Reflection

a.

Because the website was not made to be interactive yet. Error-related and documentation-related Heuristics cannot really be discussed with much meaning at this point. However, there are lots of other aspects within which I made changes to the prototype.

1. Visibility of system status

In my previous prototypes, customers do not know which stage of shopping they are at and how many steps they should take before they can complete this experience. Therefore I added a status bar at the bottom of each page to indicate this information and help customers get an general idea of their status.

◄   ●   ○   ○   ➤
        SELECTION   DETAIL   VIEW CART

2. User control and freedom

In my previous prototypes, a navigation bar at the top of the page was not available at every page. Therefore, if users want to go to a certain page, they might need to go through a lot of trouble and probably feel constrained. Such a nav bar shown below might help with such a problem. Also, the status bar shown above was also intended to be clickable, both the dots and the arrows to help users navigate more freely and easily.
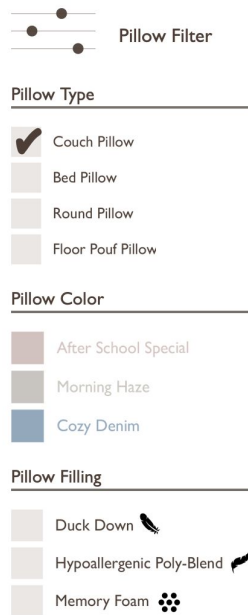
About   Collection   Occasion   Color   Filling   Sale

3. Consistency and standards

As mentioned in section 2. The navigation and status bars were not available at every page in previous prototypes. By adding them to every page, the user is able to understand these are the same functions and use them more easily. One problem I found is whether keeping the arrows in the status bar in the item-browsing page. They are not supposed to be clickable but erasing them might cause inconsistency.

4. Flexibility and efficiency of use

In my previous prototypes, the customization feature I created seems interesting to me at first, but the step-by-step procedure might increase the time needed to find the desired product. Therefore, I replace this feature with a filter. This filter can help customers who want to find products quickly achieve their goals, but it can also create an experience close enough to customization for users who enjoy such function.

Pillow Filter

Pillow Type

✔ Couch Pillow

☐ Bed Pillow

☐ Round Pillow

☐ Floor Pouf Pillow

Pillow Color

☐ After School Special

☐ Morning Haze

☐ Cozy Denim

Pillow Filling

☐ Duck Down 🪶

☐ Hypoallergenic Poly-Blend 🍃

☐ Memory Foam ⣿

5. Aesthetic and minimalist design

The UI of my previous prototypes, especially the low-fidelity paper ones, can be unnecessarily complicated and redundant. To better emphasize the traits of the company, I tried to adopt a clean and simple design in order to eliminate unrelated information to make the browsing experience more pleasant and potentially further boost the efficiency of the website. The color choices were also not too vibrant to reduce unnecessary intensity and stress the "cozy" theme of the company.

b. Challenges

One of the biggest challenges I face is my unfamiliarity with HTML and CSS. Therefore, it takes a huge amount of time for me to look up solutions to implement my website features. The solutions I found do not always work. Moreover, the alignment of the elements is also confusing to me. Therefore, I tend to use images for some features that probably should be implemented using HTML and CSS functions, such as a scroll bar. However, since this is a prototype, I think my decisions are fine for now. Sometimes I have no idea how some of the features of my inVision prototype could be implemented so I used such a method as well. To overcome the problem of alignment, I used a lot of "absolute positions", which is not the best way to align things, but I think it is good enough for this prototype.

Another problem is making changes to code, refreshing a website and not seeing any changes. As I proceed in this assignment, I realized it is probably because there are some syntax errors in my code. Developer tools are a great aid for this kind of problem, because they can remind me that something went wrong so I could fix them.

Another problem is the conflict between signifiers and usability. For example, the status bar' arrows were actually not clickable in the item-browsing page, but the dots were. Putting these errors could cause frustration if the user clicks them but nothing happens, but removing them might cause the user to think the dots are not clickable as well. Such conflicts cause me lots of trouble balancing elements.

c. Brand Identity

"Fluff Stuff" makes hand-knitted throw pillows and does not offer a very wide range of products. Therefore, I consider my expected users to be customers who like simplicity and value quality(hand-made). They are more likely to want to shop efficiently for high-quality products instead of getting unnecessary information, so I made the UI as simple as possible. To further boost the UI's efficiency, I added a clear filter to help them look for desired products more quickly. The filter in the "Selection" page was made very simple and able to reflect every option the company provides. I also indicated the size ,filling, color choices and even popularity among customers of a product clear at the browsing page. Therefore the customers tend to understand more thoroughly about a product without having to click into the detail page of each product, which can save them a huge amount of time.

The screen transition was also made very clear by installing a status bar and two arrows to indicate the transition direction. This feature was intended to prevent confusion and save customers' time. At each of the home pages, there is a "SHOP NOW" button with a completely different color compared to other parts of the page to help users jump right into shopping. The general goal is to make shopping efficient and save time for my users.

The general aesthetics aim to emphasize "hand-made" and "cozy", which are the two most important characteristics of "Fluff Stuff". I avoided bright colors to make the UI easy to look at. Also, because my users probably value the quality of hand-made pillows, I tried to make my color and font choices well-coordinated with this theme.