

User Testing Report: Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com

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Description of Test

Date of testing:	September 20, 2006
Testing location:	Lincoln High School and Washtenaw Community College
Number of users tested:	5
Length of each test:	40 minutes
Platforms tested on:	Windows XP
Browsers tested on:	Internet Explorer

Transcription Key

- ‘ ’ In page link
- [] Browser function
- () Notes about action

Priority Levels

The issues identified through user testing are grouped into three levels of priority:

High Priority: These issues are likely to impact a large number of users significantly. They should be resolved as quickly as resources allow.

Medium Priority: Issues at this priority level are also likely to affect a large number of users, but generally are less disruptive to the user experience, relative to the high priority issues. If resources are available to address these issues, they should be addressed.

Low Priority: Low priority issues typically impact a small subset of the overall user base, although they may impact a larger group. Regardless of the number of users affected, these issues carry only a minor negative impact. Low priority issues are generally easy to resolve. There is less time pressure to fix low priority issues.

Recommended Changes

Global Navigation

High Priority:

- **The ‘Browse’ link should become a larger aspect of the global navigation.** Many users had trouble finding a way to look for movies by simply browsing. By making the browse page one of the larger, tabbed links, it would relieve usage from the poor search function. It would also serve as an effective tool for finding a movie, person, quote, or tagline. Once the users found this link, the ensuing tasks became much easier.

Medium Priority:

- **Change the label for ‘My Movies.’** Many users mistakenly thought that this link would take them somewhere similar to a browse page. Instead they found a list of movies that were added by prior users, or a blank table. By either renaming the ‘My Movies’ link or removing completely from the global navigation, we can reduce this confusion and enhance the user’s experience.

Low Priority:

- **Make the ‘Home’ a larger part of the global navigation.** A few of the users did not know about the widely used ‘Click the logo to go back home’ function. Although there is a link right below the tabbed navigation, it would be beneficial to some users if ‘Home’ were a larger global navigation item.

Home Page

High Priority:

- **Reduce the amount of clutter on the home page.** Almost every one of the users mentioned something about the layout of the site being cluttered. One thing that might help the visual appeal of the site would be to remove the side bar links. Not one of the users even attempted to navigate through the side bar links. They are distracting to the user and don’t offer any vital information about the site or its contents.

Medium Priority:

- **Increase font uniformity on the home page.** Both serif and sans-serif fonts are used on the home page and sub pages. By creating uniformity among the fonts of the pages, it would be possible to reduce visual distractions as well as maintain a professional look to the site.

Search Function

High Priority:

- **The search will not function properly if the keywords are too specific.** When a user enters information other than a movie/show title or a name, the search engine will not turn out valid results. Since many users have become used to search engines such as Google and Yahoo!, they don't use simple keywords for fear of large results. This way of thinking should be taken into account when redesigning the search interface.
- **The advanced search options are not intuitive.** There is a drop down menu to modify what aspect of the site the user would like to search. However, many users felt that it was necessary to change. By changing this from its default state of 'All,' it again returns invalid or no results.

Medium Priority:

- **Reposition the search box if the navigation remains unchanged.** In an age where search engines are used in abundance, fewer people are using global navigation. In the case of this site, the amount of data is so large, that making the search function a major part of the global navigation would greatly enhance the site's usability.

Movie Page

Medium Priority:

- **Use local navigation for special features and additional movie information.** Some users had trouble finding movie quotes and goofs for the related tasks. There are links on each movie's page, but unfortunately these links aren't in a desirable position on the page. In order to make it easier for the users, it would be beneficial to create some kind of local navigation for these special features. By creating links to these features, each movie page will be able to remove unnecessary information and thus, reduce visual clutter of the overall site.

Browse Page

High Priority:

- **List all available services and information pages in a categorized form.** Many of the users reached the browse page, but had no idea what to do when they reached it. In order to display the complete array of information offered from the site, it should be listed under its respective category. Currently, each category has a small list of its features. By adding a full list of features, users could access the information they need faster and easier.

Medium Priority:

- **A ‘Drill-Down’ type of browsing function would work well here.** The more experienced users were looking for a type of directory search, much like that of the Yahoo! Directory pages. To find a movie, you almost have to use the search functionality. If you are a user looking for a movie in which you can’t remember the title, you won’t be able to find it. By utilizing a directory type search, you can drill-down to your desired movie based on genre, release year, or cast.

News Page

Medium Priority:

- **News from the HollywoodReporter.com needs to be placed lower down in the list of news articles.** The top-most articles on the ‘Movie/TV News’ page on IMDb is a Pro users only aspect of the site. A few of our users tried to go to these articles first, were shunned away by the IMDb Pro login, then later came back to the page to find the other celebrity news articles. By placing these articles on the top of the page, it may give the user the idea that all of the news articles are for Pro users only.

