

Information Architecture

Information Architecture Basics (IA)

Information architecture (IA) focuses on organizing, structuring, and labeling content in an effective and sustainable way. The goal is to help users find information and complete tasks. To do this, you need to understand how the pieces fit together to create the larger picture, how items relate to each other within the system.

Why IA matters in UX?

The purpose of your IA is to help users understand where they are, where they are going, what they have found, what's around and what to expect.

Primary components of IA

- **Organization Schemes and Structures:** How you categorize and structure information.
- **Labeling Systems:** How you represent information.
- **Navigation Systems:** How users browse or move through information.
- **Search Systems:** How users look for information.

What do you need to know?

- **Context:** business goals, funding, politics, culture, technology, resources, and constraints.
- **Content:** content objectives, document and data types, volume, existing structure, governance and ownership.
- **Users:** audience, tasks, needs, information-seeking behavior, experience... (hint.. personas)

Navigation Systems and Elements

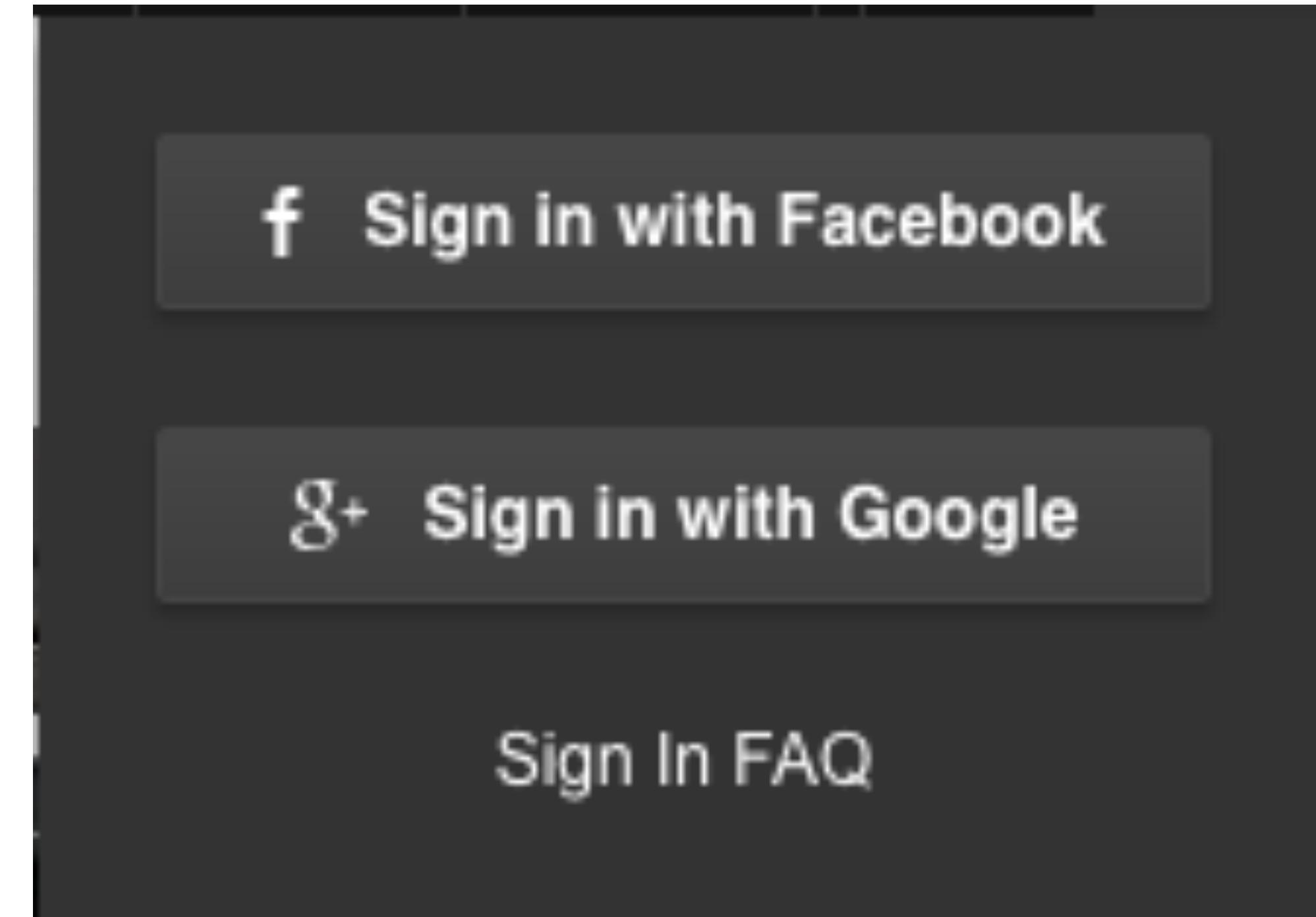
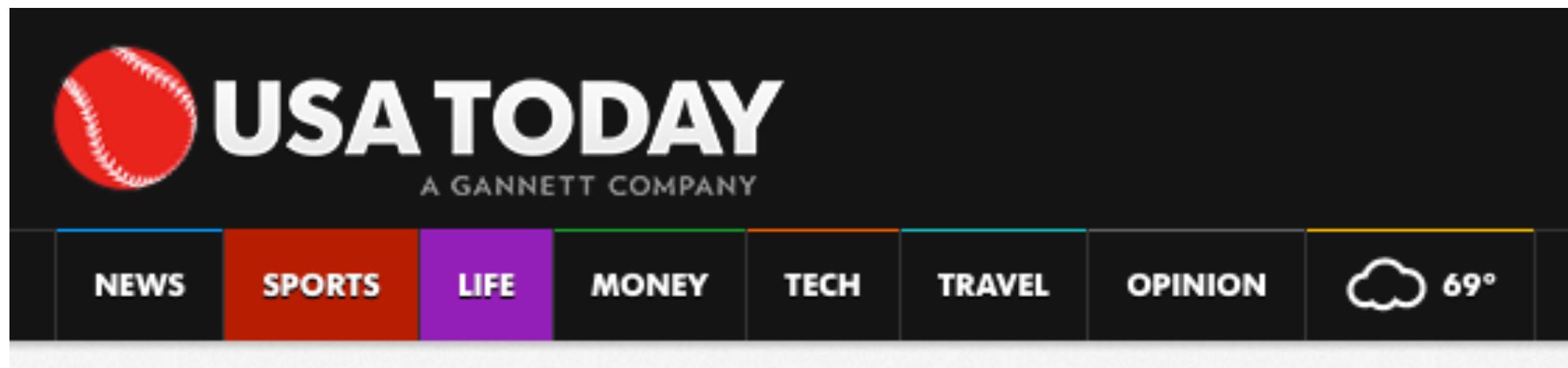
The best navigation system is consistent and predictable. Interface elements are:

1. **Input Controls:** buttons, text fields, checkboxes, radio buttons, drop down lists, list boxes, toggles, date field
2. **Navigational Components:** breadcrumb, slider, search field, pagination, slider, tags, icons
3. **Informational Components:** tooltips, icons, progress bar, notifications, message boxes, modal windows
4. **Containers:** accordion

Input Controls

Break out your sketch pad

Buttons



Text Fields

Contact

Your inquiry is related to:

General Info

Your Name (required)

Your Email (required)

Subject

Your Message

Send

Checkboxes: denote multiple actions

The image shows a screenshot of a web application interface. At the top, there is a large input field labeled "Add Comments Here" with a vertical scroll bar on its right side. Below this, there is a group of radio buttons labeled "Value 1" through "Value 4". Underneath these, there is another group of checkboxes labeled "Value 1" through "Value 5". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Submit" and "Reset".

