

Usability Evaluation Scenario

In preparation for a major revision of the car rental reservation website www.enterprise.com, Enterprise Rent-A-Car wants your assessment of the usability of the current rental car reservation process.

Background on Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Enterprise Rent-A-Car operates over 6,800 offices in the US, Canada, UK, Germany and Ireland. Branches are all operated by employees; there are no independent franchises. Each branch selects its own fleet of vehicles and sets pricing, policy and operating hours. The company has over 6 million cars on the road and consistently ranks in the top 20 of the privately held companies ranked by Fortune magazine. Customer service is a key motivator for all Enterprise employees and management.

Enterprise specializes in renting vehicles to customers who:

- Need a car because of an accident, mechanical repair or theft
- Want to take a short business or leisure trip
- Need a different car for a special occasion or need a car in town for business purposes.

If you want more information, Fortune magazine just ran an article on Enterprise:
http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2006/07/24/8381691/index.htm

Enterprise Design Priorities

Below is a list of user tasks that the Enterprise Usability team has identified as important areas to gather user feedback. Tasks are listed in order of importance to the company.

1. Make a simple successful reservation (variations: at the airport or at a non-airport location.)
2. Make a reservation that results in an error or an alert. This could be:
 - a sold-out date

TIP: To produce a sell-out: try renting a minivan at an airport of a large city e.g. LAX for Los Angeles, or MCO for Orlando on a holiday weekend, with very short lead time.

- at a time when the branch is normally closed.
- outside Enterprises' operational area (Mexico, or South Africa),

Does the site allow for successful error or alert recovery?

3. Cancel a reservation

4. Make a reservation from a promotion

TIP: Canada, UK, Germany, are more likely to have promotions up at this time of the year. Start from the promotional banner on the home page.

The Enterprise team is especially interested in how the site performs for non-US customers as usability testing has primarily focused on people in the US renting cars at US airports or in their local neighborhoods.

Feedback from years of extensive usability testing indicate usability challenges in the following areas:

1. Browser timeout concerns when using the back button - commonly seen when customers want to check prices for individual cars.
2. Error recovery when a customer selects a date or time when the branch is closed.
3. The promotional path has restrictions on location, dates, and vehicle classes.
4. Information overload on the "Verify Your Information" page due to the policies in place for the different branches pertaining to the rental reservation.
5. Language and country selectors are hard to find.
6. Coupon, Customer or Corporate Number input box is sometimes confusing.
7. Renting at an airport or a non-airport location can be confusing because the operating hours and policies differ. However, forcing the user to first select airport/non-airport and then tailoring the path is also confusing.

Enterprise would like UI11 Master Workshop attendees to focus on the Rental reservation path as outlined above. They are interested in the tasks performed by most of the people. They are not interested in the other divisions such as

1. Car Sales website
2. Fleet website
3. Corporate Program

Competition includes other car rental websites as well as travel consolidators such as Expedia or Travelocity.

User profile

Adults between 25 and 70 years of age, with household income of \$35,000 (US) or more who have rented a car at least once in the last 2 years and are competent Internet and computer-users. Enterprise often screens for people who have used the Internet to make travel arrangements or who have purchased items online. Frequent travelers who rent vehicles more than 6x a year respond somewhat differently to the site than less frequent renters.

Practical Information

The Enterprise.com site is fully operational. Reservations are live and should be made with care.

- Please **cancel** any reservations that you make within 24 hours
TIP: writing down the reservation number or printing the reservation will make it easier to cancel the reservation.
- Include the word "test" in the last name when making reservations.
- The site is very dynamic and not all information is required on the home page. Depending on what the customer inputs, the site will serve a slightly different page so as to present the most relevant information and next action. Also, banner ads ("messaging tiles") can rotate, thus presenting a different version of the home page between visits.
- The site uses cookies to keep track of customers in different programs. If you sign-in as a travel agent, express lane customer or corporate account, the site will remember you and present slightly different pages than a regular retail customer would see.
- The site will also remember reservation information so clear all cookies and cache and close the browser between sessions.

Since the site is live and functioning, a few **updates** will be released during the evaluation period. None of these are major changes and should not affect the overall results of the usability evaluation. The following site changes are scheduled:

August 17:

- US Home page - new promotional for Weekend Special – 50% off.
- Nav bar will have added drop down menus.

