

Proposal for Remaking the CUWeb Main Site [detailed view]

Scope: During this project we will address the divide between **Cornell's image** and **Cornell's Web presence**. This will include a complete graphic, textual, and *functional* overhaul of the main site. This project will include Cornell Admissions, but will not include redevelopment and redesign of *all* key partner sites currently maintained by other university units (for example, the Alumni Affairs and Development web site).

Phase One Project Details:

- Work with CIT to form a solid systems foundation for the CUWeb main site addressing hosting, content management, and security concerns.
- Establish and solidify relationships with key resources and interests in the CUWeb space.
- Remake CUWeb main site.
- Improve the utility of CUWeb Search, Events, News, and other key functional pieces.
- Flesh out the partner sites supporting academics, students, and research. Identify actual partners to manage priorities and content input for sites.
- Coordinate with partner units like Alumni Affairs and Development to improve the user experience across entire top layer of CUWeb.
- Build upon the success of Cornell's promotional sites such as Explore Cornell and CyberTower by creating a central site that provides access to these and other high quality, image-building projects.

Phase one improvements

Centrally offered web hosting (with CIT)	(in progress)
Centrally offered web content management (with CIT)	(in progress)
Centrally offered security plan for university sites (with CIT)	(in progress)
Coordinated web forum for CU web workers	(in progress)
CUWeb main site redesign	\$75,000
CUWeb main site functionality	\$75,000
Admissions Site redesign	\$50,000
Creation of web.cornell.edu site for Cornell Web resources	\$20,000
Stage I Promotional site for Cornell (reconcile Cornell promotional sites)	\$20,000
• CyberTower, Explore Cornell, Lab of Ornithology, FIG projects, Ask Cornell Experts, etc.	

Estimated \$240,000.00

[NOTE: This will include work done by CUInfo team who receive an allocation for their contributions to CUInfo and other CUWeb functionality.]

Other Media and Content Services

Photographic, textual and multimedia services **Estimated \$50,000.00**

Web Hosting Resources

CIT Server Farm and WPG Hosting support **Estimated yearly \$25,000.00**

Totals: \$315,000.00

I am awaiting a response from Mark Fogelberg, Manager of WPG, for confirmation of the estimates you see above. I have over 6 years of estimating experience and am up to date on rates and fees within CIT, so I believe that my estimates are on target. For reference take a look at <http://alumni.library.cornell.edu> for a site that cost over \$50,000 at \$65/hr.

CUWeb main site redesign [\$75,000]

The problem: The CUWeb main site (formerly known as the CU Home page) is the most important web site at Cornell University, but the site has not played a significant role in the university's communications strategy. No matter how much attention it has garnered from within Cornell, the site has had an immense impact on our visitors' senses of the Cornell identity. The CUWeb main site's home page (the Cornell Home page) is served over 1 Million times per month.

It is critical that the university place this site among its top communications projects, allotting resources commensurate with the site's impact. Why? Because for more than any other publication we print at Cornell, the traffic is there.

Proposed: Redesign and reestablish www.cornell.edu as the main site at Cornell University for leadership, navigation, identity, and the Cornell community. Solidify relationships with working elements like Alumni site (APF). Redirect and support efforts for elements with special needs like Admissions (UAO). Create support and foundations for missing or neglected elements necessary for appropriate levels of service to the CUWeb constituencies.

Elements of the project:

- Establish a **CUWeb project manager** position to focus on managing the relationships and content of the CUWeb main site. This person is critical to our ability to manage a growing, evolving and supportive navigation and identity plan in which other units can participate.
- Create an **image concept** to vastly improve Cornell online image and imagery. Determine how high quality images will flow to Cornell web sites. Lay groundwork for the creation of a Cornell image bank within the appropriate campus units.
- Reorganize CUWeb main site's **navigation system** to allow proper flow of users to desired information. Determine what elements related unit sites should use, and make them available to units—whether via a content management system or static files.
- Create a **template concept** that will support the main site. Determine what elements related unit sites should use, and make these available to units—whether via a content management system or static files.
- Create a **site for the Cornell President** to fit within the context of CUWeb main site. Determine process and responsible party for managing site content.
- Create a **Communications Center** to collect and organize University Communications and Media Relations (UCMR) output information and to provide coordinated contact points. Manage information about Cornell.
- Replace existing Academics page with an **Academics site**, under Provost supervision, that improves navigation to and understanding of Cornell's academic units and programs.
- Create **Student site**, Phase I. Make initial steps toward the creation of a full-featured site for Cornell students by gathering existing elements from campus web sites and data providers. Potential use for Uportal technology.

