

# Heuristic Evaluation for LINGsCARS.com

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## **Executive Summary**

I conducted a heuristic evaluation on the Personal and Business Car leasing website, LINGsCARS. This website is a car leasing website based in the U.K. Its purpose is to advertise its leasing business and inspire users to lease cars with their company. I used Nielson's ten heuristics to perform this evaluation.

Upon loading the website, it is apparent that it has many issues, many of them being high to medium severity. Beginning with the design, layout and colors of the website, a user will feel overwhelmed and lost at first glance. The site is overall confusing to navigate and all the crucial information is all over the place and hard to find. This makes the process of leasing a car through the site very difficult, thus not effectively fulfilling the site's goal.

The primary issue with the site is organization. The color theme, design and layout all contribute to the lack of the site's organization. There was no uniformity in the layout, and many unnecessary features such as 'Car Quizzes' or 'Karaoke' only hindered the site's effectiveness. Rather than keeping a user interested, the gifs and loud colors on the website would achieve the opposite effect; users are unlikely to stay long enough to even navigate through the website.

\*Detailed Findings begin on page: 4

## **The Ten Usability Heuristics:**

These ten usability heuristics are the general principles used as guidelines for good user interface design. These ten are specifically defined by Jakob Nielson:

### **Visibility of system status:**

- *The system should always keep users informed about what is going on through appropriate feedback within reasonable time*

### **Match between system and the real world:**

- *The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.*

### **User control and freedom:**

- *Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue.*

### **Consistency and Standards:**

- *Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.*

### **Error Prevention:**

- *Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to action.*

### **Recognition rather than recall:**

- *Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The 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.*

### **Flexibility and efficiency of use:**

- *Accelerators, unseen by the novice user, may often speed up interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users.*

### **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 or information and diminishes their relative visibility.*

### **Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors:**

- *Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.*

### **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. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.*

# Detailed Findings

## Finding 1: Home Page's Main Menu

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li><li>- Consistency and Standards</li><li>- Recognition rather than recall</li></ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Main menu is listed on the left hand side with 6 categories. Each category has a sub category, sub categories are shown in different colors</li><li>- Use of gifs around the main menu are an unnecessary distraction</li><li>- The category: "cars/vans" is too specific</li><li>- Some of the sub categories are more important than what the main menu categories are ex: 'FAQs', 'How it works'</li></ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Every page</li></ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- medium</li></ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use a consistent color theme for the sub categories and get rid of the gifs, they are unnecessary</li><li>- Instead of car/vans, name the category 'Vehicles' then include a subcategories of the different vehicles offered?</li><li>- Include FAQ's on the main menu not a sub-category of cars/vans</li><li>- Include 'How it Works' as a main menu category</li><li>- No need for random categories such as 'Fun stuff'</li></ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



The screenshot shows a menu page with a "Menu" button at the top. The main menu items are Home, Cars / Vans, Customers, About Ling, Fun stuff, and Live staff. Under the "Cars / Vans" item, there are three sub-links: Full Price list, Short Term Business Deals, and a green "X" icon. Under the "Customers" item, there are two sub-links: Order a car / van and Quote. Under the "About Ling" item, there are two sub-links: Price Updates and How it works, which is highlighted with a black oval. Under the "Fun stuff" item, there are two sub-links: Tips and hints and FAQ's, which is highlighted with a yellow oval. Under the "Live staff" item, there are two sub-links: Blog and another green "X" icon.

