



مركز تقنية المعلومات  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER

# Web Strategy

2015-17

King Fahd University of Petroleum and  
Minerals (KFUPM)

Information Technology Center (ITC)

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## **1. FOCUS OF THE PLAN AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 FOCUS**

The plan focuses on the improvement of web presence of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM). The University's web presence includes public websites, web services and internal e-mail communication. The main website ([www.kfupm.edu.sa](http://www.kfupm.edu.sa)) is first point of interaction for a student, teacher or general visitor and customer experience starts from here which is significant for building perception in their minds. Other web services provide main communication channel, connecting students, faculty and staff with University's academic and administrative applications.

#### **The plan:**

- segments online audience and profiles key customer groups
- outlines a long-term action plan to improve customer's online experience
- consistent online brand and visual identity standards
- highlights key internal and external issues on the basis of SWOT analysis
- evaluates opportunities, capabilities and gaps
- highlights monitoring and evaluations tools to measure progress

### **1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The main issues highlighted are:

- Our web presence continues to be one of most important means of communicating with our customers since it is first access point for a new visitor
- Market research indicates that personalising website content to target audience profiles and increasing web interactivity would increase the number of visitors.
- Commissioning re-branding project will be helpful to address the issues and improve overall web presence
- It is found through online trends that we need to increase awareness of what we are doing through appropriate online channels
- We need to broaden our reach and focus on building public perception of KFUPM as one of best Universities in the region
- We will rely on performance measures and customer feedback to monitor the success of our web presence and to make adjustments where necessary.

## **2. MARKET OVERVIEW AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 MARKET OVERVIEW**

KFUPM has strong brand whereas University's online presence is required to be improved because the market trends and priorities now have changed. KFUPM should adapt itself according to this change to compete with web presence of other Universities in KSA.

The major Universities in Saudi Arabia have invested resources in building their websites using latest web tools and platforms. Most of them are following customer centric approach in developing web presence to meet the expectation.

Our major competitors, KSU and KAUST have recently improved their online identity and website designs. They are focusing on content-rich websites and using latest web tools and technologies. They have done a lot of research and invested resources for improved and consistent websites.

### **2.2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

- KFUPM offers a static web presence to a limited number of online visitors that lacks basic information for a new student or faculty and does not meet with their expectations
- KFUPM main website is not responsive, has inflexible design and limitation for improvement which is required to be replaced with latest web tools, platforms and standards
- Web Content is not updated regularly which is a risk for the reputation of the University. It is required to be quality reviewed the existing content and development of new content both in English and Arabic.
- Limited resources, smaller team and responsibility are given on ad hoc basis to most of webmasters who are non-technical staff
- There is a skill gap of webmasters and absence of proper information flow that further creates website management issues such as obsolete website structure, navigation, outdated content and broken links
- Most of Colleges, Deanships and Administrative departmental websites have inconsistent design and not following identity standards
- Ownership of micro-website is not in place that further escalate issues of website management and governance

#### **Online trends on KFUPM main website:**

Below are insights collated through internally available resource of Google Analytics:

- Monthly average unique visitors on KFUPM website is 71,000 approximately.
- KFUPM website has over 55% bounce rate as an average which is quite alarming and higher than industry threshold.

- Customer retention: 3-4 visits per visitor as an average. This is a loyalty metric. It measures returning visitors
- Customer Journeys: Visitors view three web pages as an average per visit which shows limited navigation to deeper level of the website. This generally shows that how compelling online offer is and how website is easy to navigate.
- Time spent: Average time spent on KFUPM website is 03:30 (mm:ss) that shows people spend less time on website or they find it difficult to locate desired information.

### 3. INTERNAL ANALYSIS

KFUPM's online presence has some strengths and weaknesses with respect to interaction, personalization and dialogue. The University has state-of-the-art academic and business enterprise applications for students, staff and management whereas it has weak online presence especially for external audience. Some strengths and weaknesses of KFUPM's online presence are listed below:

#### 3.1 STRENGTHS

1. KFUPM has a strong brand in higher education all over the country and Middle East region.
2. Students and Teachers interact with University academic applications for performing their regular curriculum related tasks such as registrations, course enrollment, lecture schedule, grading, result verification etc.
3. University offers e-Learning experience in addition to all courses taught at KFUPM. E-Learning platform, Blackboard, provides a collaborative learning environment for teachers and students using latest interactive learning technology.
4. KFUPM student, staff and faculty use eDesk service for lodging their personal requests related to IT services. This service is a complete solution for online customer service management.
5. KFUPM forum provides self-expression opportunity to students for raising their voice. They interact with each other and exchange their views at e-forum.

