Web Marketing Basics for International Education Managers

Prepared by Kate Dempsey

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Victorian TAFE International

Victorian TAFE International (VTI) is an association of staff who work in TAFE Institutes and dual sector universities in international education in the State of Victoria, Australia. Participation is open to any international education staff members including those in: management, recruitment, business development, admissions, and quality and compliance in member public vocational education institutions.

VTI exists to support and inform members, improve communication between members and other bodies, to increase awareness and understanding of international education generally and to provide quality advice to the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA), on international education issues which will then inform policy and strategic directions for the enhancement of the TAFE brand.

Acknowledgements

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1 Why You Need to be up-to-date on Web Marketing

Introduction

The 2011 British Council EI (Education Intelligence) survey of 127,000 students from 200 countries who are considering overseas study found that universities’ websites are the single most important source of information for students establishing what to study and where (source: The Australian 12.8.11). Conversely, a quarter of prospective students decide not to apply to a US college because of a bad experience on the college’s website. This is according to a survey conducted in USA and quoted in the Higher Education Chronicle of April 20th 2011.

VTI member TAFE institutes and dual sector universities undertake marketing to prospective international students in many forums and using many means, but they are aware of the importance of web based marketing and in 2011 spent time working collaboratively to improve their web marketing options.

The following information about how to improve VTI member websites is reproduced here from two workshops offered by VTI to members in 2011. One workshop was conducted in March by Tim Winkler of Twig Marketing http://www.twigmarketing.com/. Tim is a web-marketing specialist and in his workshop he outlined the things members were doing well in their web marketing and areas for improvement. Edwin Kuller, the Web Channel Manager at Austrade, conducted the second workshop in August. Both workshop presenters have kindly agreed to the publication of their information in this document. The final document was also read by Damien Dempsey, Digital Editor, ABC Radio Australia.

“... websites are the single most important source of information for students ...”
Aim of this Document

The aim of this document is give international education program managers a basic ‘language’ and understanding of web based marketing so that they may be better equipped to speak to marketing staff and information technology staff at their institute about the requirements of web marketing to potential international students.

International program managers usually do not control either content or programming of their institute websites. In addition, institute websites are generally designed to attract visitors of many types, with international students being just one type of visitor to the institute home page.

Therefore international education program managers, information technology staff and international marketing staff members must work together within their institute in order to get optimum performance from the website in attracting international students to the programs offered.

To best achieve this aim, international program managers need to have an understanding of what is possible in web marketing and how best to utilise its potential. This document provides this basic web marketing understanding. Generally in business, marketing staff members have the responsibility for overseeing websites and social media. A recent research report (using Sensis Telstra data) suggests that 52% of medium size businesses in Australia and 74% of large business use social media for marketing purposes. Increasingly the view is that the more staff who engage professionally with social media the better.

This is especially true for staff members who have direct contact with clients, customers or in our case potential students. For example, the graphic design staff at VTI member TAFE, The Gordon use Facebook to engage with alumni and most VTI members have generic Facebook sites. But are they being well used to attract potential students? Are international program managers involved in the use of these tools? The use of the web as a marketing tool is growing and international education managers must keep abreast of these developments.

“... 52% of medium size businesses in Australia and 74% of large business use social media for marketing ...”
The Growth of the Web as a Marketing Tool

TI members TAFE institutes are acutely aware that potential students in overseas countries use the internet as their key search medium for educational opportunities. They are also aware that this means of finding educational opportunities is growing, as is the movement of higher education students around the globe. The chart below shows the steady increase in global internet usage.

The 2011 British Council EI report noted above is called Online Marketing to a Global Student Audience and provides some insights into patterns of student response to online marketing. It shows that more students in Thailand, Hong Kong and Mexico report that they use the internet ‘all the time’ than other countries. Students use social media very regularly too.

But there are two issues of importance for member TAFE institutes to consider here:

1. The social media we know in Australia may not be what is used in our source countries and ...
2. We are not clear what students use social media for.