Add Comments Here

Value 1 Value 2 Value 3 Value 4

Value 1 Value 2 Value 3 Value 4 Value 5

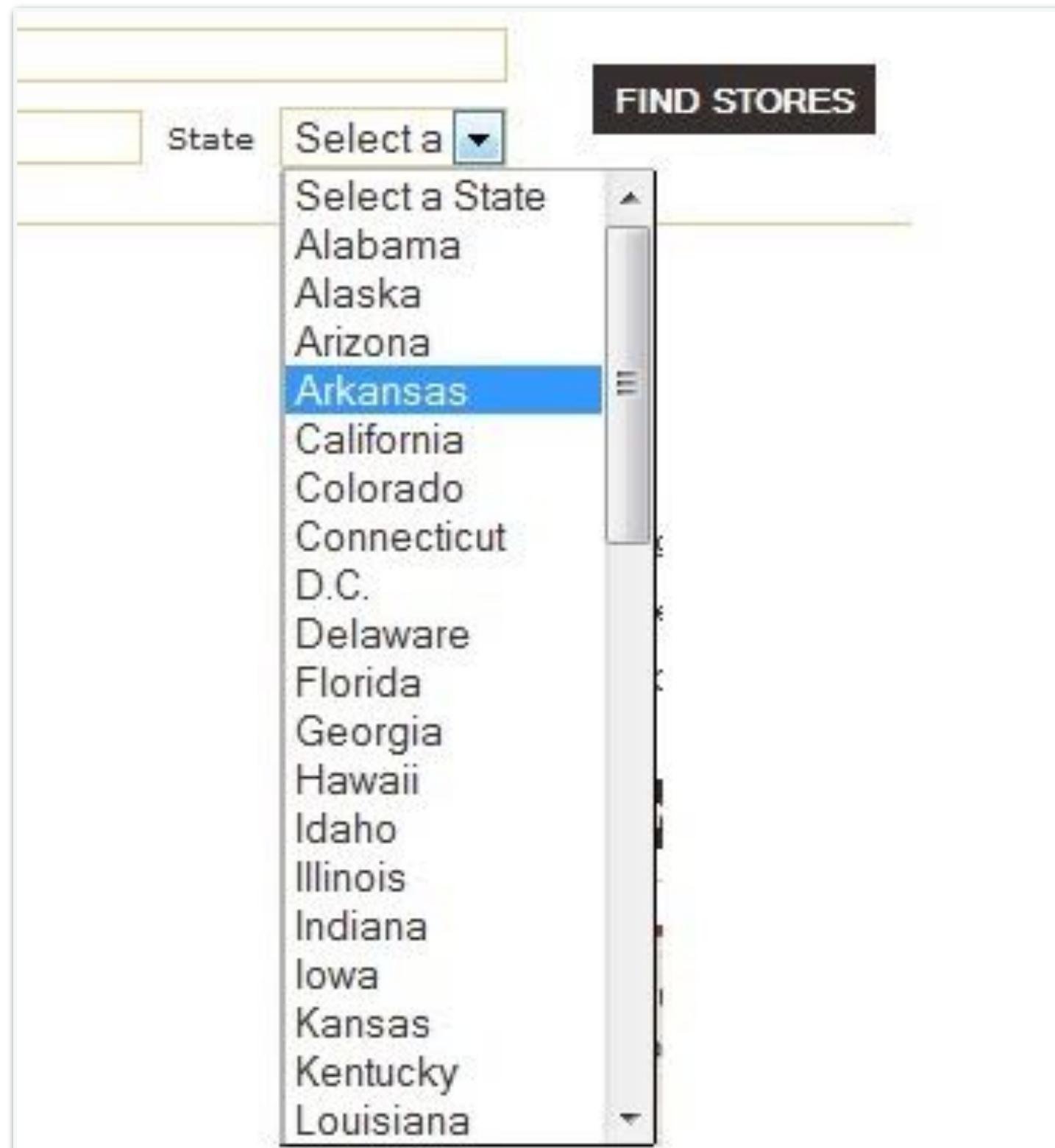
Radio Buttons: single action

Sort by

- Best match
- Newest
- Most popular

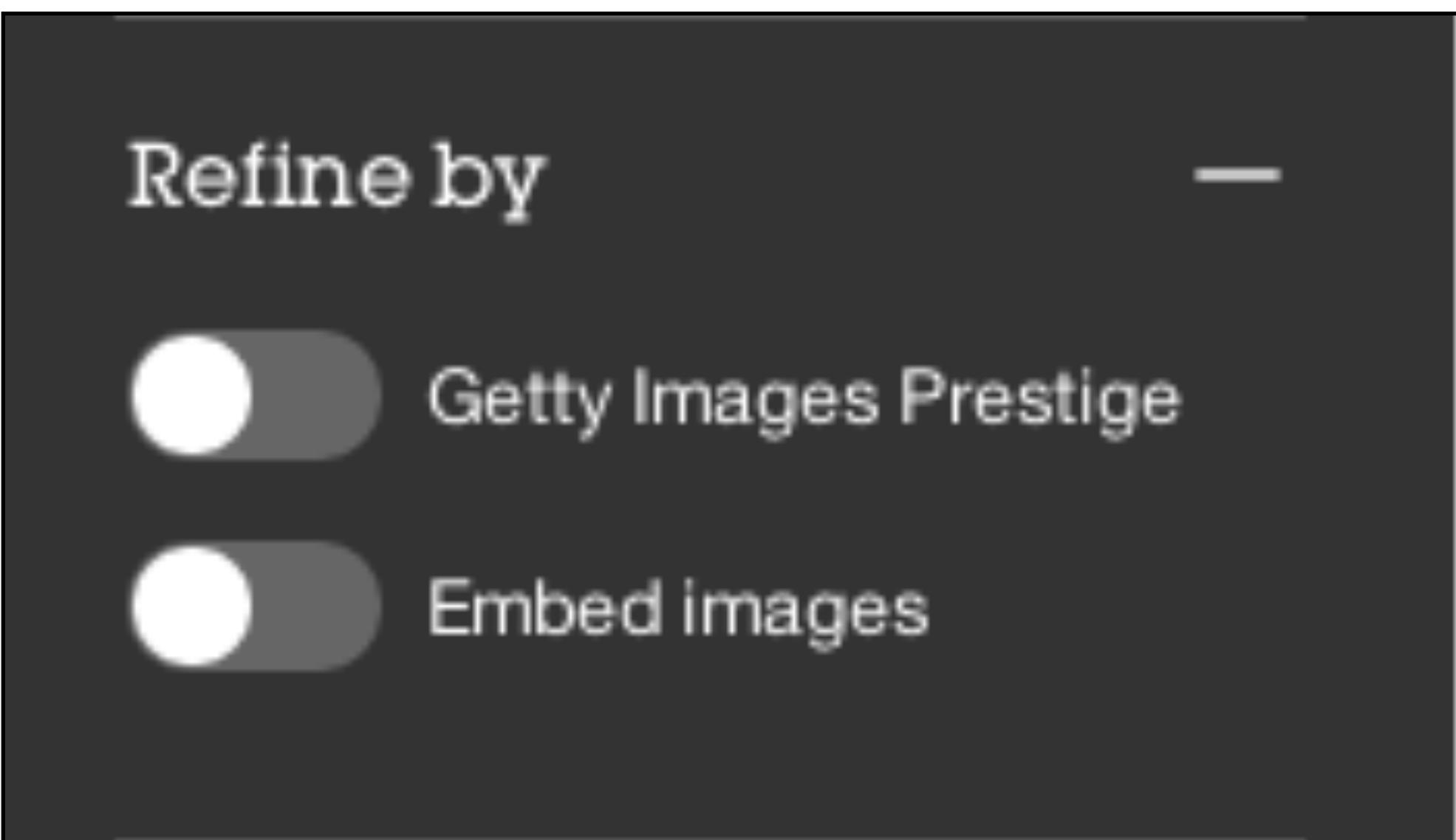


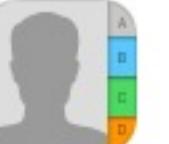
Drop down: too complex for simple nav



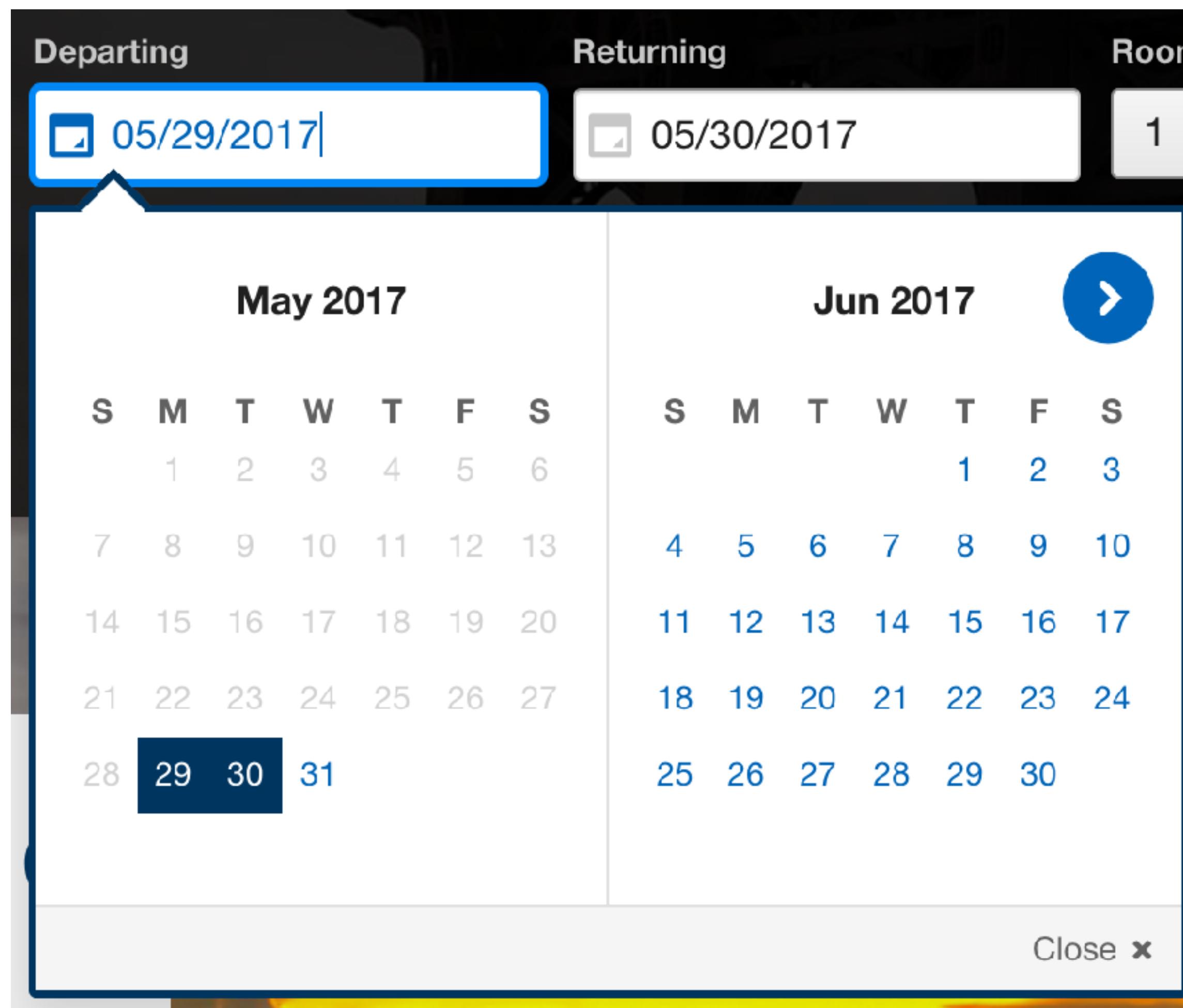
A screenshot of the Zappos.com men's homepage. At the top, there are links for "Customer Service", "Available 24/7 at (877) 927-2332", and "Join Zappos Rewards & Get E". Below the header is the Zappos logo and a search bar containing the text "Bradford, search for shoes, clothes, etc". The main navigation bar includes "Women", "Men" (which is underlined), "Kids", "Departments", "Brands", and "Sale". To the right of the navigation are "Favorites" and "Reward" links. The page features a grid of categories: Shoes (Sneakers & Athletics, Sandals, Boots, Oxfords, Loafers, Slippers, Boat Shoes, Clogs & Mules), Clothing (Shirts & Tops, Shorts, Pants, Jeans, Swimwear, Hoodies & Sweatshirts, Sweaters, Socks), Accessories & More (Bags & Wallets, Accessories, Sunglasses & Eyewear, Belts, Watches, Hats), and New Arrivals. On the right side, there is a "To Dad, With Love" section with three shoes and a "Style Advice" section with "Men's Fashion Tips".

Toggle: “either/or” scenario



	Mail	
	Contacts	
	Calendars	
	Reminders	
	Safari	
	Notes	
	Passbook	
	Keychain	On >

Date field: sort multiple possibilities at once



Navigation controls

Breadcrumb: allows for quick page navigation

The screenshot shows the homepage of usability.gov. At the top, there is a dark header bar with the website's logo ('usability.gov' with a stylized diamond icon) and the tagline 'Improving the User Experience'. To the right of the logo is a search bar labeled 'Search' and a blue square icon with a white 'e' symbol. Below the header, there are three main navigation categories: 'What & Why of Usability' (selected), 'How To & Tools', and 'Get Involved'. A breadcrumb navigation trail is visible below these categories, showing the path: 'Home > What & Why of Usability > User Interface Design Basics'. In the bottom right corner of the main content area, there is a 'Related Content' section with a link to 'User-Centered Design Process Map'. At the very bottom of the page, there are several small circular icons for adjusting text size (-A, A, +A), printing (printer), and sharing (speech bubble with plus sign).

