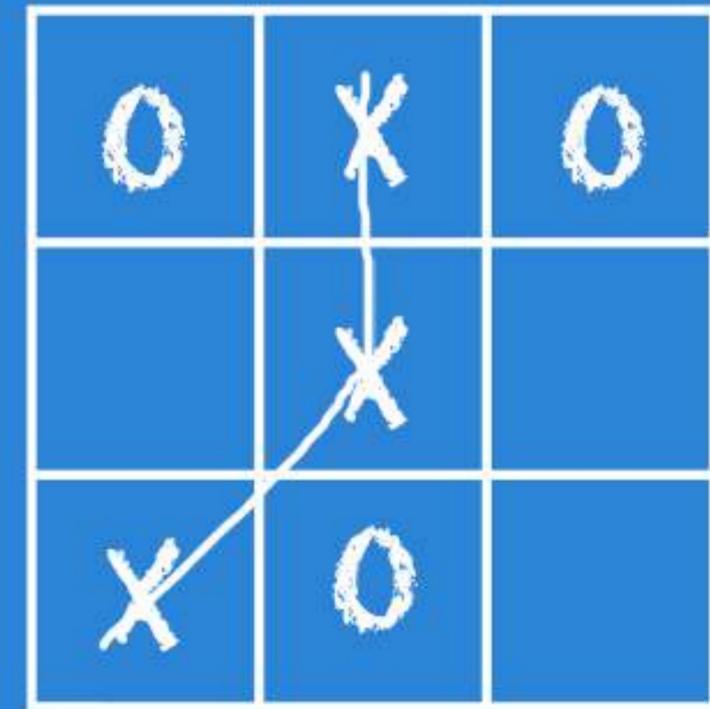


PERFORMING a UX AUDIT without Analytics Data

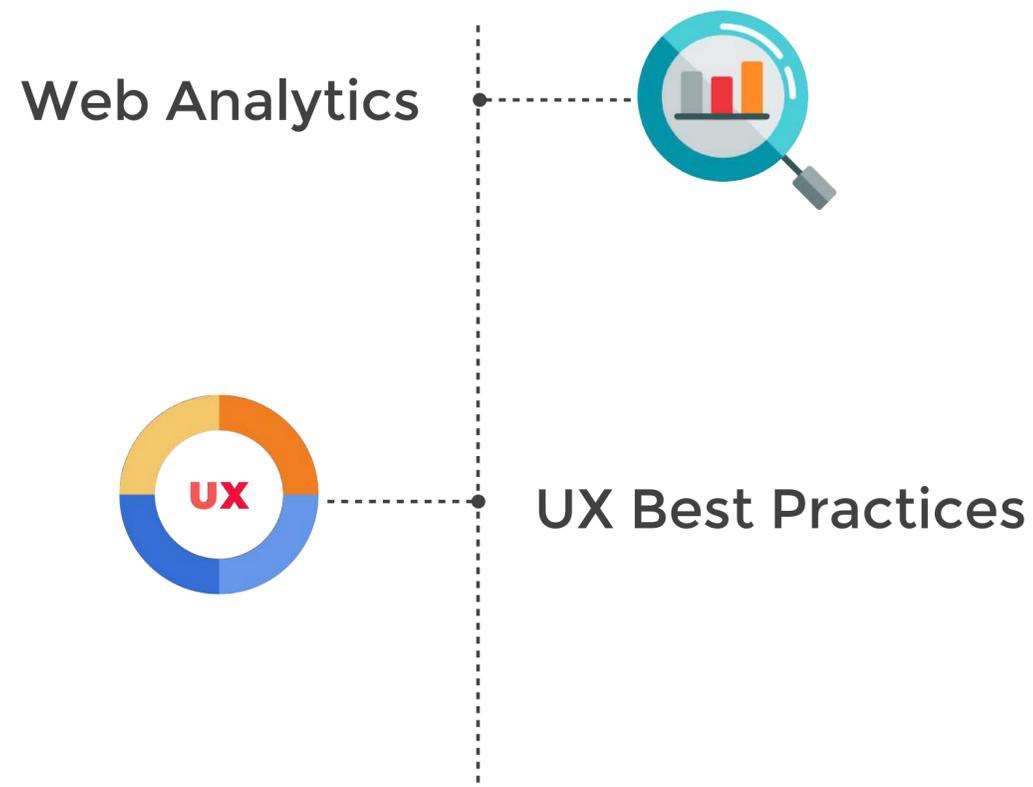
By Adam James Lamagna
Senior Digital Strategist
unstrategic.com



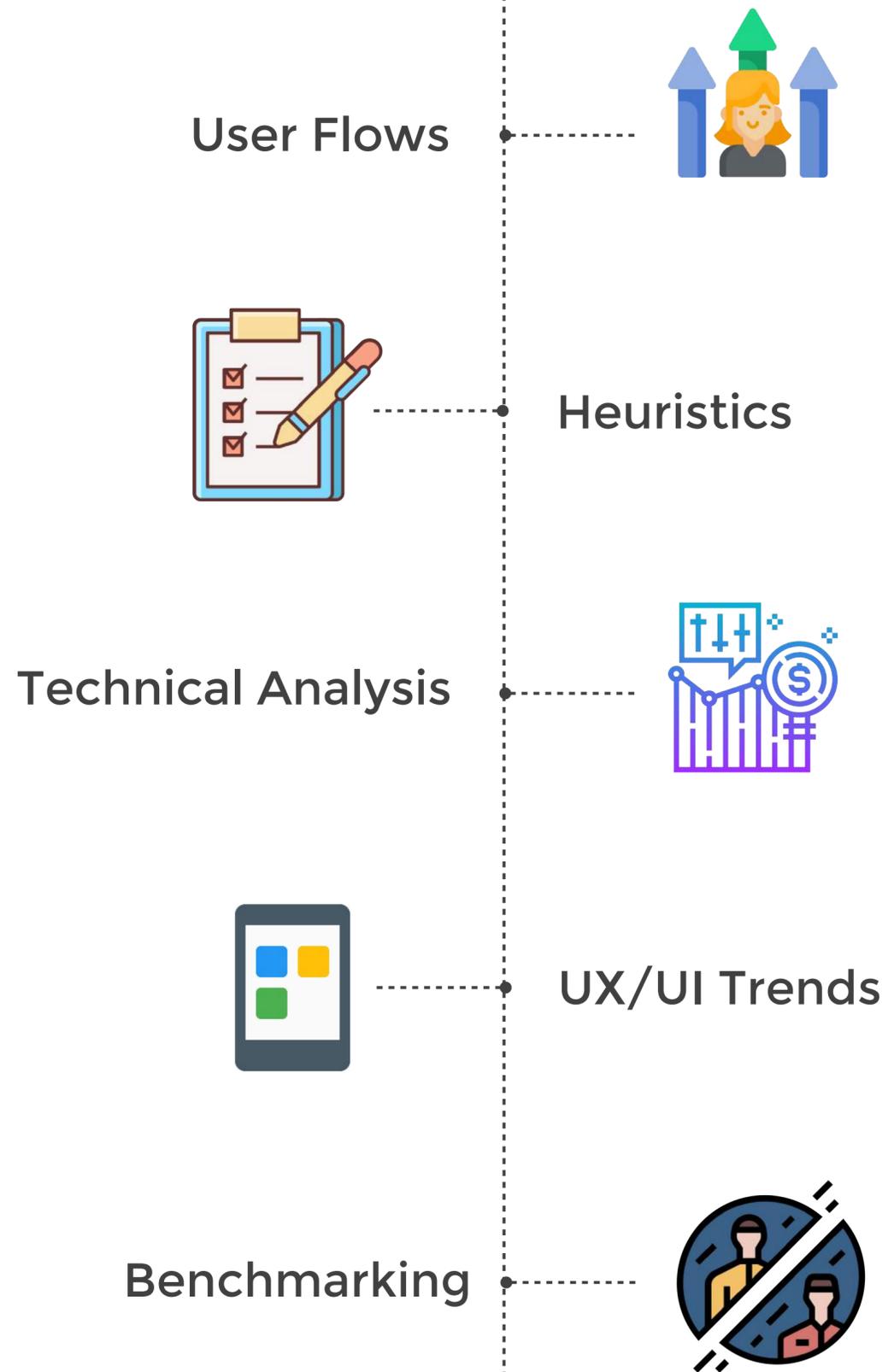
unSTRATEGIC

Introduction

Performing a user experience audit can be a fun task, but it can also be daunting. Especially, if we don't have any analytics data to gauge web behavior. If your new client doesn't have web analytics set up or couldn't gain access to it from their previous agency, don't fret! Web analytics are great to have when performing a UX audit, but there are other ways to improve your client's website through a myriad of different methodologies. Let's look at a few different methods for carrying out a user experience audit.



