
Recommendations on Recommendations - Call for Participation

Version 05 Feb 2007

Overview

Here's a unique chance to demonstrate your usability skills to the rest of the world:

The interactive session "Recommendations on Recommendations" is part of the CHI 2007 conference in San Jose, CA, 28 April - 3 May 2007. The session will discuss the quality of recommendations for improving a user interface resulting from a usability evaluation.

We have 2-3 panel seats open for people with demonstrated abilities in writing useful and usable recommendations. We will fill these seats through this pre-conference contest. This call for participation describes what you should do to qualify for a seat.

We will invite 2-3 authors of the submissions containing the most useful and usable recommendations to participate actively in the session. These authors will be seated on the podium together with three of the organizers and judges. In this way we will ensure that demonstrated practical skills in creating good recommendations are represented in the interactive session.

The contest is open to anyone who plans to attend CHI2007.

Introduction

While there is substantial literature on how to conduct usability evaluations, little attention has been paid to the way that usability evaluations lead to recommendations for change. Creating high quality recommendations for change is a critical part of making sure that the results of evaluations have an appropriate impact on product development. If the translation from problem to solution is flawed, or if the recommendations are not taken seriously by the product team, a usability evaluation is a costly step that may have little impact on the product.

Problems with the quality of recommendations include recommendations that are not actionable, ones that developers are likely to misunderstand, and ones that may not improve the overall usability of the application. The session will discuss characteristics for useful and usable recommendations, that is, recommendations for solving usability problems that lead to changes that significantly improve the usability of a product.

Rules for the contest

- Any prospective CHI 2007 attendee can participate in this contest. The contest is open to anyone: Students, usability gurus, cowboy programmers, usability architects, Flash specialists, psychology teachers, technical writers, usability professionals, graphic designers, employees of the companies whose websites are being evaluated, and more.
- Each attendee may make one submission.
- Submissions must contain recommendations for all six usability problems posed in this document.
- There are no restrictions on the content or format of recommendations. Note, however, that the judges will consider closely the usability of submitted recommendations. Submitted recommendations must be suitable for inclusion in a professional usability test report. The judges imagine that most usable recommendations for each problem are less than one page, but they are willing to consider recommendations of any length.
- Submissions must be by email to the address recommendations@dialogdesign.dk not later than Tuesday 13 March 2007. Submissions will be acknowledged by a return email within 48 hours.
- The body of your submission email must contain your full name, affiliation and address. To make sure that we can easily get in contact with you, please provide both a main and an alternative email address, if possible. Please describe the number of years you have worked in usability or user experience, and any other description of your background you deem relevant. You should also specify an alias to be used in identifying your recommendations.
- Each submission email must contain an attached recommendations document in pdf format. This document must contain the recommendations. Page 1 of the document must list your alias. Otherwise, the attached recommendations document must be anonymous. It must not be possible to guess your identity from the contents of the recommendations document.
- Start each recommendation on a separate page.
- "Leave it as it is" is considered a valid recommendation. This recommendation should be accompanied by a justification.
- The anonymous recommendations documents will be published on the web and may be used freely for further research. Details about where the results are published will be provided at the interactive session.
- Your identity will be revealed to the judges and to the public only if you become a panelist.
- At their discretion, the judges may award honorable mention to authors of submissions that we can not accommodate in the panel.
- The invitation to participate as a panelist does not include conference registration, lodging and transportation. You may register only for the day where the interactive session takes place.
- Before you submit your recommendations, please check the latest version of this Call for Participation at www.dialogdesign.dk/chi2007_rec2.pdf for any last minute clarifications and updates.

Deadlines

- Tuesday 13 March 2007: Last date for submissions.
- Tuesday 27 March 2007 or earlier: Offers for seats in the CHI 2007 interactive session are emailed. We must have your response to the offer within 72 hours. Otherwise we reserve the right to invite another qualified attendee.
- Monday 30 April 2007: Start of the main portion of the CHI 2007 conference.
- Thursday 3 May 2007, 9.00 - 10.30 am: Interactive session "Recommendations on Recommendations".

Judges

- Rolf Molich
DialogDesign
Skovkrogen 3
DK-3660 Stenlose, Denmark
- Kasper Hornbæk
Department of Computer Science, University of
Copenhagen
Universitetsparken 1,
DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark
- Josephine Scott
TechSmith Corporation
2405 Woodlake Drive
Okemos, MI USA 48864-5910
- Steve Krug
Advanced Common Sense
Chestnut Hill, MA USA 02467
(Steve Krug will not be present at the conference)

The judges will evaluate the usefulness and usability of proposed recommendations based on their extensive experience. Since little data exists about quality criteria for recommendations, the judges will evaluate submissions in an ad hoc fashion and formulate their criteria afterwards, as part of the core content of this session.

