



**AUS** | الجامعة الأميركية في الشارقة  
American University of Sharjah

# WEB STRATEGY





# INTRODUCTION

- This Web Strategy has been prepared to be able to plan and implement the new CMS for AUS.
- This includes prioritising web design, developments, allocating resource and ensuring the delivery of key web projects.
- This document focuses on the steps for creating effective AUS website and navigation, also known as information architecture or IA. As of now AUS team is not involved





# VISION



AUS Website is an important channel of communication. It is a means by which information produced by the University, be it prospectuses, handbooks, articles, or even research output, can be published.

AUS public and private website aim to be a high quality, interactive channel which supports and promotes the University's role as a leading higher education institution with international links.

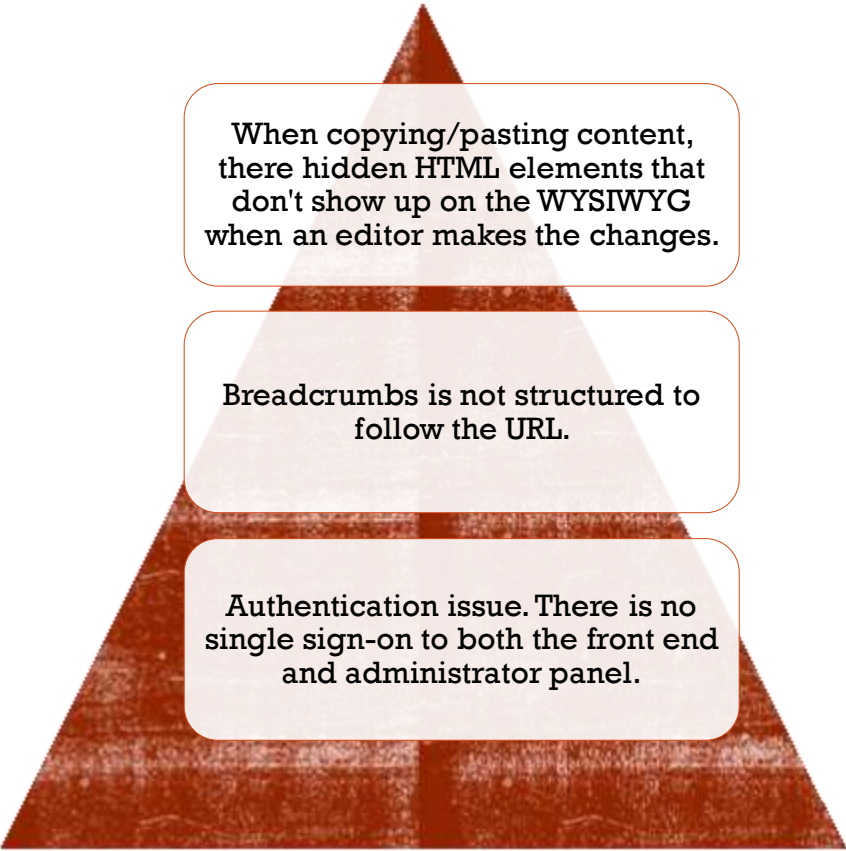
AUS web presence must continually evolve and stand up to regular benchmarking.

This Web Strategy is considered as university strategy 2015-2020 I am not aware of this strategy



# ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES

- AUS current website has many weakness and we would like highlight five key weaknesses which this strategy aims to address:



When copying/pasting content, there hidden HTML elements that don't show up on the WYSIWYG when an editor makes the changes.

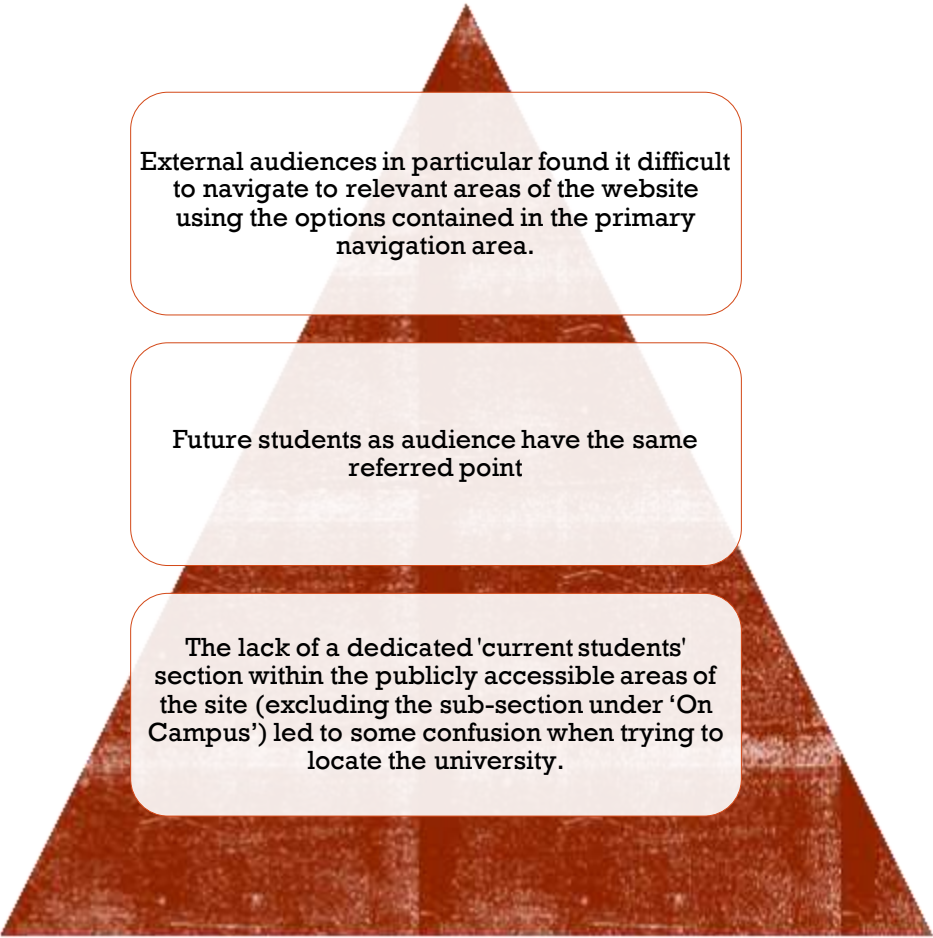
Breadcrumbs is not structured to follow the URL.

