Step 2: Research | User | Competitor Analysis

1. Competitor Analysis

   a. Who are the competitors?

The competitors for College Lifestyles are Her Campus, Living the College Life: College Magazine, and Tote Magazine.
b. Common Site Navigation Elements

The common site navigation elements are home, lifestyle, relationships, fashion/beauty/health, DIY, entertainment, and contact.

c. Common Style
The common style amongst the three competitor websites are a logo on the top of the screen with a horizontal navigation bar below it, a carousel below the navigation that shows the latest additions to the magazine, and below the carousel the sites list all of their top stories. As for appearance, the sites primarily use the colors pink, grey, black, and white.

2. Audience Specifics
   a. Find out about your audience

   The audience for College Lifestyles is college age individuals who are interested in learning more about how to dress well on campus and for the right season, where the best places are to eat or hang out on Duquesne’s campus or around Pittsburgh, and beauty, lifestyle and health/fitness advice. Some of the material is also designed to help students adjust and make the most out of college life. Users visit the site in order to gain more information about this material because it is specially catered to their age category and to their region of the United States.

   b. Who is the audience?

   The audience is 18-24 year old females who attend a 2 or 4-year college.

   c. Create at least two Personas.

First Persona:

Sara is a 19-year-old who lives in Pittsburgh, PA. She is currently a sophomore studying Art History at Duquesne University. While she attends university full time she also works at a coffee shop near campus. When viewing the site she hopes to gain more information about fashion and things to do around campus. The user wants to get to the information in a quick manner as she only has time to browse websites during her break at the coffee shop. She will be viewing the site primarily on her laptop. When on the site she will visit the homepage, then use the
navigation to browse to these two categories to find articles that appeal to her. The language that the individual will use will be words such as easy to navigate, the content and information is not hard to find, and the site is appealing to look at. Since the user is a college student, she is familiar with simplistic websites that employ some of the most recent advances in web design such as carousels, different forms of navigation, etc. She is receptive to new forms of web design, as she has had to accommodate to the new advances in technology that have come as part of her generation.

Second Persona:
Josephine is a 23-year-old college graduate who enjoys articles on lifestyle and fitness material. Although she is no longer in college she just recently graduated so she still wishes to remain connected with what is going on in college life. She is currently working at a marketing company near Pittsburgh. Her goal is to continue to obtain information that she can use in her day to day life to better her living environment. She likes to read through the site once she gets home from work. Although she enjoys information primarily on lifestyle and fitness she also likes to browse the site to see if there is anything else of interest to her. Therefore, when she views the site she wants to know what is currently new to the site because she does not want to have to go to each category to learn what content is new. She only wants to have to go to the homepage to see what is new and to then click on a link from the homepage to get to the content she wants to read. The language she will describe the site as is easy to use, and fast to get to the content she wants to read. Although she is older than the average college student she is still up to date with the latest ways to browse content on the web. She is not behind on technology; she is aware of the
advances in web design and is open to these new changes in technology, especially the advances in technology that improve her user experience.

d. What are their goals on the website?
After conducting contextual interviews of the two users, the goals of the website are to access the site easily, to navigate to the content they wish to read, to find newly added content, to post or share this content on social media, to find other material that they would be interested in reading, and to be able to contact authors or other workers at College Lifestyles.

e. What are their tasks on the website?
After looking at the information provided by the contextual interviews, it was evident that the user’s tasks are to find articles on a specific topic or from a specific satellite, to find new content posted to the website, to be able to contact workers at College Lifestyles, to be able to apply for an internship and to be able to share material on personal social media accounts.

3. Audience’s language
The audience is looking for an easy, simplistic, and fast way to get to the content they wish to view. They are not interested in sorting through multiple pages and lists of articles to get to something they wish to read. They want the site to be easy to navigate and easy to then get to and view the content. Therefore, simplicity and ease of use are the main words they would use.

4. Website’s main goals and tasks
The main goals and tasks for the website are to have a site that loads quickly so the user does not have to wait several minutes for the site to load. The site should also be able to direct the user to the content they wish to read. With the current site the user has to sort through multiple pages,
navigations, and advertisements just to see how to get to a category they wish to view, then they have to find interesting content. This website should make that process quicker, easier, and more efficient. The site should also be visually appealing and professional. The users should be able to access new content, they should be able to share that content to their social media accounts, and users should be able to contact College Lifestyles regarding any comments or questions about the material posted on the website.

5. Website’s main content categories

The website’s main content categories are home, college life, career, fashion, health/fitness, and about us/contact. The user will be able to find material after they click on these content categories that is based on the satellite location they are looking for. Once a user clicks on one of these categories and views an article, the user will then be directed to a new page to read the full version of that article.

Step 3: Task analysis | Scenarios | task flow

1. User stories

First story:

Jessica is a 20-year-old college student who wants to view information on living a vegetarian lifestyle. She has only recently turned to vegetarianism as she used to always eat meat, but after seeing a documentary on the food industry she wants to try to eat better. She wants information from individuals who are already living a vegetarian lifestyle because she thinks it will help inspire her to start this challenge and it will help her see the common struggles that can occur and
how she can avoid them. As a college student she heard about the site through promotions on campus.

Second story:
Kate is a 24-year-old engineer who was recently hired at a top 100 company. She is looking for articles that are written by Duquesne campus staff on fashion, as her friend is interning for College Lifestyles and she wants to read her friend’s material so she can support her friend. Therefore, Kate heard about the site through her friend. She is hoping that after reading through her friend’s articles she can locate the company’s email address in order to write a review of her friend’s work.

2. User Scenarios

First Scenario:
Jessica will go to the website’s homepage. She will then use the navigation to go to the category labeled health/fitness. After clicking on this category she will search for specific information on vegetarianism. This will bring up search results that match her topic. She will then click on an article of interest and then move to a page where she can read the whole article.

Second Scenario:
Kate will go to the homepage of the website. She will then use the navigation to go to the fashion page. When she is on the fashion page she will be able to use another set of navigation that will bring up content that is posted by the Duquesne satellite. After she reads through her friend’s
articles she will click on the about us/contact page where she will find the company’s email address. She can then use this email address to write a review of her friend’s work.