Secondary Mathematics Teacher Recruitment Campaign
Module 8: Web Site Identity

Produced for and by the
Marketing to **A**ttract **T**eacher **H**opefuls (**MATH**)
Research Action Cluster

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Module 8: Website Identity

Welcome to the Website Identity module for planning a mathematics teaching recruitment campaign. A program website can be an indispensable asset for information, incentives and interest.

This module offers suggestions of how to design, establish and promote a recruitment campaign website.

Section 8.0: Introduction to the Website

Websites are an important part of the ability to communicate digitally. For the purposes of a mathematics teaching recruitment campaign, a web presence through a site or several sites can serve the following purposes:

- Provide a destination for people seeking information about mathematics teaching programs;
- Provide a platform to help synthesize information related to enrollment preparation for a mathematics teaching program;
- Provide an information source/entertainment/sense of community for current and prospective enrollees;
- Provide a face and promote brand identity for the mathematics teaching program;
- Create a central hub for program curriculum, courses, and other products for faculty, advisors, and other contributors.

Websites 101

Following are some basic points about websites:

a. Websites live online, are housed on a server, and are accessible via an Internet browser:
   - Some browsers read web language differently than others, so it is important to test webpages on a variety of browsers.
   - Websites are accessed using different Internet-capable devices including computers, smart phones, tablets, and smart television sets. It is therefore important to ensure the design works across different devices, and the language used to design a site is universal enough to serve all devices.

b. Websites are typically designed with multiple pages connected by hyperlinks and navigation menus. There are a many functions that can be embedded within a website and its pages. Some examples of website functions include:
    o Streaming video links
    o Photography
    o Links to other documents/sites
    o Online forms
    o E-commerce pages allowing transfer of funds
    o Discussion via comments and message boards

c. If you decide to have your institution or an existing entity host your website, the Universal Resource Locator or URL will start with the domain of the host. For example, if you brand your campaign TeachMATH and your institution, Harvard, is the host, the campaign URL will be www.harvard.edu/TeachMATH. This has advantages both in reduction of cost (no URL name purchase) and identification with the institution, but it will also require adherence to the institution's webpage style guide and lengthen the URL name.

d. To keep the name of your website simple and to brand your effort uniquely, it may be ideal to purchase a domain name. Domain names are sold to web publishers, companies, and organizations. GoDaddy and Network Solutions are two places one can check on the availability of a domain name. Once a domain name is purchased it has to be registered. URLs are registered using a service and at a cost often marked-up by various Internet service providers. It is important to realize that URLs are commonly registered for a period of time and not purchased outright. Owning your own domain also precludes the need to comply with institutional style and web content requirements.

e. Often website design companies will also help with domain registration. Some domains, while previously registered, can be resold. The best way to proceed in acquiring a domain name is to start with a hosting service. The URLS of two popular ones, GoDaddy and Network Solutions are listed below.

    Network Solutions: http://www.networksolutions.com/domain-name-registration/index.jsp

    GoDaddy: https://www.godaddy.com/domains/domain-name-search.aspx

f. Once a domain name is acquired and registered, it needs to be populated with content. Website development companies can assist with this process, or the building of a website can be accomplished via talented students or faculty members. Once the site is ready for launch it must be hosted. Websites are typically housed (hosted) on a server and mirrored on other servers. Server service prices and access can vary widely. Hosting can be done locally or via a third party. Quite often web development companies can provide the entire service: URL/Domain selection, domain registration, web construction, and hosting. But shop around before final decisions are made.

g. URL extensions. Website users are familiar with the three letter extensions at the end of a website address: .com, .edu, .gov, and many others are commonly in use. The extensions tell search engines in which part of the Internet the site is located and each extension offers certain restrictions and guidelines. When deciding on a URL it is often a good idea to purchase available extensions and occasionally also purchase alternative spellings. For example, if the name of the recruitment program were TeachMATHToday, it would be wise to secure (lease) www.TeachMATHToday.org, .com, .us, and perhaps even.tv. It may also be wise to purchase Teachmathtoday and Teachmath2day if those URLs are also available.

Note: The .edu extension cannot be purchased but is assigned once an institution of higher learning completes the necessary paperwork to obtain the desired .edu domains.

h. Websites are located via a URL and are found using a search engine driven by keywords from registered domains. Registering the URL or domain with a Domain Name System and a Name Server is how the site is verified. Optimizing the website enables search engines to rank it at the highest possible level. This practice is called search engine optimization or SEO.
    o Search engines have a variety of rules which control where a website is located once a search is initiated.
    o SEO is an evolving reality of website design, it is important for designers to be current on SEO best practices when developing a website.

i. Social media, particularly Facebook and other large membership sites, offer another access point to websites.
    o When designing a website, it is important to take into account those types of access.
    o Ensure that the content and presentation of the site can be captured and repurposed for those social media destinations.

j. Because websites are so closely linked to their brand, most universities have graphical standards for their sites. It is important to research how these rules and policies are interpreted when designing a website that is somehow linked to the university site. See Module 4 for more information about branding.

Section 8.1: Planning the Website

Once the URL and domain names are decided upon and reserved (owned by your project for a period of time), the next step to building a website is the plan. Diligence and effort on this step will save lots of hours and time, once the site is being populated with content.

Planning should include questions like:

- What is the purpose of the website? What will this website do?
- What do the visitors have to do? What action(s) do we expect the visitor to do?
- What information do the visitors need in order to act?

The first step of planning a website is designing a site map. Site maps should include:

- A listing for each page

- A list of photos, videos and graphics
- Copy for each page
- A list of links within the site
- A list of links outside the site
- Other features deemed appropriate for the site

A technique for mapping out a website is to use a table like the one below. The table shows every page, what links to each page, and discusses content and graphics that should be on every page. Though less artistic than the plan above, the map is a practical way to outline the site's contents.