UI11 Master Workshop: Evaluation Instructions

- Confirmation page – layout changes to group car with dates and times.
- Printer friendly confirmation page - Minor modifications including weather forecast for rentals within 7 days.
- UK car class images and descriptions updated.

Workshop Deliverables

For the UI11 Master Workshop, Rolf Molich expects each team to

- Carry out a usability evaluation of Enterprise.com
- Submit a usability evaluation report and an addendum before the UI11 Conference. Submission of video tapes from usability test sessions is optional. Deliverables must be written in English.

You are free to choose any evaluation method that you consider appropriate for the study. The evaluation method you choose should be one that you would typically use to conduct a professional usability evaluation. Most teams use some form of usability testing (with users) or expert review (without users), but other methods are most welcome.

A team consists of one or two UI11 Master Workshop attendees. If you are a group of three or more attendees, we suggest that you form two or more independent teams. Team members are usually from the same company but that's not a requirement. You can ask any number of colleagues to help in running the evaluation even if they are not attending the Master Workshop.

1) Usability Evaluation Report

Your usability evaluation report must be as close as possible to the usability evaluation reports you normally write.

There are no specific formatting requirements for the reports except that your team code letter should appear in the header of each page, and that pages should be numbered. Both the usability evaluation report and the addendum must be completely anonymous except for the team code letter, which you will get from the instructor.

2) Addendum

In addition to the evaluation report, please submit a separate addendum with the following information. If some of this information appears in your usability evaluation report, please repeat it in the addendum.

1. Method.

A description of the usability evaluation procedure you have chosen to use for this usability study. You are free to choose any evaluation method that you consider appropriate for the study. The evaluation method you choose

should be one that you would typically use to conduct a professional usability evaluation. For a usability test, please also describe the test participant selection process and test participant profiles briefly.

2. Resources used for the evaluation (person hours).

Provide a day-by-day timesheet for the period where you carried out your evaluation. Include information about resources spent by all team members and colleagues. Do not include information about test participant resources if you're doing a usability test.

3. Comments on how realistic the evaluation has been compared to the professional evaluations you normally carry out.

4. Comments on the Website.

We are trying to balance realism of format with something that makes data analysis for the Master Workshop easier to do. For that reason, we ask that all usability comments be entered into a table, in the following way:

- Use the table format shown below. Do not change the column widths.
- Report one usability problem or one positive feature per comment. Split comments that are conglomerates of several problems or positive features.
- Include as many comments as you would consider appropriate in an industrial setting.
- **ID column:** Number your comments consecutively, starting from 01. Please do not use auto numbering, since auto numbering often does not survive a format conversion. Enter ID as for example "X-03". Replace the "X" with the code letter assigned to your team by the instructor.
- **Severity column:** Classify each comment. Use the severity categories listed further down in these instructions.
- **ROI column:** ROI means Return On Investment. Estimate the ROI for the comment. Use the ROI categories for cost and return listed further down in these instructions.
- **Description column:** A description of the usability comment. Start the comment description with a one-line header that briefly describes the comment. Continue with a description of the usability comment.
- **Recommendation column:** Provide a recommendation on how the usability problem could be solved. This recommendation is required only if the comment is about a usability problem.

Copy the following table format into your addendum for reporting usability comments. The examples are from a previous study of a hotel reservation system.

Do not change the column widths, since your table will be merged with tables handed in by other teams.

ID	Severity	ROI	Description	Recommendation
X-01	P		Useful information. Test participants appreciated the pictures of the interiors of the rooms.	
X-02	C	CL	Speak the users' language. Some test participants did not know what an "asterisk" was (in "fields with an asterisk are required")	Replace text with "fields marked with a * are required"
X-03	A	EM	Visibility, affordance. Most test participants did not understand that they could start by selecting a room type and thus get an overview of the dates when rooms of that type were available. Most test participants thought that they had to start by entering information in column 1, then fill out column 2, etc.	

