

# CNN.com Relaunch: Case Study

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**CNN.com**

# Why Relaunch?

## Purpose Statement

Relaunch CNN.com to give the user a more compelling and useful destination for news on the Web, utilizing any new technologies, presentation models and business opportunities to improve or advance the experience

## But Really, Why?

- Last major redesign was in 2002
- New technologies coming out that were at our disposal; Core functionality and structure of the site based on 1998 technology
- Lots to “clean up”
- New competitors had emerged and with them competing internal theories on what direction the site should take
- Momentum
- Our boss asked us to

# Where to Start?

## Process Definition

- Defined the steps – wrote a 11-step process document
- Reached out for internal/external help
  - Partnered with Adaptive Path
  - Teamed up with our Internal Research team
  - Divided and conquered research deliverables



# Discovery

- Internal Discovery
- Competitive Analysis
- Persona Development
- User Survey
- User Behavior Data
- Technology Landscape



# Directional Statement

1. Define a new standard for the online news experience
2. Present a unified, comprehensive view of the scope of CNN's brand offerings
3. Focus on content that aligns with user behavior
4. Connect users with content personally relevant to them
5. Maximize the value of CNN's human perspective, assets, and expertise
6. Improve the productivity, agility, and flexibility of CNN.com

# Working Groups

- 8 working groups
- Assigned “mandates” including tasks and deliverables
- Got input from 65+ staff members across the company
- Formalized output into outcomes documentation
- Shared outcomes across all groups in CNN and Turner
- Applied scope reconciliation and distilled outcomes into core feature set

# Cornerstone Concepts



**INTEGRATED  
STORYTELLING**

Providing a multimedia  
news experience




**CONNECTION**

Revealing connections  
between stories



**PARTICIPATION**

Empowering users  
to participate



**PERSONALIZATION**

Connecting users to  
personally relevant  
content



**LINKING**

Being a good  
web citizen

# Cornerstone Concepts

CNN.com / US

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HOME WORLD **U.S.** POLITICS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH TECH TRAVEL LIVING BUSINESS SPORTS TIME.COM CNN VIDEO I-REPORT RSS FEEDS

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Atlanta, GA Mostly Sunny 90° F International Edition

updated 10 minutes ago

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## Relatives hope, pray as river search continues

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- **NEW:** President Bush to visit Minneapolis on Saturday
- Recovery efforts could take five days or longer, officials say
- 20 to 30 people missing, bodies trapped in debris, police chief says
- Four killed, coroner says; 79 people injured

[Next Article in U.S. »](#)

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**MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota (CNN)** – Clutching photographs and license plate numbers, dozens of distraught people Thursday waited for word of their loved ones missing after Wednesday's deadly bridge collapse.



AP PHOTO  
Vehicles are scattered along the broken remains of the Interstate 35W bridge.

1 of 3 more photos »

The Red Cross has set up a family assistance center in the ballroom at the nearby Holiday Inn-Metrodome, where it's offering counseling as authorities try to recover bodies lodged in the wreckage.

As many as 50 vehicles are trapped in the rubble or in the river after the eight-lane interstate bridge collapsed during Minneapolis' evening rush hour. Twenty to 30 people were missing, Minneapolis police Chief Tim Dolan said.

Four people were confirmed dead, and officials said at least 79 people were injured when the Interstate 35W bridge over the Mississippi River buckled.

President Bush on Thursday pledged federal aid to rebuild the bridge, and the White House announced he will visit the disaster site Saturday.

