



# Amazon Smile

## HCDE 517 B

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# Executive Summary

## What we did

Our team designed and conducted a usability study of AmazonSmile, with the goals of assessing users' experiences with Smile.Amazon.com, determining how users view AmazonSmile and its mission, as well as investigating whether or not users understand that they need to return to Smile.Amazon.com to ensure their purchases support their selected charity. We also elicited participant opinions of each task, ratings of task ease/difficulty, and rankings of three prototypes intended to inform AmazonSmile customers that they have not reached Smile.Amazon.com when they land on a www.Amazon.com page.

## Who and how we tested

We conducted a series of usability tasks with 10 current Amazon.com users that have some experience with online shopping. Participants were asked to finish 5 tasks, evaluate AmazonSmile, and respond to a follow-up survey 2 weeks post study regarding their use of AmazonSmile during that period. Tasks included signing up for AmazonSmile, changing the selected charity, find an item that will benefit your selected charity upon purchase, telling a friend about AmazonSmile, and a reminder prototype comparison.

We collected data using audio and video recorders as well as note taking, data was collected for multiple metrics including:

- Number and description of errors.
- The number of participants that changed their charity in the account area versus the number of participants that changed their charity in the supporting string in the top nav
- Number of participants that require moderator assistance and description of the assistance given
- Completion rate and satisfaction ratings for each task
- Ranking of three alert prototypes
- Participant feedback during the study using think-aloud protocol
- Ranking on SUS scale for the overall AmazonSmile experience
- The number of participants that used Smile.Amazon.com in the 2 weeks since the post study

# Critical Findings & Recommendations

The following are considered to be the critical findings from our usability study. Recommendations are also included. A complete list of findings and recommendations can be found starting on page X of this report.

Finding	Recommendation
Search option for charity selection with initial AmazonSmile sign up is not discoverable	Make search option for charity selection more prominent
Participants had difficulty returning to AmazonSmile so that their purchase would benefit their selected charity	<p>Use a popup to redirect users from Amazon.com to AmazonSmile</p> <p>Place additional reminders in other areas of Amazon.com's UI (Account, shopping cart, shopping filters)</p> <p>Integrate two sites (Amazon.com and AmazonSmile)</p>
Participants preferred alert Prototype A	<p>Although these findings would indicate that AmazonSmile should implement Prototype A, we would like to note that the prototypes were shown as a single screenshot and not within the context of live use of Amazon.com.</p> <p>We recommend further research into these prototypes using a higher fidelity prototype.</p>

# Overview

## About AmazonSmile

AmazonSmile was launched in October 2013 as a separate site from Amazon.com that provides a way for customers to support their favorite charitable organization as they shop online. Customers have access to the same shopping experience as Amazon.com, the difference being that an automatic donation of 0.5% is made to a charity of their choice with each purchase made through AmazonSmile.

## What We Tested

The goal of the usability study was to uncover usability issues and user preferences. There were several key questions we were interested in investigating:

- Were participants able to easily sign up for AmazonSmile and how did they feel about the signup experience?
- Were participants able to change the charity they had previously selected and how did they feel about the process?
- Did users return to smile.amazon.com to ensure their purchases benefit the charity they selected?
- Of the three reminder prototypes, which one do participants prefer?
- What are participants' overall impressions of AmazonSmile?

## Recruitment

We determined the requirements that users needed in order to participate. We received 12 surveys that met our predetermined criteria and had 10 people participate.

Our screener survey ensured participants met the following criteria:

- They are a current Amazon.com user
- They are at least 18 years of age
- They are experienced and familiar with browsing products on a web browser
- They self-identified as being an online shopper
- They lived in Seattle at the time of the study

## Methodology

During the study, we conducted task analysis interviews, gave participants post-task questionnaires, asked participants to think aloud while executing tasks, gathered data through a post-test questionnaire, and sent a follow-up survey two weeks after the initial study. The members of our group alternated the roles of moderator and note taker for each participant.

