

Heuristic Evaluation of Instagram

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Abstract

Date

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Heuristic Evaluation on Instagram website.

Instagram is a social photo sharing application which is owned by Facebook. The users of Instagram use the application to take photos and videos to share with their followers. Instagram mainly focuses on mobile version rather than web application. Therefore, in web application, there are some small differences with mobile application. This report will analyze the characteristics of Instagram related to heuristic evaluation principles. In terms of usability or user experience, Instagram website has both good features as well as disadvantages.

Keywords

Heuristic evaluation, Orientation to digital services, Instagram, Usability.

Introduction

Today, usability is considered to be an important part of application and software. Usability refers to the extent to which a product can be used by specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use

This report will discuss about the heuristic evaluation of the Instagram website

<https://www.instagram.com/>. This evaluation will help to recognise the strengths as well as the disadvantages of Instagram usability or user experience. Applied the Jakob Nielsen's ten usability heuristics, this evaluation gives the comprehensive features related to the user experience of Instagram while using the application on website version.

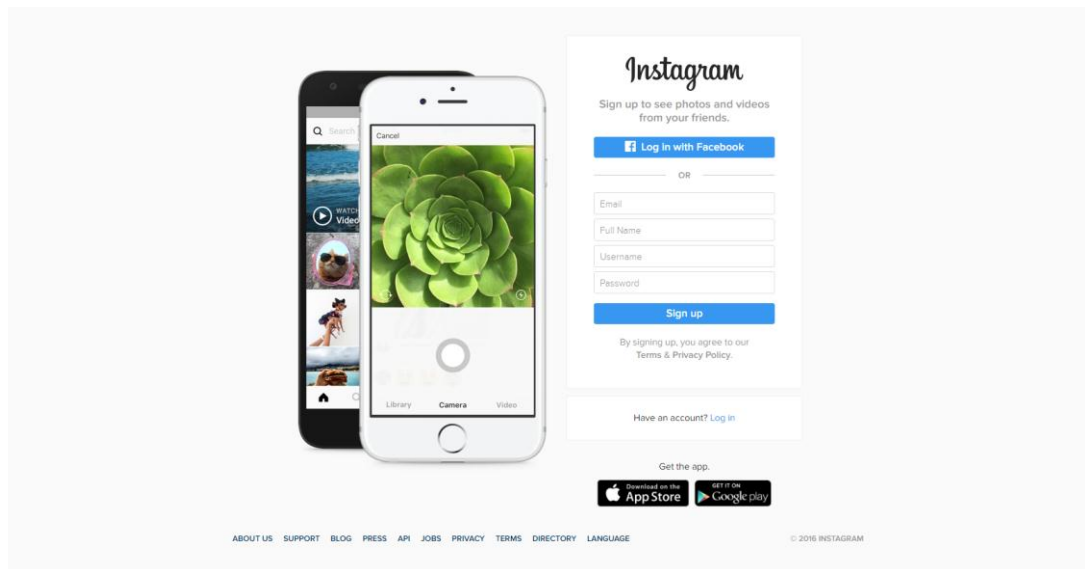


1 Visibility of System Status (Feedback)

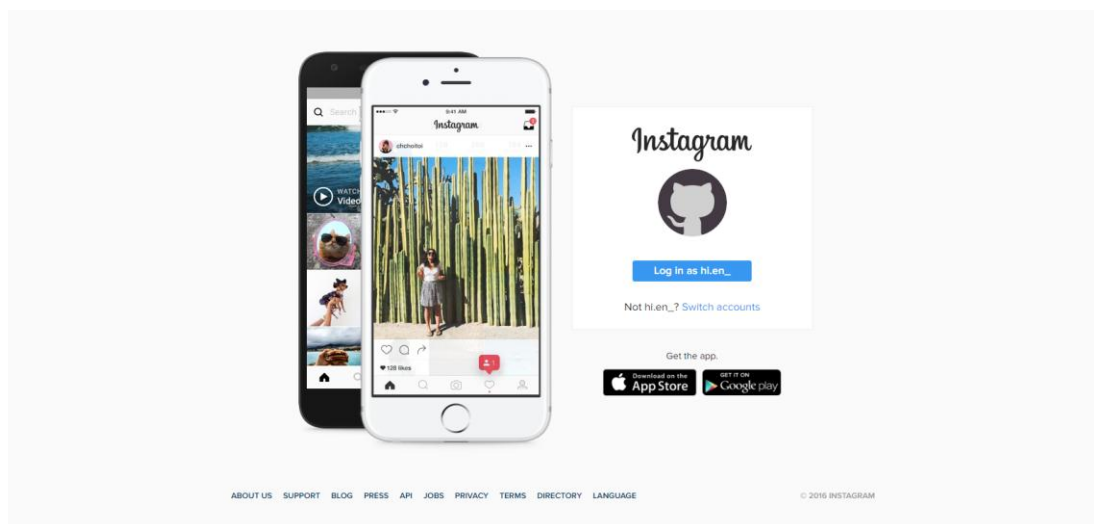
“The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.”(Jakob Nielsen)

1.1 How instagram keep users informed about what is going on

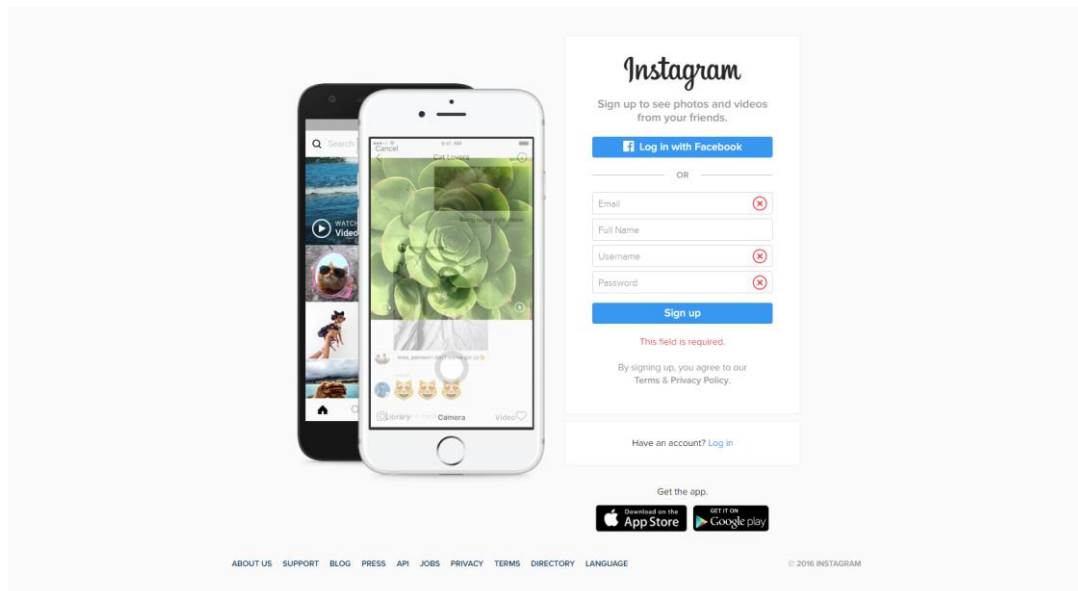
Registration process



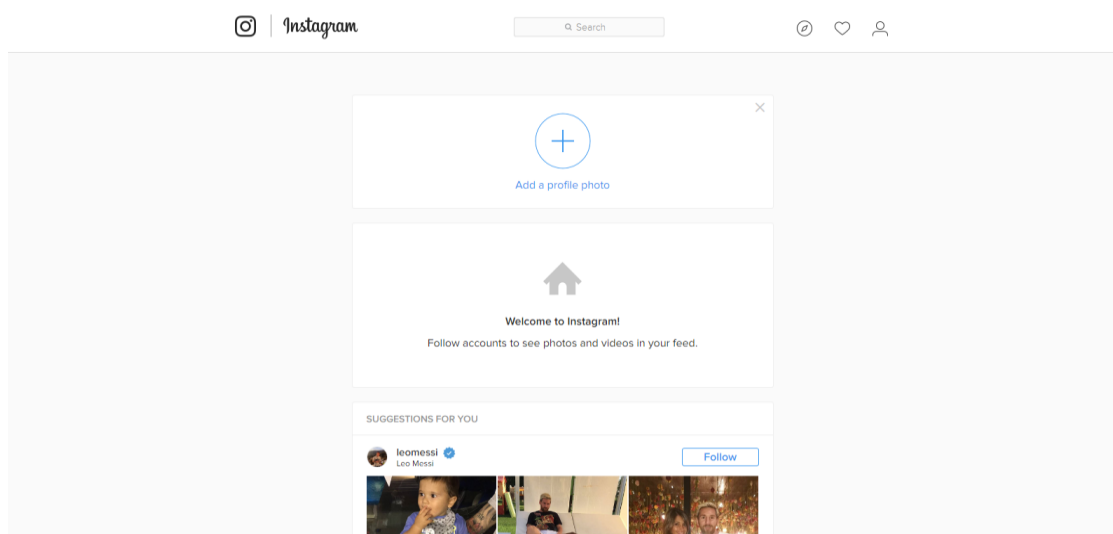
Instagram keeps informed users all the methods the user can use to register, such as register with Facebook account, or if users have already had an account, or if the user is totally new with Instagram.



