**HYPERMEDIA APPLICATIONS 2020**

# *Usability Evaluation Study 1: Inspection*

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# 1 - Abstract

This document reports the Inspection-based Usability Evaluation of the website of the website "Visit Monterosa"  ([Monte Rosa vacanze, sci e turismo - Monterosa Ski e Freeride Paradise](#)). The analysed website provides a complete overview of everything concerning tourist activities (divided in summer and winter season) available when visiting the main spots of the Monte Rosa mountain range like, for example, events and organized excursions; it also provides information about food, culture and logistic (where is possible to rent sport equipments, public transports, timetables... ) and has dedicated areas where the user can book an accomodation. The contents include an analysis through heuristic inspection of three expert evaluators and an overall evaluation of the product along with our conclusions. The Annex provides the individual scores of each inspector.

# 2 - Inspection method

## 2.1 - Overview

The inspection process is composed by the following steps:

- **Heuristics understanding**: a crucial point for the inspection process is the understanding of the heuristics to be applied in the evaluation of the website: the inspection team analysed each heuristic making sure they have significant meaning and they are easy to be evaluated in an objective way;
- **Definition of metrics (scores)**: definition of the score ranges for the applied heuristics and the meaning of each numerical value;
- **Definition of the user goals**: in order to explore the website in a more systematic way, the inspectors agreed on the main user goals, the typical reasons why users would use a specific website; all inspectors should have in mind them while analysing the website to obtain a common set of explored pages and examples for justifying individual scores. Main goals for the "Visit Monterosa" website are:
  - Discovering the main activities proposed by the Monte Rosa mountain range;
  - Booking an accommodation in one of the main spots of the mountain range;
  - Searching information concerning food, culture and events in the areas;
  - Finding logistic information and news.
- **Analysis and reporting of individual scores**: each evaluator explored the website individually, trying to achieve at least the main goals agreed among all evaluators;
- **Analysis and definition of final scores**: the individual inspector's scores are discussed in order to obtain a common agreement for each heuristic of a given category.

## 2.2 - Heuristics

The selected heuristics are divided in three groups: navigation, content and layout. Navigation focuses on how easy is for the user to move across the website and find the information he is looking for; content is about the quality of information and data provided by the website, regardless the way they are presented; layout stresses the visual image of the website and its effectiveness in terms of expressivity and ergonomic functions.

The following list of heuristics was provided in the course lecture slides.

- Navigation:
  - **Interaction consistency**: do pages of the same type have the same links and interaction capability?
  - **Group navigation**: is it easy to navigate from in and among groups of "items"?
  - **Structural Navigation**: is it easy to navigate among the "components" (parts") of a topic?
  - **Semantic Navigation**: is it easy to navigate from a topic to a related one (in both directions?
  - **Landmarks**: are "landmarks" useful to reach the key parts of the web site?
- Contents:
  - **Information overload**: is the information in a page too much/too little?
  - **Quality of contents**: do the contents of the page include the information that the user should expect there? In other words, are the contents consistent?
- Layout:
  - **Text layout**: is the text readable? Is font size appropriate?
  - **Interaction placeholder**: are textual or visual labels of interactive elements "expressive"? i.e., do they reflect the meaning of the interaction and its effects? Are they consistent?
  - **Spatial allocation**: is the on-screen allocation of contents and visual appropriate for their relevance? Are "semantically related" elements close and "semantically distinct" elements far away?
  - **Consistency of Page Structure**: do pages of the same type have the same lay out (same visual properties of each component and similar lay-out organization of the various elements?)

## 2.3 - Scoring Method

The adopted scoring method is the following: a vote from 0 to 5 for each heuristic where 0 means that the heuristic is NOT satisfied (severe violations have been detected) and 5 means that the heuristic is FULLY satisfied (no severe violations has been detected).

The scores are reported in the following sections of this document.

# 3 - Agreed scores on each individual heuristic

This chapter contains the aggregated evaluation among the evaluators. The individual scores are reported in the Annex chapter.

