

Usability Project Report

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Important note: All notes, and other documents are attached in the zip file.

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INTRO & OVERVIEW:

The topic that I will be selecting for this usability project is travel & tourism. Today, many people around the world use travel & tourism websites to book their rental reservations, to book tourist activity/experiences, and rental vehicles. From this usability research, the goal and objective is to learn people's experience/perspective from using travel & industry websites, identify common issues that users are facing with the travel & industry websites, and help people and users improve their experience with the travel & industry websites. My final end goal is to create a travel & industry website to help people to make the best, convenient and joyful travel experiences possible.

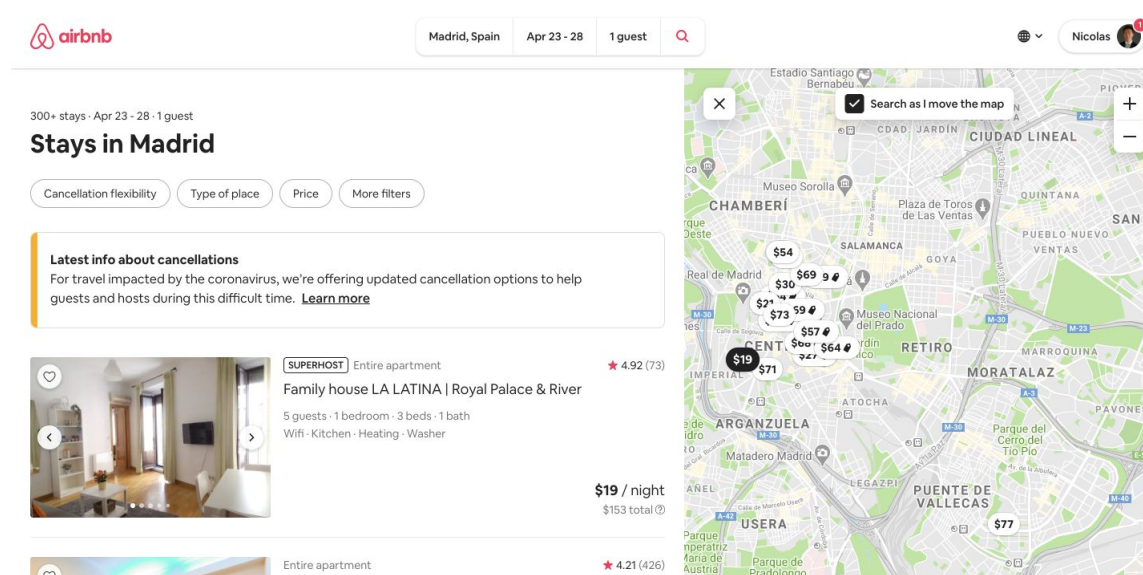
RESEARCH/COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS:

I will be examining 7 different websites within the travel & industry category and below are the websites that I choose for this usability research.

AirBnB:

URL: <https://www.airbnb.com/>

One of the websites that I choose within the travel & tourism category is **AirBnb**. AirBnB is one of the popular websites within the topic of Travel & Tourism and there are many things people can book through AirBnb such as vacation rental booking, tour activity booking and experiences booking. Since the launch, there have been over 260 million bookings through AirBnB with 160 million active users (data from MuchNeeded.com). With AirBnB, users can select the dates that users want to travel, with the places they want to visit and with the number of guests users would travel with. When dates, location and number of people are not filled up by the user, then users are guided to the home screen where users are able to see different houses, opportunities and experiences around the world without having to select a certain destination, dates and preferences. Information on different houses and opportunities (tourist experiences, rental homes, and destinations) are presented with the rounded rectangle format with neomorphism styling.

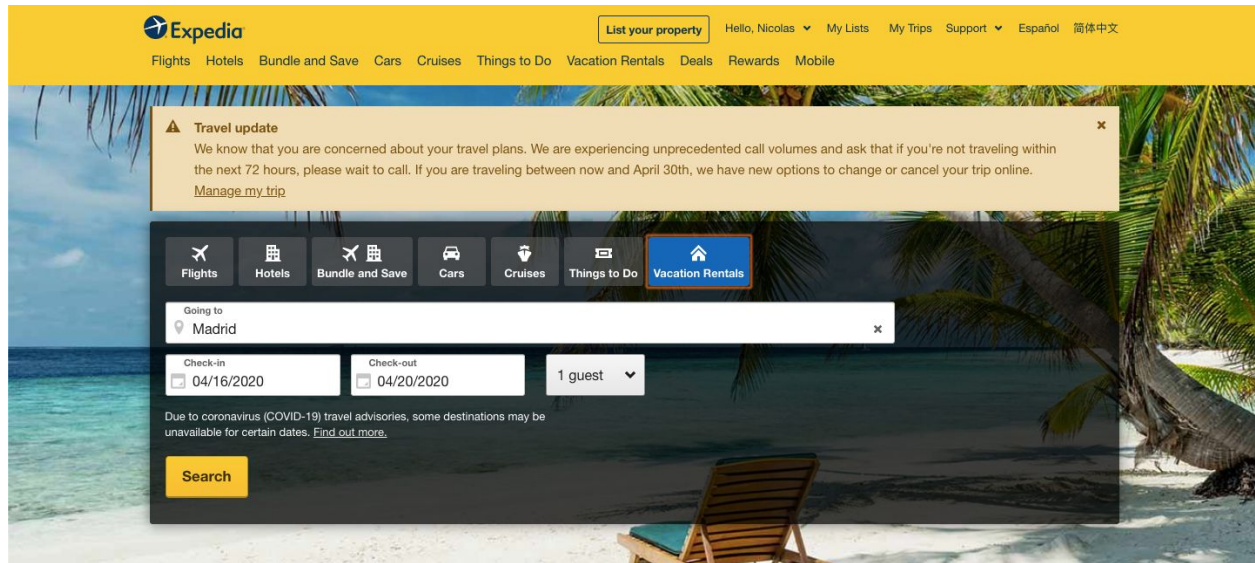


Expedia:

URL: <https://www.expedia.com/>

Another website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is **Expedia**. Expedia offers users to book hotels, cars, rental cars, cruises, and allows users to view things to do within each city around the world. Users have an option to view different features within the navigation bar, and users have an option to select between hotels, cars, cruises, vacation rentals and view things to do within each city. Similar to AirBnB, search information is displayed where users can filter out

special preferences. For instance, users can filter through the searches through amenities available, price ranges and property type. In addition, Expedia gives a similar information display as AirBnb where things to do and trending destination is displayed in a rectangular box format.



Kayak:

URL: <https://www.kayak.com/>

Another website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is **Kayak**. Unlike AirBnB, the search bar is displayed as a flight and is located toward the middle of the web page. The search bar has 4 boxes for destinations (from, to), and date ranges. Below the search boxes, the webpage has three different boxes that are placed evenly with the space. The three even spaced boxes have information displayed with trending destinations, travel tips and underrated destinations. Once a user filters the search, the choice of their search is displayed in the rectangular box. Similar to Expedia, the filter information is displayed on the left side (AirBnB has filters that are hidden from users to view). With the user's choice and preference that is displayed on the left side, Kayak can modify its searches.

The screenshot displays the Kayak website interface for a flight search. The top navigation bar includes links for Flights, Hotels, Cars, Packages, Explore, Guides, and More. The search parameters are set to a Round-trip for 1 Adult in Economy class with 0 Bags, traveling from Seattle (SEA) to London (LON) on Saturday, May 2nd to Saturday, May 9th. The results show a 'Best' deal for \$440 with a 9h 32m flight time. The flight is operated by British Airways with a codeshare available. The interface also includes a sidebar with filters for Airports, Flexible options, and Track prices. A sidebar on the right promotes Western Union and Air France flights.

KAYAK
From Booking.com

Flights Hotels Cars Packages Explore Guides More

Round-trip 1 Adult Economy 0 Bags

Seattle (SEA) London (LON) Sat 5/2 Sat 5/9

Track prices

1139 of 1139 flights

Flexible options

Show only flexible booking options due to COVID-19

Airports

Depart/return same

Seattle

SEA: Seattle/Tacoma Intl \$440

PAE: Paine Field \$644

London

LHR: Heathrow \$440

LGW: Gatwick \$480

LCY: London City \$610

Important messages:

- Certain authorities have issued COVID-19 travel warnings for this destination. [Learn more](#)
- We've tagged certain airlines that may be waiving their change or cancellation fees due to COVID-19. Confirm terms and policies on their site. [Learn more](#)

Cheapest
\$440 • 9h 32m

Best Ⓢ
\$440 • 9h 32m

Quickest
\$440 • 9h 32m

Other Sort

Best **Cheapest**

10:05 pm – 3:25 pm⁺¹
Finnair nonstop 9h 20m
SEA - LHR

4:30 pm – 6:15 pm
Finnair nonstop 9h 45m
LHR - SEA

Operated by British Airways
Codeshares available

\$440
Ovago

View Deal

Rating: 10

7:15 pm – 12:35 pm⁺¹
Aer Linus nonstop 9h 20m
SFA - LHR

Rating: 10

Send money from your bank account to theirs with our app.

