Individual Assignment 1: Design – The Good and the Bad

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Good Design Examples (8)

*Use 4 Gestalt's principles and 4 affordances (no repeats)

Example 1 – Law of Similarity

Screenshot (with URL at the bottom):

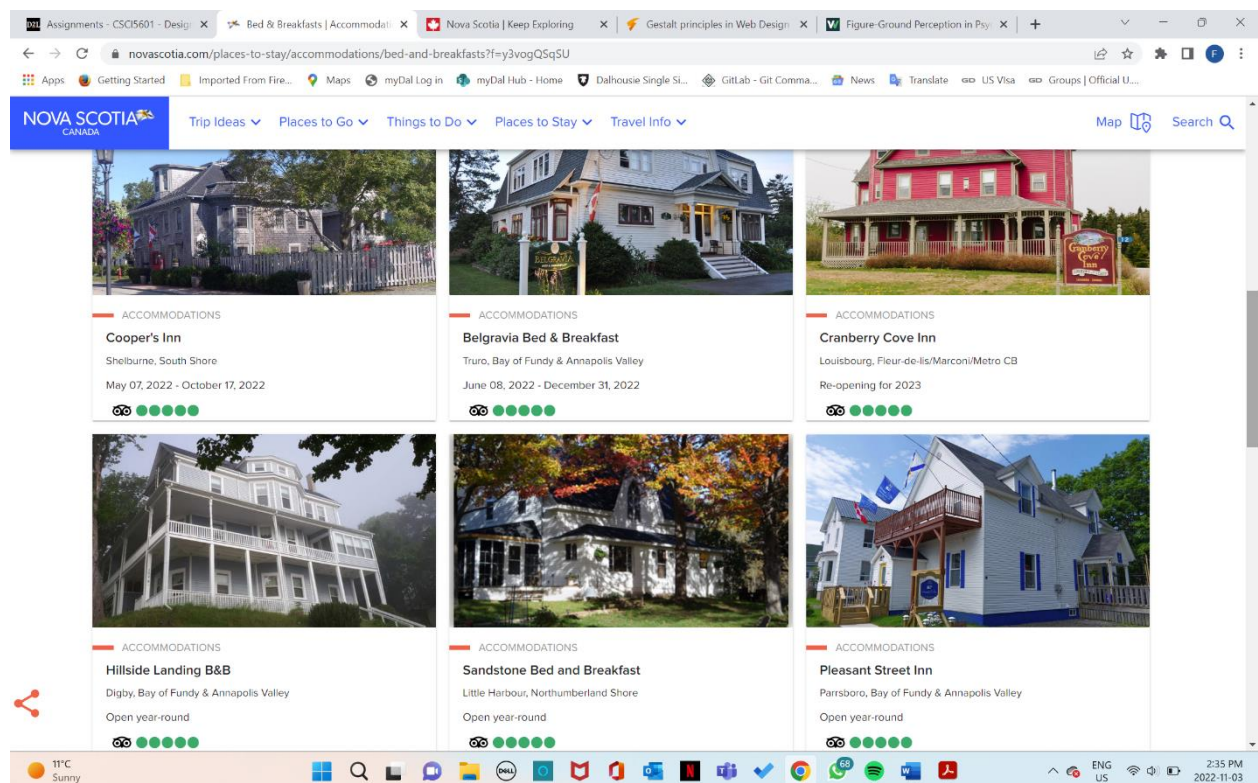**The below screenshot represents the "Law of Similarity".**

Fig 1: Accommodations – Bed and breakfasts page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The user visits the website https://www.novascotia.com/places-to-stay/accommodations/bed-and-breakfasts?f=y3vogQSqSU to find a place for accommodations.

- Once the user visits the "accommodations" page, the user scrolls down the page to look for various accommodations option under the category "Bed and Breakfasts."
- Fig. 1 represents different accommodation options.
- It allows user to look for their choice of place to stay by providing options such as "Cooper's Inn", "Belgravia Bed & Breakfast", "Craneberry Cove Inn" and many more.
- These options allow users to give a clear idea of the place, reviews, prices, availability, and location.

Fig. 1 follows Gesalt's principle of "Law of Similarity" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- In Fig. 1, similar images of accommodations are depicted in every block, which gives the user an idea of the kind of place to stay they are looking for.
- The font size of the heading under the image is the same in all blocks. It is observed that the font size of the heading is larger compared to the font-size of the date and location text for example, "Cooper's Inn,", "Belgravia Bed & Breakfast," "Craneberry Cove Inn," etc. have the same font size but are larger than "Shelbourne, South Shore,", "Truro, Bay of Fundy, and Annapolis Valley", "Louisbourg, fleur-de-lis/Marconi/Metro CB," respectively. These helps users grab attention and can be easily recalled [1].
- The date, place, and reviews mentioned under the images are in the same format, which helps the user process the information easily [1].
- The text colour of the date and location under all the images is the same. However, it differs from the colour of the heading, which emphasises links to two subtopics [2].
- Lastly, the style and colour of the ratings provided are the same for all the images. This provides extra information to the user about the accommodation and can be analysed easily.

Example 2 – Law of Proximity
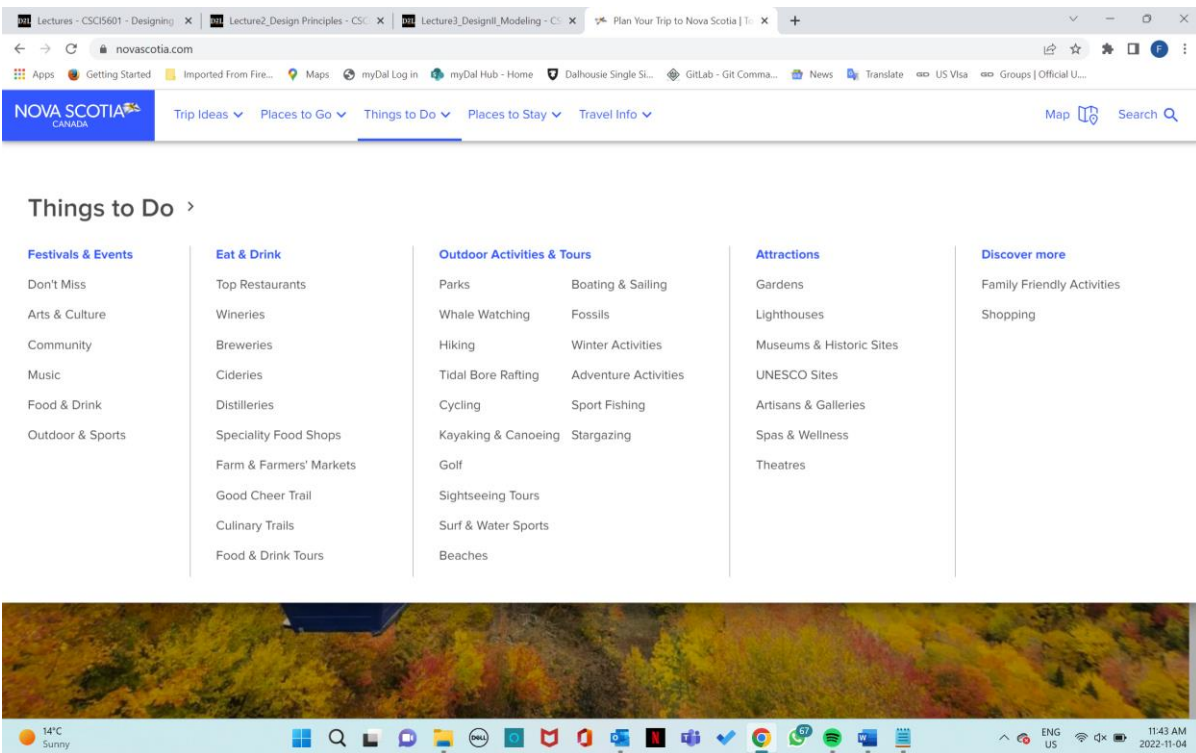
The below image represents the "Law of Proximity".

Fig 2: Navigation bar for "Things to Do" page

The user visits https://www.novascotia.com/ page to look for the things the user would like to do.

- So, the user navigates the navigation bar that is present on the top of the website, as mentioned in Fig. 2.
- The user finds various options like "Festivals & Events," "Eat & Drink," "Outdoor Activities & Tours," "Attractions," and "Discover more." This allows users to explore the things they would like to do.
- The user can choose any options of their interest and visit the respective page with the different attractions and packages.
- For instance, if a user chooses "stargazing" as an outdoor activity, the website will direct them to the page where they can find information regarding stargazing, like "places to stay to see the stars" and "packages and experiences."

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 2 follows Gesalt's principle of "Law of Proximity" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- Fig. 2 depicts the navigation bar having different rows for "things to do," such as "festivals and events," "eats and drinks," "outdoor activities and tours," etc., placed next to each other.
- The way the content is grouped makes it easier for the user to reach their goals on the site by reducing visual clutter [3].
- The elements of the navigation bar are evenly spaced apart, which provides a chance for the user to explore the website without getting lost or confused [3].
- Another reason could be that the partition line between each row highlights the different activities under "Things to do," which grabs the user's attention regarding the difference and boosts the user experience [3].

