ENSE 271 Report-Out
GROUP F

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ENSE 271 - People-Centered Design
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<u>Activity 4</u>

Business Need (James)

The SSCF finds that there is a lack of local information for charities, including Saskatchewan specific issues such as regulations, or fundraising/volunteering guidelines. As well, charities currently struggle with a lack of resources or time, and do not want to waste what they have on low quality content. Thus, a problem emerges, the problem that we are trying to solve: local charity workers struggle to find relevant help/resources easily. Often other resources pages aren't well designed, delightful, or intuitive; or even designed with content that includes Saskatchewan law or culture. The need here is for a Saskatchewan based 'resource hub' for Charities, which hosts content that could help an average local charity worker in the five main buckets of 'Marketing', 'Operations', 'Governance', 'Operations', 'Storytelling', Regulations, as well as a directory to find Organizations. This need was generated from the SSCF's survey of local charity workers, where we also discovered what was most important to our north star. Additionally, our north star, which is to be focused on, are the local charities & non-profits, as well as charity workers seeking these resources. The resource hub needs to be linked to high quality, curated resources which contain easily digestible strategies, tips, guides. Additionally, events opportunities are needed to be hosted, in a way that makes them accessible. Under the 'Grants' umbrella are tips for applying to grants; along with the grant opportunities as well. With our problem discovered, we sought to narrow the need in order to best solve the problem; by utilizing constraints, one of which is listed here: Semantic constraints found for this business need are that charity workers may not always understand technical lingo found in some of these resources. So accordingly, we made our language on the site clear and avoided jargon. From this need and information, we designed our website as an attempt to solve all of these problems at once, with our MVP being complete now.

<u>**Reflections on Planning, Execution, Closing**</u>

State the selected Northstar and Carryover customers(Anjolaoluwa)

North Star Customers: The primary focus of this project is on charities and non-profit organizations in Saskatchewan. These organizations often struggle with:

  -Accessing Saskatchewan-specific and credible resources
  -Finding relevant funding and grant opportunities
  -Establishing partnerships and strategic initiatives

The website is designed to support these organizations in creating greater community impact by simplifying access to essential tools and information.

Carryover Customers: In addition to the core users, the platform also considers the needs of several associated stakeholders:

-Donors : for transparent and streamlined giving opportunities
-Vital Signs Community :to access data and metrics for social initiatives
-Volunteers :to easily locate opportunities to contribute
-Government : to support dissemination of grants and relevant policies
-Corporate Businesses : interested in corporate social responsibility and visibility through partnerships

Summarize assumptions made and constraints uncovered(Anjolaoluwa)

Assumptions

-The platform will be developed using WordPress, assuming it can support required
-customization and features.
-An admin team member will be responsible for regularly updating content, webinars, and documents.
-Participating organizations will contribute accurate and relevant content, including training
-materials and event recordings.
-There will be sufficient funding and consistent user engagement to ensure platform sustainability.

Constraints

-We had limited technical expertise in WordPress and web development as a team.
-Our customer requires permission and content contributions from multiple charities and NGOs to -populate the resource directory.
-Ensuring information accuracy is dependent on external sources.
-No user login system is permitted, as per user feedback.
-The platform must be lightweight and easy to use without tutorials or technical training.
-Client interaction is minimal, limiting opportunities for iterative feedback during development.

Summarize key findings from affinity diagramming and empathy mapping(Anjolaoluwa)

Empathy Map Insights

-Users Say: They need one centralized location for resources; they're often short on time and funds.
-Users Think: They struggle to find relevant, credible information and wish for better efficiency and impact.
-Users Do: They visit multiple websites, spend too much time searching, and encounter barriers like subscriptions or event-based access.
-Users Feel: Frustrated, overwhelmed, and stressed due to scattered information, but remain motivated to support their communities.

