The Holistic Hunt:
An Analysis of Texas Habitat for Humanity Affiliate Websites

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Abstract

The purpose of this applied research project is threefold. First, it explains and updates a non-profit website assessment framework developed by Kenix (2007). Second, it assesses all Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliate websites using the updated Kenix model. Third, it provides recommendations for improving the Habitat websites using the results of the study.

Kenix identified six categories that contributed to the development of the conceptual framework: deliberative public sphere, opportunity for activism, advertising and fundraising revenue, space for marginalized voices, interconnected, instantaneous information and accountability. The researcher used this framework to develop a coding protocol to conduct a content analysis of Texas Habitat for Humanity websites.

The evidence of website attributes that exemplified the updated Kenix model varied. Few affiliates prioritized disability access, with little attention toward those with hearing and sight limitations. Most affiliates used creativity with branding and supporting organization information, but effectiveness of a general phone number and email address proved problematic. The communication levels and social media activity often mirrored the area. Big cities had multiple platforms, e-newsletters and contact information for multiple staff members. Smaller county affiliates typically highlighted a P.O. Box and mailed donations.

Public administrators charged with designing and revising Habitat for Humanity websites should consider the website attributes created by Kenix and modified with this applied research project to ensure optimal engagement and efficiency.

About the Author

Otinetta Eddie is a graduate student at Texas State University and works as a Business Development Specialist at Chuck Nash Auto Group. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Sam Houston State University in 2012. Otinetta is set to complete her Master of Public Administration in December 2017. Her experience is a culmination of non-profit, client centric and customer service environments. She currently lives in San Marcos, TX.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If home is where the heart is, where is your heart? Housing instability is a global crisis facing big cities, small towns and villages. Millions endure the hardships of frequent moves, overcrowding, evictions and foreclosure. These factors can lead to anxiety and depression. (Habitat for Humanity International, 2017). Housing instability compromises the health of adults and children worldwide. Some report families must choose between life sustaining choices: rent, food, transportation or healthcare.

Habitat for Humanity seeks to alleviate some of the stress associated with rising housing costs and the inability to pay. An affordable and decent place to live frees families from the physical, mental and emotional binds. The international non-profit organization upholds the possibility of new opportunities, stability and confidence with secure shelter. The families partnered with Habitat create a safe place for themselves and future generations. It reestablishes home as a place of provision and protection instead of threatening or unreliable. That is heartfelt.

Advancements in technology catapulted the expectations the public put on organizational websites. This applied research peels the layers surrounding the role of non-profit organizations and how their online presence with websites can positively or negatively impact community response, donations and volunteerism. Websites are vital communication tools for non-profit organizations. They inform citizens of primary goals and outcomes online. Preliminary research reveals the importance of an attractive and functional one. The emerging technologies create a new space with new metrics. Citizens are active partners and influencers over the message and method of today's non-profits.

Over the years, research determined how a non-profit's website affects the relationship among staff, donors, volunteers and citizens (Kwon and Jeong 2015). A website allows non-profits to interact with consumers, engage and motivate them to donate online (Panic et al. 2016). Our technologically advanced society allows people to visit an organization virtually before visiting physically. Visitor perceptions often influence their site involvement and attitudes. The public decides whether to volunteer, donate or advocate based on the website alone (Huang and Ku 2016). The online presence of several affiliates is so poor their websites do not exist. A poorly executed website or lack of one, can result in limited funds, personnel and awareness. Non-profit leaders and managers should be able to assess the quality of their websites.

Role of Non-Profits in Public Policy

Habitat for Humanity alliances and activities are multi-faceted. They boast a non-partisan identity but communicates with lawmakers in capital cities. Habitat asks legislators and housing regulators to increase support for affordable homeownership and decent housing. Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliates occasionally send staff member to Washington D.C. to represent their interests. The event is called "Habitat on the Hill" (Moore, 2016). The organization monitors public policies related to housing, community and international development because of their role in eliminating homelessness and international home building projects.

The legislative process is known for lobbying, conditional arrangements and ambiguity. Thus, Habitat only accepts government funding that support their organizational principles including Christianity. Habitat renovates existing homes. Habitat's Disaster Response works with local communities to address a variety of housing needs after natural disasters.

Habitat for Humanity leads the charge in eradicating homelessness and poverty housing. Both items impact people around the world. Websites connect a college student in Illinois with a deserving family's story in a neighboring city. An affiliate website can motivate a retiree to recruit some friends to paint walls of a Habitat home on a Saturday morning.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this applied research project is threefold: First, it explains and updates a non-profit website assessment framework developed by Kenix (2007). Second, it assesses Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliate websites using the updated Kenix model. Third, it provides recommendations for improving the Habitat websites using the results of the study.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 details the public housing crisis and need for Habitat for Humanity. Chapter 3 discusses the important terms utilized throughout this research, the components of the Kenix model and the strengths of the revised model. It includes the conceptual framework. Chapter 4 outlines the aspects of the population, content analysis, website criteria and coding process—along with the operationalization table. Chapter 5 presents the results of the content analysis of Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. Chapter 6 describes the best practices, draws conclusions upon recent findings and offers recommendations to improve Habitat websites.

Chapter 2

Setting

Habitat for Humanity's Mission

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope. (Habitat for Humanity International, 2017)

History

Habitat for Humanity's origin lies within a combination of innovators, an extended timeline and an inspired gardener. Clarence Jordan developed the idea for Habitat for Humanity on a community farm outside of Americus, Georgia (Rubel, 2009). Jordan established the Koinonia Farm in 1942. Then, Millard and Linda Fuller visited Koinonia in 1965. Jordan collaborated with the Fullers to develop a concept of partnership housing. The trio explored the idea of those in need of adequate shelter collaborating with volunteers to build decent, affordable houses. Habitat for Humanity International formally began in 1976.

Today, both homeowners and volunteers find the process rewarding. Every Habitat house positively affects lives: the volunteers and partner families. The organization's popularity grew after former U.S. President Jimmy and First Lady Rosalynn Carter's volunteer efforts (Rubel, 2009). Habitat for Humanity reaches over 90 countries and helps millions achieve strength, stability and independence through safe, decent and affordable shelter.

Organizational Practices

Habitat for Humanity seeks to remedy homelessness and inadequate housing. Their mission, to end poverty housing, is commendable and apparent in all their operations. Their

efforts help build homes and change lives. Public housing is not sufficient to meet the growing need for affordable housing. Habitat supplements the limitations by allowing people to enter home ownership.

Habitat for Humanity builds homes at no profit and new homeowners buy homes with no-interest loans. Habitat for Humanity partners with qualified families. Family size determines home size. Families meet three primary requirements to qualify. They must prove the ability to pay the mortgage, prove their need through a home visit and demonstrate willingness perform requires 350 "sweat equity" volunteer hours. where the families volunteer with Habitat for 350 hours. This demonstrates the lasting impact of "a hand up, not a hand out". The entire process from home application to home dedication can take up to 18 months (Moore, 2016)

Benefits

Prior to home ownership, the eligible families typically endure rent increases, evictions, overcrowding and financial instability. The families suffer stress from uncertainty and fear. Poor housing conditions cause people to move frequently due to rising rent costs. They often work multiple jobs to cover living expenses, suffer worsening health conditions and some students drop out of high school (Austin Habitat, 2017). Habitat's research connects housing quality and the well-being of children who earn better grades. Decent shelter provides the solid foundation for all of this (Austin Habitat, 2017).

Home ownership improves lives. Medical conditions caused by mildew, mold and poor ventilation lessen. Children are more likely to graduate from high school if the family stays in the same district. Families establish roots, pay property taxes, build assets and develop a legacy. Homeownership motivates families to build confidence to invest in themselves and their communities. Habitat homeowners strengthen their families with healthier and more

financially stable lives. (Austin Habitat for Humanity, 2016). Safe, decent and affordable shelter contributes to prosperity and stability.

Since Habitat's origination in 1976, Texas affiliates are responsible for the following over a 40-year period: 8,105 new homes, 152 recycled homes, 564 rehabilitated homes and 3,467 repaired (Habitat for Humanity Texas, 2017).

Context

This Applied Research Project connects the importance of Habitat for Humanity websites with the organization's goal of homeownership. The internet's centrality lends itself to information dissemination brainstorming. Thus, websites are a vehicle of communication for the non-profit and the beneficiary. Figure 2.1 illustrates the Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliate locations (Habitat for Humanity Texas, 2017). Some are county based others represent cities. Table 4.3 in chapter 4 lists each active affiliate and their accompanying website.

Figure 2.1 Map of Texas Habitat for Humanity Affiliates

Source: habitattexas.org
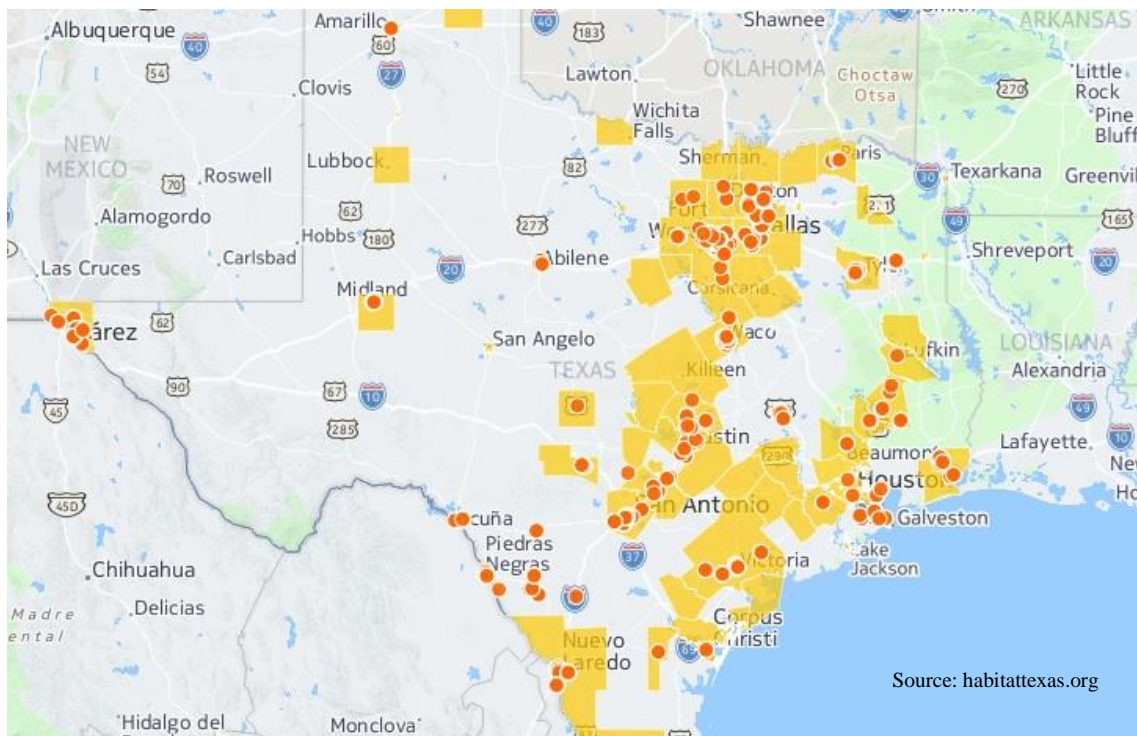
<center>**Chapter 3**</center>

<center>**Literature Review | Model Development**</center>

Purpose

This chapter reviews the literature on the value and use of websites by non-profit organizations. It explains and updates the website evaluation model developed by Kenix (2007). Then, the updated Kenix model is used to develop a conceptual framework that serve as a guide for a descriptive assessment of Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliate websites.

Context

Linda Jean Kenix (2007) explored the practical application of a utopian internet in the context of a democratizing tool. She investigated the democratic capabilities of the internet to meet the needs of non-profit organizations. After analyzing 70 non-profit websites she determined non-profit organizations should utilize the internet for six functions: deliberative public sphere, an opportunity for activism, an avenue for advertising and fundraising revenue, a space for marginalized voices, an interconnected, instantaneous portal for information and a medium to bolster organizational accountability. She argued non-profits could improve their fundraising, volunteer recruitment, service delivery and communication through efficiency online.

Kenix identified the internet's interactive capabilities while acknowledging its growing use led some researchers to question its credibility and quality. She considers non-profit organizations reliant for their communal, democratic and egalitarian values. She used Guidestar[1]. The database lists over 1.5 million organizations. Guidestar randomly selected 70 websites

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[1] It is a national database of non-profit organizations (Kenix 2007).

without keyword, city or state indicators. The online portal generated a list of 500 non-profits and Kenix included every 7th in the analysis. Each organization was in the United States and she conducted her research in the United States too. She enlisted two graduate students as coders and instructed them to analyze the content within three degrees of the homepage by measuring the content within three mouse clicks from the home page. This reasoning derived from her empirical knowledge of internet users.

Introducing the Conceptual Framework

Kenix's study, however, did provide useful assessment criteria. In the 10 years since her study, intentions and expectations about website roles have expanded. Thus, the need to updates Kenix's model. The next section introduces and defends a slightly modified Kenix model to assess Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. Table 3.1 contrasts the Kenix model with the one used for this study. This project modified several categories. The item *opportunity for activism* transformed to *citizen engagement* to appear more inclusive. It sounds like more people can participate, but not necessarily advocate. *Advertising* changed to *branding*. The purpose of the project advertising sounded to commercial and corporate. Branding seems more inviting for non-profits. Lastly, the addition of *connection with clients* fit Habitat for Humanity's name. Humanity implies all and in order to serve, one must connect.

Table 3.1 Model Comparisons

Kenix Model	Revised Model
Deliberate Public Sphere	Deliberative Public Sphere
Opportunity for Activism	**Citizen Engagement**
Advertising and Fundraising Revenue	**Branding** and Fundraising Revenue
Space for Marginalized Voices	Space for Marginalized Voices
Interconnected, Instantaneous Information	Interconnected, Instantaneous Information
Accountability	Accountability
-/-	**Connection with Clients**

Deliberative Public Sphere

Kenix asserts non-profit organizations are uniquely placed. Their emphasis on relationship building and advocacy position them for the public sphere (Kenix 2007). The internet fosters relationship building with stakeholders through dialogue. She revels in the idea of unobstructed discourse. Conversation strengthens bonds between members and organization. It permits a deliberative public sphere where "…rational discussion can develop" and "…propel democratic participation…" (Kenix 2007, 7). A deliberative public sphere is an affordable and direct way for non-profit organizations to strategize and encourage participation. According to Kenix (2007), websites that act as deliberative public spheres should include email lists, hit counters and chatrooms.

Email Lists

Email allows the wide distribution of messages directly to one's inbox. Zech, Wagner and West (2013) encourage email distribution to supplant the existence of an administrative

office. Once people visit a website, the email address allows the curators to maintain contact. It connects visitors when they are not on the website and increases familiarity. The collection of email addresses enhances outreach and the deliberative public sphere nature of websites (Sweeney 2016).

Hit Counters

A hit counter keeps track of the people visiting the site. Counters indicate how many times visitors access a particular page, but do not offer details where hits originate (Robertson and Murray 2003). Numerical data can help organizations enter arenas they would not otherwise. If visitors return to the site more frequently with certain content [pictures, videos, color palette, text format] this can motivate the affiliate to continue in this direction. If the hits drop or plateau the counter can offer insight regarding changes going forward. More than three-fourths of the websites in the Kenix study did not have a hit counter (Kenix 2007). If a website fails to keep track of online attendance, they cannot gainfully measure the relevance of their content.

Social Media[2]

Social media's prevalence is undeniable in today's culture. It functions in both personal and professional settings. Its impact permits non-profits to enter spaces for more information and interaction. Social networking sites allow parties to post links to news articles and media outlets. People can comment and send private messages. Organizations can communicate with audiences and market services (Josan 2010). Social media allows non-profits to build momentum, reach new donors, and raise awareness. Followers, friends and retweets all translate to visibility.

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[2] An updated model would measure social media in the deliberative public sphere, rather than chatrooms and newsgroups.

Social media integration releases timely information and cultivates interaction (Dumont 2013). It widens the ability of a non-profit to communicate with their audience and build momentum. The American Red Cross considered Twitter vital for relationship building, internal improvements, coordinating emergency responses and obtaining feedback from stakeholders (Gálvez-Rodríguez, Caba-Perez and López-Godoy 2016). Social media does not guarantee positivity but most feedback helps the non-profit's reputation and their ideals.

Citizen Engagement

An organization's online and physical presence contribute to citizen engagement. The second category is citizen engagement [sometimes referred to as community engagement] bolsters the success of the non-profit. It is the process of building sustainable relationships with community members. It builds trust. "Effective community engagement should be a first step towards creating the circumstances and opportunities to ensure that communities thrive economically, socially, and culturally" (Mirza, Vodden, Collins, 2012, 5). The connectivity provides space for individuals to mobilize (Kenix 2007).

Volunteer Information

Nonprofit organizations rely heavily on the support of volunteers to help carry out the mission of the organization. Higher volunteerism saves money, brings needed skills, renews energy and raises community ownership. Volunteers help non-profits maintain adequate levels of service to the community and adapt to the growing needs of the population served. Some critics attribute competition to the abundance of non-profit organizations, greater demand for social services, and increased need for volunteers (Randle, Leisch and Dolnicar 2013). However, Kenix's study demonstrated inadequacies among websites. She realized a large percentage do

not use the internet to mobilize volunteers. Sixty-two percent of organizations lacked an area for visitors to sign up for volunteer opportunities.

Websites can help volunteers, members and sponsors coalesce. [3] Dumont (2013) devised a website quality control analysis including **calendar of events** and physical **address** in his Initial Index Measures and Descriptives. Volunteers need to know where to go and when to arrive. **Information about Upcoming Meetings** is also helpful. None of the websites in Kenix's study presented online petitions or upcoming meetings and less than 2 percent few listed rally details. A large percentage of non-profits proved they were unprepared for visitors to become activists with one click.

Branding and Fundraising Revenue

Non-profit organizations benefit from online fundraising and the internet is an inexpensive public relations tool that educates stakeholders, connects with the public and reassures donors (Ingenhoff and Koelling 2010). Online fundraising supplements various fundraising goals. Some organizations sell merchandise and host online stores. Others solicit donations by connecting with individuals who support their mission. Nonprofit marketers search for innovative ways increase donor involvement and support. Gaining insights into the factors that affect individuals' affective and behavioral responses toward charitable organizations is an important challenge (Hsu, Liang, & Tien 2005).

Branding

Non- profit organizations rely on their brand to fundraise. A brand is a name, symbol or feature that identifies one's service as distinct (Shiu-Li & Hsiao-Hsuan 2016). A brand's image

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[3] The updated model will remove the federal officials section, the online petition and rally information while renaming opportunity for activism heading to renamed citizen engagement.

possesses knowledge, feelings and beliefs people have about an organization. Brand empowers partnerships and validates donors. The drive to sustain revenue affects the website's design and appeal. It is much more expensive to acquire new donors than to maintain loyal ones (Voeth & Herbst 2008). Thus, non-profit's value the relationships established and maintained online. Once an organization's members embrace brand identity, it increases cohesion and reinforces shared values. A cohesive organization utilizes existing resources, obtains external trust, attracts talent, generates financing, and exudes authority.