Even if you have already logged in to Facebook, Instagram still keeps noticed for you. The design of the registration part is somehow fancy and attractive to users

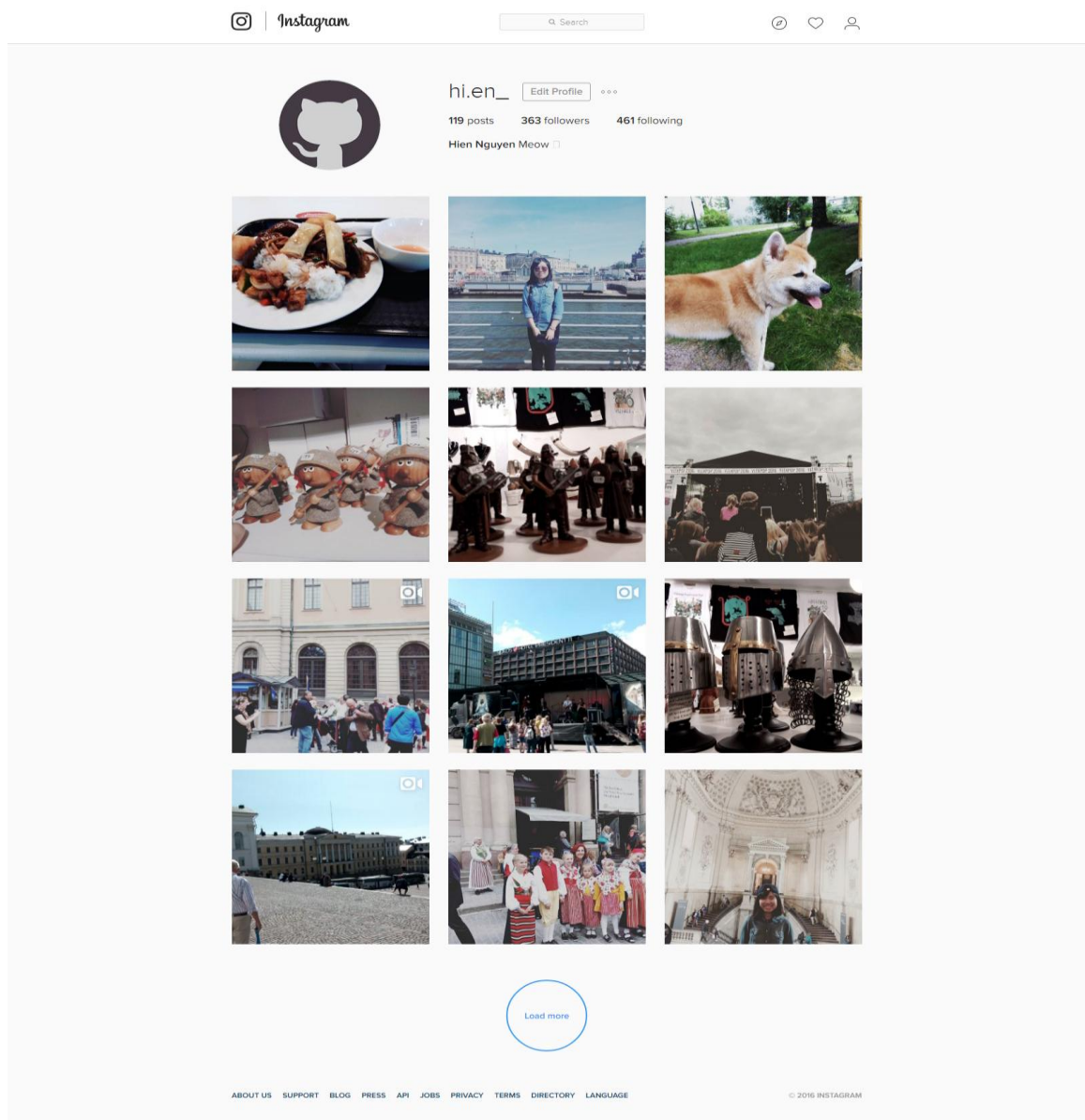


Informing users that validation of registration process is considered to be good enough because the user then will be informed what they are doing at the registration process. Also, email validation is taken into account by Instagram if user fills in wrong or unavailable email.



Users are informed at the first time using Instagram on website version. “Welcome” part notices the user the process that they have already successfully registered for Instagram account.

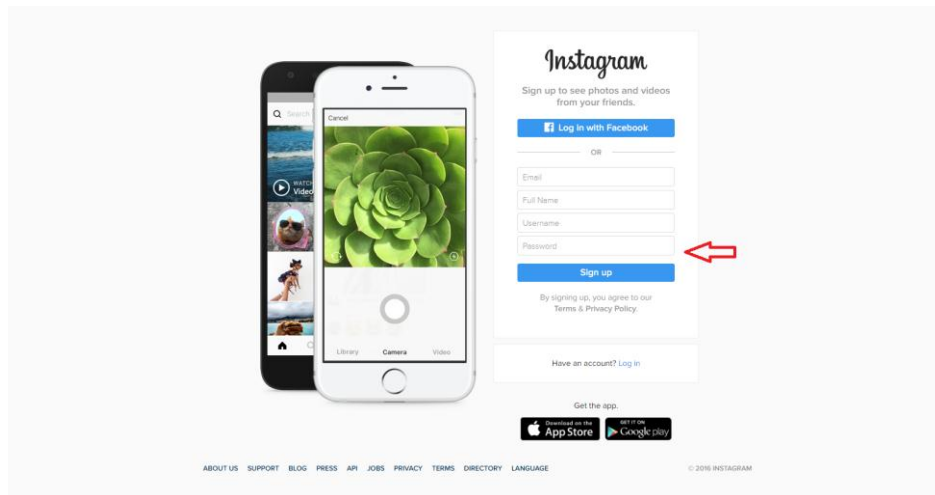
Overall, the design and layout of Instagram is quite simple in website version. So it is simple and easy for user to get to know where they are at the website, what is going on at the website. Registration box is simple to fill in.



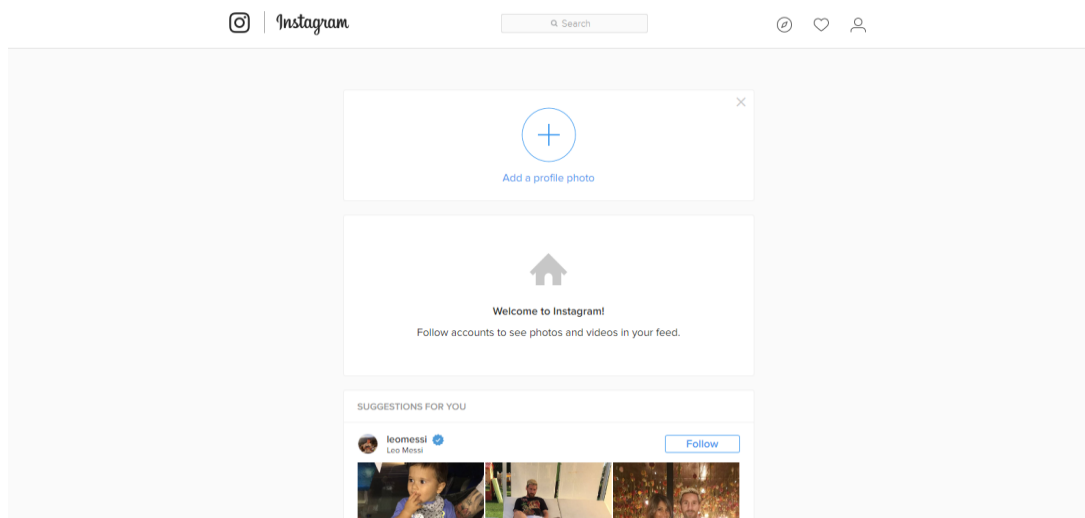
Instagram displays each of users' page with grid of photos and personal details at the top of the page. The search tab is identified by the search bar at the top. The profile tab is identified by user Instagram username, along with a thumbnail of your profile picture.

