

# **Capstone Project Title: Blacks of the Chesapeake Website Redesign**

Student Names: Mohammed Saleem, Abhiram Metuku, Yonathan Meshesha, Aditya Patel, Beimnet Aklilu, Vaish Iyer

## **Abstract**

This project aimed to redesign the existing website for the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF). The primary goal was to create a more user-friendly platform that would be easy for the community and partner organizations to use. The initial goals included promoting upcoming events, providing historical information, facilitating the sale of books, enhancing the website's visual appeal and consistency across devices, and streamlining content updates to reduce reliance on a lengthy chain of command. These goals remained consistent throughout the project. The project's objective was to improve usability and functionality with a more modern, visually appealing design consistent across multiple devices. The redesign sought to ensure needed information, upcoming events, and partnerships were more accessible, and to revitalize the e-commerce presence for book sales.

The Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to documenting and preserving the significant contributions of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the Chesapeake Bay region's maritime trades, seafood industries, and land conservation efforts. Founded by Vincent O Leggett in 1984, BOCF highlights the integral roles African Americans have played in the region's cultural and economic development. Their mission is to document, preserve, and promote this rich history, engaging in educational outreach, historical documentation, and land conservation. The need for a website redesign directly aligns with BOCF's mission of education and outreach, as an enhanced online presence can serve as a central hub for disseminating information, community engagement, and attracting support.

## **Methods**

### **Initial Planning and Research**

The project began with foundational team-building deliverables, including a signed team contract, and a roles and responsibilities matrix. These ensured accountability and efficient division of labor throughout the semester. Early on, we conducted detailed background research on BoC and similar organizations such as Chesapeake Heartland to understand best practices in these types of organizational websites.

## Client Engagement and Requirements Gathering

Our team prepared and conducted a requirements interview with BoC's team to define specific needs for the site. This included understanding their goals, identifying priority content to retain or improve, and gathering feedback on what wasn't working on the current site. This helped us align expectations and informed our requirements document and initial problem statement.

## Iterative Design

Using Figma, we created a few mockups that were reviewed by our team and shared with the client. These iterations emphasized mobile responsiveness, simplified navigation, and a clean visual layout to reflect the wants by the BoC team. We modeled our structure and visual aesthetics in part from reference sites like Black in Marine Science and Chesapeake Heartland.

## Site Development

We used Wix as the development platform to streamline the transition of content and offer an accessible content management system (CMS) for the client after we were done with the project. This also allowed us to deliver a visually consistent, functional site without requiring the client to learn complex backend tools. Throughout this phase, we migrated legacy content, added historical visuals, and structured pages for key themes like: About, Programs, Projects, and News.

## Obstacles

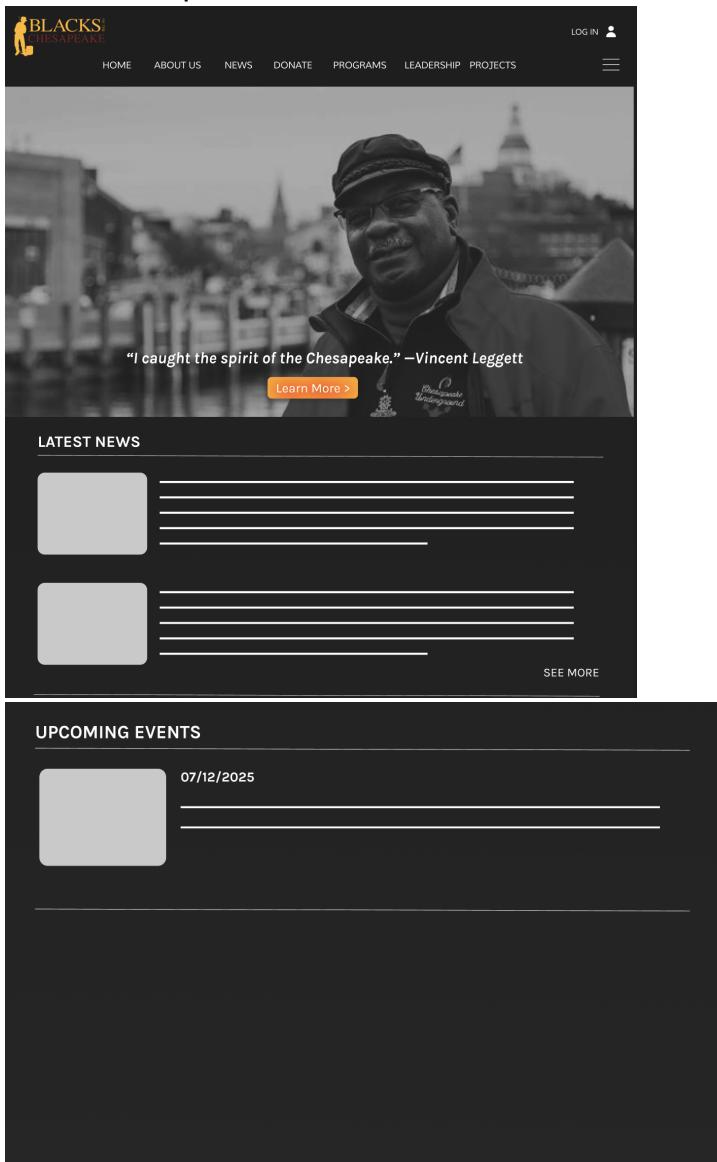
A significant challenge was migrating content from the old BoC website, which lacked consistent formatting and included difficult to transfer embedded media. We addressed this by clarifying with the client which sections would be the most important to transfer over to the website. Another obstacle was limited availability with members of the BoC team. In response, we continued to work on our project asynchronously so that there would not be a need to meet so often.

