**Human-Computer Interface Design**

**HCID Group Project**

**Project Title: Usability Evaluation of the BUiD Website**

# Due Date: 2nd June 2023

This is a Group Assignment with 5-6 Team Members.

This Group Assignment is worth 40% of the total module mark.

# Assignment Description

The key purpose of the BUiD’s website is to advance the University’s mission and message to prospective students, alumni, industrial organizations, the media and casual visitors. A secondary purpose is to provide information to the BUiD community (i.e., faculty, staff, administration, students, alumni, parents). It is where the majority of prospective students and potential research collaborators will form their initial impression of the University’s activities.

The current university website was revised and updated to reflect the university’s current structure, research interest/activities and academic programmes. The newly revised website is available at: *buid.ac.ae*

**Part A Assignment Task (80%): Usability Evaluation of the BUiD Website:**

*Usability* refers to the quality of a user's experience when interacting with products or systems, including websites, software, devices, or applications. As we discussed in the class, ‘usability’ is a combination of factors including:

* Intuitive design: A nearly effortless understanding of the architecture and navigation of the site
* Ease of learning: How fast a user who has never seen the user interface before can accomplish basic tasks?
* Efficiency of use: How fast an experienced user can accomplish tasks
* Memorability: After visiting the site, whether a user can remember enough to use it effectively in future visits.
* Error frequency and severity: How often users make errors while using the system, how serious the errors are, and how users recover from the errors?
* Subjective satisfaction: Whether the user likes using the system

Usability is therefore one of the major factors that determines the successfulness of a website. The goal of this assignment (including report and presentation) is to apply the knowledge we studied in class and your existing experiences to:

1. Use the 10 essential characteristics of a user-friendly website listed below to *evaluate the usability* of the new BUiD website.
2. For each essential characteristic, state how well does the BUiD website achieves or does not achieve
3. Recommend improvements (if any)
4. Produce a report about your findings

Here are 10 essential characteristics of a user-friendly website:

1. **Optimized for Mobile Devices**: As more and more people use their mobile phones to access the Internet, creating a mobile optimized website has become a necessity. In order to provide a truly great user experience, the site needs to be compatible with different devices, operating systems, and browsers that potential visitors will be using.

1. **Consistency**: In addition to keeping the site's navigation consistent, the overall look and feel of your site should be consistent across all of website's pages. Backgrounds, color schemes, typefaces, and even the tone of writing are all areas where being consistent can have a positive impact on usability and UX.

1. **Well-Formatted Content that is Easy to Scan**: The average Internet user skims through the content on a web page instead of reading each and every word from top to down. Users tend to scan through key parts of the page quickly to determine if it is relevant to their needs. It is important to format the content with this in mind.

1. **Fast Load Times**: Nothing is more annoying for website visitors than a website that takes long to load. In fact, slow speed is one of the main reasons why visitors leave a website.

1. **Browser Consistency**: Browser compatibility can be easily overlooked. Even the websites of some of the most reputable companies suffer from this problem due to neglect. This is bad for branding and has a negative effect on the website usability.

1. **Effective Navigation/Navigability**: Good navigation is one of the most important aspects of website usability. Having intuitive navigation on the site is crucial for ensuring visitors can find what they're looking for. Ideally, a visitor should be able to arrive on the site and not have to think extensively about where they should click next -- moving from point A to point B should be as pain-free as possible.

1. **Contrasting Colour Scheme**: The right contrast between the background of the website and content is one of the most basic yet most important web design principles that should never be overlooked. Good contrast between background and text e.g. black text on a white background makes the content legible and easy to read. Lack of contrast, on the other hand, makes it very difficult for visitors to read your content.

1. **Usable Forms**. Forms are a very important element on websites. They allow users to interact with the site. To get the most out of the site, it is important to ensure the forms are easy to use and accessible to everyone.

1. **Social Media**: The BUiD website is a unique way for our University to connect with the world and powerful tool for communicating our activities. Social media is crucial because it provides a fast way to share information.

1. **Accessible to all Users** and **follows WCAG Standards**: The [web content accessibility guidelines](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/) (WCAG) were created so that websites can meet the needs of people with disabilities. Roughly [15% of people](https://www.ibm.com/blogs/age-and-ability/2016/10/12/ibm-strengthens-mobile-app-accessibility-and-usability/) across the globe live with some form of a disability. The university doesn’t want to discourage or discriminate anyone from visiting our website. Everyone is entitled to a good experience. The WCAC has [four main principles](https://www.d.umn.edu/itss/news/2016/05/wcag_principles.html) to meet their web accessibility standards**.** A user-friendly website should also be accessible to everyone including blind, disabled or the elderly. These users typically use screen-readers to access the Internet.

**Task Instructions:**

This is a teamwork project. Choose a team leader, if you have to. Keep records of your team meetings and/or discussions.

**Deliverables: Due 2nd June 2023:**

The project has the following deliverables:

* A *Project Report* that consists of a cover page, with project title, team name, and team members.
* Introduction and background (20%) – Executive summary that gives a brief overview of the main report and should be 500-800 words;
* Main Project Report (60%) - Your project report should describe your chosen evaluation process, method, and/or technique(s) that you used and why. The report should draw conclusions on the usability of website usability. It should describe any recommendations for improvements, if any.
* The main report and the executive summary will be judged based on the following criteria:

o originality and innovation in the ideas presented, 25%

o relevance and soundness of the arguments, 25%

o appropriate consideration of relevant literature, 25%

o quality of presentation and conforming to requirements, 25%

**The main project report should be no more than 10 pages long**.

* Individual contribution report (20%) – Submit individually and should be 600 to 800 words. The report should describe your individual task contributions with documented evidence, i.e. what tasks you performed and when; your experiences with working in a group; any difficulties and how did you overcome them.

# Important Notes

* Make sure to use proper citations in your references at the end.
* The report should summarize all your activities and outcomes during the project. Even activities that eventually failed or did not achieve as expected are important to include in the report, along with plausible explanation as to why such activities failed.

**Part B (20%): Individual Report – Due: 2nd June 2023**

Please produce an evaluation report describing the advantages and disadvantages of working as a team. Your report should demonstrate, with documented evidence, how you contributed to each question as per instructions above. The report should also demonstrate your awareness of the varying roles within the team and the ability to choose the most appropriate role. Also describe problems encountered, if any, and how the team resolved these problems, communication/group tools you used. It is all about your personal reflections, so please don’t write some generic answers (as found in the books or Internet). *(Tip: it will help to keep a diary of your meetings/events as evidence for your evaluation report*).

Please make your report clear and concise in about 600-800 words!

# Marking Scheme

The grading will be broken down based on the following criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Maximum**  **Marks (%)** | **Marks Obtained** |
| Introduction and background | **20** |  |
| Main Project Report including recommendations | **60** |  |
| Individual Contribution | **20** |  |
| **Grand Total** | **100** |  |