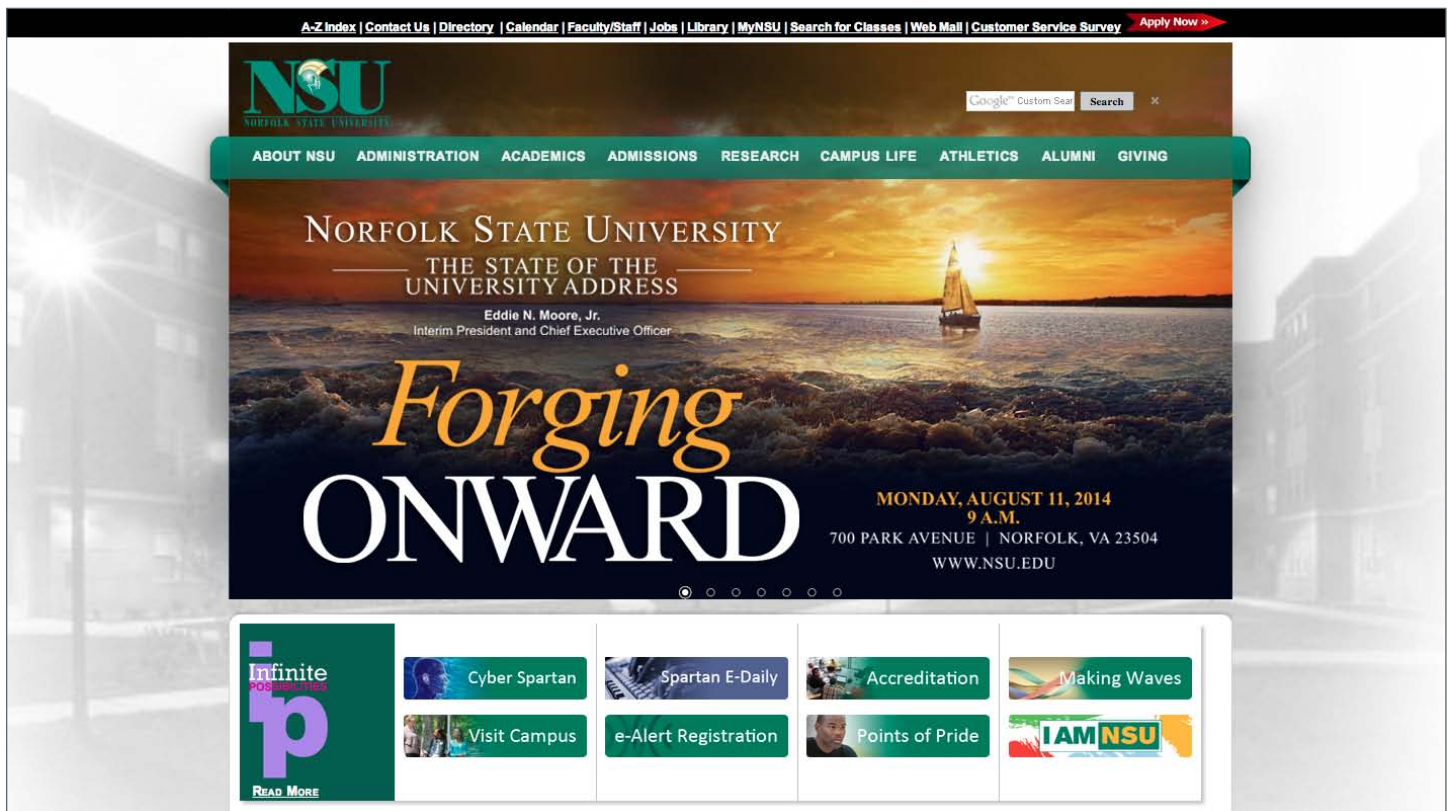# Norfolk State University Web Team Manages Over 300 Websites with Percussion CMS

As the number of NSU campus and community websites grew from 8 to several hundred, the web team needed a better way to manage the sites and keep content contributors engaged.

Managing a Growing Online Presence

Norfolk State University (NSU) could manage its web presence with a small web team and subcontractors when there were only eight websites to manage. As student demands accelerated, that number grew to over 200 sites and the University needed a way to give access to users who wanted to update content but were intimidated by the need to code HTML by hand.

Even worse, while users without technical skills would abandon their websites after a while, those with web programming knowledge could circumvent the preferred protocols and manage their sites without regard for institutional branding standards or business objectives.

Because websites were so difficult to update, their content was frequently outdated and incorrect, or not available at all. NSU's web team received at least 100 emails and phone calls each week from students looking for information about academic programs, financial aid, admissions, or how to contact faculty. Something had to change, and fast.

About Norfolk State University

Through exemplary teaching, scholarship, and outreach, Norfolk State University transforms lives and communities by empowering individuals to maximize their potential, creating life-long learners equipped to be engaged leaders and productive global citizens.

