



The Terminal

There's a new locally-focused website you'll want to add to your favorites. Touting itself as Birmingham's hub for information, The Terminal evolved from Bronx transplant André Natta's blog—Dre's Ramblings—about life in the Magic City. After one particular rambling written about changes in the local radio stations was posted, he says he received a considerable amount of response. Natta deduced that his online readers wanted access to current news in town, so he looked to web dailies in cities such as Chicago and New York for ideas.

"I want it to be an alternative information portal for the city," says Natta, who serves as publisher and managing editor. "There's also the thought that it would be great to have it change the attitudes in town—focusing on the good things instead of focusing on what we don't have and helping us be our own city instead of trying to be somewhere else. We just need to let Birmingham be Birmingham."

Launched in April, The Terminal, online at bhamterminal.com, is still in somewhat of a testing stage, but that doesn't mean it's an ill-thought site. The main page is set up with three major components. The Newsstand reports on Birmingham coverage in national and local media outlets and also generates original stories. For example, when beloved local musician Topper Price died, Natta had the story before traditional media outlets could cover the news. Oftentimes one of his five to eight daily postings will summarize an interesting story that might not have made the front page, such as "Parker High School graduates first white student today" from *The Birmingham News*. The site's Timetable offers arts and culture event listings, and My Birmingham comprises the editorial section. In the future, Natta hopes to publish in-depth feature stories, paving the way for critical discussion, and inviting solutions, via The Terminal.

Visually, The Terminal is chock full of various blurbs and hyperlinks, but it remains refreshingly uncluttered in design—you would expect as much from a Savannah College of Art and Design graduate. Natta's hub metaphor is further emphasized by a logo derived from a Charles Buchanan wood block print of the old Birmingham Terminal Station, which sat on Fifth Avenue North until its demolition in 1969.

Working from a home office on Morris Avenue, just a few blocks away from his historic source of inspiration, Natta stays busy with his new, full-time job. By the way, he is seeking additional writers as well as advertisers for The Terminal.