Example 3 – Figure/Ground

Screenshot (with URL):

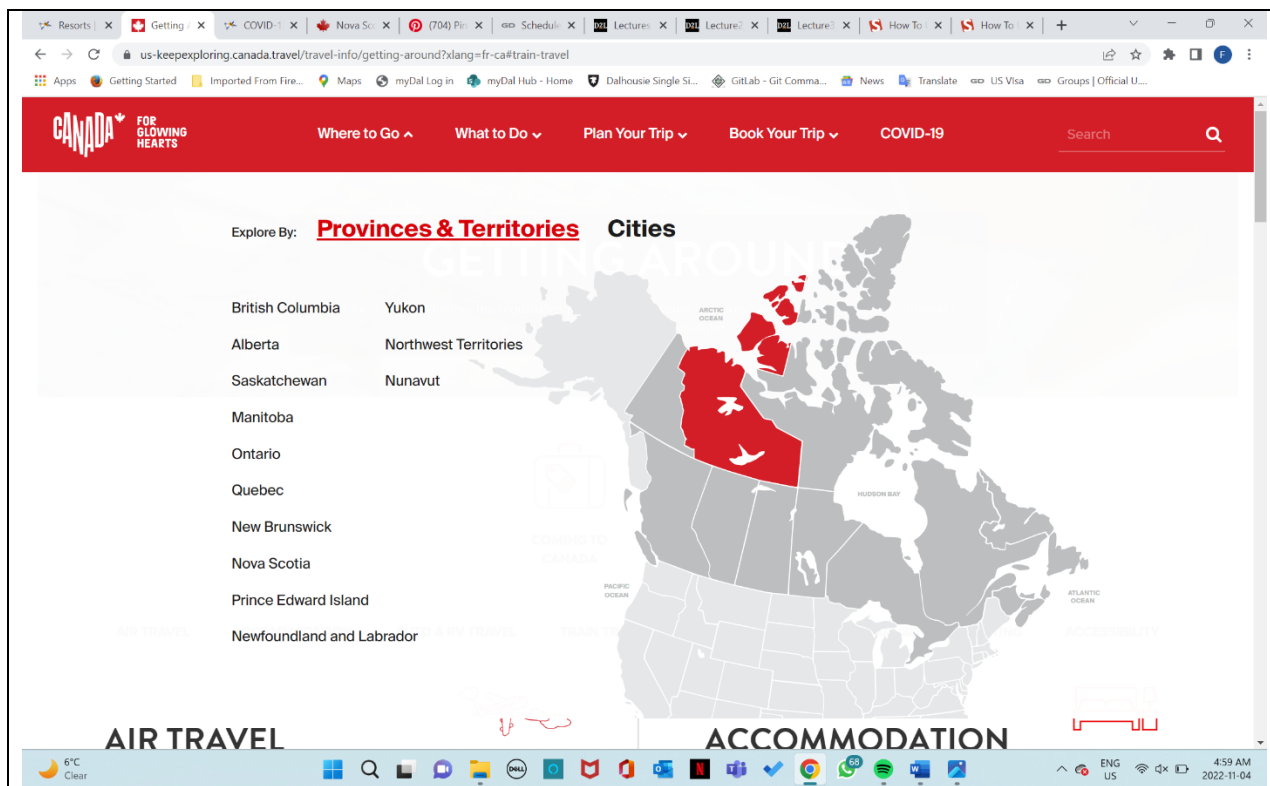**The below screenshot represents the "Figure/Ground".**

Fig 3: Province & Territories Page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

When the user clicked on one of the travel site i.e. https://us-keepexploring.canada.travel/places-to-go/nova-scotia which was mentioned on the https://www.novascotia.com/ page helps user explore more places to visit.

- So after landing on this page, the user can select the "Where to Go" option to explore places as mentioned in Fig. 3.
- On clicking that, the user will be prompted with different "provinces and territories" and "cities" as shown in Fig. 3.
- Along with that, a visual representation of the location in terms of a map is represented, which follows Gesalt's "figure/ground" principle.

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 3 follows Gesalt's principle of "Figure/Ground" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- The contrast of the color and shapes refers to the location the user wants to look for [4]. The white laziness of the background helps differentiate it from the location, which is grey color [4]. This allows the user to distinguish the background from the figure, which is the location the user is looking for [4].
- When the user hovers over the province they are looking for, the colour changes from grey to red. This helps the user focus on that place and reduce uncertainty [4].
- Additionally, this design helps the user stay on task by reducing the cognitive load [4].

Example 4 – Law of Closure

Screenshot (with URL):

The below screenshot represents the "Law of Closure".
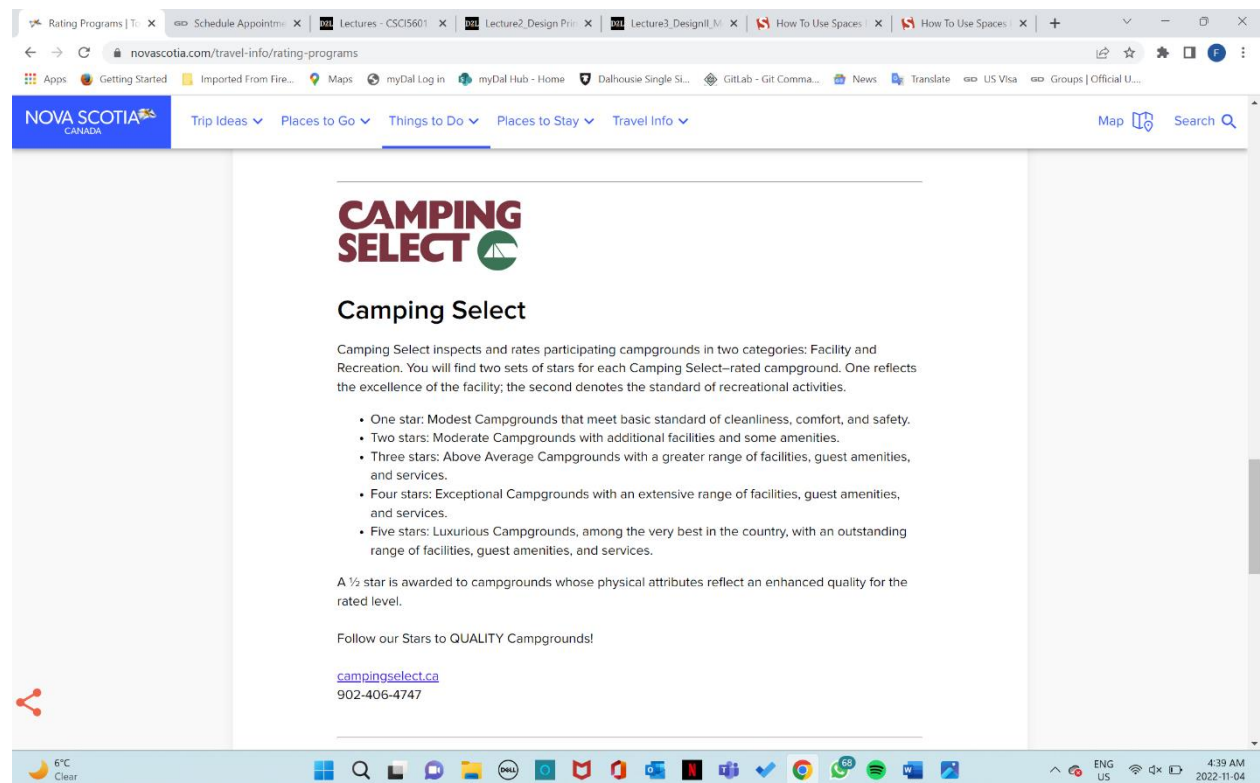

Fig 4: Travel information page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The user visits the webpage https://www.novascotia.com/travel-info/rating-programs to get the travel information on rating programs.
- The user finds various national and international rating programs for accommodations and campgrounds on this page [5].
- Various training programmes mentioned on the web page include "Clean It Right," "Canada Select," "Camping Select," and "CAA/AAA" [5].
- The logo for the training programme named "Canada Select" shows Gesalt's principle of "Law of Closure."

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 4 follows Gesalt's principle of "Law of Closure" and it's a good design because of the following reason:
- The green logo under the label "Camping Select" has the missing information, which people tend to perceive as the whole by filling in this missing information [2]. Thus, it represents the logo for camping by having the structure of the tent.
- The green colour provides a contrast between the background and foreground elements [7], which provides the user with minimalist visual design [6]. This will reduce visual complexity [6].
- By providing the missing information or being incomplete, the design provides a way of interaction between the user and the website.
- Because this principle provides a simple design, logos such as this can quickly convey the brand's identity to the user [8].

