

Report

Final Assignment

course: HCI

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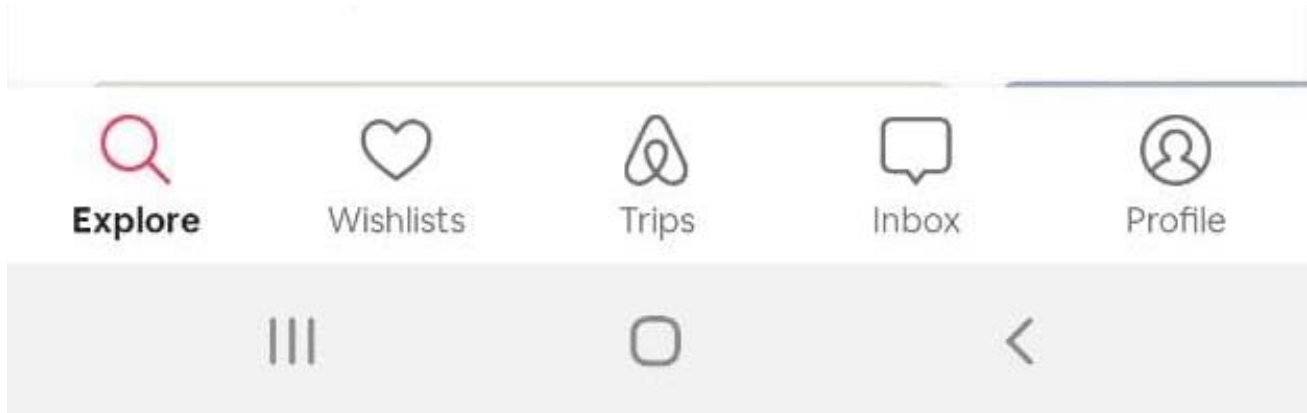
Airbnb is one of the most popular places for homestays, vacations and for anyone who is looking for some temporary place while he/she is away from home. It doesn't necessarily need to be temporary place but from my personal perspective every business has their own business model which specifically differentiates from others. However, there might be a few businesses which shares common business models. For instance, Airbnb and Booking.com have many in commons while Zigbang and Dabang have different business models.

Airbnb has been developed since 2008 and they have pretty good user-interface website for checking/looking and for renting the houses/apartments. I am going to discuss a few pros and cons according to HCI concepts that we learned from HCI class. Also, give my suggestions/implementation according to HCI concept.

Lastly, but one of the important things that helped me identifying the pros and cons of Airbnb was the Evaluation of the platform including UI-design, performance, usability etc, based on the lectures (Slides 15-16) in HCI class. So, I used reviews of Airbnb on PlayStore, Android. They have rating of more than 1,000,000 users and it's 4.6 out of 5, which is considerably good. For cons, I gathered reviews from reviews stared 1, 2 and 3 based on the HCI concept. I hope, my findings are objective and helpful.

Since Airbnb has web-platform for laptops and as well as app for smartphones. Their design, performance, usability heavily differentiates based on what tech-stacks developers used, what design frameworks they used. However, my data, reviews, suggestions based on the Airbnb app based on Android.

- **Pros of the AirBnB: Which features are good with respect to HCI concepts? Why are selected features good? - please provide your reasoning with specific HCI concepts.**



In the second class (#slide2), we learned about Usability Principles. It consists of Learnability, Flexibility, and Robustness.

In Learnability, main principles were predictability, familiarity, and consistency. If we look bottom of the Airbnb app, we can notice 5 sections with familiar design and minimal description that clearly describes its functionality.

First section at the bottom from the left, “Explore” with “Lupa Zoom”. When people see it then first thing that comes to their mind is making far closer to. It’s also can be interpreted with searching something. Finding new places, filtering, and many other functionalities described with this design, which is great.

The second section is Wishlist. It is a database for places you searched and “Liked”. That means you may wish to stay there or it’s one of your choices. “Heart” symbol is one of the universal emojis for love, liking, sympathy. It has positive effect on our mind. When people see Wishlist with Heart symbol, it highly describes that it is something that they liked, and their future stays.