Look at website challenges from multifaceted viewpoints — all data (both quantitative and qualitative) can inform your decisions around information architecture, design, user paths, and much much more.

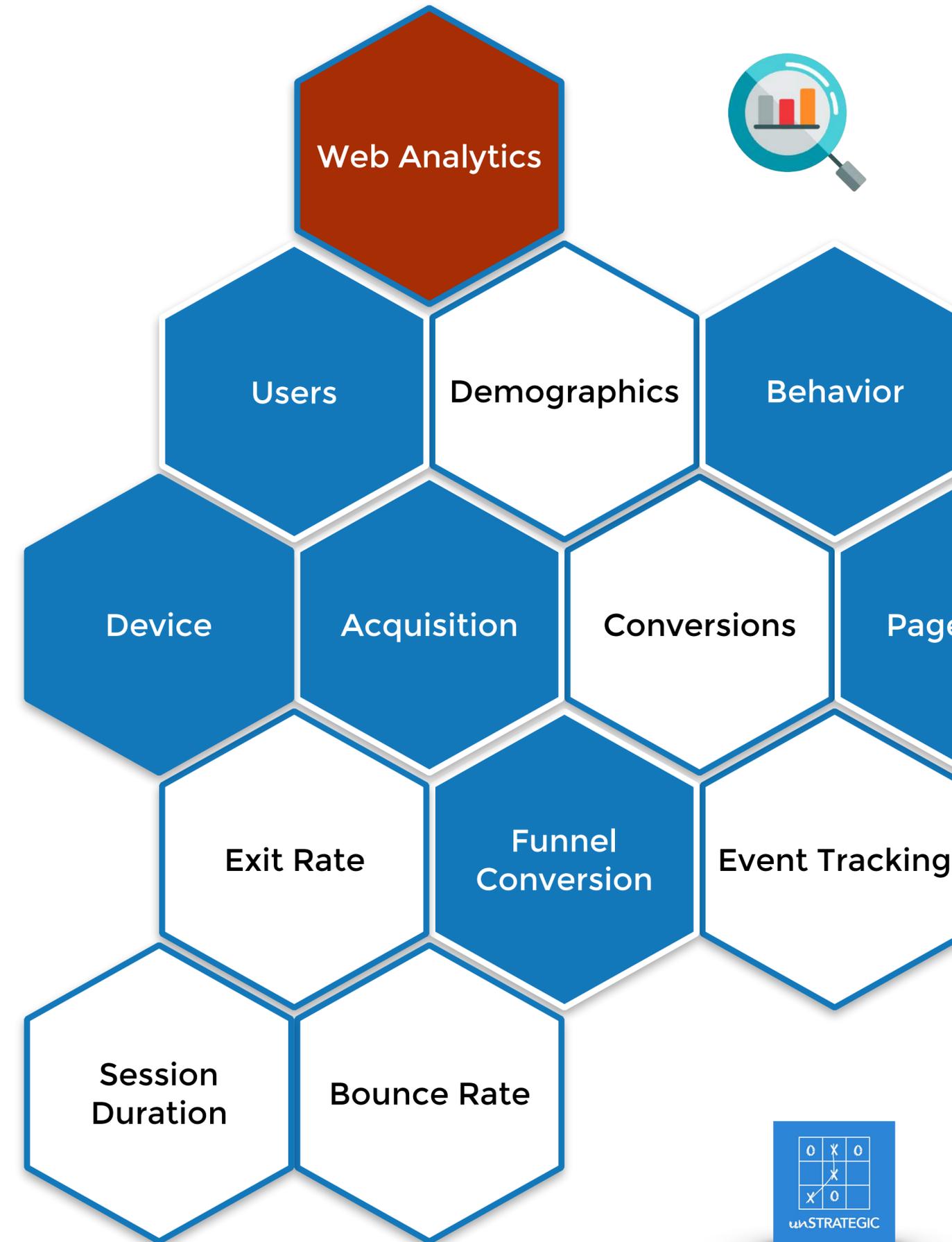


Web Analytics

If you have analytics data, then great! It can be very helpful in performing a user experience analysis or audit. The purpose of using analytics data is to determine the following:

- ➔ Types of users
- ➔ Acquisition channels
- ➔ Behavior & user flow
- ➔ Types of devices used
- ➔ Conversion & revenue data
- ➔ Event tracking (for unique events) if set up

You can glean a lot of information by looking over analytics data, but remember, this deck is on how to perform a UX audit **WITHOUT** any analytics data – so let's dive in!



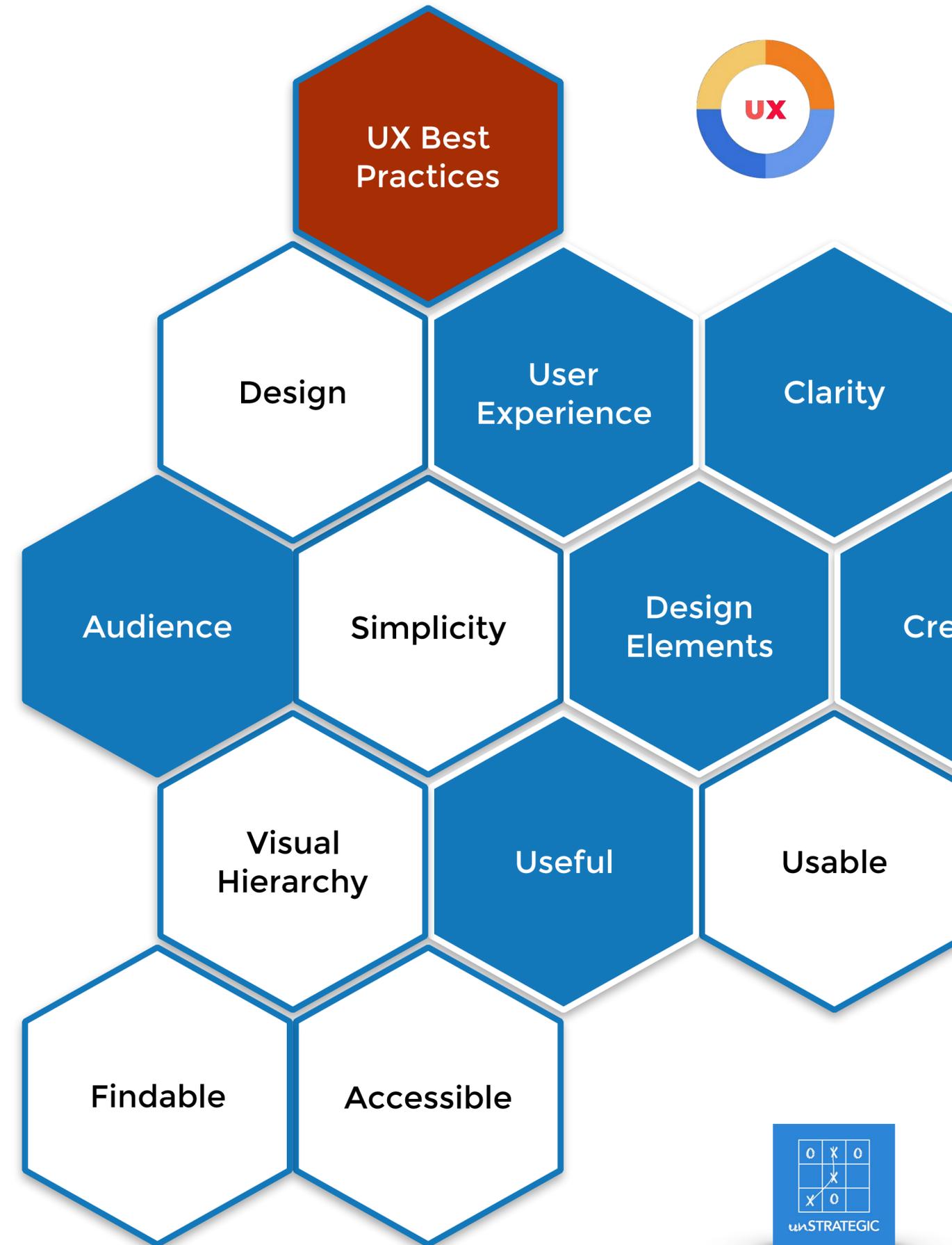
UX Best Practices

One of the methodologies used the most is called UX Best Practices and it sounds exactly like what it is. We will do an analysis based on current UX best practices.

