

## **CS 428/828: Project Proposal**

Group 15: Mahrukh Aslam, Tushar Shantaram Borchate, Nilaykumar Jha, Dhvanil Patel

### **BACKGROUND**

Craigslist, a well-known classified advertisements website, emerged in 1995 by Craig Newmark (hence the name Craigslist). Initially, Mr. Newmark hoped to mimic the idea of local events such as social gatherings to strike the interest of software and web developers residing in the San Francisco Bay Area by creating an email distribution list that spread from Craig to his friends and their friends and so on. As the list grew, it no longer was just a mailing list related to the tech industry, but rather served a much larger purpose. Employers looking for specific talent for jobs made use of the list to network with each other leading to the creation of a “jobs” category. As the annual list of users increased over the span of a decade, more and more categories began to emerge eventually leading to the Craigslist website that can be seen today. The reason we have decided to pursue Craigslist as an opportunity for improvement and redesign is to simply add our touch of modernism to the website as well as improve the categories of the website. We hope to make Craigslist a more user friendly and organized website.

### **USERS**

Broadly speaking, the users of Craigslist are individuals who want to post ads or browse ads online. These ads are made by other users and can be regarding jobs, dating, items wanted, housing, for sale and so forth. Users include businesses looking for employees, people offering services such as hairstyling and music lessons, people looking for housing and people selling and buying items. Craigslist also has a discussion forum for people who are looking to discuss various topics ranging from parenting to politics. Craigslist appeals to a broad range of users from teenagers to senior citizens. User community is a major factor in the success of Craigslist as the website provides a place for users to communicate, help one another, provide tips and report problems. Craigslist is available in around seventy countries, so people from all over the world can use it. However, Craigslist is local to the user’s area, so by default it displays ads that are posted nearby. According to Craigslist’s factsheet, Craigslist has more than 30 million user visits per month.

### **PERCEIVED ISSUES**

Craigslist has a lot of issues which spoils the user experience. They are as followed:

#### **→ Content display is cluttered and confusing:**

- There’s so much content on Craigslist, with hundreds of different local communities and lots of different categories of classifieds. This creates unnecessary clutter which may leave an inexperienced user confused.
  - “post to classifieds” button -> no proper explanation for classifieds

→ **Problems with responsiveness:**

- There are a lot of issues with responsiveness of the website such as:
  - UI elements being distorted on mobile device when orientation changes
  - No proper implementation of controls like navigation bar for mobile devices

→ **Poor Standards:**

- Though the website serves more than 30 million page views a month, it does not comply with certain user interface standards such as:
  - Inconsistency in behaviour (e.g., form to post an advertisement)
  - Improper use of metaphors (e.g., use of delete icon to hide something)
  - Inconsistency in UI elements (e.g., placement of price tag)
  - Ambiguous location tags (e.g., placement of location tag and unnecessary abbreviations of city names)

## **SUPPORT**

→ **Our Experience:**

- Craigslist fulfills its main purpose but at the cost of a bad user experience. The website has a number of issues that can make users uneasy.
- In many cases, the user interface itself does not guide a user properly. To illustrate a few scenarios:
  - There is no close button for the navigation bar on mobile devices
  - Filters are confusing
  - Clicking the next button on image slider opens the product page instead of changing the image
- Another major concern is that there is no security implementation by Craigslist to guarantee the authenticity of goods and services being sold there

→ **Comments from other users:**

- *"As someone looking to hire, and I guess the same applied to people looking for work, I find that Craigslist is too simplistic and that it lacks a search capability outside of a user's selected city. I have to use another to search the entire state for what I am looking for. Why doesn't Craigslist improve their search? We will never know!"* – Recruit Hunter (fitsmallbusiness.com)
- *"It is full of scammers. People are wasting a lot of time trying to evaluate and sort through legitimate and illegitimate sellers and service providers on the site"* - Olivia Solomon (fitsmallbusiness.com)

## **REFERENCES**

- <https://web.archive.org/web/20120805110958/http://www.craigslist.org/about/factsheet>
- <https://www.inc.com/magazine/201609/jon-fine/inc-interview-craigslist.html>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanmac/2017/05/03/how-does-craigslist-make-money/#6afa45ea27b1>
- <https://fitsmallbusiness.com/craigslist-reviews/>