Global numbers of Internet users, total and per 100 inhabitants, 2000 - 2010

- Estimated internet users (in millions)
- Internet users per 100 inhabitants

Perspectives on Victorian TAFE websites - Twig Marketing
We need to be aware, for example, of how a TAFE institute presence on social media may convert to enrolments. A recent survey of international students already in Australia by Twig Marketing shows that 93% of students using social media indicated it had little influence over their decision to study in Australia.

The British Council report notes similarly, that while social media is useful to get your institution known and that it is good for a basic introduction, educational institutes ultimately need person-to-person contact to get prospective foreign students to make a commitment to enrol. However for general brand introduction, the internet is the key driver in broadening people’s awareness of who you are and what you offer. A recent example is Deloitte’s, which 5 years ago, believed that what they say to the world about themselves is important and accounted for the bulk of their marketing message. Less important was how they choose to give the message and even less important was what others say about the company (14%). Whereas now, Deloitte’s suggest that what others say about them is of critical importance and outstrips the importance of the message they put out themselves.

The British Council report itself can be purchased at http://ihe.britishcouncil.org/ihe-exchange/products/115


3 The Cloud is where you rent space in an internet provider’s data centre, and connect over the internet. Moving to the cloud removes the cost of maintaining your own systems. Accounting, customer relationship management (CRM), project management, email marketing, spam and virus filtering, data storage, ecommerce, online publishing, audio and video streaming, general databases — these are all available in the cloud.
2 Key Website Elements and How to Improve Them

The Four Key Elements of a Website

There are four key elements in a typical web page. They are:

- Headline
- Promotional Text
- Images
- Call to Action

These four elements are described in the table on the next page.

TAFE institutes need to consider if what they offer in terms of education is well understood by their potential market. For example, is “TAFE” a well-recognised term internationally?

Research indicates TAFE is a well-respected and well-understood brand in Australia but it is not well known overseas.

Websites must clearly state what a vocational education and training institute is and how it differs from a university. In addition, VTI member institutes have the advantage of being government owned institutions and should promote this to international students.

TAFE institute websites should be clear as to why a potential student might want to undertake a vocational course and where such a course may lead them.
Table 1 Four Key Elements of a Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website Element</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Headline**    | The site must have a clearly identified headline noting the name of the institute and simple clear banner describing what it offers | • NMIT...can help you go further  
• RMIT... global university of technology and design |
| **Promotional Text** | Simple text (not too much) which succinctly describes what the website is about | • Get career qualifications which are government subsidised  
• ACU is the Australian Catholic University, a public university funded by the Australian Government and open to students and staff of all beliefs |
| **Images**      | High quality photography, which will appeal to your target audience | • See Holmesglen (www.holmesglen.edu.au) for a good example of image use |
| **Call to Action** | The call to action is what you want visitors to do at your site. It may be to buy a product or in the case of education websites, it may be to apply for a course. This must be clear and available at each page of the site. Since visitors may arrive at the site via a Google search, they need to have the call to action on every page, as they may not arrive at the home page. | • NMIT has a course finder on the home page  
• UTS has two red buttons on each page, ‘make an enquiry about UTS’ and ‘Apply Now’ to study at UTS |
How Do We Improve the Four Key Elements?

Understand your audience needs and behaviours

It is important to get to know who it is that you are trying to attract to your website. You need to understand your target market – their location, the languages they speak, how and when they access the web or use their mobile phone and social media – and why it is they are interested in living and studying in Australia. These are all important considerations for successful web content.

A profile of typical users will inform the important content elements and tone or style of the website content. Have you done surveys about your current site involving international students? Have you looked carefully at what your competitors do on their websites? These are needed to fine-tune your approach.

Relevance

Increasingly people are time poor and task focussed when they spend time on the web. Relevance is crucial.

Your audience is looking for content tailored to their interests. For example, a link on the home page “for International students” offers a simple one-click path to relevant content.

The content on your page for international students:

- Must be clear and simple
- Have some content in a language other than English
- Page elements such as photos and graphic images should move your visitor briskly to taking the desired action (inquire about a course)
- Every element on the page has to work in concert toward the same goal
- Have pop up or drop down lists on the page (as opposed to navigating the visitor off to another page if they want more detail)
- Visual elements (size, motion, color, position, and shape) should draw attention toward the call to action.

