



Strategic Trends in Government Websites

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April 3, 2018

Agenda

1. Introductions and terminology
2. Data-driven website design
3. Viewing your website as a brand
4. Content (strategy) matters
5. Bringing it all together

Introductions & Terminology

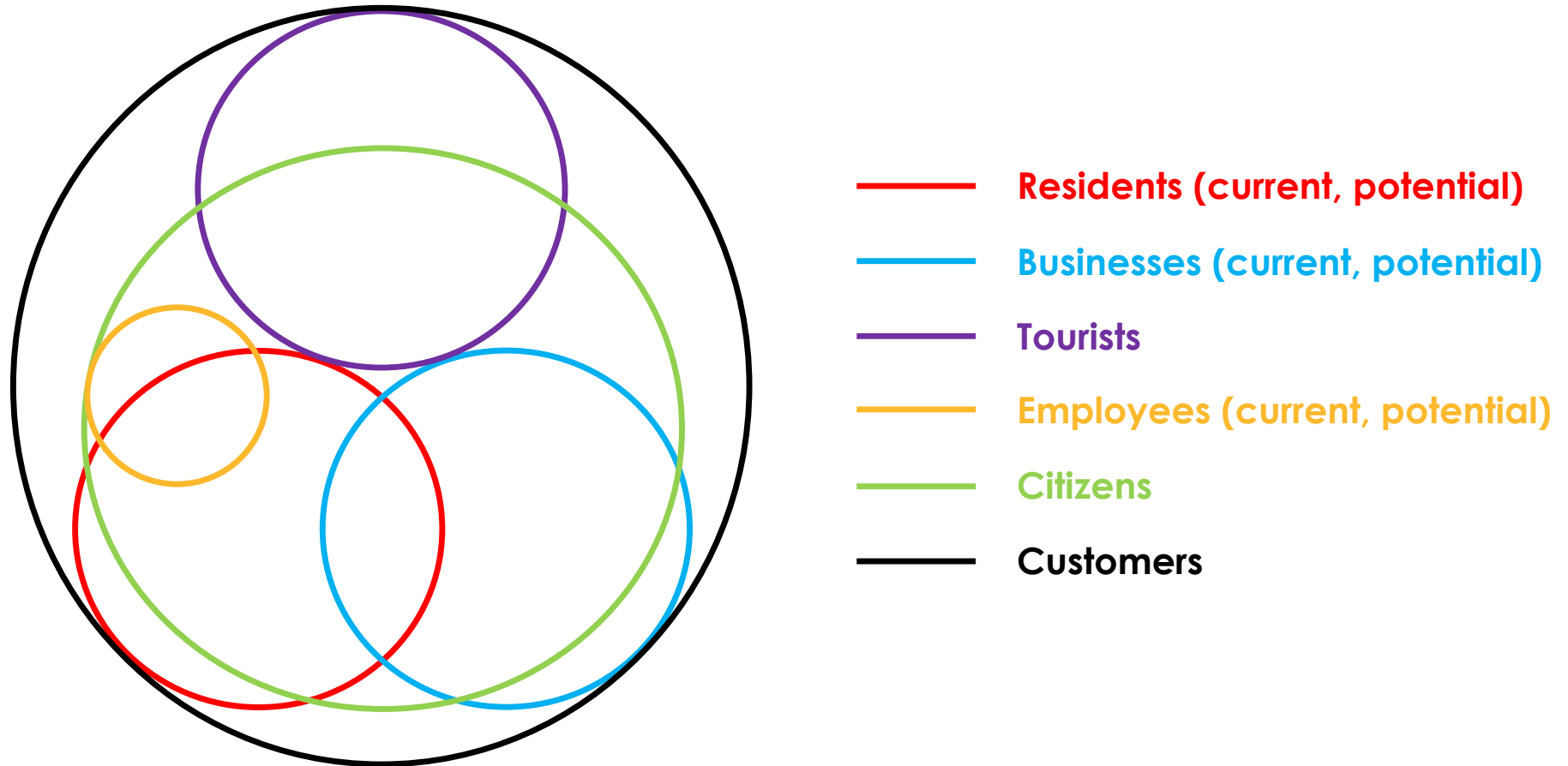


About Vision

- For 20 years, Vision has been a recognized leader in local government website development and content management system software
- Developer of more than 800 state and local websites for agencies across North America
- Unique services include content strategy and web accessibility consultations
- Recently became part of the Granicus family
- Martin runs services and partnerships at Vision
 - 25 years in technology, including 15 years in government technology and consulting

Terminology: “Customers”

Your website serves many different types of visitors, each with a different purpose:



Terminology: “Tasks”

