

# HEURISTIC ANALYSIS

---

## Yale School of Art

Website Design Project

---

**Prepared by:**



**Version:** 1.0

October 4, 2015

Prepared for Yale School of Art by Dream Team Designs

Confidential: Reproduction of this document by any entity outside of Yale School of Art or Dream Team Designs is strictly forbidden.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background and goals .....	3
Project and site information .....	3
Project goals.....	3
Methodology .....	4
Principles of usable design.....	4
Benefits and limitations .....	6
Issues and recommendations .....	7
Severity rating scale .....	7
Issue type .....	8
Conclusion .....	9

# BACKGROUND AND GOALS

---

The background information provided in this section describes the project and site information. Additionally, this section describes the goals of the project.

## PROJECT AND SITE INFORMATION

The Yale School of Art is an Ivy League school for the gifted students in the arts. The site is currently being presented as a wiki where students and faculty alike can make changes to most pages including changing the look and feel of each page; this leads to a disjointed and unprofessional looking website that is difficult to navigate. The Dream Team Designs team's goal is to reorganize the content, redesign the brand, and create a cohesive layout that is easy to navigate and reflects the prestigiousness of the Yale name.

The focus of this heuristic analysis (also referred to as expert review) will be the look and feel of the site, content organization, a split of the site for students and faculty, and presenting the work of the students.

## PROJECT GOALS

Our goals as listed below:

- Make the site look professional
- Display student work in an easy-to-use gallery
- Attract potential students and encourage them to apply
- Offer separate student- and faculty-facing facets of the site

The project team is working closely with the Usability Competency Center (UCC) to achieve these goals.

# METHODOLOGY

---

An expert review is a way to evaluate a Web site or Web application in terms of specific attributes to identify that the site or app is consistent or inconsistent with commonly accepted user interface design guidelines. The strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improving the architecture and design focus on the following areas:

- **Global:** Issue that affect the site/application as a whole.
- **Navigation:** Issue that focuses specifically on the navigation (e.g., primary, secondary, links, breadcrumb)
- **Content:** Issue related to content (e.g., context, placement, headings)
- **Functionality:** Issue related to the functionality of the Web site/application.
- **Personalization:** Issue specific to customization for or by an individual user.

Within the “Issues and Recommendations” section of this report, each issue will be identified using these areas, also known as issue type. A severity rating (on a scale of 1-4) will also be given to identify the severity of each.

## PRINCIPLES OF USABLE DESIGN

While conducting this expert review the UCC will attempt to relate each finding to an industry-accepted principle that has been found to be best practice for good design.

The following principles are employed in this evaluation:

- **User Control:** The interface will allow the user to perceive that they are in control and will allow appropriate control.
- **Human Limitations:** The interface will not overload the user’s cognitive, visual, auditory, tactile, or motor limits.
- **Modal Integrity:** The interface will fit individual tasks within whatever modality is being used: auditory, visual, or motor/kinesthetic.

- **Accommodation:** The interface will fit the way each user group works and thinks.
- **Linguistic Clarity:** The interface will communicate as efficiently as possible.
- **Aesthetic Integrity:** The interface will have an attractive and appropriate design.
- **Simplicity:** The interface will present elements simply.
- **Predictability:** The interface will behave in a manner such that users can accurately predict what will happen next.
- **Interpretation:** The interface will make reasonable guesses about what the user is trying to do.
- **Accuracy:** The interface will be free from errors
- **Technical Clarity:** The interface will have the highest possible fidelity.
- **Flexibility:** The interface will allow the user to adjust the design for custom use.
- **Fulfillment:** The interface will provide a satisfying user experience.
- **Cultural Propriety:** The interface will match the user's social customs and expectations.
- **Suitable Tempo:** The interface will operate at a tempo suitable to the user.
- **Consistency:** The interface will be consistent.
- **User Support:** The interface will provide additional assistance as needed or requested.
- **Precision:** The interface will allow the users to perform a task exactly.
- **Forgiveness:** The interface will make actions recoverable.
- **Responsiveness:** The interface will inform users about the results of their actions and the interface's status.
- **Efficiency:** The interface will allow the user to perform a task in the most streamlined, expedited manner.

The above principles are based upon industry-accepted best practices in user interface design referencing recognized experts such as: Jakob Nielsen, Ben Schneiderman, the Microsoft Corporation Research Division, and Apple Computing, Inc. Other sources include Designing Effective Speech User Interfaces published by Yale School of Art – Heuristic Analysis

John Wiley. As with any usability theory, the above listing is not intended to be a comprehensive set of user interface guidelines. The usability professional conducting the evaluation is subject to their personal analysis and interpretation during the site inspection.

## **BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS**

Expert reviews, also known as heuristic evaluations, can help to identify complexities in site design degrading the user experience. Recommendations are made to reorganize content effectiveness, enhance site navigation, and interface usability.

There are limitations to examining a site exclusively from “a user perspective.”

Although a professional, heuristic analysis will help align the site with current best practices, the recommendations are based from assumptions made with no “actual” user insight. Formal user testing is the only way to ensure the most accurate and specific usability needs be identified and applied.

# ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The following issues will affect user satisfaction if they are not addressed. Key issues that were discovered during the expert review are listed in the following table. Recommended solutions are noted where applicable. A severity rating and issue type precedes each issue.

## SEVERITY RATING SCALE

1. **Showstopper:** will significantly affect user satisfaction and/or performance
2. **Critical:** will affect user satisfaction and/or performance
3. **Important:** should affect user satisfaction and/or performance
4. **Minor:** may mildly affect user satisfaction and/or performance

## ISSUE TYPE

There are five basic issue types. These issue types are:

- **Global:** Issue that affect the site/application as a whole.
- **Navigation:** Issue that focuses specifically on the navigation (e.g., primary, secondary, links, breadcrumb)
- **Content:** Issue related to content (e.g., context, placement, headings)
- **Functionality:** Issue related to the functionality of the Web site/application.
- **Personalization:** Issue specific to customization for or by an individual user.

#	SEVERITY/TYPE	SECTION: ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	2/Navigation	All Pages: navigation is inconsistent and hard to find	Make it consistent and more apparent
	1/Content	Most Pages: Too much scrolling in small text boxes	Eliminate most of the scrolling in the text boxes
	2/Functionality	All Pages: Too many different backgrounds and colors	Choose one background for the whole site and adhere to the brand guide
	3/Content	Faculty and Student Pages: Pages are cluttered and messy	Create clean and distinctive pages for both faculty and students
	2/Content	All Pages: readability	Eliminate the random colors and images and keep the design simple to improve readability
	1/Content	All Pages: control over updates	Eliminate or limit the wiki so not every user can change all content and the look of the site



# CONCLUSION

---

The information presented in this report is based on usability and interface design standards, guidelines, and best practices. The Dream Team Design project team is now faced with the challenge of deciding how to proceed with the recommendations presented in this report. The Usability Competency Center (UCC) can assist in making these decisions and can help to make further recommendation on screen layout and content revisions.

The UCC looks forward to continued collaboration with the Dream Team Design team on this project. If there are any further questions or concerns regarding the content of this report, please contact:

Chelsey Wambach	414-704-1673
Lars Schlough	262-408-9765
Karol Brennan	262-290-6942