Authentication issue. There is no single sign-on to both the front end and administrator panel.



# ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES

- JADU CMS it has a lot of bugs according to clients reviews.



External audiences in particular found it difficult to navigate to relevant areas of the website using the options contained in the primary navigation area.

Future students as audience have the same referred point

The lack of a dedicated 'current students' section within the publicly accessible areas of the site (excluding the sub-section under 'On Campus') led to some confusion when trying to locate the university.





# ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES

The new strategy will help to implement a system whereby audiences are identified.

Knowledge of the University structure is required to quickly locate department- related information.

The current CMS is not interactive and has complicated user experience.



# OBJECTIVES OF THE WEB STRATEGY

Support publishing pages in high quality content

Streamlines publishing of material

- Facilitates the publishing of information in an easy manner without a requirement for in-depth technical knowledge. For example, publishing information to the web will not require an understanding of HTML or experience in Drupal configuration.

Has effective content which is well presented and addresses audience needs.

Presents a coherent image of university by delivering best online services and functionality through web-based applications.



# OBJECTIVES OF THE WEB STRATEGY

## Ease of use for site visitors

Quick and easy information retrieval.

Internal and external visitors should be able to retrieve information.

Content irrespective of its format should be searchable.

Site navigation should reflect the needs of the visitor as opposed to the formal hierarchy of the institution.

To engage in continuous improvement of the usability and effectiveness of all AUS web based services.

Driving potential students to apply





# OBJECTIVES OF THE WEB STRATEGY

Has appropriate technical underpinning

Can be scaled to meet the growing needs of the university.

Exhibits resilience

- Data must be regularly backed up.
- Avoid website downtime is minimised. For example, through duplicated systems

Improved integration and co-ordination with other applications





# OBJECTIVES OF THE WEB STRATEGY

Facilitates internal and external communication

Effectively market the services of the University to external audiences.

Empower staff and Faculty.

Promotes a sense of community and provides a strong basis for developing internal communication in AUS community website.

Provide effective web based services for all target groups

Support AUS external communities and facilitate collaboration with external collaborators.



# DESIGN STRATEGIC APPROACH

Encompass existing content of the current site, and be broadly cross browser/platform compatible (including mobile).

Allow for easiest possible process for search engine optimization SEO.

Home page should be designed to accommodate a dynamic, flexible, quickly - changing flow of content in order to reflect the vitality and activity of campus life in real time.

Home page should feature prominent and clear calls to action that underscore the site's main goals.

The strategy approach to combine all these elements of web design together and achieve successful results, for instance (content for public website) should be improved according navigation and overall page flow.





# DESIGN STRATEGIC APPROACH

Home page should provide greater capability for expressing “the story of American University of Sharjah” through use of marketing campaign imagery/text, photography and video content, preferably dynamic content reflecting the day - to - day vitality of the student experience

Use a site wide consistent top navigation

Specific, intuitive, easy - to - identify/access sections for prospective students, parents, alumni, current students, faculty and staff.



# DESIGN STRATEGIC APPROACH

Build a layout that works well with each device and also redesign the images for the smaller screen, make it responsive!

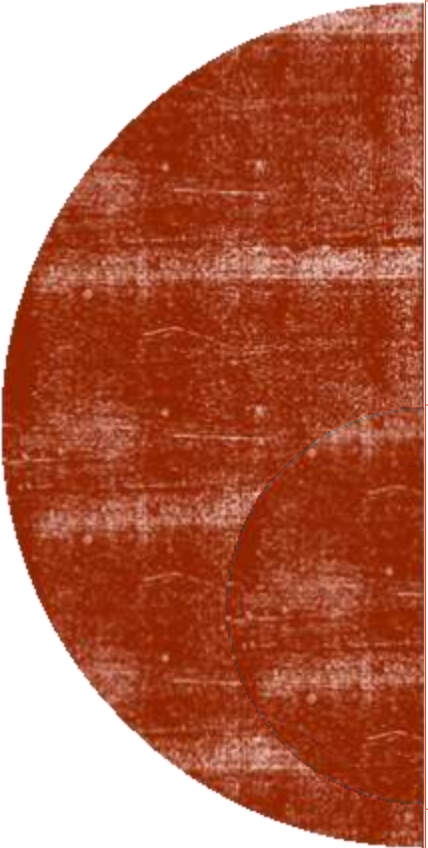
Integrate social - media and community networking opportunities into the site

Design solutions that will make an abundance of information a pleasure to read , engage with and share

Adding sharing buttons to each page or articles is essential as it will allow readers to share AUS content with the click of a button and share



# THE KEY ELEMENTS TO THE NEW WEB STRATEGY



**Professional** –The web presence of the university (including the website, Social media accounts for the university as a whole and the individual faculties) must be a professional representation of the university, its students, faculty and its staff.