WU
Western Union

Direct London Flights - Fly with Air France®

www.airfrance.us/Flights/London

Enjoy Air France's Best Offers! No Hidden Fees. Book Your Flight Now.

Visit Website

Student Flight Discounts - StudentUniverse

www.studentuniverse.com/Flights

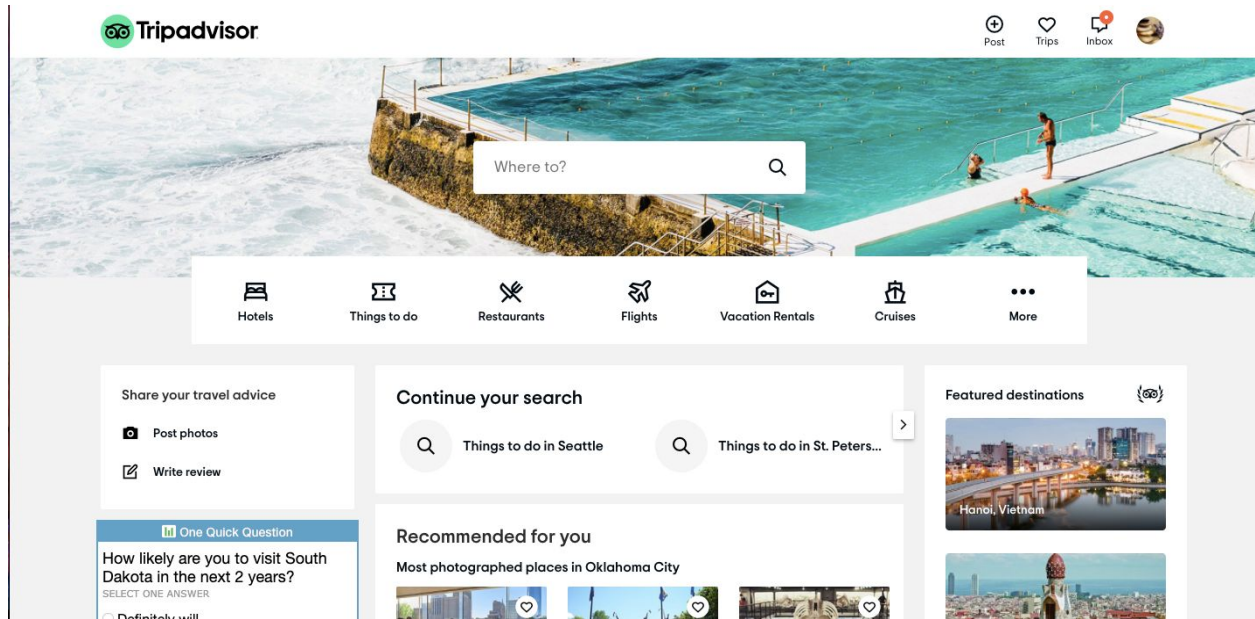
Sign up Today for Free. Get Exclusive Access to Student Flight Deals!

Visit Website

Tripadvisor:

URL: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/>

Another website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is **Tripadvisor**. Unlike Expedia, AirBnb, and Kayak, Tripadvisor has one search box that displays with the opaque short text that says, "Where to". Users do not have to fill in multiple different boxes for special dates, destinations to and from. The Navigation bar is displayed similar to AirBnb, Kayak and Expedia with hotel booking options, cruise booking options, things to do options, restaurant options, vacation rentals option and flights. Unlike other travel & tourism websites, users may click on more tabs on the navigation bar and Tripadvisor gives more options for users to choose different activities of interest. Similar to other websites mentioned above, trending restaurants, tourist spots and hotels are displayed in a rectangular box format. However, the box display is very small compared to the other websites. Users are able to view and read different travel stories and trending locations without having to search specific places unlike other websites.



Orbitz:

URL: <https://www.orbitz.com/>

Another website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is [Orbitz](https://www.orbitz.com/). This website is designed for all travelers (especially people who are aged over 24 and up owning family and for people who are under 24 who are seeking for cheap bookings. Navigation and search bars are displayed very similar to Expedia. Navigation bar consists of Hotel, Car rentals, rental property booking, and cruise bookings. Unlike other websites mentioned above, there are many information tabs with vacation packages where users can choose vacation packages for cheap vacation tours. Similar to Expedia and Kayak, there are search filters displayed on the left side of the web page where users are able to filter their searches with preferences.

ORBITZ Hotels Flights Vacation Packages Cars Vacation Rentals All travel ▾ List your property ♥ Sign in

Travel advisory
Please be aware of any coronavirus (COVID-19) travel advisories and review updates from the World Health Organization (WHO). Due to the unprecedented volume of travel disruptions, refunds may take up to 30 days to process.
[Find out more](#)

Going to **Denver (and vicinity), Colorado, United States** Check-in **May 12** Check-out **May 16** Guests **1 room, 1 guest** **Search**

What we paid may impact our sort order ⓘ

Stay flexible with free cancellation
We recommend booking a stay with free cancellation in case your plans change.
[Filter by free cancellation](#)

Sort by
☒ Recommended
☐ Price
☐ Deals
☐ Guest favorites
☐ Distance from downtown
☐ Star rating
☐ Vacation Rentals

Sponsored
Halcyon - a hotel in Cherry Creek
Cherry Creek
Denver Luxury, Book Now & Save Up To 30%
Free drink upon arrival, evening wine reception & a gear garage onsite to help you explore Colorado. High-end car service, more.
Free Cancellation
Earn \$21 Orbucks
4.6/5 Wonderful (822 reviews)
\$173 per night
\$692 for 4 nights

Sponsored
Hilton Garden Inn Denver Downtown
Downtown Denver
Stylish Downtown Denver Hotel!
Stunning hotel with restaurant, pool, free WiFi, next to convention center and near all downtown & Denver attractions.

Save an average of \$536 on auto insurance.
[Get A Quote](#)

State Farm
Average annual per household savings based on 2013 national survey by State Farm of auto policyholders who reported savings by switching State Farm.

HostelWorld:

URL: <https://www.hostelworld.com/>

Another website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is **Hostelworld**. This website is specifically designed and targeted for young travellers (people aged from 16-40). On the launching page, the user is displayed by 4 search boxes which include date ranges (check in and check out), destination, and number of guests (which is similar to AirBnb searches). Once a user enters in the information, a list of hostels are given only in a rectangular box with the price information and reviews. Unlike other travel & tourism websites I mentioned above, this website focuses on booking reservations only on hostels. There are no hotel bookings, car rentals, and tour bookings with HostelWorld. However, when a user selects and views each hostel listing, the user is able to view amenities and reviews left by other users. Users can filter searches through price, rating, rooms, property types and facilities.

The screenshot displays the HostelWorld website's search interface. At the top, the HostelWorld logo is on the left, and user options (English, USD) are on the right. Below the logo, there are four input fields: 'LOCATION' with 'Denver, Colorado, USA', 'CHECK IN' with 'Apr 03, 2020', 'CHECK OUT' with 'Apr 06, 2020', and 'GUESTS' with '2 Guests'. A red 'Search' button is to the right of these fields. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Filter', 'Sort by', and 'Map'. Under the 'Filter' tab, there are sub-tabs for 'Price', 'Rating', 'Room', 'Facilities', and 'Property Type'. A price slider is shown with 'Average price per night - USD' and a range from 0 to 65. Below the slider, a note states: 'The sort order reflects your search criteria, property ratings/rates/availability and commission paid.' A 'Featured Properties' section highlights 'Ember Hostel' with a 9.7 rating and a price of 'From US\$43'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'All Properties' with a thumbnail for 'Ember Hostel' and its URL 'https://www.hostelworld.com'.

StudentUniverse:

URL: <https://www.studentuniverse.com/>

The last website that I choose within the travel & tourism category is [StudentUniverse](https://www.studentuniverse.com/). Similar to HostelWorld, this website is targeted and designed for people who are aged (18-26) and for people who are in the younger age group (16-40). There are many search boxes with different filters. For instance, this website has destination boxes (from and to), date ranges (depart and return), with a number of guests with return, one way options. Unlike HostelWorld, there are no booking options with hostels. However, there are booking options where users can book cheap flights, hotels, group tours and tours at a discounted price for students. Users are able to view different information in a rectangular box format similar to Expedia, AirBnb and Tripadvisor.

StudentUniverse Flights Hotels Tours Group Travel More

English USD Log in for hidden discounts

Cheap student flights, hotels and tours

Flights Hotels Cars Tours Activities Transfers

From City or Airport To City or Airport Depart Return Exact Flexible 1 Search

Trip Type: Roundtrip Cabin: Economy Search hotels

Exclusive student pricing you can't find anywhere else
Log in to see additional hidden fare deals

100% Secure Bookings

Searching for a flight home to Asia?
We'll make it easier for you.
Search cheap flights here →

Book with confidence
Many airlines are providing you with protection and flexibility with upcoming travel plans.
View flexible airline policies →

DECISION FOR EVALUATION: **HOSTELWORLD**

Currently, HostelWorld is a popular website and a popular mobile application that is being used by 13 million users throughout the world. HostelWorld offers over 17,000 hostels listed throughout 179 different countries in 19 different languages. While all other websites mentioned above follow a consistent, professional design and bring a user friendly design approach to users, HostelWorld's website can be improved. In order to help users to engage more with the HostelWorld site, it is important to understand the user's perspective and current experience with the website. In addition, it is important to understand the user's frustration with the current website. When the problem and user's perspective on the current website is identified, then findings can be analyzed and as a result, better solutions for a better website can be brainstormed.

