

Education Center Redesign

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CONTENTS

Overview of Existing Content	2
Project Calendar	
Visual Timeline	4
User Personas	5
Addressing User Goals	9
User Scenarios	10
User Research	11
What's Inside—Customer Questions	17
Information Architecture	19
User Stories	20
Wireframes	21
Conclusions	24



OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONTENT

I am working on the information architecture and redesign of Kennedy Violin's Education Center. I am currently working at Kennedy Violins as Art and Marketing Director. This project is part of an ongoing process of improving the usability and design of their online sales and marketing channels.

The purpose of this outreach to new and existing customers is:

- To answer pre-purchase questions.
- To address common questions posed by customers who have recently purchased an instrument
- To strengthen brand loyalty with existing customers through engaging content as they reach new levels of proficiency in their playing.

Site drawbacks that need to be addressed:

- Navigation redundancy—see screenshots at right. Three of the main categories links lead to the same page, which include the same category links again—an unnecessary step for the user.
- Some Navigation labels are vague. "Joel's Corner" does not let the user understand that the link will take them to information about violin technique and violin care. "Jame's Corner does not provide a clue to the user that eh information in that section is regarding guitar technique and guitar care.
- The existing content, on the company's Shopify ecommerce site, lacks categorization and content tags. This makes it more difficult for the user to find the content that they need. For example, the section on "Practice Tips" is included under "For Parents." This is content that could be useful to students of any age. Appropriate tagging of the content could make it available on more than one section of the education center.
- A companion project is the reorganization of Kennedy Violins YouTube Channel to arrange existing video content into playlist and keyword the content, this will allow potential customers to easily find the information or product demonstration videos they are looking for. This will also help identify existing videos which should be included in the education center content.





Proposed Changes:

I recommend that this content be moved out of the Shopify platform, and onto a blog platform better suited to categorization and tagging of articles. The new site can be integrated into the existing Shopify site's navigation, and links back to the ecommerce site will be provided from the new Education Center (KennedyAcademy.com) in the header navigation, as well as in individual articles where appropriate.

I plan to approach this redesign in a systematic way—with site user input implemented in the structure and content, stakeholder needs addressed, and project owner buy-in throughout the process.

Research, site architecture, and initial wire-frames completed by December 4.

Asset collection can begin in December and additional wireframes and page comps to be produced in January.

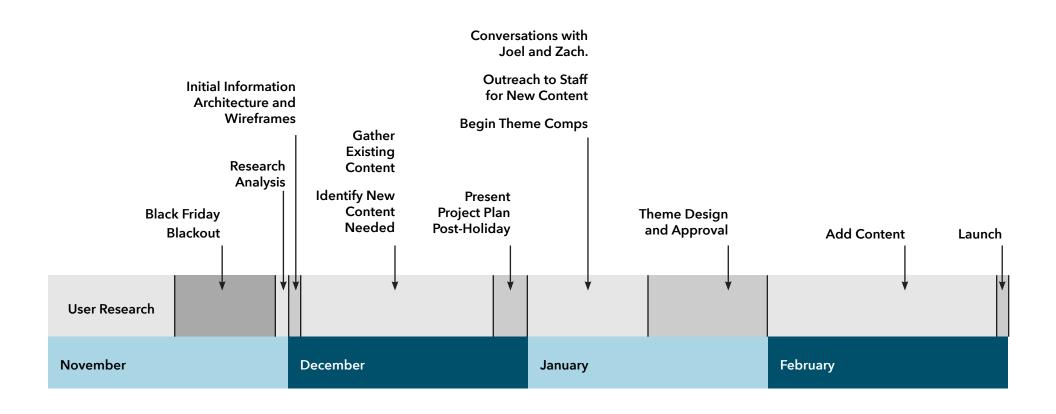
Site production is to begin in February, with tentative launch date at the end of February.

PROJECT CALENDAR

Task Project Stage
10/31/2020 — Project PitchComplete
11/10/2020 — SWOT Analysis Complete
11/15/2020 — User Survey
11/16/2020 — Card Sort
11/17–28/2020 — Break for Black Friday Work Responsibilities
11/29/20 — Persona CreationCompleted
11/29/20 — How Site meets User GoalsCompleted
11/29/20 — ScenariosCompleted
11/30/2020 — Information ArchitectureCompleted
11/30/20 — User StoriesCompleted
11/30/2020 — WireframesInitial 3 Page
11/30/2021 — Project Progress CollectionCompleted
January 20201 — Additional WireframesBacklog
January 2021 — Meeting with JoelBacklog
January 2021 — Meeting with ZachBacklog
January 2021 — Poll: staff interest in content creationBacklog
January 15, 2021 — Start Wordpress SiteBacklog



VISUAL TIMELINE





USER PERSONAS

User Persona 1 – Beginning String Player



"I try to listen in class, but, by the time I get home sometimes I forget what the teacher said.