### Master of Arts in Education

- ▶ Administration and Supervision
- ▶ Curriculum and Instruction
- ▶ Computer Education
- ▶ English as a Second Language
- ▶ Early Childhood Education
- ▶ Elementary Teacher Education
- ▶ Secondary Teacher Education
- ▶ Special Education

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STORIES

Most Viewed Most Emailed Top Searches

1 Bridge collapse recovery tedious



CNN.com

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updated Mon July 30, 2007

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## Michael Vick

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### Vick dogfighting co-defendant pleads guilty

A co-defendant in the federal dogfighting case against Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick pleaded guilty Monday morning. full story

#### Video »



Cafferly: Dogfighting outrage

#### Video »



Vick's treatment called crime

#### All About...

- Professional Football
- NFC South Division
- Sports
- Football
- NFL Football
- Special Interest Groups
- Culture and Lifestyle

more topics »

#### 29 Stories on Michael Vick

Search this topic

updated Mon July 30, 2007

Toobin: Vick case plea deal could lead to more charges

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#### STORIES

Most Viewed Most Emailed Top Searches

- At least 4 dead in bridge collapse
- Bridge drivers tell of survival
- Hit man's bullet finds editor
- Legendary Irish singer Makem dies
- R. Kelly to be tried on child...
- I-Reporters capture first images of...
- 'I didn't plan to hurt nobody'
- School bus survives falling bridge
- Reports noted bridge problems



CNN.com

# Cornerstone Concepts



## ▼ Sound Off: Your opinions and comments

- Lindsay**  
updated 5 minutes ago  
I live about a mile from the bridge - I just wanted to tell all the nice folks from other states and countries thank you for your kind words and thoughts. It gives us such a warm and unified feeling to feel all our fe...[more](#)
- Cheryl**  
updated 6 minutes ago  
My heart goes out to all of those injured and to the families of those still unaccounted for. It's unbelievable and so very tragic. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.
- Tanya**  
updated 8 minutes ago  
Living just under a mile from this horrific scene and knowing my family and friends commute everyday through the 35W passway my heart completely sank! While I am fortunate that none of my family and friends were among...[more](#)

See all 50 comments

Post a comment

**CNN.com**

# Cornerstone Concepts



## Local

### Weather >>



Today

HI 94°F | LO 66°F



Tomorrow

HI 93°F | LO 71°F

Atlanta, GA (change)

more cities >

### Local News

- [Woman killed by boss wanted to be a lawyer](#) | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- [Rapist who targeted homeless women gets life without parole](#) | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- [Teen Jailed in Ga. Over Paid Ticket](#) | KSL-TV Salt Lake City
- [Dog Dragged Behind Car](#) | First Coast News
- [CBS46 Investigates: Getting Away With Murder](#) | CBS 46

Atlanta, GA (change)

from Topix.com



## We Recommend

Stories you may be interested in based on past browsing

[Relatives hope, pray as river search continues](#)

[How to quit working on vacation](#)

[Police: Kids were adopted for profit, abused](#)

[CNNMoney: Stealing Starbucks' buzz](#)

[Survey: Why college students have sex](#)

# Cornerstone Concepts



## From the Blogs: Controversy, commentary, and debate

### Blogs linking to this story:

**Guide to  
Midwestern  
Culture**  
2 hours ago

**My mom called me last night (a 20th geographer).**  
My mom called me last night (a 20th geographer) bothered to see if anyone was home on the Mississippi bridge that failed. Since I don't know anyone in the area, I'm probably weird. Ed Munnich has footage of the collapse.

**The People's  
Republic of  
Saskatchewan**  
1 day ago

**Trying to come to grips with the unimagtable**  
I'm not certain if I can get my head around the tragedy. I will say that I've occasionally said about it: Having grown up in Minnesota and gone to college in DC, Paul and having lived about two miles from the I-35W bridge, I can't tell you how often I've fantasized that bridge over the years. As I see the growing collection of photos, and as I read...

**Big Deeper Tease**  
7 hours ago

**Bridge collapse**  
As many as 30 vehicles are trapped in the rubble of an Interstate bridge collapse, and officials said Thursday it could take five days or longer to reach the wreckage. Four people were confirmed dead, and officials said at least 22 people were injured when the 3,500-ton bridge over the Mississippi River collapsed during the Wednesday eve.

### Blogs talking about this topic:

**JSM Cafe by  
JSMC**  
10 hours ago

**JSM Cafe: Originals by JSMC**  
Bloggessess + Current Events + Blog + Post 404331/ JSM Cafe: Originals Thursday August 2, 2007 Breaking News - "Tragically 30 lives Minnesota (CNN) - At least seven people were killed when an Interstate bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, collapsed.

