

Introduction

We chose the Shasta Lake tourism website for a redesign because it currently has an outdated and poorly organized layout that does not do justice to its main attraction. The website lacks visual appeal, as there are no scenic images to showcase the beauty of Shasta Lake, making it difficult for users to engage with the content. Additionally, the navigation design is confusing, making it challenging for users to find essential information, including contact details. There are too many links, which is a result of the poor screen fit and outdated look. Our goal with this redesign is to make the website more user friendly by adding high quality images, improving the navigation for easy access and information in clearly defined sections. Objectives include scenic images, organizing content into categories, simplifying the design, clearly displaying contact information, and including only the most important links.

Project Description -

- Focus on redesigning the Shasta Lake tourism website.
- Highlight the outdated design and poor organization as key issues.

Project Intention -

- Improve the website's visuals with scenic images of Shasta Lake.
- Improve navigation for easier access to information.
- Simplify the design by reducing the links and clutter.

Personas

Three Personas -

1. Jake – Family Vacationer

Age – 38

Occupation – Teacher

Goals – Find family friendly scenery and activities.

Challenges – She has limited time to plan and book and needs to find information about scenic and activities easily.

2. Mike – Outdoor Adventurer

Age – 28

Occupation – Photographer

Goals – To find beautiful spots around Shasta Lake.

Challenges – He needs easy and quick information about the Shasta lake's activities, trials.

3. Kim – Retiree

Age – 68

Occupation – Retired Doctor

Goals – To enjoy the beauty of Shasta lake's trails and scenic views.

Challenges – She wants a simple and easy layout of the website with medium or large font size to access the information easily.

Comparative/Non Comparative Research/Study

When it came to choosing our website there were a lot of steps taken into this. First we of course wanted our main website that we were going to use for our presentation. Shasta Lake was chosen, when it came to comparing a website that was listed with things like Hiking spots, Renting equipment, Trails, fishing spots, etc.. We chose NPS (National Park Service) to compare it to as it gave us many ideas towards our project. There were a lot of things we found that were comparisons to that website as it was a park service website and our website page was based on things like trails and fishing. When furthering in the research of our website we had to find something that was non comparative to a park service website which wasn't that hard to find so we decided to go with a bicycle warehouse website that sold bikes and bike equipment like helmets and other gear.

Comparative Website - Some comparative things found in the NPS and Shasta Lake Website were the pictures of the landscape as well as images that were added to navigate users to where they wanted to go, such as fishing, trials, lodging, etc..

Non-Comparative Website- Non-Comparative Website that we chose to go with was the Bicycle warehouse and this was due to a few things, first the layout of the website was different,

we went with something similar in our comparative research, another thing being Shasta Lake is more of a lodging and a place where families can spend time with each other, this biking warehouse page only sold equipment and bikes, so it didn't really have anything to compare. Along with that the purpose of both websites was different as they both had different target audiences. One website was to attract tourists and the other was to attract customers.

Found Problems (Problem Identification)

When it came to finding problems from the initial website. We all decided to take some time in our day and go through the website to see what issues could be found. The next time we met up we would talk about what issues were found. When we did this, we were able to agree on a variety of issues. For instance there is the overcrowding of information that was completely unorganized. This overcrowding of information made it hard for there to be any concrete information to be found. There is also since some areas were not always on the headers. It made it harder for other information to be accessed than to have to go back to the home screen and then find the button for the other page you wanted to go to. If not having to go to the home page was something that you didn't want to do then you could just have the "more" page on another tab and then look for all the pages that you need to get the information for the trip you are planning. There is just a massive amount of information that can be reduced into a few pages and it's spread out through so many other pages that it could make you want to cancel your trip.

The next issue that we found on the website was the amount of dead links. Since this website was created a while ago. There are some links that are no longer in service or may have been taken down because the information was transferred to a different page for the company's website. Thus making it harder for any information to be gathered because the information is no longer there. It creates a distrust in the user and makes it more likely for the user to stop using the website.

The other issue that was agreed upon was the visual and visual of and on the website. There is clearly a lot to look at when you first go on the website. You are just bombarded with an insane amount of information and makes you confused about what you are supposed to look at. There are also too many images of the person that made the website. These images that are currently on there don't give a sense of the beauty that Lake Shasta has. There is also how visually the website looks itself. It is extremely bad. It was so bad, that when I showed a friend of mine the website they literally told me that they thought it would give them a virus if they opened it on one of their personal devices. With that we knew it would be an issue that needed to be fixed.

Lastly there is how the website looked like on other devices than the daily desktop that people use. For those who visit the website on a mobile device or even a tablet. There is a chance for the user to not be able to read the screen and have to zoom into the website to read some of

the items and clickable links. There is just such an inconvenience for any mobile users that we deemed it to be an issue.

Solutions

We plan on changing the entire webpage and completely transforming as well as the rest. There are many problems that were seen at first sight. We want to change numerous things such as compiling items that are somewhat similar and putting them in one link. To have less links and make it user friendly. Most items are similar and could be put together in one link to compile. We want to modify the navigation bars, menu, amount of pages, and the removal of non tourist information which includes personal information as if it is unnecessary. We want to make it easy so that anyone can be able to easily navigate through our website. So we can make sure that the people that want to book at Shasta Lake will have an easy to no errors on the website by booking their stay at Shasta.

Potential Interface Design / Sketch



Conceptual Model

Built on WIX STUDIO

The screenshot shows a scenic view of Lake Shasta with a forested shoreline. The title "Lake Shasta - Home" is displayed prominently. Below the title is a grid of six resource links:

- Camping (image of a tent)
- Lodging (image of a modern building)
- Boating (image of a houseboat)
- Fishing (image of a fish)
- Trails (image of a mountain trail)
- Contact Us (image of a mountain landscape)

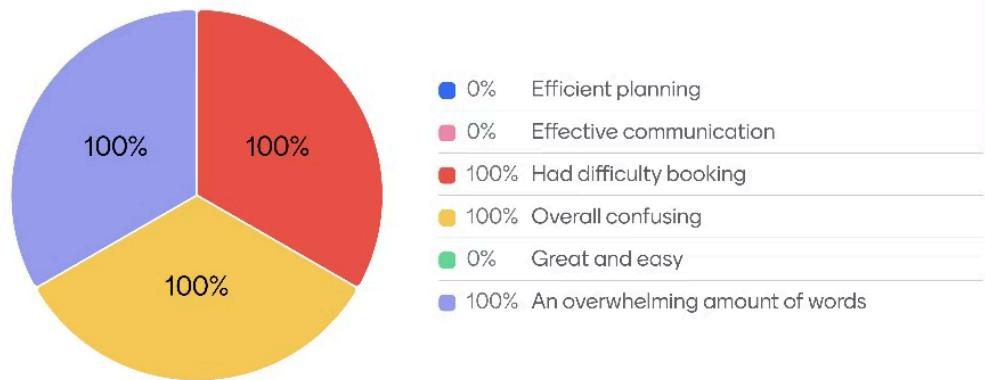
Case with no errors

How was it like navigating through this website?



Case with errors

How was it like navigating through this website?



User Testing

The participants of this final testing were 8 of my, Michael Hidebrandt, colleagues from work who I could ask to spend 10 min reviewing our prototype and answering some basic questions. My colleagues represent a fairly diverse group of people in terms of a diverse background for testing outside of age, all adults no elderly or children. For this test there were 5 women and 3 men, all between the ages of 26 - 52. They have a quite vastly different amount of technical experience with some being people who have worked in computer science for over a decade and others who still use AOL to this day. Though all of them are required by the nature of our work to have the basic technical skills to operate a computer.

The user testing was conducted with whatever device the person testing the product wanted to use, as this helped to see the results that varied between different device types. It was conducted without a time limit, but I did ask them to spend at least 5 min to look over the prototype and a few minutes reviewing the initial design. This review was followed by a few verbal questions that I took note of the answers to, for later review.

For the questions that I asked our testers there are two different sets of questions that were asked before our initial presentation and after the presentation, due to the feedback we received on our testing. The first set of questions where as follows:

1. Rate the quality of the prototypes usability between 1 and 5
2. True or False; Was the usability better than the original site.
3. Rate the quality of the visual appeal between 1 and 5
4. True or False; Was the visual appeal better than the original site.

