



HEURISTIC EVALUATION REPORT

GA UXDI PROJECT 3

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a detailed analysis of the heuristic evaluation process used to evaluate the UNIQLO app.

The evaluation itself was performed using the heuristic evaluation usability method, based on heuristics provided by Jakob Nielsen. This method consists of evaluators comparing a predefined set of usability principles to an application or website while attempting to complete a system task.

For this project, ten heuristics were used, focusing on the core functionalities of UNIQLO mobile application: browsing products, searching for deals and promotions, getting rewards points, checking of online exclusive products and sizes, checking of in-store availability. The goal of this evaluation was to identify major usability flaws within the UNIQLO interface through the application.

Below are the five main tasks that a user may use the mobile application to complete.

1. Search for a Specific Category
2. Look for special deals and promotions
3. Check the in-store size availability of a product
4. Online exclusive products and sizes
5. Look for barcode to be scanned at the cashier

The processes of completing the tasks were evaluated from a user perspective based on the usability heuristics from Jakob Nielsen's 10 Heuristics for User Interface Design.

The usability problems found from this evaluation were then ranked according to their severity and ease with which the problem can be solved.

Here is a summary of the key Success Areas identified:

No.	Success Areas	Heuristic(s)
1	Displays the loading bar when a certain element of the page is loading, and displays a message if there is no content.	#1
2	Shows pop-ups to explain what will happen before users execute something.	#5
3	Help is easily accessible.	#10
4	The Styling Book feature acts like a real life magazine.	#2

Here is a summary of the key Problem Areas identified, arranged by Severity and Ease of Fixing:

No.	Problem Areas	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating	Ease of Fixing Rating
3	The concept of incorporating UNIQLO's website into the app.	#3, #6	S4	E3
1	Messy layout and unclear hierarchy of information.	#8	S3	E2
6	Categories not clearly displayed on the landing page.	#2, #4	S2	E0
2	Confusing and/or inconsistent terminology.	#2, #4	S2	E0
4	Unable to easily check in-store availability.	#2, #3, #7	S2	E1
5	Navigation and selection of categories are not flexible for users.	#3, #4	S2	E2
8	Membership Barcode is not easily accessible.	#7	S1	E0
7	Confusion regarding the 'Check In-Store Availability' button.	#1, #2	S0	E0

2. OVERVIEW OF UNIQLO MOBILE APP

The UNIQLO mobile app is an app that allows UNIQLO shoppers to enjoy member benefits from the brand.

Through the app, they are able to receive the latest news from weekly new arrivals to items on promotion, that are available online and/or in-stores. By scanning their membership barcode when they purchase in-store, they are entitled to play 'Scan to Win' - an in-app rewards game - with every \$20 spent. Users stand to win coupons, in denominations of \$5, \$10 or \$20, which they are able to apply on their next purchase(s).

The app also provides exclusive online perks such as being able to browse the online exclusive designs and sizes ranging from XS to 3XL. Shoppers are also able to enjoy free delivery above \$60 or 'Click & Collect' with no minimum spend.

Last but not least, users can also track their purchase history and check for in-store stock availability through the app.

3. EVALUATION GOALS

This report documents a heuristic evaluation of the UNIQLO app. The goals of this heuristic evaluation would be to evaluate the usability of the UNIQLO app using an established set of heuristics and disclose a prioritized list of issues to developers' attention. This is done prior to the formal usability testing as heuristic evaluation is an easy, fast and affordable approach to evaluate the usability of systems (Nielsen, 1994). The findings along with the suggestions and recommendations will guide future changes in the application's interface.

4. HEURISTICS EVALUATION TECHNIQUE

4.1 Methodology

The Jakob Nielsen heuristic evaluation usability method was used to produce the findings summarised in this report. Evaluators compared a predefined set of specific usability principles with the UNIQLO app interface while attempting to accomplish specific tasks. For this project, evaluators worked individually and combined the findings later.

4.2 Heuristics Used

1. **Visibility of system status:** The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.
2. **Match between system and the real world:** The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.
3. **User control and freedom:** Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.
4. **Consistency and standards:** Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.
5. **Error prevention:** Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.
6. **Recognition rather than recall:** Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.
7. **Flexibility and efficiency of use:** Accelerators—unseen by the novice user—may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.
8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design:** Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.
9. **Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors:** Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.
10. **Help and documentation:** Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such

information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

4.3 Evaluation of Heuristics

To further examine the impact of each of the problems, we estimated both its severity in terms of usability principles and the ease with which the problem might be solved.

4.3.1 Severity Rating Scale

We scored each usability issue on a scale of 0 to 4, with 0 being no issue and 4 being catastrophic. We looked at three factors to determine the severity - frequency, impact, and persistence.

Rating	Definition
S0	Violates a heuristic but doesn't seem to be a usability problem.
S1	Superficial usability problem: may be easily overcome by the user or occurs extremely infrequently. Does not need to be fixed in the next iteration unless extra time is available.
S2	Minor usability problem: may occur more frequently or be more difficult to overcome. Fixing this should be given low priority for the next iteration
S3	Major usability problem: occurs frequently and persistently or users may be unable or unaware of how to fix the problem. Important to fix by the next iteration, so should be given high priority.
S4	Usability catastrophe: Seriously impairs use of product and cannot be overcome by users. Imperative to fix this by the next iteration before the product can be released.

4.3.2 Ease of Fixing Rankings

Rating	Definition
E0	Problem would be extremely easy to fix. Could be completed by one team member before the next iteration.
E1	Problem would be easy to fix. Involves specific interface elements and the solution is clear.
E2	Problem would require some effort to fix. Involves implementation of changes to multiple aspects of the interface before the next iteration.

E3	Usability problem would be difficult to fix. Requires concentrated development effort to finish before next iteration, involves implementation of changes to multiple aspects of the interface. Solution may not be immediately obvious and/or may be disputed.
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5. SPECIFIC TASKS EVALUATED

Tasks that focused on the core functionalities of UNIQLO mobile application were evaluated. The goal of the evaluation was to identify major usability flaws within the UNIQLO interface through the application.