**Anything &  
Everything**  
2 days ago

**\*\*BREAKING... Minneapolis Bridge Collapses During Bush H...**  
Aug 1st, 2007 by Chris MINCAPICCI - The massive 35W Mississippi River bridge over University Avenue has collapsed into the river and onto backstreets underneath the highway. Both the northbound and southbound lanes of 35W are bogged in the Mississippi River. There are multiple cars in the river and a house care on...

**The Daily  
Random**  
18 hours ago

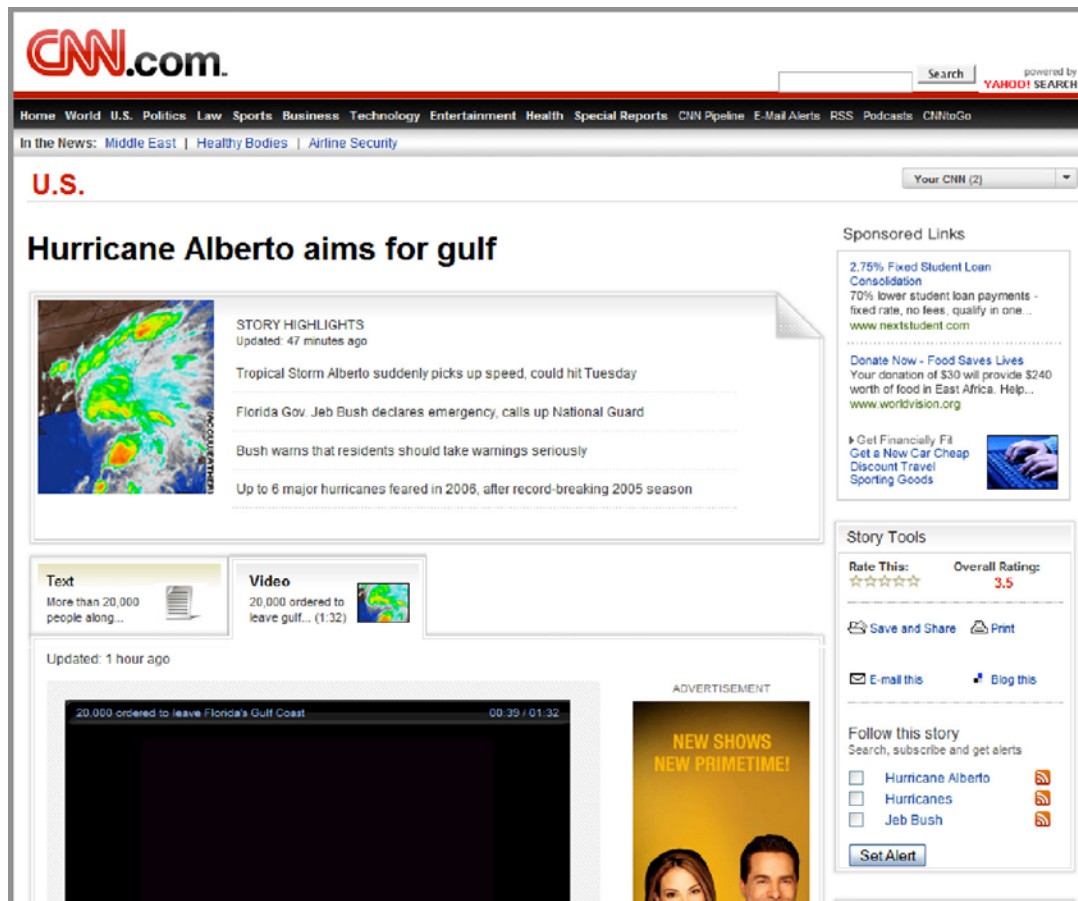
**Bridge Collapse claims the lives of 7, more feared dead or m...**  
BRIDGE COLLAPSE CLAIMS 7 LIVES, MORE MAY BE MISSING OR DROWNED The eight-lane Interstate 35W bridge, a major Minneapolis artery, was in the midst of being repaired and two lanes in each direction were closed when the bridge is closed. "There were two lanes of traffic, bumper to bumper, at the point of the collapse. Three cars fell in..."