After our presentation though, our group was informed that this style of user questioning was a bit misleading and in fact guided the reviewers to give a favorable answer towards our prototype without much room for feedback on improvement. Due to this we chose to revise our questionnaire for the testers to better suit the goals of testing. For this revision I had the testers complete certain tasks for the first part of the test and then give feedback on this experience. Following this I had them spend a few additional minutes browsing through the remaining parts of the site and testing whatever they felt like, followed by a few ratings and open ended questions. The flow of this questioning was as follows:

1. Please find the name of one nearby campsite to Lake Shasta.
 - a. Give a numerical value to how easy it was to complete this task (1-5)
 - b. Please list anything that made this task difficult for you to complete.
 - c. Please list anything that stood out to you about the design while completing the task.
2. Please find the names of fish available between the months of June and August.
 - a. Give a numerical value to how easy it was to complete this task (1-5)
 - b. Please list anything that made this task difficult for you to complete.
 - c. Please list anything that stood out to you about the design while completing the task.
3. Please find how many companies have paddle boards for rental.
 - a. Give a numerical value to how easy it was to complete this task (1-5)
 - b. Please list anything that made this task difficult for you to complete.
 - c. Please list anything that stood out to you about the design while completing the task.
4. Please give any overall comments about the visual design and usability of the website.
5. Please list anything that you noticed missing from the original design of the website and the current design.

User Testing Analysis

After conducting our secondary set of data, a much deeper analysis of the successes and failures of our prototype is possible. To begin, data was collected in a spreadsheet and categorized by each question in the following format:

Question 1: Please find the name of one nearby campsite to Lake Shasta.

Tester	How Easy to Complete (1-5)	Notes of Difficulties
1	5 None	Liked the inclusion of google maps, & thought commonly used links on homepage was good
2	4 Couldn't click on the map pins for info	Liked the inclusion of google maps
3	5 None	While not difficult, mentioned the coloring of the pins to be a bit hard to see
4	5 None	"hard to do it wrong with a big button that says camping"
5	5 None	Liked the inclusion of google maps
6	5 None	Said it was easy, but concerned about not having filters for the different types of campsites.
7	5 None	Thought that it could all be scaled down in size a bit and fit more on the page at once
8	4 Campsite Locations didn't have linked mileage to lake	Liked the inclusion of google maps

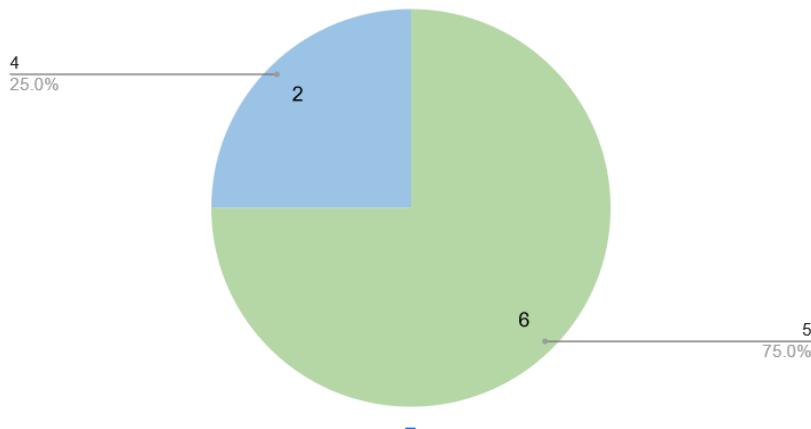
Question 2: Please find the names of fish available between the months of June and August.

Using this data we were able to graph the numerical data into pie charts as well as manually review the notes to look at the common successes and failures of the prototype. The graphs for the 3 numerical questions whereas follows:

Question 1:

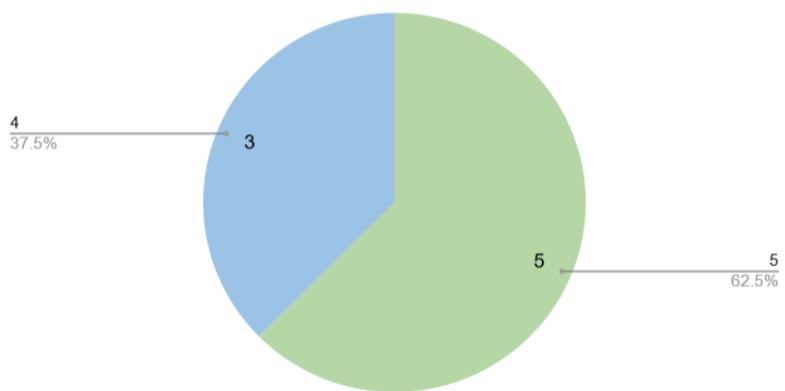
Q1 Ease Of Use (1-5)