## 3.1 - Navigation

| Heuristic | Score | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Interaction consistency | 4 | The website provided is overall consistent in this aspect. |
| Group navigation | 3.5 | Groups are not well organized and it's difficult to navigate inside them. |
| Structural navigation | 4 | The structural links are mostly well placed and consistent. |
| Semantic navigation | 3 | In each topic we are presented with not very meaningful semantic links to other topics. |
| Landmarks | 5 | The navigation bar is always available and there is also a floating "shortcut" menu containing helpful links. |

### 3.1.1 - Interaction consistency

We thoroughly inspected each page and we didn't find any severe inconsistency; navigation, submenus, footer and the floating menu are always present and accessible (*fig. 1-2*)
The only difference is that the "Monterosa Freeride Paradise" page is of a different color from the other pages. (*fig. 3*)
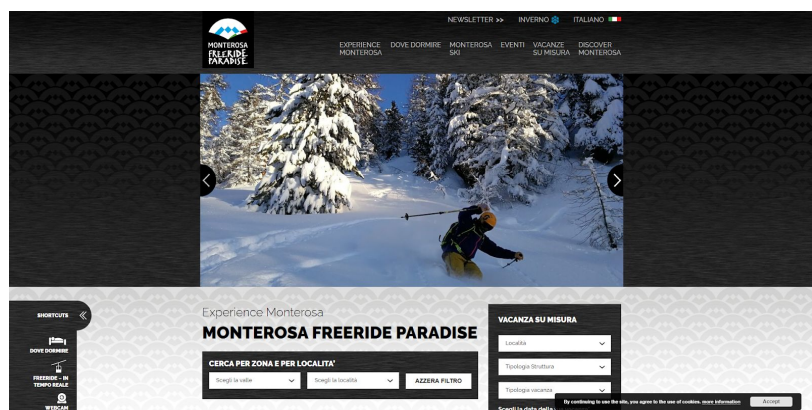


fig. 1
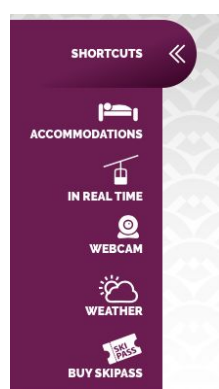


fig. 2

fig. 3

### 3.1.2 - Group Navigation

Groups are not well organized: it's hard to find out what you are looking for; the navigation between topics is provided only by the navigation bar. Moreover, the "Tailor made holidays" topic is not clickable at all (to access its groups you must use the hover menu) and the "Monterosa ski" (*fig. 4-5*) and "Discover Monterosa" pages do not contain any link to their group pages (differently from the other topic pages).



fig. 4
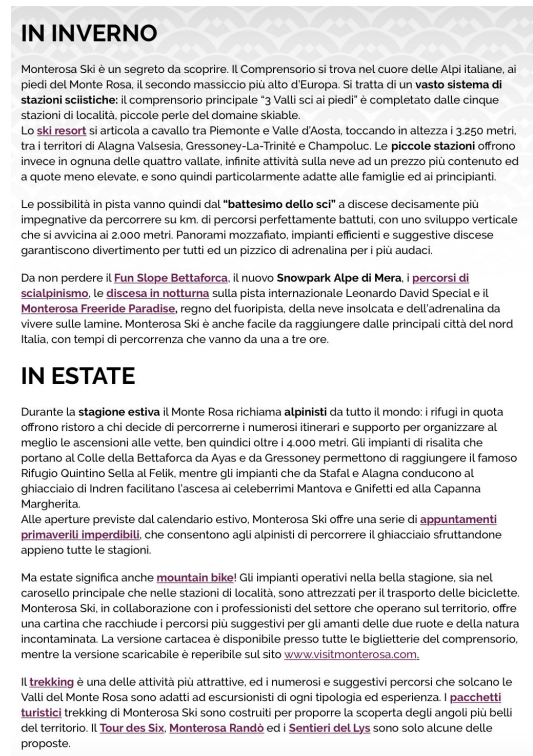


fig. 5

### 3.1.3 - Structural navigation

The structural links are mostly well placed and consistent but we found that the "Summer" and "Winter" links are disguised and they don't provide a clue to the information they will present.

### 3.1.4 - Semantic navigation

Semantic navigation is provided with links to the related pages. The related contents are often generic and not very specific. For example, the page about maps and tracks provides an uncorrelated semantic link (e.g. Nature is linked with Pinacoteca di Varallo (*fig. 6*)).

fig. 6

### 3.1.5 - Landmarks

The navigation bar is static (always the same and always available), as the floating menu. Although this, the navbar is not really intuitive: the selected page has not any kind of highlighting.

