

Interactive Youth Expression: Giving WordPlay to All

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Project Summary

Title

Interactive Youth Expression: Giving WordPlay to All

The Project

WordPlay Baton Rouge is a part of the Big Buddy Program, a non-profit organization. WordPlay provides a service to the community by providing literary resources to Baton Rouge teens. They host weekly events to promote literacy including poetry slams and open-mic nights. WordPlay wants a new website to represent their program. The website will provide cohesion between current and future members of WordPlay and the community as a whole. Their current website appears unfinished, and the main goal of this project is to polish the site by adding user-friendly applications and convenient access to WordPlay news.

The Problem

WordPlay is currently using inefficient software to both host and build their website. The software does not offer much in terms of functionality to the site. Even simple aspects of a website, such as adding text and pictures, are limited due to the software presently being used. The current website also does not offer any interactive functions. When teens look at the website, it is for informational purposes only. WordPlay would like to change this. They are looking for a site where teens can post their works and receive feedback from their peers. Our first task will be finding a replacement for the current software. The new software must provide more functionality yet remain simple enough so the youth and/or the WordPlay staff can update it after this semester.

The Impact

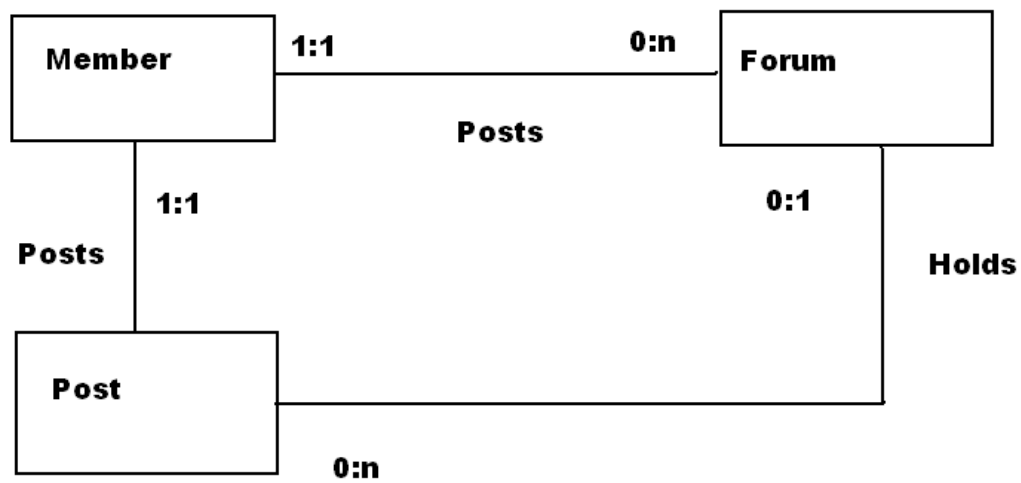
Adding these features will help WordPlay acquire a more organized and easily navigated form of communication and venue of expression. The improvements on their website will make the organization more professional, more modern, and allow the people involved (members, affiliates, followers) to share information in an easier and more efficient fashion. Essentially, WordPlay will be more interactive and accessible to the public.

The Motivation

Any program that promotes literacy and education leads to a better community. WordPlay specifically helps many teens escape problems, stress, and trouble in Baton Rouge. The venues of self-expression that WordPlay advocates help children realize the importance of education. What WordPlay does for teens in the community is positive and very important to the lives of

much of the local youth. A well built website will help mesh the organization with the community.

E-R Data Model



Inputs/Outputs

Function	Input	Output	Description
Create Page	Page name, Content, Parent, Template	Page is added to the site	Admin can create new Pages
Create Post	Subject, content	Post is created and added to Forum	Any Members can post to the forum
Delete Page	Click remove page	Page is removed	Admin can remove a page
Delete Post	Click infringing post	Post is removed	Admin can remove any user post on the forums
Create Video	Source file	Video added to Gallery	Done through YouTube Account
Add event	Title, description, start date, end date, category, link, time	Event added to Calendar	Done through Calendar Plug-in
Add User	Email, Name, Username, Password, Role	User is Created	Admins can create users
Add Picture(s)	Source Files	Photo Gallery is created	Done through Picasa Account

Testing

Calendar

When we first created the site, Google calendar seemed like a great tool to incorporate for WordPlay's use. We attempted to embed it directly onto the website, and it worked great for the site administrator. When another user accessed the calendar, however, they were met with a prompt to log into a Google account, rather than having direct access to the BRWordPlay Google calendar. Our solution to this problem was to utilize a calendar function available to us by WordPress (the open-source framework we used) so the calendar was directly saved to the site and not embedded.

Forum

Our interactive forum feature has many different user groups, and as a result, most of our testing went into this area of the website. Any user that wishes to post must be registered on the site. This was the first hurdle. We actually had to scrap an old version of the forum and start over to get this functionality to work.

There are five sections of the forums: WordPlay Organization, Pure Poetry, Users Only, Trusted Users, and Admins Only. Unregistered users can only see the WordPlay Organization and Pure Poetry sections. Once a user registers and is approved by the WordPlay staff he/she can see the two previously mentioned forums and the Users only section. He/she can also post in any of the forums that are visible. Once the WordPlay staff feels comfortable with a user, they can promote that person to be a Trusted User. When someone becomes a Trusted User, he/she can also read and post in the Trusted User forum. There is also a forum for the use of the WordPlay staff alone; it is called the Admins Only forum. This forum is only visible to WordPlay staff, and they are the only ones that can post there. This particular aspect of the website (the different user groups and permissions) took most of our testing time.

Media

We initially thought that Flickr was the perfect tool for handling all of the pictures for the website. However, over time, we discovered that there was a monthly upload limit placed on users. As a result, fairly late in the project we had to swap over to Picasa image service. Picasa also places an upload limit on users, but it is much more reasonable. Fortunately, plug-in support for Picasa was as easy to find as Flickr support.

Structure

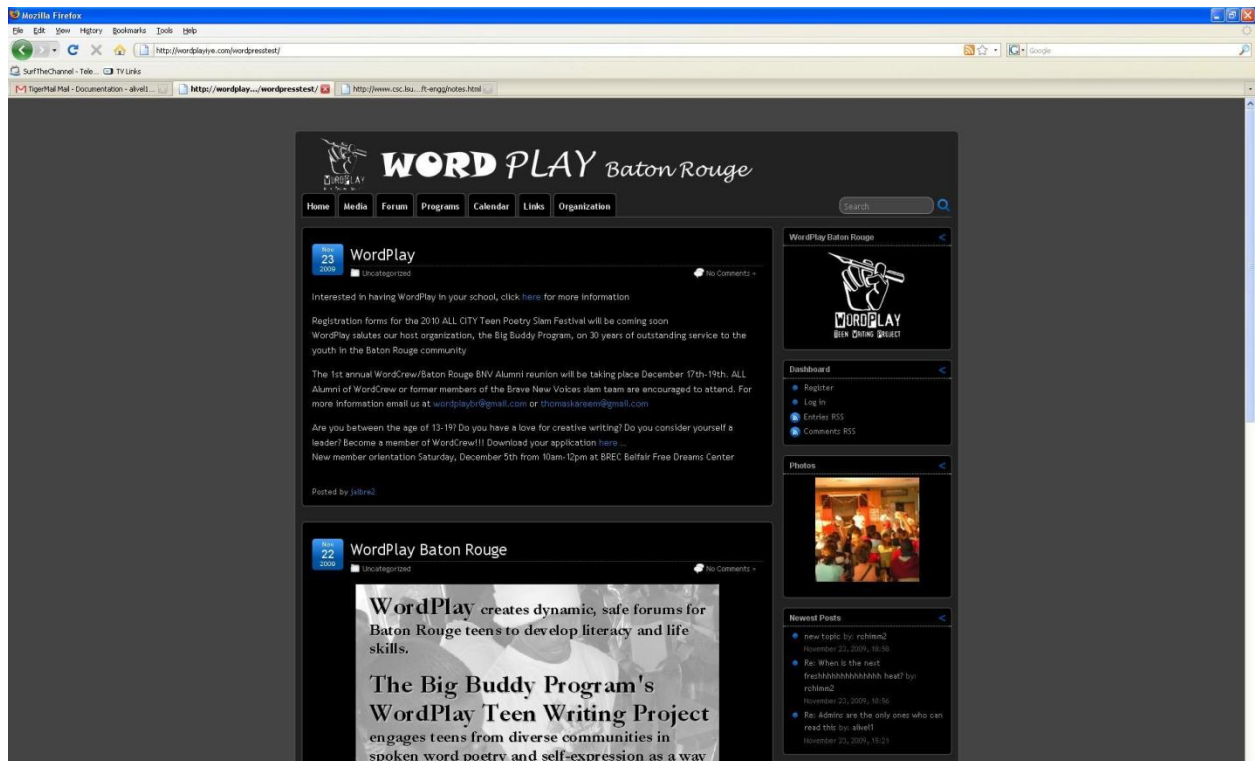
Basic Sitemap

Homepage (HOME)

- Log In Screen (LGIN)
- Register Screen (REGI)
- Media (MEDI)
 - Photos (PHOT)
 - Video (VIDE)
- Forum (FORU)
 - Admins Only (ADON)
 - Administration Forum (ADFO)
 - Trusted Users (TRUS)
 - Trusted Users General Discussion (TUGD)
 - Users Only (USER)
 - General Discussion (USGD)
 - WordPlay Events (WPEV)
 - Pure Poetry (PURE)
 - Your Creations (CREAT)
 - Inspiration (INSP)
 - Wordplay Organization (ORFO)
 - Suggestions (SUGG)
 - Events (EVEN)
- Programs (PROG)
 - All City Poetry Slam (CITY)
 - Freshhhh Heat (HEAT)
 - In-School Residencies (SCHO)
 - Word Crew (CREW)
- Calendar (CALE)
- Links (LINK)
- Organization (ORGN)
 - About (ABOU)
 - Alumni (ALUM)
 - Applications (APPL)
 - Contact Us (CONT)

- Staff Info (INFO)

Homepage (HOME)



The homepage features the latest news in the WordPlay community. The big black box in the center of the screenshot above is an example of a news post. The news posts are what sets the homepage apart from the rest of the pages. Everything else visible on the page can be seen when browsing the rest of the site.