Can you help me tune my Cello?"

BIO

Joe has started learning Cello through a program at his school. There is one teacher for the class, so individual instruction is limited. Joe is looking for support when he practices at home. He feels pretty comfortable in class, but second guesses his ability outside the classroom.

GOALS

- I want to play in the recital without too many mistakes.
- I want to learn how to make nice sounds.
- I want my teacher and my parents to see that I am trying.

CHALLENGES

- I have trouble remembering how to tune my instrument.
- The rosin get my instrument sticky!
- Sometimes I want to go out and play instead of practice.

Joe Nguyen

Age: 9

Role: Cello Player

Proficiency: Beginning

Researching For:

✓ Self

____ Someone Else

MOTIVATIONS

Achievement

Duty

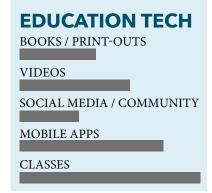
Social Standing

Satisfaction

Personal Growth

Nurturing

- Group Classes
- Workbooks
- Step-by-step print-out instructions





User Persona 2 – Advancing Violinist



Amanda Johnson

Age: 17

Role: Violin Player

Proficiency: Advancing

Researching For:

✓ Self

____ Someone Else

"I am looking for new challenges and more ways to express my personal style through music."

BIO

Amanda has played violin since the age of eight. She has steadily advanced and has participated in school orchestra, and performed with her congregation's music team. She feels she has plateaued in her playing ability and is looking for new challenges. She is exploring ways music can reflect her personal style.

MOTIVATIONS

Achievement

Duty

Social Standing

Satisfaction

Personal Growth

Nurturing

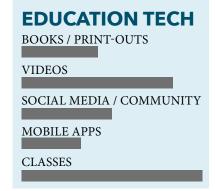
GOALS

- I want to learn to play rock and modern compositions.
- I would like to perfect some of the advanced techniques.
- I may want to go electric.

CHALLENGES

- I need to find an instructor who understands my goals.
- How do I switch from violin to electric violin.
- How do I get advice on styles I have not played?

- One-on-one instruction
- YouTube
- Group Practice
- Other musicians





User Persona 3 – Guitar Student



"I recently got my guitar and I just know the basics. I want to be able to play on the weekends with my friends from school. I need some tips to be able to keep up."

BIO

George purchased a guitar about 6 months ago. He learned some basic chords and is trying out some chord progressions. He likes to get together with a couple of friends and play some songs. George feels he needs some additional pointers to feel more comfortable with his instrument.

MOTIVATIONS

Age: 17

Role: Guitar Player

Proficiency: Beginning

Researching For:

✓ Self

Someone Else

Achievement

Duty

Social Standing

Satisfaction

Personal Growth

Nurturing

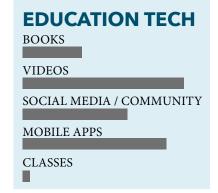
GOALS

- I want to feel more comfortable with chord transitions.
- I want to use different strumming techniques.
- What if I have to change my strings?

CHALLENGES

- Most of the time I practice on my own without feedback.
- I am embarrassed to ask friends for help with the basics.
- Can I fit classes into my work and school schedule?

- Video tutorials
- YouTube
- Peer Knowledge
- Guitar Books
- A Guitar App





User Persona 4 — Parent of A New Violin Student



Ellen Wiseman

Age: 38

Role: Parent

Proficiency: None **Researching For:**

Self

✓ Someone Else

"I have never played a stringed instrument. Ever since Claire attended her cousin's school orchestra performance she has been hounding me about the violin."

BIO

Ellen has some musical experience. She took piano lessons for a few years and performs in a local choir. But, she has never played a stringed instrument. They are a mystery to her. She knows they come in different styles, and that the price for violins varies widely. She wonders, what kind of violin is the right choice for a child Claire's age?

