

Assessment of two pairs of competing web services

Cupcakes

The two websites that will be compared and analyzed are the homepages for Toronto Cupcake Delivery and SWEET DADDY CUPCAKES.

Toronto Cupcake Delivery

The initial impression when first coming to the site is that of a webpage from around the year 2008. The color patterns and images are fitting, but the menu items look old fashioned and the transition when opening the sidebar isn't smooth, as should be on a modern website. Relevant information is found on the front page after a brief search, but everything is displayed as a static piece of text, which makes the front page less engaging for users.

Issues

The text on the front page isn't split into readable paragraphs, but instead is displayed as site-wide lines of text, which makes it considerably harder to read.

This is an accessibility issue for people with dyslexia and issues with concentration. I would fix simply by grouping text into logical paragraphs, with their own site sections

The chat button is easy to not see, and its location seems a little random.

This one definitely isn't a deal breaker, but just makes the site look messier. I would move the button for opening the chat to the bottom right corner and also make it so it overlaps over site content.

The sidebar menu is not the most usable either, since subcategories of certain menu items open on top of the actual menu, instead of a more modern drop-down menu. Clicking on the "MENU" word itself also has the same function as the x-button on the menu, which is counter-intuitive.

This makes site navigation less intuitive. I would remove the functionality of the "MENU"-text as a button as well as changing the subcategories into drop-down menus.

SWEET DADDY CUPCAKES

The first thing that grabs my attention when navigating to this website is the ad banner in the bottom section, which immediately makes the site look less professional. The color patterns are visually pleasing and make sense. Menu items and transitions feel modern. Relevant information is displayed on the front page and found easily. Further

exploration reveals that there are ad banners all over the site, which always makes using a web service less pleasing.

Issues

There seems to be quite a lot of ad banners displayed at various parts of the site, this always makes a webpage for a business seem really unprofessional.

This one is obvious: websites for legitimate businesses shouldn't be filled with ads. Not only does it make the site look like some kind of internet scam, a user might very well accidentally click on an ad, which would take them away from site engagement. Just remove the ads.

The input fields seem to be poorly formatted, with unnecessary white space.

I don't exactly know what has happened here, but it just looks like poor programming. Easy to fix once you get a look at the JavaScript.

The site also contains poorly contrasted text sections (white on pink), which makes it less accessible.

This too is an accessibility issue, color blind people will have a harder time reading this text. Easy fix to change the text into a better contrast, i.e. black on pink.

The thing that both of the cupcake sites do really well is that they have a lot of pretty and colorful pictures of cupcakes all over the site.

City websites

The two websites that will be compared and analyzed are the homepages for the City of Turku in Finland and the City of Los Angeles in the US.

City of Turku

The site feels compact even though there is quite a lot of information that needs to be displayed on the homepage of a city. The colors used are consistent with the city's general color theme of blue and white. Transitions are smooth but there is a slight delay when changing views.

Issues

There seems to be quite a lot of content on the webpage which makes finding some certain pieces of information somewhat hard.

This issue seems unavoidable, since there is just so much info that needs to be displayed here. Can't think of an easy fix.

When clicking down the menus in the top bar there are tracers left after clicking, which is visually unappealing.

This makes the site less visually appealing. Takes some understanding of JavaScript events but fixable

Changing the font size for the page also doesn't affect all the text on the webpage, which can leave the page looking really weird.

This seems again like a technical problem and should just be fixed by making it so changing the font actually changes the font for all text on the site.

A thing done well on this site is the categorization of quite a large collection of information into logical categories.

City of Los Angeles

The first thing that grabs the attention of a new site visitor is the video animation of aerial views of different parts of the city, which immediately makes the site more interesting and sets the general mood for the user experience. Information and resources on the site seem to be logically categorized, and separated into different user groups (residents, business owners, visitors and job seekers). There is no noticeable delay when switching views.

Issues

The translation function of the page to ie. Finnish doesn't seem to work very well, since the site probably just uses an external plugin for the translation process.

The problems with translation are manageable, native speakers can probably still navigate the site and get info that they need. Manually translating everything into every language of the world is an unrealistically large task.

The basic contrast between the animated content and site background is quite poor.

You can change the contrast from the accessibility settings, but a better contrast for the front page would just be black.

There is quite a lot of empty space as well, which could be used more wisely.

On the other hand, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, since it makes it easier to focus on the actual site content.

The best thing about this site is the amount of video and animated content of LA.