

IT Services Web Team



SiteBuilder2 Training Module: Managing your web content

A new course designed for those responsible for their department website. It will provide some help and advice for managing and maintaining your existing content, and for creating and writing new content.

The course will cover:

- What is a content strategy and why this is important?
- Identifying your global audiences and their needs
- What makes a good site?
- Effective online communication / Writing for the web
- Stock take – Content audit
- Post audit – what happens next – updating the site
- Planning and restructuring a site
- Measuring success, metadata and Search Engine Optimisation
- Useful tools for making your life easier

Prerequisites:

A good understanding of using SiteBuilder
Familiarity with browsing the web

Version 5.0
Last Revised: 20 March 2013

Contents

1. What is a Content Strategy?	3
2. Identifying your global audiences and their need	6
3. Revisiting the characteristics of a good site	8
4. Effective online communication and writing for the Web	11
5. Doing a content audit	14
6. Post-audit – what next?	18
7. Planning and structuring	20
8. Measuring success, metadata and Search Engine Optimisation	25
9. Useful tools and features	29
10. References	31
11. Other Training Modules	32

Task 1: What is a Content Strategy?

Objectives	To identify what a Content Strategy is and understand why it is important
Method	Discussion and examples
Comments	A Content Strategy determines what should happen to the site, when and how and should inform all the relevant parties

What is a Content Strategy?

Content Strategy is an integral part of web development and a practice that has been steadily growing since the late 1990s. Initially a field in user interface design (UX) it now covers all aspects of producing content for a web site and incorporates many different roles from information architect, designer, copywriter and editor to business and marketing analyst to project manager.

“Content strategy plans for the creation, publication, and governance of useful, usable content,” says Kristina Halvorson, one of the main current authorities on Content Strategy and author of the book *Content Strategy for the Web*. “The content strategist must work to define not only which content will be published, but why we’re publishing it in the first place”.

Rachel Lovinger outlines the need for a strategy that provides for “unambiguous content that supports meaningful, interactive experiences”, Rachel Lovinger, *Content Strategy: The Philosophy of Data*.

So, now we know what content strategy is, we need to understand why creating a strategy is so important.

Why do we need a strategy?

- It helps everyone understand what content is being produced, how, by whom, when and why – the whole reason for its existence.
- It helps us to define what is working. Is our content flexible? Is it easy to find? Is it enjoyable for people to use and to engage with/relate to? Is it meaningful to them?
- It’s essential for the growth of our service or product. Content drives visitors. We need content that leads to positive actions and not the back button!
- Content is not an added feature that can just be plugged in after the design and everything else has been done. It needs to be carefully planned, designed, and governed.
- Content has a finite lifecycle and does not just look after itself once published. It needs our constant care and attention.
- A strategy enables us to think about not just publishing anything and everything just because we can!

How do we create a strategy?

We are looking to define a proper content strategy for our department or service that will take our web content from its current state, whatever that may be, to a better place.

Our sites are likely to be something akin to a patchwork quilt. Lots of isolated chunks of information, written in different voices, conveying different messages, loosely connected with the next isolated square.

Our strategy must try to make sense of our varying content for both us and the users. Our aim is get to a place where only meaningful content is produced, content that people actually care about and content which positively reinforces the organisation's key business message.

Ideally it needs to come from the top down, so it has the agreement of all the major stakeholders and is taken as policy for the department.

Some things our strategy needs to define:

- our department's key themes and messages
- the purpose of our content – what it is there for, who is it being produced for?
- gap analysis – what information is missing and what can be done to complete the gaps?
- metadata – description and keywords – is this as complete as it could be?
- search engine optimization (SEO), and
- strategic recommendations on the future development of the content.

How it all fits together

Part 1: Content audit.

If possible carry out some user testing on the current site.
What content is here already? Who is it for?
Does the content get to the right people with the right message?
Is it clear what each page is about?
Is there a clear call for action or path from this page?
Who cares about this content, and will anyone care if it's not there?
Which are the most important pages and sections?
How do people get to the content?
What information is missing?

Part 2: Plan tidy-up operation

Remove obvious 'ROT' (Redundant, outdated, trivial) material as soon as you can.
Clean up content that is there to make it up to date, relevant and timely.
Simplify structure and navigation if required.

Group logical things together.

Create wireframes to establish what should be on each page and the interaction between pages

Enable current content to be clearer and easier to find

Update metadata

Part 3: Plan new content

Establish key themes and messaging

Create a structure – tree diagram and post-it notes

Write a plan for creating and commissioning content

Prioritise the content according to importance, create an editorial calendar and add each item. Give each item a deadline, and diary any actions/chase ups required

Locate the authors and advise them what you want from them and in what format (Style guides, content templates etc)

Wireframes, sitemaps to explain how both interaction and content will work

Part 4: Publish new content

Where does it live, how does it get there? Who will publish it?

How do people get to it? How will they search for it? Where is it linked from?

What is the call for action or value for the page?

Where do people go from this page

Part 5: Manage and govern both existing and new content

Review, see what worked and what didn't. Get rid of stuff that didn't work. Make any other incremental changes required.

Part 6: Start all over again!

Task 2 Identifying your global audiences and their needs

Objectives	To understand how to establish the primary and secondary audiences.
Method	Discussion and evaluation
Comments	You cannot target your content towards your audiences if you do not know who they are

It can be difficult to establish the type of audiences you have and their specific needs.

By understanding your target audiences and determining whether they are primary or secondary, should help determine the navigation structure and will play a major part in any future developmental work.

