

# Evaluation of Rigs of Color Website

By: Jared Lasselle

June - October 2023

Interactive Qualifying Project Report  
completed in partial fulfillment of the  
Bachelor of Science degree at  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute,  
Worcester, MA

# Abstract

---

This research pertains to the Rigs of Color website and its effectiveness. It highlights many common communication pitfalls that may exist within digital media so that they may be recognized and addressed. The conclusions of the research are based on a survey of multiple webpages and their effectiveness in the areas of aesthetic, informativeness, understandability, and captivation. It includes an interview with someone currently attempting to increase their digital influence through good web design. The research finds that the amount of text, placement of visuals, aesthetic, captivating style, and visual clarity to be major factors in one's ability to communicate effectively through websites, and expresses possible solutions as well as provides examples.

# Acknowledgements

---

I would like to recognize the contributions of Curtis Abel and Farley Chery for their continued guidance through the interactive qualifying project. I like to thank professor Courtney Kurlanska for her teaching of course ID2050 which gave skills fundamental to completing this project. I would also like to thank Rigs of Color for acting as Sponsor throughout this project and allowing me the opportunity to complete an IQP that I hope can have a powerful effect on their mission.

# Authorship & Advisor

Author:

Jared Lasselle - BS: Computer Science

Advisors:

Farley Chery - Associate Professor of  
Teaching

Curtis Abel - Director of Innovation  
and Entrepreneurship

# Sponsorship

Sponsor:

Farley Chery - Founder of Rigs of Color

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction	1
Background	2
Methodology	4
Results of Research	6
Recommendation to Sponsor	9
References	11
Appendices	12

# Table of Figures

---

Figure 1: Survey Results on Aesthetic	7
Figure 2: Survey Results on Captivation	7
Figure 3: Survey Results on Understandability	8
Figure 4: Survey Results on Informativeness	8
Figure 5: Survey Results on Overall Rating	8
Figure 6: Sample of Website Mockups	10

# Executive Summary

---

The purpose of this project was to compile and deliver to the sponsor a website improvement strategy so that they may better advertise to the general public better. The topic of website improvement was decided on after lengthy discussions between the sponsor and myself to assess the current strengths and weaknesses of the Rigs of Color communication strategy. My final recommendations also included many ways that they may have greater appeal to an audience if they were to speak at a convention as a method of outreach.

My suggestions were based on research that I conducted in the form of both a semistructured interview with the sponsor, and a survey that was given to the general public. The interview with the sponsor allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the current state of the sponsor's ability to communicate with the general public effectively. To be specific, I learned that often times people who are unfamiliar with the industry had trouble understanding what the sponsor was attempting to communicate.

# Executive Summary

---

The survey also gave me a greater understanding of what the sponsor was doing with their organization which allowed me to give them a more helpful deliverable. The survey that I synthesized focused primarily on the aspects of; aesthetic, captivation, informativeness, and understandability, and was made so that I could gain a better understanding of the things that the sponsor was initially doing wrong with their website. The resulting data from the survey explained in detail many common mistakes that were currently being made on the Rigs of Color website such as excessive amounts of text, irrelevant visuals, excessively repeated visuals, lack of consistent formatting, and lack of stylistic choices.

The survey also demonstrated possible fixes for the sponsor to make so they may communicate more effectively such as strategically placing images to break up large blocks of text, a more diverse assortment of visuals, and proper formatting of text.



# Executive Summary

---

Most importantly, the data collected from the survey allowed me to gain a better understanding of the common mistakes that one can make while designing a website such as lack of stylistic choices, improper placement of visuals, and excessive amounts of text. This in turn allowed me to make more meaningful recommendations to the sponsor such as strategic ways to reduce the excessive amounts of text on a webpage, and to reduce the excessive repeatedness present within the visuals of the sponsor's current website.

These recommendations were included in the communication strategy that was presented to them. I was also able to create mockups of a website for them to use as examples while revising their website in the future. These mockups were included in the presentation given to the sponsor. The other part of the communication strategy delivered to the sponsor focused much more on their ability to gain the support of those observing the sponsor.

