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Capstone Seminar

Context and Description

Antone's music venue is a historic home of the Blues in Austin Texas, placing it in one of the most influential music cities in the United States. Furthermore, its location in Texas places it in a unique area in regards to a history of conflicted southern history in the United States. The music venue's main draw to audiences is that it advertises itself as an authentic home of the blues, and lays claim to being among the first venues to open its doors to the genre. The venue advertises its business through a multitude of media, including Instagram, websites, merchandise, and several other media. For the purposes of this project, I will be focusing on how the company website advertises the authentic identity that is a key to Antone's success as a business. As a privately owned business, it is important to remember that the main goal of the management is to gain profit. Through the advertisement of "authenticity", Antone's venue is striving to create a consumable brand out of the blues through the selling of tickets and merchandise. Regardless of the intent of the original owners or current management, Antone's is more than a home for blues. It is a business that seeks to sell a genre of music to audiences and is successful at doing so partly due to its history as an authentic venue. This makes the site a very productive space for analysis under the communications studies major. The reasons for this reconnect us to the conflicted history of the south and the place of blues music in Texas. Due to the systematic racism which stems from

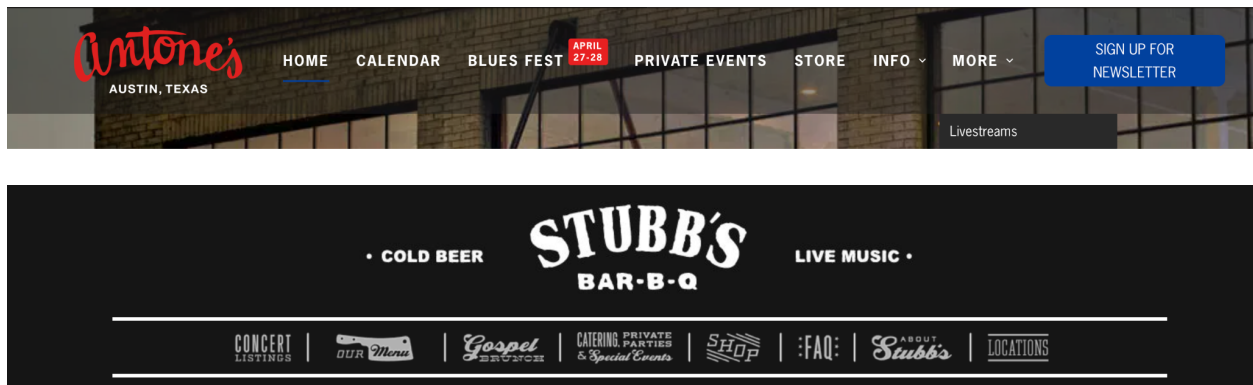
a long time frame of slavery, segregation, confederacy presence, and generational racism, the study of blues music must be interconnected with the study of race. This train of thought leads us to raise the question of authenticity of the blues, and what this authenticity looks like in the present day. In the academic work surrounding blues music, the question of authenticity is raised over and over again, and it is an important question to discuss. Blues is a genre of music that is interconnected to folk, gospel, country, and has influences on hip hop and modern rap. However, historically in its origins it was predominantly practiced and listened to in black communities. As white communities began to adapt and interpret the blues, there was a rising trend of blues music being practiced by such communities. blues music has risen in popularity, and as mentioned has connections to a large blend of genres, but its origins are mainly found in black communities. It is important to note that once media is shared, it shall be interpellated by audiences and no amount of media framing can fully predict how audiences react. As the genre of blues rose in popularity, it is inevitable that it should be practiced by people who fall outside the bounds of the communities from which it originates. This is not an inherently negative reality and it is important to understand that, however it is just as important to honor the people who first adapted this music and remember the tragic past from which blues music comes from. Explaining this historical context is essential to understanding Antone's site as a productive site for analysis by a communications scholar. A main pillar of communication scholarship is noticing the interconnectedness of race and ethnicity portrayed in different areas of media, and studying how these connections function in our world. This being an essential component of communication scholarship, Antone's venue in Austin is a site perfect for

