

The Evergreen Effect Website Planning Report

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The Evergreen Effect is an unsigned band in Seattle, Washington, that is seeking to build a strong fan-base and promote their music to bars, pubs, restaurants and other venues that hire temporary musical artist for evening events. The website at www.evergreeneffect.com is being designed, built, and managed by Scott Main.

Band members:

- Chase – Lead vocals, guitar and harmonica
- Cameron – Bass guitar and backup vocals
- Sean – Drums and backup vocals

Purpose

The website, www.evergreeneffect.com, will serve as a news and entertainment medium. Fans of The Evergreen Effect band will most often visit the site to entertain themselves with music, video and photos, to learn more about the band and to find information about upcoming shows. The website will also allow managers of live venues to learn about The Evergreen Effect and contact the band to hire them for performances.

The Evergreen Effect website will provide fans and venue managers a place to:

- Learn more about the band and its members
- Learn about their upcoming events
- Read updates on the band status
- View band pictures
- Listen to recorded music
- Watch live performance videos
- Read song lyrics
- Find contact information

Audience Analysis

An understanding of the audience that will be viewing the Evergreen Effect website is very important in order to make appropriate decisions to the graphic design and information structure of the website. The website will be designed for two specific audiences: fans of The Evergreen Effect and Venue Managers.

Fans

The people who enjoy The Evergreen Effect will visit the site often in order to find information on shows, view pictures and video, and listen to music. They are usually willing to spend time browsing the site and enjoying the content.

Venue Managers

Managers who may hire The Evergreen Effect to perform at their place of business will visit the website to learn more about the band and determine if they would like to have the band perform at their place of business. They may also browse the site to decide if they would like to hire the band, but do not want to spend as much time browsing—they would like important information quickly available.

Of these two audience types, the Fans are the primary audience. Because The Evergreen Effect books most of its shows by meeting with the venue managers in person and offering a demo kit that includes a demo CD, most venue managers do not need to visit the website to make their decision. Nevertheless, it is important to consider venue managers who do decide to visit the site and those who may come across the website before meeting the band. In these cases, the website is a very powerful tool that will represent the theme of the band and the mood of their music. The website is a much more dynamic version of the demo kits that are handed out to venue managers and should be designed with the intention of it being used as such a tool for venue managers.

Demographics

All demographic information provided here was gathered from personal interaction with fans and venue managers at The Evergreen Effect venues, by Scott Main and Chase.

Fans

Age

- 21 to 40 years old

Gender

- Approximately 50% male

Ethnicity

- 90% are Caucasian and native English speakers
- 10% are Asian, African American or Indian

Education

- 90% have completed some college
- 10% have only completed high school
- 25% are currently attending college

Employment

- 80% work full-time jobs
- 20% work part-time jobs

Venue Managers

Age

- 30 to 60 years old

Gender

- Approximately 85% male

Ethnicity

- 95% are Caucasian and native English speakers
- 5% are African American

Education

- 97% have completed some college
- 3% have only completed high school

Employment

- 70% own the venue business
- 90% work full-time
- 10% work part-time

Subject Specific Information

Fans

The people who enjoy The Evergreen Effect are often enthusiastic music followers who enjoy various kinds of music and frequently attend live shows. They enjoy The Evergreen Effect because the band has a fun personality, the band has an engaging energy when on stage, they enjoy the style of music, and they enjoy the song lyrics. Because they are enthusiastic about live music, they frequently search for upcoming shows with the internet and enjoy browsing websites to learn more about bands and to entertain themselves with music, video and photos.

These users are very experienced with the internet. Not only do they enjoy browsing websites about bands and their other interests, but they often make purchases online through sites such as Amazon.com or Ebay.com.

When these users visit The Evergreen Effect website, the most common tasks are to find information on new live shows or to simply browse the website to experience the various media and learn about the band. When they visit the site, they expect to find updated news about the band's status, information on the places that they will be performing in the near future, and media such as pictures, music, and possibly live video clips.

Venue Managers

The Managers of the live shows are very music savvy. They are very involved with the local music scene and know exactly what kind of music they want to perform at their venue. Most of them have at least five years of experience working at their current business and often even more experience working closely with musical artists.

The Managers don't always have a lot of time to spend browsing websites, searching for artists. They expect the musical artists to clearly and effectively represent themselves and their music on their own accord. The managers, while being very competent on the internet, do not take a lot of time to browse band websites—they expect the important information to be quickly and easily accessible to them when it relates to their job.

