



A River Network Learning Session

# Monster Under the Bed: How to Overcome Your Fear of Your Website

January 15, 2026



# WELCOME!

...DIY Marketing Made Fun, Efficient & Cost Effective

While you wait, please ...

- Introduce yourself in the chat – name, organization, where you're calling from
- Use the chat box for questions
- Open the evaluation form now & give us feedback after the session!

# ABOUT RIVER NETWORK

River Network grows and strengthens a transformational national network of water, justice, and river advocates.

We envision a powerful and inclusive movement that ensures abundant clean water for all people and nature to thrive. We believe that joy and hope for our planet flows through our rivers.

Meet the network and search our Water Protectors Map on our website!

[rivernetwork.org](http://rivernetwork.org) 



# OUR PRESENTERS



Mitch Sloan  
(they/them)

*Digital Media Producer*



Patrick Williams  
(he/him)

*Director of Creative Services*



---

# THE MONSTER UNDER THE BED

Overcome Your Fear of Your Website





---

## About Bold Bison

**Bold Bison Communications & Consulting** provides forward-thinking communications solutions, engaging strategy and facilitation services, and inspiring workshops and trainings for nonprofits, particularly in the conservation, climate, and local food movements, as well as the arts and cultural institutions.

Bold Bison is a professional affiliate of the Land Trust Alliance and is a Certified LGBT Business Enterprise® through the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit [BoldBison.com](http://BoldBison.com)





---

## Our Team



DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCER

Mitch Sloan  
They / Them



DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICES

Patrick Williams  
He / Him





---

# Today's Agenda

1

Site Management Discussion

2

The Old School Style of Web Development

3

Common Roadblocks to Web Management

4

Content Strategy Discussion

5

Questions You Should Always Ask

6

Wrap-up / Q&A



---

## To Get the Most From This Workshop

- 1 Reduce distractions such as phones and email.
- 2 Take notes and ask questions.
- 3 Use our prompts to consider how these topics affect your org.
- 4 Center yourself and be present.





---

# THE MONSTER UNDER THE BED

Overcome Your Fear of Your Website



---

## Popcorn Discussion:

Who is responsible for maintaining  
your organization's website?

What challenges do you experience  
in maintaining your site?





# Common Categories of Website Headaches



---

## Technical Challenges

- 404 error code
- Widget broke
- Broken links and redirects
- Backlog of updates
- Site crash, hack, or other horrible misadventures

# Time and capacity to maintain clunky CMS

- Control panel is different every time you use it
- Have to check in periodically to update/troubleshoot
- Limited technical support or documentation



The image shows a screenshot of the Kentico Site Manager interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Kentico logo and the text "Kentico Site Manager". The navigation bar includes links for "Sites", "Administration", "Settings", "Development" (which is highlighted in a darker shade), and "Tools".

The main content area is divided into two main sections. On the left, there is a sidebar titled "Development" which contains a list of various configuration items, each with a small icon: Countries, CSS stylesheets, Cultures, Custom settings, Custom tables, Document types, Form controls, Inline controls, Modules (which is highlighted in orange), Notifications, Page layouts, Page templates, Relationship names, Search engines, System tables, Tag groups, Time zones, UI cultures, Web part containers, Web parts, Web templates, Widgets, and Workflows.

On the right, there is a larger panel titled "Modules". At the top of this panel is a sub-header "New module" with a "Show" button. Below this, there is a search bar labeled "Module name: LIKE" with a dropdown arrow. A table follows, with columns for "Actions" and "Module name". The table lists 18 modules, each with a red "X" icon in the "Actions" column and a blue "Edit" icon in the "Module name" column. The modules listed are: Abuse report, Administration, Bad words, Badges, Banned IPs, Blogs, Categories, CMS Desk, Community, Contact management, Content, Custom tables, and Design.



Home  
About the School  
Apply to the School  
Exhibitions  
Publications  
News  
Public Events

Pause animations ||

# YALE SCHOOL

The Yale School of Art is a **graduate school** that confers MFAs in Graphic Design, Painting/Printmaking, Photography, and Sculpture; and offers undergraduate-level art courses to Yale College students. Our website exists as an **ongoing collaborative experiment** in digital publishing and information sharing. It functions as a wiki—all members of the School of Art community have the ability to add new, and edit most existing content.

