

Expert Review

Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.mackinawchamber.com>

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Executive Summary

An expert review was conducted of the Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce website, www.mackinawchamber.com, for the purpose of identifying existing issues that hinder the user's ability to effectively utilize the site. Suggested changes are offered for each guideline area. Current strengths are also identified.

The most significant usability issues identified in this review include:

- **Navigational problems that result from poor and inconsistent labeling practices.** Problems most occur when navigational buttons/links and page headers are not similar, when there is not a clear indicator of site hierarchy, and when users are unable to easily move about within a local navigational section.
- **Failure to break up page content into subsections with descriptive headers.**
- **Not utilizing bullets to make page scannability easier and quicker.** There are plenty of items on quite a few pages that could be highlighted with bullets, but are currently buried within long paragraphs.
- **Foregoing valuable content area for the sake of certain graphics/links that do not need to be on every page.** Following the suggested changes expands the usable area for important page content.
- **Labeling practices that make navigation less intuitive, forcing the user to think harder and locate their desired content by trial-and-error.**
- **Content that is out-of-date, some as much as 3 years.**
- **Overlapping margins, photographs and graphics that “bleed” into adjacent sections of the page.**
- **A search process that is confusing to the user.** Much of this issue can be cleared up with clear labeling.
- **Text sizes, colors, and styles that affect text scanning and readability.** Reducing the number of font sizes, colors, and styles that occur within the same page will greatly enhance the site's usability.

Terminology and Conventions Used

Different terms are frequently used to describe the same part of a browser window or web page. To make it easier to understand this analysis, one term was customarily used for each browser or web page item. The terms are:

Heading: A heading might also be thought of as a page title which identifies in a word or two (or more) the main topic of that particular page. The best practice is to keep consistent wording between the navigation button/label and the heading.

Global navigation: Buttons/links available from every page of the website. These usually lead to major sections of the site.

Local navigation: Buttons/links for moving between pages within a particular section of the website. For example, all the links to pages within the 'Membership' section are considered local navigation.

Utility navigation: Links most commonly located in the upper right corner and also sometimes at the very bottom of every page. Generally, these links provide access to subsidiary tools/pages that help the user, but are not the core reason for the site.

Site hierarchy: The various levels within the site, beginning at the top level, the home page, working "down" to "deeper" pages. The hierarchy gives the site its unique structure.

Level 2 page: The main sections of the website, normally identified by the global navigation buttons/links. 'Community Info' and 'Visitor Info' are level 2 pages.

Level 3 page: Pages under a level 2 page. 'Area Churches' and 'Area Schools' are level 3 pages.

Level 4 page: Pages under a level 3 page. 'Winterfest' and 'Snow Ball' are level 4 pages.

The "fold": The part of a webpage that is visible in the web browser window when the page first loads is described as being 'above-the-fold'. The 'fold' is along the lowest part of the screen when the page first loads.

Wireframe: A basic visual guide used in interface design to suggest the structure of an interface. Wireframes lack color and specific design elements.

Whitespace: Enough space on the page for the eye to rest. Too many words packed into the available area feels "busy" and "crowded."

Priority Levels

The issues identified in this evaluation are grouped into three levels of priority:

High priority: These issues are likely to impact a large number of users significantly. They should be resolved as quickly as resources allow.

Medium priority: Issues at this priority level are also likely to affect a large number of users but generally are less disruptive to the user experience, relative to the high priority issues. If resources are available to address these issues, they should be addressed.

Low priority: Low priority issues typically impact a small subset of the overall user base, although they may impact a larger group. Regardless of the number of users affected, these issues carry only a minor negative impact. Low priority issues are generally easy to resolve. There is less time pressure to fix low priority issues, compared to medium and high priority issues.

Usability Guidelines

Efficient Navigation

Navigation refers to browsing a website and choosing links to go from page to page. Users should be able to easily navigate the entire site, find content, and know where they are in the site at any point in time.

Practices to Continue

- **Changing the color of the global navigation button on the hover state.** This is a clear indication to the user which button they are hovering over.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Provide an appropriate, clearly recognizable, and consistently placed heading for every page.** This will enable the user to know where they are within the overall site structure. Suggested changes include:
 - **Place the heading in the upper left corner of the content area; enlarge the font size over the regular content font size; if possible make it bold.** The idea is to make it clear to the user what the content on that page is about.
 - An example of inconsistent titling are those pages that have the heading in the upper left corner in a gray, italicized, and small-sized font (see the homepage), while the headings in the 'Our Members' sections (eg: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_directory/page,viewcat/catid,4/Itemid,128/) are along the top middle, below the yellow band, colored blue, linked, and a different type of font.
 - Some pages have no heading at all (example: 'Calendars' page: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_extcalendar/Itemid,235/)
 - **Make sure the wording of the page heading is the same as the navigation button/link label.**
 - Example: Presently, the navigation button labeled "Stay in Mackinaw" points to a page heading "Area Lodging." In addition, a similar, more prominent navigation button pointing to the same page is elsewhere labeled simply "Stay."
- **If using breadcrumbs, be sure to indicate where the user is within the overall site hierarchy, beginning with the present page and going back to the home page.** This 1) allows the user to retrace their steps backward to the page at which they started, and 2) helps to identify where in the site hierarchy the user is presently located. (See Appendix A, Figure 1)

