COLLABORATION STATEMENT: I DID NOT DISCUSS THIS ASSIGNMENT WITH ANYBODY.

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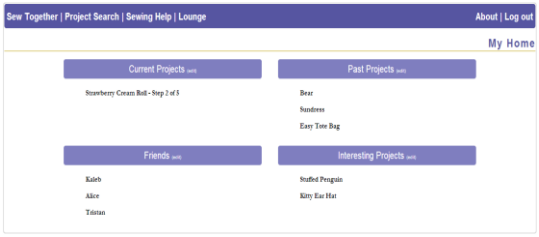
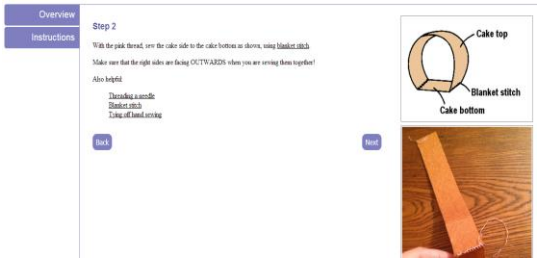
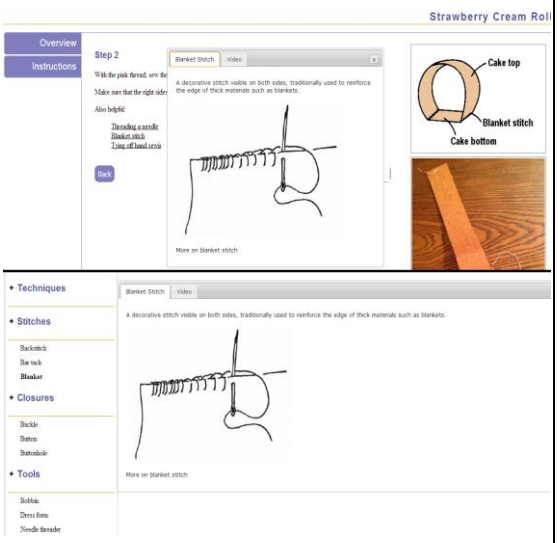
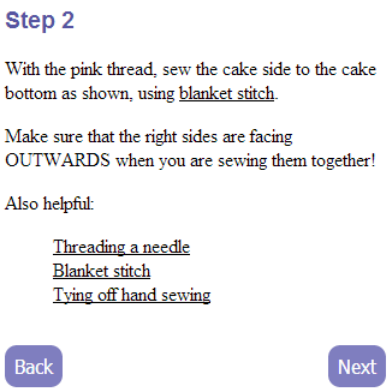
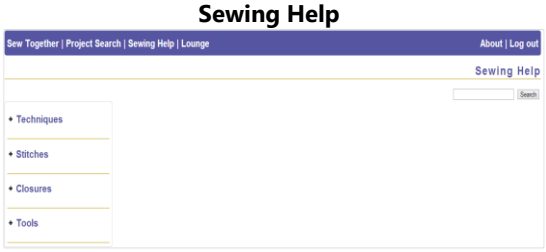
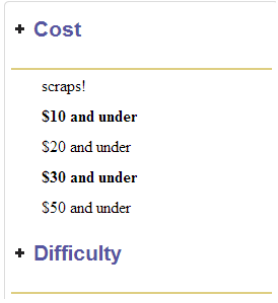
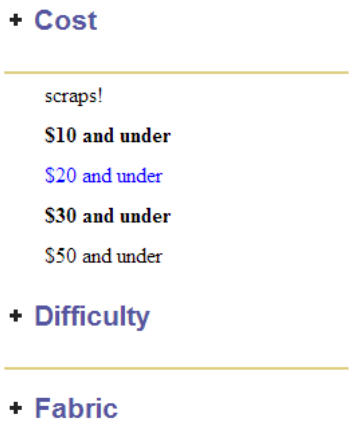
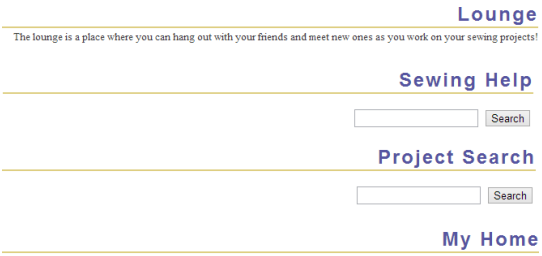
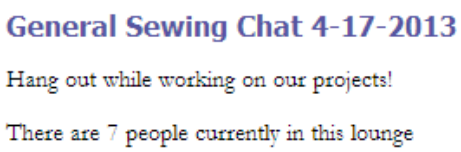
HW2: HEURISTIC EVALUATION

