Final Project: The Zara Website

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DSGN 1
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Data Collection

Brainstorming:

During our brainstorming process, as shown in **Figure 1**, the use of mind maps played a key role in guiding our decision-making process in selecting topics/systems for the project. Mind maps organize and connect ideas visually, allowing us to systematically explore different options. In **Figure 1**, the interconnected nodes represent the potential options that ultimately led to our decision to focus on the Zara online shopping platform. Mind mapping facilitates a comprehensive analysis of different factors such as user engagement, task complexity, and relevance to our research objectives. By visually mapping out our ideas, we can weigh the pros and cons of each potential object/system, ensuring we make an informed decision. Zara online shopping is an ideal choice based on its badly designed platform that we want to redesign, enhancing users' experience and reducing potential errors that users make.

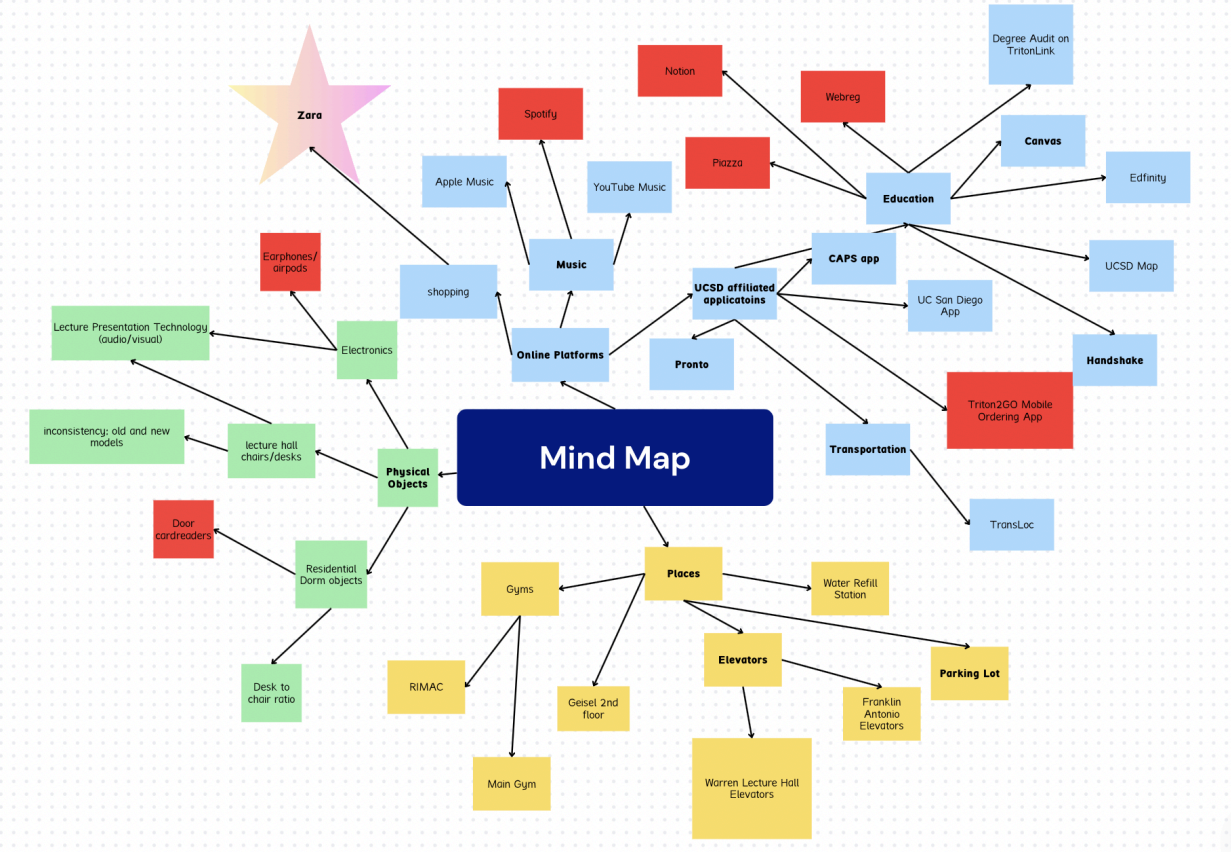


Figure 1: *An overview of the mind map with various different objects/systems we created during our brainstorming process. Different colors represented different topics (categories). However, the red colored-box indicated topics that we wanted to eliminate from choosing and the gradient-colored star represented our chosen object (link to mind map).*

Methodology

For our project, we worked together to develop interview questions and establish task procedures. This collaborative process took place on shared documents, providing a centralized platform where each team member's contribution is visible. This document not only provided a storage for our collective work, but also our brainstorming process.

In total, we conducted 15 interviews, with each team member independently conducting three interviews in-person. To simplify the data collection process, we utilized Google Forms, enabling immediate input of interview responses. This data was automatically organized into a Google Sheet, ensuring efficient management and analysis. Our respondents came from a diverse group including friends, family, and random individuals on the UC San Diego campus. The incorporation of different perspectives develops the data set and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of our research.

Our interview questions were created with the intention of providing a collection of both qualitative and quantitative data for our further analysis. While coming up with our interview questions, we avoided asking leading questions to eliminate bias in our project. Further, we applied the master-apprentice model, positioning our interviewees as the master, illustrating their knowledge to us, the apprentices. This model helps us to avoid bias in our project by providing an open-ended question, encouraging participants to express their thoughts freely. Below are our interview questions and tasks.

Pre-task Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
    a. This question is to gauge what age demographic our respondents are. Asking this question helps us understand the age distribution of the target audience. In statistical analysis, age demographics can be used to find trends, patterns, or correlations between age and certain views, preferences, or behaviors. Thus, we can use age as a variable to compare responses or behaviors across different age groups, allowing analysis of trends.
2. What method of shopping for clothes (online or in-person) do you prefer?
    a. By posing this question, we want to gather about individuals' shopping preferences, especially regarding clothing. This helps in our comprehension of the variables affecting people's decisions while purchasing clothing. For example, if a person prefers to purchase online, they could get discounts or customized advertisements for online platforms. We can also observe possible trends or external factors that influence users' preference for online or in-person shopping.
3. If you prefer online shopping, about how many times have you shopped online this month?
    a. With this question, we want to collect specific quantitative data about the respondents' online shopping behavior by gauging the frequency/tendency of online shopping for respondents. Perhaps they are used to the user interface of

most online shopping websites, so this question will provide insight about how capable they are when navigating around online platforms.

4. How many times have you shopped in person this month?
    a. This question also aims to collect quantitative data on the respondent's in-person shopping behavior within a particular time frame; similar to the question (above) about online shopping frequency.
5. Which online shopping platform do you use most frequently?
    a. Asking this question helps us observe respondents' preferences on online shopping platforms. We can collect information on particular features or aspects of online shopping platforms that contributed to users' frequent visits to a particular online platform. For instance, we can observe how the layout or signifiers, such as the size of the text significantly contribute to the overall user experience.
6. Have you ever shopped on Zara online? If so, about how many times have you?
    a. Asking this question can provide insight into the user's performance and experience while performing the task. For respondents who had never shopped online at Zara, we could observe how they navigated and interacted with the platform, collecting data on any difficulties they might have encountered during the task. This allows us to identify potential user experience challenges caused by unclear signifiers, unorganized structure, or lack of discoverability. We can also observe potential errors, such as knowledge-based mistakes that may occur. On the other hand, for respondents who had previously shopped online at Zara, this question allowed us to delve deeper into their established mental models.

Task Interview Questions

1. Open Zara.com and use the search bar to find women's jeans, and add it to your cart.
    a. By having our participants perform this specific task, we aim to gauge how easily and intuitively they can navigate the website, using the search functionality, and successfully complete adding an item to the shopping cart. We can concentrate on how the participants perceive the search bar. Does it have a clear signifier? Or are the signifiers clear enough for users to find the search bar easily? This observation is essential since it provides information on how clear and simple the user interface is. By watching how participants use the search bar, we can see any slips or mistakes that they could run into when engaging in this typical purchasing activity. It also helps determine how well the search function meets user expectations and makes for an efficient purchasing experience.
2. Can you show us how to favorite/bookmark an item?
    a. The purpose of this question is to assess the ease or difficulty users experience in locating the bookmark feature on the Zara website. Through this task, our goal is to gain insights into the level of discoverability on the Zara website and to

determine whether users are experienced at navigating and performing this particular task. Additionally, we aim to observe the impact of signifiers on users' behavior during this task, further informing us about the user experience and interface design effectiveness.