Sample Site Map

Page Name/Elements	Copy	Links
Home Page 1. Logo with photo 2. Logo of program 3. Image or video slider with short informational photos and videos about the program 4. Classroom photography with description 5. Links to other parts of the website 6. Personal testimonials	• Welcome to the XYZ University Mathematics Teaching program website. • This site will provide you with all of the information needed to discover the great opportunities available in becoming a mathematics teacher. • Read on and discover the benefits of our program and what we have to offer. • Etc.	• Financial Aid/Scholarship page • About Us Page • RSS Feed • Testimonials • A Day in the Life of a Mathematics Teacher • Why Choose Teaching? • Our Faculty • Etc.
Financial Aid/Scholarship page 1. Detailed description of financial aid packages 2. Downloadable forms 3. Cost calculator 4. Self-qualifier for financial aid 5. Etc.	• Welcome to XYZ U's Mathematics Teaching Program Financial Aid Scholarship page. • Follow the prompts to discover what aid is available and how to qualify. • Etc.	• Home page • About Us Page • RSS Feed • Testimonials • A day in the life of a Mathematics Teacher • Why Choose Teaching? • Our Faculty • Etc.

Site map continues with descriptions of each page linked in the site.

It is important to note that each page links to other pages on the site, so a visitor does not get caught in a dead link or a dead end.

Following is a sample screen grab of the University of South Carolina STEM (teachscienceandmath.org) teaching recruitment program as an example.

Note the University of South Carolina STEM home page includes:

- A program logo and photo (top)
- An embedded video with testimonial (bottom center)
- Links to popular social media (very bottom right)
- Buttons that lead the user to self-evaluation questions (right side)
- Specialty links for partners and parents (left side)
- Frequently asked questions (see buttons, upper middle right)
- A place to contact the administrators of the program (see contact bar, lower left)

Note that this home page also shows the links to other pages within the site using a **navigation** menu.

- Home
- Become a teacher
- Why choose University of South Carolina for your teaching degree

- Financial Aid and Scholarship Opportunities
- About

Once the site map is completed, it is time to think about graphics, video, and copy. All of these elements are critical components to a website and require some prior planning.

Section 8.2: Planning Website Copy and General Design

Copy refers to the words or text included in your website. Web copy differs in style and format from academic writing. Here are some rules of thumb for writing copy:

Copy should be short and punchy	• Get to the point • Be memorable
Large blocks of copy can be intimidatiing	• Be brief • Break up copy • Web visitors glance and scan before they read
Copy should be written with clarity and brevity	• Be clear • Be concise • Write in the active voice

When writing for the web, consider two things:

1. Does the website offer what the visitor is looking for? And can they find it easily?

2. Always put the most important information first.

An example: A visitor is looking for future education options associated with a career change. When the visitor arrives at a website s/he wants results and often this means having access to a search box to quickly find what s/he is seeking.

Therefore, the most important information is often a collection of simple statements of what the site or program does. Once that is established, the visitor may move deeper into the site to learn important details. And then – maybe s/he would like to know some background information. This

is particularly true if your visitors are using a smartphone to navigate the site. The smaller screen requires very limited copy.

This approach is called *the inverted pyramid (IP) style.* This method has been widely used by journalists and taught to journalism students around the globe and is a great fit for writing web copy.

In IP style, newsworthy information comes first, then details and background information. Following is a graphical example from http://www.practicalecommerce.com/articles/2896-Write-Better-Blog-Posts-Pyramid-Style
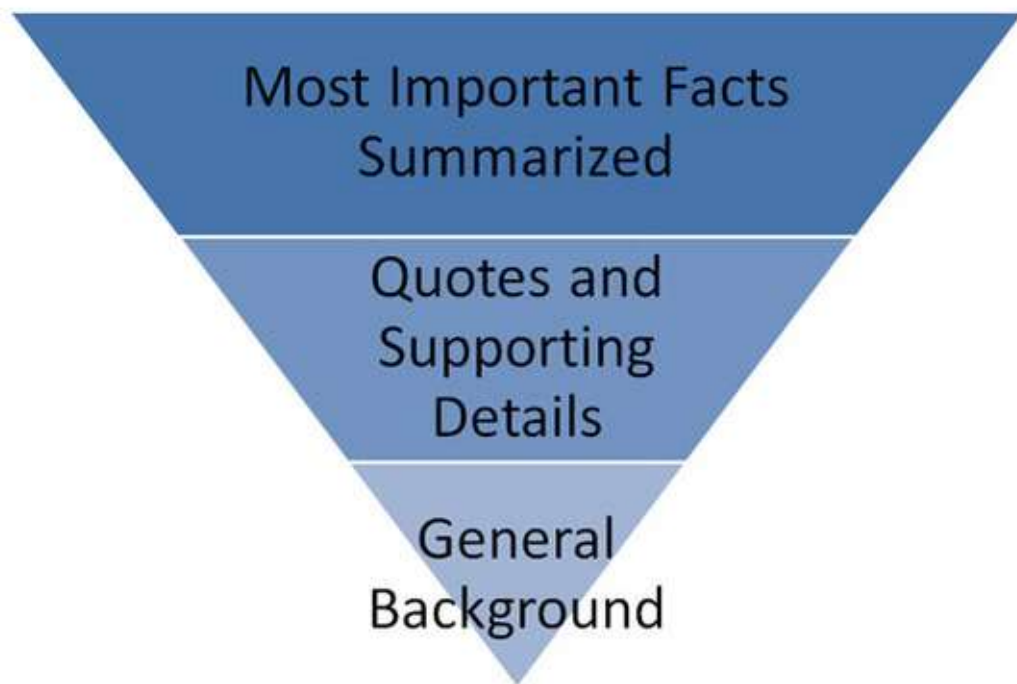
3. Cute, clever, or creative can be difficult—try a KISS instead.

While the viral phenomenon is very real and there are countless examples of quirky videos or social media posts picked up and sent and resent around the world, creating viral appeal is an inexact approach and can be difficult to perfect.

As an alternative, give the reader a *KISS*: *K*eep *I*t *S*hort and *S*imple. Brief, straightforward statements often work best.