Example 5 – Cognitive Affordance

Screenshot (with URL):

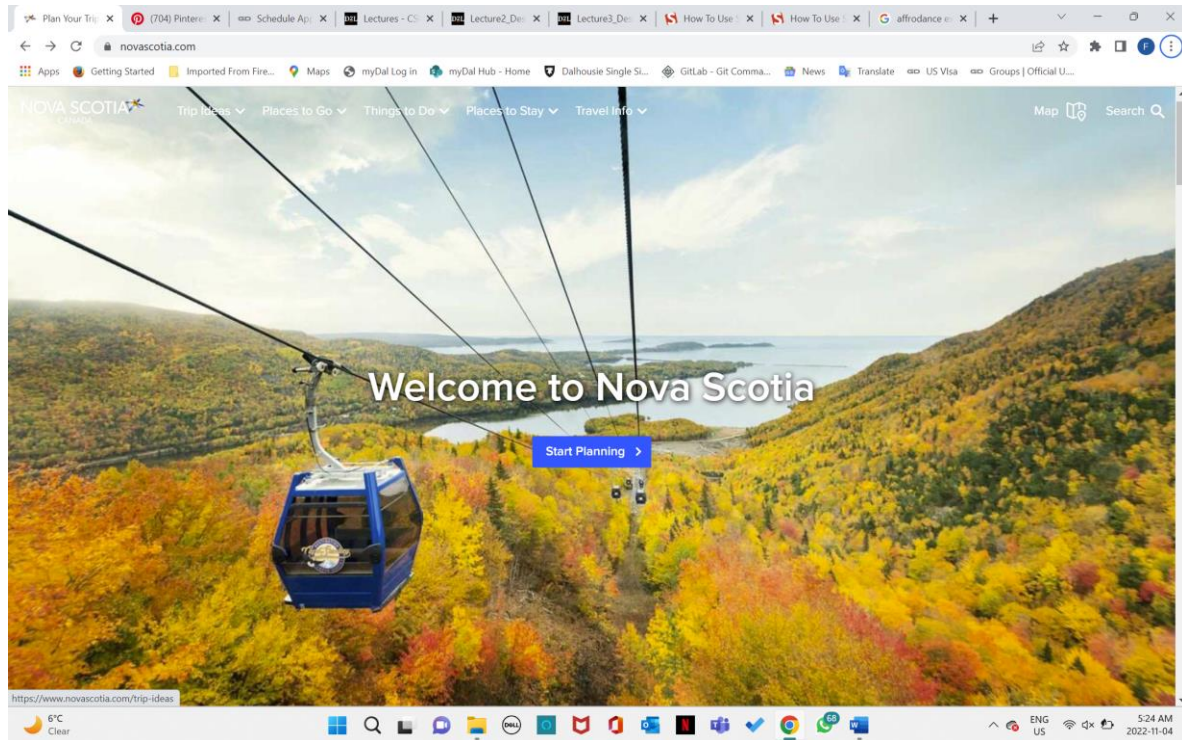**The below screenshots represents the "Cognitive Affordance".**

Fig 5: Home page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The user visits https://www.novascotia.com/ to look for various things to plan for the trip.

- Initially, users can start their planning by clicking on "Start planning," as shown in Fig. 5.
- Fig. 5 represents cognitive affordance, which provides users with knowledge about the design that helps them think, decide, learn, remember, understand, and know about things [2].

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 5 follows "Cognitive Affordance" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- 5 represents the "Start Planning" label on the button, which is clear and concise and tells the user what will happen if they click it [2].
- It helps users predict the consequences of clicking on it [2].
- It provides the functionality behind it when the button is clicked [2].

Example 6 – Physical Affordance

Screenshot (with URL):

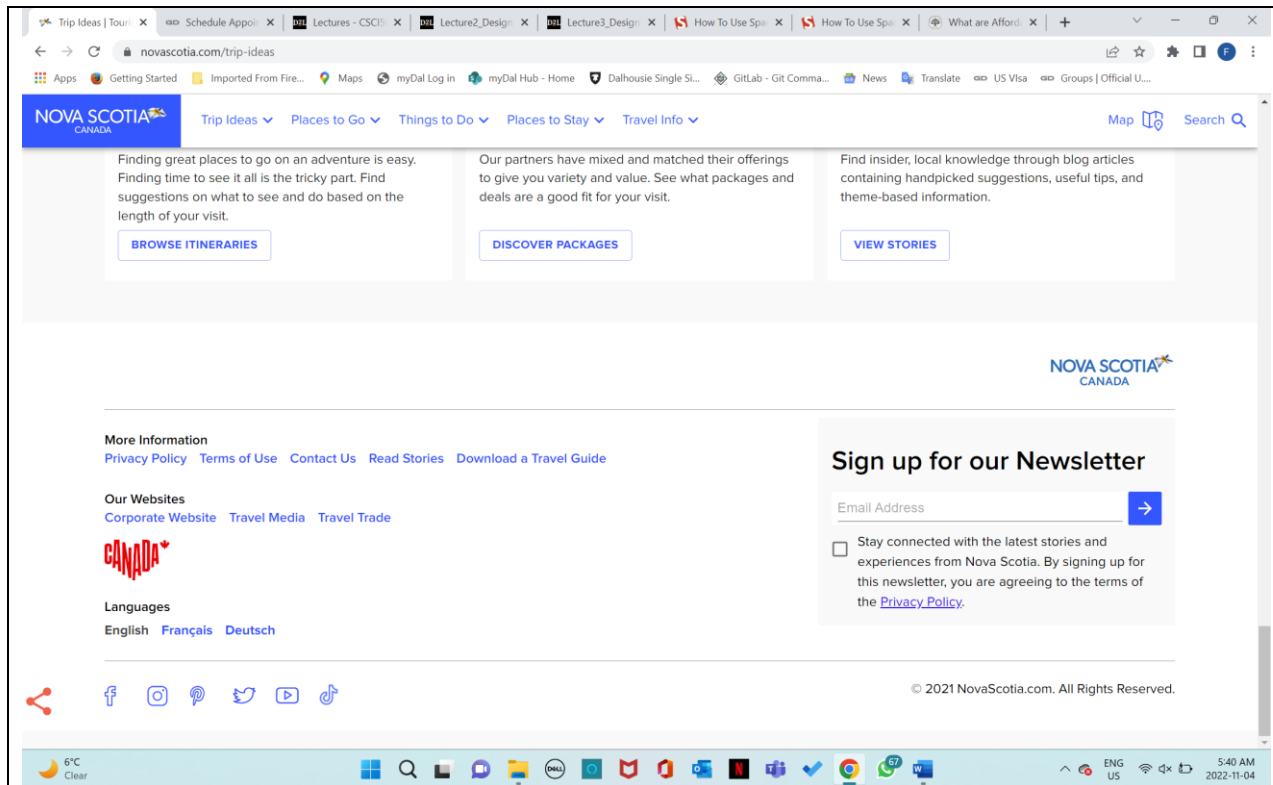**The below screenshot represents the "Physical Affordance".**

Fig 6: Garden Attraction place Page having Sign-up Newsletter

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The user can see the "Sign-up for the Newsletter" box in the below right corner of the web page https://www.novascotia.com/trip-ideas which allows user get the latest stories, news and information from the website and keep them updated about new things coming up.

- Fig. 6: represents the "Physical Affordance" that help users make physical action (For example: click, touch, point, gesture, move an object) [2].

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 6 follows "Physical Affordance" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- The "Sign up for our newsletter" box has an adequate size and easy-to-access location, which makes it easier for users to perform tasks such as clicking [2].
- The blue arrow button besides the email address textbox guides the user to click on "Next," which provides good usability.
- The colour constraint of the blue arrow button guides the user in what they should do.
- The small details below the email address text box grab the user's attention and make them click on the checkbox. This boosts the user experience.

Example 7 - Functional Affordance

Screenshot (with URL):

The below screenshot represents the "Functional Affordance".