The five tasks that a user may come to the mobile application to complete:

1. Search for a Specific Category
2. Look for special deals and promotions
3. Check the in-store size availability of a product
4. Online exclusive products and sizes
5. Look for barcode to be scanned at the cashier

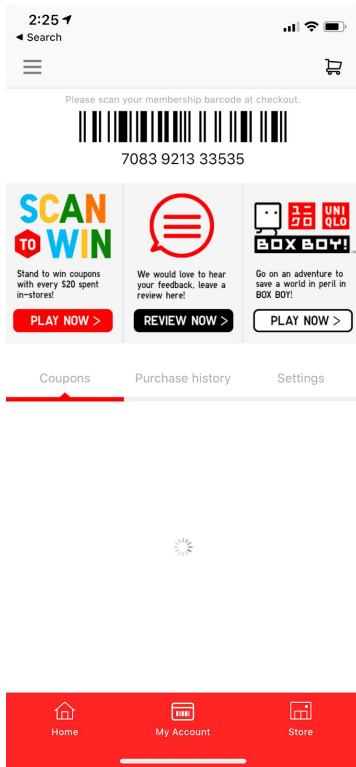
The processes of completing the tasks were evaluated from a user perspective based on the usability heuristics from Jakob Nielsen's 10 Heuristics for User Interface Design.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

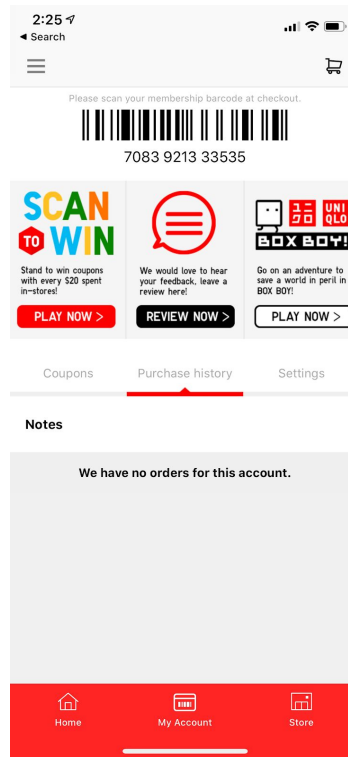
6.1 Success Areas

Success Area #1	Heuristic(s)
Displays the loading bar when a certain element of the page is loading, and displays a message if there is no content.	#1: Visibility of system status

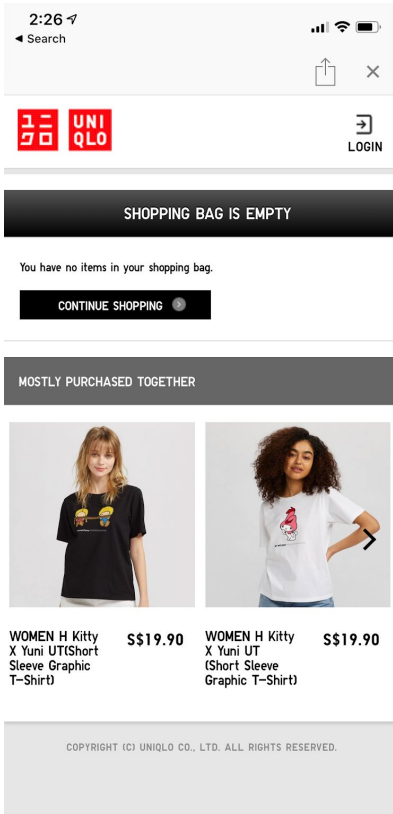
Evidence:



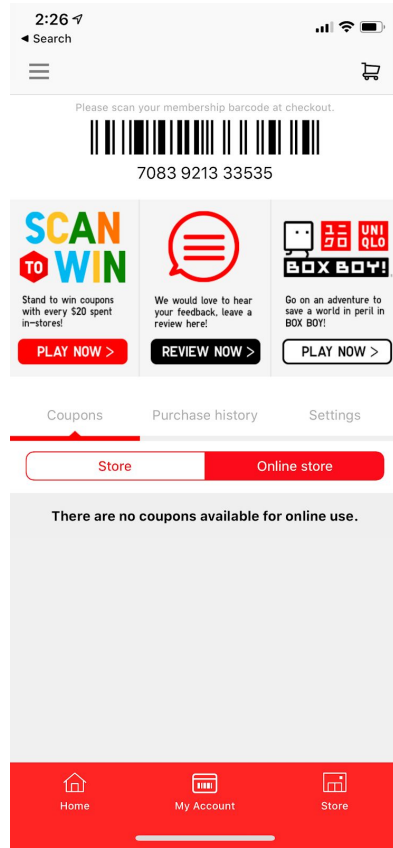
Loading icon shown



Message to inform that there is no purchase history



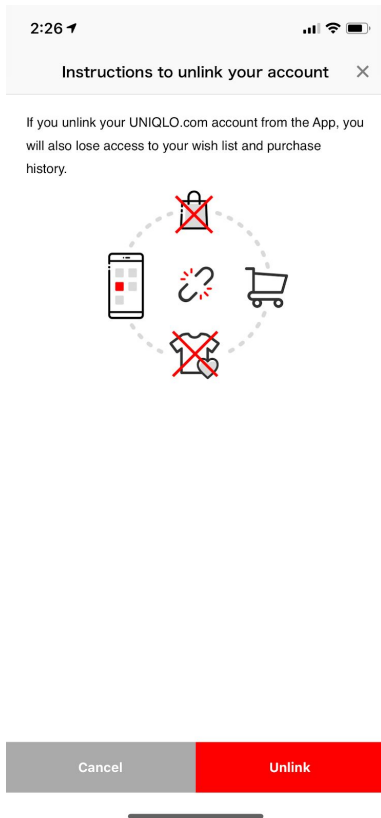
Clear messages to inform that shopping bag is empty



Message to show that there are no coupons

Success Area #2	Heuristic(s)
Shows pop-ups to explain what will happen before users execute something.	#5: Error prevention

Evidence:



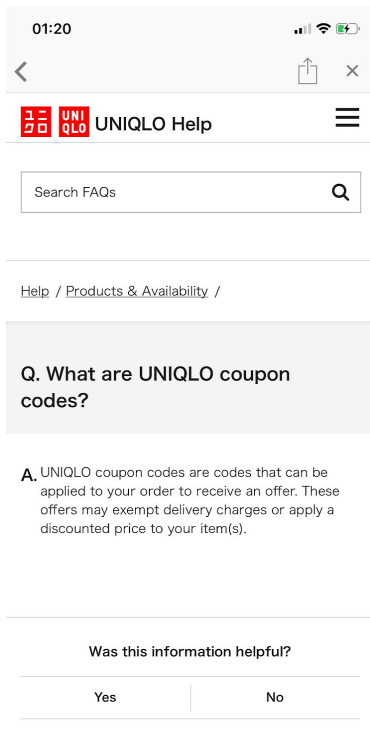
Pop up appears to confirm if the user intends to 'unlink' their account.

Success Area #3	Heuristic(s)
Help is easily accessible under “My Account / Settings”	#10: Help and documentation

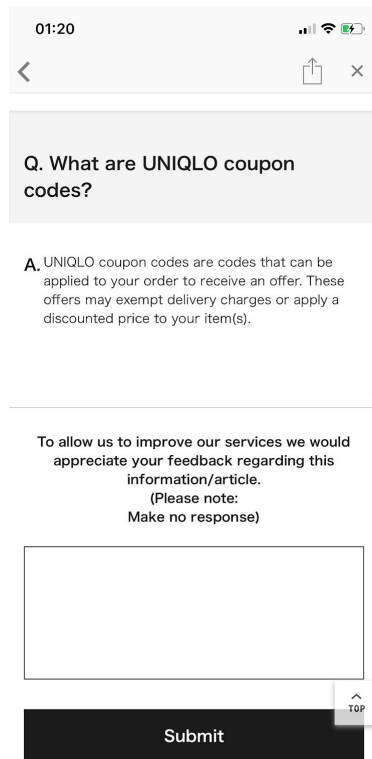
Each Q&A is accompanied by ‘Was this information helpful?’. If ‘no’ is selected, a comment box appears for users to submit feedback or further queries.