4. Write for those who are seeking information quickly. Think of the way you might read classified advertising. Is it there? Do I want it? Do I want to know more information? Internet users are constantly scanning for information and new material, so it is important to grab their attention quickly and hold it.

> **"[What most web visitors do] is glance at each new page, scan some of the text,
> and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely
> resembles the thing they're looking for." – Steve Krug**

Research suggests that only 16% of people read webpages word-for-word. Most people scan (source: http://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-users-read-on-the-web/). Keeping this in mind, the following is a checklist for writing copy that incorporates scanners:

Do headlines communicate the program?

Do subheads summarize key points?

Do easy-to-scan bullet points reduce wordiness?

Are there credibility-enhancing observations in the site?

A web visitor is hunting. Ensure the most imporant info is understood at a glance.
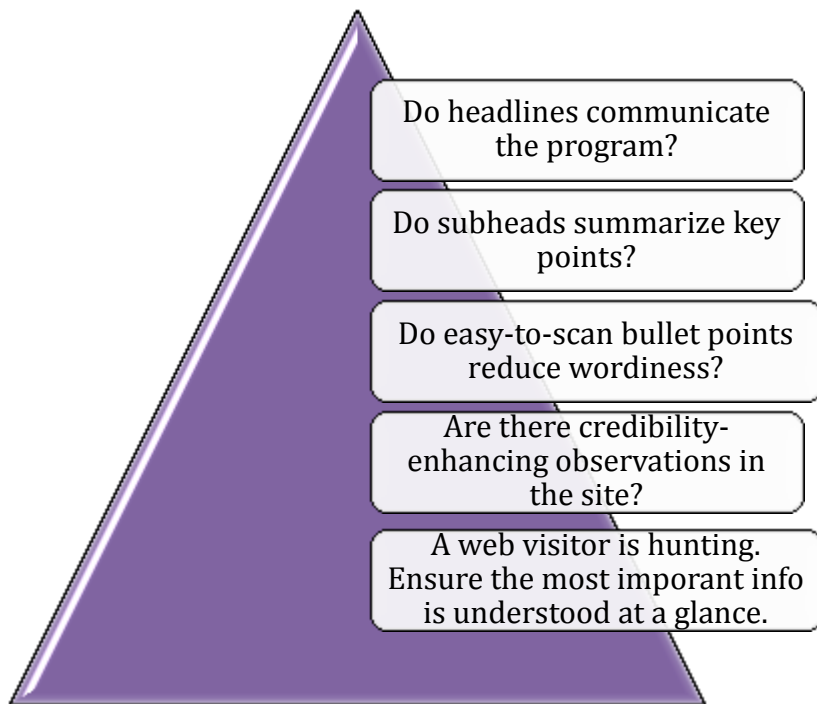
5. Use familiar words

> **"Web readers, are like hunter-gatherers, instead of scanning the horizon for prey, pages
> are scanned for *carewords*. When we see these words, we click, we act."
> ~ Gerry McGovern**

Carewords are also called keywords. Web visitors are looking for familiar words or buzz words because such words tell a reader s/he is in the right place.

Consider this example:

Imagine you want to fly to Bangkok and you're looking for a cheap flight. What will you search for: a **cost-effective flight**, a **low-fare flight**, or a **cheap flight** to Bangkok? Nobody searches for cost-effective flights. As Google's Keyword Tool shows, **cheap flight** is the keyword or careword that people search for:

Keyword	Global Monthly Searches ?
"cost effective flights" ▾	< 10
"low fare flights" ▾	2,400
"cheap flights" ▾	7,480,000

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) practice/discipline can help define the words that should be used when writing copy for a website.

6. Write for inattentive readers. Websites are as much about visual as content. Don't let the reader get bogged down in copy when they would really rather see an object than read about it. Choppy sentences are good in web copy.

Make your copy easy to read by shortening, cutting, and truncating:

- **Use short paragraphs – four sentences max;**
- **Use short sentences – twelve on average per page;**
- **Skip unnecessary words;**
- **Avoid jargon/trade speak;**
- **Avoid passive tense (will be, has been, etc.);**
- **Avoid needless repetition;**
- **Address web visitors directly. Use the word you.**

7. Expect people to enter your site anywhere:

Most web visitors may not read your home page first. It is important, therefore, to know where they came in, and to make sure they can get anywhere else in your site easily and quickly. Using Google Analytics, and other Internet-based solutions, it is possible to track how visitors navigate the site. Once a site is up, Google Analytics provides a great deal of information (Google Analytics >> Site Content >> Landing Pages) detailing exactly how many web visitors arrived on each webpage.

This information can also be used to modify popular pages. Google Analytics is **free** and there are many sites to help you setup the monitoring. Lynda.com has great tutorials, as does Google. Here is a link to the Google Analytics set-up page:
https://www.google.com/analytics/web/provision?et=&authuser=#provision/SignUp/

The image below is an example of a Google Analytics page. Note that there are additional opportunities to do more data mining, if deemed necessary.

Site Usage

〜 **9,242** Visits   〜 **58.08%** Bounce Rate

〜 **21,499** Pageviews   〜 **00:03:29** Avg. Time on Site

〜 **2.33** Pages/Visit   〜 **68.06%** % New Visits

Visitors Overview

Visitors
6,753

Map Overlay world

Content by Title

Page Title	Pageviews	% visits
Internet News - Butkaj's	5,833	27.13%
Ekonómia - Butkaj's Resources	4,726	21.98%
Fyzika I. - Butkaj's Resources	2,283	10.62%
Free Flash - Butkaj's	2,204	10.25%
Free JAVA Software - Butkaj's	1,747	8.13%

Keywords

Keyword	Visits	% visits
(content targeting)	469	20.06%
1000 free flash games	172	7.36%
www.butkaj.com	98	4.19%
butkaj	78	3.34%
butkaj.com	56	2.40%

