

Case Study

Wharton County Junior College Gets an Online Faculty Directory Makeover

Key Takeaways:

- OU Campus™ can be used to create a faculty directory that satisfies accessibility requirements and editorial freedom needs
- Faculty profile pages can be set up using a form-based template, helping maintain consistency and ease of use
- MultiEdit™ regions allow segregation of profile data to make sorting and searching easier

Wharton County Junior College (WCJC) is a public, two-year community college located in Texas. It was founded in 1946 and has four campuses in Wharton, Sugar Land, Richmond, and Bay City. The college offers a wide range of postsecondary educational programs and services, including associate degrees, certificates, continuing education courses, cultural affairs, and leisure time activities for the benefit of the community. The college enrolls about 7,000 students annually.

Editorial Freedom versus Site-Wide Consistency

Since 2004, instructors at Wharton County Junior College used faculty web pages on the WCJC FacultyWeb site to supplement the college's teaching and learning activities. WCJC had a home grown solution utilizing Microsoft Office FrontPage to create and maintain web pages, including the faculty profile pages. The software was not only hard to use, but was no longer supported by Microsoft.

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All Signs Point to OU Campus

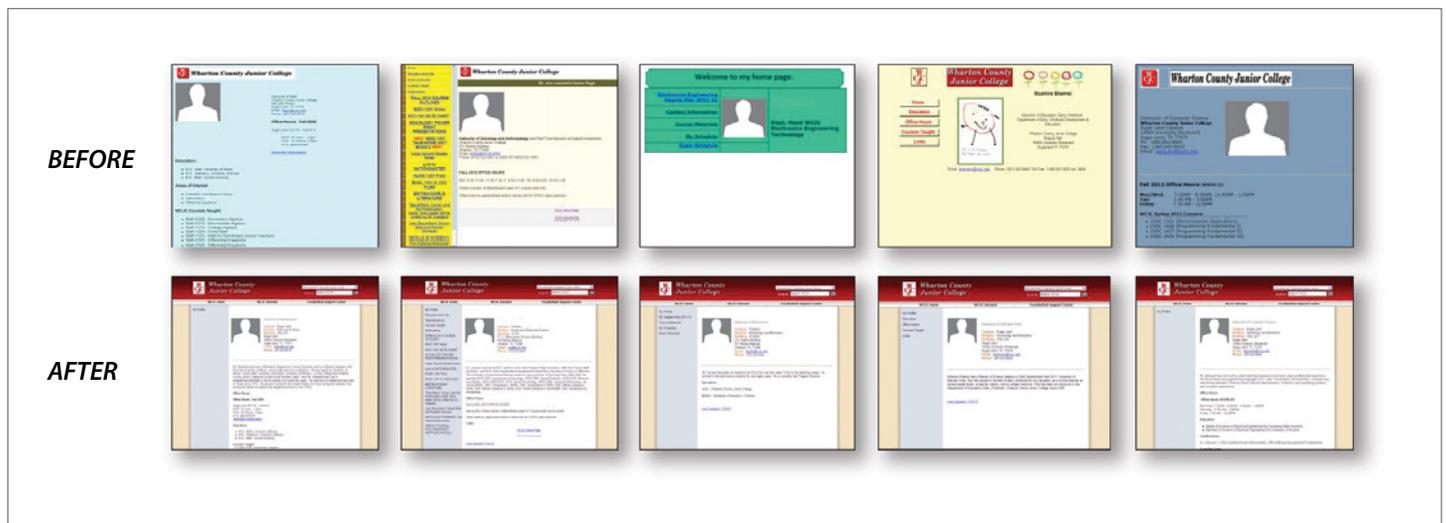
The WCJC team turned to a web content management system (CMS) as the desirable solution. They needed a system that would help manage content with no HTML knowledge required, had an easily defined workflow, and would keep content accurate and current. Although several products were considered, the positive feedback from other higher education institutions using OU Campus, plus the product's top ratings, helped solidify their CMS decision. OU Campus could address all of WCJC's website problem areas, including the faculty pages. Plus, the OmniUpdate team could provide exceptional training and support, and the CMS could grow with the institution's needs — from a mobile website to an online course catalog.

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It's All in the Template

Since the initial focus was on their FacultyWeb site, that's where the WCJC team started the makeover. With help from OmniUpdate, they came up with one standardized profile template. Using this custom-built template in OU Campus, the team was able to build out a section of the website full of easy-to-edit profile pages. To get started, faculty members simply needed to request an account from WCJC's Webmaster, Eric Li. Though it wasn't a requirement for each faculty member to have a separate account to use OU Campus, this was the preferred method for WCJC.

Once faculty members logged in to OU Campus, they could easily edit their profiles. The profile template had MultiEdit functionality, allowing faculty to edit using form-like data regions. Editable regions included a brief bio section, office hours, educational background, courses taught, areas of interest, and links. Each profile also had non-editable data regions controlled by administrators that contained the faculty member's portrait (pulled from an image folder in OU Campus) and contact information (pulled from an Access database using ASP.NET). Using MultiEdit regions made it possible to segregate the profile data, making sorting and searching easier for administration purposes. All this was made possible with one custom-built template in OU Campus.