Photos Page

Low Priority:

- **Change the heading of the ‘Photos’ page to match its global navigation item.** One of the tasks had the users finding the photo gallery for the ‘Celeb of the Week.’ A few of the users reached the Photos page, saw the heading ‘Photo Gallery’ and the picture of the Celeb of the Week and thought that they had completed the task. If the heading of this page was changed to replicate its global navigation item, it would give a better indication of where the user is on the site, as well as reduce confusion for the user.

DVD/Video Coming Soon Page

High Priority:

- **Improve upon the visual hierarchy of the upcoming release titles.** Many of our users went to this page in search of a title being release on October 17th. When they reached this page, they did not immediately see the next week’s releases and left the page. Others completed the task, but commented on the visual hierarchy of the page. Each week’s releases contain a header and a list of movie links. Currently, the only visual distinction between the headers and titles is color. The headers and links are large, bold-faced and italicized, but the links are blue in color. It is surprisingly easy to mistake the header for another title, making it hard to find what you’re looking for. By making the title font smaller and offsetting it with bullets, you could easily remedy this issue.

User Testing Script

Introducing the Test

Today we will be testing the Internet Movie Database website. The reason for this testing is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the website design, so improvements can be made.

Procedure

This entire session should take about 40 minutes.
During this time we'll be working through several tasks.
During each task I'll be observing you and taking notes.

As you work through the tasks, I would like you to "think aloud". This means saying any thoughts or reactions that come to mind as you work. However, don't feel that you need to elaborate or explain what you're saying – we'll have an opportunity to discuss it at the end of the study. If you remain silent for a while, I may occasionally prompt you to start speaking again.

If you encounter problems or difficulties, those are exactly the problems with the design that we are trying to identify and improve. When this happens, I can't give you any help, because we're interested in how you would solve those problems on your own.

At the end of the study, I'll ask you to fill out a summary questionnaire and then we can talk about any remaining questions or concerns you have.

Voluntary Participation & Anonymity

I also want to remind you that participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. You may choose to skip any of the questions in this study or quit the entire session at any time.

Website Specifics

The navigation is the part of the website we are doing this study on, and we ask that you find the tasks by browsing through the top navigation and side bar links. We will specify which questions should be found a different way. Also, after each task, please return to the home page for the start of the next task.

Do you have any questions?

User Click Tracks

Task 1: First, login to IMDB using the username: *fakeuserinp203@yahoo.com* and password: *password*.

H > Login > Type Username and password > F

H > Login > Type Username and password > F

H > Login > Type Username and password > F

H > Login > Type Username and password > F

H > Login > Type Username and password > F

Task 2: Then, *search* for your favorite movie and add that movie to your “My Movies” list.

H > Search: The Man from Snowy River > ‘The Man from Snowy River’ > My Movies > [back] > F

H > Search: Shrek > ‘Shrek’ > Add to My Movies > F

H > Search: The Last Kiss > ‘The Last Kiss’ > Add to My Movies > F

H > Search: Im Juli > ‘Im Juli’ > Add to My Movies > F

H > Search: Walk to Remember DD: My Movies > NF

Task 3: Lately you’ve had a growing interest in independent films. Find the list for upcoming film festivals.

H > Independent Film > Festivals > F

H > Independent Film > Festivals > F

H > Independent Film > Festivals > F

H > Independent Film > ‘See all upcoming film festivals’ > F

H > Search: Film Festivals > NF

Task 4: Since you're such a huge fan of outtakes and bloopers. Try to find the goofs for the movie "Little Miss Sunshine."

H > Now Playing > Trailers > 'Goofs' (from side bar) > F

H > Top Movies > Browse > Movie Goofs > 'Little Miss Sunshine' > F

H > My Movies > Search: Little Miss Sunshine > 'more' (under goofs header) > F

H > Search: Little Miss Sunshine > 'more' (under goofs header) > F

H > Browse > Search: outtakes and bloopers > Search: Little Miss Sunshine > NF

Task 5: You're also looking to see what movies are coming to DVD on October 17th.

H > DVD / Video > Coming Soon > F

H > DVD / Video > Coming Soon > F

H > Now Playing > DVD / Video > Coming Soon > F

H > Now Playing > DD: October > DVD / Video > Coming Soon > F

H > Search: October 17 > DVD / Video > New Release > Coming Soon > F

Task 6: Name an actor or actress that was born on this day in 1955.

H > Search: Actor birthday > Birthdays > F

H > 'All birthdays' > F

H > Browse > Famous Birthdays > F

H > Movies / TV News > 'On this day' > F

H > Search: September 20 DD: Bios > NF

Task 7: You love to see the stars dress up for the big awards ceremonies. See if you can uncover the photo gallery for IMDB's "Celeb of the Week."

