

dol.gov Case Study

CHRIS VAN ERT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

THE PROBLEM:

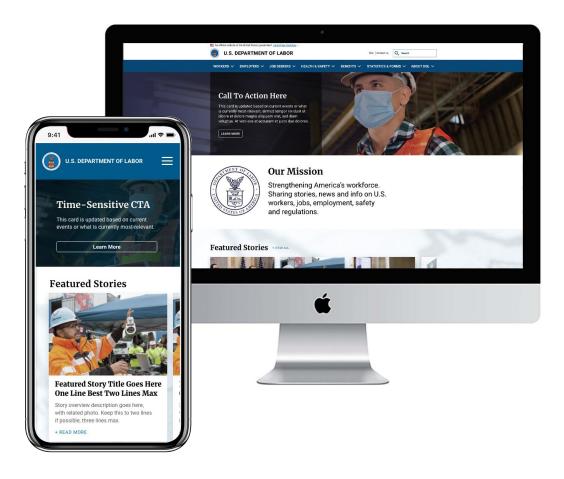
The navigation, search function, and layout of the dol.gov site make it difficult for the user to find what they are looking for.

THE SOLUTION:

Remove link duplication, reorganize categories, create robust search feature, redesign homepage to create a better, more efficient user experience.

MY ROLE: UX research, UI designer

TOOLS: Adobe XD, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, QuickTime



User Interface Analysis

Proto Persona

As an HR manager, Joan is a typical user of the dol.gov website. She frequently visits the site for information, documents, and compliance assistance for the small company she works for. She has a mid to high level of comfort/expertise with the web and technology, but has found the dol.gov site to be difficult to use depending on what she is looking for.



Joan Diaz

Goals/Needs/Frustrations Pain Points/Potential Solutions Goals **Pain Points** · Find health care compliance information for Has to dig deep to find small business her small business compliance information on the DOL site Search function is too basic/returns too Needs many irrelevant results, no filters or · Quick way to find compliance information advanced search features and documentation **Potential Solutions** Frustrations · Recategorize links to remove duplication Lack of time and help · Create logical category groupings, i.e. · Difficult to find what she is looking for on Employee, Employer, Job Seeker, etc. the DOL website Update search functionality

and apps for work.

Joan is 32 years old, and is the head of HR at a small business with 30 employees. She has an

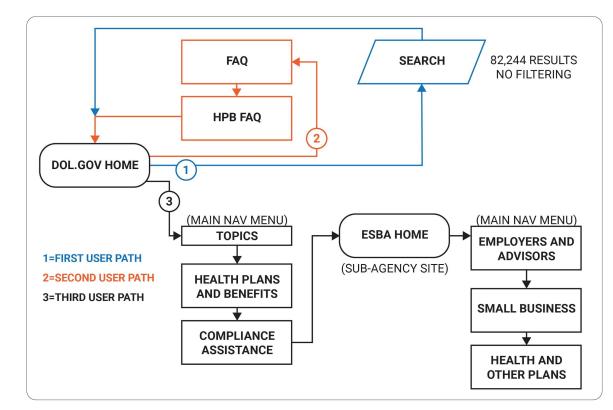
office assistant, but is the lone HR person in the company so she needs to be efficient with

her time management. Joan is comfortable with technology, and routinely uses Microsoft

Office, Zoom, Skype, and other internet sites

User Path

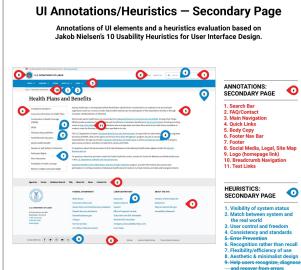
Joan visits the Department of Labor website to find various information, forms, and statistics that relate to her position as the HR manager for a small business. Health care issues are something she deals with on a regular basis. For this particular visit to dol.gov, Joan is looking for health care compliance information to ensure that her company is following the correct procedures and laws.



Joan's circuitous route to the page she was looking for.

UI Annotation and Heuristic Evaluation





User Flow, UI Annotation, & Heuristic Evaluation PDF

PDF contains detailed user flows, UI annotations, and heuristic evaluations of the dol.gov website.

#0071BC link text fails AA accessible color test, with a score of 4.43 out of a passing score of 4.5.

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10. Help and documentation

User Testing

User Test 5

Internet Experience: low to mid level Time to Complete Task: 6 minutes 20 seconds Test Insights:

User 5 spent a while scanning/scrolling homepage. Clicked on the "Coronavirus" link. Clicked "Forms". Then tried search for "health care compliance", returning 82,243 results. User scrolled through results, clicking on an OSHA link. Then returned to homepage, nav bar, "Topics" > "Health Plans and Benefits" link. From here, user clicked "Compliance Assistance" link in side nav. User then clicked "Compliance Assistance webpage" link in body copy. This went to an "Employers and Advisers" page. User clicked "Guidance" link, then back button, then "Plan Administration and Compliance" link, aritying at destination.



Summary

Homepage navigation needs differentiation for employees and employers. Homepage layout/contert needs to help guide users better. Content seems random, purpose of the entire site/department not clearly articulated.

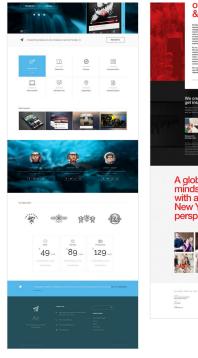
Search function needs advanced features and filters. Keywords need to be updated to match content. Too many duplicate links creates confusion. Content-specific pages contain non-related content, Instances of links on a page with same name that go to olfferent URLs. Some links are endless loops.



User Testing PDF

PDF contains 5 guerrilla user tests, with screenshots, user flows, and insights.

Moodboard









Digitalisation in Denmark

Denmark is one of the world's most digitalised countries. Most transactions are cashless, and almost all interaction with the Danish authorities takes place online.

Digital by default



If you need to pay your taxes, report a bicycle theft, or make an appointment with the public health service in Denmark, you can do it all from your computer. Almost every agency or public official can be reached online, and each citizen has specific digital ginature to "sign" important documents.

The Danish government has made a commitment to go "digital by default", with paper used only as a last resort. The high level of broadband penetration in Denmark makes digital-only services practical and accessible.

Data security and privacy is a high priority in Denmark. Financial transactions and other important services require "two-factor" identification to complete.





InVision Moodboard

Moodboard with screenshots of various UI designs and patterns for inspiration in the redesign of dol.gov

Information Architecture

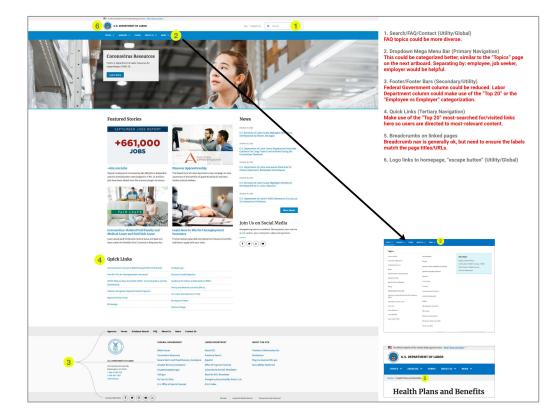
Heuristic Evaluation of dol.gov Navigation (1 of 3)

Global, Primary, Secondary, etc. breakouts shown in image at right.

Areas for improvement:

- FAQ topics should be more diverse. Search needs **filtering** (none at all currently).
- Footer links should be more dol.gov specific to guide users on the site, rather than too many external links. Good place for Employee, Employer, Job Seeker categories.
- Quick Links should be dol.gov's own list of **Top 20** searched for topics. Seems random now.
- Breadcrumbs on secondary pages need to be labeled to **match URL**.

