

Case Study: CQAF

Design & development of a WordPress website for the arts festival

www.cqaf.com

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Case Study: CQAF

Overview

The Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (CQAF) is an annual festival of music, comedy, theatre, art and literature held in May in Belfast since 2000.

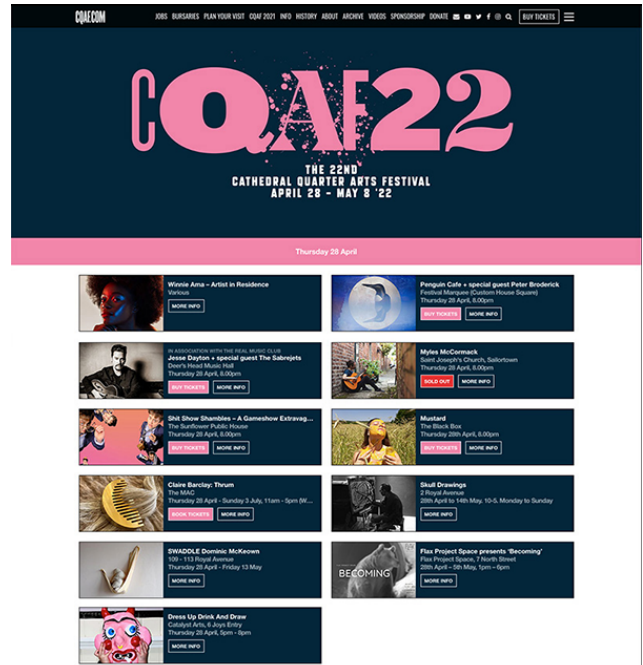
An annual January festival, Out To Lunch (OTL) was launched in 2006.

I have been their web designer since 2001, using the high quality festival branding supplied by Keith Connolly to create almost 40 festival websites to date (archived here: <https://cqaf.com/archive/>)

They required a website with a flexible CMS to promote multiple festivals and other activities throughout the year.

Website Requirements

- a strong visual identity consistent with the CQAF brand
- Mobile first design with excellent user experience
- Easy for admin to add new content and edit existing content
- Live-streaming potential
- Google Analytics set up & monitoring
- Training for admin



CQAF home page

Case Study: DiveNI

Web Design

The main goal of the website was to make it easy for users to buy tickets. Wireframes were created to plan layouts which ensured all events were accessible from every page.

The wireframes were used to design templates to differentiate between CQAF, OTL and non-festival events.

The challenge was to design a layout that was user friendly and also easily adaptable to create new templates for future festivals.

The festival branding by Keith Connolly was used prominently and also dictated the website colours for each festival template.

Strict design rules were used to maintain a consistent style across all pages.

