

Introduction

As my second assignment, I am going to evaluate www.thetrainline.com, which is a website that helps you find train tickets, coaches' ticket, ...

The task that I am trying to accomplish here is to purchase a round-trip ticket from London St Pancras International to Paris Gare du Nord. Sometimes I had to change the task slightly in order to evaluate how the website will handle different requests.

I have identified 5 usability problems on this website, which we will go through later in this article.

Notice: I used Jakob Nielsen's 10 usability heuristics from The Nielsen Norman Group. The concept is the same thing, but the terms might differ from those used in the course. Make sure to check their website www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics

The screenshot displays the homepage of thetrainline.com. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', 'Help', 'Sign In', and 'Sign Up'. Below this is a large hero section with a search bar on the left and a promotional banner on the right that says 'Travel safely with touch-free tickets'. The banner includes a QR code and the text 'Get the latest travel advice and booking info'. Below the hero section, there's a section titled 'Buy your digital Railcard with us' with a 'Buy Railcards' button. This is followed by a 'Travel safely with us' section with icons for 'Go contactless', 'Book a seat', 'Wear a face covering', and 'Use our app'. Below this, there are three featured train routes: 'Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston' for £24.00, 'London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor St' for £5.50, and 'London St Pancras to Paris Gare du Nord' for £39.00. Each route has a 'Book now' button. Below the featured routes, there's a section titled 'Have you considered coach?' with a 'Find more options for your journey' button. This is followed by a 'Popular train journeys' section with a table of routes. The table has two columns: 'UK' and 'Europe'. The 'UK' column lists routes like 'London to Edinburgh', 'London to Manchester train', 'London to Brighton', 'Glasgow to London', and 'Edinburgh to London'. The 'Europe' column lists routes like 'London to Oxford train', 'London to Liverpool', 'Newcastle to Glasgow train', 'London to Leeds train', 'London to Cardiff train', and 'London to Newcastle train'. Below the table, there's a 'Cheap train tickets - buy in advance and save 61%*' section and a 'Planning your journey' section. At the bottom, there's a footer with 'About Trainline', 'Help and useful information', and 'Train and bus companies'. The footer also includes social media links and a copyright notice.

Popular train journeys
From local trips to cross-country adventures, find info and book train tickets for popular journeys in the UK and rest of Europe.

UK	Europe	
London to Edinburgh	London to Oxford train	Regular routes in England
London to Manchester train	London to Liverpool	Regular routes in Scotland
London to Brighton	Newcastle to Glasgow train	Cheap trains to London
Glasgow to London	London to Leeds train	Cheap trains to Manchester
Edinburgh to London	London to Cardiff train	Trains to Edinburgh
	London to Newcastle train	

Cheap train tickets - buy in advance and save 61%*
We help you save on all routes by highlighting the cheapest prices for your next UK journey. Book early to get the best prices and get the most out of your journey. We also offer a range of other services to help you plan your journey, including a range of other services to help you plan your journey, including a range of other services to help you plan your journey.

Planning your journey
Use the Trainline journey planner to plan and book your next train or bus journey. We offer a range of other services to help you plan your journey, including a range of other services to help you plan your journey.

* Average savings are based on the average of the lowest fares available for each route. Savings are based on the average of the lowest fares available for each route. Savings are based on the average of the lowest fares available for each route.

About Trainline
Home
About Us
Contact Us
Help
Sign In
Sign Up

Help and useful information
Train and bus companies
Train journey to the UK
Train and buses to Europe
Top destinations
Stations

