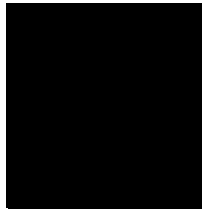


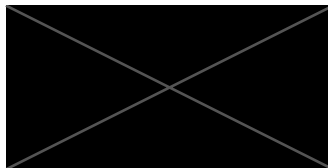
PROJECT BRIEF

Rebuilding and Rebranding of the
Website



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Prepared by



Purpose

The purpose of this Project Brief is to summarize [REDACTED] understanding of and approach for the [REDACTED] website redesign and rebuild following a Discovery phase.

Project Introduction and Background

[REDACTED] has selected [REDACTED] to provide site redesign and redevelopment services for their primary public-facing website, [REDACTED]. There is also an internally facing 'intranet' [REDACTED] that will be consolidated into a new CMS-based implementation to house materials that should be accessed by [REDACTED] users that are on their network. As Discovery unfolded, it was mutually agreed upon by the [REDACTED] ITS and [REDACTED] teams that the intranet rebuild would be developed as a "Phase 1.5" effort.

[REDACTED] current website uses rapidly aging technology. Its capabilities and structure are limiting from the perspective of site administration, growth, content management, and usability. The department is eager to refresh its web presence with a new site that has been designed with user-centered principles, and in support of their long-term needs for a site that can accommodate new and emerging content and evolving communication needs.

Problems to Solve

Dated and Restrictive Technology

Existing technology in use for [REDACTED] is dated and its configuration or capabilities create heavy reliance on coding / development skill sets within the department. Segments of the site are supported by CMS capabilities but not all. The preferred solution would support content management users of different skill levels to maintain content effectively, with a comprehensive implementation that allows more of the site's content to be maintained via the CMS.

Large and Diverse Set of Contributors

There is an intent within the [REDACTED] organization to enable a large and diverse group of individuals to contribute to content management. The solution should utilize a robust roles and permissions schema to apply appropriate restrictions to what content editors can do within the system, enabling them to affect change on content within their 'jurisdiction' while minimizing accidental content changes or inadvertent departures from the organization's established web styling and accessibility requirements.

Confusing Organization of District Versus County Content

Courts services in [REDACTED] are largely administered through a district breakdown of the state. Every area of [REDACTED] is supported by one of [REDACTED] judicial districts and one of [REDACTED] water districts. However the district breakdown is not well-known to residents, citizens, and other end users of the site, so it's difficult and frustrating for users to attempt to find content suited for their location. The site experience should help users reach their appropriate destinations - or find information - with friendly interactions using information that users are likely to have, such as city, county, or physical address. The need for both district and county pages should be scrutinized as part of the information architecture and content strategy to avoid redundancy and help the Department communicate to end users information that is relevant at a state or district level as well as at the more granular county level.

Disorganized, Duplicated, and Sometimes Conflicting Content

Currently the organization of content is unclear and deep, requiring a lot of seeking by users (and creating a lot of decision points in their navigation where they could get lost). Additionally stakeholders observe a lot of duplicated content in the site - [REDACTED] reviewers observe this in the county and district pages. In some cases, one navigational path takes you to different information about the same topic compared to a different navigational path, which is a concern for the success of users trying to be self-sufficient in the site, as well as the implications for the credibility of the site and the users' level of trust in the organization.

The new site design should utilize an updated, and validated, information architecture and the implementation should try to find opportunities to streamline content management, distribute content that is managed centrally to multiple locations in the site, and other such improvements to content findability and ease of maintenance.

Loss of Focus

There has been a gradual 'loss of focus' in the site over its life, and its purpose has evolved, such that currently it houses content that [REDACTED] no longer wishes to include in the public-facing site, or content that is no longer timely or relevant has accumulated. The new implementation should include a curated, reduced set of pages that prioritize the needs of its core audiences.

Unfriendly Site Navigation and Content Findability

The site's navigation and menu design are not friendly to users, with the homepage offering both a top-lying and a sidebar menu, interior menus lacking clarity, and breadcrumbs that appear to be inaccurate at times. Additionally, we observe more clicks than necessary to reach content, due to excessively nested content, pages that are largely or entirely empty, and broken links.

