

Executive Brief Summary

The following report examines a brief overview of the function and usability of the website based on a recent audit of the website. Through Google Analytics, KPIs were evaluated over a three-year period to year-to-date for discovery of trends, increases and decreases, and major spikes related to how users are interacting with and accessing the website. The initial audit was completed due to major concerns with the usability of the website, including structure and navigation, lack of clear calls to action, lack of content following in line with the mission of the organization and mobile optimization.

Primary Goals and Strategy

The primary goals for the website include improving the audience journey, increasing engagement, increasing conversions and driving new interest while retaining repeat interest.

This will be accomplished by:

1. Improving the usability and function of the website (primarily reworking the navigation and structure of website to be intuitive for user)
2. Writing and designing clear, concise messages to drive the audience to conversion while clearly aligning with Forterra's mission
3. Restructuring major pages including the homepage (first impression), about us, and our work to engage users with content while visually guiding them through the page (reducing bounce rate)
4. Improving mobile optimization to take advantage of the potential growth through mobile devices

Introduction

The website acts as a *first impression* to a larger demographic of people than we are able to connect with face to face. It acts as a tool for Forterra to expand their reach, drive new interest, and convert more donors, volunteers, and advocates for the brand. If the audience is having a difficult time navigating through the website, not finding the content they need or not finding a clear call to action, they will leave the website without interacting and move on to the next competitor. This will result in lower engagement rates and long term, less people converting into working partners, donors, volunteers and advocates.

Looking at long-term trends over the last three years to date, the total number of users who access the website is continuing to increase, however returning users, session duration and number of pages viewed are steadily declining as bounce rates (those who access the website, do not interact and then leave) continue to increase. This indicates that the usability and content of the website are not functioning as they should be.

Key Performance Indicators of Website Traffic

Website KPI	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Total Users	91,799	93,844	83,792
Returning Users	38,781 / 30%	40, 275 / 30%	21646 / 25.8%
Session Duration	0:01:44	0:01:40	00.01.18
Pages/ Session	4.06	2.78	1.93
Bounce Rate	3.33% *note this data seems incorrect and is not included in the observations	41.11%	67.94%

Main Concerns in Depth

Below are brief findings of the main concerns of the website relating to usability, function and content. All data was evaluated through Google Analytics over a three year period to date for discovery of trends, increases, decreases, and major spikes.

(1) Navigation

Observation + Problem

Forterra.org has over 50 navigational links (main, sub, and internal) connected to the website. Many of the links are misleading with link names that are unclear, repetitive information, links that are hard to find or information that doesn't relate to the link title. For example, only 1% of users are found to view the *our history* page because it is buried within other pages and labeled as *our story*.

Looking at the behavior flow in Google Analytics, 48% of users are dropping off after the homepage. As noted, the average user drops off after viewing only two pages. The higher drop off rate on homepage and low page views indicates that both the main navigation and sub navigation (categories) need to be revisited. The data indicates that the user is not finding the information they are looking for on the homepage (highest entrance page), not finding a clear call to action and/or unable to clearly navigate to the next page because of the complexity of both the language used in the navigation and structure of the website.

Solution

The navigation should be clearly labeled, structured, and intuitive to increase overall user experience of the website. Users should be able to easily find information and quickly navigate through the website to help drive them from their start page to the information they need. This will increase the time spend on the site, pages viewed, and conversion rates. It will also help to increase SEO with both organic and paid search.

1. **Reorganize navigation** - focusing on sub navigation, move tabs to intuitive location for user (minimal, well organized)
2. **Relabel navigation** - rename labels to use less jargon, more clear and direct language (do not assume that the audience knows the organization or mission)
3. **Reorganize content** – bring pages with vital information or highest time spent on page (land stewardship, corporate partners, our history, our staff) to the front, making sought after information easy to find
 - a. Add new navigation tabs where needed to help users find this information
 - b. Reorganize content, less duplicates of information – minimize the navigation
4. **Add breadcrumbs where needed** – sub navigation pinned to the top of long pages, allowing for easier page jumps
5. **Seamless design for hyperlinks** – set standard for design of all hyperlinks to give the audience easy to see visual cues of each link

(2) Homepage (and beyond) CTA, content, layout

Observation + Problem

The homepage is the main entrance page for most of the audience at 15% with a drop off rate of 48%. This gives insight to some of the major pain points for the average user (frustrations when

visiting the website). The high drop off rate can indicate that the user is not finding the information they are looking for, a clear call to action, unable to easily navigate to the next page or are dropping off due to slow load times.

The first half of the homepage features an image carousel, featuring recent projects. Although recent projects are important, having them at the top of the page instead of a clear stated bio addressing questions the user may have, can cause confusion on what the organization does. The image carousel and large images displayed will decrease the speed of the website, also causing frustration.

Further down the page, the subheadings misalign with the content, feature repetitive content and links, or content that doesn't relate to the category it is in. There is minimal written content (working again Forterra on SEO), creating minimal audience engagement. The page uses a passive, humble voice. It lacks a clear call to action, impact through visuals and written content, and doesn't showcase what Forterra has accomplished.

Solution

The homepage should be seen as the first impression of the organization. It should load quickly (reducing frustration) and utilize the area above the fold (portion of the website visible without scrolling) with information the audience will need to know right away. This should include a clear summary of the mission statement and a statement that demonstrates the impact or benefit of the organization, to drive the audience to engage with the content while answering any potential questions the audience may have right away. This will reduce the drop off rate while driving the user to stay on the website.

1. **Page layout / first impression** - mission statement and brief introduction should be clearly stated above the fold on the page, imagery should reflect
2. **Clear call to action** – lose passive voice, use straightforward language and focus on impact to drive audience to get involved and engage in content
3. **Reorganize content on page** – remove any duplicated information or hyperlinks
4. **Page navigation** - clear visual hierarchy to help audience navigate through page
5. **Reduce page load time** – reduce number of images or optimize images to help page load faster, remove content that isn't relevant or repeated
6. **Beyond the homepage restructure** – similar steps should be taken to restructure content, layout, and call to action on other pages

(3) Clear Call to Action: writing and designing clear, concise messages to drive audience

Observation + Problem

The call to action on most pages is not clear, either through content or design. This is also indicated by the trending decrease in average pages viewed (less than two). As an industry standard, average pages viewed should be at least two with optimal pages viewed per session being at 3-4.

There is a large amount of repetitive content and/or content is organized in a way that is not relevant to the category which can cause confusion for the audience. Language and design used for hyperlinks is often unclear that it is a link or it is generic (learn more, read more). Many of the pages are lacking content, which results in a lack of engagement (this is seen with the

reduced time spent on page and reduced pages viewed). A call to action isn't just a button on the page, it is *all* of the content working together to engage the user to click the button (the process).

Solution

All elements of the website have an impact on the overall call to action for the user, including content and visual cues. The visual cues and content on the website should have the same purpose: to inform the user and drive them to conversion (volunteer, donate, advocacy). The content should be useful and purposeful – aligning with the mission statement and goals of the organization while also being engaging for the user.

1. **Language used:** make sure language is clear and concise, avoid jargon; avoid overuse of generic terms (read more, learn more) and be more specific (see project, see our story, watch episode)
2. **Storytelling:** audience will be more likely to reach conversion through clear emotional connection (focus on more than just the button)
3. **CTA through design:** clear language and design for all CTA and links, call to action doesn't have to be all through language, design can help drive audience through page with visual hierarchy (color, typography, imagery) **Reduce repetitive content:** consolidate where needed, expand on other vital content, update information (annual reports out of date) - make sure content is in an intuitive place for the user, remove overuse of CTA on some pages (10+ donate links on one page can reduce conversion by almost 20%)
4. **Bulk up the footer:** include NAP, newsletter signup, all social links, and brief bio or mission statement to help audience know where they are at, at all times and access sought after information easily
5. **Remove bad CTA:** Some information should be moved out of main pages as it is external link and can drive audience away from website (social icons on top of about us page is call of action we don't want right away)
6. **Keywords:** research and include keywords in the content to help the audience find the information they are looking for (move likely to convert)

(4) Mobile Optimization

Observation + Problem

The bounce rate for mobile devices on Forterra.org is at an alarmingly high rate of 78%, a sharp increase from 63.22% last year. The session duration is less, at 50 seconds, compared to 1.38 on desktop. The desktop acquisition is higher, at 64%, meaning that only 36% of the traffic is through mobile device (almost half of the industry standard) even though half of the current audience uses an iPhone as their primary mobile device which is primarily app based (modern and simple). Traffic directed through mobile.facebook ranks in the top 5 for acquisition, however the bounce rate is at 88%. All of this data shows that the website is not mobile optimized, however it also shows that there is room for growth given the current traffic being driven through mobile.

Solution

Traffic through mobile devices, as an industry standard, should account for 60% of traffic. More specifically, as an industry statistic, 25% of donors complete their donations through mobile devices and 54% of nonprofit emails are opened on a mobile device according to [Nonprofit Source](#). If bounce rates on mobile devices are high it is usually the result of poor usability

including small buttons, links that are hard to see, unclear navigation, unclear forms, over scrolling and slow load times.

1. **Focus on usability for mobile:** larger buttons, limited popups, and fast load times
2. **Content:** Make sure content is easy to read and navigate through, correct typography size and spacing (words per line, space between lines)
3. **Navigation:** organize navigation so it is easy to use through mobile + clickable call to action buttons that are easy for the user to see (large, bright buttons surrounded by whitespace so links are obvious)
4. **Load times:** optimize images where necessary, remove / hide images where necessary for mobile – users expect website to load faster over having multiple images / scenery
5. **Optimize forms:** make sure all forms (especially donation) are optimized for the web including fast load time (currently slower on donation), easy to click / large input boxes, simple and intuitive form + plenty of information on the form (FAQ) so user doesn't have to flip to another page

Conclusion

This report examined a recent audit of the website based on the function and usability of the website, giving insight that the website is not functioning as it should. The initial audit was completed due to major concerns with the usability of the website, including structure and navigation, lack of clear calls to action, lack of content following in line with the mission of the organization and mobile optimization.

The recommendation for the website would be a full redesign, focusing on needs of the target audience and their user journey. This would include restructuring the navigation, an overhaul of the main structure of the website, redesigning major pages such as the homepage and the about us page to include what Forterra's commitments and impacts are, creating a clear call to action seamlessly across all pages that falls in line with Forterra's mission, and to mobile optimize the entire website.

The goal of the website is to expand reach, drive new interest, and convert donors and volunteers, while inspiring future brand advocates. The *new* website will allow Forterra to tell their story, from their goals, the mission statement, their vision, and community impact. The website will bring together the heart and soul of the organization, functioning as both a tool and a way for Forterra to build a connection and strong relationship with their audience.