Indiana Public Radio Website Re-Design

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Signed

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Abstract

Indiana Public Radio has been working with an outdated, ineffective website for too many years, and this semester I had the chance to work on a small team to re-design it. In the span of under four months, we have evaluated the content, arrangement, and visual appeal of the site and we have re-designed it entirely from scratch. Throughout the process, we have been in regular contact with the head of marketing at the station, as well as other key staff people, in order to determine focus, receive critiques, and keep the client involved in important decisions. Although the site will not be live until later this year, it is predicted to be much more effective in reaching the station’s needs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Associate Professor Sam Minor II for being my advisor during the duration of this creative project. His assistance toward my completion of the project has been crucial to my development as a student and professional, as has been his continual guidance and encouragement in the past three years that I have known him.

I would like to thank Riley and Micheala; without their help, this project would never have been as successful as it is today. I would also like to thank my parents and Jared for their endless support.
Author’s Statement

This semester, I have worked as a Design Apprentice at Ball State’s Digital Corps. Over the past few months, I have been on a team of two designers and one developer, with the occasional inclusion of a content writer, to completely redesign the website for Indiana Public Radio and its sub-sites, hosted from the Ball State IPR studio. In the process, my team evaluated the content of the site by studying the analytics of the existing sites and by conducting further external research, we met with representatives of the station on a bi-weekly basis, we created wireframes and mock-ups of the design in Adobe Illustrator and the online resource Balsamiq, and we were minimally involved in the development of the site.

The first portion of this project was dedicated to re-designing an IPR sub-site for the student-run program, The Scene. This program airs every Saturday night and plays recordings of local shows, often featuring rock, pop, folk, and punk genre bands, among others. The audience for this show is younger than that of IPR and consists primarily of college students at Ball State. When making design decisions, we looked at modern trends that appeal to this younger audience, while keeping in mind the primary goals of the station. The homepage was our first priority, and we decided to fill it with many links to help the users easily navigate to the parts of the site that we predict will be most popular. We also included links near the top of the homepage that immediately draw users back to the main IPR website and the donation page. While we recognize that the
majority of donors to IPR are older, the hope is that listeners of The Scene will grow a connection to the station so that when they are older and are able, they will feel compelled to donate.

The rest of the site provides useful information about the site and is presented with clear logic and consistency to make for easy navigation. Some new information that we worked into the design include a calendar page for local shows and events, a photo gallery for past shows (which includes the option for users to submit their own photographs), a form that listeners can use to submit questions for upcoming bands, and an infographic to differentiate between genres that have been featured on the show. We also have designed the site to be much more photograph-driven, particularly since the home page will start with a full-screen image from the last recording. These decisions have been made based upon a combination of our client's requests and our own ideas of what might keep users coming back to the site. They will be able to see fresh information, and they will even be able to contribute their own ideas and photographs. We, and our client, believe that this re-design of the website for The Scene will bring a larger audience of visitors than the current site, thus leading to more listeners and ultimately more donators.

After completing the design for The Scene's website, my team and I moved on to the design for the main IPR site. As there was a great deal more content on this site, we spent more time planning and organizing before starting into visual decisions. We
diligently went through every page of the existing site, taking notes in a shared
document on what was included already and how we could improve the content and its
display to make each page of the site more useful and more attractive. We based many
of our decisions on the Google Analytics statistics for the existing site, and what they
showed versus what our client needed. Some decisions that we made in this step of the
process include what content we would add to the homepage, how we wanted to re-
design the footer for every page, and how we could give the site a stronger focus on
news. By writing an organized list, we were able to focus our ideas in a way that we
could refer to later on in the process.

