Website Analysis July 2019

After looking at the external-facing website and analytics for the month of June, I've identified five areas in which the ██████████ website could be improved. Below, I've outlined those areas and my recommendations on how to improve them if you were to stay within the website editing platform that is currently being used.

STRUCTURE

Goal: Reduce number of pages to make the website more navigable.

People generally want processes to be easy so the fewer clicks it takes for them to get to the information they want, the better. Since the website doesn't have a search feature, content needs to be within reach and not buried under multiple pages. How can you do this? I've drafted a supplemental spreadsheet for comparison between the current structure and a proposed new structure. Your analytics show that close to 80 pages exist on the website. In these structures, I included what appeared to be the most current, relevant pages. I excluded pages that were marked archive or appeared to be blank or outdated. If all proposed changes were accepted, the website would go from 40+ active pages to approximately 20 pages. The second document is a simple mockup of the proposed new homepage which, as your most viewed page (2000+ views in June), would prioritize and highlight your most important information.

Current and Proposed Structure Spreadsheet: (Link)

Proposed Homepage Mockup: (Link)

Before any changes in structure are made, I would recommend going through the full listing of page analytics to confirm that all current, relevant information is included in the new structure.

Goal: Update menus to reflect all pages.

As people look for information, it should be readily available in your menus. Currently, 24 of your 40+ pages are represented in your menus. If you choose to use the proposed new structure, consider adding all pages to the menu and dropdowns. For example, "Sacraments," would dropdown to "Weddings."

CONTENT

Goal: Optimize website to improve search engine results.

With so many parishes of the same name, showing up high in search engine results will help bring traffic to the ████ site. While organizations can't control their standing in search results entirely, there are some steps that can be taken to improve your chances:

- Remove repeated information. Replicated information can complicate search results as the search engine may not know which page to send viewers to. By having one primary page for information, viewers are more likely to be directed to the correct destination. This also saves you time as you only need to update information in one location as opposed to many.
- Reach at least 250 words on each page. There's no consensus on just how many words should be on a page for Google to index it favorably but having at least 250-500 words is often seen as a good estimate.
- Change language to include more keywords/important words. For example: Instead of "About Us," use, "About ███████████." Instead of linking "Click Here," link "Register as a New Parishioner."
- Add metadata to each webpage so informative descriptions show when ████ is searched. Currently, the descriptions that show appear to be passages from each page. In some cases, those are not complete sentences or are just titles, instead of full descriptions.

TONE

Goal: Make website language more approachable.

People may react more favorably to a website that is speaking directly to them as it feels more personalized. How can you do this?
- Add more "you" focused language. The ████ site does a good job with this but there are more opportunities to have this "you" language throughout the site. For example, instead of "All individuals wishing to volunteer…," use "If you would like to volunteer…"
- Add more prominent calls to action. For example: "Get Involved" instead of "Organizations."

IMAGES

Goal: Prioritize the highest quality photos and update older photos.

Visuals can make the difference between someone reading a page or leaving the page immediately. Visuals should be high quality and represent the content of the page and the uniqueness of the church/program. How can you do this?

- Freshen homepage slideshow photos with high quality photos that uniquely represent the church. If a user is only on the page long enough to see one photo, it should be the best representation of the church. For example, one of the current photos shows the front of the church but the crop cuts off the majority of the photo. The viewer is left seeing only a door which may not distinctly represent the church as well as a photo that crops better to those dimensions.
- Consider hiring a professional photographer/parishioner to take new photos of the renovated church and campus improvements to replace older images.

ACCESSIBILITY

Goal: Improve accessibility on the site so that all users can consume the information.

For those with disabilities or those using translation services, a website can be more difficult to use if steps aren't taken to make the website more accessible. How can you do this?

- Avoid using screenshots of text in your news and events section and, instead, place the copy as actual text. Embedded images with text are often unreadable by screen readers and translation services as they appear as images instead of readable text.
- Add descriptive alt text to images. This is the text that shows on some sites when you hover over a photo or the text that shows if a photo does not load. This is usually added when an image is placed on the website and it provides descriptive text for those who may not be able to see the image.