In addition, if you pay to advertise your institute on Google (or other sites) you could consider landing pages (explained in next paragraph) in the languages of your principal target markets. These pages could be as simple as providing a basic introduction to the site (in languages other than English) and links to course information and relevant other details in English. Does your institute advertise on Google?

A landing page, also sometimes called a lead capture page, is a single web page that appears in response to clicking on an advertisement. A landing page sends traffic
specifically to prompt a certain action or result. Here are a few examples of ways that landing pages are used with various traffic sources:

- Website visitors (traffic) is sent from a pay per click (PPC) search marketing campaign (such as Google AdWords) to a landing page which corresponds to the keywords the searcher used
- Traffic is sent from a banner ad or sponsorship graphic to a landing page specifically designed to address that target audience
- Traffic is sent from a link in an email to a landing page designed to prompt an enrolment.

‘Scanability’

Web users generally scan rather than read content. They’re looking for quick facts and will lose patience if the content does not communicate the basics in a matter of seconds.

As outlined above short headlines of about five to nine words, an adjacent short ‘teaser’ or abstract that explains the content on the page, sub-headings and captioned images all assist in the ‘scanability’ of your pages.

Plain English

It is always best to use straight-forward language and avoid jargon terms. Be aware that education and TAFE in particular are full of jargon words that may mean little overseas. Not only can this content be viewed as a time waster, but in a world of social media and the power of peer referral, authenticity is crucial.

Overdoing the colour can be perceived as out of step with user needs and as a result become a turn-off. You are attracting students to an education facility; your branding should reflect that. Some websites try to copy what they think young people like. Stick to your professional brand and remember that parents are often searching too.
Design

A clean and simple design is important. Too much information on pages can be overwhelming, too little can discourage your audience from exploring further. Each page should have one objective and everything on the page should point the visitor to that objective.

A website is functional, in many ways like a machine or appliance. Consistent buttons, icons, styles and layouts help users learn how to use your website. Imagine a car with an ignition switch on the left hand side of the steering wheel! How many bad experiences with websites have you had?

Clear links and a considered website structure and navigational system that establish ease of use will help your audience access information quickly. In the end it is important to test your site. Simple tests involving half a dozen of your current students on how to access information about enrolments or programs on offer for international students are a great way to get an idea of how usable your current site is.

Direct users within 3 mouse clicks

Most VTI member websites carry information for all visitor types, including potential domestic and international students. If so, there must be a clear link to the international pages of the website, so that international students can navigate quickly to what interests them. Prospective international students must be able to navigate (find their way) to relevant international pages within 3 mouse clicks. Can potential international students find your international page and all its details in 3 mouse clicks?

“Can potential international students find your international page...in 3 mouse clicks?”

Define institutional strengths

Defining institutional strengths in text and images is complicated but necessary – because of the overlap between institutional offerings, member institutes need to focus on defining strengths such as the size, location and experience of the institute. Communicating unique selling points is also important but more complex when there are many educational providers offering similar courses.

Key strengths that differentiate TAFE from private sector providers of vocational education are the facilities and support offered to international students and the fact that TAFE is government owned and backed. These are selling points to overseas students. In terms of competing with other higher
education institutions, both in Australia and elsewhere, the practical orientation of a vocational training course is a key selling point, as is the potential pathway to university offered by a TAFE course. These should be emphasised on the website.

Provide value

Good websites offer proven value. For TAFE Institutes this means we must be clear on what we offer and why it is high quality. The website must demonstrate this. Since visitors are most likely to want course-based information, this should be easily accessible. Details of government requirements or guidelines must be secondary to the courses. A course finder should be prominent and it should offer clarity for international students.

“A course finder is really the ‘call to action’ of your website ...”

A course finder is really the ‘call to action’ of your website: you want visitors to apply for a course, so it must be easy to see. There must be differentiation on the website for international students as some courses are not open to international students and course entry requirements may be different.

