Discount Tire Blog Redesign Recommendations Report

To: Discount Tire Executive Staff, OMNI leadership;
Steve Fournier Jr., VP, Chris Douglas, Web Director

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Intro

Did you know Discount Tire has a blog? No? You're not alone: few within or outside Discount Tire are aware it exists.

This report will explain why now is the time to pour more resources into our blog in order to change its appearance and features. This report will also explain how to do so, and what we stand to gain as an organization as a result of redesigning it. It will conclude by providing information on the resources needed to complete this effort.

Background

Discount Tire's OMNI leadership provided a new challenge to its UX team for 2021: 15% of the company's total revenue needs to come from its website. 2020 was the website's best year ever in terms of ecommerce revenue, but consistent with the leadership of most for-profit businesses, the expectation for year-over-year growth is high. Because Discount Tire has struggled to reach and monetize automotive enthusiast audiences in the past compared to its competition, redesigning the blog is a way to help the UX team achieve its goals while maximizing the organization's opportunities by way of content-first strategies.

Based on the data from a CAB survey I conducted that included over 100 participants, the Discount Tire blog can and should be used to specifically target enthusiast audiences because they:

- Spend more money on tires than the average customer
- Will be in the market for tires within the next year
- Own more vehicles than the average driver
- Have more drivers in their household than the average Discount Tire customer
- Know more about tires than the average person (are experts within their network)
- Already create online automotive content and make recommendations online

However, the original version of the blog needs a lot of improvement to activate and retain automotive enthusiast audiences. According to the survey, when navigating an automotive blog, enthusiasts want clear messaging and large headlines, prominent visuals, a clear sense of when a blog post was created as well as who created it and what their credentials are. Because these audiences are prepared to spend, we can't afford to lose them when doing so could mean losing the opportunity to sell our products for all of their vehicles and their entire network of contacts.

The original version of the Discount Tire blog does not have any of the functions or features users expect when engaging with a blog. In fact, the original blog isn't so much a blog at all compared to the standard features of a blog as a communications genre. If anything, it's a grouping of over 100 links that have been loosely categorized based on the subject of each page, and provides a poor user experience.
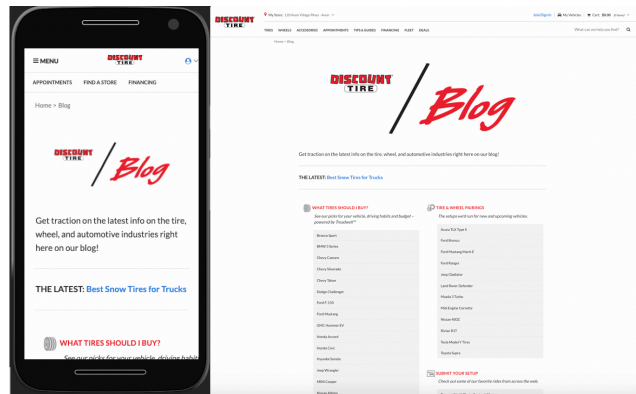
As shown above on mobile and desktop, the original blog does not meet the needs of enthusiast audiences.

Research Methods

In order to understand what Discount Tire customers would want from a Blog, I created a survey of 27 prompts and questions. This survey was sent to members of the Customer Advisory, of which 135 people participated, and 100 completed the survey. Ultimately the survey queried participants with five blog designs in front of them, in order to ask a series of questions about user preferences and sentiments. These blog designs were selected based on the blogs our primary and secondary competitors use. Finally, the survey asked participants to rank each blog example and provide comments about why they did or didn't like each.

Results
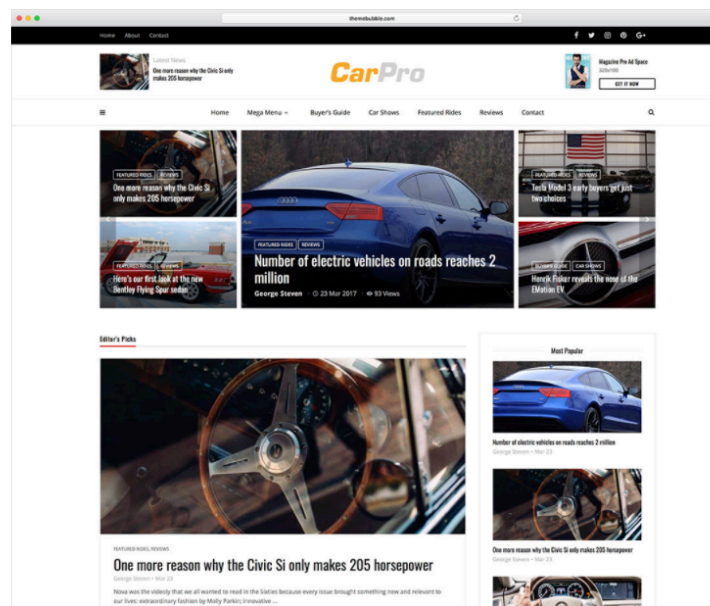
The above example, a WordPress theme called CarPro, was the highest ranked and most appealing design according to the survey participants and has been formally selected as the template to create the new Discount Tire blog around. (An interactive

version of this theme can be found here:
https://themebubble.com/demo/magplus/carpro/)

This blog design most accurately meets the criteria the survey group indicated was important when reading a blog as well as researching and buying tires online. Not only did the participants rank this design the highest, participants identified key preferences that matched this template theme. In particular, it made the most prominent use of imagery and headline text and was the clearest presentation of blog post publication recency. It also directly incorporated a number of UX features the survey data captured as important to auto enthusiast audiences and minimized certain undesirable features such as the misuse of "white space," according to many direct comments from survey participants.

It will be designed and styled consistent with the organization's branding and styles incorporated elsewhere on its website, in its marketing collateral, and relative to its storefront imagery and printed communications.

Discussion: Why WordPress? *(didn't we just spend a lot of money on Adobe Experience Manager?)*

Switching the blog to WordPress is recommended for a few reasons. Doing so:

- Allows the UX team to focus on more important/profitable eCommerce projects
- Enables our content to appear in Google News, Apple News, and improves SEO
- Makes it easier to author, manage and organize blog content
- Provides an adaptive CMS for future hires and entry-level employees
- Makes our content shareable on social media
- Creates the possibility to market blog content via email newsletter via WordPress
- Is inexpensive
- Is easy to maintain
- Is easy to do (see: discounttirefamily.com)
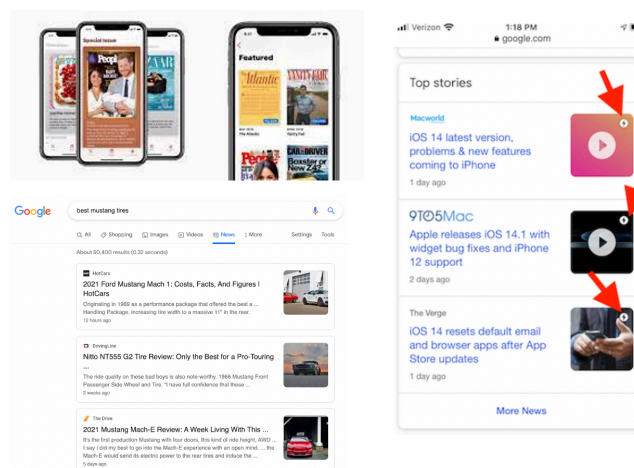
Appearance in Apple News, Google News, and the improved mobile experiences above are just a few of the benefits to switching the blog to WordPress that will result in new traffic and web revenue from auto enthusiast audiences.

Because the original blog was sourced from outdated technical information pages that were created circa 2015, its homepage experience was already mostly out of date when it was created in 2019. There also were not enough resources to improve it with the change to AEM. It has been in its current state since, with its UX design and navigation problems compounding as each new post is added to its homepage.

In all, this research-supported recommendation is made chiefly to cast a wider net at enthusiast audiences on both a topic and technological level while also providing Discount Tire's content team autonomy and independence from dev/IT and UX design requirements when creating blog posts, while also freeing up these important teams to pursue more direct eCommerce opportunities that the business has determined is the priority.

The greatest motivator for using WordPress is that Discount Tire already uses it for its internal benefits information websites; server configurations and the technology-based foundations already exist within the organization that support its near-immediate adoption. As a result, the technical work effort of standing the new blog design up will be very low, with the vast majority of the troubleshooting and work being performed by myself and members of the content team.

WordPress themes are also notoriously inexpensive: CarPro is $59 per year. Compare to the salaries and time requirements of members of the Discount Tire UX, developer, IT, SEO and content teams that would need to combine in order to create a homegrown blog experience in the same way the organization designs and builds other user experiences, and one can clearly see the advantages of using a prefabricated WordPress theme that's almost completely ready to go "out of the box."

Timeline

I estimate the project, including the blog's technical conversion to WordPress, its design and style configurations, auditing existing blog content, quality assurance checks, and the eventual production of new blog posts on WordPress can all be accomplished before the end of 2021. The below project timeline serves as a guide to the sequence the project will take through the end of the year.

Task	Date
Complete user research, analysis	January – May 2021
Present findings/recommendations	May 2021
Begin technical discussions with dev/IT	June 2021
Audit existing blog, individual posts	June – July 2021
Create performance benchmarks	July 2021
Research and map categories, tags, engagement features	August 2021
Import all existing blog imagery into WordPress	September 2021
Begin technical IT work, position /blog/ homepage and subfolder on WordPress, create analytics connections	September 2021

Optimize all existing blog posts, index in search engines	October 2021
Q/A, add link from DT homepage header to blog homepage	November 2021

Budget

Due to the mixed disciplines needed to properly build and configure the new blog experience, projections around the OMNI web team's time allocations are also provided for reference. Other than continuing to pay the wages of these employees, the final cost to implement a redesigned blog that meets the needs of Discount Tire's current and future enthusiast audiences and extracts as much value from these audiences as possible is shown below.

- CarPro WordPress Theme: $59
- Approximate hours-worked projections by specialty
    - 120 – SEO Strategist
    - 120 – Content Coordinator (x2)
    - 10 – Analytics & Optimization Analyst
    - 10 – Developer/IT

Recommendation and Conclusion

Given the low expense and effort to implement a research and data-supported blog redesign, combined with the existing precedent of Discount Tire using WordPress, it is relatively simple to address the organization's current shortcomings in relation to reaching its enthusiast audiences. Doing so would address major competitive, technological, informational, and editorial shortcomings the organization faces with its original blog experience.

