

Financial Mentors of America

Client View



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Financial Mentors of America (FMA) is a Texas-based non-profit organisation that provides education in personal finances for middle school, high school and college students. Its Real Life Financial Math course is currently offered in 43 Texas school districts. In the 2017 to 2018 school year, FMA hopes to provide online courses to 10,000 Texas high school students.

FMA's objective as an organization is to provide online educational tools for young people – however, in many cases these students have limited IT skills. This means that high standards of usability and accessibility are essential.

“The biggest challenge we have faced has been the level of knowledge of our users,” said FMA's Technology Director. *“It's unusual for an online course to provide its own LMS [learning management system] with its own quizzes and many schools weren't prepared for the challenges they faced. In addition to that, we found that many high school students, at grades 10 plus, lacked basic computing skills, such as flipping through web pages, saving and storing documents, editing*

spreadsheets and papers in Microsoft office, and so on.”

FMA also has the challenge of appealing to multiple sets of stakeholders, including both educators, students, donors and volunteers.

“Our biggest priority has recently shifted from engaging educators to engaging donors,” he continued. *“The WordPress website is in the process of being remade to give it a more ‘modern’ feel instead of an ‘educational’ feel. Our goal is to have an interactive, engaging website where educators across the US can find resources, and donors and volunteers will easily be able to see where they can fit into our organization.”*

Service & Benefits of using Sitemorse

Sitemorse's clients often comment that it gives them confidence in their online performance. In this case, FMA was able to use Sitemorse's services to optimise and then prove the high standard to which it delivered digital governance, particular focusing on accessibility.

FMA's Technology Director said, *"We needed to review our e-learning content for accessibility, with the ultimate goal being to create a report to send to the Texas Education Agency [TEA] so that students in public schools across the state could participate in our course and receive an advanced maths credit."*

By providing a unique set of tools, Sitemorse can greatly enhance the governance of content and learning platforms. What's more, while Sitemorse's reporting is comprehensive, it is also easy-to-use and provides prioritised, actionable recommendations to drive rapid improvements.

"Sitemorse gives us a way to check and double check our content to make sure we are meeting accessibility requirements," he continued. *"While our LMS platform has passed accessibility checks, the content within it still must be checked because the LMS has no meaningful way of doing this. Sitemorse helped us fill in the gaps within our already existing technology without having to outsource the labour to a different company."*

"Sitemorse is an invaluable tool for us and is one of two key components not built into our learning management system which we have had to outsource – the other is a search engine."

"Sitemorse is an invaluable tool for us."

What does Financial Mentors of America consider to be Sitemorse's best feature?

FMA particularly appreciated the granular level of control that Sitemorse provided when running tests and reports. This meant that issues could be isolated and troublesome areas could be inspected in detail – making problem-solving fast and easy.

"We used the 'Ad-Hoc - Audit HTML Source' tool to do the testing on our content," FMA's Technology Director said, "This ended up being an excellent tool for us because instead of running Sitemorse on the entire page, we were able to simply extract our written HTML and do the testing on exactly what we needed to, and nothing more."

How has Sitemorse fitted in and helped Financial Mentors of America further improve?

Sitemorse helped FMA to pass its audit, tackling both known areas of weakness as well as issues that had not previously been identified.

"To be able to audit the HTML source has really been our go-to – we needed to make sure we were able to pass our audit," FMA's Technology Director said, "We caught things that we didn't even know were important and things we didn't think we would miss. I was able to take the results of the audit and create a report relatively easily."

What does Financial Mentors of America want to achieve going forward?

Looking ahead, FMA will continue to use Sitemorse to assist with management and monitoring across the LMS, both to maintain existing content and to develop and optimise new courses.

“We are writing a new course that will be half the length of our current course. It will be called ‘Real Life Personal Financial Literacy’ [PFL],” said FMA’s Technology Director, “The same TEA measures still apply so we are hoping to use Sitemorse in the same way so that we can pass our audit to have two courses in the education system.”

Result

Sitemorse VP Client Experience, notes:

“When serving an audience with sometimes limited IT-literacy, a high standard of usability and accessibility is more important than ever. It’s great to work with a team that has such a strong commitment to its delivery – and it’s a pleasure to help them to improve in these areas. Sitemorse sets a benchmark for performance that organisations like FMA can point to as a sign of excellence. We’re proud to set standards and to help teams to reinforce their digital strengths and to tackle areas of weakness.

“It’s also very important to us that we provide reporting that is not just

thorough but that is actionable and that does precisely what our clients need it to. Rather than supply reams of data we would much rather pinpoint issues and provide a shortlist of actions that will help organisations like FMA to make changes fast – for example with our new Prioritisation Intelligence™ functionality.

“Our mission is to make it easier than ever to improve performance in digital governance. Manual monitoring is extremely time-consuming and resource intensive – and it’s easy to miss even known issues. Automated management, however, makes this process fast, comprehensive and simple.”

“Sitemorse **sets a benchmark for performance** that organisations like FMA can point to as a **sign of excellence.**”

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