Redesigning Kyoto University's Website

Introduction

We are scheduling a redesign of the official website of Kyoto University (www.kyoto-u.ac.jp, hereinafter referred to as the "official website") on Tuesday, December 1, 2020. In this article, we will introduce an overview of the redesign project, which started in 2017, as well as our new official website.

The purpose of the redesign and the efforts of the Web Strategy Office

Our official website is under the authorities of Public Relations Section of the General Affairs Department. Including information for graduates as well as regarding entrance exams, research results, and recruitments for faculty and staff, requests for posting various information comes in from many internal organizations on a daily basis. With the official website using a content management system (CMS) in order to support the task, these posting requests need to be reflected on the official website following an appropriate workflow by request type. However, our current official website, especially the CMS, has been using Plone since 2014. As the years go by, we have seen more requests that we did not expect at its inception, and the following challenges have accumulated:

- Page load time is long.
  - The browsing experience on the user side has gotten worse and the operational efficiency on the management side has decreased.
- Page display function is limited.
  - It is becoming more difficult to display pages that meet the intentions of department sending the information.
- there is tremendous gap compared with the standard design of foreign universities' websites.
  - It does not sufficiently reflect the university's international strategy regarding international students and non-Japanese researchers.
- Secure communication protocol (https) is not taken into account.
  - It is no longer able to meet demands needed of a reliable website.

In addition to these technical and functional issues, and being difficult to provide a flexible response to the requests because of the lack of personnel who is able to professionally manage website operations, the website also requires improvements from an organizational perspective, including non-user-friendly page structures divided vertically by department. To solve these issues, the Web Strategy Office was established in 2017 under the Executive Vice-President in charge of information infrastructure. With a four-year budgetary measure given, the redesign work has been conducted across the organization, such as introducing a new CMS and renewing the designs of the websites. Particularly, the change of communication protocol to "http" type was requested by major browsers such as Google Chrome, one after another, so the current official website was converted to https in September 2020. The structure and efforts of the Web Strategy Office are described in "Info! No. 14." Therefore, this article will explain the key points of the redesign regarding CMS and website design.

Overview of the new CMS, Drupal

Drupal is an open-source CMS with the following features:

- Customizability: Drupal, also classified as a "web application platform," allows you to build your website freely by combining components called modules.
- Flexibility and security: The official modules called the core and extension modules developed by third parties are designed to interact via APIs. Since adding extension modules does not change the core, it improves both flexibility in using the modules and security in protecting important parts of the core.
- High rate of adoption by large-scale sites: Although Wordpress is the most frequently used CMS in many sites across our university, Drupal is most widely used in large-scale traffic sites in the world (as of October 31, 2020, according to W^3Techs). Foreign universities, including Oxford University, Harvard University, and MIT, have built their sites using Drupal. In Japan, Hiroshima University and others have adopted it. When our university considered introducing it, we consulted Hiroshima University to see if it was user-friendly, among other considerations.

New website design

The new website design was developed in accordance with the Kyoto University Visual Identity (VI) Guidebook (published in October 2018), as described in "Info! No. 16." Professor Akihisa Tatsumi of the Department of Design, Kyoto City University of Arts, worked with us on the design as a Chief Advisor. By creating a visual design that is consistent with the business cards and envelopes that we have developed, we aim to foster our "Kyoto University-like" atmosphere.

Figure: New website design (conceptual image of website under development)

Desktop version   Smartphone version

Conclusion

During the writing of this article (to be published at the end of October), our Web Strategy Office has been working on the development of the website for release on December 1, 2020. The redesign of the official website would not be enough to solve all of the challenges the university now faces concerning sharing of information on the web. So that we can spread information in accordance with the university's strategy, it is still necessary to build and maintain horizontal connections among various departments and divisions with this renovated official website as its core and to continue optimizing connections among the entire university. It would be greatly appreciated if you could continue to give us your opinions on how we can use the Web to improve our educational research activities.

(Eri Ono, Specific Lecturer of IT Planning Office, IIMC (Web Strategy Office))

Service introduction

New faculty & staff groupware and email
How to use online storage

Since the faculty & staff groupware renewal in January 2019, we have been offering online storage services: Garoon's File Management and Messages and G Suite's Google Drive. Also, we continue to offer KUMail storage service as a sub-service of KUMail, an email system for faculty and staff.

We have prepared a guide for using online storage services of faculty & staff groupware and email so that you can use these services appropriately according to the sharing requirements of electronic files to be stored. The following is the overview.

*This article is based on information available as of October 27, 2020.

