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VALLEY ISLE AQUATICS – WEBSITE REDESIGN

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Strategy	2
Scope	9
Information Architecture Evaluation	9
STRUCTURE	10
Structure: Successful tactics and Areas for Improvement	17
CATEGORIES	18
Categories: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement	23
LABELS	24
Labels: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement	26
NAVIGATION AND ACCESS	27
Navigation and Access: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement	31
Sitemap	32
EXISTING SITEMAP	32
PROPOSED SITEMAP	32
Wireframes	35
Prototype	35
Deliverables: Reflections and Challenges	35

Valley Isle Aquatics is a Hawaii-based swimming academy offering a variety of courses for all ages.

This report documents the analysis and proposal of the website redesign for Valley Isle Aquatics.

The website is evaluated based on a variety of factors which are listed as below.

Strategy

The strategy behind the redesign of Valley Isle Aquatics discusses the project brief – the vision behind the website, the requirements that the website considers and the how it implements the same via the design principles it follows. The user demographics and user personas are analyzed to study the sample population of the users of the website which will be considered throughout the redesign process.

PROJECT BRIEF

VISION (WHY)

Valley Isle Aquatics unlike its competitors, provides a unique combination of activities to provide a positive aquatic experience with the objective of promoting water safety, providing coaching to various age groups and building a stronger community online with fun and engaging methods and unsurpassed customer service.

In a fast-paced, junk-food lifestyle where we often neglect the adverse effects on our body, Valley Isle Aquatics aims to achieve its objective of enhancing quality of life by providing safety preparedness trainings, educational opportunities & professional training to its community.

It recognizes the needs of its users and provides specific user-centric training programs targeted towards every age group and skill-level.

The online website assists users of the Valley Isle Aquatics community to connect to the program, thus keeping them updated about various happenings in the organization's online community.

REQUIREMENTS (WHAT)

Online: An online hub for Valley Isle Aquatics allows the user to not only register into the program but also provides a detailed description of the available programs and events that he/she can participate in. Photos and calendar events help the user to get a more detailed idea of the program

Education/Certifications: Users not only get details about the skills and techniques taught but also get the list of certifications which can help them decide their plan accordingly

Social Connect: Providing connectivity towards the social media, users can track all the updates and post comments, browse photos, ask questions, etc. on the group's social media webpage, thus keeping them always updated with what is happening in the community

Newsletters: Users can also subscribe to the groups' newsletters in order to keep themselves updated with the various events occurring near their place

DESIGN PRINCIPLES (WHY)

The design principles discuss how the requirements put forth by the vision would be implemented. These are discussed in brief below:



Professional training
(Expert coaching and mentoring facilities)

Focus on all age groups
(There's a program for every member of your family)

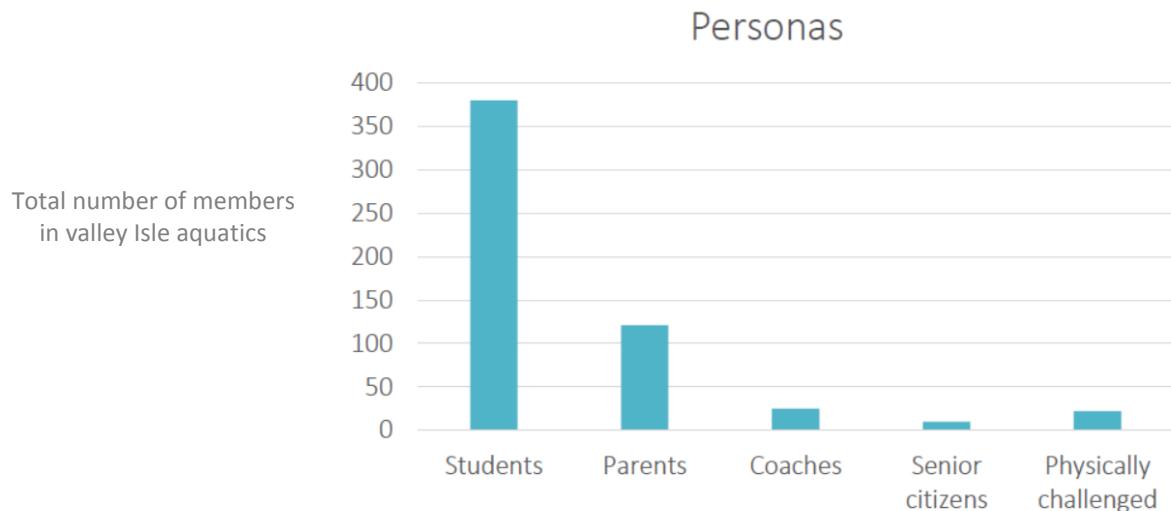
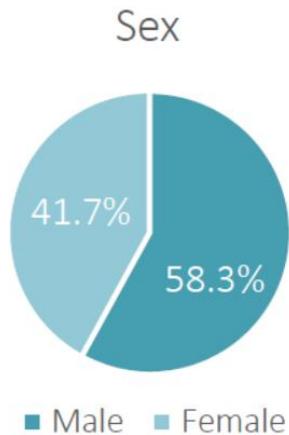


Being Social
(Stay updated by connecting with a huge online community)

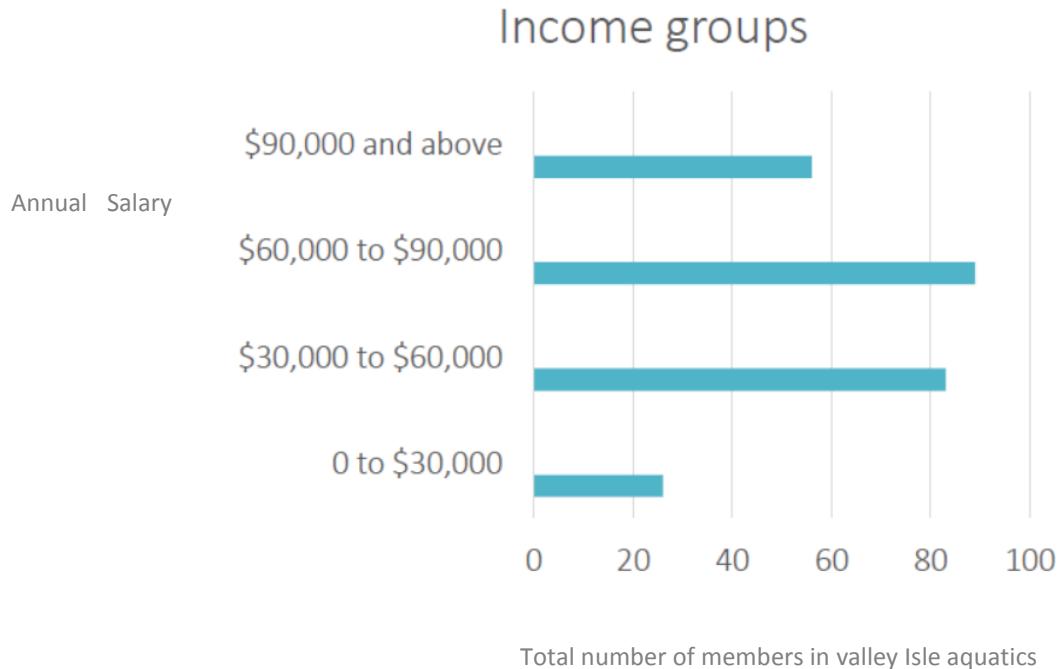
Get certified
(Certifications and rewards at the end of the program)

