

Heuristic Evaluation

How can a heuristic evaluation add value?


In a **heuristic evaluation**, a set of predetermined tasks or aspects of a product to evaluate (**the heuristics**) are provided. These tasks are completed alone and results are then compiled and compared. It is likely that each user will experience the interface differently, which is why it's important to have multiple testers use different heuristics that they'll use in their evaluation. Heuristic evaluations are a great way to troubleshoot problems in an interface, but not replace traditional **usability** (a different set of insights). The eHCD team conducted two heuristic evaluations on the [Shop CMS Product Catalog](#) in November 2019 and May 2020, which

Heuristic Categories	
1. Findable	6. Controllable
2. Accessible	7. Learnable
3. Clear & Communicative	8. Overall Aesthetics
4. Useful	9. Persuasive Design
5. Credible	

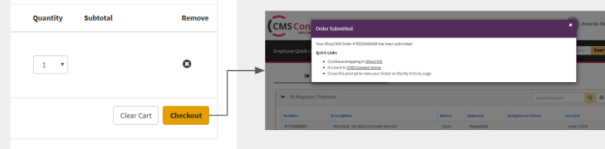
Score	
0	Unusable: imperative to fix
1	Major issue: Important to fix with high priority
2	Moderate issue: Should be given low priority
3	Cosmetic issue only
4	Meets Criteria

The results of the heuristic evaluation show a development team what areas need the most focus for improvement and will also serve as a point of reference for future evaluations later in the development pipeline. For example, the heuristic evaluation for the ShopCMS Product Catalog conducted in November 2019 revealed inconsistencies in navigation between the top of the page and the shopping cart, which negatively impacted the controllability heuristic.

Checkout from Top navigation



Checkout from Cart page



Heuristic: Controllable
Measurement: Functions work as advertised

Problem

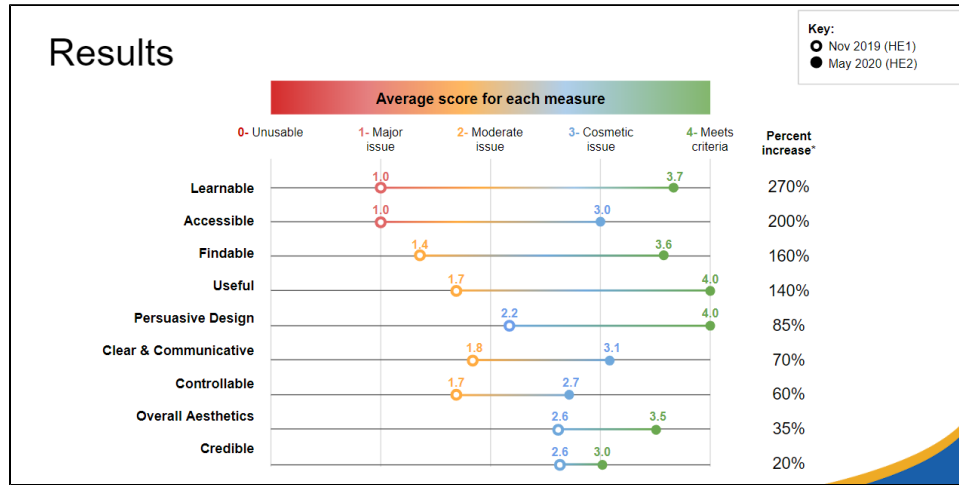
CO3 Checkout experience for Top navigation is inconsistent with Cart page experience

This includes page redirects and notifications

Next Steps

Work with CMS Connect and ShopCMS teams to match the Top navigation checkout experience with the Cart page experience - [JIRA link](#)

A later [heuristic evaluation of the same catalog conducted in June 2020](#) showed improvement in all heuristic categories, including Controllable, which is ref 2019, the Controllable category scored at a 1.7 (Unusable/Major Issues), but improved to a 2.7 (Moderate and Cosmetic Issues) in June 2020. With these s what improvements were made in a give time-frame (in Product Catalog example, 6 months) and what the priorities moving forward should be. For visual c evaluations are compared on a color-coded grid to show average scores and improvements.



How have heuristic evaluations informed work at CMS?

Insights from Heuristic Evaluation 1 on ShopCMS:

- All heuristic categories scored in the Cosmetic Issue (3) and Meets Criteria range (4) in June 2020
- All heuristic categories showed improvement from November 2019 (between 20-270% improvement)
- Individual measures needing attention placed into backlog for prioritization (508 compliance, checkout navigation, directions for adding attachments, c issues with site)
- [Read more details in our report](#)

Product: [ShopCMS](#) **Method:** Heuristic Evaluation 2 **Participants:** N/A **Contacts:** [Daedriana Harvey](#), [Amanda Beall](#)

Insights from Heuristic Evaluation 2 on ShopCMS:

- All heuristic categories except Credibility, Persuasive Design and Aesthetics were scored in the "Unusable" (0) or "Major Issue" (1) range in November
- The average score for all categories was a 2, indicative of Moderate Issues
- [Read more about this evaluation here](#)

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Considering conducting a heuristic evaluation? Here's a checklist to help you plan

- Your product is pre-release, but has enough features to evaluate
- A template with pre-determined heuristics (check out [this helpful tutorial page](#), complete with instructions and pre-filled formulas!)
- At least one team member (ideally 2-3) who can take 2-3 hours to evaluate the product
- Capacity to address any heuristics that require attention post-evaluation
- Agreed-upon time frame for addressing critical issues before a second evaluation is completed