

Enhancing Digital Presence: Chinese American Museum of Chicago Website Revitalizing

Client: Chinese American Museum of Chicago (CAMOC)

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Project Planning Report

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Background

Client Organization

The primary mission of the Chinese American Museum of Chicago (CAMOC) is to advance the appreciation of Chinese American culture through exhibitions, education, and research. CAMOC aims to serve as a bridge that connects the past and present, providing a platform for understanding the Chinese American narrative in the broader context of American history.

CAMOC is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Chinese American history and culture, with a particular emphasis on the Midwest region. Over the years, CAMOC has curated a diverse range of exhibitions, organized community events, and facilitated educational programs, all aimed at fostering engagement and dialogue.

Projects created in collaboration with CAMOC encompass opportunities that blend cultural preservation, community engagement, historical research, and innovative presentation. Projects often intertwine historical insights with contemporary relevance, offering a unique platform to apply skills and contribute to a meaningful cause.

Project Context

The museum aims to strengthen users' appreciation for Chinese American culture through exhibitions, community events, and educational experiences. To promote appreciation for Chinese American culture, the client intends to expand their user reach by targeting individuals from both inside and outside the local Chicago area. To address this, our main focus for the project is the navigability of the museum's website. This is an issue for both website visitors as well as for the museum staff. For website visitors, there is an issue with finding and accessing specific content, while for the museum staff, this issue makes updating the website more challenging. Key stakeholders include users around the globe, our direct client, Leo Wang, and the museum's executive team on this project.

Problem Statement

The current Chinese American Museum of Chicago's website experience is unorganized for users. This is a problem because museum organizers cannot easily maintain the website and update information. This is also a problem for potential users, as this hinders museum-goers/newcomers from locating the information they need in order to learn about, visit, and interact with all the museum has to offer.

Project Objectives

Main Objectives

Our team is tasked with renovating the museum's website to ensure that its diverse user base can more intuitively explore and engage with Chinese American culture and history in a more meaningful way. The new website structure should also provide an easy way for museum staff to manage content changes over time.

1. **Improve information hierarchy** – The redesign should ensure an intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to all, modern aesthetic design that makes navigation straightforward and helps users quickly locate desired sections.
2. **Improve the ease of adding and removing content** – Provide a comprehensive guidebook or cheat sheet for the team to manage content updates and better evolve the website from a back-end perspective, with the intention of improving maintenance capability.
3. **Ensure website usability for diverse user groups** – Create features that foster community interaction, engage users outside of the Chicago Chinatown community, and design content that ultimately appeals to a broader audience.

Anticipated Impacts & Benefits

This project will benefit the Chinese American Museum of Chicago by making it a more effective tool for promoting the museum's missions. As the website serves as a primary point of contact for visitors, educators, and researchers, an improved user experience will ultimately allow the museum to better target broader audiences and attain global outreach. This project journey will result in a final deliverable that is optimized for longevity, providing the client with a solution that can be evolved beyond the scope of this project.

For the local Chinese American community in Chicago, this project will restructure the design of the museum website and reduce the steps to access information about local events as well as museum visitation. This project will also incorporate design needs that eliminate pain points for scholars and researchers accessing academic information and archives. In addition, it will benefit visitors outside the Chicago area by implementing a reorganized design that increases awareness of the museum along with its goals and values. Finally, the museum team will benefit the most from this project, as the website redesign will allow the museum to more clearly share digital content, important archival information about the museum, and other updates related to the museum's missions in a structure that is adaptable as content changes.

Project Examples Folder

Overview of project resources and needs

Relevant user groups/stakeholders (add sections for each group/stakeholder)

- Who are they?
- Why and how are they relevant to the project? What value will they provide to your work?
- How will they factor into your project plan? What methods of research or testing will they be used for? (interview, survey, focus group, etc.)
- When will you talk to them? In the Fall to refine the project context, objectives and/or scope or perhaps the Winter term in the research phase, the design phase and/or the evaluation phase?
- How will you compensate participants if at all? Is the client providing funds? If so, how and when?
- How will your team and client work together for getting access to stakeholders? Broadly, who's responsible for doing what?
- What access to stakeholders does your client already have? What will they be providing to you?
- What, how and when is your recruitment process? What materials do you need to prepare for recruitment? If your client is assisting with recruitment, explain your shared timeline here.
- If your clients are not able to provide you with what was originally discussed, what is your contingency plan (backup plan)?

