FIRST IMPRESSION

When initially looking at the website, www.alternativemusic.com, I was confused on where and what to read first. There are two side bars, one on the left with social media, podcasts, new releases, newsletter sign ups, music to discover, hidden gems, news and ads all within links. On the other side is a web cam and two very long narrow blogs about bands they want you to check out. In the middle are lists, links, videos, and promotions each in it’s own sub topic, one right after another. With all this information on its home page it became overwhelming. I didn’t know where to go or what to look for when so much information was scattered all over the page.

SECOND THOUGHTS

When looking deeper into the website I came across some pros it had going for it but many more cons. Some of the pros were that the Free Stuff, Essential Music, Social Media, Contact Information, Employee Favorite Bio’s, and the Sign up/Login pages and links were laid out and executed very well. The Check out and search bar were, also, easy to use and placed where they cannot be missed by the viewer. Unfortunately, the cons outweigh the pros starting from the very beginning. When you first enter the site, your eye is immediately forced to the middle of the page to the immense amount of information thrown at you. The logo in the top left corner, although in its own colored header, gets lost above the body of the site because it is much smaller than than text and space that is provided for it.

This website is a way to find “up-and-coming” artists you may not have found anywhere else. As of right now, it’s overwhelming appearance is hard to get past. As I explored the website it was evident what three goals Alternativemusic.com needed to posses.

1. Starting from the homepage. Minimizing the test, and creating a more organized layout for the information is where I would start. Right now, the experience of music and expression is being hidden behind the heavy text and blocked sections.

2. One thing all good websites have is an easy and accessible navigation bar. On Alternativemusic.com the navigation bar is nowhere to be found other then on the New Release List Archives page. Having to revert back to that
page every time a viewer wanted to check out a different part of the site only adds a roadblock to that person’s experience. The existing navigation bar itself is pretty sad. Some links (Charts and Events) are empty and others are nearly impossible to figure out and read (About Us, Shop Our Site, and Magazine).

3. This last goal may be the most important of them all. Organization and readability. Some parts of this site are done well while others have failed miserably. This site is set up to have all of it’s content in the center tan box (which isn’t visually appealing in the first place). When navigation to links, like Shop Our Website and Magazine, all of it’s content is shifted to the right side of the page and into the red border around the tan content box. Aside from the organization and alignment of the content, readability is just as important. Navigation to the links, like News Release and About Us, this becomes a problem. In New Release the text runs longer than the tan box and into the red border making it difficult for your eyes to follow. When in About Us, the insane amount of text might scare a viewer away. Dividing the information into section such as:

- How We Got Started
- Our Mission Statement
- Our Achievements
- What We Offer Online and in The Store

might make this page more viewer friendly.
The Sensitive Emo Kid

Landon Rayme is your typical emo kid. He is 18 years old and loves to play guitar. He is currently enrolled in a small college in New York as a freshman and is majoring in Music Therapy. In his free time he likes to take pictures, surf the web for new upcoming music, and writing deep, heart-felt poetry to read to his friends and family. When Landon goes shopping it is usually to his local Goodwill or Salvation Army. He looks for clothing that most people would pass by. His motto for fit is "The tighter the better."

The Hardcore Rocker Chick

Autumn Hardin isn’t your typical 20-year-old girl. She doesn’t wear pink and sparkles but instead black and studs. She graduated high school and is now enrolled in a Tech program at her local community college. When she was 18 she was kicked out of her parents house for drug and alcohol use. Now, Autumn sleeps her friends couches for as long as they will let her. When she isn’t causing trouble with her friends she likes to go to rock concerts at an underground club close by or look for bands on Alternativemusic.com for bands that no one has heard of. She is currently unemployed but finds new ways to get money all the time. Autumn refuses to abide by the social norms not only involving clothes but the way she acts. Her motto is “I’m going to do what I want when I want, if you don’t like it leave.”
**COMPETITION ANALYSIS**

*Alternativepress.com*

**Main Page:**

Altpress.com’s homepage is executed very well. At the tops of the page there is a navigation bar that stays there no matter what page you are on. When you look further down the page there is a lot of information to look at but it is organized in a way that your eye can follow and you can understand. There are three columns running down the body of the page starting from the left introducing you to the most important information to the least.

**News:**

On this page the main story has the biggest pictures right under the navigation bar. Under that are different kinds of music news from album releases to musicians remembering September 11, 2001. Although it is in list form the text provided upfront is not overwhelming. Also the colors used to indicate each story help make each story stand out on it’s own.

**Features:**

This page of altpress.com I believe is done the best: each feature is separated by a rectangular picture of the band that it is about. It helps add to the visual and mental experience of this site.
Main Page:

Alternativemusic.com’s homepage is very overwhelming and not user friendly. There is not a navigation bar to aid you in moving quickly to other parts of the site. One positive thing the homepage does have is its side bar on the left called Discover Music. This makes searching for new or old bands much easier to scroll through. It gives you the opportunity to find “Hidden Gems” and listen to playlists based the kind of sounds you like.

News:

Alternivitemusic.com’s news page has potential. At the beginning it starts off good with a video for a Pink Floyd box set but quickly loses its appeal. Scrolling down the page you see text and articles that don’t make any sense or look as if they are even news at all. With some revisions this page could be inviting to a viewer.

Features:

There is nothing done well about alternativemusic.com’s features page. The text and images are not aligned and there is not definite structure or organization to the page at all.
Home Page:

AlternativeAddiction.com’s home page is not inviting at all. The boxes and colors make it hard for the eye to move smoothly around the page. Also, finding the information or link you want or need is a very hard. Although there is structure in the boxes themselves the content inside the boxes is messy.

News:

AlternativeAddiction.com’s News page not welcoming to its viewers. The fond is too small and too bold. The black background is also making it difficult to read the colored text. Other then the top three stories the execution of how they deliver the story to the reader is done poorly. One this that does stand out on this page from the other websites is the side box where you can search by month and year for a news story.

Downloads:

This is page of the site, in my opinion, is the worst. It is supposed to be getting the viewer interested in the music it has. With the dark colors, small text, and tiny pictures it seems like more of a hassle then it’s worth.
Main Page:

Altsound.com’s main page is done very well. It is easy to move around it and it is visually appealing. Going through the page each link is a different shape or font, other than the right side. Most of the time using such different fonts and shapes can make the page look like it was thrown together. In this case each story and each element has its own place.

News:

Like the main page, the elements the designer used work well together. Although it is hard to read the titles in the black boxes they help to divide each story to be its own. Adding pictures to the side of the news articles also make the context more appealing even if you haven’t read the entire story, yet.

Features:

This page is set up much like the news page on this site. Like before, the dark black headings are hard to read with the blue text inside but it also pulls your attention to each individual story. Giving this page a subtle patterned background behind the white content box makes the page pop.