



Carr Hill High School & Sixth Form - A Case Study

Looking at the successful journey from website
inception to website reception



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Carr Hill High School & Sixth Form - A Case Study, By Ben Bedford

Ben leads our operations at Schudio and ensures our clients projects are delivered to their requirements.

Ben was very involved with the Carr Hill website project, and has written this case study as a guide of their experience through their Schudio website project.

This case study includes quotes from Carr Hill in reference to their work with Schudio in developing their website.



Getting started on your website

Audience

When starting out on a new website project it's important to determine your audience and keep them in mind throughout the process.

Carr Hill's audience includes both parents (high school) and older students (sixth form) as their main audience. It was important to have a website that reflected the school as a whole, but also differentiated enough the year 7 pupils from the sixth form students.

Having this in mind helps when determining the next two aspects of getting started.

Structure

Building the structure for a new website is key to it's success. The structure will determine how visitors interact with the website.

Usually we begin a website by reviewing the existing structure. We then tidy it up to ensure it better serves the audience.

Carr Hill's new structure is clearly split into sections relevant for specific audiences.

- Current Students
- Prospective Students
- Sixth Form

Content

Once the structure has been determined it's time to work out what's going to sit on the pages.

If the structure has been well thought out bearing in mind the audience, and any statutory requirements this process should be much faster.

Some content is likely to come from the existing website, and some content will probably be newly created.

Features to look for

To effectively manage your website you need an effective content management system. Determining which CMS you will use is probably the most important part of the decision process when commissioning a new website. Without a strong CMS with powerful features your website content will languish on the page. Content on the website needs to be easy and quick to update otherwise it won't get updated.

Ensure that the features offered within the system match up to the requirements of your website, remember the points from getting started and try to determine how your website will communicate to your visitors and what tools you need to effectively do that. We recommend ensuring dynamic content (the content that regularly changes) is available and easy to update, content like news, events and blog posts. If this content is regularly kept up to date visitors will keep coming back to your website to read it.



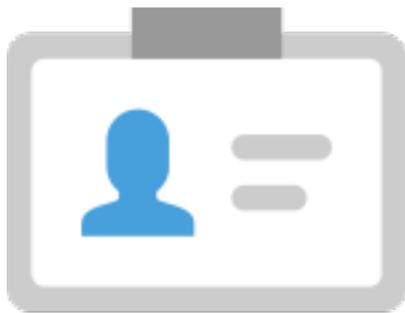
“Initially, the benefit was little disruption to our website service when we launched. This was great for us and, most importantly, our website users. On a day to day basis we are able to quickly update information, add/remove pages, upload news stories and much more. The simplicity of the CMS means we are able to promptly, accurately and effectively communicate with our audience.”

Functionality & Usability



The CMS provided by Schudio is simple to use. It did not take us long to navigate the dashboard and other features. We were quickly using the CMS like it had been in place for years.

Who can use the website?



What about the people who are going to use the website? It's really important to get your users right. Most systems will allow you to have multiple logins to edit the site, and the better ones will allow you to set permissions for different users to grant access to different areas, some of the best (Schudio CMS included) will allow you to set roles or types for users as well to ensure a content approval step is put in place.

What type of training will they need?



When all the users are in place we need to ensure they are able to use the system without a lengthy training period. In 30mins it should be possible to explain and train a user on how to administer the key content sections of the website that they will be using, for example adding a blog post or news article, and how to add documents, photo galleries, and videos into that page of content too.

Using features

We mentioned earlier about the importance of dynamic content on your website. Carr Hill understand the importance of this content and it's one of their favourite features.



One of the best things about the CMS is that we can upload news stories and schedule a publishing date in the future.

Keeping the dynamic content updated doesn't take too long, but sometimes in school the time you're allocated to spend on the website might not be the time to post all of the news content. Being able to schedule content to go out at different times gives the impression that your content is being regularly and often updated, even if the updates were all done at one time!



Evolving Features



But what about features that you want that aren't available at the moment? Advanced, modern features to help as you continue to improve your website.

At Schudio we can deliver bespoke features for clients:



Recently we worked with Schudio to devise a live web chat feature. We are looking forward to launching this feature and feel that it will be of great benefit to our users as well as streamlining the school's incoming enquiries channels.

We also try where possible to develop these features into our system so everyone can use them.



The new features are always relevant to our website needs. It is great that a lot the ideas for new features develop from a query or a suggestion from another school. If one school is looking to improve or adapt a certain online feature it is likely that other schools will benefit from the concept Schudio design as a result.

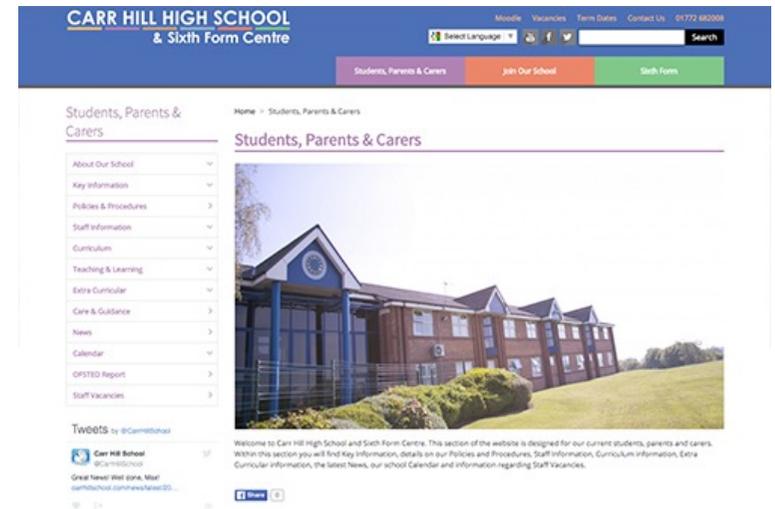
Can the functionality of your website and CMS be easily expanded as you advance and technology moves forward? Or will you be locked into the tools provided when your website is first launched?

What do people think?

After all the work that's been put into your website it can be helpful to find out what people think of your new website. This can help your school determine that they've spent their money wisely and help determine the benefit provided by the new website.

Since the launch of their new website lots of people have got in touch with Carr Hill about their new website and what they think of it.

And it's clear to see from their comments that the hard work spent in the initial phases has really paid off.



We've received lots of positive feedback from our students, parents, carers and staff. Most people comment on how easy the website is to navigate and the modern look it has.

Why did you choose Schudio?

When choosing your website provider there's a few things to bear in mind.

CMS

This is usually set by the provider. The only way to access some of the best systems (including Schudio School Website CMS) is by using the developer of that CMS.



We chose Schudio because the team are knowledgeable and passionate about delivering the best school websites. The team's industry experience and continued drive means we feel that we are getting the best web provision within the sector.

Sector Specific?

Schudio work exclusively in the education sector, this allows us to be experts in our field, and develop our bespoke CMS for use in education. Some providers will work across a broad range of sectors and create websites for a wide variety of clients.

Reputation

Anyone can build a website, a one man band to a huge design agency. But it's the final product that we are most interested in, asking previous clients of the provider or reviewing their portfolio are good ways to check what a company is like. We asked Carr Hill to sum up Schudio in one short sentence...



Industry expertise, coupled with friendly service and innovative thinking.

What Next?

We've seen a bit of the Carr Hill website story, but obviously there's a lot more involved than what has been mentioned here. Try and put into practice some of the points indicated in this case study on your own website.

If you want to start your own new website story please get in touch to see how Schudio can help.

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