

LIS 3793 Assignment 1: Needs Assessment

Alanna Burris

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Leon County Humane Society

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**General Information:**

Leon County Humane Society

<https://www.leoncountyhmane.org/>

**Goals for the Website:**

The primary goals of the Leon County Humane Society are to raise awareness about animals in need and to find them homes. The secondary goals of the Humane Society are to promote awareness of adoption and foster events as well as raise funds for animals to receive the help they require. As a non-profit organization, the Humane Society aims to educate users and provide ways in which they can help animals within the community. With this goal, the intended perception of the site is a respectable and organized place to find information about animals in Tallahassee as a way to separate itself from other animal services in surrounding areas. This redesign is meant to update and refresh the website so that users can continue to easily find the information they are seeking.

**Current Site:**

The current Humane Society website is organized by user's needs in the navigation bar. The site is laid out to promote ease of access to the information users seek. The first page users see on the site, the home page, like many pages on the site is seemingly overloaded with images and large boxes that redirect users to other sections of the site. While these boxes are helpful for users to see titles and headers visually, they are large and don't fit into the site very well. Most of the designs on this site are seemingly outdated and not aesthetically pleasing, which does not line up with the last update on January 23, 2023. And considering the site is regularly updated, its appearance needs also to be updated.

**Heuristic Evaluation:**

The Humane Society website has a few sections that don't look or operate in an aesthetic fashion, but as a whole, the site does have many well-designed aspects. The best design on the site is the site-wide navigation because it follows a logical thought process with pages linked in meaningful ways. Beyond the overall orientation of the site's organization, the content is mostly organized in a well-designed way. The pages are laid out with clear intentions for the audience. Both of these aspects make it so the user can efficiently seek and find the information they want within the entire site. Where the site fails is its home page, page sections, and the design-oriented boxes that the

site uses to organize information. For example, the boxes on the home page and the pages with animals are bulky with an animated hover feature that is not efficient nor easy to navigate. It would seem users are able to easily find information within the site but the large boxes make it difficult for users to compare animals and information across the page. These design choices need to be updated and improved so they can complement the actions of the users rather than hinder them.

### **Benchmark Analysis of Related Site:**

The site I chose to analyze for comparison with the Leon County Humane Society website was the Humane Society of North Central Florida's website. Their site is very well done and organized so I wanted to find aspects that I liked for ideas about the redesign of my chosen site. One of the best features of this site is its organization. From the home page, the user gets a sense of what the organization does, what the site can offer, and where to find what they need. The navigation is easy-to-understand and the overall consistency of the site is beneficial for the large variety of users in the target audience. The layout of the site fits well with its purpose.

While this site has some great aspects, one of the features I don't like is the lack of information about any of the animals up for adoption. This could be because of the size of the organization and the struggle to constantly update the site, but I think it would be beneficial to showcase the animals on the site in hopes of someone wanting to adopt one. Another aspect I don't like is that most of the pictures on the pages seem to have the same filter with a color gradient. It does match the site colors, but it looks too filtered. I think the site would look better if the pictures matched aesthetically without an obvious color adjustment. Lastly, on the home page, there is a blue filter over the logos of the partners. I think this could be hard to see because of the lack of contrast.

The elements of this site that I like are the sections on the home page and how they each serve a purpose. They give the user a place to understand the organization and its mission while also guiding them in their search for information on the site. The home page as a whole is well done. I also like the well-designed footer at the bottom of each page because it is large and full of information. While this usually isn't a feature I like, I think it provides important information such as location and contact info, for users who might not know where to find it. I also like that the menu and drop-down bars are simple yet effective. I think changing the bulky drop-down on our site would give the navigation a better look and feel. I would like to find a way to incorporate all of these features into the redesign of the Leon County Humane Society website so that the site can be more efficient and purposeful in its goals.