The third which is in between, is the logo of the Airbnb which is as same as the “Explore” section, however, it refreshes the page by erasing all the caches. Also, people cannot contact to the customer service if they found themselves in a place where they can’t find places to stay.

The second section from the right is for communication with hosts regarding their places to stay. The message icon and the “Inbox” clearly describes its purpose.

The last section which is “Profile” includes personal information, settings, payments, how to be a host and many other features. When we say “Profile” it is something that describes us which can be public or private. Being said, some of our profiles visible to hosts while others should be private. For instance, hosts can see our names, spoken languages while they should not access to our payment methods, or other settings which is private.

According to what we learnt, specifically in Usability Principles(#slide2), all the sections except the third one(#Trips) clearly follows our Usability principles. When we see the icons it's easily familiar and predictable which completes “predictability” and “familiarity” principles. In terms of consistency, they have their own purposes, tasks and operations which are different from each other that suits with consistency principle.

Live anywhere



Outdoor getaways



Unique stays



Entire homes



Pets allowed

If we look check the main page, Airbnb suggests four types of stays which are incredibly useful. As we talked on the Evaluation part(#slides15-16), we should gather data from users and use it for improvement of our platform. I've reviewed the early reviews of Airbnb on Play Market regarding the stays where the pets are allowed or not. Anyone does not want to have issues after renting the place and not being allowed to stay with his/her pet.

Also, some people may want to rent the whole apartment if they are going to travel somewhere with their whole family or may want to rent unique stay for their anniversaries/dates. If there is someone who lived whole their lives in major cities may want to rent outdoor gateways.

All these features can be found in “Filter” while searching for places to stay. I can say with confident that Airbnb team smoothly followed the HCI Evaluation steps and did excellent job in user studies by reviewing their complaints and improving their platforms.

The images on the above smoothly follows the concepts and principles of the Usability. They clearly show the purpose of each section and what they meant for.

As we learned in Human Abilities section (#slide 3), we perceptual abilities(read/scan), cognitive(thinking), and motor systems(respond). However, some design can a bit complicated and may take more time to figure out. And that worst thinking for platforms/businesses. According to HCI principles, our design should be clear so users can make decisions even in milliseconds.

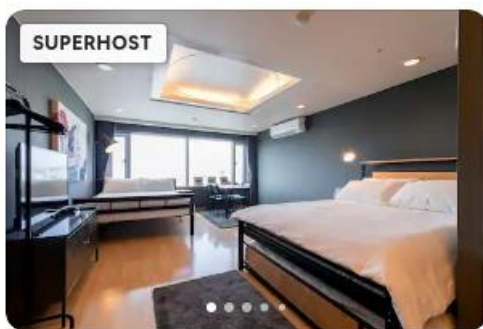
Users who see those pictures easily can understand the features of types of places and can satisfy their needs.

• Cons of the Airbnb and your suggestions: Which feature harms the user experience? How to improve these features?

1.Fee for service/cleaning/etc not included in initial price.

Personally, I have been using Airbnb for almost four years. One of the confusing things was the separate fee for various of services. Since Airbnb is famous for being flexible and cheap (no deposit). I will show you how it works.

Let's imagine I have a business trip in Seoul and need to reserve place for 29 nights.



Entire loft in Hongdae

#3 Big sale!! 1 min. from Hongik univ stn!!

6 guests · 1 bedroom · 3 beds · 1 bath

Kitchen · Wifi · Air conditioning · Hair dryer

★ 4.93 (134 reviews)

₩1,907,611 / month



I chose my place and liked everything so far. It says 1,907,611 won per month.

Let's proceed the payment.

29 nights in Mapo-gu

Jul 1, 2021 - Jul 30, 2021

July 2021							August 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				



[Clear dates](#)

Reserve

You won't be charged yet

Accommodation	₩2,640,902
36% monthly price discount	-₩950,727
Cleaning fee	₩33,974
Service fee	₩183,063
Occupancy taxes and fees	₩18,306
Total	₩1,925,518

This is a rare find. Matthew's place on Airbnb is usually fully booked.



[Report this listing](#)

If analyze further with the discounts they never mentioned and with fees for cleaning, service and taxes it become 1,925,518 won.

If I compare with the initial fee, there is 17,907 won difference. (1,925,518-1,907,611).

