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What the People Want Investigating the Voter Experience with Republican Candidate Websites

Usability Study Overview & Findings
from the
Normal Modes Usability Team

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Questions & Comments
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Executive Summary

Head-to-head competitions between GOP candidate websites show that campaigns too frequently place campaign objectives ahead of voter needs. Competition experiments, using 15 undecided voters, found that the websites of Michele Bachman and Herman Cain were the most effective at influencing voters. Surprisingly, the website of GOP front-runner, Mitt Romney, was one of the worst.

Methodology Overview

Specifically, the objectives of the interviews were:

- To determine which candidate website creates the best overall experience for voters by assessing the general usability of each candidate's website.
- To identify design inconsistencies and usability problem areas within the user interface and content areas.
- To determine to what extent candidate websites balance organizational objectives with user wants, needs and motivations.
- To establish baseline user performance and user-satisfaction levels for each website for future usability evaluations.

Due to the large number of candidates and the still uncertain nature of the front-runner, we used a representative sample of six out of the nine candidates who participated in this fall's presidential debates. The candidates we selected represent a broad cross section of both Republican ideology and website design and functionality. The candidates selected for this study were:

- Michele Bachmann - michelebachmann.com
- Herman Cain – hermaincain.com
- Jon Huntsman - jon2012.com
- Rick Perry - rickperry.org
- Mitt Romney - mittromney.com
- Rick Santorum - ricksantorum.com

Testing was conducted October 21-24, 2011 using 15 undecided voters recruited from throughout the U.S. with a mixture of demographic characteristics and voting histories (5 Democrat / 4 Mixed / 6 Republican). Each interview was structured as a head-to-head competition experiment, i.e. each participant completed the same set of tasks on two different candidate websites. To ensure fair coverage and to determine a "winner", the websites and their order varied from participant to participant.

Participant	Voting History	Contest
1	Mixed	Perry vs. Huntsman
2	Mixed	Cain vs. Huntsman
3	Republican	Romney vs. Cain
4	Republican	Santorum vs. Perry
5	Democrat	Santorum vs. Romney
6	Mixed	Huntsman vs. Bachmann
7	Democrat	Romney vs. Perry
8	Mixed	Cain vs. Bachmann
8	Republican	Perry. Vs. Bachmann
10	Democrat	Perry vs. Cain

11	Republican	Huntsman vs. Romney
12	Republican	Cain vs. Santorum
13	Republican	Romney vs. Bachmann
14	Democrat	Bachmann vs. Santorum
15	Democrat	Huntsman vs. Santorum

The tasks were identical for all participants and candidate websites.

- **Task 1:** Find the candidate’s website; provide impressions of homepage and site design
- **Task 2:** Locate candidate biography information
- **Task 3:** Find information on the issue you think is most important in this election
- **Task 4:** Make a \$10/month campaign contribution
- **Task 5:** Sign up for newsletter

After completing both rounds, participants were asked which website had the better overall experience.

Results Summary

The results of our research indicate that republican candidate websites frequently place campaign objectives ahead of voter needs, wants and motivations.

Candidate	Losses	Wins
Bachmann	1	4
Cain	1	4
Huntsman	2	3
Perry	2	3
Romney	4	1
Santorum	5	-

Major findings include:

- The **Bachmann and Cain campaigns had the best overall user experience.** Bachmann and Cain’s campaign websites both won four of the five rounds in which they participated.
- Those campaigns that provided detailed information about candidate’s positions on the issues in an easy-to-read format fared best. **Bachmann and Cain’s discussion of issues is characterized by the use of bullet points, strategic bolding, and brevity** while their peers tend to rely on longer blocks of text.
- **Email collection “splash” pages** positioned before every candidate’s homepage are annoying and confusing to participants often to the point that they leave the site entirely.
- While video drives higher engagement, most candidates have yet to develop the types of videos that voters want to see. **The Perry campaign’s use of video is exceptional** among its peers in this regard, identifying just the right mix of content, tone and length.
- The **Romney campaign website suffers from mission-critical failures that are relatively easy to resolve** such as lack of a homepage navigation item and hard to

identify secondary navigation in the “Issues” section. These problems kept participants from accomplishing their tasks, believing that content they sought did not exist.

- The **Huntsman campaign’s biography timeline of the candidate is exceptional** in terms of engagement, despite being located at the bottom of the page. Participants often spent more than 10 minutes reading, and then re-reading, every word and commenting on the numerous pictures.
- **Participants viewed engagement with the campaign as a funnel or process**, beginning with using the website to familiarize themselves with the candidate and their stance on issues. All participants stated that they would sign up for the email newsletter if they were serious about the candidate, but had not yet decided to vote for him, or didn’t yet want to donate/volunteer. Those who found the “Register” area on candidate websites, considered this to be a higher level of engagement that coincided with the decision to donate or volunteer. Candidate websites which tried to short cut this process by pressuring participants too early to volunteer or donate were often penalized. Candidates need to perfect this funnel process in order to effectively engage and mobilize voters. **We believe this engagement to mobilization process, not social media, is the most critical online priority for all candidates in the 2012 election cycle.**
- **A major cause of confusion is use of the phrase “Join the Campaign”**. This is related to the funnel process detailed above, with participants indicating that “Join the Campaign” was too high a level of commitment when they simply wanted to get a newsletter. Similarly, while some candidates use the term “Join the Campaign” for receiving a newsletter, others used the term to indicate advanced campaigning tools for supporting the candidate.
- That **many Republican candidate websites borrow elements from Obama’s 2008 campaign** is not lost on voters, who recognize and call out these elements in detail.

Additional information on findings as well as findings by candidate are detailed later in this report along with recommended follow up actions be taken to address issues most likely to cause voter confusion

Methodology Detail

Testing was conducted October 21-24, 2011. Fifteen participants (7 female, 8 male) were recruited to participate in our study. In order to take part in the study, participants were required to be 18 years of age or older and voting-eligible U.S. residents. Additionally, we only recruited participants who identified themselves as currently undecided in the 2012 presidential election. Six of our participants self-reported being primarily in Republican voters in previous elections, five self-reported being primarily Democratic voter in previous elections, and 4 reported typically voting for a mixture of candidates in previous elections.

Overall, the participants showed a fairly diverse cross-section of U.S. demographics. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 75 or older, with the bulk participants falling in the 26-59 range, and with three participants over the age of 60. Moreover, participants were distributed across 10 states and were fairly diverse both in terms of annual household income and education. The overwhelming majority of our participants (11), however, identified themselves as Caucasian. Finally, participants were fairly experienced Internet users. The average amount of time spent online, per week, was 28.8 hours ranging between 10 and 60 hours per week.

Age Range					
	18-15	26-39	40-59	60-74	75 or older
Number of Participants	3	4	4	3	1

State										
	AK	AR	CA	GA	MA	NC	OH	PA	TX	VA
Number of Participants	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	2	1

Annual Household Income (dollars)							
	< 25K	25K-35K	35K-50K	50K-75K	75K-125K	125K-200K	>200K
Number of Participants	5	1	2	2	1	2	3

Education						
	Less than High School	High School Diploma	Some College	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Post Graduate Degree
Number of Participants	0	0	3	0	7	4

Participants were interviewed individually for approximately 75 minutes from the comfort of their homes using screen-sharing technology. Verbal communication was supported via telephone or their computer's internal microphone, while a webcam allowed the capture of participant's non-verbal behaviors and gestures. Normal Modes' remote usability lab handled data collection.

To ensure fair coverage and to determine a "winner", every candidate's website competed against every other candidate's website exactly once so that each candidate's website was tested five times. Although five tests is the minimum number of tests required to identify statistically significant trends for a single website, the similarity of content and site layout between these sites means that we have 30 tests of presidential candidate websites. Overall trends in the usability of candidate websites were readily identifiable.

Participants were randomly assigned to candidate pairings using a sequence generated by random.org.

Participant	Contest
1	Perry vs. Huntsman
2	Cain vs. Huntsman
3	Romney vs. Cain
4	Santorum vs. Perry
5	Santorum vs. Romney
6	Huntsman vs. Bachmann
7	Romney vs. Perry
8	Cain vs. Bachmann
9	Perry. Vs. Bachmann
10	Perry vs. Cain
11	Huntsman vs. Romney
12	Cain vs. Santorum
13	Romney vs. Bachmann
14	Bachmann vs. Santorum
15	Huntsman vs. Santorum

Each session began with a participant briefing by the moderator. Participants were encouraged to "think aloud" so that a verbal record will exist of the task-website interaction. Participants were advised that they were not being tested. They were evaluating the website, rather than the moderator evaluating the participant.

For each website, the moderator asked a series of probing questions to obtain the participant's impressions. The moderator and a second usability specialist observed participant's interactions, behavior and comments and recorded their findings in Morae, a data logging application designed for user testing.

Tasks were derived from use case scenarios common across all sites. Due to the extent of functionality provided by each website and each participant's limited time commitment, the tasks consisted of the most common, broad use cases rather than more in-depth analysis of specific functionality. The tasks were identical for all participants and candidate websites.

- **Task 1:** Find the candidate's website; provide impressions of homepage and site design
- **Task 2:** Locate candidate biography information
- **Task 3:** Find information on the issue you think is most important in this election
- **Task 4:** Make a \$10/month campaign contribution
- **Task 5:** Sign up for newsletter

After each task, the participant provided feedback about the aesthetic appeal and ease-of-use for pages associated with the task and completed the post-task questionnaire. After all tasks had been attempted, the participant were asked to decide which candidate's website was the best overall experience.

Results Detail

Bachmann and Cain's campaign websites both won four of the five rounds in which they participated. Bachmann's site won the round with Cain's, but lost its round with Perry's. Conversely, Santorum's site won no rounds. Romney's only win was in its round with Santorum's website.

There appeared to be no relationship between a participant's voting history and their perception of a candidate's website experience. Indeed, one Democrat judged the Bachmann website the better experience despite expressing strong disagreement with most of the content contained on the site.

While we did not screen for participants who had visited campaign websites, only one participant had visited a candidate's website within three months prior to this study. That participant was not assigned, by chance, to review that candidate's site.

