

## Council Communication Team Update – 11-29-2012 Slide Notes

### SLIDE: TEAM PHOTOS

- Introduce the team (Jen and Cheryl, in attendance by phone)
- Affiliated with the Methods Board & Collaboration and Outreach Workgroup
- Contract with Water Words That Work, an environmental messaging firm, to help better target our audience and craft our message. They are currently helping to draft some new content for 8 pages we have identified as priority.

### SLIDE: TEAM OBJECTIVES

Explain what the team was formed to do

1. To expand our website audience beyond just Council members to the larger water quality monitoring community
  - Concern that our current website talks more to “us” rather than the wide-ranging audience
2. To improve our messaging:
  - On expressing value about what the Council offers (its products and services)
  - Reduce the sciency-jargon

3. To help build brand recognition

Define: (building a connection between the person and the Council (in other words, how the idea/purpose/products are expressed))

- Implement consistency on all our sites and products
    - Such as by giving the several related product websites a similar look and feel
  - Test whether our current logo is serving us properly
4. To improve design flow
    - provide a clear path to find information
      - Is there too much content on the page making it hard to decide where to start?
      - Is it confusing or frustrating to figure out where to move next on the webpage?
  5. To freshen our website’s content
    - Provide organized, edited content
      - Overhaul some pages on the website to make them more interesting and readable
      - Optimize content for scannability and craft it to convey maximum information in few words
    - Remove some stale (out-of-date) information and pages
    - Consider adding more photos for visual appeal, more inviting, adds life, attraction, helps relate to certain topics, etc

### SLIDE: WORK PLAN, steps 1-3

Chronology of what has happened, what is in progress, and what the next steps are:

(13 step will be defined)

1. Examine original purpose and function of Council website & brand
  - Messaging (e.g., clarify mission, find language to use when we first introduce ourselves)
  - Define new purposes

We are currently using what we learned through Water Words That Work combined with our internal website statistics (aka webpage traffic) and the NWQMC QUIZ to help update NWQMC Calling Card will be assimilated to improve our draft reorganization plan and identify areas where more content is needed.

1. Determine audience

2. Type
  3. Flow (to and through site)
2. Seek audience/user input
    1. Messaging input survey inquiry (to gather feedback on candidate mission statements, elevator speeches, and slogans for the NWQMC but also included some limited Qs about product/website familiarity and audience classification)
    2. NEMI user inquiry
- 12% (or 40 of the 329 respondents) marked that they were NOT aware of the Council before receiving our survey
  - Very few associated any familiarity with our Council ASPECTS (conference, newsletter, outreach, or website) but somehow made it on to our email distribution lists

**SLIDE: MISSION STATEMENTS**

- Processed input from our survey to produce a streamlined mission statement that still addresses the core concepts of what the Council is and does
- We can elaborate on an “About Us” page more specifics about what the Council is and does

**Define “elevator speech”**

- A short summary of what the organization stands for and does. You say it, others hear it and start a conversation about it.
- It is what is our gut instinct tells us in a reply to someone asking “Hey, what does the Council do?”

**SLIDE: PIE CHART AUDIENCE TYPE**

- 52% (or 173 out of 329 respondents) said they were familiar with our website. The majority of our distribution list was based on emails from our newsletters and conference participation.
- **Over 2/3rds of the respondents already familiar with our website are affiliated with a federal, state, or local government agency.**

Audience Type (of those familiar with our website):

1. Council members
2. Civil servants at federal, state, and local agencies
3. Coordinators of water-quality monitoring programs
4. Volunteers or citizen scientists
5. Employees at environmental consulting firms, water instrumentation companies, and laboratories
6. Others, including persons from tribal programs or non-governmental organizations, academic researchers, retirees and peers interested in water-quality monitoring even fewer *routinely* visit our website

**SLIDE: WORK PLAN, steps 4-7**

4. List content for site
5. Discuss need for dynamic site features
  - e.g., interactive calendar, photo gallery, newsletter sign-up, contact forms
6. Research other sites to analyze successful design aspects
7. Develop a site map

- (from steps 4 & 5)

## SLIDE: WORK PLAN, steps 8-13

8. Design site & consistent brand materials
  - Extend design to all other Council sites and products (e.g., NEMI, WQP, MEMO)
9. Content development
  - Deal with existing site content (review, migrate/save, and delete or archive existing site content)
    - Look at listed results from running a site map generator (create parallel structures, combine similar items at 1 place, fix or remove legacy/inactive and broken/error 404 links)
  - Arrange & standardize new content
  - Edit or draft new content
10. Discuss whether we will need to implement a Content Management System\* (Def: a computer program that allows publishing, editing and modifying content as well as maintenance from a central interface.)
  - Identify which pages will have regular updates versus those that will be static
  - Whether to use an extension to implement our forum(s)
  - Identify manpower to support the CMS, security, site registration and forum moderation
11. Develop a timeline
  - Date of when to launch website
  - Likely will be piece-meal targets: a way to seek user input for what they like/dislike as we implement changes
12. Develop an outreach plan
  - write a new fact sheet, reach out to members of the water quality community and solicit involvement with the Council, etc.
13. Website Maintenance plan
  - dead link checks, compliance checks, archiving

\* **About CMS:** Most CMS include Web-based publishing, format management, revision control (version control), indexing, search, and retrieval.