Everything on the website must be of the highest quality (images at 72dpi - dots per inch-professionally photographed, relevant to content and appropriately...)

7 It is important to note that in many source countries for international students, high-resolution images are complex and slow to load if the user has a slow internet connection. It is possible to detect this from the user’s email address. Therefore users from countries with poor internet connection can be filtered and sent directly to a simpler page that will load quickly and easily for them. This is worth investigating for your website.

Left: Kangan Institute web site including a course finder.
captioned) high quality videos (short in length), easy navigation around the site. Brightly coloured buttons to click for quick access are good. Websites should clearly and simply explain the value of doing a particular course either for employment or further study.

The website pictured below from Kangan Institute shows 5 key high quality images as a heading banner. It has the same banner repeated on every page.

The screen grab (previous page) shows the international page, where the emphasis is on Kangan as a government provider, as this is known by market research to be of importance to prospective international students. It is a point of differentiation from private providers and Kangan capitalises on this point in its website. It has a prominent course finder, which indicates requirements of relevance to international students and an international phone number. It also has prominent links to social networking sites.

One issue could be the over-reliance on pictures of people, with no high quality graphics highlighting the significant infrastructure and assets of the institution. For overseas students, getting a sense of the size, scale and location of the institute is important. One button this site also does not have, which would be useful is ‘share’.

A share button allows site visitors to share the content of this site with their own network on their personal Facebook page. The share button helps to encourage visits to the site by other potential students.

Another missing element is endorsement by employers and links to reputable government or employer sites.

As stated earlier this adds credibility and is likely to be considered important by website visitors, who are considering their options.

“A share button allows site visitors to share the content ...”
3 Common Features of Good Websites

Good Websites Deliver on Three Key Points

Now that we have outlined the basic features of a website, we can consider: what makes one website better than another? Good websites have a common feature in that they deliver on three key points:  

• Establish credibility  
• Facilitate use  
• Encourage re-visits

Table 2 Good Websites Deliver on Three Key Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website Element</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Establish credibility  | Factors that establish credibility are 'about us' sections on the home page, links to reputable related sites, simple 'contact us' tabs, easy to see privacy links, returns/refunds policy, how to give feedback on the site etc | • ‘Ashton University (Birmingham): a quality experience from a top 20 university’  
  • ‘Kangan – a Victorian government TAFE Institute’ (on international page) |
| Facilitate use        | Things which facilitate use of the website are items which will make a visit enjoyable and cause the visitor to stay longer. They should connect to the call to action | • Examples include: translated items, currency converter, course finder, videos, map and location finders, news items, quick links, virtual tour of campus,  
  • NMIT has ‘meet the staff’ videos |
| Encourage re-visits   | If students are deciding which provider to study with, it is important that they come back to your site for updates, news, videos, chat. Marketers speak of building a relationship with a client. This is important for education providers too. | Links to other sites, RSS feeds (explained below), Share button, links to social media (Facebook page, Twitter page, LinkedIn, YouTube channel). Think of your website as the hub and these other places as spokes that provide two way traffic to your website. |
How to Improve on the Three Key Points

Research your website visitors

When considering ways to improve a website, the first key issue must be research into the type of visitor the website is trying to attract, what those visitors are looking for in a website such as yours.

This can be done by surveying existing students about how they became aware of your institute and what attracted them to it. And as internet access expands so do expectations that information will be available in the local language.

Expectations are growing that at least some of the content of an Australian education website will be in a language other than English.

The top countries involved in international education are the US, UK, Australia, Germany and New Zealand and so this expectation creates challenges for the five top providers in servicing their largest markets. While 70 per cent of global web pages are in English, only 27 per cent of internet users are English speakers – followed by Mandarin at 23 per cent.

Top source countries for international students at Victorian vocational education providers are China and India. Do we make potential students from these countries feel they are welcomed at our websites?

Consider your own website analytics

In addition, you can measure visitors to your own site easily. At VTI we measure how many visit the VTI site and their web address and the web searches they did to find us. But we just look at mostly superficial statistics of usage. Web analytics can go further and investigate what visitors are looking for and if they fail to find it.

