

Annie Lu
Sparkly Panda Cats
Competitive and Inclusive Design Analysis

The service I chose related to my project was VolunteerMatch.org, a website for nonprofits to recruit anybody looking for new volunteering opportunities. The way this website works is that when you first visit the website, you are prompted to enter your location to find volunteering opportunities near you. A bunch of listings will show up, and you can sort by categories such as in-person/virtual only opportunities, and even add filters such as those relating to a specific cause area or specific skill area (Figure 1).

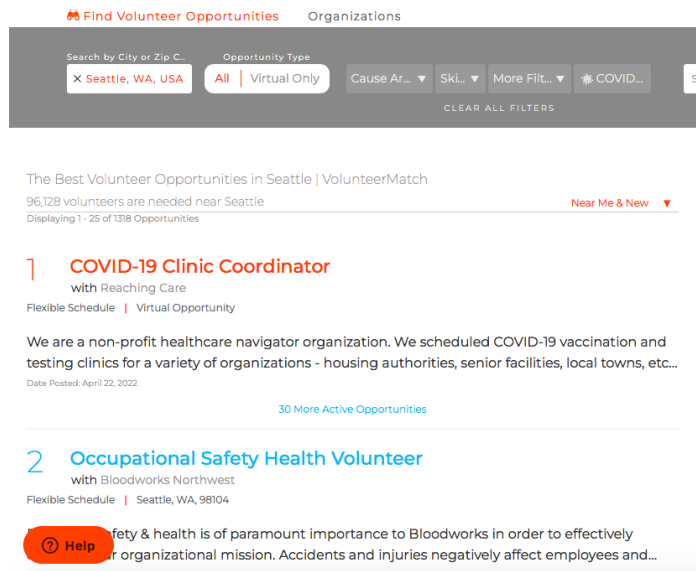


Figure 1: Filtering volunteering opportunities on VolunteerMatch.org based off location [1]

Each listing has information about the event at the top, including scheduling details such as place, time, and date. At the bottom of each event is the company's Mission Statement and a description of the company itself (Figure 2).

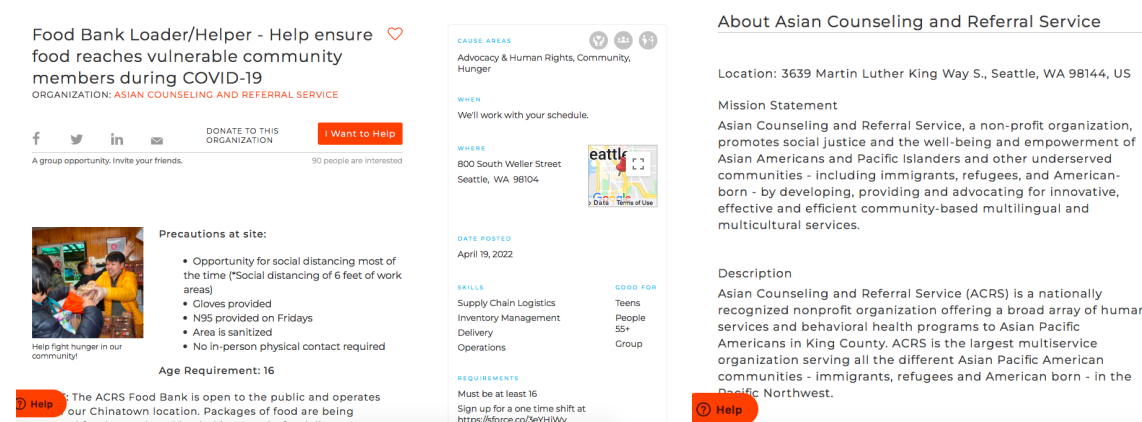


Figure 2: Example of a Asian organization volunteering listing on VolunteerMatch.org [1]

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I chose this service, not only because it was the first option that popped up when I searched “volunteering websites” (which made me assume it was quite popular), but it also had a nice eye-catching color scheme, with a nicely designed layout upon first glance [2]. The text, while a lot, is easy to read, and the colors aren’t distracting. After exploring the website a little bit, the ability to filter out volunteering options was appealing to me, and the option to look for COVID-19 volunteering opportunities was very relevant to our project topic and volunteering during the pandemic in general.

One way this service is effective in its goals is that it allows users to find volunteering opportunities based on their filtered criteria, such as location, values, types of organizations, etc (Figure 1). Listings include info such as cause areas, when, where, requirements, who the opportunity is good for, etc. The listing also has the company’s mission statement and information about the company. Having all the important details about the volunteering opportunity ensures that users who can fit the opportunity into their schedule can partake in it and allows users to plan ahead.

A second way this service is effective in its goals is the fact it has virtual volunteering options, along with a COVID-19 help section (Figure 1). The presence of virtual volunteering options allow people that may not be able to travel and people that are immunocompromised (trying to limit people-to-people contact) to volunteer from the comfort of their own home. The COVID-19 section is a nice addition because it takes into account the pandemic, and encourages people to assist with volunteering regarding the pandemic, opening up more opportunities for the users, and allowing people to help regarding an issue that’s relevant to this day.

