



EDAC Marketing Canada Awards Abstract: Digital Marketing – explorethebruce.com

In 2017, the tourism team within the economic development department embarked on a website upgrade pilot project for www.explorethebruce.com. The purpose of this project was to create a user-friendly, interest driven website that introduced users to showcased attractions and activities across Bruce County, by using a “best-of” geographically based approach. Previously the County tourism website had operated as a listings database, creating challenges with respect to keeping data accurate and up to date, as well as coordinating the online presence of Explore the Bruce (our tourism brand) and individual communities within the County. The new site reflects Bruce County as a whole, whilst showcasing individual community brands and assets, using innovative elements – specifically the mapping functionality and what’s nearby features (which rotate), with a simple design and layout, supporting ease of navigation and searchability.

The web portal was developed, through a public private partnership with Tourist Town, offering a structure to address identified challenges and navigate users to local assets they might not otherwise discover. The sites intent is to provide a main portal for people wishing to explore the variety of Bruce County and funnel users to local business owners to “close the sale”. To achieve this goal, listings are created for businesses, with options for basic and enhanced content available, and these listings populate multiple websites, including the County site, community’s local visitor attraction site, and niche market sites for weddings, golf and local deals. Businesses are responsible for maintaining their own listings, which cross pollinate, ensuring accuracy and up to date information. The County has supplemented listings with video and image content where appropriate.

This project, and ongoing website maintenance, have the following main objectives:

- To develop a robust website and a trip planning tool for visitors;
- To promote Bruce County’s assets and best experiences for attraction efforts;
- To encourage visitors to start ‘dreaming’ about coming to Bruce County and filter them through the funnel;
- To provide an opportunity for data integration to help streamlining efforts;
- To increase visitors length of stay in Bruce County and to increase the amount of visitor spending;
- To continue to foster relationships with local tourism operators;
- To build capacity at the operator level and coordination at the municipal level; and
- To support the shift in marketing of Bruce County as a place to visit, to also a place to live and work;

The target audience includes (more detailed information is attached):

- Nature Lovers: 35-54-year-old couples, with young children, budget conscious, love the outdoors
- Memory Makers: 35-50-year-old couples, often sandwich generation with elementary aged children
- Mellow Vacationers: 55+ year old, working couples without children, seeking rest and relaxation
- Knowledge Seekers: 55+ year old, females with grown children, employed, higher levels of education
- New Canadians: 25-34-year-old couples with young kids, high levels of education, influenced by trends, large networks, majority identify as part of a visible minority / immigrant segment

The switch to private listings provided a challenge to us, as for the first time, businesses were in charge of what content they put on their business listing as well as updating the information. Given the public private partnership, there is a cost involved for the enhanced listing option offered to businesses. This model created some public relations challenges, which were addressed by way of communication and community outreach.

Following the first year of the pilot program, an assessment of the new site and structure was carried out. This assessment was followed by a comprehensive content audit, which has seen the addition of search engine optimization tags across sites, promotional assets including new/enhanced video and imagery added to the sites various listings. Explorer stories (blogs) are added on an ongoing basis, with seasonal updates to the homepage imagery and story spotlights. SiteImprove is used on an ongoing basis to correct broken links, and spelling errors which may be overlooked in the upload process, or created by site architecture changes.

The new site launched in Q1 2017 (mid March), with Q2 (April – June 2017) reaching 132,628 users. Traffic has continued to grow with a 45% increase over the same quarter, resulting in reach to 191,738 users this past quarter (April – June 2018).

Target Audience Descriptions

AUDIENCE 1 PROFILE: NATURE LOVERS

PROFILE

35 - 54 year old couples, with young children, budget conscious, love outdoors.

Nature lovers have a passion for experiencing the great outdoors together. Travel for them is all about exploring new, undiscovered places off the beaten path. Bruce County is the perfect place for this segment who are looking to be dazzled by awe-inspiring nature. With a lower than average travel budget, these travelers are happy with the basics—camping in a tent, spending time as a family, and taking in all the beauty around them. Because spending time outdoors means an opportunity to enrich family bonds.

