The Refugee Forum of King County (RFKC) is a non-profit professional organization that supports service providers serving refugees and newly arrived immigrants in the greater Puget Sound area. Members include representatives from government entities (both state and national), local nonprofits and religious service organizations. As such, RFKC demonstrates a wide variety of information needs.

One way the RFKC is valuable to its members is through a meeting held in-person each month. An abundance of resources are provided at these meetings including meeting agendas, guest presentations, and paper hand-outs. However, the information was inaccessible online. The forum discussed the idea of a website for several years, but limited skills and resources were a barrier. We solved this problem by working with them to design a website. Our MLIS skills and commitment to public service, information access, and equity bore a user-centered approach to solving the RFKC’s information problem and provided insight into the information issues affecting non-profit web design.

In the end, our website included:

- Customized admin interface for easier updating and maintenance organization
- Documentation and training for two web coordinators who participate in the workflow. Since the admins are important users, it was important to reduce distractions to customize the admin interface appropriately to streamline the web coordinators’ minimal time spent exploring the files. Another goal during the development process was to make it as simple as possible for the RFKC to find another developer for maintenance issues, and for the developer to be able to make changes with minimal time spent exploring the files. Another goal during the development process was to customize the admin interface appropriately to streamline the web coordinators’ workflow. Since the admins are important users, it was important to reduce distractions and make the back end correspond to the front end as much as possible.

In the end, our website included:

- Detailed member profiles
- Capacity for user-generated content
- Customized views of information about members and their services
- Documentation and training for two web coordinators who participate in the organization
- Customized admin interface for easier updating and maintenance

Although each of us specialized in UX Design, Content Strategy, and Development, we met regularly to collaborate and iterate on our shared designs. Elements of our user-centered approach included creation of personas and other deliverables to inform our design process. Additionally we maintained open lines of communication with the RFKC board and members to get timely feedback on our work.

UX Deliverables
- User research: surveys, interviews, and usability testing
- Wireframing and iterative prototyping
- Taxonomy research & concept mapping

Visual Design
- Facilitate discussion about tone of the organization
- Develop color and type models for site
- Develop logo representative of brand

Communication & Content Strategy
- Content development, gathering, and refinement
- Alignment: technical, instructional and vision
- Management of stakeholder needs and interests

The RFKC website was built according to current design and coding standards in order to ensure maximum ease of maintenance and use. Using WordPress as the platform, we created both a theme and a plugin to house the visual design and custom functionality, respectively. The goal was to make it as simple as possible for the RFKC to find another developer for maintenance issues, and for the developer to be able to make changes with minimal time spent exploring the files. Another goal during the development process was to customize the admin interface appropriately to streamline the web coordinators’ workflow. Since the admins are important users, it was important to reduce distractions and make the back end correspond to the front end as much as possible.

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