DEMOGRAPHIC

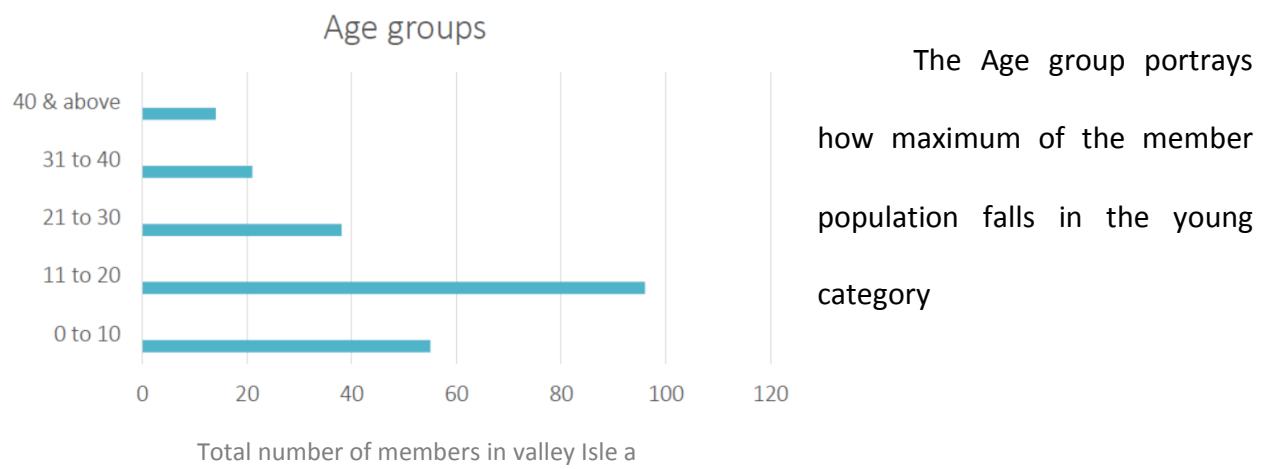
The Pie chart shows that the number of female enrollments for the swimming classes are more than that of the male enrollments. Since the difference is not striking enough, there isn't any special need for any specific considerations.

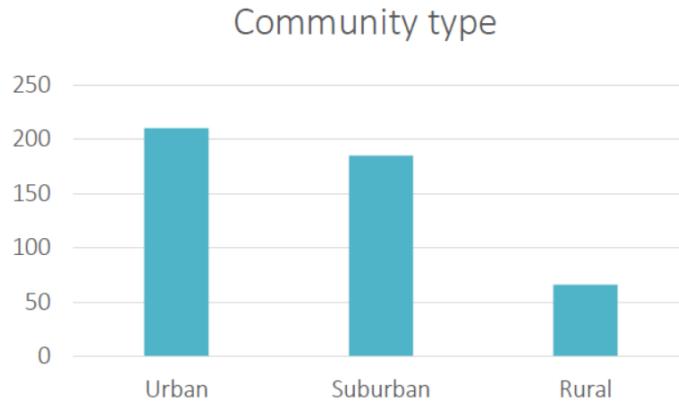


The bar graph for personas implies that the student population is the highest among members of the academy. Another fact needs to be noticed is that there are physically challenged members as well.



The income graph shows that the maximum number of member population earns \$60,000 to \$90,000 annually.





The graph alongside tells that most of the members of the valley Isle Aquatics academy are from the urban and suburban community.

PERSONAS

Personas are the types of users who use the types of users who engage with the website. As the demographics suggest, a persona for this academy can vary from students to parents, from young to old. Two of the prominent persona types for this academy are discussed below along with the biological information and focusing on their key goals and behavior and the activities that we must keep in mind for redesign while considering these type of users.



BIO

Age: 34 years
Education: Bachelor in Information Technology
Occupation: Software Engineer

Loves making food and playing with her daughter Sara

Linda

'I believe fitness is a mantra of life and would like my child to follow the same....'

Key Goals

- Get the registration process completed quickly and safely
- Very particular about timings and skills provided
- Wants to checkout the various facilities and offers provided



We must

- Clearly show skills and classes provided
- Have a simple registration process
- Have a detailed time-table
- Provide examples of user reviews and comments

Behaviors

- Likes to spend some time exploring the website
- Always consults others before taking any decision
- Using website to avoid being pressured to buy expensive packages over phone
- Interested in large group discounts



We must never

- Overwhelm the user with extra unnecessary details
- Provide the user with too many choices



BIO

Age: 36 years
Education: MBA in Sports management
Occupation: Ex-Swimming Coach

Loves working out in the gym, listening to music and social networking

Samuel

'I am looking for a full-time job that will help impart my swimming expertise to budding students of all ages....'

Key Goals

- Wants a smooth application process
- Looking for detailed timing slot descriptions
- Wants to checkout the profiles of existing coaches



We must

- Provide a clear and concise application process
- Provide portfolios of existing coaches
- Show detailed description of timing slots available

Behaviors

- Very particular about the professionalism of the website
- Does not like to spend much time on any website
- Easily frustrated by hard-to-find information



We must never

- Make the website look flashy and gaudy with confusing details
- Keep too much details on every module of the website

PRIMARY PERSONA

SECONDARY PERSONA

Scope

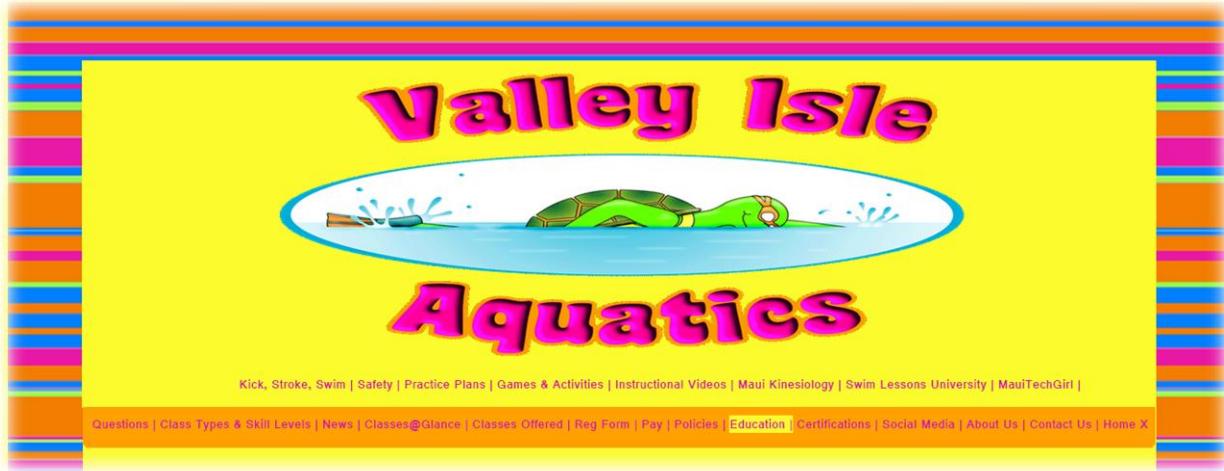
The Scope of this redesign project includes the content inventory and the content requirements for the overall content of the website. A crawler was run through the files and folders of the website and the results were later categorized according to their respective types. Purpose, user support and suggestions for various pages of the website. The excel sheet attached below documents both the content inventory and the content requirements.



Information Architecture Evaluation

Valley Isle Aquatics is a non-profit organization with a mission to provide swimming classes, safety preparedness trainings, educational opportunities and professional training courses for all ages. Based in Haiku, Hawaii, the organization aims to assist with the development and advancement of stronger programs at the local, national and global level to provide aquatics experience and assistance in building a stronger community.

Valley Isle Aquatics unlike its competitors, provides a unique combination of activities to provide a positive aquatic experience with the objective of promoting water safety, providing coaching to various age groups and building a stronger community online with fun and engaging methods and unsurpassed customer service.



The Valley Isle Aquatics website assists users of the Valley Isle Aquatics community to connect to the program, keeping them updated about various happenings in the organization's online community. It also tries to provide too much information, which occasionally leads to ill-designed structure. A detailed evaluation of the website can be described from various perspectives as below.

STRUCTURE

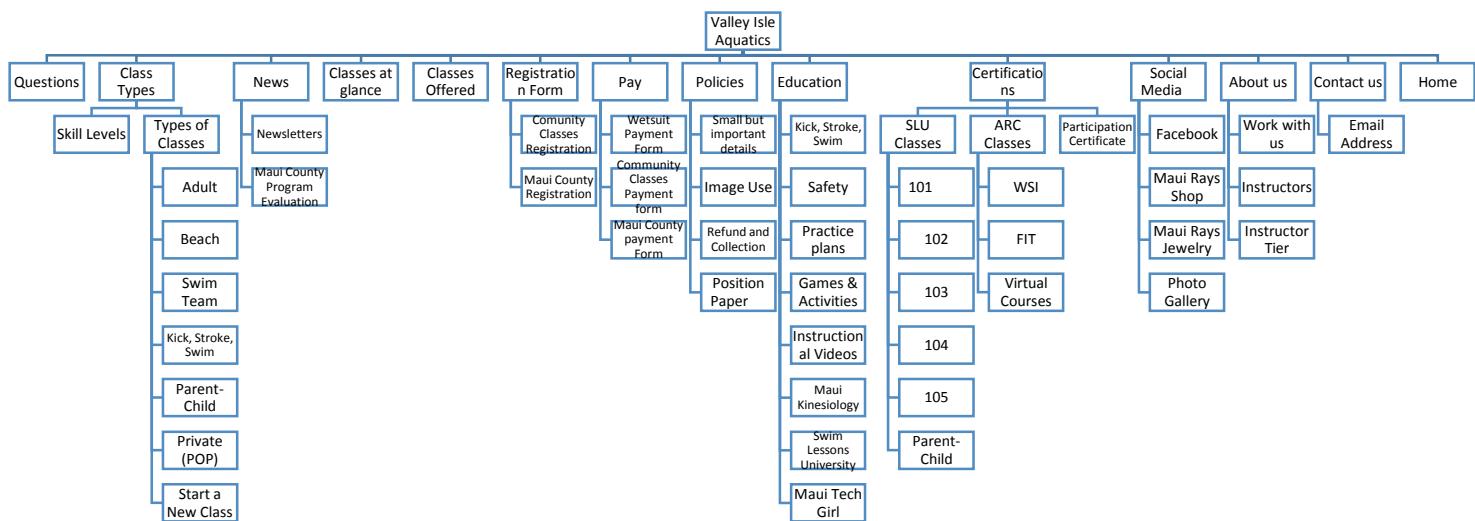
The whole content of the Valley Isle Aquatics website is divided into 14 major categories at the first level, which are further divided into more categories at second and third level. The information organization of Valley Isle Aquatics falls under the 'Category' mode of structuring from the LATCH principles provided by Richard Wurman. The categories try to answer different questions that the end user is looking for – What courses does the program offer? How to register for a program? General questions, contact information, etc.

The organization of the website can be described based on the following aspects:

1. Structure

The content structure of the website follows a **Top-Down Hierarchy Approach**. A root node (Valley Isle Aquatics) parents the 14 defined child nodes or the various categories in a hierarchical fashion.

The diagram below shows the current organization of the content of Valley Isle Aquatics website in the order that the current website follows. The website tries to organize categories based on various details such as the classes offered, registration process, contact information, etc.

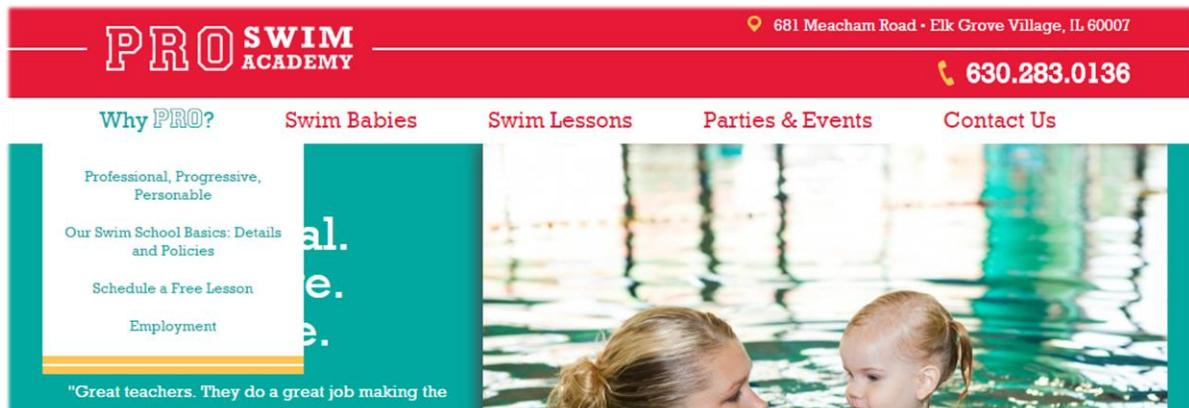


Every category in the above site map tries to answer one or the other question of the user. The categories are often redundant and can be grouped together to simplify the overall organization.

The balancing of the hierarchy is uneven with a mix of **narrow and deep** and **broad and shallow** areas. Although the highest level of depth is three levels which is not bad, the breadth of the hierarchy is very wide making the site unmanageable.

Some of the other competitor swimming academy websites have a breadth of five to nine categories but a maximum depth of only two levels as shown below:

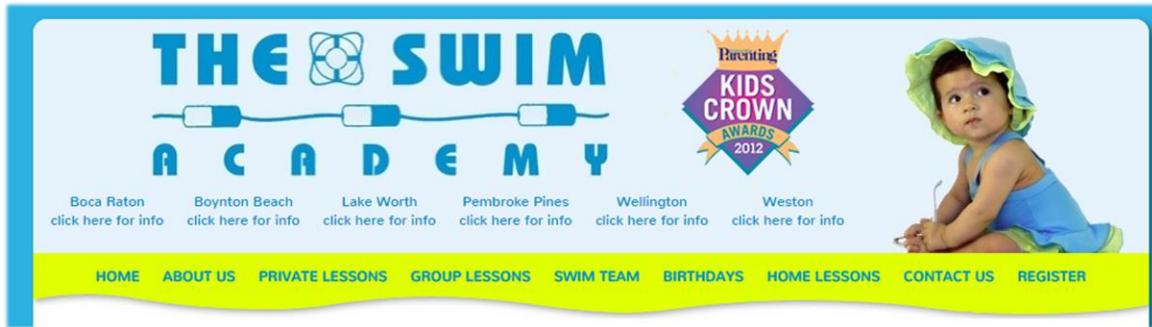
- i. [Pro Swim Academy](#) (Breadth:5, Depth: 2)



- ii. [Texas Swim Academy](#) (Breadth:8, Depth: 2)



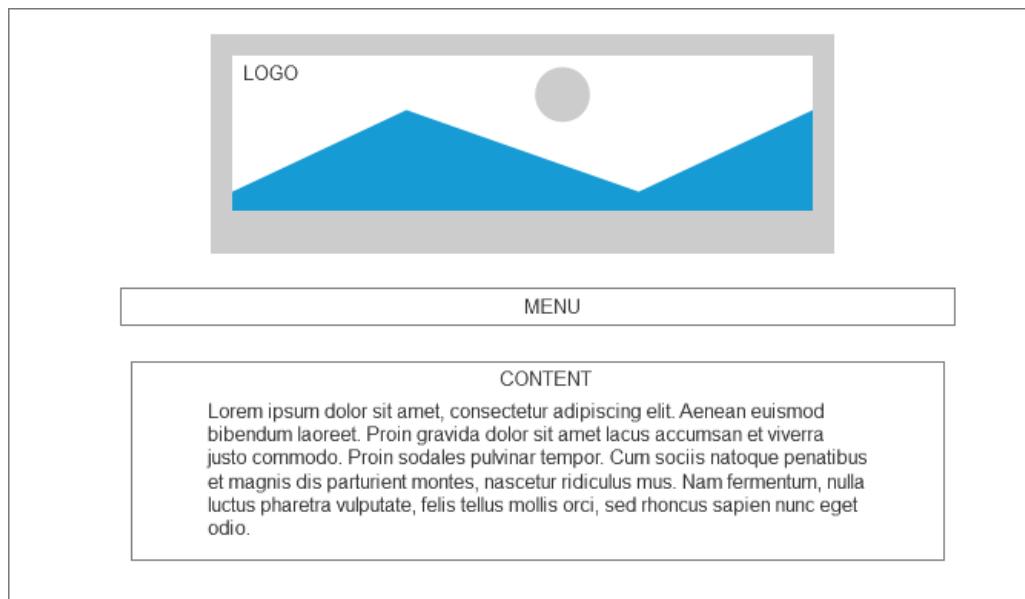
iii. [The Swim Academy](#) (Breadth:9, Depth: 1)



An organization of the structure in such a way with a fewer number of categories across both dimensions would make the content more accessible and easy to understand to the user.

