

PRESENT: Pam Burress, Jody DeCremer, Annette Levitt, Rong Li, Trisha Klass, Kate Plantholt, Norris Porter, Tonya Samuels, Alex Skorpinski, Mark Troester, Ari Turetzky, Amy Tuttle, Sarah Walczynski

GUESTS: Patrick Healy (Enrolmnt Mgmt & Acad Serv), Dave Schaafsma (HR)

ABSENT: Bob Aaron, Michelle Bohm, Jeff Grabb, Shawn Hayes

DNS Entry Clean-up / Blue Cat DNS Application:

- Telecom has a list of possibly out-of-date DNS entries that Mark will e-mail out to individuals to confirm removal is appropriate.
- Telecom is working on a Blue Cat DNS application that will be available soon to allow each area to manage and create their own entries under their domains.

Policy Web Site Links:

- The policy Web site is being revamped/updated, with numbering and page-naming possibly changing drastically. Please link only to the policy site, not to individual policies which will give a 404 error page. Relying on titles rather than numbering will help. Mark suggested being proactive by cleaning up links to the policy site now before all links go to the 404 error page. Expected release of revamped site should be mid-September.

A to Z Listing Requests:

- The committee discussed various requests to be placed on the ISU A to Z listing page. All of the requests were suggested for denial on the bases that the sites should be promoted from their departmental/college Web sites.

Branding for ISU / One Web Site:

- Pat Healy from Enrollment Management & Academic Services discussed University “branding.” His notes:
 - ✓ What I want to say this morning is this—user experience and web interaction is something we talk a lot about in my job with Admissions, the Registrar, Financial Aid and Ucollege.
 - ✓ How we talk to our audience...what kinds of language we use, what voice we have, should we be talking at all? (or as the Ucollege advisors suggested “maybe we just be really good listeners”, the kinds of experiences our users have on the web can make all the difference. Our web site is, after all, “the brand”.
 - ✓ That’s right. The ISU brand; the sum of all our experiences, all the touchpoints we associate with a product or service, with this institution, not the least of which is user interactions with the web and what they take with them.
 - ✓ It used to be that we were in control of “the brand”. We said what it was, and what it wasn’t, you could take it or leave it, but you couldn’t really comment on it, not in a public sense anyway...complaining to your spouse or kids doesn’t really count.
 - ✓ The internet changed all that, it killed the notion we could be taken at our word. Now, it’s our word plus the word of countless others who bother to offer it. So, for every PR release announcing we are requiring our students to adhere to a dress code in anticipation of the modern workplace, we have an equal number of naysayers on blogs and higher education forums saying we’re nuts.
 - ✓ Institutions just don’t have control of the message like they once did, they no longer “own” their own message or how they are perceived...it’s the market who decides who they are...the best we can do, to better understand our place in the world, is to stop looking at our own reflection in the mirror for one moment, and face the music; that’s hard if not too twisted an analogy.
 - ✓ So...how does this impact user interaction on the web. Only that we are managers of experience, we don’t control the reaction to that experience, it’s public...and it’s all about the experience...that’s the brand... it comes in the shape of a flyer you receive, in the forms you are asked to fill out, it comes to you in a podcast you would like to download, or a GPA you would like to look up.
 - ✓ It behooves us then to pay particular importance what that experience is.
 - ✓ One way people use the web is solely as an information source: for movies, addresses, maps, phone numbers, warranty information, even user guides. Where universities are concerned, user guides are a pretty good way to think about how information is used...users coming to the ISU website don’t come to look at pictures of students reading under trees, they have a goal, they come for a specific purpose. They come to see what programs are available, what the requirements are to get in, what the requirements are to get out, what classes are available...Higher Ed’s version of the DMV, it’s mostly about information transactions.
 - ✓ And, on the web, the opportunity costs of those transactions are low, accessing information is low...compared to opening a phone book, searching the newspaper for event dates, or tearing apart the car looking for a map. In this world, delivery (meaning convenience and speed) is everything and its relevancy is what makes web browsers tick, like a digital Huck’s people come to the web for immediate service and immediate answers.
 - ✓ Web search now takes precedence over content...in fact, they define it. That yardstick in today’s environment is the amount of effort the delivery of the information takes, think of it like lighting...as the path of least resistance; the barrier (and lack of relevancy) is anything that gets in the way.
 - ✓ That’s a hard way to design anything, you’re not always wrong but you’re never right.
 - ✓ Bad site structure, misleading navigation, vague focus of the content (you don’t know what to pay attention to), arcane language, or language specific to universities are all things, in my area, we have been guilty of.
 - ✓ Looked at from a brand perspective, we have, on occasion, diminished the brand, the ISU experience, at each touchpoint users have interacted with us as we create barriers to search, as we inadvertently impeded the thunderbolts.
 - ✓ What were the barriers? Well they come in a lot of flavors.