- **Make the logo in the upper left corner of each page a link back to the home page.**
- **Include ‘See Also’ links to pages within the local navigation area.** Users should be able to easily navigate to pages within a local navigation area without having to use the global navigation buttons. (Presently, the ‘Membership’ page [<http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/category/1/18/157/>] contains such a list.)
 - **Provide a link to ‘Attractions/Entertainment’ on ‘Area Attractions’ page.** Presently, the user can only get to ‘Attractions/Entertainment’ via the global navigation buttons.
 - **Provide a link to ‘Annual Events’ from the ‘Calendars’ page.** Presently, the user can only get to ‘Annual Events’ via the global navigation buttons.
 - **Provide links to ‘Area Churches’, ‘Area Schools’, ‘Parks and Beaches’, ‘Healthcare’, and ‘Historic Pathway’ on the ‘Community Information’ page.**
- **Remove any navigational duplications.**
 - ‘Calendar of Events’ level 3 page is a duplicate of the ‘Calendar’ level 2 page.
 - ‘Important Links’ in the utility/global navigation is the same label as ‘Important Links’ label on its level 2 page (<http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/category/1/27/183/>)
 - A link to the ‘Newsletters Archives’ pages is currently located in both the main navigation area located on the left side of the page) both point to the same page.
 - ‘Banks/Credit Unions’ is listed twice on the ‘Member Directory’ page.
- **Point all links with the same label to the same page.** Users are likely to be confused when links with the same or very similar labels point to pages with completely different content. One example is:
 - The ‘Community Information’ page arrived at via the global navigation button, ‘Community Info’ (<http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/view/43/122/>) is a different than the ‘Community Information’ page arrived at via the ‘Community Information’ breadcrumb (<http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/category/1/13/87/>) located at the top of the afore mentioned page.

Medium Priority

- **Unlink all links/buttons for the current page.** This also helps users get a better sense of what section they are currently in. One example is:
 - **Unlink the ‘Community Info’ navigation button for the ‘Community Information’ level 2 page.**
 - **Unlink ‘Community Information’ in the breadcrumb on the ‘Community Information’ level 2 page.**

- **Remove any link to all orphaned pages no longer a part of the present site.** Some pages have breadcrumb links to these pages, which usually confuses the user. These pages include:
 - 'General' page: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/section/1/87/>
 - 'Testing' page: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/view/72/87/>
 - 'Community Information' page: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/category/1/13/87/>
- **Provide a visual navigation path with a different color on the fly-out menus as the user works their way through the various levels of navigation buttons.** Indicating the “path” through the navigation button fly-out menus with a different color makes it clear to the user where in the site hierarchy they are going. This is especially helpful if the sub pages go beyond level 3. (See *Appendix A, Figure 5*)
- **Code the left-hand global navigational buttons to remain displayed for 1 – 1½ seconds after the user moves the mouse away.** In the course of navigating through multiple levels of “fly-out” menus, it is not uncommon for the user to accidentally move the mouse away from the navigation buttons. Presently, this causes the entire “fly-out” menu to instantly disappear, forcing the user to begin the process again.
- **Fix all broken links.** Examples include:
 - The [bike tour] 'Registration Form' page is a broken link.
 - The 'Consumer Resources' page returns a fatal error.
 - Both 'click here for entry form' links are broken on the 'Bike Tour – Rules and Registration Form' page.
- **Move 'Contact Us' and 'Important Links' to the bottom of the left-side global navigation area.**

Organizational Clarity

Organization refers to how page content is ordered and grouped into sections and units. Well organized pages are easier for users to find the information they are looking for. It also helps them and to understand the overall organizational structure.

Suggested Changes:

Medium Priority

- **Group the links into different sections with subheadings on the ‘Visitor Info’ page.** Currently, there is no recognizable organization to the links. They seem to be randomly inserted in the order in which they were received by the person who codes the site. Categories might include “Summer Events,” “Winter Events,” “Time-Specific Suggestions,” “Eating and Shopping,” “Area Attractions,” “Important Information about Mackinaw City.”

Clear Labeling

Strong usability begins with a well devised system of labeling. As most users begin their online activity by reading and scanning, it is imperative that the name given to part of a page or a link label accurately reflect the content of that page. Doing so helps the user better understand the website. Poorly chosen or vague labels tends to confuse users, who then may go to an area of the site they did not intend to visit, or ultimately leave the site altogether if they have difficulty deciphering the meaning of the labels. Any labeling issues that pertain to other guidelines may be mentioned under that guideline instead of this particular section.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Show the full list of Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce member businesses names by alphabet instead of the alphabetical listing of business categories on the ‘Member Directory’ page** (URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_directory/page,viewcat/catid,1/Itemid,128/). Users assume that the label ‘Member Directory’ will be a directory/listing of Chamber members. The current listing of business *categories* requires the user to dig through one more layer to get to a directory of Chamber members.
- **Link the ‘Member Directory’ page (now displaying the full listing of member businesses by business name) to the ‘All’ link.** Since the ‘All’ label appears as a part of the alphabetical anchor links which point to a listing of businesses *by name*, the user assumes that ‘All’ will link to a page alphabetical listing all the businesses by name.
- **Create a level 3 page called ‘Member Categories’ and link to it from the ‘Membership’ navigation button and the ‘Membership’ page.** This page would contain an alphabetical listing of all the member business categories, as the label suggests.
- **Make all text links labels descriptive of the page or document to which they point.** This is important for purposes of accessibility, especially for users who navigate via a screen readers. ‘Click here’ does not convey the necessary information needed by the user.
 - **Rephrase "Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide is available online" as "View the online version of the Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide" in the November 1, 2009 Newsletter and link the entire sentence.** (URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_acajoom/act,mailing/task,view/mailinid,78/Itemid,99999999/).
 - **Rephrase “Click here for 2009 Brochure” as “Download the 2009 Golf Outing brochure (pdf)” and link the entire sentence.** Found on URL: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/view/76/194/>.
 - **Rephrase all current “click here” links to something descriptive of the page to which they point.**

