



Request for Proposal
PIPRFP-02112011-F

Key RFP Dates:

RFP Issued: February 15, 2011
Open Vendor Meeting: March 1, 2011
Submit Proposal By: March 15, 2011

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) seeks proposals to design and develop *BrainFacts.org*—an innovative and authoritative digital source for public information about neuroscience. *BrainFacts.org* should leverage emerging technology to assemble and distribute to a global audience the field's best, scientifically vetted public information about the brain and nervous system. *BrainFacts.org*, a stand-alone Web site also linked through SfN's homepage, would serve a unique and important function that targets the broad public, sub-university level science educators, and public policy audiences. By creating a nonprofit, one-stop source for authoritative brain science, and using a strong online strategy to proactively disseminate it, *BrainFacts.org* would help achieve key outcomes for the field:

- **Strengthen public awareness** of growing scientific knowledge about the brain and how basic physical and life science research translates to better human health;
- **Help dispel “neuromyths” and decrease misunderstanding** and lack of knowledge that lead to illness, stigma, and suboptimal health outcomes;
- **Stimulate greater academic interest and enthusiasm among young people** by providing science teachers with easy access to teaching tools and resources; and
- **Increase public support for brain research funding** by showcasing how research happens, demonstrating tremendous progress to date, and informing policy deliberation about brain science.

Two key components form the basis for *BrainFacts.org*. First, it would assemble and present the best lay-friendly public information about the brain. Initially, the site would rely on SfN's wealth of scientifically vetted resources, which would be augmented regularly from SfN and elsewhere to ensure fresh content. In the following phase, an editorial board of scientists would select additional quality content identified from key content partners across the neuroscience community. The other key component is a modern technology platform and integration of social media tools to engage the public through reading, content sharing, commenting, rating, and other interactive features. The site would be widely promoted through many existing and select new SfN communication channels that directly reach target audiences based on a comprehensive outreach plan established during early planning. Ultimately, SfN believes *BrainFacts.org* will form a powerful global communications platform for public information about the brain, a platform on which the Society, its partners, and the field can build over time.

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1. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

SfN is the world's largest organization of scientists and physicians devoted to advancing the understanding of the brain and nervous system. A membership society founded in 1969, SfN has grown to serve more than 40,000 members in 80+ countries. SfN promotes scientific exchange through its annual meeting, which attracts more than 30,000 attendees from around the globe, and *The Journal of Neuroscience*, the field's most-cited peer-reviewed journal. SfN also supports the neuroscience community through professional development programming and is dedicated to sharing the excitement and progress of scientific discovery through public information and outreach. SfN advocates strongly for policies that advance science and improve health, such as robust federal research investments and the responsible use of animals in research.

BrainFacts.org is directly related to SfN's mission, which includes "Advancing the understanding of the brain and the nervous system..." and "Promoting public information and general education..." Development of *BrainFacts.org* thus allows SfN to continue fulfilling its mission by leveraging its strongest capacities—authoritative content and comprehensive reach—and beginning to do so on a scale that is possible only with dedicated resources.

SfN Capacity

For decades, SfN has been a key provider of authoritative public information material for a wide range of audiences on the full diversity of neuroscience topics, all vetted through a rigorous review process that engages topical experts and the field's leadership. SfN's publications have won more than three dozen awards for design and content in the past several years. An example is the current iteration of *Brain Facts*, a 74-page primer on the brain and nervous system. This signature public outreach resource is used in classrooms around the globe and downloaded for personal use, including 50,000 downloads in the last year. The SfN Web site also receives consistently high public traffic. In the past year, it received a total of 6,647,026 page views; the homepage alone received 1,100,727 of them. Other signature publications include *Brain Briefings*, covering a wide range of findings, disorders, and conditions; *Brain Research Success Stories*, which explain the health impact of medical research; and *Research & Discoveries*, which explores the benefits of basic serendipitous research.

2. SCHEDULE

This request for proposal will be governed by the following schedule:

Release RFP	February 15, 2011
Registration	February 25, 2011
Open Vendor Meeting	March 1, 2011
Proposals Due	March 15, 2011

SfN may delay scheduled due dates if it is to the advantage of SfN to do so. SfN will notify respondents of all changes in scheduled due dates by written notice.

3. REGISTRATION

All Firms that will submit an offer in response to this RFP are required to register with SfN. To register, the Firm must send an e-mail containing a point of contact, statement of intent to file a proposal, and the Firm's e-mail address to rfp@sfn.org by COB February 18, 2011.

4. SUPPLIER QUESTIONS

Questions may be e-mailed to rfp@sfn.org until 12:00 PM EST by February 24, 2011. No further questions will be addressed after this date. Written questions should be directly tied to the RFP by the writer. Questions should be asked in constructive order, from beginning to end, following the organization of the RFP. Each question should begin by referencing the RFP page and section number to which it relates.

Registered firms are invited to participate in an open meeting at **10 a.m. EST on March 1, 2011**. SfN will compile all questions and answer them at the open meeting. SfN will not answer questions via e-mail. Short procedural inquiries may be accepted by telephone by the Procurement Manager; however, oral explanations or instructions given over the telephone shall NOT be binding upon SfN.

NOTE: Registered firms are NOT to contact any SfN associate directly without first clearing it with the Procurement Manager. You can contact the Procurement Manager at 202-962-4028. Anyone caught violating this rule risks being eliminated from the RFP process.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BrainFacts.org will be an innovative Web-based "portal" separate from SfN's member-oriented Web site and provide what is determined to be the best lay-friendly content generated within the neuroscience community. As an independent publicly oriented site, *BrainFacts.org* will prominently feature on its homepage the sponsoring partners in the effort (including links), and the site will also be referenced on SfN's own homepage.

