

Assignment 4 - Heuristic Evaluation

1. A summary of the website and the overall findings from the analysis

The website that I have selected for the evaluation is msrit.edu. M. S Ramaiah Institute of Technology is where I pursued my undergraduate studies in computer science. One of the reasons why I selected this website was to understand if there any problems with the website and recommend the changes that come out of the assignment so that the website can get better.

The website is like any other .edu sites except that it has its own set of issues. The main issues that were found out of the analysis were

1. The student login was placed at a location which was not easily locatable.
2. The carousel at the beginning of the website acts weirdly when clicked next from the last image. Also, the contrast for the navigation icons are not handled properly which results in users not being able to see the navigations for the carousel.
3. They do not have a dedicated help section for the users in case there are any issues they want to report.
4. They also do not have any help which would assist the users in navigating through the website initially.
5. The other obvious problem with the website is that the college is now named Ramaiah Institute of technology, however the website domain URL is msrit.edu which was the previous name for the college.
6. No implementation of breadcrumbs.
7. No search functionality anywhere in the website.
8. Required and optional form fields not clearly mentioned.
9. Some links do not work (staff information site).
10. Student login is placed under other section.

2. Details on specific problem areas and an explanation of how the issues relate to the concepts we have covered in class.

The major areas where we can see the problems are Home/Starting page, Navigation, Search, Help and Performance. The Home/Starting page has certain defects like the ones mentioned above regarding the carousel. The website also has some obvious navigation problems. The help section is completely absent. Due to all these defects the performance gets hit a bit.

The issue with carousel will create annoyance and frustration as the user wouldn't be able to understand why it is behaving the way it is. The navigation problem creates frustration again as the user won't be able to navigate properly. The absence of help sections to navigate will create a lot of confusion to the user as there are a lot of content in the screen. All these would result in user abandoning the system or using the system partially or even in some cases might misuse the system.

3. Suggest improvements that may address the problem areas.

Suggested improvements:


1. Fix the carousel by making all the images back to back instead of having the carousel move back to the first image in a weird way.
 2. Ensuring that all the navigation links are working and move to appropriate sites.
 3. Adding help popups whenever a new user visits the website to help them navigate through the website easily.
 4. Adding help and resources section at the bottom which would help the user to request for help in case of any issues.
 5. Add search functionalities to the website wherever necessary.
 6. Ensure forms are appropriate and necessary and optional fields well indicated.
 7. Add login option at right top corner where it is easily visible.
4. Offer suggestions on what metrics you might use to evaluate whether the suggestions were effective.

There are two metrics which can be used for evaluating the suggestions.

1. Using the Heuristic Review Template for the website with the suggestions made.
2. Using Rubinoff's user experience audit

According to Rubinoff's user experience audit, we need to examine the site for four different aspects. They are – Branding, Content, Functionality and Usability. More information on the method can be found at [Rubinoff's user experience](#).

Please find the images of the excel sheet filled with details below.

A	B	C	D	H	I
Heuristic Review Template (Source: http://www.uxforthemasses.com/)					
Ramaiah Institute of Technology - msrit.edu		Score	Comments		
 Click over a guideline for more information, examples of good practice and importance to the overall user experience.		N/A = not applicable or can't be assessed	Optional - Provide a short rational for the score, such as a description of the issues found; examples of good practice and the likely impact for users.		
Features & functionality					
1	Features and functionality meet common user goals and objectives.	Excellent	Has all the functionalities one would expect from a .edu site. It includes clear information and transitions into programs offered, contact details, student and parent login systems which allow you to check all the details regarding the courses taken and the grades obtained		
2	Features and functionality support users desired workflows.	Good	Supports in most cases. However in some cases like application form for a particular program/course the user would want to fill in the application form and expect some kind of response from the university so as to know what needs to be done further. This functionality is missing. It just gives a pdf file which has big texts written on it saying it is just a copy and there is no place to actually submit this pdf file once edited.		
3	Frequently-used tasks are readily available (e.g. easily accessible from the homepage) and well supported (e.g. short cuts are available).	Moderate	Pages like student login which is one of the most frequently used task is under a section called others which you wouldn't notice easily unless you are looking everywhere.		
4	Users are adequately supported according to their level of expertise (e.g. short cuts for expert users, help and instructions for novice users).	Poor	For people who are visiting the website for the first time they don't have any kind of help to navigate through the website.		
5	Call to actions (e.g. register, add to basket, submit) are clear, well labelled and appear clickable.	N/A	Does not have call to action functionalities like register, add to basket or submit		
Homepage / starting page					
6	The Homepage / starting page provides a clear snapshot and overview of the content, features and functionality available.	Good	Good because it provides good information about the university, its events and news. However the login links to students and staff is put in others section which isn't a logically correct placement.		
7	The home page / starting page is effective in orienting and directing users to their desired information and tasks.	Poor	Directing to login page is poor and the link to staff information login site fails to open frequently		
8	The homepage / starting page layout is clear and uncluttered with sufficient 'white space'.	Poor	The slideshow at the top of the page has several problems. 1. The slideshow weirdly comes to the first slide when you reach last slide. 2. The navigation button on the slides is hidden against the background color which makes it harder to navigate between the slides. 3. There is an alert text at the top which seems a little unwanted there. 4. The virtual tour option doesn't work at times.		
Navigation					
9	Users can easily access the site or application (e.g. the URL is predictable and is returned by search engines).	Very poor	The name of the college was changed to RIT recently and they have failed to change the domain name for the website. Thus whenever you search for rit website you get suggestions for Rochester Institute of		

