

4G *Web strategy*



by Dave Wilson & davidcoe...

WEBSITES ARE LIKE OGRES ... ER ... NO – I MEAN ONIONS...^A

In the beginning there was notepad ...

... and some strange code (anyone remember printer command lines?) which meant that we could use this new application — a “browser” — and view pages and pages of information and some really basic images (so long as they weren’t too big) on this crazy new thing called “the internet”.

It was quite tricky to get stuff to line up and look good — but hey — we all did as best we could!

1G — welcome to first generation websites — it’s 1994 and big brother just bought a modem.

... evolution is wonderful and soon we’re experimenting with more brand new tools — “Hey look dude — it’s like a word processor — but for the web!”.

FrontPage and Dreamweaver allow designers and non-technically minded people to take part in the game. Macromedia raises the stakes by releasing some vector-based software called Flash — designer floodgates are totally breached! Never before have so many people skipped over so many intros in such a short period of time. Never before have so many designers spent so much time (or so little?) agonising over download sizes and internet connection speeds....

Never before has so much **pornography** been available to so many teenagers ...

It’s 1999...and this is the world of **2G** websites

... a new millennium — is there a new web model?... all of a sudden you, me, and everyone we know is spending many, many, many \$\$\$\$s online.

An online bookstore becomes the first household “web-brand” — “Good grief Charlie Brown!^B Amazon.com actually starts making a profit as well...”

The **cluetrain** pulled up at the platform a few years ago
— but the **corporate website refused** to get on board!

We’ve got Content Management Systems, we’ve got news feeds, portals and e-commerce engines.

Hold onto your hats — it’s welcome to the world of “Command and Control” IT departments and expensive web technology consultancy!

Most marketing departments are disenfranchised from the web experience by the **tyranny** of their IT departments — the online suffragettes of their generation.

This lack of engagement allows an undercurrent of resentment — fragmented sales and marketing — fragmented web solutions.

What is — is... This is a **3G website world!**

But right here — right now^C — everything’s changing...

...in the rest of this manifesto we’ll start to mix lots of different ingredients together — re-defining website structure and core purpose.

...the **cluetrain** pulled up at the platform a few years ago — but the corporate website **refused** to get on board!^D Customer evangelists roam the streets and blogsites are a new religious creed.

WOMM is all around us and the holy trinity of advertising, exhibitions and corporate bribery is completely and absolutely fucked (...Hallelujah!)

“Navigational hierarchy” architects start to throw themselves off very tall buildings as businesses try to cram more and more content onto more and more websites — which more and more people choose to ignore totally!

“**Traditional**” website structure just doesn’t work any more... have a look at some sitemaps and the chances are it’ll look like a “typical” organizational chart.

Hang On! — let’s just review that statement again — a **typical** organisational diagram — listen up: just because Microsoft still has little hierarchy boxes available in PowerPoint charts — doesn’t mean that’s what’s going on in the real world...

What’s a typical company structure nowadays? Chances are it’s getting flatter!

Businesses are getting leaner — people are getting multi-skilled. Multi-tasking 24/7 is the norm... the work/life balance starts to erode in the name of flexibility and freedom.

Websites don’t work with “old skool” navigational hierarchy any more.

But let’s not just make them flatter. Let’s try and make it easier to find stuff.

Let’s re-imagine the website!^E

Let’s re-imagine everything — here we go... Forget web 2.0 – 4G has already arrived...@2005.

“ABOVE THE WEBSITE” | “BELOW THE WEBSITE” | “THROUGH THE WEBSITE”

As we said at the beginning...

“Websites are like ogres — they have layers” (with apologies to onions...)

So — I've just clicked on a Google search link or I've just clicked on a PPC link — where did I “land” — I've arrived... where am I? Am I on a specific, relevant, highly targeted landing page. (yeah — right!) Or am I being welcomed to yet another bland, uninspiring homepage — completely “corporate” in its design, language and tone ...

Websites are like ogres — they have layers (with apologies to onions...)

Has my permission-marketing journey begun? Is it crystal clear to me that there are lots of different layers of “information richness” within the site? Is there a compelling offer that makes me want to share part of me, part of my identity, with the web-owner?

So ... the more I opt-in — the more stuff I get? Online permission marketing models help us close the loop ... it's “data x-change”.

You give me some info and you get some right back at ya baby!... the database model is now completely engineered around the concepts of personal profiles, information exchange and relationships.

Tourists bring back souvenirs — **explorers bring home ‘stories’**.

We all know that content is king. Content is everything...

Yet most sites still lack heroin content^F the stuff that ensures that people will come back time and time again — to re-engage with your site.

If markets are conversations, what are we saying online? Are we listening to people? Are we engaging with individuals? Where's our tribe, where are our soul mates ...

If it's all about addiction ... what exactly is your visitor willing to do to get the content they want?

The **user experience** should allow people to **get sucked** into this **ongoing “sales narrative”**...

The user experience should allow people to get sucked into this ongoing “sales narrative”...

- register for an e-newsletter ...
- download some case studies, white papers, free stuff...
- engage in online discussion forums ...
- take part in a couple of surveys ...
- contribute to a user-testing group ...
- help with some open-source product development ...

Oh bugger!

I'm a customer evangelist and I didn't even notice a purchase — when did that happen?

Strangers become **friends** ... friends become **customers** ...^G

Follow the customer curve ... If you've got someone on the “edge” of your 4G website — how can you move them towards the centre?

Do they fit an established pattern/do we have a profile that matches their behaviour — does it map to our psychometric matrix?

