

Heuristic Inspection

Heuristic usability evaluation for site :

www.SITENAME.com

PREPARED FOR : xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

PREPARED BY : xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
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DATE :

1) Introduction

Background

This inspection and report follow an initial discussion with ***** on ***** , which outlined the central purpose of the site and the objectives of the evaluation.

The

Heuristics

Heuristics in the context of usability inspections, are a set of agreed standard criteria against which the use of a site or system can be evaluated. The criteria are based of the pioneering work of Dr Jakob Nielsen.

Usability as defined in ISO 9241 concerns:-

“the extent to which something can be used by a SPECIFIED USER to achieve a SPECIFIED GOAL with EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY & SATISFACTION in a specified CONTEXT of use.”

Where effectiveness is accuracy & completion of the task, efficiency concerns use of resources including time, and satisfaction is their comfort and enjoyment.

The ten key Heuristics form the major influences on whether or not good usability will be achieved by a system, site or interface.

1. **Visibility of System Status**
Feedback of status and responses keep the user informed and reassured
2. **Match between system and real world**
User oriented vs. specialist terminology provides clarity and avoids confusion. Metaphors and mental models should be accurate with the real world.
3. **User control and freedom**
Exit and “back up” routes, clear indications for controls and actions, accommodates and supports exploration
4. **Consistency and Standards**
Same words, same meanings, use of learnable standards and conventions
5. **Error Prevention**
Design should guide users away from potential errors or check intention
6. **Recognition rather than recall**
Users will recognise controls and objects and should not be made to remember things from other areas
7. **Flexibility and efficiency of use**
Accelerators for familiar users, design allowing immediate navigation to target areas for familiar users
8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design**
Presented controls, dialogue and objects should be relevant and appropriate to position in the system. Simplifying options provides clarity, reassures the user and avoids errors.
9. **Help to recognise and recover errors**
Clear error signposting and constructive relevant recovery options
10. **Help and documentation**
Whilst a good design should minimise the need for help documentation or instruction, it should be available, clear and relevant – ideally context sensitive.

The observations in this report identify the conditions observed, explain the heuristic violated and the expected consequence of the violation.

The importance of Usability

The ever increasing volume of business completed over the internet is rapidly causing the nature of competition and competitive advantage among businesses to be redefined.

Traditional differentiators such as placement, merchandising, staff approach, location, access, shopfitting and identity have no direct relevance on the web.

Some aspects of branding can successfully be carried through to a web presence, but customer perception, trust, and willingness to trade with you, is largely determined by the effectiveness of your web site and the way it communicates with the user.

This is recognised in the large investment frequently made in the provision of sophisticated graphic presentation and complex site design.

However, user research and a vast body of evidence now suggests that the bigger and more significant determinant of a client's willingness to interact on a site, is not the glitz or sophistication, but the extent to which they can intuitively and with confidence complete their desired tasks quickly and comfortably.

Essentially, sites which are sensitive to the wants, needs, abilities and expectations of their (specific) target users and are designed for Ease of Use of that audience are much more likely to succeed. This should be no surprise, though we only need to reflect on our own experience to discover what rarities such sites are.

The failure of the majority of sites to exhibit high usability and delighted visitors, stems from the problem that:-

- 1) the designers understand the technology and consequently are unable to view the site in the manner of a normal user
- 2) the site owner – who provides the design brief, knows his offerings, intentions and ideas over how the site should work

..... even if communication and co-operation between them is first rate – neither can see the site from the viewpoint of a “naive” user without any foreknowledge.

Consequently even on a well designed site, assumptions are made over user perception, understanding and behaviour, leading to results which confuse, annoy and alienate users. At that point your nearest competitor is only a key click away and your customer is gone forever!

Usability, is a specialist area of expertise concerned with the design of systems, interfaces and websites, to ensure target users can accomplish their objectives with Effectiveness, Efficiency and Satisfaction. This means that whatever the intended task (find information, make purchase, progress an order etc.) your customer can achieve it fully and accurately, quickly and easily and in a way that is pleasing not frustrating, - that creates customer satisfaction, a strong buying motive and a loyal user.

2) General Observations : www.xxxxx.com

General

Observations were conducted on the site between .
Access was checked from multiple platforms. Connection speeds rated at xxxxx
Mbps were utilised for majority of connections, reflecting the predominant access
conditions for typical home and small/ medium business users in the UK.
No specific timing data (eg time of day delays etc) is included in the basic report
though any serious observable delays would be reported – none were experienced.

Screen sizing and construction

The screen presentation is set up to assume vertical scrolling will be required but
precluding the need for horizontal scrolling. This is at 800x600 and above
consistent with currently basic equipment .

Navigation

The navigation systems featured comprise

Functionality

The Business aim of the Site is to

Perception

The impact

Controls

Controls

3) Heuristic Inspection (A typical report may include 50+ detailed Items here with predicted severity impacts for prioritisation – rows include examples)

No.	Location / Activity	Heuristic Violated	Usability Defect	Inspector's Comments	Severity Rating	Recommendation
1	Homepage	Status/visibility	No rollover highlight on side menu	Users will have no feedback for accurate selection	High	Rollover change status on Navigation bar
2	About us	User control	Expected return to home absent from banner	Breaches common expected control methods	Med	HTML link from graphic to home
3	About us	Consistency/standard		
4						
5						
6						
7						

Summary / Recommendations

Conclusions

The limited scope of the Healthcheck normally precludes our making any detailed recommendations within this report, however I felt that you might appreciate the following being highlighted.