Content would initially rely on SfN's wealth of scientifically vetted resources, and then build on that platform with excellent content from across the community. The site should enable visitors to engage through reading, commenting, rating, subscribing to RSS feeds, and other interactive features. While a strong Web presence is anticipated for the site, equal attention should be paid to use of the latest strategies to disseminate content. With SfN's commitment to making the site enticing to visitors, *BrainFacts.org's* design should be designed using the most current Web usability standards to ensure accessibility. As scientific content is added to the site and technology is built out, *BrainFacts.org* is envisioned to become a state-of-the-art, expansive database of multimedia neuroscience educational and informational material. The site should deliver specific content tailored to individual inquiry and exploration through surfing or search queries.

Expected Goals

SfN would consider the initiative successful if, during its first few years of operation, it is able to:

- Provide consistently compelling, scientist-approved content for a broad range of neuroscience topics, ensuring it effectively highlights neuroscience progress and promise throughout the basic to clinical spectrum.
- Establish and sustain robust traffic to the site, with strong favorable views and social media engagement from visitors, and ensure strong representation of key audiences among repeat visitors.
- Demonstrably show sustained strong engagement, participation, and support from organizations within the neuroscience community, as well as from related patient advocacy and scientific organizations.
- Successfully leverage funding from reputable organizations to support content expansion and outreach strategies.

The *BrainFacts.org* project provides a transformative opportunity for SfN's public outreach efforts, and makes it possible to extend SfN's impact to support public information dissemination by the broader neuroscience community.

Thus what we envision, and what is currently planned for *BrainFacts.org*, is a highly professional, well-developed, and technologically vibrant foundation for compelling neuroscience public information, built on a well-architected, attractively designed Web platform. *BrainFacts.org* will require an aggressive use of online search engine optimization and tracking/measuring techniques to increase visibility of content and strengthen information delivery.

6. TARGET AUDIENCES

SfN envisions *BrainFacts.org* as a broad-based, widely available, public education tool in English. The overarching goal is to help create informed citizens worldwide who know more about how the brain works, keep them engaged through emerging news, and ultimately increase their appreciation of and support for basic scientific research and, in particular, for brain research. With an aggressive outreach to the broad public, SfN also anticipates an additional emphasis on providing resources for primary and secondary educators—who help shape young people's understanding of brain science and spark the next generation of scientists—as well as policymakers, who need to be informed about the scope and impact of brain discovery. Each of these emphases—the public, educators, and policymakers—will be discussed in turn. The preferences and Web patterns of each group will need to be probed and clarified during the *BrainFacts.org* research phase through focus groups, etc.

"The Public"

SfN recognizes that the broad public is a diverse and challenging target for information delivery. Yet, the community interested in understanding brain function is indeed wide and broad, perhaps universal. Based on SfN's experience, we believe individuals tend to approach neuroscience content from many interests and perspectives, which will need to be factored into the early research phase of the project to define emphases and strategies for information delivery. These segments include the following "publics" and SfN's evaluation of the dominance of interest. Promotion strategies and messages would be developed to appeal to these subaudiences (and perhaps others identified during research):

- *Interest in disease, health, and prevention strategies*—A main focus of interest and enthusiasm for understanding brain research.
- *Interest in human experience: cognitive development, function, and decline*—A strong and growing area for research and public interest.
- *Interest in scientific understanding of brain function and process*—A sustained and consistent audience consisting of individuals with a fundamental interest in biology who want to know how the brain works.

Threaded across these communities is an interest in neuroscience social impacts and applications, from the burden of disease to neural enhancement and brain-machine interfaces, to neuroeconomics and neuroethics. Additionally, the neuroscience community wants to help all of these interest communities understand how research happens and how it is funded, and provide global neuroscience perspective.

Educators

Outreach to science educators at the sub-university level is a critical part of SfN's public efforts and many educators already use our public information and teaching tools. They are uniquely positioned to spark excitement in the next generation about the wonders of brain research, either to create "brain aware citizens" or to encourage pursuit of neuroscience as a career path. When considering this audience, SfN recognizes that educational materials and tools are very different for young primary students and those in the upper grade levels prior to university. While *BrainFacts.org* would include some content for younger students such as teaching resources vetted through our current procedures, *BrainFacts.org*'s primary focus would be on generating and promoting content for upper grades. *BrainFacts.org*'s emphasis on educator content would primarily focus in two areas:

- **General content:** The main content reading level would be accessible for a broad audience, including use by teachers, either for their background or for distribution to students.
- **Teaching tools:** Scientifically vetted resources for teachers (curricula, classroom tools, multimedia material, etc.) would be available online. Relevant resources would be linked within each topical section and an additional "for educators" section would be organized by grade level, teaching tool type, etc.

Policymakers

For public benefit and neuroscience progress, it is essential that policymakers and their staffs have ready access to reliable information about brain research progress and promise. *BrainFacts.org* would provide a valuable access point for initial information about the benefits of brain research. Like other audiences, they would find information both through their own Web searching and through proactive *BrainFacts.org* promotion strategies. Based on SfN experience with policymaker audiences, we initially believe the following anticipated *BrainFacts.org* content would be of value:

- Social impacts of brain disease and health (costs, quality of life, productivity, suffering, ethics).
- The economic impact of investment in research and discoveries, including neuroscience.
- New scientific discoveries and application for better health and a stronger economy.
- How neuroscience is conducted and funded.

- Where neuroscience research is conducted.

SfN understands and appreciates the diversity of global policy perspectives, the challenges of reaching this audience in a regional or country-specific way, and the need to remain rigorously within the bounds of a site led by nonprofit organizations that focus on education and outreach rather than lobbying. During site planning, we need to evaluate how to best showcase policy reports and other nonpartisan research and analysis generated at a country, regional (e.g., European), or even global (World Health Organization) level. This could include documents like the recent European Brain Council's report on the annual Brain Policy Forum and the burden of brain disorders, the WHO report on the global burden of brain disorders, fact sheets about U.S. Recovery Act investments, and other identified non-lobbying information that advances brain research.

