

Usability Study Report: Amazon

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose (*Begins p.4*)
2. Participant Overview
3. Study Design
4. Task Descriptions
 - Task 1: Use Filters to Find an Item
 - Task 2: View Customer Reviews and Product Details
 - Task 3: Add to Cart and Checkout
 - Task 4: Follow a Brand Page
5. Appendices
 - Appendix A: Consent Form
 - Appendix B: Moderator Script and Prompts
 - Appendix C: Task Descriptions
6. Usability Study Script (Moderator Guide)

Session #	Participant Initials	Date	Time	Group Member 1	Group Member 2
Session 1	TF	4/17/25	7pm	Meri McGinnis	Hunter Haack
Session 2	JVO	4/16/25	8pm	Meri McGinnis	Dylan Seba
Session 3	JA	4/17/25	8pm	Hunter Haack	
Session 4	JS	4/18/25	10:30 am	Lexi Farhat	
Session 5	GH	4/16/25	9pm	Dylan Seba	Meri McGinnis
Session 6	SL	4/15/25	6:30	Tae Lee	Lexi Farhat

Introduction and Purpose

About Amazon

Amazon is the world's largest online retailer that offers a vast selection of products. The Amazon mobile app allows users to shop, browse, read product reviews, track orders, reorder frequently purchased items, and access additional services like Amazon Pharmacy, Prime Video, and personalized recommendations.

Who Are The Users?

For this usability study, the target users are **young adult smartphone users (ages 18-25) who shop on Amazon at least occasionally**. We are particularly focused on users who rely on the Amazon app for convenience shopping but vary in their tech-savviness, ranging from casual users who browse and buy infrequently to experienced users who depend on Prime services.

User Goals and Motivations

- Efficiently find and purchase items
- Compare products based on customer reviews
- Reorder previous purchases
- Access affordable deals through filters and sorting
- Explore brand stores for updates and exclusive offers

Study Purpose

To evaluate how easily users can navigate the Amazon app to perform common and slightly advanced tasks. We aim to uncover usability issues related to search accuracy, product browsing, pharmacy access, and customer support. Our focus is on:

- Navigational ease
- Filtering and search usability
- Checkout flow clarity
- Interaction with brand pages and advanced features (Amazon Pharmacy)

Research Questions

- Can users intuitively use filters and sorting tools to find relevant products?
- How easily can users access critical product information such as reviews and specifications?
- Is the checkout process seamless and clear?
- Are users aware of and able to follow brand pages effectively?

Participants

Participant Profile

For this study, we will target participants who represent the usual Amazon user. These participants should have experience using mobile applications and are familiar with Amazon. Preferably, they should have purchased something from Amazon in the past 3 months.

Key Characteristics of the Participants

- Ages 18+
- Comfortable using a phone/laptop
- Have used the Amazon mobile app/website at least once in the past 3 months
- Willing to utilize the think aloud method
- Varying tech-savviness levels (casual vs. experienced app users)

Participant Recruiting

Participants will be recruited through social media platforms and personal connections to be invited to participate in this study. Interested participants will be asked a few questions to determine their eligibility.

Screening Criteria

- What is your age?
- How often do you use the Amazon mobile app?
- Have you made a purchase via the Amazon app in the past three months?
- Are you willing to verbalize your thoughts while using the app during a recorded session?

Study Session

Overview:

Each usability study session will last approximately 15-20 minutes and will be conducted either in-person or via Zoom. All sessions will be both video/audio recorded, and participants will be required to share their screen. **Each session will be facilitated by a moderator**, who will lead the session, provide instructions, and monitor the participant's progress through the tasks. While **another team member will be present to manage the recording process** and take observational notes throughout the session.

All study sessions will include a set of core requirements to ensure consistency and data validity. Each session will include **four primary tasks** that cover key usability functions of the Amazon mobile app. The study will use the **think-aloud protocol**, meaning participants will verbalize their thoughts as they complete tasks. No time-based metrics will be collected, as the emphasis is on the user's thought process and task success. The session will also include the **recording of participant** screen activity and audio, **documentation of any critical incidents**

(confusion, errors, or hesitations), and the use of one **performance metric per task**, such as task success rate or number of attempts.

The **moderator will have several responsibilities** during each session. These include introducing the study and explaining the think-aloud method, clearly instructing the participant on how to complete each task without offering assistance, prompting participants to continue thinking aloud if they become quiet, and ensuring that all data collection procedures are followed appropriately. Additionally, **the moderator will work to ensure participants are comfortable**, understand the process, and feel free to express any confusion or difficulty they encounter.

