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Abstract

The Green Journey Advisor is a sustainable travel platform designed with HCI principles, featuring a responsive and intuitive interface.  
Refined through prototyping, usability testing, and user feedback, it delivers an engaging and accessible experience.

505IT – IT HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION AND WEB DEVELOPMENT

Designing an Intuitive Web Interface for Sustainable Travel: A HCI Approach to the Green Journey Advisor



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# 1. Introduction

In an era of growing environmental awareness and global climate urgency, technology plays a crucial role in shaping sustainable lifestyles. The Green Journey Advisor (GreenGo) is a conceptual web application that aims to transform how people plan their travel by promoting eco-friendly journeys with transparent carbon metrics and sustainable tourism options. This design portfolio documents the complete process of analyzing, designing, prototyping, implementing, and evaluating the GreenGo system.  
  
The project adopts a user-centered design (UCD) methodology guided by Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and usability engineering principles to ensure the final product is not only intuitive and accessible but also aligned with the ethical goal of reducing environmental impact through informed decision-making.  
  
This portfolio demonstrates how a meaningful digital experience can be built through thoughtful problem analysis, iterative design, cross-device adaptability, and comprehensive usability evaluation—culminating in a high-fidelity prototype that bridges user needs with environmental responsibility.

# 2. Problem Analysis and Case Study Selection

## 2.1 Problem Analysis & Purpose

The **“Green Journey Advisor”** aims to assist eco-conscious travelers by offering thoughtfully curated, sustainable travel itineraries. It provides options for immersive nature getaways, eco-friendly expeditions, and cultural experiences—all designed to minimize environmental impact while maximizing enjoyment.

**Target Users:**

The site clearly speaks to environmentally mindful individuals who value sustainability in their travel. These users are looking for:

Eco-experiences like scuba diving in environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. Maldives), outdoor adventures such as camping in untouched ecosystems, ethical offerings like transparent carbon footprint tracking and support for rewilding projects.

## 2.2 Rationale for Selecting This Case Study Web Application

Suitability of HCI & Usability Principles  
The platform exemplifies key HCI concepts:  
  
a) Clear navigational structure (e.g., “Explore,” “Start Exploring”) enhances usability and recognition rather than recall.  
  
b) Visually rich media promotes emotional engagement and aesthetic appeal.  
  
c) Trust-building content (e.g. “We promise…” with bullet points, “Explorer Stories”) supports user satisfaction and credibility.  
  
d) Relevance to Sustainable Design Trends:  
Sustainability is an emerging focus in UX. This case aligns design decisions with green values, offering an excellent opportunity to discuss how interface design can convey ethical alignment.  
  
e) Breadth & Clarity for Educational Use:  
The interface is sufficiently fleshed out—mission, offerings, testimonials, contact info—making it ideal for dissecting goals, personas, and user flows in a case study.

## 2.3 Goals and User requirements

* **Goals**  
  a) Inform Clearly:  
  Users must quickly grasp the mission (“sustainable travel”), what’s offered (“Scuba Dives,” “Eco‑Expeditions,” “Exciting Adventures”), and the value propositions (“Transparent carbon tracking,” “1% profits to rewilding”).  
    
  b) Engage Emotionally:  
  Use immersive visuals and stories (testimonials) to foster trust and aspirational connection.  
    
  c) Guide Seamlessly Toward Action:  
  Direct users to explore options or book journeys through prominent calls-to-action like “Explore” and “Start Exploring.”  
    
  d) Build Credibility & Trust:  
  Highlight sustainable credentials (“Carbon footprint tracking,” “Local partnerships,” “Explorer Stories”) to reassure users.  
    
  e) Facilitate Contact & Support:  
  Make it easy to reach out (“help@greengo.com,” phone, address, plus “Accessibility Statement” and “Privacy Policy”).
* **User Requirements**  
  a) Fast comprehension of offerings (clear labels, images, consistent layout).  
    
  b) Visual appeal and readability across devices (responsive design, high-contrast text, intuitive layout).  
    
  c) Accessible navigation and interaction (clear buttons, organized content, accessibility options).  
    
  d) Transparency about sustainability practices (carbon tracking, ethical promises visible).  
    
  e) Emotional reassurance via real-user stories and testimonials.  
    
  f) Easy-to-find contact and policy links for trust and support.

# 3. Interface Design and Prototyping

**a) Low-Fidelity Sketches:**

Hand-drawn or basic digital sketches for:  
  
Homepage with hero visuals and quick browse (“Scuba Dives,” “Eco‑Expeditions”).  
  
Package detail page – itinerary, carbon footprint, donation info.  
  
