Project Four Research Report

CRAIGSList

CGT 256, Team 1

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November 17, 2020 - December 6, 2020 Version: 0.2.0

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Executive Summary:

An executive summary serves the purpose of summarizing the details of a report so readers can become familiar with the content without having to survey the entire document. This summary highlights the purpose, key points, and findings of a report. Below we have included a basic outline of the sections required of an executive summary:

1. **Introduction:** *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.*

2. **Procedure:** *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.*

3. **Results:** *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.*

4. **Recommendation:** *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.*

5. **Conclusion:** *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.*

Introduction:

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The goal of project 3 was to evaluate the Craigslist website to effectively propose a redesign that is more visually dated and attractive. This project evaluated the website based on the current use of visually appealing design and execution of usability principles. From the evaluation stage, our team analyzed the findings to then propose a new website composition that maintains the familiar organization that Craigslist users are used to as well as a modernized and up-to-date design. There is still work to be done, changes to be made and goals left to achieve with our redesign of the Craigslist website and that is where this next project comes into play.

The goal of this next project is to conduct usability testing on the Craigslist website, analyze the findings, synthesize any recommendations, reflect on the results, and compile everything into a formal report. Our team will proceed through different stages to build our research report. Through this process we hope to gain a better understanding of the Craigslist website on its understandability and effectiveness in user testing. The goal of the usability testing is to answer the question, is our Craigslist design effective, efficient, and enjoyable for our intended user group?

Methodology:

Protocol

Metrics, Measures, & Analysis		
Metric	**Measurement**	**Analyze**
PERFORMANCE METRICS		
Time on Each task	Once the participant begins a task they will be timed, with the timer stopping once they hit a designated stopping point.	Is the average time for each task more or less than expected?
Success of Each Goal	Was the participant able to complete the goal without assistance, with assistance or not at all.	What was the most common level of assistance needed for each task?
Errors	Errors are defined as whenever a participant must ask for help or cannot proceed without guidance.	Any common errors? Average number of errors for each task?
OBSERVATIONAL METRICS		
Observe the behavior of our participants as they complete their tasks, the areas of concern for us our - Verbal (ex. "Shoot", "Oh-no", "yay" - Physical (ex. Leaning back, clapping) - Actions (ex. Pausing and thinking,		# of behaviors noted
		Pull-Quotes or notable moments
SELF-REPORTED METRICS		
Experience with Craigslist	Questions during Pre-session	Answers to pre-session screening questions
Experience with online retail	Questions during Pre-session	Answers to pre-session screening questions
Pre-task Difficulty	1-5 Difficulty Scale	Average rating for each task
Post-task Difficulty	1-5 Difficulty Scale	Average rating for each task

Craigslist Website Frustration	Questions during Post-session	Answers to post-session questions and feedback received.
Craigslist Website Help	Questions during Post-session	Answers to post-session questions and feedback received.

Script

SCRIPT
Materials needed: Computer, screen-recording, Craigslist Website
OPENING INSTRUCTIONS
Hello, how are you today? Our team is very greatly in your willingness to participate in our study of the Craigslist website. We are student researchers from Purdue University and our main goal of this study is to evaluate the Craigslist website based on user effectiveness, efficiency, and enjoyment.   Before we begin the first section of tasks, I would like to ask you a few demographic questions for documentation purposes.

What is your age?	
What is your major or profession?	
How often do you make purchases online?	
Do you have any experience in using the Craigslist site prior to this day?	

PRE-SESSION - SCREENING QUESTIONS	
Based on the homepage do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?	
What are your first impressions of the Craigslist homepage?	

PRE-TASK QUESTIONS	
Now we are going to evaluate the site by trying to find a listing for a cat - how difficult do you think this task will be on a scale of 1-5?	

TASK #1 - SEARCHING
We would like you to find and purchase a cat. You will be using either the "community" or "for sale" columns to complete the task. If you get stuck or have any questions please let us know and we would like you to remember that we are simply testing and evaluating the site not your personal skills and abilities.
POST-TASK QUESTIONS

Before we completed the task, you said you thought it would be this difficult to do the task. Now that you have completed the task, was it as difficult, more difficult, or easier than you had expected? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being most difficult, how do you feel now that you have completed the task?	

