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User Tests: Results and Analysis

Introduction

The overall purpose of the user tests on the National Women's Law Center site (www.nwlc.org/about) is to examine how well it answers the needs and expectations of users, specifically using concepts from plain language and *ethos* as the guiding principles behind the work. This test extended my initial heuristic evaluations and analyses by observing how the site works for users attempting to resolve a set of scenarios. While they work on the tasks, the goal is to see if they are able to (or not) complete the tasks, how they complete them, how they react to what they discover, and how their behavior and reactions map onto the heuristic evaluations completed earlier.

Participants

I had five participants: two were men, ages 55 and 18, and three women, ages 20, 45, and 55. Three of my participants (the women) also took part in the participant summaries (see Appendix A). Of the two men, the older one is personally known to me; the other is a friend of the 20-year-old woman. I asked them to participate both because I needed them and because I felt male perspectives might prove interesting.

User Test Structure

There were six pre-test questions, designed to gain an understanding of how the participants view the fight for the human rights for women as well as marginalized groups. This was followed by a quick Five Second test designed to obtain the initial impressions of participants about the NWLC site. There were three scenarios, and each participant did all three. These scenarios covered the following: a user who wants to learn more about the NWLC, having heard of them on the news; a user who needs legal help due to a gender-based issue in their workplace or school; and a user interested in taking part in pro-abortion and pro-reproductive rights activism. Finally, there were 10 post-test questions asked of each participant, seeking to learn what each user thought of the NWLC, how useful they found the site, their overall impressions, as well as any additional comments or concerns that they wanted to share.

Think Aloud Protocol

Each participant was instructed in the use of the "think aloud" protocol through both the use of a brief YouTube video, followed up with verbal instructions and asking if the procedure was clear. For the purposes of this test, "think aloud" was described to participants as "talk me through what you're thinking as you move about on the page."

Equipment

For the purposes of the test, laptops, computers, headphones, and microphones were used.

Record Keeping

The user tests were recorded using Zoom, including all in-person user tests (two were conducted long distance, a necessary evil). Both the moderator and the user had their own computer or laptop, and a Zoom meeting invite was sent to the user by the moderator. The Zoom meeting was set up for screensharing and audio only. During the first half of the user test, the moderator's screen was shared with the user while the moderator script was read, and the YouTube video shown. At the end of the pre-test interview, the Five Second Test was conducted; at the conclusion of the test, the user was instructed to open the NWLC link, sent via chat, and to share their screen with the moderator. Once the transfer was successfully completed, the scenario testing began. All recorded tests run from the start of the pre-test interview until the end of the post-test interview; several also include a recording of the moderator script and teaching users in the "think aloud" protocol.

Zoom was found to be ideal for recording user tests, as it allowed me to seamlessly and painlessly document both the audio as well as the visual aspects of user testing without the need for a separate recording device. In addition, I quickly learned that Zoom creates an audio-only recording of the meeting, which allowed me to upload the resulting file to Otter.ai for automatic transcription. While the transcription was far from perfect, it did speed up the process of writing interview answers and my observations into the journals. The use of Zoom meant that during the user tests, I could focus solely on the participants' actions and comments, allowing me to take notes afterwards, when I could hit "rewind" and "pause" as needed.

Additional Considerations

User testing was constrained by availability and timing. Two of my users were long-distance as finding in-person participants was a challenge; two of my users were located on the UMassD campus, which required travel to Dartmouth over the Thanksgiving weekend; my final participant was often busy with work and family.

Timeline

Designation	Age/Gender	Date of Test
A1	44f	11/26
A2	18m	11/28
A3	20f	11/28
K1	55f	11/30
Y1	52m	12/1

The tests occurred over a one-week period, starting the day after Thanksgiving, and concluding the following Wednesday. The participants who overlap the summaries are users A1, A3, and K1 (see Appendix A).

Findings Compared to Heuristic Evaluations

The following tables compare the results of the user tests against my original heuristic evaluations. Each table is followed by a short analysis.

Table I: Jones & Williams' Critical Discourse Analysis	Framing	Visual Aids	Foregrounding	Backgrounding	Omission	Presupposition	Discursive Differences
The National Women's Law Center, www.nwlc.org/about	*The perspective of the text, including visual aids*		*Privileging/emphasis of certain information*		*What is left out of the text*	*Assumptions about the reader & what the reader knows*	*Changes in voice & register*
Original heuristic findings:	▪ Plain language ▪ Important information in clickable blurbs in table format ▪ Yellow "Take Action" and "Donate" buttons	▪ Large photo banner featuring women ▪ Women all seemingly gender-normative	▪ "Gender justice" prominently placed ▪ First row of blurbs: general information ▪ Second row: employee information ▪ Third row: jobs and contact information ▪ Final row (visually separated): donation and history blurbs	▪ Further information about NWLC hidden behind blurbs ▪ User involvement hidden behind "Take Action" link	▪ Men are not mentioned ▪ How the NWLC accomplishes its work ▪ How to find legal aid	▪ Assumes audience is female-gendered ▪ Assumes audience is aware of women's issues ▪ Assumes audience knows about legal advances for women	▪ Page largely uses "we," "our," and "the Center;" the one exception is when "they" is used to refer to founders ▪ Audience addressed directly only once, in Contact blurb ▪ Avoids overly specialized language on About page ▪ Some aggressiveness in the text, such as "fight," "break down barriers" ▪ Outside of LBGTQ, no mention of transpeople on About page
Findings from the User Tests: the 5 Second Test	▪ Users noted the purpose of the page (3:5) ▪ Users noted the women-centered language (5:5)	▪ Users mentioned the bright colors (3:5) ▪ Users mentioned the top photo (3:5)	▪ One user noted the use of "inclusive" language (user K1, see Appendix B) ▪ Users noted the site advocates for women (3:5) ▪ Users noted the prominent Donate button (2:5)				

In my original analysis, I observed that the About page has an implicit bias towards cisgendered women, particularly in the use of the large photo banner at the top of the page and in the failure to explicitly mention transgender people other than a brief mention of "LBGTQ." The user test findings focus on the Five Second test, as the user tests were largely focused on questions of cognitive load and *ethos*. Using the Five Second test as a way of engaging critical discourse analysis helps center a focus on how the page is framed and presenter towards users, examining how well the site communicates purpose to the user. The site is able to successfully message to the user that it is women-focused, and the eye-catching colors help engage user interest as well as direct users' attention.

Table II: Cheung's Cognitive Load Heuristic

Document Structure			Document Design			Expression		
Heuristic	*Evaluation*	*User Finding*	*Heuristic*	*Evaluation*	*User Finding*	*Heuristic*	*Evaluation*	*User Finding*
Gives readers important information first	Yes: mission statement front and center	Users A2 & K1 both noted the mission statement during the 5-second test	*Uses easy-to-read typefaces at readable sizes*	Typefaces are easy-to-read but some text is small	User A1 was observed having considerable trouble finding the link she needed to complete a task due to small type (see Appendix B).	*Uses verbs instead of verb nominalizations*	Yes, except: three instances of "leadership"	
Only tells readers what they need to know	Information presented is kept brief and to the point	User A1 said, "A lot of this is repetitive… you go here, and you read it, you click here and read it again" (see Appendix B).	*Uses black text on a white background*	Some text is white against a blue background. Other text is teal against a white background. Informational blurbs are back against a white background		*Uses active voice*	Yes, except: ones instance of "is"	
Gives information in digestible chunks	Yes: small, short paragraphs	User A1 pointed out that the site would not be easy to use for women under duress.	*Uses white space & a modular grid*	Information is arranged in a grid; largely white boxes on a blue background		*Uses affirmative instead of negative constructions*	Yes: no negative constructions found	
Uses headings	Yes: page uses headings appropriately	User Y1 noted the existence of a circular link (a link which only reloaded the current page) when he clicked on "Leadership Advisory Committee" on the About page (see Appendix B).	*Uses graphics as well as text*	Limited graphics: logo, banner, and a background photo of US Capitol	All users observed the bright colors and how they were used to direct the attention of readers	*Uses simple sentences*	No: complex sentences throughout	User Y1, a non-native English speaker, was observed having trouble making sense of the complex wording
						Uses short, familiar words	Yes: common language	
						Keeps subject & verb close together	Yes: most sentences use simple subject-verb construction	
						Speaks directly to the reader	Only in one instance: the "Contact" blurb	

For the most part, the NWLC's site avoids excessive cognitive loads on users. Most users found the site, and the directions on the site, easy to understand and follow. There were key moments, however, where cognitive load became a problem. User A1, for example, was observed having difficulty completing Scenario 2 – the legal aid task – because the relevant link to a form for users to fill out was written in tiny print and as part of a sentence. User Y1 also had difficulty navigating the site, in potentially more revealing ways. As a non-native speaker who is relatively fluent in English, it is reasonable to expect that his ability to navigate the site without issue should be nearly on par with other users. However, the complex wording and unfamiliar jargon proved an obstacle, leading me to conclude that the NWLC's site could be functionally inaccessible for many of the people they claim to advocate for (i.e., low-income women and women from marginalized communities).

Table III: Ethical Proof: Argument from Character Heuristics

Invented Ethos			Establishing Good Character			Securing Goodwill			Situated Ethos		
Heuristic	Evaluation	User Finding	Heuristic	Evaluation	User Finding	Heuristic	Evaluation	User Finding	Heuristic	Evaluation	User Finding
How does the site establish its cultural standing?	The opening paragraph positions the NWLC as leaders in the fight for gender equality.	Users all immediately noted that the NWLC fights for women's rights.	What character references are present?	None; very likely available elsewhere on the site.	At least two users found a page which featured Obama in the header.	Does the site consider what the audience needs to know?	The "About" page assumes – likely correctly – that the audience doesn't know much about the NWLC	Most users found the site easy for finding information, except for Y1.	What is the relative social standing of participants?	The NWLC is likely staffed by highly educated individuals; users may come from all walks of life	Users noted that most staff positions call for legal training.
How does the site establish honesty and trustworthiness?	Page provides a way for users who have questions to reach the NWLC either by phone, mail, or online.	Most users noted the ease by which readers can reach out to the NWLC.	Does the site offer up respectable credentials?	According to the page, the NWLC has a Board of Directors, an Advisory Committee, and a staff of over 80 people.	Users noted the NWLC's board of directors and staff members; several users even took the time to read the associated biographies.	Does it supply the needed information without condescending or repeating known information?	While there are some repeated links (history and donate), the page manages to restate the same basic information without repetition or condensation.	Users all noticed the use of repetition on the site, whether it was informing readers about legal aid or talking about legal accomplishments. Users also made note of the repeated appeals for donations.	What are the power positions of participants? How does interacting with the site affect power disparities?	Audience members who need to interact with the NWLC do not have the same relative power as staff members. Power disparities remain unchanged with interactions.	Users have little opportunity to directly interact with the site, and power is not transferred to users.
How does the site show evidence of having done the necessary research?	The page uses the NWLC's own history to establish credibility in this area	Two users found fact sheets; one user found the NWLC's blog.	Does the site show evidence of long experience in their area of expertise?	According to the NWLC, it began in 1972 and has been involved in gender equity issues ever since.	All users noted the 1972 date for the NWLC; only one user (A2) thought 1972 was recent.	Does it state why its main argument is important, and what benefits the audience may receive from it?	The page establishes the importance of its argument by saying it is "central to the lives of women and girls" (nwlc.org/about). Benefits include cultural changes for all, especially oppressed communities.	Users found the site's main mission to be compelling and believable.	How rigid or flexible is power, and does interaction affect its stability?	The power structure appears rather rigid and does not appear to be affected by interaction.	Interactions with the NWLC appear tightly controlled in terms of activism. Users found this aspect disappointing.
What specialized language is present and is it used correctly?	The page uses specialized language specific to legal issues; it is used correctly.	All users noted the professional language and tone of the site.							Is the site in a position to influence participant ideology?	Yes, the page is able to influence the point of view of audience members.	Yes, all users found the NWLC's mission convincing.