The clear goal of all this activity will be to advocate for the broad benefits and need for public and private investment in neuroscience, for the benefit of people everywhere.

Neuroscientists

This group is not in need of public information knowledge per se, but should be aware of the site for several reasons. First, the site should become a major resource for their own public outreach efforts, as it will include videos and other content they can play or distribute during their own events. Second, the site would help the neuroscience community understand how sponsoring and content partners are helping to serve their long-term interests and advancing the field.

Media

BrainFacts.org could be used as an educational resource for members of the media. SfN's media relations staff would strongly encourage journalists to reference *BrainFacts.org* in relevant articles as a respected source where readers could learn more. These efforts would be enhanced by SfN's success at maintaining strong relationships with national and international outlets as part of its annual meeting communications strategy, and for coverage of *The Journal of Neuroscience*. In the last three years, media coverage for SfN's annual meeting has tripled to more than 1,100 stories each year; coverage for *The Journal of Neuroscience* has more than doubled. This channel remains an important element of a strong *BrainFacts.org* communication plan as media increasingly rely on—and link to—external sources for more information. *BrainFacts.org* would thus become regularly included in outreach to these outlets.

Secondary Beneficiaries

The secondary beneficiaries of *BrainFacts.org* would be institutions, industries, and individuals conducting neuroscience research because the site would advance public knowledge and support for the research enterprise. Prominent reference would be made to major U.S. funding and research institutions like the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, as well as the Medical Research Council in the United Kingdom and Canadian Institutes for Health Research, etc. Field-generated content on the site also would reference its originating institutions, providing recognition for those neuroscience hubs that have invested in effective public content.

7. CONTENT

BrainFacts.org content will need to be organized into an accessible and lay user-friendly architecture that is scientifically validated. Built on a base of initial user research that employs surveys and focus groups, site organization would be accurate within the scientific arena but also place a heavy emphasis on how target audiences use the Web and think about the brain. An editorial board of scientists, led by an editor-in-chief appointed by the SfN Council, would vet all potential resources and content.

Topics would involve multiple levels of neuroscience—for instance, the cellular, genetic, and molecular basic understanding of the brain and nervous system; nervous system structure and function; cognitive and behavioral neuroscience; and health and disease. Content also might include overview information on how brain research happens and the field of neuroscience; the tools and technologies of the field; the impact and benefits for society; and, potentially, topics like “neuroeducation” where research is informing other societal issues. Educational teaching tools, already generated and maintained by SfN, would be threaded through and linked from these topics for educators.

Material should be dynamically presented with links to an existing neuroscience glossary and other relevant content on the site. For example, a topical page on “Parkinson’s disease” might link to a basic neuroscience topic like “dopamine,” through to an illustration of a “synapse,” and connect to other pages on systems-level content like “motor systems” or “depression.”

Throughout project planning and development, SfN would retain consulting assistance from science communication experts to ensure material is organized and presented in compelling and validated formats.

For this reason, *BrainFacts.org* envisions an early intensive effort throughout planning and development phases to focus on digital content architecture and strategy. Activity would include key user and stakeholder research to enable user-centered design; a plan to gather actionable data as the basis of the online strategy; and a series of deliverables that would facilitate the work of the content, graphics, and technology teams. Phases would include: (1) Goals and environment (competitive space, current Web programs); (2) User research (focus groups, Web habits); (3) Information architecture development (creating an architecture that respects key science concepts and also meets public needs) and content parameters; and (4) Deployment (finalize design specifications, SEO strategy, functional and integration specifications, custom development, performance optimization, testing and quality assurance).

Content Sources

Populating content on the site is expected to unfold in several phases. The content will be obtained through different sources as follows:

All current SfN content. This content will form the corpus of *BrainFacts.org*’s information, coded in HTML on the site itself. It would be augmented from sponsoring partners and, over time, content partner items would be added or linked to it. This SfN content includes well over 500 distinct items:

- *Brain Facts*: A 74-page primer on the brain and nervous system providing updated content from across the neuroscience field. A comprehensive review and update is

performed every three to four years. Content is scheduled for update in CY2011 in time for new content to be added to *BrainFacts.org*.

- *Brain Briefings*: Forty-three issues are currently live on the SfN site, outlining the story of basic research to clinical application. Published eight times per year coinciding with academic calendar.
- *Brain Research Success Stories*: A complete set of 36 topics focused on health and disease. Twelve editions have been recently updated and remaining will be updated 12/year.
- *Research & Discoveries*: Eight total editions, tracing basic science discovery to progress today. Published four times per year, quarterly.
- *Videos*: Thirteen videos presently, focused on diseases and disorders. Additional resources for multimedia could focus in part on additional video production.
- *Medical Illustrations*: SfN owns dozens of illustrations, on a wide range of neuroscience topics.
- *Neuroscience Education Resources Virtual Encycloportal vetted teaching tools*: NERVE presently houses approximately 170 tools.
- *Press Releases* from *The Journal of Neuroscience* and other leading journals: SfN itself produces approximately two press releases per month on articles in *The Journal*. Early in planning, the site editorial board would determine a process for including releases from other leading journals (*Science*, *Nature*, *Neuron*, *Cell*, etc.).
- *“Neuroscience In the News”*: daily press clips of emerging news across the field.

Material developed by Sponsoring Partners. Also coded into or linked to site.

Material from selected Content Partners. Short list candidates for this early phase of content partner relationships could include the Dana Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or the Medical Research Council. Given modern platforms, vendors should provide suggestions as to the best way to bring partner content to *BrainFacts.org*.

