SuperFriendly

Adventist.org Pattern Library Manifesto

Hi Brent, John, Sam, Italo, and the rest of the General Conference Web and Communications teams!

We've been through a kickoff session, we've had conversations, and we've taken lots of notes. This manifesto serves to align all of us to make sure we're collectively on common ground. It's meant to be brief, so don't worry about where the other pages might be. We want to keep this as simple and actionable as possible. What you'll find here is a high-level encapsulation of our strategic direction for the new Adventist.org Pattern Library.

The Opportunity

13 world divisions. Over 70,000 churches worldwide. Over 260,000 active employees. 63 publishing houses offering publications in over 350 languages. 15 media centers worldwide. Over 1 million primary schools. Development and relief support (through ADRA) in over 130 countries.

The reach and influence of the Seventh-day Adventist church are akin to mainstream brands like Coca-Cola and Amazon. Inside that vast network are clusters of enthusiastic and passionate people who have launched and created their own digital presence through websites and other online media underneath the Seventh-day Adventist brand.

But there's a disconnect. There are over 70,000 websites in the Seventh-day Adventist network, many of which have their own look and feel and serve a local or otherwise specific audience. With so many sites doing so many different things on so many different platforms, the current digital ecosystem is fractured. There's no support system that can serve the vast digital needs, so efforts and funds are continuously and needlessly squandered across the organization to build the same kinds of solutions, to solve the same kinds of problems, just to end up with a wildly inconsistent digital brand.

The General Conference has an opportunity to provide the digital support system the Adventist church needs so digital teams large and small can efficiently create sites and pages that are flexible to their local needs but still consistent with the global Seventh-day Adventist brand.

This digital support system has two primary parts: a design system and a better back-end infrastructure. A solid pattern library is the first big step in establishing a design system that can accommodate the deep and wide communication needs of the Seventh-day Adventist community.

We couldn't be more excited about this challenge. Below, you'll find a few specifics about how we intend to make this pattern library a scalable, modular design system that offers the worldwide Adventist organization an opportunity for visual consistency with room for individuality and customization. Read on!

Creating a product culture

Your design system is a product. It's a product that helps you make other products.

And products come with product management and product marketing—evangelizing and governing your design system. Your pattern library is only one piece of a larger digital ecosystem, and it needs to morph and expand as needs and problems and possibilities are identified from the community.

Some organizations treat their products like they treat cars. Say you bought a 2010 Ford Focus. It's a great car when you buy it brand new. But, in 2012, the cruise control dies. No big deal; you can cope without it. In 2013, the heat now only turns on every other time. It's fine... you can bundle up in the winter. In 2014, your brakes need to be replaced. In 2015, the transmission starts acting up. Over the years, you build up all these issues that you think you can live with, until 2016 rolls around and you feel pressured to buy a brand new car because fixing all the problems with that 2010 Ford Focus will likely be just as expensive.

More intentional organizations think of their products more like public transportation than cars. Public transportation can never stop. People depend on this system to keep moving, keep running. If you need to update public transportation, you don't just shut it all down to make your fixes and then roll out a brand new shiny public transportation system. Maintenance happens while this system is still active.

Your pattern library should always be running, never stopping. It should be maintained and improved while the system is still active. Continuous delivery is a popular idea in software development and is only now making its way to the process of making web-based products. Make no mistake: creating a design system like this marks your entry into software development. If it's good enough for Amazon, Yahoo, Google, and many other technology companies, a continuous delivery mindset will work wonders for the Adventist church.

For Sarah to see & Simon to use

From the interviews we conducted, we identified 4 personas:

1. **Sarah** works as a Communication Director for a regional department within the SDA hierarchy. She spends the most time of anyone on staff on website maintenance, but it's still a relatively small part of her job. A lot of her pain is around how long it takes to make changes to the site. Sarah isn't very happy with the current design or her content management system, but fixing it is a daunting, expensive challenge.

2. **Simon** is a developer—often a consultant—who works with Sarah as well as other website administrators throughout the SDA Church. He's fairly technical: deeply familiar with HTML and CSS, proficient with Javascript and jQuery, and has recently started working with Sass and Compass. Simon supports many websites and has little time to spend building them, and even less for maintaining them.

