Jeff - 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 in a week(ish), I'll assume I've captured things correctly. Thanks again for your collaboration. (And now wondering if I can use rappelling as a metaphor for something!)

Jennifer

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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?
[JG: VHA comms has the intranet page with the process]

1. A user submits a web request to Web Ops.
   [JG: User selects the administration; the system shows all requests and he's able to see requests labeled VHA; JG will look at the POC, mail code, and then able to determine if it really should be handled by VHA (if it really is VHA's authority). If it erroneously got sent to VHA, there's a list of web content managers that he can reassign to the right team and usually will try to send a courtesy email to the person who he may reassign to.]

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.}
   [JG: Previously: had very set standards; e.g., not all VAMCs had a website; if a business wanted a research site, they'd need to do a little more investigation – is it national or is it part of a VAMC or is it/should it be part of the ORDMI – national program that oversees all research. Very much traffic control – what should be part of Patient Care Services vs. have its own website – consolidate if possible. RE custom site requests (Admin web comm decision) or external applications: need web ops review, security and system reviews, and cost $, contractors – e.g., applications – web ops involved but working directly with the business re databases, integrations, and security things, paperwork – maybe separate task request.]

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?

[JG: Inside web request system, can generate an approve/deny "disapproved" and can generate email form with template text and can add more context and reasoning to that email text. E.g., 'radiology pls contact your local VAMC pao.'

Typical turnaround time – sometimes there's no answer – unclear. In general, creation of new websites is not a growth area for VHA web comms. History: VHA web comms team was initially formed in 2004 just to address websites; but now they also are responsible for social media, executive messaging, reviewing communications plans for program offices, VHA blog stories, intranet blogs, GovDelivery for VHA, translations of VHA materials, all-VHA-employee email messaging, publishing VHA videos for the public and for internal sites; VHA podcast approvals, and other things. Currently, Jeff's focus is much more on social media and exec messaging.]

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?

[JG – has not encountered this – hasn't experienced a new site with 80 pages for publishing. JG's experience: usually pages get added over time. Invalid file types – often PDFs with spaces in file names – usually addressed during VHA review prior to publishing; when found, they tell the office to fix.]

508 Compliance
- What steps, reviews, or support take place to ensure that web content and uploaded documents are 508-compliant before publication?
  [JG: Blake is the VHA comms team's lead – uses 508 tools from the 508 office to check.]
- What happens when non-508 compliant web pages or uploaded documents are discovered after publication?
  [JG: VHA comms conducts regular reviews of VHA pages; and there's also a VHA intranet page with various office's 508 reports. Resolution – usually tells the office to take it down (esp if more than a year old); and point the office to (the optional 508 Office) classes; sometimes will give them license to use their Adobe tools to make compliant docs. There's an annual training class on 508 topics for VHA PAOs as well, but the class is not required. Their sites are still required to be compliant whether they choose to take the training.]
- How do teams find out about non-compliant web pages/documents on the website?
  [JG: Testing software – that Blake uses and the 508 office also uses. It's not automated, you manually run the tool on each document.]

Other web standards

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

[JG – Not applicable to social media things.]

- 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?

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404s, Redirect chains, URLs, meta properties {Ran out of time to cover this }

- 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 {Ran out of time to cover this }

- 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 team's activities different for SharePoint vs. WordPress vs. TeamSite vs. custom-built sites? {Ran out of time to cover this }

JG - General observations/comments:
- Traditionally OPIA and OIT have set the direction of websites. Now seeing OCTO more involved in improving the website experience. Sees this as a mostly good thing. Partnership seems lacking between WGB and OCTO. Feels there should be an OCTO representative on the WGB. WGB not actively doing web related work anymore.
- Concerned: VHA does not have a lot of technical support from OIT.
- Wonders what will happen if the OCTO disbands or is no longer at VA. EX: Will OCTO stay to maintain the benefit hubs for instance? Would like to keep the approach of web consolidation like what the VA.gov content team is doing.

The decentralized model of having all the field offices create their own TeamSite websites – in the past, at VA we allowed any one do this. Is OCTO going to help centralize, or become the central team to maintain the quality of the consolidated VA.gov? Or will the content go back to the field offices, similar to the TeamSite decentralized model?

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