Analytical Evaluation of ASOS.com

By

Name: Krishna Gopalan, Arvind

Student ID: 122104361

Revisions

S.No	Author	Description	Date Completed
1	Krishna Gopalan, Arvind	Initial Version	11-APR-2024

Table of contents

Introduction

Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular these days with Covid-19 being the catalyst for popularizing this trend. With limitations on in-store visits due to pandemic-related barriers, consumers increasingly turned to online platforms for their shopping needs. According to an article published by the National Library of Medicine [1], this shift in consumer behavior resulted in a significant global retail e-commerce growth of 26.4%, reaching a staggering US $4.248 trillion in 2020 (Cramer-Flood, 2022).

Drawing from longitudinal data collected before and during the pandemic, this study reveals a remarkable increase in the number of respondents who shop online at least once per week. The percentage surged nearly five-fold from 11.6% in fall 2019 to 51.2% in spring 2020 [2] .

Despite the easing of restrictions, consumers continue to demonstrate satisfaction with their online shopping experiences, leading to sustained growth in online shopping. Notably, worldwide e-commerce accounted for 17.9% of total retail sales in 2020, with projections suggesting a rise to 19.0% in 2021 [1]. Millennials and Gen Z emerge as the primary drivers of the online market.

Given the expanding user base, it has become increasingly imperative for online shopping applications to prioritize accessibility and usability to attract a diverse audience.

Goal:

The objective of this case study is to assess the accessibility and usability of ASOS, a prominent British online retailer specializing in fast-fashion and cosmetics. Established in London in 2000, ASOS primarily caters to young adults, offering a diverse range of clothing, accessories, and beauty products from over 850 brands alongside its own line. With fulfillment centers in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Europe, ASOS ships to customers in all 196 countries [4]. Boasting a staggering user base of over 25 million active users, approximately 40% of whom are based in the UK, ASOS witnessed a 4.7% increase in orders in 2022, with 99.7 million items ordered [5]. In February 2024 alone, ASOS recorded an annual web traffic of 47.11 million [6]. Given the vast user demographic, ensuring the accessibility and usability of the application is imperative to cater to all user groups effectively.

According to data from trustpilot.com [12], nearly 70% of users expressed high satisfaction with their shopping experiences on asos.com. Additionally, a survey conducted by Institute of Customer Service (ICS) [11] revealed that ASOS ranks highest in customer satisfaction, achieving an impressive score of 92%. Despite ASOS's significant revenue and wide user base, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in terms of accessibility and usability. This report aims to assess ASOS's shortcomings in these areas. We will analyze whether the website adheres to Nielsen's

10 Heuristics and evaluate its accessibility using the Wave.webaim tool. Based on the findings, we will propose a redesign of the ASOS website to address any identified issues.

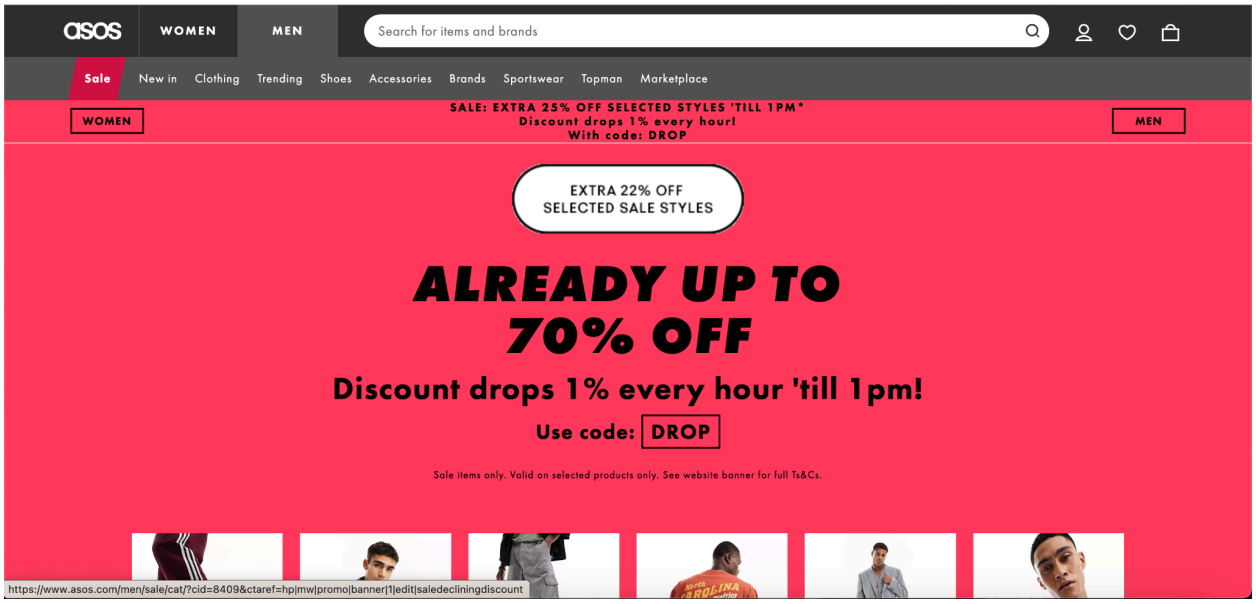

Fig 1: ASOS -Fashion company

Adherence to Golden Rules/Heuristics

For this case study, I opted to evaluate the website's conformity to Jakob Nielsen's 10 fundamental principles of interaction design.

Here are the 10 Nielsen heuristics:

1. Visibility of system status
2. Match between system and the real world
3. User control and freedom
4. Consistency and standards
5. Error prevention
6. Recognition rather than recall
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
10. Help and documentation.

Among Nielsen's 10 heuristics, I've selected four that I deem crucial for an ecommerce website, particularly due to its involvement with payments and transactions: "Visibility of

system status," "Error Prevention," "Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors," and "Help and documentation." These heuristics are vital as they ensure users are consistently informed about their actions, mitigate the risk of errors during transactions, facilitate error recovery, and provide necessary assistance and guidance to users throughout their shopping journey.

Visibility of system status

This principle emphasizes the importance of providing users with timely and relevant feedback to keep them informed about ongoing processes. Such feedback allows users to understand the outcome of their actions and plan their next steps accordingly. It ensures users are aware of whether their interactions were successful or unsuccessful, fostering trust in both the product and the brand.

Compliant Examples

Below are excellent examples from the website that adhere to this principle.

1. **Adding an item to cart:**
   When an item is added to the cart, there is a clear feedback from the application by displaying a popup asking if the user wants to checkout or view the items in the cart. Also there is a clear indication of number of items added to the cart

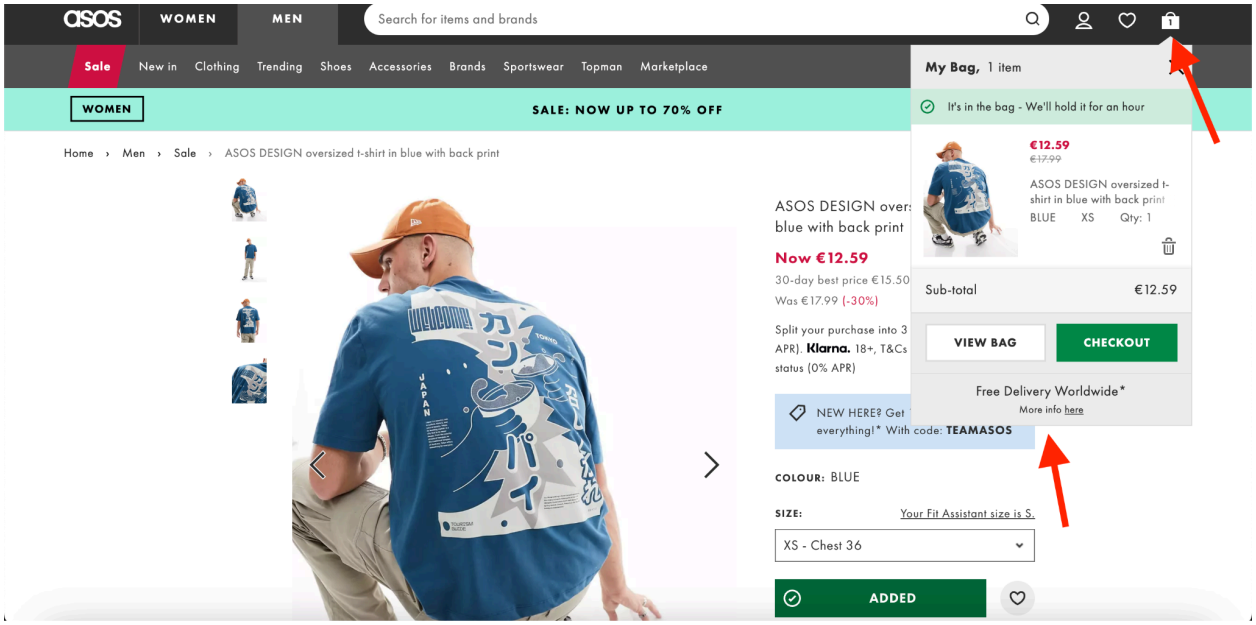

Fig 2: Adding an item to cart

2. **Removing an item from the cart:**
   When an item is removed from the cart, the application provides suitable feedback confirming that the item has been successfully deleted from the cart.

