



Discovery & Strategy

Bringing it all together on the web

Discovery

Our discovery process is collaborative and allows you to explore the best possible options for your business, guided by our digital experts. This phase is iterative, so you're not locked into a predetermined spec list. This allows for choice and adaptability. We'll guide you through several exercises and provide the tools to help you uncover the specifics of your needs, whether you know them yet or not.

The goal at this phase is to uncover all the unique insights and business requirements that you have to create the perfect match between an open source framework and your business model.

Project canvas

The project canvas is a tool to transform an idea into a project plan, to stimulate collaboration and communication between all the involved parties (project team, sponsor, stakeholders, etc.).

Analytics review

This review uses available analytics tools to help us understand the consumption of your existing site, providing insights on popular content, user flows, conversions, etc.

Competitor & reference review

Here we review reference sites (provided by you) and the websites of your key competitors to get a feel for visuals, navigation, tone and voice, and any other notable takeaways that may be important to your project and support a successful outcome.

Content inventory

When a new build is required and an existing site is available, we'll often start by cataloging the existing site pages and sections. This provides a convenient way to compare and plan how content on the new build is organized. If analytics are available, we may also highlight high traffic pages and sections that may require special attention.

Brand review

This activity is to get our design team familiar with your brand. Acro Media's design leads review any brand assets, style guides, marketing collateral, websites, etc. to become savvy with the visual aspect of your brand; colours, typography, image style, tone and voice, etc.

Stakeholder interviews

While we will all come to the table with ideas and expertise, stakeholder interviews are important as they help identify all of the different pains and needs of everyone on your team. Organizations have multiple stakeholders, so these interviews make sure your people feel vested and that their voices are heard.

Online surveys

Online surveys give us a way to gather input and sentiment directly from your website's users. This feedback is important and can help prioritize and inform the requirements of a new project from an outside point-of-view. These surveys can also be used to set a benchmark to compare against in the future.

Technical audit

A technical audit lets us review your website, code and hosting to assess the project's current health as well as our ability to perform further work on it. It may end up revealing tasks that need to be done to bring the project up to standard. These tasks can range from small code formatting fixes to urgent security patches.

Technical discovery

A technical discovery maps out the technical and business logic information for your business, including parts outside of the direct scope of the website. It gives an overview of all the systems that may need to integrate and any major functionality that is important to your business. This can include functions like inventory and order management, or shipping functions. It may also list details of specific smaller sections where precision or special details are important. Other items touched on in a technical discovery exercise: redundant technology, multiple/conflicting sets of data and data connectivity (Ex. ERP and commerce not connected).

Technology stack review

A tech stack review is a small knowledge-based activity that is primarily done by you, possibly even during initial communications with our business developers. This exercise provides a list of your existing systems and is used to plan out which systems need to be integrated and which may be replaced. This can be as simple as a list of your data management tools, CMS and CRM.

Strategy

At this phase, we take a two-pronged approach. With an understanding of your business as a whole, which we got from our discovery, we split our focus between the technical specifications and the information architecture. The brilliance of this phase is when we bring both pieces together in a visualization. This allows you to see a working wireframe for your solution.

The goal at this phase is to bring everyone onto the same page through information and rapid prototyping.

Information architecture

This is an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide input before moving into any creative and development phases where fundamental changes to the site's organization can negatively impact the timeline and budget.

Visualization/prototyping

Visualization (aka prototyping) is a low-fidelity (wireframe) design that lets project teams (both yours and ours) experience specific page flows and functionality, before going into full development. It's a relatively low-cost exercise and allows for plenty of iterations and pivoting.

Design System

A design system is the evolution of a style guide. It's built on a foundation of reusable tokens,



components, and patterns, that are living code, platform-agnostic, and can be pieced together to form the frontend look and feel of a website or app.

Development roadmap

Development roadmaps are critical for transparent communication and timeline accuracy. If a sudden scope change must be introduced into a project, the development roadmap provides a clear understanding of where the change should be made and how it will affect other tasks within the roadmap.

API specifications

Application programming interface (API) specifications are crucial for software development, especially for integrations and automation. API specifications are documentation that provides precise details on how systems will talk to each other: what data can be sent, how it will be formatted, where will it be sent to, how will responses (such as successes or errors) be communicated, etc. They may also include how data will map between two systems with different data models.

Server and host architecture

Server and hosting architecture maps out exactly how data will flow between your behind-the-scenes servers and which servers will have access to what data. These details ensure that your site is performant, capable of large traffic swings (i.e. for sales events), scalable, and compliant with industry regulations (such as PCI compliance).

Development workflow

Development workflows are a defined process for how software and functionality changes will be moved from staging to production, typically detailing the various steps for development, testing, review, and launch. These workflows ensure that your business is impacted as little as possible and may even contain specific rules such as acceptable launch times, approval processes and emergency rollback procedures.

More information

Acro Media helps companies plan and execute successful digital solutions. We add expert guidance through the discovery & strategy phases that provides a complete understanding of project requirements, ensures stakeholder buy-in, and creates a comprehensive development roadmap. For more information, visit acromedia.com

About Acro Media

Acro Media is a full-service digital commerce agency, solving complex ecommerce problems with open source platforms. Our solutions enable companies to invest in their technology as a business asset, capitalize on digital commerce as a revenue generator and confidently move through digital business transformation.

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