Booking flow and explorer stories/reviews section.

A screenshot of a website

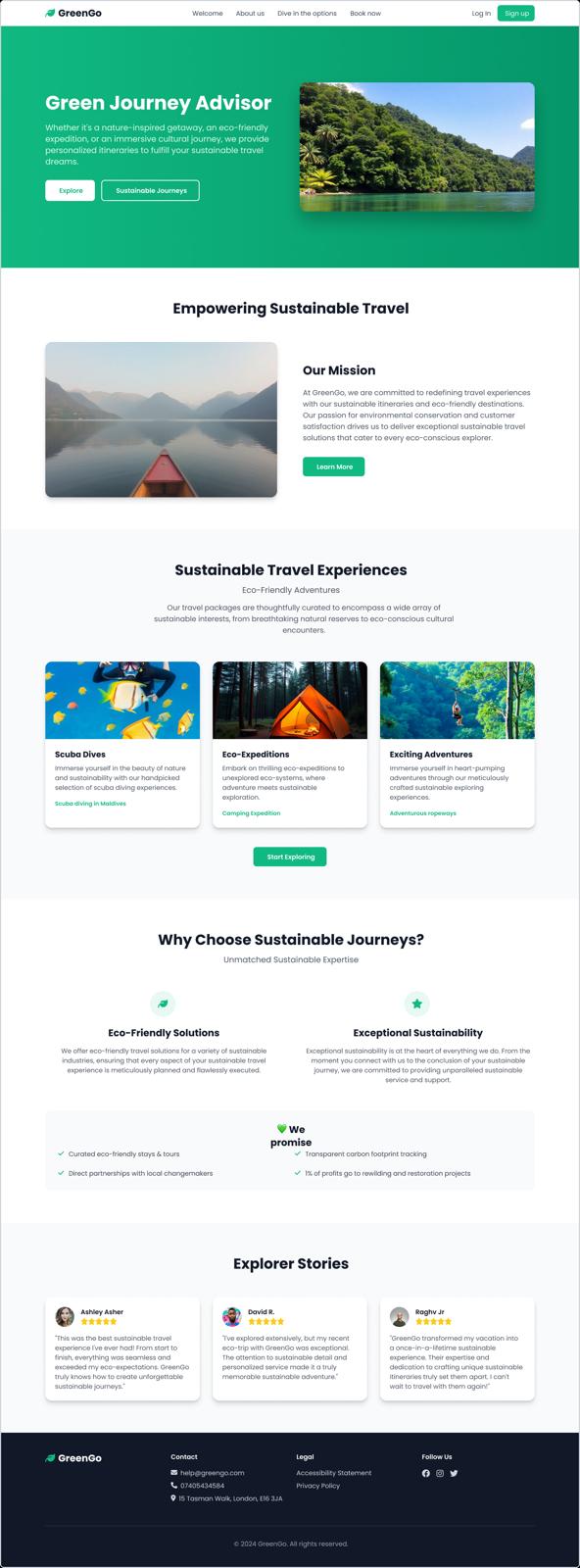
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## 3.1 Justification of Design Decisions – GreenGo Web Interface- LOW FIDELITY

When creating the **Green Journey Advisor (GreenGo)** web application design, my main aim was to make the experience simple, intuitive, and trustworthy for users who care about sustainable travel. Every section was placed and styled with purpose, guided by both human-computer interaction (HCI) principles and usability engineering theory.  
  
**1.** **Hero Section – Headline, Image, and Call-to-Action:**  
I started the page with a clear headline on the left and a large hero image on the right because first impressions matter. The headline instantly tells users what the site is about – sustainable travel – so they don’t have to search for the purpose. I paired it with a strong, single call-to-action button (“Explore Sustainable Journeys”) so users know exactly where to start.  
  
From an HCI perspective, this is about visibility and recognition over recall – the information is right there and no one has to remember what to do. The layout is uncluttered, applying minimalist design principles so users focus on what’s important.  
  
From a usability engineering point of view, this follows user-centred design by giving the audience the first step they want without making them think. The button is also a clear affordance – it looks clickable and invites action.  
  
**2.** **Our Mission – Image with Supporting Text:**  
The “Our Mission” section follows a similar left-right split, but I reversed the content to keep the page visually interesting. Here, the focus is on explaining what GreenGo stands for – sustainability, eco-friendly itineraries, and ethical travel choices.  
  
I used plain, human language that matches the real world instead of technical terms, following the HCI principle of matching the system to the real world. This makes the content relatable and encourages emotional connection.  
  
