Today, our goal is to review how VCU is going to consolidate both our V7 and V8 environment into one beautiful production v8 environment. We'll go over what that means for you and all of our end users. Most of the information provided here is a non-technical overlook, geared toward our most common user: moderators.

After a quick live presentation of v8, we'll get right into a questions and answers session.
But first, let’s get this out of the way.

We are FINALLY upgrading to Version 8. Web Services is prepared to do the work by ourselves, for free, by the end of the summer. We’ll be offering training as soon as work for the upgrade concludes.
We’ll kick this off with a quick T4 History lesson.

We purposefully held off a bit before adopting v8, to help soften any sort of new-product-related bugs. Over the last 2 years, we kept checking in to see if we felt the product was RAM-READY.

As most of you know by now, we are in fact running a Production environment of v8. Those of you who are on it already have unwittingly participated in VCU’s first Beta Test of v8. Big thanks from Web Services, we really appreciate all of the feedback you’ve given.

TerminalFour v8 turned two years old back in April. Since then, it’s undergone 37 updates, ranging from brand new features to bug fixes.

Since we brought up our v8 environment, we’ve seen multiple updates in the same month. We’ve also seen input from our users go into updates already.

Each update is done way off-normal-sane-people hours. 3:00-4:00am Eastern. Web Services has been following the Technology Services Change Management protocol
for these updates, you can review them on Landesk, or the community extranet for TerminalFour.
Thankfully, v8 is not an entirely new product. Much of the base code has been rewritten for efficiency, using technologies from this decade, but the base functionality of T4 has remained the same. Sections, content, content types, all of your favorite things.

I don't know if that's good news or bad news for y'all. Because of this, we are cautiously optimistic for a fairly easy adoption from users familiar with v7.

The bottom line for this upgrade is that it won't cost departments any money.

The update completion date is a bit of a moving window for us. All of the parts and pieces are co-dependant on each other. However, we are, again, cautiously optimistic for an End Of Summer release.
The process, broken down simply, is we'll be wholesale upgrading our v7 Environment to v8, and then taking our current v8 application and using the applications "packaging manager," migrating it to our newly minted v8 environment, which of course used to be v7. More on that in a bit!
The answer is... Yes we'd love your help, but it won't be compulsory. We know you're busy, but we'd appreciate assistance on this endeavor.
Like I said, we won't be forcing users to relunctantly help us. If you're interested in hastening this process with us, we'll give you access to our testing environment, along with a Google Form to provide feedback directly to us.

But if you can't do that, we'll do our best to validate your environment for you.
To help explain the confusion, I've created some very artistic diagrams using Microsoft Paint.

Using these simple steps, we'll all be enjoying a luxurious new Content Management System, resting on the laurels of a consolidated CMS! So let's get into this.

The first step is duplicating t4.vcu.edu onto another test server, beta.t4.vcu.edu. Once beta.t4 is there, we'll update that server to v8.

T4.vcu will continue to be in production, publishing and transferring to your live website. Beta.t4 will be publishing to a special server, away from any potential End-users.

We'll be using this special server for validating content.
Next step is to take our existing v8.t4 application and migrate a copy of it to beta.t4 as well. Again, users who opt-in to help us test their websites will receive an email and a link to a Google Form to give us Feedback.
Step 3 is the biggest step for us, and when we do it is entirely contingent on how long it takes us to get through Steps 1 and 2. So any help from you all will help us expedite this process.

After we complete a data validation and user testing, we'll take t4.vcu.edu, institute a content freeze, turn off all transfers and upgrade it to v8.

We are anticipating some downtime here. We are not yet positive on how much, but Step 1 will help elucidate that for us; you will all be made aware. Again, we are cautiously optimistic about how much downtime we'll have to go through, it will be minimal.

Once t4.vcu.edu is fully upgraded, we'll be migrating v8.t4 websites over. In parallel with that, we'll be green-lighting websites to transfer again once you or us confirm and validate that your website is intact.
Step 4 is to decommission v8.t4.vcu.edu and beta.t4.vcu.edu, leaving us with just t4.vcu.edu.

