

Out in the Fields

Sharing what we learned from our usability tests for Rail Europe

- **Parimal Satyal**
UX Designer on the project

formule du jour

- 1. the project**
- 2. usability testing**
- 3. the anatomy of a test**
 - i. the objectives
 - ii. the tasks
 - iii. the prototype
 - iv. participant recruitment
 - v. the protocol
- 4. testing + results**

the project



basically, they're
the largest retailer of
European rail products

(Like Voyages-SNCF, but for folks outside of Europe)

they sell

Point-to-point tickets

Paris — Munich [SNCF/Deutsche Bahn]

Rail Passes

Eurail Select 3 Country Pass [France, Germany, Switzerland]

Activities, Tours, Extras

SIM cards, Paris Visite, Wine tour,

Rail Protection Plan

Kinda like (but not really) insurance, worry-free travel

(significant) markets



The US



China ^{growth!}



Japan



Brazil ^{growth!}



REI

The Americas
HQ: White Plains, NY

RE4A

Everywhere Else
HQ: Paris, France

Rail Europe

Everywhere
HQ: White Plains + Paris

méthodolog-(ie)-y

Stakeholder Interviews

Vision, Goals, Organisation, Political context

Client/ Non-client Interviews

Travel planning, concerns, experiences, frustrations

Immersion, 3-day Workshop

What we understood, learnt + our (UX/orga) approach

Production, Feedback

3 Lots, 'Functional calls', Presentation, Adjustments, Validation



Lesson

Most people confuse Rail Europe with train carriers. They don't understand rail passes, don't know European geography and are not used to traveling by train.

But they trust the website, are willing to be guided and want inspiration.



Lesson

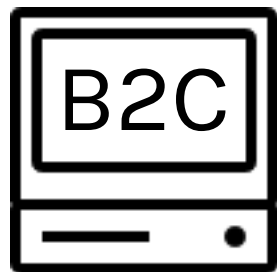
Eurail
Euro Rail Trenitalia
Eurostar

Most people confuse Rail Europe with train carriers. They don't understand rail passes, don't know European geography and are not used to traveling by train.

Can I take a train from Rome to Berlin? Should I fly? Drive?! Swim?

But they trust the website, are willing to be guided and look for inspiration.

