




# Usability Analysis of U-Haul.com Website


Your moving and storage resource.
Sign in / look up order
View shopping cart

TrucksTrailersStorageBoxes & packing suppliesLocations

### Rental trucks and trailers


Get rates, availability and deals in your area.


Pickup date

Pickup location

Dropoff location
☒ Same as pickup

[Trucks, trailers, towing, cargo vans, pickups and U-Boxes](#)






### Self-storage

Get your first month free with any one-way truck or trailer rental at participating locations.

[U-Box portable storage](#)


Fill up our new moving pods and we'll store them or move them to your new place.



### Moving Helpers®

View customer-rated movers in your area.

- Loading
- Packing
- Driving
- Cleaning



### Moving supplies

Get free standard shipping on all orders over \$25.

- [Boxes](#)
- [Tape](#)
- [Packing supplies](#)
- [Hitches & towing](#)

**Rentals**

- Moving trucks
- Trailers & towing
- U-Box moving containers
- Dollies & furniture pads

**Storage**

- Self-storage units
- U-Box portable storage
- Storage for your business
- Locks & supplies

**Products and services**

- Boxes & packing supplies
- Trailer hitches
- Propane & grilling
- Moving Help®

**Company info**

- About U-Haul
- Media & Public Relations
- Social media directory
- SuperGraphics

**Customer service**

- Sign in / look up order
- Contact us
- Frequently asked questions

Team Code N  
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## Executive Overview

This report summarizes the results from a usability evaluation of the UHaul.com website as part of the CUE-9 UPA 2011 workshop. Five end-users participated in a moderated usability test evaluating the site. Participants were asked to complete 7 basic search tasks with the site and report their impressions of the site and information presented.

Results indicated usability problems related to renting a truck with additional rental equipment, renting a storage space, and finding information regarding liability for damage to the truck. Participants found it very easy to find a U-Haul location, finding a U-Haul location phone number, and finding information within Frequently Asked Questions.

Recommendations to improve the usability of the site are to streamline the additional equipment rental process, reorganize the shopping cart to clarify cost information, clarify the insurance options, simplify the truck and storage area sizes, and provide instructions regarding address information required for location search.

## Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the ease-of-use, efficiency, and user satisfaction of the uHaul.com website (as part of the CUE-9 UPA 2011 workshop). Five end-users participated in a usability test evaluating the site. These users were asked to complete 7 basic search tasks with the site and report their impressions of the information presented.

Usability testing is an empirical method of measuring a website's ease-of-use. It involves bringing representative users into the usability lab and asking them to complete a series of tasks that typifies what they would normally do with the website. Observational, user satisfaction and performance data are collected, summarized, and used as the basis for design recommendations. This report represents Team N's evaluation of the U-Haul.com website based on the observation of five user sessions moderated by a CUE-9 participant.

## Method

### Participants

The participants included 3 males and 2 females in the age range of 25 – 45 ( $M = 35$ ). Occupations were reported to be in the areas of quality assurance, education, customer experience, library services, and project management. Three of the participants reported a high level of web savviness and two reported average levels of web knowledge (it is unknown how this was determined). Three of the participants reported that they had moved in the past 5 years while 2 did not. All participants were familiar with the U-Haul company; only one participant reported that he had explored the U-Haul website previously.

### Materials

#### Hardware/Software

It is unknown what kind of computer or internet connection was used in the study. It appears that the software program Morae™ was used to record each user session. Success and difficulty rating were recorded manually by the observer. One facilitator was present for each user session. She presented the task scenarios to the participant via a PowerPoint presentation, remotely brought up the website, and collected task success and difficulty ratings from a room adjacent to the test room. An intercom system was used to deliver instructions to the participant after an initial orientation period. Follow-up questions were delivered at the end of the test session face-to-face.

### Task Scenarios

Task scenarios were developed by members of the CUE-9 team. The overall scenario involved the following:

*Your friends Mike and Anna are about to move from Pittsburgh, PA to Denver, CO. They have an apartment in Pittsburgh consisting of a living room, a bedroom, a*

*kitchen, and a bathroom. They want to find the cheapest service for the move to Colorado. They expect to make the move themselves with some help from a few friends. They are planning to move out on April 14<sup>th</sup> and they expect the trip to take 3 days. The couple plans to return to Pittsburgh after 2 years so they want to rent a self storage unit in Pittsburgh for the stuff they don't need in Denver.*

Participants were asked to complete the following tasks related to this scenario in this order:

- Find the total price for a truck rental.
- Find out if they will need a special license to drive the truck.
- Find the per month cost for storage.
- Find a phone number for a U-Haul location.
- Book the truck along with some specified accessories.
- Investigate an insurance issue related to the truck.
- Find a U-Haul location close to home.