The CHI 2007 interactive session format

You can download the abstract for the whole interactive session from www.dialogdesign.dk/chi2007_rec1.pdf

- **At the door.** Student volunteers will give each member of the audience a self-instructing exercise with the six usability problems used in the pre-conference contest. Audience members are encouraged to write recommendations for as many of these problems as time permits before the discussions start.
- **Introduction to interactive session.** The session theme and format is briefly introduced by the moderator. Panelists are briefly introduced by the moderator using one slide per panelist.
Time: 5 minutes.
- **Study exercise.** The audience will have time to read the exercise, consider their recommendations and discuss them with neighbors. We will encourage small group discussions in the audience.
Time: 20 minutes.
- **Presentation and discussion of the solutions.** Panelists discuss solutions that are considered optimal for each of the six problems. They take turns presenting. Other panelists and members of the audience are encouraged to speak up when they seriously disagree. We will also present examples of

commonly proposed solutions that we consider less than optimal.

Time: 30 minutes.

- **Discussion.** Guidelines for useful and usable recommendations are presented. Based on the examples we will discuss what makes a useful and usable recommendation. We will also discuss problems not illustrated by the examples.

Time: 30 minutes.

- **Summary and conclusion.** Each panelist gets 45 seconds to summarize the main points of this session.

Time: 5 minutes

During the discussion period, student volunteers will distribute paper copies of the judges' favorite solutions for the six problems. Each member of the audience can compare their solutions to the suggested solutions and thus assess their skills in writing useful and usable recommendations.

Questions

Questions about the contest should be sent to recommendations@dialogdesign.dk

We will attempt to respond within 48 hours.

Usability problems

There are six usability problems. They are all taken from real world websites. All problems are based on extensive usability evaluations. At the time when this document was published, the websites behaved as described in this document.

Three of the usability problems relate to the IKEA PAX wardrobe planning tool, and three relate to the website for Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

The scenario for this contest is: "Imagine that you have been hired by IKEA and Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Both companies have asked professional usability consultancies to carry out usability evaluations of selected parts of their websites. The consultancies have come up with the six problems listed below. For various reasons, the consultancies have not provided recommendations on how to fix the problems. It's your task to provide usability recommendations based on the - possibly imperfect - usability problem descriptions."

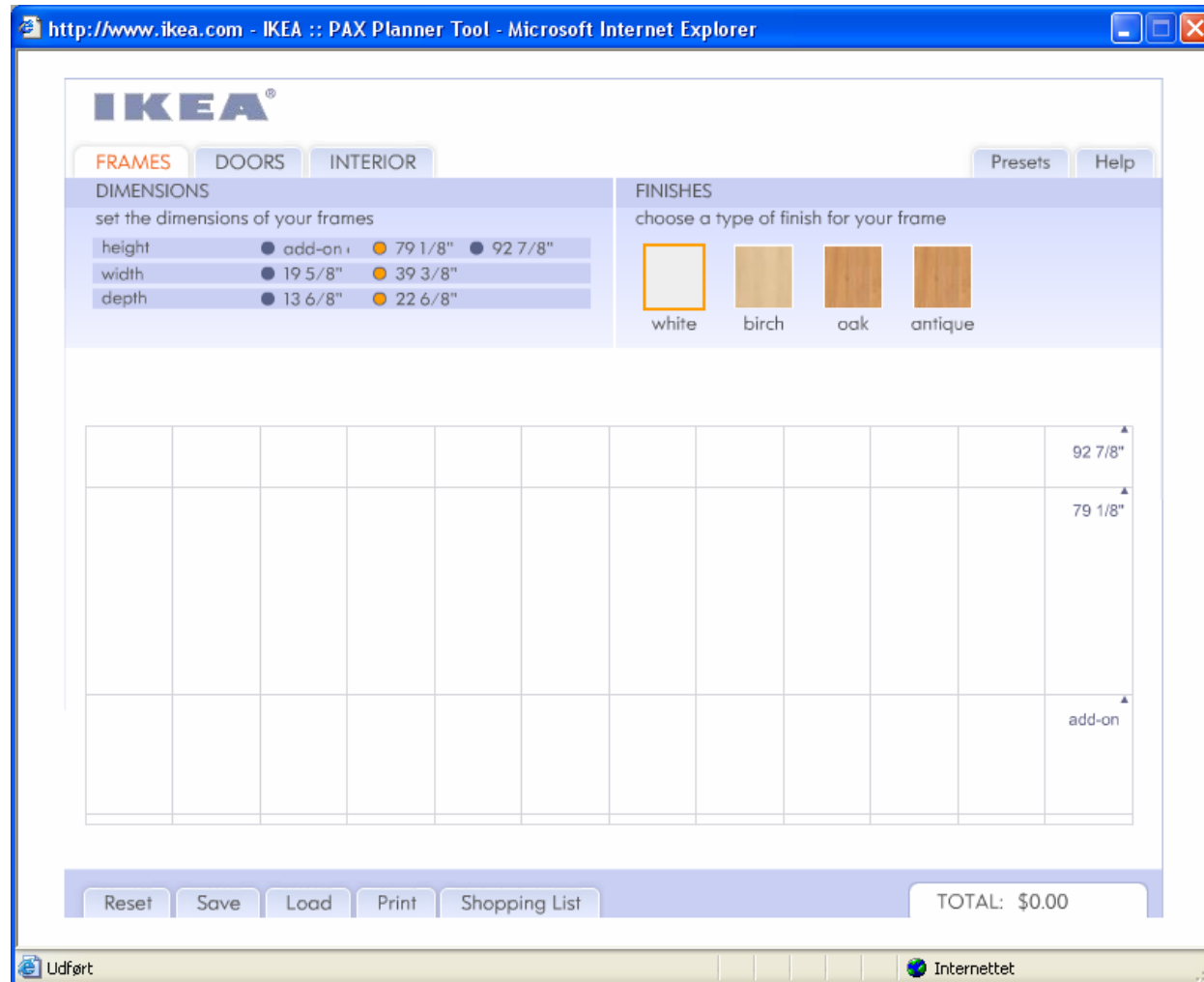
The IKEA PAX wardrobe planning tool can be found on www.IKEA-usa.com. Click "Our products - Clothes storage" and then "Planning your own PAX". The introductory page "PAX Planning Tool - Design your own wardrobe" shows the main goals of the PAX Planner.

