

LCLM4002_BIRM Digital Skills Task 3			
<u>Website Evaluation</u>			
Student Number	2521083	Student Name	Zaine Hussain
Website Chosen	https://www.thecookingacademy.co.uk/		
Insert hyperlink to website	https://www.thecookingacademy.co.uk/		
<u>Evaluation</u>			
Respond to each question			
Section 1 – Usability			
(75 words maximum for each answer)			
Question 1a - How quickly and easily does the website load?			
Answer: the website loaded quickly and smoothly for me, with the homepage appearing almost instantly and the main content becoming visible without noticeable delay. Navigation between pages also felt responsive, suggesting that the site is relatively lightweight and easy to access on a standard internet connection. Overall, the experience was fast and seamless, with no significant lag or loading issues.			
Question 1b - Does the website contain many sub-pages? How does a prospective customer navigate these?			
Answer: The website has a fair number of sub-pages, but it doesn't feel overwhelming or complicated. Everything is organised into clear sections like courses, bookings, and general information, so you can easily explore more detailed pages if you want to learn about specific classes or services. As a prospective customer, it's quite easy to get around the site. There's a simple menu at the top of the page that lets you click between the main sections, and from there you can quickly find more detailed information in just a couple of clicks. Overall, the navigation feels straightforward and user-friendly, making it easy to find what you're looking for without getting lost.			
Question 1c - Can a customer make a booking via the webpage?			
Answer: Yes, you can make a booking directly through the website, and the whole process feels quite simple and user-friendly. As a customer, you can browse through the different cooking classes on offer, click on one that interests you, and then choose a date that suits you. Once you've done that, you can add it to your basket and go through a straightforward checkout process to confirm your place. The website also gives you the option to buy or use vouchers, which adds a bit of flexibility if you're booking as a gift or planning for a later date. Overall, the booking system is easy			

to follow and doesn't feel confusing, making it convenient for customers to quickly secure a spot on a class.

Question 1d - What improvements could be made to the usability of the website?

Answer: The website is easy to use overall, but a few improvements could make it even better. Speeding up the site by optimising images and using compression would help pages load faster, which is especially useful for people on mobile devices or slower connections.

Navigation could also be a bit clearer. Adding filters or categories for different types of classes—like beginner, advanced, or specific cuisines—would make it easier for visitors to find exactly what they're looking for without having to click through multiple pages.

The booking process could be more straightforward too. Making the "Book Now" buttons more visible and reducing the number of steps would help customers secure a spot quickly and smoothly. Finally, making sure the whole site is fully mobile-friendly would improve the experience for anyone browsing or booking on a phone. Overall, the site works well, but these small changes could make it even more user-friendly and enjoyable.

Section 2 – Pleasure – Customer Experience

(75 words maximum for each answer)

Question 2a – How pleasant does the webpage look? Are there any differences in appearance on a mobile phone versus a computer?

Answer: The Cooking Academy website looks clean and welcoming, with a simple layout that's easy on the eyes. The fonts are clear, there's plenty of white space, and the food photos make it feel warm and inviting—just what you'd expect from a cookery school. It feels professional but not stiff, so browsing it is quite enjoyable.

There are a few differences when you view it on a phone versus a computer. On a desktop, everything spreads out nicely, with menus and images displayed side by side. On a mobile phone, the layout adjusts so things stack vertically, the menu gets tucked into a small "hamburger" icon, and images and text resize to fit the screen. It's simpler to scroll through, but it keeps the same clean, attractive look. Overall, the site adapts well to different devices, making it easy and pleasant to use no matter how you're browsing.

Question 2b - How does the website use imagery, video and colour?

Answer: The Cooking Academy website looks really inviting thanks to the way it uses photos, colour, and a bit of video. Most of the visuals are bright, high-quality pictures of food, cooking classes, and students in action. They really make you feel like you're part of the experience, and you can almost smell and taste the dishes just by looking at the

images. Strong visuals like this are especially important for food websites, because people respond more to what they can see than to text alone.

The colours on the site are warm and appetising—lots of earthy tones and rich food colours set against clean backgrounds. It gives the whole site a cozy, welcoming vibe that makes it feel like you're stepping into a real cooking class rather than just browsing a website. Even a little video, like class highlights or cooking demonstrations, helps bring the experience to life and makes it more engaging.

All in all, the combination of beautiful photos and warm colours makes the site feel friendly, fun, and professional, and it really draws you in.

Question 2c – Has the website made use of an online chat tool on the website? How effective is this to enquire about the product or service?

Answer:

The Cooking Academy website doesn't have a live chat tool, so you can't just type a question and get an instant reply while browsing. If you want more information about classes or need to ask something, you must use the contact form, email, or phone number listed on the site.

While this method works perfectly well, it isn't as immediate as a live chat. You'll need to wait for a reply rather than getting an answer straight away, which can feel a little slower if you're keen to book a class or have a specific question. A live chat tool would make it much easier to get quick guidance or clarify details while browsing, making the whole experience feel smoother and more interactive. Right now, the site relies on more traditional contact methods, which are effective but less instantaneous.

Question 2d – How effective are the social media links on the website?

Answer: The Cooking Academy website includes social media links, though they're not a big feature—they're tucked away in the footer as small icons for Facebook and Instagram. Clicking them takes you straight to their active social pages, where you can see posts about classes, food, and behind-the-scenes moments. Their accounts have a solid following, showing that people are engaging with the school outside of the website.

