City of Austin
Branding and Creative Report
August 9, 2010

SteelSMBology

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the City of Austin (COA) with a full record of the information gathered and recommendations made relevant to branding and developing creative concepts for the COA website redesign.

This report covers:
1. Review of SteelSMBology's approach to branding and the process of selecting a Brand Archetype for the COA website redesign.
2. Summary of the brand platform for the COA website redesign, including brand values, target audience, brand differentiation, and key brand communications.
3. Outline a vision for the COA's brand architecture, including best practices and final recommendations.
4. Summary of the creative process for the development of concept options.
5. Review of planned activities for testing the proposed concepts and choosing the final creative concept.

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Branding Approach

SteelSMBology defines a brand as a person's collected experiences of a company, product, or service. Everything a customer remembers about a company -- every communication, advertisement, experience, and comment from others -- is their "brand" for that company. A brand, simply put, is a memory.

SteelSMBology's approach to branding begins with identifying the personality or soul of the brand through the process of archetypal branding. Archetypes are the most ancient grooves in our mental architecture, which Carl Jung described as "making the unconscious conscious." Carl Jung looked across all of the songs, poems, stories, and fables of all cultures in the world. He observed that though we are seemingly diverse, the stories that thrive and survive have only six basic characters, or "archetypes." He theorized that these stories are shared across cultures because of how the human mind functions to categorize and retain information. For that reason, these "hard wired" characters are most easily related to and enjoyed by most people. Carol Pearson applied the same work to groups' identities and constructed the 12 Brand Archetypes we have today. Properly employed, archetypal branding brings meaning and loyalty to a brand. When we use one of these Archetypes as a guide for making decisions about our brand, we create a lifelike personality for a product or service that has a readily identifiable and relatable character.

The archetypal brand strategy employed by SteelSMBology creates a central unifying idea that aligns behaviors, actions, and communications to guide marketing communications, build on a vision, advance business strategy, resonate with all stakeholders, and provide clarity and inspiration to employees. This idea must illustrate who you are and what you do, while defining the organization's positioning, differentiation, and competitive advantages.

Archetypal Branding

Archetypes appeal to four basic human motivations positioned along two axes:
1. Belonging/People vs. Independence/Self-Actualization – human's desire to be part of a group yet also desire to have the freedom to be individuals.
2. Stability/Control vs. Risk/Mastery – human's desire safety and comfort but also are ambitious and desire accomplishment that usually requires taking risks.

Stability (Order)

Belonging ←   → **Independence**

Mastery (Change)
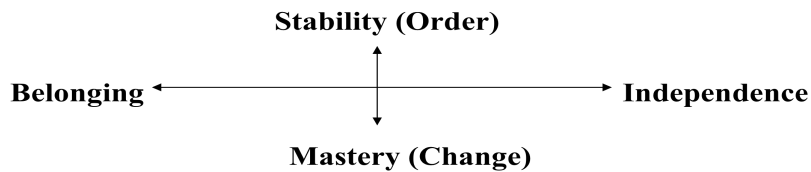
There are 12 brand archetypes that are universally effective in bringing a brand to life in the customer's mind. The following chart identifies each of the archetypes and the desire or motivation of the organization to which they appeal.

Order	Change	Group Belonging	Self-Knowledge
Caregiver – She is Mother Teresa. She is selfless and cares more about the welfare of others than that of her own. She desires order because it keeps others safe. *Example Brands: Volvo, Blue Cross, Allstate*	**Hero** – He is Superman. He is brave and fights to defeat evil even in the face of overwhelming odds. He seeks to take charge and make the world a better place. *Example Brands: Nike, Gatorade*	**Regular Guy/Gal** – He is Larry the Cable Guy. He is simple and proud to be ordinary. He desires to fit in with everyone else. *Example Brands: Saturn, Wrangler*	**Innocent** – He is Forrest Gump. He is naïve and believes that life will simply work out. He strives for true happiness (i.e., perfect life) because he believes it can exist. *Example Brands: Coke, Ivory, IKEA*
Creator – He is Michelangelo. He expresses himself through his creations. He views his creations as microcosms of the world in which he has complete control. *Example Brands: HP, Kinko's, MAC Cosmetics*	**Outlaw** – He is Robin Hood. He is faithful to deeper, truer values than those held by society. He seeks to disrupt the status quo. *Example Brands: Apple, Harley-Davidson, Salesforce.com*	**Lover** – He is Rhett Butler (*Gone With the Wind*). He is sensuous, charismatic, and romantic. He seeks to be beautiful to gain the love of others. *Example Brands: Victoria's Secret, Godiva*	**Explorer** – He is Lewis and Clark. He goes his own way searching for meaning. He strives to find his true self through the thrill and excitement of adventure. *Example Brands: Jeep, Ford Explorer, Starbucks*
Ruler – He is the President of the United States. He seeks the power to control his environment. He uses this power to serve and protect others. *Example Brands: Microsoft, Mercedes, Dell*	**Magician** – He is Merlin. He uses his knowledge of science to bring change to the world. These changes are dramatic, sudden, and mysterious. He seeks to make the world a better place. *Example Brands: Chanel No. 5, Xerox*	**Jester** – He is Jay Leno. He doesn't take life too seriously. He sees life as joyful and seeks to bring joy to others. He believes he can be himself and still be accepted by others. *Example Brands: Pepsi, Miller Lite*	**Sage** – He is Albert Einstein. He pursues knowledge for its own sake. He strives to understand the truths of the world. *Example Brands: Charles Schwab, Barnes & Noble, IBM*

Archetypes can provide useful guidance for the City of Austin's website redesign by creating a relationship with the constituency in a comfortable human manner rather than in a forced or overly technical manner. This will facilitate making users feel safe and secure. The archetypes are very natural and credible, therefore, increasing users' comfort and confidence with organizations that employ them. The appropriate archetype will also help center on core values around which the website is built to portray the City consistently in imagery, as well as choices on content and functions. Lastly, archetypal branding will provide ideas and inspiration for growth so that all members of the City government can "improvise on the theme" to create a unified vision without feeling paralyzed or overly bureaucratic.

