Yale Digital Conference 2019

Julie Ramaccia and Zach Schwartz
Does Your Content ‘Spark Joy?’
A Guide to Content Audits

Julie Ramaccia & Zach Schwartz
YaleSites, ITS
Overview

What is a content audit?  
What does it mean to ‘Spark Joy?’  
How can content ‘Spark Joy?’  
When should we do a content audit?  
Why should we do a content audit?  
Tidying up: Content audit methodology  
Putting things back together: Content audit analysis
What is a content audit?
What is a content audit?

“An accounting of all currently published web content, with all of the details recorded in a spreadsheet.”

-Kristina Halvorson

*Content Strategy for the Web*
What is a content inventory?

“...a spreadsheet that captures information (such as page title or URL) for each web page or content module you’re responsible for creating, reviewing, or caring for.”

- Kristina Halvorson

Content Strategy for the Web
What is a content audit really?

Performing a content audit has been called "tedious," "boring," and "intimidating, time-consuming, and chaotic".

- “Content Audit,” Wikipedia
The KonMari method: What does it mean to ‘Spark Joy?’
The KonMari Method of Tidying

A tidying methodology done by category, rather than by room or location in the home.

The basis for Netflix’s series *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*

“Keep only those things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy. Thank them for their service – then let them go.”
Did you know there’s an anti-Marie Kondo, who constantly sends you stuff despite you having no place to store it? Did you know it’s my mom?

 Labrador

 1,250 7:27 PM - Jan 7, 2019

 372 people are talking about this
What does it mean to Spark Joy?

Hard to describe, but you know it when you feel it!

Does an object or possession excite you? Make you happy? Does it inspire any positive regard at all?

That’s what it means to “Spark Joy!”
How can content ‘Spark Joy?’
Performing a content audit is similar to decluttering your living space:

In the KonMari method, all objects in a category are placed in a large pile, then assessed one-by-one.

When performing an audit, list all pages to view content holistically, then assess each page individually.
How can content “Spark Joy?”

Is the content...

Clear?
Meaningful?
Purposeful?
Valuable?
I'm not kidding, there should be a Marie Kondo-like show about how people have conversations in groups. "Do we need that longwinded anecdote? Could it have been one sentence? Have we repeated that joke before? Let's cut that story into thirds."
How can content ‘Spark Joy?’

Clearly supports communication and organizational goals of your website.

Serves the user.

Serves a purpose and doesn’t add clutter.
Let’s see it in action

Yale Sustainability

Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)
When do we do a content audit?
"Many people only think of audits when they are redesigning [or migrating] a website, but audits are valuable at any time during the life of your content."

Kristina Halvorson, *Content Strategy For the Web*
Why do we do a content audit?
Why do we do a content audit?

Defines the scope and direction of the work.

Improves clarity of content goals.

Improves content quality.

Determine action for each piece of content. (remove, revise, migrate, etc.)
Why do we do a content audit?

To make sense of content performance.
To help prioritize content.
To create a foundation for better future content.
To inform better editorial decisions.
Tidying up: content audit processes
Creating your inventory

Tools to crawl each page of your website:

- **SiteImprove** - Yale-owned. Includes analytics.
- **Screaming Frog** - limited free version
- **Site Spider** - free chrome extension
Break it down by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KonMari Method</th>
<th>Content audit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>Content type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Navigation menu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>Imagery / Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Landing pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentimental items</td>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trimming your inventory

Remove Items from spreadsheet that will not be included in the audit.

Content types: i.e. news, people

Any other sections that you’ve determined not to include
Quantitative audit

An inventory of all pages on the site. May include:

- Page name
- Page URL
- Page level
- Analytics
- Content type
- PDFs, forms, videos, etc.
Qualitative audit

Allows for a deep dive into content.

Assess content against certain criteria.

Rate on a scale of 1-5.

*Does content ‘Spark Joy’ for your users and your organization?*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content criteria</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readable</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>User-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findable</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Sustainable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content criteria checklist

Determine which criteria are applicable to your content.

Obtain group consensus on the meaning of those criteria.

Allows you to consistently assess content across people, categories, and time.
Is the content clear?

- Is the content written in active voice?
- Are headings and link text descriptive?
- Is the language easy to understand? (simple language over overly complex language)
Complete the audit

Assign an action to each area

Major revisions
Minor revisions
Remove!
Consolidate
Migrate
Or you can just use our template :)
Putting things back together: Content audit analysis
What does the data tell us?

How many items fall within each category?

How does content stack against each of our criteria?
Sample analysis

Of 100 total pages:

- Major revisions: 32%
- Minor revisions: 28%
- Keep as is: 5%
- Consolidate: 15%
- Remove (unpublish): 20%
Sample analysis

Is the content clear?
- Unclear (1-3) 60%
- Clear (4-5) 40%

Content that is not clear or concise does not Spark Joy!

Is the content concise?
- Not Concise (1-3) 80%
- Concise (4-5) 20%
Looking beyond the data

Read all comments and notes.

Look for patterns, potential challenges, and problems.

Look for content that needs to be prioritized.

Look for easy wins.
Remember...

You don’t need to audit your content all at once.

Have alignment on organizational and content goals.

Always keep the user in mind.

Try not to hoard! Letting go of content can be hard.

Let content ‘Spark Joy’ for your users
Letting go of your content

When a possession no longer “sparks joy,” take a moment to appreciate the joy it once gave you before letting it go.

Do the same for your content before you discard it:
- It may not “spark joy” now, but it did once
- What value did it once have?
- What lessons can it grant about creating new content?

That content’s value can be recycled into new content!
Thank you for joining :)

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