

# Canadian Screen Training Centre Website Consultation

## Competitive Analysis

A good way to begin your website revision is to take a look at what your competitors are doing online, to see where the bar is set.

### *National Screen Institute*

Currently one of the best websites for a screen training organization, the NSI site is the result of a long development process that cost a great deal of money. Since the NSI itself is not a brick and mortar establishment -- much like the CSTC -- they decided that their web presence needed to take on a much more active role in how they communicate. In fact, the NSI site plays a large role in their training mandate through the inclusion of their "Industry Centre" with blogs and features that keep their alumni and other interested parties involved as recurring visitors. They also have a regular newsletter packed with information. But they also spend a lot to keep this up, and have a fair bit of advertising on the site to offset these costs.



Functionally, the NSI website is very clear, crisp, clean, and easy to use. Their logo is prominent, alongside a very short, clear description of what the NSI is: "Canada's national training school for writers, directors and producers in film, television and digital media." Note that the word "training" is hyperlinked to their Programs section of the site, which is actually a subsection of the About NSI section of the main navigation -- a little strange, since it would seem important enough to be a main category all on its own. This

demonstrates how the priorities of the NSI are somewhat different than the CSTC, however, which is entirely focused on its programs like SIFT.

Technically, the site is kept as simple as possible. A modular layout keeps content areas discreet and separate, making them scalable to accommodate different amounts of content without breaking the layout of the page. There is no Flash on the home page, it's all done in simple style sheets in HTML.

### ***Canadian Film Centre***

As one would expect from the CFC, the presentation is a bit more artsy, with a graphic logo area at the top that changes every time the page is loaded, and slick Flash area underneath that to promote their top content element. There is nothing on the home page that describes what the CFC is, one must presume that they just assume everyone coming there would know that already.



Functionally the CFC site is presented with logical section headings and dropdown multilayer subsection navigation, making it very easy to navigate quickly. Once inside a subsection the global navigation remains consistent, as well as a "breadcrumb trail" navigational element to show you exactly where you are in the site tree, and another sub-navigation to the right. It is impossible to get lost on this site.

Technically, the site is not too complex. Minimal Flash is used for the promo area, but the rest is presented through standard style sheets in HTML.

### ***Vancouver Film School***

The VFS site is very slick and well done, but again a great deal of money was spend developing it and continues to go into maintaining it. But they can afford it.

What really works well about this site is all on the home page. The branding at the top is excellent, with the logo and "Results Matter" slogan alongside the bright red Vancouver skyline graphic and global navigation. The "official store" button is a nice touch as well, directing people to the ecommerce area for VFS merchandise. Underneath that is a Flash feature demonstrating a popular way to promote various high priority content. There are four different promo "screens" that automatically cycle through, or the user can click the arrows on either side or the numbers below to navigate through themselves. Each of these promo screens is further divided into two or three promos, depending on the content it's promoting. Very effective at making the page look dynamic and bringing important content front and centre. And then below this is a clear and colourful presentation of all the school's programs beside another prominent Flash promo area that again cycles through different promo content. What this does is offer a lot of different ways that a visitor's attention could be grabbed to draw them in. Very effective.



Functionally, the VFS site is superlative. It looks very simple, but technically there's a lot of work behind the scenes to make it look so nice and keep it fresh. The Flash isn't complex, but it takes some initial effort to make it work and some maintenance to keep it looking right when new content is put into it.

### ***Toronto Media & Film College***

This is a much smaller organization than the VFS, and the site shows it. It's not a great site, looking like it was made 5 years ago and never really updated since except to add a YouTube promo video in the middle, which doesn't really fit properly in the design.



Functionally the "Main Menu" along the side is less effective than a conventional navigation that uses a few main categories with subsections. Technically there's nothing much happening either.

### ***Institut National de l'Image et du Son***

INIS is a primarily French organization with a nice website for its size. It is really presented in this analysis as another fair example of a site for media training in Canada.

And the English version:

Mandate - Intent - Vision	Presentation of the Institute	Target Clientele
Study Programs	Training Objectives	Regular Training Program Disciplines
Extended Training	An Active Role	A Partnership Model

**Mandate - Intent - Vision**

**Mandate**  
To provide the film, television and interactive media industries with a training centre that will enable various areas of expertise to be updated and perfected.

