

# Executive Summary

Analysing the user personas gave an insight into the types of content that should be included in Bob and Robertas Healthy Ideas website but analysing competitive sites has given clearer idea of what content to include plus layout and design.

<b>Sites compared</b>	<b>Overall Scores out of possible 180 points</b>
My Dish	168
All Recipes	149
The Vegetarian Society	124
The Vegan Family	56

All Recipes is particularly impressive in the way that the content is searchable both locally within the site and with google searches. My Dish has a very strong community feel plus provides articles and useful information

The Vegetarian Society looks like a credible and reliable source but the volume of content is vast, too vast for 2 people to generate so my general recommendation is that the website to be a social networking site focusing on user generated content. The site will grow as members add content and become more useful to it's users.

Bob and Roberta are free to add content at any time but will not be pressured to provide it constantly.

# Method

## Criteria for Selecting the sites for comparison

Sites chosen for comparison were: -

The Vegetarian Society

The Vegan Family

My Dish

All Recipes

I chose two sites that offer information on the alternative lifestyle of vegetarianism and the more extreme Vegans

They are also good because they are in the same “business” to Bob and Roberta and rank highly in searches, plus have a high google page rank. I can assume then that they are successful at attracting visitors and this at least must be partly down to providing relevant, useful content.

My Dish and All Recipes provides functionality that’s centres around user-generated content.

## 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.

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 their website could be make it into a social network where members upload articles, share recipes and tell each other about how and where they buy their recipe ingredients.

## 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 of Bob and Roberta’s website.

# Findings

## All Recipes (<http://allrecipes.co.uk/>)

The screenshot displays the All Recipes website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'Recipe search (or search by ingredients I have)' and a search button. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for 'Recipes', 'Chocolate', 'Photos', 'Cooks', 'Competitions', 'My stuff', and 'Submit a recipe'. The main content area is titled 'Chocolate + Healthy recipes (6)' and features a list of recipes with their respective ratings and descriptions. On the left side, there is a sidebar with various filters such as 'Main ingredients', 'Recipe type', 'Total time', 'Cuisine', 'Occasions', 'Special diets', and 'Cook/prep method'. On the right side, there are several advertisements, including one for NHS and another for 'History'. The website has a yellow and orange color scheme.

## Content/Functionality

### Content

Recipes

Advertising

### Functionality

Extensive Search

Submit a recipe

Join Membership

Tag cloud

Find local cooks (make friends)

### Supporting Content

News

Help

Legal

Privacy

Site Map

### **Comment**

All Recipes is simple concept of providing a place where anyone can view an extremely searchable catalogue of member-uploaded recipes.

The many different way a user can search for recipes, and modify their search as they go gives this site it's UVP.

All of the content is visible without needing a password plus it is text based meaning that All Recipes is optimised for search. That is for internal search within the site and for search engines. (Comment on SEO for content only)

The most commonly used parts of the site are above the fold

It's Help section was also extensive.

### **Weaknesses**

It is not very personal and looks completely automated with little input from moderators. (I have seen inappropriate uploaded profile pictures).

The Tabbed navigation doesn't always show which page you're on.

# My Dish (<http://www.mydish.co.uk/>)

The screenshot shows the MyDish.co.uk website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Recipes, Biscuits, Community, Carol's Blog, Shop, and an 'Add a recipe' button. A search bar is prominently displayed with the text 'Find a Recipe' and a 'find' button. Below the navigation bar, there is a large banner featuring a woman's portrait and the text 'Welcome to MyDish'. The banner includes a description of the site as a recipe sharing network and a 'Join now' button. To the right of the banner, there are three icons: 'Store' (a jar), 'Share' (a cup), and 'Tell' (an open book), each with a brief description of its function. Below the banner, there are three main content areas: a featured recipe section titled 'Spring is in the Air' with three recipe cards, a 'Newest' and 'Popular' recipe list, and a 'Sign up for Weekly Recipe Ideas' form. At the bottom right, there is a 'BrandAlley.co.uk' logo and a 'Win a Le Creuset' banner.

## Content/Functionality

### Content

Recipes  
Advertising  
Shop  
Blog/Articles

### Functionality

Extensive Search  
Submit a recipe  
Join Membership  
Find local cooks (make friends)  
Find local group  
Group and cook activity feeds (like twitter)  
Forum

### Supporting Content

Press articles  
Privacy  
Terms and Conditions  
Sitemap  
Resources (external links to useful sites)

## **Comment**

My Dish received the highest score overall.

It provides a place for users to look up recipes that member users have uploaded but also provides articles, shop but it's UVP is that My Dish has a strong community feel and functionality. She also has the backing of Dragon's Den member Deborah Meadon that has raised the sites profile and commercial prospects.

It scores full marks for the criteria that Malone says are essential for social networks. Carol Savage, it's founder features prominently on the home page and she looks as though she has a genuine interest in the site and it's community. It has a very warm and friendly feel and it seems it's all about the sharing in a supportive atmosphere.

## **Weakness**

No Help documentation. Nielsen says that even though it shouldn't be necessary if the site it built correctly it should still be provided.

# Vegan family <http://www.veganfamily.co.uk>



## Content/Functionality

### Content

- Recipes
- Advertising
- Shop
- Articles

### Functionality

- Twitter feed
- Guest book
- Join mailing list

### Supporting Content

- External Links

## **Comment**

I gave the Vegan Family the lowest overall score. This is a site that is for users to view the lifestyle and discoveries of one particular family in their life as Vegans. The Vegan Family looks home made and amateurish and possibly done by the owners on their kitchen table. They are promoting an alternative lifestyle that includes every aspect of their lives including home educating their children.

The site was made by real vegans who you can imagine being hippies with opened toed sandals.

It may be too much on the edge of society and will be dismissed by many and so is a lesson on how not to design your website if you want it to appeal to the mainstream.

That is though it's **strength**. It has an authentic feel. There are enough vegan people within the world to look past it design failures to appreciate it's content. It has a surprisingly high google page rank of 5/10 which would be the envy of MyDish at 4/10.

The lesson to take away here is in niche marketing. The Vegan Family website is not trying to appeal to the mainstream. People find it because it is specialised. It doesn't have to be well designed because people are so interested in it's content. (Sevilla).

## **Weakness**

Poor Design, no member content, no help, not searchable, disorganised.



# The Vegetarian Society <http://www.vegsoc.org>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Vegetarian Society website. At the top left is the logo, which consists of a stylized 'V' in a circle with a yellow and green gradient, and the text 'Vegetarian SOCIETY' below it. To the right of the logo is the tagline 'understanding and respect for vegetarian lifestyles'. Below the tagline is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a 'Search' button, and a 'Contact us' button with a paper plane icon. A dark blue navigation bar contains the following links: Home, About Us, Latest, Support Us, Lifestyle, Food, Info, Cordon Vert, Veggie Approved, and Young Veggie. The main content area is divided into two rows of five columns each. The first row contains: 'Welcome to the Vegetarian Society' (with a paragraph of text and a 'read more >' link), 'Help and support for going vegetarian' (with an image of a bowl of food and a 'More details' button), 'Information and resources for press' (with an image of two lambs and a 'More details' button), 'Information and resources for teachers' (with an image of a group of children and a 'More details' button), and 'How to become a member or make a donation' (with an image of a woman holding a chicken and a 'More details' button). The second row contains: 'Latest' (with a list of items: 'vote for our bright idea', 'NWW sponsor announced', 'Manifesto: A Kinder Food Policy', and 'In the news'), 'Campaigns' (with items: 'UN says eat less meat to help reduce global warming', 'Why do we make pets out of some animals?', and 'National Vegetarian Week 2010'), 'Give a gift' (with items: 'Click here to find the perfect veggie gift' and 'Cordon Vert gift vouchers'), 'Young Veggies' (with the text 'Considering becoming veggie or need more info?' and an image of a woman), and 'Running a business for veggie customers' (with an image of a man). Below the main content area is a grey bar with the text 'Classified advertising: accommodation & property / food & drink / businesses / jobs / charities / products & services / holidays & travel'. At the bottom is a light grey navigation bar with links: Home, About, Latest, Support us, Lifestyle, Food, Cordon Vert, Contact, and Privacy. The footer contains the text: 'The Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom Registered Office: Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, England WA14 4QG' and 'Registered Charity no. 259358 Registered company no. 959115'.

## Content/Functionality

**Content** (relevant to Bob and Roberta – site is too vast to list all the content)

About

News

Articles on education

Lifestyle

Events

Cooking school

## Functionality

Extensive Search

Join Membership

Find local groups (make friends)

## Supporting Content

Press articles

Privacy

Contact

**Comment**

This site's primary purpose is to provide information in all aspects of the Vegetarian lifestyle.

The society itself has taken responsibility for providing all information and content so that looks like it's designed to be used like a reference book to dip into when needed. There is no community of contributors and once you have the information you wanted there is no reason to hang around on the site although there is a real world connection with events and local groups.

It's charitable status and overall look and feel gives it an air of authority making the information provided credible.

**Weakness**

Other than having no help page, the most relevant weakness for Bob and Roberta is that they could not possibly provide the volume and variety of content that the Vegetarian Society provides.

No site map either.

# Discussion & Recommendations

The analysis has provided insights as to what works and some of the mistakes that are made by the websites likely to be visited by Dale and Margo.

For each of the websites there is an essential “take away” or UVP.

1. All Recipes – Search
2. My Dish – Community
3. Vegetarian Society – Authority
4. Vegan Family – Niche

The Vegetarian Society provides all the information to do with the lifestyle but the volume of content is enormous and may well be far too much would be far too much for 2 people to generate therefore my recommendations is: -

Provide a **social community** website so that users can add their own content while building their up their own profiles.

Allow member users to rate **member added content**.

Make the member content **searchable** in the way that All Recipes has.

Allow the members ability to create **online profiles**.

Make it possible for members to message each other, set up **groups** and **meet up** providing an outside into the real world.

Have articles and contributions from **Bob and Roberta** in the form of a **blog** in the same way that Carol Savage does on My Dish.

## What I didn't test for:-

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

- SEO
- 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](http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/competitive_analysis_understanding_the_market_context)

## Raw Data

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