

You only have about 8 seconds* to capture visitor attention online, so the right content can make a major difference to your website's effectiveness and appeal. And how do you know if you have the right content?

You audit your story.

This workbook will help you examine all of the content on your school website, both as single messages and as part of a larger school story. **When the story audit is complete, you'll have a clear picture of:**

- **The story you're currently telling**
- **The content you need to refresh, create, or keep as is**
- **The order in which you should approach your website content updates**

You'll finish this workbook with a spreadsheet you can continue to use to keep track of your website content, so you'll never have to start this process from the beginning again.

Let's get started.

First: Organize Your Content in 5 Steps

To help you stay organized, we've created a **FREE school website story audit template**.

It's a Google document that you can grab, edit and use as you move through this workbook.

[Get your template now!](#)

Let's walk through the template together. For now, we'll focus on columns A-G:

- **URL:** The page's website address
- **Page Title:** The page name that appears in the top of your browser window
- **Meta Description:** The behind-the-scenes description of the content on the page
- **H1:** The main header; typically the page or post title
- **H2:** Subhead(s) within the page content
- **Page Type:** The type of content found on the page and its template structure
- **Priority:** The order of importance for your content updates

So you have the template, you know what's in it, and perhaps you've made some modifications so that it fits your school's needs. What's next?

Prep work.

Yep, it's time to start filling this sucker in. But don't worry, we'll walk you through step-by-step.

Step 1: Gather all of your URLs

The first thing you want to do is make a list of each and every page on your current website -- and we do this by grabbing each page's URL.

If you have a big site, this may be the moment you throw up your hands and say, "Forget it! Too much work!" But wait! There are free tools available that will crawl your website and figure out not only how many pages you have, but also provide you with a list of your page URLs -- and more!

One of the most popular tools is [Screaming Frog's SEO Spider](#), which is free for websites with up to 500 pages (if your website has more than 500 pages, there is a paid version). [Watch the video](#) on their website to get an overview on how it works. They also offer a helpful [User Guide](#) and [FAQ section](#).

Step 2: Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize

Now that you know how many pages you have, and where they all live, it's time to rank them in order of importance. We put this upfront because we know that if you're a small (or solo) team, you most likely won't be able to update your story on each and every page (or even complete

this audit for each and every page!). And that's OK! This can be an ongoing initiative if your resources are tight.

Use a ranking system to determine which pages YOU BELIEVE deserve your critical attention. (We'll be looking at the analytics of these pages in a moment). A few good places to start:

- Home page
- About Us page
- Tuition page
- Section landing pages
- Critical program pages
- Any pages connected to advertising or marketing initiatives
- Any pages designed for high conversions (pages with important fillable forms or calls-to-action)

Keep your ranking simple:

- #1 = High priority
- #2 = Medium priority
- #3 = Low priority

Depending on your resources, you can complete the rest of this story audit with only your highest priority pages, with both high and medium, or with your entire site -- it's completely up to you!

Has the list caused overwhelm to creep in? We totally understand, and we promise that looking at the list is always more anxiety-inducing than tackling the to-do's. Whether you update one page per month or go for a complete website revamp, the most important thing is that you're making progress toward the end goal.

Now that you have an outline of your site's pages, along with each page's priority for updating, we're ready to complete organizing our content.

Step 3: Copy and paste those page titles, meta descriptions and headers (H1 & H2).

Ok, this one can be a little tedious. But your page titles and descriptions are super important -- they advertise your page in Google search listings, and they help searchers find your content.

If you've used Screaming Frog's SEO Spider, you can find all of this information in the tabs along the top of the tool. If you aren't using the SEO Spider and aren't sure how to find this information, your school's IT team should be able to help (it's easy once you know what to look for, we promise!).

Step 4: Define the page type.

This is a helpful step when you reach the content editing stage. By identifying each page type, you'll know the amount of time and work to dedicate to each page update. Common page types include:

- Main landing page
- Program page
- Standard content page
- Fillable form
- Mixed-media page (graphics, video, infographics, etc.)

Step 5: Create a “best-of-brand” swipe file.

