

Web Evaluation of Lake Living Sites

By Tammy Taylor

For my evaluation I was using a HP 15 Notebook PC, 64 bit, Windows 8.1, 4 MB RAM computer. Chrome was the primary browser used, with Internet Explorer as my secondary browser. The two sites I evaluated were <http://www.lakeandhomemagazine.com> and <https://lakeeffectco.com>. I was looking for sites that had information about living on the lake as well as interesting information on decorating, shopping, and local interests.

Compare and contrast the sites.

The similarities between the two sites was not only the theme; but also the promotion of lake living, to provide information on each geographical location, and the promotion of each site's products. Each site had amazing pictures that provided interest for site exploration if you were interested in lake living as I am. The sites both worked well in both Chrome and Internet Explorer. The navigation links to the main pages were present on both sites on each child page. There was no bias present on either of the sites, and spelling/grammar usage was professional on each site.

The differences in content are specific to each site's purpose. The Lake and Home Magazine site is promoting their magazine that has articles primarily on interior design, boating on the lake (tips, purchasing boats, etc.), and landscaping. The Lake Effect Co. site had significantly more information. Their products are clothing and apparel in all sizes, people can submit their own lake story that is linked by a picture of the lake area they are on, an "about" page that tells the author's story, and a blog featuring all the lake stories. The Lake Effect Co. is also on Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook; whereas the Lake and Home Magazine Site doesn't have any mention of these platforms. Although there was contact information on the Lake and Home Magazine site, no specific person was listed; where on the Lake Effect Co. site they had a page identifying the author and how she had started this site. The most significant difference was in the integrity of the sites; the Lake and Home Magazine site's cart there was no secure connection (https) but the entire site of the Lake Effect Co. was secure.

Identification of the strengths and weaknesses of each site.

I really like the graphic links used in the Lake and Home Magazine site that enlarged as you hovered over it. Not all of the graphic links were designed that way, but that was my favorite design element on this site. The viewing of the individual content on each magazines loaded well. The text font was as expected and readable. The content was effective, but I felt like there wasn't enough articles for the web site and lacked easily accessible magazine online. I liked the color choices except for the text color, which wasn't dark enough to stand off the page well. There were some 3 level pages instead of the recommended 2 level, but it wasn't too cumbersome.

My favorite part of the Lake Effect Co. site was the beautiful layout of on the Lake Views page that are actually links to blog articles that people had submitted to share. It is not only graphically pleasing, but also is a draw to bring people back to share their own stories/pictures and see other people's experiences in different locations. The site's volume of relevant content was more significant, which creates more interest. The images are the focus of the web design and the logo is represented by a simplified logo to not distract from the overall content. The text is smaller on the navigation links (to keep the simplified theme I would suspect), but is an appropriate reading size on the articles and blogs. Navigation was very intuitive and easy to use. There was no video or download option for anything on this site. Overall I thought the layout and use of content more appealing on this site.

Describe 2 scenarios (use cases) in which the website might be used by different people.

Some people would enjoy the sites if they were looking for ideas on how to update their existing residence or vacation residence or express their lake lifestyle by their purchase choices. The magazine would continue to update them on lake trends and the apparel is continuing growing in variety to accommodate a wider population. There is also tips for purchasing boats and other lake oriented activities.

Other people might explore these sites if they were looking for other vacation spots that involved lakes. There are many articles/stories on the different locations and pictures of each geographical locations that would be appealing to visit. There is also information on activities within those locations.

Peer Comments

[Cynthia Crable](#)

Tuesday Jun 12 at 10:21pm

[Manage Discussion Entry](#)

Tammy,

I really liked the overall layouts of each website. I feel like being a Lake themed website they did try to make it more relaxed and mellow to look at. When I think of being at a lake I always think relaxing getaway.

I also thought that people who might want to find a vacation destination would look at these websites. while scrolling through the Lake Effect Co. tab labeled Lake Views they had pictures taken at different lakes and most of the pictures also included text to tell you where those pictures were taken. This is helpful for people to see exactly where that destination is if they wanted to visit.

I feel like I would visit The Lake Effect Co. more than the Lake and Home Magazine website. There was more general information that I would be interested in versus just reading a variety of subscriptions.

[Amanda Comfort](#)

Yesterday Jun 14 at 6:03pm

[Manage Discussion Entry](#)

Both of these websites were pretty good. Lake Effect Co. had a great layout that was simple, clean, and super appealing. It reminded me of a Squarespace template or something similar. I loved all the pictures and the color scheme. The layout was very easy to skim, and the navigation easily told me what each of the links would take me to. "Shop" was the only nav item that had a second-level, but that seemed to make sense. The top title area with the logo, search bar, social media links, and shopping cart was probably my favorite element. It had plenty of white space, but also included items users might be looking for.

Lake and Home Magazine was also very simple. It only had four navigation items at the top, and they all easily indicated where they'd go to. The main call to action was to order the magazine, and the rest of the home page featured articles from the magazine. However, I didn't like how they included the article titles in each of the graphics. It seemed repetitive and took away from the power of the photos. I'm guessing they use the same image in the print magazine for each of the articles, but it seems like they could've customized the website photos to look a little better.