

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes



Content Strategy Analysis

Katie Coen
October 2023

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....1

Introduction.....2

Client Needs.....3

Audience.....3

Content Alignment Summary.....4

Content Analysis.....5

Search Engine Optimization.....8

Accessibility.....9

Site Architecture.....10

Competitive Analysis.....11

Strategy.....14

Content Design.....15

Writing Style Guide.....19

Key Performance Indicators.....20

Next Steps.....21

Resources.....22

Executive Summary

Getting an organization's message across is the most important value of a website. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) have an online presence at the moment, but it can be drastically improved to help them achieve their goals of satisfying the Tribal members, reaching further audiences for educational purposes, and bringing in tourists to the Flathead Indian Reservation.

This content strategy breaks down how CSKT can improve their website and content distribution. After our analysis, we learned what the organization is doing well and what can be changed while still keeping the integrity of the wide variety of information the site currently holds.

Our ideas are based on revamping the website by giving it a modern look and including more visual representations. We also recommend adjusting aspects of the website for search engine optimization and accessibility, which are critical for a successful online presence. To get CSKT through this redevelopment, we give a clear path the organization can take to accomplish this.

Introduction

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes is seeking a new, restructured website that will give users a better experience when researching the Flathead Indian Reservation and the services it offers. This document is a content strategy report for the Executive Officers and other tribal leaders heading this project to share our perspective on the current website and how it can be improved.

CSKT became an established territory in 1855 with the Hellgate Treaty and now covers approximately 1.3 million acres of land in northwest Montana. Their existing websites give in depth information about the tribe's history, services they offer, court records, natural resources, and more, all of which are important to the 7,700 enrolled Tribal members and additional audiences. Each of the existing 17 websites hold valuable and necessary information, but they can be consolidated into one site with a modern design.

Their objective is to not only consolidate these websites, but to improve user experience, look visually unified, and create a new navigational structure. This revamped website will help achieve their goals of keeping Tribal members up to date with information, educating the public about the reservation, and attracting tourists.

Content strategy is a technique that can be used to reach CSKT's goals. Content strategy is a continuous process of designing an online presence and planning content. When complete, the set goals created in this process can help drive more traffic to a site. To get there, we will focus on a balance between what CSKT wants their viewers to see and what those viewers want or need.

Process

First, we will assess what actions CSKT needs to take to improve their standing. Then we will dive into the current state of the content on the CSKT website, including how it is distributed to web visitors and through social media. We will compare CSKT to its direct competitors and explain a strategy that can help the website target the correct audience. Finally, we will give inspiration for the design of the website and show how to track future success.

Client Needs

CSKT is looking for a developer to make many improvements to their website. These changes should be visually pleasing while meeting accessibility and SEO guidelines for a successful website. These needs include:

1. Rebuild, sophisticated CMS platform that can hold the variety of web pages and content
2. Consistent site structure with visually cohesive elements
3. Easily accessible navigation system with clear options
4. Calendar of events on the reservation
5. News feed with latest information
6. Interactive map showing where the reservation is and all the land it stretches over
7. Contact information and a form to submit that will deliver directly to Tribal leaders
8. Search feature
9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page with basic reservation information
10. Images and image galleries
11. Short but informative videos that educate visitors about CSKT and the reservation
12. Livestream camera of the reservation
13. Employment information and job postings/descriptions
14. Services offered by CSKT for Tribal members and the surrounding community
15. A subscription newsletter and way of signing up for email communications
16. Links to social media pages

Audience

According to CSKT, there are several targeted audiences for the websites.

1. CSKT members
2. Employees
3. People living on reservation and surrounding area
4. People of all ages looking for info
5. People registering for events and services
6. Members or residents who want a job
7. Potential visitors or tourists
8. Government and elected officials
9. Local media
10. Local businesses looking for partnerships

Content Alignment Summary

To improve and update the current content and design of the CSKT website, we are outlining the established business goals that the website must portray. These goals are based on the given target audiences and needs of the organization, as given by CSKT.

Business Goals	Content Objectives
Inform Tribal members about resources and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showcase all the events and activities available on the reservation• Keep an updated calendar of these events• List and describe services and resources available on the reservation and other government opportunities Tribal members have
Recruit members to enroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List easily understandable guidelines for enrollment eligibility• Share stories of current Tribal members and their positive experiences• Show how Tribal members benefit from their status
Educate the average person about the reservation and its culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the history of all the tribes included in CSKT and the background of the reservation land• Use images and videos to visually represent what can be found on the reservation
Attract tourists to visit the reservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visually show where the reservation is• Explain the highlights and scenery that can be found there• Use social media to spread information about visitor opportunities

Content Analysis

The current CSKT content offers a broad range of information. There are over 45 web pages on the main site filled with written content and documents with details ranging from the history and culture to the services for the Tribal community, surrounding areas, and how to enroll. However, the website lacks key elements that would make it more exciting for viewers.

Types of Content

Images

There are very few images on the current website. Besides the slideshow of images on the Home page, there are few pictures shown throughout the site. The existing images are used for a visual element, but many do not serve a purpose. The first picture that is shown on the Home page slideshow is an unknown building with no context. There are also images promoting events and the mobile app. These are not good quality visuals and lower the level of professionalism on the site.

To combat this, more images can be added throughout the site, but they should all have a purpose. Visualizations of the actual reservation, the Tribal members in their daily lives, and events will give viewers a deeper connection to what they are reading and give more context. They will also help cater to visual learners and people who want to see how the reservation functions everyday.

Professional photography would take this website to a new level. It is one simple step that can improve the quality and search-ability online.

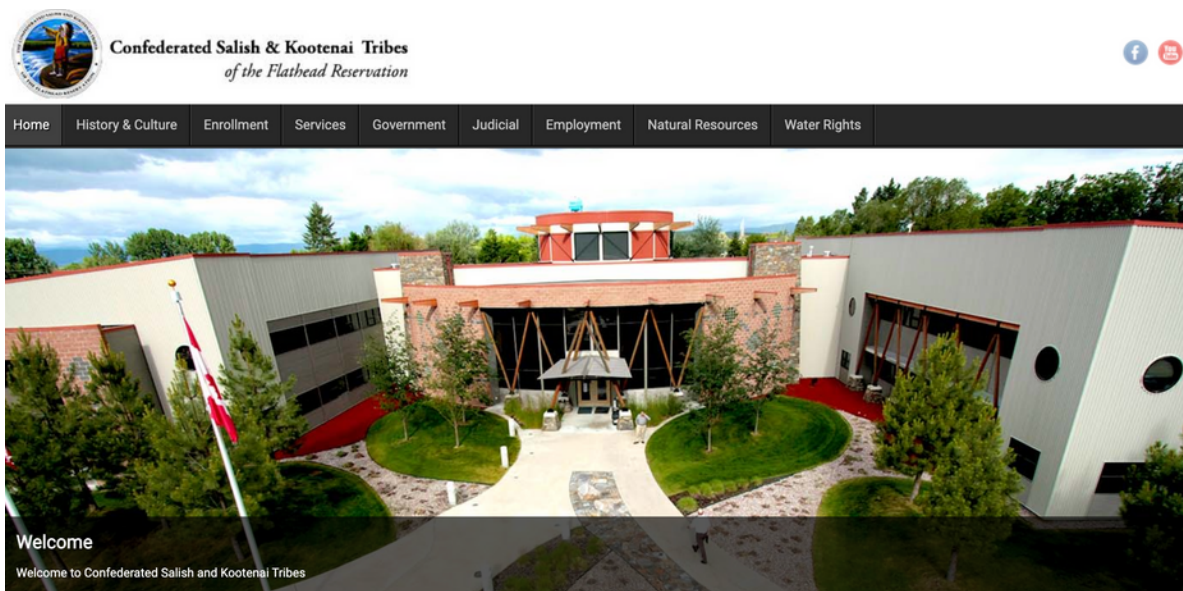


Image slideshow on Home page

Videos

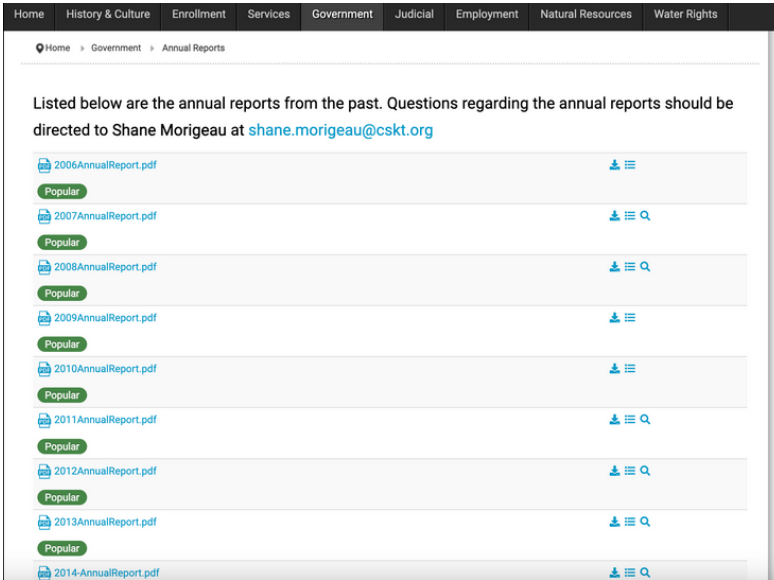
In our analysis, we did find a video on the [Tribal Education](#) website. It is a long Youtube video linked to the site showcasing the 2022 Native Youth Music Art & Poetry Expo. It's used to show what happened at the event and educate site visitors, but there are clear challenges.

The video is too long for the average viewer's attention span. Instead of a 32 minute video, the event could be summed up in 3-5 minutes. The quality is effective with multiple camera angles, but there is no context to what the event is.

More videos should be added throughout the website to give a realistic view of events and services the reservation has to offer. These videos can be on a range of topics, such as a quick rundown of health resources available for Tribal members or the opportunities a tourist can find if they visit. Site visitors will be more likely to watch a short video then read paragraphs because in this digital age, online consumers prefer a visual. Due to these short attention spans, all videos should be 1-5 minutes unless they are for a specific audience relating to an important topic.

Documents

While there are few images and videos, there are a variety of documents that can be found on the CSKT website. Annual reports, job listings, laws, and transportation routes are easily downloadable from the site. These pieces of content are necessary for the purposes of sharing services and resources for Tribal members, as well as educating the general public. But they can be displayed in a different way. Instead of long lists of PDF links, a preview image can be used to make documents look more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing.



Annual Report documents shown in list

Forms

Forms can be found in multiple locations on the main website. There is a Forms option in the Home page drop down menu that lists 3 online forms for site visitors. As you can see in this screenshot from the website, they are listed and linked. There is also a job application form under Employment for prospective employees.

These forms are necessary for the website and give an easy way for outside users to contact CSKT leaders, but one key form is missing. A contact form should be added to allow for miscellaneous comments and feedback to be sent through the website.

Online Forms

[Cultural Clearance Request Form](#)

[Tribal Council Agenda Request Form](#)

[Charitable Gaming Application](#)

Written Content

Aside from the visual and interactive content, what is written on the site is just as important. Currently, the writing has an informative tone and fits the educational purpose of the website. The average educated person can make sense of the message, but it is not very conversational.

Due to the variety of audiences the site is catered to, the writing can be simplified. Tribal members and tourists are most likely looking for easy to read explanations. The goal is to make the writing meaningful to the reader in a way they can understand, especially if they know nothing about the tribe. Later in this report, we will give suggestions on how to adapt the written content to the target audiences.

Content Distribution



CSKT uses some social media to distribute their content, but this usage can be improved. Currently, there are multiple active Facebook pages, a Youtube channel, and an X (Twitter) account.

The many Facebook pages are designated to one department or sector of the organization. There are pages ranging from health to wildlife to the Tribal council. Each post events and updates, but some are more active than others. The health information page posts multiple times a day and has done live videos for viewers, while the Tribal council posts weekly. To keep up engagement, all these accounts should be used daily.

The X page for CSKT is used very occasionally. There has been 1 post in the last 2 years about an event the health center was holding. There are only 53 followers and 19 posts.

Another way CSKT distributes their information is through their app. The general app is a great resource for Tribal members looking for details on upcoming events. The layout is very easy to follow with videos, announcements, a calendar, and links to social media. The calendar lists all activities and dates to remember, which should be incorporated into the website as well. The challenge here is that most of the videos are outdated. Many are from 2022.



Mobile app Home page

Content To Add

Most of the current content needs to be revisited and revised, while some needs to be added.

1. A weekly or monthly newsletter that is displayed on the website and an option to sign up for an email list
2. A calendar listing all upcoming events
3. Announcement banners on the Home page to showcase upcoming events
4. An interactive map of the reservation and the surrounding areas
5. More images relating to the content being described in words
6. Short videos showcasing events and for educational purposes
7. Links to social media platforms
8. Live webcam feeds of the reservation
9. Virtual tours of the reservation

Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is what an organization can do to rank higher on Google and therefore get more traffic on their site. The searchability can be impacted by a number of factors. We analyzed the current state of the CSKT website using Screaming Frog SEO Spider. This resource gives insight into website technicalities like page titles, meta descriptions, and headers.

Page Titles

Page titles, also known as title tags, are the head of a webpage that should give an overview of what can be found on the page. The goal is for these titles to be unique to each web page to describe the given content. On CSKT's website, 60.87% of the page titles are the same. "CSKT" is used on 38.39% of the pages, which gives a visitor no insight into what they will find. Aside from the repetitive titles, the other pages do describe the content. Here are some examples:

1. "Tribal Forestry"
2. "Cultural Preservation"
3. "Tribal Police"

According to Screaming Frog SEO Spider, the page titles should be 30 to 60 characters. The titles found on CSKT are mostly under 30 characters. 87.5% do not meet SEO standards for this reason.

Many of the page titles should be revised to fit the 30-60 character goal and each should have a unique name relating to the content.

Meta Descriptions

A meta description is an element of HTML that gives a summary of what the page is about. These are extremely important in SEO, as they show up on search engines as a preview of the web page before a user clicks on it. All 184 pages analyzed on the CSKT website have the same meta description, "Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes".

All of these meta descriptions need to be revisited and given a unique twist. They should serve as a brief overview of the page's content and range from 70 to 155 characters.

Headers

Headers are the titles and subtitles found on any given web page. They organize content through a hierarchy and help search engines establish what can be found on each page. Through our analysis, we found 28.57% of pages on CSKT's website are missing headers.

Similar to page titles and meta descriptions, headers should be unique to the content. There are few repetitive headers used throughout the site, but the 6.55% that are duplicates should be adjusted.

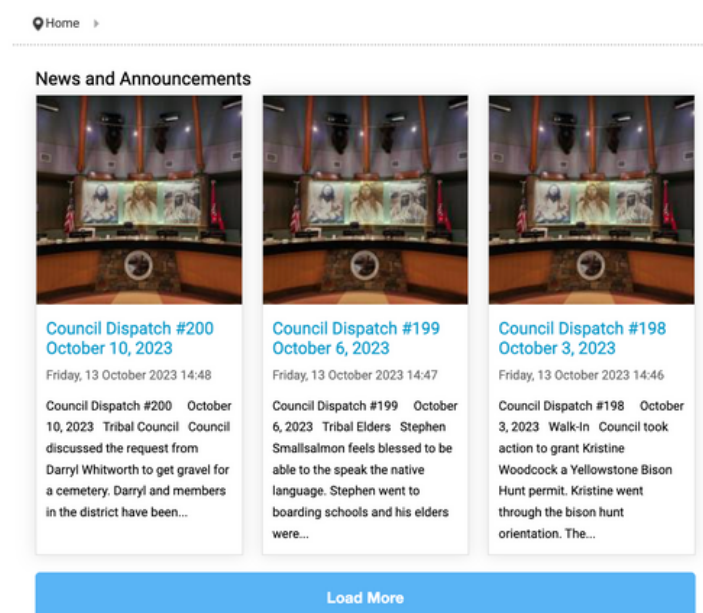
As for the writing of the headers, there are some good and some bad. An example of a well-written header is "Tribal Council Representatives". That page gives pictures of the representatives, and there describes exactly what will be found on the page. A header that could be improved is "Natural Resources...". This header is very brief and does not explain the content found on the page or what natural resources are being referred to.

This analysis shows the pages that are missing headers need them added, while others need to be rewritten for individuality and better descriptions.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a part of CSKT's website that needs to become a priority. It is so important for websites to follow ADA guidelines to make sure all users can get information from the site. One of the most common accessibility procedures is giving images alt text or alt attributes. These are captions attached to photos that screen readers use to describe the image. Screaming Frog SEO Spider shows 21.05% of the 23 images are missing alt text, while 42.11% are missing alt attributes. WAVE, another web accessibility evaluation tool, shows none of the images on the Home page have alt descriptions. To help the website meet industry standards, all existing and future images must be given alt text.

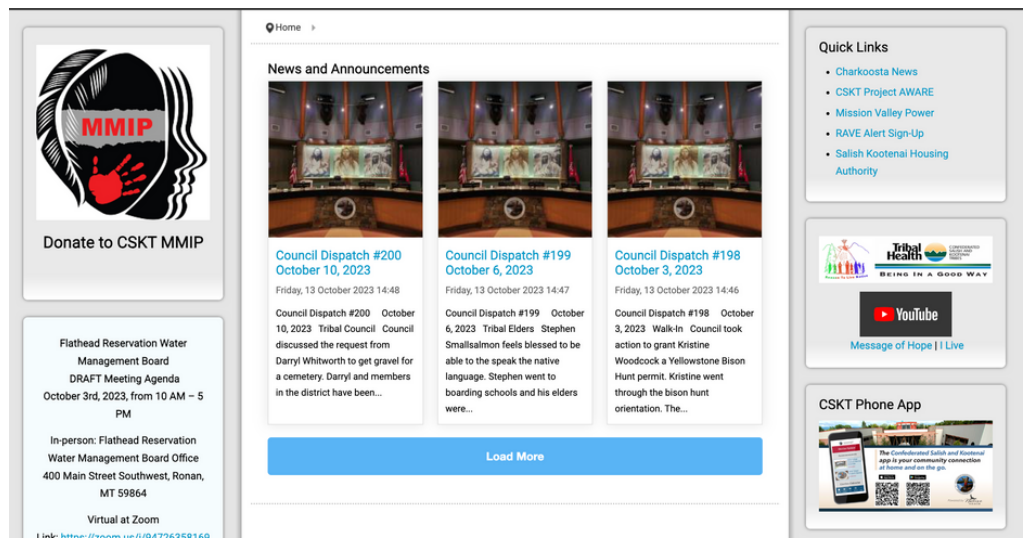
Another part of accessibility is contrast between text and the background of the website. WAVE shows there is low contrast at many places on the Home page due to the light blue text on a white background. To combat this, the color of the text could be darkened.



Example of blue text on white background on the Home page

Site Architecture

The current layout of the CSKT website is efficient but outdated. To intrigue visitors, the site can be modernized and use design elements to reformat. The current site looks old and does not meet the standards of viewers who see professional level content everyday. To update it, a variety of new colors and fonts can be incorporated. More visuals can also be added to correlate with the content, especially on pages that are meant for tourists.



Current website Home page

An addition that we believe is necessary to the website is a search function. Due to the wide variety of pages and information given on the site, the ability to search will help users find exactly what they are looking for.

There can also be more valuable details added to the footer. Contact information is already given, but quick links to news updates and the newly added calendar will give visitors access to the important aspects of the site no matter what page they are looking at.

Navigation

The way a visitor finds their way through a website is one of the highest priorities for web developers. A navigation menu must have clear options that do not confuse a user. CSKT does just that with. Although the main website contains dozens of pages, the navigation and drop down menus help a user find their way around. There are not too many options on the menu, as drop down options appear when a mouse hovers over a topic.

Another positive aspect of navigation on the website are the navigational waypoints. These can also be called breadcrumbs. They tell a user the path they have taken to get to the page they are on. With so many options on this site, this small aspect helps a visitor backtrack and understand what pages they have seen.



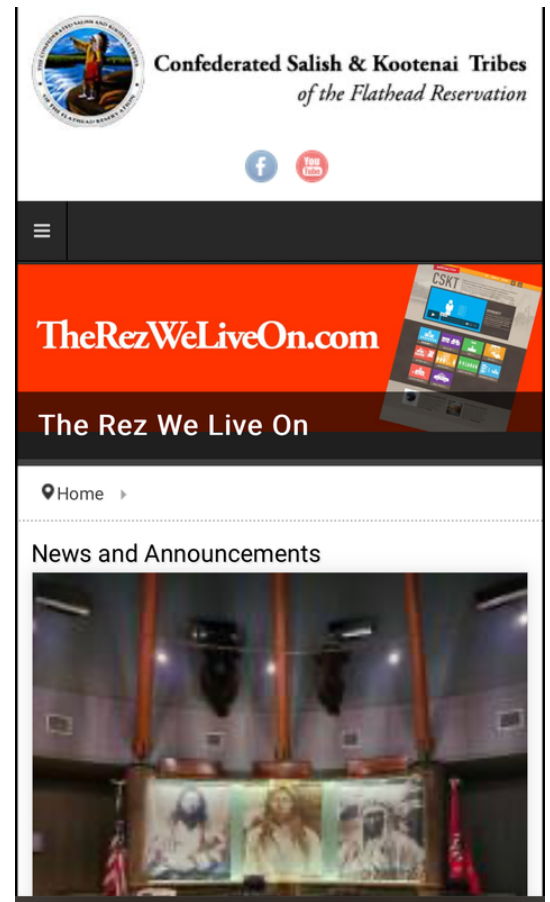
Current website navigation menu with waypoints

Mobile Usage

One of the most important things about a website now is its ability to adapt to multiple platforms. CSKT's website is mobile-friendly, as the elements are optimized to fit all screen sizes. The layout of the mobile website is more linear, allowing a user to scroll down and get the same information they'd find on a desktop or laptop.

The navigation bar becomes a hamburger menu on the left side of the screen. When it is clicked, the same navigation menu and drop down options appear.

A challenge CSKT faces with the mobile adaptability is the image quality. It is clear some of the images on the website are poor quality, causing them to look even more blurry on a smaller screen. To combat this, images can be exported at a smaller size and coded to adapt correctly.



Competitive Analysis

Looking out for your competition will always open your eyes to new aspects you can add to your site, or show what you can improve on. Two competitive entities, or similar organizations, to CSKT are the Mohegan Tribe and Cherokee Nation. All are government affiliated Native American tribes with reservations in the U.S. The three websites share a similar purpose and carry the same information for their respective tribe. The chart on the following pages compare the navigation menus, content, interactive features, and the SEO on all three websites.

	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Mohegan Tribe	Cherokee Nation
Navigation menu			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • History & Culture • Enrollment • Services • Government • Judicial • Employment • Natural Resources • Water Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About • Explore • Community • Business • Resources Secondary menu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Tribe • Our Museum • Our Government • Careers • Contact Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Services • Our Government • Employment • About the Nation • Visit Us
Content			
History of the tribe	Yes	Yes	Yes
Services offered to Tribal members	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employment information	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enrollment information	Yes	No	Yes
Government /leadership information	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visitor information	No	Yes	Yes
Contact information	Yes	Yes	Yes

Newsletter	No	No	Yes
Calendar of events	No	No	Yes
Business engagements	No	Yes	No
Interactive Features			
Search feature	No	Yes	Yes
Interactive maps	No	No	Yes
Short, informative videos	No	Yes	Yes
Livestream feed	No	No	No
Active social media	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mobile app	Yes	No	Yes
SEO & Accessibility			
Modern layout	No	Yes	Yes
Images	Yes	Yes	Yes
Images missing alt text/ attributes	21.05% (alt text) 42.11% (alt attributes)	58.64% (alt text) 0.52% (alt attributes)	8.33% (alt text) 0% (alt attributes)

Missing meta descriptions	0%	12.39%	79.9%
Duplicate meta descriptions	100%	0%	3.83%
Duplicate page titles	60.87%	0%	82.78%

The goal of looking at the competitive clients is to find what can be emulated and what should be avoided. Based on the competitive analysis, it is clear that the layout of the CSKT website should be modernized to look more professional. More interactive features should be added to give a user secondary content besides paragraphs of information. In addition, short, informative videos can capture the attention of all target audiences. Other content, such as newsletters and maps, should be added as well. These competitor websites are great resources to see what the website could look like when redesigned.

Strategy

Now that we have analyzed the existing CSKT website and identified what can be adjusted for improvement, we turn to look at what can be done to reach these goals.

Core Strategy Statement

The core strategy statement briefly answers key questions about our content strategy. It aligns the audience and the user’s needs with CSKT’s goals by explaining how we will provide the right content, to the right people, at the right time, for the right reasons (Casey 2015).

To educate tribal members and the general public, we will share relevant and useful information about the CSK Tribes that makes users feel knowledgeable about the services and importance of the reservation.

Messaging Framework

The messaging framework identifies what we want our audiences to know and believe. This is done by aligning the user’s needs with the content. The framework is then used to help decide what should be done with the content (Casey 2015).

First Impression

When a user first lands on the site, we want them to feel excited and eager to learn about CSK Tribes and the Flatland Reservation.

Value Statement

After spending a few minutes on the site, the user should feel educated and intrigued about the reservation because they understand we provide services and share the importance of the tribes in their community.

Proof

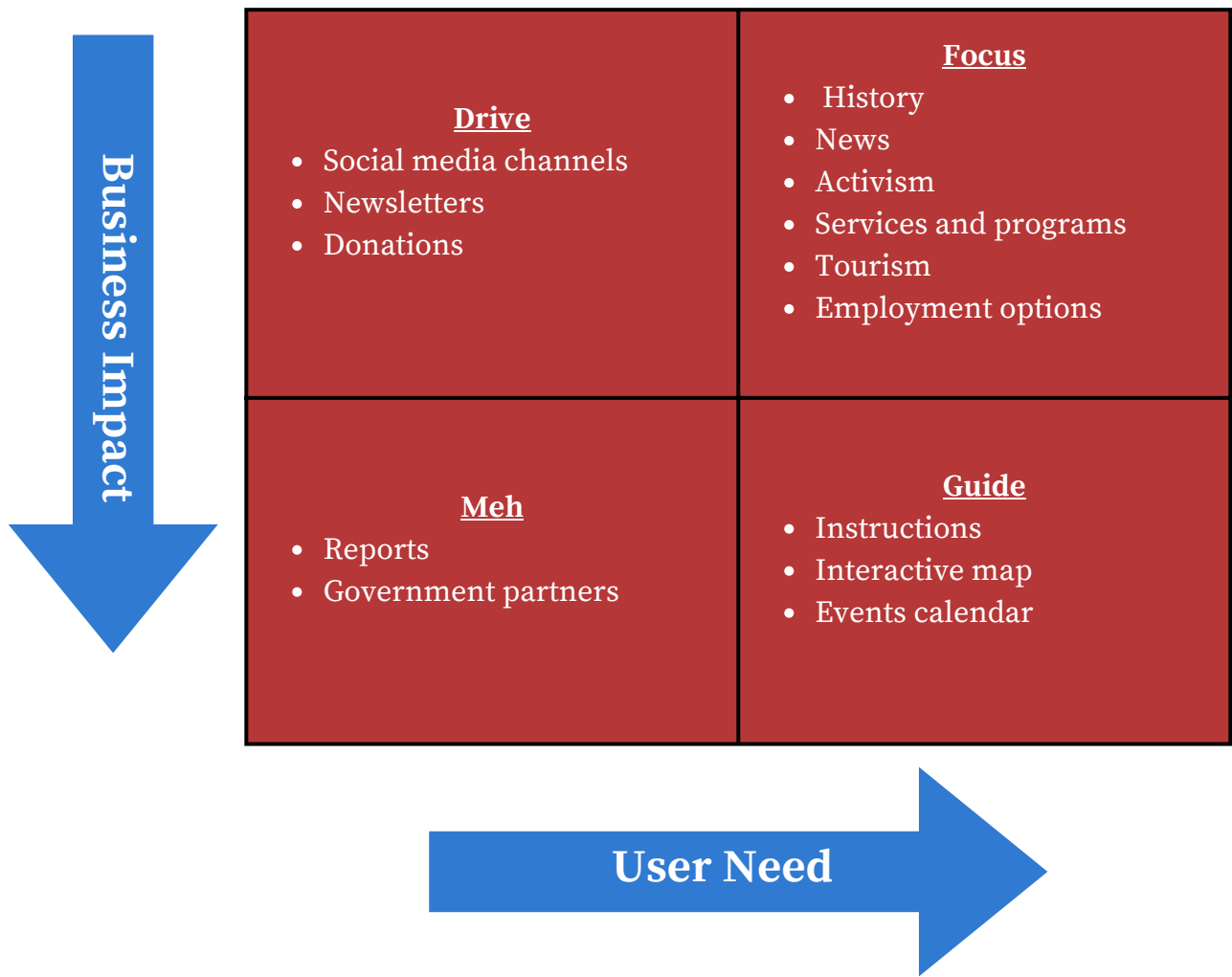
Our content should show users that we provide services for the people living on and around the reservation, events for residents and tourists, history about the tribes, and potential employment.

Content Design

The following tables and mockups make suggestions on how the new content should be designed.

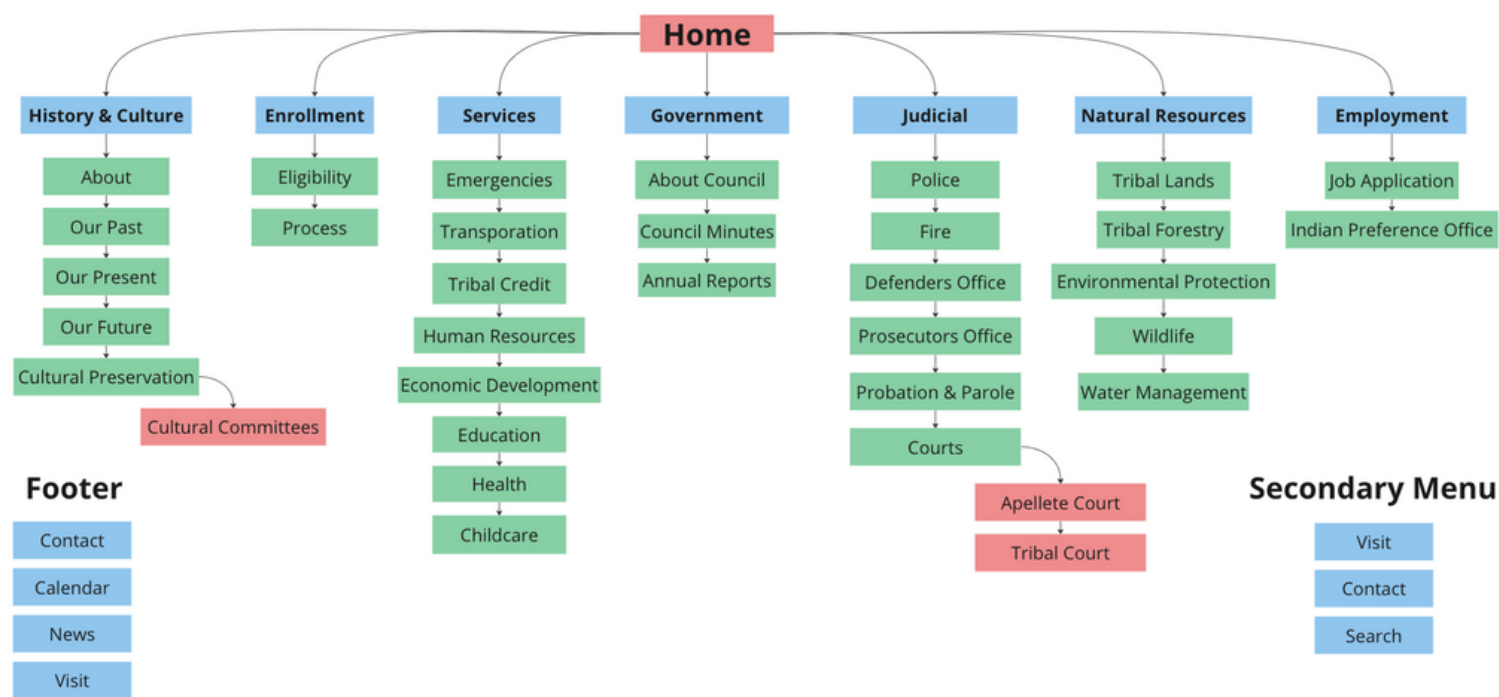
Prioritization

Prioritization explains the content and its importance to both the organization and the user. This is displayed on a priority matrix.



Organization

The organization of the site, displayed on a sitemap, shows the path users can take to find the content they are looking for. Related content is grouped together on the navigation so users can easily find what they need.



Presentation

The presentation pieces all the content together. It shows the layout the user sees when they visit the website. Wireframes map this out visually, while a content model explains the goals of the users, how they reach that information, and what is shown on the web page.

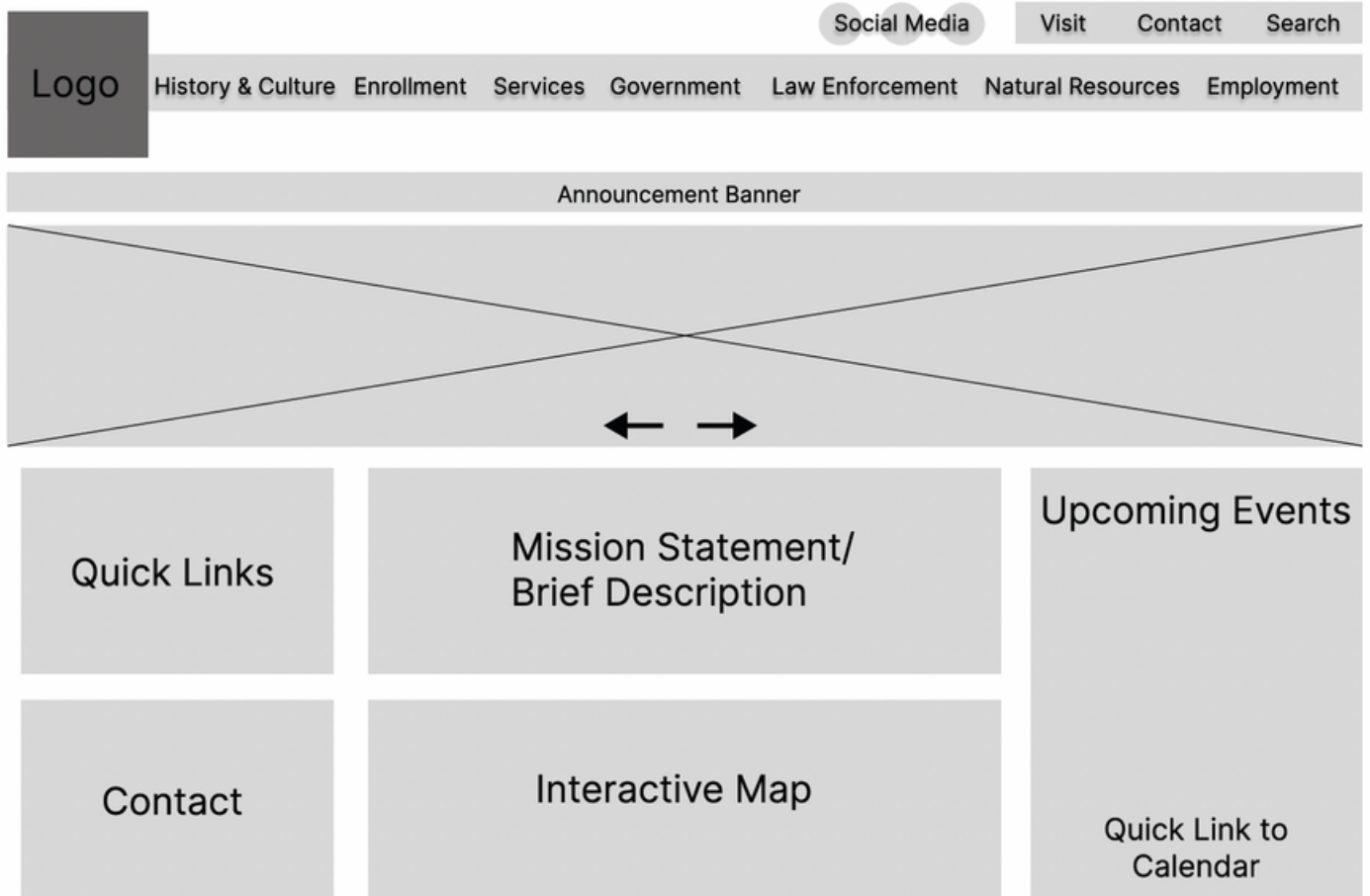
Content Model

Goal	Core List	Core Page	Core Page Content
Educate the average about the reservation and its culture	History & Culture	About	<ul style="list-style-type: none">HeaderLocationHistorical backgroundCurrently relevant informationImage gallery
Recruit members to enroll	Enrollment	Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">HeaderAvailable opportunitiesSuccess storiesOnline applicationContact information

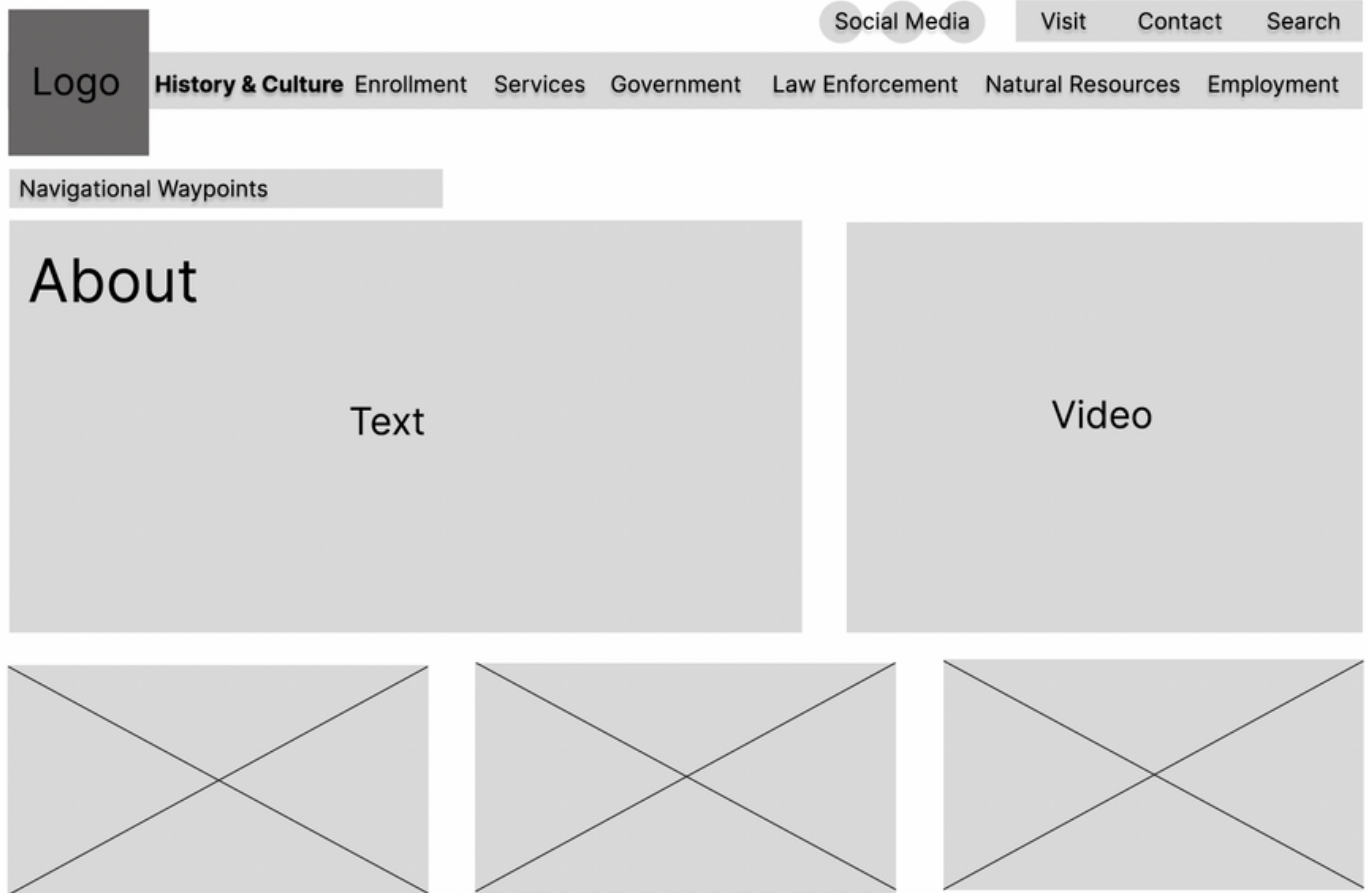
Inform Trial members about resources and events	News, Services	News, Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Header • Information about health, transportation, economic development, childcare • Images • Resourceful links
Attract tourists to visit the reservation	About, Visit	About, Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Header • Image gallery • Information on visitor center, activities, sights • Interactive map • Virtual tours • Livestream camera

Wireframes

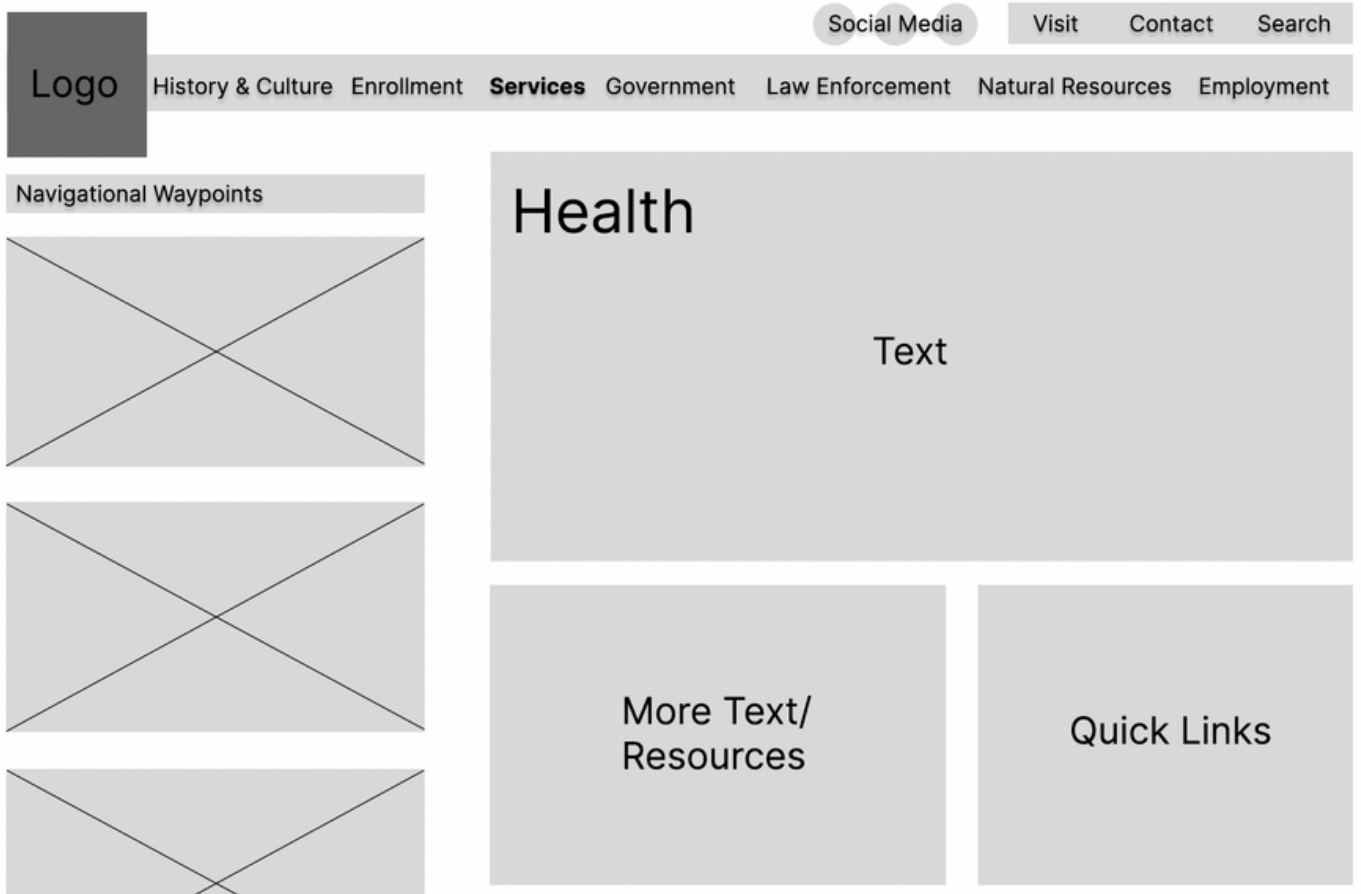
Home page



About page



Health page



Writing Style Guide

When readers visit the CSKT site, they want to be welcomed with personal web writing. This can be achieved through conversational language that is targeted at their needs.

A Nielsen Norman Group study found web users only read 28% of the words they see during an average visit, and that's the maximum. They say 20% is more likely. For this reason, CSKT needs to grab their attention immediately and write in a style that appeals to their audience.

Voice and Tone

As we've mentioned, a conversational, clear tone is necessary for CSKT's website. Currently, most of the text is written in an academic voice, which will not resonate with Tribal members or potential tourists.

Here is an example of a piece of writing from the Tribal Credit page.

“Tribal Credit was established in 1936 with the objective of making loans to raise the social and economic status of the members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Tribal Credit Program still provides lending services to enrolled CSKT members with that premise in mind.”

Some of the phrases included, like “objective of making” and “with that premise in mind” are difficult for some audiences to understand. Instead, the tone could be more casual, especially for tourists and Tribal members who want to learn about the services available to them.

“Tribal Credit was established in 1936 to raise the social and economic status of Tribal members through loans. To this day, the Tribal Credit Program offers these lending services to enrolled CSKT members.”

Simplifying some of the phrases into everyday language would intrigue viewers to read more and stay on the website for longer. Some of the writing on the website can continue to be used, but other passages, like the one above, can be rewritten for clarity.

Best Practices

To help make CSKT's web writing top tier, here are some tips to follow, according to the University of Maryland Baltimore.

1. Keep a conversational tone throughout
2. Put the most important information in the first paragraph of a page
3. Only cover one topic per paragraph
4. Write concise paragraphs without any unnecessary word
5. Use active voice instead of passive voice
6. Write in lists or bullet points rather than long paragraphs when applicable
7. Write eye-catching headlines that draw users to continue reading

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are how organizations determine if they are meeting their goals. They are a set of measurements that track the website's performance overtime, both based on statistics and user opinions.

Quantitative Indicators

Quantitative indicators are based solely on numbers, tracking value and engagement on the website. They answer questions of how much or how many, and are typically the easiest to track through data.

1. Number of visitors to the site
2. Number of page views
3. Type of device used
4. Email newsletter sign ups
5. Social media engagement
6. Amount of tourists and visitors
7. Money made from tourism
8. Tracking money made from donations

Qualitative Indicators

Qualitative indicators are not based on numbers. They are typically characteristics of behavior and emotions. Instead of how much or how many, qualitative data answers the why.

1. Feedback from Tribal members
2. Reactions from community
3. Loyalty to organization

Next Steps

We've outlined a strategy that will take CSKT's website to success, but how do we get there? There are roles to be assigned, a process to follow, rules to stick to, and continuous upkeep required.

Roles

Editor

The editor is responsible for the strategic integrity of the content. They assign content to writers, then review what they create and give feedback to make sure the content is meeting the strategic guidelines. They also make sure all the other roles have the tools they need to be successful.

Owner

The owner's job is to make sure all the content is accurate and updated. They review content based on a business standpoint and do what's best for the organization. This person is the primary contact for content related questions throughout the process.

Writer

The writer creates the website's content based on the given strategy. They may need to do additional research before drafting content for the editor and owner to review. Based on the feedback they receive, they make changes and submit the content for publishing.

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

The SME is the person most knowledgeable about the topic and organization. They work with content creators to make sure all writing is accurate and matches the organization's purpose. They also give feedback to the writers before content is published.

Publisher

The publisher is responsible for getting the content out to the public. They use code to push the content out live on the website.

Process

Once the roles are assigned, a process must be put in place to make sure everyone stays on track.

The first step is to plan the content. The group should work together to identify what needs to be created, then assign that content to writers. The writer then creates the content with the strategy in mind and uses additional research if necessary. Editors and the SME review this content and the writer makes revisions. Once that content is approved, it can be published.

Content Creation

To make sure the content created is following the strategies standards, everyone working on the content should be aware of the plan. Writers must know the strategy and how it will impact the content they are creating. Project leaders can provide tools and guidelines, like a style guide, to make this happen successfully.

Content Lifestyle

It is important to understand that this strategy is an evolving process. After one round of changes to the website, it is not complete. Instead, the project should be thought of as a lifecycle that never stops. It starts with strategizing, which we have outlined in this report. Then the planning phases, where CSKT can assign roles and create a process (outlined above) before creating the content. To maintain the strategy, content must be updated regularly. Some content needs more attention and upkeep, like the calendar and event pages, while history and culture can be reviewed annually to make sure it is still accurate. Then an audit can be done to measure how the content is performing. These steps are completed over and over again to keep up with new web developments and changes with CSKT.

We look forward to working with you on this strategic project, and see extreme potential for CSKT to improve their online presence!

Resources

Casey, M. (2015). The Content Strategy Toolkit: Methods, Guidelines, and Templates for Getting Content Right. New Riders.

SEO, search engine marketing agency. Screaming Frog. (2022, March 31).
<https://www.screamingfrog.co.uk/>

University of Maryland, Baltimore. (n.d.). Best practices for web writing.
<https://www.umaryland.edu/cpa/website-manual/prepare/web-writing/>

World Leaders in Research-Based User Experience. (n.d.). How little do users read?. Nielsen Norman Group. <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-little-do-users-read/>