



“First Hour” User Test Findings

May 2017

Client Contact

Alyssa Boehm

aboehm@edx.org

DG MACK Contact

Grace Phang

grace.s.phang@gmail.com

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Test Process
3. Global Findings
4. User Test Findings
5. Summary and Next Steps

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

About your offerings:

- 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



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)

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.

Goals for User Testing

Expectations vs. Reality

- *What are users' expectations for their edX experience?*
- *How does the current edX experience fall short or misalign with these expectations?*

Step-by-Step Process

- *What obstacles do new users experience during each step of the first-time edX use process?*
- *Where do users experience friction when registering for edX, searching for and selecting a course, registering for a course and beginning the course?*

Reasons for Attrition

- *At which points in the onboarding process do users falter or hit resistance?*
- *What causes them to abandon edX during first-time use?*

Course Logistics & Format

- *How do first-time users approach the course process and logistics for edX courses?*
- *Does the process and format meet their expectations? If not, why?*
- *What opportunities are there to help first-time users better understand the edX experience and process?*

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DG MACK's Review Process

STEP 1



Individual Expert
Reviews

STEP 2



ER Findings &
Recommendations

STEP 3



Test Plan
Development

STEP 4



User Testing
Sessions

STEP 5



UT Findings &
Recommendations

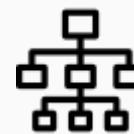
STEP 5: User Test Findings & Recommendations

STEP 5.1



Analyze Results by
capturing in Google
Forms

STEP 5.2



Group by New Findings
Positive and Negative,
Validated ER Findings

STEP 5.3



Prioritize and
Rate Findings

STEP 5.4



Develop
Presentation

User Testing Logistics

Test Sessions:

- 75 min sessions
- Testing took place between March 28 - April 14
- Participants received \$50 Amazon Gift Card as well as edX Certificate for Verified Course
- Requested that the participants use think aloud as they were performing tasks

Individual Session Details:

- 6 in-person (4 at Bentley UXC)
- 6 remotely using GoToMeeting
- 4 at Bentley UXC video recorded
- 8 were audio recorded using GoToMeeting

Participants: Advancing Professionals

12 participants with Pre-Screener:

- Participants were colleagues, family and friends
- All fit “Advancing Professional” persona
- 11 of 12 had not used edX previously



Motivations:

- Interested in advancing their career by learning new skills
- Has a timeline or clear goal in mind

Demographics:

- English-speaking (Native or ESL)
- Age range: 25 - 40

Participants:

Gender	
Male	Female
5	7

OS	
Mac	Win
6	6



ESL	
Yes	No
6	6

Age Group		
25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39
7	3	2

Used edX before	
No	Yes
11	1

Participant Results

Gender	
Male	Female
5	6

OS	
Mac	Win
6	5

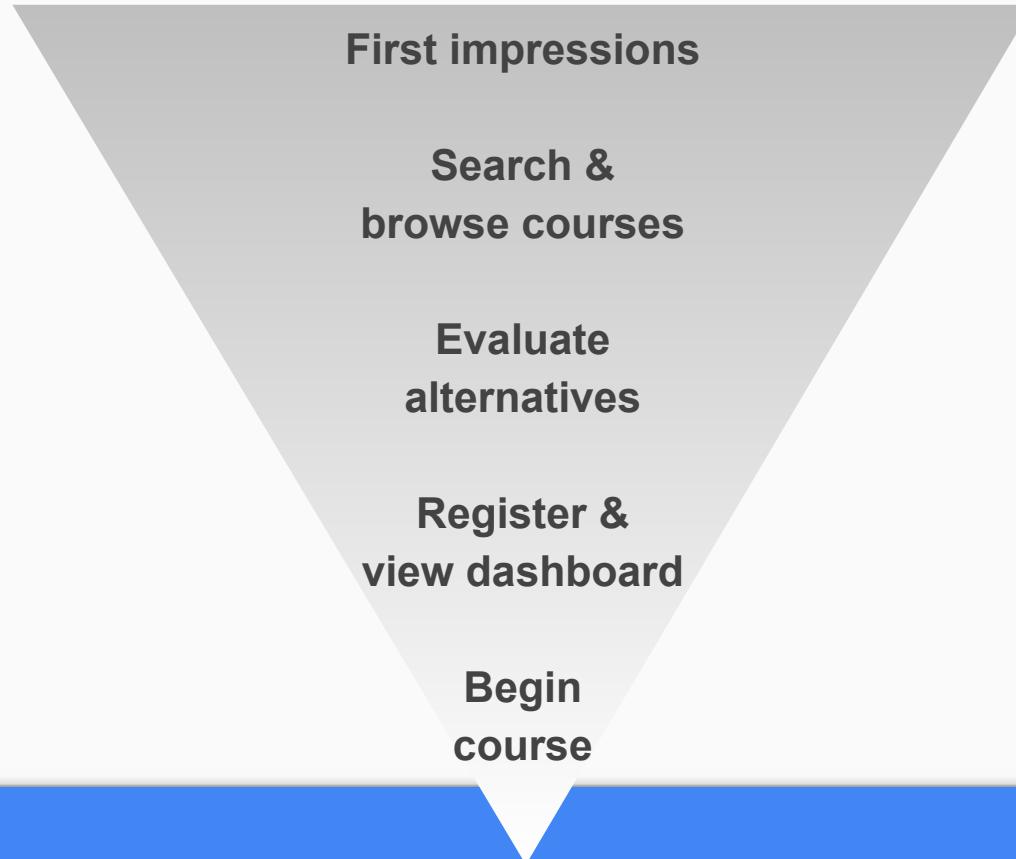


ESL	
Yes	No
6	5

Age Group		
25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39
7	2	2

Used edX before	
No	Yes
11	1

First-time edX User Journey



First-time edX Test Overview

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses,
evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

User Testing Goals for First-time edX User Journey

Task 1: First impressions

*Understand users' first impressions of edx.org and how they interact with content.
Does the homepage help new users understand what edx is all about and how to get started?*

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

*Uncover users' preferred methods for finding a course that meets their needs, including browsing,
searching and search result refinement tendencies.*

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Does the registration process create obstacles for first-time users? Can it be streamlined?

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

First-time edX User Journey

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses,
evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Understanding how the course content and process compares to user expectations for online learning.

Which aspects of the course formatting cause such a high number of users to create accounts and enroll in courses but never start taking the course?

Uncover how users approach courses with a future start date and whether or not the inability to immediately begin a course is cause for user abandonment.

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Does the user understand edX's terminology? Identify disconnects between system and user language.

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Positive System Usability Scale (SUS)

72



1. I think that I would like to use this website frequently.
2. I found the website to be simple.
3. I thought the website was easy to use.
4. I think that I could use the website without the support of a technical person.
5. I found the various functions in this website were well integrated.
6. I felt the website was consistent.
7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this website very quickly.
8. I found the website very intuitive.
9. I felt very confident using the website.
10. I could use the website without having to learn anything new.

Findings & Severity Scale

-  **5 Global Findings:** pervasive issues that significantly impacted first time user journey
-  **9 Good:** positive finding, should be retained or expanded in any redesign
-  **11 High Severity Usability Problem:** important to fix, so should be given high priority
-  **8 Medium Severity Usability Problem:** fixing this should be given medium priority
-  **8 Low Severity Usability Problems:** lowest priority, included in appendix.

Key Finding: No significant differences between demographic groups, including Native English speakers and English language learners.

<Severity w Color> Issue#. <Title of Issue>



Global 1. edX's Core Value Proposition is Unclear



High 1. Course Modifiers Don't Aid Users in Decision-Making



Medium 3. Unclear Relationship Between Courses & Programs

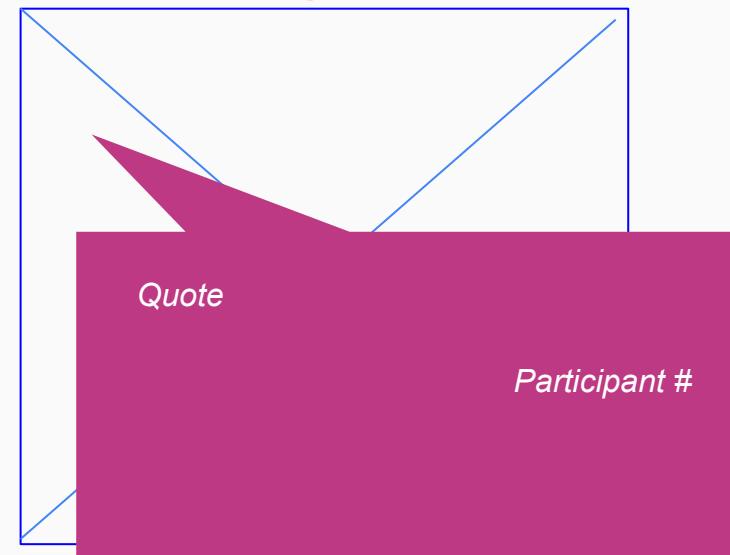
A description of the problem

Why is it a problem:

The reason it is a problem

Recommendations :

The recommendation is generally on the 2nd slide, for ease of readability.



Global Issue 1) edX's Core Value Proposition is Unclear

What the issue is:

Many users were unclear about what edX offers and how the course process works, including the timing of courses, whether or not they're online, and synchronous or asynchronous.

Where it occurs:

Questions arose about edX throughout the entire user journey. The biggest opportunities to clarify the brand value proposition occur in *First Impressions* and *Search & Browse*.

Why it matters:

If users don't understand edX or how the process works, they are likely to make incorrect assumptions. When expectations are not met, users can become frustrated and abandon the site.

"I'm not sure... if these are all online? What's the format of them? I think there's more information that could be added."

Participant #4

"It seems like a lot of programs start in the future and are not courses that I can take now. I didn't notice that before."

Participant #6

Global Issue 2) Course pricing is unclear

What the issue is:

Users did not understand the pricing of courses or add-ons like certificates. Course pricing was not made clear until too late in the shopping experience when users had already made certain assumptions.

Where it occurs:

First Impressions; Search & Browse; Evaluate Courses

Why it matters:

If users expect courses to be free and invest time in finding a course that costs money, they may become frustrated and look elsewhere for free courses, even if there are “free to audit” alternatives on edX.

“I didn't know it had a price? Oh it's for the certificate.”

Participant #11

Global Issue 3) Too Many Choices & Paths Overwhelm New Users

What the issue is:

Users are overwhelmed by too many choices and too many different potential paths to take. Users need more assistance in decision making when selecting and beginning a course for reassurance that they are doing the right thing.

Where it occurs:

Search & Browse Courses; Evaluate Alternatives; Begin A Course

Why it matters:

First-time users need more assistance than experienced users in decision-making. Next steps should be more obvious when selecting or taking a course. The “paradox of choice” explains how too many choices causes anxiety and abandonment for shoppers.

“There are too many decisions to make and much more work to do [than with Coursera].”

Participant #6

Global Issue 4) Personalized Help and Support is Lacking

What the issue is:

Because of the overwhelming amount of information and confusion created by issues 1 and 2, users would like more assistance in decision making. They want responsive chat or chatbot to answer their specific questions.

Where it occurs:

Search & Browse Courses; Evaluate Alternatives; Begin A Course

Why it matters:

First-time users facing confusion want fast, specific answers, rather than self-help options. Because they are already overwhelmed, they want a simple way of getting clarification or assistance.

"There are some websites that offer online support like a chat window. That would be nice if they can help me refine my search and find things faster or just find it for me."

Participant #12

Global Issue 5) Site Uses Vague, Confusing Terminology

What the issue is:

While edX uses familiar language throughout the site, in many instances the meaning is unclear for first time users so users operate based on their interpretation of the meaning.

Where it occurs:

Homepage Impressions; Search & Browse Courses; Evaluate Alternatives; Begin A Course

Why it matters:

Users are unable to successfully differentiate between its different offerings. Users have unmet expectations based on their interpretations of the terminology.

"Courses are single and not associated with one another. With the programs you can get a certificate."

Participant #8

Global: Terminology

Global: Terminology

Why it matters: EdX uses a range of terms that might be unclear or vague to first-time users.

Because edX uses common and accessible language, users guess at their meaning and may make incorrect assumptions.

Operating on false assumptions can negatively impact a first-time users' experience with edX and may deter them from using the site in the future.

Goal: Determine if users noticed instances of edX-centric terminology that was used and understand how they interpreted the language used.

Scenario: After the user had completed all tasks, we returned to certain pages they visited and asked specific questions about terminology.

- *Did you notice the banners on course thumbnails? What is your interpretation of their meaning?*
- *What do you think the difference is between Courses and Programs?*
- *What do you think “starting date” means?*
- *What do you think “archived” means?*



1. High: Course Modifiers Don't Aid Users in Decision-Making

Problem Description

Users noticed the visually appealing banners during the course search process, but were unable to determine the differences in the meaning behind the banners. Many users misinterpreted the meaning of "verified."

Why is it a Problem?

Users are noticing the banners but don't understand the meanings, creating wasted effort and confusion for first-time users. Again, terminology confusion prevents users from finding what they need.

