Information Architecture Design Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Online Learning Association (OLA) is launching a redesign of the company website (onlinelearningassociation.com). OLA's mission is to provide learning, resources, networking, and professional development to online learning professionals. The up-to-date resources and education developed for OLA membership and constituents creates a great deal of content on the OLA website.

OLA understands the value of human-centered design and maintainable, scalable information systems, and so commissioned this report. The essential determinations of this report include:

- **Information Environment:** Analysis of the current OLA business context and needs, paired with a survey of the website's content, primary user groups, and sample user personas.
- **Research Plan:** A detailed outline of the proposed research plan for the OLA website redesign. Iterative research should be completed in tandem with design and development. Suggested research methods are reviewed.
- **Competitive Analysis:** Review of the information architecture supporting the eLearning Guild website, a primary competitor to OLA. Information organization, labeling, navigation, and search functionality are reviewed to identify pain points.
- **Information Architecture Design:** Following the competitive analysis, opportunities for OLA to provide superior information architecture are identified across organization, labeling, navigation and search. A proposed sitemap and wireframes are included.

This report represents the first essential step toward the redesign of the OLA website. This document, along with the research it includes and proposes, will provide guidance to key stakeholders, designers, developers, and other team members throughout the website redesign process.

INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Website Business Context

The redesign of the Online Learning Association (OLA) website (onlinelearningassociation.com) is essential to the support of OLA's mission to provide learning, resources, networking, and professional development to online learning professionals. Developing and providing up-to-date resources and education creates a great deal of content on the OLA website.

Website Content

Most users arrive at the OLA website seeking information about a specific area of online learning, such as responsive design, AR/VR/immersive learning, education and development leadership, learning theories, and many more. To support different users with diverse preferences, backgrounds, and experience, OLA shares resources in many different types; blog posts, white papers, research reports, event descriptions, podcasts, conference recordings, webcasts, and videos. Although written posts and webpages dominate due to their relative ease-of-development, media recordings (e.g., webcasts, video, etc.) receive a large amount of traffic and rank highly in user surveys. These myriad content types are comprised of HTML pages, PDF documents, JPEGs, PNGs, MP4s, and MP3s. Accurately cataloguing the current array will allow clear direction in the bottom-up portion of the site redesign.

Website Users

Although OLA has a strong historic understanding of its users, user models can help the IA team identify and understand not only who the users are, but what their specific goals and tasks are when using the OLA website. This specificity can drive stronger holistic design and decision-making throughout the upcoming design process.

Primary User Groups

- Instructional Designer
- Learning Technologist
- Education Manager
- L&D Executive

Secondary User Groups

- Teacher
- Education Consultant

User Persona 1

Photograph used under [CC BY 2.0](#) from [#WOCinTech](#)

Melissa Lee, Learning Technologist	
32, Chicago, IL	
Online Learning Technologist at the American Dental Association (ADA)	
Technical knowledge: proficient web user, familiar with database management and metadata	
Instructional design knowledge: familiar with basics of instructional design theory, modern web design standards	
Personal sketch: Melissa previously worked in web development, but transitioned to become a learning technologist when recruited by ADA. She is often frustrated by how learning technologies seem to lag behind modern technology and design standards, and wants to bring her employer up to speed on the latest developments.	

Goals:
- Follow topics on the OLA blog relevant to learning technology
- Find new research on learning technology and analytics
- Explore online courses to advance her instructional design and leadership skills
- Discover new trends and tools in learning technology
- Explore OLA's upcoming *LearnTech* conference
- Find recordings of past *LearnTech* sessions

User Persona 2

	Jordan Wright, Teacher
Photograph used under CC BY 2.0 from #WOCinTech	41, Olympia, WA
	Social Science Teacher at Olympia High School
	Technical knowledge: proficient web user, browse-dominant
	Instructional design knowledge: received advanced degree in Education, nearly 20 years of experience teaching teens age 14-18.
	Personal sketch: Jordan may not be a tech-head himself, but he knows that technology is driving the future. He is concerned that technical literacy is not being taught in his school, and he wants to bring technology into the classroom to help familiarize his students with technology outside of Facebook and smartphones. He'd also like to incorporate technology in his Contemporary Studies class when covering topics like cybersecurity.

Goals:
- Find guide(s) on bringing technology into the classroom
- Explore best practices for blended learning
- Research free LMS options
- Find case studies on how others have started blended learning programs
- Explore information on digital games and learning
- Discover what others have said about their experiences with different tools and systems

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH PLAN

Essential to the redesign of the Online Learning Association (OLA) website, onlinelearningassociation.com, will be developing an information architecture (IA) research plan. This section will review selected research techniques, information environment and user strategy, and the bottom-up website organization strategy.

Investing in research at the beginning of the redesign process should save time during the design and implementation of the website, and subsequently this investment upfront should reduce the overall expenditure on the project.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviewing the key stakeholders in the project allows the IA team to pinpoint the business requirements of the redesign. By meeting with OLA board members, managers, and key staff, the IA team will be able to manage priorities and expectations for the website redesign as well as understand OLA's vision for the new site.

Content Inventory

When the OLA website was originally designed, the organization had a limited amount of content within a fairly narrow scope. Over the years, more content has been added in new subject, different formats, and for different audiences. A content inventory is necessary to understand the full scope of the OLA's current content and to predict where content will grow in the future.

A content inventory will record every web page and content item within the OLA website into an Excel spreadsheet. This process will be time-consuming, however it is vital to developing a robust metadata schema and solid architectural framework for the OLA website to grow on. Mapping the true depth, breadth, and type of content on the website helps define the scope of the project and develop a strong architecture.

Card Sorting

One of the most efficient and powerful user research methods, card sorting allows the IA team to match taxonomy, labels, and navigation elements to users' mental models. Participants will be recruited for brief, informal sessions. Cards are each labelled with a piece of content or a function, and participants sort the cards into groups that make sense to them. Card sorting reveals connections and assumptions that the development team is often unaware of, and can illuminate both missing elements and opportunities for improvement. Card sorting may be either open, where participants write their own labels for categories they create, or closed, where they

must match cards into predefined categories. The former is most useful early in the research process, and the latter is helpful once categories have been more firmly defined.

Usability Testing

Usability testing encompasses more than just running a few volunteers through some stilted directions. Usability testing must encompass learnability, findability, accessibility, and utility. This is the most important user research technique; the IA team is able to actively observe users' reactions and pain points, and measure their success completing common, predefined website tasks. Testing may range from formal to informal, but should be conducted regularly throughout the design process.

Testing participants should represent real users, particularly as defined by user groups and personas later in this document. They will be asked to complete real tasks on the OLA website, observed and recorded. The IA team will collect both quantitative data (completion rates, times, clicks, errors, etc) and qualitative data (questions, reactions, responses) to analyze. The team will be able to identify, strategize, and prioritize the problems that appear in testing, respond to them, and iterate a new design.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Organization Systems

Top-Down Structure

The eLearning Guild employs an ambiguous top-down structure, integrated with a hypertext structure. The primary top-down structure uses a task/topic hybrid organization scheme. A site map is available, although it does omit a few pages of the site. Functionally, top-level categories lead to the same page as their first child, however eLearning Guild has chosen to maintain the parent-child organization, perhaps in part to compensate for the shallow nature of certain sections.