3. Can you use the price and size filter to find a size small shirt under $20?
    a. With this task, we can observe any errors –slips or mistakes – that users may encounter using the filter on the Zara website. By identifying these errors, we can observe aspects of the interface of the filtering process that may lead to user confusion or frustration. This observation will contribute insight into the effectiveness and user-friendliness of the filtering feather, allowing us to redesign the platform for a better user experience and less likely for users to encounter errors.
4. Find “Nude Bouquet” perfume using the drop-down menu
    a. The purpose of this task is to observe participants' experience with the drop-down menu on the website. The drop-down menu on the Zara Website is disorganized with many redundant categories. With this task, we can observe potential slips that users may make intentionally, such as pressing the wrong categories when searching for a specific item. Participants may also make mistakes, which is when the wrong goal/plan is established.
5. Can you show us how to remove an item from your cart?
    a. The intent of this task is to help us observe the participants’ understanding of the underlying structure and functionality of the website. This involves assessing whether their mental model aligns with the conceptual model. We can also observe how the signifier influences users’ performance. A clear and perceivable signifier, such as an icon or well-labeled button, should guide users effortlessly through the process. If the participant can’t find a way to remove an item from their cart, this means that the website lacks a clear signifier.
6. Can you show us how to switch the layout of the clothes options in the new section? Which layout do you prefer?
    a. This task helps us observe the user's experience in finding the layout switch on the Zara website. By examining if users encounter challenges during this task, we aim to gather detailed information about the specific features, such as lack of signifiers, influencing their overall experience. Beyond assessing the functionality of the layout switch, we can also gain profound insights into users' layout preferences. Understanding the contributing factors will provide us with an understanding of what drives users' preferences in website layouts. Is it because of the aesthetic look or the simplicity of the structure that made it easier to operate the website?
7. Can you show us how to get to the sale section for women?

    a. The task aimed to observe any errors – slips or mistakes, such as knowledge-based mistakes, that users make when finding the sales section. We can observe how the signifier contributed to these errors. The term "Sale," mostly shown on the homepage of a website, serves as a clear and universally recognized signifier for discounted items, providing straightforward discoverability in finding it. Instead of labeling it "sale," the Zara website labeled it "Special price." This illustrates a bad signifier that may result in a potential source of confusion for users and difficulty in finding the section. Thus, with this task, we can collect the different types of errors that users may encounter.
8. Can you find the return policy?
    a. The intent of this task is to gather potential slips or mistakes that users may make during the process of finding the return policy. By asking our interviewees to perform this task, we can also gain insight into the discoverability of this policy, whether it is easy to find or not. Every click, scroll, and hover becomes a valuable data point, shedding light on the hurdles users face in the pursuit of a clear and accessible return policy. If users find it hard to find the return policy, we can observe what concepts in design lead to this difficulty. By observing users grappling with the task, we unveil insights into the effectiveness of design choices. We can then ask ourselves if it is because of the unclear signifiers, or the disorganized structure of the website. Further, we can also gather insights into user's preferences in finding the return policy. Most return policies can be found at the very bottom of the page. With users who often shop online, we can observe whether or not they have a mental model by scrolling to the bottom of the website to find the return policy. Thus, we can observe how the designer understands the user's mental model.
9. Can you show us what is in your cart and check out?
    a. The purpose of this task is to observe whether or not our interviewees encounter difficulty when operating the website during checkout. We can gain insight into users' mental models from their previous experiences when purchasing something online. This question also aimed to observe users' preferences about the checkout process in online shopping. Some users may prefer checking out quicker and more convenient for first-time users by checking out as a guest without creating an account. Yet, some may also prefer logging in to their account before shopping to gain points credit. The Zara website forced users to log in or create an account if they didn't have one after they clicked "continue" to the checkout process. If users express their dislike about the checking process, we can consider this in our redesign.

Post-Task Interview Questions

1. Were there any features of the website that you liked? Explain why.

    a. The purpose of this question is to gather feedback from users about the positive aspects of their experience with the website. User preferences vary and this question facilitates the collection of different viewpoints. By asking this question, we can identify specific features, functionality, or design elements that users find satisfying or attractive. For example, users may point out how they liked the large photos for showcasing clothing. Liked features are likely to align with the user's mental models, suggesting that the design and functionality resonate well with their expectations. In addition, we can also observe how the system image helps promote the mental model to guide the users when performing their tasks on the website.
2. Were there any features you disliked about the website? If so, how can it be improved?
    a. In contrast to the above question, this question aimed to observe what elements within the website contributed to the user's dissatisfaction. With this question, we can observe any aspects of the website that users found confusing, frosting, or inconvenient. Users may point out how the size of the text serves as a bad signifier because it was difficult to read or the confusion of finding their desired product due to the lack of a filter option. We then can observe how these ineffective design features impact the gulf of execution. Another important thing we can observe is the possible constraint that limits the set of possible user actions. Users may encounter difficulties and make errors, including slips and mistakes. This question allows users to express their frustration and communicate any challenges they face. Whereby, by asking how the disliked features can be improved, we can gain insight into potential solutions for our redesign of the website to enhance the functionality and usability of the website, while improving the user experience.
3. When you were shopping, how would you rate the readability of item descriptions on a scale from 1 to 5 (from very bad to extremely good)? Explain why you gave that rating.
    a. With this question, we can observe how the readability of the item description on the website impacts the overall user experience. Readability is an important aspect of usability, and by asking our interviewees this question, we can observe how well users can comprehend and extract information from the description. The purpose of this question is to observe the significant concept of signifiers and discoverability in design. Users can complain about the small visual cues, formatting, or other signifiers, which ultimately can result in a bad user experience. The small fonts on Zara's website can result in poor readability, especially for users with visual impairments. In contrast, bigger fonts enhance readability, making it easier and clearer for users to see the content without straining their eyes. Therefore, a larger font size serves as a clear signifier by improving visibility, readability, and emphasis, contributing to an effective user experience.

4. How would you compare this website to the online platform you use most frequently? Explain.
    a. This question is intended to gain insights into the user's opinion on the website's relative strengths and weaknesses in comparison to their preferred or most frequently used online platform. Users are likely to highlight features they find lacking or superior in comparison to the preferred platform. Comparing the website to the user's preferred platform provides insight into the features or aspects that users liked most. We can observe what features contributed to users' preferences. Maybe, the clear signifier or label that makes it easily readable? Understanding how users perceive a website about o their preferred platform can help manage and meet user expectations– a mental model. It provides designers with context about what users consider standard or preferred, allowing them to align the design and functionality of their website– conceptual model–with these expectations.
5. Is there anything you found confusing when using the website? If so, explain. What were some errors you made?
    a. The purpose of this question is to gather information on any possible problems with the website's usability, interface, or confusing areas. These questions aim to obtain specific information related to the user's understanding of the website's design and functionality. For example, users can identify issues related to signifiers, which are cues or indicators in the interface that convey the functionality of elements. Users may find that the purpose of certain buttons or icons is unclear, leading to confusion. We can also observe whether or not the user's mental models align with the conceptual model. Another important observation we can make by asking this question is the potential errors, such as slips and mistakes that users may encounter during execution while using the website.
6. Rate your experience on a scale from 1 to 5 (from very bad to extremely good) when using the checkout process. Explain why you gave that rating.
    a. The purpose of this question is to observe insights from users about their experience with a specific aspect of the checkout process. Understanding why users rated their experience the way they did helps us identify potential areas that need improvement. We will gain insight into what users liked or disliked about the checkout process. With the checkout process being a task, we can observe if users found it difficult or easy to checkout with the Zara Website. If users encounter difficulties, we can observe potential slips or mistakes. This observation is important for us to take into consideration what contributed to these errors. Is it the lack of signifiers or the user's mental model? Further, the Zara website checkout process forces customers to login to their accounts. If they don't have an account, it forces them to register one. With this question, we wanted to

collect users' preferences on the checkout process. Some would log in to their account before browsing through the website, while some would prefer having them login as a guest. The explanation of their rating gives us insights into the specific aspects of the checkout process that influenced our interviewees' experience, highlighting both positive and negative aspects.

7. Rate your experience on a scale from 1 to 5 (from very bad to extremely good) when using the website. Explain why you gave that rating.
    a. This question is intended to collect quantitative data of user satisfaction while also gathering qualitative insights into the reasons behind their rating. When combined with an explanation, the rating gives users a way to express how well they understand the signifiers in the interface. The way in which icons and label signals are perceived by users may have a direct impact on how clearly they feel about the overall experience. With this information, we can later observe how wide or narrow the gulf of execution is between the user and the website. A lower rating would indicate a wider gap, suggesting that users find it challenging to execute their actions with our tasks on the website. User's ratings and explanations also offer insights into how well the website aligns with their mental models. For instance, if users feel that their expectations match the actual functionality of the website, it indicates a concordant relationship between their mental models and the conceptual model intended by the designer. Moreover, users explaining their rating can reveal specific areas of frustration or dislike about the website. Understanding these areas is helpful for us in redesigning the website, which will be further explained in the **Design Space and Redesign** section.
8. What would you like to add to the website if you have any ideas?
    a. By asking this question, we can gain insight into what users want to add to the website that was not on the website. We can observe some constraints that users face when using the website. With this question, we can gather suggestions from our interviewees to improve the website and enhance the overall user experience. For instance, users might propose additions or changes to address specific difficulties or challenges they've encountered with performing their tasks. With this information, we can identify and improve the website to reduce potential errors, such as slips and mistakes that users may have encountered.

Proof of Data: See appendix for full view of tables; abridged versions of tables below show the first few rows and columns

Proof of Consent:

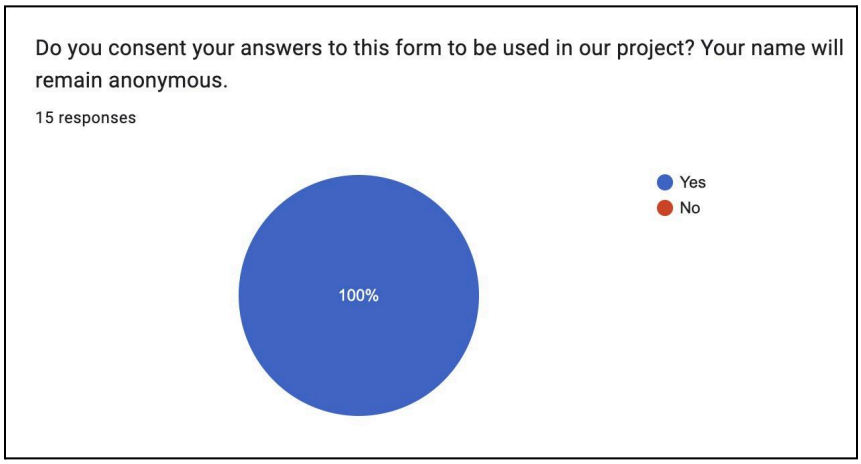


Figure 1: *Pie chart shows that all respondents gave consent for their data to be used*

Table 1: Pre-Task Information

Shows quantitative and qualitative results from Pre-Task questions; provides evidence that each member interviewed three people

Interviewee	Interviewer	Age	Preferred Method of Shopping	Frequently Used Online Shopping Store	Frequency of Online Shopping at Zara
1	Nina	20	In-person	Amazon, Taobao	0
2	Sonakshi	19	Online	Amazon	0
3	Nina	19	In-person	Amazon, retailers websites (lululemon, aritzia)	2

