

# Usability Study

## Recommendations

[www.hardyhousegames.com](http://www.hardyhousegames.com)



Jordan Ottesen

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# Executive Summary

The goal of this study is to make redesign recommendations for [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com). To make such recommendations, it was necessary to gain clarity about Hardy House Games' website users through research and analysis, discover usability issues with their website through iterative usability testing, and analyze said issues. With the research and testing in place, the recommendations are sound. By implementing the recommendations listed in this report, [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com) can become a more compelling website that better engages users, drives a larger audience, and leaves users feeling satisfied with their visit.

## Introduction

Hardy House Games is an indie board game development company. They are developing a new strategy/bluffing game, and working to establish themselves as experts in the field through strategy videos and blog posts.

Their website ([hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com)) was in need of a redesign. While users generally found their way around the website, there were notable usability issues with the blog and game content pages. Users commonly struggled finding the information they were looking for or didn't notice the information that Hardy House games was trying to communicate. Many links on the website were superfluous or completely dysfunctional. The site had a general "inexperienced" feel.

The redesign required user research and evaluations. Understanding how users perceive and interact with the site through research and usability testing allowed for educated design decisions. The proposed redesign is built on the findings from this process.

# Methodology

## Research

### Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder analysis was conducted to determine stakeholders of [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com). Key stakeholders include the co-founders, game designers, blog authors, website design, board game advertiser, website visitor, and board game illustrator. Many of these roles are filled by the same people, but the stakes they hold in the website differ based on the hats they were.

Some of the major findings in this analysis are listed here:

- The website's main purpose is to help sell the new game. This mattered to the founders, designers, and advertisers.
- The blog's core purpose to most stakeholders was to communicate professionalism and expertise, both as a deliverer and recipient of this communication.
- The main value the website provides to users is clarity and details about the flagship board game. Everything else was secondary.

The full stakeholder analysis can be found in Appendix A.

### Heuristic Evaluation

A heuristic evaluation was conducted on [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com) using [Nielsen Norman's 10 Heuristics for User Interface Design](#). The findings were generally positive. The website had very few visibility issues, gave the user good control and freedom, and was extremely minimalist in look and feel. The main issues found here were in relation to errors. The website struggled a bit in preventing errors, and error recognition and recovery was difficult for users. The full heuristic evaluation can be found in Appendix B.

## User Research

Using google forms, a survey was conducted with target users to better understand the way they see and use the website. Questions were both qualitative and quantitative. 6 participants responded. Key findings of the survey are shown here:

- The majority of users had only been on the website once. This is likely common for a board game website where users will only ever visit a few times to check out the flagship game (Rus) and sign up for updates.
- While each user had a different set of reasons for visiting Hardy House Games, every one of them was there to find out more information on the flagship game.
- The homepage was a common pain point for users. Many of them wanted more content and clarity about the purpose of the website.
- Exploration wasn't much of a problem. For a website that's structured for simplicity, this makes sense.
- A common request was more updates on the design of the new game.
- Almost all users were males between the ages of 25-34 (i.e. dads).
- Every user had varying levels of daily internet usage indicating that the site should accommodate both the internet fiend and the casual passerby.

Full results of the user research can be found in Appendix C.

## Content Inventory and Audit

A full content inventory and audit was performed to provide a clear map of the current website. The majority of the website's content is found in the blog, though the majority of the traffic goes to just a couple pages: the homepage and board game details page.

Most issues were in relation to blog post thumbnails, as some had none and were difficult to find. Additionally, a "shopping" page was found, though it was a completely blank page. Hardy House Games is not selling their game yet, so the page only served to confuse users.



The audit revealed many “red flag” pages that were on the radar for usability testing and complete removal. It also provided a clear picture of each part of the website, allowing for clearer data tracking in usability tests.

## Personas

Four personas were made using the information gathered from the user research. Each persona represented an audience that had different reasons and perspectives when visiting [hardhousegames.com](http://hardhousegames.com). The four personas are listed here:

- Game Geek Garrett
- Casual Gamer Catherine
- Reviewer Ryan
- Supportive Mom Susan

All personas are shown in detail in Appendix D.

## User Stories

User stories were generated using the developed personas. The user stories addressed each of the persona’s goals when interacting with the website. The stories centered around discovering information about the flagship board game, testing out the game, discovering and finding value in the blog, and contacting Hardy House Games. A full list of user stories can be found in Appendix E.

## Initial Usability Testing

### Testing Materials

Usability testing materials for the original website were developed based on the user stories. Testing materials included a consent form, pre-test questionnaire, scenario list, task list, post-test questionnaire, test script, observation sheet, and test plan. All testing materials for the usability test of the original website can be found in Appendix F.

### Test Administration

Usability tests were conducted on the existing site using the above mentioned testing materials. All 4 personas were represented in the 5 test participants. 12 tasks in total were

tested and 10 usability issues were discovered. Most issues were related to either downloading the board game's printable file or finding blog posts. The tests had a 94% success rate and on average took a little less than 7 minutes each.

A full report of the test can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Q6CB0mBNTZxZ6Gu7Tveau8U0vdpdukS-abUOd5HXWE5Y/edit?usp=sharing>

## Prototype Development

Based on findings from the first round of usability tests, a prototype was developed to address key usability issues. Due to the nature of hardyhousegames.com (a site created in Squarespace) the prototype was created and hosted on the domain directly as hardyhousegames.com/home-prototype. A full list of prototype edits can be found in Appendix G.

## Prototype Testing Materials

Testing materials were created to test the new scenarios. Materials included the original consent form used in the previous usability test, pre-test questionnaire, scenarios, tasks, post-test questionnaire, test script, observation sheet, and test plan. All prototype testing materials can be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rLr8xGu5x8uD63SMZNes94kqW94ucquw?usp=sharing>

# Results

While the prototype usability test uncovered some new usability issues, the majority of the findings were positive and served to validate the adjustments made in the prototype. Nearly all usability issues that were found in the first usability test were nullified in the prototype. All but one of the new issues found were minor.

Data was collected through the observational sheets and logged into the previously mentioned spreadsheet.

## Participant Information

- Both participants stated that they'd be more likely to visit the site on desktop than on their phone. (Google Analytics data shows 54% of users in the past 6 month used desktop).
- Both participants were between the ages 20-30.
- While each participant had their own game preferences, both listed 7 Wonders and Sagrada as two of their favorites.
- Both participants have a bachelor's degree.
- Both participants did not visit any other board game sites this month.
- One participant was female, the other was male.
- One participant played board games over 4 times in the last month, the other had only played twice.

## Quantitative Findings

Category	Metric	User 1	User 2
Average Time To Complete Task (In Seconds)	Find Game	10	8
	Find Download	5	6
	Download Game	11	7
	Find Rulebook	5	3
	Download Rulebook	11	8
	Find Blog	3	3
	Find Post	5	4
	Open Post	3	2
	Find Homepage	1	1
Completion Rate	Scenario 1	100%	100%
	Scenario 2	100%	100%

	Scenario 3	100%	100%
Feedback	Issues Found	4	3
	Suggestions Made	4	4
	Positive Comments Logged	6	4
	Negative Comments Logged	2	4

## Qualitative Findings

### Issues

Issues discovered in the usability test are shown here:

Scope	Issue	Severity
Game Details Page	Zip file download might appear malicious.	Major Issue
Homepage	Opening paragraph feels irrelevant and misdirecting.	Minor Issue
Blog	Post might be hard to find if more blog posts are created.	Minor Issue
Main Navigation	YouTube icon in the top right was ignored.	Minor Issue
Main Navigation	User left the site to find Hardy House Games blog content.	Minor Issue

### Suggestions

Scope	Suggestion	Severity
Blog	Add a search bar to the top of the blog page for easier navigation.	Strong Suggestion
Full Site	Add color and visual interest to the site. It currently feels boring and sparse.	Strong Suggestion

Game Details Page	Help user identify that the rulebook is included in the printable download.	Suggestion
Game Details Page	Move the printable download button towards the top of the page so user doesn't need to scroll.	Suggestion
Game Details Page	Create preview content on the website itself for users to see before they download the printable file.	Suggestion
Game Details Page	Add iconography to download buttons.	Suggestion

## Positive Comments

- The site feels cleanly organized and easy to navigate.
- There's lots of good detail about the board game.
- The buttons are large and easy to find.
- The grid system layout for the blog posts makes it easier to find relevant posts.
- The contact page is simple and easy to use.
- The link to YouTube at the top of the blog page is convenient.
- The social media links in the main navigation communicate professionalism.

## Negative Comments

- The site seems sparse.
- The zip file download for the printable game seems untrustworthy.
- This company seems young and inexperienced.
- Why isn't there a search bar?

