

www.U-Haul.com Usability Evaluation
Team P Report
Summer 2011

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Executive Summary

This usability report highlights the findings of unmoderated usability testing sessions conducted on www.u-haul.com in Spring 2011. The goal of this test was to determine the overall usability of the site.

The usability testing revealed that several aspects of the website worked well, including:

- Where to begin: All users inherently knew where to begin the process of booking a truck on u-haul.com.
- Booking process: Most users were able to eventually complete tasks common to the process of booking a truck and renting a storage unit.
- Navigation of site: Most users felt that the general navigation of the site was intuitive and that they knew where to go to find the needed information.

The usability testing also revealed several aspects of the website that could be improved, including:

- Renting vs. purchasing: Some users had difficulty determining whether they were renting or purchasing items for use during their move.
- How big is a storage unit?: All users indicated some hesitation in whether a selected storage unit would be big enough for the items that needed to be stored.
- What is exactly included in damage coverage?: Most users lacked confidence in determining what was covered in the various damage protection policies.
- Locating phone numbers: Several users had difficulty locating the phone number for locations when accessing a location from a source other than the "Locations Tab."

Introduction

Team P conducted a test of www.u-haul.com in Spring/Summer 2011.

The goal of this testing was to determine the degree to which users from the United States could successfully interact with u-haul.com to book a truck, reserve a storage unit, and identify specific information located on the website.

[Information about how the test was conducted and how participants were recruited]

The tests were evaluated by a Team P member. All findings in this report represent a critical or serious problem encountered by at least one study participant or a minor problem encountered by at least two study participants.

Findings

A indicates critical problem.

Causes frequent catastrophes. A catastrophe is a situation where the website “wins” over the test participant – that is, a situation where the test participant cannot solve a reasonable task or where the website annoys the test participant considerably.

B indicates a serious problem.

Delays test participants in their use of the website for some minutes, but eventually allows them to continue. Causes occasional “catastrophes.”

C indicates a minor problem.

Causes test participants to hesitate for some seconds.

I indicates a good idea.

A suggestion from a test participant that could lead to a significant improvement of the user experience.

P indicates a positive finding.

This approach is recommendable and should be preserved.

X indicates a bug.

The website works in a way that’s clearly not in accordance with the design specifications. This includes spelling errors, dead links, scripting errors, etc.

Findings: Shopping and Shopping Cart

While users generally understood the process of shopping and understood how to read the shopping cart, with one user saying, “the website is doing what I expect it to do,” there were some issues that were problematic for the users as they completed their test.

B-level Issues: Shopping and Shopping Cart

1) Prepopulated fields: During the course of shopping for and booking a truck, users were asked to consider purchasing or renting additional items. Some fields already had numbers entered into the fields and had the user not changed the fields, those items would have been placed into the user’s shopping cart.

[Screenshot of “Additional Rental Items” page]

Some users indicated mistrust when realizing that the fields had already been populated, with one user saying, “ooh, you’re sneaky” and another saying “if I was in a hurry I might not notice that those numbers were in there and I might reserve things that I really didn’t want to get, so I’m having to go back there and change each of those.” Some users had to go back and alter their orders because they accidentally included unwanted items through prepopulated fields.

Additionally, when users got to the shopping cart page, many zeroed out the fields in “Customers who rented a 14 ft. truck needed” section, even though they never hit “Add to Cart,” thus making their actions of zeroing out moot.

[Screenshot of “Your Shopping Cart” page]

2) Renting vs. purchasing: Some users faced significant issues when trying to determine whether they were renting or purchasing items.

[Screenshot of products page]

Typically, these users indicated that the only way to acquire a dolly or furniture blankets was to purchase, rather than rent, these items. Some users indicated that they wanted to rent, but could not figure out how to add a dolly and blankets to their cart after they had passed up the “Additional Rental Items page.” The “Additional rentals” link in the shopping cart was not immediately intuitive to many users and several users never clicked on the link to add the rental items.

C-level Issues: Shopping and Shopping Cart

1) How much do I owe? Two users indicated confusion in attempting to determine how much they would ultimately owe for the move. These two users came to the conclusion that the only way to know how much is owed totally, not just owed today, was to add it up themselves.

I=Good Idea: One user suggested listing both the amount due today and the amount due on rental day to avoid customer confusion.

2) Are my items in my cart? Two users indicated concern that when they left the page that showed their shopping carts that the added items in the shopping cart would be removed.

Findings: Locating and Understanding Information on the Website

While most users said that they understood where information on the website was supposed to be, some users expressed frustration when information wasn't where they thought it should be or if they could not understand the information.

B-level problems: Locating and Understanding Information on the Website

1) Trouble locating the phone number of a location: Three users had difficulty locating the phone number of a particular location. Two users clicked on the location in their shopping cart to determine the location's phone number and a third went to "Contact Us." The two users who had clicked on the location through the shopping cart were concerned that the phone number wasn't listed. All users eventually found the phone number by going through the "Locations" tab.