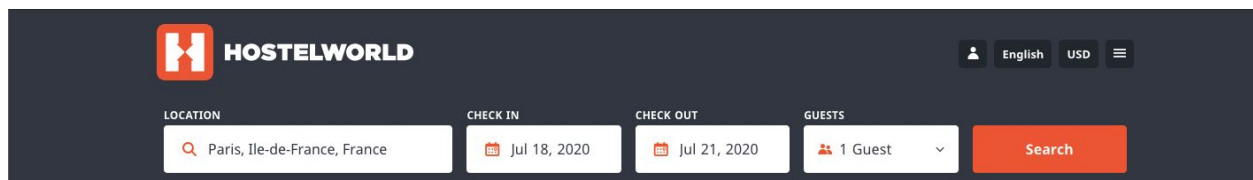
ANALYSIS, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

WEBSITE NARRATIVE:

Starting with the layout of this website, the home page of this website has one box. The search box is for the destination, saying "where do you want to go?" making it easier for me to understand what the box means. Once the user clicks on

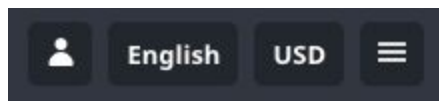
the box, additional boxes pop up with the check in, check out dates and number of guests. Although the destination is clearly displayed with prioritisation clearly demonstrated, some users may be completely confused by where date ranges are located for their desired trips. The details for the booking dates and number of guest is hidden until the user clicks on the destination ("Where do you want to go?") box. So far, other navigation links for other bookings are hidden, which would make users confused whether the booking is for hostels or for other bookings (i.e car rentals? Cruise rentals? Hotel bookings? And etc).

Once a user inserts information on the destination, checks in/out dates and number of guests, the search leads right into the list of hostels. Still, there are no other navigation links for other options other than the search boxes mentioned above (destination box, check in/out dates and the number of guests). Above those 4 boxes, there are 4 buttons where users can change language, sign in (it is just a logo of a person), currency and more option button that displays 3 horizontal lines.



Above: The header of the website with 4 search boxes (location, check in/out dates and number of guests) with 4 buttons for sign in (logo of a person), language, currency and 3 horizontal lines for more options. Other than this header, there is no navigation page, which would make users confused when users are trying to make any additional bookings.

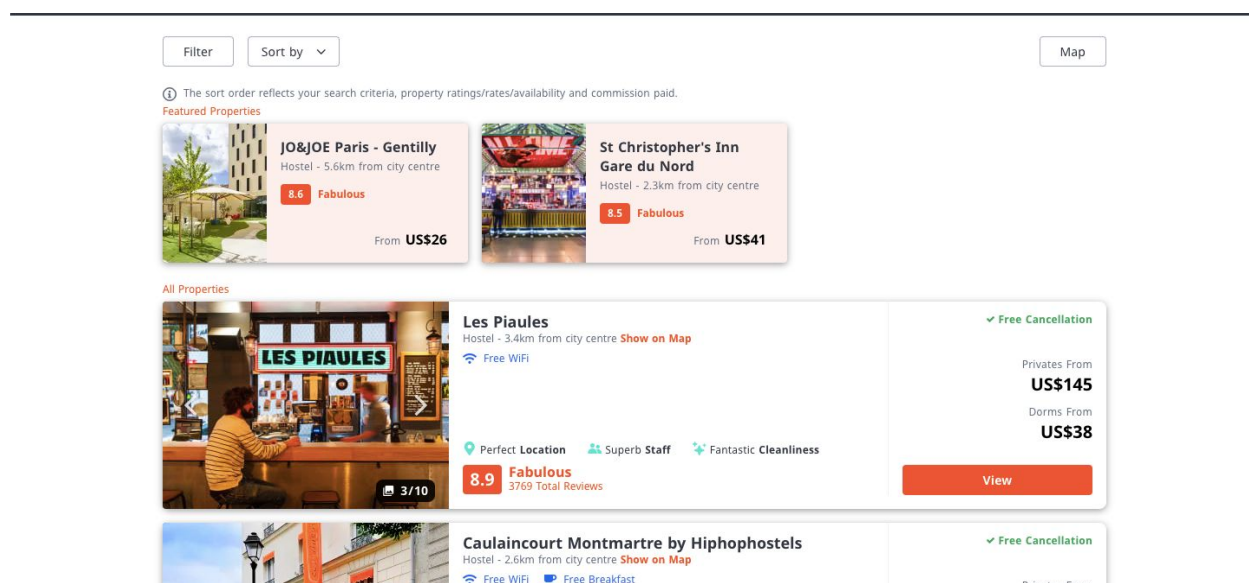
Below: 4 buttons above the search boxes



Looking at the main content, there are boxes for each hostel and for each box, there are a list of hostels with images, number of reviews, and overall hostel characteristics. Although the design and the UI layout of the hostel box is clear and users may find it easy to understand the layout, the box is not hoverable or changes any colour when the mouse is hovered. In addition, detailed information on the hostel cannot be viewed until the view button is pressed. The image of the hostel in the box can be clicked. However, clicking on images does not give descriptive

information on hostels. Instead, it allows users to view different images of the hostel, instead of viewing hostel information (i.e address of the hostel, hostel rules, time of check in, description of the hostel or etc). Although the design of the box for hostel listings is clearly displayed with colours, images, and buttons, users will be frustrated with the boxes not leading into the hostel detail.

Below: The main page of the website. As mentioned above, there are boxes with a list of hostels with clear labels. For each hostel there are images of the hostel, booking prices, reviews and overall outstanding characteristics (i.e known for cleanliness, perfect location etc). However the box isn't hoverable and does not change colour when it's hovered. Users are not able to view the detailed information of the hostel until the user presses on the view button. For about a couple of seconds, users may be struggling to find details of the hostel.



Below: Detailed information page after user clicks on the **View button**. (Please keep scrolling to view the image).

Les Piaules

59, Boulevard de Belleville, Paris, France

[Prices](#)
[Facilities](#)
[Map](#)
[Reviews](#)
[House Rules](#)

8.9
Fabulous
3769 Total Reviews

Perfect Location

Superb Staff

Fantastic Cleanliness

[Read all reviews](#)

Property Description

Les Piaules, the most Parisian hostel. Recently opened by 3 young Parisian travelers in a fully renovated art deco building. Les Piaules offers a rooftop terrace with fantastic view on Paris iconic monuments, fast free WiFi, check-out until 12am, custom bunk beds (with curtains, reading light, power plugs, private lockers and comfy mattress), the coolest bar in town with a carefully curated selection of local beer, coffee and French specialties.

We also offer: 24/7 reception, Multilingual staff, Local food and drinks, Custom bunked, City expert desk, High speed free WiFi, Badass breakfast, Rooftop terrace & view.

Les Piaules is located in the arty district of Belleville which features a bunch of bars and coffee shops full of young and cool people, and close to all must-see in Paris (50m from Belleville metro hub).
...

[show more](#)

[Check Availability](#)

