**Web Site Usability Guidelines**

**Website #1:** [**https://www.shadyrecords.com**](https://www.shadyrecords.com)

The target audience for this website are fans of any artist on the shady records label. It appears designed to draw the viewer in with interesting visuals, typography and images. There is a lot going on, so someone without much internet experience wouldn’t be who they’re targeting.

For scenarios – the website is designed to draw fans in and get them to spend money on songs/albums and buy items from their shop. It’s also designed to get users to sign-up to their newsletter, which I’d assume will have more email notifications listing ‘deals’ to be had. It also asks users to share different songs on Facebook/Twitter, which would help draw more people to their store.

I really liked the style and design aspect of the website. The images and color choices were very good. I thought the functionality and user experience of the website were awful. There were too many parts of the site that didn’t function as they were supposed to and/or were just flat out broken. Before adding new features – the designer should cut existing ones and trim some of the excess fat. After that is done, a forum for users to gather to discuss recent/past events would be cool to see.

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| **Navigation** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Current location within the site is shown clearly | 2 | When clicking on a location in the top nav bar – the link is highlighted, and a title appears on some pages. Clicking on one of the sub-links, such as one of the artists, there’s no highlighted link and the title isn’t at the top of the page. |
| Link to the site's main page is clearly identified | 5 | The home link and Shady Records logo both direct back to the main page |
| Major/important parts of the site are directly accessible from the main page | 2 | There’s decent links at the top of the page, however there’s no drop-down menu option on the links, so if you want to access a certain artist first you must click into the artist link and then find the artist you’re looking for on that page. Unless you scroll to the bottom of home page and find the artist links there. |
| Site map is provided for a large, complex site | N/A |  |
| Easy to use Search function is provided, as needed | 5 | There’s a filter by artist/year on the discography that works as intended. |
| **Functionality** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site accommodates novice to expert users | 1 | The navigation could be greatly improved, and it appears some of the page isn’t finished, so novice users might have a hard time. |
| Functions are clearly labeled | 2 | Some are labeled clearly, however the modal at the bottom for cookies has two unlabeled black buttons, and the music player has no description until you hit play. |
| Essential functions are available without leaving the site | 2 | If you use their listen now feature – there is no option to return to the main page, so you have use the browser to go back. |
| Plug-ins are used only if they add value | 1 | The website looks way too busy and disorganized. The music bar at the top with the 3 buttons doesn’t even need to be there – there’s too many ways to do the same thing. |
| **User Control** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site reflects user's workflow | 3 | Most users will be able to get to where they need to be – if they do some digging. |
| User can cancel any operation | 1 | Not everything can be canceled or paused. |
| Clear exit point is provided on every page | 1 | As discussed above – the listen now function doesn’t provide a way back. |
| Per-page size is less than 50K, to accommodate slow connections | 1 | Due to all of the media on a lot of the pages, slow connections will have a problem loading the page fast. I’m on a fiber connection and some of the pages loaded slowly for me. |
| All appropriate browsers are supported | 5 | Testing different sizes seemed to produce the same results. |
| **Language and Content** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Important information and tasks are given prominence | 5 | The different links are concise and to the point. For example, under artists/Eminem – They included a short biography, along with a discography through the years highlighting the years his albums came out. |