# Recommendations

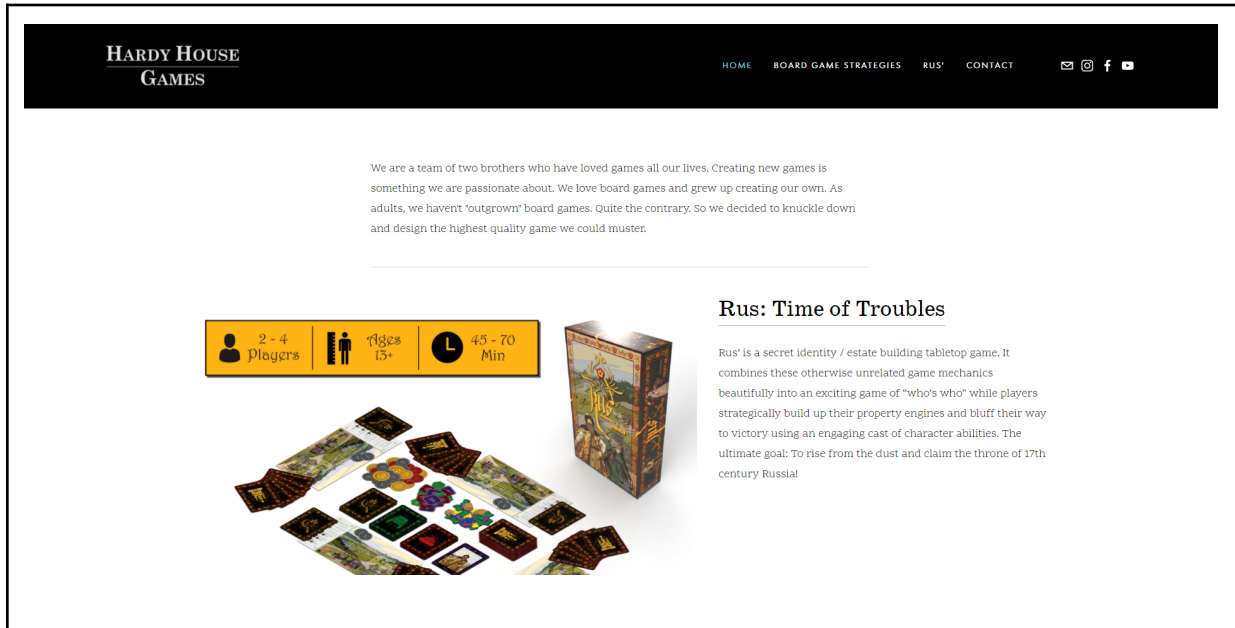
## Recommendation Summary

A summary of all recommendations are listed here, then given more detail in the following section.

- Embed the rulebook into the PnP (print and play) file, thus removing the need for a Zip file.
- Change the text in the PnP button to say "download rulebook and Print and Play."
- Include photos of game designers on the homepage.
- Replace the homepage opening paragraph with a simple and compelling tagline.
- Add iconography to download buttons in the game details page.
- Add a preview of the game to the game details page.
- Add a search bar to the blog parent page.
- Categorize blog posts to make browsing easier.
- Include more metadata about blog posts in the parent page (author, first sentence, post date).
- Format post text to make blog posts easier to navigate and understand.
- Include more photos in the blog posts.
- Add more relevant external links to the blog posts.
- Cross reference other posts from Hardy House Games within blog content.
- Embed YouTube videos from Hardy House Games' channel in the posts.
- Change the YouTube link icon to the full YouTube logo.
- Add more imagery of Hardy House Games' projects to the home page.
- Create a colorized version of the Hardy House Games logo.
- Implement a color pallet of 3-5 colors to use throughout the site on buttons, headers, etc.
- Add a video background banner to the homepage.
- Schedule weekly blog content to keep the site up-to-date.

# Recommendation Details

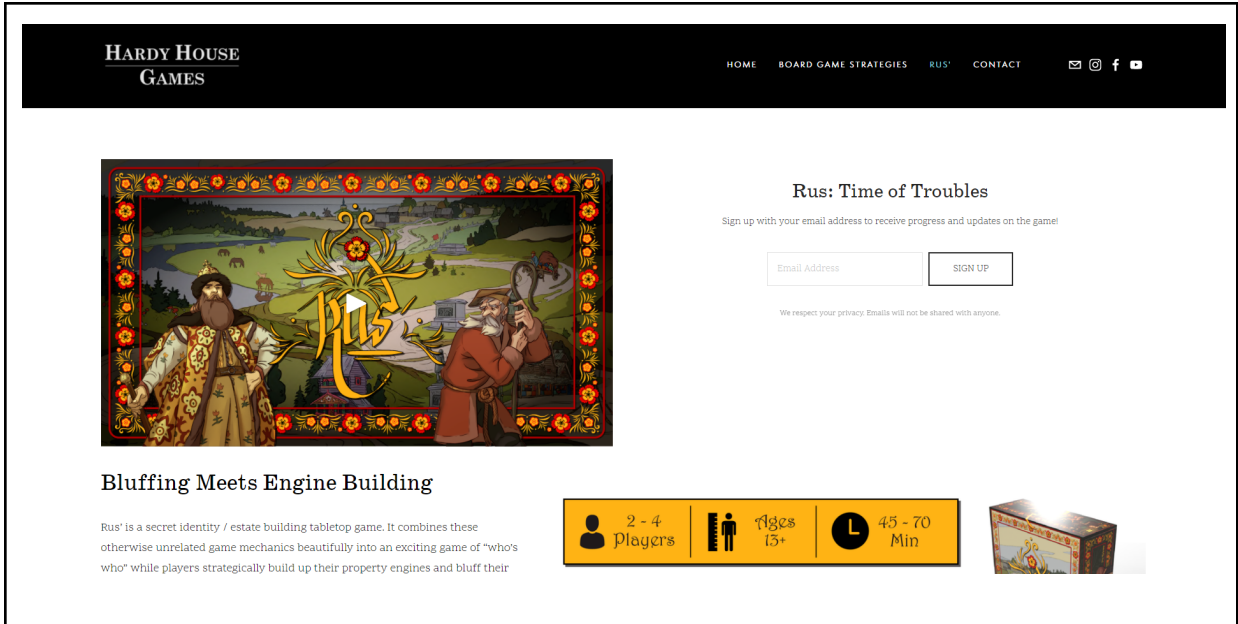
## Homepage Recommendations



Recommendation	Issue(s) Addressed
Replace the homepage opening paragraph with a simple and compelling tagline.	Opening paragraph feels irrelevant.
Include photos of game designers on the homepage.	Homepage landing view is not compelling.
Add a video background banner to the homepage.	Site feels sparse and boring.
Implement a color pallet of 3-5 colors to use throughout the site on buttons, headers, etc.	Site feels sparse and boring.
Create a colored version of the Hardy House Games logo.	Site feels sparse and boring.
Add more imagery of Hard House Games' projects to the home page.	Site feels sparse and boring.

<p>Change the YouTube link icon in the main nav to the full YouTube logo.</p>	<p>YouTube icon in top right was ignored.</p>
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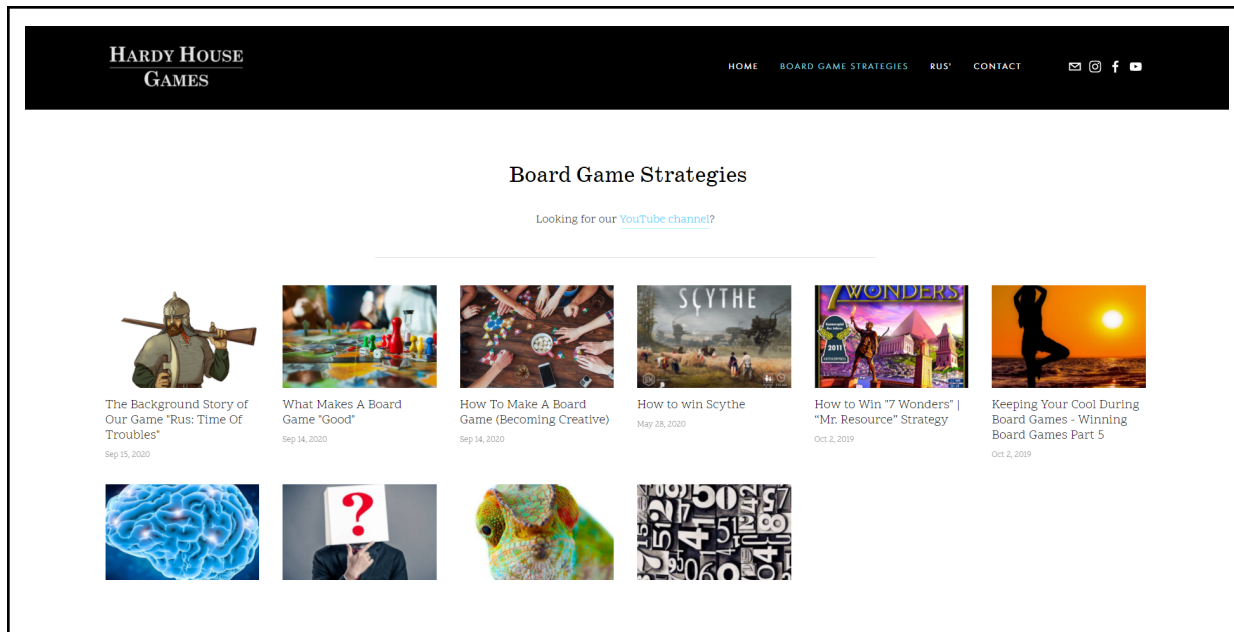
## Game Details Page Recommendations