### **User test of Site with Friend:**

The tasks I have chosen for my friend to complete on the Leon County Humane Society website are one: to find the article and read up on how to reduce separation anxiety in dogs and two: to find Gibby, a cat who has already been adopted. I chose these tasks because they are pretty simple tasks that should be relatively easy for anyone to complete. Considering the purpose of the humane society and its goals, these seem like tasks that would be common for anyone to need to do, so I'm hoping to find any issues with the way in which the site is laid out and the logical organization of information.

When the experiment began, my friend was trying to find an article about separation anxiety in dogs and knew to first look at the navigation bar at the top. She immediately went to the "Resources" tab to find the relevant page. She was looking for documents on pet behavior so she chose the "Pet Behavior Library" link. Once on the new page, she scrolled down while examining the links to find something regarding pet anxiety. She then found the correct document under "Dog Behavior Topics" and "Escaping." This first task seemed to not be challenging for her. The labeled pages made sense and successfully guided her to the document. In total, this task took her 1.5 minutes and did not cause any errors.

The next task was to find a cat named "Gibby" on the recently adopted page. Once she was back on the home page, she viewed the "Adopt" section in the navigation bar. She then proceeded to visit the "Adoptable Cats" page and scroll over each picture to view the names of the cats. This seemed to be tedious and annoying for her as she didn't find Gibby the cat. So her next action was to go back to the "Adopt" tab and click on the "Recently Adopted" link. On this page, she once again had to hover the mouse over each of the pictures of the animals to view their names, again seeming annoyed. Then at the bottom, she successfully found Gibby. This task in total took about 2.5 minutes and had just one error: going to the wrong page.

After my friend completed both of the tasks within 5 minutes, I realized that this site might not be as bad as I originally thought. The navigation bar is well organized so the pages are pretty easily understood. I realized through this activity that the biggest issues with the site are the images and layouts of the sections on many of the pages. Specifically, the home page needs to be reorganized so as to direct users to other pages on the site without needing to go to the navigation bar. Another big issue is the layout of the pet images on multiple pages. The large boxes in the middle of the page are not efficient when looking for information. Having to hover over each image is annoying when users want to view multiple animals and compare the information. The structures of the pages are neither efficient nor aesthetic, so they need to be changed.

Based on my findings, there are some obvious updates that need to be made. One is the layout of the informational sections on the home page. The page should be edited to act as a landing page for users to find out more information about the Humane Society and to get a sense of what they do and where they can find what they are



looking for. In addition to this, many of the pages are inefficiently structured and need to be updated for the sake of the users' understanding of how to find what they are looking for. One of the biggest issues my friend had was the tediousness of searching through the animals, which is a big problem considering users will most likely want to search through the animals to find one they love. Based on this goal of the users, my team and I will need to create a more logical and easy way for people to view the data and find the animal they are looking for. This change alone might help be helpful enough to match a user to an animal, which is the most important goal of the website. As of right now, the site is not unusable but rather just not logically organized. The changes that need to be made would be minor but would greatly improve the flow of the site as a whole and limit the errors users might have.

### **Content:**

The Humane Society website is organized by the actions of users. The navigation bar has options such as "Adopt", "Get Involved", and "Contact" for users that know what actions they are seeking to do through the website. Other ways in which information is organized is by general categories such as "Resources" and "About LCHS" which will be further organized by specific categories for users who seek particular services and information. There is not much organization beyond the navigation bar seeing as many of the pages are static and serve specific purposes.

The overall design of the site is simple with similar layouts on each page. The site exemplifies consistency with all of the images on the site being boxy and large with the same blue and purple hue. With two fonts throughout the site, the text sections remain short and simple so that all users can easily understand the purpose of each page and find the information they are seeking. Overall it would seem the Humane Society Website is simple and consistent but done so in a purposeful way with the intended users in mind.

