

Overview

Campus Web sites vary widely in quality and effectiveness—and compliance with federal law—with far too many ranking at the poor end of the scale. Even some professionally designed campus sites fail to support UC Davis communication standards and goals. The Web is one of our most valuable communications channels, and poorly executed Web sites adversely affect relationships with important target audiences: prospective and current students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, corporations, foundations and government agencies.

Based on a survey conducted by the initiative's project team in December 2006, key factors and contributing areas of concern include:

1. Heavy workload among campus Web content managers, programmers, copywriters and other individuals tasked with updating Web pages.
2. Cumbersome publishing processes.
3. Disparity in technical expertise, staff, and resources among campus units.
4. Lack of familiarity with official Web standards and Web practices:
 - a. Lack of clear UC Davis identification and integration of brand identity across sites
 - b. Poor and inconsistent navigation from site to site, and even within sites
 - c. Inconsistent or no compliance with published graphic, editorial, technical and legal standards
 - d. Insufficient accessibility of content to persons with disabilities
 - e. Out-of-date, inaccurate and unclear content

Strategy

To address these issues, University Communications and Information and Educational Technology have initiated a cooperative, multi-phase plan to encourage use of more efficient Web resources and practices. The first phase of the initiative included the definition and promotion of Web content and graphic standards for the campus, and the development of a structure and strategy for the initiative:

- Section 310-70 (WWW standards) of the UC Davis Policy and Procedure manual, August 2006
- Web templates published for campus use, October 2006
- UC Davis Webmasters forum launched, January 2007
- Project Vision and Scope, April 2007
- CMS Requirements and Evaluation committee, April 2007

The second phase involves the selection and deployment of a Web Content Management System (CMS) under a pilot program involving select departments and units that represent the broad needs of the campus:

- Offices of Chancellor and Provost
- Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies (HArCS)
- Office of Graduate Studies
- Information and Educational Technology
- University Communications

Using the pilot as a basis for the development of a comprehensive, efficient and effective strategy for deployment, the solution will be offered campus-wide to academic and administrative units, schools and colleges, individual departments and other administrators of official and department UC Davis pages.

What is Web CMS?

Web CMS is software that stores and organizes Web site content and information about how it can be used and presented. A Web CMS provides a centralized system for creating, editing and publishing well designed, standards-compliant and accessible Web sites without requiring technical expertise. Web CMS systems are currently being used by public and private colleges and universities across the United States, including:

- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Berkeley
- California State University, Monterey Bay
- California State University, Sacramento
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Gonzaga University
- Bentley College
- Dartmouth College

Goals

As identified by respondents to the UC Davis Web CMS survey (<http://cms.ucdavis.edu>), the selected Web content management solution will support the organizational Web publishing and management needs of the campus by:

- Alleviating existing constraints due wholly or in part to limitations in the availability of time, resources, staff or technical knowledge upon those responsible for Web content publishing, development and management.
- Improving the efficiency of work processes associated with the creation, management and distribution of content and information via the Web by providing a consistent and robust tool set for campus webmasters and content managers.
- Facilitating compliance with brand identity, information architecture, design and technical standards as defined in official UC Davis Web policy (PPM 310-70) to improve the efficacy of communications to campus audiences.
- Supporting graphic and architectural continuity throughout the campus's Web sites, while satisfying the communications needs of individual departments and better serving the needs of site visitors.
- Supporting compliance with campus, federal and state Web accessibility standards and policies.
- Offering a centralized, dynamic, flexible and high quality campus Web publishing platform.

The content management solution will be a critical component of the effort to promote and facilitate compliance with campus standards for Web content, architecture, presentation and accessibility.

Next Steps

Documentation of requirements	(Spring 2007)
Evaluate/select solution	(Spring 2007)
Pilot implementation	(Summer-Fall 2007)
Campus-wide availability	(Fall-Winter 2007)

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