HCI Task 3

Group 8 - Heuristic Evaluation

Introduction

What is heuristic evaluation?

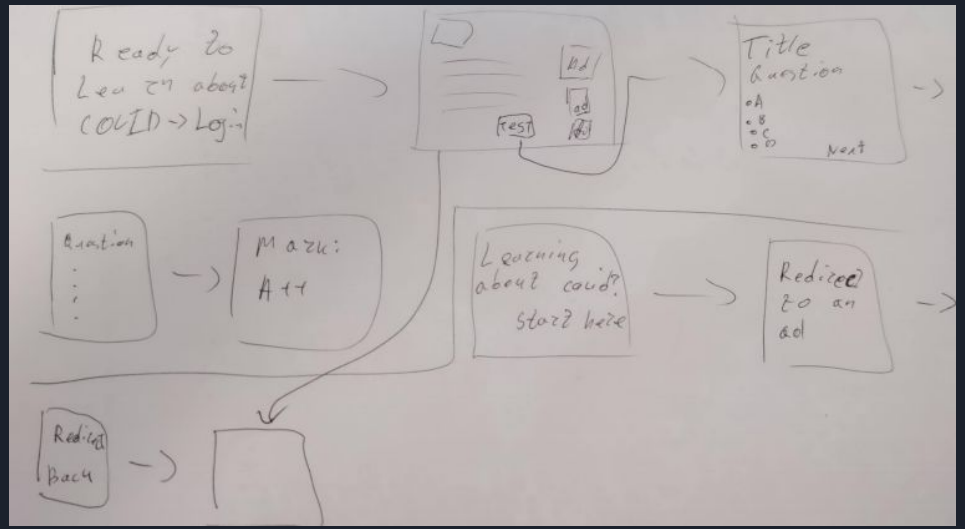
A methodology used by people to evaluate the usability of user interfaces. To do so the rule of thumb is used to enhance product usability at early stages of development therefore preventing any unnecessary issues that may occur later.

Based on the prototypes we came up with in the previous task (Task 2), we managed to use another team's work to evaluate it using the 10 heuristics. The ten heuristics are:

1. Visibility of system status
2. Match between system and the real world
3. User control
4. Consistency and standards
5. Error prevention
6. Recognition vs recall in user interfaces
7. Efficiency of use
8. Minimalist design and aesthetic
9. Help users recognise, diagnose and recover
10. Help and documentation

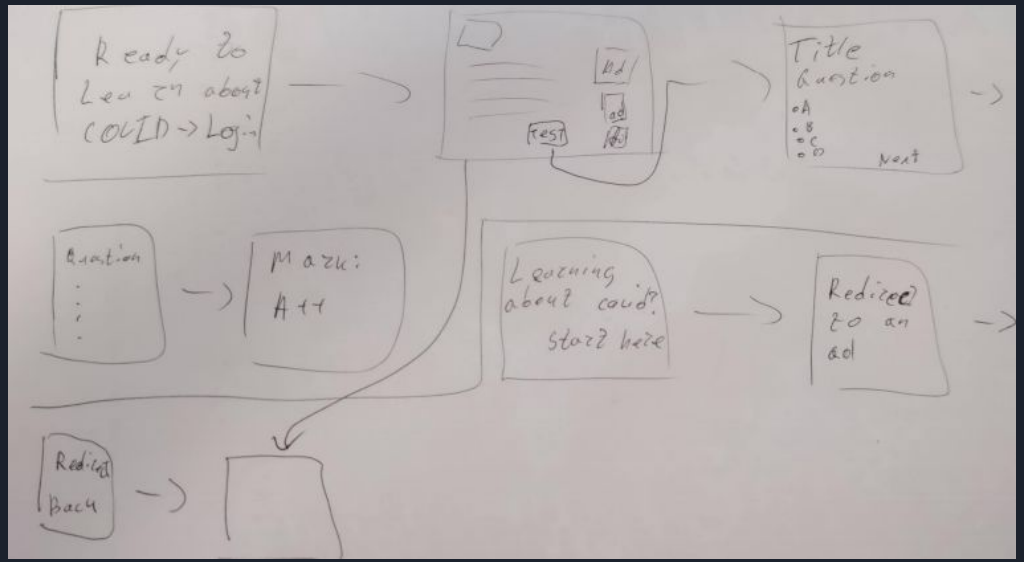
Heuristic 1 - Visibility of system status

There is no visibility of system status. For instance, if the user presses a button to go to the next page, the button could change colour so the user would be able to understand that his request is in progress and thus avoid pressing the button repeatedly making the system crash.



