



# Website optimization

conducted by iService @ 16.11.2021

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## INTRODUCTION

The website is the flagship of each project. In order to inform the target groups about the idea and the work, the page should contain all important information and is a valuable marketing instrument.

Not only details and information are necessary, **regular updates are crucial as well**. With posting new info constantly:

- target groups are well informed about process
- users stay interested in the projects work
- users will actively check for new updates/they will get involved in the projects work
- helps to build trust among target groups
- is a possibility to transfer information to the public
- gives the users content to distribute to others
- increases the chance of higher search engine ranking

Therefore it is strongly recommended to update the website with **at least 1 update per week**. An update can be a news article, an event, a project story, etc. However, not only the quantity is essential, but also the quality of the post.

To achieve this goal, the first step is to keep in mind that regular updates are necessary. During the working day, or even at the way home or under the shower 😊 ideas might come that are worth posting. These should always be written down, to slowly fill a pool of ideas from which it is possible to choose.

Basic topics for project updates can be:

- important developments or changes
- events (announcement, agenda, summary)
- insights of the way of working or of processes
- insights regarding the idea, the profession, the department
- inspirational or thought-provoking impulses
- little known facts and aspects regarding the subject or the field of expertise
- introduction of team members

## HOW TO WRITE FOR THE WEB

The topic of writing is split into 5 parts: the preparation, the strategy, storytelling, writing and the possibilities of distributing the content.

### Preparation

The first step is to **find the target group** of the project. These are the users that are most important for your work, are important to be informed about your process and/or are most interested in the provided content. In case this is not already known, the easiest way of finding the target group is to specify persona description of a **typical representative** of this target group. Age, gender, country, family situation, field of working, interests, main channels of media consumption are important to consider. After finding 3 – 4 target groups and typical representatives of these, it is necessary to think about what they are most interested in the projects. **What kind of information** will be relevant for each of them? With this information, the goal for each target group can be defined: if a user of the target group reads content, what should be achieved with this? Examples can be: attention of the projects work, reactions to the content, building trust, identification, etc.

### Strategy

After the preparation and the collection of information about the target group, strategic content planning is necessary:

- what is the core messages which should be distributed?
- what communication assets does the project have? (results/achievements for example)
- how many posts are needed for distributing the message? (only one update or a split into 3-4 posts?)

Following this considerations, the update possibilities are split into hygiene, hub and hero content.

**Hygiene content:** content which is interesting for regular updates, does not have a time-stamp on it and which can be used for times when there is nothing else to tell. It is designed to keep the interest of existing follower. Examples are “how to ...” -series, FAQs or tutorial content.

**Hub-content:** content which is valuable and engaging, which should lead to users coming back to the website. Examples can be “behind the scenes” posts, introduction of team members etc.

**Hero-content:** content meant to be seen by a lot of people. “Go-big-moments”, major achievements, everything that is raising broad awareness.

## Storytelling

The idea of a project, its progress and the work everyone involved is putting into it, is indescribably valuable. Storytelling is a perfect method to achieve the goal to distribute the content to a lot of people and to make sure the outcomes are used.

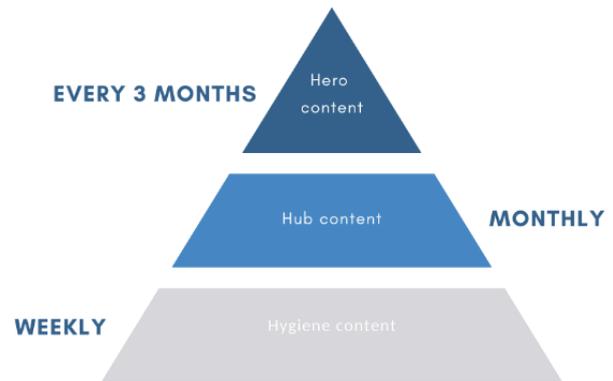
Storytelling has a very long tradition, it is a major part of human culture. Stories have always been used to inform about facts, information or – recently – also about marketing messages. With including narrated elements, sub content is created in the brain which forms associations and stimulates emotions. This builds stronger memories. However, storytelling also helps with:

- trust building
- entertaining users, which makes it more likely for them to come back
- transferring expert knowledge in an easy explained way
- raise motivation in users to take part in the discussion and to distribute the content

*Every information can be a story!*

- Start with an emotional problem/an issue that is emotional to the person describing it
- Describe the storyteller, give users a picture about the main character of the story
- Describe obstacles that have to be overcome
- Show progress
- Have a highlight
- Have a nice, positive ending, give an outlook

Based on the topic, the following questions should be answered: what is the main issue? What is the topic the content is about? Why is this an issue? Why is it important to write about it? What can be done about it? What does the writer have to say about it? At the end, it is necessary to always include a call-to-action! What should users do after finishing the article (look at another article, read about achievements, etc.).



When it comes to telling the story of an Interreg projects/about the progress of the project, the following questions can be helpful:

- Pinpoint (micro-regional) issues to make sure to catch the user on a personal level.
- Explain to what extent the region has been shaped by the project.
- Include this in the basic-storytelling idea!

## Writing

As soon as a suitable message has been found and a story has been built up around it, it needs to be written down in a nice and easy understandable way. To structure this story, the following parts are important:

- **Headline:** exciting, promising, entertaining. The headline determines if an article will be read by a user or not. Very important: if a promise is given in the headline, it always needs to be kept!
- **Introduction:** short outlook on the content of the article, should not give away too much, but should keep the user interested
- **Main part:** the reader needs to be guided through the content with a red thread. Every argument should be placed in a new paragraph and should be explained properly.
- **Conclusion:** a short summary of the arguments and a outlook on what can happen next. It should also contain a call-to-action on what the user is expected to do next.



With this structure, it will be easier for the user to follow the content. Some quick tips might help in writing:

- Pictures and quotes help to make an article “lighter”, easier to read. Should be included if possible.
- Only one statement per sentence
- Main sentences should always be preferred
- Transitions help to lead users through the article
- Use the language of the reader: the article should be understandable and without technical terms
- Examples and experiences help to understand the topic better.

## Distributing the content

After building the story and writing it, the content will be posted on the website to make it visible. As the website is a nice way to distribute information, it is not the only tool which should be used for sharing information: social media platforms help to reach a wider group of people. For more information on this, please refer to the whitepaper on “Social media management”.

## WEBSITE METRICS

Following the writing and posting part, the website metrics will help with determining if a content is successful and which kind of content works the best. To be able to make the right conclusions, it is important to always look at metrics for a certain period (3 – 4 months, a year, etc.). This will not only show a momentarily shot, but the trend of the website visibility.

### Unique users

A unique user is – for a specific period of time (day/month) – an individual that has visited the website and is counted once, irrespective of the number of times the page was revisited.

### Visits

A count of – for a specific period of time - how many times a page has been viewed. If a unique user visits the website multiple time, all of this times are counted.

### Pages

A count of – for a specific period of time – how many pages of the website have been visited.

For interpreting data, the following aspects are interesting and worth looking at:

- Basic statistics as unique users, visits and pages: these will help to determine the development of visibility
- Days of the week: knowing the days when the most users are visiting a page will help determine when to post regular updates best, to make sure as much users as possible will see it

- Countries: helps to determine which countries are reached well and which should be improved/addressed more often.
- Connections: where are the users coming to visit the page. Which channels are working well and which are not helping distributing users to the website?

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Websites are a perfect instrument to distribute content to important target group. In order to make sure the content is seen by as many users as possible, regular updates are essential. To make these interesting and meaningful, storytelling is a nice and easy way to attract users attention. Remember:

**Every topic is a story!**