

Web Marketing Plan

The Ark
theark.org

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Executive Summary

The Ark contracted with INP Associates to construct a Web Marketing Plan. The goals for this plan are to increase ticket sales, increase contributions & donations, build awareness of their upcoming performances, and create & support a community of Ark enthusiasts.

This report is organized into three major sections. The sections are:

Social Media

- An evaluation of the Ark's current social media practices is documented and analyzed followed by suggestions on changes to existing approaches as well as recommendations for new efforts, both on specific sites and overall.

Search Engine Marketing

- A series of suggested Google AdWords ad groups are detailed, each including recommended keyphrases to target. Each ad group is also accompanied by recommended ad copy as well as wireframes of the related landing pages that the ads link to.

Additional Marketing Options

- An analysis of additional marketing options outside of social media and Google AdWords is presented, including banner ads and email lists.

The following are the major recommendations for implementation in order to achieve the goals mentioned above:

- Facebook and MySpace event pages need to be populated with additional information on events as well as provide links to the TicketMaster event pages to encourage ticket purchases.
- Create a YouTube channel from which various videos can be accessed, including past performance videos as well as general information videos.
- Create a weekly Podcast that includes samples from the previous week's performances as well as information on upcoming events.
- Utilize Google AdWords ad campaigns to target suggested keyphrases related to specified goals above
- Implement suggested changes to the landing pages for the specified goals above to include clear calls-to-action.
- Reach out to local publications and restaurants to discuss placing banner ads on their websites promoting the Ark.
- Utilize a weekly email newsletter and send it on a consistent basis.

Additional recommendations of lesser but not negligible importance are detailed in the report.

Social Media

Current Practices

Research of current social media venues maintained by The Ark follows:

- Facebook [<http://www.facebook.com/TheArkAnnArbor>]
 - Page has been in use since at least November 21, 2008.
 - As of this writing, the page has 4,710 “likes”.
 - Items are posted to the page’s wall at a minimum rate of two per weekday.
 - Said wall posts are usually either an off-site link to a news article or video promoting an upcoming show or an announcement of a new Facebook event dedicated to an upcoming show. Said Facebook events are populated with only basic event information and a single-line description.
 - An additional, separate page on the Student Songwriter Series is located at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Student-Songwriter-Series/181015048602292>
 - The primary Facebook page is currently advertised on the home page of the Ark website via a text link with link text of “Facebook” and a URL of <http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/TheArkAnnArbor>
 - The Facebook page is also mentioned on the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” page, but it is not linked.
- Twitter [[@annarborark](https://twitter.com/annarborark)]
 - Feed has been in use since March 10, 2009.
 - As of this writing, the feed has 720 followers.
 - Including retweets, new tweets are posted at a rate of 1-3 per weekday.
 - Tweets almost always promote upcoming shows taking place within the calendar week. These tweets often contain links to recorded performances on YouTube or music downloads.
 - Retweets include positive comments on recent shows, posts from artists who will be performing soon, and links to news sites with music-related articles
 - The Twitter feed is mentioned on the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” page, but it is not linked. An on-page widget designed to show the tweets was present but non-functional upon discovery.
- MySpace [<http://www.myspace.com/annarborark>]
 - Page has been in use since May 30, 2006.
 - As of this writing, the page has 2,887 friends.
 - There is currently no status posted on the page.
 - The Stream is exclusively announcements of new MySpace events dedicated to upcoming shows. Said events are populated with only basic event information.

- The Comments section is predominantly comment spam.
- There are a total of 13 blog entries posted over the course of approximately eight months in 2009. Each blog consists of a link to an off-site page (usually a news site or YouTube) and a brief sentence or two of copy, usually the title of the off-site page.
- The MySpace page is referred to on the main page of the Ark website, but is not linked directly.
- The MySpace page is also mentioned on the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” page, but it is not linked.
- Wikipedia [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ark_\(folk_venue\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ark_(folk_venue))]
 - Article was created on December 9, 2005.
 - Page currently has only basic information about the venue.
 - Article lists the main website address as *www.a2ark.org*
- AddThis Bookmarking & Sharing Widget
 - The AddThis widget, designed to share pages quickly and easily with others, is present on most subpages throughout the main website, including those for specific performances.

Suggested Additions and Modifications

- Facebook – The following modifications to the current approach are recommended:
 - When creating Facebook Events, provide additional information rather than the current single-line description. Provide a link to the corresponding event page on the main Ark website at the minimum and a lengthier snippet from said corresponding event page for optimal results. Additionally, providing a direct link to the TicketMaster page for the performance can facilitate quick and easy online purchases.
 - For returning performers for which previous Facebook Events were created, invite those who responded as “Attending” or “Maybe Attending” to inform them of these upcoming performances and to drive ticket sales.
 - Build awareness of the Facebook page on the Student Songwriter Series by linking to it from the “Student Songwriter Series: The Ark at UMMA” page on the main website. Additionally, provide a link when mentioning the series in status posts on the main Facebook page to better cross-promote.
- Twitter – The following modifications to the current approach are recommended:
 - Avoid retweets that appear off-topic (e.g. “@SteveMartinToGo There’s a rumor that a recent Oscar host is going to play Catwoman. Waiting by my phone for the call.”) as they can cloud the overall message of the organization and may be counterproductive (i.e. interpreted as spam, etc.) and lead to visitors un-following the feed.

