re.web at the College of William and Mary
Transcript of: "If you always do what you always did, then you'll always get what you always got."

Hello from the W&M re.web project, I'm Susan Evans and today is Thursday, November 29, 2007. My podcast today is about change and I'm crediting this cliché: "If you always do what you always did, then you'll always get what you always got." Try saying that three times fast.

In recent days, I'm finding that I have to remind people that the W&M web redesign will require us to change. It's funny, months ago when we started this, nearly all my conversations with folks included phrases that supported change. I heard:
– We need a brand new look.
– We need a more exciting site.
– We need better photography and better content.
– We need a site that feels more alive.

Now, as we begin to talk about creative and design ideas for the home page, I'm hearing the telltale phrases that sound instead like a desire for status quo. I'm hearing:
– This is a great idea but I'm worried about how we'll sustain it.
– We don't have enough written to have a special interest feature about this on the home page.
– Who's going to do all of the writing?

Actually, concern at this stage is pretty typical for web redesign projects. Still, I googled "change management" and of course, found more than 600,000,000 results. I read a few and I'd like to highlight two thoughts about change management:
1. *Change requires a new behavior; and we often want to hold onto even minor routines.*
2. *And, even during desired change, a period of transition and confusion is normal.*

Okay, fine, that's all well and good. But just how long is this period of transition and confusion going to take? Because while we're in it, we're going to have to make decisions about features and options on our home page. We're going to have to make choices without knowing exactly how the staffing and governance of the W&M web presence will play out. For now, we should let the new ideas percolate … I can remind everyone that it is too early to eliminate options.

But here's my humble opinion - we should aim high. Do we want what we have now? If the answer is no, meaning we want the W&M web site to be different that what we've got, we can't do what we've always done.

I'm going to close today with something I heard from one of our senior administrators during the planning phase of re.web: "William and Mary has too many untold stories, too many hidden jewels. We need to use our web site to show what happens every day on our campus."

Thanks for listening. Until next week.