Your website is about them and for them – what we call user centric. The ‘user experience’ will probably be even more relevant over the next few years with the recent developments in Higher Education.

When people visit the website, they are looking for information on courses, modules, services, resources, publications, etc. They are not necessarily looking for the organization history or staff list unless they have a specific query.

Some audiences such as new undergraduates are often fairly web savvy users, are used to a fairly busy newsy site (maybe even, ‘tweeting’, texting and talking at the same time as surfing your site!) and can typically find their section quickly. They are looking for quick facts, information and a contact name if need be. Other audiences may appreciate something a bit calmer enabling them to make careful considered decisions, especially if they are about to commit some money or time to something.

Either way too much happening on the same page can sometimes prove distracting or confusing for many users. Everything is clamouring for attention and the main focus of the page becomes lost.

The first thing you need to do is to answer the big ‘why?’ question about your mission up front. Even if you are asking for money, such as ‘Why Give?’, for example, you do not need to hide your main focus. People will quickly establish what you are about and whether they can ‘trust’ you, regardless of what you want from them.

You need to set the stage and introduce your service or department.

Task 4.1: Establish who the primary and secondary audiences are for your website or a section of your website. Work in groups of 2 or 3 and look at each other’s site. See if you can work up a profile or a persona for each group.

Task 4.2: Once done, take a look at your websites and determine whether the current navigation is for your (the organisation’s) benefit or for your audience.

Task 4.3: Return to the site once again and determine if these basic questions are answered for your audiences:

1. Who is the product/service for?

Can the target audience tell from this copy that we're speaking to them? Can other people outside our audience tell that we're NOT speaking to them?

2. What is the product/service ?

Have you laid out the product's primary features and benefits in a clear, concrete way that the audience will understand?

3. What does the product/service do for its target user?

Why should they use it/buy it?

4. Why is the product/service better than the available alternatives?

Is there clear evidence rather than empty sales rhetoric to support these claims?

5. What is the call for action? Is there a clear action that can be done on the page or does it guide them to another place, or is it just a dead end?

Other issues that could be considered from the audience's perspective:

- Accuracy
- Relevance
- Timeliness
- Reliability
- Accessibility
- Readability,
- Navigability,
- Interactivity and
- visual appeal

Note: There is a very useful report on how College Students use the Web which may help in the design of your site for this target audience:

*College Students on the Web
Usability Guidelines for Creating Compelling Websites for College Students
A report from Nielsen Norman Group.*

*We have a site licence, so would definitely recommend you take a look at this:
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/intranet/projects/webdev/usability/college_students_usability.pdf*

Task 3. Revisit the characteristics of a good web site

Objectives	To identify what makes a good web site, its usefulness, usability and accessibility.
Method	Discuss usability of an example web site.
Comments	There are a number of methods that you can use to ensure that your web page is usable, accessible and has good design.

A Useful Web Site

A useful web site is one that has high quality and up to date information that maybe not readily available elsewhere specifically for the target audience. Now you have determined who the audiences are and what they want from the site, you can look a little further.

Look at the competition. You will know who your closest competitors are. Have a look at their web sites. Is there anything that you particularly like or dislike? Is information easy to find on their site? Looking at the competition can be an excellent source of inspiration and ideas.

Finally, does your own site stand up to scrutiny? The results from Task 2 may indicate otherwise!

A Usable Web Site

The web is an active not passive place. People come to 'do' and they want to feel in control doing it. Users already have the context for coming to your site. They know roughly what they'd like to achieve and is probably one of the following:

- To buy
- To download/print
- To find /research
- To join
- To engage with/communicate with
- To request

If someone visits your page and fulfils their primary goal, the page has succeeded. If they have left quickly without doing anything or clicking somewhere, the page has failed - see the information on bounce rate.

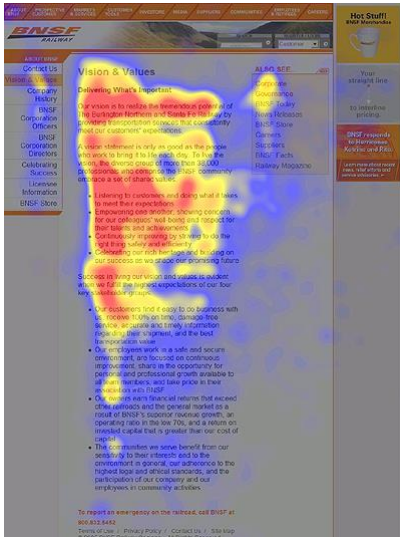
Think of each page is an advertisement, either for the information on the page, a function, to collect data or as a router for information on another page. It has no other major purpose. Where's the value on the page? Can a first-time visitor spot that value immediately?

Remember if a user has a frustrating experience on a site, or cannot find anything of value on there, it is very unlikely that they will return again.

So what is it that makes a web site usable?

First we need to understand how people use the web. There are many eye tracking videos that show how people focus on a web page.

Essentially people read in roughly a 'F' shaped pattern as highlighted by Jakob Nielsen's eye tracking videos in the examples below.



Areas where users looked the most are red; the yellow areas indicate fewer fixations, followed by the least-viewed blue areas. Gray areas didn't attract any fixations

This heatmap clearly demonstrates where people are looking on a page. Starting in the top left corner, focussing their attention on what the page is about, any main navigational links at the top or down the left, moving briefly over to the right of the F to fill in any detail they've missed, but typically allocating less attention to the information further down the page. <http://www.useit.com/eyetracking/>

Another example from a shopping cart page

Example of eyetracking from an e-commerce checkout process. As we see, people zone out the cross-selling references on the right hand side.



