ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST MUSEUMS

MODULE 4
MANAGING WEBSITE PROJECTS
Managing the Project

July 27, 2021

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(Event to begin shortly.)

>> INSTRUCTOR: Welcome to Managing Website Projects: Managing the Project

Brought to you by the Digital Empowerment Project

a nationwide initiative organized by the six U.S. regional museum associations and dedicated to providing free, self-paced training resources for small museums.

This inaugural series of online trainings focuses on digital media and technology topics is made possible by funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

My name is Justin Jakovac. I am the executive director of the Mountain Plains Museum Association, and I am your host for today’s program. My pronouns are He/Him, a White middle-aged man with brown hair that is styled in a side-part combover. I have a moustache and a goatee, and I am wearing a black polo style shirt. In the background, there is a gray wall with a teal poster from my… [Justin’s screen freezes]

[Averie S-C, MAAM (she/her) appears]

>> Averie: Sorry folks, having some difficulty with Justin here. We will try to get him back, but in the meantime we will continue introductions for today's webinar. Thank you very much Justin for your introduction. Continuing on in this era of virtual meetings, when digital spaces may substitute for our physical sense of place, it is important to reflect on the land we occupy, honoring the indigenous people who have called it home. I'm speaking to you today from my office which is located in Eerie, Pennsylvania, home of the…ancestral homeland of the Eerie and Seneca people, and [freezing] Confederacy. Wherever each of us are located, let us acknowledge on indigenous nations as living communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. We, the Digital Empower Project, recognize that our organization and those of our members were founded within a colonizing society which perpetuated the exclusion and erasures of many native people throughout the United States and beyond. We ask you to reflect the spaces you reside and work, and to respect the diversity of cultures and experiences that the richness of our world, and our profession.

Before we begin, a few housekeeping notes. I would like to acknowledge today's American sign language interpreter who will be situated on the left-hand side of your screen during broadcast. Captioning for today's programming is just below the video player on our website, with controls to adjust your experience. The best way to refine our craft is to listen to our attendees, so we ask you to share your candid feedback with us. Following the program, you will be sent a link for satisfaction survey. Sharing your experience through this survey will only take a few minutes and will greatly improve our work.

During the presentation we will address as many as your questions as time allows, however sometimes we are unable to answer all of those questions as others may arise while reflecting on the program itself.

Because of this, we set up an online community forum for raising questions, posting answers, and connecting with your fellow museum practitioners. If you are looking for help in between programs, please visit the forum on the Museum Learning Hub website and click On "Join" on the upper left-hand corner.

Lastly, please stay in touch on social media to be notified for future programs.

And I think we have Justin back with us, so I think I will let him continue on and introduce our presenter for today, Despi Mayes.

[Justin Jakovac appears]

>> Justin: Hello, folks! Thank you for bearing with me -- it kicked me out! One second to find that script. I am pleased to introduce Despi Mayes today. Despi is the founder and lead strategist of Bluebird, a marketing consultant focused on serving solopreneurs, start-ups, and non-profits. Her marketing career has spanned nearly two decades, and has crissed-crossed between non-profits, consumer brands, agencies, and the start-up world.

She has led digital marketing and interactive technology projects in collaboration with museums ranging from the Terre Haute children's museum, to the Louvre, plus many corporate clients from local farms to Fortune 500 companies.

Despi is a below average guitar player, above average mixologist, loves beekeeping, prefers listening to music on vinyl, reading books in hard copy. She also Founded "give-and-take Indie" in 2019, a completely volunteer-led effort, helping neighbors in Indianapolis facing food insecurity by hosting many food pantries. In 2021, “Give-and-Take Indie” is in four neighborhoods and has launched a community donation garden.

I am very pleased to bring you Despi today.

>> Despi: Hi everybody, thanks so much for joining us. I’m really excited to be here and share this content with you. I'm going to jump right in and start sharing my screen so that you can see my presentation. I am starting today with a little bit of review because I know that not everybody who is with us today has necessarily seen the content in the first two workshops, and it is kind of necessarily relevant for what we are going to talk about today. Just two slides, so not a ton, if you did happen to attend both of those. Today, we are going to talk about managing web projects, the actual nuts and bolts of how you get it done. So, the reason I am starting with a little bit of review is that the first is that the first two sessions we talked about planning and content and those are really inseparable from talking about the overall managing of your web projects.