Note: The site map, and this report, do not include the taxonomy of the conference sites (Learning Solutions, Realities360, and DevLearn) which are hosted on the same domain. Each of these is constructed as full-fledged websites in their own right, and including their full taxonomy would require a much deeper list.

Taxonomy

Items in green followed by an arrow (➔) represent part of the integrated hypertext structure. These categories defined as child content in the top-down hierarchy actually lead to the same "Curated Content" page with a filter pre-applied for the topic or category chosen. It is worth noting that the top-down taxonomy separates these items as different content in different categories, but the hypertext structure in fact redirects to the singular mega-index of content.

- Home
- Join
    - Membership Overview
    - Pro Package
    - Plus Package
    - Premium Package
    - Group Discounts
- Content
    - Learning Solutions Magazine
        - About Learning Solutions Magazine
        - Learning Solutions Magazine Library ➔
        - Call for Writers
            - Types of Articles
            - Submitting Queries
    - Research Library

- - - ■ Spotlights
    - ■ Webinars
    - ■ Online Events Archive ➜
  - ○ Calendar
- Jobs
  - ○ Job Board
    - ■ Overview
    - ■ View Jobs
    - ■ View Resumes
    - ■ Post Jobs *(inaccessible without login)*
    - ■ Post Resumes *(inaccessible without login)*
  - ○ Salary Calculator
- About The Guild
  - ○ About the Guild
  - ○ Blog
  - ○ Getting Started in eLearning
  - ○ About Guild Members
  - ○ About Guild Management
  - ○ Social Networking
  - ○ Guild Masters
  - ○ Sponsors
  - ○ Advertise & Exhibit
  - ○ College Program
  - ○ Contact
  - ○ Terms of Use
  - ○ Logo Usage Policy
- Contact
- Request Info
- Site Map

In reviewing the top-down taxonomy, it is fairly clear that the integration of the nonlinear hypertext structure creates the opportunity for confusion. For instance, users may click into one category's "Library" or "Archive" and decide it isn't what they want. If that user browses to another category's Library and the same page loads, albeit with different filtered content, they may become confused. Understandability problems are very likely to ensue.

It's easy to notice in the taxonomy that the top-down taxonomy is polyhierarchical. "Contact" exists as both a top-level and a child of "About the Guild." "Conference Archive" and "Online Events Archive" exist inside both "Content" and "Events" (both lead to the "Curated Content" page). While the duplication of "Contact" is unlikely to cause any issues, the repetition of the

Conference and Online Events Archives is almost guaranteed to cause understandability issues. Presumably, these were included under Content because they link back to the "Curated Content" page, as do all other Libraries/Archives/Directories, and are included under Events in order to improve findability for that content - users seeking a past recording from a live event may not look under "Content." However, users who see the labels in both categories may become confused, a major understandability issue.

Overall, utilizing a top-down structure as the primary organizational principle for the website makes sense; it allows the user to quickly get a sense of the complex range of content and services provided by the eLearning Guild. Despite this, the site as-is features a number of potential understandability issues.

Bottom-Up Structure

The eLearning Guild website itself is not database-driven. The large "Curated Content" section does not seem to be built on a database either, although it could be built on one without any obvious clues. Instead, it seems to be and index and filter system with limited options. The Jobs section appears to use the same system – it does not feature an "advanced search" or other options typically seen on job searches, such as location, part-/full-time, etc. Both the Jobs and Content section could potentially benefit from a database allowing users more control, fielded searching, and filtering.

Website Labeling Systems

The eLearning Guild website contains all varieties of labels, each of which will be reviewed for internal consistency and potential issues for website users.

Contextual Links

Most websites include contextual links, and eLearning Guild relies on these links as well. Most pages feature hypertext links out to other pages, presumably in attempts to bolster SEO and push users to key areas of the site. There are also occasional examples of contextual links to pages not included in the site's navigation (e.g., "Types of Articles" and "Submitting Queries" are only accessible through contextual links on the "Call for Writers" page). The contextual labels appear to have been developed ad-hoc, as they lack internal consistency on a number of fronts.

Below to the left, contextual links are included both as text in body sentences, lowercase. Later on the same page, contextual links appear as list items separated by pipes, capitalized. On another page (right) contextual links are used almost as a sub-menu unique to the page, as capitalized list items. These comprise internal inconsistencies across style, presentation, and syntax. It is difficult to discuss granularity, comprehensiveness, and audience when these

contextual links are used in such an ad hoc manner, but suffice to say those aspects are not inherently or systematically problematic.

Figure 1, left: eLearning Guild. *Join the Guild.* Retrieved February 18, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/content/18/join-the-guild. Screenshot by author.

Figure 2, right: eLearning Guild. *Write for Learning Solutions Magazine.* Retrieved February 18, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/content/44/learning-solutions-magazine-call-for-writers/. Screenshot by author.

Headings

The headings of the eLearning Guild site are also subject to stylistic and syntactical inconsistency. A quick sampling of of on-page h1 headers reveals the following: "About Guild Research," "Plus Package," "Membership is FREE!" and "Exploring Topics Shaping our Industry." The clear inconsistencies between verb/noun structure and capitalization are obvious with only a small (random!) sample.

Aside from those issues with style and syntax, the labels are presented consistently and have no outstanding issues with granularity, comprehensiveness, or audience.

Icons

The eLearning Guild website makes some use of icons, but that use is strikingly inconsistent. Below, you will see that some, but not all, icons accompany textual labels. Some, but not all, icons are flat colors (the RSS Feed icon features a gradient square). Some, but not all icons are enclosed in boxes as part of the icon. In fact, although these labels are very inconsistent, it is unlikely that inconsistency will cause any major usability issues for site user. However, that does not exclude the fact that the icon system could be improved.

Figure 3: Icons from the home page of the eLearning Guild.. Retrieved February 18, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/. Screenshot by author.

Navigation System Labels

Most of the navigation system labels on the eLearning Guild website are straightforward and familiar; at the top level we see "Search," "Login," "Site Map," and "About the Guild," which are all easily understandable. They are accompanied by the verb-based labels "Join," "Contact," and "Request Info." Other than those three, the navigation labels are consistently noun-based. Although this is a syntax inconsistency, it is unlikely to cause any user issues. Aside from that, the navigation labels are consistent in style, presentation, granularity, and comprehensiveness. However, there is not strong consistency or clarity in terms of audience.

Much more likely to cause understandability and findability problems are the labels "Content" and "Events." There is some ambiguity here, these terms may not be clear to the audience. The child categories of "Content" are especially fertile ground for confusion. Users are unlikely to know or understand the difference between "Learning Solutions Magazine" articles and "Guild Publications;" between "Conference Archive" and "DemoFest Archive;" between "Product Directory" and "Supplier Directory." Moreover, the distinction between a "Library," "Archive," and "Directory" is unclear. While these terms undoubtedly have clear meaning to internal stakeholders, many users are unlikely to understand the jargon.

