

Links

Live prototype: <https://zachvancleef.com/PUI-FA2020-homework5/>

- Can navigate to/from 'Home', 'Cats' product browsing page, and 'Cat Harness' details page

GitHub repository: <https://github.com/zvanclee/PUI-FA2020-homework5>

Heuristic Evaluation

Aesthetic and minimalist design

When I started creating my design, I wanted to create simple and usable experience for my users. A bug I had found in some of previous iterations was certain areas, specifically on the home page, where I was including too much information. In this current design, I tried to ameliorate this by breaking my design down into simpler, easier to digest, components. In doing so, I reduced the components of my home page and created a design that was easier to understand and digest because it contained only the information necessary for a good user experience. I think reducing the content on my home page was good because it makes the displayed information easier to parse through and retrieve relevant information.

Recognition rather than recall

Similar to my changes related to minimalist design, a key focus of my current design is visible and easily navigable options for the user. Specifically, on my product browsing and product detail pages, I made the process of finding products, purchasing products, and navigating between the details and browsing pages easier and more visible for the user. I had identified some difficulty when looking between the two pages and saw that the navigation between the two needed to be improved. To fix this, I iterated on my breadcrumbs to allow users to easily navigate between pages and products, without having to think about how they are transitioning. On the product detail pages, I made key factors related to purchase easier to see and the process of making a purchase was further iterated upon with greater visual hierarchy of actions needed to add an item to cart.

Visibility of system status

Lastly, and this was a more subtle change, I made the visibility and navigation between navigation bar pages easier and more recognizable. I identified in previous prototypes some confusion when switching between the navigation bar pages ('Home', 'Cats', 'Dogs', 'Accessories'). Specifically, it was confusing to understand which page you were on and when you were going to another page. To fix this issue, I made use of 'hover' in CSS so that users

could clearly see when they were about to be navigating to a new page. Also, the current page was highlighted and colored to indicate where a user currently was, furthering the visibility and understanding of the users' current state on the website. Overall, these changes provided users with more feedback and visual information related to their state on the website.

Challenges in Implementation

While implementing my prototype into HTML and CSS, I ran into several hurdles along the way. My primary challenges were concerned with the implementation of a grid. Beyond our initial Codecademy exercises, this was my first time working with CSS grids. I struggled a lot with getting the grid to reflect my Figma prototype, and it only got harder when I started to add content. To overcome this, I revisited our Codecademy exercises, looked at different examples of grids I could find online, and found a pretty helpful guide on working with grids (link: <https://css-tricks.com/snippets/css/complete-guide-grid/>). Then, after reviewing these materials, I started working on my own files and was able to get my live prototype to closely reflect my Figma prototype – I was pretty happy with the results! The only problem, related to grids, that I was not able to overcome was responsiveness. My webpages do alright when being rendered on a large screen, but it does not respond well to small screens.

Another challenge I encountered was working with images. In prior projects, I was never working with this many images and I never had to worry about making them work with grids. This challenge was a bit easier to overcome, compared to grids, but it took a lot of experimenting and viewing other examples to get my images in the correct position. This challenge, as with grids, was solved with trial-and-error until I was able to get my content rendered correctly.

Brand Identity

For my design, I tried to create a brand identity for Muddy Paws that was both welcoming and simple, all while supporting the goals of my expected clients. I expect that my clients will be adventurous people that are always on the move with their pet. For this reason, I tried to curate a simple and fun experience for my clients that would help establish Muddy Paws as a brand that is built around easy-to-use products without complication.

These choices can be seen in the look and feel of my design. For color, I tried to use calming hues of light and dark blue, as to create an open and welcoming perception from my client. In order to promote quick and easy navigation of my website, I used large text and easily clickable buttons to allow users to explore and discover new products quickly and with ease. On product browsing pages, I used filters relevant to my products and allow for users to sort by various means. Breadcrumb trails were used on product browsing and details pages to allow for users to quickly navigate back to a page if needed. On product detail pages, images are displayed prominently to show off the product and the sizing chart for each product is shown directly below the images so that users can quickly identify the

size they will need to purchase for their pet. Also, product details and customization choices are displayed clearly so that users can easily change and view their current product selection.

Overall, the design choices I made for my design promote easy user exploration and discovery, all while maintaining the welcoming and simple feel that I hope to establish as the brand identity of Muddy Paws. With my design, I hope that clients feel welcome and at home when they are visiting Muddy Paws, and I want their experience to be a simple and intuitive experience.