Evening Echo

Website Redesign

Why The Echo?

No Optimisation for Hi-Res Displays

Design is Not Responsive

Current Layout is Generic

Few options for user interaction

Mobile Version of Site is Basic

- Responsive design
    - increase the number of devices the echo can be viewed on
    - news on the go, users can have a near similar experience on the mobile version to the normal version
    - Saves time, less code to write, takes up less bandwidth

- Optimisation for retina display
    - Not essential, but something i'd notice
    - looks ugly
    - increasing number of people viewing from high res devices

- Current mobile site is basic
    - Lacks features available on mobile site
    - Looks sparse on phones with larger screen

- Generic Layout
    - used on a large number of different websites (owned by same company)
    - Poorly laid out
    - a lot of white space
    - spacing and positioning overlooked in some places

Moodboard

Fonts ideally san serif, clean and easy on the eye. Avenir/ Avenir Next looks similar to an older logo once used by The Echo

Grid arrangement
    Easy to create a responsive design suitable for all devices using grids

Clean 'flat' design with few, neutral colours
    easy on the eye, less distracting when reading news article

Heavy use of pictures, 'pictures are worth a thousand words', big focus but cant compromise on speed and bandwidth
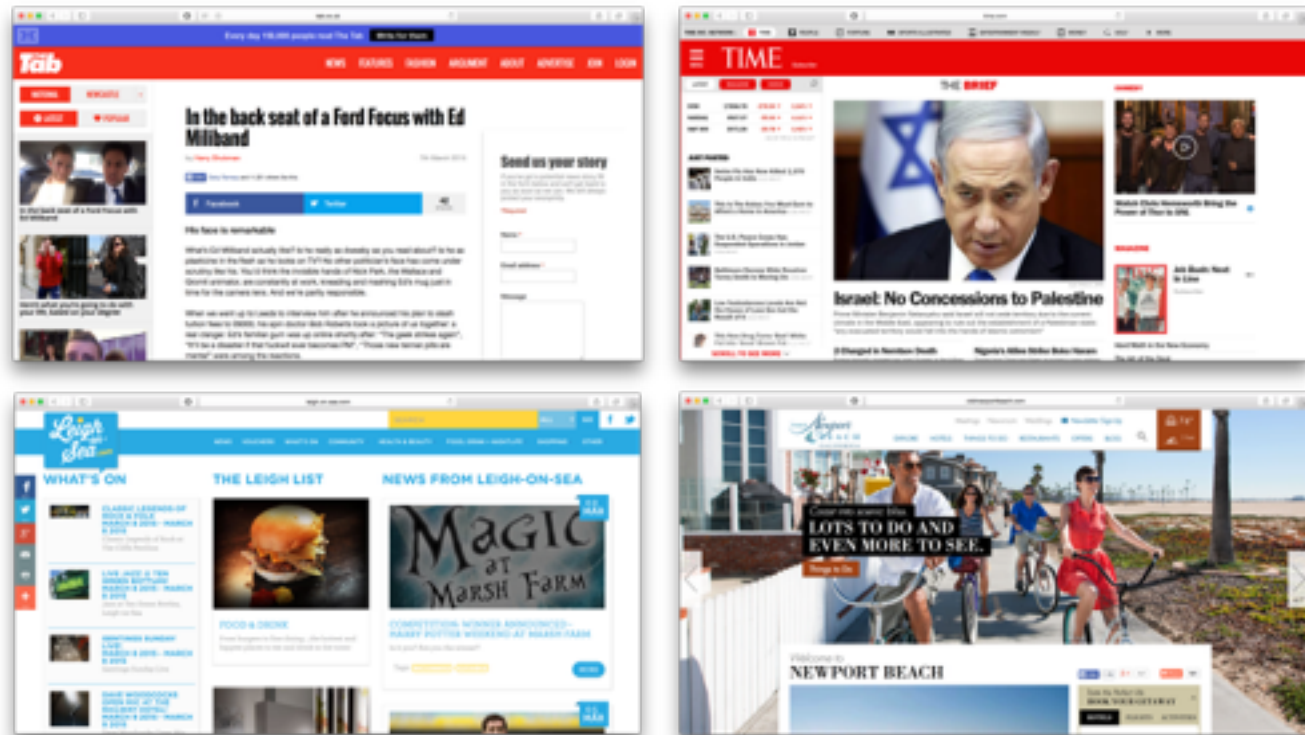
time.com
tab.co.uk
andersnoren.se