My original conclusion – that the NWLC "rests most of its appeal to the audience on *ethos*" – still stands (see Appendix C). Of particular to all users was the repeated requests for donations throughout the site. User K1 said, "I was a little surprised that… (the site) didn't offer more free services, since they obviously are looking for donations… they should have some money set aside to help people," a sentiment echoed in various ways by most users (see Appendix B). This affects the NWLC's appeal to *ethos* as the site is also unclear about how they operate and where the money goes. The appeal to *ethos* is also affected by the inability of users to find ways to become activists in the cause for women's rights. Several users noted that the suggested letters to Congress felt ineffective and underwhelming. Why are activists for women not championing ways for women to become activists?

Further Analysis

I learned that the NWLC does not fully live up to the promise of its name, that of being a "National Women's Law Center," as although it seems to advocate for individuals in need, it seemingly functions as more of a lobbying organization, mobilizing users to write letters to government officials instead of pushing for women to become actively involved in the fight for their rights. While such lobbying is necessary and important, more community outreach on the part of the NWLC could help achieve the social and cultural changes they seek, helping women find ways to pressure leaders and reaching out to other women. Their name and mission suggest that they act as a bridge between women needing help and the legal aid they need, but such assistance is hard to find and limited in scope.

The tiny text used on many of the pages effectively prevent some users from find the information they seek, either due to illegibility or because it is more easily dismissed by users who are in a hurry and possibly dealing with cognitive load – as user A1 said, "you might have screaming kids behind you, you might be trying to pick up the free Wi-Fi and do it on your phone at McDonald's, if you're really struggling" (see Appendix B). While the site is well-designed and eye-catching, little attention seems to have been given to users in real need. In fact, the site seems to be designed largely to solicit donations; the public good of these donations is not clearly defined on the site.

Patterns and Themes

From the beginning, I have been interested in how to deliver meaning to all users, regardless of their background, as detailed in my Unit One assignment (see Appendix D). Plain language became a particular interest that was fueled by the work of Schriver, who defined it as occurring when "wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information" (345). Social justice issues neatly fold into plain language considerations; when a text is easily accessible to all real and potential users, it has achieved a small measure of reducing the amount of oppression built into texts. I therefore picked the NWLC after a quick Google search to find an organization that seemed to be in line with my sociocultural beliefs; in Unit One I wrote that the NWLC "exemplifies my interest in both feminism and social justice" (see Appendix D).

Jones and Williams complicate the association between plain language and social justice, writing, "the use of plain language has previously been examined form an advocacy and ethical perspective, but not from a perspective of social justice" (412). All texts work to assume a measure of power, including texts which are presumably plain language, either privileging certain readers or oppressing others. Richard Vatz, in "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," writes "[the rhetor] must assume responsibility for the salience he has *created;*" in order to ensure that a given text meets both plain language and social justice concerns, it is necessary for the creator to take responsibility for what's in the text itself (158).

My examination of the NWLC site was therefore concerned with how well the site functions as both a plain language document and, through the study of *ethos*, as an advocate for social justice. In addition to plain language and *ethos* concerns, the concept of cognitive load is

also important. Plain language, as Jones and Williams so clearly demonstrate in their article, can exist and yet the text still operates at a remove from the user. One key way this occurs is in cognitive load; Cheung argues that because "marginalized populations have more to worry about, these worries can compound, leading to stress that can overwhelm working memory," complicating the user's progress through a text and presenting an obstacle (448). Although Jones and Williams do not touch on cognitive load in their study, a case can be made that the same socioeconomic conditions which hinder a user's understanding of mortgage documents can lead to additional stress in the form of an overwhelmed sensory input. Likewise, although the NWLC's site claims to be for all women, especially low-income and women of color, the site design, specialized language, and difficulties in navigation present cognitive load obstacles for the very communities the site claims to serve.

Conclusion

Themes	Findings
Plain Language	The NWLC's site meets most of the criteria for plain language; important information is front and center, most information is placed in small chunks, and sentences are written in largely common language. However, the site's complex sentence structures proved an obstacle for some users.
Social Justice	The NWLC appears to want all visitors to immediately know that they are deeply concerned about, and committed to, issues of social justice, especially for low-income women, women of color, and LBGTQ individuals. However, the site is not designed to help visitors achieve a measure of social justice and finding legal help can present a problem.
Cognitive Load	In most respects, the NWLC's site seems designed to help reduce cognitive load. However, the repetitive information and need to repeatedly click links to find the desired information (which user K1 described as a "rabbit hole," Appendix B), means that some users might experience considerable cognitive loads while on the site.
Ethos	The appeal to *ethos* appears to be a motivating concern for the NWLC; users are made aware of their fight for social justice and all that they have achieved in the years since 1972. However, presenting as an activist organization which lacks any means for volunteers to work as activists, and the constant appeal for money, erodes their overall appeal.

Recommendations and Future Work

In order for the National Women's Law Center to better appeal to users and become a site which visitors find both persuasive and useful, I recommend that they examine how they might better serve their users by equipping them with the knowledge needed to become on the ground

activists, instead of the "keyboard warriors" method suggested by their reliance on sending emails to Congresspeople. More importantly, however, the site, and perhaps the organization itself, needs to completely re-examine what they mean and do in terms of "legal help." Even making the process clearer, less opaque, and easier to discover and complete would help repair their tattered *ethos*. What is a National Women's Law Center if women who come to them in need cannot find the necessary legal aid to get started? On the other hand, if lobbying is truly their main, and only, concern, a change in name is recommended to help avoid misconceptions from occurring.

Having concluded the study of the National Women's Law Center website and discovered how using participant summaries, personas, heuristic evaluations, and user testing illuminates both strengths and weaknesses, I feel I have an improved understanding of usability and user-centered design. Plain language and social justice remain of interest and may influence my future work in the program. User testing is especially useful; simply seeing how an apparently simple task could be interpreted five different ways – and none of those ways the intended interpretation – illustrates the need to meet the user where they are.

Appendix A: Participant Summaries for K1, A1, and A3

Participant 1: A single mother with two college-aged daughters, she works as a finance manager at an international company. She sees financial/economical standing as being "very important" for the NWLC's economic capital as financial inequality is a major issue facing women. Having never heard of the brand, she doesn't have much of an opinion on their social capital; she notes that there are a variety of ways to contact them, as per the website; she would use email if needed. The NWLC's cultural capital strikes her as being very positive with their emphasis on legislation that brings about reform in women's lives. The brand has positive social capital as NWLC "strives for inclusion and diversity," and uses white, purple, and teal in their logo. The NWLC's focus on "we," noting that it implies an organization that views itself as a united team and which is very inclusive of people, "no matter their circumstances," strikes this participant as good linguistic capital.

Participant 3: An Arab transgender college student, she works and lives on campus. She believes that economic capital is "incredibly important" to the NWLC, as "they need to understand that women are going to have less money available to pay for their services due to the wage gap." She wishes that the website made the cost of using the NWLC as a client clearer. Although the site is well-designed and professional, she notes the heavy reliance on asking for donations from visitors. For this participant, as with the others, the brand has limited social capital. To communicate with the brand, she would first email or phone them, preferring face-to-face for extended contact. The brand has good cultural capital, because they have a "clear drive to help women." There is some information available about the "intersections with other marginalized communities," but not much. This participant had no opinion about the educational or symbolic capital of the NWLC.

Participant 4: In her early forties, she is married, has one daughter, and works as an administrative assistant at a state university. She believes that because of the NWLC's focus on gender justice for those who cannot afford it, the economic capital of potential clients is very important to the brand. NWLC's social capital is limited to its social media for this participant. She has never interacted with the brand, but would in general use social media, unless it was a "personal matter," in which case she would use their online form. The website leaves her with a positive impression, but unless an individual is listed on the site as an employee, she wouldn't otherwise know how to recognize a member of the NWLC brand. For this participant, this brand's educational capital focuses employees who are "highly educated," most of whom "have a law degree of some type." The brand has good cultural capital; she learned about the brand's mission through their website, which has been a pleasant experience. She describes the symbolical capital, as represented by the language of the NWLC's tagline ("Justice for her. Justice for all."), as implying gender justice; the site's colors are purple and aqua/turquoise. Finally, NWLC's linguistic capital is inclusive, informative, and not condescending. The site's language focuses on gender justice, including women of color, LGBTQ individuals, and low-income women. The repeated use of their tagline drives "their message and mission home" to visitors. She believes that this is probably an indication of their "main measurable goal – to teach people what they do and what their mission is."

Appendix B: User Tests

User Test Scenarios & Notetaker's Guide: *National Women's Law Center*

**Date   11/26   Location   **

**Participant #   A1   Time   **

Web Site: The National Women's Law Center; http://nwlc.org/about

Moderator Script (adapted from Usability.gov)
Welcome and Purpose

Thank you so much for helping me out today. I wanted to give you a little information about what you will be looking at and give you time to ask any questions you might have before we get started.

You will be given a series of tasks which will require that you use the given webpage to try and solve. My goal is to see how easy or difficult you find the site to use.

Test Facilitator's Role

I am here to record your reactions and comments of the Web site you will view.

During this session, I would like you to think aloud as you work to complete the tasks. To understand what I mean, let's watch this brief YouTube video which demonstrates the process of "thinking out loud." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34tOmyKaMM)

I will not be able to offer any suggestions or hints, but from time to time, I may ask you to clarify what you have said or ask you for information on what you were looking for or what you expect to have happen.

Test Participant's Role

- There are no right or wrong answers to either the tasks or the questions I ask. If you have any questions, comments, or areas of confusion while you are working, please let me know.
- If you ever feel that you are lost or cannot complete a task with the information that you have been given, please let me know. I will ask you what you might do in a real-world setting and then either put you on the right track or move you on to the next scenario.
- As you use the site, please do so as you would if you were alone.
- I will be recording this session for personal reference. I'll be capturing your voice and what you see on the screen. Your name will not be associated or reported with data or findings from this evaluation, and no one else will view or hear the recording.
- I'll ask you a series of questions before we begin. I may ask you other questions as we go along, and we will have wrap up questions at the end.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Metrics I (pre-test interview; some questions adapted from Usability.gov):

- Have you heard of the NWLC?   ___x_Yes   ____No
  If so, tell me what you know about them. If not, based on their name alone, what do you think the organization is about?
  The National Women's Law Center is an organization that promotes connecting women with law resources, especially single mothers and other low-income people that would need legal services but can't necessarily afford them.

- Who do you think this site is designed for? Why?
  Low-income families and single mothers who need legal representation.

- What comes to mind for the term "marginalized" group? What are their characteristics?
  A marginalized group is someone, a group of people that doesn't necessarily have the same access to resources that other people do. Either because of race or monetary, you know, like maybe they don't make a lot of money. And they can't afford the same sort of resources as a people group, because there are whole people groups that are not necessarily well off and can afford that sort of thing.

- How would you describe the efforts to legally recognize the rights of women and marginalized groups?
  Progress, but not equality. To clarify that statement, I mean, women could recently as the 60s were finally allowed to have credit cards before then we were finally allowed to have checking accounts, it's only been 100 years since we had the right to vote. There has been progress. But women still aren't necessarily seen as equals, by men and large, um, within large groups of society.

- Would you ever consider becoming involved in activist work to achieve cultural and/or legal change?
  I don't have any legal background, so probably not, in a legal standpoint, but would possibly be willing in a cultural standpoint. As a white woman, I don't really feel like I necessarily have a leg to stand on in that way. But I could if somebody needs an ally, and I'm willing to help as best I can.

- Have you ever needed legal assistance to deal with an issue related to some aspect of your identity? If so, how did you find help?
  I have not.

Five Second Test (adapted from NNGroup):
- *To begin, I'd like to show you something on the screen. You don't have to do anything, just look.*
Pull up page and allow participant to look at it for 5 seconds.
- *I know that was quick, but could you describe anything to me that you remember seeing? Anything at all. Take a moment and say it out loud.*
  The first picture of a bunch of women of different races. And then at the bottom, the thing that stood out was a (button?). One said "donate." And then I think the other one maybe said, "help," or "volunteer," or something. Those are the things that immediately jumped up.

Scenarios

Scenario 1
You recently heard about the NWLC in the news, and your curiosity was piqued. You've visited the NWLC's "About" page to learn more about the organization and to form an opinion about the work they do.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Determine which links might provide the most useful information for what you want to learn. ▪ Click on the links and read the resulting pages. Follow up on any additional links on those pages which may further help you achieve your goal.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Read thru page, i.e., "History," "Our Impact," "Leadership," etc. 2. Clicked on "History." 3. Taken to a timeline, realizes that years can be clicked. Reads through page. 4. Clicks on 2014 to understand what is meant by "block grant." 5. Visits "Impact" page. 6. Says, to conclude scenario, "I have learned about them."

Scenario 2
You have suffered gender-based discrimination in your workplace/school due to your identity. You need legal help, and you think the NWLC might be able to help.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
- Read the NWLC's "About Us" page. Look for any indication to find legal aid. - Read the legal help page. Look for any place to request aid. - If desired, complete the form. Only use your actual information if desired.	0 Not completed ==1== ==Completed with difficulty or help== 2 Easily completed	1. Notes to self, "this is about identity." 2. Goes to "Impact" because it covers past actions but sees no indication to get help. 3. Goes to "Legal Help/Legal Network for Gender Equity," then to "Time's Up Legal Defense," still looking for help. 4. Fails to notice the -in small print- "Start our process by filling out the form at *this link*" 5. Got busy reading and stopped the "think aloud" protocol until reminded. 6. Again fails to notice -small print- 2 separate urgings to fill out a form on new page. 7. Returns to Gender Equity page. Again fails to notice links for form. 8. Clicks on "additional resources." No luck. Returns. 9. Finally clicks on form. Notes, "A lot of this is repetitive, like, you go here, and you read it, you click here, and you read it again. And then you click here, and you think, okay, here's the form, and then you scroll to the bottom. Okay, HERE's the actual form! (Moderator: It was a little hard to find?) It was, I mean, 'cause you know, it's a very specific scenario. And their website doesn't necessarily address that specifically. So, the closest thing you're going to find is sex discrimination at work."

Scenario 3
Recently, you've become alarmed at the news coming from Texas and other "red" states which seek novel ways to prevent abortion and to punish both abortion-providers as well as people receiving abortions. You want to find a way to become involved in pushing for legal protections for women's reproductive rights.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Look for any indications for a way to become a volunteer or to work for the NWLC. ▪ Complete the steps. If it is necessary to include your information, feel free to make up your information if you desire. ▪ If you found volunteer work, describe what they suggest you do. ▪ If you found a paid position, describe the job responsibilities.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Remembers seeing "jobs" on the About page. Clicks on "staff" and looks at "current open staff positions." Looks for jobs for which she might be qualified. 2. Says "I'm curious..." and goes to the top banner, says "None of these talk about volunteering." 3. Asks for scenario clarification. 4. Goes to "learn/Abortion" to see if volunteer opportunities are listed. Clicks on "more resources." Fails to see a link titled "Here's what you can do" (NB: it has specific suggestions.) 5. Returns to "staff position" page. 6. Looks for job dealing with reproductive rights, finds one for a lawyer. "If I was a lawyer, this would be an excellent way to get involved, because it deals directly with reproductive rights and health."

Metrics II (post-test interview):

- What is your overall impression of the NWLC?

  The overall impression, um, they are a group that is, they seem very passionate and dedicated to what they're working towards. I do wish their website was a little better organized about how to take action on like a local level, or ways that, you know, volunteer opportunities, instead of having only job positions available, that would be a way for people to get more involved. But it's an excellent resource. It's a little clunky to get your way to forms. But I'm sure that's just to make sure that people can get to, they're making sure that people drill down to the right form and not just fill out the first form that you come to. So, but it's a good organization, it's definitely a needed organization. They've done a lot of work starting in the 70s, which is really great. And it's an excellent place to point people, like I know about Kentucky Legal Aid for local low-income family needs or women that are needing help. I know about them. But I didn't know about the National Women's Law Center very much, like, I knew what it was, but I didn't know what kind of resources they had. So that's really cool to learn about that.

For the first scenario,

- What were you able to learn about the NWLC?

  I learned more about the history, which, as a big history nerd, that's something I always find super interesting. And then learning more about exactly what they have accomplished was really interesting, too.

- What opinion have you formed about them?

  I have formed a positive opinion. Oh, I didn't even click the "take action" button there. Sorry, it's right there. Anyway, I've learned more about them, and I have a positive opinion of them. And it's someplace that I feel would be a great resource for people that need it. Or if even if I for some reason need it in the future, I would know where to go to look for information. So that's nice.

For the second scenario,

- In your opinion, how useful is their approach to helping people looking for aid?

  Like I said, it's a little clunky. A lot of women don't necessarily have a lot of time to sit down and invest in reading everything, to drill down to what they need. So, if they could make it a little clearer. Because you might have screaming kids behind you, you might be trying to, you know, pick up the free Wi-Fi and do it on your phone at McDonald's, if you're really struggling. And it just needs to be a little easier for people to navigate to be able to find the help they need. But they do have it. And I do understand the reason why it's a little clunky. But I still feel like it could be streamlined a little better.

For the third scenario,

- What do you think of the NWLC's method of "involvement"?

  Um, like, if you were looking for a job, and this is the sort of thing that you're interested in doing. They have a lot of opportunities, not necessarily for staff, but that's understandable. So if you're what's really great, I think, for law students just starting out, or you've just got your law degree, and you want to take action, but you're not really sure where to start a lot of firms, it's hard to get your foot in the door. And this looks like a place where they're willing to teach you from the ground up. What you're going to need to know instead of waiting for you to have experience, which is nice, because it's hard to find companies and organizations that are like that. If I'd been paying attention, I might have learned more about volunteer opportunities, but I did not see that. Well, okay, "take action" is right here next to "learn," but it would not hurt to have "take action" down here under "learn," over here under "our work" so that it's in more than one place. So, if I'm not picking up on the big yellow button like a goober, it's somewhere else where you can still see it. Instead of like, "well, I've got this big yellow button, surely they'll see that?" Obviously not. I missed it entirely, because I was too focused looking for the word "volunteer." And I didn't see that. So, if they had it a little clearer in other places, then, and more ways to access it besides just the one yellow button. It would be useful for people like me who get a little hyper-focused on looking for certain things.

Finally,

- What parts of the site were most helpful to you?

  Um, for me, personally, since I currently don't need any legal help, and I don't know anybody who needs any legal help, the "about" section, learning what it is, what they do, and things that they've accomplished was super useful so that in the future, I can recommend this service to other people.

- Do you have any other final comments or questions?
  I'm pretty sure I made all my comments already. But thank you.

User Test Scenarios & Notetaker's Guide: *National Women's Law Center*

Date_____11/28_____ Location_____

Participant #___A2_____Time_____

Web Site: The National Women's Law Center; http://nwlc.org/about

Moderator Script (adapted from Usability.gov)
Welcome and Purpose

Thank you so much for helping me out today. I wanted to give you a little information about what you will be looking at and give you time to ask any questions you might have before we get started.

You will be given a series of tasks which will require that you use the given webpage to try and solve. My goal is to see how easy or difficult you find the site to use.

Test Facilitator's Role

I am here to record your reactions and comments of the Web site you will view.

During this session, I would like you to think aloud as you work to complete the tasks. To understand what I mean, let's watch this brief YouTube video which demonstrates the process of "thinking out loud." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34tOmyKaMM)

I will not be able to offer any suggestions or hints, but from time to time, I may ask you to clarify what you have said or ask you for information on what you were looking for or what you expect to have happen.

