

IEG Website Proposal & Content Strategy

Introduction

We are at a crossroad. Our developers are building and hacking high-performance WordPress in a way often not publicized on the web. We do this for our own websites as well as websites we are hired to build for PBS. The promotion for our services is mounted in brochureware, which while pretty isn't substantial in any way. The content is a series of bullet points of services we provide along with multi-device screenshots of work we've built. The only way to learn more is to contact IEG through the contact form. The audience isn't clearly defined, and it appears we are a full-service digital agency for nonprofits that just happens to be a part of WNET.

The purpose of the IEG tech blog and this content strategy is to more clearly define who we are as a digital agency, promote the quality work that we do, and provide resources for other WordPress developers who may be asking those same questions. We will establish our brand, goals for this blog, and evaluate some assets of other companies doing similar work which we can learn from.

Content

- **Brand:** At the moment our brand is defined as such on our website:
 - The Interactive Engagement Group (IEG) at WNET is a team of seasoned media professionals creating state-of-the-art digital products. Our methods yield smart and impactful results built on a solid technology platform. [...] IEG has produced some of the most popular and critically acclaimed digital tools for nonprofit brands.
We sell ourselves as full-service digital (which, indeed we are for WNET, as well as the PBS programs that we are hired to produce content for). At the moment, we don't offer any proof of such, any portfolio work or any examples of projects we can take ownership of.
- **Goals:** The goal of this technical blog would be twofold. We hope to better sell our services as a technical agency by talking about the projects/websites/plugins we are working on. Additionally, we hope to share what we learn and, when appropriate, tutorials for others hoping to gain insight in better high-performance websites.
- **Setting:** As a brand, we are solely online on our website and nowhere else. We do not have any social feeds for our agency. Our primary audience is future customers (be that other local PBS stations, PBS itself, or possibly other

nonprofits in media). Our secondary audience is developers who are building high-performance WordPress sites and are interested in learning to be better (or, in the future, working on our team).

- **Competitors:** At the moment, we do not have any direct competitors other than, perhaps, the in-house web teams of our fellow PBS folk. That being said, we are the best of the best. We can offer a large team and resources to bring to projects, as well as many years and levels of experience for different projects.

The rest of this strategy is based on these assumptions. If this is not the case, we must take adjustments into account before implementing this strategy.

Background research

To really understand where IEG is starting from, I've researched some potential personas and created a gap analysis of the content we don't have that should be covered.

Our primary target audience is potential clients outside of WNET. They come to us either as fellow stations in need of a site-overhaul, or as program creators who need an online platform to share their tv content as well as web exclusives. We should keep them in mind always when creating our content.

- **PBS Pro, Peyton** – Peyton has worked with us previously, to great success. Perhaps we built her early PBS website such as American Masterettes, and we have dedicated producers for creating their content. The show has been picked up again and Peyton knows she wants to hire us, but would love to see the more modern content that we've been working on. Peyton's priorities are that the site be mobile-first, but fit the trend that the national sites are moving towards of big imagery.
- **Station Manager, Sawyer** – Sawyer has never worked with IEG's team before. Sawyer comes from a station which has limited resources and a limited, less-modern web presence. From that, his perception is that websites need to look good on his desktop, but not necessary caring about other tablets/mobile experience. Sawyer likes traditional content and may not have a lot of visual assets without special request.
- **Documentary TV Producer (unaffiliated with PBS), Dakota** – Dakota produces documentary films and specials for television which may be aired for PBS or other public television. She is not directly affiliated with PBS. Dakota is forward-thinking and wants a beautiful though short-living website for her latest project, a documentary about Nature v Nurture which will have

broadcast rights for just one year. The content is limited, and the website should not have too many avenues beyond encouraging watching, and will be updated by Dakota and her team.

