Politecnico di Milano
AA 2019/2020

Computer Science and Engineering
Hypermidia Applications

Usability Evaluation Study 1: Inspection

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Inspected website: `https://www.visitmonterosa.com/`

Delivery Date: March 26, 2020

Document version: 1.0
March 26, 2020

Contents

1   Abstract

The aim of this document is to report the Inspection-based Usability Evaluation of *Visit Monterosa* website which can be found at the following url `https://www.visitmonterosa.com/`.

The website that is analyzed into this document is intended to provide information about Monterosa, its valleys and the experiences that can be done during winter and summer times. It also gives the possibility to book vacations, discover offered accomodations in the sourrounding and the planned events. The website has a real time map that shows Monterosa's skilifts' status, an interactive map that gives the possibility to access some webcam in place, weather information and allows users to buy ski pass.

In the next pages are reported the steps followed to reach the objective, the evaluation for the selected heuristics and examples to demonstrate the reason why certain ratings has been given.

2 Inspection Methods

2.1 Overview

The inspection process started with the definition of both heuristics and score metrics, after a deep understanding of those concepts; then it went trough the choice of the main goals to have in mind while analyzing the website; the indivitual scoring and the final evaluation given by the average of individual ratings.
The following sections have the aim to highlight some of the steps taken during the inspection process and underline some foundamental concepts necessary to understand the final result.

2.2 Heuristic

The used heuristics can be divided into three categories depending on their final purposes and goals. Here is possible to find the groups definitions and the heuristics in each of them:

Navigation: this batch has the aim to evaluate how easy is to move across the website and how easy and intuitive is to find contents following the websites paths.

- **Interaction consistency:** do pages of the same type have the same links and interaction capability?

- **Group navigation:** is it easy to navigate among group members and from a group introductory page to group members (and the other way around)?

- **Structural Navigation:** is it easy to navigate among the semantic components of a Topic?

- **Semantic Navigation:** is it easy to navigate from a Topic to a related one?

- **Landmarks:** are landmarks useful to reach the key parts of the web site?

Contents: focuses on the quality of information and data provided by the site regardless the way they are presented.

- **Information Overload:** is the information in a page too much or too little and does it fit the page layout?

- **Quality of Contents:** do the contents of the page include the informations that the user should expect there? In other words, is the content consistent.

Layout: stresses the visual image of the website and its effectiveness in terms of expressivity and ergonomic functions.

- **Text Layout:** is the text readable? Is font size appropriate?

- **Interaction Placeholder:** are textual or visual labels of interactive elements "expressive"? i.e., do they reflect the meaning of the interaction and its effects? Are they consistent?

- **Spatial Allocation:** is the on-screen allocation of contents and visual appropriate for their relevance? Are "semantically related" elements close and "semantically distant" element far away?

- **Consistency of Page Structure:** do pages of the same type have the same lay out (same visual properties of each component and similar lay-out organization of the various elements?)

2.3   Scoring Metrics

In order to evaluate every heuristic defined in the previous section, it has been choosen a scoring system with votes between 0 and 5. The following figure shows the meaning of each scores.
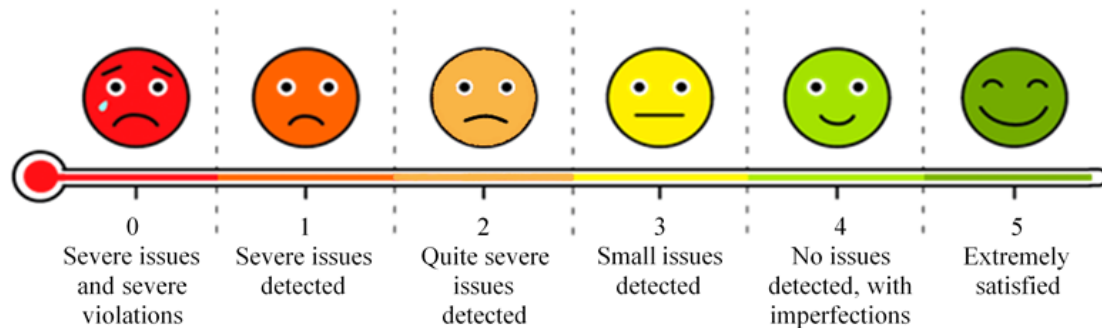
2.4   Goals

Before starting the inspection process, the following goals have been defined to better inspect the website and to work in a more precise way.