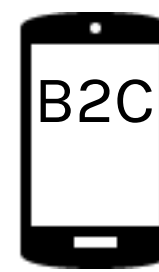
our scope



Website
B2C



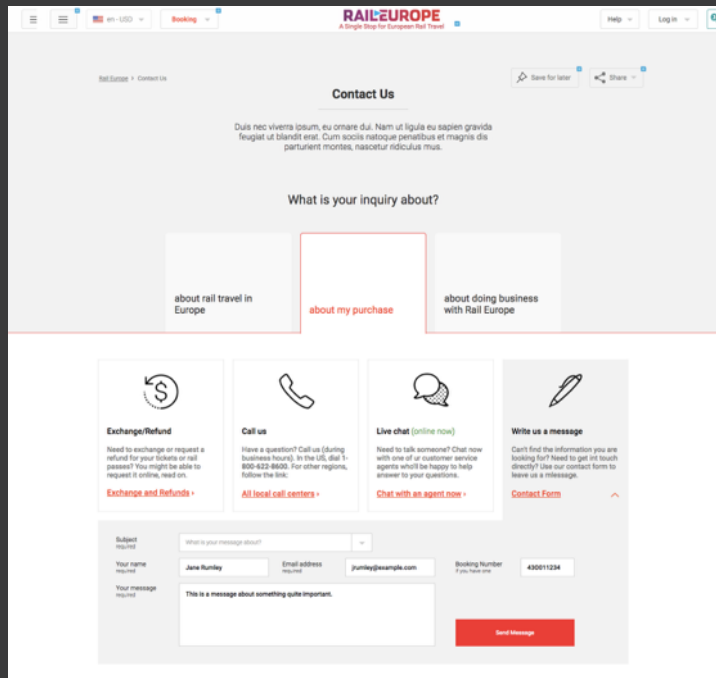
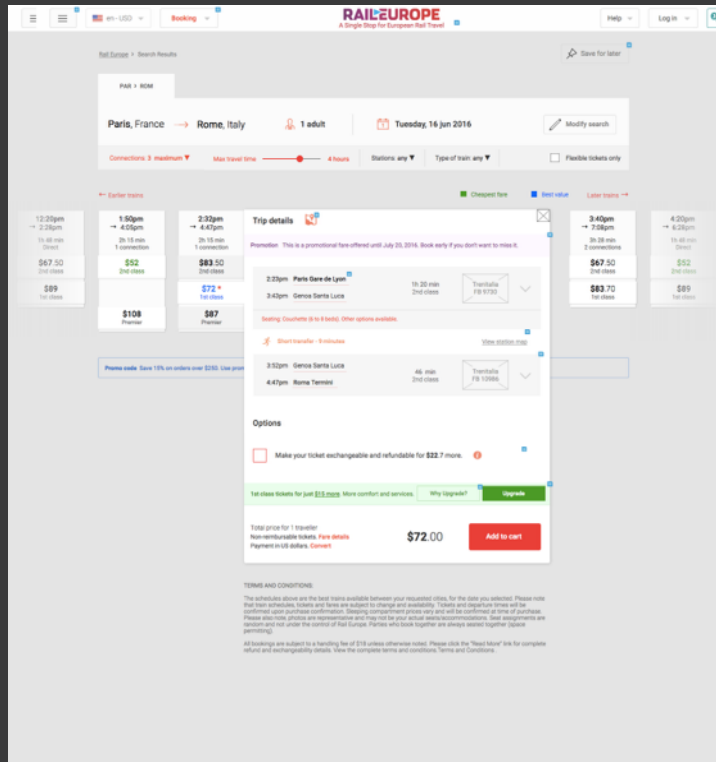
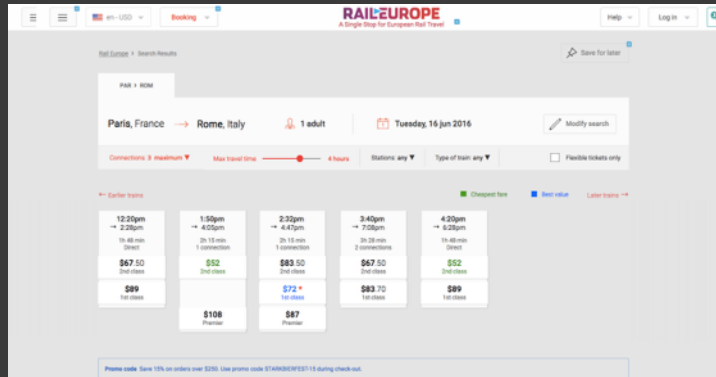
