



Expert Review

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Client Contact

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DG MACK Contact

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Review Process
3. Summary
4. Expert Review
5. Summary and next steps

edX: Free courses online from the world's best universities

About the client:

- edX is a non-profit that brings open-sourced Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) to new learners around the world

Business goals:

- edX's goal is to bring high-quality education to “1 Billion” learners
- This project is focused on on-boarding and reasons for attrition within the “first hour” of use



Project Goal

Identify and understand first-time user pain points and reasons for drop-off to make the edX onboarding process for new learners simple and painless; ensure edX clearly communicates the value and benefits of the free platform.

Positives: Content & Accessibility

Worldwide Community

- Thousands of courses from top Universities around the world
- Courses are offered in multiple languages
- Flexible learning and community engagement across time zones

Financial Options

- Audit courses for free
- Verified courses (with small fee)
- Financial aid available

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DG MACK's Review Process

STEP 1



Six Individual Expert
Reviews using Nielsen
Norman rating scale
and heuristics

STEP 2



Combined list of
issues, rated severity
individually and
averaged scores

STEP 3



Presentation with
findings,
recommendations
and next steps

Severity Scale

-  **Good:** positive finding, should be retained or expanded in any redesign
-  **High Severity Usability Problem:** important to fix, so should be given high priority
-  **Medium Severity Usability Problem:** fixing this should be given medium priority



edX is for Everyone

The Advancing Professional

Motivations:

- Working professionals seeking advancement in a current or new role
- Or unemployed/under-employed professionals seeking new professional skills to aid them in finding a new job
- Interested in advancing their career by learning new skills, including certification programs for very specific skills or classes
- Has a timeline or clear goal in mind



Demographics:

- English-speaking (Native or ESL)
- Age range - 25 - 55

Special Concerns

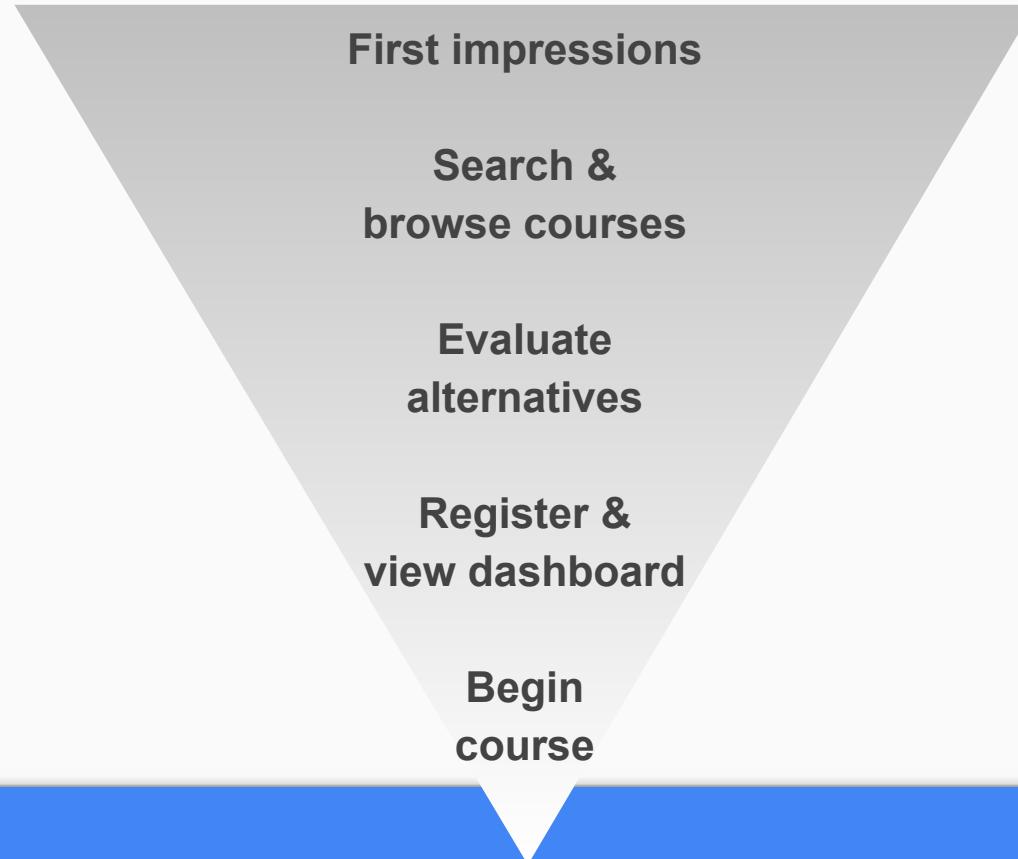
Why we picked this user:

- Starting-point, issues identified without language barrier will likely be universal and most important to address

Limitations & further research:

- Build a hypothesis for wide-spread issues
- Do further testing and research with International and non-English speaking users

First-time edX User Journey



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Global Issues

Terminology

Terminology is not explained to the user. Concepts that are core to the edX experience are left open to (mis)interpretation as users explore the site.

4 High Usability Problems

1 Medium Usability Problem

Self-Help

Self-help and process tools provided are useful, but content is too lengthy and too difficult to find.

2 Positive Findings

1 High Usability Problem

1 Medium Usability Problem

Issues by First-time edX User Journey

First Impressions

Terminology impacts user first impressions of how edX functions.

Search & Browse

Terminology; Lack of sorting; Inconsistent filtering make it difficult for users to find most relevant courses based on their needs.

Evaluate Alternatives

Hard to compare courses. Course metadata limited. Reviews hosted externally.

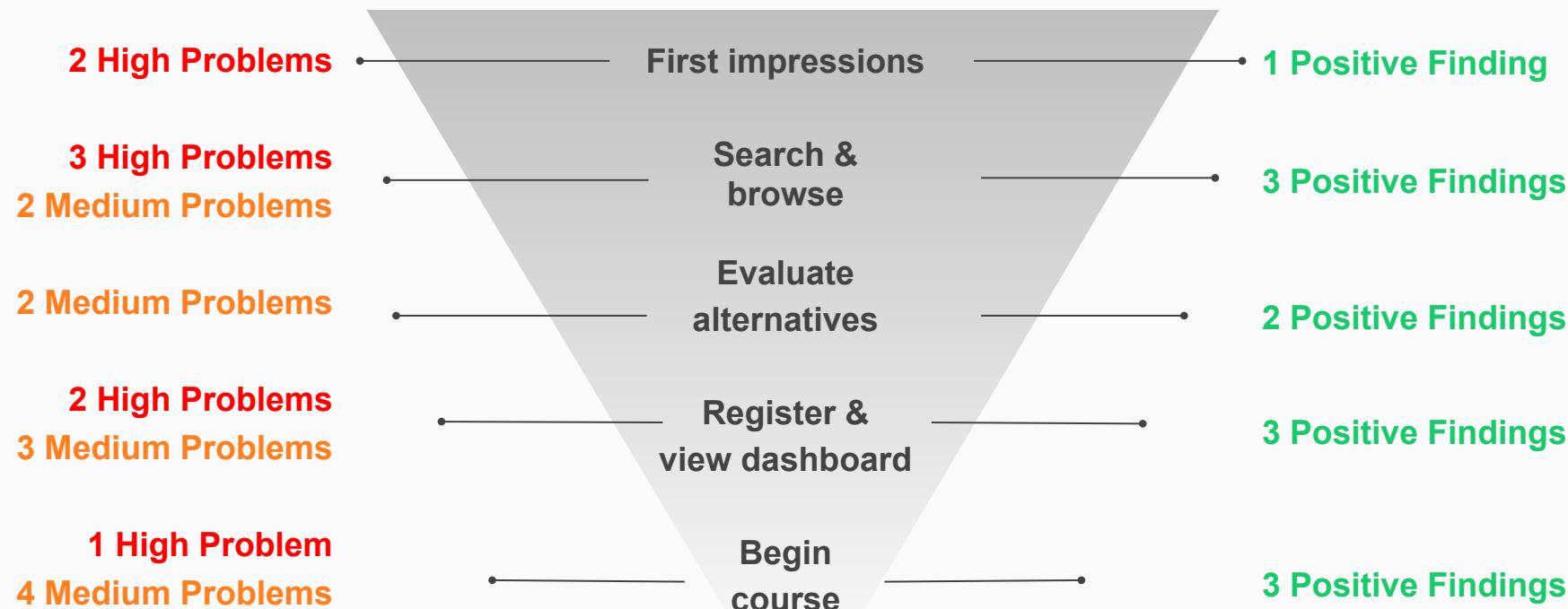
Register & View Dashboard

Unclear data restrictions. Loss of data. Top navigation inconsistencies.

Begin Course

Terminology; Process unclear & self-help information difficult to find; Course and discussion inconsistencies

Summary of Usability Problems by Section in the Funnel



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Global: Terminology

Terminology users encounter throughout using the website

How can users learn on edX?

- Courses
- Programs

What is the availability of courses?

- Current
- Starting Soon
- Upcoming
- Archived

Modifiers

- Self-Paced
- MicroMasters
- XSeries Program
- Verified
- Professional Education
- Credit Eligible

! High: Terminology is presented without context

Usability Problem #1:

Terminology is used liberally throughout the website without providing users the context of what these terms mean.

Why is it a Problem?

Users may spend more time trying to understand the terminology rather than trying to find a course.

The screenshot shows a grid of six course cards from the edX platform. Each card includes a program label in a red-bordered box:

- MICROMASTERS PROGRAM** (highlighted in red)
- PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION** (highlighted in red)
- XSERIES PROGRAM** (highlighted in red)
- MICROMASTERS**
- MicroMasters**
- MicroMasters**

The courses listed are:

- LouvainX Management (Management)
- IIMBx Business Management (Business Management)
- IIMBx People Management (People Management)
- IIMBx Strategic Management (Strategic Management)
- ACCA Management Accounting (Management Accounting)
- DelftX Water Management (Water Management)

Refine your search

Availability

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 62 |
| Upcoming | 66 |
| Self-Paced | 158 |
| Archived | 109 |

Subjects

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 258 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 21 |
| Computer Science | 77 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 44 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |
| MORE... | |

Courses & Programs

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| All Courses | 375 |
| All Programs | 40 |
| Credit-Eligible | 3 |

! High: Terminology is presented without context

Recommendation #1a

Create a controlled vocabulary for the site with terms allowed and prohibited.

Recommendation #1b

Include tool tips or hovering element nearby that gives an explanation of the term.

The screenshot displays a grid of six course cards from the edX platform:

- LouvainX Management**: Status: Current. A red box highlights the "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" badge.
- IIMBx Business Management**: Status: Current. A red box highlights the "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" badge.
- IIMBx People Management**: Status: Upcoming. Starts: October 26, 2017. A red box highlights the "VERIFIED" badge.
- IIMBx Strategic Management**: Status: Upcoming. Starts: October 5, 2017. A red box highlights the "VERIFIED" badge.
- ACCA Management Accounting**: Status: Starting Soon. Starts: April 3, 2017. A red box highlights the "PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION" badge.
- DelftX Water Management**: Status: Current. A red box highlights the "XSERIES PROGRAM" badge.

Refine your search

Availability

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Current | 149 |
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| Chemistry | 2 |
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| Data Analysis & Statistics | 44 |
| Design | 6 |
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| MORE... | |

Courses & Programs

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| All Courses | 375 |
| All Programs | 40 |
| Credit-Eligible | 3 |

! High: Program and course differentiation

Usability Problem #2:

Courses have more real estate on the splash screen devoted to them than programs.

Why is it a Problem?

Users may perceive courses as more important than programs, which is not always the case.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About, along with a search bar and sign-in/register buttons. The main banner features a woman smiling while using a laptop, with the text "Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere." Below this, there is a "Find Courses" button and a red callout bubble with an exclamation mark pointing to the "Courses" link in the navigation bar. To the right, there is a section for "NEW! 16 MicroMasters Programs to Advance Your Career" with a "See MicroMasters Programs" button, also accompanied by a red callout bubble with an exclamation mark. Below the banner, logos for various partner institutions are displayed: MIT, Harvard University, Berkeley University, The University of Texas System, The University of British Columbia, and The University of Adelaide. A red box highlights the "edX Programs Starting Soon" section, which contains four thumbnail images representing different program areas. A red callout bubble with an exclamation mark points to the "View All Programs" button in this section.

! High: Program and course differentiation

Recommendation #2

Include blurb of what a Program is and what a Course is AND/OR devote more splash page real estate to Programs.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage with several key elements highlighted:

- Header:** The edX logo, navigation links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About, a search bar, and sign-in/register buttons.
- Main Banner:** A woman smiling while using a laptop, with the text "Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere." A red callout bubble with an exclamation mark points to the "Find Courses" button.
- MicroMasters Section:** A banner for "NEW! 16 MicroMasters Programs to Advance Your Career". It includes a "See MicroMasters Programs" button and another red callout bubble with an exclamation mark.
- Logos of Partner Institutions:** MIT, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, The University of Texas System, The University of British Columbia, and The University of Adelaide.
- Program Callout:** A red box highlights the "edX Programs Starting Soon" section, which contains four thumbnail images of different programs and a "View All Programs" button. A red callout bubble with an exclamation mark points to this section.

