



**BALLARD CENTER**  
BYU MARRIOTT

# WEBSITE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

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# WEBSITE ANALYTICS

## **INTRODUCTION:**

To aid us in creating an educated plan for our upcoming brand and website redesign, we researched current best web practices. We also looked at the website analytics of two organizations we would like to become comparable to: the Harvard Social Innovation and Change Initiative and the Stanford Social Innovation Review. Listed below is a summary of comparisons we made, along with our conclusions as to how we can perform better.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Authority Score: Authority Score is SemRush's proprietary metric used to measure overall quality of domain and influence on SEO. The score is based on the number of backlinks, referring domains, organic search traffic, and other data

Backlinks: The number of links on other websites that refer back to us.

Referring Domains: Web Domains that link back to us

Position: The position an analyzed domain gets in organic search results for a given keyword.

Traffic %: Percentage of traffic that was driven to the website with the given keyword.

Volume: The average number of times users have searched for a given keyword per month. We calculate this value over the last 12 months.

Keyword Difficulty (KD)%: An estimate of how difficult it would be to rank well in organic search results for a particular keyword.

# DOMAIN OVERVIEW

## Ballard Brief (ballardbrief.org)

Authority Score: 38

Backlinks: 1.8K

Referring Domains: 195

Traffic Analytics (Jan 2022):

Visits: 8.9K

Pages/Visit: 1.47

Avg. Visit Duration: 11:11

Bounce Rate: 81.01%

### Top Organic Keywords:

- adult illiteracy
- intergenerational poverty
- zoo animal mistreatment
- mistreatment of animals in zoos
- living conditions in immigration detention centers

## Harvard Social Innovation and Change Initiative (sici.hks.harvard.edu)

Authority Score: 87

Backlinks: 1.6K

Referring Domains: 326

### Top Organic Keywords:

- Morgan Dixon
- Brittany Butler
- Jean Rogers
- Harvard Social Innovation
- Brittany Butler Harvard

## Stanford Social Innovation Review (ssir.org)

Authority Score: 66

Backlinks: 992.3K

Referring Domains: 19.43K

Traffic Analytics (Jan 2022):

Visits: 141.3K

Pages/Visit: 1.27

Avg. Visit Duration: 9:10

Bounce Rate: 85.62%

### Top Organic Keywords:

- equity
- equity definition
- what does equity mean
- social entrepreneurship
- design thinking

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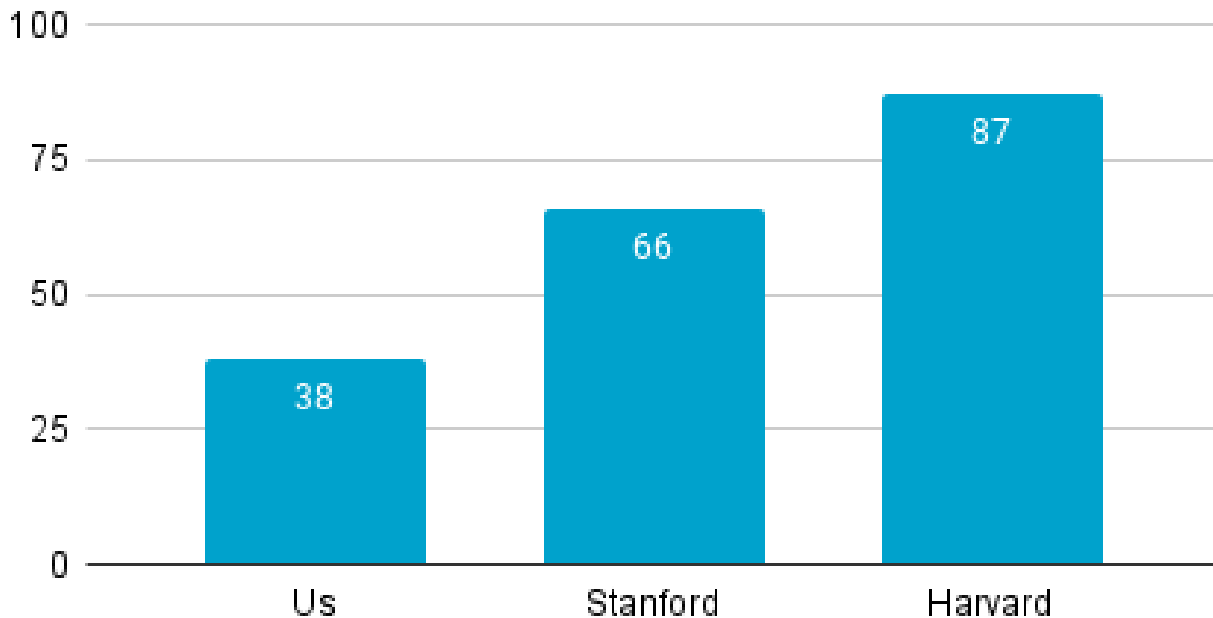
# DOMAIN ANALYTICS COMPARISONS:

This next section is dedicated to a side by side graphical comparison of several key metrics that may help us understand the gap between us and those we want to become like.

