



# Focus on Content

## Delivering Better Websites

North Bay Web Design Conference, April 12, 2011

*Leap of Faith* WEB DESIGN



# Content war stories. We all have them.

- No content
- Really, really bad content
- Totally out of scope content
- Content that no one cares about
- Content that doesn't get the job done
- Projects that never launch



# Brace yourself.

It might be time for you to step out of your comfort zone, rethink your web design process, and focus on content.



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# Why? Because when we do...

- It takes the guesswork out of execution
- Design and development time/costs become (more) predictable
- It eliminates (ok - reduces) scope creep
- We deliver better websites and end up with happier clients



# Let's talk...

- What is web content and why is good content more important than ever
- What is content strategy and how can it help us deliver better websites
- How can we add content strategy to our web design processes



What is web content  
and why is good  
content more important  
than ever before?



“Content is more important than its means of delivery.”



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The web has become an  
“organization’s primary  
communications, sales,  
marketing, and  
transactional vehicle.”

*Lisa Welchman, Welchman  
Pierpoint*





What is content strategy and how can it help us deliver better websites?

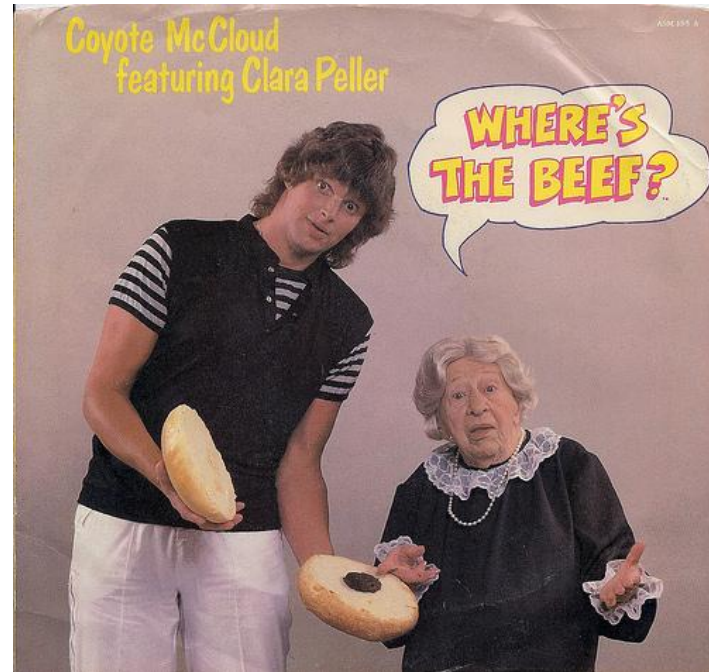


Content strategy **plans**  
for the creation,  
publication, and  
governance of useful,  
usable content.

—*Kristina Halvorson, Author of Content Strategy for the Web.*



Why it may be time to  
“throw out your design  
process.”



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# Content Myth #1

- Content isn't our job



# Content Myth #2

- We're building a CMS, so content won't be a problem.

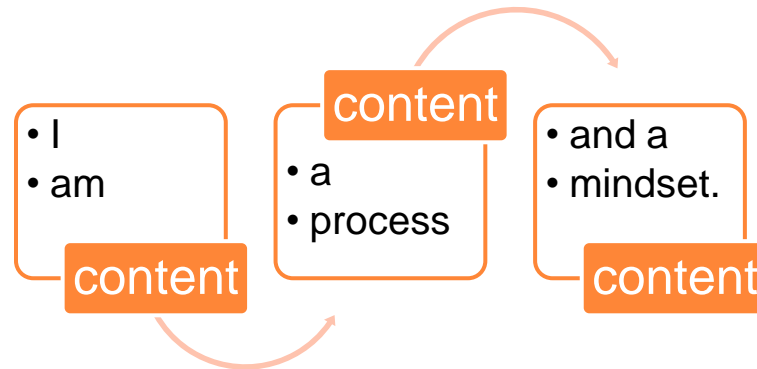


# Content Myth #3

- It sounds like it takes too long and costs too much – my clients won't go for it



“Content strategy is not a single solution or deliverable. It’s a process and a mindset.”



— Kathy Hanbury, *E3 Content Strategy*.



How can we add  
content strategy to our  
web design processes.





- Content strategy (discovery on steroids)
- Information architecture
- Page level content templates
- Web writing
- User experience
- Content production
- Design and branding
- Development, SEO, style guide, editorial calendar, and so forth.



- **The Sky's the Limit Content Strategy**

Contract an outside content specialist on a case by case basis.

- **High Budget In-House Content Strategy**

Hire an in-house content specialist and formally incorporate content strategy into your projects.

- **Medium Budget In-House Content Strategy**

Do what you can do in-house, but cover the basics

- **Low Budget Grass Roots Content Strategy**

Help our clients do it themselves by providing guidance, tools and templates



First things first.  
Acknowledge content  
strategy “readiness” on  
both sides.