### **Intended Users of the Site:**

The intended users for this site are pet owners, potential foster parents, volunteers, and donors. The pet owners would need to complete tasks such as viewing the pet behavior library, the spay and neuter services offered, and the lost and found page looking for their animal. The main pages pet owners would visit would be the documents, FAQ pages, pet food pantry, upcoming events, and pet services. Potential foster parents would likely seek information about available animals, the FAQ page, and the foster parent application. The topics they would commonly refer to would be information about the fostering process, frequently asked questions, the pet behavior library, spay and neuter services, and recently adopted animals. The users looking to

volunteer would likely search for volunteer opportunities, view upcoming events, and read the Humane Society Mission statement. The information they would seek on the website would be the email of who to contact for volunteer information, any frequently asked questions, the mission statement, the Humane Society Team, and information about how to get volunteer credit. The last group of users, the donors, would likely complete tasks such as viewing the mission statement of the organization, browsing the animals available for adoption, and making donations. The information they would seek on the site would be donation information, the mission statement, volunteer opportunity information, recently adopted animals and contact information. With these target groups, the site would need to be edited for tasks such as these to be completed with ease and efficiency.

### **Analysis and Design Recommendations:**

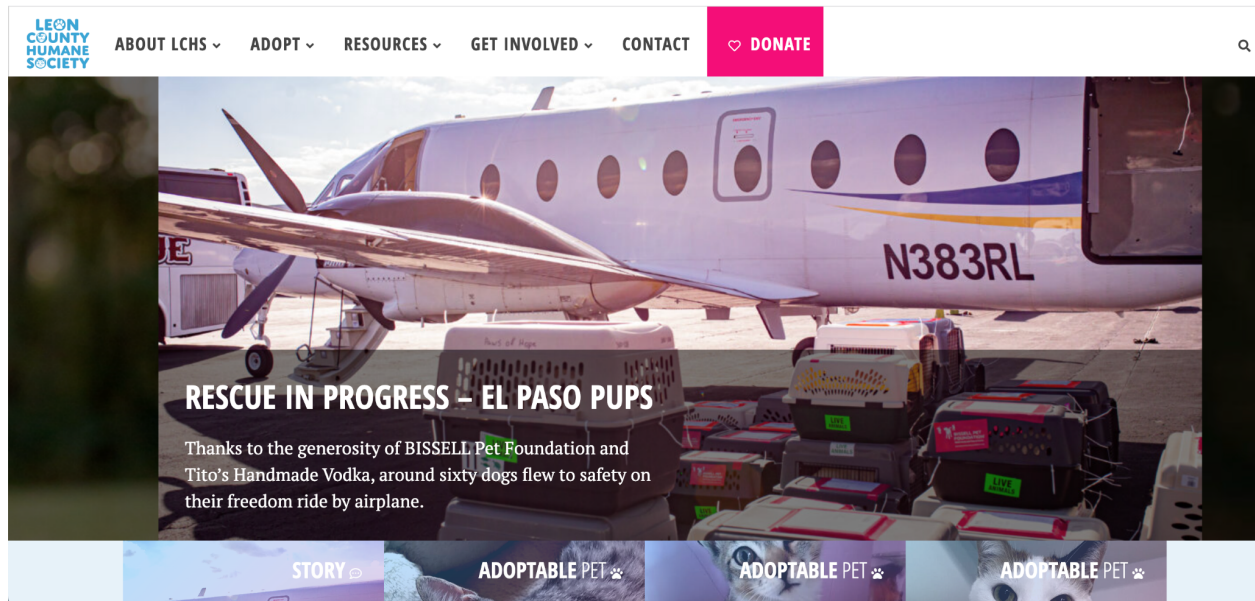
The main issues with the Leon County Humane Society website are the home page design as well as the overall design and organization choices of the pages. Users would struggle on the homepage to find information about the Humane Society and its goals as well as sections of information that navigate to other pages within the site. The layout of the image boxes is inefficient and needs to be updated for the sake of the user's search for information. Both of these aspects would need to be updated with the users' needs in mind so that the site can be more functional and aesthetic. My design recommendations would be to make the home page more of a landing page for users to get a sense of the organization of the site and the information that is offered. These sections would then link to corresponding pages for easy navigation. Beyond the home page, I would change the overall aesthetic of the site by getting rid of the filter on the images and changing the layout of the image boxes on all of the pages. Making the information and images static would allow users to be able to compare information about pets and make more informed decisions. These simple suggestions as well as some other smaller choices around the site would greatly benefit users who might not know exactly where to find information on the site. Working to make the goals of the Leon County Humane Society more apparent and increase efficiency will greatly improve the users' experience on this website.