- Closely monitor the use of #annarborark and @annarborark in other Twitter posts and retweet and/or reply as applicable. This can only further build the Ark enthusiast community.
- MySpace – The following modifications to the current approach are recommended:
 - When creating MySpace Events, utilize the Description field. Provide a link to the corresponding event page on the main Ark website at the minimum and a lengthier snippet from said corresponding event page for optimal results. Additionally, consider providing a direct link to the TicketMaster page for the performance to facilitate quick and easy online purchases.
 - Closer monitoring of comments on the MySpace profile is necessary to prevent spam cluttering up the otherwise positive fan comments. Alternatively, if unable to dedicate the time to doing so, consider hiding the comments section. This removal of social interaction amongst the page’s Friends should only be implemented as a last resort.
 - As the MySpace blog has not been updated in nearly a year and a half, post a final entry encouraging visitors to visit and “Like” the Facebook fan page.
- Wikipedia – The following modifications are recommended:
 - Additional information about the venue should be added. However, one must be very careful when doing so in order to avoid breaching any of Wikipedia’s policies. More so than the other sites, Wikipedia cannot be used for direct advertising so sections such as “Upcoming Events” are to be avoided. The best solution here is to find someone familiar with editing on Wikipedia and ask them to flesh out the current article to include history and any notable past events.
 - Monitor this article so that any falsehoods or vandalism can be reverted or corrected as soon as possible after the offending edit is made.
- YouTube – Create a YouTube channel to host various videos. When and where appropriate, link to the channel and videos from the main Ark website and other social media outlets. Doing so would have the following benefits:
 - Recordings of select performances at the Ark could be posted (after a given period of time so as to prevent a negative effect on ticket sales). These could then be used to promote the future return of artists who have previously performed.
 - Consider adding videos describing the background and history of The Ark to educate those who may be unfamiliar with the venue. Link these videos from the current “Ark History” page.
 - Utilize videos to promote the need for donations. Advertise the specifics of why funds are being raised and, in the case of any promotions (such as 2010’s t-shirt promotion), advertise the thank you gifts. When certain donation goals are reached, post a new video thanking those who donated and showing how the funds are being used (i.e. “these donations will lead to replacement of the stage”).
 - Users who subscribe to the channel would be notified of new videos being posted. This serves as another way to notify Ark enthusiasts if they miss the news via another source.

- Podcasts – Create a recurring podcast. This podcast could be utilized in numerous ways and would have the following benefits:
 - Include songs from artists who will be performing in the coming week(s) to promote the upcoming events (similar to the current function of The Ark Jukebox on the main site). Inform the listener of how they can easily purchase tickets for these events from TicketMaster or the Michigan Union Ticket Office.
 - Include select songs from performance from the previous week(s) in a “if you missed it...” segment. If a listener missed an artist performing that they enjoy, this will (a) provide them with a sample of what they missed and (b) encourage them to follow future events more closely so as not to miss them again.
 - In addition to promoting events, discussing donations as well as other social media outlets listeners can subscribe to are a must. However, the balance of music with advertisement must be monitored closely – no one likely wants to listen to an audio infomercial.
- In addition to the above suggestions, the following recommendations can be used on-site and throughout the various social media outlets:
 - To further build the social media network for the Ark, prominently link to the active social media outlets (currently Facebook and Twitter) on the main page at the minimum and optionally all pages (possibly in the footer links bar).
 - Directly link all aspects of the social media network from the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” page and repair the currently non-functional Twitter feed widget.
 - Occasional cross-promotion is recommended. For instance, notify users of Twitter that there is a Facebook fan page and provide the link. Additionally, when new outlets are created (such as YouTube), promote the addition through all available services.
 - If future donation promotions (such as 2010’s t-shirt promotion) are created, advertise through all outlets and, depending on response, publically thank specific people (with their permission) via the various outlets. Consider doing the same for large donations and extraordinary volunteers.
 - If the current business model allows it, utilize ticket giveaways via trivia or promotion via shared links and retweets (i.e. select a winner amongst the people who have shared or retweeted). This not only supports the current fans/followers/etc. but also leads to increases in their numbers.
 - Allow exclusive access to songs or other downloads only available to fans/followers/etc. People will sign up for the ability to get these free exclusive items.

Search Engine Marketing

For purposes of Google AdWords marketing, all ads should target within a certain mile radius from the Ark's location in Ann Arbor as advertising outside of this area would have a fairly unfavorable cost-to-benefit ratio. Additionally, targeting user languages other than English is likely unnecessary due to the predominantly English-speaking population of the area.

