Lessons Learned from Web Site Usability Testing

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What we'll cover in this session

- 15 lessons learned from usability testing
  - with examples
  - and discussion

- your experiences; your data; your questions
Lesson 1:
Users are goal-oriented and topic-oriented

When did you last go to the web?
Why did you go to the web?
What were you trying to do or what were you looking for?

Just want a good loan for my Jeep!
I'm rushing to a meeting; I just need one answer.
What difference did it make?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Old site</th>
<th>New site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You want to find a nursing home near you for a relative</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to find out what diabetes is and how to prevent it</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to know what housing organizations help the homeless in your area</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to know what the HHS budget was in Fiscal Year 2001</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cousin is considering a career in medical research and asked you to find out if HHS offers financial aid to undergraduate students.</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average success rates</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success with the new site
- Getting off the home page onto a good path: 97%
- Getting off the next menu page still on a good path: 87%
- Completing the scenario successfully: 82%

Lesson 2:

Users don't want to read while navigating

- Home page
- Scan, select, and move on pages (pathway pages)
- Scan and get information pages (destination pages)
- Scan and give information pages (forms)

Navigation Destination

See Rosenfeld and Morville, 2002.

Lesson 2:

Users don't want to read while navigating

- Home page
- Scan, select, and move on pages (pathway pages)
- Scan and get information pages (destination pages)
- Scan and give information pages (forms)

Navigation Destination

See Rosenfeld and Morville, 2002.
Lesson 3:
Users really do not want to read on pathway pages

- They are focused on the "scent of information"
  – on moving towards their goals.

Lesson 4:
Users will tolerate a few more clicks, if the pathway is quick and smooth

- The smoothness of the pathway is more important than the number of clicks (within reason).
- If people have to read or think – or if they make mistakes – on pathway pages, getting to the destination takes extra time and is frustrating.

http://www.occ.treas.gov/customer.htm
Lesson 5:
Even on destination pages, users are not likely to read (or notice) anything above in-page links.

Lesson 6:
In-page links help users
- Get a quick overview of what is on the page
- Get quickly to the specific topic they need
- Decide quickly that what they need is not there

Mmm. Maybe this one.  No. Nothing on this page.
Lessons Learned from Web Site Usability Testing
STC, Seattle, May 2005

Understanding Chemotherapy (section 2 of 10)

* What is Chemotherapy?
* How Does Chemotherapy Work?
* What Can Chemotherapy Do?
* Is Chemotherapy Used With Other Treatments?
* Which Drugs Are Given?
* What About Clinical Trials?
* Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Table of Contents for Booklet

What is Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is the treatment of cancer with drugs that can destroy cancer cells. These drugs often are called “anticancer” drugs.

How Does Chemotherapy Work?

Normal cells grow and die in a controlled way. When cancer occurs, cells in the body that are not normal

Facing Forward

LIFE AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

This booklet is available in other formats.

Table of Contents for Booklet

Although your treatment has ended, you are still coping with how it affects your body. It can take time to get over the effects of cancer treatment. Each person’s schedule is different. You may wonder how your body should feel during this time and what may be a sign that cancer is coming back. This section talks about some of the problems that can occur when treatment is over. Some of the most common effects people report are:

* Fatigue
* Pain
* Lymphedema, or swelling
* Problems with their mouth or teeth
* Problems with weight and eating
* Loss of bladder or bowel control
* Menopause symptoms
* Changes in their sex lives

http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/chemotherapy-and-you

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Lesson 7:
Users look for in-page links in the content area, not the left navigation column

Site visitors wanted links, but they did not look here.

http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/pilotfaq.cfm

Lesson 8:
Users have even less tolerance for paragraphs than on paper

Blah! Blah! Blah!

I'm not reading all of this!

Ah! Bullets!
That's what I like!
Bam! Bam! Bam!
You get what you need.
Lessons Learned from Web Site Usability Testing
STC, Seattle, May 2005

Update Address with FAA

To update your address, submit a signed, written request stating your name, date of birth, social security number and/or certificate number, and your new address to the mailing address below. Click here for a form to update your address with the FAA or create an account and update your address online.

Mailing Address: FAA
Airmen Certification Branch, AF5-760
PO Box 26082
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0802

A post office box is not acceptable as a residence address. A residence address must be furnished; however, if you wish a post office box-prefixed mailing address, you may furnish both. If your residence address is listed as General Delivery, Rural Route, or Star Route, you must provide directions, or a diagram, for locating the residence affected by your signature. A new certificate is not required when updating your address and will not be issued automatically.

