



Sprockets: Usability Findings & Recommendations

Presented by: Per Kvanbeck

Client: Sprockets

UX Cohort: Atwood

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	p.3
Evaluation Goals	p.4
Methodology	
- Evaluation Goals	p.5
- Structure & Analysis	p.6
- Participants	p.7
- Scenarios	p.8
Results	
- Positive Findings	p.10
- Search Results	p.11
- Low Readability	p.12
- Program Finder Search: Age	p.13
- Program Finder Search: Location	p.14
- Quality Definition	p.15
Recommendations	
- Meaningful Results	p.17
- Clearer Information Hierarchy	p.18
- Search Control	p.19

Introduction

Executive Summary

A trusted source for finding programs, with an opportunity to enhance the searching process.

SprocketsSaintPaul.org acts as a hub for program information within the St. Paul area. We conducted a set of analyses to ascertain the alignment of the website's functionality with the Sprocket's site goals.

Our initial research revealed some interesting patterns and opportunities for improvement. Overall users felt an affinity for the aesthetics of the site and reported a sense of trust for the site due to its design and styling. Unfortunately we also discovered several usability issues that we'll identify and explain in further detail in this report.

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

What did we look for?

Methodology

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Method

Evaluation Goals

Sprockets goal is to get today's youth into quality programming. They provide a wealth of resources to do so on their website.

We wanted to see how well that website is working to achieve these goals. Our study aimed to identify goals along these lines.

#1 Are users able to easily locate the program finder?

#2 Are users able to find and register for their desired program?

#3 Is Sprockets portraying it's role in identifying quality programming?

Method

Structure & Analysis

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Usability Review

Our team analyzed the website against a set of recognized Usability Heuristics developed by Ben Shneiderman

Remote Usability Testing

Each team member conducted 2-3 remote usability tests. All data was synthesized into a set of insights

In-Person Usability Testing

Our research team conducted 4 Usability Test at Fathom Labs. Data was combined with remote data for further validation.

