

WMU Webmasters' Users Group
February 27, 2008

Present: Michael VanPutten, Margaret von Steinen, Nancy Kroes, Susan Kamman, Nancy Meister, Cindy Town, Kevin West, Deb Withee, Amy Huffman, Julie Scott, Michael Whang, Sharon Wagner, Anita Ludwig, Bradley Horstman

Executive meeting (2-15) summary and discussion:

- Adopted stay the course meeting dates/times, but an e-mail was later received from Cindy Wagner suggesting the meeting times alternate. Discussion followed about keeping the day and date the same, but alternating the meeting time from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. to accommodate some active members and others who are not available at 9 a.m. Motion by Margaret, seconded by Sue Kamman, to give this a try. March 26 meeting will be held at 11 a.m. in the Tower conference room.
- Future presentations: Video Production, MSU Web team—usability & accessibility, Google presentation. Need coordinators. Margaret volunteered to contact Video Production and Google. Nancy Meister will contact MSU. Amy Hoffman volunteered to facilitate the Google meeting, if arranged.
- Julie Scott suggested an I-Tunes presentation would be helpful to clarify who can use WMU's I-Tunes areas, how do they gain access, what are the user policies, how much can be posted, and who can access it? She suggested Dave Evans as a possible resource at 7-5063

Google Analytics

Michael VanPutten and Nancy Meister

Michael's presentation included the following points:

- It's a free service.
- Allows users to better understand web design to see what will actually work well. (Michael used the Admissions website to demonstrate how they improved accessibility by using Google analytics. (Allowed Admissions to channel people more quickly to the application))
- Make site easier to use, more effective, easier to navigate
- Staff are frequently asked to perform many additional duties—can enter strategic goals for your functional unit, what does audience need? What you know about that and what is actual.
- Demonstrates if marketing is effective.
- Call Michael VanPutten or Bradley Horstman if you need help establishing an account.
- Multiple ways to view data, where are people coming in from—traffic.
- Goals overview lets you specify 4 areas of site you want people to get to; can see the steps they took to get there. Michael Wang, libraries, is knowledgeable about this feature.
- Content overview shows most popular pages, can demonstrate the importance of a page and help determine which pages need the most attention.
- Can rearrange pages based on data of most frequently visited pages.
- Michael Whang pointed out that more pages make it easier to gather more specific data.
- Put the in-demand info in the front
- Main navigation—many ways to do it, but not all good. Alpha, or order of preference or hierarchy of need are three options.
- When directories attack, analytics can help you decide how to order/list numerous similar things, such as scholarships.
- Allows you to track your visitor stats and put them on the map—global. How many from a particular country or state, helps target marketing efforts to particular cities.
- Can add code to collect data on use of pdf's.
- Can provide proxy access—custom reports.
- Not a replacement for WMU's webstats, which does offer some unique reports not available on Google analytics.
- Need to insert code into the pages from which you want to gather info

Nancy's presentation included the following points:

- Couple external web advertising comparisons for catering—can see where we are getting the hits, concrete data.
- Justification for time and effort, The Children's Place recently put their menus online. What parents want to know. Put it up for Jan and Feb and more visitors to menu page than looked at the staff, justified using resources to update menus.
- Can exclude certain IP addresses to prevent staff user visits to register.
- Often data is an inverted pyramid—top 3 pages lots of hits, much less to zero as you move down the list.
- Bradley said it could be helpful for the University to review all of its Web pages to determine which ones are duplicate or redundant and clean up the list.
- Try to supplement and not duplicate.
- GA validates the work we do.
- GA has tools available to track PDF documents.
- Michael Wang uses GA and Goals feature to determine which databases get the most hits and to help users get to the best information.
- FREE now, may eventually cost, start charging for exceeding a certain # of page views.
- New template for WMU, can paste GA script into there.
- Back up GA script \before you update the new template.
- Bradley suggested as more of us begin using GA, we should network and share data.
- You can't track out going links as well, have to use other methods to do that

Other announcements:

Julie Scott has received many Dreamweaver questions from staff newly charged with Web publishing duties. She asked if anyone from WUG would volunteer to teach a Dreamweaver workshop, which she could schedule and arrange. Staff training was an HR function but Amy Huffman informed us that funding for staff training, as well as the position, had been eliminated by Bob Beam in 2004 as part of the budget cuts.

Margaret suggested Julie write University Relations and Jim Gilchrist advising them of this need and asking for resources to meet the need. Members present agreed that this is the best way to proceed, and to avoid using volunteers to complete necessary University business.

WUG is a valuable resource for new hires to learn about WMU web duties.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.