

Newsroom — Rapid UX/Design Heuristics Audit (lightweight)

Heuristic / checkpoint	Result	Severity	Evaluation details	More info
Usability & Navigation				
Is the blog easy to navigate? (Can users find posts/categories effortlessly?)	Passes	2 (minor)	Categories (Post Types) are not included in the original design. It is recommended to consider included them.	Categorizing and tagging blog content helps organize posts, making it easier for readers to find related topics and navigate the site. It also improves SEO by signaling content themes to search engines, helping your blog reach a wider audience.
Is the search function (if available) effective?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	A search function is essential in a blog because it allows readers to quickly find specific content without scrolling through multiple posts, improving user experience and keeping visitors engaged longer.
Are links and buttons (e.g., "Read More," "Subscribe") clearly visible and functional?	Fails	3 (major)	There is no button, interaction, call to action, or cursor change indicating to users that they can click on a card. The clickable areas are small and lack interaction or state changes.	It's important to have links and buttons like "Read More" or "Subscribe" clearly visible and functional because they guide users through the site, encourage engagement, and support key actions. If they're hard to find or don't work properly, users may get frustrated and leave the site.
Is the blog mobile-friendly?	Fails	3 (major)	The layout is properly adapted to mobile screens, but the header occupies an important amount of the view, the navigation system appears intrusive and spans two lines.	Headers, including their menus, should be available when users need them, but they should collapse and remain intuitively accessible, maximizing the reading space for users.
Content Quality & Readability				
Are blog posts well-structured (headings, paragraphs, bullet points)?	Passes	1 (cosmetic)	There are long blocks of text without visual breaks or graphic aids. The editorial layout is unattractive and offers few resources to help retain information or allow for quick scanning.	A well-structured blog post uses clear headings and short paragraphs to make the content easy to scan and read. Bullet points or numbered lists help break down key information, while a strong introduction and conclusion guide the reader through the main message. Adding visuals and using consistent formatting also improve readability and engagement.
Is the content free of spelling/grammar errors?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Are images/videos used effectively to support the content?	Fails	3 (major)	Few or no images are shown to provide context, visual breaks, or aesthetic experience. The image sizes are not designed to enhance the visual content or immerse the user in the context.	More visually appealing, larger, and high-quality content makes reading more engaging and eye-catching.
Is the tone consistent and engaging for the target audience?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Design & Aesthetics				
Is the layout clean and uncluttered?	Passes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Are fonts, colors, and spacing visually appealing?	Fails	3 (major)	<p>Fonts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a lack of consistency in titles of the same level of importance, as they use different styles. - Minimal weight variation between styles creates a visually uniform block, resulting in no clear hierarchy or sense of importance. <p>Colors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The accent color (dark green) is not distinguishable from the secondary color (black). - The accent color is poorly used in the footer and in graphic elements (e.g., "Top 10 Books" image). <p>Spacing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no clear differentiation between paragraphs due to insufficient spacing. - There are few visual breaks, with little space between different content blocks. - Spacing is not used to create sections, so messages flow into each other without time to process or retain them. - Cards are not standardized; their elements and appearance are affected by the content dimensions (e.g., author line: "By Paul Sullivan"). 	<p>An effective editorial design must treat typography as a central tool to communicate, establish hierarchy, and guide reading.</p> <p>The accent should draw attention to important elements, create visual contrast, and suggest action or focus. Its correct use has a direct impact on usability, visual hierarchy, and user experience.</p> <p>Spacing is a functional design tool; poor use results in: cramped text that causes immediate rejection, visually chaotic or dense interfaces, slow reading or misunderstanding of the message, and ultimately, a higher bounce rate.</p>
Does the design enhance readability (e.g., dark mode, contrast)?	Passes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Accessibility				
Is text legible (good font size/contrast)?	Passes	3 (major)	The text shows good contrast, but the font size is small (14px) and presented in long blocks.	Good readability keeps users engaged, improves accessibility for all visitors, and enhances the overall user experience. The commonly recommended body text size for blogs is typically between 16px and 18px.
Do images have alt text for screen readers?	Fails	2 (minor)	The images do not include alternative text.	Alternative text supports inclusive reading as it provides a textual representation of an image. In some countries, including alt text is mandatory.
Engagement & Interaction				
Are there clear calls-to-action (e.g., "Comment," "Share," "Subscribe")?	Fails	2 (minor)	There is no call to action or interaction indicating to the user that they should take an action (e.g., to continue reading).	While users may understand from experience that a card leads to another screen or the next step, it is important that their action is acknowledged through a change or interaction that reinforces their decision. Additionally, it's visually appealing to encounter dynamism when using an interface.
Do readers have a way to interact (comments, social sharing)?	Fails	2 (minor)	Interaction with the blog is limited to reading. The user cannot perform actions such as sharing a post or parts of it.	Adding sharing actions turns a blog post into an active tool for outreach, growth, and reputation. Making that step easy helps your content reach further, faster, and with greater impact.
Is the comment section easy to use and moderated (if applicable)?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Performance & Speed				
Does the blog load quickly?	Passes	1 (cosmetic)	The blog loads efficiently, but this may also be due to its minimalist design and limited visual content.	-
Are there unnecessary pop-ups or slow elements?	Passes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Trustworthiness				
Is author information/bio available?	Passes	0 (no problem)	The author of the article is cited, but there is no author profile that shows the credentials of the person writing.	An author bio is a sign of legitimacy, connection, and professionalism. It helps the reader know there is a real person behind the content.
Are sources/references cited properly?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Is there a privacy policy/terms of service page?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-

