# Web Site Analysis

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The city of Gladewater, TX has presented goals they would like to achieve for the city's website, cityofgladewater.com. In this report, some areas of opportunity for the city are identified. Also, this report examines whether or not cityofgladewater.com meets the criteria for a successful website.

According to research studies, a website visitor decides within 10 seconds if they are going to stay on the site. This means the home page of a website needs to be the strongest selling point and needs to clearly communicate the value of the site to the visitor. Although this is not a store website the city is still selling it self to future residents, and new and returning visitors. If the city wants to grow and to be known over a wider area, then the primary focus of Gladewater's home page should focus on being the antique capital of East Texas. This is Gladewater's strategic selling point.  Armed with this information the city can choose to use all or some of the recommendations presented.

This report is centered on current studies of where the eye lands first and what catches someone's attention. Considering this and the goals presented, this is how the recommendations were formed. Tis report contains recommendations to improve the website for Gladewater, TX. There are two sections of suggestions. The first addresses small improvements that would improve the functionality of the website. The second part of the recommendations section is suggesting larger improvements that address the goals presented by Kati Corwin. These larger recommendations are accompanied with examples from two other cities websites. The cities that are compared are Frisco, TX and Gruene, TX.

This city and the businesses have a lot to tell and a lot to offer. Theses recommendations are only recommendations and do not have to be implemented.  The website has very valuable information on it and is a solid starting point; with these recommendations the city can present it self to site visitors as an exciting visitor destination. With this being said the city should keep in mind the saying "dress for the job you want not for the job you have." The city can remind themselves of this and constantly keep in mind the goals for the website. This will help the city to expand and become a antiquing visitors' destination.

### GOALS

- To easily keep citizens and visitors up to date on current events in the town
- Attract new and returning guests
- Engage website visitors and entice them to come visit.

### ASSESMENT

The website for Gladewater is headed towards meeting and exceeding the five criteria: accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency, and coverage, for a successful website.

## Accuracy
Accuracy addresses whether or not the information is correct. After looking at the information given, all of the information seems to be correct and relevant to each heading that it is under.

## Authority
Authority concerns itself with factors such as the credibility of the author and the domain name of the site. After speaking with Kathi Corwin I learned that she is the website builder through a service called wix.com.  Kathi has the authority to build the content for the website because she is employed by the city.
The domain for the site is under .com which may not be the most fitting because most city websites are listed as .gov.

## Objectivity
The purpose and the amount of bias wording is what objectivity is concerned with. The purpose of the city's website is to inform citizens on what is happening in the city and to list resources available for citizens. One of the goals identified is to attract new and returning guests. Currently there are not clear links to achieve this goal.
The wording used on the site is very powerful with little to no bias.

## Currency
Currency involves itself with including "last updated" dates and expired or moved links. At the top of the site in white lettering there is a date listed. This date does not say last updated but by the current date displayed the site reader can conclude that the site is up to date. Although, if this date is just the current date and not the last updated this can confuse site visitors.
There were only 3 links found that had been moved or were not working. The 3 links are discussed below under Functional Requirements.

## Coverage
Coverage examines how the site compares with other similar sites, the balance of text and images, and material depth. The site has valuable information, but other cities websites appear to be more professional. Because Gladewater is a smaller city, it has less resources to build a website than other bigger cities like Frisco or Gruene have. There are some very simple fixes to improve the website's professional appearance.
There is a lot more text than pictures on the site. Site visitors are more likely to look at the pictures. If the pictures interest them then they will read the text. Adding more pictures would also help improve the professional appearance of the site. The information discussed is not superficial and is very well written.
The information gives the reader all of the information they need to know for each of the programs and services listed.

After reviewing the 5 criteria to make a successful website it is obvious that the site for Gladewater is on the right track to meeting all of these criteria. The website has value. Through this report we will examine how to make the website even more effective.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations section is listed in two parts. The first part examines simple fixes listed by page title. The second part addressees the goals for the web site.

### Functional Recommendations

**1. .com**
If the domain was changed to at .gov people would automatically recognize this as a legitimate city website. This should be taken into consideration the city is a functioning government organization and the city's site should be seen as such.

**2. Home**
If the size of "Antique Capital of East Texas" is enlarged it would be easier to see. Since this is what Gladewater is known for, this should be large and easy to spot on the first page.

**3. City Council**
On the city council page the titles for Budgets, Agendas & Minutes, and Ordnances and Charter would be would be easier to access if the titles were hyperlinked to the specific pages the titles refers to.

**4. Ordnances and Charters**
There is no content available. If possible hide the page until content in created.

**5. City Departments**
Increase the size of the departments and add pictures so that site visitors are not overwhelmed with information. On way to add pictures would be to add the logos or the signs.

**6. Resident Information**
When clicking on the titles for Sanitation, Water Information, and City Wood Chipping Program an error page comes up saying that there is no page found.