influential websites, similar type of website (news related), my design will be influenced by them

e.g flat/clean, simple but serves its purpose, responsive, presents the content clearly,
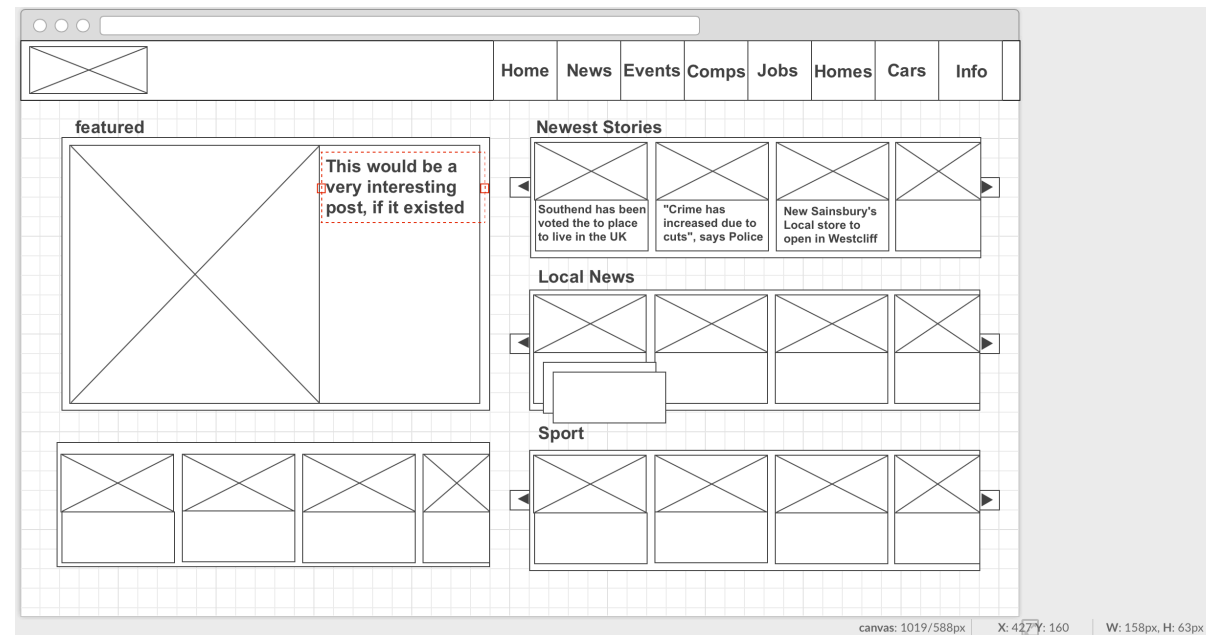
Influential Websites

All quite similar, tab and time are heavy news focus websites

Leigh-on-Sea.com and visitnewportbeach.com more focused towards people of their communities
        quite affluent areas, people care about communties and want relevant local news and information

emphasis on discussion and comments

A mixture of content inc heavy news/local info with

Wireframes

Version 1

This was the first wire frame

Took influence from the bbc news app
Main/featured post convention of majority of news websites
Clear navigation bar at the top
Row for each news category

Flaws

majority of content available on page load,
bad for smaller screens - would have to look completely different - loss of identity
        difficult to present content using the same code
could be squased in and look too small, given vast range of screen sizes
generally difficult layout to create - could work with 1 column, but not 2

