

HMART: E-Commerce Redevelopment

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Abstract

This report highlights the importance of how a user-friendly interface can impact the impression and experience of users visiting an e-commerce website, and how they perceive the brand and its products. By exploring different pain points, needs, brand identity and after testing for usability, we proposed potential solutions H Mart can implement in the redesign of their new website.

Canada is home to many large grocery retailers, such as Walmart, Metro, No Frills, and Food Basics. The Canadian grocery market contains numerous oligopolies that dominate various segments of the market. Thus, many grocery retailers like H Mart and T&T target their brand to specific consumers in the market. H Mart is an American supermarket chain of Asian supermarkets operated by the Hanahreum Group, headquartered in Lyndhurst, Bergen County, New Jersey. The H in H Mart stands for "han ah reum," which means "an armful" in Korean. H Mart is a very popular supermarket for the sale of Korean products, due to this, Koreans and non-Koreans alike come to its establishments in search of their favorite products that are known for having a wide variety of flavors as well as for being spicy. In Toronto they present 7 establishments, because it is a very recognized supermarket, it also presents its products digitally through a web application and Mobile. However, after reviewing and looking at the web application, it was found that it does not present an illustration that is friendly to the user's view. Despite the presence of great accessibility through a screen reader, language change, and the modification of font sizes and images, its content can be improved through a more fluid interaction as well as simpler for the user, since navigating to the destination of the product search it is not found first hand which every online supermarket should have.

Thus, our project aims to find strategic design methods through research and problem-solving to improve the H Market website interface.

Research and Analysis

For this study, we wanted to conduct research on our demographic to get better insights on who our target audience is and what our customer base might resemble. We performed a brief competitor's analysis by referencing another grocery store competitor's e-commerce website, to see what we could use as inspiration for our own. We also surveyed H Mart's website and our

online resources to learn more about H Mart, their origin story, the meaning behind their name and the demographic of their shoppers. After doing some research, we gathered our findings to reveal that our target audience mainly comprises those who are the following: Either of Korean or Asian descent, people who express interest in Korean Cuisine and culture, and those who live in Toronto or the GTA.

The Competition

Before we did user testing of the current website platform, we also conducted brief research on H Mart's competitors. The current competitors for grocery stores are the following: PAT Mart, Galleria Supermarket, T&T Supermarket, HaiSue, along with Hanamaru Market and Bento. After surveying the layouts of their e-commerce website, we noticed some websites-have included certain features to attract their customer base such as providing a mobile shopping app or implementing their own loyalty rewards system. After looking at their layouts, we gathered important insights to include in our redesign of H Mart's website that will ensure increased traffic and bring a more loyal customer base.

Strengths/Weaknesses:

After assessing the competition, we performed a SWOT analysis, primarily outlining the strengths and weaknesses H Mart has and how we can improve their statistics and website interface. In terms of strengths, H Mart has a great cultural connection, ambience, diverse product selection, in-house restaurants and offers in-store pickup for customers to enjoy.

- 1) **Cultural Connection** H Mart caters to specific ethnic groups, providing a cultural link for customers who are seeking products from their native countries. This creates a loyal customer base for customers that are looking to purchase native familiar products.
- 2) **Ambience -** The serenity and the atmosphere of H Mart makes customers feel calm, secure, and comfortable. The stores are well-lit and clean, while the music is calm and may include a mix of Asian and international hits without overwhelming customers. The store includes cultural touches that reflect the diverse Asian communities they serve, offering a unique ambience from other Canadian grocery stores.

- 3) **Diverse Product Selection** H Mart offers a wide range of Asian food products that are often more difficult to find in Canada. The diverse product selection can attract customers that are searching for specific asian products or ingredients.
- 4) In store Pickup (Location Specific) Having an in store pickup service is one of the key advantages that can attract customers. Through the H Mart website or mobile app, customers can order their groceries in a convenient manner.
- 5) **In-House Restaurants (Location Specific) -** Certain H Mart locations offer in-house restaurants or food courts that serve authentic asian dishes. This offers customers a convenient dining option to try unique cuisines while shopping for their grocery needs.

