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Brandy♥ Melville

JUST IN

BASICS

CLOTHING

GRAPHICS

ACCESSORIES

GIFT CARDS

LOOKBOOK



Brandy Melville: User Experience Report



Christina Li

Website: www.brandymelvilleusa.com

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Brandy ❤ Melville

OVERVIEW

Background: Brandy Melville is an Italian clothing line and fashion accessories brand that carries a vintage, old-school vibe. This brand's target customers are teenage girls and young adult women. Products are sold in physical stores and online stores. This report will focus on evaluating the usability of their online website. So far, its online clothing site has successfully attracted customers to purchase their items, because it is easily navigable and aesthetically designed to match its target customer's taste.

Purpose of this Report: This report provides an in-depth user experience analysis of this site using Nielsen's ten design heuristics and provides recommendations on how this website could be improved. User experience is defined as how the user feels when they are interacting with the system throughout every moment that they are using it. [4] Using heuristics over other methods of user experience analysis is advantageous because it provides quick and inexpensive feedback to designers, can be used early in the design process, and can be used in conjunction with other methods. [6]

Expectations: The central goal when designing products that users interact with is to ensure that these systems are usable, meaning they are "easy to learn, effective to use, and provide an enjoyable experience." [3] Specifically for online shopping sites, the top five features that over 50% of customers look for are clear pricing/shipping information, credibility, displaying products on the homepage, a visually appealing website, and a total cost calculator. [2] These expectations are connected with Nielsen's ten heuristics, and this report will discuss how well Brandy Melville's website meets these expectations.

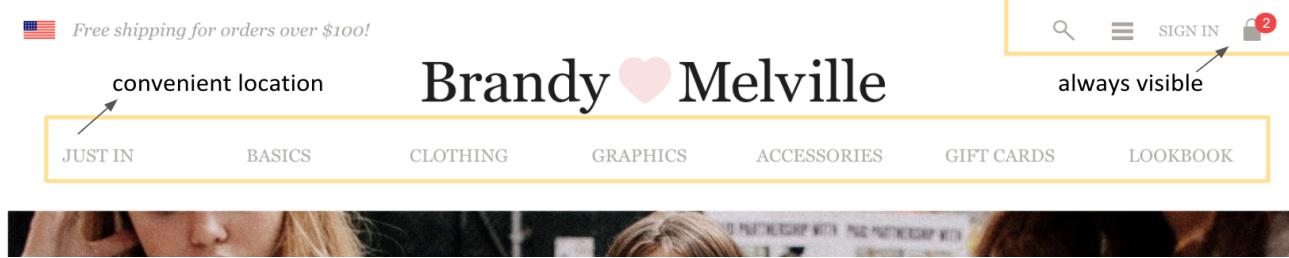
Rating System: Each heuristic will be rated based on Nielsen's rating system, which is a scale from zero to four, with increasing numbers meaning that there is a more significant usability issue. Specifically, a zero indicates that there is no usability problem, a one indicates that there is a cosmetic problem, a two indicates that there is a minor usability issue, a three indicates a major usability issue, and a four indicates that there is a usability catastrophe. [8] The purpose of this rating system is to concisely summarize the severity of usability problems. This enables designers to rapidly and efficiently allocate resources to fix the more pressing issues (i.e. heuristics that received a higher rating). [1]

10 HEURISTICS EVALUATION

1. Visibility of System Status

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how well the system communicates with the user how the system is responding to the user's actions in the system. Being knowledgeable of the current state of the system enables users to make better decisions. [5]