As I finished going through some of the final few pages, my design partner began to
create wireframes for some of the main webpages. A wireframe is a simplified version of
a website, reduced to shapes and primarily filler text known as "lorem ipsum," created in
order to focus on layout and functionality of the site before working on specific details
and visual decisions. While for The Scene's website we created our wireframes using
simple shapes in Adobe Illustrator, we used an online software called Balsamiq for
building the IPR wireframes. Balsamiq provides designers with simplified, pre-existing
shapes and text-holders that are intentionally made to look sketchy and incomplete that
the designer can quickly place, move, and edit. The sketchy aesthetic of Balsamiq's
wireframes allow for both designers and their clients to focus purely on the function of
the site without being distracted by visual appeal. It can also allow clients to feel more
willing to criticize the layout, as I believe was the case for us, because it looks like the
designers didn’t spend a great deal of time carefully constructing the wireframes. In less than two weeks, the two of us were able to build wireframes for nearly every page of the new site, present them to the client, and make necessary revisions.

Once we had solidified the layout, we started on visual decisions. First, we spent a few days looking primarily at typefaces; since words will make up the majority of the website, we recognized that the fonts used would help set the mood of the site. We researched font choices for other news-heavy websites and tried out combinations of fonts in typecast.com. Some considerations in choosing fonts were how many different weights were available – meaning bold, italics, light, heavy, etc. – and how effective the fonts could be if they stood alone with no images on a particular page. After agreeing on a few fonts, we quickly transformed our mock-ups into full-detail website mock-ups in Adobe Illustrator. Before working through every page of the site, we designed only a homepage and a few generic pages as well as a few element collages that showed various pieces of design to be used throughout the website. We presented these few mock-ups and elements to our client for feedback before moving forward with detailed mock-ups of each page. In the next two weeks following this meeting, we made the few changes requested by the client, then moved forward with designing the rest of the site.

One of the primary transferable skills that I have learned through this internship is how to work on a team. Previous to this job, I had had very limited experience working with another designer on a single project. I also hadn’t done much design work with people
who specialize in other areas. Because of my inexperience with teamwork, I faced a learning curve when we first started working on the IPR project. We started the project with a week or two of research and brainstorming, but once we started into the visual design of the website, it took some time for me to understand how two people with separate ideas are able to bring them into a single product. However, after the initial confusion in this area, we were able to figure out when we could split up the workload in a way that interested us both, and when we needed to sit side-by-side and make visual decisions together. While there was again a little confusion with how teamwork worked when we started the visuals of a second large portion of the project, I would say that overall we have successfully both been able to bring our unique perspectives into the solution and end with successful designs.

In working on these projects, the other designer and I split up some of the work so that we could each be in charge of certain pieces. With The Scene website, I was individually responsible for the wireframes for the about and calendar pages, the design of the infographic, the map header image, and the majority of mock-ups for the mobile version. For the IPR website, I took the lead on organizing content in the initial planning phase, and I designed program pages, along with two local program logos, specific pages involved with the news, support pages, a search results page, the contact page, a 404 page, and some specific elements such as breaking news and a special advertisement for the annual pledge drive. Additionally, I designed the full one-page sub-site for IPR's annual wine tasting event, and a new logo for the event.
As I have referenced earlier, I also gained experience working with a client. Before this semester, the majority of my design work had been for classes, so my "clients" had been my professors and myself. My past work for external clients has included very short-term projects that didn't give me nearly the same experience as the IPR website job. Because of the large scope of the project, my team was able to meet with a client representative numerous times to hear their hope for the website, present our ideas, and receive feedback that was critical for our continuation. I was surprised to find out how intimidating it can be to be in charge of the computer. For our first few meetings with the client, one of my co-workers connected their computer to a projector and I felt comfortable talking about what I had contributed to our progress and what we had discussed. However, when my screen was the one we used to present, I found it difficult to know what to show when, how quickly to move through the information, and what to say that would keep up the discussion. Since the first couple of times that we met with the client, I believe that I have gained a little better grasp on the presentation aspect and I am more confident that I will properly prepare myself for our final meeting before the end of the semester.

