

WMU Webmasters' Users Group January 23, 2008

Present: Michael VanPutten, Margaret von Steinen, Daren Webb, Nancy Kroes, Susan Kamman, Nancy Meister, Nicole Crocker, Carol Reid, Amy Huffman, Erik Dantes, Deb Withee, Joseph Fee.

CMS Update

Michael passed on a report from Thom Myers that the new CMS software is on campus. Redevelopment Committee is working with OIT to have the software installed on the servers and a test environment created so staff can begin working with it.

Bruce Paananen, OIT, reported that a server had been committed to the project and that the different parts of the program (server, testing server, database, etc.) may require additional hardware in order to handle a large Web site deployment in the new CMS (e.g. large amounts of content on hundreds of sites with multiple web masters accessing the CMS simultaneously). They are gathering specs on sizing the database to determine if the allocated box is sufficient (i.e. all applications associated with the CMS running on one server). If not, their server could be upgraded with additional memory etc., or will the CMS systems might need additional dedicated server boxes? Bruce said that once they are certain where the CMS will be housed, installing the software/hardware and configuring the system will be a minor amount of work. However, a few very complex, lengthy manuals need to be reviewed before configuration begins. OIT is also considering how users will gain access to the CMS and learn how to use it.

Executive Committee report (Jan. 16 meeting)

Michael reported that a Standards Committee will be formed to compile and publish a guide for Web standards, external resources and best practices. The committee will be likely be formed from the following group, who volunteered to serve, or who have been recommended to serve: Bradley Horstman, Deb Withee, Michael Whang, Michael VanPutten, Carol Reid and Joseph Fee.

Some of the topics the committee will consider are using font tags, making pages smaller so they download faster, how to use headings, phrase the headings, and conduct usability tests to determine modifications. UR is also interested in pursuing this and one UR staff, Bradley Horstman, volunteered to serve on the committee.

The group will soon establish a first meeting to plan timelines, meeting schedules, etc. WUG members at this meeting supported the development of the most comprehensive set of resources as is possible so campus webmasters/webworkers don't have to go to other sources.

- The Support Group did not get much attention from the e-survey of all WUG members and will be tabled until additional interest develops.
- The Letter regarding templates has also been tabled, as only 3 responses were received from more than 140 members surveyed.

General discussion

Michael—meeting day/time/place—does this work well for most members? Michael will send out e-mail to WUG members asking if the meeting day/time is not good for them

Future presentation ideas from Executive Committee meeting and this meeting:

- Video, compression, equipment, posting to the Web. Can WMU Web site handle a lot of video with a lot of users?
- MOV, ShockWave, Flash—what is prevalent on campus
- iTunes University, itunes.wmich.edu
- Extending invitations to webmasters of area higher ed institutions
- Google analytics and advertising presentation
- MSU and CSU, how their schools set up their Web sites? What do they do to keep it running?
- What is WMU's system of training for Web workers? Defining users groups and roles, allocating people, responsibilities?
- Usability study, Nancy M., from Yahoo, phenomenal, at MSU, they have a usability lab, Nancy will look into a possible presentation. Link to the MSU Usability & Accessibility Center: <http://usability.msu.edu/default.asp>
- Using student workers as web assistants
- A recommended list of tutorials and/or web tools should be compiled for Web developers. For example, HTML, CSS, Javascript, PHP. Intros and tutorials what can you do with PHP? Entry level? Other tools, HTML, etc. A jump start for some of the things that low-skilled users can utilize. How to get a rotating image, can get script, but how to use it properly? How to insert script? Is Michael using PHP, should he do a presentation? There are security issues. Javascript.com is a resource for some of this?

Publicity concerns

After some general discussion, members present agreed that publicizing the WUG would be beneficial, as there are many people doing Web work on campus who are unaware the group exists. The members also decided that anyone working on an official WMU department or program Web site is eligible to participate. Margaret will publicize the February meeting through UR, WMUK and the Herald, subject to executive committee approval of text released.

WUG Web site (future consideration):

Should we create a FAQ's for WUG site? There *is* an FAQ on the WUG site:
<http://www.wmich.edu/wug/getting-started/faq.html>

Should we increase resources on WUG websites, manuals, tools, U-tube instructional videos?

Announcements

Nancy M. reported the recent implementation of a PHP form on the dining website accessible via a button that has increased the number of daily queries.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35.