usability.gov *Improving the User Experience*

Search

e

What & Why of Usability

How To & Tools

Get Involved

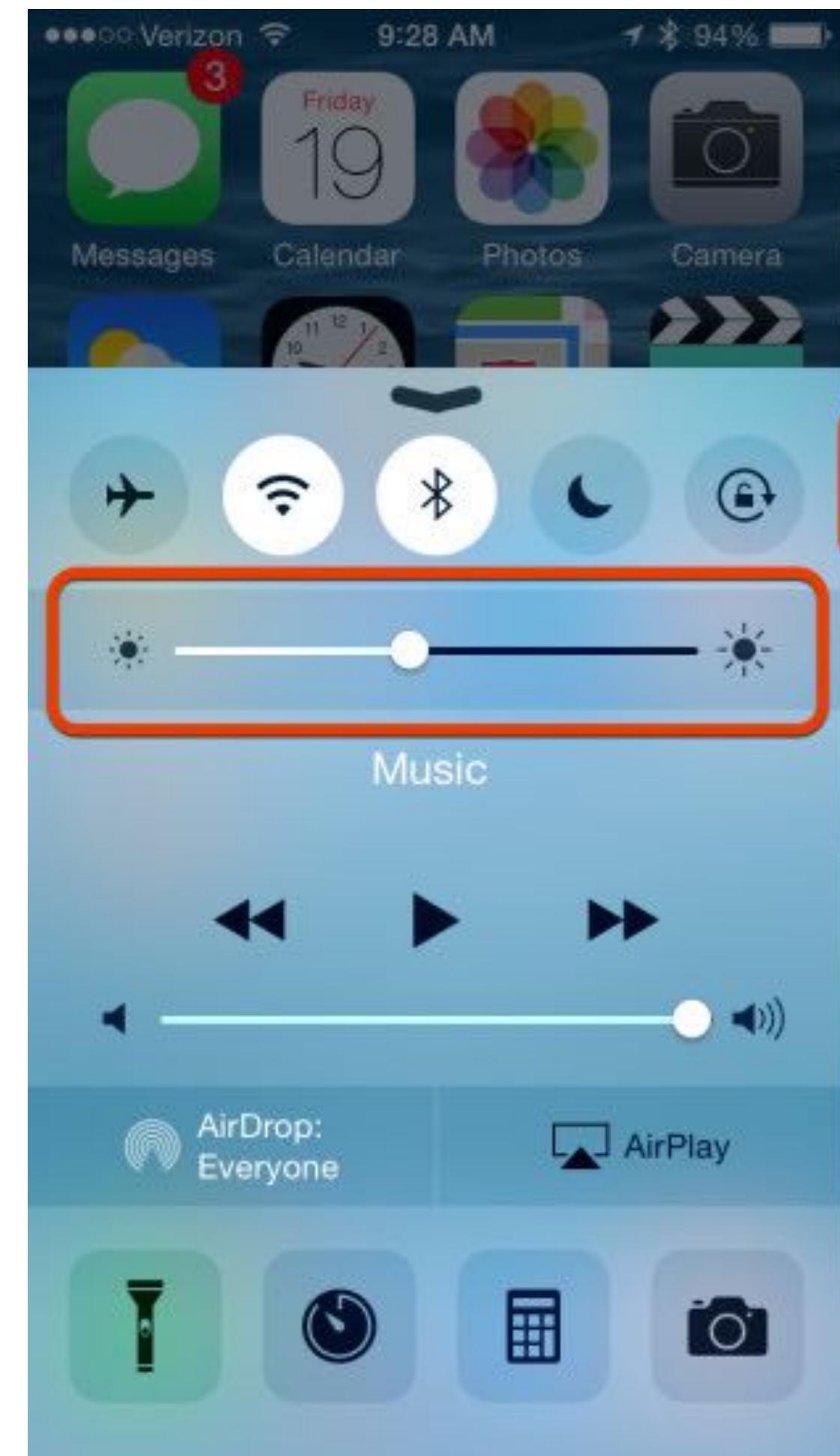
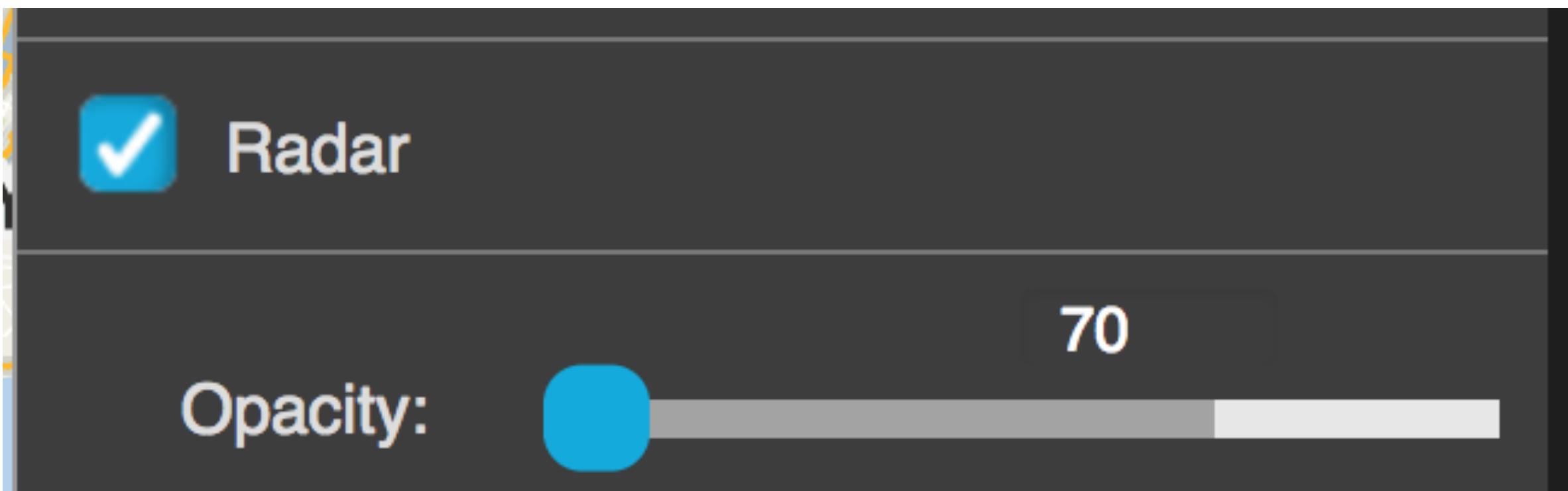
Home > What & Why of Usability > User Interface Design Basics

-A A +A Share

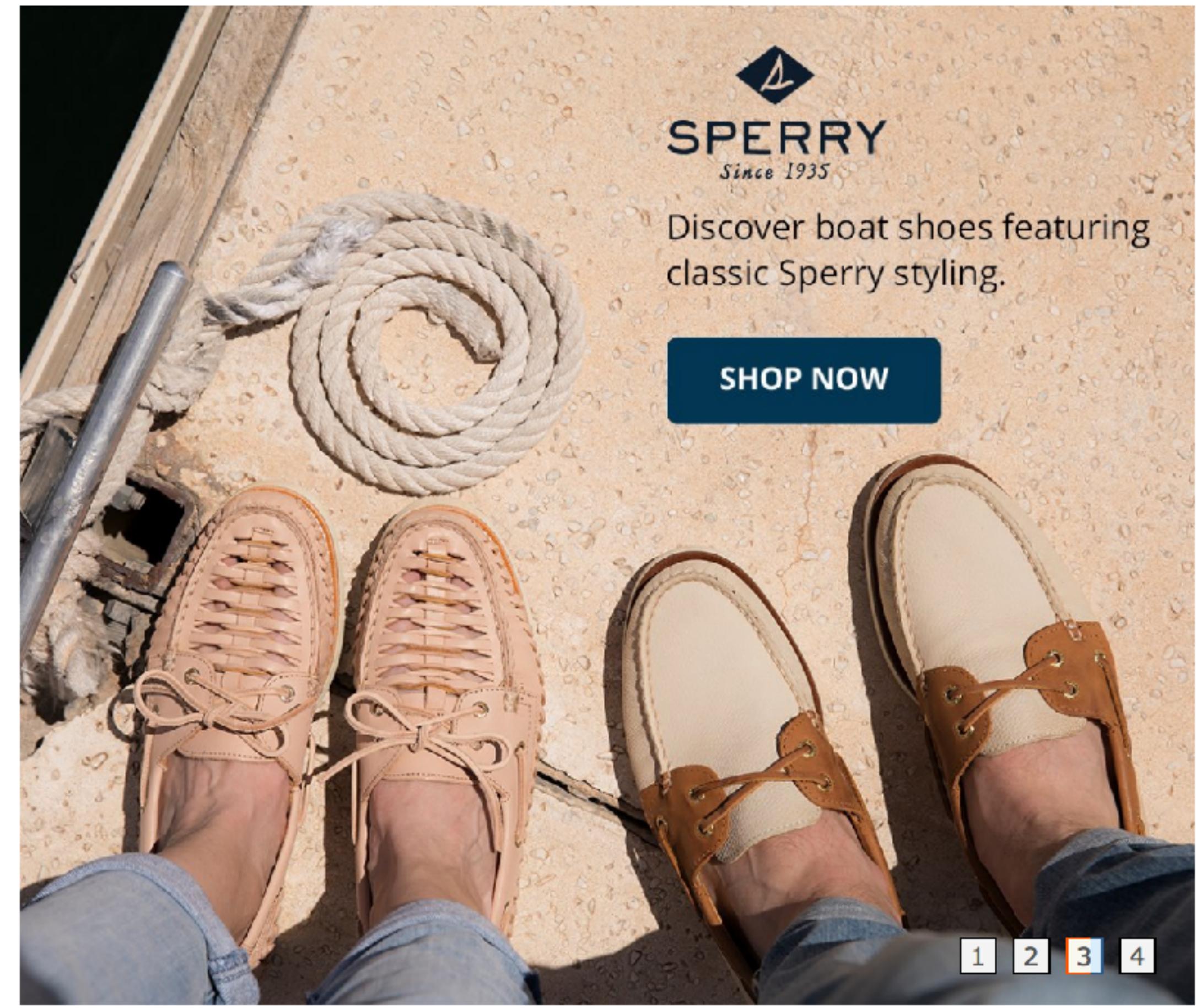
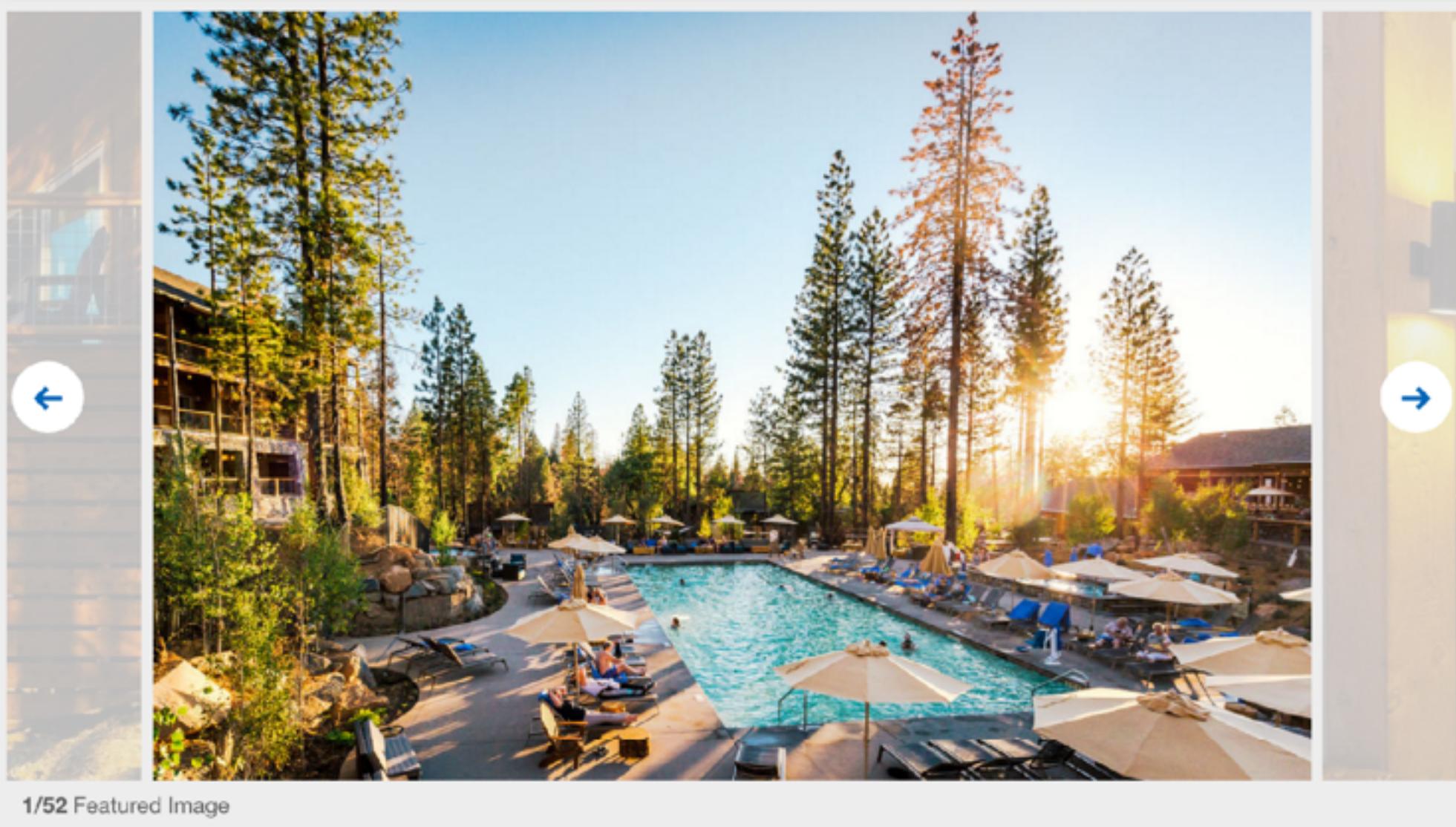
Related Content