! High: “Current” used too liberally

Usability Problem #3:

Courses and programs are labelled current, but the user may not be able to sign up for certain courses or start taking certain courses.

Why is it a Problem?

If the user sees a course or program that is current, they will likely expect to be able to sign up.

Courses in this XSeries Program

This series is ideally taken in sequence, but each course can be taken individually.

| Course | Status |
|--|----------------------|
| Big Data Analysis with Apache Spark | Enrollment is closed |
| Distributed Machine Learning with Apache Spark | Enrollment is closed |
| Introduction to Apache Spark | Enrollment is closed |

| Program | Course | Status |
|-----------|---|---------|
| ColumbiaX | Data Science and Analytics in Context | Current |
| BerkeleyX | Data Science and Engineering with Spark | Current |
| HarvardX | Data Analysis for Life Sciences | Current |

! High: “Current” used too liberally

Recommendation #3a

If a course/program cannot be taken by the user, clarify that no one can enroll anymore.

Recommendation #3b

If the course/program is closed for registration, add a call to action so users can keep updated for upcoming dates.

Courses in this XSeries Program

This series is ideally taken in sequence, but each course can be taken individually.



Big Data Analysis with Apache Spark

Learn how to apply data science techniques using parallel programming in Apache Spark to explore big data.

[Learn more](#)

Enrollment is closed



Distributed Machine Learning with Apache Spark

Learn the underlying principles required to develop scalable machine learning pipelines and gain hands-on experience using Apache Spark.

[Learn more](#)

Enrollment is closed



Introduction to Apache Spark

Learn the fundamentals and architecture of Apache Spark, the leading cluster-computing framework among professionals.

Enrollment is closed



ColumbiaX Data Science and Analytics in Context

Learn the foundations of statistical thinking, the power o...

Current



BerkeleyX Data Science and Engineering with Spark

Learn to use Spark to analyze big data. Develop intuition from firs...

Current



HarvardX Data Analysis for Life Sciences

Learn how to analyze life sciences data using the R...

Current



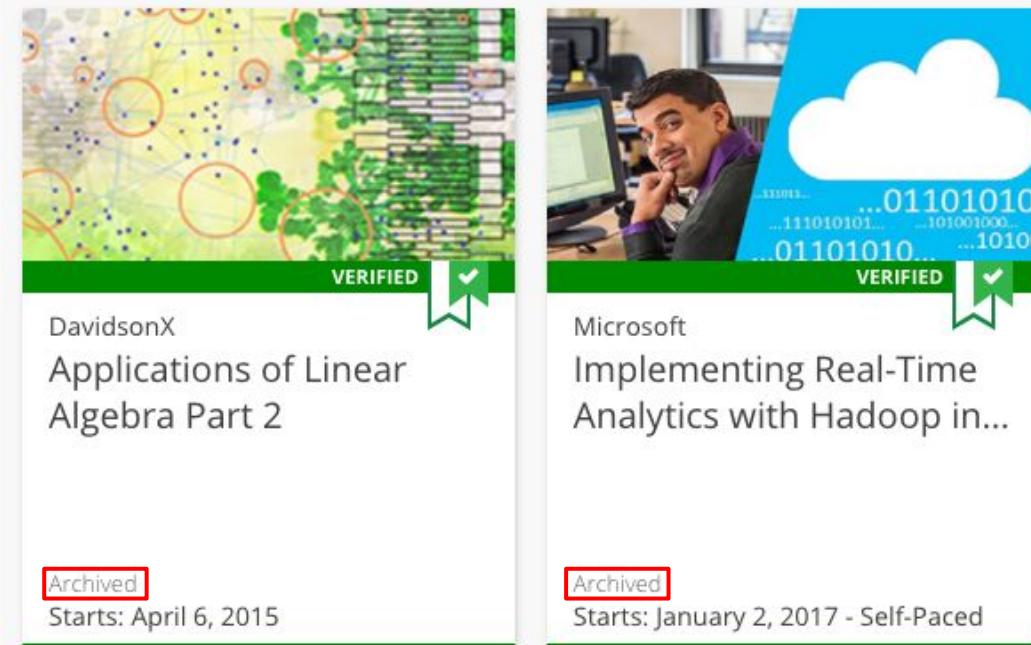
! High: Are “Archived” courses still available to take?

Usability Problem #4:

Course thumbnails say “Archived,” but whether or not the user can enroll is dependent on the specific course.

Why is it a Problem?

Users may be uncertain if they can take a course that is archived.



❗ High: Are “Archived” courses still available to take?

Recommendation #4

If a course/program cannot be taken by the user, clarify that no one can enroll anymore. Remove courses you can't take from the website.

The image displays two examples of course cards from the edX platform. Both cards feature a green 'VERIFIED' badge with a checkmark icon. The first card is for 'DavidsonX Applications of Linear Algebra Part 2', which has an orange 'Archived' label at the bottom. The second card is for 'Microsoft Implementing Real-Time Analytics with Hadoop in...', also with an orange 'Archived' label at the bottom. Both cards show a start date: April 6, 2015 for the first and January 2, 2017 - Self-Paced for the second. The background of the cards includes a map and binary code respectively.

| Course Provider | Course Title | Status | Start Date |
|-----------------|--|----------|------------------------------|
| DavidsonX | Applications of Linear Algebra Part 2 | Archived | April 6, 2015 |
| Microsoft | Implementing Real-Time Analytics with Hadoop in... | Archived | January 2, 2017 - Self-Paced |



Medium: Conflicting terminology between courses

Usability Problem #5:

Inconsistent language for what task the user is completing across courses.
e.g. quiz, lab, test your knowledge

Why is it a Problem

Users may get confused and don't know what to expect due to the variations in terminology.

Recommendation #5

Encourage course builders to use a standardized language with a controlled vocabulary.

The screenshot shows a course navigation menu with the following structure:

- 1. Python Basics
 - Lecture: Hello Python!
 - Quiz
 - Lab: Hello Python!
 - Lab
- 2. The Changing Nature of Marketing
- 3. Fundamental Marketing Frameworks and Tools
- 4. Test Your Knowledge
 - Test Your Knowledge
- 5. Competition
- 6. Tools for the Dynamic Game
- 7. Test Your Knowledge 2
 - Test Your Knowledge
- 8. Takeaways
- 9 Optional Readings
- 10. Instructor Wrap-up

Two specific sections are highlighted with orange boxes and exclamation marks:

- Lecture: Hello Python!** (under 1. Python Basics)
- Test Your Knowledge** (under 4. Test Your Knowledge)

Global: Self-Help



Good: Distinct Call to Action buttons

Clear call to action buttons are used sparingly and effectively to provide the user a clear indication of the next steps to take.

Why it's good:

Users can quickly determine what to click and can proceed to clear paths to browsing, registration, enrollment.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top right, there are 'Sign In' and 'Register' buttons, both highlighted with green circles and checkmarks. Below the header, a woman is shown smiling while looking at a laptop screen. A call-to-action overlay on the laptop screen reads 'Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere.' with a 'Find Courses' button highlighted with a green circle and checkmark. Further down the page, there are logos for MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, and other institutions. A section titled 'edX Programs Starting Soon' features several thumbnail images and a 'View All Programs' button, which is also highlighted with a green circle and checkmark.



Good: How it Works page

The How It Works page is a great introduction for users. The page includes a video that summarizes how edX is used as well as a link to a demo class (demoX).

Why it's good:

Users that reach this page can gain a better understanding of how edX works and what makes it different from other online classes.

The screenshot shows the 'How It Works' page of the edX website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About, along with a search bar and sign-in/register buttons. The main heading 'How It Works' is displayed above a text block that reads: 'Take free online courses from the best universities and institutions in the world — Harvard, MIT, UC Berkeley, Microsoft, Tsinghua University, The Smithsonian and more.' Below this is a pink button labeled 'See Our Most Popular Courses'. To the right of the text is a video player showing a man with a mustache speaking. A green checkmark is overlaid on the video player area. Below the video, there are two sections: 'Getting Started Is Easy' featuring a photo of a person using a laptop with a cityscape background, and 'Amazing edX Learning' featuring a photo of a scuba diver examining coral reefs. Both sections include a list of bullet points and a 'Sign Up Today' button.

How It Works

Take free online courses from the best universities and institutions in the world — Harvard, MIT, UC Berkeley, Microsoft, Tsinghua University, The Smithsonian and more.

See Our Most Popular Courses

Transform your life with edX

Getting Started Is Easy

- Everyone is welcome
- Courses are open 24/7
- No application necessary

Sign Up Today

Amazing edX Learning

- Learn from the world's best professors and leading industry experts through captivating lectures and presentations
- Build knowledge and expertise with interactive labs, experiments, and assessments
- Connect with learners from around the globe in easy-to-use discussion forums
- Take courses on your own schedule — anytime, anywhere

! High: Help information is hard to discover

Usability Problem #6:

Extra help information is on the homepage, but users need to scroll down to see it.

Why is it a Problem?

Users are unlikely to scroll down to see information that's potentially helpful for them to use the site.

The screenshot shows the top portion of the edX homepage. It features five main promotional sections arranged horizontally. From left to right: 1. 'Earn a Valuable Certificate' with a green icon of a diploma and a magnifying glass. 2. 'Professional Certificate' with a pink icon of a person in a graduation cap. 3. 'Credit-Eligible' with a yellow icon of a graduation cap. 4. 'MicroMasters Programs' with a blue icon of a globe and a 'MM' logo. 5. 'XSeries Programs' with a grey icon of a person in a graduation cap. Below each section is a brief description and a 'See [Program Name] »' link.

| Earn a Valuable Certificate | Professional Certificate | Credit-Eligible | MicroMasters Programs | XSeries Programs |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Select the Verified Certificate course option and receive an instructor-signed certificate with the institution's logo to verify your achievement and increase your job prospects. | Stand out in your field. Develop the expertise employers are looking for through a series of skills-based courses. | Take courses on your schedule and receive academic credit without an application or transcript at a fraction of the cost. | A series of graduate-level courses to advance your career or accelerate your Master's degree. Recognized by industry leaders, MicroMasters provide in-demand skills and critical knowledge to stand out. | Work towards an XSeries Program Certificate to demonstrate competency in a specific subject area and a level of achievement. |
| See Verified Courses » | See Professional Certificate Courses » | See Credit Courses » | See MicroMasters Programs » | XSeries Programs » |

The screenshot shows the bottom navigation bar of the edX website. It includes links for About, edX for Business, Blog, News, Help Center (which is highlighted with a red box and a red exclamation mark), Contact, Careers, and Donate. Below this is a row of smaller links for Terms of Service & Honor Code, Privacy Policy, Accessibility Policy, Sitemap, and Media Kit. On the far right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, and a smiley face icon. At the very bottom, there are download links for the App Store and Google Play.

! High: Help information is hard to discover

Recommendation #6a

Move the “Learning at edX” section closer to the top of the home page.

Recommendation #6b

Move the “Help Center” to the main navigation menu to be accessible across pages.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage with the 'Learning at edX' section prominently displayed at the top. Below it are sections for 'Earn a Valuable Certificate', 'Professional Certificate', 'Credit-Eligible', 'MicroMasters Programs', and 'XSeries Programs'. At the bottom of the page, there is a call-to-action button labeled 'Register'.

| Earn a Valuable Certificate | Professional Certificate | Credit-Eligible | MicroMasters Programs | XSeries Programs |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Select the Verified Certificate course option and receive an instructor-signed certificate with the institution's logo to verify your achievement and increase your job prospects. | Stand out in your field. Develop the expertise employers are looking for through a series of skills-based courses. | Take courses on your schedule and receive academic credit without an application or transcript at a fraction of the cost. | A series of graduate-level courses to advance your career or accelerate your Master's degree. Recognized by industry leaders, MicroMasters provide in-demand skills and critical knowledge to stand out. | Work towards an XSeries Program Certificate to demonstrate competency in a specific subject area and a level of achievement. |

[See Verified Courses »](#) [See Professional Certificate Courses »](#) [See Credit Courses »](#) [See MicroMasters Programs »](#) [XSeries Programs »](#)

The screenshot shows the edX footer. At the top, there is a text input field and a 'Register' button. Below that, a call-to-action button says 'Get notified about new courses, events, community news & more'. In the center, there is a red box highlighting the 'Help Center' link in the navigation menu. The menu also includes 'About', 'edX for Business', 'Blog', 'News', 'Contact', 'Careers', and 'Donate'. Below the menu, links for 'Terms of Service & Honor Code', 'Privacy Policy', 'Accessibility Policy', 'Sitemap', and 'Media Kit' are provided. At the bottom, there are download links for the 'App Store' and 'Google play', along with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, and a smiley face icon.



