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Website Review: Treehugger.com

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Treehugger.com

Brandi Hope Johnson

O'Neill, Meaghan. "TreeHugger.com." *Narrative Content Group*. Last modified May 27, 2016. <http://www.treehugger.com>.

The website TreeHugger.com was first created in August 2004 by Graham Hill, with the goal of "driving sustainability mainstream." This website is important to many fields because it contains all of the diverse aspects included in the broad term sustainability. There are useful articles from many categories to choose from, beautiful art slideshows, and videos to make information more organized and easier for anyone to understand. A variety of audiences may find this site worth visiting: anyone who is just becoming interested in sustainable practices and looking for inspiration; construction professionals, architects, and engineers interested in the newest building materials and techniques; and avid environmentalists can all enjoy daily updates on what is new in the world of sustainability.

The website shows nine clickable tabs in the header, including design, technology, transportation, science, business, living, energy, slideshows, and social. These diverse categories are a great way to organize all the diverse information available related to sustainability. This organizational strategy also allows those with specific interests to navigate quickly, while making navigation easier for those who do not know where to begin their search. The slideshow tab includes a stunning collection of photographs that range from butterflies, toads, and birds, to gardens and breath-taking landscapes. New galleries are added on a fairly regular basis, and include descriptions of the various scenes to help readers contextualize each image. This is a great place to enjoy a wide array of sustainable ideas and images in full color.

Of course, the site includes a selection of articles that are both diverse and at times controversial. Some examples include articles exploring the truth about biodegradable plastics, the irony of Earth Day cleanups, and car manufacturers' struggles against the EPA's newest regulations. In an article found in the science category titled, "The Big Awful Truth about Biodegradable Plastics," Melissa Breyer explains how a new UN report on marine plastics proves that most biodegradable plastics never actually break down in the ocean and actually further pollution. Another article by the same author, titled "The Unfortunate Irony of Earth Day Cleanups," reports that every year on Earth Day about 12 million plastic bags are thrown into landfills, but the solution is as simple as burlap bags that are naturally biodegradable. Another article found in the transportation category, titled "Car Makers are Fighting Back Against Proposed Fuel Efficiency Standards," author Lloyd Alter lends insight into part of the rationale behind automotive manufacturers' thinking. He quotes Scott Keogh, the president of Audi, who illustrates the challenge his industry faces: "Imagine if you were the CEO of McDonald's and they say to you, 'OK, in 10 years...25%, 30% of your business is going to be vegan. Go make it happen,' he said, 'That's exactly what we're staring at here in the automotive business.'" Of course, the article accepts this position as a legitimate concern before arguing for other alternatives. Overall, the arguments in this site, whether controversial or not, tend to be reasonable examinations of issues that ultimately tend toward sustainable thinking.

This site is written in a very natural and relatable voice. Several writers collaborate to create the site in its entirety, yet the rhythm and flow from one article to next comes with ease. The dynamic range of the topics also allow visitors to choose the technical level of the articles, videos, or photos they wish to view. The website's 'about us' category describes

TreeHugger.com as, “Partial to a modern aesthetic,” and explains “we strive to be a one-stop shop for green news, solutions, and product information.” Indeed, they succeed in this effort.

TreeHugger.com is an invaluable website for people who are interested in sustainability and sustainable practices, but who approach from nearly any intellectual discipline, career, or background. Readers from all over the world can access daily blogs and share their ideas on how to improve upon certain practices and concepts. This website is recommended for those beginning on their journey of improving the planet as well as those who enjoy learning, nature photography, or simply reading about the latest news in community to global sustainability. In short, TreeHugger.com surpasses its motto, “Your source for green design and living news, commentary, and advice.”