

# Introduction to Website Evaluation (WordPress and Wix)

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English Writing 1111

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**Taught by** Juniper Johnson & Chris McNulty



Northeastern University  
*NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks*

*Feel free to ask questions at any point  
during the presentation!*

# Workshop Agenda

- Understand the strengths of WordPress and Wix as website builders.
- Understand best practices in website building.
- Discuss the merits of a variety of Wix and WordPress website examples.
- Understand the creation of a website through wireframing.

Slides and handout available at:

<https://bit.ly/fa22-garrett-wordpress>



# Workshop Objectives: Wireframing and Evaluating Website Design

- Your goal is to learn how websites are designed through wireframing.
- Wireframing is like creating a blueprint for your website.
- DITI members will work alongside you to demo the creation of a wireframe.
- This wireframe will serve as a roadmap and help you evaluate website design and functionality. Wireframing will remain a useful skill for making professional websites or publishing other public-facing materials in the future



# What are WordPress and Wix?

- WordPress and Wix are professional **website-building tools** that allow you to build your own website
- They provide a free **domain name** with “WordPress” or “wixsite” in the URL, but both have paid versions
- They both support **themes** (both), **widgets** (WordPress), and **apps** (Wix) to customize your website



# Why choose WordPress?



- Better for websites with a blog component (features for tagging and categorizing).
- Often used for academic websites.
- Offers template-based design.
  - You can change your theme at any time, regardless of when the site was created.
- Better longevity.



# WordPress Examples

Look through websites to see how Northeastern students use WordPress to present their professional identities.

- <https://madisonwaldron.WordPress.com/>
- <https://jordanwlai.WordPress.com/>

Professional examples of WordPress sites include:

- <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/nulab/>
- <https://dsg.northeastern.edu/>



# Website Components to Analyze

- **Navigation Menu:** How clear is it? How easy is it to use on each page?
- **Design choices and accessibility:** Is the site easy to read and look at?
- **Audience and user experience:** How well-tailored is the site to meet the needs of its audience?
- **Widgets and buttons:** Do they make sense on the site?
- **Mobile site:** Compare the site on your phone vs. your computer.
- **Communicating the purpose of the site:** Can you tell why this site was created?
- **Do all the hyperlinks actually work?** What about the buttons?

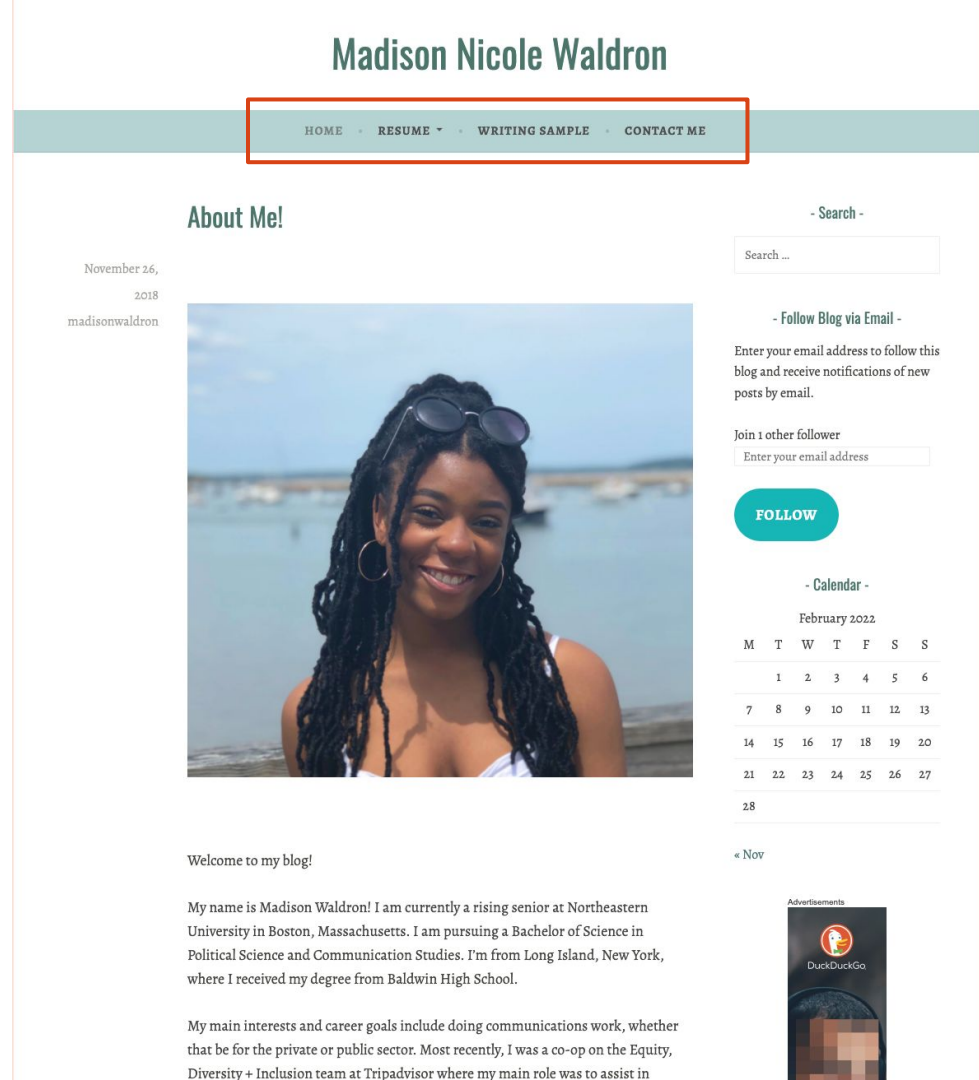


# Example: Student Website

- Objective: student portfolio for professional use.
- Navigation: Pages/subpages [parent-child page], Resume, Writing Sample, Contact.
- Media: student photo.
- Design: Search, Calendar, Follow Blog widgets.



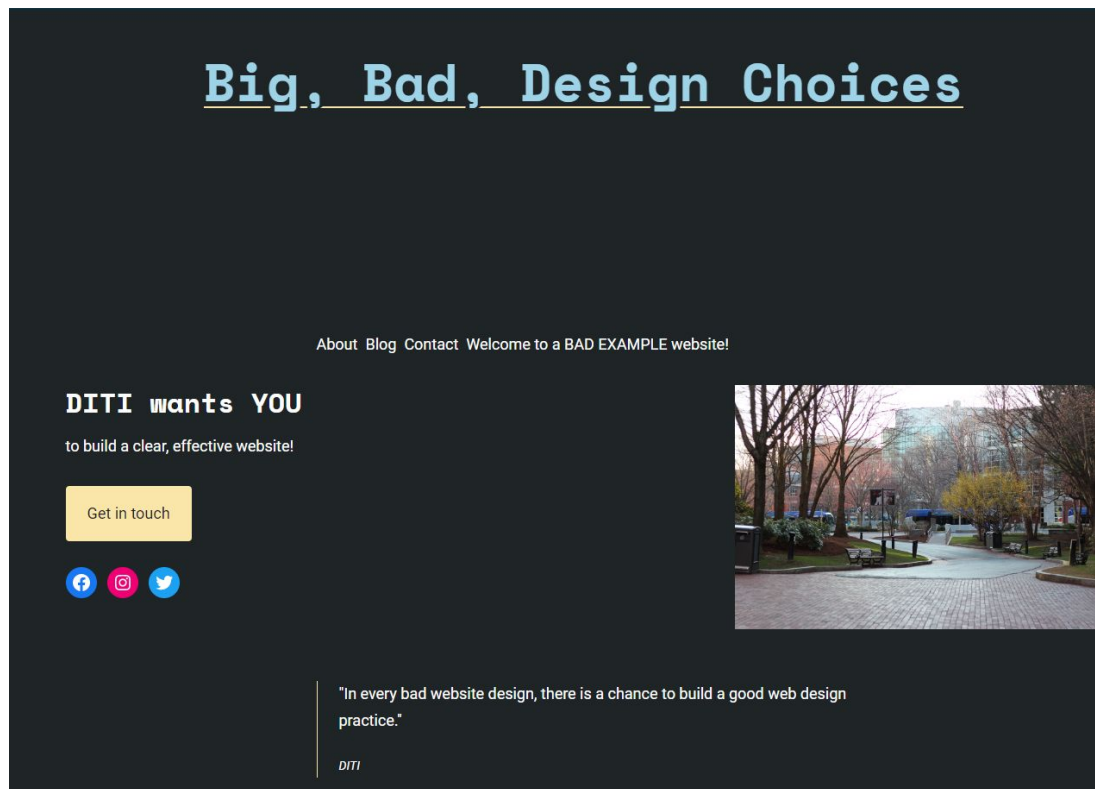
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# Example: Bad Design Website

- Objective: informal website to show bad design.
- Navigation: pages/subpages.
- Media: photo.
- Design: font size and color, social media widgets, link functionality.