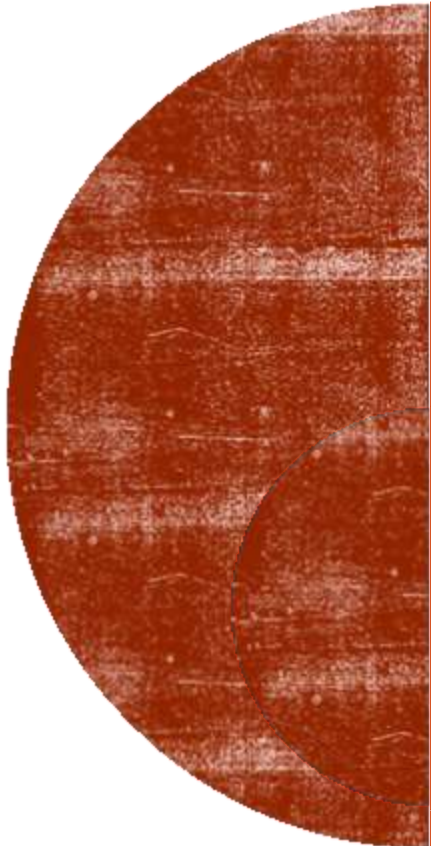
**Informational and Personalization** –The key to attracting new students, more academics and more donations is making the website user better informed. Therefore attracting serious prospects can be done by adopting four essential elements.

- **Content:** Website content is the reason visitors come to your site and engaged. If you know how users behave when faced with content on your website, you can target them with personalized communication later.
- **Create Personas** that define and describe our primary and secondary target audience
- **Consider Your Target Audience's Goals**
- **Spend Time with Your Audience**





# THE KEY ELEMENTS TO THE NEW WEB STRATEGY



**Cultural** – A university is not only a place of learning. Students in AUS should feel they are part of the herd by promoting wide resources for all AUS students and focus on student needs by providing an environment in which the principles of combine’s traditional Gulf culture with a U.S.-style education.

**Educational** – Notwithstanding the comments in respect of extracurricular activities above, the most important feature of the university is the education students receive, AUS must show the students about the quality of what they will receive.





# WEB STRATEGY OUTCOME – AUS.EDU



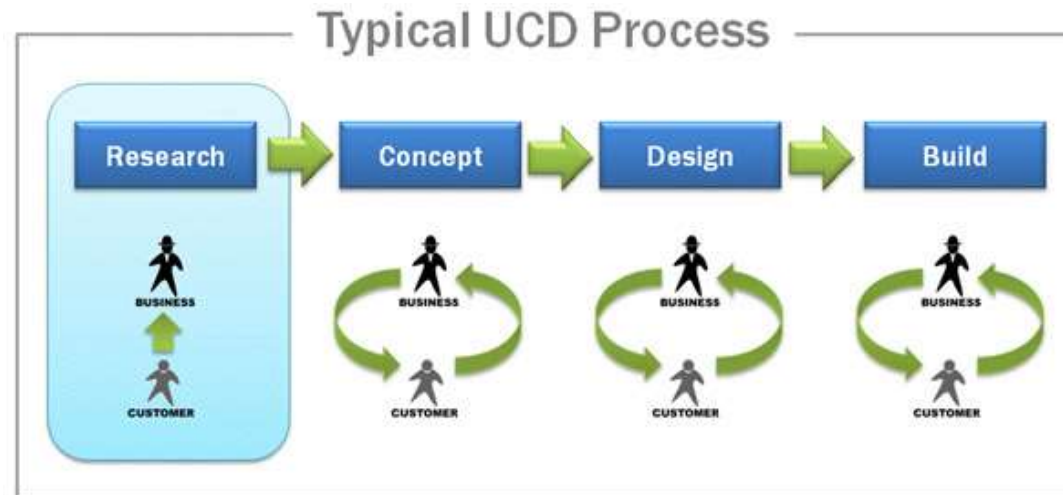


# USER CENTRED DESIGN

- Using a User-Centred Design approach to help our Web team (developers, designers) to analyse and predict how users are likely to use a and engage with website, and test these draft designs with actual users a number of times before site launch.