Replacement of Your Lost or Destroyed Knowledge Test Report

For replacement of lost or destroyed knowledge test report for which the certificate has not been issued, submit a signed, written request stating your name, date of birth, social security number, type of test, and the date the test was taken to the mailing address below. Click here for a form to request replacement of your lost or destroyed knowledge test report.

Mailing Address: FAA

http://registry.faa.gov/airmen.asp#UpdateAddress

My unofficial draft revision

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Lesson 9:
If a link lands users in the middle of a page, they may scroll before reading – and then get lost

So, think carefully about whether you should have a long scrolling page or one topic per page

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Lessons Learned from Web Site Usability Testing
Lesson 10:
If you think about your users, you might really help them with innovative solutions

- Users: Workers who are injured on the job
- Problem: Give them all the information they need in a way they can use
- Solution: Layer in place

Credit to:
- Dana Botka
- Suzanne Boyd
- Renee Guillierie
- and the rest of the team at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

http://www.lni.wa.gov/Main/claimCBT/phase1.asp
Lessons Learned from Web Site Usability Testing
STC, Seattle, May 2005

Injured at work.

If you are injured at work and your claim is accepted, workers’ compensation (LBE) pays for medical care directly related to your accident. If you are unable to work following your injury, you may be eligible for a portion of your lost wages. Most important, LBE may help coordinate a safe and timely return to work. (NOTE: Find out if your employer is self-insured. If so, the process will be different.)

Make sure you:
- See a doctor if needed.
- Tell your employer.

Find out:
- What your employer needs to do.
- What your doctor needs to do.

© More about workers’ comp claims
© Access claim information online in our Claims & Account Center

1. Injured at work
2. File a claim
3. Approved claim
4. Rejected claim
5. Return to work
6. Closed claim

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Lesson 11:
If you don't meet users' expectations very quickly, they'll leave

If you are injured at work and your claim is accepted, workers' compensation (L&I) pays for medical care directly related to your accident. If you are unable to work following your injury, you may be eligible for a portion of your lost wages. Most important, L&I may help coordinate a safe and timely return to work. (NOTE: Find out if your employer is self-insured. If so, the process will be different.)

Make sure you:
- Get first aid.
- See a doctor if needed.
- Tell your employer.

Find out:
- What your employer needs to do.
- What your doctor needs to do.
- More about workers' comp claims.
- Access claim information online in our Claim & Account Center.

Questions workers have:
- How do I find the right doctor?
  - Many injured workers do not have a regular doctor. If this is you, do your research. Ask contacts in your community for recommendations. Make sure your doctor is qualified to treat your injury and is familiar with the workers' compensation system. Go to the American Medical Association's website to search for a doctor or to the Washington State Medical Association's website for consumer advice. Not satisfied with your care? You have the right to change doctors or seek a second opinion.
- May I choose my doctor or seek a second opinion?
- How do I file a workers' compensation claim?
- How will I know if I'm covered?

If you're interested, you can visit www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/import/...
Lesson 12:

Users look at links and headings

Headings help information stay in users' heads

- Where do your eyes go on a typical web page?
- Blind users also skim from link to link and from heading to heading.
- A web page needs even more headings than a page of print does.
- How do you get more headings on a page?
  - Let go of the words.
  - Fewer words can mean better comprehension and greater satisfaction.

Auckland, New Zealand: The City of Sails

By Joe Volt

It has been 45 years since I first visited the emerald green city of Auckland on New Zealand’s North Island. As a young man, I was traveling through the South Pacific by steamer and disembarked in Auckland to work on a research project in a small fishing village in the far north. After all these years, Auckland remains one of my favorite cities. It is a city of water, and in all seasons, the water provides a dramatic backdrop for the city’s many attractions. Auckland is built on the water, with the city’s most iconic landmark being the Auckland waterfront, which features two distinctive landmarks: the Sky Tower and the Viaduct Basin.

Seabirds and Sails

Auckland, located on the North Island, is one of the most beautiful and cosmopolitan cities in the world. The city is known for its beautiful beaches, lush parks, and friendly people. Auckland is a perfect destination for any traveler, whether it be for business or pleasure.

Getting Started

Getting to Auckland is easy, and there are many ways to get there. The city is served by two international airports: Auckland International Airport and Hamilton International Airport. Both airports offer a wide range of flights to destinations around the world.

Arriving in Auckland

When you arrive in Auckland, you will be greeted by friendly, helpful people. The airport is well-equipped with all the necessary facilities, including customs, immigration, and baggage claim. There are many taxi services available at both airports, and public transportation is also available.

Getting Around Auckland

Getting around Auckland is easy. The city has a well-developed public transportation system, including buses, trams, and trains. Taxis are also available, and they are reasonably priced.

