

Case Study

I used SUMS to provide data and insight because I know I can trust their experience as practitioners in the HE sector

PHIL CHAPMAN,
DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT

The challenge

Having established a set of digital principles and protocols in 2013, the University's website was developed with a navigation designed around the user journey. Content was organised in a way that visitors to the site might expect to find it, rather than following the University's own internal structures. Over time, however, internal pressure was mounting to publish content on the homepage or 'sites within sites' which did not fit with this principle of a website for the consumer; this risked damaging the user experience if it became harder to find what they were looking for amongst content that did not interest them. The University also wanted to maintain a single site that was responsive to users of different browsers and devices.

What happened?

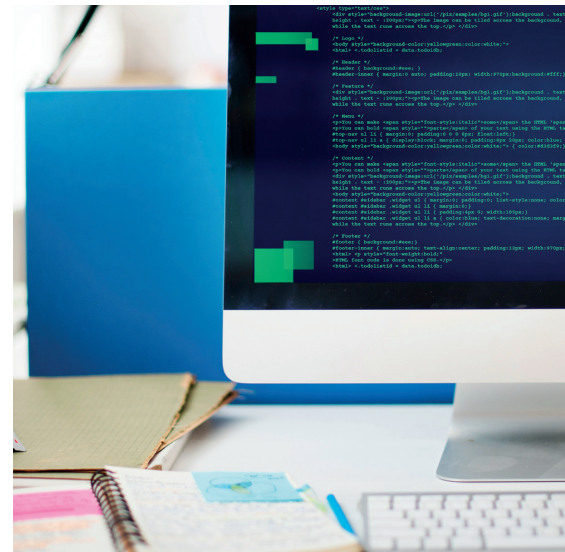
Director of Engagement, Phil Chapman, decided to invite SUMS Consulting to carry out a project using live site traffic analytics to provide in-depth insight

into website user journeys. SUMS Associates from *Uprated* looked at information such as where visitors were coming into the site, users' progress towards goals, where and after how long they exited and how they used the pages they found. This rich data was then used to demonstrate footfall around the site and to make user and site design improvements which were evidence-based.

In a second phase of activity, SUMS consultants *Uprated* worked in partnership with the in-house marketing team, IT team, and the University's Content Management tool provider to develop a more responsive site, again based on user journey insight, which users could access from any electronic device.

The outcome

The evidence from the analytics enabled Marketing Manager, Kate Stanbury, and her project team to have constructive conversations with their internal web editors and senior leaders about improvements to the



website which would be journey-led not structure-led. These improvements delivered a better user experience as demonstrated by a range of success metrics. Thanks to the new navigation, visitors found important student recruitment-focused pages in fewer clicks. The project's focus on giving prominence to key actions (particularly those that resulted in data capture) led to increases in users requesting a personalised prospectus (+131%), initiating a live chat (+14%), clicking the apply via UCAS button (+12%) and clicking to apply direct (+13%). Users also used the search function less, again indicating that they were finding what they needed intuitively without having to ask where it was.

Another big win for the University was finding that a single site could be built to cater to the needs of its target audience, no matter what device they were using to access it. This gave site visitors choice and control in how they accessed the site and ensured an improved experience on all devices.

Using data insight to evolve a user-centric website

For More Information

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