# Why choose Wix?

- Often used for businesses and artistic websites; Wix sites often look more visually polished.
- Customizable design that is less template-bound.
  - You cannot change your theme on an existing site.
- AI Design feature—recommends features to you.



# Wix Examples

Look through websites to see how Northeastern students use Wix to present their professional identities.

- <https://bellama9.wixsite.com/website>
- <https://johnsonmaryb.wixsite.com/firstyearwriting2020>

Professional examples of Wix sites include:

- <https://www.helenakruger.com/>
- <https://www.laurabaross.com/>



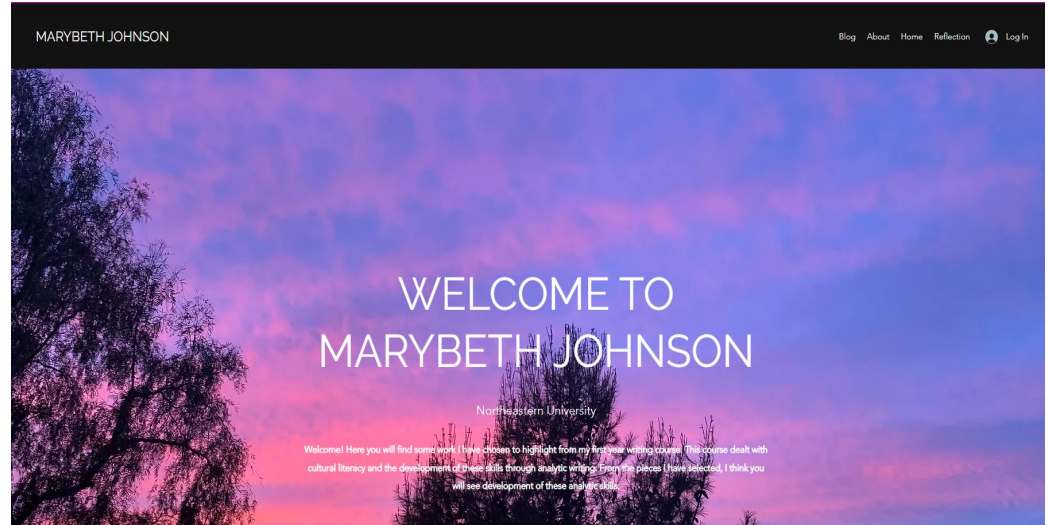
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# Example: Student Website on Wix

- Objective: student website for professional use.
- Navigation:  
Pages/subpages  
[parent-child page], Blog, About, Reflection
- Media: background image
- Design: Home page



# Planning a website



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*Feel free to ask questions at any point  
during the presentation!*

# Website Building Vocabulary

- **Pages:** these are the main areas of your website that your audience will be able to navigate in your site's menu.
- **Domain:** your domain name is the unique URL that leads to your website.
- **Design:** the aesthetic choices for your website, including colors, font, embedded media content, and more.
- **Navigation:** the way a user moves through your website using menus, buttons, and links.
- **Menus:** the collection of hyperlinked pages used to navigate through a website. Menus are usually located at the top of a website or on the left or right side of the webpage.



# Questions to Consider

- *Who* is this site for?
- *Why* would your identified audience(s) visit your site?
- *How* will they find what they need, and navigate around?





# Questions to Consider

- What is the **purpose** of this site?
  - How can you communicate this clearly in the site's content and design?
- **Can *everyone* use your site effectively?** Is it accessible on mobile devices, and to people with disabilities?
- How can you make **smart design choices** to enhance the site's:
  - Look
  - Navigability
  - Functionality
  - Accessibility



# Wireframing: Planning a Website

- Before most people create websites, they create **wireframes**. Wireframes are rough outlines for the design and placement of a website's content. They also help us envision the user experience of our site. Some questions to consider as you make a wireframe are:
  - What is the **purpose** of this site?
  - What are the **essential components** I need to get this point across?
  - Who is my **audience**?
  - What **site features** will best support my goals and audience?
  - How can I make my site **easy to use**?
  - How can users **search specific information** or find resources on the website?
- Wireframing tools:
  - MockFlow: <https://www.mockflow.com/>
  - Wireframe CC: <https://wireframe.cc/>