Rating: 2



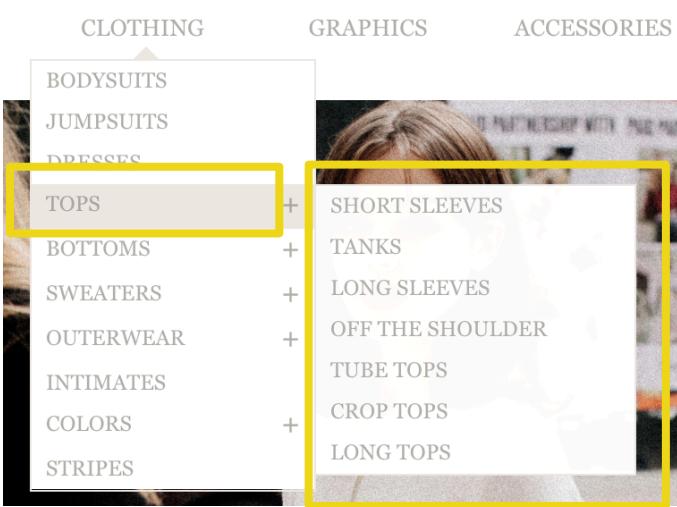
Categories Panel & Icons

As soon as customers go onto this site, they see a panel at the top of the page with all of the categories of items that this store sells (Just In, Basics, Clothing, etc.) so they immediately have a good understanding of what is available to them. All tabs for each category are always accessible at the top of the page, so users can easily switch between browsing through different categories without having to press the back-page button or returning to the homepage. Also, when the user hovers their mouse over a category, the text darkens, which provides good feedback to let users know that the system has acknowledged which category they are interested in. Furthermore, it is convenient that the shopping bag icon is always visible at the upper right-hand corner so customers can see how many items are in their cart. Each time an item is added, the number increases by one immediately, so the user knows that the item was successfully added.

Categories Page

When customers hover their mouse over a product image, a slideshow immediately begins to play, showing images of the product from different angles. This allows the user to find out more information about the product without having to click on it and go to another page.

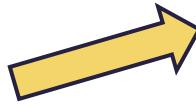




{ Recommendation }

TOPS

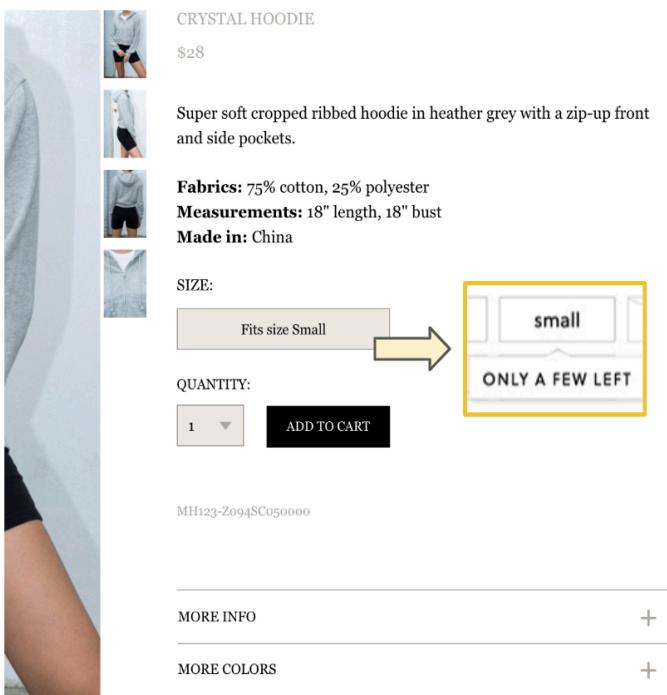
SHORT SLEEVES
TANKS
LONG SLEEVES
OFF THE SHOULDER
TUBE TOPS
CROP TOPS
LONG TOPS



Drop-down Menus

When users hover their mouse over the clothing, graphics, and accessories categories, a drop-down menu appears with further subcategories, and within some subcategories, a side-menu appears with more subcategories. This is slightly inconvenient to the user to have to go through multiple tabs to find what they are looking for. It would be better if there is only one drop-down menu and under each broader subcategory (i.e. tops), the more specific subcategories (i.e. short sleeves, tanks, long sleeves, etc.) are displayed in an indented list below it so that all of the options are visible at the same time.

