

Interaction on the web is structured through the UI and UX, in this essay I will be presenting an analysis of the UI and UX and deliberate on the ethics of the interaction design the South African government communications information systems website (<https://www.gcis.gov.za/>). For this analysis I will be looking at the UI and UX that the website offers to users. I will be looking at the singular components of the websites that make up the pages. I will be looking at how the website caters to different types of people and how its responsiveness to different devices.

The UI pros of the Government Communication Information System (GCIS) are that the website is themed around the South African flag colour, The logos and icons are either the coat of arms or a sun icon with the 6 colours of the flag. The header of this website has the South African flag and it presents some information of what kind of information the website presents. which is important to show users The website does a good job at keeping a consistent theme and keeping its identity to south Africa. One may argue that the website colours are not compatible, while this is true the website is created through south African colours and it is consistent with presenting that information to the user. The website has a breadcrumb navigation to help the user track where they are in the website which helps with better navigation. The website is also free of adds which avoids loss of focus when intaking information. The Website uses Hick's Law, it does not give the user too many options which may overwhelm users. The website follows an established guideline for what is for and it does not lead a user a stray and confuse them in terms of the information presented to them, so the user always knows what kind of information they can or should expect from the website.

The Purpose of the website was to inform and keep the citizens of south Africa updated about government news. The South African GCIS website effectively communicates its purpose to serve as the central hub of government information and communication to its target audience which is South African citizens, and they do this effectively through its structure and content which is assisted by the consistent presentation of information "At the core of design ethics is respect and empathy for users, prioritizing their needs above all else. Even seemingly small decisions, made with profit in mind, can have significant long-term impacts on businesses" (Aparna K S, 2004). The users are greeted with an official government branding and includes a South African flag, which can be a use of reinforcing the site's authoritative identity. The visual representation of the website makes sure to endure the user that the website can be used as a trusted source for information and news about public information and information that aligns with the country's policies. One of the ways that the website maintains consistency is through its clear focus and transparency, this is also followed along by accessibility of government communication and public information. The websites tone remains formal and professional across all of its pages and articles, this shows the user the seriousness of and intention of the website.

The South African GCIS website possesses several key strengths that may play a good role in contributing to the effectiveness as a government website and information portal. One of the biggest strengths the website portrays is its clarity of purpose and intention, this can be seen through the consistency through information presentation. One of its core strengths is its well

structured navigation system which allows user access to a variety of content use with ease, this navigation system is user friendly and easy to use for anyone who clicks into the website. The consistency in the website can be seen as a strength in the website and information presentation, the pages in the website follow a unified visual style using a colour scheme that's reliable based on national colours and uniform consistent layout elements. Another strength the website possesses is the constant news updates and content release, it does demonstrate the websites commitment in informing and keeping its users up to date with information and news. This does not only improve the websites usability but also strengthens the sites usability and identity which is a professional appearance.

While the South African GCIS website has its own strengths it does share its own weaknesses, this weaknesses can be fairly noticeable and affect its overall effectiveness. The first very noticeable weakness is its visual design “The most significant consideration when designing user experiences is usability, which refers to how efficiently and satisfactorily a user can accomplish a specific goal, using a particular feature, design solution, or product” (Ghanchi J, 2021). The website feel too cluttered which can cause a lot of users to be overwhelmed by information that is being presented, this also affects how the website guides the user and how it controls the user's attention to certain pieces of information. This cluster of information quickly overwhelms users that are not familiar with the navigation system that government websites use “When a user is navigating a web page, a focus indicator with a different style and a selection indicator is required so that they can easily distinguish between the two”(Vaidya M, 2020). The website does not effectively execute the same consistency on mobile devices, this is a huge disadvantage considering that most South African use mobile devices to access the government portal, so this can be a very bad disadvantage for the website considering it is already disadvantaging the majority users of the website. The search may posses difficulties when users try to locate and navigate to certain documents, news ore announcements, the search tool lacks intuitive filters or sorting options. The website does not offer user interaction such as comments and ratings, this means it is only centred around presenting information and not interactions.

In conclusion, the South African GCIS website fulfils its fundamental role as an informative and authoritative government communication platform. Through the use of national colours, formal tone, and consistent layout, it successfully reinforces its identity and maintains a clear sense of purpose. The UI and UX design contribute positively to the website's navigability and structure, allowing users to access content without confusion. However, despite these strengths, the website faces several challenges that hinder its overall user experience. The outdated visual design, overwhelming content layout, limited mobile responsiveness, and lack of interactive features present opportunities for improvement. To remain accessible and effective for all users—especially those on mobile devices—the website would benefit from modernization and a more user-centred design approach. Ethical considerations such as accessibility, inclusivity, and user engagement should be prioritized in future iterations. Ultimately, while the GCIS website serves its purpose in disseminating government information, enhancing its design and interaction models would ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the South African public.

References

Ghanchi, J. (2021) 'Ethical Design: Why Is It Critical for UX Designers?', UX Matters, 22 February. Available at: <https://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2021/02/ethical-design-why-is-it-critical-for-ux-designers.php> (Accessed: 25 March 2025).

S, A.K. (2024) 'Ethical UX Design Best Practices: A Comprehensive Guide', Aufait UX, 23 April. Available at: <https://www.aufaitux.com/blog/ethical-ux-design/> (Accessed: 25 March 2025).

Vaidya, M. (2020) 'Accessibility: Guidelines for Information Architecture, UX Design, and Visual Design', IBM Design. Available at: <https://medium.com/design-ibm/accessibility-guidelines-for-information-architecture-ux-design-and-visual-design-5ae33ed1d52d> (Accessed: 18 January 2024).