MOTIVATIONS

Achievement

Duty

Social Standing

Satisfaction

Personal Growth

Nurturing

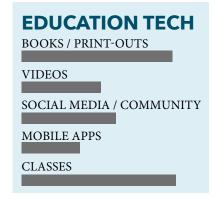
GOALS

- To support her child's goals.
- To get a decent instrument within her budget.
- To find a good instructor.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of knowledge about violin construction & quality.
- Unsure of setting expectations for a child Claire's age.
- For a young child just starting, is it better to buy or rent?

- Online Research
- Other Parents
- Buying Guides
- Reviews
- Local Music Stores





ADDRESSING USER GOALS

Persona 1 – Beginning Student

When Joe is at home his parents can direct him to videos on the Kennedy Violins website to reinforce what he has learned in school.

- He will be able to watch a tuning video and hear what the instrument should sound like when it is tuned.
- He will be able to see how to keep the instrument clean and in good repair.
- He will be able to find tips on how to develop good practice habits.

Persona 2 – Advancing Student

Amanda will find information and inspiration as she sets out to take her playing to the next level.

- She can find tips on finding an instructor that will work with her on her goals.
- The video tutorials will help her improve advanced techniques.
- She can find product information and demo videos on different styles of violins, acoustic and electric.

Persona 3 – Guitar Student

George will get some help in becoming more comfortable playing his guitar.

- He can find helpful tips on transitions, posture, and technique that will help him improve his playing.
- He will learn how to change strings by watching a video tutorial.
- If he can't fit a class in he will discover that there is a book available with online lessons included.
- He will be able to sign up for single online or onsite classes if he just wants the occasional pointers.

Persona 4 – Parent of a Violin Student

Ellen will be able to find the guidance she needs to make informed decisions.

- She can read articles and watch video about setting realistic practice goals.
- She will be able to find information on purchasing or renting a violins for a beginning student, and how to choose the right size of violin for Claire.
- She can view demonstration videos to compare the sound of student violin outfits.
- She will learn why most student violins are shipped with four fine tuners.



USER SCENARIOS

Persona 1 – Beginning Student

Joe is a young beginning Cello player who has just started his practice session for the day. He is feeling frustrated, because he is not sure whether he has tuned his cello correctly. He tells his mom he doesn't think he can practice because his instrument is out of tune. His mom reminds him that when they bought the instrument they were provided a link to an online resource that could help him get started. Joe and his mom log on to the site. As Joe watched the video and it reinforced what he had learned in class earlier in the week. Joe grew more confident in his knowledge as he tuned the cello. He was able to run through that weeks lesson and feel successful.

Persona 2 – Advancing Student

Amanda is an intermediate violin player who is considering changing her style of playing. She is looking for new ways to channel her creative energy through her music, and is considering purchasing an electric guitar, but doesn't know what accessories she would need, and if the playing technique is much different than what she is accustomed to. Amanda is able to find a video of Electric violin setup, how to run effects pedals through your amp, and what the various effects pedals sound like. She would also like to find an instructor with experience playing and teaching electric violin.

Persona 3 – Guitar Student

George is a novice guitar player who wants to feel more comfortable and confident in his ability to advance his playing technique. When he purchased the guitar he was provided with a link to online resources. He visits the education center to find out how to restring his classical guitar. There is a video online that helps him accomplish that task. While he is on the site he notices some instructional videos about chord progressions and finger-picking. Finger-picking is something he has been wanting to try. He also found a book for sale that includes companion videos. He has not felt he had time or money for traditional one-on-one instruction. This may be a good solution for him at this time.

Persona 4 – Parent of a Violin Student

Ellen's daughter, Claire is adamant that she wants to learn violin. Ellen has never played a stringed instrument and is cautious about investing much money in a very young child's whims. She knows that beginning violins come in fractional sizes for small children. Ellen wants to find the right instrument for Claire—one that will be playable, affordable, and comfortable. She searches online for information about how to choose a first violin, and finds Kennedy Violins Education Center. Not only does she find information about how to measure Claire for the right violin, she also finds information about rental versus purchase, and what to look for in a quality violin.



USER RESEARCH

Online Survey–18 responses

ROLE:

The majority of those responding to the survey were beginning students. This was followed by advancing students in second place, and then parents in third position.