Things you should consider before and during your analysis:

- ➔ Concentrate on the user experience
- ➔ Understand the audience
- ➔ Websites should be clear, concise, and simple
- ➔ Don't reinvent the wheel
- ➔ Focus should be on the most important elements
- ➔ Use common sense (websites should be easy to find, have useful content, functionality should be usable, the site should look and feel credible, etc.)

Search for Best Practices for your industry or type of site (e-commerce, marketing, etc.) and you'll get plenty of articles detailing best practices. By performing a UX best practice analysis for your client or website, you'll make sure that the website has all the fundamentals in place. You can iterate on the website down the line once you have some analytics data.



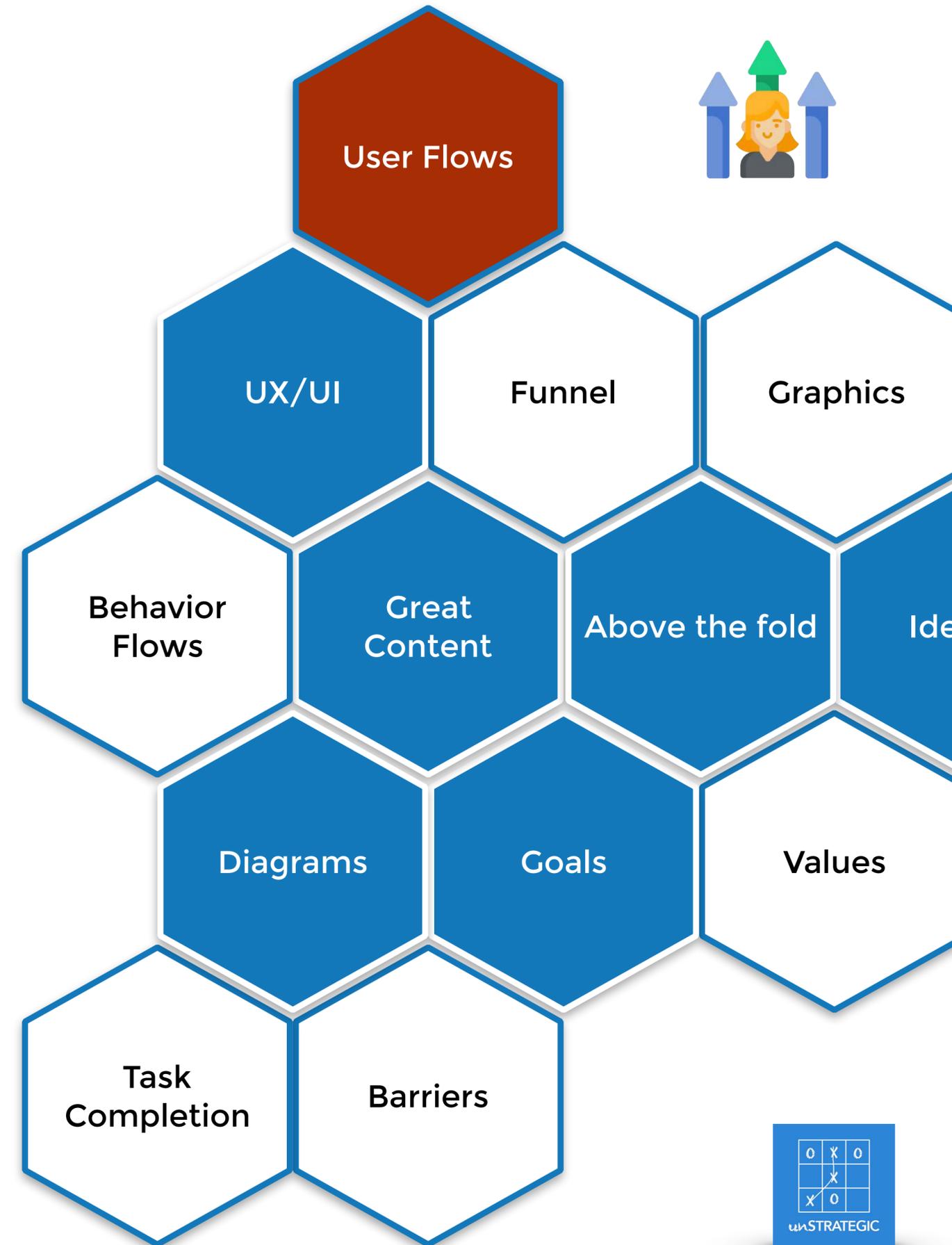
User Flows

Simply put, user flow is the path a user takes to complete a task (many websites will have several user flows). Analyzing this process can be an effective way of determining bottlenecks and improving the experience.

Things you should consider before and during your analysis:

- ➔ Craft ideal user flow diagrams and think about:
 - ➔ The goals of the user
 - ➔ The values of the user (what do they find valuable?)
 - ➔ Information needed to complete the task
 - ➔ Potential barriers hindering the completion of the task
- ➔ Diagram each way to get to the end goal (there will be different paths to reach the same goal)

Remember the common elements when analyzing user flows. Things like fast page load times, focusing on pushing users through a funnel, having compelling content will all help your users complete the goals and give you areas to improve upon.



Heuristics

A heuristic evaluation is a usability inspection method to help identify usability issues in the UI design of a website. The [Nielsen Group's Heuristics Evaluation](#) is one of the most widely used in practice today.

Following the Heuristic Evaluation:

- ➔ Visibility of system status - keep users informed
- ➔ [Match between system and the real world](#) - speak the user's language
- ➔ User control and freedom - support undo and redo
- ➔ Consistency and standards - follow [platform conventions](#)
- ➔ [Error prevention](#)
- ➔ [Recognition rather than recall](#)
- ➔ Flexibility and efficiency of use
- ➔ Aesthetic and minimalist design
- ➔ Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
- ➔ Help and documentation

These 10 principles can help guide a UX audit when working with a new client and trying to improve their website.