### **Sources**

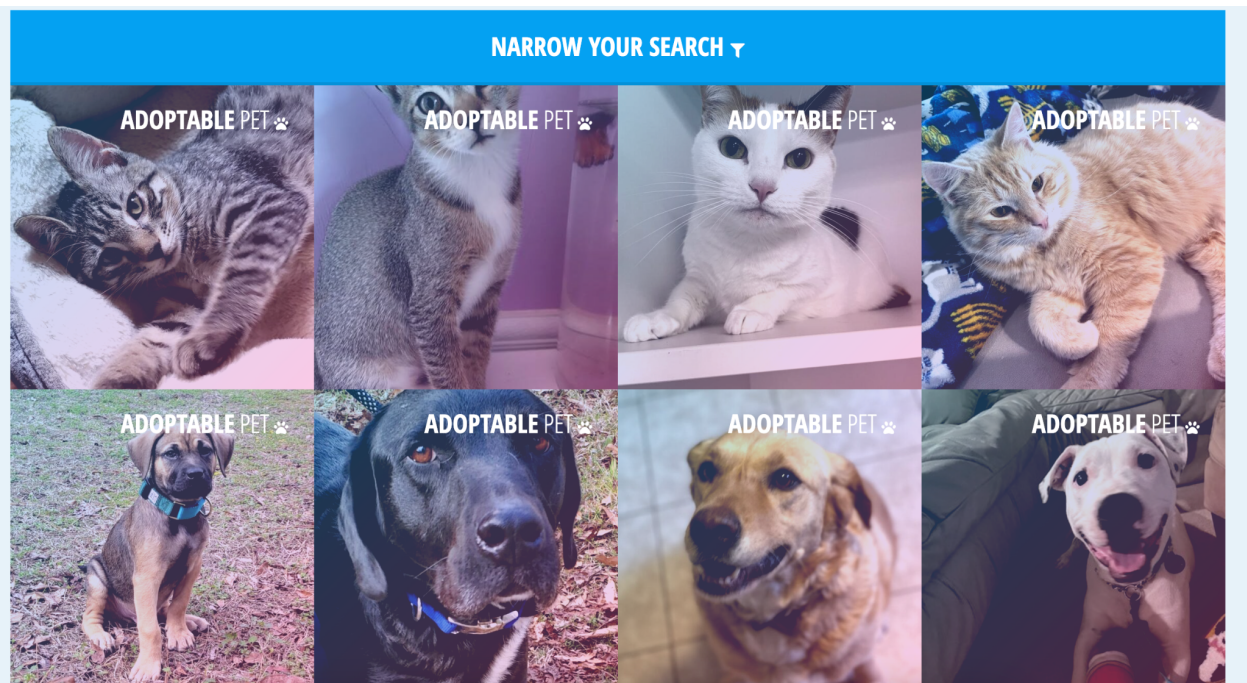
- <https://www.leoncountyhmane.org/>
- <https://www.humanesocietyncfl.org/>

## Images:

1. Leon County Humane Society Website from <https://www.leoncountyhmane.org/>  
Home page:



## Adoption Page:



2. Humane Society of North Central Florida Website from  
<https://www.humanesocietyncfl.org/>

Home Page:



Footer:

