

Content Strategy Summary

April 2024



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Why do we even *need* a content strategy?

In 2023, we conducted qualitative and quantitative reviews of digital content across internal and external channels.

This found issues with:



Inconsistency



Duplication



Mixed standards



Confusing experience



Opportunity for consolidation

It's essential we take a more strategic and joined-up approach to content – resolving these issues – so that our investment in platforms in the years ahead delivers an improved experience for users and content creators.

- Change is coming – digital transformation programme, including:
 - a new web platform by January 2025
 - new intranet and email approach for internal digital – with more channels to come
 - digital skills and capability strategy
- Sites will need to be migrated from the current Mosaic and Oxweb platforms
- Content for staff audiences is published on external sites, creating operational risk
- Duplicated content and designs = duplicated effort = wasted budget
- Recent content audit shows we can do better

Content strategy sets out vision and standards for Oxford across all digital end points

Building consensus and community for content

Substance

What kind of content do we need (topics, types, sources, etc), and what messages does content need to communicate to our audiences?

Structure

How is content prioritised, organized, formatted, and displayed? (eg communication planning, IA, metadata, data modeling, tagging, linking strategies, etc)



Workflow

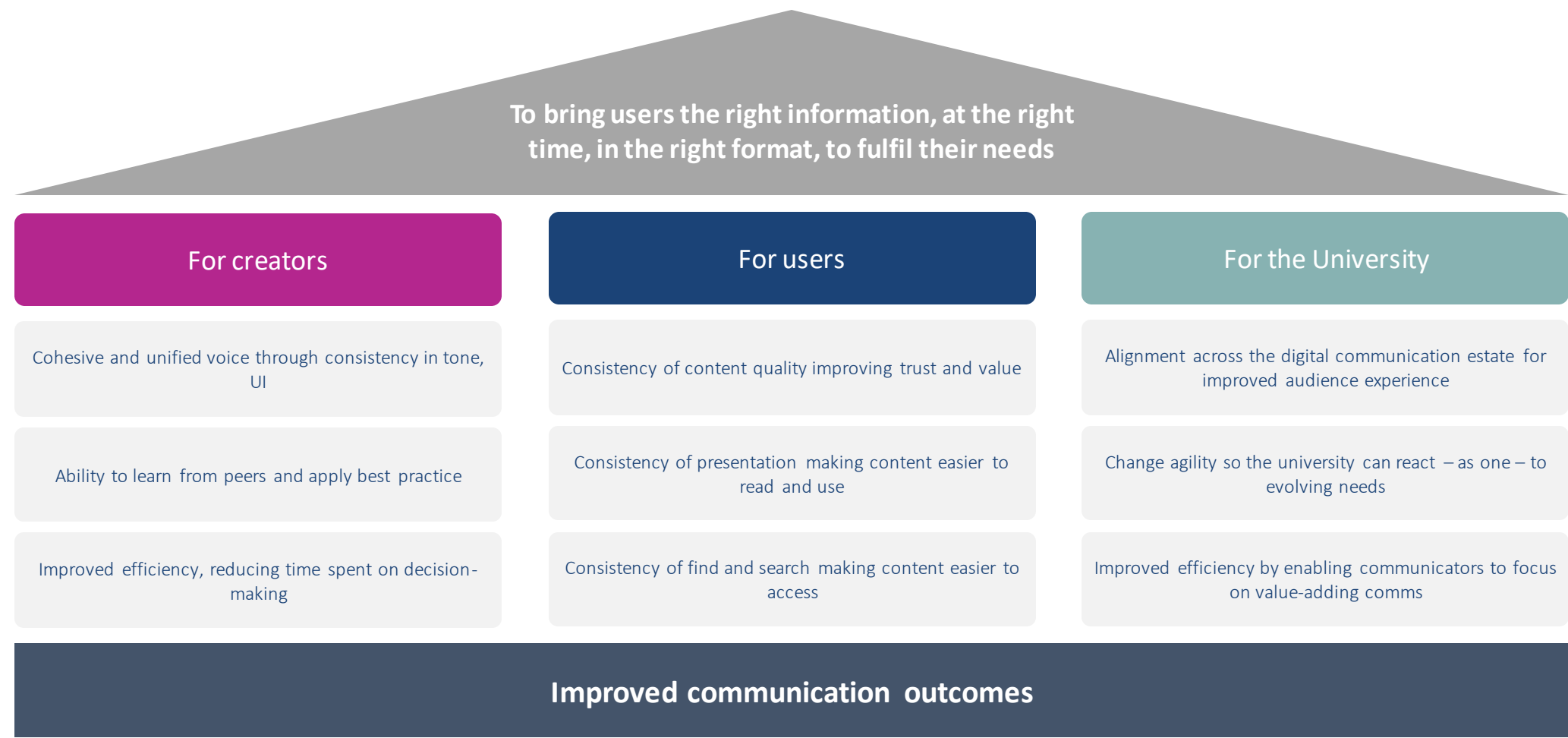
What processes, tools, and people/capabilities are required for content initiatives to launch successfully and maintain ongoing quality?