1.2 Several problems need to be considered

Registration if you are new, there are several problems. First, the password part, there is only one password input without any confirmation or ask user to input the password twice. This can cause the problem for user if there is typo mistakes from the users.



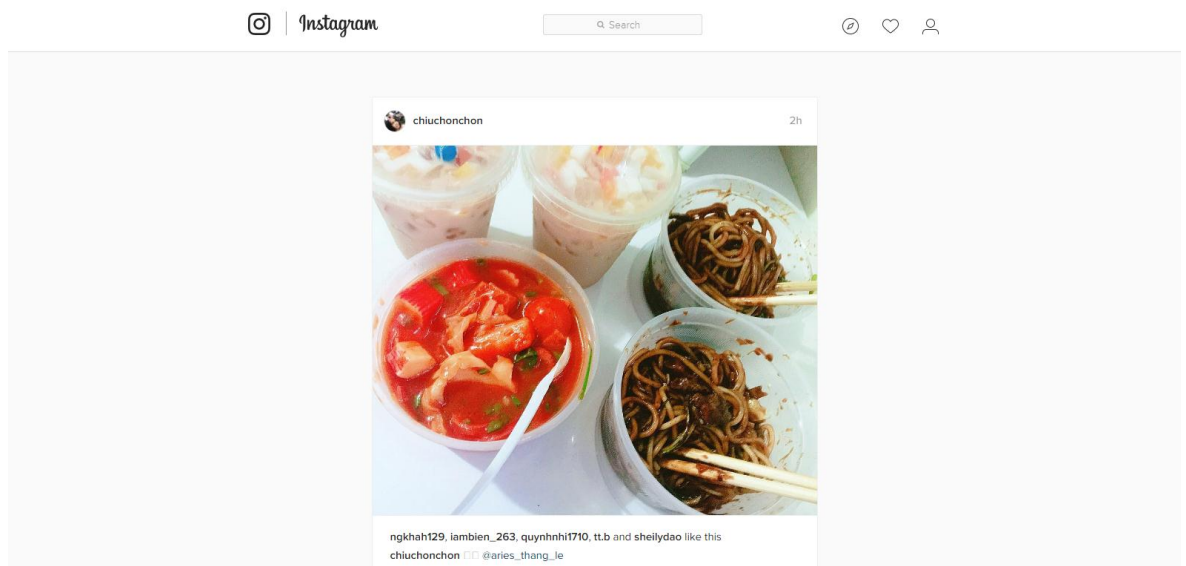
Actually, the registration part could be regarded as lacking of the feedback message saying something like registration is successful, you need to confirm your email address. Instead, Instagram directs you straight to the Home page and then pop up the Welcome message. This could be confusing for the user whether they do not know the registration is fine or not.



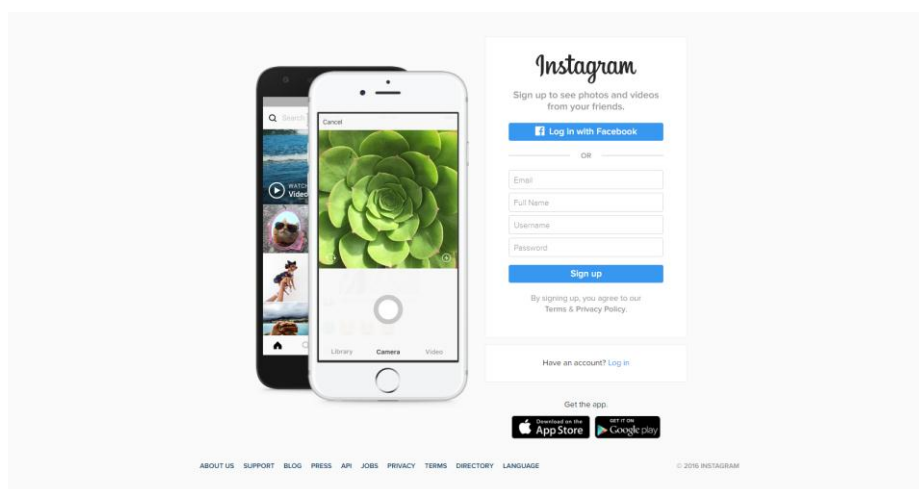
2 Match between System and Real World(Metaphor)

"The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order"

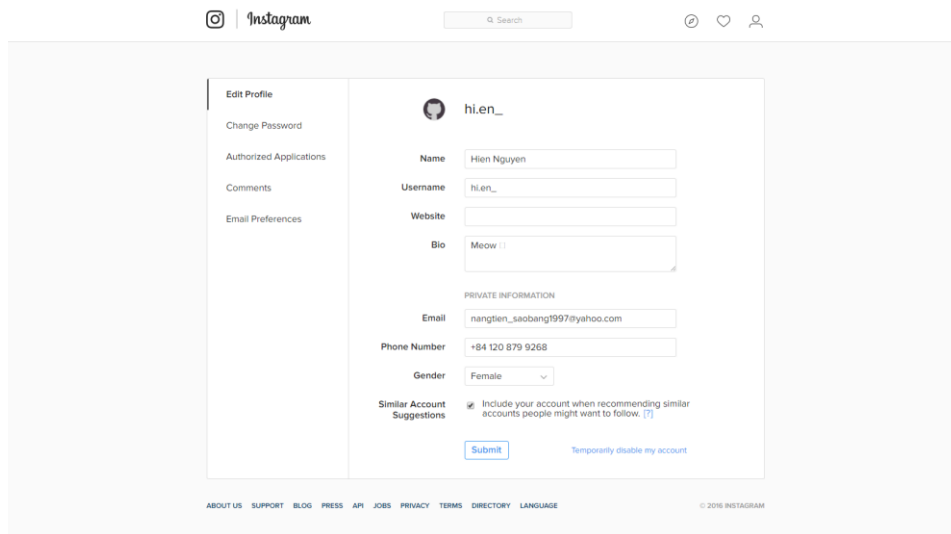
Overall, the design of Instagram website is quite simple and easy to use with new users. There is not much text and mostly with icons, it makes the website look more user-friendly. The layout of photos, Home page, header are easy to understand as overall. At least, users know where is the home page and where is the profile, etc.



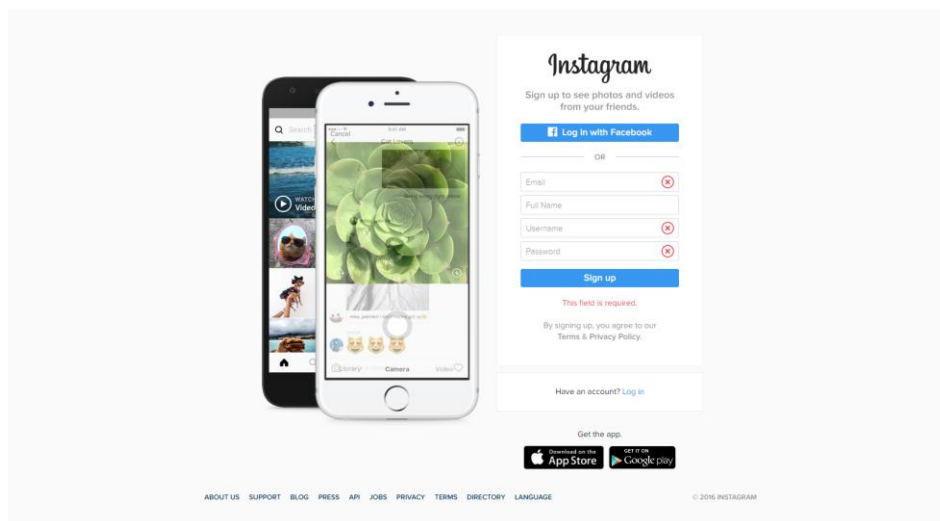
Back to the registration part, the phrases used are easy to get it. Therefore, there is mostly easy for users to get to understand what they have to fill in order to register



The phrases and terms are used is easy to understand and popular in the social media world. Some of these are “following”, “follower”, “like”, etc



Buttons is user-friendly, “Bio” in short can be like real world conversation. Clear text and more effective.

