

## Case Study

# PEACEREP

## Website Usability Evaluation and Redesign



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### Goal

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to find existing website usability issues of PeaceRep website (<https://peacerep.org>) to improve overall product performance for the target audience to align with wider goals of more and better user engagement & impact that engagement with the site content can do.

### How

To better understand if the current website conveys key message and aligns with our users' needs, we conducted user research interviews with 5 target users.

### Insights

- Understanding what information is user looking for at PeaceRep website.
- Understanding how successfully user is able to seek information they need.
- Understanding how can the website content be better presented to make information seeking easier.



# User Interviews

**Task:** The users were asked to engage in a ThinkAloud activity, where they were asked about their first observations of the website.

**Purpose:** This was to understand the current visual hierarchy of the web content and comparing it with the message we wanted to convey. We mapped the user expectations/needs of the web content and restructured our content to better align with the user needs and aiding information seeking.

## Key Questions for user researcher:

- What did your user first observe? Does it match with what we want the user to see?
- What did the user expect to find? Did they find it?

## Findings:

We present user feedback, design recommendations and further questions for individual sections and pages.

The user feedback in **green** represents positive feedback and in **red** represents negative feedback that requires design solutions.

The screenshot shows the PeaceRep website homepage. A green overlay highlights the top navigation bar, which includes links for 'Our Focus', 'Key Findings', 'Publications', 'PeaceTech Tools', 'News & Events', 'Resources', and 'About'. A red overlay highlights the main content area, which features a large image of a person working on a boat surrounded by hanging fabrics in various colors (orange, blue, red, yellow, green). Below the image, the PeaceRep logo and tagline 'Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform' are displayed. To the right of the image, the text 'Rethinking peace & transition processes in a changing conflict landscape' is visible, along with a blue button labeled 'Find out more about our research'. At the bottom of the page, a section titled 'Latest Publications' is shown with three thumbnail images: a stack of books, a destroyed building, and two people in a meeting.

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## Hero Section

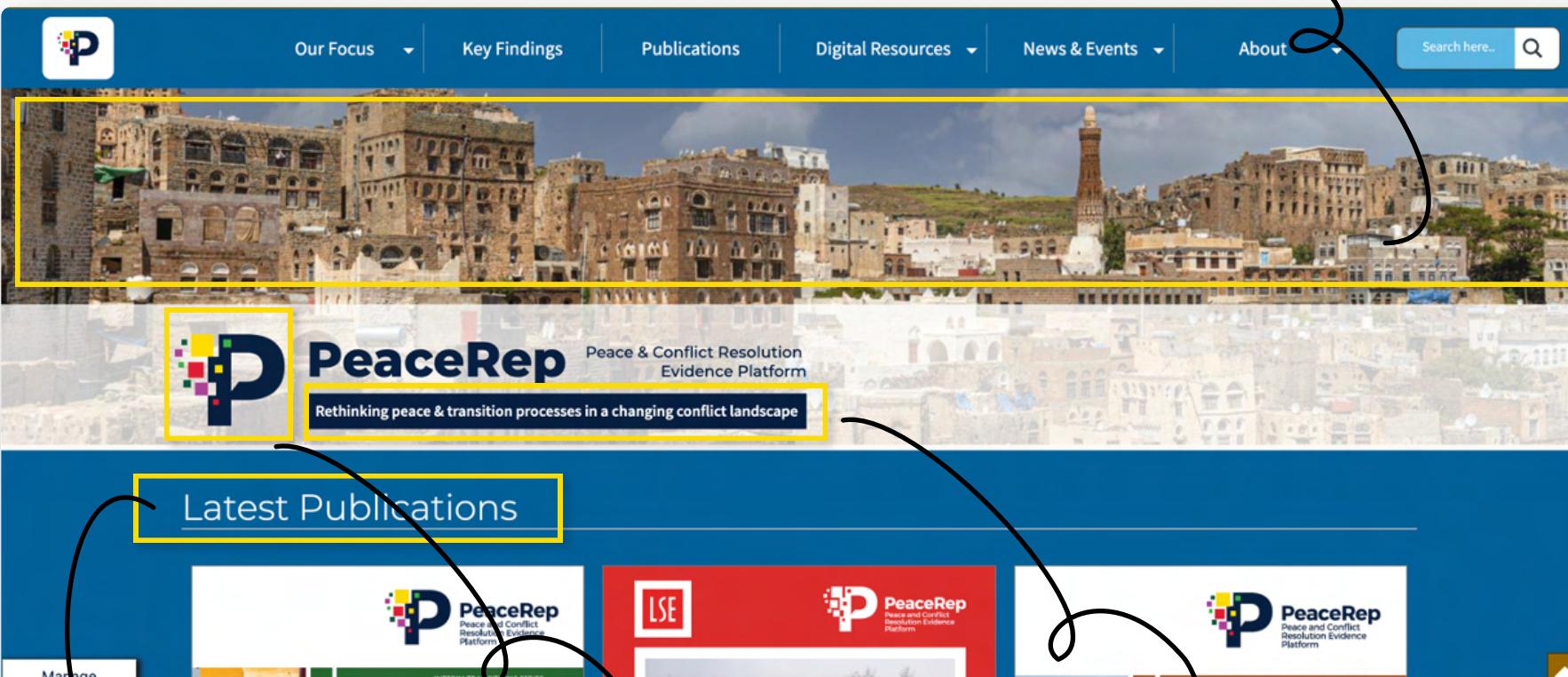
"Not necessarily sure about PeaceRep from homepage"

"The banner feels crowded & I avoided looking at it instinctively"

Action: user navigates to about us page.