Governance

How are key decisions about content and content strategy made? How are changes initiated and communicated?

Impact of content strategy on key audiences

Taking a strategic, consistent and joined-up approach to content will deliver improvements for content creators, consumers, and the University.



Our digital communications vision

To create **flexible, scalable and secure** platforms that are accessible and meet the **full range of user needs**, and are appropriate to the University’s structure and **culture** – now and in the future, through:

- **Offering consistent, consumer-grade, best-in-class digital communications and digital experiences** for all the University’s stakeholders, including staff and students
- Core principles of **simplicity, clarity, accessibility** and **productivity**
- Using **evidence-based approaches** to give every stakeholder the user-focused services and information they need to feel **connected, productive, empowered** and **informed**
- Using data to anticipate and predict needs and drive relevance via **personalised information and experiences**
- Minimising the environmental impact of digital platforms

To bring users the right information, at the right time, in the right format, to fulfil their needs



User centric

Unapologetic focus on meeting user needs at all times



Timely

Content when the user needs it



Accurate

Recognising the importance in providing robust, accurate, valued content, and reviewing it to ensure continued relevance



Courteous to time, device or other limitations

Balancing content provision and the context of readership

Key principles for content at Oxford

Principle

... which means that

1

Content has a purpose

Content fulfils a specific user need, delivers a clear objective, for a specific audience, with clear action or message

2

Content is world-class

Whether it is succinct, engaging, rich or interactive, content is easy to consume, fit for purpose, consistently designed, and purposeful

3

Content is user-centred

Our audiences may have various needs across the estate – we respect their time and will make it easy for them to achieve their goals

4

Content is unique

Make it easier for users to find and access what they need, and for us to maintain. Keep the websites small and focussed – content should not be duplicated

5

Content has a lifecycle

Content is planned, reviewed, kept up to date or retired when it's no longer useful

6

Content is measured,
and iterated

We use goals and metrics, user feedback, audits and evidence to help determine what people want and need to know

