

# **Usability and Card Sort Results**

Improving the Usability and Content Analysis for the  
North Carolina Coastal Federation

Team Name: UXperts

3/8/19

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# Usability and Card Sort Results

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Prepared for: UNC Chapel Hill  
North Carolina Coastal Federation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UXperts conducted a card sort test with 11 cards and a total of 14 participants over one week. This research was designed with the purpose of improving the information architecture and messaging of the North Carolina Coastal Federation website. After examining the website and listening to the client's problems, we determined that the navigation throughout the site needed rearranging to improve messaging, clarity and user experience. Card sorting subjects were shown 11 cards, labeled with the topics covered on the website. They were asked to group cards together, suggest a new card and/or rename a grouping, based on what they believed made the most sense to them individually. From their testing, the UXperts developed the following recommendations to improve the NCCF website:

- Create four new navigation bar titles (based on results from card sorting) and improve formatting of the homepage
- Include an engaging video about the NCCF in the design and layout of the homepage
- Embed NCCF social media in a sidebar on the site's homepage

## TEST OBJECTIVE

The card-sorting test was conducted to help improve the information architecture for the North Carolina Coastal Federation:

<https://www.nccoast.org>

Client's Problem: The North Carolina Coastal Federation expressed concerns that it has a plethora of information presented on its website, causing its audience to not fully understand the organization's goals, achievements and overall mission, as well as the organization not being able to clearly iterate what its main goal is to its audience.

## PARTICIPANTS

14 individuals attempted the card sort.

- Of those, each individual completed and saved their sort.
- Of those, 12 were students and two were professors in the UNC School of Media & Journalism.
- The following results cover the 14 participants who truly attempted the sort.

**Table 1**

Participant	Researcher
Professor	Chaeyoung Kang
Professor	Chaeyoung Kang

Student	Kara Roberts
Student	Kara Roberts
Student	Kara Roberts
Student	Nicholas Byrne
Student	Nicholas Byrne
Student	Nicholas Byrne
Student	Audrey Burke
Student	Audrey Burke
Student	Alyssa Piciuccio
Student	Alyssa Piciuccio
Student	Austin Phillips
Student	Austin Phillips

## METHODOLOGY

The team conducted 14 card sorts using paper index cards.

As an open card sort, participants organized 11 of the North Carolina Coastal Federation website's headings into groups that made the most sense to them. Then, they were asked to suggest new services, groups, or labels, if they wanted to, or if their suggestions would help make the information easier to understand.

### List of sorted cards:

About Us

Contact Us

Donate

Events

News

Our Mission

Our Outreach

Social Media

Subscribe to Newsletter

The State of Our Coast

Volunteer

# **DATA COLLECTED**

## **CARD SORTING DATA**

The facilitators collected **two forms of data**:

### **1. Qualitative:**

- **Question:** Is there one grouping that you think is most important?
  - “I don’t think there is one grouping that is most important. They all have different functions, so it’s hard to say which is most important.”
  - “*Our Mission* is most important because it’s why we [as a site visitor] should care. However, *The State of Our Coast* is important, too, if that’s what people go to the site for.”
  - “I think that probably the *About Us* section is the most important, but I also think that the *Subscribe to Newsletter* button should be prominent and accessible. I remember learning that emails have the highest link conversion rates. So, maybe that could help the organization to get its information out there.”
  - “I always go to *About Us* first. I want to know what the organization is all about when I visit its website. Also, I want to see the *Donate* button.”
- **Question:** Do you see any information missing?
  - “I’m a little confused on what you meant by the *Social Media* card. Is there going to be a page with all of the links? I think it would also make sense to have the feeds of the social media sites on the *News* page.”
  - “The card that doesn’t make sense to me is *The State of Our Coast*. I think there’s some clarity lacking there.”
- **Question:** If this information (the 11 pieces) was easy to find on the website, do you think that you would use the NCCF website more, or perhaps visit it for the first time?
  - “Yes, I would visit it for the first time, if I needed to.”
  - “I normally visit the Coastal Review website more often than the Coastal Federation one, but if all that info was easy to find, I would probably visit the Coastal Federation one more often.”
  - “I think it would be an improved website, although I don’t think that I would look up the website on my own. If I was linked to it for a class, then I probably would see it and like this newer layout.”