Because auto enthusiasts are a savvy audience that buy more expensive tires for the vehicles they use, the Key Performance Indicators (KPI)-based results from the original blog's launch are expected to be surpassed with just a fraction of the time and effort needed to improve it. More important, the lasting detrimental effect from lack of know-how will also not be a factor like it was on the original creation of the blog.

As a result, the new blog is expected to be profitable within its first full quarter of existence. As it is used to target new audiences and employs the use of its new design features and its content is syndicated and marketed, these effects are expected to compound and provide lasting evergreen results over time.

The greatest (albeit most rewarding) post-redesign challenge will be to create more blog content on an established cadence. The ultimate goal is to produce and publish a new blog post every day. Doing so will maximize the value of the blog while providing enthusiast audiences more opportunities to engage with and buy tires from Discount Tire across multiple web communications sources and gives the new blog a chance to

serve as a legitimate source of new information on the topics they care about and actively research online.

Topic Research and Blog User Experience Recommendations

for Automotive Enthusiast Web Audiences

Randsom Rockliffe

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May 3, 2021

Committee

Chair: Dr. Andrew Mara

Member: Dr. Claire Lauer

Member: Dr. La Verne Abe Harris

Acknowledgments

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Glossary

Adobe Experience Manager: content management system. One of the more popular CMS for large enterprises; used by Discount Tire.
Blog: a web-based content repository used by individuals or organizations to create and publish web content.
CAB: Customer Advisory Board. A Discount Tire-specific term applied to a group of several thousand volunteers who provide feedback on website design features and marketing initiatives.
CMS: content management system.
KPI: key performance indicator.
OMNI: the Discount Tire business department that houses its combined traditional and digital marketing, creative, communications, software developer/IT and UX teams.
SEO: search engine optimization.
Theme: as in WordPress theme. In the context of this report, the pre-built design created by WordPress or third-party design studios that can be applied to style and organize the presentation of blog content.
WordPress: content management system. The most popular content management system in the world in general as well as for blogging.
WYSIWYG: what-you-see-is-what-you-get content management system technology that renders draft content in the style of the webpage output.
UI: User interface. In the context of this report, the web pages with which users interact.
UX: User experience. In the context of this report, the skilled discipline and practice of creating web pages based on user behavior and the analysis of such behaviors.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this recommendation report is to gather data, analyze, and share insight on user behaviors and preferences, and to provide recommendations to improve the visual design, layout, accessibility, rhetoric, and overall quality of possible content contained on a version of Discount Tire's blog.

My company, Discount Tire, seeks to modernize its content presentation within this web (and web 2.0) genre in order to generate more engagement with automotive enthusiast audience members, and to create more eCommerce leads via its website. When I assembled the blog originally, I knew it would need to be redesigned at some point. Now is the time to do so. In order to do make this happen, WordPress was quickly identified as the preferred content management system by the organization due to:

- Its precedence of use within the organization, serving internal audiences on a separate domain.
- Existing technological infrastructure that supports the quick adoption of WordPress.
- Discount Tire's team of content creators and managers already being familiar with its user interface and features.

The deliverable for this project is a needs analysis and recommendation report on WordPress theme and content selection based on the data attained from a mixed-method survey of over 100 members of Discount Tire's Customer Advisory Board. This survey was designed for subject protection and consent. After careful review, Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board exempted this study (STUDY 00013248) as "Not Human Research."

Problem Statement & Research Questions

The Discount Tire blog, a minor section of an otherwise large eCommerce website, has not benefitted from professional User Experience (hereafter referred to as "UX") research or design attention and currently offers a poor overall interface for users for its intended audiences. In truth, few members of the Discount Tire blog's target audiences or members of the organization itself are aware of its existence.

The combined Discount Tire blog experience and its several dozen pages generates millions of impressions and several hundred thousand clicks every month from search engine traffic; however, there is little direct, referral, or other traffic from non-search-engine sources, and zero user engagement within the genre in the form of comments, social media sharing, etc. as expected within the blog genre.

The following literature is included to help form the research application and success criteria for this project, and to aid in answering **the below research questions as formed by their core business objective requirements:**

What features do Discount Tire's enthusiast audiences expect from its blog experience?

Who are these audiences? What do they want?

How can this information be used to recommend Discount Tire's new WordPress theme?

More details about the specific design of this study can be found in the research design methodology (p. 15).

General Statement & Project Context

After a year of dedicated blogging with a twice-weekly publishing cadence, the blog as a marketing strategy achieved its original traffic KPI (Key Performance Indicator)-based goals. The blog's stakeholders, director and VP-level officers within Discount Tire's OMNI business segment, gained new appetites for content production and its associated benefits to the organization.

The current homepage was sourced from an area of the site considered dated even years prior to this research. The core intention of the outgoing blog "homepage " was to organize and categorize content that contained a looser page URL structure and topic mix for the sake of internal linking for SEO efficacy compared to the rest of the user-facing information and content on discounttire.com—which is highly structured, curated and deliberate in its UX strategy. Additionally, its content and features are more limited because of the site's primary content management system, Adobe Experience Manager.

Figure 1

Discounttire.com/blog Homepages, Mobile and Desktop: Feb. 2, 2021
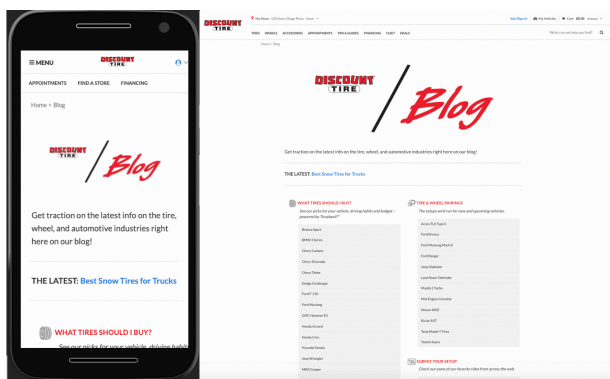
The organization identified the need to switch the Discount Tire blog to WordPress, because it needs little or no IT support "out of the box." As a result of this off-the-rack selection, there is little IT scrutiny and no UX design planned outside of my project to execute this change. With the requirement of a templatized or prefabricated WordPress theme, five direct or indirect competitor WordPress blogs were identified, and their

themes were confirmed through the analysis of their associated homepage CSS and source codes.

The following sites and their themes were scrutinized on the basis of their topical similarity to Discount Tire. These sites combine traditional automotive enthusiast news, vehicle-specific consumer marketing, user-generated product review content and feature-oriented blog content.

- Trail4Runner | trail4runner.com
- TireBuyer | blog.tirebuyer.com
- 4Wheel Parts | 4wheelparts.com/the-dirt
- Nitto Tires | drivingline.com

The following were also identified as viable candidates for user evaluation because of their specific automotive content, their use of the WordPress theme, their market function or their free text search function:

- Newspaper by TagDiv | link
- Magazine Layout by DiVi | link
- Gridlove by ThemeForest | link
- MagPlus/CarPro by ThemeBubble | link
- Essence Pro by StudioPress | link

Audience Analysis

The primary target audiences of the Discount Tire blog are automotive enthusiasts. Auto enthusiast web audiences generally follow motorsports topics, vehicle-based or vehicle brand-based topics, automotive hobbies and maintenance topics, and are prolific content creators in their own right through automotive forum activity and blog commenting.

It's necessary to define what "enthusiast" means in the context of the organization. While Discount Tire uses different product taxonomies and pricing tiers internally, these attributes are generally not visible to the public on its website.

As this report shows, these audiences comprehensively research their tires, are the household authority on such purchases, and end up spending dramatically more on their purchases than the general customer.

To broadly generalize, the tires it targets for sale to enthusiast shoppers are performance tires priced above $200 per tire and are available in sizes to fit both stock (as in a given vehicle's original manufacturer specifications) and modified vehicles.

Inversely, the retail markups on these tires are substantially higher than your garden variety all-season commuter tire that has a range of fitments between different vehicle types.

Discount Tire attempts to get users to access product detail pages via product category pages within its traditional UX design flows from its homepage, but accurate product results can only be reliably attained on the basis of a user adding their vehicle information to their session. In fact, it is currently impossible for a user to complete a purchase without adding their vehicle to their session via the website's "vehicle fitment" drilldown option. However, many enthusiast tire sizes are compatible with modified vehicles that are not captured in discounttire.com's fitment modal.

In summary, enthusiast tires represent a small portion of the overall online tire sales portfolio of the organization but are highly researched and engaged with. The internet audiences who research enthusiast tires maintain a high level of intent and begin their research with built-in knowledge and incorporate numerous content genres in their acts of research. Historically, Discount Tire has fared poorly with cultivating content these audiences (and ultimately consumers) are interested in compared to its competition. This audience group is highly knowledgeable of its vehicle information and vehicle usages.

Importance of Research

This report was created to establish which WordPress theme (and its respective attributes and features) will best meet the design and user experience preferences and expectations of its automotive enthusiast audiences, with its mixed method research providing authoritative data that burnishes the blog's WordPress theme selection and design requirements.

The included research will aid in creating a blog experience and content structure that reflects the expectations of enthusiast audiences. This project will also contribute to the organization through its analysis of user preferences while conducting online tire research, especially with regard to enthusiast content preferences and the online research mediums and methods enthusiasts use.

No focused research on the specific topic of tires in relation to the presentation of an organization's content (or blog) currently exists, and no organization related to the automotive industry with the domestic market presence or in many aspects dominance of Discount Tire has also been generated or published in a strategic marketing or academic capacity.

Delimitations

Global pandemic notwithstanding, given the web communications genres under analysis in this report there do not appear to be research delimitations that confined this report or its analysis to a less meaningful result or that contributed to a greater sense of difficulty or complexity.

Discount Tire's documented organizational needs specific to WordPress created a boundary around the technology under scrutiny in this report versus the potential for

making blog design suggestions or designing a survey that investigated the possibility of other blog platforms and associated user experiences. However, such inquiries would not have generated the outcomes required by the organization.

Summary

The study of these concepts, genres, and technologies in this report is intended to provide a deeper understanding of who the people are in Discount Tire's existing and enthusiast-specific audiences and what content they are most likely to engage with when the organization switches to a functional blog.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

WordPress Themes in the Context of UX

The success of the Discount Tire blog as a business venture and this applied project alike hinge on the informed relocation of the current blog experience to WordPress, and more directly to the optimal WordPress theme operating as its base. On this basis, the user experience is the most logical and showing area to address.

