ROB ADAMS

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

OVERVIEW

▶ A bit about me

▶ A bit about the study

▶ Personas

▶ Visual identity: Unity vs Individuality

▶ News: Stories vs Updates

▶ A New Brand Strategy

▶ Limitations & Next Steps

A BIT ABOUT ME

▶ Education: Carnegie Mellon

▶ Work: Adobe

▶ Web customers: Razorfish, Sesame Workshop, BBC, AKQA, R/GA, TBWA, Library of Congress

▶ Publishing customers: Fast Company, Bloomberg, New York Times, Conde Nast, Time Inc, National Geographic

Masters degree in HCI from Carnegie Mellon
Worked for Adobe for 11 years focused on creation, communication, and understanding
Customers such as Razorfish, Sesame Workshop, BBC, AKQA, R/GA, TBWA, Library of Congress
Recently focused on publishing industry
Customers such as Fast Company, Bloomberg, New York Times, Conde Nast, Time Inc, National Geographic

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A BIT ABOUT THE STUDY

▶ 25 website maintainers

▶ General conference, mission, division, union, conference, and local church level

▶ Primarily: programmers, trainers, communication directors, project managers

▶ Secondarily: local pastors, volunteers

25 interviews with website maintainers throughout the Adventist organization
General conference, division, union, conference, and local church level
Primarily: programmers, trainers, communication directors, project managers
Secondarily: local pastors, volunteers

A BIT ABOUT THE STUDY

▸ Questions focused on:

  ▸ Participant roles and responsibilities

  ▸ Website design decisions

  ▸ Website programming approach, tools, and technologies

  ▸ Strategies for producing and distributing content & communications

  ▸ Methods for making regular updates to website content

PERSONAS

Composite users
Developed from matching trends across multiple participants
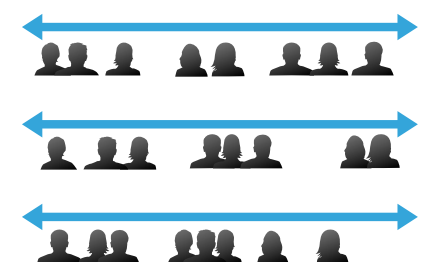Aggregates the needs of many into one easy-to-reference model

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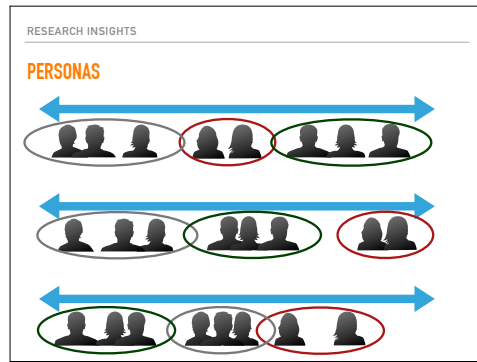Developed from matching trends across multiple participants

PERSONAS

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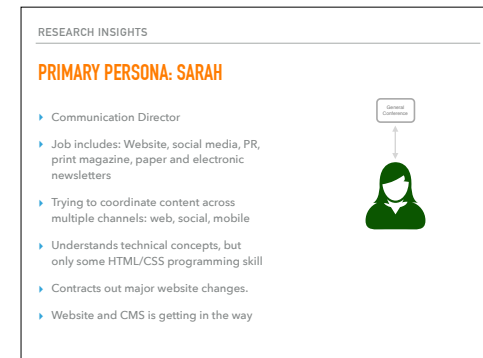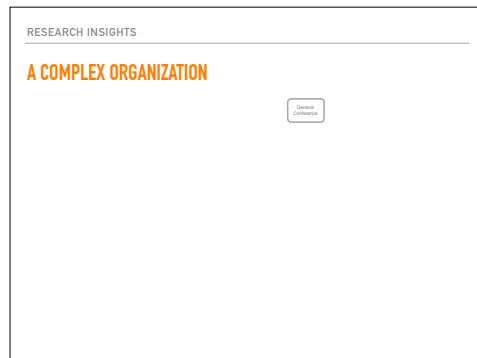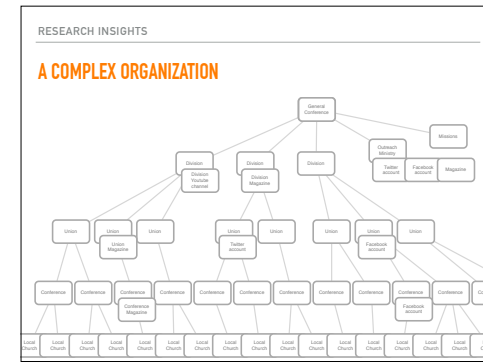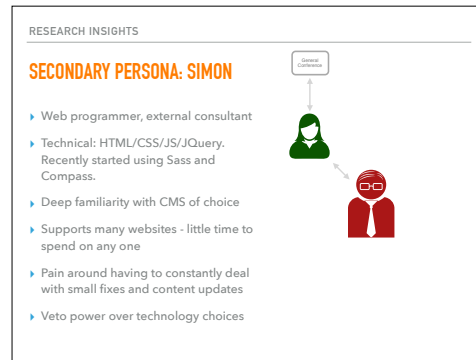Aggregates the needs of many into one easy-to-reference model
Developed from matching trends across multiple participants

