



Proposal of Project and Research Activities

Team Members

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History

Originally known as May Valley Food Club, PCC was started in Seattle by John Affolter in 1953 as a food buying club consisting of fifteen families. The idea was that by combining buying power and the ability to buy in bulk, this would reduce food costs for the families over all. In 1961 it was renamed Puget Consumers Co-op (PCC) when it transformed into a consumer cooperative. In 1967 PCC opened its first store when it reached 340 household memberships and continues to expand with its latest store opening in 2015. PCC aims to support local farmers, support the community through food banks, and to provide organic foods.

Objectives

Through our analysis we will try to improve navigation, usability, and functionality. The first thing we noticed upon viewing the site was how overcrowded the pages are with links and images. We want to look for ways to better organize the site. We also want to find a way to improve the usability. It's difficult to use the website to shop for food, the shop section of the webpage includes too much info for food in general and it is more complicated than it should be to find information on stock and prices. The main objective will be to identify the excess sections of the site and what needs to be more prominent on the site.

Methods

Competitive Analysis

The goal of a competitive analysis is to understand how PCC Natural Markets compare to other comparable vendors. We will compare these vendors to find the positive and negative aspects of each. We can link common structures of information architecture in order for users to instinctively navigate.

By comparing these companies, we will be able to set apart PCC from its competitors. We will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current site and improve on the visual design and user interaction.

Heuristic Evaluation

Heuristic Evaluation is a method of examining the user interface design that helps to identify usability problems. The following heuristic method is based on set principles for Jakob Nielsen's publication *Usability Engineering* (1995). We will use these principles to identify usability issues with the PCC website.

1. **Visibility of system status:** The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.
2. **Match between system and the real world:** The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.
3. **User control and freedom:** Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.
4. **Consistency and standards:** Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.
5. **Error prevention:** Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.
6. **Recognition rather than recall:** Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

7. **Flexibility and efficiency of use:** Accelerators—unseen by the novice user—may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.
8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design:** Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.
9. **Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors:** Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.
10. **Help and documentation:** Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

Card Sort

Card sorting is a method of collecting data from a website and group and then organizing and labeling the data in accordance to the user's model. We will write functional ideas on index cards and will group these cards according to their content. We will build a hierarchy of information within these groups, which will ultimately become the information architecture for the site redesign. Performing the card sort will help the team to understand users and their motives for visiting the PCC website.

Usability Testing

We will test the usability of the site using in-class participants. Our participants will be given specific tasks based on the user profiles we have developed. We will have a set of goals for each task, and metrics to evaluate how simple or difficult it is to complete these tasks. Some examples of these metrics would include the number of clicks each task requires, how long each task takes, if the user needs to backtrack, etc. Our observations will help us determine problem areas throughout the site, and allow us to make recommendations for a concise, user-friendly design.

User Profiles

User Type	Description	Tasks and Goals
Grocery Shopper	<p>PCC shoppers invest in quality, sustainability and community by shopping and/or becoming a member at PCC. Members value the fact that profits from the retail store operations go directly back into the stores and the community. Shoppers shop there because they care about the quality of the food and products they can purchase. Shoppers come in all ages and genders but are a majority female and 40 yo or older. They are also generally middle-class or higher, socio-economically.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Join as a member ● Search for products ● Learn about/research products ● Create a shopping list ● Look up a recall alert
Vendors	<p>Because PCC is known for high standards in product quality and sustainability, and supports local and sustainable agriculture, local vendors seek out business partnerships with them. Vendors primarily come from the greater Puget Sound region but range as far as the Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, ID, Western MT). They include, but are not limited to: small to mid-size farmers, craft beer makers, chocolatiers, home product makers, as well as crafters ranging from knitters to notecard illustrators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check PCC product standards ● Learn about application process to become a vendor to PCC ● Print agreement
Food Banks	<p>PCC partners with local food banks and purchases nutritious bulk foods that are most needed at each food bank at discounted wholesale prices. They also have work parties to package those foods and send them to the food bank. Food banks who don't yet partner with PCC and need to boost their food stock would look to partner with PCC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research PCC Food Bank program ● Request a partnership
Avid Cooks	<p>PCC not only provides a range of recipes that can be sorted by various preferences but it also offers a wide range of cooking classes. Some cooks would look to attend a cooking class to either learn the basics of cooking or to take their current skills to the next level. Avid cooks range from students living on their own and cooking for themselves for the first time, to passionate cooks in their golden years wanting to learn a new cuisine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search recipes--sorting by different criteria ● Look for cooking classes ● Sign up for a cooking class ● Create a shopping list ● Comment on a recipe

Recruitment

Several participants are required throughout different methods of our usability study. These participants are professionals and experts who are our colleagues from the Business Information and Technology department of Seattle Central College—most likely directly from our ITC 298 class. If necessary, to acquire additional outside opinions, we will rely on input from close friends and family.

Incentives

Incentives for our recruits may include but are not limited to: class participation credits, a pizza party or a beer at Mike's end-of-quarter happy hour.

Responsibilities and Proposed Schedule

All responsibilities are shared between team members

January

Friday, January 20, 2017 Proposal of Project & Research Activities

Friday, January 27, 2017 Website Competitive Analysis Report

February

Friday, February 3, 2017 Heuristic Evaluation for Websites Report

Friday, February 17, 2017 Card Sorting for Website Information Architecture Report

March

Friday, March 3, 2017 Usability Testing Your Website Interface Plan & Kit

Friday, March 17, 2017 Usability Testing Your Website Interface Report

Friday, March 22, 2017 Research Activities Final Presentation