Group 5: Diana Choi, Richard Pham, Aaron Kwok, Payton Perchez

Dr. Steichen

CS 2450-01

May 17, 2019

Craigslist Redesign Report

Description of Craigslist: Craigslist is an American classified advertisement website created by Craig Newmark. It began as an email distribution list about events in the San Francisco area and continued to grow as the number of subscribers and postings increased. The website went live in 1996 as craigslist.org. Its typical users include people looking to sell and buy things, people looking for jobs, and frequent users in a community and forum. Typical tasks along craigslist are navigating through different pages and categories and searching for items that the user wants.

Bad Design Aspects: We chose to take a look at the design aspects of Craigslist according to Schneiderman's 8 Golden Rules of interface design, Don Norman's Principles of Design, and Nielsen Heuristics. In terms of Schneiderman's 8 Golden Rules, Craigslist has troubles with consistency in naming conventions & grouping categories and issues in preventing errors as the links were too close together. Also, the site does not cater to first-time users, as there is an overwhelming cluster of links and no resources/help option on how to navigating the site. The cluttering of categories & links and the small, inconsistent font sizes creates a bad internal locus of control, which may cause users to feel anxious to navigate and use the site.

In terms of Don Norman's Principles of Design, there is no easy way to navigate through the many categories and subcategories of the site, an example of bad mapping. Also, the front page of the site has a hidden function where you can change the location of where you are currently searching, which is an example of a bad signifier.
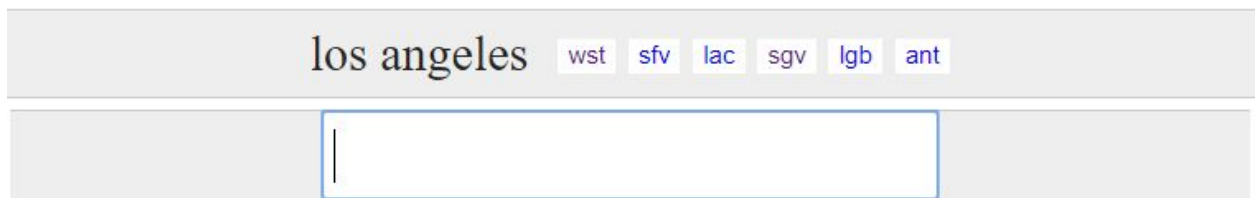
Additionally, a calendar is displayed on the front page, although it is rarely used, since events are rarely searched for on the site.

Moreover, many Craigslist users tend to utilize the search bar rather than navigate through each category nowadays; however, there is no emphasis on the bar, as it is small and off the side rather than in the middle/top.

The Redesign: As you can see on the wireframe below, we shifted many elements of the original homepage around. First, to combat the overwhelming links that used to be listed out in three columns, divided by sub-headers, we collapsed those links into drop-down ComboBox lists in order to categorize, organize, and clear the frightening visual of a mass of links. This also freed up much of the central area of the page for more relevant information, such as the top-trending posts. Additionally, we made the logo the most prominent and largest visual of the entire page, with the largest font size in order to set it apart as the most important element of the

website, that is, the name of the website, craigslist. And, to reveal the previously hidden search bar, we made it prominently stand at the very top of the page so that users can easily recognize the search bar as a usable feature and easily locate it. We also collapsed the list of location links into another drop-down ComboBox list instead of naming each one in a separate column to the side, again adhering closer to a minimalist design of the Nielsen heuristics. Lastly, we condensed the number of miscellaneous links into three distinct categories in the footer of the page, where most people wouldn't often look unless they had to, and these links included an About Us page, links to help and documentation, and other external links to related organizations affiliated with craigslist.

Evaluation: For our evaluation, we decided to do a cognitive walkthrough with these tasks: click on the first job post in the Inland Empire; go to page 2 of the Los Angeles community posts; and click on the help resources, then go back to the home page. For all three tasks, the user will know the specific subtasks needed to accomplish the overall task, as the options available directly correlate to any task instructions. For example, the user will clearly understand that they need to change their location in the "Location" combo box in order to navigate to the Inland Empire. Also, they will know for the most part that the correct action is available. One exception to this would be going back to the home page during task 3 since there is no "home" button, but the logo in the top left always brings the user back to the home screen. This may also come up as a labeling issue, although it is not so much a mislabeling issue but more of a lack of signifiers. Additionally, this is likely to be an issue for novices only since experienced users will understand that the logo usually brings them to the home page. Another potential visibility issue pertains to the buttons that change the page number. These buttons are at the bottom of the posts, so if there are a lot of posts the user will have to scroll to the bottom of the page in order to see that these options are available. For all other subtasks there are no labeling or signifier issues. Lastly, for every action performed, the user can see that progress is being made toward the solution of the task since the combo boxes and clickable links provide the appropriate feedback.

Group Contributions:

- Diana Choi: Implemented the footer of the Craigslist redesign, discussed the background of Craigslist and its violations of visual design principles during the presentation, and explained the redesign in the report.

- Richard Pham: Implemented the header format and search bar of the Craigslist redesign, culminated everyone's implementations using Github, demoed the Craigslist redesign during the presentation, and added screenshots & visuals to the report. Also, discussed bad design aspects in the report.

- Aaron Kwok: Implemented the header format and combo boxes of the Craigslist redesign, discussed violations of Schneiderman's 8 golden rules and Norman's principles of design during the presentation, wrote the description of Craigslist, and discussed bad design aspects in the report.

- Payton Perchez: Implemented the main body of the Craigslist redesign, discussed violations of Nielsen's Heuristics during the presentation, created the wireframe, and summarized evaluation findings in the report.