NAR Talks Website Content
Best Practices
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WHAT IS CONTENT STRATEGY?

Officially:
Content strategy plans for the creation, delivery, and governance of useful, usable content.
WHAT IS CONTENT STRATEGY?

Simply:
Delivering the right content to the right user at the right time on the right device.
AN EXERCISE
MOBILE FIRST
WEB TRAFFIC IS MOBILE

- 203 minutes per day on device
- 44% of US web traffic is mobile
- Typical homebuyer searched on mobile

Source: Real Estate in a Digital Age; National Association of REALTORS®
RESPONSIVE WEBSITES

1 SCALABLE
Everything - including images - should fit on mobile devices without “pinch and zoom” by the user.

2 COMPACT MENU
Keep it to a single level if you can, or make sub-menus easily reachable from the page.

3 STACKING + L/R
Horizontal page elements will stack, or can use left-to-right swiping that’s more common on handheld devices.
MOBILE THEMES

- Wix
- Squarespace
- Constant Contact
- Wordpress
- Broker solution
YOUR CONTENT SHOULD FIT THE DEVICE

- Avoid flowy introductions - users want answers now.

- Write for users on the go; should this long blog post actually be two or three short, shareable ones?

- Images should help support or frame the text; avoid stock images just for some “pop”.

- Media should be playable by a mobile browser from the page. YouTube does a great job of this.
A NOTE ABOUT APPS

- There are a lot
- You probably don’t need your own
DE-CLUTTER
"The solution to all our problems may be buried in PDFs that nobody reads."

- The Washington Post
Nobody is reading your PDF

Download distribution of World Bank policy reports, 2008 to 2012

Number of reports

517 reports were not downloaded at all

SOURCE: The World Bank
“But all my content is important.”

- Everyone, at one point or another
IT WILL BE FINE

Dude, just chill out and relax.
IT WILL BE FINE

- The Norwegian Cancer Society reduced their website size from 4,000 down to 1,000 pages. Donations and satisfaction rose substantially as a result.

- Telenor Norway went from 4,000 to 500 pages. Sales and customer satisfaction went up. Customer support inquiries went down.

- The UK National Trust reduced their web presence from 50,000 to 9,000.

- The U.S Department of Health deleted 150,000 out of 200,000 pages. Nobody noticed.

Source: Gerry McGovern
CONTENT GOVERNANCE: RULES FOR YOUR WEBSITE

- Establish content types; try not to stray from these
- Set an expiration date on each piece of content
- Revise and re-post
- Be consistent
TOP USER TASKS
ORGANIZE AROUND USER TASKS

“Make it user-friendly.”
ORGANIZE AROUND USER TASKS

Your clients want something. Give it to them.

Stop thinking you can control the journey of your customer.

In the absence of user testing, put yourself in the buyer or seller’s position.
ORGANIZE AROUND USER TASKS

- List every task that a user would want to accomplish on your website.
- Order them as small, medium, and large.
- The large tasks should be **obvious** to the user before small and medium tasks.
57 MILLION AMERICANS (18.7%) HAVE A DISABILITY

- 19.9 million (8.2%) have difficulty lifting or grasping.
- 15.2 million (6.3%) have a cognitive, mental, or emotional impairment.
- 8.1 million (3.3%) have a vision impairment.
- 7.6 million (3.1%) have a hearing impairment.
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Difficulty lifting or grasping could impact use of a mouse or keyboard.

- Limit or eliminate popups.
- Structure menus simply.

The hearing impaired might rely on transcripts or captions for audio and video media.

- Utilize the CC feature on videos.

A cognitive, mental, or emotional impairment impacts technology use.

- Limit or eliminate the use of auto-play animation.
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Those with a vision impairment may rely on a screen magnifier or a screen reader, or might have a form of color blindness.

- Use headers to denote sections in written text.
- Text displayed as an image should be converted to plain text.
- Use alt text and descriptions for every image.
- Use descriptive words for links.
- Use visual indicators in addition to color, especially red and green.
Words and phrases that might be common to you could be intimidating to new home buyers and sellers.

Remember the distracted user.

Plan for international or non-native speakers.
ACCESSIBILITY PRACTICES ARE BEST PRACTICES

Using alt text and image titles helps when an image can’t load.

Think of a mobile user with a bad connection.

Linking using descriptive words helps a user scan more easily.

“Click here to learn about condominium financing” tells me nothing at first glance.

“Learn about condominium financing” is a better option.
ACCESSIBILITY PRACTICES ARE BEST PRACTICES

Headers and hierarchy make scanning pages easier for any user on any device.

It allows for quick scanning and referencing.

Video closed captioning and transcripts allow users to watch videos without sound.
**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

**MOBILE FIRST**
Plan your website design and web content around mobile devices.

**DE-CLUTTER**
Set rules for your website content and stick with them. Review often.

**TOP USER TASKS**
Let your users define their journey, and provide them the steps they need.

**ACCESSIBILITY**
Web content that is accessible helps everyone.
A few notes based on questions received during the session.

I have **popups for GDPR compliance and a newsletter signup, which is quite successful.** Popups for newsletter subscriptions, while successful, can still present problems. Consider a box within the body text of an article instead.

And speaking of GDPR, unless you’re specifically doing business with EU citizens, a cursory message should be plenty. There are no rules on enforcement yet in the US.

I’m finding that **old content is occasionally valuable, so I don’t want to delete it entirely.** Archiving content is a great option here. Most content management systems will allow a function to “archive” a page, which removes it from your site’s menu, lists, and search, but doesn’t delete it entirely, allowing those with bookmarks (or you, in a direct message) to still access this content.

I’d like a system that’s **easy to use and doesn’t require training.** The major out-of-the-box platforms, like Wix, Wordpress, etc., have grown leaps and bounds in terms of the user experience for the website operator. Most of these require minimal training. There may be custom website builders in your area who, for a fee, can set up your website and use one of these popular content management systems for you to add content in a simple way.
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