Find information

Get answers

Complete actions

Share and socialize information

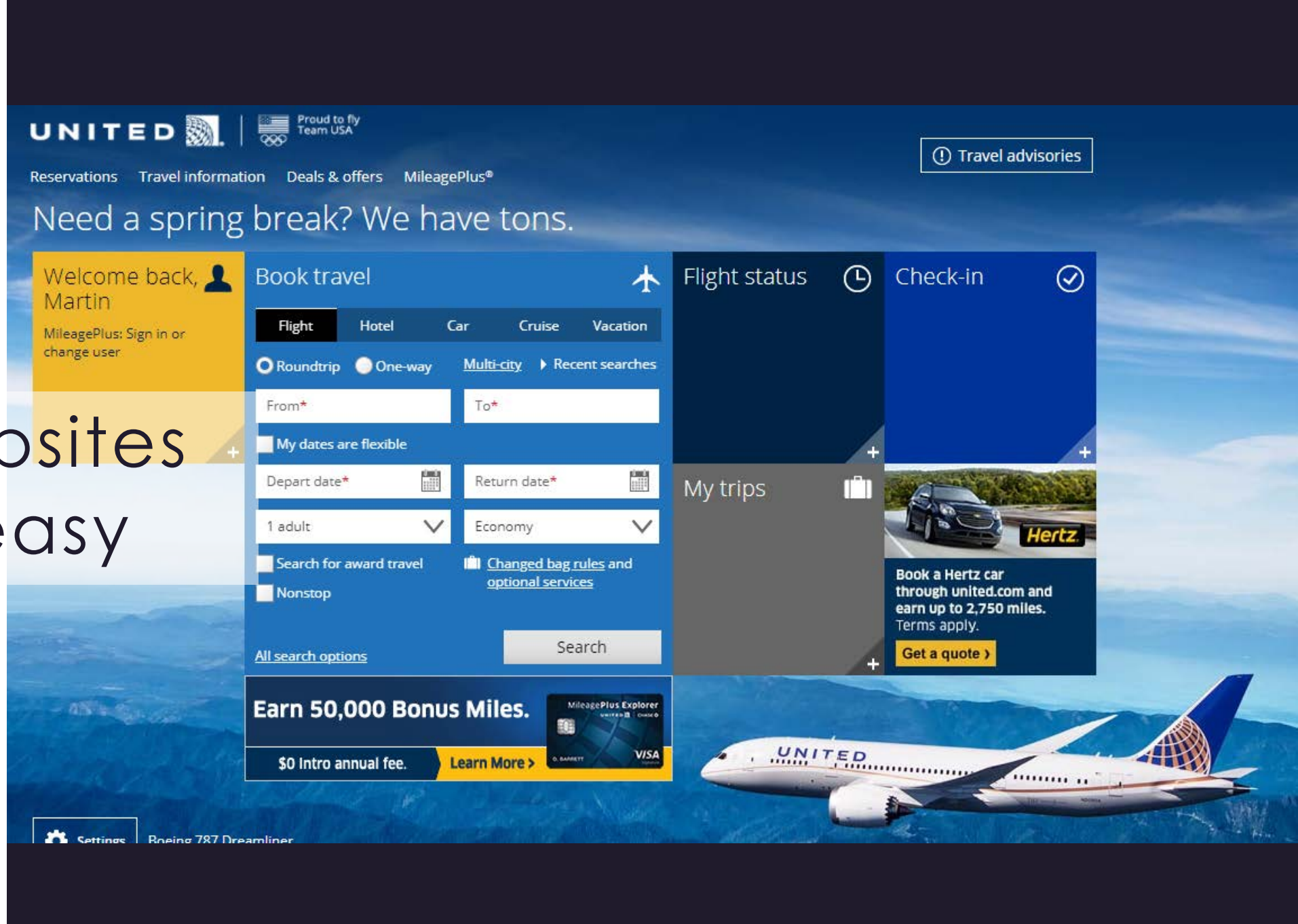


“tasks”

Data-Driven Website Design



Airline websites
have it easy



Airline websites
have it easy

The image shows the Delta Airlines website interface. At the top, the Delta logo and SkyTeam logo are visible, along with navigation links for SHOP, TRAVELING WITH US, and GET TO KNOW SKYMILES. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, there are four main sections: MY TRIPS (MANAGE AN EXISTING TRIP), BOOK A TRIP (FLIGHT, HOTEL, CAR & VACATION PACKAGES), FLIGHT STATUS (ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES), and CHECK IN (BOARDING PASS & BAGGAGE). The BOOK A TRIP section is highlighted in red. Below this section, there are four tabs: FLIGHT, HOTEL, CAR, and VACATION PACKAGES. The FLIGHT tab is selected. The flight booking form includes fields for FROM (LAX), TO (City or Airport), DEPART DATE (mm/dd/yyyy), and RETURN DATE (mm/dd/yyyy). There are also buttons for ROUND TRIP, ONE WAY, and MULTI-CITY. Below the date fields, there are buttons for EXACT DATES and FLEXIBLE DAYS. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for SHOW PRICE IN (MONEY, MILES) and PASSENGERS (1). A large blue button labeled FIND FLIGHTS is at the bottom of the form. Below the button, there are links for Advanced Search and Use Certificates or eCredits. On the right side of the page, there is a promotional banner for South America & More, with the text 'GO WITH DEALS: SOUTH AMERICA & MORE. BOOK BY MARCH 20 & SAVE TO SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.' and a link to Terms and Bag Fees Apply.

DELTA SKYTEAM

SHOP ▾ TRAVELING WITH US ▾ GET TO KNOW SKYMILES ▾ Search 🔍

SIGN UP LOG IN

MY TRIPS
MANAGE AN EXISTING TRIP

BOOK A TRIP
FLIGHT, HOTEL, CAR & VACATION PACKAGES

FLIGHT STATUS
ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

CHECK IN
BOARDING PASS & BAGGAGE

FLIGHT HOTEL CAR VACATION PACKAGES SAVE

All fields are required

ROUND TRIP ONE WAY MULTI-CITY

FROM LAX TO City or Airport

DEPART DATE mm/dd/yyyy RETURN DATE mm/dd/yyyy

TRAVEL DATE EXACT DATES FLEXIBLE DAYS

SHOW PRICE IN MONEY MILES PASSENGERS 1

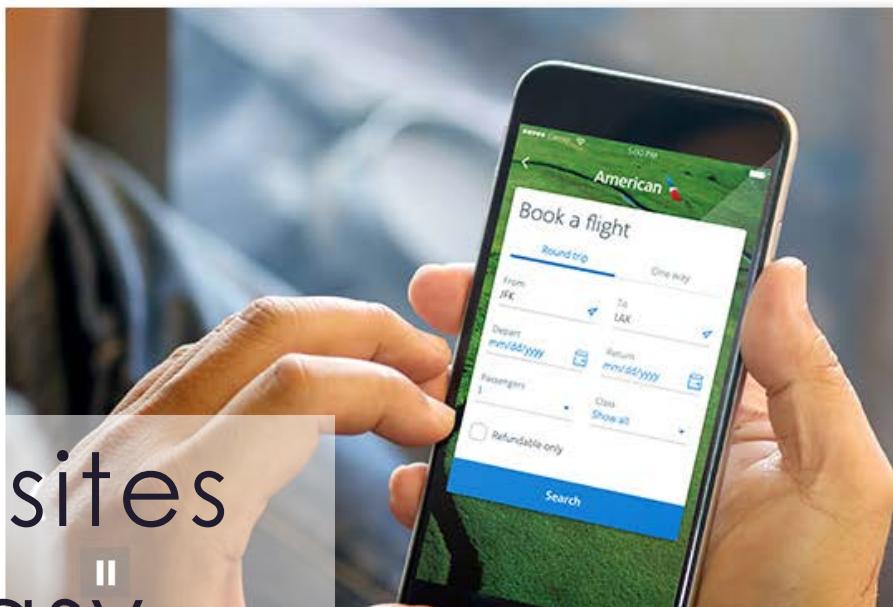
FIND FLIGHTS

Advanced Search Use Certificates or eCredits

**GO WITH DEALS:
SOUTH AMERICA & MORE.**
BOOK BY MARCH 20 & SAVE TO SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN. ➔

Terms and Bag Fees Apply.

Airline websites
have it easy



All you need.
In one place.

Download the American app »

Log in Join AAdvantage »

AAdvantage # or username

Last name

Password

☐ Remember me **Log in**

Book flights My trips / Check-in Flight status

Round trip One way Round trip + hotel ☐ Redeem Miles

(• Required)

From • LAX To • City or airport

Number of passengers 1

Depart • 03/20/2018 Return • 03/27/2018 **Search**

Airline websites
have it easy

First day of spring sale.

Spring is in the air. Shouldn't you be, too?