Findings: Expected snapshot of about on homepage and more detail on about us.

Unsure about the photo



Rethinking... (more eye catchy due to white text on dark background contrast)

Well centred Logo

## Recommendations

- The Hero section needs to have a good snapshot of what PeaceRep is/does
- Add link to necessary About.

## Questions for us

- What do we wish to highlight on the Homepage about PeaceRep?
- How can we make the information self explanatory?

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## Latest Publications Section

Latest Publications

**Building Resilience in Syria: Fragilities and coping mechanisms**  
Mechanisms for addressing fragilities, risks, and crises across Syria are identified using a resilience capacities framework.

**Economic resilience, social dialogue and democracy in wartime: Challenges for Ukraine**  
Ukraine's recent economic approach of extensive privatisation may undermine its war effort, and even risk the stability of the state.

**Sino-European relations amid the war in Ukraine**  
Cooperation and communication in engaging with Russia's war on Ukraine can benefit Sino-European shared interests.

[Read more >](#)

[Read more >](#)

[Read more >](#)

[View all publications](#)

Liked the latest publication section – likes to get overview of recent work across different strands.

No particular-style for thumbnails

Red color pops out – draws attention, suggestive of significance of color

Is this more important than the others?

Does not have a date on it even though it says latest publication – but should indicate how latest

## Recommendations

- Use a style guide for thumbnails and indicate organization color in a different way maybe just the logo.
- Add Date of publication

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## Sections: News & Opinion, Featured Events

### News & Opinion



23 JAN 2023 OPINION SOUTH SUDAN SUDAN

**Review - When Peace Kills**  
Politics: International Intervention in the Sudans

Matthew Benson highlights the importance of economic considerations in understanding politics in war and peace processes.



16 JAN 2023 OPINION PEACE PROCESSES

**Review - How to End Wars:**  
Lawyering Peace in a Changing World

A new book prompts the question: How will law and politics continue to work together in the context of new conflict dynamics?



8 DEC 2022 ETHIOPIA/OGADEN OPINION SUDAN

**Can political finance explain the different development stories in Ethiopia and Sudan?**

Differences in political finance have impacted on political settlements and, ultimately, on developmental trajectories.

Date tells how recent it is.

*"Not satisfied that news and opinion were put together and all three tabs were occupied by opinion"*

### Choice to call it an opinion

*"Other people call them blog post"*

### Featured Event



29 Nov 2022 | 15:00 - 16:00

Russia-Ukraine Dialogues: The Future of Energy

RECORDING NOW AVAILABLE. Discussing the Russia-Ukraine war in the context of short-term impact on the energy market, strategies on mitigating the energy crises, and long-term impacts on economies.

[Event details >](#)

Showing past event

[All events](#)

Use a consistent CTA towards 'View all'

### Out of date Event

Found 'recording now available' so it made sense.

But even with recording now available they expect that featured event would be something upcoming.

## Questions for us

- Do we separate News & Opinion?
- If not where would view all redirect to – News or Opinion ?
- What is the alternation when there is no upcoming event?

## Recommendations

- Add View all button.
- Combine News with Events.
- Rethink the choice of calling it an opinion?



## Subscribe Section

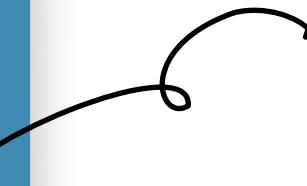
### Subscribe to our newsletter

Subscribe to our newsletter for updates on our latest news, events, and resources.

Email

We will send you updates from PeaceRep. We will not share your data and you can unsubscribe at any time.

**Subscribe**



User found the checkbox statement "weird".

The sentence does not tell why they have to click.

Expected something like 'I agree to PeaceRep...'. They know what this is for but still wondered why it is phrased the way it is.

## Navigation Menu

Our Focus ▾ Key Findings Publications Digital Resources ▾ News & Events ▾ About ▾

Themes Covid-19 News Events Opinion

Places

Does not list all digital tools available on the page.

Clicking directly on News and Events directly takes to News Page. But there is no link to events or opinion from there, apart from navigation.

## Recommendations

### Subscription Section:

- Use an "I Agree to..." statement in subscription checkbox.

### Nav Menu:

- List all digital tools on the nav menu.
- Place 'Opinion' (now Blogs) directly on Nav menu or under resources.



