User Needs Summary for
Content Management System Project

Prepared By: Josh Wilson & Kelsey Libner
Date: June 17, 2005
Executive Summary

The document summarizes information, experiences, and perspectives of Brandeis web publishers regarding 1) current web publishing activities, and 2) desired characteristics of a Content Management System to support web publishing. It is based on three types of user research conducted during Spring 2005: focus groups composed of Brandeis web publishers; a web-based survey for web publishers; and two summaries of web publishing service requests: one at the university level, and one limited to the Libraries.

Key findings

Publishing workflow

- Campus web publishers see the publishing process as complex, tedious, and frustrating.
- Site maintenance often suffers due to the time and staffing limits experienced by web publishers.
- Departments rely on student labor, which is a double-edged sword. While skilled students can improve a department’s web presence, students lacking training or skills can cause significant problems for campus websites.

Support

- Publishers find the support experience inconsistent, confusing, and fraught with delays.
- Web support and web services are largely requested and conducted by email. These messages can be time-consuming to manage and easy to lose track of.
- Many publishing service requests require only simple changes to text. Publishing tools that promote a self-service approach could reduce the volume of requests received by WTS.
- A relatively large proportion of service requests come from a small number of Brandeis organizations. Outreach efforts to these organizations would yield benefits for the organizations and for WTS.
- Publishers want WTS to communicate more consistently and more clearly.

Learning & training

- Some web publishers struggle to retain web publishing skills because they do not use them often enough.
- Publishers need a combination of effective training and timely, responsive support to help them use new tools effectively.
• Publishers and content authors request a web style guide. This guide should complement the existing Brandeis Identity Manual, but shouldn’t take the form of inflexible rules.

**CMS needs**

• The CMS should offer users basic and advanced modes.
• Publishers requested easier integration of data into their sites, such as academic data, PeopleSoft data, and campus news and events.
• For advanced publishers especially, existing publishing tools do not provide needed site management capabilities such as template-based publishing and link checkers.

**Key recommendations**

• Focus on consistency of service and message in everything we do.
• Mind people’s time. Provide tools that permit faster, simpler, and more efficient web publishing.
• Communicate proactively with web publishers to set expectations and foster a culture of openness.
• Develop a multi-level support model consisting of phone support for more basic requests, development services for more involved requests, and referrals to vendors for large-scale or complex projects.
• Function as an internal service bureau, managing a pool of student labor that responds to higher-level web publishing requests from departments across the university.
• Design and implement a multifaceted training model that includes:
  o cheat sheets and manuals
  o training sessions
  o discussions of current topics in web publishing
  o referrals to external training vendors for advanced training.
• Develop a web style guide that complements the university identity manual.
• Provide a CMS which supports distributed web publishing and workflow management.
1. Introduction

This User Needs Summary is part of a project for selecting and implementing a content management system (CMS) at Brandeis University. The document summarizes information, experiences, and perspectives of Brandeis web publishers regarding 1) current web publishing activities, and 2) desired characteristics of a CMS to support web publishing. This summary provides a foundation for later stages of the CMS project, including requirements and evaluations of CMS products.
2. Methods

Focus groups & survey
The user research team invited two cohorts of web publishers to participate in the focus group sessions. Participants in the first group had limited web publishing expertise, while the members of the second group had greater expertise. Staff members comprised over 90% of each group.

During each 75 minute focus group, participants’ comments were recorded as part of a session transcript. Each participant also had the opportunity to write his or her thoughts on a worksheet that was collected at the end of the session. Some ideas were also recorded to flipchart pages as the session progressed.

Next, the user research team used the focus group questions to develop a twelve-question online survey that could collect data from a broader group of web publishers. The survey was developed and hosted using the online survey tool on the MyBrandeis website (http://my.brandeis.edu). The team invited nearly 150 web publishers (all members of the webdevelopers email list) to complete the survey. Of the 146 list members, 39 (27% of list members) completed the survey over the course of nearly 4 business days.

After the focus group sessions were complete and the survey period had ended, the user research team sifted through the two groups of data to identify trends and themes. The team organized the data thematically, discussed and analyzed findings, developed conclusions, and produced recommendations.

University-level requests for web publishing services
Dave Wisniewski summarized two months of requests, from April 3 until June 3, 2005. Requests were categorized by requester and by type of service. Summary statistics were derived from this data. Josh Wilson and Kelsey Libner then discussed the data and derived findings and recommendations.

Library requests for web publishing services
Kelsey Libner summarized requests from November 23, 2004 until April 5, 2005. Requests were categorized by type of service. Josh Wilson and Kelsey Libner discussed the data and derived findings and recommendations.
3. Findings and conclusions

A. University web requests

*Time frame: April-June 2005*

Publishers communicate primarily via email when requesting services or support. WTS received an average of 60 emails a week from web publishers (11 times the number of phone calls received).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received....</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requests for service or support</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emails (includes requests and follow-up messages)</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls (includes requests and follow-up messages)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions:**
- The WTS support model currently relies heavily on email communication.
- Email messages can be hard to manage, easy to lose, and challenging to use as a source of data for evaluation or benchmarking.

Many requests from publishers require web support. WTS (primarily Dave Wisniewski) received 30 requests for problems requiring web support. This number represents 19\% of all requests made.

**Conclusion:** A transition to a distributed support model involving multiple WTS staff members would provide faster response to web publishers.

Many requests involve only simple changes to text-based web content. WTS received 36 requests for service that required only minor changes to text-based content. This number represents 22\% of all requests made.

**Conclusions:**
- With appropriate learning opportunities, publishers could become able to make many of these changes themselves.
- Simplifying the process of making changing and managing page content will lower the barriers faced by web publishers.

Several requests involved managing access permissions. WTS received 14 requests for problems involving access to web sites and applications. This number represents 9\% of all requests made.
Conclusion: WTS staff members spend a significant amount of time adjusting the access rights of web publishers.

Handling requests for web slideshows is very labor-intensive. WTS received requests to create 4 web slideshows, each of which required as much as 8-12 hours of development work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>Slide shows requested</th>
<th>Images included</th>
<th>Approx. time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5-7 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8-12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8-12 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions:
- WTS spends an extensive amount of time creating these slideshows, which require a great deal of communication with the requesting publisher and often develop iteratively after the slideshow has initially been created.
- These requests offer a great opportunity to provide self-service tools that allow publishers to create, edit, and manage their own slideshows.

9 Brandeis organizations account for nearly half of requests made to WTS.
Nine internal groups submitted 42% of the requests received by WTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requester</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of all requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External to the university*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and Technology Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Center</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes questions about accounts and authentication, assistance with website error messages, feature suggestions, and a request to establish a forum on MyBrandeis.
**Conclusion:** Outreach to these particular groups (including training and education) will help empower web publishers and reduce requests for support.

Academic departments account for 25% of all requests made to WTS. Of the 162 requests received by WTS during this time period, 40 were from academic departments. This represents 25% of all requests received.

**Conclusion:** Outreach to academic departments (including training and education) will help empower publishers of academic content and reduce their requests for support.
B. Library web requests

Time frame: November 23, 2004 – April 5, 2005

Routine changes predominate among library web requests. Most requests are for performance of routine tasks – creating new pages, changing the text on existing pages, and adding content. Requests to change text on existing pages outnumber other kinds of requests.

Every request requires considerable email traffic. Emailed requests are often followed by requests for small, additional changes. On average, library staff members send 12 requests by email each week. This email correspondence itself takes time, in addition to the changes themselves.

Examples of emails received:

“Ahah! When I looked at the pages that indicate [URL] as a bad link, I didn't see anything amiss, but upon a closer look…the image does not show up but the text from the alt (or title?) tag does. So, can you change these accordingly…”

“It looks good. Could you add that he's also a professor in the Dept. of English?”

Examples of routine requests:

- Modify web pages (especially to fix links)
- Modify cache.pac file (for off-campus access to databases)
- File transfer and conversion
- Create web pages
- Perform site-wide update of database URLs

Conclusions:

- The webmaster-based publishing model is inefficient since repeated rounds of editing – which are common in any editing activity – lead to long email exchanges.
- Changes may be delayed because only one person is able to make content changes.

Library staff members don’t have access to the web server.

For historical and cultural reasons, library staff members have not been granted permissions to access and change the web pages for which they are responsible.

Conclusions:

- As a result, the Library staff has not developed web publishing skills.
- Limitations on access prevent even motivated staff members from using their web-publishing skills or developing them further.
Site-wide link updates are required to maintain access to external research databases.
For reasons beyond the library’s control, vendors change the URLs of their databases from time to time. The library website maintains links to many of these databases in multiple places.

**Conclusion:** This need will persist even after the implementation of a content management system. The CMS may ease the burden of these ongoing changes.
C. Survey & focus groups

This subsection is organized by theme. Themes are:

1. Workflow
2. Barriers
3. Support
4. Learning and training
5. Tools and services requested by web publishers
6. Guidelines and best practices
7. Communication from WTS
8. Data integration
9. CMS-related needs
10. Design consistency across the Brandeis web presence

1. Workflow

**Web publishing follows different models across the university.**

Focus group participants described these web publishing models in their organizations:

1. *Consensus-driven and informal.* Colleagues work together to decide on content changes and publish.
2. *Hierarchical.* Either management makes decisions and staff implement, or staff make decisions and student workers implement.
3. *Distributed model in academic departments.* Faculty members are responsible for content on their own pages.
4. *One to two-person team.*

**Templates simplify web publishing.**

For less-experienced publishers, templates make it easier to publish and edit web content. One participant said, “I just use what Dave Wisniewski gives me. It looks very nice.” For more advanced publishers, templates represent a starting point for site design and a way to achieve consistency of design: “Having some standard templates for pages to provide some consistent look throughout University pages would be useful - it's always easier to start with something and modify.”

**Departments rely on student labor, which is a double-edged sword.**

Students have the potential to be very important players in the web publishing workflow. On the other hand, students who lack training or skills can make “a mess,” as one focus group participant described it. Student workers require training and supervision, so there is a certain “overhead” to students’ work. Turnover is also a concern: students may leave their jobs at the end of the semester or upon graduation. Said one participant, “We don’t
have resources in place to support the web. If you get lucky and happen to have a good student, you’re OK.”

2. Barriers

**Web publishing is seen as complex, tedious, and frustrating.**
A staff member said bluntly, “I despise the process…” Another observed, “If the process were more streamlined and I didn’t feel I was imposing on other people’s time, I would make updates more frequently.”

**Updating non-text content (forms, images, and PDFs) frustrates web publishers.**
Many participants expressed this view. In the words of one, “We can all do text, but it’s the graphics we have issues with.”

**There are limits to time and personnel for maintaining websites.**
Staff must juggle other responsibilities and priorities to find time for web publishing. “I do everything. The web is just one of those things.” In the survey, time was the leading barrier to web publishing (51%). In a separate question about what could improve the web publishing process, “More time” was third (36%).

**Conclusion:** Time is a barrier for many, but people don’t want to spend more time on web publishing.

**Less experienced publishers want to update content without technical obstacles.**
Participants with less web publishing experience requested content management tools. One participant asked for a “word processing interface so we can focus on data… we just want to get data out there quickly.”

3. Support

**Publishers find the support experience inconsistent and confusing.**
Focus group participants are not sure how to request web-publishing support. Said one participant, “[I would like] clear protocols for obtaining web services. If I need a redesign, how do I get that?” Several participants requested a single point of contact for support.
Delays or lack of communication lead departments to seek help elsewhere.
When publishers do request support, response time has been slow. One focus group participant said, “It takes a lot of time…to get a response. We had to hire a student worker.” When the web services office is unresponsive, departments may seek help from outside vendors to add higher level functionality to their site.

**Conclusion:** Web publishers need an improved support model, which should parallel the arrangement for requesting technology support from LTS.

4. Learning and training

Staff struggle to retain web publishing skills.
When web publishers use their skills infrequently, they may not retain those skills over time. One participant summarized the problem this way: “We learn, then we get busy, and we forget.”

GoLive isn’t easy to use.
Most participants reported that GoLive is a complex and challenging tool. One participant put it simply: “I use GoLive, but I don’t understand it.” Another said, “GoLive is so complicated, I don’t even know how to open instructions.”

Written guides would help staff to publish more easily and learn independently.
Publishers requested learning guides in various formats. “It would be really helpful if there were some simple cheat sheets,” said one participant. Another asked for “a complete step by step manual that one could [use to] learn on their own.”

Publishers want to learn more about the underlying concepts of web publishing.
Several participants wanted to better understand the core concepts of web publishing, but didn’t know where to begin. One explained, “We’d like to do more exciting and dynamic things with our website, but I lack the expertise and I’m not sure what resources are available to us to help with that.”

Publishers need both training and support to help them use new tools effectively.
The participants agreed that only a combination of effective training and responsive support will allow publishers to make effective use of content management tools. “Whatever tools you offer have to be supported by an educational component,” one noted, “or you’ll offer great tools and [we] won’t know how to use [them].”
5. Tools and services requested by web publishers

**Web publishers request guidelines, training, and communication from WTS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What tools and services would allow you and your department to improve its website, work more effectively, or save time?</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web publishing guidelines &amp; best practices</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More staff time</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better communication from groups that provide web support</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe in question 11 below)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A different method for publishing web content</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sample size: 39 respondents*

6. Guidelines and best practices

**Publishers and content authors need a web style guide.**

A web style guide would provide guidelines about writing style and page formatting for the Brandeis University web presence. This guide should complement the Brandeis Identity Manual created by Publications. One participant said, “I would…like a guide of ‘best practices’ much like the Brandeis identity book.” While participants wanted guidelines, they didn’t want to be forced into compliance with a university web style: “Guidelines are useful, provided they don’t become rigid rules.”

**More advanced publishers request technical publishing guidelines.**

More experienced web publishers requested technical guidelines and best practices for web publishing. Group participants suggested guidelines for scripting, web page metadata, and image size.

**Brandeis web content doesn’t address the needs of site visitors.**

Publishers reported that many departmental sites are developed for an internal audience but more often used by external visitors. They argued that web content needs to be focused on the needs of actual visitors to these sites.
Conclusions:

- There is a disconnect between the perspectives of site authors and those of site visitors.
- Web publishers need to learn about their users and apply what they learn to site content and design.

7. Communication from WTS

Publishers want WTS to communicate more consistently and more clearly.
Participants want WTS to more consistently share information about the group’s vision, goals, projects, and support standards. One person vented that “It would be a godsend to hear from this office, ‘We can’t do that’ instead of saying ‘We’ll get to this’ and trying to be everything to everyone.” Another wanted to see “more transparency as [WTS is] reorganizing.”

Publishers want opportunities to talk among themselves.
Several participants suggested that WTS organize opportunities for web publishers to meet, discuss their work, and learn from their peers.

Conclusion: Publishers wish to work more closely with WTS and with each other. This is an opportunity for WTS to establish itself as a new unit at Brandeis and at the same time reinvigorate the web publishing community.

8. Data integration

Publishers want to integrate university data and dynamic content into their websites.
Many participants wanted tools that would allow them to easily integrate data from PeopleSoft or custom databases into their websites. Said one publisher: “Some material on the department web site is linked to items on the registrar's page. [That listing] is not conducive to automatic updates, and so often gets out of date and must be changed by hand.” Other publishers wanted to be able to integrate campus-wide news, events, and information into their sites. “We would like a better way to integrate what’s on MyBrandeis now... If there’s already a listing of events, how do we publish it?”
9. CMS-related needs

Publishers need site management tools. Although publishers struggle with GoLive, they’re able to update individual pages when necessary. However, GoLive’s tools for managing entire sites are inadequate. “We were told there would be a [new set of tools] to manage websites,” one participant said, “but we can’t wait around for that. Our website is substantial and we need to manage it.” Another said: “A database-driven tool with templates would save a lot of time. Adobe [GoLive] does not consistently locate changes and fix them. Easy to use, efficient and accurate site-wide change tools are huge.”

The CMS should offer basic and advanced modes. While more advanced web publishers want site management tools, less experienced publishers require a simple tool for updating site content. To satisfy both groups, one participant suggested implementing a CMS that offers “a simple version and a more complex version.”

Conclusions:
- A CMS with a basic mode will lower current barriers to web publishing.
- Lowering these barriers, in turn, will promote content stewardship.
10. Design consistency across the Brandeis web presence

A majority of web publishers agree that design consistency within the Brandeis web presence is important. A significant minority of web publishers (31%) disagree.

![Consistency with other Brandeis pages is important to me](image)

Sample size: 39 respondents

Many publishers like the Brandeis design, but want some room for individuality. While most publishers want their sites to be largely consistent with the Brandeis design, they also want that design to have some flexibility. One participant explained, “I believe in the Brandeis style as well as individuality. I think you can merge the two together.”

Independent centers and programs want an independent design. Some web publishers want a web presence that suggests their independence within Brandeis. “The directors of my program and the center like having the look,” said a participant. “It’s a center, so they like to be independent.”

**Conclusion:** There is a tension between displaying a department's individuality and maintaining consistency with university design standards.
In their website designs, organizations cater to their constituencies.
In designing Brandeis websites, web publishers take into account their organization’s audiences, both on- and off-campus. For some, having a standard Brandeis design is a way to identify the department with the university: “Because of our constituency, we need to look like the Brandeis website.” For other organizations, the connection to Brandeis is not as crucial. Their site designs may vary greatly from the standard design: “Our constituents are not all at Brandeis. The connection with Brandeis was seen as important, but not the most important thing.”
4. Recommendations

**General recommendations**

- Focus on consistency of service and message in everything we do.
- Mind people’s time. Provide tools that permit faster, simpler, and more efficient web publishing.
- Provide a program of tools, training, and support to develop the knowledge and skills of web publishers.

![Diagram of recommendations]

**Figure 1.** Web publishers feel their knowledge and skills are limited. A program of tools, training, and support would allow them to expand their knowledge and skills.

**Outreach and Communications**

- Communicate proactively with web publishers to set expectations and foster a culture of openness. Request feedback; promote discussions between Web Technology Services and web publishers.
- Foster better information sharing both between departments and LTS, and among the various distributed web publishers.
  - Meetings: Schedule regular meetings of the web publishers’ interest group so that publishers can have face-to-face contact with WTS staff and each
other. Each gathering might feature updates from WTS, opportunities for feedback, discussions of web-publishing topics, and presentation of new departmental web content and applications.

- Newsletters: Send out a monthly update to web publishers. This message could spotlight new tools and services, identify best practices, feature profiles of WTS staff members, and more. Each one should contain highlights of (and a link to) new learning materials drafted by WTS.

- Targeted activities: Develop outreach programs targeting frequent requesters of WTS services.

Content management system

- Allow publishers to easily modify existing pages and add new ones.
- Make the publishing process straightforward and streamlined.
- Offer web publishing tools that build on existing skills.
- Provide tools and services to support consistency of sites with the Brandeis style.
- Allow administrative users to easily grant, manage, and report on access permissions.
- Provide a CMS which supports distributed web publishing and workflow management.
- Ensure that the CMS offers the following features:
  - support for multiple page designs
  - link-checking tool(s)
  - two publishing modes: a basic mode and a more advanced mode
  - conversion of content from Microsoft Word format to web format
  - page preview before publishing
  - creation and editing of slideshows
  - an override feature that permits direct changes to a page’s HTML code

Support

- Develop a support model consisting of phone support for basic, routine requests, development services for more involved requests, and referrals to vendors for large-scale or complex projects.
- Transition away from support by email to a ticket-based support system.
- Function as an service bureau within the university, managing a pool of student labor that responds to higher-level web publishing requests.
Training

- Design and implement a multifaceted training model that complements WTS support services and includes:
  - cheat sheets and manuals
  - training
  - discussions of current topics in web publishing
  - referrals to external vendors for training in advanced publishing skills
- Develop and communicate technical best practices for web publishing.
- Develop learning materials in various formats: step-by-step job aids, guides for reference and independent learning, web style guides, and online, interactive learning content.

Additional recommendations

- Develop a web style guide that complements the university identity manual.
- In facing the challenge of consistency across the university web presence, consider “cultural” and technical factors alike.
- Provide more opportunities for integrating data from various campus sources into university websites.
- Offer usability consulting services, possibly in partnership with Communications.
- Foster better communication between Web Technology Services and Administrative Information Services (both groups are within Library and Technology Services).
- Begin a discussion about the roles of LTS staff members in web publishing – especially staff joining LTS from the Libraries, where a highly centralized web publishing model has been in place for a long time.
Appendix A: Focus group plan

Web Technology Services
April-May 2005

Purpose
To gather information from Brandeis web content authors about current web publishing activities and desired characteristics of a web content management system.

Groups and participants
We are planning for one pilot focus group with Library & Technology Services staff, followed by two focus group sessions with participants from across campus.
  First “live” focus group: publishers with limited expertise
  Second group: publishers with greater expertise

Registration and confirmation
Send email invitation linking to workshop module for registration.
Send reminder emails day before and day of.

Location
Feldberg Main Conference Room

People and supplies
Moderator
Assistant moderator
Two note-takers (each does half a session)
  Laptop
  Flip-chart writer
Set these out in advance:
  Worksheet with questions for brief writing
  Ground rules list
  Name tags and marker
Flip chart and easel
Refreshments
One pair movie tickets. A drawing will be held at the end of each focus group.
Extra chairs for focus group staff

Discussion guide
Please see separate document.
Appendix B: Focus group discussion guide

April 25, 2005

Start: 12:10 pm

Welcome & Introductions [0:10]

1. Welcome message
   - Welcome
   - Purpose of focus group: Brandeis staff are reviewing tools and services for web publishing on campus. These focus groups will help us learn about how you publish content to your departmental web sites, and what ideas you may have for improved web publishing tools and services.
   - My job as moderator is to keep the conversation moving, and focused.
   - From time to time, we may ask you to write your ideas down before we resume the discussion. We’ll collect your notes at the end of the session.
   - Others in the room:
     o (Dave W.)
     o Ian and Kelsey: Capturing content to Word
       ▪ Your comments in report will be anonymous.
     o Mike P or Zach: Capturing content to flipcharts
     o Kelsey: Involved in planning. Keeping time and serving as assistant moderator.
     o Ryan, Lori; observers from LTS

2. Ground rules. This is going to be a somewhat structured conversation, so I’d like to establish a few ground rules before we get started.
   - Be honest & speak your mind.
   - There are no wrong answers.
   - Don’t let other opinions sway you. Don’t be afraid to change your mind because of something you hear during the session.
   - Try not to start speaking if someone else is talking.
   - Everyone gets equal “airtime.” Tell us what’s on your mind, but try to keep your comments succinct so that there’s time for everyone to speak.
   - I may need to limit your comments to keep the discussion on track.

3. Introductions:
   - Ask each participant for name, department, and how often they update their website.
**Question about workflow [0:10]**

Please turn to the page on your worksheet with boxes on it. With your BLUE pen, diagram the steps that occur when YOU create or edit a web page in your department. Steps may involve tasks, technology, people, and communication. We’ve put boxes here to get you started, but feel free to use arrows and draw additional shapes. Label as much as you can.

[Users diagram in BLUE for two to three minutes]

Please tell the story of how changes and additions to your website take place -- from the time that they are proposed to the moment that they end up as new content on your website.

**Question about barriers [0:10]**

You have just diagrammed and discussed your department’s web publishing workflow. Let’s now focus on barriers in this workflow. These might lie in tasks, communication, or other factors. Please pick up the RED pen. Mark the diagram with an “X” wherever there are barriers. Label the barriers that you identify.

[Users annotate in RED for one minute]

Please share with us the most significant barrier in your web publishing process.

[Flipchart]

**Question about templates [0:10]**

When visitors browse through Brandeis University’s web presence, they don’t see a site with a single consistent design and navigation model. Instead, they encounter a series of subsites, each with its own design -- some closer to a Brandeis standard design than others. The handout we’ve provided, using images of websites maintained by participants in this focus group, illustrates the diversity of design that currently exists at Brandeis.

Think for a moment about where your site’s design fits now within the spectrum of site designs at Brandeis – ranging from very standardized to completely custom-designed. Over time, how do you think your department’s site design will evolve within this spectrum?

**Follow-up questions:** How important is it to you that your site has a unique design? Do you perceive value in maintaining a unique design? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach? Is there value in having a more consistent look and feel to the Brandeis web presence?
Time: 0:40
Blank slate question [0:10]

[Worksheet, then flipchart]

What tools and services would allow you and your department to improve its website, work more effectively, or save time?

Time: 0:50
Final question [0:05]

Is there anything else that you’d like to share with us before we conclude this discussion?

Time: 0:55
Closing statement & drawing [0:10]

- Again, thanks.
- Explain how data will be used.
- Ask people to join eval panel [note on cards]
- Explain process for movie ticket drawing
- Draw for movie tickets

Time elapsed: 1:05
End time: 1:15 pm
Appendix C: Departments of focus group participants

Focus group 1

- Near Eastern & Judaic Studies
- English & American Literature
- Media Relations
- Provost, Office of the
- Graduate School of A&S
- American Studies
- Physics
- Rabb School
- National Womens Committee
- National Womens Committee
- Media Relations

Focus group 2

- Human Resources
- Intl Ctr for Ethics
- Alumni & University Relations
- Admissions
- Biology
- Hornstein Program
- Genesis
- Registrar
- Alumni & University Relations
- Alumni & University Relations
- Human Resources
Appendix D: Survey plan

Web Technology Services
May 6, 2005

Purpose
The purpose of this survey is twofold: 1) to gather information from Brandeis web content authors about their current web publishing activities; and 2) desired characteristics of a web content management system. This survey is intended to complement the recently completed focus groups. While the focus groups yield in-depth data from a relatively small number of stakeholders, the survey can reach more potential stakeholders (the focus groups can be thought of as “deep and narrow” and the survey as “broad and shallow”).

Participants
We will be sending a notice to the webdevelopers campus email list. As of this writing, the list has 146 subscribers. The list description states: “All editors, page masters, and web masters for departments, offices, schools, and divisions at Brandeis. Intended to inform all with current information on web development at Brandeis.” We may supplement this list with a list extracted from the HEAT ticketing system by Mike Pino, consisting of those outside LTS who have made web-related requests (31 email addresses which may overlap with the webdevelopers email list).

Invitation and incentive
We will send an email invitation to the webdevelopers list, and to other individuals as appropriate. The email may suggest that recipients forward the survey to other stakeholders in their department. The incentive will be two movie tickets to go to the winner of a drawing.

Format
The survey will be administered using a survey module of the MyBrandeis system.

Questions
Please see separate document.

Report
The report will be a companion document to the focus group report, since survey questions have been adapted from the focus group discussion guide.

References

Appendix E: Survey questions

What is your role at Brandeis?
- Faculty
- Staff
- Student

How frequently do you update your department's website?
- More than once a day
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Once each semester
- Once each year
- Never

Who asks you to make changes or additions to your site? (check all that apply)
- Dean/manager/director/VP in your department
- Staff in your department
- Faculty in your department
- You decide to make changes or additions
- Others (please describe in question 4 below)

List any others who request updates to your website.

Describe the steps you follow to draft new content for your site, get it approved, and publish it to the Brandeis web.

What are the most significant barriers that you face in your web publishing process? (check all that apply)
- Lack of time.
- Lack of support or technical assistance.
- Lack of skills with GoLive software or HTML.
- Lack of guides, cheat sheets, or reference materials.
- Working with scripts and databases.
- Obtaining departmental approval for new content.
- Other barriers (please describe in question 7 below).
- No barriers.

Describe any other barriers in your web publishing process.

In its appearance and design, my department's website is like most other Brandeis University websites.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

It is important to me that the appearance and design of my department’s website be consistent with other Brandeis University web pages.
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

What tools and services would allow you and your department to improve its website, work more effectively, or save time? (check all that apply)
- Training
- More staff time
- Web publishing guidelines & best practices
- A different method for publishing web content
- Better communication from groups that provide web support
- Other (please describe in question 11 below)

Describe any other tools and services that would improve or simplify the web publishing process for your department.

Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us?

For completing this survey, you're eligible to win a pair of free movie tickets! To enter the drawing, please type your email address in the box below.

We are forming an Evaluators' Panel to help us review web publishing tools. From time to time over the next four to six months, we will ask the panel to help us evaluate various tools or services. If you would be interested in serving on the panel, please enter your name, department, and email address in the box below.