These ads have been designed for use on the Google Search Network. It is recommended that the Rotating ad serving approach is used (as opposed to the Optimized ad serving approach) to give each ad equal views over the course of each day. Based on conversion data, lower performing ads can then be eliminated.

Ad Group #1 – Ticket Sales

The purpose of this ad group is to increase ticket sales by targeting searches in the local area for the main types of music showcased at the Ark.

Following are the recommended keyphrases for this ad group, as well as the amount of competition for said keyphrases and the total local monthly searches according to the Google AdWords Keyword Tool:

Keyphrase	AdWords Competition	Local Monthly Searches
contemporary music	Low (16/100)	74,000
folk music	Low (11/100)	201,000
traditional music	Low (10/100)	135,000
ethnic music	Low (5/100)	8,100
roots music	Low (4/100)	22,200

Based on this set of keyphrases, three recommended Google AdWords ads were created (see Appendix A, Figures 1-3).

A redesigned version of the “Tickets” landing page depicted as a wireframe was created (see Appendix B, Figure 1) and features the following important modifications:

- A clear link to the TicketMaster venue page (<http://www.ticketmaster.com/The-Ark-tickets-Ann-Arbor/venue/65561>) is provided both in the text as well as via a linked TicketMaster logo image.
- The Michigan Union Ticket Office is also indicated as a location to purchase tickets, both physically and via telephone.
- Other specifics currently on the “Tickets” page are duplicated elsewhere and should remain in those locations so as to not distract the user from purchasing tickets.

Ad Group #2 – Donations

The purpose of this ad group is to increase donations by targeting searches in the local area for places and ways to make monetary contributions.

Following are the recommended keyphrases for this ad group, as well as the amount of competition for said keyphrases and the total local monthly searches according to the Google AdWords Keyword Tool:

Keyphrase	AdWords Competition	Local Monthly Searches
donate money	Medium (43/100)	40,500
make a donation	Medium (40/100)	8,100
nonprofit	Low (24/100)	550,000
tax deductible donations	Low (21/100)	12,100

Based on this set of keyphrases, two recommended Google AdWords ads were created (see Appendix A, Figures 4-5).

A redesigned version of the “Support The Ark” landing page depicted as a wireframe was created (see Appendix B, Figure 2) and features the following important modifications:

- The “donate now” button is replaced with a PayPal donate button. PayPal offers a quick and secure way for users to make donations and offers discounted fees for nonprofit organizations.
- The specifics of memberships are moved to their respective pages in order to make clear that through PayPal users can make donations as small as one dollar – a high volume of these can add up quickly and would require no additional manpower in the office to accommodate them.

Ad Group #3 – Volunteering

The purpose of this ad group is to gather volunteers by targeting local searches for places and ways to volunteer.

Following are the recommended keyphrases for this ad group, as well as the amount of competition for said keyphrases and the total local monthly searches according to the Google AdWords Keyword Tool:

Keyphrase	AdWords Competition	Local Monthly Searches
i want to volunteer	Medium (57/100)	2,900
where can i volunteer	Medium (51/100)	5,400
volunteer ann arbor	Medium (48/100)	1,000
donate time	Low (32/100)	2,400

Based on this set of keyphrases, two recommended Google AdWords ads were created (see Appendix A, Figures 6-7).

A redesigned version of the “Volunteers” landing page depicted as a wireframe was created (see Appendix B, Figure 3) and features the following important modifications:

- Clear call-to-actions are present encouraging the user to become a volunteer
- The various positions are described briefly and separately with clear links to the pages explaining them (and how to volunteer) in greater depth.

Ad Group #4 – Events

The purpose of this ad group is to increase awareness of upcoming events by targeting local searches for general activities in the area.

Following are the recommended keyphrases for this ad group, as well as the amount of competition for said keyphrases and the total local monthly searches according to the Google AdWords Keyword Tool:

Keyphrase	AdWords Competition	Local Monthly Searches
ann arbor concerts	Low (32/100)	1,600
ann arbor events	Low (27/100)	4,400
things to do ann arbor	Low (22/100)	3,600
ann arbor music	Low (20/100)	3,600
ann arbor calendar	Low (10/100)	1,900

Based on this set of keyphrases, two recommended Google AdWords ads were created (see Appendix A, Figures 8-9).

A new version of the “Upcoming Events” page depicted as a wireframe was created (see Appendix B, Figure 4) and features the following important modifications:

- Rather than feature the entire future events calendar, the new version of the page will instead feature the events taking place over the next week. Fewer events will reduce an “information overload” effect on the user.
- Brief descriptions of the event/performer are added. Images (from the specific event pages) are also used to break up the large amounts of text.
- “Get Tickets” links are added which point directly to the event page on the TicketMaster website to facilitate sales.
- Links to calendar month pages featuring the entire month’s events are retained.

Ad Group #5 – Community

The purpose of this ad group is to build the online Ark community by targeting local searches specifically for the Ark.