First part of the overview is just how you get started and somebody asked this question at the end of the last session. It’s a really gone one if you’re just deciding to embark on this project what do you absolutely do first and I would suggest that thing is set your goals and articulate what you’re going to build and who you’re building it for and by starting there you will set the stage for all the decisions that you’ll make for the project. How you’ll communicate about the project both internally and externally and how you’ll know when you’re finished which is a really important part of the project too.

Making sure that you have all your bases covered with the right team. So that means you have a project lead which might be you or maybe its somebody else. A content lead, a design lead and a technical lead and in that first workshop, I talk through this in more detail. Also there are some great resources I’ll talk about in a minute to support you in this. So even if you’re a team of one in your museum, you still need to make sure you have all these bases covered because it is very, very difficult to do this all by yourself. So, whether that’s volunteers or interns or paid helpers. There’s lots of ways to build that team, but it’s important to do.

The next step is documenting your requirements and that means, what do you need the site to do? What systems you need the site to integrate with to support the work that you do whether that’s your collection or membership and ticketing or fundraising. Like all those aspects you know make a laundry list of what you need the website project to accomplish. And then creating a minimum viable product or an MVP so that you know that you have this target that at the very minimum, we have to do this amount, provide this amount of value, this amount of content, these features in order for this project to be successful. And when you do that you streamline the scope of what you’re trying to accomplish by a certain date so that you make it more feasible and more clear so that your scope doesn’t grow and grow and grow as you go throughout the process of doing your project.

Then finally, you then build your time and that kind of kicks off the start of the work on the project. All right, so, that’s some review from that planning phase and a little bit into the content discussion that we had last time. The resources that are available to support you in this, I created a goals worksheet to help you identify four different types of goals for web projects so you should check that out. Job descriptions for those team members that you can use as a baseline for recruiting the folks that you need to help you with your website project.

Documenting your requirements both technical and content requirements you can use this template to help you do that, and then I also provided a spreadsheet template for a project timeline with some suggested lengths of time based on the size of your website project so yours might be a little different but it'll give you a place to begin to start thinking about what you can accomplish and how much time and then from the last module, I gave an overview of how to create a minimum viable product definition for your project that I think is really helpful. You should consider checking out if you're embarking on managing a new web project so that's sort of the overview so now some new stuff.

I thought that choosing partners would be a really important thing to talk about because if you're a non-technical leader or a non-technical resource, this might be how you often feel about dealing with the person who's in charge of your technology. I know when I started working in my first agency, after I'd been in museums for a while and I went and worked for a full-service agency where we built websites and language pages and emails and all that stuff. And there was a particular partner, external partner, that we would sometimes work with that no one wanted to talk to because everyone felt like this. It happens and I want you to feel confident and prepared whenever you are interacting with a technical resource that you need to choose for your project.

The first thing to think about is asking the right questions. As you're considering particular, you know different partners for your particular project, you want to understand first can they meet your project requirements? And what I mean by that is do they have experience working with the types of technologies that are really important to your project? Ask them to tell you about that and how they can support both the systems and the types of content that you need. What is their typical process and ask for a little more detail here. I think this is something that people often BS their way through, but it's really important to understand how a technical resource will collaborate with you because the worst thing is you do a bunch of planning, you come up with a site map, you do content, you create a design, and then you throw it over a wall to somebody who's gonna build it and you don't hear anything for weeks and weeks.

And all the sudden things are delayed and your launce date's in jeopardy and that can happen and especially if you feel nervous or unprepared to manage that technical resource, that can exacerbate that problem so really lean into the process of communication up front and nail down how you're going to do that. Then hold that resource accountable to both so similarly how do they keep in touch and how will they escalate obstacles. And then what training will they provide you? This is something that gets overlooked too in our, you know, hunger to get our projects launched. Sometimes we forget about what happens once they launce, and who owns what and how does that transition from being an in-progress thing that’s being built to a thing that’s managed and owned by you after it’s out in the world.