7

Content is for everyone

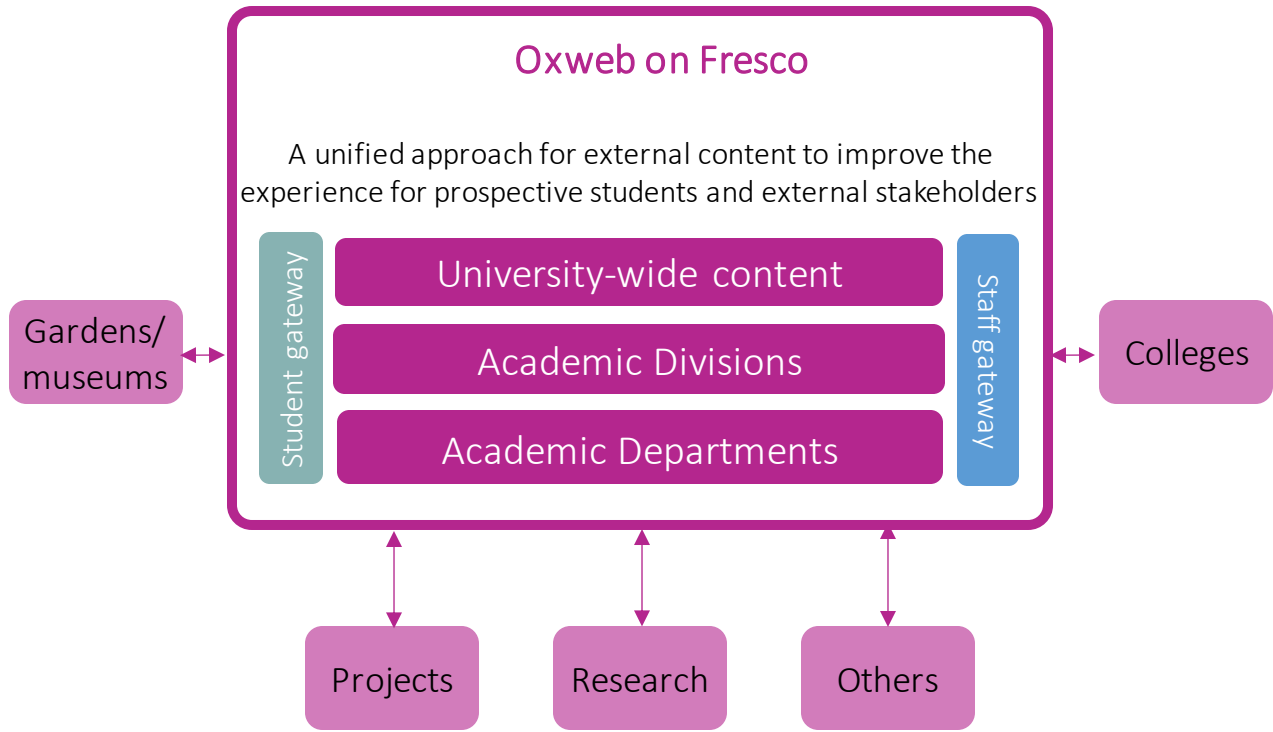
Content is jargon-free, accessible, inclusive and on brand. We use the language of our users, so we are useful, relevant and findable. Content meets highest standards of usability and accessibility

Content managed three major architectures: WebCMS, Intranet and Student Hub

External-facing audiences

Oxford Fresco (Web CMS)

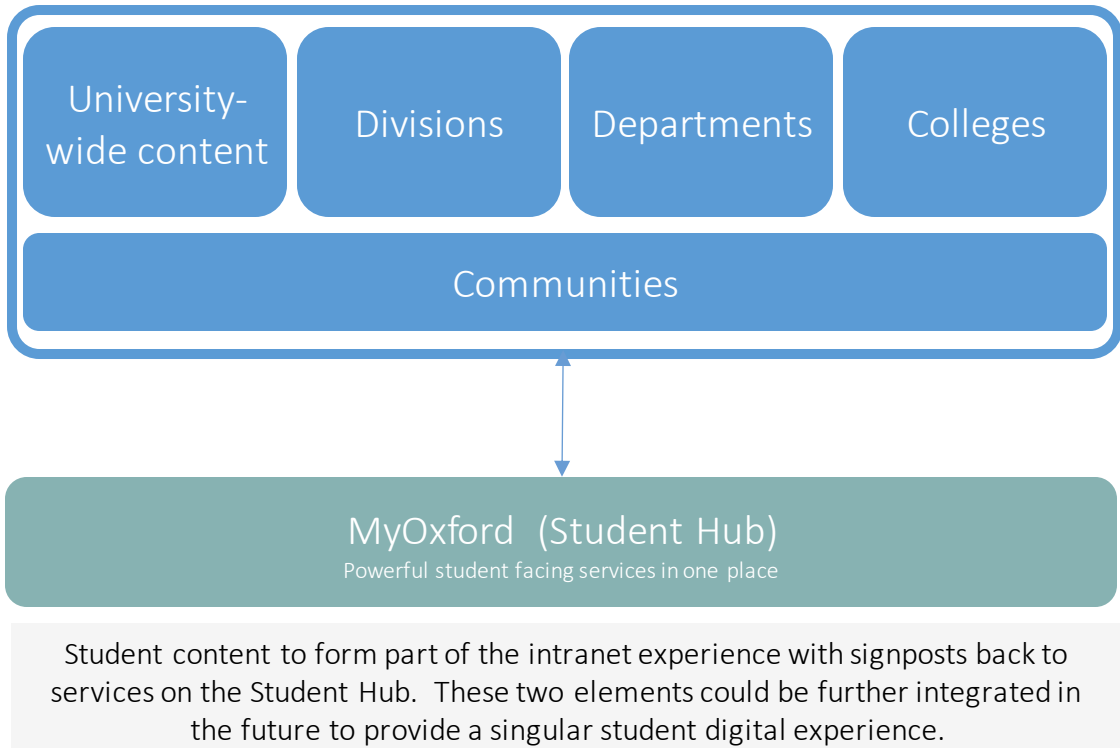
A single CMS platform that allows central, division, department and college autonomous publishing under one umbrella