The screenshot shows a grid of course cards from the edX platform. The cards include:

- LouvainX Management**: Described as "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM". Below the banner, the text reads: "Développez vos compétences de manager pour prendre en main..." Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx Business Management**: Described as "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM". Below the banner, the text reads: "Master the essentials of managing a successful business...". Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- People Management**: Status: Upcoming. Starts: October 26, 2017. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx Strategic Management**: Described as "VERIFIED". Below the banner, the text reads: "Strategic Management". Status: Upcoming. Starts: October 5, 2017. MicroMasters logo.
- ACCA Management Accounting**: Described as "PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION". Below the banner, the text reads: "Management Accounting". Status: Starting Soon. Starts: April 3, 2017.
- DelftX Water Management**: Described as "XSERIES PROGRAM". Below the banner, the text reads: "Explore water management concepts and technologies.". Status: Current.

"They make it known that there are different categories, I just don't know what they are."

Participant #4

! 2. High: “Availability” Terminology Causes Course Format Confusion

Problem Description:

Process, timeline of edX courses unclear. Users did not understand the meaning of archived, self-paced or current. There was confusion between upcoming and starting soon.

Why is it a Problem?

Terminology ties to the process and brand experience. Users may expect to begin taking courses immediately and misunderstandings around future start dates or course timelines could be causing attrition with first-time users.

“Can I sign up for current courses? If it's not ok then they shouldn't be at the top of the search results.”

Participant #3

Refine your search

Availability

Current

19

Starting Soon

9

Upcoming

9

Self-Paced

20

Archived

19

! 3. Medium: Unclear Relationship Between Courses & Programs

Problem Description:

Participants were uncertain of the difference between courses and programs. When pressed, most participants could guess the relationship between courses and programs, though some could not.

Why is it a Problem?

By not having a clear communication of the value proposition, there could be a potential waste of the user's time, that could turn into false expectations.

The image shows a grid of six course cards from edX, arranged in two rows of three. The top row includes a card for the 'MICROMASTERS PROGRAM' (LouvainX Management) and another for 'IIMBx Business Management'. The bottom row includes a card for 'IIMBx Strategic Management' (VERIFIED), a card for 'ACCA Management Accounting' (PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION), and a card for 'DelftX Water Management' (XSERIES PROGRAM). Each card displays the course title, provider, status (Current or Upcoming/Starting Soon), and a brief description.

"I don't know the difference between programs and courses. Or if some of the courses are also inside the programs. I don't know. It's tricky."

Participant #11

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Task 1: First impressions

Task 1: First impressions

Why it matters:

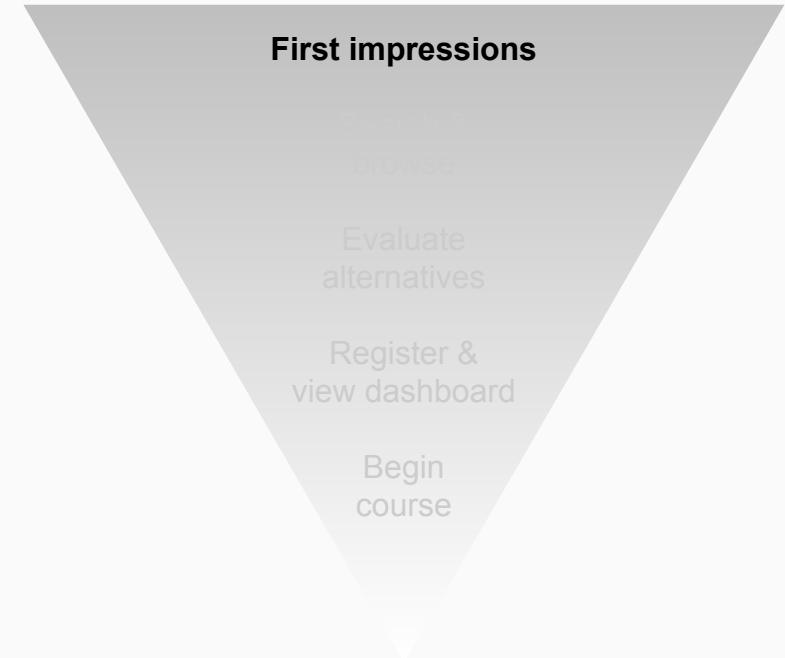
Numerous studies (1) have prove that visual appeal can be assessed within 50 milliseconds. With such short time, users build notions about the site that will influence their experience. Reason why having a “poor” first impression, could have a negative impact.

Goal:

Discover what are the user’s first impressions and expectations, and if they match the message edX is trying to deliver.

Scenario:

You want to take an online course, and a friend told you about the edX website. You decide to take a look at it. Without clicking anything yet, feel free to explore this screen as you normally would.



1. Lindgaard, G., Fernandes, G., Dudek, C., & Brown, J. (2006). Attention web designers: You have 50 milliseconds to make a good first impression!. *Behaviour & information technology*, 25(2), 115-126.

✓ Browsing allows discoverability

Some participants hovered over the top navigation menu to explore the contents of the site, and this resulted in a better understanding of edX's offerings.

Why it's good:

Supporting browsing enables potential users to find what they are looking for.

Recommendation:

Not all participants browsed, but scrolled. By having the contents straight forward we can help them engage with the content. (See example from Khan Academy).

The image shows two screenshots of educational websites. The top screenshot is the edX homepage, featuring a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. Below the navigation is a grid of course categories like Architecture, Economics & Finance, History, and Physics. The bottom screenshot is the Khan Academy homepage, which has a teal background with mountains and the tagline 'You can learn anything. For free. For everyone. Forever.' It includes links for 'Learners, start here', 'Teachers, start here', and 'Parents, start here'. A green callout box highlights the 'Math by subject' section, which lists categories such as Early math, Arithmetic, Pre-algebra, Algebra I, Geometry, Trigonometry, Precalculus, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, and AP Calculus BC. A green checkmark icon is positioned at the bottom left of this highlighted area.

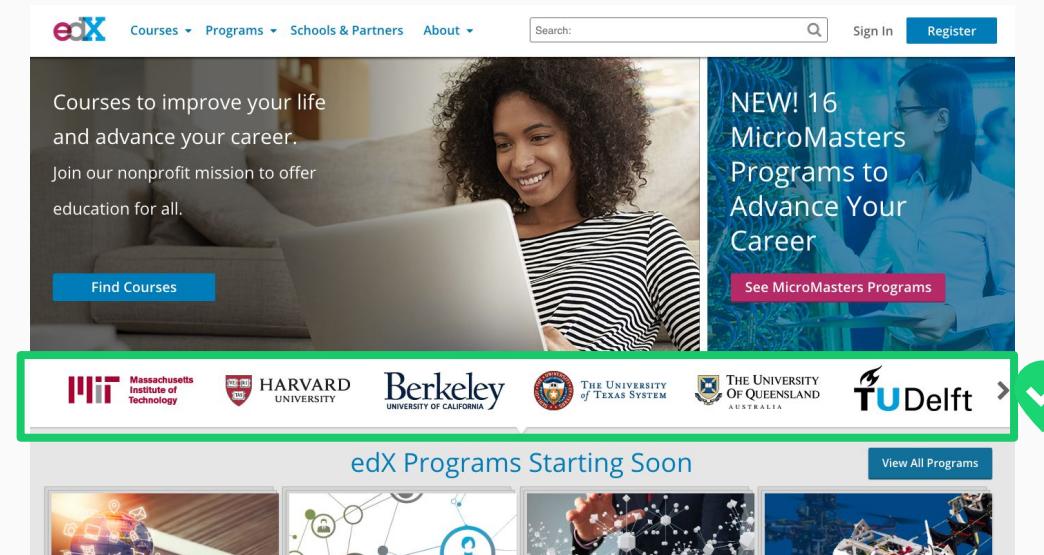


University logos build trust and credibility

Participants mentioned that the logos from Ivy league and recognized universities, provided them with a sense of trust and professionalism.

Why it's good:

Trust and credibility are two important factors that cause a positive experience as well as a good first impression. Without trust, visitors will be less likely to convert and turn into users.



The screenshot shows the edX website 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. A large banner features a woman smiling while using a laptop, with text about improving life and advancing careers through education for all. Another banner on the right promotes 'NEW! 16 MicroMasters Programs to Advance Your Career' with a 'See MicroMasters Programs' button. Below the banners, logos for MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, The University of Texas System, The University of Queensland Australia, and TU Delft are displayed. A green box highlights the MIT logo. A section titled 'edX Programs Starting Soon' shows four thumbnail images representing different courses or programs.

! 4. Medium: School Logos Seemed Static/unclickable

No obvious indication that the school logos are clickable.

Why is it a Problem?

Some users who trust the prestigious institutions displayed did not believe that the logos were clickable, yet wanted to learn more about the offerings of each institution.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. Below the navigation is a main banner featuring a person working on a laptop. Text on the banner reads: 'Courses to improve your life and advance your career. Join our nonprofit mission to offer education for all.' A blue 'Find Courses' button is at the bottom left of the banner. Below the banner, there are logos for several partner universities: MIT, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, The University of Texas System, The University of Queensland Australia, and TU Delft. The TU Delft logo is highlighted with a red circle containing a white exclamation mark. To the right of the logos, there's a 'Career' section with a 'See MicroMasters Programs' button. At the bottom, there's a section for 'edX Programs Starting Soon' with four thumbnail images and a 'View All Programs' button.

"Partnering schools are quite impressive. It would be great to be able to click on the logo and find courses from Harvard."

Participant #3

! 4. Medium: School Logos Seemed Static/unclickable

Recommendation #4

Change the background color of the university logo when the user hovers over it, or add a section title such as “Explore courses by Schools & Partners”.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the edX logo and links for Courses, Programs, Schools & Partners, and About. Below the navigation is a main banner featuring a person working on a laptop. Text on the banner reads: "Courses to improve your life and advance your career. Join our nonprofit mission to offer education for all." A blue "Find Courses" button is visible. Below the banner, several university logos are displayed: MIT, Harvard University, Berkeley, The University of Texas System, The University of Queensland Australia, and TU Delft. A red speech bubble with a white exclamation mark is positioned next to the TU Delft logo. To the right of the logos, a pink box contains the quote: "Partnering schools are quite impressive. It would be great to be able to click on the logo and find courses from Harvard." Below the logos, a section titled "edX Programs Starting Soon" shows four thumbnail images related to technology and education.

"Partnering schools are quite impressive. It would be great to be able to click on the logo and find courses from Harvard."

Participant #3

TASK 1: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"There's a lot on the page. I wouldn't know where to look at first. I looked past a lot of this."

Participant #4

"I seriously doubt that the Dean of my university will validate these courses."

Participant #12

"I don't know if the courses are online or in person? Are they free?"

Participant #11

! 5. High: Unclear Value Proposition

Why is it a Problem?

By not having a clear communication of the value proposition, there could be a potential waste of the user's time, that could turn into false expectations.

Creating false expectations could translate into frustration and lack of interest or engagement with the system.

The image shows the edX homepage. A red box highlights the main content area where a participant's comment is displayed. The comment reads: "I don't know if the courses are online or in person? Are they free?" Below this, a participant is identified as "#11". To the right of the comment, there is a section for "MicroMasters Programs to Advance Your Career". At the bottom, there is a banner for "edX Programs Starting Soon" featuring various university logos (MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, etc.) and a "View All Programs" button.

"I don't know if the courses are online or in person? Are they free?"

Participant #11

MICROMASTERS
Programs to
Advance Your
Career

See MicroMasters Programs

edX Programs Starting Soon

View All Programs

! 5. High: Unclear Value Proposition

Recommendation #5

Clearly communicate what edX is in the banner of the homepage. (See example from Coursera).

The screenshot shows the Coursera homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Coursera logo, 'Institutions', 'Catalog', a search bar, and a magnifying glass icon. Below the navigation bar is a large teal banner with a green checkmark icon on the left. The text in the banner reads 'Take the world's best courses, online.' followed by a blue 'Join for free' button. This entire section is highlighted with a green rectangular box. Below the banner, there are logos for various partner universities: Penn, Johns Hopkins, University of Michigan, Stanford, UC San Diego, and Duke. To the right of the banner, there is a photograph of a woman looking at a laptop. Further down the page, there is a section titled 'Top Specializations' featuring five thumbnail images: a brain diagram, a person speaking, a laptop keyboard, a colorful bar chart, and a red flower.

"I don't know if the courses are online or in person? Are they free?"

Participant #11

! 6. Medium: Unclear Terminology for Courses and Programs

Why is it a Problem?

Most participants were guessing about the differences between Courses and Programs. Some participants thought that *Programs* were the only way to get a certificate. This confusion could cause the loss of interest in upcoming *Courses* that as well provide the option for certification.



"I wouldn't know if one has an advantage, or if one has more for me. I'm also unfamiliar with XSeries program. So I wouldn't know how to compare them."

- Participant #3



The screenshot shows the edX homepage with several university logos at the bottom: MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, University of Texas System, University of Queensland, and TU Delft. Below the logos, there's a section titled "edX Programs Starting Soon" with four small thumbnail images. A red exclamation mark is placed above the "edX" logo in the top left corner of the page.

! 6. Medium: Unclear Terminology for Courses and Programs

Recommendation #6a

Rethink the labeling for Courses and Programs, and whether another wording could be used to make clear the differences.

Recommendation #6b

Make clear the message that either Courses or Programs can provide a certification.

"I wouldn't know if one has an advantage, or if one has more for me. I'm also unfamiliar with XSeries program. So I wouldn't know how to compare them."

- Participant #3

Career

See MicroMasters Programs !

MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology HARVARD UNIVERSITY BERKELEY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA TU Delft >

edX Programs Starting Soon

View All Programs

Recommendations Checklist

- #4: Have the background of the university logo change color when the user hovers his mouse over it, or add a section title such as “Explore courses by Schools & Partners”.
- #5: Clearly communicate what edX is in the banner of the homepage. (See example from Coursera).
- #6a: Rethink the labeling for Courses and Programs, and whether another wording could be used to make clear the differences.
- #6b: Make clear the message that either Courses or Programs can provide a certification.

Task 2: Search, Browse & Evaluate Courses

Task 2: Search, Browse, & Evaluate Courses

Why it matters:

It must be easy for users to find THE course that best fits their needs. That means finding relevant courses, and being able to easily compare them to select the best option.

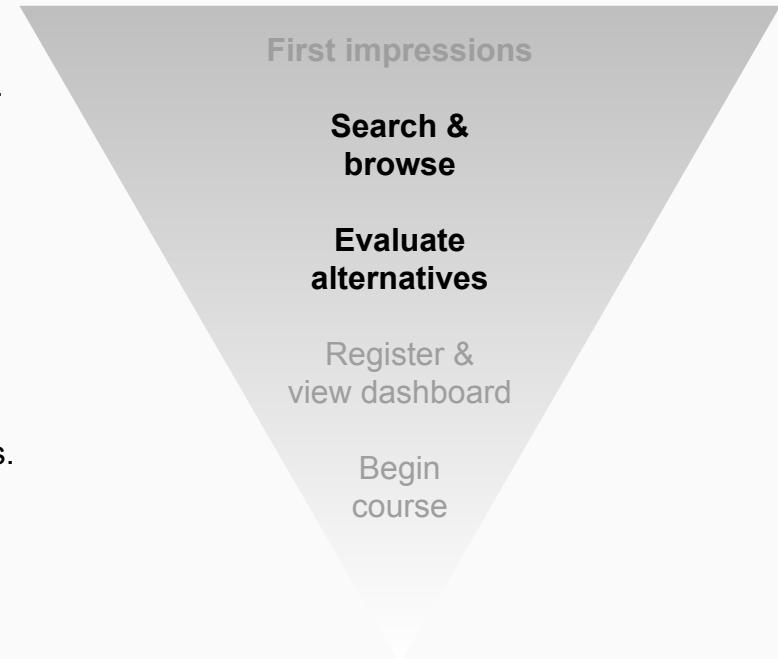
If a user selects a course that doesn't adequately fit their needs, the user can become frustrated, abandon the course, and have a lesser chance of returning to edX in the future.

Goal:

Identify if users could find a course that adequately meets their needs.

Scenario:

Find a credible introductory accounting course that they could complete within the next 2 months.





Can search OR browse

User's can either search for a course using the search box, or browse courses using the top navigation dropdowns or any of the CTO links.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the edX logo, a search bar containing the placeholder "Search:", and links for "Courses", "Programs", "Schools & Partners", and "About". A green checkmark icon is positioned above the search bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a banner with the text "Best Courses. Top Institutions. Learn anytime, anywhere." and a "Find Courses" button highlighted with a green box. To the right, there is another banner for "15 New Professional Certificate Programs. Stand Out in Your Field." with an "Enroll Now" button highlighted with a green box. Logos for various partner institutions like MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, and TU Delft are displayed.

Why it's good:

Caters to different needs. Search box is for users who know what they're looking for, and browse functions are for users who want to explore their options.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage featuring sections for "edX Programs Starting Soon" and "Popular Courses Starting Soon". The "edX Programs Starting Soon" section displays five program cards with logos and names: PennX Professional Certificate Program, GTx Analytics: Essential Tools and Methods, RITx Cybersecurity, and UCSDx Virtual Reality (VR) App Development. A "View All Programs" button is highlighted with a green box. The "Popular Courses Starting Soon" section shows a yellow banner with the text "TUCKx" and a "View All Courses" button highlighted with a green box.



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 content 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. The "Availability" section is expanded, showing filters for Current, Starting Soon, Upcoming, Self-Paced, and Archived courses. The "Subjects" section lists various academic fields with counts. The "Courses & Programs" section is partially visible at the bottom.

Viewing 371 results matching "management" Search: 🔍

"management" ✖

Current Starting Soon Upcoming Self-Paced Archived

Architecture Art & Culture Biology & Life Sciences Business & Management Chemistry Communication Computer Science Data Analysis & Statistics Design Economics & Finance MORE...

Courses & Programs

MicroMasters MicroMasters MicroMasters MicroMasters MicroMasters MicroMasters

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	



Visual display of important course information

Quick glance box provides an organized visual overview of the course's details.

The institution's logo is also prominently displayed.

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.

The school's prestige helped users make informed decisions, and validate the credibility of the course.

The screenshot shows a course page for "Introduction to Computing using Python" offered by Georgia Tech. At the top, there's a banner with the text "ER Validated". The course title is "Introduction to Computing using Python" with a subtitle "Learn the basics of computing and python programming, including fundamentals of procedural programming, control structures, and data structures". Below the title is a snippet of Python code. To the right, there's a green button labeled "Enroll Now". A green checkmark icon is overlaid on the "Georgia Tech" logo. On the right side, there's a sidebar with course details: "In Session", "Started on Self-Paced", and a checked checkbox for receiving emails. At the bottom, there's a summary table with details like length (16 weeks), effort (10 hours per week), price (FREE), and a link to add a verified certificate. The "About this course" section includes a star rating of 5/5 and a "See more" link. The "What you'll learn" section lists topics such as general programming principles, Python variables/operators/loops, error handling, and applications to computer graphics.

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

Course reviews

Course pages include user reviews of the course.

Why it's good:

Reviews were a large factor in the decision-making process of many users when finding a course that met their needs.



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 moocs 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

"[It's like] finding a needle in a haystack..."

Participant #2

"There wasn't any organization to it. It seemed like they took all of the courses and just threw them on a page, and it's up to the user to figure out."

Participant #4

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

Usability Problem #7:

Filters and search refinement options are not available on all course listing pages, like when users browse rather than search. Users should have the option to further refine search results from any screen that displays a list of course options.

Why is it a Problem?

Categories like Engineering have more than 200 courses. Scrolling through the entire page to find a specific course is time-consuming and arduous for users. As edX aggregates more and more content, this will be an increasingly important user problem.

The screenshot shows the edX homepage with a banner for 'Engineering Courses'. Below the banner, there's a list of six courses. The first course, 'Cellular Solids Part 2: Applications in Medicine' (MITx), has a red box drawn around it. A red exclamation mark is placed over the course title. The other five courses listed are:

- Signals and Systems, Part 2 (IITBombayX)
- Nuclear Reactor Physics Basics (MEPhix)
- Biobased Processes and Implementation (WageningenX)
- Stochastic Processes: Data Analysis and Computer Simulation (KyotoX)
- Sustainability Science – A Key Concept for Future Design (UTokyoX)

Each course card includes a 'VERIFIED' badge with a green checkmark.

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

Recommendation #7

Add filter options to all pages which display course options, to help users refine display results and more quickly filter through long lists of courses. Sorting features are also recommended.

The screenshot shows the edX website's "Engineering Courses" section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Courses", "Programs", "Schools & Partners", and "About". A search bar and "Sign In" / "Register" buttons are also present. Below the navigation, a banner reads "Engineering Courses" with the subtext "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 with a "VERIFIED" badge. A red circle with an exclamation mark is overlaid on the first course card in the top row. The courses listed are:

- 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 (Current, Self-Paced)
- WageningenX: Biobased Processes and Implementation (VERIFIED)
- KyotoUx: Stochastic Processes: Data Analysis and Computer Simulation (VERIFIED)
- UTokyoX: Sustainability Science – A Key Concept for Future Design (VERIFIED)

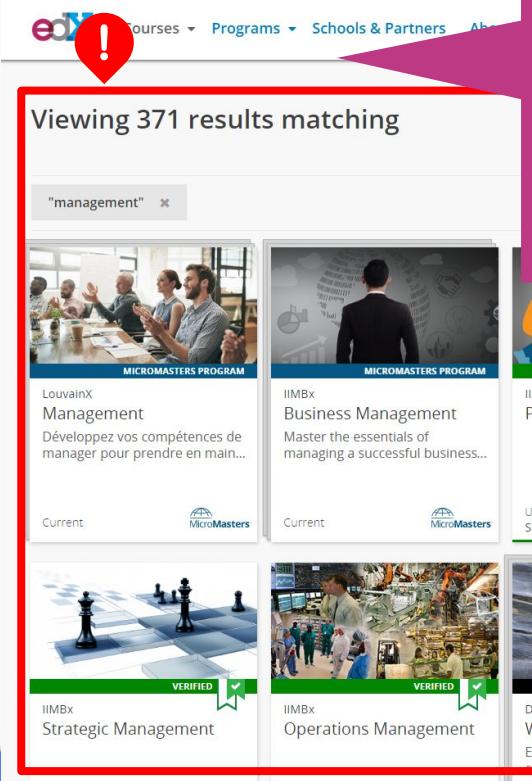
! 8. High: No clear prioritization of search results or sorting option

Usability Problem #8:

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.



...Viewing the 64 results... I'm unsure how they filtered the results. Why are these three up here? As opposed to having introductory courses up top."

-Participant #1

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	
All Courses	

! 8. High: No clear prioritization of search results or sorting option

Recommendation #8a

Tell the user what order the search results are presented in, e.g. “sorted by starting soon” or “sorted by highest rated” or “sorted by most relevant”

Recommendation #8b

Give the user options for changing the displayed results' sort order based on the examples above.

Viewing 371 results matching "management" x

LouvainX Management
Développez vos compétences de manager pour prendre en main...
Current MicroMasters

IMBx Business Management
Master the essentials of managing a successful business...
Current MicroMasters

IMBx People Management
Upcoming Starts: October 26, 2017
Verified MicroMasters

IIIMbx Strategic Management
Verified MicroMasters

IIIMbx Operations Management
Verified MicroMasters

DelftX Water Management
Explore water management
XSERIES PROGRAM

... Viewing the 64 results... I'm unsure how they filtered the results. Why are these three up here? As opposed to having introductory courses up top.

-Participant #1

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



9. Medium: Unclear terminology hinders users from finding best course

Usability Problem #9:

edX-centric terminology is used throughout the course search and browse process. Users move forward based on guesses or assumptions, which are often incorrect.

Why is it a Problem?

Users are unlikely to find the best course fit for their needs if they don't understand key course differences, including "verified," programs, availability and more.

The screenshot shows a grid of course cards on the left and a sidebar search interface on the right. The sidebar has an orange border and contains the following sections:

- 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**

Three course cards are highlighted with orange circles and exclamation marks:

- LouvainX Management**: Described as a "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM". It includes a "MicroMasters" logo and a "VERIFIED" badge.
- IIMBx Business Management**: Described as a "MICROMASTERS PROGRAM". It includes a "MicroMasters" logo and a "VERIFIED" badge.
- IIMBx People Management**: Described as an "Upcoming Starts: October 26, 2017" course. It includes a "MicroMasters" logo and a "VERIFIED" badge.

Other visible course cards include:

- Strategic Management**: IIMBx, VERIFIED
- Operations Management**: IIMBx, VERIFIED
- Water Management**: XSERIES PROGRAM, DESCRIBED AS A "BETTER" COURSE



9. Medium: Unclear terminology hinders users from finding best course

Recommendation #9a

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

Recommendation #9b

Longer term: Conduct additional user research centered on terminology and redesign edX language to better match user expectations 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, the provider, and a 'MicroMasters' or 'XSeries PROGRAM' badge. Three of the cards have orange circles with exclamation marks overlaid on them, highlighting specific terms: 'Management' (in the first card), 'Business Management' (in the second card), and 'Strategic Management' (in the fourth card). To the right of the cards is a sidebar titled 'Refine your search' which contains 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). At the bottom of the sidebar, there are buttons for 'MORE...' and 'Courses & Programs'.



10. Medium: Course card information is too limited

Usability Problem #10:

Visual cards are a good way to quickly review course information and compare similar courses, but the information is missing key information that could aid users in making a course selection.

Why is it a Problem?

Prospective students opened multiple courses in new tabs 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 are filters for "Refine your search" under "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): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx Business Management** (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx People Management** (VERIFIED): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Upcoming, Starts: October 26, 2017. MicroMasters logo.

! 10. Medium: Course card information is too limited

Recommendation #10a

Make course information on cards more consistent, and include more data such as average user ratings, skill level, price, and start and end dates.

Recommendation #10b

“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 the term "management". The search bar at the top contains "management" with a clear button. On the right, there is a "CLEAR ALL" link and a "Refine your search" section. 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). Below the search bar, three course cards are displayed:

- LouvainX Management** (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx Business Management** (MICROMASTERS PROGRAM): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Current. MicroMasters logo.
- IIMBx People Management** (VERIFIED): Descriptions in French and English. Status: Upcoming, Starts: October 26, 2017. MicroMasters logo.

A yellow circle with an exclamation mark is overlaid on the first course card, highlighting the need for improvement in course card information consistency.

! 11. High: Not all search/ browse results are relevant

Usability Problem #11:

Participants were asked to find an introductory accounting course. All but two participants exclaimed that the results were not relevant to their search/browsing query.

Why is it a Problem?

Users are presented with an unnecessarily large set of search results. This can overwhelm the user by requiring them to sift through more courses than they need to, and can lead to abandonment.

