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Usability Design and Testing

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Usability Heuristic Testing Report

Client

Our client is Oceana, an organization that is dedicated to preserving our oceans to keep them cleaner and have a more steady food supply for our growing population. Its main goal is to build awareness of the current condition of our oceans to hopefully gain support and funding to protect it and its wildlife that call it home. The main Oceana website is the area of focus here. Technology is prevalent in today's society which is why the website is important to look further into to see if it fulfills its duties of informing, campaigning, and collecting donations for its cause.

Oceana's url : https://oceana.org/?_ga=2.172156064.2067384489.1615499519-776463654.1613663215&_gac=1.152936443.1614092036.33aaf892180c129abd1898a70ef0892

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Goals of Research

Our main goal was to evaluate how easy it is to locate news and information throughout the website in order to be informed on the mission of the organization. The mission of this

website is to educate people on how the ocean and it's creatures are being negatively impacted, this is done to ultimately push them those using the site to take action, or donate money. This website also encourages people to take part in campaigns, so our group looked at how easy those campaigns were to access and contribute to.

Audiences

Since a website is under review for a Heuristic Analysis, it can really be accessed by anyone that shows interest in the cause. The main type of audience includes people that care about the environment and the condition of the Earth and its oceans in the future. The Oceana website targets these people as activists, showing that they are promoting change and protection of the oceans and its creatures that call it home. The information and campaign sections of the site show to its main audience base that it is striving to put donations toward the protection of the oceans in the present as well as the future. Members of the audience show common characteristics of change-oriented, passionate, and persistency. They encourage change to create a better world that puts our environment and the health of the Earth at the top.

Specific Audiences:

- Environmentalists
- Activists
- Change Seekers
- Animal Activists

Methods

Our methods involve following the Heuristic Evaluation that is talked about in Carol M. Barnum's book on Usability Testing Essentials. Barnum describes ten steps these include: Visibility of the system status, Match between system and the real world, User control and freedom, Consistency and Standards, Error Prevention, Recognition rather than Recall, Flexibility and Efficiency of Use, Aesthetic and Minimalist design, Help users recognize/diagnose/and recover from errors, Help and Documentation.

In order to have a proper analysis with no bias, three individual heuristic analyses were performed on the website. The appendices section includes the findings of the three individual heuristic analyses. The drawn conclusions based on the three individual heuristics can be found in the findings section.

A Heuristic Analysis is a way of testing the usability of the site in regard to its audience and users. It evaluates how easy it is to navigate through the website, how it lets users achieve their goals, and if it achieves the organizational objective of the company as a whole. Using the individual 10 Heuristics from Barnum's Usability Testing Essentials to guide the test allowed the proper analysis of aspects of the website that affect the usability.

Findings

Drawn Conclusions and Findings based on Three Individual Heuristic Analysis

1. Visibility of system status

The visibility of the system status seems to be done well. Through the three different

heuristic evaluations run, our group noticed that the website does a good job at keeping its users engaged and informed. It does this through its drop down menus, the information bar at the top, and through its news articles.

2. Match between system and the real world

The match between the system and the real world is right at where it should be. Through the evaluations run, our group noticed that the site does not get too scientific about its topics which allows a larger majority of users to understand their site.

3. User control and freedom

The user control and freedom seemed to stand in the middle of its effectiveness. Some of the evaluations decided that the site did an alright job and others believed it could use some improvement. From this the group noticed that for the most part the user is able to quickly click on the main tabs at the top and return to the main page, however, in some instances this feature is not present and the user can get lost.

4. Consistency and standards

Consistency and standards also seems as if it could use some improvement. From what the evaluations gathered the only true sense of consistency is the top of the page where the logo and navigation bar are. Otherwise some of the portions of the site do not match each other very well.

5. Error prevention

The site's error prevention is seemingly lacking. The different evaluations noticed that instead of receiving back error warnings, instead the user is able to do the errors and continue on as if they were correct. Some of these include things such as barely any confirmation for donation, as well as putting in a non real email does not send back a warning.

6. Recognition rather than recall

Oceanas use of recognition rather than recall is well done. The site keeps a simple set up and has all of the most important information at the top. With this navigation bar the user can quickly recognize what they had been on last rather than trying to recall what it was.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

The flexibility and efficiency of use is well done, it follows a similar set up to many other sites allowing users to quickly navigate. This site relies mostly on users' mental models as well by how it's set up and does it in a way that is effective for the users to browse more information faster.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

The site's aesthetic and minimalist design is lacking. When first looking at the site the only part that seems simple enough to understand is the navigation bar as well as the email sign up. From that point on the homepage is much too cluttered. This is due to its many different portions, however, it is certainly something that could be improved upon.

