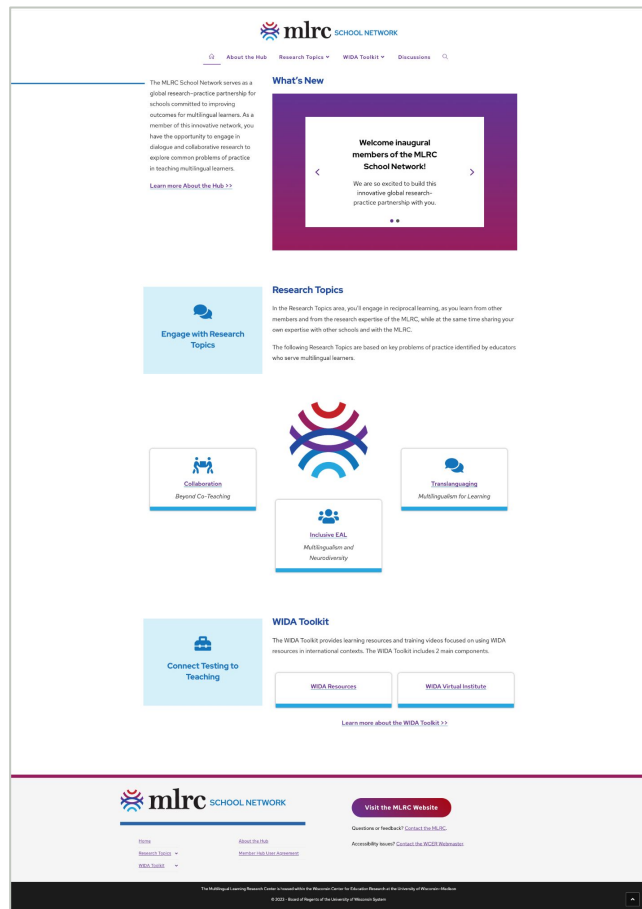
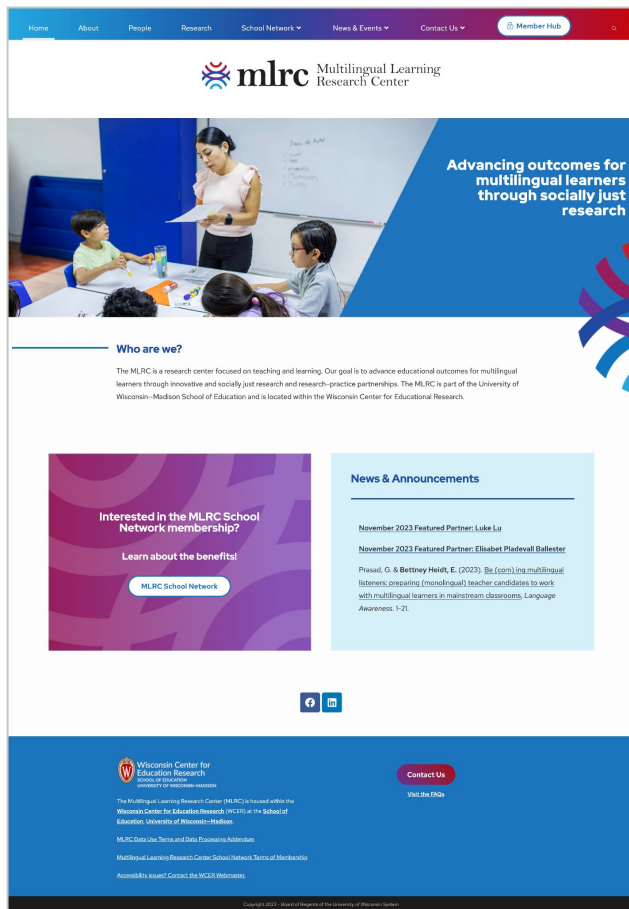




Website & School Network Hub Case Study

January 2023 to August 2023

From a Web Design Perspective, 2 years after launch



Road Map

- Background
 - About the Center
 - About the Case Study
 - Design & Development Requirements
 - Plugin Development & Integration
- Process
- Site Build & Launch
- Post-Launch
 - Usability Testing
 - Accessibility Evaluation
 - Analytics Reports
 - Continuing Growth of the Sites



About the Center

... an opportunity to reimagine how to serve international schools, shifting from a global assessment network to a global research network. This shift to the MLRC – which was inspired by the innovative work that began during the pandemic – leverages the excitement and synergy that was developed in the WIDA Global Community of Practice by migrating the network to a new research-focused center.

WIDA News Announcement, July 5, 2023

About the Center Continued

In the summer of 2023, WIDA International School Consortium transitioned to become the Multilingual Learner Research Center (MLRC). In January 2023, the MLRC co-directors and staff along with some WIDA staff members met with WCER's Technical Services, now Research IT, team to kick-off a meeting for developing a website and a member portal that. The WCER teams included web developers, a graphic designer, UX/UI web designers, and editors, who collaborated with the aim to launch the website by May 1, 2023 and the portal by July 1, 2023. To fund this endeavor, MLRC applied for research grants and wanted to implement a fee-for-service model where members (schools) pay a membership fee to be part of the school network to gain access to professional learning support, tools, and opportunities for research participation.

WIDA International School Consortium

The member portal would end in late 2023 and all trainings and resources were moved to the MLRC Hub by July 1, 2023 to become the “WIDA Virtual Institute”.

The screenshot shows the WIDA International School Consortium website. At the top, the WIDA logo is on the left, and navigation links for Assessments, Videos, Member Resources, Main WIDA Website, WIDA Store, and LOG OUT are on the right. A yellow banner below the header contains a notice about the consortium's transition to a new research center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in July 2023, and states that access to the International Secure Portal will end on June 30, 2023. Below the banner is a graphic of six diverse people standing around a globe. To the right of the graphic, the text reads "Welcome to the WIDA International Secure Portal".

Welcome to the International Secure Portal for WIDA International School Consortium members!

We appreciate that you are part of the global WIDA community and want to ensure you have the most up-to-date research and resources. As a university-based research and development center, WIDA serves educators in the International School Consortium by creating and curating evidence-based practical resources. We have designed the International Secure Portal to provide you with exclusive access to members-only tools to support professional learning and capacity building. Explore, engage and discover what your multilingual learners *can do!*

This portal supports the information found on the WIDA website while providing members with additional resources.

Use this portal for:

- Assessment training and usage guides
- Recorded conference presentations and additional videos
- Member only resources

Navigate to the main WIDA website for:

- General information about WIDA assessments
- Professional learning opportunities and conferences
- Information about the WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition

Recruitment & Membership Re-Application

The MLRC website was launched 2 months prior to the MLRC hub so that members of the WIDA International School Consortium could re-apply for membership the MLRC hub as well as for the recruitment of new schools.



Assess Teach Grow About Memberships and Programs

Member Schools

[Memberships and Programs](#) < [International School Consortium](#) < [Member Schools](#)

Learn how WIDA has made a difference around the world

Read unique stories from member schools that have been featured in our monthly newsletter. Each school tells their own unique learning journey by answering these questions:

- Why did you start using WIDA?
- How has WIDA supported learning and program growth?

You can sort the following member list by clicking on the [Member School](#), [City](#), [Country](#) or [Focus School Profile](#) headings.

International School Consortium Members

Member School	Joined	City	Country	Focus School Profile
The Fessenden School	2023	West Newton	United States	
Muhlenberg Job Corps Center	2023	Greenville	United States	
Collegiate International School	2023	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	
AIC World College of Kyoto	2023	Kyoto	Japan	

Home About People Research & Events > Contact Us > Member Hub

Multilingual Learning Research Center

Membership Overview

An Opportunity for Collaboration Between Researchers and Practitioners

The MLRC School Network serves as a global research-practice partnership for schools interested in improving outcomes for multilingual learners.

[Member Hub Login](#)

A research-practice partnership is a collaborative, long-term relationship between researchers and practitioners designed to improve outcomes of practice. MLRC School Network members have opportunities to engage in dialogue and collaboration research to explore current problems of practice in teaching multilingual learners. The MLRC School Network promotes high-level, evidence-based research.

[Join the MLRC School Network](#)

[Questions? Read our FAQs](#)

The Story of the MLRC School Network

The MLRC School Network grew out of the WIDA International School Consortium. In 2022, WIDA established the International School Consortium to create a community of independent and international schools using WIDA resources to enhance teaching and learning. On 12/20/23, the WIDA Consortium was consolidated to the parent of the global education of students.

The evolution of the MLRC presented the opportunity to strengthen support for international students, adding to the global membership support for global education network. This article – inspired by 1st research work that began during the pandemic – explores the development and history of the MLRC School Network.

Benefits for Member Schools

The annual membership for the MLRC School Network includes the following benefits:

-  **Participation** in an achievement cohort for a defined, multi-year school-based process of practice.
-  **Unleashed opportunities** to engage with other educators through an "Innovative Focus" experience. MLRC topics.
-  **School improvement** tools to enhance and engage in more evidence-based practice.
-  **Expanded offer** of current research opportunities and a supportive and confidence-building experience.
-  **Access to a WIDA Year 10**, including being a research and teaching, evidence-based learning, WIDA resources and educational content.
-  **Updated and** published in the WIDA School Network and other training content.

MLRC School Network Annual Membership

The MLRC School Network is a global community of practice and research. It is the only research-practice partnership for schools interested in improving outcomes for multilingual learners. The MLRC School Network is a global community of practice and research. It is the only research-practice partnership for schools interested in improving outcomes for multilingual learners.

Example 1

A school in the WIDA International School Consortium is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners. The school is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners. The school is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners.