{ Recommendation }



Product Page

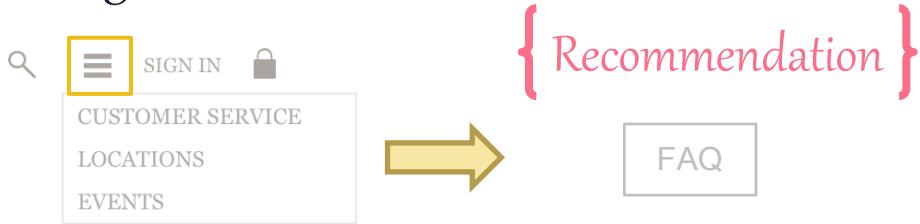
The product page shows pictures of the item from multiple different angles and the customer can see all of the photos that are available on a side panel to the right of the current picture. The information about the item is presented in a concise and organized way without multiple tabs, which is easy for the customer to read and understand.

One improvement that would make this page better would be to display information about whether or not there are only a few items left in stock, so that customers will know if they should order a product soon before the store runs out.

2. Match Between System and the Real World

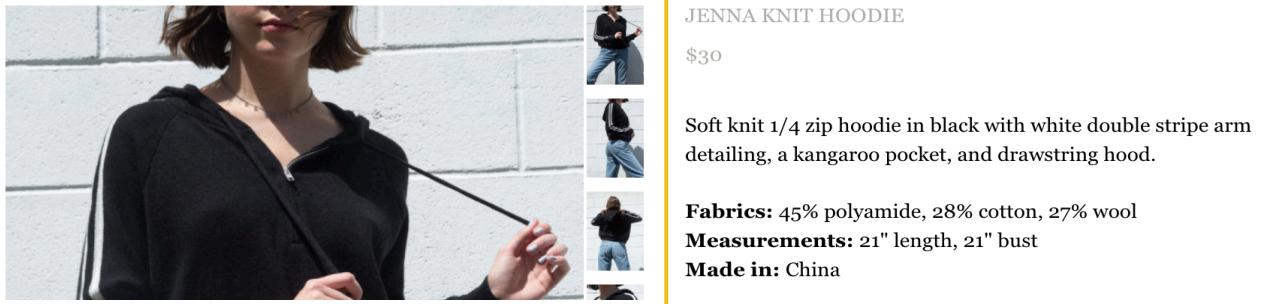
Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates if the system uses common everyday language and concepts and if the information is presented in a logical order that the user can easily understand. [7]

Rating: 1



Meaning of Icons

The search, sign-in, and shopping bag icons at the top right corner follow real-world conventions, but the function of the icon with three horizontal lines could be confusing to customers. This icon provides a drop-down menu for customer service, locations, and events, so instead of this three-line icon, the site could provide a tab titled "FAQ."



Product Descriptions

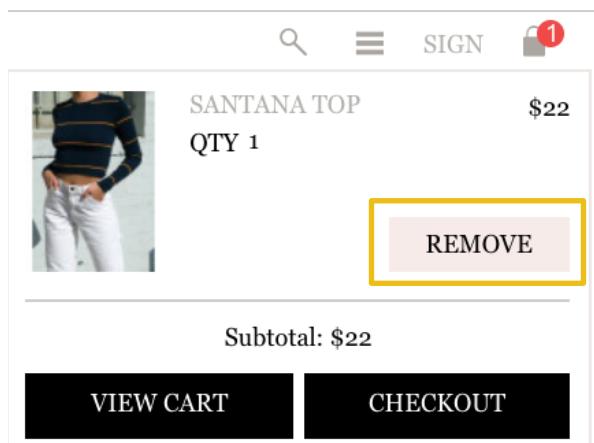
The names of their products could be slightly confusing, especially to new customers because people normally expect, for example "black hoodie with white-striped sleeves" but instead see "Jenna Knit Hoodie." However, this is a stylistic choice for this brand and if users type "black hoodie" into the search bar, they can still see this product as one of the results, so it is not a significant issue.