- **Re-label the navigation button ‘City Parks and’ as ‘Parks and Beaches.’** Presently, the label is incomplete. In addition, making this change will give consistency between the navigation label and the page heading
- **Re-label the navigation button ‘Open All Year’ as ‘Year-Round Businesses.’** Most users who are not familiar with the seasonal aspect of many Mackinaw City business will be confused by this vague label.
- **Re-label the navigation button ‘2010 Printable’ as ‘2010 Printable (pdf)’.** This lets the user know that the link is not to another page, but rather, will open the download dialog box.
- **Re-label the navigation button ‘Paradise/Carp’ as ‘Surrounding Area.’** The present label is not clear to the user who is not familiar with the names of local communities. Users might wonder if this label links to something about Carp fish.
- **Re-label the navigation button ‘Christmas In’ as ‘Christmas in M.C.’**

Medium Priority:

- **Re-label the navigation button ‘Attractions/Entertainment’ as either ‘Attractions’ or ‘Entertainment.’** Currently, the label is too long as breaks the boundaries of the navigation button.

Low Priority:

- **Raise the arrow in the navigation button ‘Paradise/Carp’ to the horizontal center of the button.**

Consistent Design

Consistent Design refers to all parts of a website: font usage, colors, link formatting, alignment of elements, HTML formatting issues, archive file formats – anything that affects the user’s ability to successfully use and understand the website.

Practices to Continue

- **Keep the left global navigation**
- **Keep the masthead with revolving photo gallery**
- **Continue to employ the right sidebar advertising.**

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Use a single layout width for the middle content area throughout the entire site.** The content area on the pages related to ‘Our Members’ have a different width than the rest of the site, and the right advertisement sidebar is narrower than on these pages than the rest of the site..
 - The width of the middle content area of the pages related to ‘Our Members’ is roughly 660 pixels; the width of the right sidebar is roughly 170 pixels.
 - The width of the middle content area of the rest of the site is roughly 490 pixels; the width of the right sidebar is roughly 340 pixels.
- **Establish a single design style for the top of the content area.** Different styling leaves the user with the feeling that there is a lack of unity across the site, which can be confusing.
 - Pages related to ‘Our Members’ have a yellow band across the top, with the heading label located at the top center. Pages on the rest of the site do not have any type of band across the top, and the heading label is located on the left side.
- **Redesign the four quick link (buttons) so as not to be confused with the global navigation buttons along the left side.** The style and placement of the four buttons – ‘Dine’, ‘Play’, ‘Shop’, ‘Stay’ – may be confusing to the user. They look like global navigation buttons, but are in fact links to level 3 pages within the ‘Visitor Info’ section. The reviewers recognize that it is the intention of the Chamber of Commerce to highlight these links as they are designed to quickly take users to the lists of Chamber members. Please see Appendix A, Figure 3 for a possible way to render these links so that they are not confused with the global navigation buttons.

Medium Priority:

- **Provide a consistent error message design throughout the entire site.**
 - The ‘Contact Us’ page renders a *pop-up* error message when the form is filled out incorrectly. (See Appendix B, Figure 1)

- Errors made in sending an E-card render on *new-page*, with an *on-page* error message. (See *Appendix B, Figure 2*)
- **Add useful alt texts to all images.** Alt texts are most helpful when they aptly describe the image. This is especially helpful for those who navigate with a screen reader. Screen readers read aloud the alt text to the user. For example, “View of the Mackinac Bridge following a storm” is more descriptive than “after_storm_clear” (URL: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com>). “Statue of Major Depeyster” is a better than “majordepeyster.jpg” (URL: <http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/view/56/140/>).
- **Use a consistent design for handling link styling.** Some links are underlined by default and do not keep the underlining when hovered over by the mouse. Some links are not underlined by default and show the underline when hovered over by the mouse. Some links are not underlined by default and do not show an underline when hovered over by the mouse.

Low Priority:

- **Give all photos in the Photo Gallery a hover caption.** Some photos have no hover caption at all, and some have a blank hover caption.
- **Make all the file types the same on the ‘Newsletter Archives’ page.** Presently, some of the files are xHTML and some are .doc.

Matching User Expectations

The Web has been around long enough to establish user expectations. Underlined text should be linked. Blue text should be linked. Occurrences of website names should be linked. Archived material should be available in a consistent format and be downloadable. Content should be up to date.

Practices to Continue

- **Making text links blue and providing a visual clue that it is a link when hovered over, such as an underline.**
- **Offering a login option in the upper right corner of the masthead.**

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Avoid underlining any text that is not a link.** Users assume that underlined words or phrases are links, and will often try to click on them. When underlined text is not linked, users may become confused and think something is broken or not working. Pages with underlined link include but are not limited to:
 - ‘Bike Tour – Rules and Registration Form’
 - ‘Area Attractions’ (“Great Lakes Bear Factory”, “Jack Pine Lumberjack Show”)
- **Avoid blue text for anything that is not a link.** Users assume blue text – underlined or not – is clickable. One example is “Jack Pine Lumberjack Show” on the ‘Area Attractions’ page.
- **Link “www.mackinawouthouserace.com” to <http://www.mackinawouthouserace.com>” on the ‘Winterfest’ page.** Users expect references to internet pages to be linked and clickable.