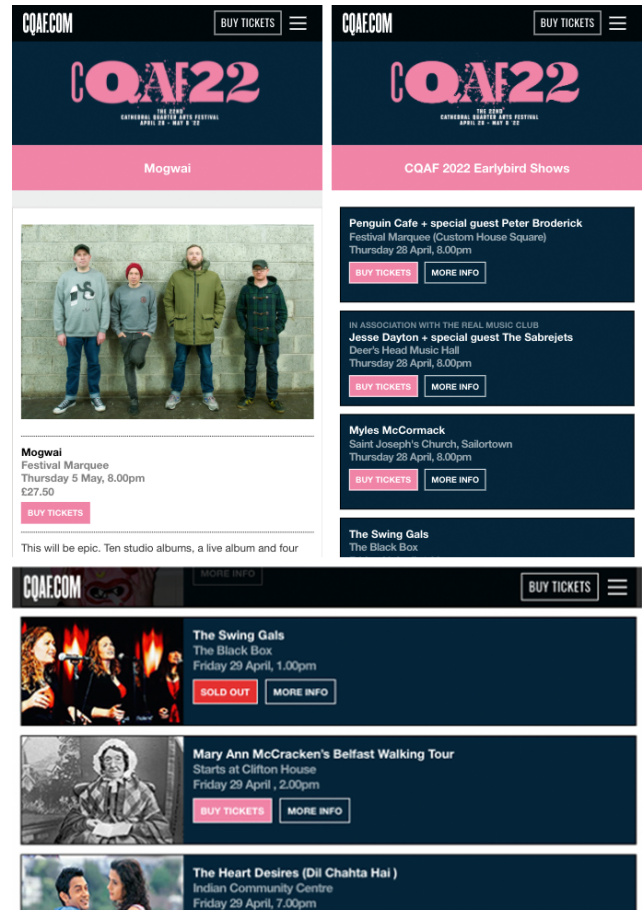


CQAF planning, sketches & wireframe

Mobile Design

According to Google Analytics, 69% of users were on mobile. A festival will have over 100 events with thumbnail images loading on the home page, which will affect page speed, data usage and page scrolling on mobile.

As there wasn't much space to work with on mobile portrait view, I opted to remove the thumbnail altogether from portrait view but have it appear in landscape view. This resulted in a much quicker experience on mobile.



Case Study: CQAF

Web Development

CMS Flexibility

Using WordPress as the CMS, I created page templates with a consistent layout but different banners & colours to differentiate between festivals. This would make it easy to create pages for future festivals and sections such as the Plan You Visit mini-site.

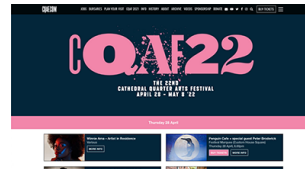
CO-VID

The 2020 lockdown resulted in the cancellation of the May festival. About 75% of the line-up had been announced online and had to be rescheduled. The CMS setup made it easy to switch page templates from CQAF to Rescheduled Events to OTL.

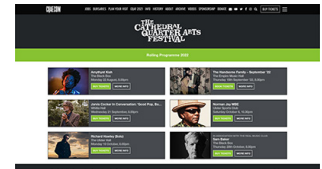
Website Security

Precautions were taken to optimise website security:

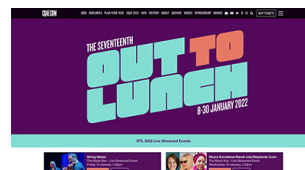
- using secure passwords
- disguising the login page
- Wordfence web application firewall & brute force protection
- email notifications of any malicious activity on the website
- scheduled backups of database & files



CQAF22 page template



Standard page template



OTL22 page template



Plan your visit section

Live Streaming

CO-VID cancelled the live element of Out To Lunch 2021 however the festival was to be live-streamed. A cost effective live-streaming set-up was required to show the events.

CQAF's online ticketing provider Ticketsolve adapted their software to display embedded html pages. This meant a YouTube video could be embedded into the page.

The live streaming company Accidental Theatre provided the YouTube links and confirmation and reminder emails were sent through Ticketsolve.

The festival events had over 110,000 views on YouTube.



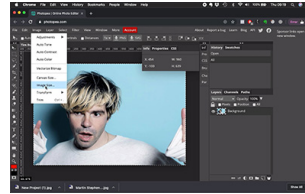
OTL21 video archive - <https://cqaf.com/otl2021-video-archive/>

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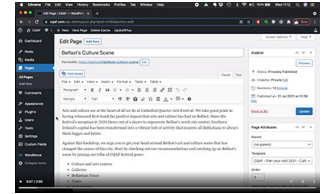
Training

Training was provided for admin staff in the form of video tutorials and step by step written instructions on the following:

- resizing, cropping and optimising images in Photopea
- add and edit events
- create content in the Plan Your visit section



Still from Resizing image in Photopea video



Still from Adding Content to Plan Your Visit video

Result

Since the festival started selling tickets online 10 years ago, online tickets sales have grown every year and now account for 95% of all ticket sales.

There were 49,000 website visitors last year and a high bounce rate of 67% which suggests users are clicking “Buy Tickets” to take them to the external ticket kiosk.