Total Wins

Candidate	Losses	Wins
Bachmann	1	4
Cain	1	4
Huntsman	2	3
Perry	2	3
Romney	4	1
Santorum	5	-

Breakdown by Participant

Participant	Voting History	Contest	Winner
1	Mixed	Perry vs. Huntsman	Huntsman
2	Mixed	Cain vs. Huntsman	Cain
3	Republican	Romney vs. Cain	Cain
4	Republican	Santorum vs. Perry	Perry
5	Democrat	Santorum vs. Romney	Romney
6	Mixed	Huntsman vs. Bachmann	Bachmann
7	Democrat	Romney vs. Perry	Perry
8	Mixed	Cain vs. Bachmann	Bachmann
9	Republican	Perry vs. Bachmann	Perry
10	Democrat	Perry vs. Cain	Cain
11	Republican	Huntsman vs. Romney	Huntsman
12	Republican	Cain vs. Santorum	Cain
13	Republican	Romney vs. Bachmann	Bachmann
14	Democrat	Bachmann vs. Santorum	Bachmann
15	Democrat	Huntsman vs. Santorum	Huntsman

Breakdown by Voting History

Democrat

Candidate	Losses	Wins
Bachmann	-	1
Cain	-	1
Huntsman	-	1
Perry	1	1
Romney	1	1
Santorum	3	-

Mixed

Candidate	Losses	Wins
Bachmann	-	2
Cain	1	1
Huntsman	2	1
Perry	1	-
Romney	-	-
Santorum	-	-

Republican

Candidate	Losses	Wins
Bachmann	1	1
Cain	-	2
Huntsman	-	1
Perry	-	2
Romney	3	-
Santorum	2	-

Global Findings & Suggested Improvements

The pages that follow discuss global findings shared among multiple candidate websites, and, where appropriate, provide recommended changes and justifications driven by participant behaviors and comments.

These recommendations will improve campaign websites' overall ease of use, while ensuring that voters have easy access to the information they need.

These findings are grouped by task.

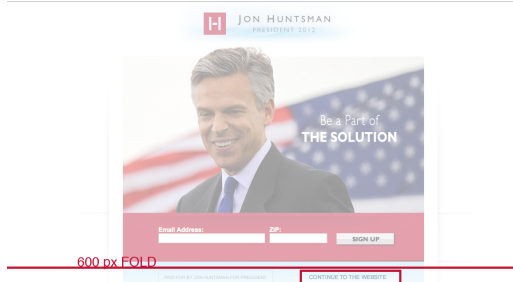
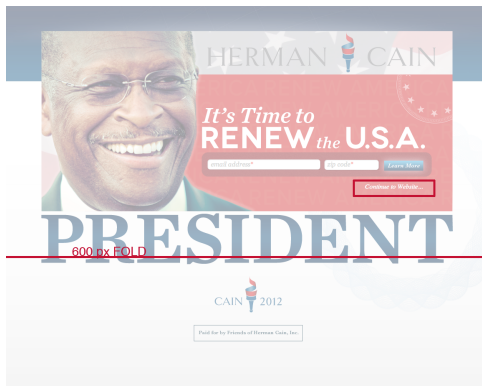
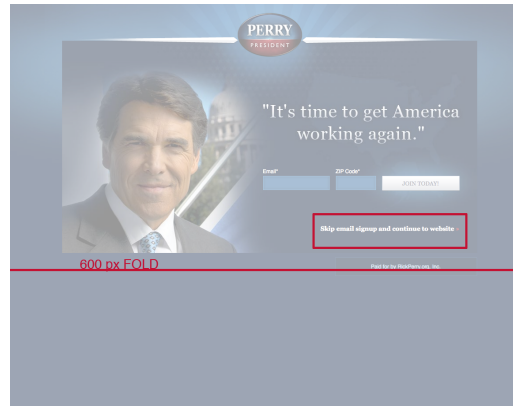
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- **Task 3:** Find information on the issue you think is most important in this election
- **Task 4:** Make a \$10/month campaign contribution
- **Task 5:** Sign up for newsletter

Additional observations and recommendations about issues specific to each candidate's website are provided later in this report.

Task 1: Find the candidate's website; provide impressions of homepage and site design

Email collection “splash” pages positioned before every candidate's homepage are annoying and confusing to participants often to the point that they leave the site entirely.

All candidates use a “splash page” to collect visitors' email addresses and zip codes, most often with a difficult to locate link to the real homepage, marked here with a red rectangle, and obscured somewhere “below the fold,” marked here at a generous 600 pixels from the top of the page.



These splash pages confused several participants, including all participants over the age of 60. Participants often assumed that they had gone to the wrong website, and returned to their Google search results. Subsequently, they navigated to a) other websites they suspected could be the candidate's, b) news websites, c) Wikipedia, or d) the candidate's donation page, which usually appeared in a Google Ad at the top of the search results. All participants who clicked on a candidate's Google Ad immediately returned to Google without reading or interacting with the donation page. Participants often verbally expressed confusion about how to get to the "real" homepage or surmised that the splash page was the only content on the candidate's website.

"This does not look clean enough to be [Romney's] website." – Republican voter

While trying to find Perry's website after viewing the splash page and returning to search results, one participant mistook a newspaper's website (Houston Chronicle) for the candidate's website and became frustrated with her navigation choices before completely giving up five minutes later.

Of those participants who recognized the first page as a splash page, many had difficulty discovering how to navigate to the real homepage. Romney's website, in particular, was difficult because the link to the homepage always fell "below the fold" on participants' computer screens, and the page's design gave no visual indications of additional content that was available by scrolling downwards.

Of the fifteen participants viewing 30 websites, none supplied their email address or zip code on the splash page.

An additional source of confusion to participants was that all candidates' websites "cookie" visitors to prevent displaying the splash page on subsequent visits. This created problems for participants in later tasks (See Task 5: Newsletter below) when they were asked to sign up for the newsletter. Having learned that the splash page was where they would go to enter their email address, many participants became lost when they couldn't figure out how to return to the splash page.

Recommendation

Email collection splash pages should be removed or retooled as modal windows on front of the real homepage content.



- Option 1: In lieu of a splash page, better integrate email newsletter subscription into core websites. We recommend the approach used by the Bachmann campaign (see Task #5 below), in which opportunities to sign up for the newsletter appear throughout the site.

- Option 2: Alternatively, present the email/zip code splash page as a modal window over the homepage so voters have visual cues about content located below the modal window.

Task 2: Locate candidate biography information

Participants expressed confusion about how biographical navigation was titled.

The word “About” was found to be lacking in sufficient detail or appeared to be “lazy.” A few participants wondered aloud if “about” referred to the campaign or the candidate himself.

While the term “Meet Michele” did not affect any participant’s ability to find biographical information, some participants noted that “Meet Michele” could mean that the section contained information about upcoming appearances and events where they could meet the candidate in person.

Santorum’s “Why Rick?” might make sense in the context of his other navigation (his issues navigation is named “Where I Stand”), but a majority of participants found his biographical information from the homepage by clicking on a feature image entitled “Meet Rick and Family” rather than through the primary navigation.

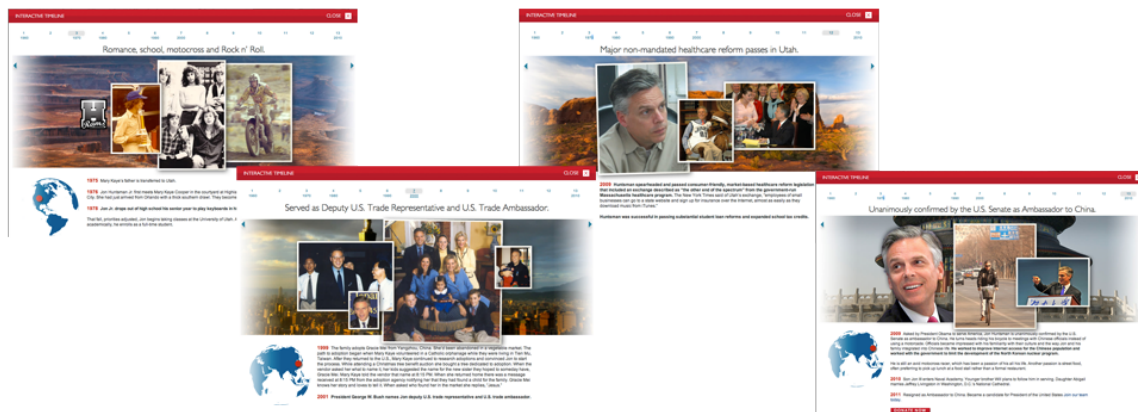
The Romney campaign’s use of the term “Bio” was most favored, though some participants suggested the campaign go a step further and use the term “Mitt’s Bio.” Similarly, the Huntsman campaign’s use of “Jon” was deemed sufficient, but perhaps could also be enhanced by adding “bio” so it read “Jon’s Bio.”

Recommendation

- Avoid being too cute with navigation titles. Visitors can have very different interpretations of what the links mean.
- Biography information should be listed as “Bio” or, alternatively “[Candidate Name]’s Bio.”

Participants placed importance on the whole biography of the candidate, but preferred the biography to be succinct and broken up into sections with descriptive headers.

Most participants read the full biography, but many complained that the biographies were difficult to skim. Participants preferred bios that included photos of the candidate.



Huntsman’s timeline was singled out as exceptional and a model other candidates should consider emulating. Participants who visited the timeline often read and re-read every single

word, visited each slide multiple times, and spent more than 10 minutes reviewing the timeline – despite the fact that it’s buried at the bottom of the page.

“[The timeline’s] filled with facts.” – Democrat voter

Participants liked to see limited details about the candidate’s family. They praised candidates who had pictures of their family that included children, but expressed reservations if the candidate shared more detailed information about their children lives. In particular, participants did not like the detailed descriptions of his children’s lives in Huntsman’s biographical video.