Number of People Who Voted For A Star Amount



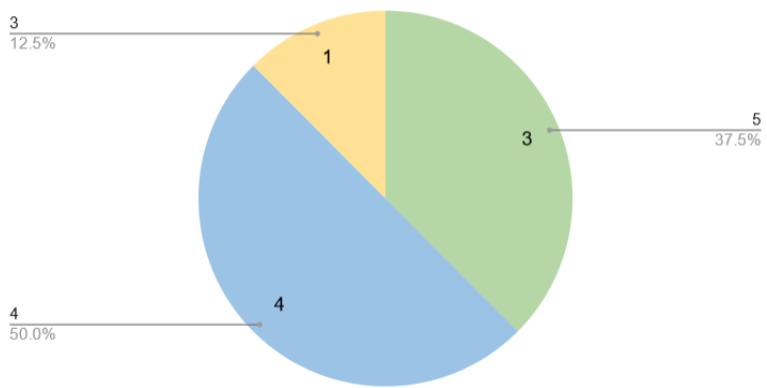
Question 2:

Q2 Ease Of Use (1-5)
Number of People Who Voted For A Star Amount



Question 3:

Q3 Ease Of Use (1-5)
Number of People Who Voted For A Star Amount



With these numeric values, an analysis of the comments left by testers, and some additional analysis comparing the backgrounds of the testers with their answers we were able to draw some conclusions towards the success of our prototype.

The first of these is seen in the numerical values for the ease of use and that is that our website is at the minimum usable by people of a decent range of ability. The second thing we can see from this numerical data is that for all 3 questions the 5 star reviews towards ease of use came from the same three people who were all very advanced in tech use, and were all on a desktop computer when reviewing. This shows that for those with a decent amount of experience navigating websites we succeeded in making a usable website. A 3rd thing to note is that one of our testers, on a cell phone, did not leave a 5 star rating and left one 3 star rating, the other cell phone user left 1 5-star and two 4-star ratings. This shows that while we made some pages better for mobile use it also was not as successful as we would have liked.

Following the numerical data we looked at the common struggles or concerns left by the testers. Overall, the most common complaints had to do with struggles with UI elements or concerns about their usability. For example, when searching for the companies who had paddle boards there were common concerns for non desktop users about the scaling of the availability table making things harder to find. There were also concerns towards the scaling of the current navigation setup when trying to include the dozens of additional links that were present on the original page.

Overall, for the main objective of improvement I believe that this testing shows that while our prototype is not perfect and should go through multiple iterations of development and testing before being released as a final product I do believe that it is a good example of the starting steps of completely resolving the problems of the original site. I believe that some of the most common concerns for testers revolving around scalability and small quirks of UI elements and coloring are things that could be solved with additional development time and do not take away from the core changes and improvements.

I believe that this user testing did give us a good path towards future development and some key things to focus on maintaining or improving. All of our users found that modern modifications like google maps, emphasizing commonly used links, and updated information were all good additions to the site that were missing from the original. And when asked to compare to the original the only concerns we had was to how we planned to keep the current design while including dozens of additional pages, a problem which we believe could be solved with the use of a collapsible navigation system on either the side nav or top, extending the current one downwards. It is also clear that certain elements could be improved upon for mobile users but that we overwhelmingly succeeded for those using desktop. Showing that further design would need to be thoroughly tested on multiple screen sizes.

Iterative Prototypes

We only have one prototype.

<https://mhildebrandt28.wixstudio.com/my-site-3>

Discussions

Some of the major challenges that we encountered while doing this project were in the actual designing process of the webpage as well as proper user testing. Building a web page while thinking about all of the different problems you want to solve with the page can be a bit daunting and hard to get going. A big part of the initial challenge was finding a good layout and color combination that fit our site's goals without taking away from them. Ultimately, good comparative research helped us to solve this problem. The second problem was user testing, it was uniquely challenging trying to figure out the best way for someone to test our site while also getting useful information to improve the site from their experience. With trial and error and corrections to our original testing I believe that we were able to solve it well.