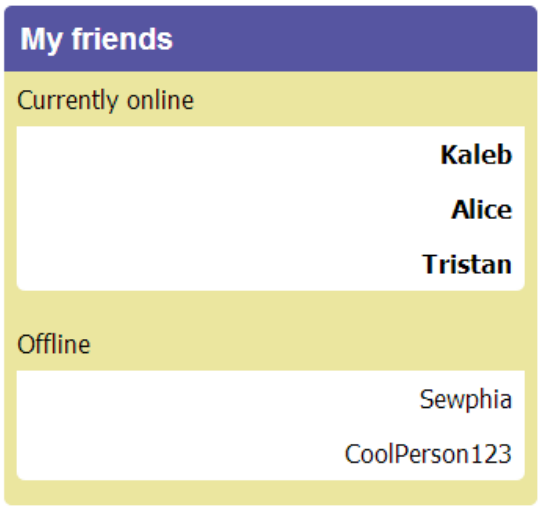
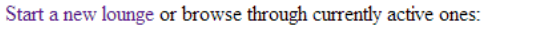
GROUP NAME: Good Unless Intended

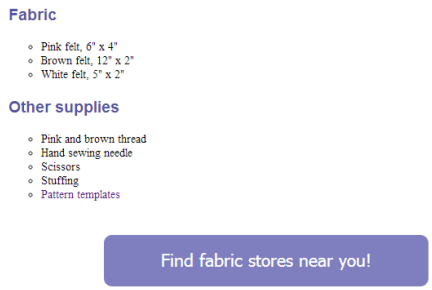
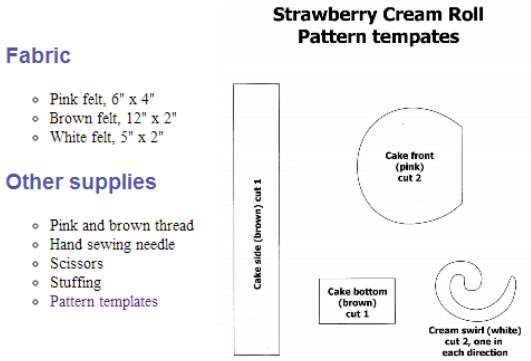
PROTOTYPE URL: http://web.mit.edu/tristan7/Public/application/html/homePage.html

PART OF WEBSITE	HEURISTIC	SEVERITY	PROBLEM
Home 	Aesthetic & Minimalist Design	Minor	Good use of white space, grid layout, and consistent headers. However, due to how repetitive the organization of content is, it is hard to differentiate between different features with a squint test.
	Learnability	Minor	Since nothing "pops out" to demand the user's attention, the user may not know where to focus their gaze if they are new to the website. Additionally, there is no "Home" button (although the "Sew Together" link serves as one, because there is no logo indicating that is the name of the website, it seems to be feature at first glance).
Current Projects 	Affordances	Minor	Although on the Home page under the "Current Projects" header, the user is able to see "Step 2 of 5," the way in which this text is displayed does not allude to its innate connection to the user's progress. (Note: An unimplemented feature that was not documented was the fact that this progress indicator does not change when the user goes on to a next step and returns to the home screen. I recommend that some kind of "Save Progress" button is added to the current project display.)

Current Projects / Sewing Help 	Efficiency, Consistency & Standards	Good	When user clicks on the "Also Helpful" links while mid-project, the dialog boxes match the content and layout that are found in the identical sections under "Sewing Help." This provides for good internal consistency and is an efficient way of getting help while in the middle of working on a project.
Current Projects 	Visibility, Aesthetic & Minimalist Design	Minor	A squint test proves it hard to differentiate between text that serves as instructions for the current step and helpful links related to the current step. It would be good to provide an organized way of differentiating between the links and instruction content with headers, a change in color/font choice, or choosing a different location to place the links on the page.
Sewing Help 	Learnability	Major	When a new user first comes to the "Sewing Help" section, the content holder is completely empty. Although most users would immediately realize that they have to select a page from the categories on the left-hand menu, it would be good to provide some kind of section introduction/instructions to this page rather than leave it blank. Additionally
Sewing Help/Project Search 	Affordances	Minor	The "+" icons next to the category names in "Sewing Help" and "Project Search" only somewhat give the affordance that the lists of can be expanded/collapsed. I would recommend having the category names change color on mouse over and/or having the "+" icon change to a "-" icon when expanded to indicate that it can be collapsed after expansion.