Retail

Auckland has a wide variety of retail options, including shopping malls, boutiques, and independent stores. Many of the city’s best-known shopping destinations are located in the CBD, including Queen Street, Ponsonby Road, and K Ponsonby Road.

Hotels

Auckland has a wide variety of hotels, ranging from budget accommodations to luxury resorts. Some of the city’s best-known hotels include the Pullman Auckland, The Langham, and the Sofitel Auckland.

Sights

Auckland has many sights to see, including the Sky Tower, the Viaduct Basin, and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. The city’s vibrant cultural scene is also a highlight, with many museums, galleries, and theaters to choose from.

Bars and Restaurants

Auckland has a great nightlife scene, with many bars and restaurants to choose from. Some of the city’s best-known bars include The Elegant Gentleman, The Longest Bar, and The Happy Valley.

Activities

Auckland offers many outdoor activities, including hiking, cycling, and kayaking. The city is also a great destination for golf, with many courses available.

Events

Auckland hosts many events throughout the year, including the Auckland Arts Festival, Auckland Rugby Sevens, and the Auckland International Festival of the Arts.

Shopping

Auckland has many great shopping options, including the Auckland Mall, Sylvia Park, and the Britomart Shopping Centre.
Lesson 13:
Space matters! Too little space drives users away

Fact Sheet-Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

- Space arrangements of the registration sections can encourage users to enter incorrect information, leading to eventual incorrect information being entered in the database. A simple error message or a different color should be used to indicate incorrect input.
- Space constraints in the registration section can make it difficult for users to read and understand the instruction. Reducing the space allocated to the instruction can help users read it more easily.
- Space constraints in the registration section can make it difficult for users to select the correct option. Providing more space for the options can help users select the correct one.
- Space constraints in the registration section can make it difficult for users to input their information. Providing more space for the input fields can help users input their information more easily.


What is your reaction to the spacing on this web page?

Evidence from workshops, not usability testing

http://www.fema.gov/about/process/, 11/2/2004
Lesson 14:  
Space matters! Too much space makes it hard for users to see how the page is organized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. to Fri. 10 - 9</td>
<td>Montrose and Main next to City Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Sun. 10 - 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use Cascading Style Sheets to get the headings close to the text they cover.

Lesson 15:  
Words matter!

- Be careful of document names.  
  *Roadmap for Performance-Based Navigation*

- Think how a section heading will work as a link.  
  *Mailing Address Releasibility Status*

- Think about even what may seem like traditional links.  
  *Site Map*

Is this where I get maps?  
Huh?

Maybe this is where I'll find locations for local offices.  
Courtesy of Suzanne Boyd  
Try *Topic Index*  
or *Site Index*
Bibliography: Writing for the Web

Some good recent sources on writing for the web


Krug, S., 2000, Don't Make Me Think, A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, Indianapolis, IN: Que Publishing.


Redish, J. C., in preparation, Letting Go of the Words, (a book on writing web content that works) San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann.

Redish, J. C., 2004, Writing for the web: Letting go of the words, Intercom, 51 (6), June, 4-10.


Theofanos, M. F., Mulligan, C. P., and Redish, J. C., 2004, Redesigning the portal of the Department of Health and Human Services, User Experience (magazine of the Usability Professionals' Association), 3 (6), Spring, 4-7.

**Recent research on accessibility**

Theofanos, M. F. and Redish, J. C., 2003, Guidelines for accessible and usable web sites: Observing users who work with screen readers, *Interactions*, X (6), November-December, 38-51. (This paper is available in html and as a pdf from [http://www.redish.net/content/papers.html](http://www.redish.net/content/papers.html).

Theofanos, M. F. and Redish, J. C., 2005, in press, Helping low-vision and other users with web sites that meet their needs: Is one site for all feasible, *Technical Communication*, 52, 1, February, 9 – 20. (This paper is available as a pdf from [http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/stc/tc](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/stc/tc). It is free if you are a member of the Society for Technical Communication. For others, there is a $10 charge to download the paper.)

**A few books on techniques for usability**


**Some of the older research that supports guidelines for writing well**


**Useful web sites**

- [www-boxesandarrows.com](http://www-boxesandarrows.com)
- [www-stcsiq.org/usability](http://www-stcsiq.org/usability)
- [www-upassoc.org](http://www-upassoc.org)
- [www-usability.gov](http://www-usability.gov)
- [www-usability.gov-methods-collecting_writing.htm](http://www-usability.gov-methods-collecting_writing.htm) (the section of Usability.gov with guidelines for writing for the web)
- [www-usabilitynews.org](http://www-usabilitynews.org)
- [www-useit.com](http://www-useit.com)
- [www-websitetips.com](http://www-websitetips.com)