**Heuristic Site Evaluation of Indeed.com**

Like many people in 2020, my partner and I found ourselves looking for work. There are a lot of job sites ranging in specificity as well as quality. One site I found myself using consistently over other options was Indeed.com. Generally, I thought it did a good job finding relevant results and I liked the ability to sort by date, distance, and experience level. Indeed.com is also accessible without an account, unlike Glassdoor or LinkedIn. While there are benefits to creating an account, such as job alerts, it’s not necessary for the main purpose of browsing jobs.

The majority of content on Indeed is from outside sources and so the User Interface is especially important in making the site seem cohesive and high quality. Another challenge Indeed faces is that job postings are text heavy by nature and can easily be overwhelming to the user. I will look at these challenges and others Indeed.com might face by comparing the current site (as accessed March 2021) to the Neilsen Norman Group’s [10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/).

**#1 Visibility of system status**

This principle focuses on the feedback given to a user so that they can situate themselves among interactions. Indeed fulfills this principle by displaying page numbers at the top of the results and having a text box with recent searches. If a user visits the site multiple times, they will observe that Indeed ‘remembers’ recent searches and even automatically filters job results “since your last visit” and “new” marked on some listings. This makes it easier for the user to pick up the search where it was left off.

One potential gap I noted was that clicking on a job title leads you into a new tab with more detailed information but when returning to the search list, there’s no indicator as to what link was just visited. A change in color after visiting a link is a common solution to these search lists so that the user can automatically return to the list and situate themselves immediately.

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

First-time users of a website are already inundated with new information and so it’s important to base your website in familiarity, especially in your terminology. Indeed’s vocabulary revolves around occupations. The issue with this is that job descriptions can vary from industry to industry. Indeed attempts to rectify this by creating sub-categories of keywords within categories in a search. Hopefully these keywords reflect the real-world usage.

**#3 User control and freedom**

Users need to feel free to navigate the site and not feel stuck or that an action is irreversible if a mistake is made. I’m not sure how much this applies to Indeed’s site because the stakes are pretty low, a window can always be existed, and a search can be redone fairly painlessly. Indeed also makes most of its heading a clickable link so users are able to explore both the job description and the company description.

**#4 Consistency & standards**

Much like #2, this principle is based in familiarity for the users. If your site is a job posting board, like Indeed, it shouldn’t look alien from any job site the user has ever seen. Industry standards and unique branded content can co-exist. For instance, Indeed follows conventions such as having the search tool being at the top of each page.

**#5 Error prevention**

The Nielsen Norman group defines two types of errors, slips and mistakes: “Slips are unconscious errors caused by inattention. Mistakes are conscious errors based on a mismatch between the user’s mental model and the design.” A good website will guide the user away from pitfalls and not burden the user’s memory from one page to the next. Indeed shows the search term on each page and allows each post chosen to be exited without difficulty.

**#6 Recognition Not Recall**

Again, a website should reduce the memory load required by the user. Indeed makes menus and labels stand out subtly by changing the background color or text color. Again, consistency also goes a long way in helping users learn and navigate a site.

**#7 Flexibility and efficiency of use**

Indeed offers customization through their account service. By signing in, you can add a resume which cuts steps out of uploading a resume to every job posting. You can also save specific job searches and turn on email notifications. Job searchers often apply to multiple postings at once and saving some of the information makes the process a little less repetitive and tedious.

**#8 Aesthetic and minimalist design**

Effectively, focus on the essentials. Too much information can overwhelm and too little can frustrate a user. Minimalist design is basically synonymous with the Web at this point because it works. Indeed veers incredibly minimalistic and almost appears as a basic HTML page aside from some subtle styling. All their pages render in white and black with blue and gray accents. Indeed’s designers probably chose this simplicity to appear more professional and/or not to distract the user in an already text-heavy page.

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

This principle stresses using plain language when displaying error messages. I have not encountered an error messages on Indeed yet so I can’t verify if Indeed adheres or not.

**#10 Help and documentation**

At first I thought that Indeed does not have Help Documentation but I found a Help Center link at the very bottom of the Home Page. As far as I can see, they cover many issues in plain language but it wasn’t great that the Help Center was hard to find.