(Each comparison uses numbers from January 2021)



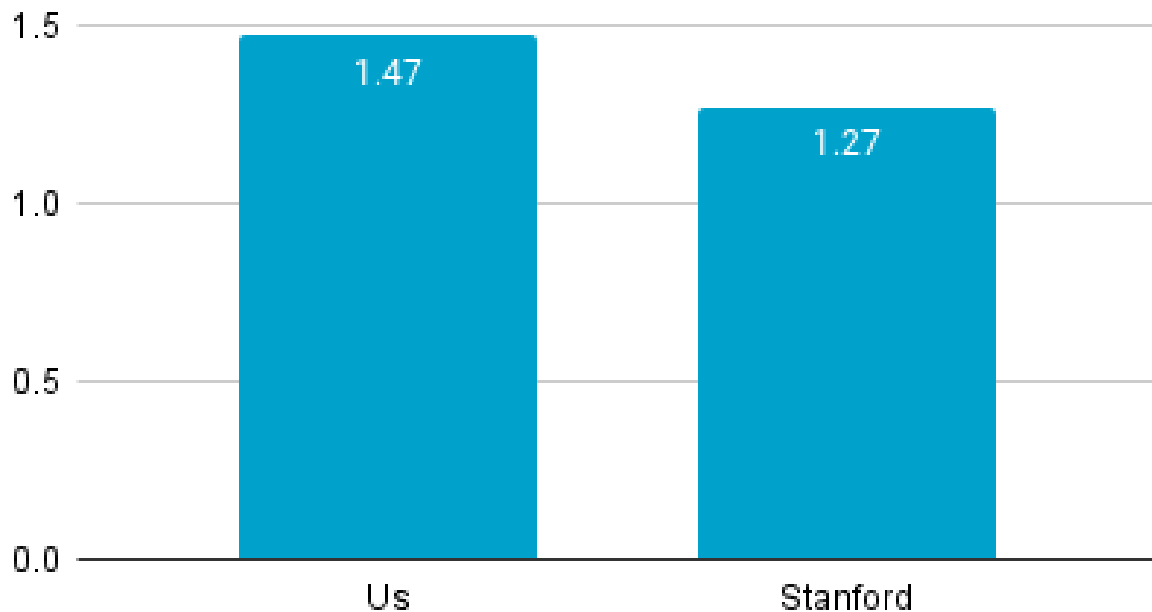
# AUTHORITY SCORE



Semrush's proprietary authority score is a measure of how much influence our website has on Search Engine results (out of 100). This is based on backlinks, organic traffic, and other metrics. Something to consider is that while the domain names and website titles of those we are comparing our self to are directly related to large, globally renowned, universities (Stanford and Harvard) the Ballard Brief is not.

