

CWN WEBSITE: USERS' VIEWS

1. Introduction

CWN e-bulletin readers were asked in November 2007 to complete a brief questionnaire sharing their views on the CWN website and how it could be improved. Some 53 responses were received, including four stating that they had not used the website.

2. Overall assessment

Respondents welcomed the existence of the website. A majority of respondents found the website:

- easy to navigate (44 to 5)
- logically organised (43 to 5)
- provided quick access to what they were looking for (39 to 9)
- had a pleasing look and feel (36 to 11)
- conveyed what CWN did (41 to 6)

3. Further assessment

A smaller majority (28 to 13) did not want more photographic images on the website.

Some 33 respondents thought the content about right. Some 10 thought that there was not enough content. One respondent said that there was "so little there to access." There were no respondents who thought that there was too much content.

A bare majority of respondents (19 to 16) thought that the website provided a clear call to action. One respondent thought it would help if there was explanation of how to get more involved. Another thought that the website didn't sufficiently convey the urgency. A further respondent thought that there should be more prominence to the CWN Plan on the site, and how this framed the different elements on the website.

Downloadable documents and resources were a priority for 46 respondents, organisation information for 39 and people/contacts for 36. Reference to the members' log-in area aroused interest from several respondents. The current log-in area has not been used and has no content on it.

4. Feedback from website users

Respondents also provided detailed comments in the different sections of the questionnaire:

Navigation: Improvements were suggested in the organisation of topic headings and downloads. Respondents underlined the need to make links much clearer.

Organisation: A more obvious search facility was needed with clearer categorisation of topics and latest additions.

Accessing specific information: Improvements were suggested including featuring new policy developments, and carrying key information on standards, registration, induction and 14-19 Diploma.

Viewing the site: The facility to make text larger or smaller was welcomed. Some respondents found the look dull and the text a bit heavy. The flashing information could be a distraction. Ensuring the future website met the needs of those with red-green colour blindness was highlighted. Several respondents wanted a more interactive feel to the site.

Use of images: A strong preference was expressed against use of more photographic images. One respondent commented: "Too many graphics slow down the pages for people with dial up connections in rural areas." Another respondent thought that the site could use young artists' work/imagery.

Content: Several respondents made pleas to improve the links to CWN member, ECM and other websites, including regional websites. The website should demonstrate more evidently how it connected to all levels of policy and practice. A glossary should be provided.

Comparators: The websites of Barnardos, ESRC Society Today and the Higher Education Academy were identified as instructive examples of good practice for CWN.

5. Conclusion

Thanks very much to all those who responded in to the survey. All your views and comments are being fed into the revamping of the website. This is at planning stage and the work should hopefully be completed in the next few months.

One respondent summed up an aspiration for the CWN website held by most respondents to the survey: "I think the website is an excellent resource which could be developed further to support the work of CWN." If you have further views to feed into the revamping of the site, please send them to me (hilarybarnard@aol.com).

Hilary Barnard

HBMC

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