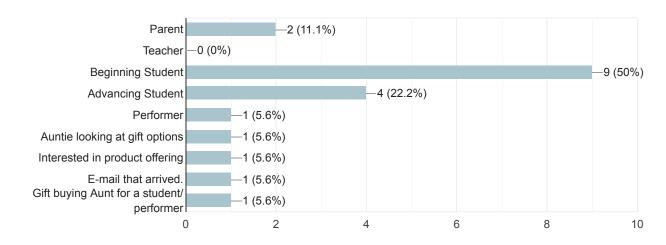
Teachers were not represented in this sample.

AWARENESS

Two-thirds of respondents did not know that education recourses were available at KennedyViolins.com.

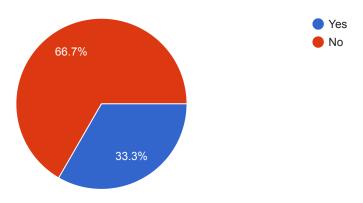
I visit Kennedy Violins as a:

18 responses



Did you know we have tutorials and education articles available at kennedyviolins.com?

18 responses





INSTRUMENT

Violin players comprised 72.2% of the respondents. This was followed by Acoustic Guitar (22.2%), Classical Guitar (16.7%), Viola (11.1%), and Electric Violin and Ukulele both came it at 5.6%.

Piano write-ins got a total of 22.4%. Write-ins for harmonica and drums each got 5.6%.

LEARNING STYLES

The majority sited watching a video as their favorite way to learn new skills (83.3%).

Second choice was step-by step instructions with images (photos or graphics) which garnered 61.1%).

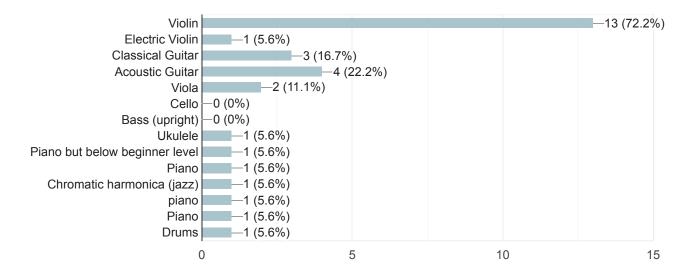
50% of respondents wanted a downloadable PDF. For some types of information a printed sheet would be useful to have on hand during practice. We may want to make sure that online articles can be easily printed as PDF files from the website.

Reading an online article came in at 38.9%. Graphs and charts garnered 22.2%.

There were also a couple of write-in responses—instructor-led and sight-reading each got 5.6%.

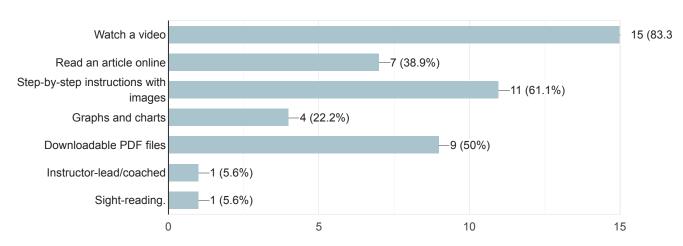
What instrument(s) do you play?

18 responses



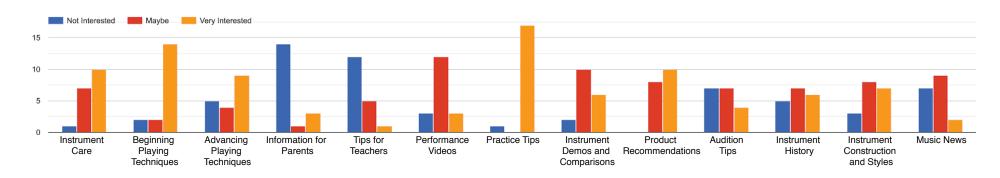
How do you like to learn?

18 responses





Please rate how interested you are in these topics:



TOPICS

The top four responses for "Very Interested" are, from most to least:

- Practice Tips
- Beginning Playing Techniques
- Instrument Care, and Product Recommendations (tied)
- Advancing Playing Techniques

The top four responses for "Maybe" are, from most to least:

- Performance Videos
- Instrument Demos and Comparisons
- Music News
- Product Recommendations, and Instrument Construction Styles (2-way tie).

Instrument Care, Demos and Comparisons, Product Recommendations, History, and Constructions Styles all had strong showings with a combination of "Very Interested" and "Maybe" votes. Is there another topic you would like to see on our website?

3 responses

How to chose the right instrument

I am a total novice. Have not picked up a violin since grade school. Could use help with everything.

Shifting positions on viola, ear training - intermediate.

On line, student texts



SOURCES

The twelve responses about where the respondents go for information are listed to the right. One response was for a competitor site.

SUGGESTIONS

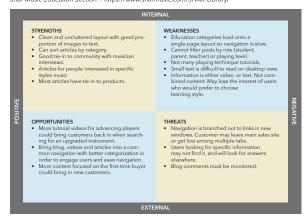
Below is the only response to the question "What can we do better?"

• I love Kennedy Violins. I would love to learn the origins and development of my Bunnel Next. I play it every day. Thank you!

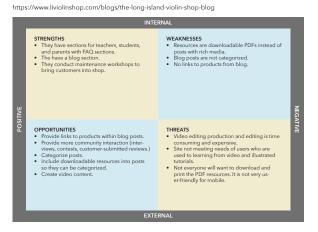
Where do you currently get information about learning and playing music
YouTube
YouTube, the tune project, fiddlerman,
Google, friends
Kennedy
YouRube
My first option would be to Google
You tube, The Real Book, Thesaurus Of Scales.
My private teachers



Shar Music Education Section - https://www.sharmusic.com/SHAR-Library/







SWOT Analysis

A Strength, Weakness Opportunity, Threat analysis was conducted of the Shar Blog, Fiddlerman, and the Long Island Violin Shop. Main takeaways are at right.

Top Three Issues

Provide information in more than one delivery method.

In most cases the informational posts and video content is separate. If the video content is combined with written and graphic information the content will appeal to a wider variety of learning styles.

Integrate learning with marketing.

Where possible provide links to products and services offered by the company. This could be done in sidebar content, as in-post advertising, or as text links within the article where it could naturally flow into the content.

Make sure the user can find the information they need.

Categorize posts by role, instrument, and topic. Be sure to use categories, and tags within categories, so the user can narrow their search. Provide a search function for the blog. Make sure the navigation is easily accessible as the user scrolls through a page or navigates from page to page within articles.



Card Sort

The card sort was not as effective a tool as I would have liked. I only has two completed responses. I believe this was because there were too many topics to be sorted and users did not have the time/patience to complete the sort.

I will provide the two completed responses here.

I may try a different card sort in January to see if a simpler format will yield better results.







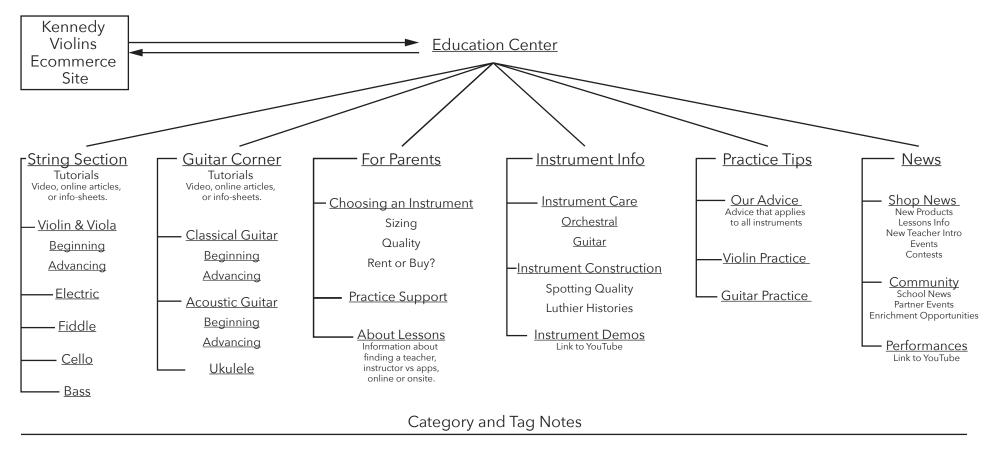








INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE



Categories and Tags can be used to display content in more that one location, to make it easier for the customer to find the info they need. Some examples:

- Instrument quality articles can appear both under "Instrument Info" and "For Parents."
- Practice tips can appear both in that category and under the instrument tutorial category they belong to.

Proper use of categories and tags allows us to post once, and have the content display to more than one audience.

Articles can be sorted by author so, although we are using more descriptive top-level link names, there will still be a "Joel's Corner" and "James" Corner".



