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# Hypermedia applications

## Usability Exercise

This document is a short evaluation of TIM website, made by identifying three surfing scenarios, which are analyzed through some heuristics about content, navigation, visual, semiotic and cognitive aspects. The evaluation is accompanied by some screenshots and links of the pages where we found the biggest problems.



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# Introduction

TIM website is the subject of our analysis. Considering the huge dimension of the whole site we defined three scenarios in order to reduce the target of the evaluation by simulating a limited number of surf actions made by an actor for each scenario. In a specific scenario, all the members of the group gave a mark for a sub-set of heuristics, in order to create a final table with average values and provide a realistic evaluation of the site.

# Evaluation table

Type	Heuristic	SCENARIO ONE	SCENARIO TWO	SCENARIO THREE	Average evaluation
Content	Accuracy				N/A
	Currency	Products often updated with new models, with the label "Novità" for the addressee to comprehend its Currency	There is no information about when or if the product is available, even if it is listed at the end you can't buy it, but you can only know when it will be available.	For example every offer is given with a precise expiring date.	1
	Coverage	The products seem to be covered just fine.	In the product iPad pro 9.7" you can't find the number of installments, but in the other products it is specified. Anyway elsewhere in the scenario the coverage is fine.	The icons in the quick menu "OFFERTE" does not cover the entire content that each page provides	2
	Content objectivity	The content is objective, there are no opinions but just facts	Each reference is definitely objective even if it deals with different brands.	We talk about selling products pages so there is the interest to attract the reader, however the content in general seems objective (prices and informations are clear).	2
	Authority				N/A
	Conciseness	Contents about products is concise enough	Only essential and needed information is given for each product.	Every offer is given with a short list of the services provided with the related informations	2
	Text errors	No errors detected	The text seems to be correct		2
	Multimedia consistency (images, audio, videos)	In "PRODOTTI" -> "Tablet e Computer" there are only tablets	The Multimedia is consistent with the subjects	The images related to the offers are not totally related to the subject of the specific offer. (e.g. a dancing man with a smartphone in his hand to advertise the offer that provides fiber connection and free calls ).	1
Navigation	Segmentation	Many subsections to show different aspects of a product	The content is appropriately segmented	The menu for each landmark topic seems very useful and well structured	2
	Transition list	In the products there are no relevant relations that require transitions	Between the offers "tablet and iPad" section and the effective details of the specific tablet/ipad, the offers are listed in an unknown way	From the topic "OFFERTE" it is not possible to switch to other one, unless you use landmarks.	1
	Introduction list	It's really clear how products are grouped	The products are grouped in a clear way		2
	Group Navigation	It's not very easy to go from one product to the next one in a list of products, the only way to do it is to go back and choose another one	Once you select one product, the only way to change product is by going back in the previous section and select the other one.	there is a bar on the top of the site, under the landmarks, to switch from the elements of the group easily and quickly	1
	"Go back"	There's no Back button	The only way to go back is by using the orientation info.	I can't find the Back button in the "OFFERTE" section	0
	Landmarks				2
	Link Consistency	The links in products are in general consistent	Links in the scenario are consistent.	In "OFFERTE" the links "FISSO" and "MOBILE" led to pages structured in the same way, but if you open "FISSO + MOBILE" the page layout is totally different.	2
	Orientation clues	There is orientation info but it's not always clickable (lack of orientation info consistency across different pages)	There is an orientation info that is a little bit messy, because if I get to the tablets and iPads through the "OFFERTE" link, in the orientation info is considered "PRODOTTI"	For each page there is a very clear orientation info with links to the pages of the path done to get to a certain page excepts for the page "FISSO + MOBILE" in the topic "OFFERTE".	1
	Orientation clues - Topic	It's not possible to understand that you are in the topic "PRODOTTI" after you click on "Smartphone e telefoni" for example, it just shows you're in "Smartphone e telefoni"	Once you select the offer, there is no other clue to show you that you are in an offer page beside the cost of the product per installment.	In the page "FISSO + MOBILE" is impossible to identify the topic within you are. In the other pages of the topic you can define where you are thanks to orientation info only.	0
	Group Orientation clues	It's always possible the topic you're in	In the orientation info you can find in which group you are.		2
	Transition Orientation clues	Transitions from topics aren't possible in products	Once you select tablet and iPad from "OFFERTE" you get to the "PRODOTTI" section without any reporting		0