Project Search 	Visibility & Feedback	Major	Once a search filter is clicked, the only way to differentiate between selected/unselected filters is by observing the boldness of the font. It is fairly clear to differentiate between text that is bold or not, but with the stars under the Difficulty header, it is almost impossible to differentiate between stars that are bolded or not (see circled in red in screenshot). I would add another way of displaying to the user that a filter has been selected, potentially by displayed all the selected filters above the search results. I would also change the way that difficulty is assessed (from stars to a different symbol), or select a different font with different glyphs.
Project Search 	Affordances, Learnability	Major	The mouse over color change from black to blue text for the categories of search filters gives a clear affordance to the user that clicking on a filter will cause it to be selected. However, new users may be unaware that multiple filters under one category can be selected for further inclusion in their search. Perhaps changing the filter selection to check boxes or something more visually indicative would help new users.
Everywhere 	Feedback, External Consistency, Learnability	Major	It was a bit surprising to see the headers for each page aligned to the top-right corner of the content pane. Because most users read and scan content in the "Z" order (top-left, top-right, bottom-left, bottom-right), it was not the location I initially expected to see this kind of feedback and suggest moving it to the top-left corner for external consistency, making it easier for new users to gain feedback.
	Internal Consistency, Learnability	Minor	Although all of the headers for each page took on the same format and styling, the "Lounge" page was the only one with informational content below its title. I suggest expanding this to every page for internal consistency as well as added help/guidance for new users who may not know what a page is for.
Lounge 	Visibility, Aesthetic & Minimalist Design	Minor	The "Lounge" suffers a squint test problem: it is hard to differentiate between the description of each lounge and the current people count underneath each description. I would change the color of the font, use icons, or find another simplistic way of displaying this information.

Lounge 	Affordances, External Consistency	Major	Although it was noted that Lounge features are largely unimplemented, it would be useful to have set out additional shallow prototyping for the "My friends" list. Right now, hovering over online usernames causes the mouse to change to an icon that gives the impression that the usernames are links, but nothing occurs when they are clicked. Additionally, this display is externally consistent with many chat room displays which makes it appear as if users can chat with other users individually, outside of the Lounge (I am not sure if this is going to be implemented or not). It would also be useful to provide a way for users to manage their friends list efficiently from this interface, so providing icons for settings/adding friends/etc. would be helpful in the next stage of implementation.
Lounge 	Visibility, Learnability	Minor	The "Start a new lounge" link is not very visible, which makes it hard for new users looking to create a new lounge to figure out how to achieve this task.
Lounge 	Visibility, Efficiency	Minor	In this stage of the implementation, there is only canned data for these lounges. However, if the website were to become highly populated, there could easily be a big problem with finding chat rooms efficiently. Because all of the lounges are displayed the same way, it would be hard to browse through a large listing of them and figure out which ones are relevant or not, or to check back in on a lounge where a user left off. Better categorization/labeling of lounges is needed here to give the user a more efficient experience in browsing new lounges or returning to old ones.

Project Overview  	Aesthetic & Minimalist Design, Internal Consistency	Major	While it is a great feature to have users efficiently locate fabric stores right from page content displaying their "shopping list" for a project, this was one of the largest buttons I saw on the site and it seemed to be unreasonably so large due to its purpose. Although this is a useful functionality, the size of this button in contrast to all of the buttons of the website does not support internal consistency. Additionally, the button's size and the attention it attracts from the user is disproportionate to its functionality, which is quite minor in comparison to other features.
Project Overview  	Efficiency	Minor	Because it is likely that users will want to quickly print the pattern templates of projects they intend to create, it may be even more efficient to provide a "Print" icon next to the "Pattern templates" link that automatically allows users to print it right from the "Project Overview" page. Although it is efficient to have the template pop up in a new window (which it already does), this addition would give more experienced users an even more efficient means of starting new projects.
Project Instructions "Step 1: Print and cut out pattern template. Transfer pattern by tracing the template lightly on the appropriately colored felt and then cutting. Step 2: With the pink thread, sew the cake side to the cake bottom as shown, using blanket stitch. Make sure that the right sides are facing OUTWARDS when you are sewing them together! Step 3: With the white thread, sew the two cream spirals to the cake fronts with a running stitch as shown. Make sure the swirls are mirrored! Step 4: With the pink thread, stitch the cake fronts on using blanket stitch, leaving a small opening for stuffing the roll. Step 5: Stuff the roll, then sew the opening closed with blanket stitch."	Help & Documentation	Major	Because the problem statement for this website seems to address many users who are not experienced with sewing and does not assume a fixed age group, the wording and level of detail of the project instructions should enable even the most young & inexperienced users to fully understand how to complete a project. In Step 1, an inexperienced user might not know what kind of pen/pencil to use for tracing the template on the felt. In Steps 2 & 3, a young user may not know which side of the cakes is the "outward" side or may need further explanation for how to "mirror" the swirls. In Step 4, "small opening" could be ambiguous: how small, and what about in situations where someone is making a smaller or larger version of this project in terms of dimensions? More details would be good here, and perhaps videos instead of pictures would be more useful.

Project Instructions	Safety, Learnability, User Controls & Freedom	Major	Although there are very nice graphics and photos that accompany the instructions, there is currently no functionality in place for users to get help on specific projects' instructions or their sub-steps. Linking projects to Lounges or providing a function for users who make mistakes on their projects or would like to share advice on how to recover from mistakes would be extremely useful for users who are attempting difficult projects.