- **Goal 1:** Find experiences' information and book them.

- **Goal 2:** Book an holiday.

- **Goal 3:** Search information about Monte Rosa.

2.5   Final Evaluation

After an individual analysis of the website done by keeping in mind the goals previously selected, the final rating for each euristic is estimated by doing the average of individual scores. Those results will be presented and analyzed in section 3 via tables, puntual comments and examples.

2.6   Report

This is the last step and corresponds to the writing of this document that explains the used procedure and the obtained results through scores and examples to support rating.

3 Agreed scores on each individual heuristics

3.1 Navigation

Heuristics	Score	Comment
Interaction Consistency	4	The site has a rigid interaction structure and respects it almost always. There are elements present in every screen such as the header, the topbar, the leftbar and the footer. There could be more consistency in links shape.
Group Navigation	2.5	The navigation from a list of items to its members is easy and intuitive most of the times, but the navigation between group members as well as the navigation from a group member to the list is not always easily accessible. It is really complex to navigate to previous pages.
Structural Navigation	4.5	The structural navigation is nice because each element of a topic has a title, an image (most of the times) and a short description.
Semantic Navigation	2	There are almost never links to related contents.
Landmarks	4	Landmarks cover all major contents of the website, but they could be more readable.

3.1.1 Interaction Consistency

This website has a pretty consistent choice of interaction. Every page shares the following elements:

- **Header:** gives the possibility to change language, season and to access to the newsletter page (fig. 1) ;

- **Topbar:** allows a user to navigate between almost every website's page and content, it is the main navigation instrument (fig. 2);

- **Leftbar:** allows a user to get important information such as weather, skilift situation, online skipass booking (fig. 3);

- **Footer:** provides links to partners' websites, to its social network profiles and general informations such as contacts and privacy policies (fig. 4).
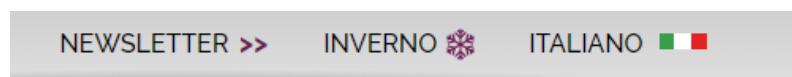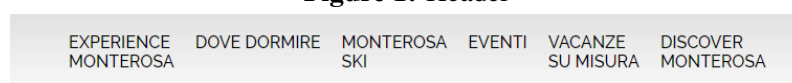

