



MySource Matrix 

*Case study*

**NZTA Feet First**

# MySource Matrix Case Study - NZTA Feet First

<http://www.feetfirst.govt.nz/>

## Feet First Background

Feet First is a NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) initiative designed to help primary schools promote walking in fun and unusual ways.

In 2009, Feet First became a flexible year-long initiative. Teachers, parents and students are encouraged to walk to school at least once a week, every week during term time.

The NZTA also wanted to make the development of Feet First 2009 a two-way process that schools could take ownership of and really engage with. So the development of Feet First 2009 was guided by the following principles:

- Citizen-centric government
- Loosely joined not tightly drawn
- Bottom up not top down
- Communities of practice
- Innovative social media
- Everyone as experts
- Participation offline and online
- Total accessibility for online environment and offline.



### Engaging a diverse public

The NZTA felt it was important to collaborate with an expert 'audience' of teachers, students and parents through all stages of development. This approach puts relationships at the core of the feetfirst project.

The NZTA aimed to make Feet First citizen-centric by:

- encouraging schools to take ownership of Feet First and develop local priorities
- making it easy to get involved
- making it flexible
- making it fun to take part
- creating a collaborative website to share and celebrate 'expertise' among the participants.

The work of Professor Miriam Lips, and Elizabeth Eppel from Victoria University Wellington's School of Government Policy was used to develop the reasoning behind Feet First's citizen-centric approach.

## Everybody provides expertise with feetfirst.govt.nz

In 2008 the NZTA invited teachers and principals to join reference groups and consult on Feet First.

The reference groups helped the NZTA understand issues including:

- How to encourage schools to keep interacting with the website
- What downloadable Feet First resources should be available
- How the website could support schools, councils and individuals in active transport.

As a result, the approach in 2009 is entirely different - the thought leadership comes from students, teachers and parents. Every person's contribution is treated as helpful and effective.

## Facilitating Collaboration

The NZTA recognised that an interactive Feet First website would be the easiest way to collaborate with schools and share ideas.

The website needed to be flexible enough to meet the following criteria:

- Address relevant needs/issues within the community
- Engage a diverse public
- Act as a catalyst for action
- Stimulate intergenerational interactions
- Link existing community groups to one another
- Initiate or enhance long-term collaborative relationships
- Create partnerships that empower community groups
- Result in products/processes that have tangible impacts in the community.

The website is expected to change and grow as the reference groups continue to feedback and enhance the project to suit the needs of each community.





## Feet First Online

www.feetfirst.govt.nz was launched at the start of Term 1. Schools/communities/councils can choose to interact on the site in a variety of ways and the website is updated and maintained by the communities it serves. The website has shared expectations; it shows real-time news stories and quantitative results. It supports traditional and new ways of viewing active travel.

### On the website, schools/communities/councils can:

- Register for the Feet First project to gain access to increased functionality. (To view example school pages go to the 'login' tab at www.feetfirst.govt.nz and enter email address: feetfirst, password: feetfirst).
- Upload their stories and pictures of anything related to active travel. The website is used to celebrate their successes. Anyone in a school or council can create a page of news. There are moderators in each region to approve story content and manage consent process for photographs.
- Read stories of what other schools/groups are doing and get inspiration for future initiatives. The website celebrates real people doing innovative things to encourage communities to walk or use some kind of active transport.
- Enter the number of students walking each week which can be shown on a bar chart so they can map their progress and compare their walking numbers to other schools in their region. This encourages an element of healthy competition.
- Download comprehensive curriculum documents developed for Feet First by two recognised curriculum experts Pam Hook and Julie Mills. Download or order a huge number of resources for use in the classroom such as posters, wall charts, postcards, certificates and student diaries. Schools don't have to be registered to download any of these resources.
- Enter the active travel Picture Book competition. Schools can win the chance to have a picture book, written and drawn by them, professionally published. They can enter in hard copy or digitally.
- Read research on active travel and find links to other related websites.