The following features are displayed on the right side of the screen and are visible while browsing most of the rest of the site.

In the upper right-hand corner of the screen, there is a search bar. This allows users to search for previous posts.

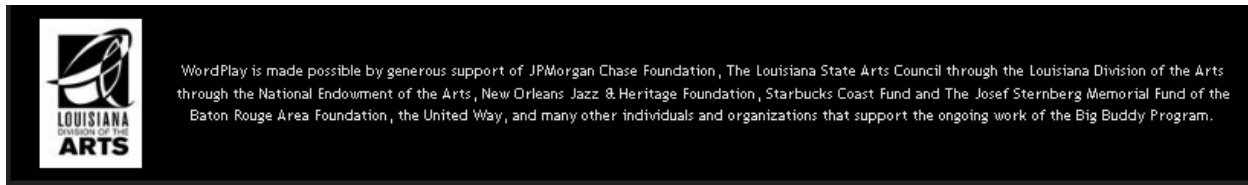
Directly under the search bar is the WordPlay logo.

The box under the logo is the register/login set of links.

Directly under the login links is a photo box that randomly displays a WordPlay photo when the page loads.

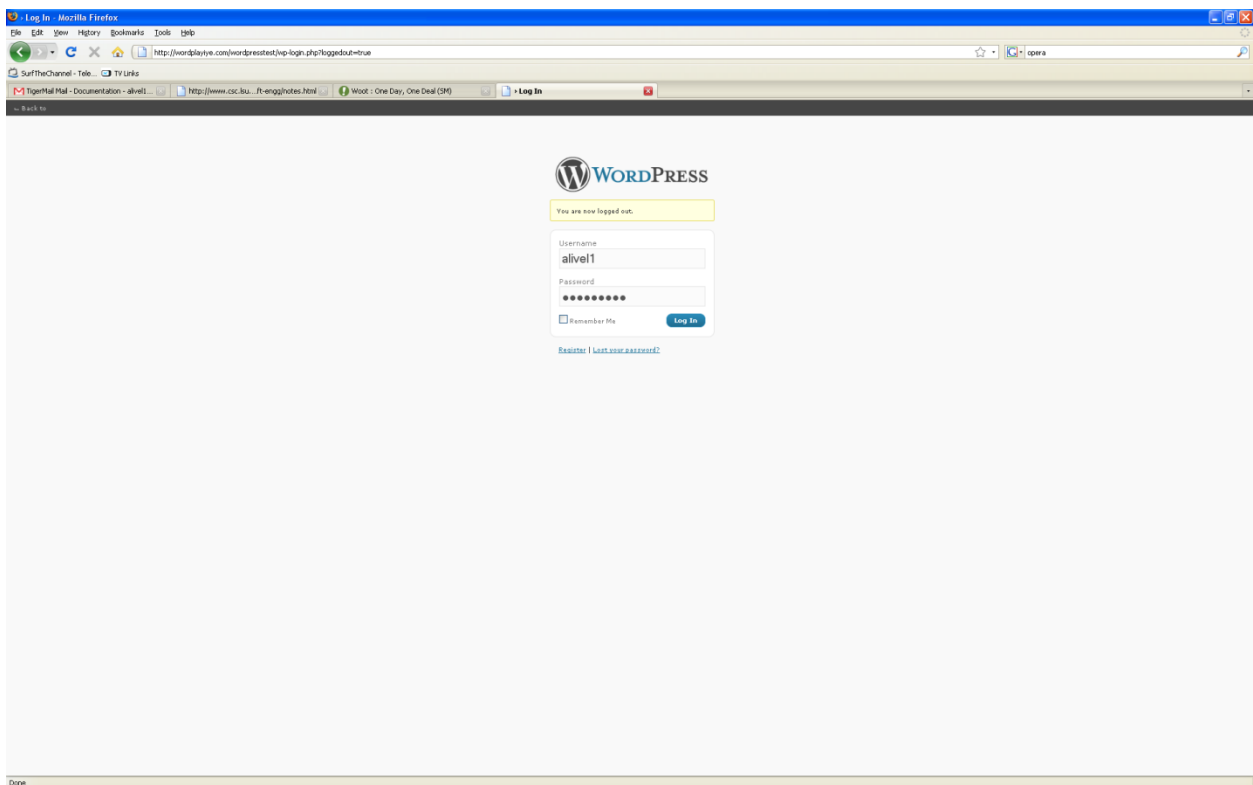
Directly under that is a list of the most recent forum posts.

Because the page has so many news posts, you cannot see the footer at the bottom of the page.



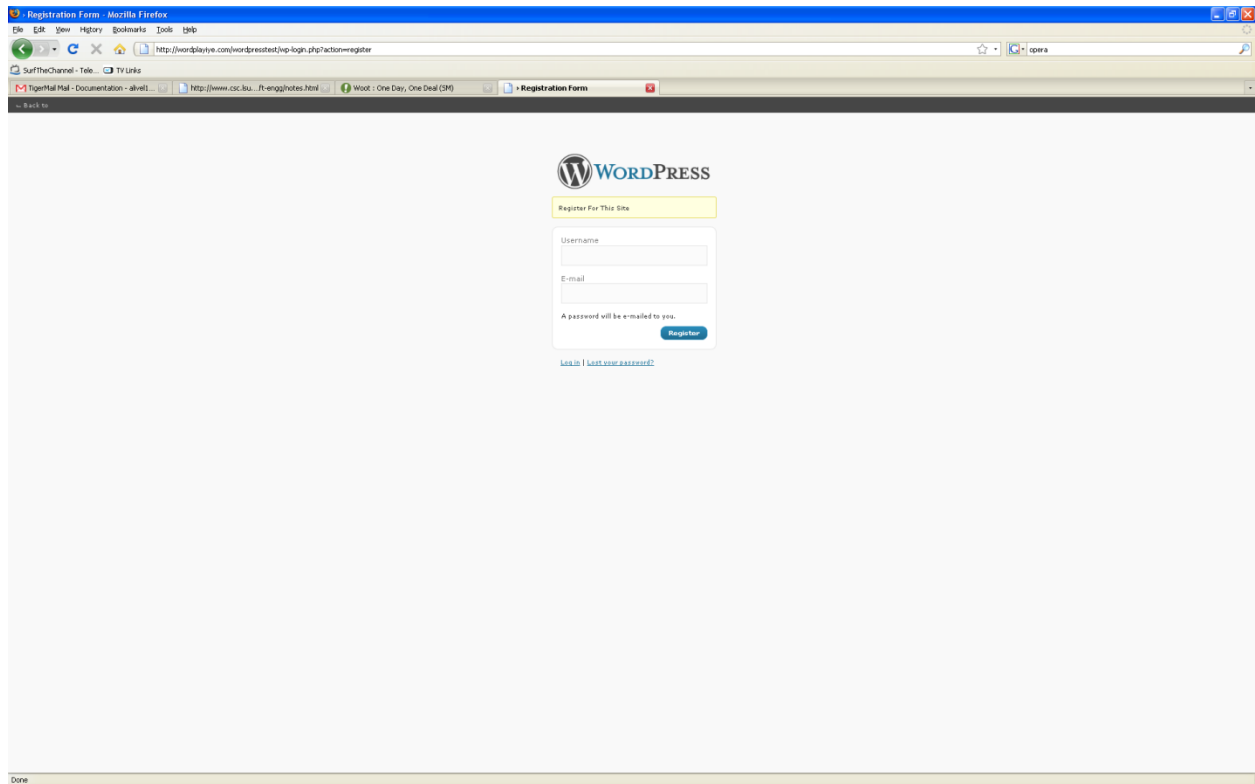
The above footer is listed at the bottom of every page (as you will see). It gives credit to WordPlay's sponsors.

Log In Screen (LGIN)



The login screen features a basic username/password system.

Register Screen (REGI)



The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Registration Form - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar displays the URL <http://wordplayya.com/wordpress/wp-login.php?action=register>. The page content features the WordPress logo at the top, followed by a yellow box labeled "Register For This Site". Below this is a registration form with two input fields: "Username" and "E-mail". A note states "A password will be e-mailed to you." and a blue "Register" button is positioned to the right of the "E-mail" field. At the bottom of the form, there are two links: "Lost ID" and "Lost your password?". The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done".