# Wireframe Examples:

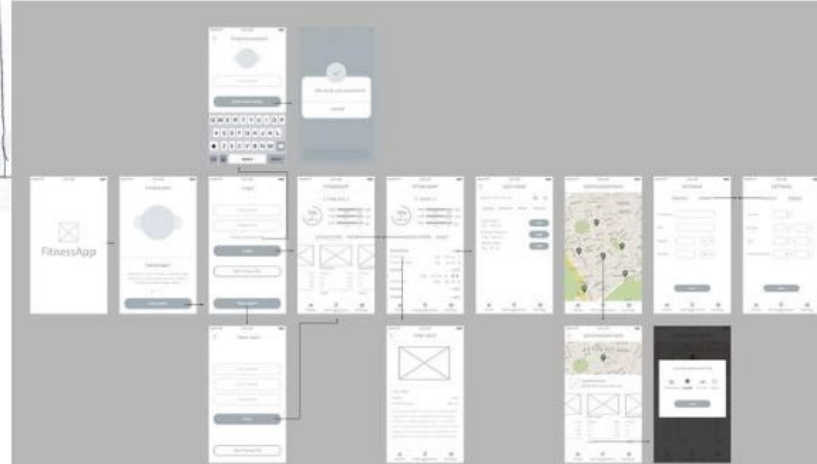
Wireframes help us plan and anticipate:

- **The design**
  - the *aesthetic choices* (colors, font, etc.)
- **Layout of individual pages**
- **Site navigation**
  - *The menu organization and hierarchy*
- **User experience**



Wireframe examples sourced from [Professor Julia Flanders](#), Northeastern University; slidedeck: "Wireframing and Project Design Processes"

**Both fine!**



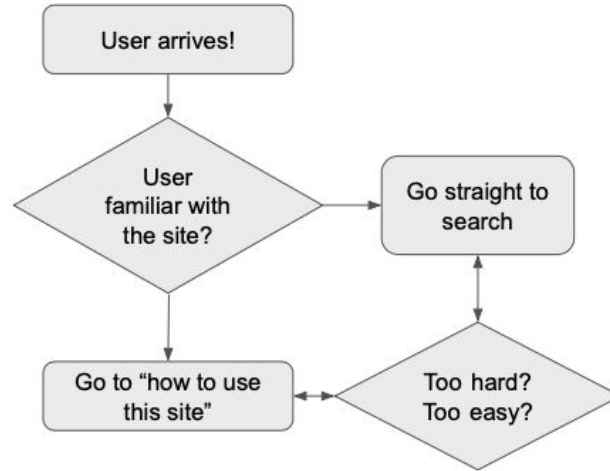
# Interpreting Wireframes

## Let's Discuss!

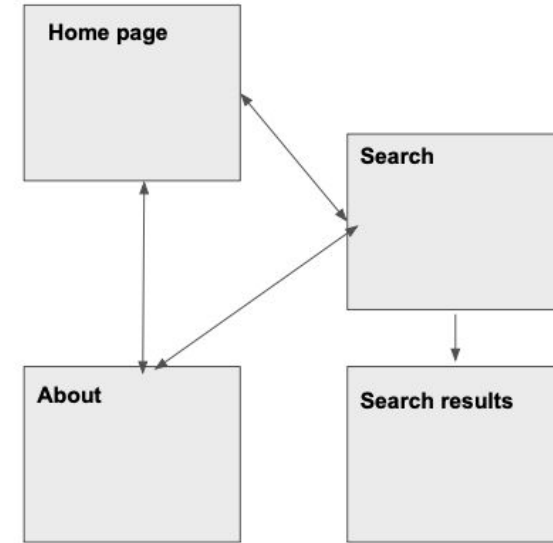
Take a look at the image.

- What's going on here?
- How do these two illustrations relate to one another?
- What do they have to do with design, usability, and user experience?

Flowchart



Wireframe



Wireframe examples sourced from [Professor Julia Flanders](#), Northeastern University; slidedeck: "Wireframing and Project Design Processes"



# Activity: Create a wireframe

- Pull out a sheet of paper and pen/pencil.
- Take **five minutes** to sketch out a wireframe. Where possible, think about how you imagine users moving through your site. Draw arrows or other indicators.
- Try to include the following elements in your wireframe:
  - Multiple pages
  - Navigation
  - Menus
  - Page layouts (content, images, etc.)



# Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact DITI at [nulab.info@gmail.com](mailto:nulab.info@gmail.com)

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We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here: <https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>

**This module was developed by DITI Fellows:** Dipa Desai, Chris McNulty, Anna Zhang, Colleen Nugent, Claire Tratnyek, Tieanna Graphenreed, Talia Brenner

*A special thanks to Professor Julia Flanders for the wireframe examples used in this presentation.*

Slides and handouts available at: <https://bit.ly/fa22-garrett-wordpress>