Usability theory supports this too – mental models suggest users expect to see a mission statement early on, so placing it near the top meets that expectation. The “Learn More” button provides feedback by showing the next step without forcing commitment.

**3.** **Sustainable Travel Experiences – Category Cards:**  
For the experiences section, I chose a card-based layout for activities like Scuba Diving, Eco-Expeditions, and Exciting Adventures. Each card combines an image, a short title, and a brief description.  
  
HCI-wise, cards help with recognition, since users can identify what they’re looking for from visuals and headings instantly. The descriptions are intentionally short, in line with minimalist principles, so people don’t feel overwhelmed.  
  
From a usability engineering perspective, cards create clear interactive zones that prevent misclicks and keep browsing efficient. They also improve task completion speed because users can quickly scan and choose the category they want.  
  
**4.** **Why Choose Us – Icons with Short Text:**  
This section uses icons alongside headings like “Eco-Friendly Solutions” and “Exceptional Sustainability.” Icons were chosen because they’re universally recognisable and help users scan benefits quickly without reading full paragraphs.  
  
In HCI terms, this is another application of recognition over recall. Consistency is also key here – each benefit follows the same icon-title-description format, so users learn the pattern quickly.  
  
Usability engineering theory explains that icons enhance visual hierarchy, drawing the eye to important information first. They also boost user motivation by making benefits easy to understand at a glance.  
  
**5.** **We Promise – Checklist Format**:  
The “We Promise” section lists four eco-commitments, each with a tick icon. I chose this checklist format because it’s simple, direct, and instantly communicates trust.  
  
HCI justifies this through minimalism – users get all the information they need without unnecessary design elements. The checklist also makes the commitments easy to scan, which reduces cognitive effort.  
  
Usability-wise, this format reinforces credibility and aligns with users’ mental model of ethical brands – clear promises that are easy to verify.  
  
**6.** **Explorer Stories – Testimonials:**  
The testimonials provide social proof, which is a powerful influence on decision-making. I kept them short, included names, and used avatars to make them feel personal and authentic.  
  
From an HCI angle, this supports trust and transparency – real people sharing real experiences. It’s also consistent with feedback principles, showing users that others have successfully used and enjoyed the service.  
  
Usability theory highlights that positive examples increase user satisfaction and reduce hesitation to engage with the service.  
  
**7. Footer – Contact and Navigation:**Finally, the footer includes contact details, legal links, and social media icons. I used a standard footer layout because consistency with user expectations makes it easy to use without thought.  
  
HCI principles here include help and documentation – users can always find support or extra information when needed. From a usability engineering standpoint, this avoids dead ends in navigation and ensures users always have a way to connect.

**b) Medium-Fidelity Wireframes & Interactive Prototype:**  
Use Figma or Adobe XD to mock desktop and mobile layouts—hero carousel, package cards, filtered browsing, details overlay, booking button, carbon footprint bar.  
  
Prototype key actions like "Start Exploring" → browse → view details → book.



## 3.2 Justification of Design Decisions – GreenGo Web Interface- MEDIUM FIDELITY

**1. Consistency and Standards (Jakob Nielsen’s Heuristics)**Design Decision: The use of consistent color schemes (greens, whites, blacks), font styles, and button shapes across the website.  
  
HCI Justification: Users recognize interface elements more quickly when consistent. This reduces the cognitive load as users can predict interactions.  
  
**2. Visibility of System Status**  
Design Decision: Clear, labeled navigation bar (e.g., “Welcome,” “About us,” “Book now,” etc.) and clearly marked call-to-action buttons like “Explore” and “Start Exploring.”  
  
HCI Justification: Users always know where they are and what actions they can take. This aligns with users’ expectations and supports smooth navigation.  
  
**3. Recognition Rather than Recall**  
Design Decision: Navigation tabs and options are visible at all times. Visual cues such as icons, images, and labels (e.g., “Eco-Expeditions,” “Scuba Dives”) enhance recognition.  
  
HCI Justification: Users don’t need to remember information from one part of the interface to another, minimizing memory load.  
  
**4. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design**  
Design Decision: Clean layout with white space, minimal text, and high-quality images.  
  
HCI Justification: Reduces distractions, making it easier for users to focus on essential content and actions. This aligns with minimalist design principles that improve comprehension and task efficiency.  
  
**5. Match Between System and the Real World**Design Decision: Use of real-world language (“Scuba Dives,” “Eco-Expeditions,” “Sustainable Travel”) and imagery that reflects natural landscapes and eco-friendly activities.

HCI Justification: Helps users quickly relate to the content and goals, improving intuitiveness and emotional engagement.  
  
**6. User Control and Freedom**  
Design Decision: Buttons like “Explore,” “Learn More,” and “Start Exploring” offer users freedom to navigate in non-linear ways.  
  
HCI Justification: Users can explore at their own pace and choose different paths without being forced into a fixed sequence.  
  
**7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use**  
Design Decision: Quick access to common actions like booking and exploring sustainable journeys. Testimonials and mission are placed mid-page for skimmers.  
  
HCI Justification: Supports both novice and experienced users by offering essential options quickly while also accommodating deeper dives into content.  
  
**8. Error Prevention and Help**  
Design Decision: No cluttered interfaces, and buttons are clearly labeled. Contact and support information are easily found in the footer.  
  
HCI Justification: Prevents user confusion and offers help/recovery options if needed, reducing error likelihood.  
 **9. Engagement through Storytelling**  
Design Decision: “Explorer Stories” with photos and testimonials.  
  
HCI Justification: Increases user engagement and emotional connection, using the principle of persuasive design to build trust and relatability.  
  
**10. Accessibility and Responsiveness**  
Design Decision: High contrast between text and background, large clickable buttons, readable fonts.  
  
HCI Justification: Follows accessibility best practices to ensure usability across different devices and for users with diverse abilities.

# 4. Interface Implementation

**High-fidelity wireframe ( hi-fi prototype)** is the most detailed and interactive variant of your design that looks, feels and behaves like the final product astonishingly.

**a) Usability Engineering:**  
  
User-centered: Persona-focused scenarios (e.g. eco-conscious millennials).

Included hero carousel, package cards, details overlay, booking modal, carbon tracking visuals.  
  
**b) Functionality & Aesthetics:**  
a) Smooth scroll animations and transitions.  
  
b) Eco‑themed visuals—greens, blues, earth tones.  
  
c) Icons for carbon footprint, donation percentage, user reviews.

A screenshot of a website

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

# 5. Usability Evaluation

## 5.1 Usability Evaluation of the GreenGo Interface Prototype

This section presents a comprehensive usability evaluation of the GreenGo Sustainable Journeys interface prototype, incorporating **three** established evaluation techniques from **Human-Computer** Interaction (HCI): **Heuristic Evaluation, Usability Testing, and Cognitive Walkthroughs**. These methods are employed to assess the system’s effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction, which are the core attributes of usability according to ISO 9241-11.

## 5.2 heuristic analysis, usability testing, and cognitive walkthroughs.

**1. Heuristic evaluation** is a usability inspection method wherein a group of evaluators examine the interface and judge its compliance with recognized usability principles (heuristics). For this evaluation, Nielsen’s 10 Usability Heuristics were applied as a benchmark.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Heuristic Principle** | **Observations** |
| Visibility of system status | The interface provides immediate feedback through clearly labelled navigation and call-to-action buttons, improving the user’s sense of control. |
| Match between system and real world | The design uses real-world language (e.g., "Eco-Expeditions," "Scuba Diving") and contextual imagery, which aligns with users’ mental models. |
| User control and freedom | Navigation elements (e.g., “Explore,” “Start Exploring”) offer flexibility. However, there is no visible “undo” or “back to top” functionality. |
| |  | | --- | | Consistency and standards |  |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | Consistent layout, colour palette, iconography, and typography enhance learnability and recognition across the interface. | |
| Error prevention | The interface design is simple and guides user action well, reducing the likelihood of errors. Input validation features (e.g., forms) are absent. |
| Recognition rather than recall | Prominent visuals and descriptive headings reduce memory load, allowing users to easily identify content without recalling information. |
| Flexibility and efficiency of use | The interface caters well to novice users, but lacks features like shortcuts or personalization for experienced users. |
| Aesthetic and minimalist design | The minimalist design avoids information overload, using whitespace effectively to enhance focus and readability. |
| Help users recognize and recover from errors | No visible error messages or guidance are present, as user input forms are not shown in the prototype. |
| Help and documentation | Contact details and policy links are accessible in the footer, though a help center or FAQ section could further support novice users. |

**2. Usability Testing (Theoretical Framework):**

Usability testing, in HCI, refers to empirical studies where representative users attempt realistic tasks using the system. While direct testing was not conducted, a theoretical usability test was designed, informed by established best practices.

**Target Users:**  
Environmentally conscious travellers aged 20–45, tech-literate, and interested in sustainable tourism.

**Key Task Scenarios:**

1. Understanding the platform’s purpose from the homepage.
2. Navigating to explore sustainable travel categories.
3. Accessing detailed information on a specific travel experience (e.g., “Eco-Expeditions”).
4. Reading testimonials from past travelers.
5. Locating contact details for support or inquiries.

