

## Case Study: UW–Madison’s website integration project improves marketing efficiency and user experience

Prospective University of Wisconsin Continuing Studies students enjoy a personalized user experience when they visit the department’s website. When users click on a digital ad promoting specific programs, they are directed to a customized site display.

### CHALLENGE

#### Confusing UX negatively impacts conversion rates

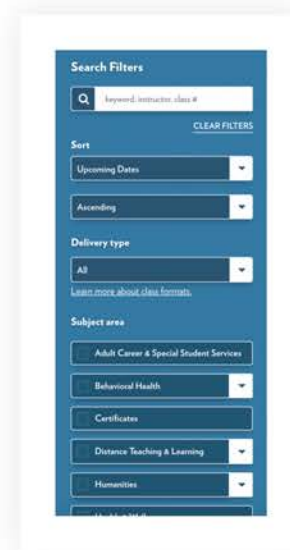
When prospective nontraditional students visit the University of Wisconsin Continuing Studies websites, they enjoy a personalized user experience. That wasn’t always the case.

In the past, a prospect may have been confused about how to achieve their higher education goals.

Now when prospects click on a digital ad promoting specific programs, they are directed to customized websites. Forms capture their contact information, and they receive welcoming emails through marketing automation. If desired, enrollment coaches will guide them to the next step of their educational journey.

Pull back the curtain of the University of Wisconsin Continuing Studies personalized experience, and you’ll discover an industrious marketing team. They’re implementing a website integration process. It benefits future and existing students, streamlines the marketing team’s operations, and provides better marketing campaign tracking.

Continuing Studies typically works with off-campus students who participate in one of its programs.



*You can count on Earthling to be a really good partner who can navigate the complexities of a business like Higher Education.*

**Debra Schwabe**  
Web Manager, UW Continuing Studies

### SOLUTION

#### Use website integration to enhance performance

Before starting the Continuing Studies website and automation upgrades, the UW created a new campus brand to unify its thousands of diverse websites. Leaders at Continuing Studies wanted their websites to reflect key elements of the UW brand.

Greta Seckman, former assistant director of Digital Solutions at UW–Madison Continuing Studies, recognized that their website project also could improve her team’s efficiencies and the user’s experience.

“We wanted to have a more personalized experience for the learners and to drive prospective students to relevant search results,” she explains. Another key goal was to develop more targeted marketing.

In addition, Greta wanted to provide enhanced accessibility and usability.

Debra Schwabe, Continuing Studies web manager, notes that the previous site was outdated and didn’t offer the desired degree of automation.

“My goal was to improve lead generation,” she says.

#### Earthling Interactive Understands Higher Ed

As the project objectives developed, Greta immediately turned to Vince Rose to help implement the integration project. He’s the Director of Marketing Technologies at Earthling Interactive, Madison, Wisconsin, and previously worked with Greta.

In addition, Vince spent many years working at the UW–Madison Division of Information Technology. He knows how to navigate the complexities of a major university to get things done.

The Earthling Interactive team provided “great customer service throughout the Continuing Studies project,” Greta says. “They set us up for success. They were true partners and true collaborators.”

With the help of Earthling Interactive, the Continuing Studies team made great strides in meeting its goals with two main focuses:

- WordPress Development and Integration
- CRM and marketing automation integration with Salesforce and Eloqua

### Keys to Obtaining Website Integration Buy-In

The Continuing Studies team initially brought in Earthling Interactive to help rebrand its Professional Degrees & Certificates program.

"They consulted with our stakeholders who are located throughout the campus," Greta explains.

At the initial meeting, Earthling invited diverse stakeholders, presented information, and collected feedback.

The project began with improving the Professional Degrees & Certificates (PDC) website. The team leveraged its experience with PDC and expanded the scope to four additional programs with distinct audiences and website destinations:

- Professional Degrees & Certificates
- Continuing Studies
- UW-Madison Online
- UW-Madison Summer Term
- Badger Precollege

Greta reports that the team completed the project on time and under budget.

### The Advantages of Centralizing Websites

One of the project's key goals was to centralize separate sites into one multi-site WordPress installation.

Combining the multiple Continuing Studies sites increases efficiency by using the same theme and plug-ins. Team members can log in once and perform multiple tasks in a more secure and accessible environment. The sites now look similar and maintain the desired university branding, and visitors also enjoy a faster site speed.

### Websites Guide Prospective Students

Besides WordPress development, the project also integrated CRM and marketing automation systems to enhance the user experience and track prospects. Both Salesforce and Eloqua provide a customized experience.

For example, let's say a prospect is interested in Electrical Engineering. Here's the process:

- A prospective student clicks on a banner ad that promotes Electrical Engineering.
- The interested prospect is sent to a landing page with a form that collects information to help tie the form submission to the campaign.
- WordPress recognizes a cookie when the enrollee returns to the home page. They will see the most recent blog posts that are part of the program.

If the prospective student fills out a form, their contact information is added to Salesforce. In addition, through an Eloqua workflow, the prospect receives an email thanking them for their interest and enters them into an automated email workflow. They are also assigned an Enrollment Coach who will provide guidance.

## RESULTS

### More quality leads and independence for the marketing team

As a result of the project, Debra says, "We've done so much better getting quality leads." That's the goal of the Continuing Studies marketing campaigns. The number of leads depends on the allocated advertising budget.

After the project completion, the team knew it needed to be self-sufficient. Earthling performed the more complex tasks and provided the Continuing Studies team with the necessary training to manage the websites on an ongoing basis.

"You can count on Earthling to be a really good partner who can navigate the complexities of a business like Higher Education," Greta says.

When embarking on a website integration project for a Higher Education institution, Debra suggests engaging in a planning process before work begins. Earthling helped with early planning so "everyone was on the same page and understood the goals and metrics."

Find out how Earthling Interactive can turn your website into a custom lead generation tool that meets the needs of today's buyers.  
Set up an introductory call to discuss your challenges.

Contact us today!