**Intent**  
To help creative talent get integrated into the milieu and to support professional progress by contributing to the development of skills, aptitudes and knowledge.

**Vision**  
To propose training programs based on practice, teamwork, creative development and an understanding of the realities of various professions.

**Presentation of the Institute**

Institut national de l'image et du son is a professional training center specialized in film, television and interactive media initiated through the efforts of the audiovisual community. It has been active since January, 1998.

INIS enables student designers, screenwriters, authors, directors and producers of audiovisual and multimedia content to learn their profession by working in teams on projects that respect established professional standards. Based on practice and creativity, INIS pedagogy has been adapted to the needs and to the realities of the milieu.

Place for higher learning, INIS also supports active professionals who want to advance, master new tools and develop new areas of expertise.

## Centre for Arts and Technology

Another larger school that does more than simply screen training, the CAT is still worth looking at because it has a really slick site implementing an innovative Flash element to its navigation for accessing the different programs, as well as navigational elements that separate actions like Ask, Apply, and Chat from information like Programs, Campuses, and About.



## Canadian Screen Training Centre Site Analysis

And now your own current site. Very simple and clean, and yet...what is the CSTC? It does tell you, if you choose to read the large block of text in the middle of the page. One might assume this is good enough, but it's not.

People don't read large blocks of text like this.

On a home page, you have a second or two of a person's time -- and all the words and pictures they can absorb in that brief time -- to capture their attention and tell them exactly who you are. Or if not exactly, then at least you need to tell them enough to make them interested enough to put the effort into finding out more.

Go back to the NSI site and see the very top of their page. You see a logo and a clear, short statement of who they are and what they do. This is what you need too.

Other considerations:

- **Programs:** you need to clearly define to people that you have certain programs you offer, and what they are by grouping them under a category heading
- **Board:** there is no way this should be on your home page, it should be under About. On the other hand, what would be effective on the home page would be to promote all the famous people who've participated with you over the years, with pictures of them. This will attract the kind of attention you're looking for. See the big picture of Kiefer on the CFC site.
- **The Pulse:** this is a main section of the site, plus it's promoted on the left...but what is it? It should be labeled as News, or a Newsletter, since that is descriptive of its function and makes more sense to an average user.
- **Alumni:** why should alumni keep in touch? Honestly, what's in it for them? How about a contest to provide incentive? How about offering real networking opportunities for them?

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Canadian Screen Training Centre (CSTC RACC). The header features a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT CSTC, CONTACT US, THE PULSE, and SPONSORS. Below the header, the main content area includes a large orange box on the left for 'acting workshops' in 'Winter 2010 OTTAWA'. The central text reads 'learn. create. succeed. catch the spirit of independence.' and describes the workshops. To the right, there is a section for 'THE PULSE' and 'alumni'. At the bottom, a 'Board of Directors' section lists several members with their titles and affiliations.

**Canadian Screen Training Centre**  
Réseau d'ateliers cinématographiques canadiens

HOME ABOUT CSTC CONTACT US THE PULSE SPONSORS

Canadian Screen Training Centre  
Réseau d'ateliers cinématographiques canadiens

learn. **create.** succeed.  
*catch the spirit of independence.*

Details added Sept 25/09. [Click Here.](#)

**acting workshops**  
Winter 2010  
OTTAWA

[Click here for details](#)

The Canadian Screen Training Centre offers workshops designed to develop the skills you need to succeed in the independent screen industry. Whether you are just starting out, or already established in the industry, you will find workshops to enhance your abilities and challenge your mind and creativity.

Only established professionals with workplace experience lead our workshops, so not only do you gain valuable hands-on experience and skills, you make strong industry and peer contacts.

Our workshops are a crucial stepping stone in developing your film and television career. Over the past two decades, more than 6,000 individuals have selected us to hone their chosen crafts and launch, develop or propel their professional careers. As a result, our Summer Institute of Film and Television has become a cornerstone of the Canadian film and television scene, establishing its reputation as the training ground for Canada's screen industry elite.