Example 2

A school in the WIDA International School Consortium is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners. The school is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners. The school is seeking to improve outcomes for multilingual learners.

Apply Early for a Discount

Sign up for the WIDA International School Consortium by 12/20/23 to receive a 10% discount on the annual membership fee. The discount is available to schools that are not currently members of the MLRC School Network.

Questions? Read the FAQs

[Apply for Membership](#)

[Join the MLRC School Network](#)

About the Case Study

Audience

- Researchers
- Campus web design/development teams
- Communications & marketing professionals
- WCER service unit staff current and future
- Peer institutions supporting research projects like WCER

Stakeholders

- MLRC co-directors, coordinators, and content managers
- WCER Web Development Team (Research IT service unit)
- WCER Graphic Design & Brand Development and Web Design Team (Communications & Marketing service unit)
- Multilingual learners educators and practitioners

About the Case Study Continued

Goals

- Showcase the collaborative work for building two related but unique websites simultaneously and the web development process from ideation to launch
- Present Wordpress capabilities for plugin development and third-party web application integrations (ie. Salesforce)
- Compile learnings and insights about the design and development requirements as well as meeting target deadlines

Design & Development Requirements

Website

- Audience: potential school network member (administrators); not student level, scholars, educators
- Home page tailored for either educator or researcher audiences
- Promote center among partners
- News page
- Events calendar
- Forms (Contact & Membership)
- Incorporate branding from logo

Member Hub

- Audience: educators, practitioners, researchers
- Build the initial architecture to anticipate growth in applicable areas
- All content behind a login
- Learning management system for the WIDA Institute curriculum
- Discussion Forum
- Incorporate branding from logo, with some similar and distinct elements from website branding

Plugin Development & Integration

Web Development Requirements:

Website

- Forms (Contact & Membership)
 - Create login credentials for login from membership form responses

Member Hub

- All content behind a login
- Learning management system for the WIDA Institute curriculum
- Discussion Forum

In considering the web development goals and needs of the website and member hub, developers researched and tested plugins and applications for data integration.

After this investigation phase, the WCER team worked with UW-Madison's DoIT team to select and implement plugins such as a learning management system (LMS) and data integration using Salesforce.

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Road Map before the Website Build

Plugin & Integration Research/Testing/Development →

Content Creation →

Branding & Visual Design Development →

Information Architecture →

Wireframes & Mockups →

Kickoff
& Requirements
Gathering

Start (Week 0)

Design Feedback & Revisions
Logo & branding; develop sitemap
& main user flows

Weeks 1-5

Design Feedback & Revisions
Finalize logo, graphics, sitemap, &
flows

Weeks 5-8

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Weeks 8-12

Begin Site Build
& review/edit
content

Week 12

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Plugin & Integration Research, Testing, and Development

Who was involved: WCER web developers and UW-Madison DoIT

What was done:

- Research of plugins to find the most suitable ones to meet the desired features and functionality.
- Test (development) sites were set up to test out plugins as well as data integration with Salesforce.
- Development work customized for the hub was also tested.

Final decisions for implementation:

- Gravity forms plugin for building forms
- Salesforce integration to manage data from forms and login credentials/permissions
- LearnPress for moving Canvas curriculum to Wordpress
- Forum plugin for discussion boards

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Week 12

Content Creation & Copy Editing

This part of the process was ongoing and important to complete before the following parts of building the website and hub. Knowing the kind of and amount of content informed how to organize information and what types of design layouts and elements should be used.

Who was involved: MLRC team as well as WCER web designers and editors

What was done:

- Text content was provided in word documents.
- Other content also provided was media files such as PDFs, Powerpoints, photos/images, infographics, videos.
- WCER team, later after the content was created, helped to edit the content.

Road Map before the Website Build

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Branding & Visual Design Development

