

Section Two: Developing Great Content

Now that you understand what a CMS is and you've learned a bit more about the CMS process, it's time to focus your attention on your most important task: Developing great content for your key audiences, and then putting that content in the right place.

But who are your key audiences? How do you develop great content for them? And how do you organize content so they can find it? The following guidance should help you.

Different Audiences, Different Content, Different Homes

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| <p>Website</p> <p>Purpose: to market your unit's offerings to the public</p> <p>Audience: prospective students and their families, alumni, donors, jobseekers, sports fans, patients, campus visitors, legislators, the media and vendors</p> <p>Content: information about academic programs, admissions requirements, financial aid, housing, dining, parking, visiting campus and much more</p> | <p>Portal Site</p> <p>Purpose: to help university insiders conduct their business</p> <p>Audience: current students and university employees (i.e. anyone with a NetID)</p> <p>Content: access to enterprise business systems, forms, documents, HR notices and much more</p> |
| | <p>Instructional Content Server</p> <p>Purpose: to aid faculty in providing quality online academic instruction</p> <p>Audience: faculty and current students</p> <p>Content: online course content</p> |
| | <p>Applications Server</p> <p>Purpose: to provide additional functionality to websites and portal sites</p> <p>Audience: varies</p> <p>Content: applications (online forms and the databases that support them)</p> |

As this diagram shows, USF serves many different audiences, and each of these audiences has distinct needs. Your challenge is to identify your unit's audiences, understand what they need from you, develop content that meets those needs, and post that content in the right place.

Once you identify your audiences and determine what type of content they need from you, it's easy to determine where that content should be housed. For example:

Content for External Audiences Belongs on Your Website

Your website is a tool that helps you market your unit's offerings to the public—also known as your external audiences.

External audiences include all website visitors who do NOT have a USF NetID, including prospective students and their families, alumni, donors, jobseekers, sports fans, patients, campus visitors, legislators, the media and vendors, to name a few.

Content for external audiences includes academic program information, admissions requirements and processes, financial aid and scholarship information, maps, directions, parking information, job postings and much more.

You should plan to migrate this type of content into the CMS so that it displays on your website, which is designed specifically to feature content for external audiences.

Content for Internal Audiences Belongs on Your Portal Site

In contrast, your portal site is a tool that helps you serve the needs of university insiders—also known as your internal audiences. The purpose of your portal site is to help these insiders conduct their university business.

Internal audiences include only those individuals who have a USF NetID. This group is strictly limited to current students and university employees, such as faculty and staff.

Content for internal audiences includes access to university business systems (GEMS, OASIS, etc.), internal announcements, HR forms and more. This information is password protected and is not available to the general public.

You should plan to migrate this type of content into your portal site, which is designed specifically to feature content for internal audiences. A portal site is different from a team site. A team site is a collaboration tool for teams working on a specific project. In contrast, a portal site is an intranet site meant to serve internal audiences.

Note: you may migrate your internal content to the USF CMS until the portal is live. IT Web Services will work with you directly to move internal content to the portal once it is available.

Instructional Content and Applications Do Not Live in the CMS

In addition to the content that lives on websites for external audiences, and content that lives in the portal for internal audiences, all instructional technology will live on a separate server dedicated to housing these modules.

Finally, applications, such as online forms and the databases that are behind them, will live in a separate space as well and will not migrate to the USF CMS.


Audience Identification + Needs Analysis = Personas

Okay—so different audiences have different needs. Got it. But what is the best way to identify your unit’s audiences? And how do you determine what they need from you?

One of the most popular ways to identify your audiences and to determine audience needs is to create personas. It’s simple: Just think about who your unit serves.

For example, do you serve prospective students? If so, are they undergraduate? Graduate? International? Are they high achievers? First generation? In-state? Out-of-state? Keep asking yourself questions until you get a really clear picture of who you are serving. Once you answer these questions for each of audiences you serve, then create a persona for each one.

Meet Suzie

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | Name: | Suzie |
| | Age: | 18 |
| | Year: | Incoming Freshman |
| | Major: | Biology (Honors College) |
| | Academic Profile: | 1350 SAT, 4.7 GPA |
| | Interests: | Soccer, Student Government |

For example, you might create a persona named Suzie. Suzie is an incoming freshman. She’s 18 years old, she’s a high achiever who’s been admitted to the honors college, and she’s moving here from out of state, after visiting USF only once two years ago.