Method

About Our Participants

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

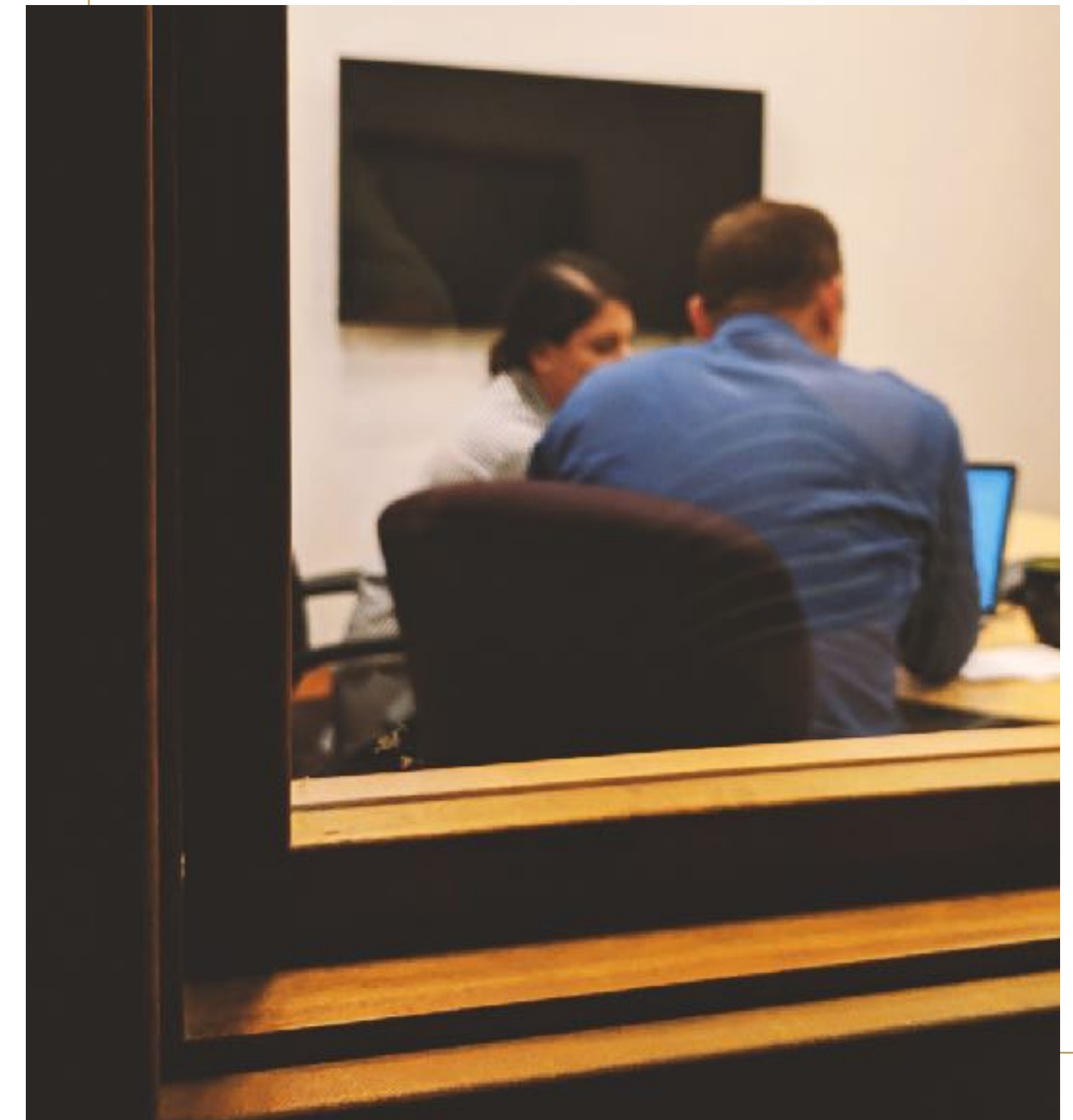
Moving
Forward

Remote

- 8 remote participants
- All data gathered via BlueJeans video conferencing tool
- 6 parents
- 1 youth professional
- Non-Sprocket users

In-Person

- 4 In-Person Participants
- All data gathered at Fathom Labs in Minneapolis, MN
- 2 parents
- Non-Sprocket Users
- 1 St. Paul resident



1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Method

Scenarios

We asked each participant to run through a couple scenarios intended to drive them to specific tasks. These tasks were intended to thoroughly test the accessibility, functionality, and overall satisfaction with searching. These scenarios also attempted to call the users attention to the “quality” designation emphasized by Sprockets.

- #1** **Imagine that you have a 10 year old child named Alex. Alex, will be out of school for summer break until Labor Day. He wants to improve his skills in basketball before school starts. Help him find an activity.**

- #2** **Now imagine that you have registered your child for some activities that didn’t work out well. How do you think you could determine the strength of a Sprockets program on this site?**

What did we find?

Results



1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving Forward

Positive Findings

Positive Message

“I like the images - they represent fun and safety.”

Users reported positively to the initial impressions of the screen. All users found the site trustworthy. When asked to explain why, users cited the organizations non-profit status, its association with St. Paul and the visual aesthetics. Each user reported associated the layout and bright colors with an organization that knows how to identify with children.

11 out of 12 users reported an inherent trust for the website.



1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Suggested Changes

Search Results

“What am I looking at?”

As users searched for a basketball program in scenario #1, they reported feeling overwhelmed by the search results. Nearly all users reported frustration with the hierarchy of the information for a program in the search results modal. Users often had to click into each program to identify dates, age ranges, times, and more. Several users stated they would not continue searching through the programs by clicking into them one by one to get this information. Complaints centered around:

- Lack of information regarding, time, age ranges, & dates
- Programs that were outdated or past the application date
- No way to filter results
- Titles and description were difficult to read

Program Name	Agency
13U Intramural Baseball (Linwood) (Program runs 6/4/2018-8/6/2018; 6:00pm-8:00pm) Intramural baseball led by Joe Seidel. Participants will learn the basic to intermediate skills of baseball. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation	Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood 860 St. Clair Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105
Program Information only shows title, location, and description.	
2018 Summer Music Camp The 2018 Summer Music Camp (SMC) is a 3-week music day camp for 35 students ages 5 to 12 that will be held July 9-27,2018. The camp provides students with the opportunity to experience instrumental... more	Walker West Music Academy 760 Selby Ave St. Paul, MN 55101
3 on 3 Basketball and Summer Lunch (Hancock) (Program runs 7/3/2018-7/31/2018; 12:00pm-2:00pm) 3 on 3 Basketball (bring a team of three or we will make teams each sessions). Free Summer lunch (for up to 18yrs old) and Youth and Family Resource... more	Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Hancock 1610 Hubbard Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104
3D pop-out art clas/Kidcreate Studio(Arlington) (Program runs 8/7/2018-8/14/2018; 1:30pm-3:30pm) Kids LOVE Pop-Out Books!! Come learn how to create an amazing pop-out art project! This masterpiece is sure to attract smiles as it pops right off the... more	Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Arlington Hills 1200 Payne Ave Saint Paul, MN 55130
ACES - Farnsworth Aerospace Magnet School The mission of ACES is to close the academic achievement gap of urban students in grades four through eight. The latest school district analysis showed that when compared to the general	ACES (Athletes Committed to Educating Students) 1000 Walsh St. St. Paul, MN 55106

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Suggested Changes

Low Readability

“How much does it cost?
I can’t find that.”