Who was involved: WCER graphic and web designers

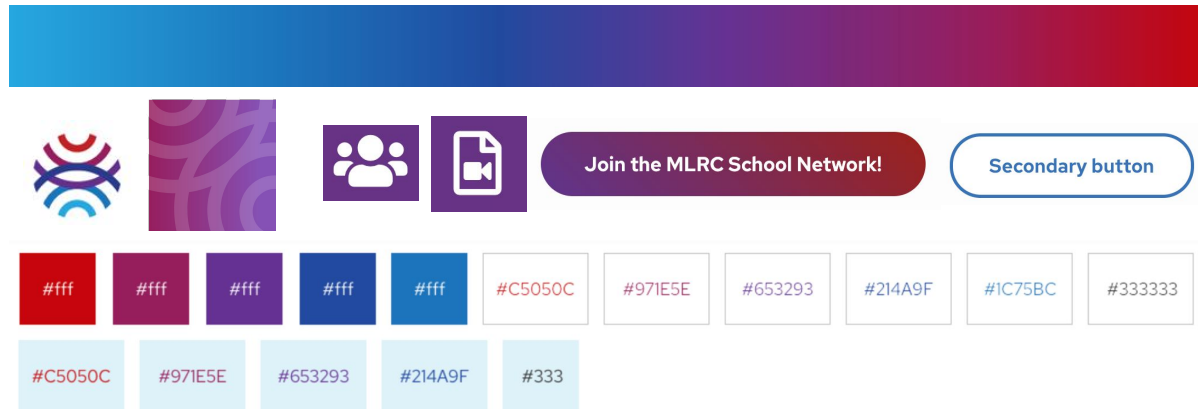
- Developed the MLRC **branding** through discussions about words, imagery, graphics, colors, and fonts that best capture the MLRC's identity, goals, and purpose.
- **Logos** were created and shared with the MLRC team for feedback; underwent 2-3 rounds of revisions; and finalized in several formats.
- Once the logo was finalized, other **visual design and graphical elements** were created for the website and member hub that utilized the colors, icon, and fonts in the logo.
- A **style guide** was also developed for guidance on when and how to use design elements for consistent branding on all types of media (presentations, business cards, web pages, flyers, posters, etc.)

Branding & Visual Design Development Continued

Logos, typography (fonts), icon library, patterned backgrounds, banners, button styles, color combinations (that pass web accessibility contrast requirements)



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Information Architecture

What is it?

Organizing and structuring information to make it easily understandable and usable, particularly in digital environments like websites and applications, ensuring users can find and navigate content efficiently.

Who was involved: WCER web designers (user experience design), WCER developers (particularly the product owner), MLRC team

User Experience Design Tools:

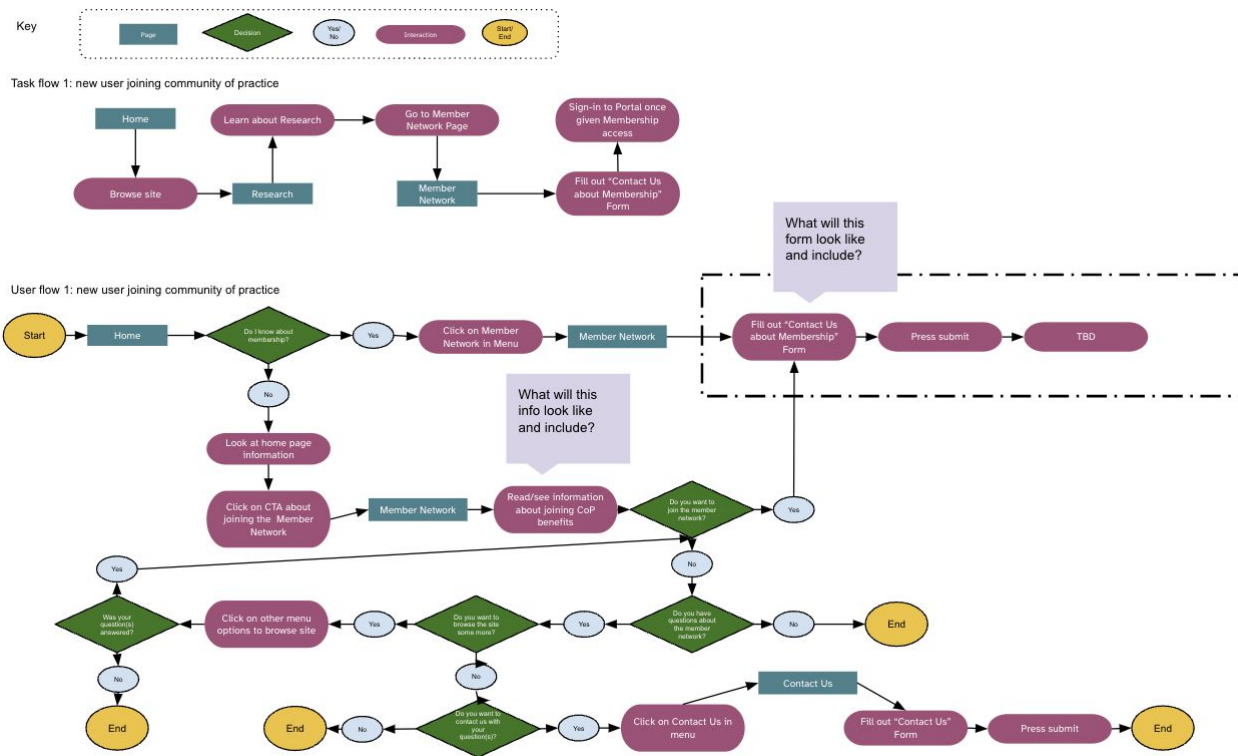
- Personas - archetype description of users such as their habits, goals, needs, demographics
- Task & User flows - descriptions turned into diagrams of user actions and decisions

Outcome:

- Site map - navigation of pages
- Style guide detailing when to use heading levels (H1, H2, etc)

Information Architecture Continued

During the kick-off meeting, getting to know the users of the website(s) is important so that user personas and task/user flows can be developed. These were refined as the designers and MLRC reviewed the flows.