Overall, the descriptions of the products match real-world conventions because they are written concisely in layman's terms and the information is presented in a logical order starting with the name of the product, its price, etc.

3. User Control and Freedom

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates if the system easily allows the user to undo and redo their actions and if they can easily exit an unwanted state. [7]

Rating: 0

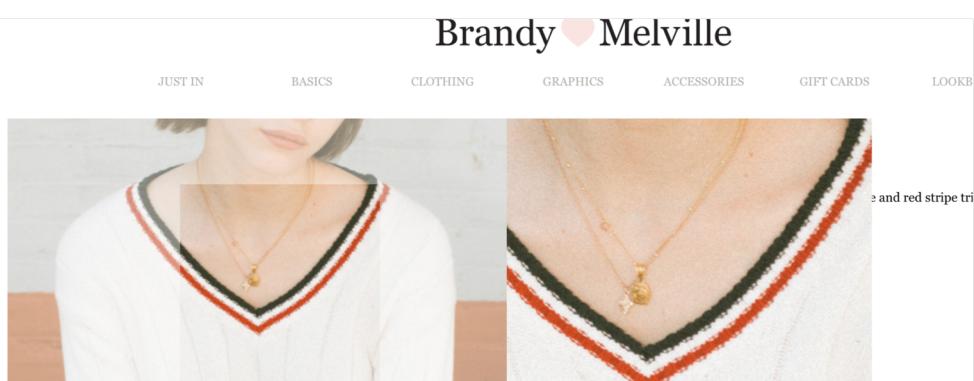


When customers want to remove an item that they added to their cart, they can easily do so by clicking on the shopping bag icon and clicking "remove." It is especially convenient that the items in the cart appear in a drop-down menu, so users can immediately continue shopping after removing the item, instead of being navigated to another page. This makes the customer's shopping experience more efficient.

4. Consistency and Standards

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates whether or not words and actions across the system have the same meaning and if the system follows typical conventions of similar platforms. [7]

Rating: 2



Each product page, whether it is for clothes, accessories, etc. have the same layout. Also, for individual product pages, all of the information is

organized in the same order. Moreover, every time users hover their mouse over pictures of products, they will see a magnified view. The consistency of formatting is enjoyable for users because they will know what to expect as they are navigating through the website.

CLOTHING

- BODYSUITS
- JUMPSUITS
- DRESSES
- TOPS +
- BOTTOMS +
- SWEATERS +
- OUTERWEAR +
- INTIMATES
- COLORS** +
- STRIPES

{ Recommendation }

Sort by Featured Items ▾

Featured Items
 Price: Low to High
 Price: High to Low
 Customers' Top Rated
 Best Sellers
 New Arrivals



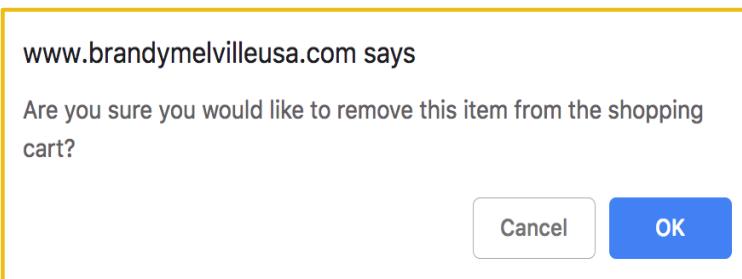
Although this site follows the conventions of online shopping websites in terms of layout, one recommendation is instead of listing colors and stripes as subcategories under clothing, the site should give an option to sort each subcategory by color, stripes, low to high prices, best sellers, etc. like most other online shopping websites. Allowing customers to narrow their search makes their shopping experience more time-efficient because they can find what they are looking for faster.

