BRITTANY HOGAN

CASE STUDY 08 · HISTORICAL INSTITUTION

Designed a Multi-Audience Digital Transformation Strategy

Architected a large-scale digital ecosystem to centralize historical content, improve discovery, strengthen audience pathways, and support long-term staff maintainability.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION · SOLUTION ARCHITECTURE · USER JOURNEYS · CMS STRATEGY

KPI SNAPSHOT

A complex institutional redesign was translated into a phased, buildable strategy spanning content architecture, public discovery, staff workflows, accessibility, and future expansion.

500+	9	18 WKS	6
Historical Markers Planned for CMS Migration	Defined Implementation Phases	Proposed Phase One Timeline	Primary Audience Pathways

ROLE

Digital Transformation & Solution Architecture

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Reviewed the institution's RFP, researched comparable historical organizations and digital systems, mapped distinct audience journeys, and reorganized the requested project into a more logical implementation sequence. Developed a Phase One architecture spanning a high-volume CMS, interactive historical marker system, advanced search, publication access, member functionality, accessibility, integrations, training, and a staff-manageable operating model.

DATA NOTE Metrics reflect the proposed Phase One scope and architecture. The project was not executed, so this case study documents strategic planning, requirements analysis, and solution design rather than post-launch performance.

CONTEXT

The challenge and the strategic response

The institution needed more than a website redesign. The proposed platform had to organize a large historical content ecosystem, serve very different audiences, support physical-to-digital discovery, and remain maintainable for staff after launch.

PROBLEM

High-volume historical content

Hundreds of markers, publications, archival documents, images, and special features required a structure capable of expanding without becoming difficult to manage.

Multiple audiences with different goals

Educators, students, researchers, donors, members, volunteers, local societies, and general visitors entered the site looking for very different outcomes.

Fragmented discovery and access

Historical markers, publications, membership resources, events, and archival information needed stronger search, filtering, and cross-platform pathways.

Complexity beyond a standard website build

Interactive mapping, custom search, accessibility, CMS relationships, integrations, and staff ownership required deliberate architecture before development.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE

Architected a scalable content ecosystem

Designed a CMS-first structure capable of supporting 500+ markers, relational content, individual detail pages, filtering, archival resources, and future expansion.

Mapped audience-specific user journeys

Defined pathways around real goals such as finding lesson plans, scholarly content, membership information, historical markers, and location-based resources.

Designed connected discovery systems

Combined advanced search, an interactive map, categorized lists, QR-connected pages, publication access, and historical storytelling into one discovery model.

Restructured the implementation plan

Reviewed the requested phases and reorganized the work so the core site, marker system, accessibility, and foundational functionality were completed before expansion features.

WHAT WAS BUILT

A phased digital architecture connecting public history, discovery, access, and staff operations

→ Historical Marker CMS Architecture

Structured a scalable CMS ecosystem for 500+ markers with relational fields, advanced filters, individual pages, and QR-connected public access.

→ Publication & Timeline Experience

Designed access to archival publications, a digitized viewer, an interactive historical timeline, and a dynamic This Day in Illinois History feature.

→ Integrated Institutional Tools

Planned member access, events, donations, store functionality, social feeds, language translation, and external archival connections within one ecosystem.

→ Interactive Discovery System

Planned a full-screen map, synchronized categorized list, advanced filtering, and search capabilities beyond standard platform functionality.

→ Audience & Membership Pathways

Created clearer routes for educators, researchers, members, donors, volunteers, local societies, underserved audiences, and the general public.

→ Accessibility, Training & Governance

Embedded accessibility testing, staff-controlled CMS updates, training materials, live training, QA, and structured post-launch support into the implementation plan.

SOLUTION ARCHITECTURE

What the proposed Phase One system was designed to support

The strategy translated a complex institutional RFP into a buildable digital operating model designed for statewide access, high-volume historical content, public discovery, staff maintainability, and phased expansion.

24%
Illinois Residents Supported Through Multilingual Access

500+
QR-Connected Digital Marker Pages

200%
Accessibility Zoom Validation

90 DAYS
Structured Post-Launch Support

ARCHITECTURE OUTCOMES

01 **A scalable historical content foundation**

Reframed the website as a long-term content system capable of supporting hundreds of markers, publications, media assets, events, and future institutional resources.

02 **A physical-to-digital public history experience**

Connected physical marker locations to searchable digital records, maps, QR-enabled detail pages, archival materials, and richer historical storytelling.

03 **A clearer operating model for staff**

Planned CMS-controlled content management, training, documentation, and workflows so routine updates could be handled without relying on the Studio editor.

04 **A phased path for future expansion**

Separated foundational infrastructure from later education and community-engagement features, reducing implementation risk while preserving a clear roadmap for growth.

WHAT THIS PROJECT

DEMONSTRATES

Digital Transformation Strategy · Solution Architecture · Operations & Process Improvement · User Journey Strategy · Information Architecture · CMS & Data Planning · Accessibility Planning · Phased Implementation