

## **Case Study: Consolidating Online Consumer Health Information Resources**

2022

### **Introduction**

A major federal health agency that provides online health information to the public undertook an initiative to modernize and streamline its digital presence.

Over time, the agency had developed several stand-alone consumer health websites covering genetics, environmental health, multilingual materials, and HIV/AIDS. While each served a distinct audience, the proliferation of separate sites created overlapping content, inconsistent branding, and inefficiencies in maintenance.

To improve usability, visibility, and long-term sustainability, the agency consolidated four legacy websites into its main consumer health information website. The goal was to provide the public with a single, authoritative source of reliable health information and strengthen the agency's overall digital identity.

### **Scope of Work / Approach**

The project team conducted a rigorous, multi-phase content audit to determine whether information on each of the four legacy websites should be retained, revised, or retired. Content was evaluated for relevance, alignment with the agency's mission, value to users, uniqueness, quality, and sustainability.

User research, environmental scans, analytics, and stakeholder input guided decisions about which content was most valuable and how it should be incorporated into the main site. A technical plan described how to adapt and transfer content using existing infrastructure and templates, while communication plans kept internal and external stakeholders informed throughout the process.

The phased implementation comprised:

1. Evaluating and selecting content to retain from the four legacy websites.
2. Transferring and adapting high-value content and functionalities to the main site.
3. Implementing parallel technical and communications workstreams to ensure a coordinated transition.
4. Consolidating all consumer health information into a single, cohesive platform.

## **Key Insights / Findings**

Evaluation and user research revealed several consistent themes:

- Original, plain-language content was highly valued. Users prioritized clear explanations and context to understand complex topics.
- Audiences expected related health information to be available in one place and intuitive to navigate.
- Consolidation would create operational efficiencies, including less content duplication and more streamlined editorial workflows.
- Maintaining multiple sites was resource-intensive and unsustainable; a unified platform allowed more strategic use of staff and technical capacity.
- Integration improved discoverability, strengthening search visibility and alignment with modern digital practices.

## **Recommendations**

The team identified the most valuable and user-relevant content from each legacy site. Redundant sections and those with low traffic should be retired, with redirects to preserve SEO and ensure continuity for users.

Long-term recommendations included:

- Developing a unified content strategy and editorial workflow for consumer health information.
- Leveraging the agency's data science expertise to prioritize updates.
- Preserving multilingual and accessibility features to serve diverse audiences.
- Establishing a post-migration plan for evaluating user satisfaction and engagement.

## **Impact and Value**

Consolidation of legacy resources produced a more sustainable model for managing consumer health content and strengthened the agency's identity as a single, trusted source for this information. The unified platform improved navigation, increased search visibility, and expanded access to authoritative, easy-to-understand information.

For internal teams, the initiative streamlined maintenance and leveraged shared infrastructure and analytics. The project also created a repeatable framework for future integrations, balancing mission alignment, user value, and operational efficiency.