[Editor details](#)

ON THIS PAGE

**HAPPENING THIS WEEK**

**FALL 2021 AT THE SCHOOL OF ART**

**SCHOOL NEWS**

**COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD**

**CALENDARS & NEWSLETTERS**

Content is the property of its various authors. When you contribute to this site, you agree to abide by Yale University academic and network use policy, and to act as a

## Website content isn't engaging

- MarComm strategy hasn't adapted to your user goals
- Unresponsive, doesn't format on mobile, incompatible with accessibility devices/strategies
- Text-heavy featuring everything your org has ever done (EVER!)

---

## Breakout Discussion:

How does your organization rely on your website?

Which of the challenges described are you facing with your site?





# Old & New: Styles of Web Development



---

## The Old School Style of Web Development

- Pay a contractor to build you a website, they work in **their own software**, resulting in an for invoice any time **you need something** and leading to a few problems:
  - **High costs** (beyond what you already paid for the website itself)
  - **Lack of full control** over the product you already paid for
  - **Developers retire**, leaving you with a **vulnerable website** that you're responsible to maintain



---

## A New Way to Work: All-in-One CMS

- **Simplify web management** by consolidating your content management, web hosting, and domain registration on a single platform, such as SquareSpace or Wordpress (recommended)
- These platforms **automatically update** to prevent security risks, widgets breaking, and outdated browser formatting – it takes the technical work completely off your plate
- Extensive **library of templates** that allow for drag-and-drop edits similar to your other marketing platforms (MailChimp/Constant Contact or Canva)
- **Archival documentation** to help you troubleshoot (forums, YouTube, Reddit threads) and **live-support options** on business plans

Home

Updates

My Home

Stats

Upgrades

Business

Jetpack 4

Posts

Media

Pages

Comments

Feedback

Appearance

Plugins

Users

Tools

Settings

Collapse Menu

## Dashboard



## Site Health Status

No information  
yet...

Site health checks will automatically run periodically to gather information about your site. You can also [visit the Site Health screen](#) to gather information about your site now.

## At a Glance

1 Post

9 Pages

1 Comment

WordPress 6.9 running [Creatio 2](#) theme.

Akismet blocks spam from getting to your blog. There's nothing in your [spam queue](#) at the moment.

## Activity

## Recently Published

Dec 15th 2023, 3:13 pm Austin Fresh

## Recent Comments

Pingback on Austin Fresh

Explore Austin's Farm-to-Table Scene with CAYTA - November 2024

[...] trolley tours were made possible through a \$30,000 grant from Austin Eats, in partnership with Austin Fresh, which are...

## Site



ABOUT FRESH TASTE COMMUNITY IMPACT FUNDERS PARTNER WITH US

favi Fresh Taste [freshtaste.org](https://freshtaste.org)

Hosting Overview

Edit Site

## Daily Writing Prompt

In what ways do you communicate online?

← Previous Next →

Post Answer

View all responses



## Newsletter

✉ 2 subscribers (0 via email)

✉ 0 paid subscribers

Effortlessly turn posts into emails with our Newsletter feature. Expand your reach, engage readers, and monetize your writing. No coding required. [Learn more](#)

Quick Links

Drag boxes here



---

# Headaches Resolved: Technical Challenges

- **Externalize the risk** to vendors whose businesses exists for it
- **Strengths of a toolkit:** donation processing, event registration, email signups, translation, etc.
- **Put your website on autopilot** so you can focus on the fun parts—content, design, and strategy

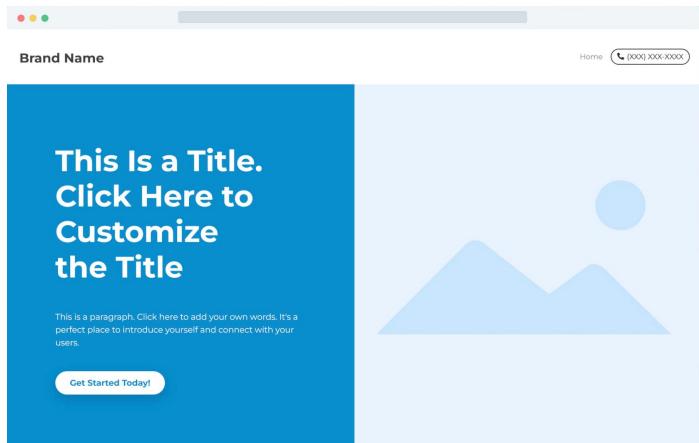




---

# Headaches Resolved: Capacity

- **Reduce the time spent** keeping systems healthy – all-in-one systems automate updates.
- **Fail-safes to restore your site** to a previous state (without coding, technical instructions, or support calls.)
- **No-code templates** let you drag-n'-drop content, “what you see is what you get” editing.