#### 3.2 WEAKNESSES

KFUPM has more focus on internal customer services and provides solutions to existing students and staff for better academic and working environment. Whereas, it lacks in exploiting new marketing opportunities of its products and services to wider potential target markets specially using emerging web tool, technologies and platforms. This gap leads to further analyze the weaknesses in different areas explained in detail below:

1. Lack of Content: KFUPM has no systematic approach of online content generation. There should be an active content development strategy and a dedicated resource for website and social media content generation.
2. Information not engagement: Online presence of KFUPM is more like information provision not online engagement. Web analytics findings reveal high-bounce rate and less returning visitors. Moreover, there's no e-mail marketing, instant customer support for turning an online visitor to a potential user.

3. Inconsistent Design: One of major weaknesses of KFUPM web presence is inconsistent design of departmental websites. The identity standards are not followed to have brand consistency.
4. Social media networks: KFUPM social networks including Facebook and YouTube are not active. These networks have stagnated content without any moderation which result slow growth. Overall, it's one way of information dissemination rather active customer engagement.
5. Communication mix: There is absence of synergy in communication mix. The information flow and its dissemination to internal and external channels are not streamlined. The reason of this problem is non-existence of central marketing and communication team.

## **5. EXTERNAL ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 OPPORTUNITIES**

- Exploiting new web technologies to improve online customer experience
- Our web presence allows us to reach a large number of students and provides access of information to faculty and students located in remote regions of Saudi Arabia and other countries.
- Using customer-centric approach, we can personalize existing and new offers to our customers, allowing us to provide more targeted information and services. This would help in improving customer care and retaining customer loyalty.

### **5.2 THREATS**

#### **Low level**

- Competitors can copy features and ideas and develop a similar websites with the same or advanced interactivity, targeting a similar customer base. However, this scenario is unlikely to impact our work to a great extent.

#### **Medium Level**

- Our website competes with our other information delivery channels, such as our information center and face to face competition. Customer preference for person-to-person communication and wariness of technology can affect the popularity of our website. We can address this threat by adding greater customer value to our online offer and by personalizing online services
- Changing in customer needs as web is transforming rapidly.

## 6. CUSTOMERS

- Our target audience consists of those people who have access and the inclination to use online services. Therefore, our main online target audience falls between the age range of **16-30 years of age**, with medium to high levels of disposable income and located mainly in urban areas of KSA.
- Generally, our target audience has higher levels of education and specifically, a moderate to good level of English language comprehension.
- The nature of the internet medium means that it is more attractive to youth. However, working professionals also prefer to access information online, because it is convenient and saves time.

Personas of principal website users will be used for defining customer journeys and clarity of their requirements and expectations.

1. **Current/Prospective Students**
2. **International Students**
3. **Current/Prospective Faculty**
4. **Researchers**
5. **External users (parents, employers, media, etc.)**

It will also be used to decide website features and conceptual designs of key web pages.