# USER CENTRED DESIGN



**Research:**  
Contextual inquiry,  
Interviews,  
Survey,  
Workshop,  
Brainstorming,  
Content analysis



**Concept:**  
Wireframes,  
Design, Page layout,  
Navigation Modelling,  
Metadata design,  
Taxonomy



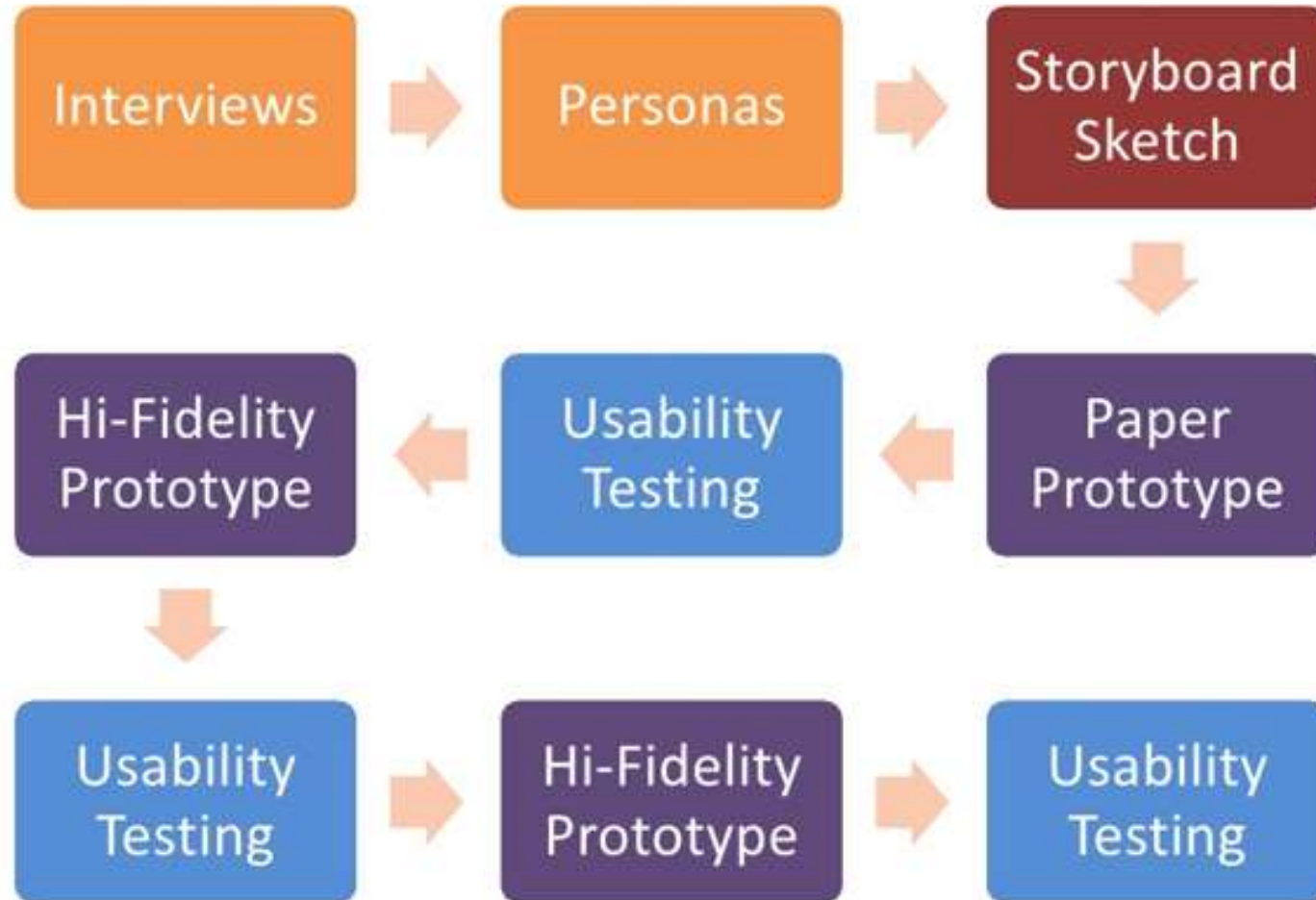
**Design:** Mock up, Themes,  
Branding,  
Functional Prototyping



**Build:** Usability testing,  
Website Analytics



# EXAMPLE OF UCD PROCESS



# CREATING INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE (IA)

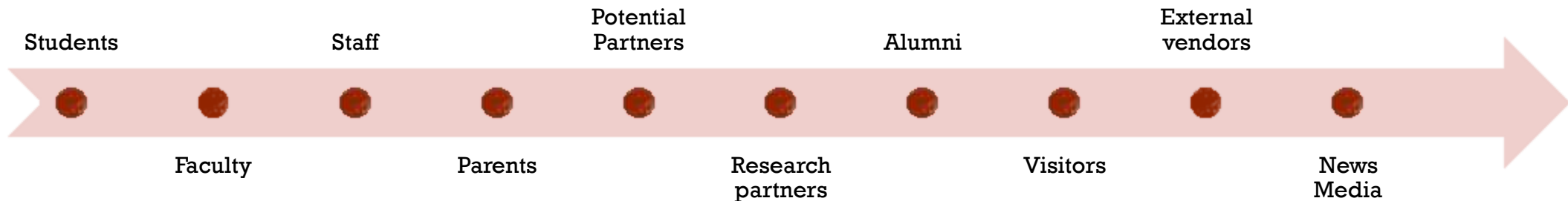
- Information architecture (IA) refers to the structure or organization of your website. It describes the ways in which the different pages of your site relate to one another and ensures information is organized in a consistent and predictable way on each page.





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 1: In this first step, you need to clarify the key stakeholders' goals
- Step 2: Identify AUS Target Audience - According to AUS survey we have prepared to group AUS audience into segments (or user groups). Here are audience segments that must account for:





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 3. Identifying your users' goals and expectations first step, you need to clarify the key stakeholders' goals
  - The ultimate goal of effective web design is to arrange AUS website so that it anticipates AUS users' needs and expectations (we cannot stress this enough). To accomplish this, AUS project team must arrange and label information the way your target audience expects to see it.

First, collect general information about each of your interviewees.

Second, find out about the interviewee's goals upon visiting AUS website.

Now, AUS should create data sheets for interview findings.

Once AUS has completed this activity, project team will need to create data sheets (see attached) or excel sheet for each of the interviews.