This shows that UNIQLO values customer feedback and takes it seriously. It is a helpful feature for users that are unable to address their concerns through the standard set of FAQs.

Evidence:



“Was this information helpful?”

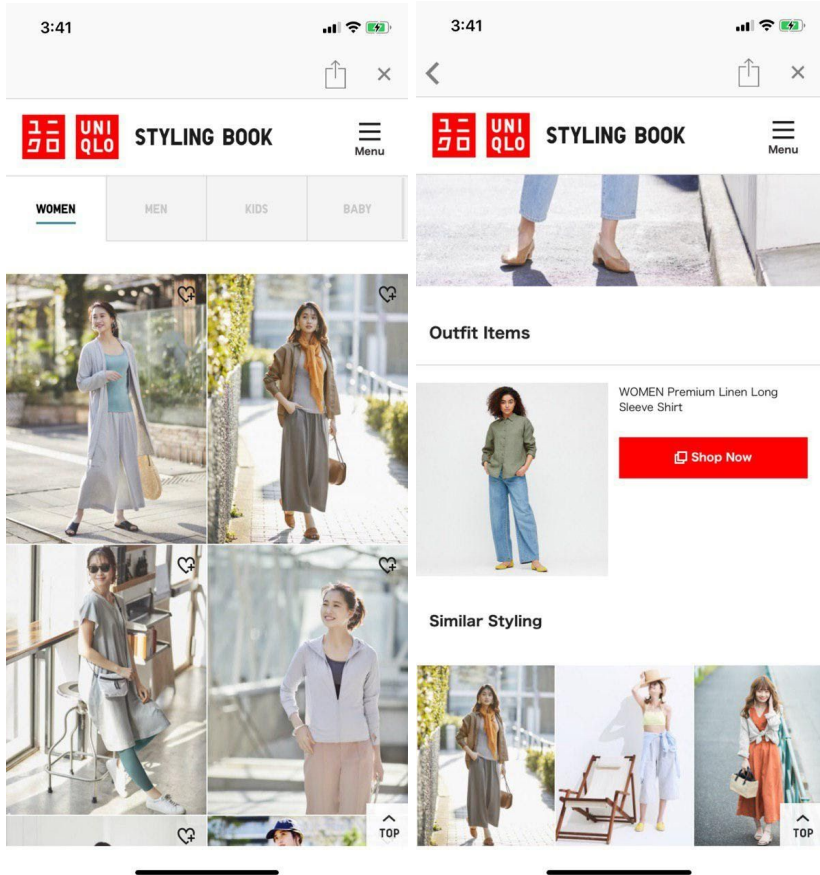


Feedback box appears

Success Area #4	Heuristic(s)
Styling Book feature acts like a real life magazine	#2: Match between system and the real world

Users can browse through images of different modelled outfits. For each outfit, there are details of the items easily accessible at the bottom, and links to purchase the item are available. This works like a typical physical magazine that might be familiar to our users.

Evidence:



6.2 Problem Areas

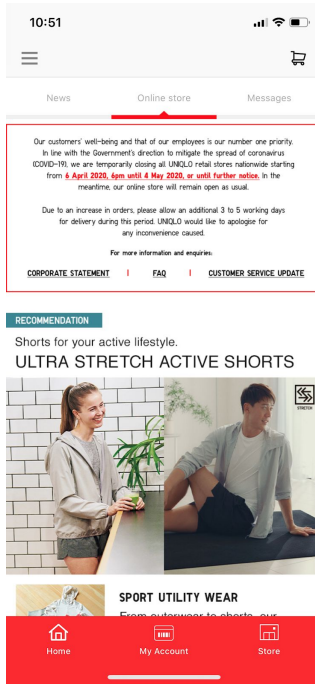
Problem Area #1	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
The concept of incorporating UNIQLO's website into the app	#3: User control and freedom #6: Recognition rather than recall	S4	E3

Elaboration of Problem:

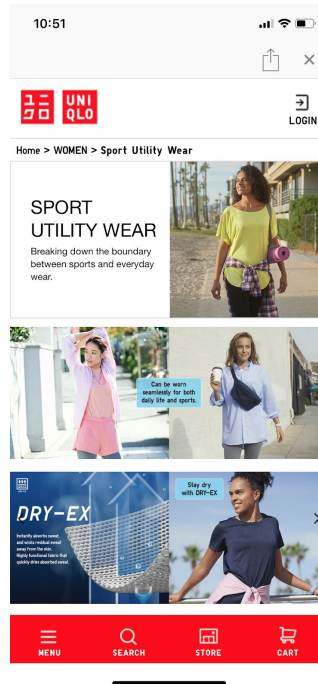
Many elements in the app (e.g. product catalogue) links the user to the in-app UNIQLO website. If users did not understand this concept, it will lead to confusion in the following areas:

1. Users might be confused as to why the bottom navigation bar has changed from 3 (Home, My Account, Store) to 4 options (Menu, Search, Store, Cart).
2. Users might be confused as to why there is no 'back' button after they immediately enter the in-app website. The way to exit the in-app website is actually to use the 'X' at the top right hand corner of the screen.
3. In the in-app website, when the menu is expanded, an 'X' appears at the bottom left hand corner of the screen to close the menu. The user might be confused as to why there are two 'X's and be unsure of their difference in function.
4. It is mandatory for users to sign in to their membership account before usage of the app. However, when users open the in-app website, the app does not 'remember' their membership and they are forced to sign in again.
5. When they close the in-app website, they are prompted by a warning message. Users might not understand the concept of the in-app website and might be confused about what happens if they close the screen.

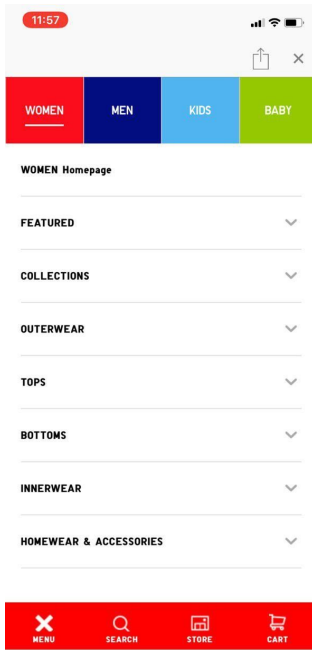
Evidence:



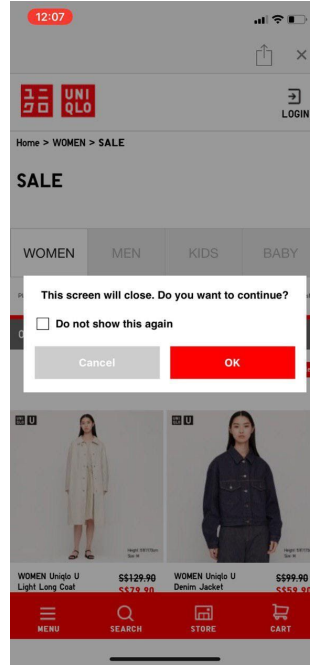
'Native app' page



In-app website looks similar, but with a different global navigation



In-app website with menu bar expanded. The 'X' at the bottom left corner is to collapse the menu. The 'X' at the top corner is to quit the in-app website and return to native app.