AUDIENCE 2 PROFILE: MEMORY MAKERS

PROFILE

35 - 50 year old couples, often sandwich generation with elementary aged children.

These Gen X-ers are parents who have built their lives around their kids. Leisure for them is all about spending quality time as a family—at home and on vacation. Travel is an opportunity to come together and bond through playful activities. When their kids are having fun, they are having fun too—and ultimately building memories together as a family.

AUDIENCE 3 PROFILE: MELLOW VACATIONERS

PROFILE

55+ year old, quiet, introverted, working couples without children, seek rest and relaxation.

Mellow vacationers are fairly quiet, low energy people looking for a home away from home where they can relax and find tranquility. Traveling is often a chance to visit family and friends. They are natural homebodies and when on vacation want to enjoy some simple R&R. Relaxation for them isn't found through a particular activity or passion, but rather simply getting away from it all.

AUDIENCE 4 PROFILE: KNOWLEDGE SEEKERS

PROFILE

55+ females with grown children, employed, higher levels of education.

Knowledge seekers are entering a new phase of life as empty-nesters with the time and money to enjoy themselves, and travel is a part of this new lifestyle. They are looking to understand the places they visit by getting exposure to local customs. Trips usually last 8 days as they want to fully appreciate where they are and explore all aspects of history, art and culture. Travel for them is about expanding their knowledge and stimulating the mind.

AUDIENCE 5 PROFILE: NEW CANADIANS

PROFILE

25 - 34 year old couples with young kids, high levels of education, influenced by trends, large networks, majority identify as part of visible minority/immigrant segment.

New Canadians have a diverse background—45% are visible minorities and 40% are immigrants. This group is recently affluent and emerging into a new life phase that includes fresh experiences such as travel. As they define a new life for themselves, travel is an opportunity to learn and explore as a nuclear family. Visiting friends and family is not a primary travel driver for them. While this group often wants to be adventurous and energetic, their travel experiences usually start with what is nearby and typically considered a core tourist attraction.