While perhaps not often thought of as a go-to content management system for UX design-sake, it does benefit from global adoption and recognition and has been identified as a business requirement by the organization's stakeholders.

Commentary on the evolution of blogging and its associated platforms may further illuminate this. In a relatively recent dissertation, He (2018) characterizes how blogs can increase agency through the deployment of WYSIWYG templates and editing.

> Blogging in itself is quite popular, but it would not be what it is today without blog platforms such as WordPress, Tumblr, Squarespace, and others. Setting up a blog with these tools can give people more control and flexibility as they provide niche-specific templates in multiple categories that people can choose from. (vii.)

However, with any new user interface or technology, there is a certain learning curve to expect, especially with those organizational blog contributors who have not used WordPress previously. Supplemental guidance can often help alleviate issues with new workflows, design feature building and other processes when operating in WordPress. Management of these aspects of the authoring and content presentation experience, including the selection and maintenance of themes and plugins that impact content presentation and user experience have their own set of best practices, according to Jones and Farrington (2011), who have created a how-to chapter on setting up WordPress websites, lay our several key strategies for using modules and templates to improve a user's site experience.

The premise of separating content from design remains a key aspect of this project given its technological center. "A site's theme controls what information appears where and what it looks like. Themes make your content look good. Without theme files, WordPress wouldn't know how to display your content on the screen" (p.17). Where the primary driver of this project—the visual and UX redesign of the Discount Tire blog homepage experience—meets the technical and stakeholder constraints of moving said experience to WordPress, might seem both straightforward and complex.

In practice, the desired action and output is simple and common enough, and there is a wealth of supporting industry documentation and guidance on deciding between themes and guiding the original selection to begin with. Jones and Farrington offer this characteristic (if casual) guidance in their book on WordPress and its features.

> Want to redesign the site completely? Choose a new theme or create your own. All your content remains the same; it's just displayed differently. When we started writing HTML, we couldn't even dream of such a flexible way to create a website. We wonder what another twenty years will bring. (p. 18)

One of the primary reasons for the Discount Tire blog homepage redesign being undertaken via re-platforming to a prefabricated WordPress theme is due to the lack of availability of internal UX resources. Discount Tire's UX team is near-constantly overallocated; such dedicated specialty time is not afforded to a feature of the organization's website that up until recent had garnered little attention from higher-ups and that still generates a small fraction of its overall web traffic.

As certain as there is need for improvement in the design experience, even with the ease of WordPress theme selection, there is also the need for user research and qualitative data to understand how these design choices might impact users. What was true in 2010 is if anything truer over a decade later, when user expectations have never been higher and web experiences have never been as detailed and accessible.

In their 2010 e-book on WordPress design and development, Stern, Damstra, and Williams lay out the stakes that existed ten years ago:

> …if your website has valuable content but your theme makes the content hard to read, hard to find, or generally inaccessible in any way, or your site is slow to load, not to mention downright ugly, you have probably lost that visitor. You may never have that visitor to lose. (p. 184)

Because of processing speeds and improved internet speeds, the stakes are higher over ten years later. Discount Tire rely on the website for both sales and marketing and depends upon its current blog as well as its organization-wide attitudes that prioritize customer service and the use of plain language.

In order to meet user expectations, the new blog homepage will obviously need to reflect and incorporate the brand standards and stylistic cues of the organization. The business goals will have to directly tie into user behaviors, as they shift toward online-only shopping and a service experience that removes or minimizes unnecessary person-to-person interaction due to social distancing considerations. In order to gain and retaining the attention of the blog's target audience, the blog will have to present a seamless experience with eCommerce and financial transactions that are facilitated by the company website.

On top of this, the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic on user behavior and online spending habits will remain in the short term (and perhaps more long term) both in the minds of the organization's stakeholders and decision makers. These more long-term patterns should inform the goals that catalyze its approaches to UX design and content delivery.

Blogging as an Organization

The Discount Tire blog is basically unknown to the rest of the organization. A handful of content coordinators contribute to it, with structured yet generalized topic categories that have been researched with the end of ranking in search engine results for desirable search keywords.

As such, the DT blog should fulfil the most basic SEO needs: of loosely organizing a selection of anchor text links that aid in search engine bots accessing blog pages through search. Beyond search engine crawler optimization, there is an unexplored opportunity for authors and web designers to reassemble the blog with user experience in mind.

By offering the DT blog with automotive blog topics, there is an opportunity to help users access the blog content through user expectations. One example within the shared topic of brand-based automotive blogging is the experience cited in Taylor's 2006 thesis dissertation on strategic marketing and public relations, in which General Motors' blog platform had an indirect outcome of "humanizing the corporate giant and providing valuable reader feedback" (p. vi).

This goal of humanizing the company is of particular interest to the organization as it enters into new markets and pursues new members of regional enthusiast audiences with its content, given Discount Tire's standing as the largest independent tire and wheel retailer in the world as measured by its total number of brick-and-mortar locations but with a lacking presence on the eastern seaboard as well as on a broader national level.

Rhetorical and cross-dimensional organizational communications considerations also squarely accompany the endeavor of reshaping the Discount Tire blog experience. In their inquiries into the dynamics of blog readership behaviors. In his essay in *Public Relations Review*, Michael Kent makes connections to important rhetorical blogging considerations this report seeks to guide the organization on how to employ via its blog:

> Blogs have several major strengths including their usefulness as research tools, and their usefulness as message framing and persuasion tools. Given the centrality of research in public relations and the great potential of blogs as information gathering and environmental scanning tools, the research aspects of blogs seem to be the best place to start. (p. 34)

Automotive blog readers and online tire researchers alike who participated in this study are highly reliant on their own expectations and subject matter knowledge as well as those of others within the communities of their shared interests when they gather and prioritize tire-focused content.

> Blog readers already come to blogs with information and views of their own. Self-persuasion and influence are more easily accomplished when individuals and publics already have knowledge of issues and important events. Blogs bring

> homogenous groups of individuals and publics together, allowing the power of the enthymeme and self-persuasion to be used. (p. 36)

In the case of certain blog features in relation to user expectations, genre conventions both apply to and bolster the fostering of communal dialogue within its audiences. As this research shows, user generated content—a hallmark of blog comment fields, on-page polls, and guest author posts—remains a highly influential and important aspect to consider in the context of online tire research when evaluating a new blog experience.

> Blog readers help to construct their own reality through dialogue, rather than simply participating in the symbolic representation… That blog readers actually have an interest in issues, read what others have to say about issues, and have the ability to comment on issues, make blogs genuinely participative. (p. 36)

It's generally acknowledged that creating an experience or architecture for search engine bots (or crawlers, spiders, etc. depending on semantics) rarely produces the desired human user engagement. An extant if secondary goal of blogging as a genre of content production the generation of human engagement Rossman, Ranjan & Sugathan (2016) refer to as "likes," "comments," and other addenda or metrics alongside the generation of online revenue, the reevaluation of the original blog homepage design and experience is paramount to the improvement of both user engagement and commercial return.

Speaking on the utilitarian possibilities of blogging as an organization, Michael Kent synthesizes the opportunity:
> Blogs are being used by organizations for everything from guerrilla marketing and attacking the competition, to creating identification with publics, sharing scientific breakthroughs, and knowledge management. (p. 32)

Particularly apt is the premise of "attacking the competition" via blogging. Survey participants frequently cited one of (if not the primary) Discount Tire competitors, Tire Rack/tirerack.com, in their responses of online sources they utilize in conjunction with researching tires. Singh, Sahoo, and Mukhopadhyay (2014) continue this exploration of the expectations of blog audiences in their article in *Information Systems Research*:

> One potential explanation for these dynamics is that blog readers are inherently variety seekers. Individuals switch from one set of topics to another to satisfy their inherent desire for variety. A need for variety can stem from different types of incentives for different topics. (p. 37–38)

Ultimately, this research report attempted to discern where the members of the blog audience places their need for variety, and how this might agree with or conflict with their desire for a good deal—and which of these motivations guide their actions.

Of tertiary benefit to maintaining and re-platforming the organization's blog is the perceived enjoyment of internal contributors when producing content on a blog. Studies such as that of Shiau and Luo in 2013 show that blogging on a continuing basis

predicted increased user involvement, satisfaction, and perceived enjoyment. "Blogging time significantly moderates the effect of habit on perceived enjoyment, but not on satisfaction and continuance intention" (p. 570).

Given that current contributors have in some cases never used a content management system specifically designed to render content in the format expected by users in a blog experience or of the genre itself, some such gratifying elements of real user engagement and feedback have not been present in the current workflows adopted by the organization. With the projected growth of the immediate contributor group in terms of size and budged as committed-to by the organization, this may too be something to bear in mind for the future.

Summary

WordPress in a UX and UX design context, considerations of user demographic and internal and external user bases all inform this research project. The practices of UX research and design have not drastically changed in the last 10 years, which remains relatively stable. However, little information exists regarding the tire, wheel and automotive accessory industries—which consumers spend billions of dollars' worth of commerce in every year—as well as the online commerce aspects of furnishing content on these topics with UX taking the lead consideration.

Gaps in knowledge may manifest in terms of contemporary WordPress theme availability or industry best practice application in comparison with the current assembled literature. Additional literature in the form of published books may help expand literature genre diversity and may better research methodologies; several contained sources are highly focused and closely related to the problems the project seeks to address but are in the form of dissertation.

Recommendations for further research include the utilization of published or printed UX design guides and books, especially accepted industry-standard reading that may be referred to as canon by seasoned UX professionals or scholars. Any contextual info on the tire, wheel or automotive accessory industries in the context of information presentation, UX, content management or organizational communication efforts may also abet further understanding.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Survey Context

While the Discount Tire blog was originally a haphazard attempt to establish a digital publishing cadence and to target specific high-value search engine keywords, the opportunity to scrutinize the responses of a group of individuals focused on the conventional genre of blog features and usability presented an opportunity to provide unique academic insight to the organization and to its content production efforts.

The included data visualization in this report is intended to convey the report's findings to the stakeholders of the Discount Tire blog, chiefly director and VP-level officers, as well as to form future strategies around.

Where opportunities to analyze user behavior on the existing blog pages were rare, there was not enough traffic to or through the Discount Tire blog homepage to analyze to meaningful effects within the suite of analytics tools that Discount Tire employs beyond the basic quantitative information available in Google Analytics and the organic search engine engagement reporting available in Google Search Console.

