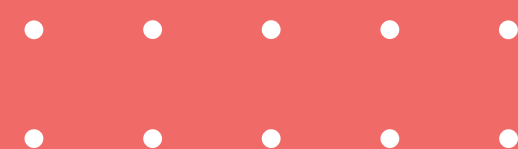# Usability Issues in the Xfinity Remote Control

Melanie Maier | VTD 404 | 1.25.21

COMCAST xfinity

Missing Usability Principles

Consistency & Standards

Appropriate Feedback

Visibility of System Status

Error Prevention & Recovery

Recognition instead of Recall

Consistency & Standards

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

The configuration of the A, B, C, and D buttons on the Xfinity remote is not consistent the external standard configuration in other cable remotes or internal consistency of other Xfinity remote models

Xfinity   Xfinity   Cox   Optimum   Optimum

Appropriate Feedback

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

Navigation buttons do not depress easily when pressed

Without clear tactile feedback the user compensates by pressing the buttons with more force

Recommendation
Raise the physical arrow buttons on the remote

Error Prevention

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

"fast-forward"

"PG up"

User often presses the "fast-forward" button instead of the "PG up" button because they are so close in proximity and have the same smooth texture

Results in a slip, an error made unconsciously because of the user's lack of attention

To Facilitate Error Prevention

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

Put a tactile cue, such as a raised triangle on one of the buttons as an identifier.

Create a barrier to block buttons that are rarely used to reduce error of pressing the wrong button or having button pressed when it is not being used but gets leaned on or stepped on by a pet.

https://www.spectrum.net/support/remote/spectrum-guide-remote

Timely Feedback

System lags behind the user's input because processing power is being used for loading media options.

Results in inaccurate system status (location of "cursor") feedback
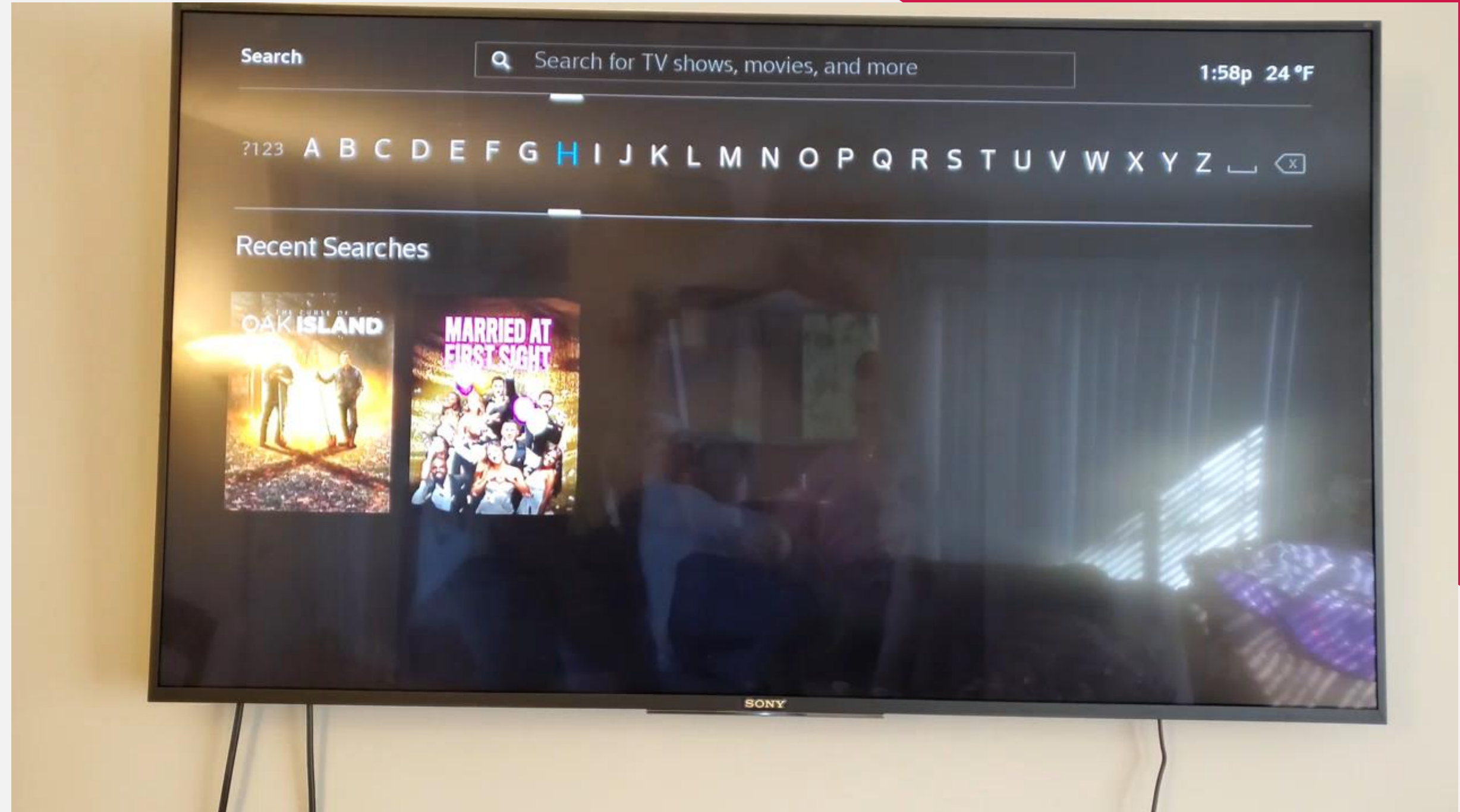
Play video