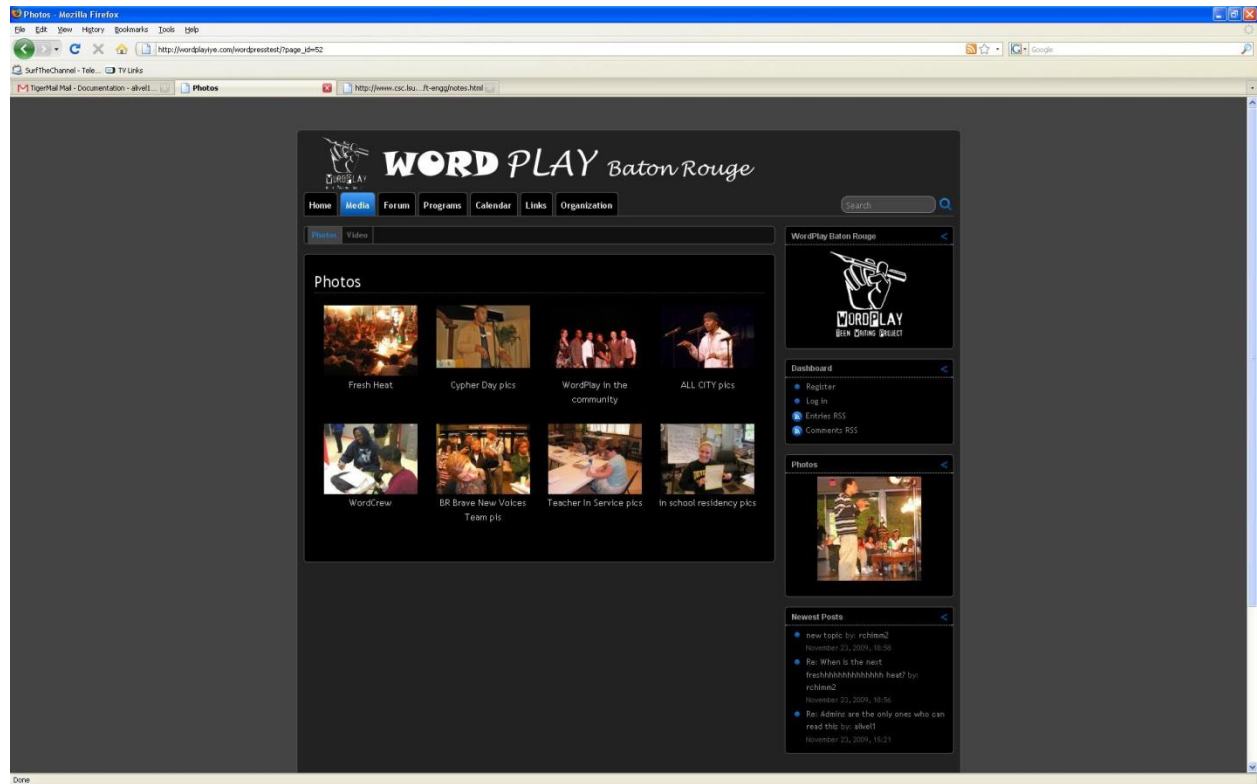
The register screen asks for you to give an e-mail address where you can be reached and to create a username. Once the WordPlay staff approves your request, a password will be e-mailed to you.

Media Page (MEDI)



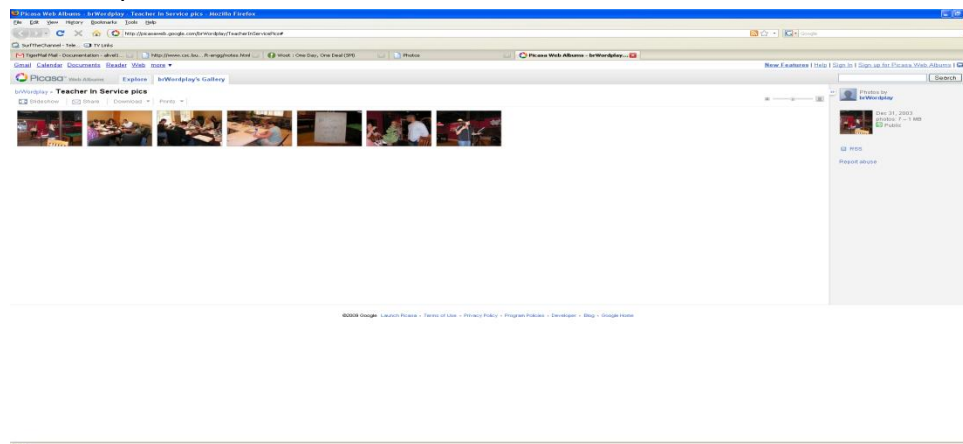
The media page directs users to click the above links to view WordPlay's videos and photos.

Photos Page (PHOT)



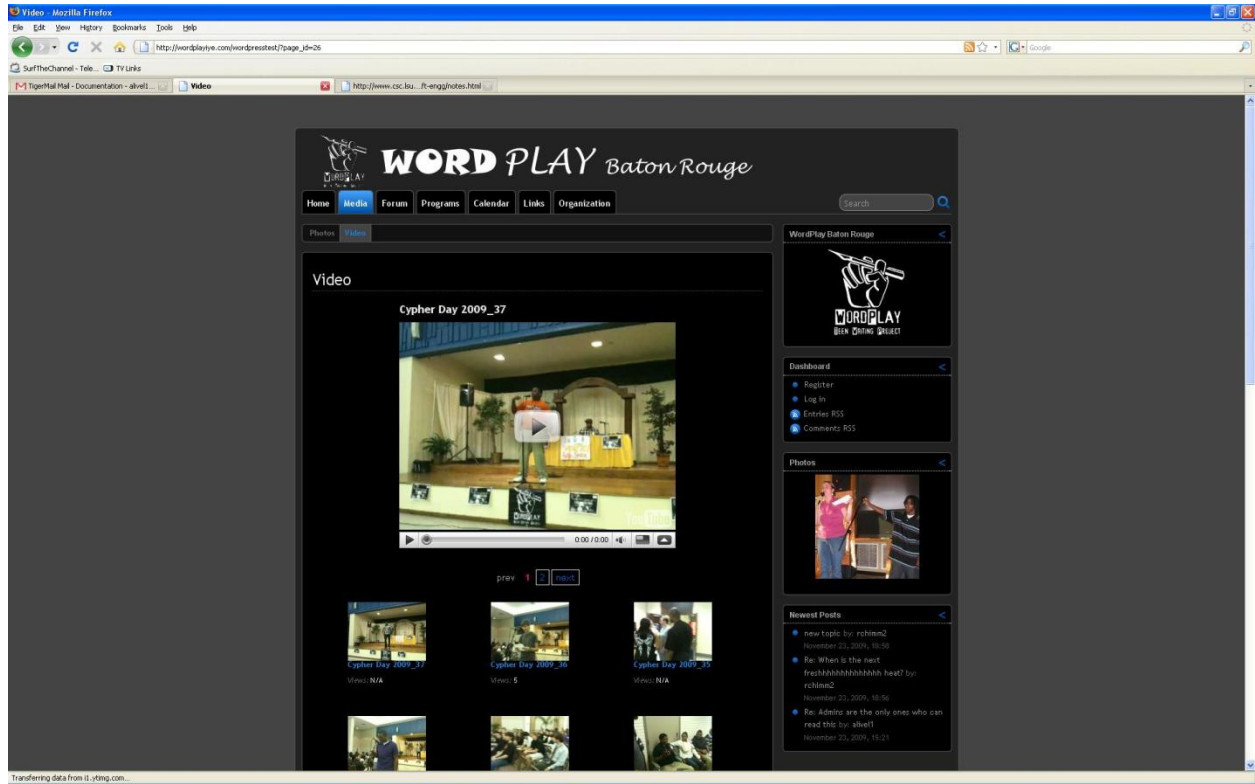
The photos page links to the Picasa web albums for WordPlay.

An example of an album:



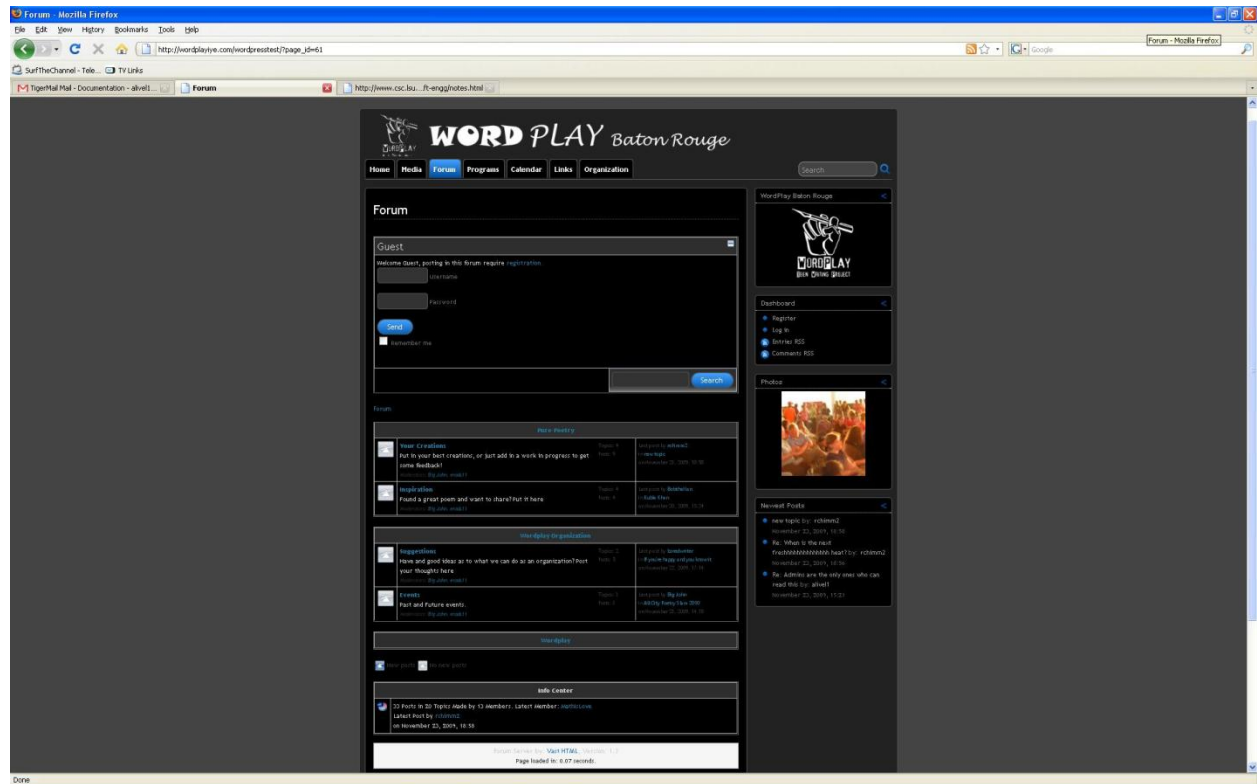
The user can click on the thumbnails of the pictures to make them bigger, and even view slide shows of the photos.