| Information of low relevance or rarely used information is not included | 5 | See above. |
| Related information or tasks are grouped:  - on the same page or menu  - in the same area within a page | 4 | The links had information that was grouped together nicely. However the home page seemed to be a mess trying to advertise a bit of everything. |
| Language is simple, without jargon | 5 |  |
| Paragraphs are brief | 5 |  |
| Links are concise, expressive, and visible--not buried in text | 3 | There’s so many different links, some are images, some are hidden in text. Most are visible, but you do have to hunt for some. |
| Terms are defined | 5 |  |
| **Online Help and User Guides** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site is designed to require minimal help and instructions | 3 | Someone used to browsing websites will have no problem, but others may get lost/confused with all of the chaos. |
| Help and instructions, if needed, are easily accessible | N/A |  |
| **System and User Feedback** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| It is always clear what is happening on the site -- visual hints, etc. | 3 | See other comments about it being busy/confusing at times |
| Users can receive email feedback if necessary | 3 | Users can sign-up for a newsletter, if they find it in the about page |
| Users can give feedback via email or a feedback form | N/A |  |
| Confirmation screen is provided for form submittal | 1 | No confirmation page when signing up for the newsletter – just redirected to home page. Only way to tell if it’s successful is by reading the link (it appears as shadyrecords.com/?result=success or error) |
| All system feedback is timely | N/A | No feedback |
| Users are informed if a plug-in or browser version is required | N/A |  |
| Each page includes a "last updated" date | N/A |  |
| **Consistency** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| The same word or phrase is used consistently to describe an item | 5 |  |
| Link reflects the title of the page to which it refers | 2 | Most at the top do – Media redirects to the home page. READ MORE links redirect to pages with youtube videos (nothing to read) |
| **Error Prevention and Correction** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Users can rely on recognition, not memory, for successful use of the site | 3 | For the most part its self-explanatory, but people new to the internet would have a problem |
| Site tolerates a reasonable variety of user actions | 1 | There are so many errors in the console log, and the list gets bigger the more the user does. |
| Site provides concise instructions for user actions, including entry format | N/A |  |
| Error messages are visible, not hidden | 1 | When submitting forms there is no visible error message. When something breaks the only place it shows up is in console logs – the website doesn’t notify the user. |
| Error messages are in plain language | 1 | See above. |
| Error messages describe actions to remedy a problem | 1 | … |
| Error messages provide a clear exit point | 1 | … |
| Error messages provide contact details for assistance | 1 | The error message in the console logs is for the developer to fix their code. |
| **Architectural and Visual Clarity** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site is organized from the user's perspective | 2 | It’s a mess the more I look at it. The images are cool, and the information is nice, but as a fan I’m disappointed in the developer of the page. |
| Site is easily scannable for organization and meaning | 3 | Some of the pages like discography have an organized timeline |
| Site design and layout is straightforward and concise | 3 | The layout is too busy on the home page but the design choice with the images and colors is nice. |
| Site design and layout are redundant only when required for user productivity | 3 | See above. |
| White space is sufficient; pages are not too dense | 4 | On most pages everything is very well styled. |
| Unnecessary animation is avoided | 4 | The only bad part is the carousels on the main page don’t have a stop/pause button |
| Colors used for visited and unvisited links are easily seen and understood | 4 | The nav bar is the only thing that changes (for current page), but I think that’s a good thing, because colors changing for visited links is more a thing of the past and looks tacky a lot of the time. |
| Bold and italic text is used sparingly | 5 | The typography is very well done |

