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IS4300

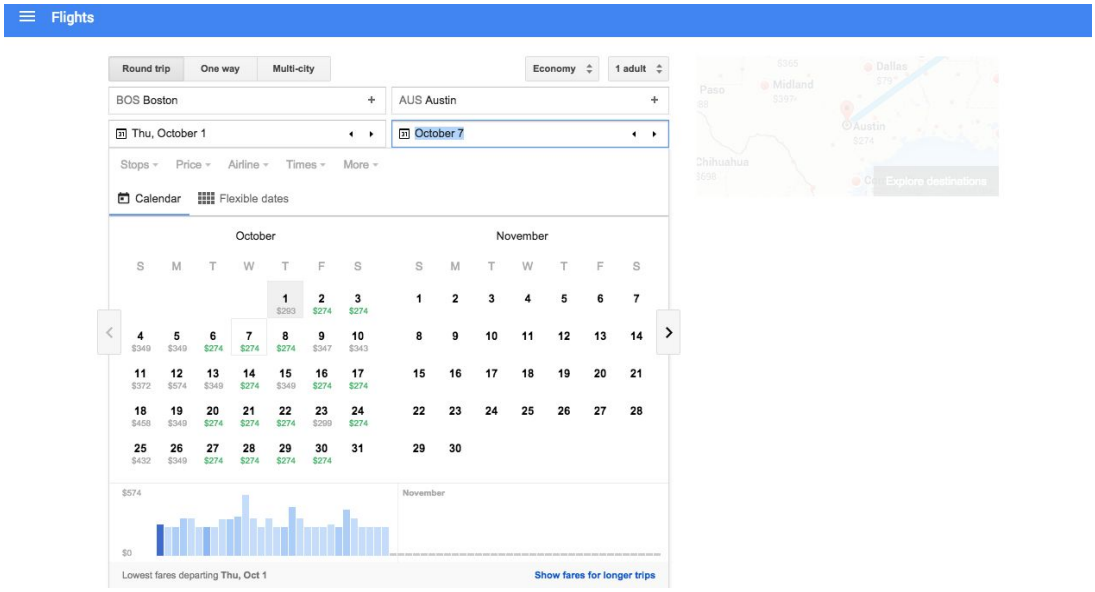
Assignment 2

Google Flights

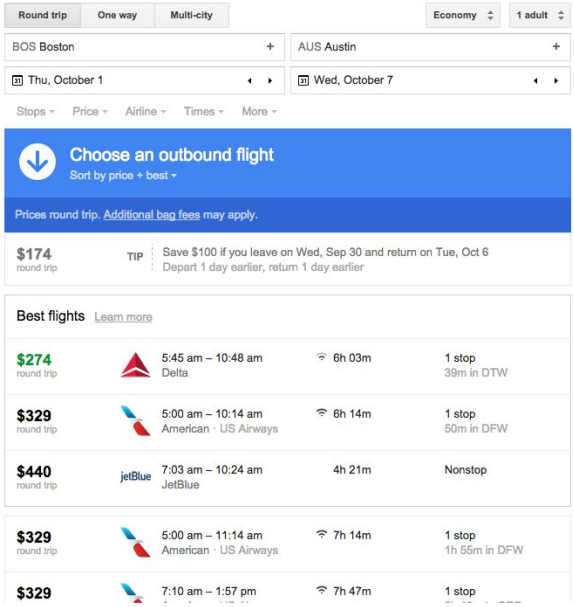
Google Flights is a web application that allows users to search for and purchase plane tickets. The interface design is very successful. Specifically, the way Google Flights does search is extremely successful; I much more so than its competitors, I believe.

