



Green Senior Living

June 26

Green Senior Living, Yellow Gardens, and Purple Hills are part of a larger residence community servicing the elder community, and as such, has a specific target audience demographic.

This target audience has very specific needs when it comes to interacting with web sites and content on the Internet.

Users that are 55+ fall into a specific category where motor skills and eye sight are not as acute as in prior years, and as such websites in general servicing this population need to avoid fine motor movement like complicated drop down menus. Larger target areas for users to click on are also a benefit. Because of the lack of fine motor skills, and slight tremors, the mouse pointer tends to move slightly when navigating, so movement to exact mouse positions is difficult.

Failing eyesight is also a problem for this user group, and as such contrast of links and graphic elements needs to be clearly visible. Text also needs to be larger, and preferably pages need to be built in such a way as to allow the user to increase text sizes as necessary.

The following chart highlights accessibility issues with the three sites

Site	High Contrast	Large Text	Resizable Text	Large Target Areas	Avoids fine motor movement	Graphics have alt tags	Score
Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	Good
Yellow	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	Fair
Purple	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	Poor

Individual Assessments

Green Senior Living

From the homepage of the Green Senior Living site the user is directed to view a video. From here the user is left to decide where to go. This is a good opportunity to further direct the user to contact the residence.

Except for the video the user is not directed through the experience, and as such soon gets lost and potentially loses interest in the site.

It is difficult to distinguish from the site that this is a collection of senior living communities. This strength should be the focus of the corporate site, with each of the residences having an individual page highlighting the specific features of a particular residence. One of the other strengths of the organization is the standardized program and collective resources. Highlighting these gives Chelsea a competitive differentiator against single location senior living communities.

Navigationally, the user receives no help. The main navigation (left column) has no link to home, so the user cannot return to the main page without searching the top or bottom navigation for help, and the items should be reordered to highlight network and program sections and to segment out the "employment" tab, which is not directed at the senior audience the rest of the site is.

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Current Organization:	Revised Organization
Programs	Our Residences
Services	Locations & Directions
Activities	
Dining	Programs
Our Locations	Services
Directions	Activities
Employment	Dining
Contact Us	-----
-----	About Chelsea Management Group
Chelsea Management Group	Employment
	Contact Us
	Home

The homepage is the main path through the site, and as such, needs to clearly convey the unique selling message of the site and provide an easy to understand path for the user to follow. When sites do not do this, users often leave without going deeper into the site.

The site as presented has many barriers including the aforementioned navigation problem. Another of the problems is the accessibility of the homepage, meaning the ease-of-use for users that have physical difficulties.

The text on the homepage is small and hard to read for persons with good eyesight. The target audience will have additional difficulties. Additionally, the same text is set as a graphic with no "ALT" text to help the user read it easier, and removes the ability to control the text size through the browser. ALT text is part of the site code that describes images, and text blocks for users with visual problems.

Fortunately, the content throughout the rest of the site is large, and has the ability to resize the content in the browser to aid in readability.

The site contains a lot of good information and explanatory text. It doesn't however lead the user through the pages. By simply adding a link to the next section from the bottom of the previous section the site is transformed from a collection of pages to weaving a story for the user.

Additionally, the location and directions section contain the same basic information and should be combined or differentiated.

In looking at the underlying HTML coding the site contains little to help search engines. There are no description tags, and keywords. There are however simple clean titles that can help users bookmark the pages.

Yellow Gardens

Navigationally, the Yellow Gardens site is more focused than the Green Senior Living Site. The text on the homepage is readable and focused to the audience; there are pleasing images of residents enjoying themselves and a clear call to action at the bottom of the text.

There is however room to improve the experience. The scrolling images at the top of the screen, provides continued movement that is distracting with no benefit. This area highlights the same four images, over and over regardless of where the user is on the site. By changing this to a rotating set of images and possibly utilizing a less jarring fading effect you can provide a much more visually interesting and useful area.