User-Centered Design Process Map

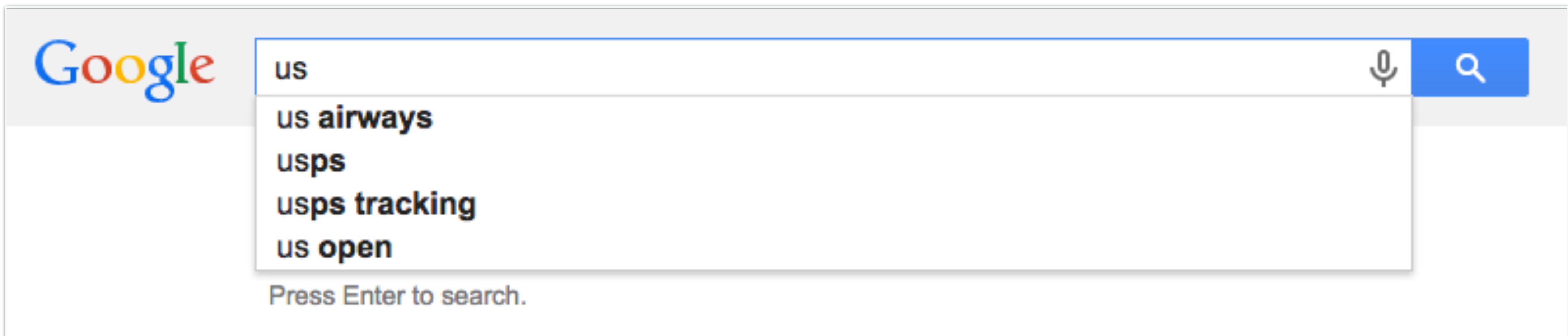
Slider: allows users to change the scale of content



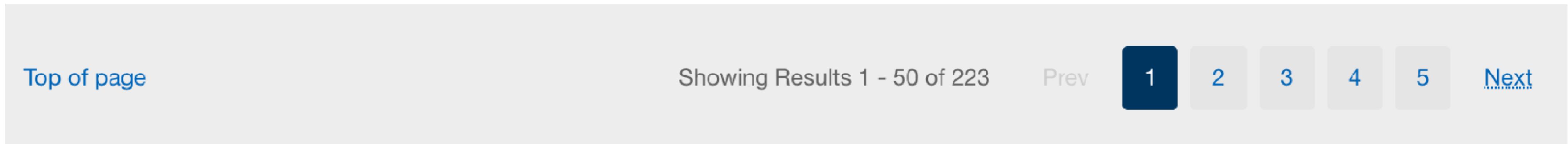
Carousel: move between sections of content



Search field: user input relies on site taxonomy



Pagination: shows users scale of content



Filters: allow users to filter content types

Image type

- Photography
- Illustration
- Vector

Orientation

- Horizontal
- Vertical
- Panoramic horizontal
- Panoramic vertical
- Square

Filter properties by

Property Class

- ★★★★★ 5 Stars
- ★★★★ 4 Stars
- ★★★ 3 Stars
- ★★ 2 Stars
- ★ 1 Star

Price Per Night

- Less than \$75
- \$75 to \$124
- \$125 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- Greater than \$300

MEN'S SIZE

MEN'S WIDTH

N	M	W	WW	2A
B	C	D	E	EE
3E	4E	5E	6E	

PERFORMANCE

BRAND

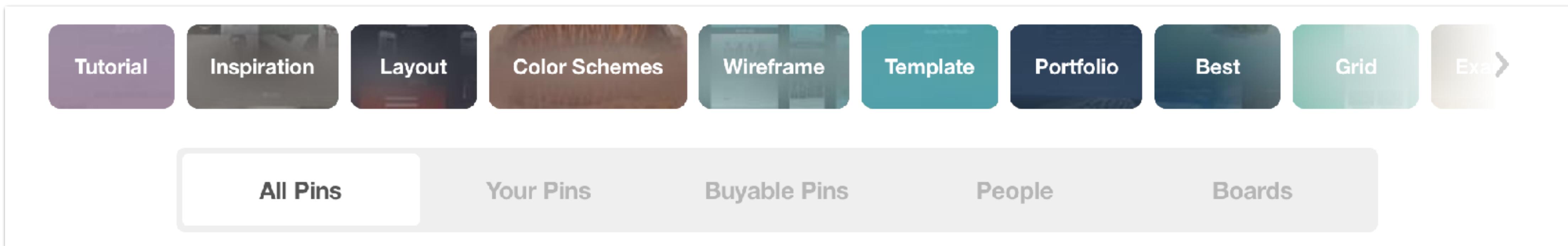
COLOR

PRICE

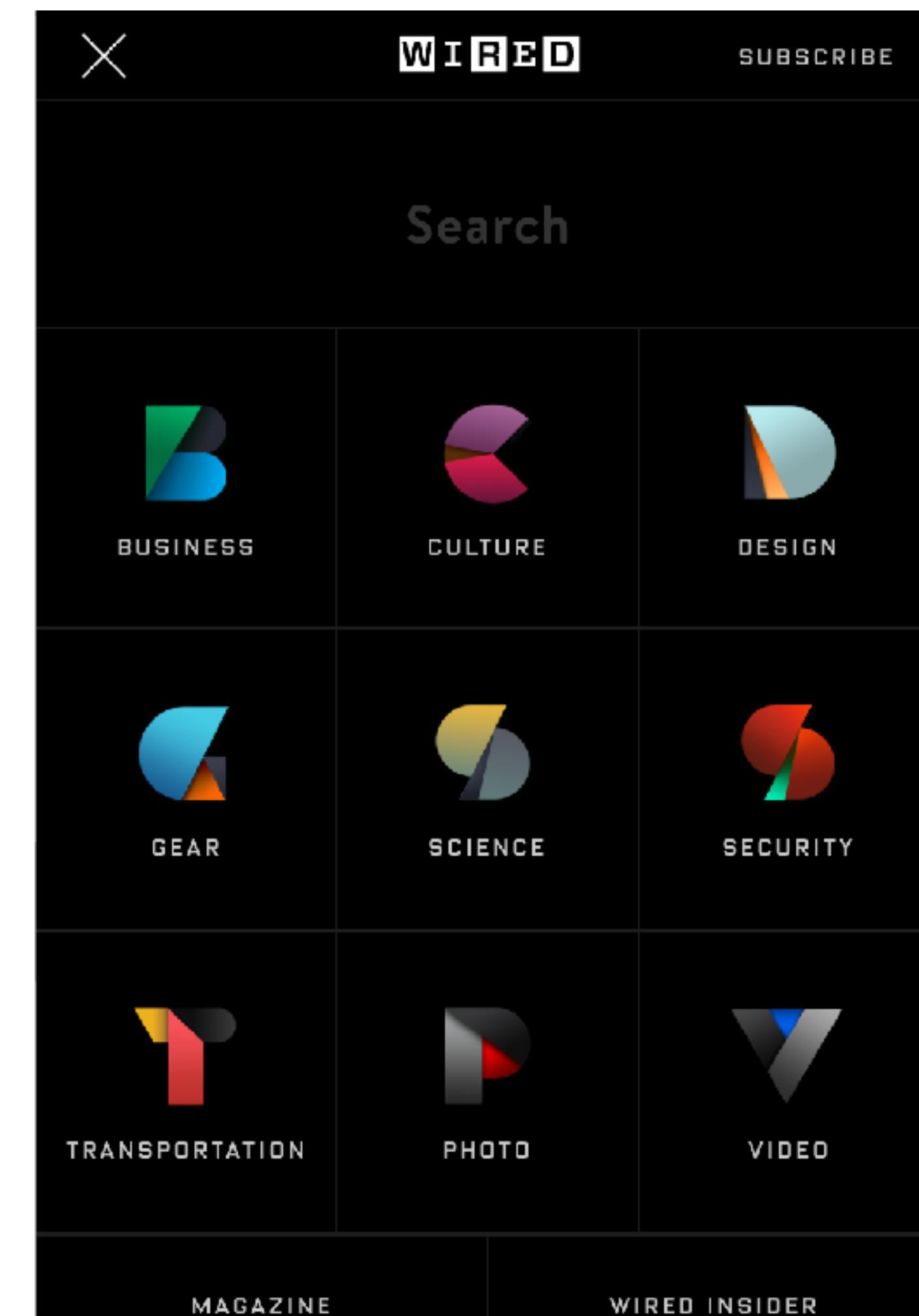
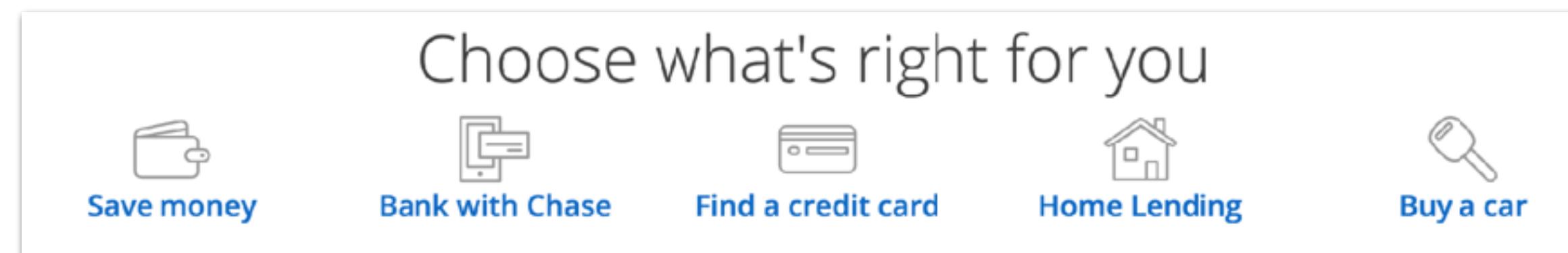
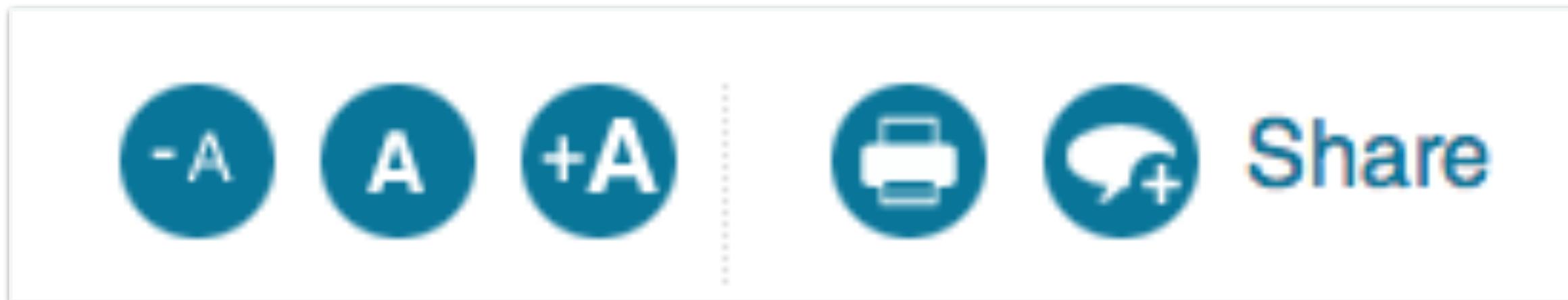
- \$50.00 and Under (911)
- \$100.00 and Under (5317)
- \$200.00 and Under (7534)
- \$200.00 and Over (518)