5. Error Prevention

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how well the system helps users prevent making mistakes so that they can avoid the hassle of error messages. [7]

Rating: 2

Message Pop-up



It is helpful for customers that when they click remove for an item in their shopping bag, a message pops up to double-check that the customer actually wanted to remove it. This prevents the customer from accidentally removing an item then not being able to find it again.

{Recommendations}

Checkout Page

The checkout page should provide a drop-down menu with options to prevent the customer from inputting a misspelled country, city, or state. Also, there should be preset formatting for entering mobile numbers.

Search Bar

There should be a drop-down menu that appears to display suggestions based on what the user has begun typing in the search bar, so users do not need to worry about misspelling the name of an item.

6. Recognition Rather Than Recall

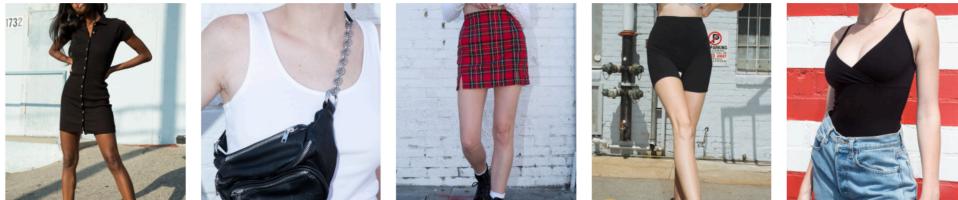
Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how well this platform makes information available to users so that they can recognize what will happen when they perform an action rather than having to recall what they need to do. [7]

Rating: 4

{Recommendations}



Recently viewed...



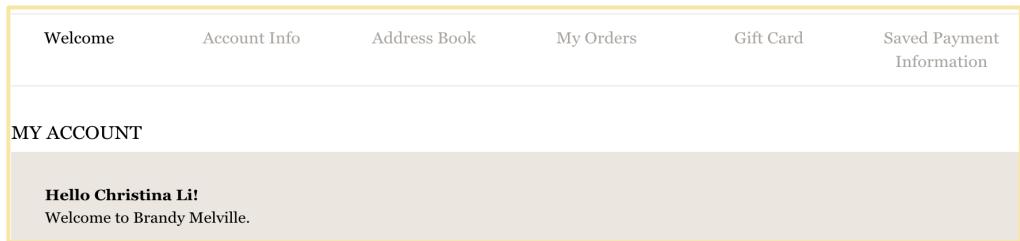
This site does not promote recognition over recall, so there are many improvements that can be made. One recommendation would be to provide a drop-down menu of the names of previous items that users looked up in the search bar or display a list of pictures of the items that users recently viewed so that they can find a product that they looked up a couple days ago. Another recommendation would be to create a wish list or favorites feature so that users can save items that they like in one place and decide whether or not to purchase them later.

7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how well this platform tailors to both experienced and novice users so that more experienced users can navigate the system more efficiently while novice users can be given more guidance. [7]

Rating: 3

CREATE AN ACCOUNT



To cater to new and regular customers, the site designed a feature where customers can make an account, so that users can access features, such as saving payment information to speed up the checkout process, saving multiple shipping addresses, and tracking current orders.

{ Recommendations }

or 1-Click Checkout



Buy all items with 1-Click

Ship to: Christina Li- Ann Arbor

However, this aspect of the site can be improved if in addition to the current features that having an account provides, there were also personalized suggested products based on what the customer purchased in the past and a 1-click ordering option to speed up the checkout process.