Medium: How it Works link does not stand out for first-time users

Usability Problem #7:

The “How it Works” page is hidden within the about menu among similar-looking options.

Why is it a Problem?

New users who could use assistance may have trouble finding these resources.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the edX website. The bar includes links for 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', 'About' (which is currently selected), and a search bar. Below the navigation, a main heading reads 'Offering the best in education to the world'. To the right, there is a list of links: 'Advance Your Career', 'How It Works' (which is highlighted with an orange box and an orange exclamation mark icon above it), 'Earn University Credit', 'On Your Schedule', 'Valuable Credentials', 'Global Community', 'Excel in High School', and 'Courses for Everyone'.



Medium: How it Works link does not stand out for first-time users

Recommendation #7a

Place the “How It Works” link in the top navigation menu or within the “Help” navigation section described in recommendation B.

Recommendation #7b

Have the option stand out from the rest of the options available to users.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the edX website. The menu items are "Courses", "Programs", "Schools & Partners", "About", and a search bar. The "About" menu item is highlighted with a blue background. Below the navigation bar, there is a main content area with the heading "Offering the best in education to the world". To the right of this heading, there is a list of links: "Advance Your Career", "How It Works", "Earn University Credit", "On Your Schedule", "Valuable Credentials", "Global Community", "Excel in High School", and "Courses for Everyone". The "How It Works" link is highlighted with an orange rectangle and an orange exclamation mark icon is positioned above it.

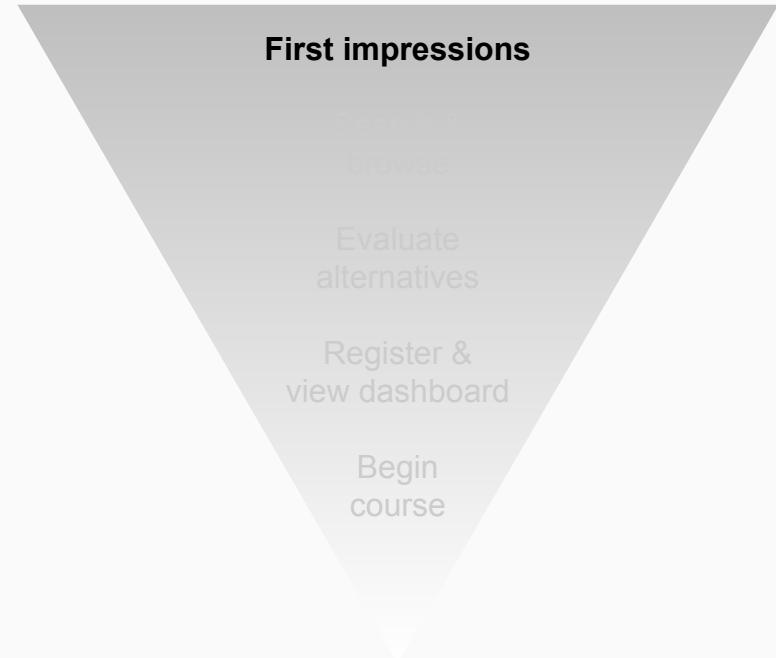
1) First impressions

First impressions: Why it matters?

A significant portion of site visitors begin their learning journey with edX on the home page. The first impression users have on the website will dictate if and how they will continue to navigate the website.

1 Positive Finding

2 High Usability Problems





Good: School logos used to gain credibility with the users

Prestigious school names and logos are immediately visible on the homepage

Why it's good:

Within 50 milliseconds, users may get a positive impression of legitimacy through edX's association with the prestigious schools displayed.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the edX logo, search bar, and sign-in/register buttons. Below the navigation is a large image of a smiling woman sitting on a couch using a laptop. To her right, text reads "Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere." with a "Find Courses" button. A green checkmark icon is overlaid on the right side of the image. Below the main image is a row of university logos: MIT, Harvard University, Berkeley University of California, The University of Texas System, Australian National University, and Boston University. This row is highlighted with a green rectangular box. Below this, there is a section titled "edX Programs Starting Soon" with several thumbnail images and a "View All Programs" button. The overall design is clean and professional, emphasizing the credibility provided by the partnership with well-known educational institutions.

! High: Conflicting Terminology concerning when courses are available

Usability Problem #8:

The titles of sections on the home page says classes are starting soon, but displays courses and programs that are current.

Why is it a Problem?

There is a language disconnect between what's available now and what's available in the future.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage with several course cards. Red boxes highlight specific sections and labels that illustrate the usability problem:

- A red box surrounds the title "edX Programs Starting Soon" at the top of the page.
- Red boxes surround the labels "Current" and "MicroMasters" under the first three course cards in the top section, which are labeled "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM".
- A red box surrounds the title "Popular Courses Starting Soon" in the middle section.
- Red boxes surround the labels "Starting Soon", "Self-Paced", and "MicroMasters" under the last two course cards in the middle section, which are labeled "Starting Soon".

The courses displayed include:

- RITx Cybersecurity (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM, Current)
- ColumbiaX Artificial Intelligence (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM, Current)
- MichiganX User Experience (UX) Research and Design (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM, Current)
- RITx Project Management (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM, Current)
- UQx English Grammar and Style (Starting Soon, Self-Paced, VERIFIED)
- Microsoft Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel (Starting Soon, Self-Paced, VERIFIED)
- CatalystX Communication Skills for Bridging Divides (Starting Soon, Self-Paced, VERIFIED)
- AmnestyInternationalX Human Rights: The Rights of Refugees (Starting Soon, Self-Paced, VERIFIED)

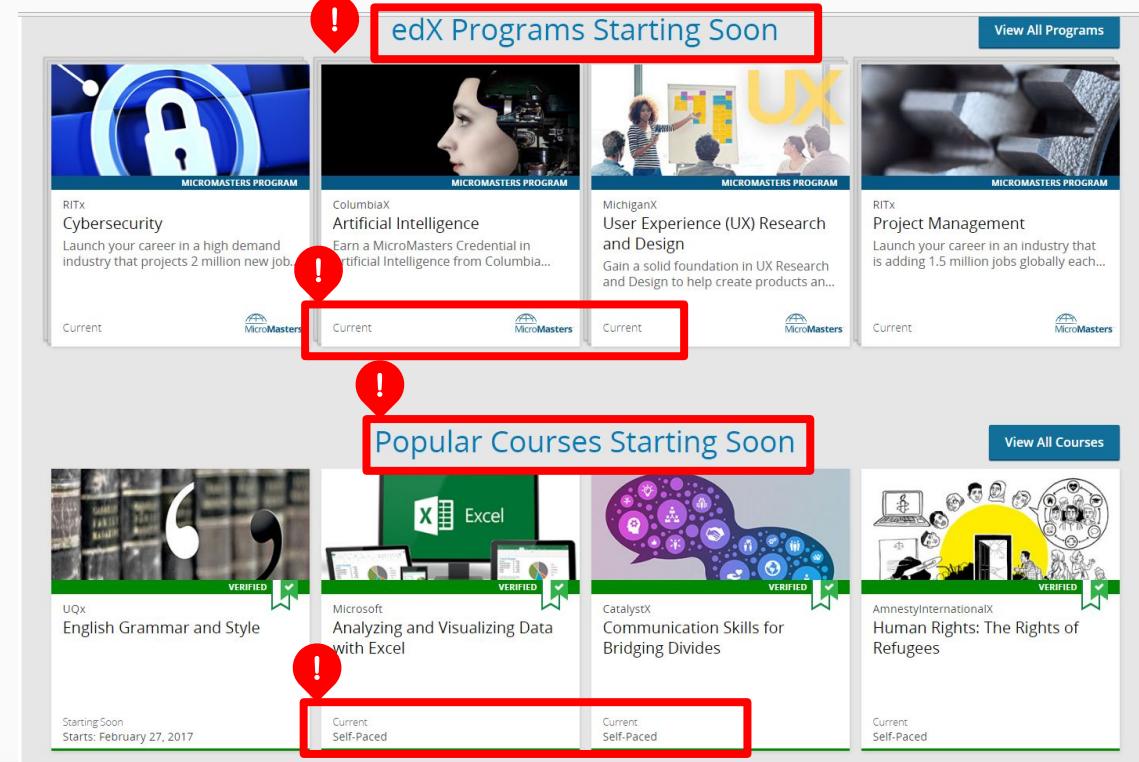
! High: Conflicting Terminology concerning when courses are available

Recommendation #8a

“Starting Soon” shouldn’t include current courses.

Recommendation #8b

Rename “Starting Soon” titles to “Now Available” and remove unavailable programs.



! High: Unclear whether programs are verified

Usability Problem #9:

Courses are marked as verified, but programs have their own verification that can't be viewed on the first page.

Why is it a Problem?

"Verified" is a common enough word that it holds more weight to users than "MicroMasters," which might include verified courses.

The screenshot displays two main sections of the edX website:

- edX Programs Starting Soon**: This section shows four program cards. The third card, for ColumbiaX Artificial Intelligence, is highlighted with a red box and an exclamation mark. It includes the text "Launch a MicroMasters Credential in Artificial Intelligence from Columbia..." and has a "MicroMasters" badge below it.
- Popular Courses Starting Soon**: This section shows four course cards. The second card, for Microsoft Analyzing and visualizing Data with Excel, is highlighted with a red box and an exclamation mark. It includes the text "Starting Soon Starts: February 27, 2017" and has a "MicroMasters" badge below it.

! High: Unclear whether programs are verified

Recommendation #9

Include “Verified” strip to Micromasters programs if all programs are verified.

edX Programs Starting Soon

- RITx Cybersecurity
- ColumbiaX Artificial Intelligence
- Michigan User Experience (UX) Research and Design
- RITx Project Management

Popular Courses Starting Soon

- UQx English Grammar and Style
- Microsoft Analyzing and visualizing Data with Excel
- CatalystX Communication Skills for Bridging Divides
- AmnestyInternationalX Human Rights: The Rights of Refugees

2) Search & Browse

Search & browse: Why it matters?

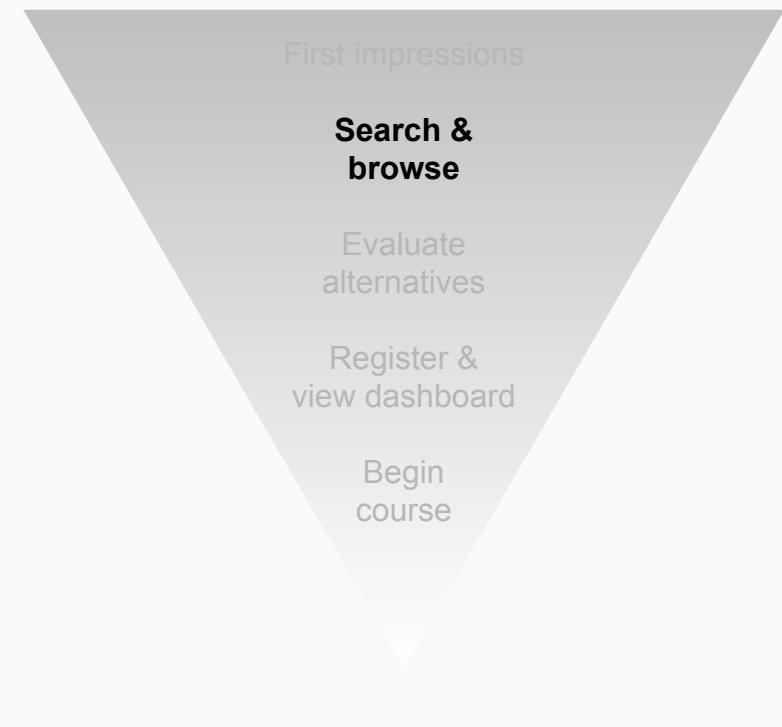
The process of browsing courses and selecting the right option. The Advancing Professional has a clear goal in mind and needs a way to quickly find the best fit class before losing interest.

While edX provides new users with a number of great tools, we found some inconsistency in how and where they're available across the site. These issues fall into the categories of refining and sorting search results, including confusing or unclear terminology.

3 Positive Findings

3 High Usability Problems

2 Medium Usability Problems





Good: Autosuggest helps users find available courses & programs

The search bar suggests available options as the user types. Suggestions are divided into courses and program sections. The typed letters are highlighted in the suggestions.

Why it's good:

Providing users with course options can help them more quickly find what they're looking for, or understand the range of options during the search process, even before hitting enter.