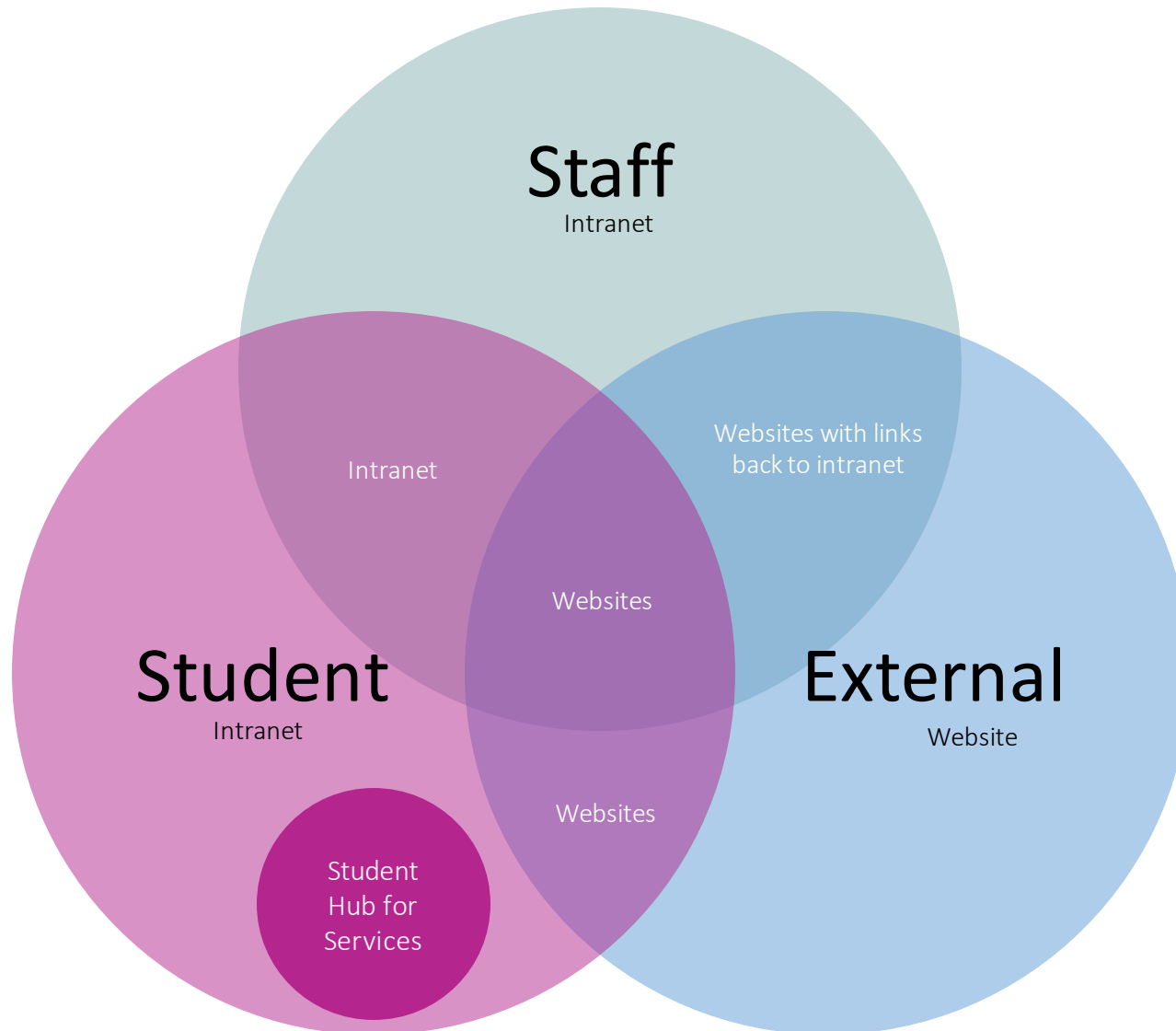
Staff and students

Ox-Intranet (Oxford-wide intranet)

Aggregates content published by teams across Oxford into a single, tailored, user-centric view, using people data



Clarity on content location ensuring that content is published in the right place



- Approach services three primary audiences with three platforms:
 - Intranet for staff and students
 - Hub for dynamic student content
 - Website for external audiences
- 'External' includes a range of stakeholders including prospective staff and students, researchers, research participants etc
- For joint audiences, content should be repurposed and written to meet precise needs