The website for Enterprise Rent-A-Car can be found on www.Enterprise.com.

Both websites contain additional usability problems. It is outside the scope of this contest to point out additional usability problems.

The six usability problems in the contest are shown on the following pages

Usability problem 1 - IKEA PAX Planner - Getting started



Usability problem description: When users click on "Create your own solution" instead of selecting one of the presets they don't know what they should do first to start building a wardrobe.

Usability problem 2 - IKEA PAX Planner - Check the dimensions of this frame

http://www.ikea.com - IKEA :: PAX Planner Tool - Microsoft Internet Explorer

IKEA®

FRAMES DOORS **INTERIOR** Presets Help

SELECT YOUR COMPONENT **SHELVES** INTERIOR DRAWERS HANGERS OTHER

width 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8" 19 5/8"

depth 22 6/8" 22 6/8" 22 6/8" 22 6/8" 13 6/8" 13 6/8" 13 6/8" 13 6/8"

PAX Shelf
PAX shelf, 19 5/8"x22 5/8", white 2 pack
\$16.00

92 7/8"
79 1/8"
add-on

D22 6/8"

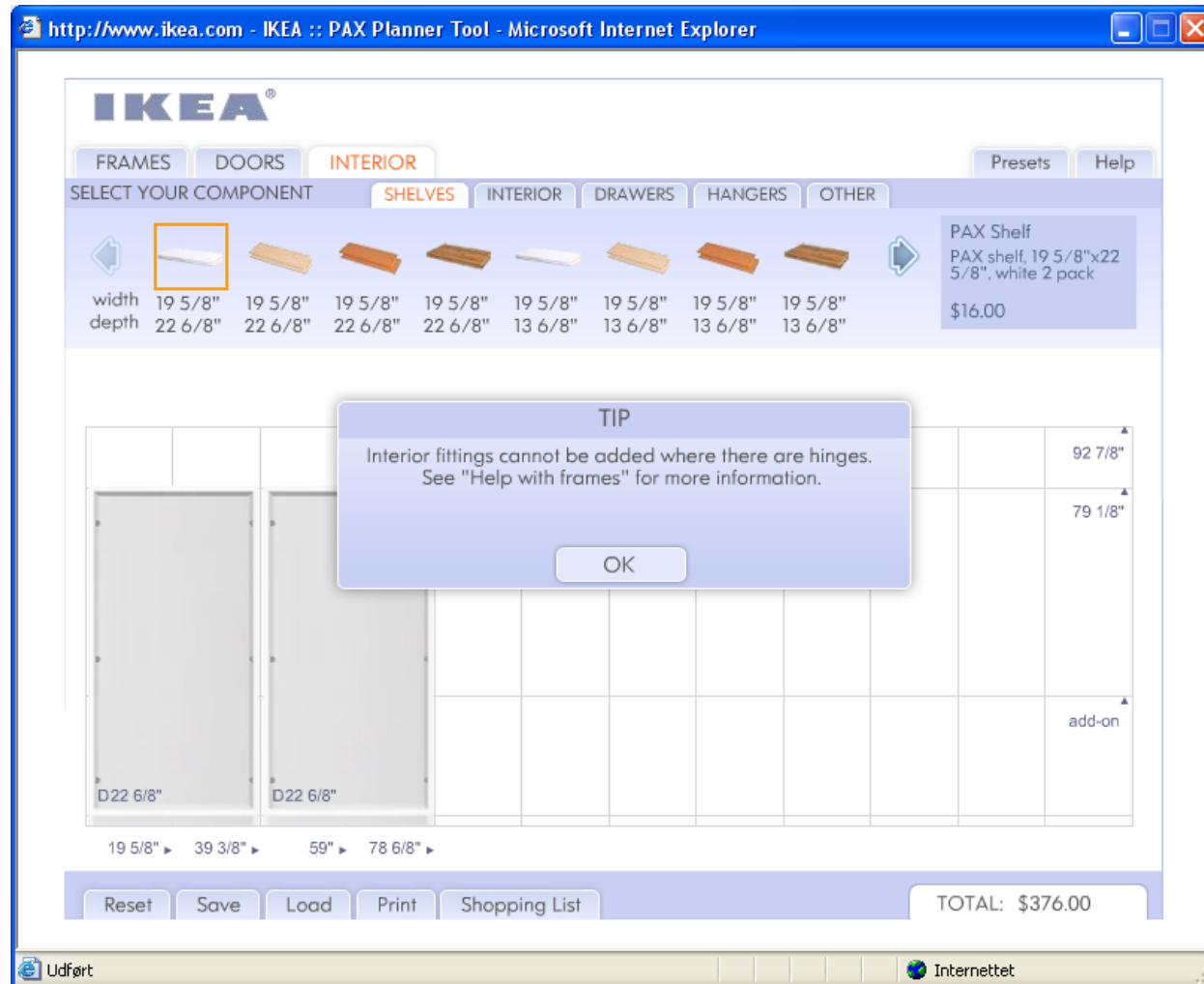
19 5/8" 39 3/8"

Reset Save Load Print Shopping List TOTAL: \$64.00

Udført Internettet

Usability problem description: Users do not realize that interior items, such as shelves, must match the dimensions of their wardrobe exactly. The message, "Check the dimensions of this frame", isn't helpful.

Usability problem 3 - IKEA PAX Planner - Confusion about hinges



Usability problem description: When users first click on the Interior tab, they get the above message. Users don't understand the message, "Interior fittings cannot be added where there are hinges." The little gray dots are hinges, and you can't put for example a drawer in over a hinge.