While users appreciated the wealth of program information provided, they reported difficulty locating key elements. Users expressed dissatisfaction with their inability to easily skim the program information. Users wanted a faster way to identify if a program would be the right fit for their situation.

3 of our 12 participants were unable to find a program based on scenario #1 that was still active.



1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Suggested Changes

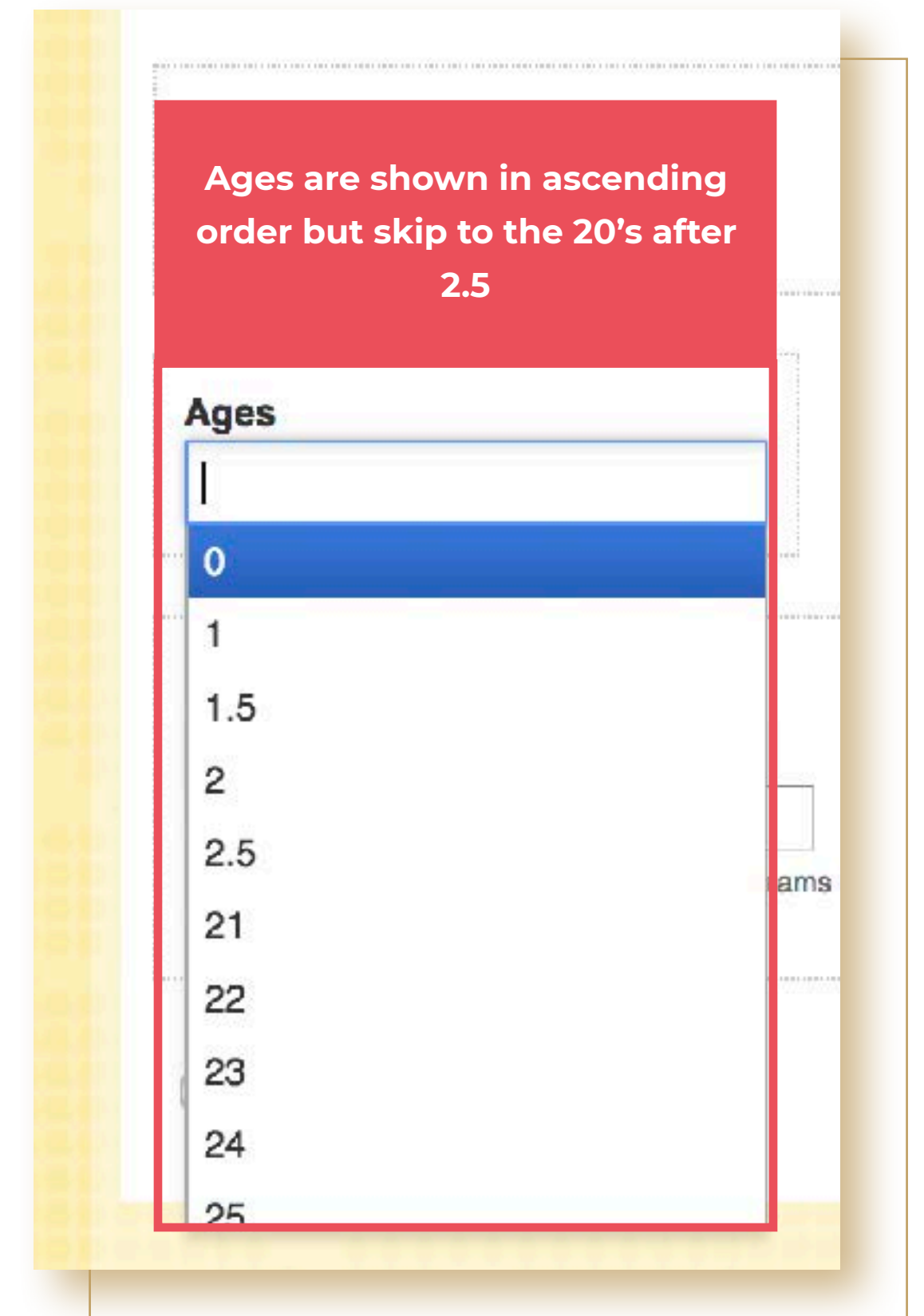
Program Finder Search: Age

“Help me find what I want to find.”