Partners: VP Communications, President Lehman or representative, Provost Martin, CUWeb advisory board, Alumni Affairs, Admissions, Students, Research, Athletics (members of key sites or interest groups). Also, production groups CUInfo and WPG from CIT.

CUWeb main site functionality [\$75,000]

The problem: A site's functionality and its user interface play a role equally important to that of the site's graphic imagery. CUWeb receives frequent complaints regarding the difficulty users have in using the site's key features like the search engine, the university events calendar, and so forth. Also, it is necessary to coordinate the primary functional features of the site as if they were being provided by one service. In a recent quote, the Student Assembly president labeled CUInfo "horrible" and its related search engine, "ridiculous".

Proposed: Collect, organize, streamline, and improve these primary functional elements based upon a coordinated plan to be generated by the office of Web Communications.

This effort should facilitate coordination within CIT of internal CIT functionality, through a consolidation of the CIT teams responsible wherever feasible. Streamline priorities and the reporting structure for these teams and products. Help to establish concrete expectations for function and realistic goals for user satisfaction. Also formulate and implement a framework to support content flow as required.

Elements of the project:

- Establish **CUWeb Features project manager** position. This person will have a web programming background and a dedication to user satisfaction.
- Evaluate, redesign, and improve where necessary the functional elements upon which users of the Cornell web space rely. Agree upon a content flow plan to support the elements (for example, events information input to the events calendar). Create official relationships between content owners and delivery mechanism developers. Ensure that the features are comprehensive, as well as usable in a unit site context.
 - **Search** make comprehensive and improve interface [CUInfo, CIT]
 - **Events** make comprehensive and improve interface [CUInfo, CIT, Resource 25?]
 - **Jobs** improve interface [OHR]
 - **News** improve search, interface, connections to other news [News Service, UCMR]
 - **Feedback** [CIVR, UCMR]
 - **Campus Map** use of modern technology for display and navigations of maps [UCMR]
 - **Weather** [UCMR]
- Create initial steps for a full-featured image bank that will serve the CUWeb main site as well as unit sites. Determine sources for image input, procedures for usage, plan for archival storage of images, and financial model for recovering costs (where applicable).
 - **Image bank** [Uphoto, UCMR, CULibrary, CIT]
- Work with CIT teams to develop standard procedures for usage of the technologies they provide to campus web developers.
 - Identity Services
 - Directory Services
 - Uportal
 - Other PeopleSoft

Partners: VP Communications, President Lehman or representative, VP of Information Technology, CUWeb advisory board, production groups CUInfo and WPG from CIT.

Admissions Site redesign [\$50,000]

The problem: The Cornell Admissions web site is a primary venue for introducing prospective students of all types to Cornell University, but many users have voiced disappointment in their experiences with the site. This Cornell site must be a leader in presenting Cornell's image to this highly prized audience. It must support a prospective student's expectations with a crystal clear graphical user interface and solid, innovative functionality.

Proposed: Improve Admissions web functionality to bolster the trust of and to solidify electronic connections to our prospective students and their parents. Integrate Admissions with the CUWeb main site. Finally, enable it to make use of other relevant promotional material from throughout the Cornell site.

Elements of the project:

- Formally establish relationship with **Admissions Webmaster** and CUWeb.
- An admissions portal? Pull admissions information from entire university, not just undergraduate. Allow those interested in admissions information to navigate from there. For example, promote user-friendly navigation to college-specific admissions information to strengthen the Admissions "network".
- Package **prospective student promotional information*** like Cornell Viewbook (formerly BigRedBook), Virtual Tour, and CUfacts. Ongoing plan for maintaining, updating, and growing this information.
- Redesign the Admissions site to be consistent with look/function of CUWeb main site. Determine and play toward Admissions' unique needs per design, once determined.
- Support Admissions web site via CUWeb hosting. Begin migration plan immediately.
- Determine most effective target for site release. Must finish project (even if an interim stage) by April to have an effect on student choices. This will only be possible if the process begins in January 2004.
- Provide tactical press releases on our process. REM: The Image Report. Balance the Image Report press with positive Admissions press.
- Create plans for the following
 - **Online application feature** to come in house
 - **MyCUapplication** (Uportal application?)
 - Track document flow to students
 - Assign permissions for prospective students to participate in password protected
 - Track results

Partners: Doris Davis, Jason Locke, Undergraduate Admissions Office, Undergraduate Admissions Webmaster, other admissions personnel as required.