As the blog homepage was to this point only accessible through discounttire.com's site footer (and the bottom of the footer, at that) as well as via blog post breadcrumbs on-page, the homepage itself did not draw enough meaningful traffic to analyze via session recording or heatmap technologies.

I employed a mixed-methods research methodology via a cross sectional survey in order to attain the data and achieve the results of the research contained in this report.

Using the online survey platform Alchemer to format and deliver the survey to respondents, the research survey was drafted to collect mixed qualitative and quantitative responses that inform design direction for the organization's consumer-facing blog which should in turn guide future mockups, wireframes, content taxonomies, and generalized production-level content presentation recommendations on the blog site.

A secondary focus of the survey centered on user and audience topic research behavior, expectations, and preferences in the specific context of consumer automotive tire research and purchasing behavior. The goal was to attain data that affirms the organization's effort and expenditure on a genre-based web 2.0 communications platform such as a blog.

Quantitative prompts on demographic and behavioral information were also incorporated in the survey to develop opportunities for broader data analysis in keeping with the overall structure of this mixed method research project, which provided separate but related avenues for inquiry while offering opportunities for supportive data visualization.

Five WordPress blog themes were selected from a group of competitor or automotive industry blog sites via information in their respective blog homepage source codes and stylesheet files. After navigating to the theme creator websites, still image files representative of each theme were saved and imported into the Alchemer survey for users to indicate preferences and comment on.

Participation Recruitment

Discount Tire has cultivated a pool of several thousand brand and topic enthusiasts (who have no professional affiliation to the company) who volunteer to participate in surveys, serve on focus groups, and provide generalized feedback on business developments or processes. Examples have included Discount Tire's beta website features, advertising and marketing concepts, etc., in addition to other strategic initiatives the organization requires data on.

Members of and the CAB group as a whole is managed via a Salesforce-based internet portal (or "Community") where Discount Tire stores, manages and hosts CAB member profiles and profile information.

This populace was identified as an opportune group to invite to participate in the survey that was designed to generate data for this project. Respondents who provided their email address and completed the survey were entered into a raffle to win a $50 gift card.

After the survey questions were drafted and feedback was provided by the project committee chair, the survey was added and formatted in Alchemer. The survey was set to automatically close when 100 participants completed it. This capacity was achieved within days of the survey being activated and furnished to the CAB pool. In total, 135 survey respondents accessed and provided responses to the survey on some level, achieving a sample size of 101 for 95% data confidence given a 5% margin of error. The response rate of total survey completion was 73.7%

The cross-sectional mixed method survey employed in this study was created leading with its quantitative questions, which intended to set up opportunities to connect to the qualitative data collected later in the survey. The qualitative responses, in particular the final survey prompt required greater concentration and engagement from survey participants.

The final qualitative survey prompt, (in the second half of the survey) presented the five different WordPress themes for survey respondents to rate and comment on. This is considered the centerpiece of this report as a deliverable.

Demographic questions closed the survey in order to avoid any type of survey answer bias pressure participants may have felt on the basis of their gender, age or region.

Survey Site

Members of the CAB were contacted within the Salesforce-based internet portal Discount Tire stores, manages and hosts CAB member profiles and information. The Alchemer survey was published in the main portal via a link from this homepage area using the participation recruitment language worked approved by Dr. Mara.

The survey link was disabled when a minimum of 100 participants completed the survey. Over 130 participated, but the remainder did not finish the survey.

Participants completed the survey online on varying device types in the setting of their choosing. Given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely the majority of participants completed the survey from their home.

As such, at no point was the survey being administered or monitored in person entertained as a possibility.

I synthesized survey data into graphs and data visualization artifacts using Alchemer when the total number of participants who completed the survey reached 100.

The raw survey data was exported from Alchemer into an Excel spreadsheet, where empty or null cells were removed, and where derivative values were categorized into an accurate parent value (such as "Chevy"/"Chevrolet").

Coding

Qualitative survey data was coded using the software NVivo. Thematic elements were annotated to help aid in the comprehension of the coded qualitative data.

Qualitative responses were spare compared to the quantitative data gathered via my survey, but this data was imported into NVivo from the master Excel document exported from Alchemer and coded on a line-by-line basis.

My rationale for using NVivo was because of its simple UI and immediate availability via download, with a native Mac app interface. Its free trial period also impacted my selection of NVivo versus other qualitative coding tools I researched.

After compiling my data and its visual output, I laid out the following analysis section of this report, providing comments and contextual considerations following the sequential order of my survey questions.

I summarized my findings at the end of each section and provided a final recommendation on the WordPress theme the organization should adopt based on the data contained in this report.

I finished the report by writing a final statement that connects all sections of this report to the theme recommendation.

Timeline

| Task	Date
Submit IRB protocol	12/2/20
Send proposal to project committee	1/17/21
Build Alchemer Survey	1/8
Recruit survey participants from CAB	1/18
Analyze survey responses	1/18–2/12
Submit draft to project chair	2/26
Submit revised drafts to project chair	2/27 – 3/22
Submit final draft to project committee	3/26
Defense	4/6
Complete metacognitive analysis	4/23
Submit final draft to MSTC DropBox	4/30

Chapter 4: Findings

Who are our customers? What vehicles do they drive?

There was an average of 2.3 vehicles in each survey participant's household. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the national average as of 2017 is 1.88 (Wagner). 81% of survey respondents identified as male, and the majority of participants were 49 years old or older.

Figure 2

Household Driver Quantity Data
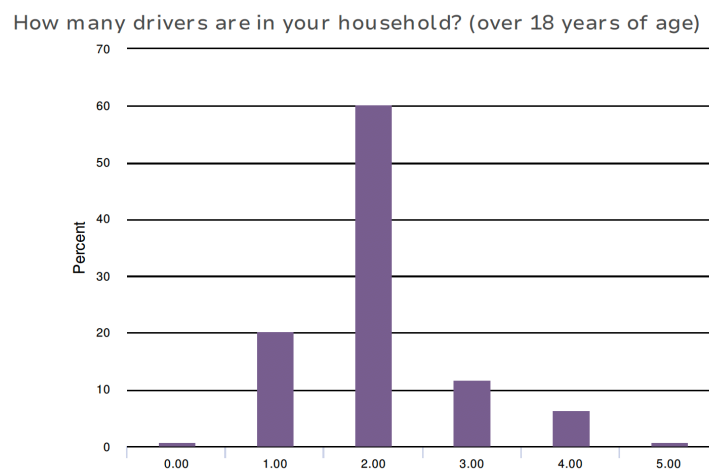
With over 75% of surveyed households made up of two drivers over age 18 or more, household codependence on tire research is considered highly likely and should motivate an even greater effort around meeting the needs of our enthusiast audiences.

The average vehicle model year of the survey group was a 2010, with a median model year of 2014. According to the Bureau of Transportation statistics, the national average age of vehicles in the US is 11.8 years old as of 2019.

As seen later in figure 8, vehicle owners have wide windows of time in which they might need to or are aware they will soon need to buy new tires. Their responses reflect a general awareness of the need for new tires after a certain number of years of use.

Interestingly, 99% of survey respondents were able to provide the full year/make/model of their vehicle(s). This is a feature on the main Discount Tire website and homepage that requires special attention in relation to UX and technical communication specific to educating users on how to find this information to the end of adding their vehicle to the website session so that accurate products can be presented.

Figure 2

Vehicle Ownership Data

Do you own, currently finance or lease your vehicle(s)?

24% Finance

5% Lease

71% Own
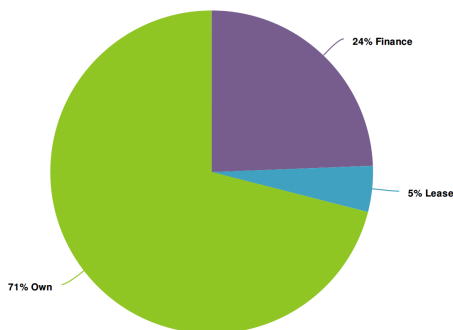
71% of respondents reported owning their vehicle outright, with only 5% under lease. This is an important distinction to make because of the tire protection plans that can be purchased under or incorporated into vehicle lease contracts, which might prevent members of our audiences who lease their vehicles from becoming potential customers while their vehicle is under lease.

For context, 25.8% of vehicles were under lease nationally in Q2 2020 (de Best, 2021). In this population, the ownership/financing ratio is 19:1, far higher than the average.

High ownership rates/financial outlay for vehicles in this survey population suggests a higher willingness to spend more than average on tires as well as an audience that is well-informed and acquainted with their vehicles. This type of familiarity will only improve over an average of 10 years of ownership (if not longer if a vehicle is inherited by a younger household driver).

**Figure 3**

What's the make of your vehicle(s)?

The prominence of domestic and Japanese automotive brands, as well as fewer "premium" European or imported automotive manufacturer brands made an interesting connection with the identified vehicle usage traits in figure 5 below. Notably, Ford,

Toyota and Chevrolet all sell multiple pickup trucks and full-size SUVs, in addition to crossovers, and are among the more popular brands with US drivers. Automakers such as Honda sell one unibody (as in car-based) pickup truck, where Subaru, Mazda and Kia have not sold trucks or SUVs over the last 10 years.

Given the majority of vehicles sold in the US are pickup trucks, SUVs or crossovers. Given Discount Tire's density of locations in the heartland of America where pickup truck ownership rates are highest, the following figure also inferred a large portion of its audiences drive pickup trucks.

Figure 4

Vehicle Use Data
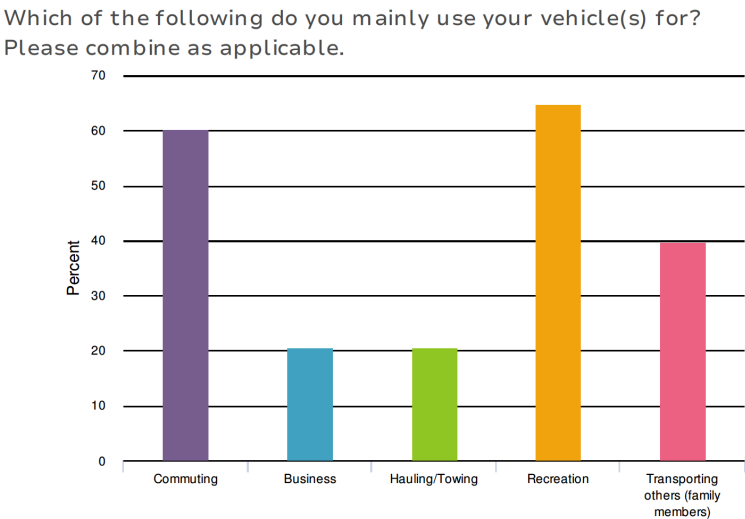
The high rates of use and of perceived use of vehicles for recreational purposes suggests our enthusiast audiences strongly identify as such while still using their vehicles for other blended purposes.

