

COMM5961

Assignment 8

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I. Improvements Compared to Competitors' Websites

I consider Xiudong website (<https://www.showstart.com/>) as my strongest competitor as most people use Xiudong when they prepare to watch a live performance. It is also the biggest website focusing on live shows tickets purchasing in China.

Above all, my prototype further narrows the live performances to the live concerts of indie bands and artists. Because the nature as well as the market of live concerts and other live performances such as comedy plays and talk shows. My prototype only targets on music performances in live houses and excludes all the other performances to make it easier and clearer to use. Then I'll illustrate some detailed improvements from several aspects.

Registration and Login

After registration, users can choose their preference in music styles, specific bands, and features and atmosphere of live performances. It's worth mentioning that the part of atmosphere is specially designed for amateur music lovers as well as young people who haven't gone to a live performance before. It can be easier to choose comparing with music styles and bands. Interaction with users can be enhanced in this way. And it can also help to collect users' personal information and interest.

Performance Information

Performance information can be browsed in a timeline like the posts on social media which is a source many people tend to use for searching live concerts information. This form conforms more with users' habits.

The page for all performance information can be selected and filtered through different tags. In addition to the traditional music style tag, different atmospheres more related to subjective preference are also provided for people who may not be familiar with music styles. Moreover, there is a recommended score of every music style

designed for people who don't listen to various kinds of music very often. This can remind them which style is more easily acceptable and which is not.

Performance information can also be posted by users themselves. Some performances of small and new bands or those in unpopular venues are easily ignored. Then their music lovers or even themselves could post performance information on the website to make the performance known by more people.

Artist Information

Artists' Weibo and Wangyiyun homepage links, relevant live concerts videos, and comments from music lovers and critics are added to the artist information page. People could easily get access to all kinds of information they want in this page, especially for the artists they know very little. And if the information is still not enough, it is also easy to browse their social media platforms.

Overall, the functions and information are much more friendly to amateur music lovers and people who are not familiar with live performances.

II. Usability Test Plan

Product under Test

What's being tested? What are the business and experience goals of the product?

The product being tested is a prototype for a live performance website. The business goal is to motivate more young people, especially people who are interested in live performances, to watch live concerts as easily as watch movies. With the trend that live house culture is becoming a more and more popular part of youth culture and lifestyle, the website gives music lovers a platform to browse and post information in a user-friendly and convenient way. And for bands and venues, especially small and new ones, it is a platform to advertise their live shows.

For experience goals, the website aims to solve the existing problem of fragmented and delayed information of live concerts and relevant artists, giving both amateur music lovers and potential live performance lovers a convenient and friendly one-stop website for all the information needed before purchasing a ticket.

Business Case

Why are we doing this test? What are the benefits? What are the risks of not testing?

By doing this test, users' thinking pattern, requirements and priorities can be explored and further used to improve the whole information architecture. Without testing, the future website may deviate from the expectation and original goals.

Test Objectives

What are the goals of the usability test? What specific questions will be answered? What hypotheses will be tested?

The test aims to discover the natural and real thinking process of users through the observation of their clicking.

Specific questions to be answered include: Is the information clear enough to understand easily? Are the procedures of finishing tasks simple enough without any confusion? Is the information architecture appropriate enough? Are the functions provided by the website necessary enough to fulfill users' needs? What does the users expect to see and to do on the page?

Hypotheses to be tested include: Users could basically finish the tasks successfully. The functions of the website could fulfil users' needs for searching related information for live concerts. The information offered by the website is necessary and helpful to the users.

Participants

How many participants will be recruited? What are their key characteristics?

There are 5 participants in total. Two of them (test1 and test5) are amateur music lovers who love live performances and go to live house very often. Two of them (test3 and test4) are people who are interested in live concerts and have only gone to a live concert once or twice before. They are not very familiar with the music styles but loves live performances as an entertainment for relaxing. And one of them (test2) is a music lover as well as the guitarist of a small band.

Equipment

What equipment is required? How will you record the data?

Zoom and Tencent meeting are used to conduct the test. The whole process is

recorded. The data are later recorded by reviewing the videos.

Test Tasks

What are the test tasks?

1. Register and login the website.
2. Find the page for all future performances.
3. Find the live performance on 11.25 in Beijing.
4. Demonstrate the process of posting a live performance.
5. Find the performances which the website recommends for you according to your preference.
6. Randomly browse the page for all performances, choose a music style, add a performance and also the artist to your collection.
7. Demonstrate the whole process of searching for information before watching a performance.