The logo of the website is itself a landmark: it is a link to the home page as the user expects.

An improvement to speed up the navigation could be or hiding the navigation bar while scrolling down through the page and make it reappear when scrolling up or introducing a button, maybe at the bottom right of the page, to direct the user back to the top of the page.
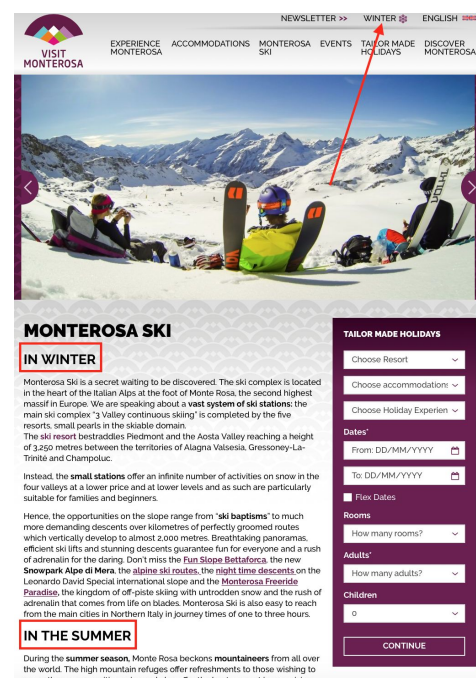
## 3.2 - Contents

| Heuristic | Score | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Information overload | 3 | The website provides way too much information and most of them are of minor importance. |
| Quality of contents | 3.5 | The quality of the contents is not very high: navigating the website we can find outdated information and reused images. |

### 3.2.1 - Information overload

The menus of the navigation bar are overloaded with links to groups and subgroups (*fig. 7*); moreover, the information of the navbar are not coherent to the selected season ("Winter" or "Summer"). Related to this, the "Monterosa Ski" page in both Winter and Summer seasons presents contents concerning the Winter season when Summer season is selected through the toggle above the navigation bar (*fig. 8*). A possible solution is to differentiate more the contents in base of the selected season.
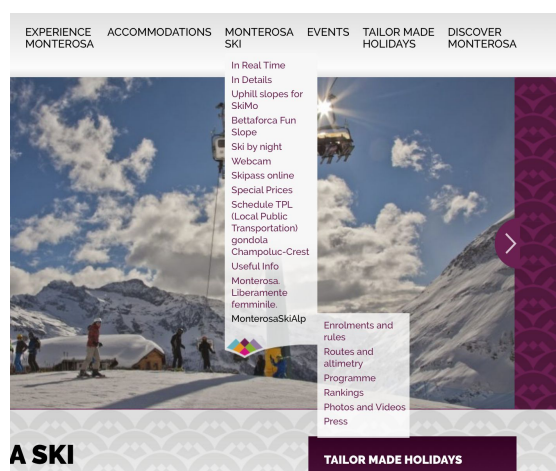


*fig. 7*



*fig. 8*

### 3.2.2 - Quality of contents

The contents are outdated in some pages and in the navigation bar (concerning the navigation bar, consider, for example, the website in Summer season mode: it presentes a link to a preview of the past year (in the italian version of the site: "Anteprima estate 2019"); concerning the contents of the pages, consider again the website in Summer season mode: the Summer Preview page shows information concerning last year timetables (*fig. 9*)).