Affinity Diagram Themes

-User Needs: Easy access to charity resources, centralized document database, no login requirements.
-Challenges: Difficulty locating Saskatchewan-specific resources, fragmented and unreliable data, limited strategy time and grant-writing support.
-Proposed Solution: A centralized charity resource hub with grant tools, webinars, and local content and resources.
-Design Considerations: Clear sitemaps, usability and accessibility focus, use of design thinking for fast iteration.
-Testing Plan: Beta testing with charities, user feedback loops, performance optimization, and ongoing content updates.

Discuss the initial & evolution of your USM/MVP (why is what you produced an MVP?)(Anjolaoluwa)

Initial MVP

The initial version of the platform includes:

-A basic WordPress site serving as a centralized hub.
-Categories for grants, regulations, volunteer opportunities, and operational guidance.
-Webinars, seminars, and tutorials accessible without login.
-Static pages with curated links and content grouped by topic.

This MVP was designed to validate key assumptions:

-That users would engage with a centralized system.
-Those charities would contribute content.
-That eliminating logins and streamlining access improves usability.

MVP Evolution.

Based on ongoing feedback and testing:

-Filtering and categorization were improved for easier access to specific information.
-The directory of organizations was expanded and made searchable.
-Additional webinar and event features were added to improve training accessibility.
-The design was enhanced using user stories, Figma prototypes, and site maps to ensure seamless navigation.
-A greater emphasis was placed on Saskatchewan-specific resources in response to user needs.

Why is this an MVP?

-Delivers the core functionality needed to solve key user pain points.
-Built to be usable, scalable, and adaptable with minimal complexity.
-Designed to test foundational assumptions before expanding into a full-featured platform.
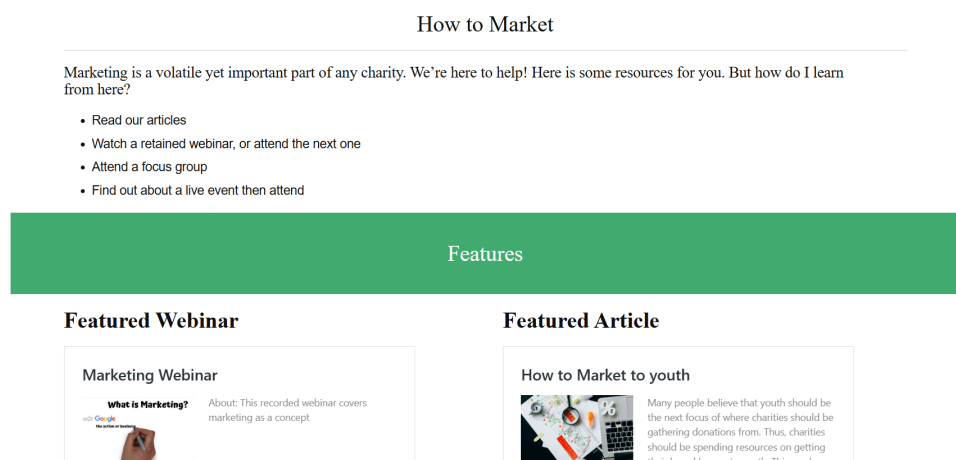-Prioritizes real user needs over excessive feature development, allowing for meaningful iteration

Summarize prototyping activities and usability evaluation findings (including feedback and comments gathered from the customer and your student colleagues and how the feedback/comments guided/changed and informed your design ideas and final solution. Ensure you discuss how your team linked design ideas to at least three topics discussed in class relating to people-centred design (affordances, gestalt, constraints, etc.). Be sure to include images of your prototypes and the final WordPress solution.

