Executive Summary

The finished application will be available on the internet and consumed in a variety of ways not just at the kiosk
By looking at 3 sites and listing their heuristics we will get a clearer idea of what content to include plus some indicators on layout and design.

Sites compared	Overall Scores out of possible 180 points
London Design Festival	137
Bristol Harbour Festival	108
Vancouver Folk Music Festival	118

The London Design Festival Website as you'd expect is appealing visually and has got a lot of the web design factors correct. Where is falls down, is in it's accessibility and help documentation. Here the designers have not considered the needs of anyone who is not totally able bodied. There will be disabled people within their industry who will not be able to use the site fully.

The Bristol Harbour Festival is a reasonably, well designed site but is currently lacking in content.

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival site is the most comprehensive of the 3 sites and with a bit more design flair it would easily score a lot higher.

Method

Criteria for Selecting the sites for comparison

Sites chosen for comparison were: -

Bristol Harbour Festival
London Design Festival
Vancouver Folk Music Festival

It was important to look at the existing offering, that is the current Bristol Harbour Festival Site, since we need to know whether it is providing the same or differing information to the iPlus Kiosks in the centre of Bristol.

Chose the London Design Festival with a view to learning how to from industry leaders.

And lastly chose the Vancouver Folk Music festival because in size of venue, city and the specialist nature of the site.

Selection of comparative questions or heuristics

The IBM list of comparative questions seemed to provide the best fit to what I need to find out about these competing websites.
The Marketing Experiments website provides a list that is aimed at more e-commerce types of website although I have added some questions from there to my list along with some questions recommended by Nielsen and Stocks.
E-commerce should be considered because the Website/application we should explore the business opportunities that it might bring.
I also added some questions about the websites social community based on the information on social networks provided by Erin Malone (Boxes and Arrows).
I did this because I can see a possible solution for the application to include access to social media such as Twitter, Youtube, and Facebook.
That way people enjoying the festival could share their experiences with their friends.

The Questions

Asking the questions about these other websites has a context and that is what can we learn from the already successful websites. Finding out what do they do well and what do they do badly and capitalising on that.
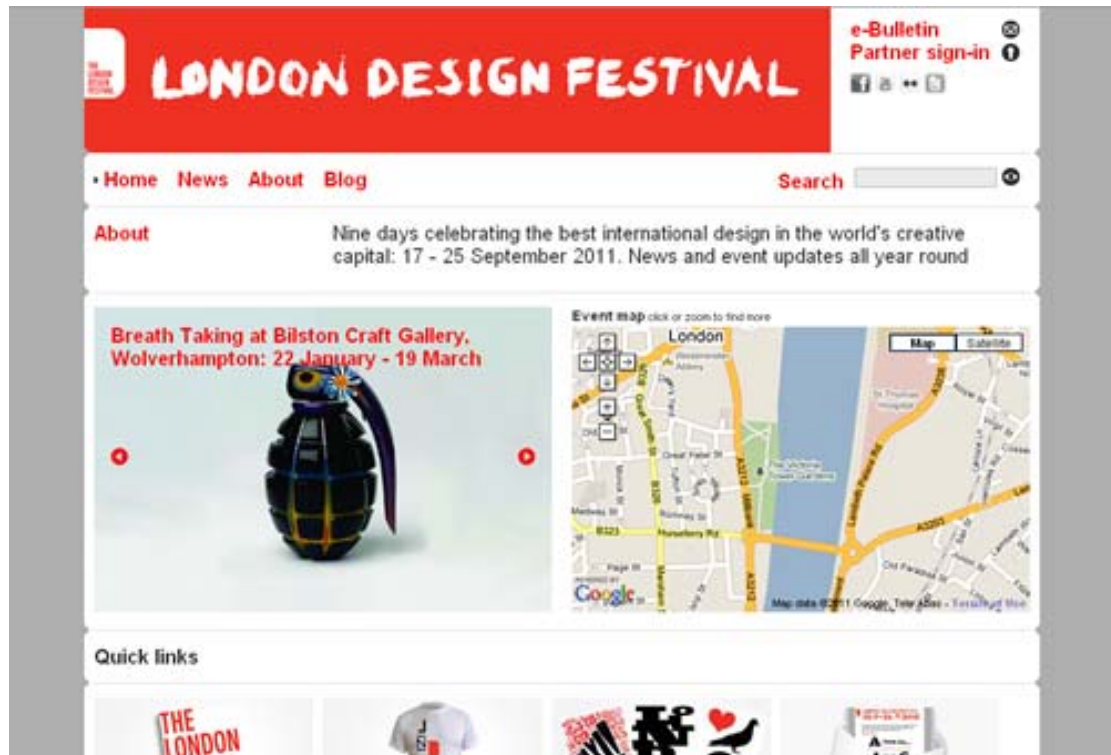I went through each question scoring out of five, five being excellent and 0 being non-existent.
I added notes where I thought it was relevant and useful for the production a web application that could sit within a kiosk or on the int

Findings

London Design Festival
## (http://www.londondesignfestival.com/)

Comment

- My Festival Feature – Just like a shopping cart you can browse events, add them to your list and print off a personalised program.
- Strong contemporary design
- Organised fairly well
- Users can keep up with news, by signing up to newsletter or social media.

Weaknesses

- Very cliquey, seems to be by designers for designers
- Not very accessible to people who might be interested in design, and excludes anyone who has a disability that means they can't navigate traditionally.
- Can't search anything other than for design agencies, that is no search for parking, travel, or help

Bristol Harbour Festival (http://www.bristolharbourfestival.co.uk)
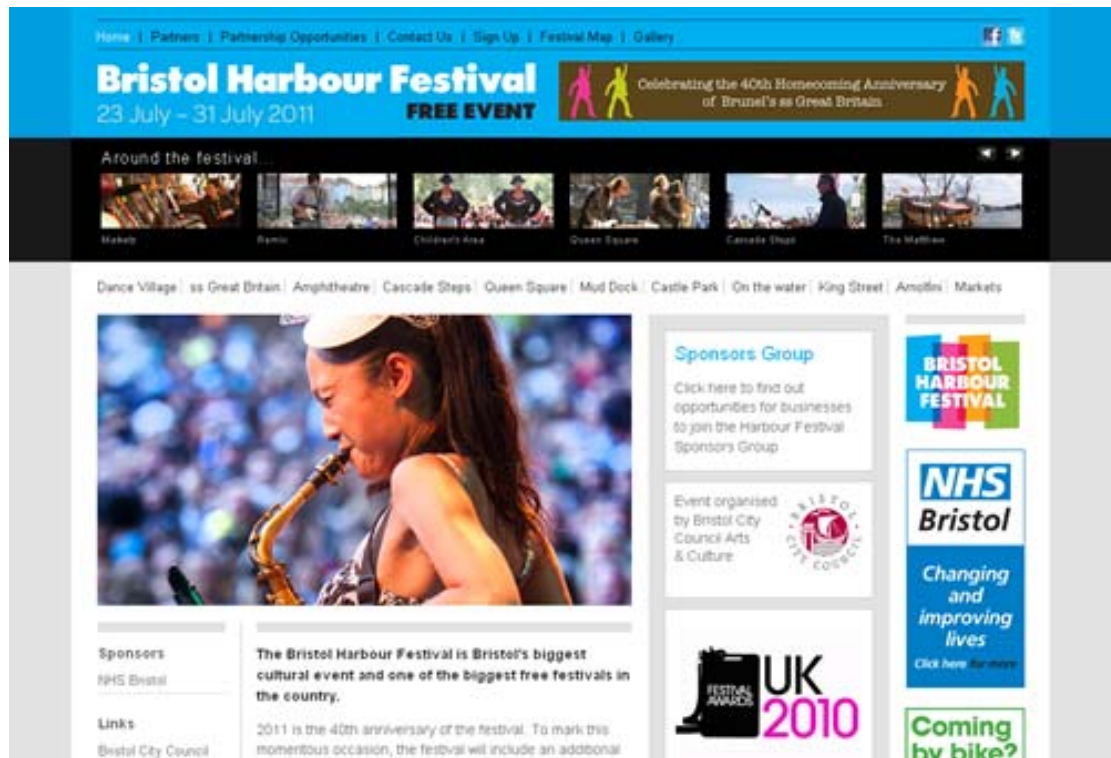
Comment

- Reasonably well designed but looks like it is awaiting content.
- Looks very creditable with NHS ad

Weakness

- Lacking in content
- What looks like secondary navigation isn't, just a list.
- Brought down by banner advertising

Vancouver Folk Music Festival
http://thefestival.bc.ca/

Comment

- Full range of extensive content for all user groups
- Lots of news of forthcoming performers, so looks as though the site is updated regularly.

Weakness

- Left Subnav below the fold
- Site is cluttered
- Site is slow to load

Discussion & Recommendations

The analysis has provided insights as to what works and some of the mistakes that are made by the websites.
For each of the websites there is an essential "take away" or UVP.

- London Design Festival – Great Design, My Festival feature
- Bristol Harbour Festival – Lacking content
- Vancouver Music Festival – Comprehensive Content

An application or website must answer the basic questions first.

How much is it?
Where is it?
What will I see?
How do I get there?

For the visitors and further information for exhibitors, such as "How do I book a stall?" and provide this information in an accessible way.

In the run up to the festival the application/website must be regularly updated with **fresh relevant content.**

Make use of **Social Media** so that visitors can like and share with their friends

Make the content **searchable** in so that people can find out the basic questions and find the things that are in the festival that interest them.

What I didn't test for:-

A very detailed report could be provided for each of these.

- SEO – Visitors should be able to find the relevant info using search.

- Adherence to Standards and Accessibility

Appendix

Sources:

Books
Information Design Desk Reference (2002) Christine Sevilla
Sexy Web Design – (2009) Elliot Jay Stocks

On Social Media
Erin Malone - http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/5-steps-to-building

Competitive Analysis Questions

IBM - http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/webservices/library/us-analysis.html

Brian Alt - http://www.marketingexperiments.com/improving-website-conversion/online-competitive-analysis.html

http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/competitive_analysis_understanding_the_market_context

Raw Data

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