**MEEC Website Redesign**

***What you will find in this document***

This document contains several recommendations for MEEC’s updated CMS website redesign. It specifically refers to MEEC’s present webpage affiliated with Nova Southeastern University at the Carpenter House. You will find section headings that detail modifications to existing content on the current site, a section that reviews additional and supplementary content not yet included, and a final unit that expands on the suggestions summarized in the first two sections. These recommendations are intended to increase user interaction with MEEC, to help achieve ease of navigation when it comes to website accessibility, and to effectively overhaul their digital presence. The hope is to extend MEEC’s services online in order to meet the needs of those effected by the Covid-19 pandemic and others who desire a digitally mediated way to connect with this educational organization.

**Updateable Existing Site Content**

*The following points listed below already exist on MEEC’s current website and simply need updating in order to better increase MEEC’s online presence and interactivity with their audience. A summary providing the most pertinent suggestions is given following the bullet points, and a more detailed proposal of each point begins on page 3, with topics listed alphabetically.*

* **Webinars**
* **Current Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)**
* **Donation Spotlight**
* **Videos (MEEC Featured Video, Feeding Captain, Feeding Time at the MEEC, Shark Tagging with GHRI, Prepping a Skull with Beetles)**
* **Mission and Value Statements**
* **Covid-19 Precautionary Statement**

MEEC’s new educational webinars are an excellent opportunity to better connect with their audience during the current pandemic preventing in-person interaction. The information for MEEC’s webinars is found under their “Plan Your Visit” tab. My suggestion would be to relocate webinar information at the forefront of MEEC’s new site, so the broadcast is one of the first things a user sees when landing on their page. Consider displaying a weekly or 2-week schedule with topics covered and names of presenters if possible. The donation page should discuss how MEEC has been changed due to Covid-19 and how donors can help remedy this setback. The page would benefit from a small showcase of current and/or in-progress projects past donations have funded so donors can actively see their gifts put to use.

MEEC’s featured video excels in describing the organization and what they stand for, and I recommend setting up a new block near the title of MEEC’s updated site that has their featured video playing muted, with an option to unmute if a user hovers their cursor over it. Other videos like Feeding Captain and Feeding Time at the MEEC should be combined (For other video recommendations, see detailed section of Videos). MEEC’s mission and value statements need to be moved to a newly created tab under “About Us.” While important, most visitors are not visiting MEEC’s website expecting one of the first things they see to be the corporation’s mission and value declarations; it makes more sense for these to be revamped under their own separate tab that talks about how MEEC came to be (this can be accomplished easily by shifting much of the information on MEEC’s main page to another tab detailing their history). Lastly, if MEEC wishes to keep their Covid-19 statement up, then they need to update the announcement to include what they’re doing to combat the effects of Covid. An example is as follows: “Due to the pandemic, the MEEC will be closed until further notice. However, we are taking measures to continue to engage our guests in a more digitized form. Please see information on virtual field trips and webinars each week.”

**Additional/Supplementary Content**

*The following points in this section are considered supplementary or additional content MEEC should consider including on their new site. These additions should increase online presence and user interaction, as well as offer more opportunities to involve communities that may not currently be affiliated with MEEC. Following the bullet point list is a summary of the extras and how they can be used to bolster MEEC’s digital authority. For a more detailed explanation of each point, see page 5.*

* **Information for Educators**
* **Add TicTok Social Media Account**
* **Field Trips**
* **360 Virtual Tour of Facilities**
* **Foster Relations with Boy Scouts of America or/and Homeschool Students**

MEEC has a plethora of educational resources for educators to take advantage of, but this information is not readily accessible via their current website. I advocate collecting and organizing information MEEC has for educators and assembling them under a single tab. I would also make note of any requests educators make when reaching out to MEEC and attempt to integrate their suggestions at a later date. Since MEEC has resources for all grade levels, I recommend organizing educational material by grade level and creating corresponding tabs for different materials. Another incredible educational opportunity for users to take advantage of is MEEC’s virtual field trips every Saturday from 1-2pm. I would post this alongside MEEC’s webinar series at the forefront of the new website because both the digital sessions and simulated field trips are some of the most interactive occasions for users to get involved both with each other and with MEEC’s staff.

Tatyana Boyd has prepared a 360 virtual tour of MEEC’s facilities complete with interactional quizzes and information on the Carpenter House as a whole. I strongly suggest featuring this tour either on the site’s main page, the “About Us” tab, or the “Plan Your Visit” tab and recommending the tour to those interested in learning more about MEEC’s amenities. Another way of extending MEEC’s digital presence could be in the form of a TicTok account. Due to MEEC’s primary visitors being middle-school students, I suggest they develop a TicTok account for MEEC to better connect with and update their target demographic on current happenings at the MEEC. TicTok is also a useful tool for MEEC to showcase shorter videos such as the staff members tending to the facility or how meals are made for Captain. Finally, MEEC should consider connecting with Boy Scouts of America’s Sea Scout branch to request a partnership so MEEC’s facilities could open an avenue for Scouts to learn about marine biology and ecology. This kind of opportunity can be extended to include homeschooled children, as well. Implementation cold simply look like

**Detailed List of Topics Covered**

**Updateable Content**

**Covid-19 Precautionary Statements**

I think their Covid-19 statement should be updated to include what MEEC is doing to combat the restrictions of the pandemic. Things such as their virtual webinars, field trips, and other online learning opportunities should be highlighted within their Covid-19 precautionary statement. Rather than saying something like “Due to the pandemic, the MEEC will be closed until further notice. Sorry for the inconvenience.” MEEC’s website should amend the second sentence to some degree say, “Due to the pandemic, the MEEC will be closed until further notice. However, we are taking measures to continue to engage our guests in a more digitized form. Please see information on virtual field trips and webinars each week.”

