

why does finding help from

the FTC have to be so difficult?

*a website redesign*

The Federal Trade Commission does crucial work to protect the government's economy, the free market and US consumers. These key facts are hard to find or understand from their very text-heavy and clinical website. A reassessment of their users, visual presence and ease-of-use is needed.

The image shows a white smartphone displaying the official website of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The website has a dark green header bar. At the top left is the American flag icon followed by the text "AN OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. LEARN HOW TO KNOW ITS OFFICIAL.". On the right side of the header are links for "EN ESPAÑOL" and a magnifying glass icon for search. Below the header, the FTC logo is centered, with "FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION" underneath it. To the right of the logo are three main navigation links: "FTC MAIN", "CONSUMER", and "BUSINESS". Below these are secondary links: "ABOUT THE FTC", "TAKE ACTION", "OUTREACH", "ENFORCEMENT", and "POLICY". A banner below the navigation bar reads "ANNOUNCEMENT: Coronavirus Policy" with a subtext "See how the FTC is reacting to COVID-19". The main content area features a large image of a coastal city skyline with beach houses and high-rise buildings. Overlaid on this image is a white box containing the text "SCAM ALERT" and "Hurricane Repair Fraud" with a subtext "Prepare for Hurricane season scams". At the bottom of the screen, there are three blue circular icons with white symbols: a person icon for "FILE CONSUMER COMPLAINT", a telephone icon for "JOIN THE DO NOT CALL LIST", and a document icon for "GET YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT". To the right of these icons are three smaller images showing a damaged house, a person using a laptop, and a person on a phone, each with a caption: "SCAM ALERT / AUG 21, 2020", "SCAM ALERT / AUG 15, 2020", and "SCAM ALERT / AUG 9, 2020".

## the goal

With a focus on an "everyday user", the goal of this project is to better highlight the useful resources the FTC has to offer for consumers and businesses.

## the audience

The primary user for this project is a middle-aged person looking to better educate themselves against identity theft to protect their assets.

### ROLE

I served as UX Researcher and UX/UI Designer. The majority of this project was done independently but the initial research portion was executed with a partner, Natasha Nanda.

### SCOPE

The duration of this project was 5 weeks. This project had a few unique factors of tight timelines and no access to a stakeholder of any kind.

### TOOLS

This project was executed with a mix of programs, primary Miro, Adobe XD, and Affinity Designer.

# heuristic analysis

Based on an initial 6 page user path. Heuristic evaluations and redlining were executed for each of the 6 pages. Below are key findings.

The screenshot shows the FTC homepage with various ARIA labels and contrast ratio metrics. A red box highlights the main navigation bar. A green box highlights the search bar area. A blue box highlights the main content area. A yellow box highlights the footer links.

**Annotations:**

- Passes AA
- Required contrast ratio: 3
- Your contrast ratio: 3.19
- Lorum ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do...
- Passes AA
- Required contrast ratio: 4.5
- Your contrast ratio: 9.34
- Lorum ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do...

**WACG Compliance Testing Results:**

- Passes AA
- Required contrast ratio: 3
- Your contrast ratio: 3.19
- Lorum ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do...
- Passes AA
- Required contrast ratio: 4.5
- Your contrast ratio: 9.34
- Lorum ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do...

**Header:**

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

Contact | Stay Connected | Privacy Policy | FTC en español

Search

ABOUT THE FTC NEWS & EVENTS ENFORCEMENT POLICY TIPS & ADVICE I WOULD LIKE TO...

**Content Area:**

IT'S HURRICANE SEASON  
Avoid fraud. Tips for before, during & after disasters

**Take Action:**

- File a Consumer Complaint
- Report Identity Theft
- Get Your Free Credit Report
- Register for Do Not Call
- Get Consumer Alerts
- Order Free Resources

**Footer:**

CORONAVIRUS SCAMS PREPARE FOR HURRICANE SEASON

LATEST NEWS More News >

COMPETITION More >

Passes AA

fig. 1 - WACG compliance testing

The screenshot shows the FTC homepage with various red and green circles highlighting specific UI elements. A green circle highlights the logo. A red circle highlights the 'File a Consumer Complaint' link. A yellow circle highlights the main content area. A red circle highlights the 'PREPARE FOR HURRICANE SEASON' button. A green circle highlights the 'LATEST NEWS' link. A yellow circle highlights the 'COMPETITION' link. A red circle highlights the 'More >' link under 'COMPETITION'. A yellow circle highlights the 'File an Antitrust Complaint' link under 'COMPETITION'.

**Annotations:**

- Prominent Logo
- Consistent Contact Info
- Search
- Navigation Header
- Link
- Placards
- Carousel Indicators
- Confusing Hierarchy
- Clear Header
- Feels Out of Place

**Header:**

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

Contact | Stay Connected | Privacy Policy | FTC en español

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ABOUT THE FTC NEWS & EVENTS ENFORCEMENT POLICY TIPS & ADVICE I WOULD LIKE TO...

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- Get Your Free Credit Report
- Register for Do Not Call
- Get Consumer Alerts
- Order Free Resources

**Footer:**

CORONAVIRUS SCAMS PREPARE FOR HURRICANE SEASON

LATEST NEWS More News >

COMPETITION More >

File an Antitrust Complaint

fig. 2 - heuristic redlining

# initial user testing

## GOAL

What is the main frustration users experience while navigating the FTC website to find ways they can stay updated on current scams?

## PARTICIPANTS

When considering participants a focus was given to individuals that would be similar to the target user, a middle-aged person seeking asset protection.

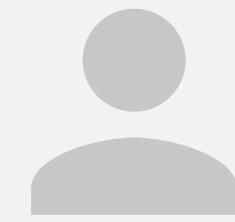
## METHOD

Five individual tests were conducted over zoom using a series of tasks based on the "user path". Participants shared their screens while navigating ftc.gov.



**NANDA**

Age: 57  
Driven, Entrepreneur,  
"Get it done"



**KATHY**

Age: 57  
Organized, Friendly,  
Kind



**JANET**

Age: 67  
Reserved, Friendly,  
Intelligent



**PHILIP**

Age: 24  
Nerd, Athletic,  
Hobbyist



**TERRI**

Age: 58  
Optimistic,  
Energetic, Creative

## RESULTS

The results of the 5 tests were higher than expected with an average success rate of 89% among the 4 task user flow. All tests were conducted using the desktop site. Although there was an overall high success rate the test revealed a few pain points such as confusing labeling, inconsistent use of branding and formatting, and links that take you off-site without warning.

## card sorting

Using Optimal Sort, a closed card sort was conducted with 9 participants, 30 cards, and 8 possible categories.

The results confirmed that many of the **current categories used on the FTC do make sense** for their underlying content. However, the results also indicated that **users tended to group consumer and business related information under more specific categories** related to their topics instead of the more general headers the FTC site currently has them hidden under.

## navigation testing

An additional set of tests **focusing on the sites navigation** were done with 4 new participants. Using a **Seek and Find method** we asked participants to find 8 different items within the FTC site. For most tasks we encouraged the users to refrain from using the search bar. Each user had a **100% success rate for all tasks**; however they each shared helpful insights that aligned and **validated the pain points from the initial user testing results**.

*Based on the card sorting results a new site map was developed. As discovered in the early research, the FTC site has many helpful resources for both consumers and businesses that are not easy to find or navigate to from the current site.*

# site map

With a goal of highlighting such resources for the “everyday user” this new sitemap lays out a much more robust site that hinges on a **3 tab navigation** that will quickly direct users to consumer resources, business resources, or the general FTC information.

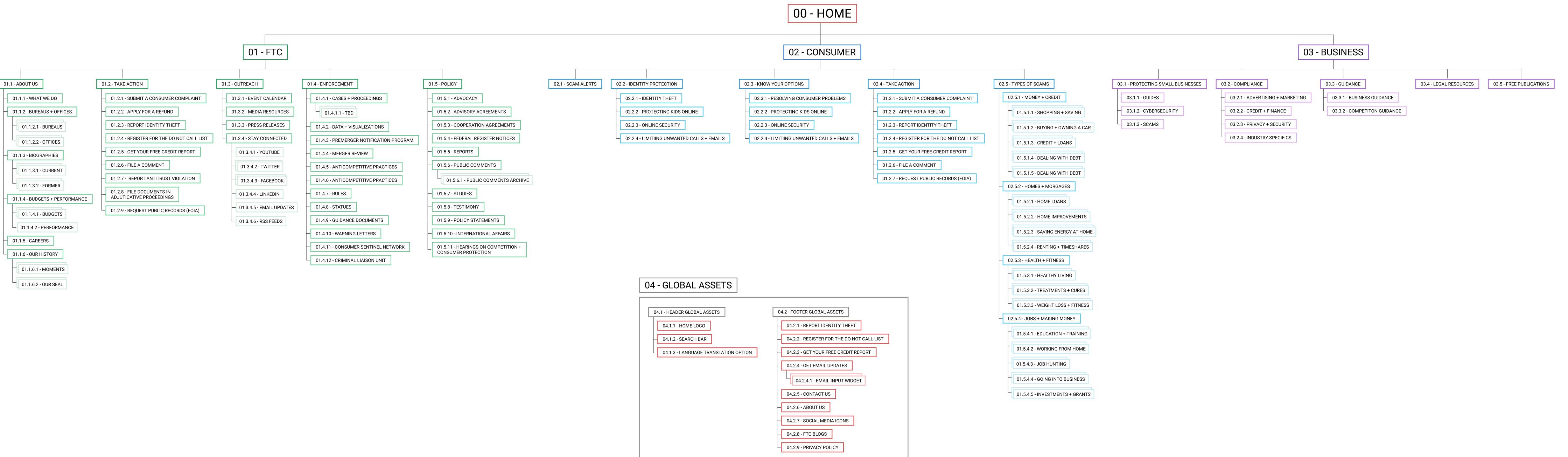


fig. 5 – revised site map with three-tab structure

# wireframing + lo-fi iteration

## initial wireframing

Instead of starting with sketches this process actually **began in XD with some rapid lo-fi prototypes**. While considering the site maps 3-tab structure the UI started with a **focus on three file folder style tabs** that remain at the top of every page no matter the viewport size. Also a use of card-style **content chunks allow for flowing content** that expands or stacks with the changing of viewport size.

These prototypes served as a good stepping stone for **discovery and exploration**. They are were the basis for developing a **component system in Adobe XD**.

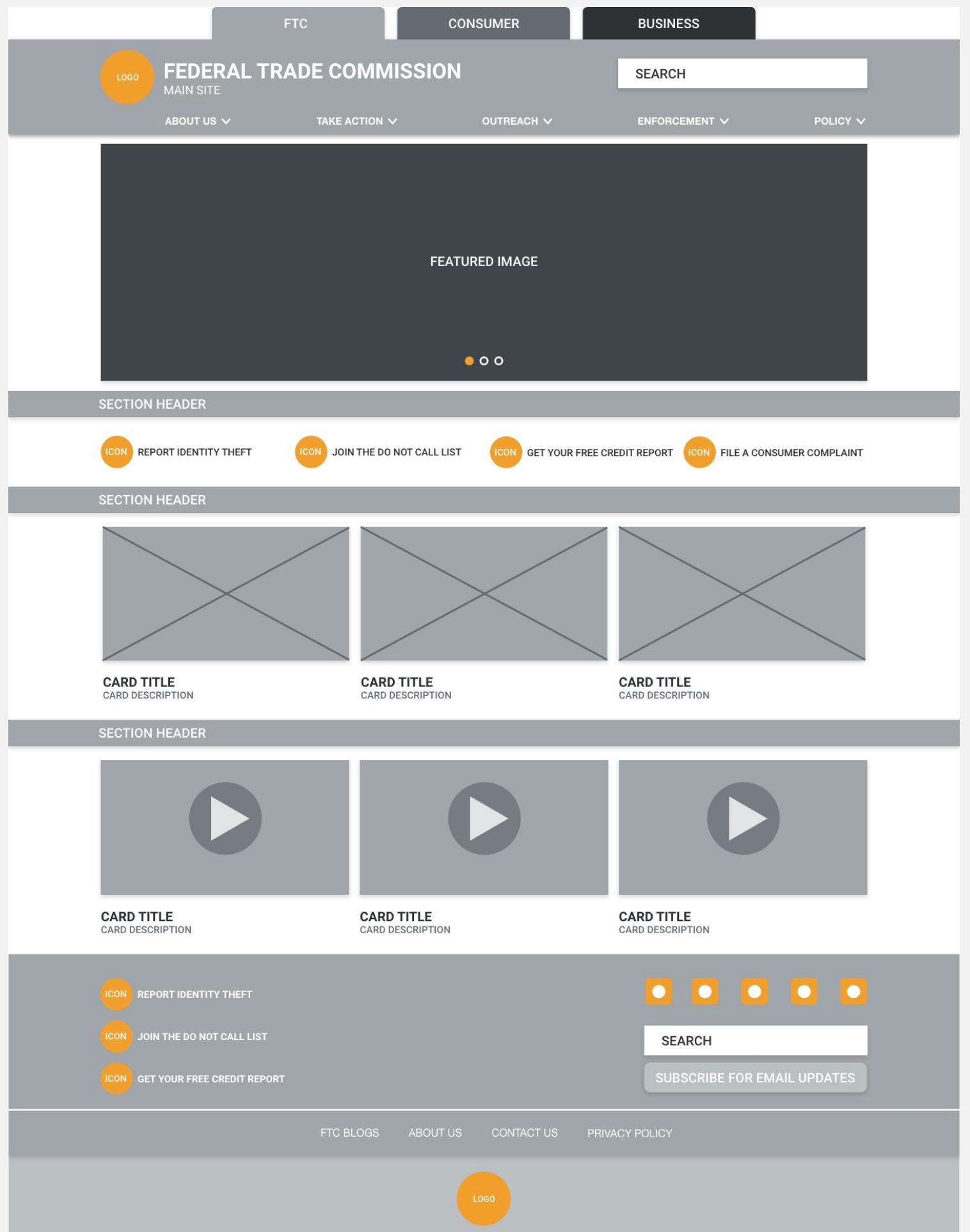


fig. 6 - initial lo-fi wireframe

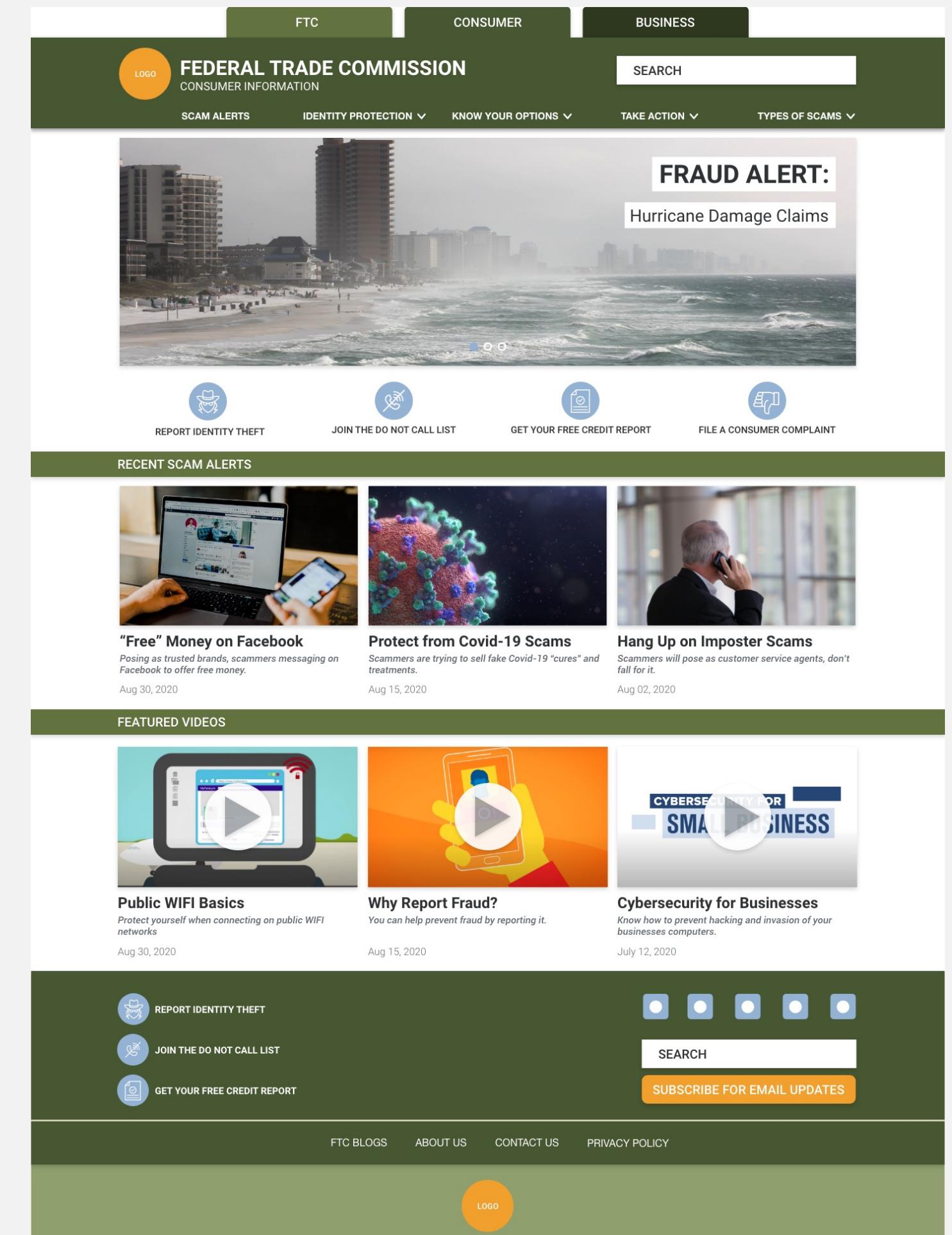


fig. 7 - mid-fi clickable prototype

# revised wireframes

After having used the first wireframe for a 5-second test, some feedback was given that **the layout looked dated**. Although that was one comment, it resonated with concerns I had already had about the visual execution.

With this in mind I went **back to the “drawing board”** i.e. Miro, to work on some new wireframes that felt less blocky and had a **different way of communicating the “3-tab navigation”** without the file-folder shape.