Book now

Travel Alert: [Winter Storm Toby](#) | [San Juan Information](#)

Book

Flight

Hotel

Car

Vacations

CHECK IN

FLIGHT STATUS

CHANGE/CANCEL

☒ Round trip ☐ One-way

Baggage and optional fees

☒ Dollars ☐ Points

DEPART

ARRIVE

DEPART DATE

RETURN DATE

ADULTS

SENIORS

03/21

Wed, Mar 21 2018

03/24

Sat, Mar 24 2018

1

0

Where we fly Flexible dates

PROMO CODE (optional)

Advanced search

Search

Why do they all have this in common?

BOOK A TRIP
FLIGHT, HOTEL, CAR & VACATION PACKAGES

FLIGHT HOTEL CAR VACATION PACKAGES SAVE

All fields are required

ROUND TRIP ONE WAY MULTI-CITY

FROM LAX TO City or Airport

DEPART DATE mm/dd/yyyy RETURN DATE mm/dd/yyyy

TRAVEL DATE
EXACT DATES FLEXIBLE DAYS

SHOW PRICE IN MONEY MILES PASSENGERS 1

FIND FLIGHTS

[Advanced Search](#) [Use Certificates or eCredits](#)

Book travel

Flight Hotel Car Cruise Vacation

☐ Roundtrip ☐ One-way [Multi-city](#) [Recent searches](#)

From* To*

☐ My dates are flexible

Depart date* Return date*

1 adult Economy

☐ Search for award travel [Changed bag rules and optional services](#)

☐ Nonstop

[All search options](#) **Search**

Book flights My trips / Check-in Flight status

Round trip One way Round trip + hotel ☐ Redeem Miles

(* Required)

From City or airport To City or airport Number of passengers 1

Depart 03/20/2018 Return 03/27/2018 **Search**

[Baggage & optional service fees »](#) [Advanced search »](#)

Book Flight Hotel Car Vacations CHECK IN FLIGHT STATUS CHANGE/CANCEL

☒ Round trip ☐ One-way [Baggage and optional fees](#) ☒ Dollars ☐ Points

DEPART ARRIVE DEPART DATE RETURN DATE ADULTS SENIORS

03/21 03/24 1 0

Wed, Mar 21 2018 Sat, Mar 24 2018

[Where we fly](#) [Flexible dates](#) PROMO CODE (optional) **Search**

[Advanced search](#)

Other popular sites that are singularly focused


The screenshot shows the ESPN website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the ESPN logo and links for NFL, NBA, MLB, NCAAM, Soccer, and NCAAW. To the right of the navigation bar are links for Watch, Listen, Fantasy, and a search icon. Above the navigation bar, there's a section for 'TOP EVENTS' with a dropdown menu and a list of sports scores for various leagues including NCAA, NBA, and MLB.

Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into three sections:


- Quick Links:** A list of links including 'Fantasy Baseball: Sign Up', 'Check your bracket', 'NFL Free Agency', and 'MLB Season Preview'.
- Suggested Favorites:** A list of favorite teams including 'Jazz NBA', 'Utah NCAAF', and 'BYU NCAAF'.
- Top Headlines:** A list of headlines including 'Fultz gets standing O, scores 10 in Philly return', 'Odds-breakers: Knights to playoffs in first year', 'Ex-Nassar boss Strampel arrested in Michigan', 'Schneider: Seahawks 'resetting,' not rebuilding', 'Yanks have 7th-highest payroll; Red Sox on top', 'KU fan Bowyer: Wife said no to Final Four trip', and 'NBA draft: What's next for Bagley, Carter?'.

The central feature is a large image of various MLB mascots sitting together on a field. Below the image, the article title reads 'Win the World Series? Ha! Realistic goals for all 30 MLB teams' by Sam Miller. The article text begins with 'Winning isn't everything' and continues with 'and that applies to nearly every MLB team this year. We define a'.

Other popular sites that are singularly focused

 U.S. | World | Politics | Money | Opinion | Health | Entertainment | Tech | Style | Travel | Sports | Video | VR Live TV U.S. Edition + Search Menu


Flu season still hasn't peaked



37 children have died so far, the CDC says, and every state except Hawaii is under siege

- How the flu turns deadly
- Flu diagnosis ends up being flesh-eating disease
- Seasonal flu: What you need to know
- Deadly flu season hits California particularly hard
- Photos: Flu under the microscope
- So you have the flu. Now what?

Today in politics




Clinton kept adviser accused of harassment on her 2008 campaign, NY Times reports

EXCLUSIVE State Department employees hire attorneys, charging 'political retribution'

- Analysis: What Trump's attempt to fire Mueller shows us
- Grassley: Trump should let Mueller work
- Hannity flip-flops on Trump report critique
- Schumer wanted Stephen Miller kept out of WH immigration meeting
- Jeers heard as Trump calls media 'fake'
- Haley slams 'disgusting' Trump affair rumors

