

AAPA 2019 Communications Awards
Port of New Orleans
Website

Website Link: <https://portnola.com>

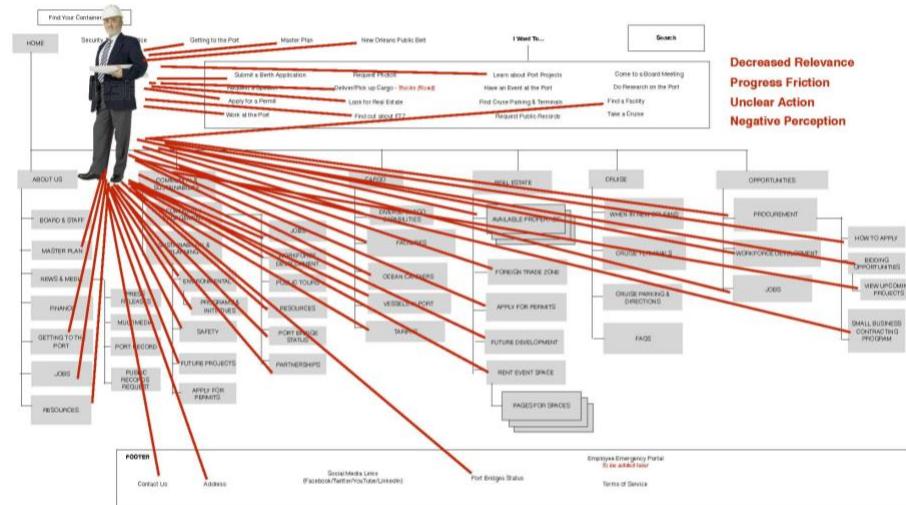
The Port of New Orleans (Port NOLA) launched its new website in August 2018 after a year of planning, building and testing. The new website provides general Port information, details on the Port's four lines of business and provides resources for community engagement. It incorporates modern design with Port NOLA branding, and uses online tools that incorporate best practices for web design, all created with the end user as a priority.

1. Challenges or Opportunities

Under the leadership of Brandy Christian who became CEO in 2017, the Port of New Orleans launched a strategic masterplan that clearly defined the port's bold vision and plans to exceed future demand. The Port needed a website that could be the front-facing centerpiece for the new Port NOLA brand and vision — one that reflects our dynamic direction, and more importantly was more useful to our broadly diverse audiences.

Our old website just didn't capture that modern energy or efficiency:

- It was out of date in appearance,
- cumbersome for the user with too many clicks and unclear user paths,
- difficult to update in the backend for content managers in the CMS,
- and difficult to accurately track user behavior because the website was confusing for users to navigate and we feel they just gave up before taking a meaningful action.



Someone like a contractor who wants to do business with the port had to sift through a lot of irrelevant information scattered all over the site

to try to get what they needed. Based on the amount of random phone calls we received people didn't always get the answers from the website. We needed intuitive and logic-based audience paths so users could find what they need within a few clicks — all while also staying true to our diverse business lines and our vision.

Also, even though we had rebranded in 2015 as Port NOLA, the domain name was still portno.com. We also wanted to take the opportunity to launch a new domain name with the new website to match our current branding.

One of the consistent challenges in communications at Port NOLA is creating collateral for our varied audiences. Our stakeholders vary so widely in their interests and goals in interacting with the Port, that no one piece of collateral can address everyone's needs. In designing a new website, the Port saw an opportunity to create one source that can provide all of the information anyone would be seeking, as well as anticipate their needs by providing them answers to questions they didn't know they had.

Port NOLA needed a website that is current, modern and adaptable, and that would allow us to convey our information in line with the ever-changing and growing digital age.

2. Mission:

The Port of New Orleans mission is: To drive regional economic prosperity by maximizing the flow of international trade and commerce as a modern gateway. Our vision: Advancing global connections and infrastructure to exceed the needs of tomorrow.

The new website showcases our four lines of business and provides easily accessible information to our wide range of stakeholders, connecting them to the resources they need to make business decisions, find a new job, plan their vacation, reach out with a community concern or find entertainment via our videos.

3. Planning and Programming Components:

Overall goals/desired results: The Port wanted to create a website that conveyed our role as a modern multimodal gateway and provided information in an engaging, accessible way. We wanted to streamline the user paths and create an ease of use for our extensive categories of stakeholders.

OLD Website Homepage:

The Old Website Homepage features a dark header with the Port NOLA logo and "THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS". A navigation bar below includes links for HOME, CARGO, REAL ESTATE, CRUISES, PORT DIRECTORY, CONTACT, ABOUT, NEWS/PUBLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT, JOBS, COMMUNITY & EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENTAL, HARBOR POLICE, and BRIDGE NEWS. The main content area has a large image of a port facility with shipping containers and cranes. A dark overlay box on the left contains the text "Port Facilities — Staying Ahead of the Curve". To the right, a large sign on a building reads "PORT NOLA THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS". Below the image, a news article is displayed with a photo of two men shaking hands.