Figure 1: Header

Figure 2: Topbar
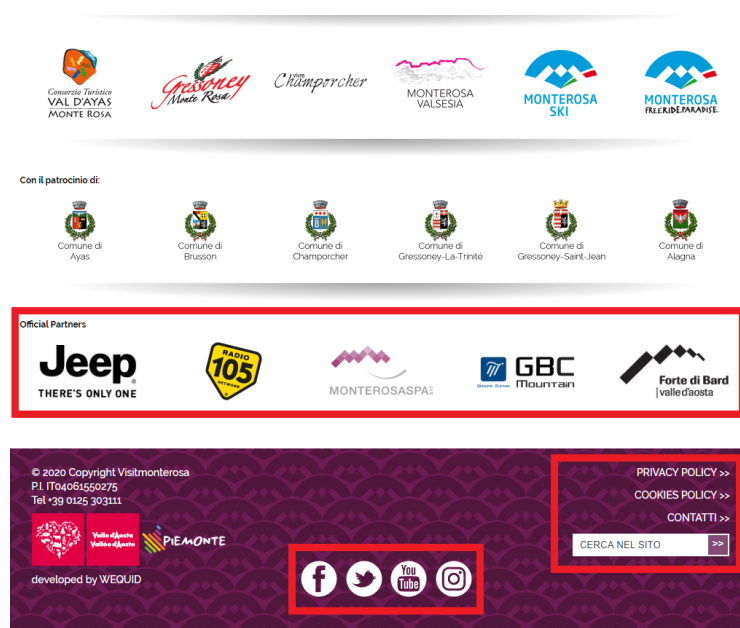
Figure 3: Leftbar

Figure 4: Footer

3.1.2 Group Navigation

Thanks to the topbar (fig. 2) and the leftbar (fig. 3) a quick access is granted to almost all contents. Group navigation is also supported by topbar's drop-down menus (fig. 5), which contain the links to all main components of each group and helps the user to navigate between them.

3.1.3 Structural Navigation

The various parts of a topic are organized in a list of items and each of them is represented by a title, a short description and almost always by an image; these elements make the structural navigation really intuitive and user friendly.

3.1.4 Semantic Navigation

Even though almost all contents can be accessed through the topbar, it is not possible to easily navigate between related contents because, except for some pages, similar contents aren't connect via a visible link on the page.

Figure 5: Drop-down Menù

3.1.5 Landmarks

Landmarks can be found into the header (fig. 1), the topbar (fig.2), the leftbar (fig. 3) and the footer (fig. 4). These elements do not change between different pages, but they could be more effective by adopting some graphic customization.
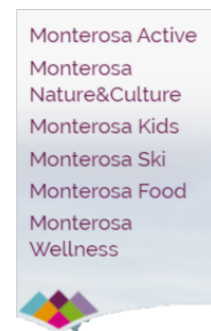
3.2   Content

Heuristics	Score	Comment
Information Overload	3.5	Information are well organized and distributed in most of the pages. There are some of them with too poor contents.
Quality of Contents	4	Events, accommodations and general information are well explained and external links are also provided when needed, images are not always present though.

3.2.1   Information Overload

Most of the pages have a balanced quantity of information but some other do not contain any explanation of their contents except for the title. Sometimes the title is enough expressive, but the user experience loses clearness because of the lack of text .

3.2.2   Quality of Contents

The overall quality of contents is good: the information is well written and organized and some nice interactive elements are provided to the user by the leftbar (fig.3); unfortunately some graphical contents are missing, such as some images as in the accomodation element in figure 6.b.
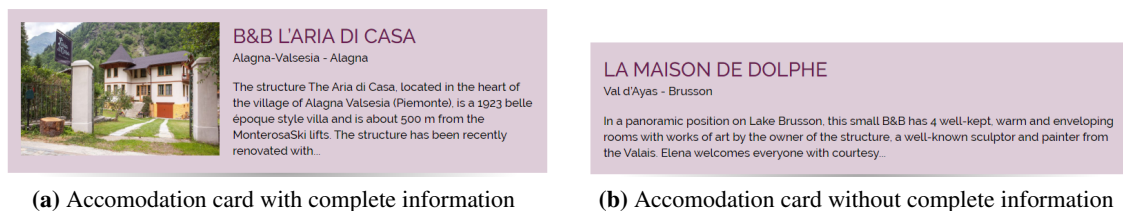

(a) Accomodation card with complete information   **(b)** Accomodation card without complete information

Figure 6

3.3   Layout

Heuristics	Score	Comment
Text Layout	3	Text layout is standard, it is easily readable and understandable but could be better.
Interaction Placeholder	4	Although labels for interactive elements of a topic are nice and well organized, those for elements of lists does not reflect at all the importance they have.
Spatial Allocation	4	The spatial allocation is fine, but a bit more effort could have helped.
Consistency of Page Structure	3	Page structure is kept consistent among pages of the same topic but between different groups similar pages changes structure too often.