As you get organized, you're going to be moving through a lot of content. Hopefully some “best-of-the-best” language will jump out at you -- language describing your school environment, your mission, your brand, your students.

Keep an eye out for this content, because it may be hidden in strange and unexpected places -- especially if many people have access to your website. Cut and paste this “best-of” content into a separate file, so that you can reference it later when you begin the copyediting process.

Since we know this can be a lot of work -- work that you have to fit into already busy days -- we created the Organize Your Content checklist to help you stay on-track and organized. It outlines Steps 1-5, and checking off the boxes is oh-so-satisfying.

Organize Your Content Checklist

- Step 1: Gather all of your URLs (Column A)**
Hint: Use [Screaming Frog's SEO Spider](#), which is free for websites with up to 500 pages.

- Step 2: Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize (Column G)**
Determine the pages you believe deserve your critical attention (i.e., Home page, About Us page, Tuition page, etc.), and rank them:
 - #1 = High Priority
 - #2 = Medium Priority
 - #3 = Low Priority

- Step 3: Copy and paste page titles, meta descriptions, and H1 & H2 headers (Columns B-E)**
Hint: Another job for [Screaming Frog's SEO Spider](#), OR ask your IT team for help.

- Step 4: Define the page type (Column F)**
Common page types include:
 - Main landing page
 - Program page
 - Standard content page
 - Fillable form
 - Mixed-media page (graphics, video, infographics, etc.)

- Step 5: Create a “best-of-brand” swipe file**
Start a document, and cut and paste the best brand messaging you find as you review your page content.

Next: Get Analytical.

This means looking at some Google Analytics, as well as reviewing your content from a storytelling and brand perspective.

This component of the content audit is designated on the template in green shading.

Step 1: Jump into Google Analytics

Google Analytics holds a wealth of storytelling knowledge. Taking a top-level dive into the analytics of each page will help you understand if and how your content is resonating with your audience.

Not familiar with how to review your Google Analytics data? [This article will help.](#)

Check each page for the following:

- **Unique Pageviews:** The number of unique sessions in which a page was viewed.
- **Average Time on Page:** The average amount of time people spend on that page.
- **Bounce Rate:** The percentage of people who came to your website and visited just that one page.
- **Exit Rate:** The percentage of people who left your website from that page.

Why? Low unique pageviews and time on page, and high bounce and exit rates could mean your audience members aren't finding the page, aren't reading the content, or aren't finding the content helpful.

If one of your high-priority pages is faltering in any of these categories, it's incredibly important for you to review that content.

Step 2: Read & Analyze.

The data has been collected, and you have a better sense of how your pages are performing. Now it's time to review the content.

At this stage, start with your highest-priority pages that need the most work. Read each page carefully, and use the following spreadsheet columns to track your progress:

- **Primary Keyword:** Keyword research helps you write using terms that people are actually using in search. When you use those exact terms, you increase your chances of ranking high in search, which increases the traffic to your page-- so write and edit with keywords in mind. (Check out [this post](#) to learn more about how to determine your primary keyword.)

- **Action:** Note whether this page will be kept as is, removed or improved. NOTE: If you are planning on removing the page, make sure you redirect the URL so that any links to the existing page do not appear broken.
- **Strategy:** If you're going to improve the page, write down the specific tasks that need to be completed to make it more effective (you can [download this template](#) to stay organized). Here are some good questions to use during your analysis:

Is the content outdated?

[If yes, write down the source for new/updated content.]

Does the voice/tone represent your school brand?

[Voice = your school's personality. Tone = how that personality is communicated.]

Is the page structured for optimal reader experience?

[Are there headers, short paragraphs, bullets, imagery, white space?]

Does it have a strong opening paragraph, or lede?

[If visitors read only the introduction, will they take away your most important message?]

Is there hidden jargon?

[Are you using words or phrases that only makes sense to your internal team?]

Is there a call-to-action?

[What specific action(s) do you want your audience to take after reading this page?]

Is the page technically sound?

[Does it include a proper Page Title (fewer than 60 characters), Meta Description (160 characters or less), and H1 and H2 headers?]