“I wish the video dwelled less on his children as accomplishments. I don’t see what that has to do with [Huntsman] as president.” – Republican voter

Similarly, an entire page on Bachmann’s website is devote to the biography of her husband. One participant in the same occupation as Marcus Bachmann liked the information, but two others found the information extraneous.

“I’m more interested in finding out about her right now, not her husband.” – Mixed voter

It’s also worth noting that no other spouse of a candidate in this study has biographical information posted on their campaign’s website.

In some cases, participants wondered about “missing years” from a candidate’s biography. For example, one participant called the lack of information about Santorum before age 32 “concerning.”

Recommendation

- Break up large blocks of text with headers that correlate with natural periods of a candidate’s life.
- Include enough personal information to demonstrate that the candidate has a well-rounded life, but focus on the skills and experience that are relevant to the presidency.
- All candidates should consider the timeline model from the Huntsman campaign.

Task 3: Find information on the issue you think is most important in this election

Most participants felt the most important issues for this election were the economy and jobs.

A breakdown of participant’s most important issues is listed below.

Participant	Issue
1	Jobs
2	Economy
3	Taxes or social issues, like welfare
4	Economy
5	Economic recovery
6	Jobs & the economy
7	Healthcare
8	Economy
9	Role of government in spending, taxes, and foreign policy
10	Flat tax
11	Economy
12	Economy
13	Job creation
14	Economic growth
15	Economy & jobs

Participants frequently penalized candidates’ sites that did not include or make easily accessible information on these issues.

When looking for information on the issues, participants favored navigation that was plainly labeled as the candidate’s position on the topic area. For example, participants preferred titles like “Jobs & the Economy” (Huntsman), “Jobs” (Perry/Romney), “Economy” (Cain) rather than “Defender of the Tax Payer” (Santorum), which participants thought was too “nebulous.” Participants expressed confusion over the difference between the meaning of the titles “American Jobs, Right Now” and “Job Creation and Growth” on Bachmann’s site.

Participants preferred candidates’ positions to be detailed in an easy-to-read format characterized by the use of bullet points, strategic bolding, and brevity.

Campaigns that provided detailed positions on the issues in an easy-to-read format fared best. Bachmann’s campaign site was often praised for its attractive presentation of the issues, which participants associated with ease-of-use.

“I like the illustrations. And the fonts. It’s easy to read, well divided.” – Mixed voter

“Her information is straightforward. Consistent. Clean.” – Mixed voter

“This 11 point plan is broken out into sections, which I like.” – Republican voter

While less aesthetically appealing, the participants liked the Cain campaign's presentation of 9-9-9 Plan materials, in particular the bulleted list and use of bold typeface for important phrases.

"There's a lot of information on this page, but it's laid out the way I'd want to see it. I like the bullet items. This feels like something I'd see at work, and I like that. It looks professional. There's highlights and bolding. I like the way this is presented." – Democrat voter



MICHELE BACHMANN FOR PRESIDENT

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AMERICAN JOBS RIGHT NOW

My "American Jobs, Right Now" Blueprint for Economic Prosperity and Job Creation

It's evident that the current trajectory of our country is simply not sustainable and President Obama lacks the understanding of how to return to a position of economic prominence in the world. My eleven-point blueprint will create an environment that will create real jobs here at home, and return America to a position of economic prominence in the world.

1. REPATRIATION More than 1.2 trillion U.S. dollars could be brought back to America in days as an immediate "stimulus" if the government would zero out the tax rate on that money until December 31, and then permanently keep it here in the U.S. if taxed at a rate of 8 percent. Foreign earnings totaling over \$1.2 trillion is more than the President's failed stimulus and it won't come out of taxpayer wallets. It would increase the value of the dollar, provide valuable capital for the job creators in this country and pump tremendous amounts of money into our economy.

2. CUT SPENDING AND GOVERNMENT. I have already voted to cut federal spending in the years ahead, every single time I have had the opportunity. In addition, I would phase out quasi-governmental enterprises, such as Fannie and Freddie, and eliminate duplicative government programs and costs. We must decrease government salaries to bring them in line with their private sector counterparts, and we must decrease the number of government employees. Over-spending by the government hurls job creation by devaluing the dollar and stealing capital from the private sector.

3. REPEAL OBAMACARE Healthcare is one-sixth of the U.S. economy and this unconstitutional takeover of healthcare by the federal government is creating crippling uncertainty for employers across this country. This legislation does nothing to address the true problem with our healthcare system — cost — and will cost states trillions. I believe it is an intentional backstab to impeding healthcare entitlement programs — Medicare and Medicaid — to transition toward a single payer system. This is the number one hindrance to job creation in the United States (according to a recently released USIS study).

4. CUT TAXES. I've demonstrated a firm commitment to cutting spending and balancing the budget. We need to reduce the number of tax brackets, repeal taxes outlined in Obamacare, fix the Alternative Minimum Tax, and eliminate the Death Tax. In addition, we must make the corporate tax code simpler and fairer, and allow U.S. companies that generate earnings overseas to bring back those profits and invest them in American jobs and growth.

5. REPEAL THE JOBS AND HOUSING DESTRUCTION ACT, ALSO KNOWN AS DODD-FRANK. This law tightened regulations on banks, made it harder for Americans to obtain credit, and failed to address the systemic problem that caused the Wall Street collapse — leverage. This 846-page bill calls for 400 new sets of rules that will be written on 8000 Federal Register pages, all written by bureaucrats, many of whom have never worked in the financial services field. The law also creates a potentially intrusive Financial Services Consumer Protection Bureau that is not accountable to Congress and which has but a vague mandate to combat misconduct — so in the wrong hands, it could cause its own kind of misconduct.

6. LEGALIZE AMERICAN ENERGY PRODUCTION AND AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES. This could create 1.4 million jobs, bringing \$800 billion of new revenue into the U.S. Treasury, and increasing domestic energy supplies by 50 percent. The price of energy has a direct impact on nearly every facet of our lives. We have to abandon the parochial and political energy policies of the past and install a comprehensive energy plan that not only reduces our reliance on unfriendly foreign regimes, but also creates millions of American jobs and generates increased tax revenues. According to the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. has more energy potential than any other country in the world. We should use that potential. It is a better policy to create American jobs and explore in an environmentally-sound way, than to rely on foreign dictators who give little regard to the environment. This includes specific strategies like reviving the logging, timber, mining and metals industries, and bringing federal lands back into productive activity by repealing radical environmental laws that kill access to natural resources.

7. REPEAL JOB KILLING REGULATIONS. America's job creators and small business owners have lost economic liberty under the weight of \$1.8 billion annually in compliance costs with government regulations. Together we sent \$2.2 trillion in taxes to the federal government this year. By comparison, job creators spend nearly as much annually to comply with bureaucratic mandates. Obamacare, Dodd-Frank, and the string of mandates and rules from the Environmental Protection Agency — as well as other agencies — are creating such incredible uncertainty in the market. The House Republican leadership has identified 219 planned Obama administration regulations, each of which will cost the economy more than \$100 million. This red tape rampage must stop.

8. INCREASE EXPORTS. This President has been holding hostage trade deals with Colombia, Panama and South Korea as he tries to negotiate favor for Big Labor. The world needs to know that we are open for business and U.S. Companies need to expand beyond our borders to the 86 percent of people who do not live here.

9. UNLEASH AMERICAN INVESTMENT. By eliminating unnecessary taxes and regulation, and expanding trade, we will create an incentive for investment in America again. We must do whatever it takes to restore our ability to manufacture here in the U.S. We can do this by reforming the tax code, providing incentive for growth, and allowing the private sector to control the market with little government involvement.

10. PAVE A PATHWAY FOR INNOVATION. Recent reports indicated that the United States has now slipped to 5th in the competitiveness rankings, and 47th in education. How do we expect to lead the world economically when we are not doing what is needed to inspire and foster innovation here at home? The future of the American economy lies with the innovation of this and future generations.

11. ENFORCE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWS. The failure of the federal government to enforce its immigration laws costs federal, state and local governments billions of dollars annually. Our nation was founded on the rule of law, and we must ensure U.S. immigration laws are respected and enforced not only to preserve our national security, but to protect federal, state, and local budgets, and to curb the unfair strain on our country's job markets.

About Michele
Michele Bachmann is running for president to bring a new voice to the White House - a voice of constitutional conservatism, limited government, and economic freedom. She will protect a constitutional conservative, restore our economy and create millions of new jobs, lower healthcare costs, and constitutional principles. Her policy agenda includes: to reduce America's debt, strengthen the family and defend marriage, and demand respect for America as the strength upon a free.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MICHELE

MICHELE BACHMANN FOR PRESIDENT

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HERMAN CAIN President 2012

Let's get **REAL**

Herman Cain's 9-9-9 Plan

Opportunity Zones

9-9-9 Brochure

9-9-9 Scoring Report

9-9-9 Scoring Tables

9-9-9: A Vision for Economic Growth



Economic Guiding Principles

- 1. Production drives the economy, not spending. Production is the engine, consumption is the tailwind.
 - Government spending is like taking a bucket of water from the deep end of the pool, pouring it in the shallow end. Then they HCFE that the water level has RISEN.
- 2. Risk taking drives growth.
 - Business formation and job creation are dependent on entrepreneurs taking risks.
 - Investors who fund those entrepreneurs likewise take risks.
 - Measurements must be dependable.
 - A dollar must always be a dollar just as an hour is always 60 minutes.
 - Shared money is critical for prosperity.

UNITE, never DIVIDE; UNITED around ECONOMIC GROWTH

- When one party is so focused on spending so that the other must focus on cutting, we must unite around economic growth
- Unlike income tax payers with payroll taxpayers so we all pull for low rates
- Unlike those wanting to eliminate deductions with those seeking lower rates.
- Unlike the Flat Taxers with the Fair Taxers

Phase One

Our current economic crisis calls for bold action to help stimulate the economy and restore America back to its greatness. The 9-9-9 Plan (Washington D.C. out of the business of picking winners and losers, using the tax code to do our farmers, and dividing the country with class warfare). It is fair, simple, transparent and efficient. It saves everything, jobs and money, while it raises the absolute possible level at the lowest possible rates. It is fiscal with respect to savings and consumption capital and labor, imports and exports and whether companies pay dividends or retain earnings.

