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Intro to UX Design and Content Strategy

About the American Red Cross

Founded in 1881, the American Red Cross (ARC) is a humanitarian non-profit organization that provides disaster relief, educational services, and various other forms of emergency assistance.

Mission Statement:

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

Fundamental Principles:

- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- ▶ Independence
- ► Voluntary Service
- Unity
- Universality



Project Description

Project Description:

- When facing natural disaster or a crisis, people need quick and easy access to the emergency resources both on and offline. This means that organization and careful content strategy is crucial to meeting their urgent needs.
- ► The Get Help section of the ARC website is where users go to find information and resources in the wake of disaster. However, this section is extremely difficult to navigate due to poor organization and prioritization of crucial elements.
- Clearing any paths of confusion and placing higher priority resources in places where they can easily be found is extremely important.

This brief will analyze the potential pain points and needs of the user and will then make recommendations on how to improve the design and functionality of the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page within the Get Help section of the website.





Business and UX Goals

Business Goal Statement:

This page will help those in crisis accomplish finding aid and assistance which will help the American Red Cross to achieve their mission to "alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies."

The Numbers: Why is This Important?

According to the annual report in 2016, the American Red Cross:

- Provided more than 56,850 shelter stays
- Served 1.66 million meals and snacks
- Delivered 1.396 million relief items
- Made 96,000 health and mental health contacts

In short, the American Red Cross provides tons of crucial services to those in need every year!

UX Goals

Redesign of the <u>Disaster Relief and Recovery</u> <u>Services</u> core page which will involve the following:

- A design that will maximize the user's experience when seeking emergency services.
- Re-prioritization of elements and placement of content so that it is relevant and useful.
- Condense and combine appropriate elements from other similar pages so that navigation is simpler and more logical.
- Improve and integrate the shelter location map feature onto this page so that it works harder for both the user and the ARC.



Who is the user? See Appendices B and C for the User Journey Map and Persona.

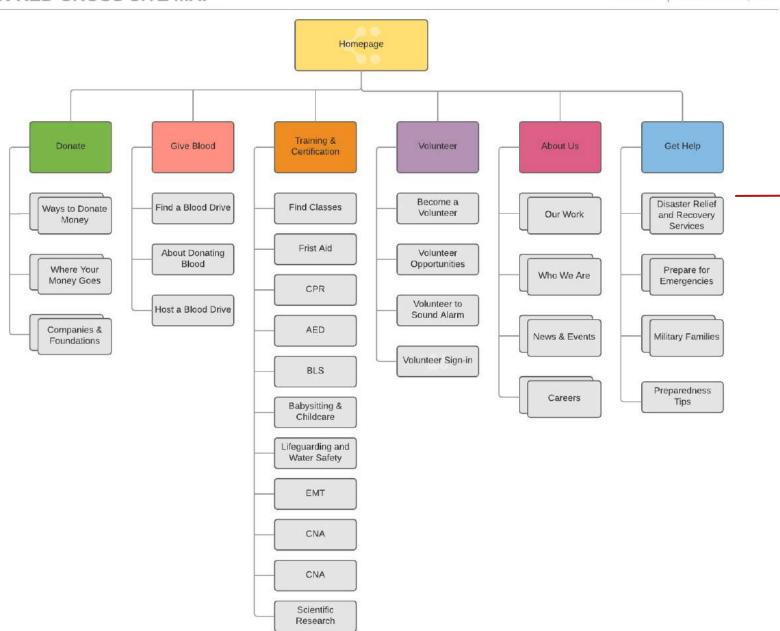
Non-Profit Goals are Different

The American Red Cross is a non-profit and it is not too uncommon to find that non-profits do not prioritize the design of their websites as often as they should. The most likely reason for this is the fact that they do not have the same business goals as their for-profit counterparts. This does not mean that they shouldn't put effort in to the design and functionality of their sites, in fact it is crucial to have a strong online presence in a world that expects it.