# Test Protocol

Each participant was allocated 55 minutes for the study. We began each session by having participants sign our consent form as well as Amazon's Non-Disclosure Agreement, briefly explained AmazonSmile, and let them know what to expect from the usability study. Once the paperwork was signed we gave participants an example of "think aloud protocol" before we began moving through the five tasks. The moderator introduced a scenario and asked the participant to complete a task while using the think aloud protocol and asked them to indicate to the moderator when they felt they had completed the task. After each task, the participant would rate the level of difficulty for that specific task on a Likert scale using a post-task survey.

We asked the participants to complete the following series of tasks to measure usability and user preference:

- In Task 1 we asked participants to sign up for AmazonSmile and choose a charity in order to test how easy that was for users.
- In Task 2 we had users edit their charity selection to test the method(s) used by participants when changing a charity and how discoverable and easy to use the method(s) are.
- In Task 3 we asked participants to shop for a pair of shoes that would benefit their previously selected charity, to evaluate participants' understanding that in order for a donation to be made to their charity, they return Smile.Amazon.com to make their purchase.
- For Task 4 we asked participants to explain AmazonSmile to a friend. We used an open-ended question to observe how participants described the AmazonSmile system and process and whether they mentioned that AmazonSmile is a separate site/url from Amazon.com.
- In Task 5 we showed participants three different prototypes of reminders that would appear on Amazon.com and direct users who had previously signed up for AmazonSmile back to Smile.amazon.com, to determine which reminder participants preferred and why.

# Test Environment

The two usability tests were conducted at the University of Washington's Seattle campus, in a meeting room located at Sieg Hall, on Saturday, February 15th and Saturday, February 22nd. We provided one laptop per test room. We cleared the internet browser cache and cookies between applicable tasks. We recorded the sessions using video camera and audio recorder. The moderator sat beside the participant and the notetaker observed the session off to one side.

# Data Collection

We collected quantitative and qualitative data during the study that is relevant to our findings. The quantitative data included number of errors made for tasks 1, 2, and 3; satisfaction ratings of tasks 1, 2, and 3; success rate of completing tasks 1, 2, and 3; the number of participants that initially searched for a charity versus selecting a default charity during task 1; the number of participants that changed a charity using the account menu versus the supporting string in the top nav for task 2; and rankings of prototypes.

The qualitative data included why participants chose a particular charity, participant reactions to tasks, participants' explanations of AmazonSmile to a friend, and anecdotal evidence on overall impressions of AmazonSmile as a system.

At the end of each session we gathered data regarding how frequently participants used Amazon.com, whether or not they had heard about AmazonSmile before the study, and asked them to fill out the SUS scale, to quantify participants' overall impression of AmazonSmile. Two weeks after the test, we sent out a survey to determine whether the participants had shopped on AmazonSmile, and if so how they returned to the site, and if not what would motivate to do so in the future.

# Findings & Successes

## Successes

Based on discussions with our AmazonSmile contact, we investigated the usability of specific tasks within the site, and collected subjective feedback from the participants. Many of the results of our investigation are favorable.

Perhaps most significantly, all ten of the participants found the premise of AmazonSmile to be attractive and stated an intention to use AmazonSmile in the future. P9 was very excited about AmazonSmile, saying "I'm gonna log on when I get home". P1 mentioned that she would "use it from here on out actually, on every purchase, as long as I remember." P7 stated that she was very likely to use AmazonSmile because "it's completely free and I get to support people." She also stated that she was "very likely to tell other people, too." Lastly, P9 described herself as "pro"-AmazonSmile.

Participants provided positive feedback regarding the concept of charity donation through Amazon. P2 stated that "it's a benefit, you know, it makes me feel good about being a consumer, and, yeah there's no, like, downside that I'm able to tell." P7 said that she "liked

the concept of supporting a charity, and so I feel like it would make me want to shop at amazon more often because I have a benefit to it.” P8 opined “I think it’s really good that amazon is supporting all these charities, I like that idea a lot.”

All ten participants were able to successfully sign up for AmazonSmile and edit their charity selection without making any errors, indicating that these two areas of AmazonSmile are very usable. In addition, participant satisfaction ratings for the signup and charity change tasks (Task 1 and Task 2, respectively) fell entirely in the ‘Very Easy’ range. On a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being Very Easy and 7 being Very Difficult, the average satisfaction rating for Task 1 was 1.3 and the average satisfaction rating for Task 2 was 1.5.