USER STORIES



PERSONA 1
BEGINING VIOLINIST

- 1. As a beginning cellist I need to see out how to tune my instrument so that I can practice.
- As a new string player I need to know how to clean the rosin off my instrument, so that it doesn't get sticky.



PERSONA 2 ADVANCING VIOLINIST

- 1. As an advancing violinist I want advice on different bowing techniques to increase my range of tones.
- 2. As someone experimenting with musical expression I need information on switching over to the electric violin, so I can explore new styles of music.



PERSONA 3 BEGINNING GUITARIST

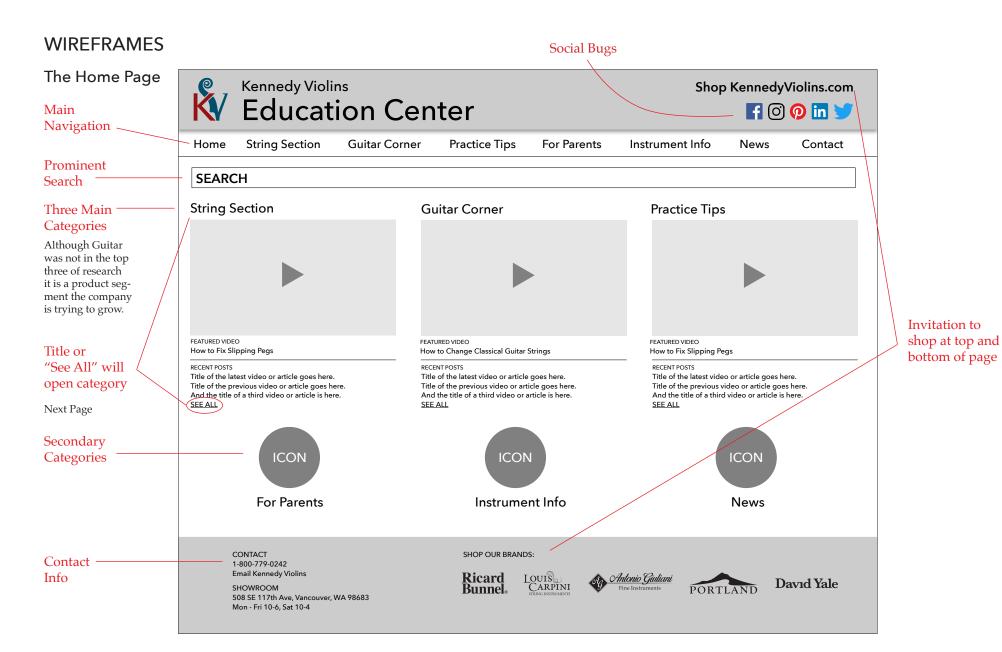
- 1. As a beginning guitarist I need to find out how tho change the strings on my classical guitar, so that it keeps sounding like new.
- 2. As someone who wants to play music with others I need to know how to make quicker and smoother chord transitions, so that I can keep up.