However, H Mart also has certain weaknesses that impact their business and their business goals. Their e-commerce website lacks structure, is not as user-friendly and could address more for accessibility. It should restructure its navigation bar, singular website to comprise their catering and grocery store, have a more organized layout for their grocery item selection and a more detailed product page.

- Navigation Bar The categories on the navigation bar could be organized better, as viewers might be confused between the different menu tabs for catering and their restaurant menu.
- 2) Website for Grocery Currently H Mart has a separate website for their online grocery store, which can be confusing when initially visiting on their landing page. Also the link to the grocery store is hidden in the promotional banner on the home page. Having a designated tab for grocery on their primary navigation bar would be more UI friendly, and easy for users to see. At the moment, the e-commerce website does not resemble a grocery website but more of a restaurant due to the different menus.
- 3) **Disorganized Grocery Layout** Aside from the products all being out of stock due to the website needing to be updated, the categories of the different produce could be better

organized. Although their subcategories are specific, it is a lot of text on the screen that can be very overwhelming for new users. We think creating simpler categories and subcategories would be better, and users could always use the search function to find the specific product they need.

4) **Barebones Product Page**- The product page lacks a variety of photos, product information in english, stock amount or even reviews and comments of the product from other customers. Having more detail in the product info page would be more informative, and could help users determine whether they want to select this brand or another competitor based on the description, nutritional info and allergens.

Needs, pain points and preferences of current users

In order to create an interface that will benefit the users who either visit H Mart or use the current website, we need to find out what needs, pain points and preferences current users have, in order to suggest changes to add or remove to the website. First off, users need to be able to easily browse for their grocery items, to be able to make online purchases, to create a user account, collect points for their groceries, and have a positive experience for their user interaction along with certain on-screen interactive elements while they explore the website. By being able to browse through available grocery items, this would be a crucial function on H Mart's website, so users can conveniently look up the item they want and see its availability. Online purchasing would also enable users to also bring their experience outside the physical store location; and be able to get groceries from the comfort of their homes. Creating a user account would help establish loyalty, and users can save their information and create customized personalized feeds that are predominantly based on the history of previous purchases. If we can create a website with dynamic illustrations or animations, this can aid us in capturing the user's attention to a specific section we might want to highlight or emphasize, which can prompt the user to learn more about the product we set as priority on their screen. Fostering a great user interaction will also enable the user to have control over the products displayed on their screen. By having visual representation, behaviors and physical space and objects through using their

fingers, mouse or touch-pad. The users will enjoy being able to have control over the navigation journey and the behavior of actions performed. And lastly, being able to collect points for a rewards system will increase brand loyalty, letting users gather points for each purchase they make and having the possibility of being able to redeem points for future purchases.

We also researched potential pain points our users might have while navigating our website. Through conducting user interviews, and exploring the website ourselves, we found some issues that could affect our user's experience visiting the site, areas of confusion and certain elements that could be added to improve overall experience. After going through the current website, we found some issues that we could create potential changes for. H Mart currently has a confusing navigation menu – users might struggle to find the shopping menu since it is not located in the nav bar, but hidden in one of the banners in their carousel on the landing home page. It also has a poor website layout as it has spacing issues with texts and menus. Although it provides language options between English and Korean, we did find that the banners with Korean text would not be changed, so it was hard for visitors to understand what they were advertising, especially if they did not speak Korean. It lacks a commenting section; where it allows users to provide feedback, to be able to find good products and recommendations. Their Weekly Flyer is also overcrowded with information and would be easier to navigate in a digital format. Being able to individually click on an item and seeing a preview would be helpful for the user to get an idea of what the product is in that instance. In their current drop down menu, there are too many options that are clustered and could be better organized. Another thing is their accessibility icon is small, making it difficult to locate and their product organization can be very confusing. H Mart has an abundance of links and filters for users to use, however, it can be confusing when searching for a specific product.

We are also aware that our users have personalized preferences when visiting the website and shopping for our products. Certain things the new website should include is the ability for customization, to be able to change their notification settings, allowing them to block pop-up advertisements on mobile and pop-up windows on desktop. Users should be able to alter the UI depending on their own viewing preferences, such as implementing dark mode, enlarging the text

or changing the website's font. Although it currently has that as a feature, it is very limited and the icon is small.