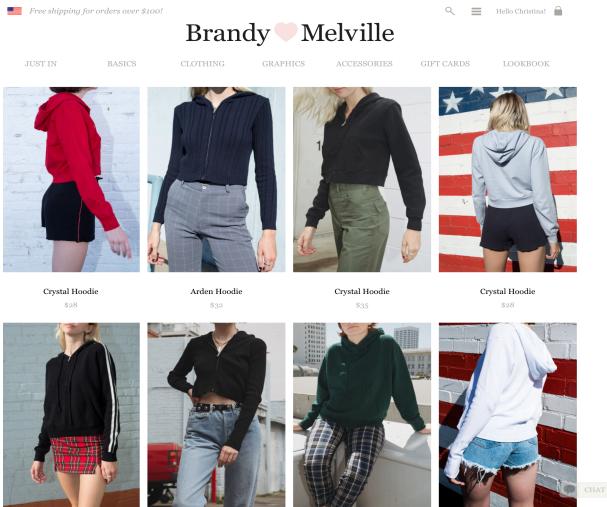
Top Picks for you:



8. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates if this system provides only relevant information in a concise manner and if the information is presented it in a physically appealing way. [7]

Rating: 0



This site excels in terms of aesthetic and minimalist design. The photos of the products, the color of the text, the font style, etc. are aesthetically pleasing. Also, the amount of information that is displayed is not overwhelming to the customer. There is no irrelevant or unnecessary information present.

9. Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how helpful this system's error messages are in guiding the user to find a solution to fix their error. [7]

Rating: 3

www.brandymelvilleusa.com says

There are a number of errors present with the credit card form:
 Card Number is invalid.
 Expiry Month is invalid.
 Expiry Year is invalid.
 CVV is invalid.
 Postal Code is invalid.

OK

{ Recommendation }

Email Address *

christinali197@gmail.com

Email should be in the format example@gmail.com

Email Address *

christinali197@gmail.com

Invalid Email Address

Error messages appear on the checkout page if the customer forgets to enter information in a required field or entered an invalid value, such as an incorrectly formatted email address. The helpfulness of these messages could be improved if the site provided suggestions for how to fix the problem, such as stating that the email should be formatted like example@gmail.com, and highlighting the text boxes of fields that are missing or incorrectly entered.

10. Help and Documentation

Description of Heuristic: This heuristic evaluates how accessible the system's help system is so that the user can easily look up their questions regarding how to use the system. [7]

Rating: 1

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Sat-Sun • 8am-3pm PST

FAQ
WHEN WILL I GET MY ORDER?

Orders usually ship out within 3-4 business days. During the busy holiday season it may take longer to process your order. Next Day Air orders placed on Saturdays and Sundays will be processed the following business day. Flat rate shipping takes 5-10 days via ground. You'll get an email with the tracking number once your order is processed.

CHAT
CHAT

There is sufficient help available to customers. Especially with the live chat option at the bottom of the page, customers can ask questions to employees and get a response within a couple minutes. There is also a customer service page that provides their phone number, email, and answers to frequently asked questions, so overall, users have sufficient access to helpful resources.

{ Recommendation }

One recommendation is to provide either a search bar for the FAQ page or a list of the questions with links that jump down the page to where the answer is so that users can find help more efficiently rather than scrolling through the entire FAQ page.

SUMMARY

Heuristic	Rating
Visibility of System Status	2
Match Between System and Real World	1
User Control and Freedom	0
Consistency and Standards	2
Error Prevention	2
Recognition Rather than Recall	4
Flexibility and Efficiency of Use	3
Aesthetic and Minimalist Design	0
Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors	3
Help and Documentation	1

0 = no usability problem, 1 = cosmetic problem, 2 = minor usability, 3 = major usability, 4 = usability catastrophe [CITE]

Two Major Recommendations

1. **More personalization.** Currently, there is not a major difference between the experience that a customer receives with versus without an account. This site can be significantly improved if it provided personalized recommended products to customers based on previous purchases and allowed customers to see their recently viewed items.
2. **More intricate features to increase efficiency.** This site does an excellent job of minimizing the clutter of information presented to the user, but there could be many technical features added to enable a more efficient experience for the user. This includes designing a filter system to narrow the user's search, a search bar that provides suggestions, and more specific error messages.

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