INGENIUX

Web Governance

Contents

Web governance is a critical part of a successful content management program. As you grow your content team and support larger websites, more customer touch points, and higher volume and velocity of content development, it's important to put the processes and capabilities in place to make sure your content meets the brand, quality, and accessibility requirements you defined.

Web governance simply means your content is properly reviewed and tested before you publish it. You need to make sure your web content is high quality, does not have any broken links, meets the design and branding requirements or "style guide" for your website, works well on all devices and form factors, and is accessible for people with disabilities.

Web governance encompasses editorial processes for reviewing content and programmatic processes for validating your content. Thus, a web governance program takes both people and training required to support your content standards, as well as tools to manage that content and maintain consistent standards and user experience. To help you get started, we created this guide on web governance. Use it as a framework for your company's web governance strategy.

The Core Components of Web Governance

Content Strategy

While many people do not think of Content Strategy as part of web governance, your strategy will help define the editorial, brand, and style requirements you need to maintain; as well as establish the customer touch points, such as your website, mobile application, print output or other channels. Before you start creating content on your website, take the time to define your content strategy. You do some of this when you create the design and information architecture for your website, but there's more to do.

A content strategy identifies the types of content you plan to create on your website and the associated taxonomy (categories and metadata) you assign to that content. It also defines the voice and tone you expect so that there is a consistent voice across all of your content.

Get started:

- Define the categories and associated metadata for your content.

- Create editorial guidelines that outline the voice and tone you want to project and includes instructions for how to categorize content and apply metadata. Be sure to include plenty of samples.

Content Planning and Development

Not everyone will create content for your website and other digital properties, but it's important to identify all those across the company that can create content and ensure you train them to use your CMS properly. It's rare that a content author will create a piece of content and publish it live without anyone else looking at it.

A big part of the content planning and development process is identifying what content you want to create, who will create it in the CMS administration tool, and who will have review and approval of that content before it goes live.
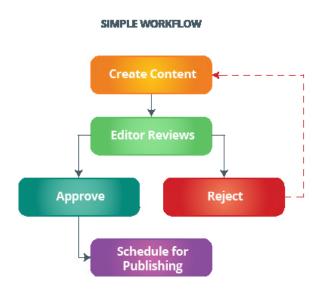
This is a key part of your web governance plan, and it includes identifying roles and responsibilities and defining the appropriate

workflow rules. In some instances, workflow may be as simple as create-review-approve. It could also be more complex with multiple levels of review and final approval by a web manager who ensures the final details of the content are completed correctly (e.g., tagging, metadata, structure).

Try not to have too many workflow processes as it makes management of your content too complex. Instead, define one to three workflows that meet the needs of most, if not all, of your content.

apply permissions by group, not person. Note that a person may fit into more than one group and that's fine. For example, group all the authors of the About Us section into a group called 'Company Updates.'

- Define one to three workflow processes.

- Create a spreadsheet listing the web pages on the website (categorized by section), the content those pages will contain, the content authors, Reviewer and Approver group and what type of

SIMPLE WORKFLOW

COMPLEX WORKFLOW

Get started:

- Identify a list of authors, editors, reviewers, and approvers for each section of the website, or department in your company who will have content on the website. Group the authors, editors, and reviewers into groups as you should

workflow to apply. This also includes your blog, if you have one.

Now you have a complete understanding of who will create and manage website content and what workflow processes and permissions to apply.

Quality Assurance

Once you have your website up and running, you need to ensure it is and remains free of errors, and your visitor experience isn't hampered by broken links and unreadable text.

- Do all the links work?
- Is everything spelled correctly?
- Does the content follow editorial guidelines?
- Is the content readable?
- Are you exposing sensitive information?

These are just some of the things you must check for when you publish content and every time you update content. Let's look at these a little closer.

Proper Linking:

Spend some time thinking about the linking strategy for your website. You want to provide a mix of internal and external links to relevant information in your content. Often, though, links change. You might archive or delete content and break the links. External content may change, and your links break. You also have to consider the age of the content you link to.

Develop a linking policy that outlines how authors should include links in their content. Have a policy for how internal links are managed (e.g., opening in the same tab, what text to link). For example, linking to the text "click here" doesn't work well with screen readers because it doesn't provide adequate context on what the link points to.

Spelling:

This one is pretty simple – your content should be spelling error-free. Ensure you use a spell checker on your content before you publish it and each time it's updated.

Readability:

Authors have different writing styles, and while you don't want to force everyone to write the same way, you do want to ensure your content is readable by all of your audience. Readability testing will tell you how "readable" your content is. Some things you want to consider including in your editorial guidelines:

- Avoid complex sentences. Shorter sentences are easier to read.
- Don't use big long words. It takes longer to read content when the words and sentences are long and complex.
- Avoid jargon. You may understand what a certain phrase means, but your audience may not.
- Break up text with headings, bulleted lists and other formats that produce

more white space and make your content much more readable. Include in your editorial guidance rules for number of headings to include, suggestions for how to write good titles and headings, when and how to use lists, images and other digital assets.

- Keep the size of any downloadable content to under 10MB.

- Do not offer downloadable content in editable format unless you want people to be able to edit the content. For example, your datasheets, whitepapers, and ebooks should be PDF. However, on the Ingeniux website, we provide an RFP Guide as a Word document because we want our audience to use it as a guideline, modifying it to suit their needs.

- Don't expose sensitive content like email addresses, PCI (credit card info) or PII (personally identifiable information) on your website.

All of these editorial guidelines should be considered when content is created and updated, but you should also have a mechanism in place to regularly monitor your content to ensure these guidelines are followed.

Accessibility

You want as many visitors able to view and navigate your website as possible. Accessibility is the process of ensuring that happens. Screen readers, people with disabilities that make it difficult to read or navigate a website using traditional means, have a right to access your website content.

There are standards in place such as WCAG 2.0 and Section 508 that outline the things you need to do to make your website accessible. Most issues are broken down into Site-level issues and Page-level issues.

Some of these include:

- Offering text alternatives (ALT text) on images, videos, and other visual elements
- Use of Headings to skip through content
- Accessible data tables
- Proper page titles
- Descriptive linking
- Media players and Forms also need to be accessible

You can run an accessibility checker on your website to find errors. Tools such as Site Improve and AChecker help you determine

the changes your site will require. Once you know where your issues are, you can put a plan in place to fix them and regularly monitor your site to ensure they don't happen again.

SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) helps the right audience find you. It requires you to do certain things on your website and in your content. Optimizing your website for SEO takes time, but pays off in the long term with improved standings in external search engines, like Google, and improved on-site searching. This process is about getting the right people to find you and your content easily.

Some of the key SEO tactics you should outline in your editorial style guide and regularly monitor on your website include:

- Proper categorizing and tagging according to your content strategy.
- Enforce the use of metadata (for web pages and content), both system-generated and manually entered. This includes digital assets such as videos, downloadable content and images.
- Create search engine friendly URLs.
- Define XML Site Maps and customize index rules for specific pages.

- You may not want all your content indexed – for these pages use the NO FOLLOW tag.
- Employ a broken links checker to monitor and fix broken links continually.
- Use 301 redirects when you move content around your website to ensure it continues to be findable.
- Integrate social media to make it easy for visitors to share your content on their social media networks.

Above all, create content that your audience wants to read. Search engine optimization is as much about the quality of your content as it is about employing specific tactics like those listed above.

Train your content authors and editors to use a consistent set of categories and metadata to create and tag their content.

A Note on Taxonomy

The worst thing you can do is let your content authors define their own categories and metadata (tags) for their content. There will be no consistency in how content is defined, making it impossible to reuse across your website and other digital channels.

Responsiveness

No discussion around web governance is complete without talking about performance. Your website should function properly 24/7, and there should be policies in place to alert your IT team of any issues before they arise or as soon as they arise. Considerations here include things like:

- The speed your website loads on both the desktop and mobile devices
- How long it takes for an image to load – looking at the size of your images
- The size of downloadable content

You'll want to put some KPIs in place to monitor: Page load time, response to request time, mobile redirect time, page load time on mobile device, throughput, transaction completion rate.