## Procedure

Participants were tested in the laboratory on an individual basis. They were asked questions related to their moving experience (e.g., had they moved in the last 5 years and if so, did they use a moving company). They were also asked if they had used the U-Haul website before and what they expected to be able to do on the website. After reading the general instructions on a PowerPoint slide, they were asked to read the overall scenario and then instructed that they would be given a series of tasks one at a time to complete on the website. Participants were instructed to read the tasks aloud before beginning and were asked to “think aloud” as they worked through the tasks.

Before beginning each task, participants were asked to rate how easy or difficult they thought the task was going to be using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = very difficult; 7 = very easy). Following completion of each task, participants were asked to rate its perceived ease/difficulty on the same 7-point scale along with their level of confidence in their answer (1=not confident at all; 7 = very confident).

The entire test session ranged from 26-47 minutes. Once all tasks were complete, participants were interviewed as to what they thought of the site overall and were asked to explain particular likes or dislikes.

## Results

The goal of this usability test was to assess ease of use and understanding of the [www.uhaul.com](http://www.uhaul.com) website by representative users, all of whom were first-time users. It should be kept in mind that these results are based only on performance on the tasks used in this study. It is expected that, with repeated usage, users would become more efficient with the site.

This report represents a summary of the observed test sessions and highlights the feedback and problems identified by the participants. First, general user interface design issues that were observed during the usability test are discussed. This is followed by specific user feedback and observations from each task scenario, performance data, satisfaction results, and recommendations.

## **General Usability Issues**

Participants were generally successful in completing most of the tasks. Several user interface design issues were evident, however, as participants navigated through the site. The most notable were those that interfered with the most critical tasks of renting a truck and storage space since these tasks are representative of the primary purpose of the website.

### **Renting a Truck**

Users were able to estimate a rental price but had some difficulty deciding on the truck size and accurately adding requisite moving supplies. This was due to the fact that the truck sizes were provided in area dimensions or by the number of bedrooms (instead of total rooms in the house or apartment). Most of the users overestimated the size of the truck needed (“just in case”) which may have resulted in a higher cost than necessary. Adding moving supplies to the truck rental was problematic since the site provided default quantities of such materials. Users either accidentally added unintentional items to their shopping cart or were noted to complain about having to “zero out” the quantity fields to avoid adding them.

### **Finding Storage**

As with the truck rental task, participants had difficulty calculating how much storage space was necessary from the box dimensions provided in the task. The site provided dimensions for a total storage area. Since the task indicated that the couple moving was only storing some of their belongings, the participants had to calculate how much total space would be required based on the individual box dimensions. Some participants wondered whether indoor or outdoor storage was necessary, while others did not notice the differentiation between the two. One user commented that she would probably complete this task on a site other than U-Haul to get more accurate information.

## **Specific Usability Issues by Task**

In addition to the general user interface design issues discussed above, user performance and subjective impressions were analyzed at a task level. Performance and perceived difficulty ratings for all participants are summarized by task in Table 1. The easiest tasks were reported to be finding the U-Haul location closest to the participant’s home, finding a phone number for U-Haul, and finding out if their friend needs a special license to drive the truck (located in the FAQs). The most difficult/least successful tasks were finding insurance information, finding a per-month storage cost, and booking the truck and accessories.

**Table 1.** Task difficulty ratings pre and post-task, post-task confidence ratings, and task success. In general, the higher the number, the higher the confidence, task ease, and success. **Most difficult/least successful tasks in bold.**