**Website #2:** [**https://www.biography.com/musicians/tupac-shakur**](https://www.biography.com/musicians/tupac-shakur)

The target audience for this website are people who want to learn more about their favorite artists/musicians/athletes/etc. It seems built with simplicity in mind and appears to be very easy to use for novice and experienced users alike.

For the scenarios – the website appears to rely on pulling in users, who are interested in learning about these different categories, and targeting them with advertisements/links to other websites for revenue.

I thought the style and design of the website was very simple and easy to understand. This is a good choice for them, because they’re targeting so many different types of users. Everything worked well and was fast/responsive. The ad placement was terrible and really distracted from the articles. If I were to change parts of the website – I would reduce the number of ads for a better user experience. I also think the article site map should be a nav on the side of the page that follows the user, so if they want to jump to a different spot they don’t have to scroll.

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| **Navigation** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Current location within the site is shown clearly | 4 | Each section contains a bold title clearly indicating the location, but everything is on the same page. |
| Link to the site's main page is clearly identified | 1 or 5 | This site is more of an article, and there’s no clear way to return to a certain section, without scrolling up. However, if rating biography.com – then yes there is a clear way to get back to the home page by clicking on the header image. |
| Major/important parts of the site are directly accessible from the main page | 3 | There is a site map provided after the main title, description, and image. |
| Site map is provided for a large, complex site | 4 | The site map lists all the important categories, however it’s the only way to navigate to/from certain categories. Otherwise, the user has to scroll. |
| Easy to use Search function is provided, as needed | N/A or 3 | No search function for the article. There is a search function that works for the main page, but instead of just allowing the user to search, the website redirects to a search page. |
| **Functionality** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site accommodates novice to expert users | 5 | The site is easy to read and understand. All the user has to do is continue scrolling. |
| Functions are clearly labeled | 3 | All links in the site map clearly show where they navigate to, but some of the text has links that navigate to different websites. |
| Essential functions are available without leaving the site | N/A |  |
| Plug-ins are used only if they add value | 1 | Ads are rampant – seemingly filling up any available white-space. |
| **User Control** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site reflects user's workflow | 5 | Easy to get from point a to b. |
| User can cancel any operation | 1 | Links will automatically redirect to their corresponding website. Advertisements can only be turned off with an adblocker. |
| Clear exit point is provided on every page | N/A | It’s a single page, unless the user clicks on an outside link. |
| Per-page size is less than 50K, to accommodate slow connections | 4 | The website is mostly text with some images, so the page is very accommodating for slow connections except for the ads. |
| All appropriate browsers are supported | 3 | The alignment of links appears to be cut off when attempting to resize to certain mobile screens |
| **Language and Content** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Important information and tasks are given prominence | 5 | All of the important information is presented in large bold readable text. |
| Information of low relevance or rarely used information is not included | 1 | Ads are the pages biggest problem, and they become bigger with the unlimited scrolling feature – More adds continue to populate after the article is over, if the user continues to scroll. |
| Related information or tasks are grouped:  - on the same page or menu  - in the same area within a page | 5 | The categories are defined and organized well on the page. |
| Language is simple, without jargon | 5 | Everything is easy to understand. |
| Paragraphs are brief | 5 |  |
| Links are concise, expressive, and visible--not buried in text | 3 | Links are sometimes buried in text and sometimes the context of where the link will redirect to isn’t apparent. |
| Terms are defined | N/A |  |
| **Online Help and User Guides** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site is designed to require minimal help and instructions | 5 | Just scroll and read. |
| Help and instructions, if needed, are easily accessible | N/A |  |
| **System and User Feedback** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| It is always clear what is happening on the site -- visual hints, etc. | 5 |  |
| Users can receive email feedback if necessary | N/A or 5 | Users can sign up for a newsletter on the main biography site. |
| Users can give feedback via email or a feedback form | N/A |  |
| Confirmation screen is provided for form submittal | 5 | The user is notified if they have entered something invalid, and a confirmation modal appears after successfully signing up. |
| All system feedback is timely | 5 | Everything happens seamlessly. |
| Users are informed if a plug-in or browser version is required | N/A |  |
| Each page includes a "last updated" date | 5 | The article contains an ‘updated’ date at the top of the page |
| **Consistency** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| The same word or phrase is used consistently to describe an item | 5 |  |
| Link reflects the title of the page to which it refers | 3 | The site map is well described, but the links in the text are not. |
| **Error Prevention and Correction** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Users can rely on recognition, not memory, for successful use of the site | 5 | Just scroll and read. |
| Site tolerates a reasonable variety of user actions | 5 | Easy to use and understand for novice – advanced users |
| Site provides concise instructions for user actions, including entry format | 5 | Everything is self-explanatory |
| Error messages are visible, not hidden | 5 | Error messages for the newsletter/search bar appear and describe the error accurately |
| Error messages are in plain language | 5 | See above |
| Error messages describe actions to remedy a problem | 5 | … |
| Error messages provide a clear exit point | 5 | The error on search allows one to try searching again, and the error on the newsletter allows one to re-enter a valid email |
| Error messages provide contact details for assistance | N/A |  |
| **Architectural and Visual Clarity** | **Rating** | **Explanation for Rating** |
| Site is organized from the user's perspective | 3 | It’s fairly well organized however the ads run amok, and certain screen sizes aren’t properly aligned |
| Site is easily scannable for organization and meaning | 5 | Using the site map, you can easily find what you’re looking for, or if you’re looking for another artist you can search and easily find a different article |
| Site design and layout is straightforward and concise | 3 | On most screen sizes everything is formatted correctly, but on others there appears to be certain links that get cut off instead of wrapping/being put in a drop-down menu. |
| Site design and layout are redundant only when required for user productivity | 5 | The design is simple and made so all users can understand. |
| White space is sufficient; pages are not too dense | 3 | There would be too much white space, however the ads took care of that – which isn’t a good solution as it could turn off a lot of users |
| Unnecessary animation is avoided | 4 | Straight and to the point everything is text/images. Except for advertisements. |
| Colors used for visited and unvisited links are easily seen and understood | N/A | The links change color when hovering over them, but stay the same after visiting |
| Bold and italic text is used sparingly | 5 | Bold/Italic text is very well done and easily draws the reader in and out of the important descriptions/titles. |