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User Experience 60502

Assignment 11: Usability analysis introduction

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A: Project Description

1. https://www.loop11.com/ui/?l11_uid=106180
2. I will need you to go to a webpage and find a specific product. Please open either Chrome or Firefox, go to the Google search page, then navigate to the Apple website, and find a product page for a 13-inch M2 MacBook Air with 16GB of RAM.

   I will need you to go to a webpage and find a specific product. Please open either Chrome or Firefox, go to the Google search page, then navigate to the Best Buy website, and find a product page for a 13-inch M2 MacBook Air with 16GB of RAM.

3. https://www.google.com

4. My success URLs were criteria only, for **Task1** they must contain the words apple, air, 16gb, and m2. For **Task2** they must contain the words bestbuy, air, 16gb, and m2.

B: Discussion

1. I selected these two websites because I am very familiar with both, particularly for the finding deals on Apple computers for people. Apple and Best Buy are my baselines whenever I provide people with links. The other reason was that all of success criteria where the same when you land on the product description.

2. As stated above I am very familiar with each website and very familiar with Apple products.

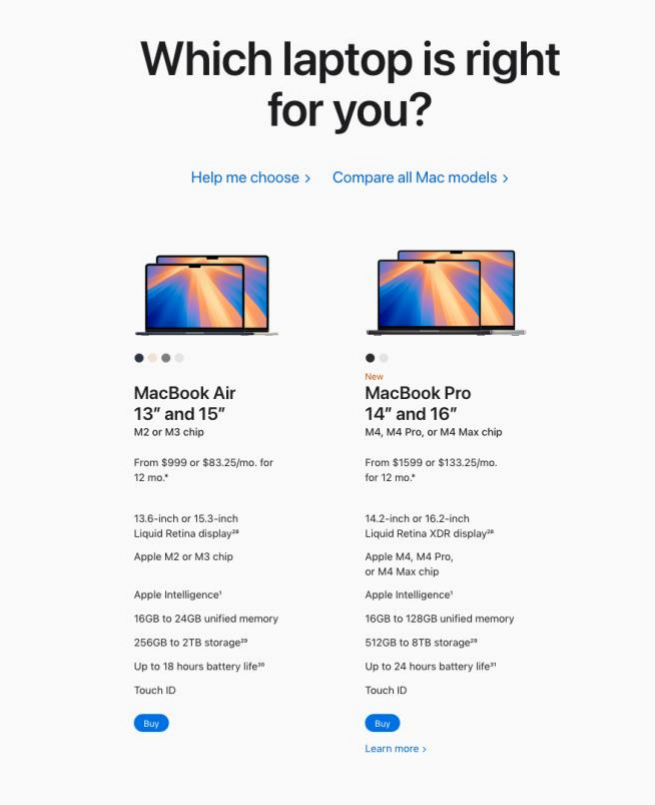
3. I think that the task represents what a typical user of my understanding would do if they were looking for a specific product. After the test ended, I realized that the average user is not as familiar with these products or websites as I am.

4. The user story would be a persona of average understanding needing to get a new computer, they realize there is a sale on a specific model, they navigate to the manufacture website, then they check the pricing at a competitor, where they ultimately purchase the computer that they are looking for.

5. I expected everyone to be able to complete both tasks. I think that Best Buy is easier for an average user to use to find a specific product, because of how you select products on the Apple website. The question-based approach that Apple use to fit the computer to perspective buyers seems to less intuitive for people who are not as familiar with their products and the functionality of the Apple website. It was not as easy or intuitive for the users to navigate to the end product page for the specific product, which resulted in fewer completed attempts.

C: Review and analyze

1. Right away my biggest concerns are with the amount of Fails and Abandons on both tasks. There was a higher Abandon rate on the Apple task, which is understandable given how different the selection method is on the Apple page. For example, if you are looking at MacBook Airs, you need to click on the Mac section in the global navigation menu, then pick MacBook Air from the menu at the top of the screen, then scroll through a bunch of animation to get to a very small “Buy” button toward then end of the page:



If you missed the "Buy" button in the action bar and the top of the page, you must scroll way down to find this second button. Compound that with the fact that people who are not Apple users are probably not going to be familiar with the difference between a MacBook Air and MacBook Pro, and you have a recipe for failure and abandonment. After locating this button, the user is still not done. They need to find and select the processor and size from the MacBook Air page. After selecting the 13-inch, they still need to click on a "Select" button which takes them to the actual product page which contains the success criteria. There is a slightly easier way to do it by searching, either in the start page Google or the site itself, but most users are going to be more inclined to navigate through the Apple site hierarchy to get to this page, which isn't particularly user friendly for people who are not familiar with the Apple page or Apple products.