If the 'X' at the top right corner is selected, pop-up will appear to warn users that the screen will close.

Recommendation:

Either (1) remove the in-app website and build the product catalogue into the app itself, or (2) make it more obvious to the user that he is transiting from the app to the website. Due to the severity of this issue and the frequency of users using the products catalogue function, it might be worthwhile to go for option 1.

Problem Area #2	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Messy layout and unclear hierarchy of information	#8: Aesthetic and minimalist design	S3	E2

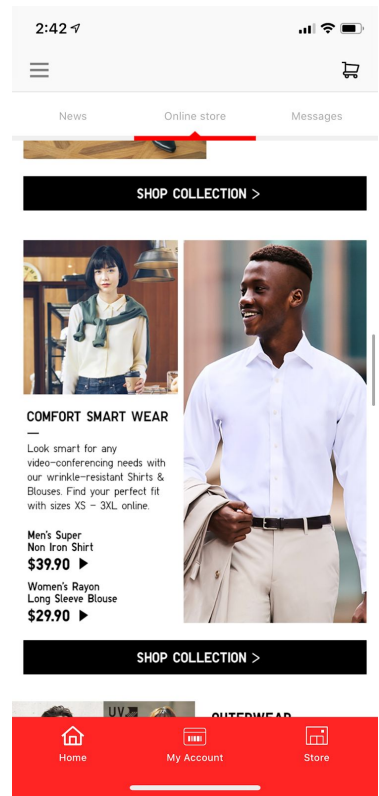
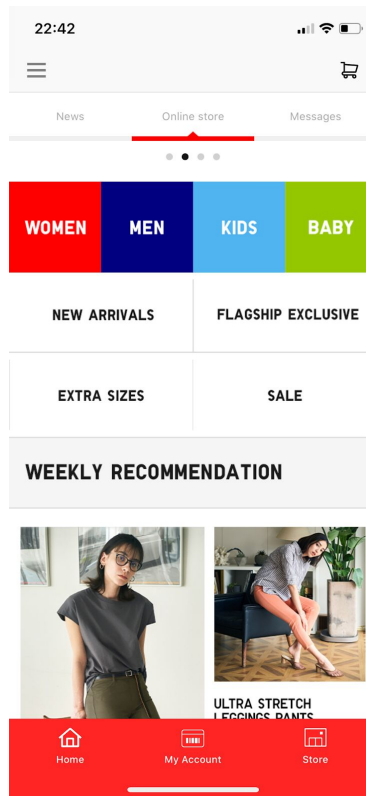
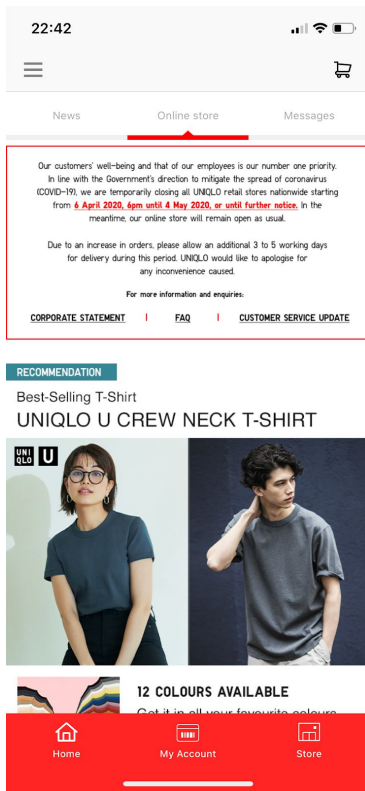
Elaboration of Problem:

The general layout of the app from the landing page to the other pages lacks structure. There are no clear and consistent headers and sections which makes it not easily scannable.

For example, under the 'Online Store' tab, the app displays 'Recommendation' in a small font and within a small tab. As the user scrolls down, main categories are revealed (women, men, kids, baby, new arrivals, etc.), followed by 'Weekly Recommendation' in large font. It might be confusing to users as to what's the difference between 'Recommendation' and 'Weekly Recommendation', and why are those similar elements separated by another element (the main categories).

Also, under 'Weekly Recommendation', the different collections featured are not easily distinguishable from each other. The button 'Shop Collection' refers to the collection featured above it, but it is only slightly closer to the collection above than the collection below it. There is no other clue (e.g. lines) to demarcate the different collections.

Evidence:



Recommendation:

Use design principles like proximity, position, size, colour to make headers more prominent and to establish clear hierarchy and relationship between elements. Terminology also has to be amended. For example, 'Recommendation' to 'Bestsellers' since it stated 'Best Selling T Shirt'.

Problem Area #3	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Categories not clearly displayed on the landing page.	#2: Match between system and the real world #4: Consistency and Standards	S2	E0

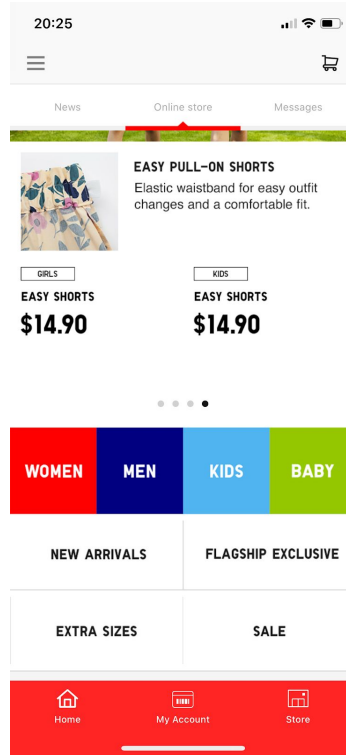
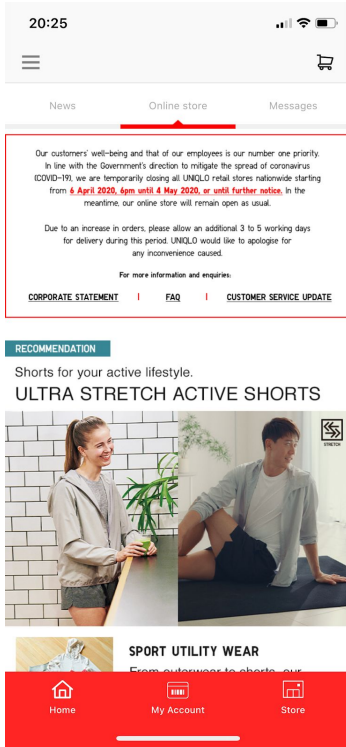
Elaboration of Problem:

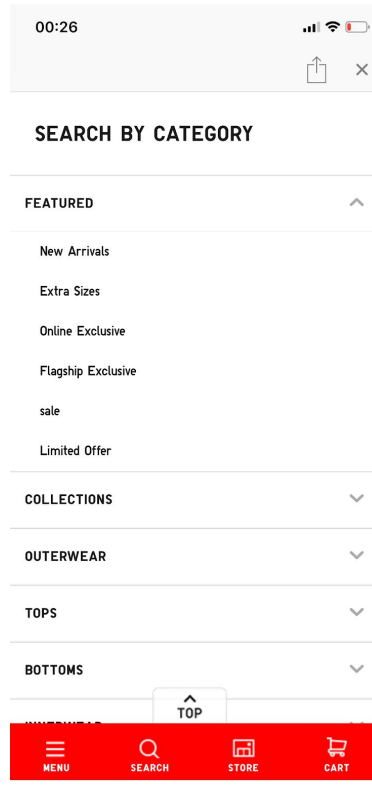
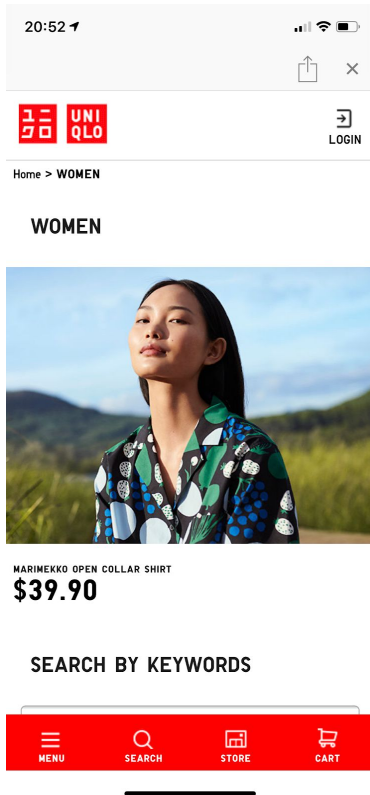
Firstly, the different categories, such as Women, Men, Kids, Baby, New Arrivals etc., are not clearly shown on the landing page and users would have to scroll down before seeing the categories. The alternative way to access the categories is via the menu at the top left but it is not as obvious as the navigation bar is at the bottom and not intuitive.

Users would also expect 'Store' at the bottom to be the online store portion of the app and to be able to see product categories. But upon clicking, it only shows links to Uniqlo.com and Store Locator. This would be a problem as users would not be able to navigate to the Online Store which might prevent people from browsing and purchasing items.

The 'Online Exclusive' category is not shown as a main category, instead, it is nested under Women's > Featured. Online Exclusives are an essential part of a mobile app/website as they are things that are not available in physical stores. However, it is not prominent to users in the app and it takes a couple of exploratory steps to finally find where it is. This might deter users from using the mobile app as they might not see the benefit of using the mobile app if they are unable to easily navigate to Online Exclusives.

Evidence:





Recommendation:

It would be ideal to show the product categories clearly on the landing page and to ensure that they are within sight without the need to scroll.

Also, it is recommended to put Online Exclusives as a main category on its own instead of nesting it under 'Featured'.

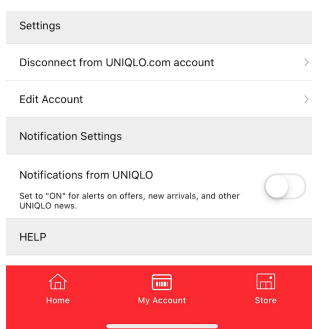
Problem Area #4	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Confusing and/or inconsistent terminology	#2: Match between system and the real world #4: Consistency and standards	S2	E0

Elaboration of Problem:

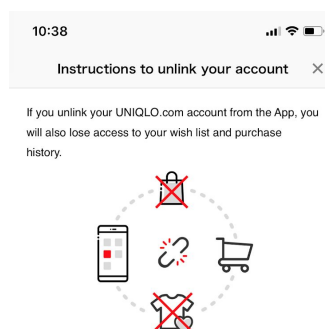
Examples of confusing and/or inconsistent terminology:

1. 'Disconnect from UNIQLO.com account' and 'if you unlink your UNIQLO account from the App...' - Users might be more familiar with the term 'Sign Out' in apps, and might be unsure as to what 'disconnect' and 'unlink' means.
2. 'News' - Conventional understanding of 'news' would be latest brand information such as COVID-19 updates or new branch openings. Instead, it shows their products through a featured collection, two tokyo residents, and a lot of random stuff put together.
3. 'Messages' - Users might expect promotional messages to appear when they tap on 'messages'. Instead, the app gives suggestions for particular products under e
4. 'Cart' and 'shopping bag' - App uses icons of a cart and even labelled it as 'cart'. However, when you click on it, you are brought to a page that refers to it as 'shopping bag'.
5. 'Eg.' and 'ex' - The former was used as a short form for 'example in the login page, but the latter was used in the product page.
6. 'Customer Service Update' and 'Service Update' - The former term is used in the COVID-19 notice, but when you click on it, the latter term is displayed. Both are misleading as users might expect a version update of the app or changes in terms of service. However, it actually leads to FAQs and Chatbot service.
7. There are 2 different sets of FAQ and they are found in different tabs - 1 in the FAQ tab and 1 in the HELP tab. The questions are similar but not entirely the same. It will be confusing for the user to know which tab to search for answers to their queries.

Evidence:



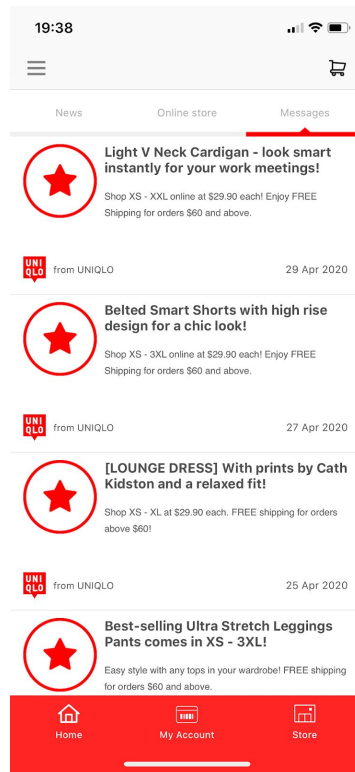
1 - 'Disconnect from UNIQLO.com account'



