Heuristic Evaluation

Key:
Website 1 (NKLA)
Website 2 (LAAS)
Recap/Comparison

1. Visibility of system status

- On various sign-up forms, the website does not indicate that there are additional fields until you reach the last field. This can be frustrating for users who do not know how long the sign-up form will take. (2)
- In addition, there is no submit button on these sign-up forms until the user reaches the very last field (which does not appear initially). This can make the form seem incomplete or broken to users even though it is not. (3)
- It's also unclear whether some required fields are actually required on these sign-up forms because they are not marked with a red asterisk despite other fields being correctly marked. This can cause confusion for the user when they are not able to submit the form or progress in the sign-up process. (2)
- There is no indication of whether completed fields have been filled with an appropriate value (e.g., email address, driver's license number). This can delay the sign-up process and make it more frustrating when users have to revisit various parts of the very long form. (1)
- Some fields (that prompt longer responses) are so small that users cannot see their entire response at once. This can make it difficult for users to see what they have written (2)
- Both websites' sign-up forms use check marks to indicate which volunteering preferences users have selected, which is good.
- Both websites' sign-up forms have issues with indicating required fields and whether users have entered appropriate values for those fields; perhaps this could be solved with color-coding or the addition of symbols to signify a correctly completed field.

2. Match between system and real world

- The 'Contact Us' page bears visual resemblance to an address book, containing the phone numbers and email addresses of the adoption center as well as other important contacts; however, the phrase 'Contact Us' typically indicates that the user will be able to reach the key contact through the page, much like a person

who wants to call their friend would dial the phone rather than look at an address book. (1)
- The 'Contact Us' page was nested in the 'About Us' tab and felt quite hidden. (2)
- The 'Contact Us' page bears visual resemblance to both an instruction manual and an address book, containing information on who to contact for certain circumstances as well as listing the phone numbers and email addresses of important contacts; however, the phrase 'Contact Us' typically indicates that the user will be able to reach the key contact through the page, much like a person who wants to call their friend would dial the phone rather than look at an address book. (1)
- Both websites have a 'Contact Us' page that feels like an address book rather than a form or tool by which users can get in contact with key individuals. This could be solved by adding a contact form (rather than listing out emails), an interactive map of the shelters (rather than just an address), and a call button for mobile users.

3. User control and freedom
- The website's adoption page does a good job of allowing you to modify/clear your selected filters for pets on the same page as the results. (Good)
- Once you filter the pets on the website's adoption page, there is no way to modify/clear your selected filters without returning to the previous search/filter page. It can be frustrating to have to return to the previous page every time users want to modify or clear their filters. (3)
- Instead of having a 'Clear' button to clear all filters like the NKLA website, there is an equivalent 'No Preference' option for each of the filters. It can be annoying to have to select 'No Preference' for every filter instead of just clicking on a single 'Clear' button. (2)
- Both websites have adoption pages with filters that can be selected and deselected to generate desired results.

4. Consistency and standards
- Some links and buttons change in color when users hover over them while others don't. Users might be confused as to what is or isn't a link/button. (2)
- Some links are colored while others are black. Users might be confused as to what is or isn't a link. (1)
- On sign-up forms, some required fields are marked with a red asterisk while others are marked with text saying 'Answer Required.' Users might be confused as to what is actually required. (1)

- Some subheaders are styled with a plain color background and white text while others are styled with a gradient color background and black text. (1)
- Some links change in color when users hover over them while others are highlighted. Users might be confused as to what is or isn't a link. (1)
- It's not clear what the difference between menu items and nested menu items is. (1)
- Subheaders on the left side of the website are styled like buttons but cannot actually be clicked on. Users might be confused as to what is or isn't a link/button. (1)
- Both websites can improve on the consistency and standardization of their links and buttons in order to make the user experience easier.

