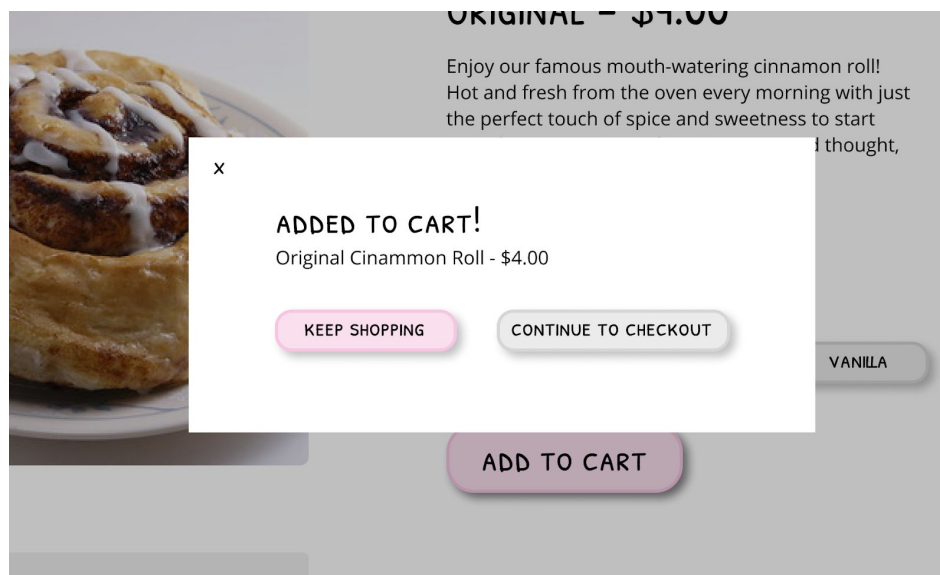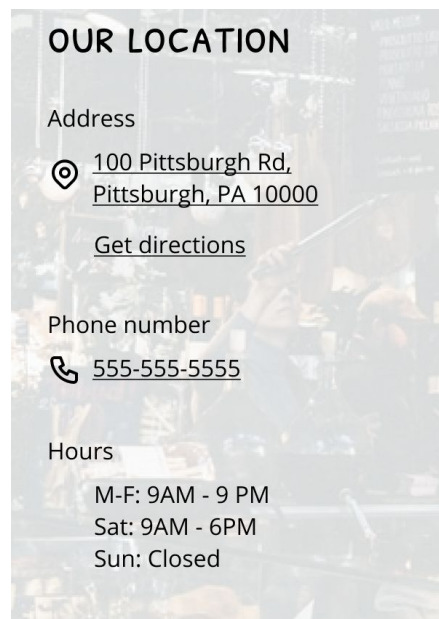Akshaya Madhavan

Assignment 5 Reflection

Before starting this assignment, I asked a classmate to conduct a heuristic evaluation of my website prototype. They found bugs related to the following heuristics: the match between system and the real world, and user control and freedom. They also found a design error, which I think relates to the "minimalist and aesthetic design" heuristic. The first bug was that I used the label "choose options" under each item on the product browsing page to redirect the user to its corresponding detail page. My tester found that the label was confusing, so I changed it to "select."

Another bug they found was that after users clicked "add to cart" on the product detail page, the prototype directed users straight to the checkout page. The tester suggested that users should be given an option to return to the product detail or product browsing page after adding an item to the cart. This would give users the freedom to choose more cinnamon rolls before checking out. So, I added a popup to allow users to keep shopping after adding an item to their cart.

Finally, the last bug they found was that it was difficult to read the text on one of my pages because it was on top of an image. To fix this, I increased the opacity of the white overlay to make the text stand out.

After fixing these UI issues, I began implementing the home page, product browsing page, and one product detail page for the original cinnamon roll. The implementation was slightly difficult for me because I have limited background knowledge in HTML/CSS. Although Codecademy is good at introducing novices to the concepts of HTML/CSS, it isn't good at helping people practice it in my opinion. Simply copying down lines of code isn't enough to help people learn. That being said, my main challenges were with creating CSS rules. I have experience with many object-oriented programming languages, so I am comfortable with abstracting concepts and creating lots of reusable code. However, I didn't quite understand the best practices for doing this with CSS. I had many elements that needed different padding, margins, and positions, so I found myself creating a huge amount of classes. It wasn't until I was almost done with my project that I realized it was better to create general classes and apply many classes to the same element depending on what styling I needed. I think that with practice and the more I see the work of experienced web developers, the more I will learn about HTML/CSS best practices. One specific challenge I had was dealing with positioning and overflow within divs, but it became easier when I finally remembered that the vertical-align property existed.

As I was coding this website, I kept the brand identity of this shop in mind. Like I mentioned in Assignment 3, we weren't given instructions on brand identity. By extrapolating from the name of the shop, I came up with a rough persona for the shop owners and the target audience. I assumed that the shop owners would be young people who made a cute and cozy bakery that would attract other young people looking for a comfortable place to relax. These ideas informed many of my design decisions like applying a pastel color palette and using lighthearted copywriting.