# Executive Summary

---

To assist the sponsor with this I delivered to them a list of statistics that will allow them to appear more favorably to the general public.

When presenting and delivering this compiled communication strategy to the sponsor I also included a detailed list of mistakes the sponsor was currently making and suggestions on how they might go about fixing them. The most important goal of this project is to provide the sponsoring organization with resources that they may utilize to further their mission. These resources included the previously mentioned survey results, ideal website mockups, statistics and methods of presentation that could be more easily understood by those outside their industry, and recommendations regarding immediate improvements to their website.

# Introduction

---

Effective communication remains one of the most crucial steps in successful marketing with a wide audience. Rigs of Color while recognizing this, requested Jared to complete an IQP regarding the revision of the Rigs of Color communication strategy. Jared found the subject matter intriguing and the organization encouraging, and quickly began researching methods by which to assist.

With the idea of effective communication in mind, a discussion regarding the impotence of the Rigs of Color website arose. It was discovered that the Rigs of Color website was ineffective at conveying what the organization does to people unfamiliar with the topic. Research ensued with intent of providing Rigs of Color an effective plan for website organization and communication.

# Background

---

Effective communication strategies have always been an essential part of a successful organization, and a large part of that includes website design. According to a paper published in 2011, visual appeal has the highest effect of website quality when compared to security, download delay, and navigability (*Wells, 2011*). The paper also states that in regards to commercial websites, “Website quality was supported as a credible signal of perceived product quality”. Another paper from 2012 states that a retailer’s website design can assist with mitigating the effects of other poor business circumstances (*Luo, 2012*). Another paper from 2016 offers the notion that “As online shopping becomes a dominate alternative to traditional shopping, the importance of the website’s features is emerging as a critical influence on consumer trust and experience” (*Mallapragada, 2016*).

# Background

---

The conclusions of the referenced work state that high quality website design can assist with commercial endeavors. While I recognize that the literature discussed was made in the context of commercial websites, I also recognize that the statistics regarding influence of these website can be made applicable to Rigs of Color. The conclusions of these studies can be realistically extrapolated to the issues that Rigs of Color is currently encountering with their website and communication strategy and can be useful in addressing Rigs of Color's core issue of an inability to explain what they do to people unfamiliar with the industry. This is because the literature states that website design is a key factor in the success of an organization.

# Methodology

---

## Interview

In the process of deciding on an area of focus for this project a semi-structured interview was conducted by Jared with the Rigs of Color founder Farley Chery to answer the research question of “How can we improve the Rigs of Color communication and outreach capabilities” (See Appendix A). The interview was conducted in an ethical manner and a statement regarding the consent of interviewing as well as maintaining of responses was given by the interviewee before the interview took place. Jared took notes while interviewing which allowed for a manner by which to accurately recall the responses given after the meeting. Following the interview the research into improvement of the website began.

# Methodology

## Survey

Following the initial interview with the founder a research question of “How can we improve the Rigs of Color website on the basis of aesthetic, captivation, understandability, and informativeness” arose. To answer this question a website improvement survey was decided to be the best course of action to take for directly applicable data collection. The survey was given to those that were most easily accessible by those involved with the project. The survey was conducted in an ethical manner and a statement regarding the purpose of the survey as well as confidentiality of responses was attached. The survey consisted of many likert scales regarding the scoring of multiple website variations in five different categories. The website variations all contained the same wording but consisted of different stylistic choices and formats. The categories scored were aesthetic, captivation, understandability, informativeness, and overall rating. (See Appendix B)

# Results of Research

---

The results on the survey included many interesting revelations. Many recurring themes were found while analyzing the data. These themes were layout of information, amount of words, content presented, and visual theming. The results obtained suggest that reducing the amount of words on screen at once can be beneficial for improving the informativeness and understandability. The results also suggested that while darker colors allow for a more easily readable website, maintaining a color scheme of only black and white can be viewed as dull and uninteresting. The results of the survey also suggest that one can increase that captivation of a website with proper placement of topically relevant images. The survey results suggest that one can add space between sections of text as a way to increase informativeness and readability, one can also place visuals or quotes in these spaces as a way to prevent excessive blank space in a website. These results are enforced by the fact that all websites viewed included the same text.



# Results of Research

Figure 1: Survey results on aesthetic

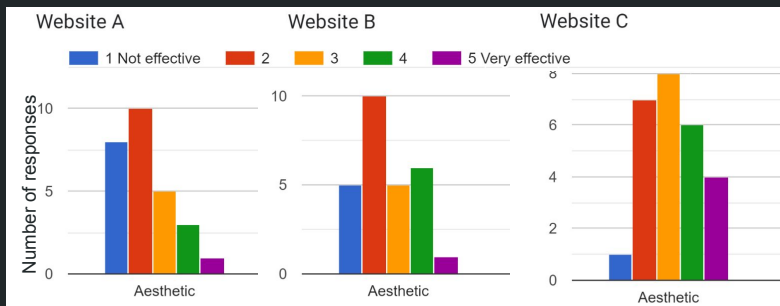
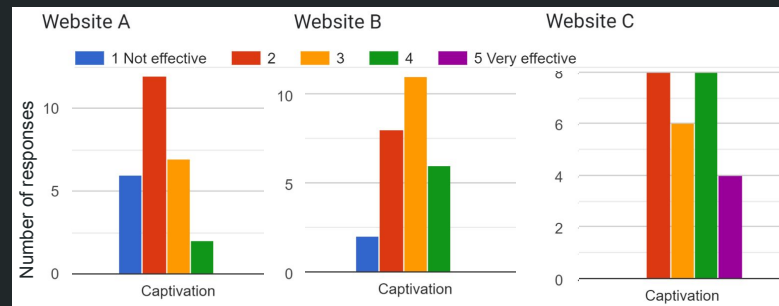


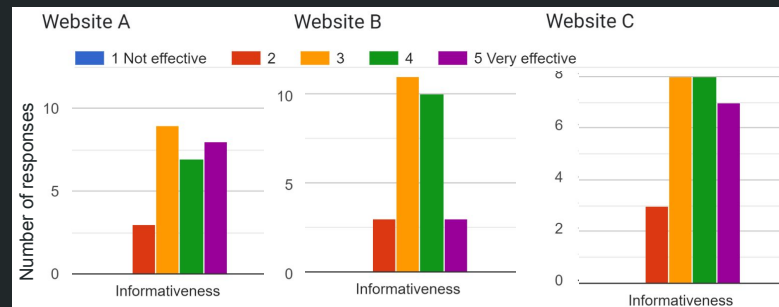
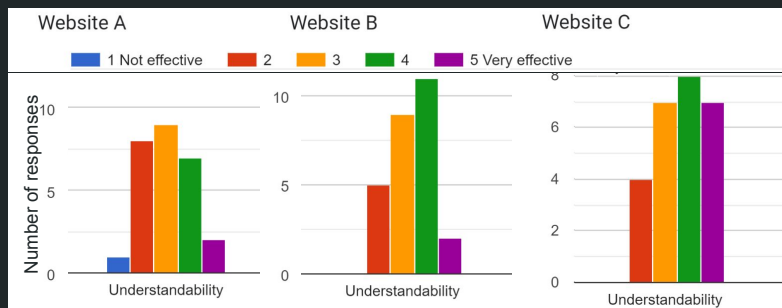
Figure 2: Survey results on captivation



The survey gave interesting results on the topics of aesthetic (See Figure 1) and captivation (See Figure 2). The data gathered in the survey states that website A scored the lowest on aesthetic and captivation while website C scored highest on aesthetic and captivation. This shows that the design features present in website C allowed for a greater aesthetic and captivation by the reader. The data also shows a relationship between aesthetic and captivation of a website.

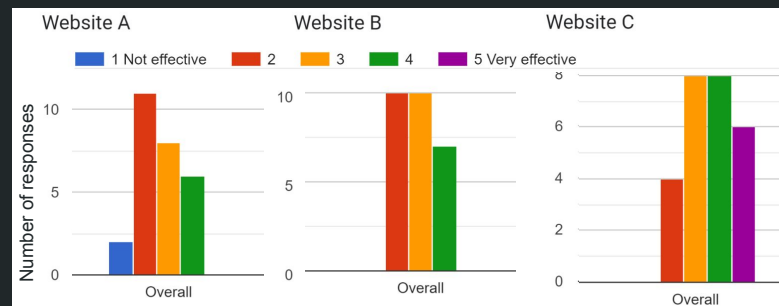
# Results of Research

Figure 3: Survey results on understandability      Figure 4: Survey results on informativeness



The survey also requested ratings on the topics of understandability (See Figure 3) and informativeness (See Figure 4). The data ranks website C as the best in all four categories and as the best overall (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: Survey results on overall rating

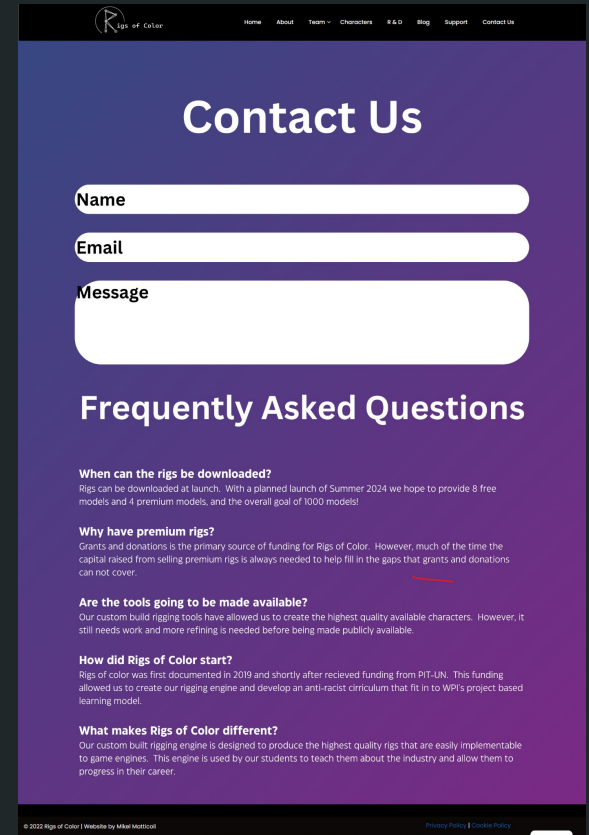
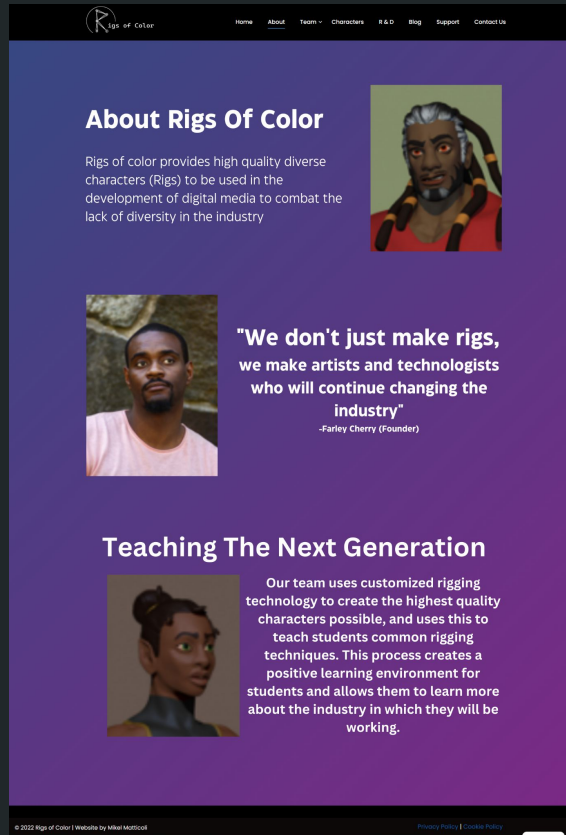
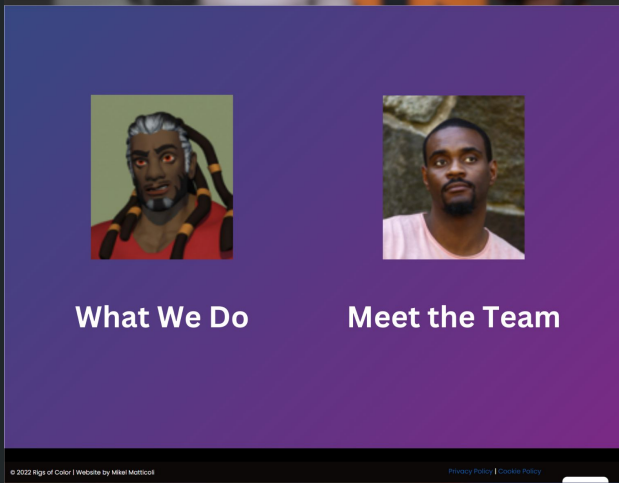
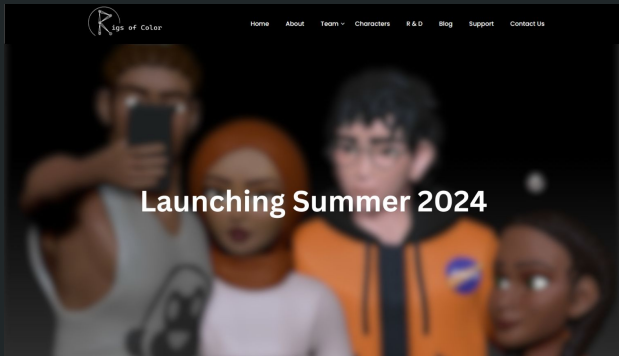


# Recommendations to Sponsor

---

After observing and analyzing the results of the survey conducted the question arose of where I should take these results to produce a project for the sponsor that is useful and will allow them to further their mission. Many meetings were held with the advisors and sponsor in an attempt to arrive at this conclusion. In the end it was requested that website mockups be produced (See Figure 6) and presented to the sponsor by Jared using his newly obtained knowledge from the recently conducted survey to showcase the ideal path the Rigs of Color website should take to increase their ability to communicate effectively. These mockups were created and presented to the sponsor along with the survey result analysis. This presentation was commended by the sponsor for the intricacies and depth of the research, as well as the provided usefulness of the website mockups provided.

# Figure 6: Sample of Website Mockups



# References

---

- Wells, J. D., Valacich, J. S., & Hess, T. J. (2011). What Signal Are You Sending? How Website Quality Influences Perceptions of Product Quality and Purchase Intentions. *MIS Quarterly*, 35(2), 373–396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/23044048>
- Luo, J., Ba, S., & Zhang, H. (2012). The Effectiveness of Online Shopping Characteristics and Well-Designed Websites on Satisfaction. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(4), 1131–1144. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41703501>
- Mallapragada, G., Chandukala, S. R., & Liu, Q. (2016). Exploring the Effects of “What” (Product) and “Where” (Website) Characteristics on Online Shopping Behavior. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(2), 21–38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43786294>

# Appendices

---

Appendix A - Interview Questions	13
Appendix B - Sample of Survey Questions	14

# Appendix A

## Initial Interview Questions

What is your target audience?

What is their expected background in your field?

What areas do you think that you need to work on?

What are the long and short term goals for your project?

What sort of analytics do you have regarding the website's traffic?

How accurate do you think the information on the website is? When was the last time you updated it?

What ways have you been advertising this project?

What sort of successes have you found while working on this project?

What sort of failures have you encountered?

How often does the people that are working on the project change?

What is the main issue that you want to address?

Are there any other projects that you know of that have attempted to solve this issue?

# Appendix B

## Sample of Survey Questions

Website A	1 Not effective	2	3	4	5 Very effective
Aesthetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Captivation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understandabil...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informativeness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What did you like about website A?

What did you dislike about website A?

Please explain your overall rating for website A