Site Map

Site Map: How are Users Who are Seeking Aid, Navigating the Website?

- A site map shows how information is organized on a website by visually identifying its structure. The navigational flow of the ARC website is very dense, particularly within the Get Help section.
- One of the goals of the creative strategy behind this brief is to consolidate and eliminate related relief services pages so that the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page functions as the primary go-to spot for urgent relief services. This will then create a clearer path, helping the user meet their goals of finding what they need quickly and efficiently.



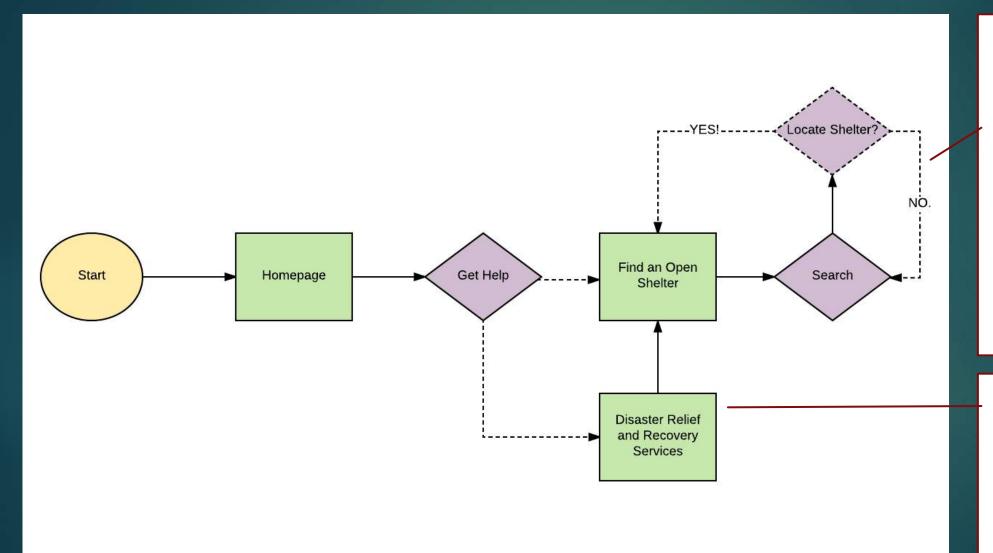
There is some opportunity to move content around and clear up some of the density found in within the central navigation of the website.

User Task Flow

Task Flow: How do Users Find Disaster Relief Resources, Like Open Shelter, on the Website?

- Task flows help identify the paths that users take as well as the options they are given on these paths, while accomplishing a particular task. The use of the task flow in this brief shows how a user might find an open shelter if they started from the homepage.
- Nowever, users often don't land on a website from the homepage. They may land directly on the Find an Open Shelter page which only contains the shelter location map and frequently asked questions about staying in shelters. The goal of this task flow is to understand how to better supply users with other important, related information that they may need, such as where to list themselves as safe, or how find related relief services when they enter the website, no matter how they get there.

How to currently find an open shelter if visiting from the homepage:



One of the things I wish to improve is the placement of the shelter location map so that it is with other useful and relevant resources on a single core page instead of sending them on a useless loop.

Placing the find an open shelter feature directly on this page will create a clearer path to other important resources.

Content Hierarchy

Content Hierarchies: What Resources and Elements are Most Important to Those Seeking Aid?

Content hierarchies determined through competitive analysis, provided ideas and laid the groundwork for designing clear, well-organized, and properly placed content on the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page that maximizes the user's ability to find relevant and necessary resources in one place.

This was accomplished through the following:

- Competitive teardown
- Analysis of common themes and priorities of elements taken from the competitive teardown.
- Determination of functional needs of the page after determination of common themes and priorities from other sites.
- A prioritization of elements needed on Disaster Relief Recovery and Services page determined from the analysis above. (See Appendix G)

Competitive Teardown and Analysis

- Who is the ARC's competition? What are they doing well and what are they doing not so well but could be emulated and improved?
- View complete competitive teardown









Competitive Teardown and Analysis – What are the Takeaways?