Fig 7: Sign-up Newsletter Form Page

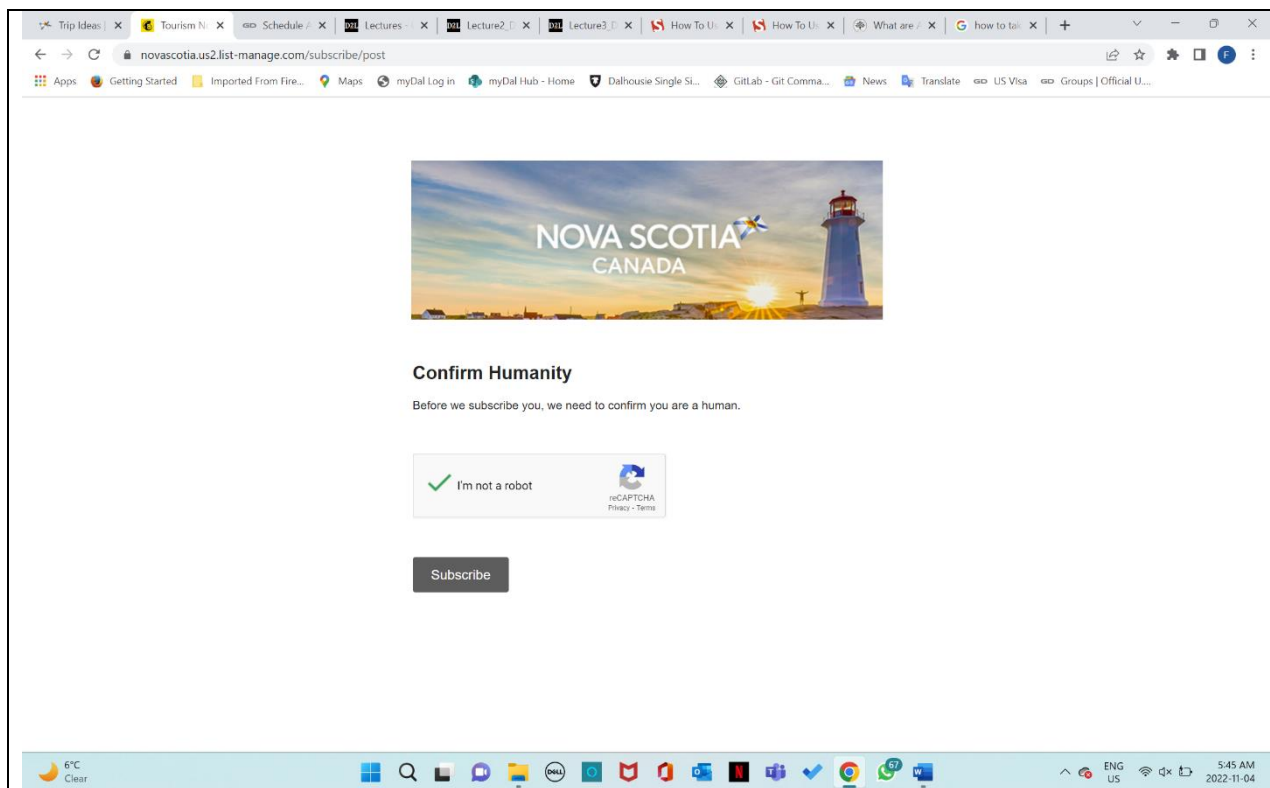*Fig 8: Sign-up Newsletter Form Page*
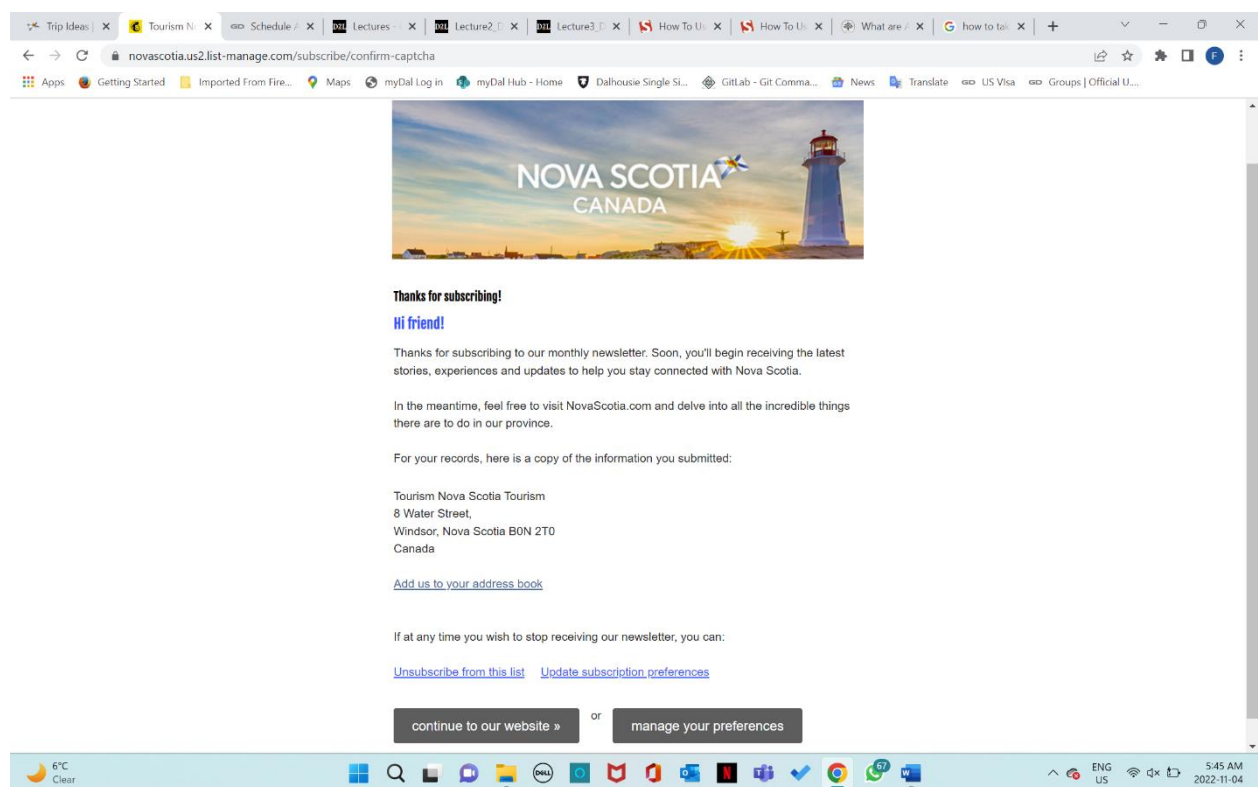
Fig 9: Sign-up Newsletter Form Page

Fig 10: Sign-up Newsletter Form Page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

After the user implemented the "Physical Affordance" on the "Sign-up for Newsletter" which was on the page https://www.novascotia.com/trip-ideas. There will be some back-end tasks that the sign-up box will execute once the user enters the details. This will subscribe the user to the page, and the user will be able to receive recent updates on the news or website.

- So in order to make a user subscribe, the sign-up newsletter having the "subscribe" button, which is given in Fig. 9, does the functionality.
- Mentioning the email, marking the checkbox given in Fig. 6, and clicking on the arrow button will direct the user to the next page, which is Fig. 7.
- The user needs to enter their details as mentioned in Figs. 7 and 8.
- After adding the details, the user can click on "subscribe," which is mentioned in Fig. 9.
- After clicking on the "subscribe" button, the user will be prompted, indicating the user is subscribed, as given in Fig. 10.
- Now the user is subscribed to the newsletter, and this task is executed at the back end of the system.

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 7,8,9 & 10 follows "Functional Affordance" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- It helps users subscribe without knowing the back-end because the functionality is handled by the "subscribe" button [2].
- It helps the user add purpose to physical ability, which fulfils the user's desired tasks.
- For the user to complete the actions, "functional affordance" enables them to make use of "physical actions," which create interaction with the system.

Example 8 – Sensory Affordance

Screenshot (with URL):

The below screenshot represents the "Fuctional Affordance".

Fig 11: Things-to-do - Shopping *Page*

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The user visits the page https://www.novascotia.com/things-to-do/shopping which allows users to explore things in "Shopping" category.

- Fig. 11 represents the image that helps the user sense things about the page. In this case, it helps the user grasp information regarding the farmer's market.
- The image gives the user a sense of the readability characteristics of the page [2] that the shopping will all be based on the farm or farmer's market.

Three to five (3-5) points to justify it being a good design (design rule/principle) and justification for each point.

Fig. 11 follows "Sensory Affordance" and it's a good design because of the following reason:

- Refer to Fig. 11 to see the text box present on the right side of the page, which gives a sense to the user about the type of shopping by providing a description. This noticeable thing helps the user navigate easily.
- The visibility of the fruits, vegetables, and farmer's market bag gives a sense of the shopping theme. This will not make users confused, even if they landed on the page by mistake.
- Through sensory affordance, the information is easily perceivable, like in Fig. 11.

Bad Design Examples (4)
*Use 2 Gestalt's Principle violations and 2 Affordance violations (no repeats)

Example 1 – Law of Similarity
Screenshot (with URL):

