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422 Final Report:

We conducted an in-person usability test on the ticket buying site StubHub to interpret the user experience, identifying user needs that we applied to design implications. The test process provided the opportunity to address defects in the site design that impact user search and navigation when looking to buy tickets online.

The goal of this project was to create a usability test in order to examine user behavior when it comes to online ticket buying. The reason for conducting this usability test was to analyze processes of ticket buying and specific tasks that could be improved on the StubHub website. We conducted a usability test of the StubHub site in order to produce a consistent procedure among users and identify underlying usability issues with the site. Our usability test was designed to address the simplicity of ticket buying for the user as well as the time it takes a user to purchase a ticket.

The users we chose to evaluate for our usability test are three of our peers; all female and twenty one years of age. All three participants said that they consider themselves to be tech-savvy. Additionally, all three users said that they are intermediate StubHub users, as they have used the site in the past to buy tickets, but do not utilize the site very often. A common theme for their lack of experience with StubHub is that there is no specific problem that prevents them from using the site often, but rather they generally do not buy tickets for events frequently. Our participants all expressed that they typically associate StubHub with concert tickets, and that is what they would most likely use StubHub for. As far as their needs with ticket buying, they expressed the importance of reasonable pricing as well as using a site that is easy to navigate in order to reach their goal.

In conducting the usability test, we began by introducing the structure of the experiment to the participants. We encouraged them to think out loud while navigating through the site as much as possible. We began the test by asking participants demographic questions to better understand the users and their past experience with ticket buying.

The first theme we identified when analyzing our test results was that users value accurate location-enabled services when searching for events. When our participants entered a specific location, StubHub generated search results from surrounding areas of the desired location. These results did not specify that they were different from the location that the user searched for. This was inconvenient for the user because they had to scroll down the page to find the correct city that they were looking for. For example, when Jess input 'Detroit, Michigan' into the desired location field when

searching for the P!nk concert, the results began with 'Grand Rapids, Michigan,' and then proceeded to list the Detroit concert below.

The second theme our group found was that the user experience is maximized with icons that communicate their affordance effectively. All of our participants reported that it was confusing where the "favorited" events are listed after clicking on the heart icon. Nicole stated, "After favoriting an event or artist, favorites are really hard to find...and not readily available on home page, so then I'll probably forget about them." Sami suggested that StubHub should have an obvious placement on the homepage where the favorited events are listed rather than having to sift through the site until the user realizes it is nested within their 'My Hub' profile page. She continued that this would be helpful because that is the first place the user goes when returning to the site, and generally, they may be seeking a saved event to make a purchase. We conclude that giving the user immediate feedback for this action would benefit the user experience and possibly impact their purchasing decision.

According to our participants, the heart icon was not an obvious symbol for saving an event for later. When we assigned the task to save an event for later, two out of the three participants expressed confusion. They clicked directly on the event, which then led them to navigate away from the heart icon that is on each event within the search results. Jess reported, "The favorites were hard, I would've never thought that meant favorites. Also there should be a tab at the top to find them afterwards." Our participants' confusion tells us that the favorite action is not supported for all types of users because it is not obvious what the heart icon means to all users of the site. This idea is also supported by our preference test survey results, which indicate that the majority of ticket buyers would prefer an icon that explicitly communicates what it does, rather than the simple heart icon.

We also found that it is common for a user to begin the ticket search process with Google before reaching the site where they actually make a purchase. All of our participants said that while they would use StubHub to buy tickets after completing this study, that would not be "the first step." Jess explained that while they are aware that StubHub has many concerts and is easy to use, that they would still begin their ticket search process with Google. Samara explained that since she only buys tickets and does not sell them, she is not drawn to start her ticket search with StubHub. She is aware that it is a good option for a fair price for a last minute ticket, as she has has checked StubHub right before a concert. However, StubHub remains a later option in her search.

Lastly, we found that the user's search experience could be enhanced with a single location on the homepage with relevant event categories. Samara reported that

she was unsure of why certain categories were selected in the 'Find Events' drop-down menu, while others were not. Similarly, Jess suggested the site should change or just entirely remove the "Find Events" tab. Not only did she believe it was redundant of the search function below the tab, but it seemed unnecessary and distracting in the first place.