#	The navigational scheme (e.g. menu) is easy to find, intuitive and consistent.	Good	Most of the navigations are intuitive and consistent except for a few mentioned above
#	The navigation has sufficient flexibility to allow users to navigate by their desired means (e.g. searching, browse by type, browse by name, most recent etc...).	Excellent	Users have flexibility to navigate based on their desired means
#	The site or application structure is clear, easily understood and addresses common user goals.	Excellent	Structure of the applications is very clear
#	Links are clear, descriptive and and well labelled.	Moderate	Some sections like our values have clickable icons displayed but on clicking just reloads the home
#	Browser standard functions (e.g. 'back', 'forward', 'bookmark') are supported.	Excellent	All browser standard functions are supported
#	The current location is clearly indicated (e.g. breadcrumb, highlighted menu item).	Very poor	No implementation of breadcrumbs or highlighted menu
#	Users can easily get back to the homepage or a relevant start point.	Good	Clicking on the logo takes back to home page however breadcrumbs are not supported
#	A clear and well structure site map or index is provided (where	Excellent	Clear site map is provided
Search			
#	A consitent, easy to find and easy to use search function is available throughout (where desirable).	Very poor	Search functionality is not at all provided anywhere in the website
#	The search interface is appropriate to meet user goals (e.g. multi-parameter, prioritised results, filtering search results).	N/A	No search functionality
#	The search facility deals well with common searches (e.g. showing most popular results), misspellings and abbreviations.	N/A	No search functionality
#	Search results are relevant, comprehensive, precise, and well	N/A	No search functionality
Control & feedback			
#	Prompt and appropriate feedback is given (e.g. following a successful or unsuccessful action).	Good	Most of the places no such action is required and some places such feedback is given
#	Users can easily undo, go back and change or cancel actions; or are at least given the chance to confirm an action before committing (e.g. before placing an order).	Good	No such operations are performed
#	Users can easily give feedback (e.g. via email or an online feedback / contact us form).	Excellent	There is an option to give feedback in the form of an email and form

Forms		
# Complex forms and processes are broken up into readily understood steps and sections. Where a process is used a progress indicator is present with clear numbers or named stages.	N/A	No such functionality available
# A minimal amount of information is requested and where required justification is given for asking for information (e.g. date of birth, telephone number).	Excellent	Right justification is given
# Required and optional form fields are clearly indicated.	Poor	Not clearly given
# Appropriate input fields (e.g. calendar for date selection, drop down for selection) are used and required formats are indicated.	Moderate	Some fields take different values than what it is intended for
# Help and instructions (e.g. examples, information required) are provided where necessary.	Very poor	No help or instructions are provided to the user
Errors		
# Errors are clear, easily identifiable and appear in appropriate location (e.g. adjacent to data entry field, adjacent to form, etc.).	Excellent	Errors are displayed appropriately
# Error messages are concise, written in easy to understand language and describe what's occurred and what action is necessary.	Excellent	Error messages are concise
# Common user errors (e.g. missing fields, invalid formats, invalid selections) have been taken into consideration and where possible	Good	In some places there is a lack of consideration.
# Users are able to easily recover (i.e. not have to start again) from errors.	Excellent	They are able to easily recover
Content & text		
# Content available (e.g. text, images, video) is appropriate and sufficiently relevant, and detailed to meet user goals.	Excellent	Content available is relevant to the user
# Links to other useful and relevant content (e.g. related pages or external websites) are available and shown in context.	Excellent	External website link are relevant and available
# Language, terminology and tone used is appropriate and readily understood by the target audience.	Excellent	language used is appropriate
# Terms, language and tone used are consistent (e.g. the same term is used throughout).	Excellent	Language and terms used are consistent
# Text and content is legible and scanable, with good typography and visual contrast.	Poor	Text is legible and scanable. However the contrast on the slideshow in the homepage is pathetic. Doesn't make it obvious sometimes that there are navigation bars in the slideshow.

Help		
# Online help is provided and is suitable for the user base (e.g. is written in easy to understand language and only uses recognised terms). Where appropriate contextual help is provided.	N/A	No such functionality required
# Online help is concise, easy to read and written in easy to understand language.	N/A	No such functionality required
# Accessing online help does not impede users (i.e. they can resume work where they left off after accessing help).	N/A	No such functionality required
# Users can easily get further help (e.g. telephone or email address).	Very poor	No option for users to get help in case of problems
Performance		
# Site or application performance doesn't inhibit the user experience (e.g. slow page downloads, long delays).	Poor	Some links which takes the user to a different page do not load. Ex: staff information site
# Errors and reliability issues don't inhibit the user experience.	Excellent	Errors don't inhibit the user experience
# Possible user configurations (e.g. browsers, resolutions, computer specs) are supported.	Excellent	Well supported
Overall usability score (out of 100) *	74	Good
* Very poor (less than 29) - Users are likely to experience very significant difficulties using this site or system and might not be able to complete a significant number of important tasks.		
* Poor (between 29 and 49) - Users are likely to experience some difficulties using this site or system and might not be able to complete some important tasks.		
* Moderate (between 49 and 69) - Users should be able to use this site or system and complete most important tasks, however the user experience could be significantly improved.		
* Good (between 69 and 89) - Users should be able to use this site or system with relative ease and should be able to complete the vast majority of important tasks.		
* Excellent (more than 89) - This site or system provides an excellent user experience for users. Users should be able to complete all important tasks on the site or system.		