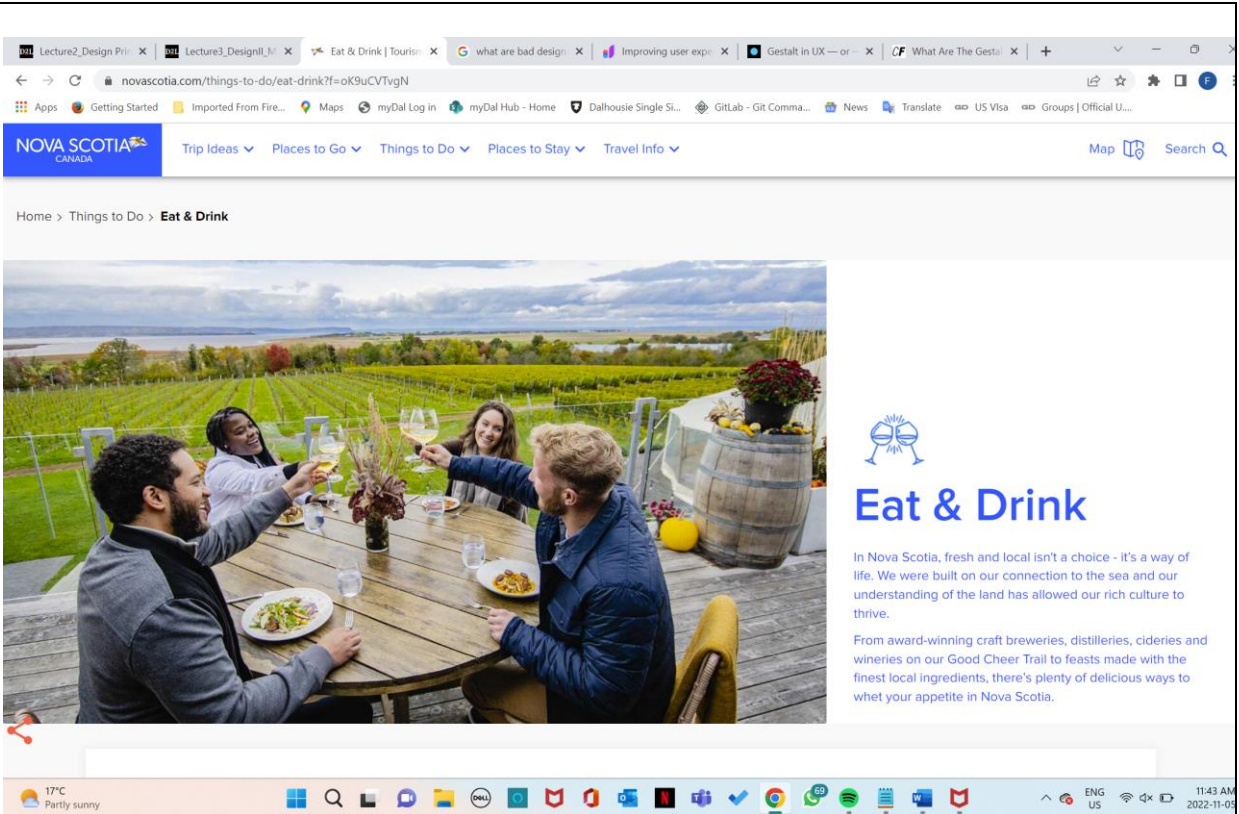**The below screenshot represents the violation of "Law of Similarity".**
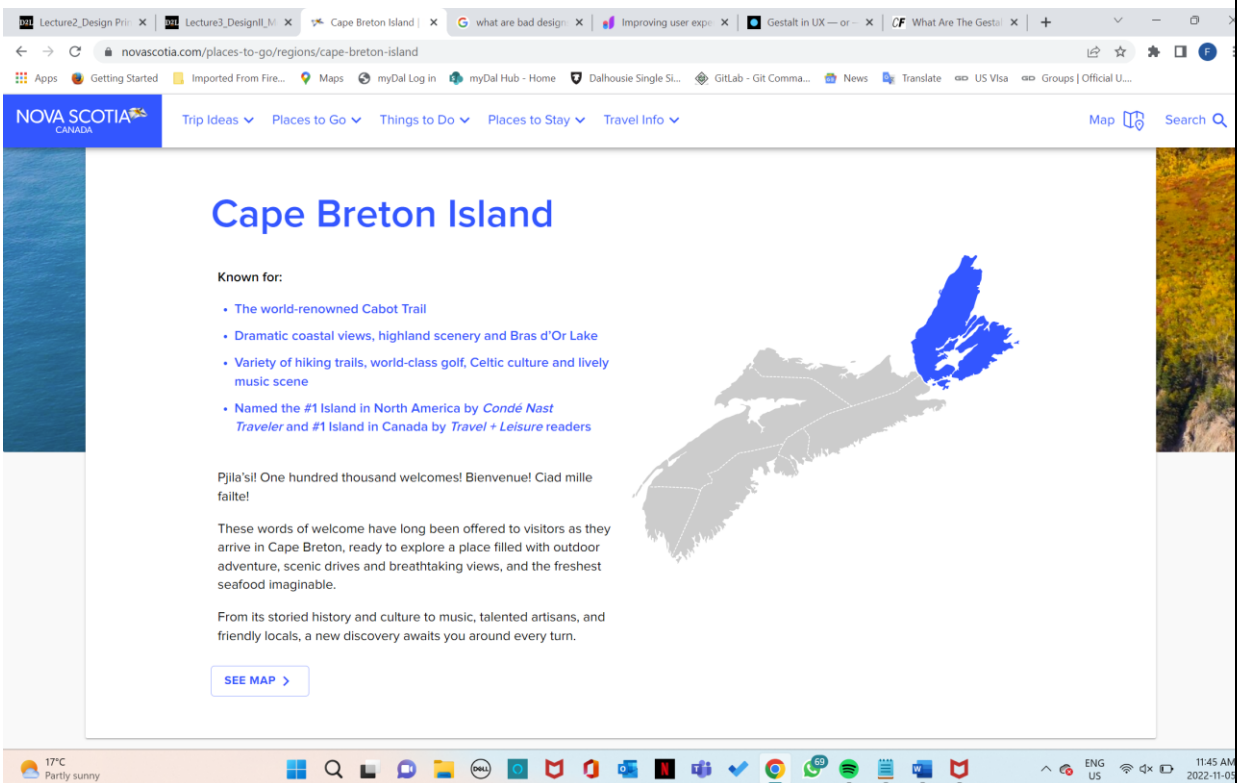
Fig 12: Eat & Drink Page

Fig 13: Regions Page

Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

For the above violation of the "Law of Similarity," I considered two examples, which are Figs. 12 and 13.

Example 1 (refer to Fig. 12) depicts that the user visits this https://www.novascotia.com/things-to-do/eat-drink?f=oK9uCVTvgN page to look for different eating and drinking options. On the other hand, example 2 (refer to Fig. 13) provides information about the Cape Breton island or the region that the user wants to visit, which is present on the webpage https://www.novascotia.com/places-to-go/regions/cape-breton-island. It also provides a visual representation of the map and nearby places.

The following is the justification of the violation of the "Law of Similarity":

- In Fig. 12, it is observed that the page consists of text of the same size and color, but the texts in the navigation bar, i.e., "Trips ideas," "Places to go," etc., are grouped together, but the information present under the heading "Eat & Drink" is not grouped with them.
- The second observation is the text color. The text color in the figure is the same, but it will confuse the user as to which one acts as a link and which one doesn't. For instance, the texts in the navigation bar, i.e., "Places to Stay" and "Travel Info," act as links. However, the information underneath the title "Eat and Drink" is not a link but rather general information that can mislead the user.
- in Fig. 13. The information is provided in both blue and black, and both types have the same text size, but it is not structured or grouped properly. The blue texts are given as bullets, whereas the black texts are paragraphs, which can confuse the user, who might think the blue texts have some special importance.

- Refer to Fig. 12. The example may have been designed this way to keep the content or information from what is present in the navigation bar.
- Refer Fig.13, The example may have been designed this way because the developer wanted to grab the attention of the user on that particular part of the content, which is present in blue, and not the other information, which is present in black.

Way 1: For Fig. 12, the text colour below the heading "Eat & Drink" should be another colour than blue to avoid confusion about whether it acts as a link or just information. Preferably, the colour should be black. On doing this, the blue texts in the navigation bar follow the "Law of Similarity," as they all act as links and are grouped together. Whereas the other information that is heading and the body will act as a different group having its own actions. For Fig. 13, change the blue text colour to black to treat it as one piece of information and not to distract the user unwantedly.

Way 2: For Fig. 13, the bulleted text should be turned into normal text to increase the similarity with the other texts and be treated as one cluster.

Example 2 – Law of Symmetry

Screenshot (with URL):

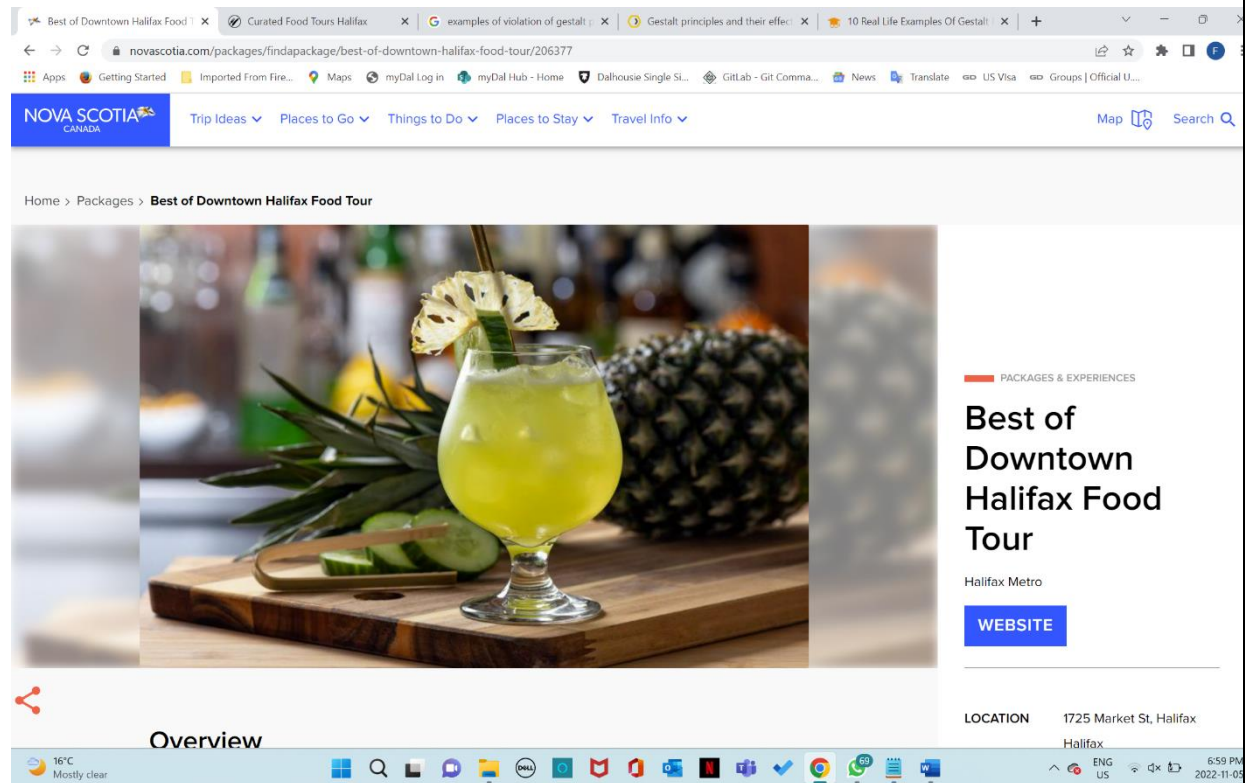**The below screenshot represents the violation of "Law of Symmetry".**
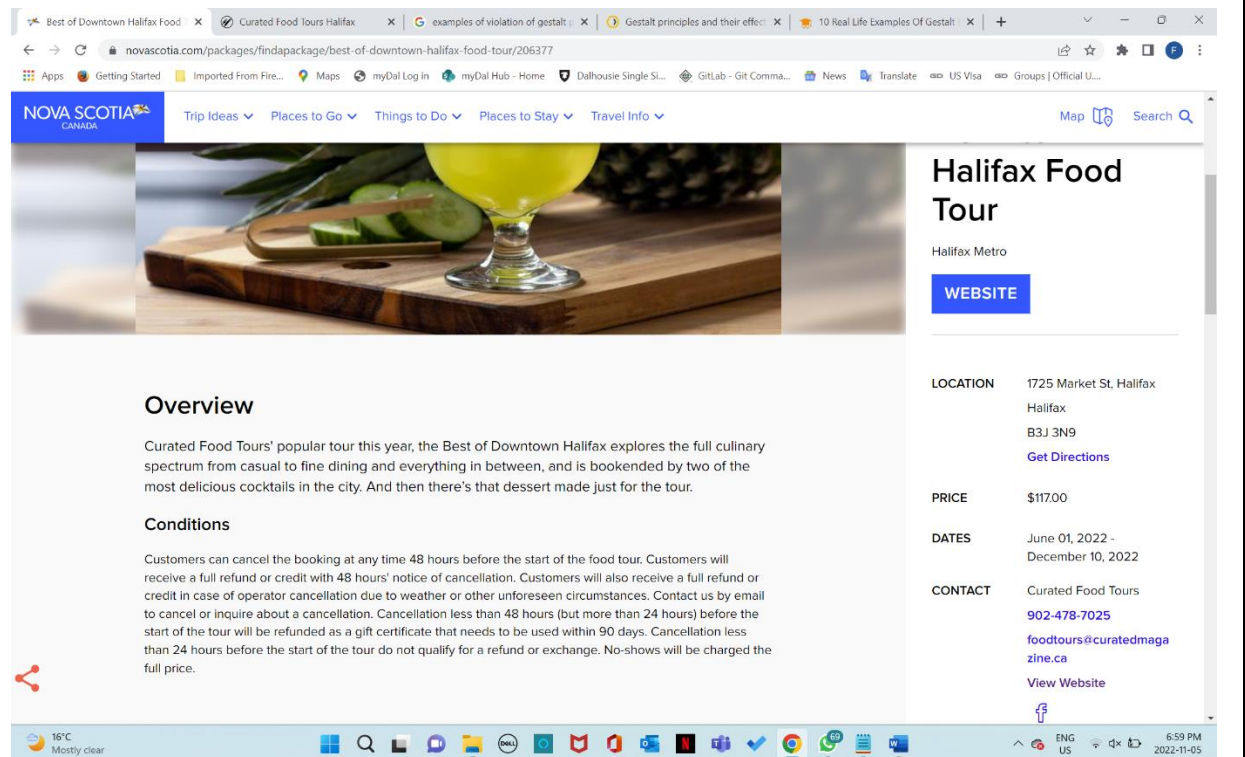