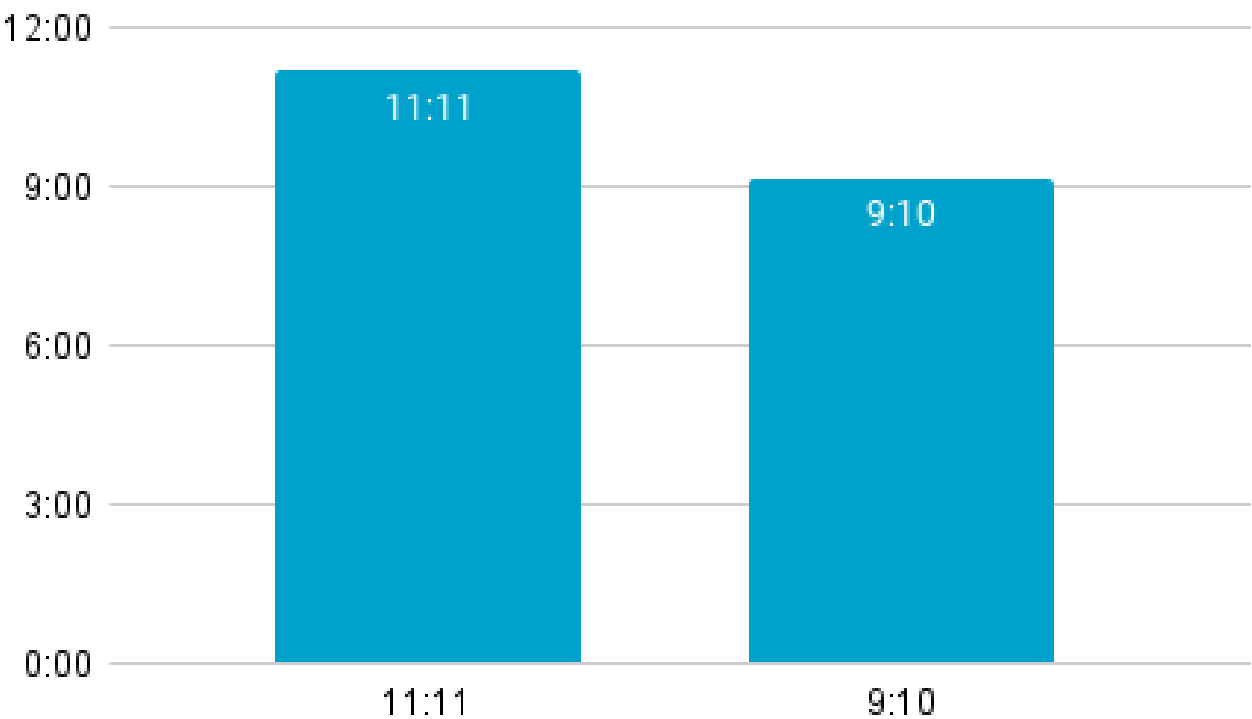
One potential way to increase traffic and backlinks is to become directly associated with our host university with a URL such as [ballardbrief.byu.edu](https://ballardbrief.byu.edu). Becoming directly associated would bring greater name recognition and likely increase our SEO score.

# PAGES/VISIT



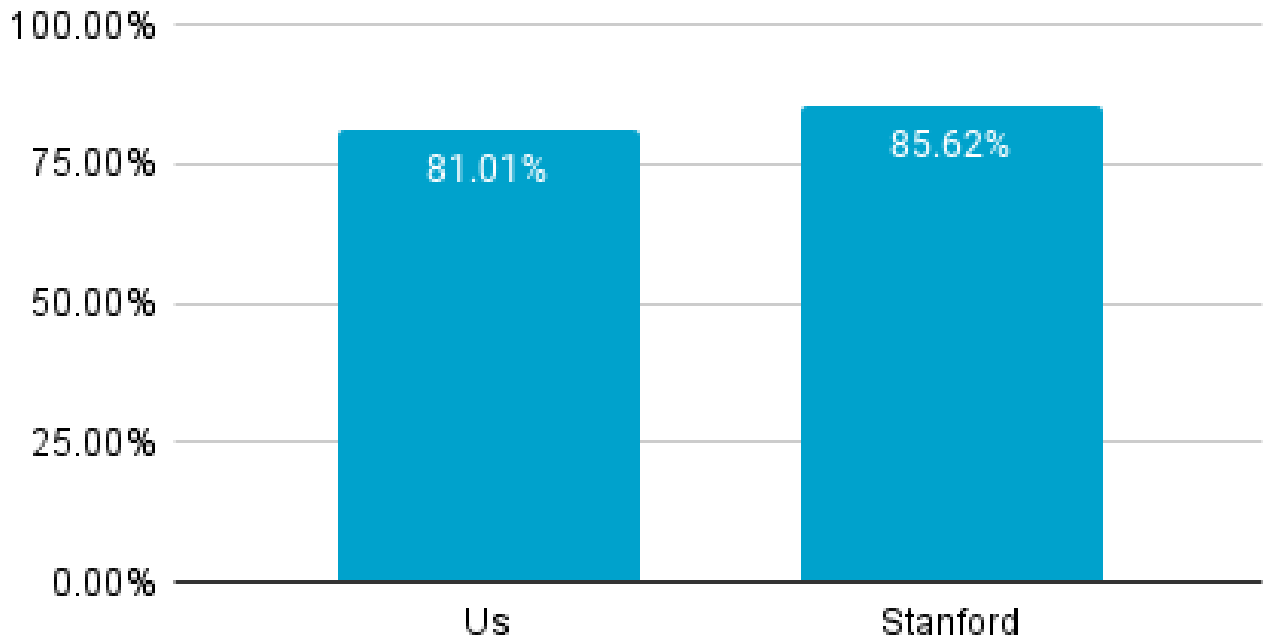
It is somewhat remarkable that despite the large gap in Authority scores (and as will be seen later, in page views) we have a higher pages/visit rate than Stanford. The reason Harvard is not shown here is because their numbers are not available on Semrush without a premium subscription as their social innovation website is a subdomain of the larger harvard.edu domain and so it requires additional tools to separate out the analytics.