Test Participant's Role

- There are no right or wrong answers to either the tasks or the questions I ask. If you have any questions, comments, or areas of confusion while you are working, please let me know.
- If you ever feel that you are lost or cannot complete a task with the information that you have been given, please let me know. I will ask you what you might do in a real-world setting and then either put you on the right track or move you on to the next scenario.
- As you use the site, please do so as you would if you were alone.
- I will be recording this session for personal reference. I'll be capturing your voice and what you see on the screen. Your name will not be associated or reported with data or findings from this evaluation, and no one else will view or hear the recording.
- I'll ask you a series of questions before we begin. I may ask you other questions as we go along, and we will have wrap up questions at the end.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Metrics I (pre-test interview; some questions adapted from Usability.gov):

- Have you heard of the NWLC?   ____Yes   _x___No
  If so, tell me what you know about them. If not, based on their name alone, what do you think the organization is about?
  They probably work on getting woman's rights.

- Who do you think this site is designed for? Why?
  Those how want to find out more about the fight for women's rights and those who want to support it.

- What comes to mind for the term "marginalized" group? What are their characteristics?
  People who are like oppressed and whatnot

- How would you describe the efforts to legally recognize the rights of women and marginalized groups?
  Pretty terrible. But in the past couple of years, it's been, it's been better

- Would you ever consider becoming involved in activist work to achieve cultural and/or legal change?
  A2: What do you mean by actively involved?
  Mod: Activist, like, do you know what an activist is?
  A2: Yeah, but like, you mean, like I? Like I'd be like Greta Thunberg?
  Mod: That's one example of a very dedicated activist, but you know, people who like go to protest marches or write letters or, you know, fly flags from their house. That's all part of being an activist as well.
  A2: I mean, yeah, yeah.

- Have you ever needed legal assistance to deal with an issue related to some aspect of your identity? If so, how did you find help?
  No.

Five Second Test (adapted from NNGroup):
- *To begin, I'd like to show you something on the screen. You don't have to do anything, just look.*
Pull up page and allow participant to look at it for 5 seconds.
- *I know that was quick, but could you describe anything to me that you remember seeing? Anything at all. Take a moment and say it out loud.*
  Yeah, it was the site for the National Women's Law Society or center, whatever it was called. It had like their About and whatnot, and it had a donate button. You know, describe to the society about what they do, how they do it.

Scenarios

Scenario 1
You recently heard about the NWLC in the news, and your curiosity was piqued. You've visited the NWLC's "About" page to learn more about the organization and to form an opinion about the work they do.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Determine which links might provide the most useful information for what you want to learn. ▪ Click on the links and read the resulting pages. Follow up on any additional links on those pages which may further help you achieve your goal.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Goes to the "Learn" button, "probably issues that they've been dealing with." 2. Thinks the average woman's pay listed on the site is outdated. 3. Clicks on "education;" wants to see if their focus is domestic or international as he believes educational issues are more prevalent overseas. 4. Wants to know why the NWLC is concerned about race if they're about women 5. Clicks on Fact Sheet. Notes that it's dated October 2012; concludes entire site hasn't been updated in nine years. 6. Notes the site's repetitiveness 7. Returns to About page. Clicks on History. Surprised they started in the 70s and not the 20s. "Feminists, doing their stuff." 8. Timeline stops in 2015. "They have done nothing since 2015, but they still want my money." 9. "I guess I support their stuff, I just don't know why they've been inactive in the past couple of years."

Scenario 2

You have suffered gender-based discrimination in your workplace/school due to your identity. You need legal help, and you think the NWLC might be able to help.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC's "About Us" page. Look for any indication to find legal aid. ▪ Read the legal help page. Look for any place to request aid. ▪ If desired, complete the form. Only use your actual information if desired.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Notices phone number 2. Finds "Legal Help" page. "Well, this is it." Mod: "What do you need to do?" 3. "Call them. Or let's see. Watch a video. So basically, you fill out this form and they'll let you know about some lawyers in the area." 4. Finds form to be filled out.

Scenario 3
Recently, you've become alarmed at the news coming from Texas and other "red" states which seek novel ways to prevent abortion and to punish both abortion-providers as well as people receiving abortions. You want to find a way to become involved in pushing for legal protections for women's reproductive rights.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Look for any indications for a way to become a volunteer or to work for the NWLC. ▪ Complete the steps. If it is necessary to include your information, feel free to make up your information if you desire. ▪ If you found volunteer work, describe what they suggest you do. ▪ If you found a paid position, describe the job responsibilities.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Clicks on "Jobs." Notes that there's staff, fellowships, and internships. Thinks volunteer work might be under "Take Action." 2. Returns to jobs and looks at internships, finds summer work program. 3. Notes that it's a paid position 4. Sees that job responsibilities are not listed. 5. Goes to Staff page and looks at the Assistant position.

Metrics II (post-test interview):

- What is your overall impression of the NWLC?

  If I were to give them a score out of ten, it'd be seven. They have a good idea and message, but they haven't done anything recently.

- If you were to describe this site in a sentence or two, what would you say?
  Needlessly confusing.

- What, if any, difficulties did you come across?

  I didn't really come across any difficulties. But I feel like that's just because I'm used to the internet. I feel like under "Learn," they had stuff about the organization itself. Like I know they have the "About" tab. But under "Learn," there should be more, I believe. And also, you know, I feel like the jobs should be underneath "Take Action," as well as volunteer work, because I'm certain they need volunteers.

For the first scenario,

- What were you able to learn about the NWLC?

  I learned that they don't only protect women, but they also protect women of color and LGBTQ people. As well as poor, low-income women. And they're, they're made in the 1970s, which I find a little bit surprising. Yeah.

- What opinion have you formed about them?

  An overall positive opinion. I think it's a good resource if it actually works. I'm not sure about that. They seem active on Twitter, a little bit dead.

For the second scenario,

- In your opinion, how useful is their approach to helping people looking for aid?

  What did I think about their approach? Let me, let me look at their application again. I mean, it's pretty easy. I think that's, I think it's a good idea. Could be filled out quickly if they're like, I was gonna say if they're like, in an abusive relationship, but you probably just call the cops at that point. Yeah, pretty good.

For the third scenario,

- What do you think of the NWLC's method of "involvement"?

  I mean, there's not really much else they could do, they just kind of like, email the congresspeople, like everyone else. Kind of like an inflated Reddit community.

Finally,

- How easy is it to use the NWLC's site to find what you need?

  Pretty easy.

- What parts of the site were most helpful to you?

  Definitely not the About page. I thought the Learn page was the most helpful to me.

- Do you have any other final comments or questions?
  Not particularly.

User Test Scenarios & Notetaker's Guide: *National Women's Law Center*

Date_____11/28_____ Location_____

Participant #___A3_____Time_____

Web Site: The National Women's Law Center; http://nwlc.org/about

Moderator Script (adapted from Usability.gov)
Welcome and Purpose

> Thank you so much for helping me out today. I wanted to give you a little information about what you will be looking at and give you time to ask any questions you might have before we get started.
>
> You will be given a series of tasks which will require that you use the given webpage to try and solve. My goal is to see how easy or difficult you find the site to use.

Test Facilitator's Role

> I am here to record your reactions and comments of the Web site you will view.
>
> During this session, I would like you to think aloud as you work to complete the tasks. To understand what I mean, let's watch this brief YouTube video which demonstrates the process of "thinking out loud." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34tOmyKaMM)
>
> I will not be able to offer any suggestions or hints, but from time to time, I may ask you to clarify what you have said or ask you for information on what you were looking for or what you expect to have happen.

Test Participant's Role

- There are no right or wrong answers to either the tasks or the questions I ask. If you have any questions, comments, or areas of confusion while you are working, please let me know.
- If you ever feel that you are lost or cannot complete a task with the information that you have been given, please let me know. I will ask you what you might do in a real-world setting and then either put you on the right track or move you on to the next scenario.
- As you use the site, please do so as you would if you were alone.
- I will be recording this session for personal reference. I'll be capturing your voice and what you see on the screen. Your name will not be associated or reported with data or findings from this evaluation, and no one else will view or hear the recording.
- I'll ask you a series of questions before we begin. I may ask you other questions as we go along, and we will have wrap up questions at the end.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Metrics I (pre-test interview; some questions adapted from Usability.gov):

- Have you heard of the NWLC? __x__Yes ____No
  If so, tell me what you know about them. If not, based on their name alone, what do you think the organization is about?
  They're a group that support women in particular.

- Who do you think this site is designed for? Why?
  Probably for, I guess what I'm trying to say, what they do and the services they offer

- What comes to mind for the term "marginalized" group? What are their characteristics?
  Groups that are more prejudiced (against) and have less privileges in society

- How would you describe the efforts to legally recognize the rights of women and marginalized groups?
  Very important

- Would you ever consider becoming involved in activist work to achieve cultural and/or legal change?
  Perhaps

- Have you ever needed legal assistance to deal with an issue related to some aspect of your identity? If so, how did you find help?

  No.

Five Second Test (adapted from NNGroup):
- *To begin, I'd like to show you something on the screen. You don't have to do anything, just look.*
Pull up page and allow participant to look at it for 5 seconds.
- *I know that was quick, but could you describe anything to me that you remember seeing? Anything at all. Take a moment and say it out loud.*
  At the top there is like a panel of like different selections, you could choose, then it had like a picture just like a generic kind of picture. After that, there was a couple of paragraphs I guess, on what they did. And then there are a couple of panels talking about specific areas.

Scenarios

Scenario 1
You recently heard about the NWLC in the news, and your curiosity was piqued. You've visited the NWLC's "About" page to learn more about the organization and to form an opinion about the work they do.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Determine which links might provide the most useful information for what you want to learn. ▪ Click on the links and read the resulting pages. Follow up on any additional links on those pages which may further help you achieve your goal.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help ==2== ==Easily== ==completed==	1. Reads top paragraph on About page 2. Clicks on "our work" to see what they've done 3. Looks over blog detailing the NWLC's work for trans students 4. Notes blog post has authors listed 5. Clicks on "learn" 6. Notes it's about important topics for the NWLC

Scenario 2

You have suffered gender-based discrimination in your workplace/school due to your identity.
You need legal help, and you think the NWLC might be able to help.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC's "About Us" page. Look for any indication to find legal aid. ▪ Read the legal help page. Look for any place to request aid. ▪ If desired, complete the form. Only use your actual information if desired.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Looks through page, clicks on "Legal Help" 2. Finds link for form on Gender Equity page 3. Finds 2ⁿᵈ link to form 4. Discusses what's on the page in terms of what it tells users about getting legal help.