The new site's design should prioritize a navigational experience that is friendly, consistent, cohesive and comprehensive for users in every area of the site, with menus that help the user understand their position in the site and easy ways to browse and course-correct. Content strategy and training should be focused towards flattening and consolidation of site content for the purpose of reducing the user's clicks - every click increases the time required to find something and the opportunity for a user to navigate in the wrong direction - while avoiding pages that are excessively lengthy or voluminous in content.

Uncertainty of Future Definition and Direction for Intranet

The intranet is currently used inconsistently across [REDACTED] Judicial Branch, based on individual division leads choosing to create spaces in SharePoint and other such decisions. As a result, what can be found on the intranet, and what the appropriate place to look for information across [REDACTED] systems, is unpredictable. This lack of transparency and predictability creates a faulty user experience, requiring a high level of familiarity and adeptness for internal users to successfully and quickly find information they're seeking. The new implementation for internally-facing content should follow a defined vision and purpose developed by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with support from [REDACTED] so that content planning and expectation setting can occur. This would help internal content owners know what information should be maintained and found within the intranet, and what information should be found on SharePoint or other systems.

Dated Design, UI, and Accessibility Concerns

Various aspects of the UI in use in the existing website speak to the site's age, and offer opportunities to reimagine the site's presentation to be clean, modern, and inviting, and to better serve content on a wide variety of device sizes, including for mobile users which constitute about half of all site traffic.

The new design will also be developed with a high level of attention to accessibility and usability, including accounting for users of all levels of skill and ability, and those using assistive technology, keyboard navigation, and so on, in accordance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Examples of this emphasis are: color contrast of text against background elements, the amount and style of animations present in the site, user controls to pause active elements, font family and typography selections that are highly legible, text styles that convey hierarchy of content on the page along with coded landmarks to support keyboard-based navigation, alt and meta tags on images, media, and pages, clickable elements with a large affordance of clickable space to reduce the amount of precision and motor control required, descriptive link and button text, and distinct styles used to indicate interactive elements.

Balancing Standardization with Flexibility

With a lot of the site's content organized by region, namely the trial courts sections by district and county, and distributed responsibility to manage that content in the counties themselves, the site experience as users visit those regional pages can be highly varied. This variation is

represented through formatting and presentation choices made in the system - including the use of capitals, bold and other emphasis - as well as the scope of information presented, and the level of detail. The implementation should respect the need for variation in what counties need to present to their users, while driving for areas of standardization where possible.

Target Audiences and Personas

The [REDACTED] site serves all [REDACTED]. It is important that the site be broadly usable and accessible by users of all types, including users of different abilities, ages, technical savvy, and familiarity with the Courts. In fact, users who are completely unfamiliar with criminal justice systems should be highly prioritized, such as through the use of plain language.

With a near-even split of desktop and mobile use currently, the site's design should be equally friendly and effective on both device sizes. English is the site's most commonly-used language, followed by Spanish. The website will need to enable translation of content into multiple languages to support the Department's communication requirements to non-English speakers.

Specific audience types that have been identified during discovery to be prioritized in [REDACTED] consideration of how to present and organize content are:

1. General public, for example:
 1. Someone with a traffic citation due in court soon
 2. A landlord with a tenant / eviction-related need
 3. Someone with a loved one who is incarcerated
 4. Someone in the process of getting a divorce
 5. Individual seeking a protection order
 6. Pro se individuals representing themselves in court
2. Attorneys and paralegals
3. Judges and clerks
4. Jurors
5. Media representatives
6. Jury commissioners
7. Probationers
8. Internal users and administrators

Key Content and Features

Docket Search

Site analytics show that Docket Search drives >20% of the site traffic currently. Users of this function are able to look up upcoming scheduled court appearances according to a variety of

input fields, including name. Attorneys use this to find their own court events and defendants and plaintiffs use it to find their dockets. It is a high-traffic and high-visibility interactive function that should be reimplemented and improved. Improvements may focus on: improved usability of this table-based layout for mobile users, and easier access to related links such as the courthouse of a particular event in the list and / or information about oral argument schedules.

Friendly Region-Based Content

Many users' needs relate to services that are regionally-focused. Different district courts have different policies and procedures for certain things, for instance. Court appearances take place at certain courthouses, and so on. Therefore a key feature will be supporting user ability to find the appropriate courthouse or court location, potentially using a look-up function or other such interaction. Furthermore, a lot of the site's content is regional in its nature. So a key function of the site will be to organize content in easy-to-reach county or district frameworks.