The difference here is not that big but there are cases it can be up to 50,000 won or more.

Here are some disadvantages:

- Inaccurate calculation

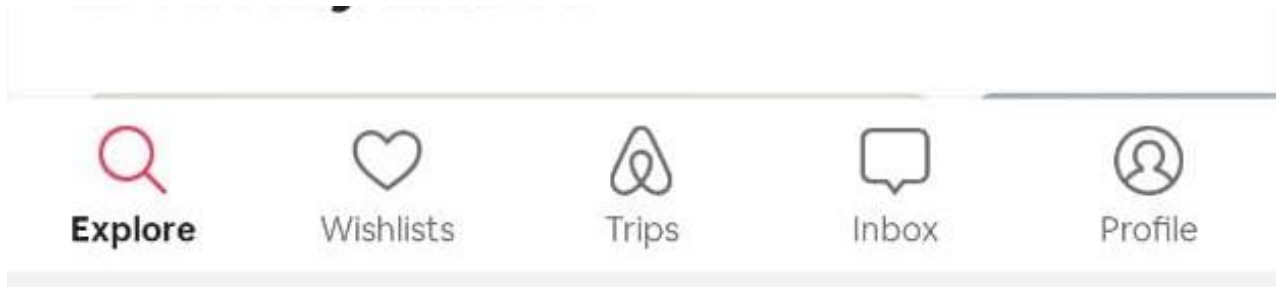
- Waste of time

For inaccurate calculation when you browse the places to stay, they show the price per each night. Some people like myself mostly focus on my budget and choose places according to their prices. However, when you come up with a place to stay, chose and decided to stay they add more fees onto the initial price shown on search box (per night).

After realizing that the final fee surpasses your personal budget you decide to look for another place which is waste of your time. If I compare this feature with Booking.com, then I would choose Booking.com over Airbnb. They show only the purchase price no more additional fees.

My suggestion is to add all the fees into the initial price of the stay. So, users do not waste their time, or research for other places due to their budgets. In Booking.com, initial price is the purchase price you are going to pay for the period you stay.

2. Trips button



As you can see in the middle of the sections, Trips section, I had no idea what this was for in the beginning. People don't have to think when they are using for better user experience. And the first thing that comes to mind is it is about trip. But what trip? I am not sure if I am the only person who found it broad but after clicking on this section there is another "Explore" button for what we already have and "Help Center" related to hosting, payments, recommendations, places, my account, terms and policies etc. There are things to get to know more about Airbnb and things we need to know more about other features deeply.

Trips

Say hello to the world again

Plan a new trip and explore places to stay close to all the places you love.

Start exploring

Can't find your reservation here? [Visit the Help Center](#)

I am more than sure that “Start exploring” button and “Explore” section shares the same features and services. Basically, linking the “Start exploring” button to Explore section.

Trips section is a bit confusing, and I do not see the point for putting “Start exploring” button on there (repetitive).