---

# Headaches Resolved: Content Strategy

- **UX (User Experience) is empathy.** Put yourself in the shoes of your audience: what do they want to do on your site?
- Does your website “feel” like attending visiting your org? Consider your **website as a welcome mat** for your organization.
- Focus on **common accessibility features and simplified navigation** to help all users engage with your content.





---

# Your Users Have Evolved

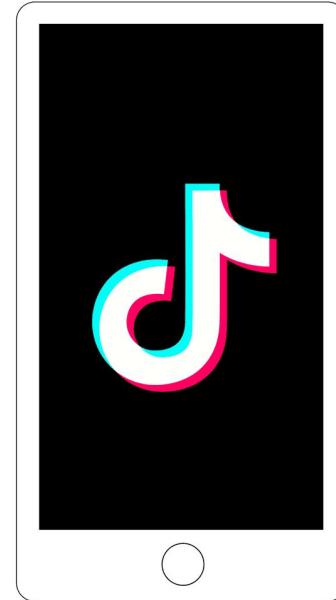
Your web strategy may be working off outdated information regarding web browsing habits.



---

# Everything is TikTok now

- **Endless scrolling feeds** of content, usually prioritizing video and **optimized for mobile devices**
- Strong preference towards **moving elements on-screen**
- Users tend to leave a webpage within **15 seconds** if the content doesn't grab their attention





# People Scan Content for Relevant Info

- “Listicle” **formatting** has transformed blog content and lived on in **Gen AI summaries**
- **Less than 1/4th** of text-on-page is read by a visiting user
- Users expect content to be **organized logically**, and want to find their quarry **within 3 clicks**





# Web Presence Effects Reputation

- Halo effect – users may become **biased for/against your organization** based on web presence
- Search engines **de-prioritize websites** with high bounce rates and minimal accessibility features
- Successful sites **design for returning users** that engage with content, instead of flashy elements for “unique visitors”





---

## Easy Win: Alternative Text

**Alternative text (alt text)** is descriptive text that conveys the **meaning of an image** in digital content. **Makes visual content accessible** to people with vision disabilities but also improves SEO in a variety of ways:

- **Additional keywords** to rank on search engine results
- Search engines **prioritize sites with accessibility features**
- Alt text helps **feed AI Summaries**, citing your content in Gen AI results

---

## **Breakout Session:**

Thinking about your organization's current website, who is your website for? Who should it be for?

What changes are needed to begin to update your website for your key audiences?





---

## Takeaways

- **Your website needs to be an asset not a burden**, so externalize the risk where you can
- **Web behaviour is changing** – considering your user experience is vital to your website, but you also need to consider how changes in website behavior impact your organization's **overall marketing strategy**
- **Implementing accessibility features** help address big-picture changes in user behaviour on websites while remaining **AAA compliant**



# Questions to Ask Before Rebuilding Your Website

1

How will this website alleviate our capacity constraints?

2

What does our relationship with our developer look like post-launch?

3

How will we “control” the look and feel of the website after launch?

4

What are the annual costs we can expect from this hosting platform?





---

## Still Feeling Stuck? We Can Help With That.

- While we hope today's learning will help you overcome any fears of your website, Bold Bison can **help you tackle** the challenges we discussed today
- Help with strategy, organization, and management to **improve your existing website**; offer an assessment, help with accessibility, or troubleshooting
- Design and **build new website**, including training those on your team to who will be responsible for keeping it up to date





---

## Connect with us!



[hello@boldbison.com](mailto:hello@boldbison.com)



SIGN UP  
FOR THE  
BOLD BISON  
NEWSLETTER



**Mitch Sloan**

[MITCH@BOLDBISON.COM](mailto:MITCH@BOLDBISON.COM)



**Patrick Williams**

[PATRICK@BOLDBISON.COM](mailto:PATRICK@BOLDBISON.COM)

# SAVE THE DATE!



May 11-14, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas

→ [rivernetwork.org/river-rally](http://rivernetwork.org/river-rally)

# THANK YOU!

