Hard-Ware_House

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UX Design

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Project Concept Summary

With the rapid advancement of technology and the availability of it around the world - more and more people are being connected to the world wide web. However, with this increase of online presence comes an increase in the need for and availability of computer hardware, software, and other matters of technology. Hard-Ware_House serves to help alleviate this issue and provide a competitive and available resource for people within the local community. Our main objective of HWH is the distribution of computer goods and services through an online web app or physical warehouse.

Competitive Research #1 - Amazon

Company: Amazon

URL: https://www.amazon.com/

Service: Amazon is an online marketplace where people can sell and buy a variety of products. The reason they are a competitor is due to the amount of products that they have, which include computer processors, cases, peripherals, and other accommodations. They are also readily accessible on different devices, which include mobile, browser, and in-person services.

Features:

- Products in the middle
- Search/narrowing functions on the left
- login/signup at the top right
- Menu list at the top left

Competitive Research #2 - Newegg

Company: Newegg

URL: https://www.newegg.com/

Service: Newegg is an online retailer that specializes in selling computer-oriented products. The reason they are a competitor is due to their business model, which closely resembles that of Hard-Ware_House. They harbor a variety of products, ranging from computer parts to peripherals.

Features:

- Search functions
- Deals and updates
- login/signup at the top right
- Menu list at the top left
- Simple layout with emphasis on the products

Competition Analysis - Overview and Summary

Amazon is a big competitor because of its size and reputation. They offer a lot of benefits through their premium setup - known as amazon prime - and are connected with several different sellers. The website that they utilize is simple to use, allowing the user to easily search and find products similar to what they are looking for. However, their menus can become a hassle at times due to how much information can be portrayed all at once, creating some confusion for first-time users of the site.

Newegg is another big competitor because of how it specializes in computer parts in an online location. It is a direct competitor as their business model and niche aligns with ours in a very similar manner. Their website as a whole looks simple at first glance, allowing first-time users to not be overwhelmed in the beginning. Viewing information about different items brings up different sets of information and wishlisting options, which allow for easy storage of viewed items. However, unlike amazon, a lot of their information displayed about individual items are not as easy interconnected due to the amount of whitespace between the different sets of information. This can confuse users and allow errors to happen in information processing by the users.

Businesses and Customer Analysis

Business Pains:

One of the more crucial business pains is the acquisition and maintenance of the hardware and other types of parts. It is imperative that we keep the website up-to-date on the stock availability and changes as fast as possible. Another big factor would be marketing the service as an alternative and strong competitor to the previously discussed competition (Amazon and Newegg). Providing special deals and promotions as a method of marketing is a good method we can try to convince others of our product. Finally, finding a suitable location to host the actual physical products is necessary in order for the business to operate at all. From there, either finding a reliable shipping service and getting some sort of agreement would be crucial to keep customers happy.

Customer Pains:

One of the big issues that a lot of these online marketplaces suffer is an overload of information or lack of information at first glance. Most customers will want to know more about the product that they may be purchasing, and from different sellers that they may acquire that from, so having that set of information at the ready is necessary. Another is keeping the customer focused on the product instead of distracting them with other information. If the customer can’t access the information that they are looking for, they may end up deciding to go elsewhere. Finally, keeping the browsing and search functions easy to change and manage is a must.

Pain Point Mind Map

JOURNEY MAP FOR CUTSOMER

Businesses and Customer Analysis Table

Business Problems	Customer Problems
acquisition of hardware (finding a good seller)	Avoiding being overwhelmed/uninformed with information
Maintaining an up-to-date stock on the website/web app	Make sure to have simple browsing options
Marketing and promotions	Not being able to have search and narrowing functions
Warehouse locations and costs	Make sure to have account systems with access to wish lists and other time-saving features
Shipping contracts and costs	Easy to follow, flow of information though the website

Personas and User Stories

Persona 1 - Hayley

Profile: Hayley is a university student that specializes in digital marketing. She has a lot of appreciation for film, design, and drawing and uses her abilities to their full extent within her major. She is going onto her third year at her university and is looking into internships within the city.

Background: Hayley grew up in a household surrounded by siblings and family that were into technology. As a result, she is very knowledgeable about the basics of computer hardware. While her current laptop was a hand-me-down from her older sibling, it provided enough power to get her through her initial classes. She currently works on the weekends to save up enough money to upgrade her computer setup at home.

Scenario: After using the same old laptop for almost 4 years straight, Hayley knew it was time for a change. With her last few classes on her horizon, show knows that she needs something that will carry her until graduation. After researching about prices and availability, she was drawn to Hard-Ware_House.