Figure 2: *A bar graph showing how many respondents have online-shopped on Zara before and how many never shopped online.*

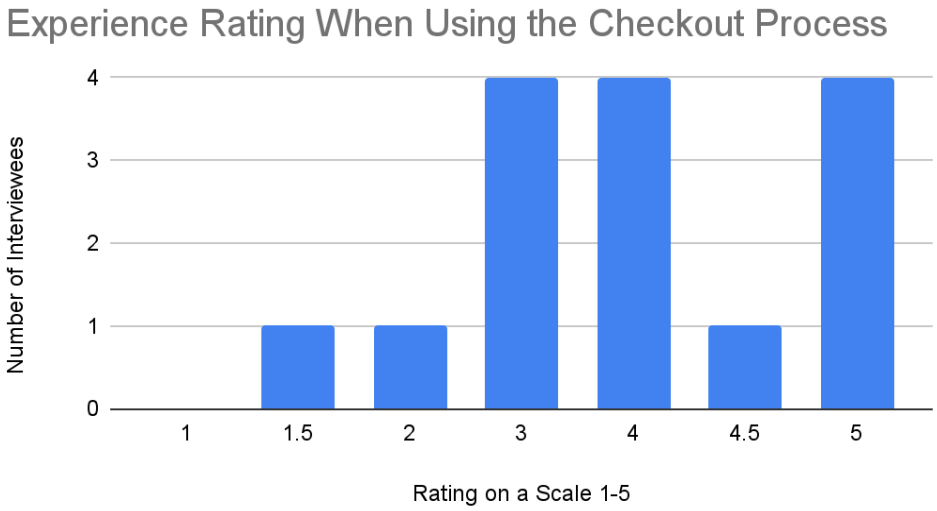


Figure 3: *A bar graph showing respondents' rating on their experience with the checkout process on the Zara website. The mean was 3.733.*

Table 2: Task Information

Shows qualitative results from asking respondents to perform a series of actions in navigating through website

Interviewee Number	Task Questions								
	Open Zara.com and use the search bar to find women's jeans, and add it to your cart.	**Can you show us how to favorite/ bookmark an item?**	**Can you use the price and size filter to find a size small shirt under $20?**	**Find "Nude Bouquet" perfume using the drop-down menu.**	**Can you show us how to remove an item from your cart?**	**Can you show us how to switch the layout of the clothes options in the new section? Which layout do you prefer?**	**Can you show us how to get to the sale section for women?**	**Can you find the return policy?**	**Can you show us what is in your cart and check out?**
1	Searched womens and then used suggested answers to select womens jeans, after adding sidebar came out	Clicked the little thing	Top limit stuck in 30 minimum.	Use search bar, cause hard to find in perfumes category	Went into cart Pressed x	Top right buttons, preferred second one	Could not find sales (also it was thanks giving though), couldn't figure out	Went into a product and saw the policy at right side	pressed sales, didn't have account

Table 3: Post-Task Information

Qualitative data regarding respondent likes/dislikes of website and suggestions for design improvement.

Interviewee Number	Post-Task Questions				
	Were there any features of the website that you liked? Explain why.	**Were there any features you disliked about the website? If so, how can it be improved?**	**How would you compare this website to the online platform you use most frequently? Explain.**	**Is there anything you found confusing when using the website? If so, explain.**	**What would you like add to the website if you have any ideas?**
1	How the prices are highlighted (in Black Friday sales) so it's clear, that we can choose the layout for scrolling	The brand font overlaps and and text fonts are so small (not emphasized, really hard to pay attention to), left hand menu (categories) layout hard to use/search for items	Font size of Amazon is nice to read, highlighted fonts/bolded fonts to know what items have deals and makes it stand out, menu button is well organized and there are categories in categories easy to read and understand	The menu (categories) normally people won't scroll down (e.g filters that need to be accessed by scrolling down on women's page)	Language switch button, signifiers to show that photos of each product can be swiped (to see other photos of the product) on main page

Table 4: Post-Task Information

Quantitative data regarding user experience in readability of item description and holistic user experience (NOTE: question wording was modified in table so it reads more clearly)

Interviewee Number	Rating Questions		
	Ratings of item description readability on a scale from 1 to 5	**Ratings of user experience on scale from 1 to 5 (from very**	**Ratings of user experience on scale from 1 to 5 (from very**

	(from very bad to extremely good)	bad to extremely good) when using the checkout process	bad to extremely good) when using the website
1	2, because text is too small but prices are highlighted so stands out, don't like small size because some important info may be missed	4, because can't proceed past login page	3, like the layout of clothes scrolling (second option) but don't like font or brand title that can't be removed, the top bar stays when scrolling so it's really annoying cause it blocks your field of vision

Google Sheets
Google Form (Interview Q's + Result)
Google Form (Response)

Contributions

Collectively, everyone created a brainstorming mind map and decided to choose the Zara website as our object/system. Every group member also conducted/gathered data from interviewing three people and created parts of the slides for presentation. As the project progresses, team members are assigned responsibilities. Camille organized and modified the spreadsheet to make it more readable for clarity and neatness, created an appendix with tables showing respondents' data, and filmed and edited video submission. Jiayi contributed to methodology and trends/patterns analysis. Nina contributed to the trends/analysis of problems. Sonakshi contributed to the design Space and Tradeoffs, helped with redesign on Figma, and went to the writing hub. Serina contributed to the Redesign Prototype section and made redesign on Figma. Lastly, we reviewed and made edits to each other's work before collectively going through the entire project to ensure that it followed the rubric criteria.

Problems & Trends

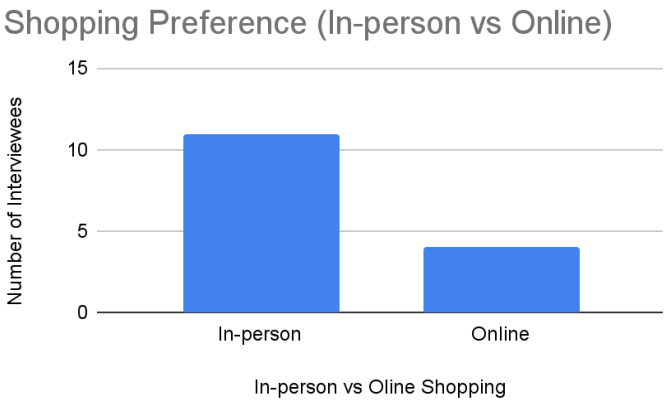


Figure 4: *A bar graph demonstrating interviewees shopping preference (In-person or Online).*

In total, we collected 15 interviews, and 11 out of 15 interviewees preferred in-person shopping, as illustrated in **Figure 4**. Specifically, 11 out of 15 interviewees preferred in-person shopping. This preference can be from a desire to physically see, touch, and try out products before making a purchase. One trend we noticed is that despite our audience being less experienced with online shopping, 7 out of 15 users consistently scrolled to the bottom of the page when tasked with finding the return policy on the website. This shows that the users have a mental model that aligns with the conceptual model. This mental model can be derived from previous experience with finding the return policy on other shopping websites. Their instinctive tendency to scroll to the bottom of the page to seek out the return policy reflects a learned behavior, possibly derived from established patterns encountered in their interactions with various online shopping platforms.

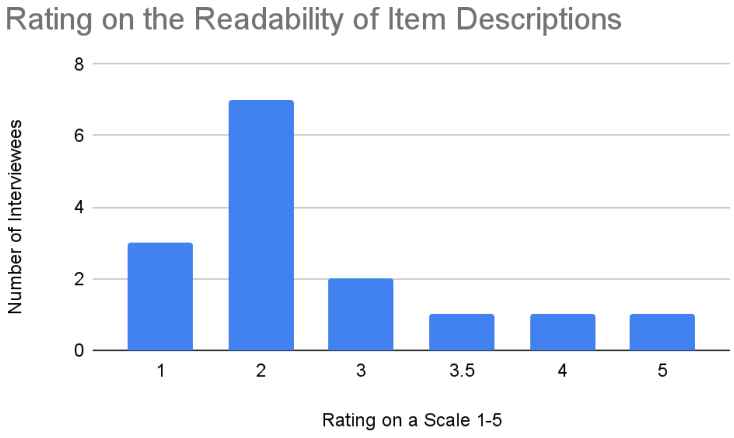


Figure 5: *A bar graph illustrating interviewees' rating on the readability of item descriptions on the Zara website.*

Another trend we noticed is that many respondents complained about the readability of the website as it lacks signifiers. This was particularly observed in their struggles with the search bar, which proved challenging to perceive and utilize effectively, illustrating a wide gulf of execution. The combination of unclear signifiers and font-related issues contributes to a user experience that falls short of meeting users' expectations and, in turn, hinders the website's usability. Besides, most people saw the attempt at minimalism on the website, the approach of visual simplicity, and its clean aesthetic as purposeful design; however, believe it's not effective for an ideal shopping experience. **Figure 5** rated a readability on a scale from 1 to 5, and based on the figure**,** most respondents rated 13 out of 15 respondents rated readability below 4, of which 10 of them rated the website below a 2. The calculated mean of the rating was 2.367, which shows dissatisfaction with the text font, and therefore indicating a bad user experience. This readability rating highlights the concerns about the font while emphasizing the important role that visual elements, such as signifiers, play in shaping users' perceptions and interactions. Addressing these issues could potentially promote a more positive user experience by bridging the gulf of execution, which is where the user tries to figure out how something works/operates.

