



Usability Audit: Findings + Recommendations:

Introduction:

This report contains U-C WEBS' observations and recommendations on the site of X: www.x.com.

NOTE: This analysis is based on Usability guidelines that come from research by many Usability organizations, as well as publications and other resources. These recommendations are from a Usability perspective, and may be discounted as less relevant because of other (marketing, branding, personal preferences) reasons.

Something to keep in mind when discussing this document with Designers is a phenomenon we call "designer's pride". Criticizing a designer's creation can be painful to some, and should be brought about carefully. Make sure your designer is non-defensive, and open to discussions. If you feel your designer is not open enough to deal with constructive criticism you should consider having us as part of the debriefing with him/her.

Site owners sometimes forget that this should be the ultimate goal of an effective website: not to tailor the needs of the site owner, or the designer for that matter: it is all about the visitors to your site. We provide an educated "second opinion" about the design, focusing on the user's perspective.

Questions we will ask on their behalf are: **So what?** Or: **Who cares?** The site should appeal to the visitor's **WIIFM - AIWIN** (**What's In It For Me - And I Want It Now**).

Your visitors should find what they are looking for, fast. Frustrations should be avoided, and the design should be inviting and engaging. No matter which page of a site the visitor happens to enter the site on. The navigation should be clear, and should create curiosity with your visitors, so they will want to dive into your site beyond the thing(s) they are looking for. This level of "stickiness" will create a higher commitment for your visitor, and potentially a higher Return On your online Investment (ROI).

Scope:

U-C WEBS has mainly focused on the homepage and two of the inner pages. Other pages of the site have been partially been viewed and recommended upon.

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"Disclaimer":

Forgive us if some of our observations sound harsh.

You are our customer. We only have your best interest in mind, by looking after the interest of your prospects and customers. Our goal is to make the Internet a less frustrating place. A place truly revolving around the empowered customers of today, and tomorrow.

Honest criticism is hard to take –
especially when it comes from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance,
or a stranger.
Franklin P. Jones

Note: this sample review has **intentionally been simplified**, and doesn't show all checkpoints. A *real* review will provide you with all recommendations on how to truly improve your site.
This review can be extended with an e-commerce module.

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Project: X (www.x.com)
Industry: Travel
Contact: Mr. ABC
E-mail: abc@x.com

Target audience: Tourists, business travelers, executive assistants
Primary goals: Be found for travelers that need accommodation within 100 km range from Y, and be contacted for a reservation.

Consultant: Nardo Kuitert
Date: December 27, 2002

Profile:

X is a Bed & Breakfast located in Y. It's web site www.x.com is being used as a lead generator and should serve as a deal-closer for people already interested.

X's main competitive advantage, its Unique Selling Proposition (USP), is the look and feel of its heritage building. It is located in an area with many renowned tourist attractions, and the B & B has been awarded a "best accommodation" award. X is the favorite lodging of many executive travelers.

These advantages should transpire clearly through the site in order to turn browsers into prospects into clients.

X's goal with the site is to showcase its astonishing interior, while exposing the visitors to the wealth of attractions in the area. Contests and incentives for repeat business are in place.

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URL reviewed: www.x.com/index.html				
Rating: = well done = minor problem = medium problem = severe problem				
	Issue	Observations	Rating	Suggestion
	Marketing review			
	Identity and branding	Ineffective use of main selling feature: pictures of the rooms. Also: rather meaningless self-promoting banners take up valuable space and negatively impact download speeds.		Put the pictures of your rooms more prominently. Consider removing the 'banners' altogether, or rotate banners with other non-competing companies.
	Credibility + trust	Many trust-building elements are hidden or not present at all.		A clear 'about us' page is very important, especially with something as personal as a B&B.
		The mentioning of awards does increase credibility, though.		
	SE visibility	Good thinking about keyphrases, but the use of them in the HTML code can be improved upon.		By incorporating the keyphrases into the content you please search engines and visitors alike.
Guideline compliance:			54 %	
	Design review			
	Layout	Logo takes up a little too much space, as do the self-promoting banners. Don't force your visitors to scroll down for the content.		Redesign the page in such a way that you have at least 50% of your top screen available for content.
		Good use of the screen real estate.		
	Scrolling	Vertical scrolling is required to reach the main navigation, which is located at the bottom of the pages.		Add main navigation to the top or the left-hand side.
	Colors	Too many colors are used in fonts and table backgrounds. Colors also feel outdated. Visited link color orange has too little contrast against a yellow background.		Bring the use of colors down to 2 (or 3) and use good contrasting colors.
	Fonts	The text is all bolded, which makes scanning the page rather difficult. Sans-serif like "arial" or "verdana" are easier to read online than the currently used serif font ("times new roman").		Use bolding only for emphasizing a few words. It's also better to use the HTML tag instead of . Change the fonts to verdana, arial or Helvetica.
Guideline compliance:			43 %	

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Final thoughts:

Your site is a very clear and consistent site, but needs more intuitive navigation to be more effective. Top navigation, combined with providing links in the text, will invite people to explore the site further.

Search engine optimization will generate more leads to your site, and by featuring the images of the interior more prominently the conversion rate from browser to customer will likely increase.

What to do next?

Implementing changes

We have provided you with recommendations. This will be your plan for usability improvement.

Providing a second opinion on the implementation of your changes, or helping you with your redesign, is not part of the scope of this project. However, it would be most efficient and effective to utilize our consulting and/or design services if you plan to move ahead with "site repairs". We know your site by now, and we know usability and search engine optimization. Our associated designers can implement the changes you request, while we monitor the process.

By asking us to be part of your project team you are sure to get the **highest Return On your Investment (ROI)**.

[Contact us today!](#)

Monitoring

Your website is a marketing tool. In order to maximize returns you need to monitor results, and adjust where needed.

U-C WEBS offers a website statistics package which includes, but is not limited to:

- Traffic reports (by page, hour, day, month, year)
- Visitors reports (repeat visitors, countries of origin, browser versions)
- Navigation paths (entry page, exit page)
- Referrers reports (referring search engines, key phrases used)

These packages start at only \$ 15.00 a month. A one-time setup fee of \$ 25 will apply.

[Contact us for a quote!](#)

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U-C Improvements ScoreCard

Too basic for you?

This is a sample report. Our **Best-of-Five Expert Review™** comes with the following extras:

- **112-point inspection;**
- review of **5 pages;**
- several **screenshots** to illustrate the recommendations made;
- 1 hour **telephone consulting** with a senior consultant.

Competitors analysis

Are you interested how you measure up to your competitors? Then you should consider our **You and Your Environment™** review. This is the **full expert review**, extended with:

- SWOT (**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**) for you and three of your competitors.

Start improving your web site today!

Contact us for a free needs analysis.

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