### **2. Quantitative:**

- Average number of groups: **4.56**  
 $(3+5+4+4+5+5+5+5+7+5+6+5+3+4+3+4)/16= 4.56$
- Frequency of each card being listed as a category leader:

**Table 2**

Category leader	Frequency
About Us	14
Contact Us	11
News	8
Subscribe to Newsletter	7
Donate	6
Our Mission	6
The State of Our Coast	5
Social Media	3
Volunteer	3
Our Outreach	3
Events	2
*Get Involved	1
*Stay Updated	1

*\*Card-sorter created their own category headers.*

## RESULTS & ANALYSIS

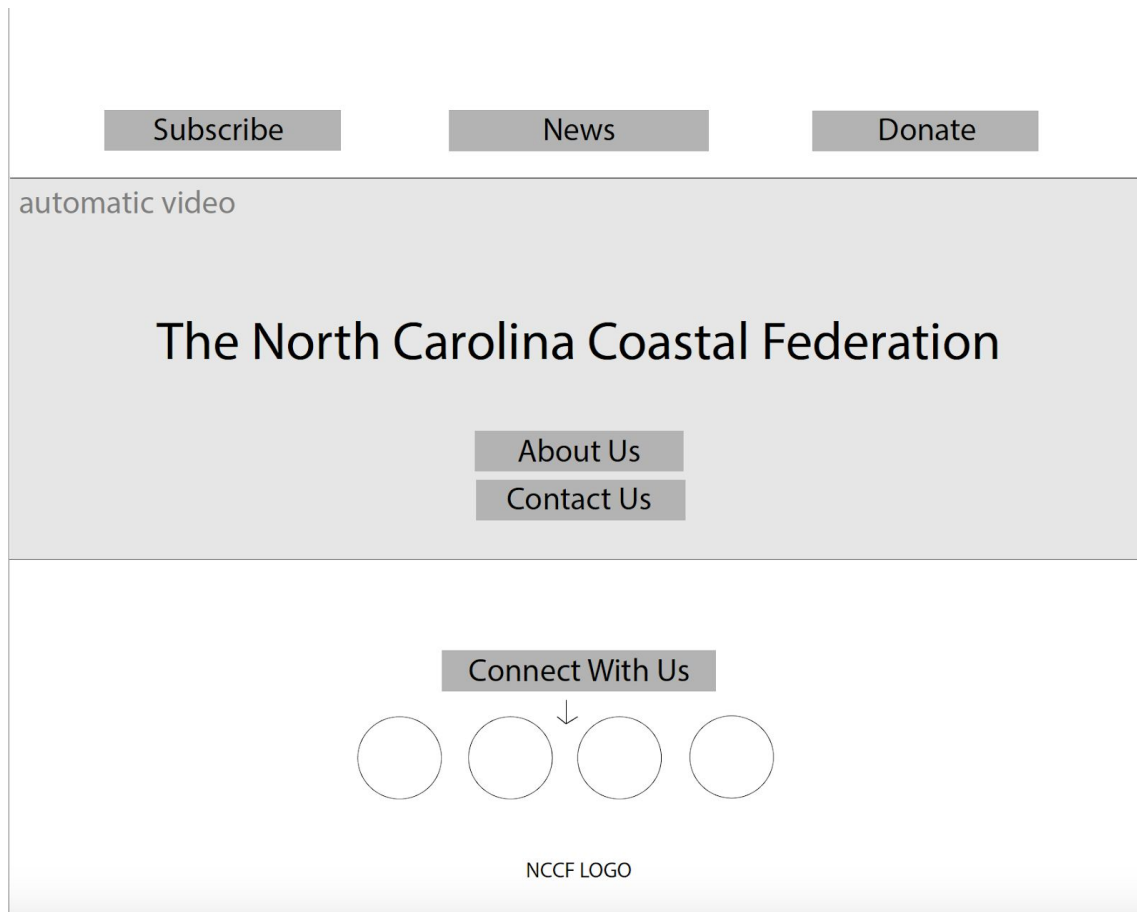
The card sorting results indicate two major findings. Qualitatively, most participants found information about the organization, the North Carolina Coastal Federation, as the most fundamental element of the website. Most participants resorted to the *Our Mission* and *About Us* headers in order to access this information. A participant answered that *The State of Our Coast* was crucial in demonstrating the significance of the website and what the organization stands for. The *Subscribe to Newsletter* was another button that would improve user experience with the organization.