Usability problem 4 - Enterprise Rent-A-Car - Specials overlooked

The screenshot shows the Enterprise Rent-A-Car website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Enterprise logo, a language dropdown set to 'English', and links for 'About Us', 'Contact Us', and 'Help'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Rent a Car', 'Corporate Accounts', 'Rent a Truck', 'Buy a Car', 'Manage Your Fleet', and 'Careers'.

The main content area is divided into three sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains links for 'RACEPOINTS™ Learn & Earn', 'Join Our Corporate Program Learn more', 'Long Term Rentals We can help', and 'Email Extras Sign up now'.
- Center Form:** Titled 'Create a Car Rental Reservation in the US (Including Puerto Rico)'. It includes:
 - 'Rent a car in:' with links for US, Canada, UK, Ireland, and Germany.
 - 'Location:' a text input field and a checkbox for 'Show airport locations only'.
 - 'Dates & Times:' with 'Start' (Jan 16, Noon) and 'End' (Jan 17, Noon) dropdowns.
 - 'Choose a Car Rental Class (More about Car Classes):' with a dropdown set to 'Show me everything'.
 - 'Your Age:' dropdown set to '25 and Up'.
 - 'Optional:' text input for 'Coupon, Customer, or Corporate Number'.
 - 'Modify an Existing Reservation' link.
 - 'Search' button.
- Right Panel:** Titled 'Welcome Rolf!' with the 'expresslane' logo. It includes:
 - 'Not Rolf?' link.
 - 'Enter your Password:' text input and 'Login' button.
 - 'Weekend Special 50% OFF' promotion with 'Friday to Monday - Off Standard Daily Rates' and 'Book Now' link.
 - 'Need a hotel room? Let us help.' with 'Shop now' link.
 - 'Buy a Car' with 'Used Car Deals' link.
 - '50 Million Tree Pledge' logo with 'Learn More' link.