There is also a new method of reading content and this is the 'Layer cake' approach. This is sometimes referred to as the commitment method and perhaps this is something we can capitalise on in designing pages.

Don't make me think!

When a user looks at your site, it should be self-evident. There should be no confusion over links or where to find the information they need. It should be instinctive.

Don't make me read either!

Scanning. scanning, scanning. It's all about scanning. It's like panning for gold – looking for golden nuggets of information!

This is the way – let's go!

Users don't necessarily choose the best link; they choose the first reasonable link.

Making sites more useable

Here is a summary of how we can make our site more useable:

- Make it obvious what's clickable – follow conventions.
- Break pages into clearly defined areas – so users can quickly focus on the areas they need.
- Keep the 'noise' down – keep it simple and give everything space so the choices are not overwhelming.
- Omit needless words and remove 'happy talk' – Aim to reduce by 50%.
- Create a visual hierarchy – nest related things together, show the relationship between things and give prominence to the more important things on the page.
- Create clear, simple and consistent navigation.
- Follow conventions and use standard navigation.
- Make the site accessible to all users.

There is a tool available that will check accessibility of our web pages. It is called Webxact and can be found at <http://webxact.watchfire.com>.

More information on how to make good quality web sites can be found at: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/sitebuilder2/goodsites/>

Task 4. Effective online communication and writing for the web

Objectives	To identify what makes a good online communication and how to write effectively for the web
Method	Discussion, observation and exercises
Comments	Effective online communication is key for making useful, usable sites.

Effective online communication

While advancements in technology and telecommunications are transforming communication and educational delivery, the key to engaging, connecting, and retaining students in online education will be human communication, online human touch, and administrative support. Kristen Betts, *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, Volume XII, Number II, Summer 2009*

Effective online communication requires genuine connection with others. You can engage with your community through your site, blogs, forums, onpage discussions, Live chat, social network sites. Explore different methods to see which ones work best for your audience and service.

1) Get it Write!

When communicating online, the written word has many advantages and enables you to create a professional profile that you may not get through discussion alone.

2) Know Your Point

Effective online communication means being clear with your message and getting there swiftly. Keep your ideas organized and concise. Take the time needed to look over your work and avoid unorganized or confusing thoughts. Clarity, grammar and spelling all matter. Write for an audience and never assume they know what it is you are thinking.

3) Follow Basic Netiquette

There are some similarities and differences with print – detailed more in the Gerry McGovern article but here is a summary of useful etiquette:

- **Always treat others with respect.** Treat others in the same way that you would like to be treated yourself. Don't say anything online you couldn't comfortably say to them in person and don't elevate yourself at the expense of others.
- **Allow the user the benefit of the doubt.** Assume the user has good intentions unless you know otherwise.
- **As in conversation state your perspective confidently but not arrogantly.**

4) Be Humble

Don't be afraid to admit mistakes or when you do not know something. Many others have made the same mistake or may have that piece of missing information that you could link to.

Writing for the web

Good content, well written, enables the user to:

- find the information they are looking for quickly and easily.
- trust the information you are providing.
- know it is relevant, timely and accurate.
- make a positive choice – either about an action they should take or where they want to go to next.
- fulfil their aim.

So, target your audiences. Say less and keep it simple and concise. Put important content first, front-load paragraphs and include a summary for the top of each page. This will enable people to establish if they have come to right page and where they need to look on the page to get the further detail required.

There are numerous online guides for Writing for the Web, including one by Ben Hunt. Ben identifies two styles of writing. An academic style based on a pyramid that involves laying down a foundation of supporting research and gradually building up an argument before finishing with a short conclusion. And a journalistic style of writing – the inverse pyramid. This is the opposite of academic writing and involves hitting people with the essential information first, before filling in with the further detail later. It's this style that should be used on web pages where people are browsing and scanning at speed.

- Put important content first (front-loading) - front-load the top of the page, the start of each paragraph, the start of each sentence and the first couple of words of each link caption.
- Use headings to help user's scan - use the different heading levels appropriately
- Use the active, rather than passive voice. For example:
'Find new course information for our undergraduate degrees' is much better than 'New course information can be found on the undergraduate degrees page', because it's shorter, more direct, easier to decode and front-loading.

For more detailed information about Writing for the Web, see the Quick Reference Style Guide and the article 'How Web is Different from Print, by Gerry McGovern.

Writing for the web is a real skill and quite a difficult one to master. Let us have a quick go with the next exercise

Task 4.1 Browse to your web site and sign in

1. **Browse to your training site on the School of Architecture site.**
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/training/session/wtr??>

Add your particular 'wtr' number to the end of the address. (see the card in front of your screen for your site number)

2. **Sign in with your normal usercode and password.**
3. **Ensure that you can see the 'Edit' link.**

Task 4.2 Create a new page and add some content to it.

1. **From the home page of your site create a new page called 'Research'.** You will need to use the 'Basic page template' to create a new blank page.
2. **Copy and paste the section about 'Research' from the word file 'content.doc'.** This file is located on the Desktop, under 'Course Materials and 'SiteBuilder Training', or from the online page:
<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/training/online/>. (You will need to download the file by following the links under 'Supporting materials').

To copy: highlight the paragraphs in the word document, then use Ctrl + c to copy it to the clipboard. Go to the browser view, insert the cursor where you want the content to appear and use Ctrl + p to paste the info into your page using the Paste from Word option.

Make sure that you include the information about the two research groups: the Architectural Science Group and the Architectural Practice Group.