Index Terms

Index terms appear prominently in the "Curated Content" page, previously discussed in the Organization section. Top-down defined categories all direct users to this page, where all of the website's content (articles, webcasts, etc.) are indexed and filtered. The first section of labels, identified by the header "Sources," match the problematic navigation system labels discussed above (e.g., Conference Archive, Product Directory, etc.,) however each of these labels is accompanied by a small icon ( ) which presents a clickable tooltip explaining the label's meaning. Unfortunately, this icon is a poor substitute for simply creating a more audience-friendly labeling system. Many users will never click the icons, and users on mobile or tablet screens are denied the icons and tooltips entirely. The second section is identified by the header "Topics," and offers a somewhat more understandable array of labels to filter content (e.g., "Graphic Design," "Mobile Learning," etc..)

At first glance, these two sections are the only two options available, as they are displayed prominently on the left-hand side. However, more index terms are hidden in a dropdown menu under the header label "Filtered Content," allowing users to select the content type from "Case Studies," "Guild White Papers," "Industry Perspectives," "Research Reports," and "Resources." Unfortunately, this appears to be another failure in audience, as the meaning of "Resources" and "Industry Perspectives" (as opposed to other options) is entirely unclear. Other potential options (e.g. webcast, podcast, blog post, etc.) appear to be absent.

Overall, the index labels in the "Curated Content" section, which houses all of the content the eLearning Guild creates and disseminates, are vitally inconsistent in their understanding of audience and appear to be lacking in comprehensiveness. Across breakpoints/devices, there is also inconsistency in presentation (the tooltip icons). Although style, syntax, and granularity are consistent, their success is entirely overshadowed by the confusion sown by other inconsistencies.

Organization & Labeling Review

The labeling systems on the eLearning Guild website suffer from a clear lack of planning and guidelines. Many labels don't differentiate themselves, are jargon-y, and don't make a good impression. They are likely to cause users findability and understandability issues, resulting in a much longer path of discovery and a more complicated search/browse path for users. Paired with the unusual polyhierarchical top-down organization system, this seems to be a system built by internal stakeholders with little or no user testing, feedback, or information architecture from outside stakeholders.

## Website Navigation Systems and Conventions

Embedded Navigation: Global

The eLearning Guild website features consistent global navigation across content (except for subsites, discussed below). The global navigation at the top of the page includes many of the navigation conventions covered by Krug (2014): a site logo which also acts as a home button, assorted utilities, the primary navigation, and a search bar. Breadcrumbs and indicators are absent. The primary navigation is basically the same as the top level of the site taxonomy, although the utility pages (e.g. "About the Guild") exist at the same hierarchical level.

Figure 4: global navigation at the top of page. eLearning Guild. Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/. Screenshot and notation by author.

Some of the utilities are combined with the primary navigation in smaller viewports (Figures 2 & 3), and have the same treatment in the drop-down menu, making the links indistinguishable. One could even argue that these links (About the Guild, Contact, Info, and Site Map) are being treated as primary navigation. However, the nature of this content and the treatment of these links on the

desktop view strongly suggests they are acting as utilities. It seems more likely, especially given other design elements on the site, that the designers worked "desktop-first" and the treatment of the utility links in the mobile drop-down was made identical for convenience.
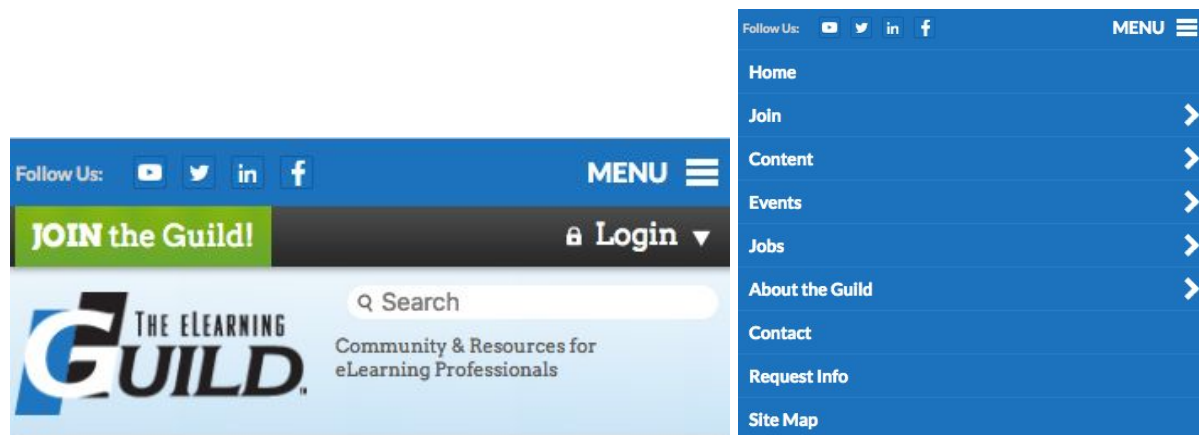
FIgures 5 & 6: responsive mobile views of top-page global navigation. eLearning Guild. Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/. Screenshot by author.

The top of page is not the only area of the site to feature global navigation elements. The eLearning Guild site has a consistent footer and, unusually, a consistent sidebar. Located on the right-hand side of the page, this sidebar contains advertisements, a calendar of events, and postings from the Jobs section of the site. Although sidebars, if present, typically contain local navigation elements, this site maintains a consistent, global sidebar on its pages.

FIgure 7, right: right-hand sidebar global elements. eLearning Guild. Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/. Screenshot by author.

Embedded Navigation: Local

Surprisingly, the eLearning Guild site features no local navigation except for page titles. Breadcrumbs and "You Are Here' indicators are conspicuously absent.
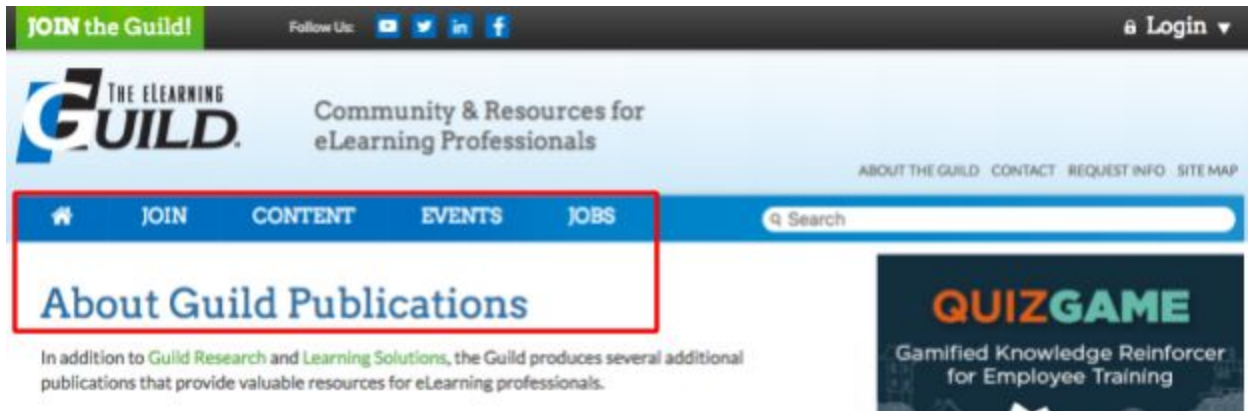
Figure 8: eLearning Guild. *About Guild Publications.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from
https://www.elearningguild.com/content/23/about-guild-publications. Screenshot and by author.

