IMY 320: Understanding Your User
Fantastic Four

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Introduction

The goal of this document is to understand user behaviour when performing the task of "Finding and buying a set of desired items" on the Game Craft website. The purpose is to identify user expectations, pain points, and improvement opportunities. We have gathered data through observation of 6 short interviews, including expert and non-expert participants.

User Feedback Summary

Using the data in the figures in our Data Gathered document, we can summarise the user feedback as follows.

Our first user had a lot of suggestions regarding the UI itself. This includes features such as:
- Disable the horizontal overflow on pages.
- On the home page, the element's edges are rounded, but not the section edges, they want a better balance between that.
- Also use the gradient we have used before for the loading screen controllers.
- Colour of prices not grabbing attention.
- Make free shipping stand out.
- There is a lot of whitespace in the cells.
- The wishlist colour should not be red, it feels like an error message.
- Pulse for payment feels like the process is going wrong.
- Wishlist font change.

They also had some other remarks about navigation and the flow of processes:
- Click on the logo to take you back to the home page.
- Weak and strong password indicators.
- The hover effect on the home page elements indicate that you can click on it, they want improvement on that.
- Maybe add animation on the landing page.
- Indicate an item is on sale.
- Placeholder images for images that aren't loading.
- Going to the next page should take you to the top of the page.
- The same amount of games aren't loading on the page.
- Add product not showing directly once you add it.
- Add to cart not working on wishlist page.
- Price not showing correctly on the wishlist page.
- Loader from home page missing.
- Loaders for pages are inconsistent.
- No alphabetical searching option.
- Do something for links that go nowhere.

For the other users, they have less feedback since a lot of it is mentioned above:
- On the home page, the colour contrast of the yellow on the blue is not working.
- On the footer, the social media items are "growing" when you hover over them, but not the links, the user wants consistency.

- On the store page, when you take a search out, it does not go away unless you search again.
- For the loading screen, you can see the products loading.
- On the about us page, the icons and placement of cards are inconsistent.
- On the view more page, the heart does not show until you hover over the add to wishlist button. The quantity chooser has 2 different ways to increase or decrease the amount of items you want to buy. The buttons should be next to each other or on top of each other, change either catalogue page or view more info page.
- On the add products page, change the fonts a bit, make it more "wow", they want more styling. Also make the buttons bigger. The word features are making them confused.
- The user was confused by the meaning of "Start your journey" button on the home screen.
- After viewing more info, and you go back, it takes you to the first page instead of where you were.
- No "Browse more games" button on the wishlist page.
- One user wanted to use the progress bar on the checkout pages to go to the next part.
- Cannot go to the more info page once you have an item in the cart.

Pain Points Identified

Based on the feedback gathered from both expert and non-expert users, several recurring issues were identified across the website. These paint points are grouped according to usability themes below.

- Navigation and Flow
  - Pain point: Inconsistent navigation when returning to pages.
    - When users click "back" after viewing product details, they are taken to the first catalogue page instead of where they were.
  - "Start your journey" is unclear.
    - The call-to-action on the home screen confuses users, as it doesn't indicate what will happen when clicked.
  - Missing "Browse more games" on the wishlist page.
    - Users can't continue exploring from the wishlist, breaking their flow.
  - Progress bar not interactive.
    - Users expect to click the progress bar to move between checkout steps, but it's static.
  - No alphabetical sorting or clear search reset.
    - Searching for products and clearing filters feels incomplete or inconsistent.
- Functionality and Performance
  - Add-to-cart not updating properly.
    - "Add to cart" fails or does not show changes immediately, especially from the wishlist page
  - Inconsistent loaders.