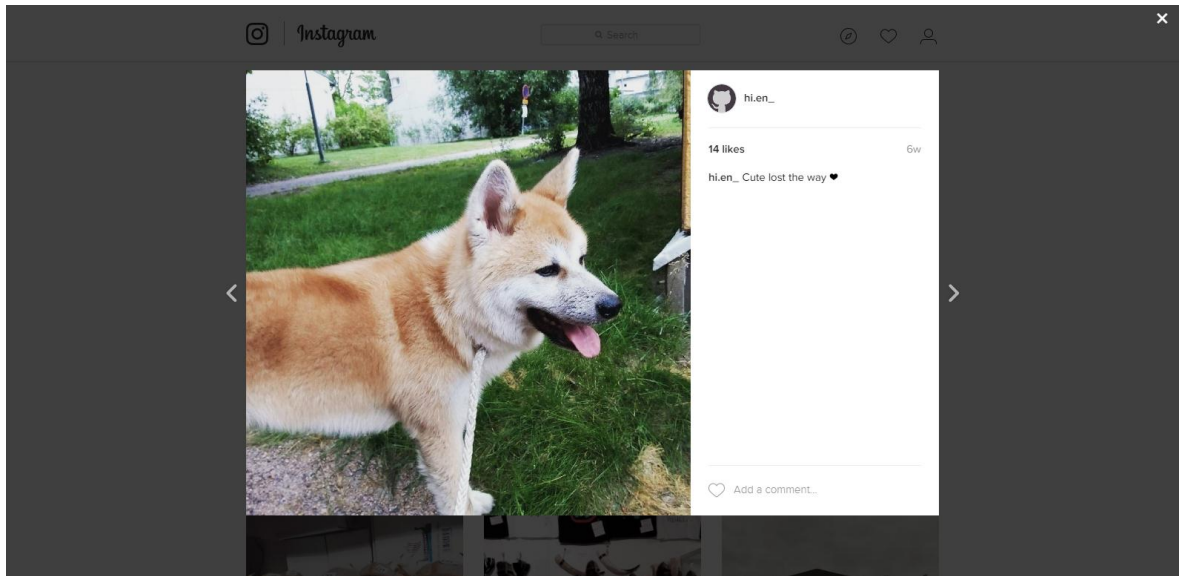


Error with red color can help users to take notice on the mistakes

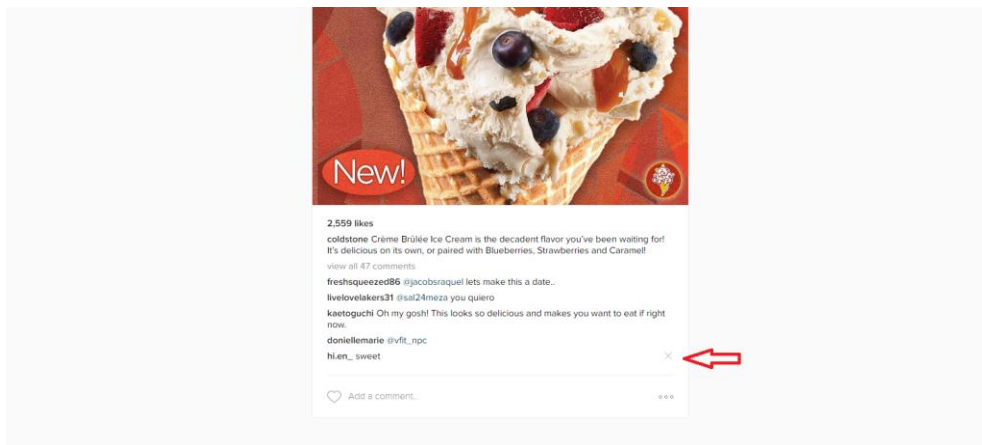
3 User control and Freedom(Navigation)

“Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked”emergency exit“ to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialog.Support undo and redo”

3.1 How Instagram supports user control and freedom

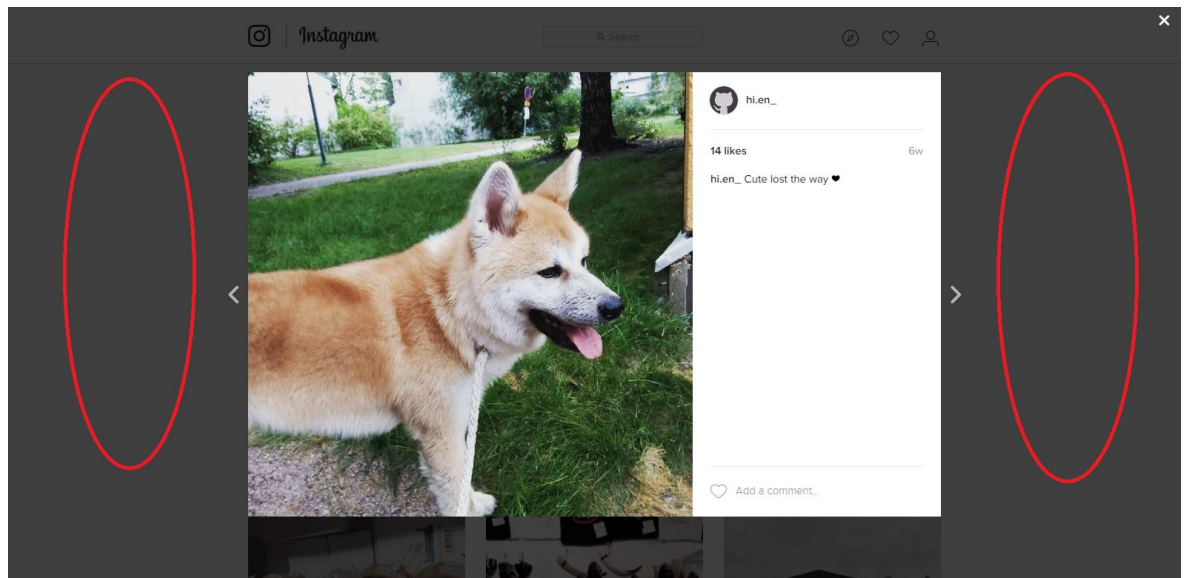


When users comment on a photos, if they want to delete or edit the comment, they can click on the icon beside the comment box



When by mistake, users like the photos that they do not intend to do so, they can drop the like by click again the like icon and the like icon from red turn to no color, which help the user to recognise their acitons, simply user can find the way to undo their ac-tions.

When users want to exit, simply click the space outer, which is easy to know



3.2 Some problems

There is no navigation bar, the layout is very simple. If the users want to go back, they have to press the back button on browser. This is kind of disadvantage of the website as users have no idea where they are. Thanks to the quick and fast load of the Instagram, this is not really a big problem.