3.3.1   Text Layout

Text layout is easily readable, but sometimes the font size is too small (10.5) and, with a longer text, it results more difficult to read it. Events and accomodations' cards could look tidier by adjusting image and text heights, by reducing titles dimension, justifing text, without truncating it in the middle of a word and by giving it a bottom margin. Some cards, such as figure 6.a, respect the charateristics described above but most of them are shaped as figure 7.

Figure 7: Untidy event card

3.3.2   Interaction Placeholder

Textual and visual labels are expressive almost in every case, a small flaw is given by some textual links that aren't underlined and that, for this reason, seem to be normal and not clickable text. There are some inconcistency, such as the fact that all topbar elements are linked to general pages except for the textual label "Vacanze su misura" or the way in which filter buttons are labeled and shown. Some navigation buttons are expressive and consistent but could have a different layout (they could be bigger) in order to be more effective.

3.3.3   Spatial Allocation

Text and contents are well placed and reflect their relevance, but these elements could use pages' horizontal space in a better way.

3.3.4   Concistency of Page Structure

Pages belonging to the same groups or topics have similar layouts and they are consistent, but pages of different groups that are supposed to have same function aren't consistent and often have a different structure.

4   Aggregated Results and Discussion

This section has the aim to aggregate all scores obtained in section 3 for each group, every value is computed as the average of heuristics' scores previously assigned and represents the overall evaluation about how navigation, contents and layout is handled in "Visit Monterosa" website. Values are then approximeted by defect or by excess.

Navigation

The navigation analysis is given by the five values corresponding to the 5 analyzed aspects: Interaction Consistency, Group Navigation, Structural Navigation, Semantic Navigation and Landmarks.

**Average:** (4 + 2.5 + 4.5 + 2 + 4) / 5 = 3.4 *which can be approx to 3.5*
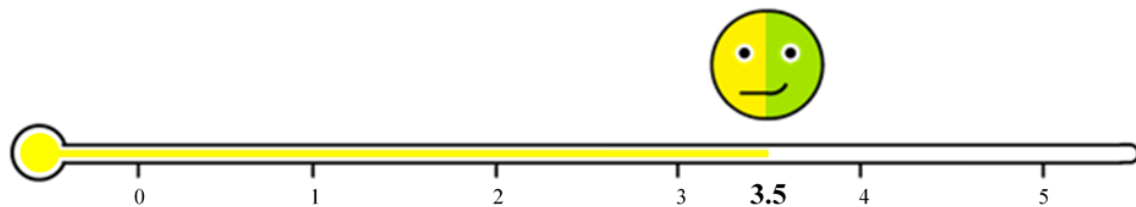
The mathematical average gives a 3.5 out of 5; this value underlines the fact that navigation is is pretty well handled, but with some issues that could be easily solved as reported in section 3.1.

Contents

The overall evaluation about contents is given by the average of the 2 analyzed aspects.

Average: (3.5 + 4) / 2 = 3.75 *which can be approx to 4*
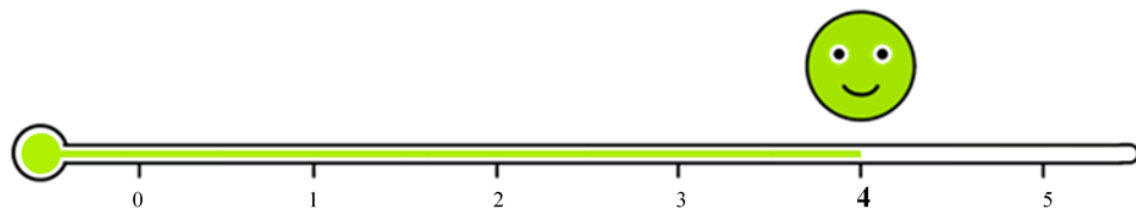

The mathematical average gives a 4 out of 5, a really high value. This evaluation is obtained because the website offers lots of information related to various topics and because they are quite well organized between pages. It could reach the maximum score by adding some little improvements as explained in section 3.2.

Layout

For what concern the layout analysis, it has been done thanks to the evaluation of 4 foundamental aspects.

