Building a Modern Statistical Website - SCAD’s experience

Presenter: Greg Pole
Introduction

• The **digital world** constantly **evolving** and **user** expectations continually **shifting**.

• In recognition of this SCAD, in 2015, undertook a **review** the **SCAD website**.

• Our remit:
  • **consult with users** and other stakeholders
  • **review the site’s structure and content**
  • **prepare an analysis** of the current state
  • **prepare recommendations** for improvement
Overview

- Review & Analysis: What our clients think
- Strategy Phase: How to improve
- Design & Implementation: What we built
- Conclusion
What our clients think
Review & Analysis

- User Experience Study
- SCAD Stakeholder Interviews
- Expert Analysis
- International Best Practice
Review & Analysis

- External focus groups - SCAD website users.
- Provided with scenarios to find specific content on the website.
- Observed ‘click paths’ and general interaction with the site.
- Users were interviewed about their thoughts on website (e.g. design, content, navigation, etc.)
To ascertain the corporate needs for the website, SCAD Department Managers were interviewed and completed a questionnaire.

- Topics included: SCAD’s strategy, customer awareness, internal workflows, external communication, website statistics, editorial guidelines, etc.
Review & Analysis

- Professional consultancy’s experience in designing and developing similar government websites.
- Analysis included: technical evaluation of website performance, HTML coding practices, search engine optimisation, etc.
• A review of leading statistical websites to understand best practice in functionality, design, and tools.

• Sites reviewed included: Statistics New Zealand, Statistics Canada, Statistics Singapore, Destatis, Open Data (US), ONS (UK).
Strategy Phase

How to improve
Strategy Phase

Context

Content

Technology

User
Strategy Phase

- **Context**
  - Context is **understanding** the internal and external **business environment**.
  - E.g. organisation structure, **core business** areas, communication channels, interaction with stakeholders.
  - Recommendations:
    - Enhance website marketing activities
    - Make user feedback ubiquitous
    - Consolidate and expand interactive tools

- **Content**
- **Technology**
- **User**
**Content** is the most **critical success factor** of SCAD’s dissemination strategy.

- E.g. content **tonality**, layout, linking, consistency, **navigation**, formatting...

**Recommendations:**
- *Create simple overview text for publications*
- *Develop a Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) strategy*
- *Improve top level navigation*
- *Optimise content for mobile and other devices*
Strategy Phase

- Analysis of the **technical environment** for hosting and presenting the website, as well as the **CMS** used to update content.

- Recommendations:
  - Improve website speed (reduce HTTP requests, resize images, etc.)
  - Apply responsive design for multiple screen sizes
  - Move to de-centralized publishing
A website’s **success** is ultimately evaluated by its **users**. Online products and services must be developed from a user perspective.

**Recommendations:**
- *Create a new modern and appealing website design (flat design)*
- *Offer more user interaction with data*
- *Reduce click path to content*
- *Offer more user feedback opportunities*
What we built
Design & Implementation

- Modern flat design
- Responsive design
- Live Chat
- Improved feedback
- Improved navigation
- Consolidated interactive tools
Modern flat design
Responsive design
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• Many modern websites have moved to ‘flat’ design.

• Different to more traditional ‘skeuomorphic’ design (resembling the real world).

• **Focus** solely on the **content** - removes the more complicated textures, patterns, shadows, bubbles, gradients, etc.

• **Minimalist**.
Design & Implementation

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Flat icons
Responsive web design reacts to the user’s viewport based on device or platform.

It attractively adjusts to any screen resolution—be it on a desktop, mobile, tablet.

Single biggest change in web development environment recently.
Design & Implementation

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Anatomy of responsive design

1. Fluid Grids
   - A percentage based design that adapts to the screen size accordingly.
2. Flexible Images
   - Images sized in relative units to prevent them from displaying outside their containing element.
3. Media Queries
   - A way to apply CSS rules to the page based on the size of the displaying browser.
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• Benefits:
  • **Enhanced user experience** - users not limited by an organization’s website preferences – own resolutions and devices.
  • **Cost effective** - developing and maintaining one website, costs less than two.
  • **Increase visibility** in search engines – recommended / preferred by Google.
  • **Increase reach** - tablet and mobile audiences were original driving force.
In addition to normal client services functions, SCAD has introduced an online “Live Chat” facility on the website.

- It enables users to ask questions and receive an immediate response from our CRM officers.

- Aims to increase user satisfaction by receiving a personalised response (human).
Design & Implementation

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SCAD has introduced ubiquitous feedback options.

For each publication, statistical tool, or mobile app there is an associated user feedback form.

Captured user opinions are shared with relevant teams as part of ongoing improvement processes.
Design & Implementation

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**Design & Implementation**

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• Important to SCAD that users ‘get to’ the data they require in the shortest time possible.

• The new **themed navigation** enables clients to download a publication / data table in **three clicks**.

• **Home page** is **dominated by six icons** (statistical themes), making it easier for users to identify the correct navigation path.
Design & Implementation

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SCAD has developed many data visualisations and interactive tools.

E.g. mobile apps, table builders, animated videos, thematic maps, etc.

In the new SCAD website, these have been consolidated into a single location.
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Demonstration
By undertaking user experience studies, stakeholder interviews, expert analysis, and reviewing international best practices, and by evaluating website context, content, technologies—SCAD has built a website that meets client expectations and utilises modern web design techniques.

Since the release, the new website has witnessed a significant increase (over 20%) in user traffic.

Feedback about the new design and functionality has been positive.

Through this initiative, SCAD has contributed to its responsibility of improving the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of statistics produced in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
Our Statistics Provide Solutions & Development