Traffic Sources Overview

- ■ **Direct Traffic**
  4,404 (47.65%)
- ■ **Referring Sites**
  2,477 (26.80%)
- ■ **Search Engines**
  2,338 (25.30%)
- ■ **Other**
  23 (0.25%)
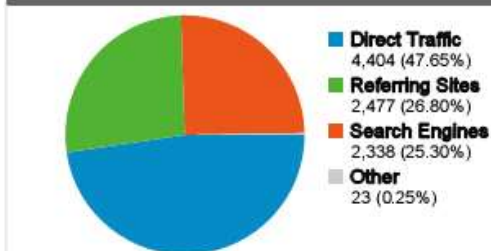
Referring Sites

Source	Visits	% visits
sms.ac	1,182	47.72%
butkaj.com	422	17.04%
en.wikipedia.org	230	9.29%
gad-get.info	160	6.46%
2cam4u.com	80	3.23%

Following are some important findings from the sample analytics page:

1. The graph at the top tracks the number of hits per time period and where the peaks are.
2. The site usage statistics are pretty self-explanatory:
   a. 9, 242 people visited the site over the measured time period.
   b. The combined total number of pages viewed during that time was 21, 499.
   c. An average of 2.33 pages were viewed per visit.

       d. 58% of people left the site after landing on only one page.
       e. Visitors spent an average of 3:29 or three minutes and 29 seconds on the site during their visits.
       f. During this time period 68% of the visitors were new to the site.
3. The graph of visitors gives the total number of new visitors and when they visited the site.
4. The world map tells where the visitors came from.
5. Content by title tells you what percentage of visitors visited which page or set of pages.
6. Keywords show you what keywords were used, if any to find your site.
7. Referring sites indicate which sites people visited before landing on your page. You will notice they are specific sites.
8. Finally the pie chart shows how visitors came to your site.
       a. Direct means they typed in the URL.
       b. Referring sites means they were at a different site and went to yours.
       c. Search engines indicate your site was found using a search engine.
       d. Other is none of the above categories.

User Experience

Internal hyperlinks. Another valuable step to making the website more user-friendly and to ensure ease of navigation is the use of hyperlinks within the site. These can also help visitors navigate across the site quickly and easily. For example, look at the eBay motors site.
http://www.ebay.com/motors
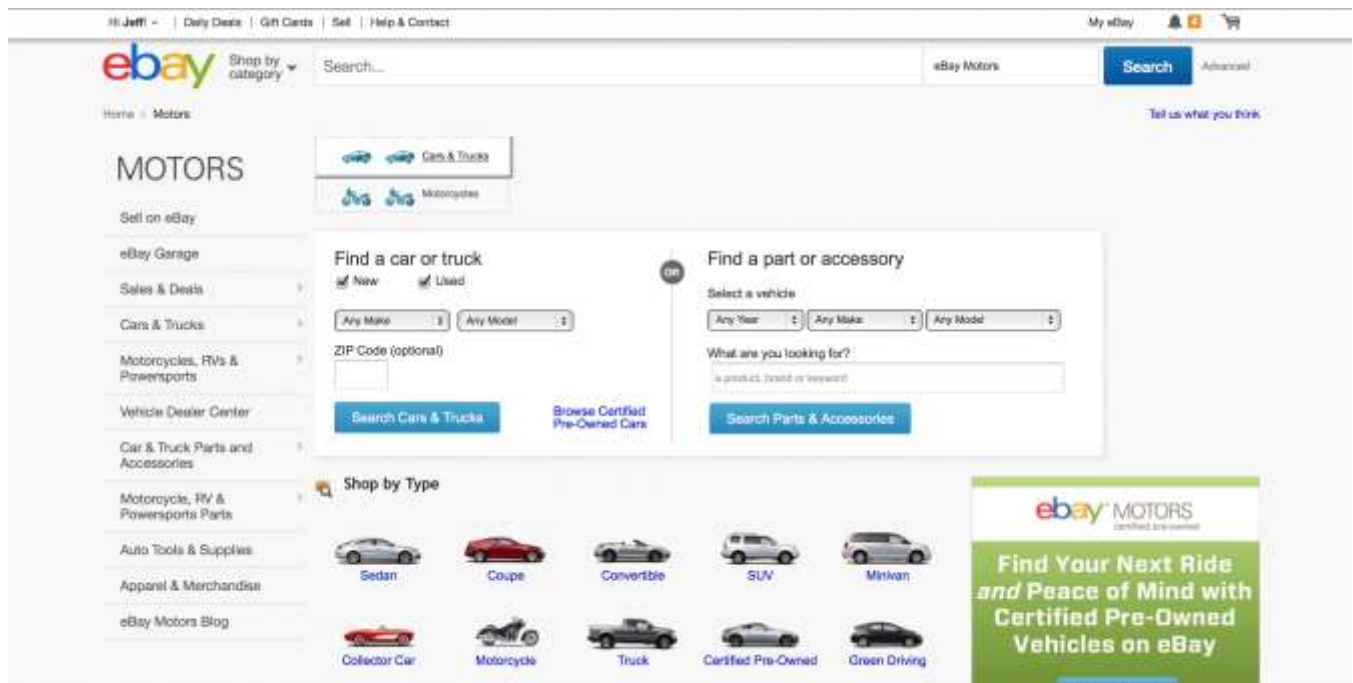
This site is quite complex, yet it allows each visitor the ability to customize searches, specify what s/he is seeking and once found, conduct a variety of actions.

Note that the site is clean. It has a limiting function, which contains the amount of information the viewer sees at one time. In addition the site is very interactive, every button or hyperlink is easily available including the back button.

Sifting through the site, nearly every page is identical and intuitive to the viewer. Information can be sorted and managed to keep it from overwhelming the visitor.

It has a high level of functionality while avoiding information overload or incomplete, faulty navigation (no dead links or pages).

By looking at each webpage as an entry page, here are some of the implications:

- **Each page should be easy to scan;**
- **Each page should clarify where the visitor is and where they went;**
- **Each page should include a call-to-action;**
- **Don't rely on the navigation bar. Include a button or link to guide people to take the next step on each page.**

8. Analytics implications:

When considering the overall appeal of a site, it is useful to adopt a holistic view and review every page. Following are some suggested things that should be considered when editing website copy:

Answer the questions your audience is asking.

