Participant name: Kathleen

Occupation: Administrative Assistant

Tech-savviness/time online: 35 hrs/week

Date of session: 6/21/23

Session format: In person

Participant noted that she had seen the website before, that it did not look very good but the home page looked like it would have good functionality, simple and easy to understand. She was able to find most things fairly easily, though others were more difficult to find. For example, when looking for a way to contact support, it ended up being in the about section rather than the help section, which she noted was not very intuitive. Overall the most common issue she found was that the layout looked very bad.

There were several individual issues the participant had with the layout. First, she stated that in general it would be nice if there were more headings, as the lack of headings made it more difficult to find things. She stated the layout was ‘messy’ and did not look good. This is important to fix because a website that does not look clean will appear less trustworthy to most users, and because it makes it difficult to focus on what is important (Nielsen).

Another big issue the participant noted was when she went into the subpages to look for things to purchase (i.e. a book, a bike) and for something to do (activities, events). She noticed that there were not many – if any – options to filter results. This was especially evident in the book section, where she found children’s books next to history books, with no way of sorting them out beyond using the search function and hoping. This is important because if a user has difficulty finding what they are looking for, they will often give up quickly and just look somewhere else.

The last major issue was difficulty with navigation in two specific instances. When I had the participant go through the process of creating a listing, she was unable to go back to the homepage without using the back button on the browser. The second instance was after she went to the New Mexico Craigslist site, she had a lot of difficulty navigating back to the New Hampshire Craigslist site. She ended up getting stuck there for a couple of tasks before she finally found the sidebar where the states were listed.

A related, though smaller, issue was that presumably due to lack of space, New Hampshire was instead listed as “N Hampshire”. Due to the sidebar list being in alphabetical order, New Hampshire was not in the spot she expected it to be, and it took her longer than it should have to find it just under New York. All of these are issues due to being confusing and different from other websites, and from how most people would expect a website to be, which makes it much more difficult to use (Nielsen).

Works Cited

Nielsen, Jakob. “10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design.” *Nielsen Norman Group*, 24 Apr. 1994, www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/.