The script text on the homepage is also difficult to read. While not as critical as the rest of the text on the homepage, this text graphic does not contain alt text to help the user. It also pushes the rest of the content lower on the page, forcing the user to scroll at 800x600 resolution to reach the call to action link at the bottom of the page.

This same graphical treatment is repeated throughout the site with the same general legibility issues and the absence of alt tags.

On some pages, the header is visually different. It would be suggested to include alt tags for all the images and redesign the headers to be more legible (and the same across the site). There are additional problems with the headers. There are spelling issues in the header, for example “Health & Wellbeing “ is incorrectly spelled as “welbeing”, and the headers do not match the navigation titles. For users that may suffer from memory issues, naming the link the same as the header is a welcome reminder.

The address bar is also set as a graphic, and should have alt text, for readability and to help get into search engines. This bar should also be clickable to the contact form.

One of the most troubling issues with the website is the inability to resize the text. For this user group resizing the text can be critical to reading the content. The current size of the text is reasonably large, but can be a problem to users with vision difficulties. Additionally, the spacing between text lines makes readability more difficult. Increasing the line height would make the available text more legible.

Throughout the site the user needs to scroll.

This is not generally a problem, but can provide challenges to users with fine motor skill issues.

Key pages such as the contact page and the directions page should reduce scrolling where possible.

Illustrated to the right is the content page with some of the vertical space removed to avoid some of the scrolling problems, thereby making a more usable page.

On selected pages of the site text is set as a graphic, such as the menu. Without alt text and the ability to resize the text as necessary the user may have reached an impasse to obtaining the information they need.

There are also consistency issues with the text. The about us page for example is visually different than the other pages on the site, providing for a disjointed experience.



While the majority of the site is one level deep, there are instances where there are sub pages. These sub pages are listed when the user clicks one of the pages such as the “Activities” page (see right for example). This is the only indicator or more content, and may be missed by the user because of its small size.

It is suggested to include a link to this content on the originating page in addition to this sub menu, and reciprocal links back to the main content to allow for easier flow between pages.



Currently, there is no link to get back to the homepage in the main navigation. The only home link is in the middle of the bottom navigation menu.

The “Directions” link provides the user functionality to map to the senior community. When the user enters their information and clicks the “Get directions” button an external site replaces the Somerset Gardens site. It would be preferable to have this action pop in a separate window so the user does not lose their place within the site

The “join our team” link is a broken link, and could not be viewed.

In reviewing the code meant to facilitate better search engine placement, the homepage contains good titles, descriptions and keywords. The rest of the site however has sporadic use of titles and keywords.

Purple Hills

Like the Green Gardens site, the Purple Hills site has focused text on the homepage and provides a clear call to action at the bottom of the displayed text. This page however does not look like a homepage but simply a generic content page. This can lead the user to search out the “real” homepage.

Other than the call to action on the homepage, the rest of the site is presented as a series of unrelated pages with no interconnection or flow from one to another. By adding internal links to existing content within sections a unifying flow can easily be established, making navigation more pleasing to the user and easier overall.

The site should lead the user from section to section as well as cross-selling the ability to make contact with the senior community, which is the ultimate goal of the site.

The majority of the navigation through the site is accomplished through the top navigation bar.



This navigation uses a fly-out navigation where the user must be dexterous enough to mouse through the levels to get to the desired page. For this user group this can be a difficult task.

Illustrated to the right is the “Purple Hills Living” section highlighted showing the sub menu entries (Suite Options, Dining, Security, etc).

There are additional navigation barriers. The contrast of the sub menu options is low, making it difficult for a user with poor eyesight to correctly select the appropriate option.

The menus, while being difficult to use do have the feature of providing landing pages for each of the sections. These landing pages provide an alternate method of navigating to content, and give the user a bit of information before clicking.

One of the most troubling issues with the website as in the Green Gardens site is the inability to resize the text, which can be critical to reading the content for people with vision difficulties.

