

User Testing Report

Adobe.com

<http://www.adobe.com/>

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Executive Summary

A series of user tests were conducted on the Adobe.com website. The primary goals of these user tests were to determine common errors, gauge reactions to labels, and discover any tasks that users might be unable to complete.

The user tests revealed various issues with the current website, including some high priority issues that should be resolved as quickly as resources will allow. The most significant of these issues is the process for adding a product to the cart, which two out of five users tested were unable to do. A redesign of the add-to-cart process is recommended to ensure that potential customers are able to successfully purchase products without facing any potential hiccups.

Additional high priority issues can be resolved by doing as follows:

- overhaul the on-site search engine to provide more relevant results
- redesign the search results page
- make the pricing of full versions of products more accessible
- re-evaluate the site's overall color scheme

Additional issues of medium and lower priority are also presented. These issues have either less time pressure to resolve or should be relatively easy to correct.

An analysis of the execution of the individual tasks performed by the users is presented in Appendix A.

An overview of the overall website evaluations completed by the users is presented in Appendix B.

Description of Test

Dates of testing:	September 20-24, 2011
Testing location:	Washtenaw Community College Computer Commons
Number of users tested:	5
Length of each test:	One hour; some users went past an hour
Platforms tested on:	Windows 7
Browsers tested on:	Internet Explorer 8
Screen resolution:	1280 x 1024; one user requested a change in screen resolution as they could not read the text on the site – this user tested at a resolution of 1024 x 768

Recommended Changes

High Priority

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

- **Redesign the process for adding a product to the cart.** The current process for adding a product to the cart has multiple issues:
 - After clicking the “Buy” button, a series of options is presented. These options, presented in a light gray on a medium gray background, do not stand out as needing to be selected or filled out.
 - The phrasing of the first option, “I want to buy”, is confusing and does a poor job indicating that this is where you select the software version desired – upgrade, full, or subscription.
 - The phrasing of the second option, “I own”, is confusing as it is unclear what it is referring to until the dropdown is selected. Additionally, the default placeholder text for the dropdown, “Choose the product you own”, is truncated in the display and shows as “Choose the pr...”
 - Additional options (“Platform”, “Language”, “Delivery”, and “Quantity”) are all disabled and cannot be selected until the first two options are completed.
 - The disabled “Add to cart” button is grayed out, signifying that it is disabled, but as other links and buttons on the site are also gray, it is unclear that it is disabled. Multiple users figured that the button was in fact broken and not disabled on purpose.

In order to resolve these issues, it is recommended that clicking on the “Buy” button would load a separate page on which the consumer can then answer the various questions and then add the product to the cart. This separate page should include the following:

- An option labeled “Select Version” accompanied by all applicable choices, i.e. Upgrade, Full, Subscription, and/or Student.
- A dropdown menu labeled “If upgrading, please select the product you currently own” and containing all applicable products. This dropdown should be disabled unless the “Upgrade” option was selected in the previous field.
- The additional options currently present (“Platform”, “Language”, “Delivery”, and “Quantity”) presented using whichever form elements are preferred.
- A final “Add to Cart” button located at the bottom. This button should not be disabled but should run an error-checking test upon being clicked to ensure that all fields are completed. If the necessary fields are not completed properly and/or completely, a message should be displayed indicating as such and the incorrect/incomplete fields should be clearly marked so the user may correct the issue before again clicking the “Add to Cart” button.

After this new process page is completed, the process can continue as is, i.e. a popup box is displayed showing the current contents of the cart.

- **Overhaul the on-site search engine to provide more relevant results.** Nearly all the searches performed by users produced results that were of no assistance in completing the assigned tasks. While those results shown in the box at the top of the search results page (referred to as “key matches”) often proved useful, nearly all other results were outdated, irrelevant, or otherwise counter-productive. It is recommended that searches performed via the global search bar initially search through a subset of the site that contains only well-linked, public pages with an option to then search deeper into the website if desired.
- **Redesign the search results page.** While useful results were often found in the “key matches” box at the top of the search results page, multiple users seemed to ignore this box upon first arriving on the page. It is possible that this is due to previous experiences with ads shown marked up differently and at the top of search engine result pages (such as with Google). It is recommended that these one or two key matches are listed along with the other results (as results one and two) and are marked up identically to the other results, with the possible exception of including a product logo or image with said result.
- **Make the pricing of full versions of products more accessible.** Users had difficulty finding the price of the full version of Photoshop. One user commented that they felt deceived, feeling that the full prices were being intentionally hidden. Another found it odd that the site seemed to be “trying to hide the pricing of the products they were trying to sell.” While a continued emphasis on the lower, upgrade price is recommended, the prices of other versions should be easier to find.
- **Re-evaluate the site’s overall color scheme.** Multiple users commented that the use of dark colors, especially at the top of the page, caused important areas to blend in with the background. Two users commented that the search bar blended in and did not stand out while a third user did not even notice the existence of the search bar until the final task of their session.