Engaging the Audience

An attractive, well-architected, and highly functional Web portal is a critical and necessary foundation for this effort. On launch, the site should integrate tools and strategies to proactively disseminate information using social bookmarking links or “share tools” (Facebook, Twitter, Digg, etc.), RSS feeds, search engine optimization, and e-mail listservs. The site also should provide the opportunity to “rate” the quality of the content, and promote comments/discussion in unmediated forums. Future add-on technologies or strategies for dissemination such as online, video-based seminar discussions, Webinars, or Web chats on a particular topic, potentially through partnerships with key patient advocacy groups or other organizational partners.

8. EXPECTED TRAFFIC OUTCOMES

The SfN Web site receives consistently high traffic. In the past year, it received a total of 6,647,026 page views; the homepage alone received 1,100,727 of them. SfN’s signature public outreach publications—*Brain Briefings*, *Brain Facts*, *Brain Research Success Stories*, *Neuroscience Core Concepts*, and *Research & Discoveries*—received a combined 375,796 page views in the last year while Neuroscience Education Resources Virtual Encycloportal (NERVE) received 107,700.

These numbers reflect sustained rates of growth in traffic due to efforts over the last three years to modernize communications and outreach efforts within current organizational resources. In the last year alone, monthly *Brain Briefings* page views have roughly doubled (from about 10,000 to 20,000 per month), *Research & Discoveries* page views have tripled with a recent new outreach effort on Capitol Hill (from roughly 750 to more than 2,000 monthly), and *Brain Facts* page views and downloads also have risen as that publication has moved more aggressively into online distribution efforts to complement sustained print dissemination.

While SfN is pleased by the trajectory of these numbers, we believe they represent a fraction of the total possible visibility for *BrainFacts.org* as the effort moves forward. The very idea of *BrainFacts.org* stems from the clear public demand for and interest in information, combined with the organization's limited capacity to increase these numbers substantially given current tools. Right now, SfN's Web site focuses very heavily on our member audience; this makes dedicated public outreach efforts hard within our own site without significant rearchitecture, which is unwise given the aging platform. Finally, SfN has not had robust search engine optimization (SEO) techniques in place; SfN determined that it was more resource efficient to look at conducting a major SEO effort on our publications prospectively as we port over content to a new site, rather than retrospectively going back and conducting SEO on our current public information content. Combined, this provides a ripe time to serve the field by creating a new, expanded platform that integrates all of the activities outlined in this proposal.

SfN's ability to undertake communications and outreach to strengthen Web traffic also is demonstrated through the SfN annual meeting Web site, which has seen sustained growth as dedicated marketing for the site has grown over the last few years. Between 2008 and 2009, SfN's annual meeting site saw a 32 percent increase in visits—reaching 735,000 in 2009—and a 20 percent increase in page views—reaching 2.5 million in 2009. With similar sustained increases, SfN's 2010 annual meeting site is on track to top an estimated 900,000 visits and 3 million page views.

Therefore, we believe there is tremendous untapped potential to transition to a more robust and comprehensive *BrainFacts.org* site with a public emphasis and strong search engine visibility, plus dedicated promotion efforts and outreach strategies across the field. With planned first year outreach efforts, we anticipate very quickly doubling the page views from almost 500,000 today to perhaps one million in the first year. Given the planned trajectory of promotion and outreach, and based on further consultation with Web experts, we expect these numbers would grow substantially in the second year and beyond.

9. SITE DESIGN

BrainFacts.org homepage design will need to prominently feature the founding partner organizations at both the top and bottom.

SfN believes that naming the site *BrainFacts.org* is valuable for several reasons related to the project's trajectory and communications goals. First, it is a clear and compelling articulation of what readers can expect, that is, facts about the brain—indirectly but indisputably making it clear that the information is authoritative. Second, it enables the project to immediately and concisely articulate in all promotional material where to find this quality information.

The enduring contributions of the originating sponsors will be attentively featured in all material; at the same time, a site with a distinct identity is more likely to positively engage other critical funding and content partners as the site grows and evolves.

10. SCOPE OF WORK

The full scope of work for this project is comprised of several components: the Information Architecture and Web Design of the *BrainFacts.org* site, the evaluation and selection of a new Content Management System, and the conversion of the existing SfN site and SfN annual meeting site to the new CMS. An additional task order that SfN may issue after the successful completion of this project is for the redesign and rearchitecture of the SfN main and annual meeting Web sites.

BrainFacts.org Information Architecture and Web Design

SfN envisions the Web strategy and information architecture for *BrainFacts.org* to be performed in four phases:

- Phase 1: Planning and Research
- Phase 2: Web Strategy
- Phase 3: Information Architecture
- Phase 4: Development

Phase 1: Planning and Research

Phase 1 includes investigations, research, and analysis to establish a project plan for *BrainFacts.org*. The research approach in this scope of work provides a framework of activities to analyze user behavior and opinion that will successfully guide *BrainFacts.org* Web strategy and information architecture.

- Coordinate communication and project administration, such as status meetings, extranet sites, project templates, required training, and logins.
- Define processes for project controls.
- Verify the appropriateness of research methodologies, including review objectives, research subjects, sample targets, and research tools.
- Create project plan that details the recommended research approach.
- Conduct online surveys to identify who will come to *BrainFacts.org*, and why.
- Observe user testing of educators, students, the broad public to identify needs, and potential usability problems.

The online surveys conducted in Phase 1 will aim to categorize potential site user groups or types, and to identify their reasons for visiting *BrainFacts.org*.

Phase 2: Web and Design Strategy

Providing a persuasive and rewarding Web experience depends on a visual design that conveys relevant messaging and branding and encourages user interaction. Information gathered from usability assessment processes will inform the creation of an engaging and effective interface that reinforces content value. The following design specifics will:

- Simplify and prioritize information and navigation.
- Provide incentive for action on the site.

- Enhance and communicate *BrainFacts.org*'s attributes.