Summarize your final WordPress solution. Include screenshots of your final solution, linking back to prototyping activities, feedback/comments gathered, and lecture topics
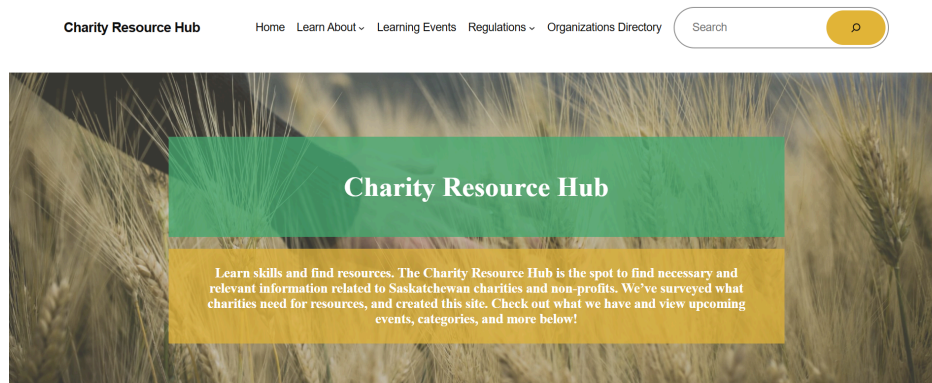
Our final wordpress solution is the Charity Resource Hub. This site was created with striving for a minimalist design. This helps to solve our customers' problem of not having enough time and needing to find resources more efficiently. Our users can more easily find the information they are looking for because we focus on creating a system that looks simple and only showing the necessary information, and eliminating the use of too many unnecessary photos and directing moving carousels.Throughout the process we got a lot of great feedback. For example on the

homepage we were told that the white text on the image we had was hard to read. So we added some coloured boxes in the back, which are the SSCF's colours and is meant to look like the Saskatchewan flag. Another change to our home page was to have an about page so that people can understand what the hub is about. The rest of our homepage contains links to important pages like granting, marketing, fundraising, and so on. It also displays featured events and articles. Our navigation bar has gone through many iterations as well. Some feedback we got in the earlier stages was that it was too busy and full. Unfortunately, we had fallen victim to the design mistake of the junk drawer menu. Our solution was to nest the learning topics under a title called learn about. The placement of this uses a cultural constraint because English reads left to right so people will see "learn about" first, which displays topics that most people will be coming to the site to view.

How to Market

Marketing is a volatile yet important part of any charity. We're here to help! Here is some resources for you. But how do I learn from here?

- Read our articles
- Watch a retained webinar, or attend the next one
- Attend a focus group
- Find out about a live event then attend

Features

Featured Webinar

Marketing Webinar

About: This recorded webinar covers marketing as a concept

Featured Article

How to Market to youth

Many people believe that youth should be the next focus of where charities should be gathering donations from. Thus, charities should be spending resources on getting their brand known to youth. This can be
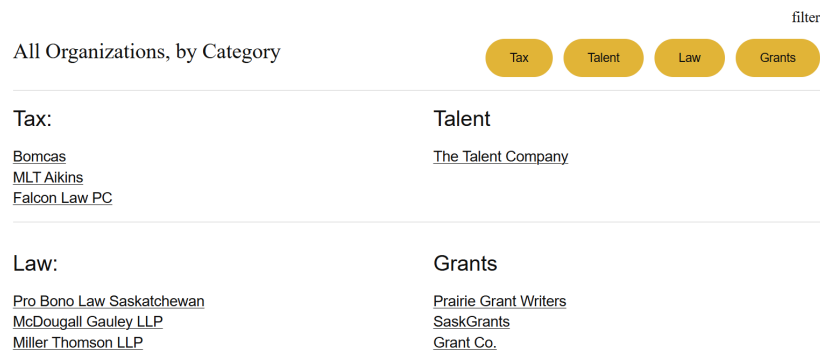
Our learn about pages utilise blog posts for the webinars, seminars, and some articles. These pages contain a description at the top so that users can know right away if that page is for them. This is followed by features, upcoming and past events, as well as external links to helpful resources.

Learning Events

Find information about future events or view past ones. Find events about important charity-related information through webinars, seminars, or focus groups.

Webinars

Webinars: Operations for Charities
This post is to educate charities on types of charities we have.