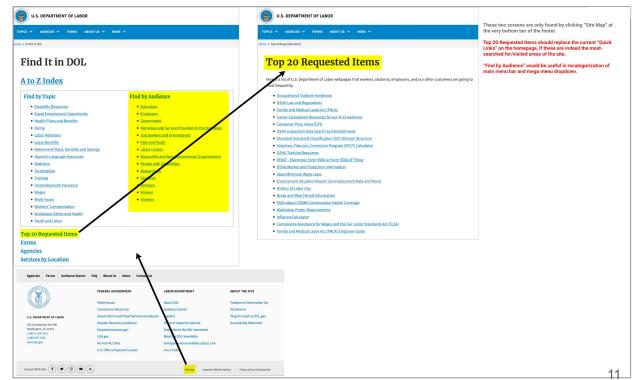
UI Navigation Evaluation PDF



Heuristic Evaluation of dol.gov Navigation (2 of 3)

Site Map link in footer reveals two navigation options that would be helpful if more visible and/or integrated into main navigation.

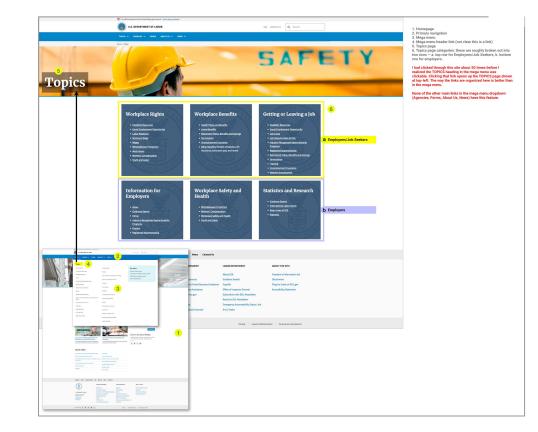
- Find by Audience. This is a very helpful funnel to direct the user to relevant content. "Topics" mega menu could benefit from similar categorization.
- Top 20 Requested Items. The pages that are most visited/requested by users. There are opportunities for more content chunking here, but this list would be the logical template for "Quick Links" on the site's homepage.



Heuristic Evaluation of dol.gov Navigation (3 of 3)

Clicking on the "Topics" header in the mega menu dropdown opens a Topics page that is categorized in a way that makes a bit more sense and has more **structure**.

- Top row is oriented towards Employees and Job Seekers; Bottom row is oriented towards Employers and Researchers
- There are topics in all 6 columns that could pertain to any of the 4 groups mentioned above, but breaking it out in these 6 boxes makes finding content quicker and less-frustrating than the navigation on the homepage.
- This page is a bit of an Easter egg. It is not readily-apparent that the "Topics" header is a link. While doing UX research, I've clicked through this site dozens of times, and did not notice this link until after weeks of using the site. Topics mega menu should be more like this.



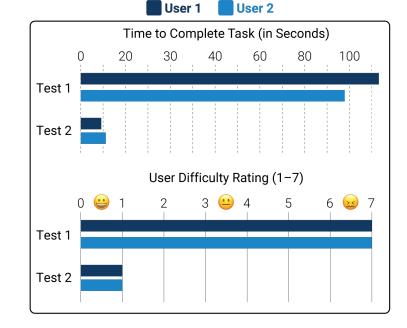
Navigation Usability Tests

Two tasks from the "Top 20" list of most-visited pages were tested, to see how they are represented in the navigation. In the first test to find "Occupational Outlook Handbook", which is the most-requested topic, test users could not find this without using search — unless they happened to find the Top 20 link. The second test to find "Family and Medical Leave Act" only took an average of 10 seconds, with links found in Topics mega menu, as well as in the Quick Links.

While only testing two potential user paths, these tests revealed the difference in user experience based on how the navigation is designed. Someone on the design team for the *dol.gov* site has done the research to determine the most visited links on the site, but the current navigation does not guide the user to those links without a lot of digging. Our redesign will address these and other issues.

