

Collins Chikeluba Portfolio Usability Report

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Introduction

I performed usability reports on my site <https://collins.lol> to get some information on how the site can be better used by users or visitors. I performed two forms of research: the primary research which are usability tests conducted on sample users, and the secondary which are individual research I did on what affects a site's usability. With the results of these tests and research (which I would share with you below), I was able to revise the site accordingly.

Methodology

The primary research are usability tests carried out on four sample users. During each session, I would start a video recording and open the site and ask the user to browse through the site while telling me what is going through their mind. I was testing the site's general usability as opposed to testing how easy it is to perform a particular task on the site and so I did not have tasks that I wanted the user to try to accomplish. Instead I asked the user to just look around the different pages.

The secondary research is individual research that I did using the internet. I read up about some design conventions and watched videos from Steve Schoger (a visual designer from Canada and a big name in the software UI design field). The videos especially were informative and practical as Steve records his thought process while transforming the design of a site.

Results / Discussion

Home page:

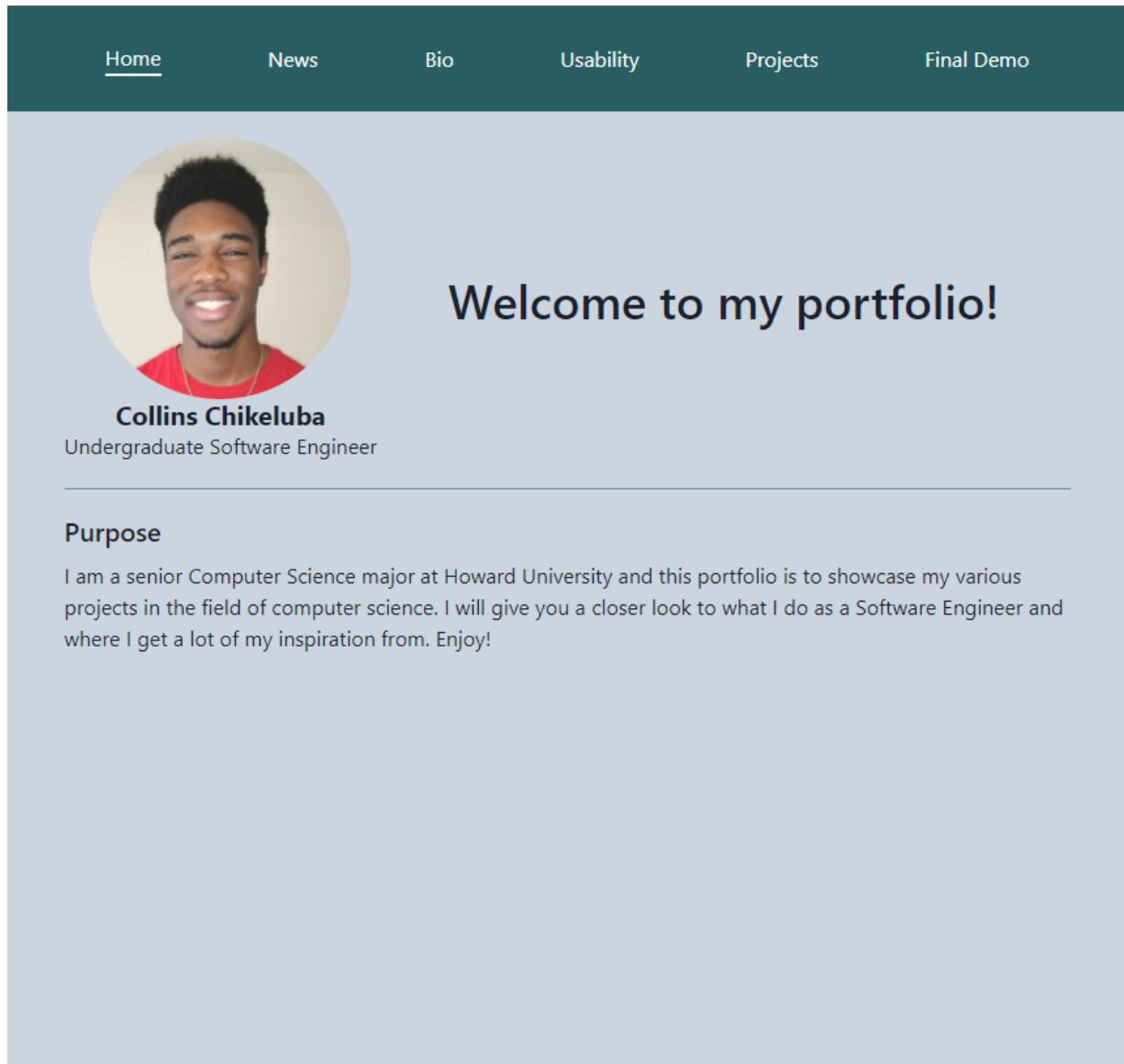


Image: Screenshot of what the home page looked like at the time of the research

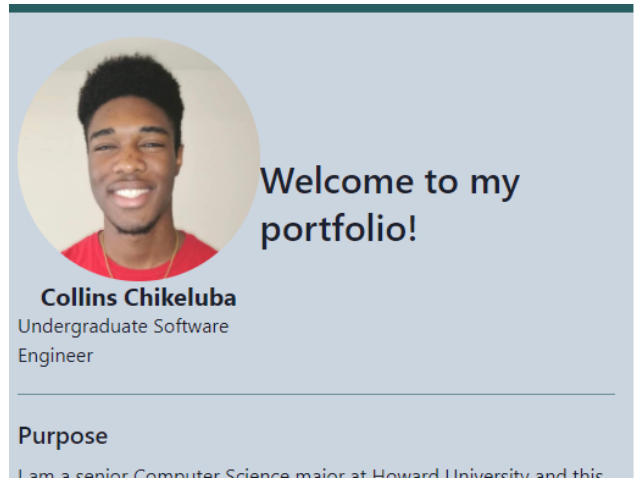
This is the first page you would be met with when you open the site. Users said that their eyes were drawn to the Welcome message.

They also said that the layout of the page seemed a bit off putting but they really cannot place what was wrong, and the text in the purpose seemed a bit small.

From individual research, I found that there is a particular number of characters in a line that make scanning through a text body easier and more inviting. This number is usually between 50 to 70 characters. A fewer number of characters in a line would cause the user to scan from left to right too often for a small amount of text. A greater number of characters in a line could cause the user to get lost trying to find their way from the end of one line to the beginning of the next line.

