

Module 3: Redesigning a Website

I redesigned the navigation menu for the State of Delaware's voter registration website. There were many aspects of the current design that I found very user-unfriendly. First, the navigation bar had a gradient background that created confusing visual noise. Next, the navigation bar didn't actually contain most of the navigation. It only included a search bar and a litany of confusing external links. Finally, said external links emerged once the user clicked a button that loaded a javascript animation to reveal them. Since they didn't even relate to voter registration, it confused me that they would be placed at the top.

I chose the Marvel app to prototype my revised design and ended up regretting my choice due to the tool's poor usability. I decided on the tool because it was recommended and I had never prototyped before. Though I wouldn't use it again, it was sufficient for this project.

Before starting, I decided that the webpage would benefit from minimalism and simplicity, since it must be accessible and usable for everyone in the State of Delaware. The navigation bar should have a solid background with a lot of contrast between it and the links, I decided. With this in mind, I began experimenting. My initial design included more menu items, but I decided to leave some sub-categories off, since they could be placed instead in the sidebar. Fortunately, there were three categories at the top of the informational hierarchy, and I was able to make them very large in the navigation bar. This allows people with fine motor disabilities to easily click the buttons, and visitors with visual impairments to easily recognize the navigation elements. Since elderly citizens often experience these disabilities and tend to vote at a higher rate than any other age group, I decided designing for their accessibility was a top priority. With something as important as our democratic process at stake, disenfranchising the elderly vote with an inaccessible website would be highly unethical. Having three main menu options also corresponds with the psychological *rule of three*, which states elements grouped in trios are more understandable. Next, I moved the search bar to the right of the navigation menu, decreasing its size slightly. While I liked how big the search bar was before, it was worth the trade-off for larger navigation buttons. Additionally, this split the navigation bar into three separate areas: the logo to the left, the buttons in the center, and the search to the right. This made it more visually digestible. Finally, I made an obvious choice to change the color of the navigation button of the active page so the user can easily understand their location on the website at a glance.

My roommate, Puneet, helped me by testing the prototype. After testing, he told me that the navigation looked good was intuitive. However, he said the links in the navigation seemed to "flow" into each other. To address this, I added solid 1px lines separating each navigation element, making them more like true buttons than text links.



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