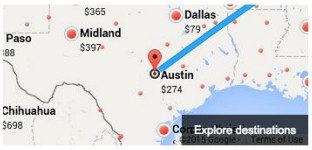
In line with the Nielson Norman Group heuristic of aesthetic and minimalist design, the google flights interface is reductive. At the top of the home page are the search input fields, with nothing surrounding them, except for a list of popular locations below. Many competitors have a cluttered home page with imagery and advertisements for cheap flights to various destinations, which obstruct the search functionality. Though the most useful part of google flights happens when the user begins to enter search information. Once locations are set and the user begins to enter dates, a calendar drops down from the search fields. This calendar shows the cheapest flights for each day, with the cheaper days displaying in green. This allows the user to be flexible and change flight dates based on which day is cheaper. On other search tools, a user would have to conduct multiple searches. This feature is so effective not only because of its of its immediate feedback(no page loads), but because it makes the information that the user wants visible in one place, rather than spread across multiple pages. It is clear that google flights was designed to allow users to find the cheapest flights, which means possibly changing flight dates. This combination of the calendar and prices seems simple, but saves users time and stress by reducing the cognitive load of doing multiple searches and remembering flights.

Once the user finally searches, the results page is as successful as the rest of google flights. On competitors search tools, results generally display as a paginated list that is ordered, by price, airline, or time. This means that you can get lists where similar flights are next to each other, meaning the user must scroll more, or click to new pages, to find more results. But google flights places the “Best Flights” at the top of their results, which are flights that they determine are best based on price, time and number of layovers. I have found that this method will almost always display the best flights in the result set, and they are immediately visible, without scrolling.


Flights
Round trip
One way
Multi-city
Economy
1 adult
BOS Boston
AUS Austin
Thu, October 1
October 7
Stops
Price
Airline
Times
More
Calendar
Flexible dates
October
November
S M T W T F S
1 $293
2 $274
3 $274
4 $349
5 $349
6 $274
7 $274
8 $274
9 $347
10 $343
11 $372
12 $574
13 $349
14 $274
15 $349
16 $274
17 $274
18 $458
19 $349
20 $274
21 $274
22 $274
23 $299
24 $274
25 $432
26 $349
27 $274
28 $274
29 $274
30 $274
31
$574
$0
November
Lowest fares departing Thu, Oct 1
Show fares for longer trips

Dallas
Midland
Austin
Explore destinations


Round trip
One way
Multi-city
Economy
1 adult
BOS Boston
AUS Austin
Thu, October 1
Wed, October 7
Stops
Price
Airline
Times
More
Choose an outbound flight
Sort by price + best
Prices round trip. Additional bag fees may apply.
$174
round trip
TIP
Save $100 if you leave on Wed, Sep 30 and return on Tue, Oct 6
Depart 1 day earlier, return 1 day earlier
Best flights
Learn more
$274
round trip
5:45 am – 10:48 am
Delta
6h 03m
1 stop
39m in DTW
$329
round trip
5:00 am – 10:14 am
American · US Airways
6h 14m
1 stop
50m in DFW
$440
round trip
jetBlue
7:03 am – 10:24 am
JetBlue
4h 21m
Nonstop
$329
round trip
5:00 am – 11:14 am
American · US Airways
7h 14m
1 stop
1h 55m in DFW
$329
7:10 am – 1:57 pm
7h 47m
1 stop

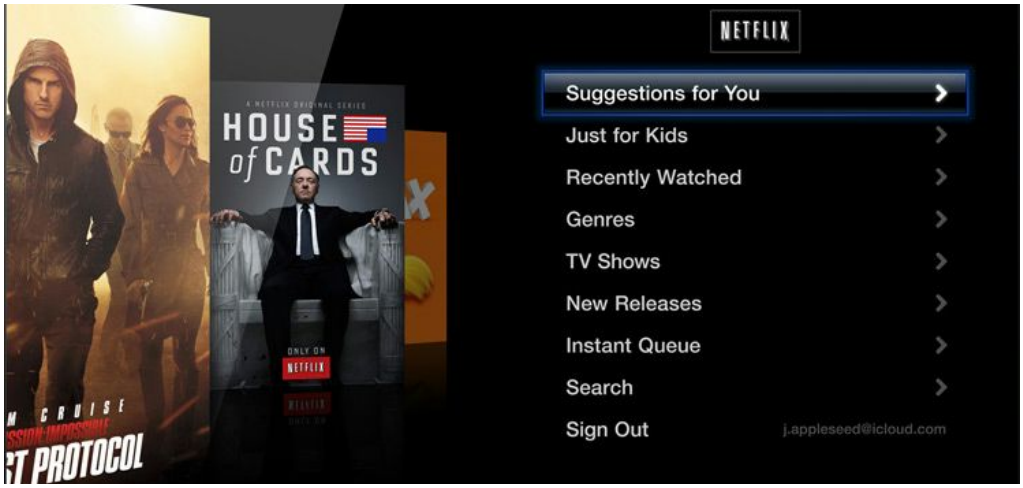

$365
Dallas
$79
Paso
Midland
$397
Austin
$274
Chihuahua
$698
Explore destinations

