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2 April 2020

Final Usability Report

**Introduction/Overview**

I chose clothing apparel, specifically designer clothes as the category of websites to evaluate. I chose to evaluate this category of websites because a lot of these brands are made from young adults and even teenagers, and they probably do not have a designated software or website developer at their company to make a stellar website. I actually do not usually buy or visit designer skateboarding clothing websites, but I know friends who do. Since I have not visited these kinds of websites before, I am not biased for the site, and I will be able to pick out usability problems more easily. Clothing websites can sometimes be tricky to navigate, especially if you don’t exactly know what you are looking for. I will be primarily highlighting the navigation issues of a website by asking users to find specific items for me and to then see if they are able to find it or not.

**Research:**

I looked up skateboarding designer clothing websites on Google and clicked the first links that I found. Here are the links to them:

Tactics: <https://www.tactics.com/skate-clothing>

CCS: <https://shop.ccs.com/apparel>

Skate America: <https://www.skateamerica.com/collections/apparel>

Zumiez: <https://www.zumiez.com/brands.html>

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/skateboarding-clothing/b?ie=UTF8&node=2371057011>

Palace: <https://www.palaceskateboards.com/>

Clothing websites generally have categories of the types of clothes (shoes, shirts, shorts, etc.). Clothes are also categorized by gender, with men and female clothes, fits, and styles. The categories are usually on a top or side navigation, and there is a clear button to check out. When you click on a clothing item, the sizes, colors, and prices are listed on the page for the user to see. A zoom in feature for clothes is also available among all the websites for the user to get a better look at an apparel item. The website I chose to evaluate is called Palace Skateboards. This website definitely has a lot of cool design and hover features; however, the navigation is troublesome. I explain in detail the navigation problems I found below in my analysis. This is a good website for my usability report because my friends and I have not visited the website, and there are clear navigation and hierarchy issues that need to be addressed.

**Analysis**

Below, I have highlighted the three scenarios I will ask my users to complete during my usability tests. After exploring the website, I found the navigation and the typography hierarchy to be the most troublesome parts of the website. In my first scenario, I ask the user to find a Rugger Bugger Rugby Shirt, because I had a feeling not many people know what that clothing item is. The clothing items have pictures and when you hover over the image, it indicates the name of the product, the price, and if it is sold out. This can make finding something tricky because there is no search bar and command/control +F will not work on this website.

The second Issue I checked on was the shopping cart process and checkout. My main problem with this is the cart feature for checking out is in very small text on the left-hand side of the menu bar, instead of on the actual shopping cart icon. From there, one is able to check out as normal, however I ask the users to remove the item they put in their shopping cart, so they actually don’t have to buy a $150 dollar shirt. The remove button in my opinion is really small, and I think the text on the website should be a little bit larger to help out the user.

The last issue and main issue I am testing my users on is getting back to the home page of the website when they are in the web shop without clicking the back arrow or re-entering the website URL. This is actually a trick question, because they can’t get to the homepage without clicking back arrow. This is a pretty significant problem because it can lead to the user being stuck into the webpage and confused how to navigate back to other features of the website. On the top center of the web shop, there are three triangles that switch colors from red, blue, and white as a cool design feature. However, I confused this design feature with thinking this was how to get back to the corresponding page with that color triangle on the homepage. At the very least, I thought clicking on the triangles would re-direct me to the home page. When nothing happened when I clicked on the triangles, I knew this was a usability issue to highlight. Interestingly, the other features of this website such as shops, advice, and Palace Reebok NPC have a large Palace logo at the top left of the page that re-directs the user back onto the homepage. But this feature is not found on the web shop.

Below are figures of screenshots to give the grader/reader a better understanding of the usability I’m talking about.

Here is a picture of the homepage with the 4 corresponding triangles. You have to hover the images to get information on where the link will direct the user to.

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

Here is a picture of the web shop. Notice the three triangles at the top of the page, these are a design feature, and do not redirect a user back to the home page.

A picture containing different, various, several

Description automatically generated

Conversely, here is a picture of the shops page with a big Palace logo at the top left of the page. Clicking this logo redirects a user to the home page.

A picture containing text, indoor

Description automatically generated

Here is an image using command F to find a shirt on the website. While I got the feature to work on this screenshot, none of my users tried doing this search shortcut will not work when you have to hover over an image.

A picture containing graphical user interface

Description automatically generated

Here is an image of the very small remove button for buying an apparel item on Palace.

