REPORT | Review & Recommendations for OFMP Website

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OVERVIEW OF WEBSITE | www.ffa.int/gef

Background

This report is compiled as a requirement for the consultancy as specified under "Scope of Consultancy (Responsibilities)", under Schedule A – Terms of Reference, contained in the Memorandum of Agreement signed between Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and the author of this report.

This report will present a brief overview on the review of the Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management (OFM) Project website. This review was carried out during the initial stages of the consultancy. This report will present a brief overview on its findings and provide recommendations which will be implemented during the later course of this consultancy.

Website Overview

The website was created using Drupal 5.1, an open source Content Management System (CMS). A customized theme is used consistently throughout the website. The uses of additional Drupal modules were not investigated.

Domain

The URL **www.ffa.int/gef** is a sub domain of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency website **www.ffa.int**.   Whilst the project is executed by FFA, it is an entity on its own and this report strongly recommends that if it **must** remain a sub domain, an intuitive URL should be used instead of the current URL. Suggestions may include **gef.ffa.int**.   A further recommendation is that the project acquires its own domain which reflects its place on the World Wide Web. However, this issue has little bearing on the execution of this project.

NOTE: *On further deliberation with the client it was resolved that the current domain will be retained based on two reasons:*

1. *This is a four year project which is already midway through its term and any such changes will not achieve any tangible benefit.*
2. *From a technical standpoint, this website was setup as a subset of the FFA website and this current setup works best for maintenance of FFA's collection of Drupal websites.*

Theme

Whilst some care has been taken to ensure that the site is not too cluttered with text and images, its lack of attention to detailed style is a drawback.   The website has a very bland look which is uninviting and can only cater for users with very specific interest in the project and its initiatives.

Content

There is a wealth of information on the website. However, its organization and presentation leaves a lot to be desired. A proper audit should be made on all content enabling it to be categorized into logical groupings with a clear correlation to navigation and site menus. The following sections need urgent attention.

- Front Page
- News
- About Us
- Profile Page

> - All other content should be grouped under clearly defined categories.

Navigation

The use of Nice Menus on the website implies the desire to get the users as quickly as possible to content. This can also be achieved by a re-organization of the front page using specific Drupal modules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report was compiled after some scrutiny on the current website. The execution of the recommendations contained in this report will be subject to a final agreement with the Project Coordination Unit. It is anticipated that implementation will consider all recommendations but may not strictly adhere **and or limited**, to those outlined within this report.

DRUPAL SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The following steps are strongly recommended:

1. Update/Install the latest stable version of Drupal. At the time of writing, the latest stable release is Drupal 5.7 and 4.7. Drupal 6 is in beta 3 and will be released during the course of 2008.
    NOTE: *This is regularly carried out by the IT Department of FFA.*
2. Upgrade all existing modules used on the website to the latest stable releases

THEME

First impressions make the lasting impressions and so are always important. The color theme and present graphics can be maintained but some modifications and careful work needs to be undertaken to improve visual appeal.

1. Frontpage – A clever re-organization of the front page can assist users acquire information as quickly as desired. To achieve this, Drupal has a dedicated Frontpage module. In combination with PHPTemplate engine (available as core from Drupal 5.x onwards), this task is made easier.
2. Color Scheme – The current color scheme can be maintained. However, clever use of shades and color combinations can enhance its current appearance.

3. NAVIGATION

In keeping with the simplicity of the current site, a well structured navigation is critical to the success of the venture. A modification on the current navigation menu must fulfill the following criteria:

1. Ease of use - The navigation system should be intuitive and easy to use, providing direct access to content on the website.
2. Visibility – The navigation menu must be constantly visible at all times enabling the user to easily navigate throughout the site.
3. Site map – A sitemap will be provided as an alternative method of navigating the site to the user.
4. Internal links – Where possible, static content must be developed to include internal links for faster access to other sections of the website.

5. Text as well as graphic links (ALT tags) - Graphics may not convey immediate meaning to some users so providing additional text links is important. ALT tags on images accommodate the visually impaired and can boost ranking with some search engines.

The current website uses Nice Menus module. However, it needs a fair amount of work to   meet   the   above   criteria.

4. CONTENT

There is a need to improve the quality and quantity of content on the website and at the same time ensuring that users are not overwhelmed with a wealth of information that may otherwise be of little use to the client. It must also be current and easy to update.

1. Degree of substantiated information – To attain some conformity and improve on quality of information available on the website, the following mechanisms must be implemented.

    *   *Authorship*: Provide ability for content to reflect who is responsible for the pages, and the content can be verified at the earliest possible time.

    *   *Currency*: Provide mechanisms on which contents on the site can be easily updated and clearly reflect date of creation and the date of the last successful update.

    *   *Coverage*: Provide a clear hierarchy of headings to illustrate an outline of the content on the website.

    *   *Accuracy*: Ensure that sources of information and factual data are clearly listed.

        NOTE: *All content should only clearly display date of creation or successful update, accurate and well-organized. Authorship is not necessary.*

2. Interactivity – Content should be tailored by use of text, graphics or animation to interact with the user. The site should take advantage of the great opportunity to interact with its users by implementing user friendly graphics, text, help messages and animation to aid content presentation.
3. Graphics - Graphics should add value to the website rather than reduce performance without providing any real benefit to the user. Current graphics are not optimized for optimal performance. A major drawback for the website.
4. Digestible Content - Content should be chunked, that is broken up into easily digestible amounts. As previously stated, content need re-organization and careful categorization.

    <u>Recommended Modules for Content Management</u>
    1. WYSIWYG Editor such as **Tinymce** or **FCKEditor**. If currently installed it must be configured by roles and available by default.

2. **Views/CCK** – The combination of these two modules can allow for greater customization of content types and categorization for ease of navigation.

5. BROWSER COMPATIBILITY

Surfing websites is a useful and pleasant experience when they conform to current industry standards. There are many variations of browsers and monitors in use today and it is important that the website is accessible to as many internet users as possible.

Ensuring that the current website conforms and is compatible for most frequently used browsers is important, especially Mozilla Firefox and Internet Explorer.

6. OTHER USEFUL MODULES

The additional modules and recommendations for content specified below are envisioned to enhance the general outlook of the website and provide greater flexibility or control over content.

1. Additional Drupal Modules
    - **Front**
      Using the Front Module can greatly enhance the front page. It gives flexibility to provide layouts/content specific to each user role. Regions/Blocks can also be defined to hold specific content such as the Latest News/Newsletter downloads on the front page.
    - **Menu Per Role**
      Menu Per Role is a small module which can be used to control menu items per user role. This module can be used to control menus for specific users.
      NOTE: *Security restrictions will not be implemented at this stage of the Consultancy. However, a disclaimer will be provided to tag content not publically available. The disclaimer will provide instructions on how users can gain access to that information. All content available on the website will be deemed public.*
    - **Taxonomy Access**
      Taxonomy Access can be used to control user created content types giving greater control over access to content.
      NOTE: *Security restrictions will not be implemented at this stage of the Consultancy.*
    - **Views/CCK**
      The combination of Views/CCK will give greater flexibility for the creation of site specific content types. Used with inbuilt Taxonomy module and content can be styled and categorized with ease. A perfect example is the Profiles page which can be enhanced using this combination.
    - **Events/Calendar**

The project plays an important role in Fisheries Management and it would be of interest to its users if a calendar of events were displayed on the website.

NOTE: *The current default theme must be modified to display a better outlook.*

- **RSS Feed**

This module will enable subscribers or users to have news, press release to be fed directly from the website in real time

- **SimpleNews**

Simplenews is a newsletter module which can be used to generate newsletters.

2. History of OFM Project

3. Mission statement

NOTE: *OFM Project does not have a Mission Statement*