Timely Feedback

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

System lag misrepresents the system's status

User compensates by repeatedly pressing the arrow buttons

Leads to "overshooting" the intended letter

User overshoots to "D" when the intended letter is "E" causing a slip error
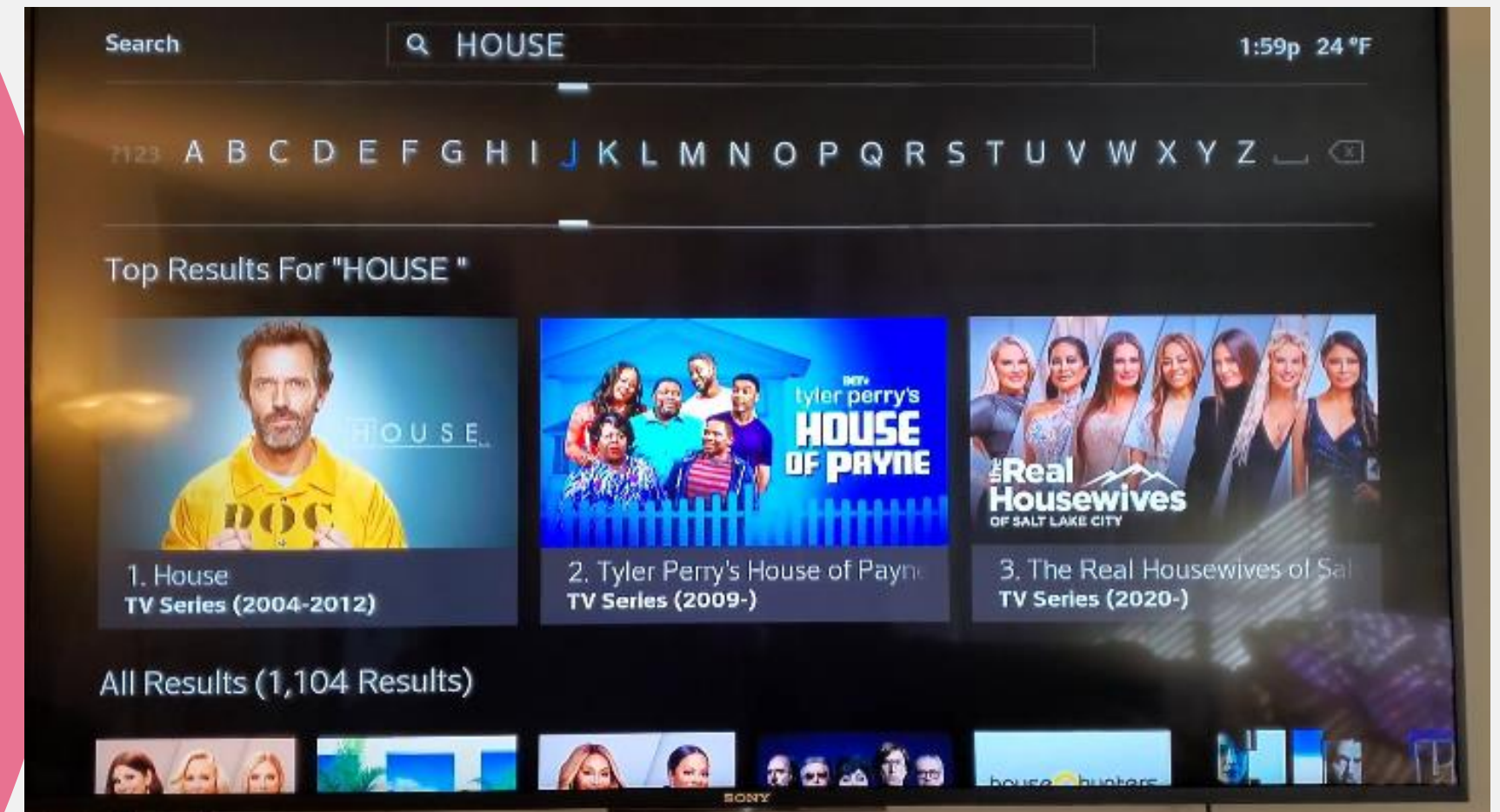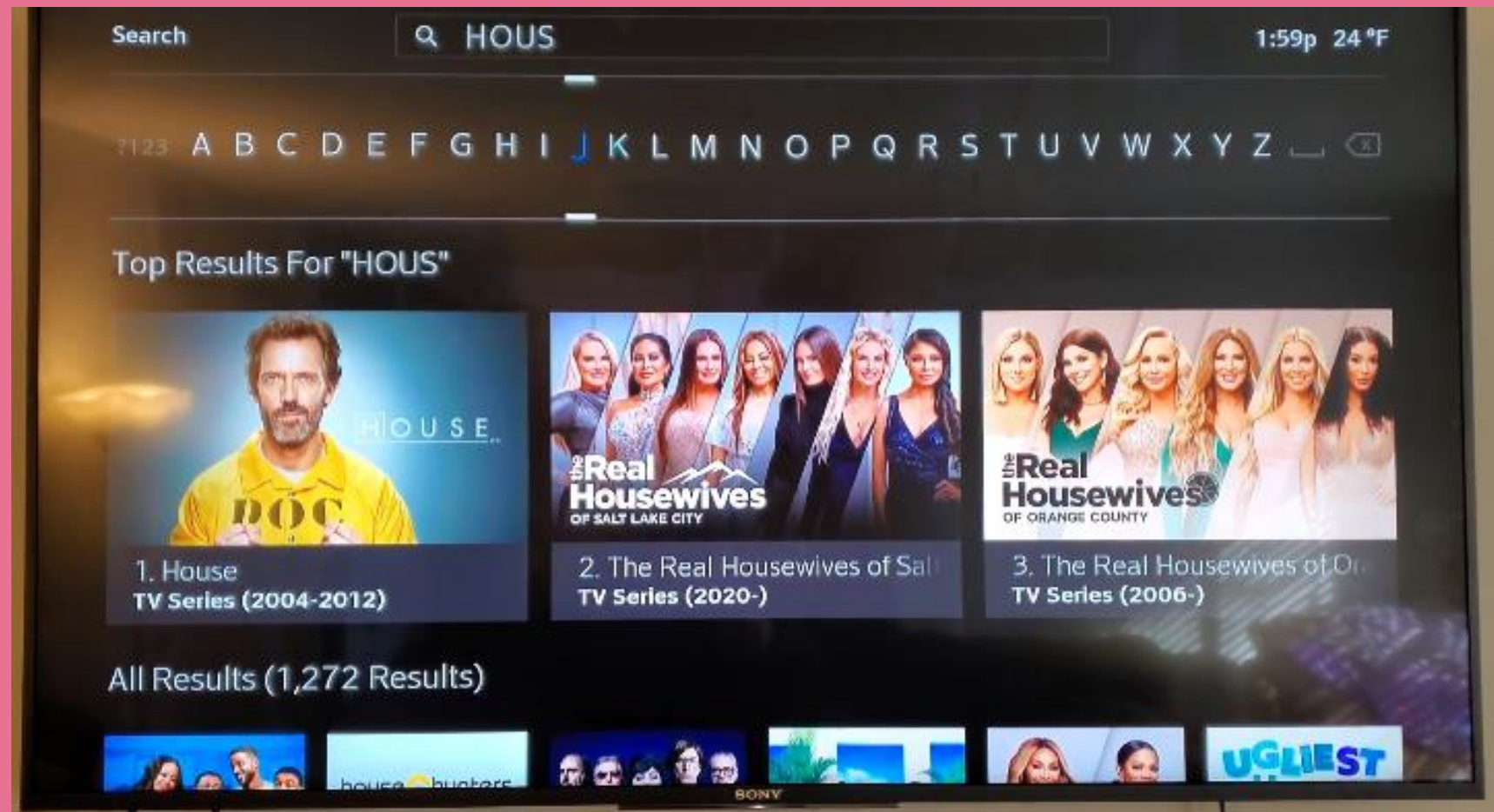
Error Recovery

No quick "undo" button

User must press arrow button all the way to the "backspace/delete" button on the right to undo the last character if the wrong character is selected.