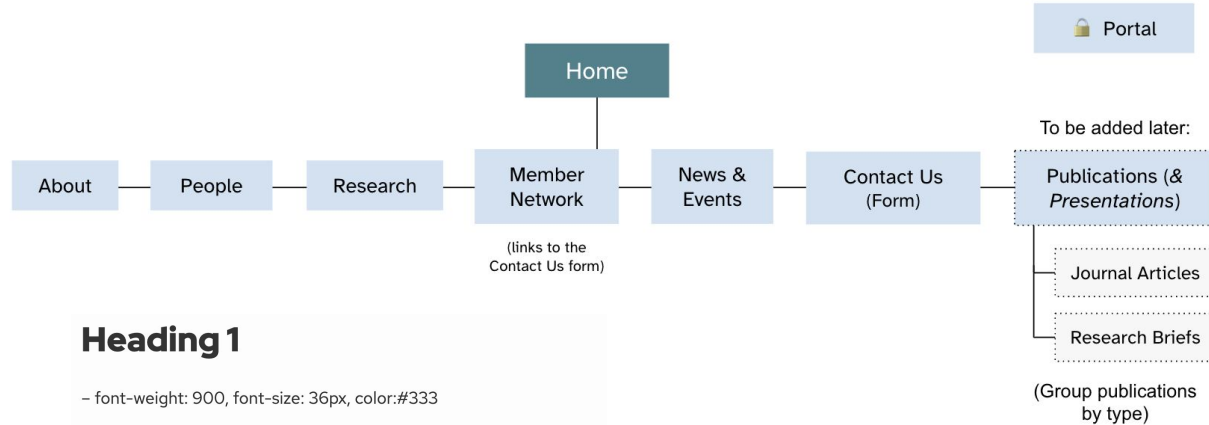


Information Architecture Continued

A sitemap was created to show the navigation of pages and information on the site.

Heading levels determine importance of information to help users find or discover information.

MLRC Sitemap



Heading 1

– font-weight: 900, font-size: 36px, color:#333

Heading 2

– font-weight: 800, font-size: 28px, color: #214a9f

Heading 3

– font-weight: 800, font-size: 24px, color: #1c75bc

Heading 4

– font-weight: 600, font-size: 20px, color: #333

Body text: Red Hat text, font-size: 18px, color: #333, line-height: 1.8.

Headings: Red Hat Display

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Wireframes & Mockups

What is a wireframe? A basic representation, typically in black/white/gray, to visualize the placement of elements, navigation, and content hierarchy before diving into detailed design and development.

What are mockups? Static versions of the design concept. They define the purpose and intent of a design, often including visual elements such as structure, layout, color schemes, typography, and editorial copy.

Who was involved: WCER graphic and web designers (user experience design), WCER developers, MLRC team

Software/Web Design Tools:

- Adobe XD, Photoshop, Illustrator
- Color Contrast Checker - web accessibility

Outcome:

- Finalized page design and layout
- Design system for consistency across all pages

Wireframes & Mockups Continued

The design team provided 2-3 versions of wireframes for the MLRC team to review and give feedback. Nailing down the content layout and design elements based on content created saves time during the build process and helps to develop a design system with balanced and consistent design layouts.