Analytics can show you how long visitors stay on the home page and where they navigate to from there. It can tell you when they fall away from viewing your site. If information is too complex or hard to find they may leave just before filling in an application form.

Tim Winkler has advised that in his assessment, VTI member websites are geared towards domestic students and their interests and issues. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect an overseas URL or web address origin and direct a student to your international web page or have 'international' prominent on the home page for re-direction.

9 British Council EI survey as cited in the Australian 12.08.11

VTI members offer various ways to engage prospective students and they have at least some content in another language on their websites. Most members offer pdf documents to download in languages other than English.
Use social media monitoring tools

In addition, research on user needs can be done by using web tools that measure and evaluate traffic across many sites.

There are several social media monitoring tools available that track words from prominent internet social media sites (rather than your own site). For example you can buy a basic search package for around $40 a month and choose key words you wish to track.

The fee will then provide you with a report of each time the key words were raised anywhere in Facebook, Twitter and other prominent social media websites you nominate. The words you track could be the name of your own institution, a course you are interested in promoting, or words such as TAFE, study, pathways, student, training and so on.

There are companies that will use your web analytics and create a measure of your web influence. Klout is one such company (http://klout.com/).

More sophisticated packages are available for fees upwards of $800 per month and give very detailed information about your brand and how and where it is mentioned on the internet. Austrade uses a sophisticated analytic package to determine where and in what context their brand is mentioned on the internet.

There are also free searches available to use. For example, http://twitter.com/#!/search-home can be used to track any key words as they are used anywhere on Twitter. Since VTI members are becoming involved in Twitter, they need to use this facility to see how relevant key words are used in this medium. In addition, you can automatically receive an RSS feed every time a word you are following is tweeted. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication.

“...does your website offer free RSS feeds?”

RSS allows visitors to sign up for web alerts if anything new is added to their list of favourite websites. So for example, media releases of interest or enrolment dates or free offers will automatically come to a signed up visitor at regular periods via RSS feeds.

The new version of Microsoft Outlook has an RSS reader already built into it. But if visitors do not use Microsoft Outlook, they can download RSS readers for free from Google and other places, so that they can receive and read RSS feeds from websites that offer them. Does your website offer free RSS feeds?
Twitter has removed this functionality from its public site, but you can still set up a keyword tracker in the following way:

**The URL below is the RSS feed for the word ‘university’:**
http://search.twitter.com/search.atom?q=university

**To follow a different word such as TAFE this would be changed to:**
http://search.twitter.com/search.atom?q=TAFE and so on.

As suggested in Table 2 you need to consider your website as the hub and other websites as the spokes which link visitors back to your website. You need to encourage both visits to your site and also re-visits to your site, as well as opportunities to share the content of your site with other potential students; this increases traffic flow and interest in your website.

Simple ways to encourage this revisiting and sharing is to put useful items on your site (currency converters, breaking news, opportunities to win prizes, alerts for changes at your website and the like). A typical way to retain contact with initial visitors to your website is via RSS feeds.
4 How to Make Your Website Easily Found by Visitors

Visitors to your website may find you through email, web links, weblogs (blogs), word of mouth, newspaper ads or via sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and so forth. To improve traffic flow to your site, use these other sites to generate interest in your offerings. But the main way that most potential students will find your website is via Google.

There are ways to make it easier for Google to find your website and place your website at the top of a search list. These processes are called SEO (Search Engine Optimisation).

Many internet ranking sites report that YouTube is the second or third largest search engine (see Alexa list below).

Although not designed as a search engine, YouTube has become a popular means of finding information on just about any topic. VTI member providers could upload short videos to YouTube and link them to the member website for maximum exposure.