## Design and functionality

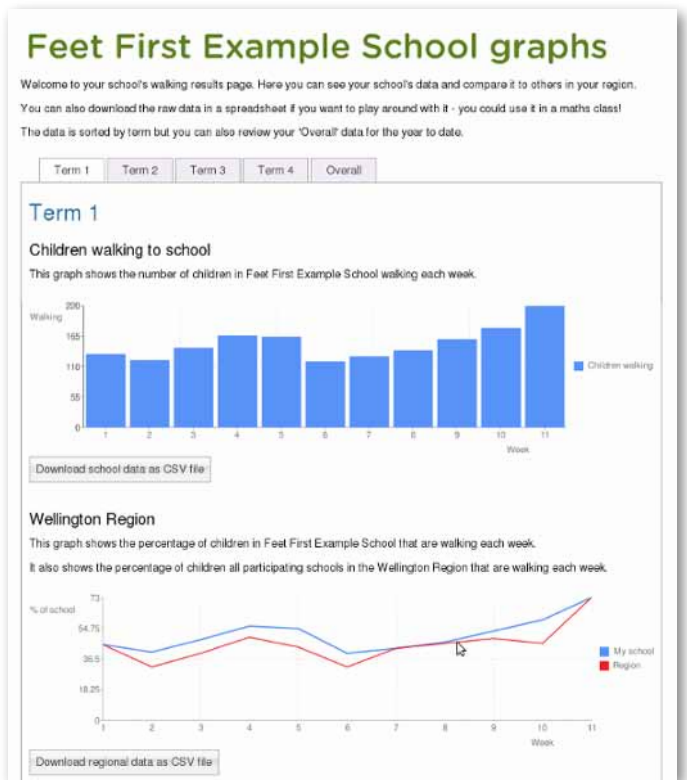
The website has a diverse audience of teachers, students, parents and councils. The site had to appeal to all these groups, make a good first impression, and encourage them to come back again. The NZTA worked with the Wellington office of Squiz to develop the website. Squiz used MySource Matrix, which is an enterprise-level Content Management System (CMS).

The central design focus of the website is simple, elegant functionality and all content is written in plain English. Care was taken at all steps of the project to ensure accessibility standards were adhered to ensuring the maximum number of people were able to view and engage with the site, and therefore the project.

All the functionality is available to schools via the Feet First website. Teachers and students do not need to use the CMS's administration interface to participate online.



The screenshot shows the Feet First website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Feet First' logo and 'Walk to School Every Week' slogan. Below that, there's a 'Curriculum' section with a sidebar listing various learning areas like 'Term 1 Walking and Road Safety' and 'Term 2 Walking and Learning'. The main content area features a lesson plan for 'Science - Exploring living things and habitats' with a 'Key Competency' section and an 'Inquiry Taster' section. A 'Register' button is visible in the bottom left corner.



The screenshot shows the 'Feet First Example School graphs' page. It features a bar chart for 'Term 1 Children walking to school' and a line graph for 'Wellington Region'. The bar chart shows the number of children walking each week, and the line graph shows the percentage of children walking each week compared to the region. Both graphs include download buttons for CSV files.

Week	Children walking
1	110
2	115
3	120
4	125
5	130
6	135
7	140
8	145
9	150
10	155
11	160

Week	My school (%)	Region (%)
1	35	35
2	38	38
3	42	42
4	45	45
5	48	48
6	52	52
7	55	55
8	58	58
9	62	62
10	65	65
11	68	68

## Location of schools

All the schools participating in Feet First are pinpointed on a map using embedded Google Maps. The map is interactive and users can zoom in on the map to view schools in a particular region. When schools sign up for Feet First, their geographical location is taken from a schools database and the new school's pin is automatically placed on the map.

## Logging the number of walkers

It's simple for schools to sign up to Feet First. Once they have signed up and logged in, it's easy for them to record the number of children walking to school each week.

Google Charts was used to create the graphs displaying number of children walking to school. The Google Charts create the graph from tabular data and returns it to the site as an image. As the image would not be accessible to adaptive technology users, the site was built to allow these users to access the same data in an accessible format.

## Conclusion

The Feet First project has a place for everybody and values every idea, style and process that supports active and safe travel. We believe the Feet First website works within the public sector through very smart technology and a completely collaborative approach. The end-users play a critical role in developing the site and creating new solutions. They take 'ownership' of the site which results in a positive impact on society.

## Adding stories

The NZTA wanted regional coordinators around the country to be able to add new stories to the website. Despite the fact that the regional coordinators are all non-technical, they were easily able to maintain content on the site through MySource Matrix.

## Number of schools involved

There are currently over 400 schools involved in the project, which is approximately 20% of the primary schools in New Zealand. This equates to approximately 125,000 students taking part. This is a great achievement as the registrations started in 2009 at zero.

As registration is not a pre-requisite for getting involved there are also many additional schools involved in active travel projects inspired by the website. They take part in local initiatives supported by their council and download the Feet First curriculum documents.