DIGITAL & CONSUMER WEBSITE DESIGN RFP 2022 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. Can you clarify which sites are on Drupal 7 and will need to be upgraded? From the RFP, it looks like: Australia, India, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, France, China, Korea and Japan.

A. Just Portuguese, Italian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese. English, Spanish, French and German have already been migrated.

Q. Can you give us a sense of how you balance partner exposure?

A. We link off to our partners ensuring exposure across the entire state of California and linking off to both Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) partners as well as the travel industry (hotels, rental cars, retail, restaurants, attractions, etc.).

Q. What is the inbound marketing strategy that would feed into the Landing Page experience? Are you doing any retargeting?

A. Our media plans vary year to year. We drive traffic through various forms of digital media such as banner ads, social, SEM, content partnerships and retargeting.

Q. What is the current media plan for site engagement? Will this remain the same/similar post-relaunch?

A. Our media plans vary year to year. We drive traffic through various forms of digital media, such as banner ads, social, SEM, retargeting, etc.

Q. What is the login section used for? What expectations will there be for the section going forward?

A. The login allows for consumers to 'favorite' specific content on the site. We would like to see this develop into a first-party data collection tool.

Q. What is or is not working within your current technical infrastructure?

A. We don't have any major issues, although one area that would be helpful would be to have a preview of site changes before running a Jenkins build.

Q. What specific challenges are you facing when marketing and localizing content in foreign countries?

A. We would like to add personalization to foreign language sites.

Q. How would you grade your efforts to drive visitation from China? What challenges exist there that we can help with?

A. China was a priority market for Visit California prior to COVID-19. Due to travel restrictions, it is currently not a focus market but we expect it to return as one of our key areas of focus in the future.

Q. What specific challenges are you facing in your current landing page strategy? What's not working that needs to be fixed?

A. Improving ToS and pages per session, and bringing down the bounce rate.

Q. What specific challenges are you facing in your personalization strategy? What's not working and what needs to be fixed?

A. We are in the beginning stages of personalization, but in the future we would like to have personalized homepages based on location, and ideally, personalization based on persona research we have completed.

Q. Is there any first party data collection happening right now?

A. Yes, for those who sign up for the e-newsletter or to order a Visitor's Guide.

Q. What are you learning from the data about how/if users are using the DREAM scrolling feature on Mobile?

A. We are learning that we need to reassure the user they are on the Visit California website and are "in the right place", as well as optimize future landing pages better for mobile.

Q. On https://www.visitcalifornia.com/road-trips/, there is a section called "Trips For You" where the copy suggests personalization. Are there any personalization technologies powering that feature?

A. It is a very low level of personalization based on a specific set of outcomes from users selecting their interests.

Q. Are you looking for a redesign as part of this project to address your challenges?

A. Not necessarily, but we are open to recommendations and rationale based on industry best practices.

Q. Why are some of the websites still on Drupal 7 vs Drupal 9?

A. The initial migration began right before the pandemic began and we needed to halt the migration due to a number of unforeseen factors.

Q. What is driving a redevelopment of the existing Drupal 8 sites?

A. We are not currently redeveloping our existing D9 sites.

Q. Is the desired future state to update all of the global properties and the US site to have the same user experience and visual design? Or to make specific strategic improvements to the current US site experience and update the global properties to match?

A. Yes – the desired future state is to update all the global properties and the US site to have the same user experience and visual design.

Q. What does "meaningful engagement" mean to the Visit California team?

A. Any consumer that is taking an action on the site, including clicking off to one of the links on the site.

Q. Will content be syndicated out to sites beyond the Visit California ecosystem or is the CaaS model to manage content across the Visit California sites globally?

A. We would like to be able to do that at some point. That is a goal.

Q. What architectural decisions or implementations are you looking to change or keep in a future state?

    A. We would like to understand the recommendation of each proposing vendor based on strategic rationale and industry standards.

Q. Is there a minimum level of accessibility required for the sites?

    A. We want to ensure we meet industry standards, AA or AAA is the goal.

Q. What level of WCAG compliance is the site aiming for (e.g. A, AA, AAA)?

    A. See above response.

Q. What is the level of accessibility conformance that the site needs to meet? Which criteria are the most difficult for your content team to meet?