Quantitatively, the results were organized based on how often the card was listed at the top of a group, signifying the category's importance to the user. The most frequent category heading was *About Us* (14). *Contact Us* (11), *News* (8), and *Subscribe to Newsletter* (7) followed next. *Donate* and *Our Mission* each appeared six times, thus indicated the same level of significance to the

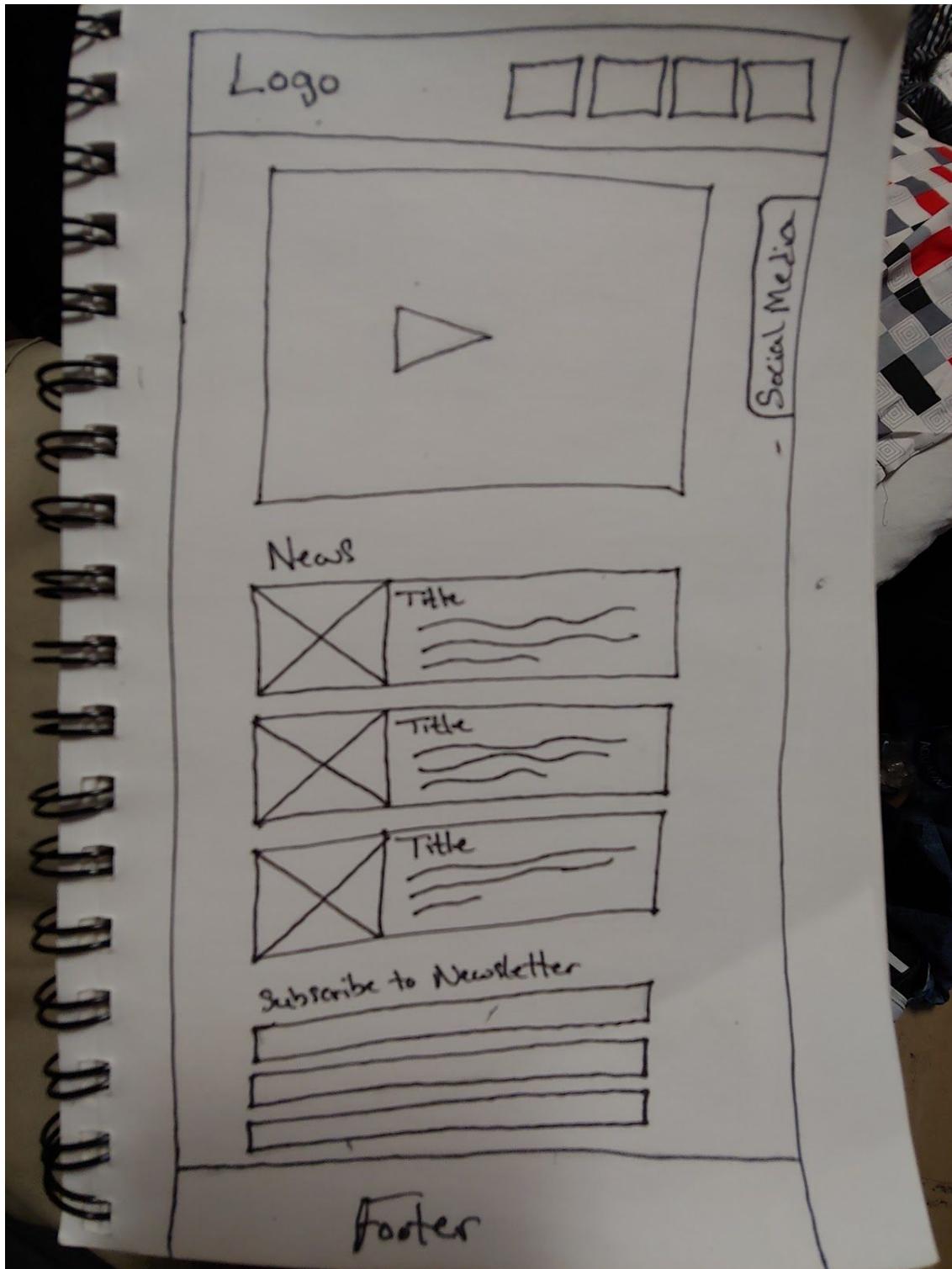
participants. In addition, each participant's sorting suggested that approximately 4.56 categories on the homepage would be the most effective.