Visual and Semiotic	Visual identity	All colors in the website remarks the colors of the TIM logo.	The dominance of blue and red colors and their shades matches the colors of the TIM logo	The colors in the site, for the icons, boxes etc. remarks the colors of the TIM logo.	2
	Chromatic code consistency	Colors are consistent throughout the website and similar buttons and functionality have same colors	The blue color of the links is often used for the name of the product choosen which isn't a link. the same happens in the topic page of that product, where "CARATTERISTICHE", "CAPACITA'" and "COLORE" have the same color of the links even if they aren't.	The button "SCOPRI" is white in the pages "FISSO" and "MOBILE" and blue in "TV ENTERTAINMENT" section.	1
	Background contrast	Color contrasts are nice, the backgroud is always white and and color matches seem nice	The choice of contrasts is accurate and does not prevent reading in any way		2
	Font size	Orientation info have a rather small size but the overall size of the website is sufficient	Font size is appropriate		2
	Font colour	Black most of the time or blue	Font colour is appropriate		2
	Font type	Standard Font	Font type is appropriate		2
	Anchor identity	Anchor links present and they work just fine in all the products	Anchor links are present in the "OFFERTE" page (FISSO PIU' MOBILE, FISSO, MOBILE, TV&ENTERTAINMENT) and in the description page about a chosen product (DESCRIZIONE, INCLUSO NEL PREZZO, SPECIFICHE TECNICHE), but anyway those links are very similar to all the other links.	For each offer page you have an identifiable group of anchor links on the left	2
	Anchor states	Anchor link state present (link underlined)	The change of state is well rapresented, in fact the link title becomes the title of a paragraph.	In an offer page when you click an anchor state it changes its color and the font becomes BOLD	2
	Icon consistency		The "pixel" position of the "SCOPRI" button in the OFFERTE/MOBILE page is a little off compared to the other links of that section.		2
	Visual proximity	There's a little of that and it is subtle (for example similar products are near to each other and arranged well when you click on "PRODOTTI")	Gestalt principles are correctly applied and visual proximity is consistent except for the filter tab that once you click on "mostra altri" in the "Tipologia" section, shows a little messy options listing .		2
	Layout conventions				2
	Semiotics	There is a problem with the word "Avvisami" used to suggest that the product is finished, that's not really meaningful	The overall semiotics is appropriate, but once you find the product related to the scenario you get the button "AVVISAMI" that does not explain what should the user do.	The word "FISSO" to indicate a home internet connection with a telephone line is not very accurate.	1
Cognitive	Information overload		no such issues in the pages related to the scenario.	The offers pages seems easy to surf in.	2
	Classification adequacy within group of topics		The number of groups in the "OFFERTE" section can influence the user memorisation of the domain dealt by that specific page	There are a lot of groups for the offers, this should confuse the user.	1
	Website Mental map	It's easy to create a mental map for the products section	The intense use of groups allows the user to make a mental map easily		2

# Scenarios

## Scenario one:

This scenario is about a rich uncle who is trying to find some presents for his nephews.

He starts his exploration of the TIM website in the homepage, where he notices some offers in evidence.

Not satisfied he continues his visit navigating through “**PRODOTTI**” -> “**Smartphone e telefoni**” where he opens some cell phones and decides to buy a P9, when he tries to add the product in the cart he finds out there's no clue on how to do that so he writes down the specific model in order to be able to come back later and buy it with all the other items he is going to choose.