Common Themes

- ► Each site had at least a page or concept that was service or aid-oriented.
- All sites contained fairly robust search features for locating people and services.
- Support content was present in most cases but not entirely useful on all sites
- All sites contained some kind of interactive map. Even though most of them could have been stronger.
- ► All sites cater to multiple types of users
- All sites were socially-oriented

Priority of Elements on Sites

- Prominent search bar or search function
- Prominent display of available resources
- Features that cater to multiple types of users but prioritize those seeking services
- Interactive maps
- Support content

Side Note: The two related sites, DisasterAssistance.gov and FEMA both regularly referred users to the ARC website for immediate relief services such as finding shelter and reconnecting with families, rather than providing services of their own. This means that users are actively being referred to the ARC website which is another reason why improving the design of the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page is important.

Functional Needs of Page Derived from Competitive Teardown

- Strong, Image-driven visuals
- Needs to be sorted, labeled, categorized and condensed in a way that draws the user to the specific items that they need without jumping around from page to page.
- Needs to allow the user to search for shelter and resources quickly without diverting them away from the page prematurely.
- Needs to display urgent information first and in a manner that is easy to find on both desktop and mobile versions.

Please see

Appendix G for proposed prioritization of elements through "content chunking"

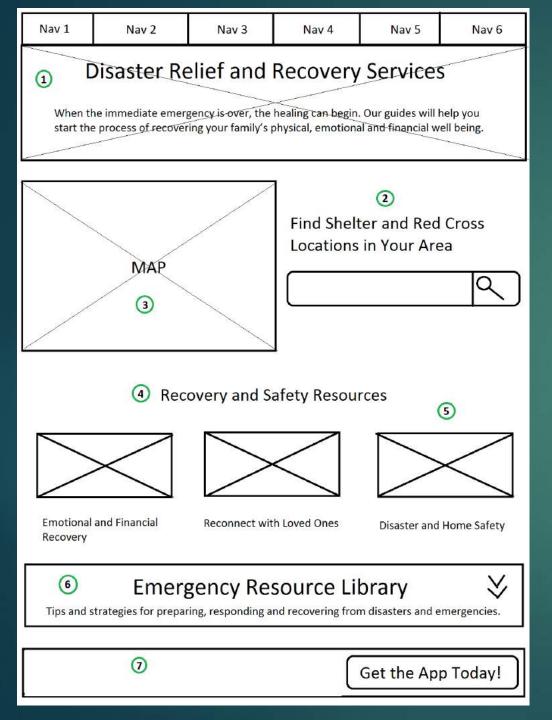
Wireframes

Wireframes: What Design Concepts Help the User Accomplish the Task of Finding Aid and Relief Resources Quickly?

Wireframes are visual blueprints of a webpage and are most commonly used as a quick, low-cost way of communicating general design ideas to stakeholders. The purpose of the wireframes in this brief is to propose desktop and mobile design concepts of the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page that meet the ARC's goals of mobilizing resources to those in need.

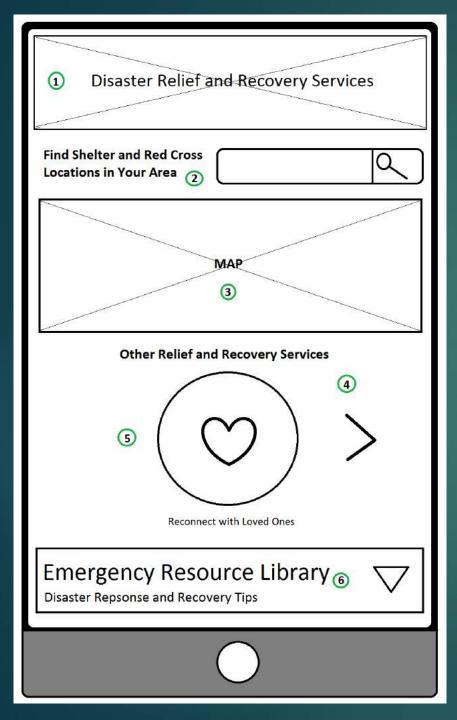
The most important functional needs expressed in the designs are:

- A prominent map and search feature that includes shelter and local Red Cross chapter locator, as well as providing necessary information about staying in shelters.
- Consolidated and clearly labeled headers, sub-headers, and resource categories.
- Prioritization of elements that favor the most urgent and important resources on the top of the page and in other easily visible areas.



Desktop Wireframe Proposal

- Smaller hero image that serves as the main header and descriptor of the page. Potential placeholder for sponsorships.
- bar found on old page. It also incorporates the find local Red Cross locations to prevent users from leaving the resource page prematurely.
- 3) Improved Map Feature will bring up a small, pop-up window with shelter or ARC branch location information such as address and an option to open in Google Maps, as well as links that take the user to page with detailed information about who is eligible to stay in shelters and what resources are available there. (These elements once had their own page and it wasn't necessary.)
 - Whitespace contrast in header to make it stand out.
- Other relevant and important disaster resources were condensed and placed on their own pages. They can be found in a very visible area directly below map.
- 6) Massive resource library condensed into a drop down option to eliminate scroll depth and overcrowding.
-) App CTA is important but not a top priority



Mobile Wireframe Proposal

- 1) Small hero image at the top that serves as header for page but also presents sponsorship opportunities.
- 2) Large search bar placed at the top of the page to draw the user's eye.
- 3) Improved Map Feature will work similarly to the desktop version and contain the same pop-up windows within map.
- 4) Other relevant categories are condensed even further into a swipe feature that allows the user to move through other resources with ease.
- 5) The first visible category is one that the user is most likely to use in the event of a disaster. This was determined by research of how the use of digital tools like social media to find loved ones as grown rapidly in the last few years.
- 6) Emergency resource library is still important but contains resources that are less urgent in nature so it lives at the bottom of the displayed page as a drop down option.

Content Matrix

Content Matrix: How do the Elements Within the Proposed Design Meet User and ARC Requirements?

The goal of the content matrix is to elaborate on the proposed design elements expressed in the wireframes, in addition to various iterations of copy within the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page, that could be used in or around those elements, particularly that of the shelter search function as well as the consolidated resource categories.

The elements of focus and are explained in depth are:

- Map search element and pop up window within the map when the search function is used.
- Other relief resource categories, their purpose, and what they contain.

Content Matrix Screenshot

Element	Job	Original Copy	Copy Variation #1	Copy Variation #2	Copy Variation #3	
Find Shelter and Red Cross Locations in Your Area	This element is the search bar for the map locator. It is big and bold because it will draw the eye to one of the most important features of the page. The header of this search bar is also ideal for SEO strategies because it contains key words that the user may use in a Google search.	Find Shelter and Red Cross Locations in Your Area	Find Shelters and Red Cross Locations Closest to You	Find Shelter or Your Local Red Cross	Find Shelter and Relief Nearby	
MAAP	This element is the map locator. It will help the user find shelter locations closest to them and give details about services provided at the shelter, rules, and eligibility through a pop up node within the map. Another way that this feature will meet the goal of simplifying and condensing elements from other pages, is to serve as the local red cross locator. It just makes sense to combine this feature with the shelter locator for simplicity. See below for more information on copy and details.	Мар	N/A	N/A	NłA	
Open Shelter: Esc. Federico Hathew Open this location in Google Maga Address flo. Ingenio Yabucos, PR 00762 County/farien Yabucos Population: 12 Shelter Services Shelter Rules	to live on the Find Open Shelter page but	Open Shelter: Open this location in Google Maps Address: Population: Shelter services Shelter Rules	Shelter: Open in Google Maps Address: Population: Learn More About Red Cross Shelters	Shelter Title and Address: Open Google Maps Shelter Population: About Our Shelters	Shelter Title and Address: Open in Google Maps Shelter Population: Staying in Red Cross Shelters	

View the complete content matrix

Usability Research Plan

Usability Research Plan: Are the Proposed Designs and Strategies Successful in Helping the User Find What They Need?

