

Guide to Creating a Study Website



Parkinson's Disease
Education Consortium



THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

Guide Purpose

- ▶ Offer direction on how to develop research study websites.
- ▶ Provide recommendations on design and usability to create a seamless and engaging digital experience.



How to Use Study Websites

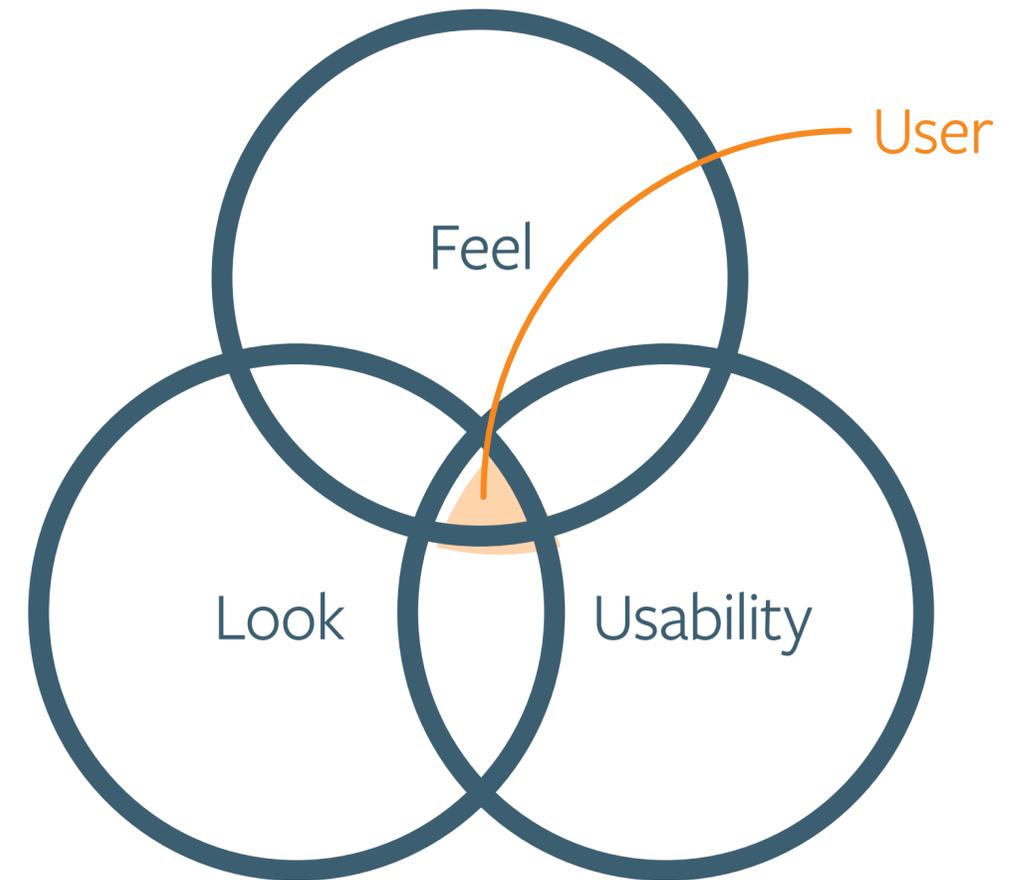
- ▶ Recruit potential participants by providing an online resource to learn more about the study and connect with study teams.
- ▶ Keep study participants engaged by providing updates and results on the website.



Creating Successful Study Websites

- ▶ Consider possible visual, cognitive and physical impairments due to aging and/or Parkinson's symptoms that could prevent people from using the website.
- ▶ Follow usability and design best practices; technical issues can turn users away from the website and, ultimately, the study.
- ▶ Remember to gain ethical review board approval on your website content prior to launch.

Tips on developing, designing and formatting study websites are provided in the following slides.



