

Mozilla Privacy not Included

Usability testing findings - Nov/Dec 2021

Background

This report outlines the findings of the follow-up usability testing on Privacy Not Included. The test format was identical to that of the previous usability testing sessions earlier in the year.

The aim of these follow-up tests was primarily to understand how effective recent changes to the site have been in addressing the points raised in the previous round. These included:

- Creating more type hierarchy and introducing tabs to break up the content and make it easier to scan
- Adding “Tips to protect yourself” section to provide actionable advice to help users make better purchase/usage decisions
- Moving the location of the search bar and made it global, instead of within a category
- Small improvements to the search criteria
- Adding subcategories to the category pages and category and subcategory tags to product pages.
- Removing the product price from product pages.
- Adding the number of hours Mozilla spent researching the product and added a link to more info about our methodology to every product page to provide more credibility to the information provided

In addition, there are plans to do a complete redesign of the homepage in 2022 to address the organisation of information around the creep-o-meter as well as to provide more actionable advice and improve the first impression of the site to be more of a set of product reviews than an online store.

Bearing this in mind, this report primarily focuses on the adjustments already made, however it will also note and further feedback that relates to the issues that are planned to be addressed in the future.

Effectiveness of changes

For each of the main site changes listed above, we've curated any feedback or observations relating to their effectiveness.

Creating more type hierarchy and introducing tabs to break up the content and make it easier to scan

Participants seemed to appreciate the tabbed data, however there were still concerns about the amount of information on the page overall. One user in particular mentioned they'd prefer this tabbed information being shown at the top of the page, and others expressed a preference for summarised information over the article-style paragraphs.

Adding "Tips to protect yourself" section to provide actionable advice to help users make better purchase/usage decisions

Participants seemed to appreciate the tips listed here, although it didn't tend to be the focus of their feedback, nor did they express whether or not it was the most important thing to them. However, there were no more requests for further practical information (apart from one participant who didn't immediately notice this section - they withdrew their comment after seeing it later).

Moving the location of the search bar and made it global, instead of within a category

This change seemed to eliminate any issues of search scope. For example, no-one seemed to expect to be able to search only within the current category they had selected. One person expressed a desire to have a search bar available on each page rather than just the homepage, but all others were able to navigate back to it without difficulty.

Small improvements to the search criteria

There were still several places where participants ran into issues regarding search terms. Searches like 'amazon doorbell' yielded no results, while 'amazon ring' or just 'doorbell' did. Similarly, as before, 'smartwatch' showed a much more limited set of watches than were available on the site. Most participants were eventually able to find these others by using the categories and subcategories, but this took some time and effort to figure out.

Adding subcategories to the category pages and category and subcategory tags to product pages.

Several users gravitated to the subcategories and used them in the tasks, particularly the 'Fitness tracker' subcategory and 'Video doorbell' category. One participant didn't notice them immediately but found them very valuable when they did. They suggested that the buttons could be made less hidden than they are now.

Removing the product price from product pages

Several participants still perceived the site to be a shop at first, but this was based on the homepage rather than product pages. Usually by the point of reaching the product page they had revised their perception of what the site was for.

Adding the number of hours Mozilla spent researching the product and added a link to more info about our methodology to every product page to provide more credibility to the information provided

Several participants noticed this. The clarity about this seemed appreciated, along with the link to the methodology page. Another participant referenced the award logo on the homepage as a sign of credibility.

Themes and patterns

Through analysing the tests and responses to the follow-up questions we asked users after the test itself, we identified the following patterns.

Understanding the site

- Overall, participants seemed to have fewer issues understanding what the site was for than in the previous round of testing.
- The creep-o-meter was still a source of confusion, but more people discovered what the site was for by scrolling and noticing how it changed. Two participants pointed it out as a live chat feature at first. One participant remarked that they initially read the default text as ‘Find out how **creepy people** find these products’, with ‘creepy’ being the descriptor of the person rather than product. They understood that this wasn’t the intention.
- More participants in this round seemed to struggle, at least initially, with ‘privacy not included’ as a phrase. Some perceived this as the site itself not having privacy built in, others than a particular product didn’t have any privacy information available for it.