One way this service can be improved is by adding more “white space” on the pages. While the website layout is well designed, it is also heavily reliant on text (with a few pictures). A solution that can clean up the layout would be to add more pictures, reduce the amount of text on the home page. For example, the website’s values and statement can be linked to a separate page if users want to read that, and the website can just keep the giant letters with the statistics of number of people helped, etc. Also, in instances such as the picture below, a lot of the tabs are confusing as they are just one word and there are many tabs (Figure 3). Cleaning that up could definitely help users navigate the site better.

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Figure 3: Bottom tabs of VolunteerMatch.org [1]

A second way this service could be improved is to not require users to sign up for an account in order to help (Figure 4). The first inconvenience this brings is the time it takes to sign up and verify an email. This will result in fewer users going through as they don't want to have to go back and forth between their email accounts and these volunteering opportunities. Instead, having a form on the page, inquiring about details such as name and phone number could work much better, so then the user can just give their relevant contact information and volunteer to help right on the spot.

This service does not account for users beyond the normal user. First off, having a website already limits the number of users to only people that have reliable access to the Internet. Considering the user group is volunteers, many do have access to the Internet, but older volunteers who aren't well-equipped with knowledge about the Internet may have trouble accessing this site, and people with sight and mobility issues may have problems reading the abundance of text on the pages/typing information, as there is no speech option for the text. Furthermore, people have to sign up for an account (Figure 4) in order to actually proceed with the volunteering after clicking on the button "I Want to Help" (which appears for every volunteering entry). People who value their privacy that don't want to put their emails/social media accounts and make passwords for sites may not appreciate this feature.

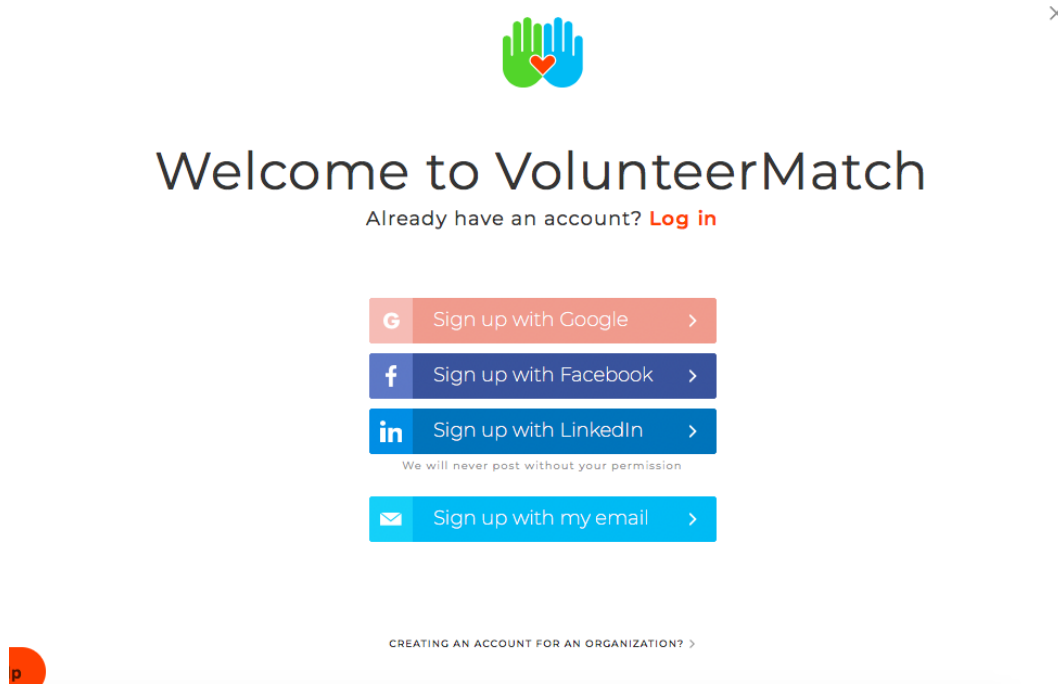


Figure 4: Signing up for VolunteerMatch.org [1]

While the service inclusivity needs more work, the service does a great job taking into account the various forms of human diversity. Many pictures on the site contain different people: men, women and children, POC, young and old people, etc (Figure 5). There are organizations from many different backgrounds (such as the one in Figure 2 seen above), so the site caters to a diverse audience. The site motto is also inclusive, and encourages anyone willing to help to use the website, no matter what their background is (Figure 5).



Figure 5: VolunteerMatch.org company statement [1]

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Sources:

[1] VolunteerMatch, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://volunteermatch.org>

[2] "Want to Give Your Time? Check These 20 Websites for Volunteer Opportunities",
zelos. [Online]. Available: <https://getzelos.com/volunteer-opportunities/>