The goal for this usability research plan was to understand whether or not the proposed designs actually help the user find necessary resources when they land on the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services page as well as gain a better understanding of whether or not elements like the shelter location map are properly prioritized and labeled.

Research Questions:

- Does this page serve its purpose of helping the user find necessary disaster relief resources?
- 2. Are the elements on the page prioritized in a way that makes sense to the user?
- 3. Are the categories and elements clearly labeled so that the user understands what they are and what they contain?
- 4. Does the map and search function help the user 1) locate shelters closest to them and 2) do they popup nodes on the map provide necessary information about shelter services, rules, and eligibility?
- 5. Do the other categories on the page direct the user to other appropriate and relevant services and resources?
- Is the user able to find his or her way back to the landing page if they click on another internal link or category?
- 7. Is the Emergency Resource Library a useful tool in the manner that it is presented?

Product Tested:

Elements and functions on the "Disaster Relief and Recovery Services" core page at www.redcross.org.

View the prototype: https://invis.io/J5EQ0R8CR

Methodology:

- ▶ **Type of study:** Due to a short turnaround period for data, this was a qualitative usability study. Participants interacted with a live prototype of the product and were asked to navigate and interact with the elements and give verbal feedback about their experience as they were working through the tasks given.
- ▶ Number of participants: 5-7 participants (I only tested 3)
- ▶ Number of questions: There were five questions or tasks in total that the user was asked to complete.
- ▶ Location of study: This study was held in person.

Participant profiles:

These participants were selected after a careful screening process. The idea was to only have those who meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Those who have experienced a disaster or crisis
- ▶ Those who have a medium-high comfort level with technology

Tasks Performed:

- Participants were asked to locate the emergency resources from the home page
- Participants were then be asked to use the shelter locator map and search function
- ▶ From there, they were asked to explore one of the pop up nodes after searching for a given location.
- Then they were asked to explore one of the other resource categories on page.
- From one of the resource categories on the page, they were then asked to navigate back to the landing page.
- ▶ Finally, they were asked to explore Resource Library dropdown option

Script:

"First and foremost, thank you for your time. My name is Michelle Dallas and I am conducting research on some services and features found on the American Red Cross website. You will find a sheet of paper in front of you asking for your permission to record this session today as a part of this study. Please sign this form if you give your permission. To show our gratitude for your participation, we will be giving you a \$50 Amazon Gift Card after the completion of the study.

Now, I am going to ask you to perform a series of tasks and with each task, I want you to answer the following questions out loud—sort of walk me through your thought process as you interact with the site. There is no right or wrong answer here so please explore the way that you normally would and please try to figure out the task on your own."

Start out on the basic search page or google screen so that the user isn't distracted while you give them your spiel.

Questions for Each Participant:

- 1. From the homepage, I want you to show me how you would find disaster relief resources.
- 2. Show me how you would find out more information about local shelters and describe the information that you find.
- 3. Now, please show me how you where you would indicate to your family or friends that you are safe and well after a disaster.
- 4. How would you get back to the main resource page?
- Show me where you would find tips and strategies for preparing for disaster.

Closing Script:

"That completes our study. Thank you again for your time."

Takeaways from Usability Tests

Users did require some level of coaching and context to help them understand which elements were currently "live" or clickable.

- Users felt that the overall structure and layout of the page was very clean and easy to navigate.
- 2. Categories were found to be appropriate but it was suggested that there be some kind of "mouse over" function to learn more about what they other resource categories contained.
- 3. The condensed Emergency Resource Library drop down option was well-received, but it was suggested that this element actually be its own page since there are so many links.
- 4. The shelter information provided by the map was found to be a potentially useful item once all of the information was built out.