Apple TV

The Apple TV is a piece of hardware with an operating system that allows you to access channels, like Netflix and HBO Go, to watch video content. This means being able to navigate through channels to find videos, or search for videos. Users do this with the Apple TV remote, which looks as such:

The part of the Apple TV user experience that I find unsuccessful is the navigation. The Apple TV home screen is a page of clickable blocks for each channel. With the remote, the user can highlight blocks with selecting up, right, down, or left on the click wheel. The center of the click wheel is the select button. There is also a play/pause button and a menu button. When a user selects a channel there is usually a list of categories that can be selected that lead more blocks that represent shows, movies, or various other content. Within any channel, there can be many clicks to get to an actual playable piece of content. Where the navigation is unsuccessful is if the user is trying to get out of a channel and go to another channel, or find other content by searching. The only way to get back to the dashboard or to search is to hit the ‘menu’ button as many times as you clicked through pages. First, there is no signifier that ‘menu’ would bring you back. Also, this means the user could be clicking that menu button more than 10 times. And the time to go back a page is much longer than it takes to click the button, so if the user gets frustrated and clicks the ‘menu’ button multiple times, quickly, the can go back more than they had anticipated. If there were some visibility of where is the tree of navigation the user is located, it would be easier to click back the correct amount of times. And users should be able to jump back to important pages, like the channel homepage or the dashboard, without having to click so many times. This could be done by having something like a breadcrumb navigation at the top of all the screen. The UI is minimalist enough there there is room for that. Another possible solution would be to have a dedicated navigation button on the remote that brings up a screen with navigation selections based on where the user has navigated.

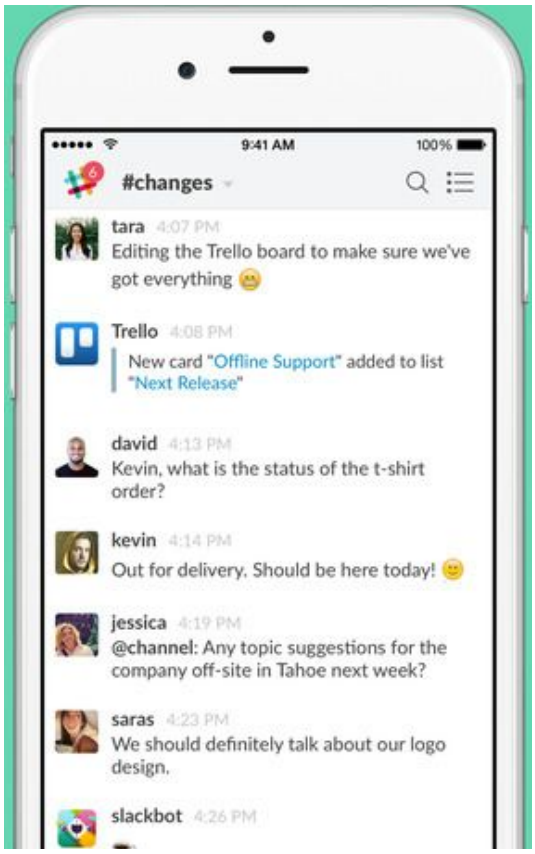

Top Movies
CAPTAIN AMERICA
THE LEGO MOVIE
GRAND BUDAPEST
THE FAULT IN OUR STARS
CHEF
DIVERGENT
Movies
TV Shows
Music
iTunes Radio
Computers
NETFLIX
huluPLUS
HBO GO
WATCH ESPN