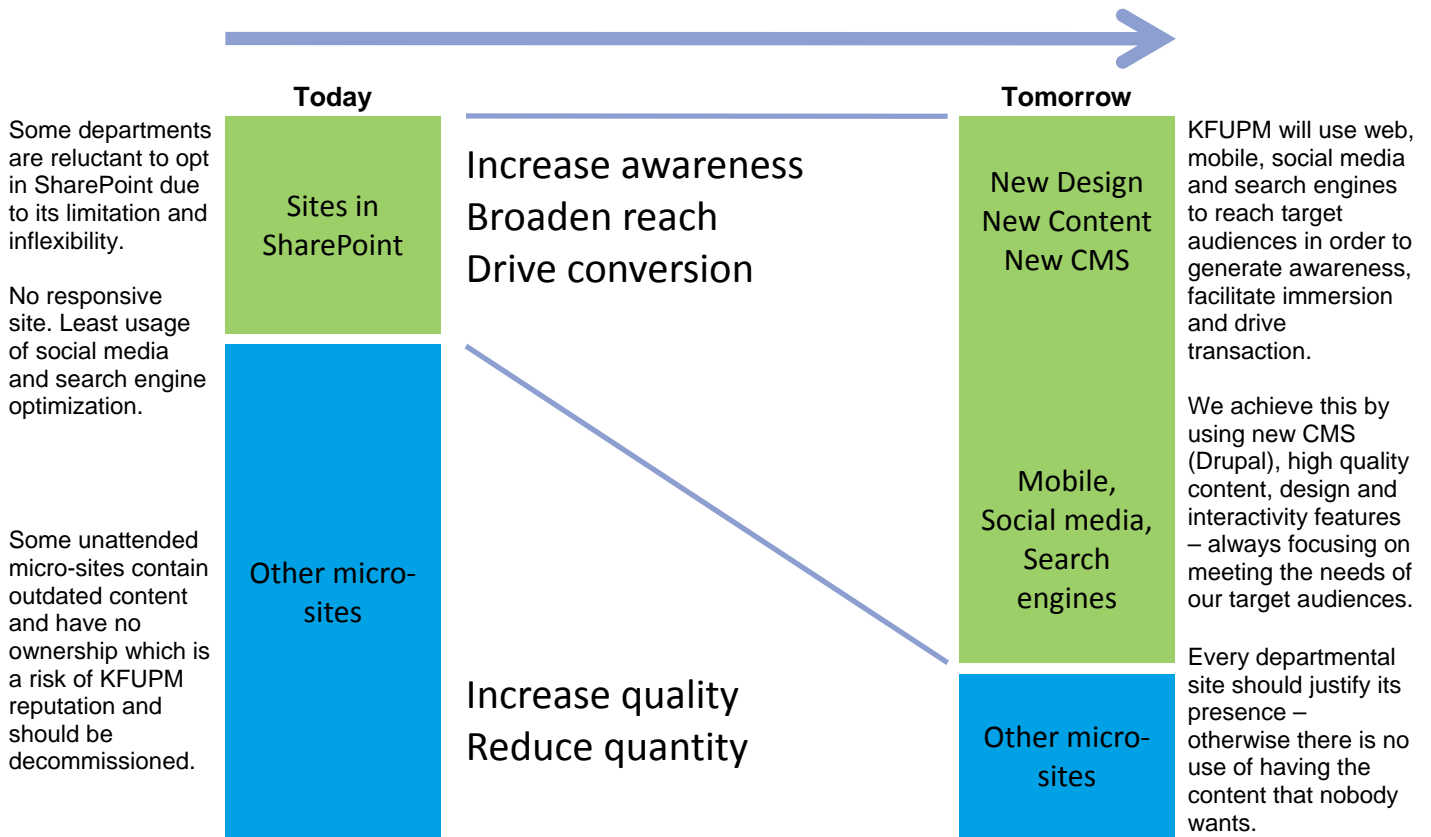
## 7. VISION

To revitalize KFUPM web presence by revamping University websites for enhanced online user's experience, adopting latest web standards. KFUPM's web-presence needs to be more **informative, interactive** and **engaging** to improve University's perception and appreciation publically in three strategic areas.

Our web presence must continually evolve and stand up to benchmarking, both against competitor institutions, and against best practice elsewhere in the online environment.

This Web Strategy supports the University strategy 2020, with all developments aligned with the University's key objectives and priorities. Our web presence must also support and complement the ITC Strategy 2015-2017. The Web Strategy is to be used as a working document, providing clear parameters for decision-making and prioritization.

## The future



# The change


	Now	Future
<b>Centricity</b>	Organizational	Target audience
<b>Marketing approach</b>	Segregated channels	Integrated marketing
<b>Communication approach</b>	One-way broadcast	Two-way engagement
<b>Working practice</b>	Silos	Co-ordinated
<b>Decision support</b>	Opinion-based	Evidence-based

## 8. STRATEGIC GOALS


- To provide satisfied online experience to our audience with easily accessible and up-to-date information through website, mobile and social media.
- To bring KFUPM's web presence to the standards of top of the line International Universities websites.
- To have synergy among online information dissemination channels.
- To ensure brand compliance and identity standards are in practice on all online channels.
- To increase retention by establishing meaningful and sustainable online engagement.
- To roll-out new platform (Drupal Content Management System) Phase-1 by 2015.