H > Photos > Celeb of the Week > 'Photos' > F

H > Photos > Celeb of the Week > 'Photos' > F

H > Photos > NF

H > Movie / TV News > Celeb News > [back] > IMDB TV > NF

H > Photos > Search: Celeb of the Week > H > IMDB TV > NF

Task 8: You're a passionate Lord of the Rings fan. Locate the birthday of the actor who played Boromir (Sean Bean) so you can bake him a cake.

H > Search: Sean Bean > 'Sean Bean' > F

H > Search: Sean Bean DD: Characters > Search: Sean Bean DD: Names > F

H > My Movies > 'Lord of the Rings' > 'Sean Bean' > F

H > Search: Lord of the Rings > 'Fellowship of the Ring' > 'Sean Bean' > F

H > Search: Sean Bean birthday > Search: birthdays > 'Character Name Search' > [back] > 'IMDB Name Search' > Search: birthdays Sean Bean > NF

Task 9: You like to keep up to date with the latest news in Hollywood. Find an article from WENN celebrity news.

H > Browse > Search: WENN Celebrity News > 'Celebrity News' > F

H > Movie / TV News > 'Celebrity News' > F

H > Movie / TV News > F

H > Movie / TV News > F

H > Movie / TV News > F

Task 10: Suppose you've been anxiously waiting for the release of "Hollywoodland". Find today's showtimes for this movie.

H > Showtimes & Tickets > 'Hollywoodland' > [back] > F

H > Showtimes & Tickets > 'Hollywoodland' > [back] > F

H > Showtimes & Tickets > 'Hollywoodland' > F

H > Showtimes & Tickets > 'Hollywoodland' > 'Showtimes' > F

H > Now Playing > 'Showtimes' > F

Task 11: Ever since your journey through the Himalayas, you've been feeling adventurous. Try to unearth this site's top rated adventure film.

H > Showtimes & Tickets > News > Search : Adventure Films > Search: Top Rated Adventure Films > Top Movies > 'Adventure' > F

H > Top Movies > 'Adventure' > F

H > Top Movies > 'Adventure' > F

H > Browse > 'Films by Genre' > 'Adventure' > F

H > Search: Adventure Films > Movies / TV News > Top Movies > 'Adventure' > F

Task 12: You have a date coming up and you don't really know what to say. Find the list of memorable quotes for the movie "Casablanca."

H > Browse > 'Facts & Trivia' > 'Find Movie Quotes' > 'C' > 'Casablanca' > F

H > Browse > 'Facts & Trivia' > 'Find Movie Quotes' > 'C' > 'Casablanca' > F

H > Search: Casablanca > 'more' (under quotes header) > F

H > Browse > 'Movie / Reviews' > H > Top Movies > DVD / Video > Search: Casablanca DD: Quotes > Search: Casablanca DD: Titles > 'Casablanca' > 'Quotes' > F

H > DVD / Video > Search: Casablanca > 'Casablanca' > Search: quotes from Casablanca' > NF

Task 13: Find the year of release for the top rated western movie.

H > Top Movies > 'Western' > 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' > F

H > Top Movies > 'Western' > 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' > F

H > Top Movies > 'Western' > 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' > F

H > Top Movies > 'Western' > F

H > Browse > 'Films by Genre' > 'Western' > 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' > F

Overall Website Evaluation

All ratings are on a scale of 1-6; 1 is the positive end while 6 is negative.

Easy to use:	3, 4, 3, 4, 2
Responsive:	2, 1, 2, 2, 1
Efficient:	4, 3, 4, 4, 1
Well-organized:	4, 2, 5, 4, 1
Good labels:	4, 4, 4, 2, 2
Direct:	5, 3, 4, 3, 1
Attractive:	3, 4, 5, 2, 3
Easy to read:	3, 2, 5, 1, 1
Focused:	5, 1, 5, 2, 1
Useful:	4, 1, 3, 2, 1
Valuable information:	2, 2, 4, 2, 1
Comprehensive:	2, 1, 2, 1, 1
Good instructions:	4, 3, 4, 4, 2

What do you consider the most valuable aspect of the website?

Showtimes & Tickets.

Search bar, tabs are good if you use them.

Sheer amount of information, all cross-referenced.

The times for the movies in nearby cinemas.

What is the biggest problem with the site?

Search.

Some things weren't very easy to find.

Busy, complicated.

Main menu buttons somewhat ambiguous, pulldowns would be better.

Not really any problems, maybe different colors.

Would you use this site to find information on movies in the future?

No.

Yes.

Maybe.

Yes because it is so complete.

Yeah I didn't even know it existed until now.

Additional comments about the website:

Lots of info! If you are a movie buff.

I like the "My Movies" feature.