Archetype Selection Process

The branding process used for the City of Austin began with three facilitated sessions with a cross-section of staff. Each of the three groups, through the activities in the session, selected two archetypes to move to the short list. The short list was then taken to the City Manager's Office (CMO) for the final facilitated session to choose the final archetype. Each session began with an individual survey among participants, where each reviewed the 12 archetype descriptions (archetype names were not given) and selected their top three matches to the City of Austin. The selection criteria included considering an archetype that is true to the brand/product, is attainable by the City as a whole and the staff as individuals, and would resonate with prospective consumers. The three facilitated sessions resulted in the short list of possible archetypes: Caregiver, Sage, Magician, and Explorer. The figure below shows the results with a green star representing how many votes each archetype received (each session was allowed two collective votes).
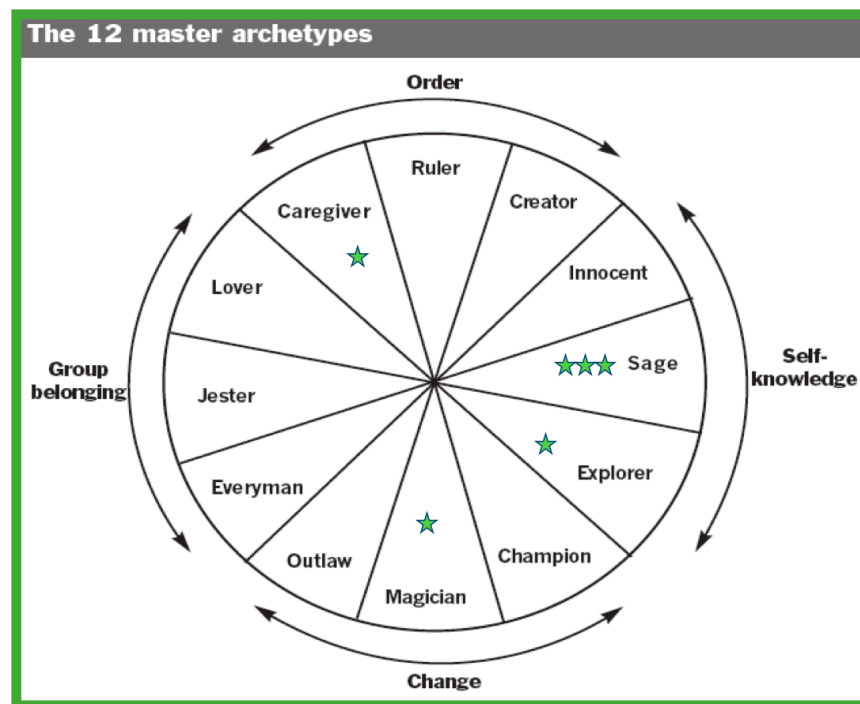
The short list was then taken to the CMO for a facilitated session with the goal to choose the final archetype to guide and inform the branding for the City of Austin website. The CMO chose the Explorer archetype for these key points:

1. Austin as a community does most closely resemble the Explorer because of its enduring spirit of adventure and always trying to be different and the best.

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2. Because Austin is such a strong Explorer, the government organization should emulate those characteristics in the best ways possible
3. It is the direction of the City of Austin's leadership to continually push beyond current capabilities.
4. The Explorer best represents innovation and therefore encompasses the City of Austin's goal of "Best Managed City."

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Branding Strategy for COA

The strategy developed for the City of Austin encompasses the characteristics of the Explorer Brand Archetype as a foundation with specific COA Brand elements and parameters applied to complete the story.

Brand Archetype: Explorer
The Explorer archetype resonates well with brands that help people feel free, provide self-sufficiency, and seek to differentiate from the regular guy or gal or the boss or ruler. Brands that have a product that can be consumed "on the go" and best obtained via the Internet are also characterized by the Explorer archetype.

The Explorer Applied
Major themes associated with the Explorer archetype include journeys, discovery, adventure, escape, and self-exploration. Key characteristics are:
- Focuses on themes of journeys, adventure, escape, self-exploration
- Rejects the mundane, traditional, or established ways of doing things
- Tries new things in search of something more in tuned with individual tastes and values
- Promises freedom or individuality
- Talks in terms of discovery, experience, and journey
- May be spontaneous or improvisational, valuing experimentation over tradition
- Touts authenticity or rare heritage
- Benefits from counter culture icons
- Seeks new information and experience, and ultimately a better world/way
- At heart, is about the journey and what will support the journey
- Finds paths that are there but undiscovered

Other Names: Seeker, Philosopher, Gypsy, Student, Truth Seeker, and Outsider
Brands: Starbucks, Levi's, Virgin, National Geographic, Jeep, City of Austin

Organizational Culture
An Explorer organization empowers individuals, awards independence and de-emphasizes hierarchal decision-making. Employees are hired for their expertise and empowered by management to use their own judgment about how to reach their goals. An Explorer organization is doing work that is pioneering and groundbreaking. Someone that works for an Explorer organization could be exemplified by the following quote:

"We love to network and work with people. We take pleasure in gathering ideas, and are curious what you think. We act with common sense and rationality. We're always available to talk. We have the right resources for any job and provide easy-to-use tools."

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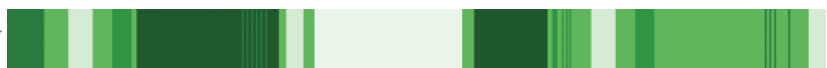
Explorer Communications
To communicate with the Explorer archetype, communication professionals should provide a means for people to be their free self -- to find and be who they want to be. Communication professionals should also consider avoiding creating buzz because Explorers are skeptical of advertising hype. Communication professionals should convey a "real" image because Explorers like products that seem as authentic as they are. Images that express scenes like open roads, wide-open spaces, frontiers, travel, and motion are consistent with this archetype. Communication professionals must emphasize freedom and place more value on the individual than belonging to a group to resonate with Explorers. By channeling the target's desire to seek out new experiences and to find their identities, the brand can begin to connect to its consumers on a deeper level. Therefore, marketers should make explicit the desire to flee from the corporate drones and experience self-sufficiency to define and differentiate the brand in the minds of their consumers.

Customer Experience
The Explorer's customer's point of view could be expressed by the following quote:

"You are accessible, versatile, and knowledgeable. You have a good grasp of my needs. Your approach to my problems is intelligent. I can always contact you and you know what you are talking about."

Brand Expression of an Explorer
Essence: I am of the mind
Strategy: I seek information and experience, in all facets of life
Strengths: Versatility, adaptability, sharp awareness
Key words: Intelligent, curious, and communicative
Colors: Orange, violet, crystal blue

Brand Vision
The driving force behind all organizational actions and communications is the vision of "Best Managed City." This vision is driven by City leadership's desire to always strive to find the best ways to operate as an organization and to serve the residents of Austin.

Key Communication
This concise phrase for internal use reemphasizes the goal of all communications:

"If there's a better way, we will find it."

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Target Audiences
There are seven key segments that make up the target market for the COA website redesign
(development is discussed in detail in the Customer Profiling Report).

<u>Residents</u>
1. Urban Tech Savvy
2. Suburban Families
3. Older Urban
4. Socially Conscious/Civically Minded
5. Hispanic Bilingual Mothers

<u>Business</u>
6. Self Employed, Professionals, and/or Small Business Owner
7. Development: Real Estate and Construction Professionals

8. City of Austin Staff/Other Government Staff

Brand Values
As an Explorer, the COA should embrace the following values:
Authenticity – The City of Austin Government is transparent and trustworthy (e.g. opens its
books, publishes decisions, and shares both successes and failures with the public)
Accessibility – Information and answers from COA are always available (e.g. provides
information and easy-to-use tools via the web that are available to everyone, from
anywhere, at anytime)
Openness – The City of Austin provides platforms for participation and communication (e.g.
encourages feedback, input, and collaboration from staff and citizens)
Relevancy – The City of Austin provides information and services that are meaningful and
useful
Independence – The City of Austin is innovative, unique, and true to our local roots
Resourcefulness – The City of Austin acts effectively and imaginatively in all situations

Brand Differentiation
Product Differentiation:
• Encourages self-sufficiency
• Easy-to-use utility
• Leading edge of technology

Corporate Differentiation:
• Innovative, yet relevant

Website Name and URL

SteelSMBology recommends that the new website name and URL be simply: AustinTexas.gov. We recommend that the "name" as it appears in the graphical header of the website and the URL be the same for simplicity. It is easy for users to remember and the use of the .gov extension in the address confirms for users that it is the official City government website. In a review of peer government sites provided by the City of Austin web team, over half use the .gov extension and most simply use the city/state name or abbreviation as the "name" of the site.