Group / Stakeholder Name	Description	Why Stakeholder is Relevant
Primary: Short Term Workers	Zapier product managers, designers, researchers, individual contributors, and consumers of information in a shorter turnaround time (around 2 weeks).	The shorter term workers are our main user base and our focus. Designing for them first will benefit the long-term planners down the line since they provide the short term, immediate insights. They are relevant because we need to design to what level of detail and type of accessibility they can have due to their high demand and supply of information in a short amount of time.
Secondary: Long Term Planners	Upper level Zapier managers and directors who depend on short term insights to make long term decisions.	This group is not the core focus of the project due to lack of access. However, if we do gain access they are relevant because they use the insights for more long-term planning, which would be an important design aspect in how we relay higher level information.
Other: Engineers	Engineers are who will make the repository based on our design prototype.	It is crucial for us to understand their capabilities and limitations in order to create a design that is within their scope.
Other: Roy	Ultimately, this project will be something Roy proposes to the company and pushes forward to implementation.	Roy is important because he will be the champion of our design within Zapier internally. During the project we need to be able to communicate to him effectively in what we need from him (NDA, interviewee list, research repositories, research examples). After the project we need to be able to effectively hand off the future of the project to Roy so he can carry it forward.

Project Resources and Needs

Research Goals?

User Groups/Stakeholders

Group/ Stakeholder Name	Description	Why Stakeholder is Relevant
Primary: Museum visitors	Visitors can interact with the website to find information about hours of operation, location, and admission details. Visitors can also contact the museum in order to ask questions, provide feedback, or make inquiries about events and programs.	Museum visitors are the primary user group that the Chinese American Museum of Chicago serves. They will be our main focus when redesigning the website's information hierarchy to provide the museum staff with insights about what exhibitions, community events, and educational experiences users interact with. They are relevant to the project because prioritizing museum visitors will help us determine the necessary information required to organize the website structure while thinking about how to expand the museum's presence to other interested visitors outside of Chicago.
Primary:		

I found this from the examples and thought this was a good way to explain each stakeholder.

- Museum visitors
 - **Description:** Museum visitors are the main user group/stakeholder for the Chinese American Museum of Chicago's website. Visitors can interact with the website to find information about hours of operation, location, and admission details. Visitors can also contact the museum in order to ask questions, provide feedback, or make inquiries about events and programs.
 - **Why Stakeholder is Relevant:** Museum visitors are the primary user group that the Chinese American Museum of Chicago serves. They will be our main focus when redesigning the website's information hierarchy because it will provide the museum staff with insights about what exhibitions, community events, and educational experiences users interact with. They are relevant to the project because prioritizing museum visitors will help us determine the necessary information required for the museum to organize

the website structure while thinking about how to expand their presence to other interested visitors outside of Chicago.

- **Recruitment:** We plan to receive website analytics data about user interactions as well as communicate with Leo to recruit museum visitors and learn more about their experiences.
 - **maybe something we can talk about with Leo this Friday: recruiting participants for initial interviews/scoping about the problem further?*
- **Timeline:** Receiving NDA approval by the end of this month to get access to user analytics/other information provided by the museum and begin the interviewing process. (*just filler, not sure what to put here)
- Research/academic scholars
 - **Description:** Researchers rely on the website to access relevant information on Chinese-American culture. They can use the website to access specific information on places, people, time periods, and use the website to access specific resource tools provided through the museum.
 - **Why Stakeholder is Relevant:** Researchers and scholars are a core user group for the museum website as they understand common information structures of other museums and what has worked and what hasn't in terms of gathering and sorting information. They have experience with best practices when it comes to organizing a vast and varying amount of information.
 - **Recruitment:** We plan to work with researchers within the Museum team to understand how information should be structured to allow for optimum navigation that offers a clear understanding of different cultural artifacts. Through focus groups we hope to start an open conversation on best practices to help strengthen the organization of the website content.
 - **Timeline:** In the next month we are working with Leo Wang to gather 3-5 researchers that would be willing to meet as a group to gather user data and recommendations. In January we will host the focus group on zoom to gather data for the website redesign.
- Chicago Chinese American community members
 - **Chicago Chinese American community are a local stakeholder.**
 - The website aims to **serve and include the Chinese American community in Chicago by sharing the history and culture of the community as well as partnering with community organizations.**
 - Users from this stakeholder group span across **various ages, genders, and occupations, but most share their Chicago Chinese American cultural identity. Within the Chicago Chinese American community, there may be a particular interest from members that enjoy community history and involvement.**