However, each of the Guild's conferences has a subsite hosted on the elearningguild.com
domain. These subsites have local navigation that replaces most of the global navigation: each
subsite substitutes new primary navigation, part of the utilities, the search bar, and the footer
navigation. They also replace the eLearning Guild site logo with a conference site logo. Although
these subsites will not be considered any further since they rely on different architecture and
design than the primary eLearning Guild site, the change in navigation is worth noting.
Technically this is local navigation for the greater elearningguild.com web domain, yet the local
navigation almost entirely replaces the (otherwise) global navigation. This behaviour is similar to
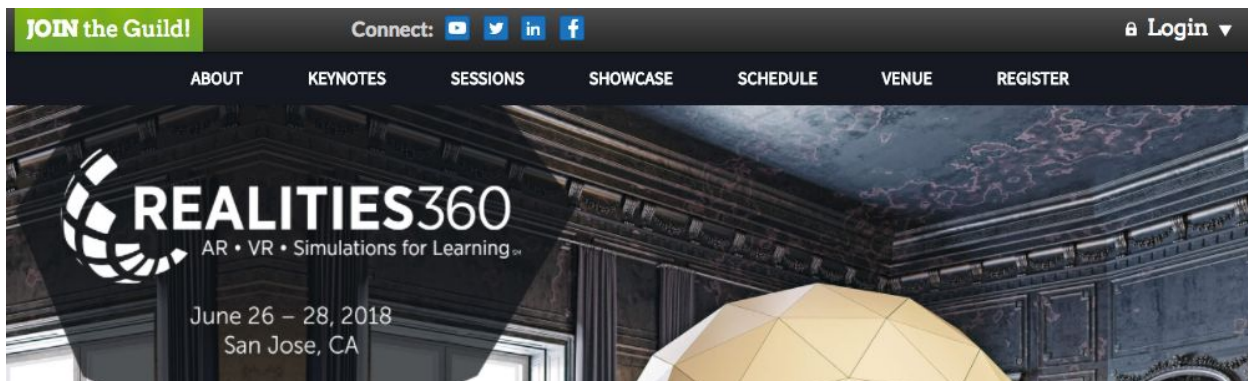the GE subsites referenced by Rosenfeld, Morville, and Arango (p. 187-189).

FIgure 9, above: eLearning Guild. *Realities360.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from
https://www.elearningguild.com/realities360/content/5330/2018-realities-conference--home/. Screenshot by author.
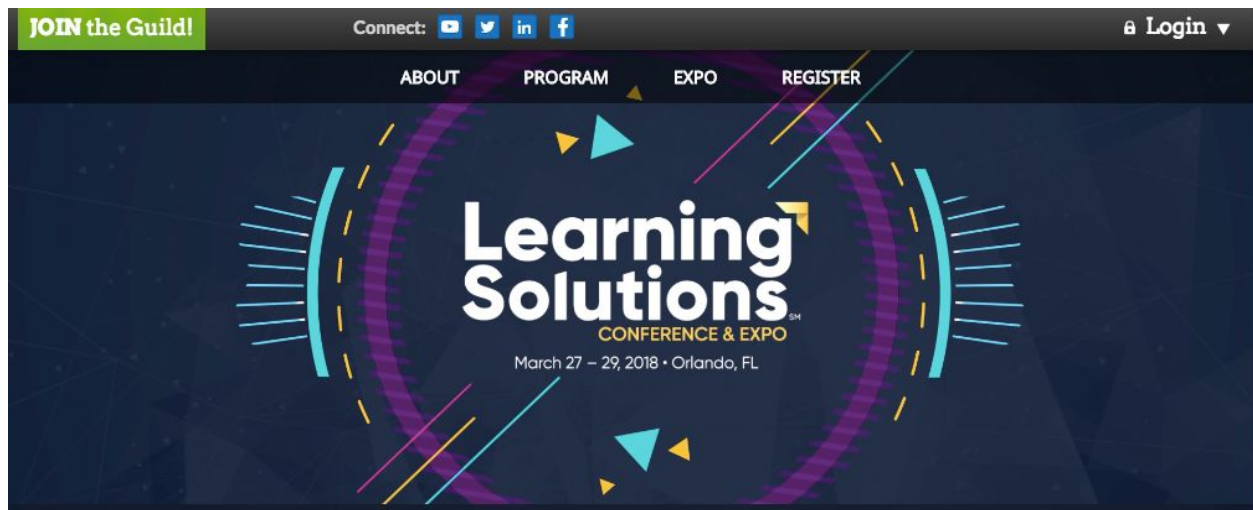
Figure 10, above: eLearning Guild. *About Guild Publications.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/lscon/content/5200/learning-solutions-2018-conference--expo--home/. Screenshot by author.

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Figure 11, above: eLearning Guild. *DevLearn.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/content/5217/devlearn-2018-conference--expo/. Screenshot by author.

Other Navigation

The eLearning Guild website makes regular use of contextual navigation links. These links are not treated consistently (as previously discussed in the labelling section) and consequently some may be missed or ignored as users cannot tell where they may appear (Rosenfeld, Morville, & Arango, 2015, p. 189).

The eLearning Guild site also includes common supplemental navigation elements: a site map and a search function. The site map is fairly helpful, although most of the content included in the map is also available in the dropdown sub-menus of the site's primary navigation (aka the secondary navigation). The search function will be covered in the next section.

Navigation Review

Overall, the eLearning Guild website contains most of the navigation elements and conventions users expect. However, the glaring omission of local navigation, especially the on-page elements

of "You Are Here" indicators and breadcrumbs, present serious usability concerns. This critical lack of context is likely to leave users lost. This can only complicate the already confusing taxonomy covered in the previous analysis, which may already present understandability and findability issues.

Website Search Functionality

The eLearning Guild site presents a simple search as part of its global navigation. The search bar is present and consistent on every page except subsites (which replace most of the global navigation, see above).

The site's search function *does* include the conference subsites, but the label allowing users to select each subsite is not well-defined: labels reading "Content Library" and "Events" may not communicate clearly to users who are unfamiliar with the Guild's content. Somewhat more helpfully, the search also offers search zones of Source and Topic.
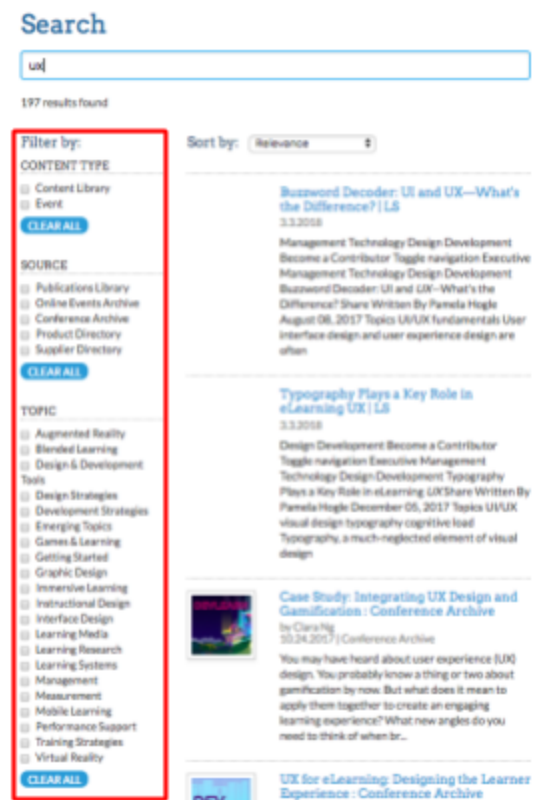
Figure 12: the search zones on eLearning Guild. *Search.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/search/. Screenshot and notation by author.