Task 4.3 Edit the Research page to make it useful web content

1. **Go to the Research page if you are not already there.**
2. **Using the content editor, edit the Research page so it makes a useful web page.**
3. **Be ruthless. Omit 50% of the words. Use summaries, lists and bullet points where you are able.**
4. **Consult the Style Guide and Writing for the Web to see if there are some other things that you can do to the page to make it more useful content.**

Task 4.4 Compare your versions

1. **It's a subjective exercise, but perhaps by speaking to others to see how they have tackled it, you could pick up some useful tips.**

Task 5. Doing a content audit

Objectives Looking at content audits.

Method Discussion, observation and exercises

Comments A Content audit is essential to understand what is on your site

What is a content audit?

A content audit is a detailed assessment of everything on your site. It is necessary to evaluate the site to determine what is there, whether it should be there or if it can be deleted or updated and what information is missing.

A complete content audit will enable you to:

- Get the full picture of your site and take control of it.
- Decide what you need to do with it and whether you need additional resources to be able to manage it.
- Break down the tasks that need to be done into manageable chunks.
- Ensure that your important content stays clear and fresh.
- Brief the people who need to know.

There are two strands to this exercise – a catalogue or inventory and an assessment of that data. So not only what content is there on the site but is it any good?.

How to do a content audit

It seems the best and most efficient way of capturing the basic information is with a spreadsheet or database. Although you may find a quicker method of automating some of the areas, it is only by carefully picking your way through the whole site will you have any idea of what is there, what state it is in and whether you need to do anything about it.

Examine everything piece by piece, as thoroughly and quickly as possible. Capture your findings in a spreadsheet or database. Each row represents one Web page or piece of content; columns represent the attributes of the content; this is what changes the most depending on the particular project and scope.

Look at every piece of content only once, if at all possible – therefore, you'll have to know the scope well before you begin. (Even so, it's likely that you'll have to redo some after the first group.)

Here are some things we can include in the spreadsheet. Much of this can be viewed from 'View page source' from the View tab of the browser.

- Link — The URL for the page
- The page or file type - for example, html, pdf, doc, ppt etc
- Meta page title — Page title as it appears in the meta <title> tag

- Meta keywords — Keywords as they appear in the meta name="keywords" tag element.
- Meta description — Text as it appears in the meta name="description" tag element.
- Content owner — Person responsible for maintaining page content.
- Date page last updated — Date of last page update.
- Audit Comments (or Notes) — Audit findings and notes.

You could capture other data for both short and long-term purposes. This could include:

- the overall topic or area to which the page belongs.
- a short description of the information on the page.
- when the next page review is due.
- pages this page links to.
- pages that link to this page.
- page status – keep, delete, revise, in revision process, planned, being written, being edited, in review, ready for posting, or posted, ROT.
- rank of page on the website – is it a top 50 page? a bottom 50 page? Initial efforts might be more focused on those pages that visitors use the most and least.

Populating the spreadsheet is incredibly slow and painful but quite valuable.

Quantitative audit

This process, known as a *content inventory*, is a relatively straightforward process of clicking through your Web site and recording what you find.

See the excel spreadsheet:

An example spreadsheet. Start at your home page. Identify the major sections of your site. Start with one of those sections, click in, and see what's linked from it. For each page that you follow record the information specified in the columns of the spreadsheet. Follow every link and navigate as far as you can through the site, making sure to gather data about every possible page on the site.

	A	B	C	D
1	Link ID	Link Name	Link	Document Type
2	200	products	http://www.xyz.com/products/index.htm	collector page
3	210	software	http://www.xyz.com/products/software/	collector page
4	2.1.1.0	internet software	http://www.xyz.com/products/internet/	paragraphs
5	2.1.1.1.0	server products	http://www.xyz.com/products/servers/	paragraphs
6	2.1.1.1.1	web server	http://www.xyz.com/products/servers/w/	paragraphs
7	2.1.1.1.2	mail server	http://www.xyz.com/products/servers/m/	paragraphs
8	2.1.1.1.3	portal server	http://www.xyz.com/products/servers/p/	paragraphs
9	2.1.1.1.4	press releases	http://www.xyz.com/pressreleases/	paragraphs
10	2.1.1.1.5	events	http://www.xyz.com/events/2002.html	paragraphs
..				

Example spreadsheet

- **Link ID:** This is a numbering system for identifying the pages. It helps us refer back to particular sections and pages as we fill in the spreadsheet.
- **Link Caption:** The content you are evaluating needs to be called something. We usually just use the title of the HTML doc, or if that's not specific enough, the headline from the content. It should be unique and descriptive.
- **Link:** It can be very useful to record the URL or web address of the piece of content you're looking at - not only can you click and navigate from the spreadsheet, but you've also captured the location of the document on the Web server. Remember, the URL should point to the location of the actual HTML file, not a symbolic link or redirect.
- **Document type:** What template does the page use, or which should it? Is it a html, word, pdf, ppt, xls document?
- **Topics, Keywords:** What is the content about? View the source of the page and see what - if anything - is in the "keywords" meta tag.
- **Owner, Maintainer:** Who created this content? Who maintains it? If you run a smaller site, this may be you, so you might ignore this.
- **Is it ROT?:** Redundant, Outdated, or Trivial. It's a tag we use to identify content that should possibly be removed from the site. Is there another copy of this content somewhere else? Is it no longer relevant and up to date? Maybe it should never have been posted in the first place? If it doesn't belong on the site any more, make a note here.
- **Notes:** Anything else you may notice. Things to include here are issues like broken images, or other HTML problems. Really just try to record anything you want to remember for later.