Recommendation	Issue(s) Addressed
<p>Add a preview of the game to the game details page.</p>	<p>User finds the rulebook, but doesn't realize it's already part of the PnP.</p>
<p>Embed the rulebook into the PnP (print and play) file, thus removing the need for a Zip file.</p>	<p>Zip file download might appear malicious. User finds the rulebook, but doesn't realize it's already part of the PnP.</p>
<p>Change the text in the PnP button to say "Download Rulebook + Print and Play."</p>	<p>User finds the rulebook, but doesn't realize it's already part of the PnP.</p>
<p>Add iconography to download buttons in the game details page.</p>	<p>User finds the rulebook, but doesn't realize it's already part of the PnP. Print and play download is below the fold.</p>



## Blog Page Recommendations



Recommendation	Issue(s) Addressed
Add a search bar to the blog parent page.	Post might be hard to find if there are too many blog posts.
Categorize blog posts to make browsing easier.	Post might be hard to find if there are too many blog posts.
Include more metadata about blog posts in the parent page (author, first sentence, post date).	Post content is not compelling. Post might be hard to find if there are too many blog posts.

## Blog Post Content Recommendations

TYLER OTTESEN · OCTOBER 2, 2019

### How to Win "7 Wonders" | "Mr. Resource" Strategy

Hey It's Ty with Hardy House Games teaching you how to win "7 Wonders" so everyone can hate you. I'm assuming you already know how to play. If not, go grab a rule book, brush up on game play, then come back to learn how to win. In this article, I'm covering the resource builder strategy (a.k.a. "Mr. Resource"). This is a fool proof strategy, so even if you're an idiot you can win with this. I have a much more interesting [YouTube video on this strategy](#), but if you're the kind of person who likes to see it in words, here ya go:

1st age: Only build resource cards! Plus one military! If you get a crappy hand with no resource cards, build a commercial structure, that's the yellow one. Or, if your wonder has at least 10 victory points in it, build it. If you don't start now, don't start at all! One wonder building per age is good.

2nd age: Keep building resources when you can and build structures that get you tons of money. Build one military and wonder. It would be best if you have at least one of every resource by this point. You may have to build a forum or caravansery in fact you should have one of those. It's

Recommendation	Issue(s) Addressed
Format post text to make blog posts easier to navigate and understand.	Post content is not compelling.
Include more photos in the blog posts.	Post content is not compelling. Site feels sparse and boring.
Add more relevant external links to the blog posts.	Post content is not compelling. Site feels sparse and boring.
Cross reference other posts from Hardy House Games within blog content.	Post content is not compelling. Site feels sparse and boring.
Embed YouTube videos from Hardy House Games' channel in the posts.	Post content is not compelling. YouTube icon in top right was ignored. User leaves site to find HHG

	content.
Schedule weekly blog content to keep the site up-to-date.	Site feels sparse and boring. Site feels inactive.

## Conclusion

hardyhousegames.com was in need of a redesign. While users generally found their way around the website, there were notable usability issues with the blog and game content pages. Users commonly struggled finding the information they were looking for or didn't notice the information that Hardy House games was trying to communicate. Many links on the website were superfluous or completely dysfunctional. The site had a general "inexperienced" feel.

It might be tempting to just redesign the site on gut feel. However no designer can guess with perfect accuracy how their users think and feel about a site. This is why research is crucial when redesigning a website. By understanding the users, designers can be informed in their design decisions as they create an experience that is compelling and meaningful to their users. The recommendations in this report will serve to take hardyhousegames.com from an okay website to a delightful one that leaves a lasting impression on its visitors.

# Appendix A - Stakeholder Analysis

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bJA\\_ZB2Kk-wTDyuCmpUBAcP7zLXRkZX8jypAIqKYGtU/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bJA_ZB2Kk-wTDyuCmpUBAcP7zLXRkZX8jypAIqKYGtU/edit?usp=sharing)

# Appendix B - Heuristic Evaluation

## Introduction

The following is a heuristic evaluation of hardyhousegames.com. It was performed using [Nielsen Norman's 10 Heuristics for User Interface Design](#). I used Jeff Rubin's 4 point [rating system](#) in each heuristic:

- 4: Unusable
- 3: Severe
- 2: Moderate
- 1: Irritant
- 0: No issue

I added the "0" rating to account for heuristics that are basically not violated whatsoever in the site. In many ways Hardy House Games is only an informative site, and its inherent simplicity lends itself well to fully avoiding some heuristic violations.

Scores for each heuristic are shown here. Details on each heuristic are shown in the following pages.

Heuristic	Score (0 = No Issue, 4 = Unusable)
<a href="#">1: Visibility of System Status</a>	1
<a href="#">2: Match Between System and Real World</a>	1
<a href="#">3: User Control and Freedom</a>	1
<a href="#">4: Consistency and Standards</a>	2

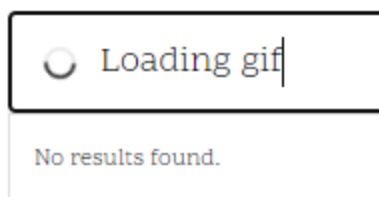
<a href="#">5: Error Prevention</a>	2	
<a href="#">6: Recognition Rather Than Recall</a>	1	
<a href="#">7: Flexibility and Efficiency of Use</a>	2	
<a href="#">8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design</a>	0	
<a href="#">9: Error Recognition, Diagnosis, and Recovery</a>	3	
<a href="#">10: Help and Documentation</a>	1	

## Test Results

### Heuristic 1: Visibility of System Status


Score: 1 - Irritant

Save for only a few instances, Hardy House Games keeps the user well informed about what is going on. The site loads quickly and each page is labeled clearly such that the user doesn't take much time to understand its purpose. Loading gifs appear when the system is working on something like a search, and the email input box has clear messaging during and after form fill. Therefore, feedback is appropriate and provided in reasonable time.



## Join the team!

Stay up to date while we near our Kickstarter launch! Let's get this game to the table already!

First Name 	Last Name
Email Address	
<input type="button" value="SIGN UP"/>	

We respect your privacy. This is only to receive emails from us.

The one issue with visibility is in the blogs. There are two blog pages and the user is sometimes left to wonder where posts went. They are not informed that some posts are only available on different pages. Furthermore, only one blog page has a search bar, the other does not. So if a user uses the search bar, they'll only be served blogs from that page specifically while the system excludes other posts without informing the user.

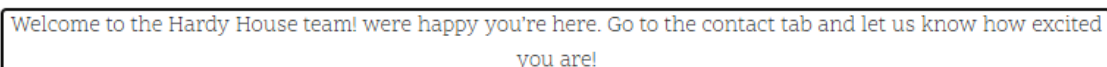
To fix this issue, I recommend combining all the blog posts into one page. If they must be communicated as different types, tags or categories could still be used.

## Heuristic 2: Match Between System and the Real World

Score: 1 - Irritant

Links and text are mostly communicated in a normal “laymen terms” fashion. The search bar explains the amount of search results, the email form fill says “welcome to the team!” instead of something like “contact information queued for data append.”

Messaging throughout the site does a good job of avoiding system jargon.



Welcome to the Hardy House team! were happy you're here. Go to the contact tab and let us know how excited you are!

The only reason I’m ranking this a 1 and not a 0 is the search bar in the blog. If no search results come up, the system says “your search did not match any documents.” The user may not know what a “document”. Their understanding is that blog posts are, well, posts. Not documents. It also leaves the user wondering if documents are therefore other pages and not just blog posts.



Q How To Win Catan

Your search did not match any documents.