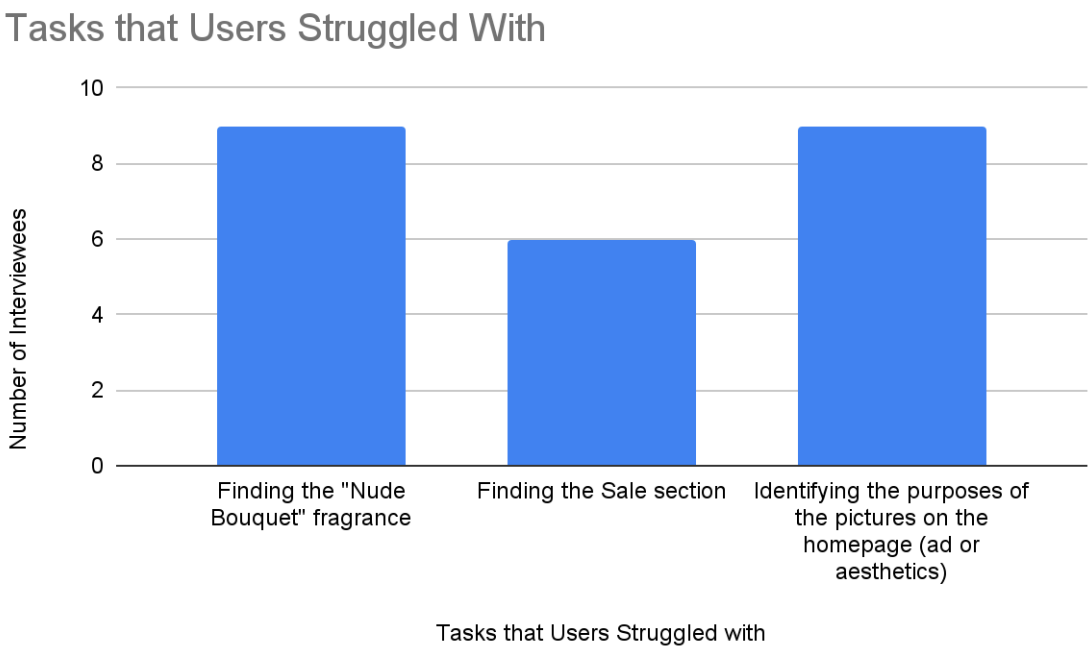


Figure 6*: A bar chart showing the common struggles that users encountered during the task in navigating the Zara website.*

Building on the identified trends, another significant aspect of user frustration emerged regarding the website's navigation, particularly concerning the drop-down menu structure. In particular, 8 out of 15 respondents expressed confusion with the menu, attributing it to the abundance of categories without specific subcategories. This complexity made it challenging for users to locate specific product categories during their tasks. This navigational difficulty not only

hindered the seamless completion of tasks but also contributed to the occurrence of common errors, such as rule-based mistakes, which is when users correctly executed the intended actions, but the underlying rules proved faulty. As shown in **Figure 6**, a bar chart illustrating common user struggles to navigate the Zara website, 6 out of 15 interviewees struggled to find the Sale Section, while 3 of them didn't find it. This is considered a rule-based mistake because, despite navigating to the Menu as expected or intended action, their struggle ensued because the category was named "Special Prices" instead of "Sale," a widely recognized term in the context of retail. Other than the naming of the category, font size is another problem that is hard to see, in which users have to zoom in for a better view. These unclear signifiers increase users' confusion. Using familiar and conventional labels is often more intuitive and aligns with the user's mental model, which helps them quickly identify and navigate the section they are looking for. Another rule-based mistake we observed from our interviewees when operating the website was their attempt to find the "Nude Bouquet" fragrance task. **Figure 6** shows that 9 out of 15 users struggled with this task. This fragrance was under the Women's section under the "Fragrance" categories instead of being under the "Beauty" section, which most users would have thought. Additionally, under the Men's section, it has "Perfumes" categories. Some users may have difficulty distinguishing the difference between fragrance and perfume, which makes it hard to identify which categories to go into to find the specific product. When asking our interviewees about anything they would add to the website, our third interviewee mentioned that a lot of the stuff in the Menu are redundant categories; therefore, suggested minimizing categories and providing more broad categories. As suggested by a couple of our interviewees, we redesigned the Menu drop-down page to make it more organized, enhancing the usability of the website and also the user experience.

Another common error we observed is knowledge-based mistakes, in which, due to knowledge deficits, users do not achieve the expected outcome. In addition, the knowledge deficits are more due to the lack of features, such as clear signifiers on the homepage, rather than the person's own lack of knowledge. Although the large photos on the homepage for showcasing clothing make it easy to perceive, the homepage is not straightforward; it is treated more like a fashion editorial rather than an online shopping website. As illustrated in **Figure 6**, 9 out of 15 users complained about the homepage layout/pictures because they didn't have a mental model to know if the picture was an ad (product for selling/how to buy that item) or for aesthetics purposes. Though the original conceptual model may catch consumers' attention with the fashion editorial layout style, our data shows the failure to align with users' mental models, and the homepage lacks signifiers indicating the purpose of those photos. Another problem with the homepage was that the Zara logo, search bar, "login," "help," and "shopping bag" stayed at the top of the screen and without a clear backdrop while scrolling, making it cluttered and hard to read and discern from the changing background. According to our fourth interviewee, they suggested "changing the homepage design to increase accessibility by displaying a collection (of different people in the same image with different clothing) instead of individual sections, then

scrolling down will access the product page." Moreover, our twelfth interviewee suggested making the "homepage a lot less flashy, giving photos borders, and wouldn't put a video in there." These suggestions were also taken into consideration for our redesign prototype.

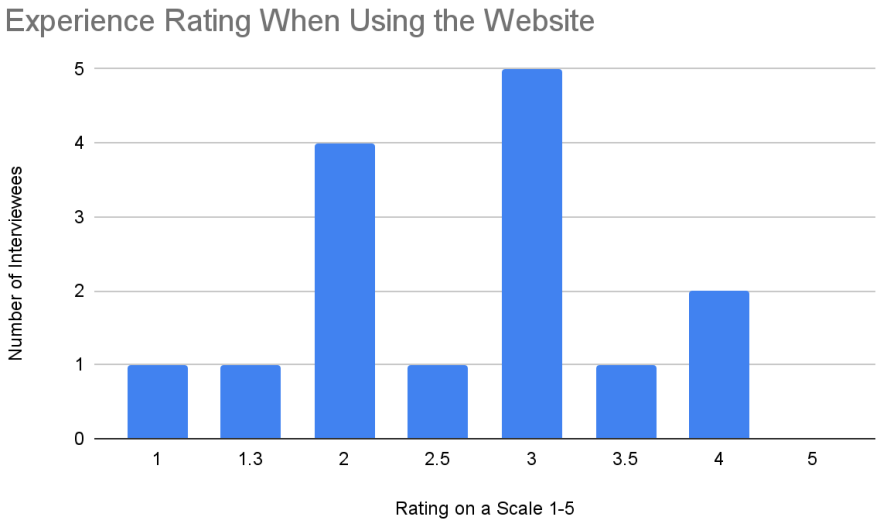


Figure 7: *A bar chart showing interviewees' rating of their overall experience rating using the Zara website, assessed on a scale from 1-5 (from very bad to extremely good).*

As illustrated in **Figure 7**, the rating on the users' overall experience using the website was relatively low, with a mean of 2.63. Only a minority of respondents, specifically 3 out of 15 respondents, rated their experiences above a 3. In addition, none of the interviewees who preferred online shopping rated their overall experience above a 3 using the Zara website. All of the complaints and struggles that users faced when navigating the website contributed to this low rating. This reinforces the importance of addressing potential issues in the online shopping interface to improve user satisfaction and align the online shopping experience with consumer preferences. As mentioned earlier, users expressed frustration with the lack of effective signifiers on the website. Signifiers play a vital role in guiding users and providing visual cues that help navigation. When these signifiers are unclear or insufficient, it becomes difficult for users to understand the interface, leading to wide gaps in the gulf of execution. The search bar, in particular, has become a point of contention, making it difficult for users to perceive and use it effectively due to the lack of clear indicators. Furthermore, the drop-down Menu was unorganized, resulting in users encountering errors, such as rule-based mistakes. This insight raises questions about the effectiveness of the online shopping platform in meeting user expectations and providing a satisfactory shopping experience. By observing the common errors that our interviewees made while navigating the Website, our main focus of this project is to redesign the Zara Website, minimizing the errors that they encountered while enhancing their overall user experience.

In general, we focus on the organization aspect of the user experience because easy website navigation is important for sales. This is greatly significant as the whole purpose of consumer brand sites like Zara is to give customers easier access to their products with more discoverability to result in more sales, or at least to give a boost to their brand image, which would contribute to more sales in the future. From Zara's unique interface, similar to a fashion editorial, it is clear that Zara emphasizes on standing out from other competing websites through its aesthetics. However, less attention to the user experience resulted in the tradeoff of aesthetics over website usability, and elements like user accessibility to features as well as product discovery are hindered. From our data, there is a clear trend of users expressing clear frustration about the difficulty of navigating product categories or using basic functions like the price filter. The inability to quickly and easily browse consumers' items of interest minimizes the exposure of products to potential customers, failing to properly engage customers and leading to disinterest. Furthermore, the frustration that results from struggling to navigate the website and to view items of interest is also harmful to Zara's brand reputation as a professional and reliable source for shopping, which may turn away potential customers to similar brands in the bracket, such as H&M or Forever 21. Overall, these factors contribute to the negative user experience that may discourage consumers from using the website, decreasing the probability of them making purchases along with the discovery of products, resulting in our attentiveness to the problems in the Zara website in our redesign.

