

Duquesne Incline Website Usability Test Plan

Objective: To evaluate the usability and effectiveness of the Duquesne Incline website by observing real users as they complete key tasks, identifying pain points, and gathering feedback for improvements.

Testing Protocol:

1) Pre-Test Setup

- a) Participants: 2 users (or perceived users, such as tourists, locals, or students)
- b) Duration: 3-5 minutes per user
- c) Method: Remote (Zoom) or in-person

2) Introduction

- a) Script: "Thank you for participating in this usability test. Today, we're evaluating the Duquesne Incline website to see how easy it is to find information. I'll ask you to complete a few tasks while thinking aloud—share your thoughts as you navigate. There are no right or wrong answers; we're testing the website, not you. Do you have any questions before we begin?"
- b) Background Questions
 - i) Have you visited the Duquesne Incline before?
 - ii) How familiar are you with the website?
 - iii) What kind of information would you expect to find here?
- c) User Tasks: Ask users to complete the following tasks while thinking aloud:
 - i) Trip Planning
 - (1) "Imagine you're planning a visit. Find the hours of operation and ticket prices."
 - (2) *Success Metrics: Did they find it quickly? Did they check the sidebar or navigation?*
 - ii) Group Visit Scheduling
 - (1) "You're organizing a school field trip. Find how to schedule a group visit."
 - (2) *Success Metrics: Did they locate the "Plan Visit" section? Did they see the group rates?*
 - iii) Gift Shop Exploration
 - (1) "You want to buy a souvenir when you go. Browse the gift shop and describe what you see."
 - (2) *Success Metrics: Did they find product categories easily?*
 - iv) Newsletter Signup
 - (1) "You want updates on events. Sign up for the newsletter."
 - (2) *Success Metrics: Was the form intuitive? Any form confusion?*
 - v) Historical Facts
 - (1) "You're curious about the Incline's history. Find when it was built and a fun fact."
 - (2) *Success Metrics: Did they use the "Our History" section?*
- d) Post-Test Questions:
 - i) What was the easiest task? The hardest? Why?

- ii) Was anything confusing or missing that you expected to see?
- iii) How would you improve the website?
- e) Conclusion: "Thank you! Your feedback is valuable in improving the site."

Data Collection and Notes:

- **User 1 Recording:** [Recording 1](#)
- **User 2 Recording:** [Recording 2](#)

Tasks	User 1 Observations	User 2 Observations
Trip Planning (Hours/Tickets)	I think it was interesting how the user's instinct wasn't to go directly to the 'Plan your visit' navigation tab but rather scroll down on the homepage to find the operating hours and prices.	The user found the hours of operations and prices easily on the homepage without issues.
Group Visit Scheduling	The user found the field trip information pretty quickly but there was some hesitation as they had to scroll a little bit to find it.	The user found the field trip information on the plan your trip page without issues.
Gift Shop Browsing	The user found the gift shop quickly and was able to browse through the selection of items without issues.	The user found the gift shop quickly and was able to browse through the selection of items without issues.
Newsletter Signup	The user found the mailing list sign up form without issues.	The user found the mailing list sign up form without issues.
Historical Facts	The user found the history page and fun facts without issues.	The user found the history page and fun facts without issues.

Changes made based on user feedback:

Through user testing, I observed that while navigation was generally intuitive, some users hesitated to find specific information, such as field trip details or operating hours, without scrolling extensively. Based on this feedback, I implemented three key design changes:

- **Enhanced Navigation Labels on "Plan Your Visit" Page:** Users initially scrolled rather than clicking navigation tabs, so I revised section headings (e.g., "Fares & Tickets," "Field Trip Program") to be more descriptive, helping users anticipate content before scrolling.
- **Added Sidebar to Mailing List Page:** Testing confirmed users easily located the sign-up form, but I integrated the sidebar (with contact info, hours, and a map) to maintain consistency with other pages and provide quick access to key details without navigation.
- **Improved Bullet Point Formatting:** On pages like "Things to Do," I structured lists with clear headings (e.g., "Dining on Grandview Avenue") and visual hierarchy (bolded venue names, inline links) so users could scan information efficiently.

With more time, I would further streamline the "Plan Your Visit" layout by adding anchor links for quick jumps to sections like field trips or FAQs, reducing scrolling. Additionally, I'd conduct A/B testing on navigation labels to optimize clarity based on user expectations. The feedback highlighted the importance of balancing visual consistency with intuitive content organization—a focus for future iterations.