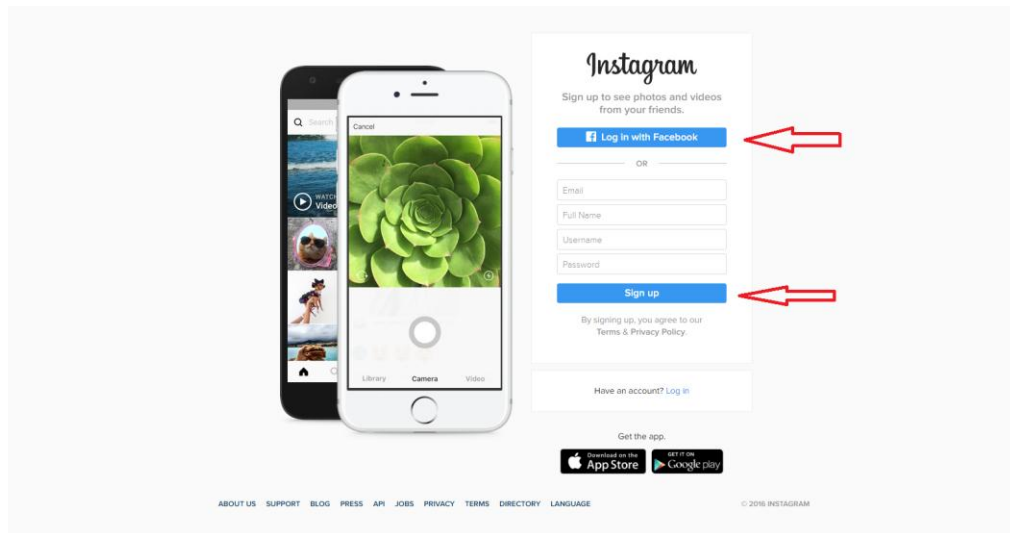
4.Consistency and Standards(Consistency)

“Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions”

4.1. How Instagram targets at Consistency of the website

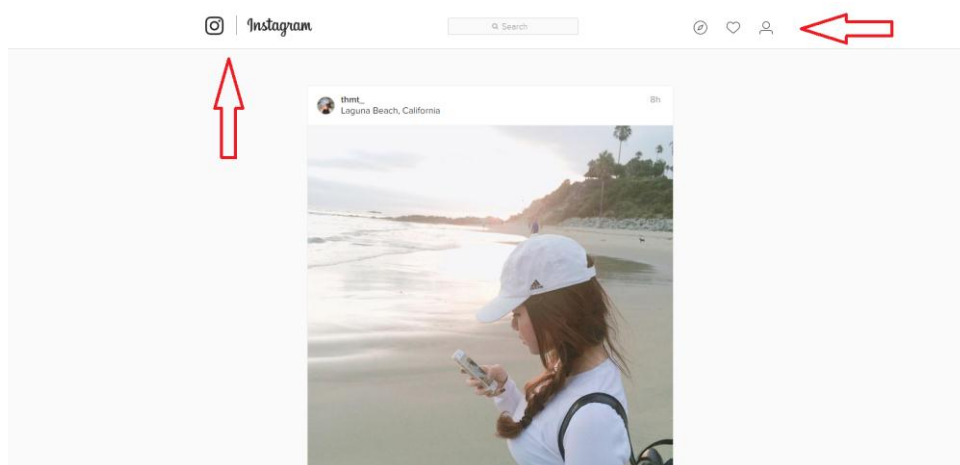
First, the layout of the page, the location of the Home page and the Profile on the navigation bar are easy to recognize. Even with the inexperienced users, they can easily notice which one is the location of their profile, which one is the search bar, which one they have to click if they want to go to the Home page. Instagram website, overall, follows pretty consistent standards of user interface and experience conventions.

Sign in and log in



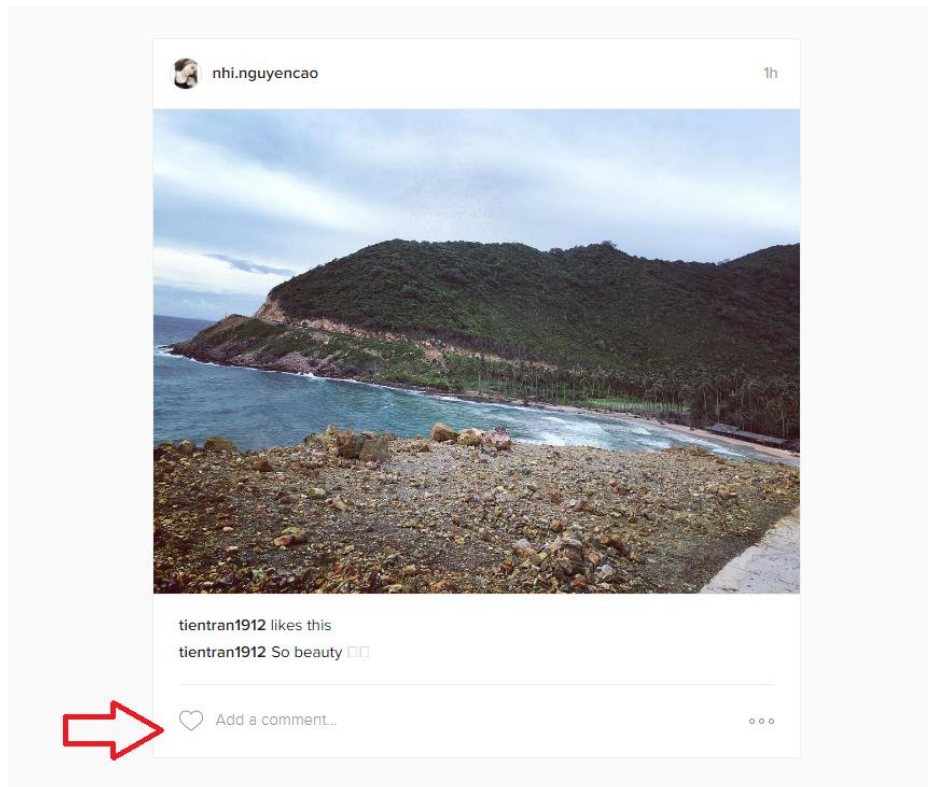
Color of the website is mainly with gray and black font. This is a very simple but beautiful and professional combination.

Most of its icons are easy to use, for example, the home, search, and profile icons stick with the standards of social website icon

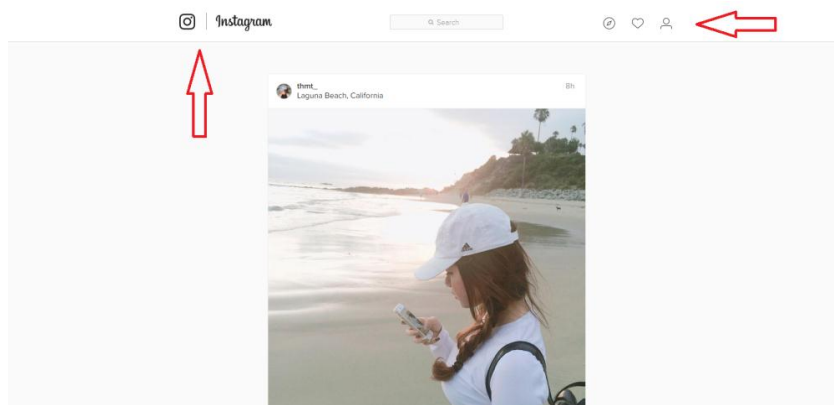


4.2. Some problems need to tackle

Some icons are instantly recognizable by users. However, the application presents new icons for different user actions, which can cause confusion. For instance, to like a photo post, the user might expect a thumbs up facebook icon, however, the application provides an inconsistent icon of a heart, which might cause the user to expect some other action



In the Home page, when users scroll down, if they want to click the header navigation bar to go the Profile, they have to scroll up again, this causes a lot of distract.



5.Error prevention(Prevention)

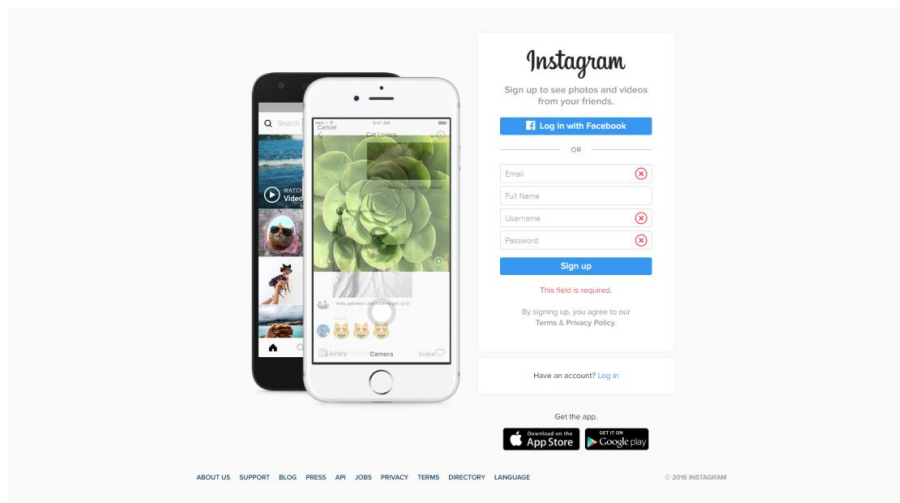
“Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action”

