# ENSE 271 - Project Report

## Signify to Testify

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Project sponsor**:** Dr. Tim Maciag (ENSE 271 Lecturer)

## Business need/opportunity:

### The challenge:

Vital Signs Reports are a collection of information about the social, economic and well-being of people and communities. The report is used to inform donors and government organizations about the projects that they fund. Previously, the Vital Signs Reports have been in the form of a PDF on the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation's website.

Our job is to create an interactive website, including community stories and community data and connecting these to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The website will be used to help inform community members, donors and government organizations about how the local organizations are working toward the UN's goals.

### The opportunity:

Initial design notes:

- An interactive interface with a focus on local community issues and how they connect to the global sustainable development goals
- The ability to filter data by regions and key focus areas
- The ability to view infographics, long-form written content and community impact stories for each focus area and region

## Project planning

**North Star and Carryover Customer:**

Our north star customer was SSCF and specifically, Victor. Victor was the one who asked us to build an interactive website that SSCF can use to display data. Carryover customers are people like donors and volunteers because they are the ones we hope to see on this website. One of the main goals of the website is to motivate people to donate their time and resources to local organizations. The purpose of the website is to give these donors and volunteers information about how their investments are being used to improve communities.

**Assumptions and Constraints:**

Some project assumptions were that we had to build a fully functioning interactive website on Wordpress. Our website had to have the ability to filter by region, focus area and type of content. We also assumed that throughout this process, we would gain feedback to make our product better and complete it on time. Constraints that we had to deal with include a lack of data to display on the website, as well as lack of knowledge and experience using Wordpress. Another constraint was having less time than people usually do when producing a product. For example, we were constantly told, "people usually get an hour for this, but you guys only get ten minutes."

**Affinity Diagram and Empathy Mapping:**

The empathy mapping really helped us understand what Victor was looking for in a website. They mentioned how a pdf file for their reports was not enough, so they wanted an interactive website. It gave us a better grasp of how users will be using the website and what the most important information they will be looking for is. This helped us with creating the layout of the website where the user can almost immediately get to the information they need. Similarly, the affinity diagram helped us in understanding the most effective way in sectioning key areas of information.

**Evolution of USM/MVP:**

Our USM was designed to guide us in designing an MVP as the product we planned to make only focused on the basics. Only the essential features like headers, footers and filtered areas were there. These were enough to make a functioning website. It's enough to work so it's considered an MVP and by adding features that could enhance user experience, it wouldn't be one anymore. Another USM was made by the final activity to help us keep track of the multiple things we had to hand in by the end.

**Prototyping Activities and Feedback:**

The low fidelity prototypes were very useful because we were able to draw out a basic layout and easily change what didn't work or what we didn't like. Each of us having our own low fidelity prototype gave the customer different options and Victor was able to pick and choose what he liked best from each prototype. This feedback helped us design our high fidelity prototype by combining aspects of each of the three low fidelity prototypes and site maps that we made.

The feedback that we got from the customer on our high fidelity prototype helped us get a better understanding of what needed to be prioritized. For example, the home page of our prototype was changed because of Victor's feedback. Originally, we focused too much on the donation aspect, but we changed that to have a summary of information, instead.

The feedback from our student colleagues was very useful because we were able to get a user's perspective on whether the website is easy to navigate and understand. In our prototype, we had the impact stories under the 'About Us' section. Our peers thought that this wasn't easily accessible for users, so for our Wordpress solution, we moved the impact stories under the focus areas.

**WordPress Solution:**

For our final WordPress solution, we created a website that is easy and quick to navigate. Our navigation bar has four sections that users can get information from.

The first section is the focus areas, where we have an overview of content for each focus area, separated by type of content. We used accordions so users can easily expand each section to get more information about the type of content they want to view. The customer gave good feedback on this design aspect. Victor liked the use of the accordions and giving the users the ability to choose what information to look at.

**DATA**                                                                    +

**COMMUNITY STORIES**                                                        −

"It created this environment where it was safe and felt comfortable to discuss some of the preventative education that sometimes feels really big and scary for kids. By the end of our program we had parents reaching out to us saying that it was their kids' favourite camp of the summer and this offered a really good foundation for them to continue to have some of these conversations about prevention, healthy relationships, mental health and consent at home."

