



RSA 2016 MEMBER WEBPAGE SURVEY

EXCELLENCE IN REFRACTIVE SURGERY

This report is provided to current RSA members and is considered confidential. Circulation of this document or its findings outside of the RSA Membership is prohibited under the confidentiality provision of the Refractive Surgery Alliance Society Conditions of Participation.

January 2017





RSA 2016 MEMBER WEB PAGE SURVEY

Provided as a RSA Member Benefit



REFRACTIVE SURGERY
ALLIANCE SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

This survey was undertaken to assess the current web presence of RSA member practices. A total of 137 member websites from 13 countries were evaluated. Some RSA member websites are excellent while others have significant opportunities for improvement. Scores for individual websites scores ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 92 out of a possible 100 points. The mean score was 51.2 points with a standard deviation of 20.3 points. The top quintile scores ranged from 76 to 92 points and included 18 surgeons from 15 practices (four were in the same practice).

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RSA 2016 Member Website Review

Guy M. Kezirian, MD, MBA, FACS

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Introduction: First Impressions

For many patients, your web page provides the first contact with your practice. [Studies show](#) that people leave most web pages in 10 to 20 seconds and that the probability they will stay on your page longer is mainly a function of first impressions. Think of your web page as the front door to your practice. The longer they linger on your doorstep the more likely they are to come inside and book an appointment.

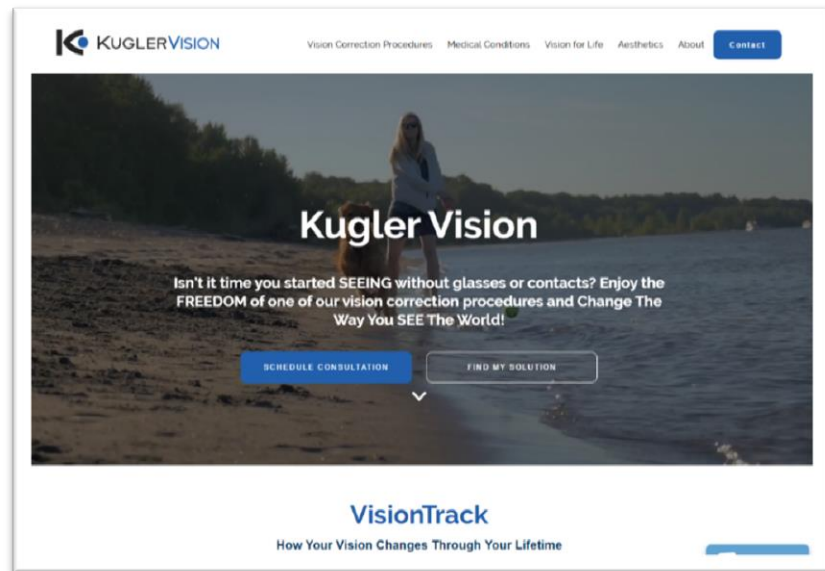
The mission of the Refractive Surgery Alliance Society (RSA) is *to grow refractive surgery by growing every members' practice*. Member web pages play a critical role in that growth. As well, RSA member web pages provide a key source of information to the public about refractive surgery. It is important to present our field well in order to increase public acceptance of our work.

The RSA recently conducted a review of member websites to assess how RSA members are being represented on the web. The review incorporated objective metrics that were used to generate reports that will guide recommendations for improvement. The evaluation did not attempt to fit websites into a standard mold but rather to assess functionality, content and appeal.

There is no one-size-fits-all template for the perfect website. Every practice has (or should have) a strong brand that represents its offerings. Some practices promote the patient experience, others emphasize technical quality, others expertise, still others focus on cost. The practice web page should reflect the brand so each practice's web page will be unique. Nevertheless, there are generally accepted [best-practices](#) that web pages should follow to ensure high conversion rates, and there are [RSA marketing guidelines](#) that are designed to promote growth.

This review was undertaken to assess the current web page practices of the RSA members, to evaluate general adherence of RSA Member Websites with best-practices, and to assess current compliance levels with the RSA Marketing Guidelines.

The goal is to provide opportunities for RSA members to improve their web presence to promote growth of refractive surgery.



Methods: The Goal of the Study Design was to “Keep It Simple”

This review focused on the features that make websites successful. The metrics for the reviews came from three sources:

- 1) The PHYSICIAN CEO™ program includes several sessions on marketing, digital media and advertising. We incorporated those concepts into the reviews.
- 2) As noted above, there are many references regarding website best-practices. These were used to construct the specific metrics.
- 3) Discussions with millennials familiar with refractive surgery helped to guide the emphasis placed on the metrics. For example, links to social media, the ability to book an appointment without calling the office, a current blog and patient testimonials were all given greater weight in the evaluations based on their input.

A database was created to track the scores. We hired contractors to visit the website of every RSA member who was listed on the [RSA webpage](#) on September 1, 2016. (New members and those not listed on the RSA website will be included when we repeat the study in 2017.) The reviews were conducted during October and results compiled on a confidential basis.

A scoring system assigned point values to each metric for a total of 100 points. Because this was a first run the decision was made to keep the process and the metrics as simple as possible.

Results: A Worthwhile Endeavor

Some websites were excellent. Others have significant opportunities for improvement.

A total of 137 member websites from 13 countries were evaluated. The distribution was mostly US-based with 115 sites in the United States, four each from the UK and Canada, three from Austria, two each from Germany and Belgium, and one from Switzerland, Spain, Israel, Ireland, India, Argentina and Andorra. The full web versions of the websites were used for the analysis, not the mobile versions.

Scores for individual websites scores ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 92 out of a possible 100 points. The mean score was 51.2 points with a standard deviation of 20.3 points. The top quintile scores ranged from 76 to 92 points and included 18 surgeons from 15 practices (four were in the same practice).

Group scores are divided into four categories as shown below.

Figure 1: Web Page Overview. Over 80% of RSA websites were deemed to have a “patient focus” and 68% had a strong emphasis on refractive surgery. About 60% were compliant with the [RSA Marketing Guidelines](#) of keeping technology off the Home Page. Approximately 1/3 sites have a current Blog and nearly 60% feature testimonials and videos.

Only 10% of the websites mention the concept of “vision for life”, including the various stages of vision development and the ability to correct refractive errors at any age. Just under 40% take advantage of the surgeon biography to demonstrate a patient focus.

An important factor, according to the Millennials consulted for the study design, is the ability to book appointments. 58% of RSA websites allow patients to book appointments on the website without calling the office.