Video Page (VIDE)



The video page contains a gallery of all the WordPlay videos uploaded onto the WordPlay YouTube account. Users can click on the video they want to watch and view it on the site.

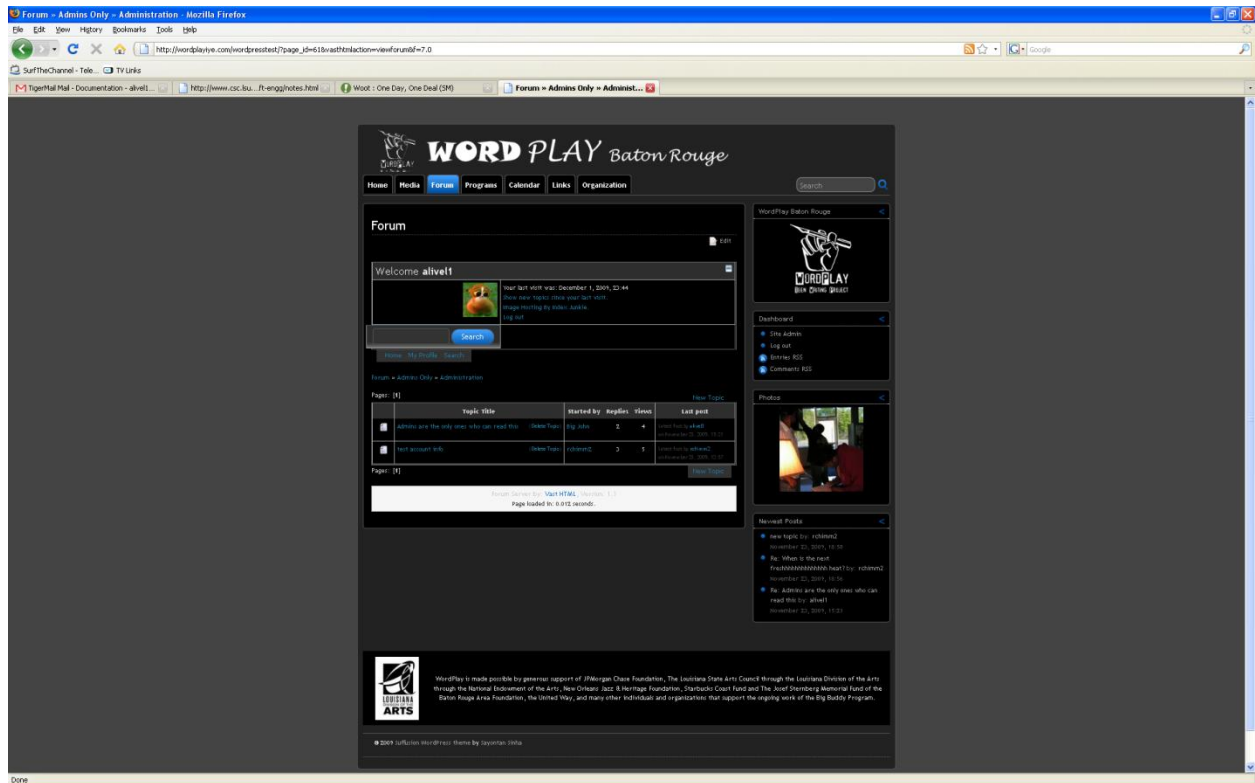
Forums (FORU)



Basic view of the forums with no one logged on.

This screen is essentially the table of contents of the forums.

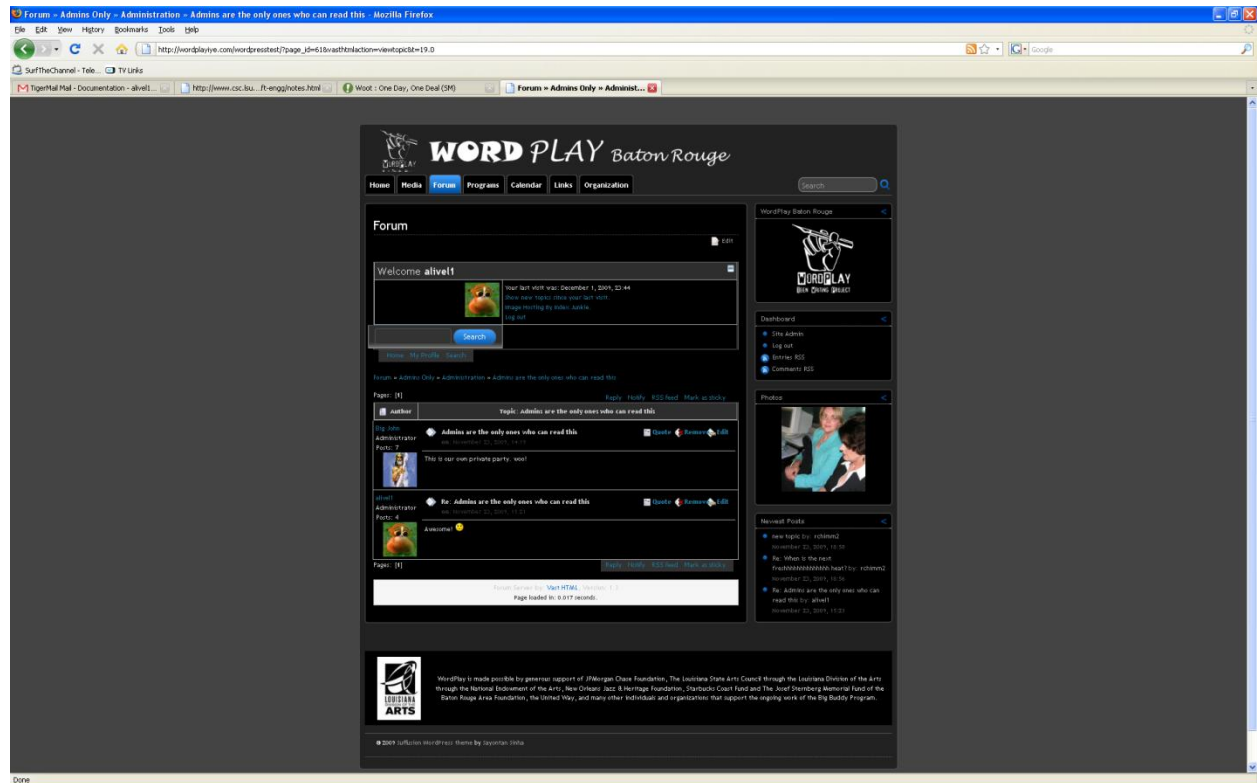
Admins Only Forum (ADON) {Other pages with the same structure: ADFO, TRUS, TUGD, USER, USGD, WPEV, PURE, CREAT, INSP, ORFO, SUGG, EVEN}



Basic view of a forum. Each of the rows is a forum thread to which other users can reply.

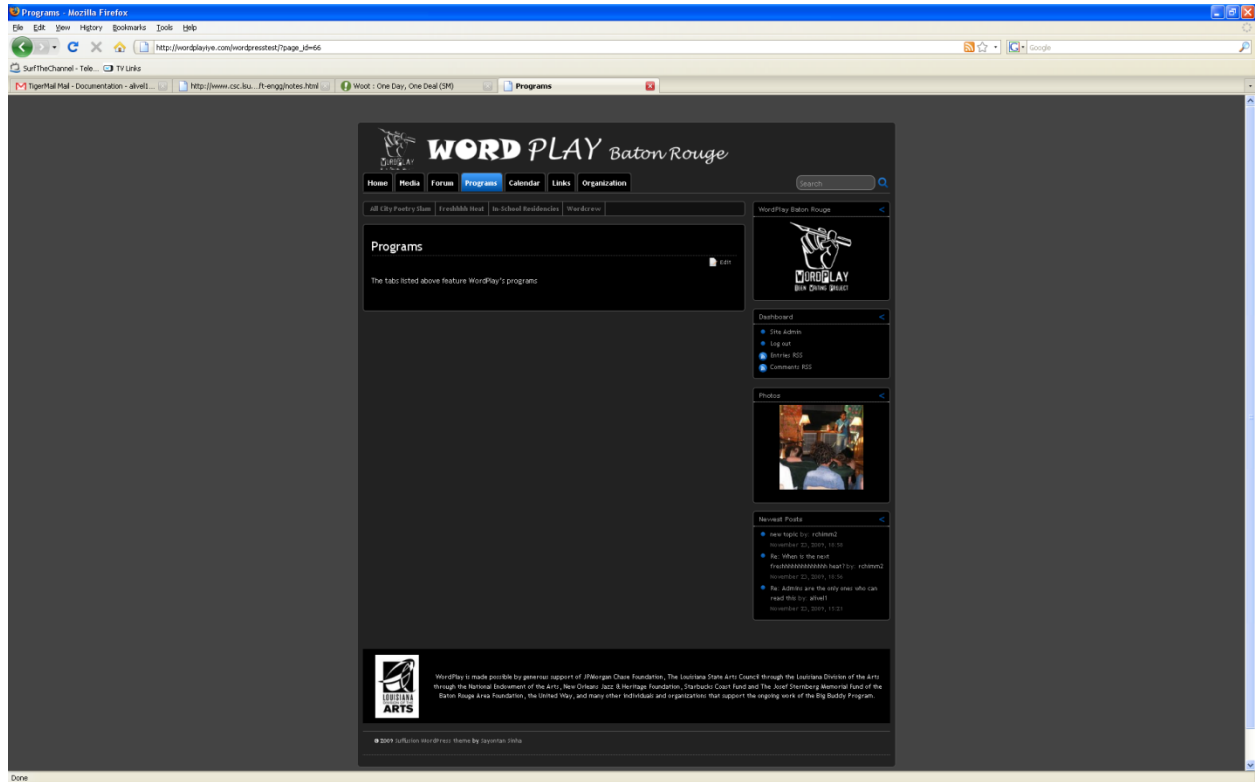
Each of the forums have basically this same view; the only difference is which users have permissions to read/write in them.

