Web revision case study
Health and AHC Resource Hub websites

The revision process for two flagship websites in the Academic Health Center (AHC)—one aimed at external audiences, one at internal—provides an example of the effort that goes into a web revision project.

Two major Academic Health Center websites launched July 31, 2013:

University of Minnesota Health | health.umn.edu
- Public gateway to health sciences at the University of Minnesota
- Provides a foundation for the AHC’s online presence

Academic Health Center Resource Hub | hub.ahc.umn.edu
- Helpful information, tools, and tips for AHC employees
- Provides a much needed, go-to source for employees to find key info and resources to do their jobs

The sites were reimagined with the goal of providing useful, relevant information to their audiences in a clear and compelling way. The sites replace the former Health Sciences site at health.umn.edu and its “Info for faculty/staff” section.

A primary change in the redesign of health.umn.edu was the decision to separate information intended for our internal audiences into its own resource hub for employees, and to keep the focus on telling timely stories with the Health Talk news blog, healthtalk.umn.edu. The goal is to help our audiences for all of these sites quickly and easily find the information they need.

The sites were created by AHC communications and built in our Nokomis web theme on the Drupal content management system (CMS). Both of these sites are responsive, meaning they work across mobile, tablets, and other devices. They are part of an AHC-wide initiative to develop an updated web theme, process, and resources in preparation for our switch to the Drupal platform in 2014–15.

The focus of the first release of these sites was to clean up their organization and content to build a strong foundation, and to begin raising awareness of these resources. We have additional features planned, and will continue to evolve and innovate the sites over time. Both sites contain feedback forms in the footer for people to submit problems, suggestions, and other comments that we will monitor and address.
Health website

health.umn.edu

Site manager
Sara Froehlich, sfroeli@umn.edu

Revision project

Timeline: January through July 2013

Core team: Rebecca Noran, David Krewinghaus, Justin Paquette, Syreeta Wilkins


Background

The previous health.umn.edu site was created as a source for news. This purpose became redundant with the launch of a Health Talk news blog. The website lacked some of the basic information one would expect to find, and had become cluttered, bloated, and out-of-date. We needed to reduce and reorganize the content to meet our needs now, and grow with us in the future.

Goals of the new site

- Help people coming to the website take action (e.g., apply, register, donate, visit)
- Provide a snapshot of what the Academic Health Center is and what it includes
- Showcase our value to stakeholders in Minnesota and beyond
- Provide tools for news media to tell our story in a timely manner
- Support revenue drivers/philanthropy

Key features

For the revision, we shifted the site’s focus from news-only to providing:

- **Answers**—direct people where they need to go and provide information for which we are the source (A to Z directory, About section with AHC at a glance, History, Patient care, Education and training, Research, footer with contact info and key links)
- **Impact and inspiration**—make an emotional connection to our audiences, showcase how we make a difference/why we matter (home page stories/features, Our impact, Research topics, Research timeline, Biomedical Discovery District, incorporation of feed from the Health Talk news blog)
- **News and information for media**—it should be easy for journalists to get what they need to help tell our stories (Newsroom, social media and Health Talk links)
REVISION PROCESS

Define

- Defined site strategy, goals, and scope, which resulted in separating internal information for employees into a new AHC Resource Hub
- Identified the AHC brand personality
- Reviewed site analytics
- Completed a comparative review of other academic health/medical center websites

Plan

- Created personas for key audiences and performed internal testing to determine usefulness of content
- Compiled a content inventory and reviewed content, defining what content to keep, delete, and revise
- Created a sitemap and navigation to guide the content organization
- Edited and wrote new content, shared with content owners for feedback as needed
- Conducted home page wireframing activity to help set priorities for home page design and content needed
- Set scope for phase 1, phase 2, and beyond

Build

- Constructed pages and navigation in Drupal CMS according to site plan, incorporating images and video as relevant
- Created additional page designs, styles, and elements as needed
- Created custom home page design
- Checked links, proofread content, created feedback forms and 404 error page
- Performed site deploy and set up redirects from key pages on the old site to the new site

Manage

- Continue to enhance the site with new features and improving on current features based on feedback and needs for audiences, AHC goals, and advances in technology and web design
- Develop an overarching plan for maintaining, evaluating, and promoting the website
- Oversee an editorial calendar for content to be updated on a regular basis (e.g., homepage slider, announcements, newsroom)
- Connect with content owners periodically to update content for each of their sections
- Review site quarterly for broken links, outdated information, content accuracy, etc.
BEFORE