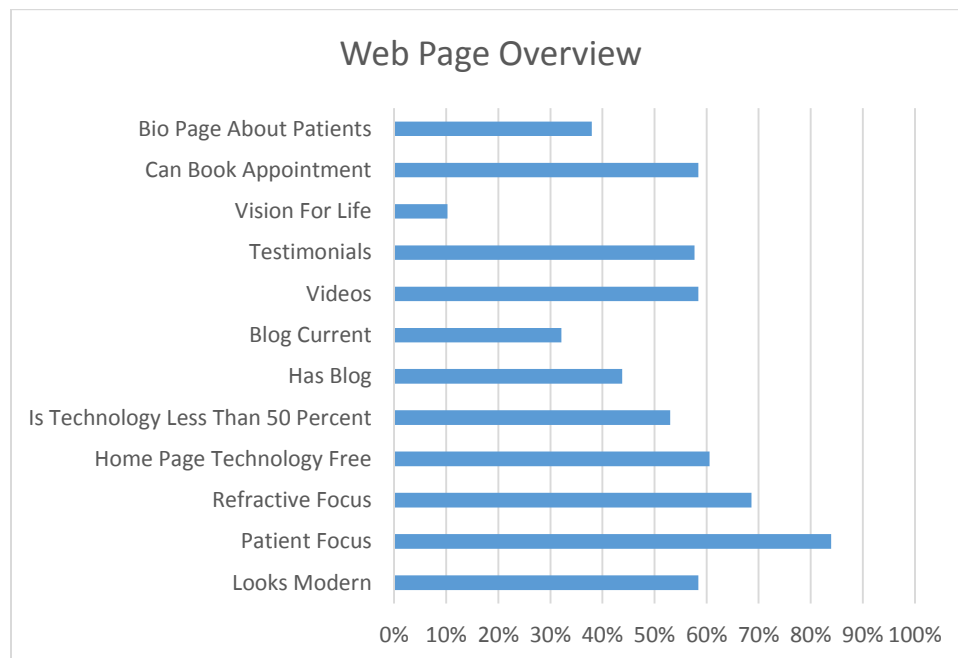


Figure 2: Social Media Links. Facebook was the most common social media link found on member web pages (76%) followed by Twitter (55%) and YouTube (50%). We expect this to significantly improve as a result of the 2017 RSA Social Media Campaign which is about to launch.

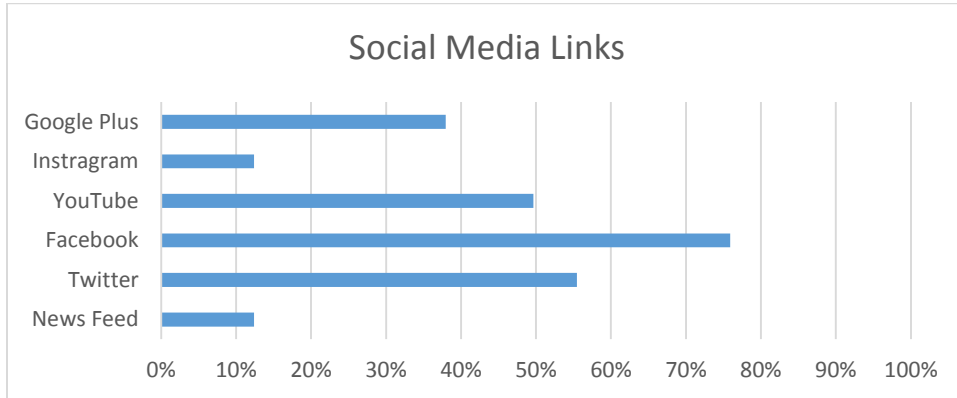


Figure 3: The Seven Refractive Procedures. The RSA promotes the concept of “the three milestones in vision development and the seven procedures to correct them.” As a baseline assessment, we surveyed which of the procedures the member websites currently describe.

The graph below shows the rates where each of the seven procedures of refractive surgery were included, and whether the information was deemed educational and was current. Findings suggest that both LASIK and Premium Lens Surgery are well represented, and that many sites could be updated contain more current information in the coming year. SMILE and Cross Linking were the least represented. While this is understandable as these are the newest procedures to be released, all RSA members are encouraged to keep current with new developments. The RSA will provide materials to support that effort in 2017.

