Test: EatSafe.co

For our fourth Civic User Testing session, we tested EatSafe.co, a Web site developed by Hoy Publications. This in-person test took place at one of the Connect Chicago locations – Chicago Public Library Hall Branch at 4801 S. Michigan Ave in the Grand Boulevard neighborhood.

EatSafe.co is a website that shows you details of food inspections near you. It uses your current location to show establishments near you that have food inspection history. You can also search establishments such as restaurants, schools, or grocery stores.

EatSafe.co uses data collected from the City of Chicago Data Portal, which provides raw data of recent food inspections. It is a product of Hoy Chicago. We really enjoyed working on them to get with regular Chicago residents and hear directly from them. Here’s what Hoy Managing Editor Fernando Diaz had to say:

Partnering with the CUT Group was the most effective research experience I’ve ever been a part of. We met real Chicagoans who were generous with their time and feedback. And among the highlights is that we have all of the results for further evaluation and incorporation into future iterations of our project”

Hoy Managing Editor Fernando Diaz working with CUTGroup members – CUTGroup #5 – Eatsafe.co – Hall Library

We were interested in finding answers to these key questions:
- What is the first thing users do when they visit the Web site? Do users allow the site to use their current location?
- What do users have difficulties with when using the Web site? How can this Web site be improved?
- What is the user’s overall experience?
- Are Chicago residents interested in food inspection history?

Segmenting

On November 6, 2013, we sent out an e-mail to all 541 CUTGroup participants asking them if they would be willing to test a food inspection Web site on November 21. We asked some screening questions to gather extra information, but the responses did not influence their participation.

We were interested in having 20 participants from different Chicago neighborhoods. Testers ended up coming from neighborhoods across Chicago including Chicago Lawn, West Town, Edgewater, and more.

Results

In the end, we had 18 responses captured via online form, and 1 user’s test was captured via video. We learned that most testers were interested in learning about food inspection history, and believed that learning about food inspections would impact their future choices.
What is the first thing users do when they visit the Web site? Do users allow the site to use their current location?

- We found out that testers were not sure where to start on this Web site, and only half of testers allowed the Web site to use their current location
- There was not a clear first thing that most testers did when visiting the Web site
- Most testers saw this as a site to look up restaurants even though there is information about many different establishment types including grocery stores or schools

What do users have difficulties with when using the Web site? How can this Web site be improved?

The screen shot below is an example of an establishment’s results. Testers had difficulties searching for a specific establishment and deciphering the results.

Here are some suggestions we learned from our testers:

- When clicking a violation, testers wanted an explanation of the violation, and not be led to a list of establishments with the same violation
- Testers were interested in better explanations of the inspection results
- Some of the testers thought that too many results came up when they searched for a specific establishment, and wanted to search by other fields such as zip code or neighborhood
- Testers want to see different search results on a map, and be able to search by moving the map’s view
- Testers are looking for consistent color-coding and violation legends between pages; testers want a better understanding of the colors used, the thumbs-up or thumbs-down symbol, and the number next to each violation

What is the user’s overall experience?

- 56% of all testers liked the Web site. The other 44% of the testers who did not like the Web site still thought this was an excellent idea or a useful tool, but did not like the graphics or found it particularly easy to use

Are Chicago residents interested in food inspection history?

- More than 83% of testers thought that learning about an establishment’s food inspection history would impact future choices
- Testers want a quick way of learning about inspection results and better explanations of inspections and violations

Final Report & Videos

Here is a final report of the results with key highlights from each question we asked, followed by each tester’s responses, and copies of our e-mail campaigns and the questions we asked:

The raw test data can be found below with the complete answers from every tester.

Here are videos from our testers: