

Digital Museum – how are you presenting yourself online?

AIM work with JG Creative and RareEarth to keep the AIM website refreshed. Here, the two agencies share their top tips for a quick and simple digital refresh, to help you present yourself well online and generate more visitors.

Let's start with your website...

Audience

How is your website working for the people visiting it (your audience)? Think about who is coming to your site and what they are looking for. There could be a few different audiences who are looking for different things, but focus on two or three. You can find out more about what they're looking for now by reviewing every bit of information you have on them:

- Google / wix analytics – can you see which parts of your site get the most traffic?
- Social media – what posts get the most engagement?
- Email newsletter – what links get the most clicks?
- Anecdotal – what do visitors ask your staff?
- If people call or email the museum, what questions do they have?

Action – when you've thought about who they are and what they're looking for, visit your site through their eyes. How easy is it to find what you're looking for?

Content

The world has changed. Your website WILL need updating. Make sure you're using your homepage to inform and reassure.

Action – review and update the information you've got on your site. These are useful questions to ask:

- Is it true? Content can get out of date very quickly.
- Is it relevant? Both for your audience and on that particular page / section.
- Is it useful? Do you need this content on your site at all or is it just clutter? Think about older news articles and blog posts especially.

Structure

If you can now see that some of your content is in the wrong place, then it's time to move it. Focus on your navigation and ensure it is as simple as possible.

Action – write your navigation headings on a piece of paper and then check all the pages you have are in the right section / area of the site. Write any you want to move under the new heading on your paper. Then you can rearrange the site online when you're done.

Note – when you move the pages around it might change the address of that page so think about any links you might have elsewhere. You might need to copy the page to its new place rather than move it.

Look

How does your website look? Is it a good representation of the experience people get when they visit you? Can you update any imagery to better reflect current collections?

Humans are visual creatures; we assume a lot from what we see, not just what we read. If your site looks good quality and works well then people will assume the information can be trusted and will be reassured.

Lots of people will be visiting your website from a phone or tablet so make sure it all looks good and works well regardless of how they're viewing it.

Action – look at your site on your phone and computer and see if you get the same experience. Can any images be updated to match the physical experience people will have when they visit?

Technical

You might be thinking, but how do I update my site? Ideally, you'll have a login to get to the 'back-end' of your site where you can make changes. If you have a WordPress site, try adding /wp-admin or /wp-login to the end of your website address and it might take you to the login page. From there you can change your password so if your email address was ever set up, you'll be able to gain access.

If you have a freelancer or agency that does your site, send the amends through to them. But also try to get a login from them so you can make small changes yourself, without incurring costs.

Finally, ALWAYS ensure you own your own website address (URL). This is called the domain and you should ensure you control it. If you don't, then make it a priority to get control ASAP. You should view it as a significant organisational asset, especially as it's usually tied to the email addresses everyone uses.

Action – go and check that you own your URL. You can start by looking at a domain registry – [click here to check](#).

Search

Once your website is up to date, looking professional and visitors can find what they're looking for, you need to ensure they can get there!

Use an incognito website browser window to search for your museum. Where are you on the results? What words did you use to search? Try something broader than using your museum name, for example 'museum in Cheshire.' If people can't remember what you're called, what might they search for? Write these phrases down and ensure they're used in the text on your website, then google (and other search engines) will know that you are an appropriate result to show people.

Action – set up a [google my business account](#) for your museum so that it is easier for you to be seen and listed by google. The set-up process involves google sending a postcard to your address with a code on to confirm you are where you say you are. Once you enter this code into your account, you are then on google maps and appear everywhere people view google maps, so it could bring a lot more people to your door.

That concludes the list of the most simple and effective things you can do, which form the basis of everything else that is possible online. Get the basics right and you WILL see a difference.

If there is anything we can do to help. Please just get in touch. Happy to give free advice if it will help you get started. Sometimes there is one little stumbling block holding you back from doing anything. Call Jo at JG Creative on 01270 626624 or email jo@jg-creative.co.uk.