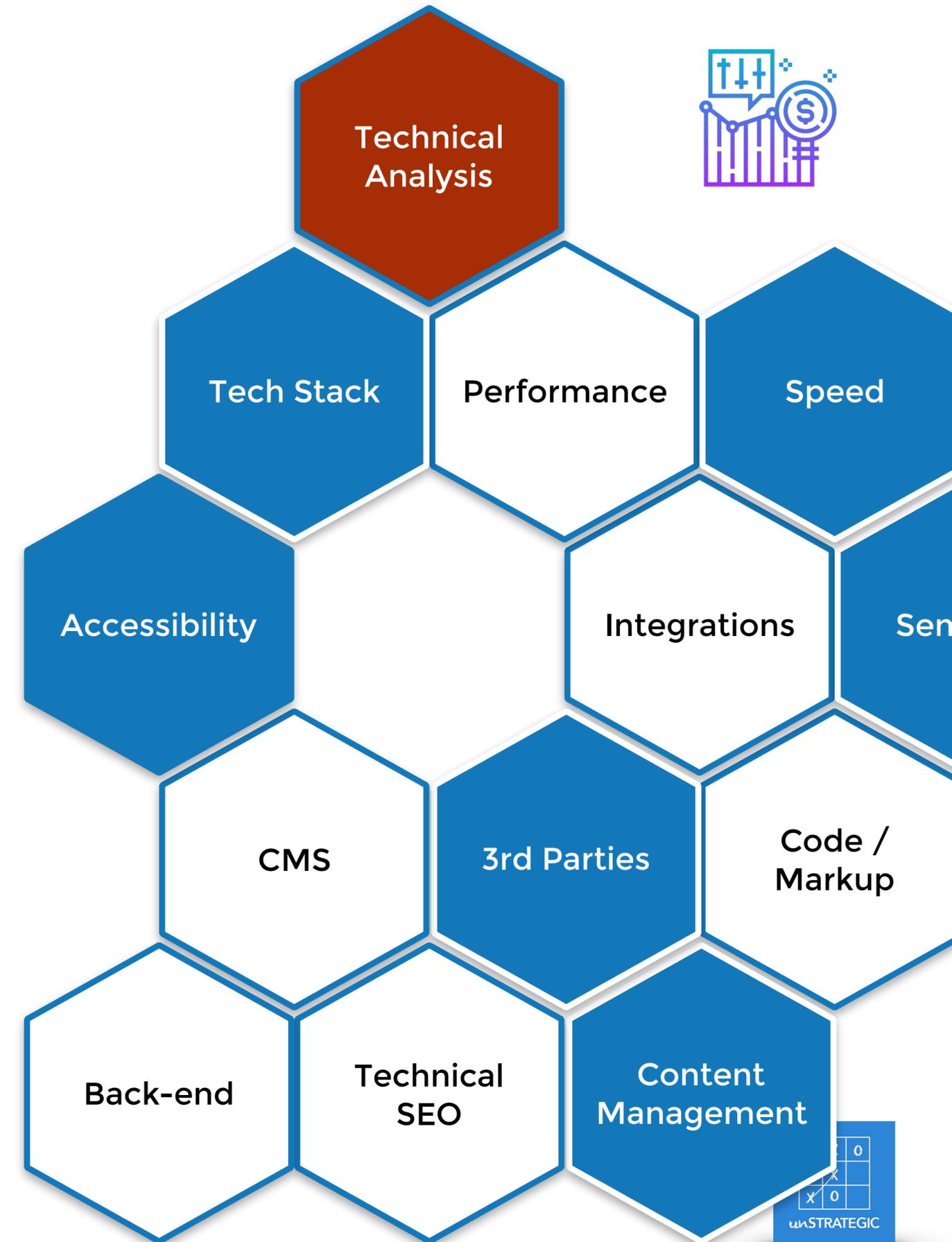
Technical Analysis

A technical analysis of a website is a little different from the other methodologies we've talked about so far. A technical analysis aims to evaluate the technology limitations and hurdles that will impact the design.

Things you should consider before and during your analysis:

- ➔ Technology stack efficiencies & limitations (pros & cons)
 - ➔ Are there any design elements currently on the site that are hard to manage and optimize because of the tech?
- ➔ Performance Barriers - is design slowing things down with high res imagery or heavy data loads with video or interaction?
- ➔ 3rd party integrations - are all of these necessary for a good user experience?
- ➔ Content Management Experience - what does this look like and how is the site being maintained / updated now?
- ➔ Code / Back-end - is the code written with proper semantic markup? Solid technical SEO?

Technology can have a huge impact on design and the flow of your website. Remember to make sure you don't get into technical debt by using antiquated technology or unnecessary integrations.



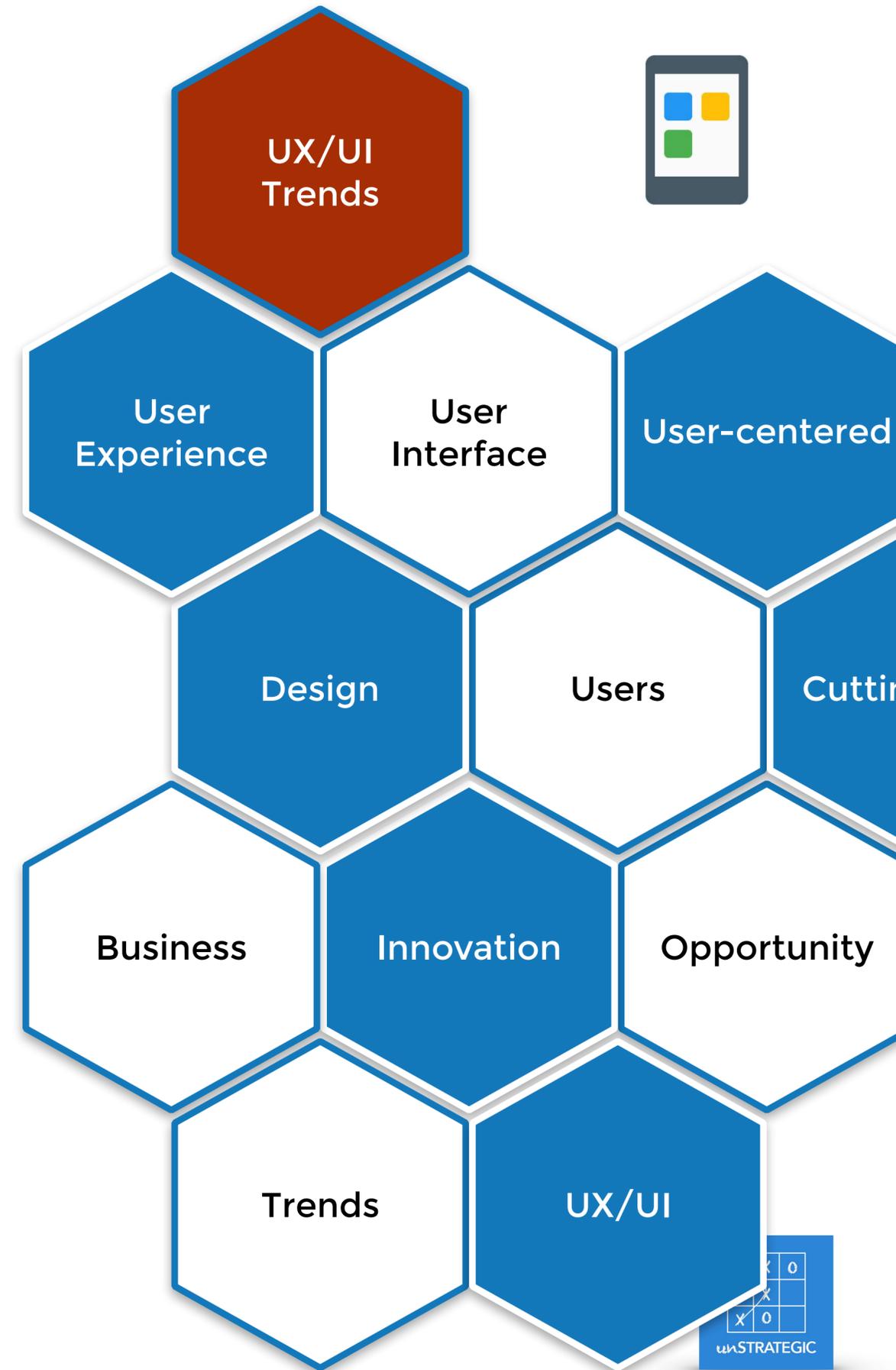
UX/UI Trends

This type of an analysis will evaluate a current website based on new design trends and look for ways to leverage more innovative opportunities.

Things you should consider before and during your analysis:

- ➔ Compile a list of new design (UX/UI) trends
 - ➔ Will site users benefit from any of these trends?
 - ➔ Will any of these trends help with completing a task or goal of the website?
 - ➔ Will any of these trends help with our business goals?
- ➔ Determine which features, elements, and layouts of the site can benefit from these new UX/UI trends

It's important to remember that you don't need to implement a new trend if it won't help with user goals or business goals. Don't change something just because it's a trend; that trend will need to fill a purpose.



Benchmarking

Benchmarking is evaluating a website by comparison with another website or a standard. For example, you can benchmark the website with its competitors or the best in industry to get valuable insight into how to make the website better.

Things you should consider before and during your analysis:

- ➔ Create a list of similar websites (both competitors and best in business)
- ➔ Evaluate the pros and cons of each website while comparing / contrasting that to the primary website
- ➔ Use both qualitative and quantitative data:
 - ➔ Qualitative - deductive observations
 - ➔ example: the process seems to take too long
 - ➔ Quantitative - numerical, statistical, etc.
 - ➔ example: number of steps to complete a goal

After conducting this type of analysis, you'll have plenty of recommendations to improve the primary website that should make it better than the competition.



Tips for UX Audits

Performing a UX Audit doesn't mean that you just put together a list of usability issues. You will need to organize, prioritize and deliver clearly defined action items to improve your client's website.

