# Heuristic Analysis: Homeowners Association Websites By Mark Uyemura

I analyzed HOA websites through recognized usability principles to ultimately improve the user interface and experience. I've evaluated four HOA websites using Jakob Nielsen's 10 criteria. Detailed heuristic data can be found here.

## Tomlinson Park Community Association

Tomlinson Park has created an attractive and easy-to-use responsive website, and earned a **heuristic grade of B.**

**What it did well:** Every page has a well defined header and footer, with clear and consistent navigation on top of each page, and clear section heads. The site navigation also displays well-labeled sections and subcategories on the navigation, and I had a good sense where I was and where I needed to go to find information.

**Recommendations for improvement:**
- There are no links under the My Account label on the navigation, even with subcategories
- There's a large Google Calendar on the homepage, with only one event on it. Seems like waste of space for one event.
- Text color and background on the Contact Us form is hard to read because they are almost the same color.

## Brea Glenbrook Club

This website had minimal content and was oddly organized. It only passed three of the 10 heuristic criteria, **earning an F.**

**What it did well:** The website has minimal content spread over four sections, begging the question, why have sections at all? The minimal amount of content and function works in its favor, intended or not. It's fairly simple to navigate.

**Recommendations for improvement:**
- The site navigation labels are also confusing and don't aptly describe the content in each category (e.g. Discussion Board.) Maybe consider a one-page site to get rid of unnecessary categories.
- Requires a fair amount of zooming and scrolling on mobile devices, since it's only a desktop site.
- Links in the Monthly Bulletin section open PDF files and open up in the same browser tab -- and loses all site look and feel and navigation, with no way to get back, leading to user errors and dead ends.

## Country Hills HOA

The HOA website is a user trainwreck with numerous UI problems. They earn a **letter grade of F with only two heuristics passed.**

**What it did well:** The site loaded with clear status in the browser, and uses constant and clear language throughout the site.

**Recommendations for improvement:**
- The site has no site navigation, even though there are category pages. On a desktop screen, these links are displayed on the footer, but on a mobile device, the links disappear altogether.
- Buttons are small, and text is barely readable because of the white text on light grey background.
- The buttons also all click to PDF files, and we lose the site UI, with no way of getting back to the previous screen.

## Mission Viejo (CO) HOA

The website is deep with information and functionality, but finding that information is a chore, **earning an F.**

**What it did well:** Deep and informative content and updated constantly.

**Recommendations for improvement:**
Multiple navigation bars (Top, left and on footer,) and 20 top-level sections with 24 subsections, with no site search makes it a chore to navigate.
- The site isn't mobile optimized and navigating is even harder on these devices- as the left-hand navigation requires a mouseover of the category button to see the subcategories--a function that doesn't exist on touch screen devices.
- Too many categories and section pages. It's time to reorganize the categories. Navigation overload.
- Each screen is extremely busy with unnecessary elements.