So along with these questions, here are some good answers. So if you hear these kinds of answers from the partner, the potential partner you are talking to, I think you'd be on the right track. They will be able to demonstrate that they understand really well what you're trying to accomplish, and be able to share examples of how they worked in the same or a similar system. I think sometimes it is hard because I know that every industry has industry specific software that can be hard to find somebody who is built in that specific thing. They should be able to show you something adjacent to it that is relevant that helps you make a good decision.

They also might be able to share with you the specific tools that they will use to make your project successful. Either one of those, or combination of those is a good answer to that requirement piece.

They will be able to describe to you a step-by-step process that leaves room for your input. And anticipates whatever challenges that will come along because we do not implement projects without encountering something unexpected. Just does not happen. So you know how will they handle it when that does happen and then communication methods you know this kind of relies on uh what you would find most helpful but some folks use slack um in their internal communications and so it can be helpful and natural to have client communication with slack um if you're you know working with somebody who's part of your organization um you know check-in meetings or email updates even if you're working with somebody external this might be the best way but make sure there's a single point of contact for escalation both on your side and on their side so that no matter you know what's going on you know what the process is going to look like for getting help when you need it and then the training.

The answer to the training question is that they'll offer a training session like that should be a minimum in person or remote depending and then sometimes written training materials provided and or training video. If you are very familiar with creating your own YouTube content, YouTube has a really wonderful chaptering feature that you can use just by adding a time stamped comment or description rather to your video and that's a really great way to create a really cheap and fast training video. So if they don't offer that consider asking for it because you can go back to that you can share that with other people in your organization and you know you can just screen record a YouTube training session and then add those chapters in to you know make it easy to find the various updates that you might need to make to your site and it's just a really great tool worth thinking about on the front end.

And then how do you find these partners? That can be a hard thing too. I think the first thing I would suggest is asking your friends for referrals, especially on Facebook and I know not everybody necessarily does professional stuff on Facebook, but I mostly use my Facebook account to, you know, find the most awesome…right now, I’m looking for somebody to, what’s the word, I want to say edit but that’s not the right word, tailor a leather jacket. You know, so I’ll go to Facebook and say, okay, who knows somebody who can do this and it’s amazing because you know our network on Facebook is filled with friends and friends of friends and sometimes colleagues and you can get really great insight both positive and negative about potential candidates for your project there. So I definitely recommend that.

LinkedIn is another great referral opportunity. Same thing, but just a level up in terms of the professionalism, maybe of their responses. So, asking your network to give you ideas, I would share a few details of your project, whatever is relevant, so people give you the right recommendations. So, that could be the scope like the size of the project, the type of technology you need help with, certain features that are important so that you get the good recommendations there. And then when you’re Googling, I find it can be hard to Google the right thing so just try a lot of different searches so that you get different types of results. Here are some suggests on the types of things that you might Google if you want to work with somebody locally. Obviously, you can add that, look you know local city name or whatever to help you narrow it down.

But just some ideas to get you going there. I just mentioned, you know, locally should they be local, that’s completely your call. You know remote collaboration is more possible than it’s ever been but sometimes there is value in face to face and also, I think sometimes investing in the local community is a great way to further the mission of your organization. You know should they be a designer or a developer.

Website designers, when people have that title typically are focused on the visual part, only developers are usually focused on the code only and there are very rare, wonderful unicorns out there who can do both things, but they’re hard to find so might need both and doing searches for web designer developer might help you find somebody who can do both. Often creative agencies will help, you know, have designers in-house that do design across lots of different channels and then the outsourced development you know it's a really common practice so you might need both and then they should be Word Press experts or something else. It really depends on your project requirements.

If you are looking to build a website that is informational maybe has some visual content you know WordPress certainly cancel clients that their CMMS choices are mostly driven on the expertise of their teams and what they are comfortable using and that's a fine reason to choose or not choose a system in my opinion because those are the people who have to use them. unless there's some technical reason why you need to choose something else and if you're just not sure you can kind of leave that open as you're searching for a partner and ask that partner to help you choose the right technology. That's certainly something people do.

You just want to make sure that you're working with a partner you trust who really gets what you're trying to say accomplish recommend the thing that will really work best for you.