Our secondary target audience are other high-performance WordPress developers. Some of our blog content will be overly technical in nature for our primary audience, which while that shows that we know what we're doing, it serves a purpose of educating other developers as to what is possible with WordPress. It also gives IEG's developers a better understanding of why we do what we do and a better way to communicate such.

- **Advanced WordPress Developer, Jess** – Jess works for Big Company XYZ, building WordPress websites for major companies. Though Jess has been working in WordPress for a long time, Jess is insulated in his own best practices and is on the hunt for new techniques from the developer community.
- **WordPress Developer, Taylor** – Taylor is a freelance developer building smaller WordPress blogs for his clients. He is not interested in cross-platform plugins as often times he is limited to one or two installations maximum, and never WordPress multi-site. However, he is hoping to learn more about high-performance sites, the difference, and possibly become employed at an agency that does that sort of work (maybe, in the future, at WNET).

Gap analysis

At the moment, we have very limited content on the web. For this reason, we are actually in a better place to start – we can do just about anything. The tech blog would fill the purpose of being a semi-portfolio of current work as well as proof of what we do.

Prologue

Core Strategy

IEG will demonstrate value of digital services by providing thoughtful and in-depth discussions of their work around high-performance WordPress themes, plugins, and installations, delighting current and future customers as well as fellow WordPress developers.

Themes

To reach our new audience and continue delight to our existing clients, IEG should concentrate on the following themes:

- **Hacking the Technology.** This includes breakdowns and tutorials for work that we've done in developing new themes and plugins, as well as explanations as to why they are best practices.
- **Efficiency.** We make certain decisions based on not only what is the most efficient for the flow of content but also for the user.
- **Small Shop Big Work.** We are a small team in charge of many, many websites. How do we firefight when all of the assets require attention at the same time. Not all content will cover all themes—in fact it shouldn't.

Content Plan

For this new site, we'll be looking at integrating the core strategy into the general site content and blog (a section is devoted to each below). In addition, we'll be proposing a few steps to streamline our content workflow and develop a content lifecycle.

Part 1: Site Content

The site content will include everything except our blog content (that's in the next section). This includes the home page, our "brochure-ware", error messages, button text, video content, staff profiles, a portfolio of work, and requests for consultation text. While blog content is technically also site content, it will be the focus of the site and be constantly updated.

As mentioned earlier, our current site is sparse for content. It's essentially 20 bullet points with no precedence, no example of our work, and nothing more than marketing language. Here's how to change up our content to match a shiny new look (and capture our client market in the process):

- **Tone.** We'll be discussing brand, voice, and style guidelines in Part 3, but know that revisiting the existing content with an eye to adhering to those new guidelines should be a priority.
- **Imagery.** Part pretty, colorful New York, and part meaningful and representative imagery. We should be proud of our part of the office, showcase work stations and what we're doing, as well as our staff.
- **Error messages.** Let's take a chance and do something fun for our error pages. Perhaps it's a still of Duke the Penguin, lost in New York indicating that the visitor, too, is lost. We can be fun, informative, and stick to the WNET brand.
- **Request for Consultation.** At the moment, this is just a form with a bit of preface text for contacting us at WNET. How often is this used, instead of someone being directly contacted? Who is this really for? We should think about this and create more clearly defined options (or perhaps, examples of work we do). We shouldn't overwhelm visitors with options, though; no more than three should be presented.
- **Portfolio.** The most important thing we do is create work. Our portfolio page should feature our top 9 to 12 projects, screenshots from the front-end and back-end, as well as compile related blog posts about how we made it happen.
- **Staff Profiles/About Us.** Currently, the only staff lists exist on our internal site, the Owl. Our staff is the biggest commodity we have, from developers to producers to social. We should be proud to be a part of IEG, and this could fit within a fun tone of who we are and what we do. Media agencies who do this well include Carrot (all about individuals), 6wunderkinder (all about the team), and less traditionally, Lateral Inc (which is less about substance more about creativity).