9% Business Flat Tax

- Gross income less all purchases from other U.S. located businesses, all capital investment, and net exports.
- Employment Zones will offer deductions for the payroll of those employed in the zone.

9% Individual Flat Tax

- Gross income less charitable deductions.
- Employment Zones will offer additional deductions for those living and/or working in the zone.

9% National Sales Tax

- Unlike a state sales tax, which is an add-on tax that increases the price of goods and services, this is a replacement tax. It replaces taxes that are already embedded in selling prices. By replacing higher marginal rates in the production process with lower marginal rates, marginal production costs actually decline, which will lead to prices being the same or lower, not higher.

Economic Impact

- According to former Reagan Treasury official Gary Robbins, of Fiscal Associates, the 9-9-9 Plan will expand GDP by \$2 trillion, create 6 million new jobs, increase business investment by one-third, and increase wages by 10%.

9-9-9 Plan: Summary

- Removes all payroll taxes and unifies all tax payers
- Provides the best incentives to create jobs and the fastest opportunities to do so
- Like a \$400 billion dead-weight burden on the economy due to compliance, enforcement, collection, ...
- Is fair, simple, efficient, neutral, and transparent
- Eliminates nearly all deductions and special interest favors
- Features zero tax on capital gains and qualified profits
- Exports leave our shores without the Business Tax or the Sales Tax embedded in their cost, making them world class competitive. Imports are subject to the same taxation as domestically produced goods, leveling the playing field.
- Lowest marginal rates on production
- Kills the Death Tax
- Allows immediate expensing of business investments
- Eliminates double taxation of dividends
- Increases capital formation which aids capital availability for small businesses
- Increases capital per worker drives productivity and wage growth
- Features a platform to launch property structured Employment Zones to renew our inner cities
- The pro-growth, pro-job, pro-entrepreneur policies of the 9-9-9 PLAN equals a strong dollar policy

Phase 2 - The Fair Tax

Amidst a backdrop of the economic renewal created by the 9-9-9 Plan, will begin the process of educating the American people on the benefits of continuing the next step to the Fair Tax.

- Ultimately replaces individual and corporate income taxes
- Ends the IRS as we know it and repeals the 16th Amendment

Meet Herman Cain

Mr. Cain has more than 40 years experience in the private sector when he balanced budgets, created jobs and rescued failing companies. A no-nonsense business leader who has turned struggling companies around to renewed success, Mr. Cain's policies will do the same for the United States of America.

Find out more at www.HermanCain.com/real

Friends of Herman Cain, Inc.

P.O. Box 2158
Stockbridge, GA 30281
(878) 601-2772

Privacy Policy Press Resources Terms of Service Contact Us

Paid for by Friends of Herman Cain, Inc.



Candidates who fared best provided easy-to-find content on the issues. Cain and Bachmann won several rounds based on the availability of content, even if the participant disagreed with the candidate's position. Conversely, Romney was repeatedly penalized because participants were unable to locate the secondary navigation in the "Issues" section.

Participants frequently expressed frustration with content that attacked President Obama or the other candidates, characterizing it as "unproductive" or noting that their motivation for visiting the candidate's website was to find out more about the candidate him/herself rather than to hear attacks on a competitor. This was true regardless of political affiliation of the participant or the candidates.

Participants often overlooked in-depth discussions of the issues because either they couldn't find it or it was buried several clicks away.

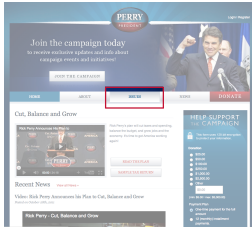


One of the primary problems with the Romney website was that participants couldn't navigate the "Issues" page. The secondary navigation does not stand out against the background color. Every participant overlooked it the first time they visited the "Issues" page, and several struggled at length to find it. One participant never found it at all.

When the navigation was found, participants complained that the text was "too light," "too gray," and "too hard to read." Participants also expressed frustration that the "Issues" header in the secondary (gray) navigation wasn't

clickable, although it appeared to be. One participant repeatedly clicked on the gray U.S.-shaped icon before navigating away from the section altogether.

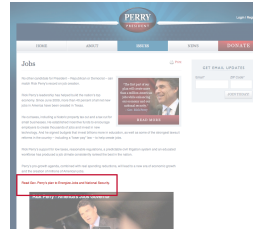
On the Perry campaign website, content relating to issues is buried several layers deep in the site, and the lack of secondary navigation gives no indication to visitors that more detailed positions on the issues are available.



Click 1 - Issues Landing Page



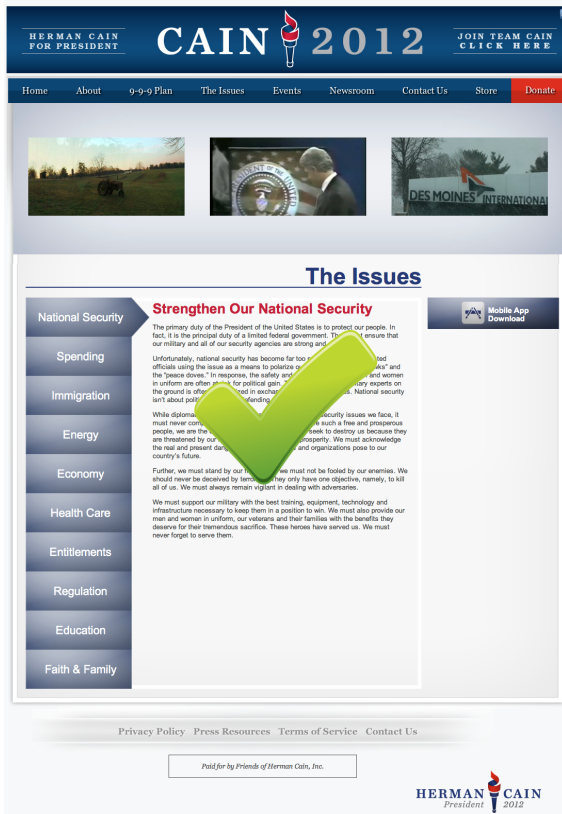
Click 2 - Click on Jobs



Click 3- Click on "Read Gov. Perry's plan to Energize Jobs and National Security."



Arrive at "Energizing American Jobs and Security"



The issues landing page on the Perry and Romney websites often contained a large block of text after which participants were able to find more detailed information. This information frequently fell "below the fold" and contained only a small text link to content that was of major importance. Participants felt this made information on issues more difficult to find. Conversely, most participants praised Cain's presentation of issues, often browsing through several different topic areas.

Recommendation

- Candidates should have easy-to-find secondary navigation throughout their websites.
- Links to additional materials about issues should be featured prominently.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Federal Election Law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

Employer *

Occupation *

Eligibility * Yes

Federal election law requires campaigns to report the occupation and employer of donors. Although all sites noted this requirement, few participants noticed this disclaimer. Most thought that candidates were collecting personal information in order to determine if they were a “blue collar or white collar worker” or if the participant could afford additional contributions the campaign.

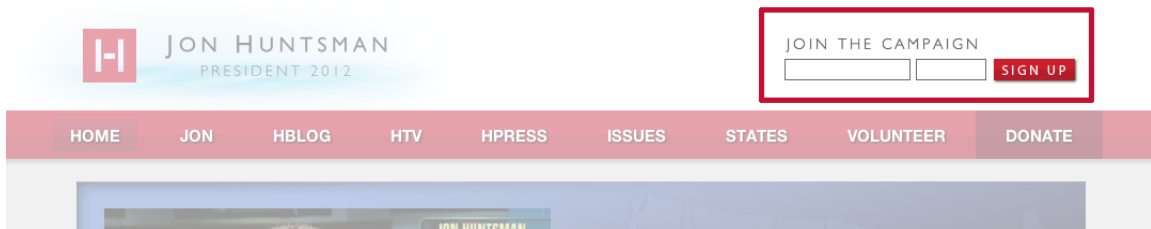
Recommendation

- Separate all federal election required information into a single content area that’s titled “Federal Election Law Information” and offset this area from the rest of the form with a different background color.
- Provide an explanation of federal election law, how the information will be used, and hyperlinks to more information from the Federal Election Commission website.

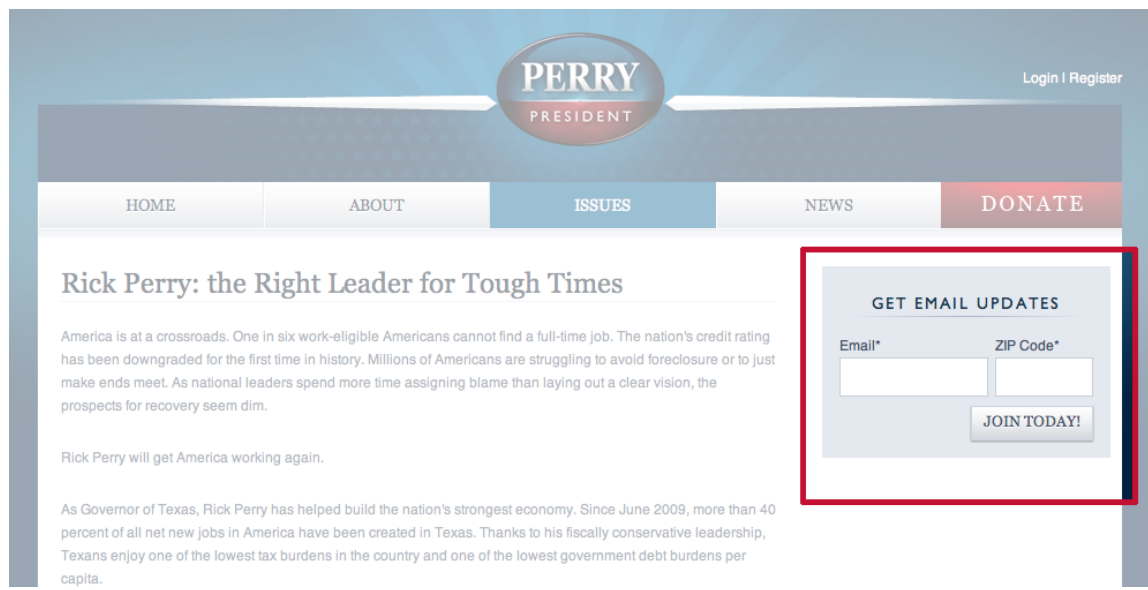
Task 5: Sign up for newsletter

Most participants found it difficult to subscribe to email updates from campaigns. This is due to a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that many candidates' sites failed to provide subsequent opportunities to subscribe to the newsletter after the participant had dismissed the splash page (See Task #1).