COLLECTIONS

Tags: allow users to select like-content types



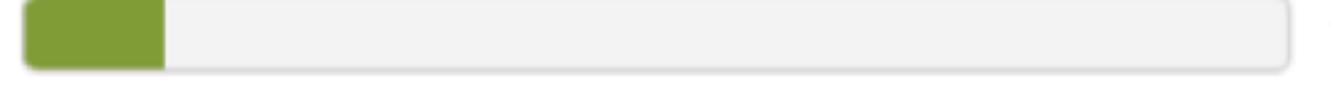
Icons: visually represent content



Informational Components

Progress bars: gives users a timeline

SurveyMonkey Research Survey

1. Display the progress bar with the page number alongside.  2 / 18  11% 

2. Display the progress bar with the percent complete alongside.

In a typical week, about how often do you exercise?

- Less than 1 time per week
- 1 or 2 times per week
- 3 times per week
- 4 or more times per week

Tooltips: provide useful tips in quick hover

The screenshot shows a portion of the Digg website's interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header bar with white text. From left to right, the header contains: "Upcoming", a green "Join Digg!" button, a "Login" button, and a search bar labeled "Search Users or Stories". Below the header, there is a light gray navigation bar. On the left side of this bar, the word "Days" is followed by a text input field containing "Submit a link". To the right of the input field is a blue button with the text "Digg it ↑". A mouse cursor is hovering over this "Digg it" button, which triggers a tooltip. The tooltip is a white rectangular box with a thin black border and a small "X" icon in the top right corner. Inside the box, the text "You must login to submit content." is displayed in bold. Below this, in smaller text, is the message "Login to submit a story and share it with Digg. Don't have an account? [Create One.](#)". At the bottom of the tooltip box are two buttons: a green "Join Digg!" button and a white "Login" button with a black border.

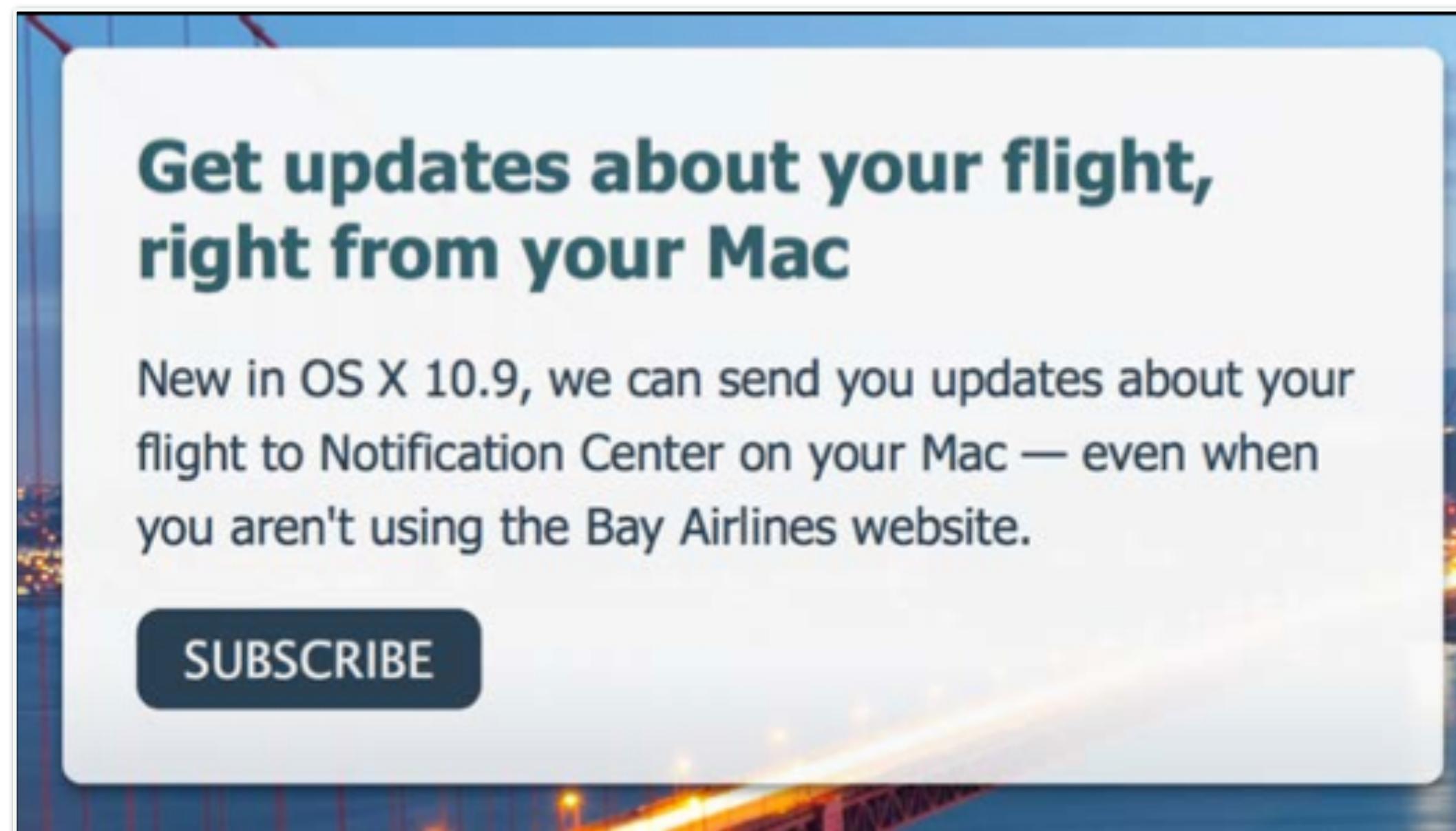
Notifications: alert users to updates or necessary actions dependent on setting



Message box: commonly used to alert users of errors when compiling a form



Modal windows: interrupt user flow, should be used sparingly as they are often unexpected elements



Containers

Accordions: can be helpful when displaying large blocks of content in small spaces

LOCAL FORECAST

Enter City or Zip Code
Wilmington, Delaware

Would you like to set this location as default?

NOW 4:42 PM
 **67°**

HUMIDITY 52%
PRECIP 0.00 IN
WINDS 6 MPH

HOURLY

TODAY OCT21  **68°** Turning cloudy

WED OCT22  **59°** Windy and cooler with rain

THU OCT23  **57°** Mostly cloudy with a shower

FRI  **63°** Partly sunny and breezy

TWITTER

Walmart Checkout

Shipping
Arrives Wed, May 4
Value shipping \$4.97

Subtotal \$39.98
Value shipping \$4.97
Est. tax \$6.50
Based on 94123 Change

2 Enter shipping address

First name John Street address 2125 Chestnut st.
Last name Newman Apt. suite, etc (optional)
Phone number (415) 999-9999 Apt. suite, bldg. c/o (optional)
City San Francisco
State California ZIP Code 94123

Set as my preferred address

3 Select payment method

Credit card Gift card PayPal Cash

© 2015 Walmart Stores, Inc.

Walmart Checkout

Shipping
Arrives Wed, May 4
Value shipping \$4.97

4 Sending to: Shipping address John Newman 2125 Chestnut Street San Francisco, CA 94123

3 Select payment method

Credit card Gift card PayPal Cash

Card information

First name on card John Same as shipping
Last name on card Newman

Card number 
Expiration date MM / YY
Phone (415) 315-9578

Billing address

First name on card John Same as shipping
Last name on card Newman
2125 Chestnut Street San Francisco, CA 94123

Review Your Order

Tiles: allow for free-form content in variety of sizes within a grid and responsive formats

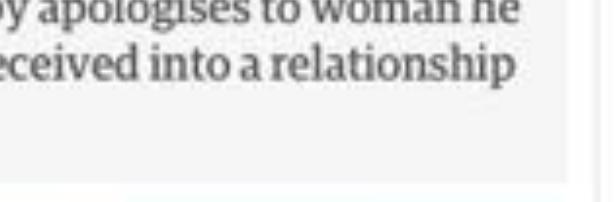
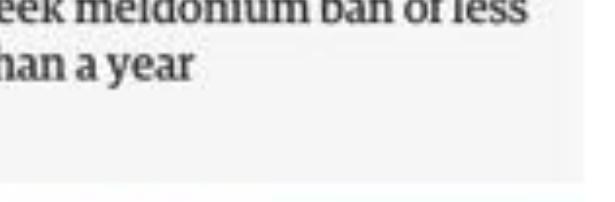
The screenshot shows the homepage of theguardian.com. At the top, there's a dark blue header with the "the guardian" logo in white. Below it is a navigation bar with links for UK, world, sport, football, opinion, culture, business, lifestyle, fashion, environment, tech, travel, and a "browse all sections" button. The main content area has a light gray background and features several news tiles arranged in a grid.