## Heuristic 3: User Control and Freedom

Score: 1 - Irritant

I looked for areas where the user gets cornered into a mistake or can't comfortably navigate the site, and there simply weren't any. This is where the value of an informative site comes in. The simplicity of it prevents any frustrations for the user's navigation.

The one example of poor user control is submitting an incorrect or unwanted email address. Once they've filled out the form fill, they can't decide to back out. That email address is now in the system and they'll have to either wait to receive an email or dig through Squarespace documentation to figure out how to get that address removed from our email list. There's no simple way to reverse the action. An unsubscribe option on the website itself would help fix this.

## Heuristic 4: Consistency and Standards

Score: 2 - Moderate

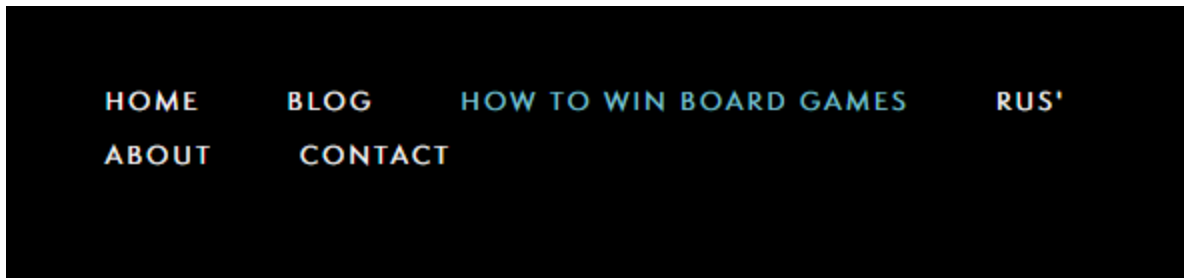
Key issues with consistency are in the typography and the menu.

For typography, there's not always a clear hierarchy of information. Sometimes subheading styles are used as titles, or fonts change between pages. Some titles are displayed as images while others are included in the text. To fix this, each page needs to use a standardized heading and subheading style.

The menu titles match their content relatively well with the exception of the link "how to win board games." The user isn't sure what this means. Is it an article? A link to an external site? A blog? This label is inconsistent with the other menu labels.

Furthermore, the large text forces the menu to take up two rows. This is inconsistent with industry standards for menus. The solution is simple: remove the link for how to win board games, place its content in the blog section, and keep the navigation menu on only one line.





## Heuristic 5: Error Prevention

Score: 2 - Moderate

There are a few areas on the website that could benefit from better error prevention. As mentioned in heuristic 3, there's no check on the user to ensure they've submitted the right email address when subscribing to the newsletter. The form does weed out errors if the user doesn't provide a valid address (i.e. doesn't include "@"), but doesn't prevent the user from misspelling their address. This same problem is present on the contact page where users need to provide a return email as part of their message.

## Join the team!

Stay up to date while we near our Kickstarter launch! Let's get this game to the table already!

Test		Formfill
------	---	----------

Email addresses should follow the format user@domain.com.

We respect your privacy. This is only to receive emails from us.

To help mitigate this issue, the form fill could have the user type their email twice to ensure it's spelled correctly. Alternatively, the website could provide a dialog box that asks if the user is sure they want to submit their email address before clicking the subscribe button.

Both of these options add some potentially unnecessary complexity to a simple process. So we'd have to weigh the benefits of keeping it brief vs the benefits of preventing an incorrect email from entering the system every once in a while.

### Heuristic 6: Recognition Rather Than Recall

Score: 1 - Irritant

For the most part, the user doesn't need to recall any information unnecessarily. Each page is relatively one dimensional and all the information is provided up front. The only reason this heuristic isn't getting a perfect score of 0 is the in blogs.

Blog posts are split between two blog pages. So while the user is reading a post, they're only informed of the parent page by the visual cue provided in the main navigation. This makes it particularly hard for the user to know which blog they were looking at when trying to find an article that they already read.



TYLER OTTESEN · MAY 28, 2020

## How to win Scythe



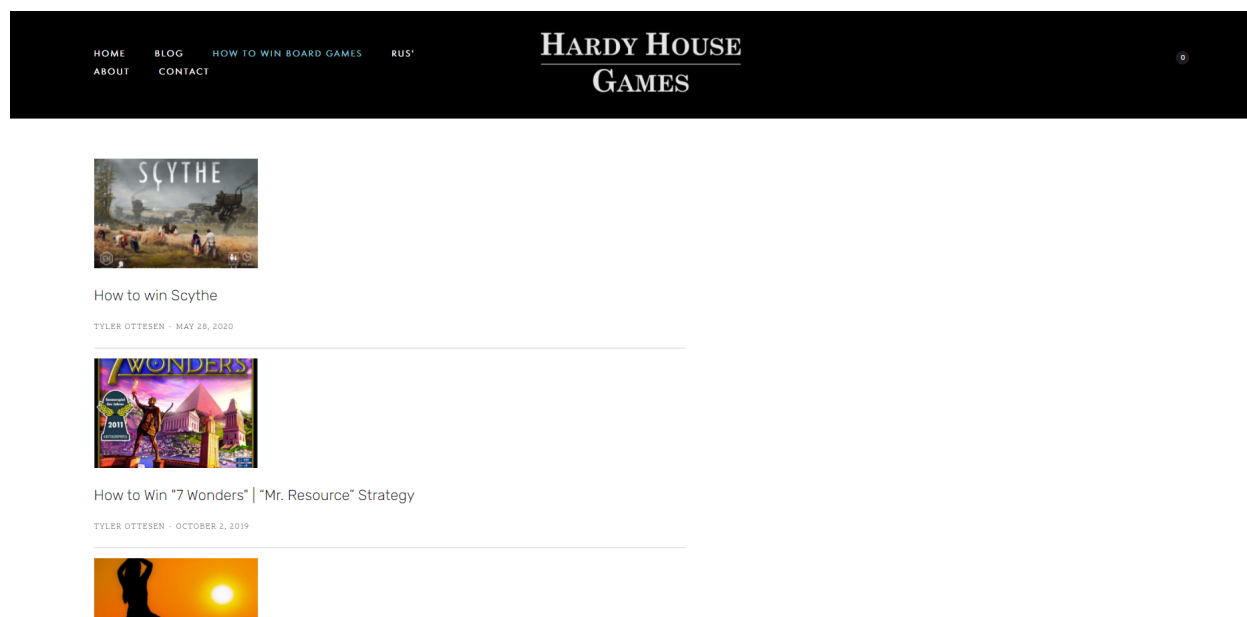
Today we are going to go over another favorite game. I'm going to teach you how to win Scythe, so

## Heuristic 7: Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

Score: 2 - Moderate

Hardy House Games' website is very simple. This can be both a strength and a flaw. Its minimalist design is great for heuristic 8, but it also means it does not accommodate expert users who may want to navigate the information more quickly. For example,

there's only one way to browse blog posts: scrolling on their parent page. There's a search bar on one of the pages, but that's still limiting the use to that page. There's no way to reorganize posts or categorize them to better navigate the options. Providing such functionality would greatly benefit expert users. The key would be doing so without infringing on the site's existing minimal design.



Another flexibility and efficiency issue is in the contact page. It's easy for users to contact Hardy House Games by simply filling out the form and sending an email. But that's the only way people can contact the company. There's no flexibility beyond that. To mitigate this, the site could include a phone number or mailing address. It could also draw more attention to Facebook as a form of contact. Users could always head over to Facebook and message the company there. More attention could be brought to this fact.

## Heuristic 8: Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

Score: 0 - No Issue

The website is arguable as minimalist as it can possibly be without sacrificing function. The color scheme is even mostly just 2 colors: black and white. Imagery is used where necessary, and the website has a clean and crisp look. Aesthetically, it could better fit the theme of a board game company, but from a usability standpoint, it has no issues.

The website was made using a Squarespace template, so it makes sense that the design is aesthetically clean and minimalist. This not only works well for the user, but for the website creator as well. It makes content easy to manage and easy to add. For these reasons, I see no issues with the site's aesthetic and minimalist design.

## Heuristic 9: Error Recognition, Diagnosis, and Recovery

Score: 3 - Severe

Errors aren't terribly common on the website, but when they occur, they're extremely glaring and confusing. The most common errors come from drop down menus. If a user generates a drop down menu from a search bar, the menu does not disappear unless the user either chooses an option or stays on the same page for their next click. If the user leaves the drop down open when navigating away, the drop down remains on the screen and often ends up in random locations.

We'll show you how to win board games so everyone can hate you. However, here is our general blog about all things regarding board games.

