



Understanding Online Reputation Information -

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Example of usability work within Future Internet SHOK

Originally presented at the User-Centric
Evaluation of Recommender Systems and
Their Interfaces

Workshop of the 4th ACM Recommender
Systems conference (RecSys 2010),
Barcelona

([http://ucersti.ieis.tue.nl/2010/
program.html](http://ucersti.ieis.tue.nl/2010/program.html))

Paper deals with

- Usability of reputation information
-as communicated through recommendations

Reputation Information



Recommended 142

Value
 Rooms
 Location
 Cleanliness

#7 of 44 hotels in
 Ranked #14 for business

Rating | Details | Photos (50)

TripAdvisor Traveler Rating

41 Reviews

90% | Write a review

"Life threatening experience"
May 10, 2010 - MichaelB007

"a great experience of safari life!!"
Apr 27, 2010 - fogf

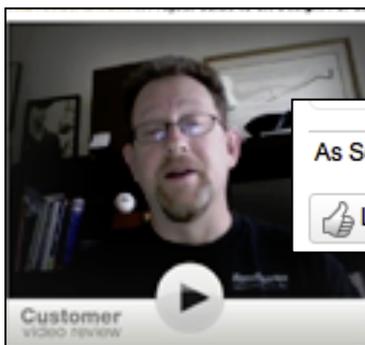
Can be presented by
visual or textual means
- or both.

This review is from: *Web Copy That Sells: The Revolutionary Formula for Creating Killer Copy That Grabs The (Paperback)*

This book is a true joy to read: every chapter contains gold nuggets of advice that will make you more effective. The author's mantra is essentially focused on keeping messages simple, targeted and appealing on an emotional level. It contains everything from word lookup tables (eg. use step-by-step guides to evaluate your content.

As a test, we converted one of our websites and email campaigns using the book's advice, with Google Analytics and the results were staggering. While it sometimes felt like I was "losing secrets of weight loss to discover the new you!", it has an undeniably positive effect on conversions. We're now renovating every site along the same lines. Overall, this has been the most technical books I've ever read.

Help other customers find the most helpful reviews [Report this](#) [Permalink](#)



As Seen On: **483 likes, 41 dislikes**

Like

11/2/2009 First to Review

Great long bar and good stiff drinks at a very fair price that will make your wallet like you. Granted it can get jammed to the hilt on full tilt weekends but the atmosphere and music make it part of the draw to go and unwind. As an added bonus, they stay open 30 minutes longer than the other places close by...

Saved. Thanks! Useful (4) Funny (2) Cool (2)

Bookmark Send To A Friend Link to this Review Flag review

Criteria	Average rating	
Item as described	★★★★★	824
Communication	★★★★★	823
Shipping time	★★★★★	825

	10,000 to 24,999 ratings
	25,000 to 49,999 ratings
	50,000 to 99,999 ratings
	100,000 to 499,999 ratings
	500,000 to 999,999 ratings

Research Question

”Why is the reputation information underutilised?”



WidSets Study

User interviews + Web based questionnaire (mobile + PC use)

Results:

Visually prominent UI elements act as main source of information for decision making.

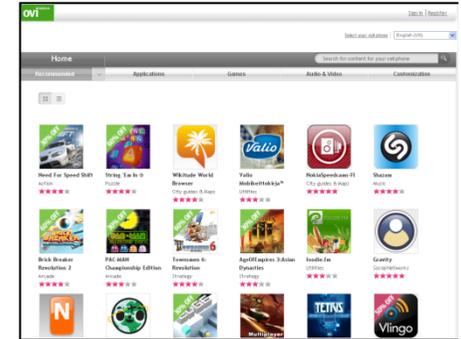
Less prominent information was overlooked.



