

Redesign recommendations for [FantasticFiction.com](https://www.fantasticfiction.com) Website

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Redesign recommendations for Fantastic Fiction

Executive Summary

In the following pages are the recommendations to improve users' experience enabling them to discover new and old books for all ages. After exploring Fantastic Fiction and understanding how the web hierarchy is set up and viewing as many pages as possible, we determined there are a few ways the site can improve its functionality. The report will reveal pages that are unnecessary and provide a new sitemap to the website to deliver the fastest and most up-to-date results. This redesign aims to draw in more book enthusiasts by changing the home landing page and structure of genres along with fewer subpages when viewing a collection of top authors or similar books. The customer should not feel overwhelmed when searching for a book and want to return to the website as a viable source of information for browsing and purchasing books.

Introduction

The website www.FantasticFiction.com is a resource for readers who want to discover new authors and fiction titles. Users who appreciate the website's features can create a free account in which they can store information regarding their favorite authors, the books they want to read in the future, and a way to record the titles that they have read. The site includes several features, including the ability to search for a book by title, author, or series. Users can also browse by literary genre. The genres *Mystery*, *Thriller*, *Romance*, *Fantasy*, and *Science Fiction* are showcased on the top of the site's main page, with an additional option for *All Genres*. Other ways to discover new books include links for *New Authors*, *New Books*, *Coming Soon*, and *Top Authors*. A selection of eighteen *Popular Fiction* books are showcased on the site's main page with the book cover's image and author/title information.

Our group has created a proposal for a re-design to improve the site's usability because we encountered several points of confusion while navigating the site's current iteration. Our re-design aims to enhance the clarity of the site's links, increase the findability of the site's resources, and alter the search capabilities of the site's search database.

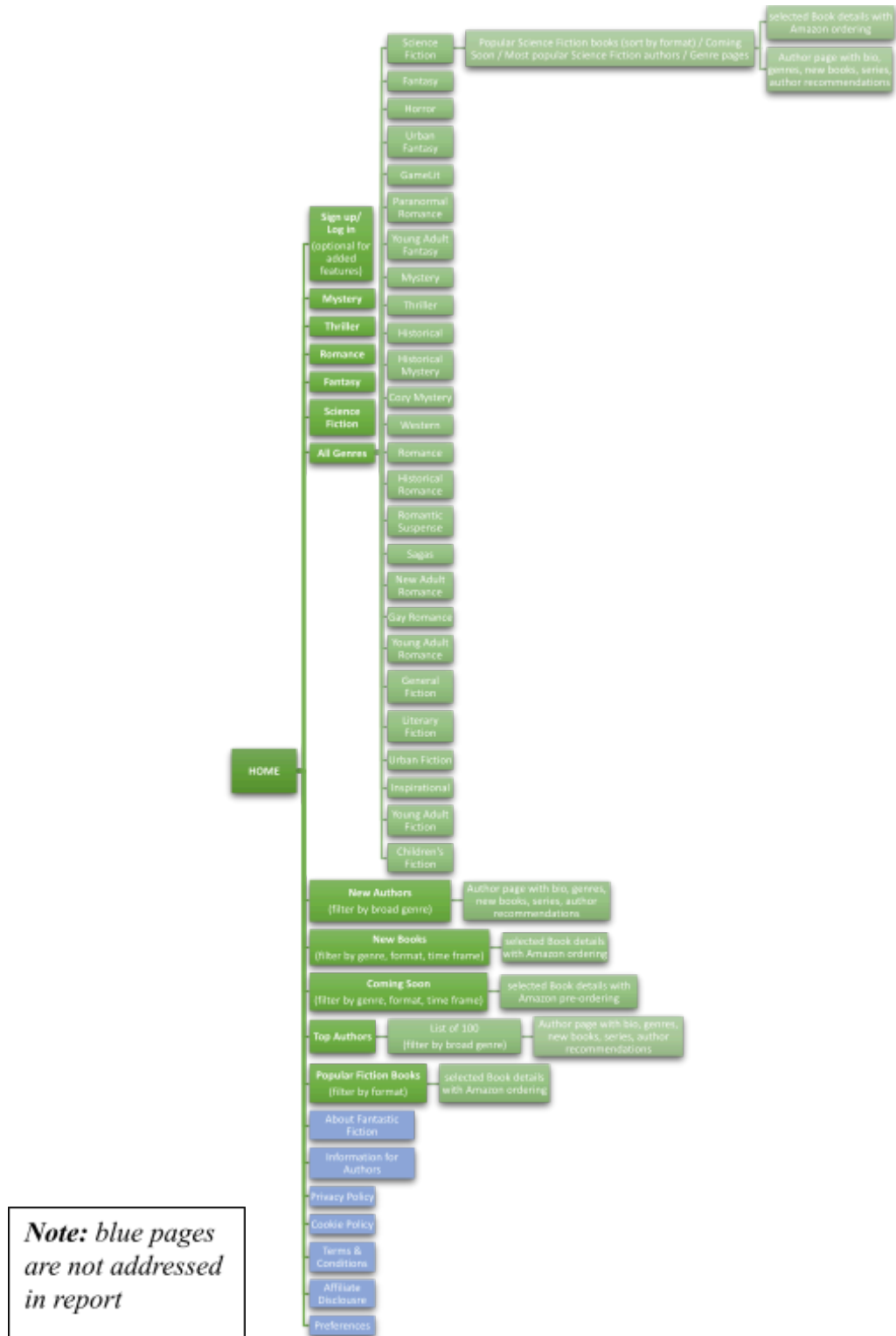
Site Map of Existing Website and Discussion