## Opportunities and Recommendations

Along with the above outlined successes, the study revealed a number of opportunities for improving AmazonSmile. The tables on the following pages outline our findings, separated by task and category, along with supporting data and recommendations.



**Table 1: Findings related to Task 1 - Sign Up for AmazonSmile**

<b>Finding 1.1:</b>	<b>Participants selected default charities more often than they searched for a charity</b>
<b>Data:</b>	8 participants selected a default charity during the signup process. 2 participants searched for a charity during the signup process.
<b>Finding 1.2:</b>	<b>Search option for charity selection is not visible</b>
<b>Data:</b>	5 participants did not see the search option for the charity selection during Task 1. 1 participant saw the option after completing the task, the remaining 4 participants did not see the option at all.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	If the aim of AmazonSmile is to promote the default charities over others, no action is recommended. If AmazonSmile wants to increase the likelihood that users will also search for a charity - we recommend making the search option more visible/discoverable.
<b>Finding 1.3:</b>	<b>The most commonly stated reason for selecting a charity was that chosen charity, when selected from the default charities, was convenient.</b>
<b>Data:</b>	5 participants stated that the default charities were convenient to choose from. 2 participants cited familiarity with the charity. 3 participants were already involved with their selected charity.
<b>Finding 1.4:</b>	<b>On a 7-point Likert scale, where 1=Very Easy and 7=Very Difficult, the mean satisfaction rating for Task 1 was 1.3</b>
<b>Data:</b>	7 participants gave Task 1 a satisfaction rating of 1. 3 participants gave Task 1 a satisfaction rating of 2.
<b>Finding 1.5:</b>	<b>The most common participant reaction to Task 1 was “the task was easy”</b>
<b>Data:</b>	Participants stated that the task was ‘easy’ 9 times. Participants noted that they did not see the search option 5 times. Participants said that the task was ‘straightforward’ 3 times.
<b>Quotes:</b>	“It was very easy. I think the bottom portion of searching, I would have noticed it right away if it had been a little larger, or maybe side-by-side of the ones that were already pre-selected.” [P1] “Really clear and straightforward, except that, i only know, only one of the charity.” [P4] “very easy, just had to click a few buttons. I would’ve liked to know if there’s local charities besides just those that you could search for charities.” [P10]
<b>Recommendations:</b>	No recommendation for these findings.

**Table 2: Findings related to Task 2 - Change Selected Charity**

<b>Finding 2.1:</b>	<b>Participants used both the “Your Account” section and the supporting string in the top nav<sup>1</sup>, almost equally, to edit their charity selection</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>4 of the participants used the “Your Account” section (both the menu and clicking on Account to get to the account page) to change their selected charities.</p> <p>6 of the participants clicked on the supporting string in the top nav to change their selected charities.</p>
<b>Finding 2.2:</b>	<b>On a 7-point Likert scale, where 1=Very Easy and 7=Very Difficult, the mean satisfaction rating for Task 2 was 1.5</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>7 participants gave Task 2 a satisfaction rating of 1.</p> <p>1 participant gave Task 2 a satisfaction rating of 2.</p> <p>2 participants gave Task 2 a satisfaction rating of 3.</p>
<b>Recommendations Findings 2.1 - 2.2:</b>	No recommendation for these findings.
<b>Finding 2.3:</b>	<b>The most common participant reaction to Task 2 was “the task was easy”</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>Participants stated that the task was ‘easy’ 8 times.</p> <p>Participants said that the task was ‘straightforward’ 3 times.</p> <p>Participants noted that they didn’t know where to go at first to change their charity 2 times.</p> <p>Participants stated that they didn’t notice the search bar at first 2 times.</p> <p>Participants stated that the purpose of the supporting string in top nav was clear 2 times.</p>
<b>Quotes:</b>	<p>“Very easy. Any changes to your profile, that’s usually typically where I go on any website, to where my name is.” [P2]</p> <p>“It’s also pretty easy, but at first i don’t know where is it, but then I find Account and it shows in the preview, and when I get in my account it’s really easy to find it.” [P4]</p> <p>“I think it was very easy, I normally would look at the top of any site I was using to shop to look for my personal information, so I do like how right at the top there it says “supporting” and it made it very clear that I had to select that to edit my options.” [P5]</p> <p>“It did take me a second to realize that I could type in my charity at the bottom cause, you’re not necessarily gonna look down there first when you’ve got all this visual up here.” [P9]</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	If AmazonSmile wants to increase the likelihood that users will also search for a charity, vs. only selecting one of the default charities - we recommend making the search option more visible/discoverable.

