

LEAP 2012

COC Mobile Web



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COC MOBILE WEB

1. Project Description

The COC Mobile Website is a streamlined webpage that contains key college information in a format and display that is more conducive to viewing on a handheld device. COC's mobile website will be the first place that smartphone and tablet users go when trying to access college information from their smartphone or tablet web browser. Better than an app, the mobile website bridges technologies, serving Android-based phones and tablets as well as iPhone and iPad users.

Smartphone and tablet users accessing the COC homepage will be automatically redirected to the COC Mobile Website. The mobile website will offer critical and timely information for handheld device users, including news, events, schedules and directory information. The COC Mobile Website provides key college information at the touch of a screen:

College of the Canyons information you need the most, when and where you need it.

2. Target Audience for the Project

The COC Mobile Website will be accessible by all smartphone and tablet users who use their handheld device's web browser to access the COC homepage. The COC Mobile Website will incorporate a device-recognition code that will automatically redirect mobile device users to the mobile site, even if they enter in the regular college homepage address. In particular, students and college staff will be able to access the mobile site for directory and emergency information. Community members and business partners will be able to access the directory as well as the events calendar and campus maps. Any smartphone or tablet device user will be able to get streamlined information needed for campus events, contacts or locations. Users needing additional information will have the option to access the campus's full website from the mobile site.

3. Stakeholders for the Project

There are several possible stakeholders for the various iterations and implementations of the COC Mobile Website. At its inception, the following offices have been identified as key stakeholders in the project:

- Office of Information Technology
- Public Information Office

Project Name: Team Mobile/COC Mobile Web

- Emergency Services/Emergency Management
- Switchboard

Depending on the implementation plans, these additional stakeholders have been identified:

- Admissions and Records
- Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center at College of the Canyons
- Business and Educational Partners in the University Center
- Associated Student Government
- Cougar Athletics
- COC Foundation
- COC Alumni Association



4. Mission Statement

The College of the Canyons (COC) Mobile Website provides smartphone and tablet users with relevant and streamlined college information in a handheld web-browser accessible format.

5. Vision Statement

The vision of the COC Mobile Website is to create a more useable and up-to-the-minute website for the increasing number of students, staff, and community members who rely on their smartphones and tablets for critical and timely information. We make this possible by designing and maintaining a mobile website accessible through any smartphone or tablet web browser that highlights and streamlines key information for on-the-go consumers. As consumers access vital information via their handheld devices, our mobile website anticipates the needs of today's students and community members.

6. Values

- Streamlined Information Access
- Clarity and Functionality of Design
- Forward-thinking Vision
- Technological Innovation
- Consumer-Focused

7. SMART Project Objectives/Evaluation

Specific

- The COC mobile website will have a finite number of “top” sites linked on the page. As the college changes and grows, the site will have to re-examine these links. However, our current list of links include
 - Maps
 - Social media
 - Events (PAC, Athletics, etc.)
 - Phone and email directory
 - Emergency information
 - Link to Admissions and Records

Measurable

- We can measure the success of the COC mobile website in a variety of different ways:
 - We will create a small focus group of “Mobile Testers” who will provide pertinent information on the functionality of the mobile website on the different mobile devices for the initial set-up.
 - We can install a “hit counter” to see how many times the mobile version of the webpage is accessed. We can also assess how many times the initial links off the mobile site are accessed. We can use these statistics to make changes to the pages or to change which COC department pages should have a direct link to the COC mobile website homepage.
 - We will issue a satisfaction survey of our beta and initial users, measuring the usefulness of the information on the page and the overall navigation quality.

Achievable

- We can complete initial implementation of the COC mobile website using the timeline below within one year. This project has a specific creation end date, but will need continual monitoring, updating and revision to stay useful and up-to-date.

Realistic/Relevant

- As a college, we need to remain ahead of the technological curve; the COC mobile website is a realistic and relevant information dissemination tool. According to Higheredexperts.com, only 9% of higher education institutions have a mobile website and of those 9%, 71% used a “homegrown” solution plan. Our plan is in keeping with these numbers—that is, our plan will be a homegrown solution, not an outsourced project. According to analysis of our own current homepage traffic, we have designed a site that is relevant to the college’s most frequently accessed webpages.

Timely

- This project is highly relevant in our current tech-driven culture. According to our research, 50% of new mobile phone purchases are “smart phone” purchases, and that trend is steadily increasing by about 15% per year (Nielsenwire.com). These purchases and the arrival of the millennial generation on our college campus suggest that the time to create and implement a mobile website is now.

8. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Fits as a timely and relevant project, as research demonstrates that almost 50% of new mobile phone sales in the US are smartphones (Nielsen Mobile Insights, February 2012).
- Connects with additional campus projects include the mobile MyCanyons portal (Datatel MOX app) and the possible purchase of Inteliresponse software for web-based FAQs. Both projects would dove-tail well with the mobile website.
- Increases and streamlines web access for all constituencies.
- Meets strategic goals of the college, including institutional advancement, innovation and technological advancement.



Weaknesses

- Lacks financial and personnel resources to move the project from pilot phase through to full-implementation.
- Lacks definition and parameters for website content. No authority exists to limit content that would be prioritized for mobile site production.
- Lack of available current student resources for a mobile site.
- Needs campus buy-in and ownership of various department homepages.

Opportunities

- Offers the opportunity to be in the ten percent of community colleges with mobile websites or mobile apps.
- Can customize and create content around the need of stakeholders.
- Can dovetail with existing social networking and media through PIO.
- Provides chance to revisit existing college website, particularly homepage, with an eye for revision and streamlining for consistency of message and formatting.