Design Space & Redesign

Design Space

Design Space Chart #1

	Name of Store	Minimalism (1 = low, 5= high)	Feature Discoverability (1 = low, 5= high)
ZARA	#1: Zara	4	2
amazon	#2: Amazon	2	4
URBAN OUTFITTERS	#3: Urban Outfitters	2	4
PRADA	#4: Prada	5	4
	#5: Ideal Design	5	5
	#6: Redesign	5	5

Design Space #1 Axes

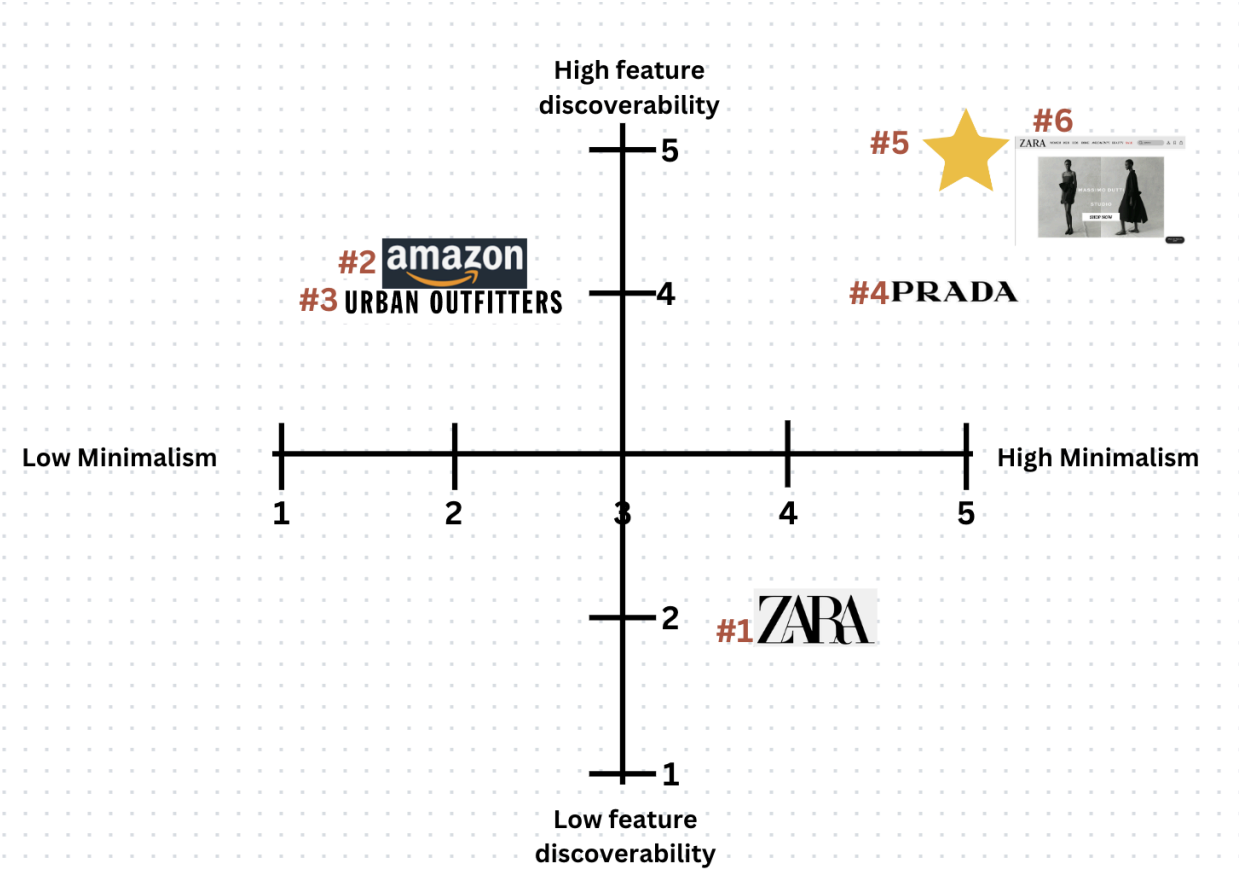


Figure 8: Design space comparing discoverability of features with minimalism from a scale of 1 being low to 5 being high

Figure 8 shows the comparison between the discoverability of the product's features and the minimalism of each website. The discoverability of features refers to how visible the different features of the website are to the user when they first use the website. The features have clear signifiers that communicate their affordances effectively, which bridges the users gulf of execution. The minimalism refers to how clean the website looks. A minimal aesthetic is associated with neutral colors, a lot of white spaces, simple typography, no distractions like big multicolor promotional banners, and overall a simple yet functional product. The design space shows that feature discoverability is a tradeoff to the minimalism of a website. For design 1, Zara is a very minimalistic website as their color scheme is very neutral and the typography is simple and the same throughout the website. Additionally, there's a lot of negative white space in most of their pages and a lack of big promotional banners, which adds to the simple aesthetic of the website. However, their minimalist design affects the feature's discoverability because there is so much negative white space on some of their pages that it causes text and symbols to be very small. The designer might have made the text small so the website would look clean with

negative space, but this hinders the readability of important texts like price. The homepage navigation menu is also very minimalistic because it has the main categories listed in a line. However, the menu is so simple that it lacks important features and there is no sense of organization since there are no subcategories, making it harder for users to shop. The website is so simple that there are not enough useful features in the first place. The homepage is so simple that only one image takes up the entire page, although this causes the navigation menu not to be discoverable since it is unreadable due to its thin, small text.

For design 2, Amazon is a 2 for minimalism because it does not have a simple aesthetic. They have a lot of multicolor banners on their pages, and their banners and typography come in a wide range in sizes. Amazon does not have a set brand style, instead it focuses on its purpose of providing users an accessible website to purchase anything from. Since Amazon does not care much about aesthetic but rather functionality, their website ranks high in feature discoverability with a 4. Amazon menu categories are very clear and come in a wide range. Their categories have subcategories which make it more organized, and the filters are easily discoverable with their large text. The organization of their menu categories affords the user to know where to find their intended product. All of their features are very organized for the user to navigate.

For design 3, Urban Outfitters is at the same place in the design space as Amazon because their websites are similar in a minimalism vs feature discoverability sense. Urban's website has a lot of multicolor signs on their page and the banners and typography have a wide range. The website is filled with useful features, causing the feature discoverability to be high. The menu is organized with clear categories which each have clear subcategories, which affords the user to find their items easily. All the filters have good discoverability, making the website easy to navigate.

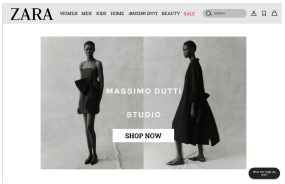
For design 4, Prada got a 5 in minimalism because it uses a neutral color scheme of mostly white and black, and it balances having a lot of negative white space well. The typography is standard throughout the site and it is very readable, allowing the text to have good feature discoverability. The website has a simple and organized menu navigation with all the necessary filters and subcategories, allowing all their features to be pretty discoverable. I gave Prada a 4 in feature discoverability because even though most of their features are discoverable, their homepage also shares a similar issue with zara as their homepage also has big images that causes the text to be a bit small, but this is not a big issue since their text is still pretty legible unlike Zara.

For design 5, our ideal design which would receive a 5 in minimalism and a 5 in feature discoverability. A website should be able to maintain their minimalist aesthetic while having their features be discoverable to the average user. The ideal website can have a neutral color scheme and a standard, readable typography throughout the website. It can also balance having negative white space for a clean look while making sure the text is discoverable. The ideal design should still be able to maintain a good amount of useful features that are easily

discoverable and have good signifiers that let the user know the affordances of the features, such as an organized navigation menu.

For design 6, this is our redesign that is similar to our ideal design since it receives a 5 in both minimalism and feature discoverability. The redesign has a clean look with neutral colors, standard typography, and a simple but organized navigation menu which affords the user to find their items easily. We made important features easily discoverable, such as price having a larger font size, and the sale section being red to signify to the user that it's a special section.

Design Space Chart #2

		Uniqueness (1 = low, 5= high)	Accessibility (1=low, 5 = high)
ZARA	#1: Zara	4	2
amazon	#2: Amazon	4	4
URBAN OUTFITTERS	#3: Urban Outfitters	3	4
PRADA	#4: Prada	2	5
	#5: Ideal Design	4	5
	#6: Redesign	3	5

Design Space Axes #2

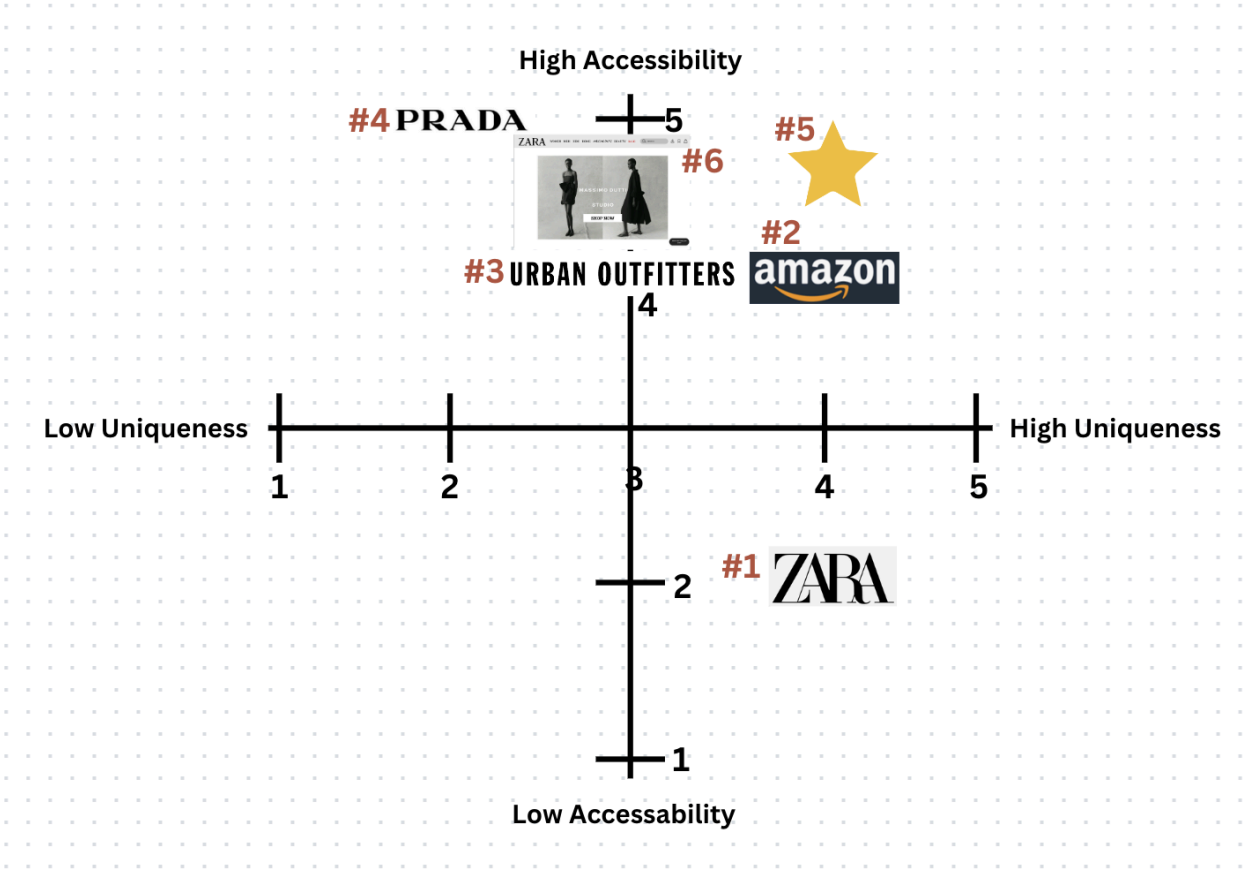


Figure 9: Design space comparing website accessibility with website uniqueness from a scale of 1 being low to 5 being high

Figure 9 shows the comparison between the accessibility of the websites and the uniqueness of each website. The accessibility refers to how easy it is for the user to use the website. The uniqueness refers to whether the website is different from other websites yet still functional. The design space shows that accessibility is somewhat related to the uniqueness of a website. For design 1, Zara is a pretty unique website since it acts like a fashion editorial. The pictures of the models are very large compared to the prices and titles of the clothing causing the website to act like a magazine. The homepage is also scrollable with a bunch of random images of models that have not much to do with Zara clothing items, making it seem more like a fashion editorial. The website does not have any banners such as sale or featured items like other shopping websites. However, this uniqueness causes it to be less accessible to shoppers. Since the website is not designed like other shopping websites and rather a fashion editorial, the designer's conceptual model does not match the user's mental model of a shopping website,

causing users to potentially have issues using the website. The homepage can be confusing for users because the pictures cover the entire page, causing the navigation menu and search bar to be unreadable, causing the website to have faulty signifiers since the users can't see the menu.

For design 2, Amazon got a 4 in uniqueness since their website sells millions of items, rather than focusing on just clothes, and this is evident from their homepage since their navigation menu has a variety of categories. Their homepage is filled with tons of deals and recommended items that are specifically based on the user's shopping preferences. Amazon does a nice job recommending items to users by showing their most recent history on their homepage in big banners, allowing the website to be easily accessible since all of the users' items are just a click away. All of Amazon's texts are easily readable, and their menu items are very organized which affords the user to find their items easily. Amazon received a 4 in accessibility since their pages may feel cluttered with the amount of categories on their menu item due to its large range of products, but it is necessary that Amazon has this since they sell millions of items rather than just clothing. The designer's conceptual model matches the user's mental model of an organized shopping website, allowing for easy accessibility.

For design 3, Urban Outfitters got a 3 in uniqueness since its website design is pretty similar to other clothing sites. They have the standard navigation menu filters with the necessary categories for clothes. They have multicolor banners for items such as featured releases, sales, etc… The website is not unique, but this causes it to be pretty accessible since it matches the users mental model of a typical shopping website, making it easy to use. The menu items are all organized well making it easy for users and all the features have good signifiers with clear affordances. It has a 4 in accessible since the amount of features on the homepage may feel cluttered to the user, but they are all useful features.

For design 4, Prada got a 2 in uniqueness since it acts like any other shopping website except its color scheme is black and white, making it minimalistic but bland. There is no variety in colors or typography. However, the simplicity of this website makes it receive a 5 in accessibility since they have the minimum amount of useful features, making them easily discoverable to the user since there is no sense of clutter. The organized menu navigation signifies clearly the affordances of each category.

For design 5, our ideal design would receive a 5 in uniqueness and a 5 in accessibility. Ideally, a website would be unique compared to other shopping websites to make it memorable, which may include having never done before features. However, it must be balanced with accessibility because it can not be so unique that the user has trouble navigating the website. This would hinder the overall functionality of the website and drive customers away. The designer's conceptual model should match the user's mental model of a shopping website, and a system image on how to use the website should not be necessary.

For design #6, our redesign would receive a 3 in uniqueness because we realized that the uniqueness of Zara's original website was the reason it was hard to use. The fashion editorial look did not make it shopping friendly, so we decided to make it similar to other minimalistic

shopping websites, such as Prada. Maintaining its minimalistic aesthetic caused us to keep the website black and white with a standard font, which is not very unique. Although, the website became easily accessible since the designer's conceptual model should match the user's mental model of a shopping website. Our redesign has an organized menu with readable text, increasing the discoverability of features and overall website accessibility.

Redesign Prototype

In coming up with our redesign prototypes, we used the Double-Diamond Model of Design, which is a model that explains two phases: finding the right problem and finding the right solution. The four stages of the Double-Diamond Model are discover, define, develop and deliver. In our discovery stage, our group conducted interviews and tasks to identify important areas in the Zara website that needed improvement. In the define stage, we refine and clearly articulate the problem/errors based on user insights. Next, in our development stage, we come up with some solutions to the problem that has been discovered. This involves features to enhance content discoverability. Finally, the last stage of our redesign process was the delivery phase, in which our prototypes were developed. Importantly, the Double-Diamond Model emphasizes divergent and convergent thinking at different phases of the design process, which makes it important to use in design. For the purpose of choosing the right problem to solve and then figuring out the best solution, it is crucial to understand the divergent and convergent stages of each diamond.

When taking the redesign of the homepage into consideration, we aimed to simplify the interface, adding functionality, readability, and organization while retaining the minimalistic and artistic components. In terms of functionality, we wanted to target more of the shopping/consumer audience rather than the old design's focus of making their website look more like an editorial. The editorial design resulted in a tradeoff between functionality and aesthetics. Our goal in redesigning the ZARA website was to appeal to other shoppers through taking inspiration from websites like Prada, Weekday, etc.