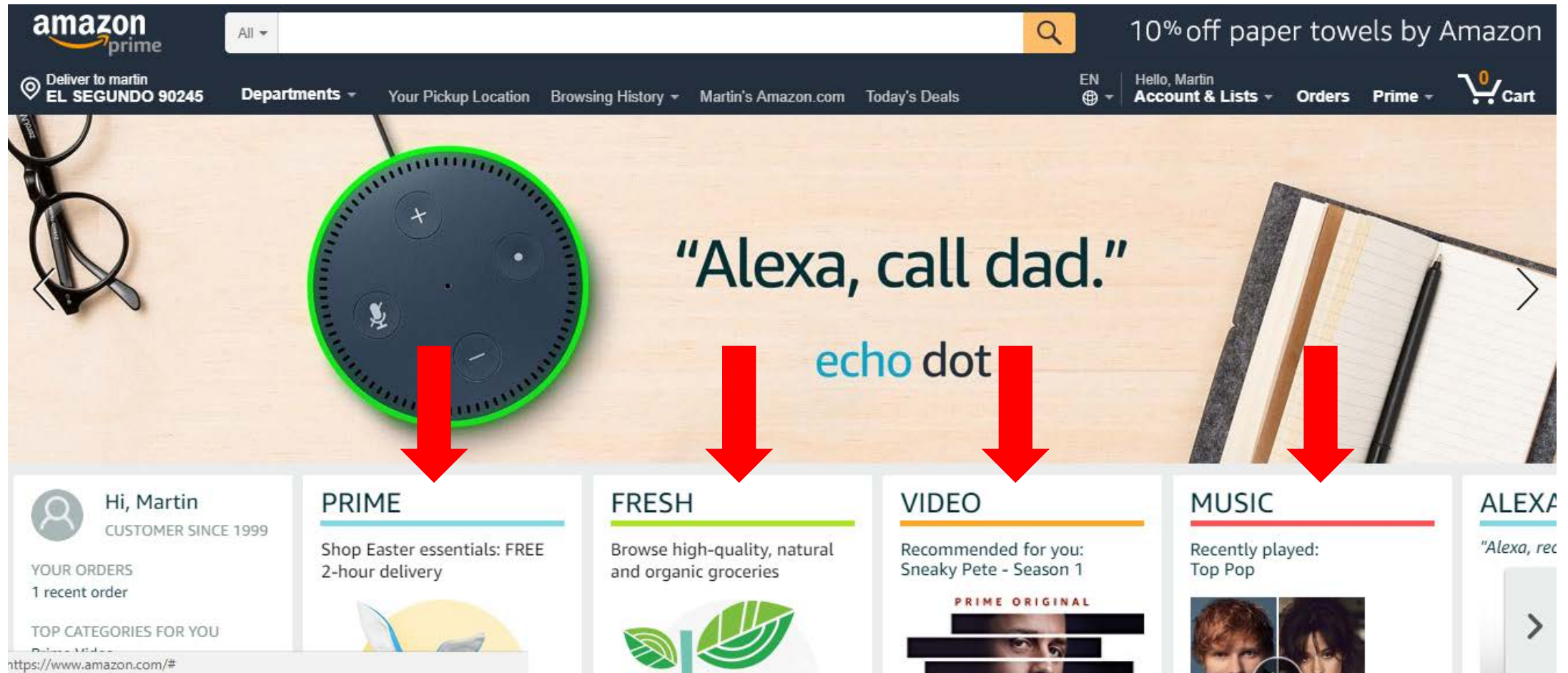
Top stories



They seemed strange, but no one suspected child torture

- Fallout from Nassar's abuse is just beginning
- Departing MSU president to get lifetime perks
- Opinion: Even a giant tax cut can't buy Trump the love of the billionaires
- Athletic director retires in wake of scandal
- ESPN's Jemele Hill is leaving SportsCenter
- The US economy grew 2.3% in 2017
- US announces fresh Russia sanctions
- Stormy Daniels' friend talks Trump
- Opinion: Trump's troubled Mideast peace bid
- Anderson Cooper debunks FBI 'secret society' conspiracy theory

...and Amazon *used to be*



So, how do you know what to put on your website?

“Your opinion, while interesting, is irrelevant.” – Pragmatic Marketing

There's no way to know without doing the research

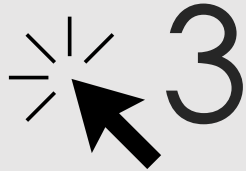
- Web analytics
- Surveys – internal and external
- Heat mapping
- User testing, including eye tracking

But the one thing
we DO know about
your website is...



...few of your
customers want
to go there or
hang out there

Commonly believed MYTHS about web design



All webpages must be accessible in three clicks

If you don't make the user think about the clicks, they won't mind a few extra clicks
("Constant scent of information")



People don't scroll down webpages

And the GREATEST MYTH of all

Our customers come to our website primarily to find our mission statement and to see photos of our leadership

Welcome to Jakob's Law

“Users spend most of their time on other sites. This means that users prefer your site to work the same way as all the other sites they already know.”

Jakob Nielsen
UX expert and co-founder of
Nielsen Norman Group



Sources: [Laws of UX](#); [NN/g](#)

You're better off following Jakob's Law

- The main navigation menu is **on the top** of every page
- “About Us” is a link on the bottom of the page, and that will lead to the organization's **mission statement** and **photos of leadership**
- You **don't** need to welcome people to your website
- Your agency's **logo is hyperlinked** to the site's homepage
- “Search” is in the **upper right**, unless it's a search-centric homepage
- Underlines are **hyperlinks** and hyperlinks are **underlined** (or a different color text, but watch for accessibility issues)
- All caps **IS SHOUTING** (and sometimes an accessibility issue)
- Things that look like buttons **are** buttons and should be hyperlinked
- Windows that pop up **on their own** are annoying and will be instantly closed
- **Keep it short** and put the important stuff at the top: process first, then purpose

Government website design trends

Top task

Search-centric

Service-centric

Video-centric

Before

“Let’s put everything on the home page!”



