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Background

Web Presence History

The organization and technology behind Calvin's Web presence is relatively unchanged since its inception in the 1990s, but Web usage has increased dramatically (35% or more annually). The Web presence is maintained in a distributed model: each department is responsible for their area of the college Web presence. Top-level pages, overall structure, best practices, central branding, templates and guidelines are the responsibility of the Web Manager. Historically, an ad-hoc Web Team has offered oversight and helped prioritize projects with the Web Manager.

In an effort to adapt Calvin's Web presence to meet growing demands, many independent solutions have been implemented to extend this framework (i.e. standard site templates, KnightVision, weblogs, photo galleries, inquiry forms, ecommerce.)

Challenges of Current Implementation

Challenges for end-user audiences:

- Navigation is based on internal organization, not audience preferences (i.e. "Development" vs. "Giving"; "Human Resources" vs. "Jobs").
- Centrally-maintained information is consistently duplicated, not syndicated (i.e. course descriptions and departmental directories).
- Too much content is publicly accessible, unedited, or outdated. This content does not accurately represent Calvin.
- Ties between print and Web communications are limited.
- Web users expect instant results, but we cannot consistently deliver.
- Communication is too one-way and lacks consistent self-discovery and user engagement.

Challenges in Web production:

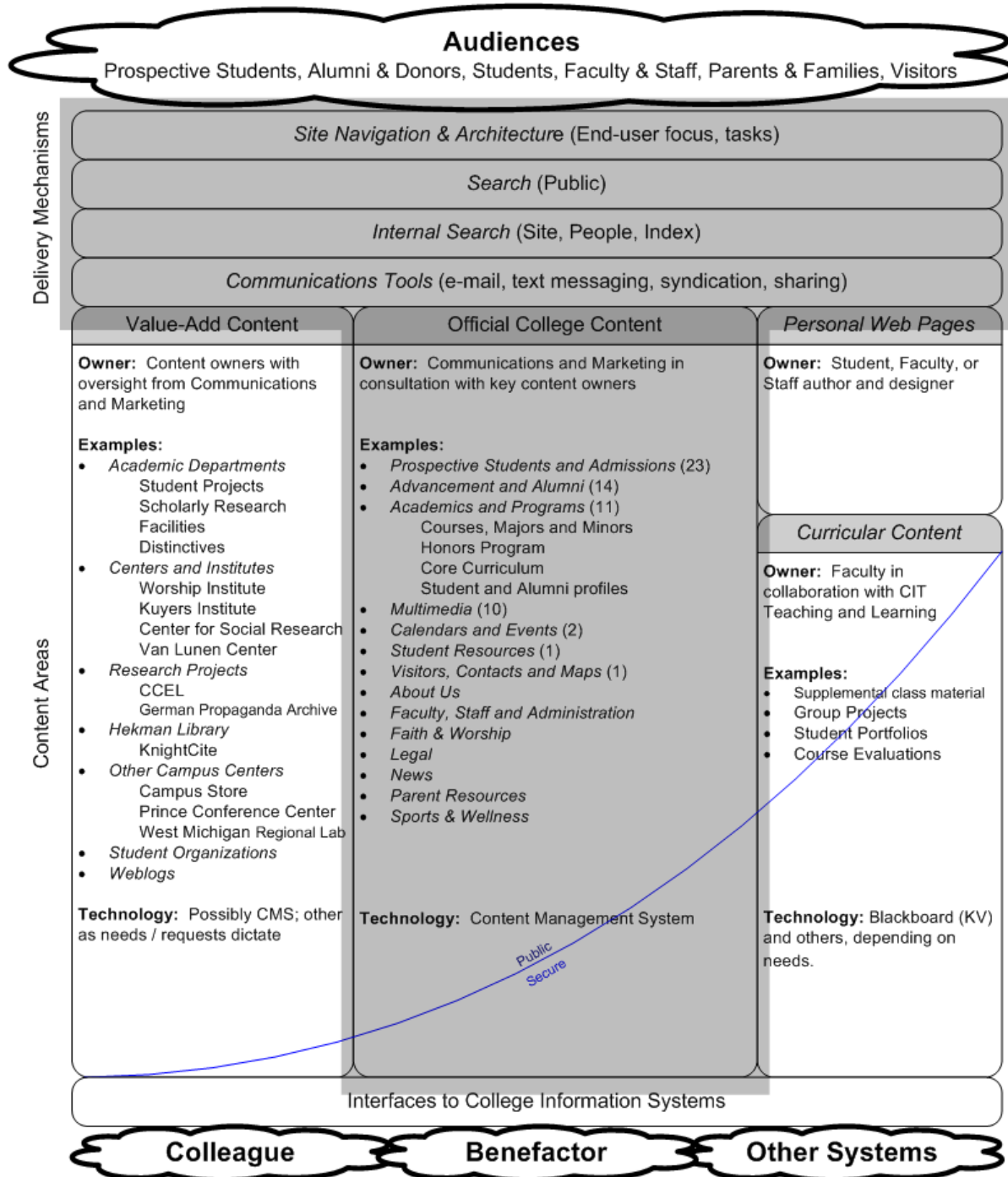
- With over 100 producers, consistency and quality of Web authorship is difficult.
- Web authoring is a low priority task for most producers and is juggled along with other job responsibilities.
- Web design and production is no longer trivial. Most authors do not have enough knowledge to be self-sufficient beyond the basics.
- Current production model doesn't adequately meet needs of Institutes, Centers and researchers: collaboration, conference hosting, and e-commerce.
- There is unclear definition of where internal communications resides. Some are in KnightVision; others are scattered.
- Admissions and Student Life struggle to respond quickly to emerging trends in Web communication aimed at quickly-adapting student populations.