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explorethebruce.com

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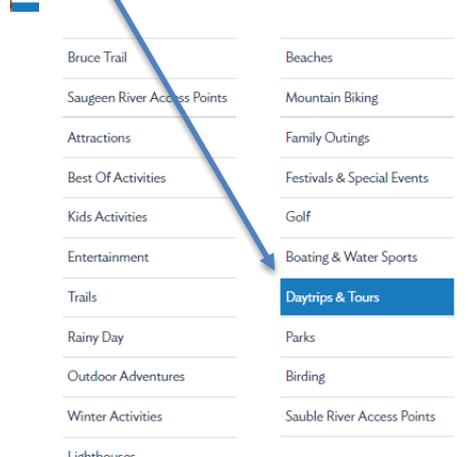
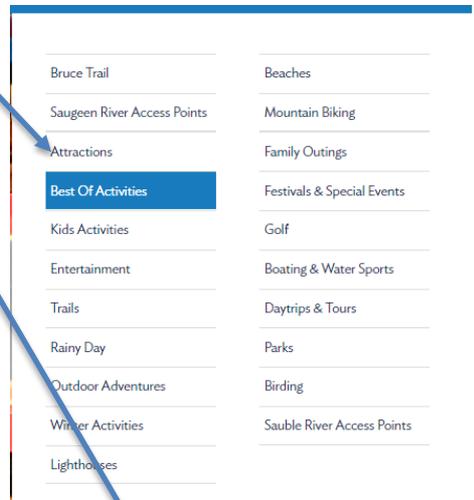
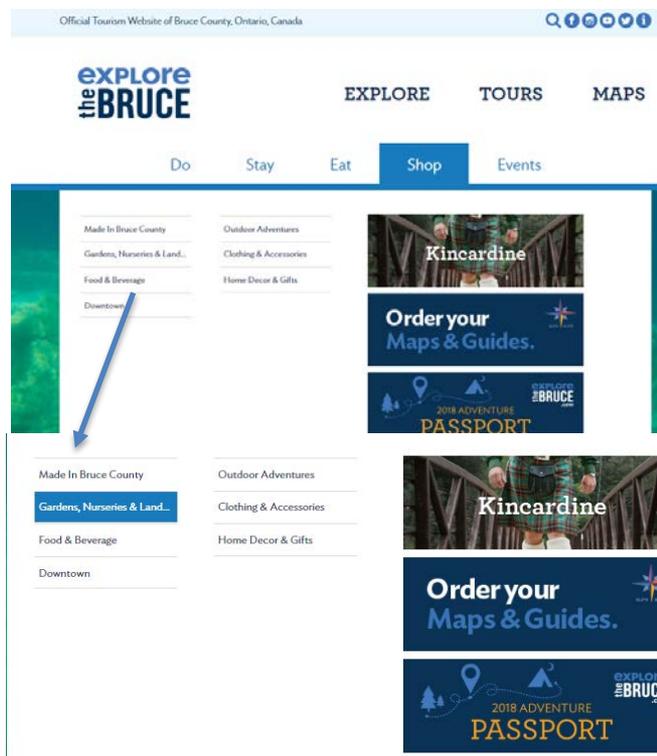
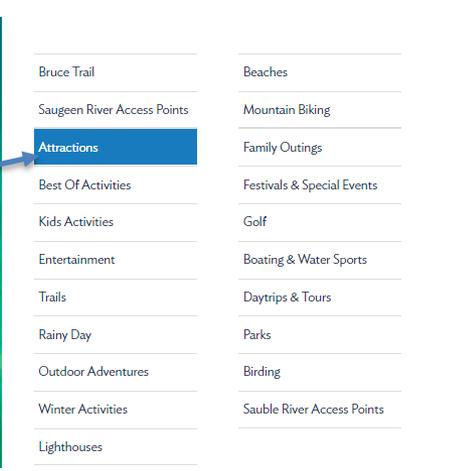
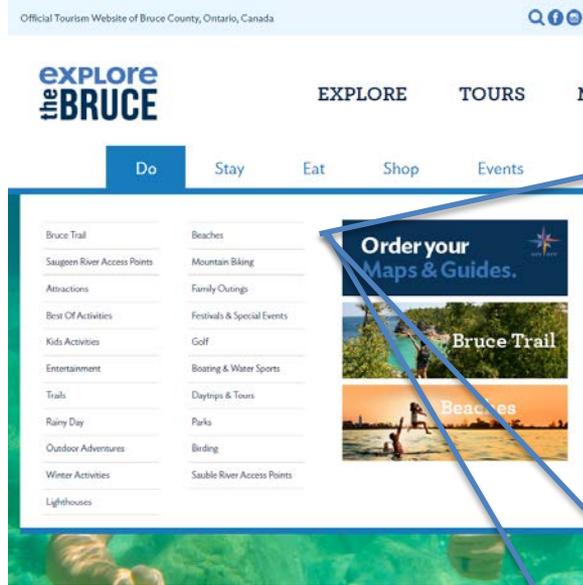
To demonstrate the purpose of this project, we've chosen a single businesses and compiled how the business is shown throughout this website and the other websites using the platform.

We will show:

- Ease of locating the webpage from homepage
 - Showcase multiple options and increased presence on the website
- Business page
 - Seamless updating in one location
- Mapping
 - Using the geographically based approach highlighting the 'best of's'
 - What's nearby
- Explorer stories
 - Increasing awareness and encouraging visitors to start dreaming prior to the businesses 'closing the sale'

From the homepage there are a few possible options to get directly to the business page.

By placing the business on multiple pages (that apply to them), it makes it easier for tourists to find them. With this business living on the 'Best of Activities', 'Attractions' and 'Day Trips & Tours' pages, instead of solely on the 'Gardens, Nurseries & Landscaping' page, it helps promote our best experiences to those dreaming based on their interests for the trip.