Recognition not Recall (Ex. 1)

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

Does not reduce the amount of information users must remember

(user must remember to look down and visually search for desired media and

remember what the cover art looks like for that show or movie)

Recognition rather than Recall (Ex. 2)

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

Ambiguously labeled buttons require user to use recall instead of recognition to remember the function of the button

Recommendation

Label buttons so that users can easily recognize a button's function rather than to have to try to remember which button to use, especially if the button or feature is not used often
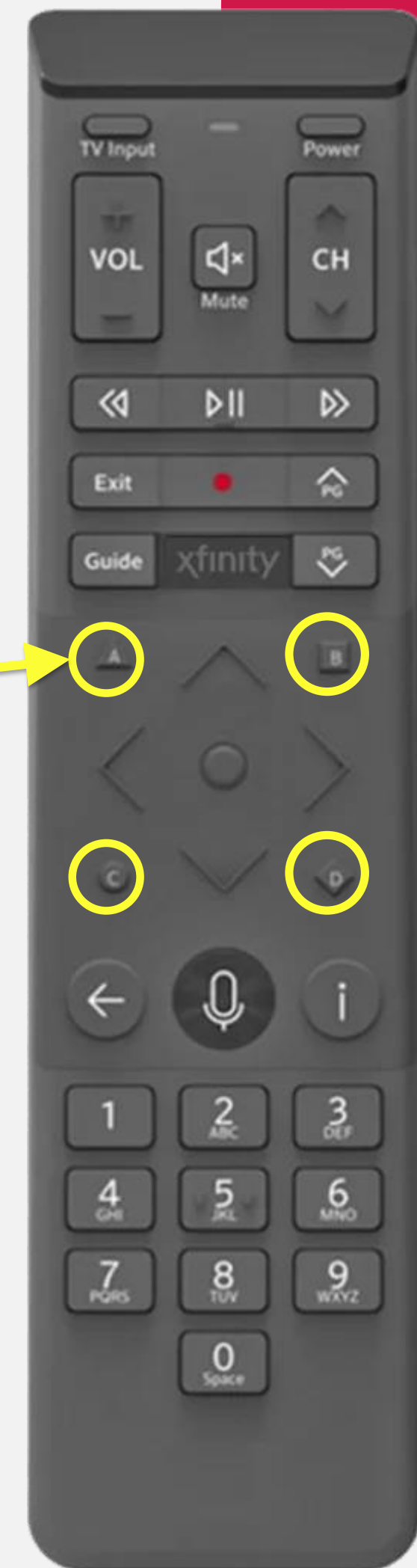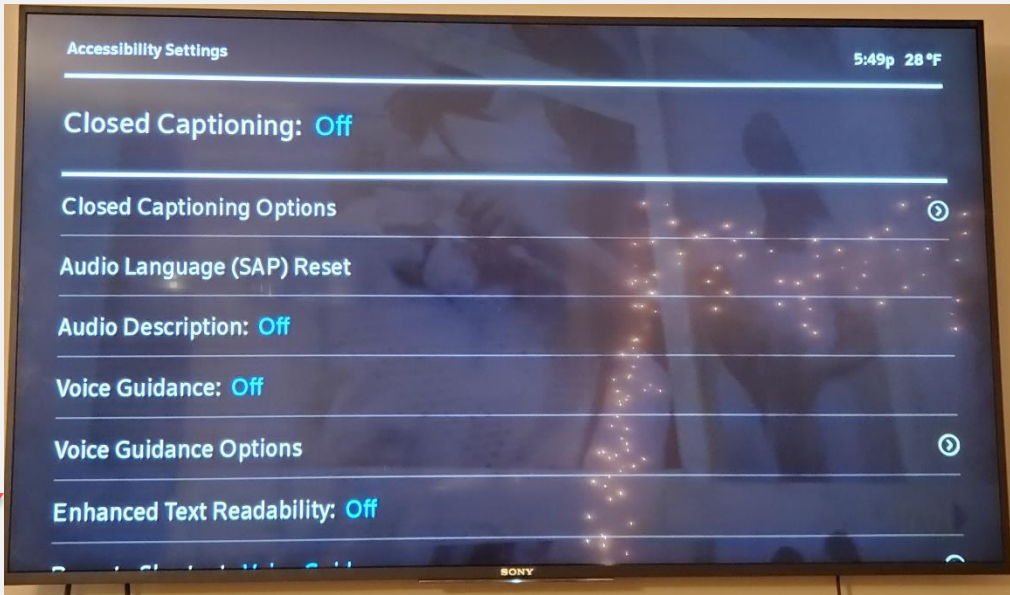
Recognition rather than Recall (Ex. 2)

(NN/Group Usability Heuristic)

Decrease users' memory load by making possible actions and functions visible. Buttons should be labeled so that the user can easily recall what each button allows.

"Help" menu

"Accessibility Settings"

No function

"Sports" menu

ABCD button labels are arbitrary and uninformative, which makes it more difficult for the user to remember to use them to access these menus, especially if these menus are rarely used.

Overview of Recommendations

Principle

Recommendation

Appropriate Tactile Feedback

Raise the physical arrow buttons on the remote

Timely Feedback

Reduce lag by presenting options linguistically instead of pictorally

Error Prevention & Recovery

Provide clear cues & place one long "backspace" icon above entire letter list

Recognition instead of Recall

Provide informative labels and salient cues