Activities in Phase 2 will evaluate user research and identify *BrainFacts.org*'s potential shortcomings. Particular attention will be spent on audience expectations and tools *BrainFacts.org* will use to meet them.

- Develop the site's organizational structure, mission, and communications approach
- Collect and review all relevant content
- Define audience segments and characterize their attributes
- Define audience goals, identify potential gaps, and define key objectives to meeting goals

Phase 3: Information Architecture

Effective information architecture depends on a deep understanding of *BrainFacts.org*'s mission and user needs and expectations. Information architecture includes planning the sequences and flow of content and functionality, encompassing organization of information, labeling and navigation, and data structure. Given the depth and breadth of neuroscience information and research available to SfN, it is particularly important that the *BrainFacts.org* architecture allows it to be readily accessible to site visitors. Strong information architecture will help *BrainFacts.org* accomplish its short and long-term goals by:

- Facilitating easy access to in-depth information and making it interactive.
- Conveying relevant messages and clear navigation.
- Providing a structure for growth.
- Enhancing the overall user experience.

Phase 3 activities will produce a comprehensive architectural plan for *BrainFacts.org* that implements the recommended Web strategy. The consulting company will explore structures that optimize organization and navigation of content consistent with the identified *BrainFacts.org* goals and user requirements.

The information architecture process will be comprised of a set of sequential activities in which progressively more detailed documentation for the site is produced. The organizational model is a high-level description/diagram of site organization, and provides the basis for *BrainFacts.org*'s structure and information architecture. The organizational model is a schematic of the Web site's organization that illustrates how the site will serve identified audiences. It will clearly indicate the major pathways and branching strategy for *BrainFacts.org*, as well as the secondary and tertiary site paths. An over-arching structure will be developed that clarifies pathways, optimizes navigation, and unifies the Web experience.

After the organizational model is approved, a site map will be developed that identifies individual site pages, designates primary navigational paths, and describes the hierarchy of content and functionality for *BrainFacts.org*. At this stage exact categorization for navigation and page titles will be defined. SfN will be presented with a detailed schematic model.

After the site map is approved, a wireframe model will detail all the unique pages, grouping of information, and navigation required within *BrainFacts.org*. This model will serve as a template guide for *BrainFacts.org*'s design.

- Correlate content elements and tools to each defined audience segment.
- Develop concept for the organization of content at the highest level.
- Identify individual content pages for *BrainFacts.org*, and identify content that needs further development.
- Develop wireframes of key or unique page types that guide content development, length, location, and priority within a page.

Phase 4: Development and Deployment

Phase 4 will focus on the development, configuration and deployment of *BrainFacts.org*. The specific activities SfN anticipates in this phase should include finalizing detailed design specifications, SEO strategy, functional and integration specifications, custom development, performance optimization, testing and quality assurance and then final deployment of the portal.

Content Management System Functional Requirements

The Society for Neuroscience's *BrainFacts.org* will be designed to further public understanding of brain science through expansion and adaptation of authoritative content, plus opportunities for dialogue presented through a media-rich digital communication platform. For instance, one of the more effective ways to engage the audience on what is largely a visual medium is "storytelling" through videos and animations. The approach would be simple and straightforward, using experts from the SfN membership on camera to answer direct questions about brain science or neurological conditions or tell the stories of discoveries and innovative research or discuss ethical issues. Given this objective, the Content Management System (CMS) that supports *BrainFacts.org* will need to provide for the following functionality:

- Videos/animations
 - Ability to embed video
 - Ability to support video that is either play on demand or auto-play
 - Easy integration with YouTube and other video hosting sites
- Audio
 - Ability to support audio that is either play on demand or auto-play
- Slideshows
 - Ability to launch a slideshow viewer of photographs that includes captions and photo credits

In addition to videos and animations, other types of interactive content will be developed to provide more immersive experiences for visitors to the *BrainFacts.org* Web site. Interactives that are visually engaging and games that are both intuitive and informative can go a long way in helping people understand how the brain functions, rather than relying solely on text explanations. We would require:

- Templates that allow for easy integration of Flash games and interactives.

Another means of enhancing the interactivity of *BrainFacts.org* is through the frequent use of “Brain Quizzes.” Multiple-choice quizzes have proven to be a very effective way of encouraging audience participation, in part because their functionality is so easy to understand and in part because most people like to test themselves. On *BrainFacts.org*, visitors would be encouraged to take quizzes both before and after they watch a video or read particular articles. Not only would this deepen the connection people feel to the site and encourage learning, but it also would provide a way of evaluating the level of audience engagement. This would require:

- Templates that allow for easily built interactive, multiple-choice quizzes.
- SfN ability to design the template.
- Ability to track number of quiz respondents.
- Ability to track user performance on quizzes.

The opportunity to share knowledge from and provide access to SfN’s member scientists and experts is also a key component of the organization’s outreach strategy. *BrainFacts.org* will need the functionality to present and archive online events, such as:

- Webinars
 - Visual presentation and audio
 - Ability to archive Webinars as enduring resources
- Web chats
 - Regularly scheduled Web chats
 - Ability to archive transcripts as enduring resources

Because it will be geared to the general public much more than SfN’s existing site, *BrainFacts.org* will need to make use of the full range of “share tools” (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to enable it to connect with the audience in more personal and direct ways. On launch, the site should integrate tools and strategies to proactively disseminate information using social bookmarking links, RSS feeds, search engine optimization, and e-mail listservs. Its audience feedback and distribution functionality should include:

- Ability for users to share content snippets and comments with friends through social channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Opportunity for visitors to “rate” the quality of the content.
- Easy-to-use blogging software.
- Blogging capability.
- User commenting and ability of audience to rate content and comments.
- Future add-on technologies or strategies for grading or categorizing commenters to reward consistently high-level commenters and penalize hostile or inappropriate participants.
- Future add-on technologies or strategies for dissemination of content such as online, video-based seminar discussions, Webinars, or Web chats on a particular topic, potentially through partnerships with key patient advocacy groups or other organizational partners.