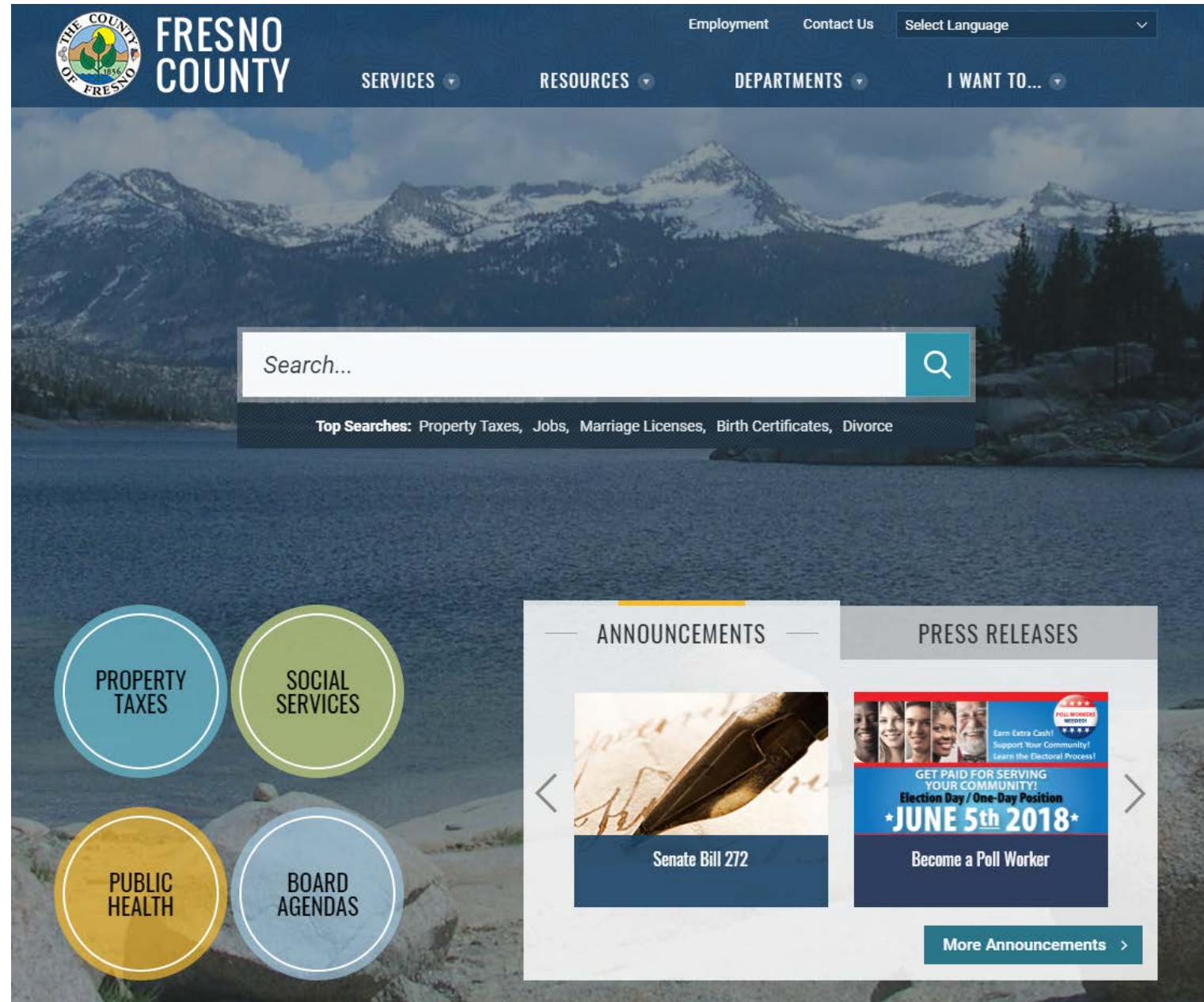
After: Top Task



Search-Centric

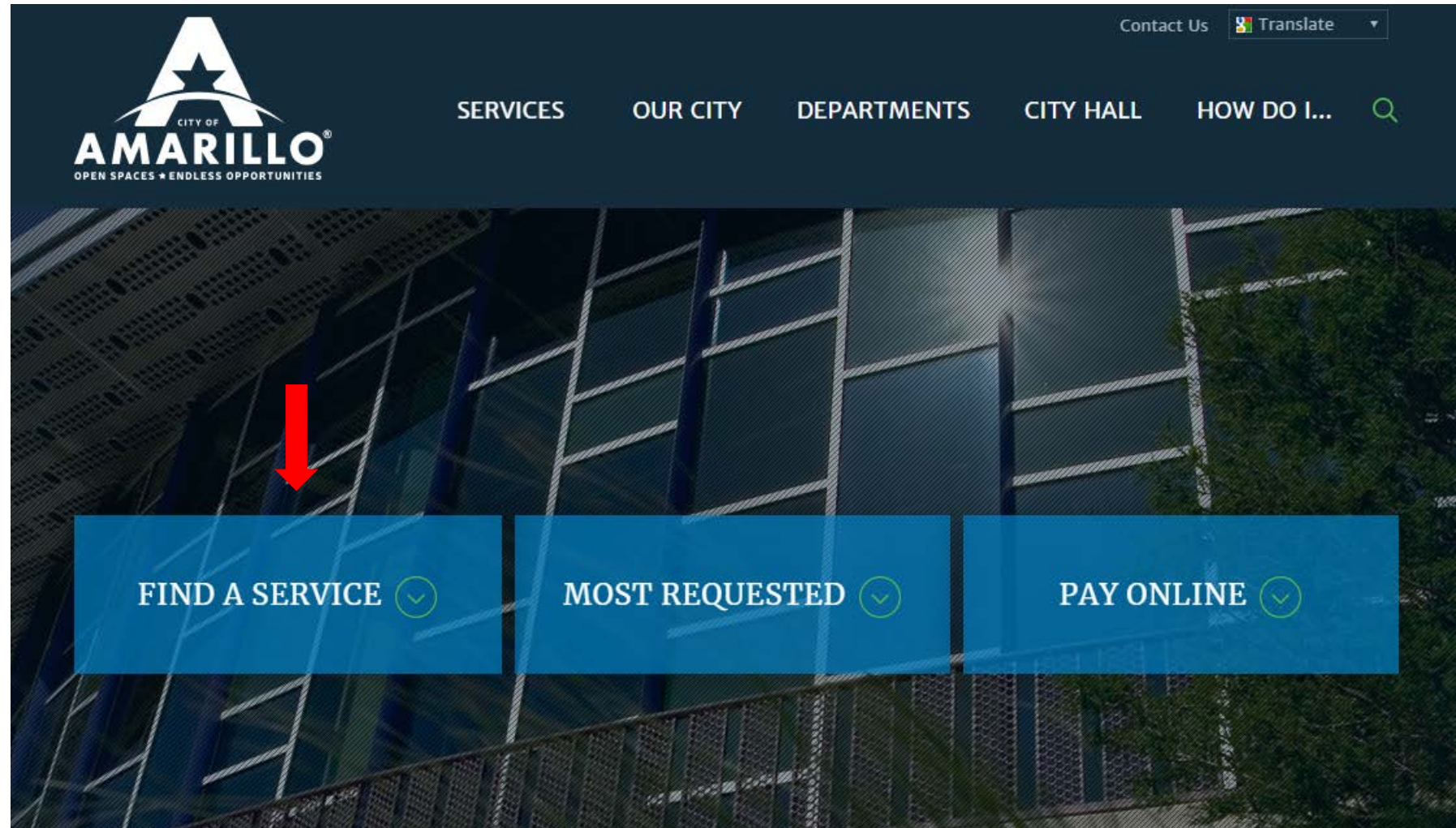
The Google problem:

- too much that doesn't fit as buttons
- too many tasks are close in priority

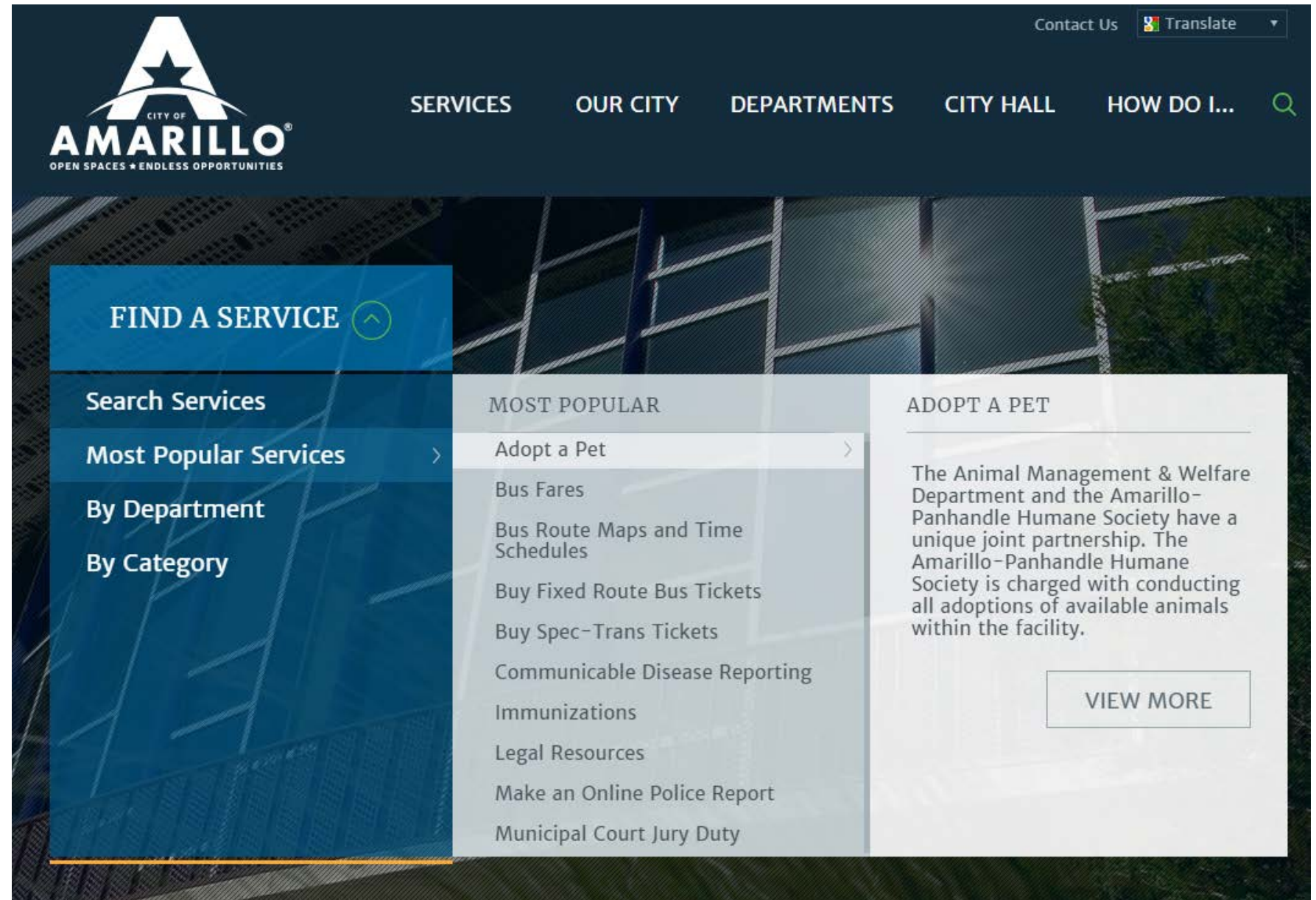


Service-Centric

Good for large agencies providing too many services to provide as buttons

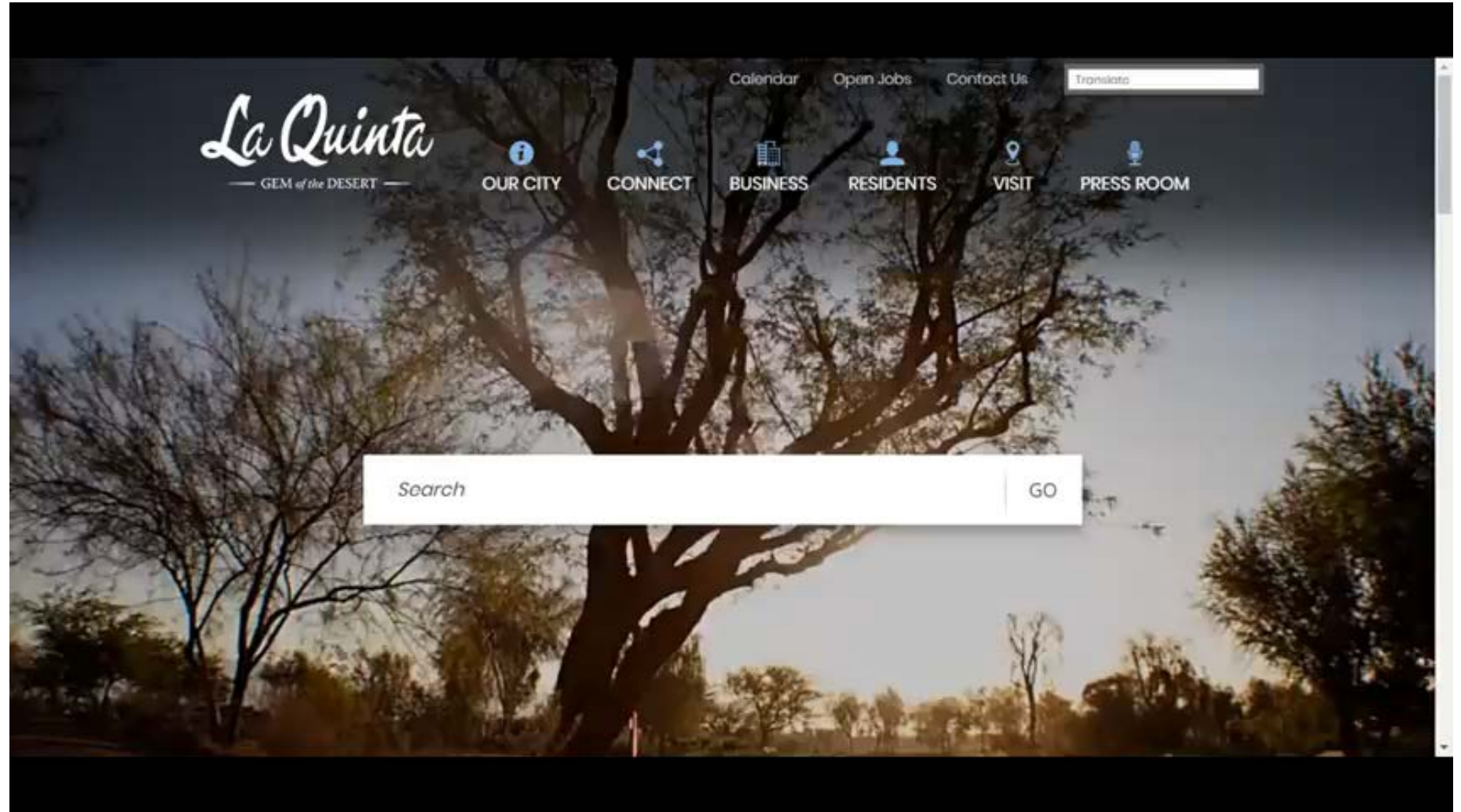


Service-Centric



Video-Centric

Allows agencies to give people a feel of what the community has to offer



Don't forget mobile design

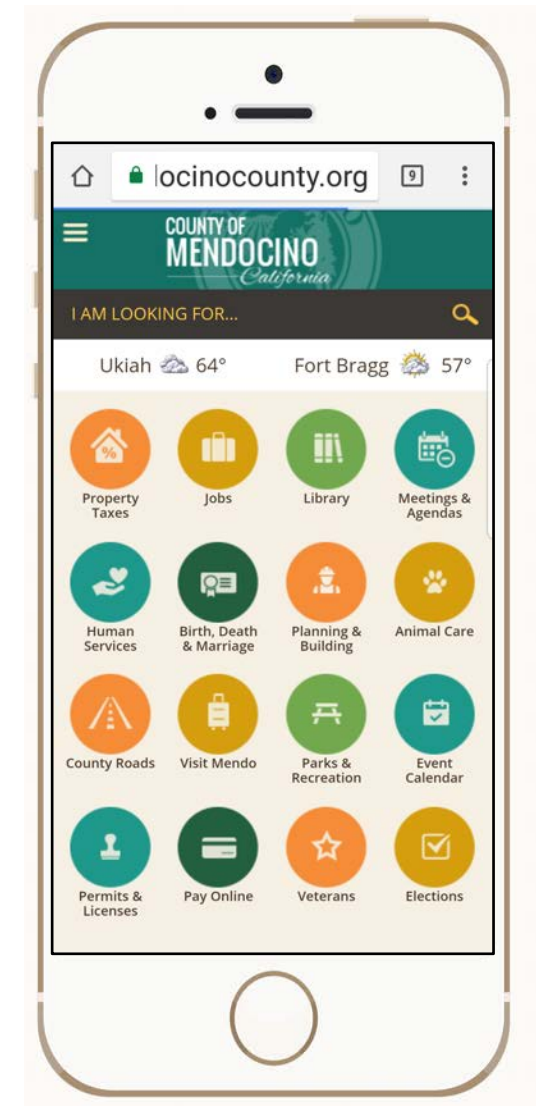
About 40% of your web visits will come from cell phone and tablet users

How does your site look on a phone?

Like a desktop?



Or responsive like mobile web?



Your Website as a Brand



What do you do when...

...you hear about a new vendor your agency is considering using?

...deciding between two hotels for your vacation?

...helping your high schooler decide between two far away colleges?



Image:
[Freepik](#)

You go to their website!

...and if the website is awful, does that influence your opinion?

Your customers are no different

For local governments, ***your website is your brand*** and ***first impressions count***

You are no longer the only thing on the Web

How did your customers know of your brand before the Internet?



Photos: [Fandom](#), [Wikipedia](#), [DeviantArt](#), [Carnegie Library](#)

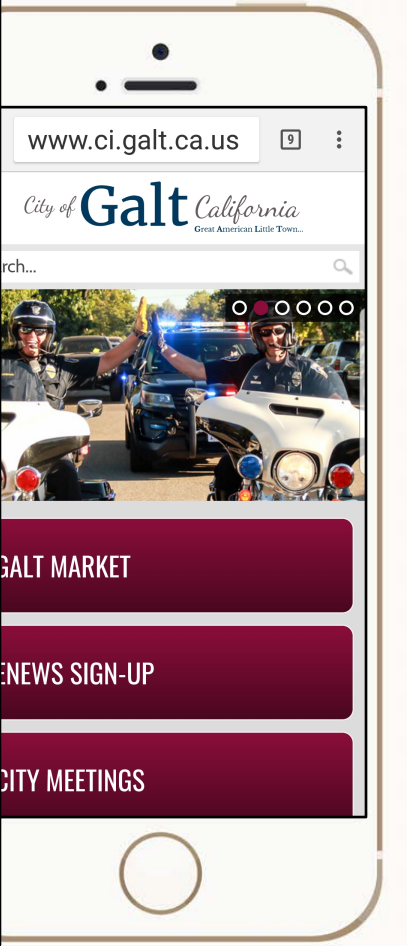
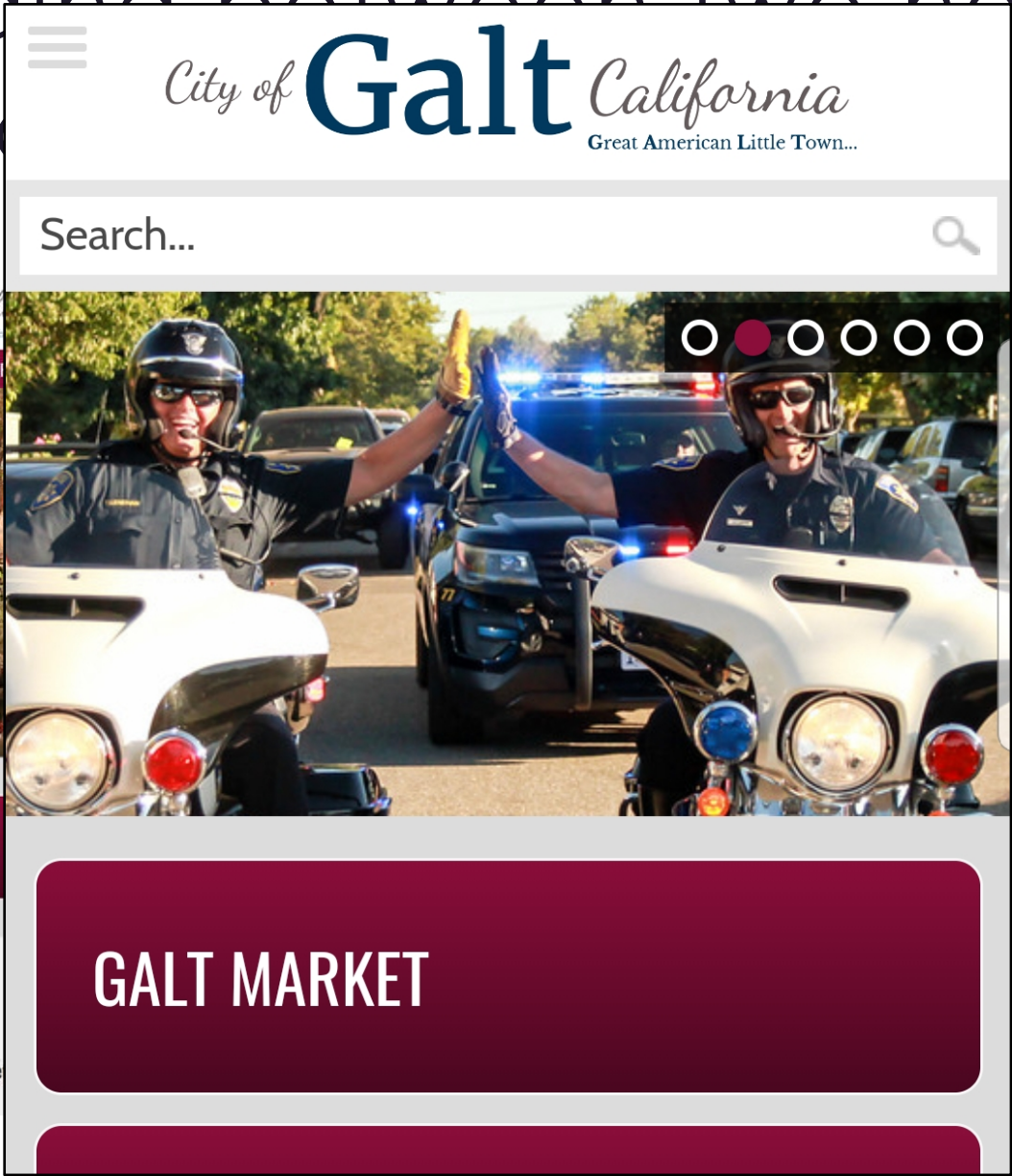
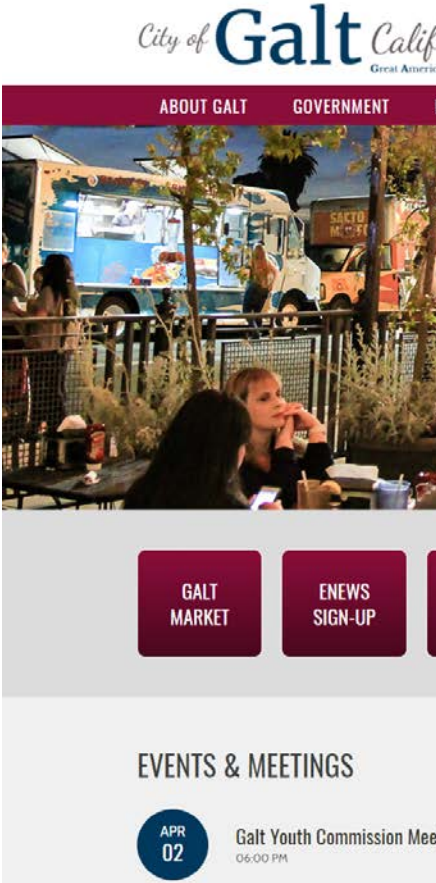
That was then...

