're unsure of how many of the deliverables can fit within the current budget now. We'll go through a prioritization process to avoid scope creep and stay within budget parameters.
• We'll begin looking at implementation using the building blocks in the fall. This does not mean the site will be released this fall.
• We want to roll this out in a timeline that's aggressive but also works for the organization.

Content Strategy
• IPFW at the top drives perception.
Like the University of Cincinnati website example, this is a focus on revenue. For us, that’s Enrollment and Advancement.

This model also helps us look at a phased approach across campus.

As we follow this model over time, we’ll be able to strengthen the measure of influence, such as helping the audience take actions to visit us, or follow specific click paths, etc.

Key Stakeholders

- We’ve engaged with the first two key stakeholders on the list so far, and we plan increase engagement with the others as the project proceeds.
- Information on the microsite will be available 24/7 to help. It will also allow us to plan ahead and help capture questions.
- We are happy to add other key stakeholders to the list.

Information Site

- The presentation will be online before end of business today as a 508 compliant PDF and can be accessed at this link.

FAQs

- These are things we’ve already started to see questions about or that we know are likely to be questions.
- We want to avoid any surprises or gotchas, and help make sure this information is available for those who want to get up to speed.

QUESTIONS

Q: Will content need to be migrated to the new site?
A: It’s not truly a migration, but current content will need to be evaluated and repurposed or reworked.

So far, we’ve put the burden on publishers to format content, so things like a “Contact Us” page might be formatted differently from site to site right now. We’re striving to create content structures where the publisher can submit content through a form, and then the display of that content can be streamlined.

In addition, using structured content will allow us to communicate and uphold standards much more easily. For example, there may be content that can be edited in one place, but will update everywhere at once, such as a phone number. We’ll also focus on our ability to relate content in dotCMS. For instance, we would have the potential to relate a professor to a program, and then relate that program to a student club or organization.
Using structured content will also help us create a new user experience for those consuming the content.

Q: Who will be reworking the content?  
A: Marketing Communications will work with each unit on campus.

Q: Will training be provided that covers writing for the web?  
A: Yes, this will be part of the curriculum administered through IT Services. This is also an opportunity to express the university’s brand standards.

Q: Will we have a way to hold to these standards?  
A: We’ll need to provide training, and it falls to the organization to provide accountability. We’ll make sure the content and curriculum is available and provided on a regular basis. This is part of why it’s critical to have IT Services’s assistance with training and governance. There has to be governance, structure and organization to the site to help prevent us from being in the same spot we are today again in the future. Marketing and IT Services’s staff are limited, so publishers receiving training on how to maintain content is critical for our long-term success.

Q: What about pages that have been maintained by those who have left or retired?  
A: We have ideas for governance that will account for turnover and transition. This is part of why governance is so important. We need to ensure accountability.

Right now, if content is wrong, it’s up to each individual unit to change it. There’s no system in place to ensure information is accurate and correct.

Q: If we have an older site right now, how much longer will it continue to be accessed as we move toward the building blocks?  
A: We recognize the need to be reasonable with everyone. Right now we’re aware that certain changes will be needed in place by July 1, 2018, but this is just one of many initiatives.

The timeline may be affected by the domain itself. Normally we can only register one primary .edu domain name with EDUCAUSE. We’ve been able to talk about having two for up to eighteen months, but they will likely not allow a secondary .edu name beyond that timeline.

Additionally, since we’ve moved dotCMS to the cloud, we do have options for archiving content within the cloud, but there would be a cost associated.

Q: Some websites will have a ‘sunset law’, where pages that aren’t touched will disappear after a certain period of time. Is this a good idea?  
A: As long as that timeframe is communicated to the units, it’s best practice to employ an idea like this. It would be a good practice for us to adopt.
Q: Has this presentation been given to the deans yet?
A: Not yet, but we're working on getting on the agenda for their next meeting.

Q: Will external sites, such as Wordpress-based sites, be brought into dotCMS under this plan?
A: These sites were mainly created due to the current limitations of features in dotCMS. With updated templates, there should be fewer reasons for sites to require an outside host. We anticipate being able to bring these sites into dotCMS.

One of the advantages of bringing this information into dotCMS is described by the acronym COPE - Create Once, Publish Everywhere. One of the paradigms we'll be able to shift through this model is not only thinking digitally first, but thinking about how we can repurpose stories by focusing on the revenue side. Publishers will be able to think about how best to distribute content in dotCMS, as well as identify content needs and demands. We'll have the capability to be more efficient in creating and publishing content.

Q: Will this be communicated to faculty before the end of this semester?
A: Yes, we plan to communicate it to them before then.

Q: Does this affect faculty members who have their own websites for classes?
A: This will not affect any users.ipfw.edu sites.

Q: Are you open to partnering with classes or groups of students for the process of updating content?
A: Yes, we're open to hiring a group of students to help with the transition effort.

Q: Is there a prioritized list of the departments that should be moving ahead relatively quickly?
A: Yes, this list is available on the microsite at this link. The units are prioritized based on Content Strategy model—the university itself first, followed by revenue, and so forth.

Q: Are you open to input on the information found on the microsite?
A: Yes, please let us know if you have any thoughts or input on this information. We appreciate your time and feedback.