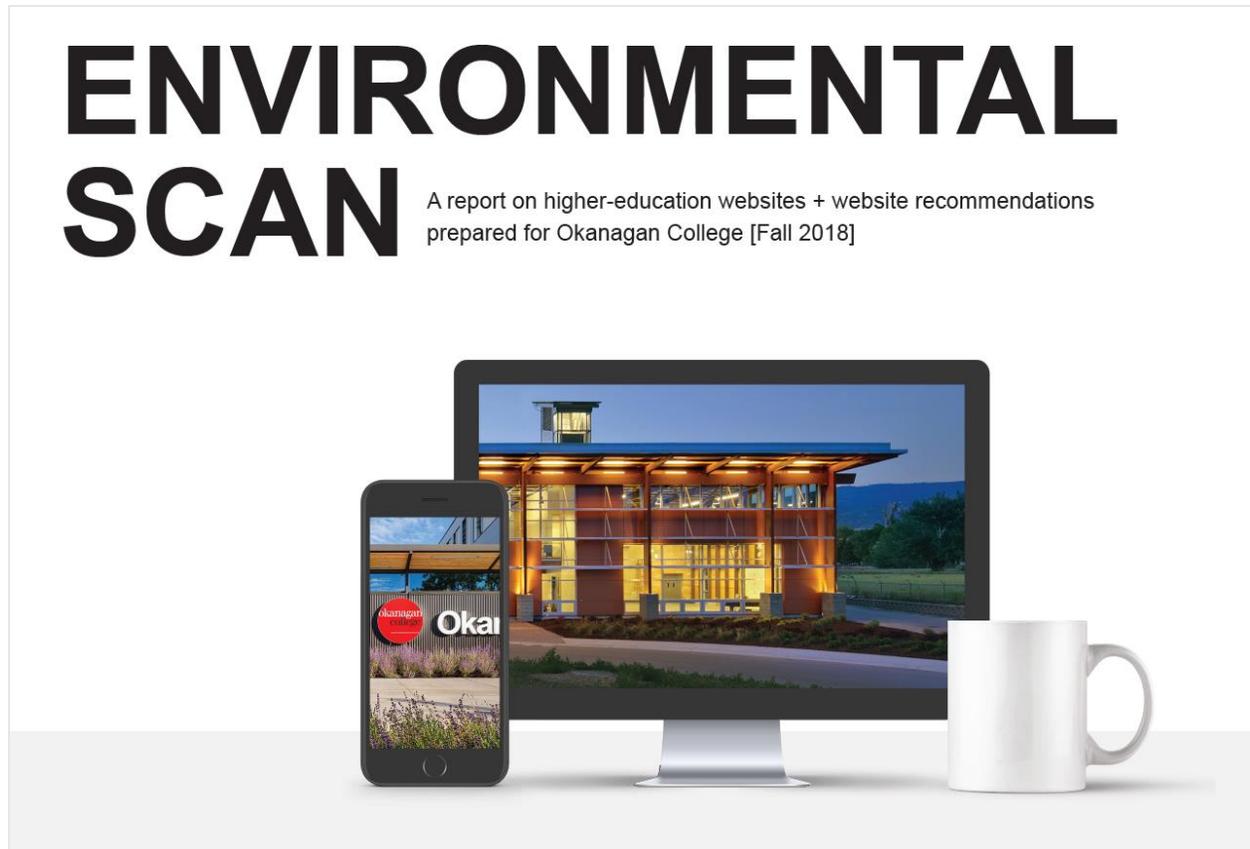


Okanagan College

Okanagan College contracted me to help with an overall redesign of their website and web services. I completed an environmental scan of college websites, worked on a needs assessment, and developed interactive tools to facilitate their stakeholder engagement process.



Final Report Summary

These are some findings from the stakeholder engagement process.

Overview

The goal of the stakeholder engagement process was to help guide development of a new Okanagan College website that meets the needs of students, staff, and the wider community.