Discuss one key topic on each page.

Include relevant links to website or other sites.

Use phrases and words familiar to the seekers.

Above all: Be helpful.

Section 8.3: Planning Website Graphics and Visuals Materials

Visual appeal is a very important part of web design. Graphics, photography, and video all contribute strongly to the success of any website and the pages within. Visual appeal is even more important when your target audience uses handheld devices where text is hard to read. This section discusses some tips and tools that can assist in creating a successful visual portion of the site along with some advice on how to maximize its impact.

Visual appeal, the bones of the successful site

- Web copy and web design should work together, especially with a visual-intensive medium like the Internet. The best copy is meaningless if the visuals do not draw in the visitor.
- Words, sentences, and bullet points must be written while considering how the webpage will look. Text has an impact on the overall appeal of the website. Text heavy sites look gray and are not as appealing to a web surfer as one that has compelling visuals. Said another way, the visual appeal of a website impacts the readability of the text and influences whether web visitors can quickly understand what the site is about.
- Speaking of copy, to increase the visual appeal of web copy:
    - Replace text with photographs or videos when possible;
    - Consider different font sizes – think about people scanning larger text first;
    - Emphasize quotes of customers (or experts) to add credibility;
    - Play around with highlights, **bold text**, CAPS, or *italics*;
    - Break long headlines into a headline with a subhead;
    - Change paragraphs into bullet points;
    - Most importantly: de-clutter. Reduce noise and add white space. Not only will it make the website easier to read, it will also increase perceived trust (source: [Social Triggers](#)).

Insider tips for making web-based visuals successful

A bit on browsing

Web browsers and the device used to view the site are an interesting part of designing websites. There are multiple resources on the Internet to help identify which browser is most popular. Internet Explorer and Google Chrome are leaders at the time of this writing but it is best to frequently check browser usage statistics when considering website design and upgrade, as not every web browser responds to code the same way. It is also good to have the web developer check the site using a variety of browsers on different computers or devices to ensure uniformity in overall presentation. In my experience in web design, there have been many instances where a page looked one way on the developer's screen and much differently on the target audience's screen. Therefore when launching a site, it is often a good idea to work with a developer and a few friends to test the site on as many different browsers and devices as possible to ensure compatibility.

It should also be noted that mobile compatibility is critical when you intend to reach high school students and young people. For parents, a computer may be a better match. When discussing setting up a website with a consultant, ensure mobile compatibility is addressed and perform the same testing with various mobile devices.

In addition, there are several programs that can help a developer, or you, measure compatibility with computers and mobile devices. PowerMapper tests site capability over more than 300 websites. The URL is www.powermapper.com. Another site test application is BrowserStack. BrowserStack advertises power testing over 700+ web browsers for computers and mobile devices. They also offer a free trial: http://www.browserstack.com/

Finding and Selecting Images

- Consider using photo galleries maintained by your university.
- Attend to copyright. Flickr, Google Images, and other image search tools often allow you to filter by copyright settings. When possible, request photo waivers from students, and always respond promptly to any copyright-related request to take down a photo or video.
- There are many excellent websites to browse stock images and videos. In addition to making copy more visually appealing, there are ways to make graphic elements more visually appealing. Following are some suggestions to make website visuals more appealing:

  - Videos and photos should be optimized for fast loading. Optimizing photography involves managing subject and resolution so that it will load quickly and be suited for the proper application. Today's digital photography allows for high-resolution (res), high detail level photography/videography. These large files are great for printing personal photos, viewing on television, and/or HD digital platforms. However they may not be necessary and could be detrimental for websites because of their impact on load time. Web developers should be able to advise the client on the proper photography optimization based on the desired application and available visuals. In general, the lower the resolution, the faster the load time and the lower the image quality; conversely the higher the resolution, the better the quality and the longer it takes to load. Every web developer and client must strike a happy medium to determine what is right for each website application.

  - The best compromises are perhaps medium resolution photos and video for websites. They will load faster and reduce the number of bounces (when a visitor is unwilling to wait for a page to download and goes elsewhere).

  - When in doubt, shoot in high res and reduce later. Photo and video resolutions can be minimized in pre-production through the use of many photo and video software applications. However, while it may be tempting to shoot in lower resolution and skip this step, original photography should always be shot in high-to-medium resolution initially to ensure quality of the original.

- Large, high-resolution photos can always be reduced in size and pixel density but once reduced, they cannot be easily expanded to higher resolution copies. In addition, the higher resolution an original photograph or video is, the easier it is to maintain the integrity of any edits to improve the image for whatever reason.

- Be sure to use compatible video formats (Whether stored elsewhere or locally, any video offered, as part of a website should be available in common video playback format. When considering how to display videos, be sure to pick the most universally accepted solutions. Nothing is more frustrating than to click on a link and not be able to view the video or have to download a player before the video can be viewed.

- Another aspect of planning for on-site video is to decide whether to self-host any videos you have or to link them to off-site hosts. Some pros and cons about these two options are listed below:

  o For self-hosting a video (placing it on your own server), there are advantages: by self-hosting, you will have control of where the site is located, can analyze more analytics about your video views, and manage uploads. The difficulties associated with hosting one's own videos include a complex process of linking it to your own website; dealing with a variety of devices, browsers and connection speeds; and it may also require additional investment in terms of high-quality hosting, which will require the additional purchase of bandwidth.

  o In terms of outsourcing video hosting, the advantages are: embedding and playing directly from your site, the inclusion of advertising (which can help offset costs), and the ability to access tried and proven video including YouTube and Vimeo Plus. Disadvantages of outsourcing your video may involve additional costs, trade-offs in copyrights and including advertising (while it can help offset costs, it can also be distracting).

- Do not use more than two fonts in your design. The fonts should be complementary but different enough that the casual reader sees the difference but does not get distracted or confused. Common font choices may include Arial, Verdana, and Times New Roman. Using more universal fonts allow for better continuity across pages and ensure a consistent reading experience. It is also important to include larger and highly readable fonts.