Scenario 3

Recently, you've become alarmed at the news coming from Texas and other "red" states which seek novel ways to prevent abortion and to punish both abortion-providers as well as people receiving abortions. You want to find a way to become involved in pushing for legal protections for women's reproductive rights.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
- Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Look for any indications for a way to become a volunteer or to work for the NWLC. - Complete the steps. If it is necessary to include your information, feel free to make up your information if you desire. - If you found volunteer work, describe what they suggest you do. - If you found a paid position, describe the job responsibilities.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Looks at jobs, staff positions 2. Finds the counsel for reproductive rights position 3. Goes to "Take Action" 4. Sees that it mostly recommends sending letters to government officials 5. Finds a place to share birth control stories 6. Clicks on a suggested take action card and finds a page to fill out a pre-written letter

Metrics II (post-test interview):

- What is your overall impression of the NWLC?

  It seems like they are committed to helping marginalized communities and they do have resources. I wish they had more in their Take Action section for like the different things you could do without needing to be working at the NWLC because sending letters to Congress is, it could help but I feel like protests and other forms might be useful, too. And having information about those would be useful. And I feel like the it wasn't like put in your face, but I could see the donate at the top and bottom of almost every page or like sometimes in the middle. And it felt almost a little too obtrusive. It makes me wonder how successful they're doing if they're always constantly asking for donations. But that could just be because they do offer lower rates for people who, for those marginalized means that might not have enough money so it's unsure.

- If you were to describe this site in a sentence or two, what would you say?

  The site looks modern-looking. It definitely was created recently and is updated. I could tell by the blog post that they are constantly, they are, haven't forgotten this website, that they're still updating it. When new stuff comes out. Seems professional.

- What, if any, difficulties did you come across?

  It took a little, it was a little, took a little while to figure out how to actually get help from them. And I wish they, since that's the service, they're mainly providing I wish they did a little bit, sort of made it easier to get to that stuff.

For the first scenario,

- What were you able to learn about the NWLC?

  I was able to learn about who they're supporting. And, I guess, a little bit about why.

- What opinion have you formed about them?

  They are for a good cause, and I think helping marginalized communities is a very important thing that not enough people do.

For the second scenario,

- In your opinion, how useful is their approach to helping people looking for aid?

  I think legal aid is very important. A lot of our, a lot of issues in this country stem from legal issues and having better laws. And helping people who get stuck in any situations that would require legal aid is very important.

For the third scenario,

- What do you think of the NWLC's method of "involvement"?

  I do wish there was a little bit more than just the telling, sending letters to Congress, just to the Senate. As I said before, I do think stuff like protests would be really useful to add onto here. Just because those tend to, I feel like, have a bigger effect.

Finally,

- How easy is it to use the NWLC's site to find what you need?

  Overall, the site's pretty useful. Hovering over the banner tells you more about like, where you'd be going, so I could pick Take Action. At first, I was thinking that would be like, how do you try and get legal help, like take action against legally, then say see, like, take action for like, getting involved in the community. So I, so while things seemed a little ambiguous at first, at least for me, being able to see what's underneath each of those little headers was useful. And let me know where, where exactly I was going.

- What parts of the site were most helpful to you?

  The most useful parts would probably be, I'd say the different types of legal help you can get. And I feel like perhaps not most useful directly for me, but for other people would be where they talk about or they have little education things. Because while I might not need specific education on one topic, having that education, having educational resources there, gives me a place where if I meet someone who needs to know more about this specific area, I could give that to them.

- Do you have any other final comments or questions?
  Overall, I think the site is well-made and well-done. It's very professional. I just wish that there's more for the legal help stuff.

User Test Scenarios & Notetaker's Guide: *National Women's Law Center*

Date_____11/30_____ **Location**_____

Participant #___K1_____ **Time**_____

Web Site: The National Women's Law Center; http://nwlc.org/about

Moderator Script (adapted from Usability.gov)
Welcome and Purpose
> Thank you so much for helping me out today. I wanted to give you a little information about what you will be looking at and give you time to ask any questions you might have before we get started.

> You will be given a series of tasks which will require that you use the given webpage to try and solve. My goal is to see how easy or difficult you find the site to use.

Test Facilitator's Role
> I am here to record your reactions and comments of the Web site you will view.

> During this session, I would like you to think aloud as you work to complete the tasks. To understand what I mean, let's watch this brief YouTube video which demonstrates the process of "thinking out loud." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34tOmyKaMM)

> I will not be able to offer any suggestions or hints, but from time to time, I may ask you to clarify what you have said or ask you for information on what you were looking for or what you expect to have happen.

Test Participant's Role
- There are no right or wrong answers to either the tasks or the questions I ask. If you have any questions, comments, or areas of confusion while you are working, please let me know.
- If you ever feel that you are lost or cannot complete a task with the information that you have been given, please let me know. I will ask you what you might do in a real-world setting and then either put you on the right track or move you on to the next scenario.
- As you use the site, please do so as you would if you were alone.
- I will be recording this session for personal reference. I'll be capturing your voice and what you see on the screen. Your name will not be associated or reported with data or findings from this evaluation, and no one else will view or hear the recording.
- I'll ask you a series of questions before we begin. I may ask you other questions as we go along, and we will have wrap up questions at the end.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Metrics I (pre-test interview; some questions adapted from Usability.gov):

- Have you heard of the NWLC? __x__Yes ____No
  If so, tell me what you know about them. If not, based on their name alone, what do you think the organization is about?
  I believe that they advocate for women. I should know more. But that's about all I can remember at the moment.

- What comes to mind for the term "marginalized" group? What are their characteristics?
  A group that isn't, you know, they, I mean, it's kind of, I mean, the whole point of a margin is that it's what's on the sideline, you know, they're not the focus. So, there are groups that that need somebody to focus on them because they're in the margins of life.

- How would you describe the efforts to legally recognize the rights of women and marginalized groups?
  I mean, I think I think there's the, I think there's ebb and flow to the effort. I think that there are times where, you know, there, I feel like maybe the efforts are still there. But maybe people aren't as receptive at times. Other times, you know, they make more progress. But I'm glad that they haven't given up, but it feels like, like back in the 70s and 80s. You know, they were really pushing for it. And in fact, in the 80s, it felt like we were farther along, and then it seemed like we kind of went backwards. But I think that the people that are trying to make a difference are still focused on, you know, continuing with the work.

- Would you ever consider becoming involved in activist work to achieve cultural and/or legal change?
  Not at all.

- Have you ever needed legal assistance to deal with an issue related to some aspect of your identity? If so, how did you find help?
  No.

Five Second Test (adapted from NNGroup):
- *To begin, I'd like to show you something on the screen. You don't have to do anything, just look.*
Pull up page and allow participant to look at it for 5 seconds.
- *I know that was quick, but could you describe anything to me that you remember seeing? Anything at all. Take a moment and say it out loud.*
  Okay, well, I mean, they have a cute little logo, I think it's like, maybe purple and aqua. And they, they advocate for women, and it felt like I think there was a word "gender" so maybe, you know, it isn't necessarily those who identify as women. I don't know, I get a little fuzzy on that sort of thing, but it felt like that their terminology makes it more inclusive instead of exclusive.

Scenarios

Scenario 1
You recently heard about the NWLC in the news, and your curiosity was piqued. You've visited the NWLC's "About" page to learn more about the organization and to form an opinion about the work they do.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Determine which links might provide the most useful information for what you want to learn. ▪ Click on the links and read the resulting pages. Follow up on any additional links on those pages which may further help you achieve your goal.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help ==2 Easily completed==	1. Looks at the different blurbs. Chooses "impact" as "it seems like the most important way to learn about what they do." 2. Notes the picture of Obama presumably signing legislation 3. Clicks on "accomplishments." 4. Notes that it's "quite an active organization" with a lot of information available.

Scenario 2
You have suffered gender-based discrimination in your workplace/school due to your identity.
You need legal help, and you think the NWLC might be able to help.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC's "About Us" page. Look for any indication to find legal aid. ▪ Read the legal help page. Look for any place to request aid. ▪ If desired, complete the form. Only use your actual information if desired.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help ==2== ==Easily completed==	1. Clicks on the "Legal Help" button and chooses the "Time's Up" option. 2. Notices the link for form immediately. 3. Reads the "How It Works" list 4. Notes that users must reach out to lawyers 5. Sees that there are additional resources 6. Notices that it may not be free assistance 7. Clicks on link to form 8. Finds the form link at bottom of page 9. "Seems like links keep taking me to things that don't look like forms. Oh, I guess this is the form here. It's pretty basic." 10. "Yeah, it looks like it is pretty, you know, straightforward as far as, you know, finding help from this group and filling out this form."

Scenario 3
Recently, you've become alarmed at the news coming from Texas and other "red" states which seek novel ways to prevent abortion and to punish both abortion-providers as well as people receiving abortions. You want to find a way to become involved in pushing for legal protections for women's reproductive rights.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Look for any indications for a way to become a volunteer or to work for the NWLC. ▪ Complete the steps. If it is necessary to include your information, feel free to make up your information if you desire. ▪ If you found volunteer work, describe what they suggest you do. ▪ If you found a paid position, describe the job responsibilities.	<mark>0</mark> <mark>Not completed</mark> (To user's satisfaction) 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Clicks on the "Take Action" button 2. Looks for ways to help in Texas: no success. 3. "This is definitely the 'Take Action' page. It doesn't seem very clear to me where I can go to get involved." 4. Chooses to click on "Tell President Biden: Fight for Abortion Access" 5. Sees that it is a form letter, says, "I just don't feel like that's the kind of volunteer work I need to do." 6. Finds a link under "Jobs" in the banner called "Volunteer Opportunities" and clicks on it. 7. The link leads to a 404-error page. "That's disappointing." (NB: the link was not in the banner on the homepage.) 8. Looks up job opportunities. 9. Looks for positions for which she is qualified, and which deal with reproductive health. Would prefer a volunteer position over a job. 10. Search for "volunteer" in the search bar: "Wasn't very helpful."

Metrics II (post-test interview):

- What is your overall impression of the NWLC?

  Well, it seems like a pretty professional organization. I was a little, I don't know, the word isn't frustrated. But it seemed like a couple of times, like when I was looking for the form, I had to, you know, it acted like I was clicking to a form, but then I got to that page and then clicked another page to get to the form. I really hate that kind of thing. It feels like you're going, you know, in a rabbit hole to get to where you want to go. But they seem like they're very focused about what they want. And the people that they want in their organization are very professional type people. So, I would say it's a legitimate organization. It's not just, you know, I think, you know, it takes, it takes their work seriously, I guess that's my overall impression.

- If you were to describe this site in a sentence or two, what would you say?
  Informative, it's eye-catching.