**Table 3: Findings related to Task 3 - Find an item whose purchase will benefit your selected charity**

<b>Finding 3.1:</b>	<b>Participants had difficulty returning to AmazonSmile so that their purchase would benefit their selected charity</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>2 of the participants did not successfully complete Task 3.</p> <p>Of the 8 participants that did successfully complete Task 3, 4 required moderator assistance in the form of reminding that the purchase should support the participant's selected charity.</p> <p>The same assistance was required of the 2 participants that did not finish the task successfully.</p>
<b>Finding 3.2:</b>	<b>Task 3 accrued the highest number of errors</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>Where Tasks 1 and 2 each saw 0 errors, Task 3 had an average of 1.1 errors across all 10 participants.</p> <p>Participants expected to find ways to AmazonSmile in the Amazon.com UI 5 times.</p> <p>Participants went directly to Amazon.com instead of AmazonSmile 4 times.</p> <p>1 participant went to Amazon.com by clicking on a Google search result.</p> <p>1 participant went to the charity's home page.</p>
<b>Quotes:</b>	<p>"I think when i got through the purchase process, I would have to log in before making the purchase, and so I think that would populate my charity. I liked how I saw up here that i was supporting the charity. I don't see that now but I believe that's because I'm not signed in." [P2]</p> <p>"If you already signed up with AmazonSmile, when you go to Amazon, it should automatically recognize that right away." [P9]</p> <p>"My first choice would've been to go directly to the charity to see if they had something... to give them the larger percentage." [P10]</p>
<b>Finding 3.3:</b>	<b>Among participants that completed Task 3, directly typing a variant of Smile. Amazon.com and searching for 'AmazonSmile' were the two most common ways of returning to AmazonSmile</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>3 participants typed Smile.Amazon.com (or a variant like AmazonSmile.com) into the address bar.</p> <p>3 participants searched for AmazonSmile via search engine.</p> <p>2 participants searched for AmazonSmile within Amazon.com.</p>

**Table 3: Findings related to Task 3 - Find an item whose purchase will benefit your selected charity (cont'd)**

<b>Finding 3.4:</b>	<b>On a 7-point Likert scale, where 1=Very Easy and 7=Very Difficult, the mean satisfaction rating for Task 3 was 2.6</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>2 participants gave Task 3 a satisfaction rating of 1.</p> <p>2 participant gave Task 3 a satisfaction rating of 2.</p> <p>4 participants gave Task 3 a satisfaction rating of 3.</p> <p>2 participants gave Task 3 a satisfaction rating of 4.</p>
<b>Finding 3.5:</b>	<b>The most common participant reaction to Task 3 was “the task was easy”</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>Participants stated that the task was easy 5 times.</p> <p>Participants said that the task was more difficult 3 times.</p> <p>Participants stated that it was unclear how to make a purchase that would benefit their selected charity 3 times.</p>
<b>Quotes:</b>	<p>“The actual process of finding the shoe is fine but I think it’s just not entirely clear that it’s going to be supporting the charity.” [P8]</p> <p>“I didn’t give this one as easy because it’s, I don’t know, it was just like ‘aagh’... I had to think about that one.” [P2]</p>
<b>Recommendations Findings 3.1 - 3.5:</b>	<p>A popup redirecting users from Amazon.com to AmazonSmile could remind users to use smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com to support their selected charity.</p> <p>Additional reminders could be placed in other areas of Amazon.com’s UI including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users’ Account area</li> <li>• Shopping cart</li> <li>• Shopping filters (that would show which products are eligible for AmazonSmile).</li> </ul> <p>Lastly, integrating the two sites (Amazon.com and AmazonSmile) could limit confusion and make contributing to a charity easier and more straightforward.</p>