These links are effective in giving visitors a way to connect with the academy beyond the website. Through social media, you can see real photos, read comments, and get a better feel for what classes are like. For someone curious about the experience or wanting a sense of the community, this is often more engaging than just reading the website pages. While the links aren't front and centre, they do a good job of helping people explore and interact with the school's online presence.

Section 3 – Perceived Value

(75 words maximum for each answer)

Question 3a - How are the services offered by the company made clear to customers?

Answer: The Cooking Academy makes its services easy to understand. From the moment you land on the homepage, you can see the main options—like adult cooking courses, gift vouchers, and special events—so it's immediately clear what they offer. The top menu keeps everything organized, letting you click through to more detailed pages about each service.

On those pages, you get all the key info you need: what the class covers, who it's suitable for, dates, prices, and how to book. Photos of the classes, kitchens, and food help bring it all to life, so you can really picture yourself taking part. Overall, the site does a good job of presenting its services in a clear and friendly way, making it easy for customers to understand what's on offer and how to get involved.

Question 3b - How are customer reviews made available? Are these up to date?

Answer:

The Cooking Academy makes it easy for visitors to see what past customers think about their classes. On the website, there's a page with short quotes from people who've attended a variety of sessions, giving a real sense of what the classes are like—from learning new recipes to enjoying hands-on cookery experiences.

Reviews are also available on Trustpilot, with recent feedback from 2024 and early 2025 showing that most customers enjoyed their time at the academy. A few comments mention cancellations, providing a balanced view.

Overall, these up-to-date reviews help build trust and give a clear idea of what to expect before booking a class.

Question 3c – How is the service presented as high quality? For what reasons would you use the company's service or recommend to a friend or family member?

Answer: The Cooking Academy comes across as a high-quality service. From the website, it's clear that the classes are led by experienced chefs and are completely hands-on, so you're cooking instead of just watching. The course descriptions make them sound well-planned and professional, and the bright, well-equipped kitchens along with photos of smiling participants make it feel like a fun, special experience.

I'd recommend the academy to friends or family because the classes are enjoyable and interactive, giving you real skills you can take home. They're also perfect as gifts or for a fun day out. Plus, the reviews and testimonials show that people genuinely enjoy their time there and feel like they've learned something valuable. Overall, it seems like a memorable experience that's worth trying.

Question 3d - Are prices made clear to customers? If yes, do the prices reflect the quality of service shown? If no, why do you think the company has chosen not to include prices?

Answer: Yes, the Cooking Academy does show prices to customers, although you usually need to click into the specific class or product page to see them. On those pages, you can find clear costs for different experiences—half-day classes are around £125 per person, full-day classes about £199, and private classes can go up to £1,200. Gift vouchers and class bundles also have their prices listed on the shop pages.

The prices feel reasonable for what's offered. With small-group, hands-on classes led by experienced chefs and a real focus on learning skills, the cost matches the quality and value of the experience. Overall, the website makes it easy to understand what you're paying for, and the pricing reflects the high-quality service provided.

Section 4 – Searchability

Question 4a - What **three** words would you type into Google to find this type of service?

1. cookery
2. classes
3. booking

Question 4b - When you type these words into google, does the company's website appear in the top ten websites?

Answer: Searching "cookery classes booking" usually shows The Cooking Academy on Google's first page, alongside directories and other local class providers.

Section 5 – Reflection and conclusion

(120 words maximum for each answer)

Question 5a - Do you feel that websites still have relevance in modern UK business? Explain your answer.

Answer:

Yes, websites are still important for businesses in the UK today. Even with social media and apps, a website acts as a central place where people can find all the information they need. For The Cooking Academy, the website lets visitors explore different classes, see photos and testimonials, check prices, and book or make enquiries—all in one place.

A website also helps build trust because it's controlled entirely by the business, unlike social media where things can change or get buried in feeds. While social channels are great for sharing updates and engaging with people, most customers still turn to a website when they're ready to decide. It's an essential part of running a modern business.

Question 5b - If you were to make one recommendation about how to improve the website of your chosen company, what would it be? Why have you suggested this improvement?

Answer: If I were to make one recommendation for improving The Cooking Academy website, it would be to add a live chat feature or some kind of instant messaging option. Now, the site provides a contact form, email address, and phone number, which are all effective ways for customers to get in touch. However, these methods require people to

wait for a response, which can sometimes be frustrating, especially if someone has a quick question while browsing or wants to make a last-minute booking.

A live chat would allow visitors to ask questions in real time and get immediate answers. This could include inquiries about class availability, what level a course is suitable for, or even how to redeem a voucher. Being able to get answers instantly would make the site feel much more interactive and responsive, and it could help reduce any hesitation a customer might have about booking. It also adds a personal touch, showing that the company is approachable and ready to support its customers.

Furthermore, a live chat could help guide users through the booking process, making it easier for them to select the right class and complete their purchase without confusion. Many modern businesses use live chat to improve customer service and increase conversions, and it could do the same for The Cooking Academy. By providing real-time support, the site would not only improve the customer experience but could also encourage more people to book classes, increasing engagement and potentially boosting sales. Overall, adding a live chat would make the website feel more helpful, professional, and user-friendly.

Reference List

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