Q How To |

---

*How to make a board game (becoming creative)*

*how to game works and why it works. Is the game balanced? What is hard to understand? What is the ... Mechanics. However, others will pick a side and that's fine too. Get started! So that's how you start ... How to make a board game creative.PNG ... How to make a board game (becoming creative) ... start asking people what their favorite game is and try it. Don't just play it to say you did. Learn ... is how you start learning how to make a board game. You simply mess around with mechanics you already ...*

*The background story of the board game Rus'*

*this game. If you have a game in your head whether it be a theme or a mechanic, take time to let ... this idea flourish! How do you start when creating a game? ... that simple. It took time to come up with how everything worked together, but it was really fun and ...*

*What makes a board game "good"*

*how your opponent will respond to your actions. It could be that you don't know what character your ...*

*How to make a board game (becoming creative)*

*how to game works and why it works. Is the game balanced? What is hard to understand? What is the ... Mechanics. However, others will pick a side and that's fine too. Get started! So that's how you start ... How to make a board game creative.PNG ... How to make a board game (becoming creative) ... start asking people what their favorite game is and try it. Don't just play it to say you did. Learn ... is how you start learning how to make a board game. You simply mess around with mechanics you already ...*

*The background story of the board game Rus'*

*this game. If you have a game in your head whether it be a theme or a mechanic, take time to let ... this idea flourish! How do you start when creating a game? ... that simple. It took time to come up with how everything worked together, but it was really fun and ...*

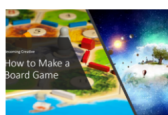
*What makes a board game "good"*

*how your opponent will respond to your actions. It could be that you don't know what character your ...*

## HARDY HOUSE GAMES

board games so everyone can hate you. However, here is our general  
g board games.

Q Ho



How to make a board game (becoming creative)

TYLER OTTESEN · OCTOBER 14, 2019



This can be very frustrating for users as they continue using the site. The only way to remove the drop down at this point is to choose an option (thus navigating away from the page you want to be on) or refreshing your browser. Both options disrupt the user's flow and are poor recovery options.

## Heuristic 10: Help and Documentation

Score: 1 - Irritant

For this site in particular, documentation isn't super critical. So the lack of it is really only an irritant. The site is self-explanatory. So ideally, users don't need help or documentation. One could argue that the text included in each page serves the purpose of help and documentation. With no documentation present, I can't give the site a perfect score of 0, but it's otherwise a low concern for usability.

## Appendix C - User Research

Using google forms, I conducted a survey to better understand the users who visit hardyhousegames.com and how they use the site. I leveraged both qualitative and quantitative questions to get a fuller picture. After posting the survey link to both my personal page and the hardy house games facebook page, the survey yielded 6 respondents.

The survey used can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdE68pebnAQUsb6-8PbKjIBEFTCEhIhA66EeAX\\_7xrYaqVDA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdE68pebnAQUsb6-8PbKjIBEFTCEhIhA66EeAX_7xrYaqVDA/viewform)

All survey responses can be found here (note: survey is still active and this data can increase with time):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wviDwNa5nsPvPFY37soiYDlbTQ3zIh9m2SusZE26U48/edit?usp=sharing>

## Survey Questions

### Site Usage

How frequently do you visit hardyhousegames.com?

What do you expect to find on hardyhousegames.com?

What are your main purposes for visiting hardyhousegames.com?

### Site Expectations

How clear is our website's design to you? (1 = very unclear, 10 = very clear)

What parts of our design make the website confusing?

What parts of our design make the website clear?

How easy is our website to explore? (1 = very hard, 10 = very easy)

What makes our website easy and/or hard to explore?

How clear is the content on our website? (1 = very unclear, 10 = very clear)

Is there any content that you'd like to see on our website? If so, explain.

What are your pain points when on hardyhousegames.com?

What are common pain points you experience on other board game websites?

### Demographics & User Information

How old are you?

What is your gender?

Which country / state do you live in?



How many hours on average do you spend on the internet every day?

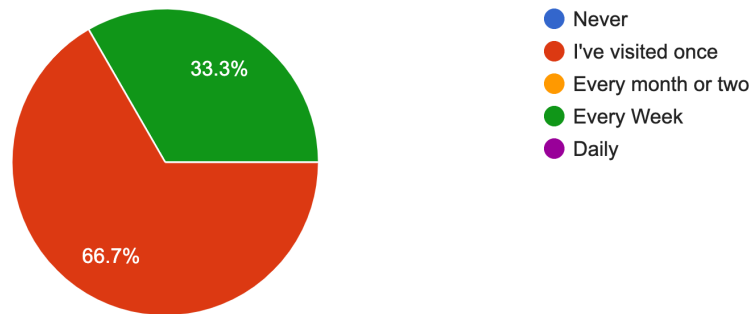
## Survey Responses

Survey results shown here are accurate as of 4:30p on September 18, 2020. The survey is still live and might yield more responses over time.

## Site Usage Responses

How frequently do you visit hardyhousegames.com?

6 responses



What do you expect to find on hardyhousegames.com?

6 responses

Information & updates on your new board game

Your line of board games

All the info I should need about the board games they are working on

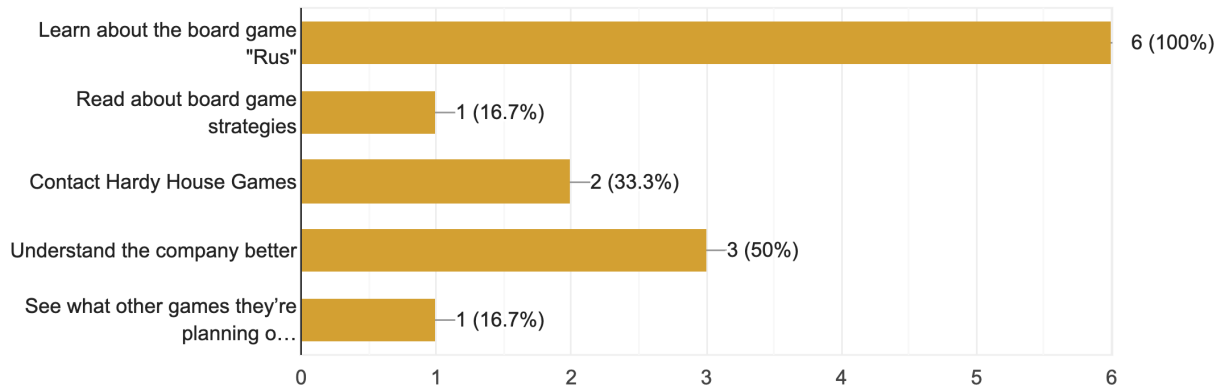
boardgame info and how to win boardgame videos

Description of Company, history/fun facts about the company, games that they have going, any additional projects from Hardy House

Updates on games, games to look forward to, links to Kickstarter or a place to buy the games.

### What are your main purposes for visiting hardyhousegames.com?

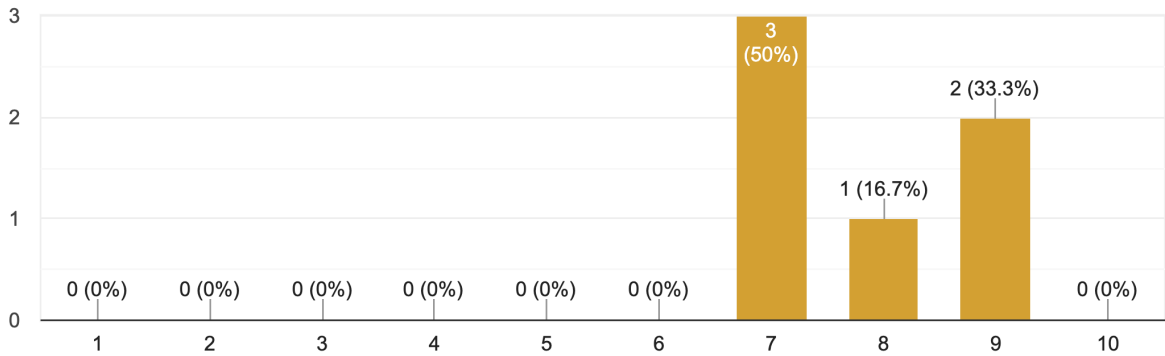
6 responses



## Site Expectations Responses

### How clear is our website's design to you?

6 responses



### What parts of our design make the website confusing?

6 responses

The blog seems directionless.

Reviewing and game strategies makes the purpose ambiguous. I would segregate the two

None

the home page doesn't give a rundown of what the website is about

Rus' on landing page is not clickable, have to go to navbar to get to Rus details

It says "current projects" as the first thing you see, and then has one game. To someone seeing this for the first time, it might be confusing to see just a picture of one of your "current projects" without some other context of the company. It's also interesting cause there is a tab dedicated solely to Rus', but to me it looks like Rus is covered on the front page. Should the tab be project details" or "games"? Or are future games going to also have their own tab? It also might be nice to have some info on what other games to expect, or at least acknowledge that there are other potential games since it is written as plural projects. The navigation of the site is easy to follow and not confusing.