Moreover, in the event page some contents are missing and the same "sample" images are used  (*fig. 10*).
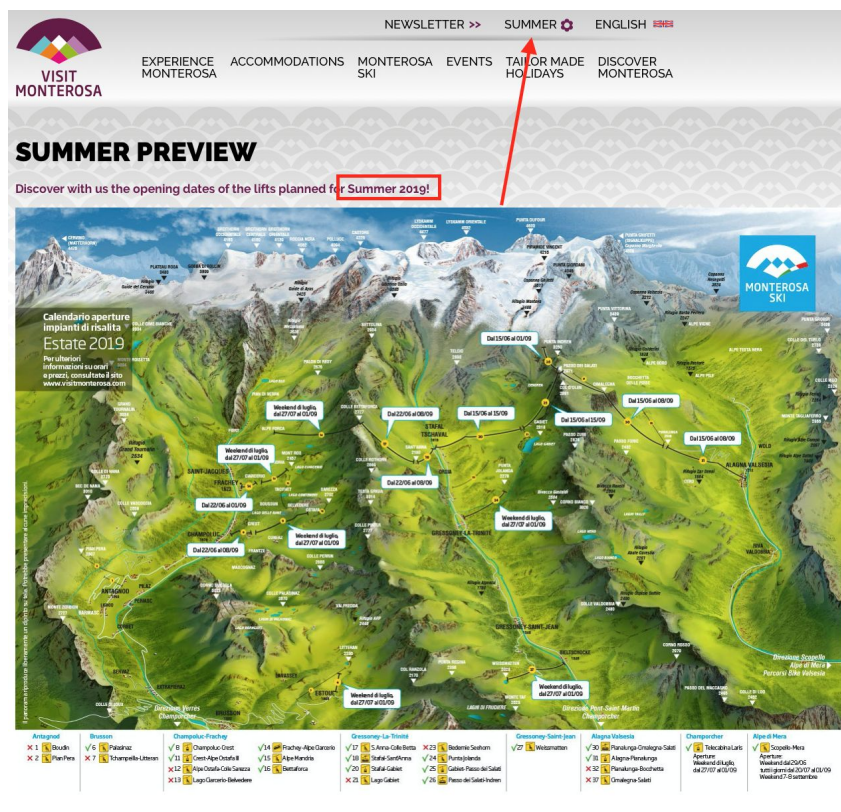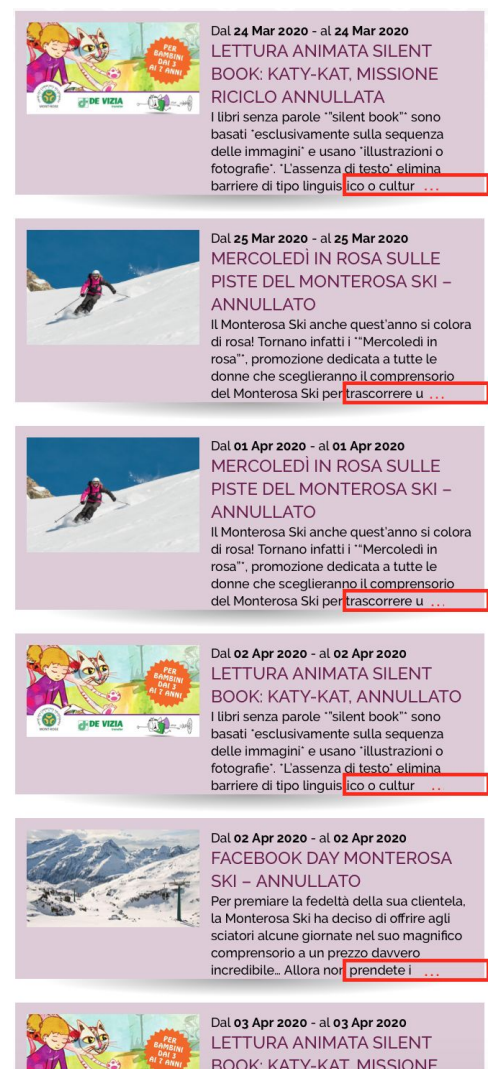


*fig. 9*



*fig. 10*

# 3.3 - Layout

| Heuristic | Score | Comment |
|-----------|-------|---------|
| Text layout | 4 | The font selected is readable in most of the cases. The size is correct for almost all the pages, except for some paragraphs. |
| Interaction placeholder | 5 | In general, in the whole website textual and visual labels are expressive. |
| Spatial allocation | 4.5 | The dimension of each component reflects its importance. |
| Consistency of page structure | 5 | In all the pages of the website, the layout is consistent with respect to the topic. |

## 3.3.1 - Text Layout

The font selected is readable in most of the website; however, in some cases it results too small (*fig. 11*) or it changes unexpectedly (*fig. 12*). In some components the text is truncated without an ellipses (refer again to *fig. 10*).



*fig. 11*



*fig. 12*

### 3.3.2 - Interaction placeholder

All the visual contents are meaningful except for the text "In real time" of the floating menu. Something like "Ski Facilities Status" would be more appropriate.