Needs: Hayley is looking for an updated and powerful new laptop computer for her final years in university. She has done the research about the specs she needs for classes, but needs a way to find it online in a fast and orderly manner. She doesn't have the time to wait for shipping and would rather have something to pick-up in a physical store instead.

Result: Hayley was able to use the store's online database to check the stock and availability of laptops online near the city. After narrowing the search through tags, computer parts, and price - she was able to find a exactly what she was looking for in a new system. With the warehouse being local to where she was, she was able to easily pick up and buy her new products without any issues.

Persona 2 - Devon

Profile: Devon is the owner of a small startup within the city of Nashville. He recently moved into the big city and is trying to kick off his grand scheme for a clean alternative in mass transit. He graduated from his university 5 years ago and kept in contact with various suppliers and distributors around the city that he met through his college days. He plans on finding good alternatives that can help change the course of climate change for the world.

Background: He is a 26 year old man, who works full-time on his small business. He has contracts with high ranking official in the local government of the area and on the state level. They are in talks with finding ways to lower fossil fuel combustion and pollution in the city and around.

Scenario: With rapid growth within his small business, Devon is in the need of faster and better processing power for not only him but also his colleagues. While he has his own station that he makes good use of, he wants to provide his employees the same level of availability when it comes to processing power.

Needs: Devon is looking into buying at least 3 fully customized desktop PCs using parts that he has specifically picked out. He wants to make sure that these parts come from a distributor that is both trustworthy and comes with it's own green guide in energy consumption.

Result: By using the web app's search functions, Devon was able to find and pick out the same exact parts he was looking for. During the process, he was given information about how each manufacturer conducts their business and promotes green methods of energy consumptions to help the earth. All this information was displayed during the browsing process in the journey map.

Persona 3 - Jose

Profile: Jose is a young adult that utilizes technology and therapy to help family with special needs. After graduating and getting experience within a company that helped kids with special needs, he wanted to create his own special program within the company. He wants to demonstrate how technology can help people overcome any sort of issues and problems that they might have had trouble dealing with before.

Background: Jose works part time at his counseling job and spends the rest of his time teaching technology classes to low income families and elderly people. Having been a recent graduate - 2 years ago - he feels as though there is almost never enough time to get from point a to point b. Due to world changes because of the pandemic, he has had to adapt and try different methods of teaching and therapy for his patients.

Scenario: The pandemic has caused several issues with face-to-face interaction for Jose. Due to how high risk some of his patients are, they have decided to switch to online methods for communication and therapies. While this is a short-term relief, they are looking into ways that can help resolve any issues regarding technology availability.

Needs: Jose is in need for cheap and available devices capable of online video chat and browsing the internet. They want to provide their patients and contacts with methods to keep in touch, especially now with the pandemic and virus concerns within the city.

Result: Jose was able to utilize the close proximity and safety precautions of Hard-Ware_House to successfully obtain pre-owned and refurbished devices for his patients. By utilizing their online databases, he was able to find them in quick and fast succession due to how easy it was to navigate and narrow down by price and availability.

Persona 4 - Amy

Profile: Amy is a film and editing student working on various movie projects both for the school and on her own. She owns various content creation software that she pays on monthly subscription model. While she is currently on summer break, she knows that her senior year would consist of various final projects and shootings. She wants to finish up her portfolio and make sure that it is presentable for the big hollywood studios.

Background: She is a 20 year old college student working part time to raise funds for her cameras and software. While she is in school, she spends most of her time studying and working on her projects. However, when summer or winter break hits, she is usually working extra hours so that she can get a bit more spending money for more expensive and quality equipment. She does this all the while working on her professional filmmaking portfolio.

Scenario: Amy is in the need of a new and more powerful desktop pc. While her current work station is still powerful enough to run the content creation software that she uses, she doesn't have enough processing power to render and edit longer and higher quality video at a decent speed. She wants to sell her old parts, and use the money that she earns towards a new pc rig.

Needs: After completing research about recommended specs and manufacturers, Amy has decided that she wants to sell her old pc at a reasonable rate so that she can use that money for a new pc.

Result: Amy uses Hard-Ware_House's selling and purchasing features to quickly and painlessly sell her old hardware and use that money towards new hardware. Without issue, she was able to get a good rate for her used hardware, send it in at a local warehouse, and pick up her parts all in the same day. She was able to do this fast, simple, and without any issues.

Persona 5 - Edgar

Profile: Edgar is the owner of a huge tech company that operates on an international level. His company creates and sells computer parts and peripherals to distributors. When he is not working, he prefers the comfort of traveling to new places and visiting areas for charity and philanthropic work. He is currently in the talks of providing funding for schools and areas of low-income so that they may have the same availability to knowledge and education as people of higher-income.