These issues are magnified on the mobile site, as the scrolling becomes unwieldy, and lack of content chunking into smaller bits makes navigation very challenging.

User 2 - Test 1 Screen Recording User 2 - Test 2 Screen Recording



Test One: Find "Occupational Outlook Handbook" Initial Click: User 1 "Topics" nav bar; User 2 FAQ Success Path: FAIL — both users needed to use Search.

Test Two: Find "Family and Medical Leave Act"

Initial Click: User 1 Quick Links; User 2 "Topics" nav bar Success Path: User 1 Quick page scan > Quick Links; User 2 Quick page scan > "Topics" nav bar > "FMLA" link in Key Topics sidebar.

Card Sorting

Links in the dropdown/mega menus, Quick Links, and footer were card sorted to create more useful **content chunking** and **categorization**.

Topics and Agencies links in the original scheme produced drop down mega menus with dozens of links, only categorized by alphabetical order. To better guide different user sets to their **relevant content**, the following steps were taken:

1. Topics was expanded to 6 **user groups**: workers, employers, job seekers, safety/health, benefits, statistics/forms.

2. About Us now holds the former News links, as well as all of the Agencies links.

3. Quick Links were changed to show the Top 20 most-visited/requested pages.

4. Search function issues are noted.



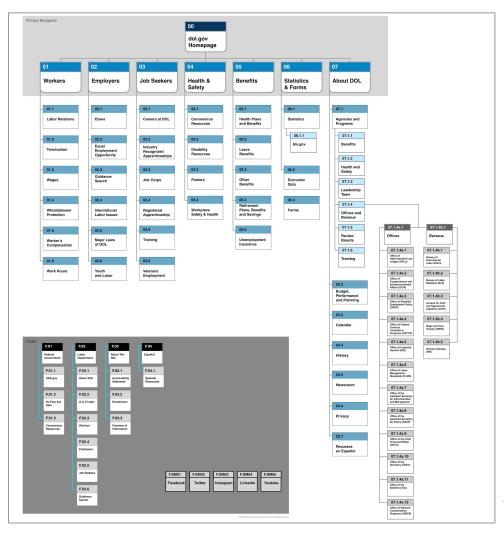
Card Sorting Details PDF

Site Map

The site navigation was reorganized based on the content chunking from the card sorting exercise. The basic number of links is still the same, but they have been put into groups based on the different types of users who may be using the site: workers, employers, job seekers, researchers, etc. The user can find relevant topics quicker now with less drilling-down in the mega menus.

The footer was reorganized similarly. The *Federal Government* and *About the Site* columns were edited down to **minimum required content**. The *Labor Department* column was restructured to mirror the main navigation — with the three main user groups, and a general index.

The detailed site map breakout for "About DOL" is shown for stakeholders to see that previous content is still accounted for, but has been removed from the Primary Navigation and reorganized.