Ability to Donate Online

Engagement, trust, reputation, connectivity and distance all impact the likelihood of a donation. If an organization performs well in those areas, then people are more willing to donate time and money. The information and dynamism placed on a nonprofit's website influence the donations. "Due to the increasing number of nonprofit charitable organizations, the competition - within the charity fundraising market has become fierce" (Panic, Hudders and Cauberghe 2016, 333). For donors, the information provided by online donating platforms reduces transaction costs and they easily target a particular population or a geographical area (Shier & Handy 2012). Fundraising encounters challenges when the use of the internet as a primary source of information compromises the relationship among security, trust and the motivation to donate time and money to a charitable cause (Long and Chiagouris 2006). In order to maximize the mission, readers need the ability to donate online or become sponsors. Action Wisconsin labeled donation amounts with labels indicating giving levels. The **sponsorship** distinctions encouraged higher donations through a sales pitch (Kenix 2007).

Annual Report

Kenix discovered more limitations throughout her study. The non-profits failed to maintain transparency. Ninety percent did not post financial information and more than eighty-eight percent did not post annual reports. Kenix found this shocking because the 501(c)(3) status of tax-exempt charities precludes some levels of privacy. This implies the public's right to know the amount of money a non-profit generates and spends during any fiscal year.

Financial Information

Some organizations choose to share the details surrounding their financial situations. Nonprofit executives believed that increased visibility, favorable positioning in relation to competitors and recognition among target audiences would translate into fundraising success (Kylander and Stone, 2012). They consider the benefits of sharing the information and anticipate more revenue will accompany their honesty. This is a positive correlation rests in perceived accountability. People feel more comfortable giving to an organization that does not mismanage funds. Supporters want to know their money supports worthwhile projects and programs. These considerations allow volunteers and donors to witness the difference their gifts make. This portion of one's website should also include links to a PDF or Web version of your annual report and Form 990 (Bray 2016).

Space for Marginalized Voices[4]

Websites have the potential to give a platform to marginalized populations. They can empower people and offer space for expression. Kenix acknowledges the importance of multiple

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[4] The updated model will remove the login requirement, bandwidth options and guestbook.

language formats and the availability for people with disabilities. She advocates the internet's strength surrounding open space, hence her quest for understanding democracy within online portals. Marginalized voices recognize individuals with disabilities and foreign language speakers.

Marginalized groups can gather online and form communities based upon similar causes. Despite these notions, Kenix (2007) discovers non-profit websites often do not welcome other voices. She provides two examples. First, The Grotto Foundation seeks to connect various ethnic groups and inspire possibility with information about Native Americans and American Indians. Yet, no first-person accounts are on the website. The second indiscretion comes from the Maryland Crime Victim's Resource Center. This grassroots organization's website lacks an area for Maryland's victims to find their voice.

Sight Disability Option

Loiacono & McCoy (2006) monitored the accessibility of corporate, non-profit and government websites in relation to the Rehabilitation Act of 1988. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act establishes requirements for information technology developed or used by the Federal government. They deemed accessibility as web content that acknowledges people with disabilities (Loiacono & McCoy 2006). The Act mandates inclusion but websites appear negligent. A majority of the literature recommended accessibility. Bray (2016) advises inclusion among non-profit organizations with regards to people with disabilities because it does not require extensive programming or cost (Bray 2016). **Hearing Disability Options** offer those who suffer hearing loss, audio modifications.

Language Options

The number of families who speak a language other than English at home continues to rise. In Texas, over one-fourth of people over age five do not speak English fluently (Thornton 2010). Approximately 5 million people in Texas need websites in a language other than English to engage online. Ninety-eight percent of websites from Kenix's did not offer language options other than English. The two percent with an additional language option only offered Spanish. Additionally, that choice was presented in English. It read "Spanish", instead of "Español". She found these omissions indicated who was allowed to speak and how. It suggests the creator of the websites lacks sensitivity. Ultimately, isolating the marginalized voices. Affiliates can combat this discrepancy two ways. First, by providing a foreign language link to the webpage in its entirety. Second, they can collaborate with a third party translation site with a majority of the content available in the visitor's language of choice.

Interconnected, Instantaneous Information[5]

Kenix includes interconnected, instantaneous information because a seamless experience often yields a meaningful experience. Users can scan online content and retrieve relevant data.

Mission Statement

Kenix (2007) reports the websites did not capitalize on the internet's interconnectivity. Eighty-five percent of the websites displayed their mission statement, but did not include hyperlinks to mission based content. Paul and Davis (2013) examined websites for contact details, mission statements, mailing lists and search features. They sought items meant to build stability through donation forms and newsletters. Yet, some non-profit organizations remain unprepared for

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[5] The updated model will remove hypertext in mission statement, opposing organization information, government information, media information, hyperlink text and newsletter.

attention online. This website negligence can lead to deficiency. Most of the websites did not add **FAQ's** (Frequently Asked Questions). Larger question lists complicate the user's ability to find an answer to a question in and wording of the questions listed in the FAQ's may be difficult to understand. (Shaw 2013).

Supporting Organization Information

Job seekers can find **employment opportunities.** Nearly 80 percent of the websites did not list employment opportunities and only one had a link to external information (Kenix 2007). Ideally, the links connect to other information and resources related to Habitat for Humanity. Over half the websites Kenix reviewed listed information about other supporting organizations and approximately one-third of them attached a hyperlink. Only 11.6 percent attached internal links. **Hypertext links** frequently did not work or the organization ignored them (Kenix 2007). The misuse of external links forced the reader to ingest the information in a linear manner although the internet is a network.

Next, it visitors struggled to decipher applicability because only 21.7 percent of non-profit website posted **'date updated'**. This failure limits the website's credibility. (Kenix 2007) In a recent study by Brown and Joshi (2014) explain timeliness is an indication of that the page or site has been reviewed recently and the information has been updated with policy changes or service details. If the information is outdated other ideas can arise, feelings of concern "Does the affiliate care?", feelings of confusion "Is this website obsolete?" or feelings of indifference "Never mind".

Search Function

Navigating proved difficult because approximately three-fourths of the websites neglected the search function. "Non-profits do not have an abundance of time or money, but one

would assume that they have more incentive…to pursue greater internet functionality" (Kenix 2007, 3). Additionally, approximately three-fourths of the websites neglected the **site index.**

Accountability[6]

Accountability "is the obligation or willingness by a charity to explain its actions" (Stone & Wilbanks 2012). Accountability is the relationship among an organization, its stakeholders, and society. A vital political resource for non-profit organizations stems from publicity. An organization's online content can build or diminish their credibility while visitors may question the integrity and idea of community.

Researchers question the transparency and accountability of non-government organizations. Organizations that emphasize "trustworthiness, humanity and idealism" fare better (Huang & Ku 2016, 80). Transparency refers to willingness to publish critical data (Stone & Wilbanks 2012). Ambiguity places doubt in the reader's mind. According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations the distrust level of NPOs rose with the competition for donations. The non-profit sector experiences higher transparency than private organizations because accountability is more pronounced.

Contact Information[7]

Accountability encompasses the organization's mission, strategic plan, the employee directory, board of directors and goals. Another demonstration of transparency is the availability of contact information for affiliate personnel. These details legitimize the affiliate and off the visitor confidence. A lack of contact information can discourage further engagement (Thornton

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[6] The updated model will exclude mission statement of author and grammatical errors.
[7] The updated model will remove email of organization, fax numbers, name of email recipient and replace type of contact information with email addresses and phone numbers of Habitat for Humanity staff.

2010). The employee directory allows the user to contact the proper individual within the organization and the strategic plan outlines the goals. Nearly half of Kenix's sample did not list a contact name within three clicks and almost one-fourth of those that listed a name did not link an email address. The functional employee links often led to general **email addresses** instead of a **named staff member.** In other words: <u>receptionist@habitat.org</u>, opposed to <u>janedoe@habitat.org</u>. A majority posted a **phone number** to the organization. The availability of agency personnel contact information fosters and legitimacy. Bypassing contact information for agency personnel can discouraging future engagement.

A recent study by Dumont (2015) indicates virtual accountability is a new area of research. An organization's website reaches the broadest audience creating the potential to broaden the level of trust people have in the organization. Most users "…accept information and retreat to an immobilized position" (Kenix 2007, 160.) This seems counter intuitive because non-profits thrive among communal interests, but low accountability can disrupt mission-driven efforts.

Connection with Clients

Habitat for Humanity promotes homeownership among low-income citizens. To do this they must connect with people in need or expands their clientele. Their mission to end poverty housing is commendable and apparent in all of their operations. Habitat for Humanity partners with qualified families. Then, sells the homes with a no interest loan. Home ownership is the goal and the website should have information to apply for home ownership. The **Home Ownership Application** is accessible on most affiliate websites.

Client Resources

Habitat equips partner families to become successful homeowners by training them to pay for their homes, maintain them and foster community connections. Austin Habitat requires families to complete homebuyer education classes and provides mentors who regularly consult the new homeowners. (Austin Habitat for Humanity, 2017). Visitors can also find home repair options and home ownership counseling appointments online.

Habitat for Humanity should be able to connect and provide client resources. A Habitat for Humanity affiliate in San Diego created avenues for local builders to donate their unused, excess building supplies to the online store. Those in need of materials for home repair could log on and purchase those materials at one-third the original cost (Jackson 2001).

