

Heuristic Evaluation, Insights From Weebly Analytics, and Sitemaps for Madison Morgan Cultural Center

By: Reid Weigner

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Heuristic Evaluation - Big Takeaways:

- Consider using page **headers** on every page and make them match the name of the navigation element users click on to access the page. This will make it obvious to the users what page they are viewing. Furthermore, If they clicked “building history” the header should say “building history.”
- **Buttons** - consider creating a second color for buttons. Keep the most important buttons (like “tickets” and “donate”) blue, and create a second color for ones that aren’t as important (like “calendar” or “contact us”). Also, make sure that button colors aren’t used or are very sparingly used in other parts of the site. This will make the buttons more prominent and allow users to quickly recall what that button does.
- Consider **combining** performing arts, chamber music festival, special events, community events, and other pages like this into one events list page. Instead of making users remember which type of event they are trying to go to (as the difference between “community events” and “special events” may not be apparent), allow them to see all the events and filter them by type (For example, see the “tests & iterations” section on my Atlanta Symphony Orchestra project: <https://www.reidweigner.com/project02>).
- **Consistency** - consider creating display/designs standards (margins, hierarchy, headers, spacing, font colors, etc...) for the whole site. This will make the experience more pleasant for users and easier for them to find what they are looking for.
- Current web accessibility design trends indicate that the **minimum font size** on a website should be 16 pt. This will make the site easier for everyone to read and scan. Consider increasing the line height for paragraphs, as this will also increase legibility.

To view the full heuristic evaluation report, please scroll down to “heuristic evaluation - detailed report.”

Insights from Weebly Analytics:

People use this site primarily to look up events while a smaller percentage come to learn about the building, staff, and how to contact. The majority of users come from Google.

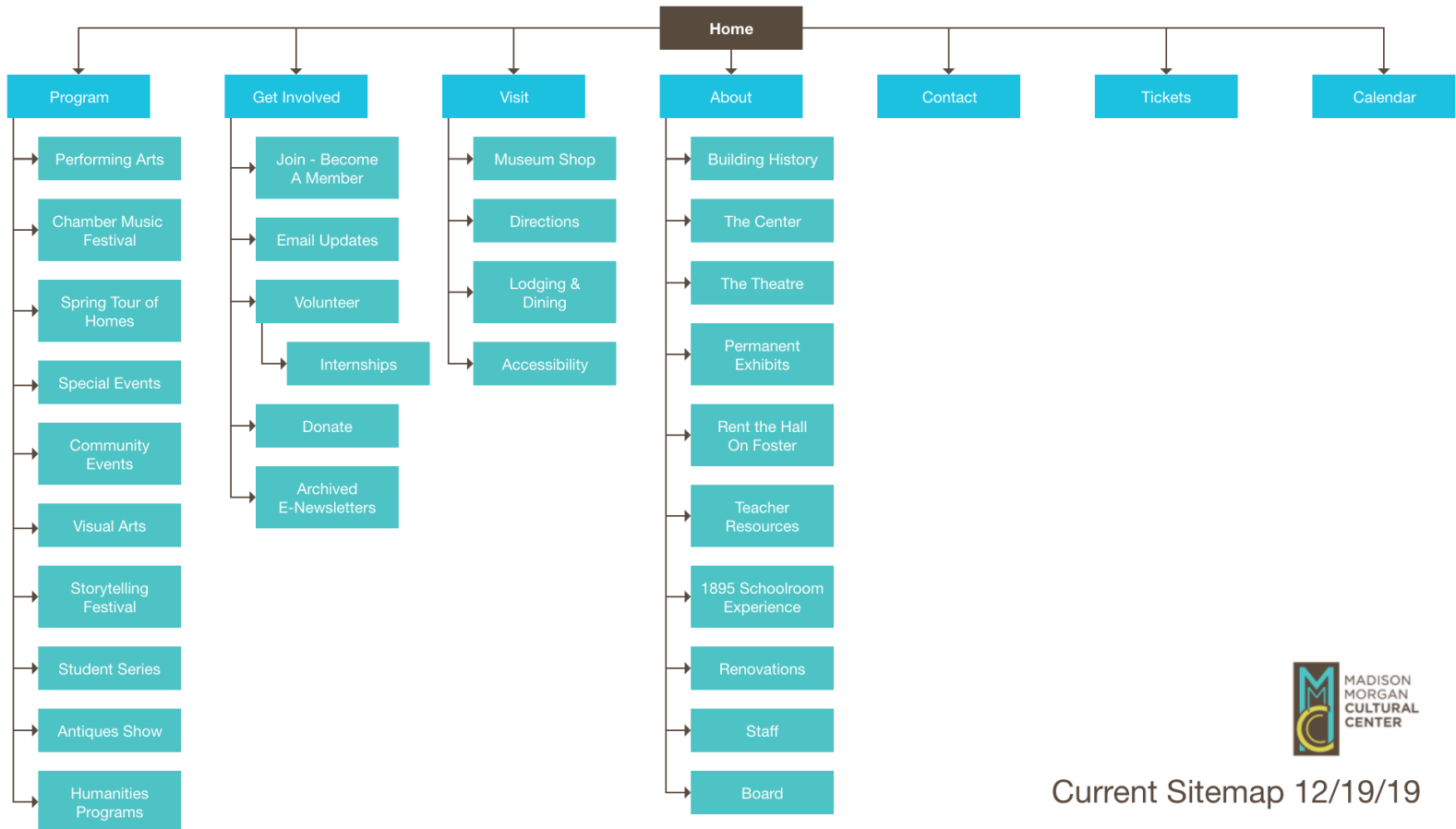
From 11/19/19 to 12/18/19, the majority of users came to the site from:

- Google: 426 users
- Facebook (mobile & desktop): 18 users
- Bing: 8 users
- 5 of the top 10 referrals came from search engines. The others were atlantasympphony.org, exploregeorgia.org, and facebook (various).

From 11/19/19 to 12/18/19, the most popular pages (besides the homepage) were:

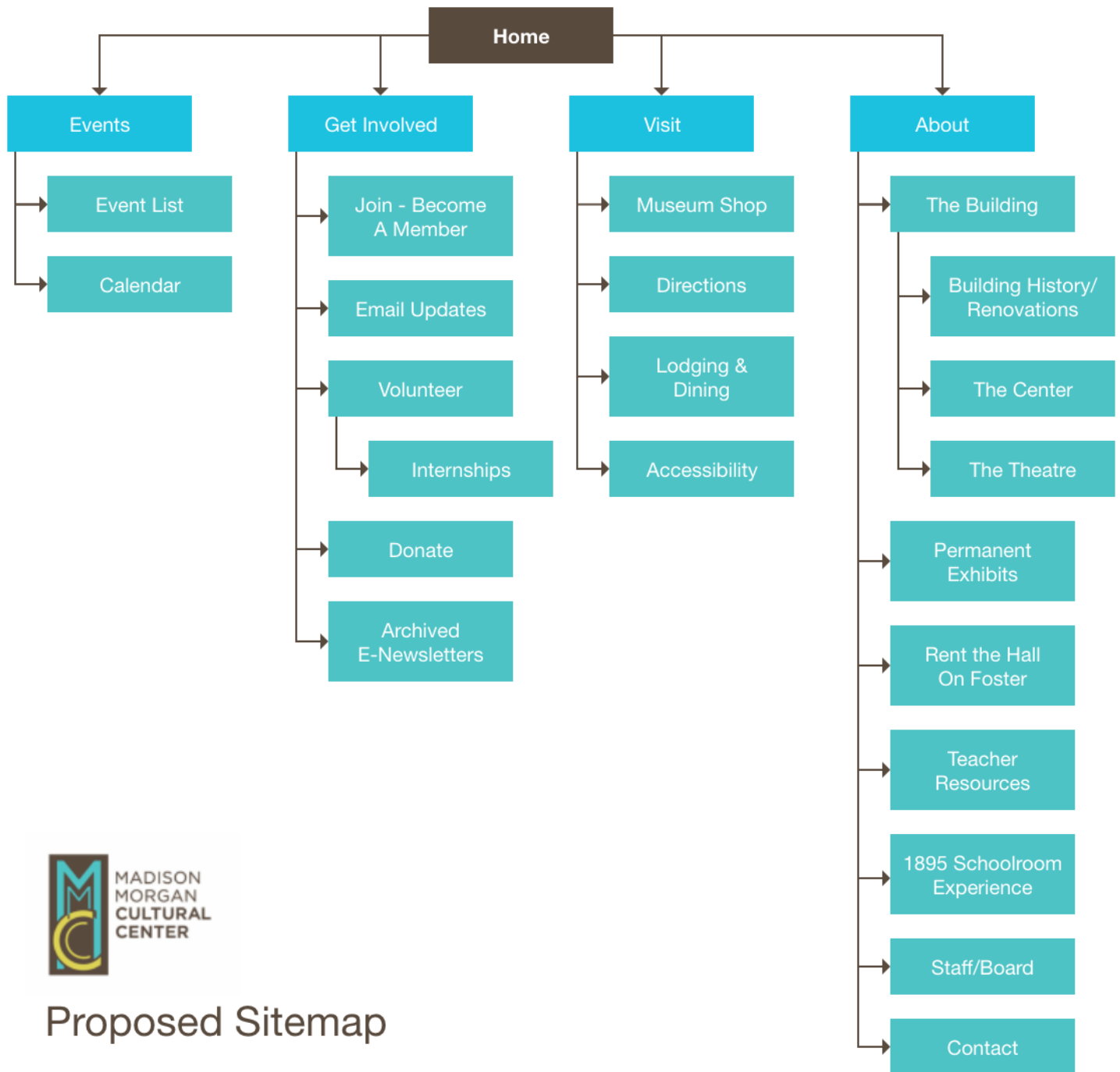
- Calendar: 204 views
 - Performing Arts: 76 views
 - Building History: 71 views
 - The next most viewed dropped sharply to 46, which was antiques show.
 - 6 of the top 10 viewed pages dealt with events, totaling 444 views. The others were building history, staff, and contact.
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Current Sitemap:



Current Sitemap 12/19/19

Proposed Sitemap:



Proposed Sitemap

Changes:

- The proposed sitemap condenses all events to an event list and calendar (past events could be another tab option). The option to filter events by type would be added to the event list page.
- Contact is moved to About, as is in line with current design trends.
- A third, or “tertiary,” layer is added in the About section, which encompasses everything about the building.
- Another main navigation option could be Donate, which we could add directly to the right of About and is a common design trend.

Heuristic Evaluation - Detailed Report

1. Visibility of system status

- Always keep users informed about what is going on.
- Provide appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

Evaluation

The page header should match the name of the secondary navigation item that was clicked on. For example, when a user clicks on “Building History,” it takes them to a page that has a “Mission Statement” header. Consider changing this page’s header to “Building History” and move the “mission statement” to the homepage.

When users click “tickets” it opens in a new window and the word “calendar” is highlighted in the main navigation. “Calendar” and “tickets” are also switched. If users click “tickets” again, a new window is opened and the same problems persist.

2. Match between system and the real world

- Speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.
- Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

Evaluation

If we're thinking about making information appear in a natural and logical order, I believe some adjustments could be made to the navigation so we can simplify the experience for users. Contact can go under the about navigation. Tickets, Calendar, and Program can be combined, creating one larger list that can then be filtered.

Side-note: Wix allows filtering, but weebly does not.

3. User control and freedom

- Users often choose system functions by mistake.
- Provide a clearly marked "out" to leave an unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue.
- Support undo and redo.

Evaluation

There may need to be “back” links/options during the ticketing process to make things easier for the user.

4. Consistency and standards

- Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
- Follow platform conventions.

Evaluation

Link vs Highlighted item - if the text is a link, use a specific color. If the text is not a link, use a different color. This issue is found on the homepage.

Not every navigation link gets highlighted when the user is on that link’s page. For example, “Home” is highlighted when on the home page. However, “program” or “visit” are not highlighted when in one of those pages.

Some pages open up in different tabs (tickets, spring tour of homes). This should be avoided if possible, or let the user know that this link will open in a new tab.

Every page seems to be a little bit different. Consider creating standards for how headers, photos, buttons, and paragraphs appear on each page. For example: headers should be above photos. This is not the case on the “visual arts” page, where some of the headers are above and some are below photos. This will make it easier for users to sift through information and find what they are looking for.

On the “become a member page” - it doesn’t say “become a member” at the top. Consider adding “become a member” at the top to make it obvious to users where they are. The “Join today” button is used multiple times on this page. While it is important to emphasize this button, consider only displaying it once in a prominent location. Seeing this button in multiple locations on one short page may be confusing to users.

Consider moving the mission statement to the first page, as this will have more impact on users.

The “Contact” link in the header navigation is not clickable. Similarly, only the “home” navigation element is clickable during the ticketing process.