Text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Background of Users**

I chose some of my close friends to do the usability tests on. A couple of them were familiar with Palace, and a couple have never heard of Palace, so I got a nice range of answers based on their experience. One user has even bought clothes from Palace before. My users are around the age range of 19-21, all of them young adults in college. Two of them come from a computer science and engineering background, one is from a political science background, and one is from a sports marketing and management background. I am pleased with the diversity in the background of my users, because I got some different answers and perspectives on my usability tests. Each of my usability tests took about 10-15 minutes for every user that I tested.

**Findings**

I have a rough sketch of my notes from all of my users, but this is the place where I’m going to synthesize my findings. I stated the process by telling the users what I am going to be doing of the usability tests and to familiarize themselves with the website before diving into the specific tasks. Three out of the four users have never visited this website before, but two out of my four users have heard of the brand Palace. All of my users understood that this website is targeted at an audience who actively collects or wears designer or Hype Beast clothing.

The specific tasks are when my users had some unique responses I wasn’t expecting. In the first task, I asked them to find a Rugger Bugger Rugby Multi, and timed them for how long it took to find. The time range took 7-20 seconds for my users to find this apparel item and given how many clothes there are on the website, that isn’t too bad. I purposely picked an item towards the top, so they didn’t spend too long on this task. I asked them what would have helped finding this item more easily and if it was at all difficult to find this apparel item. Most responded with some kind of search bar would have been helpful, because command/control F does not work for hover features. My users had mixed responses on the hover effect, some really liked it to keep the focus on the apparel image, while others said it would have been nice if the apparel information was located at the bottom of the image instead of a hover effect.

The next specific task I had my users complete was adding the Rugger Bugger Rugby Multi to their shopping cart and removing the item to make sure this feature works as expect. This test actually surprised me, because all of them had no issues doing this. They also had no problem with the remove button, even though I said it looks really small in my analysis. Maybe I was being overly critical on this website, but I was surprised that I got different responses than I expected on this task. My users might have not noticed the typography hierarchy being as big of an issue as I did or didn’t really care since the task was more functional based instead of design based.

The last test my users had to do was get back to the home page without clicking the back arrow or retyping the back button. All of them were unable to complete this task, because it is impossible. All of the users clicked on the three triangles that switch colors from red, blue, and white on the top of the page to try to get back to the home page and were confused. Some users suggested adding a home button on the side menu bar along with the shirts, shorts, etc. Another user suggested adding the Palace logo on the top left of the webpage of the web shop like on the other pages on Palace. One of my users pointed out this actually can be a smart design choice made on purpose to keep users on this page, so they have to keep shopping. However, my one user familiar with this website said that new designer clothes can sell out very clickily, and the business would not need to have this need. Regardless of if this is an intentional business decision or a poor design choice, they are unable to get back to the homepage which can be frustrating for users.

The debrief section of this usability test because this was the section where my users finally understood why I asked them to perform specific tasks on the Palace website. They actually had really good suggestions to improve the web shop, including putting a search bar to help find apparel items easier, and the Palace logo on the top left of the page to redirect them back to the home page. None of my users pointed out issues with the typography hierarchy, and issue I think could be solved if the font size was larger. Most of the users actually enjoyed the website and would visit it again if they were interested in buying apparel from Palace. Overall, my users understood some of the issues that I pointed out when I completed a usability tests, and I got new perspectives of what others thought of this website.

**Conclusion:** I found that this activity and completing the usability tests on Palace was successful. I successfully pointed out some usability issues to my users and learned new perspectives based on diverse backgrounds on what was good and bad about the website. Not all the usability tests were perfect, but all of them were pretty consistent in terms of completing tasks. I highly recommend palace to add a search bar on the top right of their web shop to find apparel item more easily, add a Palace logo to redirect the user back to the home page, and to make the text a little bit larger for a better typography hierarchy. If these changes are implemented, the website would me more enjoyable and not as problematic for users. I’m interested in doing more usability testing’s if this is implemented.

**Appendix:**

**Reflection Question:**

I was pretty successful in creating some user tasks to point out usability tests. However, it was very hard to come up with these tasks, and to find a website to be critical on because most modern websites are very well designed with little usability issues. I really had to be creative with my user tasks and questions. Some of my tasks, the users had no troubles in, and I’m wondering if I chose a bad task or what I thought was a usability issue was not an issue for other people. My navigation task was probably the most successful, because I knew for a fact it was impossible to get back to the home page without clicking the back arrow. I wasn’t expecting the usability tests to go 100% perfectly, but I am glad I got a lot of good and consistent feedback for usability issues that I pointed out.

I have the testing notes in a second document, they are in bulleted format and more for me to write this report.