- **Keep visitors on page.** The current design is minimal, but almost too much to the extreme. I was unsure on first visiting that there was more content to be discovered. Being clear about what content lives where, perhaps with a clearly defined navigation is welcomed (particularly with the advent of additional content).

Part 2: Blog

The blog is the focal point of the new IEG website. Most blogs on agency websites are used for PR or solely touting new projects. Our blog will be for proving our expertise. Why trust IEG to build your digital properties? Because we're digital experts! By explaining what we do in WordPress, what we have invented, and projects we're proud of, we can not only sell our services but define ourselves as experts in the field.

We should think of our content as existing in three primary categories:

- **Best Practices.** We are experts in the high performance WordPress field, but no one knows it yet! These posts should be around best practices for maintaining a high performance site, smaller hacks to have a more efficient website, and general WordPress information through our own lens. This could mean how we segment our themes/plugins into different files, naming conventions, merits of plugin versus in-theme development, etc.
- **Tutorial Corner.** Here's where we go into nitty gritty deep dives of our builds. These should have clear instructions of how to re-create the code (with samples of plugin text attached). This is a teaching tool for other WordPress developers.
- **Server Guides.** We have a lot of specific practices when it comes to git and server guides. This could really be the Benny Corner where he talks about best practices for caching, setting up repositories on Git, and how to watch for performance issues in our various apps/the terminal.

We are a small shop, so if we can plan on one solid blog post up per week, we're off to a really good start. We should plan ahead and have posts in the queue ahead of company holidays or projected overload in of work in the department.

You will find specific guidelines for making our blog posts more Internet-friendly (read: fun and shareable) as well as information about creating an editorial calendar in Part 3. Part 4 will cover promoting content. The blog, while primarily for advanced marketing purposes, will best succeed with promotion and feedback from stakeholders.

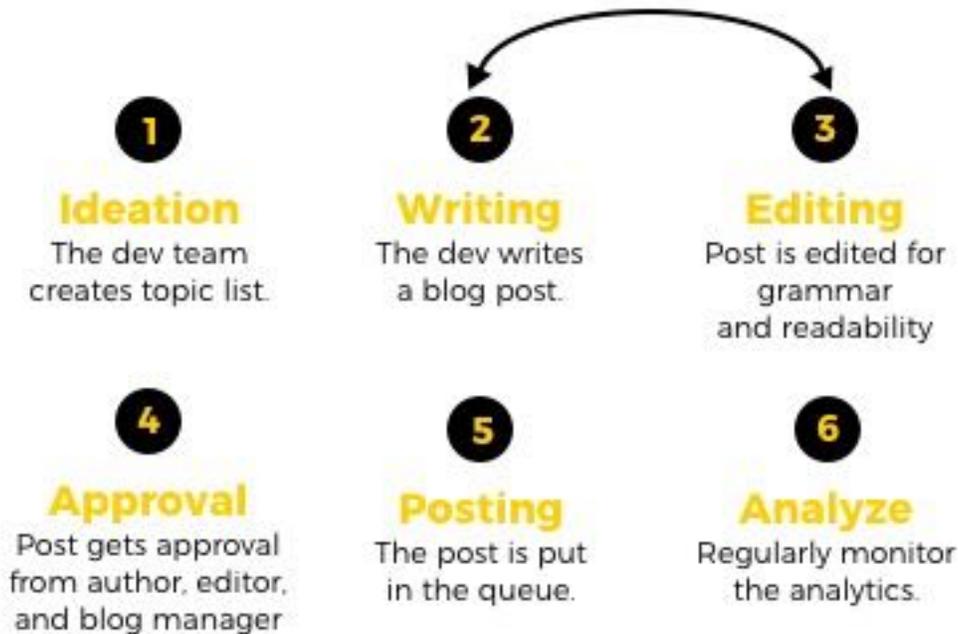
Part 3: Governance

Governance is all about the rules we set in place for content success. It's everything from the brand, voice, and style guidelines to the infrastructure on which host our content. Governance includes planning our editorial calendar and measuring the success of our content after the fact. Governance also includes workflow, but that will be separated in more detail into Part 4.

