1.1
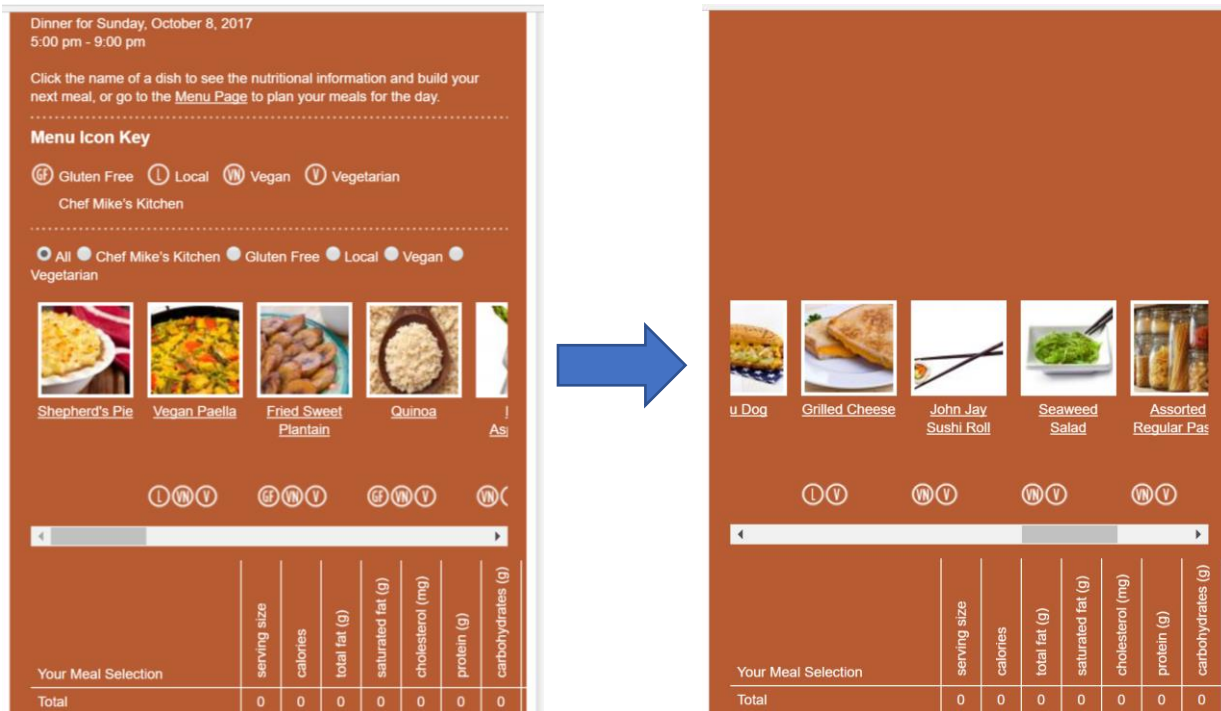

On the landing page under the selction tab for dining halls, the selection of food is displayed along with information on dining hall hours, what happens when a dish is clicked on, a key for nutritional restrictions, and a filter tool for nutritional restrictions. When a user scrolls to the right to view more dishes, all of this information scolls away along with the dishes. This goes against the **regocnition rather than recall heuristic**, since the user is expected to remember all of that information to understand the symbols below meals, if and what type of meals they may have filtered, and what clicking a dish will do. Users who don't remember this information will have to take time to scroll back and forth. With a high freuency, low-impact, and low-persistence, I would rate the problem's severity at 2.

1.2
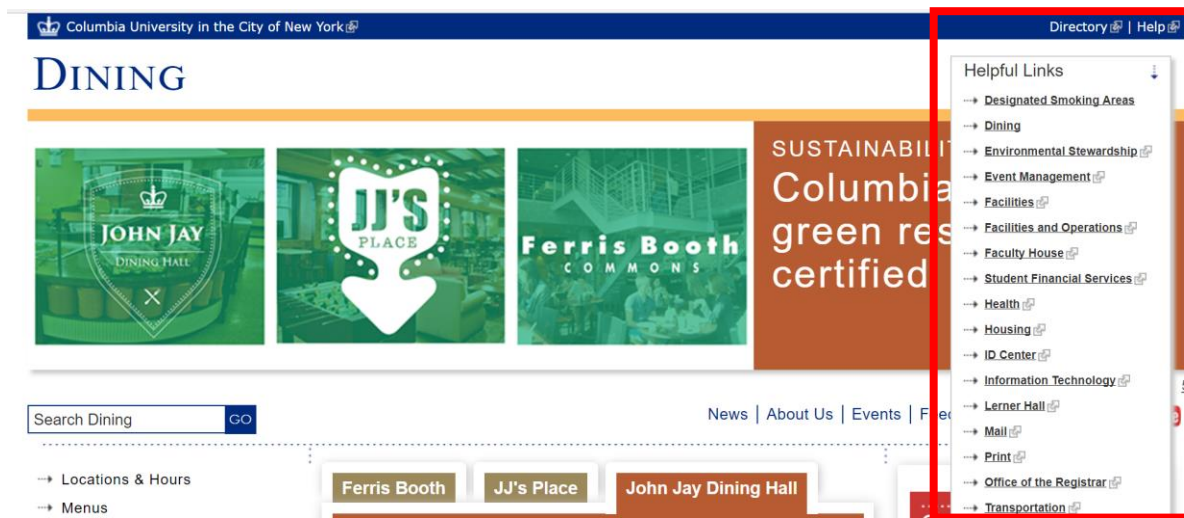
On the landing page there is a drop down of Helpful Links in the top right corner. When you hover over the list, you will see a list of links that have nothing to do with dining. This is confusing for the user if they are looking for help since none of the information is helpful to dining needs, thus not following the ability to find help easily specified in the **Help and Documentation** heuristic. This is also a dialouge that has no purpose being on the dining website, thus going against the **Aesthetic and Minimalist Design** heuristic. With a high freuency, low-impact, and low-persistence, I would rate the problem's severity at 2.

1.3

On the landing page, a menu appears in the middle left of the page. This menu includes two options that may confuse a user: Menus and Retail Menus. Including both of these options leads the user to question: Are retail menus also under menus? What is available other than retail menus that falls under menu? What falls under retail menus? It is not clear why both are included or why Menus isn't labeled with a name more specific. This may lead the user needing to check both menu choices to find what they are looking for. This goes against the **Consisteny and Standards** heuristic. With a high freuency, medium-impact, and low-persistence, I would rate the problem's severity at 2.

1.4
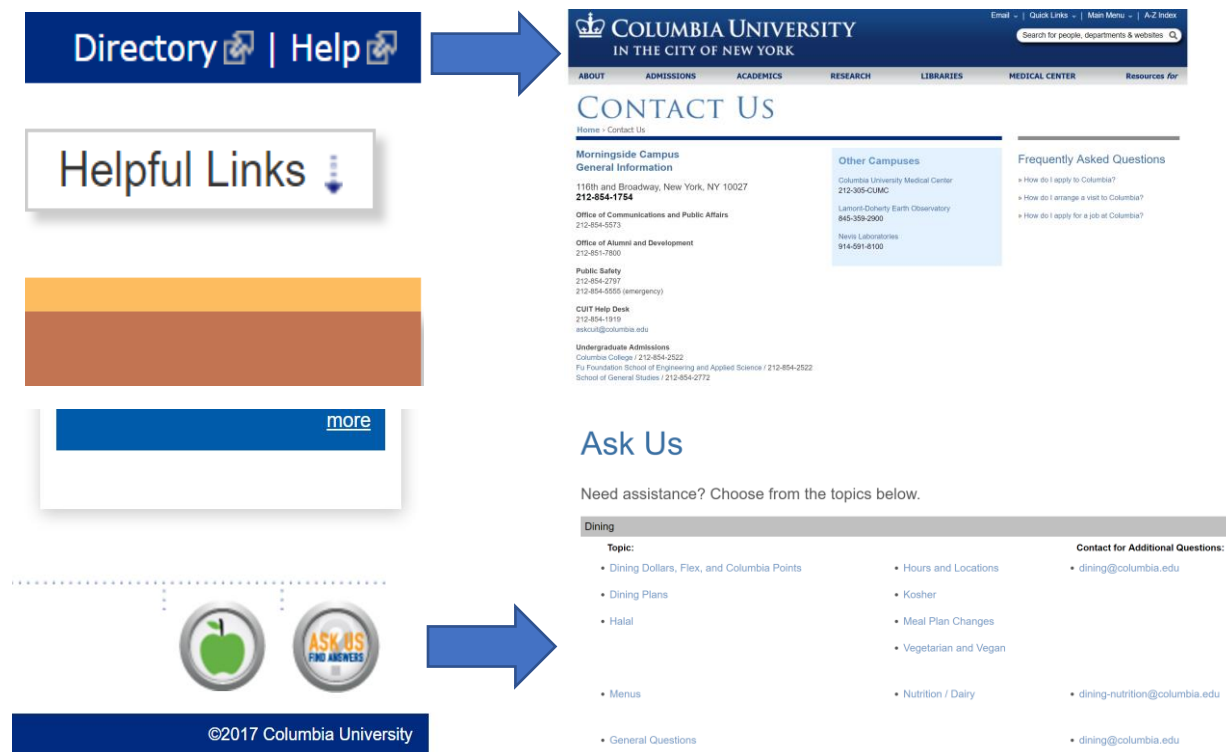
When a user lands on the main page, there is a help button on the top and an "ask us, find aswers" button on the button. Already, it is confusing to the user which to press if they need help. This double set of help buttons is not needed and goes against the **Aesthetic and Minimalist Design** heuristic. The top button leads to a generic Columbia contact us page with no dining information. The bottom button leads to a non-dining specific ask us page that is not formatted well. On the latter, dining@columbia.edu is listed twice and general questions leads back to the dining landing page where we came from. Although some of the links provided lead to some more information, the information is not well documented nor has a central place to request help. There is no more information on each link or email address other than what is seen either, so a not well-informed us could get easily lost. The lack of accessability to help goes against the **Help and Documentation** heuristic. With a medium freuency, medium-impact, and high-persistence, I would rate the problem's severity at 3.

1.5

Visibility of system status

Flexibility and efficiency of use
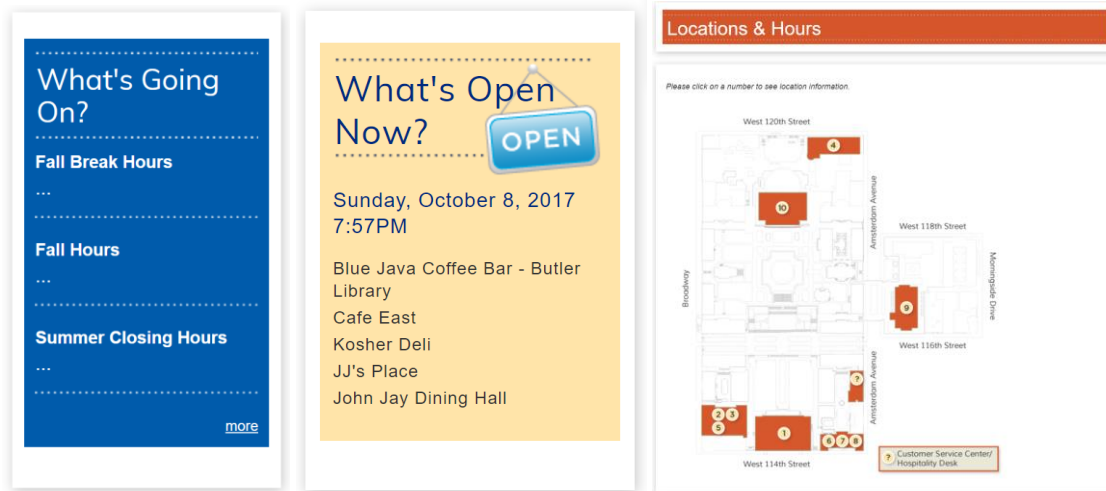
When arriving at the landing page, the two first screenshots can be seen. An important role of the dining website should be to inform students when what options are open. If the "Locations and Hours" button on the menu is choosen, it leads to the third screenshot. None of these display the hours for all the dining halls. A user must click on a number to view hours and information on the dining hall. This goes against the **Visibility of System Status** heuristic. The numbers also have no meaning or key contected to them, so the user is left to guess where a dining hall they are looking for is located. This is especially an issue for halls that have multiple dining options in them, leaving even experienced users quessing which number represents what dining hall. The only thing labeled on this map is the Hospitality desk, which has nothing to do with dining. All these issues force the user to spend more time searching for information on dining hall hours. This goes against the **Flexibility and Efficiency of Use** heuristic. With a high freuency, medium-impact, and high-persistence, I would rate the problem's severity at 4.

Visibility of system status
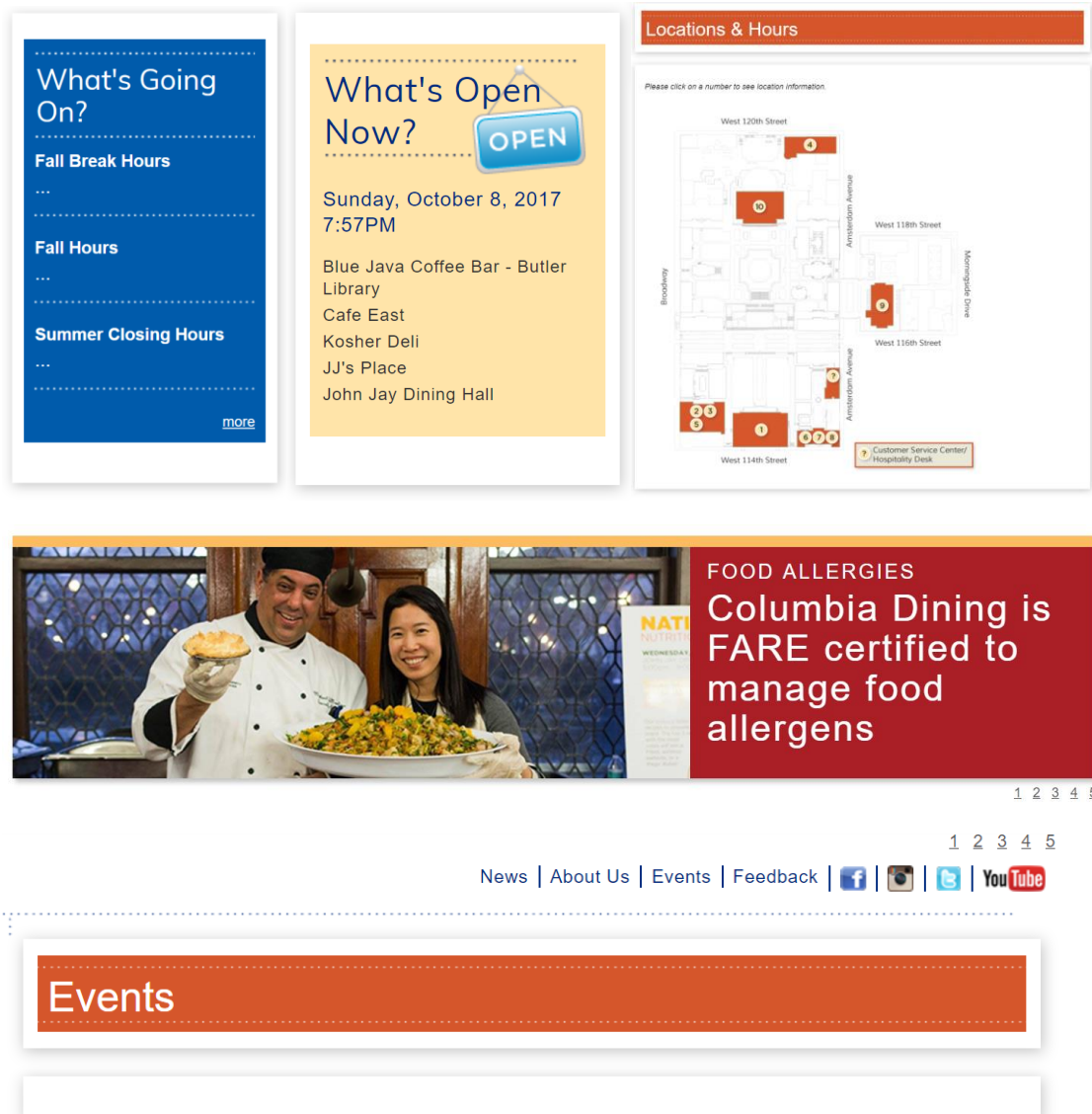
Visibility of system status means how easily is the user able to find out what is currently going on with the system they are inquiring about or interacting with. Dining halls are like restaurants for students. When looking up restaurants, the first thing that you'd like to see most likely are the hours, locations, and food. Users expect the same out of the dining hall website. Although it does show the food it is serving at the moment on the landing page, the visibility of the systems status is hard to find when it comes to location and hours, neither of which are on the landing page. For hours, you must search through an unlabeled map with pop ups. There are more clicks required to understand what is happening with the dining than should be needed. The carousel on the main page has some nice update in dining news though, which is nice as a user to watch cycle through at a reasonable rate. Lastly, the events page has no events on it, leaving the user in the dark about what is upcoming with dining.

Match between system and the real world
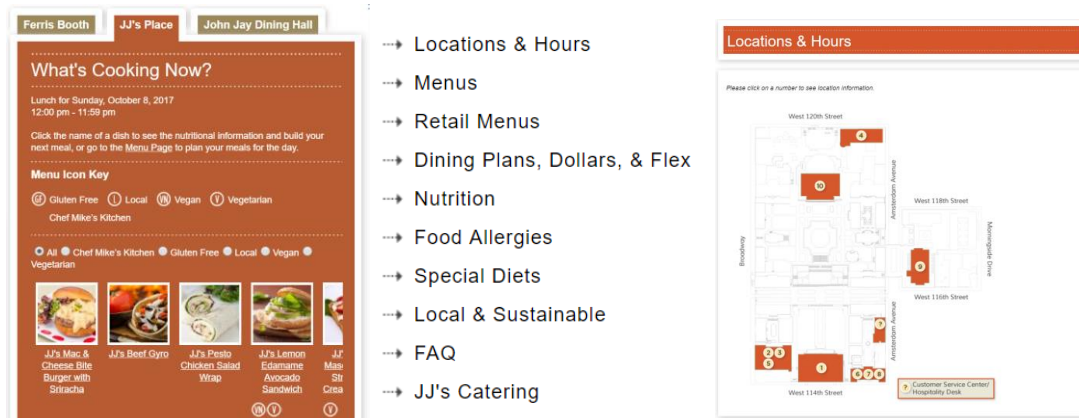
Match between system and real world means that the system conforms to organizational conventions and use language appropriate for the situation to make the system more familiar at the start for a user. The dining website does well in some areas and not in other. It is very nice to have the food on the front page, as expect, and a menu on the side with a set of options for navigation. These options seem standard and well organized, except with the redundant Menus and Retail Menus options. As for locations and hours, there is a lot of opportunity for this page to be great. It is helpful to users to get an understanding where dining options are on campus, but the numbered dots that represent dining halls doesn't have a key. Adding a key and the hours would greatly improve this usability.

User control and freedom

User control and freedom relates to a user's ability to move forwards and backwards in the page easily. This is very important when users end up in places that didn't mean to go in the page. The dining page is set up fairly simple. There are not any dynamic actions required of the user, so move through the pages is easy. The user also can easily get back to the main landing page by clicking "Dining" in the top left corner. The user can also click one the Directory, Help, and Columbia Logo in the top corners, which lead away from the dining page, which is not helpful for giving the user control on returning to the landing page. It can also be confusing to be redirected so easily to pages with nothing relating to dining.

Consistency and standards

Consistency and standards means that the user isn't questioning what will happen next when navigating a design. If something is consistent and standard, the user can expect certain outcomes. The dining website falls short with this heuristic, with a "clickhole" set of help buttons that lead users to generic Columbia pages. The directory and Helpful Links also lead off the dining page, and they sit in the top right corner of the page, a place where usually important links and menus go. Some of the menus have almost duplicate options, as seen with Menus and Retail Menus in the navigation menu. This menu stays in the same place on the page through navigation to other pages though, giving the user a consistent naviagation tool.

Error prevention

Error prevention is designing warnings and blocks so that users cannot make errors as easily in the design. For the dining site, there is not much opportunity for error, since all the navigation is laid out in the navigation menu. Users can also click "Dining" in the top left corner if they come up with an error on the page and it will lead them back to the landing page. Also if a user tries navigating to a URL non-existent, dining will re-direct to a page allowing a user to go back to the dining landing page or to Columbia.edu.

Recognition rather than recall
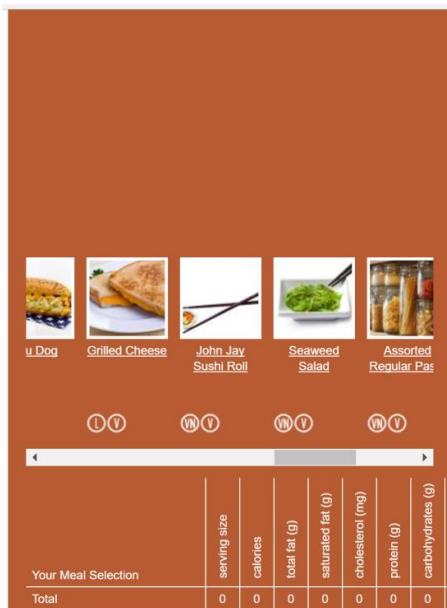
Recognition rather than recall means the design should not rely on the user's memory later when the information can be easily displayed and recognized. This reduces the chances of a user needed to go back and look up information or enter/choose information incorrectly. Columbia's dining site does a good job at keeping up information that is needed when applicable. All dietary restriction information is attached to all food listings, along with a filter to narrow down results instead of scrolling through foods a user cannot eat. The only instance where valuable information disappears that I found as a user is when going through food options at dining halls. The dietary restriction key and filter applied scrolls off the screen as the user looks at food.

Flexibility and efficiency of use

Flexibility and efficiency of use is the ability for a design to be utilized efficiently for experienced user and flexible for users to allow for optimization of the user's use of the design. For the dining hall website, some efficiency is introduced by the drop downs that appear in the navigation menu, but overall the website is not flexible. It does not offer options to remember dietary restrictions or if your favorite food is on the menu at the moment. Most students are frequent users of dining, and the website does not do much work to tailor the experience for them.

Aesthetic and minimalist design

Aesthetic and minimalist design refers to the delicate placing of only useful information in a design. The dining website makes a good attempt at this by including a new banner, search bar, navigation menu, what open now box, current food options with a dietary restriction search, and sign up banner. The user becomes overwhelmed by so much information on one page as well. The web page is a bit unorganized and needs more thought on the layout. The user definitely wants information on the hours and that is not included on the front page. Putting all the navigation links and having more clear hours and locations is needed more than some of the extra information and functionality in the page.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
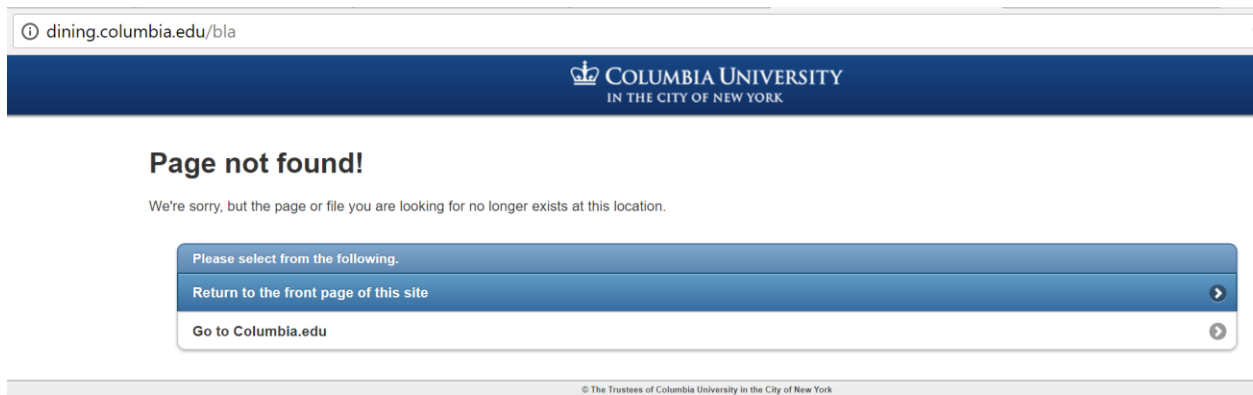
Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors means turning the technical errors that come up into something useful for the user to understand and correct the error. The only error that I was able to create as a user was typing out and incorrect dining URL. The dining site thoroughly explained the error without including too much technical information and provided me with two relevant solutions. In this situation, the user does little works to fix the error and move on with what they were trying to do.

Help and documentation

Help and Documentation means providing the user with thourough information to use the system and get what they need out of the system. Content wise, the FAQ and search bar sections are great tools to get more details quickly. In both cases, a snippet of content or a question is displayed to the user, but the answers require one more click. This greatly reduces the scrolling through information a user needs to do before find the answer they were looking for. On the other hand, the help buttons do not lead directly to anything directly dining related only and are big holes in the website where users looking for help can become more lost.