Website Review Summary

Period:

December 4, 2008 – February 18, 2009

Participants:

1. Lisa Ragland
2. Wayne Wright
3. Bill Gay
4. Michael Boyle
5. Leticia Petty
6. Robin Ying
7. Omar Ramos

Feedback:

Lisa Ragland:

From an email that Lisa sent I made a request to the Conveyor Group to correct the following issue with the CMS search engine:

1. Search Improvements
   a. Exclude pages that have the "Title to URL" field set since these almost always link to other internal pages in order to create the navigation
   b. Exclude hidden pages (it would appear that this "should" be taken care of already by looking at the source of the Search.php file however they are still showing up in the search results)

Wayne Wright:

Via a short conversation with Wayne, we talked about the possibility of organizing documents better on the website as currently documents are spread out across the site.

Comments:

Omar Ramos: This will be something that would be remedied by having an integrated document management system with the CMS. This would ensure that all of the documents are organized (and can be accessed) in a central location on our site (in other words, there would be a Documents link on our site that would contain all of our public documents, and each user would be able to organize their documents into various categories, e.g. Technology Planning Committee -> 2008-09 -> Minutes -> December 04 Minutes.pdf). In addition, at the moment when users upload their documents they tend to create tables on their pages with links to each file. With the document management system, after files

have been added, users would be able to follow a simple wizard that would allow them to choose a particular category they would like to display on a page (in this case, all documents in the Technology Planning Committee -> 2009-09 -> Minutes category) and then a table with links to each file would be created automatically for the user. Since it is automatic, there is nothing that users will have to maintain, and each table of links will have a standard look and feel. The only thing that users would have to do is go through the wizard once more when they need to change the category (e.g. for 2009-10).

Bill Gay:

During our brief PR Committee meeting on Tuesday, Bill shared some initial findings on the current data from the student survey that Bruce Page has been conducting in his classes. One of these findings was that IVC students would prefer being contacted by email vs. a social networking website like MySpace. Additionally, Bill mentioned the problem most of us are aware of: most of the student email accounts in our Banner are unusable, and there is no central student email database that we could create a list from.

Comments:

Omar Ramos: The whole topic of email has been discussed in this Council a number of times already, but just the other day I was listening to an instructor tell their students that it would be a good idea to create a free email account (from Microsoft, Yahoo, AOL, Google, etc.). As far as I'm concerned I would choose Google Apps for Education as our student email platform since there is a nice API that can be used to create, list, delete, and modify accounts and create lists for emailing. Using this approach, we could deploy an app that students could login to beforehand (using their WebSTAR Pin and Gnumber), then after logging in they would be able to create one (and only one) email account (in my testing, the domain used was: my.imperial.edu, so an email would look like: omar.ramos@my.imperial.edu and would be accessed through (https://www.google.com/a/my.imperial.edu). Management-wise I don't believe it would require too much effort to support once the application has been developed, and it would provide students with an "official" email account that instructors could ask students to create and use.

Michael Boyle:

Michael has mentioned the need to prevent email harvesting programs from easily collecting email addresses from our site.

Comments:

Omar Ramos: The method outlined by Michael in his message to me was obfuscation, which would turn a normal mailto link:

Omar Ramos

Into the following:

<a href='mailto:omar.ra&

#109;os@imperial.edu'>Omar Ramos

This is a good thing to have, though with the current CMS there is no way to implement it without the source code. However, it is a built-in feature of the CMS we will be moving to in the future.
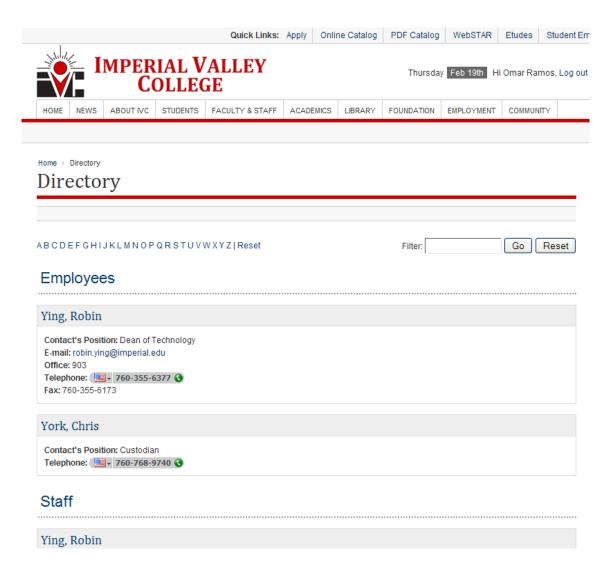
The other, perhaps even better solution is to use something that prevents these bots from ever viewing our pages, which is where the Bad Behavior program comes in. This is a program that can be easily added that would prevent any of those bots, and bad servers in general, from ever accessing our site. Since it shouldn't prevent normal legitimate users this would be an almost invisible sort of protection.

Leticia Petty:

Leticia has been updating the Faculty and Staff pages for the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division and it brings up the issue once more for the need of a central directory for Faculty and Staff.