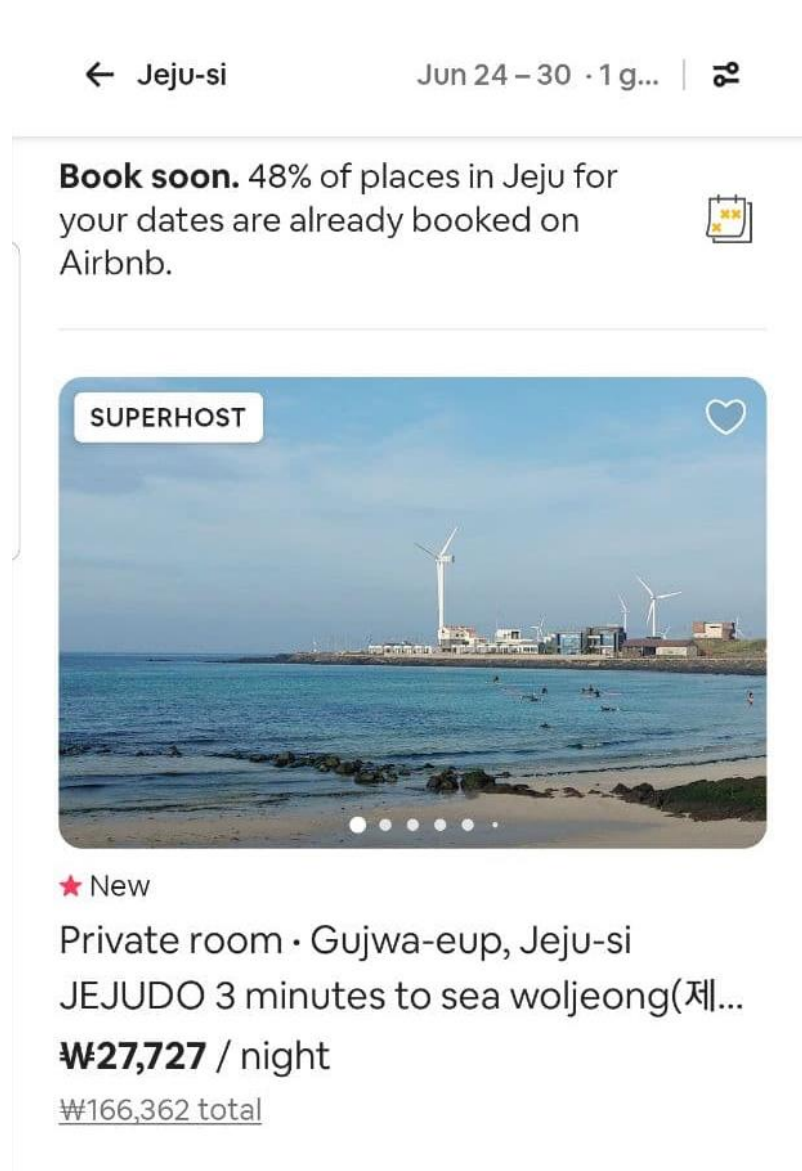
My suggestion would be removing the “Start Exploring” button and rename the “Trips” section to “About” or “Help Center”. That would precisely describe the feature it serves.

• **Overview of your design: Give an overview of the improved website - If you cannot implement the whole thing in time, you should provide sketches for the improved website. You should provide one or both of the design sketches and your implementation results.**

Since my suggestions are almost full implementation of an application which unrealistic within short period of time, I am going to explain both in writing and with sketches.

#1 As we discussed in the cons of the Airbnb, they separately add the service fees while proceeding the payment but what I suggested was to include the service/tax fees in the initial price that are shown while searching for the places to stay.

Here is how it works; I am going to show with pictures that is edited.



It is showing the price per night which is 27,727 won **which includes** itself *taxes* and *services fees*. Also, it is showing the total price for 6 nights. ($27,727 \times 6 = 166,362$ won).

When we proceed the payment, it shows the **total price** that we planned in the beginning. And what it supposed to look like this according to my suggestion. I edited interface by using photoshop.

[←](#) Request to book

Dates

[Edit](#)

Jun 24 – 30

Guests

[Edit](#)

1 guest

Is this a work trip?

☐

Price details

Price per day:	₩ 27.727
Number of days:	6
Total (KRW)	₩166,362
	More info

Lastly, I don't think it is hard to implement this part which requires some computation to be added in main page and hide the details of the service/tax fees.

#2 In the cons of the Airbnb, I also talked about the #Trip section.

The main suggestions were:

- rename the name of “Trip” section to “Help Center” which was irrelevant. (Explore, Wishlists, Help Center, Inbox, Profile)
- Remove the start exploring button
- The contents which are in “Visit Help Center” should be shown when we click the “Help Center”.

Help Center is not visited much, it will also be great to remove that section and remain with 4 other sections. As big SNS services like Instagram, Facebook do we can move the “help center” section into “Profile” section. ((Explore, Wishlists, Inbox, Profile)

If we visit the Profile section, Help Center can be easily found.

As I mentioned in the Cons part:

- “Start Exploring” button in Help Center is repetitive.
- “Help Center” is not frequently visited (I have not visited once in 4 years), so it can be moved into the “profile” section and remain with 4 sections. (Explore, Wishlists, Inbox, Profile)

These things do not require much coding but the designing the contents. Since the sections are already implemented in the beginning what we do is just link button/section to the already implemented feature.