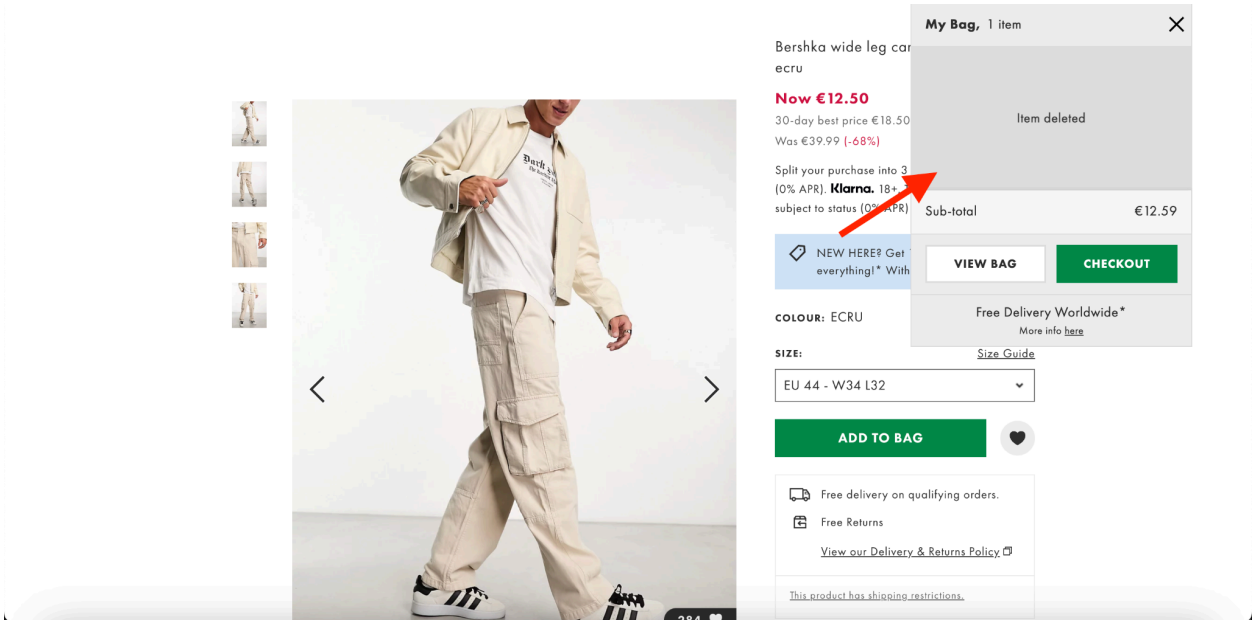

Fig 3: Removing an item from the cart

Non Compliant Examples

Below are examples from the website that need to be improved.

1. **Adding an item to wishlist:**

   When adding an item to the wishlist, the feedback displayed by the application is barely noticeable, and the website neglects to clearly indicate whether the item is already in the wishlist. This can be improved by using better animations and brighter colors for indicating whether the item is already available in the wishlist or not.

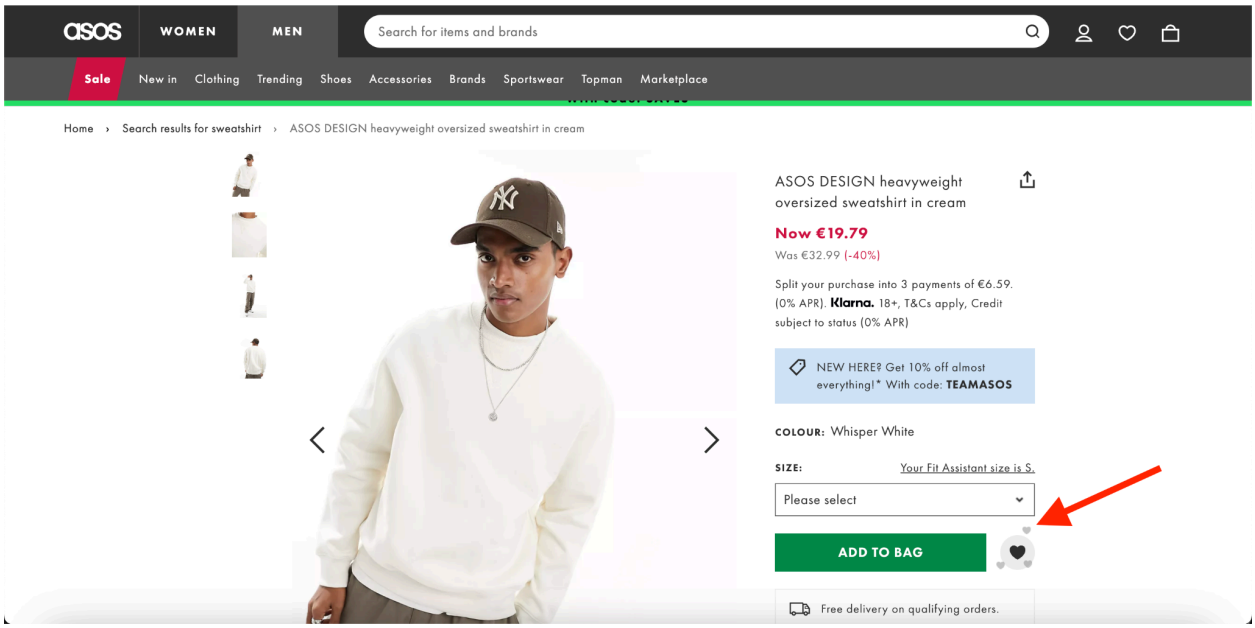

Fig 4: Adding an item to wishlist

2. **Difficulty in identifying applied filters:**
   When a user applies a filter to their search, the system inadequately indicates which filters are currently active. It simply adds a blue line around the filter category to suggest that a filter is active, which could confuse the user. This example could also be considered a poor implementation of the "Recognition rather than recall" heuristic, as new users may find it challenging to understand that a filter is active.

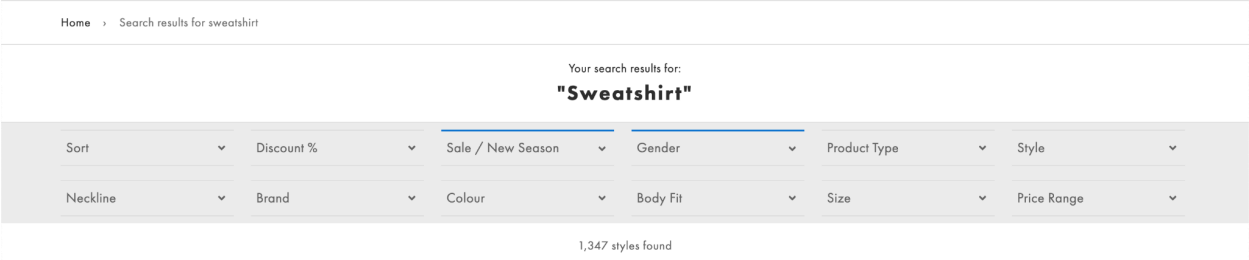

Fig 5: Difficulty in identifying applied filters

Error Prevention:

This principle emphasizes the importance of preventing errors from happening rather than providing a solution for the error occurred. This can be done by eliminating error-prone conditions, or checking for them and presenting users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.

Compliant Examples

Below are excellent examples from the website that adhere to this principle.