Medium Priority

- **Remove or update any pages and/or content that is out of date.** Posting information for events that occurred in the distant past lead users to think that the site is irrelevant and not maintained well, which may result in users choosing to not use the site.
 - The ‘Mackinac Bridge 50th Anniversary’ page displays a 2007 event schedule.
 - The ‘Corvette Show’ page displays a 2009 schedule.
 - The ‘Golf Outing’ page give information about the 2009 outing, and has a link to the 2009 Golf Outing Brochure.
 - The ‘Bike Tour – Rules and Registration Form’ page is for the 2009 tour
 - The ‘Music in Mackinaw’ page displays the 2009 schedule

- **Change the mouse pointer to a hand when hovering over the clickable ‘Search’ button on the ‘Calendars’ page.** This helps users know that the button is working and should begin the search process when they click it.

Low Priority:

- **Use the standard United States date format.** For example, “Wednesday, March 10, 2010” instead of “Wednesday, 10 March, 2010.”

Effective Visual Design

Good design principles – page balance, effective use of negative space, alignment of images and text, similarity, proximity – should be followed to ensure the website is visually appealing and functional to the user.

Practices to Continue

- **Fading in/out images in the masthead.** This banner would be enhanced with better focused and more carefully chosen images. For example, one photo displays only the heads of a wedding party; one photo displays the backs of window shoppers; one photo of the Mackinac Bridge is quite grainy/unfocused.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Rearrange the placement of the advertisement and other graphics so that more usable space is provided for the content.** Currently, nearly half of the usable area is taken up with non-content graphics along the right side of each page. On many pages, these graphics are two-wide. (See *Appendix S, Figure 3 for possible solution*)
- **Tone down the size and bright color of the ‘Welcome’ on the home page.** Text that is extra large and extra bright can come across as amateurish in design. The reviewers recognize the probable desire of the Chamber to “grab their attention” when users come to the site. However, employing more professional design standards will better likely achieve those desired goals. (See *Appendix A, Figure 3 for example of a “Welcome” message*).
- **Adjust the width of the content area where it bleeds into the right sidebar/advertisement section.** Some examples include:
 - February, 2009 Newsletter (http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_ajoom/act,mailing/task,view/mailngid,58/Itemid,99999999/)
 - ‘Golf Outing’ page (<http://www.mackinawchamber.com/content/view/76/194/>)
- **Fix the display issue on the ‘Mack WebTV’ page.** The fly-out menus are displayed *behind* the video screen, rendering them useless when on this page.
- **Include the ‘Weather Underground,’ calendar, and static Google map graphics on the home page only and arrange so that they do not diminish usable content space.** (See *Appendix A, Figure 3 for a possible solution*).
- **Remove level 5 fly-out menus buttons when hovering over the level 3 navigation button ‘Annual Events.’** By design, fly-out menus are intended to show only the next level of menu items related to the navigation button over which the user is hovering

- **Connect and display level 5 fly-out navigation buttons to the correct level 4 navigation button.**
 - **Display ‘Bike Tour Form’ and ‘Registration Form’ navigation buttons only when hovering over ‘Bike Tours’ navigation button.**
 - **Display ‘[year] Winners’ navigation button only when hovering over ‘Corvette Show’ navigation button.**

Low Priority:

- **Provide descriptive captions for all photographs.**

Readability and Scannability

Users spend most of their online experience reading and scanning through text, looking for particular headings and web links. Limiting the number of text sizes, color, and styles, using short paragraphs and bulleted text, and efficient text chunking greatly enhance a user's ability to find and comprehend a site's text. In addition, including printer-friendly specifications enhances the usability of site content.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Use short paragraphs, headings, subheadings, and bullets to optimize readability.** For the web, being concise is best. Users tend to not read long paragraphs and, instead, prefer shorter chunks of text highlighted with bullets that identify the most important information. Some examples include:
 - **Reduce the length of the content and the number of inline boldfaced words on the 'Area Attraction' page.** The current number of boldfaced words scattered throughout the paragraphs can be a bit overwhelming to the user, who may end up not attempting to read any of it.
 - **Employ the use of bullets to highlight important events or attractions.**
 - **Chunk groups of events or attractions into different sections with a header.**
 - **Make the content on the homepage bullet-based instead of sentence-based.** Much of what is currently in the paragraphs are links to websites. Turning these links into bullet points is much easier to read, and more likely to achieve the desired result of being clicked by the user.
 - **Add a few subheadings to pages such as 'Area Schools,' 'Parks and Beaches,' in order to break it up into readable sections.**
 - **Add a CSS stylesheet that provides for printer-specific layouts.**
 - **The printed page should only include the page content.**
 - **Remove the masthead, navigation buttons, and advertising graphics from the printed page.**
 - **Photographs that are not content-specific might also be removed.**
 - **The type should be a serif font.**
 - **Remove link underlines.**

Medium Priority:

- **Categorize the 'Newsletter Archives' page into two sections: 'E-Newsletters' and 'Events and Updates,' and provide each section with a subheading.**

- **Reverse the order of the E-newsletters, with the most recent at the top.** This will avoid forcing the user to scroll down to the latest information if and when the list becomes long and continues on below the “fold” (see Terminology and Conventions Used).
- **Remove any extra spaces inside of sentences.** There are many spaces before commas in the text on the homepage.

Facilitating User Tasks

A website should return search results that a user expects – the site should include enough parameters to ensure user searches are successful when they search the site’s content. Users should be able to fill out and send forms without attaching the form to their reply. If the user omits information when they fill out a form, they should receive a useful error message that facilitates completing the form. Maps should have a clear benefit to the site user.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Fix the search “failure” when users try to perform a search from the ‘Calendars’ page.** From URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_extcalendar/Itemid,235/, filling in a search query and clicking ‘Search’ results in the user being rerouted to the home page, even if the date being queried is valid.

The reviewers were able to complete a successful search when the query was begun from the URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_extcalendar/Itemid,235/extmode,extcal_search/, which is arrived at by clicking on the ‘Search’ icon on the ‘Calendars’ page.