He then goes on opening another category of products: “**PRODOTTI**” -> “**Tablet e computer**” and again opens some products but he gets frustrated when he understands that no tablet can be bought online because there's no “**Acquista**” option but just a mere “**Avvisami**” button, (Avvisami of what?). Persisting in the same category of products he thinks that maybe a computer should be better for his older nephew, but when he doesn't find any in the category, that I recall is called “Tablet e **Computer**” he decides that maybe it would be better to do online shopping somewhere else.

## Scenario two:

A customer cannot afford to buy a new tablet “all at once” so he decides to look for an offer in order to buy it in installments and he chooses TIM as the provider because he already has a TIM phone line.

At first he gets to the **HOMEPAGE** where he clicks “**OFFERTE**” and then he spots the section “**Mobile**” where it is said that, there, he will be able to find tablets and iPads in installments so he clicks “**Scopri**” in order to get to the offers list.

He thinks he will find a numerous list, so he tries at first to filter it, but he then realises that there are very few products on sale. So he is now interested in the iPad Pro 9.7” but for any unknown reason the number of installments is absent and, for this lack of information, he clicks on “**Dettagli**” and so he is led to the page of the iPad. There, he wants to know how much it would be to get a 256GB storage one and again he is not able to find how many installments and how much it is for each installment.

Anyway he is determined to buy the iPad so he is going to ask directly the TIM staff in order to get that information, by contacting them by his own.

### Scenario three:

A Dad whose family recently settled in Italy from the United States, is looking for an offer that provides both internet connection and a phone line to his house, and eventually mobile services.

He chooses the national company of communication services: TIM.

Firstly he goes in the section “**OFFERTE**” and selects “**Fisso + Mobile**” to find out the best offer for him. The prices are too high so he goes back to “**OFFERTE**” and visits the page “**Fisso**”, where he analyzes the whole offers pack.

The next step is to find a mobile offer for his daughter, so he switches from the page “**Fisso**” to the page “**Mobile**”, and he opens some offers to make comparisons and to choose the best one for him.

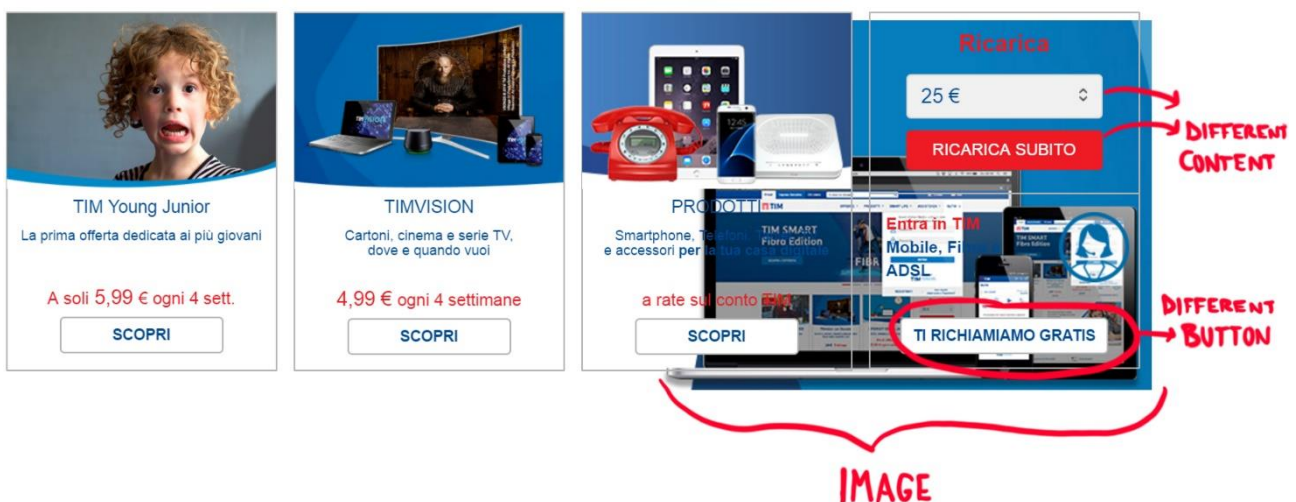
Finally, the Dad wants to satisfy his Son's request about the chance to watch on TV some films and sport events provided with paid subscriptions so he surfs in the section “**OFFERTE**” -> “**TV & Entertainment**”.