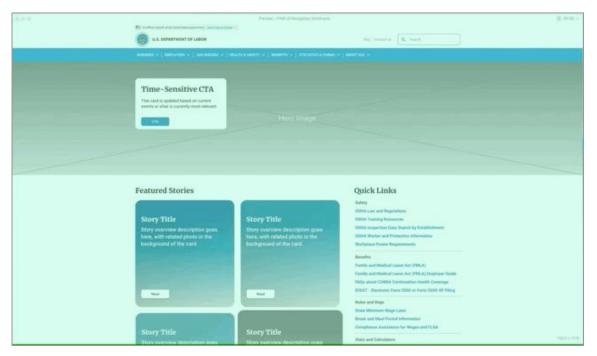


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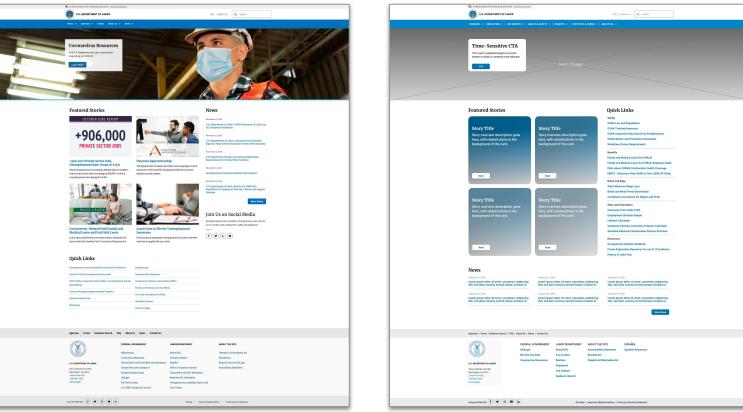
Spanish language links were **deeply nested** in the prior navigation scheme, so a link to these resources was added to the new footer.

Adobe XD Navigation Prototype



Navigation UI – Compare

before



after

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Navigation UI – Dropdown Compare

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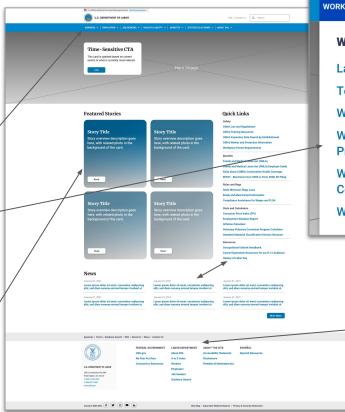
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Navigation UI – Homepage

Homepage UI elements redesign.

The main issue targeted was the mega menu organization. Prior version was only categorized alphabetically, and some mega menus had dozens of links. New Primary Navigation is split into the most-common users for the site to give each group a more-targeted pathway to content.

- Primary Navigation recategorization.
- Dropdown mega menu simplification, with -corresponding landing page link made prominent.
- Quick Links and News swap positions. Quick Links is now the Top 20 most-visited pages. News expands to 3 columns.
- Featured Stories will utilize cards to give more visual interest to a text-heavy page and site. Opportunity to add photos.



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Footer columns were edited to bare essentials.

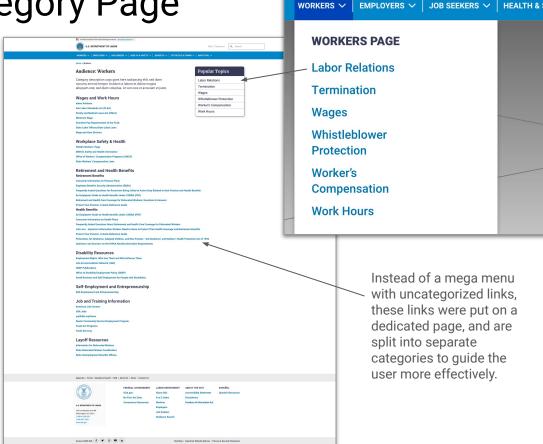
Labor Department column utilizes the new categorization scheme from the Primary Navigation, and a link to Spanish resources was added for quicker access.

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Navigation UI – Category Page

Secondary Page UI elements redesign.

These are landing pages for the main dropdown navigation link categories. Prior version of *dol.gov* did not have readily accessible breakouts for different **user groups/audiences**. The new design accounts for these user groups from the top-level. These category landing pages contain the **group-relevant** links as a list, as well as the **most-popular** topics from the category dropdowns in a secondary navigation box for quick reference.



Navigation UI – Search

Search UI elements redesign.

Previous *dol.gov* search function was a frustrating experience for users. There were no advanced search options or any filters. A search for "health care compliance" in a user test returned **82,243 results** — with <u>no way to filter</u>. Even when working backwards from a specific page or article and entering those specific keywords into search, the results would not match. Essentially, the search function was not very functional at all.

The redesigned search is a dedicated page with multiple **sorting and filtering options** (final methods TBD) that will make this feature a functional tool for users, which is especially important on such a content-heavy site.