[Screenshot of location information after clicking on the location in the shopping cart]

2) Damages coverage: While all users found information regarding damage in relatively short order, four of the five users expressed at least some confusion or frustration with the information they found about damage coverage, particularly over what was included in coverage, how one level of coverage compared to another, and what the terms used in the description of the coverage meant. Many users indicated hesitation with their choice and several indicated that they would call to find out more.

3) FAQ: While users generally found the FAQs at the bottom of the page in a reasonable timeframe, two users assumed the bulk of the text was the entirety of the FAQ, and did not realize that the menu bar at the left included other FAQs. All eventually found the proper FAQ, but for those two users, there was some confusion as to how to locate the desired information.

I=Good Idea: One user suggested adding an FAQ tab to the orange menu bar so that users can quickly locate and access the FAQs on any page.

Findings: Reserving Storage

While all the users were able to eventually, there were some issues that affected some users success in reserving storage.

X-level Bugs: Reserving Storage

One user encountered a bug on the website when attempting to get information about the storage. The loading icon would freeze and the user could not continue with her selection. The user sought several alternative pathways and eventually was able to complete the task. No other users encountered this problem.

B-level Issues: Reserving Storage

1) Will it all fit? All users hesitated in making their decision regarding what size storage unit was needed. All users seemed uncertain as to just how much space was needed to contain the described items and some had a difficult time feeling confident in their decision. All users eventually made a decision, but the users varied in their confidence of the decision, with some concerned that they reserved too big a space and other concerned that they reserved too small a space.

P= Positive Finding: One user liked having the mock-up of a man in the storage unit to help him assess the size of the unit.

I=Good Idea: Two users indicated that some kind of calculator that could help them determine the amount of space they needed would be a helpful addition.

2) What is the cost of storage? One user was concerned about the cost of the storage unit because the unit kept showing up as \$0.00. The user knew that the cost of storage for that unit was likely incorrect, but did not know why it was incorrect. He tried to rectify the situation by rebooking the unit, but the price remained the same.

Findings: Mapping

Generally, users had a positive response to the maps and listing of locations that provided particular services, though there were a few issues that developed.

P=Positive Finding: One users explicitly stated how much he enjoyed the map integration on the website and would like to see more integration.

C-level Issues: Mapping

1) Zoomed map still needs detailed information: Two users entered their pick-up location ZIP code and the website took them to a map of the area. However, these users attempted to narrow the parameters of the search by entering the street address, but both neglected to include the ZIP or the city. The users were, at first, concerned by the map's inability to locate the street, but then realized that they needed to provide a more complete address, despite the already zoomed map.

2) Storage search assumes drop-off city: Two users attempted to reserve a storage unit after booking a truck. The website assumed that they would want the storage unit at the drop-off city, while these users needed a storage unit at the pick-up city. These two users did not realize that they were searching in the wrong city until they had run the search. Once they realized their mistake, the users rectified their situations.

I=Good Idea: Two users expressed concern that mileages were not listed in critical locations. One user suggested showing what the actual mileage was between pick-up and drop-off locations so the user would know if the allotted mileage was reasonably sufficient. Additionally, one user suggested including the actual distance from address when users sort locations by distance.

Findings: Other Findings

Positive findings

- 1) Reviews: One user mentioned how much she enjoyed having the reviews on the website.
- 2) What others needed: One user liked seeing what other users needed in similar moves to help her decide what she needed for her move.

Good Ideas

- 1) Make page loading more consistent: One user noted that some pages have a page loading icon while other pages don't.

[Screenshot of page loading icon]

- 2) Make process of booking a truck more explicit: One user suggested clearly delineating the steps in the booking process so they can know where they are in the process and so they can move back to a previous step. This user indicated that it would help him to determine when he had reached the end of the process.

Appendix A: Demographics

[Appropriate demographics of users go here]

Appendix B: Tasks for u-haul.com assessment

Scenario: Your friends Mike and Anna are about to move from Pittsburgh, PA to Denver CO...

Task 1: [Price of truck task]

Task 2: [Special license task]

Task 3: [Storage task]

Task 4: [Phone number task]

Task 5: [Book the truck and add extras task]

Task 6: [Damage coverage task]

Task 7: [New location task]

Appendix C: Task Results

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7
User 1	C	+	C	B	B	B	+
User 2	+	+	B	B	+	C	+
User 3	+	+	X/C*	+	C	+	-
User 4	+	C	B	+	C	C	-
User 5	B	+	C	B	+	C	+

Key:

+ indicates user had no critical, serious, or minor problem in the completion of the task.

- indicates that the user did not complete the task, but apparently through no fault of the site.

B indicates a serious problem.

Delays test participants in their use of the website for some minutes, but eventually allows them to continue. Causes occasional "catastrophes."

C indicates a minor problem.

Causes test participants to hesitate for some seconds.

X indicates a bug.

The website works in a way that's clearly not in accordance with the design specifications. This includes spelling errors, dead links, scripting errors, etc.

* User 3 encountered a bug in her test. After finding a work around to the bug, she had minor problems completing the task.