Each usability comment must be classified in one of the following **severity categories**:

- *Critical problem.*
Causes frequent catastrophes. A catastrophe is a situation where the website "wins" over the test participant, i.e. a situation where the test participant cannot solve a reasonable task or where the website annoys the test participant considerably.
Category code A
- *Serious problem.*
Delays test participants in their use of the website for some minutes, but eventually allows them to continue. Causes occasional "catastrophes".
Category code B.
- *Minor problem.*
Causes test participants to hesitate for some seconds.
Category code C.

- *Good idea.*
A suggestion from a test participant that could lead to a significant improvement of the user experience.
Category code I.
- *Positive finding.*
This approach is recommendable and should be preserved.
Category code P
- *Bug.*
The website works in a way that's clearly not in accordance with the design specification. This includes spelling errors, dead links, scripting errors, etc.
Category code T.

If you are doing an expert evaluation, the above category descriptions should be modified accordingly, for example "*Serious problem. May delay a considerable number of users in their use of the website for some minutes, but eventually they will be able to continue. May cause occasional "catastrophes".*"

You are not required to use these severity classification categories in your usability evaluation report. In your usability evaluation report you may use different categories or you may not classify comments at all.

Please estimate the cost of implementing each comment. Also, estimate the expected return on investment of each comment. Finally, combine the two independent estimates into an **ROI category**. ROI categories are not required for positive findings.

- *Cost* can be Cheap, Reasonable, or Expensive.
- *Return* can be High, Medium, or Low. Estimate the impact that solving the usability problem, fixing the bug, or implementing the good idea would have on the overall usability of the site for typical end users.

While you won't necessarily know all of the details to classify the cost vs. return of all suggestions, this is a useful exercise in prioritization.

For instance, adding a robust rental start and end date/time solution is Expensive, as it requires a change in the underlying architecture. The return would be high as correct rental dates and times are crucial to the reservation.

<i>ROI categories</i>	High return	Medium return	Low return
Cheap	CH	CM	CL
Reasonable	RH	RM	RL
Expensive	EH	EM	EL

3) Video Tapes (Optional)

For those of you who run a usability test and who are planning to capture the participants on video tape, we would love to be able to use these videotapes for the Master Workshop. You can send us either the raw video tapes or edited ("highlight") videos in your preferred format. We accept any format that can be played on the Windows Media Player.

If you are willing to contribute your video tapes please do the following:

- Have a consent form where the participant allows the video tape to be made available for Master Workshop participants. Test participants will be recognizable on the video tape. Tell them that
 - this is completely voluntary,
 - they can make the decision after the session is over.
- Make sure you get the filled out consent form.
- Send the results, with associated consent form, on a DVD to Rolf Molich by express mail or courier before the workshop. Try to make them first generation copies, if at all possible. If you give us the originals, we can return them to you, if you like.

Questions

Please direct any questions that you might have about the scenario and the CUE deliverables to Rolf Molich at masterworkshop@uie.com.

The Enterprise.com team is willing to answer email questions posed by your team. Please send such questions to Rolf Molich. Telephone conversations or personal meetings with the Enterprise.com team are not possible.

Rolf Molich is willing to coordinate task sets between several teams who are conducting usability tests. It would be interesting to compare results from teams who had used the same tasks.

Instructions for Submission of Deliverables

Your deliverables must be submitted to masterworkshop@uie.com no later than
Monday, September 18, 2006.

Your deliverables must be anonymous and suitable for general publication. Please make sure that your name and affiliation does not appear anywhere in your reports. Check the properties of your submitted reports carefully; sometimes Microsoft Word hides author information there. The instructor will assign a code letter to your team; this letter may appear in your report in places where you would normally put the name of your company or organization.

The following report formats are accepted:

- Microsoft Word (preferred).
- Star Office.
- RTF.

PDF format is **not** accepted.

If you have problems meeting any of these requirements, please contact masterworkshop@uie.com and we'll find a solution.

Publication of reports

By submitting your anonymous report to the UI11 Master Workshop you acknowledge that the report may be published anonymously on the CUE web site, www.DialogDesign.dk/CUE.html

Have fun!

- and please don't hesitate to contact Rolf Molich by email if you run into problems. You should normally receive an answer within 24 hours.

Rolf Molich, UI11 Master Workshop Instructor
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