While we conducted the usability tests, some of the users voiced their opinion on suggested improvements that StubHub could make in order to improve the user experience and consequently increase purchase numbers. One of the users spoke about a lack of sports events; she stated that, "StubHub should do a better job marketing for sports because I usually associate StubHub only with theater and concert tickets, I would never think to use it for sports." In order to increase awareness of this, StubHub could add more sports event to the homepage. Another suggestion we received while conducting these tests was to add a sound bit or clip of from a song of the artist being clicked on, in order to familiarize the user with the event they could potentially purchase. The user spoke to this experience on iTunes, where a user could preview a song or movie before buying it. The last suggestion a user offered was the opportunity to favorite an artist, sports team, and more, to receive notifications when tickets are on sale or prices become cheaper. This aspect of this site would add another level of personalization to the user experience.

One challenge with our usability test that we did not anticipate is technical issues with the software we chose to utilize. Even though we piloted the test, it was not predictive of some problems we encountered throughout the course of the test. With the first usability test we conducted, the screen recording was not set to record audio, which we realized at the end of the test. This was not a huge issue in regards to analyzing the user experience as we had our data logger taking extensive notes throughout the process in addition to the visual screen recording, but was definitely not something that we expected. Additionally, our third user's computer would not allow her to export the screen recording video. In order to handle this obstacle, we recorded the screen recording with audio using a mobile device. This technical issue was easy to fix but created an unnecessary step in creating our appendix. If we were to conduct this type of usability test again, it would be useful to have the user complete the test on our computer rather than their own device to ensure that the screen recording settings are correct, as well as to avoid problems that arise with a slow monitor such as failure to export the video. While we carefully instructed our participants on what to do, we could not take these steps for them in reality because they were completing these tasks on their own devices. Therefore, we realized that by allowing participants to do the test with our device, we have more control as researchers.

Jaclyn Rudolf, Bari Blitzer, Samantha Moross, Alexandra Sauber

What worked well for this test was assigning specific roles for our group members because it gave each person a specific responsibility, allowing us to conduct the test with ease. After assigning roles and completing tasks, we were able to put the procedure together and the flow of our tests were pretty seamless. Also, conducting a pilot test prior to beginning was very helpful. Each test was consistent and we used the same script every time, making for unbiased data. If we were to do this test differently again, the most significant factor we would change would be to ask more 'why?' questions in the future. Although the users were voicing through their decisions aloud and there was good discussion on certain usability tasks, we feel we could have invoked even more with some 'tell me about that task' situations. Besides that one aspect, our group is confident in the work we have done for this assignment.

APPENDIX:

Facilitator Roles:

- **Samantha** - Test Conductor
- **Bari** - Facilitator
- **Jaclyn** - Observer
- **Alexandra** - Data Logger

Script

Introduction:

Bari: Hi, my name is Bari.
Sammy: Hi, my name is Samantha.
Jaclyn: Hi, my name is Jaclyn.

Bari (Facilitator): Thank you for participating in our usability test on the website StubHub.

Before starting, we just want to read over the directions and make sure everything is covered. You all probably have a good idea of why you are sitting here, but just to be a little more clear -- the purpose of this test is to observe user behavior when it comes to online ticket buying. This session should take no more than a half hour!

Jaclyn Rudolf, Bari Blitzer, Samantha Moross, Alexandra Sauber

Jaclyn (Observer): Please be as honest as possible when giving your feedback, since the entire goal here is to improve the site's interface. We're going to ask you as much as possible while you're looking at the site, so try to think out loud!
You will be asked to complete a series of tasks on the StubHub website, while we observe and ask you to answer a list of questions in a debrief afterwards.

If you have any questions as we proceed, you can ask any one of us. Since it's a structured test we might not be able to answer, but we can give you a little guidance.

Bari (Facilitator): As you can see up here we're going to be recording this session so we can take more descriptive notes after. The recording will only be used to help us analyze the site data, no one else will be seeing this.

Before we begin, I'm going to ask you to sign a quick consent form just saying that we have your permission to record you for this project.

Hand out the consent form and a pen

Samantha (Conductor):

Anyone have any questions at this time?