Port Facilities —
Staying Ahead of the Curve

Jack C. Jensen Jr. Appointed to Board of Commissioners of Port NOLA

Gov. John Bel Edwards appointed Jack C. Jensen Jr. to the Board of Commissioners of Port NOLA as one of two Jefferson Parish representatives on the seven-member regional board.

[Read More >](#)

NEW Website Homepage:

The New Website Homepage features a header with the Port NOLA logo and "THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS". A navigation menu includes links for PORT INFO, BUSINESS, CRUISE, and COMMUNITY. On the right, there are search and menu icons. The main image shows a large industrial warehouse with stacks of pallets and a forklift. Overlaid on the image is the large, bold text "EXCEEDING THE NEEDS OF TOMORROW".



CARGO



REAL ESTATE



CRUISE



PROCUREMENT



COMMUNITY

OLD Website Cruise Landing Page:

The screenshot shows the old website's cruise landing page. At the top, there's a dark header with the Port NOLA logo and a search bar. Below the header, a navigation menu includes links for Home, Cargo, Real Estate, Cruises, Port Directory, and Contact. Under the main content area, there's a sidebar titled "CRUISES" with links to Cruise Lines, Passenger Info, Vessel Schedules, Cruise Webcam, and Contacts. The main content area features a large image of a cruise ship docked at a port, with the Port NOLA logo overlaid. Below the image, there's a section titled "Cruise New Orleans" with a link to view a video. The text explains that New Orleans offers modern cruise facilities in a city that is a world-class tourist destination, where passengers get two vacations in one. It mentions several cruise lines: Carnival Cruise Line, Norwegian Cruise Line International, American Queen Steamboat Company, American Cruise Lines, Travel Dynamics International, and Blount Small Ship Adventures. It also notes that most passengers extend their vacation by staying in New Orleans before or after their cruise, and provides a link to the official website. Finally, it mentions parking options at \$20 per day for oversized vehicles.

NEW Website Cruise Landing Page:

The screenshot shows the new website's cruise landing page. The header features the Port NOLA logo and the text "THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS". To the right are links for PORT INFO, BUSINESS, CRUISE, and COMMUNITY, along with a search icon and a menu icon. The main visual is a large, dramatic black and white photograph of a massive cruise ship docked at a port under a bridge, with the city skyline visible in the background. The word "CRUISE" is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters across the center of the image. Below the image, a breadcrumb trail shows "HOME / CRUISE". The main headline reads "ENJOY THE GETAWAY OF A LIFETIME. THEN TAKE A FANTASTIC CRUISE.". A paragraph below explains why New Orleans is a popular cruise destination, mentioning jazz, Mardi Gras, and unique cultural offerings. On the right side, there's a green sidebar with links for PARKING AND DIRECTIONS, CRUISE LINES AND ITINERARIES, WHEN IN NOLA, FAQS, and CRUISE WEBCAM, each preceded by a right-pointing arrow.

ENJOY THE GETAWAY OF A LIFETIME.

THEN TAKE A FANTASTIC CRUISE.

New Orleans is the city of jazz and jambalaya. Mardi Gras and masked celebrations. There's a reason why more and more passengers choose to launch their cruise vacations from this unique city. And our cruise terminals and parking facilities are conveniently located in the heart of the city, steps from the amenities and cultural offerings you can only find in the Crescent City.

New Orleans is the sixth largest cruise port in the United States, and

PARKING AND DIRECTIONS >

CRUISE LINES AND ITINERARIES >

WHEN IN NOLA >

FAQS >

CRUISE WEBCAM >

NEW Website Navigation Tool via “Hamburger Menu” (not an option on OLD site):

PORT INFO	BUSINESS	CRUISE	CONTACT US	X
PORT 101	CARGO	PARKING & DIRECTIONS	HARBOR POLICE & SECURITY	
HISTORY	CAPABILITIES	CRUISE LINES & ITINERARIES	NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT/RAIL	
RESOURCES	TERMINALS	WHEN IN NOLA	NOLA	
BOARD & STAFF	TARIFFS	FAQS		
SENIOR STAFF	OCEAN CARRIERS	CRUISE WEBCAM		
BOARD MEETINGS	BRIDGE STATUS			
PAST BOARD MEETINGS	REAL ESTATE			
FINANCE	AVAILABLE PROPERTIES			
DIRECTIONS	FUTURE PROJECTS			
MASTER PLAN	VENUE RENTALS			
NEWS & MEDIA	PERMITTING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
PRESS RELEASES	FTZ	JOBs		
PORT RECORD	PROCUREMENT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		
MULTIMEDIA GALLERY	BIDDING OPPORTUNITIES	PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES		
PUBLIC RECORDS	SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTING PROGRAM	ENGAGEMENT		
HARBOR POLICE & SECURITY		PUBLIC EVENTS		
SECURITY & ACCESS		SPEAKERS BUREAU		
HARBOR POLICE HISTORY		PARTNERSHIPS		
HARBOR POLICE STAFF		SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
HARBOR POLICE DIVISIONS		PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES		
HARBOR POLICE JOBS				

Objectives: Port NOLA’s main objectives were to redesign the website with much of its existing content to look more visually appealing and intuitive; increase ease of use for all stakeholders; feature video more prominently and seamlessly; blend social media more deliberately; and provide a resource for users that encourages increased site traffic and SEO.

