

COMM 1730 EVALUATION REPORT

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EVALUATION REPORT

Introduction:

In the assigned task to redesign a website from the given options, I prefer to ameliorate - 15thairdale.co.uk and carry out its in-depth evaluation. This website is about scouts which offer insight into diverse challenging activities they perform and train youngsters to incorporate skills for life like teamwork, time management, leadership, communication, etc. The site's main objective is to prepare Scouts to become financially independent and guide young enthusiasts to become better citizens. I selected this website over the other options as it was the most underdeveloped and had a lot of scope for improvement. The aim of the evaluation would revolve around achieving the goal of improving this website by making it user-friendly and aesthetically appealing and by increasing user accessibility, which will help increase the number of visitors to the website, leading to the enrollment of more scouts.

The evaluation report is further divided into five subcategories:

1. Methods of testing.
2. Usability and user experience.
3. Accessibility.
4. Technical robustness.
5. Conclusion.

Methods:

To evaluate the design of a website there is a variety of user tests like:

1. Usability testing
2. Eye-tracking
3. A focus group

I have applied a combination of usability testing and a focus group method to enhance the existing website.

1) USABILITY TESTING- It is the process that evaluates a website and shows how it works for its end users. It involves a group of test users answering a questionnaire about the website's performance. It varies over thirty minutes to an hour per participant. It can be moderated or unmoderated, remote or in-person, or even a combination of them.

STRENGTHS:

- Determines customers' needs and concerns.
- Identify the changes required specifically.
- The results can be analyzed and meet usability objectives.
- Provides unbiased perspective.

WEAKNESSES:

- Requires significant commitment by participants.
- Selecting the target user is difficult.

2) EYE TRACKING - It involves the motion/focus of the eye of an individual viewing a web page. It is carried out using a software/device which focuses on the pupil of the user and determines the movement and concentration of their gaze, the software then generates the data using heat maps.

STRENGTHS:

- It tells us if a user is reading the content or not.
- It provides the user's intensity of attention to the different content of your web page.

WEAKNESSES:

- This test is ineffective on users wearing eyeglasses or having small pupils.
- It can't assure the view of the user as eye-tracking device captures peripheral vision.
- Can't tell the reason why the user is gazing more at something.

3) A FOCUS GROUP- A focus group is a conversation within a group of five to ten participants under a moderator who asks a set of questions to them about a particular topic. This usually requires a period of about one to two hours, depending on the involvement of the participants.

STRENGTHS:

- Good for drawing out ideas and feedback that participants might not give willingly in a survey.
- User might feel more comfortable sharing his personal views in small groups of peers.
- Interaction in a group leads to better brainstorming and brings new ideas.

WEAKNESS:

- In focus groups people tend to communicate what they think and not what they do.
- User might be influenced by someone else's view.

For the evaluation of this website, I have used a combination of usability testing and a focus group. For this focus group activity, I selected six college acquaintances as credible participants who could perform extensive brainstorming and come up with some new ideas and recommendations for upgrading the website. In combination with this, I chose guerilla testing a form of usability testing to be conducted on five random participants from the college campus who would provide me answers to the pre-prepared questions, set according to my assumptions. According to me the combination of chosen methods will provide me with the best outcome which will help in evaluating the website and overcome the limitation of doing the testing over a small number of people.

Usability and User experience:

Usability of the website is defined by the ease with which the user navigates through the website and user experience is concerned with the user's perception of how the site interacts with him. "Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." (Steve Jobs)

The target of usability is to achieve visual hierarchy, smooth navigation, aesthetically pleasing, and communicate the objective. Now to check the user experience the following set of questions were prepared to be used in the above-discussed methods.

Questionnaire-

1. Is there a clear visual hierarchy on the page?
2. Can you figure at first glance what this site is about?
3. Were you able to navigate smoothly?
4. Did you find the interface of the website pleasant or not?
5. Would you ever recommend this site to anyone?
6. Is there anything on the website you want to eliminate or add in terms of content?
7. Are there unnecessary elements on the page causing background noise?
8. Is there a clear title of the page?
9. Are you able to make out what page of the website you are on?
10. How can you search on the website?