- Gateways on websites will signpost staff and students to intranet and hub
- Information for student offer holders should appear on websites (because they do not have SSO access)

Where to publish – external or internal?

Solely for external audiences

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Dual publishing guidance

General principles:

- Ensure all content is published in context to make it easier for users
- Wherever possible, avoid disjointed user journeys across external and internal platforms

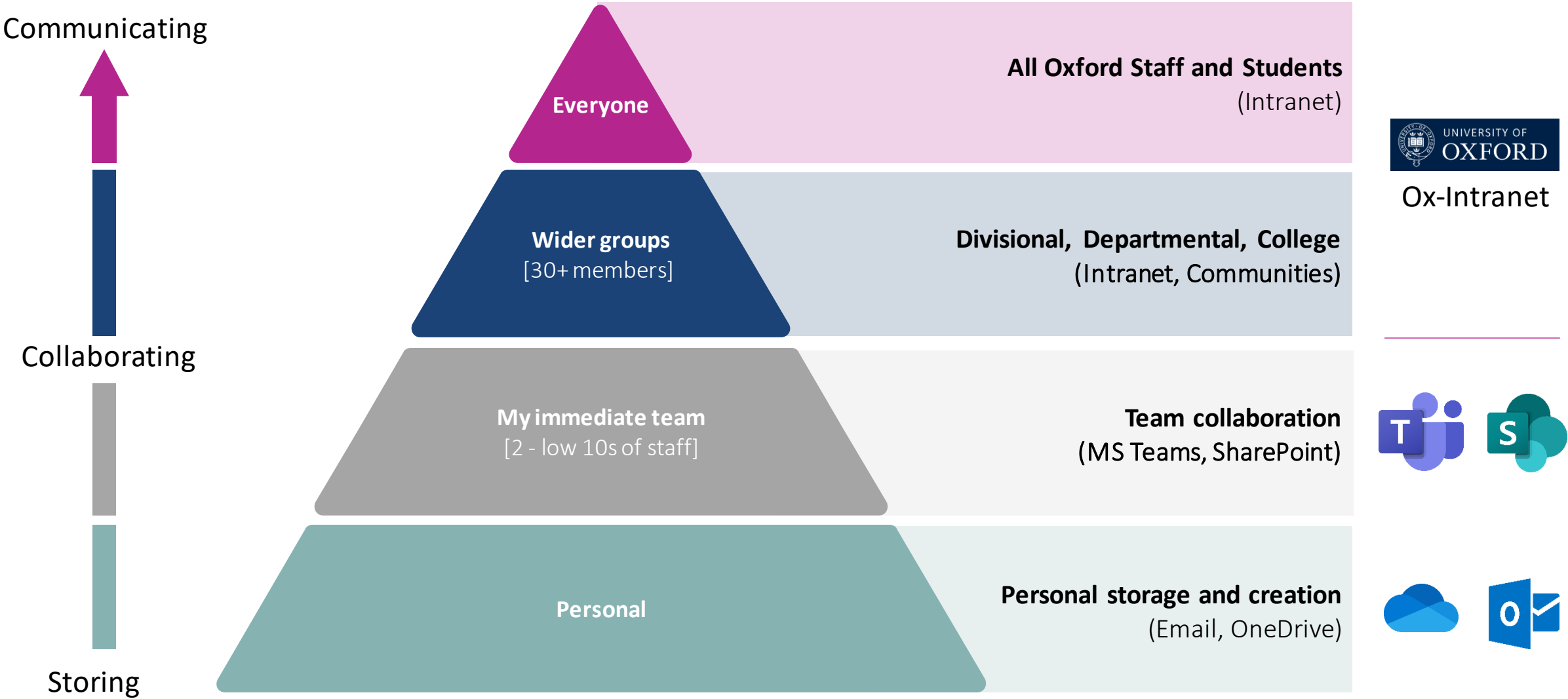
Options for sharing **internal content** with **external audiences**