Homepage

Figure 10: *Zara's Homepage Design*

Homepage Redesign

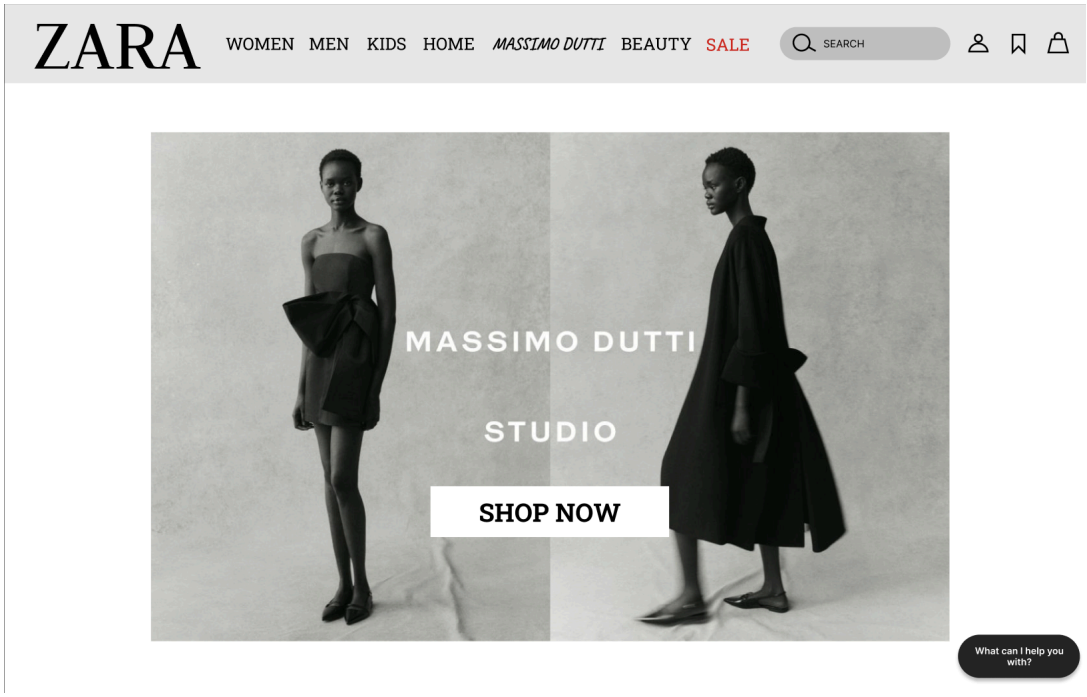


Figure 11: *Our Redesign of Zara's Homepage Design without Annotations*

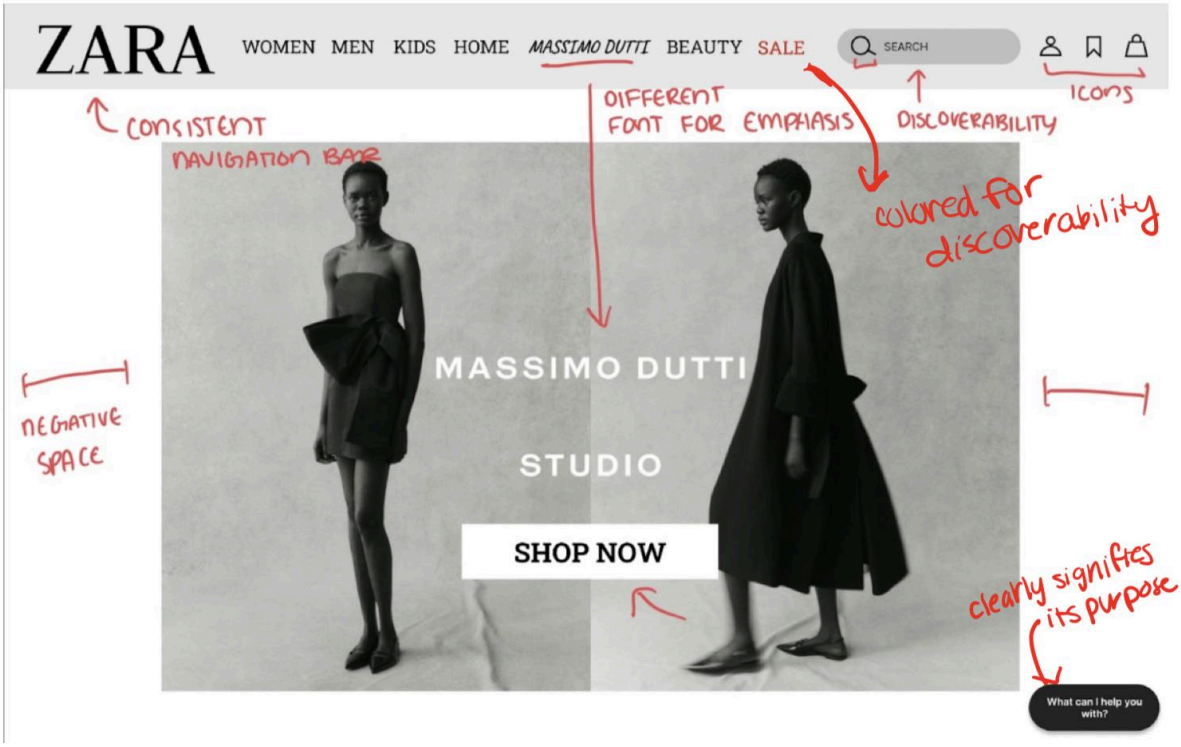


Figure 12. *Zara Homepage Redesign with Annotations. Components: Cleaner simplistic look, easier navigation for shoppers.*

As shown in **Figure 10**, in the previous design, their images took up all negative space, making the text at the top bar hard to read. Not only did they lack a balance in space, but they also included many images that would confuse the users as their role on the website was unclear. Evident from our data, 9 out of 15 users were confused about the homepage and its images. In our redesign, we not only restructured the format of the homepage images (**Figures 11 & 12**), but changed the images to what we believed was more relevant to the shopping experience. Some users were confused about what "Massimo Dutti" was, so by centering it on the homepage, it drew attention to this design collaboration, minimizing user's from making any knowledge based mistakes since there were no clear signifiers that it was a brand collaboration originally . The "SHOP NOW" button is a signifier that indicates that "Massimo Dutti" is a special clothing item line that customers can shop for, decreasing errors like slips and mistakes as it increases discoverability. Adding negative space to the homepage makes it easier on the eye as well, while bringing an emphasis to the subject. We also created a "what can I help you with?" button on the bottom right rather than the person symbol Zara as it now clearly signifies that it affords giving the user help. Users can also click this button to find the return policy, since Zara's website originally had a "help" section in the top right corner that was hard to read and overall not discoverable.

Menu Bar

Figure 13: *Zara's categories in the "Women" and "Beauty: section of the drop-down menu.*

Menu Bar Redesign

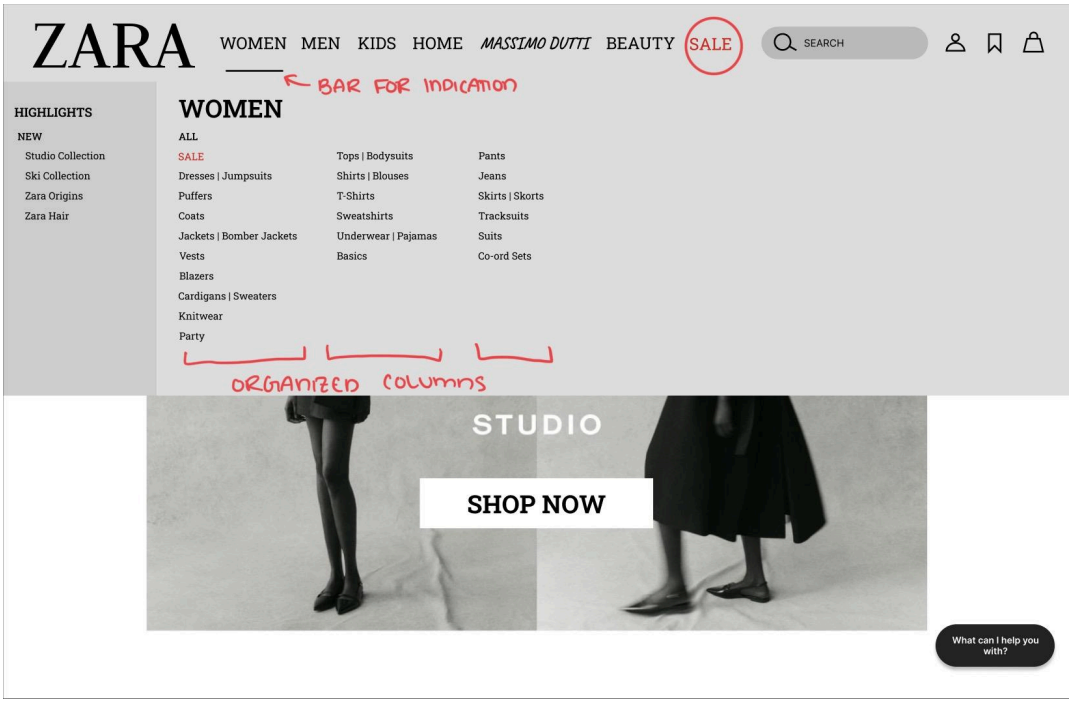


Figure 14: *Component: Reorganization of categories in the "Women" section of the drop-down menu.*

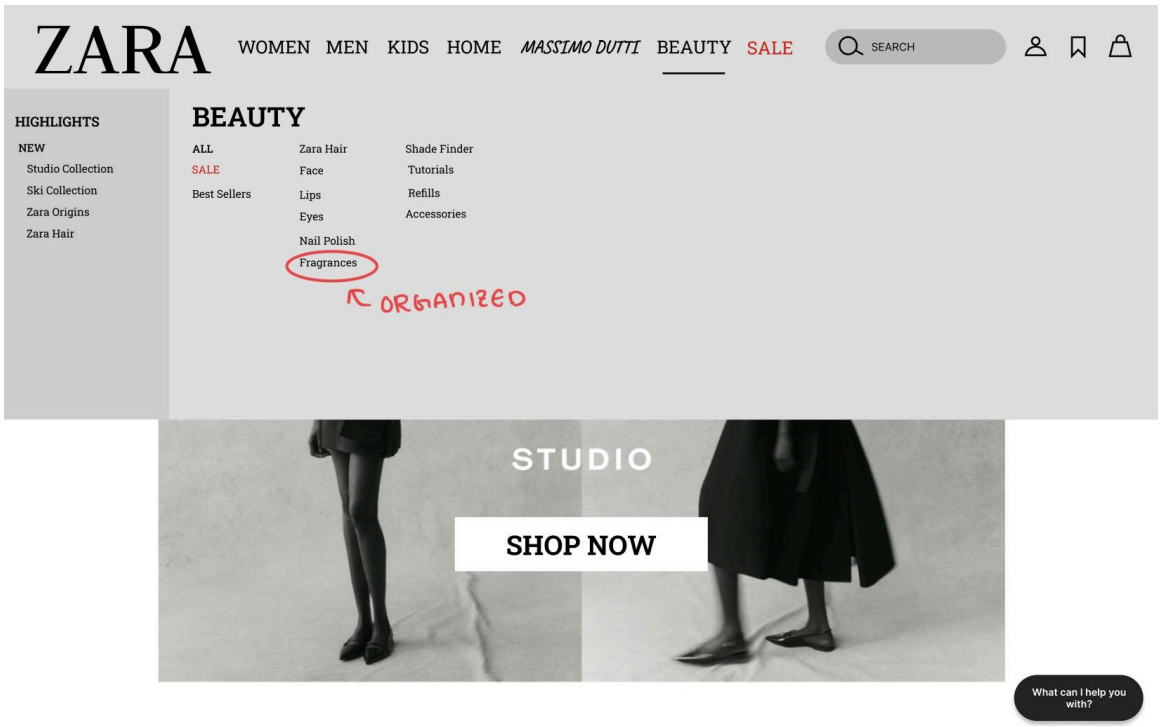


Figure 15. *Components: Reorganization of the categories in the "Beauty" section of the drop-down menu.*

The homepage navigation bar remains consistent throughout the website as it is one of the main important components of the shopping site. We added icons for elements like “profile, favorites, shopping bag” and the search bar. These all have clear affordances to indicate that it is an interactive button. For the drop-down menu, shown in **Figure 14**, we reorganized categories in the “WOMEN” section by spacing them out, making it easier to find what you are looking for by listing them in columns. We also added a sale section at the top navigation bar to make it easier to get to as the previous website design had “sale” listed as “special prices” that was hard to find. When hovering over each section, a horizontal bar will appear underneath the desired section. This bridges the gulf of evaluation as we added this to provide feedback to the user that they are under the intended section.

In this second redesign, we added another drop-down category (**Figure 15**). We thought adding this category was important as 9 out of 15 users struggled to find the “Nude Bouquet” fragrance in our survey. Many users expressed confusion when looking for this item. They often had gravitated towards the “BEAUTY” section in the original design, until they finally found their destination through the women’s section. To tackle this issue, we moved fragrances to be under the “BEAUTY” section for easier navigation and discoverability.

