

# Conducting a Content Inventory, Audit, & Analysis

Redesigning or retrofitting a website for mobile is the perfect opportunity to review web content on the basis of clarity and necessity. This tool will aid in the review process, which consists of three phases: a content inventory, content audit, and content analysis. It provides lists of critical information to collect throughout an audit, as well as criteria to use to determine whether to keep, update, or discard content.

## Preparing for the Content Inventory: Ready Your Spreadsheet

A content inventory is a quantitative assessment of your content. You are not trying to judge the quality of your content (yet). You're just trying to wrap your arms around the breadth and depth of all that your website contains. The standard tool for this type of activity is a spreadsheet, and a large one at that. Each content item should be arrayed across the y-axis of your spreadsheet and each of the characteristics below should have its own column.

Unique ID Number	Site Section	Page Title	Page URL	Content Owner
0.0	Homepage	Example U COE	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe">www.exampleu.edu/coe</a>	Abby Maple
1.0	Academic Programs	Academics at Example U COE	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs">www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs</a>	John Elm
1.1	Academic Programs	Bioinformatics at Example U COE	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs/listings/bioinformatics.html">www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs/listings/bioinformatics.html</a>	Jack Linden
1.2	Academic Programs	Nursing at Example U COE	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs/listings/nursing.html">www.exampleu.edu/coe/programs/listings/nursing.html</a>	Ellen Oak
2.0	Admissions	Admissions at Example U COE	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions">www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions</a>	Sarah Dogwood
2.1	Admissions	How to Apply	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions/how-to-apply">www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions/how-to-apply</a>	Sarah Dogwood
2.2	Admissions	Request Information	<a href="http://www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions/rfi">www.exampleu.edu/coe/admissions/rfi</a>	Sarah Dogwood

Example (truncated) content inventory. Determine which data you want to gather about your content and assign those categories to columns in your spreadsheet.

## Suggested Data to Collect

Content inventorying takes time. While some of this data can be pulled directly from a CMS or gathered through a crawler, selecting a person to review web content provides the necessary amount of editorial attention required for a thorough review. The following page includes a list of suggested data to collect. If a tight timeline or lean staff resources preclude a full content inventory, review only the “need-to-have” items denoted by an asterisk.

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## *Full Content Inventory Categories*

- Unique ID number or code for each line in your inventory (numbers map to pages)\*
- Site section, or where it sits in the site hierarchy
- Page title, including the main title and what appears in the meta <title> tag\*
- Page URL
- Content owner and/or person who last updated the page\*
- Date the page was created
- Date the page was last updated\*
- Expiration date assigned to the page, if any
- Keywords that describe the page, or keywords used to index the page for search
- Page rank\*
- Number of page visits per unit time
- Date the page was last visited, especially noting pages with no visits within a period of time (e.g., six months or one year)
- Content type or the CMS template used
- Notes/comments\*

\*Include these items in an abbreviated content inventory

## *Mobile-Optimized Categorization*

Effective mobile websites include content that is concise, precise, and broken down into easily digestible, bite-sized modules. A mobile-optimized approach to inventorying should consider each discrete component of a webpage, not only the pages themselves.

For each component included in the full content inventory, also track the following:

- Unique ID number or code for each content chunk in your inventory (e.g., 2.0: Admissions, 2.1: How to Apply, 2.2: Tuition and Fees, etc.)
- Character or word count for headlines, subheads, page summaries, and body text
- Image dimensions or standard crop ratios or cut sizes (especially note large infographics or other dense images that won't scale well to smaller screens)
- Content format, especially columns, tables, or lists, that may need to be presented differently on smaller screens
- Document types, especially .pdf, .doc, or .ppt, that do not condense well on smaller screens
- Content presented using Flash or any other technology that just won't work on some mobile devices
- Common modules reused across pages (e.g., in the right column) which may not translate well to smaller screens
- Content components that may be stored in different database locations, which may affect how easily they can be repurposed (for example, user comments are often stored in a different database from managed content)

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## Auditing Your Inventory

The audit phase of the content preparation process identifies what should and should not be migrated to a new mobile website. To conduct the audit, evaluate inventory content against criteria like the following:

- Subjectively, is each page or content component too long, too short, or just right? Assess whether some lengthy content should be separated into discrete parts, or whether it makes sense to keep the whole document together.
- Is the text wordy or filled with jargon? Are the main ideas presented concisely and succinctly, preferably in the first paragraph or in the page summary?
- Is the content structured into main ideas, broken up with headings, or with teaser-sized lead-ins on landing pages? Does each paragraph present one and only one topic?
- Is the content up-to-date, still relevant, and accurate?
- Is the content useful and important? Does “nice-to-have” content overshadow “need-to-have” information?

## Conducting a Content Gap Analysis

Each data point collected in the inventory requires an action:

- **Keep** it as-is and include it on the mobile website.
- **Revise** and edit to tighten up the writing or to create a more mobile-friendly format.
- **Delete** it, because it’s irrelevant, not useful, or outdated.
- **Create new** content, perhaps to take advantage of new capabilities on mobile devices.