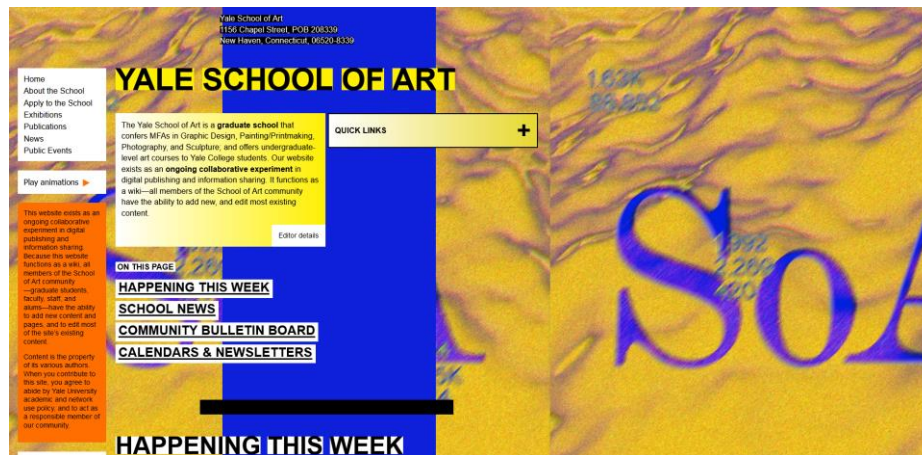


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## Fix a Website

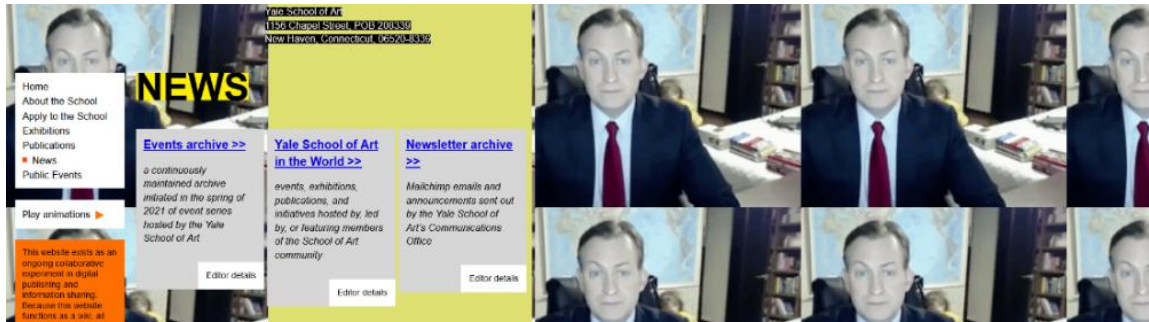
For my website, I chose Yale University's official School of Art website [1]. The way that this website looks is, quite honestly, heinous at first site. It's difficult to pinpoint one singular attribute of the website that stands out as soon as you see this website, but when considering an HCI stance, the first and most concrete issue that I noticed was that this website's home page is inhospitable to many colorblind people. Blue-Yellow colorblindness is the second most common form, and affects those with Tritanomaly and Tritanopia [2]. Though these colors were likely chosen because they are Yale's school colors, it still makes the website less accessible.



Perhaps the next thing that you would comment on is the fact that all of the text headers are highlighted with a seemingly random color, and the text is almost as random. Within just the homepage, we can see white on black, black on yellow, white on black text. It might be tempting to attempt to justify this choice by saying that the contrast of the highlight vs text makes it more readable than if the text was simply on top of the background which is inconsistent (see that "YALE SCHOOL OF ART" might blend in with the tiger-like stripes of the background), but that is simply not a good enough excuse to subject the website's viewers to this monstrosity. The fact that these are so inconsistent is incredibly distracting and only serves to confuse users.

There is nothing about the layout of this page that invokes a sense of familiarity. Contrast is not used to assist a user in distinguishing important information in a timely manner, rather, it is used haphazardly to draw your eyes over the entire page to areas that are functionally useless. This trend continues across many of the pages on this site, not just the home page.

One of the last things that you might notice is the navigation, which is the white box at the top left of the page. This box is not very noticeable because it is the most boring thing on the screen. All the gradients and highlighted text and bright colors of everything else on the page draws your eyes before you finally land on the navigation. There is also no reason to believe that these are even links, except for based on prior knowledge of what navigation tabs might be titled. For example, it wouldn't make sense for a piece of text to say "About the School" if it wasn't a link to a page where you could learn more about the school. Another issue with the navigation is that it is not pinned to that spot on the page. If you scroll down the page to view some of the artwork, you would have to scroll all the way back up to get to the navigation to access any other page of the website. Additionally, the "QUICK LINKS" button is in a very odd place; it is not with the navigation or at the very top or bottom of the page. The four lines of black text on white background are also links, although I did not recognize that they were for a long time after arriving to this page. All of these are seemingly randomly placed and only serve to confuse.



Once you get to a new page away from the home page, circumstances do not improve. You are faced with weird and wildly inconsistent backgrounds as well as similar issues regarding highlighted text, a color scheme that is clearly not thought through, and difficulty with navigation.

At first, it seems to make zero sense why the website of a prestigious university's School of Art has such a terrible website. However, it makes perfect sense once you notice that the website says that "This website exists as an ongoing collaborative experiment in digital publishing and information sharing. Because this website functions as a wiki, all members of the School of Art community—graduate students, faculty, staff, and alums—have the ability to add new content and pages, and to edit most of the site's existing content." This completely clarifies the situation. Thousands of individuals, most of whom are likely to have little to no computer science background, are given free reign to make unsupervised changes to this website. In particular, students who can't resist making a joke and alums who have no real stake left in the program have no restrictions on what they can do to this poor website.

If I were to fix this website, all of the visuals would be immediately scrapped. I would set the background to be neutral colors but make sure to include yellow and/or blue as accent colors to still invoke that sense of school spirit. The visuals would be largely consistent from page to page.

Secondly, I would move the navigation to be tabs at the top of the page with cascading menus. All of the navigation would be consolidated here, as opposed to scattered across the home page. I would also be sure to pin the menu to the top of the home page so that you can access them no matter where you are on the page. On other pages, I would show the path to get to your current page at the top. You would be able to click on any previous page to get back to where you were.

I would attempt to segregate pages based on who needs to access what information: Students should be able to find all resources for registration, "opportunities", and the private community calendar, but anyone that just wants to view some artwork, learn a little more about Yale's School of Art, or view the public calendar should not be forced to navigate through irrelevant information to get to where they want to be.

On the home page, I would show a gallery view of student's featured artwork. This would change at least every semester. The images would be paired with artist statements and provide a link to the student's portfolio/website so that any visitors to the website are creating exposure for the School's art students. The home page would also include information about the School of Art itself, as well as prominent alum in order to reinforce the program's status. Any information about the website itself, such as the collaboration/editor information, would be moved to the bottom of the site where it is not distracting from the content of the site that most people are coming to see.

Most importantly, I would restrict access of who could edit the site. It is a ridiculous and honestly quite hilarious to give so many people access to be able to edit the website. While it makes for a truly terrible user experience, this website has entertained me very much and made my week more fun. At the end of the day, the website is fulfilling its purpose as a "ongoing collaborative experiment in digital publishing and information sharing", but it is not fulfilling its purpose as a functional and intuitive home-base website for Yale's School of Art.

### Works Cited

[1] Anon. Yale School of Art. Retrieved September 22, 2021 from <https://www.art.yale.edu/>

[2] Anon. Types of Color Blindness. Retrieved September 22, 2021 from <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/color-blindness/types-color-blindness>