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 4 Build Personas
- Personas bring to life your typical customers or prospects, describing their habits, preferences, objectives, and goals when using your product or service. Putting AUS in the mindset of the customer, and ask below questions.

Why should they  
come on AUS  
website,

What are users  
interest,

What are they  
looking for,

How do they  
interact, etc





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

## What are personas?

"Our key stakeholder believes this is the most important feature"

"I'm a user and I think it should be green"

"Will anyone actually use this?"

"We know what our customers want"

"Who is your target audience?"

"Which feature should we de-scope first?"

"Everyone."





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

Create multiple persona's, but not too many 



FLEUR

"Search for answers to reference questions"



Clément Vincent

"Only if it's safe and reliable"



Sweetlana Abukaf

"Lack confidence in academic environment"



# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

PEROSONA NAME:	Current Student/ Hala Kanan
<b>BACKGROUND:</b> ❖ Job, career path	Graphic design student at the College of Architecture, Art and Design Worked in the summer as a graphic design intern for 3 months
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS:</b> ❖ Gender, Age Range, Location	✓ Female ✓ Age 21 ✓ Living in UAE
<b>Goals:</b> ❖ Persona's primary goal ❖ Persona's secondary goal	✓ Finish my graduate program ✓ Working as designer in a famous fashion shop
AUS Website	
❖ Information about Colleges and Academic Departments	Neutral
❖ Information about Academic Programs	Important
❖ Information about the Faculty	Neutral
❖ Financial Grants and Scholarships	Very important
❖ Navigation	Neutral
❖ how frequently you visit the various AUS social packages, Blog	Never
❖ Value of the content across the website	Satisfied
<b>CHALLENGES:</b> ❖ Primary challenge ❖ Secondary challenge	✓ Tuition fee for graduate program (Master Degree) ✓ Finding a job after graduation
<b>HOW WE HELP:</b> ❖ How we solve persona's challenges ❖ How we help persona achieve goals	AUS offer wide range of grants, scholarships and bursaries Give graduation something interesting on by creating AUS Alumni LinkedIn group to help Alumni to find Jobs there
<b>MARKETING MESSAGING:</b> ❖ How should we describe our solution to persona	✓ We are here to support you when you join the university and help you to figure out your next step to becoming a highly sought after graduation ✓ You Want to Learn and develop your career, Financial Aid Can Help.
<b>ELEVATOR PITCH:</b> ❖ Sell our persona on our solution	✓ Bring a educated and helpful content in new AUS website by adding Tuition & Financial Aid link in each AUS college.

PEROSONA NAME:	Student/ Qaise Ali
<b>BACKGROUND:</b> ❖ Job, career path	Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering Working with my brother transport company Friendship is very important to me
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS:</b> ❖ Gender, Age Range, Location	✓ Male ✓ Age 22 ✓ Living in UAE
<b>Goals:</b> ❖ Persona's primary goal ❖ Persona's secondary goal	✓ Establish my own company for Chiller - Air Conditioning Maintenance ✓ Finding a job in big company in Dubai
AUS Website	
❖ Information about Colleges and Academic Departments	Neutral
❖ Information about Academic Programs	Important
❖ Information about the Faculty	Neutral
❖ Financial Grants and Scholarships	Very important
❖ Navigation	Neutral
❖ how frequently you visit the various AUS social Facebook	Rarely
❖ Value of the content across the website	Neutral
<b>CHALLENGES:</b> ❖ Primary challenge ❖ Secondary challenge	✓ Studying at AUS and finding resources has been a challenge ✓ Tuition fee
<b>HOW WE HELP:</b> ❖ How we solve persona's challenges ❖ How we help persona achieve goals	AUS Library provides services to all AUS students in four areas: Information and Technical Services, Access Services, Preservation and Digital Imaging Services and Library Technology Services. AUS offer wide range of grants, scholarships and bursaries
<b>MARKETING MESSAGING:</b> ❖ How should we describe our solution to persona	✓ We are here to support you when you join the university and help you to figure out your next step to becoming a highly sought after graduation ✓ You Want to Learn and develop your career, Financial Aid Can Help.
<b>ELEVATOR PITCH:</b> ❖ Sell our persona on our solution	✓ AUS Library platform has a platform to serve AUS's faculty, staff, students and researchers with skill and innovation ✓ Bring an educated and helpful content in new AUS website by adding Tuition & Financial Aid link in each AUS College.





# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 4: Defining AUS site's content areas.



First, analyse the content you already have — either in print or on the Web — and decide which pieces should be added to AUS new site, updated or discarded.



