

## Heuristic Evaluation

# CheapAir.com

The screenshot shows the CheapAir.com website's flight search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for '1.800.CheapAir', 'Today's Avg Ticket: \$375', 'Sign In or Join', and menu items for 'Blog', 'My Trips', and 'Help'. Below the navigation is a search form titled 'Flights' with tabs for 'Fixed Dates' and 'Flexible Dates'. The 'Flexible Dates' tab is selected. Underneath are fields for 'Fly from' (set to 'Dallas, TX') and 'To' (a placeholder 'A city, town, or airport'), along with buttons for 'Depart', 'Return', and '1 Traveler, Economy'. A section titled 'Select from top destinations' displays nine cards for major cities: Boston, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. At the bottom is a large green 'Search Flights' button.

We're here to help at [1.800.CheapAir](tel:1.800.CheapAir) and [help@cheapair.com](mailto:help@cheapair.com)

## SCOPE

Perform a heuristic evaluation of CheapAir.com

## TASK

Purchase a round-trip ticket from your home city, next Saturday, to any destination you like. Stop before actually purchasing the ticket.

Start on the home page and work through the task. Find at least 5 violations using Jakob Nielsen's 10 usability heuristics as general principles to follow.

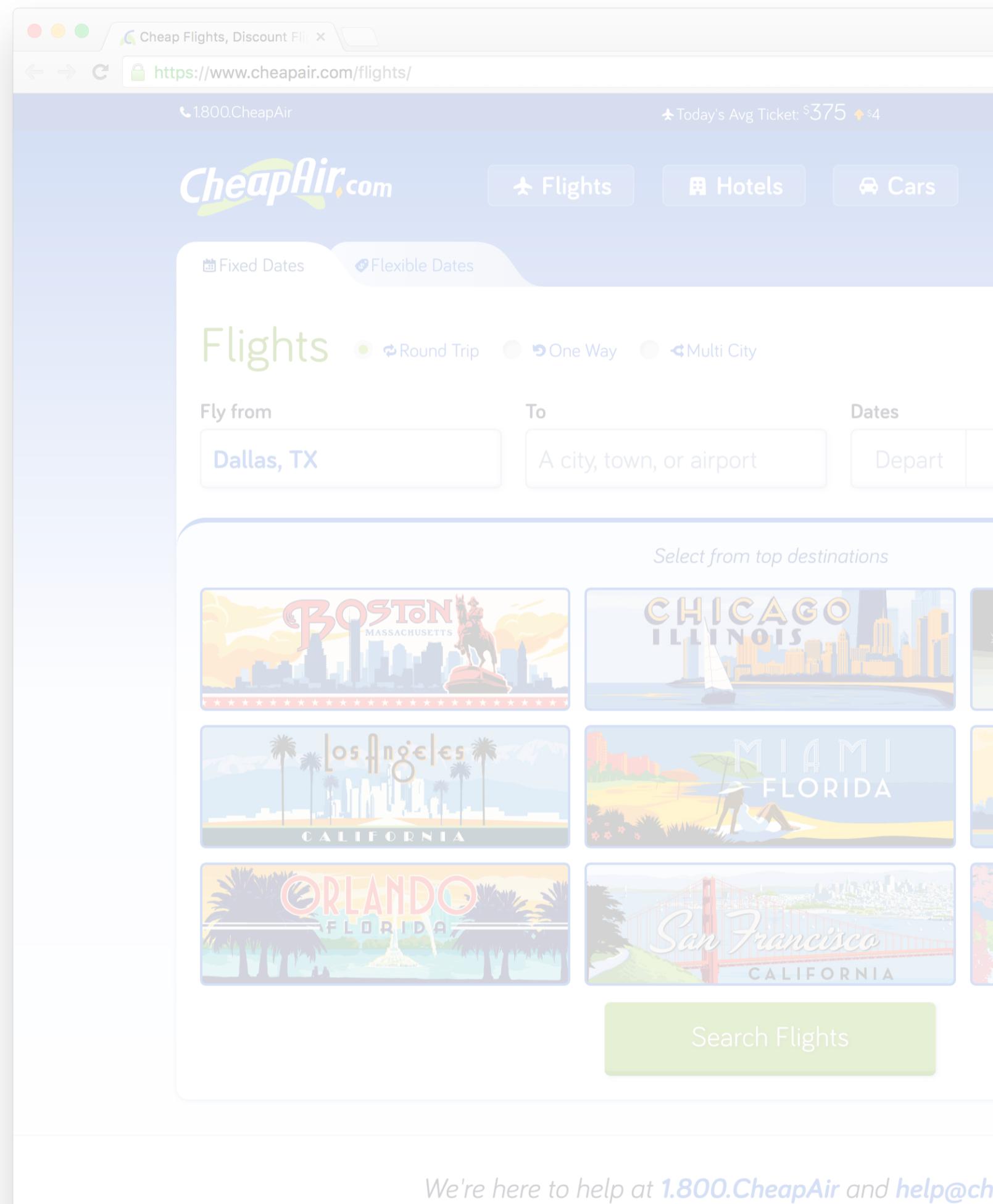
## METHODOLOGY

### 10 Usability Heuristics

- Visibility
- Mapping
- Freedom
- Consistency
- Error Prevention
- Recognition
- Flexibility
- Minimalism
- Error Recovery
- Help

### Severity Rating

- 0** - don't agree that this is a usability problem
- 1** - cosmetic problem
- 2** - minor usability problem
- 3** - major usability problem; important to fix
- 4** - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