- Three main sections were providing news content, sometimes duplicating and with conflicting priority
- Navigation was complex and confusing, with multiple layers that did not have much substance underneath
- Site content was not clearly defined or easy to access, so it was unclear what one could find on the site
- “Give” call to action was minimized to bottom corner

AFTER

- Clearly defines for the audience what content is available on the site, and provides direct access for users to get to it
- Prominently features the Health Talk blog through an automated feed, further establishing the credibility and accomplishments of AHC’s work
- Home page content is prioritized to consider audiences, including a patient care widget with links to key actions
- Opportunities to “Give” prominently placed on the home page and throughout the site on the header and footer
BEFORE

- Schools and programs section linked to colleges/schools with no context, introduction, or specific opportunities
- Education resources were not listed
- Content was not written for a specific audience
- Content was outdated and feeds of irrelevant content cluttered the page

AFTER

- Shows the broad scope of educational opportunities across the AHC
- Provides easy access to degree programs, certificates, and other educational opportunities by directly linking audiences to relevant content
- Aids in recruitment by showing prospective students all that AHC has to offer
**BEFORE**
- Limited to five topics (diabetes, infectious disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, brain sciences) focused on the Medical School
- Showed a limited view of the research within the other areas of the AHC (veterinary medicine, dentistry, etc.)
- Target audience wasn’t clearly defined

**AFTER**
- Gives a comprehensive overview of key research areas across the AHC
- Enables people to hone in on the specific topic of interest to them
- Highlights key aspects of each research topic with an overview and relevant AHC areas
- Feeds from Health Talk blog provide timely, relevant stories
BEFORE

- Content was marketing focused and didn’t speak directly to patient needs
- Provided a link to “Find a physician,” but didn’t provide any other information for patients to take action
- Patients weren’t connected to the research taking place within the AHC

AFTER

- Connects patients to relevant clinics and phone numbers
- Outlines key actions a patient can take (e.g., find a doctor, make an appointment)
- Establishes AHC as a trustworthy leader in medical, dental, and veterinary care
- Provides clear links to clinical trial information
Our impact

BEFORE

- “Fast facts” were scattered throughout the site as a way to show AHC’s impact, but they were often outdated and not relevant to the content they accompanied
- There wasn’t a place on the site to share our longer term accomplishments or impact across the health sciences

AFTER

- Topics like training the workforce, rural communities, and health care reform showcase our impact and results across the health sciences
- Provides concrete facts with data to back it up and shows potential impact of future investment (money, talent, etc.)
- Speaks to all audiences (e.g., students, faculty, donors, media) and provides quotes and images that resonate
- Impact can grow and last over time, and topics can be revised as needed
Academic Health Center Resource Hub

hub.ahc.umn.edu

Site manager

Janelle Nivens, nivens@umn.edu

Revision project

Timeline: January through July 2013

Core team: Janelle Nivens (project lead), Kristeen Bullwinkle, Rebecca Noran, David Krewinghaus (design)

Additional team: Brent Engebretson, Patrik Douša, Sara Froehlich, Brian Lucas, Joy Nollenberg, unit partners

Background

The revision and reimagining of health.umn.edu led to the decision to extract the faculty/staff section of the site, which was geared toward an internal Academic Health Center employee audience. Content in the faculty/staff section was in demand but difficult to find, since the site focused on health-related news. Limitations of the site structure and web theme made it difficult for units to adequately represent their value to AHC employees. With no formal managing editor, information became out-of-date and units were not accountable for updating their content.

Goals of the new site

- Improve the onboarding experience of new employees in the AHC
- Enable employees to execute key tasks, thereby increasing productivity
- Encourage employee engagement
- Facilitate greater communication among units, individuals, and leadership
- Create a clearer understanding of AHC’s shared service units and how they support the organization
- Generate enthusiasm about the impact made by the AHC, and by one’s specific unit within the larger organization

Key features

- The website is now organized by the AHC’s support areas to aid employees in finding what they need, e.g., all of the human resources information is grouped together in the Human Resources section. These sections are accessible from any page through the horizontal navigation bar.
- Consistent content with standards applied across all sections
- Most popular links added to the home page and footer
- Incorporates central University resources as needed to help employees get their job tasks done efficiently
- Integrates resources from across the AHC into new resource pages (e.g., resources for new employees, hiring)
REVISION PROCESS

Define
We reviewed the existing content in this information gathering stage:
- Facilitated focus groups with employees with a range in years of service and from a diversity of AHC units. Participants were given printouts of the main sections and asked to highlight content they found useful and cross out content they deemed unnecessary and in many cases detrimental to the page (e.g., embedded videos and news feeds unrelated to the content on the page).
- Met with leaders in each of the AHC shared units (e.g., Finance, Human Resources, AHC Information Systems, Communications) to assess what was and wasn’t working with their web presence.
- Reviewed analytics reports for the main sections and shared the results with unit leaders to help make content decisions.