## WIREFRAMES

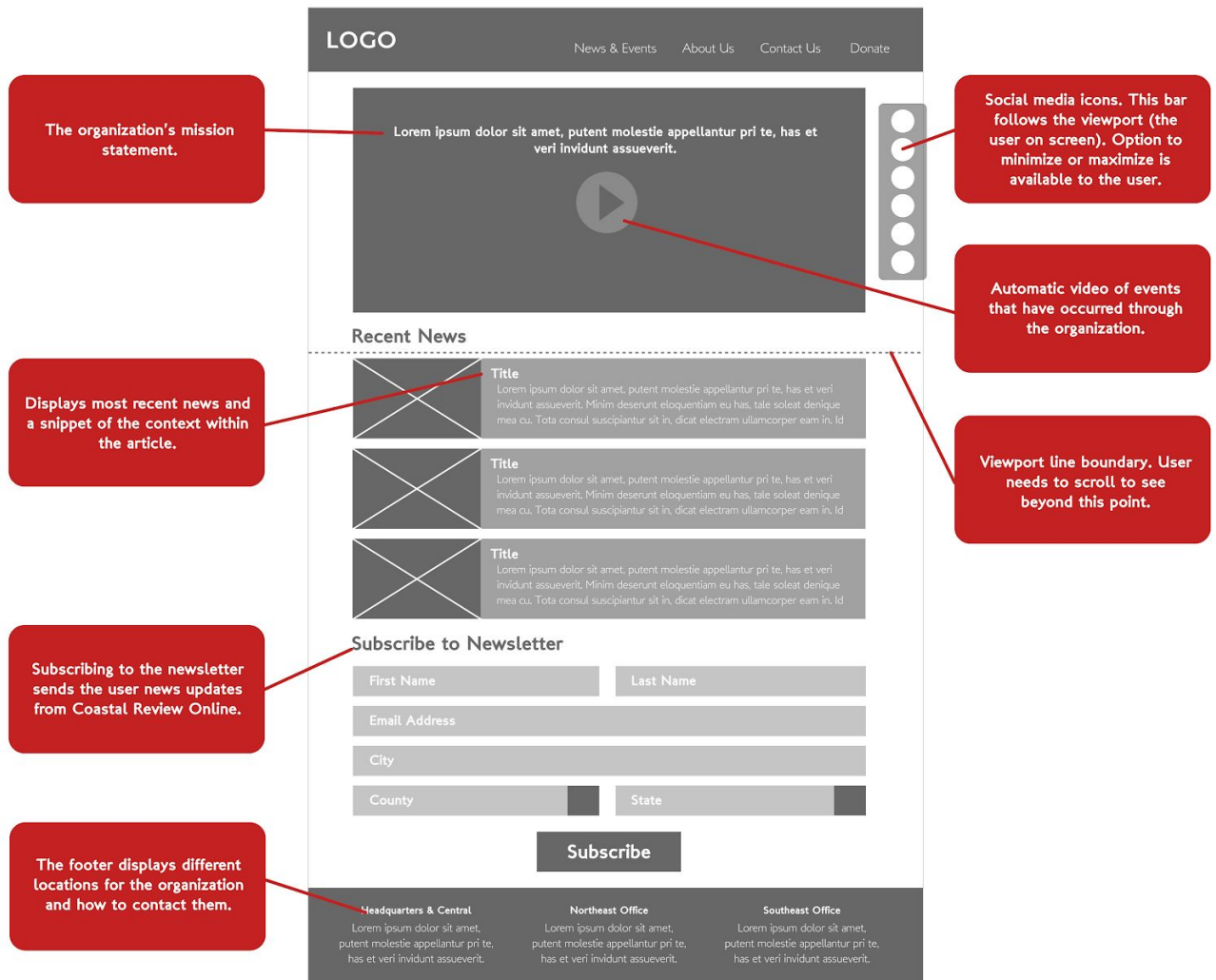
### *Low-Fidelity Wireframes:*







## Mid-Fidelity Wireframe:



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on user testing in the card-sorting section of the report, we recommend breaking up the homepage categories into five main sections. On average, users from the card sorting experiment broke up the 11 cards into roughly five sections (exactly 4.56; see **Data Collected: Quantitative** above).

Additionally, we tallied the header of each group to quantify which headers users most desired. As seen in **Table 2**, we tallied the category headers, and we found that the top four categories were *About Us*, *Contact Us*, *News* and *Subscribe To Newsletter* (and *Donate* and *Our Mission* tied for fifth).

Our quantitative research, combined with team analysis, leads us to recommend that the following categories should be visible on the homepage:

- About Us
- Contact Us
- News
- Subscribe to Newsletter
- Donate

While *Donate* and *Our Mission* were tied in the results from our card sort, we decided to place *Our Mission* under *About Us*, due to the fact that donations are important to the functioning and success of the organization.

2. We recommend replacing the three columns of *Protect the Coast*, *What You Can Do* and *What's New* on the homepage with a video. The video could either be a quick informative video with some of the leaders of the federation explaining an overview of the organization, or simply an automatic video of the coast and ocean with its mission statement in the foreground. This eliminates redundancy on the site, as well as adds a visually-captivating, multimedia aspect.