1. Re-purpose external content on website, focused on internal audiences
2. Use website news stories to share internal news and best practice externally
3. Share information via other external channels, eg e-newsletters and social media

Options for sharing **external content** with **staff and students**

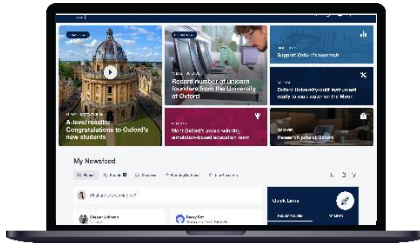
1. Use a dynamic feed to display external information on the intranet
2. Provide links from intranet to external content
3. Re-purpose external content on intranet, focused on internal aspects

Ox-Intranet and Microsoft services



Which **internal** channel to use

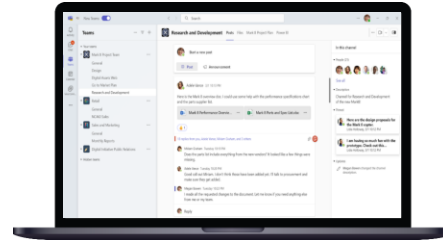
Ox-Intranet



Information for large groups of staff and students

NB: staff services can be linked or embedded into the intranet experience

SharePoint and Teams



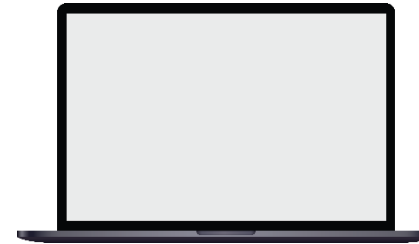
Information for small groups of colleagues.

Immediate (small) team use:

- Materials only relevant for individual teams
- Work-in-progress: materials that are in development. (On completion, they may move to the intranet)

SharePoint should no longer be used as an 'intranet'

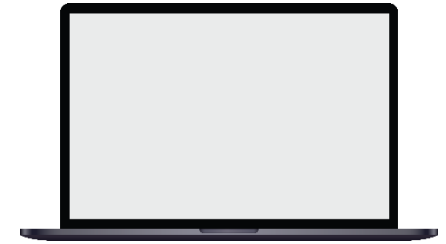
Canvas



Teaching and learning information for students, eg:

- Course information
- Lecture and reading lists

MyOxford



Dynamic (not static) content, solely for students, eg:

- Personal library loans
- Upcoming appointments and events

Staff and students

Students only

Where to publish people information

Website

- Academic and researcher information (biography / publications)
- External-facing professional services staff (eg events / admissions / senior leadership)

Intranet

- Information about all staff (academic, technical and professional services)
- Student information (where appropriate)

NB: work is underway to explore automation of academic and research information across web CMS and intranet via Symplectic

Oxford Fresco – standalone site, or OxWeb?

