

Pittsburghers for Public Transit

Executive Summary

Community Partner

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Background

Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT) is a grassroots organization led by transit riders and workers dedicated to creating a more accessible and affordable public transit system in Pittsburgh. PPT engages with its community directly, using disability justice principles as its foundation, and strives to build power and community across race and class lines. With a membership of around 250 people, PPT currently is focused on campaigns that address financial and physical accessibility issues and the shortage of bus drivers. PPT has three working committees for members to join and increase their level of leadership, and it relies on its website and social media to spread awareness and gain insights into the community's experiences with public transportation.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

PPT is facing challenges in community engagement and membership growth due to limitations in their existing website and resources. One of the organization's goals for 2023 is to increase their membership, but they currently rely on users simply stumbling upon their website through Google, with no guarantee of visitor engagement. Furthermore, the website has issues with accessibility and functionality that makes it difficult for users to get involved. These challenges are hindering PPT's ability to build a large, strong, and connected community and advocate for their goals effectively. Therefore, a solution is required to make it easier for visitors to engage with PPT's mission and initiatives, ultimately driving growth in membership and engagement.

Project Vision

Our vision is to enhance the overall performance and user experience on PPT's website through three different methods. Firstly, the improvement of the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and accessibility of the website will increase community engagement and make it easier for disabled users to navigate the website. Secondly, the inclusion of a call to action on the homepage makes it simple for new users to sign up for the newsletter, resulting in more member signups. Finally, the integration of the events list will simplify the communication and engagement process for

PPT, making it easier for new members to get involved in events. In the long term, this project will help the organization meet its goals of increasing engagement with community members.

Project Outcomes

The student team improved the following components of the website: 1) SEO and accessibility improvements based on feedback from PPT members with sensory impairments, 2) a call to action in the form of a newsletter sign-up form embedded into the website and integrated with EveryAction, 3) integrating the events calendar on EveryAction into the live website, 4) performance improvements that will enhance the website loading speed and images compressions. Overall, these solutions improve the functionality and experience of PPT's website so that there is more community engagement and more member signups. In addition to these results, we have ensured that the PPT staff (Dan and Justin) are familiar with the outcomes so that they are able to make changes in the future.

Project Deliverables

Our deliverables include updates to the live PPT website as well as documentation and tutorials on the new features that have been implemented. We have also included a survey and its feedback, which can be accessed in the Google Drive folder that has been shared with the community partner. The folder also includes meeting notes, survey questions, and a record of the communication with the EveryAction support team.

Recommendations

We recommend that PPT staff conduct more social media outreach in order to reach a wider audience, such as expanding to other platforms to reach different age groups. We would also suggest that PPT conduct an outreach campaign to make their presence more well known to the relevant community, such as putting up more flyers at bus stops to advertise, making the target audience more aware of the organization. We also recommend PPT staff to follow the tutorials and fully use their resources to improve SEO score in future posts. Lastly, we recommend Dan to highly consider upgrading the accessibility plugin to accessiBe so that there are more functions and customizations that can be made available to the website.

Student Consulting Team

Emma Jiang served as the Call to Action Lead. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Computer Science. She will be interning at Microsoft as a software engineer this summer.

Jennifer Zhang served as the Event List Lead. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction and a minor in Media Design. She will be interning with Erie Insurance this summer.

Ruoxi (Lucy) Yang served as the Accessibility Lead. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Artificial Intelligence. She will be interning at Iron Mountain as a Product Manager this summer.