Threats

- Needs dedicated web programmer eventually, a cost item that would create an ongoing salary cost item during a low budget cycle.
- Could be obsolete or redundant with the development of the Datatel portal and MOX app.
- Could become cluttered and unwieldy without proper framework, guidelines and structure. A template and guidelines for use would need to be developed to maintain the clean structure and proper use of the mobile web page (note: not every aspect of the campus website would need or benefit from a mobile webpage).

9. Project Timeline

Implementation Timeline and Guidelines

Phase I: Development and Assessment (4-6 Months)

During this phase, our LEAP Solutions Team recommends that the stakeholder(s) determine the content for the mobile website. This includes determining how many layers (pages) a mobile user will have to access before getting the information quickly or before they are redirected to the Desktop website version. All content layers will be identical, though the information will differ, this will allow the mobile website to be consistent, aesthetically pleasing, and most of all, effective. Since the content drives the source code, the stakeholder(s) will then identify the source code require to deliver the content to the mobile website. This may or may not require the stakeholder(s) to hire additional web designer(s) or graphic artist(s).

Once the content and source code are at hand, the stakeholder(s) will implement the source code on a test server. The purpose of this test is to ensure that all content layers work accordingly as it were intended. This includes, but not limited to, mapping content shows the correct location and phone numbers in the directory will actually dial after selection. It is also recommended that there be a small group of “Mobile Testers” so that feedbacks from this test group will provide pertinent information on the functionality of the mobile website on the different mobile devices.

Phase II: Live Production and Marketing (2-4 Months)

Only after the stakeholder(s) determine that development and assessment was successful by whatever means and determining factors, can this next phase commence. The stakeholder(s) will engage Information Technology and Online Services to take the test implementation and move it to the live web server. The Public Information Office will also need to be employed to promote College of the Canyons latest achievement. As this is a college achievement, encouraging other departments on campus to do the same will help keep the college in the technological forefront and will create a continual tool to help advocate for College of the Canyons as one of the more technologically advanced colleges in the state.

Phase III: Integration (On Going)

After a successful live release, the stakeholder(s) advance the mobile website’s content offerings. This can include, but is not limited to, Datatel Webportal, Blackboard, and InteliResponse. Further research will have to be conducted to ensure compatibility with the mobile website. All key identified stakeholders will need to be consulted regarding best implementation of the project moving forward.



10. Budgets

Item	Amount	Job Responsibilities
Initial Budget	\$5000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create beta page and initial source code, but web design would remain skeletal
Junior Website Programmer (dual report to PIO and IT)	\$60,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile compatible department webpages• Web apps• University Center partner apps and mobile webpages• Online and social-media based rich content• Flash-based motion graphics

11. Research

Initial internal College of the Canyons research included analysis of the most popular websites tracked from homepage links. This research helped to inform our decisions about which sites should be ranked as high priority for links on the mobile webpage. The top three links from the college homepage were (1) My Canyons access; (2) the online schedule of classes; and (3) the college's A-to-Z index. This helped us determine that current and prospective students were our key audience for the mobile site. Additionally, these statistics also helped to inform us that people wanted easy-to-access contact information for departments and staff. Our team also enlisted the help of the Office of Institutional Research; we created a student survey to assess student interest in a mobile website to be distributed as part of the Annual Online Student Survey. Unfortunately, due to a technical glitch with the survey's distribution, approximately eight questions were omitted from the survey, our LEAP team's questions among those. However, those questions are now created and can be included on future student surveys should additional data be required for the project's implementation.

Our LEAP team also engaged in external research for the project. Primarily, our secondary research consisted of information gathering from other institutions of higher education and consumer surveys. The following conclusions were gathered from consumer surveys regarding recent mobile phone purchases (Nielsenwire.com):

- Almost half (49.7%) of U.S. mobile subscribers are smartphone owners (as of February 2012).
- Smartphone purchases have increased 38% over the past year.
- More than two-thirds of those who acquired a new mobile device in the last three months chose a smartphone over a feature phone.
- These numbers, however, are almost evenly split between Android users and iPhone iOS users.

Given these statistics, our LEAP team reached the following conclusions: (1) a mobile website was a good plan, given the increase in smartphone users over the past year and (2) a mobile website is preferable to a mobile app, as two apps would need development given the split between Android and Apple iOS users.

Finally, our team consulted “The State of the Mobile Web” report by Karine Joly published on www.higheredexperts.com. The article provided data that supports the following assumptions:

- Current and prospective students are the primary audience for college mobile websites across the country (totaling about 90% of anticipated mobile website use).
 - Staff and faculty were the secondary audience for college mobile websites.
 - Most colleges envision a mobile website’s key purpose as supporting campus life, followed by marketing of college programs and student recruitment.
 - Most colleges anticipate a split usage between Android and iPhone/iPad users, with Blackberry users a distant third.
 - Most colleges have little to no additional budget allocated to the development of a mobile website.
- The most popular content on mobile sites included news, events, directory, and maps.



Overall, only 9% of institutions of higher learning have mobile websites or apps currently. Creation of a mobile website that serves student, staff and the public would place COC at the forefront of higher learning institutions.

12. Conclusion

Our LEAP team’s research and findings suggest that now is the time to begin creation of a mobile website template and begin implementation of a mobile website given the increase in smartphone purchases over the past year. The college is currently investigating a number of additional tech sites and portals, such as MOX and Inteliresponse, which will dovetail well with our own homegrown mobile website. A mobile website is preferable to a phone or tablet app, as there is no clear winner in the duel between Android and iPhone operating systems. A mobile website would be universally accessible from any smartphone web browser. Students, staff and community members comprise the key audience for a mobile website, using the site to access schedules, campus news and events, and directory information. The website also relates to a number of college strategic goals as well as the college’s push for emergency preparedness. The COC mobile website enhances the college image and maintains the college’s position as being at the forefront of technological advancement.