

Team Name - Neighborhood Deals

User goal for first sprint - The user should be able to post yard sales and items, post pictures of those, and tagging the items/sales with specific items.

Competitor – Craig's List Mobile Application

Score and evaluation of the heuristics –

1. Visibility of System Status: 8.0

The app opens to the search function and makes it clear that the system is up and running. They also have a feedback button right at the bottom to report issues with the system in real time. The only thing I can see to improvement on is possibly having a status state that you could get to from somewhere in the app.

2. Match Between System and the Real World: 9.0

The app does a great job displaying the categories and subcategories right when you open it. The main categories are clearly shown on the right, in an easy-to-read font, and use language that is easily understood by all. Once you have selected the category on the left, several sub-categories are listed on the right, with the same characteristics of the left categories. The symbols used on the menu at the bottom are standards that have been set for years.

3. User Control and Freedom: 8.0

Once you have made a post, they immediately post it in your "active" posts. You can edit the post all you want, as well as delete it. There is a large back arrow at the top left-hand side of the screen to go back to your previous screen you were on at any time.

4. Consistency and Standards: 8.5

Although a bit bland, Craigslist does a great job with using the standards that have been set by mobile applications since their inception. Users mental model will lead them to move through the application with ease and achieve the result they are looking for. The application has the search bar large and at the top, a menu with clear symbols and labels that take you to where you want to be. The navigation through the categories of posts they offer is easy to understand and clear. Under their "favorites" tab, there is a category of "hidden". The application does not explain what a hidden post is. This is confusing to the user.

5. Error Prevention: 9.0

When creating a post, they default your location to your current location. This prevents the user from posting to other users in the wrong location. They will not let you move on if you try to make a post without a description. Before publishing the post, they present you with the way your post is going to look to other users. This helps prevent you from missing something in your post. They have a built-in spell checker to prevent mistakes in your text. They allow you to make a post for a sale that is for \$0. I could see an opportunity to prompt the user with a question about the \$0 price tag before selling.

6. Recognition Rather Than Recall: 9.0

As mentioned in some of the other heuristics, the menus, search bar, browsing, and design is all easy to use, and is consistent with the mental model a user would have from using many other mainstream phone applications.

7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use: 8.0

Two of the biggest features the application has is a “favorites” and “my searches”. Under favorites, they present your “favorited” or tagged posts that you would like to come back to. Also, under “favorites” they have a “hidden” tab. After searching for the meaning of a hidden post, I discovered what it was: a post that can be hidden from the public. You can save searches that you have made frequently that show up under “my searches”. These features help to enhance the experience and make experienced users’ more efficient with their use.

8. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design: 7.0

I’m conflicted with this one. The functionality of the Craigslist application is excellent and is easy to use and understand. However, I believe design and presentation is a huge part of the experience when using an application. Craigslist is severely lacking in the aesthetics category. It is as plain and unexciting as you could imagine, but it gets the job done well.

9. Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors: 8.5

As I touched in an example earlier, when you try to make a post without a title or a description, the application does not allow you to move on. The page updates with an explanation of why all posts need a title and description, as well as making the “posting” and “description” words red, as well as a “this field is required” under it, to indicate that they are required.

10. Help and Documentation: 6.0

There is no apparent documentation available at first glance in the application. If you click on “account”, you can view the “terms of service” and “about”, but there does not seem to be any direction in how to use the application. As I mentioned earlier, they have a “feedback” button very accessible at the bottom of the application, but I am not sure how long it takes to hear back from them.

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X07 Heuristic Evaluation

Team name

Neighborhood-Deals

User Goals

The user goals our team is focusing on for the first sprint are posting yard sales, posting items for these sales, adding pictures for the items or for the sale as a whole, viewing of other yard sales and the items for them that have been posted by others, and the tagging of items / sales for more efficient searching.

Competitor

The competitor I am evaluating is Craigslist (web).

Heuristics

Visibility of System Status – 8/10

Craigslist does a good job at keeping the user informed about what is being searched for and all the filters that are being used to specify the search. At the top of the page, it shows the location area in which the user is searching, the category the user is searching in, and the specified subcategory that refines the search. On the left, the optional filters run down the screen and are always visible, giving the user immediate feedback of where they are and what they are searching within the website.

Match between system and the real world – 9/10

Craigslist has a very simplistic and easy to understand layout that uses words or short phrases that can be understood by the vast majority. The homepage of a city's Craigslist lists 8 categories with a number of subcategories beneath each and is colored blue to indicate these are hyperlinks. The filters on the left side of the page are very concise and to the point, and seem to flow in a way that a user would want.

User control and freedom – 9/10

When interacting within the Craigslist Website, at the top of each page there is the option to either change your search or go back to the previous category you were searching in. Along with the obvious back button of the web browser. The filters on the left have different ways of backtracking such as buttons being able to be clicked on or off as well as boxes you can input values into and then easily enough delete and push your search through again.

Consistency and standards – 10/10

Craigslist has been around long enough to pretty much have everything a user would want or need to successfully navigate the website due to the fact of its simplicity. When looking at the front page, the categories are self-explanatory and whether you click the category or a subcategory of it, you get sent to that specific page. As for the filters, the phrasing of each filter makes it specific and different enough from the others which leaves little to be misinterpreted.

Error prevention – 6/10

Craigslist doesn't seem to have error messages due to the fact of it being a very basic website that has everything right in front of you. If you exhaust the filters, the page shows a 'no results' message and I believe if you post something for sale that either violates the terms of service or goes against the rules you will get a message saying your post has been taken down. But as for simply browsing the website looking for deals, the error prevention is lacking because there is a low probability of error.

Recognition rather than recall – 10/10

Stemming off of the Visibility of System Status Heuristic, when browsing Craigslist your search categories and filters are clearly visible to you at all times except when on a specific page of an item. To change any of these is a simple click or input away and when updated the information is immediately visible to the user.

Flexibility and efficiency of use – 7/10

With being such a simple site and all the information being shown at all times, the contrast of usage between inexperienced and experienced users is very low. It could be said that the more experienced of users know which filters to use to more efficiently refine their search, but for hidden shortcuts throughout the site there does not seem to be many.

Aesthetic and minimalist design – 10/10

Craigslist may be the defining example of a website that does exactly what it is supposed to without any extra design. While the website looks like it could be put together in a day by a novice web developer, what is impressive is the specified filters and how the website flows that makes up for the lack of flair while focusing on the essentials of what is expected.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors – 7/10

Stemming off of the Error Prevention Heuristic, Craigslist does not have many error messages due to the fact that the capability of error is very low. As for the 'no results' message when a user has searched for something not listed or used too many filters, the message is quite self-explanatory and needs nothing else to inform a user that they must either use less filters or search for something else.

Help and documentation – 10/10

On the left hand side of the homepage of Craigslist there is a list of helpful links that go over everything from how to use Craigslist, help about posting and how to avoid scams, as well as advice about listing things legally and personal safety tips. Craigslist has provided a very well-rounded documentation to help users understand how to complete their tasks.