Links on the site pages are invisible to the user having little distinguishing quality such as the standard underlining. The site chooses to display links in a different color, which is very close to the plain text coloring, thus making deciphering links difficult to the user. In some instances the link changes color when the user mouses over the text, which is good. It would however be better for this to be done consistently through all links, plus having links underlined as a default.

Once viewing the internal pages design and layout is not pleasing. Many pages contains text with no images, although the text does not utilize the entire space available, thus giving the site an unfinished look.

General images are also a problem not only because of the lack of photos, but the contents of many of them. Photos specifically in the dining and activity center area contain little if any people enjoying the facility. Since one of the many factors to sell the facility is the community aspect, having photos with no people leaves the user the wrong subconscious message. These photos should be replaced with visuals epitomizing the lifestyle new residents would hope to achieve.

Additionally, the design does not use the available space well, having a large logo take up a large portion of available space with no content, navigation or visual elements in the same general area, thus pushing down the content. The content is further pushed down on internal pages where the title of the page takes up an excessively large amount of space.

Throughout this site and the others viewed there is a lack of alt tags that would normally describe images, to users with visual problems. The Purple Hills site also has the inability to resize the text, making it more difficult for users with poor eyesight.

Some content on the site is strangely absent. The “Senior Resources” page has no content, while the “Travel about Town” page has very little content.

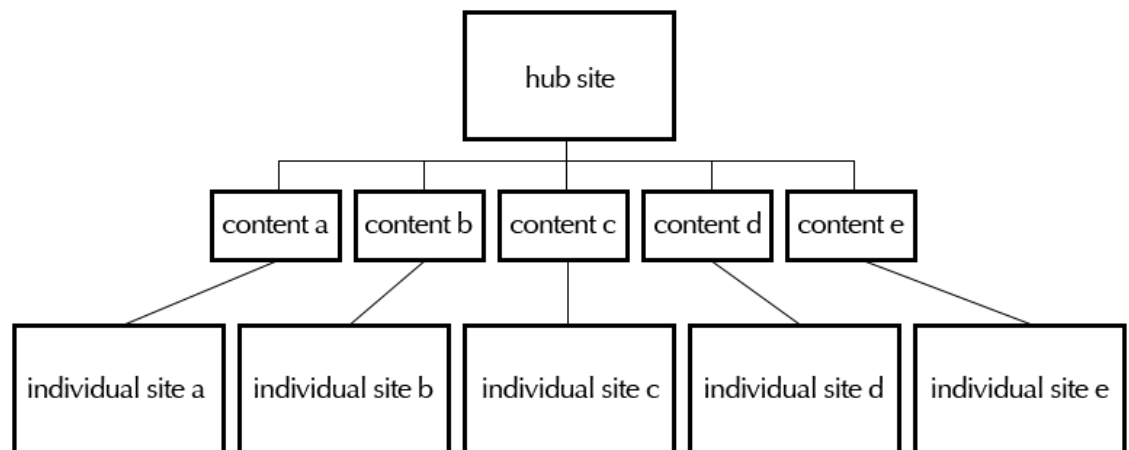
In reviewing the code meant to facilitate better search engine placement, the homepage contains good titles, descriptions and keywords. The rest of the site however has no keywords or descriptions and only contains the generic site name as a title. Specific information on sub pages can improve overall search engine placement.

Sites as part of a network

While there are specific items that can be done to improve the individual sites, focusing the main site as a portal with links to the associated sites makes sense from a user centric view to allow users to make educated decisions on the various locations, and from a strategic view interconnecting and cross selling the network of communities online and offline.

The hub sites should have general information about the association of communities and the combined strength of the network through resources, standardized programs and how the network leverages the combination of sites.

From this hub site there should be a single page of information, photos and text about each individual site, forming a consistent view on a single combined site. From each of these overview pages should be a link to a fuller site for each location.



The strength of approaching the build out of these sites through the hub and spoke method illustrated above is that the hub maintains a solid consistency at the same time each individual site can have individualized branding.

Additionally, this method allows for websites and locations to be added through a flexible timetable, and not an all or nothing approach.