1. **Disabling Add to cart button**
   When a user tries to add an item to their cart, the button is promptly disabled until the action is successfully completed. This is essential in situations where there is network delay, as it prevents the user from inadvertently adding multiple items to the cart by repeatedly clicking the button.

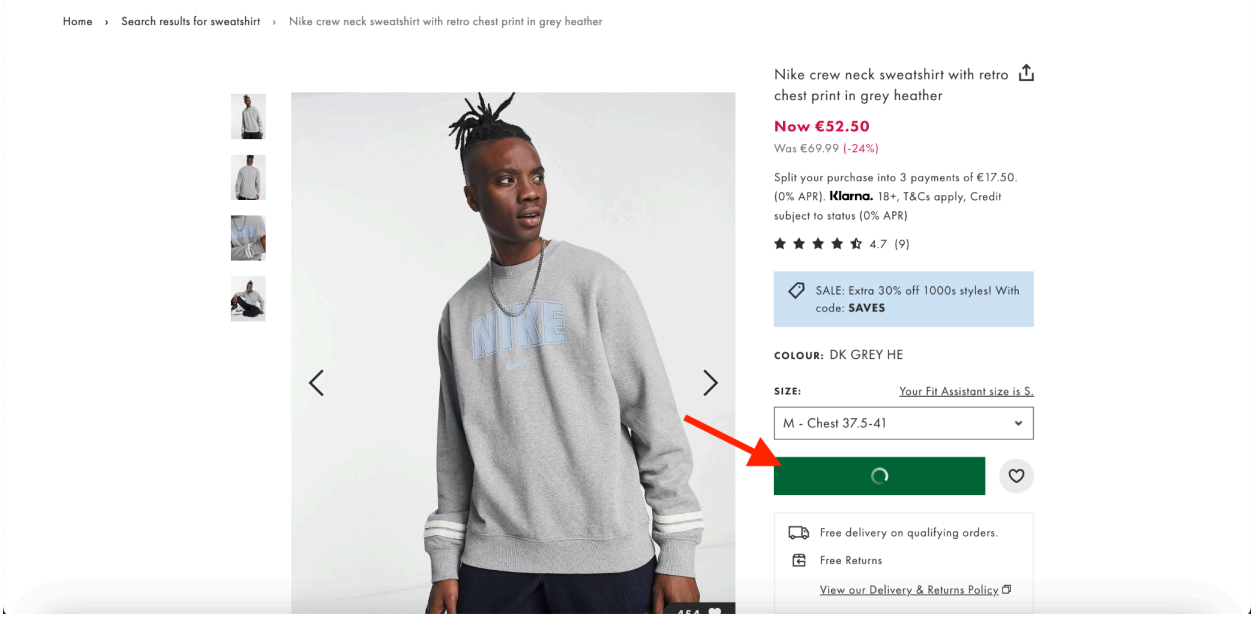

Fig 6: Disabling Add to cart button

2. **Disabling the buy button on the delivery page**
   The “Buy Now” button on the delivery page is disabled until all the essential delivery information is provided by the user. This prevents the user from placing an offer with incomplete details.

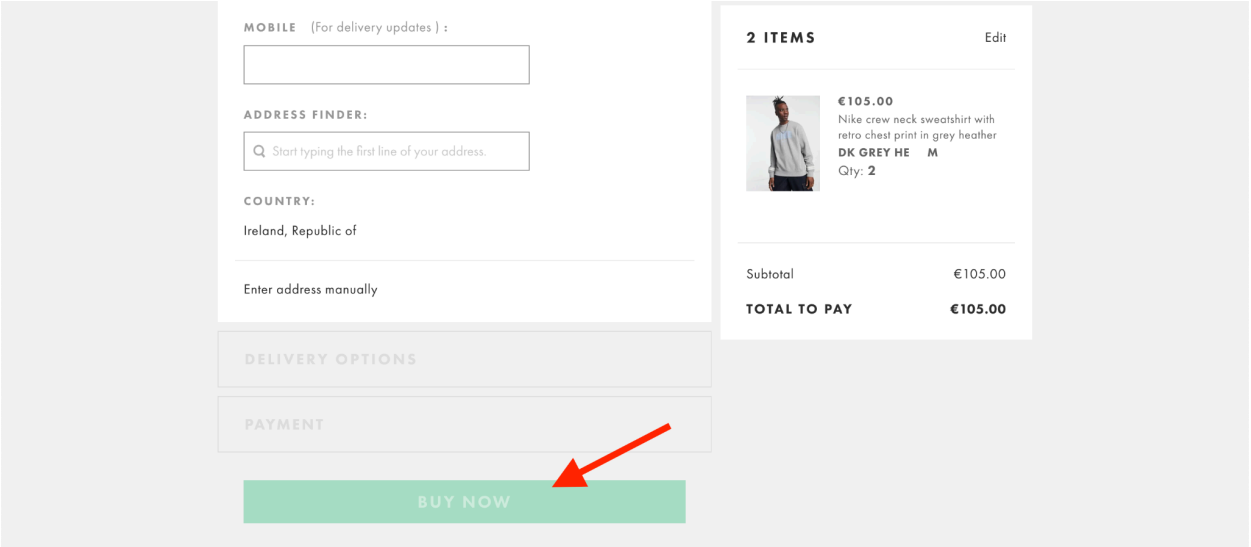

Fig 7: Disabling the buy button on the delivery page

Non Compliant Examples

Below are examples from the website that need to be improved.

1. **No indication on mandatory fields**
   There is a lack of clear indication for mandatory fields on the application. For instance, on the product display page, there is no prompt for users to select a

size before clicking on the "Add to Cart" button. Similarly, on the delivery page, users might be uncertain about which fields are required to enable the "Buy Now" button, as there is no indication of mandatory fields.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

This principle emphasizes the importance of having user friendly error messages expressed in plain language precisely indicating the problem and constructively suggesting a solution. This involves providing an escape plan for the user by providing shortcuts to fix the issue swiftly rather than following a long list of procedure to revert the change

Compliant Examples

Below are excellent examples from the website that adhere to this principle.

1. **Page not Found:**
   Whenever a user navigates to page which does not exists or whenever a error occurred, there is a clear indication of the problem and the system also provides a escape plan of navigating back to home to continue using the application

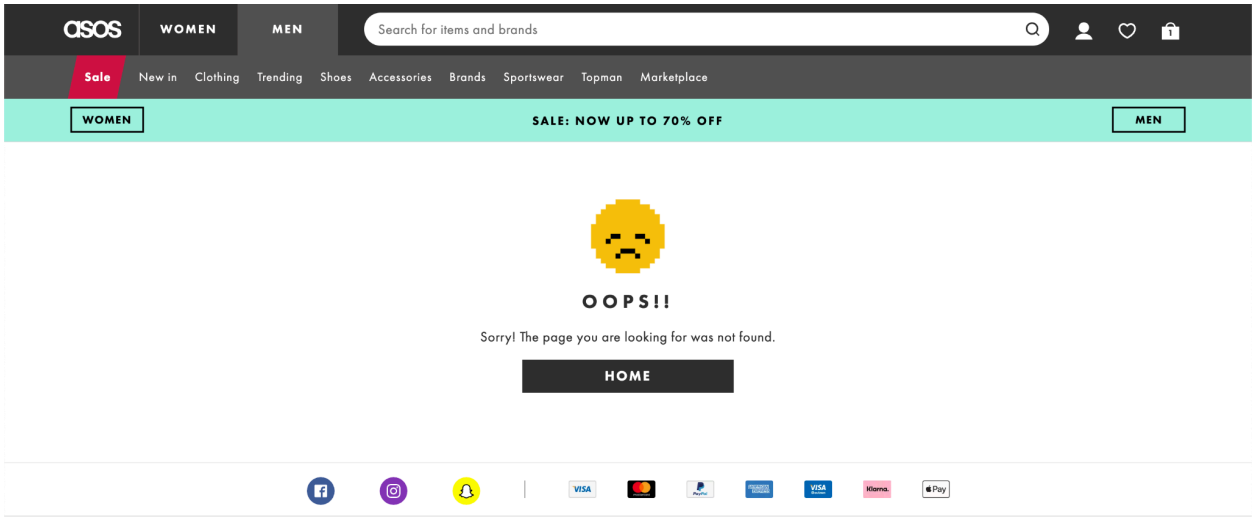

Fig 8: Page not Found

2. **Error messages on skipping mandatory fields**
   When a user skips a mandatory field and attempts an action, such as adding an item to the cart without selecting the size, there is a clear indication of why the action failed and how to rectify it.