Project Scope

Project scope, especially strategic steps, will address the entire Calvin Web presence, illustrated in Figure 1.

Tactical implementation steps will focus on 'Delivery Mechanisms' and 'Official College Content Area' sections of Figure 1; these areas are shaded.

Figure 1: The Scope of Calvin's Web Presence



Note: *Italicized items* denote category of items identified in group brainstorming and prioritization exercise (Numbers) denote priority votes received for that category

Goals and Objectives

Goals

Leverage the Web's strengths as a communications medium at Calvin by:

- Realigning to focus on audience goals, tasks and expectations (i.e. the audience perspective: improve Web delivery mechanisms)
- Establishing a content management strategy (i.e. the producer's perspective: improve production in Web content areas)
- Establishing an environment for continuous improvement

Objectives

Specific objectives necessary to meet each goal:

Table 1: Project Objectives

Objective	Description
Goal 1: Realign to focus on audience goals, tasks and expectations (i.e. the audience perspective: improve Web delivery mechanisms)	
1.1	Adjust Web Presence organization and structure to meet audience needs
1.1.1	Audience Research Conduct audience research to better understand needs and expectations; make improvements based on those findings.
1.1.2	Content and Functionality Determine and produce content that Calvin's Web presence should contain.
1.1.3	Public vs. Private Evaluate private vs. public content systems (i.e. KnightVision as an Intranet)
1.1.4	Navigation and Labelling Improve organization, navigation and labelling systems based on audience research.
1.1.5	Findability Improve audience tools to find, access, and utilize college information (i.e. RSS, search engine)
1.2	
Recommend technologies to meet online audience expectations	
1.2.1	Participation Encourage audience participation by tying an action to content where possible.
1.2.2	Search Implement a centralized site-wide search engine.
1.2.3	Syndication Allow and encourage viral, social sharing of college-controlled messaging.

Table 1: Project Objectives (continued)

Objective	Description	
Goal 2: Establish a content management strategy (i.e. the producer's perspective: improve production in Web content areas)		
2.1	Support Distributed Content Owners	
2.1.1	Governance	Publish standards, procedures, and governance for Web communications prior to major site relaunch.
2.1.2	Core Team	Formalize a core team to work with key content owners to implement standards and procedures.
2.1.3	Technology	Implement appropriate technology solutions to support unique needs of Web content areas (i.e. CMS, custom development, e-mail, personal Web pages.)
2.2	Consistently Distribute College Content	
2.2.1	Factual Content	Distribute official college information from a common location throughout the Web presence (i.e. course catalog, departmental directories, and news stories.)
2.2.2	Relational Content	Facilitate widespread, consistent use of human interest stories and content (i.e. profiles, announcements, multi-media, outcomes, and results.)
2.2.3	Transactional Content	Streamline transactions between Calvin's web presence and administrative information systems (i.e. inquiries, applications, enrollment, registration, surveys, purchases, donations, etc.)
2.2.4	Integrated Messaging	Integrate brand and messages from print and broadcast with Web communications.
2.3	Centralize Design	
2.3.1	Consistent branding	Provide design agility and consistent branding in official content areas by following Web standards and governance.
2.3.2	Accessibility	Improve accessibility by achieving compliance to Level 1, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
Goal 3: Establish an environment for continuous improvement		
3.1	Measurements	Establish centralized, site-wide benchmarks and measurable goals for applications, processes and tasks.
3.2	Tools and Training	Provide tools and training for content owners to effectively benchmark and measure Web site performance and goals.
3.3	Change & Growth	Plan to accommodate ongoing change and growth of content, technology, and audience expectations.
3.4	Strategic alignment	Set measurable, business-aligned goals to support recruiting, fund-raising, and other college efforts.