### 3.3.3 - Spatial allocation

The dimension of each component reflects its importance: everything is well laid out, except for the Winter/Summer toggle above the navigation bar (too much disguised).

### 3.3.4 - Consistency of page structure

In all the pages of the website, the layout is consistent with respect to the topic: pages of the same groups and topics have similar layout.

# 4 - Aggregated results and discussion

Results of inter-inspectors agreement about the score of each individual heuristics has been aggregated into a single value for each category of heuristics. This value is computed as the arithmetic average of the scores of each section, which represents the overall score of a specific usability aspect.

## 4.1 - Navigation

- Interaction Consistency: 4/5
- Group Navigation: 3.5/5
- Structural Navigation: 4/5
- Semantic Navigation: 3/5
- Landmarks: 5/5

**Overall score: 3.9**
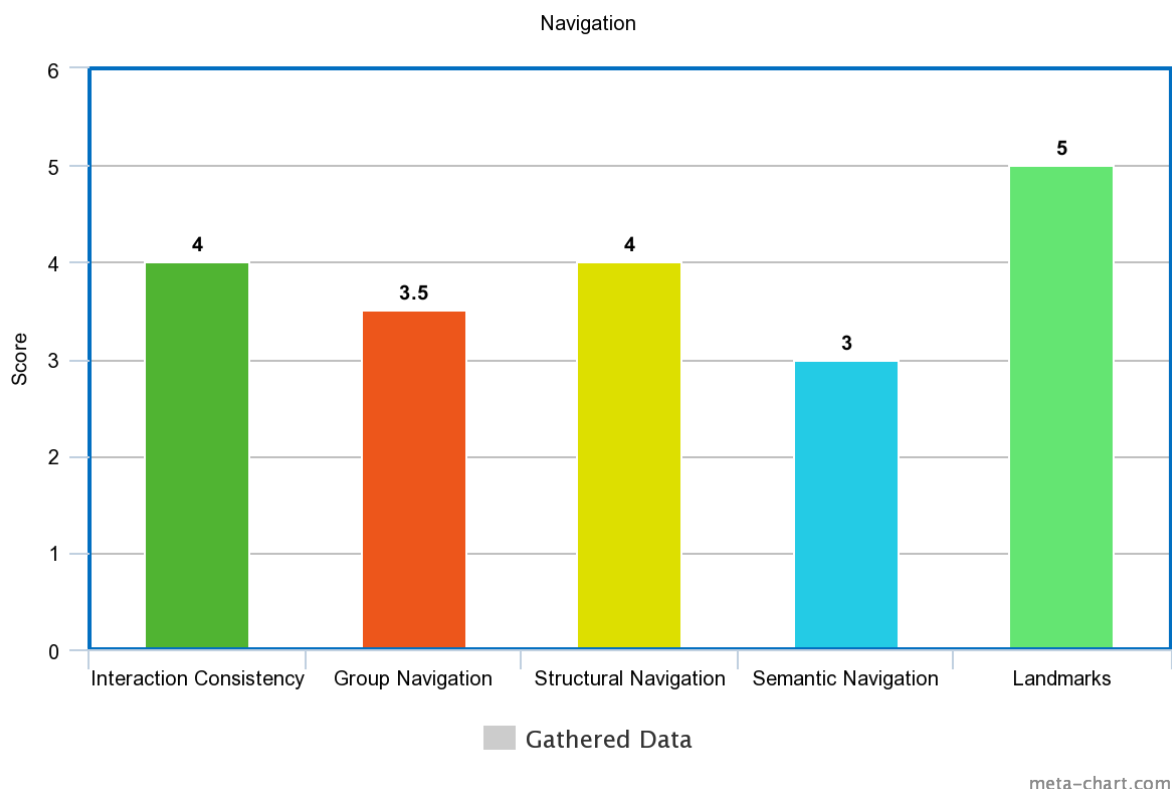


The arithmetic average gives us the second lowest score amongst all usability aspects, which means that in this specific section there is room for significant improvements. Being more specific menus are sometimes disorganized, semantic navigation is not effective and it's not always easy to find what you're looking for.