Using Content Management Systems and themes for modern web design

Webpages are written in HyperText Markup Language, HTML. HTML involves a language and syntax consistent with other computer programming languages that requires a great deal of time and effort to learn. Programs like Adobe Dreamweaver help create HTML code using what are called tags: pieces of HTML code unseen to the end user but control what appears on the browser. Fortunately there are alternatives for creating webpages that don't involve learning HTML.

Designing and maintaining a website has become much more streamlined with the advent of website publishing companies including WordPress, WIX, and others. Growing in popularity,

WordPress and other companies supporting WordPress now offer a robust selection of themes and templates web designers can use to insert and organize information.

Similar to PowerPoint and Prezi templates, the WordPress templates are interactive, customizable, and can be obtained via many different sources—both paid and free sites.

For those considering using a WordPress site, it is imperative that your institution's technology or web-presence group be involved in the decision, particularly if your institution will provide the server and domain name. This collaboration involves ensuring a unified look, protection of copyright, and brand identity. It is also likely your institution web group has templates already designed and available for use. Links to WordPress user guides are provided below.

WordPress templates and themes are useful for helping to create and fulfill desired website presentation and content. Described as the most popular online publishing platform, WordPress says, it "…is currently powering more than 20% of the web."

According to their home page, "At WordPress.com, our mission is to democratize publishing one website at a time."

Furthermore, WordPress.com claims "more than 409 million people viewing more than 15.5 billion pages each month" as users. WordPress users "publish about 41.7 million new posts and leave 60.5 million new comments each month."

Many tools and templates for WordPress.com are free, but there are also premium templates and themes that can be purchased and customized for use.

For a list of pricing and packages, visit www.wordpress.com.

For more information about the company, visit https://wordpress.com/website/

For a partial list of WordPress template and theme providers, see the following links:

TemplateMonster	http://www.templatemonster.com/welcome/
Creative Market	https://creativemarket.com/templates
Elegant Themes	http://www.elegantthemes.com/
Envato Market	http://themeforest.net/
WordPress	https://wordpress.org/themes/

For a partial list of information guides describing how to use WordPress to design websites, see the following links:

Website Setup Guide 2015	http://websitesetupguide.com
WordPress User Manual	https://make.wordpress.org/support/user-manual/
WordPress Made Simple	http://www.wpmadesimple.org/

| Simple WP Guide | http://www.simplewpguide.com/ |

An example of a WordPress template is provided below. This example represents a generic design offered by WordPress entitled *On Demand*. The layout includes navigation on the top, images and text in the middle, and channels at the bottom. It is one of many templates available through WordPress.
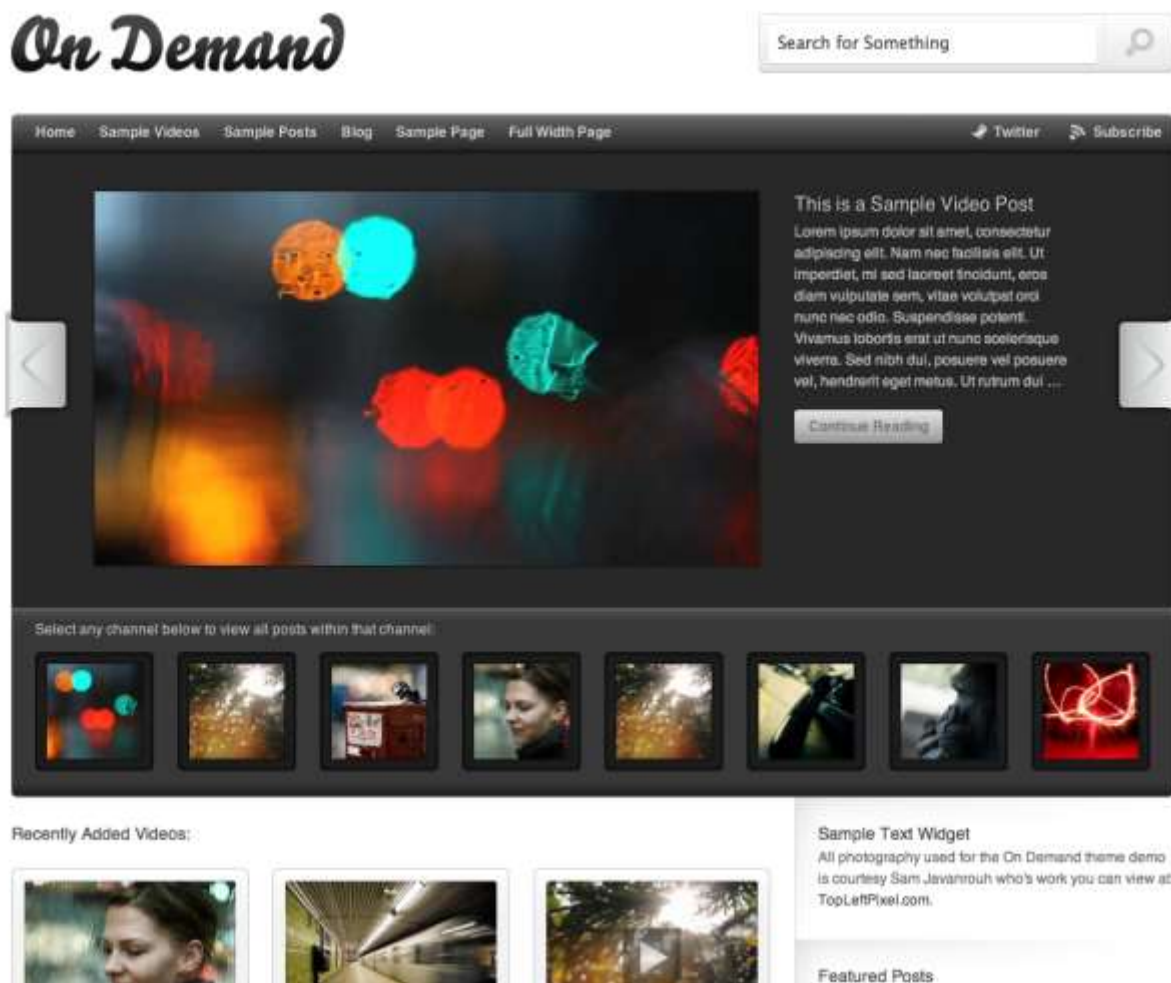
Section 8.4: Promoting the Website

Once the website is built, it is time to consider how to promote it. The following are some tips and tricks detailing ideas and issues associated with promoting a website and subsequently increasing its popularity by raising its search engine rankings.