It's important to articulate the usability flaws of the website in a productive way. You will need to do the following for a good UX Audit Report:

- ➔ Identify the flaw
- ➔ Categorize the flaw based on scale
(Cosmetic issue, Minor Issue, Critical Issue)
- ➔ Recommend the solution and explain how it meets the goals of the business and/or user
- ➔ Find opportunities for user engagement and conversion
- ➔ Action Plan



Business Goals

Business goals are usually specific objectives that help grow a business. They oftentimes come in the form of SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely). These goals will drive decisions around website design.



User Needs

User needs are requirements that add value to their experience on a website. It's important to understand user's problems, processes, goals, and preferences. User needs will also drive decisions around website design.



Opportunities to Engage & Convert

UX Audits are about finding and fixing usability issues, but they should also present opportunities to engage and convert users better. Find the flaws, but offer some opportunities as well.

unSTRATEGIC (Example)

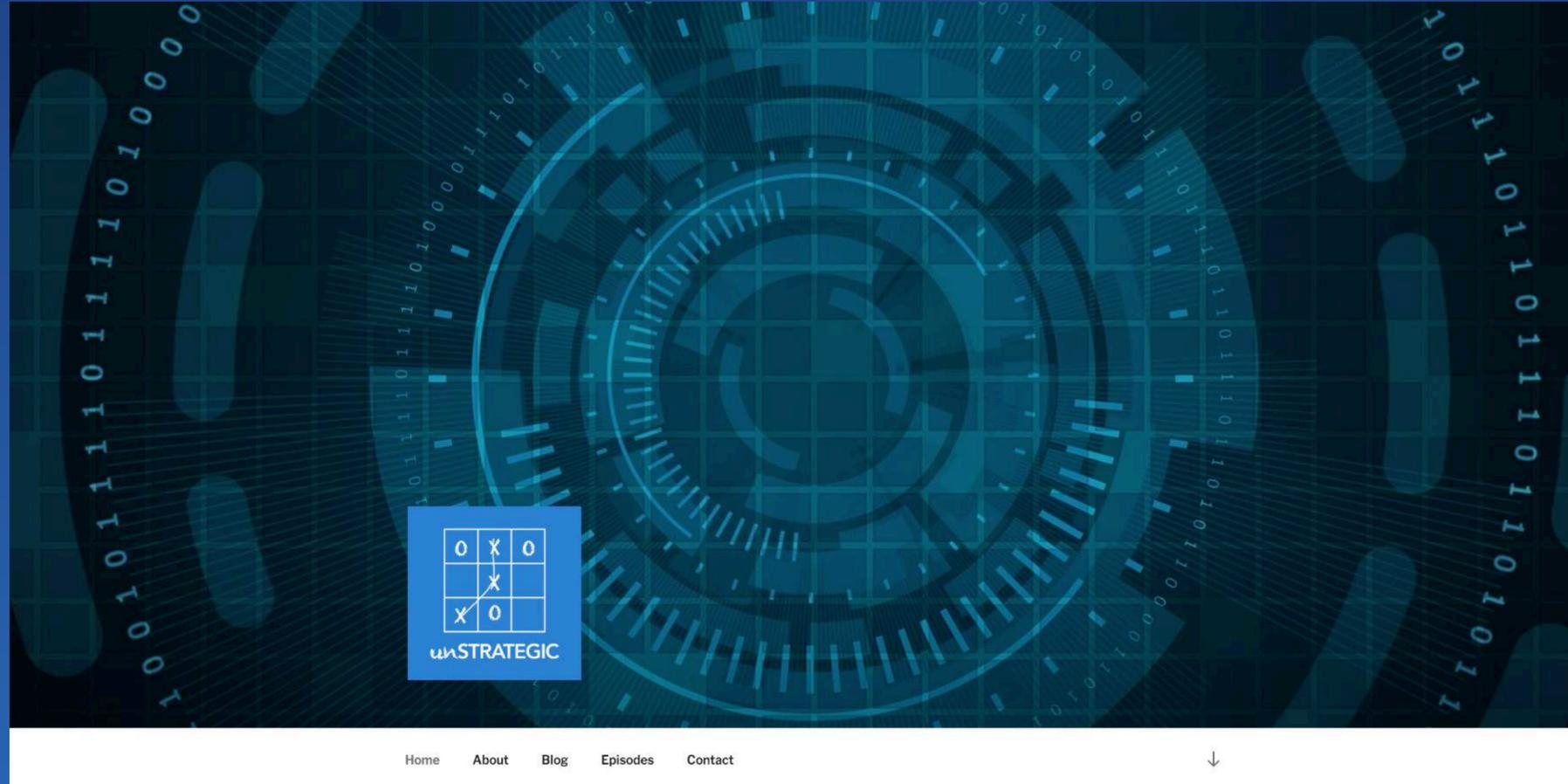
UX AUDIT

USER EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Methodology Used: UX Best Practices & UX/UI Trends Evaluation



***This UX analysis was looked at through the user, business, and expert perspectives*

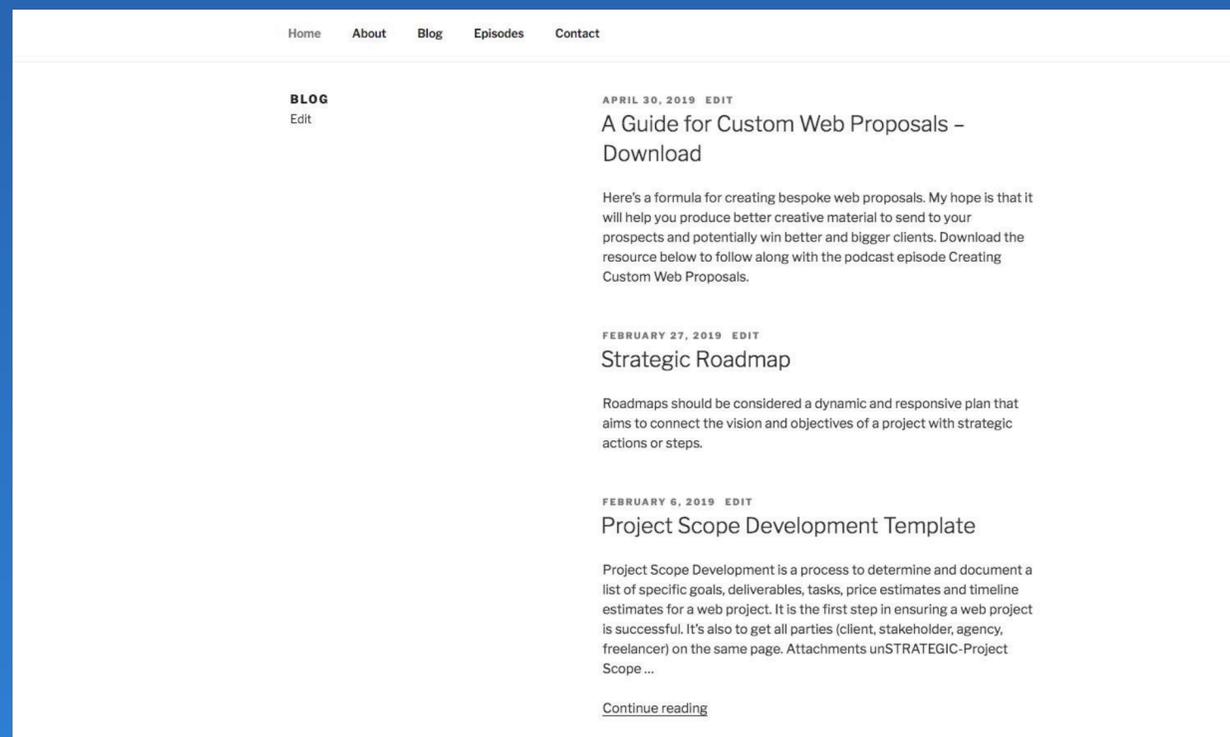


HOMEPAGE

Scale: Minor

Best Practice for a Homepage is to have the value proposition front and center. Users are no longer reading websites, they scan them in an "F" style format. Having the value proposition clearly defined on the hero image could help connect with the users of the site.

There are great resources on the blog but that content is closer to the bottom of the homepage which means users have to scroll to find it. A user's natural inclination is to scroll on a website, but having this valuable content closer to the top of the page may get more users to engage with it.