TASK #2
PRE-TASK QUESTIONS

Now we are going to evaluate the site by trying to find a listing for a cat - how difficult do you think this task will be on a scale of 1-5?	

TASK #2
We would like you to return back to the home page and find a new posting for cat supplies such as food or toys. You will be using the return features on the site to help you complete the task. If you get stuck or have any questions please let us know and we would like you to remember that we are simply testing and evaluating the site not your personal skills and abilities.
POST-TASK QUESTIONS

Before we completed the task, you said you thought it would be this difficult to do the task. Now that you have completed the task, was it as difficult, more difficult, or easier than you had expected? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being most difficult, how do you feel now that you have completed the task?	

TASK #3

PRE-TASK QUESTIONS	
Now we are going to evaluate the site by trying to locate preventative information to help users avoid scams and fraud while also protecting their personal information - how difficult do you think this task will be on a scale of 1-5?	

TASK #3	
We would like you to find information on avoiding fraud/scams and protecting personal information. You will be using the Craigslist informational features to complete this task. If you get stuck or have any questions please let us know and we would like you to remember that we are simply testing and evaluating the site not your personal skills and abilities.	

POST-TASK QUESTIONS	
Before we completed the task, you said you thought it would be this difficult to do the task. Now that you have completed the task, was it as difficult, more difficult, or easier than you had expected? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being most difficult, how do you feel now that you have completed the task?	

POST-SESSION QUESTIONS	
On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your experience with the Craigslist website?	
Was there anything that was particularly frustrating for you when completing the tasks?	
Was there anything on the Craigslist website that was helpful when completing the tasks?	
Would you consider Craigslist to be a good and reliable resource to use when e-shopping?	
Do you have any other feedback or comments based on your experience in this study?	

CONCLUSION AND DEBRIEF
Now that concludes our usability testing. Our team greatly appreciates your willingness to participate in this study . Thank you for your time! If you have any more questions or concerns about your information that was recorded please let us know at this time. Thanks.

Methods:

We will be conducting our testing and our research through interviews. Each member will choose someone who fits our user group, sit with them virtually and have them use the website to test its usability. We will have 3 tasks for the participant to complete, those tasks being: Searching for and finding a pet listing in their area using the categories, Navigating back to the home page and finding a different posting using the search bar, and finding important internet safety information on the website. We will start each session with beginning questions, mostly demographic and background information. After completing the tasks we will ask more questions about their experience. All of these will come from the script our team will create.

Metrics:

Before we conduct our interviews we will determine the best way to complete the required tasks. One of the metrics will be whether or not our participants followed the correct path or if they took another way to get to their destination. We will also record how easily and how quickly our users accomplished their goal. Did they have to think about which button to press or did they know right away? This information will come from observation and will be found in the second round of questions. Finally the last metric is success or failure. Were they able to complete the task? Did they need to ask for help? Following the interviews we will examine the responses of our users based on the 1 to 5 scale we provided for them to see how effective the site's design is in accommodating the user.

Timeline:

Here you may find a link to our working timeline: LINK

Findings:

After creating our script, protocol and identifying the metrics we would be using each member of our team conducting a Usability Testing Session, the videos of those sessions can be found in Appendix A.

		Time On Task	Success of Each Goal	# of Errors	Pre-Task Difficulty	Post-Task Difficulty
TASK #1						
	Jack	4:09	Success with Help	1	3	4
	Jess	2:00	Success	0	4	1
	Conor	1:20	Success	1	4	2
TASK #2						
	Jack	1:55	Success	0	1	3
	Jess	4:30	Success with Help	2	3	4
	Conor	3:00	Success	5	3	5
TASK #3						
	Jack	1:04	Success	0	1	1
	Jess	3:15	Success with Help	0	4	4
	Conor	0:20	Success	0	1	1
AVERAGES						
	TASK #1	2:29		0.6666667	3.666666667	2.333333333
	TASK #2	3:08		2.3333333	2.333333333	4
	TASK #3	1:33		0	2	2

After conducting our sessions we collected our data and a summarized version of that data has been collected and can be viewed above. You can find a link to the full Sheet of all the data collected during our sessions in Appendix B.

