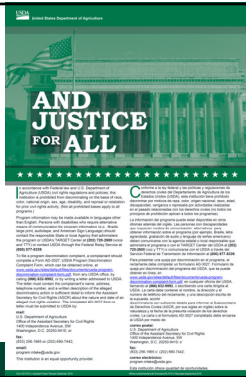**MICHIGAN STATE** UNIVERSITY | Extension

## SET IT AND FORGET IT!

**Using automated email courses in your work**

2024 Fall Extension Conference
Tyler Augst
(269) 436-0520
augstttyl@msu.edu

1

---

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

**AND JUSTICE FOR ALL**

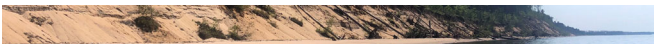**MICHIGAN STATE** UNIVERSITY | Extension

2

---

### What are we doing?

- Explain the process for developing an asynchronous email course using Qualtrics tools, including automated evaluation.

- Identify topics or content areas that may be appropriate for email course development.

- Create an outline for a new email course offering.

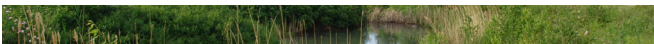**MICHIGAN STATE** UNIVERSITY | Extension

3

## Great Lakes Planning & Zoning Email Course

- Five free lessons
  - Introduction & Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes
  - Legal Framework for Shoreline Planning and Zoning
  - Planning for Shorelines
  - Zoning Tools for Coastal Communities
  - Continuing Your Learning
- Delivered directly to your inbox once a week
- 1 week and 6 month follow ups with evaluations

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension          Register here: bit.ly/3w3CasK

4

## Course inspirations

- Pew Research Center Email Courses
  - Polling
  - Immigration
  - Muslims
  - U.S. Census
- Frugalwoods – Uber Frugal Month Challenge
  - 31 days of emails to reduce spending
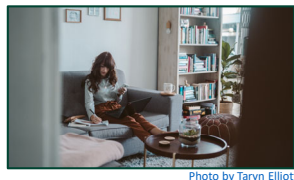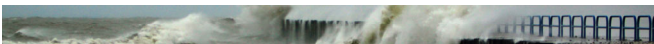
Photo by Taryn Elliott

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

5

## The need

- Needs assessment
  - 2021 survey of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipal Governments
  - 300 jurisdictions across 8 states and 2 provinces
  - Demonstrated interest in the content (coastal resiliency), just a lack of time for traditional trainings
  - Research on barriers to coastal planning (Norton et al., 2018)
- How to deliver existing content in a method the audience wants

"A majority of respondents expressed a preference for receiving information on coastal issues through websites or newsletters. This was followed by a lesser, but still notable, interest in receiving information through workshops and conferences, reports and studies, and virtual training." (Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, 2021)

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

6

## Registration



7

## What participants see



8

## The lessons



9

## How does it work?

Participant registers for Course at Time (T)…..

Welcome message sent with link to Lesson 1 (T) → Lesson 2 sent (T+1 week) → Lesson 3 message sent (T+2 weeks) → Lesson 4 message sent (T+3 weeks)

Lesson 5 message sent (T+4 weeks) → Short term evaluation sent (T+5 weeks) → 6 month evaluation sent (T+6 months)

Seriously, try it yourself!

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
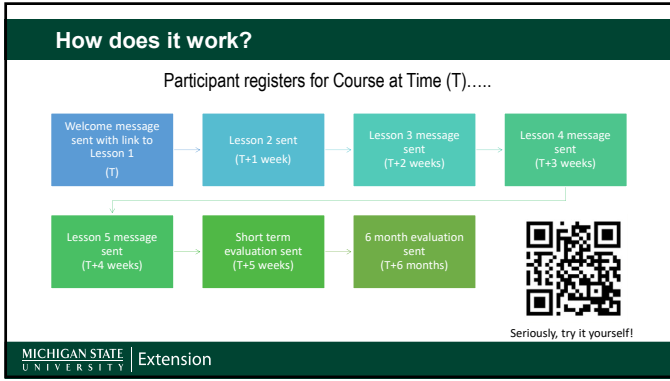
10