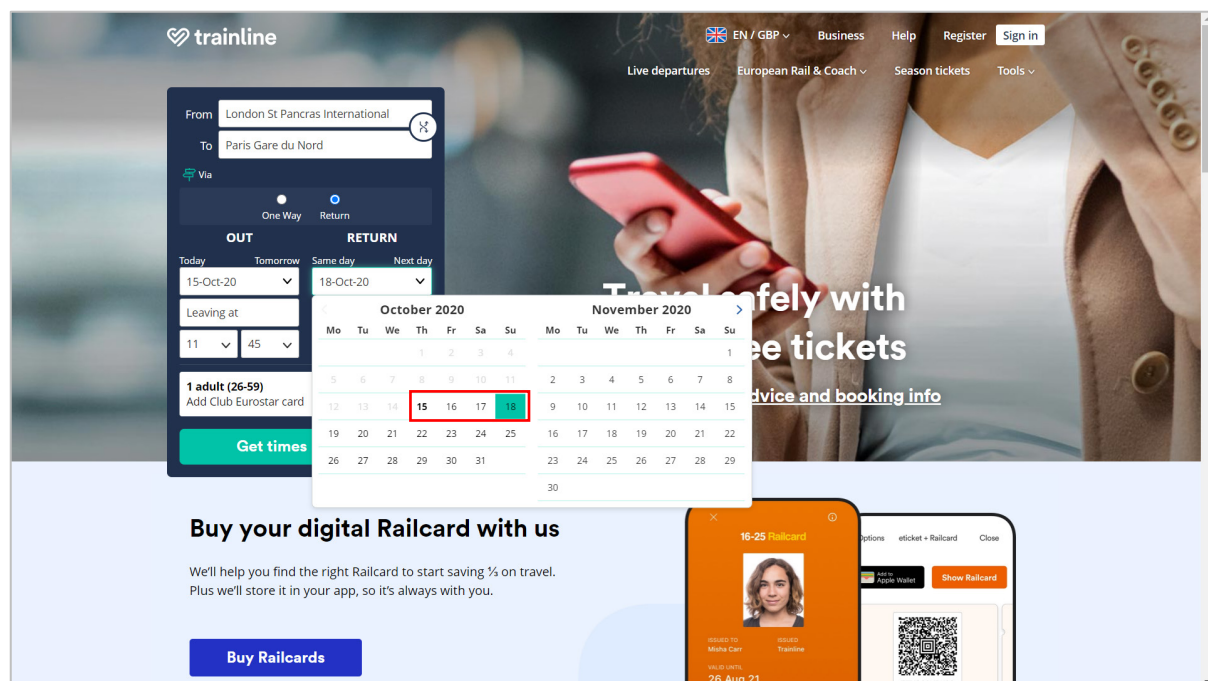
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heuristic name: User control and freedom

severity number: 2 (minor usability problem)

description:

When you try to pick a date, a calendar will pop up that allows you to choose your departure date and return date. At this point, highlighting days between departure and return date would create a better user experience. Counting days is also an excellent way to help the user understand how many days are selected.