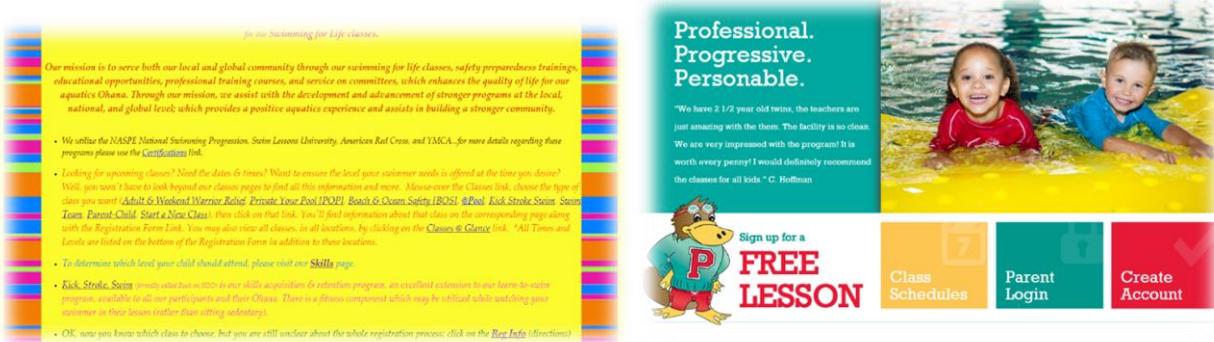
2. Layout

Another way of describing the organization is the layout. The web page layout of the website is organized as follows:



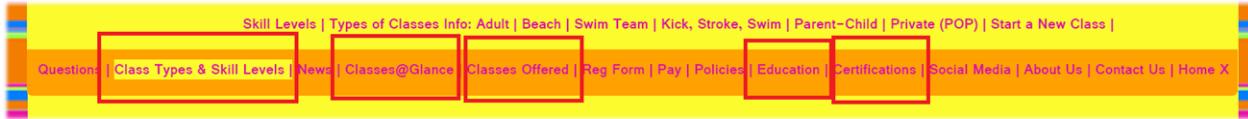
The logo of the website is persistent throughout the website and is a link to the homepage. Menu label describes the area where all the categories are included and the content after selecting every menu option is shown in the Content area. This layout is one of the most common approaches adapted by most of the sites nowadays and can be continued with in the redesign. The layout can be tweaked in different ways to achieve more clarity as per the requirement.

The main objective/goal of Valley Isle aquatics stakeholders as the website page title says is to provide elite swimming classes to all ages, however the site structure does not make a valid effort to achieve the same. The 'Menu' overload keeps the user guessing where to start from. The homepage shows lot of textual content with tacky colors and fonts that makes the website look unprofessional and difficult to use. The website should be able to support the goals of the owner and be able to attract customers. A refreshed look highlighting the main tasks with pictures should help the purpose, just as [Pro Swim Academy](#) does it as shown below:



The primary task of the website is to allow a user to explore the types of classes offered and to register for the same. However, the redundant options to explore the classes makes it difficult to do that. A separate registration option aggravates the situation. Take the example of the following screenshot:

Ashish Shendure
Final Project Report
December 15th, 2014

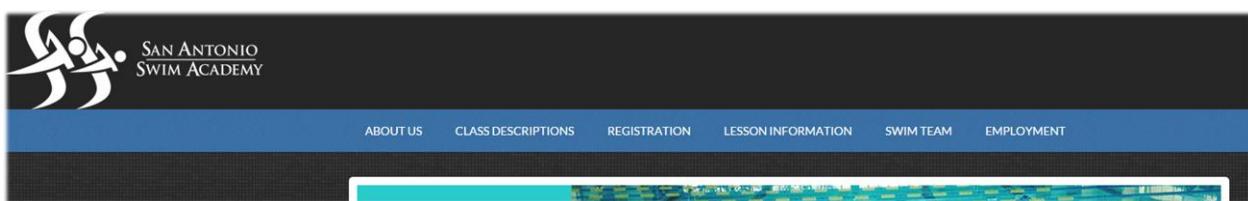


Again a separate Registration form and Payment option as shown below create redundancies in tasks:



The website's structure however does try to support the intended tasks, in fact over-achieves the same with the help of redundant menus and non-generalized approach. A detailed list of classes, FAQs, Policies, Certifications, etc does make the website information-rich but poor organization of the available content diminishes the quality of the overall experience.

Prioritization of tasks is another aspect that the website needs to improve on. Take a look at the [San Antonio Swim Academy](#) website for that matter:

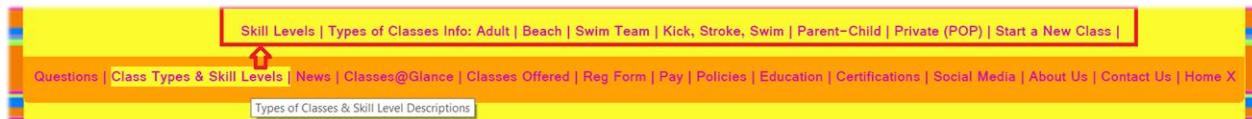


The San Antonio website clearly outlines tasks in the order of the priority. After going through the 'About Us' category, a user would want to go through the class descriptions and register for a particular class. The remaining options may not be a priority to the Primary User Personas of a swimming website whose main objective is to explore the classes and register and hence they are aligned later in terms of prioritization. Valley Isle Aquatics does not try to support any particular type of prioritization.

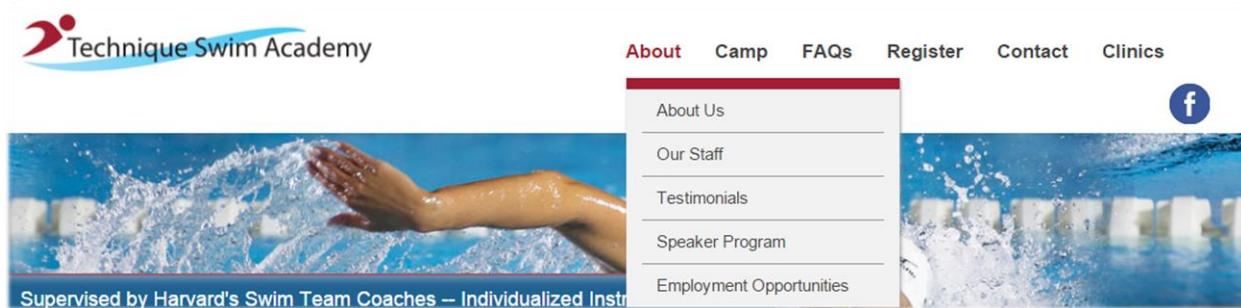
In this way, Valley Isle aquatics does not fulfill the expectations of the site users due to the poor structure and lack of task prioritization.

The site's organizational structure is not readily apparent to the user. The 'Home' category is placed last unlike on many other popular websites. The 'Contact' another such example. Redundant menus can also contribute to the ambiguity thus making the website less apparent.

Ease of navigation is another concern that the website struggles with. With the menu hover difficult to hold on and the sub-menus opening above the main menu unlike the traditional approach as shown below, the website structure does not help in any way to make the navigation easier.



An easier option would have been the traditional navigation approach adopted by the [Technique Swim Academy](#) as shown below:



A top-down hierarchy approach naturally maps to the menu drawer to open it in the downward direction and hence the above approach looks more apparent to the site user. Another point to note here is that the site user has to access the sub-menus without dragging the mouse to any of top-level menus, which is quite possible when the sub-menus are above the top-level menus which can get irritating.

The number of sub-categories for each node is very inconsistent, making the second level too broad or too narrow as shown below. Individual nodes can either be grouped together or split to achieve a consistent breadth of the nodes and sub-nodes. This will help distribute the content throughout the nodes efficiently.