    A. See above response. We are not experiencing an issue from the content side. We want to ensure we comply technically.

Q. Have you tried any personalization strategies or technologies in the past? Did they work?

    A. We personalize based on geography on our Near Me feature and have found consumers spend more time on site when doing so.

Q. Are you evaluating any personalization technologies currently available on the market?

    A. We are open to recommendations.

Q. What channels are you currently using to drive traffic to the website?

    A. All of the owned channels - e-newsletter, social, podcast as well as paid media.

Q. Can you elaborate on the goal of putting the user on a path to booking their trip to California through partner handoffs? Can you give an example of a successful partner handoff?

A. We define a partner handoff as any consumer who comes to VisitCalifornia.com and clicks off to any of our partner links (hyperlinks or official resources).

Q. Are there existing brand standards that will need to be followed for design work?

A. Yes, we have brand guidelines which may be shared later in the process.

Q. Do you have brand guidelines and design system documentation for the visitcalifornia.com site to guide the transition of the 12 country sites?

A. See above response.

Q. Can we get an analytics report from last year?

A. No. That is proprietary information.

Q. Is there an existing social media listening tool you are looking to leverage in the process? Or do you want a recommendation?

A. There is another RFP running concurrently which specifically addresses social media moderation services. Please disregard the section entitled "Other Service Activities / Requirements".

Q. What do you want to accomplish through the use of social listening tools (e.g. improve SEO rankings, content ideation, connecting with community/potential tourists, etc.)?

A. See above response.

Q. Can you clarify what is meant by utilizing a "social listening tool" and responding to "customer questions/concerns with up to 250 pieces of content per month"? Is this a requirement for a chat tool?

A. See above response.

Q. With regard to a social listening tool to meet program objectives, is there a tool currently in place?

A. See above response.

Q. With regard to the moderated content, are the sources preapproved? If so, what is the approval process?

A. There is another RFP running concurrently which specifically addresses this. Please disregard the section entitled "Other Service Activities / Requirements".

Q. When responding to customer questions/concerns, do we have to use any specific email address?

A. See above response.

Q. How do you track conversion? What are the key metrics?

A. Partner Handoffs. We define a partner handoff as any consumer that comes to VisitCalifornia.com and clicks off to any of our partner links.

Q. What are you currently doing for A/B testing? Are you looking for a recommendation?

A. We currently do A/B testing as we roll out new functionality or need additional information and insight. It is done on an ad hoc basis.

Q. Are any personalization tools currently in use? If so, what are they?

A. Geolocation on our Near Me page (visitcalifornia.com/near-me).

Q. How do you manage publishing globally today? What are the workflows that need to be optimized?

A. We currently publish all content through our team, including translated content and uploading content for translation. We use AirTable currently for editorial review, however if there is an opportunity to incorporate a workflow into the CMS we'd be open to it, though it is not a requirement.

Q. How many user roles are currently managing content on the site? Do they require permission levels for publishing?

    A. There are currently 7 user roles, and they do require permission levels for publishing.

Q. Are you looking to add any new content authoring support, or just DotDash Meredith?

    A. At this moment, only DotDash Meredith.

Q. Do you have existing project management or communication tools that you will require for the project?

    A. No

Q. Who are the stakeholders of the project, what are their roles and level of involvement? Will any of these include external partners?

    A. VCA Team:
    Director of Content Marketing - in charge of overall strategy of the website;
    Content Manager - Technology and Data - manages the strategy, technical aspects (including website development agency) and editorial content of the site;
    Content Coordinator - Print and Digital Channels - manages website updates, editorial content review/publishing.

    External: The DotDash Meredith Team is our editorial content partner and consists of -
    VP, Editorial Director;
    Deputy Editor;
    Associate Editor;
    Photo Editor;
    and two editors.

Q. Can you please describe core team members on your side and their respective role in the strategic and day-to-day website management?

