

## Part 1. Case Study: Evaluating Online Book Shopping Experiences for Amazon Customers

### Plan Overview: Background

A team at Amazon.com reached out to a user experience researcher for assistance in gathering data related to how customers shop. They would like to further understand the current customer experiences of shopping for books on Amazon.com, and how that compares to customer behavior in physical stores. No previous usability studies related to this subject have been conducted for or by Amazon to date. The team would like to explore ideas that will increase customer satisfaction, discovery and ratings. In particular, the Amazon team wishes to test new page designs, features and customized widgets that would appear during the customer's shopping experience to help increase awareness of book versions/types, reading recommendations and purchase suggestions.

### Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the end-to-end Amazon customer experience as they interact with the Amazon.com for purchasing books. Collecting this data will provide the product team with:

- Behavioral observations and insights into the current customer experience when they shop for books
- Insights into design solutions that will improve and strengthen the customer experience
- Baseline information on the current experience that can be used as a comparison for future online experiences and the optimization of new features.

### Methodology

#### Research questions.

During each 60-minute session, the following research methods will be employed. The study will collect qualitative and quantitative data to answer several research questions, including:

- **Task completion** - How well does the Amazon support our customers' ability to buy books?
- **Navigation and information architecture** - How does the site structure support customers' ability to accomplish finding books that they desire? Can customer navigate to where they want to go and accomplish their tasks quickly and efficiently? What pathways do they take?
- **Layout and visual design** - What are our customers' impressions of the current optimized visual design? Will customers notice and understand the changes from the current site?
- **Communication and site impressions** - What are our customers' overall impressions of the site? What works well and what doesn't? How would they compare shopping on Amazon to other online book retailers or physical stores?

**Study design.** We will conduct a remote usability study using GoToMeeting to gather insights into user performance and unmet needs. The study will collect information such as task completion rates, time on task, navigation and content insights, overall satisfaction, areas of concern, and unmet needs.

**Audience.** We will conduct the study with six to eight participants, both new and existing Amazon customers as well as Prime and Non-Prime members. These participants will represent a spectrum of usage behaviors per phases of the project. We recommend testing with both of these audiences because there may be discrepancies observed for existing customer and task completion and attitudes compared to new customers. In the field of user experience research a pattern has

emerged by utilizing six to eight participants for each iterations of product development, which works well in agile project management cycle (Nielsen, 2012).

**Test Instruments.** Task scenario will be developed by the product and research team in effort to assess the amount of effort required to perform each tasks, cognitive efforts and amount of time it took to become proficient in tasks.

**Tasks.** The participant will be asked to read the task scenario and begin working on the scenario while they think out loud. The researcher will observe the participant, and make notes of the participant's behaviors, comments, errors and completion (success or failure) for each task. The session will continue until all task scenarios are completed or time allotted has elapsed. The researcher will end a session with a series of subjective questions and/or ask the participant to complete online survey to measure their satisfaction. Specific tasks scenarios will be outlined prior to usability study upon discussing with product team.

## Outcomes






The study will provide us with:









- **Metrics.** Objective and behavioral performance data that provides a usability baseline to measure future improvements
- **Audience insights.** Actionable insights on how to optimize the user experience for our customers when buying books
- **Actionable improvements.** Recommendations for improvements based on research findings. Also, identify and addressing the pain points that customers are facing.

## Study Limitations / Out of Scope

Limitations and features that are out of scope for this round of research and testing include: comparison analysis between other on-line shopping retailers and difference between desktop versus and mobile experiences

## Study Timeline (table)

STATUS KEY				
				
Complete	On Track	Off Track	At Risk for Go-Live	N/A

Activity	April				May		Status
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	
Formative discovery							
Participatory design							
Develop Task Script							
Prepare Survey							
Recruit subjects							
Conduct usability Testing							
Statistical Analysis of the Data							
Preparation and submission of report							

## Part 2. Research Design

### Methodology

Team has requested a usability study to gain insight into how customers currently shop for books on Amazon, what pain points/delighters. Therefore, usability testing will consist of task analysis, survey and interview to better understand customers' impression.

### Sample Size

We plan to recruit 6 to 8 customers who fits the following profile of:

- Age range between: 18 to 65
- A mix of males and females
- Online shopping experiences, and have shopped for books in the last 6 months?
- Prime and Non-Prime members
- New and returning customers

### Data to collect

The study will collect qualitative and quantitative data to answer several research questions from the research team. The researcher will collect data on the participant's behaviors, comments, errors and completion (success or failure) on each task. The session will continue until all task scenarios are completed or time allotted has elapsed. The researcher will end a session with a series of subjective questions to measure participant satisfaction. Likert scale will be utilized to measure satisfaction rating.

### Design

The participant will be assigned to view and complete their tasks on the current, live Amazon website. Upon completion of the tasks, a 1:1 interview will be conducted with the researcher to understand the impression and pain point of the current experience.

### Task

The participant will be asked to read the task scenario and then begin working on the scenario while they think aloud. The researcher will make notes of the participant's behaviors, comments, errors and completion (success or failure) on each task. See following examples for the tasks and measures

Tasks	Errors	Completion	Comments	Total Time
Search and purchase a copy of a book you would like to read	Y	Y	Unable to find Best Books of the Months	5 min
Search and purchase a paperback version of a book from the New York Times Best seller list	N	Y	None	2 min

Conduct Post Interview:

- What are your overall impressions of the online shopping at this site?
- What are the three things you like best {about the Web site?
- What are the three things you like least about the Web site?
- If you could make one significant change to this Web site, what change would you make?
- Would you recommend this Web site to a colleague? To a friend?

### Part 3.

#### Greeting participants and introduction of the study (2 min)

When you are using the website, I'd like you to think out loud. This means I want you to tell me what you are thinking about as you use it. For example, I'd like you to say what it is you are trying to do, what you are looking for and any decisions you are making. If you get stuck or feel confused, I'd like to hear that too.

**Task Scenario: *You are buying a gift for your best friend's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. We know she loves books and want to buy one of the bestseller mystery books that came out in last month.* (8 to 10 min)**

Task 1. Search and purchase a copy of a book you would like to read

Task 2. Search and purchase a paperback version of a book from the New York Times Best seller list

I'd like to make the best of the limited time we have with you today, so I'm going to re-focus you on the task you are working on.

**Please rate from 1 to 5. (Strongly Disagree = 1 and Strongly Agree = 5) (3 min)**

- 1. I found the purchasing books on Amazon site unnecessary complex*
- 2. I thought there was too much inconsistency when I was purchasing a book*
- 3. I felt very confident using the site*

#### **1:1 Interview (5 min)**

- *What are your overall impressions of the online shopping at this site?*
- *What are the three things you like best {about the Web site?}*
- *What are the three things you like least about the Web site?*
- *If you could make one significant change to this Web site, what change would you make?*
- *Would you recommend this Web site to a colleague? To a friend?*

#### **Recap with Lisa and Kevin (5 min)**