



Background and Objectives

Heuristic Evaluation is a usability inspection method for addressing a system's level of compliance or non-compliance with the ten heuristic principles as developed by Jakob Nielsen. A Heuristic Evaluation can be completed at any stage of the design, development, and launch process however it is typically conducted in the design and/ or redesign phase. The goal of a Heuristic Evaluation is to find points of weakness in the site's current functionality.

Procedures

For our Heuristic Evaluation of the NWFF website our team came up with three scenarios that we believe best demonstrate the most common site interactions by potential users. We then individually went through each scenario and completed each associated task, flagging all issues according to the ten heuristics and giving them a score from 0-4.

Scenario 1: You are tasked with buying 10 movie tickets for you and your friends for this upcoming Sunday, for the first showtime of the day.

Scenario 2: Young local filmmaker just recently discovered the NWFF. The goal of this user is to go to the website, sign up to become a volunteer, and rent a super 8 camera for an upcoming video shoot.

Scenario 3: A film enthusiast who is new to NWFF wants to become a member. She wants to make a \$60 donation with paypal account without being charged additional fees.

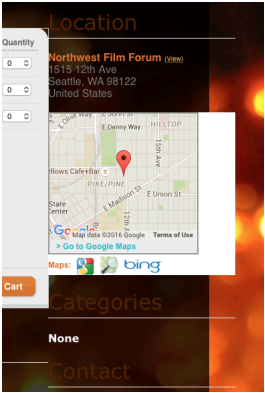
Severity Scale:

- 0 – **No Problem:** I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all
- 1 – **Cosmetic problem only:** need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project
- 2 – **Minor usability problem:** fixing this should be given low priority
- 3 – **Major usability problem:** important to fix, so should be given high priority
- 4 – **Usability catastrophe:** imperative to fix this before product can be released

Findings

Scenario 1: You are tasked with buying 10 movie tickets for you and your friends for this upcoming Sunday, for the first showtime of the day.	Akash	Starr	Tiffany	Tosia	Average Score
1. Visibility of system status: The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.					
When using the calendar on the homepage, selecting Sunday May 9. There is no communication stating that there aren't any showings that day.	3	3	3	2	2.75
When you click on "Buy Tickets Now" underneath a film title or on the film detail page, it's unclear whether you are still on the NWFF page or a page hosted by Brown Paper Tickets (the URL makes it confusing).	2	2	2	2	2
2. Match between system and the real world: The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.					
The term "cinemas" for the first navigation tab is misleading to the average person. "Cinema" usually connotes the building or actual movie theatre, not the films themselves. It is jargony and a bit pretentious. "Movies" or "Showtimes" would make more sense to a general user.	3	3	2	2	2.5

3. User control and freedom: Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.					
The user is able to go back from a movie "return to calendar" but this actually doesn't bring you back to the previous page when looking at shows from the "Cinemas" page.	2	2	2	3	2.25
4. Consistency and standards: Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions .					
Sitewide, hyperlinks and accent text are styled exactly the same (and/or not styled at all; see the "Join our mailing list" link under "Subscribe" in the left sidebar).	2	2	0	2	1.2
5. Error prevention: Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.					
The error prevention occurs on an external ticket ordering site, that isn't maintained by the NWFF.	0	0	0	0	0
6. Recognition rather than recall: Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.					
There are no clear breadcrumbs (on any page) indicating where you are or how you got there.	3	2.5	2	2	2.38
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use: Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.					

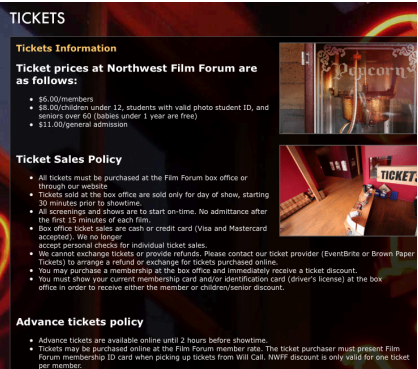
N/A	0	0	0	0	0	
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design: Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.						
	From the home page alone there are several places to go that take you to a movie (the “Cinemas” node in the main navigation, the calendar in the left sidebar, and the “Showtimes” in the right sidebar).	2	3	2	2	2.25
On the ticket order page, the external vendor and the NWFF pages, collide. There is no padding between the aside and the order box, the color choice for <h> tags is very dark and not easy to see.	2	2	1	1	1.5	
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.						
N/A	0	0	0	0	0	
10. Help and documentation: Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.						
There does not appear to be a “Help” or “FAQ” section for customers to consult if they have any questions about NWFF or how to buy tickets. For	4	4	4	4	4	

