



Orienteering Australia Website and Digital Communication Review Report

This report addresses the areas for review in the OA Website and digital Communication consultancy. It is the result of research and interviews with key stakeholders. Interviewees are listed in Appendix A.

In addition a workshop with representatives from OA and State Associations was held during in October 2011 to discuss the draft report and collate feedback. This final report incorporates that feedback. Attendees for the workshop are listed in Appendix B.

*Compiled by:
Nicole Davis
Phone: 0438 928 074
Email: nicole@fizzyred.com*

Date: 2nd November 2011

1. Background and overview of current website and digital communications of Orienteering Australia and state associations.

Orienteering Australia (OA) as the peak organisational and management body for Orienteering in Australia currently maintains a website which acts as the central digital communications platform for the national body.

A central content management system for the website was put in place some time ago (Socialfx) and remains the content management platform. While it has been adopted, and is still in use for the OA website, some State Associations have moved on to other content management systems.

The Socialfx approach promised much but technical restrictions and user knowledge has inhibited the implementation. In the meantime new web technologies have developed offering advantages such as bigger developer pools and wider knowledge bases for customisation and content enhancement.

The key issue that has caused disillusionment within the States regarding the use of Socialfx is their need to retain control over local content and the publishing schedule of news items. This shared web publishing technology does not provide enough local ownership at a publishing level. Primarily this is due to older style layout and design approaches however content and publication ownership restrictions also contribute. For example with only one tagged story/changeable news section on a page layout a key story for one state can be "bumped" at an inopportune time by another article published on a an unrelated topic by another state or indeed any Socialfx site in the "orienteering network".

While the provider of Socialfx acknowledges some of these limitations the slow progress on changing the system has forced States to look elsewhere for their websites. Currently only South Australia, NSW, ACT and Western Australia use Socialfx (excluding any clubs websites using the system). Western Australia and NSW are actively looking to upgrade and move their sites to new systems shortly.

Print vs. Online Communications

Nationally all bodies report a distinct swing away from print communications. Printed material is produced as an adjunct to digital and in 80% of cases information is produced first as digital and then as a printable version.

This dependence on digital media is what has driven the State bodies to overhaul their websites and to institute digital newsletters for all interested parties. The lower cost structures in providing the digital information is blurring the distinction between members and casual participants and key information now needs to be provided in digital format to service all markets effectively.

2. Document and prioritise the current and future functional requirements of an integrated national-state website and digital communications system e.g. ability to manage news, event calendars, members area etc. This may include a Gap Analysis i.e. document current functionality from the current national, state and linked sites (e.g. the Results System, Route Gadget, Blogs etc) and what is lacking.

Results

The current national web based application that feeds information into the website for publication is lacking in functionality and hence uptake of the results system is limited to either certain events or is duplicated in other areas by some States

Required:

- Easier event Data input
- Score event options
- Enhanced reporting on events and participation at each event for administration reports
- Easier comparison reports for user result comparison.
- Instruction and benefits are very marginally described on the current website

(Further specs are required here – feedback from workshop and others on results system development area for specifics)

Recommended action:

The base system requires enhancement and upgrading. This should be done as a matter of urgency and should be funded so that the work is completed in a timely manner.

Suggest involving a new programmer that can work with the previous programmers and, through a joint and closely supervised effort, could work with a small team of test users from each State. The goal should be to enhance the results publication and reporting module in time Easter 2012. Any end user features could then be promoted to and trialled by the Easter 2012 participants.

Currently amendments are being made to the results system *due to Tim McIntyre being able to undertake some development work* AMMENDED NOTE:

These updates include:

- 1. Reporting on Participation at events. A new report is available: permitted a participation report (with date and state as search criteria) has been developed. To improve data, states can upload a member file.*
- 2. Requirements for Score events are being investigated*
- 3. Instructional Text is being updated*

However, a broader steering committee with input from States still needs to be set up and to test, ensure all and any relevant feedback is given, co-op other programming skills if required and to handle the on going issues that will continue to arise with a system of this nature, otherwise is going to fall in a hole again.

If this management of the results system is formalised in a proactive way there is a higher likely hood that all States will start to embrace this as their system of record and part of their results reporting steps, regardless of any local reporting needs.

NEWS module:

Currently there is no real separate news module that exists independently from articles that are published. A "news section" independent of base information needs to be available on the OA website.

These news article could then be delivered via a direct RSS subscribe feed by the designated state or club contact for dissemination in the appropriate state news vehicles.

Recommended action:

A National/State integrated news feed service is not required. However a system to provide news on the OA site within a better designed front page framework should be implemented in OA site design overhaul.

A RSS (*Really Simple Syndication*) feed which is notification ability should be a feature of the OA website and this would then provide the means for the States to sign up for the notification. It would then quickly and simply provide the updated stories to the State for use as required.

Event Calender

Event Information is a collation and dissemination issue faced by all states and it is function that could be addressed through the development of a web application.

A web based applications (form or uploaded file method) feeding a database that can then be used to publish out "a set" of information based on criteria selected by the publisher of a certain website (club/state/national) would be a useful approach to collate this information in a "collate once/use many times".

Both NSW and Queensland are developing/have developed test modules that could potentially provide the basis of system that could be used nation wide and this option should be explored and an outcome negotiated.

Members Area

Comments and member forums provide ways of engaging a certain area of membership on a wide variety of topics and were mentioned as a further development that would be nice to have by many involved in State website development. However developing this functionality to host on a website is neither part of OA core strengths nor does it provide the return that would come from an immediate enhancement of the navigational structure and website design.

The potential exists for OA to investigate an agreement with the developer of the website Attackpoint (www.attackpoint.org) to explore a broader use of this well developed site's features in a way that promotes the site to the orienteering community and provides a possible way to provide benefits to members of OA.

3. Document the non-functional requirements, e.g. items such as customisable layout and styles, and ability to apply different security levels to management of content.

Which Content Management System (CMS) employed should not be the main focus of what needs to be designed to upgrade and enhance the communications structure of the OA website and digital communications.

The design brief for the site should acknowledge that different levels and types of information are required and how that information needs to be delivered.

The design and set up of the new CMS should accommodate various templates that can be applied to suit different types of information.

At a minimum 3-4 templates should be designed to cover varying types of information. This then maintains the integrity of the design of the website while allowing some variety. The key templates (at a minimum) should be:

- Homepage
- Text/information page
- Photo display page
- Video display page
- Listing pages (events/results/summaries)

Each of these templates then incorporates the areas of information that includes menu bars/detailed menus/news boxes and sponsor area links.

The selection of a CMS should include the requirement to easily add additional templates and choose them for new pages and areas as appropriate as the web site evolves and the needs change

Technically the CMS then needs to address the following components.

- A ready pool of developers and users,
- ease of use,
- ability to be hosted anywhere
- movable with no vendor lock in
- expandable
- Provide for multiple users
- Expandable to incorporate new technology through a modular design
- Provide for draft and publish options

Many of the limitations that users of Socialfx who were interviewed noted would be overcome by using a more modern CMS, where these features have become standard.

The review of the current site and the functional needs highlighted by users, workshops and usage statistics on the website means that a new site is required.

New open platform CMS must be implemented, content groups established and the process managed by the Director of Communications

Budget: Suggested Budget, not including any paid content generation is \$5,000. This would allow for a graphic design to the OA brief /specification and for multiple templates set up and for the installation of key plug-ins for any needed modules such as video and updates.

Timeline: Commence in January 2012 with aim to launch for Easter Carnival reporting in 2012. Launch should not be delayed because content is "not completed". Once a structure is in place and the new site live then there is a key driver to complete the content and content is more easily generated when content providers across the OA can see the gaps and provide suitable content.

4. Document state-specific requirements that may not be applicable to a national website, e.g. state-specific online membership systems.

Membership:

On-line membership and entry systems, while providing some economies of scale and information management, would appear to be best left as State based systems, with the ability to report to OA and other entities as required.

The reasoning for this is:

- Membership & entry cost structure vary State to State creating many more variables for a national system to handle for no apparent return on speed or ease of use for each State.
- Number of people handling the submission of information and payments is high so there is a large number of people to train in any central system

Event Entry:

Event entry is a state concern however an area where State may benefit from a new approach, this could be through the ability of OA to deliver a "preferred supplier" arrangement. This would have benefits to all States in terms of cost for the payment gateway services which are often too expensive for small events. Knowledge of orienteering needs by the central supplier should contribute to faster and easy set up of events.

Eventually this may provide a way to develop a database approach for multi area/multi club events that is easy for both entrants and administrators.

5. Implementation requirements of migrating to a new system. This would cover design of site structure, design of graphics, building of a new site, training of new content managers, migration of existing content, testing. This would be high level and technology independent at this stage.

The need for OA to move to a new system to manage its website is primarily driven by the need for new website from a communication perspective.

System Migration and Content Migration can occur relatively efficiently once a new design is established addressing the needs of all the content that needs to be displayed on the OA website.

That content plan and will be dependant on the decisions made with regard to the Orienteering Australia Magazine and the prominence to be given to the various types of Orienteering (Bush/MTBO/Urban)

Item 8 covers the needs/timeline for a new site development.

6. Operational requirements for the website and linked digital communications media, e.g. content editor, system administrator.

For OA this is a key area to establish a newer and more appropriate style of communications.

A MANDATORY requirement is to have in place a Director of Communications to oversee this work. Currently this void in the OA structure is partly why the States have stepped in and headed in different directions.

The Director of Communications role should act as a central liaison point for digital information flow Australia wide as well as overseas. The Director can also evaluate communications programs and strategies via the analysis of website statistics and member feedback.

Working with the Director of Communications would be a Content Manager as well as a System Administrator to handle technical needs. The current role of Rob Preston in this area would sit in the Content Manager area. Updating news on the website/social media forum and developing the OA electronic newsletter, linking it to website information.

Administrative tasks and updates to the site should be assessed and potentially an Admin role may be required to handle small changes and updates/state requests while the Content Manager works the publicity and critical news items and promotional content/social media framework rather than be lost to website maintenance duties.

Having 3-4 people involved would ensure that the site was able to be maintained efficiently with travel and other commitments.

The heavy dependence on digital communications raises the issue of how the print communications of Orienteering Australia link with the digital communications plans. Integration of the OA Communications needs **MUST** occur.

At this point it is clear that website results and event information have become, in the last 10 years, the primary source of up to date and relevant information. The website has also become the primary publishing platform for all administrator information, competitor information and the platform of record with the growing database of results, maps, event information and tools such as route gadget.

In this environment where the digital platform has become mandatory, user demand has meant extremely timely information has to be provided in this way. In fact promotion of the sport would not be possible without a digital presence.

A plan of the content, timing, schedule, life and publishing platform of the Orienteering Australia Magazine needs to be drawn up and quickly if it is to maintain relevance and integration within OA Communications need. Both digital and print communications take considerable time and effort. Duplication of this effort draw into question the long term benefits of a Quarterly magazine that replicates information that is now primarily published digitally.

While the Orienteering Australia magazine can remain a showcase for national orienteering of all types and levels it is unable, as a printed publication, to compete with immediate information published online such as results of events.

In this context of integrated communications plan is needed that addresses the content and delivery mechanism of the Australia Orienteering long term.

Recent trials with a digital version of Orienteering North America, found here <http://orienteeringusa.org/ona-digital>

would be instructive for the OA board to review.

Social Media:

In this emerging use of the space for OA there needs to be an overview of how the hierarchy of social media information posting interacts. This needs to be a top level down approach with the National organisation providing direction for National level information and then directing other information levels through to the State . This will delineate types of information and stop a deluge of the small information swamping social media users. It will also help prevent continual duplication of information

Management and testing of this social media approach over the coming year, with State and National cooperation, should be able to refine the approach needed to get results in each market place.

For example this would see encourage States and club use their developing social media presences to promote local event participation. National association social media use would focus on promoting National teams and National carnivals through a central means. It would mean a direct promotional contention needs to be made between the national carnival organisers and the National state media person with a plan for promotion, rather than an ad-hoc approach.

7. Recommendations and priorities e.g. maintain or enhance the status quo, develop a new site system based on specific technologies (or technological options), what features should be included in the new site system.

Recommendations:

1. Let the states run their own websites. Any benefits from a central system are lost in the lack of content control that the States feel and the inability to integrate their efforts with their local social media efforts means that this should be a State based function.

2. Finish the results and calendar system Develop it as an event information system to feed information into common web applications. This would allow for results and events to publish onto any website as required.

This addresses the conflict that States put on events but OA publishes event information. The link between applications used by both tiers to publish information is the important design consideration and not the CMS or design of how the information is displayed. The need is to focus on collecting, collating and distributing that information more efficiently.

3. Provide a negotiated contract with an online entry system (e.g. Register Now) for group buying power and local use patterns. Use for Membership and events. Work with that supplier for ease of entry requirements re: SI and entry data needs for both competitors and for event coordinators but leave the membership database to the state level management.

This leaves the "membership" discounts that States often offer as self select (ie there is no check at entry stage of someone claiming a member discount) and this is reviewed after the fact of payment by the event organiser. This is the least onerous method and is quickly established as there is no need to set up a membership data base to tie this entry to for checking purposes. The second stage of membership tied to online entry systems and process can then be built as a stage 2 requirement and can be handled at a State level. For the small percentage of people who would claim a member discount when they are not a member it's fairly a low risk, staged approach.

4. Overhaul of OA website in conjunction with an overhaul of communications plan.

A new Communications plan for OA is required and this plan must address the need to integrate digital and print communications. This plan must face the reality that digital communication is now the primary source of information on Orienteering for all stakeholders, irrespective of demographics, and that any printed material should be complimentary.