Other elements of functionality should include:

- Ability to publish *BrainFacts.org* content on mobile devices, including RSS feed updates, simple puzzles, and games and podcasts.
- Ability for scientist users to login through SSO with SfN's AMS system, Personify.
- Storage for all Microsoft Office and Adobe document types
 - Support for an internal document reader or presentation platform (e.g. flipbook technology).
- Ability to crawl/pull information from partner Web sites.
- Ability to serve banner ads.

SfN understands that the CMS may not provide all the functionality listed in a single solution. Therefore any functionality that is not provided by CMS should be identified in the vendor's response. Additionally, the vendor is encouraged to propose other third-party solutions to augment the functionality not provided in the CMS.

CMS Technical Requirements and SfN Web Site Conversion

The proposed CMS must be able to provide the functionality outlined below in order to support the SfN.org and annual meeting Web sites in addition to the *BrainFacts.org* site and potential future sites.

As part of this project and the new CMS implementation, SfN will want the vendor to assist in the migration of the existing SfN Web site (www.sfn.org) and annual meeting site (www.sfn.org/am2011) design and content to the new CMS. Any tools that can aid in the content conversion should be discussed in the vendor's response.

Staff responsible for editing the SfN.org and SfN annual meeting sites represent a range of technical expertise and the proposed CMS must cater to their diverse abilities. Training for staff on the proposed CMS needs to be provided by the vendor.

- Integration with analytics software (e.g. Google Analytics, Coremetrics) that allows for users to conduct event tracking without having to edit Javascript in the source code.
- Easy image and document uploading (preferably a system that allows for multiple concurrent uploads).
- Strong search functionality, i.e., searching for an asset should return it at the top of the search results.
- Workflows that support the ability for approvers/admins to bypass the workflow and not have to save through each step.
- Ability to edit/update CSS within the CMS.
- Ability to easily apply/change/remove CSS styles to elements in the WYSIWYG editor.
- Powerful, easy-to-use WYSIWYG editor
 - Produces clean HTML code
 - Fixes syntax errors when user chooses to edit source, but does not alter code beyond that
 - Ability to add inline styles to objects (like padding, border, margin, float, width, etc.) both on the fly and as objects (like images) are inserted
 - Easy interface for creating links (to URLs, assets, images, or files) styling links, and editing the link tag, e.g. setting link target, etc.
 - Easy table creation and editing
 - Ability to pull text and formatting from a MS Word document

- o Ability to create anchors and then link to them
- o Font style editing (size weight, decoration, etc.)
- o Easily create and edit lists, i.e., edit the list-style-type, margin, padding, etc. on the fly
- o Spell check, character count
- o Paragraph styling doesn't rely on
 tags, i.e., hitting the 'enter' key ends a <p> tag and opens a new one, and does not insert line breaks
- o WYSIWYG should support editing/customizing all applicable functionality listed in the previous section

The CMS system must run in a Windows environment and produce outputs that would work on our sites, which is currently .NET 2.0 (or greater) and Cold Fusion (CF), with the ability to upgrade to new platforms as technology improves. A full description of the maintenance plan must be included in all proposals.

Hosting Requirements

If possible, the vendor will provide pricing that includes both a hosted and unhosted option for SfN's sites. If the vendor proposes to host *BrainFacts.org* and any other SfN sites at their location, they must be able to handle more than 7,000 concurrent connections within one hour. A point-to-point VPN tunnel must be connected between the SfN network and the CMS servers. Additionally, a test site will need to be provided to SfN staff for testing pages. This test site can be hosted at SfN or with the live system.

Task Order: Option for SfN Web Site

This RFP incorporates a task order option for the selected vendor to be a preferred provider for the user research, information architecture, and redesign of www.sfn.org.

Project Activity	Date
RFP sent to vendors	February 15, 2011
Open vendor meeting to discuss project	March 1, 2011
Deadline for vendor proposal submission	March 15, 2011
Vendor selected and contract signed	April 1, 2011
Content Management System launch	July 15, 2011
Site architecture and structure completed	August 15, 2011
Site design completed	November 1, 2011
Advisory and Editorial Board meetings	November 12, 2011
Site development completed	January 30, 2012
Initial launch to focus groups/beta testers	March 15, 2012
Launch <i>BrainFacts.org</i>	April 30, 2012

11. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

11.1 General

The bidder must follow instructions in this RFP when preparing and submitting its bid proposal. The bidder is advised to read thoroughly and to follow all instructions. The information required to be submitted in response to this RFP has been determined to be essential in the bid evaluation and contract award process.

Each bidder is given wide latitude in the degree of detail it elects to offer of the extent to which plans, designs systems, processes and procedures are relevant. Each bidder is cautioned, however, that insufficient detail may result in a determination that the bid proposal is materially non-responsive.

- **Preparation of Proposal**

Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional material beyond those sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation.

- **Number of Proposal Copies**

Please submit one electronic copy of your proposal to: ptroxell@sfn.org

- **Joint Venture**

If a joint venture is submitting a bid, the agreement between the parties relating to such joint venture should be submitted with the venture's proposal. Authorized signatories from each party comprising the joint venture must sign the bid proposal.

11.2 Management Overview

The bidder shall set forth its overall technical approach and plans to meet the requirements of the RFP in a narrative format. The narrative should convince SfN that the bidder understands the objectives that the contract is intended to meet, the nature of the required work and the level of effort necessary to successfully complete the contract. The narrative should convince SfN that the bidder's general approach and plans to undertake and complete the contract are appropriate to the task and subtasks involved.