The Bachmann and Huntsman campaigns both have email subscription forms in the header, which participants found easiest to locate.



Perry's email subscription form is located in the side navigation throughout the website, though some participants were thrown off a bit by its displacement by the donation form on the homepage.



It's worth noting that when participants were unable to locate newsletter subscription option as a fixed element of the site design (as seen above), they most frequently visited the "News" or "Press" page, followed by the "Contact" page. Several participants filled out the contact form with detailed information in the comments area requesting a newsletter.

Like any marketing campaign, **participants viewed the progression of engagement with the campaign as a process or funnel marked by milestones:**

1. Visit site to find information.
2. Sign up for email newsletter.
3. Only after deciding to support the candidate would they volunteer, donate, or register.

"I think it's too early for me to determine who's my choice." – Democrat voter

All participants stated that they would sign up for the email newsletter in situations where they were serious about the candidate, but hadn't yet decided to vote for him or weren't ready to donate/volunteer. Website registration was considered to be a higher level of engagement, equivalent to donating or volunteering. Candidate websites which tried to short cut this process by pressuring participants too early to volunteer or donate were often penalized.

"Just because I want the newsletter does not mean that I am a supporter and that I want to go all out." – Republican voter

A major cause of confusion is the use of the phrase "Join the Campaign". This is related to the funnel process detailed above. Participants indicated that "Join the Campaign" was too high a level of commitment when they simply wanted to subscribe to a newsletter.

"I wouldn't sign up for this [Join Team Cain] area until I decided that I want to support Herman. I didn't want to do this now." – Republican voter

Similarly, while some candidates' sites used the phrase "Join the Campaign" for subscribing to a newsletter (Huntsman), others used the phrase to point users to advanced campaigning tools for supporting the candidate (Cain). During testing, two participants mistakenly signed up to "Join Team Cain" while trying to subscribe to the newsletter. Both participants realized the mistake when the page prompted them for a date of birth and zip code information. (One participant noted that the zip code should easily populate the county and state information.)



In one case a participant bristled when the page reported she had “incomplete actions” on the portal landing page, noting “I’m looking for basic information so I don’t like being told I’ve failed to put in more information.”

Still other participants thought that “Join the Campaign” meant they would have access to “online groups” or “an online community,” while others thought they’d receive “customized content with information about the issues most important to me” by registering.

Recommendation

Perhaps more than any other usability issue in this report, the topic of newsletters, account registration, and measuring engagement with candidates has the potential to become a defining element of campaigns.

- Candidates who pressure, or trick, voters into levels of engagement with which they are not yet comfortable, risk alienating voters.
- Conversely, candidates who fail to effectively mobilize voters with online tools which match the voter’s level of engagement risk losing voters and wasting campaign funds on more expensive forms of communication and vote gathering.
- After optimizing their marketing sites early on in the campaign, campaigns should plan to invest heavily in perfecting the conversion funnel, supporting tools, and voter portals with usability testing and advanced analytics tools throughout the election cycle.

Candidates who do this best will have an advantage over competitors.

Other Notes

Participants expressed frustration with both video content and video length on most candidate websites.



Participants found Huntsman’s biographical video (5:04 in length) to be too long, too dramatic, and too focused on his family with no substantive content about his stance on issues. Comments about the video included:

“What a loser, the guy was so serious. A little dramatic [laughing]. It’s so dramatic and mushy.” – Mixed voter

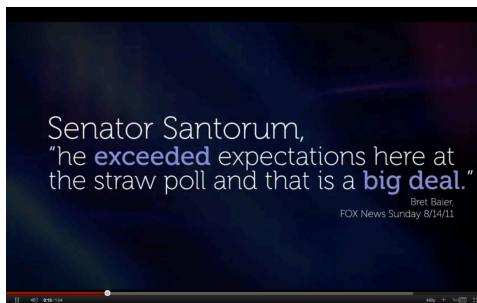
“I wish the video dwelled less on his children as accomplishments. I don’t see what that has to do with him as president.” – Republican voter

“Enough. Enough. Enough. Make it stop.” – Mixed voter (after first 30 seconds)



Conversely, Perry’s videos won universal praise from participants. The video on the Perry biography page, “Rick Perry: Time to Get America Working Again,” garnered the highest approvals.

“By god, I’m about ready to run out the door and vote for that man. Well done video. Very well done.” – Democrat voter



Participants were ambivalent about videos that featured only “moving text” quotes (Santorum) or quick-takes from news segments (Cain). Nevertheless, they expressed a desire to view news clips, interviews, and similar materials in their entirety. In one case, while watching the entire

length of a 5:07 interview on the Santorum website, a participant reclined in his chair, took out a blanket, and sipped on a soda while engrossed in the video.

“This is the most powerful marketing tool he’s had so far.” – Republican voter

Participants expressed interest in seeing video from a variety of news organizations, and complained when candidates seemed to show video from only a single news organization.

Strangely, Cain’s videos were preceded by advertisements. This caused confusion with participants, who did not expect a candidate’s biographical video to contain advertising for anyone besides the candidate. In one case, the confusion was exacerbated because the advertisement was for a fast-food franchise, an industry in which Cain spent his career.

Recommendation

- In general, videos should last no longer than 90 -120 seconds or 175-225 words. This recommendation holds true for any candidate “marketing” video.
 - Videos that are prolonged excerpts from news stories and interviews are okay in greater length, provided the user is aware of the length from the outset.
- All videos featured on candidate websites should contain a “play” arrow in the video image with a descriptive title and information about the length below.

Additional Notes by Website

The pages which follow discuss additional findings for each candidate's website, and, where appropriate, provide recommended changes and justifications driven by participant behaviors and comments.

These recommendations will improve each candidate website's overall ease of use, while ensure that the websites provide users with the information they need, and address areas where participants experienced problems or found the interface unclear.

The findings and suggestions listed below are in addition to any findings that are listed above (i.e. the campaign splash page issue).

Note that that due to the volume of information collected, this is not an exhaustive list of the issues with each candidate's website, but instead a collection of the most notable findings for each candidate's website.

Bachmann - Homepage

MICHELE BACHMANN
★ FOR PRESIDENT ★

Get Email Updates:
Email Address Zip
Login With:

HOME MEET MICHELE NEWS ISSUES IN YOUR STATE VOLUNTEER **DONATE**

AMERICAN JOBS RIGHT NOW

Learn about Michele's framework for getting America back to work

[Learn More](#)

Join Team Bachmann! Start your donation here: \$

Stay Connected:

MICHELE TV

0:00 / 1:50

Michele's Job Blueprint

"My American Jobs, Right Now Blueprint will produce an environment that will create real jobs here at home, and return America to a position of economic prominence in the world. Will you join me today?"

[Learn More](#)

Get Involved Today

You can take action today to help Michele and her campaign to restore your voice to the White House. Register to vote, tell a friend about Michele, buy a t-shirt to show your support, sign up for campaign updates, contribute to Michele's campaign, and more!

[Join Today](#)

Facebook Updates

4,200 employees of the U.S. Department of Education currently make over \$103,000 a year. Call me crazy, but I think this money would better be used in local school districts. How could this money be used in your child's classroom?
[Michele Bachmann Blasts Bureaucrats at U.S. Department of Education | Sunshine State News](#)

Michele Bachmann on Facebook
 Like 459,745

Latest News

Observations

All participants in this study found the Bachmann website using Google. A couple of participants were confused between links for Bachmann's U.S. House of Representatives homepage and the campaign website, and two visited the house.gov site before returning to Google to find the right site.

While several participants noted there was "a lot going on" on the homepage, most participants responded favorably to the design and layout.

One participant felt the rotating banner moved too fast, and as a result the participant was not able to read all the text before the next banner appeared.

A majority of participants noted the multitude of opportunities to donate from the homepage, with one participant remarking "donate blasts you in the face."

Bachmann - Email Updates Process

Step 2 of the Email Subscription process.

The screenshot shows the 'Volunteer' page for Michele Bachmann's campaign. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, MEET MICHELE, NEWS, ISSUES, IN YOUR STATE, VOLUNTEER, and DONATE. A 'Get Email Updates' form is located in the top right corner, with fields for 'Email Address' and 'Zip' and a 'Submit' button. Below the navigation bar, the 'Volunteer' section is titled 'Volunteer' and includes a brief introduction. The main form is divided into several sections: 'TELL ME WHO YOU ARE:' with fields for 'First Name' and 'Last Name'; 'WHAT ISSUES DO YOU CARE ABOUT?' with checkboxes for 'Job Creation and Growth', 'Affordable Energy', 'Capping The Debt Ceiling', 'Supporting Our Troops', 'A Healthier America', and 'American and Family Values'; 'HOW CAN YOU HELP?' with checkboxes for 'I would like to volunteer my time.', 'I would like to contribute financially.', and 'Please contact me soon.'; 'FORWARD TO A FRIEND' with fields for 'Your Name' and 'Friend Email Addresses'; 'HOW CAN WE CONTACT YOU?' with fields for 'Email Address', 'Address 01', 'Address 02', 'City', 'State' (a dropdown menu), 'Zip Code', 'Home Phone', and 'Cell Phone', plus a checkbox for 'Yes, I'd like to receive text message updates.'; 'CAN YOU HELP US IN IOWA?' with checkboxes for 'Yes! I can help the campaign in Iowa!' and 'Or in:' with options for 'New Hampshire', 'South Carolina', 'Nevada', and 'Florida'; and 'JOIN A COALITION' with checkboxes for 'Faith & Traditional Values', 'Small Business Leaders', 'Homeschoolers', 'Justice & Public Safety', 'Farmers & Ranchers', 'Healthcare Professionals', 'Firearms & 2nd Amendment', 'Lawyers', 'Sportsman', 'Bikers', 'Women', 'Educators', 'Student', 'Young Professionals', 'Seniors', and 'Moms', and 'Veterans'. A large red 'SUBMIT' button is at the bottom center.