Search results include the representational components of title, date of publication, author, and source. Descriptive components include summaries and keywords. However, not all content items have all component information included or displayed. For instance, in Figure 10 below, items display different components. The top result displays a title, a date, and keywords.

However, buried in the keywords is information on an author and an earlier date. The lower result boxed in red displays a title, as well as subheads for the author, date, and source. Instead of keywords, the result displays the beginning of the article.
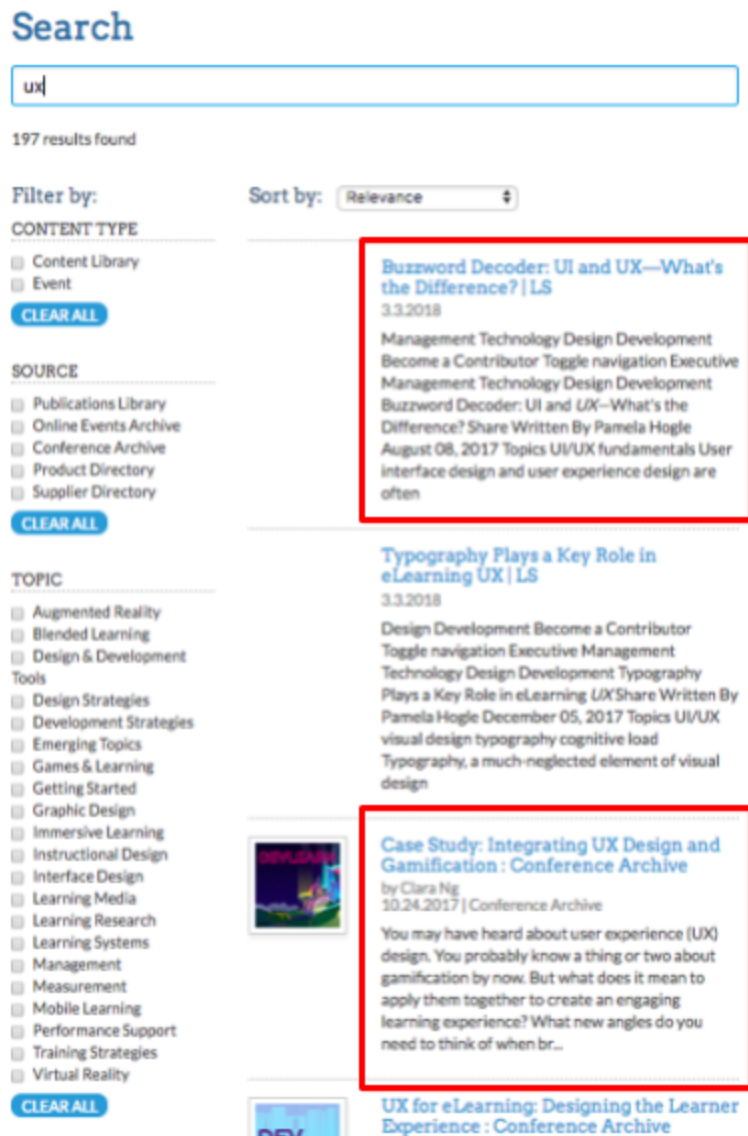

Figure 13: the search results on eLearning Guild. *Search.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/search/. Screenshot and notation by author.

The search does not include advanced search functionality, although it does support revision via search zones (see above). After a search, results are initially ranked by relevance. Sort order options include Date (Oldest to Newest, Newest to Oldest) and Alphabetical (A-Z, Z-A). The search query is repeated in the results page. When results are filtered, it is easy to see where results came from. However, the initial search does not indicate that "all" zones are being searched. The results page does a fair job of explaining what happened to the user; it is easy to see the sort order setting and the number of results retrieved. However, if zero results are retrieved, the search does not offer further help.
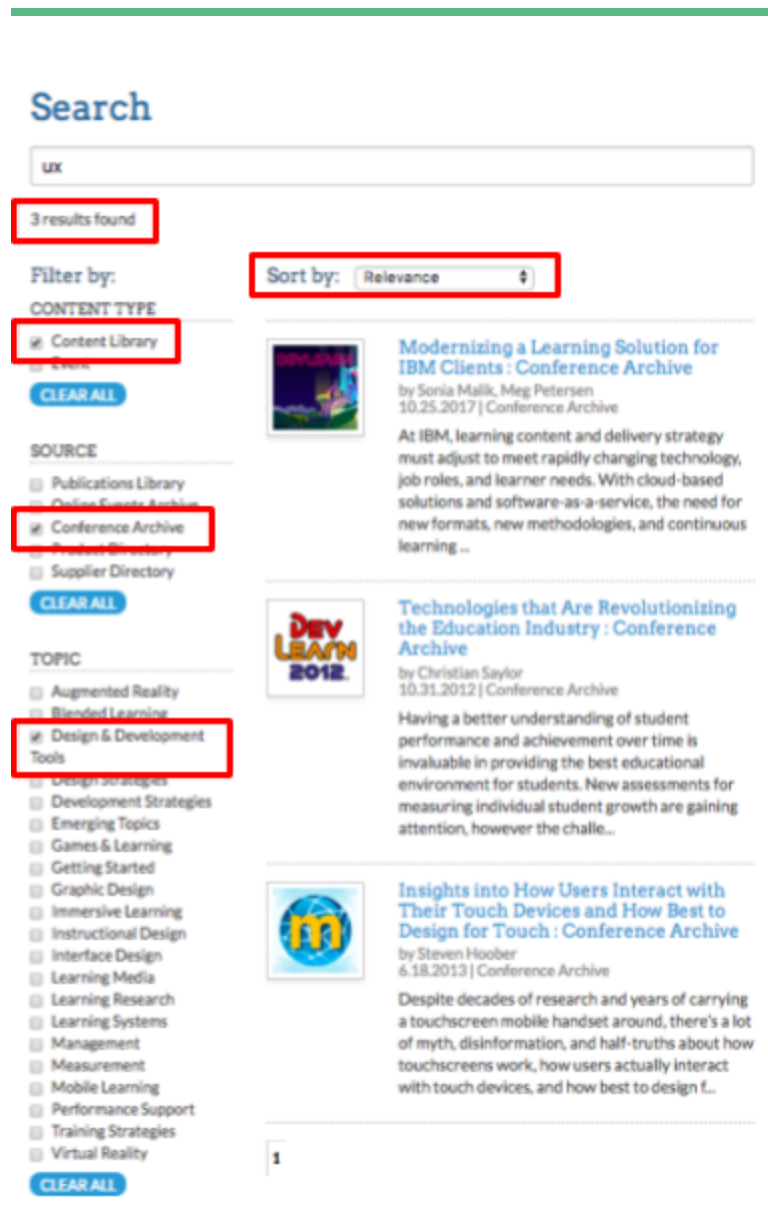
Figure 14: the search results on eLearning Guild. *Search.* Retrieved March 5, 2018, from https://www.elearningguild.com/search/. Screenshot by author.