Actions

1. Work with client to get value prop messaging; add to hero image
2. Have developer move Blog Section higher up on homepage

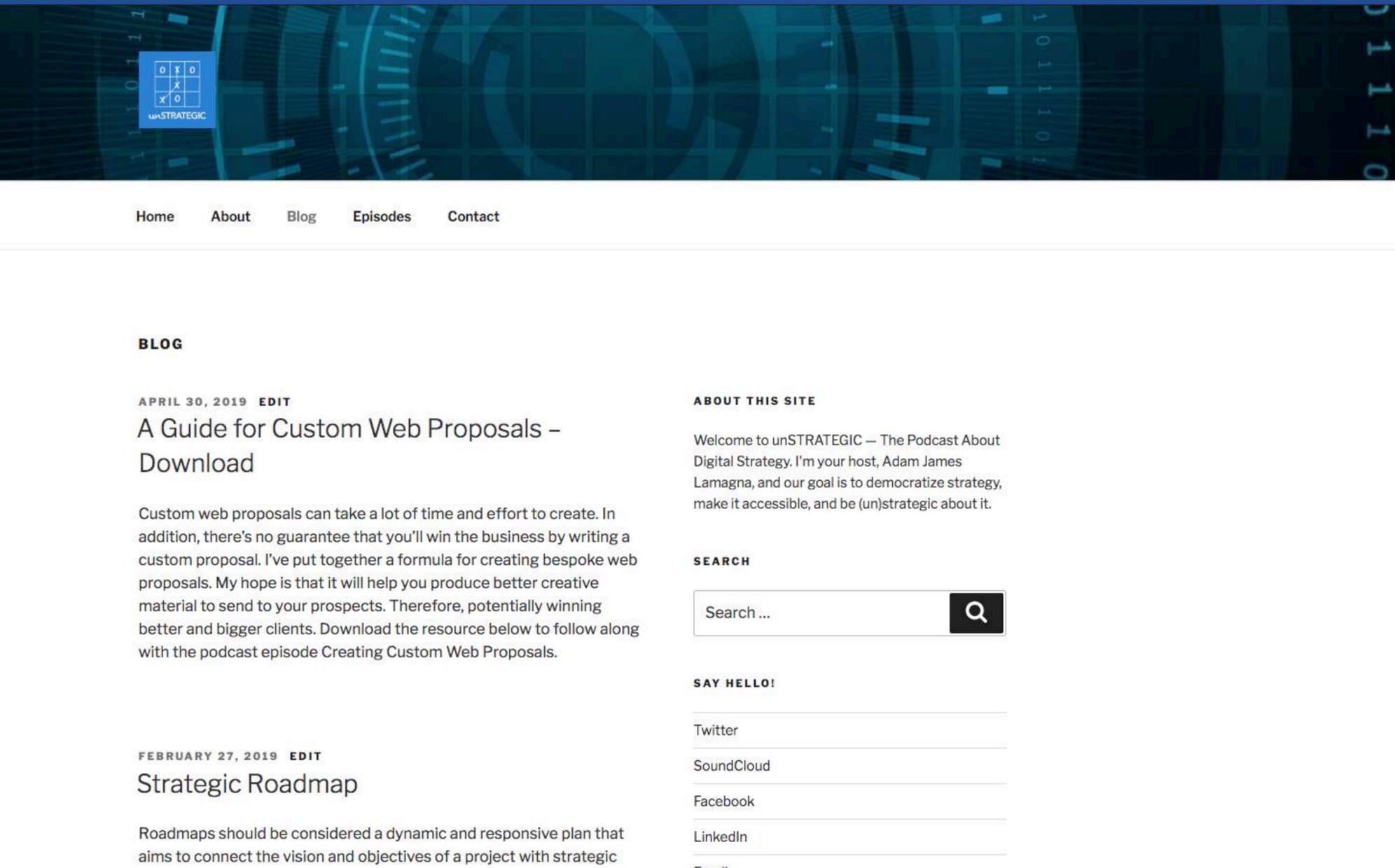
BLOG

Scale: Cosmetic

The Blog Listings (a.k.a. River) page has no featured images associated with the blog posts. Different types of users connect with different types of content. By adding featured images to the River, it may entice those users who connect with imagery to click through to the blog post page.

Actions

1. Work with client to curate stock photography for blog posts
2. Have content writer retrofit chosen images for last 12 blog posts



SEARCH & SIDEBAR

Scale: Critical & Minor

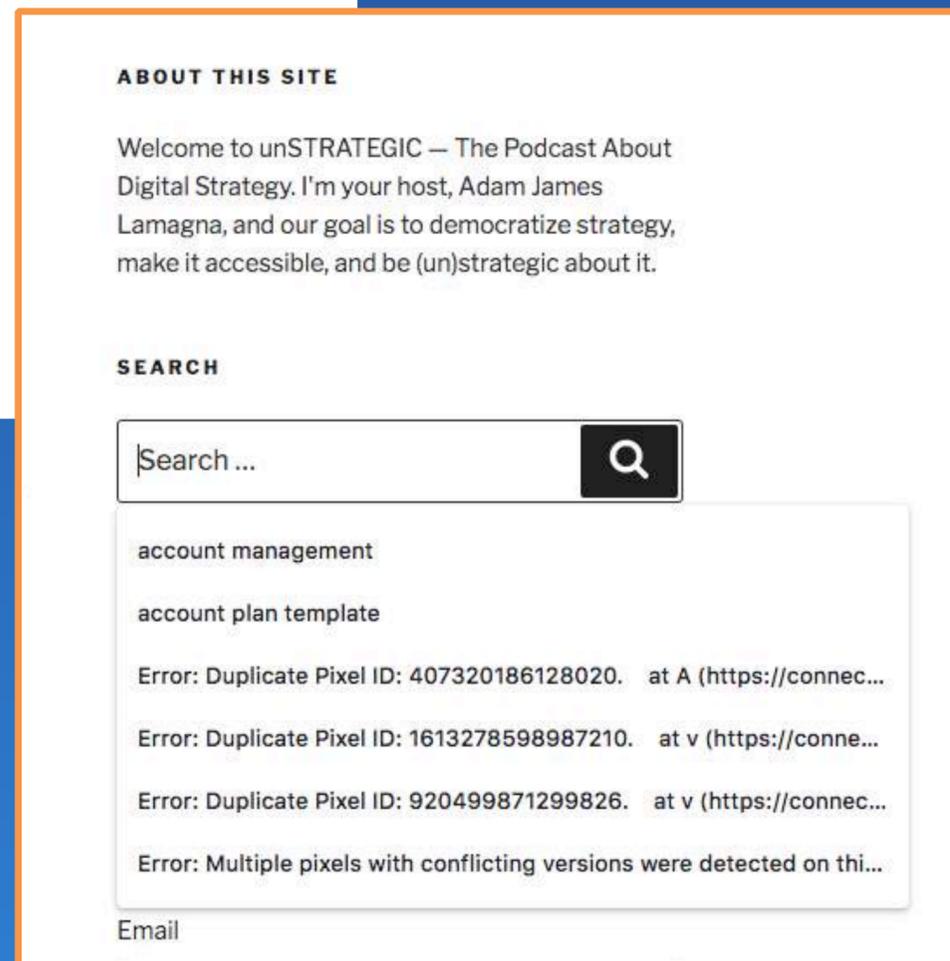
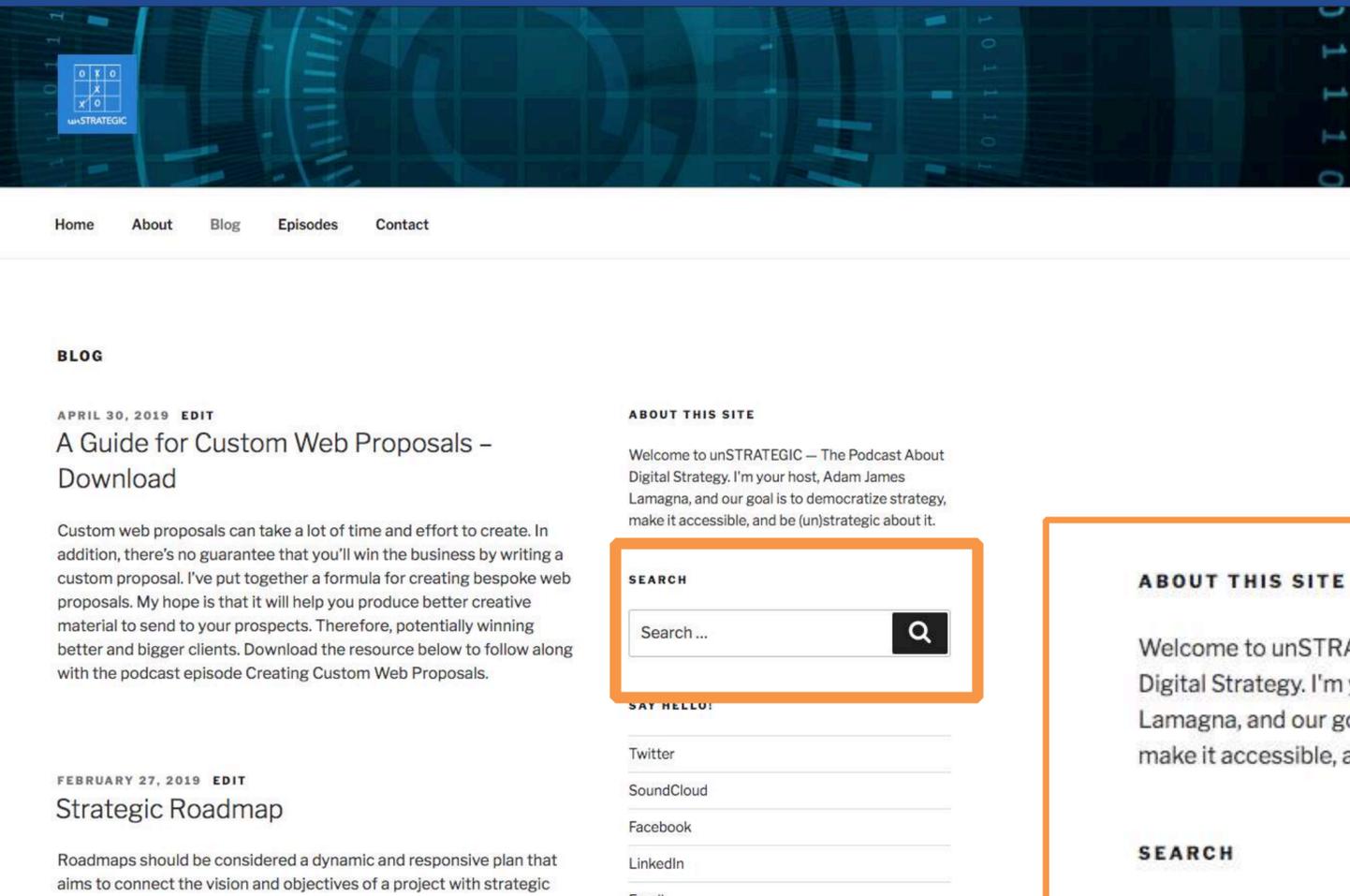
The Search Functionality in the sidebar and footer (prominent on Blog and Podcast pages) seems as if the auto-populate has error issues.