As the goal of this ad group is more so to build awareness than to increase revenue, use of the Cost Per Mille (CPM) model would be preferred over the more traditional Cost Per Click (CPC) model.

Following are the recommended keyphrases for this ad group, as well as the amount of competition for said keyphrases and the total local monthly searches according to the Google AdWords Keyword Tool:

Keyphrase	AdWords Competition	Local Monthly Searches
ann arbor ark	Low (8/100)	6,600
the ark ann arbor	Low (7/100)	4,400

Based on this set of keyphrases, three recommended Google AdWords ads were created (see Appendix A, Figures 10-12).

A redesigned version of the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” landing page depicted as a wireframe was created (see Appendix B, Figure 5) and features the following important modifications:

- The current and recommended future social media outlets are directly linked.
- Clear call-to-actions are present, including the outlets’ familiar icons.
- The Twitter feed is repaired and presented in the right sidebar. While use of this widget is recommended, it should not take up the majority of the content area.

Additional Marketing Options

Banner Ads

Banner ads can be an effective way to contact those who are unfamiliar or have not kept up with the Ark. It is currently unclear if banner ads are being utilized on other sites as none were discovered in an exploratory search. To begin utilizing banner ads, suggested recommendations are as follows:

- Attempt to place ads on websites of local publications, such as AnnArbor.com and eCurrent.com – these sites already profile local events and performances in their entertainment sections and would be a great place for banner ads.
- Attempt to place ads on websites of local restaurants and eateries to take advantage of potential “date night” scenarios. Restaurants within a short walking distance can be advertised as such.
- The banner ads should advertise what the Ark is and represents in a general sense and provide a clear call-to-action causing them to click the banner to visit the Ark website.

Email Lists

- The Ark maintains an email list through ConstantContact.com
- A user can sign up for this email list via an across-site footer link (labeled “Join E-mail List”) or via the “Join Our E-mail List” link on the “Contact” subpage. The form to sign up requires only an email address and to specify if one wants to receive HTML or text-only emails.
- At present time, it is unclear if or how the ConstantContact email list is utilized – no emails appear to have been sent in the thirty days prior to the completion of this report.
- Alternatively, a user can sign up for a (possibly different) newsletter which is stated to be sent out each Thursday. The on-site form to sign up requires an email address, a password, first and last name and optionally a physical address as well as favorite music genres. This form also asks the user to specify if one wants to receive HTML or text-only emails.
- At present time, it is unclear if or how this email list is utilized – no emails appear to have been sent in the thirty days prior to the completion of this report, despite the claim of a regular and defined mailing interval.

Email marketing can be a great way to contact Ark enthusiasts outside of the popular social media realm. To do so efficiently, suggested recommendations are as follows:

- Properly utilize a single weekly email newsletter to advertise for upcoming performances taking place over the course of the next week. Additionally, recap performances for which tickets have gone on sale in the previous week as well as preview those to go on sale the following week.
- Send out this weekly email consistently. It is recommended to send out the email during the early afternoon on Tuesdays, thereby bypassing the early work week catch-up yet leaving plenty of time for the reader to make plans for the later week and weekend.

- For each performance mentioned in the email, include a link to the event page on the main Ark website as well as a direct link to Ticketmaster to facilitate quick and efficient tickets sales.
- Finish off each email by mentioning the need for donations and contributions as well as providing links to the various social media outlets maintained by the Ark.
- Finally, the following mailing list best practices must be adhered to: use a clear and specific subject line for the email, include the name, physical address, and URL of the Ark and include a link for the reader to unsubscribe from the mailing list.
- Continue to offer the email list sign ups link as they are currently on the website but ensure they all point to the current newsletter and related sign-up process. In addition, provide sign-up links on the various social media pages as well as the “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” page.

Appendix A: Ads

Figures 1-3: Ads for the “Tickets” Ad Group

[Purchase Ark Tickets](#)

Get tickets to see your favorite artists perform at the Ark
www.TheArk.org/Tickets

Figure 1: “Ticket Sales” Ad Group Ad #1 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/tickets.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 1)

[Come Out to the Ark](#)

Concerts many nights of the week at low prices - get your tickets now.
www.TheArk.org/Tickets

Figure 2: “Ticket Sales” Ad Group Ad #2 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/tickets.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 1)

[{Keyword:Music} at the Ark](#)

Limited tickets available to see your favorite artists at the Ark
www.TheArk.org/Tickets

Figure 3: “Ticket Sales” Ad Group Ad #3 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/tickets.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 1)
Note that the title in this third ad utilizes Dynamic Keyword Insertion (DKI) to create the title based on the search query (i.e. a search for “folk music” will produce “Folk Music at the Ark”, a search for “ethnic music” will produce “Ethnic Music at the Ark”).