Again, with an average vehicle count of 2.3 per household in this survey group, it is possible although clearly improbable for each respondent to have a vehicle dedicated for enthusiast purposes such as racing, entering in car shows, or off-roading. While this data shows that the main use of vehicles in this participant group is in recreational applications, many vehicles such as pickup trucks and SUVs are functional across all of the vehicle use criteria here.

To summarize, our audiences likely own more than one vehicle and likely have more than one driver in their house. They likely drive trucks and SUVs and own their vehicles outright, which are around 10 years old. They use their vehicles for many purposes rather than for one or two specific reasons and have a high amount of knowledge about their vehicles.

How our customers shop for tires online

Figure 6

Responses to Tire Shopping Behavior Survey Question 1

Would you purchase tires for someone other than yourself?

12% Maybe

24% No

64% Yes
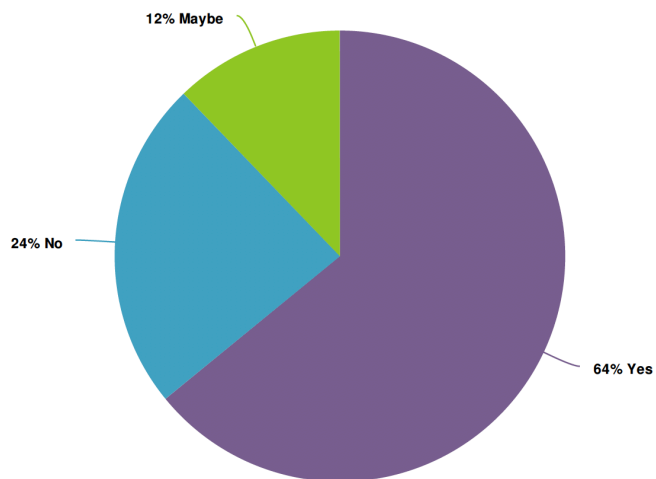
It's unsurprising participants feel comfortable selecting or attempting to select tires for other drivers in their households in figure 6, with prior data in this report proving there's a high level of knowledge of the vehicles in use in the households of this population.

Figure 7

Responses to Tire Shopping Behavior Survey Question 2

Would you select or attempt to select the model and size of the tires?

7% No

93% Yes
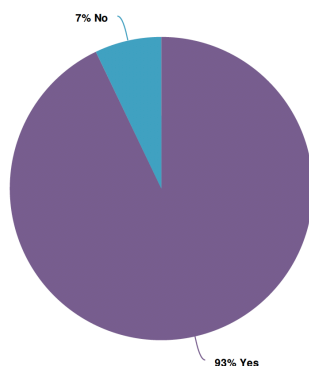
Decision logic from a "yes" answer in figure 6 triggered the question seen in figure 7. Respondents who answered yes to figure 7 reinforces a higher level of confidence and knowledge on the technical decisions around researching and purchasing tires.

Therefore, targeting an audience with blog content in an experience that would make them more likely to purchase would multiply the probability of conversion on behalf of household drivers.

Figure 8

Responses to Tire Shopping Behavior Question 3

Do you expect to purchase tires within the next year?
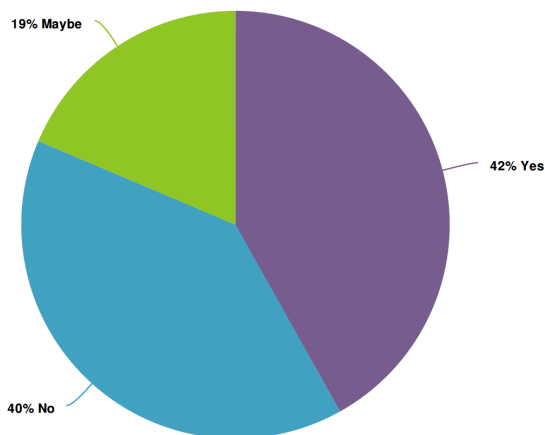
42% of respondents reported they expect to buy new tires in the next year, which seemed high given the average tire life is anywhere from 4 – 6 years according to internal information circulated within the organization as well as accepted industry standards.

Use cases vary based on region, vehicle, tire type and especially usage/usage conditions, but for this population to expect to replace tires within a years' time affirms a high level of informed context and information literacy around the current conditions of this group's tires. These audiences know how to measure and gauge their tire usage and have a high awareness of the type of questions to ask vehicle service technicians when their vehicles are being worked on or serviced.

Online tire research practices and behaviors

Figure 5

What device would you use to research tires?
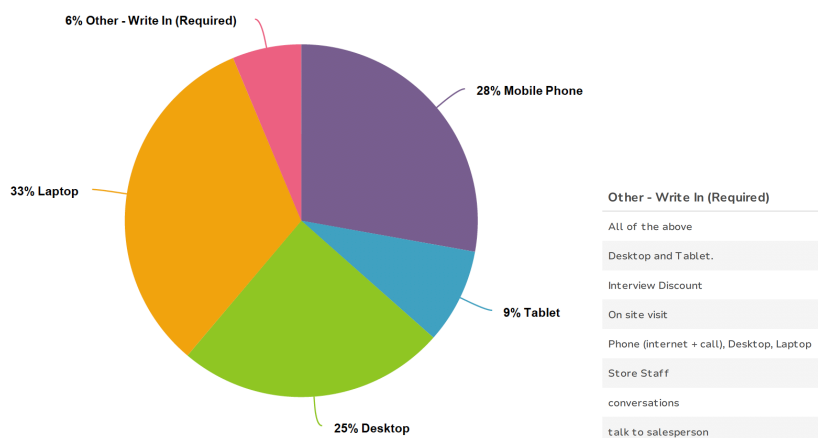
70% of research is performed from a portable device; 37% is performed via mobile device. (Close to 60% of discounttire.com's traffic comes from mobile devices. However, the majority of its conversions occur on desktop/laptop devices.)

That the majority of participants said they would use a laptop or desktop device to conduct their research provides guidance on how to prioritize the design experience of the new blog and its WordPress theme.

In summary, these audiences mostly use traditional computers when conducting research. The majority of audience members expect to or might expect to buy tires within one year's time. They feel comfortable purchasing tires on behalf of other people, likely other household drivers, and feel confident enough to attempt to select tires on the basis of their specifications.

How our customers find related content

Figure 6

What online sources do you use for research?
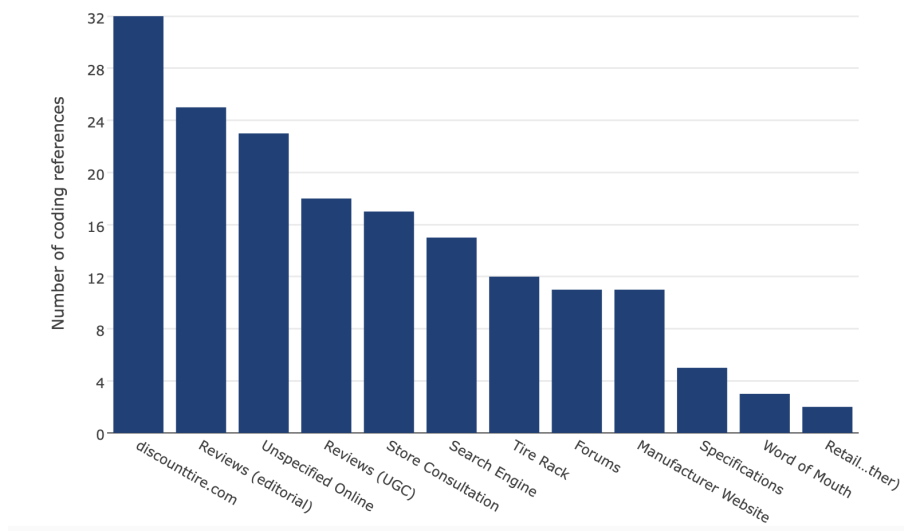
Many participants reported that they research and read reviews on tires by using Tire Rack, as well by using its robust user-generated tire review sections. (Tire rack is an online-only tire retailer and primary albeit online-only competitor to Discount Tire.)

The prominence of search engines (and its overwhelming majority of the search market in general) in the coded qualitative data supports the original goals of using the blog as a marketing strategy.

Search Engine Query Categories

Figure 11

What words would you enter into a search engine to research tires?
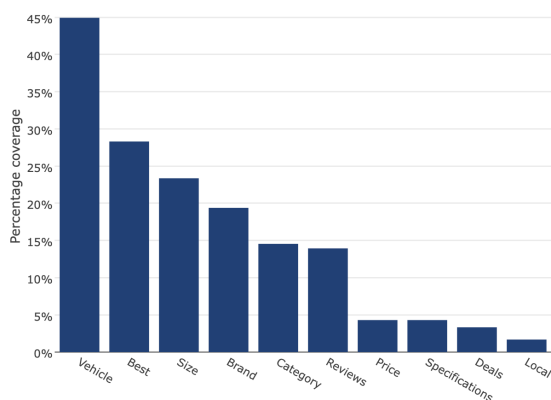
When participants were asked to provide the search engine keywords they would use, responses that included a vehicle were present in 45% of coded results—far and away the leader here.

A desire for the "best," especially in relation to their vehicle or tire usage category was also highly prevalent.

The use of tire size conventions bolsters the documented awareness of the specifications of the tires that may be needed by participants in the survey group.

Combining "Vehicle" and "Best" codes accounts for the large majority of all examples and suggests an opportunity for cultivating blog topics on the basis of the best tires for a given vehicle. Such blog content can also provide info on tire size specifications, available brands and categorical uses, largely capturing all coded query types in figure 11.

Creating detailed review-based content and utilizing other review formats as available from user-generated product reviews on discounttire.com would also serve a significant number of this audience's needs and expectations.

A book of business well into nine figures annually, discounttire.com's content efficacy in combined paid and organic search engine strategies will need to remain at the center of any organized blogging endeavors.