Mere reiterations of the RFP tasks and subtasks are strongly discouraged as they do not provide insight into the bidder's ability to complete the contract. The bidder's response to this section should be designed to convince SfN that the bidder's detailed plan and approach proposed to complete the Scope of Work are realistic, attainable and appropriate and that the bidder's proposal will lead to successful contract completion.

11.3 Contract Management

The bidder should describe its specific plans to manage, control and supervise the contract to ensure satisfactory contract completion according to the required schedule. The plan should include the bidders approach to communicate with SfN, including, but not limited to, status meetings, status reports, etc.

11.4 Contract Schedule

The bidder should include a contract schedule. If key dates are a part of the RFP, the bidder's schedule should incorporate such key dates and should identify the completion date for each task and sub-task required by the Scope of Work. Such schedule should also identify the associated deliverable item(s) to be submitted as evidence of completion of the task and/or subtask.

The bidder should identify the contract scheduling and control methodology to be used and should provide the rationale for choosing such methodology.

11.5 Implementation Plan

It is essential that SfN move forward quickly to have the contract in place. Therefore, the bidder must include as part of its proposal an implementation plan, beginning with the date of notification of contract award. Such implementation plan should include the following elements:

- A detailed timetable for the implementation period. The timetable should be designed to demonstrate how the bidder will have all services available within the time frame indicated in the RFP.
- The bidder's plan for the deployment and use of management, supervisory or other key personnel during the implementation period. The plan should show all management, supervisory, and key personnel who will be assigned to manage, supervise, and monitor the bidder's implementation of the contract within the implementation period, and include detailed resumes of all such staff.

NOTE – The bidder should clearly identify management, supervisory or other key staff that will be assigned only during the implementation period.

- The bidder should submit a plan for the use of subcontractor(s), if any, in this contract.

11.6 Potential Problems

The bidder should set forth a summary of any and all problems that the bidder anticipates during the term of the contract. For each problem identified, the bidder should provide its proposed solution.

11.7 Location

The bidder should include the location of the bidder's office that will be responsible for managing the contract. The bidder should include the telephone number and name of the individual to contact.

11.8 Experience of Bidder on Contracts of Similar Size and Scope

The bidder should provide a comprehensive listing of contracts of similar size and scope that it has successfully completed, as evidence of the bidder's ability to successfully complete the services required by this RFP. Emphasis should be placed on contracts that are similar in size and scope to those required by this RFP. A description of all such contracts should include and should show how such contract relates to the ability of the firm to complete the services required by this RFP. For each contract, bidder should provide the name and telephone number of a contact person for the other contract party. Beginning and ending dates should also be given for each contract.

11.9 CMS System Information Technology Service Overview

Describe in detail the level of service that will be provided to SfN with regard to server, network, and application support resources. This includes the following:

- o An overview of the system architecture: descriptions of the operating system, database, and application server platforms in use in your solution.
- o A brief description of the system's Internet connection capacity and offsite hosting facility (if applicable).
- o Describe how data integrity is maintained within the system, from both an application and a hardware perspective.

- A service-level agreement that describes the availability of system resources and procedures involved with ensuring said availability.
- An overview of support services.
- Highlight any relevant relationships with other vendors for technology included in your product, or that will be part of a future version. Specify the nature of the relationship, such as co-marketed or co-selling.
- An outline of procedures for notifying users of outages, system maintenance, etc. Provide an overview of your approach to regularly scheduled maintenance and system updates. Does this necessitate making the system unavailable? If so, what steps have you taken to minimize the impact of down time?
- Provide applicable portions of a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan that cover the services rendered.

12. COST PROPOSAL

Bidder must submit their cost proposal for the work as outlined in this RFP. Bidder should include comprehensive listing of all labor categories that may be used to perform the work listed herein or any additional work and/or special projects. Loaded hourly rates are to be submitted for all labor categories that the bidder anticipates may be performed herein.

The cost proposal should be broken down by the four phases outlined in the Scope of Work:

- Phase 1: Planning and Research
- Phase 2: Web Strategy
- Phase 3: Information Architecture
- Phase 4: Development

The CMS license agreement and costs must account for SfN's use of the CMS to support an unlimited number of sites.

Failure to include a labor category with the loaded hourly rates will exclude that category from eligibility to perform additional work and/or special projects under the contract resulting from this RFP. Each bidder may submit labor categories for additional work that are not included in the base proposal to perform the Scope of Work required by this RFP.

Each bidder may also submit any additional price or cost information that the bidder feels may be required to perform any additional work and/or special projects required by this RFP.

ONLY price and costing information provided by the bidder in its original bid proposal submitted in response to this RFP may later be used for additional work and/or special projects to be paid against the contract resulting from this RFP.

13. PROPOSAL EVALUATIONS AND CONTRACT AWARD

13.1 Proposal Evaluation Committee

Proposals may be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee comprised of members of affected departments together with members from procurement. On occasion, the Evaluation Committee may choose to make use of the expertise of an outside consultant in an advisory role.

13.2 Oral Presentation and/or Clarification of Bids

A bidder may be required to give an oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee concerning its bid proposal. The Evaluation Committee may also require a bidder to submit written responses to questions regarding its bid.

The purpose of such communication with bidder, either through an oral presentation or a letter of clarification, is to provide an opportunity for the bidder to clarify or elaborate on its bid. The original bid, as submitted, however, cannot be supplemented, changed, or corrected in any way during the evaluation period. **No comments regarding other bids are permitted.** Bidders may not attend presentations made by their competitors.

It is within the Evaluation Committee's discretion whether to require a bidder to give an oral presentation or require a bidder to submit written responses to questions regarding its bid. Action by the Evaluation Committee in this regard should not be construed to imply acceptance or rejection of a bid. The Procurement Manager is the sole point of contact regarding any requests for an oral presentation or written clarification.

