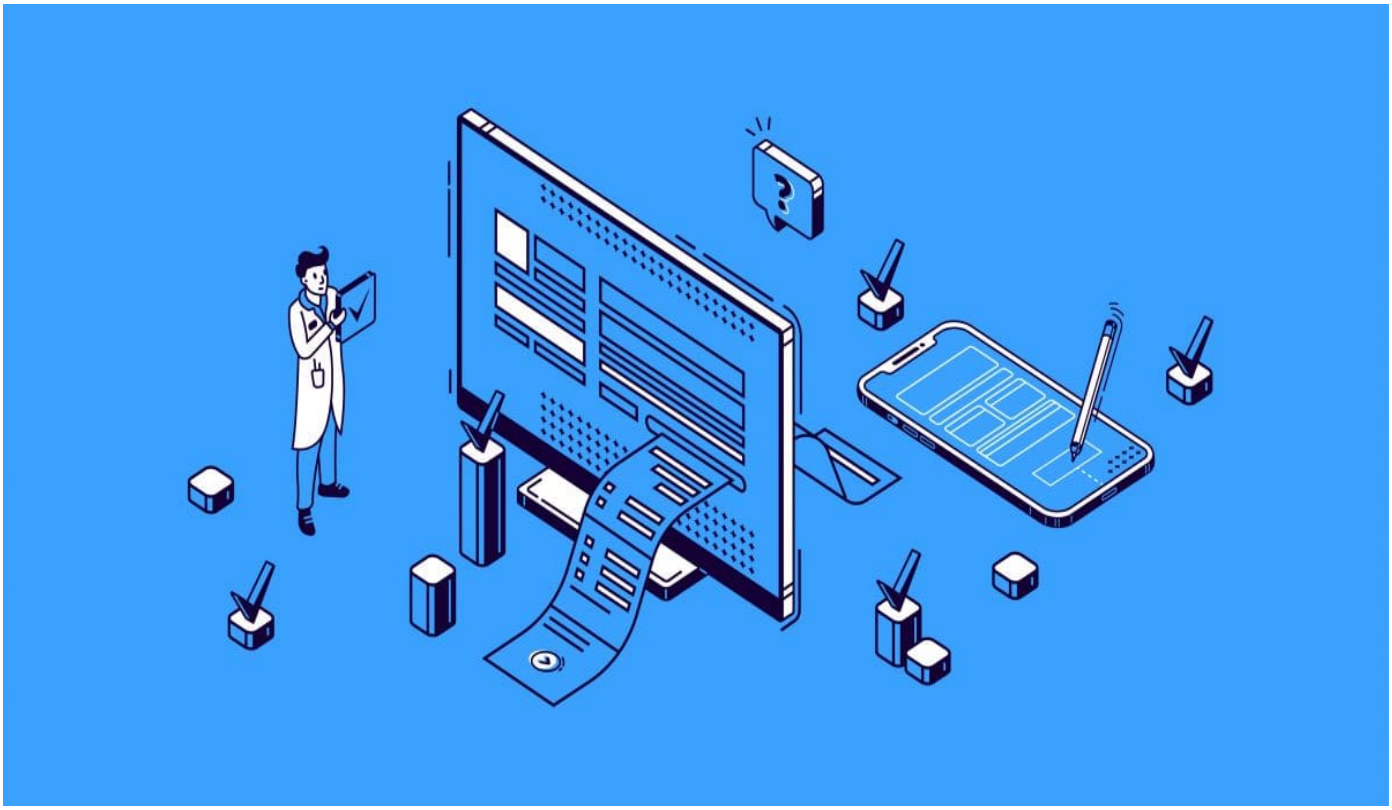

10 Heuristics Evaluations You Need to Conduct for Website Audit

Description

With the prevalence of the internet and in current times where we are living with the COVID-19 pandemic, online platforms have become the norm and a major resource for most if not all businesses. Many companies are starting to see the importance in websites as gateways to their customers.

For websites, user interface design is important as it can make or break your customer engagement. By having a fluid and intuitive interface, it increases user duration and experience. Taking apple as an example, one thing comes to mind, fluidity and the “ease of use”. This aspect is present in all of their user interfaces, applying to both their products and website. Their website meets a specific set of criteria, allowing for a smooth and user-friendly interface. The reason for their large customer pool is not just because of their products, but the experience you get when scrolling through their website looking for a product or even for a purchase. Having an effective website will entice your customers to stay longer and engage with your online presence.

When Creativeans set out to redesign our website, understanding the importance of user interface was not enough, we needed to find ways to better optimise our website for a more efficient user experience. In addition to the expansion of our services, both the content and design of our site

needs to be improved as well. We aimed to create a new site that could enhance the overall site speed and quality of our user's experience.

To achieve this, we set out to understand the performance of our current site by utilising a method called Heuristics Evaluation. An evaluation method based upon a set of design principles; it can be employed to detect problems in a user interface. Following the principles as a ten-step checklist, it directed us through a step-by-step fashion to fulfil the list of things that our new website required.

The ten steps are as follows:

1. Visibility of system users

The system should always keep users informed about is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

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.

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.

4. Consistency and standards

Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.

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.

6. Recognition rather than recall

Minimise 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.

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.

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.

9. Help users recognise, diagnose and recover from errors

Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

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.

The checklist provided us quantifiable insights to evaluate the usability and performance of our old website. By conducting and analysing the Heuristics Evaluation, we can identify improvements to include in our new website and avoid making the mistakes in our old site. Thus, enabling us to design a new website that bridges aesthetics and functionalities for an immersive and intuitive user experience.

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