Usability Research Plan in Retrospect:

- 1. Focus on fewer questions or tasks in order to keep the test more focused and clear.
- 2. Keep questions and tasks more open-ended so that the user is required to figure out what they need to do in order to achieve the task.
- 3. Being too specific about what you want your user to achieve may skew the results of the test.
- 4. Avoid using the terminology of the site too much because this could also skew the results. Part of what you want to learn is whether or not the existing terminology dis helpful to the user.
- 5. A higher fidelity prototype would also be ideal so that the user requires less coaching on how to use it.

Appendix

APPENDIX A – Initial Interview Questions for Finding Target Audience, Developing Personas, and Mapping the User Journey

- ▶ Ideally, this interview would be conducted in-person but this study was conducted as an emailed form.
- Three individuals were screened based upon whether or not they have been in a disaster or crisis.
- ► These three individuals participated in the study by answering nine openended questions.
- See next page for questions and interviews

APPENDIX A — User Research Questions

- 1) Have you ever been through a disaster or crisis? Please skip questions 2-6 if the answer to this question is "no".
- 2) If yes, please start from the beginning and describe your experience.
- 3) Please describe what you were thinking during this time. Please do the best you can to describe your thought process during the disaster
- **4) How did you feel during this time?** Please do the best you can to describe your emotions throughout the experience.
- **5) How did you respond?** For example, what did you do to get through this experience?
- 6) Are there any other times you experienced a disaster that you wish to share? Please elaborate.
- 7) Have you ever used a website or a mobile app to assist you with finding resources and/or aid of any kind?
- 8) If so, what site(s) have you used and how often have you used them? If the answer is "no" to question seven, please answer with N/A
- **9) What kind of aid or resources were you seeking?** If the answer is "no" to question seven, please answer with N/A

Instruction Script:

"Thank you for your time and please know that there are no right or wrong answers. We also ask that you please read through all of the questions first before answering them."

View answers to the research questions

APPENDIX A — Takeaways from Interviews

- ▶ Different kinds of disasters (i.e. hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc.) yield different types of emotional, thought, and physical responses.
- Anxiety is a common emotional response during the particular events that they describe.
- Shelter an family were considered a high priority.
- ► The reliance on resources from external sources both on and offline was a common theme.
- Individuals often found themselves relying on other members of the community for help and resources.

Retrospective:

- Encourage interviewees to think more outside of the box when considering types of resources they may or may not have utilized online.
- ► Focus more on how they responded to the crisis by prompting for more information here.

APPENDIX B - User Journey Map

Grace's Journey in the Wake of Hurricane Harvey

TRIGGERING EVENT(S) SEEKING AID AND ASSISTANCE RESOLUTION

00	Hurricane hits, family takes cover.	Family quickly gathers essentials.	Evacuation of home after home floods and is heavily damaged.	Locates Shelter within walking distance of home.	Searches for Missing Family.	Applies for financial assistance.	Moves family out of shelter to stay with relatives temporarily	Returns to work	Returns home and surveys damage after water recedes.	Attempts to piece life back together.
THINKING	Doesn't bel ieve that it will be that bad, they have been through bad weather before.	Has never seen anything like this before. The destruction is great.	Concerned getting family out of the water.	Needs place for family to rest until they can find a better place to go.	Needs to know where elderly family were taken.	This is the last thing she wants to do but anything helps.	Doesn't want to burden other family but a shelter is not place to keep her children.	She is needed at the hospital and her family needs a steady income.	She hopes that they can save the house and as many mementos as possible.	Grateful that loved ones are okay and wants to return to some semblance of normalcy.
FEELING	Concerned but hopeful	Shocked and devastated	Fearful and sad	Drained	Worried	Resigned and humbled	Sad and resigned	Focused	Perseverant	Grateful and hopeful

This user journey map tells the story of the persona found in Appendix C and concerns itself with potential on and offline activity during a disaster or crisis. This map was created from the user interviews conducted in Appendix A in addition to research found in Appendix C.

