

Project #2 Alterna Canvas
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Heuristic Evaluation In-Class Activity

1. Look over the summary overview of the heuristics.
2. Choose 5 of these rules to focus on for this in class activity. Plan to spend about 8-10 minutes on each of the ones you selected. You can choose ones that seem most relevant to your project. Normally, you would use them all, but to keep this activity within the timeframe of class, I suggest choosing 5. Why did you choose the guidelines you chose?

We chose the following guidelines to study for the class activity. We chose these guidelines as we all think that they are important to recognize in our development of Alterna Canvas and as we progress, we'd like to make sure that these elements are present throughout our work in order to make a cohesive and user-friendly design.

1. Visibility of System Status
3. User control and freedom
4. Consistency and standards
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

3. Read over the pdf overview posted below for each of your your guideline. You can also reference the additional materials(articles and videos) if you would like. Aim to spend 8-10 minutes on each of the guidelines you selected.

a. Consider your design plans with this guideline in mind. Where might it apply? Do you have design plans that consider this guideline? Do any of your plans potentially fail to consider this rule? How do you plan to address this?

1. Visibility of System Status

- The visibility of system status can be applied to when users use their points and when they earn points. By not only having an indicator of your remaining points, our systems can also have pop-up notifications or some other types of indication that earning/spending their points was successful. Also with the class progression bar to show users how far they have progressed in the class so far. The only area that I can think of that might fail to consider this rule is the requirement to download a powerpoint. Since the process of downloading powerpoint slides is an external feature, it might be difficult to indicate to users when the download has started and if it was successful. Overall, we plan to

address this point by having our UI give users a clear status of their progress with some sort of indication such as a point counter or a progress bar.

3. User control and freedom

- The main idea behind user control and freedom is that we want users to be able to maintain their sense of freedom while using the program by allowing them to escape from unwanted scenarios when making mistakes.
- An example of this would be a user clicking a wrong button which opens up a form dialog:
 - A system *without* good user control and freedom might force the user to complete the form to close the form/complete the action
 - A system *with* good user control and freedom would give the user the option to close out of the form early in order to let the user back out of an unnecessary operation
- The heuristic gives this topic the analogy of putting an “emergency exit” in your program—giving the users the power to exit interactions when they want to, not having to commit to a non-critical process that they’ve started
- Overall, in Alterna Canvas, there are a few places that we want the user to have control and freedom. Ideally, we will not lock the user in any page by allowing them to navigate away using the side nav-bar at any time
 - One potential exception though is if the user has inputted something critical (such as an assignment upload or a change to their user profile) and in this case we would want to make sure they actually want to exit the interaction before we allow them to do so

4. Consistency and standards

- This applies to the entire UI, we want consistency within our UI and some consistency with the current Canvas UI so users don’t have to relearn. Yes, our design plans are internally consistent and mostly externally consistent with current Canvas. I don’t think our plans fail this rule, we have to have some inconsistency with current Canvas otherwise it would be the exact same. We are addressing this by establishing a base layout that every page uses.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

- Efficiency of use will apply to user’s announcements, to-do’s, and possibly submitting assignments. We are going to have an overall announcements and to-do’s tab as well as individual class announcements and to-do’s to fit this guideline.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

- This applies to every page in the UI. Yes, we have design plans that consider this guideline. We plan to address this by making sure that the content/visual design in our UI focuses on the essentials only and avoids including unnecessary elements or information that will distract the user from the information they need to utilize our UI

b. Write down a brief description of what you found- where is this guideline relevant, how is this guideline addressed or if it isn't addressed, how do you plan to address it?

1. Visibility of System Status

- This guideline is relevant to the point system, class progression, leaderboard, and upcoming tasks. These can be addressed by having a point counter, progress bar, visual bar graph, calendar with the upcoming tasks, and/or popup notifications that gives info to the users.

3. User control and freedom

- This guideline is important for any page that requires a user input. We can see it being heavily used on the profile page as well as the assignment pages—as there are some actions that are non-critical that we want the user to have freedom to navigate away from.
 - Example of a non-critical input: user is checking their grades with the popup and they want to navigate away (there should be a clearly marked “exit” here)
 - Example of a critical input: user is in the middle of uploading an assignment submission and tries to navigate away (we should take away their user control and freedom to politely ask if that’s actually what they want to do, as navigating away before submitting could be considered a user error)

4. Consistency and standards

- This guideline is relevant for our design of every page, we want our UI to be internally consistent. We are already addressing it by establishing a base layout that every page uses.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use

- Giving the user shortcuts is something that we want to aim to do with Alterna Canvas. In order to create efficiency for the user, we can have multiple ways to view certain pieces of information (such as a global announcements list and a by-class announcements list on the class page) or creating shortcuts that allow users to perform actions quicker than the current Canvas implementation.

8. Aesthetic and minimalist design

- The guideline is useful for every page in our UI. It is currently being addressed in our UI and we will continue to make it a priority as we complete the project.