Research-to-Conversion Priority Mix

Figure 7

What would it take for you to purchase tires immediately after reading or consuming information about them?
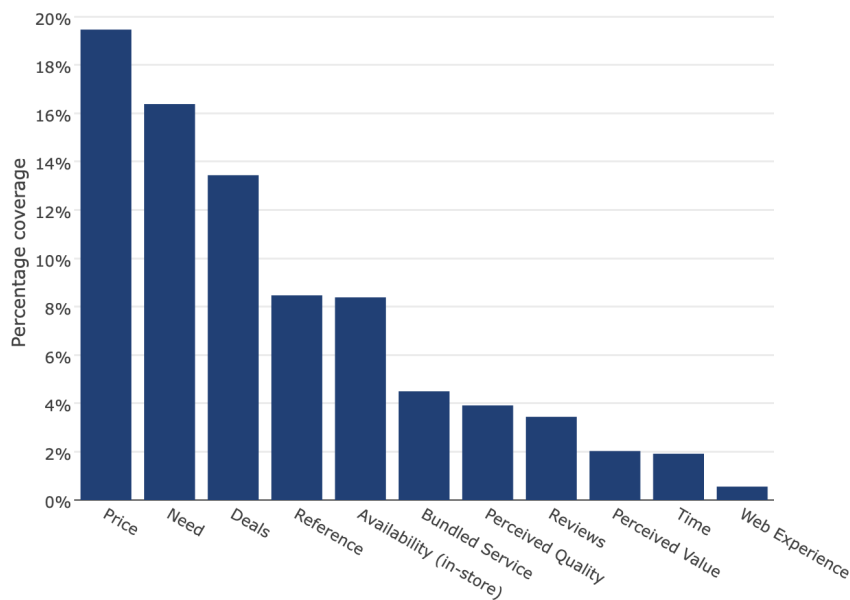
The above represents coded answers to the survey question "what would it take for you to purchase tires immediately after reading or consuming information about them?"

Far and away the most important and reoccurring factor that might convince a member of this audience to convert on tires they're researching online is aspects of product pricing (and other related terms).

We understand and assume our customers research tires online with a budget in mind, but few participants reported being moved to purchase tires by concepts other than what amounts to establishing a sense of value via the content of the given research topic and any specific web content experiences associated with it.

"Need" was coded based on a response that the noted or mentioned an immediate need to purchase tires in the moment of performing research. Combining pricing information (and using it in a rhetorically convincing capacity) with "deals" during the window of time an enthusiast audience member is in need of tires were the three aspects that made a participant most likely to make a purchase.

Being referred to a particular product (coded as "reference") by someone familiar to the respondent or from a tire retailer staff member was another major conversion influencer. This was followed by the immediate local availability of a tire being researched. Bundled

services such as free shipping or installation incorporated into the tire's information also prompted a significant number of responses.

"Reviews" being as prominent as "price" suggests high intent around overall user sentiment combined with the use of expert and subject matter expert review content. This is supported by the prominence of Tire Rack—the organization's primary competitor with regard to content marketing and search engine marketing efforts.

Tire Rack has created a robust and highly data-driven approach to testing tires, generating and then synthesizing data on its website for general users and particularly enthusiast audiences, who can easily compare and purchase products with meaningful "review" in the editorial as well as user-generated genres apparent throughout the content presentation experience.

To summarize, automotive enthusiast audiences use a mix of competitor websites and editorial websites to find information related to tires and to read reviews on tires and do so mostly from devices with large screen sizes. They use several mediums to find this information, including search engines and vehicle forums.

When they use search engines, they mostly search for tires based on their vehicle and its specifications, or search for the best tires for their vehicle. When they have a need to buy tires, pricing, deals, and immediate availability are the larger factors that would make them buy tires online.

Content Preferences

Figure 8

*How important is high quality and prominent visual content when researching tires online?*
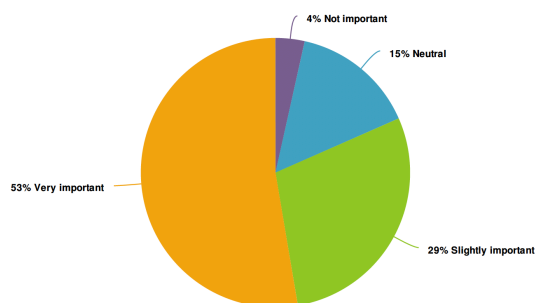
Unsurprisingly, 81% of participants indicated high quality (as in resolution, selection, size, variety) visual content is either slightly or very important in the context of online tire research.

53% of survey participants indicated this visual content is "very important"—the highest of any such response option in this section of the survey and supports the selection and prioritization of a WordPress theme that makes prominent use of imagery.

Figure 9

Importance of Written Blog Content Depth

How important is the length and detail of the written description area on a given article or blog post?

4% Not important

15% Neutral

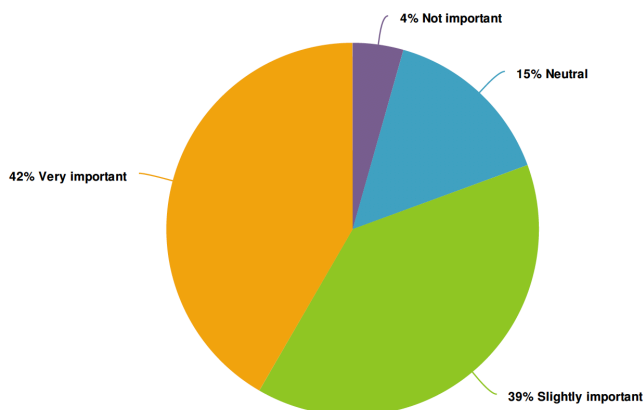45% Very important

35% Slightly important
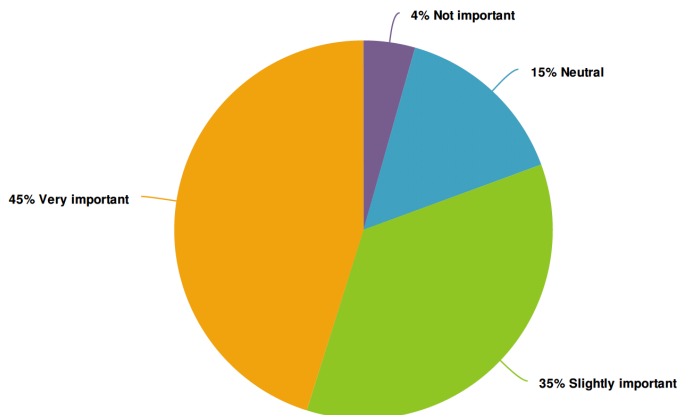
While the vast majority of participants still considered the length and depth of written blog posts important, it was not assigned as much priority as the use of visual content.

Precedent in a UX and content production capacity is established between improved user engagement and use of imagery, but there's also a baseline of page copy depth (minimum 250 words) for search engine efficacy in relation to a given topic. Where review-oriented editorial-style topic publishing might bolster page engagement performance and conversion/purchase likelihood, the dedicated effort a user makes of reading the copy on a blog page is more natural from a larger device screen size.

Figure 10

Importance of Topic Publication Recency

How important is the creation date of research article on the topic of tires?

4% Not important

15% Neutral

42% Very important

39% Slightly important

Blog post publication recency wasn't considered as important as other content features, with a 10% shift between participants who indicated visual content was very important in figure 14 indicating this prompt to be slightly important (39%).

With the semi-static nature of both the industry as well as tires as marketed products, one tire may well remain on the market for a decade or beyond before being replaced by a new version or taken off the market. However, participants indicated in the overwhelming majority that fresh content in relation to the tires they're researching online is both desirable and expected.

Figure 11

Importance of Content Personalization

How interested would you be in having content recommended to you on a tire blog?

- 8% Uninterested
- 12% Somewhat uninterested
- 27% Neutral
- 35% Somewhat interested
- 18% Very interested
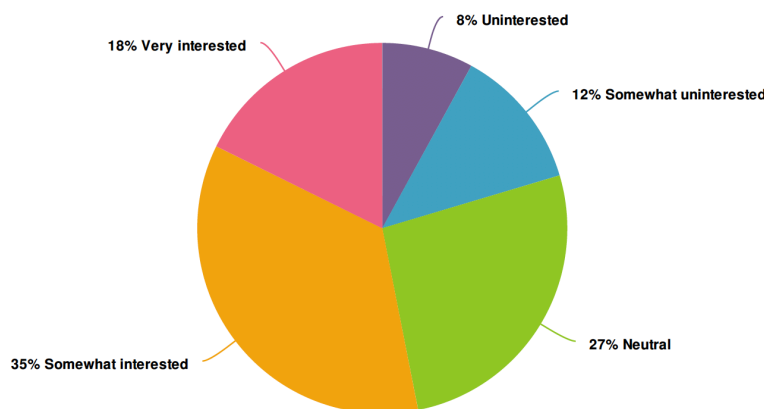
The intention of this prompt was to gauge the significance of a blog's genre-based display logic to this user group. Whether a user might land on a blog page from a search engine or navigate to the blog from elsewhere on discounttire.com where they may have already entered information on their vehicle, participants were mostly split on the importance of the recommended content within this experience.

Where blogs can take advantage of categories and tags that connect (or dynamically "recommend") related content on a given page, typically toward the bottom of a given post when a user is nearing the end of what they were reading, the responses here suggest nothing out of the ordinary needs to happen with regard to recommending content either via the blog homepage or within a blog article.

To cater to audiences that might be interested in such features, a WordPress theme that can display and cycle through trending, recent and personalized content from its homepage is considered important, though not a critical priority.

Figure 12

Importance of Blog Author Information

Is information on a blog post's author important to you?