 Updated Information

 Student's Experience


 Courses

 Student Life

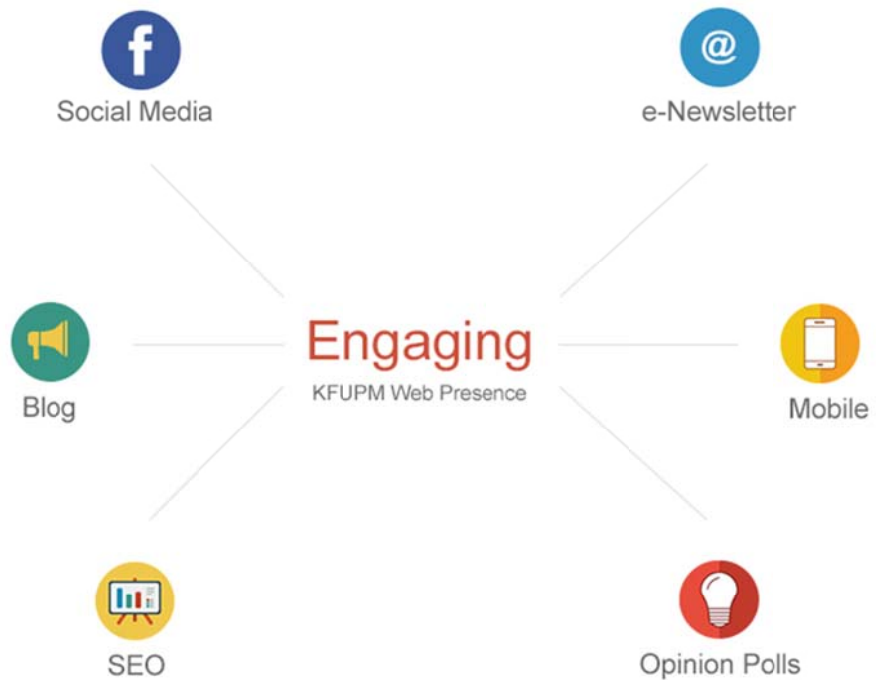
 Research

 Campus Tour

 Achievements

 About KFUPM

 Admission Process



 Responsive Site

 Video Lectures/Seminars

 Photo Gallery

 Interviews

 Campus Tour

## 9. KEY PRIORITIES:

The following priorities until 2016 will aid us in achieving our strategic goals:

### A. New web Content Management System (CMS)

KFUPM needs to have a powerful, dynamic and flexible web Content Management System (CMS) that would cater the need of expandability and stability in future and able to incorporate the latest web standards. A research of CMS used by major International universities lead us to choose Drupal 8 due to its many advantages over current system.

The roll-out of new platform will be done in **three** main Phases. The first phase will build high priority websites more focusing on establishing the frameworks and improving core information required to new visitors. It will include 6 Colleges, 3 Deanships and prep-year website.

The timeline of roll-out of all three phases is mentioned in 'Road Map' section in this document. The list of websites selected for Phase-1 roll-out:

1. Main Website
2. College of Sciences
3. College of Engineering Sciences
4. College of Applied & Supporting Studies
5. College of Computer Sciences and Engineering
6. College of Industrial Management (CIM)
7. College of Environmental Design
8. Preparatory-Year Program
9. Deanship of Admission and Registrations
10. Deanship of Graduate Studies
11. Deanship of Students Affairs

**9.1 Design:** A new interactive and responsive design of KFUPM websites will be created for better online user experience. A number of web page templates will be available in new CMS for providing flexibility to webmasters for choosing an appropriate template for new content publishing of their departments. These templates will base on improved customer journeys research for providing ease of site navigation and content composition by cross-linking relevant areas.