Today your customers mostly interact with you on your website, so your website **IS** your brand

You're deciding between two nearby towns to locate your Quiznos franchise



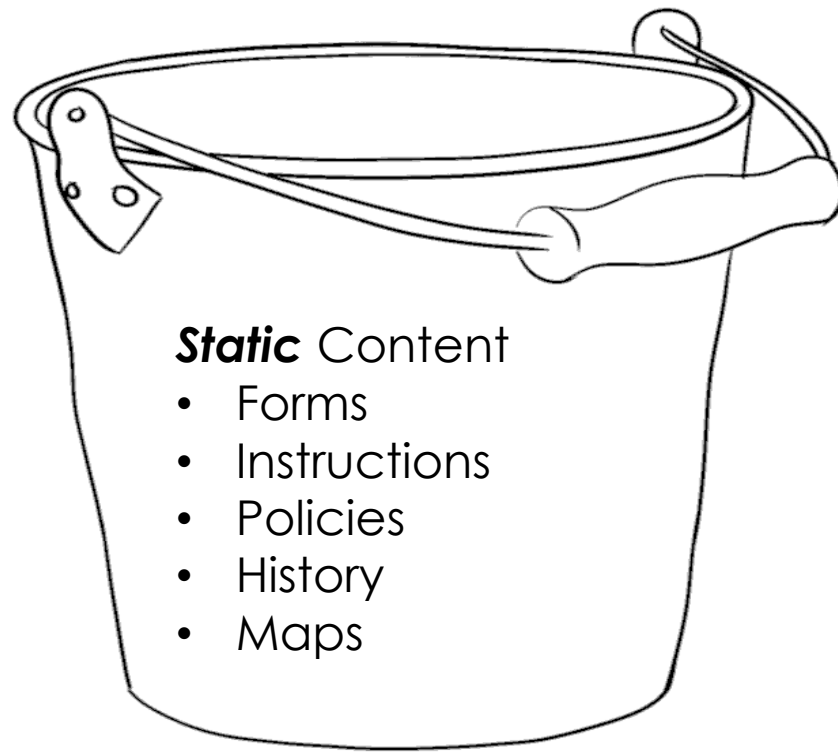
You're deciding between two nearby towns to locate your franchise



Content (Strategy) Matters



Content: the text, video and audio stuff on your website



Following content strategy best practices allows your customers to..

Find what they need



Understand what they find



Act in the time and effort that **they think** worthy



The *strategy* in “content strategy”

- View your website as a conversation
- Plan everything you put on your site
- Create information architecture that focuses on site users instead of your organizational structure
- Review and test frequently

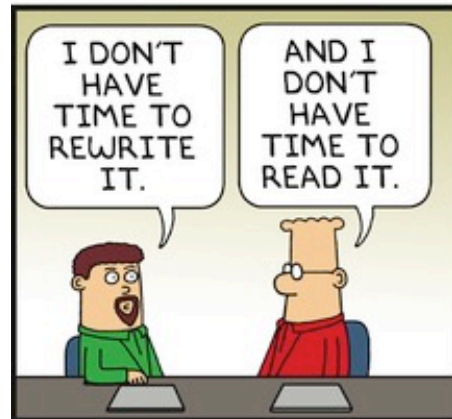
Website analytics should be supplemented with your community's Census data

Census estimates (2010 - 2016):

- Population under 5 years old in US: 7%
- Population 65 years old and older in US: 13%
- **Under** 65 years old and with a disability in US: 9%
- Foreign born in US: 13%
- People speaking other than English at home in US: 21%
- Living in a different house than a year ago in US: 15%
- Older than 25 years without a high school degree in US: 13%
- Population in poverty in US: 13%
- Average travel time to work in US: 26 minutes
 - Average travel time to work in Los Angeles County: 30 minutes

TLDR

DILBERT

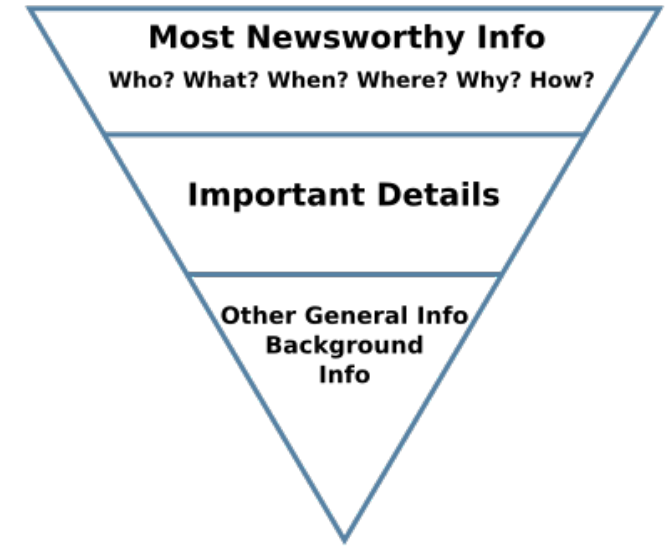


BY SCOTT ADAMS

Dilbert 4/2/17

Avoid TLDR with the inverted pyramid

1. Main point first with a short and clear statement
2. Supporting content
3. History and legalese at the bottom of the page, if required



Bringing it all together



You are not alone on the Internet

Your customers go to other sites more than yours

Make design decisions based on user research and website analytics

Your website is greatest manifestation of your brand

Design is important, but the quality of the content on your site will drive its success

The background of the slide is a faded, semi-transparent image of the Lincoln Memorial and the U.S. Capitol dome. The Lincoln Memorial is on the left, showing its iconic columns. The Capitol dome is on the right, partially obscured by a tall, thin monument. The entire scene is overlaid with a blue-to-green gradient.

Questions?



Thank you!

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