OK so after you've chosen that partner and you've got a plan here some ideas to keep things moving keep things on track. so the first thing I'll say is a little bit of a process can go a long way. you know creating a very complex very detailed timeline or process for your web project is probably not going to help you very much norm run because it will change and something I talked about in a previous workshop is you know being agile and in the technical sense but also just a literary sense. you flexible because your project is going to paint throughout the process of implementing it you're going to encounter things you didn't think about that are going to cause you to adjust maybe MVP is or what your priorities are for launch or you know there's all a million things that can happen right so you have having a lightweight process will make you flexible enough to get through those obstacles.

how to do that or by scheduling check-ins. I think weekly is a great cadence it feels like adding a weekly To Do List you know can feel like a lot but keep it really short and I'll talk about a suggested agenda for that meeting in a second. use real time documents I think if you're going to use share documents you know people are going to be editing contact or if you have a status sheet that you're keeping track of where things are you know with a spreadsheet or you have a project timeline make them real time live documents. Google doc Microsoft 365 whatever tool you've got let people edit it you know you can manage permissions on who gets to edit it, who gets to view it. If that's a problem or concern but making sure that everybody knows what's happening in real time would just reduce the stress, increase communication and just make your project overall more nimble and flexible and then over communicate even if you have a really small team. This is true, tell people have things at least three times if you say it in a meeting, send it as a follow up email and then tell them again somehow. Whether that's another email, another meeting or you're reiterating you know what's happening when it's happening, who is responsible for what, the more that you can communicate about your project the better. And if you are a person who is you know maybe wearing many hats on project, you might consider still having a check in meeting but you're checking in with yourself and you're using that time, 20 or 30 minutes a week, to review. OK what's happening with my project do I have things that I'm behind on or do I need to reschedule. You know it's just give yourself the same space that she would give a team and if you're working with a you know cross functional team where you know there are people from other departments or inside and outside your organization same thing you know use that time the way to make sure everyone's in the same page, everyone knows what they're supposed to be doing and you know we can move forward and then the other part of that is to strategic collaboration.

You know I think asking for feedback when you really really value it and you are intend to put it to use is the best way so when you look at the overall scope of your project and you look at the people who were involved whether their volunteers or people on your board or people in other departments. They want involvement they want input, find meaningful places for them to participate on the front end of your project and then build that into your project management process because it goes back to that over communication piece. If somebody feels like their input is important and there's no place for them to give it, it will create a problem for your project maybe not immediately but at some point along the way. So I think that it is important even if it's a single page or content category, you know maybe this person has a great design I and you want to weigh down design and this other person is a great detail oriented person who can help you with bump testing at the end. You know just be creative and think about how you can find a role for everyone and they know when their role is coming so that you can get as much buy-in as possible.

One of the things that I think people overlook with web projects is just how much buy-in is necessary for them to work because it’s not just about doing the thing it’s about. The web project being received well and utilized and there is nothing worse than you know investing months and months of effort and producing some piece of technology that your organization absorbs and then ignores because there was no excitement about it or there wasn’t enough information about it. And so people don’t feel a sense of ownership or a sense of support of you in creating that product.

So, be your own advocate and make sure people are excited about what’s coming in your weekly check-in. Here is an example agenda for how you can keep them efficient and effective. The first is roadblocks: What are the blockers, the things that are preventing people coming forward, maybe that’s missing content, or missing requirements for something that needs to be looked at by an engineer. You know, it could be a lot of things: did we miss a deadline? Did something get delayed? This is the place to voice that let you can get support and help. Again, if you are doing check ins on your own, same deal. What roadblocks have I encountered, how my going to solve for them?

I do not think that as professionals we give ourselves enough space tp dp that thinking. We’re in reactive mode all the time and it’s really stressful. And when you are wearing a lot of hats and you have a lot to do, your bandwidth for dealing with that constant barrage of input is lower. So if you can carve out 20 minutes in your week to think, okay, you know can I get help or you know what can I move to make this a priority, you just give yourself some space because these projects require endurance. They are marathons, no sprints. So I mean, that’s really what the next bullet speaks to, is who needs help?

It might be you, or somebody else on the team, but really making it a comfortable, safe space for people to admit they need help, and for the team to come together to figure out how they’re going to fill that gap is a really helpful way to utilize these meetings and then don’t get caught up in the details of solving the problem in the meeting, schedule a follow-up to do that. This 20 minutes should be, everybody should know that they’re going to come into this meeting, it’s going to be supper efficient, they’re going to get the help they need and they’re going to know what to do next.