- Refer to homepage section in the appendices

9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

The Oceana site doesn't really help the users recognize, diagnose, or recover from errors. This is mainly because not many errors occur, however, sometimes a user may get stuck on a certain portion of the site and be unsure of how to get back. This could call for the site to maybe adjust this and help them fix it.

10. Help and documentation

Through the three separate evaluations, our group did not notice any section that listed help and documentation. This is an aspect that the site may need to add.

Analysis

The problems with this site were a lack of an aesthetic and minimalist design, error prevention, and user control and freedom. Although these issues are present, all of the evaluators concluded that this website has great potential with just a few small changes conducted.

Recommendations

There were a few high-priority issues found in the heuristic evaluation. To start, all of the evaluators agreed that the website's aesthetic and minimalist design is not satisfactory. In order to combat this, more subpages could be added, so that the information is not as cluttered. Oceana also has a lack of error prevention. This can be fixed by programming messages to pop-up when someone puts in the wrong email, or when the user enters the amount they desire to donate. The final adjustment that should be made pertains to user control and freedom. On some pages, there is an icon to take you back to the home page, but this should be present on all pages in order to prevent the user from getting lost.

Appendices

Each Letter Explains an Individual Finding Found from the Three Individual Heuristic Analysis Tests

1. Visibility of system status

- a. Before even clicking on anything the system is already giving appropriate feedback it does this in a few ways
 - i. When hovering over options they change color

- ii. If they have a drop down menu you it also opens when you hover over the options
 - iii. The options in white text at the top also have a feature that creates a line under them when you go over top of them
 - iv. Some of the other options also make some sort of movement that helps you recognize that you are in fact over top of an option
- b. The website of Oceana keeps users engaged through its many uses of information to persuade them to donate to the cause. The information bar at the top of the website shows the users all the options they have to travel to different places in the site.
 - c. The website has up to date news articles towards the bottom of the home page, and a place to sign up for email updates right at the top

2. Match between system and the real world

- a. All of the information on the page is simple and understandable without getting too scientific which allows accessibility for many.
- b. Although an informational site with a great deal of important information, Oceana does a great job of informing the audience in a way that is understandable to them. Informing the audience of its efforts and campaigns in a way they will understand also helps persuade them to donate to the cause.
- c. All of the information is simplified so that users can understand it. The language is not highly scientific.

3. User control and freedom

- a. When clicking one of the tab options the main information is still present at the top allowing them to quickly return elsewhere
- b. The Oceana Website could do a better job in using this heuristic. When clicking on a certain aspect, there isn't much information given to the user on how to get back to where they once were without using the internet browser back arrow.
- c. From any page, you can always hit the banner that says "Oceana", to get back to the home page.

4. Consistency and standards

- a. Since there are many aspects of the Oceana site like the information, campaigns, and donations, the consistency is a little hard to see. There are many parts to the website, but the information and navigation bar at the top brings everything together and keeps all of its aspects in the same location.
- b. The website follows a general rule of consistency yet has some aspects that do not seem exactly alike
- c. The "What We Do" and "Our Campaigns" pages may seem like similar pages to the user. It may be clearer if "What We Do" was switched to "Mission Statement".

5. Error prevention

- a. There is not much error prevention within the Oceana site. As soon as you click on a certain portion, you are brought to that portion in seconds. There is a little confirmation in the donation process since it deals with users giving money to the cause.
- b.

