Hi Blake – thank you for your time and participation in the stakeholder/SME research interviews. I'm sending along the notes (in red) that I took during our informational interview, to give you a chance to make sure I understood our conversation similarly. (There is one bit I <mark>highlighted</mark> because I think I didn't catch it properly.)

If you see anything you'd like to clarify or correct, you can do so in-line below with a reply email. If I don't hear from you, I'll assume I've captured things correctly. Thanks again for your collaboration.

Jennifer

-----Original Appointment-----
From: Lee, Jennifer Y.
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 12:06 PM
To: Lee, Jennifer Y.; Scates, Blake
Subject: Rescheduled: Info interview w/Blake (VHA) - web governance
When: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 2:00 PM-3:00 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).
Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Hi Blake,
Thanks for participating in these interviews. I'm sending a list of questions in advance. You do NOT need to answer these beforehand. I just wanted to provide the list of Qs I have asked others in case that might be helpful to you to see in advance. **Not all of the questions may apply to your web comms team and that's okay;** we'll capture that as well.

I'd like to spend at least the last 15 minutes of our talk for you to freeform discuss anything you'd like to share regarding current web governance activities by your team – what works/doesn't, what's painful, anything that you feel is relevant but isn't captured by the set of standard user interview questions, and any other observations you wish to share.

--

Jennifer Lee
Jennifer.lee27@va.gov | 202-664-6532
Digital Experience Product Office
Office of the CTO

Web requests
This is comprised of information from both Josh Tuscher on the Web Governance Board and Brad Smelley on the TeamSite Admin team, and they had slightly different understanding.

Could you validate the behind the scenes steps here?

[BS: Administrative approving side of web requests. JHL, JG, BS – shared duty to respond to web request form submission. BS involved in first time creation and promotion (aka first time publishing) of internet, intranet, and page to page redirects (only Web Ops can do SITE level redirects; and they won't do any page to page redirects).

For the web requests: BS reviews description; reaches out to business if any questions or unclarity or if a different medium other than a web page or website is better. Generally, a high level of contact with requestors/program offices.

Creation of site: Usually Blake and JHL - thorough review of public pages BEFORE promotion. Things they review for: graphics branding standard, alt text/tags for 508 compliance, tables, attributes, aria labels; using design template (unless it's a custom site). They have 3 levels/categories of issues they use for reviewing. Levels: Show Stoppers – launch blockers; Please fix soon – it's acceptable, but should do X to fix; Consider – suggestion but they don't have to before or after publishing.]

1. A user submits a web request to Web Ops.
2. The ~~Web Governance Board~~ reviews the request. ~~(WGB assumption by this step that business web comms has reviewed and approved the request details: site folder, URL, internet vs. intranet, etc.)~~ {Depending on the administration selected by the requestor, the web request is 'sent' in the system to that administration's web comms team.}
3. ~~WGB~~ approves/rejects the request. {It's really the related administration web comms team.}
4. Approved requests are then sent to TeamSite Admin, who implements the request according to the approved web request specs.
5. Approved requests automatically generates a record in the Web Registry, and an auto-generated email is sent to the business POC to verify the information.
6. What happens to requests that are not approved? [See above – He'll reach back out directly to requestor to provide reasoning and when applicable, recommendation (like – incorporate info to this other existing page or site instead of creating a new page/site.]

TeamSite publishing – when Web Ops review is triggered

Web Ops review is automatically triggered and final publishing step (on server) is paused in these scenarios:
- If there are changes to 80 files or more at once
- If there's an invalid file type

What are the steps that happen to resolve this trigger?

BS: has encountered once/twice in 6 years – very rare. Example: PDF remediation use case – when he had to update a lot of files at once. In that case, reached out to TeamSite Admin. Once you let them know it's okay, publishing able to go through.

Hypothesis about why 80: Don't know – maybe in past, had to do with performance issues?

508 Compliance

What steps, reviews, or support take place to ensure that web content and uploaded documents are 508-compliant before publication? [yes see above, as part of review before first time promotion]

- What happens when non-508 compliant web pages or uploaded documents are discovered after publication?
  BS: creation & promotion – the web ops request form has a checkbox for the business to say they will be compliant. After first time promotion, it's up to the business to be compliant, but would love for the CMS interface to prevent non-compliant uploads or to notify web comms (and allow for admin override in special situations).
- How do teams find out about non-compliant web pages/documents on the website?

Other web standards

Are there any activities or processes that enforce various web standards set by the Web Governance Board?
BS: TeamSite CMS team will look to ensure no invalid file types, mixing asp with an html file, so on. BS will advise offices - No acronyms in URLs for public facing website if he sees that in the web site request. If intranet only – more flexible about it, but still encourages no acronym.

- For instance, regarding URL standards – like not using underscores – is that manually enforced or automatically prevented (via error message or whatever if someone tries to publish a page with non-standard URL)?
- Are there other types of technical operations that help support or enforce compliance of web standards?

404s, Redirect chains, URLs, meta properties

- How are broken links and 404 pages identified? [VHA web comms uses Site Improve automated weekly scans on VHA pages – it also scans for 508, reading level, broken links; believes it's sent automatically to public affairs teams.] Is there a manual or automated process (tests/scans)? On what schedule does it occur, and what happens when broken links/404s are discovered?

- How is it determined that a redirect is needed? How are redirects requested? How are redirects implemented? How is it ensured that loops and excessive chains are prevented? Page to page redirect – doesn't need system agreement; very simple – just adding a little bit of code at the top of the page in TeamSite; generally businesses reach out to VHA web comms to implement the page-to-page redirect, and Blake will help bc most offices don't have anyone with basic web skills.

- How are standardized URL patterns and unique meta titles/meta descriptions enforced? (Is it baked into the frontend templates, in the Web Request form?)
  [URL stuff: subdomain URLs less approval needed – e.g., something.va.gov vs. va.gov/something/ . ←Blake, is this correct? My notes here somehow doesn't seem right to

me. Seems like subdomains should need stricter level of approval? /JL
ES ECC {unsure about acronym} – OIT change control board in Web Ops – meet as committee to review URL and other technical protocols. Generally requesting is difficult and take a long time for a response. For this reason, Blake will generally advise offices to]

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Intranet vs. Public (external) content [Did not have time to cover]

- Is there a team or a process that is responsible for ensuring that internal content (like internal meeting PPT decks, minutes, meeting videos, etc.) doesn't get published on the public website?
- What happens when teams publish content that belongs on the intranet on the public VA.gov Internet? Do people report that to Web Ops or to another group? What group is responsible for removing that content from the public site?

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Are your governance activities different for SharePoint vs. WordPress vs. TeamSite vs. custom-built sites? [Did not have time to cover]

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Other: Blake's general concerns/observations
- Would like to see a lot tighter 508 controls especially in (hopefully) new CMS.
- Would like to see built in internal workflow governance – EX: a message that tells users, 'sorry, can't upload non-compliant things' and blocks them from publishing non-compliant docs.
- 508 Office: They seem understaffed; not enough staff there to provide remediation support; needs stronger advocate to affect VA-wide enterprise systems and processes.

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