All users reported some difficulty or dissatisfaction with the search parameters on the program finder tool page. One of the primary functions was the functionality and organization of the Age parameter field.

Searching by age proved difficult. Users expected age range due to the language of the search field caption “Ages”. Ages also displayed in an illogical order. Last users were unable to use standard practices to lock in the parameter. Users expected that a tab or clicking away from the field after entering decimals, e.g., “10”, would set that parameter in the Ages field.

4 out of 12 participants abandoned using the Age search parameter due to frustration and confusion.



Suggested Changes

Program Finder Search: Location

“Most people drive their kids.”

Location range defaulted “.5 Mile” from location. Users stated that was an unrealistic number. Users expected field to be empty before they altered the parameter.

Address line was not functional as most individuals did not know whether they were supposed to enter just street address or full address including city and zip code.

The screenshot shows a web interface for finding programs by location. A red callout box at the top contains the text: "Street address directions reported as confusing and default .5 mile radius as too narrow". Below this, the section is titled "Programs by location". It features a dropdown menu currently set to ".5 Mile". Below the dropdown is a text input field labeled "from". Underneath the input field is a prompt: "Enter a location or street address to find programs near you". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Apply" and "Reset".

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Suggested Changes

Quality Definition

“Are there non-quality partners?”

Most users missed the “Sprockets Quality Partner” designation for a program until it was pointed out to them. After seeing the badge, users expressed indifference. Some going as far as to state “Are there non-quality partners?” The lack of visibility into the element made it difficult for users to ascertain its importance. Few users were able to identify the meaning of the badge without clicking on the “What’s this?” link at the bottom, which few users completed.

Home » Program Finder » 13U Intramural Baseball (Linwood)

13U Intramural Baseball (Linwood)

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood

(Program runs 6/4/2018-8/6/2018; 6:00pm-8:00pm) Intramural baseball led by Joe Seidel. Participants will learn the basic to intermediate skills of baseball. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood

Program cost: 45

Ages: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Days: Monday

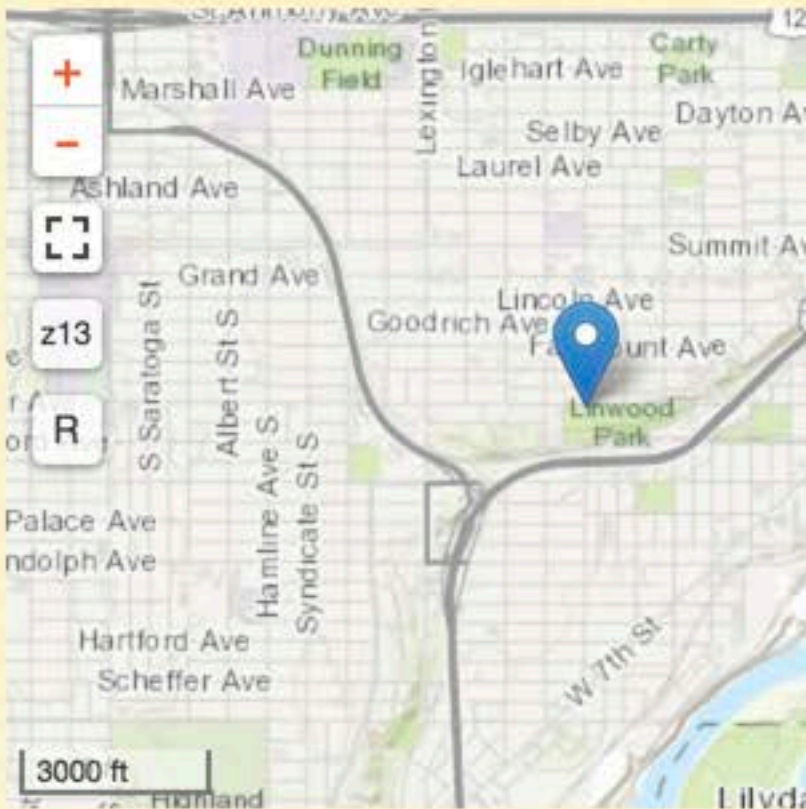
Grades:

Time of year: Summer

Program max enrollment: 50

Program scholarships: No

PROGRAMS



PROGRAM COORDINATOR(S)

Phone: 651-298-5660

Sprockets Quality Partner Badge



A black and white photograph of children playing on a playground. In the foreground, several children are standing on a series of wooden planks laid out on the ground, possibly a balance beam or a game. They are wearing winter clothing like jackets and hats. In the background, more children are visible, and there are trees and a building in the distance. The image has a dark, moody feel with a semi-transparent overlay containing text.

