**User Experience Improvements: Expedia**

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INFO 386

**Problem**

During the holiday season, many people seek to travel back home to visit their families or travel abroad for leisure. Planning the logistics of a trip can be pretty tedious, even for more experienced travelers. Many people, including my family use popular trip planning sites like Expedia to facilitate the process, but there are a couple of key ways this website could be improved.

Studies have demonstrated that younger generation of travelers are more conscious about sustainability and ethical traveling (Chumakova). Having a built-in filtering system for flights that have lower CO2 emissions would make these users feel more comfortable in their choices. This filter should also apply to hotels with the best sustainable practices, as well as transportation options.

I also noticed that when booking flights and hotels on Expedia, I often left the page to seek reviews or recommendations off the site. I think the website could be improved substantially if it had a built-in review/rating system similar to what we see on yelp. I also believe that having an AI integration for recommendation based on a user’s previous purchases and preferences would really enhance the user experience.

The underlying issue is that Expedia is missing key features present in other websites that force users to leave the site and then come back to have all of the information necessary to book their trip. The integration of the features I mentioned would make Expedia more of that one-stop-shop website it intended to be.

**Solution**

My proposed solution to integrate 3 new features that users often leave the site for: a filtering system for sustainable travel options, an onsite review system for airlines, hotels, and other services travelers might use, and an AI recommendation feature that takes into consideration a user’s previous purchases and preferences to deliver a more personalized user experience. In the end, I will be delivering a new and improved version of Expedia that takes into consideration the needs of its users, especially the ones that are worried about the environment and those that are seeking recommendations from other users or from AI.

First a user would visit Expedia and log in to their account. They would then search for the location they want to travel to and from and the dates they plan on leaving. In the top box right below the search bar, there will be an additional checkbox a user can click called “eco-friendly” so that only eco-friendly results come up, and this filter should apply to the flights, the hotels, and the transportation options. The user would then be able to see a side bar with AI recommendations based on their previous purchases and preferences. It should recommend eco-friendly options for those who have used that filter before, or who have purchased an eco-friendly option in the past. This AI tool will be loaded from an external source that creates AI recommendation integrations for businesses and will not be created from scratch for this website. Finally, once a user has clicked on an option, such as a flight or a hotel, there should be an additional box that loads towards the bottom of the page with reviews of the particular hotel, airline, or transportation service created by users of Expedia. This section will also include a 5-star rating system displayed near the top of this box, so that users can get a quick sense of how most of the reviewers feel about this service.

**Deliverables**

* **Improved Expedia website**

*Description***:** a new version of the Expedia website with the following new features

* + A filtering option is added to the search bar to allow for users to only see results that are ecofriendly
  + Under a particular selection such as a flight, hotel or transportation service, there will be an additional section below it where Expedia users can leave reviews/see reviews from other users. They will have the option to leave a written review or a rating out of 5 stars.

*Goals:* To enhance the user experience for people who are interested in sustainable travel options without needing to leave the Expedia website. To allow for users to see reviews from others on flights, hotels, and transportation without needing to leave the website.

* **AI integration**

*Description:* A sidebar that contains an AI integration used for recommendations

* + Takes in information about previous purchases and the preferences on those purchases in order to recommend flights, hotels, or transportation.
  + Shown on the search page next to the search results but not the rest of the website.

*Goals:* To give users a more personalized experience and to make it easier for them to find what they are looking for.

* **Research**

*Description:* Investigation into the existing website infrastructure to determine the feasibility of the new feature integrations, and marketing trends.

*Goals:* To inform the development process based on existing infrastructure, feasibility and marketing trends.

* **UX/UI design prototypes**

*Description:* Protype of the new user interfaces.

*Goal:* To create a seamless user experience while sticking to the overall design theme of the website.

**Timeline**

**Key Milestones:**

* Prelaunch (12 months)
  + User Research (month 2)
  + Prototyping (month 3)
  + AI Integration plan (month 6)
  + Product development (month 10)
  + User Testing (month 11)
  + Marketing (month 12)
* Post launch (1 month)
  + Analytics + future plan (month 1)

**Proposed deadlines:**

* **Stage 1: User research**
  + Expected deadline: 2 months
* **Stage 2: UX/UI prototyping**
  + Expected deadline: 1 month
* **Stage 3: AI integration plan with existing website infrastructure**
  + Expected deadline: 3 months
* **Stage 4: Improved website with the addition of the three additional features** (eco-friendly filter, review section, AI recommendations)
  + Expected deadline: 4 months
* **Stage 5: User testing**
  + Expected deadline: 1 month
* **Stage 6: Marketing and launch**
  + Expected deadline: 2 months
* **Stage 7: Analytics/ future plan**
  + Expected deadline: 1 month

**Budget**

For this project I am asking for resources totaling to $50,000 which are necessary for the success of this project. This budget will cover all stages of development from product development (UX/UI designers, software engineers, and data analysts), product integration, marketing, and testing.

* UX/UI design
  + $10,000
* Software engineers and Data analysts
  + $30,000
* Integration into existing website
  + $5,000
* Marketing
  + $3,000
* Testing and feedback
  + $2,000

**Resources**

Chumakova, H. (2020, March 3). *UX Case Study: What if Expedia was tailored to the needs of socially conscientious travelers?*[Review of *UX Case Study: What if Expedia was tailored to the needs of socially conscientious travelers?*]. Medium; Medium. https://medium.com/@anna.chumakova95/ux-case-study-what-if-expedia-was-tailored-to-the-needs-of-socially-conscientious-travelers-ba7436bcff39

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