A screenshot of the edX website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About. Below the navigation is a banner featuring a woman smiling while using a laptop, with the text "Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere." and a "Find Courses" button. To the right of the banner is a search interface. A green checkmark icon is positioned above a search input field containing the text "Search: manage". A dropdown menu is open, showing suggestions under the heading "Courses": "People Management IIMBx", "Customer Relationship Management (CRM) IIMBx", and "Management Accounting for Decision Making IIMBx". Another section of the dropdown shows suggestions under "Programs": "Business Management IIMBx", "International Business Management ThunderbirdX", and "Entrepreneurship IIMBx". At the bottom of the dropdown menu is a "SEE ALL RESULTS" link. The entire dropdown menu is highlighted with a green border. In the bottom right corner of the page, there is a call-to-action button labeled "View All Programs".



Good: Users can browse courses without creating an account



First-time users can explore edX content options without creating an account.

Why it's good:

With the goal of on-boarding more users, it's good that edX leads with its content, one of its strengths. Allowing new users to browse content without committing to creating an account helps new users understand the value of edX.

The screenshot shows the edX search results page with a search term of "management". The results are filtered to show 371 matching courses. The interface includes a navigation bar with links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About. A green box highlights the "Sign In" and "Register" buttons. On the right, there is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" with filters for Availability (Current, Starting Soon, Upcoming, Self-Paced, Archived), Subjects (Architecture, Art & Culture, Biology & Life Sciences, Business & Management, Chemistry, Communication, Computer Science, Data Analysis & Statistics, Design, Economics & Finance, etc.), and a "Courses & Programs" section.

Viewing 371 results matching "management" CLEAR ALL

Search: 🔍

"management" ×

Refine your search

| Availability | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 39 |
| Upcoming | 43 |
| Self-Paced | 149 |
| Archived | 105 |

| Subjects | Count |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 231 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 19 |
| Computer Science | 64 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 42 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |
| MORE... | |

| Program Type | Count |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| MicroMasters Program | 3 |
| Verified MicroMasters | 1 |
| Upcoming Starts: October 26, 2017 | 1 |
| XSeries Program | 1 |
| Learner Testimonials | 1 |

Courses & Programs

Management

Strategic Management

Operations Management

Water Management



Good: Refine search results by a range of categories

Search results can be refined by a number of important categories including availability, language, subject, school and level.

Why it's good:

Providing users with course options can help them more quickly find what they're looking for, or understand the range of options during the search process, even before hitting enter.

The screenshot shows the edX search results page for the query "management". The main area displays six course cards. A green box highlights the "Refine your search" sidebar on the right, which includes sections for Availability, Subjects, and Courses & Programs. A green checkmark icon is placed above the sidebar title. A magnifying glass icon is located next to the search input field at the top right.

Viewing 371 results matching "management" Search:

"management" CLEAR ALL

Refine your search

| Availability | |
|---------------|-----|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 39 |
| Upcoming | 43 |
| Self-Paced | 149 |
| Archived | 105 |

| Subjects | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 231 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 19 |
| Computer Science | 64 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 42 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |
| MORE... | |

Courses & Programs

! High: Unclear terminology hinders users from finding best course match

Usability Problem #10:

Terminology on course search results and filters may be unclear and confusing.

E.g. course/program names, availability (current, self-paced).

Why is it a Problem?

Visual tiles and refinement tools are great aids for users, but if they are confused by the terminology and it doesn't match their "real world" idea, they won't be able to use them effectively.

The screenshot shows a grid of course tiles on the left and a refinement sidebar on the right. The sidebar has a red border and a red exclamation mark icon at the top. It includes sections for Availability (Current, Starting Soon, Upcoming, Self-Paced, Archived), Subjects (Architecture, Art & Culture, Biology & Life Sciences, Business & Management, Chemistry, Communication, Computer Science, Data Analysis & Statistics, Design, Economics & Finance), and Courses & Programs.

| Availability | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 39 |
| Upcoming | 43 |
| Self-Paced | 149 |
| Archived | 105 |

| Subjects | Count |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 231 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 19 |
| Computer Science | 64 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 42 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |

Courses & Programs

! High: Unclear terminology hinders users from finding best course match

Recommendation #10a

Short term: Quick tips mouse-over explanation between different refinement categories.

Recommendation #10b

Longer term: Card sort or further research to change terminology to better match user perceptions and needs.

The screenshot shows the edX search results page. On the left, there are several course cards displayed in a grid. Each card includes a thumbnail image, the course title, and a brief description. Some cards have a green 'VERIFIED' badge with a checkmark icon. A red box highlights the first two cards in the top row, and a red exclamation mark is placed above the second card's title. To the right of the cards is a sidebar titled 'Refine your search' with sections for Availability, Subjects, and Courses & Programs. The sidebar also features a red exclamation mark at the top. The sidebar lists various filters like 'Current', 'Starting Soon', 'Upcoming', etc., under 'Availability', and subjects like 'Architecture', 'Art & Culture', etc., under 'Subjects'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'MORE...' link.

| Availability | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 39 |
| Upcoming | 43 |
| Self-Paced | 149 |
| Archived | 105 |

| Subjects | Count |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 231 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 19 |
| Computer Science | 64 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 42 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |

Courses & Programs

! High: No clear prioritization of search results or sort by option

Usability Problem #11:

Search results display order is not explained to users. Also, users cannot manipulate or control search result display order.

Why is it a Problem?

Users were unclear if search results are sorted by most relevant, or if they need to dig through hundreds of results to find the best match. Providing users with sort options can help them more quickly find what they're looking for, or understand the range of options during the search process.

The screenshot shows the edX search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. On the right are 'Sign In' and 'Register' buttons. Below the navigation is a search bar with the query 'management' and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar is a 'CLEAR ALL' button. A large red box highlights the first three search results, which are both labeled 'MICROMASTERS PROGRAM'. The sidebar on the right contains sections for 'define your search' (availability: current, starting soon, upcoming, self-paced, archived) and 'Subjects' (Architecture, Art & Culture, Biology & Life Sciences, Business & Management, Chemistry, Communication, Computer Science, Data Analysis & Statistics, Design, Economics & Finance, etc.).

! High: No clear prioritization of search results or sort by option.

Recommendation #11a

Tell the user what order the search results are presented in.

Recommendation #11b

Give the user options for sorting based on items like “available now,” “highest rated” etc.

The screenshot shows the edX search results for the query "management". The results are displayed in a grid format. A red box highlights the first three results, which are "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" offerings from LouvainX, IIMBx, and IIMBx. To the right of the results is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" with filters for Availability (Current, Starting Soon, Upcoming, Self-Paced, Archived) and Subjects (Architecture, Art & Culture, Biology & Life Sciences, Business & Management, Chemistry, Communication, Computer Science, Data Analysis & Statistics, Design, Economics & Finance, MORE...). The sidebar also includes a "Courses & Programs" section.

| Subject | Count |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |
| Biology & Life Sciences | 6 |
| Business & Management | 231 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Communication | 19 |
| Computer Science | 64 |
| Data Analysis & Statistics | 42 |
| Design | 6 |
| Economics & Finance | 79 |
| MORE... | |
| Courses & Programs | |

! High: Filters not available when browsing (versus searching)

Usability Problem #12:

Filters and search refinement options are not available on all course listing pages, including when users browse categories rather than search. Users should still have the option to further refine search results from browsing screens or any screen that displays course options.

Why is it a Problem?

Some categories, like Engineering, have more than 200 courses. Scrolling through the entire page to find a specific course may be time-consuming and arduous for users.

The screenshot shows the 'Engineering Courses' section of the edX website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. Below that is a search bar and links for 'Sign In' and 'Register'. The main heading is 'Engineering Courses' with a sub-copy: 'Learn about engineering and more from the best universities and institutions around the world.' A breadcrumb trail 'Home > All Subjects > Engineering' is visible. On the right, a green button says 'View all edX Courses'. The main content area contains six course cards, each with a thumbnail, title, provider, status, and a 'VERIFIED' badge. The first card, 'Cellular Solids Part 2: Applications in Medicine' by MITx, is highlighted with a red box and a red exclamation mark. The other five cards are: 'Signals and Systems, Part 2' by IITBombayX (Starting Soon), 'Nuclear Reactor Physics Basics' by MEPix (Current, Self-Paced), 'Biobased Processes and Implementation' by WageningenX (Current), 'Stochastic Processes: Data Analysis and Computer Simulation' by KyotoU (VERIFIED), and 'Sustainability Science – A Key Concept for Future Design' by UTokyoX (VERIFIED).

High: Filters not available when browsing (versus searching)

Recommendation #12

Add filter options to all pages which display course options.

The screenshot shows the 'Engineering Courses' section of the edX website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. A search bar and 'Sign In / Register' buttons are also present. Below the navigation, a large heading 'Engineering Courses' is displayed, followed by a sub-headline: 'Learn about engineering and more from the best universities and institutions around the world.' A green button labeled 'View all edX Courses' is visible. The main content area displays a grid of six course cards. Each card includes a thumbnail image, the course title, the provider (e.g., MITx, IITBombayX, MEPhix, WageningenX, KyotoU, UTokyoX), a 'VERIFIED' badge with a green checkmark, and a brief description. The first three courses are marked as 'Current', while the others are 'Starting Soon'. A red circle with a white exclamation mark is overlaid on the first course card, highlighting the lack of filter options on this page.

| Provider | Course Title | Status | Description |
|-------------|---|---------------|------------------------|
| MITx | Cellular Solids Part 2: Applications in Medicine | Current | Starts: March 28, 2017 |
| IITBombayX | Signals and Systems, Part 2 | Starting Soon | Starts: March 29, 2017 |
| MEPhix | Nuclear Reactor Physics Basics | Self-Paced | |
| WageningenX | Biobased Processes and Implementation | Starting Soon | |
| KyotoU | Stochastic Processes: Data Analysis and Computer Simulation | Starting Soon | |
| UTokyoX | Sustainability Science – A Key Concept for Future Design | Starting Soon | |

! Medium: Only one filter per category may be selected at a time.

Usability Problem #13:

Only one filter per category can be applied at a time when refining your search.

Why is it a Problem?

Many filter results are not mutually exclusive.

Users may be interested in search for self-paced course and those starting soon.

Multilingual users may be interested in courses in a variety of languages.

The screenshot shows the edX search interface with a search bar containing "management". Below the search bar, there are two sets of filter dropdowns. The top set is for "Refine your search" under "Availability" with options: Current (selected), Starting Soon, Upcoming, Self-Paced, and Archived. The bottom set is also for "Refine your search" under "Subjects" with options: Architecture (selected) and Art & Culture. Both sets have a "CLEAR ALL" button. A large orange box highlights the "Self-Paced" filter under Availability, and another orange box highlights the "Architecture" filter under Subjects. An orange exclamation mark icon is positioned above the bottom right filter box.

| Availability | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Current | 149 |
| Starting Soon | 39 |
| Upcoming | 43 |
| Self-Paced | 149 |
| Archived | 105 |

| Subjects | Count |
|---------------|-------|
| Architecture | 2 |
| Art & Culture | 5 |

! Medium: Only one filter per category may be selected at a time.

Recommendation #13

Allow users to apply multiple filters from each category.

The screenshot shows the edX search results for "management". The search bar at the top contains "management". On the right, there is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" with two sections: "Availability" and "Subjects". Under "Availability", "Self-Paced" is selected, highlighted with a red box and an exclamation mark. Under "Subjects", "Architecture" is selected, also highlighted with a red box and an exclamation mark. The main content area displays several course cards related to management, including "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" by LouvainX, "Business Management" by IIMBx, "People Management" by IIMBx, "Operations Management" by IIMBx, "Management Communication" by PekingX, and "Introduction to Risk Management" by NYIF. Each card includes a thumbnail image, the course name, the provider, a "Verified" badge, and a status indicator (e.g., "Current", "Upcoming", "Self-Paced").

! Medium: “Clear All” removes filters and search term

Usability Problem #14:

Original search term considered a filter, so “Clear All” clears filters and search results. The user can remove individual filters, but the “clear all” filter removes search term.

Why is it a Problem?

Refining a search should not also invalidate the original search, causing users to start over from scratch. Because of edX’s wealth of content, this can be overwhelming for users.

The image shows two screenshots of the edX website demonstrating a usability issue with the 'Clear All' functionality in the search bar.

Screenshot 1 (Top): The search bar contains three filters: "management" (with an 'x'), "Self-Paced" (with an 'x'), and "English" (with an 'x'). An orange box highlights the search bar area, and an orange exclamation mark is placed above the search icon. To the right, a 'CLEAR ALL' button is visible.

Screenshot 2 (Bottom): The search bar now shows a single search term: "management". An orange box highlights the search bar area, and an orange exclamation mark is placed above the search icon. Below the search bar, the text "Viewing 140 results matching" is displayed. To the right, a 'Refine your search' sidebar lists "Availability" and "Self-Paced" with a close button.

