

Usability Testing: Wireframes

As we designed the application, we invited several prospective users to role play to review wireframes and provide feedback. We considered Usability Testing as a critical component of the application development to identify gaps and what else we needed to address for user needs. Specifically, we tried to understand whether users thought the flow of the application and initial interactions were intuitive. This was done at the very beginning of the design process to make sure we were heading the right direction.

Our approach was to provide the wireframe to a user who was not involved in the design process and capture his or her thought process while going through the application wireframes. We also created a list of pre-defined questions to ask the users. The business analyst and designer met the prospective user for face-to-face interaction.

The interview process was divided into two sessions. In the first session, without any prototype background information given to the user, we simply gave users the wireframes and observed his or her interpretations. In the next session, we provided a brief overview about the objectives of the prototype and the User Interface designer conducted a story board along with wireframes.

Then we did a comparison between the understandings of the user at the end of session one versus the understandings of the user at the end of session two. Interestingly, we found that the user was able to understand the purpose of the application without having the back ground knowledge of the prototype. The user was more confident after the second session compared to the first. At the end of this exercise we collected the feedback from all interviews and began translating it into new user stories which the Product Owner prioritized within the backlog. The priority stories were added to the next Engineering sprint and incorporated in the final prototype.

Wireframe Interview Question and Answers

The following is a summary of the sessions.

What is this application about?

- The users were able to identify that the application “Cal eStore” dealt with an online electronics store for different procurement requirements of California State’s various Departmental purchasing managers. On the other hand they were not able to foresee what products were available inside the application.
- The logo was catchy and self-explanatory to indicate the purpose of the application.
- Users thought the sign-on screen was self-explanatory and knew it meant a user must be authorized to access and it was related to purchasing or shopping.

How would you create your profile and sign-in?

- The users were able to clearly identify the initial page as a Create Profile page.

- The users were impressed with the classification of the profile page and clear on each section of the profile page.
- Users were unsure of the ETA on the activation of the profile request.
- Users did not believe a middle name should be a required field
- Users did not need to see term “Required” displayed next to the required fields and suggested simply using asterisk to indicate required fields.
- Users liked having the visible links for forgotten password and username. Since some users may not log onto the system frequently, they often will need to be reminded about their username and password. Users liked having quick access to recall this information.

How would you log out of your account?

- Users often said they often simply close the browser tab or browser session and don’t necessarily look for an explicit logout function.
- Some users wanted the log out button at the top of the application on all pages.

How would you view the products and compare?

- Users liked the format and structure of the home page, allowing them to view categories like hardware, software, and services.
- Users were able to easily recognize the “Compare” icon as a quick link to access the Cart. They recognized that the link will allow them to remember the added items.
- Some users liked to browse multiple products simultaneously, similar to how they would view a paper catalogue; whereas other users liked to look at items one at a time because they know specifically what they are seeking, and yet other users weren’t sure about the differences between similar items and wanted to do a side-by-side comparison.
- Users were expecting a message on confirmation of adding the item to the compare.

How would you order a product?

- Users were able to easily recognize the “Cart” icon as a quick link to access the Cart and that it will allow them to remember the added items.
- Users like the ability to put an item into the cart from any of the places an item can be viewed (such as the catalogue or category view or comparison view).
- Users were expecting a message on confirmation of adding the item to the cart.

How would you know the newly published categories or vendors?

- For some users, knowing newly published categories or vendors was not considered critical but rather more of a nice to have feature.

How would I track my latest order?

- Users like the option of defaulting their profile address into the order shipping screen to minimize having to re-key information.
- Users like having easy-to-discern visual distinction between sending or submitting their order to the system versus the system receiving their order and generating an order identification number.

What do you expect from the home page?

- The landing page content should be catered to provide a very clear overview of the application's purpose and capabilities.

Important Findings:

The following are the findings from our usability testing for the wireframe.

- The landing page content should be catered to provide a very clear overview of the application's purpose and capabilities.
- Use the labels along with icons to give instructions to the user.
- Most users are experienced with ecommerce websites layout, navigation and terminology and therefore simple guidance versus overbearing instruction was desirable.
- Navigating a large catalogue of information and quickly filtering and sorting and pinpointing the desired product was essential to success.