Average Value for Actual Difficulty

Level of Success For Each Task
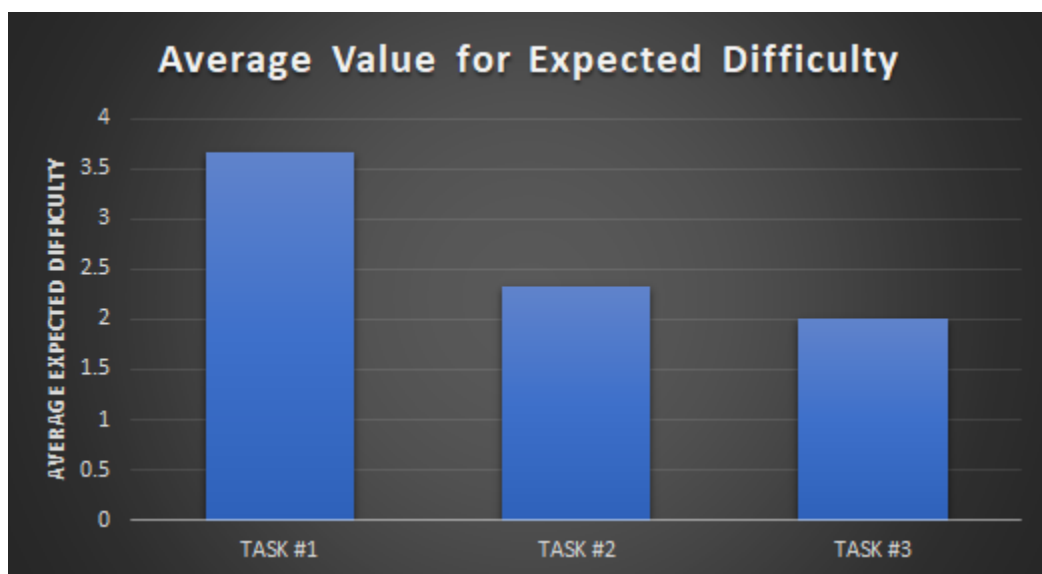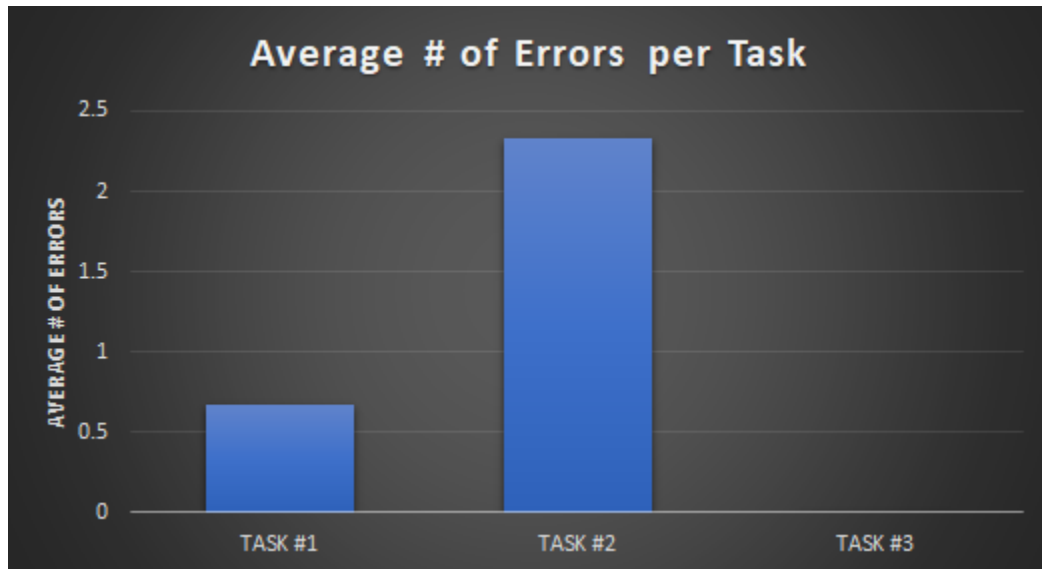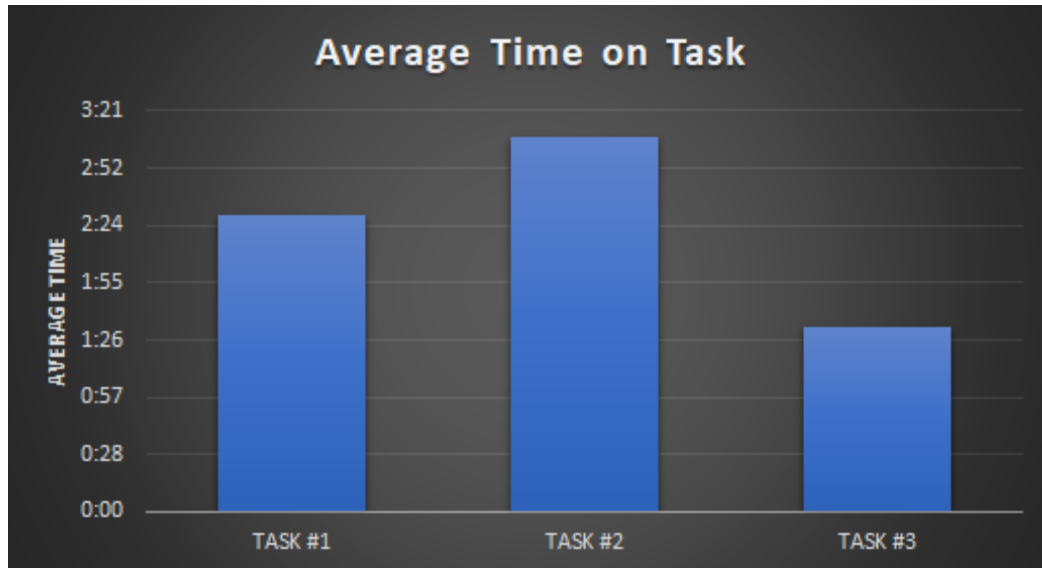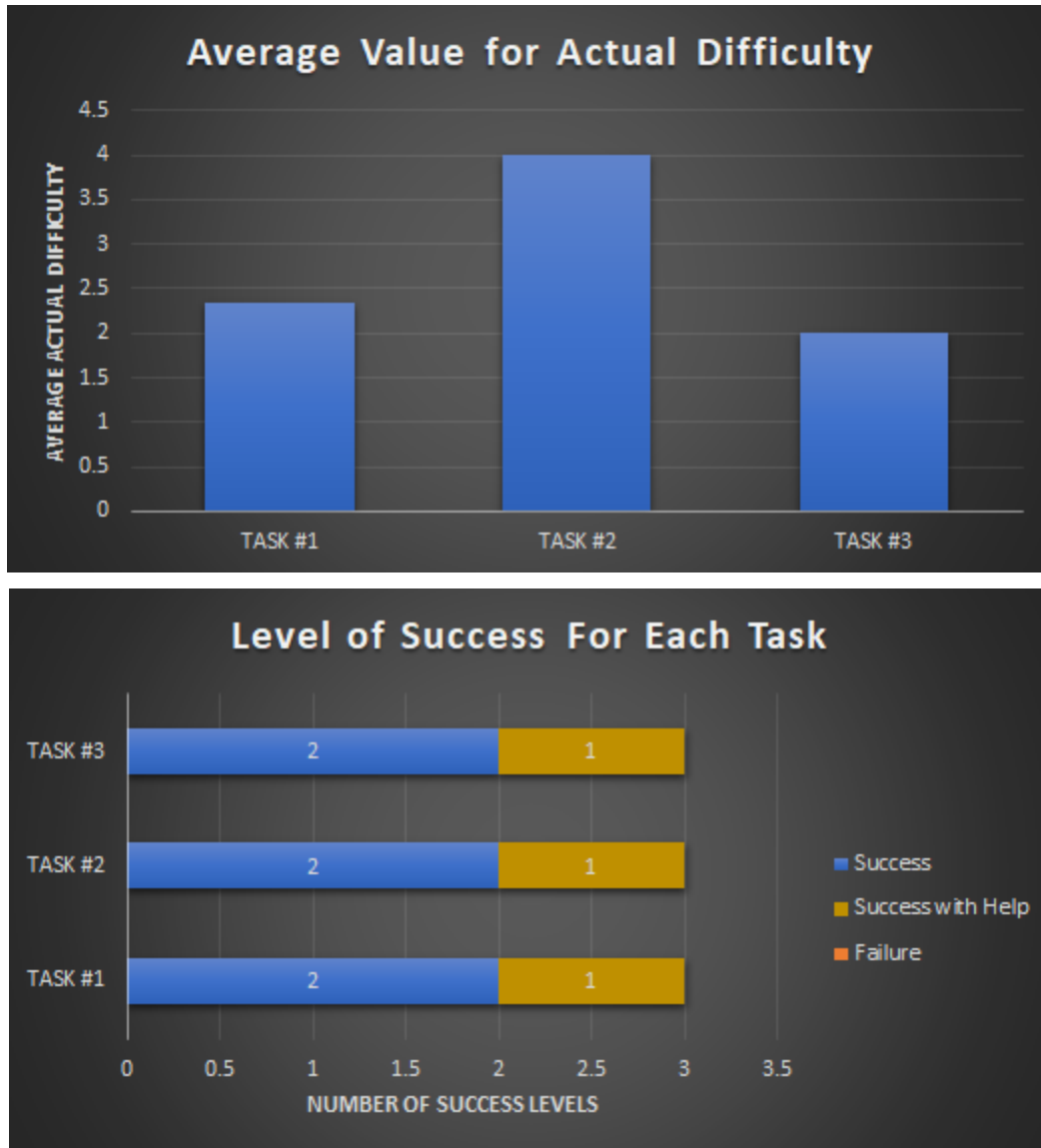
The various ways in which we analyzed our metrics and the data we collected can be seen in the charts above. Below you will find a series of pull quotes from our participants and our testing sessions. We found these quotes to be important during our analysis of our data and they eventually lead to the recommendations we will make.

