

Usability Testing Evaluation Report

COM 554 Fall 2017 | Assignment 2 | Harrison Lingren

Summary of Participant Responses

Question	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3
1. Main page observations	Would click on first/top article. Appearance is boring	Would click on a news article	Lots of empty space, would click on popular or tech. section
2. View news items on Home tab?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Find descriptive overview of a news article?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Return from detailed overview to section?	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Are all tabs clickable?	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Can you view the most popular articles?	Yes	Yes	Yes
6a. Select article and view detail?	Yes	Yes	Yes
7. Access and comment on search help?	No	No, search is not well documented	No
8. Perform a search?	Yes	No (needed assistance to perform the search)	Yes
9. Comments - unexpected screen behaviour?	Search icon/button wasn't clickable and disappeared	No comments / nothing unexpected	No comments / nothing unexpected
10. Comments - layout confusing or awkward?	Layout is basic and straightforward	Layout is not confusing	No comments
11. Comments - search unclear?	No comments / it made sense	Wasn't clear on how to perform a search	Search suggestions or autocomplete would be nice

Question	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3
12. Comments - appearance / layout issues?	Layout is nice and simple. Appearance & colors are boring	Lots of empty white space,	The search bar should match height of text or icon. Lots of empty space. Logo font is boring
13. Comments - changes suggested	Change colors based on section, brand logo design should change, search icon should stay visible and be clickable	Use search icon as button for searching	Search bar sizing, fill in empty space more, change brand logo style
14. Comments - recommendations, anything else	Links, layout clarity and simplicity is good; appearance is boring	No comments	Dividers between section buttons would be nice

Summary of Important Points from Testing

Below is a brief summary of the common points that usability testing participants made while interacting with the website.

Appearance (colors and text)

General observations of the site's appearance and layout seem to conclude that the design is sort of bland. Visually, participants agreed that the colors were boring, and the logo text at the top of the window was as well.

Layout and structure

Participants agreed that the general layout and structure is clear and simple to navigate. Few also mentioned that the layout leaves a lot of empty or unused space. All participants were easily able to locate news articles, click on them to view detailed overviews, change news sections, and view the popular articles (home page).

Search functionality

At the time of testing, search required the user to enter text into the search bar and press the Enter key to view results. Two out of three participants were easily able to search for content. One of the participants needed assistance in performing the search. Suggestions for improvement here were varied, but all of them reflected that search was not as easy to use as it should be. The participant that was unable to perform a search at first noted that the search icon disappears when typing, so there is no visible icon or button to click to perform a search. Another participant commented that because the search bar height spans the entire height of the encompassing navbar, it is visually disconcerting. A couple participants agreed that there should be a search button to click on in addition to the Enter key press functionality. A participant noted that there was not sufficient search assistance implemented at the time of testing, so this likely affected the overall search usability. One participant also suggested adding autocomplete to the search.

Response to Negative Issues

In response to the negative issues that arose during usability testing, I will make key revisions to the site in 3 areas.

Appearance

In response to criticism on the color scheme, I will change the primary and secondary colors of the site (color in the navbar and link/hypertext color within articles) so that there is more contrast. In addition to the color issues, the current font for the branding logo text at the top of the site is the same font that is used throughout. I will instead use a different font to distinguish it from the core content.

Layout and Structure

Most comments on the layout were positive, but there was criticism around the seemingly empty, unused space. The large margins that candidates observed in testing is due to a responsive design that adjusts to the size of the browser's viewport -- candidates all tested the site on a 1920x1080 resolution desktop display, so it appeared to be a bit more spread out. To address these concerns, I will implement smaller margins in the desktop version of the site..

Search

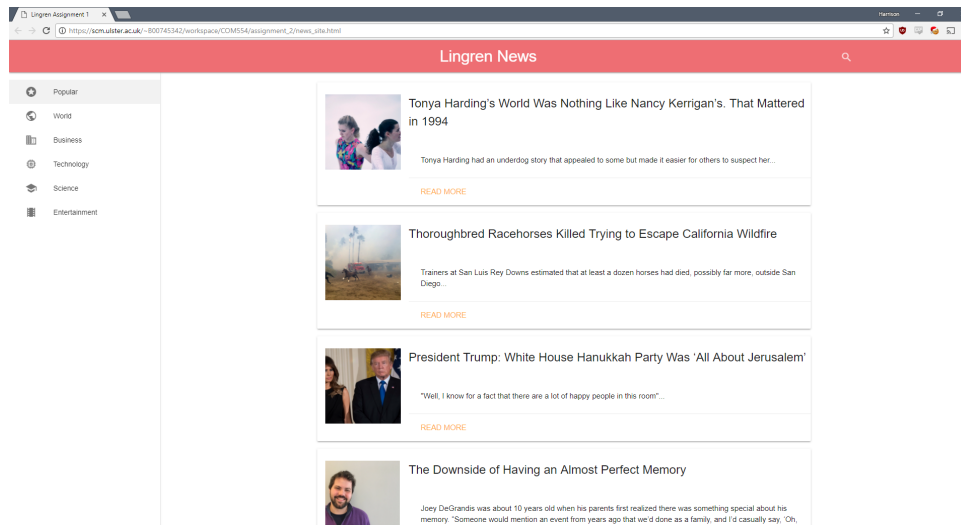
Search had the most criticism out of all the tested functionality. At the time of testing, participants noted that search was a bit too simple and not as fleshed out as it should have been -- there was little to no search assistance and the actual search input field & icon were frustrating to use.

To address these concerns, I will remove the search icon from within the input field and place it to the right of the input as a permanent search button. This button will behave in the same fashion as pressing the Enter key did previously, so that users will be able to use either method to perform a search.

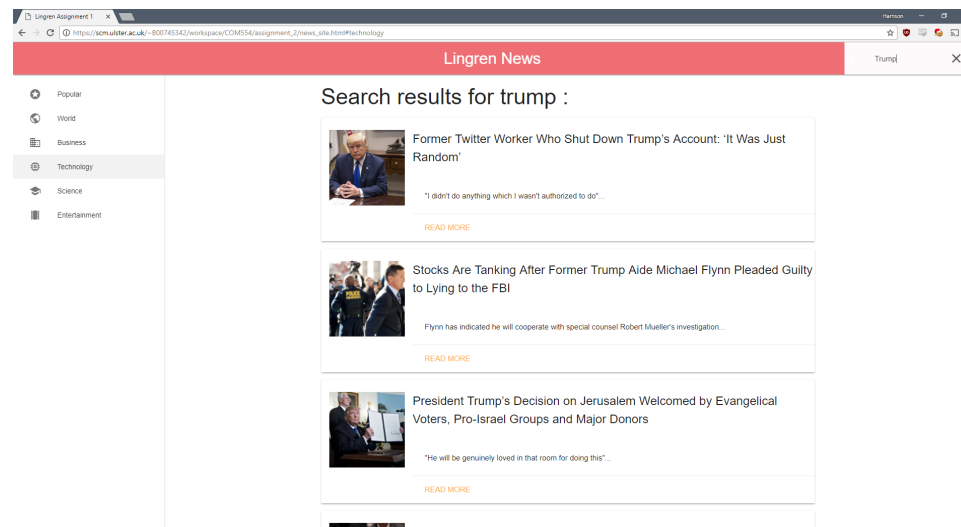
In addition to the search input layout, I will also better clarify the search capabilities by adding a tooltip to the search input. This tooltip will give the user a brief message describing how to perform a search.

Appendix A

Screenshots of the Site Layout and Appearance as of Testing



Popular News section (Home page)



Search results for "Trump"