

IA Redesign Project
May 2012

Bruce Shenitz
and
The Prospect Group



bk farmyards

social justice through urban farming.

Information Architecture Redesign of
bkfarmyards.org

The Prospect Group

CASE STUDY

BKFarmyards.com Site Redesign

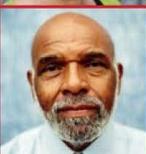
BKFarmyards is a collective of urban farmers which aims to expand food justice through agricultural production and education. By working closely with the group's executive director and other key staff people, our team came up with a comprehensive redesign that would make it easier to navigate the site and access its large amount of material.

Our Process

After extensive client consultations the team determined the steps we needed to take.

- *Determined user types and created personas and scenarios for them.
- *Performed a comparative analysis of websites with similar content and goals, both in urban agriculture and emerging businesses. In addition, we performed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.
- *Created a content inventory, which revealed: the underlying site structure's strengths and weaknesses, duplications of content, where new content was required.
- *Conducted a card sort which informed our creation of a controlled vocabulary and new information hierarchy.
- *Tested new terms and architecture with paper prototype testing, and made use of testing feedback to revise our designs iteratively.
- *Designed high-fidelity wireframes that incorporated our findings and met the client's requirements that the new site require minimal maintenance by a web master or other staff member.

Persona Creation: User Profiles

	READER	<p>TECH LEVEL Moderate to high ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Information seeker ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION None (interested outsider) EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Getting organization info; getting event info; communication EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Information at the ready FREQUENCY OF VISITS Once, for specific project</p>
	MAVEN	<p>TECH LEVEL Low to moderate ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Volunteer ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Labor as needed EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Getting organization info; getting event info; communication EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Easy navigation; information at the ready; intracommunity communication FREQUENCY OF VISITS Once or twice a month</p>
	SUPPORTER	<p>TECH LEVEL Moderate ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Donor ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Goods and services as available and needed EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Getting event info; coordination EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Information at the ready; intracommunity communication FREQUENCY OF VISITS Once or twice a month</p>
	FOODIE	<p>TECH LEVEL Moderate ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Community capacity builder ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Market for produce EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Getting organization info; communication; coordination EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Information at the ready; intracommunity communication FREQUENCY OF VISITS Once or twice a week</p>
	PARTNER	<p>TECH LEVEL Moderate ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Partnering organization ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Organizational support; coordinated activities EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Getting organization info; communication; coordination EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Information at the ready; intracommunity communication FREQUENCY OF VISITS Once or twice a week</p>
	APPRENTICE	<p>TECH LEVEL High ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Learner/trainee ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Working on farms, training with farmers, coordinating volunteers EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Communication; coordination EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Internal scheduling information; intracommunity communication FREQUENCY OF VISITS Daily</p>
	FARMER	<p>TECH LEVEL Moderate ROLE IN ORGANIZATION Cooperative member ACTIVITY IN ORGANIZATION Directing work projects; training apprentices and interns EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ON SITE Communication; coordination EXPECTATIONS OF SITE Intracommunity communication; internal scheduling information FREQUENCY OF VISITS Daily</p>

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The home page content fits on one page, so users don't need to scroll down
- The calendar on the blog's calendar page is up-to-date

Weaknesses

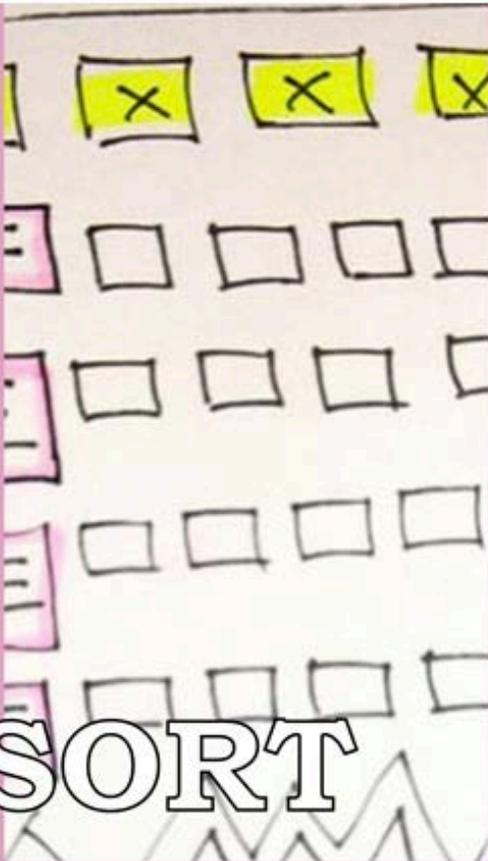
- The website's home page is actually just a portal to other sites
- There is no hierarchy in the labeling system: pages that are central to the website, such as "About Us", are buried deep beneath several layers
- Clicking on most of the site's navigational links opens new windows
- The content is neither centered nor well-aligned—there seems to be a lack of grids; content is also not well-aligned with the photos
- Content on the main page of the blog is too long, meaning that users have to scroll down multiple times to read it all

Opportunities

- The lack of a search bar means that content could be conceived as a step-by-step explanation of the organization and its message
- The map feature could be used in interesting ways; it could add a geographic visualization of the organization's farms
- The site's subject matter is very photogenic
- BK Farmyards does a lot as an organization; there are a lot of activities to document

Threats

- Every site in the study had their mission statement or organizational purpose prominently displayed.
- The step-by-step site and mission explanation on urbanorganics.com is unambiguous and visually appealing
- Many sites contain a log-in feature that leads to certain pages for specific sets of users
- Some sites include the ability to create a profile
- Urbanfarming.org has celebrities in the photos and videos it features on its site; this might draw in more users
- One of the sites included the ability to post messages to other users or a forum. This seems like a necessary feature for bkfarmyards.org, as the organization relies on communication between collective members