Medium Priority

Medium priority issues 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.

- **Rename “Tech Specs” to “System Requirements” in the secondary navigation on product pages.** The phrase “tech specs” is not often used to refer to system requirements and was confusing to some users, with one user calling it “geeky”. This would also ensure that the main heading of the requirements page matches its label in the secondary navigation.
- **Re-order the various product buying guide tables to place either “Upgrades” or “Suite editions” as the first – and therefore default – upon page load.** One user loaded a product “Buying Guide” and was surprised to not see pricing – they did not explore beyond the first/default table, which is a comparison of versions. Multiple users commented that the site seemed to be

hiding the prices of the various products. The re-ordering of buying guide tables would resolve this issue.

- **Re-label buttons and links to download Flash Player to clearly indicate that it is a link to the latest update.** While all the users tested were able to successfully find the latest update to download, many mentioned that they were unsure of what version of the Flash Player they currently have. By clearly marking the download links to indicate that it is for the most recent update, users will be more likely to download rather than question if they should or even need to.
- **Include currently installed Flash Player version info on the Flash Player download page.** The “Adobe Flash Player” page has a Flash file which displays the currently installed version number as well as a table showing what the current version is. It is recommended that this information be included on the download page for the Flash Player thereby informing users that they either have the current version installed or that they should download the new version located on the page.
- **Actively display contact phone numbers on the “Contact Support and Customer Service” page.** Multiple users did not immediately see the “Phone numbers” link in the sidebar and therefore did not click it to unhide the phone numbers. It is feasible that this would only serve to further frustrate users who are looking for assistance. These numbers should be displayed outright on this page and not under an expandable link.
- **Emphasize the dates for the Adobe MAX 2011 event.** Two users did not notice “Register for MAX October 1-5” located in the sidebar of the Adobe MAX subsite. Users may become disinterested in the event if they cannot pinpoint the timeframe during which it occurs.
- **Re-position the “Chat Live with an Adobe Support Specialist” popup box to be a permanent fixture of the right-hand sidebar.** During the testing sessions, a live support chat popup box appeared a total of three times. Each time, the user quickly clicked the “No Thanks” button to get rid of the box and continue what they were doing. However, another user did specifically state that “there should be a box where I can ask a question”. Based on these incidents, a more effective use of live support chat would be dedicating a portion of the right-hand sidebar to an area that could initiate said live support chat. This way, users who are interested in this service can utilize it while others will not be otherwise distracted.

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, compared to medium priority issues and especially high priority issues.

- **Rename the “Flash Platform” link in the “Products” menu to “Flash” and have it expand into a submenu including the various Flash tools, frameworks, servers, and clients.** One user was unsure if the “Flash Platform” link would continue them on their path to finding Flash Professional.
- **Rename the “Acrobat family” link in the “Products” menu to “Acrobat” and have it expand into a submenu including Acrobat X, Adobe Reader, and any other associated tools.** One user was confused by the use of “family” in the “Acrobat family” link found in the global navigation.
- **Place a product’s system requirements (or a link to said requirements) at the bottom of the “Features” subpage for the product.** One user expected to find the system requirements on the “Features” subpage, specifically at the bottom, likely based on previous experience.
- **Place a brief version of the requirements to qualify for Student Version software everywhere it is applicable.** Many users were unable to find the eligibility requirements where they expected to find them on their first try. Placing a brief version of the requirements, such as “students must attend an accredited primary or secondary school, university, or college, be enrolled full- or part-time, and have a valid student ID” at the top of the “Students” and “Education Store” pages – those most often visited during this task during testing – would make finding this information much easier.
- **Consider placing a contact phone number on the main homepage.** Two users commented that they would appreciate a contact phone number being present on the homepage. This phone number could be located in small print in the footer area.
- **Clearly separate multiple help topics found on a single page.** In-page links used at the top of help articles jump to various parts of the page. Depending on the hierarchy of a given help article, some help topics may become invisible to the user depending on the surrounding topics. Such was the case with two users in the “Serial number doesn’t work” article. These individual help topics should be clearly separated, either via larger margins or horizontal ruled lines.
- **Rephrase “Register for MAX October 1-5” located in the sidebar of the Adobe MAX subsite.** One user was confused by the phrasing, seemingly unsure if these were the dates for registration or for the actual event.
- **Consider increasing the base font size used throughout the site.** One user asked for an adjustment in the screen resolution of the test computer to more clearly read the text on the site. While most browsers allow for adjustment of text size and/or possess a zoom feature, not all users are aware of it.