**Expected Findings (Based on Design Review):**

* The platform effectively communicates its purpose through its homepage messaging and hero section.
* Navigation is intuitive, with clearly labeled buttons and sections.
* Visual hierarchy and content structure facilitate task completion with minimal effort.
* Testimonials and travel packages are easily scannable and contribute to user trust.
* Footer content is conventional and efficiently directs users to contact or legal information.

**Potential Issues:**

* Image cards are not clickable, which could hinder users expecting more direct interaction.
* Absence of a search bar or contextual help might limit discoverability for first-time users.
* Minimal feedback on user interaction (e.g., hover effects or confirmation messages).

**Summary:** The system demonstrates strong usability characteristics; however, enhancing interactive features would support diverse user expectations and reduce friction.

**3. Cognitive Walkthrough:**

Cognitive walkthrough is an expert-based evaluation method focusing on learnability. It assesses how easily a new user can perform tasks without prior training.

**Key Questions Assessed**:

* Will the user know what to do at each step?
* Will the user notice the correct action?
* Will the user understand the feedback?

**Step-by-Step Analysis**:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **User Goal** | **System Support** | **Assessment** |
| Understand what the platform offers | The homepage title, subtitle, and visuals provide immediate context for sustainable travel services. | Achievable with ease |
| Begin exploring travel experiences | Prominent “Start Exploring” button supports user intention. | Clear call-to-action |
| Learn more about a specific activity | Descriptive text provided under each travel card. However, lack of interactive imagery may confuse. | Slight ambiguity |
| Read a user review | Testimonials are well-formatted and positioned. | Easy to find and interpret |
| Contact the organization | Footer contains detailed contact info and links. | Consistent with user expectations |

## 5.3 the evaluation process, findings, and any necessary improvements.

**1. Strengths and Positive Usability Aspects**

The GreenGo: Sustainable Journeys prototype showcases a solid foundation in usability and HCI principles. Through heuristic evaluation and cognitive walkthrough analysis, the interface was found to be visually engaging, with a consistent layout, intuitive navigation, and meaningful use of environmental imagery that aligns well with user expectations. Its structured information architecture, concise content blocks, and effective use of white space support ease of navigation and reduce cognitive load. The system adheres to several of Nielsen’s usability heuristics, such as consistency, match between system and real-world language, and visibility of system status. Furthermore, the site supports scannability and readability, making it easy for users to identify key actions and travel categories. These strengths contribute to a generally positive user experience that promotes discoverability and engagement.

**2. Usability Limitations and Areas for Improvement**

Despite its strengths, the interface also presents a number of limitations that were identified through theoretical usability testing. Notably, the lack of interactive feedback mechanisms, such as hover states or clickable images, limits user engagement and control. Additionally, the system lacks contextual help, onboarding guidance, and error prevention features, which are essential for supporting novice users and improving learnability. The absence of personalization options, such as saving preferred journeys or customizing recommendations, also restricts user autonomy and satisfaction. These issues suggest that while the prototype is aesthetically strong and functionally clear for basic tasks, it requires enhancements in interactivity, feedback, and error handling to meet advanced usability standards. Addressing these areas will be crucial in transforming the interface into a more comprehensive and user-centered digital experience.

**Recommended Improvements**

Based on the evaluation, the following improvements are suggested:

1. **Introduce interactive image elements**: Enable clickable images with modal pop-ups or redirection.
2. **Incorporate help and onboarding features**: Tooltips, FAQs, or a chatbot for first-time users.
3. **Add user feedback mechanisms**: Confirmation messages, hover states, and error prompts.
4. **Provide personalization tools**: Save journeys, mark favorites, or get AI-powered suggestions.
5. **Enhance navigation control**: Add “scroll to top” buttons and improve back navigation.

# Conclusion

The Green Journey Advisor (GreenGo) project demonstrates how thoughtful interface design can support both user goals and global sustainability efforts. By designing for clarity, transparency, and responsiveness, the system empowers eco-conscious travellers to make informed decisions that minimize environmental impact.  
  
Throughout this design portfolio, the design process—from identifying the problem space and user needs, through iterative prototyping and usability evaluations—highlights the value of user-centered design and usability engineering. Design choices were guided by Human-Computer Interaction principles to ensure the interface is not only functional but also delightful and ethical.  
  
The result is an inclusive, accessible, and aesthetically coherent system tailored for modern travellers who value environmental impact. Through continuous user feedback and iterative improvement, GreenGo has the potential to become a meaningful platform that makes sustainable travel more mainstream, actionable, and engaging.

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