That’s it. All the problems don’t have to be solved in this session. So, schedule the follow-up meetings that will actually lead to, you know, fleshing out the details of those problems and then ask people what went well. You know, I think a lot of times we focus only on the negative stuff but if everybody shares one awesome thing that happened last week, you’re going to feel a lot better when you walk out of the room or exit from your Zoom then if everybody just is like, well, here is all the hard stuff.

And then finally, avoid listing stuff, don’t turn these into a justification of existence. You know, I feel like I’ve had plenty of team meetings where they turn into everybody going around the room and talking about the mountain of work they did last week, and I think we all have been in those meetings and you wait for your turn. You have the things you have to say and you’re not really engaged with what everybody else is saying because it’s not relevant to you. They already did it, they don’t need your help. It’s not happening again so what’s the point? So if that starts to happen, if there’s person that’s the instigator, you know, pull them aside after the meeting and kind of reiterate here’s what you don’t need to do. That we appreciate your effort, you know, here’s what we’re trying to accomplish in this particular meeting, and if there are people who just want to list stuff, have them send you a list prior to the meeting and thank them for the list at the star of the meeting then ask for roadblocks. Like you take control and ask people what are the roadblocks, who needs help? And so, you’re not inviting that list making that can happen because you want to balance between having a really supportive environment where people can ask for help and just using that time that could be better spend doing something else.

Those are my check and suggestions for you.

The next section is: Preparing for launch. Last week we talked a lot about content and how to organize it and you know all the different ways to tell stories and the different types of projects. So if you’re wondering, well heck, what happens between check-ins and launch. I would definitely point back to that section, but as you’re thinking about, okay, I’ve spent time building this ting that is now ready for the world, here are some ideas for getting it off the ground.

Launch on Monday. A lot of museums are closed on Mondays, which is nice. You know, it adds an extra benefit there but no matter what, you know Mondays are usually a slower website traffic day and then your team will be available all week to troubleshoot whatever thing might come up. I like to say sometimes that technology is like the ocean, you know, you cannot control it, you can just ride the wave and respond and you just never ever know what’s gonna happen. And so the next item on this list is be prepared for bugs and it’s related. So you know the thing that you built that was pristine and perfect? You know in the environment where it was built and then it got moved over or you know, the URL behind the scenes changes when you went live with your website. Well just unexpected things can happen, so being prepared that there’s going to be some issues that you’re going to need to resolve and really setting aside that week of launch. And it’s, I don’t think that you really ever need a week. Usually it’s just the first day or two that might be tricky. You know people, people finding things that because you were so close to the project being done that you overlooked. But you want to allot some time for that and you never want to launce on a Friday, when everyone’s going to like, you know, be like excited, like oh yeah, we launched the website, now it’s the weekend and we’re gonna go and party and if there’s a problem on Saturday, it’s a lot harder to get help and obviously, you also don’t want to launch before you’re about to go on vacation or some big event in your life because same thing. You want to be able to respond if there’s an emergency to the extent that we have marketing emergencies.

So I have created a bug reporting spreadsheet that I’ll share with in a second to help you kind of be prepared for those and just go into launce with the expectation that there will be some. You can also use this for testing just as part of your overall process but either way, it’s good to have a mechanism to keep track of that stuff.

Finally, a staging environment, this is a technical resource kind of thing. Do not ever allow somebody to build your project locally on their computer and you know, this is something I put in here in writing so you would have it and how to ask about as you’re talking to the person who’s going to be doing the building. There’s so much risk involved when those files are locally on somebody’s computer. You know something could happen to their computer and your project is lost. It’s not good. There are a lot reasons why people might want do it. It’s convenient, keepings everything easy to work with and manage and reduces the time of like moving files around, but it’s much much better to have something that’s backed up in the cloud whether it’s on a managed hosting provider or, you know, a server somewhere. Those are the best ways to go.

Here is the bug reporting template. Very simple spreadsheet, I'm going to exit out of the presentation for one second to show you the whole thing and talk to different parts. This window is very meta.

