

Megaplex Theatres Website Usability Study

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<http://designerdean.github.io/megaplex-theatres/>

Purpose

The Megaplex Theatres website exists to provide Utah and Nevada moviegoers with information on currently-running movies, showtimes, theatre locations, and miscellaneous in-theatre services. The presentation of this information should attempt to convert visitors into customers through the online purchase of movie tickets or the creation of a MegaplexTheatres.com account. Since going to the movies tends to be a group outing, the website should feature the social media sharing of individual movies in order to encourage customer interaction and thus optimize sales. In addition to its informational and sales-driven aspects, the website acts as an online representation of the family-focused and customer-centric values of the Megaplex Theatres organization.

Since the website consists of several time-sensitive components (currently-available movies, showtimes, advance ticket sales, etc.), content must be driven dynamically through a Content Management System (CMS). Aside from ticket purchases, the website contains an e-commerce platform where users can purchase gifts, concession vouchers, and other merchandise. Additionally, gift card holders can check their balance or add money to their cards, and MegaRewards card holders can view their current number of points.

Problem Statements

- Are users able to find a specific movie?
- Do users understand how to view the details of a specific movie?
- Do users understand how to find showtimes for a specific movie?
- Is the ticket-selection process intuitive? Are the steps in a logical order?
- Do users understand how to find showtimes for a specific Megaplex location?
- Are users able to find the location of a specific Megaplex Theatres location?
- Do users understand how to return to the homepage?
- Do returning customers know how to access their account?
- Do users consider the layout cluttered?
- Is the website visually appealing to users?
- Do users like the colors scheme of the website?
- Are users able to read the content easily?

User Profiles

MegaplexTheatres.com users are located in the major cities of Northern and Southern Utah, with a small portion of Mesquite, Nevada residents and tourists. Despite Utah's growing Latino population, Megaplex Theatres does not offer in-theatre language translation services. As a result, virtually all of the site's visitors speak English.

Users tend to visit the cinema on a regular basis. Because of their interest in leisurely entertainment, users are familiar with the online process of searching for local events and showtimes. They are also accustomed to making online purchases.

Ages range anywhere from young teenager to senior citizens. However, an observance of Megaplex customers' in-theatre behavior reveals that the elderly tend to bypass the electronic ticketing kiosks and go straight to a real person at the box office or Guest Services. Therefore, it is likely that elderly users visit the website primarily to find showtimes and locations instead of purchase tickets. The profile of those who do take advantage of purchasing tickets online consists of parents or teenagers representing an entire family or group of friends.

Website analytics over the last twelve months indicate that a huge number of users visit the site from mobile devices: 44%, and growing. This includes iOS, Android, Windows Phone, and Blackberry devices. These numbers are supported by the site's browser statistics: 35% use Safari for either Mac OS X® or iOS, 20% use Internet Explorer, 17% use Android Browser, 15% use Chrome, and 10% use Firefox. Users commonly search for showtimes when in a hurry or en route to a Megaplex location.

Megaplex Theatres provides movie showings with descriptive video services (DVS) for the visually impaired as well as open and closed captioning for the hearing impaired; so, it is likely that those with disabilities use the Megaplex website.

Methodology

The newly-proposed Megaplex Theatres website will undergo testing in order to identify problem areas and optimize website usability and user satisfaction. Five users will be selected that possess the attributes described in the User Profiles section above. Testing will take place during the week of May 19, 2013.

Upon arrival, the participant will be welcomed and thanked. The moderator will provide an overview of the test, encourage the participant to think aloud throughout the session, and kindly explain why assistance in task completion cannot be given. Next, the moderator will answer any questions the participant might have. The participant will then

be asked to complete a short Usability Test and Recording consent form. The moderator will ensure that all mobile devices are turned off or silenced to avoid distraction.

After these introductory steps, the participant will be asked to use the Megaplex Theatres website according to the instructions and task list given by the moderator. Following the website interaction phase of the session, the participant will complete two short surveys online. Finally, the user will have time to express feedback on both the website and testing process.

Test Environment and Equipment

Most importantly, each user should feel comfortable in the test environment. During training, the moderator needs to clarify that it is the website that is under examination, not the user. This message should be repeated whenever the user appears to be experiencing environmental stress.

Depending on participant convenience, testing will take place in either a home office or a professional office. The home office will be equipped with a 21.5-inch Apple iMac®, and the professional office will be equipped with a 15-inch Macbook Pro® laptop. Both machines will be running the latest version of the Mac OS X software (currently at version 10.8.3). Google Chrome will be the browser used during each test session. Just before being presented with the website, the video operator will start a screen recording through Quicktime®, which will also record the audio of the testing session. As a precautionary measure, audio will also be recorded through a handheld device. The video and audio files produced will also provide data on the timing of tasks. Paper and pencil will be on hand to document anything that the video recording software might miss.

