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1/24/16

a. Your analysis of whether each of your usability test participants could complete the tasks of finding and choosing a hotel room using www.marriott.com.

Not all participants were able to complete a room booking via the Marriott website. Participant 2 gave up after much difficulty, about 15 minutes worth, and opted to call the customer service line. Participant 3 thought she had booked a hotel in Detroit, MI, her destination but unbeknownst to her, booked a hotel over an hour outside of the city. Participant 1 was able to complete his task to book a room but was not aware, as Participant 2, if his hotel was close to his vacation location. The Marriott website offered a myriad of ways to find a hotel room but each participant was not thrilled with their results. Each participant took between 10-15 minutes to complete their task. Even though there were different ways to navigate throughout the site the site was lacking in error messages and prompts to help guide the user toward their goal of booking a room. Error messages could have saved time by guiding the user in the right direction. The fact that Participant 2 was stuck in a loop on the first page by repeatedly inputting her information with no results displays a huge disconnect with the website and how the user is using it. Overall, Marriott's website was frustrating for its users. The participants were able to complete their tasks with far too many pain points in the way.

b. Your commentary on which tasks gave any of your usability test participants trouble, and your perception of why they had difficulty.

It was a bit disheartening that each participant ran into, what appeared to be, avoidable difficulties. Each participant approached the Marriott website in a different fashion with Participant 1 being the only one to use the large search box in the middle of the screen. His difficulty came from his desire to have a primary filtering system followed by sub-filters. This led to longer decision-making periods on which room to choose. The results were listed but there was also no way to compare and contrast them. His primary concern was cost, which fortunately was a filter he could search by. He found that room offers were not clear and was not certain what icons or calls to action meant, such as a timer. The excess information slowed down his process as well. If he needed to look at previous choices his only option was the click the browser's back button and since there was little differentiation between pages he often found himself confused and lost. This difficulty stems from disorganization and for navigation planning. The best example of this was in Participant 3's case. She needed to know the dates of her stay but the site would only offer her number of nights.

Participant 2 could not make it past the home search screen and was unable to book a room. She consistently typed in the same location which was erased from the form without any explanation. If there was better search criteria population suggestions, she would have been able to choose her destination quickly and move on with her booking. Participant 3 chose a different search path than the other two users. She chose to “browse by destination” which led to clicking options instead of typing in search fields. Though this is a great addition to a way a user can search the Marriott site, she could not find exactly what she wanted through the available options. When Participant 3 finally got to her search results, she was met with a side-bar with advanced options. After deciding she would need to bring a pet, tap into a military discount, etc, she typed in her requests expecting her current results to be filtered to her specifications. Instead she was brought to a new page with new results and thusly, very confused. Rather than creating a new search, it would be much more useful if the side-bar tailored current results. The site did not meet their expectations and failed them with a lack of error messages, confusing search forms, and information that wasn’t tailored to them.

c. Your suggestions of what additional user research questions related to the Marriott website you have after conducting this nano usability test.

Additional questions that could be asked could be...

- Were there any consistent mistakes? If so, what?
- Did the users consistently misunderstand anything? If so, what?
- When did they look frustrated? Confused? What were they doing?
- Do you know what their expectations were?
- How are the users searching for their room? Which type of path do they take?

d. Your perspective on the purpose and rationale for doing user research, using your experience with the nano usability test as the basis of your perspective.

I cannot imagine user research being any sort of waste. Upon first glance of the Marriott website, it appeared to be a typical website with clean design. Even though it lured me in with pretty graphics the functionality was basically deplorable. My participants ranged in age from late 20s to late 60s and each one had a set of difficulties I would not have seen if I had not observed them. It was interesting to note the differences between the older and younger participants. While Participant 1 utilized different search patterns if something did not work to his liking, Participant 2 kept repeating the same actions over and over again. It is as if to say Participant 1 assumed if there was an issue, it was his fault and with Participant 2 it was the website’s fault.

I found it interesting the different types of search result views Marriott had to offer, gallery and lists. The gallery view was utilized by Participant 3 and was almost

useless as it did not include pertinent information for decision making on the search results. It was an unnecessary feature to the site and only added to the confusion. I was naive in thinking that booking a hotel room would be a simple process on the Marriott website but after watching three very different users I was proved quite wrong.