Conclusion

Kenix shared some unsatisfactory results in her quest for utopia. None of the deliberative public sphere variables produced above-average outcomes. Chat rooms, email lists and newsgroups all equaled less than 6 percent. The opportunity for activism portion had higher percentages in volunteer information and calendar of events but other areas need improvement. The ability to donate online appeared prevalent with 65 percent whereas financial information and annual reports fell below 12 percent. She expressed confusion regarding little space for marginalized voices amidst abundant, static and disengaged information. Accountability earned high percentages for email addresses and phone numbers. Lastly, these findings suggest non-profit organization websites need revising. Both Kenix's model and the subsequent update outline steps for developing a more discursive, active and interconnected space for both creator and visitor.

Summary of Conceptual Framework

Table 2.2 summarizes the framework used to assess Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. It also connects these categories to the literature. Clearly, Kenix found the non-profits were doing a poor job of supporting their goals. She found many problems with the state of non-profit websites. This framework will support build the coding sheet for the content analysis. The methodology is discussed in the next chapter.

Table 3.2 Conceptual Framework

Categories	Supporting Literature
1. Deliberative Public Sphere	
1.1 Email lists	Brown (2007); Kenix (2007); Sweeney (2016); Zech, Wagner and West (2013)
1.2 Hit Counters	Kenix (2007); Robertson and Murray (2003)
1.3 Social Media	Dumont (2013); Gálvez-Rodríguez, Caba-Perez and López-Godoy (2016); Josan (2010)
2. Citizen Engagement	
2.1 Volunteer Information	Huang and Ku (2016); Kenix (2007); Kwon and Jeong (2015); Long and Chiagouris (2006); Randle, Leisch and Dolnicar (2013)
2.2 Calendar of Events	Dumont (2013); Kenix (2007)
2.3 Postal address of Habitat for Humanity affiliate	Dumont (2013); Kenix (2007)
2.4 Information about upcoming meetings	Kenix (2007)
3. Branding and Fundraising Revenue	
3.1 Branding	Kenix (2007); Paul and Davis (2003); Voeth and Herbst (2008); Wymer (2015)
3.2 Ability to donate online	Comal Habitat (2016); Huang and Ku (2016); Kenix (2007); Shier and Handy (2012)
3.3 Sponsorship	Kenix (2007)
3.4 Annual report	Dumont (2013); Kenix (2007); Ingenhoff and Koelling (2010)
3.5 Financial information	Dumont (2013); Huang and Ku (2016); Kenix (2007); Stone and Wilbanks (2012)
4. Space for Marginalized Voices	
4.1 Sight disability option	Bray (2016); Kenix (2007); Loiacono and McCoy (2006)
4.2 Hearing disability option	Kenix (2007); Loiacono and McCoy (2006)

4.3 Language option	Kenix (2007)
5. Interconnected, Instantaneous Information	
5.1 Mission statement	Kenix (2003); Paul and Davis (2003)
5.2 Employment opportunities	Kenix (2007)
5.3 Hypertext links in employment opportunities	Kenix (2007)
5.4 FAQ's	Huang and Ku (2016); Kenix (2007); Shaw (2013)
5.5 Hypertext links in FAQ's	Kenix (2007); Shaw (2013)
5.6 Supporting organization information	Kenix (2007)
5.7 Hypertext links in supporting organization information	Kenix (2007)
5.8 Date updated	Brown and Joshi (2014)
5.9 Search function	Kenix (2003); Paul and Davis (2003)
5.10 Site index	Kenix (2003); Paul and Davis (2003)
6. Accountability	
6.1 Names of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Dumont (2013); Huang and Ku (2016); Thornton (2010)
6.2 Phone numbers of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Dumont (2013); Huang and Ku (2016); Thornton (2010)
6.3 Email addresses of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Dumont (2013); Huang and Ku (2016); Thornton (2010)
7. Connection with Clients	
7.1 Home Ownership Application	Shim, Forsythe and Kwon (2015)
7.2 Client Resources	Jackson (2001)

Chapter 4

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology used to describe and evaluate attributes of Texas Habitat for Humanity websites using an updated Kenix model for comparison purposes. The descriptive categories developed in the literature review support the website content analysis. The purpose of this research is limited to describing website attributes that fit Kenix's existing model and the revised model. Therefore, this project does not attempt to directly measure or quantify efficiency. However, it is a safe assumption that these characteristics are necessary exploratory steps Habitat websites can take to fulfill the utopian quest.

The connection between assessment framework and data collection precedes the operationalization (Table 3.1). It is a layout of the seven categories, supporting criteria and corresponding questions. It is included in this chapter to explain the researcher's expectations of during the website analysis. For example, the category Citizen Engagement (2) the subcategory volunteer information (2.1) is captured through *Does the website allow visitors to sign up for volunteer opportunities?* The category Branding and Fundraising Revenue (3) uses the subcategory the ability to donate online (3.2) to capture *Does the affiliate allow visitors to make online donations?*

Research Method: Content Analysis

Content analysis is ideally suited to describe the attributes of Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. Content analysis contributes to research in particular ways. It is "a systematic, replicable technique… based on explicit rules of coding" (Stemler 2001, 8). Content analysis is

advantageous because of its cost effectiveness. The process is inexpensive and easily edited

(Babbie 2004). Content analysis permits further exploration by equipping future researchers with

the tools to recreate the study and build on existing data. It offers a consistent and replicable way

to analyze websites. For example, another researcher can use the revised model and coding sheet

to replicate these results or to evaluate the Habitat for Humanity websites in another state.

Table 4.1 Operationalization Table

Categories	Criteria
1. Deliberative Public Sphere	
1.1 Email lists	Can visitors to join affiliate email lists?
1.2 Hit Counters	Does the website have a hit counter?
1.3 Social Media	Does the website have links to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram?
2. Citizen Engagement	
2.1 Volunteer Information	Does the website allow visitors to sign up for volunteer opportunities?
2.2 Calendar of Events	How prominently is the calendar of upcoming events published on the website?
2.3 Postal address of Habitat for Humanity affiliate	Does the website contain the postal address to the affiliate?
2.4 Information about upcoming meeting	Does the website contain meeting dates?
3. Branding and Fundraising Revenue	
3.1 Branding	Does the website incorporate the Habitat icon?
3.2 Ability to donate online	Does the affiliate allow visitors to make online donations?
3.3 Sponsorship	Does the affiliate allow visitors to sponsor projects?
3.4 Annual report	Does the affiliate allow visitors to view annual reports?
3.5 Financial information	Does the affiliate allow visitors to view financial reports?
4. Space for Marginalized Voices	
4.1 Sight disability option	Does the website offer different sized text options?
4.2 Hearing disability option	Does the website offer audio options for the hearing impaired?
4.3 Language option	Is the website available in a language other than English?

5. Interconnected, Instantaneous Information	
5.1 Mission statement	How prominently is the agency's mission statement published on the website?
5.2 Employment opportunities	Does the website include a list of current employment opportunities?
5.3 Hypertext links in employment opportunities	Does the website include the allow visitors to apply for employment?
5.4 FAQ's	Does the website include a list of frequently asked questions?
5.5 Hypertext links in FAQ's	Does the website FAQ list include links to the answers?
5.6 Supporting organization information	Does the website include a list of supporting organization information?
5.7 Hypertext links in supporting organization information	Does the supporting organization information include links to additional resources?
5.8 Date updated	When was the website updated?
5.9 Search function	Does the website include a search function?
5.10 Site index	Does the website include a site index?
6. Accountability	
6.1 Names of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Does the website contain information (names and titles) on affiliate's staff?
6.2 Phone numbers of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Does the website have the phone number of each staff number listed?
6.3 Email addresses of Habitat for Humanity Staff	Does the website have the email address of each staff number listed?
7. Connection with Clients	
7.1 Home Ownership Application	Does the website contain a homeownership application?
7.2 Client Resources	Does the website contain resources for current homeowners?
8. Overall Performance	

8.1 Best Practice Website	Does this website exemplify all the above criteria is a manner other websites should model?

Limitations

   This applied research project poses some inherent risks. First, bias or subjectivity from internal factors contributing to a website's appearance. For example, if an affiliate's IT Specialist went on medical leave, the website may not have certain data. Second, building the criteria. Kenix's article frames the context of the project. There may be different frameworks that are better at achieving the objective. The final limitation stems from inter-rater reliability because this project has only one coder.

Coding Scheme and Evaluation Criteria

   The descriptive categories framework transformed into content analysis coding in Table 3.1. This developed specific criteria questions from each descriptive category. There are 31 criteria from the framework which makeup the coding sheet questions. A majority of the questions detected the presence of the criteria identified in the descriptive categories. For the nominal variable questions, the coding sheet values were 0-No and 1-Yes. Question 1.3 measured the amount of social media connections 0-None, 1-At least 1, 2-At least 2, All 3 (referring to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Questions 2.1, 3.1, 3.3, 5.4, and 8.1 utilized a unique rating system 0-No, 1- Adequate and 2- Impressive. The ordinal variable Questions 2.2 and 5.3 used numbers to determine distance from homepage: 0- Not Present, 1-Present, but more than two clicks from the home page, and 2- Present, and less than two clicks from the homepage. Question 5.8 used an ordinal variable too, 0- No date listed, 1- Within 12 months, and 2- In over twelve months. The researcher included a best practice category as a way to identify model websites that others might use to improve their sites.