### Recommendations to Meet Goals

**1. Location of Content and Tabs**
One way to make the Gladewater web site more effective is to change what each dropdown tab on the web site says and relocate some of the information. This would allow citizens and visitors to easily find the information they are looking for. Below are the main links listed on the web site for Plano, TX:

Plano's site makes it very easy for citizens and visitors to find what they are looking for, but since Gladewater has an industry they are known for they should capitalize on this by using tabs such as:

- Home
- Your Government
- Living in Gladewater
- Visiting
- Contact & Connect

For each of the new tabs a good way to organize the dropdown list is below:

- Home: Community Profile, About the City
- Your Government: City Council, Boards/Commissions
- Living in Gladewater: City Departments, Resident information
- Visiting: Shops, Area Hotels, Historical Markers, Restaurants
- Contact & Connect: Apply for a Job, Location, Ask a question, Social media, Staff Directory

The Visit tab will make the most impact because this will make visitors' trip planning easy. To measure the effectiveness of the Visit tab, try partnering with local businesses so the city can post a coupon that only is available on the city website. This feature would increase traffic on the web site with both citizens and visitors.

If this change is implemented then under the tabs consider moving the information on each tab around. For the Home tab consider adding a drop down menu to list the Community Profile and About the City. This would help clear space so more pictures can be added to the home page. Your Governments tab list what is currently under the City Council and Boards/Commissions.

## 2. Pictures
Adding pictures to the home page is a great and easy way to engage web site visitors. This is the first thing that site visitors will see when they come to the website. Featuring a slide show of a few powerful community pictures is a great way for them to imagine the city. This is especially effective if the site visitor has never visited Gladewater before. Adding pictures is also effective because many people prefer to look at pictures rather than reading blocks of text. To add text, the city can use a free photo-editing application or, like the example below the city can create text on the site and hyperlink it to another page. Below are pictures from Frisco's website. These pictures are a good example of adding text to a picture.

If Gladewater would like to attract more visitors then, should select pictures that show fun things to do in the city. Below are pictures for Gruene. These pictures prove to the site visitor that city really has what it says it offers.



Due to the goals stated, pictures that are similar to the ones from Gruene are pictures that Gladewater would want to use on their website. The pictures chosen would be more effective if they are of people at community events such as parades, football games, or

citywide community service days. This is important because this sends the message that the citizens care about the community they live in and are actively involved.

If pictures of people being active in the community are not available Gladewater can try reaching out and asking the community to send in their personal pictures. This could be done in two ways. The city could create a picture contest and have citizens vote on their favorites, or just asking at city council meetings.

## 3. Improve position on Google
Below are the Google results when searching Gladewater vs. searching Gruene.

Here are the results for Gruene, TX



Here are the results for Gladewater:
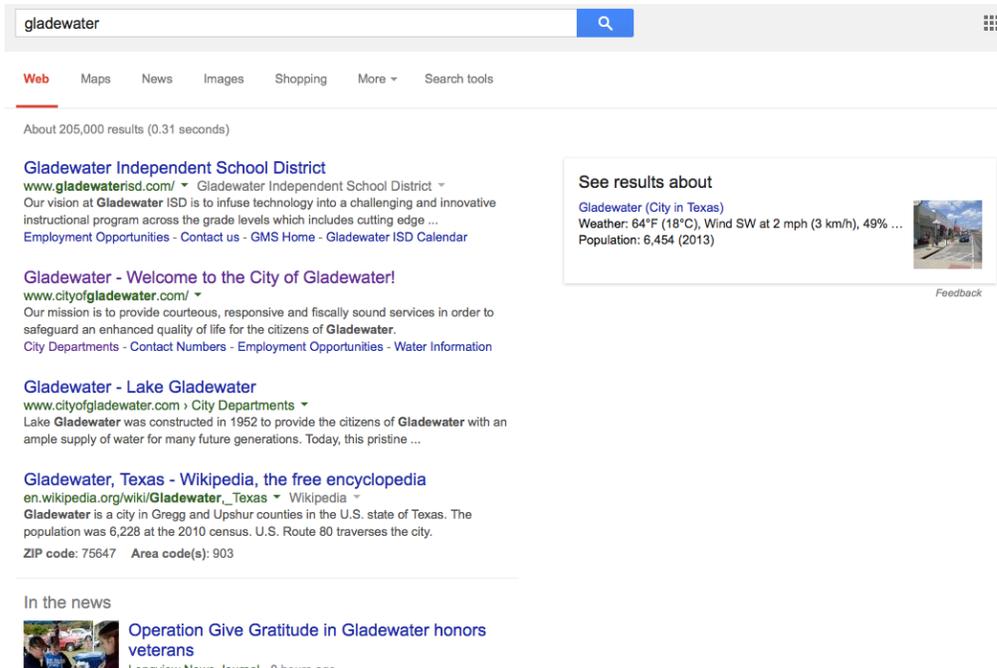
Gruene, TX is located by New Braunfels and they are best known for their historic dance hall. This comparison is valuable because Gruene is not a large city and they are known for something special. When looking at the two results there are three important pieces of information to note. The results for Gruene show a map, the city web site is the first link available, and what they are known for comes up automatically.