APPENDIX C - User Persona



Name: Grace Williams

Location: Houston, Texas

Occupation: Registered Nurse

Salary: \$70,000

Education Level: 4-Year Bachelor

of Science and Nursing

Technical Comfort Level: Medium - High

Biography: Grace is a hard-working, single mother of two boys under the age of 18. While she is a career-oriented woman, she still values time with her family above all else. Hurricane Harvey hit Huston and her family really hard. Her home was nearly destroyed and currently sits in three feet of water. She needs to know what her options are. Local churches, family and friends have been banding together but Grace still needs more help to get her and her family back on their feet.

Online activity: Grace is a busy woman and a majority of her online activity involves banking, personal shopping since she seldom has time to shop for herself, and the occasional purchase of household goods through spaces like Amazon. Her Pinterest boards suggest that she values time with her family and often pins activities, recipes, and "hacks" that allow her to save time. She also is fairly active on Facebook which is her only social media profile. She has a home computer that she shares with her sons, but a majority of her online activity is through the use of her smart phone.

Offline activity: Grace spends a lot of time on her feet at work and enjoys activities that allow her to relax. She is an avid reader, a fierce Texans fan, and believer in family activities such as board games, teaching her sons to cook, and movie nights.

APPENDIX C - Persona & User Journey Research

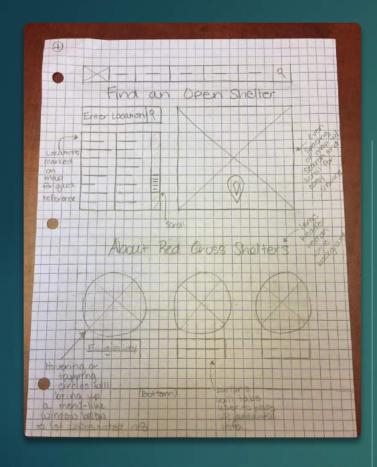
In addition to user interviews, found in Appendix A, the following online sources were consulted for general demographic information as well as online activity trends:

- https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2017/09/05/we-looked-into-the-effects-of-hurricane-harvey-and-heres-what-we-found/#6513b5cc76f1
- ► http://www.businessinsider.com/the-surprising-demographics-of-who-shops-online-and-on-mobile-2014-6
- https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/ecommerce-trends/
- http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/
- http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/the-demographics-of-social-media-users/

APPENDIX D — Competitive Teardown

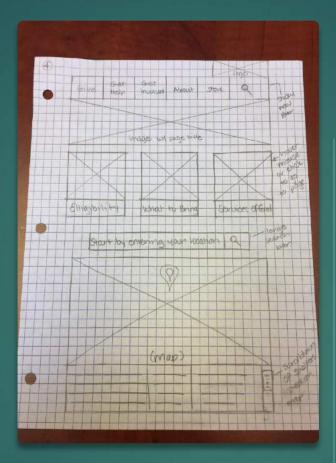
View the full competitive teardown and rollup

APPENDIX F — Rough Design Sketches



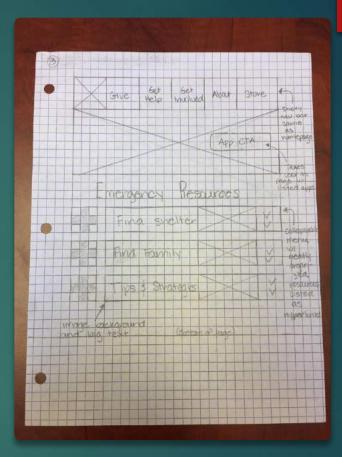


Prominent map and search features from this sketch were incorporated into wireframe design.