Table 4.2 Coding Sheet

Categories	Coding			
1. Deliberative Public Sphere				
1.1 Email lists	0-No		1-Yes	
1.2 Hit Counters	0-No		1-Yes	
1.3 Social Media	0-None	1-At least 1	2-At least 2	3-All 3
2. Citizen Engagement				
2.1 Volunteer Information	0-No		1-Adequate	2-Impressive
2.2 Calendar of Events	0-Not present		1-Present but more than two clicks from homepage	2-Present, and less than two clicks from homepage
2.3 Address	0- No		1-Yes	
2.4 Information about upcoming meeting	0-No		1-Yes	
3. Branding and Fundraising Revenue				
3.1 Branding	0-No		1-Adequate	2-Impressive
3.2 Ability to donate online	0-No		1-Yes	
3.3 Sponsorship	0-No		1-Adequate	2-Impressive
3.4 Annual report	0-No		1-Yes	
3.5 Financial information	0- No		1-Yes	
4. Space for Marginalized Voices				
4.1 Sight disability option	0-No		1-Yes	
4.2 Hearing disability option	0-No		1-Yes	
4.3 Language option	0-No		1-Yes	
5. Interconnected, Instantaneous Information				
5.1 Mission statement	0-Not present		1-Present but more than two clicks from homepage	2-Present, and less than two clicks from homepage

5.2 Employment opportunities	0-No	1-Yes	
5.3 Hypertext links in employment opportunities	0-No	1-Yes	
5.4 FAQ's	0-No	1-Adequate	2- Impressive
5.5 Hypertext links in FAQ's	0-No	1-Yes	
5.6 Supporting organization information	0-No	1-Yes	
5.7 Hypertext links in supporting organization information	0-No	1-Yes	
5.8 Date updated	0-Not present	1-Within twelve months	2-In over twelve months
5.9 Search function	0-No	1-Yes	
5.10 Site index	0-No	1-Yes	
6. Accountability			
6.1 Names	0- No	1- Yes	
6.2 Phone numbers	0- No	1- Yes	
6.3 Email addresses	0- No	1- Yes	
7. Connection with Clients			
7.1 Home Ownership Application	0- No	1- Yes	
7.2 Client Resources	0- No	1- Yes	
8. Overall Performance			
8.1 Best Practice Website	0- No	1- Adequate	2- Impressive

Population

   In sampling, units are the things that make up the population. They have

certain characteristics that help to define them. The unit of analysis in this research project is

Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliates with websites. Table 4.3 lists the Texas Habitat for

Humanity affiliates with websites. The researcher identified the affiliates by contacting the Texas

Habitat for Humanity Executive Director, Amy Ledbetter Parham and cross-referencing Habitat

for Humanity International. The State of Texas has seventy-seven active affiliates and sixty-two

affiliates have websites. This paper will assess sixty-two websites. The researcher chose total

population sampling to decrease sampling error and increase representativeness. Total population

sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where one chooses to examine the entire

population that have a set of characteristics. In this case, the attributes of non-profit websites.

Table 4.3 Texas Habitat for Humanity Affiliate List

Affiliate Name	Affiliate URL
1. Abilene Habitat for Humanity	http://abilenehabitat.org/
2. Amarillo Habitat for Humanity	http://www.amarillohabitat.org/
3. Austin Habitat for Humanity	https://www.austinhabitat.org/
4. Bay Area Habitat for Humanity	http://www.bahfh.org/
5. Baytown Habitat for Humanity	http://baytownhabitat.org/
6. Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity	https://habitatbcs.org/
7. Colorado County Habitat for Humanity	http://hfh-tx-colo.huterra.com/
8. Comal County Habitat for Humanity	https://www.comalhabitat.org/
9. Corpus Christi Habitat for Humanity	http://corpuschristihfh.org/
10. Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity	https://www.dallasareahabitat.org/
11. Ellis County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.ellishabitat.org/
12. Erath County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitat.org/cd/kit/homepage.aspx?page=erathcounty
13. Fayette County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.fayettecountyhabitat.org/
14. Fort Bend Habitat for Humanity	http://www.fortbendhabitat.org/
15. Fort Hood Area Habitat for Humanity	https://www.fhahfh.org/
16. Gainesville Area Habitat for Humanity	http://www.gainesvilleareahabitatforhumanity.org/
17. Golden Crescent Habitat for Humanity	http://www.goldencrescenthabitat.org/
18. Greenville Habitat for Humanity	http://www.greenvilletxhabitat.org/
19. Guadalupe Valley Habitat for Humanity	http://www.guadalupevalleyhabitat.org/
20. Habitat for Humanity of Angelina County	http://www.hfhac.com/
21. Habitat for Humanity of Camp County	http://www.camphabitat.org/
22. Habitat for Humanity of Denton County	http://www.habitatdentoncounty.org/
23. Habitat for Humanity of East Wharton County	http://www.habitatewc.com/
24. Habitat for Humanity of El Paso	https://www.habitatelpaso.org/home/
25. Habitat for Humanity of Graham	http://www.hfhgraham.org/
26. Habitat for Humanity of Grayson County	https://graysonhabitat.org/

27. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Fredericksburg	http://fbghabitat.org/
28. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Garland	http://www.garlandhabitat.org/
29. Habitat for Humanity of Hill County	http://hfhhillcounty.org/
30. Habitat for Humanity of Hood County	http://www.habitatofhoodcounty.org/
31. Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County	http://www.beaumonthabitat.org/
32. Habitat for Humanity of Laredo	http://www.habitatlaredo.org/
33. Habitat for Humanity of Nacogdoches	http://habitatnac.org/
34. Habitat for Humanity of Navarro County	https://www.navarrohabitat.org/
35. Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Harris County	http://www.habitatnwhc.org/
36. Habitat for Humanity of San Angelo	http://www.habitatsanangelo.org/
37. Habitat for Humanity of Smith County	https://smithcountyhabitat.org/
38. Habitat for Humanity of South Collin County	http://habitat-scc.org/
39. Habitat for Humanity of Southern Brazoria County	http://habitatsbc.org/
40. Habitat for Humanity of Texarkana	http://www.habitat.org/cd/kit/homepage.aspx?page=texarkanausa#top
41. Habitat for Humanity of Wichita Falls	https://www.habitatwf.com/
42. Habitat for Humanity of Williamson County	https://williamsonhabitat.org/
43. Henderson, TX Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitathenderson.org/
44. Highland Lakes Habitat for Humanity	http://hlhabitat.com/
45. Houston Habitat for Humanity	https://houstonhabitat.org/
46. Kerr County Habitat for Humanity	http://habitatkerr.org/
47. Longview Habitat for Humanity	http://longviewhabitat.org/
48. Lubbock Habitat for Humanity	https://lubbockhabitat.org/
49. Mason County Habitat for Humanity	http://masoncountyhfh.org/
50. Midland Habitat for Humanity	https://www.habitatmidland.org/
51. Montgomery County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitatmctx.org/
52. North Collin County Habitat for Humanity	http://ncc-habitat.com/
53. Pampa/Gray County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.pampahabitat.org/index.php

54. Plainview Habitat for Humanity	http://www.plainviewhabitat.org/
55. Rio Grande Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitatrgv.org/
56. Rockwall Habitat for Humanity	http://www.rockwallhabitat.org/
57. San Antonio Habitat for Humanity	https://www.habitatsa.org/
58. San Marcos Area Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitatforhumanitysanmarcos.org/
59. Trinity Habitat for Humanity	https://trinityhabitat.org/about/
60. Waco Habitat for Humanity	https://wacohabitat.org/
61. Washington County Habitat for Humanity	http://www.wchh.org/
62. Wimberley Valley Habitat for Humanity	http://wimberleyhabitat.org/

Statistics

A percent distribution of the responses for all 31 questions is calculated for all 62 affiliates reviewed.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the population and sample for evaluation, the rationale for utilizing content analysis, the operationalization of the conceptual framework and coding structure. This research design supports the research purpose to revise the Kenix model and institute a revised model for assessing Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. The next chapter presents the results of the content analysis deriving from the descriptive features.

<center>**Chapter 5**</center>

<center>**Results**</center>

Purpose

   The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the results of the data collected

using the content analysis discussed in the previous chapter. Examples of best practices and

conclusions are presented in the following chapter. Texas has seventy-seven Habitat for

Humanity affiliates and sixty-two have websites. Sixty-two Texas Habitat for Humanity websites

were selected for analysis using total population sampling method. The results of each

descriptive category are presented below. Considering the financial limitations of non-profits,

their initial goal is awareness and the results from this study demonstrate their various attempts

to capture attention, raise money, mobilize the public and eradicate homelessness.

   The affiliates that did not possess their own official website relied on the Habitat for

Humanity International at www.habitat.org to supply their contact information. These affiliates

are Fannin County Habitat for Humanity, Franklin Habitat for Humanity, Grater Orange County

Habitat for Humanity, Habitat for Humanity of Aransas County, Habitat for Humanity of San

Jacinto County, Habitat for Humanity of San Patricio County, Jim Wells County Habitat for

Humanity, Kilgore Habitat for Humanity, Mount Pleasant Habitat for Humanity, Paris/Lamar

Habitat for Humanity, Pasadena Habitat for Humanity, Polk County Habitat for Humanity and

Walker County Habitat for Humanity.

Deliberative Public Sphere

   The deliberative public sphere facilitates users' ability to communicate productively with

one another and the affiliate. Attention to this component is vital because websites are

interactive. The affiliate enters an online space anticipating feedback and activity. This

descriptive category focuses on three attributes supported by the literature: *email lists, hit counters, and social media.* Each is meant to measure the vitality of the website. (See Table 5.1) Forty-five percent of the websites in this study had an email list. The tag lines advertised newsletters, fundraisers and volunteer opportunities. The users simply had to enter their email address.