Background: Edgar is a religious and hard working man who wants to bring the joy of the new technology world where ever he can. He works full time running his tech company from his CEO position but often takes time out of his busy schedule to help people in need. He is nearing his 60s and soon wants to retire and promote someone else to his position. He wants to make sure that the next person in charge will share the same ideals and values that make up the company.

Scenario: Edgar is looking to invest their stock into local and small businesses that can provide and distribute computer parts and peripherals across a community. While searching for potential distributor, he comes across Hard-Ware_House and decides to look further into it. He wants to know what processes and features the company has in place so that the investment can go as smooth as possible.

Needs: Edgar wants to know the distribution methods and community work that the company has done for the community. He wants to see a resume of how the company operates and what they do to help the wider community and workforce. He also wants to have a system to educate people new to technology set in place.

Result: By utilizing the simplicity of their web app, Edgar was able to properly find the information that he needed and get into contact with representatives from the company without issue. He is also able to learn about how the company provides accessibility and learning options for individuals who are less technologically savvy. The rapid response times and easy to follow design of the app allowed for easy traversal and understanding of both the customer and supplier journey.

User Story Table

User	User Story
Persona 1: Hayley	As a user, I would like to find my products within my specifications.
Persona 2: Devon	As a user, I want to know more about the products that I am buying.
Persona 3: Jose	As a user, I want options and alternatives about the products I want to buy.
Persona 4: Amy	As a user, I want to be able to quickly sell and purchase products fast.
Persona 5: Edgar	As a user, I want to know more about the company which I am doing business with.

Hard-Ware_House Flow Diagram

Wireframe Designs

Homepage

Hard-
Ware_House
Deals
User Listings
News
Education
Customer Support
About Us
Trending Now
New Deals!
What's New?
Bookmarks
Customer Support
Link

Homepage

- Mobile

Account Page

Cart Page

Hard-
Ware_House
Deals
User Listings
News
Education
Customer Support
About Us
Cart:
Delete
Delete
Delete
Delete
Total:
$$$$$
Bookmarks
Related Items
Customer Support
Link

Search/
browse

Hard-
Ware_House

Deals | User Listings | News | Education | Customer Support | About Us

- Presets
- CPU Type
- GPU Type
- Motherboard
- Coolers
- Tower/Case
- Brands
- Preowned

200x200

Label

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Customer Support

Link

Shelf Item

Hard-
Ware_House
Deals
User Listings
News
Education
Customer Support
About Us
Back
[ITEM NAME]
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Add to Cart
Express Checkout
Item Manufactuer Information
Bookmark
Customer Support
Link

Item information

Customer Support

Hard-Ware_House

Deals | User Listings | News | Education | Customer Support | About Us

Customer Support Help Area

FAQ

Seller's Help Desk

Live Support

About Us

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Customer Support

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About Us

Hard-
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Deals
User Listings
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Quick History
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Our Reasoning
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Customer Support
Link

Contact Information

Education/
Services

Hard-
Ware_House

Deals | User Listings | News | Education | Customer Support | About Us

Training Services

List group item heading
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Charity Programs

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Job Opportunities

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Customer Support
Link

User Testing and Revisions

The first step of the survey was to know more about the user

Summary: Section 1

The purpose of the first section of the survey was to get an understanding at the real customers of online retailers. I learned that a majority of them as always connected in some manner to an online device and that the device can vary greatly between people. Their proficiency can also vary greatly depending on the person, but they seem to have basic or better understanding of regular tech use. Furthermore, while a majority of the participants are in their late teens, there are still a good majority of people from different age groups interested in the product.

How often do you use online retailers?

6 responses

Why do you use online retailers?

6 responses

From your experiences, how has your online shopping experiences been?

6 responses

- good
- Usually can find the better prices. Especially with honey(use link joinhoney.com/ref/x9cf45i) to get started!
- its a hit or miss
- Pretty good
- Meh
- They have been great

The section part was to know about the user’s previous experiences with online retailers

Summary: Section 2

This next section was more focused on learning how their past experiences may impact their knowledge of using the webapp. From what we could gather is that people are nowadays using online retailers a lot more frequently, however some people still hardly ever use them. This means that knowledge and keeping one's attention is still as important as it was before. Furthermore, we found out that deals and offers help bring in people away from physical retailers. This is an interesting find because it helps us understand why people would choose something that they can't see in-person over something that they could. Finally, our last examination found that while they may use online retailers a lot, the experience can vary greatly between people.

After looking at the wireframes, how hard was it to navigate through the webapp?

6 responses

Please provide the reason for the answer above

6 responses

- it's easy
- Just easy to navigate and made somewhat simple
- it was easy and the placement of the links made sense
- It looks a little cluttered
- Its okay
- it was nice

Could you figure out where the global navigation (Top consistent header) was right away?