Searching the site's database is primarily supported by a text field at the top of the "Home" page which can be configured with a pulldown menu to search by Author, Book, or Series. This is located in a very prominent position on the page and is excellent for users who know exactly what they are looking for. An additional search field is located at the bottom of most pages and is convenient for formulating a new search once a user has scrolled down through the original results. Browsing is supported by main pages branching off the Home Page: New Authors, New Books, Top Authors, Coming Soon, and Genre pages. There is a wish list

function available to members which may help to mitigate the overwhelm as there are copious access points, cross-referenced links, and a glut of potential search results.

The existing site map shows that Fantastic Fiction has a shallow site depth. By clicking on one of the literary genres, such as *Mystery*, the user will be linked to the main page with showcased popular Mystery books, a list of titles soon to be published, links to similar genres, and the most popular Mystery authors. If the user selects a specific book to explore, then they are linked to a page with purchasing information connected to Amazon, a summary of the book, a list of similar titles, and a link to the author's page. Further down, the home page also has links with the terms, *New Authors*, *New Books*, *Coming Soon*, *Top Authors*, and *Popular Fiction books*. These pages offer long lists of book titles and/or authors, and once a user selects either a title or author, they will be connected to the same page as found within the Genre link, a detailed page devoted to a specific author or book title/series. Technical site information links can be found at the bottom of the home page in small print.

Figure 1 Existing Fantastic Fiction Site Map



One unique aspect of the site's offerings is its author recommendations section. The site cross-references the positive blurbs authors have made, which are commonly found on book jackets, and aggregates them on the author's page. Therefore, a user who likes Stephen King can see a list of books in which he has written positive commentary and read those comments. Similarly, when viewing specific genre pages, related genres are listed with links to their respective pages at the top of the page with easy accessibility. This can serve to narrow or broaden a user's search since both broad genres such as *Mystery* are suggested, as well as narrower terms such as *Cozy Mystery*.

The site's navigation features are easy to use. When on a book or author-specific page, users are offered links to *Previous Book* and *Next Book*, which allows the user to click through all of an author's book pages sequentially. Additionally, the main page's navigation links remain at the top of each page as the user explores deeper into the website, thus enabling the user to return to "Home" or to utilize the search engine at any moment.

Redesign Site Map and Discussion

In order to increase the findability of the site's resources, our redesign suggests reorganizing the genre categories. In the current site map, there are 25 genres listed in the *All-Genres* category, which is too many for the eye to capture in one quick glance. The genre labels listed under *All Genres* are in no particular order or grouping (not alphabetic, nor grouped by theme). By decreasing the number of genres on the page, the user can easily find the desired genre. For instance, a user can select *Adult Fiction*, then the genre *Fantasy*, and from there see narrower terms, *Urban Fantasy*, *Gamelit*, and *Haremlit*.