Program vs calendar vs tickets - consider creating one bigger “events” section, where users could filter (music, exhibits, plays) or browse different events. Each event page would have a “more info” button that would take them to the event list page.

During the ticketing process - Login vs Account? Users cannot access their account without logging in, so the “account” tab may not be needed.

“Shopping cart” on the ticketing page - it is more of the norm to see a shopping cart icon and the word “cart” than it is to see the full phrase “shopping cart.”

Logo appears in different styles throughout website. Sometimes it is grayer (header), occasionally it appears with more contrast (footer). Consider using one style for the site (can be different if part of a poster).

“Get Involved” changes to “Learn” when clicking on “tickets.”

Forms should all be a similar design if possible. The “email updates” form is quite different from the “contact” form.

Consider increasing the line height of paragraphs, as this will help with legibility.

5. Error prevention

- Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

Evaluation

Good error prevention on the contact page.

Remove “Tickets on sale...” button from events (such as the ones on the chamber music festival page) that are not on sale. We can prevent an error by keeping the text but not making it a clickable link.

6. Recognition rather than recall

- Make objects, actions, and options visible.
- User should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another.
- Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

Evaluation

User's may expect a certain color to relate to a specific thing. For instance, all of the buttons are currently blue. However, that same color blue is also used when a navigation element is highlighted - in this case, when “Home” is selected, it is highlighted using the same blue color as the buttons but doesn't function as a button. While users can understand this, it may create some confusion. It will make the buttons stand out if they are the only element that uses a specific color. Furthermore, consider having a secondary color for certain buttons. Keep the most important buttons (like “donate,” and “tickets”) the color blue, but use a different color for the other buttons. This will make these most important buttons pop out more and make it easier for users to recall what they may do.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

- Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user so that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.

- Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

Evaluation

This may not currently apply to the site, but one question we can ask is: how easy is it for recurring users to buy tickets?

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

- Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed.
- Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

Evaluation

Current web accessibility standards suggest that fonts should be no smaller than 16 pt. Occasionally it may be appropriate to use a smaller font, such as a short description of a photo.

Buttons could be a bit more prominent overall. They are particularly small throughout the ticketing process.

Consider combining some of the different links in the “About” section. About the Building, About the Staff / Board, could be main links while Renovations, the center, the theater, building history, etc... could each be a paragraph or section on one page.

Contrast - “benefactor sponsor for Visual Arts season” - text should be white to increase legibility.

On homepage - focus things that will make an immediate impact on the user and allow them to navigate to wherever they need to. Make sure they understand who you are (mission statement), what is the next or most important event coming up (rather than the events & program list), when you're open, donating/getting involved, etc...

Increase font size in the footer and consider arranging the links (contact, join, etc...) horizontally across the top of the footer or vertically to the left side as this more aligned with current design trends.

9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

- Expressed in plain language (no codes)
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution.

Evaluation

When users forget to add information on the ticket page, it takes you to a new window with 2 error messages saying the same thing. After closing the message, it becomes a banner at the top of the page. Ideally, it should be right next to where the error occurred, making it obvious what the user should do and where. When users use letters instead of a number, the error message pops up at the top saying “invalid quantity.” Again, the error message should be right next to where the error occurred, and the error message should help with how to solve the problem - instead of “invalid quantity,” use something like “please enter a number.” Similar issues with “select delivery method.”

On the “email updates” page (which doesn’t tell users they’re on that page), it doesn’t tell users what errors occurred - it asks the user to take an extra step to contact the MMCAC. We want to make contacting the MMCAC a last resort, as this will delay users accomplishing their goals and frustrate them.

There also needs to be error messages if a user doesn’t select anything during the “become a member” / “donation” process. Right now, if a user does not select anything but clicks continue, it presents the user with the option to go “back to shopping,” which then leads them to the ticketing process instead of the membership process.

10. Help and documentation

- Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation.
- Help information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

Evaluation

It's great to use some sort of steps indicator (step 1, step 2, etc...) during a checkout process. I have not checked to see if this is used on the site, but am happy to figure out a way to test this.

Next Steps:

- Discuss Heuristic Evaluation report and decide if there are more things (specific pages or flows) that I should look through and report on.
- Discuss proposed sitemap and make adjustments as needed.
- Research different content management systems (aka weebly, wix, etc...) to see which would be the best fit.