Responsibilities

Who is involved in the test and what are their responsibilities?

Except for the 5 participants, I was the only one conducting the tests. I was responsible for explaining the rules, telling them every task requirement, asking for their advice, and recording the test process.

Procedure

What are the main steps in the test procedure?

Firstly, explain the aim of test, the form and procedure, and things should be noted. At the same time start to record the meeting. (Participants' consent for recording is asked in advance before the meeting.)

Secondly, describe the task and observe participants' action. Some special points can be noted down for further enquiry, such as areas they stay longer, and the moment they hesitate.

Thirdly, after participants finish one task, ask them about the easiness of the process and their advice for improvement.

III. Test Result Analysis

Clarity of Information and Expression

Results show that the clarity still needs to be enhanced. Confusions and misunderstandings are mainly concerning the name tags in the navigation bar. For example, participant 4 said the name “演出日历” is a little confusing and she could not be sure whether it includes all the performance information. The tag “发现音乐” is also problematic. Participant 1, 4 and 5 thought under this tag, there may be performance and music recommendation. They can't make sure the exact information that should be included because the name is too abstract. Another clarity problem is about the tag “我的演出”, two participants (1 & 4) pointed out that this name is not that appropriate because it includes recommended performances. They said “我的演出” is only related to personalized information.

Clarity problems concerning other information may focus on the button “发布演出信息”. Both participant 3 and 4 misunderstood the meaning of this button. It could be easily misread as “已发布演出信息”. Also, it may be explained as post only the performances of your own instead of any performances you want to share. “溯源信息” in the function of posting performance information is also mentioned concerning users' unfamiliarity with this expression. More explanations can be added.

Easiness of Task Clicking Procedures

Most of the tasks can be finished easily and successfully. However, procedures of finding out the page for all performance information is a little complicated. Because users need to first enter the calendar page and then further link to the goal page. Both participant 2 and 5 said the calendar page and all performance information page could be combined into one to simplify the clicking steps.

Another task considered hard to accomplish is to find out the recommended performances. Three participants (1, 4 & 5) wrongly click “发现音乐” for the first step. Furthermore, participant 1 make another error by clicking “首页”. She thought recommendation should be placed in homepage according to her previous experience and habits. The complexity of this task is mainly because of the lack of clarity of the tag name.

Participant 1 find it a little bit troublesome to login again after registration. She hopes she can login automatically after registration.

Participant 4 also mention the complexity of adding an artist into collection. When she browsed the performance introduction page, she prefers a button directly designed in that page next to the artist information area instead of firstly clicking “了解更多” and then add to collection.

Necessity and Usability of Functions

Basically, the functions can fulfil users' needs. But there are still some problems concerning the necessity and usability of several functions. Participants have adverse attitudes towards the preference choosing function after registration. Participant 1 and 2 are satisfied with this function and think it is important. While participant 4 and 5 said they really wanted to skip this part which may limit the recommendation from the website to only several styles. Therefore, a skip button should be added to fulfil users' need to a larger degree.

Participant 3 mentioned the necessity of the searching function in the calendar and also the city page when choosing date and place. It's more convenient to directly search numbers or city names instead of looking for them one by one. Similarly, participant 4 said she preferred searching city names and dates in the top searching bar.

Concerning the information required in performance posting page, users also have different opinions due to their different perspectives. For example, participant 4 thought the information she was asked to fulfil was too much. Only performance title, ticket price and source link are necessary for her. But for participant 2, as a member of a band, he even thinks the information is not enough. Performance introduction should be added. He may consider from the perspective of artists.

During the process of finishing the tasks, there are also some functions considered to be necessary and considerate for users. Both participant 1 and 3 expressed their needs for the artist information page. They especially like the link to social media platform and live concert videos. Participant 3 also said she was in favor of the covid-19 information in the city choosing page. On the other hand, some other functions can be added. Participant 5 said he needs a rating and marking function to see people's

comments to a live performance. This is what he values a lot when choosing a live concert. Also, a return button is needed for easier returning to the last page.

To conclude, the most important problem is the validity of information architecture. The categorizing of different information and functions is confusing. The names of categories and inside content are not that consistent. This leads to many difficulties. Card sorting tests may better target on this problem. Other information and functions should be further selected and improved according to what users really need.