Goals and Requirements

When identifying our business and user goals, there were certain requirements we needed to establish. First off, we needed to define our brand identity. Given the first impression of the website, it is not evident what H Mart really is, or what it represents. Based on the font, people might be confused – is it a grocery store or a convenience store? Some of the users we interviewed were confused, and compared it to other businesses that it reminded them of.

[below are the two photos for comparison.. Maybe the font of the "h" reminds them of a convenience store font, and since H Mart does not include Grocery Store under their logo consistently, it could confuse others when going there in person or visiting their website.



What does the H even represent? The color scheme of their brand and logo is red and white, and the H stands for Hankook (한국) meaning Korean, using a blend of handwritten fonts and typographic elements like sans serif fonts like roboto. Its phrase Han Ah Reum means to have an arm full of groceries, implying one has more than enough to share.

In terms of the style guide, we plan to create a fixed global navigation bar that does not change despite which page the user is on. In order to do this, we will create a top navigation bar that is fixed, so no matter if one visits the home page, the product page or the grocery page, the top bar will always remain the same. We strive to maintain the minimalist aesthetic, as well as

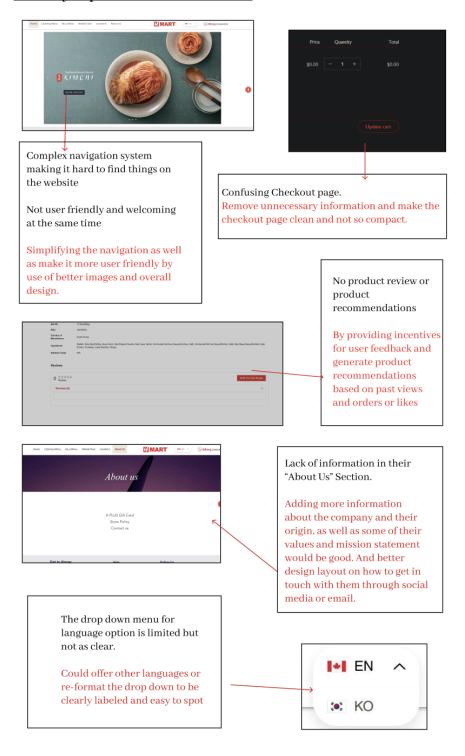
implementing big clear buttons that enable easy navigation throughout the visual hierarchy of the website. By creating clear categorical tabs in our drop down menu, it will let the users hover over each category and subcategory – until they find the section of the item they are searching for. In order to not overwhelm the user visiting our site for the first time, we will also add a hamburger menu, to store links to our other pages that are not displayed on the header. To make things easier, we also will add a search function so users can search for what they want immediately, without needing to scroll through all the pages. On the landing page, we will also add some carousels for crucial information such as promotional offers or weekly specials, and add more product information in all of the descriptions of each item. Implementing nutritional information, customer-based reviews and close-ups of each product in the image section will help create a seamless navigation experience. For our user experience goals, we aim to create an interface that fosters easy navigation for users, a smooth checkout process, and to create accessibility for all types of users through the art of customization.

Usability: Improvements and Solutions

Below are snippets of the current website with certain issues we have identified. There are certain elements ranging from the home page, the checkout page and areas that lack information which is crucial for the user experience of navigating the website.

Research & Analysis:

Usability Improvements and Solutions

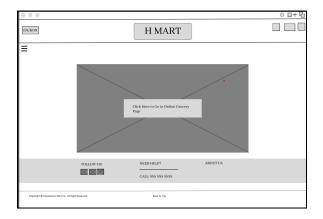


Methodology

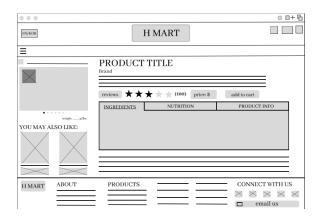
In conducting our user research, we decided to conduct user interviews with several participants to get a better understanding on how current (or potential) users feel about H Mart and their website. First, we received feedback from our instructor, on certain elements we should opt out, things we could add, and referencing competitor's website's like Walmart of Whole Foods. We created the second set of wireframes to update our UI, and this is what we used for our second round of usability testing. When interviewing the users, we asked them a set of questions and also allowed them to go through the original website to gather first impressions and thoughts. We also provided a comparison of the initial website and our first redesign of the website through our wireframes, to get a better idea of which version users enjoy better; and then we showed users our second set of wireframes with the first round of changes we implemented. By doing so, users can see the difference and compare – to see which version they liked better, and what they would like to see being implemented in the final product. We asked a total of six questions, to get a better understanding of how they enjoy navigating the interface, things that they enjoy from our competitor's layouts that we could implement in our own website, and noting down their preferences and suggestions. We interviewed a total of 6 users, from various backgrounds to provide deeper insights on their experience of navigating H Mart's website.

Initial Redesign of the Grocery Store Website

Home Page (Figure 1.1)

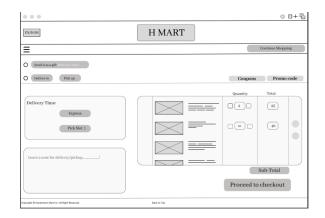


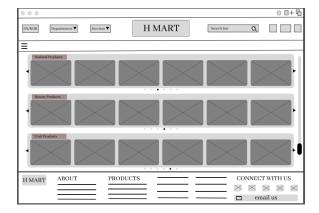
Product Page (Figure 1.2)



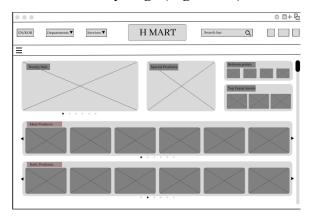
Check Out Page (Figure 1.3)

https://www.figma.com/file/dLHhUYDsghuV76fDHDh4PO/hmart?type=design&node-id=0-1&mode=design&t=SifAlVb6tzdsmgwd-0





Grocery Page (Figure 1.4)



Findings from Usability Testing

After conducting the user interviews, we found six key findings that provided deeper insights on our user's opinions about the interface and design. By consulting these, we implemented this feedback into our updated design (See Figures 2.1-2.4).

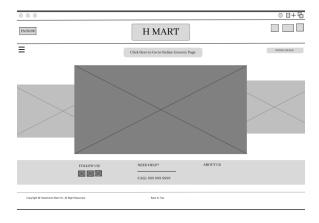
- 1. How do you feel looking at the Home Page?
 - a. Most users found the design of the home page to be minimalistic and simple. Most of them liked this design because it made navigation easier. And overall the design was similar to other sites that followed the trend of minimalist design. Those who did not like it said it was overly basic and lacked information to guide first time users. Since the home page acts as the landing page, they thought it should be more descriptive about how to navigate the site.

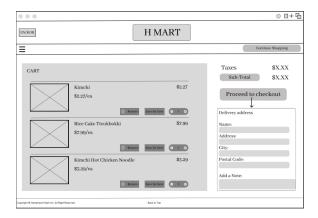
- 2. How do you feel about navigating the website?
 - a. Most people agreed that the navigation contained a lot of unnecessary white space. It was difficult to locate the products page because the visual hierarchy isn't accurate. Overall, the design of the website lacks consistency.
- 3. Are there too many drop down menus?
 - a. Most people agreed that there was a good amount of drop down menus. It was not overbearing, and contained useful categories to navigate with.
- 4. Which wireframe do you prefer?
 - a. Our participants had a preference for wireframe b) as it had a better design, easier to view all the commands and options, and they appreciated the larger photos in the product page. The checkout page was also much more intuitive to use thanks to the visual hierarchy and layout of the buttons.
- 5. What kind of customization do you want? Preferences: dark mode, larger font, contrast.
 - a. Most of our participants preferred having a dark mode setting. One person also mentioned having a mobile-centric layout would be beneficial because today's trend leans heavily on mobile applications.
- 6. What should be the main function/purpose of this website?
 - a. According to the users, browsing items and purchasing them online should be the main function of the HMart e-commerce store. It should also be capable of informing its users about new deals, events, and item quantity so that they could make better informed decisions.

