

Visual Advocacy Project INF3011F

Observatory Civic Association

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UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project.
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Part I: Business case & project outcomes

1.1 Introduction/Background

The Observatory Civic Association (OCA) is a Non-political organisation based in Cape Town, South Africa. The main aim of the OCA is to look after the best interests of the community members of the Observatory area and Surrounds. There are approximately 11000 inhabitants in Observatory, 40% of which are black and this group are predominantly from foreign African countries. The OCA forms part of the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance. Observatory has a large amount of students living in the area and as a result, much of the area has become vibrant and lively with many trendy restaurants, bars and social hubs catering for students. The current OCA website is very limited in design and functionality. Moreover, OCA has a minor online presence and little means of communication with the community members via online media.

1.2 Situation of Concern/Problem Definition

The main area of concern that the civic does not have an impactful online presence. The current OCA website is largely text-based with a very boring User Interface. In addition to this, the functionality of the current website could be improved. When meeting with the civic members, the main emphasis was placed on redesigning and improving the current website system. More specifically, adding the ability to like and comment on blog posts and to RSVP to events. In addition to redeveloping the website we would also like to integrate a YouTube channel for the civic to post information content regarding observatory as a whole. This would also create a means for community members to interact with the channel and post their own content.

1.3 Business Objectives

The OCA aims to create awareness of community events through online media. The OCA aims to improve the existing communication links between themselves and community members, keeping community members informed about ongoing events and projects that may concern them. In doing this, community members' voices will be heard. The OCA aims enhance the rich history of Observatory, through development of the existing communication media the civic hopes to rally community members and, in the long term, have Observatory declared a Heritage Site.

1.4 Assumptions and Constraints

1.4.1 Assumptions

- We assumed that we won't be allocated a budget for this project.
- We assumed that the Observatory community has widespread internet access.
- We assumed that the majority of users would be English speakers as the site is in English. However according alterations could be made to support other languages given a big enough demand.

1.4.2 Constraints

- A constraint on the project was that we had a limited budget to develop our solutions.
- We are also under a time constraint that will limit how much our group can develop in a short timeframe.
- Our schedule is a constraint as we only have limited time to complete a task.
- The scope of the project is a constraint as our group needs to achieve specific goals and tasks and would not be of value if we had to complete irrelevant tasks that didn't pertain to the project.

1.5 External Stakeholder Analysis

In order to identify solutions, we first established who is affected by the project. The external stakeholders and what part they play in the project needed to be identified. Below you will find our investigation into this. A context diagram has been generated to show our findings.

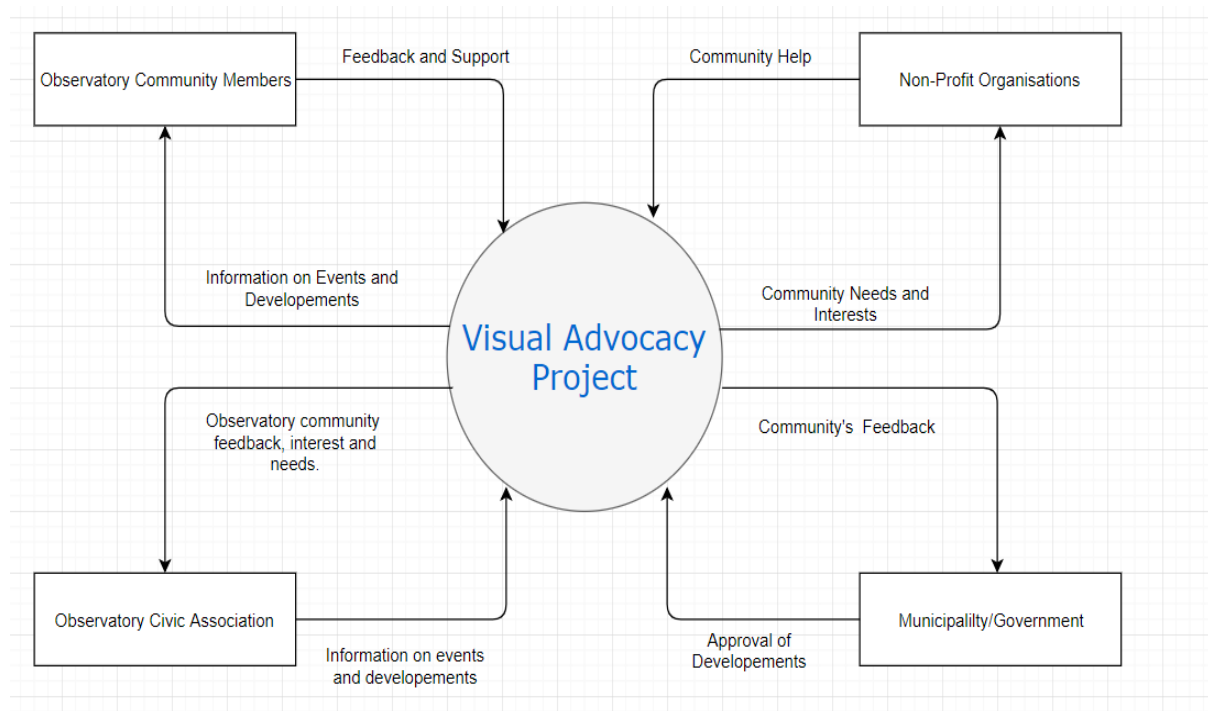


Figure 1: Stakeholder analysis diagram

1.6 Alternative Solutions

Earlier in this report we defined the problems faced by the Observatory Civic Association. We now provide some possible solutions that were considered. These solutions all require a certain amount of physical presence to back them up and will also be further explained in this section.

1.6.1 YouTube Channel

The first solution involves the creation of a YouTube channel. Starting a YouTube channel will create a more intriguing visual presence for the Observatory Civic Association to work with the community. The information displayed on this channel will be influenced by the community and the civic association. The YouTube channel is not difficult to start as anyone can make an account for free and start uploading videos.

The image below shows how easy it is to create your own YouTube channel and upload videos. An account on YouTube can be created with a simple email. The civic association can use a free email such as Gmail. The videos can then be easily uploaded or they can even live stream as shown on the left under 'live streaming'.