Page Construction Features

XXXX intends to implement an open-source, well-funded and supported CMS platform, Drupal, for the [REDACTED] Judicial Branch's new website. We will architect and implement not only the data structures and features required to accommodate the content, but also create content administration experiences that are reasonably friendly to those not used to maintaining web-based content. No HTML or coding skills will be required for content managers to update, remove, or add new content to the site.

Much of our discovery effort will be focused on establishing page layouts through design and the corresponding page components - or widgets - that are used to create those layouts and offer content contributors the flexibility to put together new pages as needed in the future. Components will be identified and defined in detail down to their individual fields and allowances, and implemented to reduce the likelihood of user error, as well as to prevent content construction tactics that impede the accessibility of the site (though there is an aspect of knowledge and training that also applies to ensure content remains accessible over the life of the site). We will also look at site management efficiencies that can be achieved such as through a centralized system for managing files and contacts, maintenance-free search functionality, and others.

Single Sign-On via Active Directory

The Drupal site will leverage the [REDACTED] zure Active Directory (AD) for single-sign-on. [REDACTED] udicial typically uses OAuth and XXXX will explore and test the necessary Drupal modules to set-up and test this solution and configuration. For non-AD users, such as those that need to access the Interpreter app or DOC Mittimus will log-in via standard Drupal username/password.

Improvement to Self-Help Content and Forms

A large portion of the general public audience is served by various tools, forms, processes, and systems offered through the website currently. In fact one type of general public user is a pro se individual using the site as a resource for their self-representation in court. However the organization of self-help and forms content, similar to county versus district content, requires users to potentially look in multiple places to find all aspects of a given topic or all involved forms. Structural, navigational, and functional improvements will be targeted to increase the ease of use of this section, to require less digging and clicking by users browsing this section, and to boost the consistency and predictability of the content within. Solutions may involve a centralized, filterable list of all self-help forms and automated availability of forms on self-help topic pages.

Initial Design Inputs

Graphic Design and User Interface Choices

██████ conducted an interactive design inspiration workshop with members of the project leadership team to develop a better understanding of the aesthetic choices that should be targeted for success in the design. This also provided information about the process and the types of inputs ██████ uses to devise design directions for new sites and applications. The following describes key takeaways from this exercise to guide design exploration.

██████ Judicial Branch project leaders appreciated examples of sites that used a large, bold drawer approach for site search and other methods that made search prominent. We discussed that a site with a wide variety of audiences, as this one will have, necessitates a friendly search as the main navigation may not be the optimum option for all user types navigating in the system. Search also helps users find more obscure or less popular content items that aren't prominent in the main navigation or other visible interactions like the homepage.

The team preferred smaller-scale imagery instead of oversized image proportions, and prefer somewhat less emptiness and white space as there is a desire to have a hard-working site that offers the user a lot of options, rather than emptiness, especially 'above the fold'.

The team found menus that included a hamburger on desktop to be helpful, from the perspective of being able to offer more menu items beyond those exposed in the menu, and for easier translation between desktop and mobile.

Participants in this exercise mentioned preferring a more static and instantaneous unfurling of page content, rather than a slow load with creative / animated transitions which is sometimes seen on websites. They felt that approach would be more fitting of the nature and tone of the content, and would be less distracting.

We discussed the use of the footer to hold key 'meta' links like Careers, ADA, Language Assistance.

The team voiced an interest in the use of icons to increase recognize-ability of key functions, and would especially be interested in modern, bespoke icons suited to the Courts (over generic style icons). We reviewed custom-designed icons for another of [REDACTED]'s clients, the [REDACTED] and received positive responses. We discussed that icons can be used to convey even abstract concepts as in the case of [REDACTED] for saving for college.

[REDACTED] identified resources maintained by the [REDACTED] pertaining to cohesiveness of [REDACTED] state agency branding and web presences. These include recommended color palettes (offering a large variety), tone of voice guidance, instructions for department logos alongside [REDACTED] logo, and typography. [REDACTED] will try to adhere to [REDACTED] state level branding in a way that helps the department be compliant while still achieving a sophisticated and unique site experience, and we will take direction from project leaders for adjustments during design iteration cycles.