After conducting the user interviews, we wrote down the pain points and suggestions for the website and altered our wireframes to reflect the new changes. We also showed our users the original website, the first wireframe that shows our initial redesign, and then the second wireframe with the changes implemented. Due to popular consensus, all of our users simultaneously agreed that the second wireframe was much better. After adding more content, adhering to visual hierarchy and providing features like a checkout page with instructions and customization, product page with multiple product photos, reviews, product information,

ingredient list and nutritional facts with suggested items, as well as a grocery inventory page with the ability to filter products based on price.

Figures 2.1





Figures 2.2

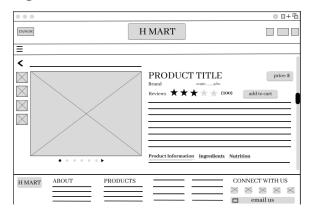
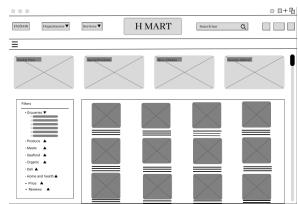


Figure 2.3





After meeting with our stakeholders (our instructor), we got additional feedback on our wireframes. Although the second edition was better than the first, there were certain elements we decided to get rid of because it either took too much space, did not make sense for a grocery store, and things to add to maintain consistency and standards. We tried to unify the look and appeal by creating a consistent nav bar that stays the same on each page (besides the checkout page), we got rid of the filters – and decided to make a menu for different categories instead. We added call to action (CTA) buttons to each product item in the grocery page, so users can easily add these items to their cart. And we redesigned the checkout page to reflect payment and shipping methods, since previously it was more of a cart design. And since we decided to do delivery for groceries, we added a function where users can schedule their delivery time.

Discussion

Overall, we concluded that H Mart's website could implement more content, have a more user-friendly navigation bar, and include better categorization of their information so it is easier for their users to navigate the website. Being able to comprise all of their needs in a singular website is more beneficial than having separate websites for their grocery. We also think for H Mart's branding, it is important to be consistent so users understand what they are looking at when they visit the website. If it is a grocery website they are trying to promote, they need to include more information about their products, promotional orders, and more information on their store rather than just using banners. Also implementing a more detailed and comprehensive language version that also translates the advertisement banner would help their consistency and standards. After exploring, and navigating we found the difficulties in the operation of the page, we proceeded to propose a series of ideas to improve it so that the user finds a product that can solve all their concerns in a simple and assertive way. On its main page, we made the decision to implement a carousel in which the user will be able to see the most relevant information about the supermarket, compared to the carousel of the original page, our website will illustrate the images at the same time and the one in the middle will be prioritized. Another very important point was the redesign of the page which will give more information about the product. The current page does not present a good organization. This is evidenced by the fact that the footer of the page takes up about 30% of the dimensions of this page. Additionally of its bad distribution, the information is very scarce. After making various versions, the conclusion was reached to add information on the ingredients and nutrition of the product, as well as illustrate a series of recommendations of products that the customer may like. We redesigned the footer so that the information of "About Us", "Products" and "Connect with Us" look more organized and informative. In addition, it was decided to take the entire width of the footer since in this way we could illustrate all the necessary information in a lower height of the page. Like the previous page, the checkout page lacks a lot of information and design. After searching for the design of the checkout page of important supermarket chains, a list located on the left side of the page will describe the information of each of the products the user chose, and on the right side, it will describe the total payment amount. Additionally, the delivery feature was included so that the user may have the opportunity to provide the required information on the destination of their order. Lastly, the side section of the product search page was removed, this side section is made up of a large series of links which fills the user with information and links, causing an overload of information. The design that was implemented was a filter box that the user can use through drop downs. These drop downs will reduce the space thus allowing better navigation and experience in their product research.

Figma file link to the wireframes -The wire-frames initially made are first based on how a website should have looked as a team we decided on it and then it follows with the new iteration after user research and user interviews and feedback as well.

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