Figure 2 Proposed site map for Fantastic Fiction



Additionally, the genre labels are not defined anywhere on the site. For users who are unfamiliar with a certain genre, such as *Gamelit*, our redesign encourages the creation of a short description of each genre to be located at the top of each genre's webpage. There are multiple specialty genres listed that casual readers might enjoy but may avoid because they don't want to spend time puzzling over what they encompass.

Also, our re-design proposes adding the terms *Adult Fiction*, *Young Adult Fiction*, and *Children's Fiction* to the main page so that users can search by the reader's age. In the current iteration, the terms *Young Adult Fiction* and *Children's Fiction* are buried within the 26 genres. Also, our re-design provides subgenres for both fields, narrowing the groups so that users can search by reading level, and a specific genre within the YA category. This will allow someone seeking books for a 3rd-grade reader to exclude books recommended for older children.

Another change our site map proposes is changing and combining some of the terms to make them easier to understand. For instance, the current site uses the term *Literary Fiction* to group together books that are character-driven and contemporary, but our group discussed how the term *Literary Fiction* to our minds, referred to classic literature, such as Jane Austen. Therefore, we suggest combining *Literary Fiction* into the grouping of *General Fiction*, since *General* is a broader term. A similar change we suggest is regarding the term *New Books* to *New Releases* since *New Books* could refer to the book's usage (a new or used book for purchase), while *New Releases* are more directly related to a recent publication.

We also suggest changing the term *Popular Fiction* to *Trending Fiction*. On the *About Fantastic Fiction* page, the authors mention that their rankings are determined by site user and member page views rather than by sales statistics. Thus, the term *popular* could lead to confusion for readers who are familiar with the national "best sellers" lists. By using *Trending*

Fiction, it is clearer that the ranking is site-specific and community driven. While the site does have a relatively large pool of users (125,000 members and 25 million monthly page views), they lack the authority and reach of, for example, *The New York Times Best Seller List*.

One final change that we suggest on our site map is to limit the number of authors available as links on the *Top Authors page*. On the current site, there are 100 authors listed, which is a dizzying number of names for users to browse in one go. By limiting the number to the *Top 25 Authors* on one page, with the option to *See More* by selecting a link, the information would be condensed and thus, more digestible.

Recommendations and User Testing

Apart from the changes to the site map, we have two additional recommendations which we hope the Fantastic Fiction team will consider. The first would be to alter the search capabilities within its database so that users can search by keywords or subjects. Currently, users can only search by title, author, or series, and they must select the appropriate field before searching. Otherwise, if a user types in *Stephen King*, but is searching within the *Title* field, no results will be found. By improving the database's ability to match the term, no matter the field, users will create fewer errors and find their desired result more easily.

And the second recommendation would be to change the main page's configuration so that the *Coming Soon* bar located at the right of the page is narrowed to a specific date, rather than the large time period it currently encompasses. By limiting the date range, the number of titles soon to be published would be diminished, thus decluttering the main page's site.

Our group discussed the different genre category labels at length, and we believe that performing card sorting activities with the target user group will provide more guidance as to improve the term's specificity and their groupings. Additionally, by analyzing the site analytics

and conducting interviews with users the designers can study whether organizing the books by age level is an appropriate grouping. The site seems to cater to readers of adult fiction; however, the site contains a multitude of titles within Young Adult and Children's literature. If indeed users are interested in Children's literature and YA, then further studies could be conducted to appropriately subgroup the books within those categories. Similarly, the site analytics and user interviews can be studied to see whether or not small adjustments, such as narrowing the Top Authors to 25 names, rather than 100, on a page, increases users' likelihood to click on a certain author.

References

Fantastic Fiction Team. (n.d.). *About fantastic fiction*. Fantastic Fiction. Retrieved November 29, 2022, from <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/about.htm>