Content shouldn't be created just because there is a content deadline, through whatever means necessary; that may be a gap filler only in the direst of circumstances. A strong brand comes from well thought content that aligns to our tone and usefulness for our stake holders. We should consider the following:

- **Brand guidelines.** We will follow WNET's brand guidelines, as we are a company within WNET. This includes color, style, font faces, etc.
- **Style and voice guide.** Our voice should be professional but witty, smart and thoughtful, as well as professorial. We want to be creative, but build ourselves as trustworthy and knowing of WordPress best practices. At times we should be very technical, very instructional. But at the end of every post we should sum it up with a tl;dr that helps put our post into perspective and give readers key take-aways. We should create a living and breathing document as our style guide. A good example of this is [MailChimp's guidelines](#). Ours does not need to be nearly as fleshed out, but having a sense of the importance of everything from wrap-ups, to gif usage, to button text is important. Our voice should be similar from writer to writer as it is coming from IEG, but every writer is allowed to have their individual flair. A sense of individuality is encouraged.
- **Writing for the web.** People look for online text to be easily scannable so think about ways to break up text with shorter paragraphs, bullets, and illustrations. When possible, we should never have paragraphs more than five lines long.
- **Let's think about SEO.** Part of governance is making sure that details like metadata and title tags are taken care of. Keyword incorporation should always go through the editorial process, in order to make our content as discoverable as possible (including the natural use of synonyms).
- **Create an editorial calendar.** Before launch we should prioritize content tasks and establish a cadence of publishing blog posts with project titles, topics, writers, and editors. This will be done in a shared Google Drive spreadsheet, prioritizing content that has the most relevance. This will also establish accountability for all of the developers to produce content regularly.

Part 4: Workflow



There are six steps to our workflow: ideation, writing, editing, approval, posting, and measuring. For the most part, this is a linear process, unless the editor has major structural changes or asks for more clarification. Then, it will go back to the writing stage and repeat until the editor gives the thumbs up.

All members of the developer team will contribute to writing for the blog. An editor will be assigned, but all members of the team should be encouraged to read each other's work and ask questions or for clarification.

Promotion

Without proper promotion, our content will sit unnoticed and be less valuable for those developers who are looking for a resource. We should consider the following:

- **Social media.** We can use our personal social outlets, as well as consider an IEG social presence for promoting our content.

- **Outreach.** If the content is something an influencer might share (such as Automattic or major companies in the WordPress space), we should reach out to the influencer to let them know our content exists.

Outreach requires more forethought. So as we are ideating, we should think about which pieces might be worthy of that kind of investment and do an extra layer of investigation into who might share the content (and what their specific interests are).

Measurement

Measuring the success of content is one of the biggest challenges we will face. Although we should be aware of our stats and analytics, we shouldn't necessarily be overly concerned with these metrics. We should think about our clients and future clients, asking our stakeholders for feedback.

That said, we still should take numbers into account to see how it's being received among the developer community. We should look at page views, bounce rates, and time on the page to see how many people are really reading our content (and better yet, returning to that content if it's a tutorial).

Let's Move Forward

This is where all of the hard work begins. We know who we are, what the content we want to create is, where we want to share it, and how we want to coordinate to be successful. But here are a few actions we should take to move forward:

- **Set up the editorial calendar.** Once we have a roadmap along with our content ideas, it will feel much less intimidating to get started.
- **Meet about content.** Once the strategy is approved, we should clarify the workflow and assign the roles of editor and blog manager. We will create a timeline for how much time before turnaround on each post and set up processes for multiple drafts.
- **Build the site.** This document doesn't cover that process, as it will go through a design stage as well. The producers in IEG should be involved in creating the general site content for marketing ourselves.