At the bottom, there is a 'BBBOnline RELIABILITY PROGRAM' logo and a comprehensive list of navigation links: 'Rent a Car', 'Buy a Car', 'Manage Your Fleet', 'Careers', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', 'Reservation', 'Vehicles', 'Locations', 'Corporate Accounts', 'Print a Receipt', 'Help', 'Travel Agent', 'Site Map', and 'Mobility Devices'. A footer note reads 'International Car Rental Sites:'.

Usability problem description: When asked to look for the best deal, users overlook specials ("Weekend Special"), thinking it is an ad. Most recall seeing it, but click on it only when prompted.

Usability problem 5 - Enterprise Rent-A-Car - "We'll pick you up"

ZIP:

Work Phone:

Other Phone:

Renter's Driver's License

License Number:

Issued By:

Expiration Date: / /

Date of Birth: / /

[Continue](#)

Our Pick-Up Policy: Need a ride from your place to our place? We'll Pick You Up!®
 Book online now, then call your rental office at Tel.: (617) 561-4488 for details
 about our pick-up service. (Geographic restrictions apply)
[Back To Top](#)

[Rent a Car](#) | [Buy a Car](#) | [Manage Your Fleet](#) | [Careers](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)
[Reservation](#) | [Vehicles](#) | [Locations](#) | [Corporate Accounts](#) | [Print a Receipt](#) | [Help](#)
[Travel Agent](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Mobility Devices](#)

Usability problem description: An exact description of the procedures, benefits and limitations of the "We'll Pick You Up" service is hard to find.



Usability problem 6 - Enterprise Rent-A-Car - Exact cost of car rental

About Us | Contact Us | Help

enterprise

Rent a Car Corporate Accounts Rent a Truck Buy a Car Manage Your Fleet Careers

Looking for a quicker way to reserve? [Learn more](#)

	Important Information	Total Cost Estimate
<p>80% Complete</p> <p>Your selections :</p> <p>Enterprise Location change  BOSTON LOGAN AIRPORT (OFF SITE) EAST BOSTON, MA 02128-1174 Tel.: (617) 561-4488</p> <p>Dates/Times: change Start: Jan 26, 2007 @ Noon End: Jan 31, 2007 @ Noon</p> <p>Vehicle Class: change Standard</p> <p>Renter's Age: change 25 and Up</p> <p>Renter's Information: change Rolf Molich Tel.: (454) 717-1731 enterprise@molich.dk</p> <p>Start over</p> <p>Need a One Way rental? Learn more</p>	<p>ALL RENTERS MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER. RENTERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 21 THROUGH 24 YEARS MAY ONLY RENT ECONOMY THROUGH FULLSIZE CARS.</p> <p>Optional Protection Products **</p> <p>Damage Waiver See Details Personal Accident Insurance / Personal Effects Coverage See Details Supplemental Liability Protection See Details</p> <p>** Actual prices may vary depending on the vehicle class that is selected.</p> <p>These optional products may be purchased at the time of rental and are not included in the Total Cost Estimate quoted in this Reservation.</p> <p>Shuttle Information</p> <p>i ALL RENTAL CAR COMPANIES ARE REACHED VIA SHUTTLE. UPON ARRIVAL PLEASE FOLLOW THE RENTAL CAR SIGNS WITHIN THE TERMINAL AND USE THE COUNTERS.</p>	<p>For a 5 day rental of a Standard (Pontiac G6, Dodge Stratus or similar).</p> <p>1 Week @ \$ 206.95 USD Weekly \$ 206.95 USD</p> <p> Standard Pontiac G6, Dodge Stratus or similar</p> <p>PARKING & CONVENTION SURCHARGE \$ 10.60 USD Subtotal \$ 217.55 USD AIRPORT ACCESS FEE \$ 22.99 USD SALES TAX \$ 11.50 USD</p> <p>* Total Charges \$ 252.04 USD</p> <p>*Additional surcharges, local taxes, etc. may apply.</p> <p>MILEAGE IS UNLIMITED EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND NORTH OF VIRGINIA, IF TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF THESE AREAS, MILEAGE IS LIMITED TO 100 MILES PER DAY.</p>

Usability problem description: The total cost of the rental is not clear. Additional surcharges, local taxes, the costs of selected Optional Protection Products, etc., are not included in "Total charges" even when all required information has been entered. These additional costs may be substantial.