Example of a thread:



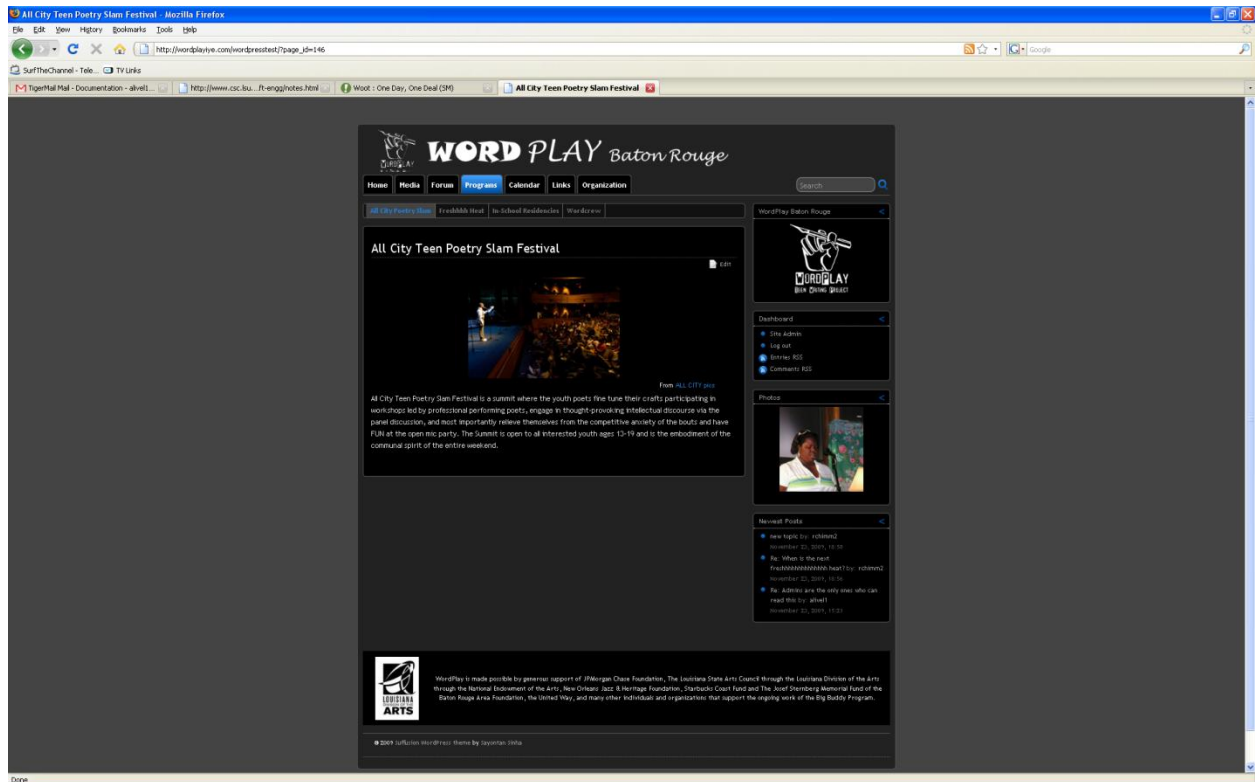
This is the view of an individual thread with one reply. Users have the option to edit their own posts and replies as well.

Programs Page (PROG)



The programs page directs the user to links for all of WordPlay's major programs. The programs are All City Poetry Slam, Freshhhh Heat, In-School Residencies, & Wordcrew.

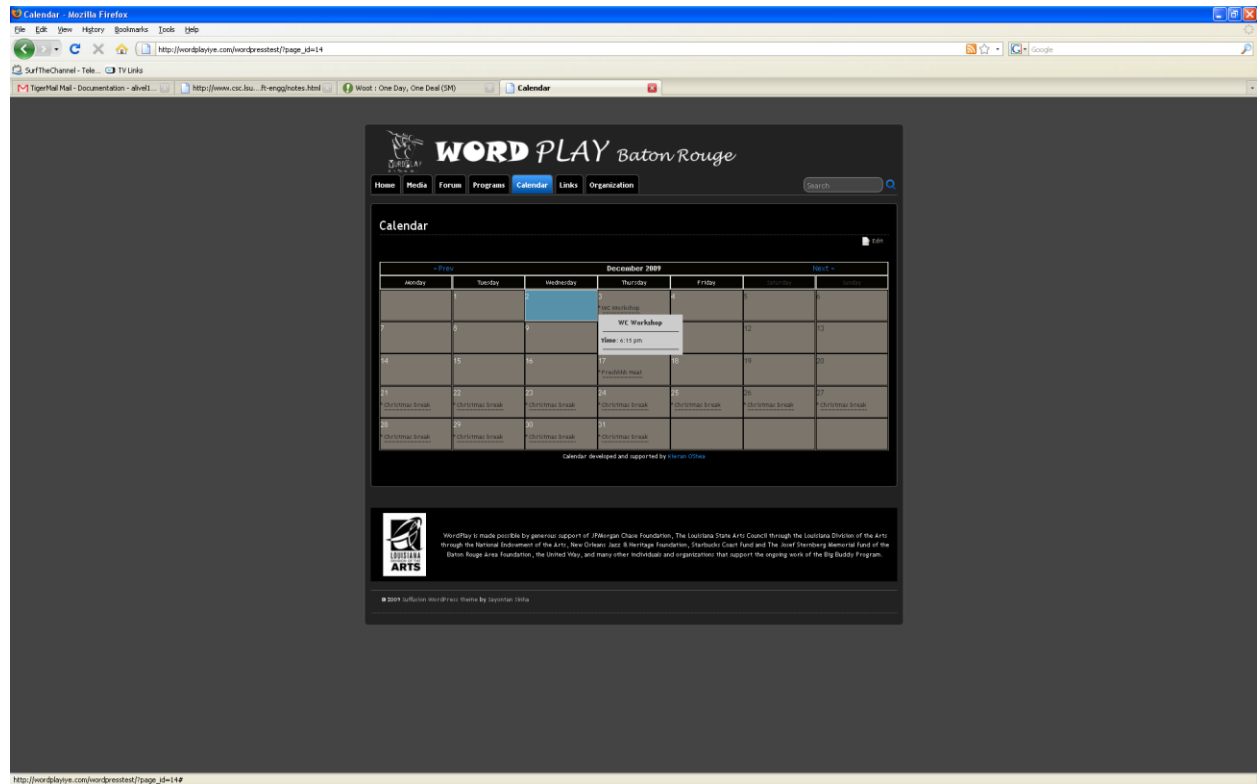
All City Teen Poetry Slam Festival Page (CITY) {Other pages with the same structure: HEAT, SCHO, CREW}



This is the All City Poetry Slam page.

All of the program pages have the same structure. They all include one static picture that represents the program and a brief description of what the program is about. We chose a static picture instead of a random one to give the programs a more consistent look and feel.

