

Web HTML and CSS Prototypes

Assignment 5

Heuristic Evaluation

1. The first design bug I identified through a heuristic evaluation of my Figma wireframes was on my product details pages. Once the user clicked on a product from the menu to view more details, there wasn't a clear way to return to the menu – a common action for users who are unsure what item to purchase. This violates Nielsen's 3rd heuristic – user control and freedom – because my design lacks a clear “exit” or “undo” button to return to the menu. To fix this bug, I added a “Back to Menu” link in an obvious location at the top of every product.
2. On the menu page, which at first just shows images, there are no traditional affordances, signifiers, or other types of feedforward. This violates Nielsen's 6th heuristic – recognition rather than recall – because options to interact with the page are not obvious and must be learned through exploration and repeated use, forcing users to recall past actions. I acknowledge that my site still violates this principle in its current state, but I believe the item preview panels I plan to add in the JavaScript phase of the project will resolve most of the issues. (You can see an example of the panel in my Figma designs.) In the meantime, I tried to make it obvious that each image was clickable by adding hover effects.
3. A minor but notable area of potential confusion could be in the navigation bar placed in the footer. You'll notice that the current page is highlighted in the orange accent color to help maintain the visibility of system status – Nielsen's 1st heuristic. But since product details pages aren't in the nav bar, I chose to leave the Menu tab highlighted, implying that these details pages are subpages of the menu. Users might become confused when that tab is highlighted on both the menu page and the details pages. Users who click the highlighted Menu tab while on a product details page might be surprised when they are navigated back to the menu, since the highlight is meant to imply you are currently on that page and shouldn't be taken elsewhere. This is a potential violation of Nielsen's 4th heuristic: consistency and standards. I don't foresee this being a major risk and believe any confusion will be resolved quickly, but I did choose to leave the hover effect active for the current page to provide some feedforward that it is a live link that may change pages.
4. In the future, I plan to resolve an issue with flexibility and efficiency of use for expert users – Nielsen's 7th heuristic. Navigating all the way to a product details page to place an order adds an extra step that could be handled directly from the menu. Therefore, I plan to add a “quick buy” button to the item preview panels once I implement them with JavaScript.

Challenges

I have extensive experience building websites using HTML and CSS as well as Git for version control and had almost no challenges converting my wireframes to a live prototype. One unexpected bug was how margins and padding can mess up calculations performed within CSS. This occurred on the product details page, where I wanted three equal columns, no padding on the left column with the image but with padding in the right two text columns. When calculating column width using $100\% / 3$, the left column was always smaller because I removed the padding. I never really figured out why this was the case and decided it wasn't a significant issue that was worth my time to solve. My workaround was to simply just add the pixel amount of the padding to the height of the image so that it filled the empty space vertically and leave the width at less than $1/3$ the page.

Another surprisingly difficult but common issue is keeping the footer at the bottom of the screen on large monitors. To avoid this issue, I made sure every screen had a responsive element that would stretch to the bottom, so that no matter the screen size, the page would never be too short and let the footer creep up. When possible, I also tried to hide the footer out of sight to keep everything looking clean.

Brand Identity

Given that the Bun Bun Bake Shop primarily makes cinnamon rolls, I built their brand around their product. The color scheme comes from a cinnamon roll. The large font in the logo is actually called Dessert Script and is similar to fonts commonly found on packaged desserts. I found the header and body fonts – Josefin Slab and Sans, respectively – to have a somewhat playful feel while staying clean and modern. As a breakfast/dessert bakery, I found that this identity was appropriate since going out to get sweets is usually seen as a fun treat.

Whenever possible, I entice users using large images of cinnamon rolls rather than text to trigger feelings of hunger and a sweet tooth. Friends who saw the site as I was making it confirmed that this strategy was effective at making them want cinnamon rolls. On the product details pages, the inclusion of allergens and special instructions adds a layer of professionalism but also shows care for their customers who would otherwise be at risk eating out.

The elements included in the design as well as the visual appearance overall was inspired by competing bakeries, such as Magnolia Bakery and Panera. Matching their brand identity with a similar feel but a more local twist would be effective. My site currently uses Lorem Ipsum as placeholder text, but the brand identity could be strengthened greatly through carefully written copy text.