Search engine rankings

Most Internet users access one or more search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.) to find the content they seek. The websites that lead the list of results for each search engine do so because of their rankings, a score created by the search engine based on keywords, content, visitors, and other factors.

One can contract with a service to optimize a site's ranking, but there are many free strategies that can be employed. Some sample site optimization services include: http://www.registereverywhere.com and http://www.mainstreethost.com

Volume counts. Sites need to be content rich. The more material a site has, the higher the rank by search engines. It is important to distinguish that when discussing content, we are not referring to content on a single page but on many pages. Search engines use a variety of tools to identify web content. Bots, Spiders, Crawlers, etc. are programmed to find keywords (or, carewords) to scan website text. In the past, these searches were done through Meta tags—codes embedded on the home page or in the script of other pages. Search engines have evolved from using Meta tags and can now grab keywords directly from webpage content. This raises another interesting point: If a site does not have lots of content (keywords or carewords, including descriptions of photos, graphics, etc.), the chances of it being found significantly decrease. For example, if a webpage has ten pages with few keywords while its competitor has 100 pages, it is much more likely a competitor's website will be found first.

Tip: Make sure your webpages include high quality content. Verify that content is helpful to visitors. Creating content without purpose does not help you or your visitors. Always ask yourself: "Is this page good enough to be in a glossy magazine or newspaper article?"

Similarly, update and add new content often. If your site contains frequently updated content, visitors have another reason to return, and it encourages them to bookmark your site. This practice will also encourage search engine crawlers to visit your site more often and increase its rating.

Create at least 2-3 pages of new content weekly or even better a new page every day. Most visitors consider sites that have not been updated in over a month abandoned pages. Home pages in particular should be updated frequently with additional content.

Prestige counts. Search results often privilege trusted websites, so links to and from your website to university or other respected websites are likely to improve SEO rankings.

There are also tools that allow you to post new content as it occurs. An RSS feed solution can be programmed to post daily or monthly. Updated content gives visitors additional reasons to visit a site. An RSS feed provides a reposting of content relevant to viewers of your site but not created by you. For example, your mathematics teacher recruitment site offers updates on teaching positions from multiple education opportunities websites. An RSS feed bot can retrieve those postings, and post them on your site as if you had placed the ads yourself. Or, in a national discussion of increasing teacher benefits, an RSS bot can grab multiple versions of the story and post them to your site so your students are informed of changing circumstances in the career field.

The following link discusses how to set up an RSS feed and why it is important: http://www.2createawebsite.com/traffic/create-rss-feeds.html

There are other content repurposing devices and tools out there as well. Look around and discover what applications work best for your system, your site, and your audiences.

First impressions can be lasting ones—the importance of the first paragraph

The first paragraph of text is very important. Search engines pay close attention to the first paragraph, and it's used to catch the readers' eyes. Place important keywords into this paragraph.

Adding photos

Adding one or more pictures to the homepage can also help grab the visitor's eye, build interest, and make sure they don't leave the site immediately. When adding a picture be sure to add an ALT option within any IMG tag, this ensures the image includes a description, and those words serve as keywords that a search engine will notice.

Use keywords in page titles for search engines

Most search engines will use the title of your webpage when displaying your site in their search results. Therefore, it is always a smart idea to put keywords into the title of each page.

Keep the title short (at most 5 or 6 words), use words a potential visitor may search for, and make the title understandable. Notice: The longest title available for search engine recognition is 70 characters.

URL keywords—the shorter the better

Having a short URL is a good method of making sure links are shared. There are several applications out there that allow you to shorten a long URL. One of the most well-known is: tinyurl.com. But there are other plug-ins and applications that can be used to shorten lengthy URLs. The advantages to short URLs are that they decrease load time, are easy to remember, and work better with social media applications.

Use the slash/

Tip: The use of a slash is very important to help servers navigate. The slash tells the computer to go back to the same page, whereas the open URL (without slash) causes the server to totally redirect. Finally, though it seems obvious, be sure to use the same URL throughout the entire website. This ensures consistency with search engines, encourages faster loading, and cuts down on dead links/confusion.

Add a search engine

If a website does not have its own search engine, consider using a third-party search engine. These custom search engine scripts can be added easily to a webpage and allow search capability within your own site and other sites on the Internet. At no cost to you and as a service to your visitors, you can secure search engine code from Google, Yahoo, Bing, or other search providers and include those features.

Doing so makes you a partner with the search engine and positively impacts your search engine

ranking. Another source for identifying search engine capabilities is
http://www.thefreecountry.com/scripthosting/searchengines.shtml

Get to the point early

When first visiting a webpage, most visitors do not scroll down. Keep the important and eye-catching information on the first viewable page. Finally, never make a visitor scroll left-to-right, a webpage that scrolls left-to-right may cause frustration, and visitors may not even realize they need to scroll and leave.

Test load times

Make sure the overall load time of a webpage is no more than four seconds on any device. Fast load times keep visitors on your site and search engines like Google use a webpage's load time as part of their ranking criteria in the search results. You can also run portions of your webpage through online tests to see what part of your page may contribute to slow loading.

Section 8.5: Search Engine Optimization

The best way to ensure people find your website is to regularly create and publish interesting, relevant, and accurate information about your program. Once a site is designed and submitted for use, you should also regularly analyze how the site performs. This section offers some insight on how to maximize search engine optimization based on regular analysis.