For the first scenario,

- What were you able to learn about the NWLC?

  That they have made positive change in legislation, and they look like, I think if I saw, they're trying to work in specific states, maybe 20 by 2020, or something, I don't know, there was a number in there. So, they, they're involved with many states trying to work at the state level and the federal level. So, I learned that.

For the second scenario,

- In your opinion, how useful is their approach to helping people looking for aid?

  Well, I felt like looking for aid was pretty, I mean, well, there's two things. I mean, I felt like it was pretty easy to find a form to ask for help. Although, you know, finding out that only my initial consultation would be free. But I think most lawyers are like that anyway. I mean, I mean, I maybe, maybe it's not, but it seems like a lot of times they well they'll listen to what you need first, and if they're gonna help you then they start charging you so I was a little surprised that it wasn't it didn't offer more free services, since they obviously are looking for donations. So, they should have some money, you know, set aside to help people. But you know, it at least gives you a direction and a name because you know, when, when you're looking for help, sometimes, you know, the internet's too big a place to narrow it down. So, it's nice that they give you some focus there.

For the third scenario,

- What do you think of the NWLC's method of "involvement"?

  Well, since I couldn't find any way to volunteer, I wasn't very impressed with that. And all of their jobs require somebody at a professional level. So, if you're just kind of an average person looking to help, I

didn't see where you could help other than just give them money, which, you know, if you really want to get involved and be an activist, I think that this should be a place I could go to find out to do that right. I wasn't able to. And I'm not saying they don't, I just wasn't able to find it.

Finally,

- How easy is it to use the NWLC's site to find what you need?

  Well, it's fairly easy. Like I said, I couldn't find how to volunteer, but I don't I just feel like maybe because it wasn't there, (it) wasn't like I couldn't find it. So, you know, it has a search button. So, you know, it's fairly user friendly.

- What parts of the site were most helpful to you?

  The most useful, I guess, you know, when clicking the "about" (page), you know, there's lots of information about the organization there. So that was useful. All their buttons are, you know, informative, so it feels like whatever information you want to find out about them, you now, if you keep clicking, it takes you down a little more information each time. So, you know, it's really helpful.

- Do you have any other final comments or questions?
  I don't think so.

User Test Scenarios & Notetaker's Guide: *National Women's Law Center*

Date_____**12/1**_____ **Location**_____

Participant #___**Y1**_____**Time**_____

Web Site: The National Women's Law Center; http://nwlc.org/about

Moderator Script (adapted from Usability.gov)
Welcome and Purpose
Thank you so much for helping me out today. I wanted to give you a little information about what you will be looking at and give you time to ask any questions you might have before we get started.

You will be given a series of tasks which will require that you use the given webpage to try and solve. My goal is to see how easy or difficult you find the site to use.
Test Facilitator's Role
I am here to record your reactions and comments of the Web site you will view.

During this session, I would like you to think aloud as you work to complete the tasks. To understand what I mean, let's watch this brief YouTube video which demonstrates the process of "thinking out loud." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34tOmyKaMM)

I will not be able to offer any suggestions or hints, but from time to time, I may ask you to clarify what you have said or ask you for information on what you were looking for or what you expect to have happen.

Test Participant's Role
- There are no right or wrong answers to either the tasks or the questions I ask. If you have any questions, comments, or areas of confusion while you are working, please let me know.
- If you ever feel that you are lost or cannot complete a task with the information that you have been given, please let me know. I will ask you what you might do in a real-world setting and then either put you on the right track or move you on to the next scenario.
- As you use the site, please do so as you would if you were alone.
- I will be recording this session for personal reference. I'll be capturing your voice and what you see on the screen. Your name will not be associated or reported with data or findings from this evaluation, and no one else will view or hear the recording.
- I'll ask you a series of questions before we begin. I may ask you other questions as we go along, and we will have wrap up questions at the end.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Metrics I (pre-test interview; some questions adapted from Usability.gov):

- Have you heard of the NWLC?   ____Yes   __x__No
  If so, tell me what you know about them. If not, based on their name alone, what do you think the organization is about?
  About women.

- Who do you think this site is designed for? Why?
  For women, because the title says "women."

- What comes to mind for the term "marginalized" group? What are their characteristics?
  People who are pushed aside or something.

- How would you describe the efforts to legally recognize the rights of women and marginalized groups?
  It's good, it's a lot. It's going very strong.

- Would you ever consider becoming involved in activist work to achieve cultural and/or legal change?
  Yes

- Have you ever needed legal assistance to deal with an issue related to some aspect of your identity? If so, how did you find help?
  No.

Five Second Test (adapted from NNGroup):
- *To begin, I'd like to show you something on the screen. You don't have to do anything, just look.*
Pull up page and allow participant to look at it for 5 seconds.
- *I know that was quick, but could you describe anything to me that you remember seeing? Anything at all. Take a moment and say it out loud.*
  Something about women. Some images for women. Couple of sections "About Us" and another one. All kinds of colors, yeah.

Scenarios

Scenario 1
You recently heard about the NWLC in the news, and your curiosity was piqued. You've visited the NWLC's "About" page to learn more about the organization and to form an opinion about the work they do.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Determine which links might provide the most useful information for what you want to learn. ▪ Click on the links and read the resulting pages. Follow up on any additional links on those pages which may further help you achieve your goal.	0 Not completed **1** **Completed with difficulty or help** 2 Easily completed	1. Had trouble understanding the instructions 2. Tells me how he'd find out instead of finding out 3. Looks over page 4. Needed further guidance 5. Clicks on "history" 6. Returns to About page 7. Clicks on "impact" 8. Says: "Yeah, I mean, if you want to learn, there's a lot to learn." 9. Clicks on leadership. Reminded to think aloud. 10. Notes that "Leadership Advisory Committee" link takes user back to About page 11. When asked about opinion: "It's like equal rights for women, equal pay or jobs or stuff like that. Worker rights."

Scenario 2
You have suffered gender-based discrimination in your workplace/school due to your identity.
You need legal help, and you think the NWLC might be able to help.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
▪ Read the NWLC's "About Us" page. Look for any indication to find legal aid. ▪ Read the legal help page. Look for any place to request aid. ▪ If desired, complete the form. Only use your actual information if desired.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help ==2== ==Easily completed==	1. Goes to "Contact Us" and sees a button for legal assistance. 2. Does not click button 3. "They cannot give you legal assistance, but they can direct you." 4. Goes to "Legal Help" on banner 5. Says: "You can fill up or take form or something" 6. "A lot of donation requests but the legal, how can you request legal help, it's not. Really confusing. One said they cannot help, the other said they can."

Scenario 3
Recently, you've become alarmed at the news coming from Texas and other "red" states which seek novel ways to prevent abortion and to punish both abortion-providers as well as people receiving abortions. You want to find a way to become involved in pushing for legal protections for women's reproductive rights.

Tasks	Success (Circle 1)	Notes/Observations
- Read the NWLC "About Us" page. Look for any indications for a way to become a volunteer or to work for the NWLC. - Complete the steps. If it is necessary to include your information, feel free to make up your information if you desire. - If you found volunteer work, describe what they suggest you do. - If you found a paid position, describe the job responsibilities.	0 Not completed 1 Completed with difficulty or help 2 Easily completed	1. Finds the jobs easily 2. Sees the "Take Action" button but is not sure what it means or if it's a donation request 3. Does not find any volunteer activities 4. Clicks on "Take Action" and scrolls through resulting page. Concludes that there's "not much."

Metrics II (post-test interview):

- What is your overall impression of the NWLC?

  Not bad. I'll give it average.

- If you were to describe this site in a sentence or two, what would you say?
  I mean, they, they have a good cause, but there is, was, as far as, if I'm looking for help, there's not much help, there's just direction, like information.

- What, if any, difficulties did you come across?

  If I come to this site, come, navigation. I come to no navigation, I mean I can't find the answer to my question, I can't answer them.

For the first scenario,

- What were you able to learn about the NWLC?

  Organization for women, for equal women's rights, and a lot about the leadership roles, staff, but not what they, not much about what they do.

Finally,

- How easy is it to use the NWLC's site to find what you need?

  Not that hard, yeah.

- What parts of the site were most helpful to you?

  Maybe "Take Action," if I wanna take action something. Seems like they tell you, especially you have the form.

- Do you have any other final comments or questions?
  No.

Appendix C: Unit 2

Analysis Via Heuristics: Unit Two Assignment

Introduction

I am interested in the overlap between UX, professional communication, and social justice issues. Basically, what does it mean to be a human in this world, and how can we work to make things better for all people? While plain language is an important part of working towards more fair and equitable treatment, the work of Jones and Williams shows that there is still a long way to go – and that plain language isn't a cure-all, dependent as it is on the writer's ethics.

At various times throughout my life, I have experienced oppression, due to my gender, my style of dress, and my socioeconomic status. These experiences, as painful as they were, taught me the values of empathy, equality, and determination. I am motivated by the desire to prevent others from experiencing the same types of hurt, and the potential for usability to be a tool in this work is exciting.

Analysis & Discussion

The readings in this unit discussed social justice issues, interweaving them into the work of heuristics, except for Roger Grice's article, which asks the reader to consider the many facets experience architecture. I found the work of Natasha Jones, Miriam Williams, and Iva Cheung compelling as they make forceful arguments for applying plain language in ways that minimize oppression. For Jones and Williams, the "use of plain language has previously been examined from an advocacy and ethical perspective, but not from a perspective of social justice" (412). Their work points out the flaws inherent to plain language when it is not applied evenly or ethically. Looking at the outsized impact of adjustable-rate mortgages on communities of color, Jones and Williams discovered a systemic practice of deceptive and manipulative uses of language which made it difficult for individuals to correctly judge the merits and accompanying risks of these mortgages. They suggest that "writers begin to take a human-centered design approach to plain language rather than a usability approach" as a means to prevent the harmful use of language aimed at communities which may not have the necessary experience to see the pitfalls (427). Indeed, they "argue that plain language, because of its potential to engage issues of human dignity and human rights, moves beyond an ethics concern to a concern of social justice," which they demonstrate through their work on confusing financial documents which contribute to oppression (413). Any document which purports to use plain language and yet fails to be easily understood by the reader uses "plain language" in name only.