Fig 14: Halifax Food Tour page

Fig 15: Halifax Food Tour page

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The purpose of the page which is https://www.novascotia.com/trip-ideas/packages?f=rybK0dwQSH is to find good packages to plan a trip. So the page provides user the overview of the Halifax food tour where user can find he website, contact details and price of the tour and many more things.

The following is the justification of the violation of the "Law of Symmetry":

- Figs. 14 and 15 represent the violation of the "Law of Symmetry." The page layout is not exactly halved. The image on the left consumes more space than the information present on the right. This makes for poor readability for the user.
- Refer to Fig. 14, where the information on the right side is not started from the first line, which is not aligned with the image; this unstructured information results in a poor user experience.
- Referring Lastly to Fig. 15, the information under the image is not wrapped text, which again leads to the asymmetry of the page. This violation of the "Law of Symmetry" diverts user attention and does not focus on the information provided.

- The webpage must be designed this way because the content is limited and the image should be large to keep it attractive and exciting for the user.
- Another reason could be the distribution of the information throughout the page.

Way 1: The image and block of information side by side should be of the same size and symmetry. This will provide stability and consistency on the page.

Way 2: Making the information under the image as wrap text, which will also be organised so that the content is easily perceived by the user.

Example 3 – Physical Affordance

The below screenshot represents the violation of "Physical Affordance".

Fig 16: Booking page
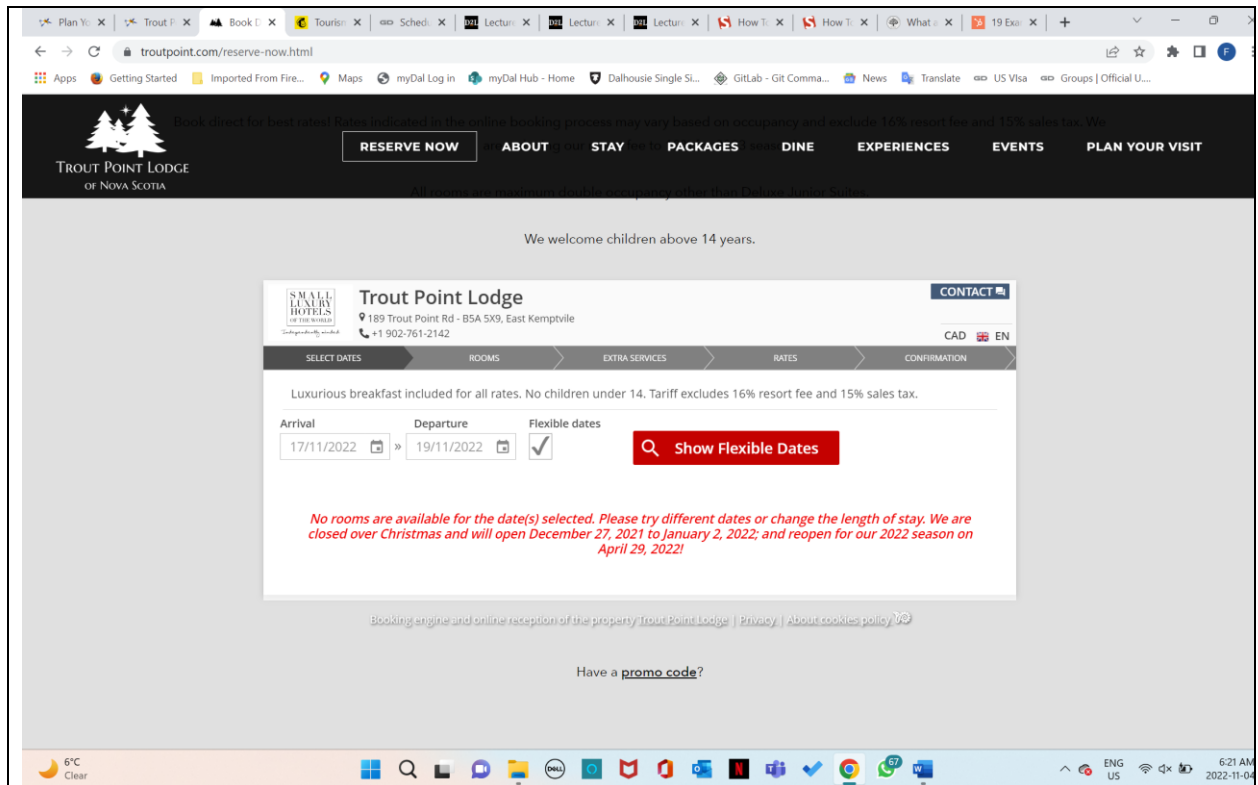
The user was prompted to https://www.troutpoint.com/reserve-now.html to book a ticket for the trip or place to eat.
- First the user needs to enter the arrival date and departure date to check the availability. If the flexible dates are available it will show on clicking the search button. The date entry is mandatory in order to proceed to check the availability.
- The physical affordance is the user can enter the arrival and departure date.
- After getting the availabilities, if the user wants to change the date or reset it, user could'nt do it. This violates the "Physical affordance".

The following is the justification of the violation of the "Physical Affordance":

- It's a bad design because it does not show the dates by marking the checkbox for "Flexible dates," which violates physical affordance. This violation increases physical awkwardness if it does not work [9].
- The user cannot reset the date after looking for flexible dates. This makes the web page non-responsive [9, 10].
- The user can't undo the actions. If the user wants to see the changes, they should refresh the whole page, which can sometimes lose the data.

- The webpage is designed this way because the results for flexible dates are possible by providing some input dates. This is why the user can't search without entering the data information.

- Additionally, the webpage is designed in such a way to ignore the undos from the user to save the state whether the user added the date or not. This will prompt the user to be attentive and carefully enter the details because undo actions don't work.

Two ways you could improve the design (based on design principles). You can include a mocked up screenshot to help but you still need to clearly describe the change and justified.

- The webpage should allow users to undo the actions. This will increase the user's interaction with the webpage, and the user can navigate the page without any concern of data saving or loss.
- The "Show flexible dates" button should provide the result once the user has marked the checkbox. This will allow users the flexibility to try out their preferred dates without having to explicitly mention them.