Business Model

The initial launch of the website will not generate any direct revenue. The site, though, may inevitably provide alternate revenues: venues that are gained will sometimes provide revenue for the band from ticket sales, and the fans who are able to follow the band through the site may purchase albums and merchandise at the shows.

The business model for the website is, thus, not to directly generate sales as a place of commerce, but to provide the fans with motivation to attend shows, purchase albums and merchandise, and to motivate venue managers to hire The Evergreen Effect to perform at their venue—all of which can lead to band revenues, indirectly, through the website.

Similar Websites

There are thousands, if not millions, of band websites, but only a selection of such bands are within proximity of The Evergreen Effect's music genre. Although there are still very many web sites that compare to the scope and theme that we aim for with The Evergreen Effect band website, I have selected a few that use good style to express their content, while also offering very similar links, media and information for users.

While The Evergreen Effect website may adapt similar techniques for some content delivery methods from these sites, some elements need improvement. Experiencing the good and bad from these sites has inspired the design of several elements in The Evergreen Effect website, including the music media player, the home page and navigation.

<http://www.heavenly100.com/>
<http://www.themagicnumbers.net/home.html>
<http://www.modestmousemusic.com/>

Website Design

The design of The Evergreen Effect website is very important because it represents everything about the band, from the style of their music to the personality of each individual member and the band as a whole.

Each aspect of the website's design—theme, style, and mood—must be carefully considered in order to effectively represent who the band is, before the viewer meets any of the band members or even listens to their music.

Theme

The website must represent the spirit of the band without words. As Chase says it, the band is an “acoustically driven, funky, vintage rock,” but with a youthful, new-age spin. This statement of what the band is, is just the beginning of what the theme of the site should be. The site should express these notions of what the music is like along with the feelings that they create directly to the user—the user should pre-attentively process the theme through the design, without dwelling on the meanings. Although difficult, this kind of theme and spirit can be expressed without words through the use of good style and mood in the site design.

Style and Mood

The style and mood make the theme speak out. The styles used with the page colors, graphic designs and fonts speak to this theme most of all, before the viewers read or hear anything. The prominent moods to be expressed by the website are: happy, energetic, funky, strong, and playful.

The light, forest-green color used in the logo, for the links and for the headings creates a clean, warm tone that helps express the funky and playful attitude of the band and their music. The light grey background color on each page gives the site a calming, vintage kind of feel that isn't too exciting or distracting, which helps express the calm nature of the band's music—but also isn't too calm, the grey is still strong enough to provide energy that is present in the band.

The sans-serif font used for the main content area and page links offers a casual style to the page. The font is very welcoming to readers with the casual style, and the tone in the page content also reads like a casual conversation, further enhancing the mood.

The one element that most successfully provides effective mood to the site's theme is the band logo we created to be used on the website and for other publicity, such as on merchandise (stickers, t-shirts, posters, etc.). The “Happy Tree” logo represents the band very well by projecting a the happy and playful moods found in the music while also symbolizing the band name.

Early Concept Sketches

In order to effectively visualize ideas and share them with the band members for evaluation, I created some concept sketches of possible page designs using Macromedia Fireworks. Because creating a website with HTML is a tedious task that can often take several hours for one page, these sketches that can be

created in very little time are important in order to avoid making difficult design changes after the code for the web page has been developed.

The first concept sketch, seen in Figure 1, was based on my favorite design that was developed during a brief brainstorming session, in which I sketched three design ideas with pencil and paper. (The pencil sketches were discarded.)



Figure 1: Concept Sketch #1

We decided that switching to a horizontal navigation bar would be best, in order to allow more space in the main content area. The “News” and “Upcoming Shows” were elements used in the original website home page, which always made sense, in order to make such often-sought information quickly accessible to all users. The green color used in the logo was an element that we felt set a good mood, so I decided to use it for some text and in the background.

With this first concept sketch now visualized in color and on screen, it became easy to identify drawbacks in the design. This concept did not seem to emphasize the moods in the theme as well as I had hoped. The opaque logo was a little distracting and seemed very secluded; the green was used too much, which made the site feel too simplified and childish; this home page felt empty; and the navigation was too de-emphasized.

We knew that the logo was very important for the theme of the website, so I began thinking of alternative methods of implementing the logo and solving the other design problems. With all of the strengths and weaknesses assessed, I designed a second concept sketch, seen in Figure 2.

