Expert Evaluation

# General Methodology

Expert evaluation, also called Expert Inspection, is a technique used for testing a site’s usability.

It consists in assembling a squad of people with previous knowledge about concepts and standards of usability for a site.

Everyone in the squad conduct separate inspections on selected web pages, gathering then their conclusions and data to decide together the evaluation of the site.

The most common way of proceeding is the Heuristics Inspection that is based on checklists and usability principles.

Inspection is very useful since it provides a solid basis for a first general overview of the site, finding strength and weaknesses, having an initial idea of what modifications should be included by the client in the post-evaluation.

# Heuristics

Heuristics are a set of rules to evaluate the usability of a site.

There are three main types:

* **Navigation Heuristics**: those are the ones related to how well the user can navigate throughout the site.
* **Content Heuristics**: those are the ones related to the information contained inside the site.
* **Presentation Heuristics**: those are the ones related to how the content is presented inside the website.

There is a huge number of heuristics that can be used among which the testers will choose.

Two of the most famous heuristic sets are Nielsen heuristics and MiLE (Milano-Lugano Evaluation Method) heuristics.

In our project, we chose to use all the 10 Nielsen heuristics and a subset of 10 MiLE heuristics.

A list containing all of these is contained in the next sections, along with a brief description for each one of them.

## Nielsen Heuristics

**H1 Visibility of system status:**

The system should always keep users informed about what’s going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

Examples of elements that allow to have a better visibility of the status are process labels, status bars, orientation map of the site and bread crumps.

**H2 Match between system and the real world:**

The site should use intuitive icons that users can simply recognize from the real word.

An example of this may be using the icon of a letter to indicate the contact us function.

**H3 User control and freedom**

Users often choose the wrong system functions and need to leave the unwanted state without having to redo everything but performing tiny changes without restarting it all.

An example is booking.com possibility to change vacation period without redo all the previous steps.

**H4 Consistency and standards**

Users shouldn’t have to wonder what different buttons, icons or actions mean, there should be some conventions or standards to implement that can solve this problem.

An example is the close button always represented as an “x” button.

**H5 Error prevention**

A well-designed website should prevent errors from occurring.

This can be done either by eliminate error-prone conditionsor check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.

An example is the evaluation of the security level of a password during an account creation.

**H6 Recognition rather than recall**

The objective here is to Minimize the user's memory load by making objects,

actions, and options visible.

The system should give the user a list of possible choices guiding the user.

An example is the list of possible places to go for an internship.

**H7 Flexibility and efficiency of use**

The Interface should be flexible, supporting both novice and advanced users, and transforming itself depending on the user.

There should also be the presence of accelerators, used to speed up the interaction.

Examples are landmarks.

**H8 Aesthetic and minimalist design**

Interfaces of the website should be clear and should contain only relevant content.

Aesthetic is useful for achieving this goal.

An example is the learn more button in almost every Apple product’s page.

**H9 Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors**

Error messages should be clear and precise. They also should suggest the solution.

An example is the “showing results for…” when searching with google.

**H10 Help and documentation**

Help and documentation should be easy to reach.

This should be focused on the user’s task, presenting a list of concrete steps to help users.

## MiLE Heuristics

Navigation/Interaction Heuristics:

* **Group navigation**: it should be easy to navigate from and among groups of “items”.
* **Structural Navigation:** it should be easy to navigate among the “components” (parts) of a topic.
* **Semantic Navigation:** it should be easy to navigate from a topic to a related one in both directions.
* **Landmarks:** landmarks should be useful to reach the key parts of the web site

Content Heuristics:

* **Information overload**: the information in a page shouldn’t be too much or too little.
* **Consistency of Page Content Structure:** pages that present topics of the same category should have the same types of elements.
* **Content Organization (hierarchy):** hierarchical organization of topics should be appropriate for the topic relevance.

Presentation Heuristics:

* **Text Layout:** text should be readable and font size appropriate.
* **Interaction placeholders-semiotics:** textual and visual labels of interactive elements should reflect the meaning of the interaction and its effects.
* **Spatial Allocation:** semantically related elements should be close and semantically distant elements should be far away.
* **Consistency of Page Structure:** pages of the same type should have the same spatial organization for the various visual elements.

## Metrics Used

We decided to adopt a 5-tier model to evaluate the heuristics scores.

The scores are the following:

* **0**: The Heuristic is unsatisfied, and it misleads the user.
* **1**: The Heuristic is unsatisfied, but they don’t have a drastic impact on user experience.
* **2**: The Heuristic is partially satisfied: there are weaknesses that don’t affect user experience.
* **3**: The Heuristic is satisfied, but it could have been implemented better.
* **4**: The Heuristic is satisfied is a brilliant way.
* **N/A**: The Heuristic cannot be evaluated.

# Page selection

At the beginning of the study, we decided to evaluate not the entire website, but to select among the pages the ones that are more important or representing a category of pages.

So, we selected these 10 pages:

1. Homepage: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/>
2. Apply now page: <https://app.theinterngroup.com/apply>
3. Career Field – CS: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/career-fields/it-and-computer-science-internships/>
4. Application Process: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/how-it-works/application-process/>
5. Academic Credit: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/educators/academic-credit/>
6. Program Fees: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/program-fees/>
7. Summer Internship: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/destination/summer-internships/>
8. University/college students: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/internships-for-college-students/>
9. Our Team: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/about/team/>
10. Cost of Living: <https://www.theinterngroup.com/applicants/cost-of-living/>

# Execution of the Study

Inspection was individually performed on each one of the above written pages.

This was done evaluating the selected in heuristics with the marks we agreed, using an inspection table to keep track of the results and additional notes.

Then we merged our results and after a short discussion we arrived at the following conclusions.