VTI member providers could upload short videos to YouTube and link them to the member website for maximum exposure. Central TAFE Institute in Perth, Western Australian recently got significant free publicity with a YouTube video created by two of its former students. “It’s A Snap” went up on YouTube on February 2012. It rapidly went viral, being viewed by nearly two million viewers. The institute had previously provided $1000 in sponsorship for the two students, on the understanding that they would make an ad for CIT at some point. Their brief was to make something that would appeal to the 15 to 20 demographic. See it at http://www.youtube.com/user/Centralinstitute.

It is also important to know that Youku is China’s equivalent of YouTube and is ranked 47th in the world by Alexa (ranking service based on traffic flows).

10 Tencent’s leading Internet platforms in China – QQ (QQ Instant Messenger), QQ.com, QQ Games, Qzone, 3g.QQ.com, SoSo, PaiPai and Tenpay – have brought together China’s largest Internet community, to meet the various needs of Internet users including communication, information, entertainment, e-commerce and others. As of March 31, 2011, the active QQ users accounts for QQ IM amounted to 674.3 million while its peak concurrent users reached 137.2 million. Source: http://www.tencent.com/en-us/at/abouttencent.shtml

### Top Sites
*(measured by traffic flows)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yahoo</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Live</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Baidu</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Blogger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tencent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visitors use Google to find you

Google is the world’s largest internet search engine. This is the key way that visitors find your website; they search on Google (or other search engines or they may email you directly). They may type into Google search terms such as ‘study abroad’ or ‘training in Australia’. Of course Google is not the only search engine, but it does have around 80% market share globally. However of significant interest for our markets is the fact that the Chinese search engine Baidu is also very large.

Understanding how Google works

The way your website becomes known is by search engines trawling through millions of pieces of data around the world and finding key words in websites which match the key words people type into Google (or other search engine). Your website will come up to the top of a search list if you pay for an advertisement (Google Adwords) or if you have those key words prominently in your site. Remember when you are creating a website, you are writing for people to find information easily about you. But you are also writing for machines, which search for relevant words. But firstly, do you know what search words people might use to find courses in a TAFE institute in Victoria?

“... ‘study abroad’ is the most common search term used by prospective international students.”

You can use other sites to find the type of word most often used in your field. Sites such as www.wordtracker.com give you a free trial of their product. There is also www.keyworddiscovery.com/search.html which offers the top 100 usages of a key word search for free. For example, do prospective students usually search under “international study” or another term? Keyworddiscovery.com suggests the top usage of that term (international study) is found linked to bible study.
It is found 29 times (out of 100). Whereas, “study abroad” is the most common term found for studying overseas across English language search engines with 67/100. So this suggests that study abroad is the best term to use in your website to get to the top of the Google list of sites offering opportunities to study overseas. But how many of VTI member websites use the term study abroad?

**Investigate your website source code**

The next step is to see what words your website may be using already to attract visitors. The web ‘robots’ trawl through your source codes, not necessarily actual words on your home page. **Source Code** is the name given to the language used ‘behind the scenes’ to write your website.

Web ‘robots’ search amongst the millions of pieces of this computer language coding to find words that match what people search for on Google. You can find what key words are being used and ‘advertised’ on your own site by going to your source codes and then clicking on VIEW, then VIEW SOURCE on your web browser title bar. This will give you a list of text your site uses. Source codes are the ‘back end’ of a website. They are not visible in your text but they are the key words, that the website builders have used so that search engines (such as Google).

VTI members need to ensure “study abroad” is a term used in source codes. The source codes used in the VTI’s own website is given below as an example. When on the VTI website if you click on VIEW and then VIEW SOURCE on the tool bar of your browser, the box below appears to show you the keys words that have been created to attract people searching for various education websites and the ‘description content’ that further directs people to the website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 VTI website source code key words and description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>meta name=</strong>&quot;keywords&quot; content=&quot;VTI, TAFE, Victoria, International Students, Vocational Education, Overseas students, Victorian TAFE International&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meta name=</strong>&quot;description&quot; content=&quot;Victorian TAFE International (VTI) Inc is an incorporated body that represents Victorian TAFE Institutes and TAFE Divisions of Universities, which operate in the international student market. Our members conduct vocational education and training programs both here in Victoria to local and overseas students and many of our member Institutes also manage vocational education and training programs with partner organisations in overseas countries.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Something that the VTI site does not do (but then we are not marketing courses and seeking enrolments) is heading tags. These are another way of making it easier for Google to classify your site.