Example 4 – Functional Affordance

Screenshot (with URL):

The below screenshot represents the violation of "Functional Affordance".
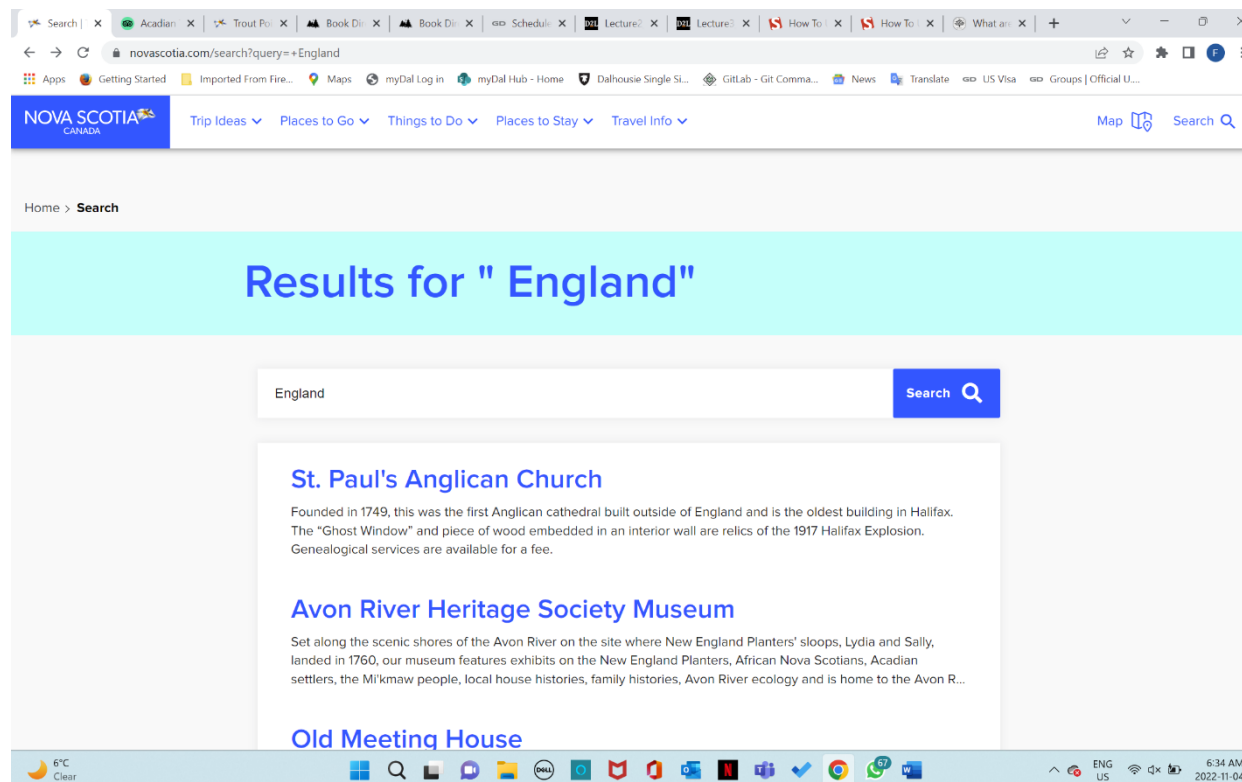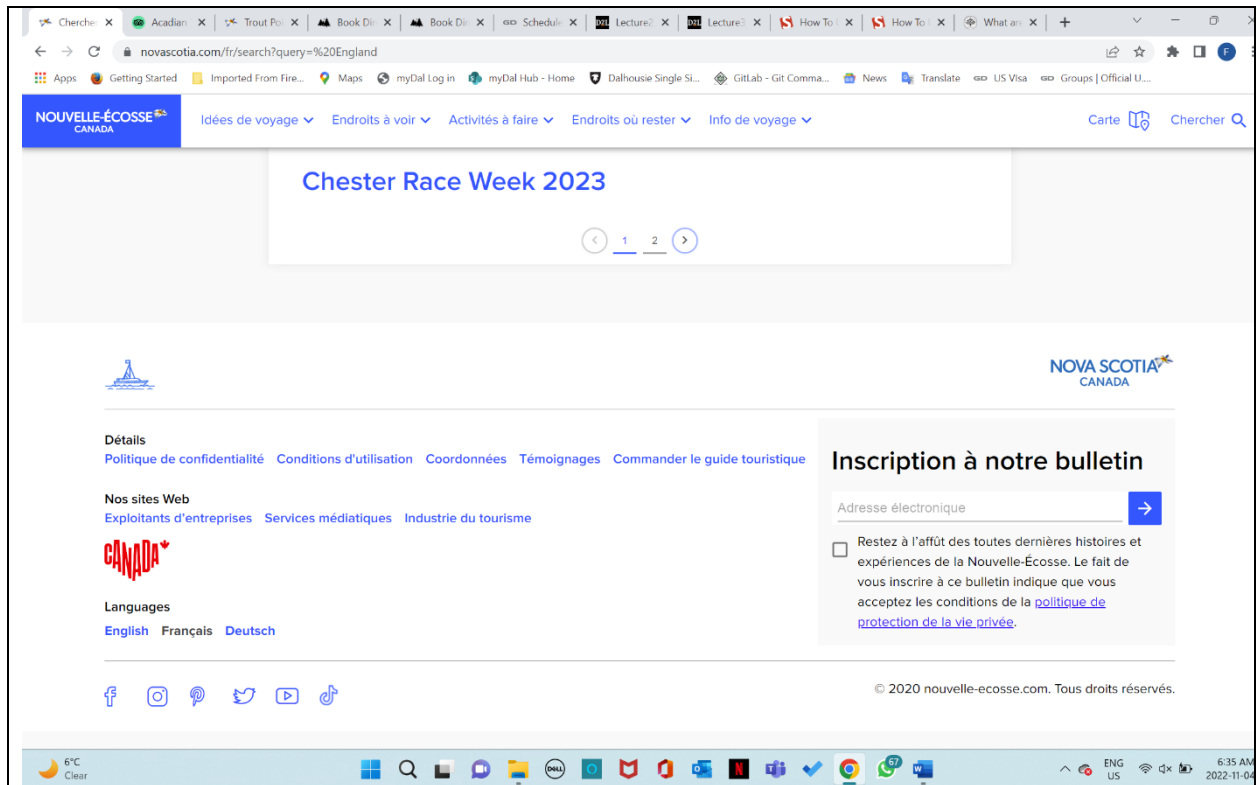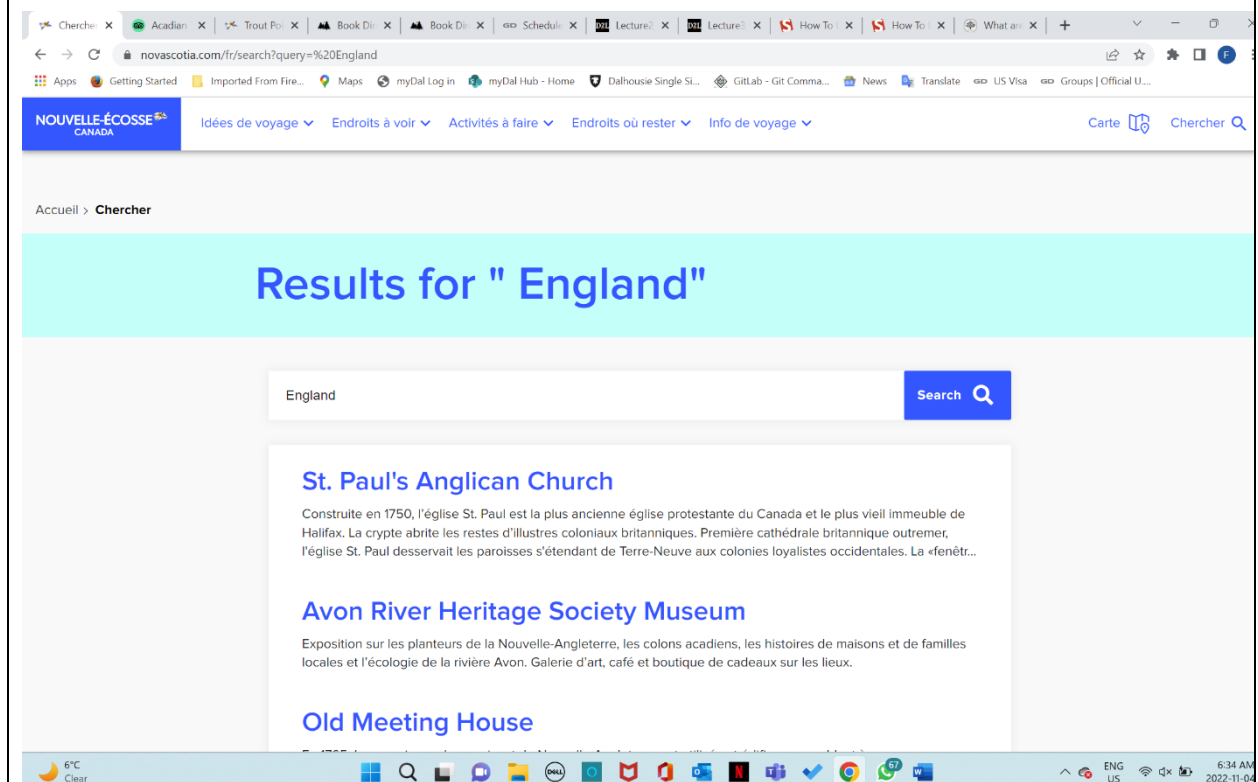