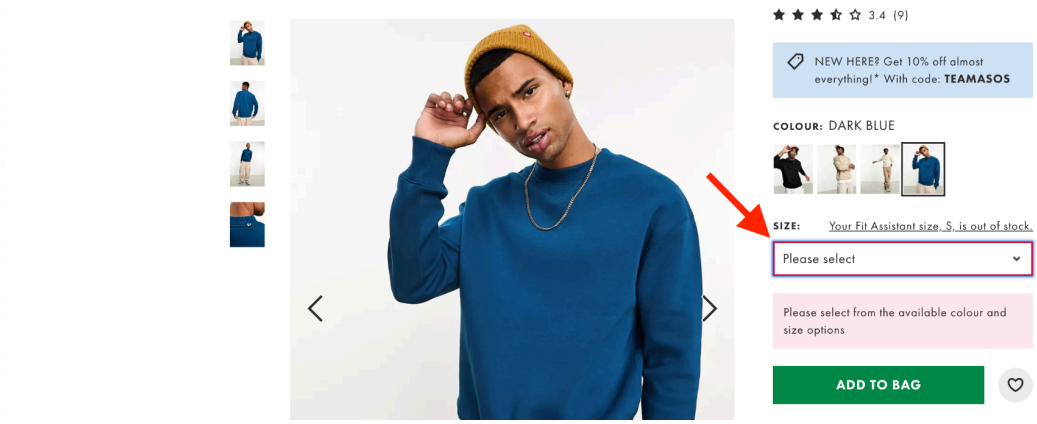

Fig 9: Error messages on skipping mandatory fields

Non Compliant Examples

Below are examples from the website that need to be improved.

1. **Removing item from wishlist**

   There's currently no straightforward method for users to remove an item from their wishlist after adding it. Users must navigate to the wishlist section to remove items. This issue could be easily resolved by implementing a toggle feature that allows users to add and remove items from their wishlist with a simple click.

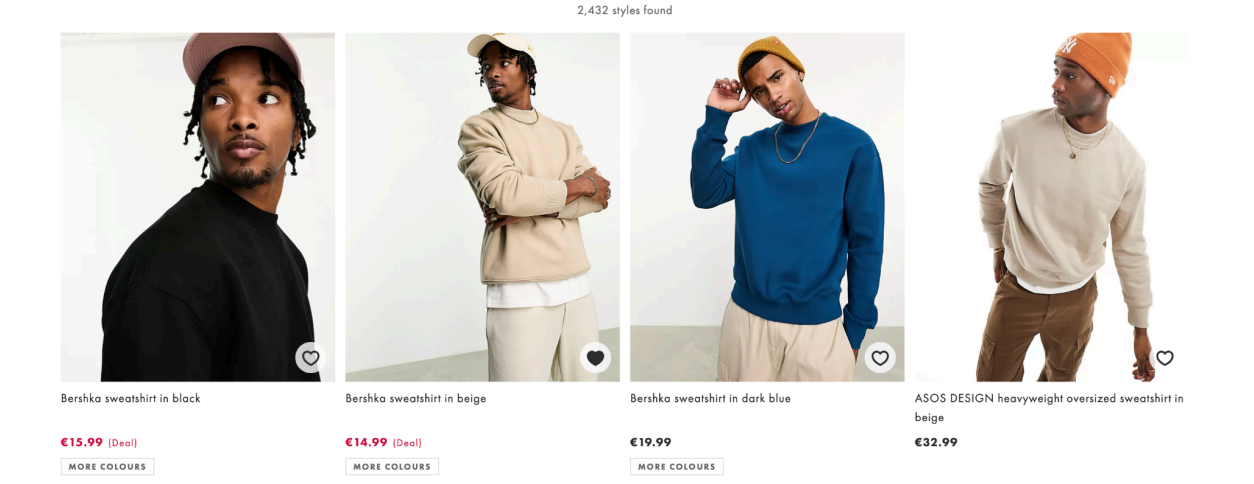

Fig 10: Removing item from wishlist

Help and documentation

This principle underscores the significance of offering documentation to assist users in comprehending how to accomplish their tasks. While it's ideal for the system to be intuitive without requiring additional explanation, it's crucial for all website processes to be clearly documented and easily accessible.

Moreover, in the context of an ecommerce website, it's vital to actively support customers with their inquiries and concerns. This can be achieved through the implementation of chatbots and live support features.

Compliant Examples

The application features a dedicated Help and Support section readily available from the navigation menu. This page offers comprehensive information addressing various user queries. Alongside documentation, the application also provides a live chat feature, enabling users to connect with professionals for clarifying queries and obtaining assistance with their purchases.

