

Needs Assessment for Final Project (CMP 2035)

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For my final project, I will be attempting a “redesign” of the American Meteorological Society’s website—specifically, the Publications section (<https://www2.ametsoc.org/ams/index.cfm/publications/>). My client is Brian Papa, Technology Project Manager at AMS.

The client needs the website to provide information to users about the various publications provided (AMS publishes ten technical journals ranging from quarterly to twice-monthly, a number of monographs, and several books each year) and the necessary steps to authoring publications, as well as to direct them to available content to read and additional resources for help in any of the above areas.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- To ensure users are aware of the available published content to read, which translates into maintaining (or increasing) subscriptions.
- To provide clear instructions and documentation on publishing content with AMS and reduce the number of queries made directly to staff. Also, to make the submission of content to be published as easy as possible, which translates into increased submissions (and, therefore, increased revenue).

The website is targeted at authors who publish with AMS as well as readers of AMS Publications content (who are also potential authors).

The client plans to measure success of the new website via a review of analytics and queries from users. For this department, success is generally measured by the number of users that successfully submit articles or that are directed to a separate content site (Journals Online: <http://journals.ametsoc.org/>) to read and/or purchase content. Success can also be measured by a decreased volume of questions (email, phone, etc.) that staff receive to clarify information that is already available on the website.

The website does already exist (see above). According to the client (and I would agree with this as well!), the content is presently unclear, poorly organized, and difficult to navigate, as well as poorly written, excessively verbose, and generally confusing to users.

The client has previously worked with multiple designers. Positive experiences include the designer taking feedback and developing a template for the site that was easily populated with content. Additional maintenance on the site was easily done locally or with minimal feedback from designer. Poor experiences included many rounds of back and forth, the designer poorly implementing or ignoring design requests, the designer being consistently late with deliverables, and the overall implementation of the site being significantly delayed.

Given that the site already exists, acquiring sample text and imagery will not be a problem. I anticipate that my main challenge will be reimagining navigation in a way that is friendlier to the user *and* elegantly incorporates all of the disparate content that is presently on the site. The client's other stated need—content that is not “poorly written, excessively verbose, and generally confusing to users”—is outside the scope of this particular project, but I believe that restructuring the site's current navigation with authors and readers in mind will alleviate many of the site's present woes and, perhaps, even result in increased revenue for my client's place of employment.