Individual Clothing Page

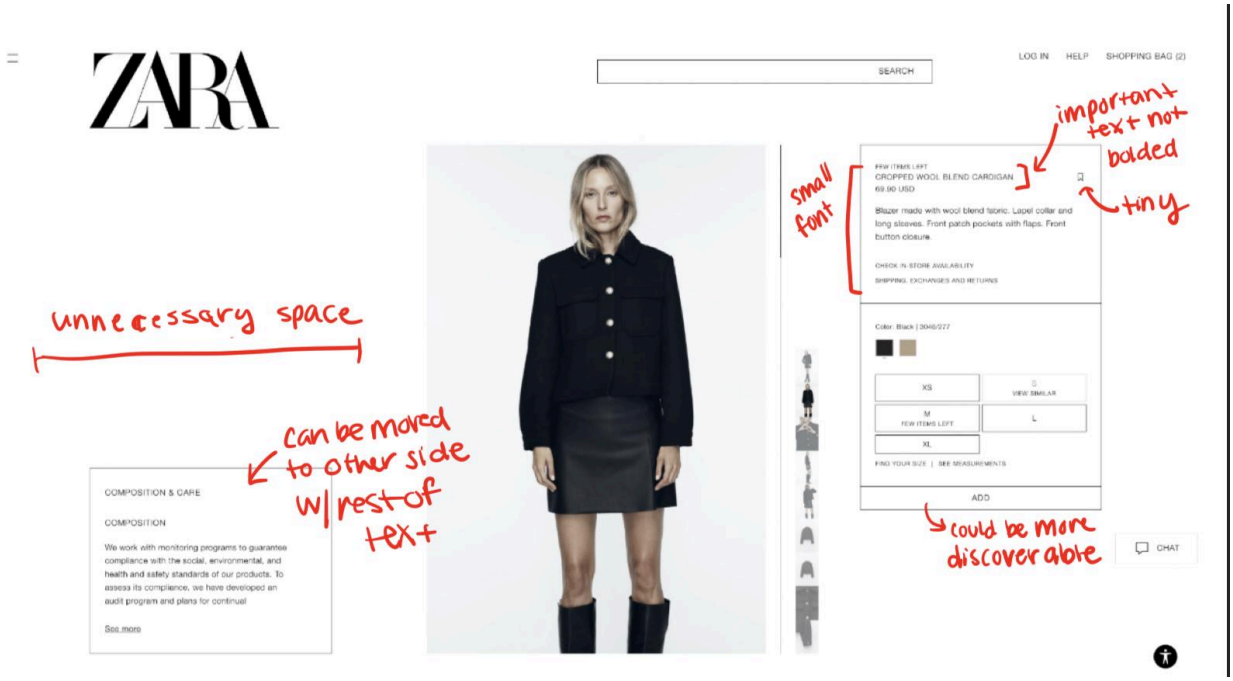


Figure 16 . *Zara’s Individual Clothing Page*

Individual Clothing Page Redesign

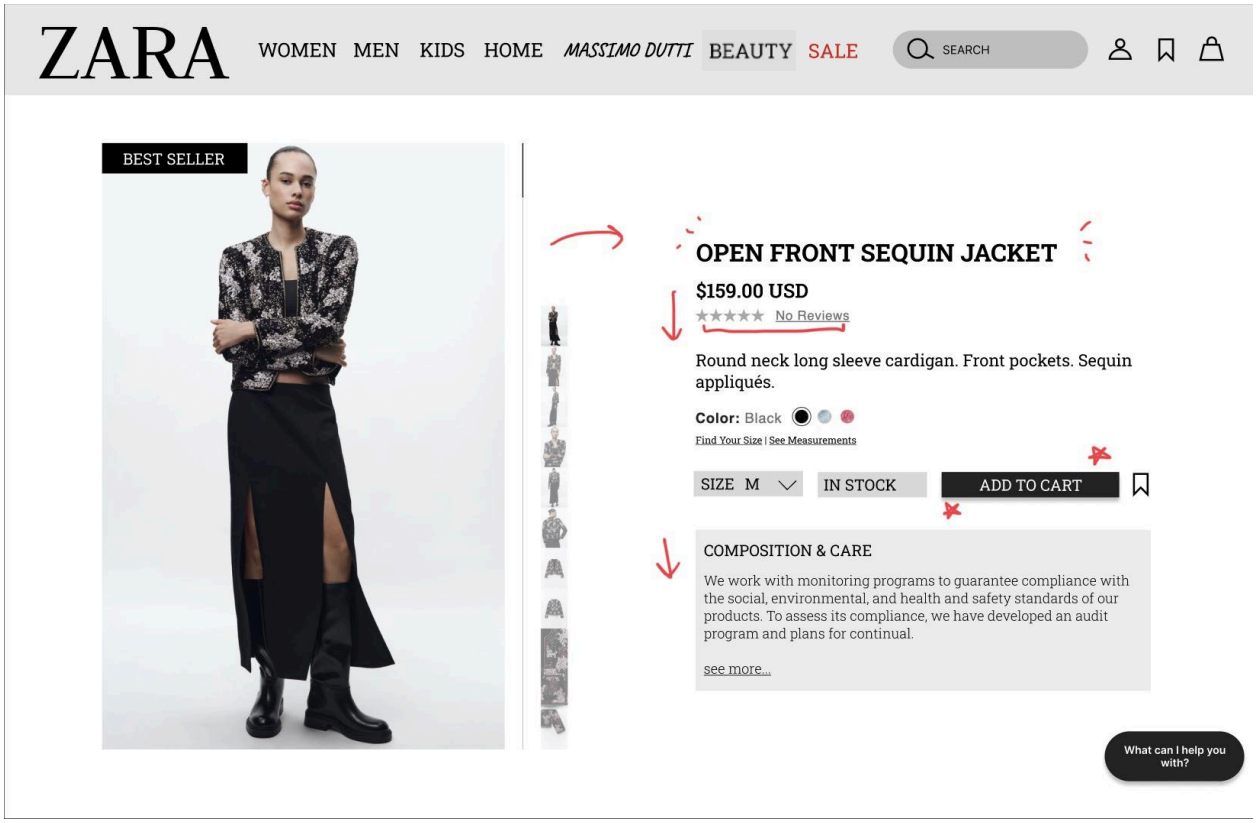


Figure 17. *Components: Reorganization and functionality of different elements.*

Our redesign also covered the individual clothing shopping page. We re-oriented the display of the elements as we moved the clothing image gallery to the left-most side of the page. We wanted to display a left to right reading format. From the data we collected, the mean of the rating of readability (1-5, 5 being best) was 2.367. To tackle this issue, we made the text size and font more readable by adjusting the sizes and thickness of the found. We made important text, such as the clothing name, price, and description larger than the other text to make the main information more discoverable to the user and to signify that they are the most important information regarding the item. As illustrated in **Figure 17**, we changed the color of the "ADD TO CART" icon to draw attention and discoverability and bridge the gulf of execution, as users can more easily understand how to perform the action of adding an item to their cart. We made the sizes a drop down menu to reduce unnecessary space being taken up and make a more organized viewing for the user. We increased the size of the bookmark symbol to increase discoverability. The addition of reviews allows shoppers to find reviews more easily on the website rather than finding it on secondhand websites. Furthermore, we added the "Best Seller" sign at the top right of the clothing image since the website did not indicate which clothing items were "best sellers" or "top rated", which is a feature that other shopping websites have that allow users to know which items are popular, which can influence their own buying decision.

Additionally, we moved the “COMPOSITION AND CARE” section to the bottom. Most people gravitate towards these sections last, so with it at the bottom of the page it creates a better flow to all the different sections.

ReDesign Trade-offs

We acknowledge that our design also harbors some trade-offs. When maintaining a minimalistic style, we risk limited content and a more artistic freedom. Because we wanted to appeal to consumers/shoppers, we wanted to make the website have more of a simple shopping experience, rather than a website that acts like a fashion editorial but is not very user friendly. This allows for a trade-off of uniqueness that would separate the ZARA website from other competitors. We chose to allow these trade-offs to occur as we thought that our redesign’s simplicity would make the shopping experience much easier and would ultimately give the customer less stress and confusion when shopping online. With a more simple website, the designer’s conceptual model matches the user’s mental model of a shopping website, causing an user-friendly experience. Although our website is not as unique, we increased the feature discoverability and accessibility of our website which overall increases website’s functionality, resulting in happy customers.

Conclusion

After conducting interviews and collecting data with emphasis on the master-apprentice model, we found that users consistently had problems with the Zara website involving three main categories: (1) readability, (2) functionality, and (3) organization. To mitigate these problems, our group proposed a more user-friendly design that allows users to have a better online shopping experience, emphasizing on easier website navigation while still maintaining a certain level of aesthetics.

To further improve and expand upon this project, we would look to fix the organization of each category and their subcategories. For instance, if a user clicks on the women category, rather than showing subcategories, it will show the user all items with discernable pictures and relevant information. Additionally, we would also fix the guest-login feature that the website makes tedious to complete so that users would have a faster time checking out. Furthermore, we would branch from desktop websites to mobile versions to ensure that the shopping experience is most ideal on whichever device a user chooses to use. Lastly, we would potentially find a way to maintain the fashion editorial aesthetic the website is currently trying for while allowing the website to be easily accessible. This way, we can possibly maintain the uniqueness of the website and have Zara stand out while being user friendly.

Extra Credit:

We’ve made an appointment with the writing hub and attached our consultation feedback below:

writinghubreport.png

writing hub link

LINKS:

CANVA

https://www.canva.com/design/DAF0QrdTvnc/AV9drkX2kfRp8mjq6G6OXw/edit (mind map)
https://www.canva.com/design/DAF1kSuGol4/or07KZtKm2J8iMmPIluUhQ/edit?utm_content=DAF1kSuGol4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton (presentation)

FIGMA LINK

https://www.figma.com/files/project/171244036/Team-project?fuid=1159356294204014633

Homepage and navigation bar prototype (women and beauty section hoverable):
https://www.figma.com/proto/XZT1q4mA8c4IpSbX1AIqAk/ZARA-REDESIGN?type=design&node-id=1-2&t=ZUptljcBJKLZe39H-1&scaling=scale-down&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=1%3A2&mode=design

Individual clothing page prototype (“ZARA” clickable, takes you back to homepage):
https://www.figma.com/proto/XZT1q4mA8c4IpSbX1AIqAk/ZARA-REDESIGN?type=design&node-id=49-2&t=RLZisMmFkf5jCKHm-1&scaling=scale-down&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=1%3A2&mode=design