https://www.asos.com/customer-care/?ctaref=my%20account%20-%20need%20help

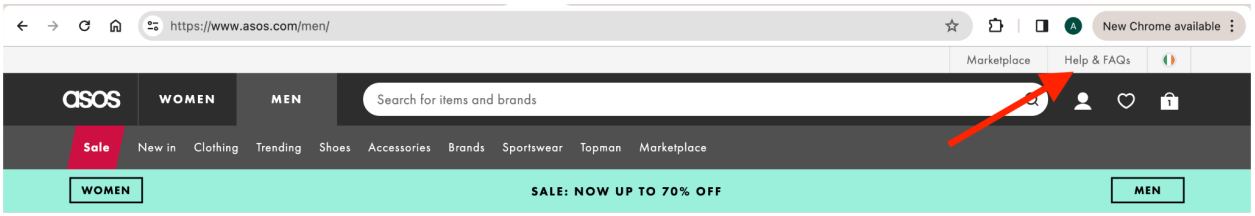

Fig 11: Help and documentation - Nav item

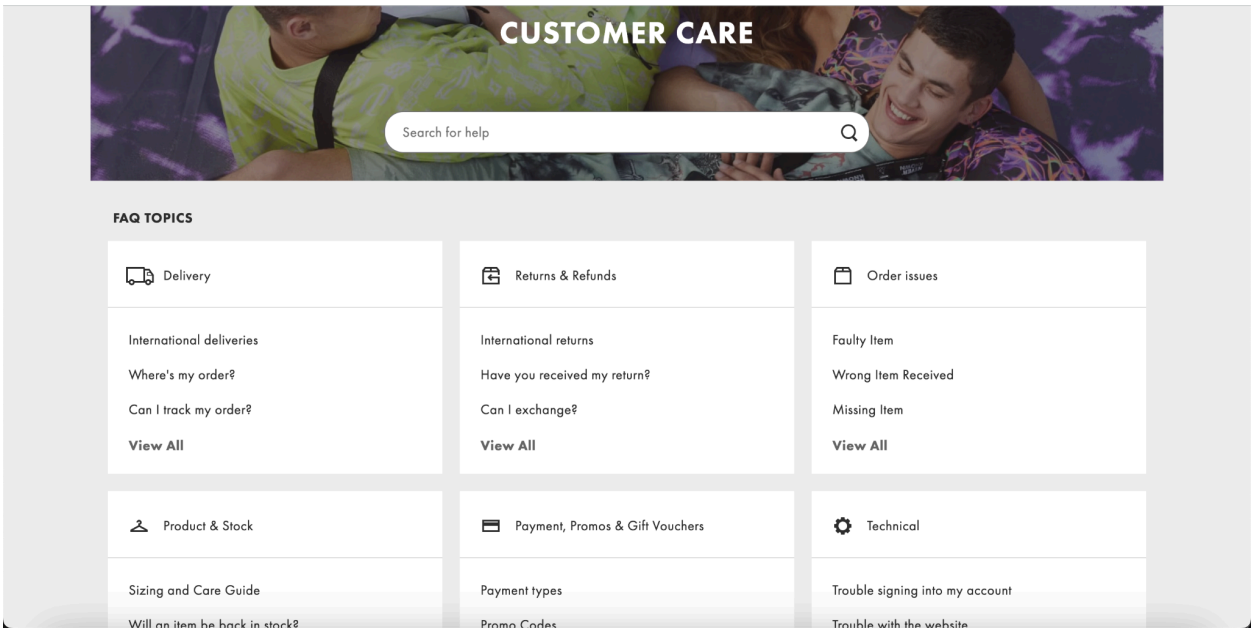

Fig 12: Help and documentation page

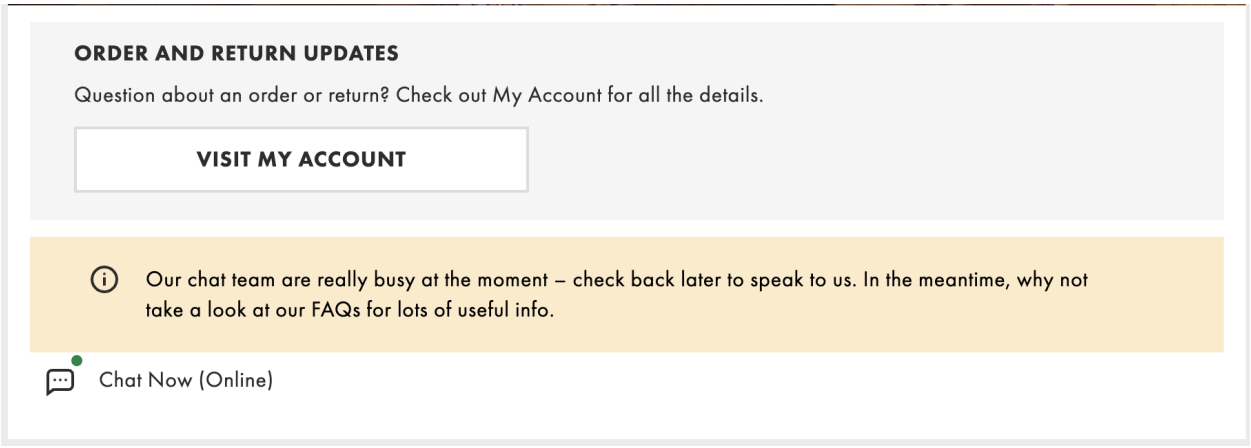

Fig 13: Chat Support

Accessibility Analysis

Tools Used: https://wave.webaim.org/ **,** Google Lighthouse

The Accessibility of the website is quite satisfactory, boasting an average accessibility score of 94.66% and an average performance score of 72.33, as evaluated by Google Lighthouse. Notably, the site is fully operable using the keyboard's "tab" key, enhancing navigation for users with mobility impairments. Furthermore, the utilization of HTML tags such as headers, lists, and appropriately assigned ARIA roles contributes to improved navigation for screen reader users. Additionally, the webpage exhibits efficient loading times, with an average first paint time of 0.8 seconds, ensuring responsiveness and mobile-friendliness. User-friendly labels, placeholders, and error messages further simplify navigation for users. While the overall accessibility and usability of the website are commendable, there is still room for enhancement.

Case 1: Accessibility Analysis of Home Page

URL: https://www.asos.com/men/
Lighthouse Accessibility Score: 90
Lighthouse Overall Performance score: 74

The following problems were identified in this page
Missing alternate text for images
The webpage contains several images that lack alternative text, posing a critical issue as screen readers are unable to convey the function of the link to users. This lack of information may render the link unusable as users are unaware of its intended destination.

To address this issue, it is imperative that all images on the webpage include alternative text that accurately describes the content of the image or the function of the link. This is crucial for users who rely on screen readers and those with poor internet connections, as it ensures they can understand the purpose of the image even if it fails to load properly. Additionally, providing alternative text improves search engine optimization, enabling search engines to suggest the appropriate page when users search for relevant content.

Missing / Empty form label

The webpage exhibits numerous instances where form labels are either missing or the associated attribute is empty. This deficiency is critical because the absence of form labels fails to convey any information about the form control to the user. Consequently, individuals with disabilities, who rely on clear labels for understanding form elements on websites, encounter significant challenges. Moreover, unclear form labels can also create difficulties for mobile users, especially when screen space is limited.

To rectify this issue, it is imperative to ensure that all form controls on the page are properly associated with their corresponding label tags. Alternatively, options such as "aria-labelledby" can be utilized to describe the form control and provide users with the necessary information to interact with the form effectively.

Empty heading

The webpage exhibits some occurrences of empty headings which might confuse users, especially those who rely on screen readers. They might find it difficult to understand the structure and logical groupings of the elements on a webpage. This might also impact the SEO score of the webpage making it difficult for the search engines to show the relevant content to the users.

To rectify this issue, all sections of the website should be grouped by appropriate headings.

Empty Buttons and Links

The webpage contains a few occurrences of buttons/ links with no text. Empty buttons and links introduce confusion for people using screen readers or keyboards as they might be unaware of the purpose of the link. Empty Buttons and Links might either need to be removed or should have appropriate texts to describe their intended purpose.

Images with same / long alternative text

Alt texts play a vital role in uniquely identifying images when they fail to load or for assisting users with screen readers in understanding them. Images having same / long alternative text is not a severe issue however it's essential that alt texts are clear and concise.

Case 2: Usability Analysis of Search Results Page

URL: https://www.asos.com/search/?q=sweatshirt
Lighthouse Accessibility Score: 100
Lighthouse Overall Performance score: 71

The following problems were identified in this page

Broken ARIA reference

The webpage contains multiple instances of broken ARIA references. This can cause confusion for users who rely on assistive technologies like screen readers, as these tools may not correctly associate the element with its intended label. To resolve this issue, ensure that elements referenced in the aria-labelledby or aria-describedby attribute values are present on the page and provide accurate descriptions for the associated elements.

Smaller text

The webpage contains some text whose font size is very small. Smaller texts are difficult to read, particularly for those with low vision.

Case 3: Usability Analysis of Product Display Page

URL:
https://www.asos.com/bershka/bershka-sweatshirt-in-beige/prd/205169218#colourWayId-205169219
Lighthouse Accessibility Score: 94
Lighthouse Overall Performance score: 72

Skipped heading level

The webpage features a few instances of skipped heading levels. While not considered a critical issue, preserving the heading hierarchy is important as it delineates the structure of elements on the page.

Smaller texts and texts with low contrast

The webpage contains some text content which is small and challenging to read. The design is also cumbersome making it difficult for the users to find the essential information they are looking for.

Usability Analysis

User Persona

Name: Kate Cross
Age: 26
About: Kate is a young professional who prioritizes fashion and enjoys keeping abreast of the latest trends. Due to her hectic work schedule, she frequently opts for online shopping, appreciating the convenience and diverse selection it offers.
Background: Kate, gearing up for her upcoming vacation with her boyfriend to Switzerland, is on the hunt for winter clothing, including sweatshirts, to ensure they stay warm and comfortable during their travels. She's eager to find stylish yet practical options for both herself and her boyfriend to enjoy their trip to the fullest. Given her busy work schedule and the convenience of online shopping, she decides to browse various online stores to find the perfect outfits for her trip. She appreciates easy navigation and accessibility features on websites due to her busy schedule.

Name: Elleys Perry
Age: 70
About: Mrs. Perry is a retired teacher who enjoys spending her time reading and knitting. Despite her visual impairment, she remains independent and active in her community. She values family and often takes care of her daughter's needs, including shopping for clothing.
Background: Mrs. Perry's daughter, who lives in another city, has requested her help in purchasing some new clothes online. While Mrs. Perry is not very familiar with online shopping, she is determined to assist her daughter. She relies on screen magnification software and voice commands to navigate the internet. Although she faces challenges due to her visual disability, Mrs. Perry is eager to learn and adapt to the online shopping experience to fulfill her daughter's wishes.

User Scenarios

Case 1: Usability Analysis of Home Page

URL: https://www.asos.com/men/
Redesigned Webpage:https://cs1.ucc.ie/~akg2/labs/CS6115/assignment/src/

Mrs. Perry's daughter suggests she purchase clothing from the popular online retailer ASOS. Following her daughter's recommendation, Mrs. Perry searches for "ASOS" on Google and clicks on the link that leads her to the homepage of the ASOS application

Problems Identified:

Mrs. Perry is overwhelmed by the number of options displayed in the navigation menu. She is unfamiliar with options such as “Top Man”, “Marketplace” etc. She is also confused by the redundant options to select the gender.