Building upon these ideas, Iva Cheung takes a sociocognitive approach to resolving the issues with unconsidered plain language usage. Cheung argues that because "marginalized populations have more to worry about, these worries can compound, leading to stress that can overwhelm working memory and interfere with learning," and calls the use of plain language, which can "decrease the cognitive load of… communications," an "ethical imperative" (448). Cheung's work calls to mind Roger Grise's opening statement, where he says the user's experience is affected by many "factors, both planned and unplanned," which "can be part of" the experience, and "their relative importance […] can make all the difference in the world" (41). For Cheung, these factors include anything which can or does contribute to the marginalization of the user, including class, health, and race; she describes such users as having "more worries that, collectively, can tax working memory in a way that impairs learning" (449). Cheung argues that true "plain language" does more than simply achieve a readability score; instead,

practitioners should realize that "plain language is not merely good business… it is an overtly political act" which counters "the inequalities stemming from oppression" (454). All politics are personal, of course, and refusing to engage with plain language as a means of reducing oppression is as much a political statement as Cheung's work. Her argument places an important responsibility squarely on the shoulders of plain language practitioners, and her heuristics help to answer the challenge of writing for individuals struggling under heavy cognitive loads.

Grice and Chisnell et al also have valuable contributions to make to the work of the plain language practitioner. Although the heuristics created by Chisnell et al deal specifically with the older web user, they offer useful advice for anyone working in the field of usability, including "consider the diversity of your audience" and "put yourself in the place of your user" (55). Practitioners who are sincerely working towards the creation of a more equitable playing field for all users must always bear in mind that the work they do will be viewed by many individuals in a wide variety of situations. Grice speaks to this, saying, it "is important to consider not only what we think users want but also what the users expect and what they actually need (40)." The user experience cannot be fully accounted for or controlled, but the process of creation should consider how the user is engaged. Grice further writes that attention "to details—often very minor details—can make a major contribution to user experience," which, again, reflects back on the work of Jones, Williams, and Cheung (44). What we might consider "minor" can have an outsized impact on the user, who brings to the experience their own background and mental schemas.

Professional Communications & Scenario of Use

I am interested in the field of usability as it pertains to creating documents and websites which are responsive to the needs of underserved communities. The website I chose to examine, the National Women's Law Center, has a mission of challenging cultural norms, fighting oppressive laws and policies, and working to create a more equitable future for all women. Although I feel that more research is necessary before I can claim their work exemplifies my own interests, what I have learned about them thus far suggests that this may be the case.

For my heuristic evaluations, I created a scenario of use which combined the features of various participants, particularly Participants 1-4. These participants are known to me personally, so I was able to take features of their lives which may not be necessarily reflected in either their interviews or their summaries, as the questions I asked did not take into account the eventual direction of my work. I wanted to see if the concerns of these participants, which share some features in common, would be reflected and answered in the NWLC's page.

Heuristics

I used the following heuristics:

- Cognitive Load Heuristics, from Iva Cheung: based on the "cognitive load theory," this set of heuristics considers the mental burden a given text places on its users. Looking at document structure, design, and expression, these heuristics use plain language criteria to ensure the resulting text avoids placing an undue burden on the user.
- Critical Discourse Analysis Heuristics, from Natasha Jones & Mariam Williams: these heuristics use critical discourse analysis to determine the effectiveness of a given text, using the guidelines from the SEC's *A Plain English Handbook* to

determine textual choices to avoid and to use. Ultimately based upon the work of T. Huckin, their set of elements look at a text's encoded ideologies.

- Ethical Proof Heuristics, from the book *Ancient Rhetoric*: these heuristics were created from the "Ethical Proof: Arguments from Character" chapter. The chapter headings guided the structure of the heuristics, and the questions created from the content of each section. This set of heuristics looks at the *ethos* of a given text, asking how it is created and if it is effective.

Scenario of Use

This scenario of use is based upon an amalgamation of Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Actor: Betty, 41 years old. White, lower middle class. College educated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Works in data entry for a local company.

Motivator: Betty's youngest child recently came out to her as gay and genderqueer, although with a traditionally "feminine" presentation. Betty is worried about her child's future in a society which Betty sees as increasingly hostile to anyone who does not hew to societal expectations.

Reason/intention: Betty wants to find out what she can do to proactively assist her child and others like them. She is particularly interested in ways she can push for cultural and legal changes.

Action: Betty goes online, using a search engine with the terms "LBGTQ legal rights," "women," and "activism." A number of relevant links pop up; based on Betty's past use of the search engine, the NWLC page is at the top of the list. She visits the site and, after reading about their work and their mission, feels inspired to get in touch with them to see what she can do.

Resolution: Although not completely satisfied, as there are no easy answers to her issues, Betty is happy to have found an organization which appears interested in the same goals she seeks, and which offers her ways and advice to get involved.

Jones & Williams' CDA Heuristic	Framing	Visual Aids	Foregrounding	Backgrounding	Omission	Presupposition	Discursive Differences
The National Women's Law Center, https://nwlc.org/about	*The perspective of the text, including visual aids*		*Privileging/emphasis of certain information*		*What is left out of the text*	*Assumptions about the reader & what the reader knows*	*Changes in voice & register*
	▪ Presented in a plain language style. ▪ Important information presented in clickable placards containing informational blurbs ▪ Near bottom of page, a blurb grounds the donation ask by restating the NWLC's work ▪ A yellow button at the bottom of the page invites the visitor to "Take Action"	▪ A large photo banner is positioned above the "About Us" text, featuring the midsections of, apparently, women ▪ The clothing/visible bodies all carry cultural significant markers of femininity ▪ Diversity in race, sexuality, economic status, and gender presentation not immediately apparent in photo in seeming contradiction of page's claims	▪ The NWLC's main mission of "gender justice" is prominently placed at beginning of text ▪ The first row of placards contains general information about the NWLC ▪ The second row contains information about its employees ▪ The third row contains information about work opportunities and ways to contact the NWLC ▪ The final row (visually separated from previous rows) has a donation placard & repeats the history placard	▪ Further information about the NWLC is hidden behind the clickable placards ▪ User involvement hidden behind yellow "Take Action" button	▪ Men are not mentioned anywhere on the page ▪ Page does not discuss how the NWLC accomplishes its work ▪ How to find help if you are a woman in legal crisis	▪ Assumes that most, if not all, of their audience is female gendered ▪ Assumes audience knows about "the issues that are central to the lives of women and girls," issues of "gender inequity," and "barriers that harm all of us." ▪ Assumes a working knowledge of major legal and policy changes affecting women for the past 50 years	▪ The page uses "we," "our," and "the Center" except where the founding (?) members are referred to as "they." ▪ Audience is directly addressed only once in the "Contact" placard ▪ Avoids the use of overly specialized language except as appropriate (i.e., "courts," "public policy," etc.) ▪ Some aggressiveness within the text – "fights," "justice," "break down barriers" ▪ Outside the mention of LBGTQ, no mention of trans people

The CDA analysis showed that this page has a surprising bias towards cisgendered women, particularly in the use of the primary visual aid (the banner of women's midsections) and in the failure to explicitly include transgendered/genderqueer individuals in the text. Given the current social climate towards trans/queer people, this omission is both surprising and alarming; how can the NWLC effectively fight for "gender justice" if this fight does not include those who struggle with gender norms? Another surprise within the text was a seemingly performative diversity; no mention is made of the work they've done in support of oppressed communities. There is an unsurprising lack of men; in keeping with their raison d'être, the page is focused on women. Although Betty doesn't notice these issues the first time she visits the site, upon reflection, she notes the overall lack of LBGTQ inclusion and decides against sharing the link with her daughter, although she still plans to follow the NWLC's advice on getting involved.

Cheung's Cognitive Load Heuristic

Document Structure		Document Design		Expression	
Gives readers important information first	Yes: mission statement front and center	*Uses easy-to-read typefaces at readable sizes*	Typefaces are easy-to-read but some text is small	*Uses verbs instead of verb nominalizations*	Yes: three instances of "leadership"
Only tells readers what they need to know	Information presented is kept brief & to the point	*Uses black text on a white background*	Some text is white against a blue background. Other text is teal against a white background. Informational blurbs are black against a white background	*Uses active voice*	Yes: one instance of "is."
Gives information in digestible chunks	Yes: small, short paragraphs	*Uses white space & a modular grid*	Information is arranged in a grid; largely white boxes on a blue background	*Uses affirmative instead of negative constructions*	Yes: no negative construction found
Uses headings	Yes: page uses headings appropriately	*Uses graphics as well as text*	Limited graphics: logo, banner, and background photo of US Capitol	*Uses simple sentences*	No: complex sentences throughout
				Uses short, familiar words	Yes: common language
				Keeps subject & verb close together	Yes: most sentences use simple subject-verb construction
				Speaks directly to the reader	Only in one instance: the "Contact" placard

According to Cheung's Cognitive Load Heuristic, the NWLC "About Us" page avoids excessive cognitive load in most instances. Despite the subject matter, which could easily fall into legalese, the page remains easily readable and understandable. The biggest issue comes with the default font sizes for the placards; in the interests of keeping the visuals compact, the font sizes for the informational blurbs are smaller than necessary. Betty, for example, is of an age to start needing reading glasses for smaller text sizes, and while she is able to read the text, she can't help but notice the small size. All important text – except for the header text – is written in black against a white background. The header, however, which is a larger, easier-to-read font and size than the rest of the page, is white against a medium blue background. This may place an undue cognitive load on some individuals' ability to both read and understand the text; Betty experiences no issues with it.

Ethical Proof: Argument from Character Heuristics

Invented Ethos		Establishing Good Character		Securing Goodwill		Situated Ethos	
How does the site establish its cultural standing?	The opening paragraph positions the NWLC as leaders in the fight for gender equality.	*What character references are present?*	None; very likely available elsewhere on the site.	*Does the site consider what the audience needs to know?*	The "About Us" page assumes – likely correct – that the audience doesn't know much about the NWLC.	*What is the relative social standing of participants?*	The NWLC is likely staffed by highly educated individuals; users may come from all walks of life.
How does the site establish honesty and trustworthiness?	Page provides a way for users who have questions to reach the NWLC either by phone, mail, or online.	*Does the site offer up respectable credentials?*	According to the page, the NWLC has a Board of Directors, an Advisory Committee, and a staff of over 80 people.	*Does it supply the needed information without condescending or repeating known information?*	While there are some repeated links (history and donate), the page manages to restate the same basic information without repetition or condensation.	*What are the power positions of participants? How does interacting with the site affect power disparities?*	Audience members who need to interact with the NWLC do not have same relative power as staff members. Power disparities remain unchanged with interactions.
How does the site show evidence of having done the necessary research?	The page uses the NWLC's own history to establish credibility in this area.	*Does the site show evidence of long experience in their area of expertise?*	According to the NWLC, it began in 1972 and has been involved in gender equality issues ever since.	*Does it state why its main argument is important, and what benefits the audience may receive from it?*	The page establishes the importance of its argument by saying it is "central to the lives of women and girls." Benefits include cultural changes for all, especially oppressed communities.	*How rigid or flexible is power, and does interaction affect its stability?*	The power structure appears rather rigid and does not appear to be affected by interaction.
What specialized language is present and is it used correctly?	The page uses specialized language specific to legal issues; it is used corrected.					*Is the site in a position to influence participant ideology?*	Yes, the page is able to influence the point of view of audience members.

