

Findings and Recommendations (Dodge Nature Center)

Overview:

In this project, my team and I created findings and recommendations for our client, Dodge Nature Center, to address and fulfill the intent of optimizing information navigation and inquiry to user needs.

Key findings were derived from heuristic analysis and usability tests, highlighting challenges such as difficulty in locating information due to misleading labels, frustration caused by redirection and lack of contextual cues, and confusion regarding specific layout features. Navigation throughout certain parts of the site was very misleading. Clicking a button on a certain page would take you to the previous page even if it seemed as if it were to take you to a new page. Our team, as users, also felt like the website did not offer a deep visual understanding of what Dodge actually offers at their facilities because there was a lack of real-life experiences shown on the website.

Based on these findings, I developed targeted recommendations to promote seamless navigation and guide users to information they seek. These recommendations prioritize ease, clarity, and usability to ensure an optimal user experience.

Deliverables:

Findings and Recommendation Report

Methods/Tools used

- Heuristic Analysis
- Usability Testing
- Usability Test Planning
- Script Writing
- Note-taking
- Figma

Client/Organization:

Dodge Nature Center

The Dodge Nature Center & Preschool website is their primary online presence and repository for information about everything Dodge offers. It is the first point of contact for people wanting to find information about Dodge, and staff regularly directs people to the website for information, registration, and inquiry forms for their various programs, events, and services.

Key tasks

Information Inquiry:

- Find what activities are available to do with kids.

- Find out if Dodge offers any field trip programming and how to request a field trip or outreach.
- Find relevant information about Dodge's Preschool — costs, registration information, curriculum, facility tours, etc.
- Find what camp options Dodge has for school-aged children and how registration works.
- Obtain a trail map of a property.
- Find if there are options to bring a naturalist to a school classroom.
- Get involved as a volunteer at Dodge.
- Make a monetary donation to Dodge.

[The main case study content]

A Heuristic Analysis was performed to gain insight on usability issues within the website. While issues were identified across various areas, a recurring problem surfaced related to the website's flexibility and efficiency of use. We encountered confusion and frustration due to multiple redirections before reaching their desired page. I sought to identify the precise location of these pain points. Was it the layout? Or perhaps the flow? If it was the flow, which specific step was causing the most issues? With these questions and goals in mind, I then devised scenarios that targeted and addressed these concerns through usability testing.

Scenario 1:

You are an elementary school teacher using the Dodge Nature Center website because you've heard they offer a great experience with nature for students pre-k - 8. You are looking for a field trip to help your students have an in-person experience and want to learn more information about what they offer.

Task 1: Find some options where you can bring your students to regarding field trips.

Task 2: Schedule your class for one of their listed field trips available.

Task 3: Where would you find information to pay for this field trip?

Task 4: Let's say you want to bring Dodge to present to your class instead. Schedule one of their available sessions.

Purpose

During our heuristic analysis, we reached the conclusion that within this particular section, multiple pathways existed for users to access a single piece of information. The problem was that it was too flexible. We designed this scenario to **allow a step-by-step observation of their interactions to gain insights into user navigation patterns**. Through this approach, we were able to accurately pinpoint the specific stage in the user flow where redirection issues frequently arose.

Reference: [How to Write Project Case Studies for Your Portfolio](#)

Finding:

The key issue was the “Read Here” button that redirects users to the same page multiple times. Multiple users were already directed to the “Read Here” page prior to clicking onto the “Read here” page. This redirection caused frustration among most users.

Recommendation:

Do not have “Read here” on a separate page. Get rid of this section and move all information on the “Read Here” page to a single page containing all other information regarding the field trips.

Preference of having details on the same page was expressed by 80% of users.

Scenario 2: You are a parent wanting to enroll your child into Dodge’s preschool program for the upcoming school year

Task 1: Find an option you are interested in from their offers and tell us which option you’re interested in.

Task 2: Find the application and look it over.

Task 3: Find how much the application fee is.

Purpose:

In the pre-school section, our analysis found that information in this section was hard to find and placed in non-intuitive areas. **To understand user expectations, we designed this scenario for step-by-step observation of their interactions and reactions to information placement.** This allowed us to identify specific improvements to enhance intuition.

Finding:

Contrary to our initial hypothesis, our findings revealed that the issue in the “Apply” section lay in the visibility of system status, rather than mapping.

Particularly, misleading visual representations of the application completion time.

Recommendation:

Although a few users suggested using **"How to apply" instead of "Apply" for improved mapping**, their discontent was comparatively minor. Start with the labeling first to address flow then in next steps, target the misleading visual of application completion time.

Scenario 3: You are a private funder passionate about environmental education and want to see if Dodge Nature Center's cause aligns with your values.

Task 1: find Dodge's mission statement (what they believe in) and summarize what they stand for.

Task 2: Let's say that you are compelled to their mission statement. Donate \$1,000.

Purpose:

One of the objectives was to assess the factors influencing donor motivation and evaluate the ease of the donation process. To address this, we created a scenario to understand user emotions and involved personalized follow-up questions tailored to each individual, allowing us to delve deeper on how presented content influenced their donation decisions. This approach **facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the user experience and its impact on donation behaviors.**

Finding:

A notable recurring pattern was that users consistently desired more information, regardless of the task at hand (excluding Preschool). Regarding donations, **the lack of specificity regarding fund allocation deterred users from contributing.** Insufficient content prevented user engagement and connection with Dodge, leading to a reduced motivation to donate.

Recommendations:

Have a section labeled "What we do" in where there is context on where the money is going and what sets them apart from other nature centers

Scenario 4: You and a group of 7 friends hikers are looking at Dodge's Nature Center for a hiking opportunity after a recommendation from a good friend. Curious, you go on Dodge's website to look for location information to determine if their hike trails are good for you.

Task 1: Locate the map of desired location.

Task 2: Find out if bikes are allowed on the trails.

Task 3: Find out if you are allowed to bring your group of 7 to hike.

Purpose: One of the tasks the client wanted us to determine was how intuitive certain information for the general public was. To understand user expectations, we designed this scenario for step-by-step observation of their interactions and reactions to information placement. This allowed us to identify specific improvements to enhance intuition.

Findings:

Reference: [How to Write Project Case Studies for Your Portfolio](#)

There were two recurring issues. First was the misleading label that prevented most users from finding information efficiently. “Activities” heading was continuously mistaken for another section of information. Many looked at this section expecting to find hiking and outdoor activities since many other sites list “Activities” as such. Users expressed discontent that Calendar and activities are the same.

Recommendation:

Replace “Activities” with “Events”

Findings:

Second, though the map was found, it was overlooked on the main page multiple times.

Recommendations:

Bold lining on the main page to bring attention to the PDF link.

[The outcome or Next steps]

With the insights gathered from this test, we would recommend moving forward with changes in the following areas discussed in this report to attain the goal of efficiently navigating and inquiring information from the website. Once this is implemented, have a second round of usability testing to validate if changes attained goals.