Site Descriptors

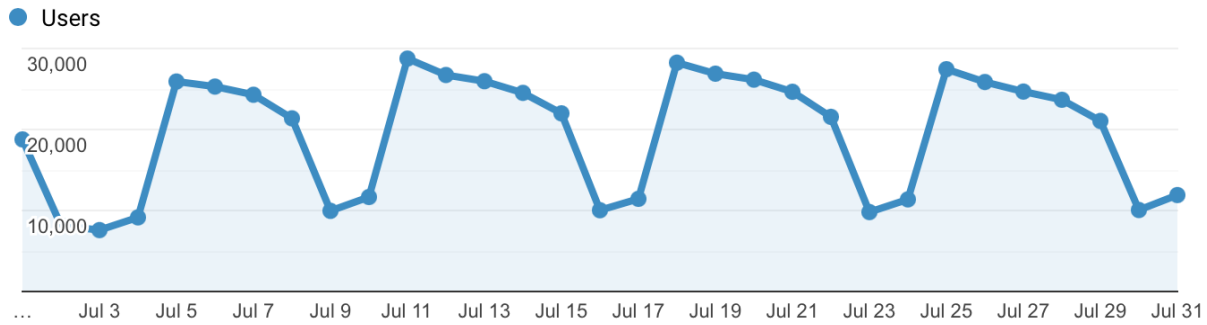
Target descriptors selected and defined during our graphic design inspiration workshop were:

- Trustworthy
- Inviting
- [REDACTED] oriented
- Informative
- Diverse

Current Site Analytics

The analytics for the site, provided through Google Analytics, offer insights to recent and historical site usage, visitor behaviors, referral sources, high-traffic pages, and technology distribution.

The site sees the highest utilization during the workweek, Monday through Friday, suggesting some audiences are engaging with the site for professional or work-related needs. During the week, daily site visits are in the mid-to-high 20,000s, with the highest traffic on Monday and gradually diminishing with each day, and with weekend traffic closer to 10,000. The following visual represents daily traffic for July 2022.



Based on a view of the last year from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022, site visitors are about 75% new, 25% repeat. Close to 99% of users are viewing the site in English, with the most popular other languages being Spanish and French. Users see an average of 3.84 pages per session, for an average session duration of 3 minutes, 17 seconds. The bounce rate, which refers to the rate of single-page sessions in which there was no interaction with the page, is 36.81%.

Greater than half of users over the year-long period were on mobile devices, at about 55%. This represents a significant opportunity for mobile-first design and other considerations that prioritize the mobile experience. Approximately 67% of mobile users are on Apple iPhone, with 1% on Apple iPads, and the remainder on mobile Android devices. The most common browsers used to access the site are Chrome and Safari, at 47 and 40% respectively (Edge comes in third at 5%, followed by Firefox at 2%).

The dockets search page constitutes a very significant portion of site traffic, representing about 25%. This is an area that would be prudent to analyze and focus on in the site rebuild to ensure this high-priority area remains friendly and effective for users at some point, in accordance with the contracted project scope. Forms, Self-Help, and Courts pages are also popular but do not approach, for the last year at least, the level of user interest that Dockets does. Additionally, one particular case, [REDACTED] was popular with site visitors in the last year, especially in Q4 2021, suggesting Cases of Interest are an important feature of the site.

Project Execution Methods and Tactics

Research

One important execution method [REDACTED] utilizes in order to have data to drive decision-making is user research. The following is a list of research methods that [REDACTED] has pursued.

- End user survey** - conducted in writing, with recruitment through the website and social media, a questionnaire was produced for interested end users to respond to, involving quantitative and qualitative questions. A report of this data has been delivered to the [REDACTED] Judicial Branch.