- Utah – utah.gov
- Kansas – kansas.gov
- Washington DC – dc.gov
- Boston – boston.gov
- San Francisco – sfgov.org
- Edmonton – edmonton.ca
- Kansas City – kcmo.org
- City of Virginia Beach – vbgov.com
- Houston – houstontx.gov
- College Station – cstx.gov
- New Orleans – cityofno.com
- Birmingham – informationbirmingham.com
- Nebraska – nebraska.gov
- Indiana – in.gov
- Idaho – idaho.gov
- Cincinnati – cincinnati.com
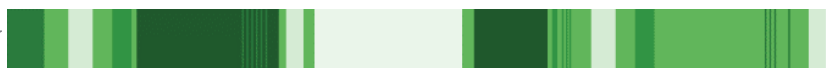
Brand Architecture

Brand architecture is how an organization structures products (or other brands) within its portfolio. There are three main types of brand architecture in the corporate world:

- Monolithic – Focuses on one Masterbrand, usually the company name across all products (e.g. Sony, IBM, Dell)
- Endorsed – Allows a parent brand to add credibility to other brands it owns, promising consistent values. The Brand has it's own name and identity (e.g. NexWatch by Honeywell, Polo by Ralph Lauren, GE Monogram, GE Profile)
- Branded or House of Brands – The parent brand has little or no prominence in the individual brands (e.g. Tide, Pampers, Duracell – all owned by Procter & Gamble).

Top-Level Website Structure and Organization

An analysis looked at how to organize and name the content on the website with City Government in the role of the Brand, then departments and services in the role of sub-brands or products within that organization. The analysis first examined all the services provided by the City, and included a look at those services that also serve the citizens of Austin in a similar way. Interviews with citizen website users found that they don't typically distinguish between the goals for a City government website and a site like the Visitor's Bureau. On the other hand, services typically provided by City government, like public libraries and the airport, are not expected to be a part of the City government structure (for more detailed information see the In-Depth User Interviews Report). Therefore, when providing a top-level structure for the City of Austin Website, SteelSMBology has recommended a Family of Sites strategy that aligns with these user trends and employs a strategy used frequently by large corporations outside of the government industry. The recommendation is that there be a "Brand Bar" at the top of all COA websites, allowing the user to toggle between sites. It is recommended that the Brand Bar include:

- AustinTexas.gov
- Airport
- Library
- Austin Energy
- Convention Center
- Visitor's Bureau
- Open Austin (will be the new data portal)
- Austin Water

Within the AustinTexas.gov website, the recommendation is to employ a more "Monolithic" strategy with departments and services so they are depicted as clearly within the structure of the City of Austin's website both navigationally and visually. A review of peer sites in the government space confirmed that this is a best practice.

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Peer Website Review
SteelSMBology conducted a review of five peer websites (City government websites identified by the Web team as aspirational to Austin) and recorded how each City structured content on the website. The peer sites reviewed were: Boston, San Francisco, Edmonton, Kansas City, and Washington DC. The following are the results of that review.

Boston
- Name: CityofBoston.gov
- Tag: Official Web Site of the City of Boston
- URL: www.cityofboston.gov (www.boston.gov also directed)
- Strong, consistent, organized branding throughout the site.
- Role-based sections are differentiated by the image at the top of the page and color of the left menu bar.
- User drills down through listing or portal pages organized by role, then by topic, to get to information pages located in a Department section.
- Branding Architecture - City Brand is very clear and tightly controlled throughout the site. Departments do not have their own look and feel and are simply depicted with page title and graphic.
- Library is incorporated into the structure and Branding Architecture of the website (i.e. treated like the other Departments).
- Airport website is completely separate, residing on the Port Authority website.

Home Page

Boston continued:

Portal Page
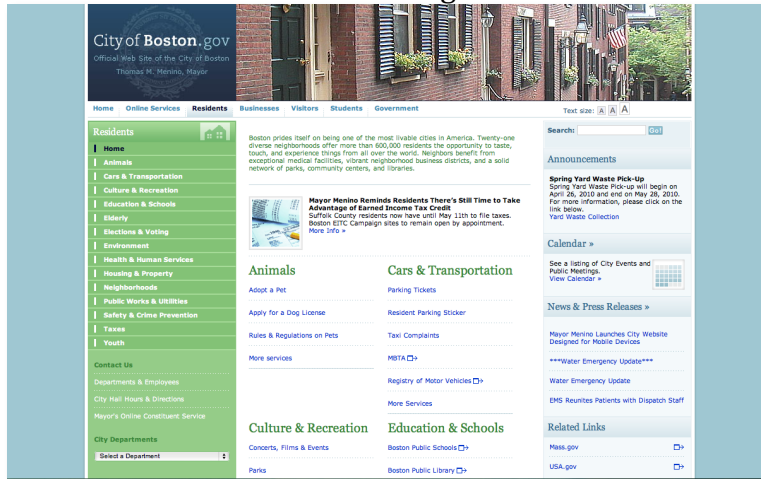
Department Page
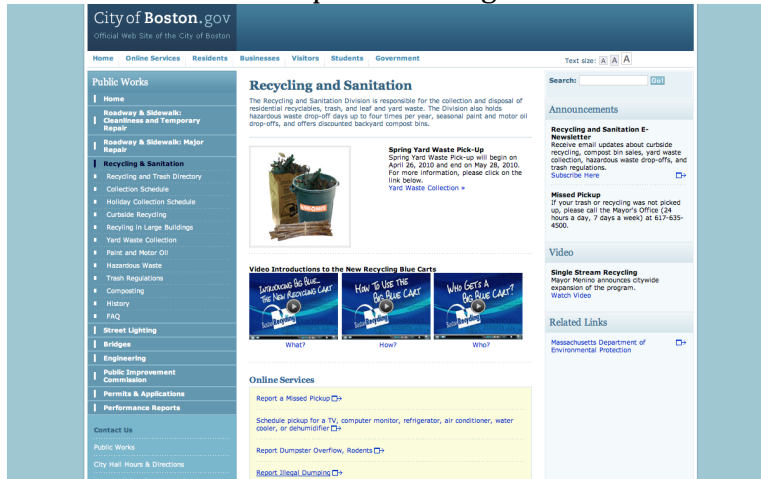
Library

Boston continued:

Airport

Edmonton
- Name: The City of Edmonton
- Tag or Headline: none
- URL: www.edmonton.ca
- Strong, consistent, organized branding throughout the site.
- Top-level sections are differentiated by the image at the top.
- User drills down through listing or portal pages by topics that get more and more specific.
- Branding Architecture - City Brand is very clear and tightly controlled throughout the site. Departments do not have their own look and feel and are simply depicted with page title and graphic.
- Library has its own look and feel and its own URL.
- Airport website has a page on the main site with basic information then links to a separate site that has its own look and feel and its own URL.

Home Page

Portal Page
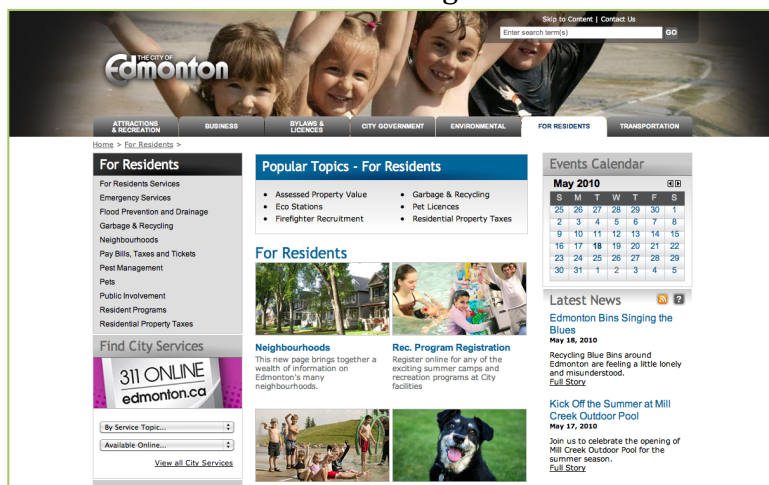
Edmonton continued:

Department Page

Library

Airport

Kansas City
- Name: The City of Kansas City Mo
- Tag or Headline: none
- URL: www.kcmo.org
- Strong, consistent, organized branding throughout the site.
- Top-level sections are differentiated by a roll over color at the top that matches the color of the navigation menu within that section. The navigation mixes role with key topics.
- User drills down through listing or portal pages by topic categories that lead to department pages. All department pages are in Business portal.
- Branding Architecture - City Brand is very clear and tightly controlled throughout the site. Departments do not have their own look and feel and are simply depicted with page title and graphic.
- Library has its own look and feel and its own URL.
- Airport website has a page on the main site with basic information and a link to a separate site that has its own look and feel and its own URL.