13.3 Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria categories, not necessarily listed in order of significance, will be used to evaluate the bid proposals received in response to this RFP. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

13.3.1 The bidder's detailed approach and plans to perform the services required by the Scope of Services section of the RFP.

13.3.2 The bidder's documented experience in successfully completing contracts of similar size and scope of those required by this RFP.

13.3.3 The qualifications and experience of the bidder's management, supervisory or other key personnel assigned to the contract.

13.3.4 The overall ability of the bidder to mobilize, undertake and successfully complete the contract. This judgment will include, but not be limited to, the following factors: the number and qualification of management, supervisory and other staff proposed by the bidder to complete the contract, the availability and commitment to the contract of the bidder's management, supervisory and other staff proposed and the bidder's contract management plan, including the bidder's contract organizational chart.

13.3.5 The bidder's cost proposal.

13.3.6 The Procurement Manager may obtain any information determined to be appropriate regarding the ability of the bidder to supply and/or render the services required by the RFP.

13.3.7 The Evaluation Committee may consider such other factors that, in the opinion of the team, are important in evaluating the bidder's proposal.

13.3.8 The Evaluation Committee reserves the right to request all bidders to explain the methods used to arrive at any costs or pricing figures.

13.3.9 When making the contract award decision, SfN may consider evidence of formal or other complaints against the bidder(s) by local, state and federal government agencies or other non-profits.

13.3.10 SfN reserves the right to check bidder's financial capacity and ability to successfully undertake and complete the services required by this RFP by any means deemed appropriate.

13.3.11 SfN reserves the right to conduct site inspections of any facility(s) services by the bidder(s) to assist in judging the bidder's ability to provide the services required by this RFP. This applies to all facilities services by the bidder or any sub-contractor to the bidder.

13.3.12 **SfN has the right to consider additional information not listed here.**

14. Contract Award

The contract shall be awarded with reasonable promptness by written notice to that responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to the invitation for bids, will be most advantageous to SfN, price and other factors considered.

After receiving the RFP responses, SfN reserves the right to issue multiple awards. If this occurs, SfN will structure the agreements so that task orders will be issued to the most appropriate firm, or person, using the firm's fixed price quote(s) outlined within their RFP response.

15. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Neither SfN nor its representatives shall be liable for any expenses a Firm incurs in connection with preparation of a response to this RFP. Applicants should prepare their proposals simply and economically, providing a straightforward and concise description of the Firm's ability to meet the requirements of this RFP.
- The issuance of this RFP does not commit SfN to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal in response to this request or to actually procure the requested services.
- SfN reserves the right to reject any or all the RFP applications submitted in response to this solicitation, due to the lack of responsiveness, changes in SfN's operating objectives, lack of funding, or for any reason determined by SfN and at the sole discretion of SfN.
- Time Extension: SfN may for good and sufficient reason extend the response deadline, in which case all potential vendors will receive an addendum setting forth the new time and date.
- Request for Additional Information: Prior to the final selection, vendors may be required to submit additional information that SfN deems necessary to further evaluate the vendor's qualifications. As part of the evaluation process, vendors shall furnish such additional information as SfN may reasonably require.

- Denial of Reimbursement: SfN will not reimburse vendors for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of a proposal or for any travel or other costs that are incurred.
- SfN will not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in connection with interviews (i.e., travel, accommodations, etc.) conducted as part of the evaluation or negotiation process.
- Gratuity Prohibition: Vendors shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any associate at SfN for the purpose of influencing consideration of this proposal. If an SfN associate solicits a gratuity, the vendor is obligated to inform SfN's Deputy Executive Director.
- Right of Withdrawal: A proposal may not be withdrawn before the expiration of one hundred and eighty (180) days from the proposal due date.
- Right of Negotiation: SfN reserves the right to negotiate with the selected vendor the exact terms and conditions for a contract.
- Liability and Insurance: The selected firm shall purchase and maintain insurance in the amounts and types as needed for the protection from claims caused by the contractor's personnel or work, or by any subcontractor performing work for the contractor.
- Legal Compliance: In connection with the furnishing of supplies of performance of work under the contract, the contractor agrees to comply with the Fair Labor Standard Act, Equal Opportunity Employment Act, and all other applicable Federal and State laws, regulations and executive orders to the extent that the same may be applicable.
- Disqualification: No award will be made to any firm, person or party, parent or subsidiary that is de-barred from providing services to the federal or state government, or with which SfN has an outstanding claim against or a financial dispute.
- Performance and Approval of Sub-Consultants: The vendor will perform the project as an independent contractor and not as an agent or employee of SfN. The vendor shall secure written permission from SfN before subcontracting any part of the project. Such permission should be obtained during the proposal evaluation stage.
- Licenses, Permits & Taxes: The price or prices for the work shall include full compensation for all taxes, permits, etc. that the vendor is or may be required to pay. SfN is a tax exempt entity.
- Minority/Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Policy: It is the policy of SfN to provide minority and women owned business enterprises with equal opportunity for participating in the selling of goods and services to SfN. In cases where a vendor plans to sub-contract a portion of the work, it is required to make "A Good Faith Effort" to engage qualified MWBEs for such work. Vendors shall keep records of such efforts, when applicable, that are adequate to permit a determination of compliance with this requirement. If subcontracting is involved in the proposal, a Proposed Schedule of Minority/Women Business Enterprise Participation shall also be submitted.
- Revisions to this RFP: In the event it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFP, such clarification or revision will be by addendum. Any RFP addendum will be distributed to all registered bidders via the e-mail provided.

Bidder Responsibility: The bidder assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in the RFP. No special consideration shall be given after bids are opened because bidder's failure to be knowledgeable of all the requirements of the RFP. By submitting a proposal in response to

this RFP, the bidder represents that it has satisfied itself, from its own investigation, of all the requirements of this RFP