# Problems detected & Screenshots

## Scenario one:

- 1) In the homepage under the first big landscape image there are four main rectangles displaying offers, this presents many inconsistencies and problems:
- The first three have a button named “**Scopri**”, the last one “**Ti chiamiamo gratis**” and has different content.
  - If you click on the second one the button “**Scopri**” opens the link automatically in another Tab, the other three in the same Tab.
  - The last two rectangles present problems of visibility, they're transparent and their texts results to be overlying on an image, sometimes with similar colors, this makes the reading very difficult.



2) Going in "PRODOTTI" -> "Tablet e computer" and choosing an iPad to buy, the page displays a button that says "AVVISAMI" without an explanation on what it's going to alert you on. The page should provide information stating that the product is currently finished, and that you can receive an alert when it will be available again.

Home ► PRODOTTI ► Tablet e computer ► Apple iPad Pro 12.9" 128 GB

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Apple iPad Pro 12.9" 128 GB

**Caratteristiche:**

- Wi-Fi + Cellular (4G LTE)
- Retina Display 12.9" (2732x2048) Led IPS
- Sistema Operativo iOS 9 (co-processore M9)
- Fotocamera iSight da 8 megapixel

Scopri di più ►

Colore: 

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Unica soluzione

**1169,99 €**

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**AVVISAMI**



- 3) Going in “**PRODOTTI**” -> “**Smartphone e telefoni**”, choosing a cell phone and then looking for a way to pay, it can be noticed another inconsistency:

<https://www.tim.it/prodotti/smartphone-e-telefoni/huawei-p9#section4>

Scegli la serie HUAWEI P9 che preferisci rateizzata, con la tua Offerta TIM ricaricabile, a partire da 10 €/mese.

Smartphone	Prezzo di listino	Contributo iniziale	Rata mensile	incluso nell'offerta	tipo pagamento
P9	599,99 €	99 €	10 € x 30 mesi	1GB/mese di Internet 4G	Carta di credito Conto Corrente
P9 PLUS	749,99 €	99 €	20 € x 30 mesi	1GB/mese di Internet 4G	Carta di credito
P9 LITE	299,99 €	49 €	10 € x 24 mesi	1GB/mese di Internet 4G	Carta di credito Conto Corrente

How is it possible to add thing in the Cart? There's a cart but you can't put things inside.

- 4) Good **segmentation** in products:

DESCRIZIONE	INCLUSO NEL PREZZO	SPECIFICHE TECNICHE	VIDEO
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Different conventions for orientation info in products:

<https://www.tim.it/prodotti/smartphone-e-telefoni?N=1473316359>



Smartphone e  
telefoni

Cambia categoria >

<https://www.tim.it/prodotti/smartphone-e-telefoni/huawei-p9>

## Scenario two:

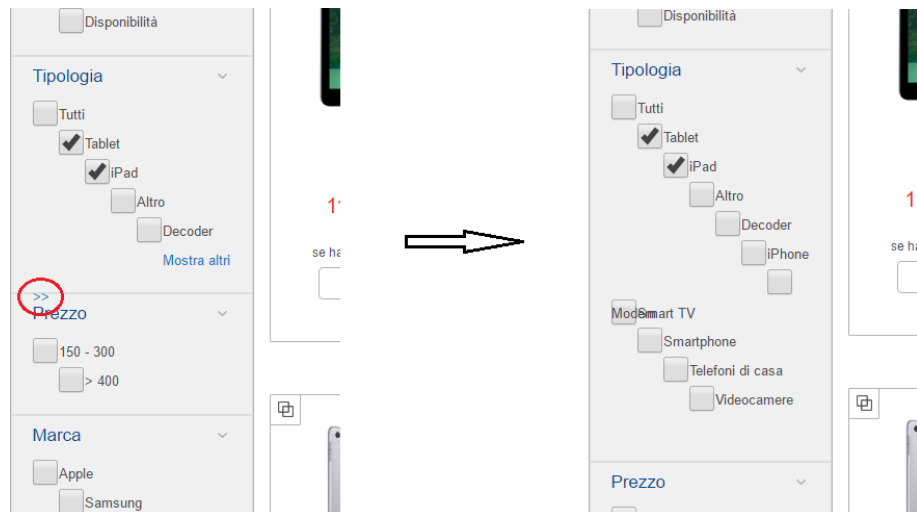
In the main pages related to the third scenario detected, there can be easily found many evident mistakes:

- 1) In the “MOBILE” section of the “OFFERTE” menu, there are three sub-sections with a button “SCOPRI” inside and some information about the offer related. As shown in Screenshot 1, the third button is half the button height off upwards and by watching it carefully, it can be noticed that spaces are not equally divided to display the information. The same happens to the content itself: it is shown in different position with respect to the frame that contains it. Thus, this content arrangement is a clear example of visual inconsistency, and more specifically a MiLE heuristic “Icon inconsistency”.



Screenshot 1: icon inconsistency of the SCOPRI buttons and the content

- 2) The second issue that I'd like to point up is about the filter tab located on the left of the page that shows the list of the products available. At first in the “Tipologia” section, right above “Prezzo” there is a symbol “>>”. If you click on it, the filter options list unfolds and many other options are shown to the user (Screenshot 2).



Screenshot2:

Visual proximity issues. The symbol ">>" is referred to "Tipologia" but is visually located on the "Prezzo" section on the left, and on the right, the entry "Modem" doesn't have its checkbox and the string overlaps with "Smart TV" check box and string.

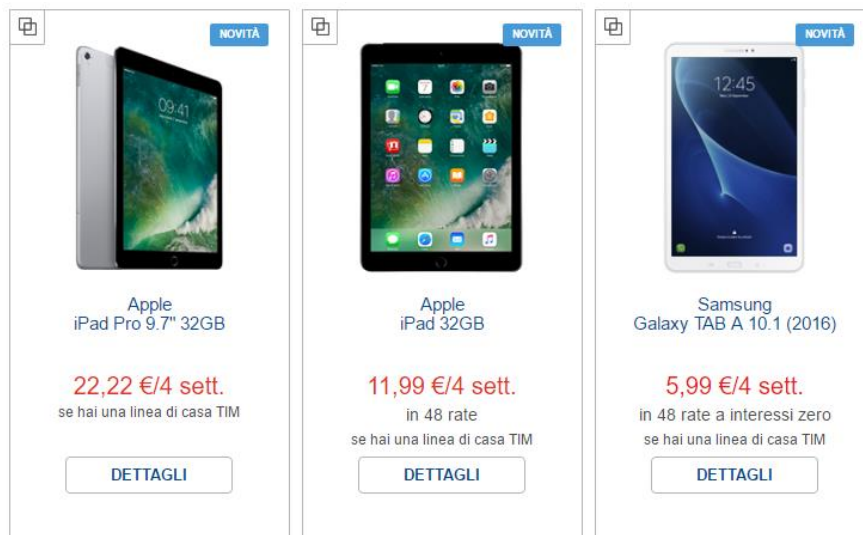
There are a lot of issues related to this tab:

first, the ">>" symbol is presented without any clue to guess the meaning of it, in a position that is totally inconsistent with its actual effect. In fact, what it does is to show more filtering options in the "Tipologia" section, so it has the exact same meaning as the "Mostra altri" link and this is a redundancy. After that the complete list shows up, among the first things that jump out we can find the fact that there is not a way to hide the added options back. After that another evident issue is how the options are arranged in their containers: they are listed in a diagonal pattern, that (at least IMO) conveys a disorganized and confusing structure of the list. The striking example of this problem is the overlap of the "Modem" (that is what I guess it is written) option and the "SmartTV" one. In addition, for the "Modem" option there is no checkbox, so there is no need to have it as an option.

