Wisconsin Dairy Council

Competitive Analysis

Assignment: Website Competitive Analysis Report

Researchers

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Company

 Wisconsin Dairy Council http://www.wisconsindairycouncil.com/

Objectives for the Analysis

To gain knowledge of competitor practices and ensure that our client is maintaining practices consistent with industry standards. This analysis is intended to identify aspects of the client's website which could be modified to improve site accessibility, usability, and organization.

Questions to be Answered by Analysis

- Is the website up to industry standards?
- Which aspects of the site are visually appealing or unappealing?
- Are features easy for a user to access?
- Are pages understandable and easily usable?
- What is the overall feel of the site?
- Is the user able to easily navigate to pages they have seen before?
- What is distinct about the client's site?

Assessment Criteria of the Analysis

- Navigability
- Visual appearance
- Organization of information
- Features and Functionality
- Relevance of content

Competitors

Dairy Max

Dairy council that represents dairy farm families from Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Southwest Kansas. They value education, health & wellness, dairy farming and business, and supporting their producers.

Dairy Council of California

Established in 1919, the Dairy Council of California produces balanced nutrition education programs and resources for California schools, health professionals, and workplace wellness programs.

WashingtonDairy Council

Located in Lynnwood, Washington, the Washington Dairy Council is a coalition of nutrition professionals furthering nutritional education. The council encourages lifelong health decisions based on The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines.

Dairy Max

Organization	Dairy Max
URL	http://www.dairymax.org/
Audience	Children, Parents, Health Professionals, Dairy Farmers, School Educators, Athletes

Findings & Results

Navigability

- The user is not able to navigate easily. On the desktop, the main menu only appears if the user scrolls. The site does have the nav items laid out in an alternate way, that looks more like CTAs (Calls to Action).
- On the desktop site, the CTA-style Nav has subpages. However, on the main nav, there are no subpages.
- On mobile devices, the CTA style nav does not have subpages, unless you click in a certain way (I did not know that there were subpages until I clicked on the nav item). The main dropdown nav does not have subpages.

- When the user is on a subpage, the active main nav item is a slightly different color. However, on mobile, there is no way to tell what subpage you are on. On the desktop version, the active subpage is a different color, but only if you click on the related main nav item.
- There are no main headers on the pages, to tell the user what page they are on.
- There is no breadcrumb navigation.
- There is not a Contact Page, which makes it difficult to find contact information.

Visual appearance

- The text is extremely legible. The text is black, with a white background. The font size is large enough to read. However, the images overwhelm the text and cause a distraction, making otherwise legible text difficult to read.
- The page overall feels fun, bold, and modern. It feels up to date with modern websites. It is extremely graphic heavy.
- The site is aesthetically pleasing and has an acceptable color scheme.

Organization of information

- The information is organized by audience- School Educators, Health Professionals, and Dairy Farmers.
- Although the organization makes sense, it may ostracize other audiences.
- The tools are resources are separate from the downloads, which may be confusing since technically downloads are tools and resources.
- There is a blog, but it is difficult to find. There are also "Trending Topics" which are separate, but basically the same thing. "Trending Topics" even has a small feed from the blog.
- "In the News" appears to just be a category of the blog, but is on the same navigation level as the blog, which may be confusing for the user.
- The contact information is buried on the About Page. It is difficult to find.

Features and Functionality

- The Dairy Max website has relevant features that are in line with other sites of the same genre.

- Features include sliders, blog, recipes, downloads, videos.
- Functionalities include a mailing list, event signup, and search bars (for both the overall site and the blog).
- There appear to be two separate mailing lists, though it is completely unclear what the differences are between them, other than their names.
- The mailing lists are easy to sign up for.
- Downloadable items are easy to download and print. It is very nice that you do not have to use a shopping cart to obtain these items.
- There are currently no events to sign up for, so we are unable to test this function
- It is somewhat confusing that there are separate search functions for the blog and overall site, but both of the search functions work well.

Relevance of content

- The content all appears to be relevant to the audiences and website genre.

