

Classical Music, Contemporary Tech

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Bringing Curtis's IT and Digital Infrastructure into the 21st Century

Curtis c. 2015-16 School Year

The Vision

Strategic Plan for next decade unveiled in 2015, outlining a commitment to increasing its global reach and engagement

Curtis c. 2015-16 School Year

The Project

Redesigning the Curtis
digital landscape to achieve
Strategic Plan goals:
including increased
engagement, ticket-sales,
and fundraising

Curtis c. 2015-16 School Year

The Plan

- Create Digital Committee from Board of Trustees
 - Hire VP of External Relations and Digital Projects Manager
 - Engage web agency to redesign Curtis.edu
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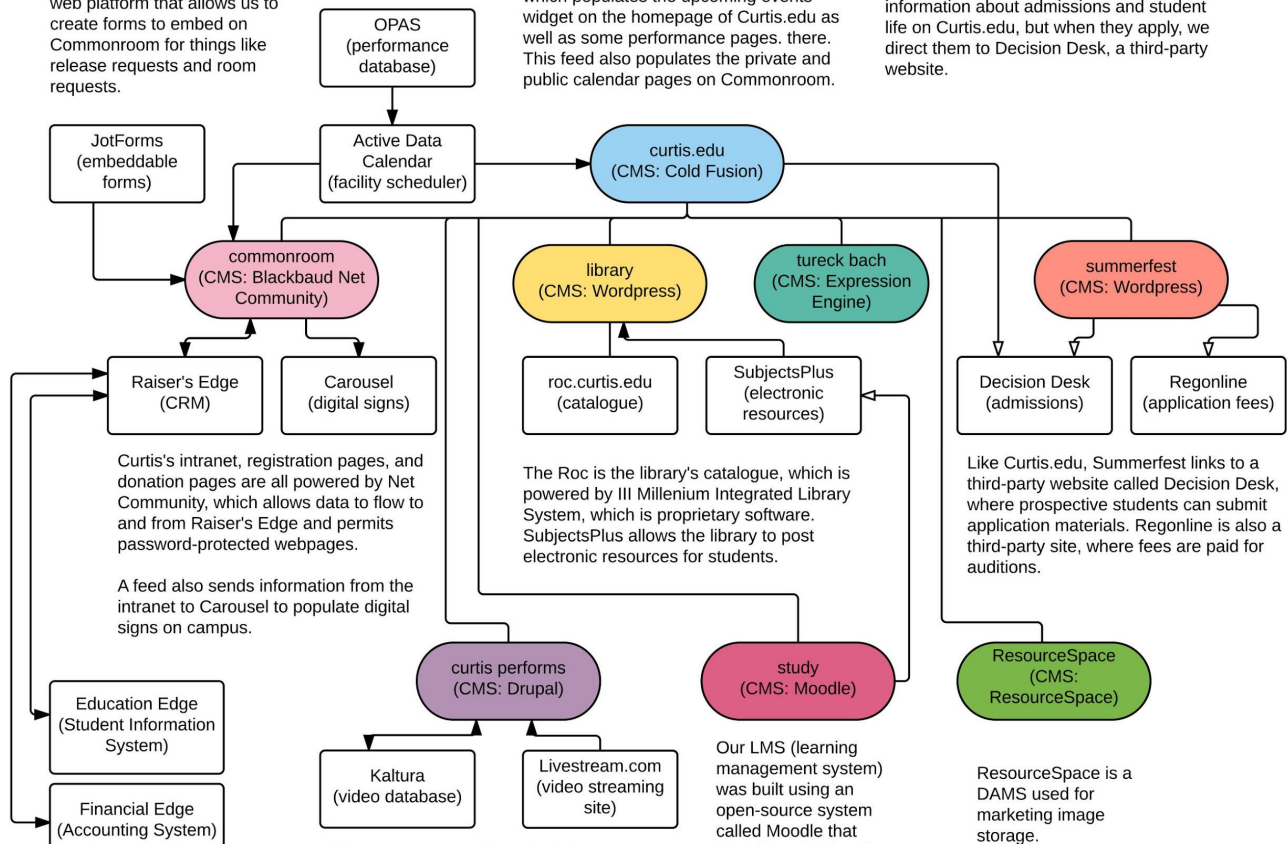
**And then I tried to write the RFP.
Here's what I discovered.**

Web Links and Systems Integrations

JotForms is a paid third-party web platform that allows us to create forms to embed on Commonroom for things like release requests and room requests.