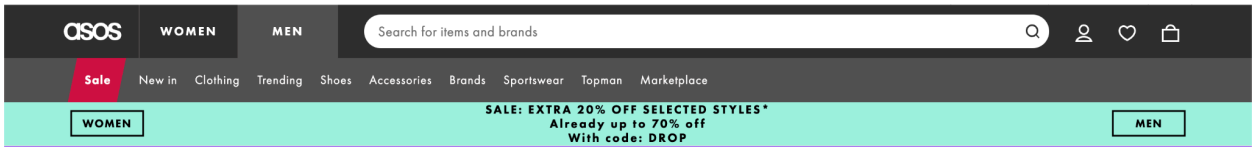

Fig 14: Home Page - Men

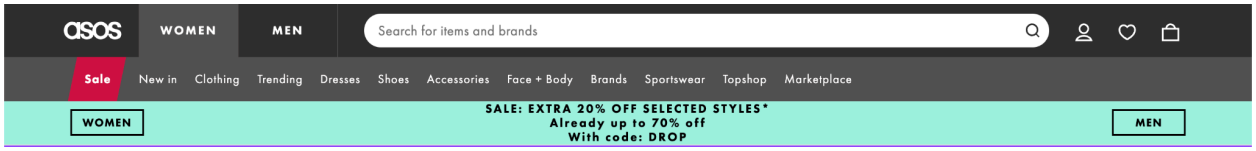

Fig 15: Home Page - Women

She then hovers over the items in the navigation bar which bombards her with even more options to select from which makes her stressed. She finds the website to be very unorganized and complicated.

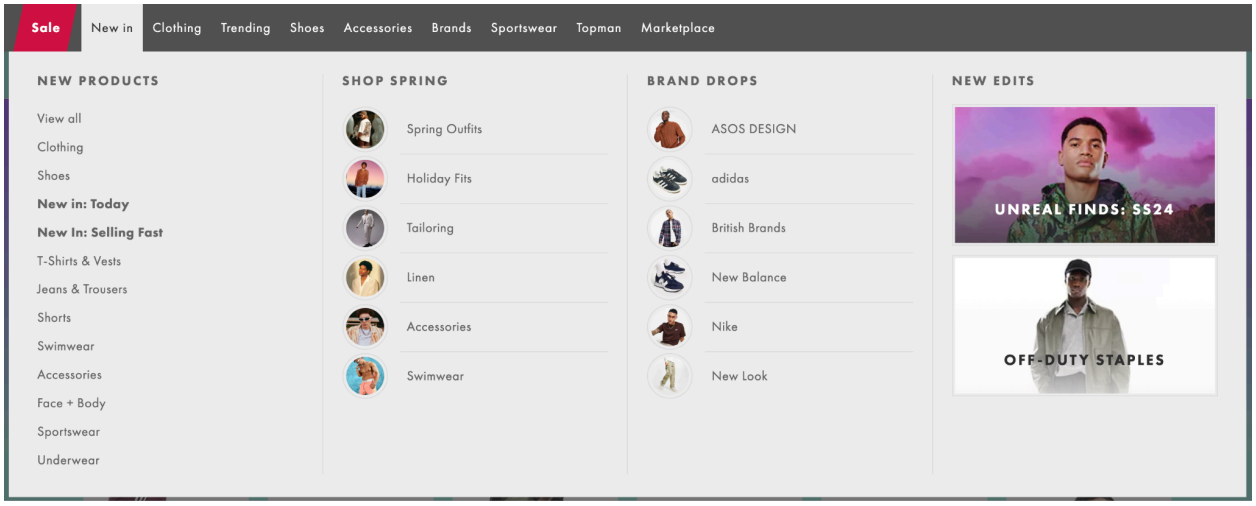

Fig 16: Home Page - Navigation Menu

Proposed Solution:

To streamline the user experience, I've organized related content into cohesive groups and relocated all other items as subcategories within their respective sections. For example, options such as "Top Man" and "Top Shop," which are featured products on ASOS.com, have been relocated under the "Feature" subcategory within the "New &

Featured" section. This provides users with a more focused selection, enhancing their overall experience. Moreover, this revised design aligns with Jakob Nielsen's heuristics, particularly "Recognition rather than recall" and "Flexibility and efficiency," as it simplifies the interface for both novice and experienced users.

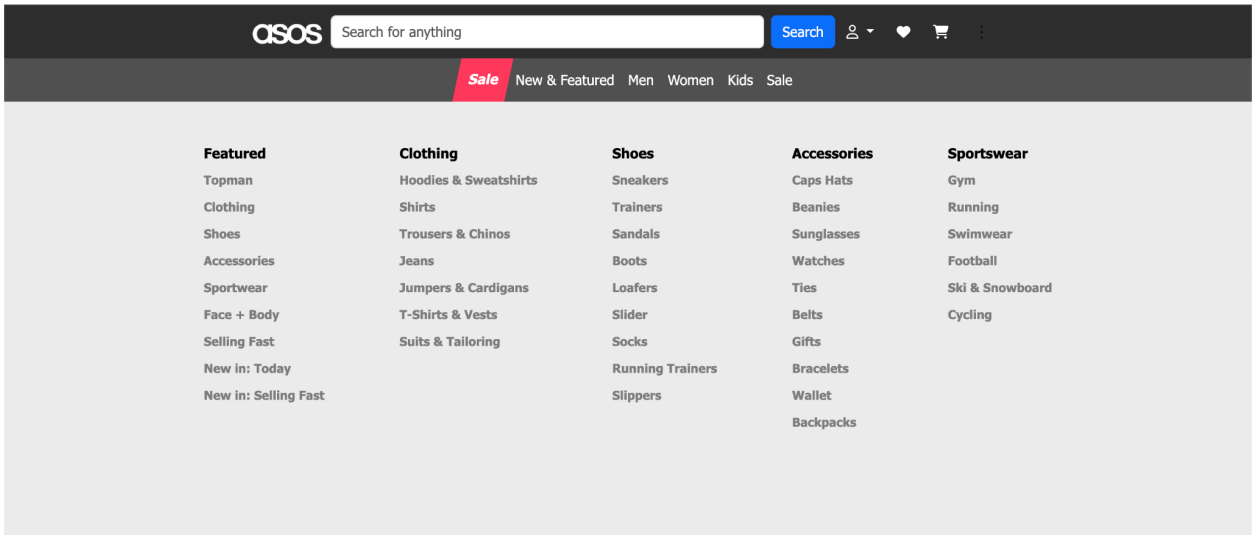

Fig 17: Home Page - Redesigned Navigation Menu

Case 2: Usability Analysis of Search Results Page

URL: https://www.asos.com/search/?q=sweatshirt
Redesigned Webpage:https://cs1.ucc.ie/~akg2/labs/CS6115/assignment/src/searchResultsPage.html

Kate begins her search for sweatshirts on ASOS.com by launching the application and selecting the appropriate gender. She then types "Adidas Sweatshirt" into the search bar, which directs her to the search results page.

Problems Identified:

Despite selecting her gender, Kate still encounters mixed content in her search results, causing frustration. She isn't aware that she needs to filter again by gender on the results page, which adds to her annoyance. Furthermore, she finds the floating navigation menu increasingly frustrating because it flickers and obstructs her view whenever she scrolls the page. Additionally, Kate is unable to discern the filters she has selected as there is no proper feedback from the website. She also finds it challenging to clear the filters individually since there's no option to clear everything at once.

Moreover, Kate struggles to locate common options such as sorting and filtering by price. She is also unable to find any option to view or filter by customer rating, leading her to perceive the filter options as very limited.

