Yang Cheng

PUI Assignment 8

Link: https://yangcheng-design.github.io/ladle/

Part 1: About Ladle

Ladle helps home cooks focus on cooking by answering common questions via a voice assistant. Simply choose one of the available recipes you want to use and the assistant will help you at each step: finding what ingredients are required, listen to the cooking instruction, and go back to last step / next step. Ladle is for the beginner home cooks who want to try out online different recipes, so that they can free their hands from constantly unlocking their phones and scrolling.

Part 2: Interactions

UX Interactions

- Click to expand sidebar contents

    - User can click on "Breakfast", "Lunch" and so on to see the recipes available under each category.

- Click on recipe card to read recipe

    - User can click on each recipe card in the sidebar, then the main content area shows the corresponding recipe.

- On mobile, user can interact with a hamburger menu

    - On smaller size displays, the sidebar is hidden under the hamburger icon. User can click on the icon to reveal the sidebar

Voice Interactions

- Say "Hi" to greet the voice assistant Alan

    - Alan will greet you and tell you that you can let him know when you are ready to cook

- Say "Start cooking" or "I'm ready" (similar commands will also work)

    - Alan will say "Great, starting with the first step" and read to you the first step. At the same time, the active step will be highlighted yellow.

- Ask "What's the next step" (similar commands will also work)

    - Alan will read to you the next step and highlight it with yellow.

- Ask "What's the last step" (similar commands will also work)'

    - Alan will read the previous instruction

Part 3: External tools

- Alan AI API

    - Alan is the only API I found that works for my purpose of adding voice interactions to a website. It adds the critical voice interactions to my app. I used their built-in development environment to write voice scripts (handing user inputs, matching intents, sending API calls back to my Javascript) and connected the SDK to my javascript.

- Tailwind CSS

    - Tailwind is a utility-first CSS framework that allows me to write CSS as classes directly in HTML. Tailwind lets me style my website as fast as possible. Additionally, the default styles follow a design system (e.g. topographic scales and color palettes) so I can get a decent looking website very fast while not be bound to default components such as those in Bootstrap that aren't very customizable.

Part 4: Iterations and Changes

I changed from my original plan of combining a recipe importer and voice assistant and instead only focused on the assistant. Scraping a recipe site turned out to be much more difficult than I anticipated; however, while I did make some progress in reading in common recipe metadata the importer was not working for most sites. In the future, I'd consider keep working on this project and making the recipe importer work.

In terms of visuals, I added a sidebar to my previously-emptier visual mock. The sidebar adds more utility to the site, allowing the user to see at a glance the available recipes and not having to leave the page to read the recipe.

Part 5: Challenges

The most challenging part, other than scraping, was learning to work with the Alan API. I needed to learn new concepts of how to store data within the Alan object, how to communicate with my own program, and new syntax for conversation design such as handling intents and fuzzy intents.

Wave tool: