

A design comparison between Leeds United and Derby County websites.

URL: <http://www.leedsunited.com>

URL: <http://www.dcfco.co.uk/homepage.asp>

Introduction

In this Essay I'm going to review two official football clubs websites, Leeds United FC and Derby County FC. The reason I have chosen this type of site is because I'm a keen sportsman and enjoy football. I don't support either Leeds United or Derby County but feel associated with both teams as I'm at university here in Leeds, and my home city is Derby. Therefore I can criticize and admire the design without being biased.

Firstly I'm going to analyze 'Leeds United' site then 'Derby County'. The areas I will be looking into are

- Navigation
- Style / Design
- Layout
- Advertising
- Colour Scheme
- Contents
- Download time

Leeds United FC Official Website

When the address is entered into the browser an 'enter page' appears which asks if you would like to play football in a competition at 'Elland Road' following the more details link you come across a page where the viewer can enter a team into a six-a-side tournament, but for the pleasure of entering a team you have to pay Leeds United £1000. This I feel is a waste of time as most people visiting the site will be the younger generation and therefore won't be able to find that amount of money for a competition, and this all before entering into the main site.

When I finally got into the site I was bombarded with flashing text and advertising, this I didn't like as it distracted me from what I wanted to look for, like team information fixtures and results. From this advertising I found it hard to navigate around the site. The navigation probably isn't that bad but the way in which the advertising is placed makes it look unpleasant.

In the top right hand corner there is a quick links bar which consists of 6 links, Fixtures Striker, online stores, new tickets betting and latest news. This is a nice idea but I thought it was a hard to find, all of the above are also placed on the very long site map on the bottom left hand side of the home-page. There is a total of 24 links on the main menu which I feel is far too many and looks unprofessional. Some of the more important links could be put into pictures and placed somewhere else so they stand out more and make it easier to navigate around the site. When one of the 24 links is clicked you then get more menu which drops down, this just looks cramped and dense. The less important links could be put into a JavaScript menu so when the mouse moves over the menu extends, this would make the site more user friendly.

The overall design and style of the site is poor. There is no feel of professional design, or thought into the menus and tables as they are all over the place. The site has been centralized which some times is necessary and can look first-class but in this instance just looks overcrowded and teeming with information.

As I have already said there is far too much advertising on the site, some of this is for 'Leeds United' products like the 'Leeds United Store' and other sponsors of 'Leeds United'. The Ladbrokes advertising is fairly productive as it allows the viewer to see what the odds are for the different scores and outcomes. On the right hand side you can actually see what you would win if you placed a bet on a certain score. I like this as it useful and constructive.

The colour scheme should really match the clubs colours, white yellow and blue. I don't feel that the amount of white space is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. If the main colour was blue it would stand out more, and the other two colours could be used subtlety in a way that would look pleasurable.

The Contents of the Leeds United Site is enormous it covers everything any fan wants to know from the 'history' of the club and Elland Road to 'live Commentary' and 'Interactive Information'.

The download time for the site in general was pretty fast even though there is a vast amount of flash on there,

Derby County FC Official Website

When the page loaded up on my browser at a glance it looked very professional with the black background, picture of 'Pride Park' and a graphical look to it with the grey / silver table out-lines. The site has more order to it than that of the Leeds United site, with a clear menu on the left and news headlines down the middle.

The navigation around the site is simple and easy to use. The menu on the left hand side is condense and to the point. On some of the links a drop down menu appears which helps to organize the menu and doesn't allow it to become cluttered and chaotic like that of 'Leeds United'. With this site it has been made with a center frame this is very effective and works well within most browsers. One problem I have with the main navigation menu is the text used; I found it hard to read as the text is small and in a very strange font. It would be better if they kept some continuity throughout the site.

The design of the Derby County site looks professional and skilled; it makes the viewer believe that the team plays football in this way (which isn't true). I really like the way on the right hand side you can look at the next match, league table, fixtures and results and squad details, without much effort in the same frame. There is only one piece of flash on the site this is in the form of a news bar at the top giving a vast amount of information at one click. This looks elegant and helpful.

The colour scheme works excellent, the team's main colour is white same as 'Leeds United' but they chose to use black as their main color and white and yellow in the layout.

There is advertising in the site but not too much, it works well within the layout and doesn't distract from the main object of the site.

The content of the site is also of good quality it has everything, you as a fan would want to know about the club.

Download time is fairly quick; you have to wait a while to play the penalty shoot out but only 15-20- seconds on a 56k modem.