Plan
- Created a sitemap and navigation with a focus on job tasks instead of solely organizational structure.
- Prepared a content audit with web leaders from each of the shared units resulting in documentation of pages to delete, keep as is, and keep with edits.
- Created migration documentation to assist in the build.
- Wrote draft versions of new web pages and shared with content owners for feedback.
- Continuously incorporated feedback from unit leaders/contacts.

Build
- Constructed pages and navigation in Drupal CMS according to site plan.
- Created additional page designs, styles, and elements as needed.
- Created custom home page design with easy access to most sought-after information and space for announcements.
- Checked links, proofread content, created feedback forms and 404 error page.
- Performed site deploy and set up redirects from key pages on the old site to the new site.

Manage
- Meet with content owners regularly to keep content current and generate ideas for continuous improvement.
- Create an employee spotlight blog to celebrate the contributions of the wide range of work roles that help make the AHC successful.
- Provide a system and space for units and employees to promote AHC events and opportunities related to the goals of the AHC (e.g., Turtle Derby, Red Hot Soiree, etc.).
- Survey AHC employees to help guide future features and fine tune content and site structure.
Before

- Cluttered layout with 10+ images distracting from relevant content
- News feed and embedded video unrelated to page content
- Links to main content sections not clear
- Flickr photo and events feeds out of date

After

- Top of page provides overview of main AHC functions, with corresponding quick links to information relevant to an employee’s job
- Clear links to the main pages of each section
- Space for timely announcements
- News feed from Health Talk blog included, but doesn’t dominate the page
**BEFORE**

- Main office contact information lost on the page
- Inconsistency in staff pages across AHC shared units

**AFTER**

- Main contact information and office location prominently displayed in a box at the top of the page
- Staff organized by job function
- Consistent display of staff information across all AHC shared units
Resource Hub

BEFORE
- Faculty/staff section of health.umn.edu lacked a space to outline key tasks for a new employee of the Academic Health Center at the University of Minnesota
- Information relevant to a new employee was decentralized and located in a number of sections (AHC-IS, HR, etc.)

AFTER
- Compiles information from various offices within the AHC and greater University to help people get started in their new jobs
- Categorizes information to correspond with when a new employee would want it (before and after arrival)
- Provides links for resources relevant for AHC employees on all campuses
BEFORE

- One level of navigation made it difficult to organize information in a clear manner; all section links crammed onto main section page
- Missed opportunity to incorporate list of links into relevant content
- Acronyms and human resources jargon used throughout
- List of “hot topics” not up-to-date
- Contact information not consistently displayed on AHC shared resource pages

AFTER

- Text provides context for how AHC Human Resources complements the work of the University's central Office of Human Resources
- Links organized by human resources tasks (hiring, reclassification, leaves and absences, etc.) to provide better context for all employees
- Contact information presented in a clear, consistent manner
The Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences

Organizational chart

The following Academic Health Center support units also report to the vice president for health sciences:
- School of Medicine
- School of Dentistry
- School of Public Health
- School of Nursing
- Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences

AHC Strategic Plan

Administration and governance

BEFORE

- “The Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences” page title was not meaningful to users when asked in focus groups
- “Updates” and presentations dated back 3+ years
- Archive of Dean’s Council agendas were not accessed by employees; these and an assortment of files dating back 15 years pulled attention away from the most important, relevant items

AFTER

- New page title “Administration and governance” provides clarity on the section’s purpose, and now links to central University governance information
- Links to timely information (e.g., search for new dean of the Medical School and vice president for health sciences)
- Only significant reference files are posted, and they are the most recent versions (e.g., strategic plan, external review)
Find web resources and information on the web section of the AHC Resource Hub: z.umn.edu/ahcweb

This document lives at: z.umn.edu/ahcwebcasestudy