All recordings will be captured using Zoom, including both screen activity and participant/researcher audio. Each recording will be labeled with a unique participant ID number to maintain confidentiality and facilitate organization. All files will be securely stored in a shared team Google Drive folder and accessible only to research team members.

Task Overview

Task One - Use filters to Navigate finding an item

- “You want to buy a pair of wireless headphones for under \$75. Use Amazon to search for wireless headphones, filter by price range under \$75, and sort by average customer review. Choose the headphones with the highest rating and add them to your cart.”

Usability Focus:

- How intuitive and easy it is for users to apply filters, specifically price range filters, to narrow down product options.
- Whether users can effectively use sorting features (such as sorting by customer reviews) to identify the highest-rated products.
- The clarity of product information (price, rating, etc.) once filters and sorting options are applied.
- How easy it is for users to add the selected item to the cart and whether the confirmation process is clear and efficient.

Rationale: Filtering and sorting are essential for navigating Amazon’s large product inventory. This task evaluates how easily users can find high-quality, budget-friendly items.

Metric & Analysis: Task success (Was the item filtered correctly and added to cart?)

Task Two- Find Customer Reviews and Product Details

- "Open a product and locate its customer reviews and technical specifications."

Usability Focus:

- Layout and navigation of the product page

- Visibility and labeling of review and detail sections
- Scannability and hierarchy of information (e.g., star ratings, specs)

Rationale: Many users rely on customer reviews and detailed product info before making a purchase. Difficulty locating or understanding this information can erode trust and lead to indecision or abandonment.

Metric & Analysis: Number of attempts/clicks to find details

Task Three- Add to Cart and Checkout

Objective: Test how users buy a product and the ease of checkout.

- "Once you find the wireless headphones that meet your criteria its time to buy them, add the item to your cart then complete the checkout process to get the item delivered straight to your door."

Usability Focus:

- Clarity of checkout process and steps to complete purchase
- Ease of selecting payment method and getting the correct address
- How easy is it for a user to complete the checkout process for their item of choice

Rationale: These steps are central to completing a transaction on Amazon. Confusion or delays here can directly impact user satisfaction and conversion rates. Observing where users hesitate provides insight into possible friction points in the buying process.

Metric & Analysis: Task success (Was checkout completed?)

Task Four - Follow a brand page on Amazon

Objective: Test how users follow and manage brand or influencer pages on Amazon.

- "You recently found out your favorite skincare brand has a store on Amazon. Search for the brand 'CeraVe' and follow their brand page so you can get updates on new products and deals."

Usability Focus:

- How easily users can search for and identify a brand's official Amazon storefront.
- How intuitive it is to locate and use the "Follow" feature on a brand page.
- Whether users understand what following a brand does (e.g., notifications, recommendations, deals).
- The visibility and placement of the following features within Amazon's UI.

Rationale: Following brands is part of Amazon's social shopping strategy. This task helps evaluate how well this feature is integrated and understood by users.

Metric & Analysis: Task Success

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form Signed by both participant and moderator. Includes permission for audio/video recording.

Appendix B: Moderator, instructions, think-aloud practice, and task prompts.

Appendix C: Task Descriptions of each of the four tasks given to participants during the session.

Usability Study Script (Moderator Guide)

Introduction

In this study, I'll be asking you to complete several tasks designed to help us evaluate the **Amazon** app. The most important thing for you to remember is that this is not a test – there is no right or wrong way to complete the tasks. The point of the study is to learn about how you think about and/or use the Amazon app, and your honest responses will be extremely useful in helping us figure out how to improve the app in the future.

We're looking for places where the Amazon app should be changed, so if it seems like something doesn't make sense, please don't feel bad. That is exactly the kind of information we are looking for. Also, participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you become uncomfortable in any way, feel free to stop at any time, and you will still receive your incentive for helping us out today.

In this session, I'm interested in two things: **how you go about completing the tasks, and what you think about as you complete the tasks.** You'll be asked to "think aloud" – and I'll teach you how to do this and give you a chance to practice in just a second. It's very easy to do, and we get a lot of good information from these kinds of studies about where people run into problems with the app. It's basically like you're talking to yourself, but loud enough for other people to hear.

Explain Thinking Aloud

When I say "think aloud", what I mean is that you should say whatever is on your mind while you complete the tasks. I want you to tell me EVERYTHING that you are thinking from the time you begin a task until you finish it. I would like you to talk aloud as CONTINUOUSLY as possible – even if the only thing you are thinking is "I'm drawing a blank."

I want to hear about what you're looking for or what you're trying to do, even if it seems obvious. If you hesitate or are indecisive, describe what's causing your hesitation. Don't try to plan out what to say or try to explain to me what you are thinking. Don't hold back hunches, guesses, wild ideas, or negative comments – these things will all help us a lot. Just try to act as if you are alone, speaking to yourself – only a little louder.

