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Hitchbot

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The Hitchbot website at first sight confuses; there is nothing to first take your attention or to first explain what this obscure project is. Hitchbot is a hitchhiking robot and that needs to be communicated easily. It's also a fun project and deserves to have a fun webpage.

I am thinking about maybe having a hero image: a cartoon design of hitchbot and having an about statement clearly placed below him. As the users scroll down the about statement disappeared and the hitchbot graphic is covered up to only show a bust on the banner. On the home page there will be a clear simple page with clear social media links and hitchbot's most recent activity/post. In the bar under the banner will be links to an about page, a hitchhiking log, a contacts page, a family page, a news and Media page and a gallery.

I hope to draw people from not only social media but also those who stumble upon the actual robot. In general I am hoping to draw people between the ages of 16-50 as they are most likely the people to help hitchbot on his journeys or support hitchbot's team. I am also trying to gear the website more towards the whimsical side of the population as this project is still in its earliest stages and it's future is still ambiguous.

Since Hitchbot is a private not-for-profit project and completely unique, it’s website won’t have that many Competitors. Instead of looking at competitors I will look comparatively at similar websites trying to advertise their projects/products after already grabbing the persons initial attention. The first website I looked at was glowforge.com, a website I looked up after already being intrigued from an online source. The Glowforge Website titillates at first sight with a giant hero video, a simple description and a link to “see how it works”. Immediately you have some questions answered and are directed simply to the next step. If you choose not to “see how it works” the nifty menu bar is pinned to the top and has links to it’s most important pages, such as “about us”. These Techniques will come in handy in cleaning up Hitchbot’s website, the design also has good flow and is easy to use and learn. Though the home page can get a bit lengthy and could take you down many levels, the site isn’t that deep by following the menu bar, and keeps everything simple, follow-able and understandable. But what about the other mechanic drawing in the people to the Hitchbot website: the in-person experience? Molson Canadian’s latest Ad campaign featured a fridge that would only opened when 6 different people said “I am Canadian” to the fridge in 6 different languages. Once the fridge was unlocked the people gained access to the free beer inside. Though no overt signage was placed on the fridge, it was the beer bottles that would’ve drew more attention, reading Molson Canadian. The Molson website has a large background image and a clear beer bottle on the first page. Then in a scrolling slideshow is advertisements for different products and the fridge itself, inviting the people involved to learn more about their experience. Or, if they rather choose to look around the website that is very easily done. It seems as if because Molson is looking for a profit it is easy to become lost in its advertising, which works for them, but not so much Hitchbot. But we could also use this tactic to create more involvement between Hitchbot and his followers. The website is on the simpler side and keeps most of it’s content brief.

Content will remain pretty much the same as the existing site, but with better organization. What I would like to add is a new banner/hero image that I will render myself on Adobe Illutstator and links to the most recent popular news article about Hitchbot. I would also like to include an updating twitter feed. Also I would Like to incorporate some sort of cognitive response software so that younger audiences can intereact with Hitchbot online also (whether this is too ambitious: time will tell)

Some tech requirements include: a facebook feed widget, and an updating twitter feed widget. Also if I could incorporate a feed for Hitchbot in the news that would probably be best. In addition Hitchbot has on their site a Guestbook. What they are using now is a facebook comments plug-in which is something I’m interested in recreating with an option of not logging into facebook for those younger audiences. Tech requirements also include either finding or borrowing or creating a primitive cognitive response software in order to create the “chat with Hitchbot” featurette.