



Introduction

This document provides a competitive analysis of three of the top-ranked ^[1] public university desktop websites in the United States:

- University of Michigan — umich.edu
- University of California-Berkeley — berkeley.edu
- University of Virginia — virginia.edu

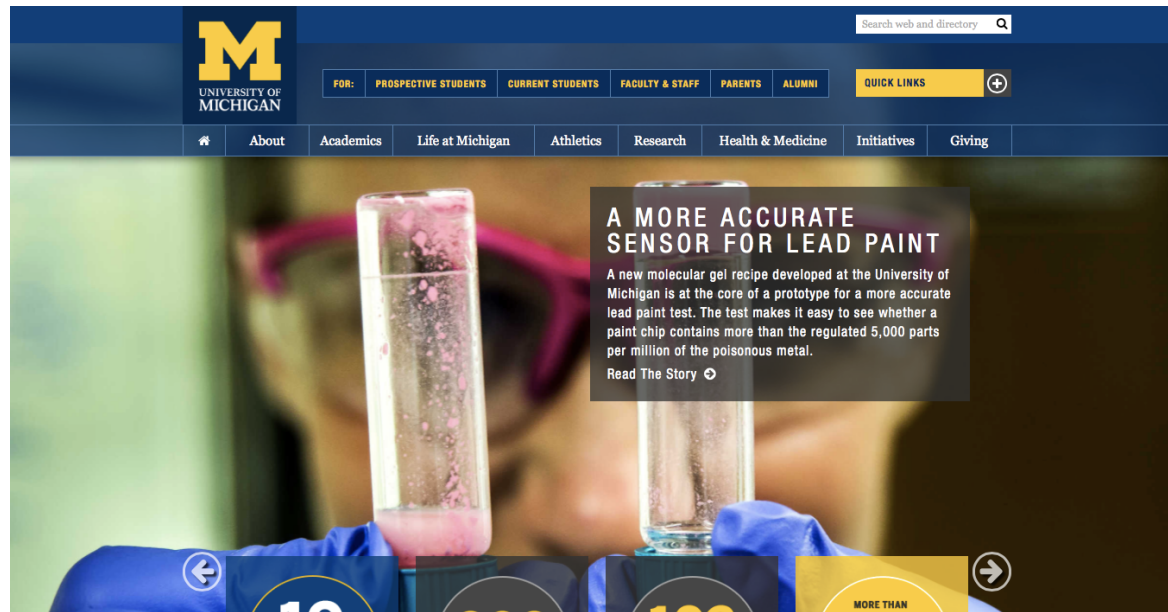
NOTE: This analysis does not cover mobile sites, but it is important to note each website is responsive. The recommendation is a separate analysis be conducted of the responsive mobile displays.

Analysis Criteria

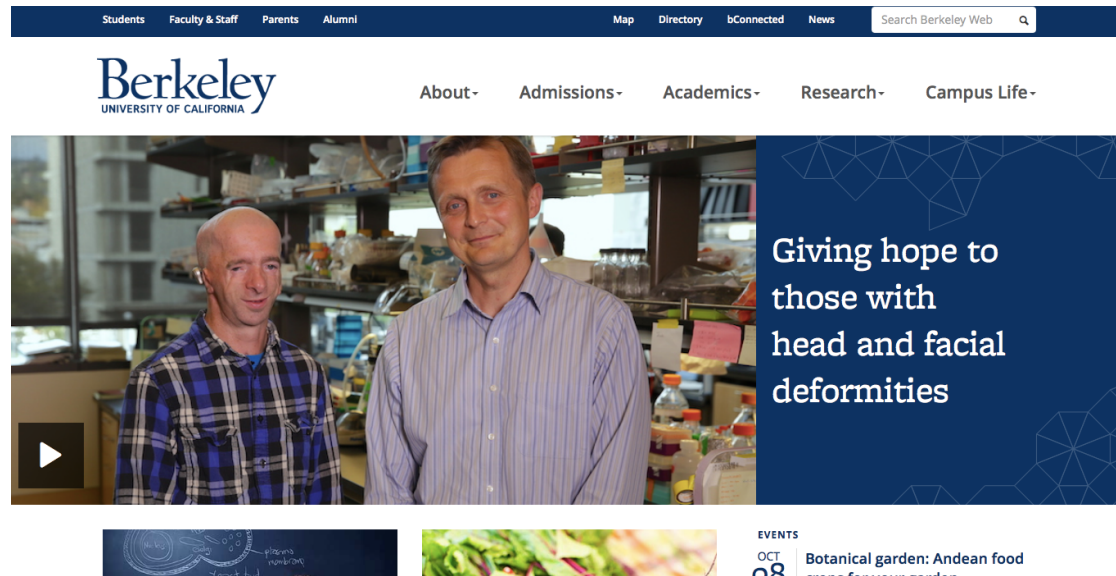
Pros, Cons and Usability Issues:

- **General layout** — analysis of the home page above-the-fold layout
- **Typography** — analysis of typography used on homepage and navigation menus
- **Available links on homepage** — analysis of what's available to users upon first landing (navigation menus)
- **Aesthetic overview** — analysis of the look and feel of the website design

^[1] <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>



Analysis — umich.edu	Pros	Cons	Usability Issues
General layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's clear where the navigation is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different navigation menus, borders Important links don't make it above the fold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't access certain links without scrolling down
Typography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many different types of text are being used Text too small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference in link typography is confusing
Links on homepage (navigation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two nav bars available at top 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serif font is used in nav text, which appears odd/old-fashioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Quick Links" — not clear what this is supposed to be, definitely not "quick" when user has to click to expand
Aesthetic overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean navigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text covers main photo Too many colors and very dark overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears a little busy/confusing with borders



Analysis — berkeley.edu	Pros	Cons	Usability Issues
General layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very clean with clear navigation • Everything above the fold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image is small due to sidebar title (blue box) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Events” probably needs to be available in main nav
Typography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good use of consistent font 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Links on homepage (navigation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nav bars and links are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User has to click on dropdown while it appears it would just drop down by hovering
Aesthetic overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great look overall with ample white space to keep site from feeling too dark and busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None






Analysis — virginia.edu	Pros	Cons	Usability Issues
General layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nice clean navigation access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links in top nav don't appear to be links until user clicks
Typography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italics in nav bar seems odd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Links on homepage (navigation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything is up top and accessible upon entry Footer links follow user (always accessible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The italics in the top nav are confusing, and those links do not appear to be links at first glance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See cons
Aesthetic overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of the photo is great — really captures a feeling, draws you in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of two different shaded blue backgrounds is not desirable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None



Grades

Based on the review of each website's criteria, here are how they compare if we give them a grade for each area:

	General layout	Typography	Links on homepage (navigation)	Aesthetic overview
	B	D	B	C
	A-	A	A-	A
	B+	A-	B+	B