

The Illusionist: Pulling Web Content out of Thin Air

Suzanne Wayne
suzwayne@psu.edu

Has this happened to you?

“We need a new site up within 1 week. Can you take care of that?”

A Magician's Bag of Tricks

1. Preparation - Make a list of what you need.
2. The Magic Begins - Start producing content.
3. Watch the Magic Happen or "The Prestige" - Reflect content back to owner.
4. A note on behavior reinforcement - OR - "If I do this, then everyone will expect me to do this all the time."

Preparation

- Brainstorm what content you will need.

Preparation

- College and University Requirements
 - Penn State Web Policy - [AD 54](#)
 - Penn State [Web Style Guide](#)

Preparation

- Benchmark with sites of similar academic units or organizations.
- Don't forget to look at keywords and descriptions on these sites.

Preparation

- Look at the print materials counterpart.
- Print used to be the primary source of communication. If it was once needed in print, it most likely will be needed on the Web.

Preparation

- Talk to your content owner, if possible.
- Ask - What do you need to say?
- Ask - What do you want your Web site visitors to do?
- Create a brief.

Preparation

- Use a basic content list.

Basic Content List

- Contact information
 - ◆ Site Manager
 - ◆ Content Owner
- College or University Mark
- Unit identifier
- Search Function
- Faculty/Staff Directory
- Links to Legal Info
- “About” information or Mission Statement

Basic Content List 2

- If an Academic Program:
 - ◆ How to apply
 - ◆ How to earn the degree (requirements)
 - ◆ What is this degree
 - Body of knowledge learned
 - Careers
 - ◆ Financial Aid
 - ◆ Faculty Expertise
 - ◆ Student Life

Preparation

- Don't forget images!

Preparation

- Keep it simple!

Example Site: New Master's Degree

What we will need:

- Basic Content List
- Images

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Review other sites:

[University of Florida](#)

[Marymount University](#)

[Boston Architectural College](#)

The Magic Begins...

Fill in the Outline

- The Content Owner
- Grants and Awards Office (if a grant is involved)
- Press Releases
 - [Penn State Live](#)
 - Your Unit's PR Office

The Magic Begins...

Fill in the Outline

- Search General College Web Site
 - ◆ Admissions
 - ◆ Online Catalogue
- Search the Web in General
 - ◆ Funding Agencies
- Print Materials
 - Promotional Materials
 - Strategic Plans

The Magic Begins...

Fill in the Outline

- Images:
 - College or Unit's Photo Archive
 - University's Photo Archive
 - PR Person
 - Multimedia Person
 - Content Owner

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Contact Info:
 - E-mail footers; College or University Directory

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- College or University Identifier:
 - College PR or Web Team
 - Web Templates
 - Images on College Style Guide

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Unit Identifier - Unit PR or Web Team

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Faculty/Staff Directory
 - Link to College Directory; Request Specific List for Master's Degree

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Legal Info:
 - Review how legal and copyright info is handled on main university site

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- About Information - Degree Proposal to Faculty Senate

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- How to Apply:
 - Link to [Graduate School](#)
 - Look at how it is presented on another [Master's Degree](#) site

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- How to Earn Degree (Requirements):
 - Degree Proposal to Faculty Senate

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- What is this Degree:
 - Degree Proposal to Faculty Senate OR a Gap

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Financial Aid:
 - Gap: Assistantships?
 - Link to [Office of Student Aid](#)

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Faculty Expertise:
 - Degree Proposal to Faculty Senate OR a Gap

Example Site: New Master's Degree

Where to find the content:

- Student Life:
 - Degree Proposal to Faculty Senate OR a Gap

The Magic Begins...

Fill in the Outline

Keep it Simple!

Web content should be short, and easily scannable, so you have that on your side.

Watch the Magic Happen - Reflect Back to Owner

- Create the site with the content you have.
- If you are doing the design (most likely you are...), design it **AFTER** you have created an outline and filled it in.
- Send Web site link to owner to review.
 - ◆ Include a deadline.
 - ◆ Include **BIG RED** text to mark missing text.

Watch the Magic Happen - Reflect Back to Owner

“I have been able to give priority to this site up to this point. However, due to my work schedule, if I do not receive your final content changes by this date, the site will be delayed.”

You have my permission to use this statement verbatim...

Example Site: New Master's Degree

MFA in Interior Design

A Note on Plagiarism

- Its OK to plagiarize yourself!
 - ◆ Original grant proposals (if directly related)
 - ◆ Original Course/Degree Proposals
 - ◆ Strategic Plans
 - ◆ Press Releases regarding the unit (not published articles unless in your unit's publications)
 - ◆ E-mails and letters

A Note on Plagiarism

The content needs to be original
to your unit!

A Note on Plagiarism

- As you look at other sites, be very careful.
- Use others' content as a suggestion of what you need.

A Note on Plagiarism

- If you see actual content you would like to use...
- Seek permission to use it, then quote it verbatim with quotation marks, a permission statement, and a link to the original content owner.

A Note on Plagiarism

- An even better solution:
- Share content with content owner, and ask for something similar.

[MFA in Interior Design](#)

A Note on Behavior Reinforcement...

“If I do this, then everyone will expect me to do this all the time.”

The Web - Print Analogy

- Web Site
- Client/Content Owner
- Writer/Editor
- Web Designer
- Programmer
- Printed Brochure
- Client/Content Owner
- Writer/Editor
- Graphic Designer
- Printer

The Web - Print Analogy

Would you expect your printer to write the big glossy magazine?

Questions?

Suzanne Wayne
Coordinator of College Relations
Penn State
College of Education
suzwayne@psu.edu