This could be a security vulnerability.

Furthermore, the sidebar does not have Categories for users to choose from. Having categories displayed will help with those users who do not have a specific search query in mind. Categories like Strategy, Design, Business, Data, etc. could help drive more engagement on the site.

Actions

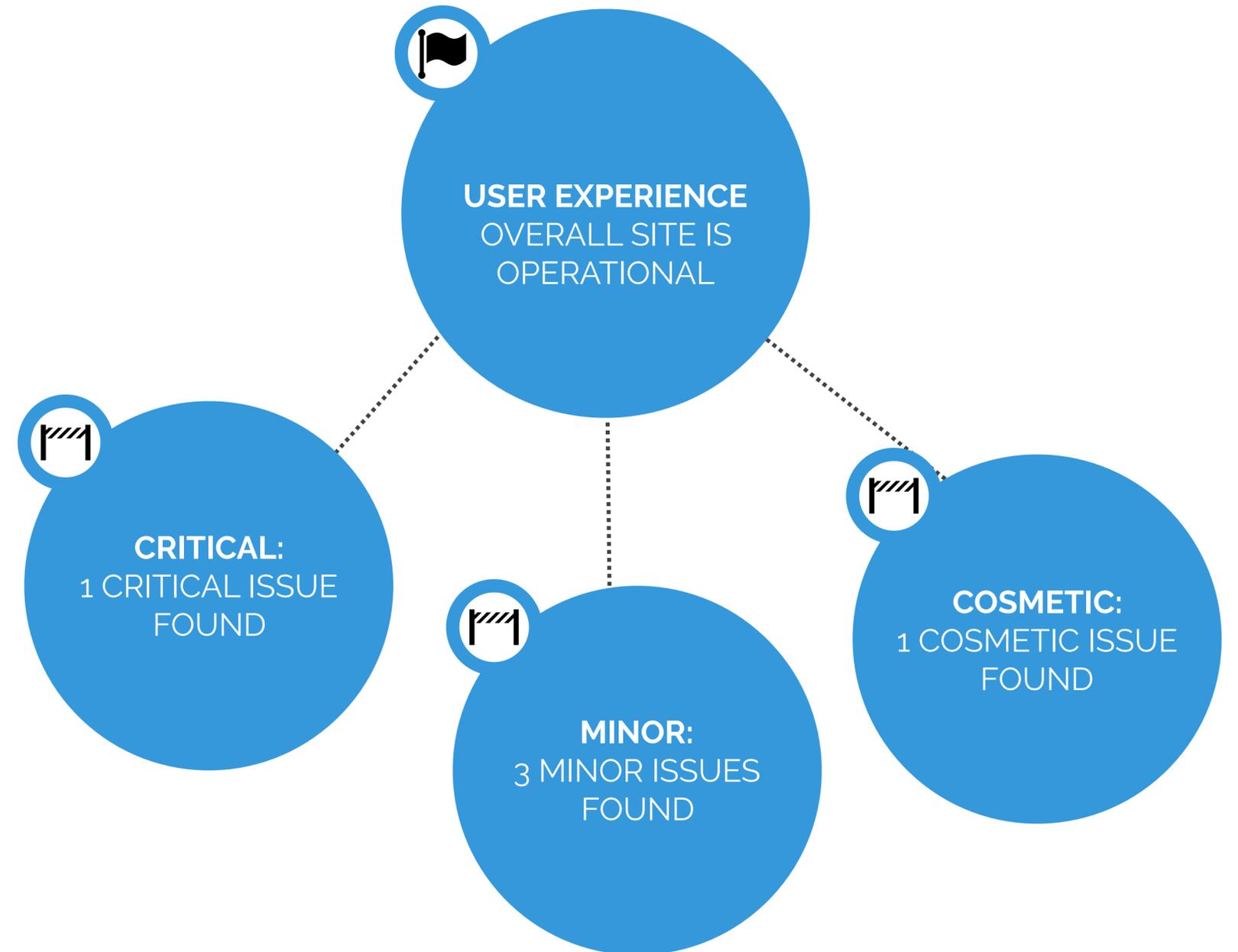
1. Have our top developers look into the search functionality to determine the threat level; fix as needed
2. Work with client to categorize blog posts and podcasts; display in sidebar



OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Overall, the site is operational and caters to a good user experience. We did find several areas we can improve upon that we feel would help engagement and conversions on the website.

The site has a lot of positives including simple design and ease of use. We feel there is a good balance between hitting business goals and user needs. But please view the next page for a detailed action plan on making some adjustments to the site.



