SiteWorks Bulletin May 2024

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SiteWorks roll-out

The roll-out of the SiteWorks project got underway with Zoom Introduction to Training & Migration sessions from early February. A lot has happened since then.

- All u3a sites that are registered with SiteWorks have been sent T&Cs to sign.
- The majority of those u3as have signed T&Cs and are somewhere between invited to Zoom and migrating/going live
- The 100th u3a SiteWorks site went live on the morning of Sunday, 28th April and as of May17th we now have 133 live sites.

Migrators are nowhere near capacity so if you are approaching site planning followed by site preparation stages you might wish to push yourself a little if you want to take advantage of this early availability.

T&Cs status and Zoom bookings

There are still around 170 u3a sites that have yet to sign the T&Cs or where T&Cs have been signed but no Zoom booking has been made to progress further in the programme. Various reasons are being put forward regarding this and some are misconceptions that we shall try to address individually. Site Builder is end-of-life and will be turned off within the year. If your u3a is not planning to use SiteWorks it is important to put an alternative in place as soon as possible. We are a team of volunteers and need to plan our time so if your u3a is not already actively migrating please talk to us. We are here to help you with any issues or concerns that you may have.

Training & Migration feedback

Thank you to the 60+ Web Managers who have taken the time to give feedback on part 1 of the training & migration process (Zoom and learning SiteWorks). The feedback is around 96% positive overall and some of the comments are really lovely and make the work that has gone into the training workbook worthwhile. What has been very useful is the feedback about the timings. We made estimates within the team, but real data helps us to plan and also provides some guidance for Web Managers yet to begin their migration.

Zoom to going live date has varied between 2 days and around 3 months so far. Feedback indicates an average of 22 hours going through part 1 of the training workbook over several days/weeks and we can see that, on average, Web

Managers are in the site planning/site preparation stage for about a month before going live. Average overall is more like 2 months in total with work in each section taking place over several days rather than a couple of intensive sessions.

We now have over 100 live sites but only 11 Web Managers have so far given feedback on part 2 of the training & migration process (site planning and server site preparation). What has been received has been positive but there is not enough of it to provide reliable trends. If you have completed your migration and can spare a few minutes to give your feedback we would be grateful.

Part 1 feedback link is https://forms.office.com/e/ka3rfNgXTn and part 2 is https://forms.office.com/e/9FHZQ48351

WordPress 6.5 updates for those relatively new to WordPress/SiteWorks

The new features supported by WordPress 6.5 plus the new u3a SiteWorks plugins features and functions have been rolled out. Note that any Web Manager working through the training workbook and using Local WP and the demo zip file will need to make sure they have applied all the available updates to see these new features.

At editing/display level there are some nice plugin enhancements. Here are the summaries.

- Using the u3a groups list block: When displaying the group list, you will be able to show or hide items such as status, time, and venue. You'll be able to display groups in alphabetical order by vertical column or horizontally across the page. You'll be able to filter groups by category. When setting up events you will be able to make them multi-category.
- Using the u3a events block: You can show previous or future events in ascending or descending order. You will be able to display events by category, show a specified number of events or events over a specific number of days. You'll be able to turn on and turn off the display of group events from this page instead of having to go to u3a settings. You will have more layout choices. Adding a featured image, you'll be able to show an image alongside the text of your event. You'll be able to add a colour to the background grid of each event. When setting up an event you'll be able to choose the end time as well as the start time.
- A new WordPress feature for buttons will be the ability to apply a drop shadow. u3a code has been added that enables the shadow to be one of several pre-set colours/ weights/ styles that complement the u3a branding colours. This feature is available for similar blocks such as columns and images.
- An enhancement to the u3a contact form plugin provides the facility to log the use made of the contact form. This facility is initially switched off and the site Admin can turn it on if the log is required.
- The u3a contact form is set up with a 'spam trap'. A robot will fill in a field that is invisible to a human. The contact form log records all mail sent from contact forms across the site and will pick up such activity if your site is being targeted. This data is stored for 90 days so if this feature is enabled on your site you will need to make a small change to your u3a Privacy policy to reflect this.

A technical bulletin has been issued regarding the above. The User Guide was updated before roll-out and contains some additional features and functions. A 'how to' update document is being written for Web Managers as an addendum to the training workbook and will be issued to all who have attended the Zoom session to date. The training workbook will be updated to reflect the changes and will be used with new Web Managers going through the programme but will be available for existing ones upon request.

As always you can find more information about the SiteWorks programme on our website - https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/

The SiteWorks Team