### What parts of our design make the website clear?

6 responses

Your board game is explained well. The animated pictures help me see how the game plays.

You make games

It's black and white

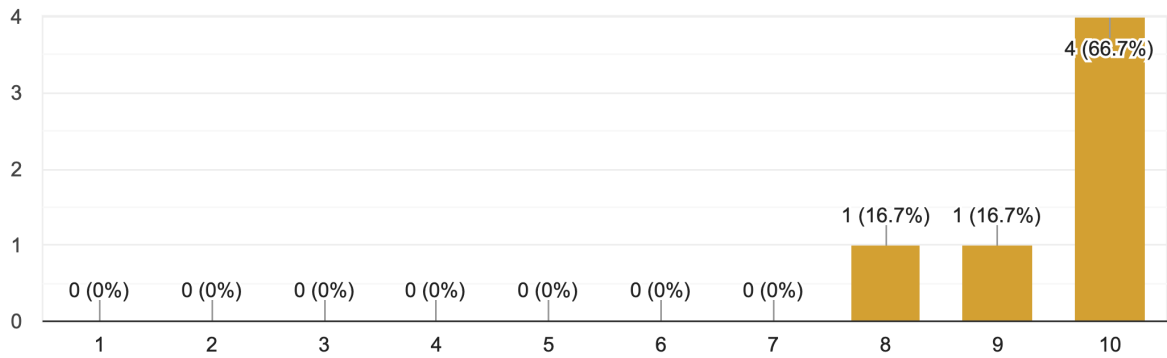
make the front page more concise (and smaller summaries) and have links so viewers can quickly move to what they want to see.

Large text, crisp layout, the specific navbar links, the written text is very clear and concise. Headings are clear and descriptive

The tabs are simple and clear. Each page is considered and easy to see what info is on it.

### How easy is our website to explore?

6 responses



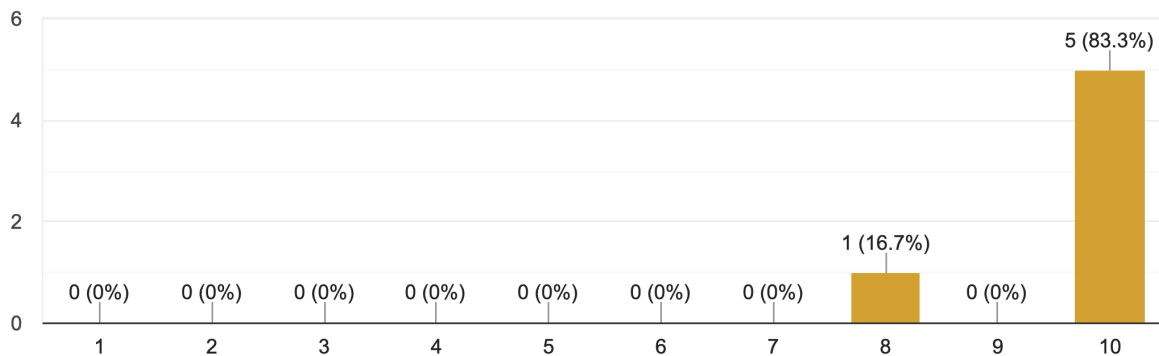
### What makes our website easy and/or hard to explore?

6 responses

- There are only a few pages and they all make sense. The blog could be easier to find articles.
- Idk
- No ads or other "fluff" distracting me from viewing what I need
- the font/area used seems excessively large
- Navbar, not too much content, no link tunnels. Makes it very easy
- So far it's very simple. With only 5 tabs and limited content, it's easy to get around. The only potential thing is the blog tab. Once there are enough blog posts, one long list can be hard to navigate. Maybe look into categorizing these somehow?

### How clear is the content on our website?

6 responses



### Is there any content that you'd like to see on our website? If so, explain.

4 responses

I'd like to see more updates on how you guys are designing Rus.

Board games you recommend or what you're playing right now

nothing comes directly to mind.

Upcoming projects, plans for the future. Fun to see that the company is still going

### What are your pain points when on hardyhousegames.com?

5 responses

None.

None

it takes up a large amount of screen space to say very little.

Rus on the landing page isn't clickable.

Mostly I just don't feel satisfied with the front of the home page. I'm not convinced that it will grab the attention of a passerby. The Rus' spotlight and link to how to win videos are great, but should that be the only thing on the home page? Idk

### What are common pain points you experience on other board game websites?

4 responses

They're too busy and complex. Also sometimes people are mean in forums.

Too many ads

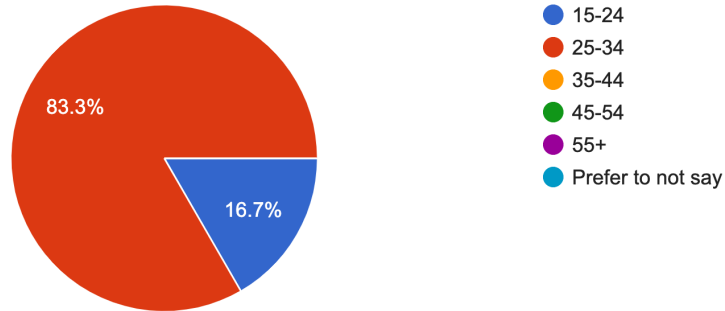
screens that are too cluttered.

Outdated design, layouts that don't make sense

## Demographics Responses

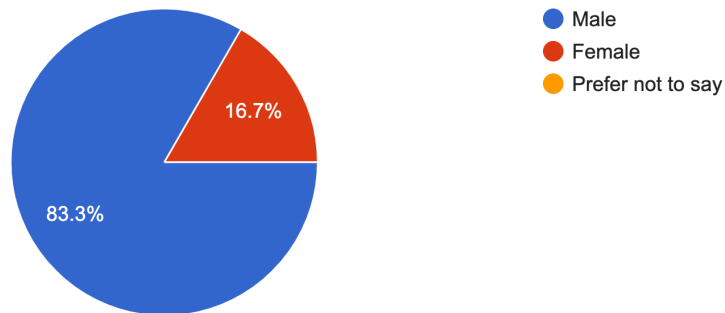
How old are you?

6 responses



What is your gender?

6 responses



Which country / state do you live in?

6 responses

Arizona

Usa

US / Texas

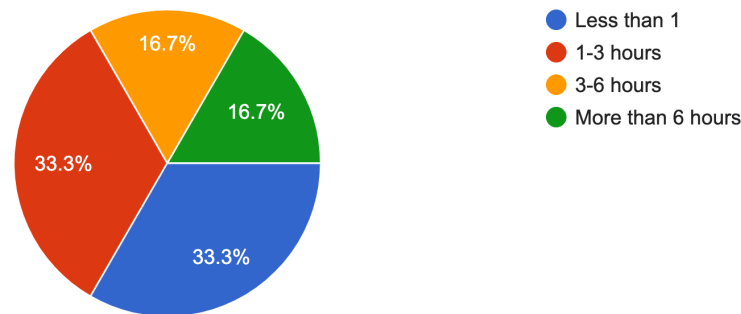
USA

US, AZ

Utah

How many hours on average do you spend on the internet every day?

6 responses



## User Research Insights

- Very interestingly, the majority of users had only been on the website once. This is likely common for a board game website where users will only ever visit a few times to check out the flagship game (Rus) and sign up for updates.
- While each user had a different set of reasons for visiting Hardy House Games, every one of them was there to find out more information on the flagship game.



- The homepage was a common pain point for users. Many of them wanted more content and clarity about the purpose of the website.
- Exploration wasn't much of a problem. For a website that's structured for simplicity, this makes sense.
- A common request was more updates on the design of the new game.
- Almost all users were males between the ages of 25-34 (i.e. dads).
- Every user had varying levels of daily internet usage indicating that the site should accommodate both the internet fiend and the casual passerby.

# Appendix D - Personas

## Game Geek Garrett

HARDY HOUSE  
GAMES



"My wife's happy as long as I only use 8 shelves in the linen closet for all my board games."

