Content Strategy Plan

For UC Davis University Writing Program

By: TechniGals

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Content Strategy Executive Summary

In this day in age, creating new, fresh, clickbait-worthy content at a fast pace is the new reality for maintaining a channel; being adaptive and establishing organized structures and frameworks that allows the University Writing Program (UWP) Department to be reactive, while still being proactive and informative is key. Three main goals that would be in the best interest of UWP of perusing primarily involve researching ways to increase the website's traffic, develop a team responsible for product content management and production, and promote the existing programs elemental to UWP's wide appeal.

At its current state, the UWP's website is in a dire need of an update. Upon navigating through the various social media platforms listed on the UWP website (Facebook and Twitter), it is immediately evident that the content distribution has not been maintained at an appropriate volume or frequency for the program's events and information to stay "relevant" in their audience's newsfeed.

As for the Program's actual website, the content *has* been updated for the most part, however there are some grammatical errors scattered throughout and many technical aspects needs refining. Content-wise, it is a simple fact that websites need to produce more content in order to remain competitive in searches. It is important to emphasize that *more* content is not the same as *better* content; it is pertinent that the UWP website's headings, keywords, images and their descriptions, and content length be revised and improved on. On the aesthetic and usability front, one issue that need to be addressed immediately is the fact that going "back" to the *Previous Page* or *Homepage* is near impossible. Furthermore, the website is currently not mobile friendly and each tab includes its own website link; thus, centralizing websites that the UWP Department hosts would enable users to access various information sources without being redirected to an entirely new website, which may prevent confusion.

Successful content creation and production requires the constant revision and tracking of the website's performance in order for the program's leaders to determine what aspects of their "brand" is working towards achieving their goals, and what areas need reevaluating. The TechniGals offer a three-phased blueprint that, once implemented, will revolutionize UWP's digital marketing strategy. First, UWP needs to focus on the primary audience, which is current and incoming University of California, Davis students by stripping the website of its outdated information and bland images, and rather make the website more appealing to the user by utilizing the large amount of empty space on the website and changing the entire aesthetic. Second, UWP may increase outreach and engage with their audience simply by offering an email or text "subscription" option, and organizing a regular "newsletter" or notification system containing UWP updates. Lastly, creating a central internship program for the UWP Department could not only attract students associated with a number of varying majors, but the students and UWP staff can create a mutually beneficial internship where the students would provide content management services at no cost to the department, all the while gaining experience with a professional and easy-to-find, on-campus internship.

Content Marketing Goals

The overall marketing goals for the UC Davis University Writing Program (UWP) are to improve both the design and usability of the department's website, both for mobile and computer users. Our secondary goal is to promote the existing programs supported by the department, specifically the Professional Writing Minor.

Content accomplishes these goals by:

- Providing an opportunity to ask the UC Davis community about the website by giving out a survey to students and professors.

- Bringing more visits to the website by including a email list or social media page where students view website content and can subscribe to a monthly newsletter with department news, submission dates of writing prize contests, announcements and more. Creating a mobile friendly website would allow students to find information in a manner that's most convenient for them.

- Including a student intern who could help other students online during certain hours with questions about their writing. Website traffic could be monitored by viewing how many people visit the site when offering this service to determine which hours of the day have the most demand. If students do not find the website useful, they will choose not to visit the website at all, so providing live writing tutoring, would increase student traffic.

- Fixing current errors and enhancing the design and aesthetics of the website while providing up-to-date information about the program by adding more information to the home page and centralizing the websites that the department hosts.

Key metrics include:
- More followers on social media platforms.
- Making the website accessible everywhere: mobile and computer.
- Creating the design of the website more concise, neat and appealing to the user.