## 4.2 - Contents

- Information Overload: 3/5
- Quality of Contents: 3.5/5

**Overall score: 3.25**



meta-chart.com
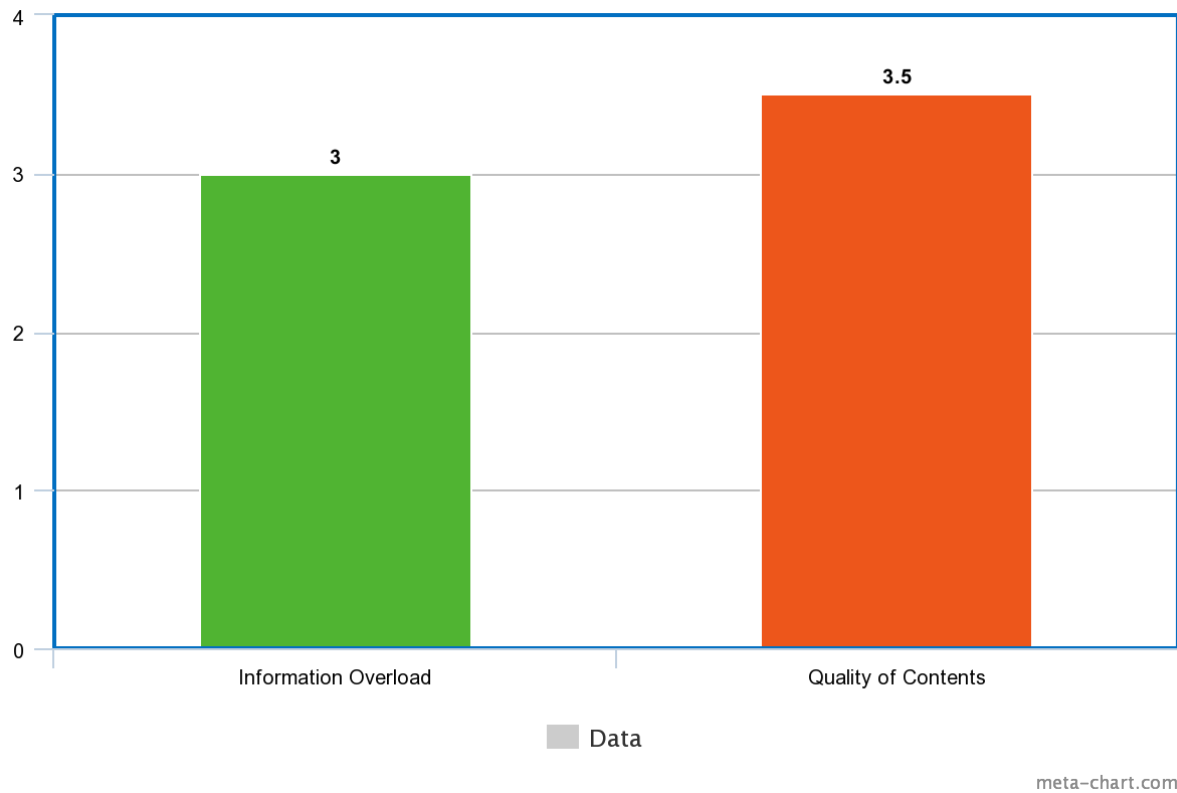
The contents that the website provides are generally ok but many notable exceptions are present. The score is reflecting the average work. We found that the major flaw was the switch between Winter and Summer content, that leads to confusion to a user.

## 4.3 - Layout

- Text Layout: 4/5
- Interaction Placeholder: 5/5
- Spatial Allocation: 4.5/5
- Consistency of page structure : 5/5