Comments:

Omar Ramos: The situation here is similar to the current predicament for documents: contact information is strewn about our site and is not contained in any central location for students (or even ourselves) to use as a resource (besides the PDF version of the Faculty and Staff Directory). During the summer I decided to test a new program that was being worked on and entered all of the current information in our printed directory. Eventually, such a program would allow either individual instructors, or designated secretaries, to update the Contact information for each instructor. It would allow for searching, and alphabetic filtering. (Screenshot will be shown next).

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE

Thursday Feb 19th   Hi Omar Ramos, Log out

HOME   NEWS   ABOUT IVC   STUDENTS   FACULTY & STAFF   ACADEMICS   LIBRARY   FOUNDATION   EMPLOYMENT   COMMUNITY

Home › Directory

Directory

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z | Reset

Filter: [   ] [Go] [Reset]

Employees

Ying, Robin

Contact's Position: Dean of Technology
E-mail: robin.ying@imperial.edu
Office: 903
Telephone: 🇺🇸▾ **760-355-6377** 📞
Fax: 760-355-6173

York, Chris

Contact's Position: Custodian
Telephone: 🇺🇸▾ **760-768-9740** 📞

Staff

Ying, Robin

Robin Ying:

Dr. Ying, has contributed a number of time since the last Technology Planning Committee meeting, most important of which was helping me to discover and troubleshoot the source of the CMS intrusion around December 15.

Comments:

Omar Ramos: The issue was centered around the login area for faculty and staff for the CMS. The issue turned out to be a SQL Injection Vulnerability. These types of vulnerabilities occur when the programmer asks for some type of user input (in this case, a username and password) in order to query a database, but does not validate the input to make sure it does contain any bad characters which would allow somebody to login to the site without any password.

Omar Ramos:

The following four issues were also brought up with the Conveyor Group when I asked them to fix the Search Engine for the CMS (read the section about Lisa Ragland for more information regarding that particular issue):

1. (Incomplete) Internet Explorer Ajax caching issue for CMS Admin (this one's pretty important as it's been reported numerous times)

   a. In Internet Explorer, the page listing is cached in the browser so when a user creates or deletes a page the changes are not reflected in the page listing since Internet Explorer caches the previously sent page retrieved by the Ajax request. From my talks with different users, the only fix is to clear the cache and try again.

   b. The fix for this is to add a dummy variable to the end of the URL to trick Internet Explorer into thinking that the page is unique. This would need to be applied to the URL used on the [+] and [-] images on the Page Listing screen and could be accomplished by creating a new numeric variable using microtime() and appending it to the end of the URL.

2. (Complete) The include for the Custom_Header.php file you added for me is in an odd location (above the starting html tag). It really should be within the head tag somewhere after the title tag for it to be useful.

3. (Incomplete) Correct undefined variable errors within index.php file which are clogging up the error_log

   a. Text file is attached with recent examples (the errors will repeat, but I just took a sample so that you could see, that amount of text is generated within moments and means that our error log is exceedingly large >)

4. (Complete) In index.php remove two <br /> tags that occur right after <div class="Main_Content"> begins

As you can see, there are still a few problems that have not been resolved yet by the Conveyor Group, particularly the first issue above so I will need to contact theme again in order to get that particular problem fixed. An example of this issue can be seen on the next page. To illustrate, the screenshot was taken in Internet Explorer 7 after the last 3 pages had been deleted (New CMS Test Subpage, New Test Page 1, New Test Subpage 2), but there are still listed in Internet Explorer 7.

Pages

Page Title	Page #	Last Modified	
⊞ Where Success Begins	1	02/19/2009	Create Sub Page
⊞ About Us	2	10/24/2008	Create Sub Page
⊞ For Students	3	01/26/2009	Create Sub Page
⊞ Faculty & Staff	4	02/04/2009	Create Sub Page
⊞ Foundation	5	01/23/2009	Create Sub Page
⊞ Community	6	01/25/2008	Create Sub Page
⊟ Quick Links	22	10/15/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Address	26	11/06/2007	Create Sub Page
└ Adverts	103	12/09/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Contact Us	24	11/22/2006	Create Sub Page
└ Library Testing	4124	07/08/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Library Home	4413	08/19/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Valley Libraries	4654	08/19/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Search - (Hidden)	27	09/27/2007	Create Sub Page
└ Site Map	23	05/15/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Test Page	3756	12/16/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Adverts Backup	4817	10/07/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Frontpage Flash	3939	10/07/2008	Create Sub Page
└ Library Test	4348	07/30/2008	Create Sub Page
└ New CMS Test Subpage	3807	05/14/2008	Create Sub Page
└ New Test Page 1	4889	01/22/2009	Create Sub Page
└ New Test Subpage 2	4890	01/22/2009	Create Sub Page

Some other new additions have been:

1. Addition of Google Analytics Tracking Code for the following sites:
   a. http://www.imperial.edu (Over 12,000 visits to our site on Feb. 17, over 10,500 on Feb. 18)
   b. http://orientation.imperial.edu
   c. http://accreditation.imperial.edu
   d. https://esars.imperial.edu
   e. http://outpost.imperial.edu

In progress:

2. New athletics website