It is relatively easy to improve the city's web site position on Google. There is an application called Google Analytics that is free and easy to download. (http://www.google.com/analytics/) This application will immediately start to work and show how visitors are going to the website and keywords used to get them engaged such as leaving a comment.

**4. Directory**
A directory is a powerful tool that citizens can use to efficiently find a phone number or an address they are looking for. The current list of contact numbers is hard to read when looking for a number that is in in middle of the list. A very easy way to fix this is to add spaces between the different sets of Places and phone numbers.

**CITY FACILITIES**

**George A. Purefoy Municipal Center**
6101 Frisco Square Blvd., 75034

| | |
|---|---|
| **City Hall** [ MAP ] | **Frisco Public Library** [ MAP ] [ WEBSITE ] |
| (972) 292-5000 | (972) 292-5669 |
| **Contract Postal Unit / TollTag** (1st Floor) | **Collin County Tax Office** (2nd Floor) [ WEBSITE ] |
| (972) 292-5550 | (469) 362-5800 |
| **Frisco Central Fire Station** [ WEBSITE ] | **Frisco Police Department** [ WEBSITE ] |
| 8601 Gary Burns Dr., 75034 | 7200 Stonebrook Pkwy., 75034 |
| (972) 292-6300 (administration) | (972) 292-6100 (administration) |
| **ALL FIRE STATIONS** | **POLICE DIVISIONS** |
| **Frisco Athletic Center** [ WEBSITE ] | **Frisco Municipal Court** [ WEBSITE ] |
| 5828 Nancy Jane Ln., 75035 | 6865 Main St., 75034 |
| (972) 292-6600 | (972) 292-5555 |
| **Public Works** [ WEBSITE ] | **Environmental Collection Center** [ WEBSITE ] |
| 11300 Research Rd., 75033 | 6616 Walnut St., 75033 |
| (972) 292-5800 | (972) 292-5900 |
| **Frisco Heritage Museum** [ WEBSITE ] | **Parks & Recreation Administration** [ WEBSITE ] |
| 6455 Page St., 75034 | 6726 Walnut St., 75033 |
| (972) 292-5665 | (972) 292-6500 |
| **Frisco Convention & Visitors Bureau** [ WEBSITE ] | **Frisco Economic Development Corporation** [ WEBSITE ] |
| 7601 Gaylord Pkwy., Suite 100, 75034 | 6801 Gaylord Pkwy., Suite 400, 75034 |
| 1-877-GoFrisco (463-7472) | (972) 292-5150 |

**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

[ CITY COUNCIL WEB PAGE ]

**Mayor Maher Maso**
972-292-5050

**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**

[ CITY MANAGERS WEB PAGE ]

**GEORGE PUREFOY**
City Manager

**CITY DEPARTMENTS / DIVISIONS**

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

ANIMAL CONTROL

BUDGET OFFICE

The directory shown is for Frisco, Texas. This directory is easy to locate on the site and once a site visitor arrives on this page it is very easy navigate. The names of each facility is in bold while the address and phone number is directly below the name with a space in between the different facilities. This type of layout makes navigating on the page easy and convenient.

To improve this list even more, the city can add two features. The first would be to add more names and numbers than what is currently included in the Helpful Contacts List. As shown in the example the Mayor and City Council is listed along with other divisions of the city. This is the type of valuable information site visitors are looking for when they are searching for names and numbers. The other option to further improve the directory is to create a searchable directory. Although the searchable directory is only beneficial when people know the name of the person of facility they are looking for.

**5. Calendar**
An easy way to increase attendance for events is to create a calendar. Below are two examples for a calendar. The first is from Plano. This calendar is geared towards the citizens and the community. The second calendar is from Gruene. This calendar focuses on tourism.

Either example of a calendar would work for Gladewater. Adding the calendar on the Home Page is a very effective page to place it on because people can easily find out what is going on and can plan their schedule. With the calendar, event attendance will increase because people are able to plan further in advance.

**6. Logo**
The logo for the city could be moved from the bottom of the page to the top left hand corner. The logo is a valuable city marketing tool, and many people do not scroll down on the home page. They just automatically click on what they are looking for. Moving the logo would provide exposure for the city. Here is Plano's website.



The logo is a great way for people to easily recognize the city and can be capitalized on by including it all marketing material. People who live in the city should automatically recognize it. This is Gladewater's unique logo and should be taken advantage of.

## CONCLUSION

By using some or all of these recommendations Gladewater can improve their website and focus not on changing the content that is already published, but improving on how the information is presented. Web sites have a large design component and the suggestions are meant to address this aspect of the web site.

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