analysis. Now that we have some understanding of the pertinence of race to blues music, the southern United States, and communications scholarship, questions on the construct of authenticity advertised by Antone's must be asked. This paper will show analysis on how Antone's music venue constructs a sense of authenticity as a blues venue through the site and rhetorical analysis of the businesses official website. Further analysis will also be performed on the physical venue of Antone's later on, however this shall connect to the themes found in the website. This physical on site analysis will be done to further develop the research done on the website and find links between the media portrayed online and the actual physical site. However, analysis cant simply be done by addressing the website as a whole, and it is important to break down the site of analysis into sections. In this paper the various sections of Antone's website will be explained to the reader, illustrating the different components that will be analyzed.

As mentioned, the main research object of this paper is the official Antone's website. As mentioned, a main purpose of this website is to promote the shows and merchandise created by the business for public consumption. Of course this does not make it an unusual website and is a very standard base for most music venue websites. Similarities between Antone's website and other music venues are important to note in order to illustrate the common trends within websites of this nature.

The website has a very similar layout compared to other notable music venues in the Austin area. When opening the website the viewer is shown immediately to the upcoming concert listings. From this point, the viewer can also visit the merchandise tab, the event calendar, organize private events, or read the historical context of the venue. Such tabs are common in any venue's website, and we can see similar tabs

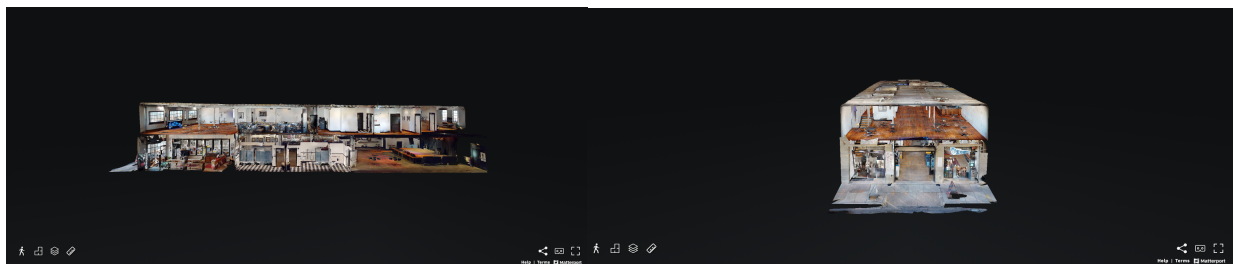
listed in the Stubbs venue website, another notable venue with characteristics similar to Antone's. Below, there is a side by side comparison of the two venues website headings from which the visitor may explore. A main difference worth noting is that while Antone's advertises itself as an authentic home of the blues, Stubbs advertises itself as an authentic venue of Texas BBQ. However, the website clearly shows how it is a site for live music as well in the website heading, and portrays themes of rustic texas authenticity.

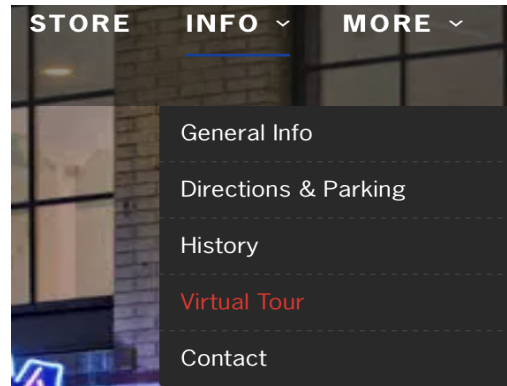
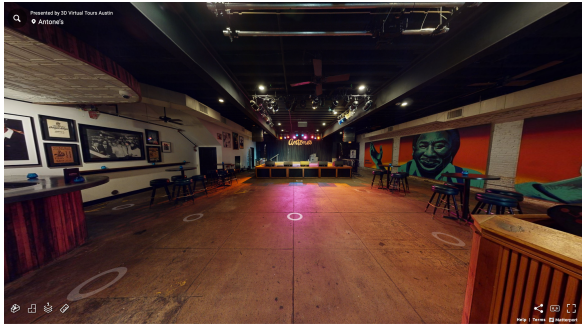