From editing to the pages – by having a single platform, it allows the business owners to create content and have it updated on multiple pages, instead of having to enter it multiple times, therefore streamlining the process.

Don't miss these...



GARDENS, NURSERIES & LANDSCAPING
Earthbound Touring Gardens



GARDENS, NURSERIES & LANDSCAPING
Garden In Thyme Country Market



GARDENS, NURSERIES & LANDSCAPING
Everest Trees

Official Tourism Website of Bruce County, Ontario, Canada

EXPLORE the BRUCE | EXPLORE | TOURS | MAPS

Do | Stay | Eat | Shop | Events



Overview | Location

Earthbound Touring Gardens

South Bruce Peninsula, ON

Our passion is lilies and daylilies, with 1000's blooming from June to August. Our Greenhouses and Garden Center offer an eclectic selection of on-site grown plants and shrubs for sale. Lilies are our speciality - brilliant Asiatics, sweetly scented Orientals, stately Trumpet-Lilies and fabulous new Lily-Trees. Most of our lilies and daylilies are potted and ready to take home, plant and enjoy.

Tour the two and a half acre garden, at your leisure or on one of our guided tours. Experience the wonder of our very active butterfly garden and learn more about the incredible story of the Monarch Butterfly. Share in the joy of frog-spotting in one of

[Add to My Trips](#)

14 Hlea Road
South Bruce Peninsula
ON, N0H 2 J 0
[View Map](#)

Official Tourism Website of Huron Ontario

All Seasons | **Warton** | TRIP PLANNER | STORIES | MAPS

See & Do | Stay | Eat & Drink | Shop | Events | Services



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[Add to My Trips](#)

14 Hlea Road
South Bruce Peninsula
ON, N0H 2 J 0
[View Map](#)

The Wedding Resource for Bruce, Grey & Huron

something blue

Articles | What's On | Your Day | Search by Map



VIEW ALL PHOTOS

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[Add to My Trips](#)

FOR TOURISM PROMOTERS

One site, everyone benefits.

What if you could stand with other communities and share the same message, that all of your attractions, features and businesses are just a short drive away?

While Explore the Bruce reflects the County as a whole, individual communities and municipalities have their own brands and websites.

Here is an example of how this single platform can create a seamless appearance on multiple websites.



AMENITIES, BUSINESS SERVICES & ATTRACTIONS ARE INCLUDED TO CREATE A SUPER-DESTINATION



Our database of listings can be shared across Community Organizations, Community, Municipal and County Tourism websites saving thousands of person-hours of work and thousands of tax dollars.



Earthbound Gardens and Greenhouses, Red Bay

Many garden enthusiasts before you have sent their families to either Sauble Beach or Oliphant, while they've snuck off to visit Earthbound's Garden 'not-to-be-missed' garden centre. You'll quickly find yourself happily lost for hours amongst the thousands of blooming lilies and daylilies. When you finally come back from your garden reverie, you'll discover a spectacular 2 ½ acre garden tour on your own or with a guide. Uncover nifty garden features such as bicycles and old screen doors used in clever ways. Beautiful water gardens and an active butterfly garden will open your eyes to the possibilities that can be recreated in your own backyard. At the end of the tour you'll be delighted to discover The Front Porch Café, where you can get a cool drink and a snack before you head back to the beach.

Explorer stories (blogs) are found throughout the website and provide a brief description to intrigue people and then provides the link to the business's page to 'close the sale'

Keeping with the same business, here are two different explorer stories with relation to mentioning and directing to this business.

