**Heuristics Evaluation of the New York State Assembly Website**
**https://nyassembly.gov/**

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### 1. Visibility of system status
- Always keep users informed about what is going on.
- Provide appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

***Evaluation***
Not satisfied. For those new to this level of government and are hoping to find information about Legislative Info, the best this website offers is a page that reads: New York State Bill Search. There is little contextual info, especially regarding bills, and when clicking certain tabs, the user is redirected to other websites without notice.

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### 2. Match between system and the real world
- Speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.
- Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

***Evaluation***
Not satisfied. This website has little information for those seeking to learn the basic ways their state assembly functions. The language is exclusive to those familiar with the government process. For example, how am I supposed to immediately know the difference between a public committee and a committee meeting?

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### 3. User control and freedom
- Users often choose system functions by mistake.
- Provide a clearly marked "out" to leave an unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue.
- Support undo and redo.

***Evaluation***
Not satisfied. When exploring "Assembly Reports," i was barraged with categories I did not understand with a plain list of apparent reports dating back years. There was no way to search the reports nor to find context about what reports were valuable to me. The legislative info tab offers no immediate info, but actually directs to a Bill search page. One must be familiar with the exact bill number in order to find it.

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### 4. Consistency and standards
- Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
- Follow platform conventions.

***Evaluation***
Not satisfied. A phrase like "legislative info" actually directs to the New York State bill search, whereas clicking on the "laws" tab redirects to another site. Why do bill and law info result in two wildly different functions. I frequently found myself confused as the consistency of terms varied wildly.

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### 5. Error prevention

- Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

*Evaluation*

Satisfied. While this is inconsistent, there are tools for users to quickly access relevant info. On the home page, there is a large link that reads "Who is my Assembly member." Such a link can help reduce errors of navigation. There is also a very useful "sitemap" in the footer. There is also a link in the footer for "Request Information." While the site is not intuitive and easily navigable, such links offer help to those who are hopelessly lost (like myself).

## 6. Recognition rather than recall
- Make objects, actions, and options visible.
- User should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another.
- Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

*Evaluation*

Not satisfied. Much context is missing when searching sections of the website, especially pertaining to bill information. Assembly categories offer little information, and those who want to learn more about the specific assemblies would have to do a separate web search. In other instances, links are merely images with vague text, like "Aspire to Inspire" which takes a viewer to a very unusual-looking page that apparently has to do with a recent initiative. One would have to re-navigate back to the home-page and remember what this vague term means.

## 7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
- Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user so that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

*Evaluation*

Satisfied. I assume that the majority of this website is tailored to those who are very familiar with the New York State assembly. Those who want to find an assembly member can do so with the click of a button on the home screen, and those who want to find a specific bill can simply click on "legislative info" and type in the bill number.

## 8. Aesthetic and minimalist design
- Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed.
- Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

*Evaluation*

Satisfied. The aesthetic is relatively comfortable and minimalist. The home page has a familiar layout and a consistent color and font pattern. News, events, and special messages are easily demarcated and the header and footer appear uncomplicated and inviting.

## 9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

- Expressed in plain language (no codes)
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution.

### Evaluation

Unsatisfied. When typing in an invalid bill number, I was confronted with a simple "No bill matched your criteria." There was no help provided or any resource I could turn to to figure out why such a bill could not be found. While the problem was concisely stated, there was no suggestions about how to change my search nor how I could seek help if I wanted to.

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### 10. Help and documentation
- Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation.
- Help  information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

### Evaluation

Not satisfied. The main system of seeking help is through "Request Information," which offers no help in the way of navigating the site. Those who are unfamiliar with assembly terminology would have to seek outside sources. There is a sitemap that is easily found, but it still offers no context for various services.