29% No

71% Yes
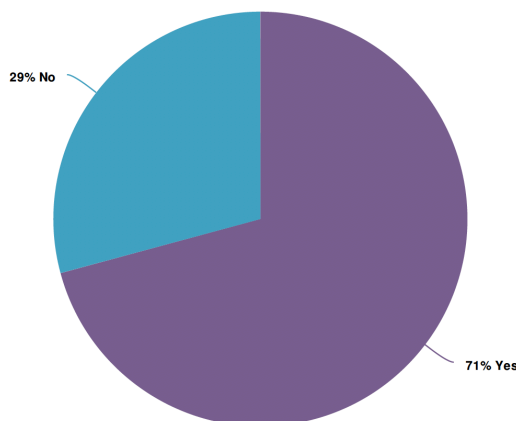
Participants indicated overwhelming importance of author information content and context. This information is already objectively important for the sake of establishing Google's EAT—Expertise, Authority, Trust, in relation to the quality it assigns to a given webpage and its content.
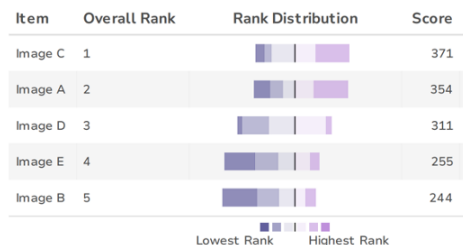
Blog author/contributor profile pages, when linked to from a post byline serve to "humanize" (per Taylor's assessment of GM's blog in the literature review) the publishing organization, but in the context of automotive enthusiast audiences, a certain like-mindedness is assumed in vehicle-based web genres such as forums or vehicle-specific blogs, especially so in its comment sections.

Regardless of the audience or data, the idea of creating content that informs users of the contributor's credentials and interests is still considered a standard blog feature—this data supports this expectation in the context of automotive enthusiast audiences.

WordPress Theme Ratings
***Figure 13:** Blog Theme Survey Rankings*

Please rate the level of appeal of each of the above templates.
Please comment on what makes each appealing to you in one to two
sentences each, as well as what you may not care for. (1. being the
best)

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score
Image C	1		371
Image A	2		354
Image D	3		311
Image E	4		255
Image B	5		244

Lowest Rank   Highest Rank

Winner: Image C – MagPlus/CarPro by ThemeBubble | **link**

With its structure already oriented around being a car blog in its own right, MagPlus/CarPro contains desired features per the data in this report: prominent use of imagery and use of white space, clear publishing dates and author bylines, editorial and recommendation features via "most viewed" content display fields.

In terms of being the best "out of the box" WordPress theme of those examined MagPlus/CarPro is the best-equipped to meet the needs of the organization and the preferences of its blog audiences.

It was the clear leader in terms of overall participant preference, while also garnering fewer last-place and bottom-half ratings than the second-most preferred Image A: Newspaper theme by DiVi. Both contained prominent imagery of vehicles and represented a more editorial/news-based look and feel, but participants clearly preferred the more complete and purpose-built automotive theme of MagPlus/CarPro. From the template previews used, Image A was rated in the bottom half or very last in rankings at nearly double the rate of Image C/MagPlus by ThemeBubble.

Image D, Gridlove by ThemeForest, was the highest-rated theme that did not incorporate automotive imagery with also the fewest last-place ratings. Mixed rankings in the top half and bottom half of responses with a similar amount of (few) responses ranking it first or last suggests a general ambivalence in relation to its attractiveness to this audience.

Essence Pro/Image E was rated almost as poorly as Image B/Magazine Layout, which aligns the survey data with the indicated participant preference around editorial-based content with regard to tires. Essence Pro has a closer look and feel to a personal blog rather than an industry, organizational or even news blog; it did not surprise that it fared poorer compared to the others in the survey.

The more text-heavy, minimal and less image-based Magazine Layout by DiVi (Image B) was rated lowest of all; consistent with the importance placed on prominent imagery in figure 14 by survey participants.

Figure 19

Coded Qualitative Responses to Blog Theme Ranking Selection
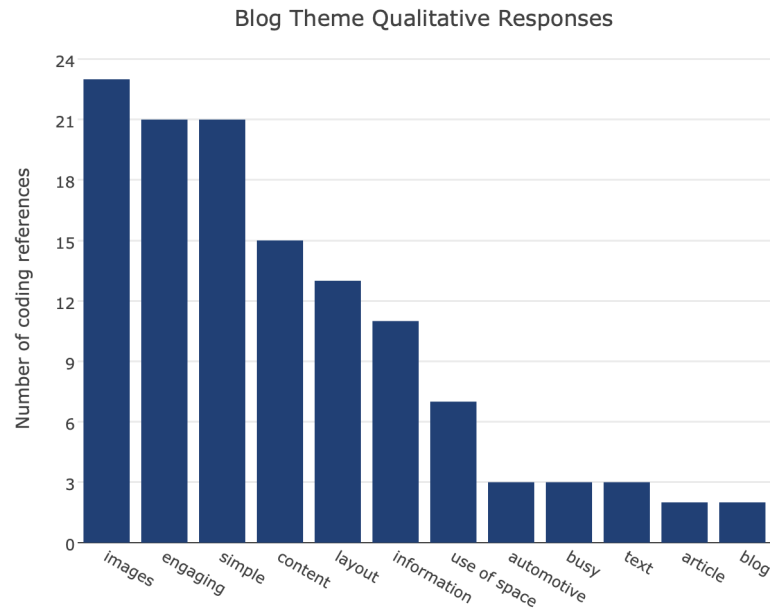
Of the collected qualitative data (via the request for comment on each theme example) there was a high and recurrent indicated importance around imagery and a sense of a layout being "engaging" or holding their attention.

This was closely followed by the perceived importance and prominence of imagery in relation to easy scan-ability and legibility of content on the homepage experience.

Participants repeatedly cited preference with regard to the perceived simplicity of a given theme as well as its use or abuse of space (in this context white space). A significant enough number of comments cited the legibility of text as a determining preference factor.

Supporting qualitative quotes
- "c. appeals to my desire for useful information, leaving me with the ultimate decision making."
- "White space. Ease of seeing what topics are of interest."
- "Image C is the best because it has the greatest amount of action and pictures in one single webpage."
- "I like a simple layout so your brain doesn't get overwhelmed like in some with way to (sic) many images and small text."
- "C is clean while still showing a lot of information."

- "C and D have a layout where I can see a number of articles and choose the one I want without it being shoved in my face."
- "Image C is easy to read and select the article(s) that are important to you. It displays a lot of information at a glance and is also easy to jump to other categories as desired with the command line across the top."
- "C: Spacial (sic) clarity and multiple options. Not overdone."

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the content of this report, the recommendation is for Discount Tire to select the theme MagPlus/CarPro when it moves its blog to WordPress.

This theme most directly meets all of the documented preferences of the enthusiast audiences/survey respondents who provided information on who they are, what they drive, and how they research and buy tires for what they drive.

To reconnect this outcome to the research questions established in the beginning of this report:

What features do Discount Tire's enthusiast audiences expect from its blog experience?

They expect prominent use of imagery, use of reviews and user generated content, the opportunity to share their experiences and opinion, and information about a blog post's author. Content depth and recency is also important to audiences researching tires, and it's advisable to keep users engaged with related topics when they access a blog post.

Who are these audiences? What do they want?

These audiences are predominantly male and middle-aged. They know a lot about their vehicles as well as the vehicles in use in their household, and use said vehicles for a variety of reasons and activities, including for recreation. They keep their vehicles for a long time, are likely currently in the market for tires, and know a lot about tires.

Their desire for tires is based on whether they're needed at the time, but they prioritize their options based on price and availability. Active deals, immediate local availability, word-of-mouth references and a sense of value based on a tire retailer's services are other things that will make them more likely to buy tires after researching them online.

Members of this audience do most of their online research using devices with large screens. They use a mix of different web mediums for research, including the websites of editorial review publications, competitor sites, vehicle forums, as well as Discount Tire's own site.

When using a search engine to find tires online, they mostly search for vehicle-specific options and iterate on these vehicle-based searches to try to find the best or most-reviewed tire.

How can this information be used to recommend Discount Tire's new WordPress theme?

Information from the analysis of this cross-sectional mixed method survey was employed throughout this document with the explicit goal of recommending Discount Tire's WordPress blog theme based on the data and preferences of its audiences.

The accompanying subject matter and online tire research preference data in this report is intended to help Discount Tire's content experts create and publish posts on its new blog experience that target the root of the topics enthusiast audiences are looking for, in order to maintain and maximize future blog engagement. This document is in essence the answer to this question.

These insights can also be readily called upon in relation to other areas of its online information and content presentation efforts, in addition to the content marketing and larger eCommerce marketing efforts of Discount Tire's OMNI business group.

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Appendix

Demographic Data

Figure 14

Participant Gender Identification

19% Female
81% Male
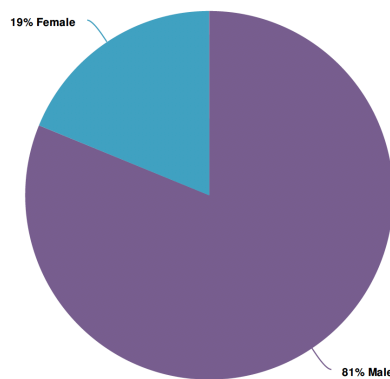
Figure 15

Participant Ages

Please select your age group:

3% 18-28
11% 29-38
21% 39-48
30% 49-58
35% 59+
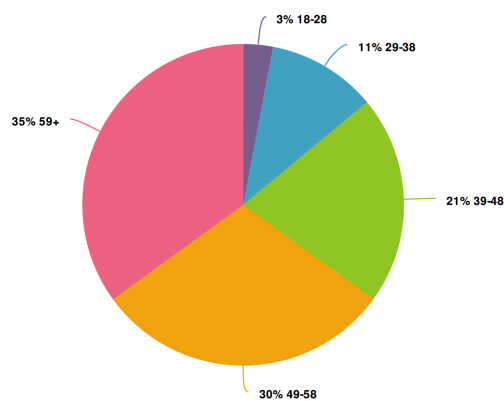
Survey Questions

Quantitative Survey Questions

How many vehicles do you drive?

Do you know the year/make/model of the vehicle(s) you drive?

If yes: please provide the year/make/model of the vehicle(s) in question?

Do you own, currently finance or lease your vehicle(s)?

About how many miles do you drive per year?

Which of the following do you mainly use your vehicle(s) for? Please combine as applicable.

- commuting
- business
- hauling
- recreation
- transporting others (including family members)

How many drivers are in your household? (Over 18 years of age)

Would you purchase tires for someone other than yourself?

If yes: Would you select or attempt to select the model and size of the tires?

Do you expect to purchase tires within the next year?

Qualitative Survey Questions and Prompts

How would you research what kind of tires to purchase? Please explain and list any sources you would use:

Which device would you use to research tires?

If you were going to use a search engine or "Google" the type of tires you think you would need or be interested in, what are the phrases you would use? Please list below:

What online sources do you use for research?

What would it take for you to purchase tires immediately after reading or consuming information about them?