The hit counters were nearly non-existent. Most would agree the internet encourages popularity but only 4% of the websites had hit counters. Amazingly, those two sites [Habitat for Humanity for East Wharton County and Midland Habitat for Humanity] possessed less of the other measured characteristics.

The project identified three social media sites: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The majority, 39%, of affiliates had at least two links or live feeds. This allowed the user to view the social media activity in real time while still on the affiliate site. Nineteen percent linked at least one social media site. That same amount linked to all three social media platforms. Surprisingly, 23% did not have any indication of social media on their website. The appeal of "likes" and "shares" offer new ways for Habitat to generate leverage. Social media sites make concerted efforts to promote social causes and stimulate the public.

Table 5.1

1. Deliberative Public Sphere*			
1.1 Email lists	No: 55%		Yes: 45%	
1.2 Hit Counters	No: 96%		Yes: 4%	
1.3 Social Media	None: 23%	At least 1: 19%	At least 2: 39%	All 3: 19%

*n=62

Citizen Engagement

Trust is required for users to engage the non-profit and transparency generates that trust. Thornton (2010) reports the complexities of transparency provide legitimacy of the organization and confidence in the visitor. This study measured the prevalence of *volunteer information, calendar of events, address and information about upcoming meeting.* Table 5.2 summarizes the findings for citizen engagement.

Each affiliate that posted volunteer information styled it differently. The layouts included a variety of details and methods. Some websites present volunteer registration forms, volunteer safety waivers, calendars with home construction days, links for groups volunteer projects or court-ordered community service. Three percent did not post volunteer information. Over half proved adequate (56%) and 40% were impressive. The impressive websites had Google forms for signing up instead of PDF forms to print. (See Figure 5.1) They often used calendars with hyperlinks on specific days and times to volunteer in the ReStore[8], on a construction site or in the administrative office. Other calendars publicized seasonal celebrations, fundraisers or meeting for those interested in becoming a partner family.
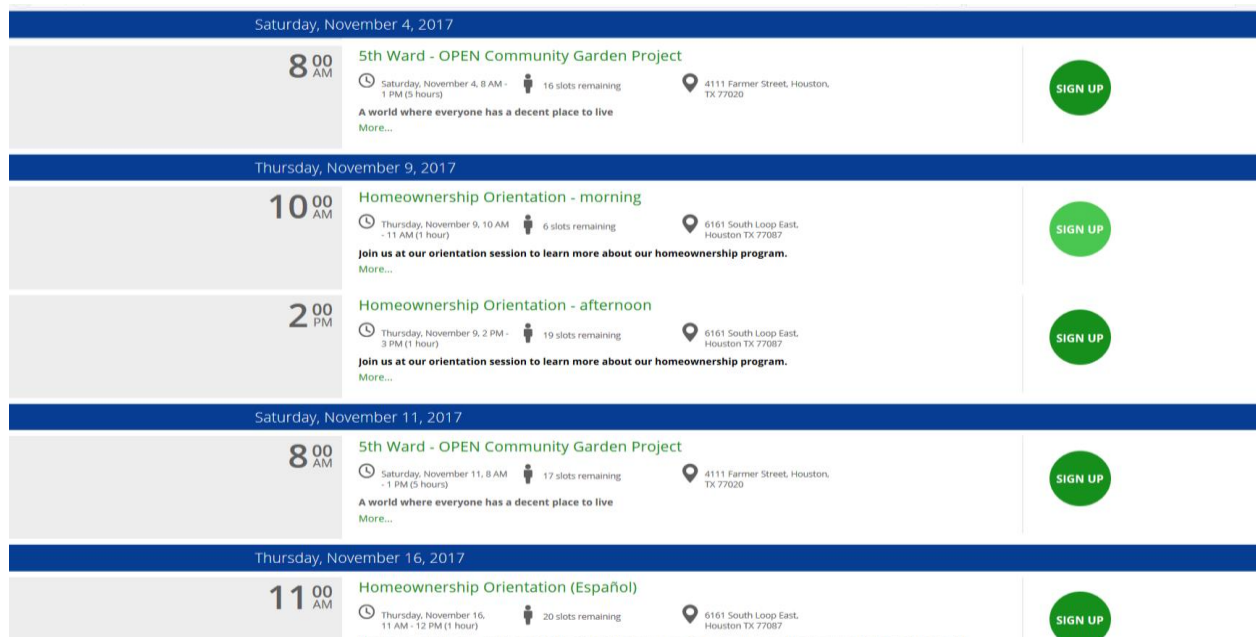
Figure 5.1 Habitat for Humanity Montgomery County Volunteer Page

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[8] The ReStore is Habitat for Humanity's home improvement store of gently used household items at a fraction of the cost of major retailers. (Moore, 2016)

Figure 5.2 Habitat for Humanity Houston Calendar of Events

The statistics surrounding the calendars proved challenging. The coding strove to monitor a visitor's ease. Several affiliates had calendars, but now upcoming events attached. Multiple affiliates had banners for on-going special projects without a calendar and others attached calendars with events over a year old. Figure 5.2 demonstrates a meaningful calendar of events from Habitat for Humanity Houston with embedded volunteer sign up opinions. For this study only affiliates with upcoming projects, events and fundraiser with visible dates posted in the form of a bulletin, banner or calendar were counted. Forty-two percent of websites did not qualify.

The formats varied across websites but one example that deserves attention is the Bay Area Habitat for Humanity advertised the Collegiate Challenge where college-aged groups of five or more participants can spend one week working the affiliate, typically Spring Break. They collaborate with staff and partner families, to help eliminate poverty housing in the Texas Gulf Coast.

Another surprise occurred with addresses. A majority (77%) of Texas Habitat for Humanity websites posted their physical address. Whereas remaining affiliates only offered P.O. boxes in a mailing address. Further research on yellowpages.com listed physical addresses for most. However, approximately 23% of websites did not provide their physical address. Those same affiliates often held meetings in community centers or local libraries.

Table 5.2

2. Citizen Engagement*			
2.1 Volunteer Information	No: 3%	Adequate: 56%	Impressive: 40%
2.2 Calendar of Events	Not present: 42%	Present but more than two clicks from homepage: 5%	Present, and less than two clicks from homepage: 53%
2.3 Address	No: 23%	Yes: 77%	
2.4 Information about upcoming meeting	No: 87%	Yes: 13%	

*n=62

The upcoming meetings portions appeared inconsistent, yet contingent. Only 13% of websites placed the dates of upcoming meetings. These details accompanied more instructions. If the home ownership application season was closed—no meeting. If the affiliate was in the middle of build season—a meeting date may appear. Others required in person visits, phone calls or online inquiry submissions prior to releasing meeting dates. Families interested in home ownership may have to complete a pre-application questionnaire, submit it online or in-person, then retrieve the date of the next meeting from a staff member. If the website did not include a meeting date and month or year range was offered to relieve the stress.

Branding and Fundraising Revenue

This category measured the accessibility of *branding, ability to donate online, sponsorship, annual reports and financial information.* Every website used some level of Habitat for Humanity branding. Three people joined together with arms raised under a roof with and a wall represents the international organization. Habitat for Humanity also utilize the colors blue and green to spread their message of "vibrant, friendly and optimistic" (Habitat for Humanity Brand User Guide: U.S. Edition 2016, 58). The websites that exemplified the color palette and icon usage earned impressive rankings. Sixty-one percent of websites demonstrate adequate usage and 39% display impressive use. Table 5.3 summarizes the findings for branding and fundraising revenue.

The fundraising element waivered. Almost 85% of the websites allowed visitors to donate online. Despite the need for financial support, multiple websites did not have online giving capabilities. After exploring the websites more, one could find other options: mailing in donations, giving in person, donating land for future homes or donating items for the ReStore. Fourteen percent of affiliates did not include online giving options.

Sponsorship appeared in a myriad of ways. Affiliates posted corporate challenges for businesses or dollar-for-dollar matching. According to Houston Habitat, sponsors are businesses and individuals whose investment pay for land, materials and skilled trades. They help build and repair homes while demonstrating their commitment to serving our community. Many affiliates advertised sponsors of current home building projects and those with long-standing partnerships with the affiliate. Nineteen percent of the websites earned impressive scores because they attached sponsorship forms, recommendations for dollar amounts and timelines for participation.

The money mindset continued with the release of annual reports and financial information. A small percentage of affiliates posted their 990 tax forms (annual reports) and fewer posted their in-house collection financial information. The most compliant affiliates posted reports or financial information from more than the one-year. However, 76% withheld annual reports and 81% declined to publish financial information.

Table 5.3

3. Branding and Fundraising Revenue*			
3.1 Branding	No: 0%	Adequate: 61%	Impressive: 39%
3.2 Ability to donate online	No: 15%	Yes: 85%	
3.3 Sponsorship	No: 58%	Adequate: 23%	Impressive: 19%
3.4 Annual report	No: 76%	Yes: 24%	
3.5 Financial information	No: 81%	Yes: 19%	

*n=62

Space for Marginalized Voices

Non-profits should create websites with visitors' varying needs in mind. They should consider those with hearing and sight limitations as well as those who speak other languages. Lack of attention to these design features negate the inclusion many non-profits seek to embody. It alienates members of the public, they mean to serve. (Thornton, 2010). Table 5.4 summarizes the findings for space for marginalized voices.

Presumably, Habitat for Humanity would consider individuals with trouble seeing or hearing. This study recognized patterns amongst disability access. Eight percent of websites offered larger text for the seeing impaired. The hearing disability options appeared with captions on websites with videos. Nineteen percent of the affiliate websites considered options for the hearing impaired. Abilene's Habitat website included captions during their videos. Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity included English and Portuguese subtitles for their video segments.