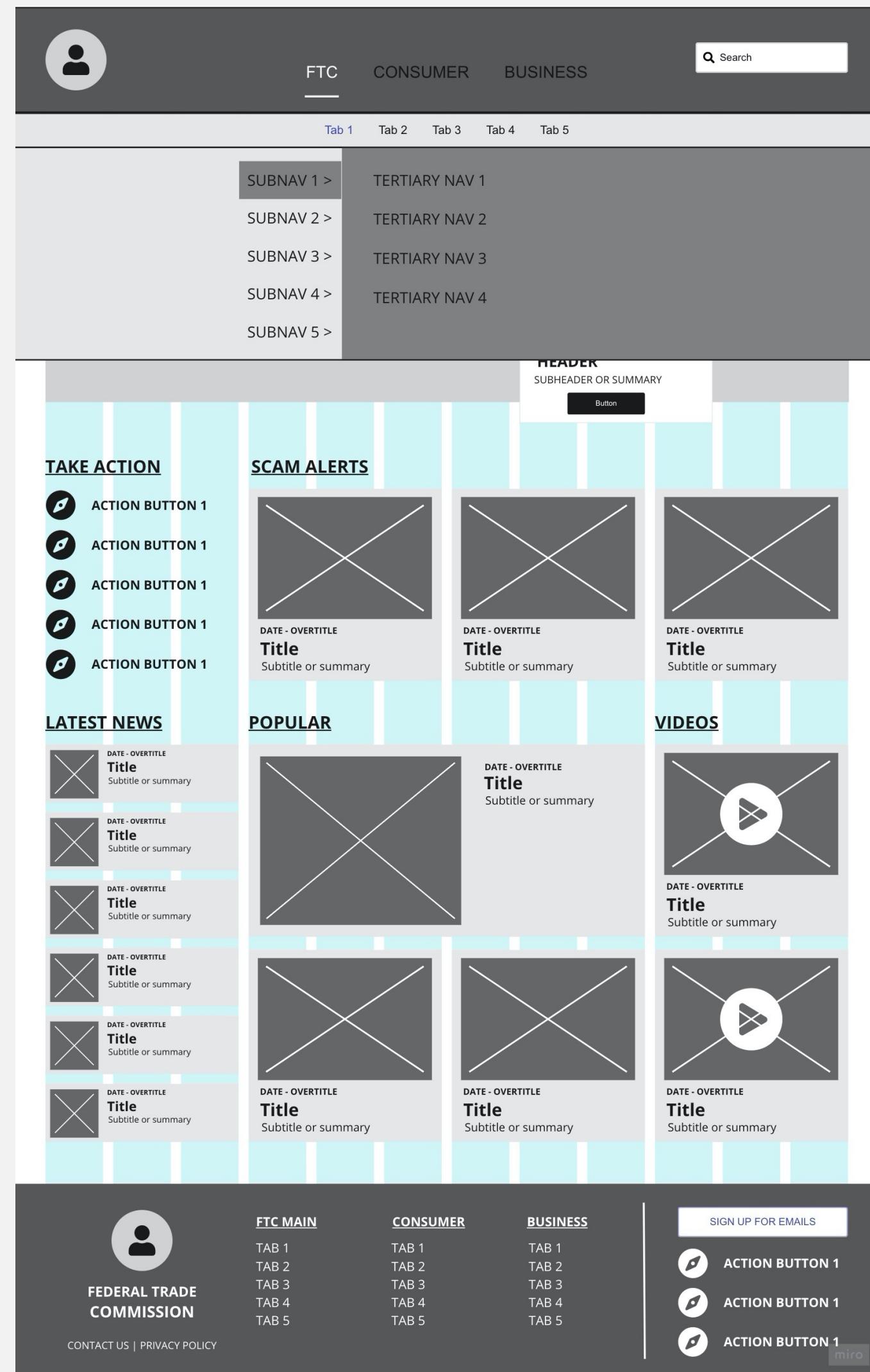


fig. 8 – revised wireframe

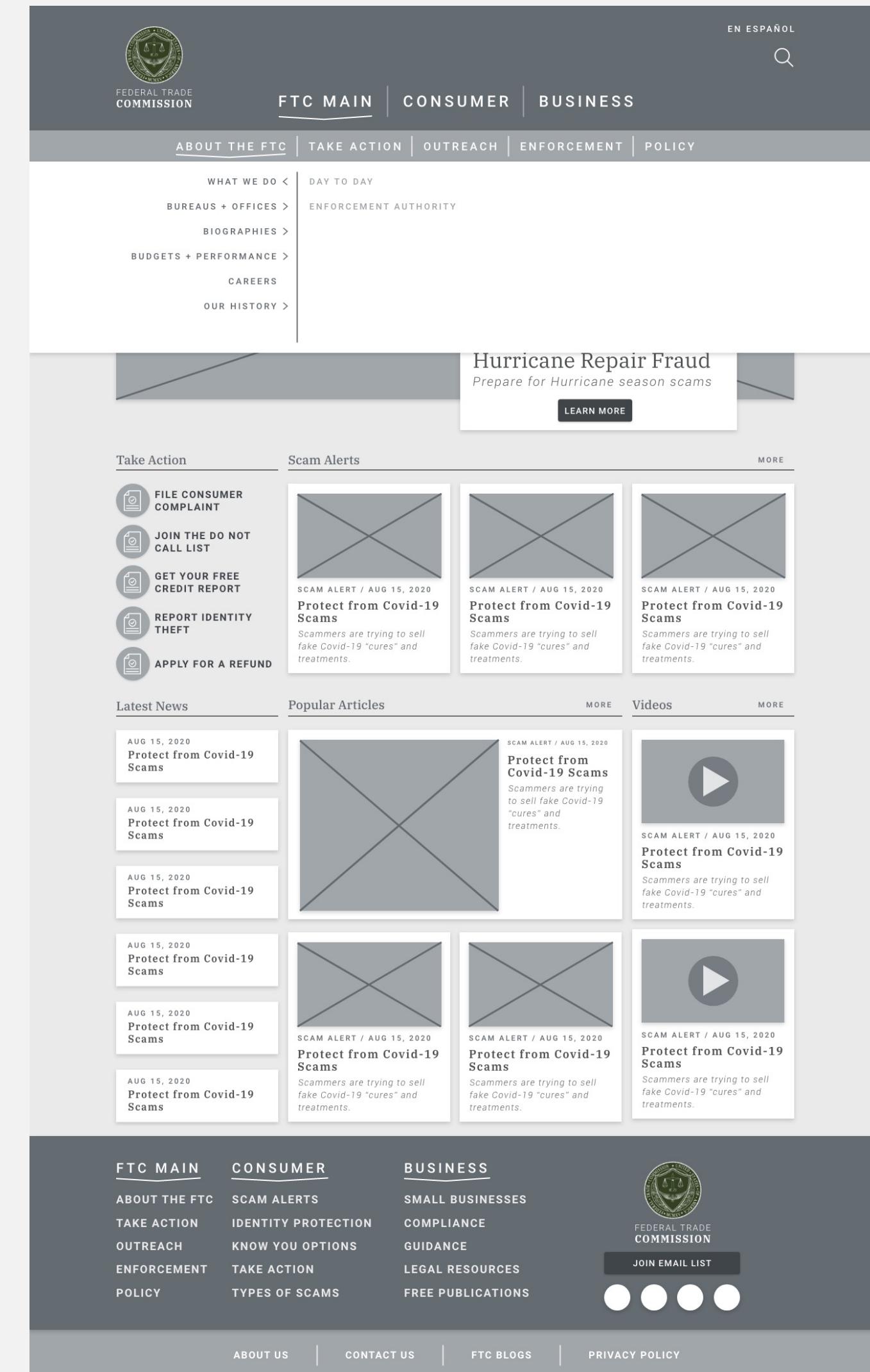


fig. 9 – revised lo-fi prototype

# style guide

The aesthetics for FTC.gov were very basic and relied heavily on the typical government blue color scheme. This new style guide provided direction for fresh aesthetic elements that still kept a traditional feel.

## FTC UI Style Tile

Page 1

Shift color scheme from blue to green as a primary color. This changes alludes to the financial basis of the organization but is also a calm, trustworthy, and refreshing color. I want to balance the old-school traditional feel of a typical government agency with more clean and simple design techniques of modern sites.

### Characteristics

Down to Earth: The content of this site can come across as very elitist. The redesign needs to think more about the everyday person visiting who is trying to better understand the system.

Approachable: Communicating financial content can be overwhelming. More than likely the user has had a negative experience and is seeking the site for help. The site needs to be clear and welcoming to help manage the fears and anxieties of the visitor.

Organized: Takes text heavy content and displays it in a way that is easy to scan and navigate. Makes use of cards, internal scrolling, and drop downs to condense information.

### Typography

## Headline 1

### Subtitle 1

### Body 1

## Headline 2

### Subtitle 1

### Body 1

### OVERLINE/BUTTON

IBM Plex Serif  
Semibold 48 pt

Roboto Medium Italic 24 pt  
Roboto Regular 16 pt

IBM Plex Serif Medium 34 pt

Roboto Medium Italic 20 pt  
Roboto Regular 14 pt

Roboto Medium 12 pt

### Logo

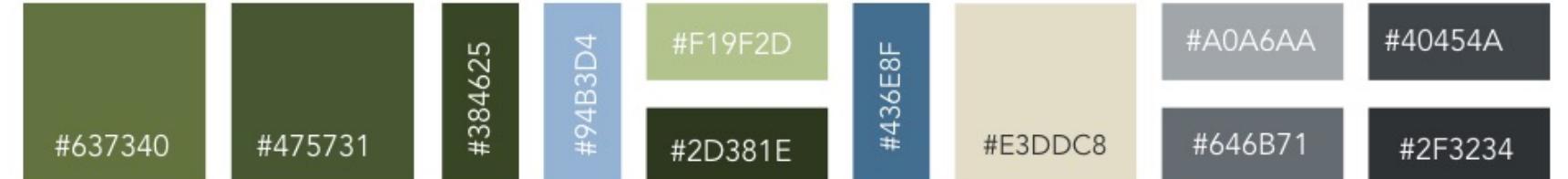


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COMMISSION

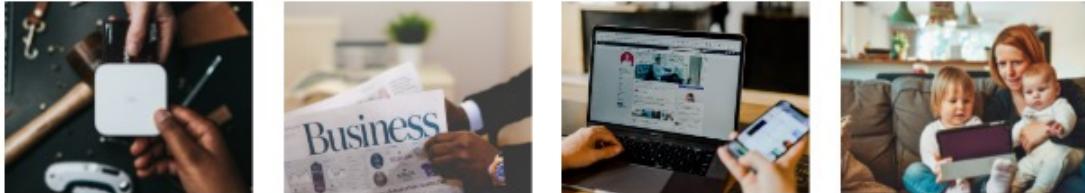


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### Color Palette



### Image Samples

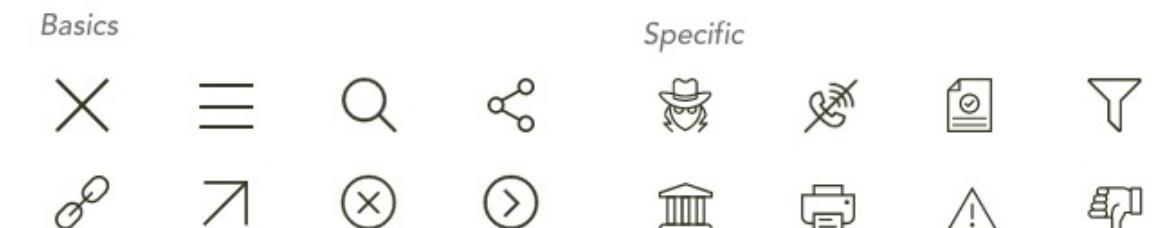


### Graphic Patterns

The graphics for the new FTC site will feature clean lines and flat graphics that closely align with material design guides. This choice is inspired by vintage graphics.



### Iconography



Thin lines, outlined style, and leaning toward more detail than very simple.



fig. 10 - style guide page one

## FTC UI Style Tile

Page 2

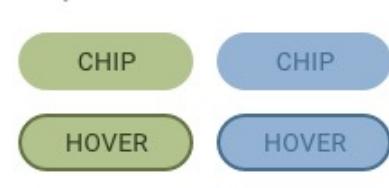
### Profile Images



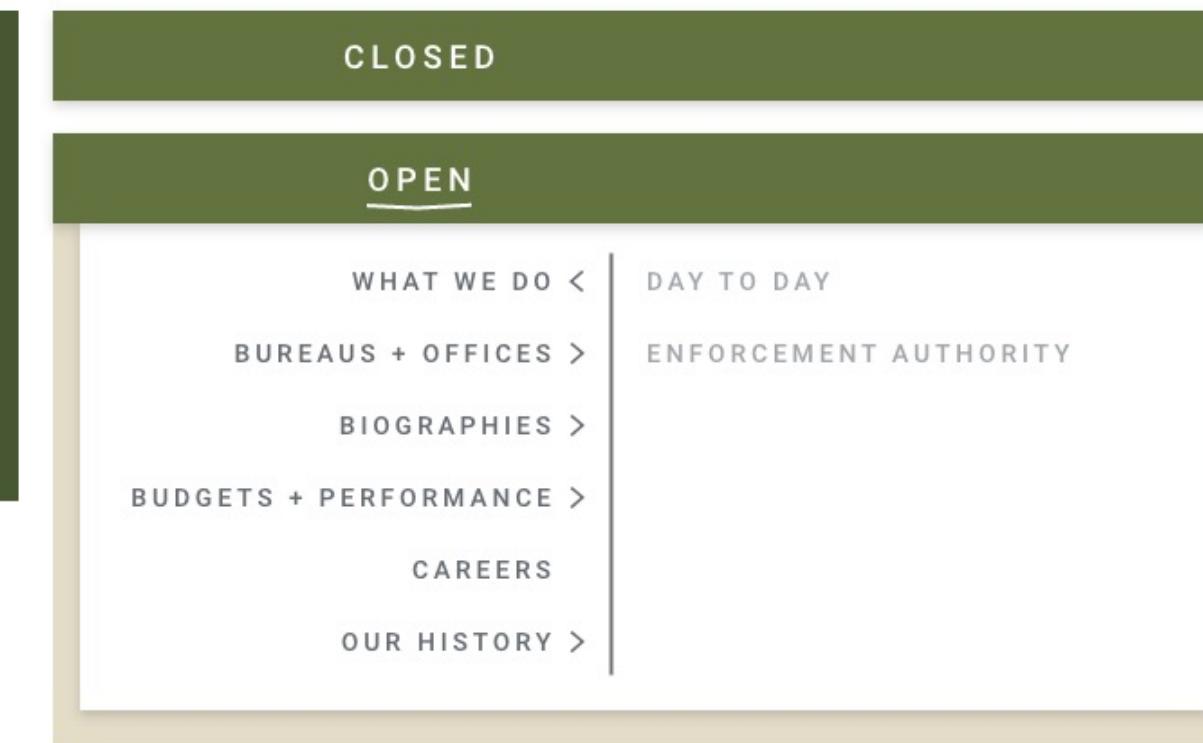
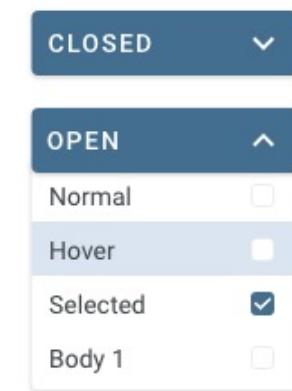
### Tabs



### Chips



### Dropdowns



### Input Fields

Idle/Normal

Focus

Filled

Error

### Button States



BUTTON

BUTTON

BUTTON

BUTTON

BUTTON

Normal  
Hover  
Focus  
Pressed  
Disabled

### Search Bar

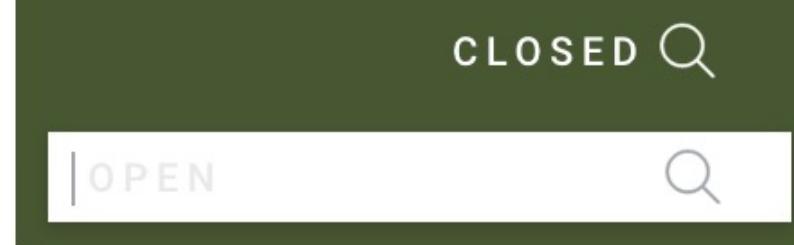


fig. 11 - style guide page two

# hi-fi prototyping + testing

The development of the hi-fidelity mock came together quickly with the use of established components from the lo-fi prototype and the use of color and character styles from the style guide.