Bottom Content: Below the search bar, there are course cards for "IMBx Operations M.", "UQx IELTS Academic Test Preparation", "Microsoft Essential Statistics for Data Analysis using Excel", and "IITBombayX Object-Oriented Programming". A sidebar on the right lists course availability and subjects.

! Medium: “Clear All” removes filters and search term

Recommendation #14

Exclude search term from the filters list.
To clear the search, a user can delete
the search term from search box, and
re-submit search query.

The screenshot illustrates the 'edX' platform's search and browse functionality, specifically focusing on the 'Refine' feature. It shows two distinct search results pages.

Top Result Page: This page displays 140 results matching the search term "management". The search bar at the top contains the term "management". Below the search bar, three filters are applied: "Self-Paced" and "English". A prominent orange callout box highlights the "CLEAR ALL" button located to the right of these filters. To the right of the search results, there is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" which includes a section for "Availability" with the option "Self-Paced" selected. An orange exclamation mark icon is placed above the search bar and another one above the "CLEAR ALL" button.

Bottom Result Page: This page shows the results after clearing all filters. The search bar now contains an empty string. The sidebar "Refine your search" is visible on the right, showing a table of course availability categories with their counts: Current (531), Starting Soon (153), Upcoming (162), Self-Paced (538), Archived (551). An orange callout box highlights the search bar, which now contains an empty string. Another orange exclamation mark icon is placed above the search bar.

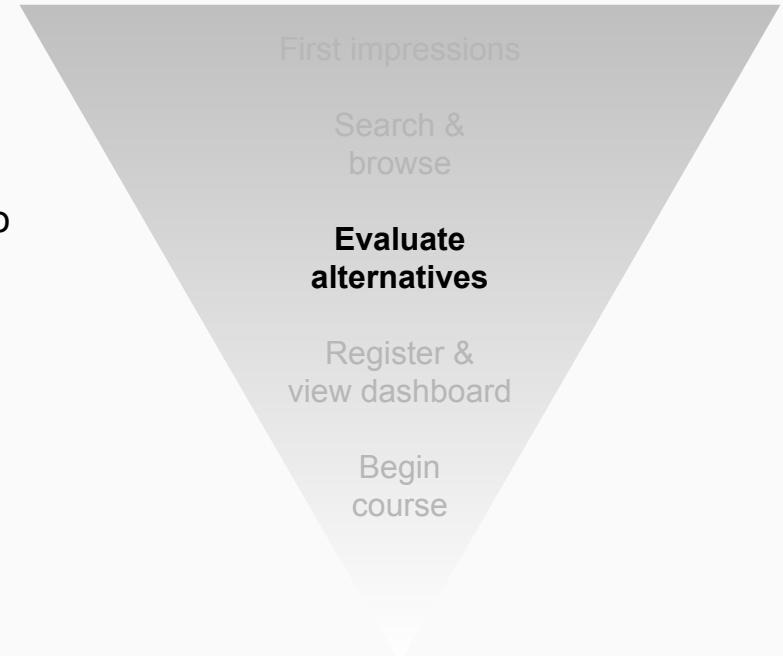
3) Evaluate Alternatives

Evaluate alternatives: Why it matters?

As users begin to narrow their search results, they need a way to determine which course best fits their needs. It's crucial that edX help users compare and contrast classes to ensure they find the best course available so they feel positive about their edX experience.

3 Positive Findings

2 Medium Usability Problems





Good: Course detail page has quick-glance tools

Quick glance provides a laid out, visual overview of the course's details.

Why it's good:

Gives users quick and direct access to important course overview details, so they don't need to spend time sifting through the more extensive course description text.

Home > All Subjects > Computer Science > Introduction to Computing using Python

Introduction to Computing using Python

In Session
Started on Self-Paced

Enroll Now

I would like to receive email from The Georgia Institute of Technology and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Computing using Python.

About this course 5 Reviews 5/5 ★★★★☆

In this computer science course, you will learn about foundational computing principles, such as how to write and read computer code and how to run and debug code.

You will learn about programming concepts in Python and how they demonstrate computing principles and domain applications that use programming concepts and computing principles in real

[See more](#)

What you'll learn

- General principles of programming: procedural programming, control structures, and data structures
- Programming in Python, including variables, operators, loops, conditionals, functions, error handling, and advanced data structures
- Applications of programming to computer graphics and human-computer interaction

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | Length: | 16 weeks |
| <input type="radio"/> | Effort: | 10 hours per week |
| <input type="radio"/> | Price: | FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$99 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Institution: | GTx |
| <input type="radio"/> | Subject: | Computer Science |
| <input type="radio"/> | Level: | Introductory |
| <input type="radio"/> | Languages: | English |
| <input type="radio"/> | Video Transcripts: | English |

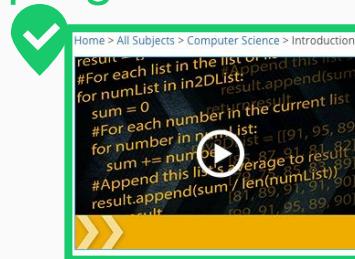


Good: Some courses and programs offer a video overview

Concise videos provide an overview of what will be taught in the course, how, and by whom.

Why it's good:

Gives prospective students a good idea of what to expect if they decide to take the course. Student's can then decide if they would like to learn more about the course and read the full class or program overview.



Introduction to Computing using Python

Learn the basics of computing and python programming, including fundamentals of procedural programming, control structures, and data structures.



About this course

5 Reviews 5/5 ★★★★★

In this computer science course, you will learn about foundational computing principles, such as how to write and read computer code and how to run and debug code.

You will learn about programming concepts in Python and how they demonstrate computing principles and domain applications that use programming concepts and computing principles in real

[See more](#)

What you'll learn

- General principles of programming: procedural programming, control structures, and data structures
- Programming in Python, including variables, operators, loops, conditionals, functions, error handling, and advanced data structures
- Applications of programming to computer graphics and human-computer interaction

In Session
Started on Self-Paced

[Enroll Now](#)

I would like to receive email from The Georgia Institute of Technology and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Computing using Python.

| | | |
|--|--------------------|---|
| | Length: | 16 weeks |
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| | Price: | FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$99 |
| | Institution: | GTx |
| | Subject: | Computer Science |
| | Level: | Introductory |
| | Languages: | English |
| | Video Transcripts: | English |



Good: Search results displayed as “rich cards”

Courses and programs are shown as visual “rich cards” in search results.

Why it's good:

Visual, color-coded cards are a good way to quickly review course information and compare courses at a glance.

The screenshot shows a search results page for "management" on the edX platform. At the top, there is a search bar with the query "management" and a green checkmark icon. To the right of the search bar is a "CLEAR ALL" button. Below the search bar, there are three course cards, each with a green border. The first card is for "LouvainX Management" (Micromasters Program), featuring a photo of people in a meeting. The second card is for "IIMBx Business Management" (Micromasters Program), featuring a person from behind looking at a wall of charts. The third card is for "IIMBx People Management" (Micromasters Program), featuring a cartoon character with speech bubbles. To the right of the cards is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" with sections for "Availability" (Current: 149, Starting Soon: 39, Upcoming: 43, Self-Paced: 149, Archived: 105) and "Subjects" (Architecture: 2, Art & Culture: 5, Biology & Life Sciences: 6). Each course card includes a status indicator (e.g., "Current"), a "MicroMasters" logo, and a link to the course details.

! Medium: Course “card” information is limited and inconsistent

Usability Problem #15:

Visual cards are a good way to quickly review course information and compare similar courses, but the information is inconsistent and limited.

Why is it a Problem?

Prospective students may have to click into multiple courses to compare them.

Requires effort from users to seek and find the information they need, which may be time-consuming and difficult.

The screenshot shows a search results page for "management" on the edX platform. The search bar at the top contains the query "management". On the right side, there is a sidebar titled "Refine your search" with sections for "Availability" and "Subjects". The "Availability" section includes filters for Current (149), Starting Soon (39), Upcoming (43), Self-Paced (149), and Archived (105). The "Subjects" section includes filters for Architecture (2), Art & Culture (5), and Biology & Life Sciences (6). The main content area displays three course cards:

- LouvainX Management**: A "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" offered by LouvainX. It is currently available. The card features a photo of people in a classroom setting.
- IIMBx Business Management**: A "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" offered by IIMBx. It is currently available. The card features a graphic of a person standing in front of a wall with charts and graphs.
- IIMBx People Management**: A "VERIFIED" "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM" offered by IIMBx. It is upcoming, starting on October 26, 2017. The card features a graphic of a person's head with thought bubbles.

! Medium: Course “card” information is limited and inconsistent

Recommendation #15a:

Short-term: Make course information on cards more consistent, and include more data.

Recommendation #15b:

Longer term: “Comparison shopping” tool - users can select multiple courses and compare them in a matrix format across different features or attributes, depending on which matters most to the user.

The screenshot shows a search results page for "management" on the edX platform. The search bar at the top contains the query "management". On the right side, there are two sections: "Refine your search" and a list of course filters. The "Refine your search" section includes filters for Availability (Current: 149, Starting Soon: 39, Upcoming: 43, Self-Paced: 149, Archived: 105) and Subjects (Architecture: 2, Art & Culture: 5, Biology & Life Sciences: 6). The main content area displays three course cards:

- LouvainX Management**: MICROMASTERS PROGRAM. Current status. Description: Développez vos compétences de manager pour prendre en main... MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx Business Management**: MICROMASTERS PROGRAM. Current status. Description: Master the essentials of managing a successful business... MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx People Management**: VERIFIED. Upcoming, Starts: October 26, 2017. Description: MicroMasters logo.

A large orange exclamation mark is overlaid on the first course card, highlighting the inconsistency in course information presentation.

! Medium: Reviews are located on an external website

Usability Problem #16:

Course reviews written by previous students are displayed on course pages. This is a good feature. However, when a user clicks the “read more” link, they are redirected to an external webpage (not edX.org) to view all the reviews.

Why is it a Problem?

The layout of the external website is visually similar to edX.org, and users may be unaware that they are no longer on edX, and be unsure how to navigate back.

The screenshot shows a course page on the CourseTalk website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "WRITE A REVIEW", "NEW COURSES", "RECOMMENDATIONS", and "Course Tracker". Below the navigation, the course title "Introduction to User Experience" is displayed, along with the provider information "Provided by: edX". The course is listed as "FREE" with an option to "Add a Verified Certificate for \$99.00". The start date is "In Session". There are two main call-to-action buttons: "Enroll on edX" and "See details on edX". Below these buttons, there are links for "Course Details", "Course Description", and "Reviews". The "Reviews" link is highlighted with an orange exclamation mark icon. The "Course Details" section includes fields for "Cost" (FREE) and "Course Provider" (edX online courses), both of which also have orange exclamation mark icons above them.

Medium: Reviews are located on an external website

Recommendation #16a

House all review content on the edX website, so users do not need to navigate away from the edX web page.

Recommendation #16b

Allow users to sort the reviews by date, rating, etc.

Recommendation #16c

After users take courses, ask users simple yes/no questions to provide feedback for courses based on common search criteria without having to fill out a full paragraph review (e.g. “good for English learners,” “good for beginners”)

Course Reviews

8 Reviews 4.5 / 5 ★★★★☆

Omar Ahmed 5 months ago
I recommended for anyone Who has passion for UX to continue this course to the end It's comprehensive course. I think you not find any course related to this field like that.
Hide

student 6 days ago
Loved this class. My favorite part was the 10,000 elevator exercise where it really challenges your mind to come up with at least 10 different design ideas. I got a lot out of that exercises that 5 months later it is still with me and a needed skill for UX Design. The instructor, Mark Newman, is excellent. He clearly explains what ever topic he is talking about. Mark teaches the next two classes and they are equally as good. I am totally looking forward to the next few classes. My knowledge base in UX Design wouldn't be as good if it wasn't for this Univ of Michigan micro-masters. I am forever grateful.
Hide

Isabela Rapetti 3 weeks ago
I would say it's the best introductory course on the subject. Interesting, short engaging videos easy to understand with many precise examples. Hoping for the next moods in the micromaster to be released
Hide

student 3 weeks ago
The course covers both the research and design elements of UX. The lectures are clear and informative. The "elevator" assignment is something I enjoyed and will remember for a long time. I'd recommend this course to UI/UX designers, but also to marketers and front-end developers who are close to the UX process.
Hide

[See more](#)

[Write a review](#)

More Features

General Features

- 🚚 Order Delivery
- 🚚 Order Pickup
- 🗓 Make a Reservation
- 🎉 Offering a Deal
- 💵 Cash Back
- ⏪ Open At:
- 09:04 AM
- 🕒 Open Now 9:04 AM
- 🛌 Takes Reservations
- 💳 Accepts Credit Cards
- 🚚 Delivery
- 🌞 Outdoor Seating
- 🏫 Good for Kids
- 🏪 Good for Groups
- 🍷 Waiter Service

▶ **Alcohol**

▶ **Meals Served**

▶ **Music**

▶ **Parking**

[Search](#) [Cancel](#)

4) Register & View Dashboard

Register & View Dashboard: Why it matters?

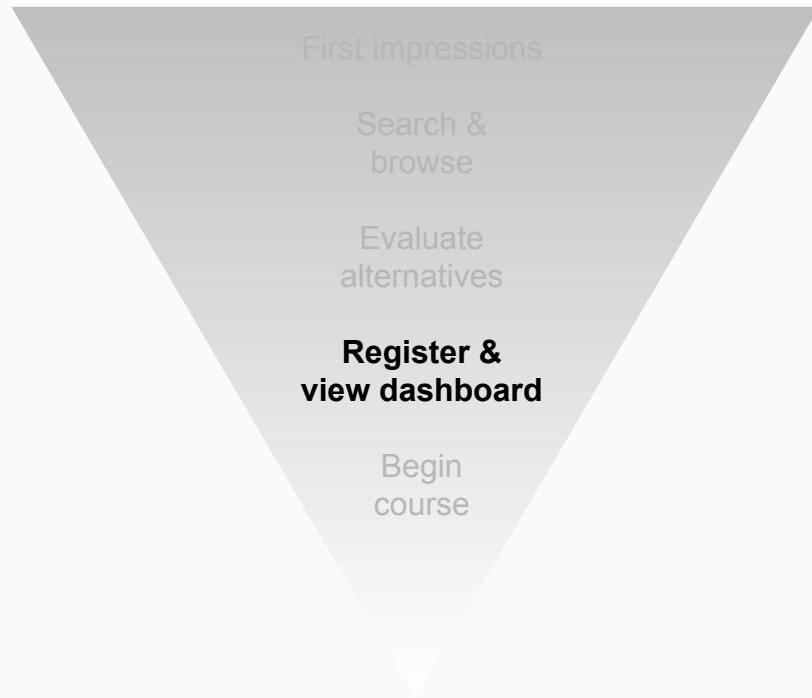
If the registration process is painful, it will deter users from creating an account and therefore taking courses. It needs to be quick, easy and flawless.

The dashboard must be accessible and consistent with expectations.

3 Positive Findings

3 High Usability Problems

3 Medium Usability Problems



Good: Clear Calls to Action

Registration and enroll buttons are highly visible and consistent across pages

Why it is good:

Attention is quickly brought to registration and enrollment, making it easy for new users to understand the clear next steps.

The screenshot shows the edX website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. A search bar and 'Sign In'/'Register' buttons are also at the top right. The main content area features a course thumbnail with a person and the 'Office 365' logo, followed by the course title 'Provisioning Office 365 Services'. Below the title is a brief description: 'Learn the steps required to properly plan and configure the provisioning of an Office 365 tenant.' The Microsoft logo is present. On the right side of the page, there's a sidebar with a green box highlighting the 'Enroll Now' button, which is labeled 'Started on Self-Paced'. Below the button is a checkbox for receiving email from Microsoft. To the right of the sidebar, there's a table with course details: Length (9 weeks), Effort (3-5 hours per module), Price (FREE, with an option to add a Verified Certificate for \$99), Institution (Microsoft), Subject (Computer Science), and Level (Intermediate).

✓ Good: Clear Calls to Action



Good: Form Validation

Attention is brought to missing information

Why it is good:

Information is saved, preventing loss of data and wasting the user's time and energy.

The screenshot shows the 'Create your account' page on the edX website. At the top, a red error message box contains the text: 'We couldn't create your account.' followed by three bullet points: 'Please enter your Full name.', 'Please enter your Public username.', and 'You must agree to the edX Terms of Service and Honor Code'. Below this, there are input fields for 'Full name *' containing 'Jane Doe' and 'Public username *' containing 'JaneDoe'. A note below the public username field states: 'The name that will identify you in your courses - (cannot be changed later)'. Further down, a text area asks 'Tell us why you're interested in edX' with the input 'learning'. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'I agree to the edX Terms of Service and Honor Code *', a link to 'Review the Terms of Service and Honor Code', and a large blue button labeled 'Create your account'. A small note at the bottom right of the form says '* Required field'.

! Medium: Creating a Public Username

Usability Problem #17:

Rules for username in registration are not clear.

Why is it a Problem?

Users may be unsure whether their public username must be unique, whether it must be an email address, and if this username will be required for login.

Public username *

The name that will identify you in your courses - (cannot be changed later)



Medium: Creating a Public Username

Recommendation #17a

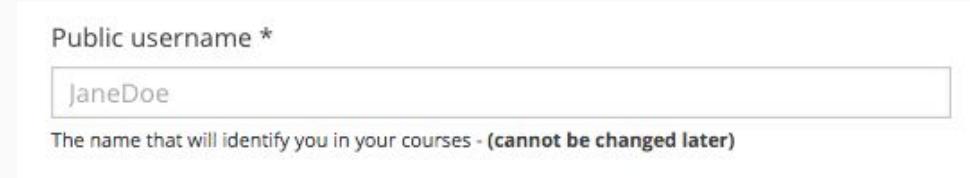
Provide a more specific username example
and add parameters below entry field.
Rename this field “Display name.”

Recommendation #17b

Allow users to change their public username
after registration and eliminate requirement for
usernames to be unique. This is because
public usernames are not required for login.

Recommendation #17c

Remove this question from the registration
form



The screenshot shows a registration form with a single input field. The field is labeled "Public username *". Inside the field, the text "JaneDoe" is entered. Below the input field, there is a descriptive note: "The name that will identify you in your courses - (cannot be changed later)".



Medium: Lengthy Registration

Usability Problem #18:

Too many required registration fields

Why is it a Problem?

Registration may take a long time and there is a higher probability of form validation errors.

Create an account using

Facebook Google Microsoft

or create a new one here

Email *

Full name *

Your legal name, used for any certificates you earn.

Public username *

The name that will identify you in your courses - (cannot be changed later)

Password *

Country *

Gender Year of birth

Highest level of education completed

Tell us why you're interested in edX

I agree to the edX Terms of Service and Honor Code *

[Review the Terms of Service and Honor Code](#)

[Create your account](#)

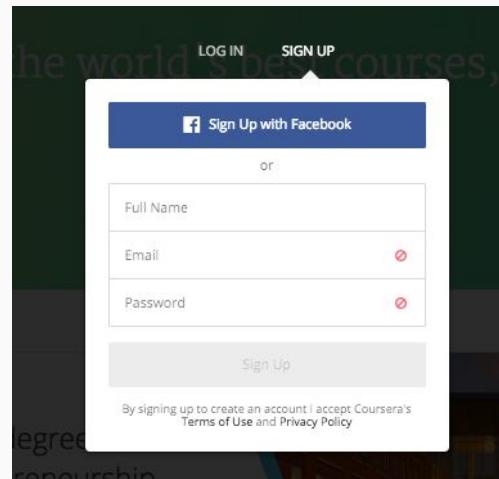
* Required field

Already have an account?
[Sign in](#)

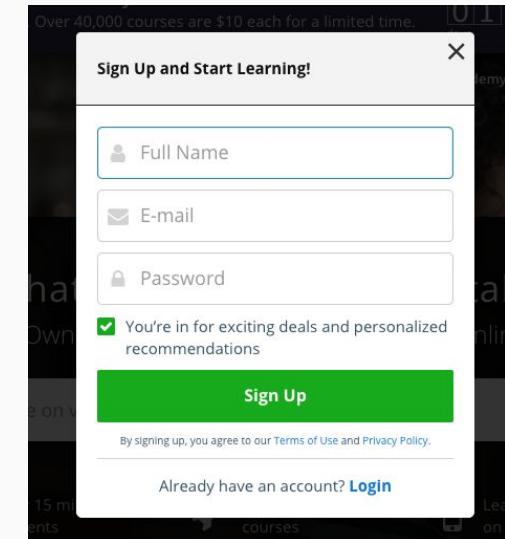
! Medium: Lengthy Registration

Recommendation #18

Minimize the number of fields required for registration to focus on essential registration components: name, email, password.



Coursera



Udemy

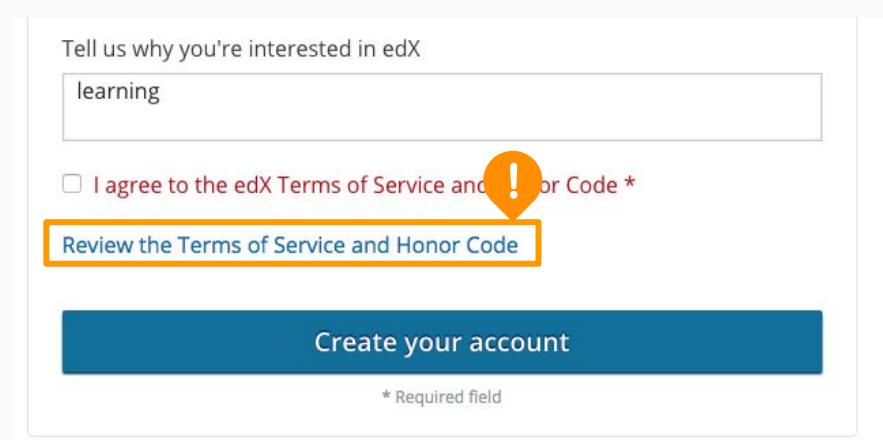
! Medium: Terms of Service

Usability Problem #19:

Clicking on the Terms of Service causes the user registration form to be reset.

Why is it a Problem?

Loss of information



Tell us why you're interested in edX
learning

I agree to the edX Terms of Service and Honor Code *

[Review the Terms of Service and Honor Code](#)

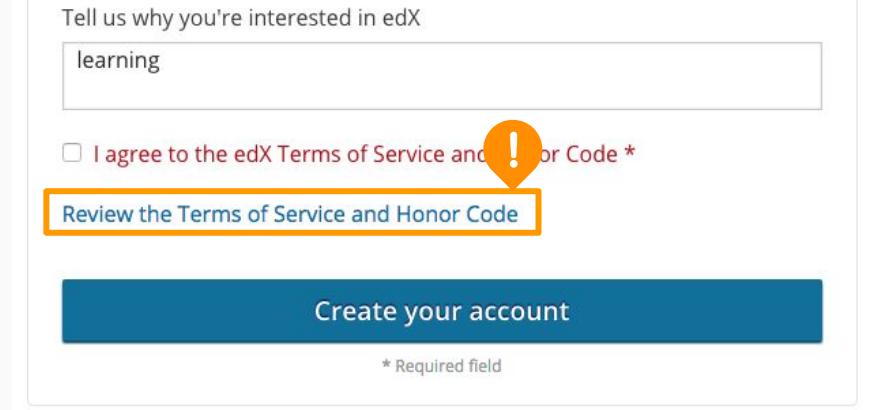
[Create your account](#)

* Required field

! Medium: Terms of Service

Recommendation #19

Save the registration information if TOS is reviewed.



Tell us why you're interested in edX
learning

I agree to the edX Terms of Service and Honor Code *

[Review the Terms of Service and Honor Code](#)

[Create your account](#)

* Required field

! High: Dashboard Navigation Menu

Usability Problem #20:

Dashboard navigation menu changes (see red box). Pressing “courses” on dashboard does not lead to the same page as pressing “courses” on the homepage.

Homepage and most other pages



Why is it a Problem?

After users register for a course they are brought to a dashboard screen with an unfamiliar navigation menu with limited navigation capabilities. Users expect to land on the same pages.

Dashboard



! High: Dashboard Navigation Menu

Recommendation #20

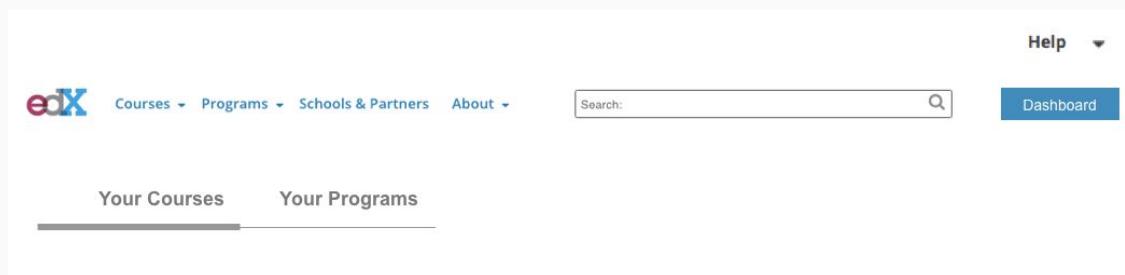
Update the navigation bar to be the same throughout the edX website.

Place courses and programs on the same dashboard page and allow sorting between the two through a toggle button.