**Donation Spotlight**

I think sprucing up the donation block would be beneficial for MEEC. Putting something up about how they’ve been impacted by Covid-19 and how the donations will help or further a certain mission/goal of theirs. We could also showcase projects that past donations have been put toward to create via photos (static images or scrolling slideshow) or clickable links. I think either something in progress or completed would work for showing. I also have an idea to showcase previous donors, thanking them for their contributions or even presenting special offers like a free visit or merchandise to donors. Of course, permission would be needed from the donors before implementing this.

**Field Trips**

Virtual field trips every Saturday from 1-2pm should be at the forefront of MEEC’s website. A short blurb of what they plan to do for that day’s field trip should do. If possible, it would be nice to showcase the lesson and who’s presenting that week and update each week on a designated day (Mondays may be preferred). I also like the idea of having an optional sign up for weekly emails from MEEC close to their promotion of virtual field trips because this would increase the ease of navigation for users.

**Mission and Value Statements**

MEEC’s mission and value statements are very prominently featured on their current, old website. I feel they would be better placed under their “About Us” tab rather than taking up valuable real estate on the main page. However, I like the idea of using some of their statements such as “marine education” and “interactive learning” for new organizational tab names in the latest website redesign as another option.

**Social Media Links**

The old website has missing logos for MEEC’s social media pages, however the links to these images are still clickable and still lead to MEEC’s social media. I am not certain how prevalent MEEC wants their social handles to be on their site, but depending on their answer I believe the social media should be moved to a “Contact” link/block. Another option is to place it toward the bottom of the site. I also notice they’ve grouped their past webinars in a YouTube playlist, yet there’s nothing alluding to YouTube under their social media contacts. I would add their YouTube channel to their social media promotions. Finally, if middle-schoolers and younger children are MEEC’s primary audience, I may also recommend creating a TikTok account for the center to garner more audience interaction and volume from a younger demographic.

**Videos (Update to Current Site) Be specific here, too**

There are five videos on MEEC’s current site (four regular videos and one featured video). MEEC’s “Featured Video” does a great job of detailing what MEEC stands for and I feel it should be seen more by the website’s traffic. While watching, I thought it would go very well alongside or within the donation page to give viewers a chance to truly see what MEEC does and how viewers’ donations go to work. I also considered having the video playing in the title block when a user first enters the site (muted of course, until the user decides if they want to unmute it). The four current video locations are awkward and feel like an afterthought. I think it’s a good idea to combine “Feeing Captain” and “Feeding Time at the MEEC” and place them in the tab for Sea Turtle Conservation. I’d also recommend MEEC’s “Shark Tagging with GHRI” and “Prepping a Skull with Beetles” be placed under a new Educator tab since these videos seem to fit better within an educational framework. A final suggestion for any additional videos MEEC either decides to update and integrate into their new site or create completely new shorts would be to show how the center has changed due to Covid-19 and inform viewers of MEEC’s pandemic-friendly options to become engaged with the organization. Another idea for a new video could be one that showcases how a particular project that donations have funded is coming along. It should of course be placed near MEEC’s donation tab.

**Webinar-** Webinar information needs to be showcased. Currently it looks like there is very little in terms of information on these webinars showing on MEEC’s main website page. Using these specially designed webinars allows MEEC to connect with their audience while their in-person activities remain closed or open for limited capacity. I’m thinking showcase a schedule that’s updated regularly with upcoming seminars like they’ve done under the “Plan Your Visit” tab. Maybe consider showing a 2-week schedule and update every other week for new MEEC webinars. Also have a small description of webinar topics being covered and the name(s) of presenter(s). I think this could easily either be linked or added as a small table on the main site. It is also a good idea to send patrons weekly emails that feature these webinars.

**Additional/Supplementary Content**

**360 Tour**

My partner, Tatyana, is working on this and I think it would be an excellent addition to either “About Us” or “Plan Your Visit.” I could also see this as another main block on their webpage since it’s a wonderfully visual introduction to MEEC’s facilities that users can explore on their own time.

**Fostering Relations with Boy Scouts and/or Homeschooled Students**

In order to increase visitation volume and recognition, MEEC can consider partnering with Boy Scouts of America. They have an entire branch dedicated to the ocean, including conservation efforts (something MEEC has expressed interest in cultivating). Also, homeschooled children and parents are consistently searching for enrichment opportunities for their children since they do not attend traditional school where enrichment programs are built in. MEEC’s facilities and educational workshops can provide the perfect opening for these families to explore marine education. Once these relations were well-established, MEEC could request marketing or testimonials to better promote their mission of aquatic biology and ecology training.

**Information for Educators**

Educators should have an easier time figuring out how to access the resources they need to plan visits and obtain information about marine environmental education. My idea is to separate their educator information by grade or school level i.e. elementary/primary education, middle school, high school, college. You’d then be able to click on a designated grade/school level and it should send you to the information dedicated to that level of education. I also think we need a tab that specifically says “Educators” or “Educator Resources by Grade Level.”

**TicTok Account**

Due to TicTok social media accounts primarily being utilized by middle-school aged children, I would strongly recommend MEEC consider adding TicTok to their social media repertoire. Since MEEC receives the most business from this demographic, a TicTok account would help in keeping middle-schoolers and their friends and family updated with current happenings from MEEC. TicTok provides a fantastic opportunity to show off MEEC’s facilities, staff, and sea creature attractions by utilizing a variety of short and catchy video editing technology. Just like other social media outlets, TicTok also offers a space for feedback from its audience, which can then translate to a better ability to meet visitor needs.