

YE Marketplace Usability Research

Consumer Side – May and June 2019

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on behalf of Young Enterprise UK

Executive Summary

Five participants from various age and gender demographics were invited to complete tasks on the existing YE Marketplace interface using both a mobile and computer browser. They were asked to complete two different tasks: compare two black travel mugs (mobile task) and purchase specific products from two different companies (computer task). While users commented on the aesthetic simplicity of the site, many struggled to complete their tasks and the majority failed to do so on mobile. The main usability issues pertain to the search function, issues in feedback when inputting search criteria, the reloading of the product and company pages and difficulty finding the search bar.

Methodology

Five people were invited to take part in the YE Marketplace place consumer side usability tests. All participants use the internet 5 or more times per week, have a home internet connection and have purchased a product or service online in the past month.

We hypothesised that the majority of consumers using YE Marketplace would be at least 35 years old and would likely be parents, grandparents or other family members of young people taking part in Company Programme. We created the following age brackets and ensured that a minimum of one person from each was invited to take part:

- Aged 34 to 44
- Aged 45 to 54
- Aged 55 or older

We also attempted to create gender balance by recruiting a minimum of two men and a minimum of two women.

Each participant took part in an hour long in-person usability test at either their home, their workplace or a public workspace. The tests were conducted in Oxford, UK between in May and June 2019.

All tests were conducted using a both a Samsung Galaxy S8 mobile phone and a 2013 MacBook Pro running OS X 10.10 Yosemite. Quicktime video, audio and screen recording were used to record the tests. Vysor was used to connect the mobile screen to the desktop for recording purposes, although the users completed the tasks using the mobile phone itself.

Participants were asked to vocalise their thoughts and narrate their actions as they moved through the tasks. They were occasionally prompted to elaborate on certain comments or actions they made by the moderator.

Test recordings were later analysed by the moderator. Timestamped notes and quote transcripts were recorded and later organised into groups based upon their content. The generalised themes and results presented here were drawn from the material provided by these groups.

User Profiles

User 1

User 1 is a 63 year old man that works in actuary regulation. He chairs a Young Enterprise local volunteer board (LVB) and has had no prior experience using YE Marketplace. He typically does his online shopping using the Amazon app.

User 2

User 2 is a 36 year old woman that works as a child nutritionist. Although she has heard of Young Enterprise, she has never participated in any of it's programme and has no prior experience using YE Marketplace. She uses a number of websites and

devices while shopping online but prefers to visit stores in-person to determine quality before buying.

User 3

User 3 is a 52 year old woman that works as a self-employed business consultant. She is married to a member of Young Enterprise's senior leadership team and has previously acted as a Company Programme Business Adviser, although her team did not use YE Marketplace to sell their wares while she was in post. She briefly explored both the consumer and student ends of YE Marketplace in 2018. She prefers in-person shopping for most items, but will occasionally buy gifts and electronics online.

User 4

User 4 is a 67 year old man that, though retired, helps to run a business consultancy. Before retiring, he provided mentorship and support to university students running their own enterprise activities. He was previously a member of a Young Enterprise LVB. He does most of his shopping online (and regularly uses Amazon) as he finds it most convenient.

User 5

User 5 is a 43 year old woman that works as a business support manager. Although she has heard of Young Enterprise, she has never participated in any of its programmes and has no prior experience using YE Marketplace. She mostly buys books online using Amazon, but occasionally buys online that she wouldn't be able to find in a shop.

Tasks

Each participant was asked to complete two tasks: one using the YE Marketplace website using the Chrome browser on a Samsung Galaxy S8 and the other using Chrome on a 2013 MacBook Pro.

Task One - Mobile

They were first asked to find and compare at least two black travel mugs using YE Marketplace and then decide which they'd prefer to buy for a friend. This task was completed using the Samsung Galaxy S8 mobile device.

Task Two - Computer

They were then asked to buy a product from the following two companies using the 2013 Macbook Pro:

- A phone charger from Stix (company from The Richard Collyers College in Horsham, West Sussex)
- A bath product from Bathe (company from Pipers Corner School in Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire)

Observations

These observations were made based upon review of the usability test recordings. They are organised by topic and importance within each page/category. Quotations are statements made by the participants during the testing.

The most critical issues have been highlighted in bold and orange. These are the issues that most immediately impact the user experience of the website and should be rectified first.

All expect one user failed to complete the first task: find and compare two black travel mugs before choosing one to buy for a friend. This is in a large part due to the issues highlighted in orange below the Products Page and Company Page headers: participants struggled to use the search function and received inconsistent results, participants could not tell whether or not their search had worked, pressing “back” brought users to a refreshed search page where they would have to start over, and participants had difficulty finding the search bar in the first place.

All users were able to complete the second task but gave valuable insights into how usability can be improved along the way.

General Observations

- 1. All five participants found YE Marketplace through the Young Enterprise website.** They first Googled either “ye marketplace” or “young enterprise marketplace” and clicked on the first link provided (<https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/home/get-involved/ye-marketplace/>). While the majority of the participants did not realise they were on a separate website, a few commented on the fact that they were seeing Young Enterprise promotional material and had to click through to visit YE Marketplace. All had to scroll to click either the “Visit Marketplace” or “Shop Marketplace” buttons.
- 2. The most frequent feedback given at the end of tasks was that there was too much text on each page and too much scrolling required to complete tasks.**
- 3. Many participants liked the simplicity of the site.** A few commented on how well integrated Young Enterprise’s branding is.
- 4. A few participants commented on how they would have liked to see back buttons integrated into the site.** They had to click on the browser back buttons or the menu in order to navigate.

“This doesn’t take me straight to the marketplace. It takes me to information about YE. That’s an unnecessary step.”

“It’s quite wordy. I’m skim reading and it’s not really registering.”

“I quite like the no nonsense, clean, logical layout.”

Menu

1. **Four of the participants had difficulty finding the shopping cart during the mobile tasks.** They expected to be able to see it in the right hand corner without needing to click elsewhere. In order to find it, however, they first needed to click the hamburger menu at the top of the page.

“It would be useful to have a shopping cart image at the top with an indication of how many items I have in it.”

Homepage

1. **All of the participants initially struggled to find a way to view or search products.** Many commented that they were looking for some kind of search function or product list and scrolled past the All Products, All Companies, etc. links. A few queried why there were only two companies listed and/or why only three products shown.
2. **A number of participants commented that it is not clear they are on an e-commerce site.** They were surprised that searching products wasn't the immediate focus of the homepage and that in order to do so they needed to click out to the products page.
3. **Participants were unsure of what the log in and register buttons were for.** A few were concerned that they would need to register for the site in order to make a purchase.

“It would be helpful to have a search button.”

“The homepage is obviously targeted at the student company, not the consumer.”

“I wonder if I have to register?”

Products Page

1. **All participants struggled with the products search function every time they used it.** They would use search terms such as “travel mug”, “mug”, “black travel mug”, “cup”, etc. and each time different results would come up – sometimes even with the same search criteria input. If a space was accidentally input in front of or behind the search term, the number of search results would be impacted. Results that would show up under “travel mug” might not show up under “mug”, which created a lot of frustration for users that weren't able to find products they had previously seen. Two users tried to use the category functions but did not produce any results since they had not cleared their search criteria in the search bar. When searching by category rather than with a search term, users commented on the amount of scrolling they had to do in order to find something they were looking for.
2. **Participants could not tell if their search had worked.** Many input their search term and pressed enter or ‘Go’ (on mobile) and then waited for something to happen. On mobile, the keyboard would stay up and obstruct the view of the search function so people were unable to see if any results had been found. On desktop, the search function was usually at the bottom of the screen underneath the criteria categories so users did not see or notice when search results appeared.

3. **When users pressed the back button to return to this page, it did not return to the search results they had previously found.** This meant many had to reinput their search term or scroll again through a number of products to find what they were looking for. Many said they would have given up at this point and made their purchase somewhere else.
4. **Participants struggled to find the search bar.** A few thought they were on the companies page because of the two companies listed at the top. One scrolled past the search bar and later said that she thought it was a title for the categories drop down menus listed below.
5. **Users could not tell if a product came in more colours without clicking onto the individual product page.** Users expected to see either small boxes with additional colours on the product image or text saying “more colours available”.
6. **Participants that used the categories sorting feature thought the categories were too vague.** A few tried both “house and home” and “food related” to try to find travel mugs. One said that she’d like to see subcategories to further sort through products.

