

# **Enrique Gonzalez**

Sample Design Statement

Project: CNN Homepage Redesign

The following is a sample design statement regarding the redesign of the CNN.com homepage. Due to constraints involving little to no contact with CNN.com staff, usage data, and users; the proposed design is based solely on expert review techniques and not a complete research and design strategy. This design statement consists of business and user assumptions, current design faults, proposed redesign overview, and next steps.

## **Assumptions**

In order to perform the CNN.com homepage restructure; assumptions had to be made in regards to CNN's brand identity, business goals, and user goals. The following assumptions were made based on general business goals, usability guidelines, and CNN.com homepage content.

- CNN Brand Identity Guidelines
  - Use red, white, and blue colors
  - Tone is authentic, credible, and unbiased
  
- CNN Business Goals
  1. CNN's content is the main priority
  2. Increase brand promotion
  3. Increase the number of subscribers
  4. Increase user satisfaction
  5. Increase revenue
  6. Be the most popular online resource for breaking news, U.S., world, weather, entertainment & video news
  
- CNN.com User Goals
  1. Positive experience
  2. Ease of navigation
  3. Affordance
  4. Fast delivery of breaking news, U.S., world, weather, entertainment & video news

## Current Design Faults

One of the main goals of the proposed redesign of the CNN homepage is to resolve usability and content issues found on the current homepage design

### Usability Issues

*Note: This is only a sample document; therefore, I will only provide one major fault per category.*

An expert review of the current CNN homepage provided the following usability and content faults:

#### *Visual Load*

The "Latest News" section consists of too many uncategorized links. General users scan websites for clusters of information, which allow them to zoom in on categories of interest. The "Latest News" section is a long list of unrelated links that disrupt the user's natural way of scanning content and forces them to slow down to determine value.

#### *Intellectual Load*

The "Special Feature" (Spif) section of the homepage consisting of the Barack Obama image and paragraph go against the user's mental model. In the U.S. we read and scan from left to right and then top to bottom. The information to the right of the image is not related to it. Contrast is the only attempt used in linking the information together, but is conflicting with the user's mental model of scanning to the right.

#### *Memory Load*

No memory load issues were found on this page.

#### *Motor Load*

The homepage is very long requiring users looking for "Local News and Weather" to significantly scroll down the page before reaching their desired information.

#### *Audio Load*

No audio load issues were found on this page.

### Content Issues

*Note: This is only a sample list, it is not all inclusive*

- Local News and Weather is at the bottom of the page
- Only one main Spif is allowed
- Shopping for CNN products is peppered throughout the site in an inconsistent manner
- Market information is sidebar material, currently the economy is a hot topic.
- Multimedia content is scattered throughout the page and the majority of it is located near the bottom.
- Social media initiatives are hidden among news content
- The footer consists of redundant and uncategorized information
- Advertisements have priority over user interaction

## Proposed Redesign Overview

The proposed redesign aims to accomplish two goals:

1. Striking a balance between CNN's business goals and CNN.com user goals; and
2. Resolving usability and content flaws found in the current design

The proposed homepage redesign consists of a standard 3-column layout with header and footer and utilizes the colors red, white, and blue. This is the same layout used for the current design. The 3-column layout is appropriate due to the large quantity of information presented by CNN.com and also serves to avoid disorienting loyal users. The significant difference between the current design and the proposed redesign lies within the information architecture.

### Information Architecture

All of the IA modifications listed below were performed to enhance the user experience and in turn promote CNN's brand. (*see assumed business and user goals on page 1*)

- The header area has been cleaned up; this promotes navigation, registration, and customization (Business Goal: 2,3,4; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- The Special feature section now reads from left to right, and allows for multiple spifs with user controlled rotation (Business Goal: 1,2,4; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- The main content area consists mainly of prioritized news related content (Business Goal: 1,2,4; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- The sidebar section has been clustered for easy scanning and promotes multimedia content, subscription services, social media initiatives, user interaction, shopping, and advertisement (Business Goal: 1,2,3,4,5; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- Internal advertising for CNN products has been clustered into one content area in the sidebar and consists of user controlled rotation to encourage shopping and promote the CNN brand (Business Goal: 1,2,4,5; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- The footer has been clustered to provide more information about CNN and CNN services, support navigation, promote subscription, and enhance customer service (Business Goal: 1,2,3,4; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)
- Negative space aka "white space" has been added to the entire design to support clustered information and promote scanning (Business Goal: 1,2,4; User Goal: 1,2,3,4)

### Compromise

One external advertisement was removed from the new design. Removing the ad was a necessity to balance aesthetics, user, and business goals. This decision negatively affects advertisement revenue and would ultimately fall on the shoulders of CNN management.

## **Next Steps**

The proposed redesign should be considered an interim design. This design should be thoroughly tested in a series of usability studies. The results of these studies will determine the direction of the final design and provide a roadmap for future development.