SUMMER 2023 PRACTICUM

UTEST WEBSITE REVAMPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Samiha Essakhi

University of Toronto

Table of Contents

Accessibility Audit **3**

Objective 3

Tools 3

Issues & Recommendations 3

Heuristics Analysis **4**

Methodology 4

Breaches & Recommendations 4

Usability Testing **6**

Methodology & Results 6

Usability testing findings 6

Summary of main findings 7

Proposed redesigns **9**

Limitations **9**

Reflection **9**

Accessibility Audit

Objective

Ensure that the UTEST website meets **level AA** by complying with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), level AA in accessibility. As of January 1, 2021, the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), requires that all public websites be accessible if you are **either**:

- a designated public sector organization or
- a business or non-profit organization with 50 or more employees

These requirements apply to websites and **web content published on a website after January 1, 2012.**

WCAG is organized around four main principles:

- **Perceivable** content can be presented through different modalities: sight, sound, and touch.
- **Operable** content can be interacted with in different ways, not just by using a mouse or specific gestures.
- **Understandable** content is predictable, clear, and helps users with interactions.
- **Robust** content supports a wide presentation across a variety of user agents and different types of assistive technologies.

Within each principle are a number of guidelines, and within each guideline are specific, testable success criteria

Tools

Automated tools:

➔ Web extension: https://wave.webaim.org/
➔ Colour contrast checker: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Manual tools:

Code review.

Issues & Recommendations

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1zhpP-MIuGKGwB78vgYUisPNL3h3HHS1P/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=102675678999363887480&rtpof=true&sd=true

Heuristics Analysis

Methodology

Use of Jacob Nielsen's 10 heuristics.

Breaches & Recommendations

1. Visibility of system status				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating (1-4)	Recommendation
1	Lack of visual feedback in the menu	There's no hover effect when the menu elements are hovered over which can cause confusion and uncertainty about the element's functionality	**3**	Include hover effect
2	Clickable icons aren't highlighted in the hover state	The footer elements, page numbers section in Entrepreneurs page, and the arrow down in the "Apply" page aren't highlighted when hovered over	**3**	
3	It's not clear which page is active	When visitng a page, the user cannot tell which page they are at, which creates confusion	**3**	Highlight active pages
2. Match between system and the real world				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
1	Use of jargon to refer to the newsletter	Deep tech is not a common term, it required the user to read the subheading ot make sense of it. The name insinuates something related to tedchnology whereas the newsletter is inclusive of all fields.	**2**	Replace the heading with Newsletter and then use the jargon-y term (QUARTLY NEWSLETTER)
2	Use of jargon in Apply	Use of "Pitch day"	**2**	Remove or rephrase
3. User control and freedom				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				

4. Consistency and standards				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
1	Different hover effect for similar links	The hover effect for similar links isn't consistent across pages, specifically Entrepreneurs page (underline in white which makes it invisible)	**1**	Fix the hover effect for better consistency
5. Error prevention				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
1	The user can enter any type of character	There are no constraints when it comes to entry format: a user can enter a number in the 1st & last name fields There aren't enough constraints in the email entry (so long as there are characters before and after @, it's acceptable	**4**	Add more constraints to the newsletter form
6. Recognition rather than recall				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				
7. Flexibility & efficiency of use				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				
10. Help and documentation				
Issue Number	Brief Description of Issue	How was the Heuristic violated?	Priority Rating	Recommendation
N/A				

Usability Testing

Methodology & Results

Testing plan:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E9vUJkeLC7ATJiHIgN2uhxJRLsJ9f7tzlBrAHIMHjb4/edit?usp=sharing

Note-taking document:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lZR7kRLBQrmQ6LMVwYVQ4PKq7l7N1QmV7Yr9Fhyo7gc/edit?usp=sharing

Usability testing findings

Task 1: You'd like to find information on UTEST team members

3 out of 4 participants found information on team members after thoroughly looking. They **all expected to find it in "About us"** either **as a section** or **a link** that directs to the team information

➔ **Recommendation:**

Move team information to "About Us"

Task 2: Finding startups in IT field (Investor, startup supporter)

- Confusing filtering system.
- The fields filter is randomly organized.
- Resetting filters isn't intuitive.
- Startups search is placed in the middle - adds to friction with the website.

➔ **Recommendations:**

- Organize "fields" filter **alphabetically**
- Clearly display the **resetting option (Reset All)**
- Rearrange the sections so that the startups search is visible immediately upon opening the "Portfolio" webpage.

Task 2: Finding application process & eligibility criteria (Student)

Both participants couldn't find any information on the application process.

Task 3: Subscribing to the newsletter

- Lack of options in the drop-down menu for "Field".

- Company field is mandatory, even for individual investors.
- There was no issue receiving the email since the session was held in July.
- It's recommended to include "quarterly" in the description.

Post-session feedback:

- **P01:** For new investors, the newsletter is "generic", there could be some section or specific form that they can use to get connected

➔ **Recommendation:**

"Are you an investor?" Call-to-action **on the Portfolio page**: directly connect to one of the team members - Quick without having to visit Contact page

- **P01:** Events page: they were interested in some events only to find out that they expired!

➔ **Recommendation:**
Create two sections: "new events", "past events"

Summary of main findings

Webpage/Section	Issue	Actionable Recommendation
About Us	All 4 participants expected to find information on team members on the "About Us" page as a section or a link	Consider moving the team section from the "Contact" page to the "About Us" page, or including a link within the "About Us" page that directs users to the team's information.
	A participant reported that the page contained an overwhelming amount of content to process	Reorganize content into sections and bullet points so that it is easily digestible
Portfolio	Both investors expressed frustration with the startup's search function due to the absence of a reset option	Implement a "Reset all" function to allow users to conveniently reset any applied filters
	The startup spotlight section increases the amount of scrolling required to reach the portfolio search bar	Decrease the size of the startup spotlight section to enhance user accessibility to the startup search bar

Apply	Both students failed to find information on the application process	Include information on the application process
Events	A participant experienced frustration when they discovered events they were interested in had already expired	Divide the events section into two distinct categories: “Upcoming events” and “Past events,” to avoid confusion
Footer	The newsletter section doesn't clarify that it is released quarterly, potentially causing frustration among visitors who do not receive it immediately or as often as expected	Clearly state in the newsletter section that it operates on a quarterly schedule

Proposed redesigns

I used Figma to sketch the proposed redesigned web pages and elements:

https://www.figma.com/file/UuGVDQvpJIDWoPaCC7H1RT/Redesigned-screens?type=design&node-id=0%3A1&mode=design&t=67YnnHAS4MrkHavF-1

Limitations

- ➔ Lacking coding skills to check the robustness of the code.
- ➔ Lacking access to functionalities to implement the proposed redesigns.

Reflection

The project was a valuable learning experience. It was challenging at first to adapt my work plan and figure out a way to balance my learning goals with the organization's needs, but eventually, with the accommodation of my supervisor, I managed to accomplish most of the goals I set for myself.

I was able to conduct an in-depth accessibility audit which is something I didn't get to do before. I have also successfully managed to create a testing plan and conduct several user interviews, which allowed me to hone my interviewing and data synthesis skills.

My initial expectation was that I would be able to redesign the whole website, but after understanding the constraints, I had to adjust accordingly and set different goals.