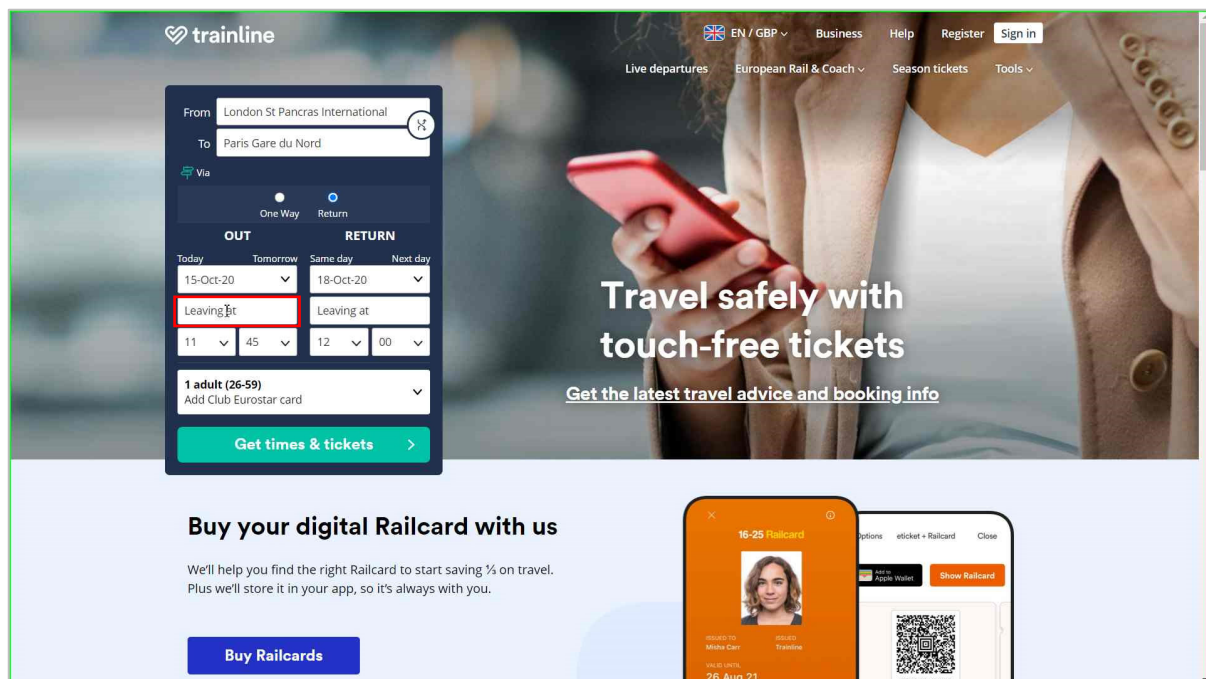


heuristic name: Match between system and the real world

severity number: 2 (minor usability problem)

description:

When you hover over "Leaving at" box, you can see the mouse cursor state change from normal (default) to text. This will convey the message that the user needs to provide some sort of input. While in fact, the user needs to choose from the drop-down menu.

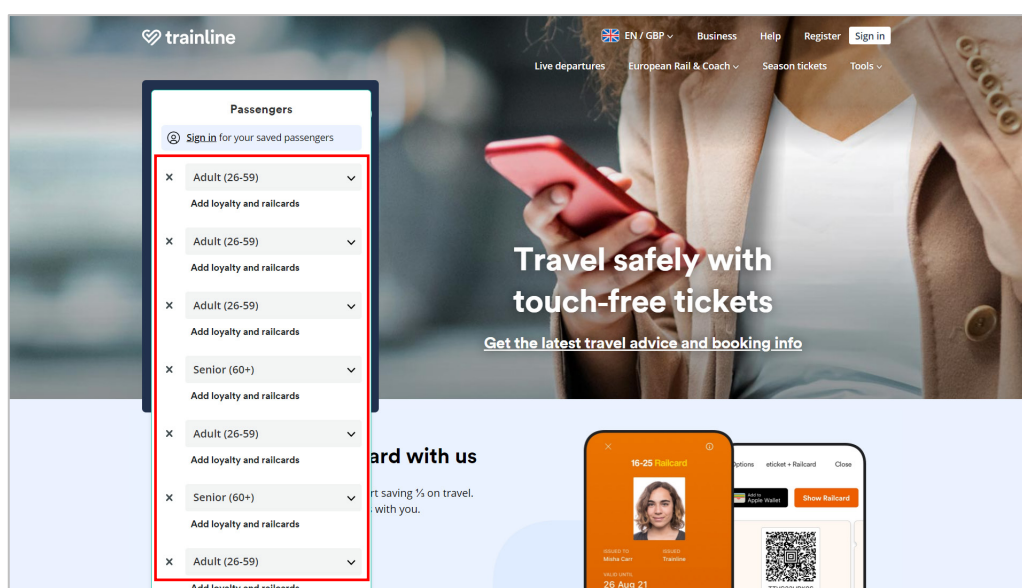
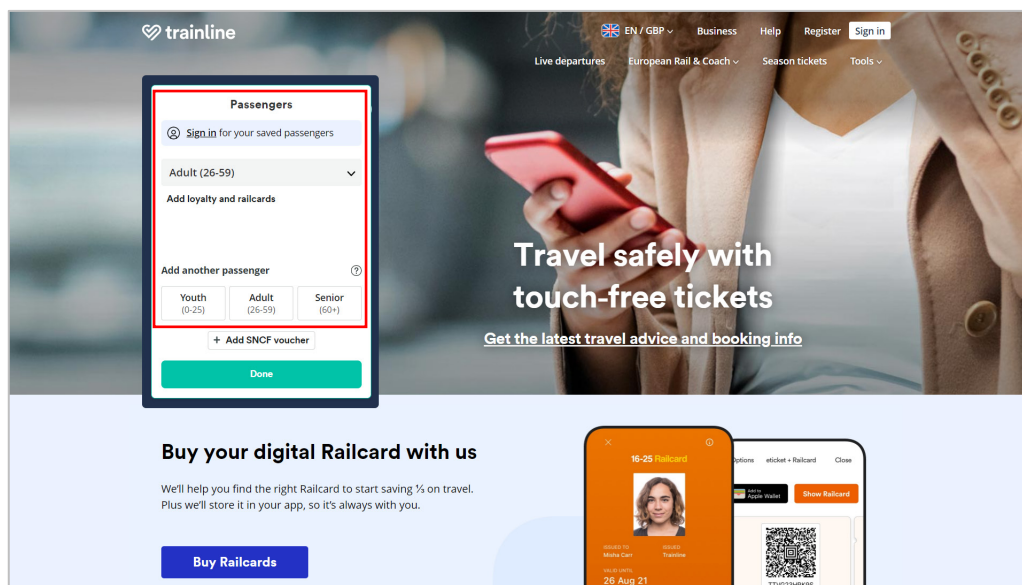


