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WSJM FM 94.9 (AM 1400) is a news and talk station based out of southwest Michigan. The community of license for the station is Benton, Michigan. According to *streamingradioguide.com*, WSJM's market is South Bend, Indiana – 40 miles south of Benton, Michigan and just a few miles from Michigan's border. For a more robust assessment of the population and demographics for the station, it is better to examine southwest Michigan as a whole. According to *southwestmichiganfirst.com*, a 2010 census reported southwest Michigan region as predominantly white, encapsulating approximately 82.51% of the population. The remaining percentages are 9.8% African-American, 1.74% Asian, and 5.95% described as multiracial or other. The census also estimated that the gender split in the area is 50.75% female and 49.25% males. Given the subject matter of the website, it's advertising for local sports and banks, and the relatively high percentage of certain demographics, it could be determined that WSJM's primary consumers are white males between the ages of 34-50. Given that they are both large sections of the region's population, have an interest in local and national sports, and may be at a pivotal ages where loan advertisements could be beneficial for those that are money conscious and concerned with financial security.

There is a clear sense of purpose for this website – why they would visit is mainly for the listen live feature, for viewing the program schedule, perhaps reading from the abundant source of news articles, finding the radio station's contact information, and to view information on community events. Given the age of WSJM's audience, they would probably be using a computer at work or home to use the listen live feature, a few might look up the news articles on mobile devices. One could also assume with the given age of the audience, the use of browsers would be Internet Explorer, Safari or Firefox given that these are the browsers that currently support the websites listen live feature. The gain of utilizing their website is convenient access

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to their programs and to stay informed. The most useful feature on the website is surely the listen live.

As WSJM is a news and talk station, the tone of the website is information centered. The page is designed to produce as much breaking news that is important to their community as possible. This is communicated by the sites complete saturation of links and information right on the home page for WSJM. There are a number of categories and sub-stories present on the main page for quick user access to dozens of written articles from their local and national news affiliates.

The number of categories and links work for, and against, WSJM in their approach to communicate as much information as possible. Adding linked images to their several radio shows and events allows easy access for a user who may frequent the site to quickly navigate to some of the most popular content, however, a new user to the main page may be overwhelmed with content and be turned off to the experience. Sub-pages also feature this problem. The News tab, for example, contains upwards of 100 links listed sequentially on the page. It is unlikely that a user would ever want to navigate this enormous link list for breaking news. Additionally, the color schemes between the images have no coordination, leading to an over-use of flashy visuals as a visitor navigates the information. From the logo, the station colors appear to be red and blue. These thematic cues are dwarfed by the green banner ads and multicolored event links. While the designs are eye-catching, they do not complement the dozens of links to news stories and lead to a very “busy” navigation.

There is no intentional theme used in the websites design for a user to understand the content, with maybe the exception of the “levels graphic” surrounding the listen live link in the top left, but a theme can still be discerned from rotating ads by their affiliates. In the first few

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moments on the page, a user can see the logos for many major news organizations as well as several Michigan based sports teams. This inadvertently lets a new user know what type of content they should expect from the website.

WSJM's website is dynamic in a few ways and appears static in others. The one absolutely dynamic element to this website is the ON-AIR NOW feature that displays the currently airing program in the schedule in real time, and changes depending on the hour or the day. News articles seem to be frequently updated, though it is not likely that this is achieved through automation akin to the ON-AIR NOW feature. Aside from these outliers, the website is mostly static as there is no real encouragement of interaction from the users – no section where the user can sign up for a newsletter or answer questionnaires, or any other element of the like. This doesn't seem to affect the navigation, but one could argue how this might affect the duration of time spent on the website. With everything readily available upon first entering the website, the user can get to what they want and leave in relatively good time, which is a key characteristic of a more static website.

The site utilizes the nonlinear approach to web design which is suitable for this type of website and the content that it provides. The main navigation bar is constant and structurally fixed in the user's traversal through the site. This is an excellent way of reducing any confusion as to where the user is in any given click through the site; they will always know where they are and not wonder if they have somehow navigated away from WSJM's website. They have established a sense of hierarchical organization through out the site, using large text for the headings and smaller text for a more detailed description for that particular topic. This hierarchical structure, however, is obfuscated by the content saturation and makes it overwhelming to the eye on just what is the most important segment of any given section. How

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does this affect user experience of exploring the site?

There are a fair amount of multimedia elements spread throughout the site in the form of a photo carousel, audio segments from television news, and a large archive of podcasts from past segments extending back several months. These elements seem to be well integrated with the text media, as any visuals serve as a reference to news stories or as a redirect to other site features. The implementation of the multimedia elements is equally as staggered as the news articles. For example, the video widget is located along the right edge of the page where a vertical advertisement typically sits on most web pages. A new user would likely disregard the video section due to this placement, thinking that it was advertised content.

Given the program schedule, it is safe to say that the primary perceived target audience for WSJM are Republican males, possibly 35 and above. This is evident from shows such as *America in the Morning*, *Veterans Affairs*, and the rebroadcasted block of Rush Limbaugh. Although males only make up about 50% of the population in WSJM's region, the inclusion of *Outdoor Magazine*, *Car and Driver Magazine*, and *The Cigar Dave Show* are a dead giveaway. The perceived audience therefore has a very wide range of technical savvy. Based on the layout of the website, it is designed for those who are uncomfortable with extensive site navigation. This is seen in the large amounts of information found on each page, which requires little navigation on the users part.

This suggests an older demographic, possibly early 30's, that is computer literate but not a heavy user. It is likely that they frequent websites dedicated to national or local news stories, and other major sites for sports consumers such as *espn.com* or *foxsports.com*. It could be inferred by the broadcast blocks and the provided news stories that WSJM's target audience are blue collar workers who spend their time following Michigan sports teams, events concerning

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local government, and outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing. The targeted users time on the web is probably infrequent, and solely for information gathering or perhaps connecting on social media. It is unlikely that any given audience member is a heavy user of technology or the Internet.

WSJM's website is tailored for its target audience, due to the saturation of media on every page. The number of "flashy" image links to other content garners attention well and is appropriate for users who may not frequent web pages too often and the non-extensive categorization allows for easy access and navigation. Strangely enough, this style of organization could also be the weakest element of WSJM's website as well. Although it allows for the selection of more articles with less navigation, any given page contains a large amount of content and may be too intimidating to traverse for a casual web-user. Because of this organizational structure it is likely that a typical user will only use WSJM's website to locate the program schedule and find contact information for the station, rather than use it as a newsfeed. Adjusting the linked images and overall color palette of the web page to align with the stations color theme would help new users immensely. In addition, a tiered navigation for news stories currently listed in columns would help reduce the cluttered appearance of the main page. If WSJM was concerned about users getting lost in the sub-navigation, they could add a "bread-crumbs" navigation to allow the user to step backwards through their traversal.