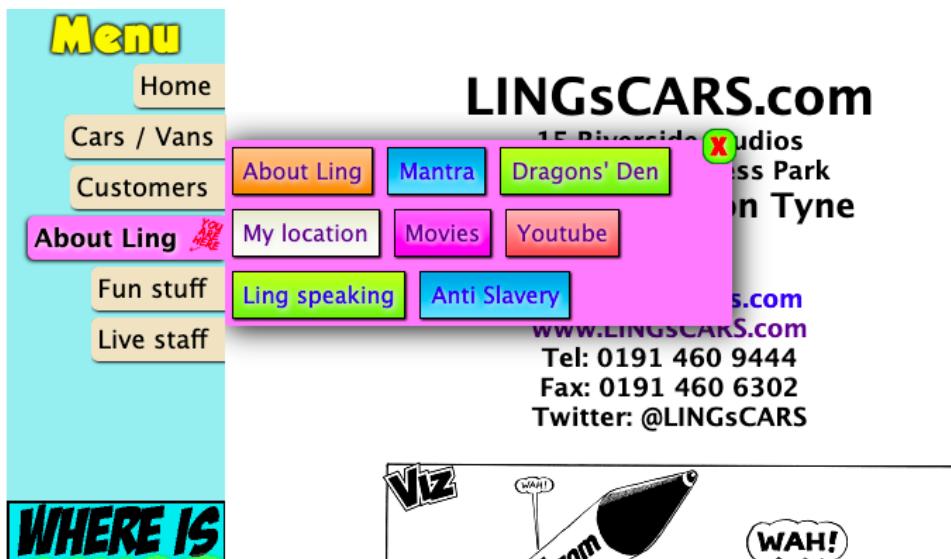
## Finding 2: Car List

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Consistency and Standards</li> <li>- Flexibility and efficiency of use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of cars A-Z is extremely long, it includes all car companies as well as different car types offered underneath</li> <li>- Very long to navigate through</li> <li>- No uniform way of categorizing the cars they are just listed by name with no pictures unless clicked on</li> <li>- Home page offers a "Cars/Vans" category but an alphabetical cars list also exists, confusing, too many car categories</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remove the alphabetical car list on the side of the website, this makes the user scroll for far too long</li> <li>- Get rid of white space</li> <li>- Replace with a category on the main menu labeled 'cars' allow a drop down that displays 'shop by:' and include another drop down displaying different filter options: car type, car company, all cars prices low to high etc</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 3: About Page

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visibility of system status</li> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- About page includes too many unnecessary subcategories like movies, dragon's den, etc</li> <li>- Does not give users a clear purpose of the website</li> <li>- Biography of Ling is unnecessary</li> <li>- My Location is hidden in a subcategory including Ling's contact info, why is the contact info hidden and hard to find?</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- About Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- About page should include the purpose of the website</li> <li>- Remove unnecessary sub categories that are specific to the ceo/owner ling, this is a car leasing website, not an autobiography of the ceo</li> <li>- Include a 'contact us' option on the main menu, not hidden in a sub category</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 4: Website Color Theme

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Consistency and standards</li> <li>- Flexibility and efficiency of use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The background is patterned</li> <li>- Too many bright and neon colors</li> <li>- No color consistency</li> <li>- Why are there gifs?</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choose a color theme and alternate web page and menu colors with those only</li> <li>- Get rid of all the gifs</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



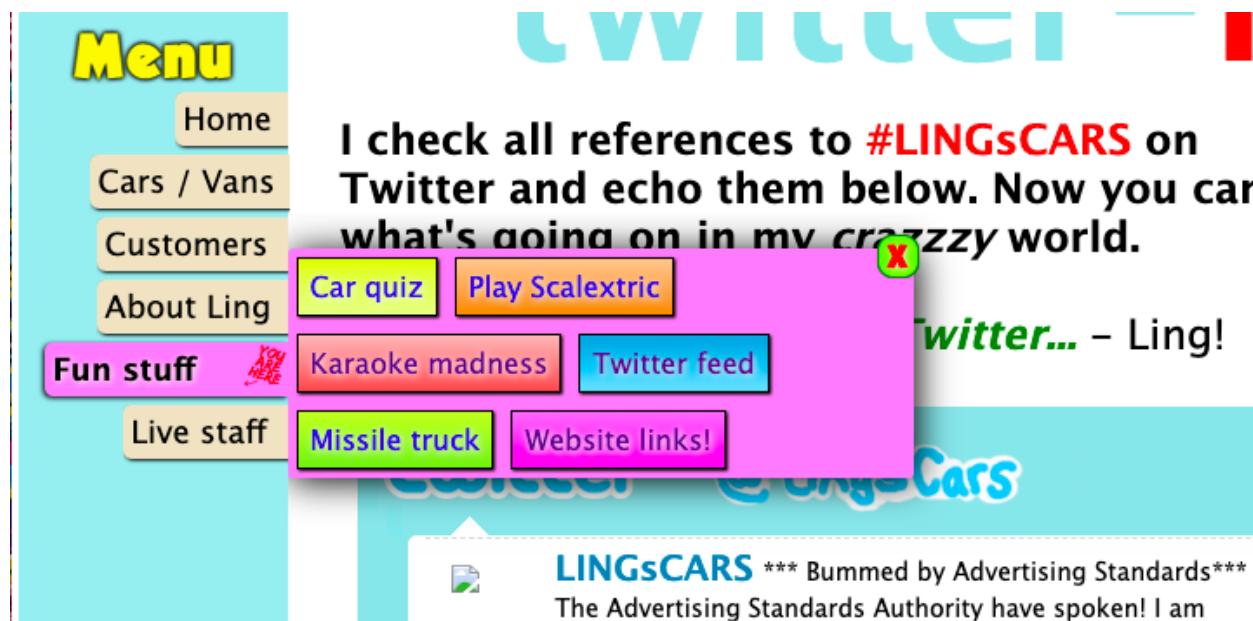
## Finding 5: Text and Font Choice

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Consistency and standards</li> <li>- Recognition rather than recall</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too many different fonts and font color used</li> <li>- Too many different font sizes ranging from really small below the header, to extremely large</li> <li>- The lack of consistency makes it hard to focus and unreadable</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choose a font-family to be consistent with</li> <li>- Choose specific font sizes that are consistent with the Titles of each page and the content text</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 6: Fun Stuff Category

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Flexibility and efficiency of use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the point of this category and why is it on the home page?</li> <li>- The sub categories are also unnecessary, no need for things like Car Quiz and twitter links</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- medium</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get rid of the Fun Stuff category and replace it with a more important category such as a Contact Us page or a tutorial page</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 7: Customers Category on Main Menu

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	- Aesthetic and minimalist design - Flexibility and efficiency of use
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	- There is no need for a customer map, 'customers in process', or live web visitors - The only useful sub category in this section is 'customer letters' which are reviews...
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	- Home Page
<b>Severity</b>	- medium
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	- Get rid of the customer's category and replace it with "Reviews/Feedback" - No sub categories for this section, it will be a straightforward feature
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below

The screenshot shows the LINGS CARS website. On the left, there is a vertical menu with options: Home, Cars / Vans, Customers (highlighted in pink), About Ling, Fun stuff, and Live staff. The 'Customers' menu item has a small icon of a person. To the right of the menu, the page title 'CUSTOMER LETTERS' is displayed in large, bold, black capital letters. Below the title, there is a pink rectangular callout box containing five links: 'Who is on my page?' (green), 'Customer letters' (pink), 'Customers in process' (orange), 'Customer map' (blue), and 'Trust Pirate' (red). An 'X' icon is located in the top right corner of this callout box. To the right of the callout box is a graphic of an envelope and a pen. Below the title, the text '1522 LETTERS!' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Underneath that, a smaller line of text reads 'More customer letters than any other car sales site IN THE WHOLE WORLD! - Ling'. At the bottom of the page, a red message says 'You are viewing page 1 of 58 - go to page:'.

## Finding 8: How it Works Page

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help and documentation</li> <li>- Flexibility and Efficiency of Use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How it works page is a subcategory of Cars/Vans, making it hard to find</li> <li>- Must scroll past a couple paragraphs of unnecessary information before reaching the step by step guide</li> <li>- If users are unable to find this page, they will be unable to work the website as a whole</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How it Works Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The home page should display a 'Get Started' feature that can summarize the main workings of the website</li> <li>- A How it Works page can be included but it must be a main category on the home page, not a hidden sub category</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Step-by step guide to Contract Hiring a car

### 1. Choose your car

I recommend that you choose from the website's list of cheapest deals, as this contains my best value, most readily available models. Alternatively, I can find you a bespoke car or van, if you simply ask using my quote form. [Click HERE for a QUOTE request](#).

I only select the cheapest deals, and I know I don't have the widest selection in the world (I don't want to waste your time with uncompetitive cars), but I usually list over 500 cars and vans. The primary difference between business and personal contract hire is just the VAT exclusion/inclusion in the price.