- As the museum is based in Chicago Chinatown, **the Chinese American community in Chicago have the most direct access to the museum. As such, the website is an important tool to update the community about a local cultural landmark.**
- Description: The Chicago Chinese American community are an important stakeholder for the museum website. The local community views the website as a tool for sharing their cultural history through the museum, and promoting the community.
- recruitment
- timeline (?)
- Museum staff
 - **Description:** The museum staff are also a major stakeholder for the finished website design, as the website is the CAMOC's main form of connection with other stakeholders. They can utilize this website to communicate upcoming events, museum information, and Chinese history-related resources.
 - **Why Stakeholder is Relevant:** The museum staff bring a unique aspect of working in collaboration with our team by providing feedback and guidelines to produce an organized website. They will share accumulated pain points with the current website's organization of current information to prioritize in the website redesign. By understanding current needs, we can implement sustainable and realistic designs that suit both staff and visitors when considering future website content.
 - **Recruitment:** We have already started to collaborate with the museum staff through video meetings and email conversations. We plan to include more staff members in our research and design process to ensure optimal solutions. The team also plans to include a **software engineer (is this still happening?)** in our video conversations in order to gauge the practicality of our designs.
 - **Timeline:** (?)

Project Resources

Relevant resources (data, systems, tools, specific sections for each need based on your project)

1. Current Website Platform:
2. Figma - Prototyping:
3. User Analytics (web traffic, interactions with website):
4. Information Archives and Back-End Data:
 - Current website platform
 - The website is hosted on its own domain and appears to be constructed through code. Our team will work intimately with the website's current state, analyzing each page and the various types of content it features.

The website is publicly accessible but client involvement will be required in order to gain a better understanding of what improvements they are seeking as well as any updated content that will need to be reflected in the final version.

- *use of low/no-code platforms? (wordpress/webflow?)*

- Figma - prototyping
 - Figma is a cloud-based design and prototyping tool that enables teams to collaborate on creating digital products, such as websites, mobile apps, and user interfaces. It offers a versatile platform for designers, developers, and other stakeholders to work together on the entire design process, from initial concepts and wireframes to high-fidelity prototypes. Figma will be essential in our actual implementation process; the platform will allow us to visualize our creative visions and provide a space for us to collaborate with our partner on a real-time canvas.
- User analytics - Web traffic, interactions with website
 - User analytics such as Google Analytics or other user interactions with the museum's current website will be essential for us to understand how the website performs with its current user base (i.e. click rates, most visited pages, etc.). After NDA approval, our team hopes to use this data to scope out potential user research methods that evaluate the current website and the final prototype for the museum. Methods such as usability testing on UserTesting.com or virtual user testing with participants through Zoom/video conferencing platforms can optimize our access to user analytics data that would help inform design decisions alongside the client's goals later in the prototyping and design phases of this project.
 - Timeline: Team has already sent NDA forms to client for approval.
 - **check on NDA approval with Leo*
- Information archives and backend data
 - In order to redesign the information architecture while creating longevity for website use and maintenance, we need a strong understanding of how information is organized on the client's end in order to create an efficient updating system. By accessing the way the museum organizes artifacts and vital information, we can understand how they can better transfer the content onto a digital space.
 - Timeline: Our team has already sent NDA forms for client approval and we plan to gather archival history and backend data in November. This month we will discuss available information that the museum can provide. Once we have access to the needed data in November we can organize and highlight core functionalities needed and implement them into our website prototypes for review.

Skills

Relevant skills (add specific sections for each skill you need to acquire)