Technically, I have seen myself improve dramatically in designing for the web. This understanding comes largely from working with another designer who has more website experience than I do, partly from researching modern trends and techniques in web design, and partly from working with a client with specific needs. Many of the techniques
that we used in the IPR website and its surrounding sites, I would not have considered if I had been working on my own. With the guidance of my project leader and the suggestions of my partner, we were able to respond to modern design trends in an appropriate way. I have been able to apply what I've learned in a project re-design and in the re-design of my personal website. What took me months to carefully put together just last semester, I was able to greatly enhance in the matter of only a few days. It was also very helpful for me to gain experience with building wireframes, as they allow me to focus purely on the layout and functionality of a site before adding specific typography, color choices, and images. While my web design classes taught me some basic skills that I was able to bring into this job, working on a team and for a client has helped me to make these basic skills more useful for my future clients.

This website re-design has satisfied our client and provided me with valuable experience to supplement my formal education. Although the development of the site is still in progress, I believe that the work that we put into this re-design will definitely show positive results for the station, and I look forward to seeing our designs live online. I have gained so much valuable information and experience from this internship that it is difficult to summarize in a few pages, but some key highlights include what I have learned about working on a team, with a client, and for the web. This internship has been a valuable way to round out my educational experience.
Project Supplements
Website Links

- **Indiana Public Radio (IPR)** - 100% reimagining and redesign - [http://indianapublicradio.org/](http://indianapublicradio.org/)
  - **Subsites**
    - The Scene (local bands show) - [indianapublicradio.org/thescene](http://indianapublicradio.org/thescene)
    - Morning Musicale (classical music show) - [indianapublicradio.org/morningmusicale](http://indianapublicradio.org/morningmusicale)
    - Indiana Weekend (unique interview profiles from around the state) - [indianapublicradio.org/indianaweekend](http://indianapublicradio.org/indianaweekend)
    - Community Connection (non-profit news from East Central Indiana) - [indianapublicradio.org/communityconnection](http://indianapublicradio.org/communityconnection)

- **WIPB (PBS affiliate)** - minor changes and updates - [http://www.wipb.org/](http://www.wipb.org/)
- Some "business information" site for the overarching entity: Ball State Public Media

- **NPR home site** - [http://www.npr.org/](http://www.npr.org/)

The Scene

Here are some sample audio files for The Scene. Randomly picked, so they may not necessarily be the best examples of overall quality.

- [http://iprthescene.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/episode_29_ashcraft-mp3.mp3](http://iprthescene.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/episode_29_ashcraft-mp3.mp3)

Website inspiration for The Scene: [http://www.suiiepaparude.ro/](http://www.suiiepaparude.ro/)


Isotope categories (for sorting by genre, etc):
[http://www.9bitstudios.com/demos/blog/jquery-isotope/](http://www.9bitstudios.com/demos/blog/jquery-isotope/)

Band website suggestions:
[http://wearemahogany.com/](http://wearemahogany.com/)
[http://www.nuvo.net/](http://www.nuvo.net/)
HOME
http://getyowza.com/

Check out this website’s sidebar - http://www.wbhm.org/ I like how they use it as a secondary menu
can we include little icons with each menu item?? That would be so cute! YES!!

NEWS
PROGRAMS
listen live  does this need to be here? - probably one in the header and maybe (maybe) one in the footer
schedule
ipr programs - this page is currently blank and could be taken out completely i think - maybe replace it with a landing page for the 4 programs listed... double-menu is confusing - totally confusing... I’m working on a sitemap so we can get a menu that is more functional and doesn’t include the same item so many times
  community connection
  indiana weekend
  morning musicale
  the scene - DONE
ipr news - Does this make sense here? It just links to the news page again - trash it

COMMUNITY
  community calendar
  community connection - this is already on the programs page.. needed here too? - already gone from the site map
  public service announcements - rename to something that makes more sense - does this need its own page or can it be included in the sidebar with an announcement/event submission form? i’d prefer that if we can talk them into it
  season partners

SUPPORT
  online pledge form
  leadership circle
  membership
    member card
  matching gift
  planned giving
  underwriting
  vehicle donation

ABOUT
  advisory council
  awards
  coverage area
  eeo information
  job opportunities
  latest news
the sides, still with a sidebar and a main content area... hopefully with photos and different content. kind of like the first content area of image below - I like this for sections of it but we want to make sure to include some white space - well of course but the current page is wasting a lot of content space with whitespace and we could lose some of it giving the page a more modern feel without going too overboard for the older people alrighty sounds good