	Pre-Task Difficulty <sup>1</sup>	Post-Task Difficulty <sup>1</sup>	Post-Task Confidence <sup>2</sup>	Success (%)	Time on Task
1. Find total price of truck.	4.6 (.89)	4.8 (2.17)	5.6 (1.14)	80%	5:41 (4;12)
2. Find if they need special driver's license	4.0 (1.87)	6.4 (.89)	6.8 (.45)	100%	:46 (:13)
<b>3. Find storage per month cost</b>	<b>5.6 (.55)</b>	<b>3.8 (2.4)</b>	<b>4.25 (2.5)*</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>6:29 (1:01)</b>
4. Find phone number for U-Haul	6.2 (.84)	6.6 (.55)	6.8 (.45)	80%	1:33 (:19)
<b>5. Book a truck and accessories</b>	<b>5.6 (1.14)</b>	<b>4.2 (1.79)</b>	<b>4.8 (1.3)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6:16 (3:03)</b>
<b>6. Find insurance information</b>	<b>3.2 (1.93)</b>	<b>2.67 (1.15)**</b>	<b>4.5 (2.12)***</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>3:31 (1:43)</b>
7. Find a U-Haul location	6.8 (.45)	6.8 (.45)	6.6 (.55)	100%	1:14 (:29)

<sup>1</sup> 1=Very Difficult; 7=Very Easy

<sup>2</sup> 1 = Not Confident at all; 7 = Very Confident

\* n = 4; \*\* n = 3; \*\*\* n = 2

### Usability Findings Summary

The following is a summary of the usability findings, severity rating and description. A complete set of usability findings and referenced video clip locations is shown in the Excel attachment "Resultsfor TeamN.xls".

Finding	Rating Code	Description
Default quantities	A	Default quantities for additional rental equipment/supplies resulted in accidental additions to the shopping cart or annoyance at having to reset quantities to zero for unwanted items.
Insurance info	A	Users don't like to read the large amount of insurance info on the site; they feel more comfortable calling U-Haul or their own

		insurance company for this info
Rental equipment difficult to find	A	Some rental equipment (i.e., utility dolly, moving blankets) difficult to find if not chosen initially or from additional rentals link from shopping cart
Shopping cart organization confusing	A	Organization of shopping cart is confusing as to what user owes and when. Also confusing when rental equipment is added to the cart unintentionally.
Instructions disappear in fields;	B	Instructions for location field disappear when clicked; uncertainty of what they need to type for address results in multiple attempts
Storage U-Box field confusion	B	Users entered location info in U-Box rates rather than general storage
Truck size/storage size miscalculation	B	Users have a hard time translating apartment size or box size/quantity to U-Haul truck or storage dimensions
Drop-off/Pick-up default location confusion	B	The default of the drop-off location as the same as the pick-up causes confusion if overlooked
Location distance not readily apparent	B	Users think location search results should show actual distance from their location in the description
Adding items from equipment page	C	One user wanted to add materials without having to go to cart and then return to the materials page again
Rental agreement duration confusion	C	Users unsure how long they are able to rent a truck; not clear why truck defaults to 6 days or how to change the length of time or if cost is impacted.
Calendar arrows not shown/delayed	X	Only March shown on the calendar with no forward/back arrows
Storage price zero	X	Storage prices display \$0 for one user
Insurance option not presented	X	Insurance option not shown for one user
FAQs easy to find	P	FAQ info on whether a different license is necessary was easy for all users to find
Location/phone	P	U-Haul locations and accompanying phone numbers easy to



numbers easy to find		find for all users
Map easy to read	P	Map showing nearby locations easy to use
Calendar widget easy to use	P	Calendar widget to select date easy to use
Flexibility of item pick-up	P	Users liked having the ability to pick-up additional rental items in the store or to have them shipped
Show cost difference by date	I	Users who have flexibility in their move date want to see if there is a cost difference based on date
Scroll and zoom map	I	Users want to be able to scroll and zoom map (e.g., typical Google map interaction)
Location info on hover	I	Users want to see address/location information on mouse-over of 'pin' on map

A = Critical; B = Serious; C = Minor; I = Good idea; P = Positive; X = Bug

## User Satisfaction

After all tasks were completed, participants were interviewed for their likes and dislikes of the site.

When asked what they *liked* about the site, users noted:

- easy access to Frequently Asked Questions
- the ease with which they could find a U-Haul location.
- the suggested “other items” they may need for the move

When asked what they *disliked* about the site, users noted:

- the “automatic” addition of items to the shopping cart; pre-populated quantities of accessories
- the organization of the shopping cart (confusing what costs were due and when)
- the complexity/ambiguity of the insurance information
- the entry field instructions that cleared when the cursor focus was placed in the field
- the ambiguity of whether a full address or only zip code was needed

- the inability for the location map to scroll

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations to improve the usability of the site are to streamline the additional equipment rental process, reorganize the shopping cart to clarify cost information, clarify the insurance options, simplify the truck and storage area sizes, and provide instructions regarding address information required for location search.