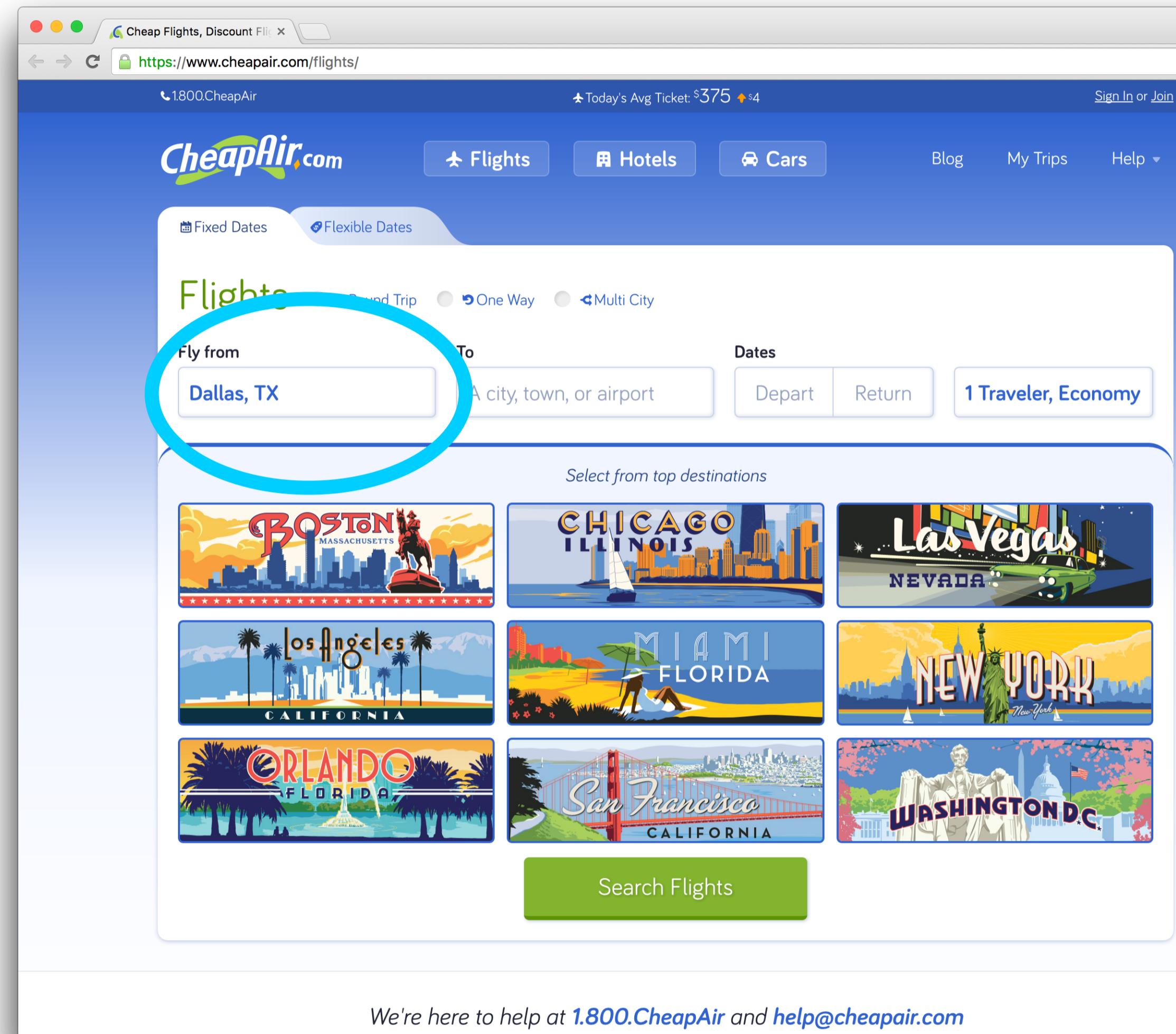


## **VIOLATION**

Flexibility and efficiency of use

## **ISSUE**

First time visiting the website, it assumed my fly from location to be Dallas, TX instead of where my actual current location is forcing me to change it.



## **SEVERITY RATING**

**3** - major usability problem, important to fix

## VIOLATION

Match between system and real world

## ISSUE

Users are unable to find out what "Price Drop Payback" means or find more information/details.

The screenshot shows a flight search results page from CheapAir.com. The search parameters are: from1=NYC&to1=CHI&flightdate1=2016-03-26&from2=CHI&to2=NYC&flightdate2=2016-04-02&numpax=10000&cabinRe... . The results are for a nonstop flight from New York (LGA) to Chicago (ORD) on Saturday, March 26. The results are sorted by price, with the lowest price at the top. A blue circle highlights the "Includes Free Price Drop Payback" message at the bottom of the page.

Flight Details	Airline	Flight Number	Departure Time	Arrival Time	Duration	Status
\$155 roundtrip	Spirit	LGA 9:45 am	ORD 11:20 am	2h 35m	Nonstop	
\$169 roundtrip	American	LGA 6:00 am	ORD 7:47 am	2h 47m	Nonstop	
\$222 roundtrip	American	LGA 7:15 am	ORD 9:07 am	2h 52m	Nonstop	
\$222 roundtrip	Jet Blue	JFK 8:19 am	ORD 10:09 am	2h 50m	Nonstop	
