

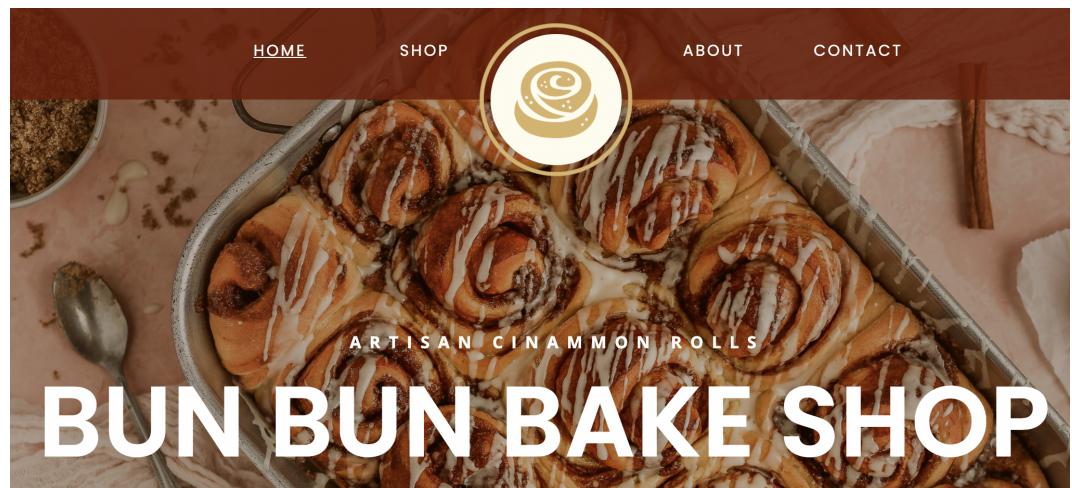
Assignment 5 - HTML & CSS Prototyping
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Programmable User Interfaces

Changes in User Interface

Using heuristic evaluation, I identified several bugs in my Figma prototype and changed the user interface accordingly. In general, the changes I made addressed concerns relating to the visibility of the system, user control and freedom, and recognition over recall. Below, I outline what specific changes were made and what heuristic they relate to.

1. Regarding visibility of the system:

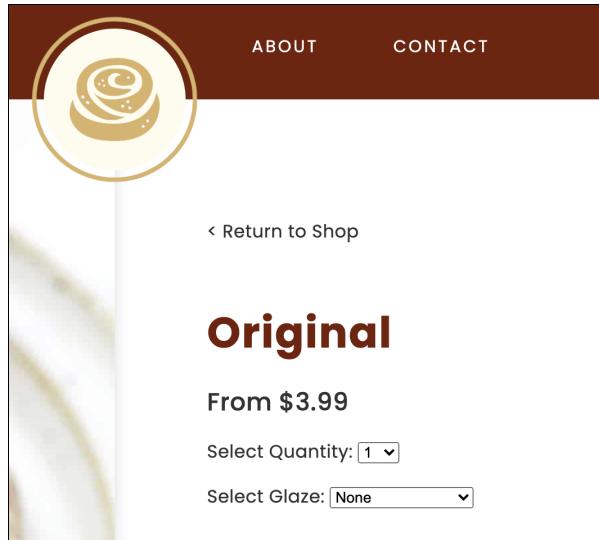
- a. As a user navigates the site, there was previously no feedback to know which page they were on (in relation to the navigation bar), other than the page's title and content. To indicate what page someone is currently on, I underlined the text on the navigation bar that corresponds to the current page. Additionally, the underline appears for other words if they are links and this change gives feedback on whether an area is clickable.



“Home” is underlined in the navigation bar, when the user is on the home page.