- - ■ Some pages have missing or visually inconsistent loading animations, confusing users.
    - ○ Links that go nowhere.
      - ■ Users click certain links that lead to blank or dead pages.
    - ○ Quantity selector inconsistent.
      - ■ The quantity adjustment layout differs across pages, confusing users.
- Visual Design and Layout
  - ○ Excessive whitespace.
    - ■ Users felt the layout was unbalanced, with too much empty space.
  - ○ Weak color contrast.
    - ■ Yellow text on blue background and price color not drawing attention.
  - ○ Wishlist color feels like an error.
    - ■ The red color gives users a negative impression.
  - ○ Buttons and text lack visual hierarchy.
    - ■ Users noted that some buttons (e.g., on the Add Product page) feel small and fonts lack emphasis.
  - ○ Social media hover inconsistency.
    - ■ Hover animation differs between icons and text links in the footer.
  - ○ Rounded corners inconsistency.
    - ■ Elements and sections use inconsistent rounding styles, creating visual imbalance.
- Clarity and Feedback
  - ○ Weak and strong password indicators missing.
    - ■ Users were unsure about password strength requirements.
  - ○ No indication when an item is on sale.
    - ■ Users want clearer visual cues for promotions.
  - ○ Placeholder images missing.
    - ■ When images fail to load, the page feels incomplete.
  - ○ "Pulse" effect on payment causes concern.
    - ■ The pulsing animation during payment feels like an error to users.

Proposed Solutions

To address the above usability issues, the following design and functional improvements will be made:
It will be listed as "Pain Point": "Proposed Solution".

- Returning to the first page instead of the previous: Implement a session memory for catalogue browsing. Users should return to their last viewed page and scroll position.
- Missing "Browse more games" on the wishlist: Add a "Browse More Games" button at the bottom of the wishlist to improve flow.
- Non-interactive progress bar: Make the layout more clear that the user does not try to click on the progress bar to go to the next step. For instance moving the go to next step button more to the top.
- Search reset issue: Add a "Clear Search" or "Reset Filters" button for better control.
- Add-to-cart bugs: Standardize the add-to-cart event across all pages and ensure cart state updates dynamically.

- Missing/inconsistent loaders: Use a unified loading animation (keep the existing style) across all pages for consistency.
- Dead links: Audit all links and ensure they have valid destinations or display a "Coming Soon" message.
- Quantity selector inconsistency: Standardize quantity controls across all product-related pages, either have the plus and minus or the arrows, not both.
- Excess whitespace: Adjust padding and grid layout to improve balance, particularly on wide screens.
- Weak contrast: Make price text bolder and make other colours not clash, making the website more readable, and thus more usable.
- Wishlist color: Change the wishlist indicator to a neutral or positive color (we used blue) to avoid error associations.
- Font and button style: Update to a consistent typographic hierarchy; increase button size and add hover effects for interactivity.
- Social media hover inconsistency: Apply the same hover animation across both icons and text in the footer.
- Rounded corner inconsistency: Standardize corner radius across all cards and sections for a uniform aesthetic.
- Password strength indicator: Tell the user what they are missing in their password.
- Missing sale indication: Add a "SALE" badge or tag to discounted items.
- Missing placeholders: Add placeholder images for products that fail to load, maintaining page structure.
- Payment "pulse" effect confusion: Replace the pulse animation with a progress indicator or loading spinner that conveys success rather than error.

User Persona

Two personas were developed based on observations and interviews with both expert and non-expert participants. These personas represent the primary user types who interact with the Game Craft website when performing the task of finding and buying a set of desired items.

Persona 1 - Expert Gamer (Thabo, 25)

Occupation: Software developer and gaming enthusiast
Experience Level: Expert
 Goals:

- Find new game releases efficiently.
- Quickly add multiple games to the cart or wishlist.
- Compare prices and complete purchases with minimal steps.

Motivations:

- Enjoys well-designed, fast interfaces.
  Prefers sites with clear navigation and visually engaging content.
- Values a streamlined checkout process and minimal friction.

Frustrations (Pain Points):

- The progress bar is not clickable, slowing down his checkout flow.
- Add-to-cart inconsistencies make him question whether actions were successful.
- Returning from product info pages resets his position in the catalogue.

Personality:

- Tech-savvy, detail-oriented, and goal-driven.
- Values efficiency, clarity, and responsive design.

Preferred Features:

- A reliable cart system.
- Clear product filtering and search options.
- Interactive progress indicators.