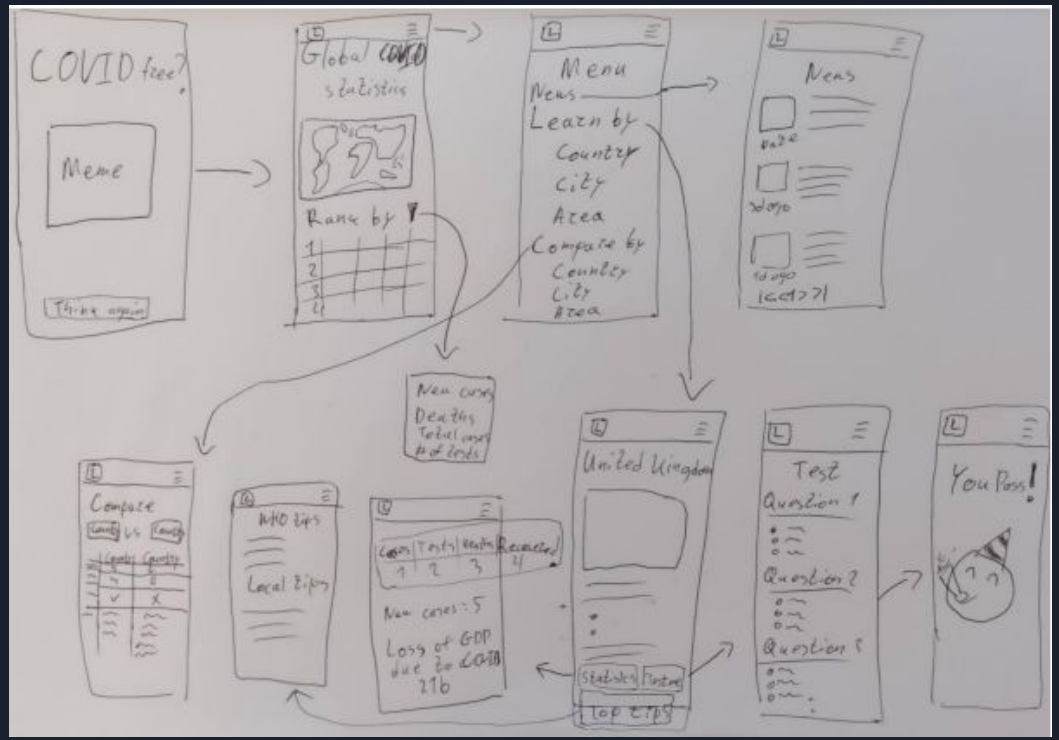
Heuristic 3 - User control and freedom

There is not back and forward button to go where the user was, before going to the state where he would need an emergency exit (undo an action). For example, in the first slide of “ADS IN THE SYSTEM”, it shows that if the user presses the button of ‘test’, then the questions and a ‘next’ button are listed. However, a ‘cancel’ button should have been there as well as the user might have pressed it by mistake and would not want to go through it again to get out of it.



Heuristic 6 - Recognition rather than recall

On all of the paper prototype designs, the ‘L’ button, located on the top left-hand corner of the page, is not clarified as to how it will function or what the button is. This will lead to the user being more confused as to what to do, say if they would like to exit out of the page. I think changing the symbol on that button from ‘L’ to a more recognisable character (e.g. ‘X’) would allow the user to navigate the website for whatever purpose better.

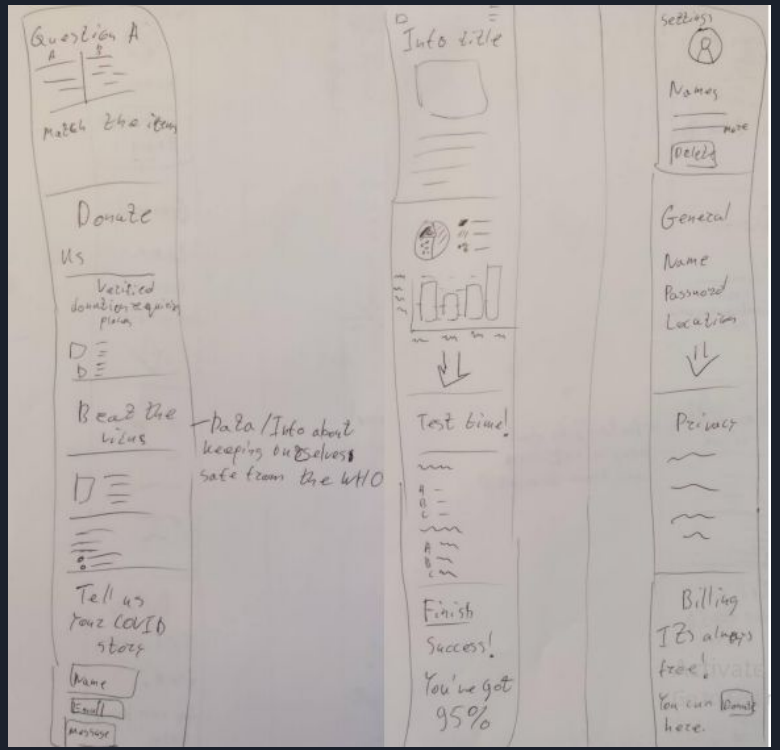


Heuristic 6 - Recognition rather than recall

The contents page of the website should be listed in the first page of the website since a website generally should be designed in a way that the user knows what they're looking for when they first enter the website. By doing this, the user will be able to access the information that they want more quickly and accurately without having to second-guess themselves about what they could remember.