Agencies can alleviate foreign language access with a variety of approaches. First, they can publish an identical website in a language other than English or embed link to third-party language alternatives. The discrepancies arise if the page just offers basic details and does not include all the original content. Additionally, affiliates can consider translating software on the website that allows the user to select the language most comfortable for them. One-fifth of the websites incorporated other languages. Most notably, Bryan/College Station Habitat had home ownership information available in Spanish labeled "Propietario de la vivienda". Hood County Habitat published the Volunteer Liability Form and Waiver in Spanish. Mason County Habitat's technology could translate the entire website into 58 languages including Spanish, French, German and Chinese. Seventy-nine percent of the websites did not offer foreign language translations.

Table 5.4

4. Space for Marginalized Voices*		
4.2 Sight disability option	No: 92%	Yes: 8%
4.2 Hearing disability option	No: 81%	Yes: 19%
4.3 Language option	No: 79%	Yes: 21%

*n=62

Interconnected, Instantaneous Information

A clear outcome of transparency derives from a focused description of the affiliate's mission. (See Table 5.5). Some affiliates posted their individual goals or objectives. In some cases, personalizing the mission to match their clientele. Eighty-five percent of the websites posted a mission statement within two clicks from the homepage. In fact, most had it on the homepage.

Each affiliate differed with their job openings. Less than one-third (29%) posted current job openings. The percentage of hypertext links fell below that (16%). The formats ranged from scanned paper applications to Google Forms. Many recommended sending a resume, cover letter and salary requirements to an administrative team member.

The role of a non-profit obtains clarity through frequently asked questions [FAQ's]. The most popular questions noted how Habitat functions, its origin and how to get involved. A majority of the websites addressed such topics in other forms. However, 32% had an adequate display and 8% offered an impressive explanation of Habitat while 11% included hypertext links.

Habitat websites reminded visitors of the drive to cultivate safety, stability and strength. Yet, not all websites connected users to supplemental information. Forty-seven percent posted supporting organization information. Forty percent of those involved hypertext links. These included links to home repair guides, financial literacy, emergency management, housing counseling, car donation steps and sponsor's webpages. The home repair guides serve residents at any phase. The financial literacy information is designed to coach families to transition from rent payments to mortgage payments. Emergency management links correlated with Texas's hurricane season. The car donations are often tax deductible and proceeds support local families. Lastly, the businesses and organization that aid Habitat financially often had advertisements along the bottom that linked to their homepages.

The date updated was challenging to locate and verify. The bottom may read ©2017, but the last function was in 2014. Thirty-seven percent were updated within 12 months and 15% were updated in over one-year.

Site indexes proved obsolete. Ninety-two percent of websites did not see a need to post them.

Table 5.5

5. Interconnected, Instantaneous Information*			
5.3 Mission statement	Not present: 13%	Present but more than two clicks from homepage: 2%	Present, and less than two clicks from homepage: 85%
5.1 Employment opportunities	No: 71%	Yes: 29%	
5.2 Hypertext links in employment opportunities	No: 84%	Yes: 16%	
5.4 FAQ's	No: 60%	Adequate: 32%	Impressive: 8%
5.5 Hypertext links in FAQ's	No: 89%	Yes: 11%	
5.6 Supporting organization information	No: 53%	Yes: 47%	
5.7 Hypertext links in supporting organization information	No: 60%	Yes: 40%	
5.8 Date updated	Not present: 48%	Within twelve months: 37%	In over twelve months: 15%
5.9 Search function	No: 68%	Yes: 32%	
5.10 Site index	No: 92%	Yes: 8%	

*n=62

Accountability

According to Table 5.6 non-profits have reputations for less ego-centrism. That justifies

the accountability aspect of the project. The availability of a contact information empowers the

visitor with information to legitimize the affiliate. Neglecting to include accessible contact

information for staff members has the ability to discourage future engagement. Sixty-percent of

websites maintained a list staff members and positions. Forty-eight percent offered individual

phone numbers and 58% displayed corresponding email addresses.

Some websites listed staff member's names and a collective phone number and general email address. Few listed multiple email addresses and phone numbers for specific positions without names. Multiple websites included email addresses as hyperlinks without phone numbers aside from the administrative office phone. Fewer did not include a staff list at all. Visitors would benefit from a staff list with their accompanying individual phone number and email address, if applicable. Habitat for Humanity El Paso placed staff photos and biographies without subsequent contact details.

Table 5.6

6. Accountability*		
6.1 Names	No: 40%	Yes: 60%
6.2 Phone number	No: 52%	Yes: 48%
6.3 Email addresses	No: 42%	Yes: 58%

*n=62

Connection with Clients

Home Ownership Application

This category generated mixed results. Thirty-seven percent of websites uploaded home ownership applications on their website. The causes ranged from negligence, full wait lists or closed application seasons. Others placed home ownership applications online in English and Spanish to complete or print and complete by hand. Select affiliates posted pre-application questionnaires on inquiry form opposed to full housing applications.

Client Resources

The client resources fell short according to Table 5.7. The primary goal is to build home at low costs and sell them to low income families. But, skills and data are required before, during

and after. The places Habitat to act as an intermediary for those interested in homeownership and current home owners. Thirty seven of websites clearly marked additional information for clients. Amarillo Habitat holds financial stability classes. Austin Habitat offers college prep classes and English language lessons.

Table 5.7

7. Connection with Clients*		
7.1 Home Ownership Application	No: 63%	Yes: 37%
7.2 Client Resources	No: 63%	Yes: 37%

*n=62

Overall Performance

The websites' style and substance possibly fluctuated for reasons outside the course of study: budget, population, and level of interest. Twenty-two percent demonstrated impressive use of the criteria. The Austin Habitat for Humanity earned the Affiliate of Distinction Award 2015-2017 because they exceed best practice standards. It is well deserved. The website is well maintained, thorough, includes family profiles and pictograms explaining the benefits of home ownership. Austin Habitat posts quotes from applicants, highlights individual volunteers, hosts Habitat Young Professionals and allows visitors to tweet (Twitter) or share (Facebook) within the pages.

Table 5.8

8. Overall Performance*			
8.1 Best Practice Website	No: 39%	Adequate: 39%	Impressive: 22%

*n=62

Advantages of a Local Site

Several of the local affiliate websites became obsolete during the project. It is safe to assume the growing popularity of social media led to the discontinuation of official websites. This inadequacy has the potential to create additional problems. Not everyone is comfortable with the social media and creating an online profile. They may prefer the anonymity of an official website. Some websites appeared streamlined and the different designs indicated the various consultants and website curators. Others appeared minimal and leave much to be desired.

Conclusion

This chapter presented and analyzed the results of the content analysis of Texas Habitat for Humanity affiliates with websites. The coding structure used to collect these results is based upon a conceptual framework supported by scholarly literature, particularly the Kenix Model. The final chapter will summarize the results, present the best practices of the best performers and make recommendations for continued research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results in Chapter 4, present the best

practices from those results and describe recommendations for further research. The research

process allows the one to quantify findings, then make recommendations. This project seeks to

influence knowledge and create a better understanding for nonprofit organizations, public

administrators and MPA students. It acknowledges the benefits of an engaging and user-friendly

Habitat website, while informing those responsible for designing and developing affiliate

websites. They can refer to these observations and incorporate them to maximize online

presence, increase visibility and ensuring everyone has a decent place to call home.

Initial Observations

Non-profit organizations meet goals and create change with modest resources such as

time and money. Habitat for Humanity serves the disadvantaged through affordable housing.

They continue their vision of a "decent place to live" (Habitat for Humanity International, 2017)

via the internet. Most affiliates strove to welcome and motivate the visitor and less than half

waivered in their ability to retain membership and foster conversation. The websites failed to

acknowledge English-language learners or the disabled. Most affiliates publish the mission

statement, contact information and volunteer information, but avoid financial information or

links to external sources. Finally, while most affiliates do provide opportunities to donate online

and search features, very few have site indexes.

During the research process some sites were redesigned. The online communication

blended videos for the affiliate, multimedia from Habitat for Humanity International and press

releases to propel the cause. Some affiliates altered the original text of the mission and made it a

goal or objective.

Table 6.1 Summary of Results

1. Deliberative Public Sphere	
Email Lists	Most affiliates did not include email lists to their websites.
Hit Counters	Only 2 of the 62 websites posted a hit counter.
Social Media	Most affiliates provide means for citizen feedback. More than half use multiple platforms.
2. Citizen Engagement	
Volunteer Information	A majority of the affiliates connected visitors to volunteer information and details for getting involved.
Calendar of Events	Some affiliates posted calendars without events. Others posted event details from previous years.
Address	Several affiliates posted P.O. boxes, while other listed physical addresses.
Information on upcoming meeting	Most of the affiliates omitted information about upcoming meetings.
3. Branding and Fundraising Revenue	
Branding	Every website incorporated the words "Habitat for Humanity" and the brand icon.
Ability to donate Online	Multiple affiliates did not have the option to donate online. Several suggested mailing donations.
Sponsorship	Thirty-six affiliates do not provide sponsorship details. The remainder offered instructions to join the movement.
Annual report	Most affiliates did not publish annual reports.
Financial information	Most affiliates did not publish financial information.
4. Space for Marginalized Voices	
Sight disability option	Only 5 of 62 websites offered larger text options for the seeing impaired.
Hearing disability option	Various videos embedded closed captions for the hearing impaired.
Language option	Few websites translated the websites into a language other than English.
5. Interconnected, Instantaneous Information	
Mission statement	The mission statement did not appear a fraction of the website.
Employment opportunities	Most affiliates did not include employment opportunities.