Search Review

Overall, the search feature is functional and usable for most users. The only major usability issue is the dead-end when a search returns no results. However one obvious area that could use improvement is the search results. They should be displayed more consistently, preferably all results should include subheadings that identify the content Source.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

Website Organization Systems

The redesigned OLA website organizes content by type. The top-level taxonomy, as identified in the site map diagram (Figure 15), groups content into six types: membership, resources, publications, events, careers, and general/company information. The competitive analysis conducted on the eLearning Guild website identified a number of issues with the taxonomy of that site, including an ambiguous hierarchy that often eschewed landing or navigation pages. The OLA website design avoids this mistake by assigning landing pages to each first-level category in the taxonomy (Figure 17) clearly establishing the hierarchical structure for second- and third-level pages.

The eLearning Guild website utilizes a polyhierarchical structure, redirecting users to the same massive "Curated Content" page from various levels and categories, which ultimately results in an unintelligible hierarchy for the average user and difficulty rediscovering previously-found content even for experienced users. As demonstrated in the site map diagram for the OLA website (Figure 15), content is organized strictly within the top-down taxonomy. Although individual content items are searchable from the content database (via the Advanced Search feature) the returned search results will still direct the user to the appropriate level in the established hierarchy (Figure 18).

Website Labelling Systems

Continuing the direct comparison with the eLearning Guild site, the OLA design improves upon the hodgepodge nature of the eLearning Guild labelling system - or rather, the lack thereof. The eLearning Guild site features numerous h1 headers on single pages, inconsistent noun/verb choice among labels, and intermittent use of icons. The OLA design will rely on a consistent style guide for labelling, which includes technical HTML hierarchy (improving accessibility as well) and consistent use of textual labels.

Regarding label choice, rather than presentation, the OLA site will again improve upon the missteps of the eLearning Guild design. Some labels on the eLearning Guild site were identified as ambiguous in the competitive analysis (e.g., "Product Directory", "Conference Archive", etc.). These labels were especially problematic within the polyhierarchical organization of the eLearning Guild site, since each label's contextual link sent the user to the same "Curated Content" page (with filters applied). The OLA design makes use of some similar labels (Figure 15) but the more structured taxonomy and strict hierarchy eliminates some of the confusion seen in the eLearning Guild site. That site also suffered from confusing insider and marketing labels (e.g.

"Industry Perspectives") which the OLA site actively avoids. (Note Figures 16, 17, and 18 are absent any industry jargon).

Website Navigation Systems and Conventions

The problems caused by the eLearning Guild's taxonomy are compounded in their global navigation. Although structurally sound, the nature of the "Curated Content" redirect is almost certain to leave users feeling as though they have navigated to the wrong place. The OLA design may here rest again upon the laurels of a stricter taxonomy (Figure 15) and presents a fairly standard global navigation (Figures 14, 19, 20, 21) on both desktop and mobile views that matches the top-level taxonomy.

One major issue in the eLearning Guild's navigation system is the total lack of local navigation. Again compounded by the shallow polyhierarchical structure, site pages lack all local navigation, or even indicators in the global navigation of the user's current location. The OLA design remedies this issue directly with a "You Are Here" indicator in the global navigation, as well as breadcrumbs and "You Are Here" indicated local navigation (Figure 17, 18).

The OLA design also makes content items significantly more findable than on the eLearning Guild site. By making use of landing pages, users are easily able to mentally map where content lives and how it is related to other parts of the site (Figure 17).

Website Search Functionality

The eLearning Guild site relied on sometimes-confusing labels in their search system, which also served as the primary navigation element to content items. This of course causes the site major findability issues, and the OLA design remedies this as previously discussed in the Navigation section (Figure 17, 18).
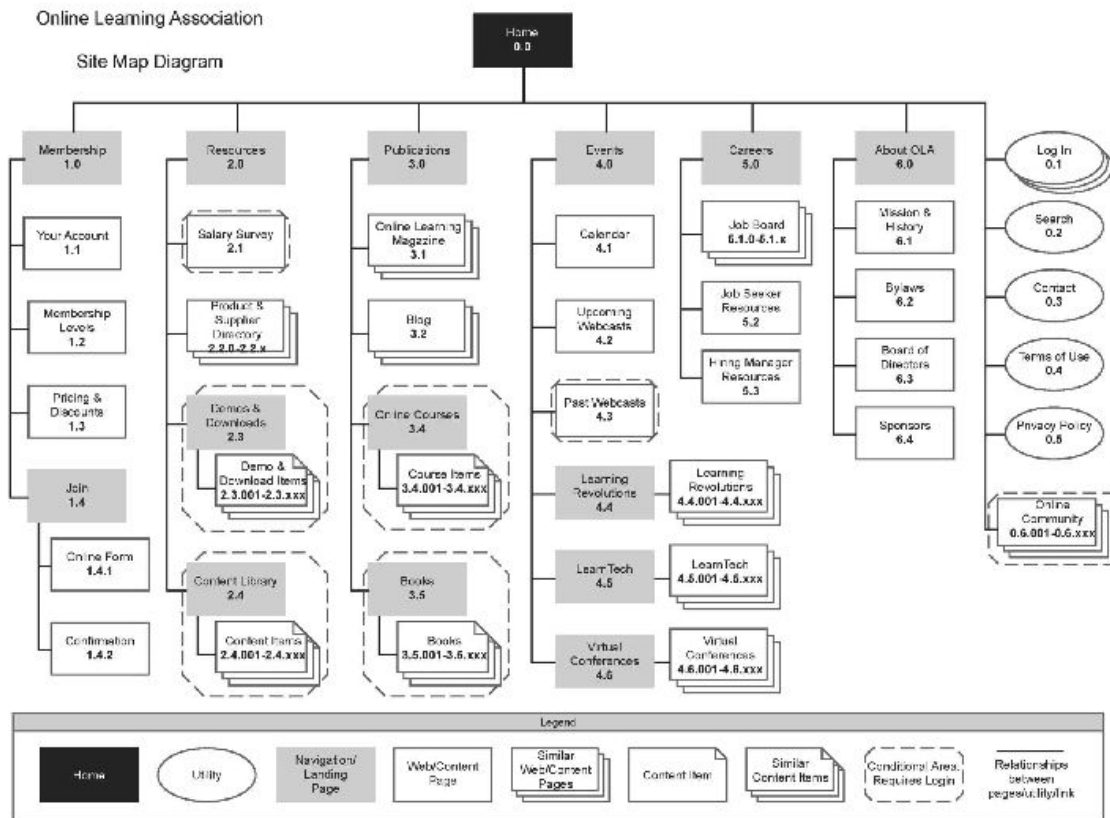
Website Sitemap Diagram