- search by zipcode for coverage area

- black, white, gray, red
- clean, easy-to-understand
- big headings: blocky slab serif
- headings: serif, red
  - (sometimes sans, gray)

- new color scheme? - it would be fun to do something punchy, but would this deviate from what current visitors expect of the site? it's so serious... we could at least lighten it up some
News

- local news
  - headline, date, starting text
  - link to full story
    - sometimes include audio
    - generally short
  - text only
- NPR news
  - tiny thumbnail
  - headline, date, starting text
  - link to full story on NPR site
- news partners w/ links
- different sidebar
  - search news
  - special features (?)
  - recent stories
  - news archive

How can this be more attractive?

- PHOTOS
- new logo

How can this be more useful?

- PHOTOS
- more stories - work with DN, pull more from Star Press?
- pull more stories from NPR
- allow people to comment on stories

How can this be more attractive?

- PHOTOS (and bigger photos for NPR)
- highlighted stories in slideshow format at the top (yahoo news style)- i like it
- the sidebar is boring and easily overlooked - could pull in images here when we get them

Full local news

- generally short
- sometimes include audio
- print & share to social media buttons

How can this be more useful?

- PHOTOS
- there isn't any easy/obvious way to link back to the main news site from...
• set up as a static table with days listed across top and time-of-day on left
• programs listed to fill up a block of the schedule
  o link to the program's page or source page
  o program currently playing is red with a “listen” button

• give the user options to how they want to view this information?
  o as is vs. one day at a time vs. sort by program to see when it is on air
  o kind of like the options accuweather gives you to look at forecasts (now, weekend, extended, month) - this would make it easy to navigate

• look at ABC schedule for example...

How can this be more attractive?
• maybe days that have already passed in the week could be faded, like in Google calendar - this would be cool

How can this be more useful?
• archives listed by month is probably not the most useful... you typically have no clue what you’ll see
  o list organization instead? - how many of these are there, if there aren't too many maybe they could just be under the different organizations on the same page?
• make categories
  o archives could use the multi-category filter system

How can this be more attractive?
• maybe the “Recent Posts” section can be part of the main content and include a photo and beginning of the description (rather than listed in the sidebar)

How can this be more useful?
• same as Community Connection
• photo of John Strauss (I assume) might not be the best use of space, at least if it’s the only imagery here

Community Connection
• about CC w/ logo
• latest episode
  o description (appears to be taken almost entirely from organization website)
  o audio
• additional sidebar
  o search
  o recent posts (just links/titles)
  o archives (month/year links)
  o categories section but there are currently no categories)
  o meta

Indiana Weekend
• about IW w/ photo
• latest episode
  o date
  o short description
  o audio

How can this be more useful?
• same as Community Connection
on website, rather than just on-air
- maybe this could be in the sidebar for all Community pages

How can this be more attractive?

Season Partners
- description
- list with links
- contact # for more info

How can this be more useful?
- more info about how to become a Season Partner

How can this be more attractive?
- photo (maybe someone from IPR with a season partner... these can rotate through)

Support

Online Pledge Form
- basic form
- no navigation bar
- empty header
- only footer is contact info

How can this be more useful?
- 

How can this be more attractive?
- is there a reason the basic content is missing from this page? It looks out of place
- tiny font on Next button

Leadership Circle
- thank you to donors
- description
- photo of donors
- link to donor form
- circle benefits
- more info, phone#

How can this be more useful?
- re-order so description is first
- list circle members

How can this be more attractive?
- 

Membership
- info about pledging
- link to MemberCard page w/ card pic
- more info phone# and email

How can this be more useful?
- can this information be condensed?