Secondary objectives sought to incorporate more compelling graphics presentation and interactivity. The interactive functions of the new website include video, ship/cargo tracking access, forms and expandable content.

The new website also needed to coincide with a domain change from “portno.com” to “portnola.com.”

Audiences: Given its diversity as a port, wide range of tenants and customers, proximity to residential neighborhoods, engagement with elected officials and civic groups, partnership with economic development and maritime industry groups, and appeal as an employer, the Port of New Orleans serves a great variety of stakeholders. Its website audience includes: shippers; ocean carriers; railroads; terminal operators; freight forwarders, people looking to locate their cargo; businesses seeking real estate opportunities; cruise passengers searching for information; companies looking for RFPs; media looking for Port information and breaking news; educational institutions and community members wanting to learn more about the industry or to identify ships currently berthed at the Port. In addition, the Port is required to post its board meeting schedule, agenda, minutes and resolutions on the website for public access.

These stakeholders and scenarios drive the website traffic, as well as posting links to the website from social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube).

4. Actions & Outputs:

Strategies: Port NOLA worked to create a dynamic and modern website to effectively represent its position as a global gateway and economic engine. Priorities were placed on innovation and keeping the project on time and on budget.

Staffing was comprised of designated Communications staff (2 staff) and hiring a third-party vendor for the website design and build.

Tactics & Implementation Plan:

- In Spring 2017, research was conducted as to the anticipated cost of a new website and that amount was budgeted for Fiscal Year 2018.
- In September 2017 the project manager drafted the RFP, the Procurement department posted it via their best practices, and five vendors submitted proposals in October 2017.
- An internal staff team (6 staff) comprised of multiple departments reviewed and evaluated the proposals.
- The same internal staff team met with the top three vendors to view presentations, which were then evaluated.
- The project manager tallied scores, wrote a memo of recommendation to the CEO, and it was approved.
- The project manager drafted the contract, it was reviewed and approved by the legal department, and the contract went into effect in January 2018.
- The Communications staff (4 staff) met with the vendor to map out planning, discovery, wireframes, content creation, coding, testing and launch.
- The discovery period included a needs assessment; staff questionnaires; content review; content strategy; old site outline; functionality needs; and wireframe creation for new site.
- The final approval of the overall organization and design of the website included review and feedback by all Port Directors and Executive staff.
- The content creation period included sourcing over 200 images and video b-roll; writing all new copy for 80 planned content pages; creating new forms; shooting and editing new headshots for all Commissioners (7) and senior staff (23); and writing brief bios for every Commissioner and senior staff member.
- The coding was built out in a new CMS by the web design vendor. QA/QC and testing was done by the web design vendor as well.
- The Communications staff was trained on the new CMS.
- The website was soft launched for one week during final testing and changes.
- The new website, portnola.com, was launched on time and on budget in August 2018, with an accompanying press release, Constant Contact email announcement and posting to social media.

5. Outcomes & Evaluation

The new website has been measured as successful based on feedback from Commissioners, Port staff, customers, vendors, marketing industry professionals and all of the Port's various stakeholders. External users consistently tell us how they can easily find what they need now. Also, our general information receptionist number receives fewer phone calls.

Feedback from staff includes:

“Congratulations on the new website! Looks fantastic.”

“Just checked out the website! You guys hit it out the park, as usual! Great job! I'll take some credit for helping choose the vendor! Only thing that can make it better is getting my picture up there. 😊 All jokes aside, it looks awesome!”

“The website as a whole is a really great website. I think in comparison to other ports especially, I am very happy with our website.”

Efforts to drive traffic to the website via press releases, electronic newsletters and social media posts have resulted in 150-500 percent increases in live site traffic. Our general users have remained constant, and our content pages also

retained the same pattern of use with 50 percent Cruise content, the remaining a split between the Homepage, Cargo and Procurement. One significant increase is User Time On Page, which has doubled from 1 minute to 2 minutes. The users need less clicks to find more concentrated and engaging information.

Dynamic features like video in the hero on the homepage, forms that auto-send to staff for efficiency, GIS maps and expandable content to reduce page clutter have all been complimented as improved features of the new site.