Home Page

Portal Page

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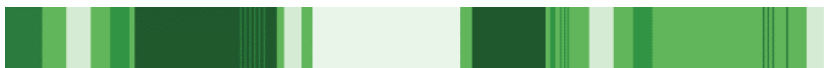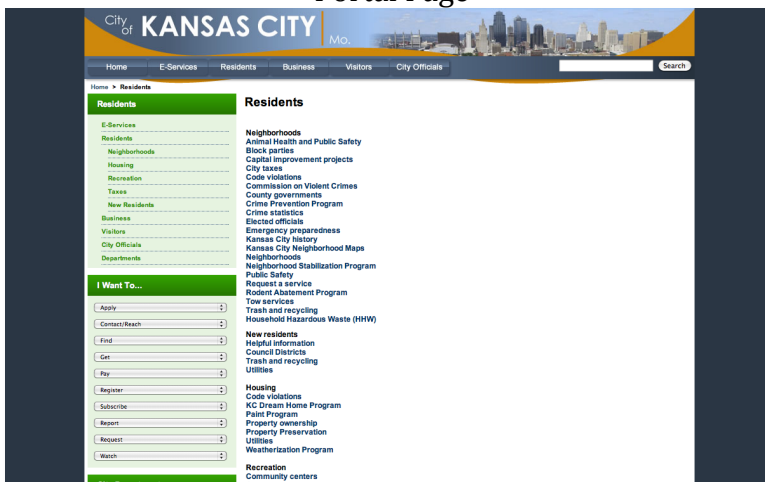
Kansas City continued:

Department Page

Library

Airport

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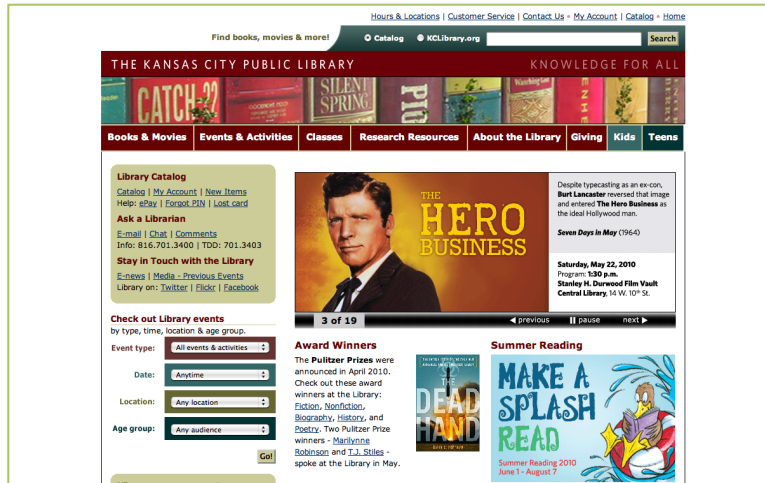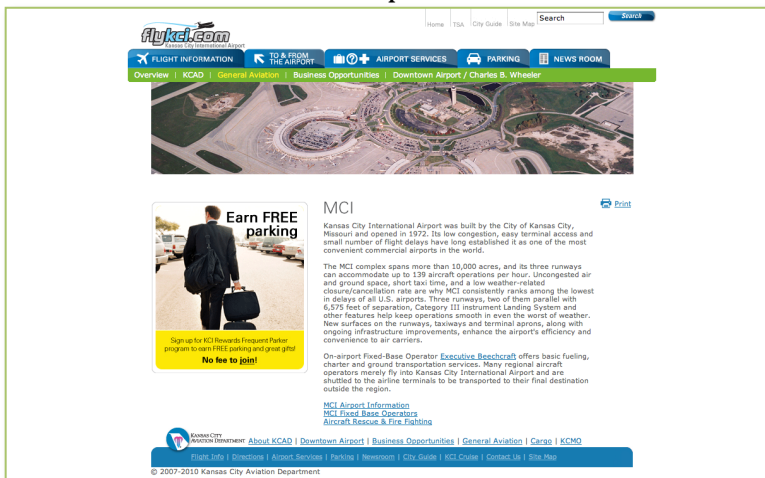
Washington DC
- Name: District of Columbia
- Tag or Headline: none
- URL: www.dc.gov
- Consistent branding throughout the site.
- Top-level sections are not differentiated visually.
- User drills down through listing or portal pages by topic categories that get more and more specific.
- Branding Architecture - City Brand is very clear and tightly controlled throughout the site. Departments do not have their own look and feel and are simply depicted with page title and graphic.
- Library website has a page on the main site with basic information then links to a separate site that has its own look and feel and its own URL.
- Airport has its own look and feel and its own URL.

Home Page
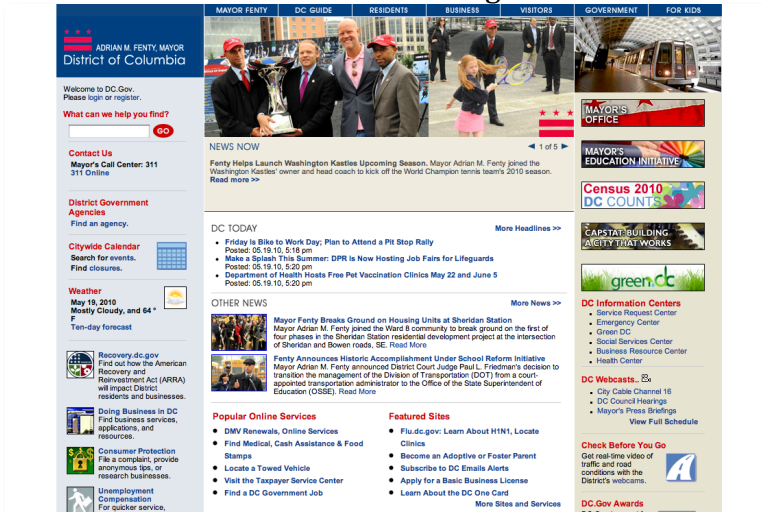
Portal Page
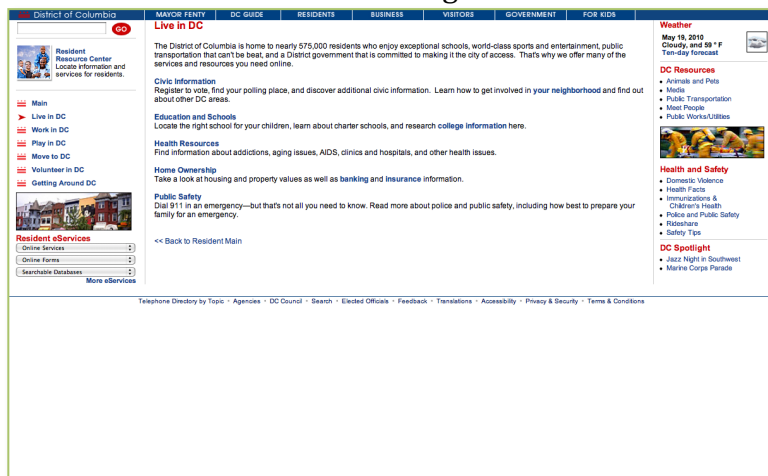
Washington DC continued:

Department Page

Library

Airport

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San Francisco
- Name: City and County of San Francisco
- No tagline or Headline
- URL: www.sfgov.org
- Role-based sections are not differentiated by anything visual.
- User drills down through listing or portal pages organized by role and then by topic to get to information pages located in a Department section.
- Brand Architecture – Some Departments have their own look and feel and seem to be micro-sites. Others use a template branded like the core site.
- Library has a page on the main site with basic information then links to a separate site that has its own look and feel and its own URL.
- Airport website has a page on the main site with basic information then links to a separate site that has its own look and feel and its own URL.

Home Page

Portal Page

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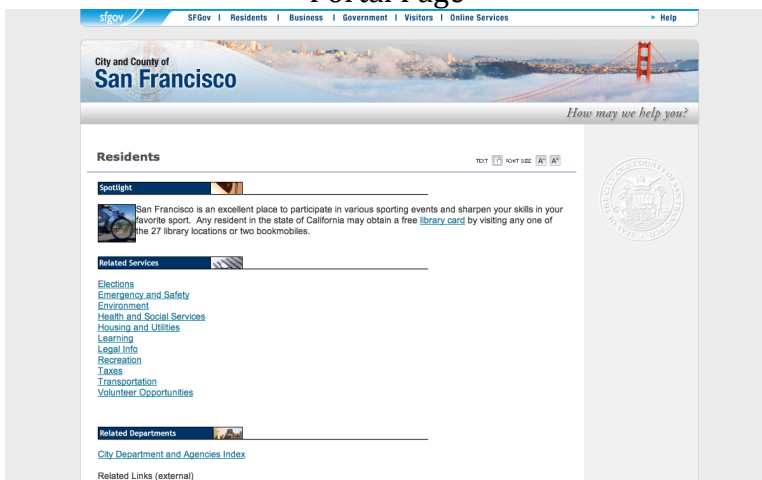
San Francisco continued:

Department Page

Another Department Page

Library

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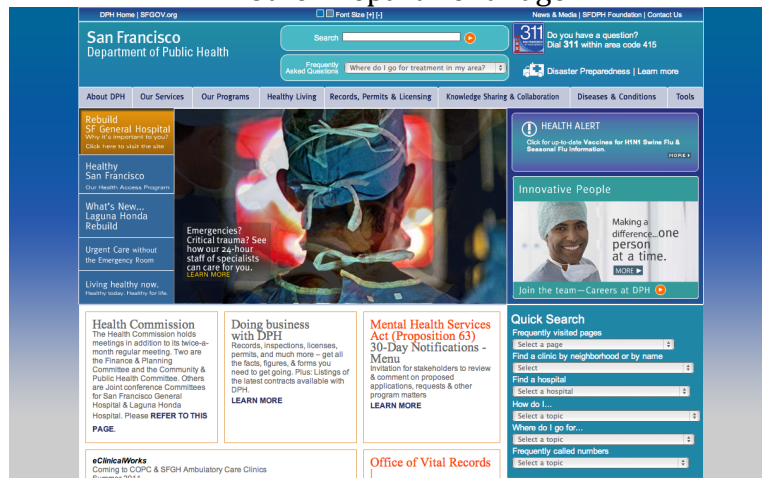
San Francisco continued:

Airport
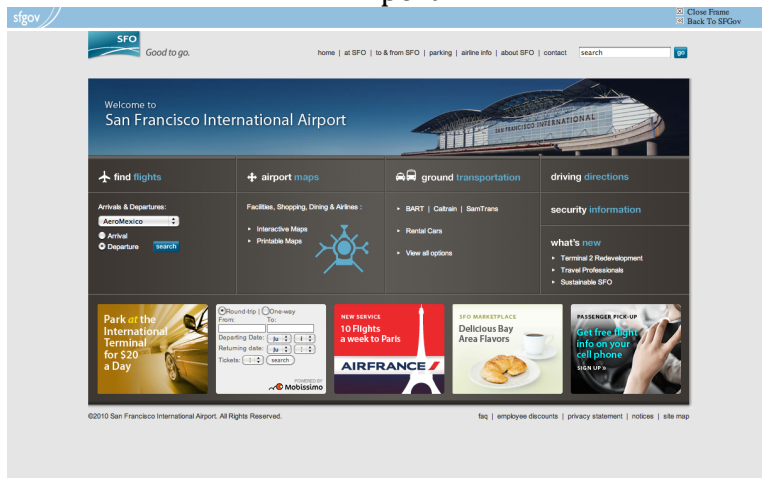
Brand Architecture Recommendation
It is recommended that the City of Austin's new website, AustinTexas.gov, serve as the Masterbrand for all other departments. All departments will share a consistent look and feel and navigation, with all current department micro-sites brought under the AustinTexas.gov framework. The slight exceptions will be the aforementioned sites that have been identified to have a compelling business case to be treated as Branded sites. The key benefits of this structure to the web redesign project and COA organization will be to:
- Ensure rapid establishment of the new brand
- Remove the perception that some departments have more resources or are more important than others
- Clearly promote all services from the users' point of view, as opposed to an internal or organizational perspective

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Creative Brief

This section provides a summary of all the above branding information that will be used as a resource for the creative and communications teams.

1. What is the specific assignment?

Develop three to five website design concepts for the City of Austin demonstrated on a home page and one secondary page.

2. Brand Platform

The Explorer Brand Archetype:
- Help people feel free, non-conformist, or pioneering
- Have a product that can be consumed "on the go" and "from anywhere"
- Can be obtained via the internet and mobile device
- Provide self-sufficiency
- Value individuality
- Seek to differentiate from the Regular Guy/Gal or the Ruler brand archetypes

Essence: I am of the mind
Strategy: I seek new information and experience in all facets of life
Strengths: Versatility, adaptability, sharp awareness
Key words: Intelligent, curious, and communicative

Key rationale for the Explorer archetype from City Management:
- Promotes innovation
- Pursues continual improvement
- Promotes pushing beyond our current capabilities
- The Explorer is Austin, and who the government should be also
- Encompasses goal of "Best Managed City"

"The City is always seeking a better way, to serve the citizens of Austin."
- Marc Ott, City Manager

Brand Values:
- Authentic – The City of Austin Government is transparent and trustworthy (e.g. opens its books, publishes decisions, and shares both successes and failures with the public)
- Accessible – Information and answers from COA are always available (e.g. provides information and easy-to-use tools via the web available to everyone, from anywhere, at anytime)
- Open – The City of Austin provides platforms for participation and communication (e.g. encourages feedback, input, and collaboration from staff and citizens)

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- Relevant – The City of Austin provides information and services that are meaningful and useful
- Independent – The City of Austin is innovative, unique, and true to our local roots
- Resourceful – The City of Austin acts effectively and imaginatively in all situations

Brand Differentiation:
Product Differentiation:
- Encourages self-sufficiency
- Easy-to-use utility
- Leading edge of technology

Corporate Differentiation:
Innovative, yet relevant

Key Brand Communication:
If there's a better way, we will find it.