5. Recognition rather than recall
- In the name field of the filters on the pet adoption page, users are prompted to type in a name rather than select from a set of given names. It is likely impossible for users to generate the name of a pet at the shelter unless they have already browsed the page or visited the center. (2)
- Instructions/next steps on how to adopt a pet should be provided when the user selects a pet they are interested in. Right now, there is no adoption information provided on the pet listings, and users have to navigate to a separate 'Pet Adoption Center' page themselves. (3)
- When looking through the pet adoption page, there is no way to tell which pets you have already viewed and which pets you have not. In addition, there is no way to mark which pets you want to remember. Perhaps there should be a display of previously/recently viewed pets as well as favorite pets. (2)
- Both websites are lacking ways for users to see recently viewed pets and to mark their favorite pets, which are important features in the adoption process. The addition of these features could facilitate the adoption process.

6. Error prevention
- On the donation form, the final submission button has the text 'Donate $X' in order to confirm that the user wants to donate the listed amount of money. However, if the user has selected the option to donate monthly, this button does not update to reflect that. (2)
- There is no indication of which fields are required on the donation form, which could lead to issues when submitting. (1)

- The donation form does not require users to confirm their email address, which could lead to the donation confirmation / receipt and other potentially sensitive information being sent to the wrong person. (2)
- There is no indication of which fields are required on the donation form, which could lead to issues when submitting. (1)
- The total donation amount is only updated when users click on the 'Update Total' button. If users forget to do so, this could cause them to donate an amount of money different from what they had intended. (3)
- Both websites lack indication of required fields and important updates that can largely affect the submission of forms and amount of donation. Consistently indicating required fields and making sure that important updates are both automatic and accurate should help with these issues.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
- The filters on the pet adoption page allow more experienced users to filter the available pets based on their preferences while still allowing newer users to browse all of the available pets. Additional filters, like color or maintenance level, should be added to allow advanced users to further specify their preferences. (1)
- The filters on the pet adoption page allow more experienced users to filter the available pets based on their preferences while still allowing newer users to browse all of the available pets. Additional filters, like breed or shelter location of pet, should be added to allow both basic and advanced to specify important preferences. (2)
- Both websites are currently accessible to both basic and advanced users, but the addition of important filters can make it easier for users to specify important preferences.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design
- On the 'Spay Neuter' page, there is excessive information about Spay/Neuter partner websites and options based on your location. Instead, it would be simpler to have users enter their location and to generate available spay or neuter options based on their input. (2)
- All frequently asked questions and answers are displayed, which appears cluttered. Instead, it would make more sense to display only the questions and have them expand with the answers when the user clicks on them so that the user only sees the information they are interested in. (2)

- The 'Spay & Neuter Resources' page lists various mobile clinics that users may be eligible for. Instead, it would be simpler to have users enter their relevant information and to generate available clinics based on their input. (2)
- Both websites have a lot of unnecessary information that can be simplified by requiring basic input before presenting relevant results.

9. Help users with error
- The newsletter sign-up widget allows users to submit the form even if they have entered an invalid email address. This could lead users to think that they are on the mailing list even though they are not. (3)
- The volunteer sign-up form allows users to submit an incorrectly formatted phone number. The organization might not be able to contact the user. (1)
- Users can submit a donation form despite having an incorrectly formatted address, postal code, and more. (2)
- Both websites allow for the submission of forms despite invalid values for certain fields, which can be problematic because the organizations might not be able to contact the user or contact the wrong user. Adding in checks for valid values before submission should resolve this issue.

10. Help and documentation
- Information about the adoption process is presented in a block of text. Along with other information in the website, it may be better presented in a more modular list of distinct topics so that users can select what information they're interested in acquiring. (2)
- The website lacks clear information/steps on the adoption process, merely suggesting for users to visit a shelter and fill out an adoption form there. There is no indication of necessary information/materials for the process, the expected timeline, or other pertinent details. (1)
- The website also lacks answers to common questions about the adoption process, volunteering, and other aspects of the organization. The search bar does not scan all pages of the website and is thus ineffective for users. (2)
- Both websites lack easily accessible and digestible help sections for important services like adopting, fostering, volunteering, and more. Breaking down information into modular blocks of content and having the search bar scan all pages should help with this issue.