

Redesign Strategy: UIC Library Website Redesign

Introduction

The main website of the University Library is six years old. It was originally built on the WebGUI content management system, which is no longer maintained or capable of meeting the needs of Library staff and end-users. In addition, the site has been difficult to maintain due to the lack of personnel, governance structures, or content strategy. As we move forward with the redesign of library.uic.edu, we need to identify our overarching goals, priorities, and principles, as well as who is responsible for doing work and approving milestones. This document will guide the remainder of this project – including requirements definition, content creation, visual design, and site development – up to the launch of the site in Fall 2016.

Goals

The following goals were identified in the Web Presence Survey:

1. Simple navigation and search systems that seamlessly connect users to appropriate information and resources
2. Less segregation between our many library services and accounts
3. Content that is for our users, not just for librarians – less jargon
4. Frequent, iterative updates to ensure users are getting current, accurate information
5. Improved connections between our users and staff, spaces, and services, both online and physical
6. Clear communication and policies that allow for more efficiency in implementing updates and new projects
7. Easier, more efficient tools and workflows for content creation, editing, and publishing

Priorities

Based on our goals for the Web Presence,

1. Migrate to a modern, more flexible content management system (CMS) and infrastructure (Goal 4, Goal 7)
2. Implement a streamlined information architecture, navigation system, and homepage that prioritize student success (Goal 1, Goal 3)

3. Redesign site content to be more useful, usable, and accessible to end users (Goal 3, Goal 5)
4. Establish an accessible, user-friendly visual design that meets the new University branding guidelines; clearly conveys the Library's brand and key message as defined by the Communications Plan; and provides a framework for the visual design of other web properties (Goal 2, Goal 6)

Content Design Principles

Web content is not the same as print content. Web content is much more than copy – it also includes images, media, interactive elements, structural and navigational elements, and metadata. Web content should be designed based on best practices and web standards, and iteratively tested and improved.

Useful

Content design should always start with user needs. Every piece of content (and every system and service) should exist based on an end-user persona and a valid, actionable user need.

Personas

Personas are an archetype for a broad user group. Every piece of content should identify one user persona who represents their primary audience.

User Needs

A valid user need does not assume a solution or a tool – first the need should be identified, then the solution is designed based on the need. User needs are identified based on evidence from analytics or user research.

User needs also must be based on actions or tasks, following this template: As a [persona], I need to [actionable task], so I can [desired outcome].

Good example: As a commuter student (persona), I need to find resources for my assignment online (task), so I can complete my assignment without driving to the library (desired outcome).

Bad example: As a commuter student, I need to use the databases A-Z list (tool assumed), so I know what databases you have (not actionable).

Usable

Content should be easy to read and easy to use, following best practices for web writing and formatting. Usable interfaces only work if they contain usable content.

Plain Language

Language should not exceed an 8th-grade reading level and should be free of jargon and unclear acronyms. In our diverse campuses, it is especially important to use plain language, as many of our students do not speak English as their first language.

Calls to Action

Every piece of content should clearly and concisely convey what the user needs to do to meet their need. Even instructional content should clearly indicate what the user can “do” with the information.

Accessible

Our services should not exclude any user based on ability. We create web content that meets accessibility standards and considers all user needs.

Standards

Web content should meet Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>) and the IITAA (<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32765>) standards.

Form

HTML is more accessible than embedded documents. When documents must be used, accessible PDF format is required.

Content

When writing content about our services, use inclusive language and consider user needs based on ability. For example, if writing about visiting a Library location, include relevant information about accessible transit options, disability parking, and elevators.

Findable

Our content and services should be findable, on our website and across the Web.

Labels

Consistent labels that use plain language will help users find content, on our site, in search engines, and at times, in our physical spaces.

Formatting

Use of headings, bullets, small paragraphs, and buttons will help users easily scan our content on our site and will help search engines better identify important pieces of information.

Portability

Content should live – and be maintained – in one place and shared across all of our platforms. This ensures that information is consistent.