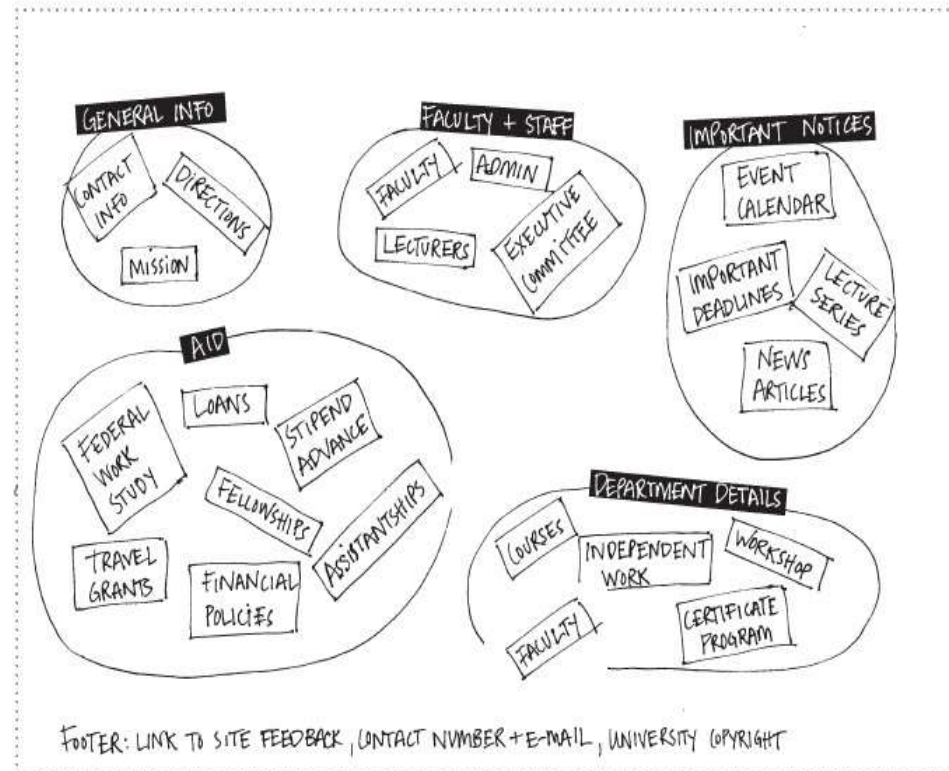
Next, list all of the content areas that AUS users will want to find it on AUS website. The ideal way to do this is to ask a wide sampling of actual users (who are members of your target audiences) what they will be seeking (review “conducting user interviews and creating data sheets”).



# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

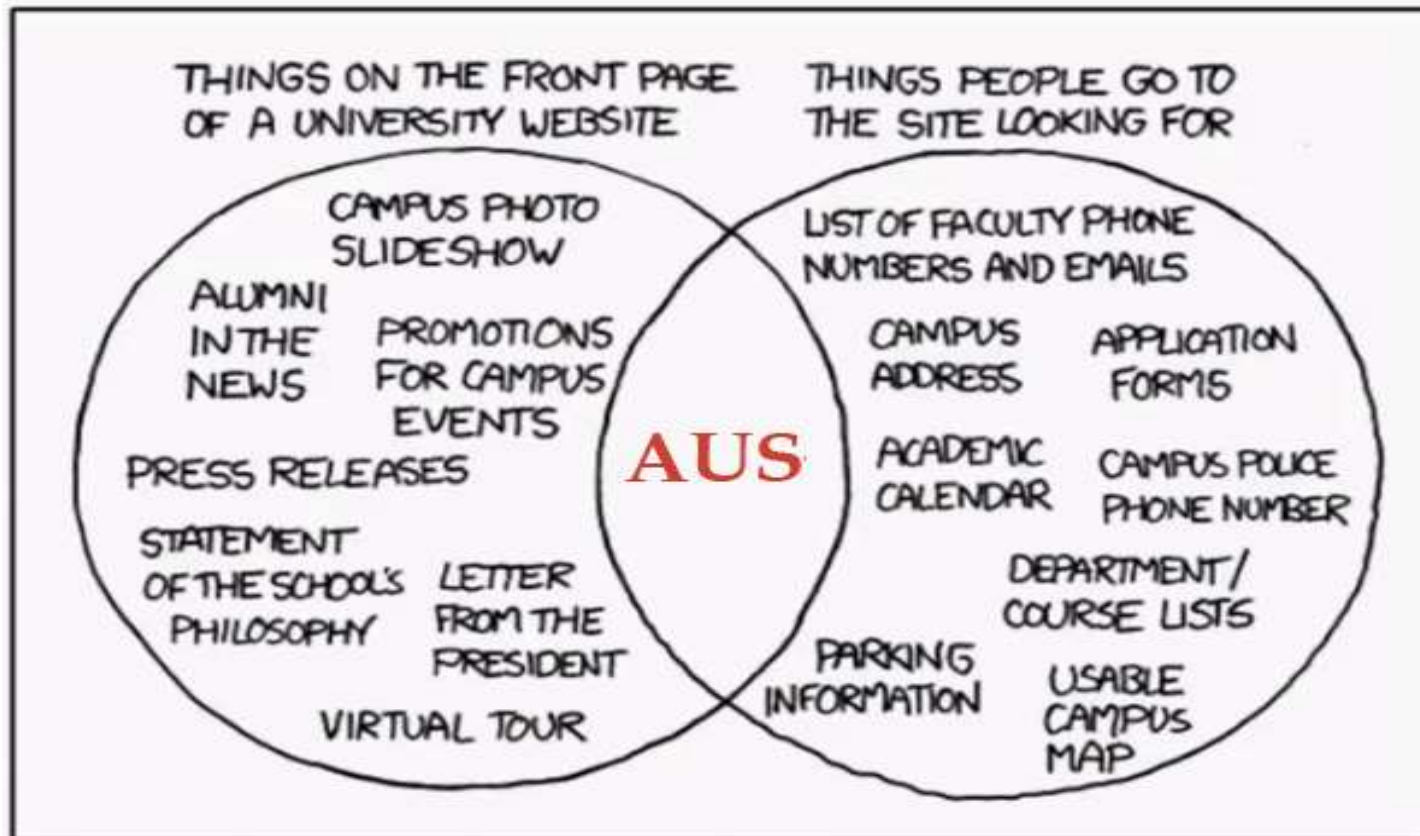
- Step 5. Organizing the content areas and grouping content
- In this step, project team will organize the content areas that they want to find on new AUS website.

