NTTG.BIZ OBSERVATIONS OF USER INTERACTION

USER TYPES

This document describes the insights our team has learned about http://nttg.biz to date through usability interviews and observations of current user interactions with the website.

USER TYPES

There are three different types of users accessing the website: administrative users, private access users, and public users. Administrative users handle the day to day content maintenance of the site. Public users have access to information that must be legally made available (meeting notes, contact information, and a list of upcoming meetings). Private access users have access to all of the public content, plus private content.

ADMINISTRATIVE USERS

There are very few regular administrative users of the website. These administrative users are frustrated with the difficulties posed by a counter intuitive interface. Often, they need to use multiple browser windows to capture the relevant structural and hierarchical information in order to make updates to the site. In order to create hyperlinks that reference the correct URI, administrative users must use multiple browser windows and a pop-up dialog.

The admin taxonomy does not map well to the administrative users' expectations. For example, the admin interface contains a location for "Files" and a location for "Documents," but the difference between the two types are not clear.

The relationship between the front end and the back end is hidden by numerous lists, folders, and specialized names.

The confusion that this interface causes may result in slower turnaround when implementing content, architecture, and event updates.

Navigation of the administrative interface is an entirely different experience than navigation of the website front end.

Rather than relying on familiarity with website administration and maintenance to keep the website up and running, administrators must rely on an extensive collection of self-created, locally saved support documents. Each administrator may have a different set of documentation or documentation with differing instructions.

PRIVATE ACCESS USERS

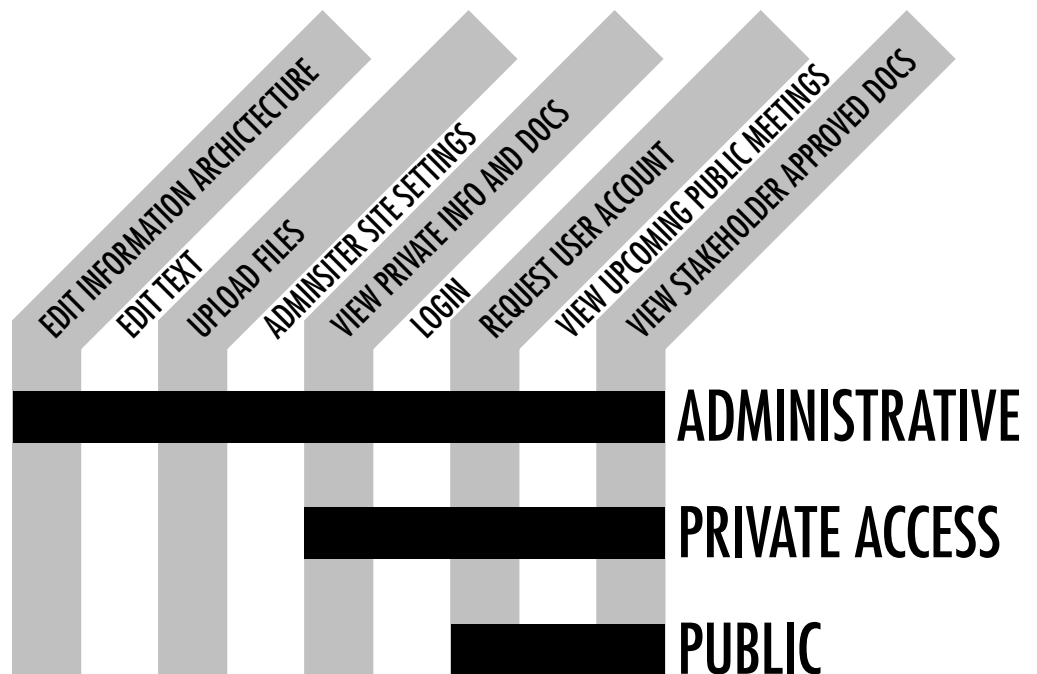Note: we have not interviewed any private access users.

While private access users could feasibly access content that was not available to the general public, no such content is currently being added to the site. As a result, private access users have access to no more content than public users.