How the Audience's Needs Match Our Solutions

UWP's Goals	TechniGals' Solutions
Increase Website traffic	- Make UWP's content consumable by managing existing social media platforms, or by updating the UWP website to be accessible on mobile devices. - Google says more searches now occur on mobile than on desktop. 75% of Americans admit to bringing their phone to the bathroom. - Creating an "app" for iPhone/Android mobile devices. - Apps account for 89% of mobile-media time, with the other 11% spent on websites. 83% of mobile users say that a seamless experience across all devices is very important. - Creating a simple horizontal email or text "Subscription" bar where students would receive a monthly newsletter containing information on new staff members, deadline reminders, Study Abroad program details, photos, Writing on the Edge samples, etc. - Over 50% of smartphone users grab their smartphone immediately after waking up.[1]
Product content management and production	- Offer an department-specific internship for Professional Writing minors, Communication majors, or Computer Science students. - UWP currently has students find their own internships for the Technical Writing Minor, then have those internships go through an approval process. If the department were to establish an internal internship, the students and UWP staff can create a mutually beneficial internship; the students would provide content management services at no cost to the department, all the while gaining experience with a professional and easy-to-find internship.
Promote existing programs	Prize Writing Competition

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[1] <u>All Statistics Provided By:</u> Group., Britton Marketing & Design. "How to Successfully Create Content for Humans and Bots." *Britton Marketing + Design Group*, 29 Mar. 2017, www.brittonmdg.com/the-britton-blog/creating-successful-content-for-people-and-algorithms.

	○ "Since 1989, *Prized Writing* has published exemplary undergraduate writing from across the disciplines."[2] ● Professional Writing Minor ○ "The minor in Professional Writing offers students advanced instruction in writing and editing as well as guidance in adapting to new technologies, new modes of discourse, and new rhetorical situations."[3] ● Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies (WRaCS DE) Graduate Courses ○ "The Designated Emphasis (DE) in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies (WRaCS) offers PhD students the opportunity to prepare for leadership roles in writing research, teaching, and program administration. This DE provides both a theoretical and practical knowledge of writing instruction, program administration and research. Developing pedagogical strategies and assessment programs which respond to local needs have applications for graduate students interested in researching student writing in both secondary and postsecondary environments."[4]

Competitive Research

[2] "About." *About | Prized Writing*, University of California, Davis, prizedwriting.ucdavis.edu/.
[3] "Professional Writing Minor." *Professional Writing Minor | UWP*, University of California, Davis, writing.ucdavis.edu/academics/professional-writing-minor.
[4] "About." *About | Designated Emphasis (DE) in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies (WRaCS)*, University of California, Davis, wracs.ucdavis.edu/.

Content From the Competition

The UWP department's main competitors include writing departments at other universities and other UC Davis departments that have minors. There are a number of universities that have organized writing websites with helpful resources for students and staff, each with their own advantages. For example, Purdue University has useful links with tutorials like "How to Format in MLA / APA". Each page of their website is color coded and well organized, making navigation easy for users. Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) features an owl eye on the "O" of their logo, immediately drawing users' attention to the website. The catchy name OWL is also easy for first time users to remember. Another competing university is UC Santa Barbara. Near the top of their homepage, there is a direct link to information about their minor. The website also features a page for student and faculty publications, faculty profiles, and alumni spotlights with information about what past students who completed the minor are doing. Other universities' writing departments offer services like tutoring, essay help, Youtube videos with information about classes, and quick links to other helpful resources. If the UWP website offered services that students found helpful and interesting, website traffic would increase.

Having a well established website that offers helpful links to internship programs and tutoring services for students would make the website more useful. Having an active social media presence on Twitter and Facebook could also increase traffic on the UWP website by posting links to the website. Through social media, the department could easily inform students, faculty, and the public on information about classes, deadlines, department events and socials, all of which will increase the number of people visiting the website and having knowledge about the department.

Existing, Similar Content Sources

Heroes include: The heroes in the University Writing Program at UC Davis include professors and faculty that teach the UWP classes and students who provide the funding and attendance for UWP.

Watering Holes include: These websites are those that we know are popular and used most and people can get information easily from them. They represent places your customers trust for useful content.