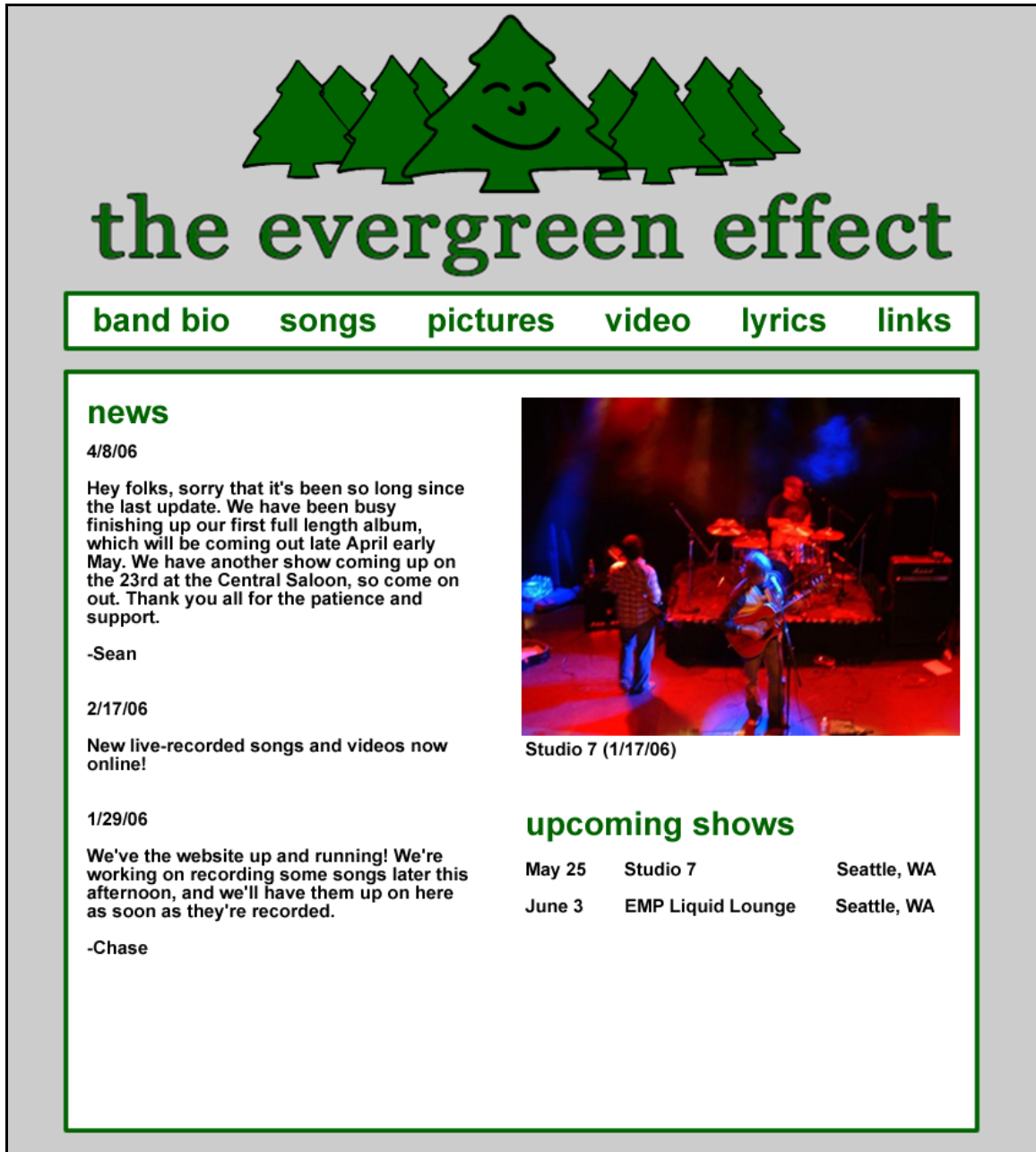


Figure 2: Concept Sketch #2

The second concept was much more representative of the theme and solved all of the problems in the first concept: The logo, placed at the top and surrounded by other trees, allowed it to offer presence without being visually overwhelming; the navigation was moved into its own bar to give the page balance; a subtle

grey background assisted the mood and countered the strong green; and a single photograph gave the home page more weight and identity.

The second concept sketch was quickly approved by the band members, and the current web design successfully reflects the all the concept's layout decisions for the home page.

Early Design Reviews

Throughout the early design stages of the website, I have worked closely with Chase to ensure that the design was able to properly express the band. Upon the completion of any stage of the design process, I have conferred with him and, at times, the other band members regarding the design decisions.

