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PUI Homework 5 Reflection

Reflection

Although I was generally pleased with the results of my high-fidelity prototype for the Bun Bun Bake Shop website, there were undoubtedly some user interface bugs plaguing my design. These errors only became apparent to me upon learning Jakob Nielsen's heuristics for user interface design. Through the completion of this assignment, I sought to implement my design, using HTML and CSS, while also fixing those user interface bugs.

There were three primary bugs that I set out to fix in this assignment, as well as numerous smaller aesthetic and organizational changes that do not necessarily fall under one of Nielsen's heuristics. The first of the primary bugs was the navigation from the home page. In my original design, navigation from the home page to other pages on the website was done through clicking links displayed in roughly the middle-left of the page. However, I felt that this was a violation of the Consistency and Standards heuristic, since the online shops I visited for competitive analysis in earlier assignments all featured navigation bars across all pages, including the home page. My fix was fairly straightforward, then: I simply replaced the previous feature with a navigation bar. I strove to keep navigation from the home page somewhat unique, though, by using different font sizes than the rest of the pages.

The second bug that I fixed was a violation of the Visibility of System Status heuristic. In fact, my previous design featured no apparent visibility of system status! To complete this goal, I ensured that the text in the navigation bar referring to the user's current page is bold -- thus, hopefully making apparent the user's current location on the website. Because product

detail pages cannot be reached from the navigation bar, there is currently no tracking of system status for the product detail page. This is something to consider for future work.

Third, I sought to fix another violation of Consistency and Standards in my initial design, this time on the product details page. My original vision was that glaze and quantity options would be listed in horizontal bars, and users could toggle which choices they desired. However, a Teaching Assistant implied that, for choices of that nature, drop-down menus are the most common solution. In order to uphold conventions, I changed my original design to HTML selectors.

Beyond the three major bugs addressed above, I also made a few smaller, aesthetic and organizational edits. The first of these involved general resizing of elements, since I somewhat misjudged the size of a browser window in my initial design. Furthermore, I changed the background of the navigation bar from a solid blue hue to a slice of the home page image, since I felt the solid blue bar was not appealing, and the current image provides a sense of uniformity in my design. Finally, I opted to change the font that I used throughout the website, partly because the previous font did not capture the feeling that I wanted the pages to evoke, and partly because the previous font did not have options for different line weights.

During the implementation of this design, I encountered numerous challenges. Perhaps the most frustrating of these was my struggling to use CSS grids correctly. A great deal of the time that I worked on this assignment was spent attempting to place elements in grids in the exact locations where I wanted them to appear. One approach that I took was to use flex boxes instead, as can be seen on my menu page. In a last ditch effort, I tried again to use a grid as I

worked on the product details page, and I think that I started to finally grasp grid implementation.

Another challenge that I faced arose when I was implementing the buttons on the product details page. In my initial design, the "More Buns" and "Check Out" buttons appeared with tapered edges, like arrows pointing in opposite directions. However, it appears that the only way to customize buttons this way in CSS is to import certain libraries. Because we were required to use only vanilla CSS and HTML for this assignment, I realized that this aspect of my design would not come to fruition. Instead, I added "<" and ">" symbols within the buttons, hopefully capturing a similar idea.

Despite the challenges that I faced, I believe that I was able to create a cohesive website with a consistent brand identity. This is in contrast to my initial design, which I think displayed a few different ideas competing with one another. For example, the font and blue navigation bar that I chose for the first design felt light-hearted and "silly," while the images and background seemed to point in a more "homey" direction. As I implemented my website, I decided to follow the brand identity that captured a sense of home and warmth. The background remained the same because it is reminiscent of the walls in a lived-in house. The new font that I chose is reminiscent of a typewritten letter or newspaper that one might read while sitting in a comfortable chair, eating a warm cinnamon bun, and the navigation bar image feels like the peripheral view of the room as one reads that letter or newspaper.

Throughout this process of identifying bugs, overcoming challenges, and developing a brand identity, I feel that I learned a great deal about not only the technical aspects of website development, but also the design considerations that one must make when building for users.