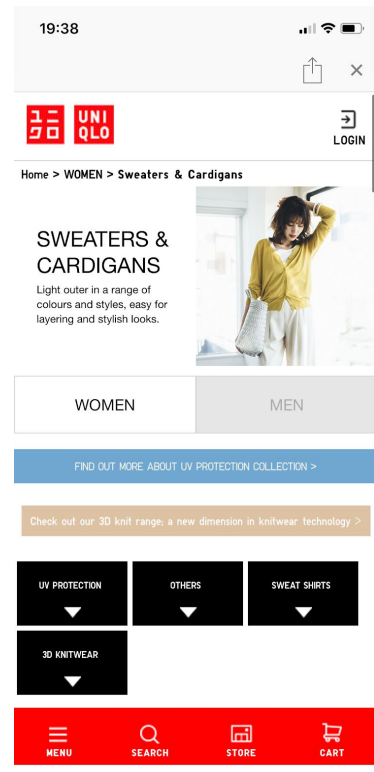
1 - 'Unlink your account'



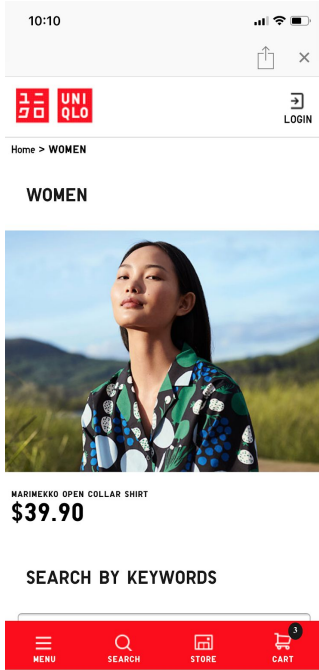
2- 'News' shows featured products



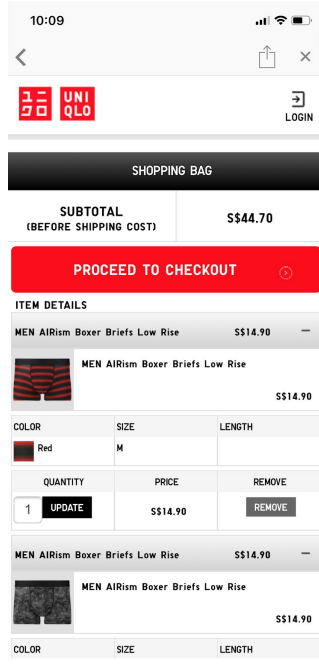
3 - 'Messages'



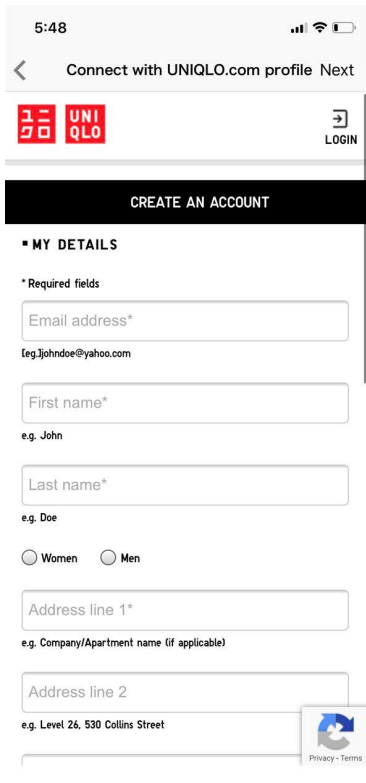
3 - After clicking on a 'message'.



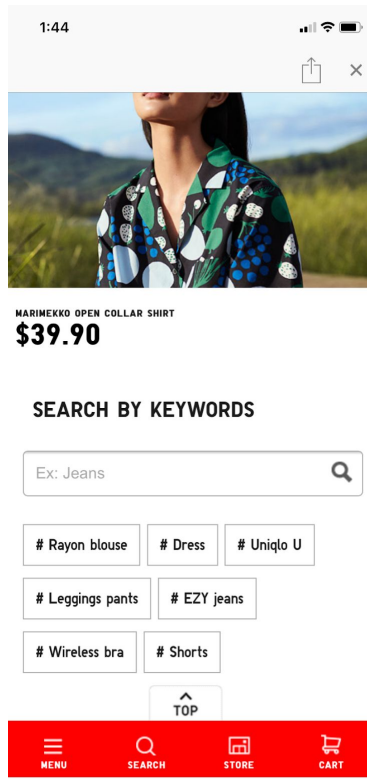
4 - 'Cart' icon at the bottom



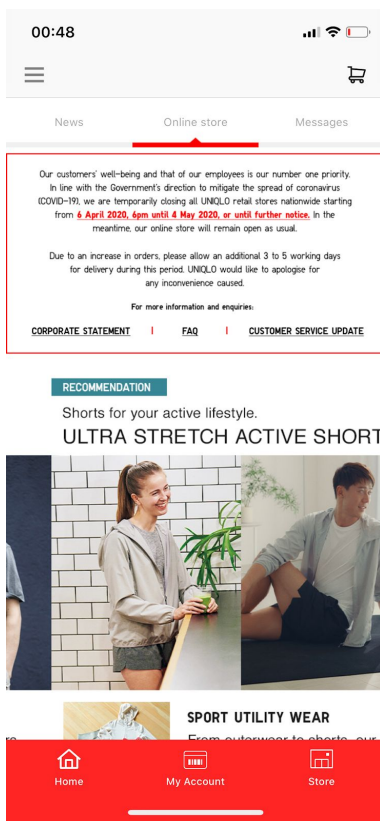
4 - After clicking on cart, page says 'shopping bag'



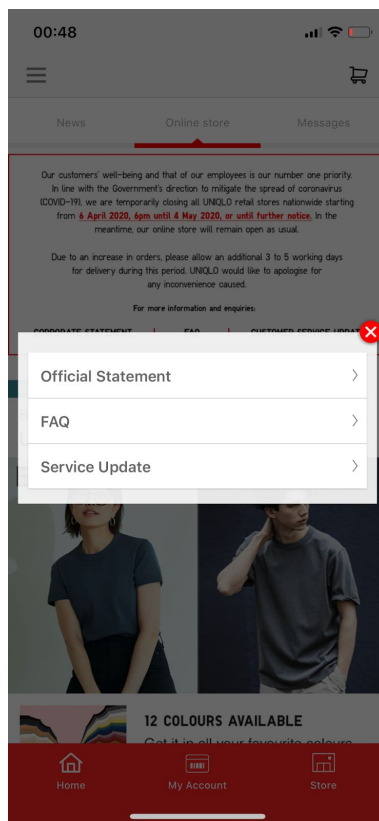
5 - 'e.g.'