In conjunction with this plan a new website is required by Orienteering Australia to deliver the communication goals within a workable framework for administrators, content providers and for promotional needs.

5. Ensure a Director of Communications is put in place ASAP to oversee these plans.

8. If redevelopment is a recommendation, include a high level project plan (tasks, effort and costs).

Google Analytics has also recently been installed on the Orienteering Australia website and a review of the initial data will be used to confirm the high use content areas prior to recommending and design of content tiers.

Monthly reports initially highlight that the 3 key areas are

- News,
- Newcomer
- Events.

The highest search term is all variations of Orienteering and Australia. The site is getting good traffic so the challenge now is to capitalise on this base.

Content Plan

3 key areas – learn Orienteering, go orienteering, admin/putting on an orienteering event. Menus need to be able to handle the cascading hierarchy in the front page design while maintaining the integrity in the 2nd and 3rd tier page design for navigation purposes.

LEARN:

Newcomers

Adult Coaching

Junior Coaching

Schools Development – teachers and resources

EVENTS:

States

Summaries

Major Carnivals

Search database of events and results

National Teams and National League

ADMINISTRATION:

Event Management

Governance

Roles and Responsibilities

Some questions on content will need to be addressed before a final design brief is completed for quoting and design by the web developer.

This includes:

Where do different styles of events/orienteering fit e.g. MTBO – is it an area or is it just Orienteering?

Would you treat Sprint differently?

Is Metro / Urban – just a type that should be searchable and newsworthy but not a “new” cluster on the site structure?

Designing a page that allows for these types of events to be visible from the front page and well as a menu structure will be key to a good design set up.

Section 3 previously in this report highlights the technical requirements of the setup.

Ownership Areas of Content Plan:

Divided by National and State level.

State:

The main thing that the State Associations will be called upon for is for event information and results, additionally, when there is a National carnival there will need to be logos, links and information promoting the carnival on the National site. This is not consistent at this point and this level of information could be improved.

The National body will be responsible for collating and standardising the other content areas and establishing content area leads e.g. News, Coaching etc

This does not mean that the States would not and could not provide content but that the ownership to ensure the content is appropriate and does not duplicate current content and remains up to date would stay with the content area managers as appointed by the National body.

Transfer and Timing

1. Design Brief after the National Conference confirms go ahead and any further requirements of ideas
2. Graphics design of template and page set up in new CMS to be done by selected web company
3. Transfer of content from current site and new content collated from the content area managers
4. Site goes live with key content areas populated
5. Ongoing site development as site draws support and content managers continue to add further content based on feedback and needs.

Costs

Budget:

Suggested Budget, not including any paid content generation, is \$5,000. This should allow for a graphic design to the OA brief /specification and for multiple templates set up and for the installation of key plug-ins for any needed modules such as video and updates.

A quote from 2-3 suppliers should be sought, dictated by the design brief and by the need to use a team proficient in open source based CMS systems. The recommended systems are Joomla or Wordpress

Appendix A – Interviewees

National:

Jon McComb	SocialFx manager
Rob Preston	OA Website Communications Officer
Robin Uppill	OA Director, Technical
Ben Rattray	OA Facebook & Twitter administrator
Craig Steffens	OA MTBO website
Bob Mouatt	OA results database; OA media liaison officer

State:

QLD:

Tim McIntyre	OQ Technical Officer
Craig Steffen	OQ Web Project Manager
Frances Powell	OQ Admin Officer

NSW:

Paul Prudhoe	ONSW President
Ian Jessup	ONSW Marketing
Margaret Jones	ONSW Communications
Barbara Hill	ONSW Promotions Director

ACT:

Geoff Wood	Executive Director
------------	--------------------

VIC:

Craig Feuerherdt	VOA Vice President; Bendigo website manager
Bruce Arthur	VOA President
Peta Whitford	VOA Development Officer

TAS:

Mike Dowling	OT president: IOF Council member
Ian Rathbone	OT webmaster

SA:

Peter Mayer	OASA President
Ken Thompson	OASA Secretary
Robin Uppill	

NT:

Adam Liedloff	results administrator
---------------	-----------------------

WA:

Jennifer Binns	President
Tony Simpkins	BA Sport Development Officer
Paul Dowling	Webmaster

Appendix B – Workshop Attendees

Workshop Attendees

Ben Rattray	OA
Bill Jones	OA
John Harding	OA
Tim McIntyre	OQ Technical Officer
Barbara Hill	ONSW Promotions Director
Geoff Wood	ACT Executive Director
Don Fell	VOA
Robin Uppill	OASA
Richard Matthews	OAWA