Purdue University https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
DePaul University https://las.depaul.edu/academics/writing-rhetoric-and-discourse/Pages/default.aspx
Stanford University http://creativewriting.stanford.edu
University of Santa Barbara http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/

Content Inventory

Here is a content audit of the website:

- About
    - Contact
    - Position Announcements
    - Program History
    - Program History Document Archive
    - University Writing Requirements
- Academics
    - Course Schedules
    - Course Descriptions
        - Lower Division
        - Upper Division
        - Graduate Courses
        - English as a Second Language
        - Professional Writing and Internships
        - Rhetoric, Grammar, and Style
    - Internships
    - Student Learning Objectives
    - Writing Minor
        - Requirements
        - Forms
        - FAQs
        - Portfolios
    - Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies Graduate Courses
- People
    - Directory
    - Faculty
    - Faculty Administrators
    - Graduate Student Interviews
    - PhD Students
    - Office Hours
    - Committee List
- Publications
    - Prized Writing
        - About
        - The Contest
            - The Rules
            - Enter Here
        - The Archive
        - Where Are They Now?

- History
        - Writing on the Edge
        - Recent Publications by Faculty
        - Readings About Writing
- Programs and Services

These are the most visited pages:
- Upper Division Composition Exam
- Course Schedules

These are the social media accounts:
- Twitter: @writingprogram - 366 followers
- Facebook: UC Davis University Writing Program - 168 likes

Evaluation of Existing Content

What Sticks?

Certain concrete elements of the UWP website bring in the most amount of traffic to the website. These elements are the: University Writing Graduation Requirements and the Upper Division Writing Exam. As these two facets are the most well known, there does not need to be any improvement in the marketing plan. The above services have reached a saturation within the student body of UC Davis. There are other concrete sections that do not reflect the overall theme of improvement that is being presented in this content strategy plan. Those sections are outlined below.

Areas that Stick:

1. University Writing Graduation Requirements
2. Upper Division Writing Exam
3. Posted and updated Office Hours
4. Directory of Faculty/Staff
5. Has an option of quick links

What Should We Fix?

After conducting a thorough exploration of the UWP website, it was clear that there are some major improvements that need to be taken in order to draw more attention. The overall usability of the website is limited to desktop version, there is an issue with getting back to the homepage, and there is an underutilization of strategies that can promote some of the internal services that are uniquely offered by the UWP. The issues are annoying at best, but are also discouraging the main customer that the UWP is attempting to attract, the students.

Areas to be Fixed:

1. Do not limit website to desktop format only
2. Mirror to homepage
3. Promote writing minor
4. Promote Prized Writing
5. Utilize homepage more effectively
6. Sticky the UWP building on campus map

What Should We Nix?

Restricting the access of the website to only a desktop version needs to be removed. There is a need to have a mobile friendly site because that is how most of the customer base, students, access information. There is little information on the UWP site that mandates a restriction to only a desktop version. Refusing to integrate to a mobile platform is refusing to meet the demands of the customers. Along with changing the format of the site, the homepage needs to be changed. As it stands, the

homepage is dedicated to the minority interest group. The first thing that the viewer sees at the UWP page, is banners that would interest faculty and staff. Focusing on the primary client, the content of the banners should be targeting students. Banners about the minor or some of the other programs offered for students should be displayed.

 Areas to Nix:

1. Desktop only version of site
2. Banners targeting faculty

What Should We Add to the Mix?

There is a need to attract students to the UWP page, and to do so the program must create new content that will interest the primary market. This new content can come in the form of an in-house internship for the UWP. While the UWP hosts internships for outside companies, they are neglecting their own business prosperity. Having a dedicated UWP intern can bring traffic to the department in terms of more students. Along with an intern position, the program can utilize a quasi-social media newsletter to update the primary customers. This newsletter can be spread once a month via email subscription. It can contain a variety of content such as updates about the faculty or staff, deadlines for the various writing competitions, and other noteworthy department happenings.

Add to the Mix:

1. Internship
2. Monthly newsletter w/ deadlines, general updates
3. Redefining and focus on primary customer (students)

New Content to Create
Types of Content to Create

- **Update the design of the website**: Instead of having outdated information and images with a plain white background, make the website more appealing to users by adding more color and making use of the excess white space.

- **Email newsletter:** Create a collection of links and resources with information about the UWP program, due dates, faculty profiles, internship updates, and anything else that seems important for students in the department. The newsletter would be emailed every month, allowing subscribers to reply with their thoughts, questions, content ideas, or any other feedback.

- **UWP social media**: Currently, the UWP Twitter and Facebook pages are not updated frequently. Having a UWP intern or staff member in charge of making daily Twitter and Facebook posts could increase student traffic to the UWP web page and would increase people's knowledge of information about things going on in the department..

- **Internship program:** There would be a team of interns working for the UWP department and fulfilling the internship part of the Professional Writing minor. Live website interns would be helping students who visit the UWP website to get tutoring in writing or just have a quick question about the UWP program or website.

- **Fixing current errors on the website**: The website currently is very difficult to navigate, especially as a first time user. Going back to the previous page or homepage is nearly impossible. The website is currently not mobile friendly and each tab redirects users to a different website link. Centralizing websites that the department hosts would ease user navigation.

Estimate of Content Capacity

Website Revamp and Maintenance

- Who's the team: Elliot Pollard, Webmaster, new user experience and design focused intern
- What's the workflow: Elliot works on redesigning the website over the rest of the year with the assistance of an intern who helps with the overall design of the website
- Moving forward: Elliot continues to maintain the website and post relevant updates to department information. If needed, the user experience intern can continue to provide input on the design of the website so that it is user friendly, aesthetically pleasing, and avoids becoming outdated.

Internship Program

- Who's the team: Elyse Lord, Coordinator for Professional Writing Internships
- What's the workflow: Elyse creates application for interns, interviews and hires students for quarterly or year-long internships with the department, with the assistance of the people who the interns will work for. Interns will be directly overseen by their part of the department.
- Moving forward: Past interns will provide feedback on the program and their experiences to help improve it.

Monthly Newsletter

- Who's the team: Newsletter intern
- What's the workflow: Intern compiles information from department to put in monthly newsletter and then send to subscribers. Potentially, this intern will work with the social media intern to stay up to date on information.
- Moving forward: This internship will develop as the intern sees fit. The intern could change the frequency of the emails, the method of distributing information, etc.

Social Media

- Who's the team: Social media intern
- What's the workflow: Intern maintains UWP's Facebook page and Twitter feed with posts regarding deadlines, department information and updates, and anything else they deem necessary. This intern could potentially work with the newsletter intern to stay up to date on information.
- Moving forward: Like the newsletter intern, this internship will develop as the intern sees fit. It will ultimately be up to them as to how often they want to make posts, what kind of posts they want to make, and what social media outlets to use.

Editorial Calendar

Frequency:
- Newsletter: send monthly newsletter to subscribers with departments updates, information and deadlines
- Website: update monthly with any new information that goes out in the newsletter
- Internships: quarterly applications and interviews for positions

Summary

Social media explosion and technological advancements have changed how target audiences consume content, and in response to the customer service demands, UWP must change how they create and present the content.

Increasing the website's traffic and bring attention to the UWP's existing programs are obvious goals, of which can simply be achieved through the managing of the existing social media platforms, or by updating the UWP website to be accessible on mobile devices. Audience outreach can be streamlined by simply creating a horizontal email or text "Subscription" bar where students would receive a bi-monthly "newsletter" or brief notification containing information on new Staff Members, deadline reminders, Study Abroad program details, photos, *Writing on the Edge* samples, etc.

Generally speaking, as one of the top universities in the nation, UC Davis is in an extremely unique position; its students may be engaged in a variety of differing majors and extracurriculars, and hobbies, however the one major thing they all have in common is their drive. The UWP program can capitalize on the high student demand for internships by offering an internship for students -- whether it be in offering essay writing help, website/application design, coding, or the drafting of new content -- in which the department can increase employee numbers and task distribution without raising costs, as well as provide students an opportunity to work on something that will showcase their abilities to not only other students visiting the site, but to future employers as well. A website or application made for students, by students is the way to go.