How can we get peer-to-peer, word-of-mouth (and “word-of-mouse”) activity and customer evangelism to speed their transition through the layers to become a customer?

...you wouldn't sell your friends products would you? (OK — there's always Amway) Or services? What about solutions? How about selling them experiences or joining them in adventures? ...now our little community, our tribe is talking!

And it's not just about tone of voice and compelling argument — **interactive design is also king** — just ask a Mac user!

Pick up an iPod — now pick up a generic MP3 player — it's all about “experience”... ease of use — the sheer joy of the controls creates that brand differentiation.

Think Amazon — think Google.

Compare their web usability with nearly every other website that you visit today...

OK — I want some **4G** action... how do I start? How much will it cost?

Remember — you don't need to take control of the corporate website (in most cases, it's best to leave that alone!). You need to operate “above the website” — with tactical micro-sites, webverts, e-newsletters...

You have to work harder on your landing pages — the driving force behind ROI is relevancy and the landing page is where most people are missing an opportunity.

You need to work “below the website” to make sure your databases are all talking to each other — that you're tracking the right information — that you're delivering ROI.

Get some **Girl Power** — We all know “what you want, what you really, really want...”^H

You want the ability to organize a complete, integrated online marketing campaign from your desktop.

Well comrades — before you can do anything else, you need to **take control** of the **means of distribution** ...

Why not pick some keywords? Set up a Google adwords campaign? Create a landing page? Upload a white paper, track the downloads, send them an e-newsletter?

Need to report on your activity for the board? Just choose the feedback data you have to include — click submit — choose the relevant internal e-mail distribution list — click send — OK, that’s done...

What’s next?

Well comrades — before you can do anything else, you need to take control of the means of distribution ...

4G is all about having “joined up” **permission marketing** solutions that:

- Are easy to implement;
- Use “standard” industry software;
- Run on existing infrastructures.

Hey guys — there’s nothing here that’s rocket science!

There's nothing here that's really dependent on IT involvement — so if you still find your IT department's being a bit negative...

..just tell them to — **“Get F.I.T!”**^I

In our opinion, most IT department managers don't really “get” what remarkable customer service is all about — these are people who don't usually generate income — or drive sales — or come up with truly creative innovations.

Narrow-minded, middle manager, middle-of-the-road fuckwits who still wear a suit and tie to work — even though they're rarely in face-to-face contact with their customers.

If your IT department is really nothing more than a glorified telephone repair centre for your business — just tell them...

“Get Fucked IT!”

If they still don't want to come along for the ride?

Just remember the question...

“Why exactly haven't we outsourced our IT function yet?”

Show me the money! It's **“SMarketing”**...

So how do we prove the ROI? Where are those American dollars, British pounds and Japanese Yen?

If it's a universal truth in 2005 that “It's all about design...” and marketing and differentiation...

Then there's another missing link, which is SALES activity.

Companies can't afford to have a disconnect between their Sales and Marketing departments...

...life's just too short!

...so everyone's a salesperson now...

...that means I can work with my team, create some interactive online content, and integrate sales tracking tools directly into the online marketing process.

Let me have a look at those stats — wow! Let's allocate these leads to the sales team right now!

With auto-responders and internal profiling we give everyone the opportunity to contribute to ROI at a micro and macro level.

In a **rock n' roll world** — everyone wants **access to all areas**...

Identity and Access Management issues — 'single sign on' and 'federated identity' are as much about creating a user-centric website experience as producing robust security networks.

At the core of the onion — the lines between a company's intranet / extranet and the external environment is beginning to blur — it's disappearing right before our eyes.

"I can't believe they published that..."

"They would never have admitted that 10 years ago..."

...imagine there's **no single, corporate, marketing or brand website**.

...imagine that everybody has a slightly different web experience from everyone else.

Everything's up for grabs — unique to each user... driven by CSS choices and driven by customer evangelists.

“Imagine there's no heaven... no religion, too ...”^J

“Prosumerism”, “co-opertition” — we're all interconnected in the new world view — because... as ever ...

It's all about people — stupid! — so **personalise** this!

I want to have my own experience and my own interaction level with every website I visit.

I want ... I need ... I expect ... I demand ...

I really don't care about your products and services — what's in it for me?

4G — it's **revolution** — **not evolution** ...

ENDNOTES

- A *Shrek*, “Ogres are like onions — they have layers.”, DreamWorks SKG
- B Charles M Shultz, *Peanuts*
- C Fat Boy Slim, *You’ve Come A Long Way Baby*, October 1998
- D The Cluetrain Manifesto, <http://www.cluetrain.com/>
- E Tom Peters, <http://www.tompeters.com>
- F Vincent Flanders: <http://www.webpagethatsuck.com>
- G Seth Godin, *Permission Marketing*
- H Spice Girls, “Wannabe” EMI International, release date June 30, 1996
- I Tim Rickards (Tim actually said “Get **Focused**, IT!” — but we’ve translated it into “proper English” for him)
- J John Lennon, *Imagine*, 1971

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dave Wilson is the original founder of PDG Graphics and as well as his role as MD, David also acts as primary contact for a number of PDG's key accounts. David's skills have been honed with some of the leading corporates in the UK and Europe and his experience covers all aspects of marketing and communications.

davidcoe... has worked on branding projects to develop and deliver integrated marketing campaigns both online and offline. Many of these have used innovative techniques and pioneered new practices. David is very experienced in internal communications, 'smart' sales tools and web interaction strategies.

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
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