## Descriptions of your deliverables/findings

1. Project Plan & Timeline Document: A document outlining milestones, deadlines, and responsibilities. This was a completed task early in the project, providing a roadmap for the team's work
2. Wireframes & Mockups: Visual representations of the new website layout and design concepts. The team used Figma to create initial mockups and refined them into high-fidelity designs based on client feedback. These mockups incorporated specific client requests, such as changing colors, adding scrolling

movement, including main page hyperlinks, focusing on Chesapeake imagery, and ensuring non-grayscale photos.

## Initial Mockups



## Revised Mockups



3. Website Prototype: A working model of the redesigned website for review and feedback. The team began transferring the approved mockup designs onto a functional website using Wix. This prototype served as a basis for further client review and feedback.
4. Fully Redesigned Website (Final Draft): The final version of the website with all agreed-upon features implemented. The final draft aimed to incorporate all client feedback and meet project goals.

## Recommendations

Based on the work completed and the identified next steps, the following recommendations are crucial for the successful launch and ongoing maintenance of the Blacks of the Chesapeake website redesign:

- **Purchase Wix subscription:** To make the website live and accessible, a subscription for Wix will need to be purchased.
- **Complete domain transfer:** The domain [blacksofthechesapeake.com](http://blacksofthechesapeake.com) will require transferring from godaddy to Wix. This step cannot be completed unless there is an active subscription on Wix. A detailed guide to transfer the domain is located here <https://support.wix.com/en/article/connecting-your-godaddy-domain-to-the-wix-name-servers>

## **Conclusions**

The redesign of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation website successfully met the project's goals of enhancing usability, improving visual consistency, and creating a more accessible and informative platform. Through collaborative planning, client engagement, iterative design, and careful development using Wix, the team delivered a modern website that better represents BOCF's mission and legacy. The new site streamlines content management, improves event promotion, highlights historical contributions, and supports e-commerce functionality for book sales.

Looking ahead, we recommend that BOCF complete the necessary steps to launch the site publicly: purchasing a Wix subscription and completing the domain transfer from GoDaddy. These actions are essential to fully transition from the outdated website to the new platform. Additionally, periodic updates to content and continued engagement with site analytics will ensure the site remains relevant and impactful.

For any short-term questions or technical support regarding the new website, please contact our team representative, Mohammed Saleem, at [mosaleem@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:mosaleem@terpmail.umd.edu). We are proud to have contributed to preserving and promoting the vital history that BOCF represents and hope the new website serves the foundation and its community for years to come.

## **Deliverables**

- Website Backend Code: <https://github.com/cowsaymoe/Blacks-of-the-Chesapeake>
- Final Website: <https://aleggett93.wixsite.com/blacks-of-the-chesap>