Figures 4-5: Ads for the “Donations” Ad Group

[Donate to the Ark](#)

We depend on donations and your contributions are tax-deductible
www.TheArk.org/Donate

Figure 4: “Donations” Ad Group Ad #1 (Links to http://www.theark.org/support_the_ark.html depicted in Appendix B, Figure 2)

[Support the Ark](#)

Purchase an annual membership or send a small cash donation
www.TheArk.org/Donate

Figure 5: “Donations” Ad Group Ad #2 (Links to http://www.theark.org/support_the_ark.html depicted in Appendix B, Figure 2)

Figures 6-7: Ads for the “Volunteering” Ad Group

[Contribute to the Ark](#)
Hear world-class performers in
exchange for volunteering your time
www.TheArk.org/Volunteer

Figure 6: “Volunteering” Ad Group Ad #1 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/volunteers.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 3)

[Volunteer at the Ark](#)
You can make it all happen - learn
about becoming a Club Volunteer
www.TheArk.org/Volunteer

Figure 7: “Volunteering” Ad Group Ad #2 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/volunteers.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 3)

Figures 8-9: Ads for the “Events” Ad Group

[Upcoming Ark Events](#)
New events are announced every week
Come check out our events calendar
www.TheArk.org/UpcomingEvents

Figure 8: “Events” Ad Group Ad #1 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/upcoming-events.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 4)

[Coming Soon to the Ark](#)
New events just added - come check
them out on our events calendar
www.TheArk.org/UpcomingEvents

Figure 9: “Events” Ad Group Ad #2 (Links to <http://www.theark.org/upcoming-events.html> depicted in Appendix B, Figure 4)

Figures 10-12: Ads for the “Community” Ad Group

[Join the Ark](#)
Are you a fan of live music?
Join the Ark's online communities
www.TheArk.org/JoinUs

Figure 10: “Community” Ad Group Ad #1 (Links to http://www.theark.org/find_us__follow_us__friend_us.html depicted in Appendix B, Figure 5)

[Follow the Ark](#)
Follow @annarborark to hear
about upcoming live musical events
www.TheArk.com/FollowUs

Figure 11: “Community” Ad Group Ad #2 (Links to http://www.theark.org/find_us__follow_us__friend_us.html depicted in Appendix B, Figure 5)

[Be Friends with the Ark](#)
"Like" us on Facebook to receive
info on upcoming concerts & events
www.TheArk.com/FriendUs

Figure 12: "Community" Ad Group Ad #3 (Links to http://www.theark.org/find_us__follow_us__friend_us.html depicted in Appendix B, Figure 5)

Appendix B: Wireframes

It should be noted that the cross-link boxes present on the right-hand side of some wireframes below have not been assigned to any specific pages. It is recommended that these particular landing pages cross-link to each other to further promote the stated goals for this plan. This has not been indicated on the wireframes so as to avoid clouding the overall message of each individually wireframed page.