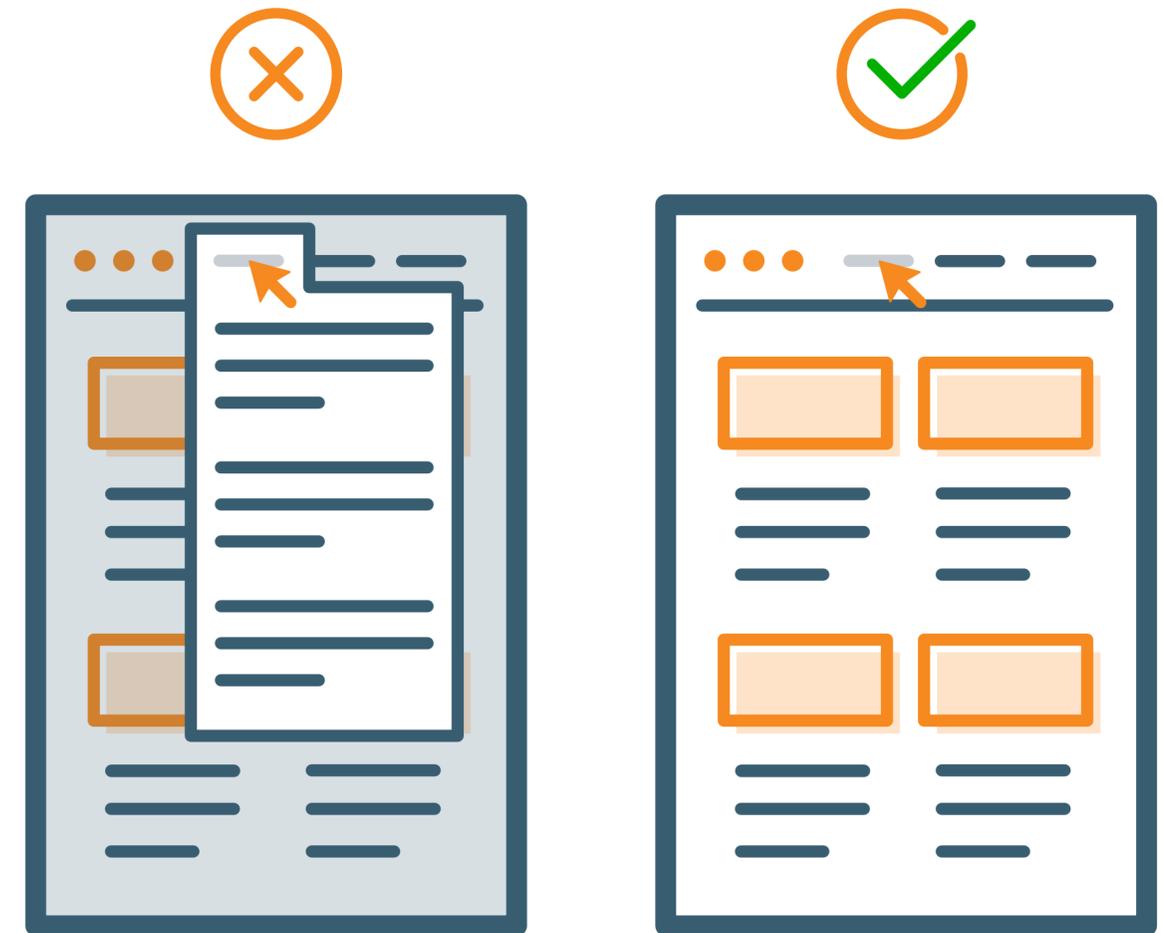
Creating a Study Website

- ▶ Develop your own website or use a website “builder” service, such as Wix, WordPress or Squarespace. Many are free or low cost.
- ▶ Select a domain name, or web address, that is short, descriptive and memorable; for example, a suitable domain name for “XYZ Study” would be www.XYZStudy.com.
- ▶ Consider reserving both the .com and .org versions of your chosen web address or similar domain names (e.g., www.XYZ-PD.com and www.XYZPD.com).



Navigation

- ▶ Use a consistent layout and create an easy-to-use navigation bar that lives at the top of all pages.
- ▶ Avoid drop-down menus that require precise movements to select menu items.
- ▶ Avoid using double mouse clicks for navigation.
- ▶ Underline hyperlinks that change color once clicked.
- ▶ Minimize extensive scrolling.



Writing Style

- ▶ Use active voice and address users in the second person (i.e., “you”).
- ▶ Keep information concise, minimize the use of scientific jargon and define unfamiliar terms.
- ▶ Provide simple and clear actions steps; for example, “Call a trial site near you to schedule a visit.”
- ▶ Obtain ethical review board approval on all study information included on the website.

 A phone call was made by Adam. **PASSIVE**

 Adam made a phone call. **ACTIVE**

 The footballs will be kicked by the boys. **PASSIVE**

 The boys will kick the footballs. **ACTIVE**



Content Organization

- ▶ Organize and group information in a manner that is simplest for potential participants to learn about the study (i.e., explain study rationale before outlining study procedures).
- ▶ Use clear and informative page headings; for example, the “Who is Eligible” page should contain eligibility criteria.
- ▶ Break information up into short sections, each no more than five lines long.
- ▶ Prioritize key information first. Many web users never read beyond content that is immediately visible on the screen.



Readability

- ▶ Use Sans Serif font types, such as Helvetica, which are easier to read on digital devices.
- ▶ Use 12 point or larger font sizes, and left justify text.
- ▶ Use margins of at least 1.5 inches.
- ▶ Avoid using all CAPITALIZED words or *italics*.
- ▶ Ensure that text and background colors have good contrast.