Where do we go from here?

Recommendations

Recommendations

Meaningful Results

Provide users with more information directly on the search results page. Users are looking to see if these programs can fit with their schedule. Bring important elements to the front by displaying the Age, Dates, and Times of the program.

This would be a strong place to indicate programs that have the “Sprockets Quality Partner” designation. Displaying this in list form would help users identify the difference between programs. Make the badge clickable so that users are able to go to explanation page directly.

Finally provide a way to Learn More or Register directly from the search results item. Users complained about the time it takes to get into each program and ascertain program specific information. A register button would allow them to get in and signed up for programs quickly.

Before

Program Name	Agency
13U Intramural Baseball (Linwood) (Program runs 6/4/2018-8/6/2018; 6:00pm-8:00pm) Intramural baseball led by Joe Seidel. Participants will learn the basic to intermediate skills of baseball. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation -... more	Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood 860 St. Clair Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105

After

13 U Intramural Baseball (Linwood)

1.2 Miles away



Description
Intramural baseball led by Joe Seidel. Participants will learn the basic to intermediate skills of baseball. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood [read more](#)

Ages
13U

Dates
6/4/2018-8/6/2018

Times
9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

[Learn More](#)

[Register](#)

1

Intro

2

Method

3

Results

4

Moving
Forward

Recommendations

Clearer Information Hierarchy

Text hierarchy can increase skim ability. Providing a more efficient means for parents and youth to identify if a program is correct for them.

We suggest elevating key elements through size and weight differentiation. Designating the most important values at the top with additional information below will allow users to identify the most pertinent elements first and supplement their decision making with the additional program info.

Suggested Program Info Layout

13 U Intramural Baseball (Linwood)

1.2 Miles away

Register



Description

Intramural baseball led by Joe Seidel. Participants will learn the basic to intermediate skills of baseball. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation - Linwood [read more](#)

Price: \$25

Ages

13U

Days

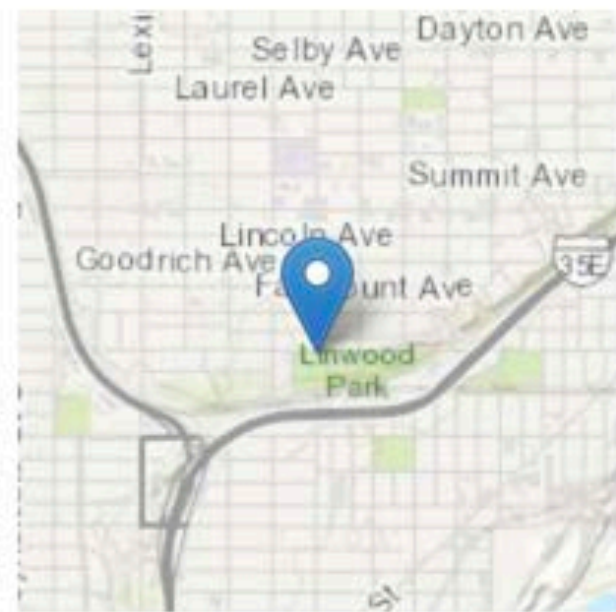
Mon, Tues

Dates

6/4/2018-8/6/2018

Times

9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.



Recommendations

Search Control

Provide users with the control to search for what they need. Every user expressed the necessity to align their schedule with a program’s time. Providing them a means to search by certain days and times allows users to more quickly decide whether or not they will have time to get their kid to and from a program.

Allow users to enter their address and how far they are willing to travel for a program instead of defaulting to a .5 mile radius.

Lastly, offer a means of categorization that allows the users to clue into the types of programs offered by Sprockets partners.

Before

Narrow Your Search

Keywords

Enter titles or description keywords

Ages

Choose some options

Programs by location

.5 Mile

from

Enter a location or street address to find programs near you

Apply

Reset

After

Keywords

Category

select a category

Age

Days Available

S

M

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W

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F

S

Times Available

From

To

Address

Locate me