In total, approximately 250 stakeholders provided feedback. The four strategies that Public Affairs (PA) used to gather feedback are listed below.

In-Person Surveys

Following a recommendation from the Steering Committee to focus the homepage on prospective students, PA held a series of open houses where participants were asked to step into the shoes of a prospective student seeking information on a specific program.

PA then observed the “paths” participants would follow to find that information. For example, one of the early questions asked whether they’d first click “Become a Student” or “Programs.”

Learning what participants would intuitively click on or do is useful when it comes to optimizing the language and page flow of the new website. These open houses were held at the Penticton and Kelowna campuses on October 22, 2018, and at the Salmon Arm and Vernon campuses the following day. In total, 118 people completed the walkthrough; 39 in Penticton, 23 in Kelowna, 29 in Salmon Arm, and 27 in Vernon. 72.9% of participants were current students.

Sticky Notes

During the open houses, PA also set up three separate boards: Homepage Feedback, Student Services Feedback, and General Feedback. People were invited to write down feedback on sticky notes and post them on one of the boards. Approximately 180 pieces of individual feedback were gathered in this way.

Departmental Discussions

PA held in-depth conversations with 20 portfolios and 12 other individual staff members at Okanagan College to assess how staff are using the website and what they thought could be improved.

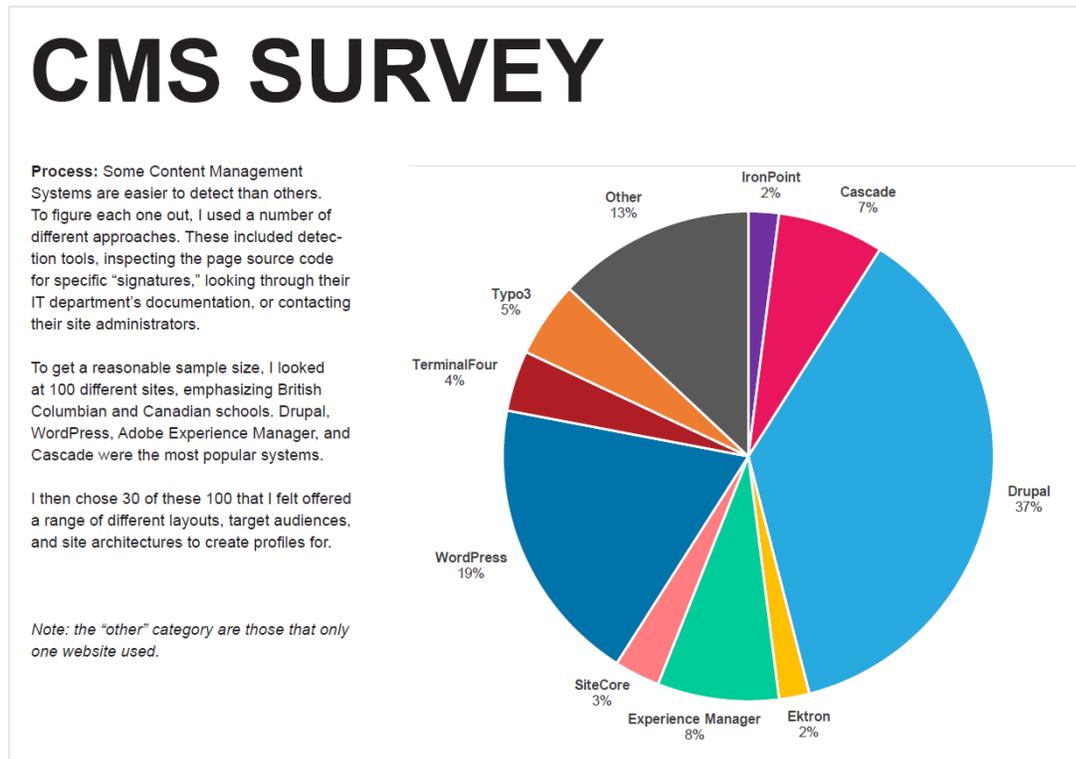
Similar to the feedback gathered from the sticky notes, several broad and recurring themes emerged, as well as some department-specific requests and suggested features.