3. Target Audience

Residents, Business Owners, Visitors and Employees of the City of Austin. The majority of the current users of the site identify themselves as coming to the site as a Resident (71% per research conducted) looking for information that pertains to their households and living in Austin.

Angela   Elena   Jason   Leah   Lynn   Robert   Rosie

(See detailed profiles of the target segments in the appendix)

4. What does the target currently think? What obstacles currently exist?

Key Findings Overview of Current User Study

- Residents are by far the largest group of users
- Two out of three visitors are women. Women are overrepresented among tourists. The two professional categories – business and employees – have a close to even split on gender.
- Most visitors are reasonably adept at Internet technology. Tourists, however, are somewhat less so, with 20% reporting themselves as novices, compared to 3-4% for the other groups.
- The initial profile research led to four segment groups representative of the users of the website: Residents (71%), Business (7%), City Employees (which includes a small number of government employees other than the city of Austin) (17%), and Visitors (5%).
- Residents visit to explore educational resources and the library. They also visit to find family-related events and to get information about City services and facilities. They visit

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the website 1.5 times per week on average, which is less frequently than City employees and business users.

- Business users visit to get information about the City government, boards and commissions (10% of their primary reason for visiting), construction and development (20%), bidding opportunities (11%), and permits and licenses (7%). They are the least satisfied users of the website.
- City employees are the most frequent users of the website, with half visiting at least once per day. They use the website for almost every purpose except visitor information.
- Visitors to Austin are most likely to be first-time users, who use the website to get information on things to do and how to get around. They are the most satisfied of the four user groups.
- Overwhelming feedback received from the in-depth interviews conducted with users in the seven key target groups revealed that the website needed to reflect the Austin's "fun and funky" personality in look and feel and by showing pictures of our beautiful surroundings.

5. **What single idea would we like to convey? (Net Communication, in less than 12 words)**

The approved name for the website (replacing Austin City Connection) is "AustinTexas.gov". This is also the new URL for the website. A tagline will convey the COA Brand Values and position the website as a handy tool (e.g. Swiss army knife) and key communication point between the City and its citizens.

6. **What do we want the target to think?**

Upon using the site, users should remark:

"You are accessible, versatile, and knowledgeable. You have a good grasp of my needs. Your approach to my problems is intelligent. I can always contact you. You know what you are talking about."

7. **Creative Guidelines**
   - Graphics must include the City Seal
   - Navigation menus include: Brand Bar, Role-based portal bar, Utility Navigation, Primary Navigation, Secondary Navigation, Breadcrumbs, Footer Navigation. (Note: Final labels and content included in each navigation bar is not finalized. Please use the below lists as placeholders.)

     Brand Bar Nav:

     AustinTexas.gov, Airport, Library, Austin Energy, Austin Water, Convention Center, Visitor's Bureau, Open Austin

     Utility Nav:

     My Account, Make a Payment, Calendar, Media Center, FAQ, Contact, 311

     Footer Nav:

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Home, My Account, Calendar, News, Media Center, FAQ, Links, Legal Notices, Privacy, Policies and Terms of Use, Site Map, 311, Contact

Role-based portal bar:

Residents (default), Business, Government, Development, Sustainability

The website will feature role-based, top-level navigation. Prioritization of content and labels for navigation within role-based portals provides relevance for the user, in that the content most important to them is prioritized. This is also a common trend in top peer City sites, chosen by the web team. Users can toggle between the portals, as needed, and this will change the organization of content on the home page to be most relevant to that particular role. As almost 70% of the current users of the website are coming to the website as a "Resident", the default home page will be the Resident portal.

- Brand Architecture – Overall, the architecture follows the Branded approach, with each Brand in the Family of Brands having its own look and feel. Within the AustinTexas.gov site, however, the Brand hierarchy is Monolithic. Individual departments will not have their own distinct look and feel or navigational structure. Similar to the example of Edmonton's hierarchy, the AustinTexas.gov branding and navigation structure will remain consistent, and departments will have a content area within that template. It is recommended to develop a branded set of header graphics that can change out and depict the different facets of the City's services as provided by the different departments.

- We are designing for 1024 width/resolution.
- Government Peer sites:
    - Utah
    - San Francisco
    - Whitehouse.gov
    - Kansas City
    - Kansas

- Non-Government Peer Sites:
  - Apple
  - Microsoft
  - iGoogle
  - Govloop
  - Whitehouse
  - Rackspace

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Design Concepts

The following pages feature the design concepts that were presented to the City during the creative development and review process.

Design Concept Goals:
The design goals were to create a look and feel for the City of Austin's website that:
- Visually represents the new Branding Strategy and Explorer Archetype. Each concept will demonstrate the new Brand Platform elements from a visual perspective, in choice of content layout, in language used on the navigation labels, and the use of headers and sub-heads for usability.
- Incorporates the positive design aspects of the peer sites chosen by the web team. Each concept will include strong visual branding through photographs and other imagery, provide user-focused navigation, and incorporate all forms of City communication into the website (e.g. social media, calendar, etc.).
- Includes priority content items for the home page as defined by the web team and cross-department combined work sessions. Each concept will include the agreed upon required content elements:
  - A place for alerts/announcements
  - Online services area with navigation options such as drop downs of services and a "I need to" drop down
  - 311 promo area and information on how to get more information
  - News
  - Calendar of events promo area that links to full information about events
  - Promo area for mapping function of services by neighborhood
  - Multiple content and promo areas for content not developed yet
- Demonstrates usage of the Top Level Navigation. Each concept will show where the Brand Bar for the Family of Sites will be and demonstrate how the role-based navigation will work on the website.
- Incorporates design and government trends for websites. Each concept will incorporate top trends and best practices. Current trends include designs that take elements typically used in print advertising online. Designs have much more "white space" for usability. It is no longer a goal to push everything up on the page. Scrolling is not only acceptable but also preferred to a cluttered page. From a Government perspective, "open government" features such as data portals, links to view documents, feedback options, and social media integration are identified sustainable trends.
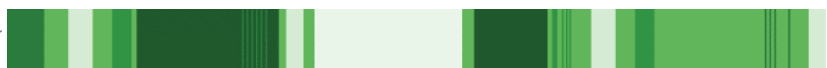
Initial Design Concepts:
SteelSMBology presented four distinct design concepts in the initial presentation, all designs visually demonstrate the Explorer Archetype and overall Branding Strategy in these ways:

- Focus on information and experience – providing the information the users want and use most often in an easy to use format through role-based portals. In each design, the role-based top-level navigation is prominent.
- Core value, Knowledgeable – website organization that demonstrates the depth of information and City Services available through the website; without being too cluttered.
- Core value, Accessible - multiple ways to contact or connect with City of Austin are demonstrated on the home page in areas that will carry through the website (e.g. the footer).
- Easy-to-use tools that encourage self sufficiency is a trait of the Explorer Archetype – multiple ways to navigate and search for information, icon "tool bars" that create quick links to most used information, communication tools, such as social media networks, accessible through the website, and do-it-yourself tools available online (such as online payments).
- The Explorer Archetype drafts off themes of journeys, adventure, escape, and self-exploration – choice of images that feature or evokes movement, as well as action-oriented language.