Another thing that can annoy the user is the fact you can't check the "SmartTV" checkbox, unless you click right few pixels above the "Modem" string.

Due to all these particularities, MiLE Heuristic "Visual proximity" is not used in the most appropriate way for the filter tab which however isn't the most significant part of the semantic of the site.

3) If a user wants to know how many installments he has to pay in order to get an "Apple iPad pro 9.7", as can be seen in the Screenshot 3, he can't notice it directly from the list as it happens for all the other products, but he must navigate to the topic page related to the product.



Screenshot 3:

The iPad Pro presents a lack of information, because it isn't shown the number of installments as it is for the other two products

Once there the 32GB ipad page shows the number of installments, but the 128 GB and 256 GB version still lack of this kind of information and so the only way to get the information he needs is to directly contact TIM.

(iPad Pro 9, 128 GB): <https://www.tim.it/prodotti/tablet-e-computer/apple-ipad-pro-9-128-gb>

The problem related to this case is the content consistency among all the products.

- 4) The last one I want to mention is about the orientation clue: clicking on “OFFERTE” and than through the “MOBILE” section I get to the topic page about the product and I get the following orientation path:

Home ► PRODOTTI ► Tablet e computer ► Apple iPad Pro 9.7" 32 GB

As it can be easily noticed that path is totally different from the real path followed.

This has the drawback to make a website mental map hard to be done for the user who, as a direct consequence, can get easily disoriented.

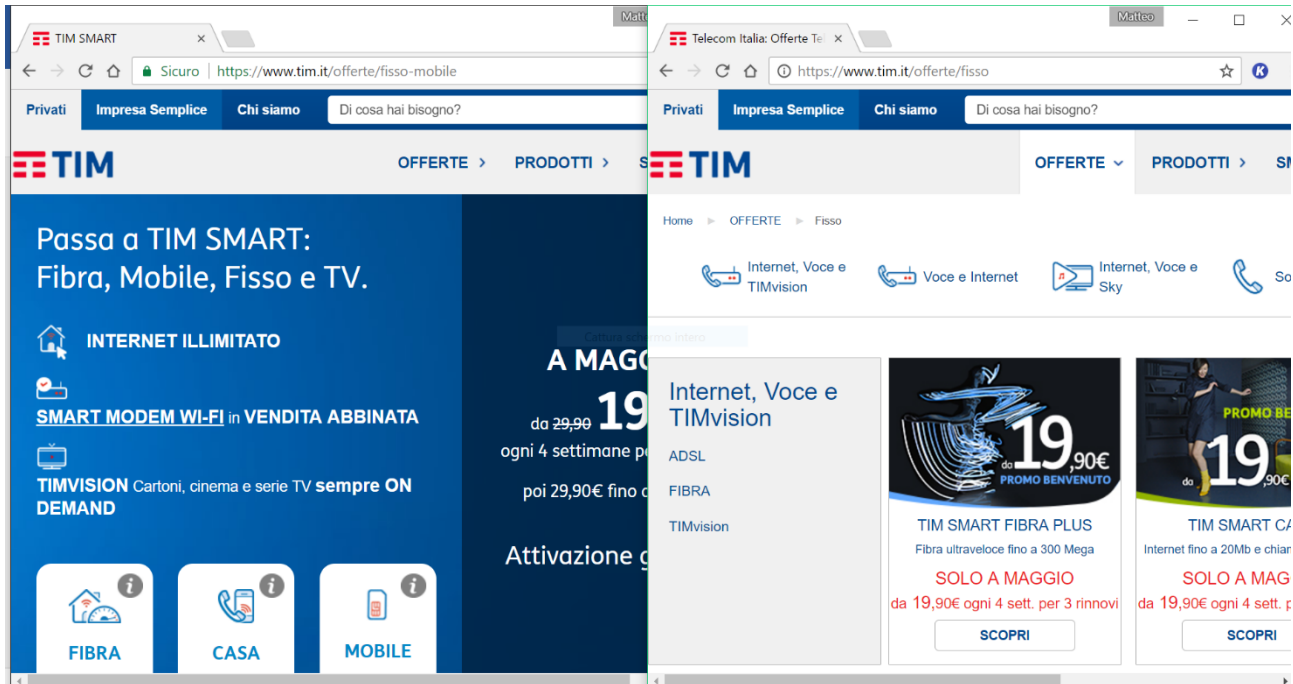
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Home ► PRODOTTI ► Smartphone e telefoni ► Huawei P9