- headlines**
 - Refugee crisis / Balkan countries shut borders as attention turns to new routes**
Hundreds of thousands could become trapped in Greece after Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia announce frontier closures

 - Berta Cáceres / Nephew of murdered Honduran activist: 'The atmosphere is**

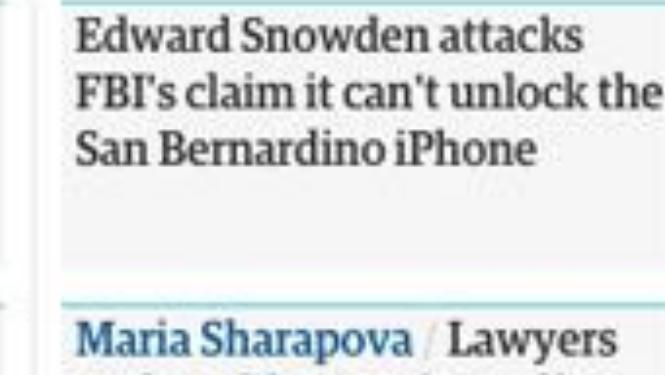
 - Russia / Ukrainian pilot on hunger strike attacks trial as 'farce'**

 - Man v computer / AI breakthrough as Google program beats Go champion**
179

 - Exclusive / Former UK police spy apologises to woman he deceived into a relationship**

 - France / 'End of term'**

 - Ghostbusters / New trailer**

- US primaries / Sanders beats Clinton in Michigan upset**
Live / Sanders shakes up race
3,777

- Edward Snowden attacks FBI's claim it can't unlock the San Bernardino iPhone**

- Maria Sharapova / Lawyers seek meldonium ban of less than a year**


Navigation Systems

Single action text link

craigslist

post to classifieds
my account

search craigslist

search
for sale >

event calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15

help, faq, abuse, legal
avoid scams & fraud
personal safety tips
terms of use
privacy policy
system status

about craigslist
craigslist is hiring in sf

philadelphia ^w

community

activities	local news
artists	lost+found
childcare	musicians
classes	pets
events	politics
general	rideshare
groups	volunteers

housing

apts / housing
housing swap
housing wanted
office / commercial
parking / storage
real estate for sale
rooms / shared
rooms wanted
sublets / temporary
vacation rentals

jobs

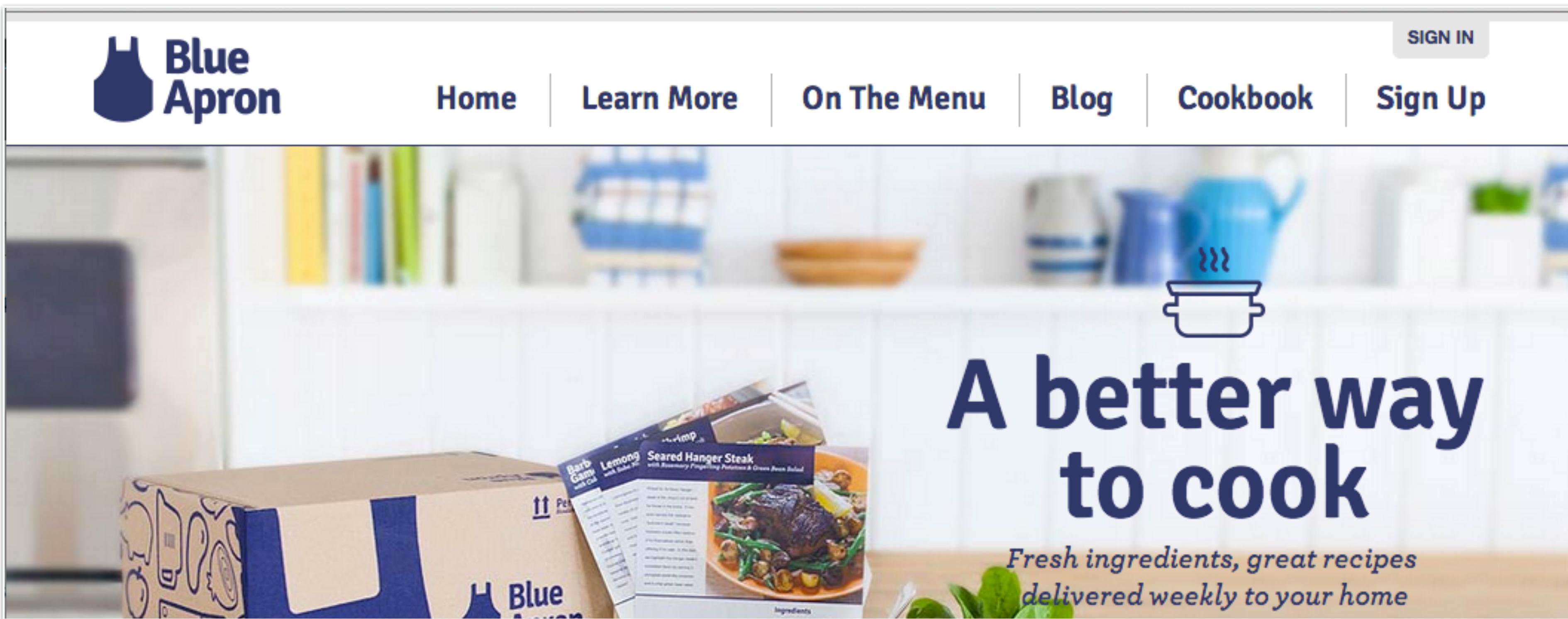
accounting+finance
admin / office
arch / engineering
art / media / design
biotech / science
business / mgmt
customer service
education
food / bev / hosp
general labor
government
human resources
internet engineers
legal / paralegal
manufacturing
marketing / pr / ad
medical / health
nonprofit sector
real estate
retail / wholesale
sales / biz dev
salon / spa / fitness
security
skilled trade / craft
software / qa / dba
systems / network
technical support

english

nearby cl

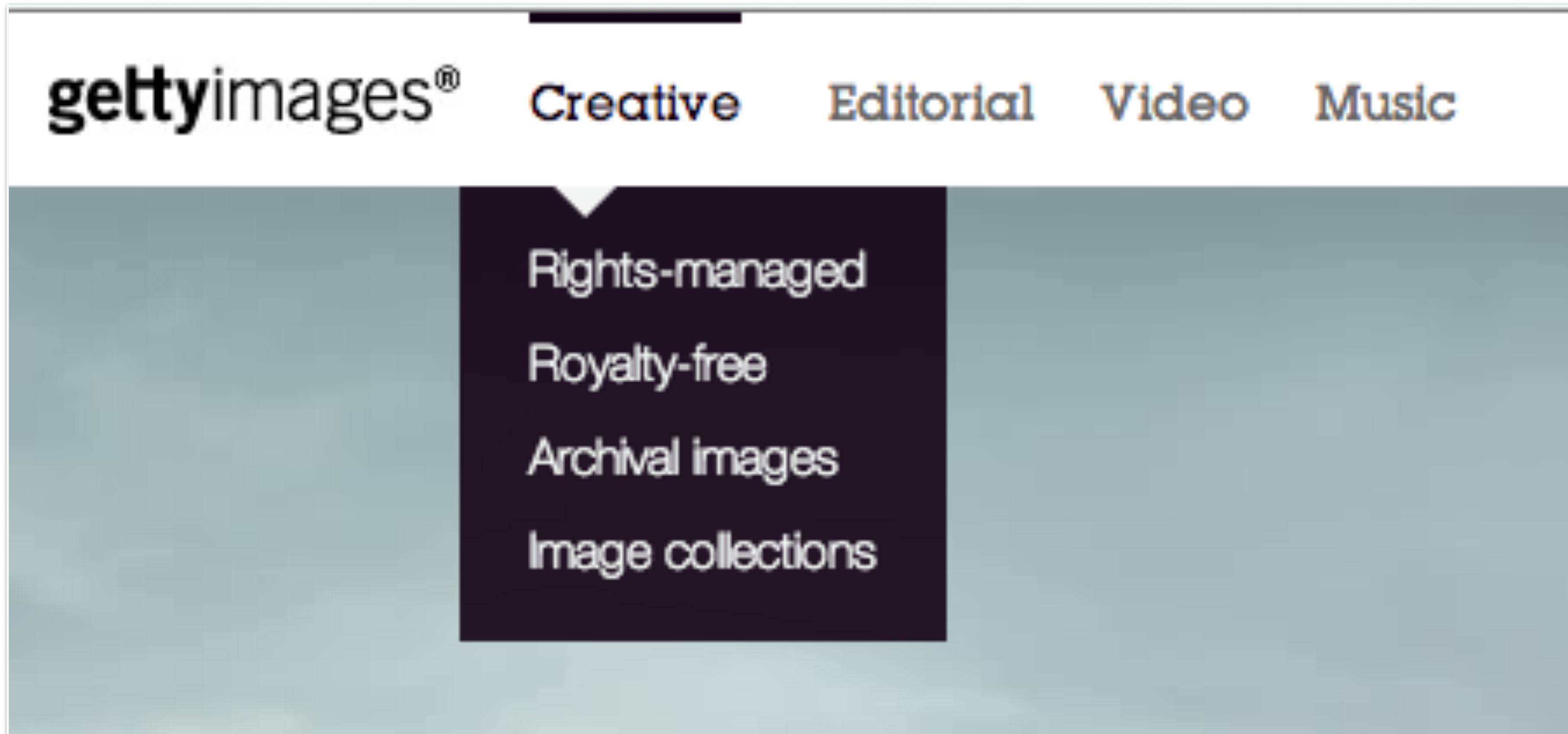
allentown
annapolis
baltimore
binghamton
catskills
central nj
cumberland val
delaware
eastern shore
eastern wv
frederick
fredericksburg
harrisburg
hudson valley
jersey shore
lancaster
long island
new haven
new york
north jersey
northwest ct
poconos
reading
scranton
southern md
south jersey
state college
washington
williamsport

Single action item: button click



The screenshot shows the Blue Apron homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Blue Apron logo, a "SIGN IN" button, and links for "Home", "Learn More", "On The Menu", "Blog", "Cookbook", and "Sign Up". Below the navigation bar, there is a blurred background image of a kitchen counter with a meal kit box and ingredients. In the foreground, on the right side, there is a large text area with the headline "A better way to cook" in bold blue letters, accompanied by a small icon of a steaming pot. Below the headline, there is a subtitle in a smaller font: "Fresh ingredients, great recipes delivered weekly to your home".