3. **Jorge** is Digital Media Manager, and his role is similar to Sarah's and many of his goals overlap with hers. However, unlike Sarah, Jorge works for an externally-facing mission that is tasked with outreach to Adventists and non Adventists alike. Jorge shares many of Sarah's concerns about the difficulty of making updates, ensuring information is easy to find, etc. Additionally, he has a lot of pain around sharing information within the SDA Church.

4. **Paul** is a pastor at a mid-sized local church. He's familiar enough with technology from a user perspective, but he knows very little about HTML, CSS, and other underlying web technologies. Evelyn is a volunteer who works with Paul, and is no more familiar with web technologies than he is, but is the most tech-savvy of the volunteers.

The primary goal of this project is to create a pattern library that Sarah can use as a visual reference when conceiving of what she wants and need to build. The pattern library also needs to contain the snippets of code that can help Simon to quickly and efficiently bring Sarah's vision to life.

Objectives & Key Results

A number of themes surfaced during the course of our research and interviewing. Our kickoff meeting together gave us the opportunity to prioritize those themes into the ones most relevant to this pattern library.

In order to get the most out of those priorities, we'll use Intel's and Google's tried-and-true framework of OKRs—Objectives & Key Results—to help us create a wholly effective site. To recap, OKRs act as a forcing function for focus and prioritization. They align team effort and make sure everybody is working towards the same goal.

Objectives are goals in a single sentence; they tell us where to go. Objectives should be qualitative, ambitious, vague, and somewhat uncomfortable.

Each objective should have a few **Key Results**, which answer the question, "How will we know if we met our objective?" Key Results are measurable, quantifiable, and difficult, but not impossible. As Yahoo! CEO Marissa Mayer said, "It's not a key result unless it has a number."

Key Results should be graded and reevaluated every quarter on a scale of 0 to 10. A great target grade usually ranges from 6 to 8. (If you're constantly scoring a 10, the Key Results probably weren't challenging enough. If you're constantly scoring a 0, perhaps the Key Results were too ambitious.)

We've distilled the larger list into three initial Objectives, each with their own set of Key Results. Why only three? Too many OKRs would give us an unfocused trajectory; too little would be putting all our eggs in not enough baskets.

For the first quarter after the pattern library is delivered, we suggest you focus on these three Objectives:

A. Create a foundational, deeply-rooted pattern library

B. Allow for customization and individuality in the new pattern library

C. Involve the community in the creation and adoption of the pattern library

A. Create a foundational, deeply-rooted pattern library

In our kickoff meetings, we talked a lot about the idea of a *comprehensive* pattern library.

Building a *comprehensive* library of all patterns the SDA organization needs and would need implies that, once delivered, this library will be… *complete.* It implies the system is a project that has an end point, and that once launched, the project will have served its purpose. Simply put, that would be a disappointing outcome, nor is it our intent.

This pattern library should continue to grow long past our involvement. It should be adopted by media centers and development teams across the organization and inspire ownership and inclusion across these kinds of teams. We'll build a strong foundation for you, because this first step needs to be able to support years of growth. Comprehensiveness will be a side effect, not a goal.

Rather than creating a *comprehensive* pattern library, we will create a *deeply-rooted*, *foundational* one that can be used immediately, but one that is meant to be tended and groomed, like a living structure that needs nurture and care.

KEY RESULTS

1. **10,000** SDA websites (15% of the 70,000 sites) make obvious use of the pattern library

2. **75 websites** made by the GC (50%) make obvious use of the pattern library

3. The first SDA websites built for these languages report **0 issues** when building:

    1. Mandarin
    2. Spanish
    3. English
    4. Hindi/Urdu
    5. Arabic
    6. Portuguese
    7. Bengali
    8. Russian
    9. Japanese
    10. Punjabi

B. Allow for customization and individuality in the new pattern library

How do you create a design system that is scalable, modular, and offers customization and expressions of individuality for unique visual designs and logos? Color presets.

Color presets are design variations that offer customization in color and tone. These color presets will give each "sub-brand"—individual churches, for example— a bit of freedom within a structured visual variation. They'll offer "on brand" alternatives by providing options approved by the GC while still leaving room for individuality.

KEY RESULTS

1. A trained person at the GC—Brent? John? Sam?—can build a site with the new design system in **2 days**.

2. **20% increase** in use of design system. (Currently, 15,200 out of 76,000 SDA churches use the current design system. We should see this number jump to 15,500.)