# Prototypes and Design Iterations

- Created a conceptual prototype to test in lab setting



Discovered key findings about ad models, user acceptance of storytelling models, and more

# Prototypes and Design Iterations


- When design was complete, applied visual layer to prototype
- Design agency refined design based upon outcomes

The screenshot shows a CNN.com article titled "Snoop Dogg arrested after 'Tonight Show' performance". The article is dated "updated 3 min ago" and includes a list of bullet points: "Police: Charges include possession of a gun, cocaine and marijuana", "AP: Snoop was in car pulling out of NBC when police stopped him", "Lawyer: Rapper 'innocent' and has been freed on bail, AP reports", and "Arrest is latest of several run-ins with police this year". The article text mentions that Snoop Dogg was arrested on weapons and narcotics charges after his performance on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno". It also notes that Burbank police Sgt. Kevin Grandalski said the charges include possession of a gun, cocaine, and marijuana, and that Snoop Dogg is accused of having a false compartment in a vehicle. The article further states that Tuesday's incident was the latest of several arrests for Snoop Dogg, whose real name is Calvin Broadus. It mentions that he was pulled over shortly after appearing on NBC's "The Tonight Show" and performing songs "That's That S...!" and "I Want to Love." A "Watch Snoop Dogg leave the police station with his entourage" video is embedded. The article also notes that the 35-year-old musician from Sherman Oaks has sold more than 17 million records and starred in films. A "Snoop Dogg Talks" video is also featured, with a caption: "Donald Etra, the rapper's attorney, told The Associated Press that...".

Activity Comments 232 | Viewed 204,232 times

ARTICLE | VIDEOS | PHOTOS

LOS ANGELES, California (CNN) Police arrested rapper [Snoop Dogg](#) on weapons and narcotics charges after his performance Tuesday on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno."

 Burbank police Sgt. Kevin Grandalski said the charges include possession of a gun, cocaine and marijuana. He also is accused of having a false compartment in a vehicle. The weapons charge is a felony.

Tuesday's incident was the latest of several arrests for Snoop Dogg -- whose real name is Calvin Broadus. Police pulled his vehicle over shortly after he appeared on NBC's "The Tonight Show" and performed songs "That's That S...!" and "I Want to Love." [Watch Snoop Dogg leave the police station with his entourage](#) (0:45)

The 35-year-old musician from Sherman Oaks has sold more than 17 million records and starred in films.

In 1990, Snoop Dogg was convicted on a felony narcotics possession charge for trying to sell cocaine.

**Snoop Dogg Talks** Donald Etra, the rapper's attorney, told The Associated Press that...

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# Being flexible



# Implementation

- Implementation challenges of “Chicken and Egg” scenarios between requirements, development, and dates
- Solution: Picked our dates. Made a schedule working back from a launch date
- Refined schedule and process to include ALL aspects of the project including stakeholder reviews, time to make changes after reviews, etc.
- Set a train in motion for folks to jump on