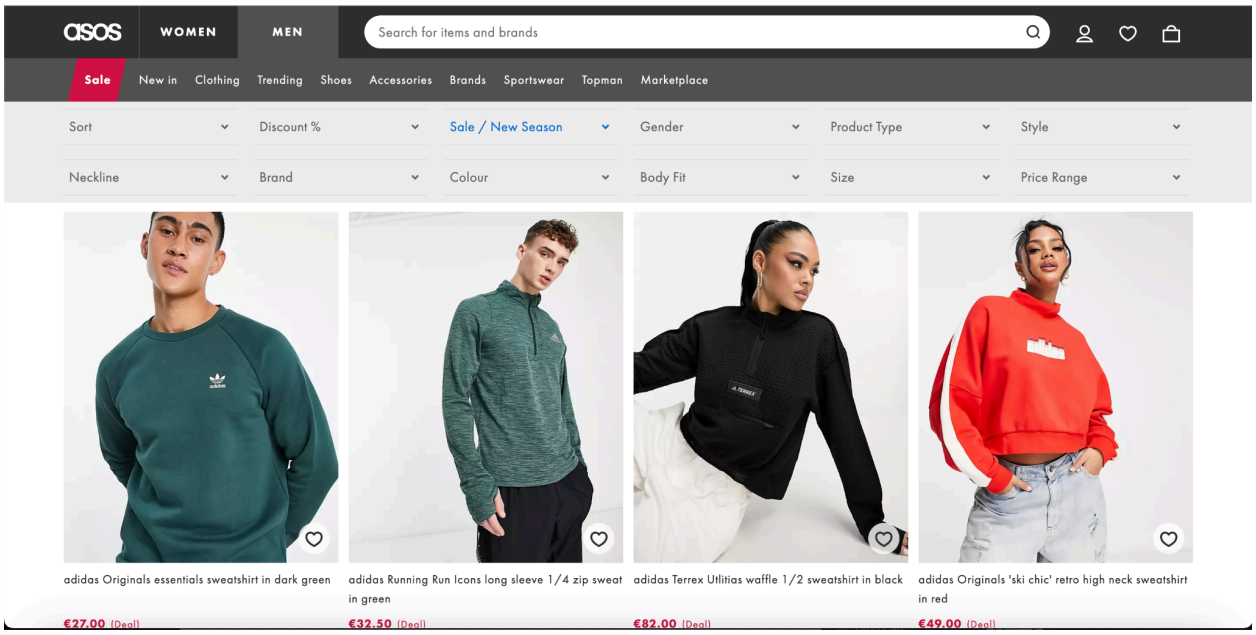

Fig 18: Search Page - Filters

Proposed Solution:

I've redesigned the page layout by relocating the filters section to the side, enhancing the user experience by ensuring essential filters are immediately accessible. Under the essential filters section, I've included popular filtering options like "Customer Rating," "Brand," "Price," "Discount," and "Color." Additionally, other rarely used filters such as "Fabric" are placed at the top of the results section to offer users additional flexibility with filtering options. The filter section also displays what filters the user has applied and it provides the ability to easily clear it if the user no longer needs it.

Moreover, I've separated the "Sort" option from other filters and added additional sorting options such as "Popularity" and "Customer Rating." This adjustment addresses the common user behavior of sorting products by reliability, ensuring a smoother shopping

experience.

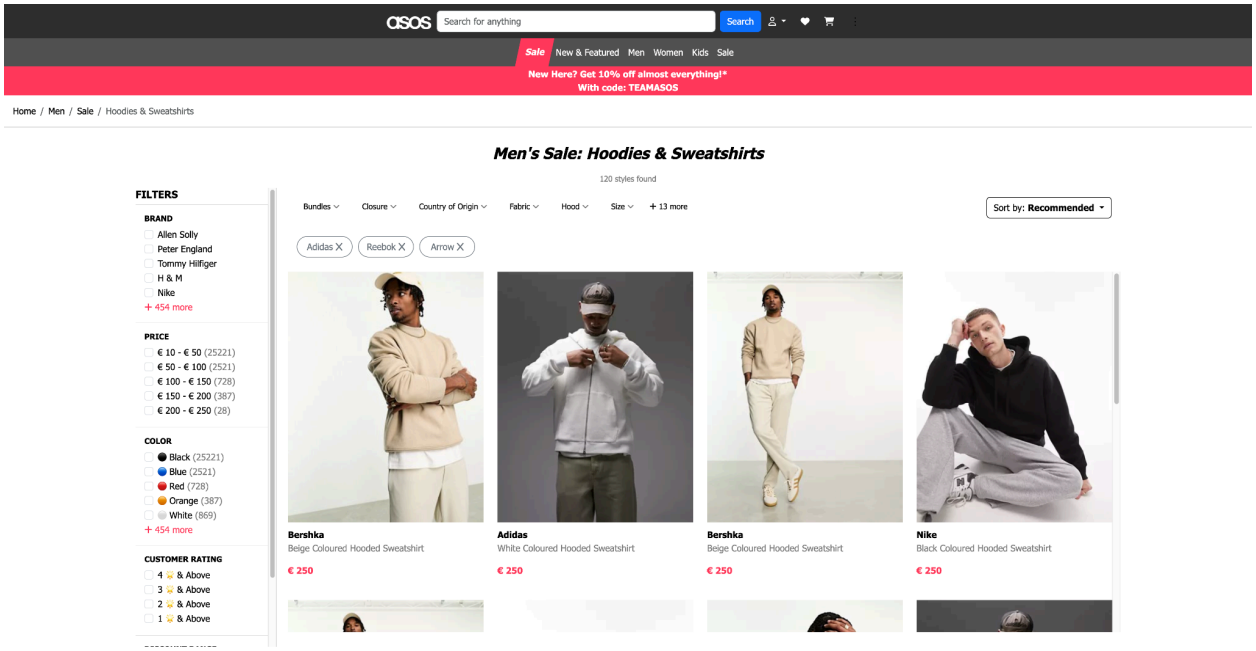

Fig 19: Redesigned Search Page

Case 3: Usability Analysis of Product Display Page

URL:
https://www.asos.com/bershka/bershka-sweatshirt-in-beige/prd/205169218#colourWayId-205169219
Redesigned webpage:
https://cs1.ucc.ie/~akg2/labs/CS6115/assignment/src/checkoutPage.html

After selecting her favorite sweatshirt, Kate navigates to the product display page. Before proceeding with the order, she seeks to check the customer rating of the product and review comments posted by previous buyers to ensure its quality and suitability. Additionally, she wishes to explore EMI options and available offers to understand the final price and product delivery availability for her location.

Problems Identified:

Kate encounters difficulties in finding the customer review section, as it requires scrolling all the way to the bottom of the page. Additionally, she struggles to understand the final price she has to pay and the delivery availability. It is inconvenient for her to navigate to the Delivery Policy page to check availability and to know the final amount she needs to pay for the product. Kate finds the page visually unintuitive and struggles

to locate information such as product rating and available offers since the font is small and light.