	<div>OxWeb on Fresco Our emerging vision is that the main University website (Oxweb) will be the future home of university-wide content; and that over time it will include divisional and departmental sites, to improve the user journey.</div>	<div>Other Fresco sites Other entities will continue to run as standalone sites. The content on these sites should follow the content strategy and principles.</div>	
Central University content	<div>University-wide content (admissions, research, corporate news, events and information)</div>	<div>UAS content relevant to external audiences</div> <div>Staff and student gateways</div>	<div>Central services, where there is a commercial or very specific operational need for a standalone website.</div>
Divisions and departments	<div>Divisional offices</div> <div>University departments</div>	<div>Institutes, schools, and research projects</div> <div>NB: Decisions to be made on a case-by-case basis about whether these sites are standalone. Consolidation is recommended wherever possible.</div>	<div>Multi-institution collaborations</div>
GLAM	<div>GLAM divisional information</div>		<div>Individual gardens, libraries and museums</div>
Colleges	<div>Conference of Colleges information (TBC)</div>		<div>All college websites</div>
Clubs, societies and subsidiaries	<div>Clubs and society listings</div>		<div>All clubs, societies and subsidiaries</div>

Summary of our content approach

Observation

Reflection

1

Any content exclusively for staff or students should sit on the intranet and be promoted where appropriate by email

The new Oxford intranet should be the exclusive home for internal content

2

Content for external audiences should be published on the web, supplemented by social channels for amplification

External content should be published via webCMS to a website

3

Any joint audience content needs to consider the primary audience and place accordingly

It is fully appropriate that some audiences have restricted access to some channels and content

4

Content should not repeat or significantly overlap with existing content

Audiences often have access to multiple platforms so where duplication and overlap can reduce confidence in content. Content should be re-written if **purpose** differs