heuristic name: Aesthetic and minimalist design

severity number: 1 (cosmetic problem)

description:

When you want to enter the number of passengers, you have to click on three options available (Youth, Adult, Senior) individually and create an entry for each passenger. While in most cases, there is usually an add and remove button to help you choose the number of passengers from different age groups.

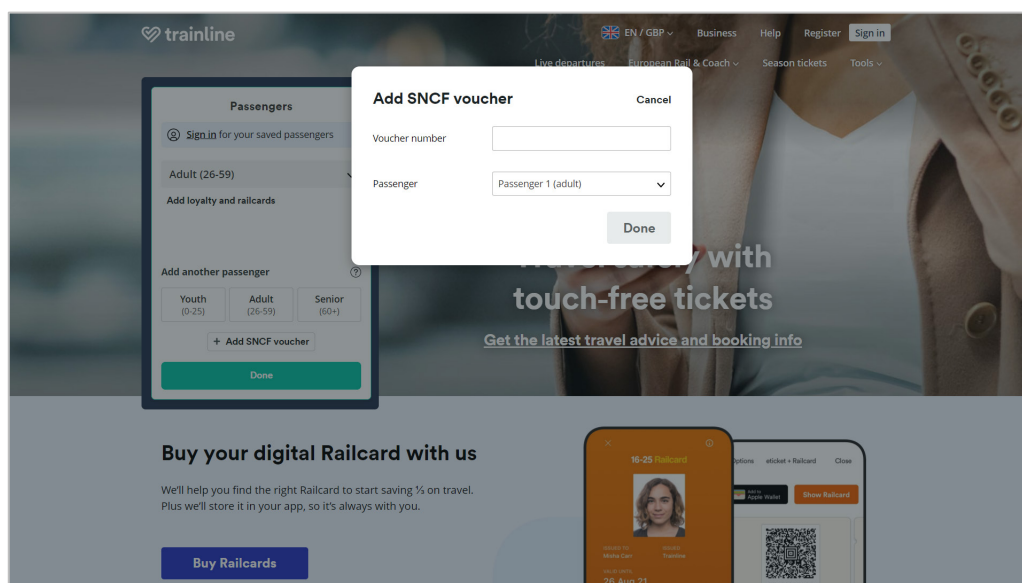
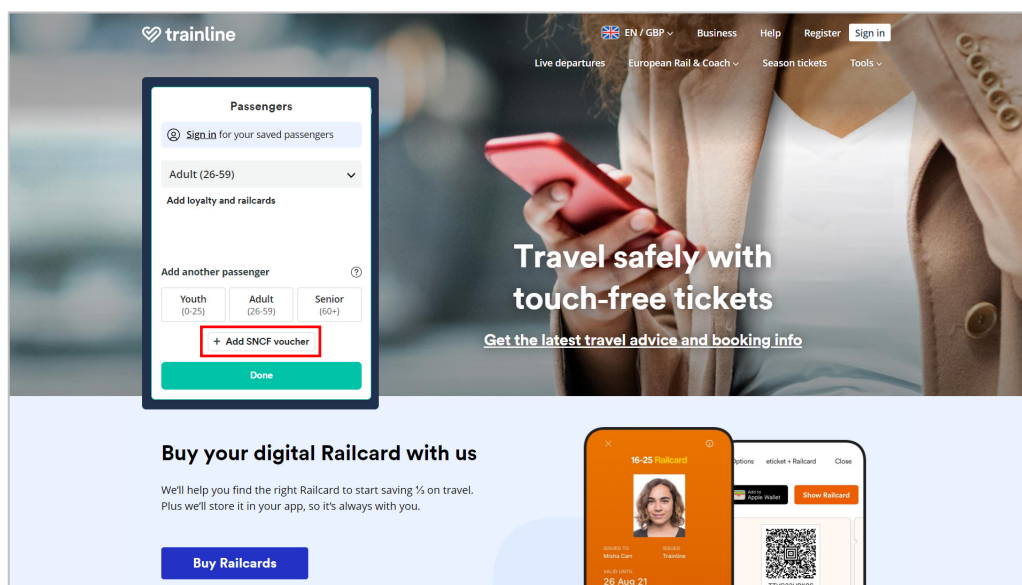