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# The basics of web content strategy.



- Get to know your clients well
- Find out what content exists and what needs to be created
- Make a plan for content creation
- Make a plan for content management, review and success metrics



Get to know your clients well; their business objectives, their audience, and goals for the website project.



Business Objective(s)



Website Goal



Intended Audience



Call to Action



Tactic



Success Metric



Website Goal



Intended Audience



Call to Action



Tactic



Success Metric



Find out what content exists and what needs to be created. What do they have, is it any good, and what's missing.





## Content Inventory - ITS, Web section

URL: <http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/>

Page ID	Page title	URL	Format	Template	Access	Keywords
1	Policy and guidelines	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/</a>	HTML	Section entry page	Public	policy, guidelines
1.1	Webmaster policy	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/webmaster/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/webmaster/</a>	HTML	Policy document	Monash staff only	webmaster, policy
1.2	Web server policy	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/webserver/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/webserver/</a>	HTML	Policy document	Monash staff only	web server, policy
1.3	Chowning policy	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/chowning/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/chowning/</a>	HTML	Policy document	Monash staff only	chowning, policy
1.4	Accessibility policy	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/</a>	HTML	Policy document	Public	accessibility, disability, policy
1.4.1	Accessibility contacts	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/contacts/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/contacts/</a>	HTML	Standard document	Public	accessibility experts
1.4.2	Accessibility resources	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/resources/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/policy/accessibility/resources/</a>	HTML	Standard document	Public	accessibility, resources
2	Web workshops	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/</a>	HTML	Section entry page	Public	workshops, training
2.1	Optimising images for the web	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/optimising-images/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/optimising-images/</a>	HTML	Presentation	Public	images, optimisation
2.2	Introduction to usability	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/introduction-to-usability/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/introduction-to-usability/</a>	HTML	Presentation	Public	usability, user-centred design
2.3	Migrating to the CMS	<a href="http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/migrating-to-the-cms/">http://www.its.monash.edu.au/web/workshops/migrating-to-the-cms/</a>	HTML	Presentation	Monash staff only	CMS, Teamsite, migration

Description	Maintainer	Approver	Status	Notes
Official policies and guidelines	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
	WRD	Sue Steele	Redundant	This policy no longer in use
	WRD	Sue Steele	Trivial	
	WRD	Sue Steele	Review	Shorten, kill jargon, rename
policy	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
tools, links	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
Presentation notes from	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
design, UCD	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	
n	WRD	Sue Steele	OK	



Make a plan for  
creating clear, concise  
and relevant content.



# Content Template

*Name of Project*

## Section Name: Page Title



<b>Audience(s)</b>	Who are you trying to attract
<b>Primary Message</b>	What is the project's primary message
<b>Audience Specific Message(s)</b>	Is there an audience specific message
<b>Purpose of Page</b>	What business objective is the page aligned with
<b>Style and Tone Notes</b>	What tone and voice is appropriate
<b>Call(s) to Action</b>	What you want visitors to do

## Priority 1 Content

<b>Heading</b>	H1
<b>Body Copy</b>	
<b>Guidelines</b>	
<b>Example</b>	
<b>Assets</b>	Images, links, videos, PDF files, etc.



# CREATING VALUABLE CONTENT™

## *A Step-By-Step Checklist*

IS THE CONTENT:

### Findable

Can the user find the content?

DOES THE CONTENT INCLUDE:

- An h1 tag
- At least two h2 tags
- Metadata, including title, descriptors & keywords
- Links to other related content
- Alt tags for images

### Readable

Can the user read the content?

- An inverted pyramid writing style
- Chunking
- Bullets
- Numbered lists
- Following the style guide

### Understandable

Can the user understand the content?

- An appropriate content type (text, video, etc.)
- Reflection that you considered the user personas
- Context
- Respect for the audience's reading level
- Articulate an old idea in a new way



Make a plan for  
ongoing content  
management, review  
and success metrics.



- Who owns the content?
- Who will update it?
- Who will approve it?
- How often will it be updated?
- How will you know when it's successful?
- When will it be retired?



“Call it whatever you want. Just make sure someone is doing it.”

—*Kristina Halvorson, Author of Content Strategy for the Web*



# A new breed of web professional

"Content strategy...is going to nudge different types of folks into the industry. Agencies will start employing writers, strategists and big-picture thinkers either full time or on contract. ...More writers will understand design and technology. And more designers and developers will understand writing and content-driven design.

—*Tiffani Brown,*  
*Facebook*





# Resources

The slides will be posted on the conference website, and the template examples that I used here, as well as others are available on my website.

<http://www.lofwebdesign.com/content-strategy-resources.html>

You can also immerse yourself in a boatload of content strategy resources here:

<http://www.firehead.net/1001-content-strategy-links>



# Thank You!

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