Hypertext links in employment opportunities	Very few websites attached hypertext links with employment opportunities.
FAQ's	Most affiliates did not post FAQ's.
Hypertext links in FAQ's	Very few websites attached hypertext links in FAQ's.
Supporting organization information	Most affiliates did not highlight supporting organization information.
Hypertext links in supporting organization information	Very few websites attached hypertext links in supporting organization information.
Date updated	Most affiliates included a date updated.
Search function	The search function was unavailable on some websites.
Site Index	Only 5 of 62 websites included a site index.
6. Accountability	
Names	Most websites listed the names of staff members and board members.
Phone number	A phone number typically appeared, but individual extensions appeared less frequently.
Email addresses	An email address typically appeared, but individual addresses appeared less frequently.
7. Connection with Clients	
Home Ownership Application	Although the premise of the program, dozens of websites did not include home ownership applications online.
Client Resources	The client resources varied in availability and applicability.
8. Overall Performance	
Best Practice Website	The top performers fulfilled a majority of the detailed criteria, but with style, ease and sensibility.

Best Practices

Texas has seventy-seven Habitat for Humanity affiliates and sixty-two have affiliate websites. All sixty-two were used in the content analysis. The purpose of this section is to present some of the best practices identified through this Applied Research Project to revise the website characteristics of model Texas Habitat for Humanity websites. The best practices presented in this section are examples of website features that support the characteristics. Some agency websites stood out as examples of best practices for specific indicators, but no website included all of the attributes in the revised Kenix Model. The top performers made space for deliberation, engagement, utilized branding, fundraised, connected with clients and recognized the need for accountability.

Figure 6.1 demonstrates Austin Habitat's mastery of branding. The website integrated the colors green and blue while displaying the Habitat for Humanity icon. Tabs or labels for several other criteria are clearly visible including volunteer information, ability to donate online, search function, supporting organization information and client resources.

**Figure 6.1 Austin Habitat for Humanity**

Denton County Habitat for Humanity's affiliate website highlighted other strengths, particularly language options. The Home ownership portion considered individuals who speak Spanish. Figure 6.2 depicts the General Qualification Guidelines for the Home Ownership Program, Pre-Qualification Guidelines, Pre-Qualification Application followed by the General Application Form in English in Spanish. The bottom center icon offers more inclusion. Visitors can complete the form online, or print it, complete it and drop it off at one of two locations: the office or ReStore.

Figure 6.2 Denton County Habitat for Humanity

Lastly, the researcher wants to identify the positive direction of the Dallas Area website. This website also used branding well and labelled the tabs to meet visitor's needs. From left to right they read: Donate, ReStore, Volunteer, Buy A Home, Homeowners, Weather and Traducir (Translate). These titles encompass a majority of the 8 categories from the coding sheet. Figure 6.3 depicts the qualities and displays sub-categories of getting involved.

Figure 6.3 Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity
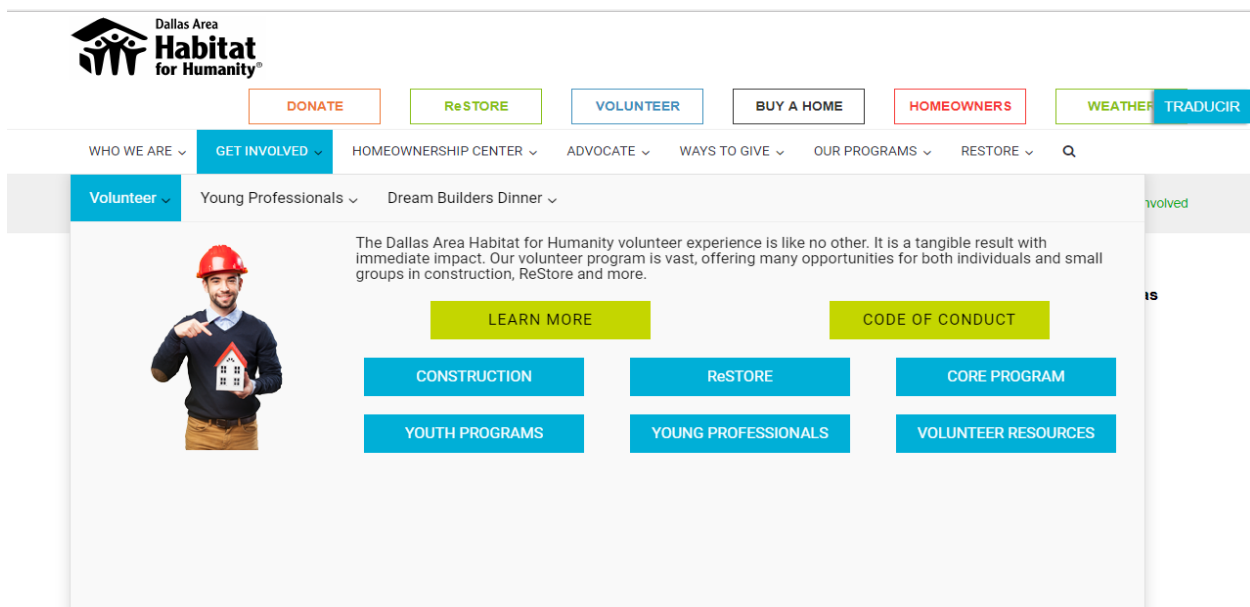
Recommendations for Future Research

This Applied Research Project is limited in scope because it observed one state. Future researchers may consider the interface and effectiveness of website attributes for Habitat for Humanity websites in other states. They may also recalibrate the coding sheet because the content analysis revealed the presence, underuse or inconsistency of certain criteria. For example, email lists are less necessary with the popularity and reliance of social media platforms. This links to the disappearance of hit counters with new metrics. Facebook calculates likes and friends whereas Instagram tallies likes and followers.

The next Habitat for Humanity website content analysis could analyze the quality of the content instead of just the frequency. For example, some affiliates included English and one other language, while others offered English and several other languages. The mission statement also became an area of contention. Some websites homepages posed a call to action suggesting the visitor build or give today. Many used a sentimental or ecumenical slogan. Another example stems from date updated. One affiliate had ©2014 listed at the bottom of the page but images dated 2016. This challenged the researcher. Future researchers might also consider reusing the coding sheet used in this Applied Research Project to note the changes Texas affiliates make over time. A longitudinal assessment will determine whether websites reviewed in this research project improved.

Recommendations for Habitat for Humanity Websites

The Texas Habitat for Humanity websites have some revisions to consider.

1. Remove hit counters and site indexes. They have little importance in 2017.

2. Ensure each affiliate develops at least one social media profile. Once they create a social media profile, they should post a link on their affiliate website.

3. Post online volunteer registration and donation portals. The availability of volunteer information and the ability to donate online are non-negotiable. Habitat is a non-profit organization requiring more people who are willing to work for free and generously donate.

4. List a physical address for the Texas Habitat affiliate. Habitat means homes implying an address is critical.

5. The websites need a visible mission statement informing the visitors of Habitat's purpose.

6. The websites need search functions because visitors go online to search for information. Some people visit Habitat websites without prior knowledge, thus FAQ's and supporting organization information may convert novices to allies.

7. Post annual reports and financial information to instill confidence in visitors about Habitat's fiscal responsibility.

These factors operate together. A deliberative public sphere allows for the continual flow of information and citizen engagement motivates participation. Branding aides the public to clearly recognize an organization while creating space for marginalized voices. The online interactions facilitate interconnectedness and fundraising. The staff becomes accountable to visitors and willingly connects with clients. At peak performance the categories yield a positive overall experience.

This project contributed to the Habitat for Humanity narrative. The non-profit sector is a vital part of this country's identity. With Georgia roots and international appeal, the organization seeks to fill the void created with the housing crisis, specifically for low-income families. The websites are virtual entries to the cause and the results.

Overcrowding, dilapidated buildings, and homelessness are all very real problems that plague our world. This project sought to measure the websites while researching inclusivity. For example, Habitat for Humanity envisions a world where people have a "decent place to live" (Habitat for Humanity International, 2017). If they cannot see (vision impaired), hear (hearing impaired), read (language options), access (contact information) or uncover (hypertext links) information online that vision becomes harder to realize.

Appendix A

Kenix's Contextual Framework of Coded Variables for Non-profit Websites[9]

Contextual Framework	Coded Variables
Deliberate Public Sphere	Chat rooms Email lists or listserves Newsgroups Hit counters
Opportunity for Activism	Volunteer information Calendar of events Name of state or federal officials Email address of state or federal officials Phone number of state or federal officials Postal address of state or federal officials Online petition Rally information Email protest Information about upcoming meeting
Advertising and Fundraising Revenue	Ability to donate online Sponsorship Advertising Annual report Financial information Items for sale
Space for Marginalized Voices	Sight disability option Hearing disability option Language option Bandwidth option Login requirement Guestbooks
Interconnected, Instantaneous Information	Employment opportunities Hypertext links in employment opportunities Mission statement Hypertext links in mission statement FAQ's Hypertext links in FAQ's Supporting organization information Hypertext links in supporting information Opposing organization information Hypertext links in opposing information

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[9] Source: Kenix, L.J. (2007) In search of utopia: an analysis of non-profit web pages. *Information, Communication & Society,* 10(1), 19.

	Government information
	Hypertext links in government information
	Media information
	Hypertext links to media information
	Date updated
	Search function
	Site index
	Newsletter
Accountability	Email of organization
	Name of email recipient
	Contact name
	Type of contact information
	Phone number of organization
	Fax number of organization
	Mission statement author
	Grammatical errors

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