Resources

Resources required to complete project deliverables are estimated below. Strategic deliverables (*in italics*) cover the entire scope of Calvin's Web Presence illustrated in Figure 1, while tactical deliverables focus on top-tier 'official college content' pages shown in Figure 1. Top-tier content includes approximately 200 - 400 of the college's most essential pages.

Table 2: Project Deliverables, with dependences

	Deliverable	Dependency
Goal 1: Realign to focus on audience goals, tasks and expectations (i.e. the audience perspective: improve Web delivery mechanisms)		
1.1	<i>Audience, stakeholder, and peer research study</i>	None
	Solicit expert opinion to independently evaluate successes, challenges, opportunities, and expectations from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target audiences • Stakeholders • Peer institutions 	
	Gather requirements into formal RFP and select consulting partner	
	Gather input from Calvin producers/stakeholders (i.e. interviews and forums)	
	Research target audience needs (i.e. focus groups and surveys)	
	Evaluate peer institutions' use of Web	
	Compile results and evaluate the project plan	

Table 3: Project Deliverables, with dependences (continued)

	Deliverable	Dependency
Goal 1: Realign to focus on audience goals, tasks and expectations (i.e. the audience perspective: improve Web delivery mechanisms)		
1.2	<i>Overhaul Information Architecture</i>	1.1
	Recommend improvements to hierarchy, labelling, usability, language, and structure of Calvin's Web presence.	
	Current Web presence inventory and analysis (i.e. what content do we have on our top-level pages?)	
	Public vs. Private decision (i.e. what is our approach to secure community information?)	
	Taxonomy (i.e. organize site labelling and classification)	
	Wireframes (i.e. define content requirements, structure, reuse)	
1.3	<i>Recommend use of Web-centric tools</i>	1.2
	Strategize on use end-user technologies to utilize the strengths of the Web as a communications of medium.	
	Evaluate current use of Web tools, considering proposed Information Architecture overhaul (1.2)	
	Recommend tools to require in Content Management System RFP	
1.4	<i>Produce and rewrite content</i>	1.2
	Adjust messaging and branding to incorporate new information architecture, deliver core messaging and prepare for content reuse/repurposing.	
	Evaluate current content and messaging, considering proposed Information Architecture overhaul (1.2)	
	Determine core message themes to be carried through reorganized site	
	Determine content for reuse and syndication	
	Produce photos and multimedia	
	Writing	
	Editing	
1.5	<i>Develop new design</i>	1.2
	Adjust art direction and branding to incorporate new information architecture, enhance core messaging and leverage content reuse/repurposing.	
	Evaluate current design, considering proposed Information Architecture overhaul (1.2)	
	Art direction	
	Design prototypes	
	Build homepage (i.e. html markup)	
	Build body page templates (i.e. html markup)	
Project management and oversight		

Table 4: Project Deliverables, with dependences (continued)

Deliverable		Dependency
Goal 2: Implement a content management strategy (i.e. the producer's perspective: improve production in Web content areas)		
2.1	Documentation and Governance	1.2
	Update and extend Calvin's Web Style Guide to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated information architecture and site design • Recommended best practices • Available and supported technologies • Resources for Web publishers • Oversight and process for publishing to Calvin Web presence. 	
	Evaluate Web publishing needs as discovered in audience study (1.1)	
	Update Web Style Guide (i.e. maintain consistent experience across entire Web presence)	
	Establish Technology regulations and recommendations (i.e. use best available technology to meet unique needs)	
	Build communication and enforcement plans	
	Expert review and assessment	
2.2	Content Management System	Start: 1.2 Finish: 1.5
	Select, license, and implement a commercially-supported Content Management System to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized design templating • Distributed, controlled publishing • Workflow, oversight and versioning • Appropriate use and of web-centric tools/technologies 	
	Gather requirements based on audience study (1.1) into formal RFP	
	Select vendor and license Content Management System	
	Stage development/testing environment	
	Customize using out-of-the-box system configuration and extension	
	Customize via custom programming/development	
	Integrate with college information systems	
	Construct body page templates in CMS	
	Build out top-level body pages in CMS	
	Implement CMS site management tools (i.e. content repositories, workflow, meta tagging, versioning)	
	Establish best practices for content production & train producers	
	Benchmark performance, then build production environment	
	Project management and oversight	