Appendix A: Task Evaluation Summary

Task 1: You are interested in purchasing Flash Professional and need to find the Flash product page on the Adobe website.

All five of the test subjects were able to navigate to the product page of a specific product, in this case Flash Professional.

- One user was unsure if the “Flash Platform” link would take them to the desired page.
- Two users reached the page via the “Products” tab in the global navigation, two users via the “Store” tab in the global navigation, and the fifth via the search bar.

Task 2: You are interested in purchasing Acrobat X Standard but want to ensure your computer will support it so you need to find the system requirements.

Three out of the five test subjects were able to find the system requirements for a specific product, in this case Acrobat X Standard.

- One user expected to find the system requirements at the bottom of the “Features” subpage for the product.
- One user found the system requirements, but commented that “as long as you look around long enough, you’ll find what you’re looking for.”
- One user referred to the current label, “Tech Specs”, as “geeky” and would have preferred something that “everyone would understand.”
- One user mistakenly found system requirements for a different product via site search.

Task 3: You are interested in purchasing Photoshop, specifically Photoshop CS5 Extended, but need to figure out how much it costs.

Three out of the five test subjects were able to report the price of a specific product, specifically Photoshop CS5 Extended.

- All three of the users reported the upgrade price. No users reported the full version price or subscription price.
- A fourth user did find the upgrade price, but believed they were searching for the full version price, which they were unable to find.
- Said fourth user came across the “Buying Guide” and was surprised to not find prices listed in the main table (which is the “Version comparison”).

Task 4: You are ready to make your Photoshop CS5 Extended purchase and to add it to your cart.

Two out of the five test subjects successfully added a specific product to their cart, specifically Photoshop CS5 Extended, with a third adding a different product to their cart.

- Three users, including one of the two who were successful, clicked on the disabled “Add to cart” button.
- The two users who were unsuccessful identified the “Add to cart” button as “broken” and were unable to continue.
- One of the unsuccessful users commented that “this shouldn’t be this hard. If I was at home, I would be mad now.”

Task 5: You realize that you are not ready to make your Photoshop purchase at this time and need to empty your cart.

All three of the test subjects who were successful in adding a product to their cart were successful in removing the item from their cart.

- Two users easily identified the “My cart” link at the top of the page and used this to access their cart.
- All three users easily located the “Remove” link at the top of the product row of the product they were trying to remove from their cart.

Task 6: You are a student on a limited budget and have heard that Adobe offers discounted software for education. Find out what qualifications must be met to get the student version of Illustrator CS5.

Four out of the five test subjects were able to find student software eligibility requirements in some form on the site.

- Two users found the requirements via the “Learning” tab in the global navigation.
- One user found the requirements via the “Education Store” located under “Store” in the global navigation. This user only pursued this route after failing to find it via the product pages.
- One user found the requirements via a “More on Education Discounts” link in a marketing graphic on the homepage. (It should be noted that this particular graphic was only displayed on the homepage of the site during this user’s testing session.)
- One of the users commented that selecting the Student Version should be possible when adding a product to the cart.
- One of the users commented that the eligibility requirements should be placed higher up on the “Students” page.

Task 7: You have some questions about the purchasing process but want to speak to a real person so you need to find a contact phone number for customer service.