Now think about what Suzie needs from you. Remember, Suzie doesn’t know USF. She’s never been to college before, and she’s only visited campus once. Everything is new to her; she’s not familiar with higher ed terminology, much less our university acronyms, so it’s important to speak clearly in layman’s terms that Suzie understands. And she’s not familiar with the campus, so it’s important to help her find her way.

What are some things Suzie might hope to find on your website? If you are Parking and Transportation Services, Suzie will hope to find maps, directions, parking information and details about the shuttle bus system. If you are Undergraduate Research, Suzie will hope to find information about how she can get involved in research, including checklists, contact information and more.

If you complete the persona development process for each of your audiences, then you will have a clear understanding of who your audiences are and what each one needs from you. And that will help you to develop great content and to post it in the right place. The bottom line: It’s all about Suzie.

What About Existing Content?

So now you understand who your key audiences are, and you know what they need from you. That means you're ready to develop some great new web content. But what about the existing content housed on your current website? What do you do with all that? Do you keep it? Do you throw it away and start over?

This is where a content audit comes in. Simply create a spreadsheet of all the content that is currently on your website. Include all text, photos, videos, PDF docs, RSS feeds, etc.

Say Goodbye to Out-of-Date, Redundant and Bad Content

Now go through the list and strike out any content that is out-of-date, redundant or just plain bad. This might include an event listing from two years ago, content that you've repeated on multiple pages, or poor-quality text and photos.

And Move Applications, Internal and Instructional Content Elsewhere

In addition, you should isolate anything that is still valuable, but simply not appropriate for a website. This might include internal content you want to move into your portal site, or instructional content and applications that live on other servers. Create a separate spreadsheet for each of these types of content and move those items accordingly.

Think You're Done? Not So Fast

If you complete the steps above, you should be left with content that is accurate, up-to-date and appropriate for your external audiences.

But just because you got rid of the worst of it, doesn't mean your content is ready to go. You still have some work to do to ensure that the content you post is working for you, not against you. Remember: If your site is cluttered with random, poor-quality content that doesn't help your audience do what they came to do, then your site doesn't work.

To that end, every word, link, feed, article, photo, video and graphic element on every page of your site should serve a very specific purpose—to help your audience find what they are looking for and complete the tasks they came to complete.

Anything that doesn't serve this purpose should be eliminated. And everything that makes the cut needs to be made "web-friendly."

Preparing Content for Websites

Back in the day, when the web was new, communications people simply copied content out of their latest brochure and pasted it onto their website. Great idea, right? Wrong.

Why? Because site visitors are looking for timely, accurate, accessible information, and they want it FAST. They will not meander around your site like they might do when they are reading a magazine. In fact, studies show that, in a best-case scenario, we only read 28 percent of the text on a web page (Nielsen Norman Group 2008).

Web-Friendly Content

To develop web-friendly content, keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure your content is high quality. Poor quality text, photos and graphics makes your unit seem incompetent and unprofessional, and it harms your credibility.
- Make sure your content is relevant. Don't add content just "to fill the space." Every element on every page must serve a purpose and be relevant to your audience.
- Limit content to one topic per page. If your visitor is on an academics page, then they shouldn't be reading about housing. Content needs to be hyper-focused to help your audience find what they need.
- Keep your text concise. Use short words, short sentences and short paragraphs.
- Lead with the most important details. Follow with supporting details. End with related information.
- Don't use words your audience doesn't understand, including technical jargon, acronyms and the like. Use common words and phrases.
- Use headings and bullet points to break up long blocks of text. This makes it easy for site visitors to scan and quickly find what they are searching for.
- Don't post irrelevant content. External audiences will be annoyed if you clutter up your page with things they don't care about, in the place of things they desperately need.
- Include a call to action. For example, if you want your site visitors to fill out a form, RSVP for an event, or register for orientation, say so.
- Include key words in your text. This will make it easier for search engines to find you. To learn more about Search Engine Optimization, read the SEO section in the addendum of this manual.
- Limit the number of links on each page to a reasonable number.
- Never say "click here." Instead, insert the text link into your copy.
- Link directly to the subject-matter experts. For example, if you need to provide financial aid information, link directly to the financial aid website, as opposed to recreating that content on your own site. This ensures that your visitors will have the most up-to-date information and

removes the need for you to keep tabs of changes outside of your control.

- Follow copyright laws. Do not use photos without permission.
- Do not steal photos from other websites to post on your own, unless you are eager to court a lawsuit.
- Use stock images sparingly, and only with permission / after you've paid for them.
- Make sure photos are high quality. Think web-ready resolution, relevant subject matter and excellent cropping.
- Don't hide text inside images. For example, if you want your unit's name or address to be indexed by a search engine, make sure it is not displayed inside a graphic element.