    A. See above response.

Q. Who will be the project stakeholders over the course of this project?

A. See above response.

Q. Will you have a single point of contact for routing information and approvals?

A. Yes, the Content Manager Technology and Data.

Q. What is your internal approval process?

A. It depends on the scale and scope of the project. Higher profile projects will need approval from VP of Marketing, but in general it will require the approval of the Content Manager -Technology and Data, and the Director of Content Marketing.

Q. How many people will be involved in creative review and approval?

A. Four.

Q. What are the minimum number of days required for approval turnarounds? (ex. 2 days)

A. Two days is minimum, but we would prefer five.

Q. What level of post-launch support are you looking for as part of this agreement?

A. Visit California has a current maintenance vendor and will go out for bid at the beginning of FY 23/24.

Q. What roles do you have on your team for ongoing development/ maintenance support?

A. Maintenance and development support is performed by an agency, not in-house.

Q. Can you provide some historical website performance data?
- average visits per month, page views per visit and time on site for the past several years?

A. 2.5M pageviews/month; 1.2 pages/session, 0:46 ToS.

Q. Are there specific website goals set up in GA that you optimize the user journey toward or are goals currently under review?

    A. No.

Q. What have been your biggest pain points with the current site?

    A. Search functionality is one of our biggest pain points.

Q. Are hosting/CDN costs to be included in the budget form?

    A. No.

Q. Are you open to alternate translation solutions if a vendor has extensive experience with it?

    A. At present, this is a hard requirement, but we are open to recommendations for FY 23/24.

Q. Are you open to non-US vendors completing this work? Do you have a preference for domestic vendors?

    A. Yes, we are open to non-US vendors.

Q. Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across North America?

    A. See above response.

Q. Are your international sites built as separate sites in a multi-site confirmation? Or, just translated versions of the same site?

    A. Translated versions of the same site.

Q. What is the average monthly page views that your site(s) get? Closest 100K is fine.

    A. 2.5 Million.

Q. How many unique monthly visitors does your site get? (to the nearest 100K is fine)

    A. 1.5 Million.

Q. Do you have defined audience types / "personas" already? If so, please describe them.

    A. Yes.
- a. Convince me:
    - i. Visit California IQ: none to low
    - ii. Stage: research
    - iii. Here to: explore, evaluate
    - iv. Feeling: cautious
- b. Looking at Options:
    - i. Visit California IQ: Low
    - ii. Stage: Research and Planning
    - iii. Here to: Compare, customize
    - iv. Feeling: Curious
- c. Core Experience/Event
    - i. Visit California IQ: Medium
    - ii. Stage: Planning & Booking
    - iii. Here to: Gather information
    - iv. Feeling: certain
- d. Same old:
    - i. Visit California IQ: medium to high
    - ii. Stage: booking, anticipation
    - iii. Here to: augment trip
    - iv. Feeling: capable
- e. Expert:
    - i. Visit California IQ: High
    - ii. Stage: Research, reporting
    - iii. Here to: build on opinions
    - iv. Feeling: Confident/expert

Q. Are there existing Audience personas or Jobs To Be Done that will inform this project?

    A. See above response.

Q. How, if at all, have you been personalizing your Drupal content to-date?

    A. We have not been personalizing content besides the Near Me functionality.

Q. What sorts of technologies are currently integrated with the site(s)?

A. YouTube, LibSyn, Google Analytics, LingoTek, CrowdRiff, ConfirmIt, Zeta, in-house fulfillment (EPIC [in-house]/PFC integration).

Q. How many 3rd party integrations exist for the current sites?
- Newsletters, fulfillment services, content APIs (consumed or implemented), CRM?

A. See above response.

Q. Are there any other integrations other than YouTube, LibSyn, Google Analytics, LingoTek, Crowdriff?

A. See above response.

Q. Do you use a CRM or any sort of solution to create customer profiles and track inquiries/information submitted?

A. Not currently.

Q. Where is the website currently hosted? Is there a finite list of content sources that can be shared with the bidders?

A. It is hosted on GCP. Currently there are two main sources of content: DotDash Meredith develops editorial content for us including all articles and blog posts on the site (including sourcing accompanying imagery), as well as our podcast. We also feature curated UGC galleries and Travel Story galleries, and both of those feature UGC pulled via our partner CrowdRiff.