The screenshot shows a grid of course cards from the edX platform. The cards are as follows:

- IDBx**: Gestión de gobiernos subnacionales para... (Upcoming, Starts: August 3, 2017)
- ColgateX**: Greeks at War: Homer at Troy (Archived, Starts: April 27, 2015)
- UChicagoX**: Critical Issues in Urban Education (Archived)
- IRTx**: Understanding Islamic Insurance and... (Archived, Starts: February 27, 2017)
- ColumbiaX**: The Civil War and Reconstruction - (Archived, Starts: January 31, 2016)
- Unlabeled Card**: (Archived, Starts: September 30, 2015)

A red box highlights the last three cards. A pink arrow points from the participant quote below to the third card.

"After I clicked Business Management I wasn't sure where to look after that because the first couple [course] options weren't business related, so I wasn't sure if it took me to the right page"

-Participant #4

! 11. High: Not all search/ browse results are relevant

Recommendation #11

Improve the search results algorithm to include only relevant courses and programs.

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

- IDBx**: Gestión de gobiernos subnacionales para... (Upcoming, Starts: August 3, 2017)
- ColgateX**: Greeks at War: Homer at Troy (Archived, Starts: April 27, 2015)
- UChicagoX**: Critical Issues in Urban Education (Archived)
- IRTx**: Understanding Islamic Insurance and... (Archived, Starts: February 27, 2017)
- ColumbiaX**: The Civil War and Reconstruction - (Archived, Starts: January 31, 2016)
- edX**: (Archived, Starts: September 30, 2015)

A red box highlights the first three cards (IDBx, ColgateX, UChicagoX). A pink box highlights the last three cards (IRTx, ColumbiaX, edX).

"After I clicked Business Management I wasn't sure where to look after that because the first couple [course] options weren't business related, so I wasn't sure if it took me to the right page"

-Participant #4

! 12. High: Course pricing not introduced until late in the shopping process !

Usability Problem #12:

Some users expressed that they were unsure if courses were free to enroll in. Although course pricing is listed on each course page, users were unsure of pricing until after clicking the “Enroll Now” button.

Why is it a Problem?

This illustrates a larger issue where first time users don't understand edX's service and offerings. It's not clearly stated up front how pricing works, and users are left to assume, until very late in the process when it is explained.

The screenshot shows a course page for "Introduction to Investments" on edX. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "Home > All Subjects > Business & Management > Introduction to Investments". Below the navigation is a course thumbnail featuring a tree with coins and a play button, with text like "Primary Markets", "Secondary Markets", "Emerging Markets", and "Investing Markets". To the right of the thumbnail is the course title "Introduction to Investments" and a brief description: "Learn about equity markets and security valuation." Below the title is the logo of the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB). On the far right, a red box highlights the "Enroll Now" button and a checkbox for receiving emails from IIMB. The main content area includes sections for "About this course" (with 2 reviews and a 4/5 rating), "What you'll learn" (a bulleted list of learning objectives), and a sidebar with course metadata: Length (5 weeks), Effort (5 hours per week), Price (FREE, Add a Verified Certificate for \$25), Institution (IIMBx), Subject (Business & Management), Level (Intermediate), Languages (English), and Video Transcripts (English).

Starts on May 4, 2017

Enroll Now

I would like to receive email from Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Investments.

About this course

2 Reviews 4/5 ★★★★☆

When you complete this course, you will become familiar with the general structure of primary and secondary equity markets from a domestic and international perspective. Beginning with introductory finance notions of risk and return, we examine qualitative concepts such as market efficiency and valuation.

See more

What you'll learn

- To advance the understanding of fundamental concepts of financial markets and market participants.
- To explain the structure of global markets in which equities trade.
- To evaluate the economic and industry environment in which companies operate.
- To develop and employ tools of financial analysis for examining company fundamentals.
- To understand techniques for valuing equity securities.

Length: 5 weeks

Effort: 5 hours per week

Price: FREE
Add a Verified Certificate for \$25

Institution: IIMBx

Subject: Business & Management

Level: Intermediate

Languages: English

Video Transcripts: English



12. High: Course pricing not introduced until late in the shopping process



Recommendation #12a

Ensure that users understand edX's services and value proposition earlier in the process.

Recommendation #12b

Add a search filter for "free to audit" to help users understand and find free courses. Include "free to audit" text on course cards, and on course page near "Enroll Now" button.

Home > All Subjects > Business & Management > Introduction to Investments



Introduction to Investments

Learn about equity markets and security valuation.



IIMB
संशोधन वाचकपत्रिका

About this course

2 Reviews 4/5 ★★★★☆

When you complete this course, you will become familiar with the general structure of primary and secondary equity markets from a domestic and international perspective. Beginning with introductory finance notions of risk and return, we examine qualitative concepts such as market efficiency and valuation.

[See more](#)

What you'll learn

- To advance the understanding of fundamental concepts of financial markets and market participants.
- To explain the structure of global markets in which equities trade.
- To evaluate the economic and industry environment in which companies operate.
- To develop and employ tools of financial analysis for examining company fundamentals.
- To understand techniques for valuing equity securities.

Starts on May 4, 2017

Enroll Now

I would like to receive email from Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Investments.

Length:	5 weeks
Effort:	5 hours per week
Price:	FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$25
Institution:	IIMBx
Subject:	Business & Management
Level:	Intermediate
Languages:	English
Video Transcripts:	English

Recommendations Checklist

- #7: Add filter options to all pages which display course options, to help users refine display results and more quickly filter through long lists of courses. Sorting features are also recommended.
- #8a: Tell the user what order the search results are presented in, e.g. “sorted by starting soon” or “sorted by highest rated” or “sorted by most relevant”
- #8b: Give the user options for changing the displayed results’ sort order based on the examples above.
- #9a: Short term: Quick tips mouse-over explanation between different refinement categories.
- #9b: Longer term: Conduct additional user research centered on terminology and redesign edX language to better match user expectations and needs.
- #10a: Make course information on cards more consistent, and include more data such as average user ratings, skill level, price, and start and end dates.
- #10b: “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.

Recommendations Checklist (continued)

- #11: Improve the search results algorithm to include only relevant courses and programs.
- #12a: Ensure that users understand edX's services and value proposition earlier in the process.
- #12b: Add a search filter for “free to audit” to help users understand and find free courses. Include “free to audit” text on course cards, and on course page near “Enroll Now” button.

After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)*

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Strongly Agree

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the ease of completing this task. **Avg 3.64**

2. Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time it took to complete this task. **Avg. 3.82**

3. Overall, I am satisfied with the support information when completing this task. **Avg 3.33**
(on-line help, messages, documentation)

*Only 10 participants took this ASQ

Task 3: Register, Enroll & View Dashboard

Task 3: Register edX Account & Enroll in a Course

Why it matters:

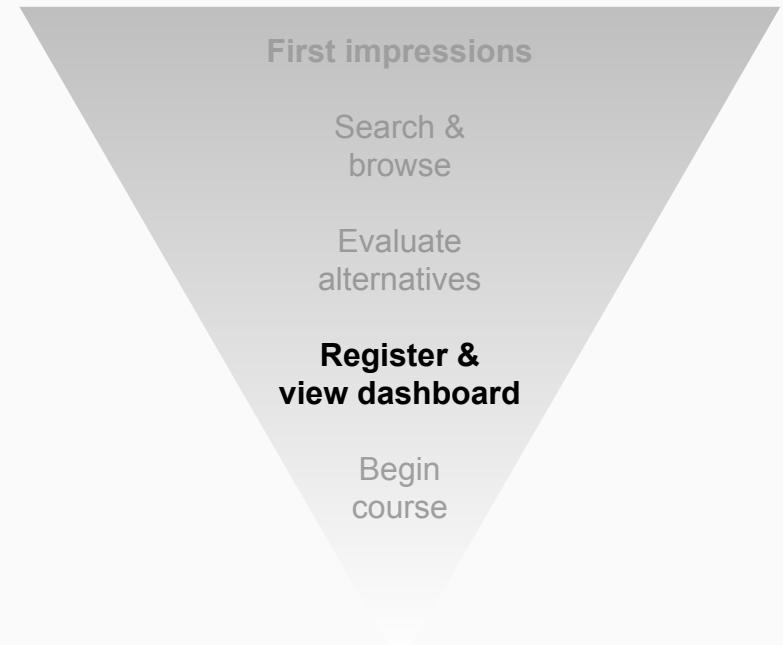
If it takes users too long to sign up for a class or to register an account, they would be less likely to stay with edX.

Goal:

We wanted to gather how users would register their information with edX and enroll in the class.

Scenario:

You ran the course you picked by your supervisor, and he told you he would like you to take this course instead, ICBS001 Accounting Essentials for MBA Success. Sign up for this class and as you sign up, don't use your own information. Instead, just tell me what you would do and I'll provide you with dummy account information to use today.



"It was fast. I mean, I just put in the general information. I didn't feel that they were asking too much."

Participant #12

"A little more challenging than I would have expected for signing up for a course"

Participant #4

"It's a very standard registration format...I think [the process provides] the bare minimum of what [edX] need to sign someone up."

Participant #6



Many users feel the registration process is fast & easy

Several users say the registration process is fast, even after they fill the entire form out (sans the “Why are you interested in edX” text box).

Why it's good:

Users who want to start taking classes right away don't get bogged down by the registration process.

However

This perception only applies if the user encounters limited errors.

The screenshot shows the edX website with a search bar and navigation menu. A user profile 'andrew_mich' is logged in. The main content area displays a course titled 'Artificial Intelligence (AI)'. Below the course title, there is a large image of a human head with a grid overlay, followed by a brief description of the course content. To the right, a green button says 'Enroll Now'. A pink arrow points from the text above to this button. Below the course description, there is a section titled 'About this course' with a brief summary and a 'View more' link. Further down, there is a section titled 'What you'll learn' with a bulleted list of topics. On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar for creating an account using social media (Facebook, Google, Microsoft) or creating a new one. It also includes a 'Create a Verified Certificate' section and a 'Benefits of a Verified Certificate' section. At the bottom, there are sections for auditing the course (Audit This Course (No Certificate)) and enrolling in another course ('Computer Forensics'). The footer contains links for 'About', 'edX for Business', 'Blog', 'News', 'Help Center', 'Contact', 'Careers', 'Donate', 'Terms of Service & Honor Code', 'Privacy Policy', 'Accessibility Policy', 'Sitemap', and 'Media Kit'. A copyright notice at the bottom states: '© 2012-2013 edX Inc. All rights reserved except where noted. EdX, Open edX and the edX and Open edX logos are trademarks of edX Inc.'

"It only takes a minute or two to sign up."

Participant #8



Many users liked the Social Media Options

Four users noted that they would use the Social Media Shortcut buttons (especially Facebook) during testing.

Why it's good:

It would allow for the registration process to be even faster for new users.

Recommendation

One user was hesitant to display work-related content on their personal social media feed. Consider adding LinkedIn as a work-related account shortcut method. This will support current edX badging and certifications already present on LinkedIn.

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)





13. High: Public Username Field Confusing

Usability Problem #13:

Users had trouble filling out the Public Username field

- Unsure what characters were valid
- Common for users to pick existing usernames

Why is it a Problem?

Continuous errors may cause stress in users while selecting a username.

We couldn't create your account.

- It looks like JDoe belongs to an existing account. Try again with a different username.

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

(After 3 failed attempts)

"Are you for real?!? Oh My God!"

Participant #1

! 13. High: Public Username Field Confusing

Recommendation #13a

If username taken, suggest an available username for the user (“JohnDoe is taken, but JohnDoe1985 is available”).

Recommendation #13b

Provide users with the characters users are able to use in their public username before they type anything in the text box.

Choose your username

That username is taken. Try another.
Available: crazybanana701

“I would prefer...a system that would suggest a username, which I know some systems do”

Participant #3

You need
everything Google.

You can use letters, numbers, and periods.

Name

Bob	Mackie
-----	--------

Choose your username

Create a password



14. Medium: When error appears, unclear what field needs to change

Usability Problem #14:

Users were unsure what fields to alter if an issue came up.

Why is it a Problem?

Users would try to change valid fields when trying to fix an invalid field.

We couldn't create your account.

- It looks like JDoe belongs to an existing account. Try again with a different username.

Create an account using

Facebook Google Microsoft

or create a new one here

Email *
SpamAccount@gmail.com

Full name *
Michael Andriyauskas

Your legal name, used for any certificates you earn.

Public username *
JDoe

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

Password *

Country *
United States of America

Gender Year of birth

Male 1988

Highest level of education completed
Bachelor's degree

Tell us why you're interested in edX



14. Medium: When error appears, unclear what field needs to change

Recommendation #14a

Highlight the box where the error appears.

Recommendation #14b

Provide the error message adjacent to where the error exist.

Recommendation #14c

Have the error appear as soon as the user moves to the next part of the form.

We couldn't create your account.

- It looks like J|Doe belongs to an existing account. Try again with a different username.

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



15. Medium: Language makes some users unsure about enrollment status

Usability Problem #15:

The Verify or Audit course options page says they're enrolled, but the Dashboard page immediately after course registration says they're almost done AND they're enrolled in the class.

Why is it a Problem?

Several users were confused about when they were actually able to take the course.

Step 1:

Congratulations! You are now enrolled in Computer Forensics

Pursue a Verified Certificate

- Official: Receive an instructor-signed certificate with the institution's logo
- Easily shareable: Add the certificate to your CV or resume, or post it directly on LinkedIn
- Motivating: Give yourself an additional incentive to complete the course
- Support our Mission: edX, a non-profit, relies on verified certificates to help fund free ed

Audit This Course (No Certificate)

Audit this course for free and have complete access to all the course material, activities, tests, and not offer a certificate for learners who earn a passing grade.

