



About Roanoke College

Roanoke is a small college of 2,000 students in Salem, Virginia, that was ranked 2nd on the 2014 U.S. News and World Report list of Up-and-Coming National Liberal Arts Colleges.



Advanced Site Search Search by Swiftype

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Search for

Roanoke needed a search solution that could handle its large, complex site after a major redesign.



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Roanoke College



SEARCH NOT SUFFICIENT FOR NEW WEBSITE

While Roanoke is a small college, its large website serves a wide range of audiences – including prospective students, current students, faculty, and alumni – and search is often the fastest way for them to find what they're looking for. After a site redesign resulted in a large website of nearly 7,000 indexed pages, Roanoke found that its initial search solution wasn't returning the desired results. Roanoke had been using Google's Custom Search Engine, but the tool wasn't flexible enough for their site and it wasn't producing the results they expected.

According to Michael Santoroski, Director of Web and Software Development, two capabilities were especially critical for them – weighted search and being able to rank search results, and type-ahead features. With a limited IT team, Roanoke also needed a solution that would be easy to implement.

IMMEDIATE REDUCTION IN SUPPORT LOAD

It took less than an hour to get Swiftype up and running, according to Michael. And one of the immediate results was a drastic reduction in the number of emails coming in to web support. "We were constantly getting emails through our contact page from users who couldn't find what they were looking for, whether that be an upcoming course schedule or an event," Michael said. "As soon as we implemented Swiftype, the emails stopped...virtually overnight."

SEARCH SOLVES THE BALANCE PROBLEM

With so many different audiences being served on the Roanoke website, it can be challenging to reach a balance in what type of information to show, according to Michael. The good news is that search has somewhat solved that problem. "It's one of those things that works great and I don't worry about it too much. It just does exactly what I need it to do and it doesn't make me spend a lot of time fighting with it," he said.