CARD SORT



Defined Methodology

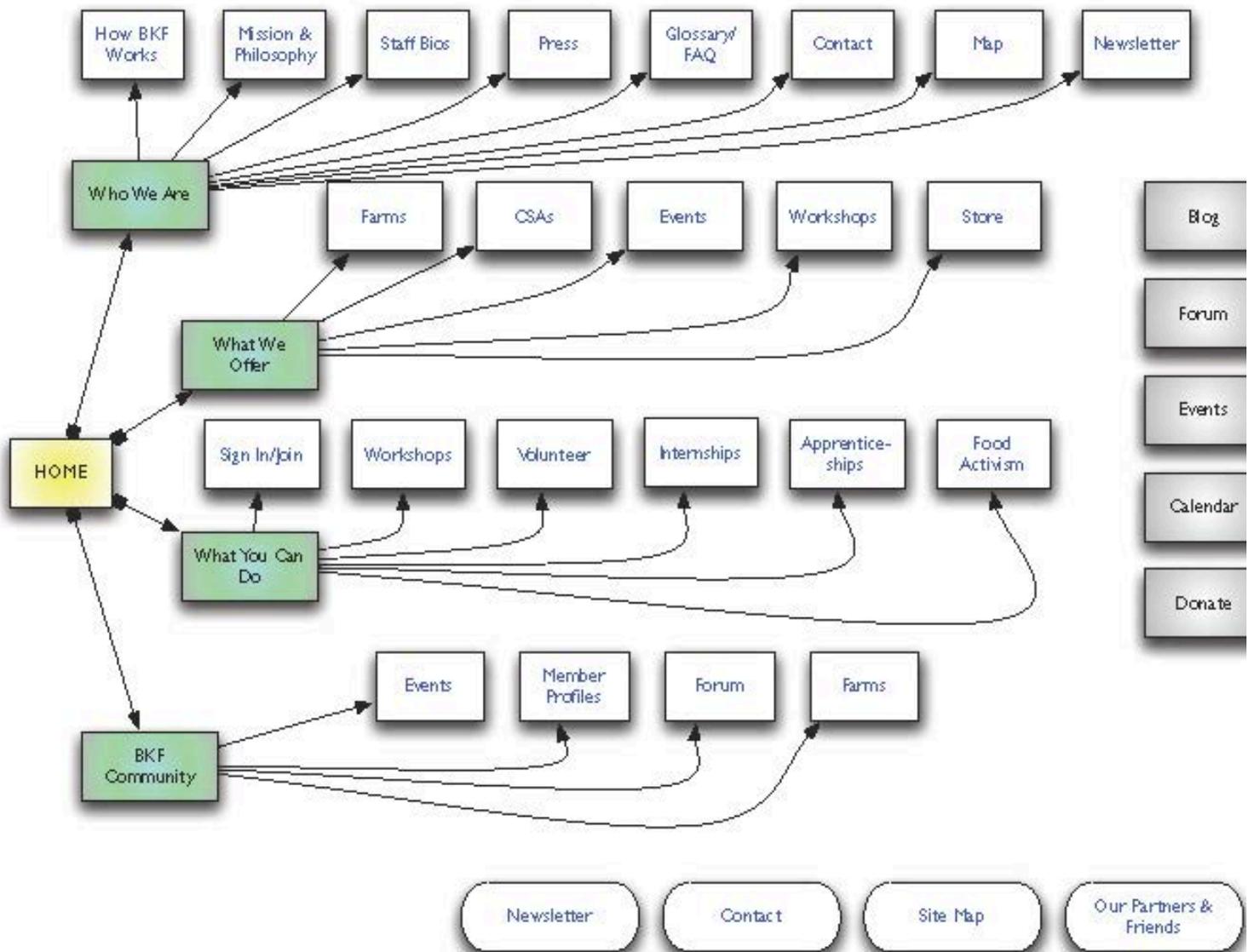
Our card sort was designed to create the most appropriate user-centered design for bk farmyards (www.bkfarmyards.com). Forty-six (46) cards labeled with singular aspects from our content inventory were distributed to ten (10) test-subjects. These subjects were asked to group similar cards together in order to determine how users are likely to find information on bk farmyard's website. Additionally, these final grouping of cards were then given labels by the test-subjects so that we could understand the lexicon users use and understand. Through various testing, our design team was able to determine a specific controlled vocabulary for the client's site as well as construct an information hierarchy.

User Observations

- Several users brought up the idea of utilizing a sidebar or footer navigation to separate the "informational" aspects of bk farmyards from the more program-oriented content.
- The "Flowers" card was often difficult to place among groups for the users.
- The broad consensus from the users was there was an abundance of varied content often making testing frustrating or confusing for the test-subject. The presence of these sentiments led our group to determine ways of delineating content so that the purpose of each piece of content was intelligible.
- A user suggested the idea of a "glossary" to introduce and define certain words or terminologies to an audience who may not be familiar with the idiom urban farmers.



Proposed Site Map Based on Card Sort and Paper Prototyping Research



1  **bk farmyards** *SOME KIND OF CATCHY TAGLINE*

2

Who We Are	What We Offer	What You Can Do	BK Farmyards Community
------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------------------

Persistent Elements (appearing on every page of site)

1 Logo, site title, and tagline

3 Right-hand menu appears on every page, links directly to items

2 Main navigation menu drops down to navigate through entire site

4 Bottom navigation line for site and organizational information

Blog
Forum
Events
Workshops
Calendar
Donate

4 Newsletter | Contact Us | Site Map | Our Partners & Friends