Example: The hours for the library appear in multiple places on the library website, the library events calendar, and the library news site, as well as digital screens in the building. Because our content is portable, we update the hours in one place and the updates appear everywhere.

Scope of Work

Includes

These sites will be redesigned and migrate to a new platform.

- Library.uic.edu
- Faramir.lib.uic.edu
- M.library.uic.edu

Affects

The visual design of these sites will be updated, based on decisions made in the redesign project.

- LibGuides
- LibCal
- LibAnswers
- Serials Solutions public-facing pages

Excludes

The following sites will not be included in this project, though they may be included in separate projects to update branding, clean up legacy content, and/or improve usability.

- Wordpress exhibit sites
- Legacy digital collections sites
- Finding aids
- Indigo
- Journals@UIC
- Library Catalogs
- Discovery Systems
- Electronic resources
- ILLIAD
- CONTENTdm collections
- Social media

Governance Principles

Adapted from the [Government Service Design Manual](#) (2015)

1. Don't slow down delivery
 - a. Be available when needed
 - b. Remove – don't create – roadblocks to implementation
2. Decisions when they're needed, at the right level
 - a. Decisions should be evidence-based and focused on user needs
 - b. The Redesign Teams have authority to make decisions, and only escalate when absolutely necessary
 - c. Meetings for Redesign Teams are short and frequent
 - d. Use iterative design and development
3. Do it with the right people
 - a. Redesign Teams consist of the minimum number of people needed to complete the work to keep the team agile

- b. Redesign teams should include people who are focused, motivated, and empowered to complete the project
- 4. Go see for yourself
 - a. It is everyone's responsibility to stay informed – pay attention to communications and ask questions
- 5. Only do it if it adds value
 - a. Value comes from meeting user needs
 - b. We explore ideas that could add value, and if they don't, we stop
- 6. Trust and verify
 - a. Trust and empower your colleagues so they can focus on completing the project

Stakeholders & Roles

Everyone is a stakeholder in this project, so we must establish clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder group. The three Redesign Teams will be responsible for all project tasks and decisions. Library Stakeholder Groups will provide input and feedback.

Redesign Teams

Implementation Team

This team will manage and carry out the redesign project. They will work closely with our vendor, Pixo, and meet in daily scrums to ensure the project moves forward.

Web Content Team

Members of the web content team will be responsible for designing, editing, and creating all of the content for the new site. Reporting directly to the Web Services Librarian, they will serve as section editors, working closely with members of their service areas to create content that is accurate and useful.

This team will be kept to the smallest possible number of members to maximize quality and speed of publishing (Demsy and Chapman 2015, 29). Members will collaborate with their colleagues to gather feedback and requests, but they will be empowered to make final decisions over web content. Because of the time commitment and responsibility, members will need supervisor approval to participate.

Members will be required to participate in trainings and workshops to learn how to design useful, usable, accessible web content based on our user personas; to create content in our new CMS; and to meet standards for accessibility and usability on the web. Team members will meet regularly with the Web Services Librarian to workshop content, share requests and comments from Library staff in their service area, and they may also participate in usability tests of the CMS. See Appendix I for the full list of requirements.

At the close of the redesign project, the members of the Web Content Team are expected to continue to serve as site editors, managing additional contributors to their area of the site; collaborating with colleagues on requests for additions and changes; and assisting in training additional content contributors.

Communications Team

In the initial phases of the redesign project, the Communications Team will be responsible for informing Library faculty and staff on developments and milestones in the project.

In the later stages of the redesign project, the Communication Team will communicate upcoming developments to the University community and our end users.

Library Stakeholder Groups

Web Advisory Group

WAG will meet bi-weekly through the duration of the project, and they will provide feedback on all tasks listed in the Work Breakdown & Timeline section of this document. WAG will also participate in usability testing, user interviews, and UX design activities. All milestones and major milestones will go through WAG before review from Steering Committee and Library Councils. Milestones will require approval from the Web Services Librarian.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will review milestones. The designated Steering Committee representative for this project will approve major milestones (as designated in the Work Breakdown below).