**Table 4: Comparison of Task 1, Task 2, and Task 3 satisfaction ratings**

<b>Finding 4.1:</b>	<b>Satisfaction ratings for Tasks 1 and 2 are both statistically significantly higher than the satisfaction ratings of Task 3</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>Although all three of the satisfaction ratings average on the ‘easy’ side of the scale, we ran a paired samples T-test between Tasks 1 &amp; 2, Tasks 2 &amp; 3, and Tasks 1 &amp; 3.</p> <p>While no statistically significant difference was found in the satisfaction ratings of Tasks 1 &amp; 2, Task 3 was rated to be more difficult than Tasks 1 &amp; 2, and these differences are statistically significant (0.002 and 0.04 respectively).</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	Consideration should be taken into directing users back to AmazonSmile to shop. Returning to smile.amazon.com to ensure purchases support participating charities is difficult for users to remember.

**Table 5: Findings related to Task 4 - Tell a friend about AmazonSmile**

<b>Finding 5.1:</b>	<b>When describing how they would tell a friend about AmazonSmile, over half of the participants specified that AmazonSmile is separate from Amazon.com</b>
<b>Data:</b>	<p>6 participants specified that AmazonSmile must be accessed separately from Amazon.com.</p> <p>4 participants focused on describing the charity aspect of AmazonSmile to a friend.</p>
<b>Quotes:</b>	<p>“The first thing I would tell them is to just to go to Smile.Amazon.com and log in with your regular password and username and that will direct you to a page where you get to select a charity.” [P1]</p> <p>“I would recommend just going to Google, typing in AmazonSmile and you could find it that way.” [P5]</p> <p>“I’m sure that there’s a way that you could, like, invite people or send a link to my friend.” [P2]</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	No recommendation for this finding.

**Table 6: Findings related to the prototype comparison**

<b>Finding 6.1:</b>	<b>Participants preferred the full-page prototype Prototype A</b>
<b>Data:</b>	7 participants preferred Prototype A. 2 participants preferred Prototype B. 1 participant preferred Prototype C.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>Although these findings would indicate that AmazonSmile should implement Prototype A, we would like to note that the prototypes were shown as a single screenshot and not within the context of live use of Amazon.com.</p> <p>We recommend further research into these prototypes using a higher fidelity prototype.</p>

**Table 7: Findings not related to a specific task**

<b>Finding 7.1:</b>	<b>All 10 System Usability Scale (SUS) scores fall in the ‘Acceptable’ range</b> <i>Note: The System Usability Scale was developed by John Brooke at Digital Equipment Corporation</i>
<b>Data:</b>	SUS scores range from a low of 77.5 to a high of 100, all of which fall into the ‘Acceptable’ range. (The acceptable range is determined by a compilation of 500 studies on the SUS in which scores are collected and charted to find trends.)
<b>Recommendations:</b>	No recommendations for this finding.
<b>Finding 7.2:</b>	<b>In the post-test interview, participants voiced concerns about remembering to return to AmazonSmile</b>
<b>Data</b>	3 participants mentioned that they might need to be reminded to return to AmazonSmile.
<b>Quotes:</b>	“I think I would need more advertising to remember it” [P10] “I guess it is also a little weird that you have to go to smile.amazon to be able to do that, it would be nice if it was like centralized and you can just like toggle that option on or off instead of going to like separate, different pages.” [P8] “I’ll use it from here on out actually, on every purchase as long as I remember.” [P1]
<b>Recommendations:</b>	A popup redirecting users from Amazon.com to AmazonSmile. Additional reminders could be placed in other areas of Amazon.com’s UI. Integrating the two sites (Amazon.com and AmazonSmile) could limit confusion and make contributing to a charity easier and more straightforward.
<b>Finding 7.3:</b>	<b>Half of the participants had heard about AmazonSmile prior to the study</b>
<b>Data:</b>	5 participants had heard about AmazonSmile prior to signing up for the study. 2 participants had heard about AmazonSmile from a friend. 1 participant had heard about AmazonSmile from social media (Facebook). 2 participants could not remember where they had heard about AmazonSmile.
<b>Quotes:</b>	“I am on Amazon often, so it was probably there, but I can’t remember specifically.” [P2]
<b>Recommendations:</b>	No recommendations for this finding.

