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DCOM 131

Introduction:

   The e-commerce website we chose for our usability report is Etsy (https://www.etsy.com/). Their

organizational objective is to provide a space where independent artists can sell their products without

competition from major retailers, and ensure that buyers have a safe way of purchasing from

independent sellers. Etsy's business model is dependent on repeat sellers and buyers, and attracting

new buyers and sellers to use their website is important to this business model. This test is focused on

first time buyers since it will be easier to pinpoint problems in the system if a user unfamiliar with it is

asked to complete tasks revolving around the site's main objective without guidance.

Methodology:

   We will be testing multiple participants from different backgrounds. The only requirement for the

participant is that they have never purchased a product through Etsy, and that they have used the

website one or less times. The test is a remote synchronous test. It would require both the participant

and the person giving the test to have a computer with Internet access. There should be a way for the

participant to still hear the test giver while they are on the Etsy website. The participant would also need

access to a timer and an audio recording device.

Participants:

There are four major groups of people who would use Etsy: people looking to sell their products for the first time, experienced sellers, repeat buyers who come to the website to buy a specific item or from a specific artist, and first time buyers who come without a specific product in mind or just to look around.

First Time Sellers:

- Skill level: low

- Experience: low, may have some experience selling on other websites similar to Etsy

- Motivation: high, if they are making sales through Etsy they have a significant desire to use it

- Characteristics of users: must have a computer with Internet access, must have used Etsy at least one time, must have made one product to be sold on Etsy

Experienced Sellers:

- Skill Level: intermediate/advanced

- Experience: intermediate advanced

- Motivation: very high

- Characteristics: must have Internet access, must have sold products from Etsy.

Repeat buyers:

- Skill level: intermediate/advanced

- Experience: intermediate advanced

- Motivation: high, since they are making a repeat purchase

- Characteristics: must have Internet access, must have purchased a product from Etsy at least

  once

First time buyers:

- Skill level: low

- Experience: low

- Motivation: low/intermediate, depending on why they are making a purchase and if they intend

  to be a repeat buyer

- Characteristics: must have Internet access, must not have purchased a product from Etsy, must

  have accessed the Etsy website one or less times

We have chosen to test the first time buyers, since users unfamiliar with a system will be an effective

way to test how effective the system is.

Results:

    The results of the tests found that the Etsy buying experience is generally efficient and easy for new users to figure out. All five participants tested were able to complete all three tasks. The tests took between five and seven minutes, with the majority of tests being under six minutes. The average time it took to complete the test was 5 minutes and 53 seconds. None of the test participants reported any problems in using the site. Three participants did not find anything about the Etsy site that they would change or had difficulty with. The other two participants both commented on the site's search function, saying that it returned inappropriate results for the search terms entered or should have more filters on the search function. All users indicated that they were more satisfied with their experience than not, and that they would probably use Etsy again.

Analysis:

    As stated in the results section, all of the participants found Etsy easy to use, despite never making a purchase from it before. There were 2 types of quantitative data collected, and 2 types of qualitative. For quantitative data, the time to complete the test and the number of tasks the participant was able to complete were noted. For quantitative, participants were asked to complete the tasks while speaking what they were doing and any opinions they had on the action they were completing. Users also completed an eight question post test survey measuring their satisfaction and perceived ease of use of the website. Most of the users indicated satisfaction with the website. None had any difficulty in completing the tasks given to them. All participants successfully completed the account creation task

with no problems. They all completed the searching and customization task, although this was the only

task that did not receive entirely positive reviews. The only negative feedback given about the Etsy

buying process was regarding the site's search function. One participant indicated that despite searching

for very specific terms, in this case "black women's shirt size m," the search brought up seemingly

unrelated items, such as face masks, within the results. Another participant stated that they would add

more search filters to the search. The purchasing task was also completed with no issues. The average

times indicate that the purchase process can be completed very quickly, especially if the user is aware of

what they want to purchase before they begin interacting with Etsy. We did not test or collect data

relating to users who want to browse Etsy with no particular product in mind, but these are more likely

to be repeat users. The fact that all participants completed all tasks successfully would also indicate that

the perceived ease of the Etsy website is high. The results of the usability tests show that the only area

in need of improvement in the Etsy website buying process is the searching and customization stage,

more specifically the search function.

Recommendations:

   With the results found through the five usability tests, we would recommend that Etsy keep the

majority of their website functions the same, but make some changes to the search application. Refining

the search function to better recognize search terms would help with the participant comment that the

search terms brought up unrelated results. In addition, adding more filters to the search would address

the participant comment that there were not enough search filters. Currently, the Etsy website has

search filters for special offers (free shipping, personalization, sales), shipping time, price, holiday, color,

shop location, item type (this is very broad and only has specific categories for vintage and handmade

items), and ordering options (accepting gift cards and if the item can be gift wrapped). The user can also filter by large categories of items such as clothing and accessories. Adding more search filters that depend on the category selected would be beneficial. For example, choosing "clothing" for a category should provide options for size, whether the item is women's, men's, or children's, the material, and the type of clothing. Allowing the user to filter by materials for all items would also be a beneficial addition to the Etsy website.