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University of Oxford

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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—Conrad Youngman,
Web and Design Officer

In 2008, the University of Oxford publicly launched a capital campaign, Oxford Thinking, with a fundraising goal of £1.25 billion. As the campaign approaches the end its eighth year, it has raised more than £2.48 billion and has more than doubled its original fundraising goal to £3 billion.

Conrad Youngman is the Web and Design Officer with the central development office. He was part of the team that built and currently manages the Oxford Thinking website, in addition to supporting regular giving and marketing promotions, which are large sources of donor participation for the campaign.
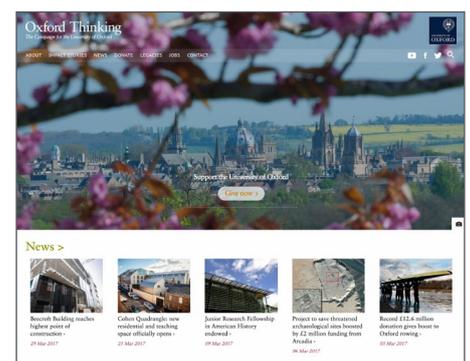
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A new streamlined and intuitive website

In the middle of Conrad's tenure at the University, he began working with Blackbaud to move the Oxford Thinking website from a third-party CMS to Blackbaud Internet Solutions (BBIS). The development office also enlisted a third party web designer to revisit the look and feel of the website in conjunction with on-going efforts to recalibrate the campaign. The result of their collaboration is a single beautiful, responsive and intuitive website that's image driven and focused around impact. It is far easier for Conrad and his colleagues to manage, thanks to a significant reduction in the number of web pages hosted by the site. The streamlined website has also contributed to an improved donor journey.

Keeping content fresh with simple and intelligent tools

Even with a more agile website, keeping web content fresh and relevant over the course of a campaign that will eventually be active for more than a decade is no easy task. Fortunately for the Communications team, BBIS has provided them with a variety of tools that make keeping content fresh a far simpler endeavour.

First, they've built portions of their site using a Custom Content Part that facilitates smoother updates for news and photos on the website, creating efficiencies while preserving formatting consistency.

"The key idea behind this effort was to build something that enabled our team to create content without spending too much time in HTML," Conrad says. "The site enables new updates to be published in three different ways within three different parts of the site, all while updating only one form. Furthermore, libraries of photographs geared towards a particular event or area of the University can be displayed with similar ease."

Pulling data directly from Blackbaud CRM to online donation forms

The efficiencies afforded to Oxford Thinking extends to their donation form, which enables supporters to quickly and easily search for and identify the desired designation for their gift. Through the use of Designation Search, Tags and Query Results, Oxford Thinking pulls hundreds of designation options from Blackbaud CRM and presents them to donors through the donation form quickly and easily. Conrad explains, "Being able to pull the data directly from Blackbaud CRM simplifies – and in many cases automates – maintenance and creates a superior user journey, not to mention incentivises data hygiene in Blackbaud CRM."

BBIS goes far beyond Oxford Thinking

The benefits of BBIS have extended well beyond the Oxford Thinking Campaign. In fact, the campaign website is only one of 30 sites that Oxford has built on the same instance of BBIS. This includes nearly 20 colleges within the University who manage their own BBIS sites that feature unique design, creating a distinct online identity for each area of the collegiate institution to reach their audience and accept donations.

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