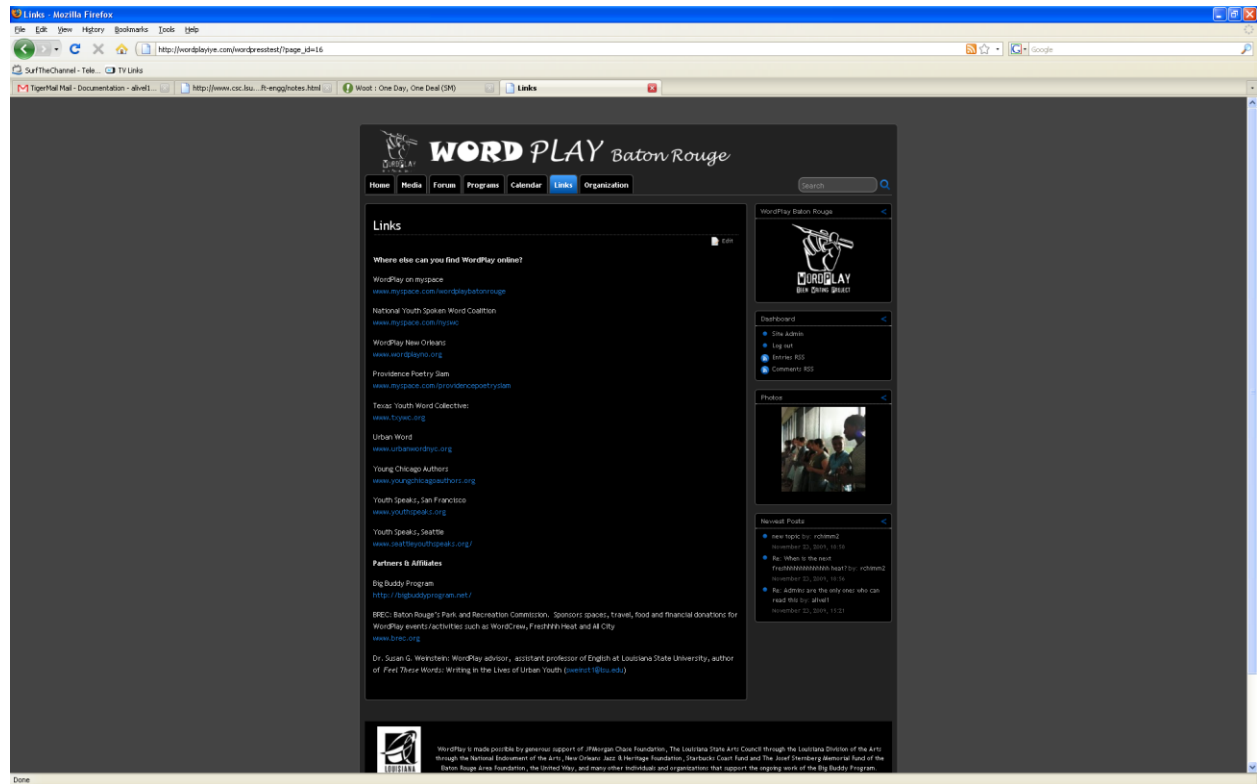
Calendar (CALE)



The calendar lists all of the major WordPlay events. The date highlighted in blue is today's date. When a user mouses over an event, he/she can see details about the event (time, location, description, etc).

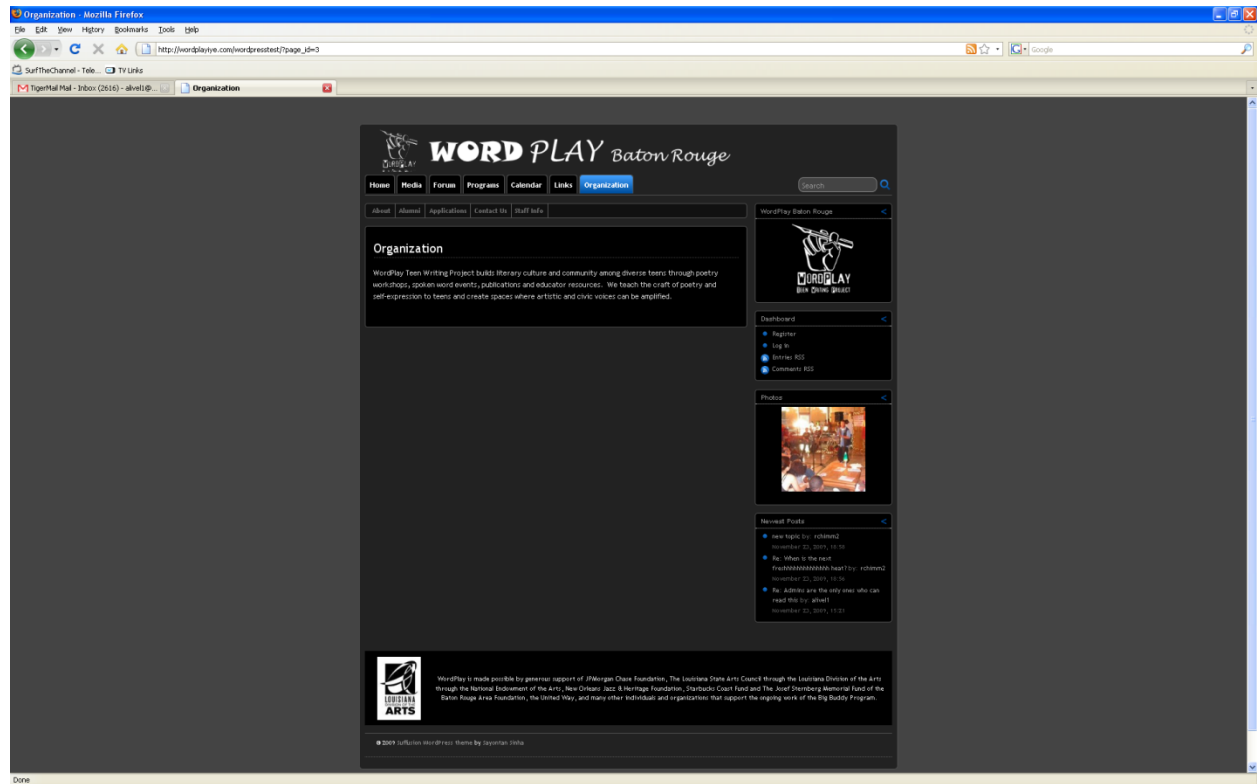
This page does not show the right-hand side bar because it destroys the alignment of the calendar.

Links Page (LINK)



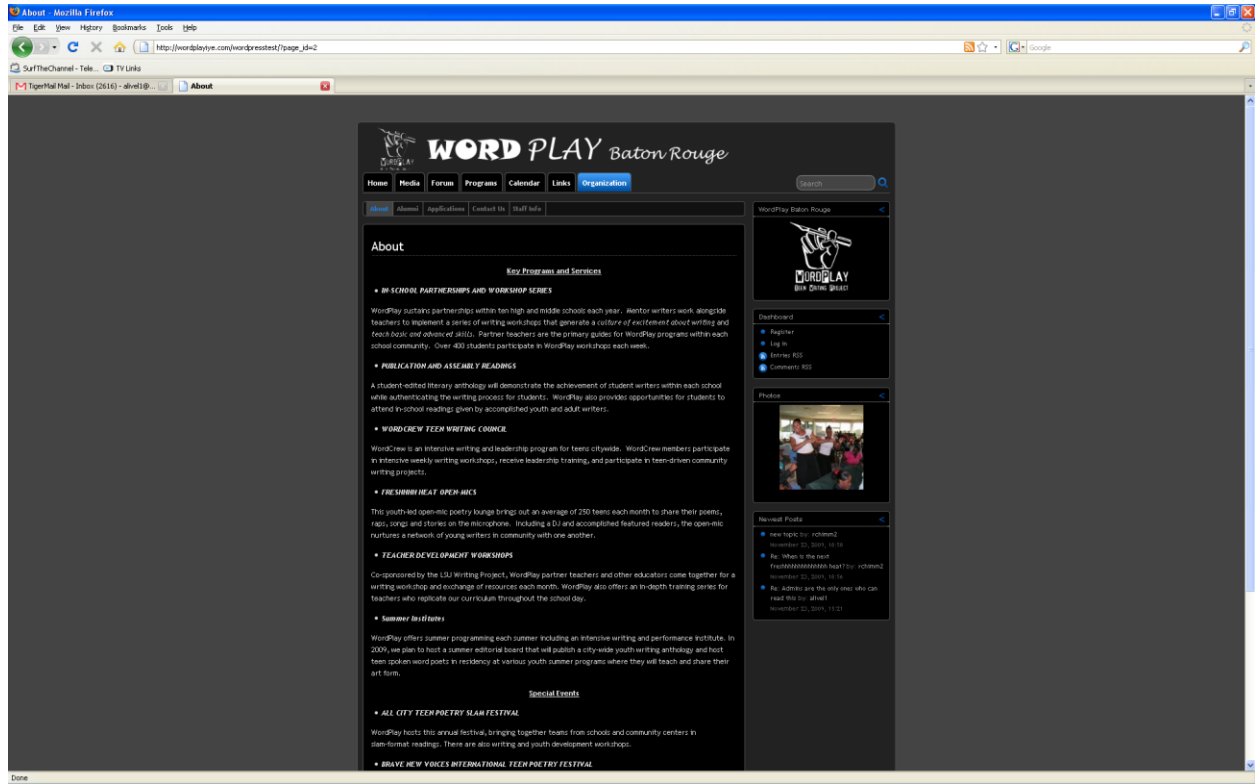
This page displays relevant links to WordPlay partner sites. The blue text means that it is a hyperlink that can be clicked to reach the website listed.