# Next Step - Moved Out!

- Team was sequestered; “Relaunch Protection Program” began








# Site Specifications

- Used Wiki-style tool for requirements – a HUGE success

CNN.com. 17.06 Popular news

Added by [Karyn Lu](#), last edited by [Lori Adams](#) on Feb 01, 2007

#	Mockup	Description
17.6.1	<b>Popular News</b>  <a href="#">Britney Spears exposes herself in paparazzi photos</a>  <a href="#">Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade threatened by weather</a>  <a href="#">U.S. moving up to 2,700 troops into Baghdad</a>  <a href="#">Elderly woman survives alligator attack, loses arm</a>  <a href="#">Sea World trainer in fair condition after killer whale attack</a> <a href="#">all most popular &gt;</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First 3 bullets = the 3 popular stories (based upon rules below) that lead to the appropriate default in the mosaic, and last 2 = popular videos (based upon rules below) leading to the BVP</li><li>• Window of popularity is based upon previous 3 hours (may need to expand this based on testing)</li><li>• Stories in Popular News should not duplicate stories in the T2s</li><li>• Note this area will require different logic from the most popular page</li><li>• Placement is flexible depending on home page configuration</li><li>• "all most popular" link takes user to the most popular page</li><li>• Icons will appear in Popular news to denote any mosaics that do not lead with text; headline and icon combination should not wrap past 2 lines</li></ul>

**Comments** [\(Hide\)](#)

What should happen if there is not an valid ft4 image associated with the story?

Posted by [Simit Shah](#) at May 11, 2007 09:19 | [Permalink](#) | [Reply To This](#)

- Eventually moved requirements into a ticketing system

# CNN.com Beta

## Beta Goals

- Assessment of user behavior & traffic patterns
- Obtain user feedback
- Resolve bugs
- Surface workflow issues
- Test all content scenarios
- Load & platform testing to see how new services performed
- Library of some content types
- Test of ad functionality

## Internal Beta

- CNN Worldwide President sent out company-wide note inviting staff to view beta
- Collected feedback, fixed bugs based upon this roll out

## Public Beta

- Rolled beta out to public
- Created/launched site tour and “behind the scenes” blog
- Obtained user feedback and tweaked presentation accordingly

# Beta Feedback Study

- 3 stages of feedback
  - Baseline
  - Beta
  - Post-launch

http://ccc01.opinionlab.com - Comment Card - Microsoft Internet Explorer

**CNN.com.** We are always looking for ways to improve your website experience to make it more useful and enjoyable. Just complete the questions below, click Submit, and you're done!

Page Comments	Rate This Page											
Choose a topic for your comments... After you rate this page, please enter any comments you have about your ratings, or any suggestions for improvement. 1000 characters remaining.	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th></th><th>disagree</th><th>agree</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Engaging</td><td>-- - +- + ++</td></tr><tr><td>Visually appealing</td><td>-- - +- + ++</td></tr><tr><td>Easy to use</td><td>-- - +- + ++</td></tr><tr><td>I would recommend this page to others</td><td>-- - +- + ++</td></tr></tbody></table>		disagree	agree	Engaging	-- - +- + ++	Visually appealing	-- - +- + ++	Easy to use	-- - +- + ++	I would recommend this page to others	-- - +- + ++
	disagree	agree										
Engaging	-- - +- + ++											
Visually appealing	-- - +- + ++											
Easy to use	-- - +- + ++											
I would recommend this page to others	-- - +- + ++											
It's easy to find stories in the format (text, video, etc) I prefer	-- - +- + ++											
It's easy to find news about topics I am interested in	-- - +- + ++											
The information is timely and up-to-date	-- - +- + ++											
It's easy to find information that's relevant to me	-- - +- + ++											
I found the advertising on this page ...	Please choose one... -- - +- + ++											

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Submit

Done Internet

# Launch

- Used July 4 weekend to our advantage
- Not as scary as had thought, due to beta period
- Continued collection of user feedback
- Still working on post-launch tickets



# Recap: User Involvement

## Discovery Phase

- User Survey
- Qualitative Interviews
- Persona Development
- Traffic Analysis

## Conceptual Prototype Phase

- Usability Testing Round 1

## Visual Prototype

- Usability Testing Round 2

## Pre-Beta Phase

- Baseline Comment Cards

## Beta

- Beta Comment Cards
- Behind the Scenes Blog

## Post-Launch

- Post-Launch Comment Cards
- Behind the Scenes Blog
- Continued Informal Testing
- Traffic Analysis

## More to Come...

# Why We'll Never Do this Again

- Set up of agile processes
- Staff and momentum in place to stay moving forward
- Will continue to release “relaunch” features that were not in the first release in phased batches
- State of constant relaunch

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