5

Content should deliver for our content vision

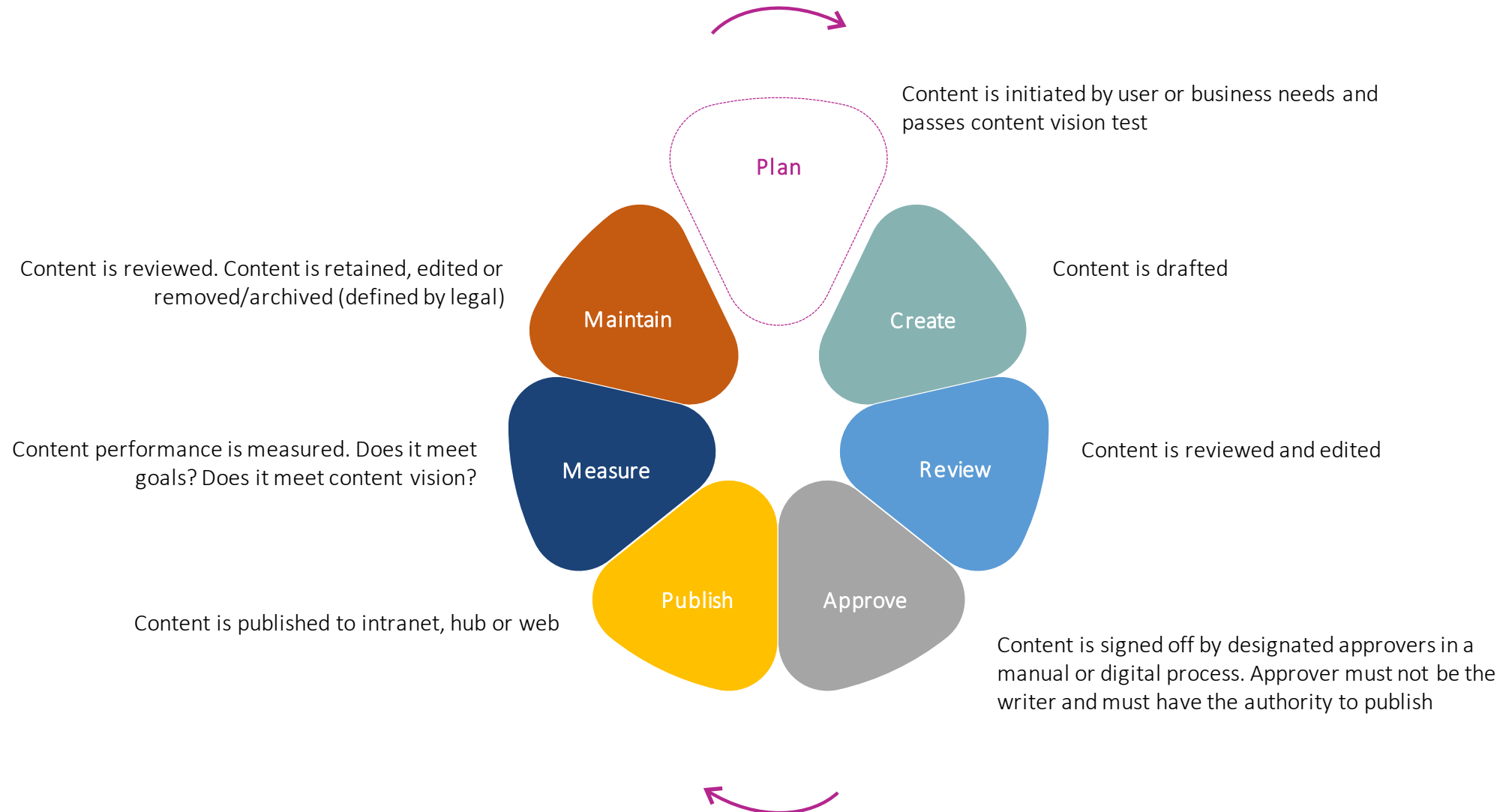
The vision defines our content and should always be central to decision making when publishing

6

Content should always be user-centric

We'll use data to target content to audiences to improve relevance wherever possible

How content is initiated, created, published and reviewed at Oxford



The content strategy will be reviewed by a Community of Practice

To bring key Oxford content stakeholders together, to create consistency in standards and improve our digital experiences.
To share knowledge, be supported and build professionalism in our content across Oxford University

The role

- Inform and provide insight for the content strategy
- Feed into standards, processes (eg workflow, lifecycle), guidelines, measurement framework
- Implement the agreed standards, processes, guidelines, measures in your area
- Share learnings from our work with the group – successes and failures
- Conduct content crits to improve content standards organisation wide
- Learn together – undertake relevant training and development opportunities

The Engagement and Dissemination portfolio will own the content strategy

- ✓ Steering group oversees the digital transformation of internal and external communication and will be the ultimate owners of the content strategy
- ✓ A community of practice will be used to maintain the content strategy as the needs of users, creators and the university evolve



Common questions and answers



Will I need to publish my content in different places?

We anticipate there will be a switch from old platforms such as Mosaic and other CMSs to the new platforms. This will start in June 2024 when we will go live with the new intranet. A limited body of internal content – content that that we wish to also share externally – will need to be republished for both intranet and web.

Will I need to use certain content types for our content?

We are planning to use a small number of powerful templates for all our content published internally and externally. By limiting the flexibility, we will improve consistency and advance the user experience of our content across our digital estate

Will I have to set up workflows to assist with content lifecycling?

We will look at automated tools, as part of the content management systems, to assist with content lifecycling. Ensuring that our content is accurate and adds value is central to our platform success

How can I join the Community of Practice to input on content strategy?

A community of practice will be established to input into this content strategy and help refine the details to make sure that it aligns with user and organisational needs. More information about this community will be shared.

Where can I get more information?

Please see our web page for more information and updates: <https://projects.it.ox.ac.uk/transforming-oxfords-digital-communications-programme-0>

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