example, it would be helpful to know that you can also buy tickets in person at the theater, or that the theater is ADA compliant.					
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Scenario 2: Young local filmmaker just recently discovered the NWFF. The goal of this user is to go the the website, sign up to become a volunteer, and rent a super 8 camera for an upcoming video shoot.	Akash	Starr	Tiffany	Tosia	Average Score
1. Visibility of system status: The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.					
N/A	0	0	0	0	0
2. Match between system and the real world: The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.					
Under "Volunteer" the "Download" sidebar has a link to the volunteer application pdf but other than the name of the file the link is not really labeled. On the other hand, on the "Equipment Cinemas" page (that name is unclear/ doesn't match the links you click to get there) there is a downloadable pdf labeled "Current Rental Equipment List" with no real contextual info about what it is.	3	3	3	2	2.75
As a user I would expect equipment rental information to be under "filmmaking," however the path to equipment rental info is actually located in the "Resources" sidebar on the filmmaking page (not obvious at all). Note: this sidebar is also located on the "Productions" page, however there is no actual "Resources" page that is accessible from anywhere on the site.	3	3	3	3.5	3.13
3. User control and freedom: Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to					

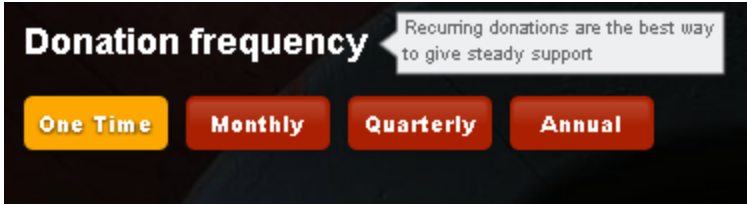
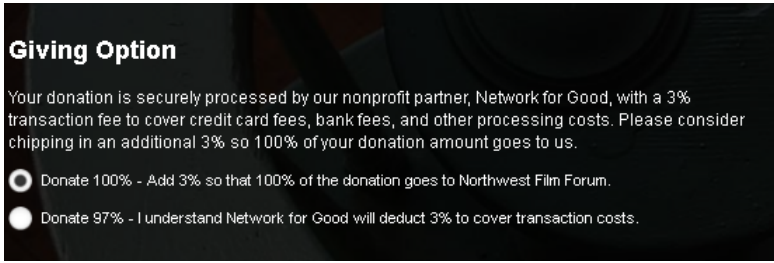
leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.					
External links do not open in new window and do not tell the user that they are leaving the NWFF site.	2	2.5	2	2	2.13
4. Consistency and standards: Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions .					
As noted above, some of the terminology used on the website is not clear from a user perspective (“Resources” vs. “Productions”).	2	2.5	2	2	2.13
5. Error prevention: Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.					
There are no error prevention methods in place. Should consider adding these to the updated site. Use of forms, with clear error messaging, would make the process of membership sign up and renting equipment more streamlined and add functionality to the site.	4	4	4	4	4
6. Recognition rather than recall: Minimize the user’s memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.					
The “Ready to get involved” (a.k.a the apply to volunteer section) visually doesn’t stand out from the rest of the text and information on the page.	2	2	1	1	1.5
There are no clear breadcrumbs (on any page) indicating where you are or how you got there.	3	3	3	2	2.75
When you click on “Productions” in the main nav and jump to that section of the site, “Productions” is not marked or highlighted in the main nav to	3	3	3	3	3

indicate where you have navigated to from the home page.					
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use: Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.					
There is a call to action to call or email to become a volunteer. It would make the process much more simple if there was a contact form on this page rather than having to leave the site to send an email.	1	1	1	2	1.25
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design: Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.					
Volunteer page is overloaded with content and you shouldn't have to go to an unrelated page to find out about the policies for volunteers.	2	2	2	2	2
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.					
There are currently no opportunities for error in this process.	0	0	0	0	0
10. Help and documentation: Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.					