The screenshot shows the desktop version of the FTC website. At the top, there's a dark green header bar with the FTC seal and the text "FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION". Below it, a secondary navigation bar has "FTC MAIN", "CONSUMER", and "BUSINESS" tabs, with "CONSUMER" being underlined. A "SEARCH" icon is on the right. The main content area features a large image of a beach with buildings in the background. Overlaid on this is a white box containing a "SCAM ALERT" titled "Hurricane Repair Fraud" with the subtitle "Prepare for Hurricane season scams". Below this are two sections: "Take Action" with icons for filing consumer complaints, joining the do-not-call list, getting free credit reports, reporting identity theft, and applying for refunds; and "Latest News" with links to various articles like "Why Report Fraud?", "Online Safety for your Family", and "Avoid Post-disaster Scams". The footer contains links for "ABOUT THE FTC", "TAKE ACTION", "OUTREACH", "ENFORCEMENT", and "POLICY" under the "FTC MAIN" category, and "SCAM ALERTS", "IDENTITY PROTECTION", "KNOW YOU OPTIONS", "TAKE ACTION", and "TYPES OF SCAMS" under the "CONSUMER" category. It also includes links for "SMALL BUSINESSES", "COMPLIANCE", "GUIDANCE", "LEGAL RESOURCES", and "FREE PUBLICATIONS" under the "BUSINESS" category. Social media links for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are at the bottom.

fig. 12 - hi-fi desktop clickable prototype

The screenshot shows the mobile version of the FTC website. The layout is similar to the desktop version but adapted for a smaller screen. The top navigation bar includes the FTC seal, "EN ESPAÑOL", and a search bar. The main content area features a large image of a beach. Overlaid is a "SCAM ALERT" for "Hurricane Repair Fraud". Below are sections for "Take Action" and "Popular Articles". The "Popular Articles" section includes links to "Online Safety for your Family" and "Loot Box Play?". The "Videos" section has a thumbnail for "CYBERSECURITY FOR SMALL BUSINESS". The footer includes a "JOIN EMAIL LIST" button, social media links for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and dropdown menus for "FTC MAIN", "CONSUMER", and "BUSINESS".

fig. 13 - hi-fi mobile clickable prototype

## final user testing

### GOAL

The main goal of the test is to **confirm that the 3-tab structure that better highlights the FTC's consumer and business resources is understandable**. The intent is the **users see the sections as distinct** and can easily navigate within and between the sections.

### METHOD

To validate the efficacy of this new design **8 usability tests were conducted**. Each test had 8 tasks to lead the participants through the site. The test was led with **4 participants on the mobile prototype and 4 participants on the desktop prototype**. The tests were conducted via Zoom, each participant was given a prototype URL and asked to share their screen while being recorded.

*"Better than expected"*

- Terri

*"Straight-forward"*

-Ken, Terri, + Jess

*"Tasteful [for a] government site"*

-Kennedy

### RESULTS

Each prototype (Mobile and Desktop) had a 93.75% success rate between the 4 participants. Although not a perfect comparison, this is an improvement from the 89% success rate found during testing of the original site.

# final prototype

*The greatest asset of the usability tests was the commentary from the participants during the test rather than the statistical results of the tests. The three main changes to the site based on user feedback were:*

## hero title

Globally changed the hero title to lay on top of the hero image. I got multiple comments that the previous title looked too much like an intrusive pop-up.

## eliminated side-scroll

To make the design more responsive and functional on any mobile touch device I replaced the side-scroll article cards with smaller list style cards.

## announcement section

I had many questions regarding the FTC's response to Covid-19. Therefore added a collapsible announcement section.

The image shows a laptop and a smartphone displaying the official website of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The website features a dark green header with the FTC logo, navigation links for 'FTC MAIN', 'CONSUMER', and 'BUSINESS', and a search bar. A banner at the top reads 'AN OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. LEARN HOW TO KNOW ITS OFFICIAL.' Below the banner, there is an announcement about the 'Coronavirus Policy' and a 'SCAM ALERT' for 'Hurricane Repair Fraud'. The laptop screen also shows sections for 'Take Action' (with links to file consumer complaints, join the do-not-call list, and get free credit reports) and 'Scam Alerts' (with three examples from August 2020). The smartphone screen shows a similar layout but with a different background image and a simplified 'Take Action' section.

AN OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. LEARN HOW TO KNOW ITS OFFICIAL.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

EN ESPAÑOL

FTC MAIN | CONSUMER | BUSINESS

ABOUT THE FTC | TAKE ACTION | OUTREACH | ENFORCEMENT | POLICY

ANNOUNCEMENT:  
Coronavirus Policy  
See how the FTC is reacting to COVID-19

SCAM ALERT  
Hurricane Repair Fraud  
Prepare for Hurricane season scams

Take Action MORE Scam Alerts MORE

FILE CONSUMER COMPLAINT  
JOIN THE DO NOT CALL LIST  
GET YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT

SCAM ALERT / AUG 21, 2020 SCAM ALERT / AUG 15, 2020 SCAM ALERT / AUG 9, 2020

EN ESPAÑOL

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

FTC MAIN | CONSUMER | BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENT:  
Coronavirus Policy  
See how the FTC is reacting to COVID-19

SCAM ALERT  
Hurricane Repair Fraud  
Prepare for Hurricane season scams

Take Action MORE

FILE CONSUMER COMPLAINT

# thanks for reading

*If you're interested in seeing more of my work let's connect! You can find me and a large variety of my work on linkedin and behance or you can contact me directly via email.*

linkedin

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kyla-beals/>

behance

<https://www.behance.net/kylabeals>

email

kylabydesign@gmail.com