Karvonen, K, Kilinkaridis, T, Immonen, O: [WidSets: A Usability Study of Widget Sharing](#), in: T. Gross et al. (Eds.): INTERACT 2009, Part II, LNCS 5727, pp. 461-464, 2009. The Proceedings of INTERACT 2009, 12th IFIP TC13 Conference in Human-Computer Interaction, August 24-28, 2009, Uppsala, Sweden

Nokia Ovi Store Study

www.ovi.com →
store.ovi.com



Semi formal usability tests (following think aloud protocol) + User interviews

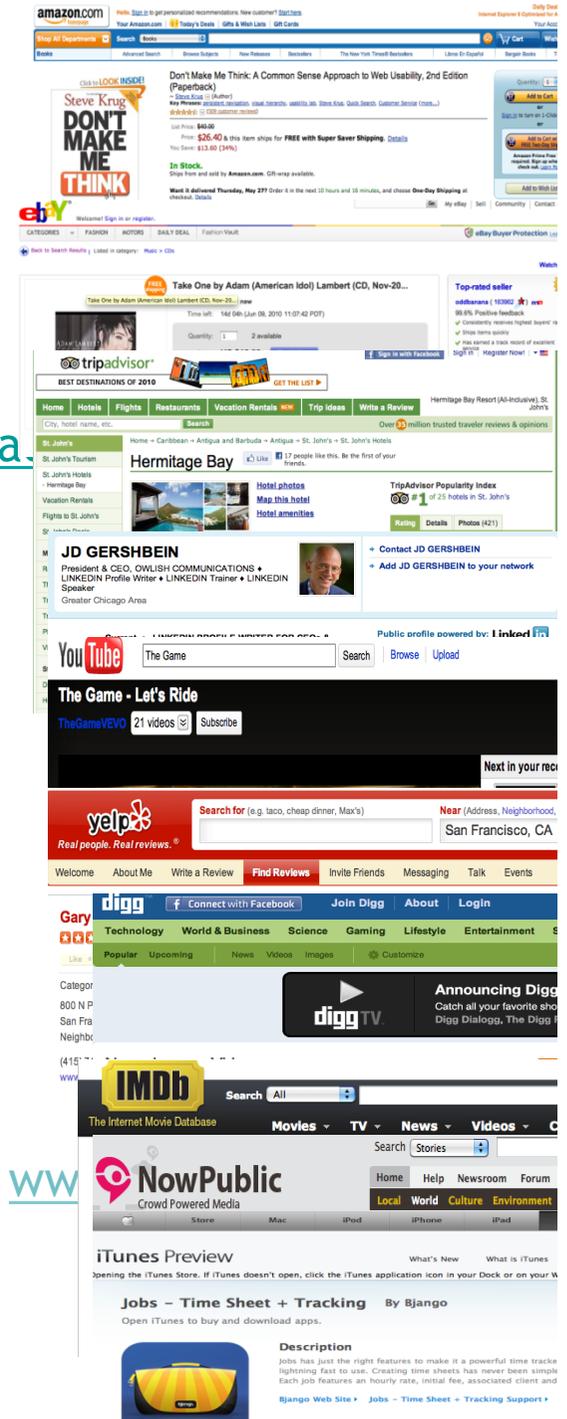
Results:

Lack of cohesion between different reputation elements.

Users found quality & credibility of the reputation information questionable.

Heuristic + Expert evaluations

- Amazon (shopping), www.amazon.com
- eBay (shopping), www.ebay.com
- TripAdvisor (hotel & vacation reviews), www.tripadvisor.com
- LinkedIn (networking tool), www.linkedin.com
- YouTube (video sharing), www.youtube.com
- Yelp (reviews & recommendations for local business), www.yelp.com
- Digg (social news), www.digg.com
- NowPublic (social news), www.nowpublic.com
- IMDb (serial & movie reviews), www.imdb.com
- AppStore (Apple's store for iPhone applications), www.apple.com/iphone/apps-for-iphone/



Hypotheses

- H1. Websites offering reputation information have problems with overall usability that may affect usage of the reputation information.
- H2. More specifically, reputation information provided has additional problems with usability.
- H3. Visual prominence of reputation elements is guiding the decision making process. The visually prominent elements on the recommender websites are wrong.