Please refer to the latest version of the guide posted on the IIMC website for the latest information.

http://www.iimc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/services/portal/member/ku_internal/post_1.html

1. Comparison of functions

	Capacity	Sharing with students and non-university members	Change of ownership	Secondary group sharing settings
Garoon: File management	5GB (total in Garoon)	×	○	○
Garoon: Messages	5GB (total in Garoon)	×	×	△
Google Drive	Unlimited	○	△	○
KUMail Storage	2GB	○	×	×

2. Sharing with students and non-university members

If you'd like to share electronic files externally or with students, your options are Google Drive and KUMail storage. Garoon is only available for users with a faculty & staff account (SPS-ID) and cannot be shared externally or with students.

Google Drive used to be only accessible to individuals who had a Google account, but from around October 2020, it also became accessible to individuals who do not have a Google account.

KUMail storage has an email authentication function that allows you to specify the email address that you want to share with, enabling you to share highly confidential electronic files externally and with students in a secured way without exchanging passwords.

3. Change of ownership

In the case of sharing electronic files over a medium to long period of time, it is operationally important to be able to change the owner when the person in charge changes.

The easiest way to change the owner is using Garoon's file management, because the operational management control of a folder can be specified in a secondary group, and changes to the members of the secondary group are reflected in the operational management control of the file.

Although only one user can be assigned as the owner, the current owner will have to take the steps of designating the new owner, with Google Drive allowing you to change the owner to the user you are sharing the file with. For example, if the current owner resigns without appointing a new owner, it will be impossible to change the owner of the file/folder, and the file/folder will be deleted after 365 days. Attention should be paid on this matter.

Garoon messages and KUMail storage are not suitable for medium- to long-term sharing, because you cannot change owners with these services.

4. Secondary group sharing settings

Garoon file management and Google Drive can be set up to share files to the secondary groups of faculty & staff groupware. By setting the secondary group as the party you are sharing with, any changes to the members in the secondary group will automatically be reflected in the storage sharing settings.

Although because the destination will be saved as individual members, any changes to the members in the secondary group after the message is sent will not be reflected in the message destination, for Garoon messages, you can select a secondary group and specify its members as the destination.

We are planning to conduct a seminar on the use of the online storage of faculty & staff groupware and email based on this guide at the IIMC seminar series in AY2020. The seminar materials are scheduled to be released publicly. Please refer to them as well.

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(Yujin Asao, Head of e-work Promotion Division Team, Information Promotion Section,
IT Planning Office/Planning and Information Management Department, IIMC)

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A Price for Careless Posts on the Internet and on Social Media

While we believe that your living environment has been tremendously changed as well, new terms such as "with corona era" and "social distancing" were created. With communication using information technology, such as online classes and online meetings, springing into wide use, we are in a situation where people must keep physical distance from each other in the actual society. Now let's think about how we put out information on the Internet and on social networking services (SNS), as in addition to the online classes and online meetings, the opportunities for using networks have increased.

Facebook, LINE, Instagram, and Twitter are several of the most common social networking services. Because of the features of its service and protocols, many are registered to Facebook under their real name, while users tend to stay anonymous on Twitter. The higher the anonymity, the more likely it is that problems will occur. When people take part in online social interactions anonymously, they may say things which they cannot say in person or with their real name, or exhibit more aggressive behaviors. There is also a term "internet mob." When people post comments out of a sense of their justice, it tends to be extreme, sometimes resulting in a group of people attacking an individual.

So that the right to request disclosure of sender information is ensured, in the event that a violation of rights occurred from posts on bulletin boards or social media, as a measure against issues online such as privacy violations or defamation, the Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers (abbreviated name) has been established. If the sender can be technically identified, the sender may be held liable for civil and criminal responsibilities, even if the information was posted anonymously online.

In one instance, while a person was having a conversation with a classmate on Twitter, the person tweeted with an intention only to tease the classmate. However, the classmate perceived the Tweet as a slander online, which is public to the whole world, and demanded compensation. Also, in some cases, people who just simply retweeted information that is a slander were regarded as taking part in spreading the information and were demanded to pay compensation, just as with the sender. Once information is sent out, the information quickly spreads to the world, and it is not easy to remove. Posting carelessly on the Internet and on social media can cost you a significant amount of compensation!

When you put out information on the Internet or on social media, please ensure that the information is not discriminatory, defamatory, insulting, harassing, or causing violation of privacy from the opponent's point of view. It is important to be considerate to others, both in the real world and in online communities.

Information for reference

Cases of Trouble Caused Online (2020 Version) - Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000681954.pdf
Notice to the Whole Campus on October 19, 2020 "Cautions on Spreading Information Online and on Social Media"

(Yosuke Toda, Head of Information Security Management Office, Information Infrastructure Division, IT Planning Office/Planning and Information Management Department, IIMC)