

# MEMO

TO: Dr. Jared Grogan  
FROM: Renovate SEED Wayne Website Group  
DATE: March 28, 2015  
SUBJECT: Collaborative Research Plan

## Introduction

As a group we decided to create a feasibility study suggesting ways to improve the SEED Wayne website to further align with the group's mission and goals. A feasibility study is the best genre to meet this end because it includes a section like "Criteria", discussed on pages 547-548 of Anderson, which would evaluate the cost and benefits of improving the website and be one of the most persuasive sections. The Methods section of the feasibility study will be more challenging because we will need to explain how we obtained our facts and prove that our research is credible. A way we could do this is by conducting a usability study on the current website and discuss our results in this section. We will suggest two to four different ways a new or renovated website could be produced for the organization. We want this feasibility study to be clear and persuasive so that the readers, Jared Grogan and leaders of SEED Wayne, see the need and feasibility for an improvement to the current website.

## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this feasibility study is to improve the SEED Wayne Website to make it more accurately represent SEED's goals and mission. Our hope is for the readers of this study to be persuaded to adopt a plan to create a webpage for the organization that is easier to navigate, user friendly, and more persuasive.

## Audience

The readers of our study are Dr. Jared Grogan, the leaders of the SEED Wayne organization, the editors of the current site, and the possible third party developers of a new web page. The SEED Wayne organizational leaders are our primary audience because they need to know the problems of their organization's site and ultimately will be the ones who decide how to use our information. Dr. Jared Grogan is also a primary audience member as he is our manager and the judge of the content we will be presenting. The current editors of the site have to be aware of the issues and lack of usability of the current site so that they can figure out where they went wrong, or how they may fix any problems on their own. The possible developers of the site will be able to use our information to create a site that is usable and enticing.

## Criteria

In order to evaluate the issues relating to the usability and design of the current SEED Wayne website, we will use usability tests and observations to see how difficult it is for people to use the website. We will also compare related websites from other universities with usability tests to provide clear data to compare with SEED Wayne.

## Research Questions

Collectively, the group identified a total of fifteen research questions to maintain focus and help narrow the scope of our feasibility study. The first category of questions pertain to the current state of the SEED Wayne Website and SEED's specific goals and values. The first series of questions are as follows:

- How often is your website currently being updated and why?
- What would you want in a revision?
- Why has a revamped website been a low priority for the organization?
- As an organization what is SEED Wayne's goals and values?
- What is important for people to know about SEED Wayne?

This series of questions would be asked to organizational leaders of SEED Wayne. It is important to know why the website seems to have been neglected for several years because we want to understand not only how they update their site, but the means they have to undertake any meaningful revisions. Finding out what SEED Wayne values and how they wish to be portrayed as will help us provide them with better choices that will align with their mission. Also it may help us figure out better options to present in our study to create the website. For example, if SEED Wayne values student leadership and involvement, we would like to provide options to renovate the website by Wayne State students. This may also solve any issues related to SEED Wayne's available funds as they are continually involved in community projects.

The second series of research questions deals with investigating different ways they could actually make a renovated website. Specifically these questions are:

- What different types of methods would work best to create a new website?
- How much would it cost to have a professional create the website?
- What would it take to have a web design class at Wayne State make redesigning SEED Wayne's website as an assignment?
- What kind of quality could the website have if a group of volunteers re-did the website?

These questions are important to address as they are the essence of our feasibility study. Having a professional create the website is probably the best way to ensure the highest quality, but SEED as an organization might not have the funding to outsource the scope of work needed to be done to a professional web designer. If it is too costly, they might want to have students work on it as a project or contest, as mentioned above. We should provide quotes and ideas to compare and present to SEED's organization.

The following list of research questions revolve around the benefits a revamped website could bring to SEED Wayne.

- What are the possible benefits of updating SEED Wayne's website?
- How does the design layout of a successful website affect audience perception?
- Would updating the site increase participation in a organization?
- How might updating a website help the productivity of an organization?
- How does an updated website increase funding?

Knowing the benefits to an organization of a high quality website will make our feasibility study more credible and persuasive. We will look at different marketing and advertising research to learn what exactly attracts people to certain websites and what will cause them to become interested in the content of the site. Looking at how a well-designed website affects participation, productivity, and funding in organizations will also greatly increase our persuasiveness.

The last question that will be researched for our feasibility study involves comparing SEED Wayne's website to other universities' urban gardening, or related websites.

- What type of information does a successful university affiliated urban gardening website include?

Looking into this question will allow us to see the key characteristics of a well designed urban gardening webpage. We will be able to compare more successful sites to SEED Wayne's and therefore provide a clear contrast between their site and a well executed site. This will enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of our feasibility study.