Q. Where are the sites currently hosted?

A. See above response.

Q. Who currently manages the sites? (Internal or external team? If internal, IT or Marketing?)

A. Our web agency manages the technical side. Our web manager and Content Coordinator manage the editorial content (with the help of our editorial agency - DotDash Meredith).

Q. Are there any security compliance requirements like PCI, HIPAA, SOC II, etc?

A. We would like to have SOC compliant but can also use our GCP SOC.

Q. Do you have any SLAs around uptime/performance, or support?

A. No, and support is generally handed through our managed services agency – we will go to bid for this agency again in FY23/24.

Q. What is the most important function of the site?

A. Inspiring travel to California.

Q. What are the top two calls to action on the site?

A. Handoffs to our partners and E-News sign up and Visitor Guide orders.

Q. What is the main business goal?

A. VisitCalifornia.com promotes California globally as a preeminent tourist destination, showcases the state's abundance of travel offerings, and facilitates increased travel to California.

Q. If there is one thing we have to get right on this project what would it be?

A. Demonstrating technical expertise & leadership, and marketing/industry savviness.

Q. Are there tools or communication channels (such as Google Docs) that you are prohibited from using?

A. No.

Q. Will the design and interface be updated and completely redesigned, or is the intent to upgrade the underlying CMS platform and only make relatively small improvements to the user interface?

A. We would like to understand the recommendation of each proposing vendor based on strategic rationale and industry standards.

Q. Will current metrics — i.e. customer surveys, site questionnaires, analytics data, and other traffic reporting metrics — be shared as part of the Discovery process?

    A. No, this is propriety information, but it may be shared at a later stage.

Q. Similarly, will we be able to propose UX research initiatives that can fit within the project timeframe?

    A. Yes.

Q. Are there existing customer journeys that will inform this project?

    A. Yes.

Q. Are there sub-optimal experiences on the current site that should not be replicated, that you are currently aware of?

    A. We would like your assessment of sub-optimal experiences.

Q. Are there any systems that we will need to work with to authenticate for login functionality?
-    SSO, SAML, OpenID integrations?

    A. Auth0 is the authentication tool we use.

Q. If possible, can you provide a list of currently used modules on the site?

    A. LingoTek.

Q. Do you have any technical documentation you can share?

    A. We do not.

Q. How many users currently manage the site?

    A. Approximately 10.

Q. How many roles currently exist?

    A. There are 7 user roles in the CMS.

Q. How many forms are currently on the site?
- Does the form data get stored in Drupal?

A. We currently have forms for our E-news sign up and California Visitor Guide request (2 total), visitor guide requests get stored in Drupal.

Q. Is there a content editing workflow in place?

A. Yes, but the workflow is not integrated into the CMS. We are open to recommendations for a workflow to be incorporated into the CMS but it is not a requirement.

Q. Are there any encryption requirements? Other security considerations?

A. No, we don't have any specific encryption requirements.

Q. Does the site handle payment data (PCI) at all?

A. No.

Q. Do you work with an SEO firm?

A. No, but DotDash Meredith provides some insight.

Q. Are there any specific requirements for SEO tools or tracking expected?

A. No, however GA and Search Console expertise is expected.

Q. Migrations
- Is migration required for all sites (Drupal 9 and Drupal 7) or only Drupal 7?
- Are you open to considering a phased launch of all-new Drupal 9/10 sites?
- Are there any sites not in scope for migration?
- Approximately how many nodes and users need to be migrated?
- For users, are there public accounts with content (e.g. trip planners, "flags," personalized settings) that need to be migrated or are we only concerned with administrative users?
- Are there any custom modules providing content that will need to be migrated?

- Approximately how many files (images, PDFs, text documents) will need to be migrated?
- Are there any embedded scripts (Javascript) that need to be migrated?

A. Answers below:
  a. Only Drupal 7.
  b. Yes we will migrate according to business priorities in a phased approach.
  c. No sites are excluded for the migration.
  d. We will not migrate all content from existing international sites, instead we will translate a select amount of content from the existing domestic site and translate it for the migration.
  e. Only admin users.
  f. Only the LingoTek module needs to be migrated.
  g. Same answer as D.
  h. No embedded scripts that we are aware of.

