

CS22310 Assignment: February 2011

Website usability mini-project

This assignment applies the web design and general usability guidelines and principles that you learned in the lectures of the course (and in your own reading) to two tasks:

- 1) The evaluation of three existing large web sites
- 2) The design and evaluation of your own web site

This should be written as a report and you should limit yourself to 3500 words.

The assignment is worth 50% of the marks for this course. The final report should be submitted via SafeAssign on Blackboard between 10am and 10pm on Wednesday **6th April 2011**. More information on the SafeAssign process can be found here:

http://nexus.aber.ac.uk/xwiki/bin/download/Main/safeassign/SafeAssignguides_tudent.pdf

Please submit the report as a pdf – any other format will not be marked. The file size should be less than 10Mb.

The assignment will be assessed in line with the assessment criteria for essays given in the student handbook. You should work on your own for this assignment and not share any material with other students (your attention is drawn to the plagiarism warning given in the Student Handbook). More information on what constitutes plagiarism can be found here:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-13/>

Part 1: Applying web design guidelines to three sites (5 marks per site)

For each site that you choose, you should do the following:

- Approach the site with a specific purpose in mind (e.g. buying a certain item at *amazon.com*). Start at the site's home page and try to approach the site as if you had never seen it before, even if that is not the case.
- Note the decisions that you made as you try to complete the task.
- Write a narrative of what you did to accomplish the task.
- Consider how the site matches the guidelines for web design from Krug given in lecture 2, paying special attention to the ease of site navigation. Could closer attention to the guidelines have improved the site? Are there any improvements that could be made that are not covered by the guidelines?

Part 2: Design and evaluation of your own website (10 marks for web site design, 20 marks for evaluation, 5 marks for accessibility consideration)

Apply the usability principles that you have learned to both the design and evaluation of your own web site. This can either be the development of your own personal website, or the development of a fictitious business site (e.g. e-

commerce). The website should consist of at least 10 pages (not all need to contain useful information) and should be structured logically, containing sections and subsections. The underlying code will not be assessed. The use of CMSs and HTML editors (such as SeaMonkey <http://www.seamonkey-project.org/>) is allowed.

In the report itself, you should

- Discuss any lessons learned from the evaluation in Part 1 above that have affected your design decisions.
- More importantly, describe how you have approached the design of your site and how you have incorporated the usability principles given in the lectures. You should include several screenshots of the web site to illustrate this.
- Justify any decisions made in this process.
- Discuss any problems encountered in the design and how they have been resolved. For example, where design principles have had to be sacrificed to achieve functionality.
- Discuss how you have considered accessibility principles/guidelines in the construction of your website.
- **Important: Provide a URL in the report that points to the web site's location.** Don't forget to do this!

Please post any queries regarding the assignment to the assignment forum in the discussion board on Blackboard.