Page Type #1



Page Type #2



Mobile – Page Type 2 boxes



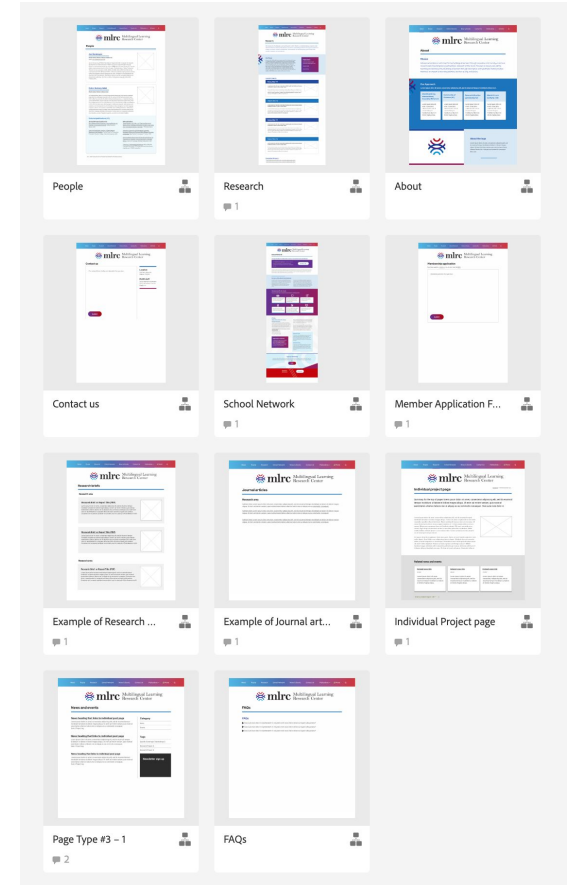
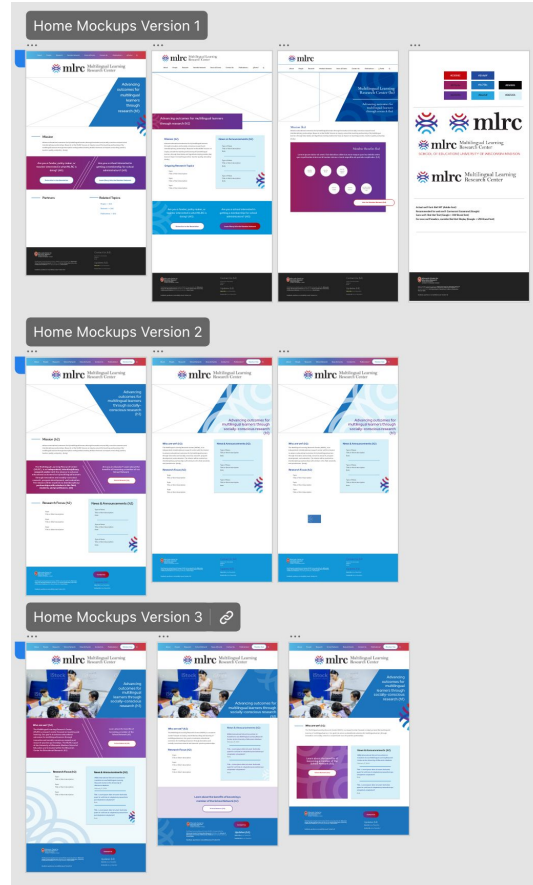
Page Type #3