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## Key findings Page

Power-sharing		Security		Emergency Legislation	
Political, economic, military, and territorial power-sharing can support an end to conflict.			Conflict and peacemaking can influence the declaration or ending of states of emergency.		
Trust Funds		Human Rights		Refugees & Displacement	
Peace agreements can influence the creation and development of trust funds.			Displacement is a common consequence of conflict, and can expose difficult choices that go to the heart of the conflict.		
PeaceTech		PeaceTech is focused on innovations in data, research and data collaboration, and feedback to data owners and social change agents in the field.			

Users questioned current order.

"Would assume that the Top Listed were most important or most recent key findings. For specific search for example 'Human Rights'".

"If I am not sure what or if there is published research on what I am looking for, I go to Key Findings, go to the topic overview and find relevant materials and citations."

## Countries Page

### Research Sites



Afghanistan



Ethiopia



Iraq

Read more >

Read more >

Read more >

A lot of wasted space.

### Recommendations

- The key findings should be alphabetized to ensure the order is not insinuating a hierarchy of importance, and for users to easier find relevant topics.
- The layout should be responsive for different screen sizes to account for the large whitespace.

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The screenshot shows the PeaceRep website homepage. At the top is a banner with a photo of a person working on a boat with colorful fabrics hanging to dry. Below the banner is the PeaceRep logo and the tagline "Rethinking peace & transition processes in a changing conflict landscape". A call-to-action button "Find out more about our research" is visible. The main content area features a "Latest Publications" section with three cards. The first card is for a report on Named Entity Recognition (NER) in peace and conflict studies. The second card is for a paper on the Yemeni Civil War. The third card is for a study on UAE's influence in the Western Balkans. Each card includes a thumbnail, date, title, and a brief description.

# Final Website Changes & Implementation

- Created a visual hierarchy that highlights desired elements, like logo, about PeaceRep and necessary call to actions.
- Consistent Thumbnail style
- Date highlights Latest Publication, News and Events.
- In case of No upcoming events, News occupies all three columns
- Renamed 'Opinions' as Blogs and created a separate section for 'Featured Blogs'.

The screenshot shows the "News & Events" section of the website. It features a large circular graphic and a news item about the launch of the PA-X Tracker. Below it are three smaller news items: one about introducing new PA-X Peace Agreement Analysts, another about COP28, and a third about the release of PA-X Version 8. At the bottom of this section is a "All news" button. Below this is the "Featured blog" section, which includes a photo of cattle in South Sudan and a blog post titled "Assets as Armies in South Sudan: Local Peace Mediation in the Path of Elites' Cattle". At the bottom of this section is a "All blogs" button.



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# Final Website Changes & Implementation

## Nav Menu -

- Digital tools now called 'PeaceTech tools' list all categories of available tools
- New 'Resources' menu lists Blogs and all other resources available for more information.
- Subscription check rephrased as "I consent to...".

## Key findings and Countries pages-

- Responsive Layout (for all screen devices) used.
- Content sorted in Alphabetical order for easy parsing.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the PeaceRep website. It includes a 'Our Focus' dropdown with 'Themes' and 'Countries' options, 'Key Findings', 'Publications', 'PeaceTech Tools' (which has a dropdown menu for 'Track Peace Processes', 'Search Peace Data', 'Visualise Trends', 'PeaceFem App', 'Maps and Dashboards', and 'COVID Hub'), 'News & Events' (with 'News' and 'Events' sub-options), 'Resources' (with 'Blog', 'Courses', 'Podcasts', 'Infographics', and 'Videos' sub-options), and 'About' (with 'About PeaceRep', 'People', 'Funders', 'Impact', and 'Opportunities' sub-options).

The screenshot shows a newsletter subscription form titled 'Subscribe to PeaceRep's newsletter'. It includes a text input for 'Email', a checkbox for 'I consent to receiving emails from PeaceRep and agree to PeaceRep's mailing list privacy policy. (See Privacy & Cookies in this footer section)', and a 'Submit' button.

The screenshot shows the 'Key Findings' section of the website. It features a blue header with the title 'Key Findings' and a sub-header: 'Read our key findings across research topics related to fragmentation, peace processes, geopolitics, and PeaceTech.' Below this are six cards, each with a thumbnail image and a title: 'Ceasefires' (with a thumbnail of people in military gear), 'Constitution-building' (with a thumbnail of a gavel on a desk), 'Elections' (with a thumbnail of a person writing in a notebook), 'Emergency Legislation' (with a thumbnail of two people in white protective suits), 'Environment & Climate' (with a thumbnail of oil pumps at sunset), and 'Women & Gender' (with a thumbnail of a group of women in traditional dress).

The screenshot shows the 'All Research Sites' section of the website. It displays a grid of nine cards, each representing a different country or region: 'Afghanistan' (with a thumbnail of a mud-brick building), 'Ethiopia' (with a thumbnail of people holding flags), 'Iran' (with a thumbnail of a flag), 'Iraq' (with a thumbnail of a city skyline at sunset), 'Myanmar' (with a thumbnail of a yellow bus), 'Somalia' (with a thumbnail of a large crowd), 'South Sudan' (with a thumbnail of a flag), 'Yemen' (with a thumbnail of a flag), and 'Yemen' (with a thumbnail of a flag).