– Brianna Taylor, RSAC Counsellor

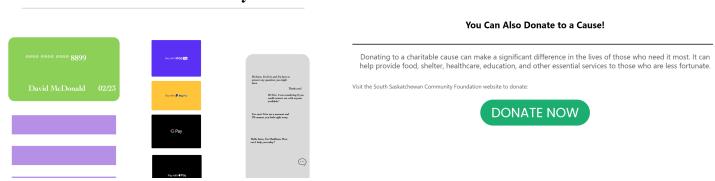**MORE INFORMATION**                                                         +

We then have the option to view content based on regions. Under each region, we have accordions for the six focus areas. Having these accordions on each page brings continuity to the website because the format of each page is the same. This makes the website easily understandable for users.

**HOMELESSNESS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING**                                        +

**SUSTAINING RURAL COMMUNITIES**                                             +

**MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**                                                −

What are Organizations Doing to Address Community Needs?
• Established "Mental Health bites" – presentations on a variety of relevant topics at no cost.
• Implemented monthly wellness check-in with a counsellor for Centres.
• Established a Wellness Response Line to give individuals someplace to speak to a staff member to provide non-crisis support and some referrals into services if needed. Over 1,000 individuals across Saskatchewan received support.

**DRUG ABUSE & ADDICTION**                                                   +

**SAFETY IN COMMUNITIES**                                                    +

**RACISM TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS & INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**                           +

We also have an 'Our Goal' page and an 'About Us' page, which gives the user more information about what Vital Signs is and how it helps communities in South Saskatchewan.

The feedback that we got on our high fidelity prototype led to us removing our donation page. Instead, we had a small section on the homepage and on the header, both of which link directly to the SSCF donation page.

**Choose the Method of Payment**

You Can Also Donate to a Cause!

Donating to a charitable cause can make a significant difference in the lives of those who need it most. It can help provide food, shelter, healthcare, education, and other essential services to those who are less fortunate.

Visit the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation website to donate:

**DONATE NOW**

**Link to People-Centred Design:**

We used Gestalt's Principle of Similarity to call attention to the donate button on the navigation bar. The navigation bar is all the same, except for the donate button, which is a different colour. The navigation bar also has arrows on the focus area and regions sections, to signify that there is a dropdown menu. The '+' symbol for each accordion also signifies that the user should click on it for more information. The 'Donate Now' button on the homepage and the past Vital Signs Reports buttons on the 'About Us' page are affordances, as there are no signifiers indicating these are buttons. Users understand this from past experiences.

# Reflections on project results

**Project Likes and Dislikes:**

We enjoyed working directly with a customer and gaining feedback regularly. It was a new and delightful experience. It was kind of uncomfortable at first to present prototypes that we thought weren't good enough, but once we realized the purpose of this was to gain feedback, it felt better. The feedback we received was also crucial in the process. This project gave us the opportunity to  familiarize ourselves with software that is useful. Additionally, it gave us a glimpse into what a real world project would be like.

The pace of the project was hard to keep up with sometimes considering everything else going on. Sometimes, our vision was hard to recreate in WordPress as the edit page won't look the same as the preview page.

**What Went Well:**

Working with a group made it easier as our communication and splitting up tasks worked out. The meetings with Victor and Tim gave us enough feedback to keep improving. The software recommended enabled us to achieve our goals.

**What Did Not Go Well:**

We struggled a bit with our vision as our lo-fi and hi-fi prototypes did not quite fit what our customers wanted. Figma's prototype feature didn't work immediately at times and needed some configurations. Lastly, WordPress editing and plugins were hard to deal with from time to time.

**Translating Prototypes into WordPress Reality:**

Our lo-fi prototypes helped us shape what our navigation bar and infographics would look like. Afterwards, our hi-fi prototype combined with the feedback we received is what our WordPress was based on. We only changed the colours we used and the way we presented data.

**Did people-centred design ideas in lectures helped/hindered design explorations?**

While designing our prototypes and websites, we kept people-centered design ideas at the top of our focus. This both helped and hindered our design explorations. Metaphors, signifiers, fast-feedback cycle and more helped in giving us guidance for certain designs, which we used to spark ideas and feel confident in our designs. However, it also placed some restrictions on us, since some creative ideas did not follow people-centered design principles like us not being the user.

**Do the same for future projects?**

Three lo-fi prototypes and the hi-fi prototype were definitely very helpful. These didn't require as much time as WordPress. They were efficient activities that allowed us to gain feedback and come up with a reliable finished product. The starter template was easy-to-use as it was a foundation that got us started.

**Do differently on future projects?**

We think we could have explored built in WordPress features before diving in to plugins as they made the process complicated sometimes.

**Opportunities and Design Ideas for Future Work:**

We should have looked into using the searching and sorting plugin recommended by Dr. Maciag. This plugin would have introduced a feature that can make a user's experience smoother.

## Appendix: WordPress Themes and Plugins

**Theme:**

1. Astra
   - 4.9 / 5 Stars (based on 5242 ratings)
   - Last updated: April 5, 2023
   - Active Installations: 1+ million
   - Astra is fast, fully customizable & beautiful WordPress theme suitable for blog, personal portfolio, business website and WooCommerce storefront.

**Plugins:**

1. Accordion Blocks
   - 5 / 5 Stars (based on 35 ratings)
   - Last updated: 1 year ago
   - Active Installations: 20,000+
   - Accordion Blocks is a simple plugin that adds a Gutenberg block for adding accordion drop-downs to your pages.
2. amCharts: Charts and Maps

- ○ 5 / 5 Stars (based on 29 ratings)
- ○ Last updated: 8 months ago
- ○ Active Installations: 3,000+
- ○ This plugin loads JavaScript libraries from external amCharts CDN which is a free service provided by amCharts.

3. Code Block Pro
   - ○ 5 / 5 Stars (based on 18 ratings)
   - ○ Last updated: 2 weeks ago
   - ○ Active Installations: 2,000+
   - ○ This block provides fast, native, code highlighting that renders perfectly in any language and theme supported by VS Code.

4. Custom Fonts
   - ○ 4.5 / 5 Stars (based on 45 ratings)
   - ○ Last updated: 3 days ago
   - ○ Active Installations: 300,000+
   - ○ This plugin helps you easily embed custom fonts files (woff2, woff, ttf, svg, eot, otf) easily in your WordPress website.

5. Give - Donation Plugin
   - ○ 4.5 / 5 Stars (based on 591 ratings)
   - ○ Last updated: 6 hours ago
   - ○ Active Installations: 100,000+
   - ○ Allows one to view donor data and fundraising reports, manage donors, and integrate with a wide variety of third-party gateways and services.

6. Jetpack
   - ○ 4 / 5 Stars (based on 1865 ratings)
   - ○ Last updated: 2 days ago
   - ○ Active Installations: 5+ Million
   - ○ Jetpack is made by WordPress experts to make WP sites safer and faster, and help one grow their traffic.

7. Simple Custom CSS and JS
   - ○ 4.5 / 5 Stars (based on 85 ratings)

- Last updated: 4 weeks ago
- Active Installations: 500,000+
- adding custom CSS and JS code without even having to modify your theme or plugin files.

8. Spectra
- 4.5 / 5 Stars (based on 934 ratings)
- Last updated: 1 week ago
- Active Installations: 400,000+
- Spectra speeds up the process of website building with easy to use settings and customizations for intuitive visual styling.

9. Starter Template
- 5 / 5 Stars (based on 3875 ratings)
- Last updated: 3 days ago
- Active Installations: 1+ million
- Create professional designed pixel perfect websites in minutes with the Starter Templates plugin.

10. WP Coder
- 5 / 5 Stars (based on 19 ratings)
- Last updated: 2 weeks ago
- Active Installations: 10,000+
- This plugin is great for placing a connection of various scripts or styles to make the site more beautiful, dynamic and attractive.

11. WPCode Lite
- 5 / 5 Stars (based on 1073 ratings)
- Last updated: 2 days ago
- Active Installations: 1+ Million
- make it easy for to add code snippets in WordPress without having to edit your theme's functions.php file.

12. WPForms Lite
- 5 / 5 Stars (based on 12, 856 ratings)
- Last updated: 1 week ago

- Active Installations: 5+ Million
- WPForms allows you to create beautiful contact forms, feedback form, subscription forms, payment forms, and other types of forms for your site in minutes, not hours.