

The Web User Experience Nielsen & Loranger : Chapter 2

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SWE 432

**Design and Implementation of
Software for the Web**

Have a Point, Make Your Point!

You have less than two minutes to convince
first time visitors to stay on your web site

Every page must justify **WHY** the user
should stay

Chapter 2 Methodology

These comments are based on a usability
study of the web

69 users

2004-2005

As described in Chapter 1

Overview / Chapter 2 Outline

1. How Well Do People Use the Web?
2. User Satisfaction with Web Sites
3. How People Use Sites
4. Search Dominance
5. Scrolling
6. Complying with Design Conventions and Usability Guidelines
7. Information Foraging

Users are impatient because most of the Web is full of
useless **junk**

How Well Do People Use the Web?

- The measure of success
 - Whether users can complete a task at a *NEW* site
 - Example task : *Make a reservation*
- Success rates
 - 66% on site-specific tasks (“do something on this site”)
 - 40% in the 1990s!
 - 60% on web-wide tasks (“do something on the web”)
- Success by users’ experience level
 - Low experience: 59% (site-specific) to 52% (web-wide)
 - High experience: 72% (site-specific) to 67% (web-wide)

The Web is getting better
But users still fail a lot !

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User Satisfaction With Web Sites

- Users often do not realize what they have missed
 - Satisfaction is hard to accurately measure
- Key distinction :
 - Home page visited first 40% of the time
 - Deep links visited first 60% of the time
- Three guidelines for supporting deep link users
 - Tell users where they are and where they can go
 - Name and logo on every page
 - Direct, one-click link to home page
 - Search, preferably in upper right corner
 - Orient user to the rest of the site (breadcrumb train)
 - Do not assume users took the standard route

Make entire website easy to navigate

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How People Use Sites

- Users average visiting 3.2 sites per task
 - Less than two minutes on a site before abandoning it
 - Most sites are rarely revisited
- Home pages are hit 40% of the time
 - So must be designed very carefully
 - But users go to “deep links” 60% of the time!
- Internal pages must
 - Tell users where they are
 - Encourage them to look elsewhere on the site

“A website is like a house with a thousand doors, and visitors can enter anywhere”

How People Use Sites (2)

- The homepage : So much to say, so little time
 - Inexperienced users spend 35 seconds on home pages
 - Experienced users spend 25
 - Experienced users are ruthless !
 - Clarity is crucial
 - Users only read 20 to 30 words
 - Only 23% of users scrolled down the home page
 - Users are not reading – they are deciding where to go next
- Two problem examples :
 - QuadGraphics
 - DialBeforeYouDig

Home pages are like signs on the freeway,
with users zipping by at 70 MPH

How People Use Sites (3)

- Four goals for a home page
 1. Define the site (use your tagline!)
 2. Articulate what benefits are offered
 3. Describe the company and its products
 4. Give them their choices and how to navigate to them
- Interior page behavior
 - Users read more content on interior pages
 - Put important links in content area
- Write at the valid reading level
 - Eighth grade level for adults
 - Fifth grade for teenagers

Users are goal directed
Help them reach their goals

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Search Dominance

- 88% of tasks started in a search engine
 - Search engines are replacing bookmarks !
- 1994 : Searches were used to find resources
- 2011 : Searches are used to answer questions
- Four ways to grab value from search engine visitors
 - Offer flytrap content : Clear answers to common problems
 - Embellish with useful “see also” links
 - Provide deep analysis and insights
 - Publish newsletters with additional tips and information

Users ignore your navigation, but may
click your links

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Search Dominance (2)

- Encourage, do not discourage, deep linking
 - Navigation is always a barrier, no matter how well designed
- Organic vs. sponsored links
 - Organic links are best matches for user's query
 - Sponsored links are ads
- Search Engine Results Page (*SERP*)
 - 93% of users visit first SERP only
 - Only 47% scroll the first SERP (4 or 5 results from Google)
 - 51% click on first site; only 16% click on second site

Try to be the first!
If you're not in the top 5, you are invisible

Search Dominance (3)

- Keyword advertising
 - Company pays search engine for a keyword
 - Search engine displays ads from top eight bidders
 - Keyword prices have been rising steadily
- Maximize profits, not business
- Companies can double their business by increasing usability

Search engines get most of the benefit from
improved usability

Scrolling

- Users do not scroll
 - They are lazy and ignorant
 - Or ... maybe they are busy
- 23% of users scroll the home page on the first visit
 - Only 14% scroll the home page on subsequent visits
- 52% scroll interior pages
- 47% scroll SERPs
- Users with more Web experience scrolled more

Don't make me think! (Krug)
Don't make me scroll!

Complying with Design Conventions and Usability Guidelines

- Seven reasons for standard design elements
 1. Users know what features to expect
 2. Users know how the features look in the interface
 3. Users know where to find features
 4. Users know how to operate features
 5. Users do not ponder meaning of unknown design elements
 6. Users do not miss important features
 7. Users do not get surprised
- Users spend 27 seconds looking at a page ... do not make them think about the navigation

Community standards encourage good design

Information Foraging

- Animals in the jungle use complicated calculations to decide where, when, and how to eat
 - Simplified formula : Maximize benefit and minimize effort
- People on the web behave in exactly the same way
 - What information we absorb, where, and when, is based on the same formula
 - “*Informavores*” will keep clicking as long as they “smell” that they are getting closer
- Make your website easy to catch
 - Easy to find
 - Easy to read and understand

Your website must make a tasty meal!

Information Foraging (2)

- Three ways to enhance information scent
 - Ensure that links describe precisely what user will find
 - Use common English instead of made-up words
 - Remind users they are on the right path (feedback)
- Pitch abandonment : Keeping users hunting here
 - Old : Trap users on your site—make it expensive to browse elsewhere
 - New : There is no cost to search to a new site
- Do not keep users on-site, keep them coming back
 - Give lots of information snacks for short visits
 - Emphasize search engine visibility

Informavores make constant cost-benefit estimates

Summary

- Search engines now dominate how the Web is used
- The concept of “site loyalty” does not exist
- Current users “visit”, not “browse”
- Experienced users spend less time on pages than inexperienced users
- Younger users spend less time than older users
- Older users see lots of websites and web applications; younger users see one big Web

Understand the informavores !