Figure 1: Wireframe for the “Tickets” landing page

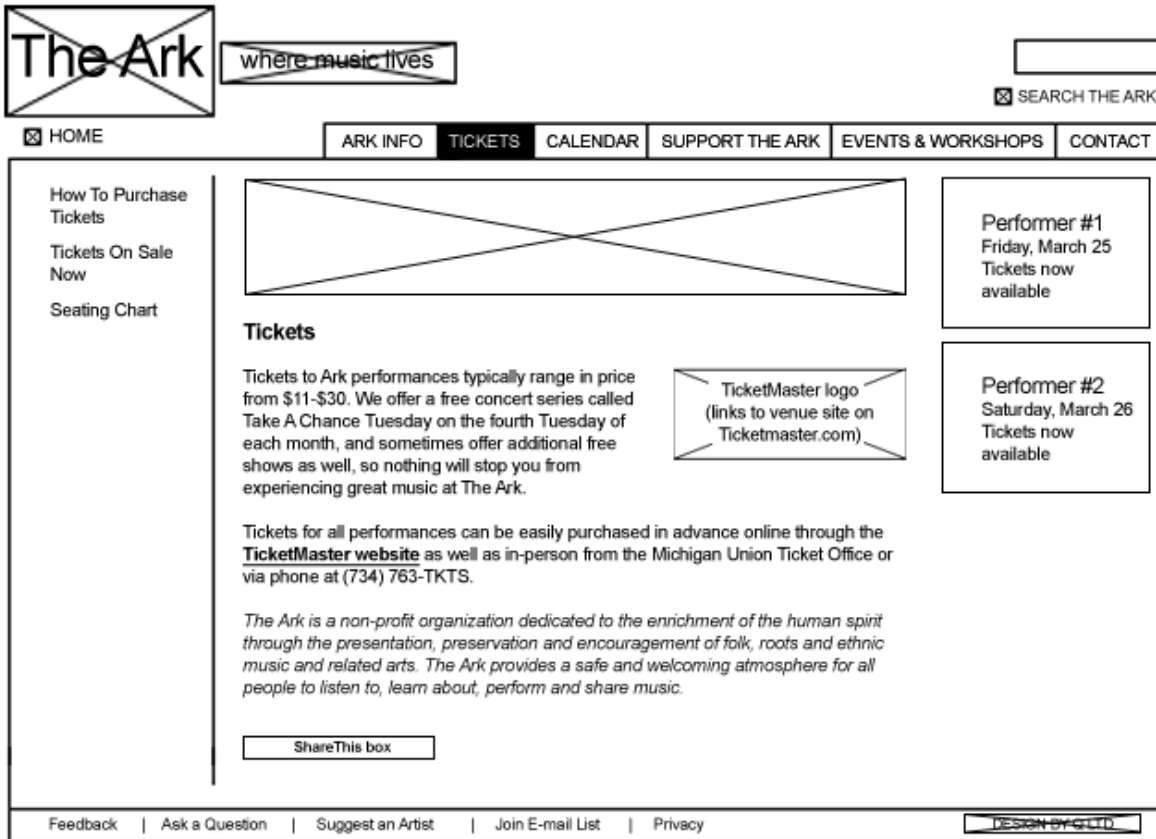


Figure 1: “Tickets” Page Wireframe (<http://www.theark.org/tickets.html>)

Figure 2: Wireframe for the “Support The Ark” landing page

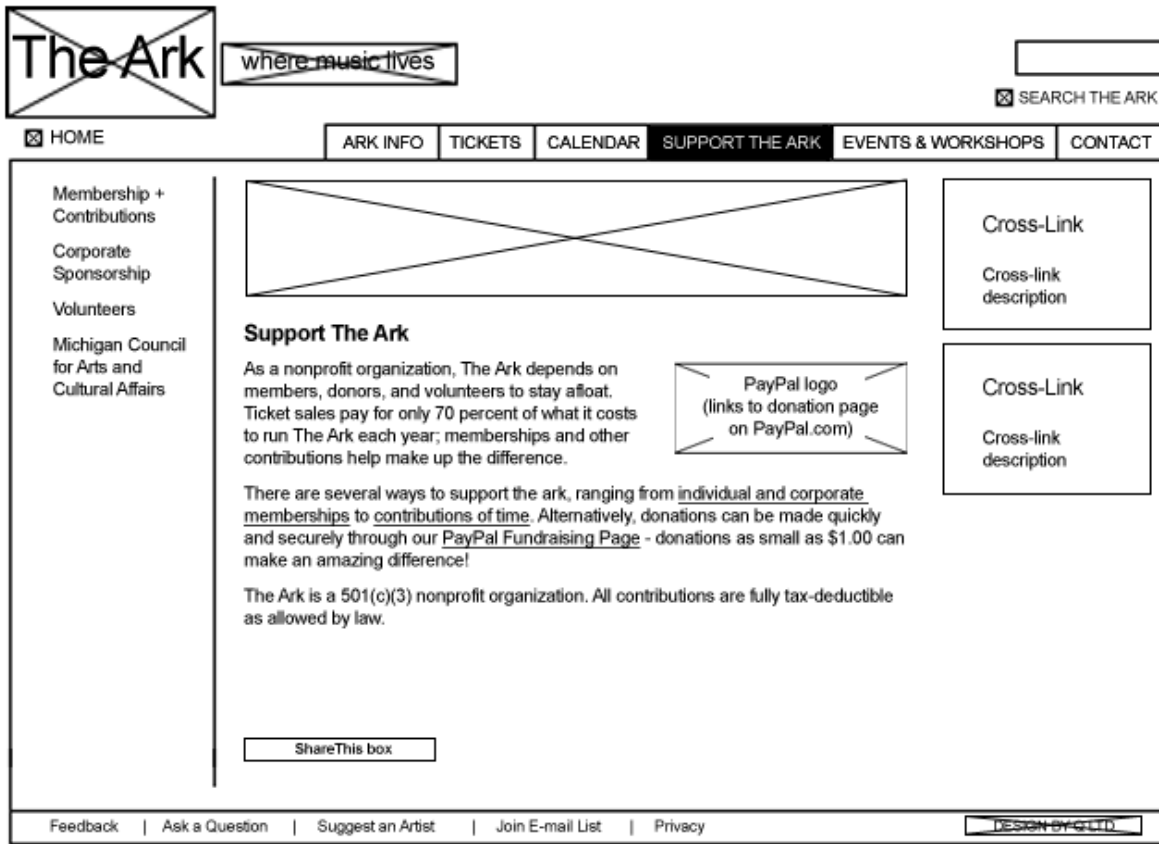


Figure 2: “Support The Ark” Page Wireframe (http://www.theark.org/support_the_ark.html)