Sketch #2 - Find Open Shelter page

Hero image and 3-category box alignment incorporated into final wireframe design.



Sketch #3 - Disaster Resource and Recovery page

Dropdown element for categories used in design of resource library on final wireframe design

APPENDIX G - Content Chunking

Suggested Prioritization of Elements for the Disaster Relief and Recovery Services Page for ARC

- 1) Main header and page descriptor
- 2) Find an open shelter and local red cross locations (two features combined into one)
- 3) Reconnect with family after emergency
- 4) (Staying Safe After Disaster): Immediate steps to take
- 5) (Checking Your Home's Safety): Checking Structural Elements | Checking Utility Services
- 6) (Recovering Emotionally): About Emotional Recovery | What you may be feeling | Actions You can Take | If you still don't feel better
- 7) (Recovering Financially): Restore your well-being
- 8) Emergency Resource Library (listed links and not necessary at top because there is already a link to this page
- 9) Download FREE emergency mobile app

APPENDIX H - Core Model

Core page: Disaster Relief and Recovery Services

***User focus is in this project is on those seeking aid.

Not donors or volunteers.

Netlife Research

Business goals

To provide aid and resources to those in need by facilitating and appropriating donations and volunteer time.

User tasks

User tasks are to find and utilize available disaster relief resources relevant to their situation and needs.

Inward paths

Google search

Social media campaigns

News outlets

Red Cross PR efforts

Core content

- 1.) Hero image/banner with page title and brief description
- 2.) Find shelter and local Red Cross search function
- 3.) Map locator
- 4.) Header that describes more resource categories
- 5.) Reconnection services category and image with brief copy description
- 6.) Recovery resources category and image with brief copy description
- 7.) Safety resources category and image with brief copy description
- 8.) Emergency library dropdown option with brief description
- 9.) App CTA

Forward paths

Locate closest shelter or ARC branch

Further exploration and utilization of resource categories

Exploration and utilization of resource library

Download page for mobile app

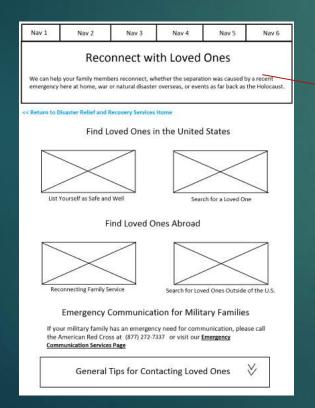
Based on user tasks and the chunking exercise (Appendix G) there was a need to further condense core content into simpler, primary categories as shown in the core model to the left.

Another goal of this model is to improve SEO by making sure that core content is clear and appropriately labeled.

APPENDIX I — Digital Prototype

Please visit the following link to test and view the digital prototype:

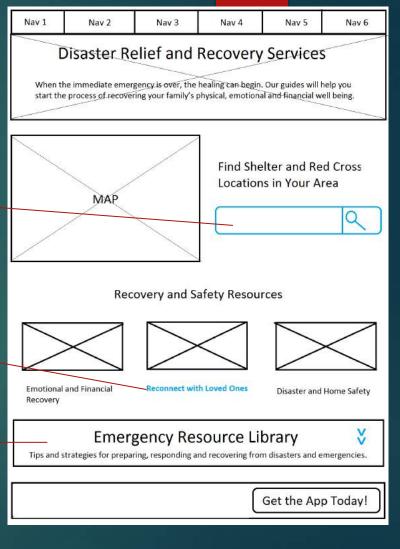
https://invis.io/J5EQ0R8CR





Emergency Resource Library Tips and strategles for preparing, responding and recovering from disasters and omergencies. Cheesical Emergency Earthquake Flood Flu Food Safety Heat Wave Highway Safety Home Fire Landslide Pet Safety Power Outage Terrorism Tornade Volcano Wilster Safety Wilster Safety Wilster Safety Wilster Safety Wilster Safety

Core page



***Elements or pages connected by red lines indicate testable features