Structure: Successful tactics and Areas for Improvement

Successful Tactics:

- Hierarchical approach as an organization structure suits the content type
- Detailed information of every particular node makes the categories involved more informative

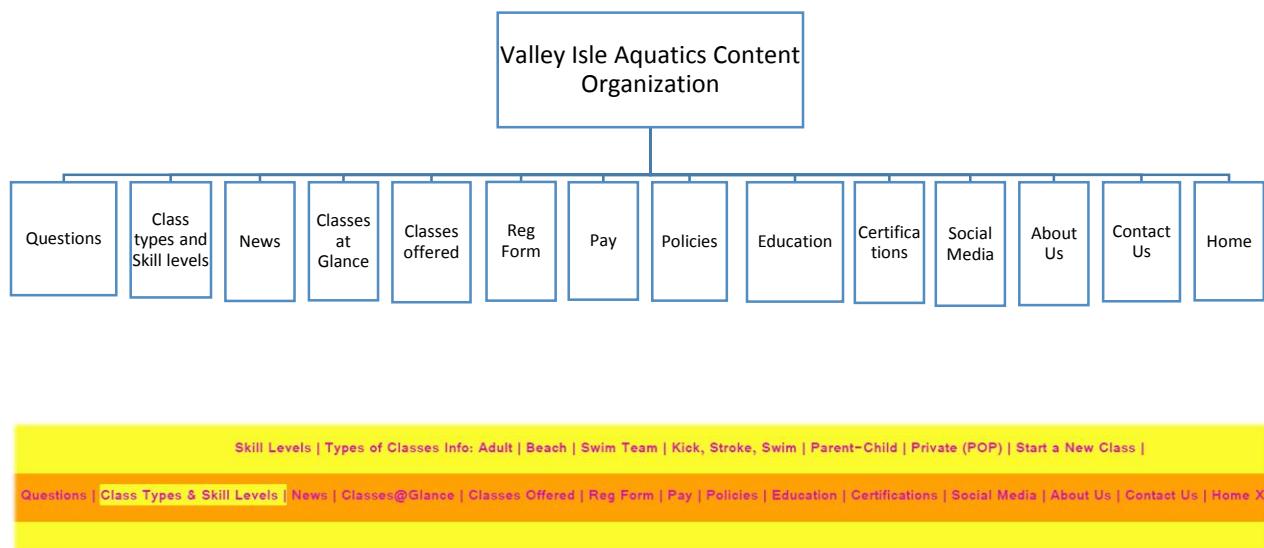
Areas of improvement:

- Poorly organized content structure
- Too many categories
- Inconsistent breadth and depth at second level of the categories
- Absence of priority to intended tasks
- No ease of navigation

CATEGORIES

As discussed earlier, the content of the Valley Isle Aquatics website has been divided into 14 major categories at top-level as shown below. The categories divided according to the ‘Category’ LATCH principle are divided with an objective to achieve intended end-user tasks. The categories are located below the organization logo, as shown before in the page layout.

A top-level hierarchy diagram and its actual representation are as follows:



The categorization of the content at the second level within 14 categories is grouped according to the various functionalities that the program offers, that is the different tasks that the end-user can achieve. Furthermore, each category is divided into sub-categories that are types of the parent category.

For example, one of the superordinate category ‘Types of Classes’ is divided into the following subordinate categories:

- Types of Classes
 - Adult

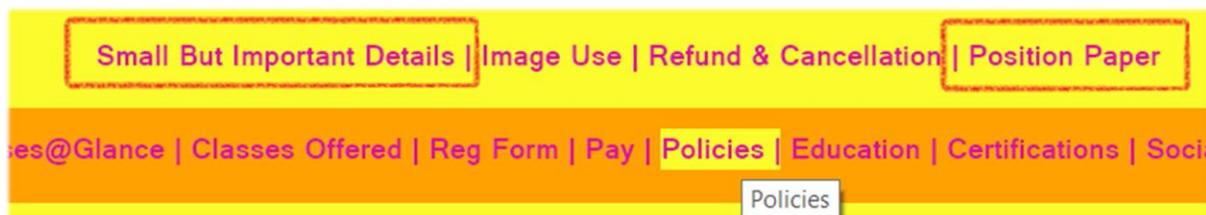
- Beach
- Swim Team
- Kick, Stroke, Swim
- Parent-Child
- Private (POP)
- Start a New Class

Here the various subordinate categories are types of the superordinate category where different types of classes taught are mentioned which fit accordingly. However there are some subordinate categories that do not fit well in their superordinate categories. Following are the examples for such abnormal categorization:

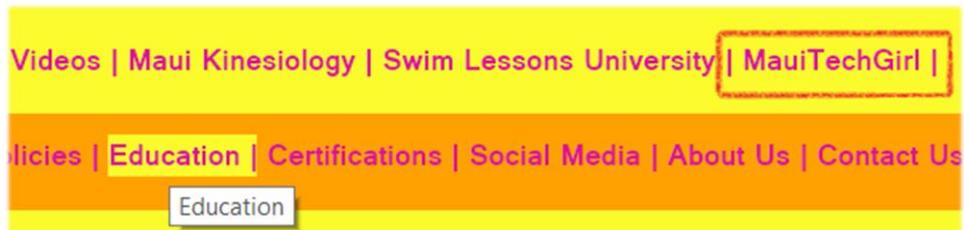
The 'News' superordinate category includes the 'Maui County Program Evaluation' which is a link to a PDF form for getting feedback from the users of the program.



The 'Policies' superordinate category includes two categories that are not related to policies - the 'Small But Important' and the 'Position Paper'.



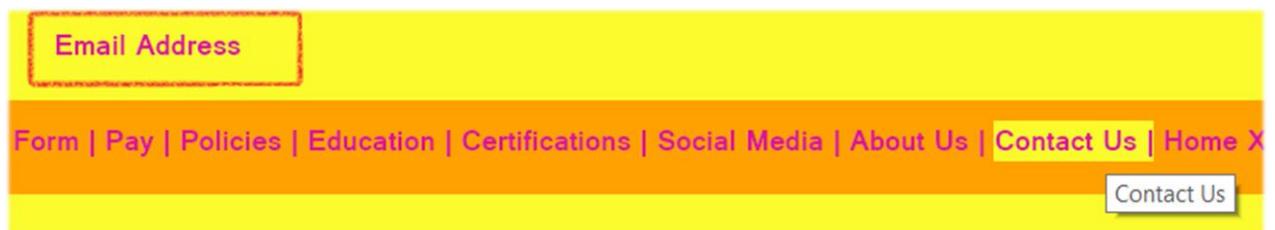
Another instance is of the ‘Education’ superordinate category which includes the ‘MauiTechGirl’ which is the link to the website developer’s portfolio website.



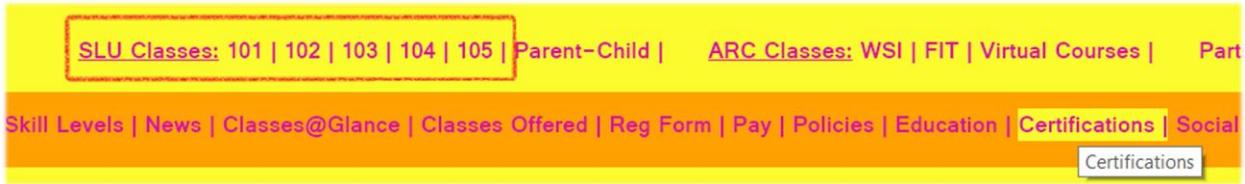
The ‘Social Media’ superordinate category includes ‘Maui Rays Shop’ and ‘Maui Rays Jewelry’ which are advertisements of partner websites and are not relevant to this particular category.



The ‘Contact us’ superordinate has only one subordinate category ‘Email address’. The contact information could be shown directly in the Content Area waving the ‘Email address’ category superfluous.



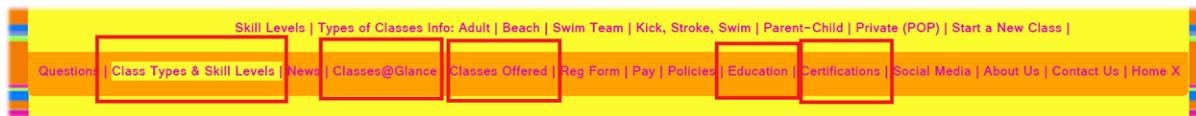
As far as nesting is concerned, the following is a striking example where having a third level category was not necessary. The SLU (Swimming Lessons University) class types could have been shown as a single category and the details could have been shown under SLU.



Overlaps are another aspect that need to be focused on. There is a lot of redundancy between categories which can be demonstrated with the help of following instances:

A high between-category similarity can be found amongst the categories marked in the following diagram.

All the marked categories describe the various types of programs offered at Valley Isle Aquatics and can be grouped together in a single category.



Another instance of a high between-subcategory similarity occurs when the same subordinate category is found in other superordinate categories. The following examples shown below demonstrate this. Here 'Kick, Stroke, Swim' is a subcategory within both 'Class types and Skill Levels' and 'Education', while 'Parent-Child' is a sub-category of both 'Class types', 'Skill levels' and 'Certifications'.