Four out of the five test subjects were able to find the support phone numbers on the site.

- One user was confused by the presence of multiple phone numbers.
- Two users commented that placement of the phone number on the site's homepage would be helpful.
- Two users did not immediately see the "Phone numbers" link and briefly explored the page before seeing and clicking on it.
- A third user only saw the link after scanning the page, leaving, and then returning via a different "Contact Adobe" link. This user commented that the "Contact Support and Customer Service" page was "uninteresting" and that the link to show phone numbers could stand out more.

Task 8: You have heard that you should always keep your web browser's Flash Player up-to-date so you need to find the Flash Player update page to download the latest update.

All five of the test subjects were able to navigate the site and end up at the download page for the most recent Flash Player update, 10.3.183.10.

- Each user took a different path to successfully reach the download page:
 - The first user utilized the link in the "Download" section of the homepage
 - The second user utilized the "Downloads" tab in the global navigation
 - The third user utilized the search function
 - The fourth user utilized a link in the "Help" section of the homepage
 - The fifth user utilized the "Products" tab in the global navigation.
- Two users commented that they either weren't sure which version of Flash Player they had installed or were unsure of which version they should install.

Task 9: When installing your new software, the installation program asks for your product serial number but you are not sure where it is. Find a help article that will help you locate your serial number.

All five of the test subjects were able to locate the help article that explains how to locate a product serial number.

- Three users utilized the "Help" tab in the global navigation with a fourth user utilizing a link in the "Help" section of the homepage.
- The fifth user utilized the search function.

- Two users arrived at the help article entitled “Serial number doesn’t work.” They then clicked on the “I can’t find my serial number” link to jump to a specific area of the page. Both users then scrolled around the page for a period of time before finding the area of the page they were originally directed to.

The specific help section in question is comprised of merely a level four heading and a single line of text containing a link labeled “Find a serial number.” It is then followed by a much larger help section containing a level one heading and a table of problems and solutions. It is likely that this large help area stood out and therefore “blinded” the two users to the help area they were directed to originally.

Task 10: You have heard about the Adobe Max 2011 event and are interested in attending. On what dates does it run?

All five of the test subjects were able to correctly identify October 1-5 as the dates for Adobe Max 2011.

- Two users were able to answer the question by using the search function and referring to information in the key result box.
- One user mentioned that the phrasing in the sidebar of the Adobe MAX subsite homepage (“Register for MAX October 1-5”) was confusing. This user was also confused by the dates associated with different pricing.
- Two other users who arrived on the Adobe MAX subsite homepage did not seem to notice this message in the sidebar and instead found the answer via digging deeper into the Adobe MAX subsite.

Appendix B: Overall Evaluation Summary

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

	User 1	User 2	User 3	User 4	User 5
Quality of Experience					
Easy to use	2	2	5	4	3
Interesting	5	3	6	6	2
Efficient	4	2	2	4	3
Navigation					
Well-organized	4	1	5	3	2
Good labels	3	2	5	3	1
Direct	5	3	4	3	2
Layout and Appearance					
Attractive	6	4	6	6	4
Easy to read	3	1	6	4	2
Focused	1	2	6	1	3
Content					
Useful	4	1	1	2	3
Valuable information	5	1	4	2	3
Comprehensive	2	2	2	4	2
Good instructions	5	2	3	1	2

Quality of Experience

Users found the site neither overly easy nor overly difficult to use and also found it neither overly efficient nor overly inefficient. The majority, however, did find the site uninteresting, though it is unclear if that is due to the design of the site or due to the subject matter it covers.

Navigation

Overall, the tested users did not feel strongly overall – positively or negatively – about the navigation of the site. Most felt that the labeling was more good than bad, however.

Layout and Appearance

While most users found the site focused, some did not find it easy to read. This is a combination of the font used being rather small (one user requested an increase in screen resolution to navigate the site) and some portions of the site being overly technical (“it’s geeky”).

Overwhelmingly, the site was found to be unattractive. Multiple users complained of the color scheme being too dark and subdued while others mentioned that said color scheme made finding things difficult as they blended into the background.

Content

Most users found the content of the site useful and comprehensive. Opinions of the value of the information on the site covered the entire spectrum, but this again may be due to a non-interest in the subject matter of those users tested.