## Qualtrics – Surveys

- Create the surveys that will function as your registration and any evaluations
- Registration survey should have:
  - Name for personalization
  - Email address to send lessons to
  - County of Residence
  - Demographics
- Evaluations
  - Automation makes it very easy to set up short term and longer evaluations, use it!
  - Great for demonstrating impact and informing future programs
  - Keep them short and simple and expect low response rates

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

11
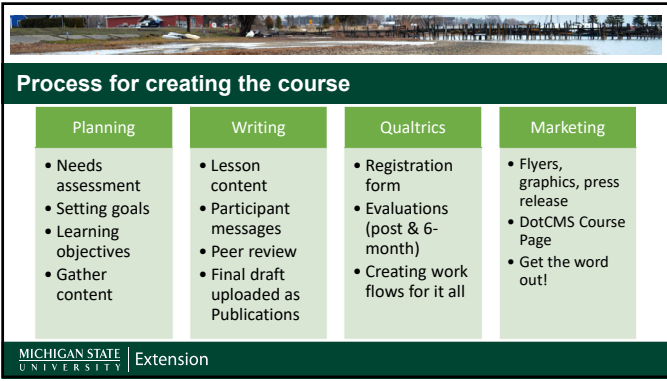
## Qualtrics - Workflows

- Workflows are a feature in Qualtrics to automate tasks like:
  - Master Citizen Planner Application – Notifies the appropriate Extension staff when there is a new applicant in their service area
- Email course runs on automated workflows all triggered when a registration is received
  - Lesson workflow: Sends series of six emails with links to lessons
  - Evaluation workflow: Sends the short term and six-month evaluations at appropriate time
- Great documentation form Qualtrics on workflows here: https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/actions-module/setting-up-actions/

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

12

**Process for creating the course**

| Planning | Writing | Qualtrics | Marketing |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Needs assessment<br>• Setting goals<br>• Learning objectives<br>• Gather content | • Lesson content<br>• Participant messages<br>• Peer review<br>• Final draft uploaded as Publications | • Registration form<br>• Evaluations (post & 6-month)<br>• Creating work flows for it all | • Flyers, graphics, press release<br>• DotCMS Course Page<br>• Get the word out! |

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

13

---
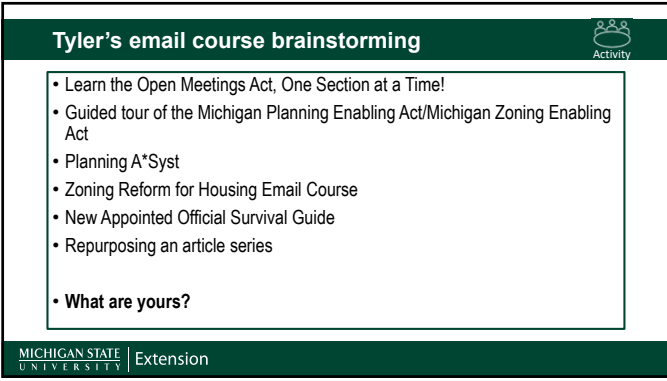
**Planning – Establish YOUR goals**

Activity

- What is the goal of the course?
  - For Great Lakes Coastal Planning and Zoning it was to get already existing content to a specific audience in a way they preferred while marketing other programs

- What is YOUR goal?
  - What is the need?
  - Who is the audience?
  - What are the key topics/units to cover?
  - What level of detail?

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

14

---

**Tyler's email course brainstorming**

Activity

- Learn the Open Meetings Act, One Section at a Time!
- Guided tour of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act/Michigan Zoning Enabling Act
- Planning A*Syst
- Zoning Reform for Housing Email Course
- New Appointed Official Survival Guide
- Repurposing an article series

- **What are yours?**

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

15

**Planning - Learning objectives**

- Next step is to focus those goals into specific learning objectives
  - Helps to break it out into units/topics/lessons
- What will be different about participants on the other side?
  - Lean on Bloom's Taxonomy for writing
  - Use MSU Extension Learning Objective Outline Worksheet

- Lesson 2: Legal Framework for Shoreline Planning and Zoning
- Participants will be bale to…
  - Identify where the authority to plan and zone in MI comes from
  - Paraphrase the state's role in shoreline protection
  - Explain the public trust doctrine along shorelines

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

16

---

**Planning – Write YOUR learning Objectives**

Activity

- Based on the goals you identified, what are the learning objectives for your course? (May help to start with broad units)
- Fill these out on the Learning Objective Outline Worksheet

| Unit 1: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning Objective #1 | Supporting Content | Activities | Assessments |
| Learning Objective #2 | Supporting Content | Activities | Assessments |
| Learning Objective #3 | Supporting Content | Activities | Assessments |

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

17

---

**Planning – Gather Content**

- On the MSU Extension website there are at least:
  - 10,000 articles
  - 1,400 publications
  - 500 videos
  - 100 courses
  - 100 podcasts
- What can be reused or repurposed?

