Florida Energy Systems Consortium

Website Redesign: Research and Plan

# Project Purpose (Objectives)

The Florida Energy Systems Consortium (FESC) plays a key role in the development of efficient forms of energy generation, distribution and consumption. The consortium pulls the expertise of Florida’s preeminent state universities. The universities are then working towards a shared vision for the State of Florida with minimal duplication of efforts. Since the consortium and its member universities are publicly funded they need make their findings readily available to fulfill their public promise.

While public lectures, new articles and press releases are one way to disseminate information, in internet age there is usually no better way to communicate with the public than a website. Not all websites are created equal, however. A poorly designed website can be difficult to navigate and in turn obscure the intent of the website and the message its authors are trying to convey. A poorly designed website reflects poorly on the authors of the site which can affect public opinion.

Unfortunately, the FESC website (<http://floridaenergy.ufl.edu/>) does not comply with industry best practices for web design. The design issues with the site will be addressed in more detail in the following sections but in summary the site is not accessible to user with disabilities, it does not scale with the size of the display and it is not easy to navigate. It is imperative that the website undergo a significant overhaul to make it available to a wider audience. As it stands individuals that require screen reader assistance cannot interact with significant portions of the site and visitors on mobile devices will have a difficult time interacting with the site.

Therefore, the purpose of this redesign is to first ensure that the FESC website complies with best practices for accessible and mobile design. This will ensure that all Florida tax payers can view the information and research that their tax dollars helped fund. Second, site navigation will be streamlined to facilitate user access and reduce the time spent looking for information. Load times also need to be reduced on the site. Given the content on the site many of the pages load far too slowly and the website or backend server will need to be upgrade to improve response times during site navigation. Finally, a consistent branding is needed for the website to improve site readability.