Don’t just move it, improve it

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How do you make over 200 people move their websites?
The Project
Milestones

**Spring 2015**
High level assessment of 365 websites

**Summer 2015**
Announce shutdown plan

**Fall 2015**
Begin migrations

**September 2019**
Shutdown legacy CMS
Why move?

IT’s motivations

Current CMS no longer keeping up with needs.

Difficult to enhance or add functionality.

Get out of running local infrastructure.
Don’t just move, improve.
Why improve?

Motivations

Design refresh
Responsive design
Better content organization
Remove outdated content
Accessible content
Outdated designs convey outdated knowledge.

This department specializes in technology? Maybe technology from 2 decades ago!

Prospective Student
Responsive designs to accommodate new devices

I wish I could read the department’s news on my tablet.

Current Student
I can’t find what I’m looking for. This website is a mess.

University Staff

Menus and pages that grew out of control over time
That person hasn't worked here in 2 years!

University Staff
Click on what green link?

Faculty

Content that doesn’t meet accessibility requirements
We began moving websites and learned some lessons...
Communication
In an ideal world...

- Change is embraced with enthusiasm
- Website owners lined up in an orderly fashion
- There is all the time in the world
Some website owners...

... jumped at the opportunity.

... dragged their feet.

... were worried that Drupal was hard to learn.

... forgot they even had a website!
Communication considerations

- Explain why
- Simplify migration steps
- Options for DIY migrations
- Training and documentation
- Offer an incentives
Estimating & Planning
In an ideal world...

- Every website is consistent
- Nobody hacked the code
- Website owners knew exactly what they wanted up front
- Website owners remembered they had a website!
What really happened

- “Creative” coding
- Legacy modules
- Renewed interest in the website
- Neglected websites with no ownership
Estimating and Planning considerations

- “Creative” coding map to standard Drupal functionality
- Contingency time for the unexpected
- Options for migrating, but not too many options
Getting down to business - migrating
In an ideal world...

- One magical script moved the entire website’s content
- All content that should be structured was structured
- Best practices were followed and no content was neglected
• Migration script was constantly tweaked.

• Lots of manual clean up

• Unstructured content was manually made structured

• Change requests occurred throughout projects

• Unexpected content found

What really happened
Migrating considerations

- Be prepared to read through content
- Editors familiar with MS Word
- Automate content inventories - find hidden pages
- Manual cleanup to convert headings into proper `<headings>`
- Budget and schedule
- Google Analytics - dead content
- Some locally stored content is better stored elsewhere (ex. videos)
Design & Accessibility
In an ideal world...

- Every website had a “timeless” design
- We predicted the future and had already made all websites WCAG 2.0 AA compliant
- Website owners remembered to pick heading tags and enter alternative text
What really happened

- We made some ugly sites in the past
- Accessibility what?
- Designs didn’t leverage the Princeton “brand”
Design & Accessibility considerations

- New design themes that were responsive
- Do not recreate existing (ugly) design
- Accessibility from the start
- Standardized as much as possible (Princeton-specific distribution of Drupal for consistency)
- Use the design theme based off the main Princeton.edu website
Our Progress
145 websites migrated

archived or deleted 60 websites
Summary of Lessons Learned

When migrating a website to Drupal...

● Build in time for the unexpected
● Unstructured content cut off date, if possible
● Migration scripts only get you so far
● Seek opportunities to improve
Thank you.

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