



santa monica college | graphic design

Client Survey

SMC Design Technology Department Website

CURRENT SITE

1. *Do you feel your current site promotes a favorable user experience? Why or why not?*

We need to bring all three programs into one Design Technology department website. There is no cohesive look across all three sites and the design needs to be updated.

2. *What specific areas of your current site do you feel are successful? Why are they successful?*

The AET website has elements that are both aesthetically pleasing and help aid navigation (i.e. the color scheme, for instance, and the use of hierarchy and scale in the typography.) The Graphic Design site has easy-to-find and useful navigation that is consistent and intuitive.

3. *What shortcomings exist with the current site, and what three things would you change on the site today if you could?*

- The three departments need to be one Design Technology department website. The Design Technology website needs to house and unite the other three departments.
- The content and organization of the content for the three programs needs to be reviewed.
- All three programs need a new look-and-feel that can be integrated into one Design Technology website.

4. *Have you conducted usability tests or gathered visitor feedback for your current site? If so, how long ago? Please include any reports or findings.*

No, We have not conducted usability tests or gathered visitor feedback in any formal manner. **Do we have any web analytics we can refer to?**

5. *How important is it to maintain your current look and feel, logo, and branding?*

The goal for the new Design Technology department website is to totally redesign the look and feel of the sites and update the branding of the Design Technology Department.

REASONS FOR REDESIGN

1. *What are the main reasons you are redesigning your site (new business model, outdated site, expanded services, different audience)?*

For several years, the 3 programs had separate websites and, with the impending construction of a new facility, the Design Technology department would like to unite all three programs into one site.

2. What are your primary online business objectives with the site redesign? What are your secondary objectives? (Examples include increased sales, marketing/branding awareness, and fewer customer service calls.) Please discuss both long- and short-term goals.

- Enhance the awareness of the Design Technology department by highlighting the campus, the relevancy of the programs, (Entertainment Technology, Graphic Design, Interior Architectural Design) and showcase the work of the students.
- Create a sense of community where students, prospective students, faculty and alumni can keep informed and involved with the Design Technology department.
- Focus attention on career placement and networking for students and on building a community of alumni who remain active with their respective programs.

3. What is the main business problem you hope to solve with the site redesign? How will you measure the success of the solution?

The main problem has been that the three separate sites do not communicate the main message of the department or the brand of the Design Technology department. There is a lack of online awareness of all three programs and the websites have not met the needs of the students, faculty, and alumni.

We will measure success by the responses we receive from prospective students, students, faculty and alumni. If the site is useful for their needs, this will be an indicator that the site is successful. If we see an increase in the number of students enrolling in classes, increased hits on our website, and more interest from alumni, these will also be important measures.

4. What existing strategy (both on- and offline) is in place to meet the new business objectives?

A new state-of-the-art facility for the Design Technology department is being built that will also house the Communications department, and the college radio station KCRW. There is also a SMC rebranding initiative that is being spearheaded by Adams Morioka.

AUDIENCE/DESIRED ACTION

1. Describe a typical site visitor. How often are they online, and what do they generally use the web for? Give basic demographics: age, occupation, income level, purchasing habits. (Use as much detail as possible in profiling your target user. Profile more than one type if appropriate.)

- Current Students (ages 17+): primarily use the site to keep updated with their program, to check class schedules, and to login to Corsair Connect.
- Prospective Students (ages 16+): use the site to gain information about the programs, see student work, and make a decisions about whether they want to attend the college.
- Parents of those students (ages 38+): use the website to find out information

- about programs, student work, career placement, and pricing.
- Faculty and prospective faculty members refer to the site to post information about the programs, courses, and to view department news and events.

Demographic information for Santa Monica College from 2007 data:

Age Composition

15% are 18 and under
 55% are 18-24
 18% are 25-34
 12% are 35+

34% are full-time
 66% are part-time
 56% are women
 44% are men

In the Design Technology department the demographics may be different. General assumptions are that the department has larger populations for students over 30, students who already have a degree, students looking for a career change, or wanting to gain more experience and knowledge in specific areas.

2. What is the primary “action” the site visitor should take when coming to your site (make a purchase, become a member, search for information)?

- Search for course descriptions, class schedules, program information and requirements, professor bios, and notable alumni. Look at current students’ work.
- Use social media tools to connect with fellow students and alumni for networking purposes.

3. What are the key reasons why the target audience chooses your company’s products and/or services (cost, service, value)?

Students choose a program in the Design Technology department because we offer quality, affordable education incorporating current technologies that will be relevant in a student’s chosen career or aid them in transferring to a four-year college.

4. How many people (as far as you can tell) access your site on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis? How do you measure usage? Do you forecast usage to increase after the site launch and by how much?

Our best guess is that current students access the site once a semester or less. Prospective students may visit the site only once or twice.

PERCEPTION

1. Use a few adjectives to describe how your site visitor should perceive the new site. (Examples include prestigious, friendly, corporate, fun, forward thinking, innovative, and cutting edge.) Is this different than the current image perception?

How we would like the Design Technology Department to be perceived:
 Perception Group 1 - Affordable, Approachable, Friendly, Personable, Open, Welcoming, Positive, Diverse, Inclusive.

And at the same time:

Perception Group 2 - Current, Modern, Savvy, Credible, Leading-Edge, Reliable, Accredited, Knowledgeable, Expert, Cutting-Edge Technology, Innovative, Hip.

Perception 2 may be different than how the Design Technology department is currently perceived online.