heuristic name: Help and documentation

severity number: 2 (minor usability problem)

description:

While trying to enter the number of passengers, you can see that there is a button under the name "Add SNCF voucher." Most users may not have any idea of what it is and where they can purchase it. So, it would be better to provide a short description about this item.



heuristic name: Visibility of system status

severity number: 3 (major usability problem)

description:

While the users are trying to find a ticket that best suits their interests, it will be great to let them know where they are standing base on the user journey map. We can use shapes to illustrate different steps (from searching to checkout and payment) and let the user know which stage they are currently engaged in and what is before and after this step.

The screenshot shows the trainline website interface for a train search. At the top, the trainline logo is on the left, and language/currency (EN / GBP) and a sign-in button are on the right. Below the logo, the search parameters are displayed: 'London St Pancras Intern...' to 'Paris Gare du Nord'. The departure is 'Out Th 15 Oct • 12:45' and the return is 'Return Su 18 Oct • 12:00'. The passenger count is '1 adult (26-59)' with a link to 'Add railcards'. Below the search bar, there are buttons for 'Train • £149.50', 'Coach • £75.85', '+ Add travel via', and '+ Add a voucher code'. The main section is titled 'Outbound: London St Pancras International to Paris Gare du Nord'. A yellow banner states: 'Due to quarantine measures, passengers must complete COVID-19 travel docs. Get the forms on our travel info page. [more info](#)'. Below this, there are two tabs: 'Standard and Standard Premier' (Change for a fee) and 'Business Premier' (Refund/change with no fee). The 'Standard' tab is selected. A table shows the journey details: 'Thu 15 Oct 2020', 'Standard', 'Standard Premier', and a recommendation: 'We recommend this journey based on price and duration.' The selected journey is '12:24 → 15:52' (2h 28m, 0 changes) for '£149.50' (Cheapest) compared to '£199.50' for the Standard Premier option. A 'Continue' button is visible. The 'Selected journey' section shows the route: '12:24 London St-Pancras' to '15:52 Paris Gare du Nord' (2h 28m, 0 changes). The 'Ticket conditions' section shows '1 x Adult Standard' for '£149.50' with a link to 'View exchange and refund conditions'.