The moderator will be seated slightly behind the user, on the right-hand side. This arrangement will provide an optimal view of both the participant's use of the website as well as the mouse device. In a further attempt to provide environmental comfort, two different mice devices will be on hand from which the participant can select.

Testing Crew

The roles of moderator, data recorder, time-keeper, and video operator will be assumed by myself, Joshua Dean.

Evaluation Measures

The following measures will evaluate task-related results and user perceptions:

- Successfully completing the task versus failing to complete the task
- The amount of time taken to complete the task
- The number of clicks taken to complete the task
- User feedback during tasks
- User rankings generated from survey questions

Task List

Task 1: Find a specific movie title.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: First, I would like you to locate something on the homepage. Feel free to use the mouse, just don't click on anything yet. Please find a movie titled, *The Wolverine*.
- Conditions for Success: The user points to the *The Wolverine* movie poster/title in the "Find Movie Times" box.

Task 2: Find the location of a specific movie title's details.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Find the rating for a movie titled, *Man of Steel*.
- Conditions for Success: The user navigates to the *Man of Steel* page and locates the MPAA movie rating information below the movie poster image.

Task 3: Return to the homepage.

- Start State: *Man of Steel* page
- Script: Please navigate to the homepage.
- Conditions for Success: The user returns to the homepage by way of the website ID/logo, breadcrumbs, or the back button.

Task 4: Locate the account login link.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Please identify how returning customers would login to their account.
- Conditions for Success: The user points to the "Login" link in the top-right corner of the website.

Task 5: Locate where showtimes are listed for a specific movie title.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Please locate where you would find showtimes for a movie titled, *The Great Gatsby*.

- Conditions for Success: The user navigates to the page titled, *The Great Gatsby*, and locates the “Choose a Time” section in the “Tickets” area.

Task 6: Evaluate the ticket-selection process.

- Start State: *The Great Gatsby* page
- Script: Take a few moments to look over the “Tickets” area on this page. (*Wait a few moments*) Is the ticket-selection process clear? (*User answers*) Why or why not? (*User answers*) Are the steps in a logical order? (*User answers*)
- Conditions for Success: The user indicates that the ticket-selection process is clear and that the order is logical.

Task 7: Find the address of a specific Megaplex Theatres location.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Please find the address of the Megaplex Theatres location at Ogden - The Junction.
- Conditions for Success: The user navigates to the “Ogden - The Junction” page and identifies the address.

Task 8: Locate showtimes for a specific Megaplex Theatres location.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Please find a schedule of today’s showtimes for the location at Ogden - The Junction.
- Conditions for Success: The user navigates to the “Ogden - The Junction” page and identifies the “Showtimes” section.

Task 9: Buy movie tickets.

- Start State: Homepage
- Script: Buy any type of tickets for a movie titled, *Star Trek Into Darkness*.
- Conditions for Success: The user navigates to the page titled, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, goes through the ticket-selection process, and clicks the “Buy Tickets” button.

Results

Task Results				
Task	User	Did the user successfully complete the task?	Time taken to complete the task (seconds)	Number of clicks taken to complete the task
1. Find a specific movie title.	1	Yes	2.0	N/A
	2	Yes	4.0	N/A
	3	Yes	2.9	N/A
	4	Yes	1.6	N/A
	5	Yes	3.2	N/A
	Avg	Yes	2.74	N/A
2. Find the location of a specific movie title's details.	1	Yes	9.8	1
	2	Yes	5.7	1
	3	Yes	12.2	1
	4	Yes	5.2	1
	5	Yes	8.6	1
	Avg	Yes	8.3	1
3. Return to the homepage.	1	No	15.6	3
	2	Yes	4.7	1
	3	Yes	5.1	1
	4	Yes	2.7	1
	5	Yes	5.8	1
	Avg	Yes	6.78	1.4
4. Locate the account login link.	1	Yes	4.4	N/A
	2	Yes	5.7	N/A
	3	Yes	3.3	N/A
	4	Yes	3.2	N/A
	5	Yes	3.6	N/A

	Avg	Yes	4.04	N/A
5. Locate where showtimes are listed for a specific movie title.	1	Yes	6.3	1
	2	Yes	6.7	1
	3	Yes	11.8	1
	4	Yes	7.0	1
	5	Yes	19.8	1
	Avg	Yes	10.32	1
6. Evaluate the ticket-selection process.	1	Yes	N/A	N/A
	2	Yes	N/A	N/A
	3	Yes	N/A	N/A
	4	Yes	N/A	N/A
	5	Yes	N/A	N/A
	Avg	Yes	N/A	N/A
7. Find the address of a specific Megaplex Theatres location.	1	Yes	9.1	1
	2	Yes	7.4	1
	3	Yes	10.3	1
	4	Yes	8.2	1
	5	Yes	26.0	3
	Avg	Yes	12.2	1.4
8. Locate showtimes for a specific Megaplex Theatres location.	1	Yes	8.8	1
	2	Yes	12.1	1
	3	Yes	13.0	1
	4	Yes	8.7	1
	5	Yes	24.1	3
	Avg	Yes	13.34	1.4
9. Buy movie tickets.	1	Yes	18.7	6
	2	Yes	18.5	10
	3	Yes	39.8	10

