

Assignment

MPC 637: Web Design & Development

WEBSITE INSPECTION REPORTS

Due: Wednesday, February 13, in class

Turn In: Single digital copy (one file), uploaded to Angel

Deliverables: 1) three website inspection reports, complete with notes; 3) recommendations lists to accompany each report

Save as: Lastname_WebsiteInspectionReports.pdf

Value: 100 points (10% of overall grade)

Description and Rationale—Before designing a website, web designers should have a basic understanding of what makes websites usable and what makes them problematic. To this point in the semester, we have learned about basic usability principles. In order to put your new knowledge into practice, you will design your own website inspection report, conduct a simple usability test, and design a mockup of a new page that you feel could use some revision.

Assignment—You will act as if a web design consultant that provides expert advice on web usability. For this assignment (which is the first of two related assignments), you will find three websites that you frequent often and conduct a preliminary website inspection report—that you design—for each. The website you choose must be **functional** in nature, not **experiential** or **social**. In other words, the site's purpose should be task-oriented, where the user is visiting it to learn something, find something, or buy something—not to *experience* something, be entertained, or connect with friends.

You will create the **Website Inspection Report** based on the reading in your textbook. Considering concepts we have discussed thus far in class (making users think, scanning, satisficing, visual hierarchies, conventions, breaking up pages, clickability, noise, omitting words, global navigation, page names, utilities, and so forth), you will develop questions in which you can score, rate, and/or comment about various aspects of websites. This document will function, more or less, like a list in which you are able to **rate** elements of a web design (“On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent does the site exhibit ‘happy talk’?”) and **take note** of design elements (“What was used as ‘you are here’ indicators and how well did they succeed?”). Your website inspection report should be thorough (cover most of the areas discussed by Krug) and it should contain personal, hand-written or typed notes about your experience with each of the three websites.

After filling out each of your inspection reports, you will highlight, separately, a list of recommendations (these can be short, preferably in list form) for each of the websites. As the expert, you will simply be drawing attention to places where you suspect usability may be improved (this is never known for sure until after conducting a usability test, which is the follow-up to this assignment).

Scoring Standard—You will be assessed on this assignment by your ability to synthesize the reading into a comprehensive inspection report, providing good notes on each of your reports, and supplying a thoughtful list of recommendations for each website. Lack of depth in the inspection report itself, your responses/notes on each, or ambiguity/lack of connection in your recommendations will result in a reduction of your grade. Your goal should be to demonstrate clear understanding of usability principles and your ability to give strong recommendations based on expert knowledge.

As an MPC student, I also expect that your “professional communication” skills are evident. This includes proficiency in the following:

Professional Presentation: All deliverables should be of the highest visual quality, being designed with a reader in mind by using headings, titles, boldface when necessary, and other document design practices.

Appropriate Style, Grammar, Spelling, and Mechanics: All text should exhibit professional language, correct grammar usage, and be void of spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical problems.

Creativity & Problem-solving: Each document should exhibit clear and creative approaches to the communication problem at hand (for this assignment, taking usability knowledge and applying it to inspection report questions, knowing when to rate responses and when to leave them open-ended, and how to word them). You are in control of the direction that you take this report, so make it your own and make it convincing.