From:	Lee, Jennifer Y.
To:	Herrera, Rhett A.; South, Koby L.
Cc:	Hauptmann, Bobbi J.
Subject:	RE: OMHSP interview-web governance
Date:	Wednesday, June 30, 2021 10:01:00 AM

Hi Rhettt and Koby,

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. 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

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Jennifer Lee

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Digital Experience Product Office

Office of the CTO

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Lee, Jennifer Y.

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:16 PM

To: Lee, Jennifer Y.; Herrera, Rhett A.; Hauptmann, Bobbi J.; South, Koby L.

Subject: OMHSP interview-web governance

When: Thursday, June 24, 2021 4:00 PM-4:55 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Rhett, Bobbi, and Koby – 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.

Rhett & Koby – role: Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP) web communications POCs: they are responsible for OMHSP's various websites and other types comms.

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?

1. A user submits a web request to Web Ops.

[RH: since OMHSP has multiple websites, the OMHSP web comms team doesn't get requests that often for a new site. But when OMHSP business has a change to another office's existing site/page – e.g., incorrect or potentially harmful info--RH will reach out directly to VHA web comms (JHL et al) and the VHA web comms team will address it with the other office/business. (Does not happen that often – maybe 4 Xs in the some years.) VHA web comms will email them with reason for not making the change or confirm that change will be made.

When a request comes in to OMHSP – like for a new page – OMHSP web comms will work with requestor on strategy, and consider other factors like: is it redundant, is it a Veteran resource. For ex: OMHSP web comms team may recommend some place better where it belongs – like an already existing page, SharePoint, or intranet.

Any request for an external (public) OMHSP page or site goes first through internal OMHSP approval process, then VHA web comms and relevant leadership people (with Rhett and Koby from OMHSP in the loop).

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?

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?
[RH: has not encountered this – their contractors are aware of file type rules, so they probably wouldn't encounter the invalid example.]

508 Compliance
- What steps, reviews, or support take place to ensure that web content and uploaded

documents are 508-compliant before publication?

[RH: OMHSP web comms team has a quality control process for anything that's external facing. One tricky thing they encounter is different interpretation of 508 compliant. OMHSP uses contractors and makes 508 compliance a requirement. They generally don't reach out to 508 office and instead use VHA resources (trainings, guides). Sometimes VHA web comms will report something that's not compliant, and it's often something that's very old. At this point, nothing gets published on the OMHSP sites unless it goes through the OMHSP web comms team first. They will do a review for compliance by using Adobe checker tool (not automated – tool to manually check PDFs).]

- What happens when non-508 compliant web pages or uploaded documents are discovered after publication?
  [RH: We take it down and fix it as quickly as possible. Generally, it will be a document from some other team/program office or a very old file. (E.g., things that span offices like substance abuse info. They'll help fix 508 issue not as one of their formal duties, but as a colleague wanting to help. Many program offices don't have the staff with know-how to fix 508 issues, and the 508 office doesn't remediate issues themselves.]

- How do teams find out about non-compliant web pages/documents on the website?
  [They may hear about it via email or conversation – e.g., from the VHA web comms team -- then after SME okays, Rhett's OMHSP web contract team will make the change in TeamSite.]

Other web standards

Are there any activities or processes that enforce various web standards set by the Web Governance Board?

- 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)?
  [RH: OMHSP web comms makes sure their web contractors are aware of the 6102 Handbook and compliance is written in to their contracts. They also use also other standards not in the Handbook like Fleish-Kincaid Reading Level, VA.gov content style guide. The 508 tools they have access to is limited by what VA allows.]

- Are there other types of technical operations that help support or enforce compliance of web standards?
  [KS: Broken link checker monthly. 508 tool – but we don't do a lot of PDFs at this point.]

404s, Redirect chains, URLs, meta properties [Did not have time to cover – some items addressed by above]

- How are broken links and 404 pages identified? 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?

- How are standardized URL patterns and unique meta titles/meta descriptions enforced? (Is it baked into the frontend templates, in the Web Request form?)

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Intranet vs. Public (external) content [Did not have time to cover – some items addressed by above]

- 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 – some items addressed by above]

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Rhett and Koby - General observations/comments:
RH: Involving SMEs more during strategy and during the creation of new pages or updating pages. EX: VA.gov homepage; VA medical center sites – e.g., suicide prevention coordinator pages on medical center sites.

KS: Not just communicating but coordinating work better with them.

RH: TeamSite – latency issues – page loading issues, slow loading. Sometimes won't load e.g. 5 minutes. Over the years, it seems like this happens more and more. Site performance issues sometimes impact their paid media campaigns. Ex: They don't want to send paid media traffic to super slow loading pages.

Reason for request:
As part of the discovery research, I've interviewed people on various teams including the TeamSite admin team, members on the Web Governance Board, and the director of Web Ops. So far, everyone interviewed has said that web governance is ultimately the responsibility of the business's web comms teams. So I'd like to interview actual members of some web comms teams to get their input on what currently happens – what works, what hasn't worked, what causes pain, current processes or practices.

Goal/desired outcome:
I want to make sure that I understand what we're already doing at VA, where we may have

opportunities for reducing pain points, and even adapt good things that we may not be doing yet for the modernized VA.gov site. My ultimate goal is not to add more layers of red tape but to have the right balance of policy, business process, and technical solutions that result in the maximum good impact on actual Veteran experiences on the site.