A CMS may serve as a central repository containing documents, movies, pictures, phone numbers, scientific data.

A web CMS may catalog and index content, select or assemble content at runtime, or deliver content to specific visitors in a requested way, such as other languages.

Examples:

- Plone
- Joomla!
- Drupal

## SLIDE: FOR DISCUSSION

Understanding our audience types combined with possible flows through our site will help use design the new website

### Exercise:

1. Build in the mind some example audience profiles

2. Then, I'm going to describe 4 possible pathways of why & how they came to our site
3. Your task will be to help us better understand what products or information they are seeking and use this info to design a "topic-based" approach to navigating our website

#### Audience Types:

- **Cara Councilmember:** Council members, working group members, and others who are closely involved with the work of NWQMC.
- **Steve Supervisor:** Civil servants at federal, state and local agencies who put time and/or money into the budgets and workplans of council members.
- **Carl Coordinator:** Those who manage water-quality monitoring programs and must ensure that their monitors collect data that meets accepted protocols.
- **Vicky Volunteer:** Volunteers and citizen scientists; those that are water monitors and prospective water monitors.
- **Terry Technologist:** Private-sector employees at environmental consulting firms, water instrumentation companies, and laboratories.
- **Mix of others:** For example, those from NGOs, tribal programs, academic institutions, scientific/environmental societies/organizations...

#### User Flow Pathways:

1. Internal users (Council and workgroup members), already familiar with sites search typically knows where to find what they need on existing site
2. Water-quality practitioners, came to site or product page by recommendation or outreach avenue
3. Bureaucratic-type, came in to check on a very specific item, typically a "legal" item such as the Terms of Reference
4. Public, generally those unfamiliar with the Council that may have bounced in from another site or web search

**Discussion QUESTION:** With the purpose of expanding our audience base, how do we direct (new) visitors around our website by a topical approach?

We don't want to let them stumble around, we want to direct visitors around our website (lead them down a specific path that's is appealing to their interests and geared for turning random visitors into loyal fans!)

**A topical link will NOT link to our category pages (e.g., HOME, ABOUT US, WORKGROUPS, PRODUCTS).** Topical pages will be custom designed.

Ideas for topical search phrases/keywords are:

- Resources
- Popular articles
- Interested in volunteering?
- Find a method
- News & events

**Survey Background info, if needed:**

Survey 1 – Council newsletter distribution list and conference email registration list

- To give feedback about messaging

An identical survey was distributed in 2 different ways:

An “outsider” focus group (or test panel) consisting of 25 participants and “insider” survey consisting of 5211 email invitations.

100% (25 persons) provided feedback from the test panel; and

9% (484 persons) clicked the link to view the survey with 6% (330 persons) completed the survey

What we did with the results:

Revised mission statement, developed an audience speech, analyzed comment input to see how we may serve their needs better, quantify areas where we can better promote, etc.

Survey 2 – NEMI user survey (developed by Cheryl & Jen, Jen implemented via Survey monkey)

Purpose:

- to learn from our users how they use NEMI, what they would like and dislike, and any other improvements or features they'd like to see
- To gain input in our redesign process, add new content, and improve usability

18% (28 persons) provided feedback out of the 155 email invitations sent (uncertain how many came in through our announcement links posted on the Council Homepage and NEMI site)

State what we did with the results:

Jen could elaborate although this subject is to be discussed during the NEMI workgroup breakout session

SPECIAL FUNCTIONS:

77% of respondents use the “Find an analyte by Name or Code” button when looking for an analyte

63% of respondents use the multiple analytes search.

50% of respondents use or are interested in using the regulatory search.

60% of respondents said that the greenness rating is important or very important to them.

55% percent of respondents have used NEMI’s support materials (FAQs, Contact Us, Help for IE8 users, etc.) and 85% of them found the information they needed.

NEMI awareness:

2/3 of the respondents knew of colleagues who also used NEMI.

Common ways of learning about NEMI included direct involvement with the NWQMC, attendance at the National Water Quality Monitoring Conference, and referral from a colleague.

64% of respondents were not aware of any recent NEMI updates, like MEMO or NEMI-SAMS. Those who were aware learned about them from the NWQMC newsletter, webinar or the NEMI site.

All respondents were open to or interested in getting news and updates about NEMI updates or related news on NEMI’s homepage. 90% were also interested in getting updates about new individual NEMI methods through various methods.

**Audience USER STORIES:**

- **Cara Councilmember:** Council members, working group members, and others who are closely involved with the work of NWQMC.
- **Steve Supervisor:** Civil servants at federal, state and local agencies who put time and/or money into the budgets and workplans of council members.
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