What would make it easier for you to make a decision when researching tires online?

How important is high quality and prominent visual content when researching tires online? Why do you feel this way?

How important is the length and detail of the written description area on a given article or blog post?

How important is the creation date of research article on the topic of tires?

How interested would you be in having content recommended to you on a tire blog?

Is information on a blog post's author important to you?

WordPress Themes

Please rank the level of appeal of each of the following templates. Please comment on what makes each appealing to you in one to two sentences each, as well as what you may not care for. (1 being the best*)

Figure 16
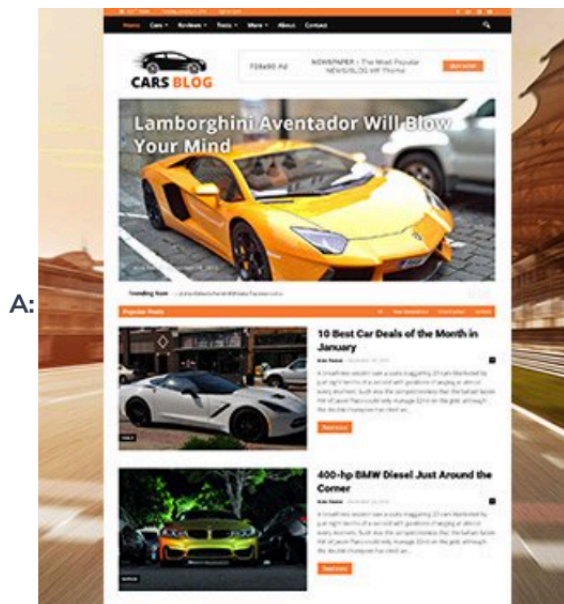
Image A: Newspaper by TagDiv

A:

Figure 17

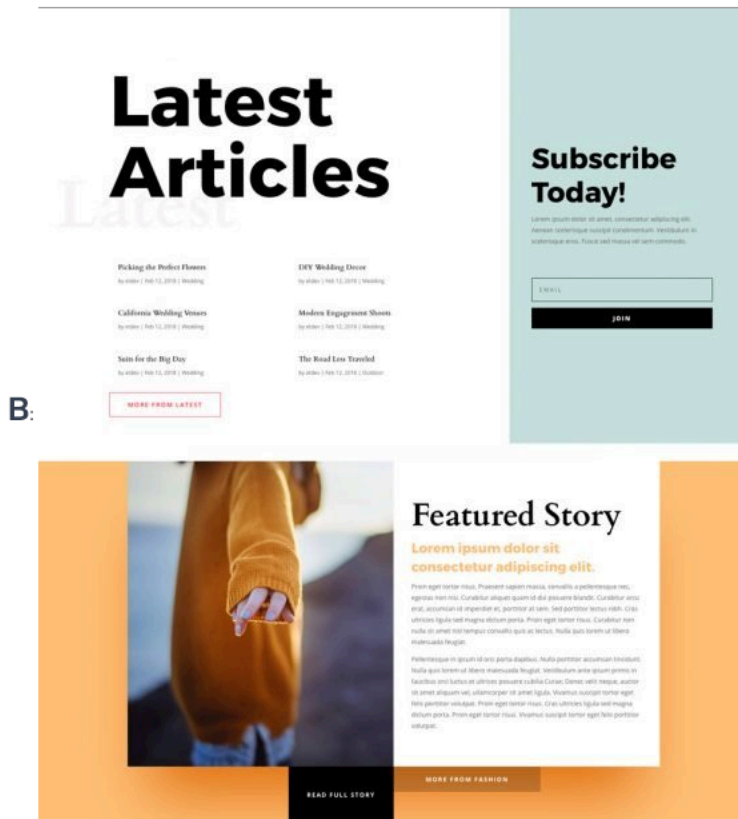*Image B: Magazine Layout by DiVi*
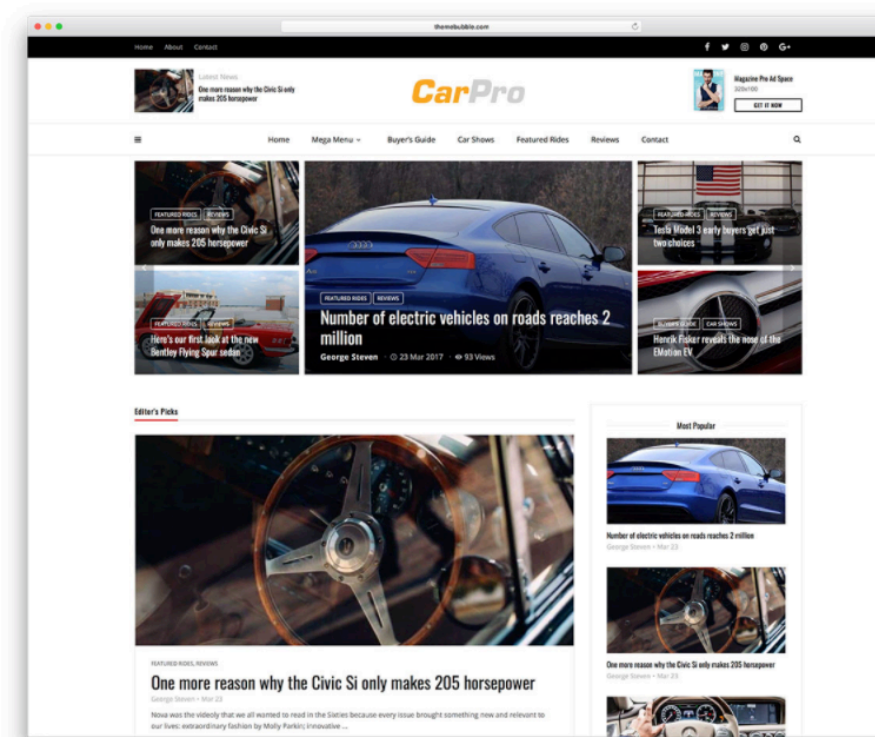
Figure 18

Image C: MagPlus/CarPro by ThemeBubble

Figure 19

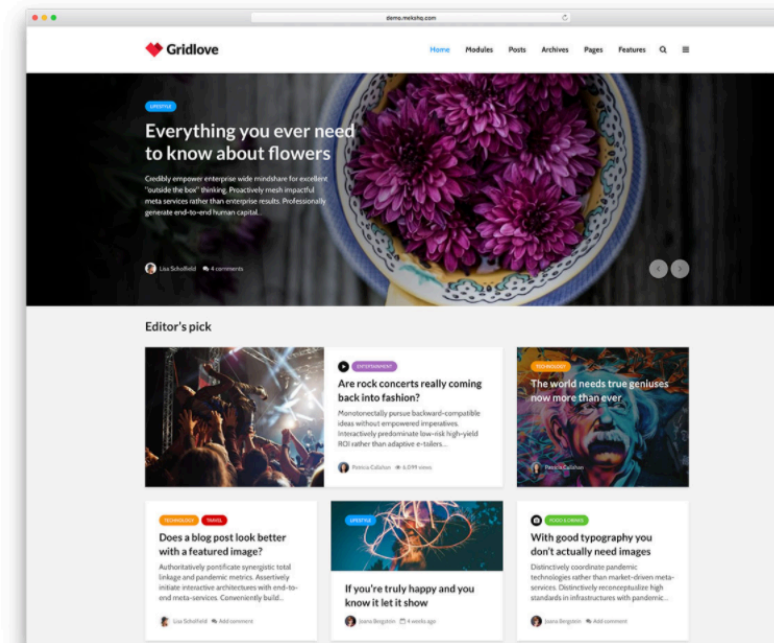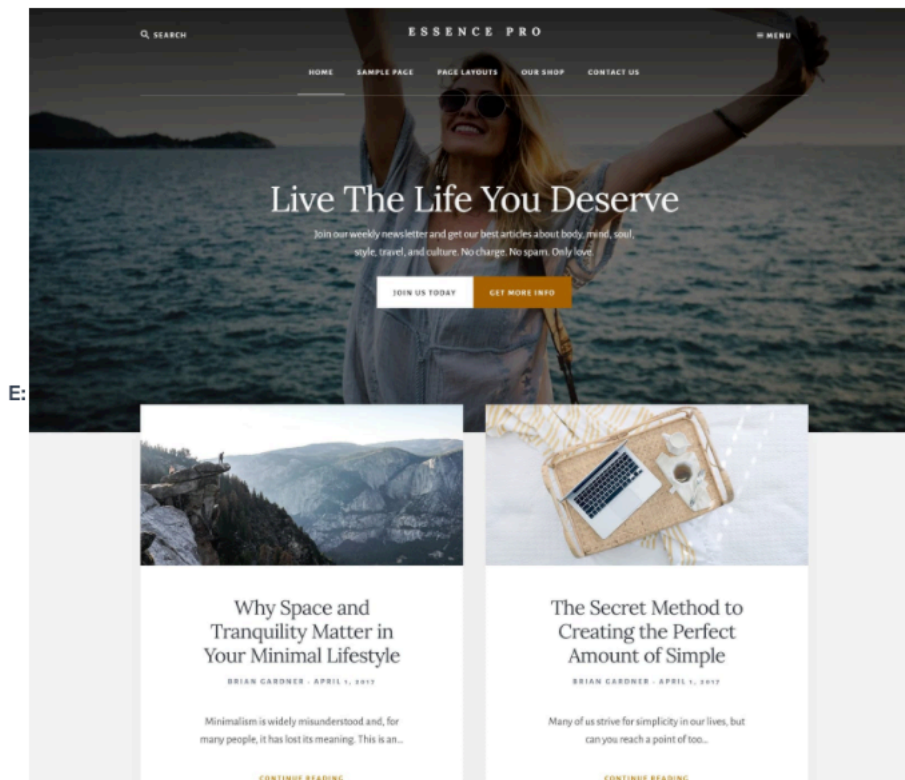*Image D: Gridlove by ThemeForest*

Figure 20

Image E: Essence Pro by StudioPress

WordPress Theme List

- o Image A: Newspaper by TagDiv | link
- o Image B: Magazine Layout by DiVi | link
- o Image C: MagPlus/CarPro by ThemeBubble | link
- o Image D: Gridlove by ThemeForest | link
- o Image E: Essence Pro by StudioPress | link

Demographic information

- Gender
- Age group
  - o 18–28
  - o 29–38
  - o 39–48
  - o 49–58
  - o 59+
- City, state of residence