Responsible Governance
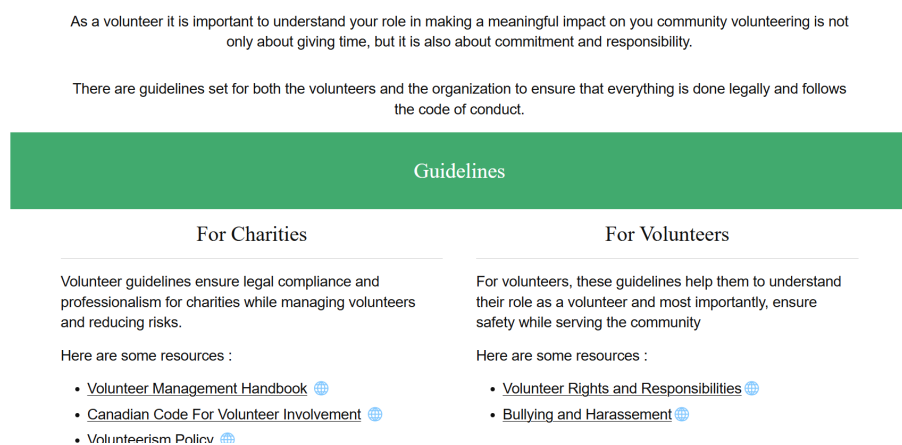This is an introduction of the role of the Board of Directors in the management of charities

The learning events are another important part of this site. In this project's primary requirements we were told that users should be able to view information about upcoming webinars, seminars, and focus groups. As well as recordings being available to be watched after the event has finished. We divided these into sections, and then used blog posts to host videos of missed events

and also for information about upcoming ones. Also, our customer has stated that they would like to know what a link is about before they click it. This is why the events have descriptions underneath the link itself.

filter

All Organizations, by Category

Tax | Talent | Law | Grants

Tax:

Bomcas
MLT Aikins
Falcon Law PC

Talent

The Talent Company

Law:

Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan
McDougall Gauley LLP
Miller Thomson LLP

Grants

Prairie Grant Writers
SaskGrants
Grant Co.

The Organization directory is meant to show lists of organizations that are trusted and recommended by the community. This page has a filter. The filter is important because it improves usability and efficiency. Users can click and find the correct information they need more easily and faster by eliminating having to look through other information that may not be relevant to them. In the image above there are the filter buttons in yellow. This yellow stands out against the background and is very clear to understand. We tried to make all of the buttons on our site this colour because this keeps things consistent. Users will remember the shape and colour of the button and know that wherever they see it, that it can be clicked.

As a volunteer it is important to understand your role in making a meaningful impact on you community volunteering is not only about giving time, but it is also about commitment and responsibility.

There are guidelines set for both the volunteers and the organization to ensure that everything is done legally and follows the code of conduct.

Guidelines

For Charities

Volunteer guidelines ensure legal compliance and professionalism for charities while managing volunteers and reducing risks.

Here are some resources :

- Volunteer Management Handbook 🌐
- Canadian Code For Volunteer Involvement 🌐
- Volunteerism Policy 🌐

For Volunteers

For volunteers, these guidelines help them to understand their role as a volunteer and most importantly, ensure safety while serving the community

Here are some resources :

- Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities 🌐
- Bullying and Harassement 🌐

We have a section on regulations, which has information about volunteer guidelines, fundraising policy, laws, and donation regulation. These pages are laid out in a way similar to many of our other pages to aim for consistency. They use underlined text which is using standards. People have most likely encountered that underlined text means something is clickable. The blue signifier also helps.

Reflections on project results

Overall our results were a functional platform, of which a resource hub for charities could be hosted, whilst being aesthetically pleasing and discoverable. Our site features pages for the main buckets, which may host and categorize external resources, webinars (both retained and future), articles, organizations, seminars, and focus groups.