Please note our new address:  
342A Elgin St  
Ottawa, ON K2P 1M6

**THE PULSE**

**alumni**

We want to know what you are up to – tell us about your projects and credits.  
[Drop us a line!](#)

FIND US ON  
Facebook & Twitter

**Board of Directors**

**CHAIRMAN**  
**Barry McLoughlin**  
President, McLoughlin Media

**Harvey Glatt**  
Music and Entertainment Consultant

**Elizabeth McDonald**  
President, Canadian Solar Industries Association

**Firdaus Kharas**  
Chairman & Executive Producer  
Chocolate Moose Media Inc.

**Catherine Mensour**  
President, Mensour Agency Ltd.

**Chris Knight**  
President, Knight Enterprises

**Lawry Trevor-Deutsch**  
Business Development Consultant

**Bryn Matthews**  
Television Broadcast and Production Consultant

As you can see from the competitive analysis, organizations like yours are acting on the reality that the vast majority of prospective participants use the internet for almost all their initial interactions: people find you online, learn about you online, then if they can,

they register with you online. Once they've graduated, they'll continue to interact with you online if you offer the means to do so. It's how things work now.

The quality of sites targeting your audience is, on average, very high. Your audience are media savvy and graphically oriented, so you need a site that is better than average in looks and functionality. You need to be state-of-the-art, but fortunately that doesn't mean you need to have all the bells and whistles. Quite the opposite: media savvy web-users demand a site that looks good, but is also very simple to use.

Organizationally, what works well is dividing your content into just a few discreet content silos: About, Programs, News, Alumni. Sections that make sense to everyone, where they can quickly and easily find predictable content.

Functionally, you have some Flash at the top, but it's not really doing a lot. You should be getting more punch out of your Flash. The rest of the content can be laid out in a simple modular fashion using HTML to make content updates easy.

## **Recommendations**

The CSTC site would benefit from a redesign that updates the look and adds new functionality and content.

Specifically, the site's content should be divided into a few main silos with appropriate subsections, such as:

- About
  - History
  - Board
  - Contact
- Programs
  - Register
  - SIFT
  - Taking it to the Screen
  - Workshops
- News
  - Recent
  - Archive
- Alumni

The site design should be kept simple and clean, with modular content areas to easily accommodate necessary updates without requiring special design considerations.

The majority of the site can be done in basic HTML using style sheets, with strategic use of Flash for promo areas and a bit of fanciness in the global navigation for dropdown subnav elements.



The key should be to build a site that can last for a while with minimal changes to structure and features, while still allowing for easy updates to certain content, such as the Home Page Flash Promo, new testimonials, program info, and news.

### Sample Home Page Wireframe:

**CSTC LOGO** *A nice tagline that describes what the CSTC is all about.*

ABOUT PROGRAMS NEWS ALUMNI

Learn. Create. Succeed. *Spirit of Incept*

1. SUBNAV DROPDOWN

2. FLASHVIDEO PROMO

3. STATIC PROMOS

4. PROGRAM DETAILS

**INTERACTIVE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS:**  
**CSTC**  
 Page: Home Page

- 1. SUBNAV DROPDOWN**  
The navigation is simple and universal. Rolling over the headings brings a dropdown of subnav options.
- 2. FLASHVIDEO PROMO**  
Dynamic promo also cycles through top features. For example, a special program offering, promoting celebrity participants, success stories from alumni, etc.
- 3. STATIC PROMOS**  
Various standard static elements are promoted.
- 4. PROGRAM DETAILS**  
Highlighting the programs offered with a bit of information on each, especially dates.

**Programs**

- Summer Institute of Film and Television**  
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- Taking It to the Screen**  
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- Acting Workshops**  
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PROMO FOR TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

PROMO FOR ALUMNI

CONTACT ADDRESS AND EMAIL AND PHONE

### Site Element Notes:

- *Testimonials* -- the current use of testimonials should be ramped up, with at least one good quote from an alumnus on each page.
- *Celebrity Images* -- copious use of pictures of famous people who have participated in the past (or better still those who will be participating) should appear across the site, perhaps integrated into the testimonials
- *Alumni* -- the Alumni area should be created to allow people to easily update their contact information and find the information of other past participants. It should become a place where people can showcase their skills and accomplishments and network together