**Age:** 32

**Work:** Chemical Engineer

**Gender:** Male

**Education:** BS & MS in Chemical Engineering

**Computer Skills:** Above Average

**Internet Use:** Moderate

**Interests:**



GAMES



3D PRINTING

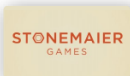


FANTASY FICTION



CAMPING

**Frequented Websites:**



### Bio

Garrett is a dad and engineer who loves board games. His \$5K+ collection of board games and constantly active 3D printer are proof of it. His young children make it hard for him to find time to play as often as he'd like, but family is far more important anyway. His wife humors him by playing board games every now and then. Thankfully, he has a weekly game night with other geek minded dads. He spends a lot of time surfing board game forums and keeping up-to-date on the latest board games on Kickstarter. He has a lot of ideas for creating a board game of his own and wants to be more involved in the board game design community.

### Goals:

Get a clear picture of the flagship board game while exploring Hardy House Games' website. This includes the full rulebook, video playthroughs, strategy discussions, and print and play demos.

Test out the new game using the print and play demo and his own custom 3D printed pieces.

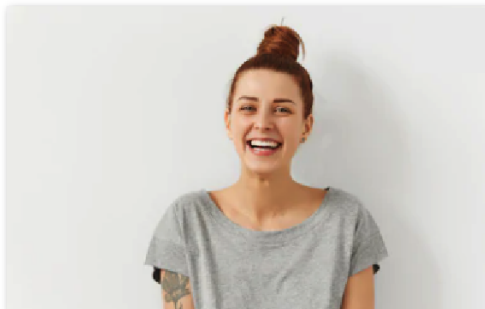
Find out how to clearly communicate with the game creators to give game feedback and suggestions.

Read and contribute to the game strategy blog.

Find board games and opponents that challenges his intellect and strategic mind.

# Casual Gamer Catherine

HARDY HOUSE  
GAMES



"Board games are fun! Especially with the right people."

## Bio

Catherine is a graphic designer who plays board games with her friends more for the excuse to socialize than to play competitively. She owns a few board games, but only ones that are light-hearted and relatively easy to learn. She's happy playing the more intense games that her friends own and is good at forming strategies. She cares less about winning and more about making sure everyone playing is having a good time. She often spends time looking at and admiring the artwork on the game pieces and has a good eye for visual design.

**Age:** 23

**Work:** Graphic Designer

**Gender:** Female

**Education:** BS in Graphic Information Technology

**Computer Skills:** Expert

**Internet Use:** Moderate

## Interests:



HIKING



ART & DESIGN



MOVIES



GAMES

## Frequented Websites:

Instagram

amazon  
prime

dribbble

twitter

vimeo

YouTube

## Goals:

Determine if the games are interesting and fun to play.

Get to know the creators behind the game. Maybe find fun stories or anecdotes.

See updates on the game development progress, specifically on graphic design and artwork decisions.

Look for deals or coupons for the game that she wouldn't find on Amazon or Kickstarter.

Spend quality time with her friends and build meaningful relationships while playing tabletop games.

# Reviewer Ryan

HARDY HOUSE  
GAMES



"I always appreciate a game with thoughtful mechanics and good replayability."

## Bio

Ryan runs a successful board game retail store at the local mall where he often hosts gaming tournaments. His love for tabletop games has driven him to create a YouTube channel for reviewing up-and-coming games. Due to his quality videos and decent audience size, indie board game developers often send him prototypes in exchange for a video review. His review videos are frequently used in Kickstarter campaigns, so he's motivated to show the game in a good light. Since most of his life revolves around the commercial side of board games, he rarely plays games at home.

**Age:** 27

**Work:** Board Game Retail Store Owner

**Gender:** Male

**Education:** BS in Marketing

**Computer Skills:** Above Average

**Internet Use:** Moderate

## Interests:



GAMES



MOVIES

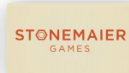


FANTASY FICTION



CAMPING

## Frequented Websites:



## Goals:

Receive a prototype of the game to play through it multiple times with his fellow reviewers.

Get a clear picture of the board game while exploring Hardy House Games' website. This includes the full rulebook, video playthroughs, strategy discussions, and print and play demos.

Create a quality review video of the game for Hardy House games to use on their Kickstarter.

Build his YouTube audience with quality content and effective marketing.

Wake up every morning excited to go to work.

# Supportive Mom Susan

HARDY HOUSE  
GAMES



"I'm not very good at board games, but if my son is are making one, I'll learn it!"

## Bio

Susan is a high school biology teacher and mother of 4. All but one of her kids have moved out of the house and have families of their own. She bought board games for her kids as they were growing up. They're good for developing minds after all! Her son is working on a board game, and while she's not too interested in gaming herself, she's happy to support him. She enjoys games with her family, but often confuses the rules. As long as she's spending time with those she cares about, it simply doesn't matter. Although it certainly would be fun to win against her self-assured kids once in a while.

**Age:** 50

**Work:** High School Biology Teacher

**Gender:** Female

**Education:** BS in Education, MS in Biology

**Computer Skills:** Average

**Internet Use:** Minimal

## Interests:



HOME ORG



HIKING



MOVIES



VOLUNTEERING

## Frequented Websites:



## Goals:

Show the website to her friends and colleagues as a conversation point to talk about her kids.

Share the website on social media to show support for the game.

See updates on the game development progress.

View the game artwork.

Learn the rules of the game and some strategies so she can stick it to her kids and win next time they play.

See her kids happy as they pursue one of their passions, board games.

# Appendix E - User Stories

## Game Geek Garrett

User Story	Acceptance Criteria
As a board game enthusiast I want to view the board game in detail so I can determine if the game is fun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access the rulebook</li> <li>● View components</li> </ul>
As a board game enthusiast I want to print a demo of the board game so I can test it out for myself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access print and play file</li> <li>● Print demo game</li> </ul>
As a game strategist I want to contact Hardy House Games so I can provide feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● View contact information</li> <li>● Send email to Hardy House Games</li> </ul>
As a board game enthusiast I want to engage with the blog so I can have meaningful conversations about board game strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access blog</li> <li>● Comment on articles</li> </ul>
As a board game enthusiast I want to buy board games that challenge me so I can enjoy forming strategies and competing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access Rus game page</li> <li>● View rules</li> <li>● Determine Rus is a good strategy game</li> </ul>

## Casual Gamer Catherine

User Story	Acceptance Criteria
As a casual gamer I want to determine if Rus is fun so I can know if it's worth taking time to learn it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access Rus description page</li> <li>● View brief game walk-through</li> </ul>

As a social player I want to read about the creators so I can know their story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Find about section</li> <li>● Read about the creators</li> </ul>
As a casual gamer I want to see the game's artwork so I can admire the artistry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access Rus description page</li> <li>● View artwork</li> </ul>
As a casual gamer I want to find discounts so I can spend less money on the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Find discounts</li> <li>● Apply discounts for future purchase</li> </ul>
As a social person I want to play board games with friends so I can build meaningful relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access Rus game page</li> <li>● Determine that Rus is a good social game</li> </ul>

## Reviewer Ryan

User Story	Acceptance Criteria
As a board game reviewer I want to receive a prototype of Rus so I can create a review video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● View contact page</li> <li>● Email Hardy House Games</li> <li>● Receive prototype of Rus</li> </ul>
As a board game reviewer I want to view the board game in detail so I can provide quality insights in my review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access the rulebook</li> <li>● View components</li> <li>● Play through demo</li> </ul>
As a board game reviewer I want to create a quality review video so I can grow my audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Receive a quality prototype</li> <li>● Contact Hardy House Games with questions</li> </ul>
As a board game reviewer I want to find engaging games so I can wake up every morning excited to go to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access Rus game page</li> <li>● View rules</li> <li>● Determine that Rus is an engaging game</li> </ul>

## Supportive Mom Susan

User Story	Acceptance Criteria
As a proud parent I want to show the website to friends and colleagues so I can show off my kids' work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access the website</li> <li>● Show the site to friends</li> </ul>
As a supportive parent I want to share the website on social media so I can help my kids' board game succeed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access the URL</li> <li>● Copy URL</li> <li>● Paste URL in social media post</li> </ul>
As a supportive parent I want to see updates on game development so I can feel involved in my children's projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access blog</li> <li>● Find game update posts</li> <li>● Read posts</li> </ul>
As a supportive parent I want to see the game's artwork so I can provide inevitable praise and encouragement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● View game page</li> <li>● Find game artwork</li> </ul>
As a competitive family member I want to find strategies so I can win next time I play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● View rulebook</li> <li>● Access blog</li> <li>● View game strategies</li> </ul>
As a caring parent I want to support this game's development so I can see my children happy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Find options to contribute</li> <li>● Receive feedback that contribution was effective</li> </ul>

## Appendix F - Site Testing Materials

### Test Script

“



Hi, I'm Jordan Ottesen. I'm one of the co-founders of Hardy House Games and a user experience designer. I'd like to start by thanking you for taking time out of your day to help us improve [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com). Hopefully you already received and filled out the pre-test questionnaire. If not, let's do that right now.