Creation of web.cornell.edu site for Cornell Web resources [\$20,000]

The problem: There is little coordination among the university's distributed web personnel. The history of web design and production is a picture of organic and unsupervised growth—though the end results have been quite good in some cases. The Director of Web Communications was partly developed to act as an advocate for this coordination effort. It is important to create a repository for

Proposed: Develop a website to support and facilitate growth of the Cornell web community. The site will reside on a central web server and accommodate input from a variety of content providers on campus and off.

Elements of the project:

- Establish **web.cornell.edu project manager** position to oversee this resource site, and to respond to web community needs.
- Coordinate **CUWeb main site contact information** for Web Communications office for, and linked from, the CUWeb main site.
- Provide single **point of contact for Cornell's web resources**
 - Model for maintaining web contact information for all units (web.cals.cornell.edu, web.engr.cornell.edu, etc.).
- Create a **web resources directory**
 - Related groups (Network services, Network Operations Center, etc.)
 - Terms glossary (managed via "wiki")
 - FAQ
 - Training opportunities
 - Web professional position descriptions
 - Network status
 - Identity information
- Integrate with **CUWeb Forum**
 - Threaded discussion list
 - Web events tracking
 - Related electronic lists
 - Campus-wide resource survey form and results
- Coordinate development of **best practices** in regards to
 - Accessibility
 - Production (including CSS, Environments, Hosting relationship, etc/)
 - Training
 - Working titles reconciliation, HR
 - Project management
- Coordinate and present **Solutions Groups materials**
 - Hosting, Content management, Security
 - Copyright, Media management and production for Cornell web sites
 - Identity
- Manage and share **project- and code-related information**
 - Shared code Library, Wc3 and other resources, Tech references

Partners: VP Communications, President Lehman or representative, VP of Information Technology, CUWeb advisory board, production groups CUInfo and WPG from CIT, CUWeb Forum volunteers.

Stage I Promotional site for Cornell [\$20,000]

The problem: Across the university, there are many disparate efforts to promote the innovative work being done by the people of Cornell. Many of these efforts use the web to communicate to the largest possible audience. A high level of redundant effort is required to create and manage these projects. Very few (if any) make use of a common framework or set of processes. And more to the point, the sites are scattered throughout the university's web space and users find only one at a time. One interesting topic doesn't necessarily lead to another.

Proposed: Create a central site to amplify the value of high quality content from a wide variety of disciplines and efforts. Gather references to and drive traffic to pre-packaged Cornell web content. Convey the significance of Cornell and its work from one coordinated vantage.

Consolidate access points to Cornell content. Introduce Cornell's web users to new ideas. Increase value for Cornell alumni, prospective students and their parents, recruitment efforts, researchers, instructors, colleges, departments, units, labs, etc. Make specific elements available to contributors, units, as well as this central promotional site.

Elements of the project:

- Establish **CUWeb promotional project manager** position to act as lead editor and "content programmer" for the Cornell content that is created for or packaged for the CUWeb main site.
- Bring together **preexisting content packages** such as Explore Cornell, CyberTower, FIG, CULibrary content, etc.
- CUQA (Cornell University Questions and Answers) Bring together **"Ask A..." sites** and provide CMS functionality for units interested. For example, Division of Nutritional Sciences sponsors "Ask a nutrition expert" to collect and answer questions directly from their online users. This unit has developed their own architecture and procedures for answering the questions they receive—but the fact is the format is not different from the "Ask an astronomer", "Ask a scientist", or "Ask Uncle Ezra" sites.
- Maintain highlights list of Cornell's **high quality content sites**.

Partners: VP Communications, President Lehman or representative, Provost Martin, VP for Research Richardson, CUWeb advisory board, Alumni Affairs, Admissions, Students, Research, Athletics (members of key sites or interest groups). Also, production groups CUInfo and WPG from CIT, and other promotional site builders.

Conclusion

It takes a strong, deep rudder to steer the university, and a great deal of time. But the web is mercurial. While a president cannot change a university in the blink of an eye, one can affect a web site terrifically in a short time. There is no need to suffer with the current state of our web affairs when they can be improved, and improved quickly and significantly.

The four project management positions I included as part of this proposal have not been reconciled with the total dollar amount requested. The production teams I will work with to make these improvements can provide a minimum of project management for the life of the project when it is in development—but there is no way for these same teams to provide ongoing project management in the form the products will require. In each case I have included the cost of project management from the teams. Choosing to hire any of these roles will reduce the project management overhead in the CIT group, but will require a full salary and benefits. The exception is the Web Resource project manager, which could be a half time role.

I look forward to discussing this series of projects and this proposal to provide clarification or to respond to unforeseen issues. I would like to pursue the approval of this proposal as vigorously as I can.

Thank you for your time.

Thomas Richardson