Now Get Organized

You've identified your key audiences, analyzed their needs, created personas, conducted a content audit, and generated great new content for your website. Now it's time to get organized.

Take a look at the template specifications in the toolbox section of this manual. Notice that there are different types of templates you can use to organize your web content. Not only are these templates properly branded, they are designed to help you provide your audiences with relevant information and resources FAST.

Your site will likely have a homepage that welcomes your site visitors with relevant, accurate, up-to-date content, followed by a series of index pages that help your site visitors quickly access important information and complete necessary tasks. Your site will also likely include text pages that provide detailed yet concise information about specific topics.

Now it's time to determine how to organize your content within the templates. For that, we turn our attention to creating wireframes.

The Importance of Wireframes

Now we have arrived at one of the most critical steps of the entire website migration process: creating wireframes.

Imagine you are building a house. Before you can begin the process of laying the foundation, or putting up walls, or installing cabinets, you need to create a set of blueprints that will tell your contractor not only what goes in your house, but precisely where each element will be placed.

Contractors use blueprints to help them plan and execute the building process. Web managers use wireframes.

Wireframes are like blueprints for your website. They enable you to carefully plan precisely where each and every piece of content will live on your website. Just as a contractor cannot construct a sturdy home without blueprints, web managers cannot create a solid website without wireframes.

The Wireframe Process

The wireframe process can be challenging. To help you, we've broken it down into some basic steps:

1. To begin the wireframe process, download the wireframe forms from the USF Brand website at <http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/wireframe-forms.aspx>. Note that each wireframe form corresponds to one of the website templates described in this manual.
2. Select the wireframe form that corresponds to the homepage template you'd like to use for your unit's homepage. Using the leadership-approved content you've already developed, fill in the blanks on the homepage wireframe form. Pay close attention to your header navigation, which is extremely important to the following steps.
3. Once you complete your homepage wireframe, take note of the four-to-six links you listed in your header navigation. These links will take website visitors to your secondary pages. Now select the wireframe forms that correspond to the secondary page templates you'd like to use for your unit's secondary pages. Again, using the leadership-approved content you've already developed, fill in the blanks on the secondary page wireframe forms.
4. Once you've completed the wireframe forms for your unit's homepage and four-to-six secondary pages, email these completed forms to your liaison for review. Your liaison will provide feedback that will assure you that you're on the right track.
5. Using feedback from your liaison, repeat the above steps until you've completed a wireframe form for every single page of your unit's website.
6. Share your completed wireframe forms with your unit's leadership to ensure that they are satisfied with the way you've organized the content.
7. Once you secure your leadership's approval, email all your completed wireframe forms to your liaison for final review.

At this point, several things will happen:

1. Your liaison will confirm receipt of your wireframes, and provide you with an estimate of how much time it will take UCM to review your content.
2. Your liaison will ask you to provide information about workflow, including the contact information for each of your unit's content managers and content contributors.
3. IT will use your wireframe forms to set up your directory within the CMS. This will include creating login credentials and permissions for all the CMs and CCs who will need access to your unit's website; setting up the workflow for content review and approval; creating the basis for your unit's homepage and secondary pages based on your wireframes; and creating your call-to-action buttons, if you have chosen that option. **They will not build out your entire site or add content for you.**
4. While UCM reviews your content and IT sets up your directory, you should carefully review the technical manual found within this user guide.

5. Once your directory is complete, your liaison will assist you with training and you will receive your login credentials. At that point, you will be able to begin building out your website.

Building and Launching Your Website

It's finally time to build your site! If you've done your homework—completing the wireframes and studying your technical manual—this step should go pretty smoothly. Remember: Your liaison is here to help you, so if you get stuck, ask for help (if you are a CC, please contact your CM for assistance).

Once your migration is complete, you will likely wish to meet with your unit's leadership to preview the final product before the site goes live. Note that it is very likely that you'll be asked to make changes, even at this late stage of the game. If this happens, remember that this is very common, and try not to get discouraged.

Upon receiving final approval from your unit's leadership, contact your liaison to submit your website to the CMS Workgroup for final review. Representatives from UCM and IT will take one final look to make sure everything is working as it should before they add you into the production queue (review the [Website Migration Checklist](#) for more details and timelines). Shortly thereafter, your site will go live!

After that, it will be up to the site's CMs and CCs to keep the site content relevant, accurate and up-to-date.