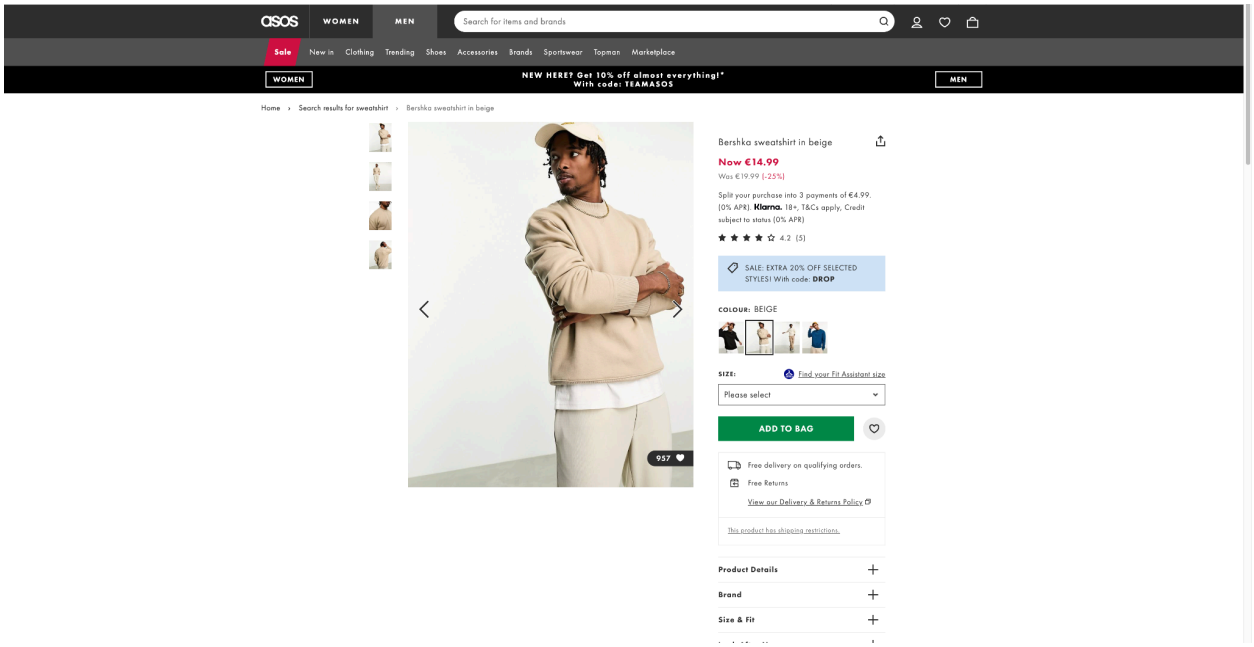

Fig 20: Product Checkout Page

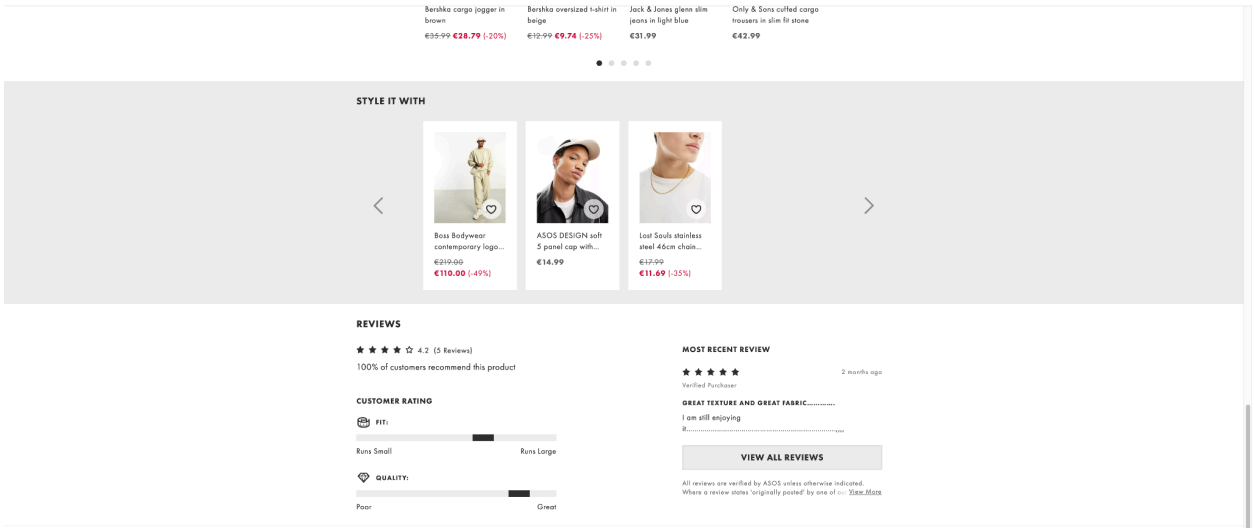

Fig 21: Product Checkout Page - Reviews Section

Proposed Solution:

I've restructured the page layout to enhance intuitiveness and user-friendliness. Additionally, I've added a feature for easily checking delivery availability. To improve

usability, I've replaced dropdown menus with buttons, allowing users to quickly identify available sizes and stock availability. This adjustment streamlines the user experience, making it easier for Kate to navigate the website and find the information she needs.

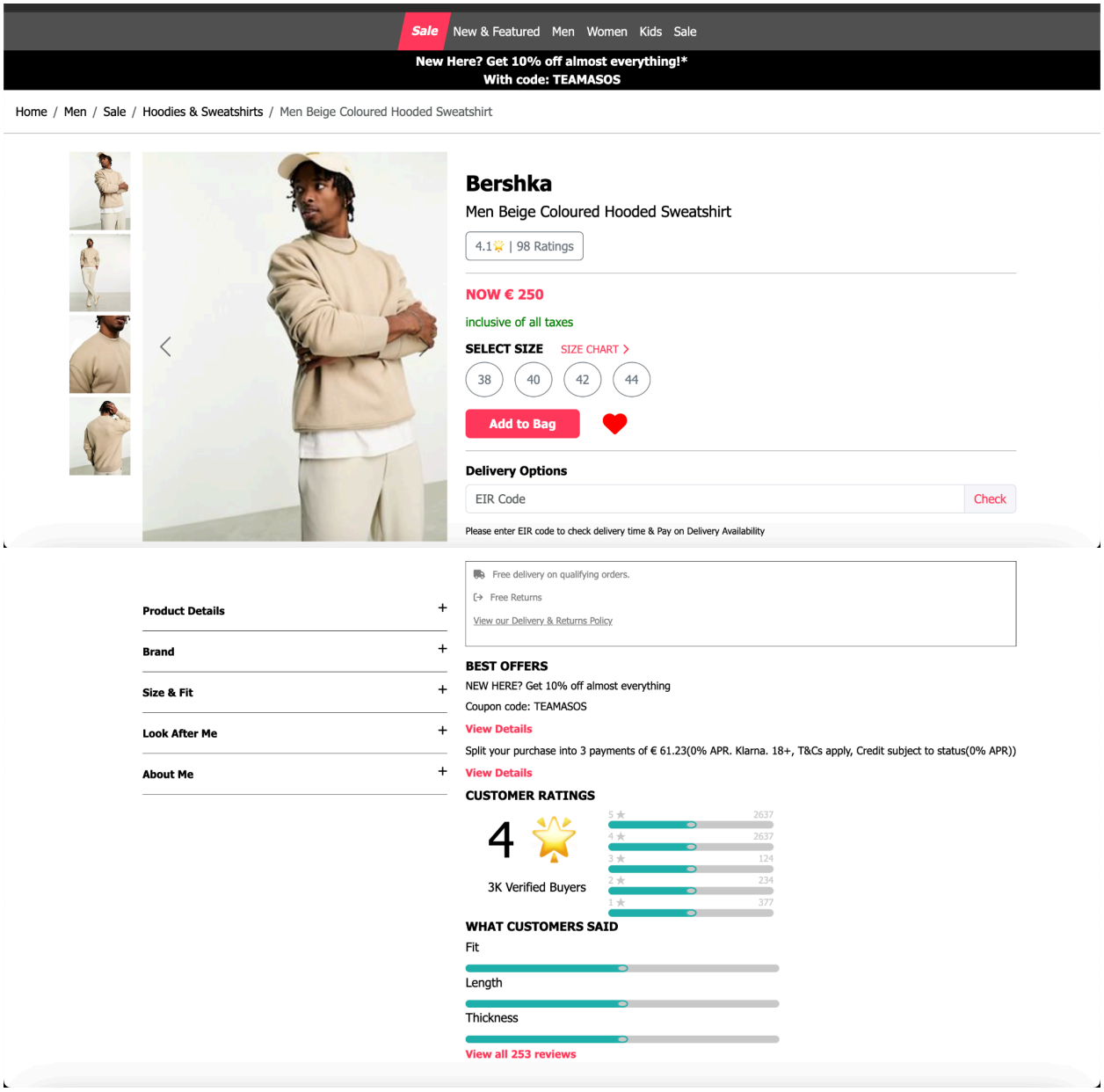

Fig 22: Redesigned Checkout page

References

[1] Online shopping continuance after COVID-19: A comparison of Canada, Germany and the United States by Norman Shaw, Brenda Eschenbrenner and Daniel Baierc https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9379614/

[2] The increase in online shopping during COVID-19: Who is responsible, will it last, and what does it mean for cities? By Mischa Young, Jaime Soza-Parra, Giovanni Circella https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/rsp3.12514#:~:text=The%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic%20and,and%20spring%202020%20(51.2%25).

[3] Ecommerce Statistics You Must Know (Chatbots, Voice, Omni-Channel Marketing) by Maddy Osman https://kinsta.com/blog/ecommerce-statistics/#:~:text=Millennials%20and%20Gen%20Xers%20are,spend%20more%20time%20shopping%20online.

[4] "About ASOS". ASOS.com. Retrieved 1 November 2015.

[5] https://www.businessofapps.com/data/asos-statistics/

[6]https://helplama.com/asos-revenue-usage-statistics/#:~:text=ASOS%20boasts%20over%2025%20million,million%20annually%20in%20Feb%202024.

[7] https://dequeuniversity.com/rules/axe/4.8/aria-allowed-attr

[8] Nielsen, Jakob. “10 Heuristics for User Interface Design.” Nielsen Norman Group, 24 Apr. 1994, www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/.

[9] Design references from https://www.myntra.com/

[10] Design references from https://www.nike.com/ie

[11] UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI) by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) https://www.agencyuk.com/2012/07/asos-amazon-score-top-in-customer-satisfaction-index/#:~:text=The%20research%20finds%20that%2C%20overall,Amazon%20in%20January%20this%20year.

[12] https://ie.trustpilot.com/review/www.asos.com