Drop down: for easy scanning



Mega drop-down: for complex content

Customer Service Available 24/7 at (877) 927-2332 Join Zappos Rewards & Get E

Zappos.com

Bradford, search for shoes, clothes, etc

SEARCH

Women Men Kids Departments Brands Sale Favorites Reward

Shoes Clothing Accessories & More

Sneakers & Athletics Shirts & Tops Bags & Wallets

Sandals Shorts Accessories

Boots Pants Sunglasses &

Oxfords Jeans Eyewear

Loafers Swimwear Belts

Slippers Hoodies & Watches

Boat Shoes Sweatshirts Hats

Clogs & Mules Sweaters New Arrivals

Socks

To Dad, With Love

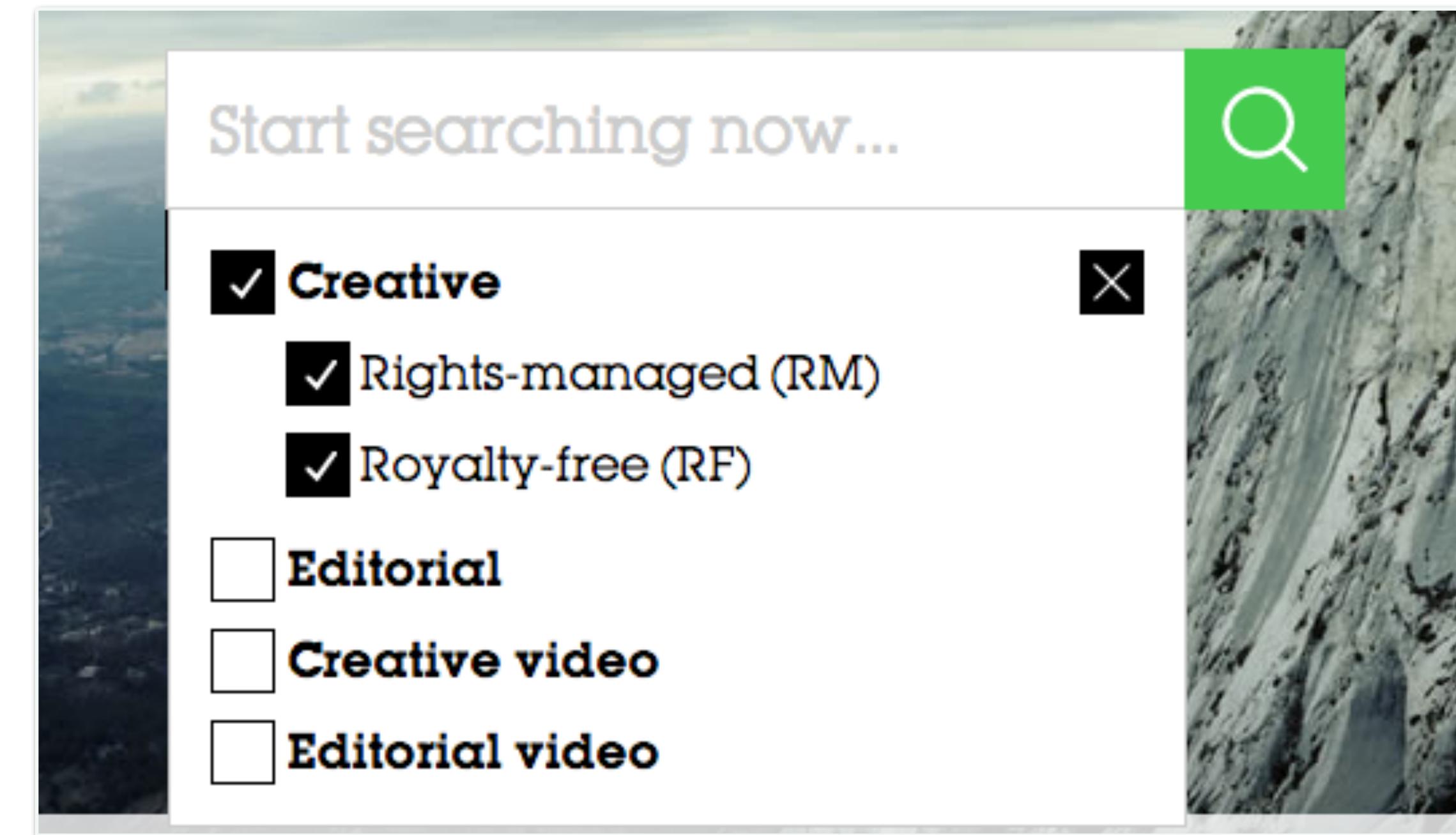
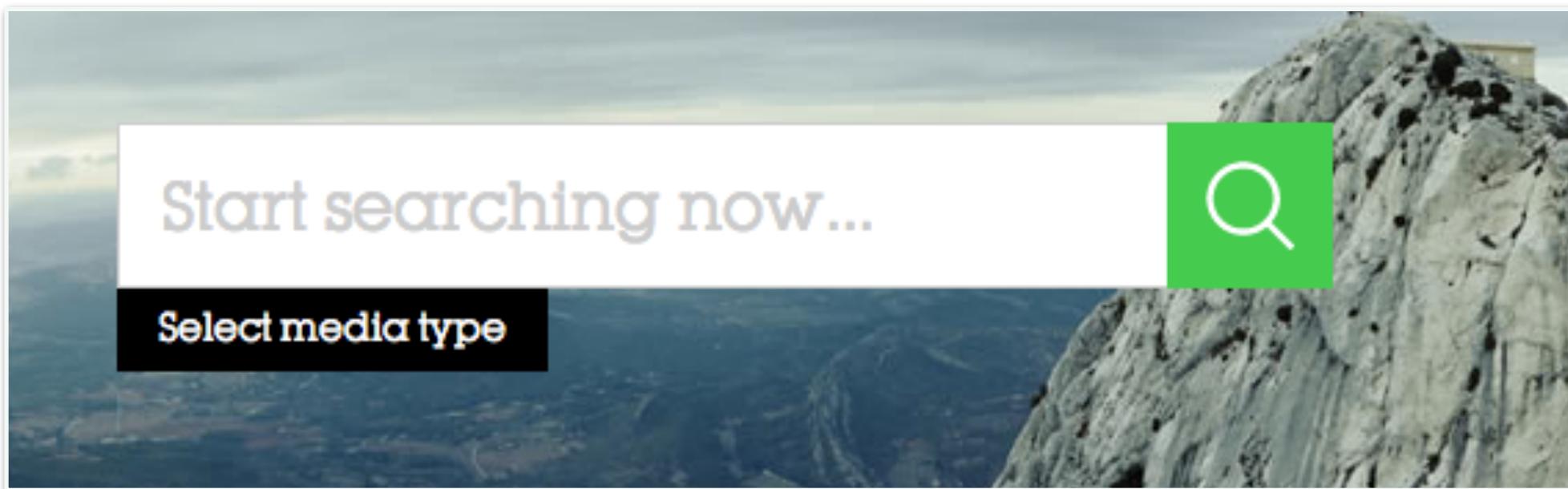
Style Advice

Men's Fashion Tips

New Arrivals

www.zappos.com/mens

Drop down selectors: pre-filter content



Tabs: allow users to scan large chunks of content at a high nav level

The screenshot shows the official website of the State of Delaware. At the top, there's a header with the Delaware logo, "Delaware.gov" (The Official Website of the First State), a search bar ("Search for Services, People and More..."), and a menu icon. Below the header is a navigation bar with four main tabs: "RESIDENTS" (orange background), "BUSINESSES" (blue background), "JOB SEEKERS" (blue background), and "VISITORS" (blue background). The "RESIDENTS" tab is currently active.

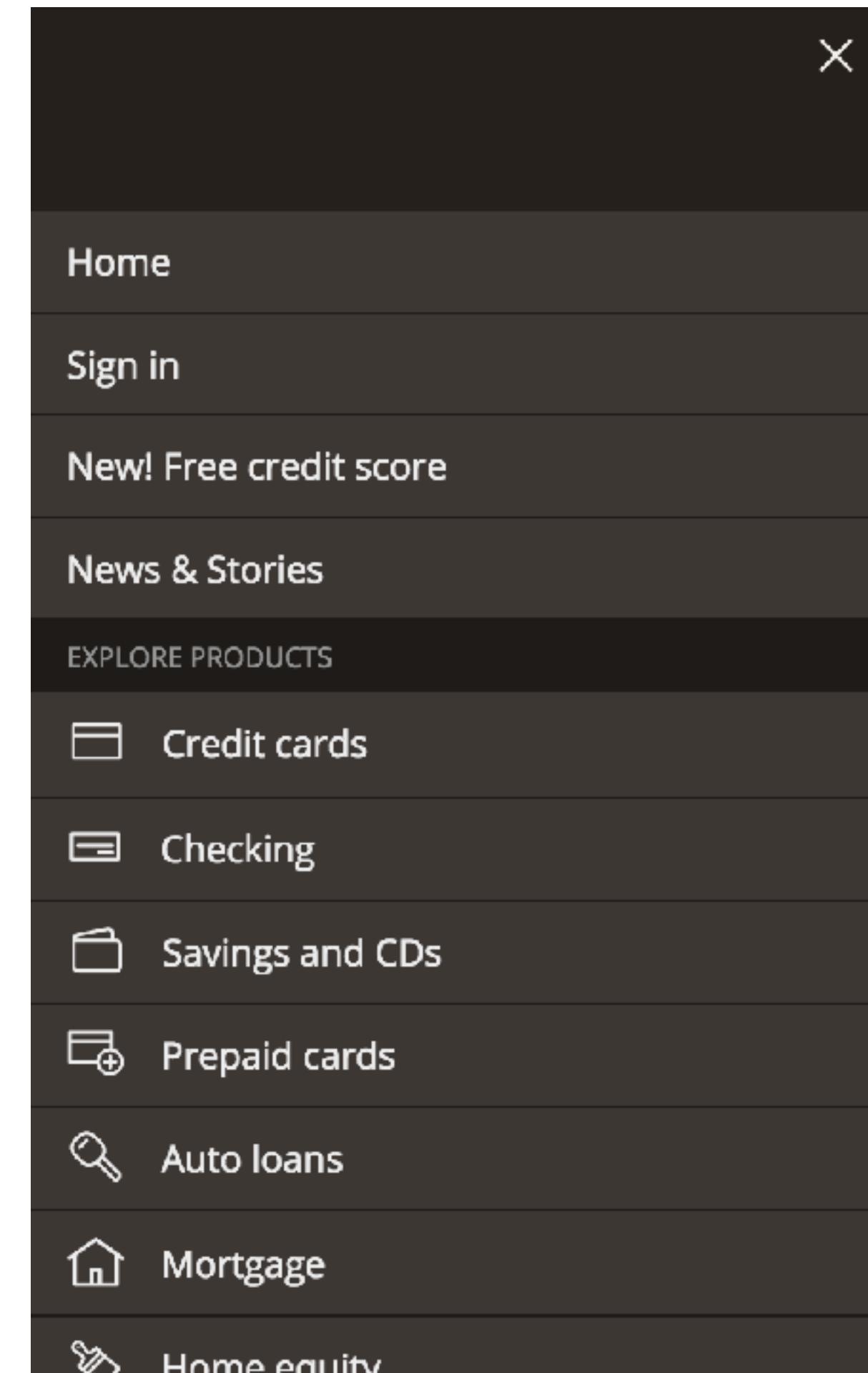
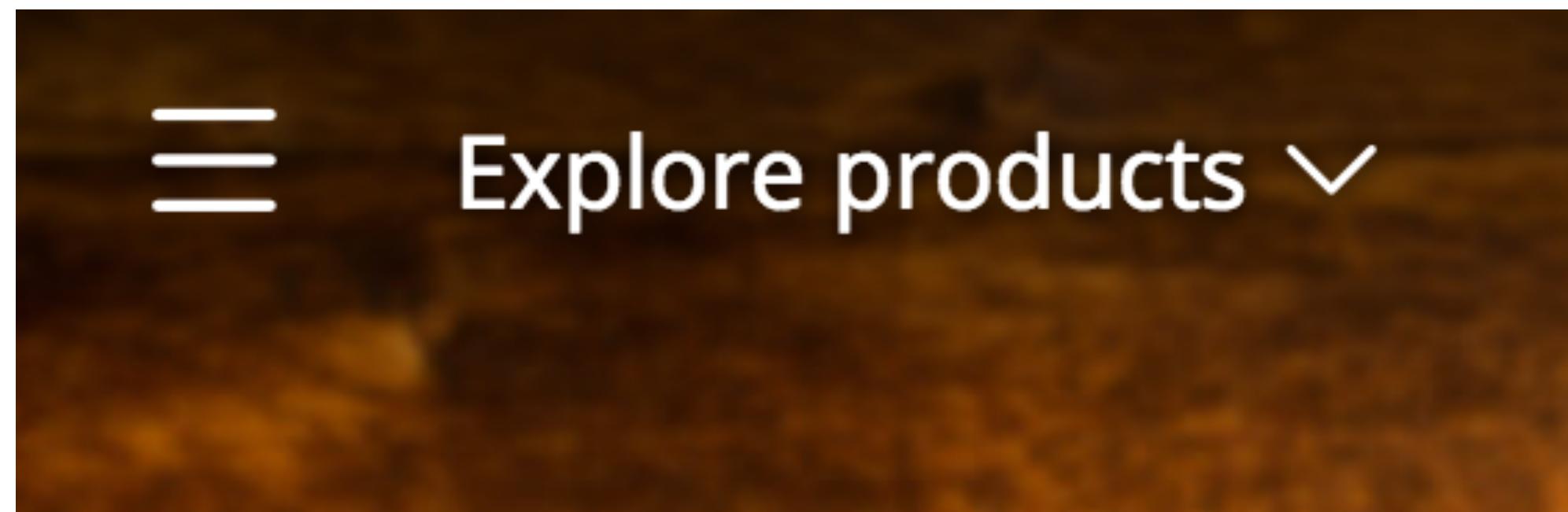
The main content area features several sections:

- A video thumbnail on the left with the text "Got Yours? The flu vaccine saves lives. Get it." and a small circular progress bar.
- A "BY THE NUMBERS" section in the center with a large orange background. It features a large white number "1" and the text "DELAWARE'S RANK Among the states in foreign direct investment (PDF.)".
- An "UPDATES" section on the right containing three recent tweets from official accounts:

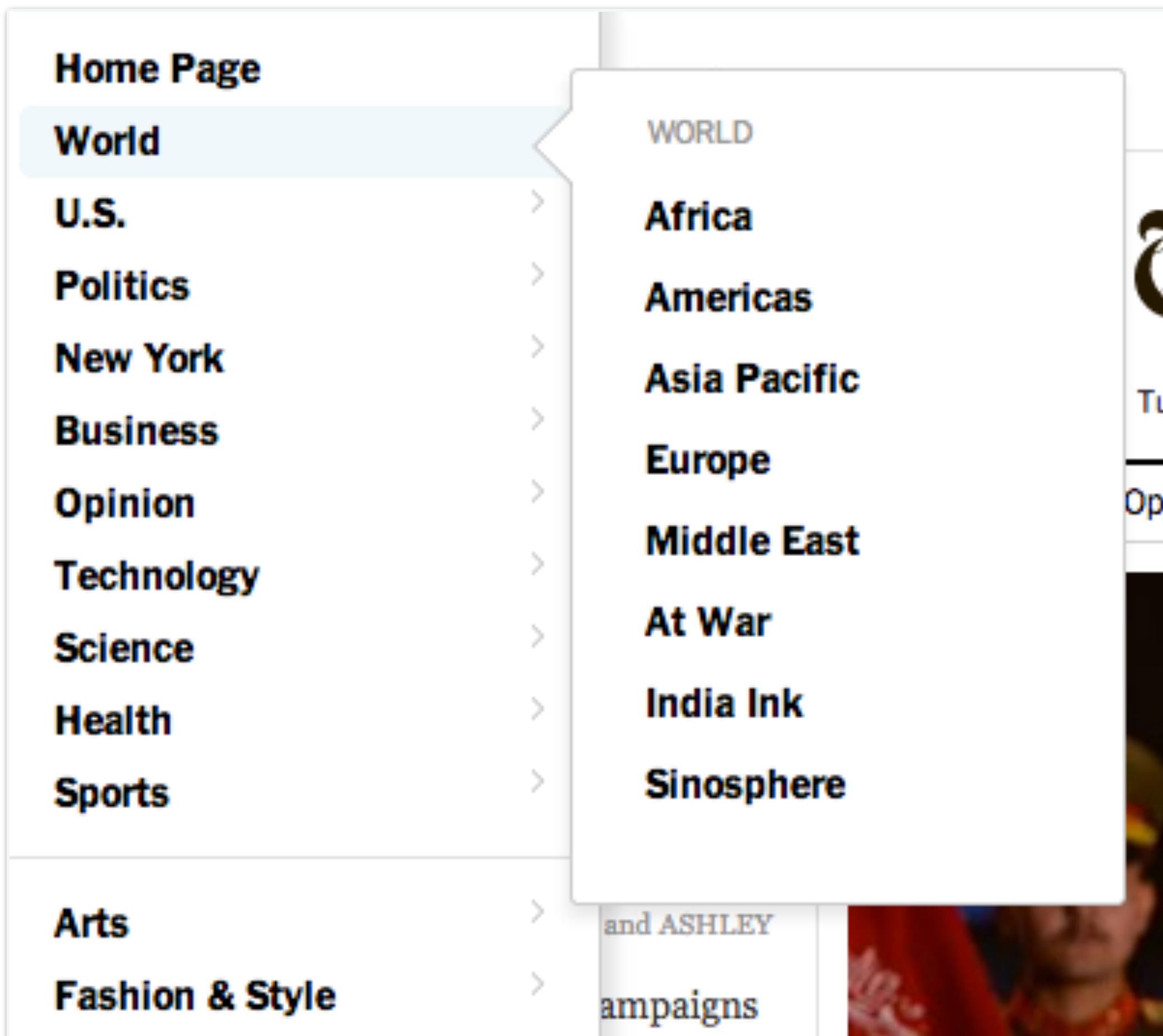
User	Time Ago	Text
AG Beau Biden @AG_Biden	35m	'An open air drug market is no longer in existence' thanks to @AG_Biden's Crime Strategies Unit -- bit.ly/ZN0VYr
DSHA @DEStateHousing	2h	Presenting @the_moneyschool "Mind Over Money" 10/21 6-7:30pm NCALL, 363 Sausbury Rd. Dover 877-307-6858
DSHA @DEStateHousing	2h	Presenting @the_moneyschool "Show Me My

At the bottom, there are links for "GET MOBILE APPS", "READ THE NEWS", and "ATTEND MEETINGS". There are also sections for "PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES" (with a "Customize Your Experience..." button) and "ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS".

Hamburger menu: commonly used in mobile frameworks, however also seen in desktop



Fly-out menus: allow for greater filtering to occur before leaving your top-level nav



Organizing Navigation

Left or right: keeps content center focus, though traditionally more useful with smaller blocks of content

PARENTS
EDUCATORS
GET INVOLVED
ABOUT US
STORE
CONTACT
DONATE

[f](#) [in](#)

Professional Development
Introduction
The Science of Learning to Read
Teachers, Teaching, Teachers (T3) Institute
Professional Development Classes
- Reading 101
- LETRS
- DIBELS
- 95 Percent Group
- Customized Workshops
CORE Conference
Register for Classes

Resources for Your School
Tutors
Parent Assist

New
Sale
Activewear
Bottoms
Tops
Tailored
Outerwear
Golf
Accessories
Featured Shops

Groomshop
Gift Cards
Gift Box
Guideshop Locations
Sign In

New
Sale
Activewear
Bottoms
Tops
Tailored

All Tailored
Suits
Blazers
Dress Shirts
Shirt & Tie Pairings
Tuxedos & Formalwear

Men's

Shop by Category

Outerwear
Shirts
Sweaters
Sweatshirts
Blazers
Pants & Jeans
Shorts
Swimwear
Sleepwear & Robes
Base Layers & Underwear
Accessories
Active Clothing

Fixed left top, slide right secondary

Fixed left top, drop down secondary

Fixed left secondary single action text links

Top Level Nav (TLN): highest level content

gettyimages® [Creative](#) [Editorial](#) [Video](#) [Music](#)

Secondary Nav (SN): next level content blocks

gettyimages® Creative Editorial Video Music    Ken ▾

Refine your results ^  travel 

Sort by Best match Newest Most popular

Preferences Exclude nudity Show details

All images Royalty-free (RF) Rights-managed (RM)

1,687,461 results < 1 of 16,875 >

people 

family 

shopping 





Tertiary Nav (TN): primarily used for actionable content blocks

The screenshot shows a product page for a photograph on Getty Images. The main image is a photograph of an airplane wing against a bright, golden sunset or sunrise background. The page includes a header with the Getty Images logo and navigation links for live chat and contact. A "GETTY IMAGES PRESTIGE" section highlights exclusivity options. Below the image, the caption reads "Airplane wing with sunflare" and credits "David Ryle". There are three large, prominent buttons: "CALCULATE PRICE" (green), "ADD TO CART" (white), and "SAVE TO LIGHTBOX" (white). At the bottom, there are links for "View similar images", "More from this photographer", and "Download comp". Social sharing icons for heart, share, and print are also present. Metadata at the bottom includes Creative # (179774414), Release info (No release, but release may not be required), License type (Rights-managed), and a "Show more" link.

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Live chat Contact us < >

GETTY IMAGES PRESTIGE

Exclusivity options available [Learn more](#)

Airplane wing with sunflare

Credit: David Ryle

[CALCULATE PRICE](#)

[ADD TO CART](#)

[SAVE TO LIGHTBOX](#)

Creative #: 179774414

Release info: No release, but release may not be required. [More information](#)

License type: Rights-managed

[View similar images](#) | [More from this photographer](#) | [Download comp](#)

Caption: plane wing in air with sun flare

[Show more](#)

What have we learned
about users?



Sketch: creating an order form



Group Activity:

With your User Flow map, please create wireframes to allow users to order a single scoop of chocolate ice cream in a waffle cone for a desktop.

Requirements:

<http://bit.ly/2rvuDAN>

Test: let's try our work



Ask another group to use your site, what did they think?

While they're using it, ask:

- Did they enjoy it?
- Did they get stuck?
- Was it easy to use?

Iterate: what would you change?



Using post it notes, sketch ways to improve your mobile site.

Review: group discussion



What did you learn from sketching and testing your prototype?

As a group, let's build a site together on our wall for both mobile and desktop devices.