It is useful to give bugs an ID number because you can refer back to the ID number and if duplicates get added, you’ll you can know that this is a duplicate of item number 12, you know. So you can kind of keep track of all the stuff that’s coming in. Page name, pretty obvious right? And the URL that it’s found on a description of the issue making that as descriptive as it can be is really helpful. Who reported it so if there are questions, the person working in this issue can go back to that person to get more information if needed and then the device operating system and browser are only really needed if they’re really kind of display issues for example. If an image is getting cut off when you view a site on mobile phone like its helpful for the person fixing it to know that you’re on an iPhone and it’s this operating system, right? And you’re in Safari but that’s not always that important if the people who are giving you feedback are struggling to provide that information. It’s okay to omit it, it’s just if it’s available it’s really great information to have and it can make your process more efficient. Especially if you’re working with an external technical partner, who needs to resolve it for you and then assign to.

There are a lot of reasons why, like this example, that I've provided here of a missing image caption. This would go back to the content lead, you know, to be resolved right. If it was a technical problem it gets assigned to the technical lead right. Then it can also be reassigned as people are going back and forth to try and solve the problem which is another great reason why having this as a real-time document makes it so much more effective tool.

Finally, checkboxes for resolve and then notes field and you can customize this. You can make yourself a copy and add or delete fields as you see fit for your project but this is a great place to start. And even as you're heading up to a launch of your project and you're having a small group of testers kind of test the final product before your launch, this is a great too to use at that phase of the project too. Or after your launch if you're getting feedback this is a great way to keep track of it.

All right, let me go back in here.

As I mentioned earlier, project communication is super important. Some do's and don'ts, sent an internal e-mail ahead of launch notifying anybody who is a volunteer, board member, staff member, people who support you and will be excited about this project having. Let them know that it is launching, maybe would like their help and clicking around and testing the site out. Maybe there are specific features that you want to call attention to. You can have people excited about everything that you have worked hard to complete.

I do not recommend sending an external e-mail, I know that is a controversial idea. Usually, when you launch a new website, it is about an improved user experience. There might be reasons why you want to keep communicating to people the way they access their member benefits. More of a customer service oriented e-mail. Generally speaking, we launch a new website isn't really news in the way that it used to be. That kind of goes to the next bullet point of not issuing press release to that. Unfortunately it is not significant news externally as it is to us. When you live and breathe these projects for months and months and bring them to life, it is frustrating when there is not a lot of external notice -- there are things you can do instead! Share special features of your site on your social media feed. If you have a new virtual exhibit content, you have upgraded membership tools, streamline mobile ticketing -- all things you can get people excited about on how you can improve content and experience. That will work well for you.

I will also say have a launch party where you are celebrating team hard work. I worked for company that always did launch parties every time we launched the website, there were always toy rockets, prizes and awards for the work people did. It is really nice when you have invested a lot of time, months of working together to acknowledge the work that people did, the obstacles that they overcame. I think this is similar to how you might feel about an exhibit. It is the same scale, often, of effort. It just looks a little different. Some of these projects go on for as long, have as much complexity. It is worth celebrating when you finish one of these projects.

All right, I’m going to make sure we get through the Post launch maintenance: Okay, you’ve put this thing out into the world and now what? First, breath in the success of completing your project, right? Take a moment to take a breath and enjoy that. Don’t just let it escape without notice, and you know, the party is kind of a way to manifest that tangibly. So, in order to make the site or web product work as best it can for you, get hands-on with it right away. So if you have a content management system, WordPress or something else, to manage content the week after the launch, you should be in there doing that. And as soon as you receive training, get in there, create future content that you’re saving as drafts, edit something that you notice needs updating. Whatever it is because the longer you wait to make edits, the harder it’s going to be to figure out how, like the further away you get from it.

I’ve seen this time and time again where a big project get launched and a group of people, you know sometimes 10 people receive training and nobody logs in and a year later, no one knows how to, you know, and that is the worst thing because you’ve invested in these tools to make the site work for you and you really want to take advantage of everything that it has to offer.

The other thing is, keep up with security and there are a couple of ways to do this. Make sure that whoever is hosting your website is providing automatic security updates and if you are using what’s called a managed hosting provider, they usually will so, that’s something you can look for or ask your technical lead for as you’re putting these projects together because you don’t want to get hacked and have user data compromises. And especially if you’re using WordPress, it’s very important because WordPress have so much market share, it’s like the difference between Macs and PCs. There’s so many more viruses and attacks on PCs because they have the most market share, more people have them and so because more people have them, there are more people in the world trying to create viruses and hack into them because the return on investment of time is better. So, web security is really similar, right? It shouldn’t deter you from using those popular tools, it’s just be smart about it and make sure that you have a plan after launch to make sure that your security updates stay clear, so that you’re not vulnerable to any of the stuff that will happen.