Alright! Before we open up the StubHub site, we just have a few background questions.

1. What is your name and where are you from?
    Responses:
    > Participant 1: Nicole, NY
    > Participant 2: Jess, Florida
    > Participant 3: Sami, NJ
2. How old are you?
    > All 3 participants said 21

3. Where are you from? Is that a suburb or a city?
    > Participant 1: Suburb
    > Participant 2: City
    > Participant 3: Suburb

4. Do you consider yourself tech-savvy?
    > All 3 said some variation of yes

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Great, we're done with these questions. Now we can move on to the real stuff!

Open up the StubHub homepage

First I want you to take a look at the homepage and tell me what you think the purpose of this site is -- what sticks out to you, what you can do on this page, what's it for?

Give the participant three minutes to observe

Sami:
- Pretty icons
- Assuming u can search for your area (don't know why it is set to Stamford CT)
- You can see where event is being shown

Jess:
- Search events artists, teams venues
- Buy and sell
- I've used it before but not that often-- ik it can be various events and locations
- That's weird because mine says Michigan hockey, etc

Screener:
1. Which of the following describes you as a StubHub user?
   · Beginner
   · Intermediate
   · Advanced
   · None of the above

Responses:
   All 3 said intermediate users

Scenario: You are a college student in Ann Arbor looking for an event to attend this weekend.

Now, I'm going to ask you to try doing some more specific tasks. I will read each direction to you, and again, it will really help us if you can try to think out loud as you complete them.

Read each task out loud and allow the user to complete it or until you feel they've become too frustrated

Jaclyn Rudolf, Bari Blitzer, Samantha Moross, Alexandra Sauber

Once this is done, ask the user each corresponding question to the task before moving on

Repeat these steps for each task

Task List:

1. Sign in to an existing account or create an account if you do not have one already.
   a. To create a new account, **select 'Sign In'** and then **'My Hub.'**

Responses:
   - First participant (Nicole) creaed an account with email
   - *Two articpants elected to sign in with Facebook because it "saves time"
     Jess: "I do not want them to send me emails"
     Sami: "Oh it's my Facebook password"

2. Search for a concert to attend in your hometown this weekend.
   b. You want to show your friends what you found. Save this for later so you can find the same event quickly and show it to them.

Responses:

   Jess:
   - So I changed the button that looks like it was on a map
   - It said AA and I changed it to Weston
   - It has it laid out very nicely by date

   Sami:
   - Went to find events
   - "Press NY because it is my hometown"
   - Let's see if I can type in NY
   - So I saw the search where you can enter a town, NYC

2. You want to look for tickets for the next Pink concert for you and a friend in Detroit, Michigan. Go through the process of searching for these tickets.

Responses:

   Jess:
   - Annoying we typed in DTW but the first location to come up was Grand Rapids

   Sami:
   - What I found is she has a concert March 18, 25, and that is it
   - Oh the first was Grand Rapids, this one is just for DTW

a. Select 2 tickets and filter the 'Price', 'Delivery', or 'Seat Features' based on your preference

Responses:
   Sami:
   - As you update criteria, seating availability updates, that's interesting
   Jess:
   - She is popular these are expensive tickets

   b. Select **'Go To Checkout'**, so that the tickets are in your cart in preparation for purchasing.

Jess:
- I know it's with a heart because I know that from your AB test but I wouldn't have known that
- Except I have no idea where that takes me

Sami:
- Well I'm having difficulty finding the heart
- I've never had such difficulty on the website in my entire life
- Ok got it

4. Now let's assume that you are done searching, and you want to revisit the event that you saved for later. Navigate to your favorites and find the event.

Responses:
   Sami:
   - My hub, favorites tab, going to go there
   - Interesting it separates it by artists venues events
   - If you have a lot favorited you can filter→ oh I was wrong! You can just favorite specific events or teams or venues
   - I'd assume all shows that aren't sports team are just under here
   Jess:
   - I don't know why the symbol changed from a heart to a star
   - Wouldn't have known what that meant

Thank you so much. Take a few minutes for a break and then we'll get started with some debriefing questions.

Bari (Facilitator):
Debrief: Thank you again for participating in our usability test. The purpose of this test was to evaluate StubHub and how the user navigates the website when buying tickets.