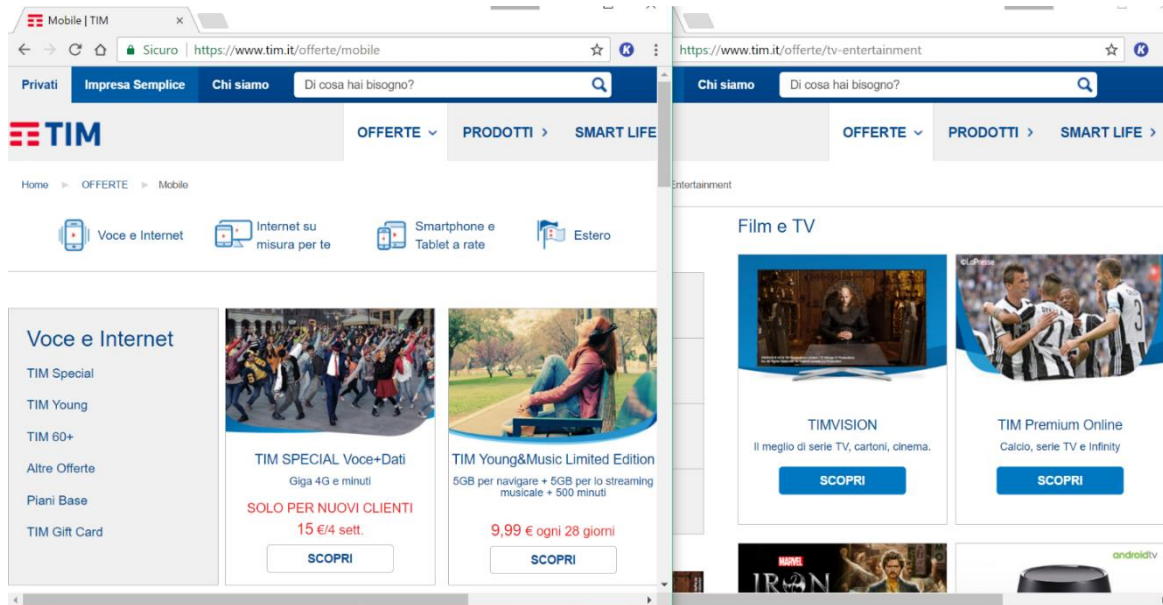
## Scenario three:

- 1) In the section “OFFERTE” there are four links: FISSO, FISSO + MOBILE, MOBILE, TV & ENTERTAINMENT. If you open the link FISSO + MOBILE (page on the left) the page layout is totally different from the page layout of the three other links (e.g. FISSO on the right), this is an example of link inconsistency.



- 2) There is a chromatic inconsistency between the page “Mobile” and “TV & Entertainment” in section “OFFERTE” about the “Scopri” buttons, blue in “TV & Entertainment” page (on the right) and white in the other one (on the left).





3) The orientation clues – topic heuristic is violated in the page “**Fisso + Mobile**” in the section “**OFFERTE**” where the orientation info is absent.

<https://www.tim.it/offerte/fisso-mobile>

4) The site is unavailable in languages different from Italian!!

5) In the whole “OFFERTE” section the “go back” button is not present, the Heuristic with the same name is severely violated.