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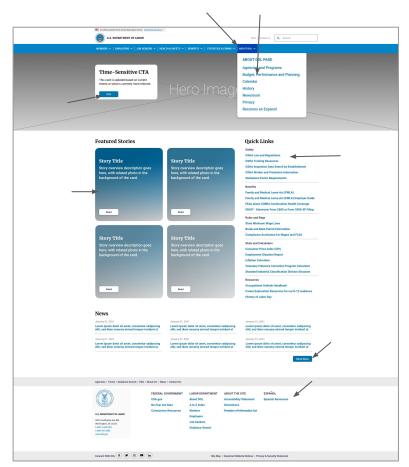


UI Design & Testing

Header & Footer Components & Wireframe: Desktop

- Primary navigation recategorized per new site map, mega menus edited down to smaller lists.
- Footer navigation recategorized per new site map.
- * Cards are used for featured stories.
- * Quick Links displayed as a categorized column of text links.
- Buttons, cards, primary nav links/dropdowns are XD components for reuse throughout site.

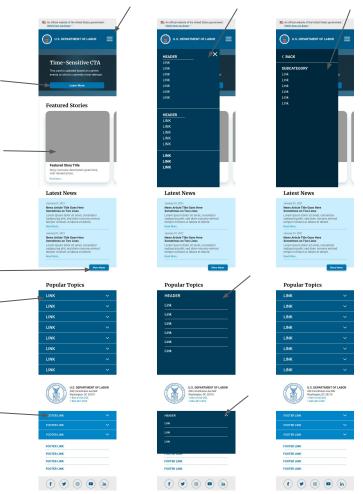
* Not part of header/footer, but part of overall redesign and makes use of XD components



Header & Footer Components & Wireframe: Mobile

- Primary navigation is available via hamburger menu, which creates a nested sliding menu.
- * A sliding card carousel is used for the Featured Stories.
- * News shows two stories and has a button to click for more.
- * Primary navigation is displayed again as dropdown bars.
- Footer has dropdown bars and text links
- Social media links at bottom of footer.
- Hamburger icon, buttons, cards, bar dropdowns are XD components for reuse throughout the mobile site.

* Not part of header/footer, but part of overall redesign and makes use of XD components

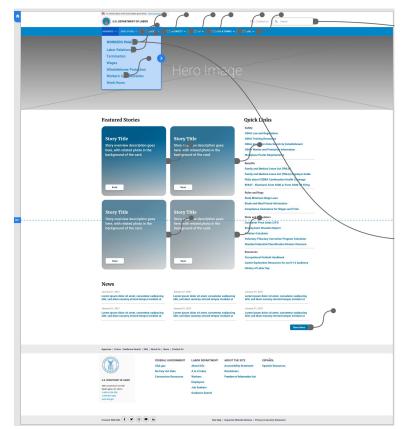


Desktop Clickable Wireframe

Clickable Items for Testing:

- Primary navigation dropdowns
- Call to action buttons
- Cards



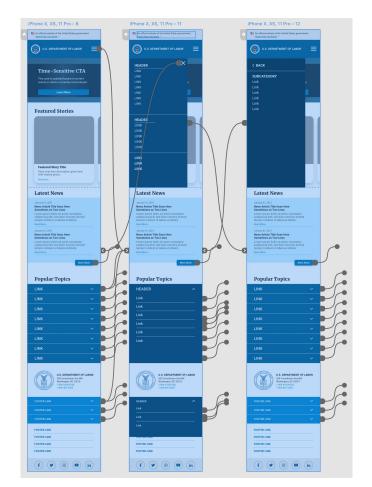


Mobile Clickable Wireframes

Clickable Items for Testing:

- Hamburger button/sliding nested menu
- CTA buttons
- Dropdown bars (Popular Topics)
- Footer dropdown bars