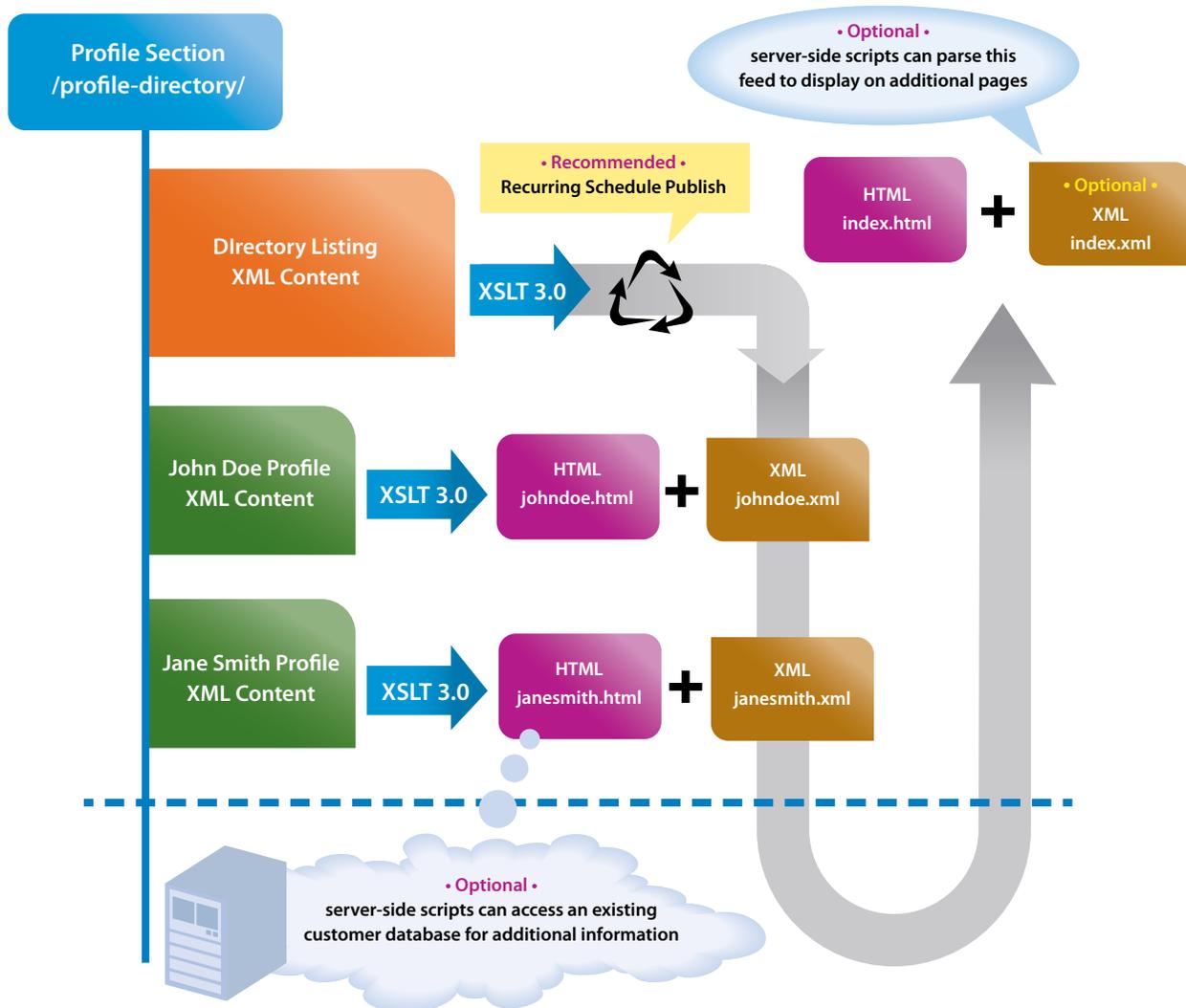


Effortless Directory

With no server-side scripts required, the WCJC team created a directory listing page that aggregates and links to each profile. The directory page was set up as the index page for the section, allowing the team to configure the page in endless ways for different listing layouts (e.g., sorting table, alphabetical list, grid layout). They chose an alphabetical listing using an ASP.NET script to sort the listing by last name.

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Every time the profile pages are published, XSL converts all the information into two different formats: an HTML page using WCJC's preferred layout, and an XML file for storing the basic information that is needed for the directory page. The directory page uses a special template that whenever published, XSL iterates through the directory, collecting the information from the published XML files. Collecting this information from each published page ensures that the content has passed through workflow and is approved for public viewing.



Finding Balance

The made over WCJC FacultyWeb directory site launched in January 2013. With the launch, WCJC gained a lot more than just a faculty directory—they are now able to satisfy accessibility requirements and they reduced man hours and staff cost on training and support. OU Campus resulted in much improved user satisfaction. Eric Li stated, "OU Campus improves website appeal for both students and faculty, simplifies their website navigation, and provides a pleasant and consistent experience for website visitors."

Since the faculty directory launch, the WCJC website has undergone a full-site makeover and the web team has migrated the entire site into OU Campus. The team is now equipped to manage the entire site with ease.

OU Campus granted their faculty the academic freedom to build their own web-based teaching tools.