And just like that, your spreadsheet is complete -- congratulations!

Now it's time to move on to storytelling. Get ready, because this is where your hard work pays off.

Then: Uncover Your Story

Now is the time to reflect on everything you've done during this content audit process and ask yourself some hard questions:

- Is our website telling the right story?
- Is our website telling the FULL story?
- Is our website story compelling?
- Is our website story written for our audiences -- or is it written for us internally?

Make a list of:

- The story elements that are missing from your website. Possibilities include:
 - Emotion
 - Facts / Reasons to believe
 - Multimedia content
 - Audience focus
- The places these story elements can fit within your current website structure

Get creative!

- If your website is lacking emotion, how can you add it? Would a new video that demonstrates the student experience or alumni success make an impact?
- Would an infographic that displays your school's impressive stats stand out more than that text link?
- Can you use photographs in different formats (oversized, closeups, panoramics) to help support your story?
- Can you use storytelling elements to share student and alumni testimonials in a way that's more captivating?

By analyzing not only your current content, but also your future opportunities for storytelling, you're going beyond the content audit and beginning to strengthen your overall school story. Think big, because the opportunities are endless!

Finally: Plan Your Attack

We are impressed! You have made it through the content audit, and you've done some hard work and story-soul-searching on the way.

And now it's time to plan your attack. Because what good is all this prep work if it just sits in a spreadsheet?

To help, we've added two pink columns to the end of the content audit spreadsheet:

- **Updates Complete:** This is the date by which you will have that page's website content updated. At that point, it may need to travel through the appropriate channels to be approved, which is why we also included...
- **Updates Launched:** This is the date your awesome, new, updated content will be live on your website, telling its amazing story to your now-captivated audience.

Tips to consider as you plan your content updates:

- **Consider the time of year.** Some pages/sections of your site are more popular at certain times of year, so start your editing process where it makes the most sense seasonally.
- **Check your overall marketing/communications schedule/strategy.** Do you have upcoming initiatives that align with any of your web content? Do any of your content pages need updates based on the content of these initiatives?
- **Where does this page fit in your overall audience experience?** What action is this page meant to inspire?

And remember: Keep your spreadsheet updated! As you make and launch your content updates, make sure you reflect those page changes in your spreadsheet, so that your content audit document is always up-to-date.

Need more help during this content editing process? Check out our additional resources on creating an online story your audiences will love:

- [School Website Content: When to Keep It, Save It, Trash It \[A Checklist\]](#)
- [9 Content Mistakes Wrecking Your Website](#)
- [The FAQ Page: Does Your School's Website Really Need One?](#)
- [12 Timeless Things I Learned From 12 Years of Copywriting Websites](#)
- [Refresh Your School's About Page With These 5 Tips](#)
- [How to Write a Tuition Page Worth Reading](#)

If the Story Audit Challenge has you ready to tackle your website content, we have something for you...

Introducing [Write Your School Site](#)

[Write Your School Site](#) is an online, on-demand course that includes 9 video lessons and a deep library of bonus materials that systemize the website writing process and make it easy for you to tell your school story, even if you're not a writer.



We created [Write Your School Site](#) because we know how stressful it can be for a small department (or a department of one!) to tackle a massive website edit or rewrite -- and we want to empower you to take control of your school's online story.

Your school website is the hub of all of your online communications. It's your most important marketing tool. [Write Your School Site](#) is designed to help you give it the love it deserves (without overwhelming you in the process!).

Course Prep		
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	▶ Welcome to Write Your School Site! (1:07)	Start
<input type="radio"/>	📄 Write Your School Site Workbook	Start

Course Lessons		
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<input type="radio"/>	▶ Lesson 4: Structure Your Story (25:27)	Start
<input type="radio"/>	▶ Lesson 5: Conquer Your Calls-to-Action (12:00)	Start
<input type="radio"/>	▶ Lesson 6: Perfect Your Pages (22:12)	Start

[Write Your School Site](#) is available NOW, and ALL course materials are available immediately.

(Plus, you'll get lifetime access to any materials we add to this course in the future!)

[Explore what Write Your School Site has to offer.](#)