Current Dashboard Navigation Menu



Revised Navigation Menu and Course/Program Toggle



! High: Dashboard is Difficult to Find

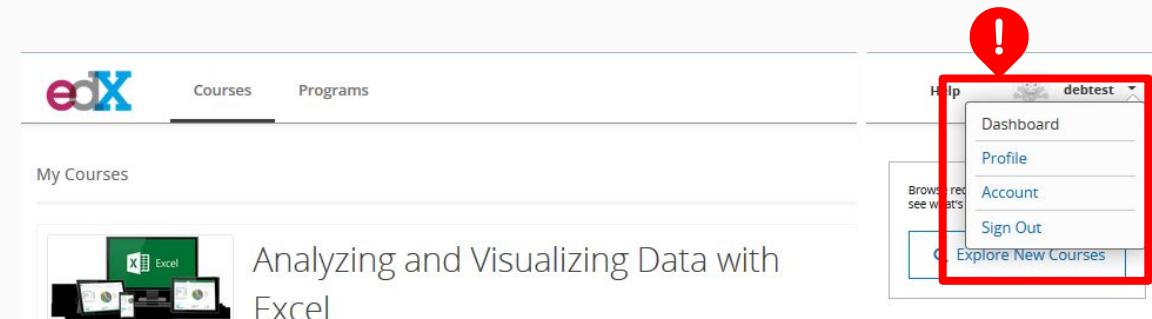
Usability Problem #21:

Dashboard is difficult to find and access.

Dashboard can only be accessed via small dropdown menu.

Why is it a Problem?

Users want quick, efficient access to the courses that they have already enrolled in.



! High: Dashboard is Difficult to Find

Recommendation #21

Add a dashboard button to the navigation menu.



5) Beginning A Course

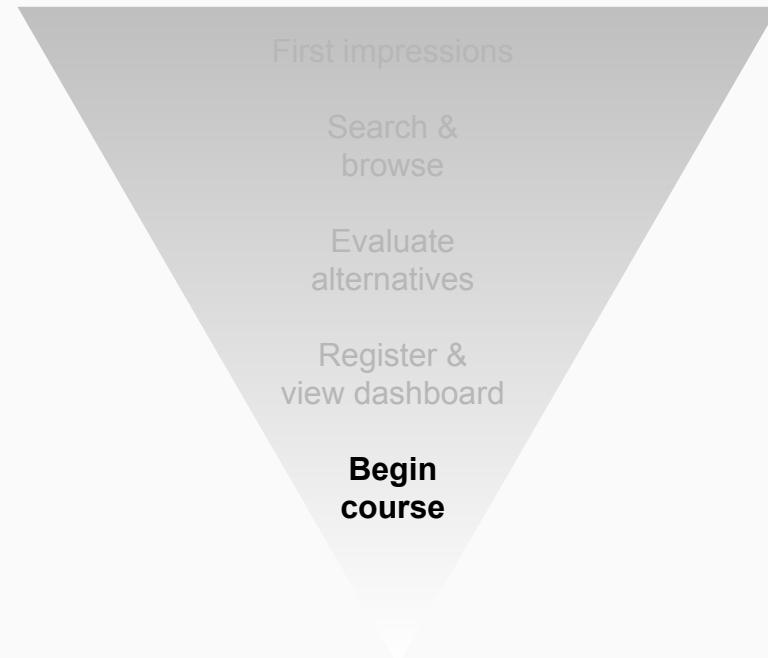
Begin course: Why it matters?

When users begin taking a course, their initial interaction with the course materials is important. Anything that is hard or confusing could be a cause for attrition. If the student quickly finds a course, enrolls and begins a course within the “first hour,” it could be due to the the course content and interaction and their understanding of how the edX course process works.

3 Positive Findings

1 High Usability Problem

4 Medium Usability Problems



Good: Enrolling in a program

Users can see the courses in the program and when they are available. They can quickly register for the courses

Why it's good:

Displaying the information about the courses gives the user a quick overview of what is expected.

Courses in this XSeries Program

This is a series of 3 courses that can be taken in any order, however they do partly build on each other's knowledge and taking them in the suggested order might make it a more comprehensible learning experience.



Nutrition and Health Part 2: Micronutrients and Malnutrition

Learn about malnutrition and micronutrients and how they Impact human health.
[Learn more](#)



Nutrition and Health Part 1: Macronutrients and Overnutrition

Learn the fundamentals of nutrition and its impact on human health.
[Learn more](#)



Nutrition and Health Part 3: Food Safety

Learn about bacteria, pesticides and health hazards present in food.
[Learn more](#)

I would like to receive email from Wageningen University & Research and learn about other offerings related to Nutrition and Health Part 2: Micronutrients and Malnutrition.

Self-Paced

Enroll Now

I would like to receive email from Wageningen University & Research and learn about other offerings related to Nutrition and Health Part 1: Macronutrients and Overnutrition.

Self-Paced

Enroll Now

In Session

Started on December 6, 2016

Enroll Now

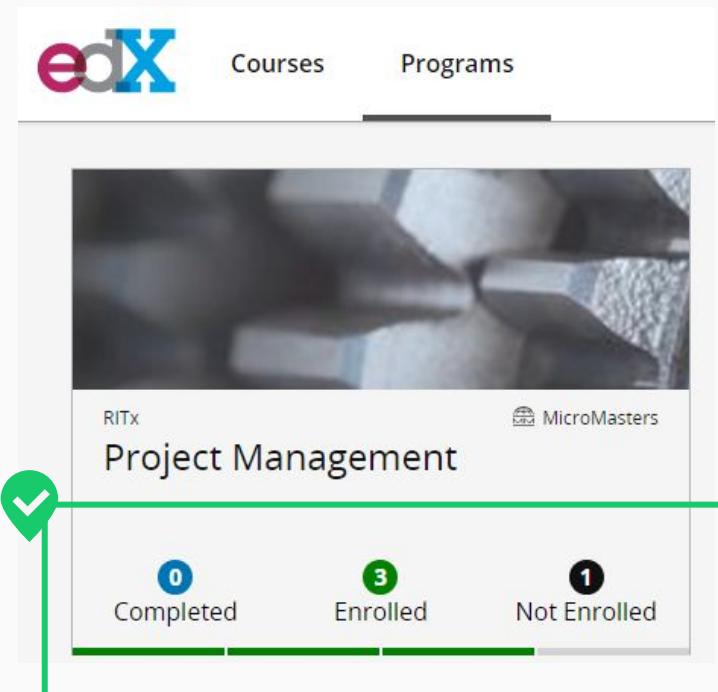
I would like to receive email from Wageningen University & Research and learn about other offerings related to Nutrition and Health Part 3: Food Safety.

Good: Program view on Dashboard

The dashboard shows the program-at-a-glance

Why it's good:

Displaying information about the progress of the student is helpful





Good: Video Transcript Optional

Text Transcript of the video is an optional feature.

Why it's good:

Users learning English or a new technology or domain may welcome the extra visual cues while watching the video. It also allows users to dismiss the transcript if they find it distracting.

The screenshot shows a video player interface for a Microsoft video titled "Python Data Types". The video is part of the "Intro to Python for Data Science" course. The transcript visible in the video player includes the following text:

By now, you've played around with different data types. On the numbers side, there's the `float`, to represent a real number, and the `int`, to represent an integer. Next, we also have `str`, short for string, to represent text in Python, and `bool`, which can be either `True` or `False`. You can save these values as a variable, like these examples show. Each variable then represents a _single_ value.

As a data scientist, you'll often want to work with many data points. If you for example

A green checkmark icon is located in the top right corner of the video player, and a green line connects it to the text above.

! Medium: Video Transcript Optional

Usability Problem #22:

The button which controls the transcript as an optional feature is not clear.

Why is it a problem?

Users may not realize it controls the transcript.

Python Lists

Microsoft

Intro to Python for Data Science

Python Data Types

- float – real numbers
- int – integer numbers
- str – string, text

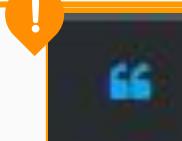
By now, you've played around with different data types. On the numbers side, there's the 'float', to represent a real number, and the 'int', to represent an integer. Next, we also

have `str`, short for string, to represent text in Python, and `bool`, which can be either

'True' or 'False'. You can save these values as a variable, like these examples show. Each

variable then represents a _single_ value.

As a data scientist, you'll often want to work with many data points. If you for example





Medium: Video Transcript Optional

Recommendation #22

Add context or a few words to make the function of the hide/show transcript button more apparent

Python Lists

The screenshot shows a video player interface. At the top, it says "Microsoft" and "Intro to Python for Data Science". The main title is "Python Data Types". Below the title, there's a bulleted list: • float - real numbers • int - integer numbers • str - string, text. To the right of the list is a video frame showing a man in a black polo shirt speaking. At the bottom of the video frame is a control bar with a play button, the text "0:00 / 4:09", a speed selector set to "1.0x", and other standard video controls.

By now, you've played around with different data types. On the numbers side, there's the

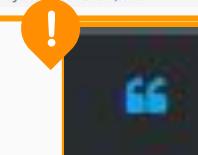
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have 'str', short for string, to represent text in Python, and 'bool', which can be either

'True' or 'False'. You can save these values as a variable, like these examples show. Each

variable then represents a _single_ value.

As a data scientist, you'll often want to work with many data points. If you for example



! High: Course Inconsistency

Usability Problem #23:

Courses on the Dashboard are inconsistent. If a course is upcoming or starting soon, no course metadata is accessible from the dashboard

Why is it a Problem?

Users expect consistency. Users are unable to access or review the course information pages for upcoming courses, which they previously viewed when signing up for the course.

My Courses



Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel

Microsoft - DAT206x
Starts - Mar 31, 2017 20:00
EDT



Pursue a Certificate of Achievement to highlight the knowledge and skills you gain in this course.

It's official. It's easily shareable. It's a proven motivator to complete the course.
Learn more about the verified Certificate of Achievement.

Upgrade to Verified



Accounting Essentials for MBA Success

ImperialBusinessX -
ICBS001
Started - Mar 20, 2017



View Course

Related Programs: Essentials for MBA Success XSeries

Pursue a Certificate of Achievement to highlight the knowledge and skills you gain in this course.

It's official. It's easily shareable. It's a proven motivator to complete the course.
Learn more about the verified Certificate of Achievement.

Upgrade to Verified

! High: Course Inconsistency

Recommendation #23

Change the upcoming course title to a hyperlink and add a “View Course” button. Both should link to the course page.

My Courses



Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel

Microsoft - DAT206x
Starts - Mar 31, 2017 20:00
EDT



Upgrade to Verified

Pursue a Certificate of Achievement to highlight the knowledge and skills you gain in this course.

It's official. It's easily shareable. It's a proven motivator to complete the course.
Learn more about the verified Certificate of Achievement.



Accounting Essentials for MBA Success

ImperialBusinessX -
ICBS001
Started - Mar 20, 2017

View Course

Related Programs: Essentials for MBA Success XSeries

Pursue a Certificate of Achievement to highlight the knowledge and skills you gain in this course.

It's official. It's easily shareable. It's a proven motivator to complete the course.
Learn more about the verified Certificate of Achievement.

Upgrade to Verified

! Medium: Starting a Course

Usability Problem #24:

Immediately after registering
the call to action button says
'Resume Course' but has the
same interaction as clicking on
the 'Course' link

The screenshot shows the course landing page for 'Microsoft: DAT206x Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Course (which is highlighted with an orange box and a yellow exclamation mark), Syllabus, FAQ, Discussion, and Progress. To the right of the navigation is a user profile for 'debtest' with a small owl icon. Below the navigation, the main content area features a large heading 'Welcome to Microsoft's DAT206x!' and a subtitle 'Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel'. On the right side of the content area, there's a blue button labeled 'Resume Course' with a yellow exclamation mark above it. A vertical sidebar on the left is labeled 'Support'.

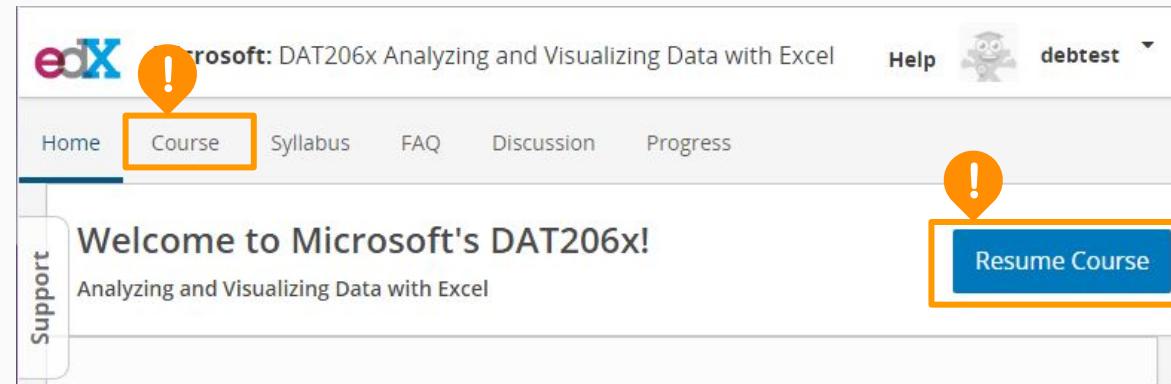
Why is it a problem?