The most common path to success on the Apple page required 7.3 page clicks to land on the product page for the correct computer. By comparison, Best Buy is more streamlined to manage, both on the Best Buy site and when navigating to the product from a Google search. The lostness rating of 0.81 for Apple versus 0.34 for Best Buy reinforces these assumptions.

2. I do believe that there is an unfair comparison in the sites, and that comes down to the Loop11 application, and the wording of my tasks, where I stated that the user needed to use Chrome or Firefox. If they were using a desktop, this wouldn't matter, but if they were using a mobile device, they would be inclined to open a browser and then they would abandon both tasks in the application. The fact that all the abandonment happened in the first task, the Apple task, helps to reinforce this idea.

3. I believe that Best Buy has greater usability than the Apple site. Average page views were similar between the two sites at 4.8 for Apple versus 4.5 for Best Buy, but the difference lies in the maximum, where Apple was at 11 for success, 14 for Fail, versus Best Buy being at six for success and 8 for fail. The average duration on the Apple site was almost twice as long as Best Buy (2:21 versus 1:25), the lostness rating for Apple was almost triple the Best Buy amount (0.81 versus 0.34).

   Best Buy came in significantly higher in success rate with 38%, however the failure rate was much higher at 61%, with 0% abandonment, versus Apple's 18% success, 36% failure and 45% abandonment. The abandonment rating may have been caused by the Loop11 app and people abandoning the study at the very first task (Apple), however.

4. The minimum and average scores for both sites were similar, with the Maximum for Apple being much higher. I attribute this to people giving up early, driving scores down, and to the complexity of the Apple site as described above.

5. The most common success path for the Apple site was to use searches the whole way through, starting with Google. Then the user clicked on the appropriate buttons to end up on the success page. It required seven clicks to get there. This is what I would expect a user to do to get to the pages, but it is overly complex due to the number of pages the user must click through to get to the product page.

   For Best Buy, this process was shorter, with four pages, however two of them show the same google search for Best Buy, so I am not sure why that is the way it is. If you search for the particular product from the Best Buy search bar in google, you can go right to the page from the results, which may be what was supposed

to be shown. I am unsure. These did not differ from my expectations after setting up the tasks.

6. The most common fail path was not doing anything from the start page for the first task (Apple), which I assume is due to the people using clicking out of the application and opening a browser. Of the three users who did this, one was not on a mobile, and the other two were on mobile devices. There was multiple fail points distributed throughout the click streams. I attribute this to the design of the Apple page. I have been visiting the Apple page for years and I know a lot about Apple products, so this complexity didn't really occur to me when I set up the study. I was happy that I had found product pages with matching qualifiers in it, so I didn't really take the complexity into account while I was setting this up.

   For Best Buy, the complexity of the results was less, and the amount of unique fail scenarios was also less. I align this with the simpler hierarchy of the Best Buy site, and the fact that the results are easier from a search or through page navigation.

7. With Apple, the most abandons happened at the starting page, Google. People did not click on anything else. I assume this is because they were using the Loop11 application and clicked out, or they did not know how to access the instructions to continue. The amount of unique abandons would be caused by the complexity of the site, and unfamiliar users not knowing that they needed to click the small "Buy" and "Select" buttons and just giving up on the entire study, which is why all the abandons happened in the Apple task. The simplicity of navigating the Best Buy site after dealing with Apple allowed the subjects who made it to that task to complete it with relative ease.

8. My initial impression is that both sites fulfill basic utility of finding products, but that Apple's process for selecting them is unnecessarily complex, particularly for novice users. This complexity leads to lower levels of learnability, particularly for subjects who are not familiar with the products.

   Compared to the straightforward nature of the Best Buy site, the navigation, excessive scrolling and animation, and the use of small, unfamiliar buttons to select products is highly inefficient, particularly for people that are not multi-decade Apple users. Memorability is the only thing that allows people to navigate the Apple website with any efficiency when looking for this product,

based on my personal experience with setting up the study, which is backed up by the results of people failing out or abandoning the Apple task.

Both sites are safe as there isn't a high chance of someone accidently adding their payment information and address and buying a computer they do not want while looking at this site. It seems that Best Buy's straightforward approach to site architecture and easily accessible product pages makes it easier to find specific products on the Best Buy page.

9. SUS came in at 66 for Apple and 80 for Best Buy. This aligns with the data showing people being lost throughout the Apple site and failing or abandoning the study.

