

Information Architecture Case study Discussion

Group 6:

Xin Tang (001348255)

Neel Shah (001029882)

Ravi Kumar Pilla (001356731)

Dhankuwar Sisodiya (001066439)

Tian Wang (001050107)

Yafu Zhang(001346166)

Task:

What are your reflections after reading this case study, and anything you learned or any thoughts for information architecture improvements if any?

IA is a blueprint of the design structure which can be generated into wireframes and sitemaps of the project.

Techniques used in Case study for I ♥ NY website:

1. Conduct a heuristic evaluation

Heuristic evaluation can be done by answering a few integral questions such as categorized as findable, accessible, clear, communicative, useful, credible, controllable, valuable, learnable and delightful.

Some of the question that cover these aspects are:

- A. Can users easily locate that which they are seeking?
- B. How is findability affected across channels and devices?
- C. Are there multiple ways available to access things?
- D. Can it be used via all expected channels and devices?
- E. Does it meet the levels of accessibility compliance to be considerate of those users with disabilities?
- F. Is it easy to understand?
- G. Is the path to task completion obvious and free of distraction?
- H. How is messaging used throughout? Is messaging effective for the tasks and contexts being supported?

With respect to the case study the author came across a few minor usability problems such as a lack of contrast on certain sub-header fonts and few discrepancies in behavior between mobile and desktop viewports.

2. Create a sitemap

Site map reflects the main structure of the website. It is important to map the existing site structure to get an idea about the navigation in the website. Building a site map can give you an overall understanding about the website.

By deciding exactly what you want from your site and then mapping it out, you can ensure that every part of your website is reinforcing your goals. Then it's possible to cut parts that aren't directly tied to the site's purpose before they become an integral part of the site's architecture.

Sitemap can help you clarify what your site's goals are before you start designing and creating content, which can be helpful in deciding different flows for multiple users.

3. Conduct one round of an open card sort

Open Card Sorting is where the participants are asked to organize topics from content within the website into groups that make sense to them and then name each group they created in a way that they feel accurately describes the content.

With respect to this case study,

There was an ambiguity with respect to the "Things to Do" and "Events" navigation and initially the participant thought they were duplicate pages but upon drilling down deeper they found out that they were two different pages with two different functionalities.

The issue here was the pages were lacking a time frame due to which it was difficult in separating them and treating them as two different pages.

Open card sorting overall in the case study had around 10 card sorts between both open and close and all the users had different approaches when it came to the open card sort approach.

My thoughts on this would be that different users had a unique way of categorizing the information overall and a closed card technique would work better considering they are given pre pre-defined set of categories.

4. Document a user flow

Lays out the user's movement through the product, mapping out each and every step the user takes—from entry point right through to the final interaction. It is usually done at an early phase after gathering requirements.

W.r.t the case study, User flow was started with the existing site setup. As there are multiple processes, there can be high-level v/s detailed flows. In this particular study, a couple of attempts of revisiting the site made them arrive at a streamlined simple flow.

Our thoughts on this are that we need to make the user flow more detailed as it helps to cover the requirements in a better way at a later point.

5. Conduct one round of a closed card sort

Analyzing the closed card sorts was much more straightforward than the previous open card sorts.

Predefined categories made it easier to identify commonalities in the data.

Closed card sort analysis is generally much quicker and easier than open and hybrid card sorts because there are no participant created category names to analyze – it's really just about where the cards were placed.

Closed card sorting means that the participant is limited to using only the cards provided

6. Create a final sitemap

They show how the navigation should be structured, where the content should sit and how the overall site will be produced. This is the first tangible deliverable.

W.r.t the case study, the revised site map was formed after closed card sorting and they could arrive at a more concise map to achieve all the functions and also add a few new ones.

Our thoughts on this are that this was mostly done rightly as it was not the first step but done after researching on user needs and experience. The revised map looks achievable.

Reflections/Things learned:

1. A persona was created in order to keep a target user in mind.
2. Testing is a key feature when designing a website. Without it we can't know if it's an improvement or not.
3. Aspects that can be considered when performing Heuristics Evaluation: Clear, Communicative, Usable, Credibility, Controllable, Valuable, Learnable, Delightful
4. Initial Sitemap was done to figure out the problems in the website and final Sitemap was sketched after correcting those issues with various tests which makes SiteMap one of a key feature in design testing.
5. It's important to show the variation for each items in Navbar or else users might confuse it as duplicate items
6. Author's initial impressions on if the color of websites is remarkable and if the categories are clear.
7. Author found it to be difficult to find a pattern during the data analysis phase when using less than 15 rounds in open card sorting
8. For actual usability of the revised site structure, it must be tested by conducting further testing and iteration.
9. The website looked good at first but upon further notice there few things off, such as the color contrast in the headers in few places which is a important aspect to be kept in mind as this can make the website less usable in the long run or even unusable for some users
10. There should be consistency between the desktop and mobile version of a website right from the colors used and the categories/data presented to the user.
11. The accessibility functionality should be shown to the user up front or easily visible in the app as soon as a user lands on the website. Having to search for the accessibility function can make the website less user friendly as it can become impossible for some users to use the app/website.
12. If there are categories or subcategories with the same title, they need to be named with distinction for card sorting activity to avoid the participants being confused with duplicate cards.
13. Before conducting any usability testing method to analyse the website, we need to research and decide the best technique or software that suits our website for performing that usability testing method effectively.
14. The sitemap reflects the main structure of the website. Building a sitemap at the beginning can help you quickly have an overall understanding of the website. Although these cognitions may be inaccurate, as the research progresses, the sitemap can be gradually modified to make it relatively accurate.
15. Open card sorting means that the participant can create categories of her/his own, or add concepts that are missing. Open card sorting is a more accurate portrayal of a user's mental model, more flexible and good for the generative phase of a project.
16. Closed card sorting means that the participant is limited to using only the cards provided. It's more likely to see grouping patterns in results, more controlled and good for the evaluative phase of a project.