“It doesn’t show up with ‘mug’. I’ll have to search ‘travel mug’ to find that again.”

“I’m not finding the green mugs I saw before or the ones in my cart.”

“[The search] is doing absolutely nothing.”

“It’s irritating that the keyboard doesn’t disappear automatically.”

“I don’t like that [the search results are] found underneath all these categories. I have to scroll down to see them.”

“I have to scroll through adverts to get to the search bar.”

“I can now see that [the mug] comes in different colours but it would have been nice to have known that before.”

Individual Product Page

1. **Three participants failed to notice and select a customisation specification (eg. colour) and couldn’t tell whether or not the item had been added to their cart.** A couple had to open the menu and visit their cart in order to realise the product had not been successfully added. The moderator had to tell them what they had missed in order to progress through the task.
2. **It was made very clear to participants when products were successfully added to the cart.** Both the green pop-up affirming that the product had been successfully added and, on the computer, the red number on the shopping cart demonstrated to participants that the product had been added.
3. **Users were confused by personalised products.** Three participants gave up on task one and added a personalised travel mug to their cart instead of a black one, and all asked how they could go about personalising it as there were no input options or instructions.

Companies Page

1. **Participants could not tell if their search criteria had worked.** As with the products page search function, many input their search term, clicked enter and waited for a while before realising that they needed to scroll down.
2. **As on the homepage and products page, participants struggled to find the search bar.**
3. **People would have prefer to have the companies listed in alphabetical order.** Three participants chose to first try to find the company by scrolling through the company list. All three commented in how the companies were not listed in alphabetical order and all three eventually gave up and used the search function instead.
4. **As on the homepage and products page, people did not understand why two companies were featured at the top.**
5. **Two users commented on the regional categories for groups.** One was confused as to why some regions are Shires and some are not. The other commented that she like to see a town or city name instead.

“I was hoping when I typed this in and hit enter it would search for me.”

“[The companies] are not in alphabetical order. I’m failing to see a pattern.”

“I don’t know why these two companies are featured [at the top]. I would expect to see all of them.”

“It’s not giving me the option to search companies.”

Individual Student Company Page

1. **The majority of participants struggled to find the company’s products.** They had expected to see them at the top instead of scrolling down.
2. **All participants thought the Twitter and Facebook icons would direct them to the student company pages.** A few that clicked the icons were surprised to see that they were actually sharing the page on their own timeline. All understood the email icon to mean “email the company” and the heart icon to mean “like the company”.
3. **All participants struggled to find the About Us section of the student company page and three failed entirely.** The three that failed told me that in order to find more information they would have to visit the company’s website, Facebook page or Twitter feed. The two that did scroll to the bottom commented on the Instagram link and assumed that it would take them to the company’s Instagram page (although the hyperlink didn’t work for Bathe).
4. **A few participants were confused about what is or is not hyperlinked.** Two thought clicking the company banner image would bring them to a new page. One assumed the company name in orange was a hyperlink that would direct them to more information about the company. Company Stix has their website URL as their company description, although it is not hyperlinked.

“I can’t see their products. Do I have to go to their website to buy it?”

“It could be that I need to create a Facebook or Twitter account to find out more about them.”

Shopping Cart

1. **A few participants wanted to be able to see an image of what was in their cart.** While this is available on a computer, no images are shown in the cart from a mobile view.
2. **Users wanted to see postage costs before having to input their details.**
3. **People were confused by having two companies in their cart when they added multiple products.** Although everyone figured out what the two names/arrows in the cart were, a couple were initially confused. When it came to checkout, most participants commented on the fact they were only able to check out one item at a time. One person commented that they would prefer to see a running total for their cart so they know how much they're spending.

“It would be good to have an image in the cart so I know what I've bought.”

“I'm being billed before it shows me postage and packaging.”

“I don't know what that is – Anchored or Hot? Oh, those are two products.”