“I see this warning, it says ‘privacy not included’. So I’m going to assume this doesn’t talk about privacy.”

“I presume it would be a live chat option... I wonder what that does”

“I don’t get the smiley... I don’t get that.”

Browsing

- One of the most common requests in the previous round of testing was to include a comparison feature. Interestingly, this was not mentioned at all

in this round. However, the ability to view products by brand was mentioned again as a way of finding particular products more easily. It is not clear whether this would still be necessary with improvements to the search feature.

- Participants seemed to respond well to the top-level categories and the subcategories. There were no negative comments about them in this round.

“Oh here we go... there’s even little filters under the titles... these will show me the watches. I didn’t see that...”

Search

- As with the previous round, search term consistency was a common issue across both the smartwatch and Amazon Ring tasks, with similar searches yielding different sets of results and sometimes none at all.
- No participants were confused by the search being global rather than contextual now.
- One participant commented they would like to see a search button on all pages, rather than just on the homepage. Another said they expected that the search results would be on another page, rather than dynamically filtered.

Product info

- Similarly to previous testing, most participants did not expect so much information and several said they would prefer less, or more summarised information than what was presented. One person mentioned that the vote block gave the impression that they’d reached the end of the page content, yet the more useful (to them) summary was beneath it.
- No participants specifically requested an overall score for the review, and several noted the Mozilla verdict and vote results at the top of the page.

No requests were made in this round of testing about including an overall score for the products.

- The additions of the research time, review date and methodology pages seem to have alleviated any concerns about credibility of the information shown. Several participants noted specifically the 'Donate' button at the top of the page, which they found reassuring since it indicated that the site was made by a non-profit who would have impartiality.
- One user found it confusing that a product with an overall warning had a warning icon in its Privacy tab, but a product without an overall warning also had one too. They seemed to feel that the other tabs could potentially have warning icons in them too, and this demonstrated at a glance how bad the product rated against each of those tab categories.

"Just either give me an option to read a summary or bullet points... I'm getting tired. Who has time for this, honestly? Security is important to me but I'd rather not buy something than go through all of this."

"I'm not sure I'd want to read all this... if I come to your website I would just want to know because you're telling me, not because I'm figuring it out... I want you to tell me, I don't want to have to read all the information"

"I think it's very crucial to get more people to embrace more of a security mindset that it's easily accessible, and accessible to people with a short attention span... the amazon thing was a page of block set type... not very easy to sail through"

"Why has this one got a warning... ok it's only privacy, that doesn't make sense... because the other one only had privacy and it doesn't have this [overall warning] right here..."

Praise and overall comments

"I think it's a fantastic idea, something that more people should be more enthusiastic about"

"I find the site really helpful and I'm surprised I didn't know about this"

"It was very easy, very enjoyable, a great experience"

"It's very very good, and I think now on any time I decide to buy a new piece of technology I will come here and read about it"

"Overall, I'm going to start using it! I didn't even know it existed, this is amazing. I love this so much. This is like all I could ever want honestly, I adore it. The creators of the site: amazing job, this is absolutely wonderful."

Recommendations

Based on the results outlined above, we would recommend considering the following changes and improvements in any future design work.

- Further improve the homepage to better distinguish it as a product review site rather than an online store
- Improve the consistency and accuracy of results across similar search queries
- Consider improving the colour contrast of the subcategory filters
- Consider how frequently to use 'Privacy not included', as this play on words isn't being perceived correctly in all cases and is likely to be less well understood by those who speak English as an additional language
- Consider revising the product information page to provide more summarised information more prominently
- Consider making the usage of warning sign icons more consistent in their meaning across the site