Figure 15: Site map diagram
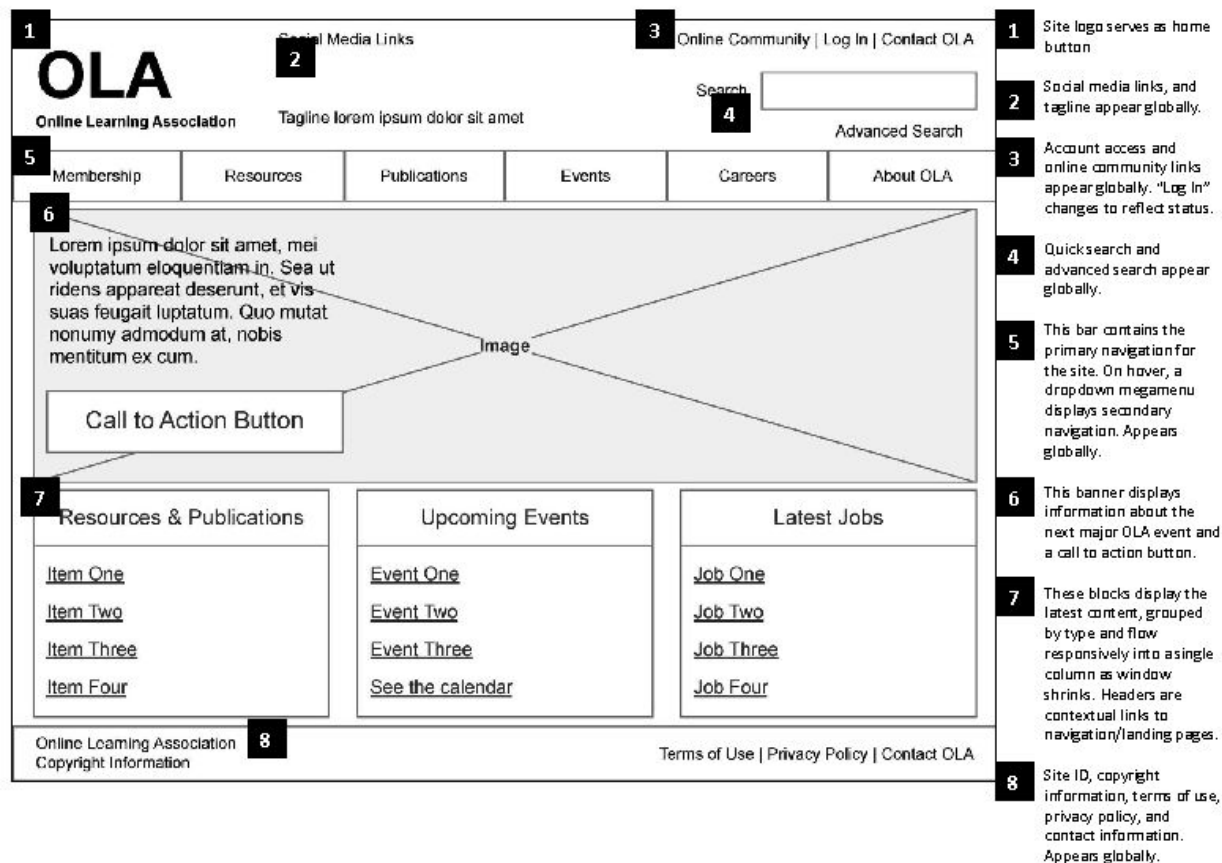
Website Wireframes for Web Browser Display
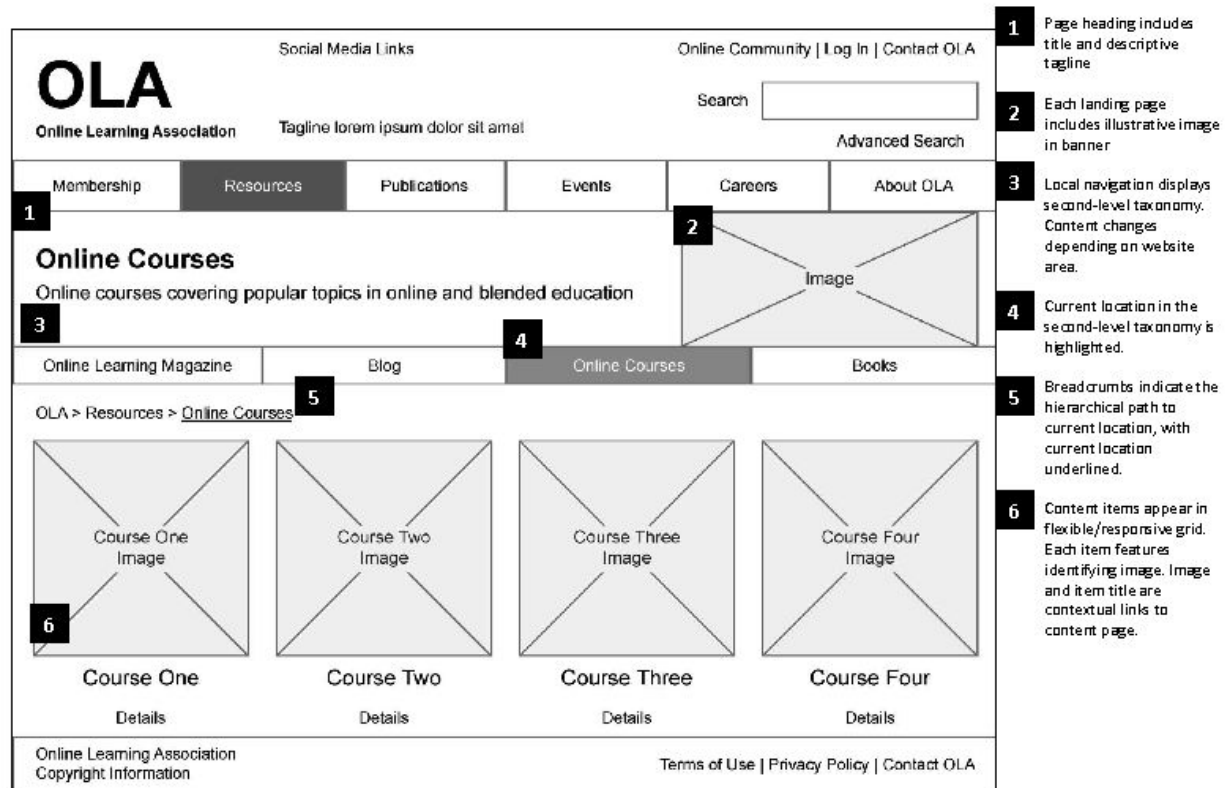