Online Survey

A more detailed online survey was developed in consultation with Institutional Research in order to determine how stakeholders used the current website, what type of content they’d like to see added or improved, and their general feedback. 80 people completed at least a portion of the survey.

Environmental Scan

Sample pages from the environmental scan I completed. This was an in-depth document that covered similar higher-education websites, best practices, and recommendations.



Web Testing Tool Guidelines

After Okanagan College produced design mockups for their new website, I developed a custom web testing tool that incorporated timed randomized tasks for users to perform, as well as A/B testing. This was done to test which layouts best emphasized the content that Okanagan College deemed most important, and how intuitive it was for users to perform common tasks. This is from the guide I wrote for Okanagan College to install and use the tool in the future.

Overview

This tool is built with Jekyll, a static website generator. For Jekyll installation instructions, visit jekyllrb.com/docs/installation. Websites built with Jekyll can be hosted for free using GitHub Pages (jekyllrb.com/docs/github-pages/#deploying-jekyll-to-github-pages). But since Jekyll outputs static HTML files (with no database required), you can also host them on any server.

Setup

Once Jekyll and all of its requirements are installed, open up the `oc-user-testing-example` project folder in an editor like Visual Studio Code (free to download).

Open the **config.yml** file and write out the site's title, description, and base/urls.

If you want the site URL to be at `okanagan.bc.ca/web-testing-feedback`, for instance, you'd use `/web-testing-feedback` as the `baseurl`, and `okanagan.bc.ca` as the `url`. Then set the Analytics tracking ID.

Using Visual Studio's integrated terminal (press `Ctrl + `` to open it) or Command Prompt (should be installed with Windows), navigate to the project folder and then run the **jekyll serve** command.

The site generates a new `_site` folder. And it should start a local server, with the address defined in the terminal. (Probably **127.0.0.1:4000** or **localhost:4000** – either will work).

Paste that address into your browser and the site should load.

While the site is being served, any changes you make to page files, stylesheets, javascript files, etc., will show up when you refresh the browser.

The only exception is changes to the **config.yml** file. If you make a change, you'll need to stop the server and restart it.

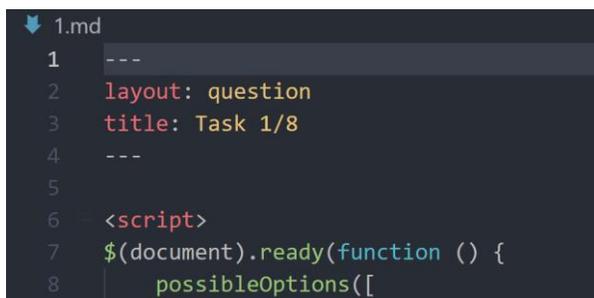
When you're ready to upload it to a server, run the command **jekyll build**.

All the files will get compiled into the `_site` folder. Then just upload the contents of the `_site` folder to your server!

Question Pages

The files called 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, .etc, with an extension of .md (modified markdown files) are the main question pages. The name of the markdown file will by default be that page's URL. So 2.md will be your-site-url/2. This specific naming structure is required in order for the site to work properly and link to things automatically.

You'll notice that the files have a "front matter" property (the area between the three dashes at the top of the file) called layout. In 1.md, it's assigned to "question" which is just an HTML template found in the "_layouts" folder.



```
1 ---
2 layout: question
3 title: Task 1/8
4 ---
5
6 <script>
7 $(document).ready(function () {
8     possibleOptions([
```

If you open up the question.html layout file, you can see where the template pulls in the page's title front matter property as {{ page.title }}, and where the content from the .md file gets pulled in as {{ content }} – which is anything that appears below the front matter.