Your feedback is important to our analysis, so any ideas you have regarding your experience will be very helpful! Now we have some follow-up questions for you to understand your experience, what's positive about StubHub, and what could be improved.

Jaclyn (Observer):
Post-questionnaire:
1. Please describe anything you **liked** about the site as a whole.

Responses:

Nicole:
- It had a lot of pictures, big font, everything readily available
- Home page good, search feature good because I was nervous 'pink detroit' was going to come up with other things and it separated it by artist and location, very easy to find and understand

Jess:
I liked that there were different ways of viewing; can separate by dates, type something in, by type of event. Clear buttons for buy and sell. Also liked recommended based on maybe your area or past searches.

Sami:
Navigation bar toward the center/top of screen -- first action a user will do, guides the user straight to search. Filter by city because it's annoying to search for events and get random cities. Aesthetically pleasing as well.

2. Was it intuitive? Easy to follow?

Responses:

Nicole:
Yes

Jess:
Yes and no : all events, sports intuitive. The favorites were hard, would have neer thought that meant favorites. Also should be a tab at the top to find them afterwards.
- Search by specific amount, go through whole process and not enough tickets left for that criteria could be very annoying

Sami:

> Presented tasks were difficult because i got caught up in another page and i wasn't sure how to get back or change search criteria.... So I had to go back to the homepage and start from scratch. Not so familiar with the stubhub home page so I guess that makes sense.

3. Please list something you would **change** about the site.

Responses:

Nicole:

> After I click on an event, it doesn't seem like I can favorite it there and have to navigate back. After favoriting an event/artist, favorites are really hard to find, not readily available on home page, I'll forget about them

Jess:

> I would change the favorites, change find events because there's that right below it but much bigger, redundant. View popular place; same as before "search by number of tickets." I also would maybe add a social feature→ usually with people, would be great if you could easily share with someone, copy the link to show others what you searched.

Sami:

> I don't find the 'Find Events' menu in the top left corner very necessary. StubHub should move location/calendar input somewhere else because it doesn't stand out to me and i wouldn't initially look there, maybe towards the top? StubHub should make an easier searching process with filters: when I click on sports, concert or theater it just takes me to a new page which is confusing.

4. What are some features you would **add** to make the experience more enjoyable?

Nicole:

> Instead of having a pic having a clip or a "sound bit" of recording to help you familiarize with the event. Blood Sweat and Tears-- remind you → Should have samples like iTunes → That would be cool

Jess:

> Social, would want to favorite "all TSWIFT" to get notifications to get it cheaper when her tickets come up

Sami:

> Going into Profile/ Hub to find favorites is hard, sidebar on home screen. When you save events you're just pushing it aside, not trying to give

yourself more work to do to go find it. It would be easier if it was already saved on the home page.

5. If you weren't a StubHub user, did this study persuade you to be one?

Nicole:

I don't currently use it a lot because I don't have a reason to buy tickets so often. However looking forward I would use this when I need to buy tickets now that I see how easy it is to use, and also I know it is a credible source.

Jess:

Probably would still Google first. It has a lot of concerts and easy to use but my first medium would be Google or on the venue's website if I know what it is beforehand.

Sami:

I don't think so because I only buy tickets, not sell them. I think someone who sells tickets would use it more. I go into it for last minute right before a concert, second option. I struggled a little...The UI has changed over the past few years, but I don't find it any more intuitive...At least enough for me to use it.

6. Would you buy tickets on StubHub after completing this study?
Responses:
   Nicole:
      Yes I definitely would

   Jess:

   I would buy it, secure, a lot of people use, just don't know if it would be my first step

   Sami:

   I would, I use it as the cheapest option last minute for an event since it's people selling rather than Ticketmaster lets say which is just face value, but I would never browse on StubHub in my free time

7. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding this study?
Responses:
   Nicole:

They should do a better job marketing for sports because I usually just associate StubHub with theater, comedy and concerts rather than sports. I would never think to use StubHub for this.

Jess:

Very well conducted

Sami:

No

User Recordings:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1m0rHaOFstzaU2HIbhVK_IdN8WlKjpPWK