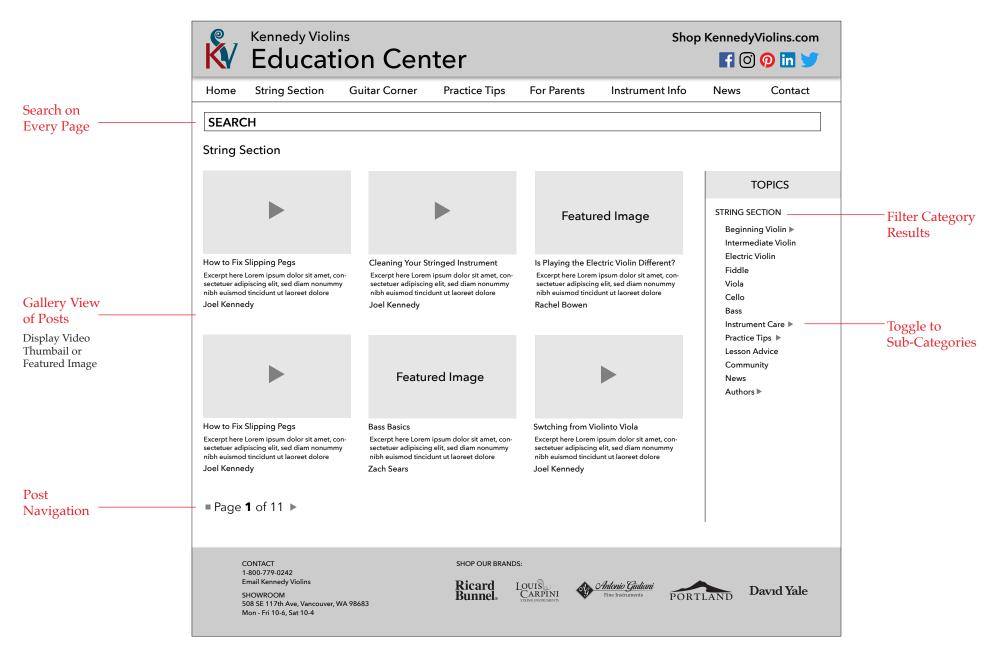
PERSONA 4
BEGINNING GUITARIST

- 1. As the mother of an aspiring young violinist I need information on purchasing or renting a violin appropriate for my child's age, so that she has a good, but reasonably-priced starting instrument.
- 2. As a parent I want to know how to best support my child in her violin practice, so that she feels happy about the process.

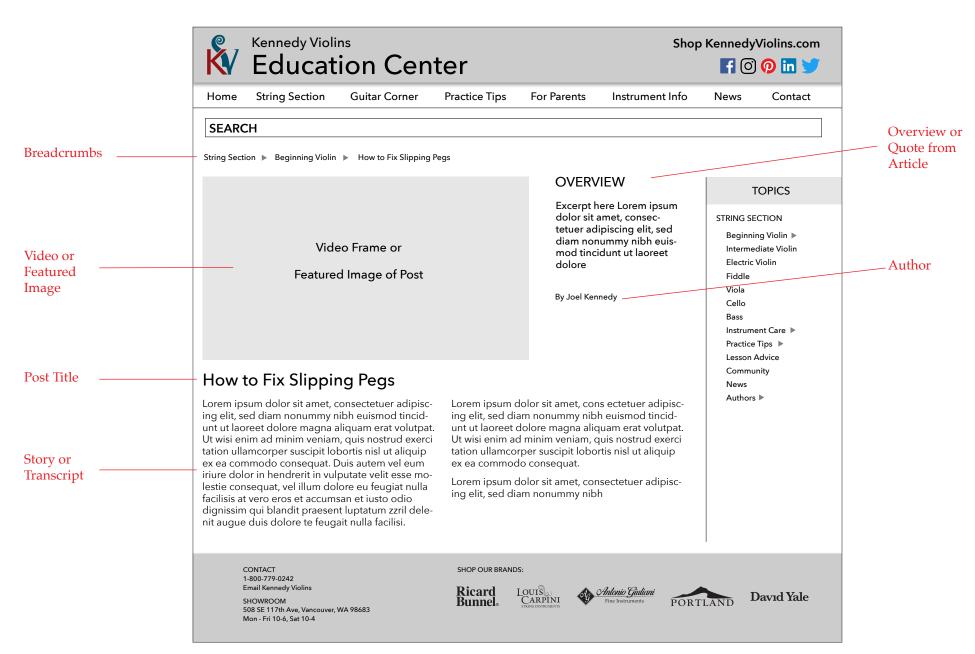














CONCLUSIONS

Improvements to User Experience

The proposed redesign introduces categorization functionality to the site, which will make it easier for customers to find the information they need. Having an easy-to-utilize site structure will be less frustrating to users, and they will be more likely to visit the site again. The posts can be linked to specific products or services on the Shopify site. This will to allow site visitors to convert to customers seamlessly. In addition, moving the Education Center off the Shopify platform will provide better SEO for content.

Benefits to Kennedy Violins

With better SEO and categorization the Education Center will attract users who are not current customers, and are considering their first purchase. Maintaining a professional, helpful and accessible source of information strengthens the Kennedy Violins brand as a company that has expert knowledge of stringed instruments. Site users who benefited from the information on the site are likely to have a positive view of the company, which is a contributing factor in purchasing decisions.

Next Steps

- Talk with Joel and Zach about their goals for the Education Center
- Poll staff concerning willingness and ability to produce content
- Determine if the Kennedy Academy URL is the right one for this site.
- Make sure that all existing videos are accessible and in a file structure that makes sense on the drive
- Develop page comps
- The Wordpress site will need to be installed
- Build out the theme
- Theme will need to be approved
- Begin adding content to the site (Beginning student and parent content first)
- Launch and link to search engines