My Selection

Private Rooms

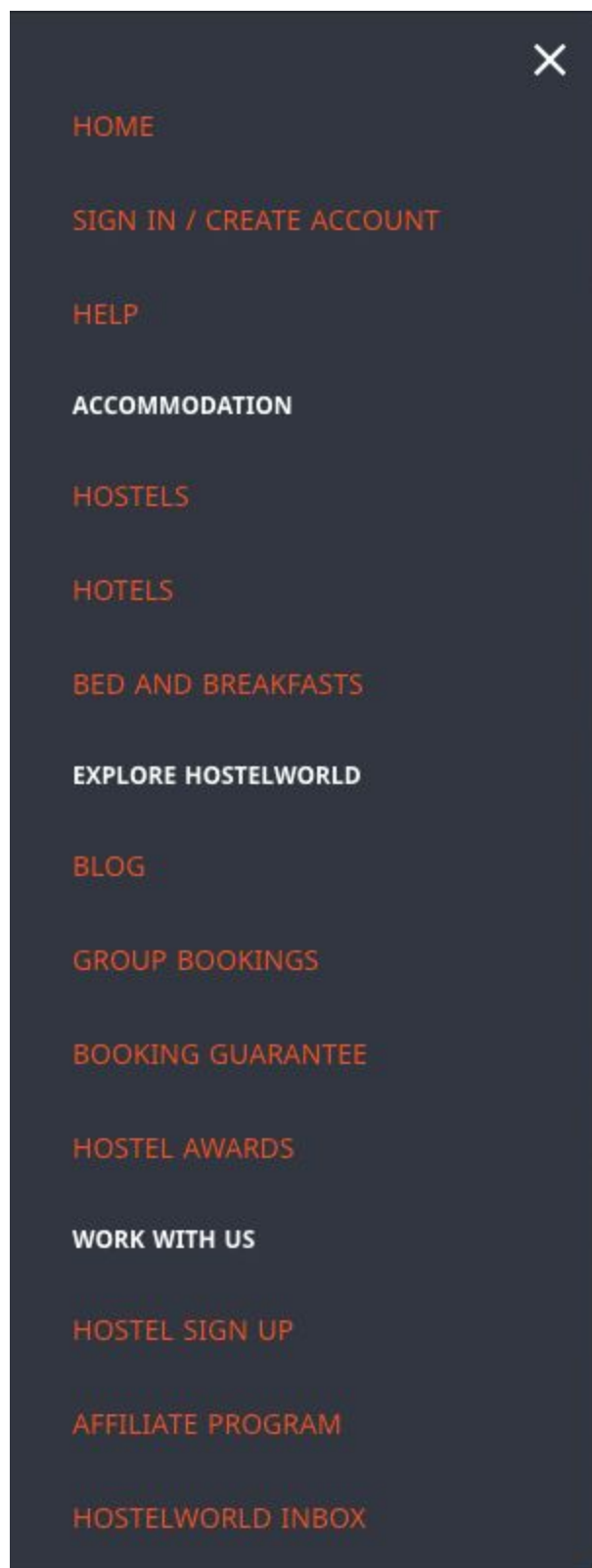
Jul 18, 2020, 3 nights
 1 Guest

Overall, users may find the design of the website excellent with the colour choices, proper UI layouts with images, reviews, descriptions, prices, availability and dates. However, there are still a lot of hidden features where users would never be able to find out instantly. In the worst case scenario, there would be a case where users completely ignore that other links exist within the page. For instance, some users may understand the three horizontal lines in the upper right corner of the header as a logout button. There are so many other tasks that users can accomplish (i.e group bookings, hotel bookings, signing up for an account and etc) with the three horizontal lines button.



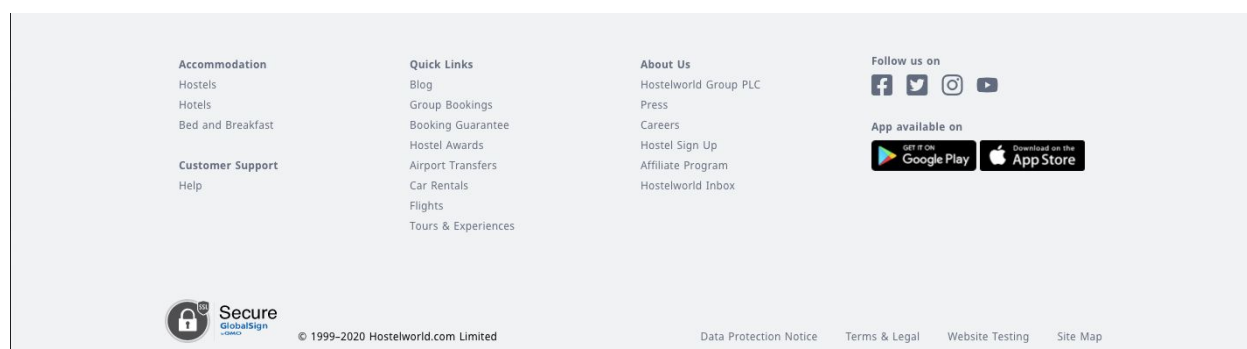
Above: The three horizontal lines button for more options.

Below: List of options when the three horizontal lines are pressed.



These are not the only hidden features and there are more to the hidden features within this website. On the footer of the webpage, there are links with multiple other booking options! The colour choice of the footer page is terribly layed out with similar background colour (i.e grey background with grey coloured links). These types of colour choices may make people with colour blind hard to see. Even worse, many users will ignore the fact that this website has nothing else other than hostel bookings. While car rental options, group booking options, flight bookings, tour bookings and airport transfer bookings exist within this website, many users may find these links hard to find within the website.

Below: The footer page of the website with quick links, other accommodation links and social media page. The grey coloured background and grey coloured links would make coloured blind users or sight disability users hard to read.



GOAL FOR THE TESTING:

HostelWorld provides hostel booking services and vacation rental booking services for mostly the young people who are planning on travelling on a budget. I will be testing users to see if users are able to accomplish a hostel booking with the given UIs in the website. For instance, I will be testing users to see if users are easily able to view amenities and reviews outlined in the website. Most importantly, I will be testing users to see if users are able to view other hidden features within the website. There may be a lot of hidden features within the website that users do not know about. Maybe users are only aware that hostel bookings are the only bookings that users can accomplish.

Throughout the usability testing, I want to check if users are able to accomplish bookings listed in the quick links (i.e quick links include other booking reservations such as hotels, cars and etc). Would users be able to read and find those other booking reservations (i.e car rentals, group bookings, hotel bookings and flight tickets) quickly and conveniently? Would users find the color choice of the quick link page pleasing? While features of the website are important, I want to

find out if users are able to quickly find other features on a given color choice and UI layouts in the website. Would users be pleased in booking flights through this website? What needs to be changed and what are they expecting to see within each feature displayed in the website? I would also want to find out how booking reservations through this website is different from other websites. Maybe for some users, they might be used to other vacation booking reservation websites.

Identifying appropriate scenarios is important throughout this usability testing. For instance, how would users feel about a scenario when users have to book hostels for 87 other guests? Can users actually accomplish overwhelming multiple guest booking? Understanding their behaviour and experience is what I want to take notes in. For some people I'm testing, it might be their first time using the website and may not have visited this website once in their lifetime or even heard of this website. How would they first react and think throughout this search process? My goal is to explore overall people's behaviour and approach on how each person reacts and responds to the UI layouts and features that are displayed in the website.

BACKGROUND ON USERS:

For background on users and for user's information, I was able to discover this information through the entry 1 questions (Entry 1 question will be defined on the "Findings section").

TESTER 1: Duke Wang

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

College/Year: Senior at Indiana University

Hometown: Bluffton, Indiana

Age Group: 18-24

Major/Cognate: Informatics, Human Centered Computing

EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOSTELWORLD: Never Visited

DURATION OF USER TEST: 15 Minutes

TESTER 2: Claire Johnson**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

College/Year: Junior at Indiana University

Hometown: Avon, Indiana

Age Group: 18-24

Major/Cognate: Apparel & Merchandising/Marketing

EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOSTELWORLD: Never Visited

DURATION OF USER TEST: 15 Minutes

TESTER 3: Tessa Imperial**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

College/Year: Junior at Indiana University

Hometown: Fort Wayne, Indiana

Age Group: 18-24

Major/Cognate: Informatics with Human Centered Computing Cognate

EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOSTELWORLD: Never Visited

DURATION OF USER TEST: 15 Minutes

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS:

For the usability testing, I have tested 3 people total. Details on demographics and background is mentioned above.

Preparation: Due to COVID-19, and distance (I am in Seattle, WA and the tester is in Bluffton, Indiana), I decided to use Zoom conference call for usability testing. Before all the Zoom conference calls started, I printed out the Usability testing script and began preparing for the user testing process. I decided to divide separate questions into two separate categories (Entry 1 questions, and Entry 2 questions) for the order of user testing events. I also wrote down helpful tips that I might be able to give before usability tasks/scenarios since I am not able to answer

any questions during the usability task/scenarios (i.e reminder to think aloud and tell me all processes).

USER TASKS:

Entry 1 Questions (Opening questions for the usability testing):

1. What do you do? Where do you go to school, year in college, major/minor?
2. How often do you visit sites to book cheap hotels or vacation rentals?
3. On a scale of 1-10 how savvy would you say you are with browsing and searching on the web in general?
4. Have you visited HostelWorld before?
5. What do you think the purpose of this site is?
6. Who do you think the intended audience is?

Entry 2 Questions (When entering the website and first approach):

1. What are three things you noticed on the home page?

Usability Tasks/Scenarios

1. Please find the best rated hostel in Madrid, Spain. Once you find it, describe to me what you are thinking and doing.
2. You live in Canada, you want to see how much these hostels cost in Canadian dollars. Describe to me the process of how you can change the currency.
3. Price is a big factor. I want to see the list of hostels within 0-40 Canadian dollar range in Madrid Spain for 18 July-21 July 2020. Describe to me your process.
4. Now that you were able to find a list of hostels in Madrid, Spain, I am short on budget and I wonder if breakfast is free and provided. Tell me how you could find this out on this site.
5. You want to see the reviews of the hostel and you want to particularly see reviews from your age group. Tell me how you can view reviews from your age group.
6. You want to see if the interior of the hostel is clean and well designed. Tell me how you would find out how clean and well designed the hostel is in multiple different ways.
7. You realised last time you used a hostel, you did not have a great time and I would rather book hotels. Tell me how you would book hotels in Madrid, Spain using this site.
8. After visiting Madrid, Spain, you are now going to Moscow, Russia. I want to view different parts of Russia and now I want to rent a car. Tell me how you would rent and book a car using this site. This can be any dropoff location within Europe.