Design Recommendations

- Avoid overuse of images and animation. The site has an impressive appearance, initially, but this creates a negative user experience in the long run. Simplifying the website would increase readability and allow the user to navigate the page more easily.
- Adopt a more familiar navigation scheme. Users respond well to recognizable patterns.
- Integrate more audiences into the navigation. This may involve a massive overhaul of the information architecture.
- Consolidate mailing lists, or clarify the distinction between them.
- Avoid having categories of the blog outside of the basic blog page. The categories can be easily navigable from there.
- Integrate Blog into the main navigation.
- Create a Contact Page.

Dairy Council of California

Organization	Dairy Council of California
URL	http://www.healthyeating.org/
Audience	Educators, school food service members, parents, students, health professionals, health and wellness providers.

Findings & Results

Navigability

- The left navigation is much simpler than the main navigation and allows you to know which page you are on and possible pages to navigate to next.
- The site includes a breadcrumb feature that helps you know where you are on the site and how you got there.

Visual appearance

- There is a graphic in the top right heading on the pages. This graphic has a look of stacked icons and becomes a link button on all pages except the home page. The button links to a nutrition philosophy page, this seems random and unintuitive.
- The overall feel of the site is professional and family/school friendly.
- The site features a photo slider on the main page with appropriate images and information.
- Main information is legible, however paragraphs and sub content are difficult to read.
- The site includes areas with a lot of content that become overwhelming. This seems more apparent as you scroll down the page.
- The colors on the site are pleasing. They work well together and speak to the dairy theme.
- A negative in the color scheme is the light blue link color. This color becomes hard to read on the pages.
- There seems to be a heading color theme of bright colors outside of the blue family seen throughout the site. These bright headings are consistent depending on what section of the site you are in.

Organization of information

- Main navigation includes a lot of sub-navigation items and is overwhelming. Further, the main navigation labels are cluttered and redundant.
- Overall the site has a large amount of information, which could be simplified and better organized.
- The site has three call to action sections targeting the main users of the site. The topics and information in these areas is well organized and speaks directly to the specific user's needs.
- Across the many pages of the site there seems to be a lack of cohesion in content layout. The site does have a lot of pages however, there seemed to be a different layout for almost every page.

Features/Functionality

- The site has features consistent with other educational resource websites.

- Certain pages of the site contains informational videos and resources. These are used well and are relevant to the page content.
- The site has a photo slider feature and a search bar.
- The site features Nutrition Blog Network blog section as well as social media links.

Relevance of content

- The Dairy Council of California's website has a large amount of useful content catering to a wide range of users.
- Part of the site is dedicated to health and wellness professionals, which we haven't seen in our other websites.

Design Recommendations

- Reorganize and consolidate site information, simplify the main navigation and labels.
- Consider eliminating the left side nav providing the main nav is made more usable.
- Consider eliminating the graphic/button in the top right corner and placing the Nutritional Philosophy page under an appropriate section of the site.
- Increase font-size and leading of type across the entire website.
- Audit content to simplify and "decongest" the large, overwhelming areas with a lot of content.
- Improve cohesion of content layout between pages.
- Consider changing the text link color to something more readable.

Washington Dairy Council

Organization	Washington Dairy Council
URL	http://nutrition.eatsmart.org/
Audience	Educators, students, dairy consumers, parents, nutritionists, health care professionals