Qualitative audit

This is the assessment part and in a way the harder part as you need to make a quality judgement about each page, that you may not necessarily be in a position to do. If a page has vexed you, make a note about your thoughts and defer or refer it for further evaluation from a colleague or line manager.

- Is this content accurate?
- Is it up to date?
- What purpose does it serve?
- Is it still fit for that purpose?
- Does it answer your readers' questions?
- Is it written in plain language?

Some things you have on the page and may not need anymore

- boxes

- words
- additional navigational options
- extra formatting that may have been copied over from the original word documents.
- lines
- colours
- images
- gradients
- different typefaces
- backgrounds

Task 5.1: Doing a content inventory

1. Get into groups of 2 or 3
2. Open the spreadsheet 08a content inventory from Course Materials/SiteBuilder Training on the Desktop.
3. Save the file to your documents so you can work with it.
4. Select a main section of your site, and take a very small sub-section of that site.
5. Drill across and down as far as you can, logging as much information as you can about all the pages that are there. Remember to take into account all the sub-pages and any pages and files that may be hidden, if you have permissions that is!

Task 5.2 Quality assessment

1. Taking the same section of site, now go through and see if you can make a quality judgement about the pages using the information above and earlier in the module.
2. Is it valuable or ROT etc?
3. Record your findings in the Notes/comments section of the spreadsheet for each page.

Task 6. Post- audit – what next?

Objectives	Assessing the audit and deciding what needs to be done
Method	Discussion, observation and exercises
Comments	The information gained from the audit can inform the Content Strategy and the Strategy can be updated when new information comes to light

So, you've carried out the painful but revealing audit, but what's to do now?

Firstly the results from the audit need to be fed back into the Content Strategy as this is your main policy document that will inform how you deal with the updating and maintenance of the site.

You may find that you have an awful lot of content on the website that you never knew existed. There may be lots of pages just sitting there that have not been updated for many years, there may be a lot of hidden pages, there may be content that you just cannot get to as the permissions have been restricted. It is a dauntless task but don't be disheartened !

The important thing to remember is that you are not alone and do not have to do everything yourself, even if you think you are 'expected' to manage on your own – often these are self-inflicted restraints. Your manager may not realise just what the management of the site entails and may assume you or someone will just 'get on with it' but unless they know the size of the problem or your workload, they are unable to help. Of course, you may think it better that they don't know!

Here are some ways of focusing on what needs to be done and how to break it down into more manageable chunks.

1. Decide what you can comfortably do yourself within a given timescale.
2. Decide which pages or sections you are happily able to delegate and to whom. Perhaps a colleague with a bit of SiteBuilder knowledge could help or is there someone you could train to help you out with a specific task?
3. Decide if you need additional admin support and see if there are resources within your dept to hire some short term help such as a temp if possible.
4. Get your line manager and major stakeholders on board if you are able. Show them that you've completed an audit on the site, and these are your recommendations for the next 6 months of the site's development.

For sections that you responsible for, here are some tips that could help.

Allocate specific web time (say half a day a week). If you are able to diary this time in every week, otherwise it will soon slip to the bottom of the pile, inform people that this is web time and do not disturb! By giving it the importance it needs, others will start to realise that it is important too.

Take a very small section and just go for it at a sprint. View the audit comments and try to do the necessary action required.

Delete any ROT as soon as you can. By removing all the redundant, outdated or trivial pages, you are already making your current content shine a bit brighter and easier to find. Be ruthless with the delete button!

Remove, retire, redo. If the page has not been updated for a couple of years and the content is clearly out of date, decide if you actually still need this page now. Is it still purposeful to the intended audience? Would anyone actually care if this page wasn't here? If you are unsure, you could retire it temporarily (ie hide it from the left hand navigation and restrict the viewing permissions) and see how it goes for a couple of months (but diary it on the editorial calendar). If no one tries to access the page or asks about it, perhaps it is no longer of value. Then you could decide if this page needs updating and re-launching or whether you can remove it all together.

If you have not written the page, contact the page owner, or the person who last updated the page to see if they can update the content to make it timely and relevant.

Ensure all the metadata is up to date, especially the Title bar caption, page description and keywords – see the information on How to improve the rank of the page. Up to date content is the most important factor for people finding the relevant pages in a search.

For similar looking pages, such as module pages or staff biographies, you could create a content template which you could distribute to the editors which will show them what sort of information you are looking for and in what format. This should hopefully speed up and simplify the whole content development process making both your life as manager/editor and the authors' lives easier.

The information the Content template could include:

- Page Title (Title bar caption)
- Page heading
- Quick summary of product or service, answering the question – What is it? Short description answering the questions 'What is it? Who is it for? What does it do? In 2 or 3 sentences (this could be used as the description in the page properties)
- Keywords the editor would use to search for this page (3-4 word phrases are usually better than single words)
- Main description – bulleted lists where possible. Answering the questions – What will this do for me? How does it work? 3 main features and benefits from these features. Why it is better than other alternatives? if appropriate.
- How do they buy/join etc. What action from this page? Where to next?
- Contact info
- Any other important info

See the document: An example Content template.

You could also consider creating a Styleguide for the department – see the Quick Reference Style Guide.

Task 7. Planning and structuring parts of the site

Objectives	Looking at structuring part of or the whole site
Method	Discussion and examples
Comments	A restructure could simplify the structure and make the more important information more prominent and easier to find

This next chapter is useful if you are creating a site from new or planning a site restructure.