Sample of content groupings



# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 6. Creating the site map





About AUS

- ❖ AUS at a Glance
- ❖ AUS's Chancellor
- ❖ AUS's Leadership & Boards
- ❖ Academic Tour
- ❖ Administrative Offices
- ❖ Directories
- ❖ AUS in Community
- ❖ News

Admissions & Grants

- ❖ Undergraduate Programs
- ❖ Graduate Programs
- ❖ Continuing Education
- ❖ Certificate Programs
- ❖ International students
- ❖ Tuition and Fees
- ❖ How to apply

Schools & Colleges

- ❖ Business
- ❖ Art and Design
- ❖ Art and Science
- ❖ Engineering
- ❖ Faculty in AUS

On Campus

- ❖ Athletics
- ❖ Wellness
- ❖ Commencement
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Events
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Green Life
- ❖ Visit AUS
- ❖ Faces@AUS

Alumni Community

- ❖ Career services
- ❖ Alumni benefits
- ❖ News and events
- ❖ Contact us

Periodical news

- ❖ Contact AUS
- ❖ Make a gift

Audience Pathways

- ❖ Faculty
- ❖ Staff
- ❖ Students
- ❖ Alumni
- ❖ Parents
- ❖ Visitors

Media

Footer

- ❖ Contact AUS
- ❖ Maps & Directions
- ❖ Jobs
- ❖ Social Media
- ❖ Sitemap
- ❖ Privacy Statement

Chancellor

- ❖ Office of the Chancellor
- ❖ Biography
- ❖ News
- ❖ History
- ❖ Blog
- ❖ Contact

Media Relations

- ❖ Home
- ❖ Photos and Multimedia
- ❖ Press Releases
- ❖ In the News
- ❖ Policies
- ❖ Contact

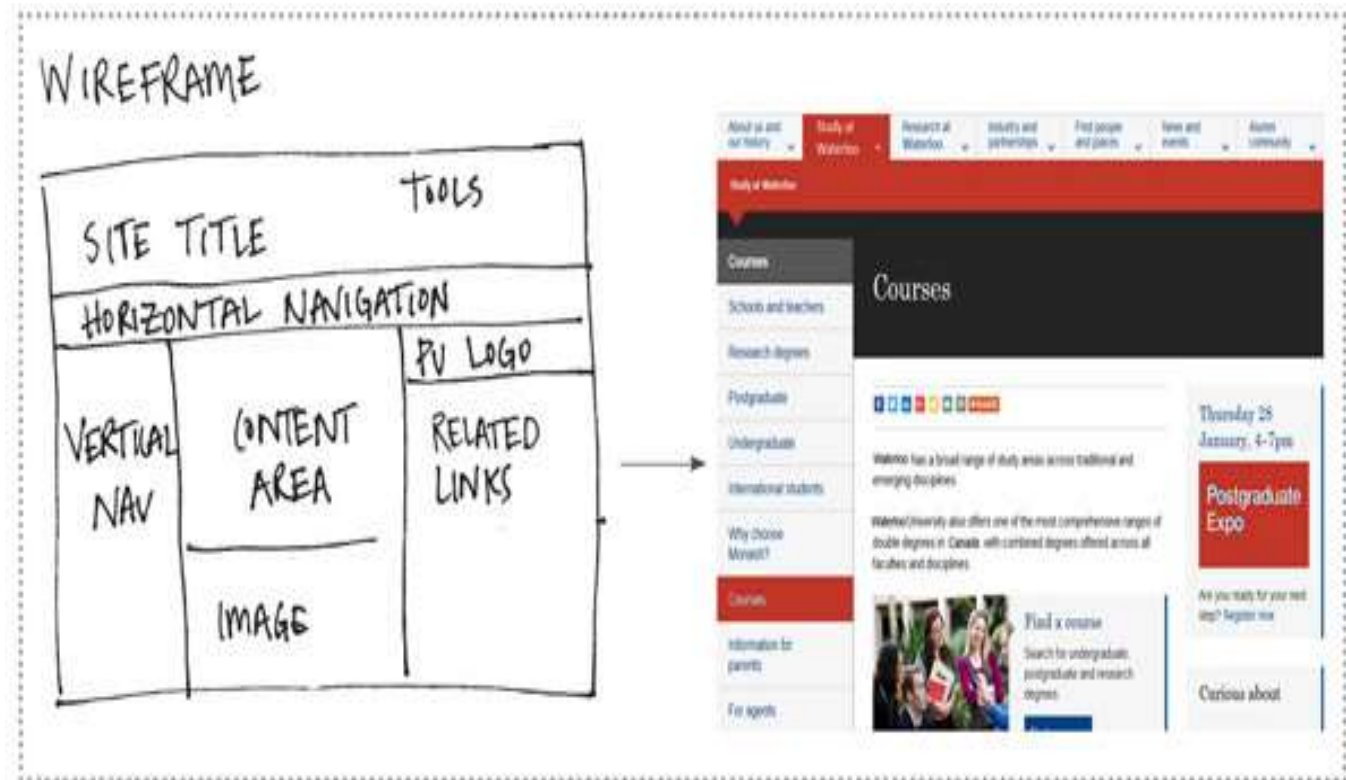
Visit AUS

- ❖ Visit AUS
- ❖ Tours
- ❖ Calendar
- ❖ FAQ



# HOW DO WE CREATE GREAT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

- Step 7: Creating Wireframes
- Emulate the wireframe scheme. A wireframe is a sketch or blueprint that closely represents how the areas of a page will be organized.



