

John Beauregard

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SWE 432

HW 3 - GMU Bookstore Site Usability Evaluation

Task 1

The first task of finding out what books are required for SWE 632 was easy, plain and simple. The Textbook page was the first option on the navigation bar at the stop. Each dropdown menu narrowing down the course updated the next dynamically, making each choice feel like there was progression towards the goal. Creating a book list is irrelevant if a user is just looking for one book, but it only added one extra click, which wasn't far from the add button, and it let me know that if I want to search multiple classes at once then it was possible. The first result was the book that was needed, with the information laid out clearly, and bold red text specifying that it was a required text book as opposed to recommended. This was all done without scrolling a single line down the page. There is absolutely nothing negative I can say about this process.

Task: Find out what books are required for SWE 632			
<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Priority Scale</u>	<u>What Goal Should Be</u>	<u>What UI Achieves</u>
Rate of user errors	1	Very High	Very High
Subjective satisfaction	2	High	Very High
Time to Learn	3	Moderate	Very High
Retention of Skills	4	Moderate	Very High
Speed of UI Performance	5	Moderate	Very High

Rate of user errors is high priority primarily because a user error could result in the user ordering an incorrect book without realizing it. Not only that, but since many people buy books from other sources like Amazon or eBay, the user may just be looking for the book information so they can order it elsewhere. If the book is incorrect, the user may be in trouble since like most forms of media, books generally have more strict return policies. Subjective Satisfaction should be high priority since the site does make money off of user making purchases on the site. If they don't like the site, they'll buy elsewhere.

After completing the task, the possibility of user error is nearly nonexistent, navigation is completely straight forward, as is narrowing down the course list, which also makes the time to learn very short. The UI doesn't require much thinking, making it easier to retain the skill of using it. As mentioned, the layout is easy to use, and required no scrolling, making the UI fast to use. It would be hard not to be subjectively satisfied with the interface, which is good for the site since that alone can attract customers.

Task 2

The second task of buying a sweatshirt for a 9 year was only slightly more difficult, but completed successfully. Finding the apparel section was easy, and the sweatshirt section was only the third option down. However, the kids sweatshirts aren't included in the sweatshirt section. Instead, kids have a section of their own that is further divided between youth and toddler/infant. After finding the sweatshirt, another issue emerged. I don't know what size a 9 year old would wear. Plenty of clothing sites show a table showing measurements corresponding to their sizes, but there doesn't seem to be anything like that here. I just picked medium and added to the cart. It was completed, but I'm unaware of whether it's actually the right size.

Task: Buy a sweatshirt for a 9 year old			
<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Priority Scale</u>	<u>What Goal Should Be</u>	<u>What UI Achieves</u>
Rate of user errors	1	Very High	moderate
Subjective satisfaction	2	High	moderate
Time to Learn	3	Moderate	High
Retention of Skills	4	Moderate	High
Speed of UI Performance	5	Moderate	High

The rate of priority for rate of user errors is very high for this task as well, but for the reason being that since this may have been a gift, an error may create a personal dilemma for the user. This ties in to subjective satisfaction since this site sells merchandise, users who aren't satisfied will buy products from somewhere else.

After completing the task I found that the rate of user error may be an issue. It is normal for kids clothing to be its own section, but that's normally true when the categories are distinguished by type of person rather than type of clothing. out of the 11 options, 9 specify a type of clothing, followed by Women's then Kid's clothing. The first options give the impression that it will be narrowed down starting with clothing type, which is not the case. I would suggest either starting with the option of Men's, Women's, or Kids, then narrow down to clothing type, or vice versa, as opposed to mixing the two in the base menu. The other area of concern for user error is the sizes. I don't know how exactly how kids sizes compare to adult sizes, so a measurement table would be nice. Time to learn, retention of skills, and speed of UI performance are all quite good, with time to learn being slightly affected by the previous issues.

Task 3

Buying the shot glass was even easier than finding the textbook due to it being a general gift item, although it had a minor issue. The gifts page is easy to spot at the navigation bar, with drink ware being the obvious choice for this item. There were 4 shot glasses on the page, and if it didn't matter what kind of shot glass it needed to be, than the goal is as easy as just clicking on one and going with it. However, two shot glasses stood out, mainly because they seemed to be the same item at different prices. They were both the same size at 1.5oz, only one was \$2 more. They had different pictures, one was dark green and one looked almost black. That is, until the green one was clicked on and the other image for it was the exact same as the black-looking one. They both have the same description, who knows what the difference is? It could be a duplicate entry with an old price, it could be a wrong picture of an actually different product.

Task: Buy a shot glass			
<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Priority Scale</u>	<u>What Goal Should Be</u>	<u>What UI Achieves</u>
Rate of user errors	1	Very High	High
Subjective satisfaction	2	High	moderate
Time to Learn	3	Moderate	High
Retention of Skills	4	Moderate	High
Speed of UI Performance	5	Moderate	High

For the same reason as the sweatshirt, user errors should be the highest priority since it may be a gift, which again will have an impact on subjective satisfaction. Time to learn, retention of skills, and speed of UI performance are almost on equal terms, but ordered such that putting one over the other should benefit the next in rank.

It's difficult to suggest that the issue of the matching shot glasses would cause an error, but it may create some doubt in the user's mind, effectively lowering the subjective satisfaction with the site. One common trend in online stores is to have a color as part of the item name, even if it only comes in one color. If that was the case with this, it would be easier for the user to determine whether it was a duplicate item with an outdated price, or an actual different item based on the name alone. While this may not affect the issue of the shot glasses, the way they were spread out on the page created some unnecessary scrolling to see if there were more. The drink ware section has enough product to make distinct categories of each, one of which being shot glasses.