Some notes about restructuring

You may find that having done the audit, the best course of action is a restructure of some or all of the site. However, before you do this it is probably a good idea to think carefully that this is actually necessary for your site. Your site may not be as bad as you think and it may only require some slight tweaking here and there in certain places to make something better rather than a total rehaul.

Also, the process of restructuring can sometimes be long, messy and painful, especially if there are two sites (the old and new sites) running in tandem with the possibility of people editing in two places. The two sites will quickly become out of sync unless someone is carefully controlling and monitoring the process. You also have to think about go addresses and redirects when pages are renamed, moved, copied, deleted etc.

A final caveat. Although a major restructure seems like a good idea in the short term, what will happen in say 6 months or a year down the line? Is there not the danger that the site will be in exactly the same place as it is now – everyone creating pages in an adhoc manner with no rhyme or reason – back to the patchwork quilt model! A restructure alone without a Content strategy for the longer term, will be something of a meaningless exercise.

Here is one way of doing a structuring exercise.

Step 1 – Gather together the information.

If possible get your audiences to tell you what information they want to see on the site. If you don't have time or access to your audiences, pretend you are them and list what you think they will want, based on the understanding you've already gained about them.



Step 2 – Prioritise the information.

Which are the really key items of information the audiences want to get to fast? What do you really want your audiences to be able to achieve? – Make sure that the important stuff is linked to from your homepage

Step 3 – Group the information.

Give each selection a label (use words your audience might choose). Can you now see any gaps in your information?



Step 4 – Test your groups.

Now ask your audience to group the information themselves (if you have access to them, if not try it on other members of your team). Ratify your results, if there are common elements that people always group together, go with those. Do your audiences label the groups differently? Use their words if they come up repeatedly. Decide on a system that most closely matches the majority view, simplicity not

cleverness is best here. Think about whether categories can be extended in the future if the situation changes.

Step 5 - Create wireframe layouts of key pages. For pages like your homepage do a mockup of how that page might look. At this point you should think about how much of the page you are giving over to each audience type. Make sure there is information or links to information that matches their key goals. If this is achieved they will be happy and you will be sure that your page conveys what are the most important messages.



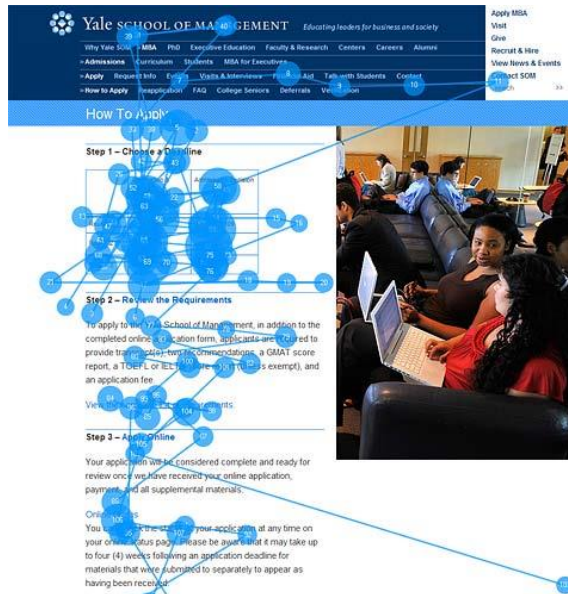
Wireframes are an excellent low-fi way of creating an initial mock-up before it becomes too developed or designed. It's effectively sketching it out on a bit of paper. It gives everyone a visual representation of what the page will look like when it has been designed and people are more likely to engage with and comment on a less polished version.

The wire frame is also a good way of highlighting the relationships between and prominence of different elements on the page. Newspapers use this grouping technique to give us useful information about the contents of a page before we start reading.

- The more important something is, the more prominent it should be.
- Logically related items should also be connected visually and nested accordingly to show what's part of what.
- So you know what your audience want (you have decided what main tasks they will want carry out on your site) and you have a feel for the overall structure of the site. Now you can start to think about the visual appeal.
- The first thing is to look around to get some inspiration and ideas. Look at competitor sites and other good and bad sites. Compile lists and urls of sites that work for you.
- Are there any logos or visual elements that you must include? Are there certain colour schemes that have to be used, for example any print material that web needs to connect with. Gather them together and consider, what style of look will work best for your audience? What sort of feel are you trying to get across?
- What sort of imagery would you like for the site design and homepage or other designed pages. Can imagery on the pages be used to get across messages about what you do, or how things work? Images, but only the right images speak volumes and can add a lot of value to the page. Real images of real people doing real things in your department are infinitely more interesting and useful to the user than i-stock generic photos. It is funny how quickly people

are able to spot generic photos and quickly zone them out. They do not mean anything to me, they are not portraying any useful information about this department or service and are therefore not relevant.

Here is another picture from Jakob Neilson's eye tracking studies of the Yale School of Management showing just how eye candy photos are ignored:



Although these may be real students here, on this page, the image is just a filler and people are quickly zipping past on their way to somewhere else.

- Colours often evoke moods or themes, dark blue for example being cool and corporate, blue sky can represent innovation, and so on.
- If you are getting ITS Web Team on board to do the site and homepage design, all this information will help them to work with you to achieve something that works.
- Think about whether your design will work on different browsers and at different monitor sizes including mobile devices

Task 7.1 Creating a wireframe for the School of Architecture homepage

Using the software provided by Balsamicq.com, we are going to create a wireframe for the new School of Architecture homepage.