10. **UX Research Report: Analysis of Usability Test for Apple and Best Buy Websites**

    Introduction

    This report presents an analysis of the usability test results for the Apple and Best Buy websites, focusing on the task of locating a specific product: a 13-inch M2 MacBook Air with 16GB of RAM. The analysis includes task completion rates, lostness metrics, page views, task duration, and System Usability Scale (SUS) scores. Based on these findings, recommendations are provided to enhance user experience on both websites.

    Findings

    Apple Website

    Task Completion and Abandonment Rates:

    Abandonment Rate: 45% of participants abandoned the task, indicating potential issues with task clarity or motivation.

    Success Rate: Only 18% successfully completed the task, suggesting significant usability challenges.

    Failure Rate: 36% attempted but failed to complete the task, highlighting obstacles in task flow.

    Lostness Metric:

Recorded at 0.82, indicating high levels of user disorientation during navigation.

Page Views:

Participants required an average of 4.9 page views, suggesting inefficiencies in navigation or search functionality.

Task Duration:

Average duration was 2 minutes and 21 seconds, which, in context with low success and high abandonment rates, suggests challenges even for those who completed the task.

System Usability Scale (SUS) Score:

The SUS score was 66, indicating below-average usability.

Best Buy Website

Task Completion Rate:

Successful Completion: 38% of participants successfully completed the task.

Failure Rate: 61% failed, but notably, 0% abandoned the task, showing commitment despite difficulties.

Lostness Metric:

Recorded at 0.38, suggesting moderate difficulty in navigation.

Page Views:

Participants required an average of 4.7 page views, indicating a somewhat complex site structure.

Task Duration:

Average time was 1 minute and 25 seconds, reflecting relatively efficient task completion for successful participants.

System Usability Scale (SUS) Score:

The SUS score was 80, indicating good usability.

Analysis

Apple Website

The high abandonment and failure rates, coupled with the high lostness metric, suggest significant navigation and search functionality issues. The below-average SUS score further emphasizes the need for improvements.

Best Buy Website

While the Best Buy website had a higher success rate and better SUS score, the moderate lostness metric and high failure rate indicate room for improvement, particularly in navigation efficiency.

Recommendations

Apple Website

Improve Navigation and Search Functionality:

Simplify navigation paths and enhance search capabilities to help users locate products more efficiently.

User Guidance:

Provide clearer instructions and prompts to guide users through the task, reducing disorientation.

Interface Design:

Evaluate and redesign interface elements that may contribute to user confusion.

Best Buy Website

Enhance Navigation Efficiency:

Streamline navigation paths and improve the visibility of product categories to reduce page views and lostness.

User Guidance:

Implement clearer guidance or prompts to assist users in staying on the optimal path.

Interface Evaluation:

Conduct a thorough evaluation of the interface design to identify and mitigate potential barriers to task completion.

Conclusion

The usability tests reveal significant challenges on both the Apple and Best Buy websites, with the Apple website showing more severe issues. By addressing navigation inefficiencies, enhancing search functionality, and providing clearer user guidance, both websites can improve their user experience and task success rates. Implementing these recommendations will likely lead to higher user satisfaction and better overall usability.

I feel that the AI report says many of the same things that I am saying about the issues of these sites, but it does so in a more efficient manner, with a more objective approach to the Best Buy site. I agree completely that the Apple site has severe issues, particularly for the average user who is mostly unfamiliar with these products. I feel that more simplified search results could lead the user more directly to the product and its price on the Apple site. This was something that the Best Buy site did better, you could navigate directly to the product page from a google search and see the price immediately.

11. I would be most inclined to change the Apple site first. The usability issues are significantly more severe on the Apple site. I would want to simplify the site's information architecture, I would want to make it easier to access specific product page results from both internal and Google searches, I would change the buttons to be more consistent and larger, but beyond that I think the entire hierarchy of product selection should be changed into something more streamlined for uninitiated users, and I also think that the use of motion graphics and long downward scrolling should be minimized. All of these are supported by the fail, abandon and lostness ratings related to the Apple task. However, I am less inclined to agree with the AI results regarding Best Buy, I think this site is utilitarian enough to be fine as it is.

    I believe that many of the issues related to the Best Buy task have to do with my Loop11's instructions, and the application issue mentioned before, along with unfamiliar users not being able to find the instructions in Loop11. About half of my test subject were not classmates, so I think that they may have had significantly more issues with Loop11 aspects of this test than the people in this class who had already tested their own Loop11 tests and did all the other usability tests that they did.

I also believe that starting on the Google page added an interesting aspect to this study, as the option to search into the product pages exists, allowing subjects to find different routes to the product pages. This increased the page count across the board for both tasks, but I do not believe that it skewed the data.