- **Provide an *same-page, on-page* error message when users do not successfully complete form data.** Error messages are best rendered on the page on which the form is located. When the reviewers tried to send an E-card with invalid data, the error message was returned on a new page. Correcting the problem involved returning to the original page/form with the backspace key.
- **Provide a detailed error message when users do not successfully complete form data, indicating the details of what the error is and how it needs to be corrected.** The reviewers received a vague error message via pop-up box when they attempted to send an invalid message from the ‘Contact Us’ page. Rather than “Please make sure the form is complete and valid,” a better error message would have been “Please include the “@” in your email address.
- **Prevent form-based emails to be sent to recipient when users do not successfully complete the form.** The reviewers were able to send an email to a Chamber message from the URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_directory/page,viewListing/subtask,contact/lid,24/Itemid,128/ without including the “@” in the ‘Your Email’ input box, making a response from the recipient impossible. After clicking the ‘Send’ button (without the “@” in the return email), a pop-up box indicated that the test email had been sent through to the recipient.
- **Add descriptive labels to both the business name search area and the category search area in order to be clear about what the user will be searching for.** On ‘Our Members’ pages such as URL: http://www.mackinawchamber.com/component/option,com_directory/page,byletter/alpha,h/Itemid,128/, users see two different search options, and neither is clearly labeled. Even though the default text in the search by category dropdown menu reads “Select category stating with ‘[alpha letter]’,” it is very easy for the user to not read that text and become confused when the options in the dropdown menu are different than expected. (See Appendix A, Figure 2)

Medium Priority:

- **Make the ‘Tourist Concern Form’ an HTML page with the necessary form coded into it.** Currently, the form is in .doc format. Making it an HTML page has many benefits: 1) it removes a big step in the process of filling out the form; 2) it alleviates the possibility of the form being altered by the user; 3) the form can be filled out and returned without the necessity of a printer or being turned into an email attachment; 4) the form can be returned quickly and directly to the person who needs to receive it.
- **Make the within-site Google map an interactive map, and include a link to view it at Google Maps if the user desires a larger rendering of the map.** The present map is a static graphic that is linked to Google Maps. Making this map interactive removes one step in the process of being able to utilize the features of an interactive Google Map.
- **Locate the ‘Login’ form in the masthead.** Making this change will reduce the number of steps it takes for the user to log in. (See Appendix A, Figure 3)

Low Priority:

- **Redesign the content of the ‘Contact Us’ page so that the information is more easily deciphered.** (See Appendix A, Figure 3)

Providing Help

Web users may need help navigating a website or have questions about the site's content. The site should provide a Help or FAQ link to help its users. In addition, a site should categorize content in a way that lets the user easily find information pertinent to the site's focus.

Suggested Changes

High Priority:

- **Make the options in the category search drop-down menu a listing of the business categories.** If searching by category, most users will be more interested in choosing from a full list of business categories (eg, "Bookstores," "Banks," etc.) rather than a partial listing of categories that begin with a particular alpha letter.
- **Provide a site index or site map.**

Additional Usability Issues by Page & Section

Chamber E-Newsletters

High Priority

- **Remove file data from the top of e-newsletters.** This information will be confusing to the user and also detracts from the visual design of the page. (see *Appendix B, Figure 3*)
- **Keep the content area from “bleeding into” the adjacent sections on the page.** (See *Appendix B, Figure 4*)
- **Use layout styles that are consistent with the web.** Currently, the e-newsletters are styled to resemble the *printed* letterhead. The most notable printed feature is utilizing the left-hand column for personnel data. This causes at least two problems:
 - Valuable content area is lost.
 - Visually, there is not enough white space.