9. You now have a car rented and want to see if there are any tours around Moscow, Russia. Tell me how you would view and book a tour using this site.
10. You had a great trip and now you want to head back to the US. Tell me how you would book a flight using this site.

Ending Question (Exit Question):

1. Was there something missing that you were expecting to see?
2. Is something about the site too well hidden?
3. If you could change one thing about this site, what would it be?
4. Would you return to this site in the future?

After listing down all the questions for the usability tasks/scenarios. I was ready to take notes and I prepared 3 A4 papers for notes. I decided to use the A4 papers for notes because there might be a time where I would have to draw and map out the user's experience and thoughts on the website. I was finally ready for the first usability testing with Duke Wang.

USABILITY TESTING WITH DUKE: On 3 April 2020 3:00 pm (Pacific Standard Time), I made a Zoom conference call in my office room. There were no technical difficulties of any sort and began starting a general conversation with Duke before jumping right into the usability testing. I started off the video by saying thank you and his dedication in the midst of Coronavirus pandemic. After thanking him, I addressed to him why I am doing usability testing (Introduction) and moved onto signing the recording permission form for recording of the conference call. Finally, I asked him if he has any questions and talked about general rules about the usability testing such as not being able to answer any task related questions during user tasks.

Then we moved onto the Entry 1 question (Opening questions with general questions). His response is listed below. **Pictures of written notes will be provided below.**

Entry 1 Question with Duke

Q: What do you do? Where do you go to school, year in college, major/minor?

A: I am a Senior at Indiana University, and I am an Informatics major with Human Centered Computing Minor.

Q: How often do you visit sites to book cheap hotels or vacation rentals?

A: I would say about 2-3 times a year, which is not very often.

Q: On a scale of 1-10 how savvy would you say you are with browsing and searching on the web in general?

A: I would say I'm somewhere around 5 because first, I don't really travel that much but when I do decide to travel once or twice a year, I am pretty sharp on booking travels and making plans for the travel through websites such as Expedia.

Q: Have you visited HostelWorld before?

A: No this is my first time in HostelWorld and didn't know this website existed.

Q: What do you think the purpose of this site is?

A: The main purpose of the site is for booking cheap travels and arranging hospitality around different places around the world.

Q: Who do you think the intended audience is?

A: I think the main intended audience is young people because I think for older people, they would rather stay at luxury and comfortable hotels.

Entry 2 Questions (Usability Tasks/Scenarios) with Duke

T1 (Me): Please find the best rated hostel in Madrid, Spain. Once you find it, describe to me what you are thinking and doing.

Duke's response and action: Okay so I see a destination box where I can type in my destination, I will type where I would want to go and then I will click on the date ranges for check in/check out, the calendar is very well displayed. After inserting the dates, I will use the drop down menu to select the number of guests, which is 1 person. Then I would click search. After clicking search, I get all those lists of hostels with ratings next to the hostel image. I would scroll down to see which hostel has the best ratings and click on that hostel. After reviewing the ratings and reviews from other users, I would click the book after reviewing the prices.

Time: 40 seconds

T2 (Me): Okay great you got it. You live in Canada, you want to see how much these hostels cost in Canadian dollars. Describe to me the process of how you can change the currency.

Duke's response and action: Hmm let me see (Takes a minute to search for the currency symbol). I can't find the currency symbol at all.. Ah I found it! It's on the top right corner. Okay now, I will click on the USD logo and on the dropdown, I will now click CAD for Canadian dollars. Now I can now book hostels and view the price in Canadian dollars.

Time: 85 seconds

T3 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. Price is a big factor. I want to see the list of hostels within 0-40 Canadian dollar range in Madrid Spain for 18 July-21 July 2020. Describe to me your process.

Duke's response and action: Okay now, I would go back to where the logo is again. Oh wait never mind. I found a sort by dropdown button option on the top of all the list of hostels. I would select sort by price and then I would put 40 on the maximum dollar range instead of the 157.

Time: 30 seconds

T4 (Me): Great. Here is the next task. Now that you were able to find a list of hostels in Madrid, Spain, I am short on budget and I wonder if breakfast is free and provided. Tell me how you could find this out on this site.

Duke's response and action: Okay if I want to check out if the hostel covers breakfast, I would probably click on the hostel box. Wait, maybe it's on the sort by page. Hmm wait nevermind I would click back onto the hostel listing. Then I would scroll down and where is it.. (takes about 20 seconds to browse). Wait I found it! It's on the bottom page where facility listing is.

Time: 80 seconds

T5 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see the reviews of the hostel and you want to particularly see reviews from your age group. Tell me how you can view reviews from your age group.

Duke's response and action: Sounds easy. I would go down to where the reviews are, click on the reviews and then on the sort page on the review tab, I would sort by age group. I found reviews from my age group.

T6 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see if the interior of the hostel is clean and well designed. Tell me how you would find out how clean and well designed the hostel is in multiple different ways.

Duke's response and action: Okay there are two different ways I discovered earlier if I recall. I can look at the interior of the hostel by looking at the images. That way, I

am able to see how the interior is designed inside and see if it's clean. Or I can look at the reviews in the review section and how the cleanliness is reviewed.

T7 (Me): Great, You got it. Here is the next task. You realised last time you used a hostel, you did not have a great time and I would rather book hotels. Tell me how you would book hotels in Madrid, Spain using this site.

Duke's response and action: Okay let me go back to the home page and see what I can find. I believe this is hostel booking only so I would have to see if there is a hotel booking on the website. (Scrolls up and down in the hostel listing page for 3 minutes). Wow I don't know where it is but just give me one more minute (minute passed). Wait I found it! If I scroll down all the way to the bottom, I found out that hotel bookings exist under accomodation link in the footer page.

T8 (Me): This is the last task. You had a great trip and now you want to head back to the US. Tell me how you would book a flight using this site.

Duke's response and action: Okay since I found additional features in the bottom of the link, I would go bottom again. I found book flights link under quick link in the bottom footer page.

① Drop down
type Berlin Germany
Click on it
check in date and check out
click sort by
pricing cheapest one.
\$30 Euros ↘

② Main page
and metaphor
Euros
Search
Canadian dollar ↘

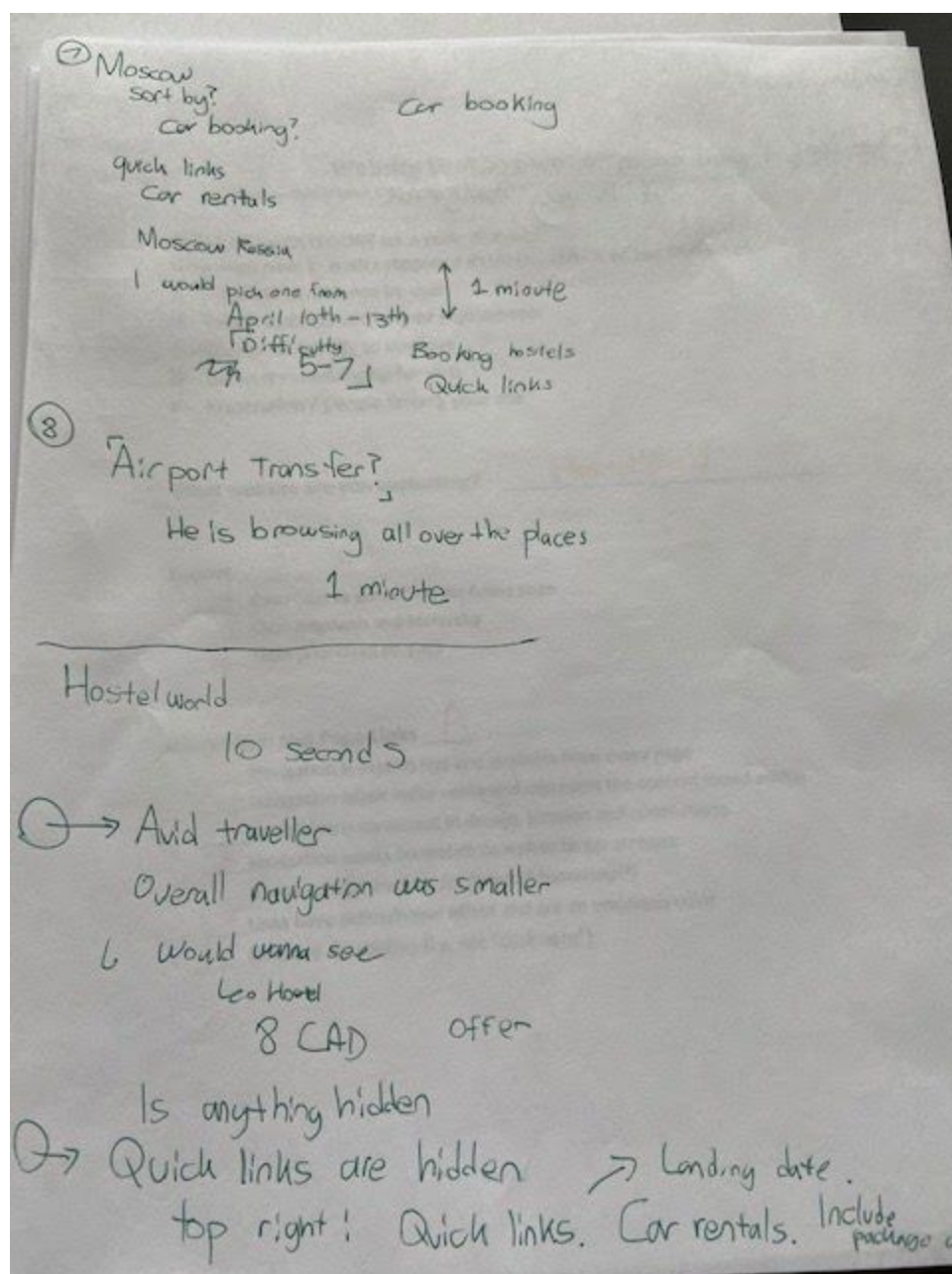
③ Madrid from pop down
time doesn't matter
Search
Copy into filter
ranges 0-40
okay 35 seconds ↘