5.1.Instagram supports error prevention

Registration process includes every methods that you can use to

The form of registration has validation for the user input. For example, the site will detect an invalid email address, user name, password

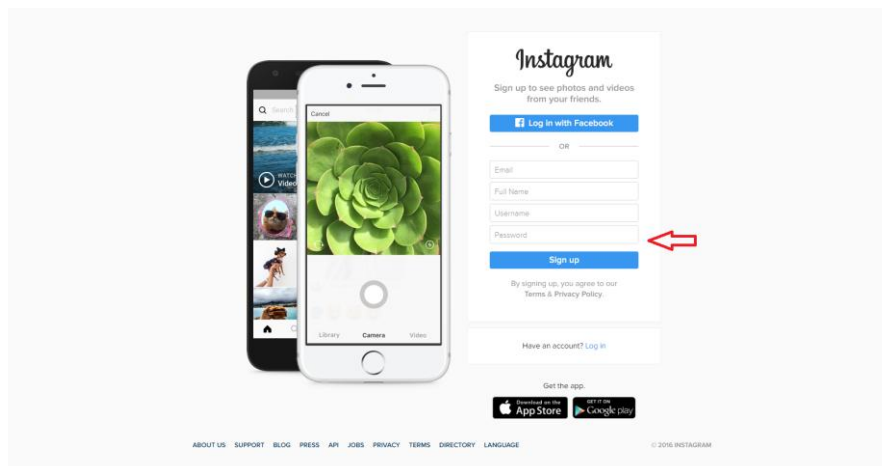
Registration process have already eliminate the case of making errors, or when users fill in the input box, it has already help users to recognize that the information of input is correct.



Pop up prompt

5.2. Some issues with error prevention

Registration process with only 1 password box. Typo mistakes could make user confused about their password. It should be confirmed again the password.

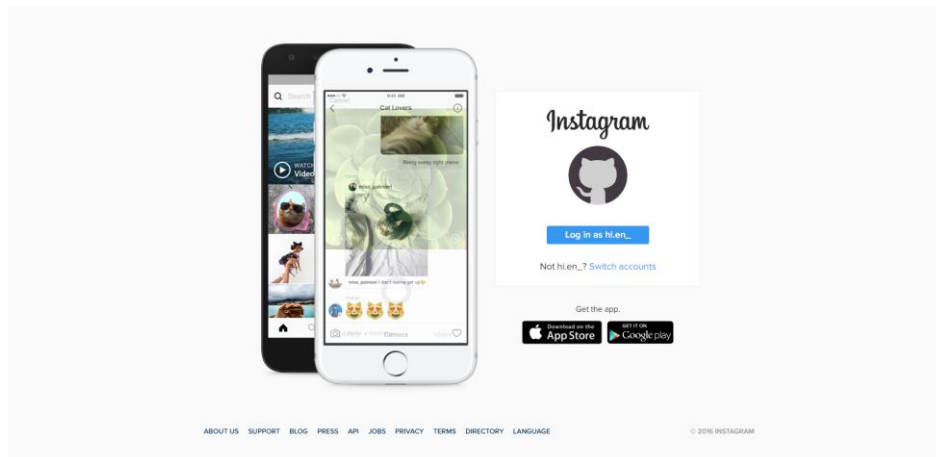


6. Recognition rather than Recall (Memory)

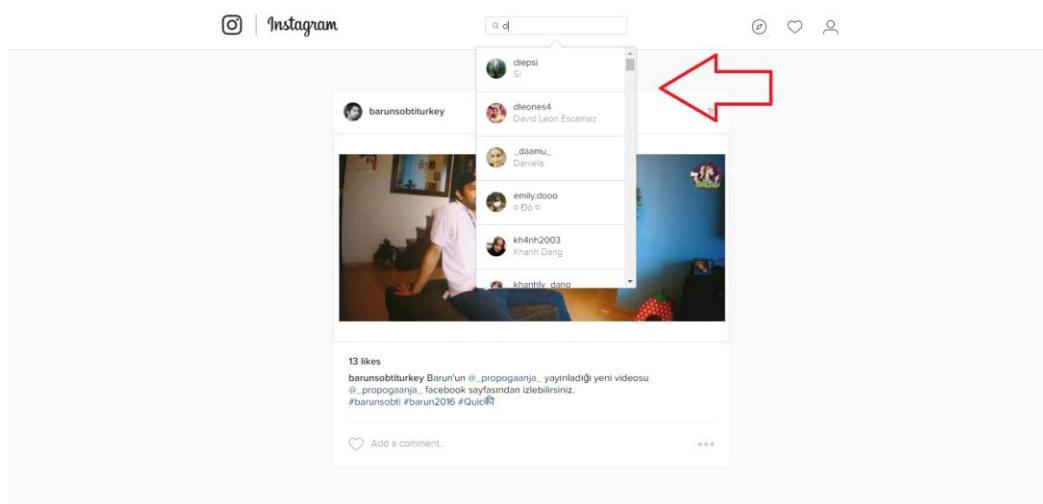
“Minimize the user’s memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate”

6.1. How Instagram helps users recognition

Log in with Facebook or with available Instagram account reminds the user that they do not have to create the new Instagram account.



Instagram will recognise recent searches including tags, people, and locations within your history. It will allow users to search for common topics of interest without having to know exactly what you want to search for.

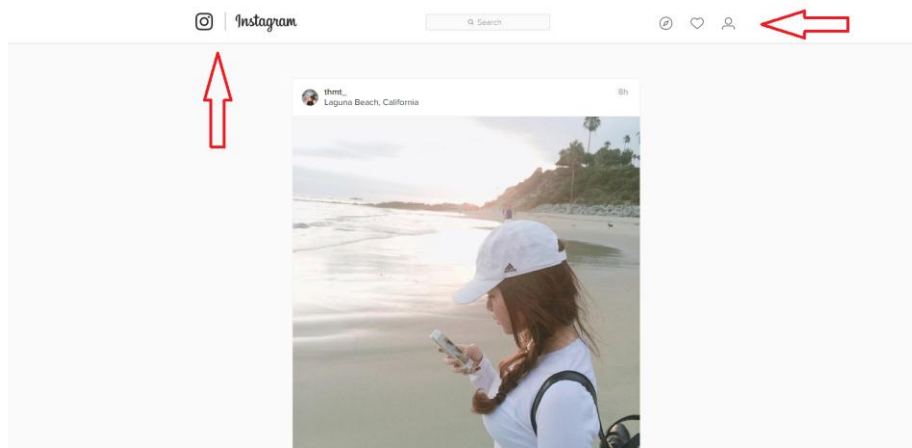


Clear proposition , instruction prompt.

When user logs out, Instagram remembers that username to hopefully help user to remember quickly.

6.2. Some problems

Instagram has some icons that create confusion at the first time, for example, the heart icon to like a post, the heart icon at the header navigation bar for notification. This causes a lot of confusion for user experience. Instagram needs to tackle this problem.



7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use (Efficiency)

“Accelerators-unseen by the novice user-may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions”

7.1.Flexible use of Instagram

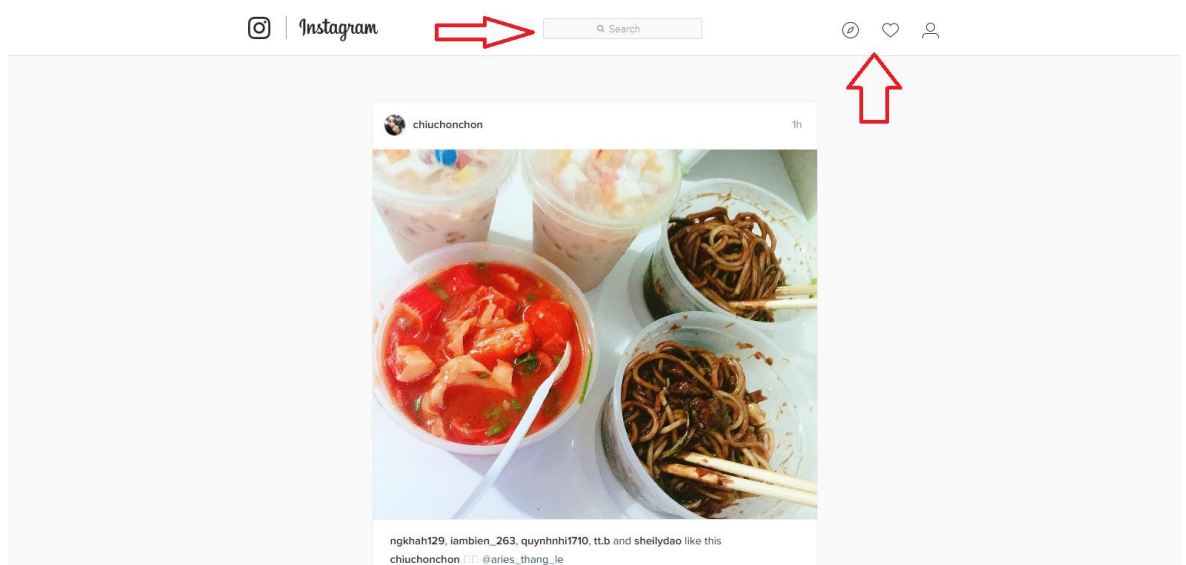
Allow users to tailor frequent action such as comment, like, follow, etc