Observations

The Bachmann Email Subscription process is:

A small screenshot of the 'Get Email Updates' form, showing the 'Email Address' and 'Zip' fields and the 'Submit' button.

1. Enter email address and zip code into the box located on all page headers and hit "Submit"
2. Arrive at Volunteer page (see left). Fill in additional information and hit "Submit."
3. Receive this email subscription confirmation page:




While participants found it easy to locate the email subscription form, the page entitled "Volunteer" that followed confused every one of the participants and in the majority of cases caused participants to abandon the process altogether. One participant circled the "Volunteer" page title with their mouse and remarked, "that's not what I was trying to do."

Recommendations

Retool the process so voters who sign up for email updates receive a confirmation of their email subscription immediately, with an invitation to provide additional information and volunteer as a call to action on the confirmation page. (See also information about the voter commitment funnel elsewhere in this report.)

Bachmann – Meet Michele video & navigation



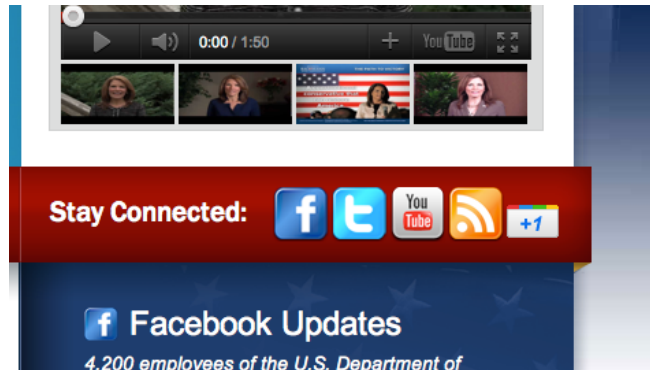
The screenshot shows the campaign website for Michele Bachmann. The navigation menu includes: HOME, MEET MICHELE, NEWS, ISSUES, IN YOUR STATE, VOLUNTEER, and DONATE. A red box highlights the 'ISSUES' dropdown menu, which lists: AMERICAN JOBS, RIGHT NOW; JOB CREATION AND GROWTH; NO DEBT CEILING; A HEALTHIER ECONOMY; A MORE SECURE FUTURE; and AFFORDABLE. A video player is visible below the navigation menu, and a text block titled 'Meet Michele Bachmann' is on the left side of the page.

Observations
Several participants noted that the dropdown navigation for “Issues” and “In Your State” falls behind the video on the page, instead of on top. Participants indicated that while it didn’t keep them from clicking on a menu option, they couldn’t read many of the navigation listings.

Recommendations
Have front end design team review code to eliminate this bug.

Bachmann – Google+ icon

Google+ on homepage



No Google+ in footer



Observations

One participant noted that the Bachmann homepage social media icons included Google+, the participant's preferred social network.

The participant later noticed, however, that the Google+ icon was not featured in the footer.

Recommendations

Add Google+ icon to footer.

Cain - Homepage

HERMAN CAIN FOR PRESIDENT **CAIN 2012** **JOIN TEAM CAIN CLICK HERE**

Home About 9-9-9 Plan The Issues Events Newsroom Contact Us Store **Donate**

CAIN'S VISION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH [CLICK HERE](#)

Stay Connected Let's Get Real Watch Cain TV Cain's Commentary Get Involved

Cain's View on Abortion Policy

"Yesterday in an interview with Piers Morgan on CNN, I was asked questions about abortion policy and the role of the President.

I understood the thrust of the question to ask whether that I, as president, would simply "order" people to not seek an abortion.

My answer was focused on the role of the President. The President has no constitutional authority to order any such action by anyone. That was the point I was trying to convey.

As to my political policy view on abortion, I am 100% pro-life. End of story.

I will appoint judges who understand the original intent of the Constitution. Judges who are committed to rule of law know that the Constitution contains no right to take the life of unborn

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of our 13 troops killed in Afghanistan today. [RT](#)

Talking immigration with #Alabama Gov Robert Bentley! #teot <http://t.co/b17yt5WA> [RT](#)

Pundits/MSM still don't get it. "We the People" do! Please Donate/RT <http://t.co/g3XrwXVF> #FiveDollarFridays #teot

Observations

Immediately upon finding the homepage, the majority of participants noted Cain's picture, which they described as "friendly" and "a good picture of him." One participant stated this picture should have been the one on the email splash page.

One participant commented that the logo reminded her "of the Olympics."

The page's design was described as "not too busy," "not too overwhelming," and "easy to navigate." That said, participants didn't say they liked the design so much as they found nothing objectionable about it, with one participant remarking "I can't think of a better way to do it."

None of the participants understood the Twitter feed on the homepage. While a minority knew about Twitter, the majority did not. One participant stated that she "doesn't know Twitter I'm not comfortable with that."

Several participants noted that it was "weird that half the page is dedicated to abortion."

Cain – Homepage (cont.)

The screenshot displays the homepage for Herman Cain's 2012 presidential campaign. At the top left, there is a Twitter feed with three tweets, each featuring a profile picture and a red 'RT' button. The tweets discuss immigration, political policy, and a CNN appearance. To the right of the tweets is a blue text box with white text stating: 'President has no constitutional authority to order any such action by anyone. That was the point I was trying to convey. As to my political policy view on abortion, I am 100% pro-life. End of story. I will appoint judges who understand the original intent of the Constitution. Judges who are committed to rule of law know that the Constitution contains no right to take the life of unborn children. I will oppose government funding of abortion. I will veto any legislation that contains funds for Planned Parenthood. I will do everything that a President can do, consistent with his constitutional role, to advance the culture of life.' Below this text is the name 'Herman Cain-'. The main content area features two video thumbnails. The left thumbnail shows Herman Cain in a suit and glasses, with a magnifying glass over his face. The right thumbnail shows a video player interface with a play button, the text 'HERMAN Cain President', 'HermanCain.com', and 'Common Sense Solutions Bus Tour - Iowa'. Below the videos are navigation links: 'Privacy Policy', 'Press Resources', 'Terms of Service', and 'Contact Us'. At the bottom, there is a small box that says 'Paid for by Friends of Herman Cain, Inc.' and the 'HERMAN CAIN 2012' logo.

Observations

Of the six candidate's homepages, Cain's was the only one participants fully scanned. Every participant scrolled down to the bottom of the page, taking in and noting all the homepage's content.

Of the videos on the bottom of the page, participants were mixed about which one they would watch. Several noted the video on the left did not have a title, while the video on the right did. Participants did not know what to expect from either.

A majority of participants played the left video, which triggered a commercial that in all cases was somehow related to the food service industry. This confused users, who thought the commercial was part of the video until at least half way through. In one case, the participant was presented with a commercial for a fast food burger restaurant, which she thought was related to Cain's background working for Godfather's. "I was not expecting that," she said followed by "I'm a little annoyed."

Neither video met participants' needs. The one of the left, which was 15 minutes in length, was described as "just too long" while the one on the right "wasn't really what I was looking for – I wanted something that was more a highlight of the issues."

Cain – Homepage (cont.)

The screenshot shows the bottom portion of Herman Cain's website. On the left is a Twitter feed with three tweets, each with a red 'RT' button. The top tweet is from Bentley (@Bentley1) about immigration. The middle tweet is from a user asking for donations. The bottom tweet is from Mark Block (@MarkBlock) about a CNN appearance. To the right of the tweets is a blue box with white text containing a quote from Herman Cain about presidential authority and his pro-life stance. Below the tweets and quote is a video player. The left side of the video player shows a still image of Herman Cain with a play button overlay. The right side shows a video thumbnail with the text 'HERMAN Cain President' and 'HermanCain.com'. Below the video player are navigation links: 'Privacy Policy', 'Press Resources', 'Terms of Service', and 'Contact Us'. At the bottom center is a small box that says 'Paid for by Friends of Herman Cain, Inc.'. At the bottom right is the 'HERMAN CAIN President 2012' logo.

Observations (cont.)

One participant stated they were “not a fan of how the bottom of the page doesn’t line up” and lacked “structural integrity.”

Cain – About page video

**HERMAN CAIN TRAIN:
COMING SOON TO IOWA!**

MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2011

11 A.M. - ELDON'S RESTAURANT
3922 SINGING HILLS BLVD., SIOUX CITY, IOWA
SIOUX CITY JEWISH COALITION MEETING

2 P.M. - CRONK'S CAFE!
812 4TH AVE. SOUTH, DENISON, IOWA

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2011

8:30 A.M. - MASONIC TEMPLE
511 EAST 65TH STREET, DAVENPORT, IOWA

1:32 / 2:12

360p

YouTube

About Herman Cain

HERMAN CAIN BIOGRAPHY

Herman Cain grew up in Atlanta, Georgia with loving parents and little else. His father worked three jobs—as a janitor, a barber and a chauffeur—and his mother was a domestic worker. Even though these jobs required hard work and little

Mobile App Download

Observations

Participants felt the header video on the bio page was out of place and got lost in the background.

One participant who watched the entire video noted the dates listed at the inclusion of the video (for early August 2011), were “several months out of date.”

Videos with content that is obviously several months old appear “stale.”

Recommendations

Because videos are more expensive to update than web content and also not where voters might first look for information about candidate appearances, consider removing the material from these videos when they're next updated.

Cain – Mobile App



Observations

A number of participants wondered about the mobile app button, which was fixed at the same location throughout the website, stating "I would not have the mobile app on there."

One participant suggested the campaign "explain what the mobile app is and why you would want to download the app."