Summarize how you felt about this project (likes/dislikes):

Overall we liked our page designs and felt that they were effective and solved our core problem. Personally, I did not like the wordpress post blocks, and felt I was limited by wordpress blocks in a lot of ways. Although we also did like wordpress' simplicity. Figma was a surprising gem for prototyping, we believe it was a high-functionality application of which we could construct very useful prototypes. Our team really enjoyed this experiential experience as well

Summarize what went well during the project:

While at first we had some failures and successes with discoverability, we believe we have now created an intuitive website for our north star. We credit these changes in the right direction to the meetings with Tim and Brooklyn, where we discovered issues we could rectify. An example speaking to this is our header's evolution:
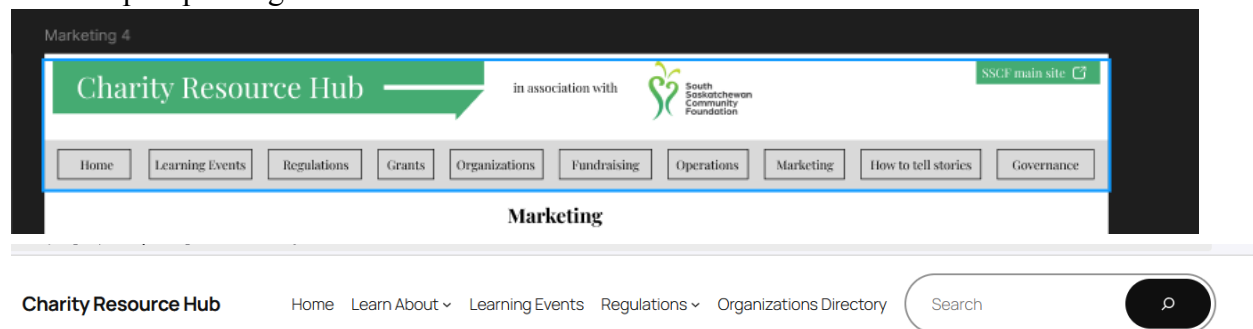
Originally, our header was not delightful, it was crowded, and the names of pages were also not 'intuitive', while our group referred to the pages as they were originally named in Figure 1, which made sense to us; we found that this did not make immediate sense to Tim and Brooklyn. We had fallen victim to the false-consensus effect, though we fixed it, as shown in Figure 2. This speaks to the effect that the check-ins played into our result, something which shows in almost all features of our resultant web-page. We also believed that our pages would be very understandable and discoverable. For example, our home page has many ways to navigate through the site from, with multiple 'call to actions' throughout. Also our simple design aided in understanding.

Summarize what did not go well during the project:

Something that did not go well was that we fragmented our work and found that sometimes designs are too divergent across pages that could be more similar. Making these pages more convergent satisfies a heuristic of recognition instead of recall as well as consistency. Adding to that, our pages were simple, and while simple is not necessarily bad, some pages could have used more complexity, and more interesting designs.

How successful was your team in translating prototypes into WordPress reality?