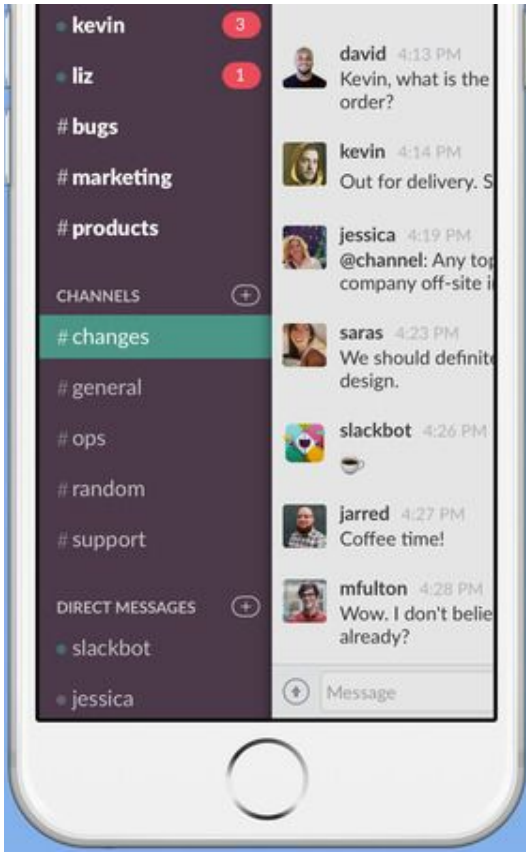

NETFLIX
HOUSE of CARDS
ONLY ON NETFLIX
Suggestions for You
Just for Kids
Recently Watched
Genres
TV Shows
New Releases
Instant Queue
Search
Sign Out
j.appleseed@icloud.com

Slack iPhone Application

Slack is an application that allows for communication between people, generally in a work/project setting. Companies will can register all of their employees and people can chat, create groups, share files, etc, through either the desktop application, the web application of the iphone application. I will be focusing on the iPhone application. The application is generally very well designed, but I believe the most successful is how the application handles chats and the related notifications.

The application is largely typographic, but the chat displays a list of messages from users and displays a thumbnail of the person who sent the message. These thumbnails assists the user in identifying the user that sent the chat. The user's list of chats are in a hamburger menu which is revealed by hitting the icon at the top left of the application. It is prominent enough that it is easy to discover that this icon reveals chats. The menu has a search bar at the top which easily allows the user to search for users/groups, and has a list of groups and then individual chats below. When the user gets a notification, the top left icon displays a red bubble over the icon with a number inside, showing the number of new messages. Then when the menu opens, the chats with new messages move to the top of the list. This increased visibility of chats that have unread messages allows users to more easily get to the messages they need to, since they will quite often be going to unread messages.





myNEU

Myneu is the portal where Northeastern University students and faculty can complete various tasks, like register for classes, make payments, download software, etc. The is a significant amount of functionality either built into myNEU or that myNEU links to. Because of this, it is important for students to be able to navigate through all of this functionality and find what they need. Though myNEU is unsuccessful with this.

The myNEU homepage has tabs that reveal various capabilities. The tabs are somewhat grouped by similar functionality, but there is so much functionality that the tabs have functionality under them that may not be assumed by the name of the tab. This visibility issue makes it hard for the user to find what they are looking for. The homepage of myNEU is the ‘’myNEU Central” tab. This tab does not not have much functionality, but rather a stream of somewhat irrelevant university news. This means that users have to navigate away from this screen. Making the homepage the ‘Self Service’ tab would be more effective because that tab is where most users end up, since the most functionality is there. When the user clicks into ‘Self Service’ tab they are faced with a large wall of text. There are blocks with lists of text links to various functionality. There is no hierarchy in the typography and the representation of functionality, so there is no easier way to find functionality than to look through all the links in the page until you find what you’re looking for or to remember where on the page a link is.

To make myNEU easier to navigate, I would first do research into the information design of all the functionality within myNEU and create some more logical groupings. This would allow for a better tab/navigation system. Within the self-service page, and all other pages, I would create a hierarchy with the typography to make the links more accessible and more obviously groups.