1. **[Enter the Balsamiq url into your web browser - http://www.balsamiq.com](http://www.balsamiq.com)**
2. **[Have a quick look around the site to see what they are about](#)**

3. Click on the 'Try Web Demo' in the right hand side box in the centre content. It will take a few minutes to upload.
4. Once you've read the sample mock-up info, you can highlight each of the boxes and delete them, leaving you a blank canvas
5. Then, click on the 'Containers' tab to create a webpage rectangle.
6. Click on the 'Rectangle/Canvas/Panel' tab and drag it into the centre canvas
7. You will see a little box, drag it out to about average monitor size, say 1024 x 684. You will see the size adjust itself.
8. Then click on the browser window and drag that onto the canvas.
9. You will see a box with 'A Web Page' and 'http://'. This is effectively the name of the site with the url.
10. Highlight 'A Web Page' and type The University of Warwick - School of Architecture here.
11. Highlight 'http://' and type http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/architecture
12. When you click off the box you will see it has given you a Web page browser view complete with the site name and url.
13. Drag the browser window out so it matches the same size as your container
14. Then we are going to add the top banner and left hand navigation menus (the L shape Warwick template known as the site design). Click on the 'Rectangle /canvas/panel' element from the options menu at the top and drag it into your main window.
15. Place the rectangle in the top left hand corner of your page, under the browser view you've just created, then drag it across so it forms the top banner of a page.
16. Take another rectangle and place it under the one you've created for the banner and drag this out to the right and down to form the left hand navigation menu.
17. Then have a play with all the tools and elements and see if you can create a wireframe for possible School of Architecture homepage.

Click on 'All' to see all the elements, 'Markup' for adding things like numbers, comments, arrows etc for connecting elements and comments etc, 'text for text boxes'

Ignore the messages about the mock-up demo – just dismiss them. They are trying to get you to buy a licence.

Task 8. Measuring success, metadata, SEO

Objectives	To see if the pages are successful and useful
Method	By using a range of tools and features for measuring success such as testing, statistics, analysis of data.
Comments	We can test in a variety of ways but the most important ingredient of all is up to date content. The metadata needs to be completed and the page should be optimised for Search Engine Optimization.

Are the pages successful?

How do I know that my web site is successful, getting to the right people, being able to be found by the search engines etc.

Web traffic statistics provide very valuable information about your web site and help you to make better decisions about your content and how best to use it.

- Which Web pages are most popular and which are least used?
- Who is visiting your Web site?.
- Which Web browsers to optimize your Web pages for?
- Which Web search engines are most useful to you, and which are the least useful?
- Where errors or bad links may be occurring in your Web pages.

There are a number of methods we can employ

- Use the Web stats info generated by the Web Team as part of the site's data.
- Creating a Google Analytics account. This will provide a lot of data, possibly more than you need for analysing your traffic.
- You can also get an account with 'Clickdensity.co.uk' to get access to a click density piece of software that you can use to monitor traffic on your site for a short period of time. This is the clicking version of eyetracking studies – scientific approach rather than just a vague notion but quite expensive to use. The Web Team has a limited trial account and we could apply this to part of your site but we would probably only really do this as part of a restructuring exercise and you really need help in establishing what the important pages are.

Task 8.1 Site statistics

1. **Go to your website or a page that you have permissions for.**
2. **Sign in**

3. Click on the Edit link to take you to the editing section.
4. Click on the Stats tab.
5. The default is set at the last week. Leave it as it is for the moment.
6. View the traffic that has come to site.
7. Which are the most popular pages, top sections, how people got there, whether you have any missing pages and broken links etc.
8. Do you think that the top pages that people use are easy to get to and apparent from the homepage?

What are bounce rates?

Traffic analysis data may also tell you about a bounce rate. A bounce rate is a good indicator of landing page relevance and effectiveness.

A bounce is when a user comes to your page and leaves straightaway without doing anything or clicking on a link etc. A bounce rate is the percentage of visits in which a user left without viewing any other pages. The more relevant the page the less likely a visitor will bounce off of it.

High bounce rates are bad and low bounce rates are good.

To lower your bounce rate, analyse your content and then update the metadata - the Title bar caption, description, associated keywords, and referral links so that everything matches the content more closely. Remember it needs to be relevant to the user who clicked on the referring link or entered those search terms.

Search Engine Optimisation and why this is important

So what attributes do you think a page needs to be considered as 'quality' by a search engine?

- The page is relevant to the terms being searched for.
- The page is considered an authority about its topic.
- The page has good, useful content.
- The page has been around for a while.
- The page is part of a site with lots of other trusted information.
- The page loads quickly.
- The page isn't full of broken links.

For some more information about improving the rank of your page, see the search FAQ: How do I Improve the rank of my SiteBuilder page? (on the back of the Quick Style Reference Guide:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/servicessupport/web/search/faqs/improverank>

So, one of the most important things to take from this module is to **ensure your content is good and up to date.**

But, having a solid content strategy for your web site that ensures that your existing content is relevant and meets the expectations of users is equally as important.

The old cliché still stands: Content is King!

Task 9. Some available tools and features

Objectives See some of the available tools and features from the Web Team for Site Managers

Comments Just a few pointers to make your life easier

Site overview tools

Current site admin

Current site tab (available if you have edit or admin permissions at homepage level). Provides an overview of the whole site – see how many pages and files there are in the site, edit the site properties, change page contacts, purge deleted content and see all the recent edits in the site.

If you have access to the 'Current site' tab, you are also in a position to create new page templates and edit page templates on behalf of the department.