	4	Yes	29.5	10
	5	Yes	23.4	8
	Avg	Yes	25.98	8.8

Demographics Survey Results				
User	Movie frequency	Age	Gender	Internet hours/week
1	Once a month	21-29	F	11-20
2	Once a month	21-29	M	5-10
3	Once every 3 months	50-59	F	21-30
4	Once a week	30-39	M	31-40
5	Once a month	30-39	M	31-40

Evaluation Survey Results						
Question	1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither agree or disagree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Strongly agree	Average Score
1. Finding a specific movie was easy.				1	4	4.8
2. The ticket-selection process was intuitive and straightforward.					5	5
3. The ticket-selection process was ordered in a logical manner.					5	5
4. The website was well organized and free of clutter.				1	4	4.8
5. The website was visually appealing.				1	4	4.8
6. Content on the website was easy to read.				2	3	4.6

Evaluation Survey Open-Ended Question Results	
User	Answer to: What did you like best about the website?
1	I liked the website because the process was very simple and straight forward. Finding locations, movie times and tickets was one of the easiest processes I have ever used.
2	Basic interface.
3	Movie posters and clean and free of distractions.
4	Modern layout and colors, with clean text. The site felt fresh and easy to navigate.
5	Very simple and intuitive.
User	Answer to: What did you like least about the website?
1	Nothing, I honestly think this website is better and more simple than the current Megaplex website.
2	N/A
3	Not clear on other ways to get back to the home page.
4	Scrolling down to see the 3 categories and social feeds.
5	Couldn't see everything at the bottom without scrolling down.
User	Answer to: Do you have any suggestions for improving the website?
1	No suggestions for improvement that I can see or recommend at this time.
2	No.
3	It is good as is.
4	Decrease the title sizes slightly, include upcoming movie information and ticket sales, include "watch trailer" box instead of text, add select date, have a home icon or "return home" arrow of some kind.
5	No.

Discussion

Despite its relative simplicity, the most difficult task for users to complete was that of returning to the homepage. This task's results in success rate, average time, and number of clicks were poorer than expected. Additionally, multiple users expressed their confusion related to the task either during testing or in the survey. This task's difficulty might be explained by the relationship between the homepage content and the page titles in the main navigation. For example, two users wanted to click the "Movies" navigation link when asked to return to the homepage. Confusion resulted from the similarity between the homepage's primary content (a list of movies) and the first link in the navigation ("Movies"). Since the "Movies" link in the navigation does not link to the homepage, it is not marked by a "you are here" indicator when visiting the homepage. The original purpose of the "Movies" link was to direct users to a page displaying all the movies, similar to the homepage, but with the added functionality of sorting and filtering. This separation confused users.

User number three represented an older demographic (ages 50-59), and provided valuable information in terms of website readability. During any task that required the user to find a specific movie title on the homepage (tasks 1, 2, 5, and 9), this user moved her face closer to the screen and squinted her eyes. When asked if the titles below the movie posters were too small to read, the user stated, "I didn't even notice the titles...I was looking at the [movie posters]." It is likely that the strong and varied colors of the movie posters distracted the user from the titles' small text and subdued design, resulting in an attempt to read the often indiscernible image-based text.

Due to its potential complexity, the ticket-selection process was the most crucial aspect of the website's redesign. The user comments, survey results, success rates, time, and number of clicks related to tasks 6 and 9 reveal that the new ticket-selection process is clear, intuitive, and in a logical order. Despite positive results, various users pointed out further improvements and missing steps. Due to their dynamic and complex nature, these steps were planned for the next development phase, and are outlined under Recommendations for Change.

During tasks that presented a date picker element, users spent more time than expected selecting a date. They were not sure if the default date shown was today's date or a future date. This can be attributed to the date picker's generic design and vague format.

Users two and five showed some difficulty with tasks 7 and 8. When trying to find the details of a specific Megaplex location, instead of going straight to the "Locations" link in

the navigation, they would get distracted by the “Location” label above the movies box. This confusion can be explained by the failure to provide unique naming conventions.

Two users expressed that they did not like having to scroll down to see the latest promotions and social media items on the homepage. Despite the fact that the movies box is the most important element on the page, it is possible that its size discourages users from noticing or effectively exploring timely content.