Step 2:

You're almost there!

There's just one more step: Before you enroll in a course, you need to activate your account. We've sent an email message activating your account. If you don't receive this message, check your spam folder.

Thank you for enrolling in Computer Forensics. We hope you enjoy the course.

edX is a nonprofit bringing high-quality education to everyone, everywhere. Your help allows us to continuously improve the learning experience for millions and make a better future one learner at a time.

My Courses

Computer Forensics

RITx - CYBER502x
Starts - May 23, 2017

Related Programs: Cybersecurity MicroMasters

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.

Upgrade to V

Global Issue 1) edX's Core Value Proposition is Unclear



15. Medium: Language makes some users unsure about enrollment status

Recommendation #15a

Change “Congratulations! You are now enrolled in [course name]” to “One last thing before you’re enrolled in [COURSE NAME].”

Recommendation #15b

Change the “You’re Almost There!” title to “Please Verify your Account”

Recommendation #15c

Change the “Before you enroll in a course,” message to “Before you begin your course”

Step 1:



Congratulations! You are now enrolled in Computer Forensics

Pursue a Verified Certificate

Highlight your new knowledge and skills with a verified certificate. Use this valuable credential to or highlight your certificate in school applications.

Benefits of a Verified Certificate

- **Official:** Receive an instructor-signed certificate with the institution's logo
- **Easily shareable:** Add the certificate to your CV or resume, or post it directly on LinkedIn
- **Motivating:** Give yourself an additional incentive to complete the course
- **Support our Mission:** edX, a non-profit, relies on verified certificates to help fund free ed

or

Audit This Course (No Certificate)

Audit this course for free and have complete access to all the course material, activities, tests, and not offer a certificate for learners who earn a passing grade.

Step 2:



Courses

Programs

You're almost there!

There's just one more step: Before you enroll in a course, you need to activate your account. We've sent an email message activating your account. If you don't receive this message, check your spam folder.

Thank you for enrolling in Computer Forensics. We hope you enjoy the course.

edX is a nonprofit bringing high-quality education to everyone, everywhere. Your help allows us to continuously improve the learning experience for millions and make a better future one learner at a time.

My Courses



Computer Forensics

RITx - CYBER502x
Starts - May 23, 2017

Related Programs: Cybersecurity MicroMasters

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.

Recommendations Checklist

- #13a: If username taken, suggest an available username for the user (“JohnDoe is taken, but JohnDoe1985 is available”).
- #13b: Provide users with the characters users are able to use in their public username before they type anything in the text box.
- #14a: Highlight the box where the error appears.
- #14b Provide the error message adjacent to where the error exist.
- #14c Have the error appear as soon as the user moves to the next part of the form.
- #15a Change “Congratulations! You are now enrolled in [course name]” to “One last thing before you’re enrolled in [COURSE NAME].”
- #15b: Change the “You’re Almost There!” title to “Please Verify your Account”.
- #15c: Change the “Before you enroll in a course,” message to “Before you begin your course”.

After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) **Strongly Agree**

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the ease of completing this task. **Avg 4.30**

2. Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time it took to complete this task. **Avg 4.30**

3. Overall, I am satisfied with the support information (on-line help, messages, documentation) when completing this task. **Avg 3.45**

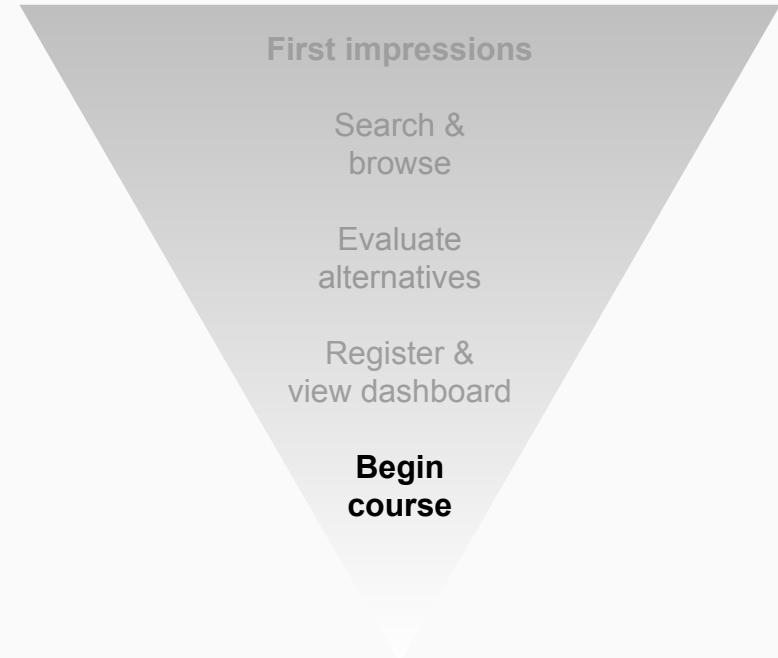
Task 4: Review a Current Course

Task 4: Review a Current Course

Why it matters: Of the people that enter course content, less than 10% engage with more than one item. Why are people dropping off?

Goal: Examining positives and negatives in the initial evaluation of course content.

Scenario: Now that you have enrolled in the course, you want to understand how the course works. Take a few minutes to explore the course.





Syllabus Content

The majority of users found and reviewed the syllabus

Why it's good:

Users get an overview of the subjects they will cover, how they will be evaluated, and the time frame in which they will learn the material





Imperial College
Business School

Accounting Essentials for MBA Success
Syllabus

Background
Want to study for an MBA but unsure of your basic accounting skills? Paving the way for MBA study, this course will teach you the foundational accounting skills needed to achieve success on an MBA program and in business generally.

You will be introduced to the principles of accounting and learn about the basic financial statements, including the income statement, the balance sheet and the cash flow statement. You will learn how to read and interpret this information in order to make informed business decisions.

This course assumes no prior knowledge of accounting. Concepts are explained clearly and regular activities offer you the opportunity to practice your skills and improve your confidence.

Course Outline

- How to create and interpret the three basic accounting statements - the income statement, the balance sheet and the cash flow statement
- How management accounting differs from financial accounting
- How financial information is used on an MBA program and in business to make informed decisions

Assessment

In order to pass this course, you must complete the assessment.

Assessment Matrix	
100%	End of course assessment

! 16. High: Course Introduction Materials and Tools are Dense and Long

Usability Problem #16:

The course description, introduction videos, and Personal Learning Plan (28 questions), are dense and time consuming.

Why is it a Problem?

People may waste time, become frustrated, and/or skip critical information if the introductory materials are too dense or long.

“Too much irrelevant information.”

Participant #12

The screenshot shows a course landing page with the following sections:

- Course Updates and News**:
 - March 16, 2017
 - Welcome to ImperialBusinessX!
 - We are delighted to welcome you to the ImperialBusinessX community. This Essentials X-Series which has been designed to prepare you for the programme.
 - The course has been designed for those of you considering studying for an MBA; it aims to equip you with the knowledge and skills to successfully engage with the topics you will encounter. It is also a valuable course for those of you who are interested in finding out more about this topic, both in the workplace and in your everyday life.
- Course Structure**:
 - This course is self-paced and open for enrollment from the **20th March**. It has been designed to give you flexibility over both the content you study and the pace at which you do so.
 - The course starts with a short questionnaire which allows you to create your own **personal learning plan**. It is important that you complete this to determine your study path.
- Course Handouts**:
 - After this date, course content will be archived.
 - 1. Download the

“Big, chunky paragraphs.”

Participant #6

“I wouldn't take this test [the personal learning plan]. It's too long. I just want to start the course and this doesn't seem important.”

Participant #11



16. High: Course Introduction Materials and Tools are Dense and Long

Recommendation #16

Work with institutions and consider creating a introduction template to increase readability and focus on essential information. Consider shortening introductory videos and questionnaires.

Coursera, a competitor, only has a short paragraph introduction to the course before allowing a person to “Start Lesson.” Users also have options to read FAQ and Introduction Videos before starting the Course.

The screenshot shows the 'Course Information' section of a Coursera course page. At the top, it says 'Course Information'. Below that is a profile picture of Brian Hare and his name 'Brian Hare'. A detailed course description follows: 'Dog Emotion and Cognition is a course designed to introduce the exciting new science of dog psychology to any level of dog enthusiast. In learning about dogs you will be introduced to evolutionary and cognitive theory, learn about experimental methodology, see how dogs compare to other species, and even have the chance to try some of the cognitive games you learn about with your own dog. The course is a great introduction to the field of animal cognition and animal behavior but is also relevant to anyone interested in human evolution or even dog training. When you finish you will think about your dog in a new way, will be ready to apply your new knowledge, and will be prepared to take higher level classes in the evolutionary or cognitive sciences.' There is a 'Less' link below the description. At the bottom, there are sections for 'About the Course' (with 'FAQs 10 min' and 'Introduction to Dog Emotion and Cognition 37 sec' links) and a blue 'Start Lesson' button.

Competitor (Coursera) Example



17. High: Difficulty Navigating and Finding Specific Information

Usability Problem #17:

Users all use different methods when they begin a course.

As a result people vary in their ability to find specific course content e.g. syllabus and instructor contact information. Some participants did not even use the navigation tabs at all.

Why is it a Problem?

People may waste time or become frustrated if they cannot find the information they are seeking quickly.

"I think there was too much information and there's nothing to guide you. You just go by intuition and try to see where you have to go."

Participant #11



17. High: Difficulty Navigating and Finding Specific Information

Recommendation #17a

Make course navigation tabs more prominent with a clear path to the syllabus and instructor contact information.

Recommendation #17b

Add an optional guided walkthrough for the course navigation that show available tools and next steps.

“The tour guides would work really well, it would show the steps across the top, first do this then this. You already know you completed the tour and you know what to do next.”

Participant #11



18. Medium: Syllabus Availability

Usability Problem #18:

Several participants stated that they wish they had syllabus specific information prior to registering for a course, when they were searching for a course.

Why is it a Problem?

People sign up for courses based on the short course description page may be unmotivated to continue when they read the syllabus, if the course content doesn't meet their expectations.

"The only thing I'd like to have [on the course description page] is a sample of the syllabus or some expectation of what kind of work would be covered."

Participant #4

! 18. Medium: Syllabus Availability

Recommendation #18

Add the syllabus to the course description page. Users can then evaluate course-specific information during their course shopping period.

The image shows two screenshots of a course landing page. On the left, the main course page includes a sidebar with links to 'Overview', 'Syllabus', 'FAQs', 'Creators', and 'Ratings and Reviews'. Below this is the course title 'Introduction to Mathematical Thinking' and a large blue 'Enroll Now' button. At the bottom, there's a note about financial aid. On the right, a larger screenshot shows the 'Syllabus' page itself, which is divided into weeks. Week 1 starts with a 'Week 1' section containing a brief description, a video count, and a problem set. Week 2 follows a similar structure. Both the 'Syllabus' link in the sidebar and the entire syllabus page are highlighted with a thick green border.

Coursera Example (Syllabus is on Course Page)

Recommendations Checklist

- #16: Work with institutions to make the course introduction more readable and focused on essential information. Consider shortening introductory videos and questionnaires.
- #17a: Make course navigation tabs more prominent with a clear path to the syllabus and instructor contact information.
- #17b: Add an optional guided walkthrough for the course navigation that show available tools and next steps.
- #18: Add the syllabus to the course description page. Users can then evaluate course-specific information during their course shopping period.

After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Strongly Agree

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the ease of completing this task. **Avg 4.09**

2. Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time it took to complete this task. **Avg 3.82**

3. Overall, I am satisfied with the support information (on-line help, messages, documentation) when completing this task. **Avg 3.64**

Task 5: Review an Upcoming Course

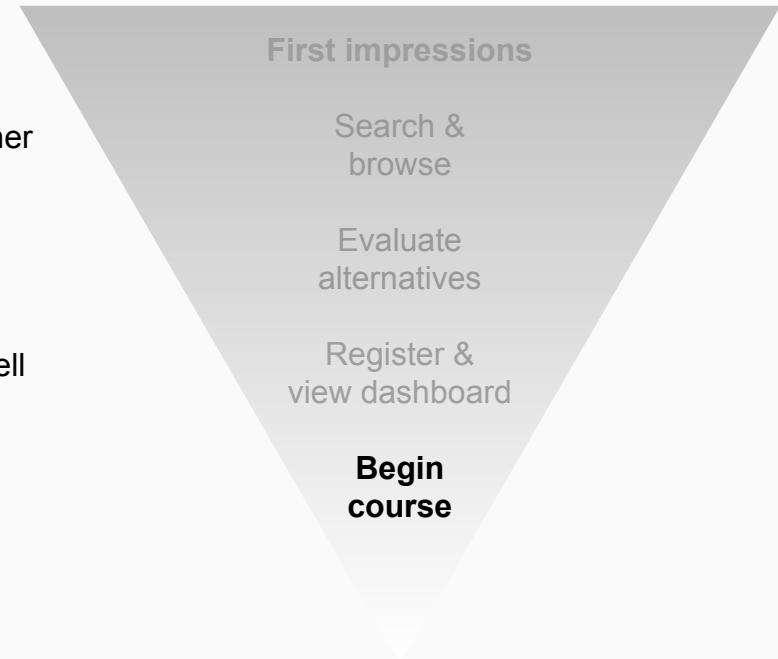
Task 5: Review an Upcoming Course

Goal and Why it Matters:

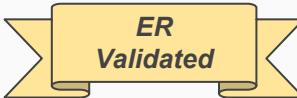
Learn how users approach courses with a future start date and whether or not the inability to immediately begin a course is cause for user abandonment.