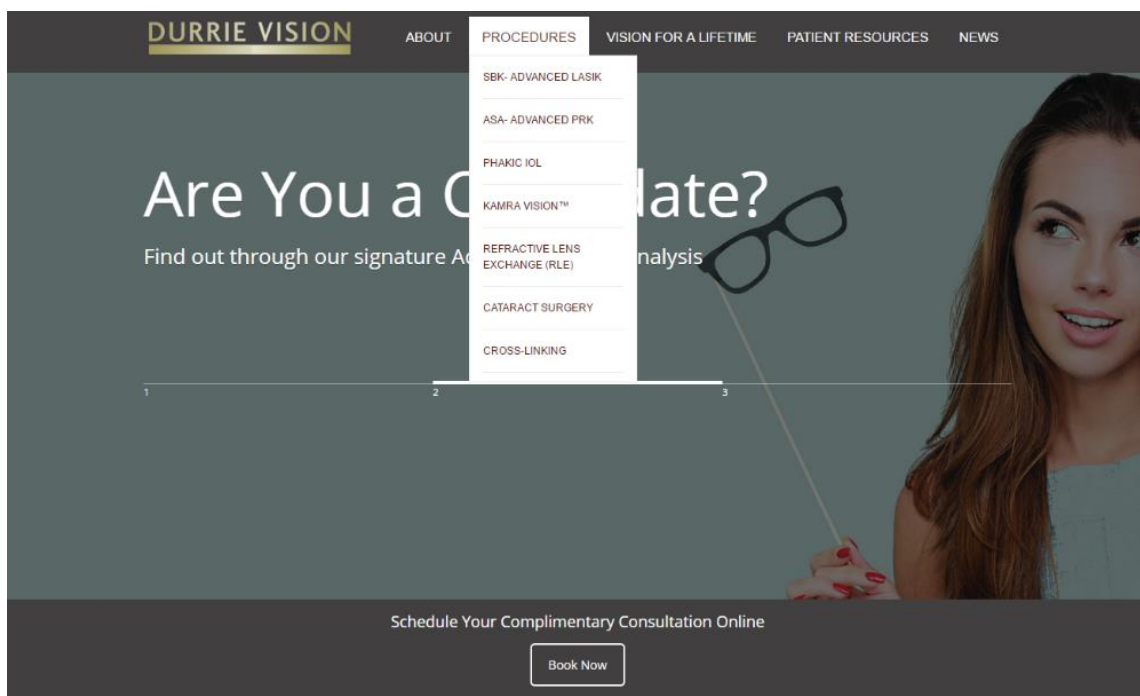
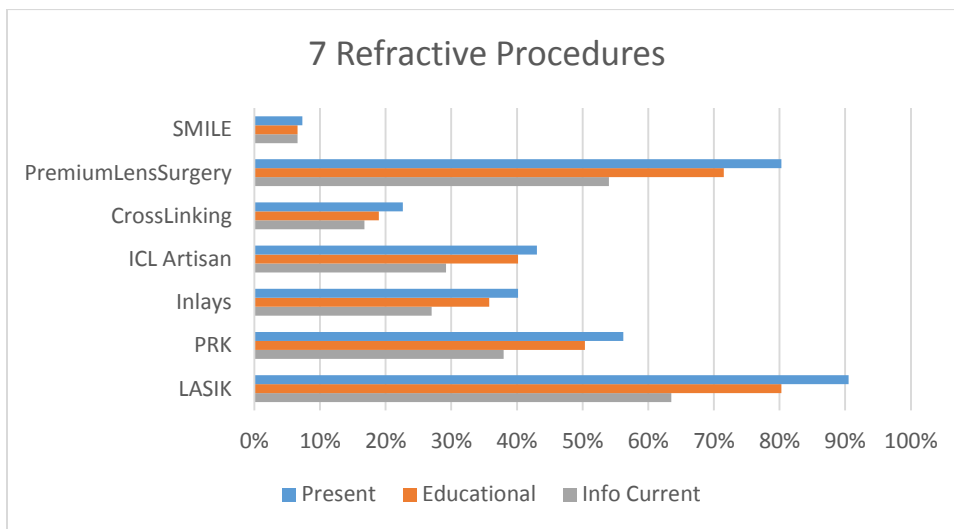
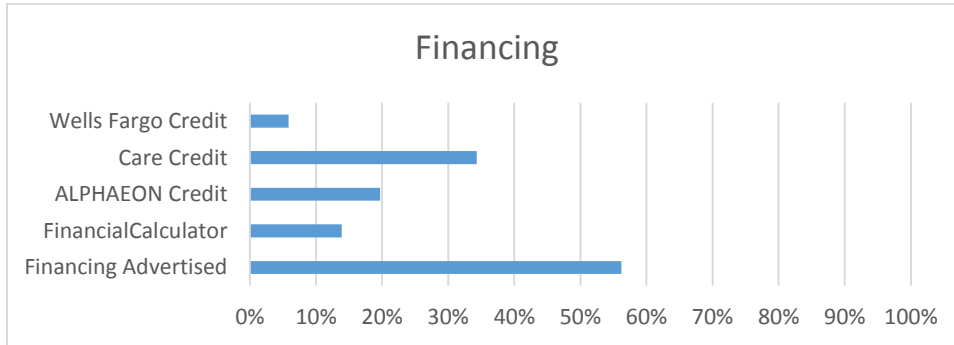