Your analytics application also gives you an idea of the responsiveness of your website. Metrics such as bounce rate, time on site and goals completed can also give you a look at how well your site may be performing.

Finally, have a set of processes in place that define the priority and triage process for website issues like these. The faster you catch and resolve them, the better it is.

Tools for Web Governance

There are third party tools you can integrate with your website to monitor and actively manage your governance policies and procedures.

Site Improve's Content Suite offers tools for quality assurance, accessibility, SEO and web standards and internal policy adherence. Site Improve provides a CMS plug in that you connect with your web content management system to actively monitor and catch problems when you are creating and managing content. It can also test content after it's live to ensure it remains in compliance.

Other tools include that provide some or all web governance capabilities include Monsido, AChecker, Wave, Simply Accessible and WebAIM.

In addition to third party tools, some web content management systems, like Ingeniux, offer many of these capabilities out of the box. It's important to ask your CMS vendor what they can support and what third party tools they integrate with to provide the capacities they don't.

How Ingeniux Supports Web Governance

Ingeniux provides many web governance capabilities out of the box. We call it web lifecycle management. Our goal is to help you provide the best content experience for your audiences. We understand that you can't always be actively checking for issues, so some of our capabilities run automatically and resolve issues as they are found.

Here's a look at some capabilities we provide:

Content Formatting:

- Page Types: Ingeniux Page Types define content structure and layout, ensuring that your content meets the brand requirements for your website.

- Page Builder: With Ingeniux Page Builder trusted users can create new layouts or modify existing layouts using approved content blocks.

- Smart Paste: Smart Paste allows website managers to define content import rules that validate XHTML, clean up content to remove artifacts such as SPAN or MSO formatting from Microsoft Office, and other invalid formatting.

Content Maintenance:

- Workflow: Create multiple types of workflow and apply them as needed to your content.

- Content scheduling: Always ensure your content is available at the right time and that stale content is removed automatically using Publish and Perish Dates.

- Spellchecker: Ingeniux includes a native spell checker, so you will always have the correct spelling in your content.

Accessibility

- In-CMS Accessibility Checker: Ingeniux CMS includes the AChecker Accessibility Checker. It will validate content using Section 508 or WCAG 2.0.

- Site Improve: Ingeniux provides integration with the Site Improve web governance suite.

Link Management:

Ingeniux CMS provide automatic link management eliminating 99% of the issues that arise due to broken or incorrect links.

- Auto Redirects: When you move content from one location, Ingeniux CMS automatically creates redirect links to ensure that links to that content aren't broken.

- Vanity URL and overall redirect page management: Vanity URLs are search engine friendly URLs that make your content easier to find.

- Broken link checker, asset checker: A broken link checker runs automatically and reports on broken links so you can resolve them. The same happens for broken assets such as images or videos no longer in the system but referenced in the website.

- URL history traffic: Ingeniux CMS provides a full history of URL traffic.

Wrap Up

There's a lot of work involved in ensuring your website provides the best customer experience. Editorial guidelines and a brand style guide ensure your web governance policies and guidelines are documented for everyone involved in content development.

Equally important is having the right toolset to support adherence to your governance policies. When possible, you should employ automated capabilities that regularly run through and fix problems with your content. Ingeniux provides a lot of the capabilities needed for web governance, and many of these are automated. It also integrated with other governance tools like Site Improve to give you even more governance capabilities within your CMS.

If you're struggling with getting adoption of your web governance strategy, we can help.

About Ingeniux

Ingeniux is the leading provider of web content management and digital experience software. We enable organizations to orchestrate the entire customer experience from acquisition through to sales to support and service, across any device, application, or website.

We build content management software with an unparalleled focus on the content itself. The Ingeniux CMS is designed to manage and deliver modern websites, customer support portals, online communities, and other customer touchpoints.

We believe in intelligent "structured" content. We design our software to enable content reuse, enable true mobile and multi-channel content delivery, and insightful content discovery. Our unique content-as-a-service capabilities deliver content into web and mobile applications, and other key channels.

Ingeniux software is available as a fully managed software service or an on-premise application. Ingeniux delivers unparalleled service and support to customers worldwide.

To learn more, visit us at http://www.ingeniux.com.

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