Newsroom — CMS Audit (Redesign Feasibility)

	Result	Severity	Evaluation details	More info
The blog structure is scalable				
Layout				
Is the layout modifiable?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	Can elements of the layout be easily adjusted or updated without breaking the design or structure?
Is the layout replicable?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	How easy is it to make changes to the layout in response to new content or user feedback? Can the layout be reused across multiple pages or sections of the site?
Is the layout scalable?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	Is there a clear, consistent structure that allows for duplication without losing design integrity? Does the layout adapt well to different screen sizes and devices (desktop, tablet, mobile)?
Is the layout responsive?	No	3 (major)	Overall, the header is intrusive and unnecessarily large, and it's also not optimized for mobile devices, taking up a high percentage of the screen and displaying the menu in an expanded state, a practice that is neither common nor effective on mobile.	How well does the layout handle increased content or more complex features? Does the layout automatically adjust and look good on different screen sizes, from desktop to mobile? Are breakpoints properly defined for mobile, tablet, and desktop versions?
Is the layout built with a modular approach?	Yes	3 (major)	The layout is based on a design system, but the adaptation does not follow best practices or standards.	Are components (like buttons, cards, or headers) reusable across different parts of the website or product? Does the layout follow a design system or pattern library for consistency?
Is the layout optimized for performance?	No	2 (minor)	The images are in JPG format with high compression, which results in a significant loss of quality.	Are images and media optimized for the web to reduce load time (e.g., using appropriate file formats like WebP)? Is lazy loading or other performance enhancements used for non-critical elements?
Taxonomies				
Taxonomies exist				
Are categories and tags clearly differentiated in purpose?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Clear differentiation helps users and search engines understand the content structure, making navigation more intuitive and improving content discoverability.
Is the number of categories limited and focused (e.g. 5–10 main categories)?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Limiting the number of categories keeps the content organized and prevents overwhelming users with too many choices, helping them find relevant information quickly.
Are tags used consistently across posts, or are there many near-duplicates or one-offs?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Consistent tagging ensures a better user experience and SEO benefits by grouping related content effectively. Duplicate or one-off tags confuse users and search engines.
Do categories reflect how users naturally browse or search for content?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Categories that align with user behavior improve content discovery and reduce friction for users looking for specific topics, enhancing engagement and retention.
Can users easily filter or find content through the taxonomy structure?	No	3 (major)	There are no categories or tags, and the content cannot be grouped into separate files.	An intuitive taxonomy helps users find what they're looking for quickly, enhancing the usability and user experience of the site.
Are important topics easily discoverable through the taxonomy?	No	3 (major)	<i>idem.</i>	Ensuring that key topics are easy to find boosts the visibility of important content and improves user satisfaction, while also contributing to SEO by promoting relevant pages.
Can the current taxonomy system accommodate future content growth without becoming disorganized?	No	2 (minor)	It is possible to add categories later, but the issue will be the extra work involved in categorizing and tagging existing content. Additionally, there may be a loss of indexing in search engines for keywords.	A scalable taxonomy structure ensures that as more content is added, the site remains organized, preventing confusion and maintaining a smooth user experience over time.
Are category and tag archive pages optimized for SEO (titles, descriptions, structured URLs)?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	SEO optimization of archive pages ensures that these pages are discoverable by search engines, improving site visibility and driving more organic traffic.
Are taxonomies implemented using CMS-native features (e.g., WordPress categories/tags) or custom code?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Using CMS-native features ensures ease of management, better compatibility with plugins, and smoother site maintenance, whereas custom code can offer more flexibility but may be harder to maintain.
Are taxonomy pages loading correctly and not generating errors or duplicate content?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	Proper loading and error-free taxonomy pages enhance user experience, reduce bounce rates, and prevent SEO issues like duplicate content, which can harm rankings.
Plugins				
Is there excessive reliance on dependencies?	No	0 (no problem)	-	Excessive reliance on external dependencies can create maintenance issues over time. If a plugin relies on many third-party libraries or services, it can increase the complexity of the system, making it harder to troubleshoot, update, and secure. It can also lead to compatibility issues if those dependencies are no longer supported or updated.
Can dependencies be avoided?	No	0 (no problem)	-	Avoiding unnecessary dependencies reduces the risk of future problems. When plugins or tools are self-contained and don't rely heavily on third-party libraries, there's less chance of conflicts and breakowns. This also leads to faster performance and better control over updates and functionality.
Can paid dependencies be avoided?	Yes	2 (minor)	It is possible to avoid using ACF (Advanced Custom Fields), but it may require additional manual work since certain automations are paid features.	-
Code				
Is the theme custom-built or using a third-party theme?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Is the site using a child theme?	No	2 (minor)	-	If no child theme exists, should one be created to ensure that customizations are preserved during theme updates?
Is there hidden code within the site?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Is the code accessible?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Can the code be modified?	Yes	0 (no problem)	-	-
Is there custom code in the functions.php file or other theme files?	Yes	2 (minor)	Modifications should be identified.	This means thoroughly reviewing the code or content to track any changes or customizations made to the original setup. If you're referring to identifying hidden or altered code, it often involves inspecting the site's source code or using tools like browser developer tools to pinpoint changes.
Are there any hardcoded values in the template or theme?	N/A	0 (no problem)	Pending...	-
Is version control in place (e.g., Git)?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-
Is there a staging environment for testing changes?	N/A	0 (no problem)	-	-