Ashish Shendure
Final Project Report
December 15th, 2014

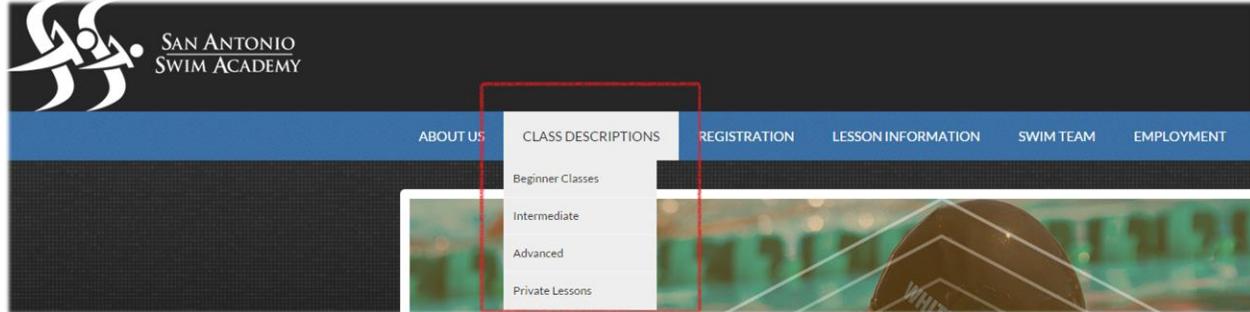
[SLU Classes: 101 | 102 | 103 | 104 | 105 | Parent-Child |](#) [ARC Classes: WSI | FIT | Virtual Courses |](#) [Participa](#)

[Skill Levels](#) | [News](#) | [Classes@Glance](#) | [Classes Offered](#) | [Reg Form](#) | [Pay](#) | [Policies](#) | [Education](#) | [Certifications](#) | [S](#)

A good reference in this case would be the [Texas Swimming Academy](#) website which groups all the classes under a single superordinate category called 'Our Programs' as follows:



Or the [San Antonio Swimming Academy](#) for that matter which does the within-category differentiation in an intuitive way as shown below:



There is thus redundancy across category groups of the Valley Isle Aquatics website and the boundaries need to be more intuitive and appropriate.

Ordering is one of the major concerns of Valley Isle Aquatics. The order at the top level breaks the convention by placing the 'Home' category at the end which might be very unfamiliar and hence less apparent to many users. The first category is 'Questions' which answers questions regarding enrolling and

registration process which might be a priority but could have used a different label like ‘FAQs’ for that content. An ‘About us’ category used in most websites could be a good idea which in this context is placed at the end.



The overall categorization approach is a hybrid of the various ‘Function or Task’ category approaches. The categories represent some of the functions or tasks that an end-user needs to accomplish like exploring the classes, registration, payment, connecting via social media, checking for contact information, etc.

Categories: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement

Successful Tactics:

- Adoption of function or task-based category formation suits the website content

Areas of improvement:

- Category overload, the breadth of the first level needs to be reduced
- Redundancies at superordinate and subordinate category levels should be avoided
- Overlaps for within-category and between-category similarity can be avoided
- Poor ordering of the super and sub categories affects the website accessibility

LABELS

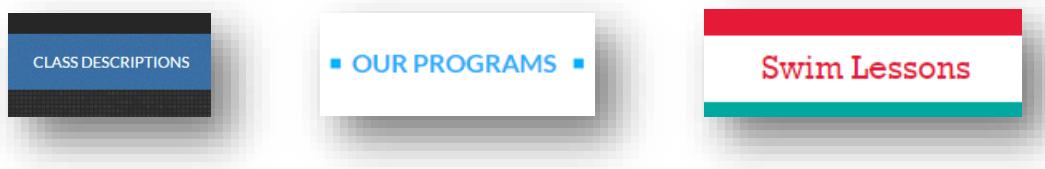
Labeling is a form of representation and the Valley Isle Aquatics website does an inconsistent though overall satisfactory job of representing the categories via labels. The global navigation system labels seem to have been created ad hoc during the site's creation.

Let's start with the 'Questions' label. A popular 'FAQs' label would be more appropriate in this case.

The [Technique Swimming Academy](#) for example uses the 'FAQs' label name:



The 'News' label has 'Newsletter' sub-category label creating duplicity. The 'Classes@Glance' label is used to show the Calendar schedule of all the events and hence a more general name like 'Class Schedule' would be a better solution. Other descriptions of labeling category depicting swimming classes' information of competitive websites can also be used:



The 'Classes Offered' label for a category that actually displays all the swimming class locations creates ambiguity. A more general 'Locations' label would have suited better.

The 'Certifications' label also shows types of classes (Swimming Learning University and American Red Cross) which can mislead the end-user.

The advertisements of some of the partner websites fall under the ‘Social Media’ label as shown below.

A more appropriate ‘Partners’ label in a separate category or showing clickable logos at the bottom of the page above sitemap would have worked in this context.

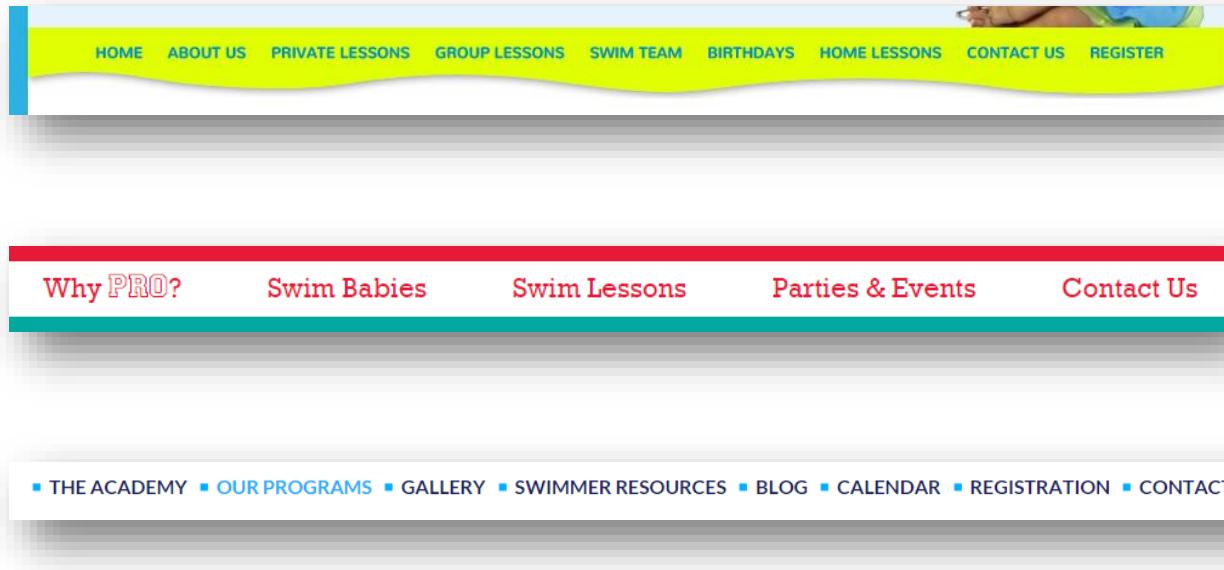


Redundant labeling for categories can be observed below for two different categories having the same purpose to introduce the instructors of the academy. One of the categories and hence the label could be scrapped.



Overall, the labels for the Valley Isle Aquatics website work well except for some of the cases mentioned above. Though the labels do not use a controlled vocabulary, they are predictive enough for the user. Occasional redundancy and inappropriate labels make the interpretation of the represented concept difficult to understand. This also affects the differentiation between two labels of similar type or function. Thus, on a whole, the labelling has been inconsistent.

Some of the examples of competitor websites with consistent labeling following controlled vocabularies can be seen below:



Labels: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement

Successful Tactics:

- The labels are not based on a controlled vocabulary for the category, which can be improvised

Areas of improvement:

- Inconsistent labeling across different category levels
- Difficult interpretation of some of the labels makes them less intuitive
- Lack of a consistent controlled vocabulary may create ambiguities in accessibility
- Some labels are not predictive and can be improved

NAVIGATION AND ACCESS

Navigation plays an important part in balancing the context and improving flexibility of any website. The valley Isle Aquatics has a persistent global navigation bar at the top of the every page. The logo above the global navigation bar redirects on clicking to the home page. In this way, the homepage of the website is accessible from any subordinate page, except for pages which redirect to a new tab of the browser to open a PDF file or form.