Findings & Results of analysis
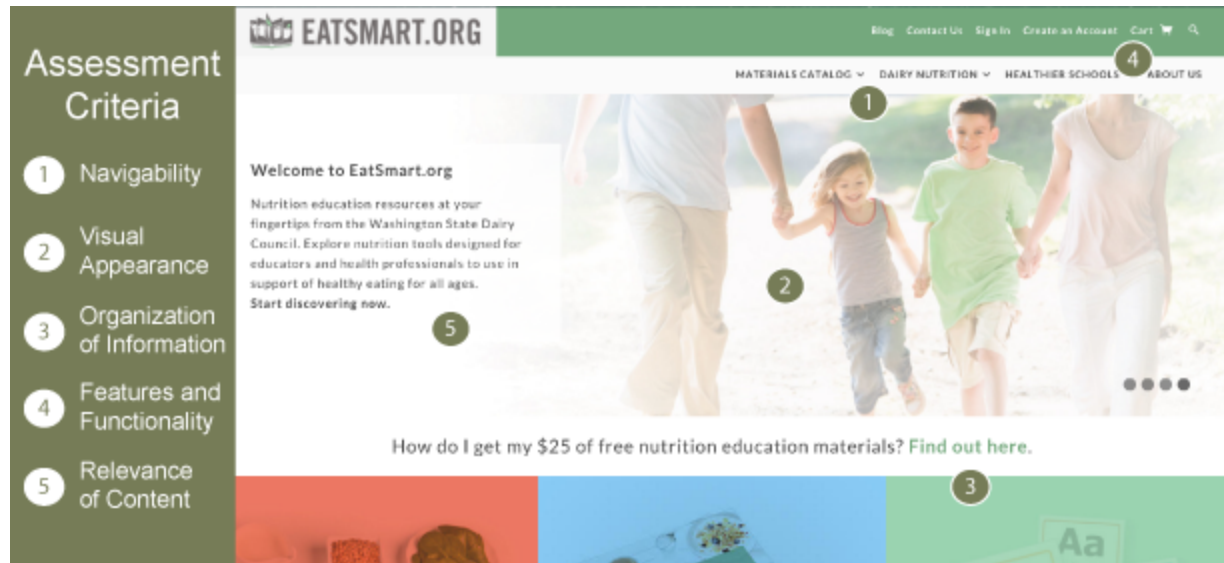
Navigability

- The breadcrumb is misleading to page structure, the path represented does not match the structure of the main navigation bar.
- The four rotating images on the main page contain the same information, and have no navigational purpose.
- The main nav bar responds on a hover, but requires a click to expand. The sub-nav menu hierarchy is visually vague--sub-headings carry the same visual weight as hyperlinks.

Visual Appearance

- Information formatting often lacks cohesive structure, making it more difficult to read in certain resolutions. Formating often restricts content container width, but leaves it uncentered. Other times container widths expand to the browser width, making text hard to read.
- Overall, the site has a clean, professional feel. The homogeneous page structure, and weak pastel color scheme give the site a feeling of clinical sterility.
- The colors are well-balanced on the main page, but each page suffers from a lack of strong focal points.

Organization of Information

- Information is structured fairly well into promotional materials, nutrition information, and school programs--but could be improved to better target our identified users, educators, parents, and students.
- Despite their social media presence, there is no landing page or structural inclusion for their social media accounts.

Features and Functionality

- The updating features--Twitter, Instagram, blog--are present but underutilized.
- The organization's Facebook page should be integrated to the site--it is by far their most frequently updated account.

Relevance of Content

- The content is mostly targeted at our identified users, especially nutritional educators and parents seeking nutritional information.
- The organization's programs largely are targeted towards younger students--one of our identified users--but the site lacks content that would be relevant to these users.

Comparative Recommendations

- Avoid stylistically-adopted features without specific design intent--Eat Smart's main page rotating gallery is its strongest visual element, yet this feature lacks information, navigational value, and visual interest.
- Adopt a policy of clearly defining stylistic traits for text, headers, hyperlinks, and titles. Visual weight of these elements on Eat Smart's page often confuses the purpose and hierarchy of certain information.
- Maintain the contrasts of strong color in the current site--Eat Smart's pale color palette and low color contrast lacks variety and does little to reinforce page structure.
- Utilize a less cluttered navbar by developing an informational hierarchy that is more geared towards our identified users.

- Integrate social media in a way that is inviting and accessible to users. Currently both sites have very active social media accounts but they are relegated to discrete locations on their homepages.
- Avoid forgetting about engaging younger users, which are a target audience for many of the organization's programs.