Heuristic 7: Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

This heuristic aims to enable the user of the User Interface to find a method that best fits them to use it. For instance, in general, for a more efficient way of copying and pasting, we use Ctrl C despite there being other ways of copying and pasting like the traditional highlighting and right-clicking. However, we lean towards the Ctrl C as it is quicker for us and makes us feel more compliant. Based on the paper prototype we are evaluating, we do find that they use this heuristic, mainly when using the 'One Page' layout. This enables the user to access everything without scrolling potentially, and thereby the user can get on with the activities quite effortlessly.

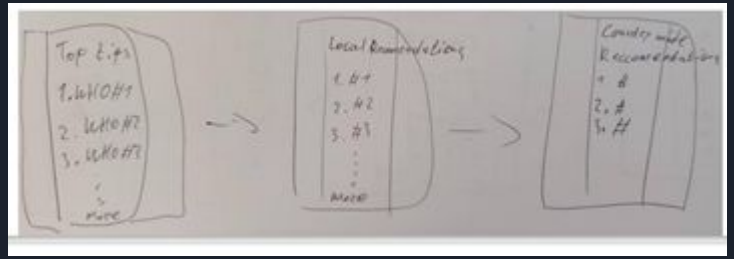


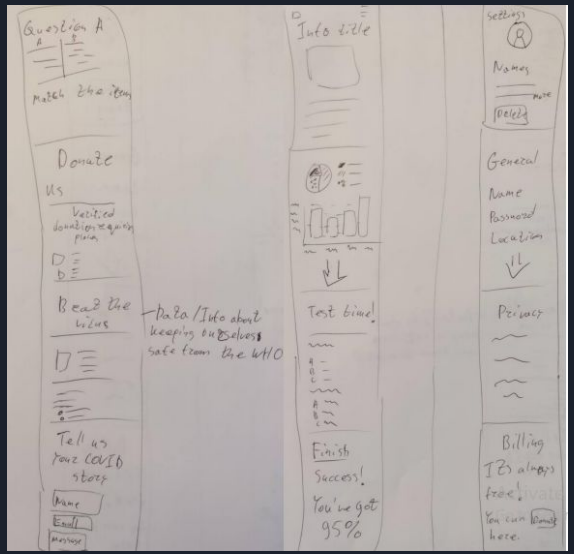
Heuristic 8 - Aesthetic and minimalist design

Some of the pages designed for the paper prototype are way too cluttered. These pages often contain too much or irrelevant information that the user may either not grasp or understand or simply feel that it's not needed at all. As a result, this could lead to the user having to rely on their memory on what they could remember or salvage from the page, which can be difficult for some. In addition to this, the pages should be better ordered, so it's clear as to how the user will use and experience the website. To solve this, have only the critical information and content displayed on the pages so that it's easier for the people to understand what it is they're looking at. Also, order the pages in terms of what information the user would like to see first before the other pieces of information. This will make the users feel more intrigued to carry on reading and finding more information, without their heads hurting.

Heuristic 10: Help and Documentation

The primary purpose of this heuristic is for whenever the user finds themselves facing an issue using the User Interface, how is it designed to help them overcome it? For example, most technology retail sites will always have a chatbot there to “assist” people whenever they need help. By observing this paper prototype, there is no search engine to assist the user in documentation perhaps. However, they do use the World Health Organization as a link to maybe when the user wants to confirm facts with their “Top Tips”.





Also on the one page layout its labelled as ‘Beat The Virus’

Bonus heuristics

Heuristic 2 (Match between system and the real world) - The system should speak the user's language, if not the user might get irritated or confused. For example, RSS Feed and GDP terms are used, which might not be that familiar to some users. In this case, RSS Feed and GDP could be updated by Updates and Gross Domestic Product, respectively.

Heuristic 4(Consistency and standards): The website achieves an almost uniform feel in terms of the header. However, users are more generally more accustomed to a simple top navigation bar, because that standard is generally easier to learn, understand and navigate with. Having a simple top navigation bar for every page of the website will not only remove the need for a menu page and improve the uniform feel of the website, but will also improve the overall functionality of the website.

Bonus heuristics

Heuristic 5 (Error Prevention): Trying to stop errors before they happen. A good example would be before taking the test; a message would appear asking if the user is ready to take the test. If not, then he should be taken back to the menu page where he could navigate, read and get ready.

Heuristic 9(Help users recognise, diagnose, and recover from errors): The errors that might appear to a user should be plain language and easily understood. The public does not know what '404 error' means, and if we do not want them to abandon the website, we should explain the problem with easily understood terms. Furthermore, the repeating of an error from a majority of users might lead to more significant issues we then have to fix.

Thank you !!!