Page tracking

See who has visited a small set of pages from a webgroup
<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/tracking>

Develops in FormsBuilder for report reports about the submissions – Table based and summary datasets

See if someone from a webgroup has not submitted a form

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/formsbuilderfaqs/peoplenotsubmitted>

Personalisation tools

Groups

Make certain information only available to certain groups within the page. This can be quite a powerful tool - for example hiding Intranet links or tailoring the materials to different people, works well with Webgroups

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/editingcontent/personalisation/>

Add your user's name to a page

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/editingcontent/username/>

Searching tools

Warwick Search

Search for sites, people, blogs, exam papers, interactive map. Includes layers that the Google search engines cannot get to and has been personalised for Warwick users according to permissions.

<http://search.warwick.ac.uk/>

Live Search

Make your own site or section of site easier to search with a Live Search

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/other_admin/live-search

Or a **Site map**

Additional navigation for a site and provides a graphical view of a page as you roll over the links rather than having to click into each page. It also now shows you how many pages and files are contained within each section.

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/create_pages/specialpages/sitemap/sitemap_test

Or a **Tags Filter page**

Enable people to search only in the areas they are interested in – works very well with research areas

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/create_pages/specialpages/tot

Or a **Site changes page**

A list of all the recent events on the site, over the last 24 hours, week, month etc

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/create_pages/specialpages/whatsnew

Organisational tools

Webgroups

The key to many things. Use the membership groups already established or create your own bespoke webgroups and use them for updating page permissions, page commenting and create areas specially for these groups.

<http://webgroups.warwick.ac.uk/admin/groups/home.htm>

Arrange a meeting tool

Very versatile and easy to use tool for getting everyone together

<http://mtg.warwick.ac.uk/>

Upload several files together

Uploading using a HTML5 compliant browser such as Firefox 3.6, Chrome 3.0 or Safari 4

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/files/upload_multiple

Contents list page

Great for organising sections of your site – automates the adding of links and updates when there are changes to the pages and files below. Can be customised to show different info

http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/create_pages/specialpages/toc

Bookings page

A calendar page to enable users to book slots for resources

<http://warwick/sitebuilder2/faqs/resource/>

NewsBuilder

For news and calendar pages. Create your news and events pages, then insert a feed from your news/calendar page somewhere else such as your homepage

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/newsbuilderfaqs>

FormsBuilder

For online forms and can be used as interface for online payment

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/formsbuilderfaqs>

SiteBuilder2 Training Module

And now you can create datasets reports (table-based and summary datasets) from the submissions.

QuizBuilder

For rich interactive quizzes

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/quizbuilder>

Collaborative tools

New SiteBuilder forums

Create a forum page

http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/servicessupport/web/sitebuilder2/faqs/create_pages/specialpages/forum

Page Comments

Enable a discussion actually on the page

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/properties/page-comments>

Make comments on page edits as you change a page

Ideal if several people editing same page

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/faqs/editingcontent/commentonedit>

Page history

View, restore and compare versions of a page and pin a good version

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/training/demopages/visualpagehistory>

References

Content Comes First

Kristina Halvorson

<http://www.braintraffic.com/>

Content Strategy for the Web

<http://www.contentstrategy.com/>

‘Writing Content that Works for a Living’

Erin Kissane, 4/11/08, A List apart

<http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writingcontentthatworksforaliving/>

‘Content Templates to the Rescue’, Erin Kissane, 07/07/09, A List apart

<http://www.alistapart.com/articles/content-templates-to-the-rescue/>,

Rachel Lovinger

<http://www.slideshare.net/rlovinger>

<http://www.slideshare.net/rlovinger/nimble-report>

Complete Beginner’s Guide to Content Strategy

Andrew Majer, 20/07/10

<http://www.uxbooth.com/blog/complete-beginners-guide-to-content-strategy/#what>

Web design from scratch, Ben Hunt

<http://www.webdesignfromscratch.com/articles-and-tutorials/>

Web Design Articles & Tutorials – Best designed Web sites in the world 2010

<http://www.webdesignfromscratch.com/web-design/top-10-best-designed-web-sites-in-the-world-2010/>

Lost in Translation: Importance of Effective Communication in Online Education,
Kristen Betts, Drexel University, *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*,
Volume XII, Number II, Summer 2009

University of West Georgia, Distance Education Center

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/summer122/betts122.html>

Photos as Web content, Jakob Nielsen’s Alertbox, 1/11/10

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/photo-content.html>

Eyetracking Research

Findings from Nielsen Norman Groups’s usability studies using eye tracking
technology

<http://www.useit.com/eyetracking/>

What is “bounce rate” anyway?, 08.17.2010

By Julián Q. Becerra

<http://graphicmint.com/blog/online-metrics/what-is-bounce-rate-anyway/>

Other Training Modules

There are further training modules offered by IT Services Web Team that cover many of the other features in SiteBuilder2:

- Getting Started
- Working with Files
- Working with Links
- Adding images
- Adding News and Events
- Creating Forms and Quizzes
- Creating Dynamic Pages

Go to <http://warwick.ac.uk/its/training/> to check availability and book a place.

They are also located here for on-line training and reference:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2/training>.

More information about SiteBuilder2 is available including an extensive FAQ section from the web support area for SiteBuilder2 users at:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilder2>

Finally, you can find lots of information on the SiteBuilder forum at:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/sitebuilderforum/>

Useful Links

Making a good website:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/design/good/>

Services offered by the Web Publishing team:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/webteam/>

<http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/design/>

<http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/design/copywriting/>

What does my web site look like on a mobile device:

<http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/sitebuilder2/faqs/gettingstarted/mobile-site-appearance>

Improve my page rank in search engines:

http://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/service-support/web/sitebuilder2/faqs/other_admin/improverank