ABOUT NEW GEORGIA ENCYCLOPEDIA

The [New Georgia Encyclopedia](#) (NGE) is the nation's first born-digital state encyclopedia. Created by Georgia Humanities in partnership with the University of Georgia Press, the University System of Georgia/GALILEO, and the Office of the Governor, the NGE is a free online resource that covers Georgia's history and culture, including literature and the arts, business and industry, counties and cities, education, geography and the environment, government and politics, history and archaeology, science and medicine, and sports and outdoor recreation.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The NGE seeks design and development services for a complete redesign of our website. We invite vendors to submit proposals to revise our site's user interface and appearance while maintaining our existing content and media assets. Vendors should recommend an open-source CMS and approaches for the build that incorporate responsive design, search engine optimization, and content migration, among other features. Proposals should reflect a projected website launch date of August 2, 2021 and an all-inclusive budget not to exceed $100,000. Please note that as a grant-funded program, pricing will be a major factor in our decision making, and we expect competitive proposals to come in below that threshold.

BACKGROUND

First launched in 2004 and redesigned in 2013, the NGE contains more than 2,300 articles and over 7,000 media files. Its entries are written by established scholars and fact-checked by University of Georgia reference librarians. As such, it provides a uniquely authoritative resource to a nationwide community of readers that includes students, teachers, scholars, journalists, and anyone with an interest in the state.

When the site's initial, proprietary platform was threatened by obsolescence in 2013, the project underwent an extensive redesign, selecting Drupal 7 as its platform in hopes that it would offer the flexibility necessary to adapt to changes in technology and user needs. The redesigned site served the project well for a time, but it has suffered from a series of difficulties in recent years, including unsustainable maintenance costs and declining traffic. As recently as 2015, the NGE received more than 600,000 visitors per month. But despite ongoing efforts to protect its search

position, traffic on the site has declined precipitously in recent years, such that it now receives only 300,000 visitors per month.

When crafting their bids, vendors should give serious consideration to this trend, proposing strategies that will reverse the site's declining readership and position the encyclopedia to grow its audience in the years to come. Vendors are encouraged to provide concrete examples of how their previous projects have resulted in increased site usage.

PROJECT GOALS

As an open access publication, the NGE is a trusted resource that serves students, educators, researchers, journalists, and the broader public. Our goal is to grow NGE's audience, and the primary objective of this redesign is to increase user acquisition and engagement. We want a clean and compelling design that is built for an increasingly mobile-first environment. The new site should help our readers quickly find the information they're looking for and inspire them to dig deeper. We also want the flexibility to build content collections and features in-house to meet user interest and editorial needs. The redesigned site should help position the NGE as an essential research tool and significantly increase our traffic in the first year of launch.

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of this project involves a complete overhaul of the New Georgia Encyclopedia and should encompass site design and appearance, user experience, a content management system upgrade, and a migration of our existing articles and media assets. This includes:

I. Design

Requirements

1. Responsive design with effective scaling of media, typography, and graphics
2. Dynamic homepage, w/large images and multiple entry points for users, and customizable content collections/modules
3. Clean and compelling redesign of existing content types

Nice to have

1. Highlighting text to share it

2. Hover-over link previews for internal links

II. Editorial

1. Editors, not programmers, must be able to perform all common day-to-day content management tasks, including but not limited to the tasks described below
2. WYSIWYG editing of content
3. Bulk importing of content
4. Making bulk/global changes across multiple items
5. Adding, viewing, and modifying content metadata (we adhere to Dublin Core standard)
6. Adding new topics (either a new subject area or page), as well as all related modifications like the addition of the new topic to the menu
7. Multiple backend user roles for different editorial capacities, and ability to add new or change existing users and roles over time
8. Workflows for review and approval of content, including ability to preview publication
9. Revision workflows (for post-publication updating), with version control showing changes made, by whom, and when, and ability to roll back changes
10. Configuring new pages or features (e.g., exhibitions landing page, featured articles, content collections, media galleries, source sets, etc.)
11. Reporting and sharing data around site content (e.g., showing number of articles and multimedia objects on live site)
12. Ability to regularly export complete metadata for articles and media
13. Ability to gather statistics about our users and their activity on site
14. Automatic reporting of broken links (internal and external)
15. Updating header and footer content

Nice to have

16. Importing alt-text and location tags from Digital Library of Georgia metadata

III. Search and browsing

1. Robust search engine, basic and advanced, with multiple options for search filtering (type, category, date, Georgia Standards of Excellence reference number) and the ability to improve search results by tagging
2. Search must work fast, with results that are accurate and easy to refine (note: we currently use solr)
3. Multiple ways of browsing, e.g., by topic, alphabetically by title, author, "what's new,"

place/location, featured content (e.g., women's history)
4. Auto-generated and/or customizable displays of relevant suggested content for all appropriate content types
5. Multiple ways to search for content on the admin side (e.g., by title, by author, by credit line, by full text, by type, by date of publication, by associated article or media)

IV. Content

Requirements

1. Content types for articles, images, exhibitions, basic pages, counties, forms, blog/news, homepage features
2. Customizable, stand-alone media galleries (e.g., gallery for Georgia State Art Collection)
3. Quick Facts page that is visually appealing with custom graphics or artwork that bring state info to life
4. Engaging and user-friendly education section that invites students and teachers to explore articles, galleries, and teaching materials
5. Ability to embed third-party tools in articles and on pages
6. Template for minimally designed pages for special features built with third-party tools (e.g., story maps, timelines, spotify playlists, etc.)
7. Options for landing pages that provide a cross-section of articles, media, and facts, curated around a given theme, time, subject, or other method of subdividing/tagging content (e.g., black history, women's studies, LGBT history, primary source set from the Civil Rights Movement, etc.)
8. Automatically generated citations for each article or media asset
9. Display of original publication date plus last revision date in user interface
10. URLs for all content that are understandable with breadcrumbing
11. Ability to differentiate internal links to other NGE resources from external URLs that constitute an additional user resource (e.g., content from Georgia-based resources)
12. Sign up for e-newsletter
13. Print this article button
14. Easy access to the "business" side of NGE, such as contact information, staff, etc.
15. User ability to report errors or technical problems, to offer comments, to suggest revisions

Nice to have

- Ability to add pull quotes or other engaging elements to text
- Content type for quizzes/trivia
- A subsite or special landing page for a Georgia Studies "textbook"

- Author profile pages, linked from their content throughout the site
- Help/"Getting Started" page, with tours highlighting functionality for different audiences. For example: citations, further reading, and breadcrumbing for researchers; lesson plans for teachers; maps for tourism, etc.
- Donate/contribute button

V. Media

1. Ability to associate multimedia files of different formats to articles
2. Ability to add caption, credit, and metadata to media as necessary, including ability to hyperlink, and to associate media items and related data with multiple articles
3. Ability to choose placement of images inside article, in a variety of placement styles relevant to our content
4. Digital media library for file storage, with a good admin-facing search for locating needed assets
5. Ability for users to search and discover images independent of articles
6. Easy, seamless viewing/listening for audio/video clips
7. Scalable images with option to view full size

VI. SEO and Social

1. Templates should include appropriate components when creating pages in order to boost rankings on major search engines
2. Fast page load speed
3. Ability to manage keywords or tags to articles to improve site search
4. Sharing content (email, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.), with customizable open graph tags for social cards
5. Optimize images for discovery in Google image search
6. Incorporate W3C accessibility standards in UX (https://www.w3.org/TR/2018/REC-WCAG21-20180605/)

   Note: Recent efforts to reverse the current site's declining traffic have included the following: submission of a new sitemap, identifying mobile pages as canonical, deployment of an AMP module, activating alt text for media, and the adoption of structured data. We welcome new ideas that go above and beyond these interventions.

VII. Technology

1. Migrate site to a flexible, open-source CMS

2. Migration of all content, including more than 2,300 articles and over 7,000 images in the site media library. Some images will likely need to be migrated from cloud storage.
3. Maintain existing topic taxonomy for articles, with ability to add and change as needed
4. Preserve old URLs, and redirect where appropriate, for preservation of search rank and users' bookmarks
5. Database must be backed up and exported regularly to GALILEO servers
6. Database must support ongoing growth of site content and media

VIII. Maintenance

1. Site must be sustainable and supported (in terms of updates, patches, and versions) for six months after launch
2. Vendor should offer maintenance service options for keeping NGE apprised of major updates, potentially disruptive issues, changes in best practices on the horizon and propose course of action

COLLABORATION

We're looking for a partner in this project who can:
1. Collaborate on a shared set of goals and measurable outcomes for the redesign
2. Create and adhere to a timeline of work that allows us to achieve our goals
3. Track and advance our progress toward those goals during our work together, alerting us if we're in danger, and proposing possible solutions
4. Provide regular detailed updates of progress, with opportunity for feedback and time to implement that feedback
5. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of our organization, our content, and our audience, and propose variances from our scope and design where opportunities exist that more effectively help us reach our goals
6. Conduct testing and quality assurance on deliverables and updates

FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

Please submit a document including:
- Agency Information – include firm name, contact information, and a short narrative detailing the firm's history, expertise, and approach to web design

- Agency Experience – describe success stories in increasing user acquisition and provide three examples of similar projects for previous clients, including testimonials or references if available
- Project Approach – include sample project plans for the redesign and details regarding your process for project management
- User Feedback - describe your approach to conducting user research and recommend approaches for collecting feedback on the new design
- Staff Information – provide project team bios and areas of expertise
- Schedule – include a proposed work schedule that reflects RFP timeline, including deadlines for major deliverables and regular check-in with NGE
- Cost – provide an itemized budget including estimated costs for all work

TIMELINE

- RFP shared: April 6, 2020
- Proposals due: May 4, 2020
- Finalists selected: May 26, 2020
- Project kick-off: July 22, 2020
- Content migration: December 7, 2020
- QA begins: January 4, 2021
- Release candidate: April 15, 2021
- Soft launch: May 3, 2021
- Target launch: August 2, 2021

DEADLINE

Please submit your proposal to Edward Hatfield (edward.hatfield@uga.edu) and Stephanie Devine (sdevine@georgiahumanities.org).

Thank you, and we look forward to your response!