

Usability Evaluation for Tourism in Uzbekistan Tourism Website (Case Study on uzbektourism.uz)

N.N.Sevinchova

Teacher of Tashkent University of Applied Sciences

Abstract

The usability is recognized as an important quality factor of any modern website. There are 1, 196,298,727 websites in the World as of September 2020. Each website works on different reasons. For instance, tourism websites are considered the most influential travel booking. More and more consumers are booking travel breaks last-minute using their smartphone, with google trends showing a massive 519% increase in travel related searches whereby people are including the phrase “tonight” and “today”. The total number of online travel bookings made each year is around 148,3 million, which generates sales of around \$755 billion per annum in 2019. In this paper, usability evaluation for tourism in website is proposed and its use is described. The dynamic nature of the Web poses problems for usability evaluations. Development times are rapid and changes to Web sites occur frequently, often without a chance to re-evaluate the usability of the entire site. New advances in Web developments change user expectations. In order to incorporate usability evaluations into such an environment, we must produce methods that are compatible with the development constraints. We believe that rapid, remote, and automated evaluation techniques are key to ensuring usable Web sites. In this paper, we describe three studies we carried out to explore the feasibility of using modified usability testing methods or non-traditional methods of obtaining information about usability to satisfy our criteria of **rapid**, **remote**, and **automated** evaluation. Based these case studies, we are developing tools for rapid, remote, and automated usability evaluations. Our work includes using these tools on a tourism Web site to determine 1) its effectiveness compared to traditional evaluation methods, 2) the optimal types of sites and stages of development for each tool, and 3) tool enhancements. Demands for tourism websites from worldwide is now surging. It is a quality measurement of advertising, information providing and persuasive marketing all in one. The evaluation of website’s usability illuminates the specific strengths and weaknesses of each website’s studies. The proposed method has been accomplished in two phases and implemented on a tourism website as a case study. First, a website usability test is implemented by a number of users, and then the final results are showed which one of the websites is considered the most used for tourism in Uzbekistan. The authenticities of the results have been confirmed by comparing them with user opinions acquired from a questionnaire, which proves the precision in which the website is rated.

Key words: Websites, Usability, Interface, Uzbekistan, Tourism

Introduction

Usability is one of the important elements to make product usable. Usability is about how easy to use a product or application is so that users can be satisfied by its use. In software applications, usability is very much about the quality of the interface and how

all the available functionalities can be presented in front of the user in an efficient and effective manner. The usability word also refers to ambitions to increase the easiness and effectiveness of the application while the application is in the software cycle. Usability plays vital role in evaluating websites where major interaction of users with the system is measured. A lot of work has been done on usability evaluation of websites by using distinctive techniques with different attributes. The system should always be user oriented rather than technology oriented and thus the user has become an important part of the development team system in recent years. Usability testing shows how the system is used by the user and how she/he gets benefits while using it. Interface design of websites is so important that can provide information related to the whole system that should be time saving, and support the users so that they can easily get their required results. Usability can be measured by analyzing experience of different users when they interact with the system. Website evaluation is determining the quality of the website.

Based on that information, the main purpose of this article is to analyze uzbektourism.uz according to usability evaluation.

Problem Identification

This is an era of internet. Most users have access internet at home as well as at work, so users use internet to search information who are interested in, or booking tickets, hotels. The majority of tourists order tickets or booking hotels with the help of internet websites. From these websites they must be aware of that place, destination, accommodation and other things. Web development places severe time constraints on developers and evaluators because of the rapid development and release cycle. The tight coupling of content, navigation, and appearance of Web sites means that separate evaluation of anyone component is not meaningful. Web sites also change frequently. We feel it is safe to assume that in the majority of cases, there is no testing of the entire site to see how the new portion fits in, even if the new portion has been evaluated. Web sites must evolve as users' expectations change and as new software and hardware developments are implemented in the Web sites of others and content becomes outdated. This implies that usability evaluations for Web sites should be a continuous effort. But the traditional usability tests, and even Nielsen's (1989) "discount usability testing," take time, especially if one has to test an entire Web site. Web sites reach a diverse audience. Getting representative users to come to a usability laboratory to participate in an evaluation is often not feasible. More importantly, users view Web sites with different types of browsers, preferences, and internet connections. Testing under all these different conditions adds to the time and complexity of setting up and conducting laboratory tests. Therefore, tools to monitor existing sites for potential usability problems should be very useful to Web site developers While traditional software has the same constraints, we maintain that these constraints are more severe when developing Web sites and Web-based applications. However, the Web facilitates quick and widespread delivery of information. Moreover, Web server logs record much information about user interactions with Websites. We wanted to see if we could take advantage of these two properties in developing some methods for obtaining usability information for Web-based software.

