



# Updating Website Workflows to Efficiently Meet Changing User Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

**Objective:** Assess whether changes implemented to an Extension website increased website traffic and met user needs.

**Use of Theory/Research:** Social distancing, quarantining, and staying at home due to COVID-19 had significant impacts on media consumption (Nielsen Insights, 2020). According to the Pew Research Center, about 53% of US adults reported the internet was essential for them during the pandemic, with another 34% saying it was important (Vogels et al. 2020).

**Target Audience:** General public and multiplier groups (e.g., educators, health professionals, media).

**Program Description:** The website team coordinated new, updated, and curated content for consumers and health professionals around timely food, nutrition and health information related to the pandemic.

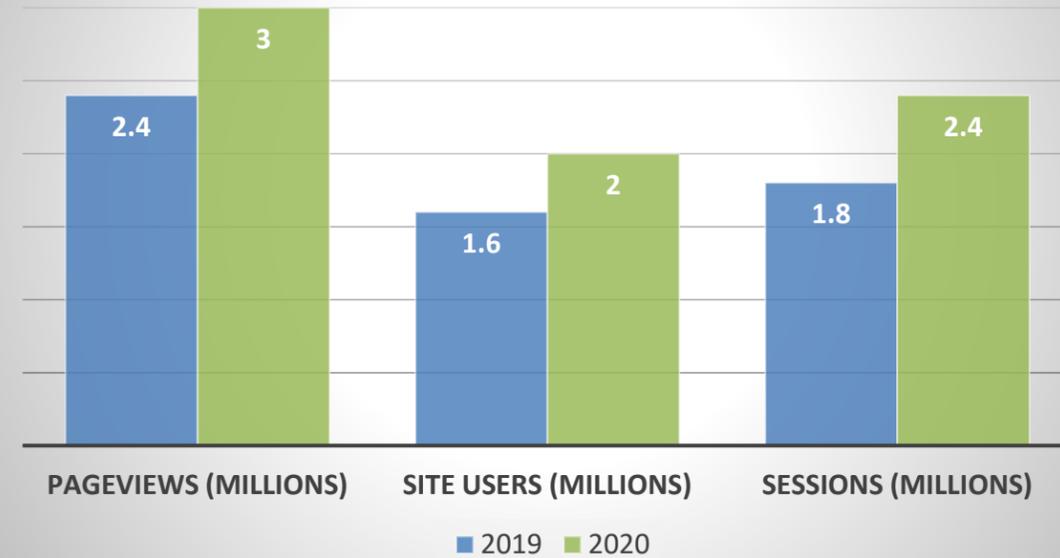
**Evaluation:** Google Analytics was used to assess website statistics. A web feedback form was added to new articles. Social media was used to promote/market content.

**Results:** Google Analytics (2019 vs. 2020) showed increases in: pageviews (2.4 vs. 3 million), site users (1.6 vs. 2 million), and sessions (1.8 vs. 2.4 million). There were positive increases in percent change for website traffic: direct traffic (36%); organic search (29%); and social media (53%). Specifically, positive increases in percent change for Facebook (112%) and Twitter (90%). Over 2,500 web feedback form responses were included in the analysis. Respondents said information was helpful to them (89%) and shared information with over 157,800 people (e.g., friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, students, parents, clients, and seniors).

Approximately 90% of responses were unique. Themes from open-ended comments included: helping keep families safe (food safety); recipes and activities for families at home with children; and food resource management tips.

**Conclusion:** Curating and creating content relevant to COVID-19 and promoting on social media increased website traffic. Using a standard web feedback form provided information about what content was useful to users. Templates and organizational structures helped state and county level Extension, support staff, and college students easily add content that was reviewed.

## Google Analytics for food.unl.edu



## Sample Quotes from Web Feedback Form

“Great ‘formula’ to use while we are ‘hibernating’ in our homes! This shows us how to use canned goods that we already have.”

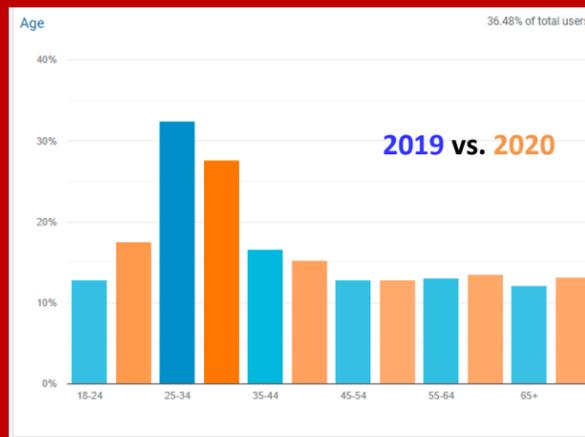
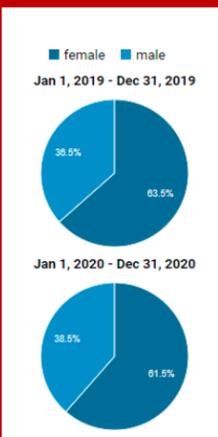
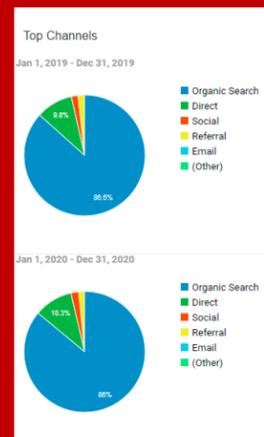
“Good information, clear, & concise, I learned things I did not know that will help keep my family safe!”

“Adding your resources to use with [state] Extension social media to help families affected by the pandemic. These resources and activities may help families to stay active and reduce stress.”

“Great [casserole] recipe...with the corona virus making us all stay home we need ways to save money.”

“Great resource to help families at home with children because schools are closed....”

“I just want to thank whoever put the time and energy into these recipes and updating the activities. This is a huge help as I am a FCS teacher. I know families enjoy the activities as well.”



## Conclusions

The core team implemented timely, relevant changes through a newly created template system, coordinated by an IANR Media colleague. Additionally, support staff and college students can easily add content on behalf of Extension professionals, which is reviewed by the core team before making it publicly available. There were 184 recipes and 217 articles added since the October 2019 update.

### References:

- Nielsen Insights. (2020). *COVID-19: Tracking the Impact on Media Consumption*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2020/covid-19-tracking-the-impact-on-media-consumption/>
- Vogels, E., Perrin, A., Rainie, L., Anderson, M. (2020). *53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak*. Pew Research Center Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/04/30/53-of-americans-say-the-internet-has-been-essential-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

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