Here is an example of computer language writing. What it is telling Google (or other search engine) is to classify according to headings.

```html
<h1>This is heading 1</h1>
<h2>This is heading 2</h2>
<h3>This is heading 3</h3>
<h4>This is heading 4</h4>
<h5>This is heading 5</h5>
<h6>This is heading 6</h6>
```

<h1> defines the most important heading.  
<h6> defines the least important heading.

All web browsers understand and recognise these headings short cuts, whether you use Opera, Explorer, Firefox, Chrome or Safari to search the web. Short headlines that are tagged with the “H1” style tag in the code are good for Search Engine Optimisation, as is a short teaser that repeats the subject in the headline and provides an overview of the page content and tagged with the “H2” style tag in code.

The words that your IT staff put in source codes do not have to be seen on your home page. But to make sure your international page comes up on a Google search you need to have key words such as study abroad in your source code so that your site comes to the top of the Google list.

You can hyperlink the text of relevance to international to the home page of your site. So for example, kangan.edu.au can hyperlink international to the home address in source code, so that kangan.edu.au/international is linked for Google to find.

You should also consider putting key words in the source code of your website to capture common misspellings. For example, keyworddiscovery.com shows that while there are 280,000 searches on the key word “accommodation” there are also nearly 96,000 searches on “accomoda- tion”. By putting the word spelled correctly and also in the most common misspellings, your website will appear above others with the relevant word.
Research by Morgan Stanley and ComScore showed that from about July 2009 there were more users of social networking than those using email and by July 2011 the amount of time spent on social networking surpassed time spent on emailing globally (source: Austrade).

Twitter’s traffic per country in March 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percent of Site Traffic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alexa (Austrade)

For social networking Facebook is the top choice in all markets, except China where the free instant messaging service QQ Tencent (QQ to users) has 750 million accounts. Twitter has around 200 million users in China. In South Korea, the search engine Naver beats Google by a wide margin, and in Japan, the social network Mixi is close behind Facebook. Australian TAFE institutes marketing to our key source countries must be aware of the services that people use in those countries.

In Taiwan one favourite is a community site, which hosts blogs and provides a free photo album and is called “Wretch” (British Council EI survey as quoted in the Australian 12.08.11).

The importance of Facebook and other social media sites is that they can create awareness of your institution and build a relationship with potential (and existing) students. Twig Marketing research suggests that young people do not use Facebook in order to choose an education provider, however they do use Facebook considerably and so it can drive potential students back to your home page. Larger institutions have a full time staff member managing the university Facebook page.
Social media has fundamentally changed the way people interact with the media and institutions. Through peer networks people are empowered to connect and share their views about every conceivable product or service.

Your students and potential students operate in this space and rely upon the advice of trusted individuals and the debates/discussions that takes place within these networks. It is commonplace for people to ask their peers in these networks what they think about an institution or for referral before approaching organisations.

It’s important for institutions to understand where these discussions are taking place and join in.

But organisations have to ensure they are genuine and honest or else they risk loss of credibility. VTI members must also be aware that Facebook, whilst the biggest social media site across the world, is banned in China thus one of the most popular social media sites is Sina Weibo, which is a Chinese microblogging site and is a hybrid of Twitter and Facebook. Weibo has more than 140 million users and now has a mobile phone version of its site. www.weibo.com

A new blog has appeared listing the words and content that are banned by China on its internet space. You can see the list of terms banned at http://blocked-onweibo.tumblr.com/

“Social media has fundamentally changed the way people interact with the media and institutions.”
Creating a Mobile Website
Version and a Smart Phone Application

Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong all have internet penetration rates between 70 per cent and 80 per cent. Turkey follows with around 50 per cent access. However the two biggest Australian markets for international students, have much lower online access.