- What content does you team have?
- Think about:
  - Things you frequently refer folks to
  - Articles you have written
  - Recorded presentations
  - Content from partners
  - Classes
  - Fee for service activities to advertise

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

18

## Planning – Gather YOUR content

Activity

- What content do you have that can support your learning objectives?

- Fill these out on the Learning Objective Outline Worksheet

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

19

## Writing – Create the Content!

- Two main types of writing to do
- Lesson content
  - Guided by goals and learning objectives
  - Keep the content manageable and appropriate for the audience
  - Get others to peer review the content
  - Format into a professional package and upload as Publications to DotCMS
- Qualtrics content
  - Registration forms
  - Evaluation tools – Measure impact in the short and medium term
  - Workflow email messages – The text and links that will automatically get sent

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

20

## Marketing – Get the word out

- Once everything is created the challenge is to drive traffic to the course…
- Lean on the Extension marketing resources:
  https://www.canr.msu.edu/od/communications_marketing/
- Potential options:

| Things to make | Things to do |
|---|---|
| Website article | Promote during programs |
| Flier | Feature in newsletters |
| Social media graphics/language | Advertise through county office networks |
| DotCMS Course page | Include in email signature/out of office |
| Press release | Share in professional networks |

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

21

## Impact so far – 2022 short term evaluation

- 163 individuals registered across 50 (of 83) counties in Michigan
  - 92% strongly agreed or agree that they had increased their knowledge about Great Lakes coastal planning and zoning.
  - 100% agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the course they are aware of resources available on the topic to assist in planning and zoning.
  - 77% responded that the course exceeds or far exceeds their expectations.
  - 62% plan to share the information provided with others
- *"Appreciate you providing educational content in this unique format."*
- *"This course is a one stop resource for everything related to planning any activity around the Great Lakes. Thank You!"*

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

22

## Impact in 2022 six-month evaluation

- 86% reported that since they completed the course they had shared the information provided with others
- 86% reported that since they completed the course they had learned more on the topic
- 43% said they had accessed additional resources available on this topic to assist in planning and zoning
- One respondent reported that since taking the course they *"volunteered to serve on [their] Township Planning Commission and we are now updating our Master Plan to include a Chapter on our Lake Michigan Shoreline."*

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

23

## Impact in 2023 – Short term evaluation

- 78% strongly agreed that they had increased their knowledge about Great Lakes coastal planning and zoning.
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the course they are aware of resources available on the topic to assist in planning and zoning.
- 66% responded that the course exceeds or far exceeds their expectations.
- *"Well done, informative course. Topics included are ones I would not have been exposed to otherwise. Additional reading resources are aa useful tool I will share with other planning commissioners."*

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

24

### How hands off is it really?

- In 2023/2024 to maintain this offering I have:

  - January - Compiled evaluation responses for the previous year and reported in PEARS
  - January - Encouraging marketing in coastal counties with no participants to date
  - July - Mid-year summary for evaluation for PEARS (in 2023, not 2024)
  - Occasional user question

- Has created some additional ~~work~~ opportunities…
  - Used the course as an outline for a F2F presentation as part of a lunch and learn
  - Sharing at conferences
  - Direct Contacts with clients that have additional questions

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

25

---

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

### Questions?

**Tyler Augst**
**(269) 436-0520**
**Augsttyl@msu.edu**

26

---

### References

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. (2021). *Preliminary Findings from the Coastal Resilience Needs Assessment Survey of Great Lakes and St . Lawrence Municipal Governments. May.*

Norton, R. K., David, N. P., Buckman, S., & Koman, P. D. (2018). Overlooking the coast: Limited local planning for coastal area management along Michigan's Great Lakes. *Land Use Policy, 71*(December 2017), 183–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.11.049

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

27