

## Sample Demographics and Characteristics

- Ideal User Sample: The ideal user should vary based on the following:
  - Age (17-23)
  - Attend a variety of colleges
  - Tech savvy nature (not tech savvy, moderately tech savvy, very tech savvy)
  - Usage and familiarity with mobile apps, particularly relevant to online shopping
- Actual User Sample: As a student attending Northwestern University, the most accessible sample is Northwestern students. While this limits my focus to one geographic location, it still provides a variety of students.

## Scheduling and Recruiting Participants

All individuals were contacted by text message, or by in-person conversation. Testing has occurred in locations convenient to the participant.

## Measures Used

1. Recording: Application Lookback (<https://lookback.io>) on Mac was used to collect and record user testing. The MacBook camera captured both users interacting with the prototype and the phone screen as they navigated through the prototype on the iPhone.
2. Exploratory (Formative) Testing
  - a. This testing was task-based as were given goals to explore the system and evaluate the prototype to detect usability problems and possible improvements. All user think-aloud comments were captured using Lookback and phones during the testing. User testers were guided through tasks throughout testing sessions.

## User Testing Task Instructions

Three sets of tasks were presented for each user tester to complete:

1. Task Set A: Search for a Textbook and Choose a Bookseller
2. Task Set B: Navigate to the Purchase Checklist
3. Task Set C: Navigate to My Account

### **1. Task Set A: Search for a Textbook and Choose a Bookseller**

Task 1:

1. Sign-in with an account, or continue as guest

2. Input information about whether or not you want to search online stores, offline stores, or both
3. Search for textbook using the search bar either by author, title, or ISBN
4. Select the textbook from list of search results

Task 2: Compare and choose a bookseller

5. Compare booksellers (using filter if necessary) and choose one bookseller
6. Get direct link to bookseller

## **2. Task Set B: Navigate to the Purchase Checklist**

Task 1: Navigate to Purchase Checklist

1. Navigate to back to the home page
2. Navigate to purchase checklist from home page
3. Create a new list
4. Delete a checklist

## **3. Task Set C: Navigate to My Account**

Task 1: Manage Checklists through My Account

1. Navigate to My Account from home page
2. Select My Account Settings
3. Select “Manage Checklists”
4. Navigate to purchase checklist

Task 2: Browse Search History through My Account

1. Navigate to My Account from home page
2. Select search history
3. Browse search history
4. Navigate to previously visited link

## User Testing Results

Major Problems/Areas for Improvements:

- Problem #1: Counter-intuitive sequence
  - Users were confused by the “compare” button on the search results page
  - They did not know what was exactly being “compared”
  - Users also were confused about having to search online/offline stores because search results generally display all existing books that match the search inquiry (regardless of online/offline stores)
- Problem #2: Placement of stars
  - Users questioned whether or not the stars indicated how expensive or cheap the offered prices are

- Problem #3: Two flows linking to purchase checklist
  - Users questioned the differences between being able to manage checklists from the My Account Settings page and accessing the checklist page directly from the hamburger menu on the home page

## Iterations

- To address Problem #1, the Book Description page before the Textbook Comparison page and after the Search Results page was also inserted to provide a more logical progression. This page provides full details about the book that the Textbook Comparison and Search Results page does not provide. The compare buttons have been also removed from the Search Results page and relocated to this page, so it is clear to the user that they are comparing booksellers for the same book, not across search results. Additionally, the whole search result is now clickable and linked to the Book Description page, instead of just the compare buttons that have been removed.
- To address Problem #2, the word “Rating” has been placed above the stars to indicate that the stars are representative of the overall ratings of the bookseller based on trustworthiness, reliability, and other factors that contribute to the quality of service. The price has been re-located to appear right below the bookseller’s name, along with the other important details that users have deemed critical when purchasing/renting textbooks (according to user research).
- To address Problem #3, the flow to the purchase checklist from the Account Settings page has been removed. Users can now only access the purchase checklist through the hamburger menu from the home page.