Mobile – News and events

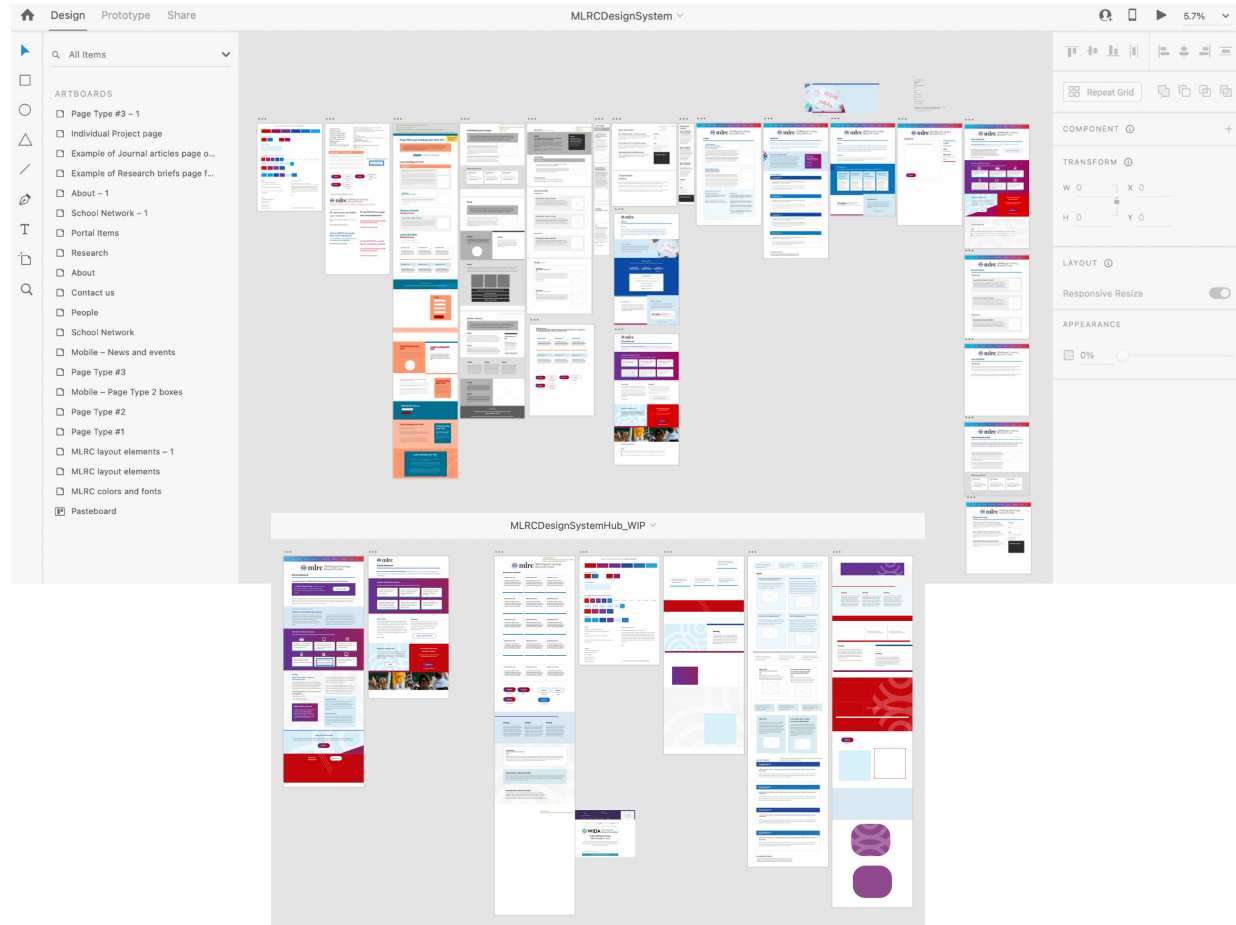
Wireframes & Mockups Continued

Using Adobe XD, the design team could share links of the mockups so that they could be previewed as web pages. With this collaboration tool, feedback can be added as comments directly on the mockups.



Wireframes & Mockups Continued

Once mockups of the pages were finalized, the design team compiled reusable design elements into a design system (template guide) that could be used for new, future pages to the website and hub.



Road Map

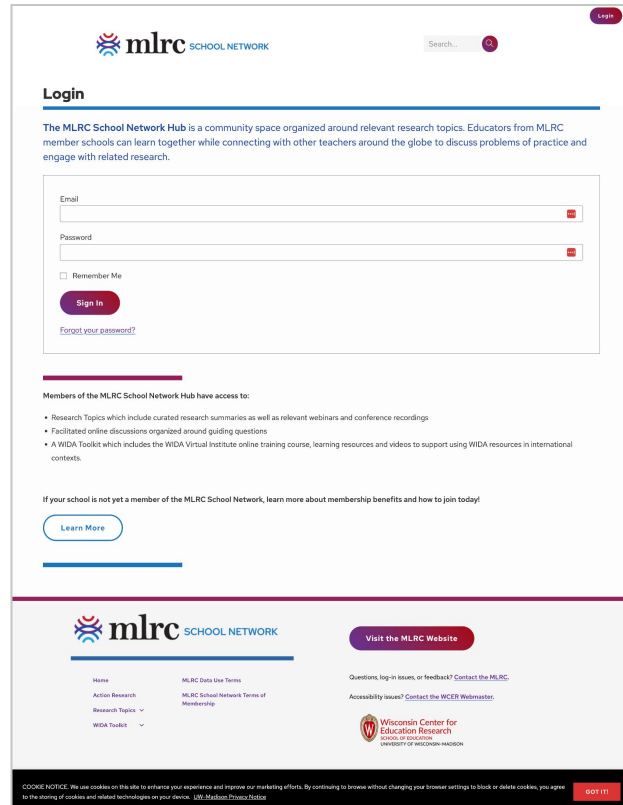
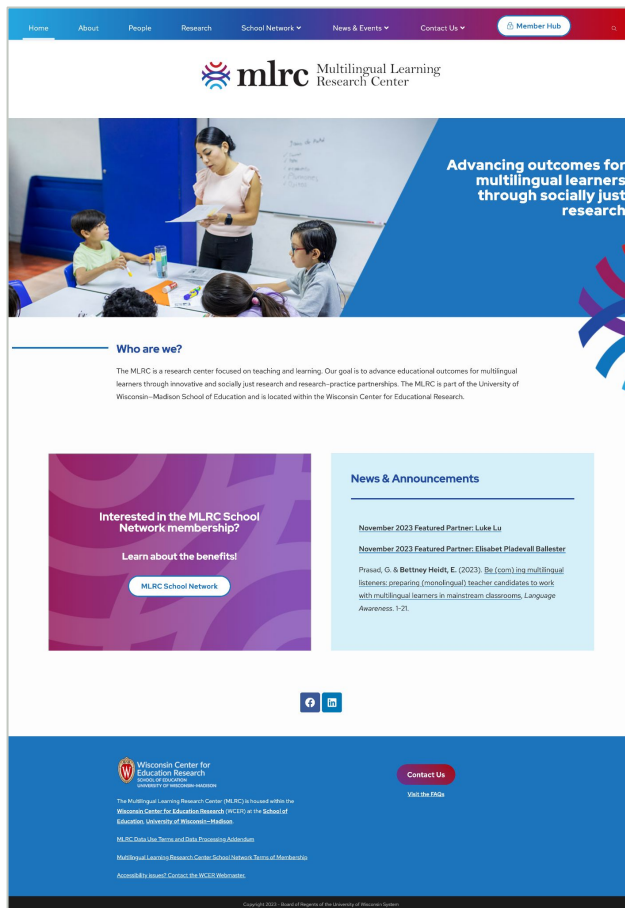
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Site Build & Launch

- Once a domain name is either purchased if using a “.org” URL or approved if using a “.wisc.edu” URL, Wordpress site is setup at the domain name.
- The OceanWP template was used as its highly customizable and user-friendly for layout design.
- With finalized mockups and completed content, the website was built in about 1 week, with several days for review and editing.
- The member hub site took several weeks to build, which involved development testing.
- The last step when a site is ready to launch completing a web accessibility evaluation on all pages and making fixes.
- Once the website and hub launched, the web designers setup Google Analytics for the website and also provide training for simple content editing.

