

Amanda Crawford  
PUI HW 5 Reflection

## Github Links

Repo: <https://github.com/Amanda-Crawford/amanda-crawford.github.io>  
Hosted: [https://amanda-crawford.github.io/homework\\_5/](https://amanda-crawford.github.io/homework_5/)

## Heuristic Evaluation

For this assignment, my main goal of the heuristic evaluation was to discover whether I had extra information and whether the user could accomplish their goals. Overall, I found that the users I showed the pages to were easily able to navigate through the tasks. This was a very good finding and so I focused on other heuristics such as aesthetic and minimalist design and user control and freedom.

First, I looked at the home page. Here, I found that the extra orange arrows over the furthest right images were confusing without any blurring or fading on the images to show that you could scroll through them. Seeing the arrows did indicate that the user could scroll through more images but the layering was confusing when I had other people look at my design. This design choice violated the heuristic of aesthetic and minimalist design by being confusing and offering too much to the user. The solution that I came up with was to just remove the arrows for now because the scrolling of images was not vital to the site's functionality and it was a simple way to improve the aesthetic design of the website. Now, the homepage just displays four images of the top selling products for each category as a sneak peak for what Muddy Paws offers.

The second design flaw that I found was that users wanted all options available to them when filtering. Although I had liked the primary design I chose after competitive testing, which was to display one filter and collapse all others, my users wanted to not have to remember what they could filter by. So, my design choice violated the heuristic of Recognition rather than Recall and had to be changed. The change made was to just keep all filters expanded all the time. This allowed users to see what they could filter by as well as what they already were filtering by without having to expand or collapse any options. Also, my original fear of not seeing all the filters and hiding information from the user was unwarranted because I had so few options I needed to display.

Finally, my heuristic evaluation found that users were confused by the extra photos on the detail page because some were repeated. This violated the match between the system and the real world because most people expected to see the same product multiple times instead of other colors of the product. This is an example of how using stock images was detrimental to my design. Because I could only find one shot of each product, I did not have the other stock photos to show and created a mismatch

between what was expected and what was being seen. To change this, right now I removed the extra mini pictures from my product detail page. However, I would like to have those in my design eventually so I may try and find a way to take my own pictures that are all of the same product but different shots. I think this design element still had some value even though I cannot execute it properly right now.

## Challenges

My main challenge for this assignment was that I have forgotten how to work within just HTML and CSS because I am so used to working with other frameworks and including JavaScript. Coming back down to just the basics was difficult and I had a hard time getting back into the swing of things. It was definitely an adjustment that took a little while to get used to but after doing the header and footer, I remembered the normal conventions and was able to get used to everything.

In general, my favorite way to program is using React components that I am able to reuse for similar code. This means that for things like my product cards I had to make each one by hand instead of creating a JSON object file and one component that would read it and create each card. For my mind, this way of programming makes much more sense because I am used to simplifying my code and making it more readable. So, when I had nine product cards all written out, I had difficulty seeing where different elements started and ended. This caused me to spend a lot of time checking what div I was in and whether it lined up or not with where I thought I was.

Another difficulty I came across was exact replication and I don't think I even did it perfectly. I have done more work on the backend of web projects and most of my assignments have been for the "essence" of the page and not the exact design. This means that I had a tendency to say that something was "good enough" to move on from instead of spending more time to make it perfectly match my design.

Finally, I struggled a lot at the design stage with making this site feel commercial and I don't think I got there. It definitely feels more like a coding project than an actual web shop and I think that's because I was designing around how I code instead of how it all would look. My mind thought about components and not aesthetics which came out in the heuristic evaluation as well as my overall design at the end.

## Brand Identity

First off, I am not well versed in creating a brand identity and full web page design so I tried to keep things simple and focus on the color palette instead. I tried to go for light, earthy colors with the pop of orange for dramatic effect. This was so that I could have the feeling of the outdoors in my design without being super dramatic about what design choices I made. I chose to stick with earthy colors because for me, colors like blue and cream are associated with hiking and being outdoors.

I chose orange as the accent color because it is bold and I associate being bold with taking your pets hiking with you, especially cats. Having this accent color also relates to rocks or wildflowers and works well with the cream and blues.

Overall, I struggled with creating a logo. I haven't worked much in photoshop or anything of the sort so for a while I thought about trying to create a logo but decided against it so that I could spend more time on programming the site. I think that if I had taken the time to actually create a logo then that would have contributed to creating a more cohesive feel. Just having the paw print picture doesn't feel very much like a real brand to me so I hope to fix that for my next iteration.