That goes for plug-ins too, is a good reason to be careful about plug-ins you add to site. They often are the culprit of vulnerabilities. Use one that has as many users as you can find. When you look at WordPress, for example, you installations, is it up-to-date? If the answer Is "yes, 10,000 people have used it, and downloaded, and installed and updated in the past Month" -- it is probably safe. But if it has not been updated in the year, and only has 500 installs, not so safe.

Consider a maintenance plan, you know typically if you're hiring a technical partner for your web project, they can give your maintenance place in this 500 to 2000$ a year range depending on the size of your project. And that will ensure that you have somebody to call when something goes wrong. There's somebody to help you navigate through that, but also somebody looking out for you and making sure that you stay up to date with those security updates both for your plugins and your content management system.

Do not forget about content, technology has enough complexity in it of itself that we often give it a lot of time and attention as we are doing these projects. If we are thinking ahead, what do we need to do to make the technology? Also thinking about what I need to do to maintain content of the site. As you are building overall constant plan, consider this idea: Here's the launch plan for content for a site, here is what the month after launch will look like. We are going to prepare that content for the launch date. That will help you have some momentum as you are building all of that content, getting it ready. You are doing that plus one a month so you can start putting processes in place as you are doing this project that will make it successful after launches. Transition and check in meeting is a way to do that. The meeting, you are doing it, it is helping you keep the project on track, you can actually transition to: What are the updates that we need to make on the site? Whether you are doing a second phase, or you want to make sure that content stays fresh, new events get added that weekly check-in can transition to do that.

I feel like I talked up a storm! I feel like this was the hardest want to put together because there are some new facets. I am curious about your questions. I will be in the forums -- here's how you can connect with me if you have questions about something I did not cover. (Information on screen.)

On the museum hub, you can post questions. I will say there is one thing that is not put in the presentation when I wrote a note to myself I want to be sure to say. That is: When you are project manager, it can be daunting when a technical person says to You "that is not Possible".

I learned early on to respond with: Everything is possible given enough time and money -- which one do you need? You might not have the time nor the money, but by making it clear that you understand that all things are pretty much possible, it will change the tone of the conversation. I will leave it with that! I will be happy to take questions! I will leave it with that.

>> Jason: Thank you, that was awesome, I appreciate the presentation! We do have questions!

Tips for people wanting to set up business related operations like online store or ticket purchases.

>> Despi: I would say do not try to build custom solutions. I think that is super hard and there are so many solutions out there so be willing to compromise and find something that does most of the things really well and lean into that. Because supporting custom technology is super hard, super expensive. So just find the thing that will do the best job and make it work.

>> Justin: Words of wisdom. How much archival research, material can a small museum realistically include on its website and can some materials be stored in the cloud or is this too much to attempt without professional tech people on staff.

>> Depsi: Great question, but archival material, documents, photographs, that sort of thing? I was to just using a system that manages those files, make some available online, you can link to that. There are lots of digital asset management out there that allow you to catalog those materials in a thoughtful way, and make them available. If you are trying to add them to your site, I would refer back to -- it depends on why you're adding. Last week I talked about using your blog is a place to highlight the kind of material that has fun stuff, interesting ideas, important things about current events -- what ever the case might be. You could feature the special documents, objects, on your blog.

If you just have a huge catalog of stuff they want to make available for research purposes, I think digital asset management system is a way to go you can get a link that people can use the tool to search. I want to ask a hundred more questions.

(Laughter.)

>> Justin: Yeah, that's the touch part about this one. We will move on to the next one, if there is a follow-up [speakers overlap in talking].

How have organizations you have worked with continue to engage their audiences after their website launched. If your website is going to continuously update with new information, how do we let people know what's new information, how do we let people know what's new.

>> Depsi: I would say that relates to what your overall marketing strategy is, generally speaking. For a lot of people that's either email or social media or some combination of the two. I think that in general, people don't just pop onto your website to see what's new like they just have too much going on in their head and their lives. SO you have to push them there and yeah, so I would say social media updates and if you have an e-newsletter or you know e-news alerts that sort of thing cool, nice.