Observations from focus group activity and usability testing are as under:

1. Majority of participants found no visual hierarchy on this website.
2. 70% of the participants could not find out at first glance, what this site is about.
3. 80% of the participants could smoothly navigate but didn't find the related content appropriate.
4. 100% of the participants found that the interface of the website was unpleasant.
5. Everyone said a big no to recommend the site to anyone as there are way better websites available in comparison to this website for scouts.
6. Participants recommended adding images of the activities website is offering.
7. Most of the participants stated that there was not much background noise.
8. 30% of the participants found the titles clear and loud whereas the rest didn't find clarity in them.
9. Participants suggested getting more clarity about the pages, titles, and content.
10. Participants were unable to search the required content as there is no search bar available.

Recommendations for the problem identified in the above testing methods are as under:

1. Need to highlight important content in a way that visual hierarchy is maintained.
2. Need to develop a proper home page stating the objective of the website with a clear title for each web page, defining the purpose and aim of the website.
3. Aesthetic changes are needed to entice users to use this website.
4. Proper use of images wherever needed.
5. Proper content display.
6. Search bar to be added.

Accessibility:

Accessibility is the practice of making a website usable by as many people as possible.

Following are the barriers to Accessibility:

1. **Technology:** Like mobile devices, old browsers, or old computers. Thus, the website should be functional with the earlier versions also.
2. **Environment:** Noisy environment, bad lighting, or poor screen contrast.
3. **Language:** Non-native speaker.
4. **Disabilities:** Physical, auditory, visual, speech & cognitive.

Accessibility Issues:

1. No meta-information- The website should include meta-information like keywords and descriptions.
2. Some table header cells have no corresponding data cells.

<https://www.15thairedale.co.uk/about/contact/>

3. Text and background colors don't have enough contrast. Some users find it hard to read grey text on a blue background, so need to apply contrasting colours.
4. Heading elements are not in sequentially descending order. Properly ordered headings that do not skip levels convey the semantic structure of the page, making it easier to navigate and understand when using assistive technologies.
5. Footer Information is missing. For example, we could provide some links like privacy and term and conditions, contact information, about us, or at least copyright details.

Technical Robustness:

A technically robust website has capabilities to deal with different situations.

Robustness, as defined by WCAG, refers specifically to web content that is compatible with a variety of “user agents”: browsers, assistive technologies, and other means of accessing web content. For example, the content should be written with proper tags in HTML and nested correctly to prevent errors while using assistive technologies. After validating the website consideration, the following are the findings:

1. Critical website error- According to <https://validator.w3.org>, there are a total of 28 warnings & errors including JavaScript, CSS & HTML. Will remove all errors related to HTML and CSS. For example, Error: **“An img element must have an alt attribute, except under certain conditions”**. The impact of this is that the screen reader is unable to comprehend it.
2. The site is responsive on all types of browsers like google chrome, firefox, etc., and usable on all screen sizes and different devices. But on mobile, the menu is not properly labeled.
3. This website is not SEO friendly as meta keywords are not being used and meta description is not proper. To improve the SEO of the website, we will use meta keywords and describe them properly.

Conclusion:

After the complete evaluation following are the identified limitations, their impact, and solutions:

1. This website needs to have a proper page name mentioned to display what it is about and a logo defining the aim of the website. Otherwise, people viewing this website will not be able to make out the scope of the website.
2. The website lacks a visual hierarchy so needs to highlight important content to increase visual impact and to keep viewers glued to it.
3. Viewers find it difficult to read the content due to the current color contrast so need to change the colours of the background, text, and tabs which will also make it aesthetically pleasing.
4. Incorporating proper images where ever required with suitable alt attributes will make it compatible with the screen-reader and more vibrant.
5. Need to make appropriate changes in the content as pages are lacking information and some needs upgradation. Content also requires nesting.
6. Search bar is missing and footer information is inadequate, so the search bar has to be added to make it easier for users to find the needed information on the webpage. Also, we could provide some links like privacy and term and conditions, contact information, about us, or copyright details.
7. HTML content needs correction as per the errors shown by the validator and since SEO is poor, meta description and meta keywords are required.

The main objective of this evaluation report is to make the changes discussed above to enhance the user experience without altering the essence of the current website.

References

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