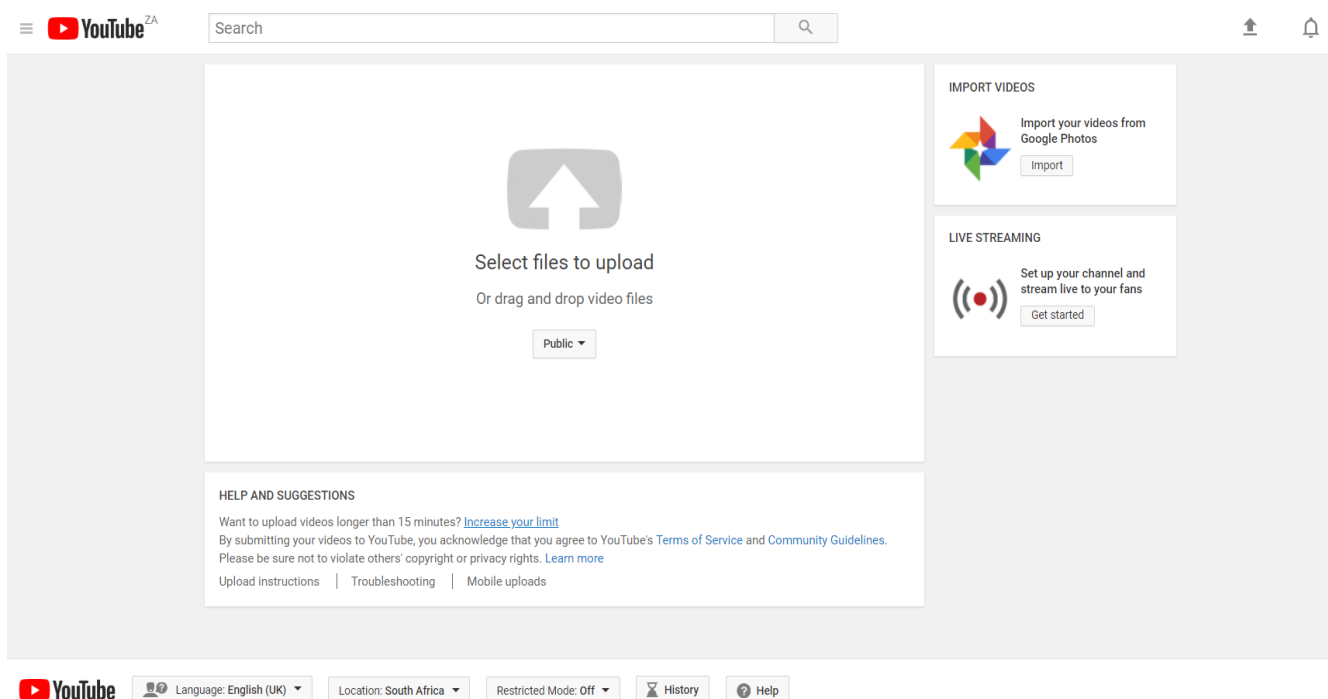


Figure 2: YouTube account prototype

A concern for many civic members is the lack of knowledge on the history of the Observatory area. With this channel the civic association will be able to make entertaining informative videos instead of their more text based efforts to date. It will be more interesting for community members to see video of heritage areas close to them with entertaining visual explanations.

Civic members will also be able live stream community events and increase interest in the area by using this as a form of advertising. Civic members can make 'top five' list videos which are very easy to make and will provide community interaction. By doing this the community can comment or ask questions on the posts, state opinions and polls can be set up to get community feedback.

The civic may higher professional photographers and video producers, but this may not be feasible for a volunteer organisation such as the Observatory Civic Association. This is not an issue as entertaining and informative content can be generated by the civic. The civic can also

allow community members to submit content therefore providing more content and interaction with the community. They will be able to work off this to better understand the community's interests and desires.

1.6.2 Observatory Communicator

This solution involves the creation of an online-based app. Community members will be able to download the program onto their phone or computer. The program will be set up much like their current website, but less text based and having a more interactive approach.

The app will require the user to register with the home location so that the civic association can further develop their database on the community members. It will be developed in a way that is intriguing to community members so that they will want to sign up. Information will be provided on any new developments or events happening in Observatory. By including social events the app will become desirable to the community members and especially the younger demographic. Members will then be able to get notifications to their phone about any new stories and therefore stay informed in case any issues relevant to them arise.

The app can include the location of historical sites and any interesting information regarding them. Users should also be able to locate any of these sites that are close to them by using their current location. This could promote community interaction and develop interest in the user's area.

Community members should be able to give as much feedback as possible. This can be done by adding ways for the users to comment on stories and developments, contacting the civic association privately and providing their own thoughts and experiences on the historical sites.

The creation of this app would require software development. The civic association can pay for a software company to develop this app, but this again may not be feasible. Another possibility is for the civic association to find a developer passionate about the area and willing to create the app pro bono.

Below we give some examples of what the app could consist of. The first figure shows a news app that refers to how you could display new stories and developments. The second figure shows how members can provide feedback through comments. The last figure shows an example of a location app that determines nearby restaurants. A similar application of this can be used for finding historical sites in Observatory.



Figure 3a: Communicator Example A

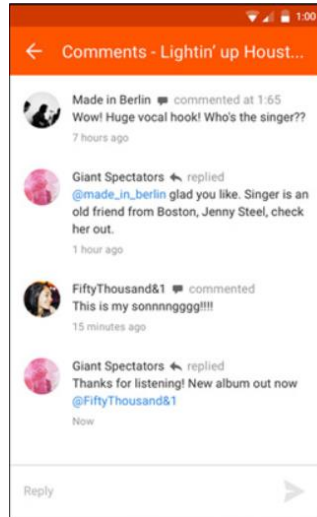


Figure 3b: Communicator Example A

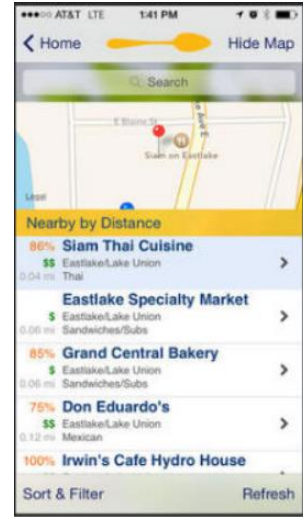


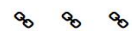
Figure 3c: Communicator Example C

1.6.3 Website Redevelopment

Currently the Observatory Civic Association has a website to inform the community about Observatory, its developments and what the association does. From investigation into this website we find that it does not draw in the attention it needs. The picture below shows the website's current home page.



Observatory Civic Association



The Voice of the Neighbourhood

About us
Members Area

Constitution
Newsletter Archive

Contact Us

Invite: Visioning and planning workshop for Obs

The OCA will be holding a visioning and planning workshop for all residents, NGOs and businesses in Observatory. It's your...

OCA Statement on Hartleyvale situation

The Observatory Civic Association (OCA) is deeply disturbed by developments at Hartleyvale. The Cape Town City Football Club has secured...

OCA Update – April 2018

This is an excerpt from the OCA newsletter of 22 April 2018. Subscribe to OCA Updates here. The next meeting...

Figure 4: Existing OCA Website

From the image we can see that the site is very text-based with a difficult structure to follow. The solution we suggest is the redevelopment of this site. This redevelopment would include

less text for the stories and rather make use of thumbnails and an interactive user interface to interest the community users in the stories. The site will include more of a social aspect to draw in more readers from the community and especially the younger demographic. This can be done by an upcoming events section promoting social and professional events.

At the very bottom of each page on this site there is an option to join the mailing list of the Observatory Civic Association. This was shown to be ineffective from the lack of current residents the civic has on its mailing list. The website is shown to be ineffective with regards to community feedback and interaction. We can also integrate social media, YouTube channel support and live commenting on news developments.

To develop the database of community members we can add a member's registration page. If the user is not registered as a member they will not be able to take part in the social aspects of the website such as commenting. This will help the Observatory Civic build their database of community members and get a better representation of its interests.

1.6.4 Physical Presence

The problem with any of these solutions is how community members find out about them. The community members need to discover what information channels they can use. We suggest an increased physical presence.

Events in observatory are a very important part of the community. There needs to be larger presence from the Observatory Civic Association members with stands at these events where community members can talk to civic members and volunteers should be handing out flyers. There could be more concentration on the social hubs such as the River Club near The Observatory and bars such as Trenchtown. Members can also gain awareness at Fun Runs, Picnics and Markets. In areas where there is something being sold, like Markets and Fun Runs, there can be discounts for community members that sign up for the mailing list. All this physical presence will help the civic association promote community member interaction and feedback. The members can concentrate on getting the website they have out to the community and promote any community interaction hubs they decide to pursue in the future.

1.7 Final Solution

After meeting with the observatory civic members, we could establish the final solution to the problem description. The civic members were very interested in a redevelopment of the website. While the civic was interested in the YouTube channel, it is believed they do not need the plan to be further investigated and established in this report, but to rather provide YouTube integration in the redevelopment of the Website. The Observatory communicator was believed to be infeasible and they lacked expertise to accomplish this.

1.7.1 Website Redevelopment

In this solution we will describe what needs to be considered, what the solution will do to deal with the problem definition and how the website will be redeveloped. To do this we must first look at the cost and how it will be developed.

Cost and Development

The Observatory Civic Association consists of volunteer members from the community. This means funds and expertise could be lacking when redeveloping a website. Today this is not much of an issue. Volunteer members from the Civic Association can design and implement a website with little expertise. WIX.com provides an easy platform to design and then publish the website. This online platform provides an easy to use drag and drop interface with many templates for design. The only costs involved with this are time from volunteers and an advised \$19.91 (around R250) per month plan with WIX which allows the publishing of the website to your chosen domain among other things. We advise this WIX plan because it allows for unlimited bandwidth, 10 GB storage and removes WIX advertisement. These all prove necessary for future expansion of the site. The image below shows potential plans for the online WIX platform.

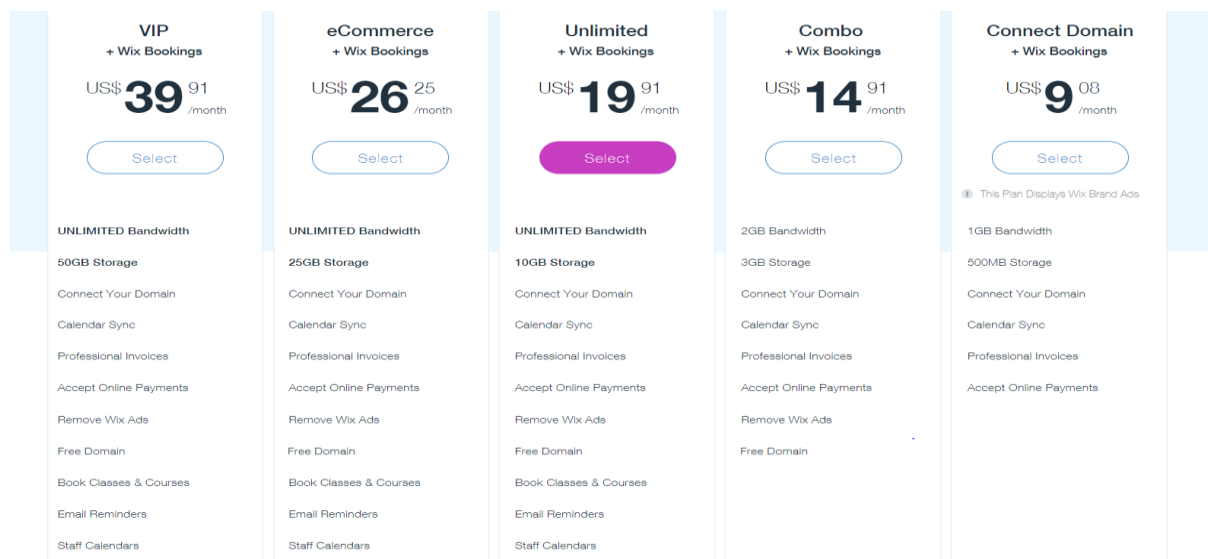


Figure 5: Price Plan for Wix.com

1.7.2 Interface Issues

For the successful redevelopment of this website we must consider the failings of the previous website. As we have discussed before the website is extremely text based and not very interactive. In the new design of the website there should be a concentration on images and icons. News stories should have a thumbnail and a simple title to draw readers in. These can be easily updated by Civic members. The most important aspect should be the redesign of the home page which currently is not intriguing and desirable to users especially from the younger demographic. Below we have an example of a more visually appealing home page with simple and to the point explanations. Behind the words ‘the voice of the community’ there is an easily found video of Observatory which is more visually appealing and will grasp the reader more effectively.

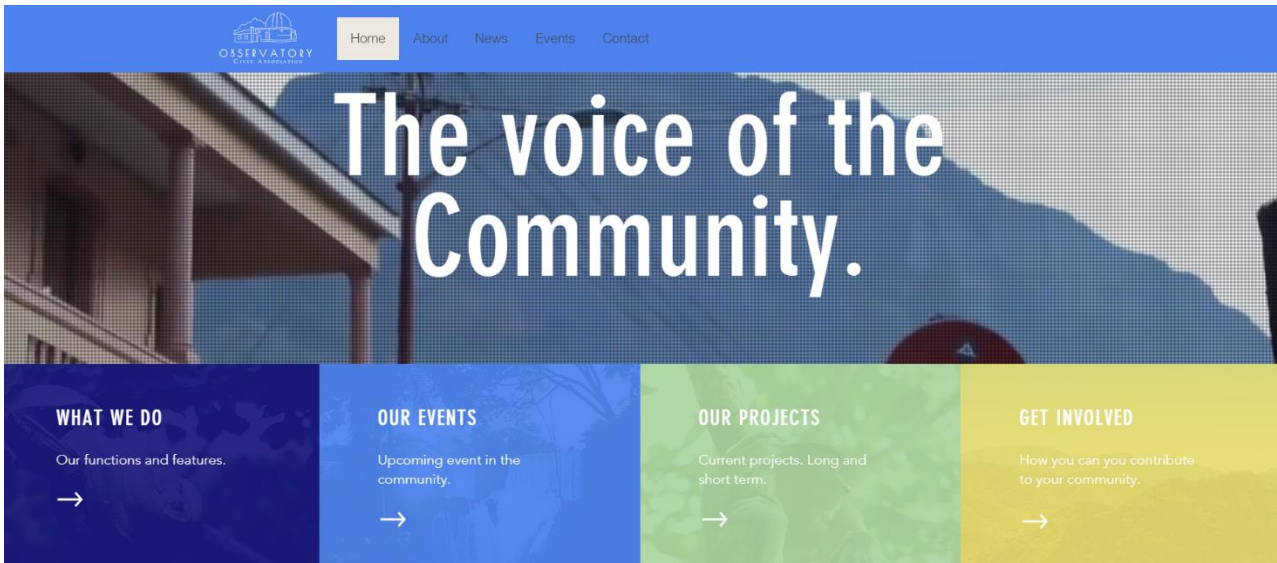


Figure 6a: Website prototype – Home Page

1.7.3 Database Development and Registration

Although interface design is an aspect that needs to be considered, it is not the main element of the solution solving the problem definition. We believe the website must have methods of gaining more community member interest and being as informative to those community members as possible. In order to do this the Civic Association needs to build its database of community members to get a better representation of the community as a whole. This should be done by making a registration process on one of the pages. The current site allows you to sign up for a newsletter but does not allow registration. The difference is in the motivation to register. This will be explained later in this solution. Below there is an example of the proposed registration page.

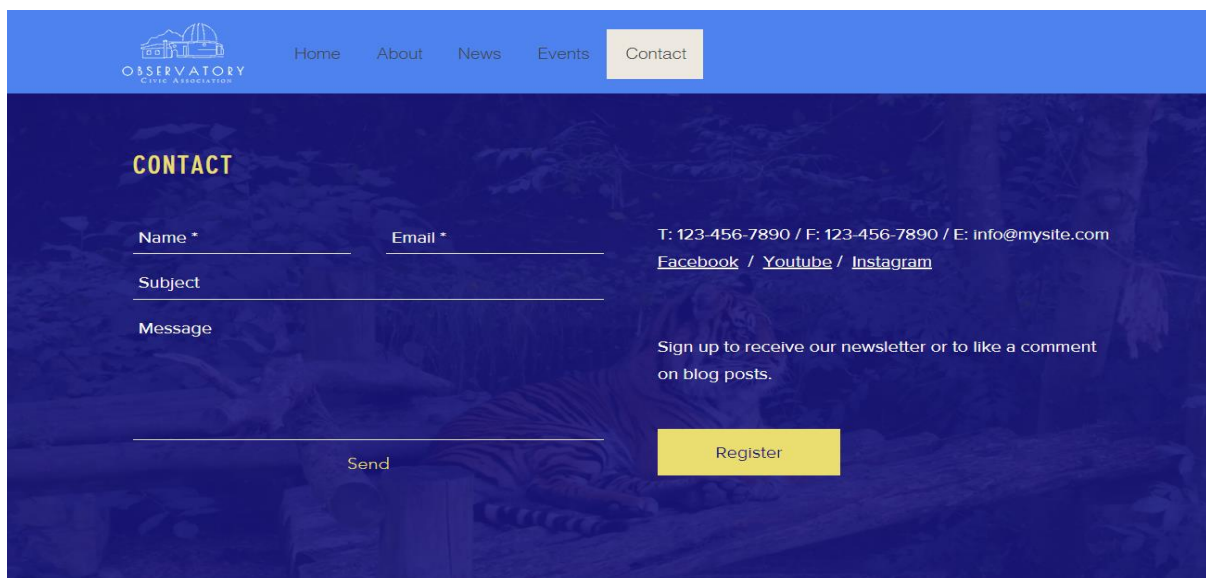


Figure 6b: Website prototype – Contact Page

1.7.4 Social Aspect

A major issue for the civic association is generating interest in the community especially from the younger demographic. We believe the implementation of a social aspect in the website will generate more interest. Observatory is home to many social events and these should be advertised on the site. An example of this is given below.

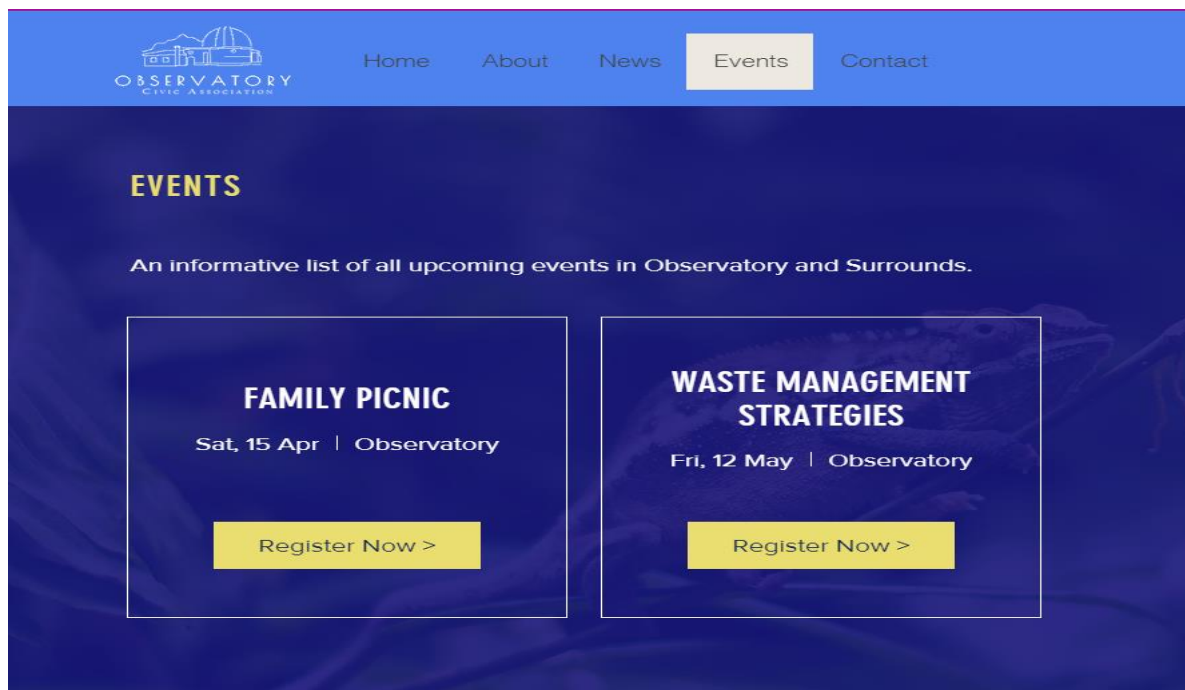


Figure 6c: Website prototype – Events Page

Website traffic will improve as interest in these events increases. More community members will now be looking at the different aspects of the website. Therefore, the next step is to entice community members to register their information. We believe this can be done by adding a more communicative approach to the website. The civics goal is to get information about Observatory out into the community and so they upload news stories and information. This information should allow feedback and opinions from users. We suggest this should only be possible with registration from the user. This allows for the civic to develop its database on the community and have a more relevant interpretation of its community as a whole instead of its current lack of participation. Below we give an example of the news stories and the option to comment. From the image you can see that the option to login/sign up must be completed first in the top right corner.