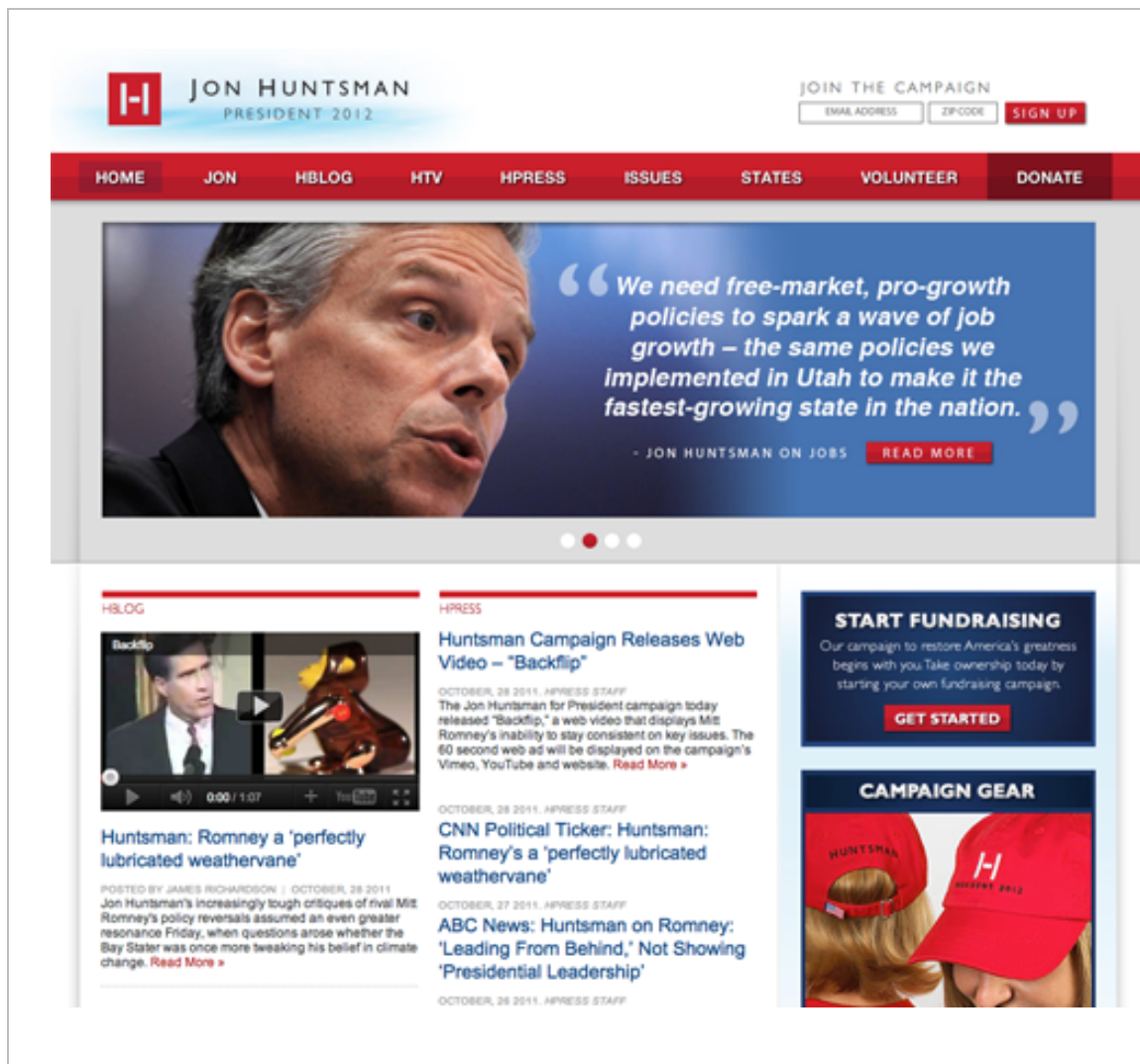
On the donation page (seen here), one participant wondered "what's this mobile app thing? Another way to give money?" The confusion was exacerbated when information about donations by mail was located adjacent to the mobile app download.

Recommendations

Move the mobile app download to another fixed location on the website, freeing up important horizontal space.

Explain the benefits of downloading the mobile application and what voters can expect to find in return for their extra time and effort.

Huntsman - Homepage



Observations

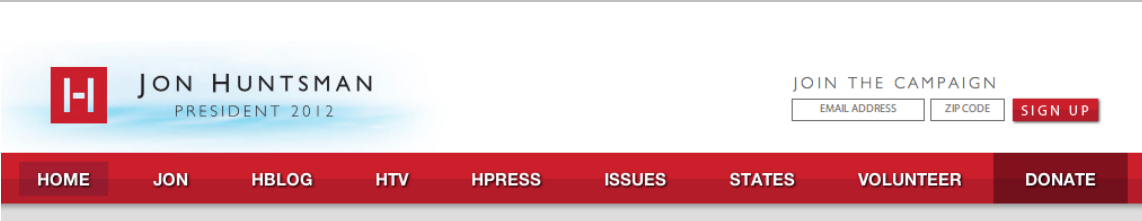
The Huntsman campaign rolled out a redesign to the website within 24-48 hours before the study began.

Participants felt there was “an awful lot of stuff on the page” with some describing it as “a newspaper all about him.” One participant noted that while “it’s a very pleasant looking page and there’s a lot of information here if you want to read it” there’s “too much stuff.” One participant stated the page “would take me awhile to get through it all.” Another participant stated he “had an overall negative feeling on sight, and the site should be more straightforward and to the point and easier to navigate.”

Many participants said they liked that the page was updated daily, which they could tell from the dates adjacent from headlines.

Two participants noted the website reminded them of Obama’s 2008 campaign website, especially in terms of blue colors which they described as “not aggressive” and “weak.” The light blue behind the Huntsman logo was singled out for scrutiny.

Huntsman – Primary Navigation

 <p>The screenshot shows the primary navigation for Jon Huntsman's 2012 presidential campaign website. At the top left is the campaign logo, a red square with a white 'H', followed by the text 'JON HUNTSMAN PRESIDENT 2012'. To the right is a 'JOIN THE CAMPAIGN' section with three input fields: 'EMAIL ADDRESS', 'ZIP CODE', and a red 'SIGN UP' button. Below this is a horizontal red navigation bar with white text links: HOME, JON, HBLOG, HTV, HPRESS, ISSUES, STATES, VOLUNTEER, and DONATE.</p>	<p>Observations Several participants found the use of the candidate's last initial before the words "Blog," "TV," and "Press" in the primary navigation confusing or "conceited."</p> <p>Recommendations Remove the letter "H" from the front of these navigational items. Branded navigation is most susceptible to becoming what we refer to as "mystery meat navigation." Seek first to be understood.</p>
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Huntsman – Biography Timeline



Observations

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, participants found the biography timeline incredibly engaging, often reading and re-reading every single word as well as viewing and commenting on multiple pictures on each slide.

Nevertheless, some participants also found navigating the timeline “difficult,” because “the side buttons are too small” or “hidden” and that they had to rely on navigation at the top of the page instead.

Participants also observed that the timeline was “buried at the bottom of the page” and that it was “easily missed or overlooked.” It’s worth noting that a link to the timeline is, in fact, located at top of the page. However, none of the participants ever saw or clicked on it.

Recommendations

Enlarge the blue arrows at each side of the timeline, and create a more generous navigation region along the entire length of the left and right side of each slide.

Replace the video at the top of the page with an image of the timeline similar to the one at the bottom of the page. Move a dramatically shorted (2 mins or less), retooled version of the video to the top right navigation area.

Perry - Homepage

Observations

Overall, participants liked the Perry campaign website, describing it as “organized,” “good,” “well laid out” and “overall, very attractive.”

Two participants stated that elements including the “blues” and the “striping behind his logo” reminded them of Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign.

Of all the candidates, Perry garnered the most comments on his appearance. Those comments always began when participants arrived on the homepage. Two participants commented on his suits, with one remarking “his suit looks like it costs more than I make in a month.” Regarding the same picture, participants described Perry’s demeanor as “strong and confident” or “too old, intimidating, and angry.”

Perry – About Page



Observations

There are 1469 words on the Perry “About” page, twice as many as any other candidate:

- 525 – Bachmann
- 795 – Cain
- 543 – Huntsman
- 695 – Romney
- 412 – Santorum

Contrary to all the other candidates in this study, most participants did not want to read the bio information for Perry. Participants quickly scrolled through the page noting, “the page seems very long” and that “I didn’t want to scroll all the way to the bottom” or that “it’s just a wall of text.”

One participant suggested the page be “broken up into several other pages.”

Recommendations

Significantly pare down the biography text, breaking it up into sections that discuss each period of the candidate’s life and career.

Also consider adding a photo of Perry with his wife and/or family.

Perry – Donation Buttons

The image shows a donation form with a dark blue background. The form is divided into two main sections: 'Contact Profile' on the left and 'Payment Details' on the right. The 'Contact Profile' section includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Street Address, Street Address 2, City, State (a dropdown menu), and Zip Code. The 'Payment Details' section includes a checkbox for '(Optional) Is this for an event?', a field for 'Event Source Code', 'Credit Card Number', 'Verification Code', 'Expiration Month' (a dropdown menu), and 'Expiration Year' (a dropdown menu). At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: a light blue button on the left that says 'Paid for by RickPerry.org, Inc.' and 'Click here to donate by mail', and a light gray button on the right that says 'SUBMIT'. Both buttons are highlighted with a red rectangular border. Below the form, in a dark blue footer area, there is another light blue button that says 'Paid for by RickPerry.org, Inc.', also highlighted with a red rectangular border.

Observations

Some participants were confused about which of the highlighted buttons was the “Submit” button for the campaign contribution form.

The correct button is the light gray button to the right of the page, while participants most frequently first navigated to the lighter blue box with their mouse. Occasionally participants would click on the lighter blue box before discovering it wasn’t a button, and subsequently searched for and found the submit button.

It’s worth noting that the light blue “Paid for by RickPerry.org Inc.” button is duplicated with another area at the bottom of the page in dark blue.

A similar situation presents itself on the homepage donation area.

Recommendations

Gray call to action buttons are weak and difficult to located in general. In this case the problem is amplified by the addition of other button-appearing elements. Either remove those elements, or change the calls to action to a different, more dominant color (in this case red is used throughout the site) and significantly enlarge the button so the “Submit” step is obvious and intuitive.

Romney - Homepage



Observations

While one participant found the Romney homepage “clean,” other participants found “the pictures hard to look at” and the page “jumps around a lot with a lot of different stuff” with “all the topics but not well presented.” Overall, participants felt the design was “not very catchy” and “not very interesting.”

One participant stated the homepage was “cumbersome” and that he “never really felt like he was on the homepage.”

Another participant, comparing Romney’s site to Perry’s, remarked that Perry’s site “highlights signature issues” whereas “Romney’s site is less focused.”

One Republican participant had a strongly negative reaction to a hat featured on the homepage during the time of the study. “I don’t like the banner. They’re advertising a hat that looks cheap.” The participant liked the remaining banners, but reiterated his distaste for the hat multiple times afterward.

Several indicated that they were “not very impressed.” One Democrat participant noted, “I expected more from Romney.”

Recommendations

Consider major revisions to the homepage design (but not a complete redesign) with thorough homepage usability testing prior to launch.

Romney – Primary Navigation



Observations

In our experience, we find that about half of internet users don't know that the logo usually links to the homepage. On websites where an explicit homepage link is not identified, these users struggle to find the homepage again.

Because the Romney email collection splash page featured a link that was not only below the fold, but way down and somewhat hidden from users, most participants found their way to the Romney website by clicking on links in on their Google search results that sent the participant to a Donation page or the Issues section homepage. Once there, most participants were unable to find the homepage. Some participants actually believed the Donation page was the homepage, which they felt was "greedy," "aggressive," or a "gimmick." One participant entered "home" into the search box, but did not receive information useful for finding the homepage.

When we eventually directed them to click on the Romney logo, one participant remarked, "I would not have thought that I could click on the logo."

Recommendations

One of the biggest problems with the Romney website is an easy fix: add a link to the homepage in the primary navigation.

Romney – Homepage Features



Observations

A couple of the older participants struggled in the features area of the homepage with clicking the right area to view that feature's content. Both participants repeatedly clicked the smaller feature numbers in order to view the feature content.

For example, immediately after finding the homepage (which was a struggle), the participant identified feature content – “On the Road to Iowa” – the participant wanted to see. After clicking on the “#2” icon in the feature area several times, the participant declared, “well, this isn't working either. The website's just not working.” Eventually the participant accidentally clicked the feature image, which began taking him to the requested content. “Well, that was confusing.”

Recommendations

The Romney website's experience is death by a thousand cuts. A problem like this generally might not make it into a high level report, but when coupled with the homepage navigation issue, it becomes mission critical because it further aggravates already frustrated users.

Consider removing the numbers from boxes and shrinking them in size so participants view them less as active navigation and more as a visual cue.

Santorum - Homepage

RICK SANTORUM
The Courage to Fight for America

JOIN THE FIGHT ON: [Sign up with Facebook](#)

RICK'S VIDEO
Senator Rick Santorum at the Iowa Faith & Freedom Coalition Fall Banquet
Senator Rick Santorum's speech at the fall banquet for the Iowa Faith & Freedom Coalition on October 22, 2011

RICK'S TWEETS
Rick Santorum: Great event in Council Bluffs 4 St Sen candidate Al Ringgenberg w Gonge King & amp; Latham. Signed up lots of volunteers. #Ia
Follow Rick

EMAIL UPDATES
SIGN UP TO RECEIVE EMAILS TODAY

CONTRIBUTE
MAKE A SECURE DONATION TO RICK

RICK ON FACEBOOK
Rick Santorum on Facebook
Like 31,279

MEET RICK AND FAMILY
LEARN MORE >

RICK TALK
SANTORUM RESPONDS TO PELOSI STATEMENT THAT BOEING SOUTH CAROLINA PLANT SHOULD BE UNIONIZED
Verona, PA - Former Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) made the following comment in response to Rep. Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) call on CNBC for the Boeing plant in South Carolina to be unionized.

SENATOR SANTORUM SET TO COMPLETE PUBLIC EVENTS IN ALL 99 COUNTIES IN IOWA
Santorum returns to Iowa for a campaign swing Taking him to all corners of the state. Santorum says, "We're just getting warmed up"

Meet our daughter Bella
At the last debate, I mentioned how I was looking forward to taking the red eye home to see my three year old daughter Bella since she had surgery earlier that day. Following that debate, Karen and I got numerous emails and calls from supporters...

MENU
HOME
WHY RICK?
WHERE I STAND
RICK TV
LATEST NEWS
VOLUNTEER
CONTACT
DONATE

Observations

In his round versus Bachmann, Santorum came closest to a win. As we've discussed throughout this report, participants placed a premium on substantive content often penalizing those who were perceived to be light on details. The win would have been based on content, in particular the participant's dislike of Bachmann's content (which was characterized as "overly dramatic," "inflammatory," and at times "grammatically incorrect") versus the comparatively "sparsely detailed," but inoffensive, content on the Santorum website. In this round the participant noted the Santorum website had better content, but Bachmann had the overall best experience.

The majority of participants noted the "strong imagery of the Liberty Bell" on the homepage. Subsequently, however, two participants indicated that the page's layout was heavily influenced by it, and that the "layout could be different [if they] use the Liberty Bell as a background image."

One participant characterized the homepage content as "stacked" with information in "columns and not rows."

Another participant described the homepage layout as "very strange."

Santorum – Primary Navigation

The screenshot shows the Rick Santorum website with a primary navigation menu on the right side. The menu items are: HOME, WHY RICK?, WHERE I STAND, RICK TV, LATEST NEWS, VOLUNTEER, CONTACT, and DONATE. The website content includes a video player, tweets, email updates, and news articles.

Observations

In one round of testing, Cain’s prevailed “reluctantly”. In this case, the participant preferred Santorum’s overall site design, but the participant penalized the Santorum site because “there aren’t a lot of links to find information easily.” Only after the interview had concluded and he’d selected Cain’s as the site with the better overall experience did the participant notice Santorum’s primary navigation in the far right column.

Most participants indicated they were “used to seeing navigation on the top or left.” As a result, participants felt the site “is terrible with the navigation on the right” or indicated they would prefer navigation to be “on the homepage” instead of off to the side.

One participant called it “Incredibly strange that the navigation is on the wrong side and is a background color.”

Recommendations

One participant suggested, “Rick needs to get himself another webmaster.”



Normal Modes

Acknowledgements

While we promised not to mention anyone by name, we want to thank all those anonymous citizens who took time out of their busy schedules to provide such valuable feedback about these campaign websites. Your comments about how they looked, how they worked, and whether they provided you with the information you need were invaluable to the success of the project. Thank you!



Normal Modes

About the Author

Angela Schmeidel Randall is the founder of Normal Modes, a firm based in Houston, Texas that specializes in user experience design and usability testing.

Angela has more than 15 years of experience in user interface design, user experience development and usability testing with complex, data-driven websites and applications. She began her career in financial services with AIM Management Group Inc., a mutual fund company later acquired by INVESCO. During her time at AIM, she worked with the newly-formed eCommerce group where she designed the user interface for the company's first online customer account portal.

Angela later worked with Continental Airlines to redesign and upgrade the airline's customer-facing systems. In addition to developing personas and defining use case scenarios, she conducted usability testing using a variety of methods, including formal usability testing, A/B testing with paper prototypes, magnitude estimation, eye tracking and heuristic evaluations. She used data gathered from these studies to create user experiences for the hotel and car booking engines, a new customer portal (OnePass' My Account) and the industry's first AJAX-driven frequent flyer engine. She later designed and tested the caller experience for the first voice-automated flight-booking engine. All systems remain widely used today.

Since founding Normal Modes in 2009, Angela has worked on numerous user experience design and usability testing projects for applications ranging from electronic healthcare records to oil trading platforms to ecommerce systems for commercial and government use.

Angela earned a bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas, and a master's degree from Rice University. Her master's thesis was an ethnographic study, conducted in China, of people's interactions with healthcare systems.



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Normal Modes

About Normal Modes

Normal Modes is a user experience consultancy that offers a range of services including usability testing, user experience (UX) design, and training.

We help companies create great experiences with websites and software. Our work is methodical and practical, with the goal of delivering an engaging and useful experience for the target audience that meets organizational objectives. Customers love our work because it makes working with technology easy and enjoyable, and companies love it because it's good for the bottom line.

We specialize in usability testing and user experience design for large, data-driven websites and applications that require users to complete complex processes like those found in oil trading applications, booking engines, eCommerce systems, and specialized portals. We practice a user-centered design methodology that balances business objectives and technical requirements, with the end user's needs, abilities, and motivations. And we share our knowledge using the case study method in our training workshops and webinars.

Usability

Know what your users actually think—not what someone thinks they think! Everyone has an opinion but, when it comes to your website's functionality, nobody's opinion is more important, or more valuable, than that of your users. Usability testing a single website with 15 participants usually runs around \$22,500. To learn more visit normalmodes.com/usability.

Use Experience Design

Our end-to-end user experience (UX) design based on task analysis incorporates best practices from user-centered design throughout the entire development process. We specialize in large, data-driven websites and applications that require users to complete complex processes like those found in oil trading applications, electronic healthcare records, eCommerce systems, booking engines, and portals. Starting at \$25,000 depending on the scope of the project. To learn more visit: normalmodes.com/ux.

Training

We offer in-house training workshops that use the case study method to teach a variety of user experience and usability topics to corporate software teams. In-house workshops start at \$8,500. From time-to-time, we also offer public training events and webinars. To learn more visit: normalmodes.com/training.

We find that the money invested in creating a good user experience pays for itself by:

Increasing revenues;

Increasing productivity;

Decreasing training and support costs;

Decreasing development and maintenance costs; and

Improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.