Organization Page (ORGN)



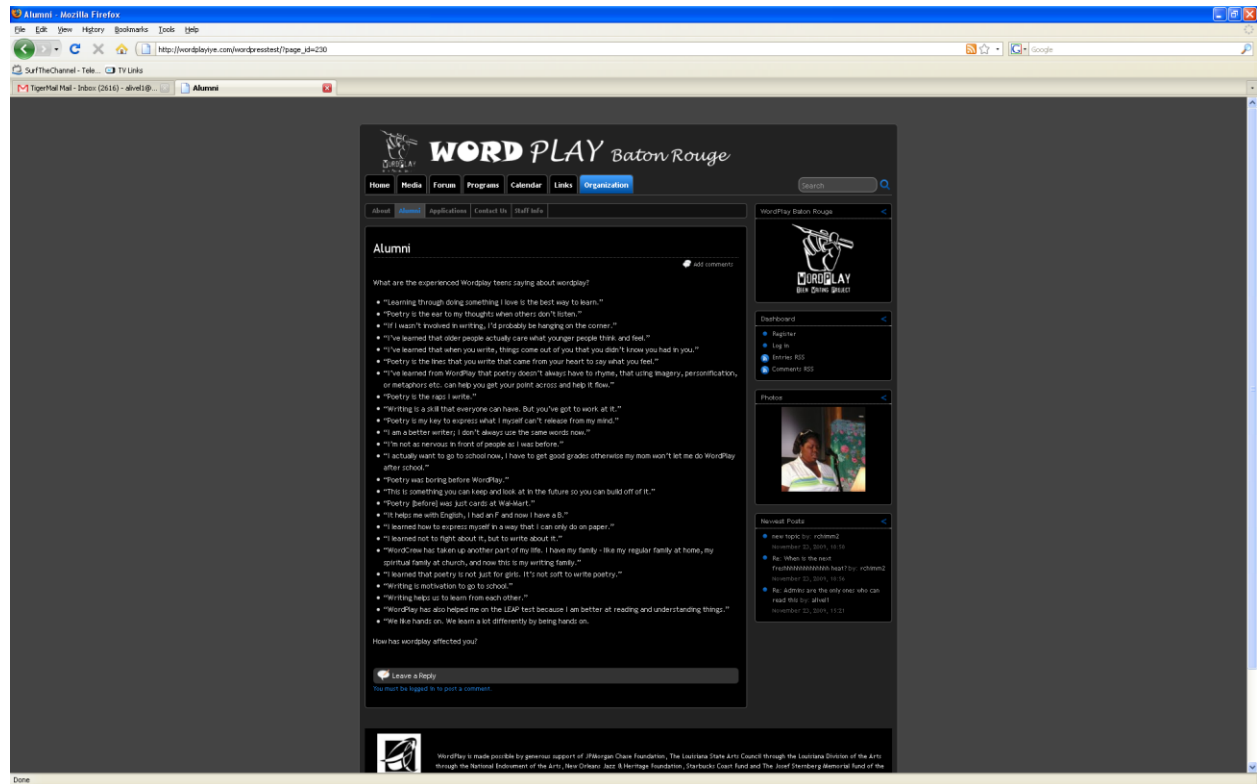
The organization page provides a brief description of WordPlay's mission. It also directs the user to the links of pages about the organization.

About Page (ABOU)



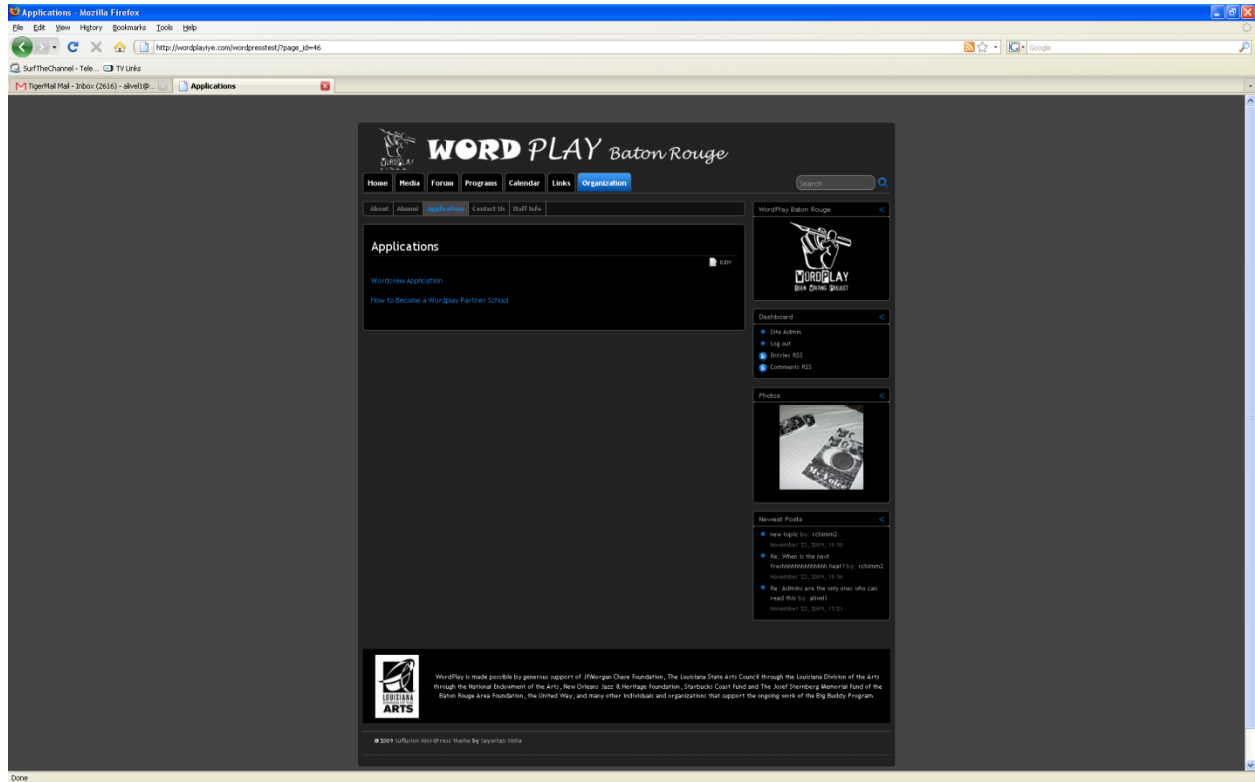
The about page contains basic information about the organization. It lists key programs, services, and special events.

Alumni Page (ALUM)



The alumni page lists quotes from former WordPlay members about their experiences within the program. Users have the option to post a reply with his/her own WordPlay experiences. Comments can only be made by registered users, and the WordPlay staff approves all comments before they are visible on the site.

Applications Page (APPL)



The applications page lists the Wordcrew application and the application to become a partner school. Both of these are links which prompt the user to download a Word Document when clicked.

Contact Us Page (CONT)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `http://wordplayinc.com/wordpressed7/page_id=11`. The page title is "Contact Us - Mozilla Firefox". The website is "WORD PLAY Baton Rouge". The navigation menu includes: Home, Media, Forum, Programs, Calendar, Links, and Organization. The "Contact Us" page is active. It features a "WordPlay Teen Writing Project" header with contact information: address (1415 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802), phone (225-385-9737), and fax (225-346-8441). Below this is a "To contact by e-mail:" section with fields for "Your Name:" (required), "Your Email Address:" (required), "Your Website:", and "Your Message:". A "Submit" button is at the bottom of the form. To the right of the form is a sidebar with a "WordPlay Baton Rouge" logo, a "Dashboard" section with links to Site Admin, Blog RSS, Events RSS, and Community RSS, a "Photos" section with a photo of a group of people, and a "Recent Posts" section with three posts. At the bottom of the page, there is a small logo for "ARTS" and a paragraph of text about the organization's funding and support.

WORD PLAY Baton Rouge

Home Media Forum Programs Calendar Links Organization

Search

WordPlay Teen Writing Project

* address: 1415 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802
* phone: 225-385-9737
* fax: 225-346-8441

To contact by e-mail:

Your Name: (required)

Your Email Address: (required)

Your Website:

Your Message:

This area is 10 and 2 in.

CC yourself on message: ☐

Submit

WordPlay Baton Rouge

Dashboard

- Site Admin
- Blog RSS
- Events RSS
- Community RSS

Photos

Recent Posts

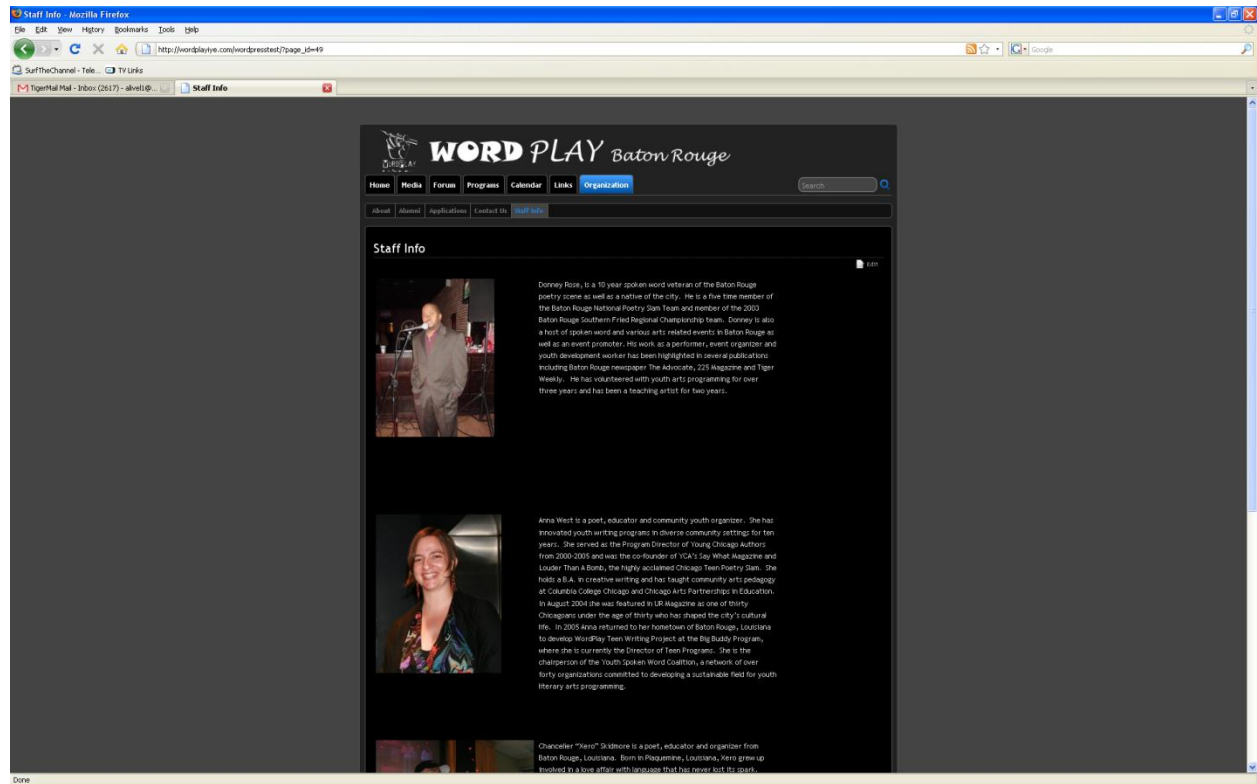
- new topic by: rdhms2
December 22, 2007, 10:50
- Re: What is the next
multicultural event? by: rdhms2
December 22, 2007, 10:50
- Re: Admins are the only ones who can
read this by: rdhms2
December 22, 2007, 11:01