### 2. Fill in an online proposal (paper form also available)

You can get a printable or online version of my proposal form [here](#) on the website. Because the proposal form contains so much information which you may have to look up, it is fully protected on a secure server and security certificate. If it's a paper form, I need it signed.

### 3. Fax or send the proposal form to me

When you have made sure you have completed ALL the information on the proposal form, press the submit button (duh!) on the online form, or fax the paper one to 0870 486 1130 or 0191 460 6302 (or scan and email it). I may require from business customers a copy of your latest accounts or P&L and balance sheet for the benefit of the finance company (I will advise you of this, it depends on a number of factors such as credit scoring, number of years trading, etc). From private customers... maybe I need a recent gas/water/electric bill, or bank

## Finding 9: Quote Feature

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Flexibility and efficiency of use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The form expands only as you fill in information, users cannot expect what the site will need of their information at first glance</li> <li>- Used a fake name and email to fill in the quote, the form was extremely long and unorganized</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get a Car Quote Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- medium</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include a form without all the flashy colors, pictures and arrows indicating where to go next</li> <li>- Get rid of the expand as you fill feature and show all the required information up front</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below

**OK! First I need your details...**

First name:  Surname:   
 Friendly name\*  ?

\* = eg: "Dave", "Pete", "Suzie", "Topgun", "Nobby"  
 (the name I will call you by)...

---

  :Your email  
 :Confirm email

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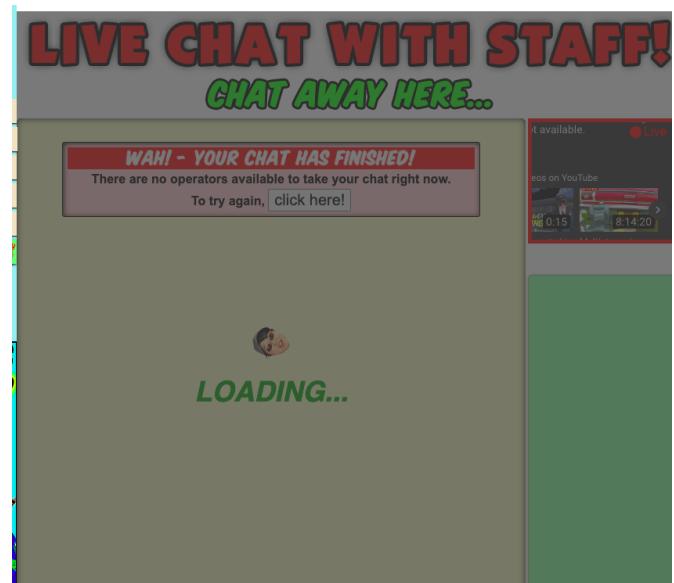
  :Telephone No.  
 :Mobile No.  
 I will only contact you by phone in an emergency!

***Now the juicy bit :)***  
***Choose a car!***



## Finding 10: Live Staff Feature

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	- Flexibility and efficiency of use
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Live Staff feature includes 'Meet my staff' and a live chat option</li> <li>- No need for the live chat option, users can call or email if they have questions</li> <li>- Meet my staff page is too overwhelming, includes videos and gifs of the staff...</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	- Live staff page
<b>Severity</b>	- medium
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get rid of the live chat feature, it doesn't even work, it kept me on a loading page</li> <li>- Organize the layout of the meet the staff page, include shorter descriptions and professional shots of the staff</li> <li>- Get rid of the video and the gifs</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 11: Copyright/Footer

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	- Aesthetic and minimalist design
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The footer on every page shows a gif of ling along with a slogan...'You can trust me I am ling'</li> <li>- This footer is too big and too loud for the site</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- medium</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not a good slogan, slogans are short and help the user remember your site like nike- just do it</li> <li>- Change the slogan picture and remove the gif, make the logo picture simpler and easier to remember, same with the slogan</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below



## Finding 12: FAQ Page

<b>Heuristic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic and minimalist design</li> <li>- Flexibility and efficiency of use</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback / Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too many colors and inconsistency in text and font</li> <li>- Unorganized questions and answers page</li> </ul>
<b>Screen / Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FAQ Page</li> </ul>
<b>Severity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- medium</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions and Trade-Offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Display the questions in a list and the answers beneath them to allow for easier navigation</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Captures</b>	See below