Users may be confused with
the terminology.

! Medium: Starting a Course

Recommendation #24

Button text should be within context: 'Start' or 'Resume'.
Or should be neutral 'Enter Course'



! Medium: Discussions are inconsistent

Usability Problem #25:

Discussions can be accessed from top navigation or within a particular lesson but same content is presented in differently

Why is this a problem?

Users expect consistency. Users may have to learn to interact in two different ways to do the same task

The screenshot displays two separate sections of a course interface, both titled "Discussion".

Top Section (Original Course View):

- Header: Home, Course, Discussion, Progress, Syllabus, Course Schedule, Guest List, Wiki.
- Breadcrumb: All Topics > Week 1 > Comparing Your Classmates Responses with Menzel.
- Search bar: Add a Post, Search all posts, Search.
- Discussion list:
 - Show all posts, by most activity.
 - Post 1: "How do they do it?", 7 replies. Content: "Please someone tell me how..."
 - Post 2: "Food, Classmates, Global Nutrition", 7 replies. Content: "First of all, my classmates I'm sur..."
 - Post 3: "So much food - for most!", 7 replies. Content: "It's quite amazing to visually see t..."
 - Post 4: "Where's the 'assessment'?", 6 replies. Content: "Do I need to add a new post to 'complete the module?' Where's the 'assessment'?" Accor...
- Buttons: Add a Response, 3 responses.

Bottom Section (Lesson View):

- Header: Hide Discussion, Add a Post.
- Breadcrumb: Topic: Week 1 / Introduce Yourself!
- Search bar: by recent activity.
- Discussion list:
 - Show all posts, by recent activity.
 - Post 1: "Examining Ethics in My Life", 1 reply. Content: "I'm from Vancouver, Canada but travel a lot for school. My first out-of-country trip turned me into a vegetarian. It's been..."
 - Post 2: "Hello", 1 reply. Content: "I'm living in Salt Lake City. I've been vegan for 9 years and I teach classes in sustainable eating."
 - Post 3: "Vegetarian from San Diego", 1 reply. Content: "I only ate chicken and turkey growing up. I tried my first burger when I was 17 and didn't like it. I ate a few steaks and re..."
 - Post 4: "Vegan Italian", 1 reply. Content: "Hello! I'm a first year psychology student in UK and I come from Italy. I have been vegetarian since I was 14 and I have b..."

! Medium: Discussions are inconsistent

Recommendation #25 Consolidate to a single presentation format

The screenshot displays two separate sections of a course discussion board:

Top Section (Discussion Tab):

- Topic: Comparing Your Classmates Responses with Menzel
- Posts:
 - How do they do it? (by someone who tell me how...)
 - Food, Classmates, Global Nutrition
 - First of all, my classmates I'm sur...
 - So much food - for most!
 - Where's the "assessment"? (with a checked checkbox)
- Post by MillieMatz: First of all, my classmates I'm sure are much younger than I am. I am 78 and don't always eat the right things. The pictures of the classmate's food were very interesting, a lot of color. The world situation disturbs me. However, the family which had the least seemed to be eating a lot of grain and some healthy fresh vegetables. The families who spent the most ate a lot of junky type foods. I have a big problem with the amount of food that is wasted by the more "affluent" people in the USA. Perhaps this is true world-wide.
- Related to: Week 1 / Comparing Your Classmates Responses with Menzel
- This post is visible to everyone.
- Add a Response button
- 3 responses

Bottom Section (Discussion Topic):

- Topic: Week 1 / Introduce Yourself!
- Posts:
 - Examining Ethics in My Life (by recent activity)
 - Hello (1 reply): I'm from Vancouver, Canada but travel a lot for school. My first out-of-country trip turned me into a vegetarian. It's been...
 - Vegetarian from San Diego (1 reply): I only ate chicken and turkey growing up. I tried my first burger when I was 17 and didn't like it. I ate a few steaks and re...
 - Vegan Italian (1 reply): Hello! I'm a first year psychology student in UK and I come from Italy. I have been vegetarian since I was 14 and I have b...
- Add a Post button

! Medium: Discussions are lacking information

Usability Problem #26:
Course Discussion lacking
information in the list view

Why is this a problem?
Users have to click into
item to gain more
information

The screenshot shows a course discussion list view. At the top, there's a header with the title "Discussion" and a topic link "Topic: Week 1 / Introduce Yourself!". On the right side of the header are two buttons: "Hide Discussion" and "Add a Post". Below the header, there's a search/filter bar with "Show all posts" and a dropdown menu set to "by recent activity". The main content area displays four discussion posts:

- Examining Ethics in My Life**
I'm from Vancouver, Canada but travel a lot for school. My first out-of-country trip turned me into a vegetarian. It's been...
1 reply
- Hello**
I'm living in Salt Lake City. I've been vegan for 9 years and I teach classes in sustainable eating.
1 reply
- Vegetarian from San Diego**
I only ate chicken and turkey growing up. I tried my first burger when I was 17 and didn't like it. I ate a few steaks and re...
1 reply
- Vegan Italian**
Hello! I'm a first year psychology student in UK and I come from Italy. I have been vegetarian since I was 14 and I have b...
1 reply

! Medium: Discussions are lacking information

Recommendation #26

- Add Date Time stamp to the entries.
- Add Sort by date in addition to by activity.
- Add the content of the discussion in a reading pane

The screenshot shows a course navigation bar with links: Home, Course, Discussion (highlighted), Progress, Syllabus, Course Schedule, Guest List, and Wiki. An orange exclamation mark icon is positioned above the Discussion tab. The main content area displays a discussion thread under the heading "Comparing Your Classmates Responses with Menzel". On the left, a sidebar lists recent posts:

- How do they do it? (by most activity)
- Food, Classmates, Global Nutrition
- So much food - for most!
- Where's the "assessment"?
- Money does not always buy you health
- Disgusted with myself
- Access to fresh produce in

On the right, a detailed view of a post by "MillieMatz" titled "Food, Classmates, Global Nutrition" is shown. The post content discusses food choices and health. Below the post, there is a "Add a Response" button and a section for "3 responses". One response from "CynthiaHennecke" is visible, dated 2 years ago, sharing a personal anecdote about food availability during World War II.

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Review Process
3. Analysis
4. Expert Review
- 5. Summary and next steps**

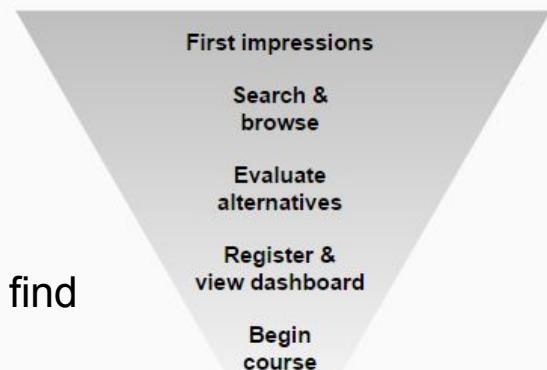
Expert Review Summary

edX is Content Rich

- 1000s of online courses being offered, with a variety of subjects
- Many excellent educational institutions
- Free course audit or affordable to earn certificate

Why are students dropping off?

- What is the cause during the “first hour”
- Global Issues are found throughout the User Journey
 - Terminology: concepts core to edX are not clear
 - Self-Help: content rich but overwhelming and hard to find
- Advancing Professional User Journey



Reasons for attrition for the Advancing Professional User Journey

First Impressions

If the purpose, function and value proposition of edX is unclear, users may leave

Search & Browse

If users cannot find what they're looking for quickly, they may go elsewhere

Evaluate Alternatives

If users don't end up selecting the best/right course for their needs, they may drop off

Register & View Dashboard

If the process takes too long or is too confusing, they'll may stop

Begin Course

If the process for taking a course and course content itself is confusing, they may abandon edX and never come back

Next Steps

User Testing

- User testing with 12 participants that meet Advancing Professional criteria
- 75-minute test with tasks along first-time user journey
- Goal of user test is to validate and clarify existing findings (e.g. how does terminology confusion impact user drop off) and identify additional issues

Highly Recommend

- Conduct Card Sorting study for terminology purposes
- Additional user testing with
 - Non-English speaking, international and mobile users
 - Test plan with tasks focused on attending a course

Total Findings from Expert Review

-  **Good: 14 Positive Findings**
-  **High Severity: 13 Usability Problems**
-  **Medium Severity: 13 Usability Problems**

| Theme | Good | High | Medium |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Global Terminology | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Global Self-Help | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 1) First Impressions | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 2) Search & Browse | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 3) Evaluate Alternatives | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 4) Register & View Dashboard | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 5) Begin Course | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| | 14 | 13 | 13 |

Appendix

Heuristics used for Individual Reviews

Visibility of system status: The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

Match between system and the real world: The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

User control and freedom: Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.

Consistency and standards: Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.

Error prevention: Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.

Recognition rather than recall: Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

Flexibility and efficiency of use: Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

Aesthetic and minimalist design: Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

Help and documentation: Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

Severity Scale used for Individual Reviews

0 = I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all

1 = Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project

2 = Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority

3 = Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority

4 = Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

Recommendations Checklist

- #1a: Create a controlled vocabulary for the site with terms allowed and prohibited.
- #1b: Include tool tips or hovering element nearby that gives an explanation of the term.
- #2: Include blurb of what a Program is and what a Course is AND/OR devote more splash page real estate to Programs.
- #3a: If a course/program cannot be taken by the user, clarify that no one can enroll anymore.
- #3b: If the course/program is closed for registration, add a call to action so users can keep updated for upcoming dates.
- #4: If a course/program cannot be taken by the user, clarify that no one can enroll anymore.
- #5: Encourage course builders to use a standardized language.

Recommendations Checklist

- #6a: Move the “Learning at edX” section closer to the top of the home page.
- #6b: Move the “Help Center” to the main navigation menu to be accessible from everywhere.
- #7a: Place the “How It Works” in the top bar.
- #7b: Have the option stand out from the rest of the options available.

Recommendations Checklist

- #8a: “Starting Soon” shouldn’t include current courses.
- #8b: Rename “Starting Soon” titles to “Now Available” and remove unavailable programs.
- #9: Include “Verified” strip to Micromasters programs if all programs are verified.

Recommendations Checklist

- #10a: Short term: Quick tips mouse-over explanation.
- #10b: Longer term: Card sort or further research to change terminology.
- #11a: Tell the user what order the search results are presented in.
- #11b: Give the user options for sorting based on items like “available now,” “highest rated” etc.
- #11c: Have a section for edX recommended courses at the top of search results to help users make a decision.
- #12: Add filter options to all pages where course options are explained.
- #13: Allow users to select multiple categories from.
- #14: Exclude search term from the filters list. To clear the search, a user can delete the search term from search box, and re-submit search query

Recommendations Checklist

- #15a: Short-term: Make course information on cards more consistent, and include more data.
- #15b: Longer term: “Comparison shopping” tool - users can select multiple courses and compare them in a matrix format across different features or attributes, depending on which matters most to the user.
- #16a: House all review content on the edX website, so users do not need to navigate away from the edX web page.
- #16b: Allow users to sort the reviews by date, rating, etc.
- #16c: After users take courses, ask them to review courses based on common search criteria e.g. “good for English learners,” “good for beginners”

Recommendations Checklist

- #17a Provide a more specific username example and add parameters below entry field. Rename this field “Display name.”
- #17b Allow users to change their public username after registration and eliminate requirement for usernames to be unique. This is because public usernames are not required for login.
- #17c Remove this question from the registration form
- #18: Minimize the number of fields required for registration to focus on essential registration components- name, email, password.
- #19: Save the registration information if TOS is reviewed.
- #20: Update the navigation bar to be the same throughout the edX website. Place courses and programs on the same dashboard page and allow sorting between the two through a toggle button.
- #21: Add a dashboard button to the navigation menu.

Recommendations Checklist

- #22: Consider changing the Video Transcript button which allows the user to show or hide the video transcript to something more intuitive
- #23: Access course metadata regardless if course is current or future
- #24: Button text should be within context: ‘Start’ for first time entry or ‘Resume’ if the course is in progress. Or should be neutral ‘Enter Course’.
- #25: Make the discussion interaction and display consistent regardless of how you interact.
- #26: Add Date Time stamp the entries. Add Sort by date in addition to by activity. Add a reading pane.