OPAS feeds information into Active Data, which populates the upcoming events widget on the homepage of Curtis.edu as well as some performance pages. There. This feed also populates the private and public calendar pages on Commonroom.

Prospective students can access information about admissions and student life on Curtis.edu, but when they apply, we direct them to Decision Desk, a third-party website.



8 websites.
12 databases.
20 product owners.
0 strategy.

Curtis c. 2015-16 School Year

The Problem

- Foundational systems are outdated, disconnected data silos
 - IT and digital support teams are understaffed and underfunded
 - Audiences are little understood outside of anecdotal evidence
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**To redesign a website now would be a
cosmetic, not functional upgrade.**

Curtis c. 2015-16 School Year

The Revised Plan

- Investigate solutions for consolidating and upgrading business software systems
 - Concurrently, begin research and content strategy planning for future website
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Onward!

- Administered surveys and stakeholder interviews with all staff, as well as a number of students, faculty, and alumni about their use of technology at Curtis and the capabilities they wish they had
- Consulted with peer institutions about their successes and struggles in the IT and digital space
- Completed content audit and analytics review of Curtis's various web properties

**“Specialization promotes excellence
in systems management,
just as it does in music performance.”**

Key Findings: People

- Staff, students, and faculty felt like the digital tools at their disposal were a hindrance to their current work and project growth
- Prospective students, ticket buyers, and donors struggled with the disconnect between the refined and renowned Curtis brand identity and their clunky online experiences with the school

Key Findings: Systems

- After a wave of turnover, many non-technical staff members were forced to be “IT experts” in their departments’ software
- A number of systems were being phased out by their manufacturers and not properly supported
- A number of systems were not being used for their intended purposes, therefore not meeting the needs of administrators and audiences

Key Findings: Content

- Content for prospective students, our primary web audience, was buried in sub-navigation
- Print materials were being repurposed for the web without regard to the user behavior and needs on these different channels
- Website governance fell into departmental silos with little editorial oversight
- User experience and brand continuity suffered across all of our websites due to a lack of a clear content strategy

**A “refresh” isn’t enough;
Transformation is required**

Curtis c. 2016-17 School Year

The Vision

Curtis will provide the same
“boutique” experience
online for its constituents
that it does in person

Curtis c. 2016-17 School Year

The Project

To meet the evolving needs
of our primary audiences
Curtis's technology stack
needs a complete overhaul