2. How is your company currently perceived offline? Do you want to carry the same kind of message through your website?

We're not sure what the offline perception of the department is. There may be a lack of awareness of the program due to its location on a separate campus. Prospective students may perceive the programs as affordable alternatives to four-year colleges and universities such as Otis, Art Center, UCLA, and Cal-Arts. We'd like the new site to challenge that perception and show faculty, courses, and student work that rival the four-year schools.

3. How does your company differentiate itself from competitors? Do you think your current audience differentiates you from your competition? Please list competitor URLs.

Santa Monica College was recently ranked the "best community college" in the Los Angeles Times readers' choice poll. We offer quality, affordable education with the latest technologies to prepare our students for either transfer to a four-year college, or with skills and training to advance their careers. We are also the leading transfer institute among Community Colleges in Southern California.

Other local colleges offering design programs include:

- Pasadena Community College: <http://www.pccc.edu/>
- LA City College: <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/>
- The Art Institute: <http://www.artinstitutes.edu/>
- Fashion Institute of Design: <http://fidm.edu/>
- Otis College of Art and Design: <http://www.otis.edu/>
- UCLA Extension Design Program: <https://www.uclaextension.edu/r/default.aspx>
- University of California, Los Angeles: <http://www.ucla.edu/>
- Art Center College of Design: <http://www.artcenter.edu>
- California Institute of the Arts: <http://calarts.edu/>
- Westwood College: <http://www.westwood.edu/programs/school-of-technology/>
- Parsons New School: <http://www.newschool.edu/parsons/>
- California College of the Arts: <http://www.cca.edu/academics/graphic-design>

4. List the URLs of any sites you find compelling. What specifically do you like about these sites?

UCLA Extension Design Program

<https://www.uclaextension.edu/r/default.aspx>

The UCLA extension website appears organized and has a clean look-and-feel. There are large links to social media, and an image panel that switches through current news and featured topics.

Otis College of Art and Design

<http://www.otis.edu/>

The Otis College website is successful at displaying student work. The site is regularly updated and features new galleries and exhibitions.

CONTENT

1. Will this site use existing content from the current site? If so, what is the source, who is responsible for approval, and has the content been audited? If not, will you be creating content in-house or using an outside provider?

We will refer to the current sites for content, but there will likely be changes. The faculty overseeing the redesign will have final approval on the site design and content.

2. What is the basic structure of the content, and how is it organized? Is it a complete overhaul of the current site or an expansion?

Currently there is a lack of consistency in how the content is organized across the three sites, but basically each program will have a description of the overall program, the individual courses, and the major requirements. Each department should also have information on professors and a gallery of student work. The current sites will serve as a reference, but the major organizational structure will need to be overhauled and thoughtfully considered.

3. Describe visual elements or content that should be utilized from your current site or marketing materials (logo, color scheme, navigation, naming conventions, etc.)

We would like the look and feel, and overall branding for the Design Technology website to be separate from the Santa Monica College website.

4. How will the content of this site (along with functionality and navigation) expand or differ from your current site? Do you have an existing sitemap for the outgoing site structure? Do you already have a sitemap or outline for the proposed redesign?

There should be additional, dynamic content on the new site, such as event notifications and galleries. A sitemap will need to be created.

TECHNOLOGY

1. What is your target platform and browser? Whom can we talk to in your organization to help respond to technical issues?

Firefox, IE, Safari and Chrome are our target browsers. The targeted platform is both PC and Mac.

2. Are there specific technologies (Flash, JavaScript, jQuery, etc.) that you would like to use in the site? If so, how will they enhance the user experience? Please describe in detail.

JQuery may be used for the galleries either as slideshows or lightboxes. We want to avoid Flash because of the difficulties with mobile device compatibility. Video will need to be integrated into the website so we will use HTML 5 and the H.264 codec. A smaller mobile website should also be part of the discussion.

3. Will you have database functionality (dynamic content generation, personalization/login)? Do you already have a database in place? Please describe it in detail, including specific information regarding existing programs and software.

We have a system called Corsair Connect and will need to link to that site to allow current students to log in to their classes.

4. Will you have a need for secured transactions (e-commerce)? Do you already offer transactions online? Please describe in detail.

Secured transactions (such as tuition payment) is handled through the main SMC website, so there will be no need for ecommerce functionality.

Donors?

5. Will you require other specific programming needs (such as personalization or search capability)? Please describe in detail.

The site will have search capabilities and a gallery to showcase student work and post news and events for the department. Because the content needs to be evergreen, a CMS will be integrated into the final design so faculty and staff can update the website.

MARKETING/UPDATING

1. How do most people find out about your current website? What kind of triggers prompt a visit (referral links, incentives, search engine terms)? What methods of distributing the URL already exist within the company on and offline?

Most people find out about us through online searches and word-of-mouth. Our web address is printed on marketing materials, brochures, flyers, etc. and we promote our college and department throughout local high schools and career-training school.

2. Briefly, what are your short-term marketing plans (specifically, for the site redesign and the 6 to 12 months following launch)?

The new site will complement the larger launch of the new campus facility.

3. Do you have an existing or planned marketing strategy in mind to promote this site redesign? If so, please describe.

We plan to promote the site redesign in the college newspaper and post notices to our social media networks.

4. Do you intend to keep the site updated? If so, how often? Who is responsible for updating and providing content?

Yes, there should be frequent updates to certain sections of the site (course, events, galleries) to encourage students to visit often. For these sections, the website should be built using a CMS so faculty and staff can update content and student volunteers (such as Graphic Design Club officers) could also help update the site.