# AVERAGE VISIT DURATION



Having a longer average visit duration is even more impressive than having more pages/visit. People on average spend more time on [ballardbrief.org](http://ballardbrief.org) than on [ssir.org](http://ssir.org).

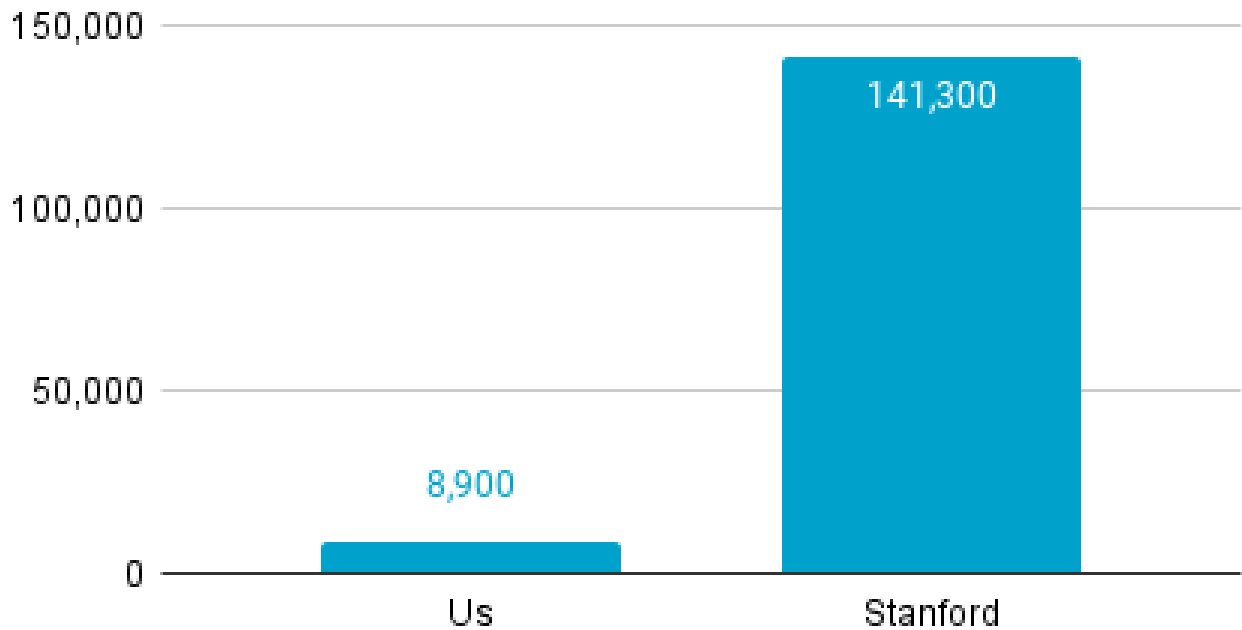
# BOUNCE RATE



While our bounce rate is nearly the same as ssir.org, this is still an impressive feat. It signals that an abysmally high bounce rate is not unique to our small library.



# VISITS



The number of visits is where there is the biggest gap between the Ballard Brief and Stanford. Though our number of visits increases every month, we still have about 130,000 less visitors per month than Stanford. Though there are likely hundreds of factors that influence these numbers, two that stand out are age and name recognition. The Stanford Social Innovation Review has the advantage in both of these factors.

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# UNDERSTANDING OUR BRAND

## 1. Value Proposition

- We help people become global citizens by providing quality research on pressing issues

## 2. Similar Organizations Pursuing Social Change

- Stanford Social Innovation Review
- Harvard Social Innovation and Change Initiative

## 3. Mission

- Our mission is to advance social impact by providing people with high-quality research and education on some of the world's most pressing social challenges. [Link Here](#)

## 4. Determine Personality

## 5. Design the logo and a template

## 6. Integrate language you can use to connect, advertise, and embody on social media

## 7. Know what to avoid.

## 8. Monitor your brand to maintain its brand identity.

## 9. Who is going to use your service? (Hint: the answers can't be "everybody")

- Students doing research
- People who want to be aware of social issues
- Professionals doing research (I think we should focus our design on these people)

## 10. Why will they use it?

- "To learn about something bigger than themselves; to understand the parts of world they don't see on a daily basis; to feel more inspired and better equipped to get involved in solving the issues they read about"
- "BECAUSE IT IS SUCH A GOOD RESOURCE!!!! The topics are SO well researched that you would be hard pressed to find something else so specific on the topic you're interested in."
- "Learn more about an issue of their choosing, perhaps for general awareness or to cite in their own research"

## 11. What problems will it solve?

## 12. What will make them want to come back again (and is it needed?)

## 13. What will make your service special?

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# BALLARD CENTER PERSONAS

**Passionate Change Maker (25%):**

- This is the BYU student who has the Ballard Center and wants to know more about social impact. They take the DGB class and get introduced to BB. They want to know all they can about issues around the world from sources they deem both approachable and trustworthy.

**Interesting-Issue Reader (50%):**

- This is the person who has been introduced to a trending topic and wants to learn more. This person finds our website through searching for keywords on the internet and is surprised to find easily consumable, viable research on the topic they want to learn more about. An easy-to-use website, helpful images & graphics, and short but info-packed briefs are important to them.

**Deep-dive Researcher (25%)**

- This is the person who is diving deep into a specific issue and has found the BB website as part of their search. They are impressed by the depth of research and quality of writing, and want to potentially cite BB in their work or utilize the knowledge in creating their social venture. Accurate citations, footnotes, and writing quality are important to them.

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# WEBSITE BEST PRACTICES

## **Make content scannable through visual hierarchy**

- In the modern era, people are overwhelmed by the sheer amount of digital content available. Because of this, users tend to "scan" through most websites, paying attention to images and headlines, but unless they feel it will benefit them, they won't read much else.
- Visual hierarchy: to arrange and organize the content on the page in the way which is the most natural for human perception.
  - "When used deliberately, it guides the visitor's attention through a series of messages, toward a call to action."  
(<https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/web-design-tips/>)
- Eye scanning patterns
  - *F shape, others as well (find source for this)*

## **Use a descriptive, keyphrase-focused headlines high on the homepage**

- Should be clear and focused, let visitors know they are in the right place

## **Have call to action at the top, but also spread throughout**

- Some users are ready to dive into the briefs as soon as they reach the homepage, but most new users will likely want to learn more about who we are and what we do, so providing additional opportunities to engage with the content as the user scrolls down the page is important

## **Show one thing at a time**

- Whitespace helps create the visual hierarchy by grouping things together and giving the content (and the user) some breathing space
- Users want visual simplicity, not complexity

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# WEBSITE BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

## **Avoid carousels and rotating sliders**

- Carousels hide content and increase page load time
- Can reduce readability and usability
- Might be good to change the dropdowns for Summary, Key Takeaways, and Key Terms blocks, just have everything showing?
  - Reason: people may not intuitively know that those are dropdowns, might never see that information because they don't know to click

## **If you are using photos, use people photos (but Avoid Stock Photos)**

- Users connect more with real people
- While stock photos are often very high quality, they often look staged and impersonal
- "Authenticity is more important than polish"

## **Add legal documents (Cookies, Privacy Policy, Terms of Use)**

- EU law requires that companies provide a cookie agreement
- Add a cookie banner

GDPR squarespace information

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# SEO AND BRANDING BEST PRACTICES

## SEO:

Determine our "key words" and include them in as many places as possible (Home page, about page, contact pages, maybe even briefs)

- Have students come up with 3-5 keywords that could be used to categorize their brief
- SEO is complicated... Best thing we can do to improve is to get more traffic through non-organic sources (social media, awareness events, etc.) so that Google is more likely to show our site to others

## BRANDING:

- Understand who you truly are and use your beliefs and values to guide your decisions in ways that are better for your people, your business, and the future.
- Communicate your brand consistently and effectively through every piece of content you make.
- Attract the right customers to build a strong, lasting brand.
- Position your brand in a way that helps you compete now—and tomorrow.

### **5 steps of branding design:**

1. Business goals and brand personality
2. Market and User research
3. Logo Design
4. Visual elements of brand
5. A style guide

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# ACTION ITEMS

- Celebrate
- Create Project Proposal
- Finalize Design
- Execute Plans