

Brady Baldwin – Reflection, Homework 5

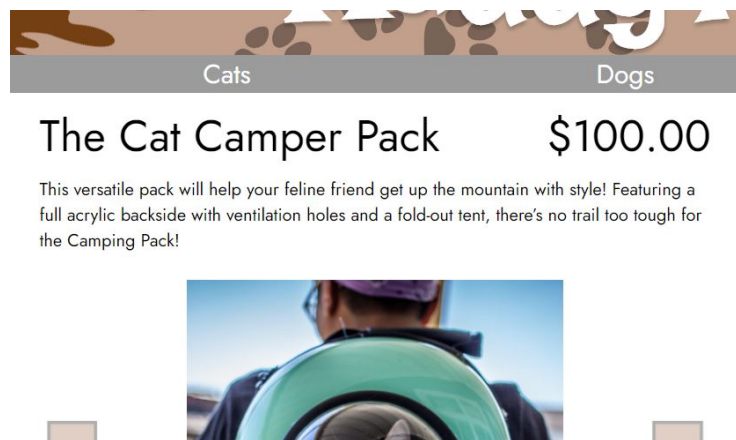
PUI Fall 2020

Live Page: <https://bradybaldwin.github.io/PUI-2020/>

Repository: https://github.com/Bradybaldwin/PUI-2020/tree/homework_5

Heuristic Evaluation:

There were several heuristic flaws with my initial prototype that I found I was able to patch over in my first web-based iteration. These user interface bugs were mostly minor and had more to do with the aesthetic arrangement of signals than with other issues like help documentation or error correction. The first interface bug I found was the hierarchy of information on the product page, making it an aesthetic and minimalist design heuristic. I noticed on my prototype that in the grid structure the price of the product was sandwiched between the product name and description, forcing the user to search for this critical information for longer than necessary. I fixed this in my current iteration by moving the price onto the same gridline as the product name and making the price's font size the same as the product name, giving it a prominent position on the product page overall.



The product price is now very prevalent on first glance

The second UI bug I found was on the product browsing page. I had created an instant add-to-cart option for users that I identified as knowing what they wanted before accessing the site, therefore making it easier for them to checkout. However, I failed the flexibility and ease of use heuristic by not including selection menus for color and size of the product in this instant-add pop-up, making its purpose as a time saver moot and actually becoming a time-waster. Since I did not include pop-ups in this iteration of the site, I did not fix this bug this time around.

The third bug I found was another aesthetic and minimalist design error, this time on the product browsing page. I found that with so many buttons and windows on one page the user could become overwhelmed at first glance. I decided to mitigate this by moving the slide selection arrows from inside the product image to below it, making the grid space appear less cluttered.



With the slide selection buttons at the bottom of the grid the product image is free of clutter and focus can return to the 'Shop' button.

The final bug I focused on was one that spanned all pages and fit within the consistency and standards heuristic. I realized that by not having a nav bar below the header with the main pages on it I was potentially confusing users who were used to navigating sites based on this internet-wide standard. I included a basic nav with minimalist design so as not to distract from the pages but with clear destinations should the user wish to navigate between pages using this method.



The Nav allows for a fast, universally understood method of travel across the site

Challenges in Implementation

I faced many small challenges in implementing my site as it was my first experience with fully writing an HTML and CSS page from the ground-up, as well as my first foray into GitHub and building a repository. My first challenge was in setting up git on my computer and using the command prompt to commit and push files into a repository. I had many hiccups involving the validation key and being unable to link my files, so I eventually decided on using GitHub desktop.

GitHub desktop worked immediately, and I have had no issues pushing local files to the repository since.

Almost all the other challenges lay in understanding how to utilize the toolbox of HTML and to a greater extent CSS to achieve my desired vision for the pages of my site. When I began writing the CSS document, I did not know how to implement grids, and I was having a great deal of difficulty positioning all my elements on the page, especially when accounting for resizing the window. I finally taught myself the basics of grid and was able to achieve an overall look that I am satisfied with. The other bugs that I dealt with mostly revolved around applying CSS styles to HTML elements that were incompatible with them or applying the wrong style for the wrong situation. By using the console on Chrome, I was able to highlight elements whenever they weren't styled the way I had envisioned and edit the CSS to experiment until I found the right combination.

Brand Identity of Client

I have always seen Muddy Paws as a playful, small organization of people who provide a good experience to both animals and their owners. I spent a long time trying to implement design decisions that both reflect the playful nature of the company while remaining the most useable and elegant solution for the design problem at hand. I see the user of the site as an individual who does not want to spend a lot of time browsing and searching; they are focused hiking enthusiasts who know the gear their pet needs and want to be able to procure it as soon as possible.

To strike the balance between playful and efficient I went with a color scheme of light brown and grey, with white lettering and trim on many elements. I found this combination to both reinforce the 'muddy' in muddy paws without being distracting in any way, letting the user easily find any element on the page quickly. I separated the site between dogs and cats under the presumption that most users would specialize in either cat or dog hiking. For typeface I chose a very playful font for the site title but used a very legible, clean sans-serif font for the page text. Every page adheres to a fairly tight grid that intends to put prevalence on the higher volume click areas (such as 'cats' and 'dogs' on the main page or 'add to cart' on the product detail page).

I tried to use pictures of animals wearing the products as much as possible to reinforce the commitment to a good animal experience that I see Muddy Paws as having. Finally, I implemented a changing header that reflects the page the user is on (the paw changes to a cat paw when on the cat product browsing page), giving the site another playful touch while reinforcing the nature of each page for the user.