Question 6)

Heuristic Evaluation

1) Visibility of System Status:

   Users did not report any confusion while testing the system. The system was able to respond to all user requests. When "Add to cart" was selected, a badge appeared on top of the cart, providing feedback to the user.

2) Match Between System and Real World:

   The system uses real world language; all English speakers will be able to comfortable interact with the system. Users who do not have English as their first language may still purchase items as the checkout process was developed with individual difference in consideration. The dark mode function uses a sun to indicate light mode and the moon to indicate dark mode, matching the real world.

3) User Control and Freedom:

   Each user is given complete freedom to navigate RecordShare. First time users can still navigate the RecordShare prior to creating an account.
   Should a user accidentally add an item to their cart, they can simply remove each individual item in their cart or empty the cart completely.

4) Consistency and Standards:

   RecordShare full adheres to consistency rules, each page is structured with the same navigation functionality, and each function is visually identical.

5) Error prevention:

   When using the empty cart button, the user is asked to confirm their action prior to the complete removal. Should a user accidentally navigate to an incorrect page, they may easily correct their mistake as the navigation bar present every page allows the user to navigate to whichever page they wish.

6) Recognition over recall:

   Instructions are visually recognizable, in the checkout page, each items description is accompanied by its image. This menu style functionally allows the user to simply look at the picture of the product rather then memorize its description. Each user is not required to memorize the order of each page; the navigation bar functions as a menu where each user selects the next page they wish to visit. In the instance the user does not recognize the category of products present on each page, the current page is underlined in the navigation bar.

7) Flexibility and Efficiency of Use:

   No shortcuts are present in the functionality of RecordShare. Each parent category is always one mouse click away. Should a user wish to visit a child category, that distance then becomes two mouse clicks. All frequent actions do not need to be streamlined with the current functionality.

8) Aesthetic and minimalist Design:

The header image and the dark mode option provides the users with a calm environment, this design was intention as the goal was to replicate the experience of browsing in physical locations. Users who enjoy browsing are not forced to have a bright white screen thus increasing the duration of their visit to RecordShare. The content present on each page focuses on popular items users may be looking for, in the instance that the user wishes to probe further, the filter dropdown to the left of the search bar provides a minimalist design and the essential categories visitors may choose to select.

9) Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, Recover from Errors:

All pop-up messages are provided in plain English, after each message they user may choose to stop or procced with their intentions.

10) Help and Documentation:

The footer present on each page provides various way of contacting RecordShare. Should the user choose to stay within the website, they may use the 'contact us' page to request assistance.

Cognitive Walkthrough:

1. Will users be trying to produce this effect?

User 1: Jane Doe, 23. Jane is searching for a birthday present for her boyfriend, the extent of her interest in physical media is limited to the completion of the checkout process.

User 2: John Smith, 22. John is an avid buyer of physical media, until this point in time, John would purchase items regularly on Walmart.com, Amazon.com and BestBuy.com. In 2024 BestBuy halted selling physical media, in the past year Amazon and Walmart have increase their prices while lowering the quality of their shipping and customer service. John now wishes to find a new online physical media retailer who values their customers experience.

2. Will the user notice the correct action available?

Yes, both users may accomplish their initial goals. Assuming Jane is only aware of the title, she may easily search for the desired item to see whether or not it is in stock. A search bar is present in the top half of each page, on the landing page Jane may easily begin searching to check for product availability.

Upon visiting RecordShare, The footer of each page is present with an "About us" Section which emphasizes the value RecordShare has for their customers. The location of the footer is naturally the first location users would check to find information specifically related to a company.

Both actions allow for availability as the design and functionality is familiar in nature.

3. Will the users know the correct action is the right one?

For Jane, the search bar is the only input field on each browsing related page. The search button written in plain English allows for familiar controls for all types of users.

For John and users similar to John with the same goal, they would understand the value of each item, should they require further proof following the 'About us' section, the competitive pricing may prove RecordShare's goal is customer satisfaction.

4. Will the user understand the feedback.

For Jane, the result of her search will either populate with items in inventory or an apology message which asked her to try another search.

For John, assuming he is fluent in English, once completing the 'About us' section and some simple browsing, he will have a better understanding the mission statement of RecordShare compared to the time prior to his visit.

Findings:

A problem may occur is Jane's search does not yield any results. Jane may have misspelled a word or the item she is searching for is not currently available.

Possible design change to better accommodate Jane, suggest an alternative query in the form of "Did you mean x?" this provides feedback that the search functionality is working. The next possible design change would have every item populate following a query, if the item is out of stock there will be an induction that it is not available. This provides feedback that the item she is looking for is available on RecordShare, but not at a current point in time.

Summary:

At this point, all general functionality is in place for a pleasant user experience. Recommendations are to update the search functionality in the event a query does not yield any results.

Usability Testing:

Tasks:

- Add an item to your cart.
- Search for an Item.
- Navigate to various pages.
- Buy a product.
- Send a help request by contacting RecordShare.
- Add items to your Wishlist.
- Empty your cart.
- Remove a specific item from your cart.

Users where not given any guidance through the interface, this test is focused on learnability.

Quantitative Data:

- Time to Completion: Every task was completed in within 1 to 10 seconds other than "Send a help request by contacting RecordShare". the spread is caused by the duration of particular tasks rather than the difficulty.
- Time to Complete a task after some time: Speeds improved reducing the maximum navigation time to 5 seconds.
- Number of times online help manuals accessed: Zero times.
- Time to correct path: 1 to 10 seconds, first attempt, 1 to 5 seconds, second attempt.
- Number of errors: All 8 users did not have any errors occur.
- Number of users successfully completing a task: All 8 users successfully completed each task.

Qualitative Data:

- During the first attempt of the takes, "Send a help request by contacting RecordShare", users reported feelings of anxiety caused by observation. Users also reported that if they were not observed, the initial task would not have taken as long. This feeling of anxiety is the result of the requirement of scrolling down to the footer, opposed to having the path to every other task present within the top 75% of each page.

Questions Asked to Perform the SUS evaluation.

1	I think I would like to use this system frequently
2	I found this system unnecessarily complex.
3	I thought the system was easy to use.
4	I think that I would need to support of a technical person to be able to use this system.
5	I found that the various functions in this system were well integrated.
6	I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system.
7	I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly.
8	I found the system very cumbersome to use.
9	I felt very confident using the system.
10	I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this system.

Question 7)

After the evaluation, We have added a dedicated 'About us' page for users who which to learn more about us. We have also begun refining our search algorithms to better align with users who may provide accurate queries. Lastly, should a product not be in stock, the item will still populate the page following a user search accompanied with an out of stock label.