Adobe XD Mobile Clickable Wireframe Link



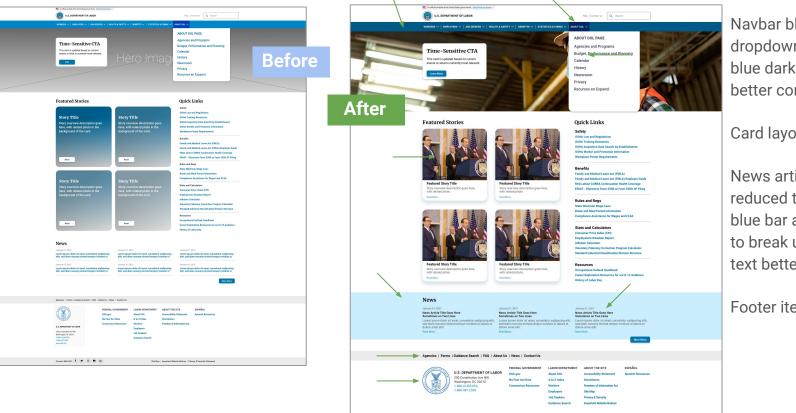
5-Second Tests

- Users were able to locate/use the main features: search, primary navigation, cards, footer.
- User feedback indicated there is a lot of text to scan in order to figure out the various sections.

5-Second Test Screen Recording

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5-Second Tests—Iteration



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Navbar blue darkened, dropdown link text blue darkened for better contrast.

Card layout simplified.

News articles shown reduced to 3, light blue bar added behind to break up page and text better.

Footer items edited

Style Tiles

Style guide providing reference for:

- Overall Tone
- Typography
- Color
- Logo Usage
- Button Styles
- Image Direction
- Graphic and UI Pattern Styles

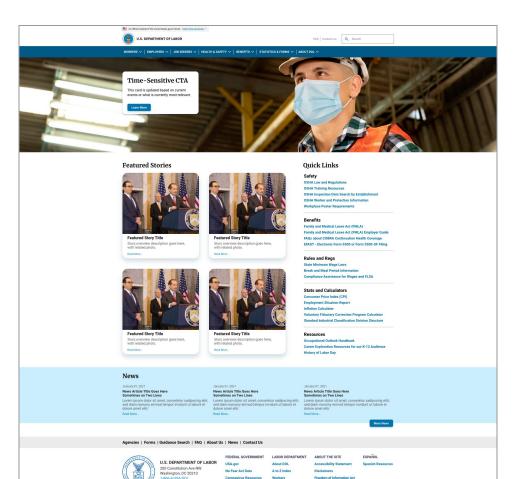
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Styles Applied

Styles applied to the homepage design, with 12-column base grid.

Homepage + Secondary Click-through





Employers

Job Seekers

Guidance Searc

Site Mag

Privacy & Security

Important Website Not

1-866-487-2365

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Styles Applied

Styles applied to the mobile design, with 4-column base grid.

Mobile Home Screen Click-through

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Popular Topics	More News
WORKERS	~
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JOB SEEKERS	~
HEALTH & SAFETY	~
BENEFITS	~
STATISTICS & FORMS	~
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U.S. DEPARTMEN 200 Constitution Ave Washington, DC 2021 1-866-4-USA-OOL	NW

WORKERS

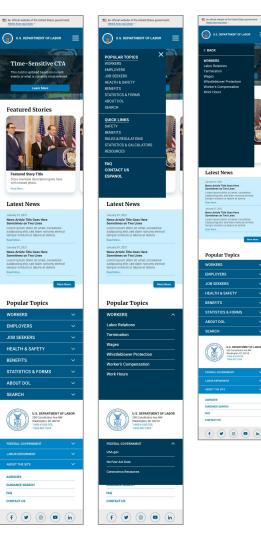
BENEFITS

ABOUT DOL SEARCH

AGENCIES

CONTACT US

FAQ



More News

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LADOF



Interaction Design

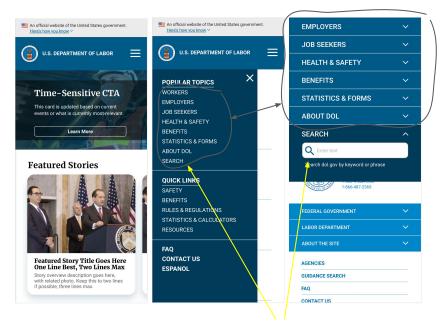
Mobile User Tests

7 user tests were conducted on the mobile wireframe prototype. Users were instructed to:

Find "User Test" card in Featured Stories. Find the "More News" button to access News screen. Find and "use" Search. Find the "Workers" screen link in the main hamburger navigation.