C. Involve the community in the creation and adoption of the pattern library

A pattern library is only as good as its relevance to the organization it's meant to serve, and inclusion in the process is an important first step in marketing this new system to the broader SDA audience.

Author Austin Kleon offers <u>some advice about why organizations should be transparent about their work</u>:

1. Documenting your process helps your progress.
2. Sharing your process reaps the benefits of self-promotion.
3. Building an audience for what you do creates a valuable feedback loop.

One of the things we heard loud and clear in most of our interviews about the lack of adoption of the current design framework was that people simply didn't even know it was being created. The process didn't seem to be interested in the community, so the community responded with an absence of interest in the product. Building awareness long before an official "release" of this product can go a long way to seeing traction in its usage.

KEY RESULTS

1. **18 unions** (30%) register in a feedback program.

2. **3 ideas** originating from the community not included in the initial delivery of the design system have been adopted.

3. Design system adopted by **3 customers** that weren't part of the initial interviews or any feedback program.

Further recommendations

Create a suggestion box feedback program

The best way to find out how your constituents are using the pattern library is to ask them and provide a way for them to tell you. There are no shortage of tools that allow you to communicate directly with your community. Create a dedicated Twitter account. Send out a monthly TinyLetter. Leave up a permanent Google Form or Wufoo form. Whatever the method, making the communication channels go both ways is a big step in making sure you can respond to the needs of the community.

Launch a Product Blog

Creating a blog is a quick way to jumpstart communication with the people interested in what the GC web and communications teams are up to. Specific articles could be broadcast from other platforms, publications, radio shows, and more.

It's also an easy way to start thinking and acting like a product team. Several companies—like the BBC, Salesforce, and the Guardian, to name a few—have taken a similar approach to offer resources and to involve their communities. Beginning the conversations about the pattern library by describing it and presenting it as a product that needs continuous delivery cycles will shape your communities understanding of how to use and be involved with this product moving forward.

Here's a few ideas of topics you could post on your blog:

- The kickoff process and discussions

- Issues of governance

- Sneak peeks

- Use cases: specific examples of case studies of how you could use or how it's been used

- Showcase: examples of "in-the-wild" use

Make the pattern library public

Making your work public is a simple and easy way to share it and build a sense of familiarity. We're not just talking about public to the small SDA community members that have the URL. We're talking Open Source, in the fullest extent of the phrase. Making this pattern library freely available for anyone— SDA or not—to pore over extends its reach and applicability. It also acts as a form of self-governance, quality control, and accountability; after all, no one wants to publicly put on display their second-rate code.

Launch a hashtag

Using social platforms would be an easy way to promote content from the blog as well as incite some light collaboration. Using a hashtag to centralize feedback, excitement, and content sharing is a quick win for including the community.

- `#SDADesignMatters`

- `#SDADesignSystem`

- `#increasethereach`

- `#adventistdesignsystem2016 #ADS2016`

- `#makeyourmark`

Use a federated model for pattern library governance

As we discussed the many models of governance at the kickoff, the version that seemed to have the most energy and potential around it was a federated model, where representatives from multiple responsibilities—the GC, unions, churches, etc—come together to work on, test, and update the pattern library. Of those representatives, identify a subset whose responsibility it is to make sure the pattern library itself is the most current version of itself.

Consolidate content management systems

Perhaps the longest-term but furthest-reaching recommendation is to move toward one content management system to rule them all. We heard reports of upwards of a dozen difference CMSs in play, and we're guessing there are more than a few still flying under the radar. Moving onto one shared development environment can help foster consistency, provide immense value for subsidiaries that struggle to operate an independent site, and get you a step closer to a pattern library-driven development environment. We'll provide more detail about this recommendation in an upcoming conversation.

Continuing the conversation

Hopefully, the pages above give you both a sense of our project philosophy as well as a framework to carry on once our involvement tapers. We'll use this document often throughout the course of our work. Expect us to repeat a few bits—or all—of this at the start of every meeting to confirm that we're still on the same page.

How does this all sit with you? Perhaps you're already thinking along these lines (great!). Or maybe, this is a drastic shift in the way you've been thinking about this project. Either way, we think this is something special, which is why we're so thrilled to work with you. We hope this raises a lot of questions and concerns and worries and excitement. It does for us.

As always, we're looking forward to the conversation. Thanks!