Action & Prioritization Plan

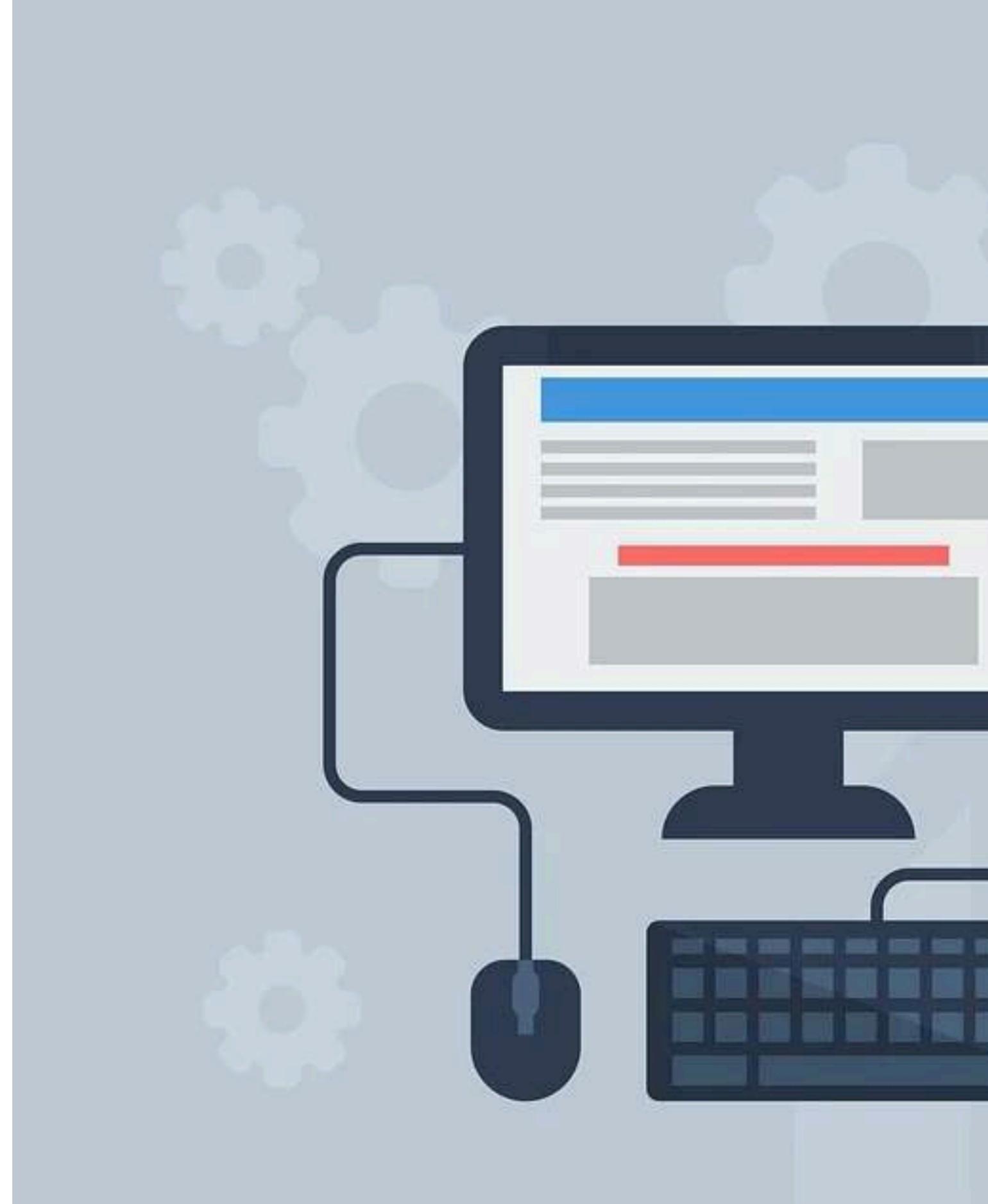
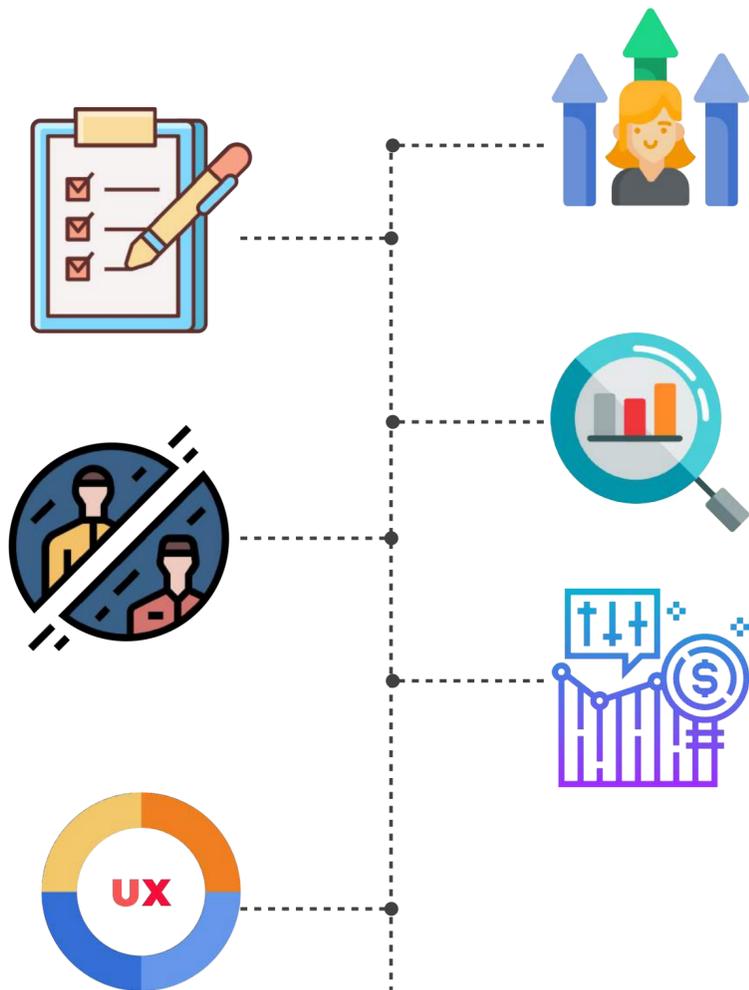
<u>SCALE</u>	TASK	START / END DATE	STATUS	NOTES
CRITICAL	Determine if the search bar is a security vulnerability	ASAP	In-Process	Developers to assess threat level and determine solutions
Minor	Add Value Proposition to the homepage hero image	TBD	To-do	Work with the client to create a clear and concise value proposition
Minor	Move blog section on homepage closer to the top of the page	TBD	To-do	This might help with user engagement
Minor	Add categories to the sidebar	TBD	To-do	This might help users who do not have a specific search query in mind with better user engagement by giving them broad topics to look at
Cosmetic	Add featured images to blog post	TBD	To-do	Having images on blog posts could connect with different types of users

Credit

While putting together this resource, I did use some cool graphics on the website: [freepik.com](https://www.freepik.com) - check it out. I specifically used graphics from the following authors/artists:

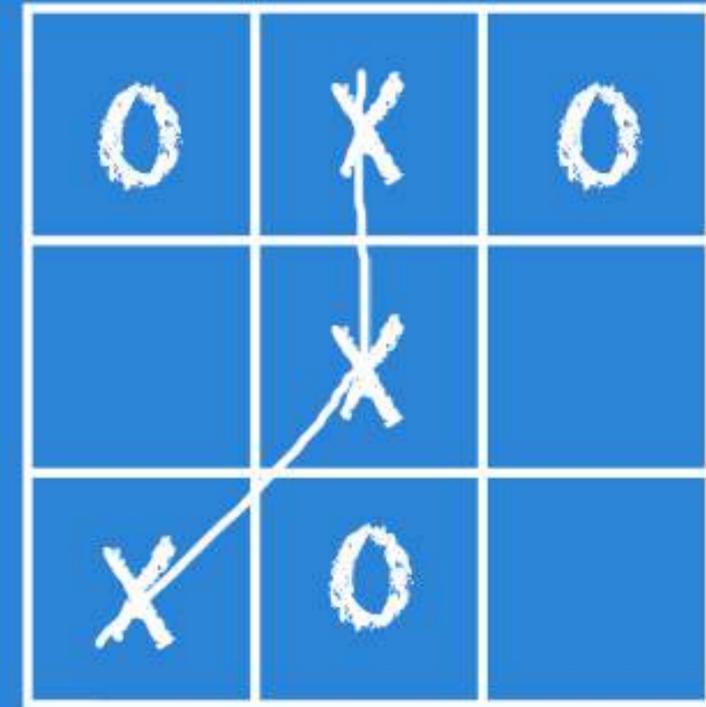
- ➔ flat-icons
- ➔ eucalyp
- ➔ wichaiwi

Thanks to them!



PERFORMING a UX AUDIT without Analytics Data

By Adam James Lamagna
unstrategic.com



unSTRATEGIC