<p>Read our volunteer & intern ticket policy here</p>  <p>When going to review the volunteer & intern ticket policy, the link doesn't direct you to the content you are looking for on the page. It isn't visible unless you scroll down the page.</p>	2	2	2	3	2.25
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Scenario 3: A film enthusiast who is new to NWFF wants to get membership. She wants to be member by making a donation of \$60 with paypal account without being charged additional fees.	Akash	Starr	Tiffany	Tosia	Average Score
1. Visibility of system status: The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.					
In membership page it explains how the membership works.	0	0	0	0	0

<p>Support Northwest Film Forum</p> <p>Northwest Film Forum is a film arts center that screens over 200 independent and classic films each year, offers a year-round schedule of filmmaking classes for all ages, and supports emerging filmmakers at all stages of their careers.</p> <p>We are an organization led and inspired by our community of supporters: film lovers of all ages and life experiences, filmmakers working to kick-start their career or build their craft and professional connections, families who want their children to have meaningful cinematic experiences.</p> <p>How Membership Works</p> <p>For any donation of \$50 or more per year to Northwest Film Forum, our supporters automatically become members and receive membership discounts at the Film Forum and affiliated businesses. Membership benefits include discounts on movies, classes and rentals, among other donor perks—please read more below.</p> <p>Make A Donation And Receive Membership Benefits</p> <p>You can make a gift to support Northwest Film Forum online via Network for Good:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Donate Now Secure donations through Network for Good</p> </div> <p>Membership benefits start at the \$50 Establishing Shot donor level. Please see below for an overview of donor levels and associated membership benefits.</p> <p>Benefits Overview Why Donate?</p>						
<p>2. Match between system and the real world: The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.</p>						
<p>“Membership” is in the utility, not the main nav.</p>	2	2	2	2	2	
<p>Membership is also accessed through the main nav under “Get Involved” which may not be a clear label for this section, that users would automatically assume this is where to find membership information.</p>	2	2	2	1	1.75	
<p>3. User control and freedom: Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.</p>						
<p>N/A</p>	0	0	0	0	0	
<p>4. Consistency and standards: Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.</p>						

The links in the donation disclaimer are styled differently from the links everywhere else on the site.	1	2	1	1	1.25
<p>5. Error prevention: Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.</p>					
<p>Information is provided in donation frequency.</p>  <p>Giving option defines how donation is processed.</p> 	0	0	0	0	0
<p>6. Recognition rather than recall: Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.</p>					
There are no clear breadcrumbs (on any page) indicating where you are or how you got there.	3	2.5	3	2	2.1
The explanation of the benefits of different memberships are not available for reference on the actual donation page.	2	2	2	2	2

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use: Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.					
Rather than forms for equipment rentals, there are just email addresses provided for every different service. Forms would make things easier for the user and the NWFF.	2	3	2	2	2.25
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design: Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.					
The links in the donation disclaimer are dark red on black and really hard to read.	2	2	1	1	1.5
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.					
Information is provided to users providing explanation in plain text.	0	0	0	0	0
10. Help and documentation: Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.					
N/A	0	0	0	0	0

Results

The team's evaluations of three specific user scenarios found the following major usability issues (average score of more than 2):

Scenario 1: You are tasked with buying 10 movie tickets for you and your friends for this upcoming Sunday, for the first showtime of the day.

- **Visibility of system status:** Calendar information lacks clarity
- **Match between system and the real world:** Navigation terminology confusing
- **User control and freedom:** Return navigation
- **Recognition rather than recall:** Lack of breadcrumbs
- **Aesthetic and minimalist design:** Lack of consistency in navigation and terminology; too much information in too many places
- **Help and documentation:** Lack of help and documentation materials

Scenario 2: Young local filmmaker just recently discovered the NWFF. The goal of this user is to go to the website, sign up to become a volunteer, and rent a super 8 camera for an upcoming video shoot.

- **Match between system and the real world:** Lack of consistency in terminology and ways to acquire information
- **User control and freedom:** External links do not inform users that they are leaving the site
- **Consistency and standards:** Terminology unclear and inconsistent
- **Error prevention:** There currently is no error prevention
- **Recognition rather than recall:** Lack of breadcrumbs
- **Help and documentation:** Policy links do not lead to relevant policy information

Scenario 3: A film enthusiast who is new to NWFF wants to get membership. She wants to be a member by making a donation of \$60 with a PayPal account without being charged additional fees.

- **Recognition rather than recall:** Lack of breadcrumbs
- **Flexibility and efficiency of use:** Lack of forms; downloadable PDFs and email addresses rather than embedded forms

The findings show several specific flaws in usability that can be improved through a redesign. We believe the biggest improvements to the site that can be made involve making clear pathways for the user to complete imperative tasks (such as buying movie tickets or renting equipment), providing more help resources for the user (like a FAQ page), and streamlining transactional actions between the user and NWFF (for example, creating embedded forms for renting equipment instead of making users download a PDF to fill out and send back to NWFF).