Textual Analysis of the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama Website

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This textual analysis will focus on the website for the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama named [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com). This is a mainstream community website and the analysis will emphasize the community representation of the website. The text that will be analyzed will be from [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) in terms of the content, structure, and functions. The qualitative content analysis approach will be used to interpret the underlying context. The review will cover the five main categories found at [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) such as government, city services, live & play, business, and Tuscaloosa 311.

In reviewing literature relevant to the textual analysis of [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) it correlated to differences between industrial and informational society from the perspective of “social activity, engaging in some sort of collective effort to enhance or maintain the social or physical environment” (Miller, 2011, p. 96). In addition, to the “consumption activity, the ability to consume a level of goods and services that are considered normal within the society one inhabits” (Miller, 2011, p. 96). The City of Tuscaloosa’s website is informative and socially engaging within its main five categories. Pursing this further, the connection to thought process that everything should be streamlined and online. The translation of [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) and the digital benefits affect the citizens of Tuscaloosa, Alabama in various aspects. The important factor is of bridging the gap between various cultures and backgrounds because [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) has brought a connection between a “diverse population in active creation of digital cultures” (Reed, 2014, p. 87). In addition, the branding that [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) uses is the strategy of “tell them your why – when you have a compelling why, people will become your evangelists not just client” (Ford, 2019, p. 34). The website clearly showcases the why at [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) by being user friendly and city service goal oriented between social and informational. Also, the website establishes a level of trust by keeping residents in the know about services, social aspects, news, and announcements.

The theoretical framework for this textual analysis will be under the premise of the social capital theory. Robert D. Putnam treated this theory from the perspective that “social capital as a public good—the amount of participatory potential, civic orientation, and trust in others available to cities, states, or nation” (Claridge, 2014, para. 2). This relates to the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama website in the terms of building trust with the residents of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. This aligns with Putnam views that “social capital refers to ‘features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Claridge, 2014, para. 3). The exploration of [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) showed an apparent social capital theory themes due to the effort of organizational, network, and benefits that the website provided to the constituents of Tuscaloosa.

The textual analysis of the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama website [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) was broken down by groups of government, city services, live & play, business, and Tuscaloosa 311. The analysis of the website demonstrated that it was very user friendly and provided instant connections to what exactly you were searching for. Under the section of “Government” you can locate quick access to the Mayor, City Council members, and other city offices which provides the structure to the information. In the subsection “toward tomorrow” which highlights how Tuscaloosa maneuvers through the city’s budget process. The review demonstrated that it was very easy to understand with the video in which they had Tuscaloosa children play different roles of the budget process, like the mayor, department heads and more. Also, in effort to establish trust, they have a system that you can ask questions and submit feedback. Under “City Services” there was clear messaging on all the services that the City of Tuscaloosa has to offer from water to garbage collection to recycling which provides the functionality of the website. The “Live & Play” section was very robust with a section dedicated on things to do in Tuscaloosa and was very content driven. The section also served up messaging of connections to special events, parking, agency grants, housing, and traffic. The support system was impressive because the City of Tuscaloosa has assistance programs for the homeless with a continuum of care grant competition. This is where funding was awarded to local charities that assist the homeless in the area and the program’s overall goal is to find housing for those that are homeless. Under the “Business” section of the website, it pretty straight forward with quick access to information on business licenses, football license for the University of Alabama, and disaster recovery. The “Tuscaloosa 311” section is where you make a connection for non-emergency calls and submit requests to be reviewed by the City of Tuscaloosa, These city services also provides a structure for what the city has to offer. The website [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) provided content, structure, and functions.

In conclusion, through the textual analysis the City of Tuscaloosa’s website [www.tuscaloosa.com](http://www.tuscaloosa.com) it showcased as a great tool for the citizens of Tuscaloosa. The overall messaging and tone was about the public good for the community by the way of content, structure, and functions. One are to improve upon is the recycling section as it does not give a detailed list of drop off locations but a location map. To keep in line with their user friendly website, it would be great to have a list with detailed information of what recycling bins are at each site and days/times of operation.

References

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