Appendix A

Wireframes

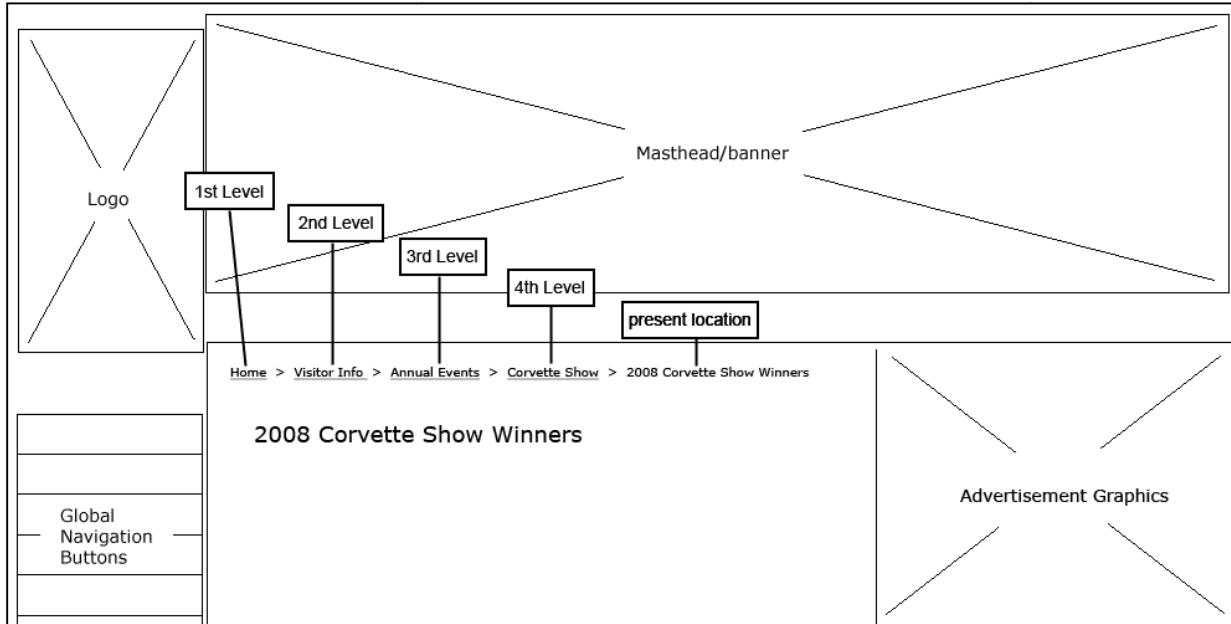


Figure 1: Breadcrumbs

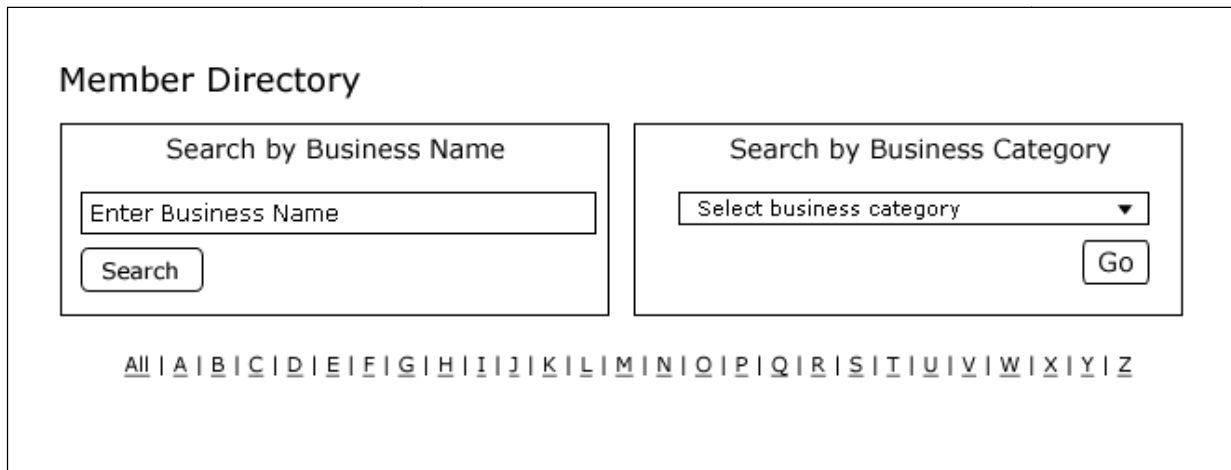


Figure 2: Member Directory Search

Wireframes

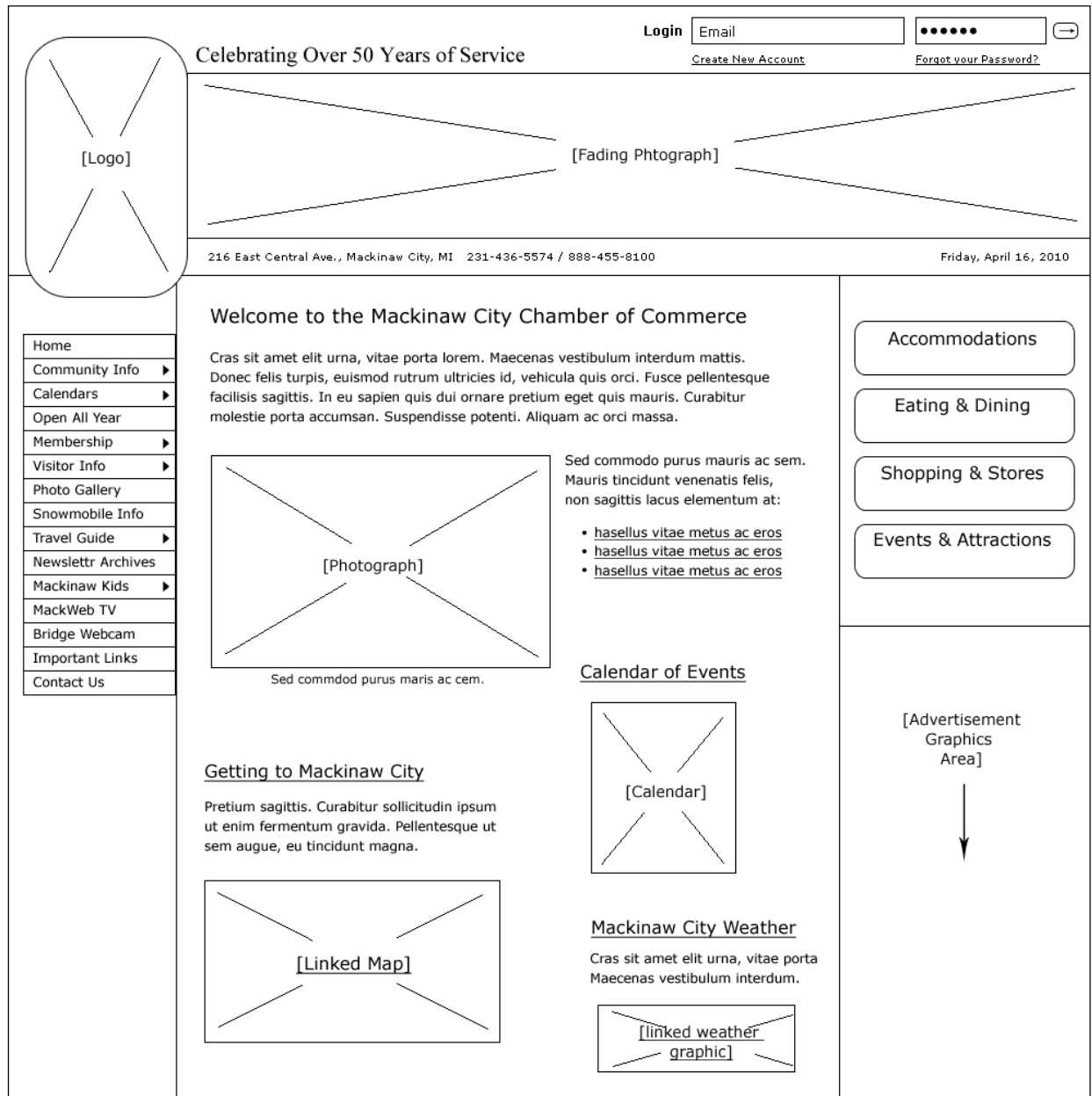



Figure 3: Homepage

Wireframes

Contact Us


E-mail:  **Your Name:**


Your Email Address:

Message Subject:

Message:

Email a copy of this message to your own address

Postal Mail:  P.O. Box 856
Mackinaw City, MI
USA
49701

Telephone:  Local: 231-436-5574
Toll Free: 888-455-8100

Location: **Year-round office:** Mackinaw Crossings Mall/Depot
Summer office: 216 E. Central Ave.

