

Heuristics:

- 1) Navigation is pretty explicit on this website. On the main page, it is easily inferred that the user can navigate to four main sections: "Study with Us", "Our Research", "Business & Enterprise", "Alumni & Supporters". So the primary navigation seems to be a mix of separation of types of people such as students and alumni, but also separation of subjects such as research, classes and business.

However, if the user wants to go to "Our Research", they have to press the "Our Research" tab, and press "Our Research" again. This double click is unnecessary. Not only is it time consuming, but it also confuses the user. Even though the main background changes, the user might not see that a "Our Reserch" navigation menu showed up. Therefore, the user might think that the "Our Research" link does not work, and cannot direct them to the research main page.

It is fairly easy to see where we are by looking at the directory-like map. This "trail of breadcrumbs" allows the user to easily navigate back to the main page. However, the aesthetics of the navigation bar could greatly be improved.

- 2) The text chosen feel natural and straightforward. The designers did a good job at synthesizing FAQs in few-word expressions. This makes the website easier to go through for the client, and much cleaner. Confusion is avoided and the intended information gets to the user.

There are some awkward formulations though. For instance the section : "What's happening" should be renamed "Events". This is a major problem, since the user is less likely to click a link that they do not understand. For instance, there is a link called "hosted bodies". This sound too mysterious and obscure to invite user to click on this link. Therefore, there is a whole part of the website that will not be visited as much as it should be. .

- 3) There is not much to interrupt or undo, the website does not implement a back button, but all browsers have it already. Everything loads so fast that the user does not have time to cancel mid navigation

The only time when there is "loading", is when we go to the virtual tour. But it does not take more than a couple of seconds to get the tour going. Also, if the user presses the home button, but while the page loads, they click on "Maps and Directions" the request is updated, and the map will show instead of the home page.

When the user clicks on "Maps and Directions", they are redirected to a nice interactive map. Even though it does not look like the rest of the site, it is still aesthetic, and it feels like a mobile application, which means that it looks simple, clear, but it is efficient. When the user selects a place, some information about the place appears on the map. There is not only a picture of the place, but also links related to this place such as a link to the department which is in this building.

- 4) The website lacks consistency in many categories:

For navigation, the home page looks nothing like any other page, it feels that we go through two different websites. If we research something, we go to the google embedded page, embedded in the website, but it does not feel like the navigation is consistent.

Headlines are not consistent either. for example, "Our Research" leads to "Research", "Business & Enterprise" leads to "Business Services".

Even the buttons do not seem to be consistent: search button vs letter buttons

The contact bar at the bottom is not consistent. In the home page, it is relatively tall and black. On the “Our Research” page, it is much shorter, but still black. Finally, on the sports page, the contact bar is short and green.

The home page presents the website’s brand as colorful, simplistic, with not too much information. However, the rest of the website looks old fashioned, it has too much text everywhere, almost no images, blank backgrounds, etc.

- 5) There is not much error to handle on this website, since there are not many places where errors could occur. However, often times when an error could occur, it does, without being prevented by the system. For instance, on the homepage, the user can press the search button without typing anything to search. That leads the user to the search page with written “Sorry, no results were found. Please try again with different words.” on it.
- 6) The user can tell where they are by looking at the breadcrumb trail. However, the site does not have a clear color convention. On the main page, it looks like they are trying to associate Study with green, Research with orange, Business with Red, and Alumni with another green. But this convention is not applied anywhere else. The background color does change from pages to pages, but it is more confusing, than helping.
- 7) This website does pretty poorly for frequent users, since it seems like there is no automatic customization from the website for the user. For instance, every time the user goes to the interactive map, a help dialog shows up. If the user is a student, and needs to regularly check out the map, they do not need the dialog after their first visit.
- 8) The homepage is looks pretty nice, since it is very minimalist. The negative space is well filled with the background picture, and the page is not flooded by text.
- 9) There are two main errors that are recovered on this website. The first kind are errors due to unsuccessful search, the system tells clearly the user that the search was unsuccessful, but it does not make suggestions to solve the problem.
The other kind are bad URLs, aka error 404. The website does a pretty good job at handling those errors. Indeed, not only there is a custom page saying that the typed URL does not exist, but the system suggests similar links to the user, to help them find the page they were looking for.
- 10) Almost everywhere on the website, there is a contact bar at the bottom of the page. This contact bar separates users in different categories, such as students and visitors.
There is no help link on the main page. However, on the rest of the website, the contact bar contains a help link. The help page is really ugly, it has too much text, which makes it harder for the user to find what they are looking for.