This comparison is made to show how stubbs compares to another venue which promotes itself as an authentic home of a Texas product. Although different in font and website design, we see similarities between the general lay out of the website heading. Options for tickets, sponsored/private events, merchandise, and historical information are available. Below we can see a website for a different nature of venue, a venue called Emos. This website advertises a Houston founded location that opened a location in austin for punk and edm shows to be held. Below we see the Emos website heading.



Although there are some similar themes between Emos and Antone's website such as font and heading sections, we see a drastically different venue portrayal. This brief comparison shows how Antone's official website similarly compares to other venues of "authentic texas" nature, and how it illustrates how it compares to other sites of music outside of blues, folk, or country. One extreme difference between Antone's venue and other websites of its nature is that it comes with an in depth 3d recreation of the venue. This is an interactive model that allows for viewers to tour the venue remotely. This feature is found underneath the tab labeled "info" and can be accessed at the website heading. Unique features such as this create an interactive digital space and are an important to note in Antone's web design.





Antone's website functions for a business for profit which promotes an air of authenticity. This construct of authenticity is advertised through a vintage aesthetic that is seen through the photos provided in the website and the clothing that is being sold. In the case of Antone's this vintage aesthetic attributes to an air of authenticity by promoting Antone's as an old establishment. This seems to be a main theme in the branding of Antone's as it promotes authenticity through vintage branding.

.Antone's itself is a music venue which opened on 6th street in 1975, long before 6th street was considered one of the vibrant nightlife areas of Austin Texas. It later moved to Gaudalupe, and is now settled in 5th street only a few blocks away from the original location. The club was opened by Clifford Antone and went on to be the host of artists such as B.B. King, Stevie Ray Vaughn, and the fabulous thunderbirds. The website's history is difficult to fully describe as there is no certain creation date listed for public viewing. However, it is a focus of the website to advertise the history of the venue to the public and educate audiences about the history of the club. Antone's website strives to discuss the significance of the club in past years to the genre of blues, and strives to keep this historic venue alive.

This mission is in part accomplished through the maintenance of Antone's website, with the website's purpose to explain the authenticity of the club as a historic home of the blues and gain capital to keep the doors open. The process of maintaining the website is in collaboration with other businesses that focus on website development and merchandise. The website management company which designed Antone's website is <https://friendlywp.com/>, which specializes in website design for various industries. There is also collaboration between Antone's venue and Big Henry's Record and Vinyl store. This is the business which sells Antone's clothing and other merchandise, and is also a physical piece of Antone's music hall. Furthermore on Antone's website there is the advertisement for the "Austin Blues fest" which takes place in Zilker park and is organized by Waterloo Green way. This is a music venue separate from Antone's and takes place in Austin's public parks for all to see.

More in reference to blues in academia and how these discussions connect to the idea of authenticity which Antone's constructs

Antone's music venue and its construct of authenticity will provide a research opportunity that will branch into many subjects related to communication studies. Some of these will certainly include history of gender, masculinity, and race in my study of the history of blues research. As I connect these themes to my research, I imagine the definition of authenticity in blues will include broadening an understanding of such concepts and understanding how blues performance at Antone's is related. Of course this will mainly be observed through the website and media produced through it, however it is important to relate this research to the many applicable connections and understand the history of blues. One of the biggest questions from this project will be

what is authenticity in regards to the blues? This will need to be better understood before a true explanation of how Antone's website actually constructs authenticity can really be created. It is also worth noting how they brand this definition of authenticity through products and media to create a profit. Furthermore, as race will play a pertinent role in this project and in answering the question of authenticity, it is important to ask how does the website emphasize itself as a place for people of color to play music through the media it produces. This also begs the question of how the club promotes blues as a genre, and how it has opened its space up to more than strictly authentic blues.

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