PUBLIC USERS

We have not interviewed any public users.

Public users only have access to content that is published for availability on the website front end.

Relative level of access for the identified user types.

EDIT INFORMATION ARCHICTECTURE

EDIT TEXT

UPLOAD FILES

ADMINSITER SITE SETTINGS

VIEW PRIVATE INFO AND DOCS

LOGIN

REQUEST USER ACCOUNT

VIEW UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

VIEW STAKEHOLDER APPROVED DOCS

ADMINISTRATIVE

PRIVATE ACCESS

PUBLIC

CONTENT TYPES

There are four different types of content currently being added to the website: images, text, Adobe Acrobat files, and datetime information.

IMAGES

Only two images are currently used on the website. One is the header image (bus_header.jpg) and the other is a map of NTTG's coverage area (nttg_map_final_xxlarge.jpg). The coverage map is the only image that is ever updated. It is an in-line image placed within a WYSIWYG text box.

This image is updated slightly less often than the text, every two years or more.

TEXT

A large portion of the content on the website is text. The text is updated by administrative users. They first log in through the front end and then perform their edits within WYSIWYG text boxes and single line text boxes.

This data is updated "maybe once every two years."

ADOBE ACROBAT FILES

This may be the most frequently updated content. These are meeting notes and proposals. Before being made available to public users, the administrative users must first receive sign-off from stakeholders. In some cases stakeholders may have private access accounts, but these accounts do not grant them early access to content.

Correctly uploading, storing, and including these files on the website is a difficult, time consuming process.

Publicly available content includes items like approved biennial reports. Content that has not been approved for public consumption are not available to public users.

Advisicon: Observations of User Interaction with http://nttg.biz

The current process for uploading meeting notes is as follows:

1. While the meeting occurs a note taker takes notes. In most cases the note taker is an administrative user of the website.

2. The note taker saves the notes in docx format and sends the notes out to all of the stakeholders.

3. If a stakeholder has changes to make they will either:
   a. Turn on track changes, make edits to the document, save the document as a docx, and email the file back to the note taker, or
   b. Raise their concerns at the next meeting.

4. At the next meeting, all stakeholders will be asked if they have any objections to making the notes public.

5. Until a quorum is reached with no objections, the notes will remain private.

6. When a quorum is reached with no objections, the administrative user will save the notes as a pdf and upload them to the website via the DOCMAN feature.
   a. The files need to be uploaded into the proper location of DOCMAN. Figuring out the proper location can be a time consuming process involving multiple browser windows and hunting through menus.

The process for uploading proposals is very similar to the process of uploading meeting notes, with one difference: there is no meeting at which to take notes, the proposals come from stakeholders.

It is unclear how much space these files (or the website for that matter) take up. Some error codes indicate that it may take up more than 128mb.

Since no visitor analytics are currently being captured, we do not know how much traffic this portion of the website receives monthly.

DATETIME

An important element of the website is the inclusion of dates and times of upcoming public meetings. Directions about how to access these meetings must be made available to the public by law.

NTTG also holds private meetings. For private meetings, meeting subject, date, time, attendees, and access information are *not* added to the website. This information is communicated privately between the relevant stakeholders.

COST

Records show that NTTG originally paid about $3500 to get the site built by eVenture. At the time, they were hosting the site via SiteGround for $7/month. They were paying the hosting fees annually for $84.40/year.

The 2011 website assessment showed that the hosting costs had raised to $107/year.

The 2013 hosting invoice shows that hosting was still through SiteGround at the time and was being paid monthly at $15.39/month. This works out to an annual cost of $184.68/year for hosting.

Hosting is still through SiteGround. The Joomla platform running on the SiteGround Apache servers is currently free of charge.

DOCUMENT BIASES

The information we've gathered has been heavily reliant on the user studies conducted with administrative users. To better understand the needs of other user types, we suggest conducting additional user studies with private access users (if such users exist) and public users.

An important part of additional user studies will be finding and observing private access users. Since this is a group that is largely ignored in current administrative practices, learning about the needs and expectations of these users is likely to result in a significant improvement in their experience with the site.