Use Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a very popular application that reports how users see and interact with a website. Analytics can explain how and where viewers are entering a site. The analytics can also tell where people went after visiting your site. Takeaways from using analytics include leveraging popular pages with more links to other related information on your site. And if you have pages with low traffic or higher bounce rates where visitors go elsewhere to get work done, it is best to improve the page's appeal, and, if needed, add more information.

More good information on promoting one's website

Following is some information that is good to know for maximizing search engine optimization. Most of this information comes from http://www.computerhope.com/promote.htm, a great resource for promoting one's website.

Keywords as tools

Many web hosts offer their users website traffic information. Google Insights for Search is a good tool which allows web masters to enter and compare search keywords and find trends. By assessing this information, it becomes clear what pages are popular and/or where people are going after leaving your site. By carefully reviewing these words, trends can be discovered and keyword triggers established. If there are keywords that regularly appear in the charts, and they

are not in your site, add them. Use online tools to monitor and compare search keywords to help better judge what keywords should be used on the site.

Create a community

Creating a comments section or online forum on your site allows visitors to post comments; questions; information about you, your content, or the site; as well as other pertinent (and sometimes not so pertinent information). For this reason, forums should be monitored and commentary maintained as needed. Unanswered criticism can have negative consequences. But, on the positive side, creating a community builds brand, disseminates relevant information, and generates more content for the site.

Submit and promote the site to Search Engines

Submitting pages to a search engine can bring great dividends in increased rankings. There are multiple search engines out there. Here are some of the top options to consider.

Google - Google is currently ranked the most popular search engine on the Internet. To accelerate how quickly Google bots find a site, submit the main page to the link below. Direct Google add link (new window)

Yahoo - Another very popular search engine on the Internet, and now part of Microsoft Bing, is Yahoo. To post your site with Yahoo, visit the link below, sign into a Yahoo account, and submit the URL. Direct Yahoo add link (new window)

Other tools

To better monitor your own site there are other applications in the SEO discipline that help optimize responsiveness to search engines.

Google Alerts

A Google Alert sends emails anytime a webpage or company name is mentioned. This method provides resources for finding new pages and articles linking to your site or mentioning your service.

Google Webmaster Tools

The Google Webmaster Tools is a free service yielding information like: search queries used to find pages, crawl errors, links to your site, keywords, and diagnostics.

Prevent bad links

Bad links are a growing issue with webpages and an easy way to lose visitors. Once a site is launched, avoid changing names or location of pages. It is likely previously published pages are already indexed in search engines, linked on other webpages, or even bookmarked.

Removing or moving pages could cause a significant reduction in new visitors coming from other areas and other search engines that use older links.

Finally, the [Google Webmaster Tools](#) help quickly identify bad links.

Spelling and grammar

Nothing stands out like a typo or a misspelled word. As an old boss of mine once said, typos are like cockroaches. You see one and you start looking for others, and shortly you start asking yourself, how squared away is this house anyway? Webpages are like that. Nothing short circuits credibility like a misspelling or a typo. All pages should be proofed by hand and by machine before posting. Pages with spelling and grammar errors can drive away visitors quickly, never to return.

Old age is an advantage

Many search engines (such as Google) incorporate a website's age into the overall rank of a site. The older the site (assuming it is updated regularly), the higher the rank.

Section 8.6: Summary

Mathematics teacher recruitment campaigns require an effective and attractive website as part of its total package of brand identity, information dissemination, and community.

Websites will lend credibility, provide a sense of location, and build community.

One of the first steps in planning a website is deciding on the domain name, whether to use your institution's name, or acquire a unique domain name. There are several places to locate available domain names including GoDaddy and Network Solutions. Domain names can be purchased along with hosting services and server space. For some, their home university may provide server space and hosting arrangements.

Websites should be designed from the ground up using site maps. There are many tools available for preparing websites and WordPress is one of the most popular. This group and others offer pre-made templates or themes, which make publishing a website very simple. Section 8.5 of this guide provides some discussion of using WordPress.

Another major consideration for website design is maximizing rankings on search engines. Abbreviated SEO, the way a site is designed, promoted, and managed will impact its ranking by search engines.

Once launched, your website's traffic should be analyzed. This can be accomplished via a number of analytic tools. Based on the analytical findings, sites should be updated frequently to ensure fresh content and high search engine rankings.

To maximize SEO effectiveness, successful websites should contain compelling copy, attractive visuals, and clear calls-to-action. The pages should be easy to read and review, with a mixture of

visuals and copy. The goal of a website is to connect interested parties with opportunities they can explore and participate in.

EXAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A SECONDARY MATHEMATICS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM WEBSITE

Front Page [mathed.university.edu]

      Slideshow or Video
      Brief Overview
      News & Announcements
      Key Personnel
      Top Reasons to Teach Math
      Social Media Feed(s)

Apply [...edu/apply]

      Application Requirements
      Application Form(s)
      Contact Form
      FAQ

About Us [...edu/about]

      Mission, Goals, and Philosophy
      Organizational Chart (with contact information)
      Personnel (lead faculty, supporting faculty/instructors, administrative support)

Our Programs [...edu/programs]

      Undergraduate Tracks & Degree Plans (regular, late-entry, post-bac, alternative, dual-cert)
      Graduate Track(s) & Options
      Structure and Curriculum (course descriptions)

Why Teach Math [...edu/why-math]

      1-minute Video Welcome from Faculty
      1-minute Video Welcome from Students
      2-minute Video Overview of Program and University
      Program Benefits and Distinctive Features (especially supports)
      Scholarships, Jobs, and Other Funding
      Why Others Joined (testimonials, etc.)

How to Become a Teacher [...edu/pathways]

Just Starting College
Midway through College
Transferring to College
Recent University Graduate
Career-Switcher

Participate [...edu/participate]

Steps to Success (admission, progress, graduation)
Advising
Program Requirements
FAQ
Social Media
Discussion Boards
Contact Forms
Jobs and Scholarships

News & Events [...edu/news]

Calendar of Events
In the Press
Student and Faculty Accomplishments