Library Councils

The Library Councils will review and provide feedback on milestones.

Library Working Groups

The Implementation Team will work closely with Library Working Groups in the design and testing of website content and features (as designated in the Work Breakdown below).

End Users

The most important stakeholder in the project, End Users will participate in usability testing and user interviews that form the information architecture, content design, and visual design of the redesigned site. End users include our target audience groups:

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate and professional students
- External researchers
- Clinical staff
- University faculty
- Donors
- UIC campus community
- Peer institutions and partner organizations

Work Breakdown & Timeline

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
UX & Service Design	User interviews, usability testing, persona development			
	Activities with students to understand mental models and vocabulary around library resources and services (card sorting, tree testing, etc.)			
	Milestone: Web Usability Assessment Report (Complete)			
	Milestone: Personas			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Content Strategy	Complete a detailed inventory of the website			
	Identify Phase I and Phase II content priorities. Phase I priorities will be based on the needs of student personas, Phase II priorities will be based around the needs of faculty and researcher personas.			
	Complete a task inventory of all of the tasks each persona should be able to complete on the site			
	Create a content outline to guide the Web Content Team – based on task inventory and content inventory.			
	Complete an inventory of any legacy content that must be publically available (via staff survey)			
	Major Milestone: Web Content Team Roster			
	Milestone: 2015 Redesign Content Inventory			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Information Architecture	Develop mobile-first wireframes based on UX phase			
	Test wireframes with students			
	Identify ARIA landmarks			
	Major Milestone: Final Information Architecture Wireframes			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Resource Architecture	Develop architecture related to searching and resources			
	Conduct usability testing on search wireframes			
	Major Milestone: Final Resource Wireframes			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Authoring Content	Trainings in UX, design, and accessibility			
	Phase I: Content planning and development (student personas)			
	Phase II: Content planning and development (faculty and researcher personas)			
	Trainings & usability testing in CMS			
	Add content into the CMS			
	Content design testing			
	Milestone: Phase I Content for Redesign Launch			
	Milestone: Phase II Content for Redesign Launch			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Visual Design	Develop mockups based on authored content and wireframes			
	Major Milestone: Final Mockups			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Usability Testing	Round 1: Test information architecture and early stages of visual design			
	Round II: Alpha site testing			

Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Front-End Development	Build in ARIA landmarks and responsive layouts	People	Start	Complete
CMS Development	Choose CMS Front end development			
	Milestone: Public Beta Site			
	Install CMS on development server			
Phase	Task	People	Start	Complete
Launch	Major Milestone: Public Beta Site Launch Date			
	Major Milestone: Production Site Launch Date			

Appendix I: Requirements of Web Content Team

The Web Content Team should consist of 5-8 people (not including the Web Services Librarian), representing the following service areas:

- Access (borrowing, ILL, etc.)
- Research (workshops, online resources, etc.)
- Archival collections (digital exhibits, special collections, university archives, etc.)
- Publishing and scholarly communications
- Library and locations information (facilities, policies, etc.)

Members will be required to:

- Identify user needs based on:
 - Analytics data
 - Usability tests
 - User interviews
- Have or gain knowledge of a wide array of information related to our public services
- Have or gain knowledge of accessibility and usability standards
- Collaborate with colleagues across departments
- Design content architectures
- Write succinct, accessible prose in plain language
- Optimize existing content for accuracy, usability, usefulness, and findability
- Create usable, accessible metadata
- Work with the Web Services Librarian to test the CMS
- Advocate for user needs – explaining what they are, and saying “no” to requests that don’t serve our users
- Communicate content principles and redesign progress to Library staff and faculty

At the close of the 2015 Redesign Project, members are expected to continue to serve as site editors, managing requests and content contributions for their areas of the site.

Resources Consulted

Demsky, Ian, and Suzanne Chapman. "Taming the Kudzu: An Academic Library's Experience with Web Content Strategy." In

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