Most current websites have a set of global, local and contextual navigation systems, the integration of which improves the website accessibility and flexibility. The Valley Isle Aquatics website also has the three mentioned navigation systems, however the placing of these navigation systems is unconventional and makes the navigation difficult.

The local navigation lies above the global navigation which makes it difficult for the user to access since a conventional way is to have a local navigation below the global one. This decreases the intuitiveness of the website.

The main link to the homepage from every other page is a consistent Valley Isle Aquatics logo that lies above the persistent Global and Local navigation bar of the page. However, unlike traditional websites, the logo is too large for a logo and looks like an image. So a user may not use it as an upward link to the homepage.

Some of the links like registration forms, policy, etc. which are PDF forms, open in a new tab as shown below:

Valley Isle Aquatics Registration Form

Session: Oct-Dec~2013 (Community Pools)

Class Dates, Times, & Location(s): Please see [Class Information](#) page for details.
Number of Lessons: Dependent upon the pool location.
*30 minute classes

Auxiliary access systems are supplemental navigation systems that help improve the flexibility and accessibility of the website. Unfortunately the website supports only one mode of auxiliary access system in the form of FAQs or 'Questions' Category which itself does not answer all the questions which a user may come across. However, there are other auxiliary systems which are worth considering.

Site maps typically present the top few levels of the information hierarchy and provide a broad view of the content in the website, facilitating random access to segmented portions of the content. The absence of a sitemap makes the website content less accessible. Some of the competitor websites include the sitemap in various fashions as shown below:

Connect With Us





Pro Swim Academy
681 Meacham Road
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
[View Map »](#)
P 630.283.0136

- Employment
- Why PRO?
- Swim Babies
- Kids Lessons
- Adult Lessons
- Parties & Events
- Contact Us



SAFER³ WATER SAFETY
foundation



UNITED STATES SWIM SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION



QUICK LINKS

Home Special Events
The Academy Gallery
Community Sponsorships Swimmer Resources
Our Programs Blog
Infant Aquatics Survival Press
Stroke Development Group Lessons
Registration Adult Lessons
Conditioning Swim Contact

GET CONNECTED



Like our Facebook page for weather closures!

98 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

8 · 10

FLICKR



There are however many alternate ways of displaying the menu structure that can improve the navigation of the website. Some of the ways of achieving such navigations are shown below:

A vertical accordion menu approach as used by the [Charlotte Swimming Academy](#) can be used to display a list like for the calendar events:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Charlotte Swimming Academy. On the left, there is a vertical blue sidebar containing a list of menu items: Home, About Us, History, Staff, Philosophy, Location, Class Information, FAQ, Fish Tales, Contact Us, News, and Career. To the right of the sidebar, the main content area features a large orange banner with a goldfish logo and the text "Charlotte Swim Academy". Below the banner, there is a blog post titled "Fish Tales" with a preview of the content: "Our bright Charlotte magnets with us! Below a the link Enter a". Further down, there is another section titled "Pam" with a preview: "2010-09 My family vacation Academ theater home!!!!".

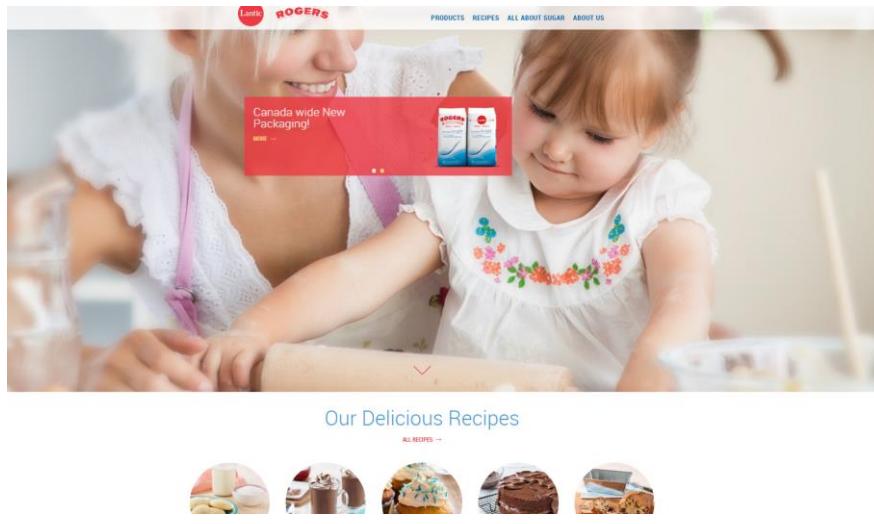
A more visual and image-driven menu approach adopted by the [US Swim Academy](#) website. This technique can be used for various categories which currently show too much of text:



An image-driven homepage to make the website more intuitive and interesting as used by the [Texas Swim Academy](#). A similar carousel can be used for the homepage:



Or to break the ice, adoption of a modern design with the combination of large photographs and flat design in order to display a website that is clean, intuitive and interesting with improved user appeal.



Navigation and Access: Successful tactics and Areas of Improvement

Successful Tactics:

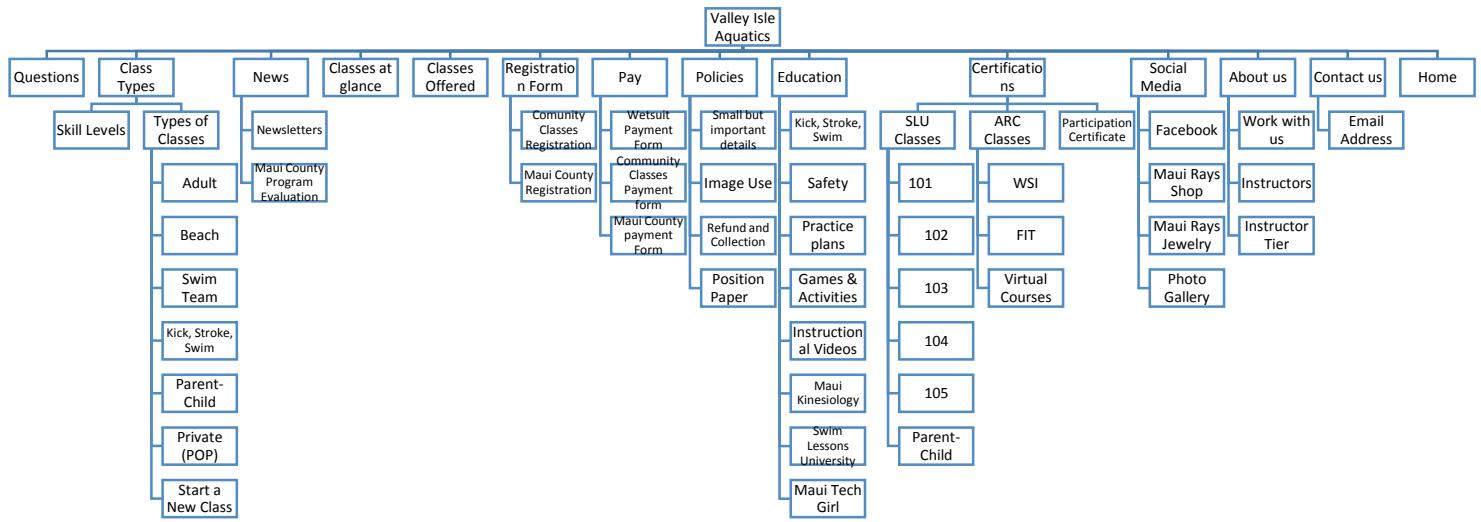
- Persistent global navigation bar makes the homepage accessible from any subordinate page

Areas of improvement:

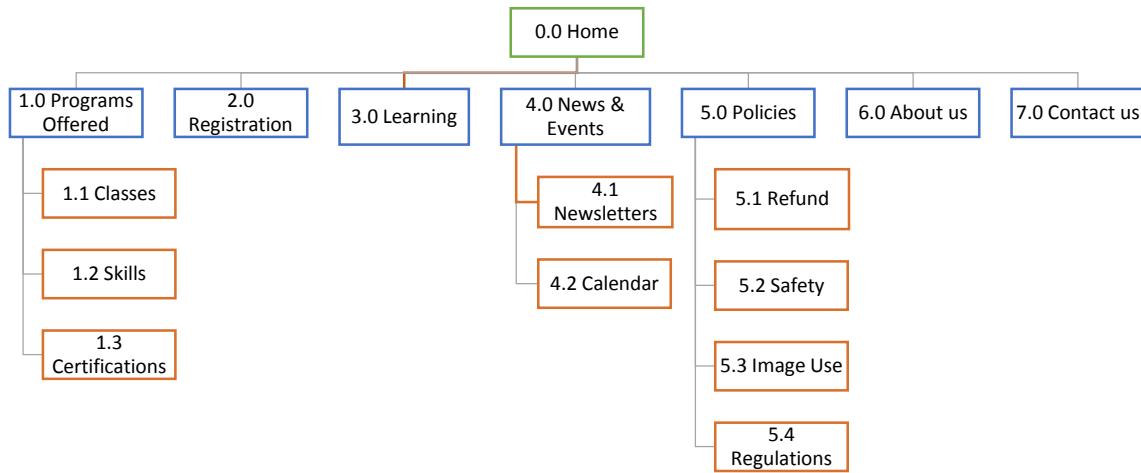
- Improper navigation system with incorrect placing of local and global navigations
- Adding auxiliary access tools such as sitemaps and alternative menus to improve navigability
- Poor grouping and labeling makes the website less intuitive

Sitemap

EXISTING SITEMAP



PROPOSED SITEMAP



Wireframes

The Wireframes for the redesign are made with the Balsamiq Tool. Since the length of the pages of the redesigned webpage vary, for optimized viewing, all the wireframes are attached in the zip file below:



The Wireframe of the homepage for Valley Isle Aquatics is as shown below:

Ashish Shendure
 Final Project Report
 December 15th, 2014

Valley Isle Aquatics - Home

<http://valleyislaquatics.com>

Header:

- Company Logo that redirects to the home page
- LOGO
- Member Login | Sign up
- Social media icons: f, p, in, +, r
- Login and Sign up links for existing and new users respectively
- Links to various Social network platforms with the academy's profiles
- Persistent Menu bar displaying the various categories available

Banner Area:

- A collection of beautiful illustrations of photographs from the academy that change with a fixed time interval
- Button to switch between images

Welcome to Valley Isle Aquatics

Content Sections:

- Professionalism Exemplified**
- Focus on all age groups**
- Social Connectivity**
- Upcoming Events**
- Testimonials**
- Site Map**
- Contact us**

Footer:

- Copyright and developer information

Annotations:

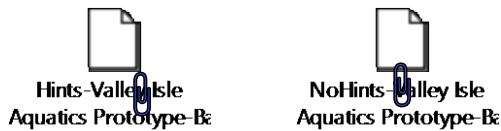
- A brief introduction about Valley Isle Aquatics Who? What? How?
- Three of the main highlight features of Valley Isle Aquatics website with brief descriptions of how they are implemented
- Video showing glimpses from one of the previous events
- Links to switch between the testimonials
- Contact information like address, contact number, map, etc.
- Copyright and developer information

Page Footer:

©2014 Valley Isle Aquatics
 Site Designed by Ashish Shendure
 For any site issues please contact xyz@abc.com

Prototype

The Prototypes for the redesigned website are created via Balsamiq as well. Two versions of the prototypes (one with clicking hints and one without) are attached below as PDF files. Since the length of the webpages vary, it is suggested to keep the scrolling mode of the PDF reader turned ON for optimized interactivity and navigability.



Deliverables: Reflections and Challenges

SITEMAP

Considering that the current website of Valley Isle Aquatics has 14 categories and with many redundancies, one of the biggest challenges in designing the site map was creating categories in a way that did not look complex by their labels and at the same time were simple enough to understand and intuitive enough to navigate. The most challenging category to restructure was 'Programs Offered' category. The current website has 4 different categories related to programs - 'Class Types and Skills' which includes various class types and skills required, 'Classes@Glance' which includes a Calendar, 'Education' which again includes certain programs and 'Certifications' which include the list of certifications provided. After some brainstorming, results of the card-sorting sessions, outputs from the Project fair and some paperwork, all these four categories were combined into one single category ' Programs Offered'. The 'Programs Offered' category retained some of the sub-categories while the remaining were moved to other relevant

categories. The ‘Calendar’ was moved to ‘News and Events’ category since it fitted the Events label and many of the card-sorting exercise outputs suggested that ‘Calendar’ be under the ‘Events’ tab. Another challenge while creating the site map was categorizing the learning tab. Since the current website provides a lot of learning resources in lots of different categories – Videos, practice plans, safety and games, and since all these resources are in the video format, all four of these categories were initially kept as separate sub-categories under Learning. But the category needed to be simplified and hence all the four labels were discarded and a single ‘Learning’ category was created with all the videos under one place.

The proposed site map has 8 categories and bringing the overall category count wasn’t easy. Though the ‘Programs’ category redundancy did play a vital role in bringing down this number, there were other categories that contributed as well. The ‘Social Media’ category had to be discarded since a button bar of various social media websites were added to the persistent menu bar. ‘Refund’ and ‘Safety’ seemed most relevant to the ‘Policies’ category and hence were swapped from their previous categories. While the ‘About us’ category in the current website only focusses on knowing more about the Instructors of the academy, a restructure decision had to be taken where the ‘About us’ in the proposed design now includes – ‘Branches’, ‘Partners’, ‘Testimonials’ and ‘Employment’ sub-categories, each of which were scattered throughout the initial categories. The ‘Contact us’ and ‘Home’ categories with highlights of the website was fairly an easy task considering the convention set by the number of competitor websites.

Another challenging scenario was to decide if or not to integrate the 'Programs Offered' and 'Registration' tab. This integration meant that the user directly sees and selects the course and the enrollment is done in a quick fashion. However, the study of competitive websites and discussions in Project Fair led to the conclusions that user may just want to see the courses and not necessarily enroll in one. Almost all the competitive websites had separate tabs for both 'Registration' and 'Programs' and hence it was decided that the integration would over-simplify the registration function and hence the idea needed to be dropped.

WIREFRAMES AND PROTOTYPE

For Wireframing and Prototyping, Balsamiq was the tool chosen considering the abstractness it provides with the layouts and widgets. However, unlike tools like Axure and LucidCharts, Balsamiq does not provide the ability to put conditions (some basic level programming) on a certain type of interaction and navigation. This was one of the issues with the tool that needed to be confronted. Since there wasn't any condition using capability available- the workout tried was with the help of layering and cloning. For a particular page for example, if I needed to show an alert message after registration, then a clone of the wireframe was made and a message was added to the clone. The background was then covered by a translucent layer of rectangle which made the background appear just enough to look like it was disabled. An opaque top-layer was then added so that the form now appeared like an alert message which appears like a dialog box

and which can be discarded by clicking on the Close button (like 'x') from the top-right corner of the dialog box.

A major concern while creating the wireframes was creating wireframes for the 'Programs Offered' tab. Just as the categorizing of the programs was challenging, the wireframing of the program tab was challenging as well. The main challenge lied in selection of a particular navigation technique which would facilitate the multi-hierarchy of the categories.

The proposed website has a global navigation at the top of the page. The 'Programs Offered' tab was having further hierarchies as well - 'Classes', 'Skills' and 'Certifications' and hence selecting a particular navigation design that did not complicate things was important. A variety of websites from the Internet were studied and various navigation techniques were observed. A local navigation that did not disturb the essence of simplicity was required. Accordions, splash screens, radial menus and lots of other techniques were observed but finally a simple persistent local nav bar that sits on the left of the screen was chosen. Since the human mind sees the top left corner of the screen before anything else on a website, the combination of having a persistent global nav bar at the top and a persistent local nav bar on the left looked simple and efficient.

Along with these challenges there were some other challenges as well. The Valley Isle Aquatics website comes with a splash of loud colors, bright yellow and pink and hence it was important to maintain the redesign in terms of function and not aesthetics since it is very easy to digress from your motive after seeing such a layout. Also, some of the navigation and hover interactions were

choppy and took a lot of time to refresh thus consuming a lot of time as well. Overall, redesigning this website was a great learning curve and helped strengthening the concepts of Information Architecture.