1. Design Skills
2. UX Research
3. Communication and Language Skills
4. Content Organization and Delivery
- Design skills (graphic design, color theory, data-driven design)
 - **Graphic design:** Graphic design will be needed in the redesign of the website. Incorporating graphics and other aesthetic elements will enhance the visual. For the project, graphic design will be a skill utilized by team members comfortable learning and showcasing their designs. It will be learned and developed through team and client discussions, as well as through external resources. As we develop our project plan, identifying team skills and learning interests in graphic design will be important in how we assign tasks and execute our project plan in the next semester.
 - **Color theory:** Color theory is a specific skill we intend to utilize in the project. Color theory describes how colors work together and affect viewer emotions and perceptions. In our redesign of the museum's website, color theory is an aspect we will incorporate. Through UMSI curriculum, color theory as well as other design skills have been touched upon. We will apply this knowledge as we move into the execution phase of the project.
 - **Data-driven design:** Data-driven design utilizes quantitative and qualitative data to support design decisions. We will use data from analytics, usability testing, user feedback, among other methods to assess the effectiveness of the website and determine impactful changes. As we find ways to collect insightful data and propose creative design solutions from our findings, we will apply and grow this skill. Data-driven design will be a skill we more steadily use after the project plan.
- UX research (usability testing, Google Analytics, user interviews, other research methods)
 - **Usability Testing:** Usability testing is a research skill that we plan to utilize throughout the project, as a means of collecting key pain points of navigating the current website. We will conduct usability testing with all user groups in order to understand needs specific to each stakeholder. The entire design team will need this skill to collect necessary data to emphasize usability in our design process; while most members are familiar with this skill from previous course experience, others have gained further experience from extracurricular projects or internship experience. We will need client support in providing representatives from each stakeholder group, and we will then schedule virtual testing sessions with each user. Before testing, we will create a script outlining each category of testing as a team.
 - **Google Analytics:** The team plans to utilize Google Analytics to gauge the CAMOC website's current global reach. This will be our main method of

researching stakeholders that are not necessarily accessible to us, while also understanding the current design aspects of the website that work best. Our team will communicate with our client to understand which aspects they want to focus on and if they have a point person for this skill. The current goal of using Google Analytics is to measure the most popular pages of the site and global user demographics. We plan to utilize this skill within the research process of this project before the design phase begins.

- **User Interviews:** User interviews are a skill specific to understanding users' overall perspectives through explicit communication. This is necessary to our team in addition to testing, in order to understand overarching themes of users' desires or struggles concerning the website. By working with our client, we will gain access to diverse user groups to interview. All members of our team are familiar with user interviews through previous coursework, and plan to create a script for this process.
- Communication + Language skills (proper communication with client, team members, and user groups)
 - **Communication with partner:** Proper communication skills will ultimately determine our success in meeting our partner's needs + expectations. Our team plans to practice and refine this skill through actively participating in bi-weekly meetings involving our partner along with consistent offline communication. Our timeline for acquiring this skill spans across the entire project journey, as communication + language skills will prove to be a vital part throughout every step of the process.
 - **Communication within our team:** Our team plans on practicing internal communication skills through creating an inclusive space for all opinions, perspectives, and voices to be heard. Weekly meetings as well as collaborative meeting agendas will allow for us to stay on the same page and achieve each of our benchmarked goals. Each meeting will also designate one team member as the "leader" who will facilitate the discussion for that day.
 - **Language + Writing skills:** As our final deliverable is serving as a representation of the museum and all of its rich culture + history, the ability to accurately communicate the website's content will prove to be crucial. Therefore, not only is good communication important from a partner-to-partner perspective, but it is also essential from a designer-to-audience standpoint.
- Content organization / delivery
 - *this could go along with UX research?
 - **Content organization:** In previous courses with UX research, our team has learned various methods utilized for usability testing that we plan to incorporate when understanding the users of the museum's website. The main method we will be using is card sorting which will be useful in determining the information hierarchy of the website from the perspective of the museum website's users as well as the museum staff. By utilizing the website's existing architecture, card

sorting will allow us to get a better understanding of how users may organize information and help us determine how to reorganize the structure's site accordingly. There is no timeline to acquire these skills since we currently have the knowledge to execute this research method but we plan to communicate with the client to determine how we can get access to specific user groups to perform interviews and later analyze the data.

■ **Delivery:** figma?

- Our team plans to use Figma to deliver the final project to the client. With Figma's capability of creating wireframes, prototypes, and mockups, our team has the ability to visualize our design ideas to the client as we approach this project from start to finish. Our team has previous experience with Figma through coursework and personal learning but if there is something new that we need to familiarize ourselves with, we will learn through online video tutorials and internal collaboration. Our team will reflect on the client's goals while utilizing insights from user research, analytics data, to inform our design decisions throughout this project. Figma is a collaborative platform, so our team will be working together on wireframes and the final prototype through initial designs and critique between each member and the client.

- *use of low/no-code platforms? (wordpress/webflow?)*