"The second task when I was looking for cat toys and a bunch of trailers came up, that was confusing, that was a 'what is going on!' moment."

- Participant #1

"I do like the categories, but it was kinda confusing knowing which one to use."

- Participant #1

"It's a little busy and overwhelming, the sections and titles are helpful."

- Participant #2

"Extremely difficult to search for the desired category of item."

- Participant #3

"Quite unreliable as a method of online shopping"

- Participant #3

These quotes as well as the analysis of the metric data that we acquired during our testing sessions allowed us to identify areas of the Craigslist website that need our attention and need to be redesigned. By using this information we were able to create recommendations that we believe should be considered for the Craigslist Website.

Recommendations:

Based on the results of our testing and our findings we make the following

recommendations:

From the three sessions of usability testing that our group conducted, we discovered that there
were a few usability errors in the design and composition of the Craigslist website. To begin, our
participants felt very overwhelmed at first glance with the Home page. There are many different
columns that contain similar information that is misleading for a first time user. Also the Search
bar feature on both the Home and postings pages is not effective in the way it narrows the search
for the user. From our study, our participants all experienced difficulty as unrelated postings were
brought up as a result of their search. Finally, on an individual posting page it appears difficult
for users to find seller contact information as it is not placed in easily identifiable areas. From
these three major pain point areas, we created a set of recommendations for an updated and more
modernized version of the Craigslist website.