Recommendations for Change

1. Merge the home and Movies pages
 - a. Add sorting (alphabetically vs. date) to movies box
 - b. Add schedule filtering (Now Playing vs Coming Soon) to movies box
 - c. Add format filtering (IMAX, 3D, VIP Theatre, etc.) to movies box
2. Improve how the homepage presents timely content
 - a. Add a small area above the movies box displaying the single most recent item (i.e. "Tickets now available for *Man of Steel*," "Visit our Facebook page for a chance to win *The Lone Ranger* premiere tickets," etc.)
 - b. Mark special event or coming soon movies with a ribbon or badge
3. Improve the ticket-selection process
 - a. Add seat selection
 - b. Add cost (matinee/evening, sub-total/total)
 - c. Style "Change Date" and "Change Location" links in a way that makes them look more like form elements and less like external links
4. Make the movie titles in the homepage movies box more prominent
 - a. Increase the font size
 - b. Add a hover state that enlarges the title and displays more details
5. Clarify movie box location filtering on homepage
 - a. Change "Location" label to "Filter by Location"
 - b. Change "All Megaplex Locations" default value to "Select a Location"
6. Add "Today," "Tomorrow," or day of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) to the date pickers in the ticket-selection process and on the location-specific page
7. Add a calendar icon to the date picker on the location-specific page
8. Make the "Watch trailer" link on the movie-specific page more obvious
9. Change "2D" format name to "Standard format (2D)"

Appendix A

Evaluation Survey - Likert Scale

1. Finding a specific movie was easy.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree
 - c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
 - d. 4 - Somewhat agree
 - e. 5 - Strongly agree
2. The ticket-selection process was intuitive and straightforward.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree
 - c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
 - d. 4 - Somewhat agree
 - e. 5 - Strongly agree
3. The ticket-selection process was ordered in a logical manner.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree
 - c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
 - d. 4 - Somewhat agree
 - e. 5 - Strongly agree
4. The website was well organized and free of clutter.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree
 - c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
 - d. 4 - Somewhat agree
 - e. 5 - Strongly agree
5. The website was visually appealing.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree
 - c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
 - d. 4 - Somewhat agree
 - e. 5 - Strongly agree
6. Content on the website was easy to read.
 - a. 1 - Strongly disagree
 - b. 2 - Somewhat disagree

- c. 3 - Neither agree or disagree
- d. 4 - Somewhat agree
- e. 5 - Strongly agree

7. What did you like best about the website?
8. What did you like least about the website?
9. Do you have any suggestions for improving the website?

Appendix B

Demographics Survey

1. About how often do you go to the movies?
 - a. More than once a week
 - b. Once a week
 - c. 2-3 times a month
 - d. Once a month
 - e. Once every 3 months
 - f. Once every 6 months
 - g. Once a year
 - h. Less than once a year
 - i. Not at all
2. Which category below includes your age?
 - a. 17 or younger
 - b. 18-20
 - c. 21-29
 - d. 30-39
 - e. 40-49
 - f. 50-59
 - g. 60 or older
3. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
4. How many hours do you spend on the internet on an average week?
 - a. Less than 5 hours
 - b. 5-10 hours
 - c. 11-20 hours
 - d. 21-30 hours
 - e. 31-40 hours
 - f. More than 40 hours

Appendix C

Consent Form

Your participation in this usability study will be recorded with the intent of improving the Megaplex Theatres website.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the audio and video recordings.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Appendix D

The Megaplex Theatres website applied the following usability guidelines as outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

No.	Guideline	Relative Importance
1:1	Provide Useful Content	5
1:2	Establish User Requirements	5
1:4	Involve Users in Establishing User Requirements	5
2:1	Do Not Display Unsolicited Windows or Graphics	5
2:3	Standardize Task Sequences	4
3:2	Design Forms for Users Using Assistive Technologies	5
3:3	Do Not Use Color Alone to Convey Information	5
3:4	Enable Users to Skip Repetitive Navigation Links	4
3:5	Provide Text Equivalents for Non-Text Elements	4
5:3	Create a Positive First Impression of Your Site	5
5:4	Communicate the Web Site's Value and Purpose	4
5:5	Limit Prose Text on the Homepage	4
6:1	Avoid Cluttered Displays	5
6:2	Place Important Items Consistently	5
9:4	Use Unique and Descriptive Headings	4
10:1	Use Meaningful Link Labels	5
10:3	Match Link Names with Their Destination Pages	4
10:5	Repeat Important Links	4
11:1	Use Black Text on Plain, High-Contrast Backgrounds	4
11:3	Use Mixed-Case for Prose Text	4
14:5	Include Logos	4
15:1	Make Action Sequences Clear	5
16:1	Organize Information Clearly	5
16:2	Facilitate Scanning	5
16:4	Group Related Elements	4