Curtis c. 2016-17 School Year

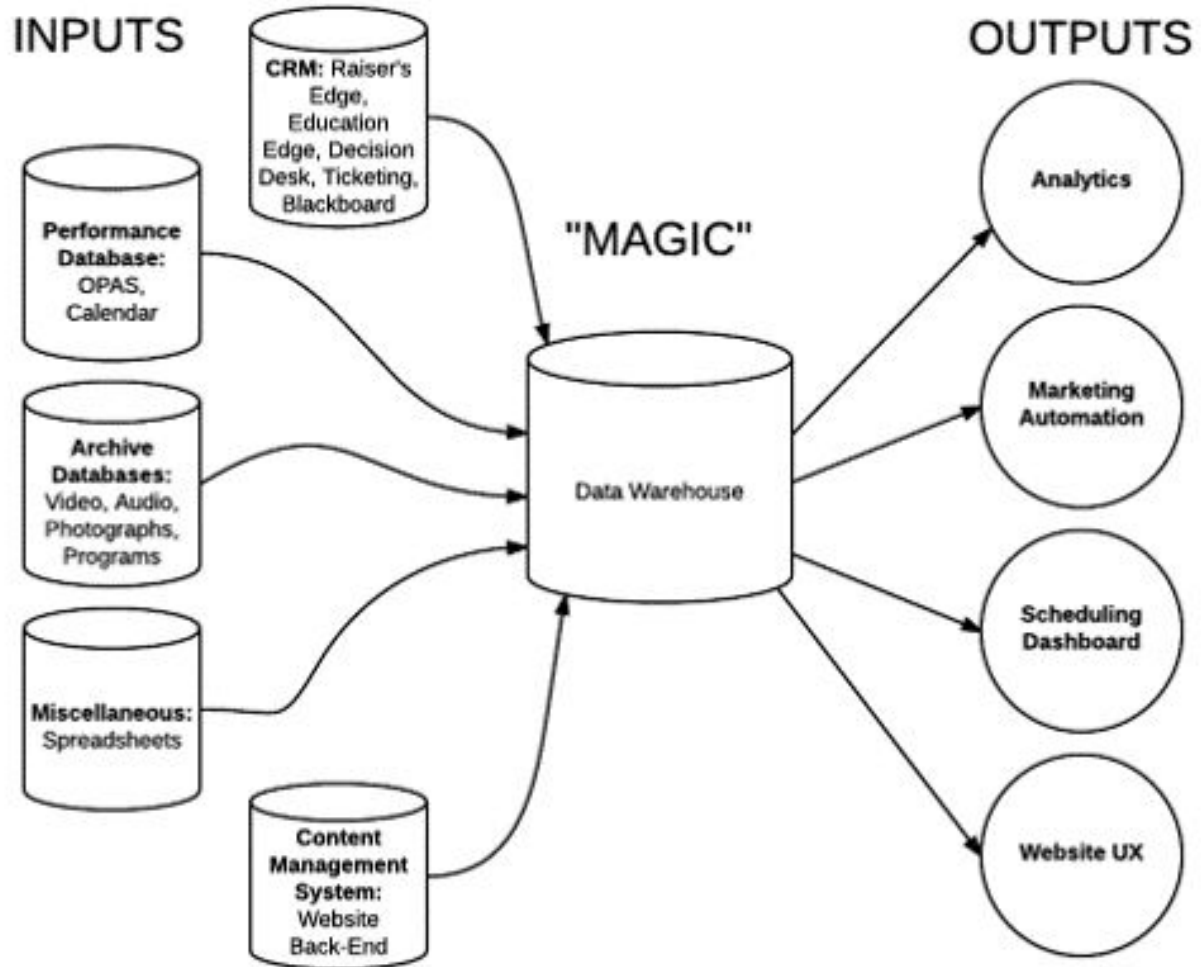
The Plan

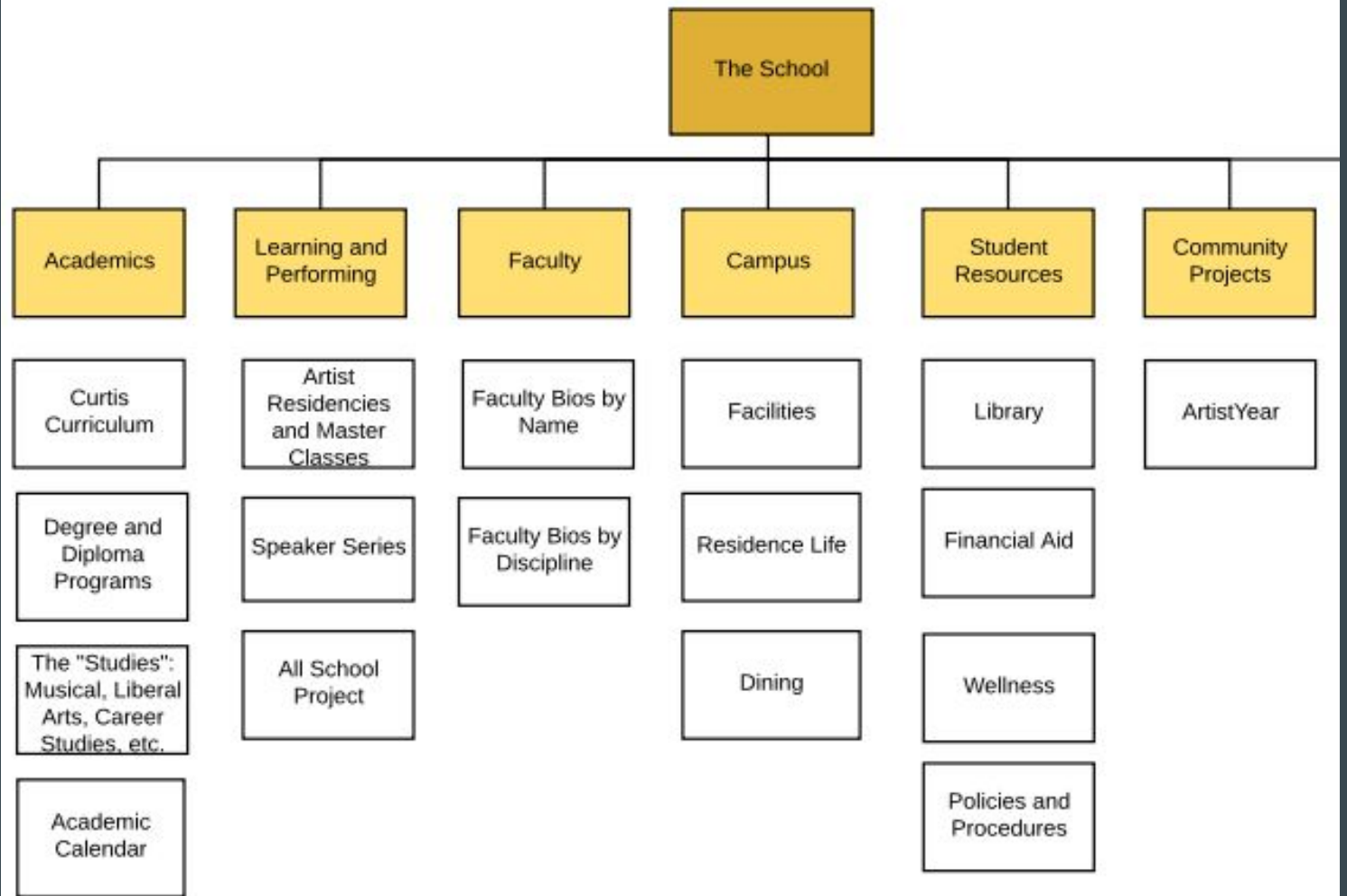
- Replace outdated marketing and ticketing systems
 - Custom-build software where no tool meets our unique needs as a school/performing arts organization
 - Create a data warehouse to provide BI connecting data from our specialized systems
 - Consolidate websites onto a single CMS
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**Rome wasn't built in a day;
Our digital strategy won't be either**

BUT! We're getting closer every day.

Data Flow In and Out of Systems





Curtis.edu:
"The School"
 information
 architecture

Curtis c. 2017-18 School Year and Beyond

- Develop curated and targeted online experiences for prospective students and parents; alumni; ticket-buyers; and donors - on our website, apps, and social channels
- Centralize data connecting constituent types and attributes to program types and attributes
- Build an IT team to support maintenance and growth of campus technology; develop capabilities of existing staff to take advantage of emerging digital opportunities

**By our 100th anniversary, we will be
leaders - not laggards - in our digital
initiatives**

Any questions?