**Table 8: Findings related to the follow-up survey**

<b>Finding 8.1:</b>	<b>Of the 7 participants that responded to the follow-up survey, 2 shopped on AmazonSmile</b>
<b>Data:</b>	2 participants shopped at AmazonSmile in the 2 weeks since the study. 5 participants did not shop at AmazonSmile in the 2 weeks since the study.
<b>Quotes:</b>	<p>“I will shop at amazon smile for my next amazon purchase. The only motivation I needed was that a portion of my purchase goes towards charity at no extra cost to me.”</p> <p>“I will probably use it over normal Amazon if given the opportunity, but that is usually determined by prices.”</p> <p>“It’d be nice to have a toggle option on Amazon.com. I shopped on Amazon and bought some things, but I totally forgot to go to smile.amazon”</p> <p>“I have an aunt who runs a non-profit organization that I would love to support while also shopping for myself.”</p> <p>“Reminders from Amazon (especially when adding items to cart) about using Amazon Smile.”</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	A popup redirecting users from Amazon.com to AmazonSmile. Additional reminders could be placed in other areas of Amazon.com’s UI. Integrating the two sites (Amazon.com and AmazonSmile) could limit confusion and make contributing to a charity easier and more straightforward.
<b>Finding 8.2:</b>	<b>Of the respondents that shopped on AmazonSmile, both returned to AmazonSmile via typing the URL directly into their address bar</b>
<b>Data:</b>	2 respondents returned to AmazonSmile by typing the URL directly into their address bar.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	No recommendations for this finding.



# Next Steps

## Lessons Learned

Due to availability we arranged to conduct our tests at Sieg Hall for HCDE students on the University of Washington campus during the weekend. When the time came to conduct the studies we realized that not only was it difficult to try to direct participants to Sieg Hall, but there was also no way to get participants inside the building without assistance. We enlisted help one week, when a friend attended the sessions and acted as a guide around campus. The second weekend, though, we had to rely on our cell phones. Luckily, our sessions were not interrupted by phone calls, but next time we would prefer to conduct the studies in a more accessible location.

In addition, although we were often in contact with our AmazonSmile liaison, it was not until after the study had been completed that she remarked that another team had shared their study kit with her prior to conducting their studies, which we had not thought to do beforehand. Although our liaison did not see this as an issue, we would have liked the opportunity to identify any missing pieces, or places where we are collecting data that may not be useful to the AmazonSmile team. For future studies, we will share all documents related to the study with our clients before using the documents.

Finally, we were limited by the participants that we were able to recruit because we only had incentives of \$5 Starbucks gift cards and homemade cookies. Since Amazon's "typical user" is defined by the company as "everyone," recruiting participants from a wider range of backgrounds would be beneficial, and make the data more generalizable, as well as examine the data based on categories such as computer experience and age range.

## Future Studies

Many of our results indicate that further research should be conducted on several key points.

Further research should be done for Task 3 (find an item that will benefit your selected charity upon purchase). We did not have users complete a purchase on smile.amazon.com. This would give users the full experience of a confirmation that their purchase would benefit their charity and they could see the opportunity to share that information via social media.

Additionally, the prototypes were presented to participants in our study as a series of screenshots. As such, the data that we collected may not be representative of participant preferences in a live-use setting. The

prototypes should be tested again in a scenario in which they actually pop up while a participant is visiting Amazon.com in order to better reflect the actual situation in which they would be encountered on Amazon.com.

Lastly, since many participants experienced difficulties remembering to return to AmazonSmile in order for their purchases to benefit the charity they had selected, and because several participants outright stated a desire to be reminded to return to AmazonSmile, additional research should be conducted on the efficacy of Amazon's emails, bookmarks, and other methods of routing customers back to AmazonSmile in order to determine which methods work best and which need to be examined closer.

# Appendix

## 1. Supporting String in the Top Nav:

