City of Torrance = blue

City of Los Angeles = red

Recap/comparison = purple

**1. Visibility of system status**

* There is little information on the homepage regarding emergency resources for people suffering from the effects of COVID-19. Since the system should always keep users informed about what is going on (and COVID-19 is currently the most relevant issue), this is a critical problem and must be addressed. (3)
* The website makes an effort to keep users informed by displaying emergency resources on the homepage for COVID-19 preparedness. It also displays twitter updates and the most recent news articles. However, if I did not come to the website for COVID-19 related material, it would be difficult for me to find anything else. (1)
* While the Los Angeles city website is more informative to users of the most pressing issues, both suffer from similar visibility problems. Both could benefit from a 24/7 message chat box that would allow users to have specific questions answered quickly.

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

* In the search bar, the phrase “I am looking for…” is a strong example of the system speaking the user’s language. One the tabs titled “I want to…” also serves as an easily understandable title that helps satisfy the user’s needs when opening the platform. The system’s use of real-world conventions is satisfactory.
* The system could improve with the use of more phrases familiar to the user, such as in the search bar. The tabs such as “residents, business, visitors, etc.” are vague and could benefit from name changes to enhance the user’s understanding of the website. (2)
* While both systems use language that is mostly understandable to the user, the Torrance city website implements phrases that are more likely to help the user find information faster.

**3. User control and freedom**

* When clicking through multiple tabs on the website, I noticed that certain tabs take the user to a completely different website. This makes it difficult if the user entered this website by accident, as he or she must go all the way back to the homepage after leaving this site. The “emergency exit” is more difficult. (2)
* After playing with the website for an extended amount of time, I was satisfied by the “emergency exits” provided by the website. When clicking through multiple tabs, your search history is listed at the top of the page so you can return to any page if you feel you made a mistake.
* The Los Angeles city website does a better job of limiting the “extensive dialogue” by housing all of its information within its website. The Torrance city website could benefit from decreasing its amount of external links.

**4. Consistency and standards**

* When searching the drop-down menus, I found the sheer amount of information to be overwhelming. There were too many tabs in each drop-down menu; therefore, I feel that many of the tabs could have been consolidated, as different words and titles often meant the same thing. (2)
* The presentation of the website may be inconsistent, as its platform has completely changed because the homepage is dedicated only to COVID-19. There are still people who must carry on with their daily lives amidst the crisis and need to access the website for other information. Thus, COVID-19 could potentially be made a tab where all relevant information is listed there. (2)
* Both websites suffer from inconsistency and lack of standards but for different reasons. The Torrance city website needs consolidation and the Los Angeles city website needs to present information more appropriately.

**5. Error prevention**

* After taking the time to carefully and meticulously search through both government websites, I encountered no error messages. Thus, I believe that this heuristic is not applicable to the websites, and that they are both satisfactory in this regard.

**6. Recognition rather than recall**

* Both websites are similar on this front, so I will explain them in one comparison paragraph. Both the Torrance and Los Angeles city websites could benefit from making many of their actions and objects visible through pictures and other forms of visual media rather than text-based. Not only would this minimize the user’s memory, but it would also make their platforms more visually appealing. Information is not easily retrievable when it is all in the form of text. The severity of this issue is a 2.

**7. Flexibility and efficiency of use**

* The website creates a distinction between experienced and inexperienced users by allowing the experienced ones to use the search tab or the “I want to…” tab if they have visited the site before and know what they want. Therefore, I feel that this feature is satisfactory.
* The search bar also separates the experienced from the inexperienced. Furthermore, the website provides its twitter handle so that experienced users can find the most up-to-date news on this platform rather than from their website. Thus, this feature is satisfactory.
* Both websites do a good job of providing experienced users with options to operate their platforms faster than inexperienced users.

**8. Aesthetic and minimalist design**

* The homepage displays a relatively minimalistic design and employs a pleasant aesthetic, with a picture of the city on the front and tabs “play”, “work”, and “live” below it, along with a calendar for events. However, beyond the homepage, other pages are not as pleasant aesthetically and could be more appealing visually to the user. (2)
* The homepage lacks a minimalist design, as there are many tabs upon first glance that clutter the page and make it visually unappealing. I deem this a critical issue as the homepage makes the first impression on the user. (3)
* The Torrance city website puts forth more of an effort to make boring government information more exciting to its users with an aesthetic homepage. The Los Angeles city website, on the other hand, has competing information throughout its homepage and could use a makeover.

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

* After taking the time to carefully and meticulously search through both government websites, I encountered no error messages. Thus, I believe that this heuristic is not applicable to the websites, and that they are both satisfactory in this regard.

**10. Help and documentation**

* Both websites are very similar on this front, so I will explain them as one. They are excellent at documentation, as text dominates both platforms and is often very easy to follow, giving clear and simple instructions. However, both websites could also benefit from a 24/7 message chat box where a user could send a message and be helped instantly by a representative from the city. This would allow specific questions to be answered efficiently without having to search through the dense, information-heavy website. I rate this issue at a severity level of 2 for both websites.