Q. Are you using any of the following Drupal 7 modules?
- Field collections, Paragraphs, Panels

A. Unsure: on Drupal 7 as we are no longer editing content as sites are frozen.

Q. Are you using any of the following modules on your Drupal 9 sites?
- Paragraphs, Layout builder, Microcontent, Panels

A. Microcontent and paragraphs.

Q. Translation
- Is Lingotek a hard requirement or are you open to alternative translation solutions?
- How is translated content currently being served?
  - Is it based on domain, or can content be viewed in any language on any page/domain?
- If paragraphs are in use, how are translations being managed?
  - Is this module being used?
    https://www.drupal.org/project/paragraphs_asymmetric_translation_widgets

A. At present, this is a hard requirement, but we are open to recommendations for FY 23/24.

We use the LingoTek module to translate content and it is uploaded to the site, it is based on domain.

Paragraphs are in use and we currently have a work-around solution with our current agency for translation.

Q. Gatsby integration:
- Which gatsby related drupal modules are used and what versions?
- What version of gatsby-source-drupal is being used?

A. Unsure of which version of Gatsby we are using.

Q. Search
- What framework is being used for site search?
- Are you open to revamping the current search?

A. Elastic search, and yes, we are open to revamping.

Q. Minisites
- How is the content for the minisites being managed?
  - Ex: https://www.visitcalifornia.com/dreaming/
- Are there other examples?
- Is there an expectation for these to be translated?

A. This page is managed with our current vendor. There are no other similar examples, all other pages are editable in the CMS. There is no expectation for this to be translated.

Q. What are your digital business objectives (e.g. monthly traffic, email signups, account creation, etc)?

A. We would like to see growth in each of the areas. Monthly traffic is around 2.5M, E-news: 6k sign-ups, and we have no metrics around account creation.

Q. What is an example of an ideal web site, one you would look to as a north star?

A. We would like your recommendation.

Q. Are you looking to fully redesign the experience or will you leverage existing design templates and/or integrate with a template partner? Is there an existing design system or design standards the new experience will be expected to utilize or adhere to?

A. We would like to understand the recommendation of each proposing vendor based on strategic rationale and industry standards.

Q. Do you have content partnerships/syndication in place? If so, is personalization enabled? Will all partnership syndication content need to be migrated?

A. We do not currently syndicate and the only personalization for the site is geographically based (In-state vs. out-of-state).

Q. What is the scale of your current content and assets for migration?

A. We will not migrate all content from existing international sites, instead we will translate a select amount of content from the existing domestic site and translate it for the migration

Q. What is your timeline for migration and launch of redesign? Have you prioritized certain countries' websites?

A. Japan and Korea will be the next priorities and should be migrated by end of June 2023, and we will need to develop a strategy for the Chinese language site.

Q. What usability research currently exists about the live site and its functionality?

A. We currently work with our research partner SMARI to gather consumer usability insights via the survey on our website.

Q. What, if any, elements of the current look and feel are considered integral to the Visit California experience?

A. We feel the site should align to the California brand.

Q. Will the new design be expected to accommodate all existing site content?

A. Yes.

Q. Is the Visit California team open to content recommendations (keep/change/kill) in support of the digital strategy?

A. Yes. However, there would need to be a strategic rationale to accompany the recommendations.

Q. What is the current publishing volume on the site experience across blog posts, podcast, etc? Do we expect that to remain consistent in the redesign?

A. We publish between 5-10 articles each week, which should remain consistent.

Q. Does the Visit California team have working audience segmentation or prioritized personas it can share?

A. Yes, please request access to see the marketing work plan: https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications/work-plan-chapters

Q. Who are your core audiences?

A. See above response.

Q. What is your marketing operations structure to support content?

A. Currently we work with DotDash Meredith which develops all editorial content for Visit California, including our California Now Podcast and all website content.

Q. What platforms and tools are integrated into the experience today (e.g. DAM, CRM, Analytics, CDP, A/B Testing, etc)? Are you looking for a recommendation and implementation of any of these as a part of this project?