Usability Issue	Severity	Recommendation and Rationale
Ineffectiveness of Search bar feature with key words	High	By using the Search bar feature, a user should be able to easily navigate to their desired postings based on a specific keyword search. Similar to typical search engines and other e-shopping sites, **users should be able to search and find related postings based on all input words**. **To increase search efficiency and effectiveness, users should be able to find a plethora of related postings based on the keywords they input into the Search bar**. It is apparent that the current Craigslist Search bar feature arranges postings based on the first word inputted into the search bar so postings are often irrelevant to the intended search.
Difficulty in initiating communication between potential buyer and seller on posting pages	Low	On each individual posting page, if a user is interested in the product or service, they should easily be able to find and contact the seller. **The Craigslist website should display an option or feature for interested users to find the contact information of the seller**. **It should be clear on each posting for users to contact and find the contact information of sellers**.Our proposed recommendation is the implementation of user profiles that are displayed at the top of each posting similar to what one would see on a social media platform or a contact button that is located in a more frequented area of the screen.
Abundance of category (column) options on Home page	Mid	On the Home page, the organization of simple columns deemed overwhelming for the participants in our testing sessions. As previously stated, many of the columns include similar information, making the experience confusing and inefficient for the user when completing tasks. When first entering the Craigslist site, **users should be able to understand their actions based on a straight-forward and familiar layout**. Craigslist should make the transition into a more modernized Home page where each topic and column is organized in a better way. We recommend for Craigslist to consider making different landing pages for each individual topic thus eliminating frantic confusion for the user.

Conclusion:

When we conducted our testing with the recruited participants we noticed that despite initial negative perceptions of the site itself, the first task was found to be easier than was expected. We believe that this is due to the fact that despite the dated and obsolete nature of the site itself there were enough familiar elements for the user to recognize and use. The second task, however, was the most difficulties for all of our participants and the primary culprit was the discovery that the search function of the Craigslist website was not reliable at all, and did not display any of the desired results. The third task was the simplest of all three and was quickly completed thanks to the presence of a direct link that was easily accessible in the sidebar.

On analysing the actions of our test participants and the Craigslist site in general we have come to the conclusion that the most pressing need would be to overhaul and improve the search function in order to make it a more reliable tool for e-commerce. It is also important to streamline the design and content of the web page itself, making it more accessible to users and eliminating potentially redundant links and tabs. These steps would need to be taken while keeping in mind the need to have important links in a visible and accessible location for the user.

Team Information:

Jack Altenburger: Jack Altenburger is a student in the Computer Graphics Technology department at Purdue University studying Building Information Modeling. His main interest is architectural and structural modeling. Jack can be reached at jaltenbu@purdue.edu

Connor Gilpin: Connor Gilpin is currently a Junior double-majoring in Animation and Game Development and Design and also seeking a minor in Art and Design and a minor in History. Connor can be reached at gilpinc@purdue.edu
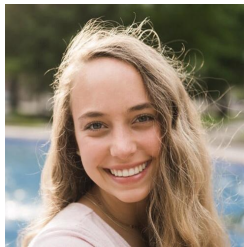
Jessie Keown: Jessie Keown is junior studying Web Programming and Design in the Computer Graphics Technology department at Purdue University. She is also pursuing a minor in Spanish language. Her interests include digital design. Jessie can be contacted at jkeown@purdue.edu

Team Contributions:

Jack Altenburger

- Helped Create Proposal
- Helped Create Usability Testing Dashboard
- Helped Create Protocol
- Helped Create Script
- Conducted a Usability Testing Session
- Helped Create Research Report

Connor Gilpin

- Helped Create Proposal
- Helped Create Usability Testing Dashboard
- Helped Create Protocol
- Helped Create Script
- Conducted a Usability Testing Session
- Helped Create Research Report

Jessie Keown

- Helped Create Proposal
- Helped Create Usability Testing Dashboard
- Helped Create Protocol
- Helped Create Script
- Conducted a Usability Testing Session
- Helped Create Research Report

Appendix A:

Below we have provided a link to a Google Drive folder. Within this folder are the recordings of the testing session from each of our team members.

[Testing Session Recordings](#)

Appendix B:

Below we have provided a link to the Google Sheet we created for our testing session. This sheet has the complete set of data from each team member and everything we collected from our testing sessions.

Testing Session Databank