REDESIGNING THE CORPORATE WEBSITE

Results of Internal Focus Group Testing

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Redesigning the Corporate Website

Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do.
~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German Poet, 1749-1832

SUMMARY

❶ Usability
❷ Accessibility
❸ Content
❹ Interactivity
❺ Other Suggestions

Information Resources Department staff tested the layout of a website main page and discussed website content issues with the Family Health Department, the Comprehensive School Health Department, the Clinical Services Department, the Infectious Disease Control Department, the Chronic Diseases and Injury Prevention Department and the Health Inspection Department. The departments interviewed were presented with the same image and were asked general questions about layout and content of a new Health Unit website. Appendix A is a printed copy of the image presented to the teams, while Appendix B is the question guide developed and used to interview Health Unit staff at the team meetings.

The goal of the exercise was to have the departments, who would provide the bulk of the content for the new website, envision and discuss what a new Health Unit website should communicate to the community. IRD wanted to build some consensus throughout the organization on what elements were required to design and develop a successful organizational website for Health Unit clientele. The information provided in this report is a synopsis of the comments made by Windsor-Essex County Health Unit staff. The authors have divided the information into five summarized sections.

1 Usability

Web usability focuses on the design and structure of the entire website. During the discussions, the following comments were shared about the usability of the draft website main page.

- The colour scheme was more attractive than our current site, however many team members indicated that the layout was filled with too many words. More white space was suggested as a method to reduce

the wordiness, with many departments suggesting broader topic categories on the main page, with numerous subtopics.

- More pictures were required on the main page. The pictures displayed should represent numerous demographic groups in the community.
- A section on the website should be tailored for specific groups. Groups suggested included teachers, parents, physicians, the media and the Board of Health.
- The ability to download forms, schedules, and resources was deemed a necessary function for the new website. Many staff suggested that all the resources we provide as an agency should be provided online.
- An ability to ask questions to public health professionals, in real time over the Internet, was suggested as a possible new method of communicating with our web visitors.
- Many team members felt that the Health Statistics section on the main page should not be displayed so predominantly. Rather, the statistics should be provided in the content of the articles, further into the website.

2 Accessibility

Web accessibility focuses on the user and the technical components of the website. During the discussions, the following comments were shared about the accessibility of our new website.

- The site needs to download quickly, or people will not use it. Many staff suggested a maximum download time of 10 seconds.
- A search function was an absolute necessity on our new site and just as important, staff wanted users to be able to find our new website using external search engines like Google, Yahoo or MSN.
- Health Unit staff repeatedly indicated that the organization needed to have an easy-to-remember domain name. Many people indicated that we needed a catchier name than www.wechealthunit.org. At the meetings, none were suggested, however the words health and Essex County were deemed as necessary words in the domain name.
- Some departments felt that an online staff directory should be included on the new website, providing the public with an ability to look up staff e-mails and extensions. Other departments were quite opposed to this suggestion.
- Every department indicated that the current website needs to be vastly improved. Some departments indicated that many of their clientele were not connected to the Internet, however they believed that more people were getting connected to the Internet and that it would be easier to promote our website if many of the resources, the information, and the interactive tools were available online.

- Some staff would like to see a multi-language option on the new website. French and Arabic were the two predominant languages mentioned at the meetings.
- Many departments raised the issue of the importance of evaluating the website, ensuring that the Health Unit is constantly gathering feedback from the users about the website (content, layout, resources, interactive tools, & website performance).
- Promoting the website was considered a high priority for many departments. Suggestions included promoting the website through radio, newspapers, and television advertisements. Another suggestion was to have many reciprocal hyperlinks to local health and government agencies in our community.

3 Content

Content is the substance of the web articles that populate the website. During the discussions, the following comments were shared about the content of our new website.

- The articles should be written using only brief paragraphs, with point form being preferred and pictures being used whenever possible.
- The focus of the information should be strictly on local health issues or services that have an impact on our community.
- Content needs to be monitored and updated on a daily basis for consistency and credibility purposes.
- Clear language needs to be used in all web articles (titles & content), avoiding the use of technical language whenever possible.
- Staff members should write web articles. This point was stressed because staff felt it would create more local credibility and would also create a better relationship between our staff and the community. However, staff also indicated that the articles should not be a duplication of content found on other websites.
- The author of a web article should site his/her references whenever possible and he/she should also provide a list of reliable links to external websites that support his/her position within the article.
- Promotional web article teasers were suggested as a great way to constantly promote users to revisit the website for future information. For example, “if you liked this article, please visit us next week for information on …”

4 Interactivity

Interactivity comprises all the multimedia files we would provide to web users. During the discussions, the following comments were shared about interactivity and our new website.

- The information that we provide to the community should be available online in various types of formats for the users to view and/or download.
- A calendar of events was suggested to help clientele understand logistics (the when, the why, the where, the how, and the who) of Health Unit programs, services, and events in the community.
- Online quizzes, questionnaires, games and contests were all suggestions of interactive tools for the new website.
- An online calculator was a suggestion for health topics like Body Mass Index, Nutrition, Air Quality, Humidity, and UV index.
- A Virtual Tour of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit was suggested, especially for those visiting the clinics for the first time.
- Some departments who have information on VHS cassettes would like to be able to provide the information in MPEG and/or Quicktime format for people to download the videos from the website to their home computers.
- Providing real time statistics on various activities that are occurring at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit was suggested.

5 Other Suggestions

The following suggestions were shared with the Information Resources Department about displaying corporate information and organizing the health topics category.

Displaying Corporate Information

- Every web page should have our phone number, our logo, and our mailing address.
- A map, directions, pictures of the Windsor, Essex, & Leamington offices, and parking instructions for all the offices should be provided on our new website.
- Our hours of operation should be included on the website.
- There should be a web page that displays our budget and the funding formula.
- The general e-mail of intake@wechealthunit.org should be changed to questions@wechealthunit.org.

- A human resources concern was raised regarding the new website. If our website is successful and we receive numerous e-mail requests, questions and suggestions, is one person enough to handle our agency customer service?
- Some departments felt that e-mail responses should be decentralized, allowing appropriate departments the ability to respond to e-mails, instead of everything going through the intake nurse and then being filtered down throughout the organization.
- Many people felt that the biggest obstacle facing the development of this new website was getting the information from the departments. Time delays occur within the organization, which makes it difficult to have updated and accurate information on the website. A system needs to be developed to improve information sharing within the organization.
- A small group felt that the website should be in the two official languages of Canada.
- A Healthy Babies/Healthy Children button should be on the website.
- More diseases should be listed in the Health Topics section, rather than having just a diseases link.

Organizing The Health Topics Category

The following list is a compilation of department suggestions regarding the health topics category.

- Air Quality
- Humidity
- Birth Control
- Septic Tanks
- Safe Sex
- Food Safety
- Head Lice
- Epipen
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- Family Planning
- Babies
- Infancy (0-1)
- Toddlers (0-2)
- Playing with toddlers
- Tuberculosis
- Preconception
- Prenatal
- Breastfeeding
- Dentures
- School Screening
- Immunization
- Postpartum Depression
- Restaurants
- Beaches
- West Nile Virus

Windsor-Essex County Unit staff have clear opinions on what it will take to make this new website a success in our community. A website development plan is currently being written that reflects both the practical information gathered from the Health Unit staff and the information in the review of literature on developing quality health websites. The new Health Unit website will be an application of theory to a practical organizational public health setting.