⑦ Car booking
Individual page
top right
hotels
Group

④ Filter
facility
breakfast
CAD →
Easy ↘

⑤ Click on
total reviews
Reviews
age group
31-40

⑥ Madrid
Wide or Spread
Images →
1 can and large
pictures
left & right
← →
20 images
April 1



KEY FINDINGS FROM DUKE: Overall, Duke has mentioned that the overall design in the hostel listing page is convenient and user friendly. Specifically, he mentioned and showed that navigation through viewing, booking and reading reviews in the hostel section was easy to find and navigate around. For instance, he found out that reading reviews and being able to sort out the hostel by price was easy to accomplish. However, Duke mentioned and showed that additional features, and quick links are very well hidden. Duke showed difficulty and challenge in finding

additional features such as the hotel bookings, flight bookings and changing currency option. While Duke had an easy time to look and select different hostels, Duke faced difficulty in finding additional features such as hotel, flight and currency changes.

TEST #2

USABILITY TESTING WITH CLAIRE: On 5 April 2020 3:00 pm (Pacific Standard Time), I made a Zoom conference call in my office room. There were no technical difficulties of any sort and began starting a general conversation with Claire before jumping right into the usability testing. I started off the video by saying thank you and his dedication in the midst of Coronavirus pandemic. After thanking her, I addressed to her why I am doing usability testing (Introduction) and moved onto signing the recording permission form for recording of the conference call. Finally, I asked her if she has any questions and talked about general rules about the usability testing such as not being able to answer any task related questions during user tasks.

All questions and tasks are similar as above:

Entry 1 Question with Claire

Q: What do you do? Where do you go to school, year in college, major/minor?

A: I am a Junior at Indiana University, and I am an Apparel and Merchandising major with a marketing minor.

Q: How often do you visit sites to book cheap hotels or vacation rentals?

A: Few times, usually parents book, I book a few times a year maybe once or twice when going somewhere.

Q: On a scale of 1-10 how savvy would you say you are with browsing and searching on the web in general?

A: I would say I'm around 9-10 because I am usually good at looking and searching for different places.

Q: Have you visited HostelWorld before?

A: No this is my first time in HostelWorld.

Q: What do you think the purpose of this site is?

A: It looks like this website is used for hostel booking and making connections with other people from all over the world while traveling?

Q: Who do you think the intended audience is?

A: I think the main intended audience is young people who love to travel.

Entry 2 Questions (Usability Tasks/Scenarios) with Claire

T1 (Me): Please find the best rated hostel in Madrid, Spain. Once you find it, describe to me what you are thinking and doing.

Claire's response and action: Okay I see a where to here where I can type in my destination. I would type in the location Madrid Spain and hmm. It looks like it is already filled in the dates for me (confused). Can I change the dates? Okay I'm gonna change the date and yup it leads me to different listings of hostels. Now I see a sort by on the top where I can click on the sort by dropdown menu and select "sort by rating".

Time: 40 seconds

T2 (Me): Okay great you got it. You live in Canada, you want to see how much these hostels cost in Canadian dollars. Describe to me the process of how you can change the currency.

Claire's response and action: Okay now I see EUR at the top where I can change from EUR (Euro) to Canadian dollar. What is Candian dollar abbreviation again? It is CAD. So I will select CAD.

Time: 30 seconds

T3 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. Price is a big factor. I want to see the list of hostels within 0-40 Canadian dollar range in Madrid Spain for 18 July-21 July 2020. Describe to me your process.

Claire's response and action: Just like how I did earlier, I would click on sort by and this time, I would sort by prices. Then on the right side where it says maximum amount, I would type in 40 instead of like 3000.

Time: 30 seconds

T4 (Me): Great. Here is the next task. Now that you were able to find a list of hostels in Madrid, Spain, I am short on budget and I wonder if breakfast is free and provided. Tell me how you could find this out on this site.

Claire's response and action: Hmm okay I would probably click on the sort by again like how I did earlier. Hmm I don't see it so I'm going to click on the filter box

which is next to the sort by dropdown button. From the filter, I would click facilities and from there I can make a check on the “free breakfast” radio button.

Time: 50 seconds

T5 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see the reviews of the hostel and you want to particularly see reviews from your age group. Tell me how you can view reviews from your age group.

Claire’s response and action: I would click on the hostel reviews and then click on the sort by tab in the reviews page. Then I would click on the sort by age group and now I can view reviews from my age.

Time: 45 seconds.

T6 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see if the interior of the hostel is clean and well designed. Tell me how you would find out how clean and well designed the hostel is in multiple different ways.

Claire’s response and action: Okay one way to do that is that I would click on the images on each hostel and if I scroll through the different images, I can now see all different images of inside. Another way to do that is I would click on the reviews again in the review section and see how the cleanliness is rated.

Time: 55 seconds.

T7 (Me): Great, You got it. Here is the next task. You realised last time you used a hostel, you did not have a great time and I would rather book hotels. Tell me how you would book hotels in Madrid, Spain using this site.

Claire’s response and action: Alright, so now I’m gonna click on the back button where all the hostels were. Or would I have to make it back to the home page? Okay I’m just gonna click on the hostelworld logo on the top and go to the home page where it said “where do you want to go” in the search bar. Wait I don’t see it, let me type Madrid, Spain again. I’m gonna scroll down a little bit and see. Wait, should I click on the hostel page again? Let me scroll down from here (Scrolling up and down continues for 5 minutes). Wow this is really hard. Are you sure there’s a hotel booking option here? Let me scroll down again.. Wait I found it! It’s in the footer page and it is very small where I can’t even read it. I found it, it is under the accommodation section. Phew that was hard.

Time: 405 seconds.

T8 (Me): This is the last task. You had a great trip and now you want to head back to the US. Tell me how you would book a flight using this site.

Claire's response and action: Okay should I be going down to that bottom page again. Yes, that is what I'm going to do. Okay now I found the flights option here and it leads to the flight booking page. And then I would just type in my destination and dates.

Time: 65 seconds.

KEY FINDINGS FROM CLAIRE: As we began entering into the ending questions, Claire has mentioned that the website is overall user friendly and has mentioned that there are a lot of features. Similarly to Duke, she has mentioned and showed that the navigation in the hostel page is easy and the design choices for the hostel tab layout is great. She has stated that finding price ranges, finding particular facilities and sorting by reviews were easy tasks she was able to accomplish. However, she expressed disappointments in the footer page and how a lot of additional features were hidden in the bottom of the page. Claire said, "Flight bookings, car rentals and tour bookings are great services that HostelWorld offer. But users would not be able to find these links if it's in the bottom". Similar to Duke's experience with the website, browsing for hostels are easy and convenient while finding quick links and additional features are very well hidden.

Explore the notes I took during Claire's usability testing on the bottom

Usability Report Task Notes

Tester 2: Claire Johnson

① Where to go?

→ Madrid, Spain

Confused about notes and date ranges.

I found Madrid.

Sort it by rating?

② EUR at the top?

Sort it by ratings!

Clicked \$35 CAD

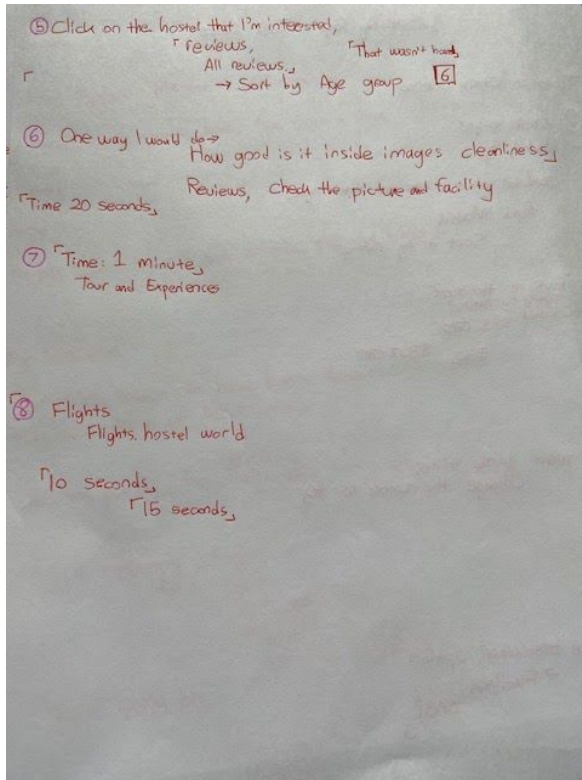
\$30, \$327 CAD

③ Went to the filter.