- **Focus group surveys** - conducted in writing, with recruitment through email recipient groups, this questionnaire focused on Jury Commissioners, Trial Courts, Appellate Courts, and [REDACTED] stakeholders, and involved both quantitative and qualitative questions about key features and pages in the site, about these individuals' perspectives on the current successes of the site, and about how better the site could meet the needs of site visitors. A report of this data has been delivered to the [REDACTED] Judicial Branch.
- **Project stakeholder interviews** - discovery opened with a series of meetings with the core IT project team at [REDACTED] Judicial Branch to introduce [REDACTED] to the primary purpose of the site as well as historical decision-making, background of how it is currently architected and structured, pain points, and goals.
- **Tree testing for validation of information architecture** - based on other state judicial branch websites as well as current utilization of [REDACTED] site, [REDACTED] devised a modified information architecture for the team to consider, and is using task-based tree testing to gauge the efficacy of this new potential IA as well as the current IA so that the new site's content organization can be supported by user data.
- **Analogous research** - this involved a review of similar sites across other states, focusing on how they address the same types of challenges that [REDACTED] needs to address, their content organization, etc. Outcomes of this research have been incorporated into design concepts at both low and high fidelities.
- **Analysis of site data** - this has shed light on existing user behaviors and content priorities, such as the importance of docket search and the portion of users on mobile devices. The high portion of mobile users, as an example of site analytics being put to work, has driven a heavily mobile-focused design and emphasis on current content presentations such as tables that are not accessible or usable on mobile devices currently.
- **User personas** - user research results in a greater understanding of different site audiences, named above, and personas are hypothetical, realistic representations of those audiences, focusing on their demographics, traits, habits, priorities, and needs from the website.

Design Workshopping

As mentioned previously, [REDACTED] conducted a one-hour interactive design 'workshop' session to explore various sample sites and their respective designs, focusing on aspects of the visual direction as well as decisions around use of imagery, iconography, text, menu structures, search experiences, interactions, content presentations, and other factors that contribute to a site's overall design. During this session we identified key descriptors the new website should meet and set certain goals and targets around colors and layouts that the new design should utilize. We also reviewed state branding guidance and discussed ways to follow state guidelines while still creating a distinctive site design for [REDACTED]

Low-fidelity Wireframing and Iteration, High-fidelity Mock-Ups

Low-fidelity wireframes are grayscale page ‘skeletons’ that focus on layouts, arrangement of content, order of content, and interactions on the page, and purposefully exclude imagery, color, and stylized accents and fonts. This is so that in deciding how to structure and present content, reviewers are not distracted by the various aspects of the visual decision-making that may interfere with their review. Low-fidelity wireframes may look ‘vague’ with a lot of gray boxes and lines, but they can actually include a high level of detail and be used for specification / reference during implementation, and they are quicker to generate than full mock-ups.

High-fidelity designs are indistinguishable from a finished site implementation, except for the fact that the designs are static and non-functional. Function and navigation can be mimicked through the development of clickable prototypes if that is important to conveying expected functionality, or they may be annotated with remarks from the designer to clarify behaviors. Development of high-fidelity designs is generally based on the low-fidelity exploration that has already occurred, so that the high-fi designs are realistic and appropriate for the content strategy, layouts, and organizational aspects selected, allowing reviews of high-fi designs to focus on colors, fonts, images, icons, backgrounds, textures, and other elements that contribute to a site’s final look-and-feel.

Agile Methodologies

██████ will employ agile methodologies as an organized and systematic approach to the accomplishment of work and related product-focused interactions. Specifically, the team will use the Scrum process framework. JIRA will be the primary tool to manage requirements and associated documentation in support of the website rebuilding development effort.

Specific agile components to be used for the ██████ website rebuild include:

- Epics / User Stories
- Backlog
- Sprints (and associated agile ceremonies such as sprint planning, sprint demos, retrospectives, backlog grooming, etc)

Content Audit

The █████ Judicial team has requested that █████ migrate 100% of the content from the current site to the new site. As such, █████ has conducted a thorough site review and audit to ensure understanding of the full scope of content to be migrated. Content will be migrated and transformed through both manual migration and automated migration efforts. The site audit is also used to inform decisions regarding the optimal drupal configurations and the high-level architecture elements, such as taxonomies, content types, components, and entity types (nodes, topics, custom).

Priority Content for Phase 1

Priority Content for Phase 1 is defined in the SOW and currently documented in the draft Epic-level backlog spreadsheet. Phase 1 scope includes:

- Google Analytics
- Core CMS Deployment
- Custom Development
- Search
- Content Architecture (back-end work)
- Frontend
- User Management
- Web Forms
- Integrations
- Content Migration -- Manual
- Content Migration -- Automated
- Multilingual Support
- Documentation
- Training
- Site Launch