A COMPLEX ORGANIZATION

A COMPLEX ORGANIZATION

PRIMARY PERSONA: SARAH

‣ Communication Director

‣ Job includes: Website, social media, PR, print magazine, paper and electronic newsletters

‣ Trying to coordinate content across multiple channels: web, social, mobile

‣ Understands technical concepts, but only some HTML/CSS programming skill

‣ Contracts out major website changes.

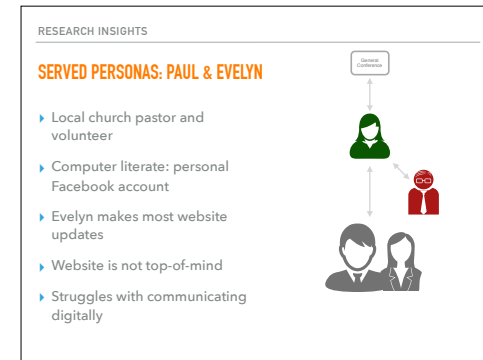‣ Website and CMS is getting in the way

Works for a regional department, supports communications for the department itself and member entities
Primarily focused on internal communication with membership and church administration, but some external media responsibilities.
Website only a part of her job. Primarily focused on information flow more generally.
Trying to coordinate content across multiple channels: web, social, mobile
She's the person to make regular website tweaks. Some skill with HTML/CSS, but needs help with anything complex
Doesn't have full-time tech on staff, contracts out when changes to the site need to be made she can't handle (rarely does this).

Website and CMS is getting in the way

SECONDARY PERSONA: SIMON

General Conference

- ▸ Web programmer, external consultant
- ▸ Technical: HTML/CSS/JS/JQuery. Recently started using Sass and Compass.
- ▸ Deep familiarity with CMS of choice
- ▸ Supports many websites - little time to spend on any one
- ▸ Pain around having to constantly deal with small fixes and content updates
- ▸ Veto power over technology choices

Fairly high technical skill: strong familiarity with HTML/CSS/JS/JQuery. Picking up Sass and Compass.
Some design ability but usually works with a designer
Supports many websites and has little time for each
Frustrated by lack of technical skill of the website administrators.
Pain around having to constantly deal with small issues eg updating content or tweaking styles - would prefer to have users themselves do this work
Has little influence over timing and nature of updates, but does influence technology choices.
Can veto technologies that are too difficult to use to fit Communication Director's needs.

SERVED PERSONAS: PAUL & EVELYN

General Conference

- ▸ Local church pastor and volunteer
- ▸ Computer literate: personal Facebook account
- ▸ Evelyn makes most website updates
- ▸ Website is not top-of-mind
- ▸ Struggles with communicating digitally

Local church personnel
No technical skills but computer literate, probably has personal FB account but not twitter/instagram.
Most website updates are made through volunteer, who is often changing.
Website is not top-of-mind. Mostly happy if he can get his sermons and events up.
Struggles with communicating with membership digitally. Most members struggle with digital communication anyway so this isn't too big of a deal.
Vague sense he should be doing more digital to reach out to the youth.

VARIATION: JORGE

General Conference

- ▸ Digital stratagist
- ▸ Outward-facing missions
- ▸ Communicates to non-members
- ▸ Storyteller
- ▸ Communicates internally for donations and support

Similar in most ways to Communications Director persona
Works on outward-facing initiatives e.g. ministries, radio, health & education institutions
More of a focus on communicating to nonmembers / general public
Access to stories of good work done by the SDA church.
Needs to communicate internally as well for donations & support

ADVENTIST PERSONAS

General Conference
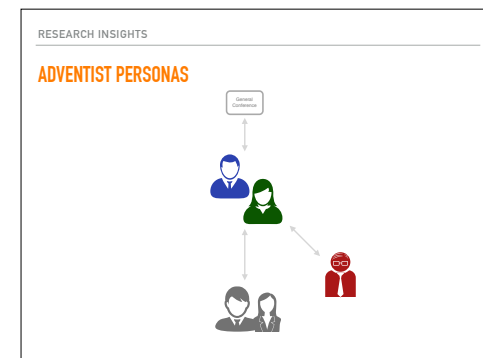
ADVENTIST PERSONAS

Sarah: Introduce flexibility. Enable multi-channel communication.

Jorge: Encourage sharing. Support a broad internal reach.

Simon: Reduce workload. Adhere to requirements.

Paul & Evelyn: Simplify digital communication.

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A REGIONAL OR LOCAL CONNECTION."

Sarah

Technologies must be flexible enough to adapt to different languages, cultural norms, whims of local institutions
Understands importance of unified branding but resistant to one-size-fits-all solution as she feels her region has special needs.
Still feels loyalty to world SDA church and would like to share more information about the great stuff that is going on.

"[MAINTAINING SITES] IS ONLY 20% OF WHAT I DO."

Sarah

Not a full-time web pro. Not even really a web pro.

"WE NEED TO BREAK DOWN SILOS"

Jorge

"THE TEMPLATES AREN'T ROBUST ENOUGH."

Simon

"THERE'S NO END TO STUPID QUESTIONS."

Simon

"NOBODY IS SPEARHEADING WEBSITE CHANGES."

Paul & Evelyn

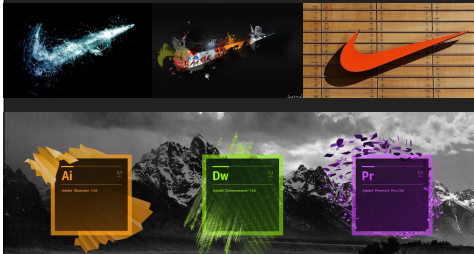"THE WEBSITE JUST NEEDS CLEAR INFORMATION. AND TO WORK ON MOBILE."

Paul & Evelyn

VISUAL IDENTITY: UNITY VS INDIVIDUALITY

▸ Sarah resists uniformity

▸ Must tailor identity to local needs

▸ "Enforcing" the brand might backfire

Comm director has many reasons for resisting too much unity - some logical; some cultural
Identity must be tailored to local cultural expectations, broad audience of publications, whims of regional and local church personnel
Those who must "enforce" brand call for more edicts from on top, but unclear those would be effective

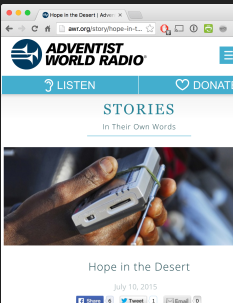## RECOMMENDATION: FLEXIBLE BUT IDENTIFIABLE MARKS

Invest in a visual brand identity that can morph to fit the needs of the audience
Still must reinforce a globally recognizable brand
Tie together currently disconnected works into a single Seventh-Day Adventist identity
Examples?

NEWS: STORIES VS UPDATES

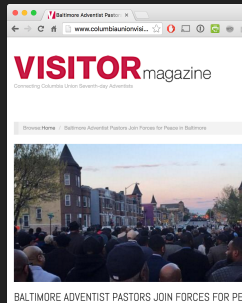▸ Example: Reaching out to the needy in remote areas

Updates: internal-focus, local appeal
Examples: Church events, sermons
Stories: external and internal, broad appeal
Examples: SDA response to Baltimore riots, AWR reaching out to new areas

NEWS: STORIES VS UPDATES

▸ Example: Local response to events of national interest

Updates: internal-focus, local appeal
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Examples: SDA response to Baltimore riots, AWR reaching out to new areas

RECOMMENDATION: MAKE UPDATES EASY AND FAST

▸ Quick to post updates

▸ Easy to learn

▸ Locally managed & locally circulated

Quick for pastors and volunteers to post updates to website and social
Easy system for new volunteers to learn
Not important for updates to be broadly shared

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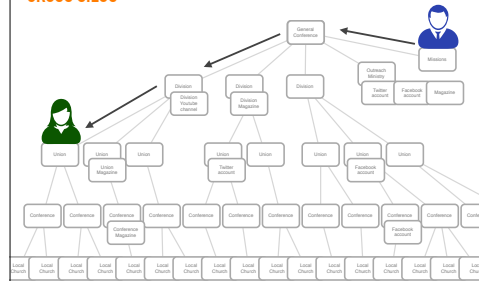
RECOMMENDATION: GIVE STORIES GLOBAL REACH

▸ Support sharing

▸ Encourage story development

▸ Publish to local & regional departments

Invest in infrastructure to support sharing of stories across regions
Encourage regional departments to invest in story development
Make it easy for local churches and regional departments to share stories from other regions across social & web

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CROSS SILOS

CROSS SILOS
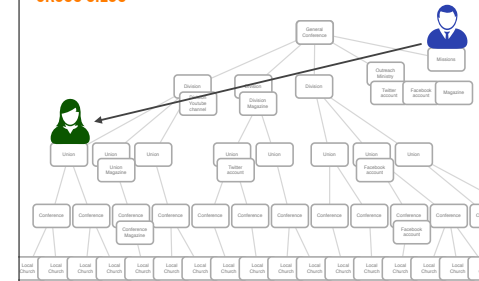
A NEW BRAND STRATEGY

▸ Stories + flexible global brand

▸ Regional control over brand placement

▸ But guidance on what works for different purposes

LIMITATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

▸ Limited exposure to local churches, esp small churches

▸ Only secondhand exposure to volunteers

▸ Important if we decide to expand functionality for these user types

THANK YOU