Scenario:

You signed up for two courses yesterday and you have just logged back into your account. Find out the number of hours per week as well as the number of weeks it will take you to complete the course.



19. High: Limited Accessibility for Upcoming Courses



Usability Problem #19:

If a course is upcoming or starting soon, a user cannot click on the title, or “View Course” like they can for current courses (in Task 4). This problem affected every test user and the majority of users abandoned this task.

Why is it a Problem?

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

Upcoming Course

Current Course Course

“I would have expected the same View Course button. If not, I would have expected the title to have a hyperlink. I’m actually not sure where to go from here.”

Participant #4

Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel

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

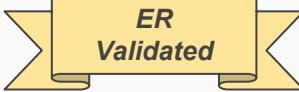
Pursue a Certificate of Achievement to highlight the knowledge and skills you gain in this course.
It's official. It's easily shareable. It's a proven motivator to complete the course.
Learn more about the verified Certificate of Achievement.

Upgrade to Verified

Accounting Essentials for MBA Success

ImperialBusinessX - ICB5001
Started - Mar 20, 2017

View Course



! 19. High: Limited Accessibility for Upcoming Courses

Recommendation #19a

Add “View Course” button and a “course title” hyperlink that allow users to view the original course description.

Recommendation #19b

Clarify what users can expect for courses that start in the future. E.g. “You will receive an email when the course begins”

Upcoming Course

The screenshot shows a course card for "Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel" by Microsoft - DAT206x. The card includes a thumbnail image of a computer screen displaying Excel, the course title, the provider, start date, and a "View Course" button. A red box highlights the course title, and a red arrow points from the participant's quote above to this highlighted area.

Current Course Course

The screenshot shows a course card for "Accounting Essentials for MBA Success" by ImperialBusinessX - ICB5001. The card includes a thumbnail image of a graph, the course title, the provider, start date, and a "View Course" button. A red box highlights the course title and another red box highlights the "View Course" button.

! Global Issue 1) edX's Core Value Proposition is Unclear

"I would have expected the same View Course button. If not, I would have expected the title to have a hyperlink. I'm actually not sure where to go from here."

Participant #4

Recommendations Checklist

- #19a: Add “View Course” button and a “course title” hyperlink that allow users to view the original course description.
- #19b: Clarify what users can expect for courses that start in the future. E.g. “You will receive an email when the course begins”

After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)*

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Strongly Agree

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the ease of completing this task. **Avg 2.40**

2. Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time it took to complete this task. **Avg 3.10**

3. Overall, I am satisfied with the support information (on-line help, messages, documentation) when completing this task. **Avg 2.11**

*Only 10 participants took this ASQ

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Test Process
3. Global Findings
4. User Test Findings
- 5. Summary and Next Steps**

Usability Test Recap

Task 1: First impressions

Unclear core value proposition; Terminology confusion impacts first time users' understanding of what edX is

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

Usability Test Recap

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

*Unclear core value proposition; Terminology confusion; Options overload; Lack of personalized help
All hinder first time users' abilities to find a course or program that best fits their needs*

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

Usability Test Recap

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Generally positive experience; Error prevention opportunities to streamline process

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

Usability Test Recap

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

*Too many choices and paths forward confuse users; Help is lacking;
Potential for attrition before users start lesson.*

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

Overall Impressions & SUS

Usability Test Recap

Task 1: First impressions

Task 2: Search & browse courses, evaluate alternatives

Task 3: Register & view dashboard

Tasks 4 & 5: Begin a course

Task 6: Terminology (Global)

*Unclear terminology throughout the site leads users to operate on incorrect assumptions;
Impacts first time users' expectations of what edX is and offers*

Overall Impressions & SUS

After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Strongly Agree

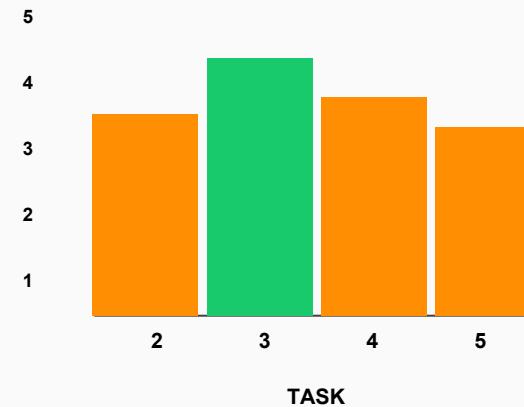
GLOBAL EASE OF USE

Overall, I am satisfied with the ease of completing this task.



GLOBAL AMOUNT OF TIME

Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time it took to complete this task.



GLOBAL SUPPORT INFORMATION

Overall, I am satisfied with the support information (on-line help, messages, documentation) when completing this task.



After Scenario Questionnaire (ASQ)

Strongly Disagree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Strongly Agree

TASK 2

Search, Browse & Evaluate Courses

TASK 3

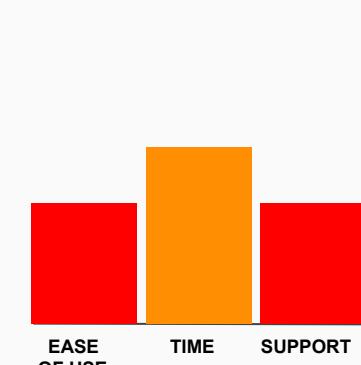
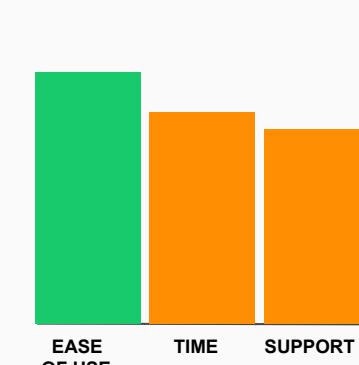
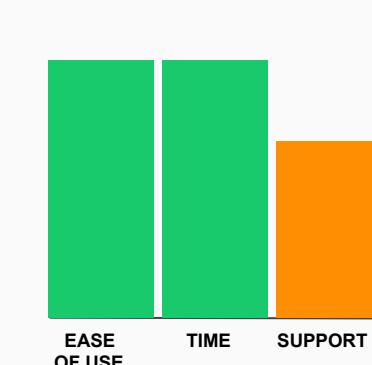
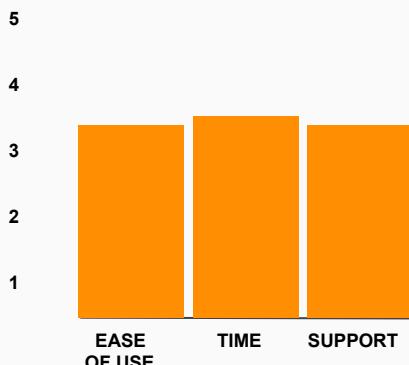
Register edX account & enroll in a course

TASK 4

Review a current course

TASK 5

Review an upcoming course



Positive System Usability Scale (SUS)

72



1. I think that I would like to use this website frequently.
2. I found the website to be simple.
3. I thought the website was easy to use.
4. I think that I could use the website without the support of a technical person.
5. I found the various functions in this website were well integrated.
6. I felt the website was consistent.
7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this website very quickly.
8. I found the website very intuitive.
9. I felt very confident using the website.
10. I could use the website without having to learn anything new.

Positive SUS

72



10

20

30

40

50

60

80

90

100

70

Participant
#11 **12.5**

Participant
#12 **47.5**

Participant
#4 **62.5**

Participant
#3 **70**

Participant
#1 **95**

Participant
#5 **77.5**

Participant
#2 **90**

Participant
#6 **82.5**

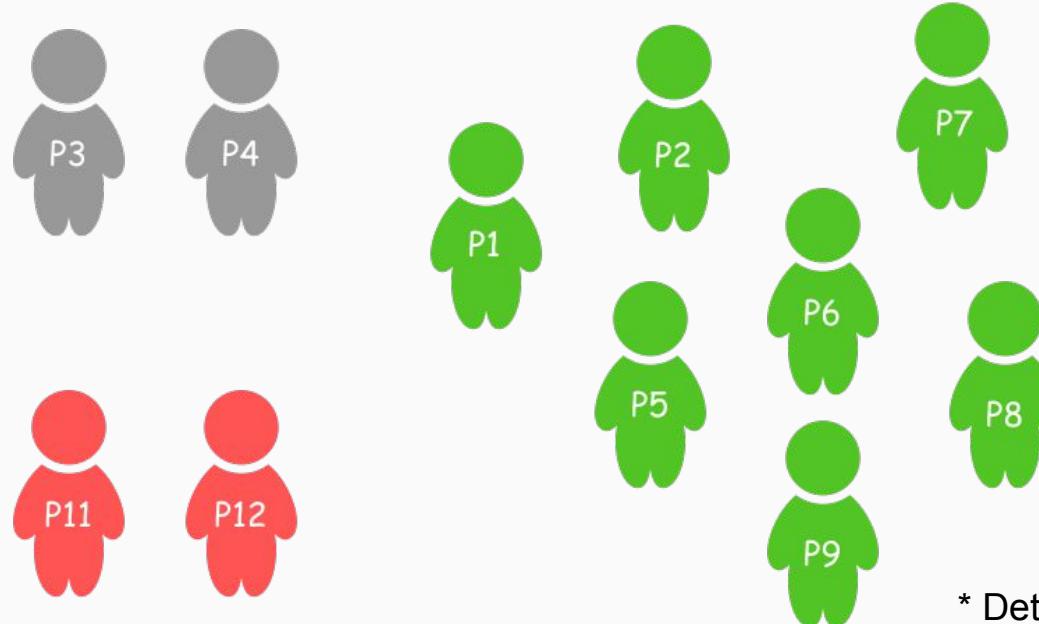
Participant
#8 **77.5**

Participant
#7 **97.5**

Participant
#9 **82.5**

Post-Test Questions

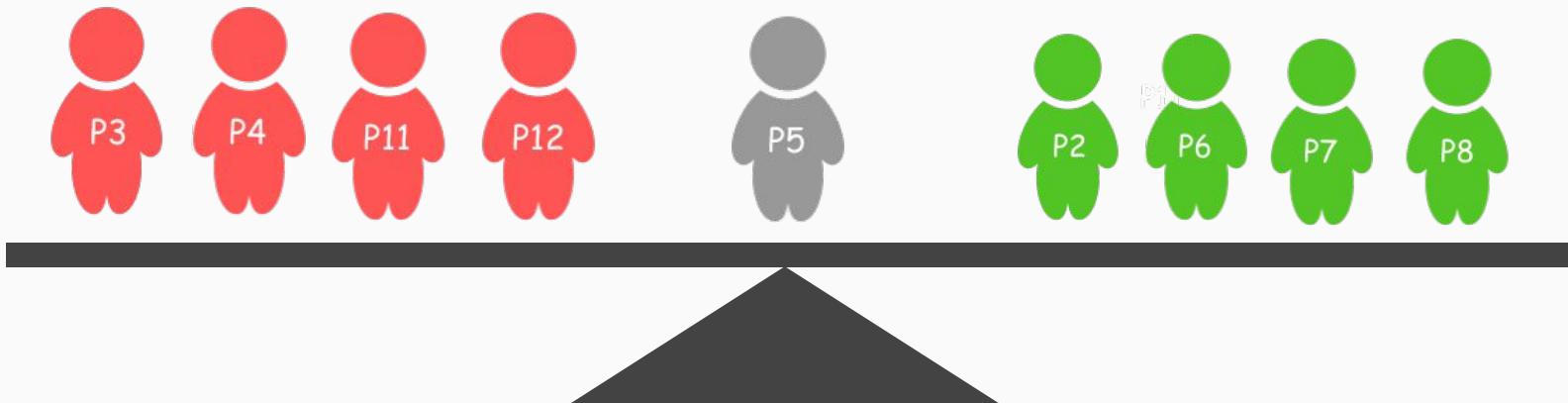
What are your overall impressions of this site?



* Detailed notes in Appendix.

Post-Test Questions

How does this site compare with other eLearning software?



*Detailed notes in Appendix

Post-Test Questions



What two things did you like best about using the edX website?

Common Themes

- Prestigious Universities
- Wide variety of other responses



What two things did you like least about using the edX website?

Common Themes

- Upcoming Course Information
- Not Accessible
- Public Username
- Search and Browsing Difficulty

**Detailed notes in Usability Test Notes*

Task	Good	High	Medium	Low
Terminology (Global)	0	2	1	1
1) Task 1: First Impressions	2	1	2	1
2) Task 2: Search & Browse	4	4	2	3
3) Task 3: Register & View Dashboard	2	1	2	1
4) Task 4: Begin a Course	1	2	1	1
5) Task 5: Begin an Upcoming Course	0	1	0	1
	9	11	8	8

Scope of Evaluation

When examining possible causes of attrition for new users, is attrition really happening in the "first hour" of use?

People may find it hard to understand when to begin a course and when to return, and thus abandon edX.

"My experience with EdX is limited. I signed up for a linear algebra class provided by UT Austin. However, I didn't receive any notifications that I actually successfully enrolled or notifications when classes started. I attempted 3 times. So I'm taking my time with Khan Academy instead."