How can this be more attractive?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Underwriting</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|• contact info  
• info & thank you  
• list of current underwriters w/ links| How can this be more useful?  
• submission form instead of phone/email  
How can this be more attractive?  
• |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Car Donation</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• external site w/ Cartalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>About</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advisory Council</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|• descriptions & contact info  
• list of 2013-14 council members| How can this be more useful?  
•  
How can this be more attractive?  
• photos|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Awards</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|• overview  
• specific awards & recipients, organized by year  
  • some include a link to more info about the award  
• photo| How can this be more useful?  
• “sort by” options (year, award, recipient)  
• description of award (hideable)  
• description of what the person did to receive this award (when appropriate) - is this what the links are supposed to be?  
How can this be more attractive?  
• photos?  
• any video/audio clip of award presentation?|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Coverage Area</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• brief info</td>
<td>How can this be more useful?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Station History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can this be more useful?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- combine with staff page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can this be more attractive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- fix the tiny column</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can this be more useful?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- CONDENSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- form including what position they’re interested in and some basic info (remove phone/email and have form link to appropriate person depending on position)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can this be more attractive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- photos - can we have a student staff gallery (current, then maybe one for past student workers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contact

#### Contact Us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can this be more useful?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- move social media buttons to this page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can this be more attractive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content Meeting

- Could we lighten up the color scheme?
- Pop-up player
  - ads
  - links to news articles
- "Indie" Music streaming channel - online only?
- PHOTOS
- Videos of IPR
- Header
- Menu
  - Double-navigation bar on top (second bar lists the IPR-specific programs)
- Sidebar
  - include Flickr rotating gallery, Twitter stream, and Facebook Feed in a sidebar
  - Enter your zipcode/city, state to find which channel IPR is on for your area
- Footer
  - mission statement - can we shrink this down to a sentence or two
- Home Page
  - Highlighted stories/content at the top in a slider
  - Below slider aggregate content from all subsections to populate the homepage
    - most recent episode, upcoming event, feature news articles
    - NPR articles
    - IPR articles
    - IPR news
    - The Scene
    - Morning Musicale
    - Community Calendar Events
    - Community Connection
    - Indiana Weekend
- News
  - Make share buttons more prominent & allow comments on stories & episodes
  - Written article & audio clip then a Transcript of the story
  - Photos
  - State Government, Local Government, Human Interest
- Schedule
- Community Connection
  - Logos - Link to business' website
- Indiana Weekend
- Community Calendar
  - Submit an event to the calendar (form) w/ vetting
  - PSA - Promote Your Event
    - brief info about PSA could also be included with this form
- Membership
States Review Laws Revoking Licenses For Student Loan Defaults

ByANCES
April 8, 2015

Clementine Lindley says she had a great college experience, but if she had to do it over again, she probably wouldn't pick an expensive private school.

"I could actually buy a small home in Helena, Montana with the amount of debt that I graduated with," she says.
Leadership Circle

Local membership and community support are the lifeblood of Indiana Public Radio. IPR thanks everyone who has called in during a pledge drive, made a pledge online or entertained an invitation to join the station. You ensure the viability of public radio.

The Indiana Public Radio Leadership Circle honors contributors who make annual cumulative gifts of $1,000 and above. Matching gifts from companies and firms count toward membership.

IPR Leadership Circle giving is an effective way to advance your local community through the unique ability of radio to inform and inspire.

Inspire others and impact your world. Make a deeper investment in IPR's mission and secure its future.

Benefits

- Leadership Circle Lecture – from the latest on emerging media, and the pursuit to teach journalism in Afghanistan; to a sampling of the best of the IPR classical music library, you will be inspired and informed at these Leadership Circle semi-annual gatherings.

- Two complimentary tickets to IPR events like All Beers Considered and An Evening in the Vineyards.

- Advance notification of IPR and NPR sponsored events and trips.

A Big Thank You to our Leadership Circle Members

Mark and Mary Mordue

The Mordues are IPR fans. Mary starts her day listening to Morning Edition and Mark appreciates local news and election night coverage, and IPR's involvement in the community. Both enjoy MorningMusical with Steven Tar越. The Mordues' Leadership Circle gift is an investment in the people who inspire and impact our community.

We couldn't find that page

Try using the advanced search below. If you continue to have problems, please contact us using the contact form.