



CASE STUDY

Bit Group develops user experience strategy and architecture for a new Web 2.0 entertainment portal

OurStage had a vision to build the leading consumer-oriented entertainment Web portal. This Web 2.0 site would comprise of a radically new, innovative and entertaining user interface that allows users to share and experience media such as video, music, and pictures. The new Web site would support an improved ranking capability, utilizing a custom ranking technology.

The ultimate goal was to produce higher-quality ranking and better entertainment that would ultimately drive substantial organic growth of the Web site allowing it to become the dominant Web 2.0 site for online socially-networked entertainment. OurStage approached Bit Group to help plan the user experience strategy for this next generation entertainment portal.

Challenge: Designing a next generation Web 2.0 portal

OurStage had a very well-defined and clear perspective about the importance, timing and value that this “American Idol”-type entertainment portal would bring to the market. The portal would have to cater to the target consumer audience in the 10 – 60 age range but also appeal to the contributors and reviewers in the 15-30 age range. For instance, target contributors in the music channel could be indie musicians looking for an avenue to promote their music. Users would potentially have leapfrogged dial-up technology and moved directly into broadband access with higher bandwidth.

The web site would have to incorporate Web 2.0 concepts around social networking such as user-generated content community (similar to Myspace.com), contest & judging experience, viral marketing techniques to send, link, & embed content such as video, images, and music, and other collaborative community features.

Solution: Creating a Web 2.0 user experience design that incorporates best practices for social networking

Bit Group closely collaborated with OurStage C-level stakeholders to outline the user experience and information architecture requirements for this new web site. These workshops helped to capture the vision and formed the basis for the overall design of the site. Utilizing user-centered design principles, Bit Group consultants translated the business goals into specific content and functionality for the web site.

An important characteristic of this site was the ability for users to customize their experience by highlighting and storing contents of interest. When designing the user experience for OurStage, Bit Group considered how users could create their own customized content and experience, by giving them the ability to track and store their favorite content by genre and medium. Bit Group architects incorporated intuitive and innovative navigation for the content items which allowed users to navigate content from left to right and vice versa. This navigation technique helped to maximize screen space while giving the user easy access to lots of content.

The site architecture also accommodated for features such as the ability to send the item to a friend, leave comments, read other users' comments, join a fan club, link or embed the content on another page, and add the item to a favorites section. These features gave users the ability to stay in close communication with the community and other users.

The Results

- Provided a site user experience that was intuitively easy to understand and easy to use. In five weeks of closed beta, OurStage had several thousand users register and use the site mostly through word of mouth.

“ Bit Group's user experience team has been an invaluable asset to OurStage in helping us to develop the initial user experience design and information architecture for our Web site ”

Ben Campbell
Entertainment Executive
OurStage.com



- The ranking interface was a huge success. Initial user base did over 100,000 voluntary judging battles - and by doing so ranked over 3,000 entries from best to worst across 19 channels of music and video entertainment. For the grand prize winner selection, fans texted in over 10,000 SMS votes.
- The site (currently in beta “sneak peak” release) has garnered exclusive coverage in Wired, Boston Globe, Josh Spear, Mashable and lots of the best blogs.

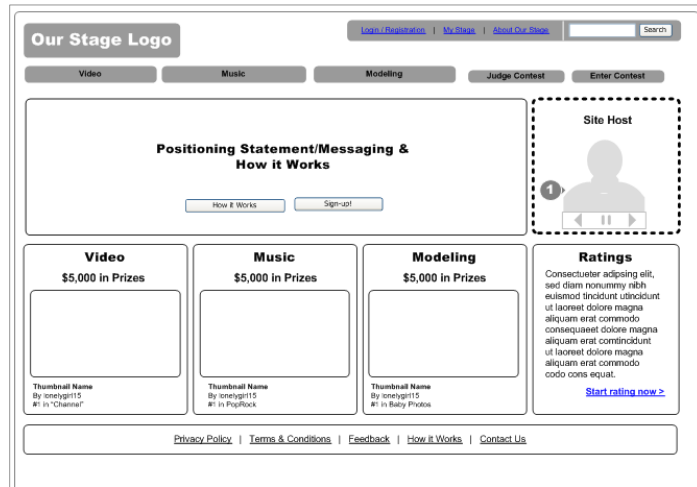


Figure1: OurStage homepage wireframe design

About: OurStage, Inc. (www.ourstage.com)

OurStage is the only purely democratic online competition where the fans decide who's the best in emerging music, film and video. The OurStage mission is to help talented artists achieve critical exposure by solving the greatest challenge on the Internet today: sorting quality content from the sea of mediocrity online. OurStage provides a neutral, trusted, game-free platform, in which the true judgment of the fans drives the best content to the top. Through its wealth of partner programs, including Bonnaroo, Virgin Festival, Bumbershoot, Paste, CMJ, PLUG Awards, Pops on the Edge Fest, Slamdance, Relix, Gen Art, Noise Pop, Videomaker, IFFBoston, and many others, OurStage offers worthy artists real opportunities to actually launch their careers.

Discover Bit Group

Achieving business goals through technology innovation.

Bit Group is a full-service technology consulting firm that helps clients make lasting and substantial improvements in their business performance. Now celebrating over 12 years in business, Bit Group has a distinguished client list of market-leading Fortune 500 and emerging businesses across North America. We have developed over 275 solutions for more than 115 companies, some of which have been working with us since our first year in business.

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