**Overall score: 4.5**
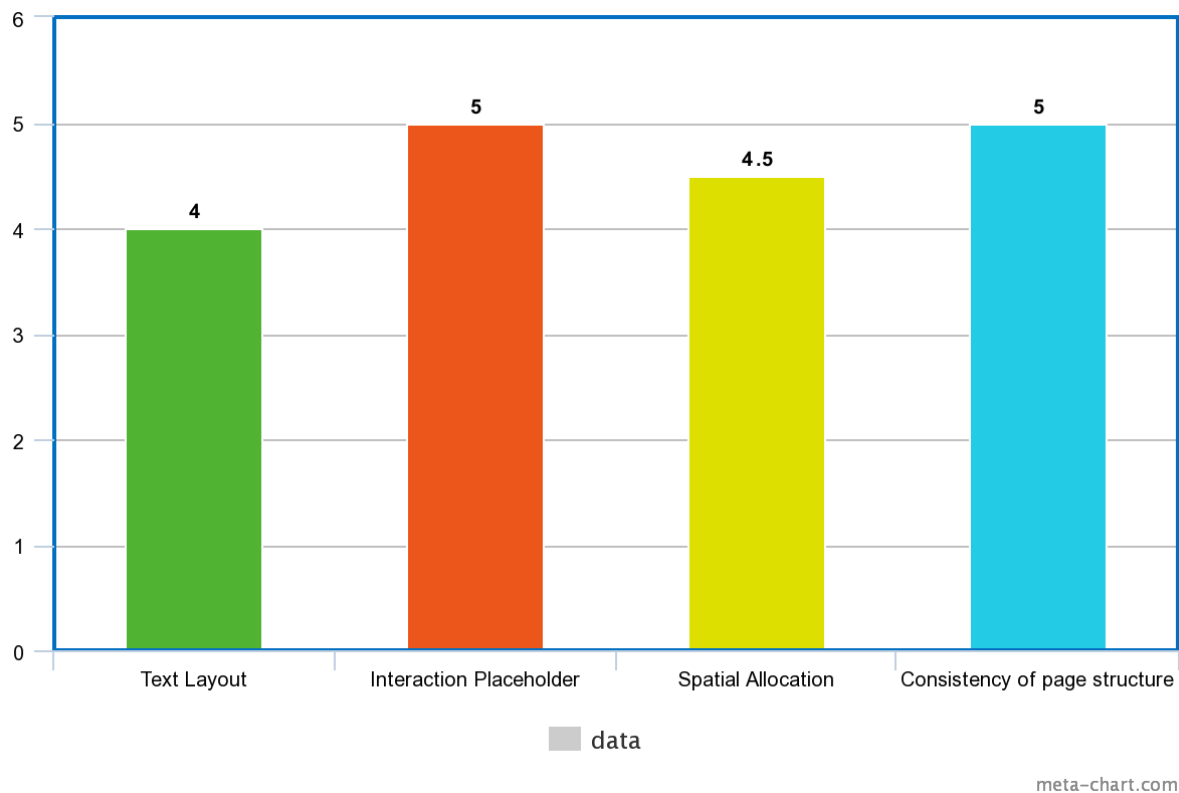


This is the best scoring Usability Aspect, the website has a readable and well thought layout that carries throughout all pages. Some paragraphs have what it seems to be a font size or two smaller of what would be the perfect dimension for readability.

# 5 - Conclusions

Wrapping up, we found that the "Visit Monterosa" website is mostly well made, with some notable exceptions like the "Winter" and "Summer" switch and the lackluster organization of the content.

We generally felt good during the writing of this Usability Evaluation Study, finding the weak spots of the website was generally straightforward. The hardest task was to assign each fault to the correct heuristic. In the end, we reached a satisfactory result by discussing and sharing our ideas that we gathered during our individual inspection of the website.

# 6 - Annex

In this section we report the individual scores on each heuristic reported by each inspector. The following tables are the ones upon which the tables in chapter 3 are based.

Important consideration: final votes reported in chapter 3 of this document are not necessarily obtained by averaging votes reported in the following individual tables; final votes are instead the result of our common work and discussion.

## Navigation

| Heuristic | Stefano Martina | Francesco Peressini | Tommaso Peresson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interaction consistency | 4 | 4 | 4.5 |
| Group navigation | 4 | 4 | 3.5 |
| Structural navigation | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Semantic navigation | 4 | 3.5 | 3 |
| Landmarks | 5 | 5 | 5 |

## Contents

| Heuristic | Stefano Martina | Francesco Peressini | Tommaso Peresson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Information overload | 3 | 3.5 | 4 |
| Quality of contents | 3.5 | 3 | 3.5 |

## Layout

| Heuristic | Stefano Martina | Francesco Peressini | Tommaso Peresson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Text layout | 4 | 4.5 | 5 |
| Interaction placeholder | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Spatial allocation | 5 | 4.5 | 4 |
| Consistency of page structure | 5 | 5 | 5 |