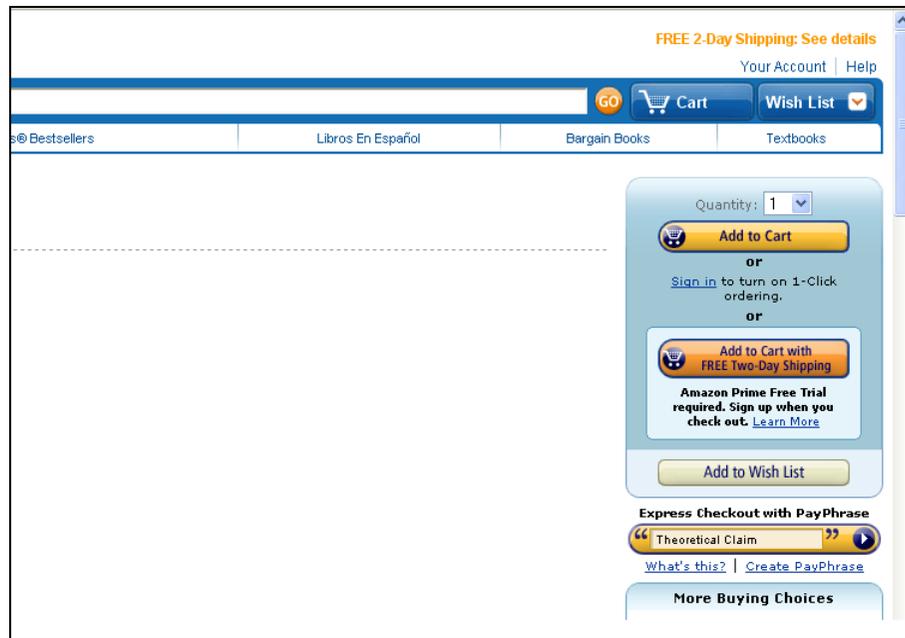
Heuristics

1. Visibility of system status.
2. Match between system and real world.
3. User control and freedom.
4. Consistency and standards.
5. Error prevention.
6. Recognition rather than recall.
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use.
8. Aesthetic & minimalistic design.
9. Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors.
10. Help & documentation.

(Jacob Nielsen)

Heur 2: Match Between System & Real World

Amazon

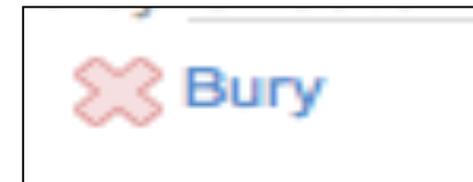


Amazon



eBay

Positive Feedback: 100%
Feedback score: 10890
[How is Feedback calculated?]



Digg

Heur 4: Consistency & standards

TripAdvisor



A screenshot of a TripAdvisor review snippet. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Rating' (highlighted in green), 'Details', and 'Photos (50)'. Below the tabs, the text reads 'TripAdvisor Traveler Rating' followed by five green circles, four of which are filled, and '41 Reviews'. Below that is a thumbs-up icon, '90% | Write a review'. Two review excerpts are shown: 'Life threatening experience' by MichaelB007 from May 10, 2010, and 'a great experience of safari life!!' from fogf from Apr 27, 2010.

Yelp



A comparison of price range definitions between TripAdvisor and Yelp. On the left, a box contains the TripAdvisor definition: 'Price range is simply a relative indication of cost.' followed by a legend: '\$ = Inexpensive', '\$\$ = Moderate', '\$\$\$ = Pricey', '\$\$\$\$ = Ultra High-End', and 'Price Range: \$'. On the right, a box contains the Yelp definition: 'Price range is the approximate cost per person for a meal including one drink, tax, and tip.' followed by 'We're going for averages here, folks.' and a legend: '\$ = Cheap, Under \$10', '\$\$ = Moderate, \$11 - \$30', '\$\$\$ = Spenny, \$31 - \$60', '\$\$\$\$ = Splurge, Above \$60', and 'Price Range: \$\$\$\$'.

Heur 5: Error Prevention

Amazon

The screenshot shows a 'Post a comment' form on Amazon. At the top, there is a header 'Post a comment'. Below it is a blue bar containing a button labeled 'Insert a product link' and a link '(What's this?)'. A large white text area for the comment is below this bar. At the bottom of the form, there is a checkbox labeled 'Receive e-mail when new posts are made'. Below the checkbox are two buttons: 'Sign in and post' (highlighted in yellow) and 'Cancel'. At the very bottom, there is a small text prompt: 'Prompts for sign-in'.

Digg

The screenshot shows a Digg page with a modal dialog box overlaid. The dialog box has a blue title bar that reads 'The page at http://digg.com says:'. The main content of the dialog is a question mark icon followed by the text: 'Are you sure you want to undigg this? This action cannot be undone.' At the bottom of the dialog are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. In the background, the Digg page is partially visible, showing a green banner with text about top stories and 'undigg' buttons.

