

Nielsen Norman Group Heuristic Evaluation Workbook

Use this workbook to conduct your own heuristic evaluation.

For each of Jakob's 10 Usability Heuristics, look for specific places where the interface fails to adhere to the guideline. Write your recommendations for how to fix those usability issues.

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Date:
Product: Employee Management System

Task: Search and Filter

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1

Visibility of System Status

The design should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within a reasonable amount of time.

- Does the design clearly communicate its state?
- Is feedback presented quickly after user actions?

Issue

Users may not receive immediate feedback when they initiate a search or apply filters.

Recommendations

Implement loading indicators or progress bars to inform users that their request is being processed.

2

Match Between System and the Real World

The design should speak the users' language. Use words, phrases, and concepts familiar to the user, rather than internal jargon. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

- Will user be familiar with the terminology used in the design?

Issue

The terminology used in the search and filter options may not align with users' expectations or common language.

Recommendations

Use familiar terms and phrases that users commonly understand, such as "Department" instead of "Division".

- Do the design's controls follow real-world conventions?

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3

User Control and Freedom

Users often perform actions by mistake. They need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted action without having to go through an extended process.

- Does the design allow users to go back a step in the process?
- Are exit links easily discoverable?
- Can users easily cancel an action?
- Is *Undo* and *Redo* supported?

Issues

No clear "reset" option to clear search or filters and view all records again.

Recommendations

Add a "Clear Filters" or "Reset Search" button.

4

Consistency and Standards

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

- Does the design follow industry conventions?
- Are visual treatments used consistently throughout the design?

Issues

Inconsistencies in the design of search and filter elements (e.g., different styles for buttons).

Recommendations

Standardize the design of all search and filter components to ensure a cohesive user experience.

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5

Error Prevention

Good error messages are important, but the best designs carefully prevent problems 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.

- Does the design prevent slips by using helpful constraints?
- Does the design warn users before they perform risky actions?

Issues

Users may struggle to remember the available filters or search options.

Recommendations

Implement validation checks that prevent users from applying conflicting filters.

6

Recognition Rather Than Recall

Minimize the user's memory load by making elements, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the interface to another. Information required to use the design (e.g. field labels or menu items) should be visible or easily retrievable when needed.

- Does the design keep important information visible, so that users do not have to memorize it?
- Does the design offer help in-context?

Issues

Users may struggle to remember the available filters or search options.

Recommendations

Provide a dropdown or checklist of available filters that users can easily browse and select.

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7

Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

Shortcuts — hidden from novice users — may speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the design can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

- Does the design provide accelerators like keyboard shortcuts and touch gestures?
- Is content and functionality personalized or customized for individual users?

Issues

Advanced users may find the search and filter process too slow or cumbersome.

Recommendations

Introduce keyboard shortcuts for frequent actions and allow users to save their preferred filter settings.

8

Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

Interfaces should not contain information that is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in an interface competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

- Is the visual design and content focused on the essentials?
- Have all distracting, unnecessary elements been removed?

Issues

The default DataTable search is functional but not visually optimized for clarity or layout.

Recommendations

Style the search bar to be more prominent and aligned with modern UI expectations.

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9

Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

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

- Does the design use traditional error message visuals, like bold, red text?
- Does the design offer a solution that solves the error immediately?

Issues

Error messages may not clearly explain why a search returned no results.

Recommendations

Provide informative error messages that guide users on how to adjust their search or filter criteria.

10

Help and Documentation

It's best if the system doesn't need any additional explanation. However, it may be necessary to provide documentation to help users understand how to complete their tasks.

- Is help documentation easy to search?
- Is help provided in context right at the moment when the user requires it?

Issues

Users may not have access to help resources when they encounter difficulties with search and filter tasks.

Recommendations

Include a help section or tooltips that explain how to effectively use the search and filter features.