- ✓ First, I would argue that a web site is defined by its layout and look with users digesting its visual signature. If users have to relearn that signature with each new page, you are creating barriers.
- ✓ If users don't find enough cues that are consistent across the site, you are creating barriers. If they can't identify you as you or even better you as someone else.
- ✓ If users are finding a confusing array of styles and looks (read this changing brands), you are creating barriers.
- ✓ If users are relearning the site and it's structure with each change of college or department or unit, they will be confused and finally abandon you.
- ✓ We all face the issue of differentiation with the competition, but that is not competition between sub-brands and associated brands at the same university. That's not the problem...The message to the market gets garbled when we fail to speak in unison, when we are managing lots of little brands in lieu of our core brand. In the long run, it is important to create an identity that is distinct, one that recognizes are unique features and attributes, but in a large organization not distinct from itself. That is a muddle.
- ✓ What I want to leave you with, this morning, is this...two things: (1) to the public, to the market at large, the ISU website is not a amalgam of lots of little websites arranged by interest, the ISU website is one website; (2) the brand is made up its constituents, but should not be confused with them. At each point of contact, the market interacts with only one brand...the ISU brand...not the Katy School of Insurance or the Mennonite College of Nursing, or the Shakespeare Festival.
- ✓ Sacrificing the message of your core brand, for that of a thousand sub-brands means no one gets heard in a market that either doesn't "get" your message or can't understand it.
- Mark shared that the FAV icon is an example where a single look is desirable (the 16 pixel square does have added value to branding ISU).
- The "Giving to ISU" has the bell as the standard icon now.

CourseFinder:

- Mark showed the new CourseFinder Web page (link off of www.illinoisstate.edu). This page lets people do powerful searches (via mainframe data) for course information for the current and/or upcoming semesters.
- Google did a case-study on ISU's CourseFinder, and published a success story on this.

Streaming video and flash:

- Norris Porter shared that the COB is working with a firm to enhance the Marketing brochure on the Web through streaming video and flash. They have started shooting footage in Peoria and at ISU and noted an important key is feeding the right topics on this site. Before beginning the \$12,000 project, they discussed it with both IWSS (Mark Troester) and University Marketing & Communications (Bob Aaron).
- Example: www.fullsail.com

Review Web issues/updates from each committee member:

- CAS representative, Sarah Walczynski from LILT
- CAST representative, Kate Plantholt from CAST
- CFA representative, Jody DeCremer from College of Fine Arts
- COB representative, Norris Porter from COB
- COE representative, Amy Tuttle from COE
- LIB representative, Rong Li from Milner
- MCN, no report
- VPFP representative, Ari Turetzkey from AIS
- VPSA representative, Lataundia Samuels from Student Health Services
- VPUA, no report
- AP representative, Annette Levitt from Alumni Relations
- Civil Service representative, Pam Burress from Telecommunications & Networking
- Faculty representative, Trish Klass from EAF
- Student, no report
- CTSG representative, Mark Troester from IWSS
- IWSS Tech Writer, Alex Skorpinski from IWSS

Miscellaneous:

- Our next meeting time has not yet been announced.