6 responses

If you couldn't, please tell me why:

2 responses

- .
- n/a

In your opinion, what improvements would you like to see?

6 responses

- i dont know
- seems fine to me
- different fonts and colors
- Space out things more add more color and things to make the website pop
- .
- just keep doing what you are doing

The final step was getting direct feedback regarding the webapp (Part 1)

Summary: Section 3 part 1

What we can learn about the first part is that the wireframes were of average difficulty to move throughout. When asked about the reasonings, some answered that the simplicity of the site allowed for easy maneuvering, however it could at times feel too cluttered or messy. Finally, when asked if they could figure out general naviational tools, most answered that they could. While I wasn't able to receive feedback on why 1 couldn't, I could assume it was an error or another issue regarding the placement of the navigation. Additional feedback revealed that while the layout could use some spacing, it was overall organized alright. However, there was a lack of color within the site, which can be alleviate by allowing some different colors within the palette.

Was the information presented in a clean and orderly manner?

6 responses

If no, please tell me why:

3 responses

- A little cluttered
- .
- n/a

Was the subject/purpose of each webpage presented clearly?

6 responses

Could you provide reasoning for your answer above?

6 responses

- it's easy
- It was easy to figure out
- the name of the webpage isn't the focus point and i wouldn't have known it was a hardware page
- It was pretty obvious because it was the first thing visible
- .
- the info was all right there

Is there any other feedback you'd like to give?

6 responses

- no
- Not at the time
- No
- .
- Lit

The final step was getting direct feedback regarding the webapp (Part 2)

Did you find the navigation and searching experience enjoyable or easy? Why?

6 responses

yes

Enjoyable, Uniqueness

yes I did because its built the same as other pages and its accessible

It was easy but it lacked a lot of pop

.

its wan both enjoyable and easy, few clicks and i had everything

The final step was getting direct feedback regarding the webapp (Part 3)

Summary: Section 3 Part 2 and Part 3

What we can learn about these sections is the general feel and usability of the site for the user. We learned that while most stated that they could understand the purpose and use of each site, some felt that it was too cluttered to not obvious. Some mentioned that while that might've been the case, they still felt that the information that they were looking for was present and they were able to obtain what they were looking for. Finally, when asked about the navigation, we got a lot of varied feedback regarding the issue. Some mentioned that the experience was enjoyable and that it was easy. Others, however, would mentioned that while it was simple, they felt that the experience was lacking in the feel side of things. They didn't feel as though the site stood apart from others of its kind, and it needed something to make it stand out more or feel better for general use.

Final Summary + Revision strategies

I gathered a lot of information from these user test surveys. In general, it allowed for me to know more about how users utilize these online applications and how their past experiences played with their usability and understanding of my own webapp. From what we can gathered, we can setup a table in which we list some weaknesses and strengths of the webapp. From these, we can start to make a revision plan.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Simple Layout	Cluttered
Easy to navigate	Lack of “pop” or additional unique features
Easy to understand purpose	Purpose can get lost between pages

Revisions

I've gone ahead and made a few revisions regarding the feedback I gathered from the user testing. For starters, I cleaned up the global navigation and reduced the amount of unnecessary links at the top. I also made sure that the logo and name of the company was easy to see so that a first time user could understand what they were looking at and from which store they were browsing. Finally, I cleaned up some pages and allowed more breathing room for the cart sections and more options for the browse sections. I also made the text clearer so that the intended purpose was easily conveyed for people of different expertise in technical terminology. I have also gone ahead and updated the wireframes to comply with the changes.

I am in the process of experimenting with a new color palette so that it can "pop" out more and draw the attention of the user better. This palette change can be seen in the following slide, where I show side by side 2 different instances of the mobile version of the homepage

Old vs new palette

Old Vs New Wireframes (Homepage)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Search)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Shelf Item)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Account Page)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Cart)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Company Information)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Customer Support)

Old Vs New Wireframes (About us)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Contact Information)

Old Vs New Wireframes (Education/Opportunities)

Visual Design Completion

Final Theme

Final Color Palette

Icons:

Fonts:

Arial, Impact

Mockup for Desktop

Mockup for Mobile

Mockup for Tablet

Theme and Final Design Points - Thoughts

After compiling all of my feedback, I took a quick glance at my previous wireframes and finalized them. Throughout this journey on the design process, I started from this overly ambitious idea and concept in my head and was able to create it finally. There was a lot of headaches, anxiety, and work that went into this project, but I can say it's something that I'm proud of.

Quick Video:

https://www.loom.com/share/e185aaa965c7455bb294ad10bf84c4ca

Final Presentation:

https://www.loom.com/share/7f638d6a92c74bf3b8e27aff7212bc34