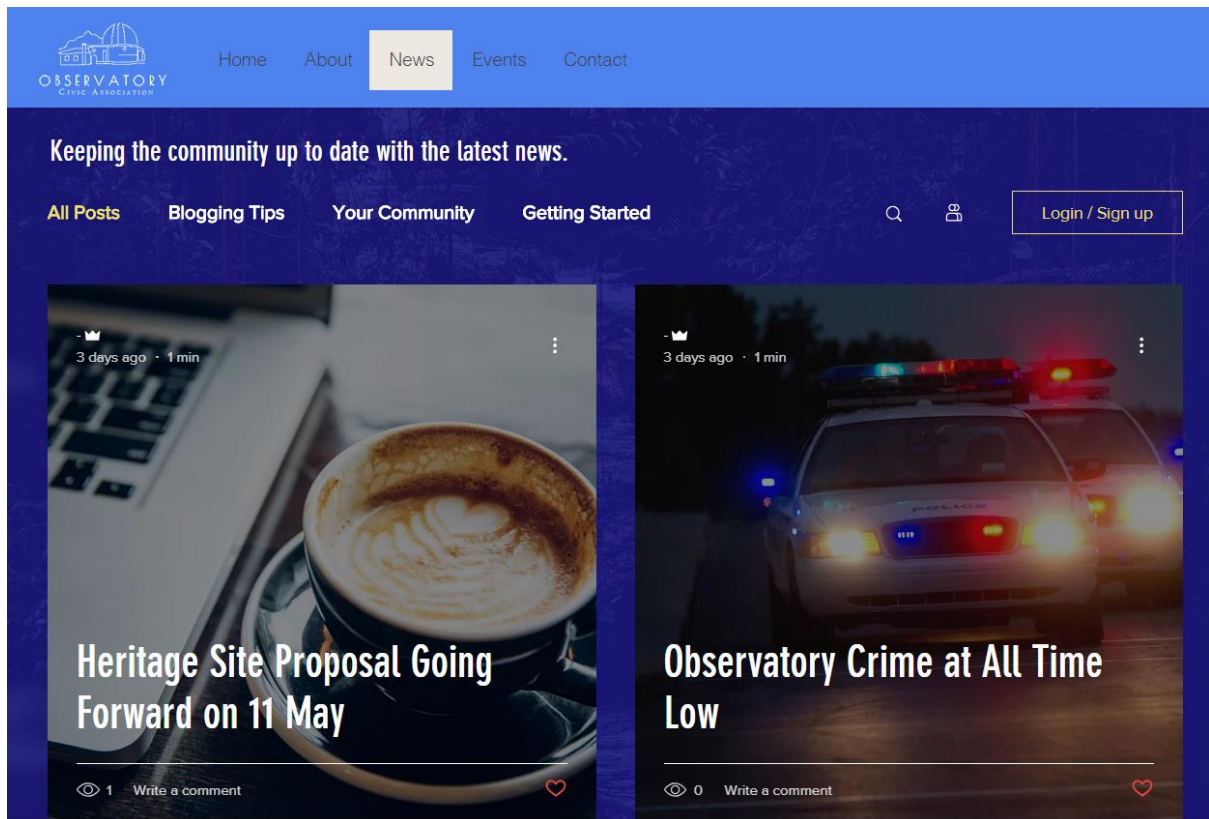


Figure 6d: Website prototype – News Page

Lastly a lot of information is spread through media these days. Therefore, the site should also be integrated with media which can include the YouTube channel previously mentioned as a potential solution and more. This is not difficult to do and WIX provides options for this. There is also a lot of support on the internet in case the Civic association wishes to expand this further.

1.7.5 Benefits

The solution we've discussed has dealt with many issues revolving around the problem definition. It is difficult to fully deal with the problem due to it being a very broad issue. We believe this solution has dealt with this well. Below is a summary of the benefits we believe the solution accomplishes:

- Existing Software and Help – WIX.com provides easy platform and there are many tutorials to follow.
- Generates Community Interest – By including big social events the website will generate more traffic.
- Allows for Community Feedback – Feedback on stories and developments in the community is built into the solution.
- Develops Database of Community – Registration of members allows for better understanding of the community demographic.
- Provides Platform for Future Expansion – This solution can be built on and expanded. For example, the inclusion of other media that will be linked to the site.

Part II: Project planning & implementation

2.4.4 Prototyping & Testing

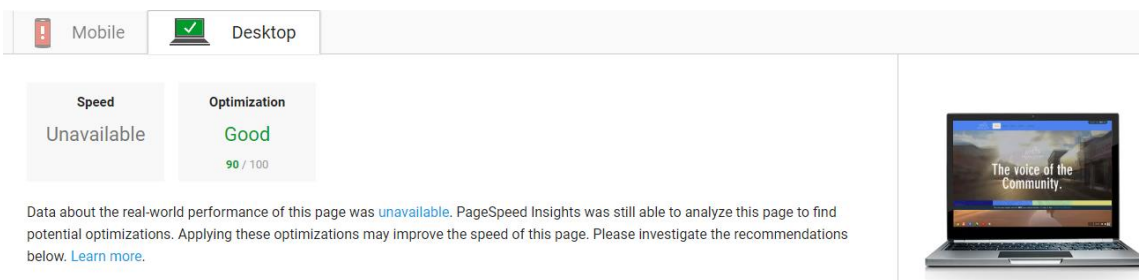
We designed a proposed prototype for a website using Wix. Although this is a very rough initial design, we believe that we adequately incorporated all the major functionality points as specified by the civic members. It is an easy-to-use interactive UI that has vastly superior functionality to the existing website. The site can be viewed at:

<https://adamitchellchin.wixsite.com/mysite-1>

We plan to have our site tested by the civic members themselves as well as community members of observatory. We tested the performance of the website at

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

The performance of the site was rated good at 90% (as pictured below)



2.4.5 Exhibits/Outputs

- Business Case
- Project Charter
- Website prototype
- Directions for website development and implementation
- Poster

2.4.6 Challenges and Limitations

- The OCA is NGO and typically doesn't have a lot of funding, thus the budget will be limiting.
- Communicating and setting up meetings with stakeholders
- Limited time, due to project deadline, lessons time to gather information
- Project team could only meet on campus and at specific times due to distance and class timetables