Scope Of Research

- Importance of usability for uzbektourism.uz
- Tourist satisfaction of uzbektourism.uz regarding usability
- Suggestions of uzbektourism.uz relating to the result of usability

The scope is limited in different way. The first, are there any importance of usability for uzbektourism.uz according user perspective? The second, tourist satisfaction regarding usability that is the tourist who visits Uzbekistan, does he/she usually satisfy to use website or not regarding to usability evaluation? The third, suggestions to uzbektourism.uz, for this scope.

Research Objective

In this article the author aims to explore experiences and requirements of users of uzbektourism.uz website and highlight some challenges faced by tourism website systems regarding in this case the interface of uzbektourism.uz and accessing resources behind the interface of the system in efficient and effective way. The author plans to perform usability testing with users focusing on when users are accessing documents and information remotely.

The following will be the expected results of our report:

1. Mapping of the importance of usability in uzbektourism.uz website.
2. Validation of results and analysis.
3. Discussion of the results and some suggestions for improvement of the website especially concerning the interface.

Research Benefit

1. Provides a better user experience
2. Offers insight into how satisfied users are with the tourism website
3. Identifies problems areas within the product which may not have been obvious otherwise.

Research Approach Description

The author uses two types of research questions in their research. The first research question is related to the qualitative approach in which the author carries out a literature review concerning the functioning of website system and explore the usability issues of the interface of the website. The author discusses the importance of tourism website, contents of website, the resources of the website system, an interface description of the website.

The importance of usability issues with respect to website system, and depiction of usability factors like learnability, memorability, efficiency and effectiveness and error prevention.

The second and third research questions have been addressed with a quantitative approach that aims to give us statistical data on which analysis will be performed to get results relevant to the research problem. The literature review gives a base for the usability testing that is carried out through Think Aloud protocol aiming to observe the structure of mental understanding and behavior of the user of the system. The usability inquiry contains the questionnaires and interviews for the further investigation relevant to usability evaluation of website. The discussion is based on the results of questionnaires and interviews conducted with different users and the author aims to conclude by presenting suggestions to improve usability issues in the system.

Methodology

For the usability testing, the author has used think aloud technique for evaluation of uzbektourism.uz. Pretest and posttest functions have been performed to identify important tasks and total maximum and minimum time for all tasks. It describes the different usability testing and inquiry techniques for usability evaluation.

USABILITY TESTING

Usability testing is a popular UX research methodology.

In a usability testing session, researcher (called “facilitator” or “moderator”) asks a participant to perform tasks, usually using on or more specific user interfaces. While the participant completes each task, the researcher observes the participant’s behavior and listens for feedback. The term of “usability testing” is often used as “user testing”.

The goals of usability testing vary by study, but they usually include:

- **Identifying problems** in the design of the product or service.
- **Uncovering opportunities** to improve.
- **Learning about the target user’s** behavior and references.

There are many variables to design a great user interface and there are even more variables in the human brain. The total number of combinations is huge. The only way to get UX design right is to test it. There are many different types of usability testing, but the core elements in most usability tests are **the facilitator, the tasks, and the participants**. (a usability-testing session involves a participant and a facilitator who give tasks to the participant and observes the participant’s behavior). The facilitator administers tasks to the participant. As the participants perform these tasks, the facilitator observes the participant’s behavior and listens for feedback. The facilitator may also ask follow up questions to elicit detail from the participant.

Facilitator

The facilitator guides the participant through the test process. She gives instructions, answers the participant’s questions, and asks follow up questions. The facilitator, works to ensure that the test results in high-quality, valid data, without accidentally influencing the participant’s behavior. Achieving this balance is difficult and requires training.

Tasks

The tasks in a usability test are realistic activities that the participants might perform in real life. They can be very specific or very open-ended, depending on the research questions and the type of usability testing. Task wording is very important in usability testing. Small errors in the phrasing of a task can cause the participant to misunderstand what they are asked to do or can influence how participants perform the task (a psychological phenomenon called priming).

Task instructions can be delivered to the participant verbally (the facilitator might read them) or can be handed to a participant written on task sheets. We often ask participants to read the task instructions out loud. This helps ensure that the participant reads the instructions completely, and helps the researchers with their notetaking, because they always know which task the user is performing.

Participant

The participant should be a realistic user of the product or service being studied. That might mean that the user is already using the product or service in real life.

Alternatively, in some cases, the participant might just have a similar background to the target user group, or might have the same needs, even if he is not already a user of the product. Participants are often asked to think out loud during usability testing (called the “think-aloud method”). The facilitator might ask the participants to narrate their actions and thoughts as they perform tasks. The goal of this approach is to understand participants’ behaviors, goals, thoughts, and motivations. In this usability-test session, the participants sit on the left, and the facilitator sits on the right. The participant uses a special testing laptop, which is running screen-recording software. The laptop has a webcam to capture the participant’s facial expressions and is connected to an external monitor for the facilitator. The facilitator listens to his feedback, administers tasks, and takes notes. The photo captures the moment after the participant’s task, when the facilitator is asking him follow up questions.

The author prepared this questionnaire which consisted of some questions to evaluate usability of Website. This questionnaire was prepared by using different usability evaluation criteria which could be helpful for author to evaluate usability issues in website at its maximum level. These criteria were based on human computer interaction principles and usability evaluation techniques.

Usability Evaluation Criteria	Questions related to Usability Factors	...of Responses	Strongly Satisfied A	Satisfied B	Less Satisfied C	Not Satisfied D
Effectiveness	1	56	19,6%	53,6%	19,6%	5,4%
Learnability	2,3,13	56	20%	16,7%	14,5%	6,7%
Easiness	4,8	56	55,9%	40,4%	12,3%	4,5%
Simplicity	8	56	40,3%	19,7%	2,8	1,9%
Time Saving	5,9	56	36,7%	17,6%	5,7%	7,4%
User Friendly	6,7	56	19,6%	55,4%	17,9%	7,1%
Comfortable	10,11	56	56,7%	43%	12,7%	4,5%
Aesthetic	19	56	25,7%	44,2%	18,5%	13%
Memorability	14	56	57,5%	34,7%	20%	1,5%
Satisfaction	15,18	56	17,9%	50%	17,9%	14,3%
Consistency	12	56	36,7%	49%	13,6	4,9%
Reliability	17	56	21,4%	48,2%	21,4%	8,9%
Error Prevention	11	56	32,1%	45,7%	21%	1,2%
Total		56				

Usability Evaluation Criteria results of Website

The author designed the questionnaire in a way that could extract maximum requirements of the users relevant to website. This questionnaire was distributed among people of different job from different ethnic background by google form. The author was only able to get this questionnaire filled in from 56 respondents. After getting feedback from the users regarding question of usability evaluation with

different criteria of website, the author analyzes the statistics to get results in percentages so that they would be in a better position to evaluate this system in a relevant way.

There were approximately 53, 6% users agree that the site is easy to navigate. Just 5, 4 respondents disagree of it. There were 58% of those users who are strongly satisfied with the fact that website (uzbektourism.uz) is facilitating them in every aspect for which it is intended to provide supports. Users who are satisfied with usability () so it a great percentage of those users who satisfied from this website, intended to provide to users. The only (Per) are strongly not satisfied that it provides them all those facilities in different criteria of usability evaluation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to evaluate website (uzbektourism.uz) to make it more effective and efficient for users of tourism sphere. For this purpose, author adopted a research methodology that helps them towards their desired goals to achieve the usability evaluation of website. Six Students from different study programs were selected for conducting usability test because they are studying at Tourism High School and they are familiar with the field of tourism. Students are classified into two groups as Advanced and novice users. 4 different tasks were given to the users to perform on this system to get results for usability evaluation of the website. Informal discussion was conducted from the experts of teachers who are working on this school, for designing and developing interface and also managing the e-resources. The results gathered from our research study show the satisfaction level regarding the research material and services provided by the website as well as interface of the website page. The authors then conducted usability test from the selected students and derived some results after observing the behavior of the students while they were performing usability test. They were also given questionnaires to be filled by them. Author distributed questionnaires to some other users including teachers, students and researchers so that results can be achieved from every kind of users who are interacting with the system. Moreover, Interviews were conducted from the 12 users to validate results that author achieved from questionnaires from usability evaluation criteria.

Bibliography

1. Nielsen, J., (1993), *Usability Engineering*, Academic Press, pp. 25-26, 196-214.
2. Preece, J., Rogers, Y. and Sharp, H., (2002), *Interaction design*, John Wiley & sons, p. 14, 230, 390-398.
3. Virvou, M., Kabassi, K., (1992), "Designing and evaluating user interfaces for knowledge-bases systems", Great Britain: Ellis Harwood limited.
4. Dillon, A., (1994), *Designing Usable Electronic Text*, Second Edition, CRC Press Release, ISBN 0-415-24059-X, p. 13.
5. Galitz, W.O., (2002), *The essential guide to User Interface design, an interdiction to GUI Design principles and techniques*, John Wiley & sons, p. 55,717.
6. Blandford, A., (2006), "Interacting with information resources: digital libraries for education", *International Journal of Learning Technologies*, Vol. 2, pp. 185-202.
7. Marshall, B., (1996), "Preserving Digital Information", Report of the Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information.

-
8. Cain, M., (2003), "Managing Technology: Being a Library of Record in a Digital Age", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 4, pp. 236-240.
 9. Blandford, A. Keith, S. and Fields, B., (2001), "Designing for expert information finding strategies", Springer, London, pp. 89-102.