A. Google Analytics, Google Search Console, HotJar. We are open to a recommendation for these, but it is not explicitly requested.

Q. Is the migration scope limited to the six sites that are currently on Drupal 7 to Drupal 9? What Drupal modules are you using?

A. Yes, and LingoTek is the Drupal module we are using.

Q. Is there a geographic breakdown of current traffic (by state or by country) that can be shared? Is there journey analysis that can be shared?

A. 77% US, 11% Canada, 3% China, UK, Germany, Japan 1%. All other countries are less than 1%.

US States: CA 45%, TX 6%, WA 5%, FL & NY 4%, all other states less than 3%. We do not have a journey analysis to share.

Q. The RFP denotes a written narrative. Would MS PowerPoint format be acceptable or will only MS Word be accepted?

A. PowerPoint is acceptable.

Q. May we have a copy of the previous winning bid?

A. No. Bids submitted in our RFP process are confidential.

Q. Is Instagram your only source of UGC?

A. Our source of UGC is through the Crowdriff platform and it is deployed on the website and through social media channels.

Q. How many specific domains are to be supported?

A. 13 domains.

Q. What are the specific types of content for the proposed Locals Content Hub?

A. Images, editorial, video and audio.

Q. What are the specific types of content for the proposed Native Californian Content Hub?

A. Images, editorial, video and audio.

Q. What are the current site metrics, including but not limited to:
- The amount of bandwidth necessary to handle current
- Number of monthly visitors

A. GCP is able to handle the bandwidth to handle current number of monthly visitors.

Q. Does the current website use a redundant architecture?

A. We use a headless architecture.

Q. Is there a failover mechanism currently in use for the site?

A. Yes.

Q. How many resources from the Visit California team are available throughout the initial process?

A. There are four Visit California staff who work on the website.

Q. How many resources from the Visit California team will be available throughout the contract year?

A. See above response. One is dedicated to the site.

Q. What type of support will be provided by the Visit California team?

A. Visit California staff manage and oversee all website related projects with one FTE dedicated to the website.

Q. Who are the users that need to be trained? Will those users be formally approved by Visit California?

A. We are not currently planning to make a shift away from our CMS, however we are open to recommendations and strategic vision from bidders if there is a strong rationale to change.

Q. Is the site to be used for ecommerce?

A. No.

Q. Is the site to be used as a social media platform?

A. Not at this time but we would be open to understanding what you mean by this question.

Q. Given Visit California's vision is to have a site that leverages leading technology, is it mandatory the site use Drupal technology?

    A. Yes, but we would want to understand the rationale of why you would recommend changing.

Q. Do you have any specific site goals (might be different for each audience)?

    A. No.

Q. Do you know what your highest performing content is currently on the site?

    A. Currently "experience" page types (articles) are highest performing. Specifically content on celebrities, national parks, Highway 1 and Covid travel information has been performing best.

Q. Do you have any noted shifts to your content strategy moving forward that we should know about? I.e. you're doing a big push for content for kids or content for families with HHI $60K or below, etc?

    A. Our content strategy continually shifts up and down based on larger organizational priorities. Organizational priorities are conveyed in the 22/23 Marketing Work Plan: https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications/work-plan-chapters

Q. What sorts of metrics do you track on analytics? And what metrics are important for you to track in the future?

    A. Beside the typical metrics in GA we track partner handoffs and views of CrowdRiff stories.

Q. Have you already migrated to Google Analytics 4?

    A. Not yet, but this is in progress.

Q. Do you have any user feedback you can share about the current site experience?

    A. That is proprietary information, but may be shared at a later stage in the process.

Q. Are there any specific pain points that have been brought to your attention from your users or web admin that we should take into account?

A. Search.

Q. Could we request an electronic submission in light of the lifting of all delivery guarantees from all the courier companies?

A. An electronic copy of proposals is required in addition to hard copies, as outlined in the RFP document. To date, we have not experienced any issues with courier company delivery delays within the U.S. That said, for submissions coming from outside of the U.S., as long as your electronic submission is received and physical submission postmarked by the proposal submission deadline, your submission will be considered complete and timely.