

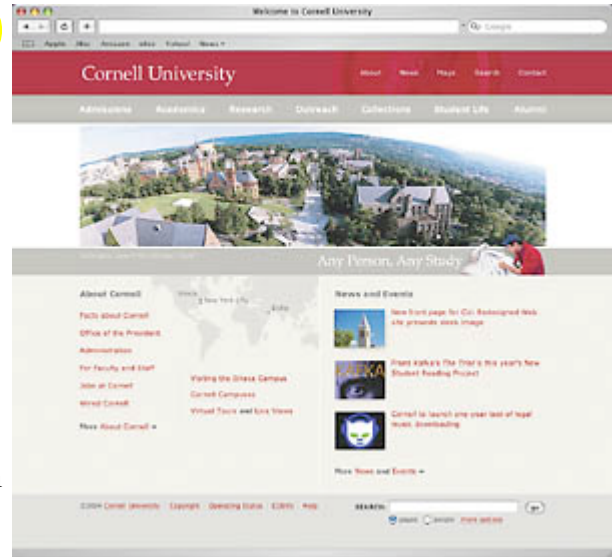
## New Cornell Web site provides more info and better navigation

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You still type in [www.cornell.edu](http://www.cornell.edu) to log on, but that is one of the few similarities between Cornell's new Web site and its predecessor.

The new site made its online debut this week, following nearly a year's planning and four months of intensive work. It is designed to improve the university's Web presence in several key areas, especially navigability, organization and accurate, informative responses to requests for specific information.

Five separate search tools on the former Cornell Web site have been consolidated into a single unified interface. The Web portion of a search undertaken from the site is powered by Google and examines more than 2 million pages, which represents a tenfold increase.



"We've got the university's front door in place on the Internet," said Cornell President Jeffrey Lehman. He added, "People will no longer have to resort to external search engines to find out even the most basic facts about us."

"From now on, visitors have three easy choices," said Thomas W. Bruce, Cornell vice president for communications and media relations. "They can spend time perusing over 100 pages of information about Cornell University, including a Web page devoted to admissions, where all nine offices can now be found together for the first time. A second option is to go to a specific destination, such as a school, a college or an institute, in two or three clicks. And for the truly hurried, there is a box where one can type in a query and get there in one click."

The Cornell home page has long been a popular and active Web destination, with about 300 million page views, or hits, in 2003, when the Cornell home page alone was accessed about 11 million times. But the multiple search tools and other impediments frustrated many users, leading Cornell's president, when he took office last year, to create the Office of Web Communications to address and promote the university's extensive use of the Internet.

"Giving the world access to Cornell through this new Web site will undoubtedly result in even more traffic," said Bruce, who accelerated the pace of development of a new Cornell Web site and logo when he arrived in April.

A team led by **Thomas Richardson, Cornell's first director of the Office of Web Communications** (OWC), started to overhaul the graphical, textual and functional aspects of the main Web site and to recruit content curators to take responsibility for specific areas undergoing extensive redevelopment. The Cornell Information Technologies' Web Production Group was engaged to develop the site and establish its technical infrastructure.

By June, Bruce and Richardson were briefing and consulting two key groups: campus webmasters and designers who are members of the CU-Web Forum, and marketing communications professionals who work in the colleges and other units. Presentations were made to each of the college deans. There also were numerous conversations with faculty members and students.

The design team sought still wider input, posting news of the redesign on the existing home page and inviting visitors to participate in a Web-log dialogue at <http://web.cornell.edu/redesign/blog/>, where draft designs often drew spirited comment and exchanges with the designers.

The new Web site comes online at a strategic time of year, when many prospective undergraduate and graduate students start sorting out their application choices. October was the busiest month last year, when there were more than 46 million page views. September followed with 36 million page views.

Richardson, who designed the new architecture, said that the revamped site is the first of four Web-development phases to be implemented over the next three years. "Our top priority was to redevelop the main Web site. We ended up accomplishing a lot more toward showing the true value of a Cornell University education," he said.

He was joined in this effort by Lisa Cameron-Norfleet, program manager, developer relations in the OWC, and Diane Kubarek, program manager for cornell.edu, who is now interim director of the OWC. With completion of the first phase, Richardson left Cornell last week to chase another dream, a career in screenwriting and film production.

Two editors from the Office of Communication and Marketing Services (CAMS), JoAnn Wimer and Vivek Apte, wrote and edited new copy for the site and sifted through thousands of pages of available information to authenticate their accuracy before making them available to site visitors. In the first phase, Stephen Hamilton, associate provost for outreach, has served as content curator of the outreach section, and Lesley Yorke, from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, content curator for the research sections. As the site expands, more curators will be added. Students, for example, will soon curate the student life section.

Substantially complete but yet to be unveiled is a new Cornell University logo, which has been developed by a team of graphic designers from CAMS in consultation with the nationally recognized firm Chermayeff and Geismar. The logo, which will become Cornell's graphic identifier, is to be released by Trustee-Council Weekend, Oct. 28-30, along with a style guide for its electronic and print usage, and it will then appear on the Cornell home page and in all university publications.



**Four key players in the development of the new Cornell Web site are: Lisa Cameron-Norfleet, standing at left, and Diane Kubarek, seated, from the Office of Web Communications, and Sanjeev Shukla and Will Morris, standing at right, from CIT's Web Production Group.**  
*Robert Barker/University Photography*

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