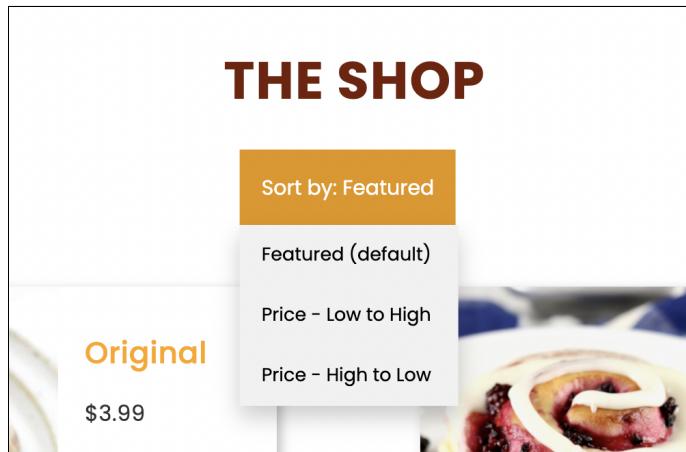
2. Regarding user control and freedom:

- a. I noticed that once the user reaches the individual product page, there was not a clear way to go back to the gallery, other than by using the navigation bar, if they wanted to continue browsing or look at other products' details. To expand user freedom on navigating between products, I added a “Return to shop” link at the top of each product page (see photo below). This link helps clarify how the user might go back to the shop and continue their shopping experience.



“Return to shop” link on the original roll’s product page.

- b. Additionally, to give the user more control on what products they are viewing, I added a “Sort by” drop-down menu. In this prototype, the button is not functional, so it is not possible to switch the view, but this is something that can be implemented further if we utilize Javascript to our high-fidelity prototypes.



“Sort” option on the product gallery page

3. Recognition over recall:

- a. On the home page, there is a button at the center that reads “Order Now”, inviting the user to continue exploring the site. Although this is a clear call to action, this button was not correctly linked to the product gallery page (titled “The Shop”) in my Figma prototype. As a result, this button was misleading, as users may click on it and nothing happened. In the HTML and CSS prototypes, this button is linked to the gallery page. This connects to recognition over recall, as the functional button guides users on how to access the gallery page, without requiring any previous knowledge or experience with the user interface.

Challenges

Completing this assignment was the first time I have used HTML and CSS, beyond the scope of the Codecademy courses we completed at the beginning of the semester. In general, most of the challenges I faced were related to positioning objects within the screen and adding images behind or around text. With positioning, I spent a lot of time experimenting with various settings and reading through documentation to understand the differences between keywords like ‘auto’, ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’. A point of confusion at the beginning of this process was whether positioning was relative to the screen or to the size/position of the parent element. This was especially important to understand when working with grids and overlaying images. Throughout the site, I wanted to use images to highlight the bakery’s products, but the raw images were of varying sizes, and it was a challenge to consistently format them or repeat them (can be done easily if the image is set as the background image of another element). To overcome these challenges, I frequently used the Chrome Developer Tools, making and verifying incremental changes. Additionally, the solutions were typically found with a Google search. In many cases, I referred back to my Codecademy projects and several W3schools tutorials or code examples.

Another challenge I faced was differentiating which elements should be grouped and formatted as a class, and where to use IDs. Initially, I was copying elements and their styles from my Figma prototype’s home page, using a Figma-to-HTML plugin. I soon realized that formatting each element with an ID was very inefficient and redundant, so I reformatted by CSS code to involve more classes, especially for repeated elements (e.g. on the product browsing page). As I went through this process, I more quickly started identifying what types of elements would be better suited for classes, and if I needed to reference formatting styles (e.g. font size, colors), I would reference the “Inspect” panel on my Figma prototype as necessary.

Design Reasoning

Overall, I focused on maintaining a consistent layout and color scheme, with warmer colors (maroon and orange) that set a welcoming tone and match common images of cinnamon rolls, the client’s key product. Additionally, I wanted to have a minimalistic layout that guides users through the site, making it as easy as possible to make a purchase. The priority on having a short path to “Add to Cart” guided the placement of information on the product-related pages; for example, I placed the item’s description and ingredients below the “Add to Cart” button, so that they are accessible to anyone who is interested in reading more, but they do not distract from the fields that must be filled when placing an order. I also frequently used large images to engage the customer and highlight the bakery’s offerings.