During Recruit

Next Steps

Further Testing Recommended for:

- Longer Time Frames
- ESL/International Users in English and their native languages
- Mobile
- Taking a Course

What We're Delivering

- This Presentation
- Recordings from GotoMeeting and In-Person Sessions at Bentley UXC
- Test Session Notes
- High Priority ER Findings Not Tested (in separate powerpoint)

Questions?

Low Priority Findings

20. Low: Program Names & Descriptions Don't Truly Differentiate Them

edX offers three different types of programs (MicroMasters, Professional and XSeries) but users were unable to understand the differences.

Why is it a Problem?

By not having a clear communication of the value proposition, there could be missed opportunities for users to find the best fit program for their needs. Vague differentiation doesn't allow users to find what they need.

The screenshot shows the edX website's 'Programs' section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Courses', 'Programs' (which is currently selected), 'Schools & Partners', and 'About'. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled 'Programs' and contains three sections: 'MicroMasters Certificate', 'Professional Certificate', and 'XSeries Certificate'. Each section includes a brief description and a 'Find' button. Below these sections are links to explore each type of program. At the bottom, there are logos for several partner institutions: MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; HARVARD UNIVERSITY; BERKELEY; THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM; and THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND.

edX

Courses ▾ Programs ▾ Schools & Partners About ▾

Search:

Programs

Best Learr

Find

MicroMasters Certificate

A series of Master's-level courses to advance your career, created by top universities and recognized by companies. MicroMasters Programs are credit-eligible, provide in-demand knowledge and may be applied to accelerate a Master's Degree.

Explore MicroMasters Programs »

Professional Certificate

Designed by industry leaders and top universities to enhance professional skills. Professional Certificates develop the proficiency and expertise that employers are looking for with specialized training and professional education.

Explore Professional Certificate »

XSeries Certificate

Created by world-renowned experts and top universities, XSeries are designed to provide a deep understanding of key subjects through a series of courses. Complete the series to earn a valuable XSeries Certificate that illustrates your achievement.

Explore XSeries Programs »

MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

BERKELEY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

20. Low: Program Names & Descriptions Don't Truly Differentiate Them

The screenshot shows the edX website's "Programs" section. On the left, there's a sidebar with "Best Courses", "Learn", and a "Find" button. The main content area has three cards:

- MicroMasters Certificate**: A series of Master's-level courses to advance your career, created by top universities and recognized by companies. MicroMasters Programs are credit-eligible, provide in-demand knowledge and may be applied to accelerate a Master's Degree.
- Professional Certificate**: Designed by industry leaders and top universities to enhance professional skills. Professional Certificates develop the proficiency and expertise that employers are looking for with specialized training and professional education.
- XSeries Certificate**: Created by world-renowned experts and top universities. XSeries are designed to give you deep understanding of subjects through a series of courses. Complete all courses to earn a valuable XSeries certificate that illustrates your achievement.

At the bottom, there are links: "Explore MicroMasters Programs" (with a MM icon), "Explore Professional Certificate" (with a PC icon), and "Explore XSeries Programs" (with an XS icon).

*"To advance your career,
created by top Universities.
This one is also created by top
Universities. All of them, for me
they're all describing the same
benefits so I don't know what
the difference is."*

Participant #11



Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Berkeley



THE UNIVERSITY
of TEXAS SYSTEM



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND

21. Low: “How it Works” Useful but Buried on Home

Why is it a Problem?

Although participants in the study did scroll in the homepage, most of them didn't get through the bottom of the page where important information that help the users understand how edX works is located. By not setting expectations fast, users could abandon or disengage with the site.

Recommendation #21

Bring the section of “Learning at edX” above the fold, so users can quickly understand how it works, and the benefits of this open source learning offering.

"I found this to be informational, without having to explore the whole site."

- Participant 2

Starting Soon Starts: April 26, 2017

Starting Soon Starts: May 7, 2017 - Self-Paced

Current Starts: April 11, 2017

Learning at edX

Earn a Valuable Certificate

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.

Professional Certificate

Stand out in your field. Develop the expertise employers are looking for through a series of skills-based courses.

Credit-Eligible

Take courses on your schedule and receive academic credit without an application or transcript at a fraction of the cost.

MicroMasters Programs

A series of graduate-level courses designed 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.

udemy

Browse ▾ Search for Courses

Development Business IT & Software Office Productivity Personal Development Design Marketing Lifestyle Photography Health & Fitness

Be Able.

From programming to photography, take in-depth online courses and meet any challenge with skill.

What do you want to learn?

Explore over 45,000 courses taught by expert instructors Enroll in courses at any time, with lifetime access Learn at your own pace, from any device

Best Sellers in Development

Java Python

22. Low: Institution names muddled with edX jargon

Usability Problem #: 22

An “x” is added to the end of each institution name, to match “edX”.

Why is it a Problem?

The “x” confused some users, and made them second guess the institution, or credibility. It required the user to guess or assume, and in other cases users did not understand that this was the University name at all.



22. Low: Institution names muddled with edX jargon

Recommendation: #22

Use the actual university or educational institution name on course cards.



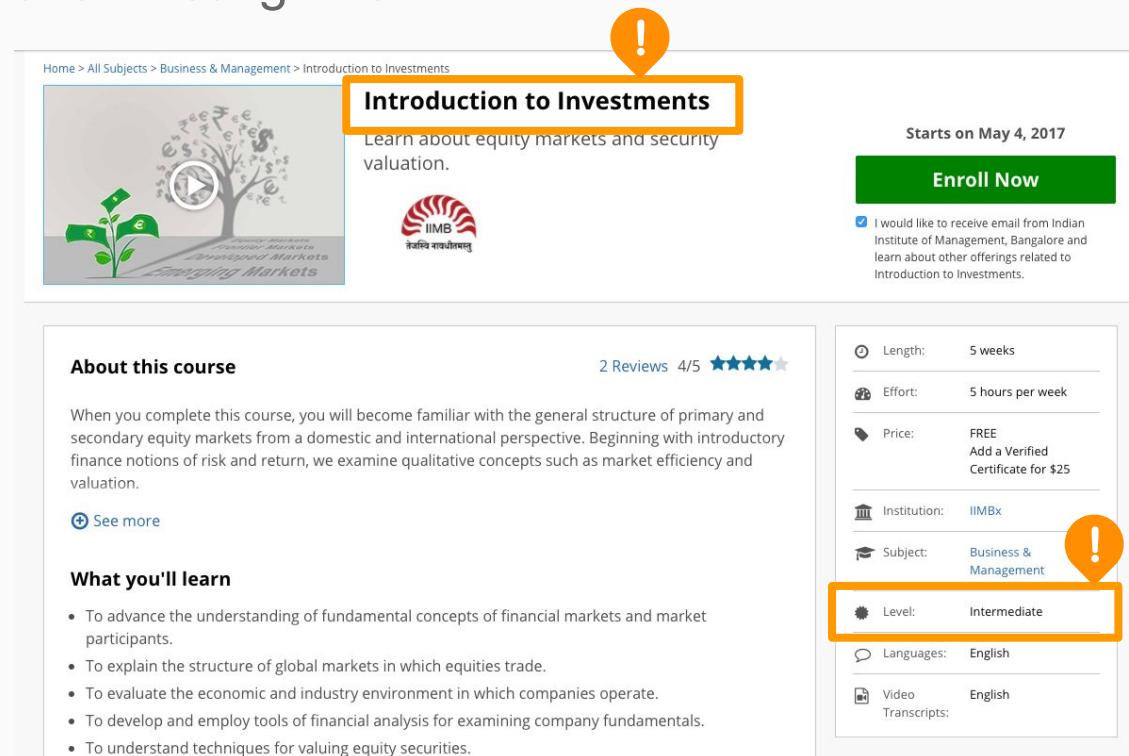
23. Low: Course difficulty level misalignment

Usability Problem #23:

The communicated level of difficulty in some course titles do not align with the difficulty levels described on the course page.

Why is it a Problem?

The real difficulty level of the course is unclear and confusing. Users could sign up for a course and have a bad experience, leading to abandonment.

! A screenshot of a course card on the edX platform. The title "Introduction to Investments" is highlighted with an orange border. Below the title is a description: "Learn about equity markets and security valuation." To the left is a thumbnail image of a tree with coins and banknotes growing from its branches, with the text "Primary Markets", "Secondary Markets", "Developed Markets", and "Emerging Markets" visible at the base. To the right is the IIMB logo. At the bottom, there's a summary of course details: "Starts on May 4, 2017", a green "Enroll Now" button, and a checkbox for receiving emails from IIMB. On the right side, there's a table with course metadata: Length (5 weeks), Effort (5 hours per week), Price (FREE, add a Verified Certificate for \$25), Institution (IIMBx), Subject (Business & Management), Level (Intermediate), Languages (English), and Video Transcripts (English). An orange exclamation mark is placed above the course title and another one is placed near the "Level" row in the metadata table.

Introduction to Investments

Learn about equity markets and security valuation.

IIMB

Starts on May 4, 2017

Enroll Now

I would like to receive email from Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Investments.

Length:	5 weeks
Effort:	5 hours per week
Price:	FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$25
Institution:	IIMBx
Subject:	Business & Management
Level:	Intermediate
Languages:	English
Video Transcripts:	English

23. Low: Course difficulty level misalignment

Recommendation #23

Verify the title of the course matches the skill level listed for the course.

! 

The course card shows the following details:

- Title:** Introduction to Investments
- Description:** Learn about equity markets and security valuation.
- Provider:** IIMB भारतीय व्यापार संस्कारण
- Start Date:** Starts on May 4, 2017
- Enroll Now:** A green button.
- Checklist:** An unchecked checkbox for receiving email from IIMB.
- Course Details:**
 - Length: 5 weeks
 - Effort: 5 hours per week
 - Price: FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$25
 - Institution: IIMBx
 - Subject: Business & Management
 - Level: Intermediate 
 - Languages: English
 - Video Transcripts: English

About this course 2 Reviews 4/5 ★★★★☆

When you complete this course, you will become familiar with the general structure of primary and secondary equity markets from a domestic and international perspective. Beginning with introductory finance notions of risk and return, we examine qualitative concepts such as market efficiency and valuation.

[See more](#)

What you'll learn

- To advance the understanding of fundamental concepts of financial markets and market participants.
- To explain the structure of global markets in which equities trade.
- To evaluate the economic and industry environment in which companies operate.
- To develop and employ tools of financial analysis for examining company fundamentals.
- To understand techniques for valuing equity securities.

24. Low: Information overload

Usability Problem #24:

The course detail pages can be very dense, and text heavy. One user exclaimed:

"There's a lot on the page, so I don't know where to look first, but it has all the information I expect to see on the page." -P4

Why is it a Problem?

Users want to quickly scan course descriptions at first to determine if the course meets their criteria. There is little to no hierarchy on some course pages, and users cannot scan.

!

 **Introduction to Linux**
Never learned Linux? Want a refresh? Take this course free or get a verified certificate for \$99!

Join This Course

I would like to receive email from The Linux Foundation and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Linux.

About this course 115 Reviews 4/5 ★★★★☆

Develop a good working knowledge of Linux using both the graphical interface and command line, covering the major Linux distribution families.

Linux powers 94% of the world's supercomputers, most of the servers powering the Internet, the majority of financial trades worldwide and a billion Android devices. In short, Linux is everywhere. It appears in many different architectures, from mainframes to server to desktop to mobile and on a staggeringly wide variety of hardware.

Moreover, 97 percent of hiring managers reported that they will prioritize hiring Linux talent relative to other skills areas in the next six months, and 44 percent of hiring managers saying they're more likely to hire a candidate with Linux certification.

This course explores the various tools and techniques commonly used by Linux system administrators and end users to achieve their day-to-day work in a Linux environment. It is designed for experienced computer users who have limited or no previous exposure to Linux, whether they are working in an individual or Enterprise environment.

Upon completion of this training you should have a good working knowledge of Linux, from both a graphical and command line perspective, allowing you to easily navigate through any of the major Linux distributions. You will be able to continue your progress as either a user, system administrator or developer using the acquired skill set.

Join the 250,000+ students who are already enrolled in this course and start your Linux journey.

[Hide](#)

What you'll learn

- A good working knowledge of Linux
- How to navigate through major Linux distributions
- System configurations and graphical interface of Linux
- Basic command line operations
- Common applications of Linux

Self-Paced

Length: 8 weeks

Effort: Most users will find that thoroughly covering the material will take anywhere from 40 to 60 hours

Price: FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$99

Institution: LinuxFoundationX

Subject: Computer Science

Level: Introductory

Languages: English

Video Transcripts: English

Share this course with a friend

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [g](#) [e](#)

Prerequisites

None. However, the course does assume familiarity with computers and common software, such as would be had from daily computer use.

24. Low: Information overload

Recommendation #24

Consider adding bullet points to course descriptions, and/or implementing text hierarchy principles, such as bold, italics, underlining, text size, and text style. If implemented strategically, users will have an easier time scanning and locating the information of interest to them.

!

Introduction to Linux

Never learned Linux? Want a refresh? Take this course free or get a verified certificate for \$99!

Join This Course

I would like to receive email from The Linux Foundation and learn about other offerings related to Introduction to Linux.

About this course 115 Reviews 4/5 ★★★★☆

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Price: FREE Add a Verified Certificate for \$99

Institution: LinuxFoundationX

Subject: Computer Science

Level: Introductory

Languages: English

Video: English Transcripts:

Share this course with a friend

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [g](#) [e](#)

Prerequisites

None. However, the course does assume familiarity with computers and common software, such as would be had from daily computer use.

