

Document Design Takeaways

If you had asked me to outline a document design process before this class, I would have told you to just whip up a draft, ask a higher-up if any changes need to be made, and hit “publish” on it the same day. At least, that’s what I do at work when I have to write up a new workflow. My manager will review the document and post it on our team drive for everyone to use, and that’s that. Now, I can tell you that the process is incredibly more iterative and circular than that.

Outside of just getting a document generated, it’s important to consider stakeholders’ demands and users’ interactions with the information. Even the least nitpicky clients should be given options and choices for branding and themes for their information products. Usability should be a priority as well: intended users of the information should be involved in the usability testing process.

With all these different factors to consider and provide feedback during the design process, it really necessitates patience and a solid plan. To me, this is a lot more systematic than I would have predicted before this class. I’m actually in the process of transition roles at work to more of a coordination emphasis rather than task-specific, so the timing is kind of perfect for me to wrap up this course. The documents that we produce are scientific journal articles, and although the process is already ironed out fairly well, I will be in a better position to revamp where I might see fit and oversee the process as a whole of individual steps.

Aside from this process, I’ve also really enjoyed becoming more familiar with Microsoft Publisher. I regret that I didn’t chose Adobe to get experience with it, but Publisher has definitely been adequate for what I was doing. I was a bit intimidated by starting from essentially zero, but the components of the modules such as the competitive analysis made the process much more linear than I would have guessed, and for that, I’m glad.

DURHAM COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND

BRAND STRATEGY KIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Durham Community Concert Band's website, www.durhamband.org, deserves a fresh face and overhaul to keep up with the band's acclaim in the community. As it currently functions, there are a number of issues with the DCCB website that detract from its full potential of being informative and persuasive. As part of this overhaul, I also provide a comprehensive brand kit that includes a social media image package and an email newsletter template.

GOALS

Community band website typically have two objectives:

1. Inform about upcoming concerts.
 - a. This is accomplished by clearly organizing the website so that information about the concerts is:
 - i. Easily accessible
 - ii. Up to date
2. Persuade prospective members to attend a rehearsal and consider joining the band.
 - a. This is accomplished by clearly communicating rehearsal information and membership stipulations, if any.
 - b. Additionally, prospective members will want to gain an idea about the caliber of the ensemble.
 - i. Links to past videos of past performances are helpful.
 - ii. Information about past repertoire will also help.

It is safe to assume that these are the main objectives of the DCCB website as well. An improved website will increase marketability for the band, leading to more sponsorships and more involved members, which are essential for the maintenance and growth of the organization.

METHODS

A number of steps were involved the process of generating this brand strategy kit. First, the DCCB website was evaluated for its design and information architecture strengths and weaknesses. This led to preliminary findings regarding the website's deficiencies and pointed the investigation in the right direction in order to determine how well the website was fulfilling goals one and two above.

Second, a competitive analysis was performed in order to compare how well the website was performing versus its potential competitors, which I identified as the

Triangle Wind Ensemble and the Triangle Brass Band. While these are audition-based ensembles, their websites are in the upper echelon of comparable area bands, so their websites were chosen for the competitive analysis.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation found a number of points in the DCCB that need revising. First, information should be reorganized to optimize the efficiency of the navigation menu. Second, a new color and font scheme should be chosen in order to make the page more inviting and interesting. Third, all information present on the home page of the website should also be categorized into a page in the navigation menu, so that nothing is found on the home page that is not also present on a separate page. Finally, the integration of photos should be revised so that they appear to accentuate information, rather than distract from information.

CREATIVE BRIEF

GENERAL DESIGN ISSUES (SEE IMAGE 1):

1. *Excessive Centering.*
 - a. Centering is pervasive throughout the entire site, leading to jagged edges of text which are uninviting.
2. *Color scheme* is dark, uninviting, does not match top banner.
 - a. Black on white, white on grey. The occasional maroon text does not match the red in the banner.
3. *Underlined links* throughout website.
 - a. There is a social media button linking to the band's Facebook page, but underlined plain text links (on the opposite side of the home page) lead to Youtube and Twitter accounts.
4. Main page has *two columns of text with no clear distinction* other than font size; the *categories* of the columns are unclear as well. Announcements? News?
 - a. Main page really needs reorganization and a cohesive mission.
5. *Trapped negative space* throughout website.
 - a. The eye wanders to the large amounts of white space introduced by the centering, rather than to important content.
6. *Images* are not very neatly integrated.
 - a. Main page has an image directly under the banner, which pushes down important text.



IMAGE 1: GENERAL DESIGN ISSUES

COMPETITORS:

The Triangle plays host to many community bands; if one lives in a central location, they may be able to freely choose which band to join without considering travel times. Community concert bands are generally non-competitive between each other; however, a tentative musician may peruse each website to try to get a better feel for each ensemble. Prospective competition includes:

1. The Village Band, Chapel Hill, <http://www.thevillageband.org/> (VB)
2. Raleigh Concert Band, Raleigh, <https://thercb.org/> (RCB)
3. Cary Town Band, Cary, <http://www.carytownband.org/> (CTB)
4. Triangle Wind Ensemble, <https://www.trianglewind.org/> (TWE)
 - a. Note: this ensemble differs as it is audition-based, however, its website will not differ in its primary objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: INFORMING ABOUT PERFORMANCES

The DCCB webpage should reorganize its information pertaining to upcoming concerts and keep the website updated at all times

- *Navigation (Image 2)*: navigation of the website is currently placed on the left-hand side of the page, underneath the top banner. There are currently 13 navigation links. A reader may not want to poke through 13 separate pages to find information.
 - Navigation should be moved to the top so that the eye anchors to the first post on the home page, rather than the navigation menu.
 - The links should be grouped into a lesser number of drop-down links.
 - Two of the competitive organizations do not suffer from the issue, while two of them do. In order to place itself in the upper echelon of Triangle community band websites, the DCCB should consider reorganizing its navigation in this manner.
- *Calendar (Image 3)*: at the first draft of this brief, the home page was still advertising a “next concert” that happened in December, nearly a month prior.
 - The website should be kept up-to-date to better inform readers.
 - The DCCB should provide a “season schedule” as the other community bands have done. Currently, the concert calendar is provided as an embedded Google calendar, which detracts from the cohesiveness of the website.

Navigation

Home

Calendar
DCCB News
Our Director
Our Music
Photos
Links
Board and Member Information
History
Sponsor DCCB!
Send Us an Email
Join Our Mailing List
Application for Band Camp
Scholarship (Download)

IMAGE 2: NAVIGATION ISSUES

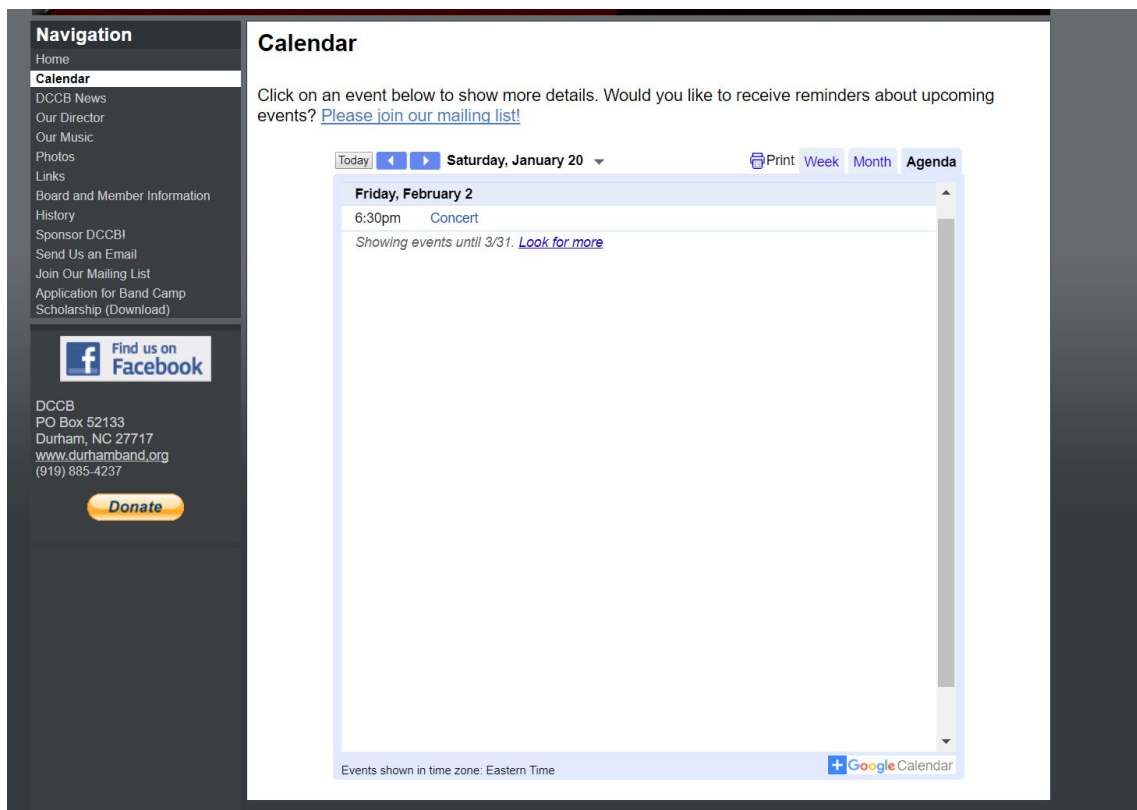


IMAGE 3:
CALENDAR

OBJECTIVE 2: ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS

Due to a lack of content organization, the DCCB may be missing out on prospective members.

- Information for prospective members is only present on homepage (Image 4).
 - This information is only visible after scrolling down. There is no link to a separate page with this information in the navigation menu. There is no point of contact for questions.



IMAGE 4: NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

- Ensemble information
 - The full past repertoire is not on the web page. If this information is available, it should be made public and current so that prospective members can make a more informed decision.
 - The "Our Music" page only has videos of performances through 2015. If newer videos are available, they should be posted.
 - There is a link to a CD available for purchase with recordings of the band, but this information is only available through scrolling down on the home page. This should be moved to the navigation instead.
 - As mentioned in section C, there is no full season schedule posted on the website. Prospective members will be looking for this information.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

FINDINGS REPORT

1. A **new site banner** should be designed that is built from an interesting color scheme, or a high-quality ensemble photo should be chosen for the site's banner.
2. **Text and images** throughout the site **should be resized** so that they counterbalance each other. Images should be narrowed down to one to two per page.
3. The **site should be redesigned** so that **images** and **text** work in **harmony** with each other. Lopsided pages should have some sort of counter-balance, either textual or image, to evenly distributed visual weight.
4. A **new color and font scheme** should be chosen that makes the sight pleasing to look at and easy to read. This color scheme should be used consistently throughout the navigation and individual pages so that the site feels coherent.
5. **Information** should be **better organized** so that there are not rivers of white space up and down pages, between columns of text.
6. The **navigation should be reconstructed** with fewer links in the bar and instead repositioned with drop-down sections. The navigation bar should be moved to the top of the page with a horizontal orientation.
7. **Performance schedule** and **new member information** should be **moved to the navigation**. The home page should advertise the next concert and have a small "about" section with rehearsal information. The performance schedule should be rebuilt so that it is visually interesting, and there should be a separate tab for potential member information in the navigation.

TABLE 1: COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET

Criteria:	Focal point	Effectively integrates images	Use of rhythm, movement, balance	Has a pleasing color theme; Use of interesting fonts	Practical use of white space	Easily navigable	Performance schedule + Prospective member information
DCCB	No	Images are too big	The side navigation draws the eye, the two columns are different widths	no	Too much blank space due to centered text	Navigation needs to be simplified, social links are everywhere	Only on home page, no link in navigation, no point of contact
TBB	Yes	The entire website has images on every screen,	images are balanced by large text, bold colors that match the images	The red and blue are used as accents against a clean black on white scheme.	Blocks of text take up their windows and are proportionate	Navigation at top is clear and content is sensibly organized.	"come to our next concert" verbiage on main page. No prospective member info found.
TWE	Yes	Images are not overpowering and are rotating, which provides good movement	Rotating images provide movement, are balanced out by appropriate amounts of text.	Gold, white. Black match the small triangular logo, and text is provided as black on white background.	Very minimal white space; page is wide on its background, images/text integrated into blank spaces	Navigation at top is clear and content is sensibly organized.	Thematic banners per concert. Prospective member info is clear, outlined, and easy to access.

PROTOTYPES

I have provided a number of prototypes with complete overhauls of each aspect of the DCCB brand. The colors and font scheme are inspired by the city of Durham's own flag and government style guide.

WEB PAGE REDESIGN



SOCIAL MEDIA PACKAGE



[Problems viewing this email? Click here for browser version.](#)

Durham Community Concert Band

Summer Newsletter

June 1st 2018

Upcoming Events:

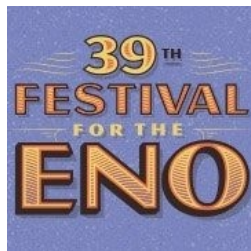
◇ *We are excited for the third annual...*

Triangle Community Band Festival

Saturday, June 16th, 4:00pm

Durham Central Park

This concert is always a wonderful time to meet and mingle with fellow Triangle community bands and for each ensemble to showcase some of their season's work! We hope you'll bring a chair or a blanket and enjoy the afternoon with us!



For information about EnoFest, click the image

◇ *And mark your calendars for...*

Festival for the Eno

Wednesday, July 4th, 12:00pm

West Point on the Eno

Band members get free admission to EnoFest, so come out early to experience the various performances by wonderful local musicians and artists. Our performance is at midday, with plenty of time on either side to soak in the river and eat delicious local food!

Rehearsal reminders

- **Thursdays**
- **7:15pm-9:15pm**
- **Durham Arts Council**

Remember!

- **No rehearsals between July 4th and August 15th**

A Note from the Director

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, id conceptam deseruisse ullamcorper est, mundi tacimates delicata sea ad. Cu facer assentior constituam eam. Eum libris ceteros cotidieque et. Eum tale atqui temporibus eu, ne agam tantas apeirian vis.

Member Spotlight

Cu facer assentior constituam eam. Eum libris ceteros cotidieque et. Eum tale atqui temporibus eu, ne agam tantas apeirian vis.