You can also ask me questions, but I can't explain anything about the Amazon app to you right now. If you do have questions, go ahead and say them out loud anyway so we can learn about the kinds of questions and problems people have, and I'll answer your questions at the end of the session. And don't worry, if you forget to "think aloud," I will jump in and remind you to keep talking.

Let me demonstrate thinking aloud for you as I perform a simple task:

- I'm opening the Amazon app, tapping the 'search bar,' and typing 'sweatshirts.' Now I'm looking at the search results and thinking, I want to find the best-rated sweatshirts, so I'm looking for reviews.

Now, you try thinking aloud. Here's a practice task: please think aloud while you answer the question, "How many windows are there in your best friend's house or apartment?"

- [Participant practices thinking aloud.]

Good!

Now, those problems were solved entirely in our heads. However, when you are using the Amazon app, you'll also be looking for things and seeing things that catch your attention. These things you are searching for and things that you see are as important for our observation as thoughts you are thinking from memory, so please verbalize these too.

Do you have any questions about thinking aloud?

Great! I'm just going to give you some final instructions now.

As you're doing the tasks, I won't be able to answer any questions. But if you do have questions, go ahead and ask them anyway so that I can learn more about what kinds of questions the Amazon app brings up. I'll answer your questions after the session. Also, if you forget to think aloud, I'll say, "Please keep talking."

Do you have any questions about thinking aloud?

Task Overview:

- [Hand the participant the printed task list.]
- [If the session is online make sure to send them a copy of just the task list]

These are the tasks you will be working on. Why don't you read it aloud, just so you can get comfortable with speaking your thoughts?

[Participant reads tasks while demonstrating thinking aloud]

Do you have any questions about the tasks before we begin?

- [Answer their questions.]

Whenever you're ready please begin.

[Participant should now perform the tasks while demonstrating thinking aloud]

Finish:

(This section is for once the participant finishes their tasks and the session is wrapping up)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study, your participation will help us better understand how users interact with the Amazon app and identify areas for improvement.

Do you have any questions before we finish the session?

[Wrap up the session]

For Researchers - before the session ends

- Confirm you have a copy of the signed consent form with both Moderator and Participant signatures
 - End the recording and save the recording on your computer and if applicable, add the recording to the shared Google Drive folder
 - End the session after both of these are confirmed
-

Study Tasks for Amazon

Objective:

In this usability study, participants will be asked to perform tasks related to searching for products, filtering results, reviewing product details, adding to the cart, checking out, and interacting with brand pages within the Amazon app. Participants will verbalize their thoughts (think-aloud) throughout the tasks to help identify areas for improvement in the app's user experience.

Task Descriptions

Task 1: Find and Filter a Product

Description: Participants will search for a specific product and apply filters to narrow the search results.

Steps:

- Open the Amazon app.
- Search for the term 'wireless headphones'.
- Once the search results load, apply a filter to only show products that have 4 stars or higher.
- Think aloud and describe your thoughts as you perform the task, including any difficulties you encounter and why you chose the filters you did.

Task 2: Add to Cart and Checkout

Description: Participants will select a product, add it to their shopping cart, and proceed to the checkout process.

Steps:

- From the filtered search results, select a product you are interested in (e.g., a wireless headphone).
- Add the product to your cart.
- Proceed to checkout and select your preferred payment method.
- Think aloud and describe your thoughts as you complete the steps, including what you are looking for and any areas where you feel unsure or confused.

Task 3: Find Customer Reviews and Product Details

Description: Participants will look for the customer reviews and important product details for the product they selected.

Steps:

- Open the product page for the item you selected in Task 2.
- Locate the customer reviews section.
- Look for any important product details, such as specifications, features, and ratings.
- Think aloud and describe your process of navigating the product page, what information you prioritize, and any difficulty you experience finding details.

Task 4: Follow a Brand Page

Description: Participants will explore and follow a brand's official page on Amazon.

Steps:

- Locate the brand of the product you are looking at (for example, Bose or Sony).
- Navigate to the official Amazon page for that brand.
- Follow the brand's page (if the option is available).
- Think aloud and describe your thoughts as you search for the brand's page, how easy it is to find, and anything you notice during your exploration of the brand's page.

Study Notes:

Participants are encouraged to think aloud throughout the tasks, describing every action and thought they have, including frustrations or confusion.

The tasks are designed to assess how easily users can search for products, apply filters, interact with product details, and complete checkout steps within the Amazon app.

Feedback from this study will help identify usability issues and suggest improvements for user experience design in the app.