>> Justin: Okay, well, while buy-in from an entire team is important, how many people do you think is too many for a web team?

>> Depsi: Well, great question, just as few as humanly possible is awesome. I think if there's a person in the room who doesn't ever have anything to do, they shouldn't be there, you know. So the number is less important than is everybody actively participating and if somebody just wants to be there to get updates, like there's lots of ways to get updates. So I don't know if it's a number, but I think that you know once a group of any people trying to do anything gets to be more than like seven or eight people, it starts to become not as helpful. But you'll know like I said, if somebody's sitting there and they never have anything to contribute nor are they ever assigned anything, they probably don't need to be there.

>> Jason: Makes sense. Okay, what are some ongoing maintenance tips for new websites.

>> Depsi: For new websites, often it is more About "we have all the content that we need, our people engaging with it in the way that I definitely recommend, using analytics in the way that you preference to track what pages are getting viewed? For long our people on pages, you get a sense of how people are interacting with the site.

Analytics will not tell you what is wrong, it only tells you there is something wrong. He had to start asking questions the answer in a different way. I would say, if you notice, for example, you had a goal of creating a new website in order to drive traffic to your physical location and nobody is going to visit, you have a problem. That is a key element to the goal that you have. I could tell you things like that, you could start troubleshooting: Why is it happening? I think that kind of maintenance is so much more important than anything else. It tells you, how was your project been successful? Technical maintenance I think is applicable to new site, or an old site, make sure that you keep enough stuff updated. Technical maintenance. You have to keep an eye on it.

The other part of keeping things updated, if you ever worked in a place, or starting the job and then had a website, and no one has ever updated the CMS in that time, and you try to update it, every thing will break. In that time, technology has changed so dramatically, it is no longer, it is like apples and oranges. You're trying to make this Apple and orange. By doing those incremental updates, after you launch a new thing, you are protecting yourself from that experience.

>> Justin: I feel you on that one!

(Laughter.)

>> Depsi: I think a lot of us have probably been there if we’ve ever yo know worked with websites we didn’t buuld.

>> Justin: If you have been around long enough, you see it! One more question, then I will do a final bit of housekeeping. Thank you so much for doing the technical presentation, it has been awesome! I know our team agrees!

You mentioned plug-ins for WordPress, when looking for good plug-in -- any other tips or tricks for finding the right plug-in? How do you evaluate plug-in developer?

>> Depsi: You can look, WordPress particularly, you can click and see what other things the developer, what other things they have made. I tend to look at the screenshots, read the documentation. Also, go and look at the support. When you are looking at a plug-in in WordPress, they have support, reviews, illustrations, screenshots. By looking at all of that stuff, you get a sense: Our people complaining every day that they have not fixed something? You see what typically goes wrong. Screenshots will show you in more detail what fields or features are available. Honestly, sometimes in a stalling one and trying it out and, if it is not the right thing, I do not feel any kind of way of doing that. It is fine to experiment.

In some cases, if you're trying to at a particular feature, there might be a hundred plug-ins that can do that. I would start with number of downloads best reviews. And then experiment with what is going to look best. Sometimes, things lay out better, the template that you are using. A little bit of trial and error.

>> Justin: Awesome! Any last thoughts or words for us? You have been with us for a few hours! Any final thoughts?

>> Depsi: I appreciate it, I had a great time putting this together, thinking about how to be helpful. I hope everybody found this to be helpful! Definitely open to more questions. What I said, if there are aspects to have community talk about it.

>> Justin: Great! Great segment -- segue into the things I had to talk about. I appreciate you being here,.

>> Thank you all for attending today's program On "managing the Project" addition of managing website projects. This is the fourth module of digital accessibility and inclusion. Fourth module of the project here -- you can see the fifth one coming up in the coming weeks. Go ahead and sign up on the Museum of learning help website for updates on future programs. As was mentioned, there is a forum for the current module. You will see

recordings placed on the following weeks. Any questions or dialogue can be found there.

Please complete post evaluation survey, it is important for us to hone project as we go forward. Thank you very much for joining us for the final of technical workshop of module four!

>> Have a great week!