User Test Summary

User Test 1 Recording



Users had difficulty quickly and reliably finding search. This was the most-common issue on all 7 tests.

Several users commented that there were too many links or that repeating the links in both the main menu and towards the bottom of screen was maybe not necessary.

The slider menu should not go deeper than one level.

Mobile Iterations

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WORKERS

BENEFITS

ABOUT DOL

SAFETY

BENEFITS

RESOURCES

CONTACT US

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EMPLOYERS

JOB SEEKERS

HEALTH & SAFETY

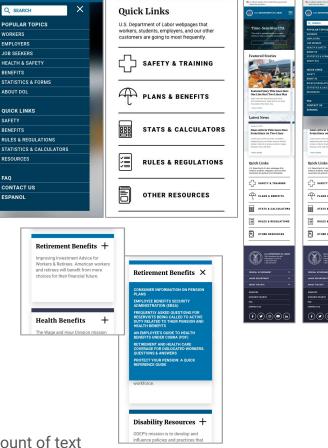
Slider menu revised. Only one-level deep, and search is prominently placed at top.

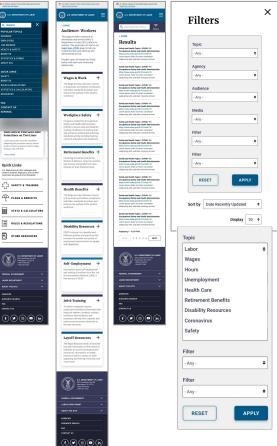
Duplicate links removed from bottom of screen; footer area matches desktop version.

Icons created for Quick Links to provide a break from all of the text in previous version.

Cards used for news stories and on Workers screens to help organize the numerous blocks of text and break up the information into more usable chunks.

Links were put onto cards to cut down the amount of text visible at one time. Main categories are listed along with brief description. Clicking "+" activates menu with related links.





Style Tiles Revision

- Colors updated
- Buttons updated
- Iconography updated
- UI patterns updated

UI STYLE TILE : Department of Labor (dol.gov)				
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Final Versions





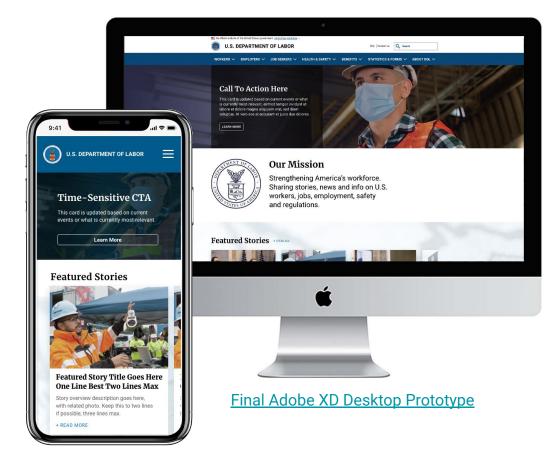
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Summary

Using heuristics, user testing, and iteration cycles, the Department of Labor desktop and mobile sites were redesigned to create a user experience that enabled users to navigate the site more effectively. The layouts were reorganized and redesigned to reduce visual clutter, especially in regards to the numerous "floating" text links in the original version.

The streamlined navigation and content chunking of important topics and categories makes it easier for the user to find what they are looking for, and the addition of images and icons breaks up the monotony of the previous text-heavy site layouts. Search feature was updated to include filtering and sorting.



Final Adobe XD Mobile Prototype