The current number of characters in a line in the purpose is about 110 characters which is way too much. This makes the font seem too small and uninviting to read.

Also, the page had inconsistent spacing making the layout look messy. The spacing in between the profile image and the navbar is 20 pixels, but the spacing in between the profile image and the text below the image “Collins Chikeluba” is 5 pixels. This makes the area around the image seem crowded in relation to the rest of the site. Also, the spacing between the image and the welcome text is fully dependent on how big the screen is. This means that if you reduce the screen size a bit, the text ends up being right next to the image.



Also, I noticed the solid color in the navbar was a bit too strong and eye catching. Yes, the navigation bar is important, but I do not want it competing with the information on the page.

After making changes in respect to the research, this is how the site now looks:



Purpose

I am a senior Computer Science major at Howard University and this portfolio is to showcase my various projects in the field of computer science. I will give you a closer look to what I do as a Software Engineer and where I get a lot of my inspiration from. Enjoy!

For the navbar I made it a light gray color and inverted the text to keep a good contrast. Because of that, I had lost the teal color which was to be the primary color of the site, and so I replaced the active page bar with the teal color and thicken the teal divider that is in the middle of the page. I also made the page's background white to increase overall contrast.

I removed the text below the image entirely and placed it next to the image instead. I also added a generous amount of spacing to make everything feel spaced out and less crowded. I did not bother making the text (which has my name) bold as it is already huge and eye-catching and does not require more emphasis. I italicized the text below the name to give it a secondary emphasis without making it steal from the text above it. I also changed the layout of the purpose text to reduce the length of the text and so hit the 60-characters-in-a-line mark that I was going for.

News Page:

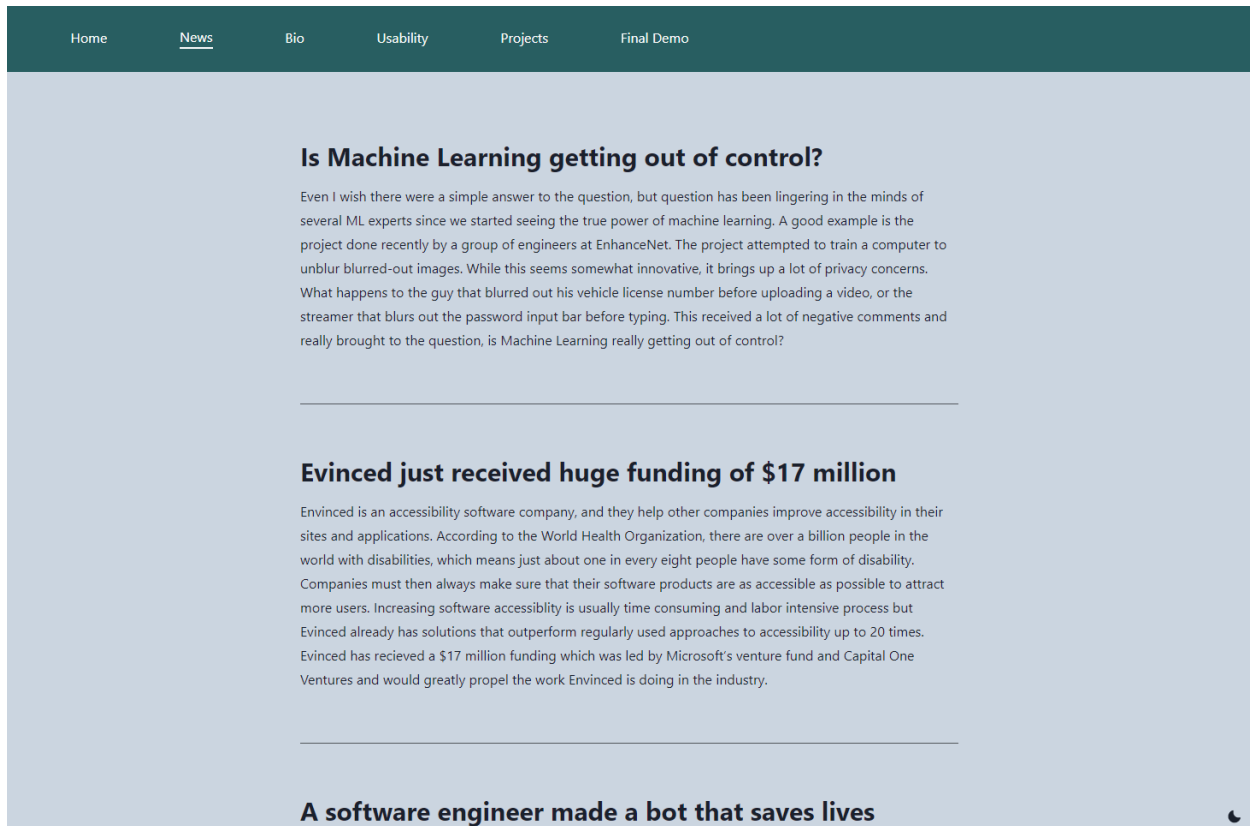


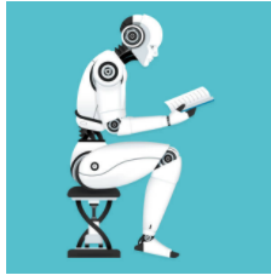
Image: Screenshot of what the news page looked like at the time of the research

The news page received good feedback during the user tests. The users said they liked the page layout. However, the users said they would be more likely to read the news if there were images that are somewhat related to the news article.

From individual research, I found that just like the homepage, the number of characters in a line is a bit too much and it would help to get it to about 50-70. Also, I saw that a lot of borders or dividers might not be as useful if there is a good amount of spacing between the different items. I also revised the size of the article titles. I saw emphasis can be created with a bigger size or a bolder text or even italicized text, but using more than one might be too excessive. In the current site, the article is both bigger in size and bolder than the rest of the text, which may be too much.

After making changes in respect to the research, this is how the page looks like now:

IS MACHINE LEARNING GETTING OUT OF CONTROL?



Even I wish there were a simple answer to the question, but this question has been lingering in the minds of several ML experts since we started seeing the true power of machine learning. A good example is the project done recently by a group of engineers at EnhanceNet. The project attempted to train a computer to unblur blurred-out images. While this seems somewhat innovative, it brings up a lot of privacy concerns. What happens to the guy that blurred out his vehicle license number before uploading a video, or the streamer that blurs out the password input bar before typing. This received a lot of negative comments and really brought to the question, is Machine Learning really getting out of control?

EVINCE JUST RECEIVED HUGE FUNDING OF \$17 MILLION



Conclusion

The new site has proven to be a lot better as users really like it. There is a lot I have learnt from this research regarding a site's usability. An important one is legibility. Making sure text is legible and readable is very important as it makes the users comfortable reading anything on the site. Do not be afraid to make text bigger even though it may not be the primary information on the page, or it is lower on the page's hierarchy. Also, there are other ways to emphasize text without always making a bigger. You don't want to have too many larger title sized texts in a page as it is slightly more tasking on the user to read texts with different font sizes. So, if you need to emphasize text, it may be better to put it in all caps, or make it bold, or maybe italicize it. It is also important to note that using more than one of these on the same text may be unnecessary.

In general, usability research is very important and could help make a site a whole lot better.