YouTube

The screenshot shows a portion of a YouTube user profile. It includes a 'Subscribers' count of 200. Below that, there are two rows of profile information: 'Hometown: Vancouver' and 'Country: Canada'. At the bottom, there is a message: 'Thank you. This user has been reported.' with a small white box next to it.

Heur 8: Aesthetic & Minimalistic Design

eBay

The screenshot shows an eBay My World profile page for the user 'dutchman1953' with a feedback score of 127. The page is divided into a left sidebar and a main content area. The sidebar contains a placeholder profile picture, a member since date of Jun-13-06, location of United States, and a total of 118 views. The main content area features a feedback summary showing 100% positive feedback and a score of 127, with a link to 'See All Feedback'. Below this is a 'Latest Feedback' section with a navigation bar (back, pause, forward, See all). A single feedback entry is visible, dated Jan-01-10 08:48, from a seller named 'andreastoy's' (25509) with a star rating. The feedback text reads 'Great transaction!' and includes the item number 3101856935.

eBay My World: dutchman1953 (127 ☆)

Feedback earned for transactions on eBay [View your eBay My World page](#)

Positive feedback: **100%** | Feedback score: **127** [See All Feedback](#)

[Learn about](#) what these numbers mean.

Latest Feedback [See all](#)

Great transaction! Jan-01-10 08:48 Item #: 3101856935
Seller: [andreastoy's](#) (25509) ☆

Visual Elements Representing Reputation Information:

”an estranged and large family”

Amazon

Amazon's Top Customer Reviewers
The top reviewers have helped millions of their fellow customers make customers. They will amaze you.

New Reviewer Rank **Classic Reviewer Rank**

10,000 customer reviewers

Rank	Customer Reviewer
# 1	 A. Chandler See all 331 reviews
# 2	 Joanna Daneman See all 2,197 reviews

eBay

Feedback Profile

 **eyewearisland** (14533 ★)  
Positive Feedback (last 12 months): 99.2%
[How is Feedback Percentage calculated?]
Member since: Dec-07-03 in United States

	Recent Feedback Ratings (last 12 months)		
	1 month	6 months	12 months
 Positive	331	1766	3746
 Neutral	5	15	30
 Negative	2	17	29

Criteria	Detailed Seller Ratings (last 12 months)	
	Average rating	Number of ratings
Item as described	★★★★★	2862
Communication	★★★★★	2850
Shipping time	★★★★★	2851
Shipping and handling charges	★★★★★	2853

Digg

204 diggs

 **5 Non-Geek Directors**
televisionwithoutpity.com — N
director, both by the studio
Raimi.

 Favorite?

TripAdvisor

Rating **Details** **Photos (50)**

TripAdvisor Traveler Rating

 **41 Reviews**

 **90%** | Write a review

“Life threatening experience”
May 10, 2010 - MichaelB007

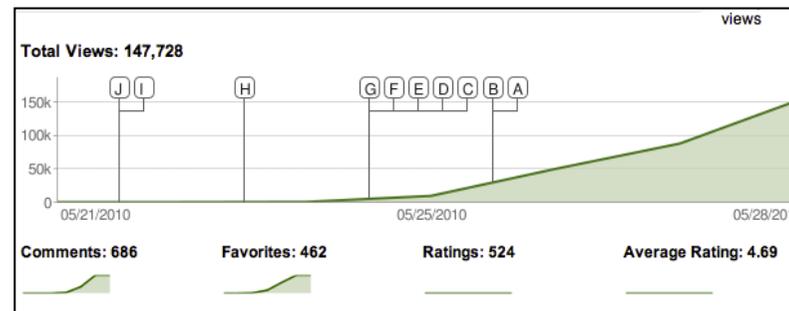
“a great experience of safari life!!”
Apr 27, 2010 - fogf



Yelp



YouTube



Results vs. Hypotheses

H1. Websites offering reputation information have problems with overall usability that can affect usage of the reputation information.

→ Yes. The sites did mostly poorly in the evaluations.

H2. More specifically, reputation information provided has additional problems with usability.

→ Yes. Reputation information was disconnected, cluttered, hard to understand.

H3. Visual prominence of reputation elements is guiding decision making process. Visually prominent elements on the recommender websites are wrong.

→ Probably yes. Reputation information is not visually connected; it has different representations on different sites; visually presented information does not pop up on the sites offering it.

A user study should be run to confirm or reject the findings.