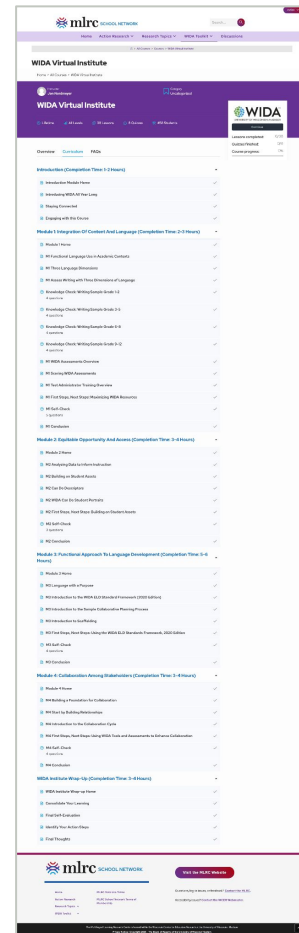
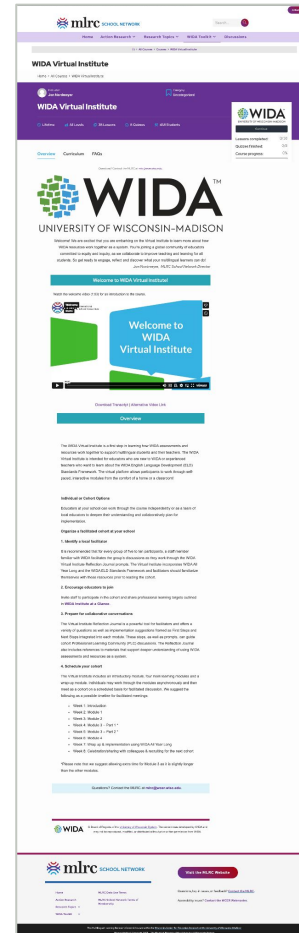
Site Build & Launch Continued

Home page of the MLRC website and landing page (login) of the MLRC School Network Hub site.



Site Build & Launch

This is an example of the WIDA International Consortium becoming the WIDA Virtual Institute in the MLRC Hub.



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Usability Testing

What is a usability test?

A method of evaluating a product (website) or design by observing real users as they interact with it to identify usability issues and areas for improvement, ensuring the product is easy and effective to use.

Surveys can also be used to gather feedback from users.

One month after the launch of the hub site, an opt-in survey was shared with users. The development team added a custom banner to the site to give users a link to the survey which included questions for feedback on how easily it was for them to interact with the site and find what they were looking for.

This information was useful for making short-term, immediate fixes and revisions and refreshes to the site later.

Accessibility Evaluations

What is an accessibility evaluation? Why is it important? A process that assesses how well a website meets accessibility standards, ensuring it's usable by people with disabilities (e.g., visual, auditory, motor, cognitive impairments), and often guided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The purpose is to identify and address barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing and using a website effectively.

Accessibility evaluations were done not only right before the sites were made live, but also after new pages are added to the site. For new pages with new plugins or more functionality (ie. not just informational but interactive), an accessibility evaluation is important for ensuring the page is usable for all users. After about 2 years from post-launch, a refresh was done on the hub site which also needed an accessibility evaluation.

Analytics Reports

What are analytics reports?

Structured summaries of a website's performance data, like traffic, user behavior, and conversions, that are easy to understand and act upon, helping to make informed decisions about content strategy and information hierarchy.

The WCER Communications & Marketing team utilized Google Analytics to compile analytics on how the MLRC sites were performing, popular pages and search terms. Reports were made after several months from launch and yearly after launch, especially as the sites have many users both new and returning. These reports could also inform decisions about refreshing specific pages or the site as a whole.

Continuing Growth of the Sites

Almost 2 years since the launch of the 2 MLRC sites, they have grown and continue to grow especially as the MLRC itself has grown in reach and memberships. The WCER teams continue to support the website needs and maintenance along with designing new pages and implementing new functionalities that promote the MLRC's work and mission for building a network of schools equipped to support their multilingual learners.

Some examples of new pages that were added are:

- News - for highlighting MLRC activities and partner schools work
- Upcoming events - such as the annual MLRC Research Symposia
- Member Directory - interactive map and table of schools in the MLRC school network
- Action Research participation - resources hub, cohort connections
- Workshop guides on research topics