The figure for China is around 30 per cent and India’s is barely 5 per cent (British Council ELI survey as quoted in the Australian 12.08.11). However in countries where infrastructure does not easily allow internet connections using broadband, mobile phones with internet connection via the 3G network are growing steadily.

A mobile version of your website may be worth developing as a resource for countries with better 3G penetration. The mobile version of the website would have the URL (internet address) www.m.vti.edu.au This allows the site to be more easily viewed and navigated on smaller devices, including smart phones and tablets.

*Estimate
Source: ITU World Telecommunication / ICT indicators database
Several education providers are also now developing applications to download and operate on smart phones (iphone apps or android operating system apps for Samsung, HTC smart mobile phones). It costs around $20,000 to create a basic smart phone application. Victoria University has an iphone application. It offers campus maps and directions to find facilities and services, locations and contact details of the library, student support centres, bookshops and prayers rooms. Floor plans of each campus building are being progressively added to the app. It also offers a ‘what’s on’ feature for Victoria University events. It is considered of use primarily for new students (rather than to attract prospective students).

![Internet penetration (in percentages).](source)

Source: The Australia (from the British Council El Survey)

![Predicted growth in phone apps](source)

Source: Twig Marketing www.148apps.biz
Consider Online Trade Fairs

Online attendance at exhibitions is now competing with physically attending an expo as a means of meeting representatives in person to ask questions about overseas study aspirations (British Council EI survey as quoted in the Australian 12.08.11).

There are many opportunities to create a “booth” at an online education trade fair; some examples are given below. Edufair has provided a ppt presentation to show the look of your “booth” at an education fair. Costs range from $5000 for a booth (based on around 8 hours of continuous operation). But costs associated with having institute staff work on line to ‘man the booth’ must also be taken into account.

Examples of companies offering virtual education fairs include:

Virtual Education Fair Middle East
http://www.vefme.com/

IDP India
http://www.idpvirtualfair.com/index.php

Edifier India
http://www.slideshare.net/EduFairLive/edu-fairlive-an-online-education-fair-8078230

College Week Live
http://www.collegeweeklive.com/
Conclusion

This document has aimed to give international education program managers the language to confidently speak with IT staff and web marketing staff about the needs of those who recruit international students to the courses on offer at TAFE institutes. It highlights the growth in web marketing and social media sites where young people (in particular) around the world spend considerable time researching varied topics, including a study abroad experience.

### Key issues and questions for consideration that this report highlights are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“TAFE” is not a well recognised brand to attract overseas students</td>
<td>What websites are they using to find you? (In China it is not Facebook, but Baidu and Weibo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know what search words people might use to find courses in a TAFE institute in Victoria? “Study abroad” may be used more often than “international study” by prospective students</td>
<td>Key strengths that differentiate TAFE from private sector providers of vocational education are the facilities and support offered to international students and the fact that TAFE is government owned and backed. Do you market this to overseas students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys regarding your current site and involving international students will improve your content and design</td>
<td>The practical orientation of a vocational training course is a key selling point, as is the potential pathway to university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content in languages other than English is important for our source countries. Do you have it?</td>
<td>A course finder is the ‘call to action’ of your website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you advertise on Google Adwords?</td>
<td>Why have a presence on Facebook when 93% of students in a recent survey do not use it to choose an educational institution? What is the value of an educational institution having a presence on Facebook?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have endorsements from other students and from employers on your site?</td>
<td>Do you get regular updates about who is visiting the institution website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you encourage re-visits to your site?</td>
<td>Does your website offer RSS feeds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you direct overseas web visitors directly to your international page?</td>
<td>Did you know YouTube is the 3rd largest search engine? But not in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the internet capacity of your key market sectors (can visitors upload high resolutions graphics?)</td>
<td>What source code is at the ‘back end’ of your website? Have you considered adding common mis-spelling of key terms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mobile version of your website may be worth developing as a resource for countries with better 3G penetration than internet broadband infrastructure</td>
<td>Have you looked at the cost effectiveness of a smart phone application or an online trade fair?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective international students must be able to navigate (find their way) to relevant international pages within 3 mouse clicks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

