

Memo

To: Joe Flynn
From: Lisa Mullinaux
Date: 12/5/2007
Re: New Golf Arena

Methodology

- Participant was encouraged to "think out loud" as they navigated the web site.
- Moderator observed either in person or via UserVue and interacted with participant as needed.

A successful user experience is significantly influenced by the user's conscious/ subconscious impression of the following:

- ease of finding information
- being visually pleasing
- promoting comprehension
- satisfaction with the site
- looking professional

Objective(s)

- To understand how a golf enthusiast uses the Golf arena
- To identify the challenges, limitations and opportunities

Goals

- Set a baseline for the Golf arena to set growth against
- Understand what information/features/content the golf enthusiast wants to view

Participants

Participants were selected based on a range of demographics, psychographics, knowledge and relationship to golf, to gain an understanding of how the golf arena fulfills their needs and expectations.

Mercedes Open January 4-7, 2007

Derek R.
Male
40-45 age range
Commercial pilot
Golfer for 20 years

Steven K.
Male
46-50 age range
VP Business Development
Golfer for 10 years

Suzanne V.
Female
55-60 age range
Office manager
Golfer for 1 year

Bruce W.
Male
40-45 age range
Retail chain owner
Golfer 10 years

Sony Open January 11-14, 2007

Perry M.
Male
56-60 age range
SVP Operations
Golfer for 25 years

Lisa C.
Female
40-45 age range
Political analyst
Golfer for 10 years

Holly F.
Female
30-35 age range
Hair stylist/vocalist
Golfer for 5 years

Buick Invitational January 25-28, 2007

Holly F. (revisit)
Female
30-35 age range
Hair stylist/vocalist
Golfer for 5 years

Steven K. (revisit)
Male
46-50 age range
VP Business Development
Golfer for 10 years

Summary

The golf enthusiast is markedly different in their use of the web site and view of the sport itself, in that it is very personal. His/her interest is relative to their own needs: what equipment to use to help improve their game, what golf course to play at (and NOT play at!), which teaching pro would be good to help improve a certain flaw in their game, etc.

Pictures and information about the courses was also very important to the golf consumer – especially the ones that they may never get to see in person.

The first visit to the site drew positive comments overall; the second visit brought more negative comments and disappointment.

Tasks

1. Q&A – normal behavior related to gathering golf information (irregardless of medium)
2. Overall impression of the Golf arena
3. Based on recounted experience, gather information on the site. Comment on likes, dislikes, missing, excessive and/or unnecessary content.
4. Revisit – use the site again.

Issues & Observations

1. Picture of Vijay Singh [Mercedes Open] was the first element noticed on the page; the comment was about his expression and the participant's interpretation ("he looks like he didn't like his swing").¹

Validation: this size and detail of this image has fulfilled the major usability best practice of gaining immediate attention, interest in the page, and personal connection to the image subject.

2. "Need to know" information: how many times has Stuart Appleby won this [Mercedes] tournament? Participant expected to see this information on the home page as a major story; went to the Leaderboard, then to his Stats page to find this information. Participant said "I am sure the story is here somewhere but I am so impatient that I just can't find it". He felt that anything that was important to know would be on the Leaderboard – stats, scores, important news. He finally went to google.com and looked it up. [went to www.caddybytes.com]

Recommendation: place news that is key to the tournament within the flow of the user experience. Don't "hide" the content and risk making the user feel stupid. When the participant did finally come across the story on our site he felt even more like he was not "smart" enough to use our site.

3. Leaderboard was easy to get to – participant chose to click on the link "full leaderboard" within the GOLF AT A GLANCE box. However, 20 minutes later, he noticed that the box itself was the scores, and was embarrassed that he did not see it beforehand. He stated that the list in the box was really all he needed to know for scores.

Recommendation: change the title to SCORES AT A GLANCE or LEADERBOARD AT A GLANCE – more contextual to what is listed in the box.

4. Highlighting a player to follow could be useful, but the registration page was daunting. Plus, it was important to know not only where the player ranked in this tournament, but also who was that player's immediate competition.²

¹ 2nd item noted was the ad with Tiger Woods on the LAX runway – the ONLY time the IMU is noticed is when Tiger Woods is in it. However, the caption did not imply that a highlight video of the tournament would be shown in this video, so did not feel compelled to watch it.

Recommendation: show value for using the Highlight Your Players feature before asking them to register; allow use of the feature while on the page, and ask when they leave if they want to save this information by registering.

Add secondary highlighting of the other players around your highlighted player (i.e., golfers tied with your highlighted player).

Offer ways to get to contextual information that answers the “why”³.

5. After checking out the Schedule, one participant wanted to go see the Leaderboard, and had to scroll back up to see the navigation and get to it. While the tournament name does link to that page, it’s not intuitive (he thought that the tournament name went to a description about the tournament, and information about it, such as historical content, golf course information, etc.

Recommendation: Clearly define a link to the Leaderboard, and/or link to the information expected from the tournament name.

6. Highlight Player: When faced with the registration page, I had the participant use my log in. When she did, she was returned to the Leaderboard page, instead of being able to start selecting favorite players.

Recommendation: continue the path the user started when clicking on “highlight your players”.

7. After the Leaderboard, Courses and Travel was the link each participant went to next, followed by the Equipment section. The photos were considered very beautiful, but did not give a sense of difficulty, elevations, wind/weather expectations, etc., which is important to each participant.

This section is called Courses and Travel, so the participants expected to see information about travel, in context to the tournament they were on the site for – the links to travel to other areas were not noticed, but the lack of information about travel around the Torrey Pines area was noticed.

Recommendation: these are the sections to add details and information, to create and encourage loyalty. Links to course details (i.e., Torrey Pines) from lead stories as “related links”, location information were both mentioned as good information to have easily available.

Header for the travel links should indicate “other” travel information (not related to the current tournament).

8. Most participants wanted to know when the tournaments started, and if/when they were airing on TV. Several participants wanted to know why the time was not just listed in the Events Information area (upper right of the Leaderboard) instead of a link to the broadcast times.

Participant who clicked on “broadcast times” was even more irritated to find that that he had to now scroll to find the time. On a re-visit test, one participant was irritated because there were no tee times listed on the schedule page⁴. In addition, having clicked on “broadcast schedule” from the Leaderboard page, then finding which column to check on for the Buick Invitational seemed “silly”⁵.

Another participant saw the yellow highlight stating “...pacific time which is 3 hours behind...” yet couldn’t find tee times listed on the Leaderboard page.

Recommendation: place key information the page(s) that make sense contextually. Do NOT put words that imply that information can be found on this page. An expectation was set by the participant when reading the highlighted message.

² “It just would not be interesting to know only where **my** favorite player(s) are in the tournament. I want to know who he is in competition with, who he has to beat, what the difficulty of the next hole is...”

³ “Leaderboards tell the “what”, not the “why”. The Leaderboard is exactly as I expect, now I want to know the “why” of, for example, David Choi is where he is in the tournament.”

⁴ 9am, Sunday morning, Buick Invitational

⁵ “They know I just came from the other page – they should know that and show me what I want first.”



Gear page – 800x600 resolution: Can't see anything but the McDonald's ad



Gear page – 1024X768 resolution: One paragraph is what the user sees – with white space to the right.

- On her first visit to the equipment pages, one participant saw a feature about a swing jacket, and since she was working on her swing, she found it interesting and followed the link to read more. She was disappointed that there was no picture on a person using it, and no information about what manufacturer made this jacket and how to find it (store, online, etc.).

The 2nd visit to this page disappointed this participant as the article was not there anymore, and when she went to the Gear Guide page to find it, encountered multiple usability issues – content was not visible above the fold to tell the user “you are in the right place”, and if/as the user scrolls, the text explains how to use a page that they have not seen yet (explanation of the color coding). This detail is not contextual, as they have not seen that page, and puts pressure on the user to remember everything.

The Gear Guide itself was difficult to use – it was not clear if “sorting” applied to the current page or the entire guide section (it was neither – sorting went to the 3rd page). Participants questioned the value of each column’s advantage in sorting by that topic, the reviews (credibility of the reviewer and the review, context of the comments). Pictures of the products would enhance the guide and recognition of the products. Navigating back also was unwieldy – participants had to click back 3 times, or start over.

Recommendation: Add instructions to using the Gear Guide on that page; make use of the white space. Help the user to see the value (help links) and take advantage of the sorting capability. Link from articles about products to the section of the Gear Guide that is relative to the article. Archive past articles for users who want to read about it again, or

refresh their memory about something they are interested in. Add photos. If this is an outside source, open in a new window.

Other comments

10. As one participant kept insisting that he was not the typical golf web site visitor/golf news consumer, he knew what he wanted, where to go for information, and details that were important. It's very important to understand this – it is a good example of how personal interpretation does not necessarily match actual behavior. Throughout his test, he kept saying "if I were Chris [a golfing buddy] I'd do... or "if I were one of my buddies who was a fanatic about following scores.." – and then illustrate his own behavior.
11. Highlight Player: The image is not "clickable"; participant had to click on the link. The image is clickable on the Player page, so this must be a bug.
12. Speak up/Talk about the round/Message Board: These are all ways the user can get to the message boards; it's very confusing both in context and the different labels.

Recommendation: maintain consistency in the way we refer to the message board.

13. "Upcoming..." on the days of the current tournament, reference to the current tournament should be taken out. It adds to the visual clutter as the user is trying to find information about future tournaments.

CLICK FOR THE BEST OF 2006			
Drivers	Fairway Woods	Utility/Hybrids	Irons
Wedges	Putters	Balls	Main Index

TALK BACK!		
Subject	Started by	Last Post
View Message Board		

Recommendation: Change to 2 columns, for ease of reading. Continue to establish a consistent format and raise readability on other pages.

A "reading online" study examined the effects of line length on reading performance.

Results indicated that users read significantly faster while maintaining high reading efficiency in a 95 characters per line format (other formats tested were 35, 55, and 75 characters per line).

Participants indicated a strong preference for either the short (35) or long (95) line lengths.

Participant **perception** was that the 35 cpl facilitated "faster" reading and was easier because it required less eye movement. However, this actually resulted in the slowest reading speed.

~Reading Online News: A Comparison of Three Presentation Formats. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 48th Annual Meeting.*