The layout is easy to use with inexperienced and experienced users

The search box is located in header nav.Instagram offers the flexibility in the way that some users can enjoy the application, others just want to use it look at friends post, or search options to find other users and tags. These actions are easily handled by Instagram

7.2.Problems

Shortcuts, icons are somehow difficult to understand

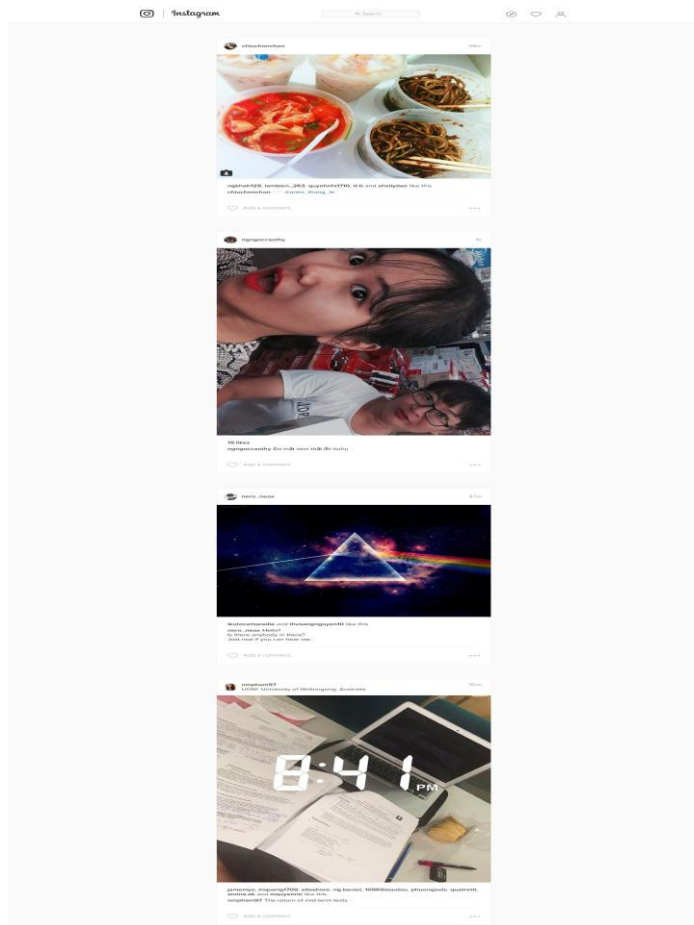


The search box has no filter

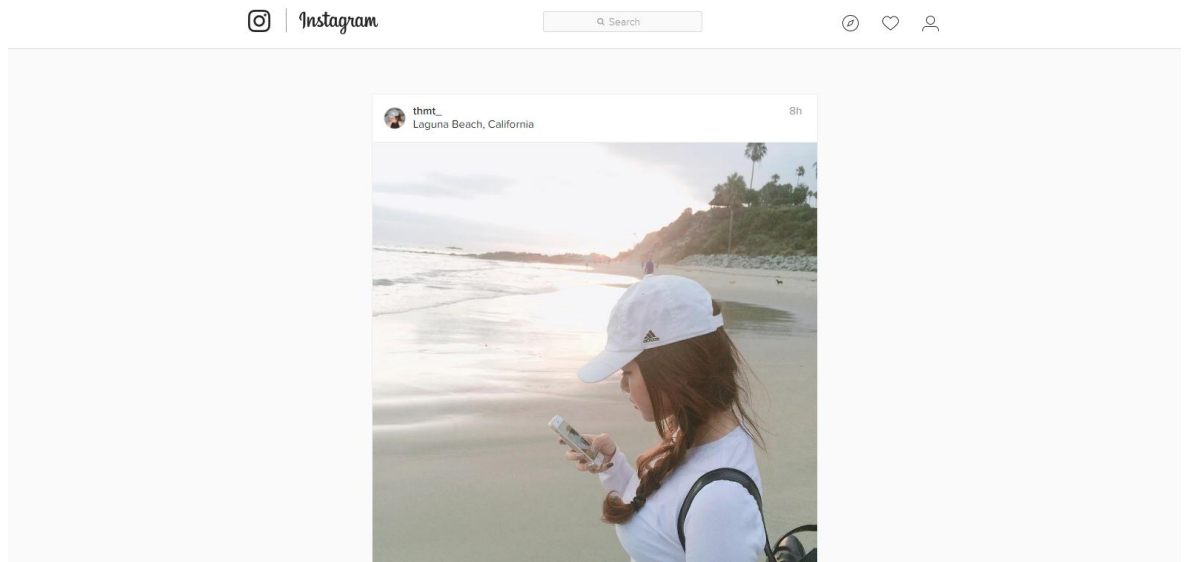
8.Aesthetic and minimalist design(Design)

“Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility”

White space outside the right and left, home page posts is put in the center



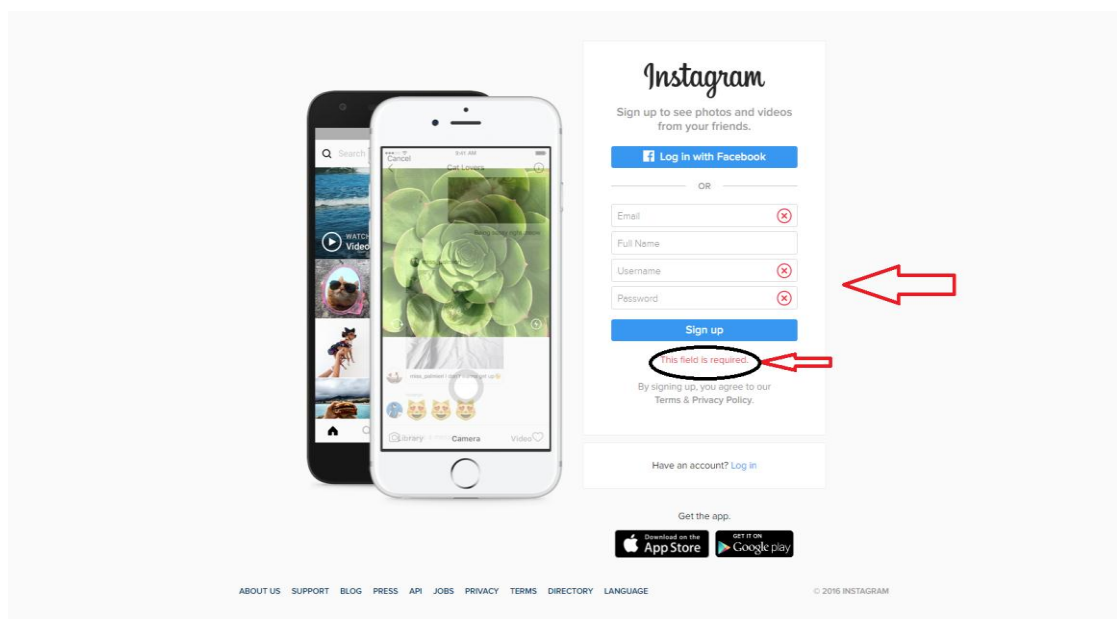
Simple layout with a header navigation bar and a footer navigation bar, actual content takes up most of the screen keeps it clean and simple to use



9.Help users recogniz,dianose, and recover from errors(Recovery)

