June 1, 2018

President & Director of SALTS, Kelly Hall
309 - 1 Street S.W.
High River, AB, T1V 1R7
Canada

Dear Kelly,

I am writing to you regarding recommendations I have for your organization, SALTS, with respect to your website and its usability. These suggested recommendations are based off careful study of the SALTS website, and many hours of usage and interacting with various content.

Recommendation 1 - Use Simple Backgrounds
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The SALTS website features numerous high-resolution images utilized on each of the five main pages of the website, including the home page. For website visitors with high speed internet connections, they should encounter no problem loading your pages. But, users with slower internet connections, they will encounter slower download times for your webpage. Overall, this will be a more negative experience for the user. Poor Web site performance leads to poor company image and often compromises users' conceptions of the security of the site (Bouch, Kuchinsky, & Bhatti, 2000).

Recommendation 2 - Limit Image Use
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The SALTS organization concerns land trust in Alberta, so it is reasonable to feature images of the beautiful Foothills that would help enhance your message. This comes at the cost of visibility of the text itself. his is most noticeable in the high-resolution images used throughout the website's main pages. This does not present a problem at the homepage where the logo of the organization is visible in front of the image. Alternatively, this can be a problem when the font colour, white on the "Donate" page, and the image features the colour yellow. Overall, this creates poor visibility and creates difficulty reading the text.

Recommendation 3 - Include Data with Graphics
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Furthermore, another recommendation is to include actual data within the graphics provided. An example worthy of note is within the "Protect" page with respect to the Southern Alberta graphic. While the graphic displays the increase in density of human land use, it can be improved by displaying annotations with more information when hovering over certain portions of the graphic giving the user actual numbers.

Tailor displayed data to user needs, providing only necessary and immediately usable data for any transaction; do not overload displays with extraneous data (Smith, Mosier, & Mitre Corp, 1986)

Recommendation 4 - Avoid Jargon
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My final recommendation for an area of improvement within the SALTS website is avoiding jargon or any words your audience may not understand. For instance, within the "Protect" page, using the word "easement" can confuse your reader. Changing the phrasing of words to reflect simpler language helps improve your user's understanding of the website content. You want to avoid your users having to search for the meaning of certain words you are using and remain concise. A common thread between conciseness, scannability, and objectivity is that each reduces the user's cognitive load, which results in faster, more efficient processing of information (Morkes & Nielsen, 1998).

Final Thoughts
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To provide a recap, the four suggestions that would immediately improve the SALTS website usability are to use simple backgrounds, simple language, include your data, and to limit your image usage only when necessary. Overall, these recommendations will help contribute to a better user experience which is the objective we are attempting to accomplish.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Muhannad Nouri

List of Resources
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Bouch, A., Kuchinsky, A., & Bhatti, N. (2000). Quality is in the eye of the beholder: Meeting users' requirements for Internet quality of service. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 297-304.

Morkes, J., & Nielsen, J. (1998). Applying writing guidelines to Web pages. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems: CHI 98 Conference Summary on Human Factors in Computing Systems; 18-23 Apr. 1998*, 321-322.

Smith, Mosier, & Mitre Corp Bedford MA. (1986). *Guidelines for Designing User Interface Software*, 98.