3. Integrating a news feed to the homepage would give the homepage a new feature and overall “look” (besides the video mentioned above), and would generate more traffic to the federation’s newsletter. This would encourage more people to become aware of and stay informed about the issues surrounding the North Carolina coasts.
4. In order to make it as easy as possible for users to stay up-to-date with the N.C. Coastal Federation, we recommend placing a *Subscribe to Newsletter* function at the bottom of the homepage. It would contain the embedded information fields that users need to fill in on the

page, so they would not have to leave the page or click any other buttons. The federation expressed concerns that its audience does not completely understand what kind of work the organization is currently doing, so making it easier for people to subscribe to the online newsletter would lead to more subscribers and more general awareness of the organization's news and announcements.

5. While the NCCF is a non-profit organization that relies heavily on donations and fundraising, the *Donations* page is not very prominent on the home screen. We recommend putting the *Donation* button more towards the top of the homepage so that site visitors see it when they first arrive to the site, recognizing it as an essential piece of the organization.
6. The North Carolina Coastal Federation already has a presence on the main social media platforms. To encourage more followers and more engagement with the organization through the platforms that drive our lives more so today than websites and online newsletters, we recommend having a bar on the side of the homepage with its social media accounts (linked to the bar in circular icon shapes). This bar could follow the user as they scroll down the homepage. This will draw attention, if not interest, to the icons, increase followers, and help the NCCF interact with a younger audience.