- c. When testing the site the user could type in a fake email into the email box, and it didn't tell me that it was not valid. So, in that aspect, the error prevention could be stronger.
- d. When navigating through the site some aspects make it hard to get back to the main page, which caused me to have to go and search for how to get back, this could use some help because it allows the users to make more errors

6. Recognition rather than recall

- a. All of the important tabs and information are present at all times allowing for the users to quickly recognize something rather than hunting for where they found it
- b. The layout of the Oceana website is simple. The main navigation bar at the top of the website is similar to that of other websites, allowing users to know how to find pieces of the site using that.
- c. All aspects of the website are integrated within each page appropriately, eliminating for user confusion.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

- a. Going back to the simple layout with the navigation bar at the top, tends to many levels of user's mental models since it is a piece used in many other websites. It gives users much information and lets them travel to different places in the site.
- b. The site is relatively easy to use, for the most part the navigation portion stays at the top making it easy for the user to get to any portion of the site within seconds
- c. The website is fast and easy to navigate from one page to another.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

- a. For the most part the information that is provided is minimal however the site does feel very cluttered.
- b. There is a lot going on, especially on the home page. The information could definitely be spread out a little more so it is not as cluttered.
- c. Since there are many aspects of the Oceana site containing information, campaigns, and donations, it can feel like it is complex at times. There is a lot happening on the homepage and may be a bit overwhelming to the users at first glance.

9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

- a. There are not many issues that one can run into on the Oceana site other than clicking on the wrong page of the site. There really is only confirmation when navigating to the donation page since it is a touchy portion of the site dealing with money and funds.
- b. The only error noticed was sometimes you can get stuck on a certain portion of the site and not easily be able to figure out how to get back, this doesn't help the users and it should be implemented.
- c. Did not observe any error messages.

10. Help and documentation

- a. I am not sure if there is a documentation area for the Oceana site itself. I would assume there is documentation in the area of donations, but a smaller more specialized test on the donation sector could be done to test the feedback of that.
- b. A specific help and documentation portion of the site does not seem to be present.
- c. While the site is easy to use, there is no designated "help" section.

Home Page and Parts of the Site

INTERNATIONAL ABOUT PUBLICATIONS MARINE LIFE SUPPORT BLOG

OCEANA Protecting the World's Oceans

What We Do Our Campaigns Take Action 25 **DONATE**

SAVE THE OCEANS, FEED THE WORLD.

RESTORING THE OCEAN COULD FEED 1 BILLION PEOPLE A HEALTHY SEAFOOD MEAL EVERY DAY.

Email

Join Us

- Tell Congress: Save Dolphins, Whales Dying in Drift Gillnets**
[Add Your Name >](#)
- Transparency and Traceability: Tools to Stop Illegal Fishing**
[Learn More >](#)
- Stop the Killing: Become an Oceana Member and Help Protect Marine Life**
[Donate Now >](#)
- Securing Seafood for a Growing World**
[Save the Oceans, Feed the World >](#)

BECOME A WAVEMAKER
Sign up today to get weekly updates and action alerts from Oceana.

[JOIN US](#)

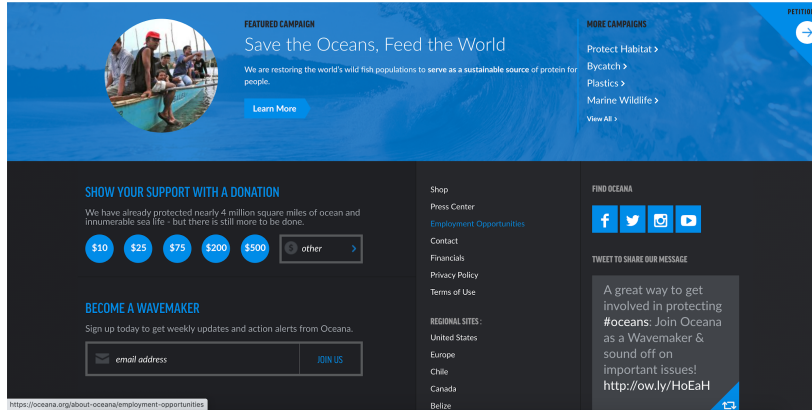
OCEANA HAS ALREADY PROTECTED NEARLY 4 MILLION SQUARE MILES OF OCEAN
[Learn How](#)

BLOG
COVID-19 shook the seafood sector. Researchers say it now gives us a chance to change the way we feed the world.
COVID-19 upended life as we know it, affecting how we work, who we interact with, and even what we eat. Much has been said about the...

BLOG
What would the world's fisheries look like without women?
The seafood industry is often viewed as a male-dominated space and in many ways it is. Globally, men perform most of the "production"...

BLOG
CEO Note: Three Levers to Tackle Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing
I'm a big optimist on the matter of rebuilding fish populations. It's achievable, and the benefits are larger than people understand...

VICTORY
Oceana and Allies Stop the Expansion of Offshore Oil Drilling in the United States



Bibliography

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