25. Low: Some users didn't realize accounts needed to be verified

Usability Problem #25

Some users ignored the black message boxes at the top of the Dashboard page after registering.

Why is it a Problem?

Users who don't see these notices would miss feedback to set up their account.

The screenshot shows the edX Dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the edX logo, 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Help', and a user profile for 'JDOE21354'. A red circle with an exclamation mark highlights a specific area. Below the navigation is a dark callout box containing the following text:

You're almost there!
There's just one more step: Before you enroll in a course, you need to activate your account. We've sent an email message to [SpamAccount@gmail.com](#) with instructions for activating your account. If you don't receive this message, check your spam folder.

Below this, another message says:

Thank you for enrolling in Computer Forensics. We hope you enjoy the course.
edX is a nonprofit bringing high-quality education to everyone, everywhere. Your help allows us to continuously improve the learning experience for millions and make a better future one learner at a time.

On the right side of the dashboard, there's a 'My Courses' section for 'Computer Forensics' (RITx - CYBER502x, Starts - May 23, 2017) and a 'Browse recently launched courses...' link.

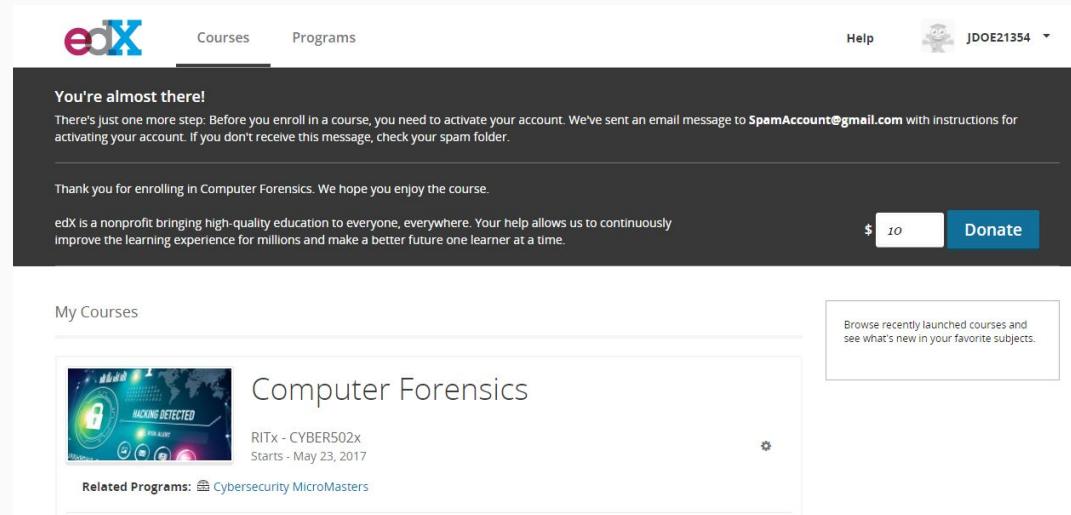
Low: Some users didn't realize accounts needed to be verified

Recommendation #25a

Change the background color (and text if necessary) of the notification message box that stands out more.

Recommendation #25b

Make the registration message appear on all pages a new user may visit until they register their account.



The screenshot shows the edX homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the edX logo, 'Courses', 'Programs', 'Help', and a user profile for 'JDOE21354'. Below the navigation bar, a dark banner displays a registration message: 'You're almost there! There's just one more step: Before you enroll in a course, you need to activate your account. We've sent an email message to [SpamAccount@gmail.com](#) with instructions for activating your account. If you don't receive this message, check your spam folder.' Below this, a thank you message for enrolling in 'Computer Forensics' is shown, along with a note from edX about their mission to bring high-quality education to everyone. On the right side of the banner, there is a donation button with a '\$ 10' input field and a 'Donate' button. The main content area below the banner is titled 'My Courses' and features a card for the 'Computer Forensics' course by RITx, which starts on May 23, 2017. The card also lists 'Related Programs: Cybersecurity MicroMasters'. To the right of the course card, there is a sidebar with a link to 'Browse recently launched courses and see what's new in your favorite subjects.'

26. Low: Resume Course Button

Usability Problem #26:

Default button says “Resume Course”.

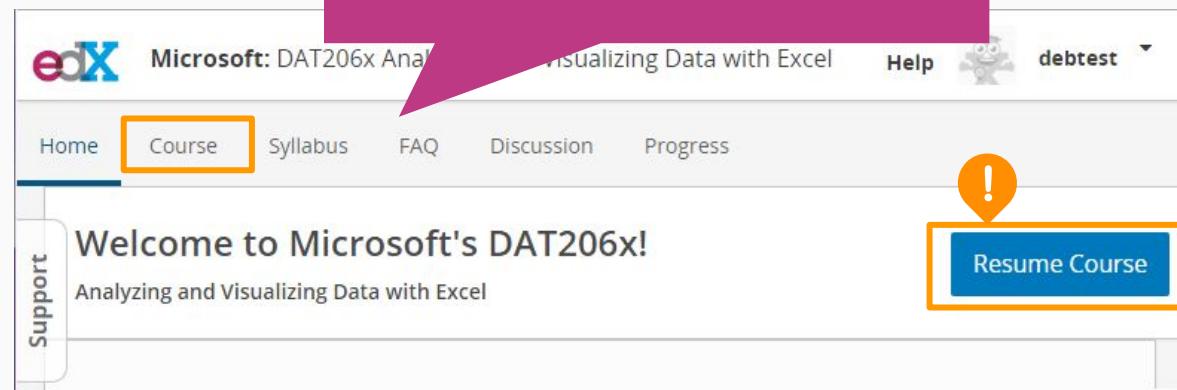
Why is it a Problem?

The default may cause confusion for new users who are starting a course for the first time.

“Resume” implies the user is returning, and they have already made progress in a course.

“I don't understand resume course. I want to start my course. My course didn't die. I don't know why it says this.”

Participant 5



26. Low: Resume Course Button

Recommendation #26

Revise the “Resume Course” button to neutral terminology such as “Enter Course”

The screenshot shows the Microsoft DAT206x course page on the edX platform. The top navigation bar includes the edX logo, the course title "Microsoft: DAT206x Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel", a "Help" link, a user profile icon for "debtest", and a dropdown menu. Below the navigation is a horizontal menu with links for "Home", "Course", "Syllabus", "FAQ", "Discussion", and "Progress". To the left, a vertical sidebar has a "Support" tab. The main content area features a welcome message: "Welcome to Microsoft's DAT206x! Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel". On the right side, there is a prominent blue button with the text "Resume Course". An orange circle with an exclamation mark is drawn around this button, highlighting it as the subject of the recommendation.

27. Low: Navigation Bar Changes

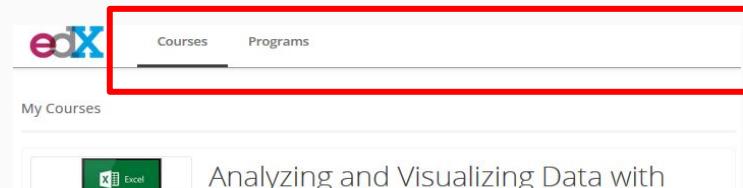
Usability Problem #27:

Users cannot not access the search bar/navigation menu from the dashboard page

Why is it a Problem?

Some users wanted to use the search bar and navigation bar to find the course description and were surprised that it wasn't there

Dashboard Navigation Menu



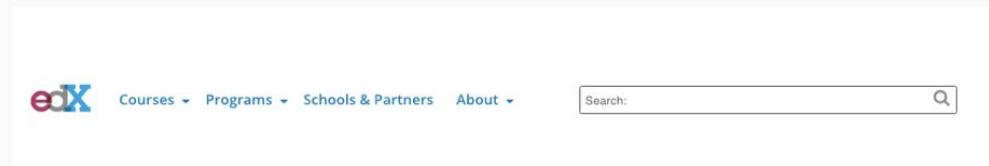


Low: Navigation Bar Changes

Recommendation #27

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

Consistent Navigation Bar



Low Recommendations Checklist

- #21: Bring the section of “Learning at edX” above the fold, so users can quickly understand how it works, and the benefits of this open source learning offering.
- #22: Use the actual university or educational institution name on course cards.
- #23: Verify the title of the course matches the skill level listed for the course.
- #24: Consider adding bullet points to course descriptions, and/or implementing text hierarchy principles, such as bold, italics, underlining, text size, and text style. If implemented strategically, users will have an easier time scanning and locating the information of interest to them.
- #25a: Change the background color (and text if necessary) of the notification message box that stands out more.
- #25b: Make the registration message appear on all pages a new user may visit until they register their account
- #26: Revise the “Resume Course” button to neutral terminology such as “Enter Course”
- #27: Update the navigation bar to be the same throughout the edX website.

Appendix

Links

- Video Recordings:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6tU2IdyqfDXVzJmOEh0ZC1Jd1U>

- Test Session Notes:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16v5biRsnXwTRjQRDvA9B1dh55c8bsqc_bFtCCBmwUJ88/edit?usp=sharing

- SUS Scores (Individual and Averaged) and Calculations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1I8bC6uQSTDOSmOvAaAs_wlThQdw_Zj8ieYMOfZoT_uE/edit?usp=sharing

- Participant Chart (quick view on next page)

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11b_v153fnVp1iBJzeQflamvbig8-mZw9zxscHmZfPI8/edit?usp=sharing

Participant Chart

	Employment Situation	Operating System	Programs Previously Used?	Topics/Interests?	M/F	ESL	Age	In Person or Remote?	Nationality/Language
P1	Working Part-Time	Windows	None	English as a Second Language, Classroom Management, Programming Languages	F	no	25 - 29	Remote	
P2	Working full time	Mac OS	stack overflow	Computer science	M	no	35 - 39	In-person @ Bentley	
P3	Working Full-time	Mac OS	Yes, UCSD Extensions (both online and in-person courses)	HTML/CSS course and a SQL course	M	no	30 - 34	In-Person	
			Yes, Youtube, Khan Academy, Enrolled in University-run degree program (recently finished last semester)	Entrepreneurship, Finance, different types of Management					
P4	Unemployed/ looking for work	Windows	None	Accounting, design, career development	M	no	25 - 29	In-person @ Bentley	
P5	Unemployed/part time student	Windows	None	Machine Learning and Computer Science	F	yes	25 - 29	In-person @ Bentley	
P6	Working Full-time	Windows	Yes, Coursera and Harvard Extention		M	no	25 - 29	In-person @ Bentley	
P7	Working full time	Windows	ICICI Lombard (INDIA) = had done a lot of product training programs	business analytics, finance	F	yes	25 - 29	Remote	
P8	Working full time	Mac OS	yes coursera	system architecture, human-computer interaction, data visualization	F	yes	35 - 39	Remote	Pilipino/Tagalog
			YouTube, student at UMass Lowell	Computer science, Data and Computer Communication Networks, Mobile and Wireless Networks, and mobile app programming					
P9	Working full time	Mac OS	Yes	Legal	F	yes	25 - 29	Remote	Thailand/Lao
P10	Working Full-time	Windows	Yes, used edX last year		F	no	30 - 34	Remote	
P11	Working Full-time	Mac OS	Yes	business, accounting, entrepreneurship	F	Yes	25 - 29	In-Person	Mexican/Spanish
P12	MPA Student/part time	Mac OS	Yes	business, accounting	M	Yes	30 - 34	Remote	Mexican/Spanish
			6 Windows		M/Yes/Age	5	6	7 25 - 29	
			6 Mac OS		F/No/Age	7	6	3 30 - 34	
					Age			2 35 - 39	

P10 Information

Demographics:

Female, Native English Speaker, 30-34, Full Time Employed

Because she was a returning user, she remembered the processes of Tasks 1, 2, and 3.

Summary of Results from Tasks 4, 5, and Terminology:

- Findings were in line with other participants who viewed edX favorably

* Full notes present in Usability Test Notes

Post-Test Questions

What are your overall impressions of this site?

P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 - Site is “pretty good” “professional” “comprehensive” “no fatal errors” “cool you can audit instead of paying for it” “easy to use and understand” “nice flow” “appealing”

P3 - “opportunity for improvement with search result page... [and] sorting”

P4 - “lots of features that would be beneficial but are unorganized”

P11 “I don't really trust the site. The logos on the homepage, gave me telling me it's something professional and that I could trust, but once I saw the sections, etc. and how difficult it was to start a course, I would not decide to take a course here. I'd look for another option.”

P12 “I would have opened at the same time Coursera and Khan Academy and compare the courses. I feel these universities are there as well in other platforms. Don't feel compelled to use it. Would do a search for online platforms to see edX's ranking. Before investing time and if I want to display it in my LinkedIn program, I would search more about this website.”

Post-Test Questions

How does this site compare with other eLearning software?

P1, P9 - Don't know, no prior experience

P2- Better, others are clunky

P6- Better than what I am using [HarvardX and Stackshare]). Coursera looks exactly the same.

P7- I've used programs in India... compared to those programs it [edX] is very nice

P8- similar to Coursera, but progress [bars] is better

P5- looks the same

P3- Presents too much information... prefer other sites

P4- I've done specific schools online... all the information is laid out. [On edX] feels like I have to search around to find all info I want

P11- Others are more organized

P12- Not as well organized as other LMA