Website Evaluation

Throughout the website design and development, there has been ongoing evaluation. Upon completion of a significant element to be included in the site, I perform compatibility tests with multiple web browsers and request feedback from The Evergreen Effect band and other peers who will visit the site.

As I develop portions of the website, piece at a time, I use a hidden directory on my website to upload the files and perform testing and evaluation of the page elements online. Piece by piece, I have built the site in the hidden directory on my website and invited the band members and peers to visit the site and provide feedback on the design and navigation.

Once the site is complete, on the hidden directory, all browser compatibility issues are resolved, and the band members are satisfied with the design and content, I will remove all of the old web pages from www.evergreeneffect.com and upload the new website.

Evaluation will forever continue, though. As more people begin frequently visiting the site, there will be more opportunity to address new functionality issues and more opportunities to receive design feedback from the fans.

Website Requirements

The maintenance of the website will be ongoing, as there is always new information to post regarding the status of The Evergreen Effect band and upcoming shows. With more shows there will also be new pictures to post and even new video clips, music tracks, and lyrics.

Staff

For a considerable time into the future, I, Scott Main, will be the Webmaster of The Evergreen Effect band's website, www.evergreeneffect.com.

Equipment

The minimum equipment required for me to maintain the website is a personal computer with an internet connection, a text editor, and an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) client.

Budget

There are currently absolutely no costs in maintaining the website because as a life-long friend to Chase, I am working for free (or, rather, for mere "peanuts"). The domain, www.evergreeneffect.com, is also currently being hosted for free by Chase's brother on a home server.

The website will likely not remain on the home server for ever, though, and the domain will eventually be transferred to a professional web service such as GoDaddy.com. In which case, there will be monthly costs of about \$4 a month.

Website Content

Content Elements

Text

- Updated News
- Band biography
- Lyrics
- Upcoming shows

Graphics & Photos

- Logo
- Live show photos
- Band photos

Audio & Video

- Live show audio recordings
- Studio audio recordings
- Live show videos

Content Acquisition

Because this project is a redesign of the existing website that I developed for The Evergreen Effect, most of the web content is already available to me.

Some of the existing content was obtained from Chase, either in person or by email. I have also acquired a lot of the content currently on the website first-hand, including: video footage, photos, live audio recordings, and the logo I designed for the band.

As the ongoing webmaster for the website, I will continue to gather content for the website with my digital camera and digital camcorder. Other sources for website content will include:

- photographs from friends
- studio-recordings from Chase
- textual content from Chase and Sean

Content Implementation

All of the content on the Evergreen Effect website is implemented using HTML and CSS. In addition, some elements also use PHP scripts in order to maximize the re-use of the website with future updates. Some page elements also use Macromedia Flash movies for increased entertainment and usability.

CSS

Along with the basic HTML used on each page, a style sheet has been created with CSS in order to provide customizable fonts and design layout that can be immediately applied to all pages on the web site once changes are made to the CSS file.

PHP

Although HTML is the primary code used to transmit every page, each page uses PHP scripting (so all file names end with “.php”). Similar to the way a style sheet works, this allows a level of global changes to be instantly made: elements such as the logo, navigation bar and footer information are contained in a separate file, which is called by each page by a PHP script; thus, if a change is made to the file that creates the navigation bar, every page calling for this file will see such changes. PHP is also used to allow dynamic updates to other elements like the band photos: a PHP script is used to search certain directories on the server for all JPEG images, display a thumbnail of each image, and provide a link to enlarge the image; thus, by simply adding JPEG images to this directory on the server, the website will immediately add them to the web page.

Flash

The navigation bar buttons are created using flash so that an animation will occur when the mouse hovers over the button; giving the page a playful melody that furthers the theme of the website. The video page is also created with flash to allow multiple videos to individually play in the same window with player controls.

Website Architecture

The following outline illustrates the organization of the Evergreen Effect elements.

A round bullet (●) indicates content that exists on the parent page and an arrow (➤) indicates a link that opens in a new window.

Home

- News
- Upcoming Shows
- Live show picture

Band Bio

- Biography of the band
- Chase's information
- Sean's information
- Cameron's information

Songs

- "Journey of a Tale Voyage"
- "Cold Flame"
- "Bonfire"
- "Light on My Shoulder"
- "Happy for Today"
- "To Long Ways"

Pictures

- Live show pictures (thumbnails)
 - Enlarged pictures
- Band pictures (thumbnails)
 - Enlarged pictures

Video

- "Cold Flame"
- "Happy for Today"

Lyrics

- "Bonfire"
- "Cold Flame"
- "Happy for Today"
- "To Long Ways"