Average: (3 + 4 + 4 + 3) / 4 = 3.5
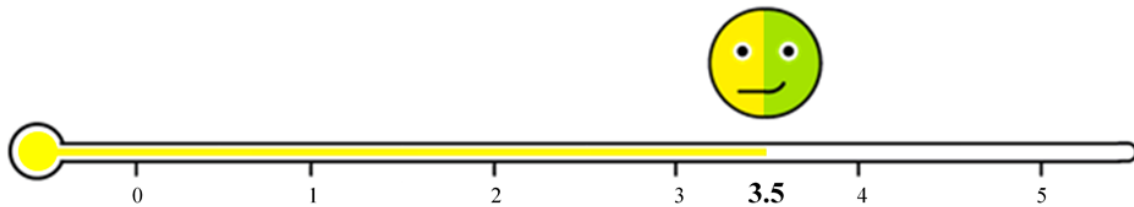
Also in this case the average gives a 3.5 out of 5; this value means that layout is pretty well done but could be improved more by adjusting some critical aspects such as Text Layout and the Concistency between pages.

5   Conclusion

As this usability evaluation study has highlighted, the Monterosa's website gives to users a quite good experience that could be easily improved by solving the found small issues.

For what concern Navigation, the strength is given by the four landmarks (header (fig. 1), topbar (fig. 2), leftbar (fig. 3) and bottombar (fig. 4) which:

- ensure a consistent aspect between pages;

- give an intuitive way to navigate between contents;

- overcome all navigation problems related to links' miss between contents of a same topic and structural problems.

This aspect could be better managed by adding the possibility to go back to previous page *(for example by including the followed path to reach each page)*; by adding links and letting users to move between similar contents without always accessing the header and by being more consistent in buttons layout and and visibility (for example by always showing only the one related to the selected season).

Contents have taken the best score between the 3 groups because the website contains lots of information well organized and without visible issues. The only adjustments that could be done is related to adding all missing images and adding some text even in those pages in which there is just an expressive title.

Last but not the least, sometimes the layout was found a little too rough but with a small effort could make pages look tidier and more clear (suggestions can be found in section 3.3). The real layout weak point is given by the lack of consistency between the pages reached by clicking over topbar's links, they should be similar but actually there are 2 main contents' structures (fig. 8 - fig. 9). We don't know which one should be used to make it uniform because both have they pros and cons.
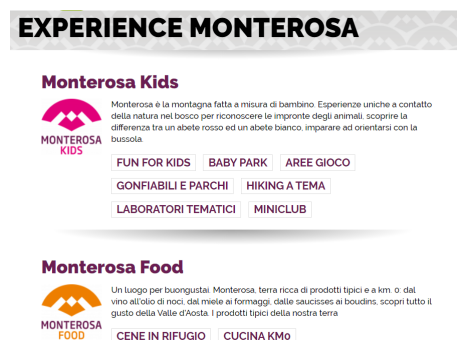

Figure 8: Content's structure 1

Figure 9: Content's structure 2

Personal Comment

We encounter some difficulties in alligning our ways of reasoning over the analyzed aspects and also in getting the heuristics limits. We found this project kinda complex but in the same time interesting because it allowed us to understand in a clear way what has an impact over our sentiment as users and how we would like a website to be done.

A Annex

The following tables are the ones upon which the final scores are obtained and they contain the individual ratings.

Heuristics	Alessandra Pasini	Stefano Bagarin
Interaction Consistency	4	4
Group Navigation	2	3
Structural Navigation	4	5
Semantic Navigation	2	2
Landmarks	4	4

Figure 10: Navigation

Heuristics	Alessandra Pasini	Stefano Bagarin
Information Overload	3	4
Quality of Contents	4	4

Figure 11: Contents

Heuristics	Alessandra Pasini	Stefano Bagarin
Text Layout	3	3
Interaction Placeholder	5	3
Spatial Allocation	4	4
Consistency of Page Structure	2	4

Figure 12: Layout