\$222 roundtrip	Jet Blue	JFK 3:22 pm	ORD 5:14 pm	2h 52m	Nonstop	
\$232 roundtrip	United	LGA 6:30 am	ORD 8:03 am	2h 33m	Nonstop	
\$232 roundtrip	United	LGA 7:20 am	ORD 9:01 am	2h 41m	Nonstop	
\$232 roundtrip	United	LGA 8:00 am	ORD 9:40 am	2h 40m	Nonstop	
\$232 roundtrip	United	JFK 5:10 pm	ORD 7:09 pm	2h 59m	Nonstop	
\$232 roundtrip	United	JFK 12:00 pm	ORD 4:06 pm	5h 6m	1 Stop – CLT for 47m	

**Select Departure**  
New York to Chicago  
Sat Mar 26

Change Cities & Dates

Nonstop Only

Sort by Price

Includes Free Price Drop Payback

Book

## SEVERITY RATING

2 - minor usability problem

## VIOLATION

Visibility of system status

## ISSUE

Clicking on a departure option automatically scrolls me down to select a return flight but with no clear indication that there was a change in state. The page looks almost the same and the transition was so subtle that it was easily missed.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Flight Results | CheapAir" displaying flight search results. The URL in the address bar is <https://www.cheapair.com/flights/results?from1=NYC&to1=CHI&flightdate1=2016-03-26&from2=CHI&to2=NYC&flightdate2=2016-04-02&numpax=10000&cabinRe...>. The page title is "Select Return". The search parameters are "Chicago to New York" and "Sat Apr 2". The results list 10 flight options:

Flight Details	Airline	Departure Time	Arrival Time	Duration	Status
\$155 roundtrip, ORD 10:51 am → 1:57 pm	jetBlue	ORD 10:51 am	JFK 1:57 pm	2h 6m	Nonstop
\$180 roundtrip, ORD 5:53 am → 9:00 am	Spirit	ORD 5:53 am	LGA 9:00 am	2h 7m	Nonstop
\$180 roundtrip, ORD 6:01 pm → 9:08 pm	Spirit	ORD 6:01 pm	LGA 9:08 pm	2h 7m	Nonstop
\$205 roundtrip, ORD 7:26 am → 10:40 am	United	ORD 7:26 am	LGA 10:40 am	2h 14m	Nonstop ORD - LGA operated by Skywest dba United Express
\$218 roundtrip, ORD 5:46 pm → 9:00 pm	jetBlue	ORD 5:46 pm	JFK 9:00 pm	2h 14m	Nonstop
\$235 roundtrip, ORD 11:25 am → 2:37 pm	United	ORD 11:25 am	LGA 2:37 pm	2h 12m	Nonstop ORD - LGA operated by Skywest dba United Express
\$241 roundtrip, ORD 5:05 pm → 8:22 pm	United	ORD 5:05 pm	LGA 8:22 pm	2h 17m	Nonstop ORD - LGA operated by Republic Airlines dba United Express
\$244 roundtrip, ORD 12:01 pm → 3:14 pm	American	ORD 12:01 pm	JFK 3:14 pm	2h 13m	Nonstop
\$244 roundtrip, ORD 6:35 pm → 9:49 pm	American	ORD 6:35 pm	JFK 9:49 pm	2h 14m	Nonstop
\$258 roundtrip, ORD 7:25 am → 10:30 am	American	ORD 7:25 am	LGA 10:30 am	2h 5m	Nonstop ORD - LGA operated by Skywest dba United Express

At the bottom of the page, there is a blue banner with a thumbs-up icon and the text "Includes Free Price Drop Payback". There is also a "Book" button.

## SEVERITY RATING

2 - minor usability problem

## VIOLATION

User control and freedom

## ISSUE

There's no easy way to edit the trip details once you've selected it. Users must navigate back to previous screen to make changes.

The screenshot shows a flight search result from CheapAir.com. At the top, there's a 'Price Details' summary table:

	Base Fare	Taxes & Fees	Total
Adult Traveler	\$120.42	\$34.48	\$154.90
Change # of travelers or traveler types? <a href="#">Change Travelers</a>			
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$154.90</b>

Below this is a note: \*All Fares exclusive of [baggage fees](#) and in U.S. dollars. and links to [Gift Card/Promotional Certificate](#).

The main part of the page is titled 'Trip Details' and shows two flights:

**New York/Laguardia, NY → Chicago/Ohare, IL** (Sat, Mar 26, 2016)

	Spirit #847 Airbus A320	From: New York/Laguardia, NY (LGA)	9:45am	Economy Class
		To: Chicago/Ohare, IL (ORD)	11:20am	

**Chicago/Ohare, IL → New York/Kennedy, NY** (Sat, Apr 2, 2016)

	Jet Blue #906 Airbus A320	From: Chicago/Ohare, IL (ORD)	10:51am	Economy Class
		To: New York/Kennedy, NY (JFK)	1:57pm	

A large blue oval highlights the two flights listed under 'Trip Details'.

At the bottom right is a green 'Continue >' button.

## SEVERITY RATING

2 - minor usability problem

## VIOLATION

Help and documentation

## ISSUE

Users have no way to find out more about the airline or additional flight information.

The screenshot shows a flight search results page for New York to Chicago on CheapAir.com. The search parameters are: from1=NYC&to1=CHI&flightdate1=2016-03-26&from2=CHI&to2=NYC&flightdate2=2016-04-02&numpax=10000&cabinRe... . The results are sorted by price. A blue circle highlights the first flight in the list:

Flight Number	Airline	Departure	Arrival	Duration	Type
\$155	Spirit	LGA 9:15 am	ORD 11:20 am	2h 35m	Nonstop
\$169	American	LGA 6:00	ORD 7:47 am	2h 47m	Nonstop
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\$232	United	LGA 8:00 am	ORD 9:40 am	2h 40m	Nonstop
\$253	American	JFK 5:10 pm	ORD 7:09 pm	2h 59m	Nonstop
\$260	American	JFK 12:00 pm	ORD 4:06 pm	5h 6m	1 Stop – CLT for 47m

At the bottom of the page, there is a message: "Includes Free Price Drop Payback \$200".

## SEVERITY RATING

2 - minor usability problem