**9.2 Content:** New content will be developed for the new sections and existing content will be quality reviewed by professional editors before placing on new websites. Currently, some websites contain outdated, irrelevant and poorly written content that will be either decommissioned or revamped. Because, there is no reason of having the content that nobody wants. A bilingual website structure is required in English and Arabic. There is no as such defined ratio of English and Arabic content on KFUPM websites but it is aimed to raise this ratio from 10% to 25% of Arabic content.

**9.3 Identity standards:** The new web presence will be designed according to KFUPM online identity standards. The design of departmental websites will be derived from main theme but each website will have its own unique identity for representation of a College or Deanship. All visual elements including logo usage, font, color pallets, headings and URL will be followed for new web presence.

## **B. Internal e-mail communication and service delivery:**

Internal e-mail communication with all staff, faculty and students needs to be standardized. Currently, it comprises of different type of messages sent by number of different departments and administrative bodies without monitoring and quality control. The message should be sent to specific mailing lists only because overuse of message broadcasting results in excessive emails exchange to over 10,000 e-mail accounts that consumes unnecessary network resources for example cluttered mail boxes with heavy attachments.

The tone of the message and design require improvements and must follow KFUPM identity standards.

Rate of email messages exchange:

- 25000 emails delay
- 80 emails received monthly per student

The plan:

- To identify lists of senders/recipients based on types of most frequent emails
- To provide specific templates that cater for proper Identity and representation
- To allow recipients the flexibility to unsubscribe if needed
- To increase the size of students' mail boxes and move them to Cloud platform

## **10. GOVERNANCE**

Unattended Web presence creates management issues when volume increases and relevant policies and standards are not in place. In current circumstances, it is observed that most of the departmental websites exist without ownership, especially in case of updating websites and doing regular audit and performance reviews. It is aimed to have control over web content publishing and usage of images on public facing websites. The system will be flexible enough to allow webmasters to place re-usable common objects on their web pages for quality control and standardization.

## **11. SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Web has transformed the way we live, work and play. A major driving force behind this online revolution has been an explosion of social media networks that enable a thriving global conversation to take place in the digital space.

In order to stay relevant to the changing habits and needs of our customers, KFUPM needs to be a part of this conversation.

KFUPM aims to build meaningful and sustainable online relationships with our customers. Social media offers a dynamic delivery channel as part of our communications mix to increase the numbers and quality of our engagement with our target audiences.

### **11.1 Purpose**

We will use social media to:

- Build stronger and wider relationships with our target audiences
- Enhance online presence to achieve active participation of target audiences
- Create online presence that goes beyond information, and gives our target audiences a responsive, useful and inspiring experience.
- Increase awareness, interest and appreciation of KFUPM by engaging target audiences.

### **11.2 Benefits**

- Use already developed community spaces that will not only save the staff time to develop such platforms but also the development cost
- Web traffic will be generated through this community to increase number of visitors on country website
- Audience will get opportunity of self-expression through participation.

A content posting strategy is required for making KFUPM social networks more active and ownership lies with Public Relations Department.

## **12. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO):**

The new content should be aligned with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices for securing high ranking in popular Search Engines. Keywords research will be conducted for core landing pages and that will be further used content development.

**13. PERFORMANCE MEASURE:** To measure the performance of any online product, website or application through credible web analytics platform. Performance measuring framework is required to be in place based on KPIs. Each college and deanship will have access to measure the performance of their website so an appropriate and timely action can be taken.

#### **14. APPROACH**

- To create more interactive, responsive and user-friendly KFUPM websites focusing on latest **open-source** web tools.
- To **commission** re-branding KFUPM websites project
- New **content** development/generation for three strategic areas of new web presence (informative, engaging and interactive)
- To execute online **brand guidelines** for new site development and migration of existing sites to new platform
- To measure the performance and usability of new websites using **web analytics** framework and KPIs.
- To insure presence and proper training of **webmasters** at collages/departments

## 15. ROAD MAP

	2015				2016				2017			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>CMS Roll-out Phase 1</b>		■	■	■								
<b>User experience</b>		■	■									
<b>Content Development</b>			■	■			■	■			■	■
<b>Search Engine Optimization</b>			■					■			■	
<b>CMS Roll-out Phase 2</b>						■	■					
<b>CMS Roll-out Phase 3</b>									■	■		
<b>Build presence across online channels (e.g. social media)</b>					■			■			■	

