NOAA Ocean Exploration Website Redesign Strategy

The NOAA Ocean Exploration Communications Team plans to develop a new version of the office website (oceanexplorer.noaa.gov) to meet the goals and objectives outlined below. **Note that these goals and objectives will be reevaluated and may change** as development progresses – this document is intended to frame the scope of evaluation in determining the best path forward.

Website Redesign Goals and Objectives

Primary goal: Increase functionality, ease of maintenance, and effectiveness/appeal of the website as a communications tool, creating a website that is modern, accessible, and effective at telling the ocean exploration story while providing a better experience for users. With the redesign, the Communications Team will work to achieve the objectives below.

Objectives of the Website Rebuild

Technical/Functional:

- Move website to CMS, resulting in:
    - Increased discoverability of content through improved navigation and tagging of content and thus an increased number of pages viewed during a visit
    - Optimized workflow through increased automation
    - Reduced overall management costs
- Make site more mobile friendly
- Reduce bounce rate (primarily from mobile users)
- Optimize image/video integration based on user/device
- Increase overall website traffic
- Ensure website is current in terms of federal web requirements
- Resolve video player and format issues

Content:

- Address new audiences, including (potentially) the science community and members of the media
- Provide better access to data and other end products/information (e.g., publications, discovery announcements, follow-up stories)

- Improve accessibility per Section 508 requirements and the federal DEIA Accessibility Roadmap
- Improve content contributor experience, both for office staff and external partners
- Modernize design (look and feel)
- Increase use of visualizations and interactive elements to deliver office message
- Enhance search engine optimization (SEO) to increase search engine rankings [by optimizing content for search intent, optimizing on-page content around target keywords, and writing compelling title tags and meta descriptions]
- Ensure content reflects updated office branding and messaging

Goals and Objectives of (New) Redesigned Website

The oceanexporer.noaa.gov website is an **outreach tool** – providing information (not services) to meet the goals and objectives below.

Primary goal of the redesigned website: Educate, inspire, and inform audiences about what ocean exploration is, why it is important, and NOAA Ocean Exploration contributions and opportunities in the field.

Proximate goals of the redesigned website:
  I. Explain ocean exploration discoveries and key phenomena to the **[ocean-interested] general public**

  II. Inform and engage the **science, technology, and resource management communities** regarding the NOAA Ocean Exploration mission, data availability, and opportunities for participation, partnership, and funding

  III. Inform the **media community** about NOAA Ocean Exploration discoveries, accomplishments, and expeditions (*media attention supports broader public awareness*)

  IV. Build capacity of **educators** to incorporate ocean science and exploration content into their teaching and to influence and inspire the **next generation** of ocean explorers

  V. Raise visibility and support for NOAA Ocean Exploration, both internally within NOAA and by external decision makers

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Office strategic goals: While the redesigned website should support all elements of the office's [new] strategic plan, it will most directly address **Goal 5** of educating, inspiring, and promoting the value of ocean exploration. The site can achieve this goal by highlighting other elements of the strategic plan, including:

- **Expeditions** that enable scientific discovery
- **Partnerships** – why are they important and how to establish them?
- **Tools and technologies** for ocean exploration
- **DE&I** – does not all have to be explicit, can be illustrated through other content or functionality
- **Data** to drive discovery

Primary target audiences:
[*These are the audiences we need to specifically think about in delivering content – who are they, what do they want, how are they going to find/use content*]

- General public
- Science community**
- Media**
- Educators

***New with website redesign*

Secondary audiences:
[*These are audiences that may use the site, but for which specific content will not be developed or delivered; their needs should be met by meeting the needs of the primary target audiences*]

- Internal (NOAA) decision makers
- External decision makers (e.g., Congress, White House)