We found we kept the spirit, and main intentions of our prototyped designs, but that also the constraints of Wordpress altered how we executed our designs as we had to use Wordpress block system, which may not have agreed with our prototype design features. I would say that for the skills pages, we kept the design fairly well. Only a few real changes there, such as wordpress posts now being added there as events.
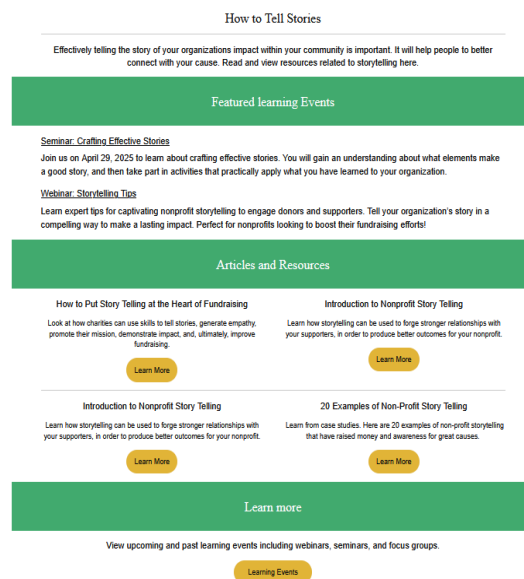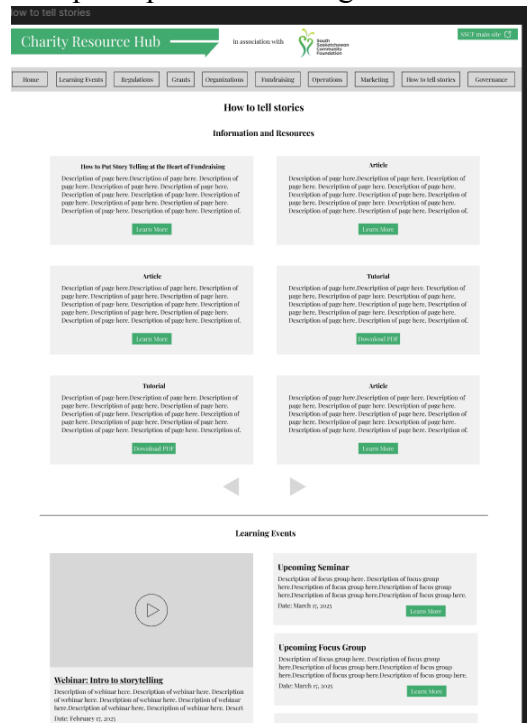
Did the people-centred design ideas discussed in lectures help/hinder your design explorations?

We believe that using People-Centered Design principles significantly helped our design. The activity system, akin to sprints from the Agile system, helped motivate us to finish our work timely. We think it would have gone differently if we only met at the very end. This also plays into the fast-feedback cycle; as we can generate ideas then have them evaluated or tweaked.

What would you do the same on future projects?

For something we would do the same: we would do the fast-feedback cycle similarly, as we found it effective for finding a solution to a particular problem, specifically while using empathy and People-Centered Design principles to brainstorm ideas to prototype. We found that this helped in finding solutions, and for changing what needs to change. Also, I found that considering constraints as a way of narrowing options is a smart strategy in design, so I would probably consider this in future designs.

What would you do differently on future projects?

For something we would do differently: we would probably try to start working earlier, as this hindered our designs as some features could have been smoothed out more. Additionally, we would try to ensure our designs are more consistent throughout, especially with which content goes where, as well as creating our own custom blocks, which could have made the post systems

more delightful and usable. Additionally, more communication would help a future project, as more communication could have resulted in a better experience. More meetings with charity workers could have also helped us to have an even better experience for them.
Summarize opportunities and design ideas for future work.

Future work should be on the 'gain skills' (How to market, how to tell stories) pages, but particularly new design elements could be created with consultation from experts on the respective subjects. Along with this, aesthetics could be made to look better, along with a more uniform design. Additionally, posts links from other pages could look nicer, however, they are decent enough for the scale of the site. Another thing that could be added is a tad more complexity, in the form of some more interesting blocks from plug-ins that could add some uniqueness to the site. As well, the site currently lacks accessibility settings, or language selection.

All in all, our result was a functional website custom-designed for the SSCF, which provides resources to charities. While not perfect, it is well-designed overall and solves the problem given while being discoverable and understandable; due to the people-centered design principles it was born of.

Appendix(Ishan)

You would be shocked to know that our website uses only **one** plugin.

Jetpack: Used to monitor site security and performance.

Being a resource hub, we expect a lot of traffic in our site mostly from our Northstar customers which are charities and other non-profit organizations. Jetpack offers statistics like the number of active visitors, total views, views per page and much more which is quite helpful in gathering insights. With the help of these insights we can figure out which pages are more helpful to the viewers and which ones need improvement and thus help us in improving site functionality and user delight.

The theme we used for our website was the default WordPress theme Twenty Twenty-Five. The idea behind this was to keep the design simple and easy to navigate while also being visually appealing. Additionally, having such a design improves sites performance by making it fast and responsive.