Persona 2 - Casual Buyer (Lerato, 31)

Occupation: High school teacher
Experience Level: Non-expert
Goals:

- Browse through games easily to find gifts or casual options.
- Feel confident during checkout without confusion.
- Clearly understand what each button or label means.

Motivations:

- Wants a pleasant and straightforward shopping experience.
- Appreciates appealing visuals and clear instructions.

Frustrations (Pain Points):

- Found "Start your journey" unclear.
- Wishlist color red gives the impression of an error.
- Struggles with inconsistent page loaders and dead links.
- Whitespace and uneven layout make the site feel unfinished.

Personality:

- Curious and open-minded, but not highly technical.
- Appreciates friendly design and clear cues.

Preferred Features:

- Simple language and clear button text.
- Stable navigation that remembers her position.
- Consistent and responsive visual design.

User model

The User Model describes the typical behaviors, needs, and goals of Game Craft users as identified through observation and feedback. It integrates both personas into a unified understanding of how users interact with the system.

- User Goals
  - To find, compare, and purchase games efficiently. Users expect feedback after each interaction (e.g., adding to cart, viewing info).
- Knowledge Level
  - Split between expert users who are familiar with e-commerce platforms and non-experts who need clear labels and predictable flow.
- Context of Use
  - Desktop and mobile devices for online shopping and browsing new releases.
- Attitudes and Expectations
  - Users expect smooth performance, minimal navigation errors, and engaging design.
- Information Needs
  - Clear game descriptions, pricing visibility, sale indications, and product availability.
- Pain Points
  - Confusing navigation when returning to a previous page, unclear calls-to-action, inconsistent loaders, and broken add-to-cart functionality.
- Design Implications
  - Focus on visual clarity, predictable behavior, consistent UI design, and interactive feedback mechanisms.

User Journey

The following journey illustrates how a typical user (expert or non-expert) interacts with the Game Craft website while performing the task of finding and buying games. The journey highlights the emotional experience, pain points, and potential improvements at each step.

Step	User Action	User Experience / Emotion	Pain Point	Improvement Opportunity
1. Home Page	The user clicks "Start your journey" to begin signing up.	Curious but unsure what "Start your journey" means.	Ambiguous CTA label.	Rename it to "Start Shopping" or "Explore Games" for clarity.

2. Browsing Catalogue	User scrolls through the catalogue, filters, and searches.	Interested and engaged. Notice good visuals but slow reloads.	Inconsistent loaders, uneven item display, no alphabetical sorting.	Standardize loaders, fix catalogue pagination, add filter reset option.
3. Viewing Product Details	The user clicks on a game for more information.	Enjoys layout but finds minor visual inconsistencies.	After clicking "back," returns to the first page instead of the previous position.	Implement session memory for browsing position.
4. Adding to Wishlist/Cart	Users add an item to their wishlist or cart.	Confused when the cart doesn't update immediately.	Add-to-cart bugs; wishlist price and color inconsistencies.	Fix add-to-cart event triggers; use consistent wishlist visuals.
5. Proceeding to Checkout	The user navigates to checkout using the progress bar.	Expects to use the progress bar to skip steps.	The progress bar is static.	Make progress bars interactive and show hover tooltips.
6. Payment Step	The user enters payment details.	Pulse animation causes anxiety, unsure if the process is working.	"Pulse" effect looks like an error.	Replace with a clear progress indicator or spinner.
7. Confirmation	The user finishes checkout.	Relieved and satisfied overall. Appreciates colors and general flow.	Slight confusion from earlier steps affects confidence.	

Conclusion

The User Personas, Model, and Journey illustrate a clear divide between expert users seeking efficiency and non-expert users seeking clarity and reassurance.
 The key areas for improvement include:

- Clarifying confusing labels ("Start your journey").
- Standardizing UI consistency (colors, loaders, spacing).
- Improving interactive elements (progress bar, navigation memory).
- Reinforcing user confidence with clear visual feedback.

Together, these refinements would make Game Craft's shopping experience smoother, more intuitive, and more enjoyable for all user types.