Figure 3: Wireframe for the “Volunteers” landing page

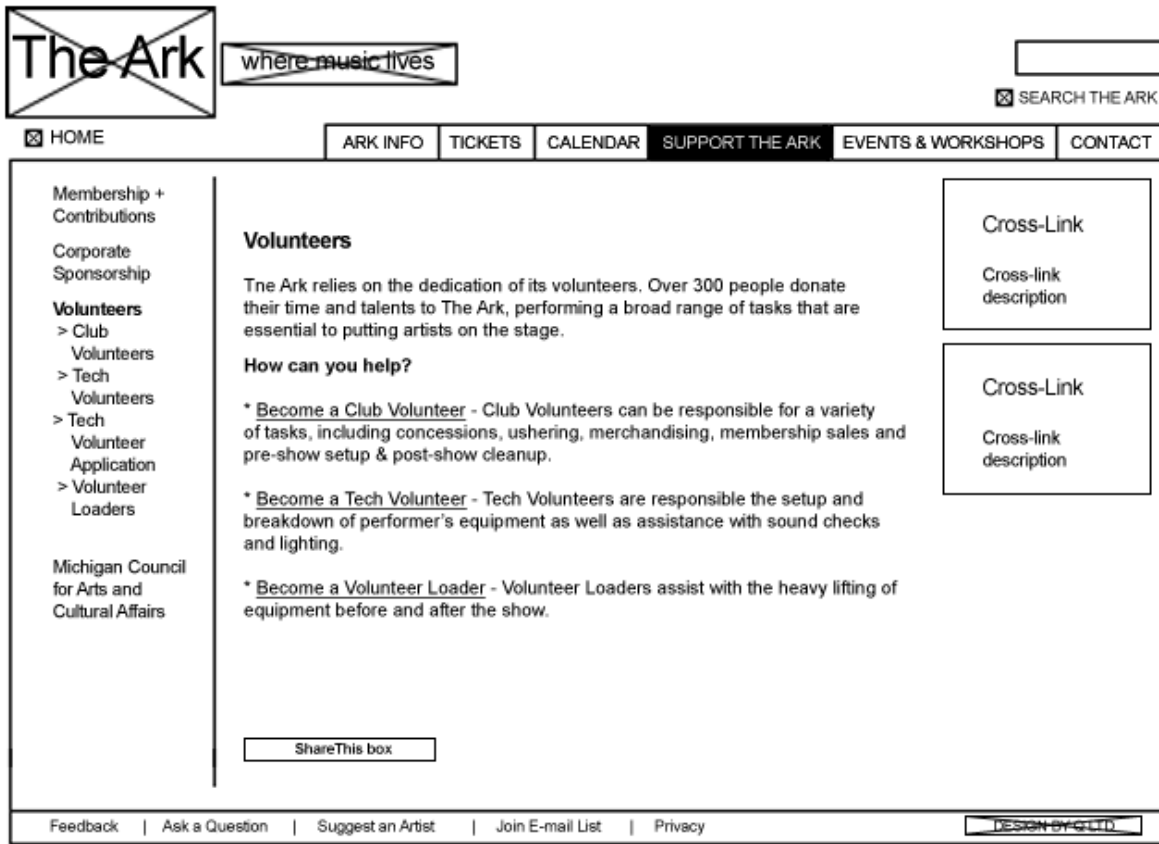


Figure 3: “Volunteers” Page Wireframe (<http://www.theark.org/volunteers.html>)

Figure 4: Wireframe for the “Upcoming Events” landing page

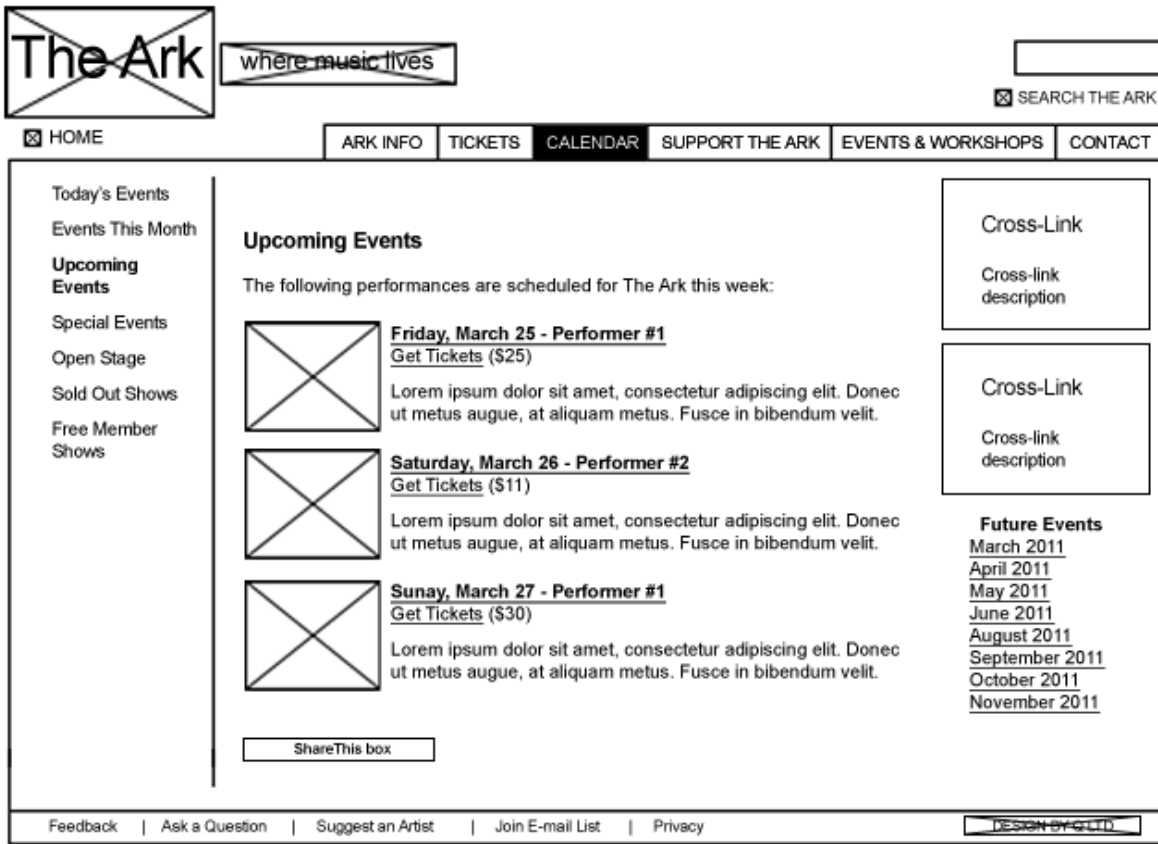


Figure 4: “Upcoming Events” Page Wireframe (<http://www.theark.org/upcoming-events.html>)

Note that the wireframe as depicted shows three upcoming events. The number of events will vary depending on the number of events taking place during the given time period.

Figure 5: Wireframe for the “Community” landing page

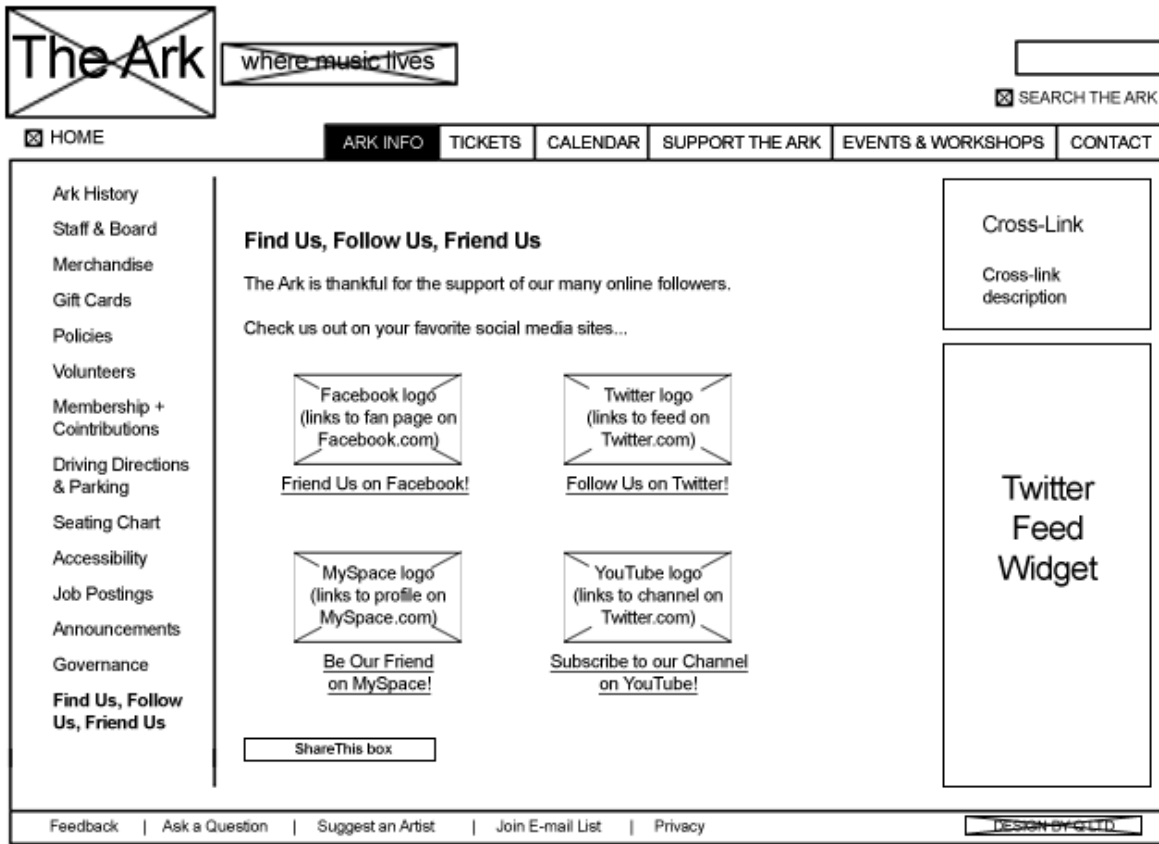


Figure 5: “Find Us, Follow Us, Friend Us” Page Wireframe (http://www.theark.org/find_us__follow_us__friend_us.html)