Previous Papers

Paper #1 – Review of Literature

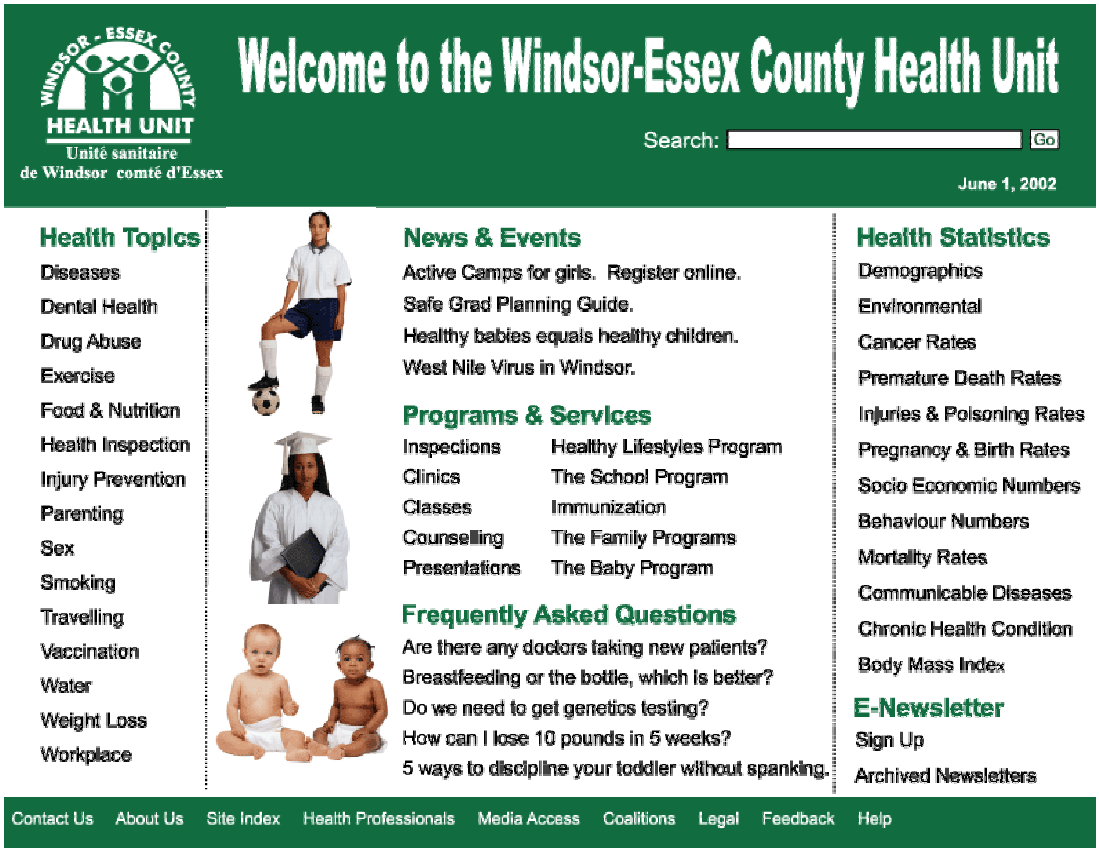
Next Papers

Paper #3 – The Website Specification Document

Paper #4 – Results of General Population Focus Group Testing

Paper #5 – The Website Marketing Plan

Appendix A


WINDSOR - ESSEX COUNTY
HEALTH UNIT
Unité sanitaire
de Windsor comté d'Essex
Welcome to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
Search:
Go
June 1, 2002
Health Topics
Diseases
Dental Health
Drug Abuse
Exercise
Food & Nutrition
Health Inspection
Injury Prevention
Parenting
Sex
Smoking
Travelling
Vaccination
Water
Weight Loss
Workplace
News & Events
Active Camps for girls. Register online.
Safe Grad Planning Guide.
Healthy babies equals healthy children.
West Nile Virus in Windsor.
Programs & Services
Inspections
Clinics
Classes
Counselling
Presentations
Healthy Lifestyles Program
The School Program
Immunization
The Family Programs
The Baby Program
Frequently Asked Questions
Are there any doctors taking new patients?
Breastfeeding or the bottle, which is better?
Do we need to get genetics testing?
How can I lose 10 pounds in 5 weeks?
5 ways to discipline your toddler without spanking.
Health Statistics
Demographics
Environmental
Cancer Rates
Premature Death Rates
Injuries & Poisoning Rates
Pregnancy & Birth Rates
Socio Economic Numbers
Behaviour Numbers
Mortality Rates
Communicable Diseases
Chronic Health Condition
Body Mass Index
E-Newsletter
Sign Up
Archived Newsletters
Contact Us
About Us
Site Index
Health Professionals
Media Access
Coalitions
Legal
Feedback
Help

Appendix B

1. Let's discuss form of the website. You are surfing the web and you come to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit website in search of information on X (information on part of your program). Would this page help you to get information on X – in that it gets you where you want to go?

- Is it intuitive/does it make sense (do you know where to look for the information you want)?
- Does it have the elements that you like [graphics, colour, search function, easy to read and understand]?
- what do you like about the navigation here/don't like about it?
- What will keep you coming back to this site in terms of form?

2. Let's discuss content now. You are surfing the web and you go to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit website in search of information on X (information on part of your program). What do you want to see in terms of the information contained in this website? What don't you want to see? Specifically:

- Characteristics of information [format – bullets, gobs of text, links to other places, interactive; accuracy (sources); timeliness; privacy statement; local information).
- Breadth & depth of information.
- Uniqueness
- What will keep you coming back to the website in terms of content?

3. I love websites that have/are.

4. I hate websites that have/are:

5. The three most important things a website should have are:

6. The three least important things a website should have are:

7. I keep coming back to websites that have/are:

8. As a web user, I believe a Health Unit website should have information on the following topics: