

Project Charter: SLA First Five Website

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SLA First Five Website

1. Problem/Opportunity

Students graduating from Masters in Library and Information Studies programs have a wide range of professional associations that they can join but only limited resources with which to pay for memberships. As a result, students tend to select associations by geographic location rather than specialization. This continues after graduation when new professionals will tend to join their local or national library association rather than SLA.

There is a gap in the marketplace in terms of providing concrete learning resources to new professionals. This creates an opportunity for SLA to be the most accessible and relevant provider of educational opportunities for new librarians and information professionals during their first five years.

2. Goals

The goal of the website is to increase SLA membership among new librarians and information professionals.

3. Specific Objectives

1. Provide learning resources online for new professionals by January 18th, 2009 in the ten areas where they themselves have identified a need.
2. Achieve daily participation on the site by new professionals and SLA mentors within six months of launch.
3. The site will be one of the top ten non-search engine referrers to the SLA membership pages within six months of launch.
4. Receive 1000 enrollments to the First Five site within six months of launch.

4. Stakeholders

There are multiple stakeholders who need to be consulted on this project. However the key decision makers are Gayle Gossen and Christina de Castell as they will be providing the client-side input and reporting to the SLA board.

SLA Board

The SLA Board has oversight over all SLA projects and is charged with both enhancing the overall success of the organization and protecting it from any potential hazards. They will also need to approve the creation of a

maintenance team for the site in order for it to have any longevity. They will need to be consulted on all major aspects of the projects though not on the day-to-day details.

SLA Technical & Design Staff

They will need to provide both short-term deliverables and long-term support. The content strategy and technical design of the site has repercussions on their workload. They will need to be consulted to ensure they have the time to acquire any missing skillsets with respect to the technology platform and any maintenance issues. The design staff will be needed both for initial assets and longer-term image asset creation.

Gayle Gossen & Christina de Castell

As project leads on the client side Gayle and Christina have primary oversight over the project. It is a substantial investment of their time and energy and therefore an unsuccessful result will have denied the organization other potential avenues of growth. They will need to be consulted on all major design and implementation questions.

SLA Volunteers

Several members of SLA are volunteering their time. If the project is successful they will have an added asset to their resumes. They also hope to gain insight into the project management aspect of website development.

Potential SLA Members

There are substantial learning opportunities which can have an impact both on finding their first professional position and in managing their careers in the first five years. If the project is successful they will be positively disposed to SLA as a partner in their progress however if the site fails to deliver for them it could negatively impact their perception of SLA for years into their careers. Current SLA student members will be consulted in focus groups where possible to ensure that their needs are met by the site.

Vancouver Film School

Vancouver Film School prides itself on the quality of the work of its students and staff. If the site is a success it will provide a useful case study as well as promotion of the school itself. VFS will expect to have their logo present above the fold on the site if possible and to have permission to show all elements of the project and documentation to students during and after the site's creation.

Constraints

- The site must be maintainable by SLA volunteers (as opposed to paid staff.) Therefore some design decisions will have to defer to simplicity in order to make it possible for people with limited training to maintain the site. However the main platform will still need to be maintained by SLA Information Technology staff.

- There are only limited financial resources available to cover costs such as site templates, URL purchases, and honorariums. As a result all work is being done on a volunteer basis which limits the amount of design and interaction work which is feasible on the project.
- Site must have some opportunity for participation by site members. This will require adding community functions to the site which will take time away from other design aspects and create the need for users to join the site and input information.

Solution

The proposed solution is:

1. Follow Vancouver Film School's Interactive Design lifecycle of discovery, definition, design, development, and deployment. This will result in the creation of an Interaction Design Document which contains all pertinent strategic, technical, and design decisions and can be an ongoing resource for maintaining and evolving the site.
2. Focus the site around delivering initial free content with the promise (and linking) of more content to be provided through Click University and other existing member services.
3. As one of the identified problems is that new professionals have a skewed perception of what the term special librarian means, make the content creators and site mentors into role models by providing information on their jobs that can be seen along with the content they create.
4. As time and resources are limited, use an existing open-source content management system (such as Joomla) as the basis of the site. Also use a pre-existing template as the basis for design rather than creating something completely new.
5. Make use of SLA volunteers often as a means to focus group key elements of the site such as the visual identity, navigation, content...etc.

Scope

The scope of this project is to design and develop the site itself. Content will be provided by SLA consistent with the needs identified by this project. Key deliverables will include the Interaction Design Document (containing information architecture, wireframes, mockups, style guide...etc.) and the site files themselves.

This project does **not** cover the installation and ongoing maintenance of the site. Nor does it address the need for initial and ongoing marketing efforts which will need to be provided by SLA.

Risks

SLA has a relatively low risk tolerance for this project. This is because while the site is not mission-critical in itself, it nonetheless provides the front-face of the organization from the perspective of the target audience. It would be better to provide more limited functionality than to create something which had higher risks or required too much maintenance.

- **Security & Liability:** Any new site involving user-data has the potential to be hacked and the information looted. The site will rely on the existing security features of the open-source content management system and therefore highly sensitive data (such as financial or credit card information) should not be stored here.

- **Delays & Costs:** The principal designer on the project is volunteering his time and has other substantial obligations to VFS and other projects. Therefore it would be best to provide interim solutions where possible that could be launched if further design was going to be delayed. For example, starting from a simple site using an elegant template so that content could be launched even if further customization was delayed.
- **Feature Creep:** There is a great deal of interest in the project and therefore there are other parties who may feel they have a stake in the project over time and will want to introduce new requirements and functionality. Gayle and Christina will need to manage these stakeholders to prevent the project from getting out of control.

Assumptions

- SLA will provide initial content for all knowledge areas of the site.
- SLA will provide technical support for installation and testing of the site.
- SLA's initial user research has correctly identified the needs of new professionals in a way which will induce them to want to join the association.
- SLA can and will provide a marketing push to create awareness of the site in time for launch.

Deliverables

Overall the idea is to provide a complete website which enables users to join, ask questions, use learning modules, and connect to SLA's membership page and Click University. The specific assets to be delivered are:

- **Project Charter** (this document)
- **Interaction Design Document:** This will detail the experience goals, functional specifications, interaction requirements, and wireframes. This document will likely evolve over the course of the project in order to facilitate the creation of iterative site prototypes for early testing.
- **Completed Site:** This will include all design templates, functional code, and installed content.