Outcomes at a Glance

- Information requests down to 1 or 2 per month from a high of 100 due to accurate, timely information on site
- Turnaround for updates is almost immediate instead of 1 to 3 days
- Content contributors log in daily to update their pages
- Web team able to focus on usability and strategic priorities over day-to-day content updates

Something Had to Be Done About Nothing Getting Done

The primary website administrator was frequently working 12 hours a day, bringing work home, and continuing her work into the weekend. Most edits would be implemented within a 24-78 hour window, and longer if things got extra busy.

With no good options for consistent content revisions and critical updates coming through on a regular basis, there was no way around just putting in more time.

To break their bad web habits once and for all, NSU agreed to a complete redesign of the main college website, as well as implementing a real content management system in order to "do it right."

Ease of use was a critical feature for the web team, who needed the ability to delegate the management of each site to the appropriate office and minimize the technical skills and resources required for simple updates without losing control of brand standards.

Most of the CMS products reviewed by NSU promised user-friendliness, but after sitting through demo after demo, all of them fell short. While many delivered exciting features, they lacked solid out of the box functionality and a simple experience for the novice, non-technical user. That is, until they saw Percussion.

"Percussion CMS met all of our requirements with the ability to manage multiple sites, countless users, and provide an environment where day-to-day content management is entirely code free." Debbie Jones, Norfolk State University Webmaster explains, "you can't imagine our relief at finally finding a solution that everyone could use."

"The Percussion Widget Builder shares technology between the programmers and non-technical users, allowing them to work together in harmony to seamlessly build a better website. Another exciting innovation from Percussion."

Debbie Lyn Jones, Norfolk State University Webmaster

A Better Website for Students and More Time for Staff

With hundreds of NSU websites on Percussion, most users now make updates almost daily. "The former onslaught of calls and emails from students seeking information has now dwindled to one or two emails per month," Debbie recalled.

The Percussion implementation began with training tailored for website editors and contributors, who find the current process much easier. Debbie Jones now encourages the occasional user who still needs some hand-holding to sit with her and update their pages from her office, where she can offer immediate support without doing their work for them.

Improved Use of Limited Time and Resources

The site's webmaster is now rarely involved with minor day-to-day content updates. She still reviews and edits some pages, mostly for usability and web standards. She provides various resources for users, including an update checklist, cheat sheets, process and best-practice documentation that she has had time to prepare.

For users who have grown extremely comfortable and are authorized to edit design, Jones has granted additional permissions and access. She loves that different users can have different roles within the system. The ability to schedule pages to publish and expire has also added a layer of control to ensure outdated content doesn't linger on the website and confuse visitors.

With the team more self-sufficient, she is also able to focus on web strategy, measurement, and ensuring contributors adhere to an update schedule. Managing site assets is even streamlined with the bulk uploader and folder-based permissions operating 4X faster than the manual processes previously leveraged.
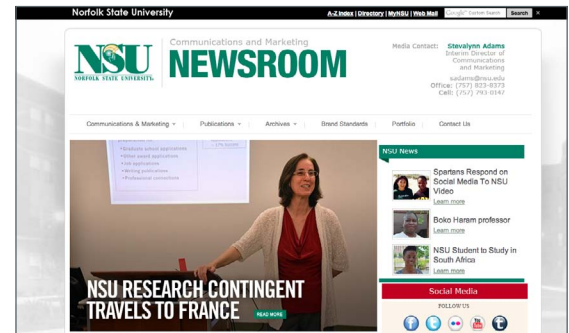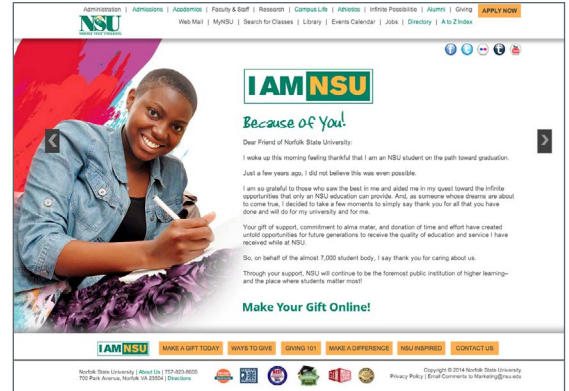
About Percussion

Percussion Software's award-winning web content management system is used by higher education, government agencies, and businesses to create effective websites and engaging content. Marketers use Percussion CMS to create, publish, and share content that drives web traffic, engages visitors, and looks great on any device. Percussion customers love our unique coaching program, drag-and-drop editing, built-in blogs, responsive mobile templates, SEO tools, and fast migration with LiveFirst. Launch your website in days instead of months. Take ownership of content, design, and go live dates because Percussion CMS is a product, not a platform. Leading customers include FirstMerit Bank, U.S. Social Security Administration, Norfolk State University, and Ceridian.

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