



COMMUNICATING DANISH BICYCLE CULTURE TO VISITORS IN COPENHAGEN

The Design of a Cycling Guide for the Dansk Cyklist Forbund

An Interactive Qualifying Project submitted to the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic
Institute in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of
Science

Submitted by:
Adam Tragellis
Katarina Lopez
Andrei Ilyashenko

Professor Holly K. Ault, Faculty Advisor

In Cooperation With

Dansk Cyklist Forbund webmaster Michael Hammel

Dansk Cyklist Forbund

May 11, 2010

This report represents the work of three WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its web site without editorial or peer review.

Executive Summary

The city of Copenhagen has a historical and established culture with many unique characteristics distinguishing it from other cities around the world. One particularly unique element of Copenhagen's culture is its bicycle culture. The term bicycle culture encompasses many different aspects related to cycling. Bicycle culture is used to discuss a region's or a group of people's cycling infrastructure, cycling ridership, learned behaviors, attitudes, practices of cyclists, cycling safety and policy, cycling organizations, and cycling subcultures. Denmark as a whole, especially the city of Copenhagen, has a world-renowned and established bicycle culture. Since bicycle culture is a complex entity, it is a difficult concept to grasp for those who are unfamiliar with it. Previously, there was no existing cycling resource in Denmark to inform visitors about either the practical or unique aspects of Danish bicycle culture. Visitors who wish to cycle in Copenhagen could benefit greatly from an informative cycling resource. In fact, the Danish Institute for Study Abroad, a school for American students studying in Copenhagen, and the American Embassy in Copenhagen contacted the sponsor of this project, the Danish Cyclists Federation, asking for such a resource. The Danish Cyclists Federation displayed the egalitarian nature of the Danish people by wanting to facilitate the inclusion of visitors to Copenhagen into Danish bicycle culture and responding to this request by initiating this Interactive Qualifying Project in collaboration with WPI.

The goal of this project was to assist the Danish Cyclists Federation in communicating bicycle culture to visitors and tourists planning to cycle in Copenhagen. The group created a web-based cycling resource called Cycle Guide (cycleguide.dk), which is intended to inform users of the basics of cycling in order to cycle safely and without intimidation. Along with safety and practical information, the guide is meant to be used as a way to explain other elements, and provide a means of facilitating immersion into Danish bicycle culture.

Many strategies were implemented to learn about bicycle culture to an extent great enough to effectively convey it to visitors in Copenhagen. Extensive research, interviews, on-site observation, and fieldwork were conducted on the history of cycling in Denmark, elements of Copenhagen's bicycle culture (cycling infrastructure, cycling ridership, cycling organizations, etc.), bicycle cultures from other countries, existing cycling resources, our target audiences' make-up and needs, potential forms of media for the guide, and methods of increasing awareness of the guide.

One of the key findings was the dynamics of the cycling infrastructure. The roads were categorized according to their safety for cyclists, and annotated pictures were created for each road type. The group found a resource that explains the different intersection types. Also, a complete list

of road signs along with explanations in Danish was obtained. For the confusing signs that one would see regularly, the explanations were translated into English.

Additionally, information on the cycling rules and behaviors of cyclists in Copenhagen was obtained. This information included the full list of formal rules such as the rule for turning right on a red light, and how to legally perform a left turn. The common cyclist behaviors, including illegal behaviors, were investigated through interviews with the Copenhagen Police and Danish Cyclist Federation workers as well as through fieldwork. The group also learned about what cycling tips are useful for people cycling in Copenhagen for the first time from interviews with a representative from Wonderful Copenhagen (the primary tourism company in Copenhagen), owners of bicycle renting companies such as Københavns Cyklebørs and Baisikeli, International Students, and from the group's own experience.

Analysis of the target audience was another important objective. The target audience was divided into two main groups: short term visitors, and extended stay visitors. Through interviews of target audience members as well as people knowledgeable about the target audience, the group determined what content would be most useful to the target audience and what mode of communication would be best suited for relaying this information to the target audience.

Aside from Copenhagen's bicycle culture and the target audience, research was done into various media that could be used to communicate the information that was gathered. This included research into pamphlets/leaflets as well as web based media such as wikis, blogs, Youtube videos, and Facebook groups.

From the analysis of this information, several strong points of the web-based blog media were identified. Blogs are easily accessible, facilitate online communication, and do not require one to build a website from scratch. For example the popular, well-established blog platform WordPress has premade themes and layouts that can be easily customized. Many of the interviewees confirmed that a blog was a form of media that they would use to learn about cycling culture. The concept of using a blog was also well received by the bike renting companies that were interviewed; interest was expressed in linking to the blog.

Based on this analysis, the group decided to create a Wordpress blog to effectively communicate Danish bicycle culture to visitors to Copenhagen. The blog created, Cycle Guide (cycleguide.dk), serves as a means for tourists to have access to what the group determined to be the most important and relevant information on cycling in Copenhagen. Figure 1 shows the blog in its initial state. The groups that have an interest in promoting Cycle Guide were contacted and informed of the blog's existence. Many of them agreed to link to Cycle Guide and thus increase awareness of it. Additionally social media such as Facebook and Youtube were utilized to increase

awareness of Cycle Guide. Also the group developed strategies to continue increasing awareness and creating content for Cycle Guide after the group leaves Copenhagen.

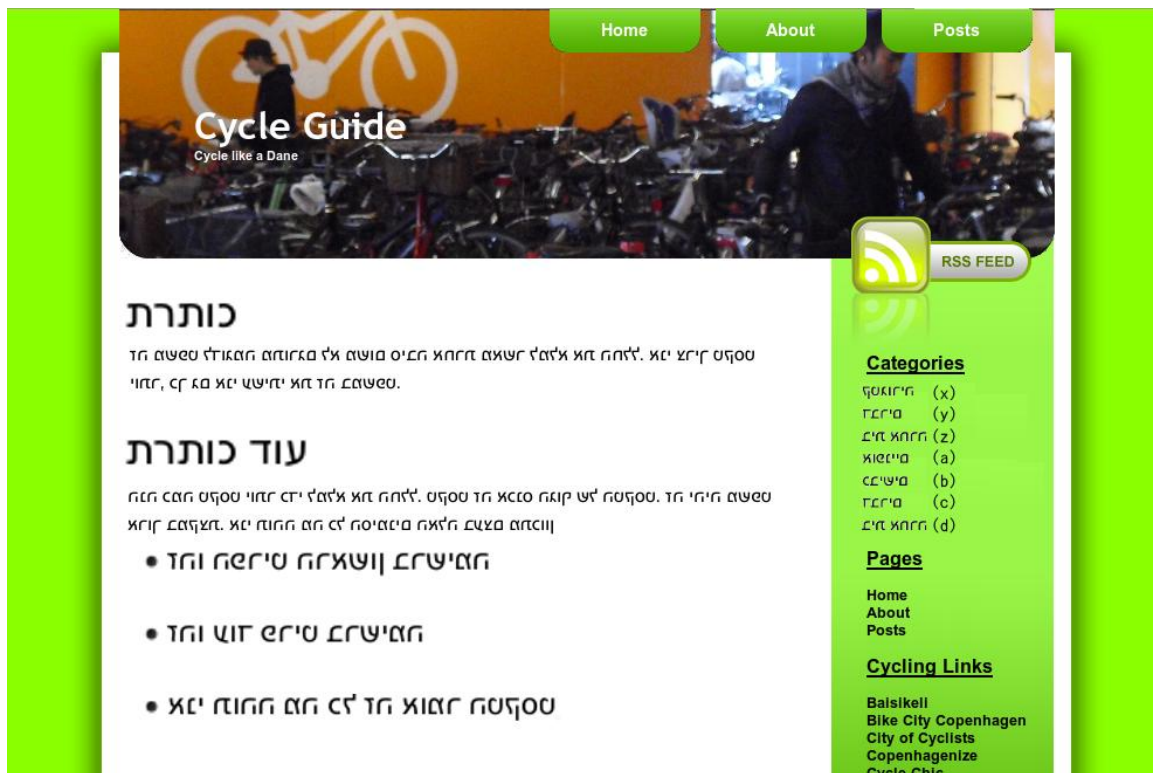


Figure 1: Showing the blog in its initial state. The content has been filtered out of the screen shot.

Cycle Guide has two main focuses. One focus is articles and media that discuss the practical matters of cycling. This section includes items such as: instructional videos, written explanations of certain maneuvers and traffic signs, top ten cycling tips, basic advice, road rules, and infrastructural related posts. The other focus is content that discusses unique aspects of Danish bicycle culture. This section contains photos of cycling Danes doing what they perceive as everyday and normal, but outside observers would perceive as out of the ordinary. Users will also be able to make posts on the blog themselves, allowing them to communicate with one another. Cycle Guide also provides users links to a variety of well established cycling websites. The content, usability, accessibility, and interactive capabilities of Cycle Guide should help facilitate the communication of Danish bicycle culture to visitors in Copenhagen.

Aside from the creation of Cycle Guide, it was also suggested that a pamphlet be created. Due to time constraints, the group could not create and prototype the pamphlet so instead the pamphlet content was recommended. Also, the group contacted several bicycle renting companies and arranged for the pamphlet to be prototyped at the renting companies once it is created.