Wireframes

Version 2

This looks similar to final design

clear navigation at top

featured stories posts at the top

3 column layout presenting majority of content
        easier to make layout responsive

heavy use of images, engage reader with pictures

HTML/CSS Wireframes

Started by laying out the elements on page

Use CSS to add colours to each element

Start adding detail to the wireframe

Saving file and checking frequently

Easy to find potential mistakes

Get look you are after using HTML/CSS

Start by laying out the divs on the page

use css to add colours to distinguish the different divs/columns and other elements
        this allows you to see the general outline of the page

start adding text (real stories), styling those elements e.g contrasting colours to further distinguish the areas

saving frequently, every few changes, allows you to see whether your change has made a significant difference, if something wrong you can easily pinpoint the issue(s)

Screenshots show final HTML/CSS Wireframe

Prior to conversion to Wordpress Theme

These are the final wireframes, with comprehensive CSS styling and media queries, for responsive design
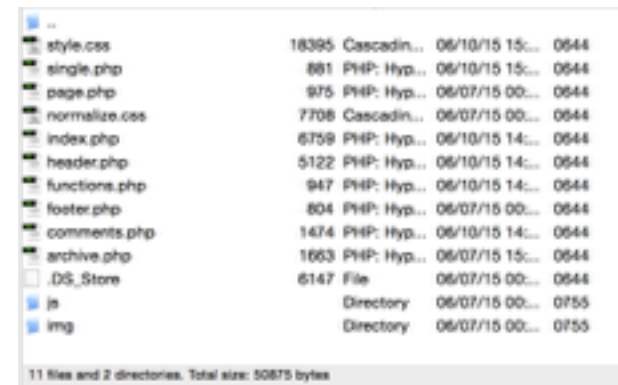
Wordpress Templates

Challenging!

Wordpress links individual PHP files

Draws them together and places them on the page

Uses MySQL database to store data

PHP code used to draw this information

Templating is definitely a challenge, I had some knowledge already but still learnt new things

Templates are made up of individual PHP files
PHP files are placed on a page and 'put together', there are many different supported files, but you must have certain files for a theme to work
MySQL data base is used to store information
PHP code in files is used to collect information and present it on the page

(image) these are just some of the files used in the theme

Wordpress Templates

Many plugins used on the theme

These add extra functionality to theme/wordress

Advanced Custom Fields

Wordpress Related Posts

Disqus

Many plugins have been used to create theme, although plug ins are great they can break site - alternatives are out there e.g creating own, using functions.php file etc

They do add very useful functions to wordpress and theme

I used Advanced Custom fields - in a post, ACF is used to add a required story summary that is displayed on the home page.

Wordpress Related Posts - used to encourage readers to click on stories and increase navigation between pages on site

Disqus - a comment system that replaces default comments.php, feature rich and can be used with social networks - increasing presence on social networks

Many Plugins used, adds certain functions to theme
advanced custom fieldseasy for reporters to add required summary for each post to be displayed on home page - could be used for
Zemanta Wordpress Related Posts - encourage readers to click on related posts, reduce bounce rate and increase post to post reading

After the Unit…

I've learnt a lot in this unit, but you can always learn more…

Ability to update certain elements using Dashboard

Multiple Image Sizes when uploading images

Theme widgets

I've learnt a lot in this unit, but there's always room to learn more stuff

I'd like to learn more about the ability to update a lot of elements of the theme through the Wordpress Dashboard, such as changing logos, colours, fonts etc
   - better than delving in to code, good for users or clients who don't know how to code

When uploading images, multiple copies are made in different sizes that can be applied to certain image sizes, such as thumbnails - reduce amount of disk space use, lower bandwidth, faster loading speeds for 3g users and users with little data

Theme Widgets, this is a challenge i've tried to attempt but with little success. widgets can be added on to pages, again good for users who lack coding experience.

Final Design

http://echonews.raveweb.net