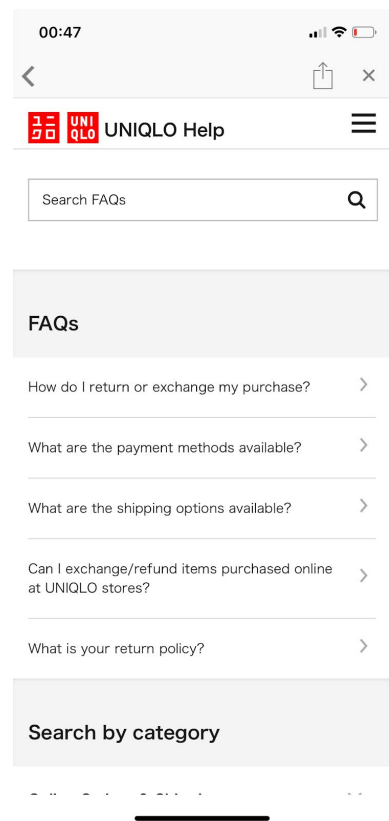
5 - 'Ex'



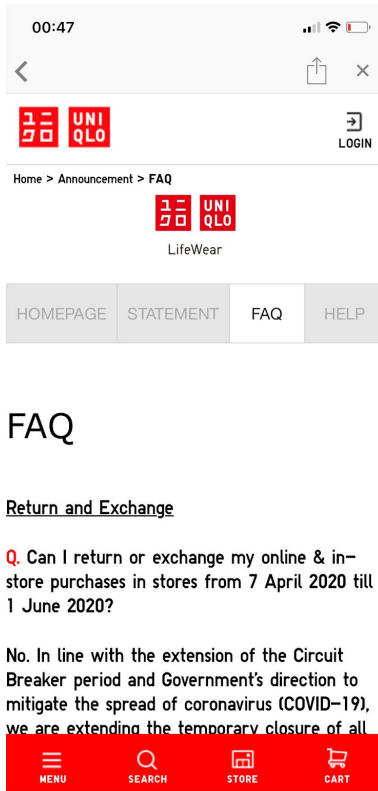
6 - COVID notice shows link for 'Customer Service Update'



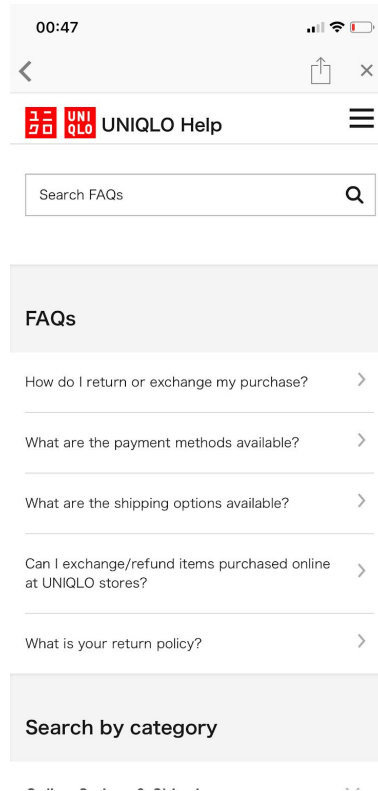
6 - After clicking, pop up appears that describes it as 'Service Update'



6 - Button leads to FAQ page



7 - FAQ under 'FAQ' tab



7 - FAQ under 'Help' tab

Recommendation:

Standardize terms across the app to 'sign out', 'featured', 'cart', and 'e.g.'. Remove the 'Messages' function if it is not necessary. Maintain just 1 source of FAQ.

Problem Area #5	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Unable to easily check in-store availability	#2: Match between system and the real world #3: User control and freedom #7: Flexibility and efficiency of use	S2	E1

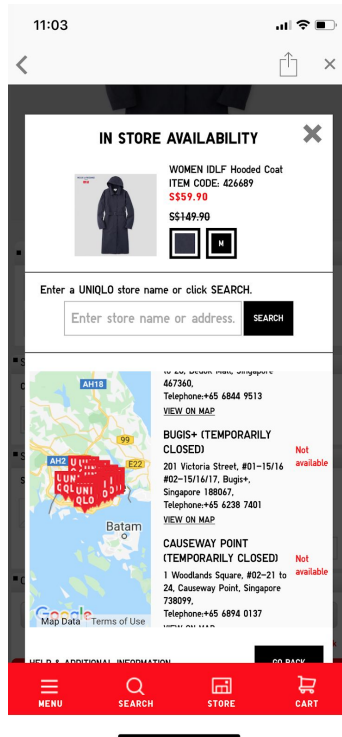
Elaboration of Problem:

To check in-store availability, the user taps on the 'check availability in store' button, selects colour and size, then searches for a store. In searching for stores, users can either type in a specific store, or leave the field blank and hit 'search'. If they had left the field blank, the app will show the entire list of UNIQLO stores in Singapore and their respective availability for the product. This brings about 2 issues:

1. Although there is text description that tells users they can simply click 'search', it is not intuitive for users to leave a text field blank and is a mismatch between the system and the real world. Users may feel forced to enter a specific store even if they want to see all the stores that have the product they want.
2. If the text field is left blank, the app displays all stores in Singapore in alphabetical order. Users have to scroll through the entire list to check which store has available stock. This restricts flexibility and efficiency of use.

If users find that all stores do not carry their desired product in their selected size and colour, they are unable to change the colour (while keeping size constant) and check availability. They have to quit the pop-up and repeat the whole search process again. This restricts user control and freedom.

Evidence:



Recommendation:

Allow easy toggling of options (size and colour). Introduce a button 'search all stores', and display stores in order of availability.

Problem Area #6	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Navigation and selection of categories are not flexible for users.	#3: User control and freedom #4: Consistency and Standards	S2	E2

Elaboration of Problem:

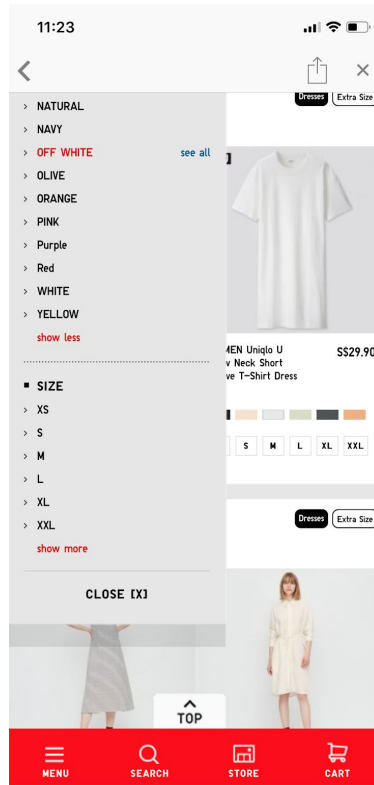
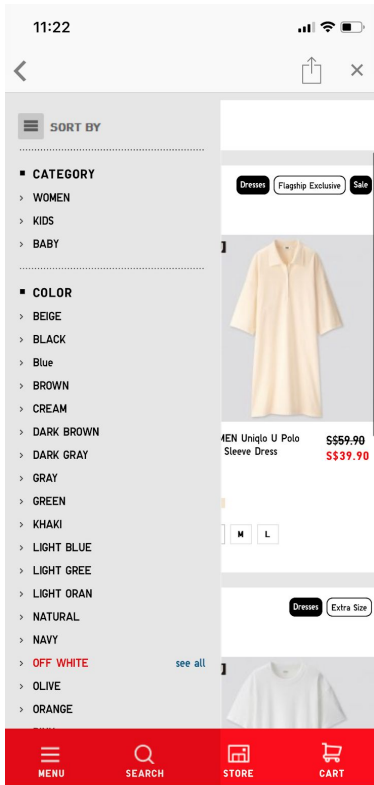
The “Sort By” function acts as a “filter” function, where the number of visible items is reduced to the selected features. This would be confusing to users who would like to sort the items by their features, but might want to see the full range of items available, instead of filtering out the results.

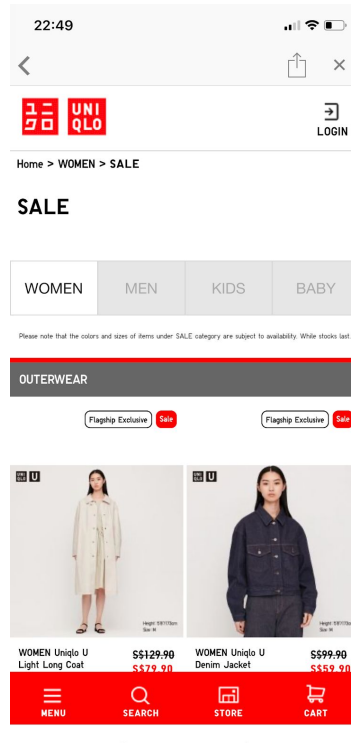
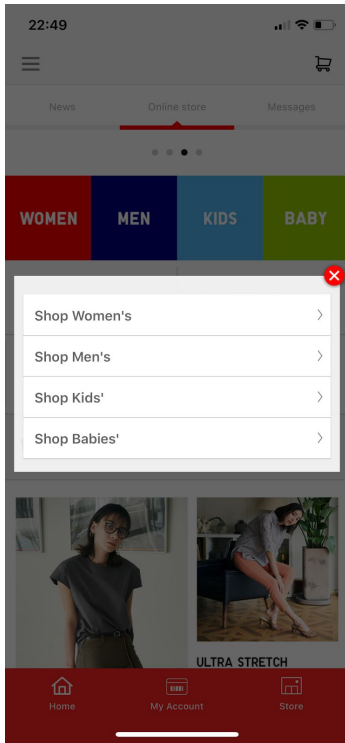
In addition, the colours are not grouped by similarity (e.g. brown is apart from dark brown, cream is away from off-white). This might be confusing and ambiguous to users as colours are pretty subjective and they might want to be able to browse a range of colours.

Thirdly, the “Close” button is at the bottom. Therefore, if a user used the “show more” function, the list would be longer and the user would be forced to scroll all the way down to close the list. Most importantly, this function does not function well - after making a selection, the user is unable to exit the “Sort By” list. The list is too long and visually covers 3 of the results.

Lastly, upon clicking the ‘Sale’ tab, users have to make a decision to choose 1 category (Women’s, Men’s, Kids’, Babies’) to view the products on sale. Users are not given the option to browse “All Sale” but after selection, all 4 categories are available on the page again, allowing users to toggle around. The initial selection and filtering of the categories might frustrate users, as they might want to be able to browse through all the products on Sale.

Evidence:





Recommendation:

Our recommendation would be to change copy to “Filter”, allowing multiple filter options, organising options by similarity, and enabling easy collapsing of filter options list. The colour options could also be more concise and similar colours could be grouped together.

The ‘Sale’ tab should allow users to view all products on sale, and they can have the option to filter the gender and category once they reach the page. While having the option to filter between categories is good, it should be only done once and in a less intrusive manner.

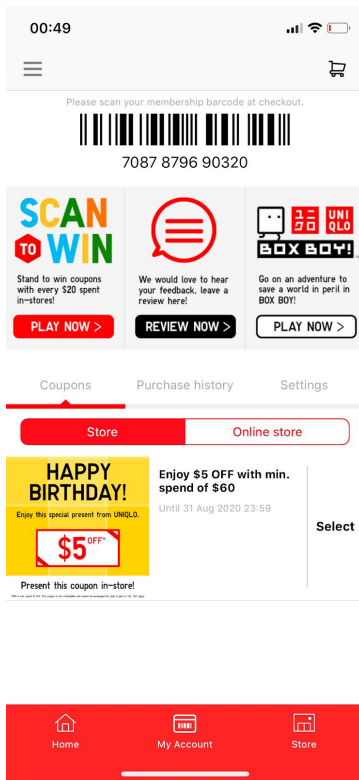
Problem Area #7	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Membership Barcode is not easily accessible.	#7: Flexibility and efficiency of Use	S1	E0

Elaboration of Problem:

One of the core functions of the app would be scanning of membership at the physical store. The Membership Barcode is found under ‘My Account’ and is only accessible from the “main” part of the app. In the browser, it is accessible through the side drawer menu, which is not as prominent as it should be, considering that the barcode is a core function of the app.

Also, within the ‘My Account’ tab, the placement of the barcode is right at the top, which is not that visible and it is also outshone by the colourful banners beneath it (Scan to Win, Review and Box Boy). Users might have difficulty locating the membership barcode to scan at the counter, causing frustrations and inefficiencies.

Evidence:



Recommendation:

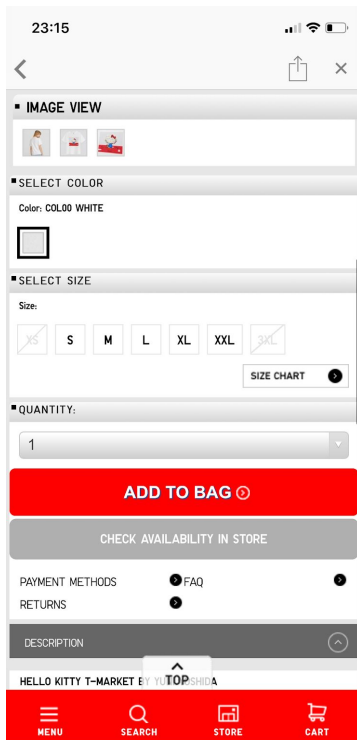
The membership barcode could be repositioned to a more prominent part of the screen such as the middle where users would be able to easily locate the barcode in a short span of time.

Problem Area #8	Heuristic(s)	Severity Rating (S0-S4)	Ease of Fixing Ranking (E0-E3)
Confusions regarding the 'Check In-Store Availability' button	#1: Visibility of System Status #2: Match between system and the real world	S0	E0

Elaboration of Problem:

The “Check Availability In-Store” button is grey, so users might be confused if that option is available or disabled. As users might have experienced greyed out buttons to be unclickable, they may apply the same mental model towards this button. They might portray the interface in a negative way.

Evidence:



Recommendation:

We would recommend changing the color of the button so that the state of the button would not confuse users.

7. REFERENCES

Nielsen, J. (1994). Heuristic evaluation. In J. Nielsen & R. L. Mack (Eds.), *Usability inspection methods* (pp. 25-62). New York: John Wiley & Sons.