

Submitter's name, title, and email

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All UC locations represented in the award submission

Irvine

Specified award category(ies)

Design Award

For Recognition Awards:

Name(s) of individual(s) being nominated for an award

Sylvia Bass

Project narrative

A NEW OIT.UCI.EDU

We recently undertook a complete redesign of UCI's Office of Information Technology (OIT) website. The previous site was built in 2013 and it was time for a dramatic re-architecture. The effort was led by our Web Content Architect, Sylvia Bass, with support from our OIT Communications Team. We started the process with some user interviews in late 2019 to determine what was working, what wasn't, and the best way to move forward. Then when COVID hit, our team's priorities shifted and the project was put on hold. We were able to take up the project again in Spring of 2021.

We started by crafting a mission statement for the new site: "The Office of Information Technology's website exists **to serve our clients** by providing easy, seamless access to technology resources, information, and support while highlighting OIT as a strategic partner in furthering UCI's three-fold mission of teaching, research and public service." We also tied in our eight relatively-new OIT values as guiding principles for the redesign:

- **Customer-centric**
 - We will deliver information the way users understand and interact with it, not the way OIT units are organized or structured. Language used will take into account a broad range of IT knowledge, including those totally unfamiliar to what programs and services we offer.
- **Transparent**
 - We will make it clear how and where to get the help each user needs. Information about pricing, delivery times, SLAs (incidents' response), etc will be clearly stated up-front.
- **Trust**
 - The website will foster trust through accuracy. The information presented on the website will be accurate, up to date, and relevant.
- **Quality**
 - The website will use best practices in design and accessibility to present information in a way that is optimized for all users on all devices.
- **Learn & Grow**
 - The website will promote learning opportunities for our technology tools and platforms, including live training sessions, user guides and documentation.

- **Respect**
 - The website will use simple navigation that respects our users' time by getting them to the information they need quickly and easily. We will communicate with users in a respectful tone, with friendly, easy-to-understand language.
- **Inclusive**
 - The website will uphold the highest standards of web accessibility to ensure all of its users can access and engage with the website.
- **Collaborative**
 - The website will feature stories that showcase how we work collaboratively with campus entities, using narratives that feature impact statements (the “why”), not just technical jargon (the “what”).

Together, the mission and values became our lodestar, against which we would test and measure all efforts. Armed with these, we were able to prevent falling back to “we've always done it this way” or “this is how OIT is organized to deliver this service” or even “this is what our leadership thinks is important.” We were able to shift to – and constantly defend – decisions based on actual user experiences, in alignment with our mission and values.

Key to this approach was enlisting an advisory committee of campus stakeholders to gather data on the current user experience and determine key areas to target for improvement. We recruited representatives from key customer groups: School IT Directors (tech professionals who are not part of our central IT office), Library IT, Strategic Communications, faculty, staff, students, UCI Health IT, and one representative from each internal OIT service division.

The advisory committee met monthly (via Zoom, due to COVID) and were asked to provide feedback on concepts such as:

- Site architecture, including navigation
- Site content: which pages and content types were most useful
- Service category names (structured very closely to the ECAR service catalog)
- Page template architecture
- Naming conventions

What we heard from our committee is that they care most about our services. They want to know who can use them, how much they cost, how to order them, and how to get help. Armed with this feedback, Sylvia [met with each service](#) owner team and to condense and streamline the existing content into standard service landing pages with all the information users need in places that are consistent and easy to find. As part of that effort, she also moved all of our help documentation for each service off of the main site and into our ServiceNow knowledgebase, creating links to relevant help articles from within each service page.

Sylvia also built landing pages curated for each of our core audiences. Users can choose their role at UCI and find the services available to them from our “By Audience” menu. Links to these role pages are also repeated on the service pages in the “At A Glance” sidebar and on the home page.

And she created a Support Hub, reimagining how we display helpdesk information, to quickly get users to specialized support options, both within and adjacent to OIT.

The resulting site is beautifully modern and appealing, responsive, and accessible. Using this novel approach in the design and development phases, Sylvia has improved usability and created a simpler, more streamlined experience for everyone, including people with disabilities.

[Experience the redesigned OIT website for yourself](#)