**Why Digital Transformation?**

The Digital Transformation matters for a couple of reasons. First, to deliver services to AIA members and the broader AEC community. Our new platforms will help us engage those audiences in new ways and develop closer relationships with them. Second, it gives the AIA an opportunity to think differently about how it conducts its operations.

One of the goals we have is to put the user first and gather information from internal stakeholders. The end product will align itself with value to AIA members. The agile process you may have heard about gives us a smart way to prioritize and set achievable goals. Organizational change will evolve over time. What the Digital Transformation does is help us accept a level of risk and employ an iterative process.

Change is healthy. But change also means engaging everyone in the process—and rewarding them for their engagement. The agile process, for instance, operates in two week cycles—called sprints—and every two weeks we can see a level of change that we can be proud of.

**What’s Changing Now**

Training has begun in several departments with test group staff members using the programs to load web content and send e-newsletters. The new inside experts will provide feedback that will help to create training materials for the extended AIA community of content creators such as local chapter leaders and Knowledge Community contributors.

Each of the 2016 releases represents an improvement on the technology foundations being built:

* Q1 will deliver a new member/professional site
* Q2 will deliver newsletter and unified email tools
* Q3 will deliver Component tools.

Over the holidays you may have missed the beta release of the new public site for the AIA, which is called “Topic Architecture.” After the soft launch of the public site platform, the AIA digital content staff will lead the charge on updating, curating, editing, and testing content on the site for maximum impact. You can see the work in progress at [www.topicarchitecture.com](http://www.topicarchitecture.com).

This new public face will launch in early 2016 to engage clients, students, and enthusiasts in an accessible, memorable, and meaningful way in order to raise the profile of architects and architecture.

**What’s Next: AIA.org**

Now that the Topic Architecture platform is launched, we are ramping up for Release 3: the new member logged in site. This is a big deal for the team, and for the AIA.

There has been a lot of foundational work done over the last 9 months: we’ve combed through over 4000 pages of the existing AIA website. The new member and professional site will launch with the top 300 pages that receive the most traffic on AIA.org. The Digital Transformation team is not simply copy & pasting things over. The top 300 pages are going to get a makeover. We are working with internal AIA departments, such as the Knowledge Communities staff and Communications teams, to update the most popular pages. The rewriting, redesigning, and reformatting guarantees the new site has a consistent style, design, tone of voice, and editorial style throughout.

The entire staff at AIA is going to be helping us clean up and update the content. It’s great to have that much man power and support because this is a huge project – and, if we’ve done it right, not one we’ll have do again for a long time to come.

We are using the latest technology to make the site dynamic, too:

* Calendar items will be filtered by the user’s geography (Californians see items in California)
* Leadership lists will pull from the database instead of being typed manually
* Chapter finder information will pull the most recent mailing address
* Content will be tagged with topics, and those topics are surfaced to the members who are interested in them the most

Amazing work is being done on big data and how we are making personalized content recommendations. The steps in our development process for the new AIA.org site are:

1. Discovery: figure out what we have and what needs rewriting
2. Information Architecture: figure out a way to navigate and explore the site, store and share content in a standardized way
3. Requirements: meet with content owners and develop functional stories and content requirements
4. Wireframes: Block out the basic parts of the page and annotate what the functions are
5. Creative: Design web wireframes and apply the new “AIA Style” to them
6. Development: Take functional stories, the wireframes, and comps to start programming and actually make the website
7. UAT: User testing to make sure everything works

**What’s Next: Email**

In February a trial of an email marketing and automation tool, Real Magnet, will continue with subject matter experts from AIA staff. There is a Pilot Group of a select few AIA staff participating in trainings and meetings to help explore the new tool.

The limited scope and size of the Pilot Group means the AIA and Digital Transformation can test, experiment, and refine the tool without negatively impacting existing email communications. The work of the Pilot Group in tinkering with Real Magnet has given us a better idea of what kinds, which format, and how much training would be needed for a full roll-out. In addition to the AIA Architect email newsletter, the Component Update and a handful of 2016 Grassroots Conference communications have been successfully created and sent through the new tool.

Emails sent to members can be more engaging, fewer in number, and more relevant when sent through a coordinated platform that unifies all AIA emails. In the short term email communications are being sent without a noticeable change to members: this period of “status quo” will give us the baseline data we need to make better decisions about emails and marketing automation. We want to use data, not “hunches”, to prove (or disprove) which articles, subject lines, time of day, and even graphic designs are the most engaging for AIA members. In 2016 you will be voting every day with your clicks and email opens on what you want in your inbox and on the website.