From research conducted as part of this project, end-users of the website from our target audience segments told us these features are important in the website redesign's look and feel:

- Consistent and obvious navigation options – each design features multiple navigation bars that will remain consistent in placement throughout the site, for ease of use.
- Content should be planned and organized into obvious and logical sections – each of the designs features the role-based portals for a "customized", relevant experience for each type of website user.
- Cleaner look with more easily "scan-able" content – each design features use of negative space to spread out the content giving it a less cluttered look, descriptive subheads over content sections that are easily scanned by the user, use of abstracts or summaries that click through to full information.
- Use of photos, design elements, and colors that demonstrate the character of Austin and the region – each design features images from either the Austin area or of Austinites. The variety of concepts allows us to explore some of the different personalities that Austin is known for: Outdoorsy, natural, green/environmental, technology forward, friendly, unique/individual, etc.

Concept 1, nicknamed "Organic" – this design concept features multiple colors, textures, "hand written" or crafted type, and rustic-looking tool bar icons. The overall look is natural with an outdoorsy feel. The use of color and textures help to organize and compartmentalize the content that is featured. The logo for AustinTexas.gov on this design is lower case, contributing to the friendly and more casual feel of this design. The icon bar anchored at the based of the main graphic includes most used features of the website for quick access to tools and information such as social media, news, payments, etc. A roll over provides description of the icon and there is consistent use these tool bar icons throughout the site. The main body of the home page is divided into sections to provide a "console" into the content that is in the site. This console is divided into three sections, with headings that encourage the user to: "Explore" what is happening in the City, "Find" City services, resources and information available and convenient to you, and "Connect" to your City government or each other in the community.

Concept 2, nicknamed "Sleek" – this design concept features a monochromatic color scheme with a clean white background. The overall look is clean, minimal, sharp, and organized appealing to and representing high tech as something Austin is known for. The use of gray rules and "capsules" help to compartmentalize content on the home page and gives the feeling of an online planner or organizer. The logo option on this design concept is upper case with font weight used to differentiate the words; this version has a bit more formal feel to it than the lower-case version. This concept features a roll over in the main graphic area that provides the user with an overview of what is in the top tier navigation of each role-based portal. The main body of the home page is divided similarly as the above concept, but labeled differently with detail in the heading itself.

Concept 3, nicknamed "Modern" – this design concept features a bright and modern color scheme anchored with the color green. The color green and the use of the leaf shape that create the "dot" in the website name is carried throughout the site, representing both the emphasis of the environmental issues to the citizens of Austin and the outdoors. In this design the icon tool bar described in Organic appears here as well creating the main graphic on the home page. In this design, each image represents a common use on the site as well as common activities used on the site. The main body of the home page is divided into three main sections with action-oriented headers: "Read about it", "Do it", and "Find it". The black tabs are "grounding" for their sections giving the home page an organized, uncluttered feel.

Concept 4, nicknamed "Media" – this design concept has a very clear focus on media, specifically video, with the main "Branding" graphic being replaced with an embedded video player. The player allows users to actually see what is happening and what is current via video clips and news clips provided by the City. The rest of the content organization appears below that, but this time not necessarily divided into compartments. In this home page organization each content feature or topic is stand alone and intended to be organized by priority vs. by action or area of interest.

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"Organic"

"Sleek"

"Sleek rollover"

AUSTIN CITY CONNECTION | AIRPORT | LIBRARY | AUSTIN ENERGY | CONVENTION CENTER | VISITORS BUREAU | OPEN AUSTIN

AUSTINTEXAS★GOV

SEARCH

MAKE A PAYMENT | CALENDAR | MEDIA CENTER | CONTACT US | 311 | EXPLORE

I AM INTERESTED IN: | RESIDENTIAL | BUSINESS | DEVELOPMENT | GOVERNMENT | SUSTAINABILITY

HOUSEHOLD | LOCAL SERVICES | NEIGHBORHOOD | HEALTH & SAFETY | ENTERTAINMENT | ENVIRONMENT | TRANSPORTATION | GOVERNMENT

Copy inside tells the visitor about what they can expect to find in this area of navigation. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elinisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat mollit anim id est labor.

Keep Moving, Austin.

THE VIEW OF AUSTIN FROM HERE

YOUR NEWS: NOW

City Council highlights for June 24
Improvements for traffic signal network and Summer Food Program.

Austin cited by Monster.com as best city for job growth
City's economy, environment and education are key factors.

City launches Online Contract Catalog
View online vendors, authorized contracts and dollars spent.

Manager's Update from Marc Ott
FY11 budget and recent economic news.

City launches Online Contract Catalog
View online vendors, authorized contracts and dollars spent.

Read more
RSS feed for Featured News

THE MONTH AHEAD: AUGUST

- Austin Government
- City Council
- Boards & Commissions
- City Music
- Arts & Entertainment
- Parks & Recreation
- City Planning
- Boards & Commissions

View All

THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

YOUR SERVICES: ONLINE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet nonummy nibh consecteteur.

SELECT A SERVICE | I NEED TO

Just say NO to potholes! If you spot one, report it by lorem ipsum dolor sit ametiat. Consecteteur nonummy nibh.

SHAPE THE FUTURE: GET INVOLVED

City Programs
- Program One Lorem Ipsum
- Program Two Dolor
- Program Three Dolor Sit
- Program Four Dolor

View All

Volunteer Opportunities
- Volunteer Opp One
- Volunteer Opp Two Dolor Sit
- Volunteer Opp Three
- Volunteer Opp Four Dolor

View All

CALL 311 Get info on Austin 24/7 by calling this simple number.
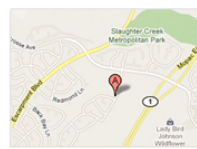
Visit our **DIY Toolbox** for all the contracts and forms you need.

Additional Promo Area: Dolor sit amet it by lorem ipsum dolor sit ametiat. Consecteteur nonummy nibh.

CLOSE UP & PERSONAL

IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet nonummy nibh liason conse cteteur elite orem ik. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet nonum my nibh liason conse cteteur elite orem ikillya.

Click here

GET OUT THERE AND EXPLORE SOMETHING!
Click here and we'll send you on an adventure to another city-related site.

We need your thoughts in order to give you a website that has all the tools you need to work, play, or live in Austin.
Take a quick survey

JOB HUNTING?
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet nonummy nibh liason conse cteteur elite orem ik. Lorem ipsum dol.
Click here

ADDITIONAL LINKS
Pay Online
Calendar
Media Center
FAQ
Contact Us
Site Map
Links
Help
Legal Notices
Privacy Statement
311

GET THERE FROM HERE
Residential Services
Local Services
Neighborhood
Health & Safety
Entertainment
Environment
Transportation
Government

POPULAR SERVICES
Best Service Ever
Second Best Service Ever
Another Service
Another Service
Another Service
Another Service
The Last Service

CONNECT WITH US
Mobile Apps
Multimedia
Twitter
Facebook
YouTube
RSS Feeds

LATEST TWEET
"Austin is the best place in the world and this awesome website is proof of that! Have a fantastic day!"
www.myownfanclub.com

- 23 minutes ago via web

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"Modern"

"Media"

These initial concepts were reviewed by the internal team at COA and narrowed down to two design concepts, with three layouts. The following are the three design layouts that will proceed to creative testing and public opinion gathering.

Design #1 – this design moved forward with a few changes to the "organic" concept, mainly lightening up the overall look with lighter backgrounds and a re-work of the top-level navigation area. It was discussed that the key image area could potentially be a slide show of key points of interest in Austin, or the photo change out on a regular basis.

Design #2 – this design moved forward with a few changes to the "sleek" concept, mainly in the header area. It was decided that the lower-case version of the logo was "friendlier" and preferred by the internal team, so the logo was revised to incorporate this feedback within this design concept. It was discussed that the key image area could be a series of images around Austin that the user could click through.