For this usability test, we're going to go through a few scenarios on [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com) to see how well the site is working for visitors. So as you go through these scenarios, please say what you're thinking out loud as you do each task. Keep in mind we are testing the website, not you. There is no way for you to "fail" this test. So no need to feel pressure. We're just trying to find ways to improve the website. Try your best to ignore me and don't be upset when I don't answer any questions during the test. I'll only show you how to do something after you feel you've exhausted all of your options. Do you have any questions?

[Scenarios]

With that, let's get started.

Scenario 1: You read a post from a friend on Facebook recommending a new board game that's coming out soon called Rus. You want to learn more about the game and get updates on its development progress.

Scenario 2: You've checked out the board game Rus and you want to test it out for yourself.

Scenario 3: You have some ideas to help Hardy House Games make their game better and want to contact them to submit your feedback.

Scenario 4: You just lost a game of 7 Wonders with your family. You want to find tips to help you play more strategically so you can win next time.

[Post Text Questions]

“

## Pre-test Questionnaire

### Demographic / Level of Experience

- What is your age?
  - 18-24
  - 25-34
  - 35 and over
- What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Prefer Not To Say
- What is your highest level of education?
  - No Degree
  - High School
  - Bachelors
  - Graduate

- How often have you played board games in the last month?
  - Never
  - Once or twice
  - Every week
  - Every day
- How many board game websites have you visited in the past month?
  - None
  - 1 to 2
  - More than 2
- How frequently do you visit hardyhousegames.com?
  - Never
  - I've visited once or twice
  - Commonly

### Site Expectations

- What kind of content do you expect to see on hardyhousegames.com?
- Which device(s) would you use to access hardyhousegames.com?
  - Desktop
  - Mobile
  - Tablet
- What are your first impressions of the website's look and feel?
- What are your first impressions of how the site is organized?

## Subject Preferences

- What are some of your favorite board games?
- What makes a board game site good?
- What are some of your favorite board game sites?

## User Goals

- What might you hope to find while on hardyhousegames.com?
- What would make your visit to hardyhousegames.com a “successful visit?”

## Scenarios and Tasks

### Scenario 1

You read a post from a friend on Facebook recommending a new board game that’s coming out soon called Rus. You want to learn more about the game and get updates on its development progress.

Task 1: Find the Rus game details page.

Task 2: Find information on how the game plays.

Task 3: Sign up for the newsletter.

### Scenario 2

You’ve checked out the board game Rus and you want to test it out for yourself.

Task 1: Find the Rus game details page.

Task 2: Find the “print and play” link.

Task 3: Download the print and play version.

### Scenario 3

You have some ideas to help Hardy House Games make their game better and want to contact them to submit your feedback.

Task 1: Find the contact page on Hardy House Game's website.

Task 2: Fill out the email form.

Task 3: Send the email.

### Scenario 4

You just lost a game of 7 Wonders with your family. You want to find tips to help you play more strategically so you can win next time.

Task 1: Find the blog on Hardy House Games' website.

Task 2: Find the blog post on 7 Wonders strategies.

Task 3: Identify the best approach for each age in the game.

## Post-test Questionnaire

How difficult or easy was scenario 1? Why or why not?

Scenario 1 required you to find the game details page and sign up for the newsletter.

How difficult or easy was scenario 2? Why or why not?

Scenario 2 required you to download the print and play version of the game.

How difficult or easy was scenario 3? Why or why not?

Scenario 3 required you to email Hardy House Games your feedback.

How difficult or easy was scenario 4? Why or why not?

Scenario 4 required you to find and read the 7 Wonders strategy blog post.

What did you think of [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com)?

If you could change one thing about [hardyhousegames.com](http://hardyhousegames.com), what would it be?

Is there anything else you wish to tell me about your experience with the website?

## Observation Sheet

### Scenario 1

You read a post from a friend on Facebook recommending a new board game that's coming out soon called Rus. You want to learn more about the game and get updates on its development progress.

Task	Time to Complete (If Complete)
Task 1: Find the Rus game details page.	
Task 2: Find information on how the game plays.	
Task 3: Sign up for the newsletter.	

#### Actual Paths Taken (If different than above):

- 

#### Think-Aloud Comments and/or questions:

- 

#### Facial Expressions:

#### Additional Observations:

-

## Scenario 2

You've checked out the board game Rus and you want to test it out for yourself.

Task	Time to Complete (If Complete)
Task 1: Find the Rus game details page.	
Task 2: Find the "print and play" link.	
Task 3: Download the print and play version.	

### **Actual Paths Taken (If different than above):**

- 

### **Think-Aloud Comments and/or questions:**

- 

### **Facial Expressions:**

- 

### **Additional Observations:**

-



### Scenario 3

You have some ideas to help Hardy House Games make their game better and want to contact them to submit your feedback.

Task	Time to Complete (If Complete)
Task 1: Find the contact page on Hardy House Game's website.	
Task 2: Fill out the email form.	
Task 3: Send the email.	

**Actual Paths Taken (If different than above):**

- 

**Think-Aloud Comments and/or questions:**

- 

**Facial Expressions:**

- 

**Additional Observations:**

-

## Scenario 4

You just lost a game of 7 Wonders with your family. You want to find tips to help you play more strategically so you can win next time.

Task	Time to Complete (If Complete)
Task 1: Find the blog on Hardy House Games' website.	
Task 2: Find the blog post on 7 Wonders strategies.	
Task 3: Identify the best approach for each age in the game.	

### Actual Paths Taken (If different than above):

- 

### Think-Aloud Comments and/or questions:

- 

### Facial Expressions:

- 

### Additional Observations:

-

## Appendix G - Prototype Details

Hardy House Games' website is built in Squarespace. As such, iterative prototyping can be quickly done on the domain directly. I've created the following prototype pages (with functional links between pages for each task) to test for the the major issues found in my usability tests:

Prototype Page URL	Related Scenario	Major Issue(s) Addressed
<a href="http://hardyhousegames.com/home-prototype">hardyhousegames.com/home-prototype</a>	1,2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find print and play</li> <li>- Find &amp; download rulebook</li> <li>- Confusion about blog</li> <li>- Confusion about videos</li> </ul>
<a href="http://hardyhousegames.com/rus-prototype">hardyhousegames.com/rus-prototype</a>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find print and play</li> <li>- Find &amp; download rulebook</li> </ul>
<a href="http://hardyhousegames.com/blog-prototype">hardyhousegames.com/blog-prototype</a>	2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confusion about blog</li> <li>- Confusion about videos</li> </ul>
<a href="http://hardyhousegames.com/contact-prototype">hardyhousegames.com/contact-prototype</a>	N/A	(Included in case users navigate here - not pertinent to tasks or addressed usability issues)

### Prototype Content

Adjustments made to create the prototype are as follows:

## Homepage

- Condensed links to Rus into one link
- Adjusted navigation header
  - Logo repositioned & page links justified right
  - Removed 2 pages
  - Added links to social media accounts (including YouTube)
  - Removed link to non functioning shopping cart
- Added “about” blurb (to therefore remove the About page)

## Rus (Game Details Page)

- Added rulebook to the downloadable Print and Play (PnP)
- Adjusted copy to better communicate location of the PnP download button

## Blog

- Changed title to “Board Game Strategies”
- Added section to link to Hardy House Games YouTube channel
- Added photos to all posts for consistency
- Changed layout from list to grid
- Organized post content to be easier to browse

## Contact

- (No adjustments made)

## Prototype Scenarios and Tasks

### Scenario 1

You've checked out the board game Rus and you want to read through the rulebook and test it out for yourself.

- Task 1: Find the Rus game details page.
- Task 2: Find the "print and play" link.
- Task 3: Download the print and play version.
- Task 4: Identify the Rulebook
- Task 5: Identify the PnP

#### *Major Issues Tested in Scenario 1:*

- Find Print and Play
- Find & Download Rulebook

### Scenario 2

You just lost a game of 7 Wonders with your family. You want to find tips to help you play more strategically so you can win next time.

- Task 1: Find the blog on Hardy House Games' website.
- Task 2: Find the blog post on 7 Wonders strategies.
- Task 3: Identify the best approach for each age in the game.

#### *Major Issues Tested in Scenario 2:*

- Confusion between where the post is and how it relates to the YouTube channel.

### Scenario 3

You've heard from a friend that Hardy House games provides "how to win videos" online and you want to check out their videos.

- Task 1: Navigate to Hardy House Games homepage.
- Task 2: Scroll down.
- Task 3: Click the button linking to Hardy House Games' YouTube channel.

*Major Issues Tested in Scenario 3:*

- Confusion between where the post is and how it relates to the YouTube channel