Domains

Location	URL	Hosting	Pros	Cons
Same domain	placeholder.ca/blog	Same	<p>SEO benefits: All the traffic and SEO value generated by the blog contribute to the primary domain (main website). This can help boost the rankings of the main site in search engines.</p> <p>Brand consistency: Hosting the blog on the same domain keeps your brand unified and easier for users to recognize. The blog becomes an integral part of your main site.</p> <p>Simpler management: You don't need to manage separate hosting, DNS records, or configurations. Everything is centralized, making it easier to update and maintain.</p> <p>Cost-effective: Since you're hosting on the same server, it's often cheaper and more efficient than managing multiple domains.</p>	<p>Potential for clutter: If the blog grows significantly, it could make your website harder to navigate or lead to a cluttered user experience if not properly organized.</p> <p>Limited flexibility: You may have fewer design or technical options compared to a separate blog hosted on a subdomain or own domain.</p> <p>Site speed issues: If the main website becomes very large or resource-heavy, it could impact the blog's performance.</p>
Subdomain	placeholder.newsroom.ca	Same	<p>Clear separation: Having a subdomain makes it clear to users that the blog is a distinct section of the site, which can be useful for large websites or if the blog has a different target audience or tone.</p> <p>Brand recognition: The blog still carries your primary domain's branding but stands apart as a specialized section (e.g., a corporate blog, news section, or separate content vertical).</p> <p>SEO control: You have more control over SEO for the blog as a subdomain can be treated as a semi-independent entity by search engines. If done right, this can help rank specific blog content for niche terms.</p> <p>Performance isolation: Performance issues with the main website (e.g., large eCommerce site) won't affect the blog, as it's technically a separate subdomain.</p>	<p>SEO complexity: Search engines may treat the subdomain as a separate entity from the main domain, meaning that any SEO benefit from the blog may not be fully passed onto the main site. You may need extra effort to build authority for the subdomain.</p> <p>Technical setup: You may need to set up and maintain DNS records, separate analytics tracking, and possibly different hosting configurations.</p> <p>Maintenance overhead: If the subdomain is on a different hosting setup or platform, it might require separate management, which can lead to increased complexity.</p>
Own domain	newsroom.ca	It can vary	<p>Full control: You have complete control over the design, branding, and content of the blog. It can have its own identity, separate from the main business or site.</p> <p>SEO independence: With a dedicated domain, you can fully optimize for SEO without being tied to the main site's strategy or performance. It's easier to rank for niche keywords and build an independent SEO presence.</p> <p>Brand flexibility: The blog can have its own distinct branding, tone, and target audience. This is especially useful if the blog is intended to appeal to a different demographic or has a different focus from the primary business site.</p> <p>Monetization opportunities: If the blog is intended to be a standalone business or revenue stream (e.g., affiliate marketing, sponsored content), having it on its own domain is beneficial.</p>	<p>Cost: Owning a separate domain means additional costs for domain registration, hosting, and maintenance.</p> <p>SEO challenges: Starting a blog on a new domain can be harder from an SEO standpoint because it lacks the domain authority and traffic that the main site might already have. Building traffic and backlinks will take time.</p> <p>Brand fragmentation: With a separate domain, users might not immediately recognize the connection between the blog and your primary brand. You'd need to work harder on linking the two or driving cross-site traffic.</p> <p>Management complexity: Managing a separate domain involves additional configuration, hosting management, DNS, email, and tracking systems. You'll also need to ensure consistency between the blog and the primary site for a unified experience.</p>