Design #3 – this design is a new layout incorporating the "sleek" design concept with the content organization demonstrated on "organic".

Design #1

Design #2

Design #3

Appendix

Target Segments:

Jason

Age: 25
Gender: Male
Marital Status: Single
Household: No kids
Urbanity: Urban
Ethnicity: White
Home Ownership: Renter
Internet Usage: Expert
Mobile web usage: High
Social Media Usage: High
HH Income: $50,000/yr
Education: College graduate
Job: Rackspace Customer Support

Segment: Urban Tech Savvy
This is the largest Residential segment. Members of this group are mostly urbanites with no kids who are characterized by being very net savvy and having a high usage rate for social media. This group includes a large number of recent college graduates. The content most visited on the website by this group is library and education information. Ethnicities in this group include mostly White, Hispanic, and African American.

Psychographics: Jason is into athletic, outdoor activities, the latest technology and nightlife -- especially live entertainment. Overall, his lifestyle is heavy on leisure and recreation.

He lives in a young, hip, metro neighborhood and consumes all types of media like a locust. Seeking recreation mostly outside of the home, he goes out to movies, museums, concerts, and parks regularly.
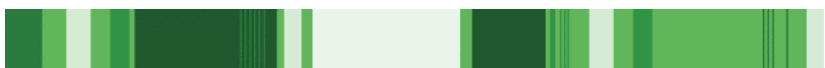
Leah

Age: 39
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Married
Household: Two kids
Urbanity: Suburban
Ethnicity: Hispanic
Home Ownership: Owns
Internet Usage: Expert
Mobile web usage: High
Social Media Usage: High
HH Income: $175,000/yr
Education: College graduate
Job: Home-based marketing director for Consona Software

Segment: Suburban Families
One of the largest groups, members of this group are settled homeowners who are overwhelmingly age 25-44 and married with kids. Financially strong, they are active in their lives and careers. These are internet experts who use social networking applications regularly. Ethnicities in this group include mostly White, Asian, and Hispanic.

Most seek out library, education, and Airport information on COA. Of all users, they visit for the greatest number of topics and with the greatest variety. Of residents, they visit the most frequently.

Psychographics: Amanda cares for herself, her kids, her husband, and her parents. She consumes healthy foods and jogs around Town Lake. The combination of income, education and children translates into large investments into educational and Disney products.

Rosie

Age: 65 years old
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Single
Household: No kids at home
Urbanity: Close-in
Ethnicity: White
Homeownership: Owns
Internet Usage: Intermediate
Mobile web usage: Low
Social Media Usage: Some
HH Income: $27,000/yr
Education: High School
Job: Seton Help Desk
Note: Vision challenged

Segment: Older Urban
This group is the residential segment that is retired or dreams of retiring, and is the segment struggling the most financially. Heavily female, they are older, with no children at home.

They do know how to use the Internet and do so to find out about city resources. Nearly one-third go to the website about job opportunities and benefits. All are internet intermediates and 16% have an impairment (primarily vision). Ethnicities in this group include mostly White, African American, and Hispanic.

Psychographics: Rosie has a low key, home-centered lifestyle. She is big on inexpensive pleasures such as gardening, sewing, and woodworking. She spends much of her day enjoying news and talk shows. Her social life revolves around activities at church.
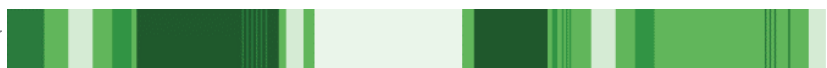
Lynn

Age: 45
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Married
Household: No kids at home
Urbanity: Suburban
Ethnicity: African-American
Homeownership: Owns
Internet Usage: Advanced
Mobile web usage: High
Social Media Usage: Some
HH Income: $60,000/yr
Education: College graduate
Job: Counselor

Segment: Socially Conscious/ Civically Minded

As a resident segment, this group is identified by behavior rather than demographics. This group is mostly female (67%), age 35-64, and own homes that are close in or in suburban neighborhoods. Seventy-four percent do not have children at home.

They are significantly more likely to be self-employed than the other residential segments, but significantly less likely to view themselves as unemployed or homemakers. Most (54%) categorize themselves as professionals.

Psychographics: Lynn is a "heavy follower" of City government – Council meetings, programs, and news. She is also abreast of news in her own neighborhood. Specific hot button topics for Lynn are the environment, animal rights, and things affecting her neighborhood. As a person, Lynn is educated, outspoken, passionate and has the time, flexibility, and energy to stay involved.

Elena

Age: 34
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Married
Household: Three kids
Urbanity: Close-in Suburban
Ethnicity: Hispanic
Homeownership: Rents
Internet usage: n/a
Mobile web usage: n/a
Social Media Usage: n/a
HH Income: $42,000/yr
Education: High School Graduate
Job: Pre-prepared Foods Department at HEB

Segment: Hisp. Bilingual Mothers
This group is made up of first and second generation immigrants with two or more school age children in the household. Many households are bilingual but mostly prefer to speak Spanish in the home.

Unlike Hispanics in the Suburban Family segment, this group has a much lower income range; $36,000 – $47,000. Many are high school graduates, and work in service, sales, administration or construction-related jobs.

Psychographics: Elena listens to contemporary music, watches a lot of TV, reads Spanish magazines and strives to be successful at whatever she does. Her lifestyle is befitting a large family with an active social life. She spends a lot of her time taking her children to sporting activities and events. She lives in a modest home and buys her groceries in bulk. When she needs something for the home she shops at discount stores.
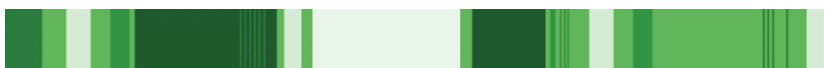
Angela

Age: 40
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Married
Household: No kids in home
Urbanity: Suburban
Ethnicity: White
Homeownership: Owns
Internet Usage: Advanced
Mobile web usage: High
Social Media Usage: High
HH Income: $110,000/yr
Education: College Graduate
Job: Project Manager
for Burt-Watts Construction

**Segment: Development –
Real Estate and Construction**
These high volume users are primarily in construction related businesses (30%) and real estate (20%). They visit for information on licenses, codes, and permits (74%) or to find information on City Council government, boards & and commissions. They are the most frequent visitors to the website with 63% visiting the site a few times a week and 37% visiting daily.

Psychographics: Angela is mission-oriented and organized, yet independent in spirit – she has a mobile daily work life . Many of her friends do similar work.

As a frequent visitor, her behavior is strongly reinforced by previous experience which has resulted in a type of "training." As a workplace user, she prefers to know where she is going rather than explore. She has a specific purpose and often her task is tedious, time-bound, or repetitive.

Robert

Age: 50
Gender: Male
Marital Status: Married
Household: No kids at home
Urbanity: Suburban
Ethnicity: White
Homeownership: Owns
Internet Usage: Advanced
Mobile web usage: Very High
Social Media Usage: High
HH Income: $100,000/yr
Education: College grad
Job: CPA

Segment: Self-Employed, Professionals, and Small Business Owners

In addition to self-employed, this group also includes small business owners. They make up half of the business users, but are much less active than the other business segment. Eighty-one percent describe the type of work they do as professional/ executive.

While not making frequent visits, they do look for resources, information, and news that affect their business. They use social media tools for networking.

Psychographic: Robert is a well-educated, self-sufficient provider-type. He is a leader in the circles he is a part of – be it church, neighborhood or trade association, non-profit organization or sports team. He often attracts business from these. As an upscale empty-nester, he focuses on business when needed and enjoys successes fully when warranted.