Change the number to 40.

④ Free breakfast? option

→ Facilities, one?



Test #3

USABILITY TESTING WITH TESSA: On 5 April 2020 5:00 pm (Pacific Standard Time), I made a Zoom conference call in my office room. There was a little bit of technical difficulty with Tessa's internet connection. Things tended to be slow but we were able to figure out ways to solve internet issues. I decided to try something different this time in taking notes. I decided to put time for the starting of the task until the end of the task to measure exact time took to accomplish each task.

All questions and tasks are similar as above:

Entry 1 Question with Tessa

Q: What do you do? Where do you go to school, year in college, major/minor?

A: I am a Junior at Indiana University, and I am an Informatics major with a Human Centered Computing cognate.

Q: How often do you visit sites to book cheap hotels or vacation rentals?

A: Almost never. I do not book hotels or vacation rentals.

Q: On a scale of 1-10 how savvy would you say you are with browsing and searching on the web in general?

A: I would say I'm around 7 because I am pretty good at surfing the Internet.

Q: Have you visited HostelWorld before?

A: No this is my first time in HostelWorld.

Q: What do you think the purpose of this site is?

A: I think the purpose of this website is to inspire people to travel to different places around the world.

Q: Who do you think the intended audience is?

A: By looking at the picture around the search bar area, I see a picture of young students drinking at a pub so I would say the intended audience is targeted toward young adults who are above the age of 20 trying to book for cheap places to stay around the world.

Entry 2 Questions (Usability Tasks/Scenarios) with Tessa

T1 (Me): Please find the best rated hostel in Madrid, Spain. Once you find it, describe to me what you are thinking and doing.

Tessa's response and action: So I'm typing Madrid, Spain in the "where do you want to go" search bar. Then I'm selecting in the dates for check in and check out. Then, it leads me into the list of hostels and then in order to view the best rated hostels, I would go to the sort by dropdown menu and click on sort by ratings to view the best rated hostels.

Time: 40 seconds

T2 (Me): Okay great you got it. You live in Canada, you want to see how much these hostels cost in Canadian dollars. Describe to me the process of how you can change the currency.

Tessa's response and action: Okay I see a EUR logo, I think that means Euro so I would click on that and see if I can find Canadian dollars. I found it and I will select Canadian dollars as a currency.

Time: 30 seconds

T3 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. Price is a big factor. I want to see the list of hostels within 0-40 Canadian dollar range in Madrid Spain for 18 July-21 July 2020. Describe to me your process.

Tessa's response and action: Okay I'm going to go back to the sort by dropdown menu and then I'm going to select. Oh wait, I don't see a price range so I guess I'm gonna check out the filter button. Oh I found it! There is a box for the price range on the right and I'm just going to put 40 on there.

Time: 30 seconds

T4 (Me): Great. Here is the next task. Now that you were able to find a list of hostels in Madrid, Spain, I am short on budget and I wonder if breakfast is free and provided. Tell me how you could find this out on this site.

Tessa's response and action: Okay is it sorting by price again? I'm going to see sort by dropdown menu to see if anything is available at breakfast. It looks like I can't find any information on breakfast so maybe if I click on filter button again I would see different options. I clicked on the filter button and oh I found it! If I click on the facilities, there is a radio button for "free breakfast".

Time: 73 seconds

T5 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see the reviews of the hostel and you want to particularly see reviews from your age group. Tell me how you can view reviews from your age group.

Tessa's response and action: To view the age group, hmm is it sort again on the sort by button? I'm going to view the property ratings on the hostel list and I can't find it. Is it the Map that I have to click? I don't see anything on the Map. I found it! If I click on the reviews, it leads me into sorting by age group.

Time: 300 seconds.

T6 (Me): You got it. Here is the next task. You want to see if the interior of the hostel is clean and well designed. Tell me how you would find out how clean and well designed the hostel is in multiple different ways.

Tessa's response and action: Okay one way to do that is that I would click on the Facilities tab under the filter button and from the filter, I would check on the radio button that says excellent cleanliness. That is one way and the other way would be clicking on each hostel listing and seeing "superb cleanliness" on the description section.

Time: 85 seconds.

T7 (Me): Great, You got it. Here is the next task. You realised last time you used a hostel, you did not have a great time and I would rather book hotels. Tell me how you would book hotels in Madrid, Spain using this site.

Tessa's response and action: I clicked on the hamburger menu on the top right corner because I wanted to see what was there and now I see an option for hotel booking!

Time: 45 seconds.

T8 (Me): This is the last task. You had a great trip and now you want to head back to the US. Tell me how you would book a flight using this site.

Tessa's response and action: Let me check the hamburger menu again to see if there are any additional links there. Hmm it looks like the flight booking option is not listed in the hamburger menu. Maybe if I go to filter again I would find the option for flight booking? I only see facilities, map and property type. I'm visiting every place and I still can't find it. (Searches the Facilities page for two minutes). I don't know if I can find it. It's hard, maybe if I scroll down... Oh I found it! It's under the quick links and wow that is very hard to see.

Time: 195 seconds.

KEY FINDINGS FROM TESSA: As we began entering into the ending questions, Tessa has mentioned that overall navigation and searching within the Hostel booking page was easy. In addition, Tessa emphasised that the hostel booking had convenient UI layouts where there were multiple dropdown menus for filtering and sorting. However, similar to Duke and Claire, Tessa also emphasised inconvenience with the quick links and how it is located in the bottom. Additionally, Tessa emphasised how she usually never visits the footer page when searching for different things within the website.

Notes for Tessa's Usability testing is attached below

Usability Report Task Notes

Entry 1 Questions Notes

Tester 3: Tessa Imperial

① IV Blooming, Informatics HCC, Junior

② Almost never, I usually never book.

③ 7, I would say

④ I have not.

⑤ The purpose of this website,
to get to touristy areas.
Book hostels.

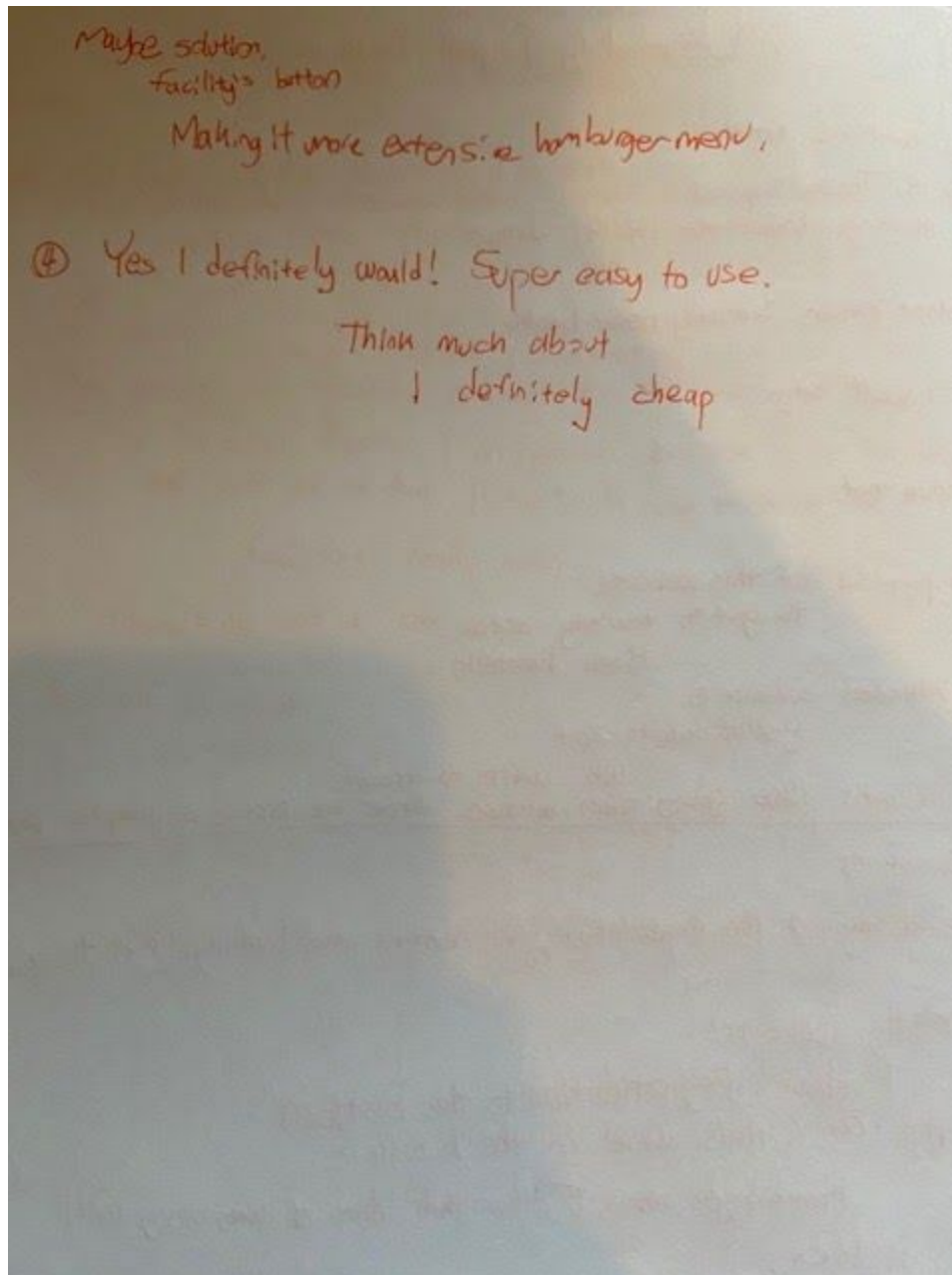
⑥ The intended audience is
young adults 20+
who wants to travel,
and it looks like young adults because there are pictures of people partying.

