Competitive Analysis

	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3
	staysafeonline.org	Forbes.com	bleepingcomputer.com
Strengths	- Covers a variety of useful topics - Provides other resources - Printable information sheets - Straightforward	- Relevant news articles - Trusted name/company	- Focuses more on malware/viruses - Has tutorials for computer tasks - Offers download links to useful software - Has links to deals on online courses/products
Weaknesses	- Nothing relating to current events, i.e. news, recent information	- No way to sort through articles - Only provides news articles - Mainly global news	- Does not focus solely on cybersecurity
	Competitor #4		
	thehackernews.com		
Strengths	- News articles covering a plethora of subjects relating to IT security		
Weaknesses	- Nothing but news articles		

Competitor #1: staysafeonline.org

Strengths: This is the most useful site I have found about my topic, it covers a wide range of users and situations, and does so with a good amount of depth. It is very accessible to general users as technical jargon is limited and everything is explained in an understandable manner. The site also provides printable information sheets to keep around if a user so desires.

Weaknesses: There are little to no weaknesses with this site; one gripe is that there is not a section or any information regarding recent/up-to-date news about cybersecurity.

Other: The website looks and feels modern and functions smoothly throughout most of the entire site, the only page that loses this somewhat is the resources library page which feels sluggish when scrolling. Sections are clearly labelled as to what they are about and contain only information regarding that topic.

Competitor #2: Forbes.com

Strengths: Forbes is a very well trusted company, which lends credibility to their articles. In the security section of their tech category they offer relevant and up-to-date news articles about IT security.

Weaknesses: Since Forbes is a magazine company, they don't have anything else on their site other than articles, which means it's only good for learning about what's going on in the world of IT security rather than learning about it. Given that they are also a global media company, their editorials tend to be broader in scope; which might turn off people interested only in what directly affects them.

Other: Forbes website reflects their reputation; it has a clean and simple design and a simple colour scheme that prevents any issues with readability and contrasting colours. However, at least in the tech security section, there is no way to sort articles, so you're forced to keep scrolling in order to get to older posts. Getting to the section itself is also a little difficult, it's within the technology category on the sidebar, but there is no way to navigate to it when you're on the technology page. You must use the sidebar and click more to the right of the link to get the drop down menu to open up, which also changes the cursor to an unusual double sided up and down arrow that I hadn't seen before until now.

Competitor #3: bleepingcomputer.com

Strengths: bleepingcomputer focuses more on teaching visitors about computer technology, which includes not only IT security, but also about malware and general computer tasks. In addition to the tutorials they use to teach, they have a section about deals on various computer related products, such as online courses and gadgets. This website also provides up to date news most of which relate to security.

Weaknesses: One of the strengths of this website, which is the broad amount of information it provides, is also a weakness. Since it deals with a lot of topics, that means it cannot go as in depth with certain ones like cybersecurity, which means there are other websites that are more comprehensive.

Other: There are a few drawbacks to bleepingcomputer's website design, one of the major ones is the fact that clicking on a link does not redirect you. In the dropdown menu there are selectable links that change the cursor when you hover over them, giving the appearance of being clickable when they are in fact, not clickable, which can lead to confusion. The dropdown menu only serves to highlight some relevant article or download link which you can click and then be redirected, but aside from that it really functions only as a simple navbar. Another detriment of bleepingcomputer is that it feels slightly dated, while everything else about the website is mostly fine, just using the website feels off somehow.

Competitor #4: thehackernews.com

Strengths: The biggest strength of hackernews.com is the amount of information it covers, relating to security and privacy. Everything is broken up into different categories and sub-categories which then display recent related news/events.

Weaknesses: Although it is to be expected from its name, hackernews.com only deals with what is happening around the world, and doesn't offer anything else. Even though articles can be sorted by content, just like Forbes they cannot be sorted by date.

Other: hackernews.com design feels dated, it's not as bad as websites that can instantly be seen as supremely old, but it does seem a little antiquated and plain. A small gripe is that the dropdown menus aren't any different from other links in the navbar, which means some links just have a dropdown menu instantly appear.

Summary

Basic requirements: All of the websites listed had a pretty navigable design, some more than others, but they had clearly stated sections that were distinct from each other so visitors knew what information they would see. They also all of course, dealt with aspects of IT security or cybersecurity. Most had news articles about the happenings within the realm of technology.

Performance: staysafeonline.com has a list of other resources that can be filtered to get specific results. All of the websites also have an option to sign up for an email newsletter.

Delighters: bleepingcomputer.com has a forum where users can post and discuss topics.

It seems like the biggest competitor for me is staysafeonline.com, it covers a lot of topics that a general user might want to know, and it bundles it in an attractive website design and functions smoothly. For my own website to stand out and be distinct I'm going to have to narrow my focus so I can go more in depth. I was also thinking of putting a password tester and generator on my website, which I didn't see on any of the websites. Some provided tips and how-to's on creating a strong password but didn't offer users a chance to see if their password was actually good, or just generate a secure password for them. I'm going to need to focus on making sure my website is easy on the eyes and navigable, as well as intuitive and following common practices, i.e. changing the cursor on clickable links, etc. I doubt I will be able to have a news section, as I would need to populate that myself and I wouldn't have the time to write articles, and I most likely won't continue supporting the website past this quarter. I could probably link another website like Forbes and use it to fill a small section with the most recent updates, negating the need for me to manually input everything and keep up with the website. I might also want to implement a discussion forum so people can discuss things not covered by my website or specific problems/questions and get help from other users. That would require the ability to sign up for an account, and/or posting anonymously.

My Unique Features:

- Password generator
- Password tester
- Downloadable information sheets