WordPlay is made possible by generous support of Morgan Chase Foundation, the Louisiana State Arts Council through the Louisiana Division of the Arts through the National Endowment of the Arts, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, Starbucks Coffee Fund and The World's Strongest Memorial Fund of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the United Way, and many other individuals and organizations that support the ongoing work of the Big Buddy Program.

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The contact us page contains WordPlay's street address, telephone number, fax number, and an option to contact them by e-mail. Rather than list the e-mail directly, the user is required to enter his/her name and e-mail address in the corresponding fields. The user can then type his/her message and click submit. The user also has the option of forwarding a copy of the e-mail to himself.

Staff Info Page (INFO)



The staff info contains both a picture and a brief biography of the members of the WordPlay staff. Because of alignment issues, we could not have the right sidebars visible on this page.

Auxiliary Softwares

Internet Connection

An active internet connection is required to access the website. A broadband connection is ideal for looking at videos and pictures.

Mozilla Firefox/Google Chrome/Opera/Internet Explorer 8

A modern browser (e.g. not Internet Explorer 6) is recommended for accessing the site.

WordPress

WordPress is a state-of-the-art publishing platform with a focus on aesthetics, web standards, and usability.

The entire website is built off of WordPress. It allows us to integrate other, more advanced features thanks to independently developed plug-in.

Picasa

Picasa is a photo upload service that allows people to compile and share all of their pictures in one place.

We implemented Picasa primarily to embed picture galleries into the photo section of the website. We also utilized a plug-in to showcase a random picture from the gallery on the sidebar every time a page loads.

YouTube

YouTube is an online video service that is owned and managed by Google. People use it to store and publish video clips.

We implemented YouTube as a place to keep all of WordPlay's videos from their events, while sparing the cost of the bandwidth required for hosting it themselves. We used a plug-in to create a YouTube video gallery that was linked to the YouTube account we previously set up.

Meeting Agendas

September 11, 2009 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Client Meeting

Attendees

Donney Rose (Client)

John Albrecht

Alana Lively

Eugene Radcliff

(2 members of a second group were there, Bridget & Eric)

We discussed their current website setup, what they want to get out of this project, when would be best to set up recurring meetings, and when/how we could get direct feedback and ideas from the youth of the organization. He said the next big step is for some of us to come on September 24 to get the opinions of the organization's members during one of their major group meetings. In the interim, we are looking into either upgrading Moonfruit or finding an adequate replacement. We also exchanged contact information.

September 24, 2009 6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Client Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht

John met with the younger members of the organization at one of their meetings to get ideas and brainstorm as to what they would like to have included on their website. Mr. Donney Rose was out sick. Many ideas built off of previous ones, like a calendar, "upcoming events" on the front page, a spot to download the application to join, a way to build community with other writers, etc.

September 25, 2009 4:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Client Meeting

Attendees

Donney Rose (Client)

Eugene Radcliff

Ravi Chimmalgi
John Albrecht

We met with Donney Rose to discuss the meeting from the night before, as well as how to move forward. Mr. Rose pushed us to get in contact with the other group and to find a way to split the work with them to get more done. He did not want to pick between two competing designs, or have to keep track of everything two separate groups are doing.

October 9, 2009 10:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

Alana Lively
John Albrecht

John bought a hosting domain from HostGator so we could get a jumpstart on the website. We spent several hours getting it set up and tried to implement the website with Drupal. We got quite a bit done with it, but we kept hitting snags. Our Drupal website: wordplayiye.com/drupal We started looking at alternatives to Drupal because things were moving really slow with it. We installed WordPress on the server to give it a shot. Within a few hours, we managed to surpass our work accomplished on the Drupal site. WordPress was much more user-friendly and did not require tons of setting up. We spent as much time as we could adding features and searching through plug-ins to find the things we needed.

October 9, 2009 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Client Meeting

Attendees

Donney Rose (Client)
Alana Lively
John Albrecht

We met with Donney to show him both our Drupal site and our WordPress site to get his feedback. He agreed that the WordPress site seemed better than the other, and considering the efficiency we were having with it, we dropped Drupal completely. At this point we focused exclusively on the WordPress site. Our WordPress site: wordplayiye.com/wordpress-test

October 11, 2009 2:00 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht
Alana Lively
Ravi Chimmalgi
Eugene Radcliff

We met before class to put our finishing touches on the website and PowerPoint presentation to prepare for the presentation later that day. We added features such as the embedded Google calendar and photos using Flickr.

October 21, 2009 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON

Client Meeting

Attendees

Donney Rose (Client)
John Albrecht

Met with Donney and Trey to show our progress with the WordPress website and to get more ideas on what to change. He wanted us to add a section for Programs (such as Word Crew and All City poetry slam). He also told us to scrap the biographies section. We also set up the drop box so we could share files with the other group.

November 16, 2009 12:00 NOON – 3:00 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht
Alana Lively
Ravi Chimmalgi
Eugene Radcliff

We ramped up our work on the website. We scrapped the embedded Google calendar since it wasn't working, and stopped using Flickr. We searched for some new calendar plug-in. Alana set up a Picasa account with all of the photos in the dropbox. We made sure to share this account with the other WordPlay group.

November 17, 2009 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht

Alana Lively

Shi Ning Sun

Tweaked some of the website features – Media section especially. Ning was able to go into the css files for the forums & calendar to change the hex values for the colors around until he found a good mix of color to match our dark theme for the website.

November 20, 2009 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Client Meeting

Attendees

Donney Rose (Client)

John Albrecht

We met with Trey and Donney for the final time to go over the websites for final touches to them. Donney preferred the look and feel of the Picasa photo albums and how they were integrated over the flickr account. He asked us to combine all of the fresh heat pictures into one section(they were previously separated by date). Donney supplied us with a list of partners and other websites that he wanted featured in the links section. We also spoke about the upcoming presentations and made sure he could make it.

November 22, 2009 4:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht

Alana Lively

Ravi Chimmalgi

We met to clean up the rest of the site and to add text to the various sections that were empty before. There was also considerable time spent preparing for the presentation on the following day, and we created a PowerPoint for that. Ravi managed to find a plug-in that allowed us to change the avatars that go with the forums on the website, which allowed for greater

customization overall. The forum was also bulked up considerably through new categories and forums, and then populated with posts.

November 23, 2009 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht
Alana Lively
Ravi Chimmalgi
Eugene Radcliff
Shi Ning Sun

We met in the hours running up to the presentation to put our final touches on the website. Before this, we were embedding the YouTube videos directly onto the website, which made for a fairly clunky interface overall. We managed to find a plug-in that created a gallery on the website with all of the videos from the YouTube account that we had set up. We finished up the PowerPoint and made final preparations for the presentation, while tweaking minor setting around the site.

November 30, 2009 3:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht
Alana Lively

Pulled the documentation we worked on during the Thanksgiving break together and made plans for how to finish the final document.

December 1, 2009 12:00 NOON – 1:30 P.M.

Group Meeting

Attendees

John Albrecht
Alana Lively

Put all the documentation that we had together and delegated the rest.

Acknowledgements: Special Thanks to...

Donney Rose & the WordPlay staff

for being so easy to work with and enthusiastic about our project.

WordPlay Baton Rouge on the Web group

for setting up the drop box and helping us throughout the project.

VastHTML

for the wonderful forum plug-in.

Interactive Youth Expression: Giving Wordplay to All

A presentation by: John Albrecht,
Ravikumar Chimmalgi, Alana Lively,
Eugene Radcliff, Shi Ning Sun

What is Wordplay?

- Wordplay creates dynamic, safe forums for Baton Rouge area teens to develop literacy & life skills.
- Programs offered include writing workshops, open-mics, poetry slams, publications, & educator resources.

Requirements

- A working website that had more features than their previous site (“Moonfruit”)
- Interactive feature for poets to post their poems, inspiration, etc (forum)
- A site that is easy to update/maintain beyond this project

Why Wordpress?

- Does not require extensive technical knowledge of HTML, css, javascript, etc to maintain
- Has a central management system for uploads, widgets, editors, etc

Basic Features of Site

- Home page with current events
- Details of organization (What they do, etc)
- List of all programs offered
- Calendar
- Applications for Wordcrew, schools
- Media
- Links
- Interactive forums

Features of Forum

- Private forums that elevated users can access (e.g. Administrators)
- Unregistered users can see a limited set of forums, but cannot post at all
- All registered users have a profile where he/she can set an avatar, post an e-mail address, etc