Fig 17: Result page

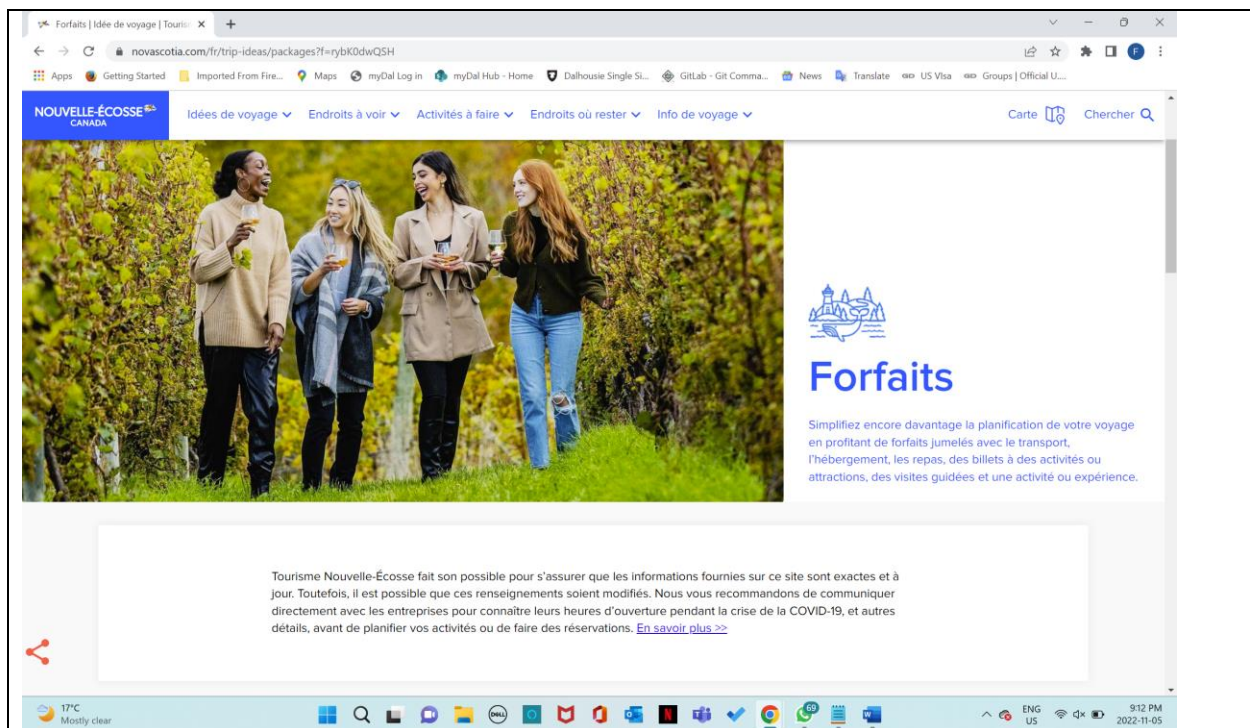Fig 18: Result page

Fig 19: Result page

Fig 20: Page after French translation

Fig 21: Page after French translation
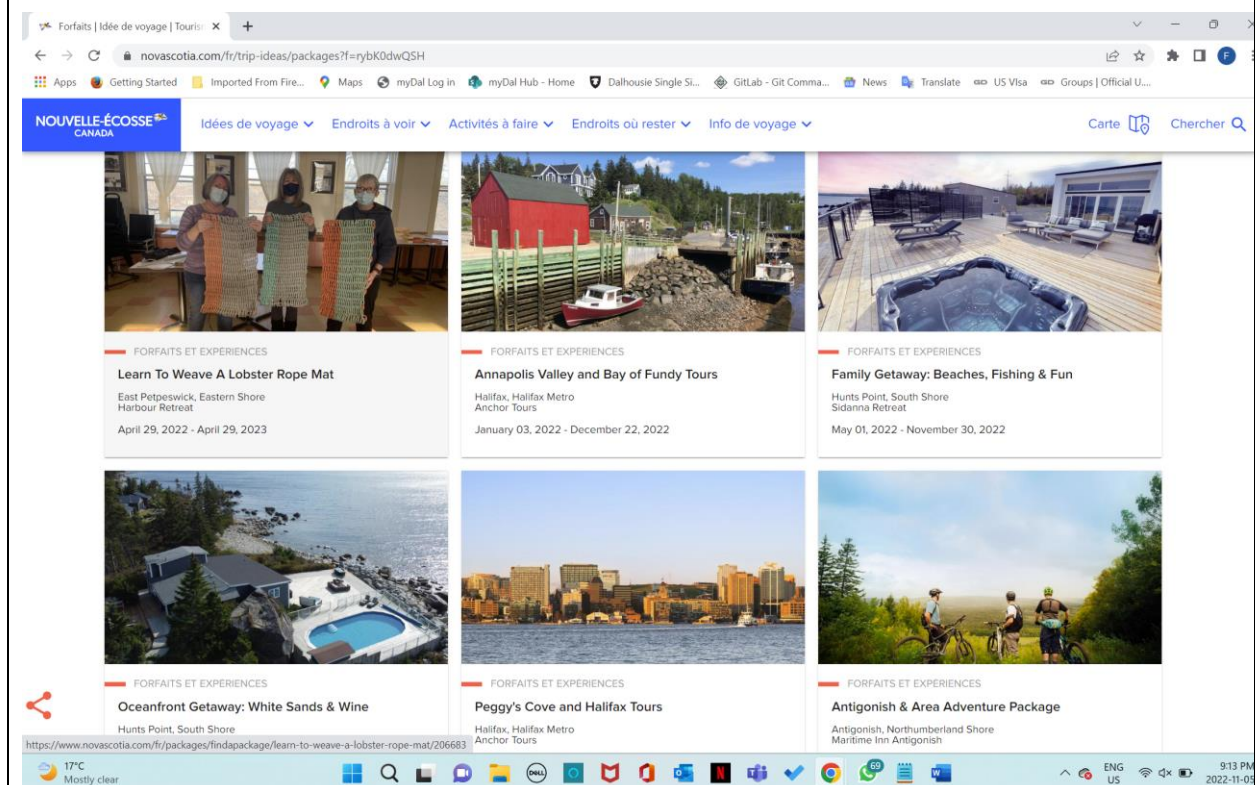
Paragraph that the describes what the example is supposed to allow users to do (its overall purpose):

The Figs. 17 and 19 represent the "Search page," which provides the result to the user when they search for a term or anything else. In Fig. 18, the left bottom corner of the page shows different language options that enable users to change the language based on their requirements.

Three to five (3-5) critique points to justify it being a bad design (design rule/principle it violates) and justification for each point.

- Firstly, the webpage was initially in the English language, as shown in fig. 17. But then the user wanted to change to French. So the page translated to French, which is shown on Fig. 19, but the results section showed the content in English while the text in the navigation bar is in English, which violates the "functional affordance."
- Fig. 21 represents the French translation page, but not all the content of the page is being translated, which reduces the ease of access and usage by the users.

Example why the example may have been designed this way (2-3 points based on your opinion)

- The "search" results depend on the words entered to search. If the user translated the page into French but searched for the words in English, the results would be shown in English. The webpage is designed in such a way to give back the information in the same language to increase understandability.
- The webpage is designed in such a way that not all content is translated, as shown in Fig. 21. This might be to maintain flexibility between the English and French users.

Two ways you could improve the design (based on design principles). You can include a mocked up screenshot to help but you still need to clearly describe the change and justified.

Way 1: Design a webpage in such a way that if the user translates the page into a different language, then the whole content should be translated, irrespective of the language the user uses to search the word. This will increase consistency and make switching between the user's preferred languages easier.

Way 2: Translate every content of the webpage if the user translates it to a different language to maintain consistency and ambiguity.

References:

[1] N. Su, T. Li, J. Zheng, X. Hu, T. Fan, and L. Luo, "How font size affects judgments of learning: Simultaneous mediating effect of item-specific beliefs about fluency and moderating effect of beliefs about font size and memory," *PLoS One*, vol. 13, no. 7, p. e0200888, 2018

[2] "Brightspace," *Brightspace.com*. [Online]. Available: https://dal.brightspace.com/d2l/le/content/230470/viewContent/3293016/View. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[3] A. Fitzgerald, "What is the law of proximity & why does it matter in UX design?," *HubSpot*, 27-Jul-2022. [Online]. Available: https://blog.hubspot.com/website/law-of-proximity. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[4] "CorelDRAW Graphics Suite," *Coreldraw.com*. [Online]. Available: https://www.coreldraw.com/en/tips/gestalt-principles/figure-ground/. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[5] "Rating programs," *Tourism Nova Scotia, Canada*. [Online]. Available: https://www.novascotia.com/travel-info/rating-programs. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[6] "Principle of closure in visual design," *Nielsen Norman Group.* [Online]. Available: https://www.nngroup.com/articles/principle-closure/. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[7] "CorelDRAW Graphics Suite," *Coreldraw.com.* [Online]. Available: https://www.coreldraw.com/en/tips/gestalt-principles/closure/. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[8] J. Hensley, "Improve your designs with the principles of closure and figure-ground (part 2)," *Smashing Magazine,* 10-May-2016. [Online]. Available: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2016/05/improve-your-designs-with-the-principles-of-closure-and-figure-ground-part-2/. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[9] R. Hartson and P. S. Pyla, "Affordances Demystified," in *The UX Book,* Elsevier, 2012, pp. 643–661. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].

[10] R. Ali, "How bad website design affects your business," *Invicta Agency,* 08-Sep-2021. [Online]. Available: https://www.invicta.agency/learn/how-bad-website-design-affects-your-business/. [Accessed: 06-Nov-2022].