## **Research Methods**

To answer the research questions laid out above, we will be using primary and secondary research. Our group has multiple approaches for completing primary research. We plan on creating a set of interview questions directed toward an organizational leader of SEED Wayne, a web designer, WSU students, and possibly other urban gardening website owners. Interviewing an organizational leader of SEED Wayne would give us a lot of background information on the organization. That information would be useful to determine the extent of work that needs to be done for the website. Whether its adding more usable tabs or just more pages about the organizations outreach. Interviewing a web designer would give us background information about what a remodeling may cost and the time it may take. Cost would definitely be something that SEED Wayne has to consider when improving their website. Interviewing others associated with urban gardening could determine if a usable website increases funding and volunteers. They may even recommend developers they used or content that users enjoyed. Interviewing students would tell us how well the organization is known around campus, and therefore the organization's current outreach. We could

also ask students who are interested in computer science and graphic design if they would be interested in helping redesign and update the website. This research would be both beneficial to SEED Wayne and the students as it may provide SEED Wayne with a cheap alternative to update their site and provide valuable experience to students.

We plan to create a usability test to compare SEED Wayne to other university affiliated urban gardening websites. The usability test will have participants locate and paraphrase information, and also perform certain tasks that will highlight problems in the design of SEED Wayne. The results will be compared to usability tests, with similar parameters, of other university affiliated urban gardening websites. The results of all tests should help SEED Wayne realize that their website should be updated.

As a group we have also identified several Secondary Research resources. One resource that provides a wealth of information pertaining to our subject is the Wikipedia footnotes pertaining to marketing, advertising, urban studies, and urban planning. The marketing and advertising footnotes will give us information about how an improved website could benefit SEED Wayne as an organization. The urban studies and urban planning notes may provide us with good information about urban gardening and its benefits to help the group better understand what SEED Wayne wants their website to portray. The current SEED Wayne Website is also a great secondary source because from it we can understand the organizations goals and missions. We can also compare the current site to other university affiliated urban gardening websites to see where the current website is lacking.

More of our secondary research will come from books and articles on urban gardening and marketing. Gaining knowledge about urban gardening will make us, as a group, more credible and therefore more persuasive to the decision makers of SEED Wayne. Information about marketing will help us assess the need for an improved website and also make our feasibility study more credible and persuasive. Looking at internet articles pertaining to web design and website narratives will also be added to our list of secondary research. These will help us determine what benefits and drawbacks that will come with each of our proposed ideas on how to implement a renovated website. For example, we will look at the web design capabilities of professional web developers, students, and volunteers and will analyze their effectiveness vs. their cost. Looking into website narratives will help us propose a website that will be usable and interesting, but also clear and concise. Finally, the last secondary resource we will utilize are other feasibility studies pertaining to our topic. We will look at these good examples and try to emulate the quality in the feasibility study we are creating.

## Time Table

<b>Week 10</b>	
Thursday	Begin Secondary Research
	Design Primary Research
	Review/Find Relevant Examples of Feasibility Studies
<b>Week 11</b>	
Tuesday	Summarizes Research and Synthesis Research
	Draw Conclusions from Research
Thursday	Refining Project Goals
	Write a Strong Draft of Methods Section
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>All Research Should be Completed By this Week</b>
Tuesday	Write a Strong Draft of Results Section With Graphics
	Complete the Key Sections
Thursday	Revise Key Section
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Rough Final Draft Completed</b>
Tuesday	Write a Executive Summary Revise Sections
Thursday	Revise Using appropriate Writers Guide
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Final Project Due</b>

## Member Responsibilities

To ensure each member has a complete understanding of our objective and the quality of the research we will present, we have created a *team charter* that each member has signed a hard copy of. By signing the charter, members have agreed to the time table and level of scrutiny we hold to create valuable information for our audience.

Vittoria Veltri has been designated by members of the group as the team leader. As team leader, she is responsible for the creation of the time table and keeping all members up-to-date with new developments and enforcing deadlines in the group. Tiarra Cody is in charge of recording all of our team meetings in designated sections labeled "Minutes." She is in charge of cataloging the details, decisions, and concerns

that members voice in meetings. All team members are responsible for contributing and properly sourcing research conducted via primary or secondary research. Primary research will be conducted primarily by Matthew Kable and Kevin Azar, and secondary research will be conducted by all members of our team. Secondary research has been divided into types of information (newsletters, wikipedias, etc.) created in team minutes and each member has volunteered to study one of those sources. All information will be presented in a layered approach where final editors, Matthew Kable, Tre'Lon Hunt, and Vittoria Veltri, will provide cohesiveness to the content for a clean and concise report.