If all goes well, this will be a relatively painless upgrade for all of us. And the best thing?
We've designed this plan with our end-users as our top priority. Caution has been our primary goal here, starting two years ago when we started reviewing v8.

The take away here, is that Web Services is going to do everything in our power to make this upgrade as painless as possible. If you can help us, it will go a long way to making this happen more efficiently, but either way, we're committed to this goal.
I don't think anybody here is actually wondering this, but why SHOULD we upgrade to v8?

For starters, it's a more efficient application. I know you all have witnessed and helped us through T4's growing pains. Every week, we welcome more and more websites into the T4 Community.

Any kind of efficiency boost is going to improve our day-to-day life in T4. From waiting to preview, to editing a single piece of content.

To help further efficiency, we're making a handful of "exciting" changes in how we handle the application.
We'll be moving away from individual channels, which require at least two publishes and one transfer per website. Currently, in v7, we have a few thousand tasks everyday to pull this off for our whole environment.

Instead, we'll be using what T4 calls a "microsite" environment.

Basically, every individual department will require JUST two publishes. Period. No matter how many websites a department has, it'll only need two publishes.
In addition to that, we're moving away from the Application's "Transfer Manager" and instead using a native Linux utility called "Rsync."

This is the big one for us. Having T4 transfer the websites using the built-in Transfer Application requires the application to use a huge slice of the resource-pie. RSYNC lets us do the heavy lifting, letting T4 concentrate on making your lives happier.

A consequence of RSYNC is the departure of t4dev.vcu.edu. Instead of using t4dev, all websites will receive a subdomain for staging.vcu.edu. For example, what was once t4dev.vcu.edu/history will now become history.staging.vcu.edu.
Lastly, we'll be enabling VCU's 2Factor Authentication on the entire application. I think this is just me, but I am tickled every time my Phone asks me to confirm my identity. It's a very nice security feature that you'll never really appreciate because of how well it'll do its job.

Again, by limiting our publishing and removing the weight of transferring, we'll see significant gains in the speed of the application.
Let's take a look at what a typical Moderator's life will look like in Version 8.

So let's check out our favorite Moderator, Curtis Reisinger. Assistant Coordinator Of The Subcommittee for Dining Technology.

He just put in a ticket to Corie Forrest to start on his new website, using Joel Eisner’s Katmai template. Let's take a look.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
WE’LL START!
What kind of performance hit will v8 take when the sites are all migrated over? It's super responsive and quick right now, but will the load of having more sites cause a performance drop?
Current v8 production is on a very small server.  
4 processors, 4 gb Ram.

When we upgrade v7 to v8, it’ll retain the current v7 server stats:  
16 processors, 16gb Ram.

So.. Hopefully not!
How are eForms used in V8, if at all?
eForms are a “beta” feature in v8, but can be used in production with that in mind.
How fast will content actually appear live once we upload?
Once you “Approve” a piece of content, it will fall into the typical three-hour-window publish queue. Once published, it will take up to 5 minutes to go live.
Are there any new standard VCU templates for websites? What are changes to the media library?
The famous “GBOOT” will return to v8, but in addition to that, we have the Katmai template, demo’d earlier. New sites will receive the Katmai template.

The Media Library is largely the same.
Can there be more than one Power User on a Department website?

Is there training about how to use T4?

What kind of time investment is involved in learning T4 to update your Department's website?

Is there a limit to the storage for documents/files housed on a Department website?
Absolutely, there can be as many Power Users for every website as you’d like.

We’ll be offering a T4 Basics course after the upgrade. In the meantime, you can use 1-on-1s for training, or attend Consulting Hours.

Time investment definitely depends on the user. Somebody familiar with any CMS will catch on pretty quickly.

Technically, yes. Effectively, no.
YOUR TURN.
QUESTIONS?
WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

• The T4 Email List
• go.vcu.edu/t4docs
• Open Consulting, every Wednesday & Friday.
• 1-on-1 Appointments using appointlet.vcu.edu
• Use The Service Desk!