Figure 4: 'Contact Us' Page

Wireframes

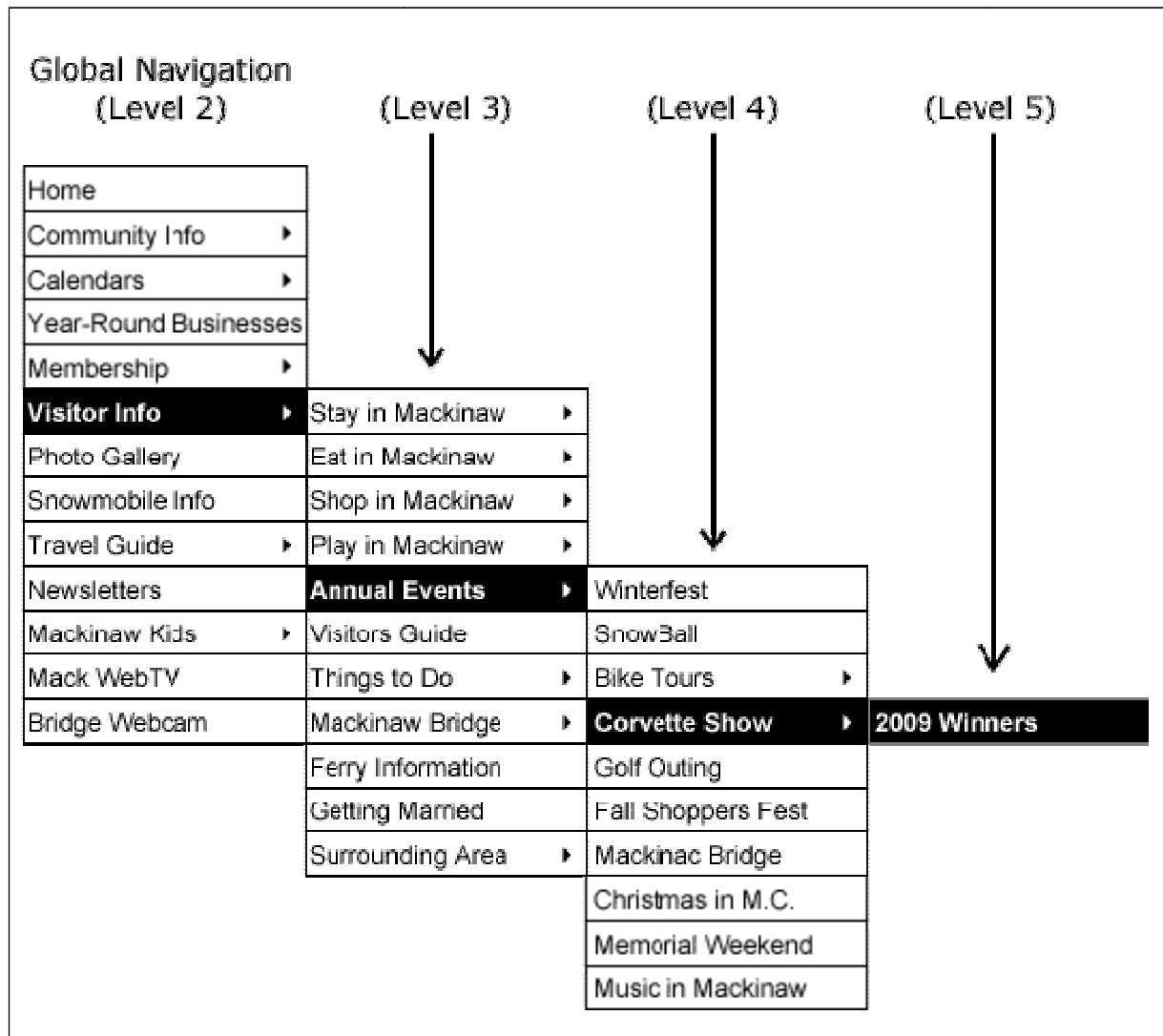


Figure 5: Fly-Out Menus

Appendix B

Screenshots



Figure 1: Pop-up Error Message



Figure 2: On-Page Error Message