Rural Gardens Tour

Share this story... [Tweet](#) [Like 0](#) [Share](#)



Rural Gardens in Bruce County

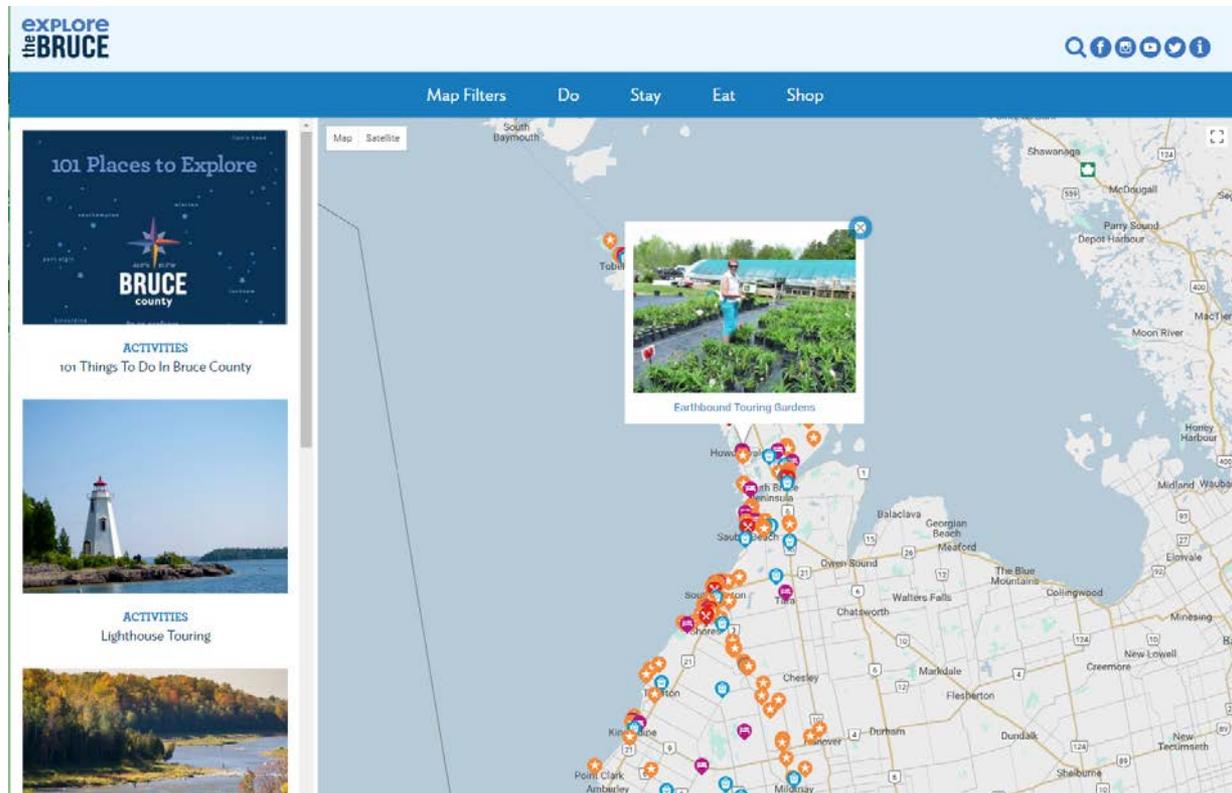
Rural Gardens in Bruce Counties, both hobbyist and professional gardeners who welcome visitors and share their green thumb secrets. The nearly two-dozen member sites range from internationally recognized gardens to lush organic crops to sanctuaries for butterflies.

Here are a few gardens you can explore:

1. [Earthbound Gardens](#)
2. [Harvest Moon Organic Bakery and Sculpture Gardens](#)
3. [Kincardine Rock Garden](#)

For more gardens along the Peninsula, visit: [Peninsula Gardens](#), or for gardens within the interior of the County, visit: [Interior Gardens](#).

Using a geographically based approach, it provides an easier way for tourists to see what is around them and add to their trip, potentially increasing their length of stay.





BRUCE
county

Once again using the geographical approach, we are able to make suggestions about 'What's Nearby' to a currently selected business. Once again increasing the options to the visitor and enticing them to visit more attractions and stay longer.

What's Nearby?

▶ Within 20 km

 DO [View All](#)



DAYTRIPS & TOURS
Bruce Peninsula Boat Tours



DAYTRIPS & TOURS
Earthbound Touring Gardens



FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS
Sauble Beach Sandfest