Ending Questions

① I would say no. No expectations, car rentals and booking travel tours.

② Honestly, websites
I don't pay attention to the bottom
All the car rentals were in the bottom.
Hamburger menu. Other than that it was very well
hidden.

③ I liked the layout and it was very straight forward.
Scheme was good. Layout was understandable,
I would've added another category, I would've added another



CONCLUSION

FROM THE TESTING:

From this research, I was able to visually see how people responded, behaved and reacted to the one of the most popular travel & tourism websites, Hostel World. All

testers had never heard of HostelWorld before or had never visited HostelWorld in their lifetime. In addition, all testers usually never book hotels and/or vacation rentals often because testers do not travel as much. Before jumping into user testing, a lot of testers already understood that the purpose of this website is to somehow inspire young adults (people who are 20+) on cheap hostel bookings while travelling.

All 3 testers emphasised that the HostelWorld is user friendly and has stated that they would return to this website. Starting with hostel booking, users were able to type in their destination in an appropriate box, and users were able to enter check in/check out dates with the correct number of guests. Testers emphasised that the boxes for searches were very well labeled (i.e where do you want to go, check in/check out and number of guests at an appropriate place). Furthermore, users were able to find sorting by method in various places without taking no longer than 60 seconds (i.e sorting hostels by price, ratings and etc). Also, users were able to conveniently locate the filter button within the website and discover additional amenities offered by hostels (i.e filtering and seeing which hostels cover free breakfast). In terms of design, testers emphasised excellence in the list of hostel UI layout boxes. Testers emphasised that the location of the image was clear and visible, ratings/reviews were clearly visible to users in big text and pricing/booking buttons were clearly visible with appropriate colour choices. Overall, hostel booking pages had appropriate and adequate design where users were able to navigate through different hostel options without taking no longer than average of 60 seconds.

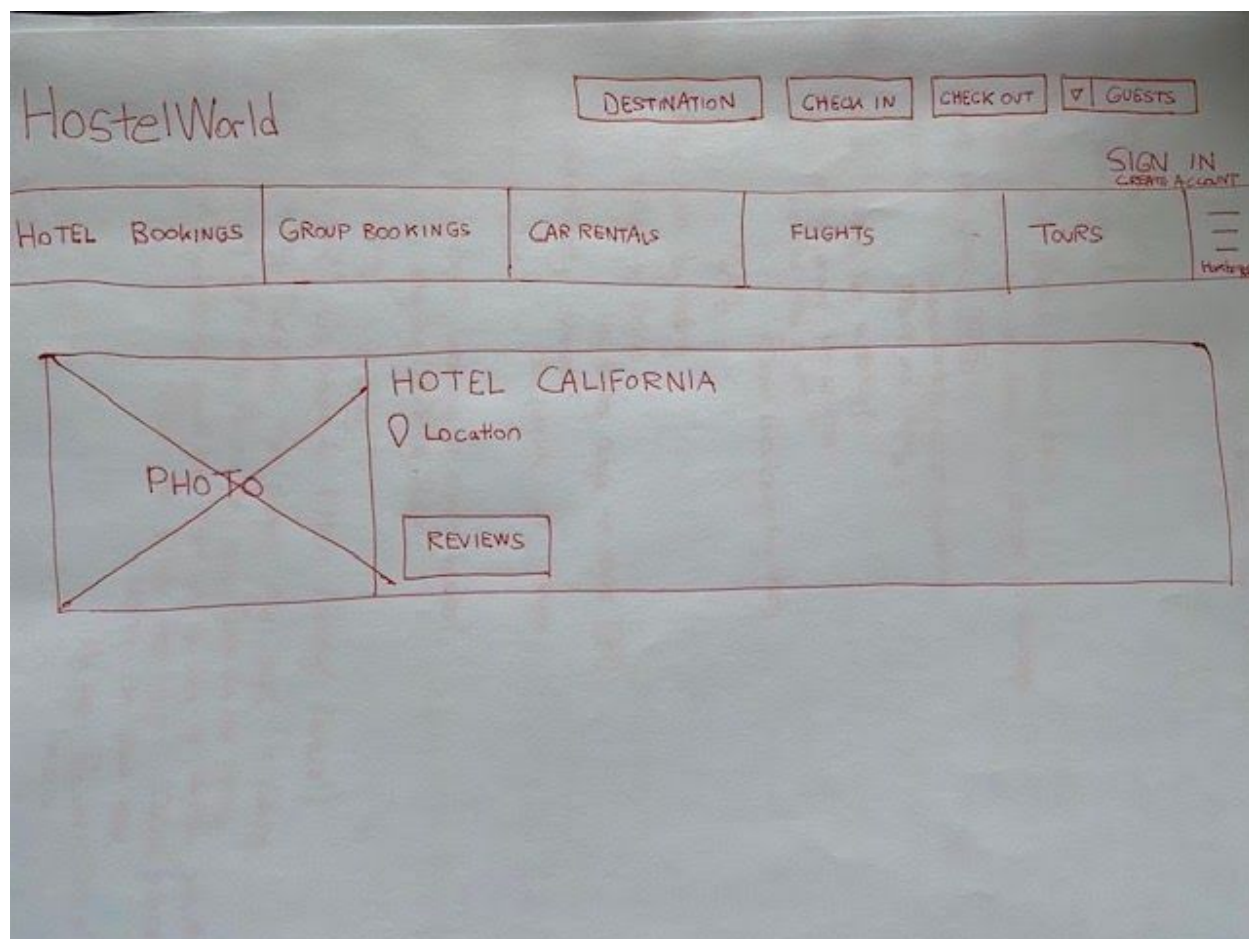
The main problems that users emphasised were the footer page and the design choice of the footer page. All testers emphasised that the location of additional features (i.e car rentals, hotel bookings, group bookings, tour bookings and flight bookings) are located at odd places. One particular user pointed out that the user rarely visits the bottom of the page when looking for booking. Additionally, the additional booking links were too small for some users to read and the colour choices on design were very odd. One user pointed out that grey text with grey background isn't the best way to display booking options. In conclusion, users marked this website very user friendly and interests in revisiting the website in the future. Users recommended that additional booking features be located where the headers are as navigation links.

RECOMMENDATION (Drawing provided below):

After usability research and testing, there are many emphasis on the location of additional booking links. As mentioned above, testers recommended other additional bookings to be relocated to where headers and searches are. For instance, if your booking was located where the hamburger menu is or where

search boxes are, then more users would find out that tour bookings are available within this website. Car rentals, hotel bookings, group bookings and flight bookings) could also be located where headers are as a navigation link. The suggested image and drawing of the UI layout of the website is provided below.

Below: Suggested UI of the website. Instead of having the other booking features in the bottom of the page, it would be more visible to users if those features are located in the navigation link where headers are. By changing the UI layouts, more users would be using the hotel bookings, group bookings, car rentals, flights and tour services offered by HostelWorld and help HostelWorld to grow and increase their sales as a company (i.e 300 people per day booking car rentals through HostelWorld to having 1000 people booking cars through HostelWorld, which is more than 300% sales increase).



REFLECTION

Usability Reflection:

I actually have a lot of experience with usability testing since I'm a HCI minor. This is one of the best experiences of my life because I am very passionate about travel & tourism and my experience understanding people's behaviour with the website layout, features and designs. Although COVID-19 and campus closure was a big factor, I was able to contact my friends without having to face technical problems. User tasks/scenarios went really well and I was able to take good notes on people's process, accomplishments and results. From the data that I gathered, I will be making decisions to come up with the travel blog website for my future project.

Usability Testing Questions:

Question 1) When doing usability testing, what is the duration of usability testing within the UX research?

Question 2) What are some of the best UX research methodologies when doing usability research?

Question 3) What are some of the best software tools to do wireframing for the website?