    The "About Us" page for the National Women's Law Center rests most of its appeal to the audience on *ethos*. Modern society largely considers the work of gender equality, social justice, and the reduction of oppression to be meritorious. As that is the principle around which the NWLC is organized, it is unsurprising that they would rely heavily on the ethics of their work as a means to persuade their audience. However, the "About Us" page is lacking in some respects, as it fails to do much in the way of establishing good character. Presumably, such evidence is available elsewhere on the site; still, adding some elements of good character to this page would go a long way in better establishing the *ethos* they wish to present to the reader. However, the page is successful enough to be in the position to positively influence Betty's ideology with regards to the cultural change that their work requires.

Findings

Each set of heuristics throws into relief different successes and failures of the webpage to adequately address Betty's needs. While the NWLC's "About Us" page is successful overall, issues remain. Jones and Williams' CDA heuristics demonstrated the biases implicit and explicit within the text of the page. While it is not surprising that the page is biased towards women, it is surprising that an organization which places so much emphasis on their *ethos* of diversity and inclusion would show so little actual racial, sexual, and gender diversity in both its visual and textual framings. This is a concern for Betty, as her child is both gay and genderqueer. According to Cheug's cognitive load heuristics, the page's strength lies in its overall readability and accessibility for a wide range of users, regardless of whether or not they have the same level of education and the same background as my user, Betty. This is an accomplishment for the designers of the page, given the complexity of the subject matter. Just from the application of three relatively simple heuristics, it has become clear that more work can and should be done in service of the page's potential users.

Betty, my scenario of use persona, allows for a more personal take on the text. Moving across the page through her eyes centers the experience on a user and her issues, creating a better understanding of how the text is actually working – or not. What might pass muster when the "user" is an impersonal conglomerate of statistics and data suddenly acquires personal significance, making any difficulties the user encounters harder to dismiss. This necessarily complicates the work of an experience architect, but it ultimately helps guide the creation of a more inclusive, useful text, which should be the ultimate goal of any plain language practitioner.

The NWLC's strategic narrative can be summed up as "we take the fight for gender equality to capitol hill!" The findings show that the textual and visual choices for the "About Us" page mostly reinforce this narrative, adding clarifying details to their mission and making it clear that women and their families are the group's focus. However, as not much is done to reinforce the diversity narrative, particularly as it relates to people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and other marginalized groups, it complicates this strategic narrative. Their own text works to undermine their narrative in crucial ways which need to be addressed by the organization.

Evaluating Heuristic Evaluations

Heuristic evaluations have a number of important strengths. They provide a systematic way to examine texts, ensuring that a certain level and type of proficiency is achieved. They also allow for the discovery of both strengths and potential weakness which may not be immediately apparent. The wide variety of heuristic evaluations means that there are many ways of assessment, each of which illuminates the different facets of a given text.

However, like all other evaluations, heuristics have their limitations. If a specific user or persona is not an explicit part of the evaluation, it can be altogether too easy to divorce the user from the text. Heuristic evaluations are a part of the usability "toolbox," but they cannot be used alone. Further complicating the use of heuristics is how one determines which set of heuristics to use, how to apply it, and how to create a set that suits the purposes of both project and user. These complications mean that potentially, a heuristic evaluation could fall short of both the designer's and audience's needs.

Conclusion

Learning about heuristic evaluations and scenarios of use provides additional ways a text can be examined, analyzed, and understood. They help answer the question of how to write and evaluate texts which meet the needs of the intended audience. Going forward, these methods will allow me to refine my understanding and use of plain language and help ensure that the work I do meets the standards I have set for myself. I can easily envision using heuristics on my own texts when the text in question needs to meet specific standards, and the experience I have gained from this assignment is invaluable.

Appendix D: Unit OneTO: Dr. Karen Gulbrandsen, Professor

FROM: Barbara Shaddix, mere student

DATE: October 6, 2021

SUBJECT: Participant Summaries and Personas

Introduction:
Before taking this class, I had not given deep consideration to the issues of usability and user experience. Indeed, before deciding to apply for the Professional Writing and Communications degree, my focus had been on literature, which is still my first love. However, one of my main theoretical interests in literature is deconstructive theory, as I am deeply interested in how we create meaning and how meaning can change outside of our control. My work has always had a feminist, de-stabilizing take on meaning, as I consider deconstructionism complimentary to third-wave feminism. Bringing this history to the classroom has influenced my professional interest in usability. How can we work to deliver meaning to all users, regardless of background or gender? The rhetorical work involved in plain language answers my own deep-seated interests in feminism, social justice, and equal access for all.

Readings:
The work of Friess and Christiansen and Howard taught me much about user-centered design which I had not known. Christiansen and Howard, in their discussion on design, said, "In other words, rather than constructing technologies adapted for users, this approach seeks to *construct users* by providing them with interpretative frameworks that give them predictive power over an interface" (128). This is a departure from the idea that designers should only design with the user's needs in mind; instead, according to Christiansen and Howard, design should do the rhetorical work of creating an audience which is responsive to its needs, an audience which will interpellate with the design and act according. Although Friess's work focuses on using personas (in contrast to Christiansen and Howard's participant summaries), she furthers this idea of design creating its audience when she notes, "[w]hat *is* needed is an intervention that can allow both designers and users to have their voices heard, enabled, and respected during the design process" (114). For Friess, the way forward is the use of personas to create believable, sympathetic narratives of potential users which allows designers to fully integrate the audience into the design.

However, what eventually snagged and captured my attention in readings was Schriver's work on plain language and Ross's related work on the ethical implications of plain language. Schriver looked at the history of plain language in the United States since the early part of the 20th century, defining it as "A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information" (345). This idea is deceptively simple; what could be easier than writing in a common tongue? In practice, however, Schriver found that there is little agreement about what "plain language" means and even less agreement in how to best apply it. She points out that an important element to plain language is that it "means ethically-motivated communications, striving for honest conversation through clarity, accuracy, usefulness, and

truthfulness" (345). Here, Schriver's article and Ross's article overlap, as the ethos of plain language is of paramount concern for plain language practitioners. Ross examines the case of the *Ecodefense*, an underground text which has served as the inspiration for environmental terrorism. Written in apparently plain language, Ross asks how it, and other subversive documents like it, complicate and make problematic the effort of plain language. He observes, "I ultimately find that *Ecodefense* is at least partially representative of plain language use and practices, and that plain language standards, though enabling efficient, usable documents, have little embedded, inherent ethicality" (170). The use of plain language itself, while inviting the reader to believe in the ethos of the writer, means little if the writer is engaged in deceptive and/or harmful practices. Ross agrees, writing, "It appears that ethical consideration of application of plain language, or creation of documents using plain language rests on the author, not in the standards" (171). In terms of how this applies to the work I'm doing in this unit, it means I have to not only consider the ease of access for the user, but I must also consider the motivations and the ethical implications thereof for the brand behind the website.

Work:
As of yet, I have no clear focus as to which area of professional communication I am most interested in. My first true love is literature and all that means: the mechanics of writing, the work of meaning-making, and how to destabilize assumptions about meaning. My work thus far has helped me become a better teacher and communicator, and I am likely to continue in this field for the time being. Professionally, I have been working in the creation of business documentation, which only partially satisfies the itch for personally meaningful work. As a new student in this program, my primary goal is to find where that meaningful work lies for me.

I chose the National Women's Law Center website as it exemplifies my interest in both feminism and social justice. Users of this text may fall into a number of different categories as there is an infinite variety of users on the internet, but of concern to the NWLC are women in need of some sort of legal help as well as potential donors who might be persuaded to assist the NWLC through monetary means. The use of plain language doctrine on a site such as this one has the potential to allow the NWLC to reach women where they are, as opposed to requiring the user meet a certain threshold of education or class.

I interviewed a wide group of women ranging from the ages of 20 to 55. I chose these women as they represent a variety of intersecting groups: age, ethnicity, educational attainment, sexual orientation, gender queerness, and background. Responses ranged from, "[t]he NWLC is an organization that strives for inclusion and diversity – not only with racial or ethnic diversity, but with gender and sexual identity as well," to "[c]lear drive to help women… there is a little about the intersections with other marginalized communities" (Appendix A). The NWLC claims to stand for all women, including the women who formed the group I interviewed, so it was important to me to see how they interacted with the site and understood the brand. I learned that the NWLC has some work to do in terms of achieving its goal of reaching these women, as all were unfamiliar with the NWLC and their positioning of diversity and inclusion was viewed by at least one participant with suspicion, who said "I personally believe it would be mainly (but not all) Caucasian women but that in this day and age they are trying to do DEI (nb: diversity, equity, and inclusion) and "reach out and include diverse voices," whatever that means, since many companies and non-profits are deliberately vague about this" (Appendix A).

Personas and Participant Summaries:
Both personas and participant summaries seek to apply user-centered design to an end product, whether that is a text, a program, a device, or some other medium. Both approaches have their limitations and their strengths. Participant summaries, particularly as envisioned by Christiansen and Howard, which uses *capital* as a means of querying the user and applying that understanding to the brand, allow usability practitioners to place the user's lived experience front and center. Divorced from the user's personal information, it nevertheless positions the user's perception of the brand as crucial to understanding interpellation and engagement. A drawback to using participant summaries is the lack of empathetic connection with the user; absent context, how the designer understands and uses the given information may not reflect the actual lived user experience. Personas, in contrast, while based on user data, are a fictional recreation of a particular user, a narrative which personalizes the user as an individual with a name, a life, and realistic needs and desires. For designers who create and engage in personas, they can be a powerful tool; but they are only as powerful as the designer's engagement. I wrote my own narrative as a story, not a table, because in so doing, I sought to breathe even more life into the persona I created. Jennifer Al Nimmar should and does feel like a real person with real issues; there is an approachability to her that does not exist in my participant summaries, despite the engaging nature of my interviewees.

Conclusion:
Thus far, I have learned much about both usability and plain language. Going forward, my interest in plain language will continue, as it is clear to me that it is congruent with my interests in feminism, social justice, and actively working to reduce oppression. My work thus far with the NWLC website has shown me that even when there is an overall agreement with users about the purpose of a site – indicating that the language used may meet the criteria of plain – the site may continue to fail its users in critical ways when it comes to a detailed understanding of the brand and its identity.

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