# AUDIENCES

- The web presence must be able to deliver information in an effective and targeted way to meet the needs of each of these groups.







# AUDIENCES

Prospective Students

Parents

Prospective Faculty and Staff

Donors

Alumni





# AUDIENCES

## External Audiences

Global research community

Potential students (particularly research postgraduates, as well as taught postgraduates and undergraduates), and other opinion formers

Alumni

Business community

Local and regional community

General public

## Internal Audiences

### Current students

- What's happening around the University and University procedures (programme regulations, enrolment, graduation...)
- Academic support (library, iLearn, Banner...)
- Other areas of support (financial, health, accommodation...)
- Transactional facilities (payment of bills, printing.)

### Faculty

- What's happening around the University and University procedures (news, events, ...)
- Accessing online services work-based resources (faculty online profile, email, blackboard/iLearn, library, banner)
- Contacts Private or public website?





# STRATEGIES FOR CREATING INTERACTION, ENGAGING , OPTIMIZED AUS SITE

Prioritize the pages you optimize

Programs or degrees that have capacity for students and need an enrolment boost.

New programs or degrees that you need to build awareness for.

Programs or degrees that are more unique to AUS and therefore have less competition for search results from competing campuses.

Popular programs and degrees that will have large numbers of students searching for them (e.g. Business, Mas Communications, Civil).





# STRATEGIES FOR CREATING INTERACTION, ENGAGING , OPTIMIZED AUS SITE

Incorporate keywords into your web writing

- To determine which words and phrases are the most popular (and therefore have the highest search volume), it's important to conduct keyword research. For maximum effectiveness, insert keywords into headings and subheadings (H1 and H2), body copy, anchor text in links, and photo captions





# STRATEGIES FOR CREATING INTERACTION, ENGAGING , OPTIMIZED AUS SITE

## Plan your page

- Once a visitor has landed on AUS page, the key to getting your copy read is to have clear goals for what AUS would like to accomplish with the page.

## Consider how the page relates to other pages

- In pre-planning for a page, it's also helpful to consider how the page relates to other pages on your site.





# STRATEGIES FOR CREATING INTERACTION, ENGAGING , OPTIMIZED AUS SITE

Creating effective student engagement

Collaboration and Connecting  
with Students

Helping Alumni Find Jobs.

Social Media Hub: Social  
media is a great way of  
keeping up with all the latest  
news from the American  
university of Sharjah.





# KEY PRIORITIES

The following priorities until 2020 will aid us in achieving our strategic goals.

The strategy will be ranked depending on which of the priorities they cover.

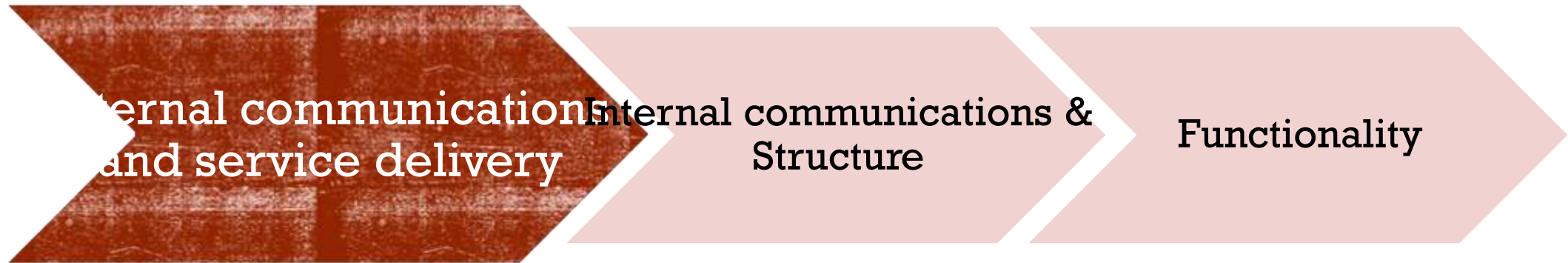




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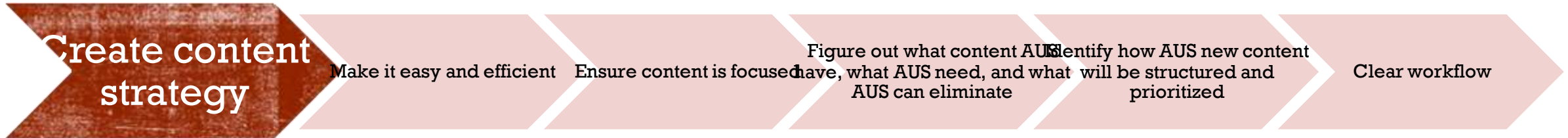




# KEY PRIORTIES

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# UNIVERSITY WEB GOVERNANCE

- The university's web environments will be divided into two websites
- Units will determine what web content is public and what content is intended for an internal audience only.
- The authoritative source of information for the public site is the Web Steering Committee.
- The intranet web pages will follow the same templated and theming.
- The internet web pages will be designed according to each school and college.
- All web pages will comply with the university's brand and visual identity
- All standard templates for the home page, inner page, hub pages, and unit-level pages will be developed according to RFP
- A private website is a private environment network that uses Internet protocols and network connectivity to securely share part of an university's information or operations with its employees.