 **Sentence case**

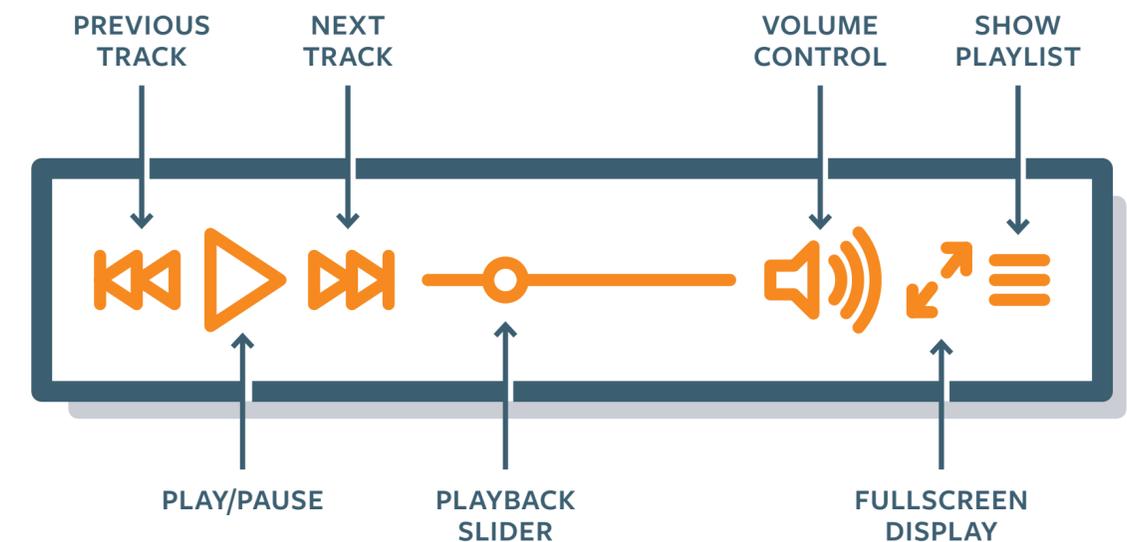
 **ALL CAPS**

 *Italics*



Multimedia

- ▶ Consider including images, video or audio to make your website more engaging.
- ▶ Use relevant images to illustrate written content.
- ▶ Use video and audio clips to explain the study or procedures; clips should have prominent control bars and captions for hearing impaired users.
- ▶ Consider adding online forms, such as prescreening tests or contact forms, with large text fields.



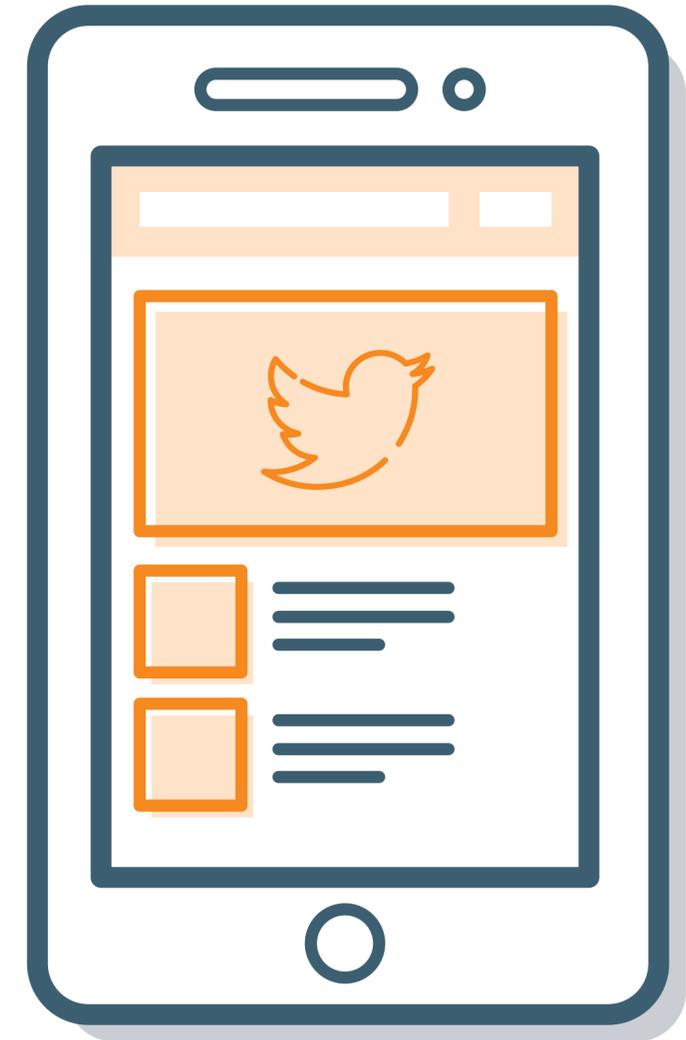
Promote Your Study Website

Print materials

Include a web link on all study materials, such as flyers, to recruit participants and connect them with the study team.

Social media

Include a web link in a Tweet or Facebook post so interested individuals can learn more about the study.



Additional Resources

See the “[Study Website Sample](#)” in The Michael J. Fox Foundation’s Recruitment and Retention Toolkit for guidance on website content.