Screenshots

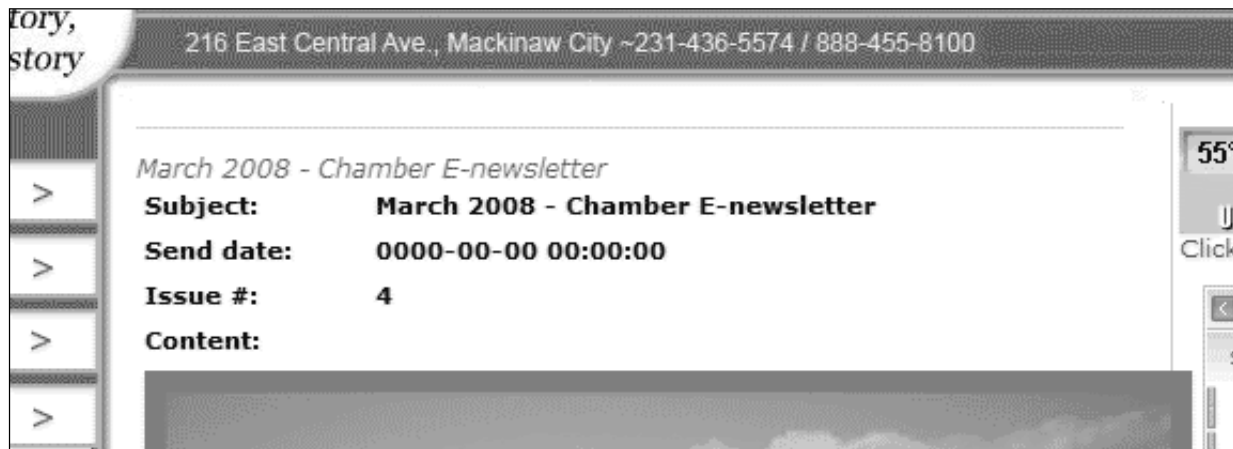


Figure 3: E-Newsletter File Data

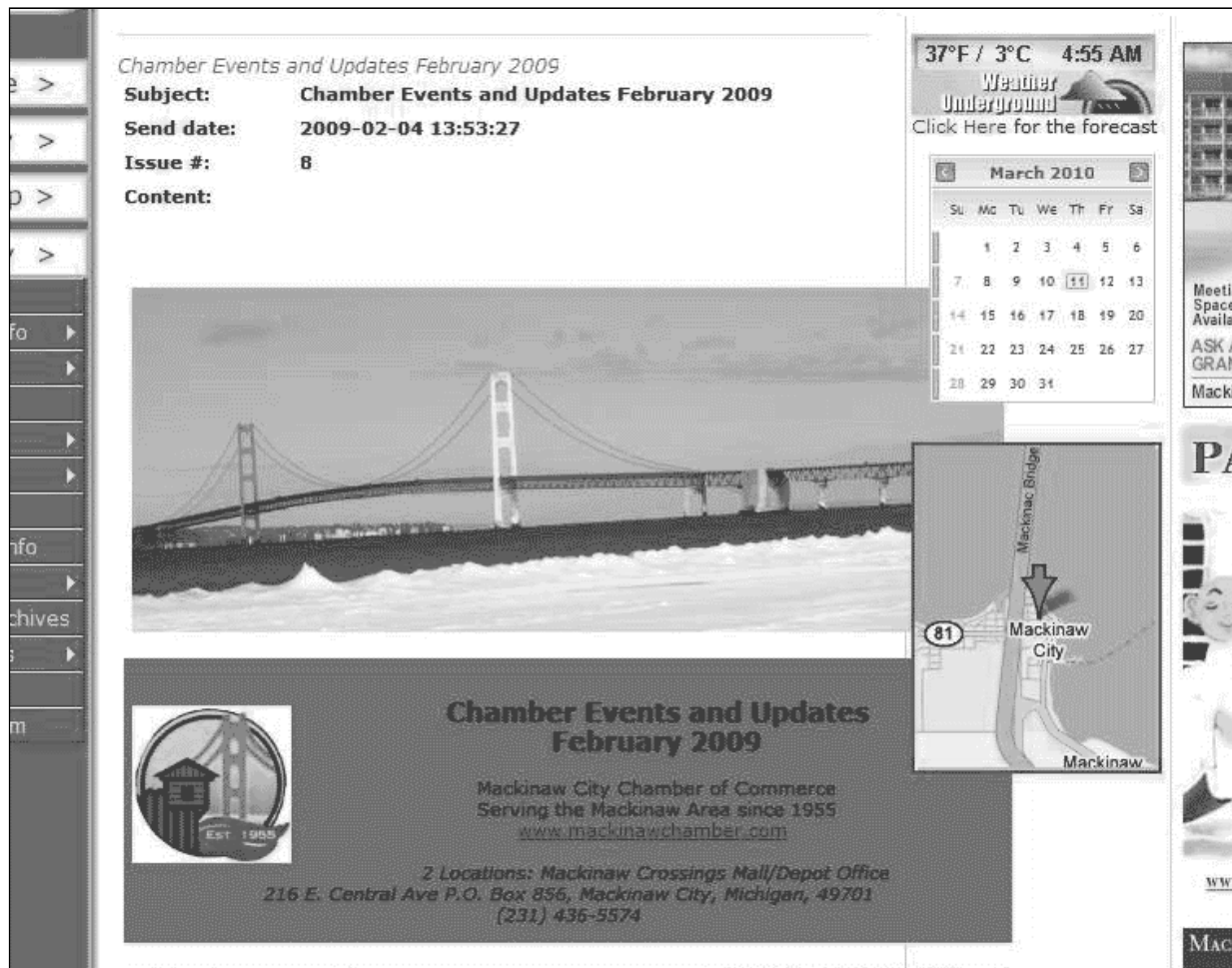


Figure 4: Content Bleeding into Right Sidebar