Figure 4: Patient Financing. Making refractive surgery affordable is one of the main [RSA initiatives](#) and patient financing is central to that effort. The RSA’s Preferred Vendor arrangement with ALPHAEON Credit offers [best-in-industry merchant rates for RSA members](#) regardless of credit volume.

Only 56% of RSA member websites mention patient financing as being available and only 20% mention ALPHAEON Credit. This is an obvious opportunity for improvement for many practices.



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☰



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More Patients

PATIENT FINANCING EXCLUSIVELY FOR BOARD-CERTIFIED PLASTIC SURGEONS, OPHTHALMOLOGISTS, AND DERMATOLOGISTS

ALPHAEON CREDIT, a patient financing program, offered through Comenity Capital Bank, can help you help more patients with **strong approval rates, superior credit limits, and a wide array of payment plans** to fit any patient's budget.

Discussion: Messaging Should Emphasize the Benefits of Refractive Surgery

The RSA's is built on a foundation of collaboration. Member websites should extol each practice's brand and emphasize the benefits of refractive surgery for patients. Competitive advertising that focuses on technology only induces fear and stunts growth of the field.

RSA market research suggests that most patients considering refractive surgery search for centers in their region and only open web pages that are returned on the first page of a Google search. They spend 10 to 20 seconds looking at each page and close those that don't grab their interest, limiting their focused search on no more than 3 practices. Websites play a key role in driving volume to your practice!

As part of this study, we evaluated the Google search placement for each of the practices using different key words (e.g., LASIK, Refractive Surgery, Vision Correction, etc. accompanied by City and/or State locale). Reports of the search results were generated for each practice and are available upon request, along with the overall scores that are described above.

Experts vary regarding specific techniques for website optimization. For example, some recommend including links to social media, others may not. This survey does not attempt to validate or assess any specific approach. It merely surveys current practices. Practices must decide the best approach for their website according to their needs.

While not a formal part of the analysis, it was noted that only 3 sites displayed the RSA logo or link to the RSA Webpage. This may represent a missed opportunity for improving [search optimization](#). All RSA members are encouraged to mention their involvement in the RSA and to post the logo – with an embedded link – to www.RefractiveAlliance.com. High resolution RSA logos can be downloaded at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2bsm98hph8z6wjt/AAAVNxQpQUB-1ry21jsbm3aa?dl=0>

To emphasize, there is no template for the perfect refractive surgery website because every practice's brand is and should be different. The website must reflect the practice's brand, offerings and culture. However, best-practices do exist and this study attempts to evaluate how RSA member practices follow established best-practices for consumer websites.

This study surveyed the websites of the 137 RSA members that were current as of September 1, 2016 and who were listed on the RSA webpage (www.RefractiveAlliance.com/Members). As of this writing there are over 160 members in the RSA. Findings suggest that there some RSA members have excellent websites, while many have significant opportunities for improvement. We hope this study and the metrics it provides will cause RSA members to re-evaluate their websites and make any needed changes.

The study has also presented an opportunity for the RSA Society to provide members with materials for their websites on an ongoing basis. The Executive Committee has agreed to include this as a program focus for 2017.

We plan to repeat this study on an annual basis to track improvements over time. The results may to generate new questions, as good studies often do. Your comments, suggestions and observations are welcome.

Respectfully,

Guy M. Kezirian, MD, MBA, FACS