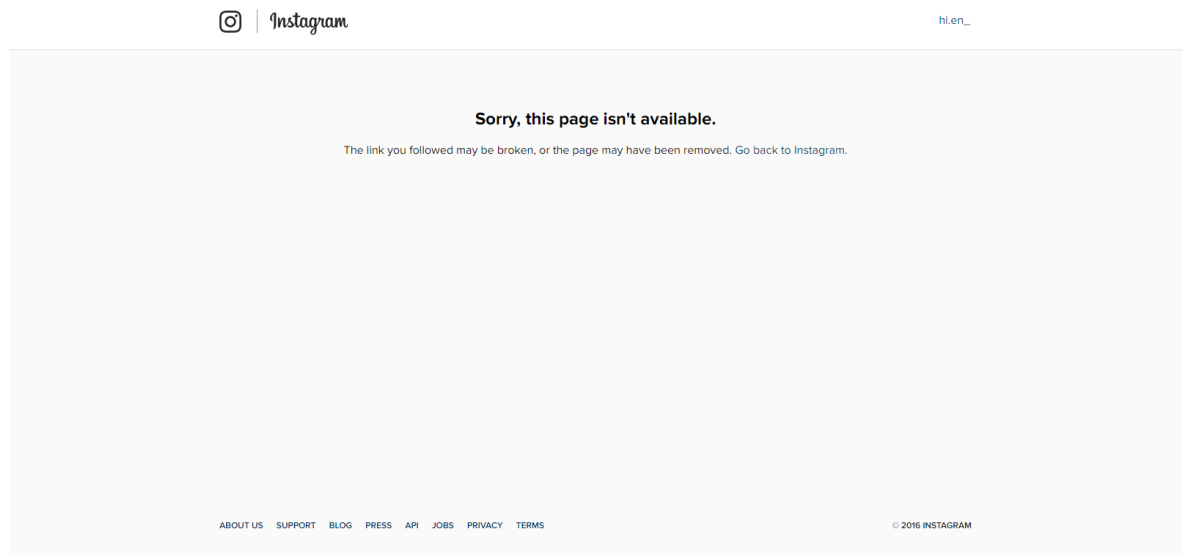
“Error messages should be expressed in plain language(no codes),precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution”.

Error messages are in plain language, it could be said that there is no technical or IT terms in this website.Below is the registration part when users input is invalid, there is a feedback message that inform user of the invalid information and some plain explained text that help user knows exactly what the problem is. For example,



Precisely indicate the problem constructively. Error messages are well presented, are written in plain language which directly state the problem in the least amount of words necessary making them the most efficient.

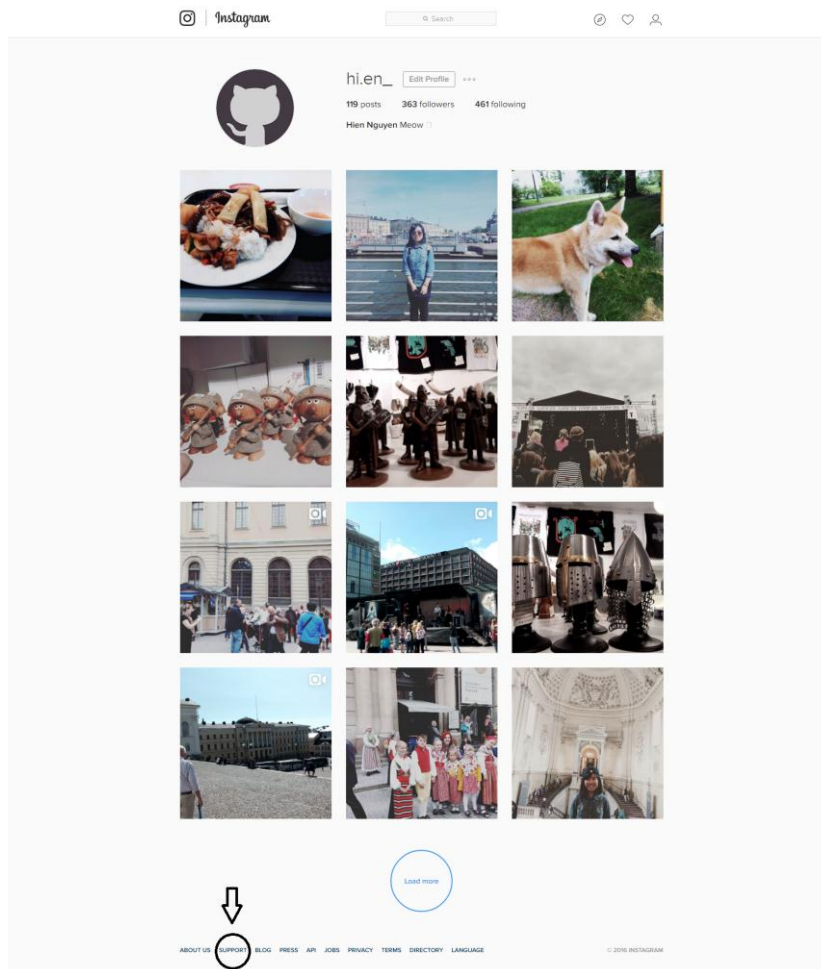
Instagram suggests solutions for some error. For example,



10.Help and Documentation(Help)

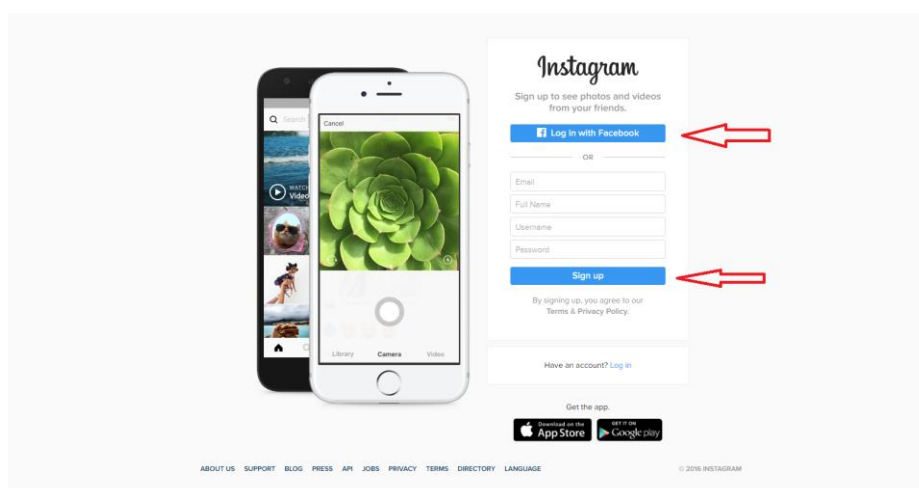
“Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.”

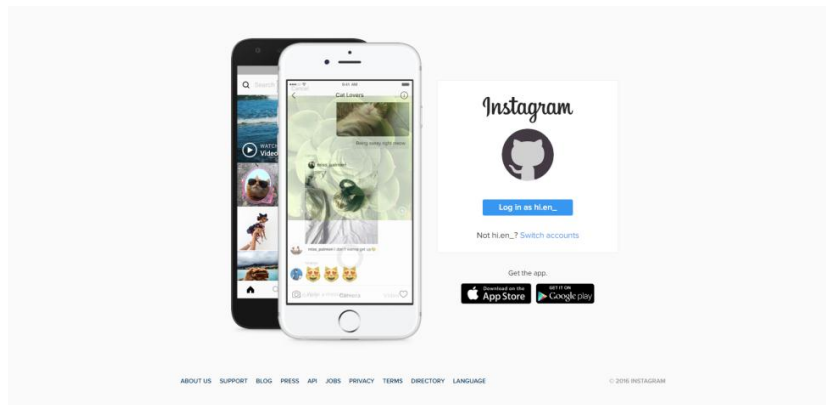
Beside from Instagram lack of immediate help, it contains a very helpful tab within the option page. This Help center tab allows you to search through known issues, FAQs, new problems, as well as the basics of Instagram.



However, the support help is located at the footer navigation bar, which is hard to find it, even at the Home page, the photos keep loading that you can not find the footer bar.

In the application welcome page the user is given the option or sign or login. Various main features are also available on the home page.





I would say this problem is important to fix, so should be given high priority. Because with the new user, they are not familiar with Instagram, it is helpful to provide the user with a short demo or tutorial before their first use of the feature.

References

Moodle Page of Orientation to Digital Services course