

University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA): Site Architecture

Design concepts behind organization and content type design

A key design requirement for the UMRA site is to make content entry as simple as possible for users who will need to do only specific tasks, and sometimes not very frequently. A simple set of containers (Content Types) and the layout of the site, integrating containers with the page design, are the main elements in attaining a simple design. Here are key design philosophies guiding the design of containers and layout.

UMRA Site Design Philosophy

Web site organization should be based on a scheme that both new and long-time members will grasp immediately. Detailed, or jargony categories cause confusion. The easiest to follow web layouts draw on common themes that people will recognize from other web sites, and broad organizational terms.

It is also important to have the most interesting, or valuable information readily available from the top level of the site, so users will see it. The most valued activities and benefits of an organization should be the most easily accessible. For us this is News and Events, as well as a general view into our organization.

Another very important aspect of a web site is planning for keeping it updated. If visitors come to a web site and see outdated information, it sends a signal that the organization may not be very active, or effective. People will wonder what information is up to date, and which is old or unreliable. And the site will be a poor resource for members. A web site is our public face, and a key method of outreach to potential and current members. Up-to-date and dynamic information is vital!

To manage the timeliness of information on the site, it is good practice to separate the time critical info from non-time critical. Some information will be meaningful and important for long periods of time, such as a description of the organization, or other primary site content. Other content will have fleeting currency, such as announcements of monthly meetings. With a little forethought, articles can be separated into News and Events, which are time critical and change often; and content that is more durable, or static. Time critical information can be reviewed regularly, with more static articles reviewed less often, thus reducing time to manage the site. Dynamic info may also be managed automatically -- events with an event date can automatically be moved to a PAST events page after the event date, thus preserving them for future access – in a less used area. Upcoming events can be entered at any time ahead of time, with a publish date when they are to begin to appear on the site.

With this methodology, content on UMRA pages becomes simpler to update, and partially automated. Each page combines static and dynamic content, but different content is edited, updated, or aged out separately, as needed.

Simplicity of data entry is also important. Editors will need to be familiar with only 3 ways to enter content -- News, Primary Content, and Link Lists – making data entry simple and fool proof. Data entry is also made easier by a framework where formatting of article titles, body text, article positioning, and many of the details are handled automatically.

One thing that is a headache, but is a necessity to be able to find content, and understand it's age, is to have a naming convention for Newsletters, Minutes, Treasurer's reports, etc., such that they can be archived and sorted appropriately. Without naming conventions for archived documents, chaos ensues over time....

Here is the basic structure/layout of the top level (menu) of the site:

Home: Should contain a clear indication to visitors who we are and what we're about. It should convey the spirit of the organization, and give visitors an opportunity to learn more about us through key links.

The (mostly static) article "*Actions we have taken on your behalf*" is an impactful description of the spirit of UMRA –who we are, and what we do. The dynamic News and Events are also important for new and returning visitors to see on the home page. We want our luncheons, club meetings, and other current events to be highlighted. These will be easy to keep up to date due to the automated management by publication dates.

Past News and Events will be available on archive pages (web pages that are accessed from less prominent links).

Events:

At the top of the page will be (static) brief information regarding annual events and **monthly luncheon meetings** and workshops, with cost and usual location, as reservation information and links.

Events (dynamic) are also important for new and returning visitors to see on the Events page. This will highlight the upcoming luncheon as well as other current events to be highlighted. These will be easy to keep up to date due to the automated management by publication dates.

Luncheons Reservations, and Meeting and Workshop Photo Albums are subpages of this page.

A link to **luncheon reservations** should also be linked from this page (right margin), along with other important resources: UMN Events Calendar, Resources for Retirees, Photo Galleries, Newsletters, how to Join UMRA. ~~Also to Program Committee page. And Clubs and Activities (top).~~

Membership:

Membership info and how to join is prominently displayed at the top of the page. The main content on this page will feature a static article (Primary Content type) listing **member benefits**. Member-related news is also important for new and returning visitors to see on the Membership page. We want current

member news to be highlighted. These items will be easy to keep up to date due to the automated management by publication dates.

Resources for Retirees, as well as **Join**, **Renew**, and **Change my Record** are subpages of this page. They should also be prominently linked from this page (right margin), along with other important resources: UMN Events Calendar, Photo Galleries, Newsletters, Luncheon reservations.

Right margin has a View listing **Newsletters** (and their date), with current newsletter on top. Newsletters are a wealth of information for current and potential new members, collecting all aspects of the organization and activities in each monthly summary.

~~This page should link to Clubs and Activities (top), Committees, Membership Committee~~

Clubs & Activities

This page will feature content from Clubs and other UMRA groups. For those articles that are long, they will automatically spill onto an additional page (a More link goes to the full article after 1000 characters).

Club Events will also be prominent on this page, displaying all club-related events in a list.

A link to **other key content** should also be linked from this page (right margin), along with other important resources: luncheon reservations, UMN Events Calendar, Resources for Retirees, Photo Galleries, Newsletters, how to Join UMRA. ~~**Also link to Committees page!!~~

Newsletter:

This main page features the President's letter, or other important content from the newsletter – a new item to be added each month. The articles are sorted (descending) by the Title entered into the Primary Content form, where the article is entered. This title should be of a standard format: YYYY-mm Title. In this way, the most recent one will be on the Newsletter page. A list of newsletters will be in the right margin, displaying a few recent ones, with a link to the Newsletter Archive of all Newsletters.

Also Quick Links: links to Minutes, Treasurer's reports, and a page containing official documents.

About:

The About page typically talks in some more detail about the history, mission and vision of the organization. An article to this effect will be accompanied by a list of officers, board members, representatives and liaisons.

Also available in the right margin will be links to Minutes, Financial reports and other operational documents

A subpage of About is a view of PrimaryContent for Committees.

Membership Comm page should link to Membership (top), Clubs and Activities (top), Committees (main). Each year a new list can be created, named Committees 2014-2015. The newly created list will show up as the committees list. An archive will have all past committees.

Program Comm should link to Events

Contact Us allows retirees and other visitors to easily contact UMRA without a frustrating search. This key page should be a top level page for findability. It is a very important function, and should be easily available, especially when we have people who may prefer direct contact over fighting with a computer!

Reference for home page design: www.nngroup.com/articles/top-ten-guidelines-for-homepage-usability/

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/31097/12-Critical-Elements-Every-Homepage-Must-Have-Infographic.aspx>

<http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/53/file-23112469-png/blog/images/12-homepage-elements-hubspot-infographic.png?t=1422899797236>

http://www.w3.org/wiki/What_does_a_good_web_page_need

UMN sites using Drupal: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/web-cms-drupal-initiative-news-information-and-updates/umn-sites-using-drupal>

Techniques for modifying the site

This describes how to make changes to the newly revised website for UMRA, written in Drupal 7.

<http://dev.umn.edu/UMRA>

Overall, there are 4 kinds of content containers, and each is entered into a form specific for that type of content: News, Primary Content, List Links, and Gallery. The table below is a quick reference for creating each type of content.

Content	How to add it to the site:
Announcements: General (info with a time relevancy)	Content→Add Content→News (Select News)
Member News: Member oriented news	Content→Add Content→News (Select Member News)
Events: Luncheons, meetings or other events	Content→Add Content→News (select Events)
Articles: main page content that rarely changes	Content→Add Content→Primary Content (select page)
Clubs & Activities info:	Content→Add Content→Primary Content (select Club)
Committees:	Content→Add Content→Primary Content (select Committee)
Important Links:	Content→Add Content→List Links (select file or enter a link)
Photos:	Content→Add Content→Gallery (select gallery type)