Figure 16: Wireframe, OLA homepage

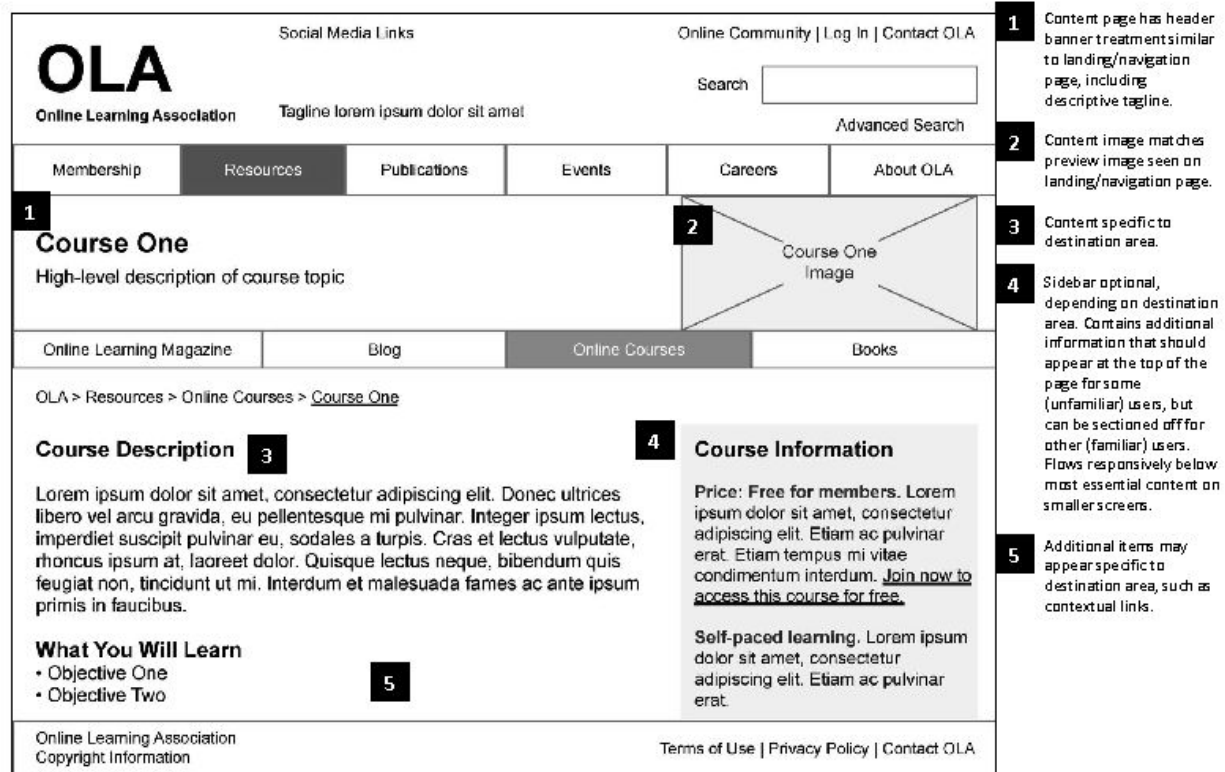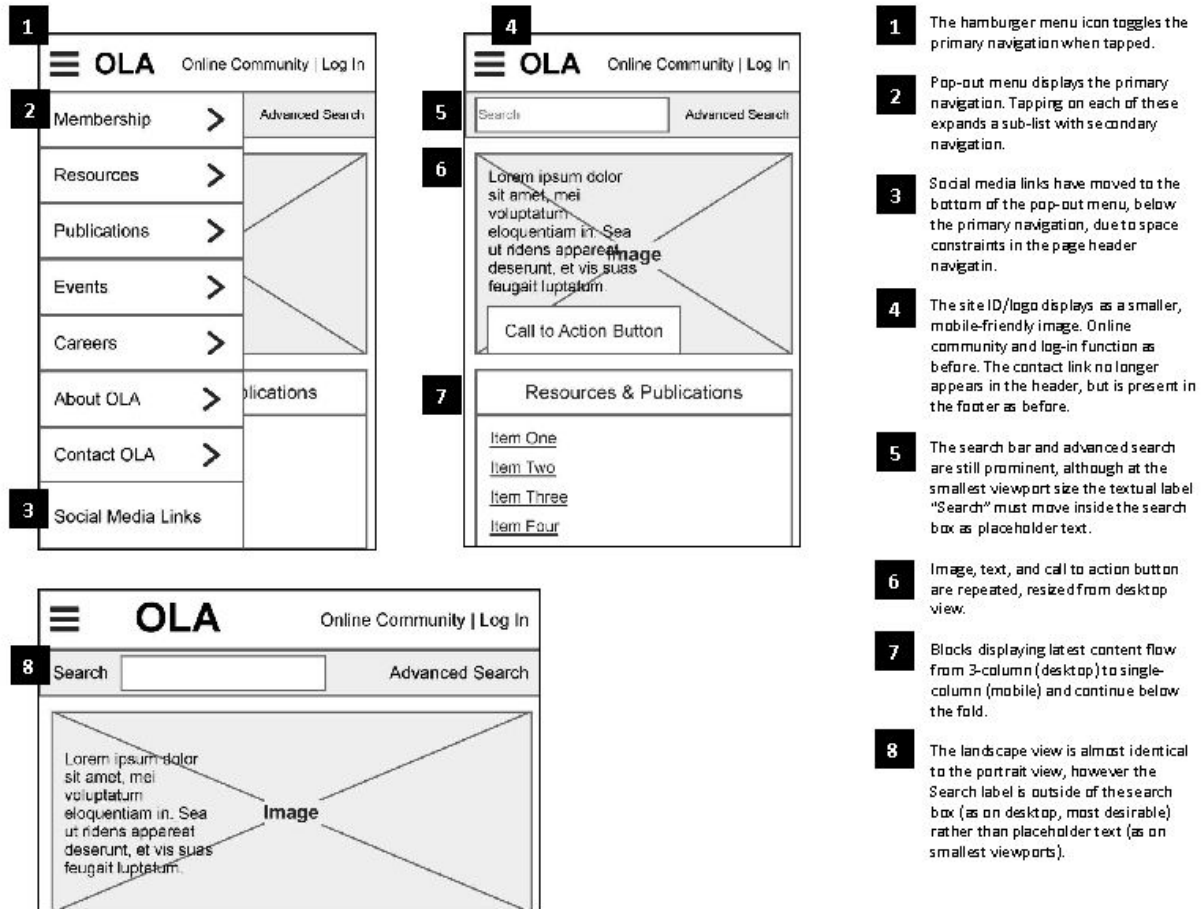Figure 17: Wireframe, OLA landing/navigation page

Figure 18: Wireframe, OLA content/destination page

Website Wireframes for Smartphone Browser Display

1 The hamburger menu icon toggles the primary navigation when tapped.

2 Pop-out menu displays the primary navigation. Tapping on each of these expands a sub-list with secondary navigation.

3 Social media links have moved to the bottom of the pop-out menu, below the primary navigation, due to space constraints in the page header navigatin.

4 The site ID/logo displays as a smaller, mobile-friendly image. Online community and log-in function as before. The contact link no longer appears in the header, but is present in the footer as before.

5 The search bar and advanced search are still prominent, although at the smallest viewport size the textual label "Search" must move inside the search box as placeholder text.

6 Image, text, and call to action button are repeated, resized from desktop view.

7 Blocks displaying latest content flow from 3-column (desktop) to single-column (mobile) and continue below the fold.

8 The landscape view is almost identical to the portrait view, however the Search label is outside of the search box (as on desktop, most desirable) rather than placeholder text (as on smallest viewports).

Figures 19, 20, 21: left to right, top to bottom: Wireframe, OLA homepage mobile with pop-out menu. Mobile homepage portrait. Mobile homepage landscape.