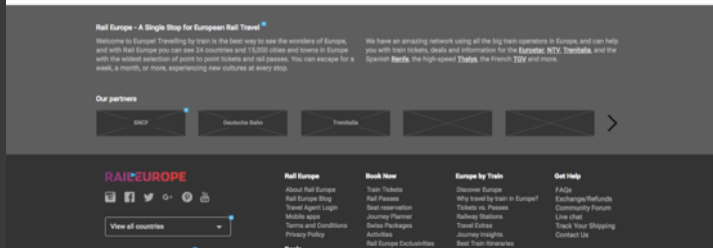
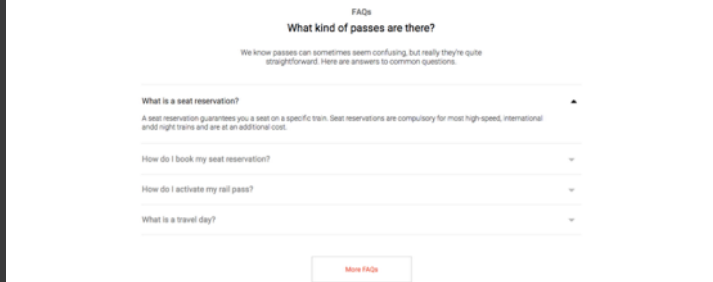
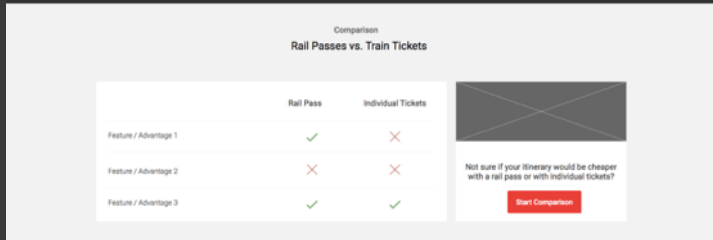
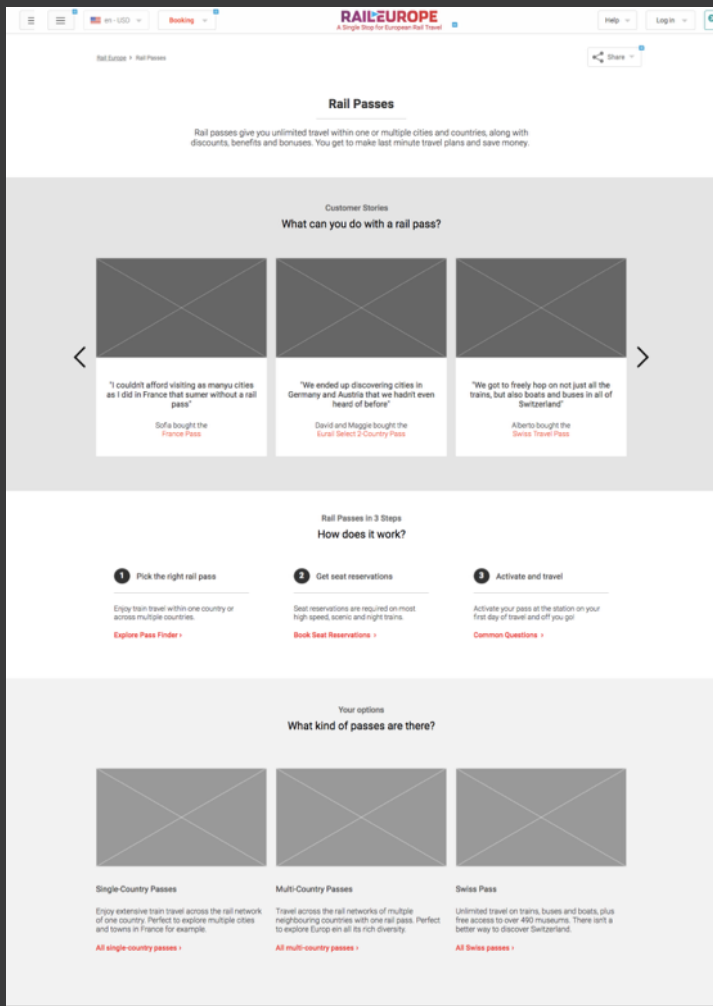
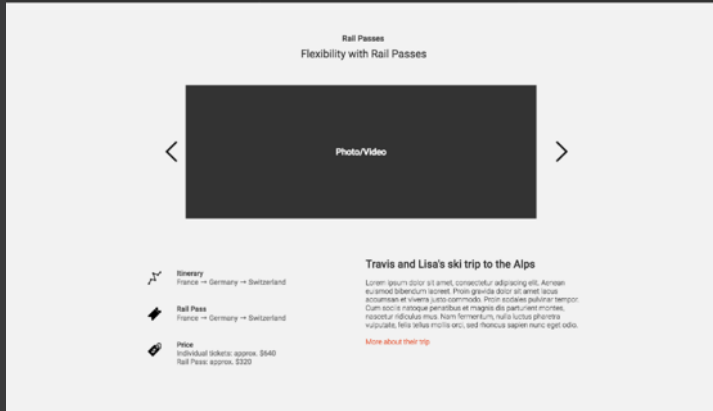
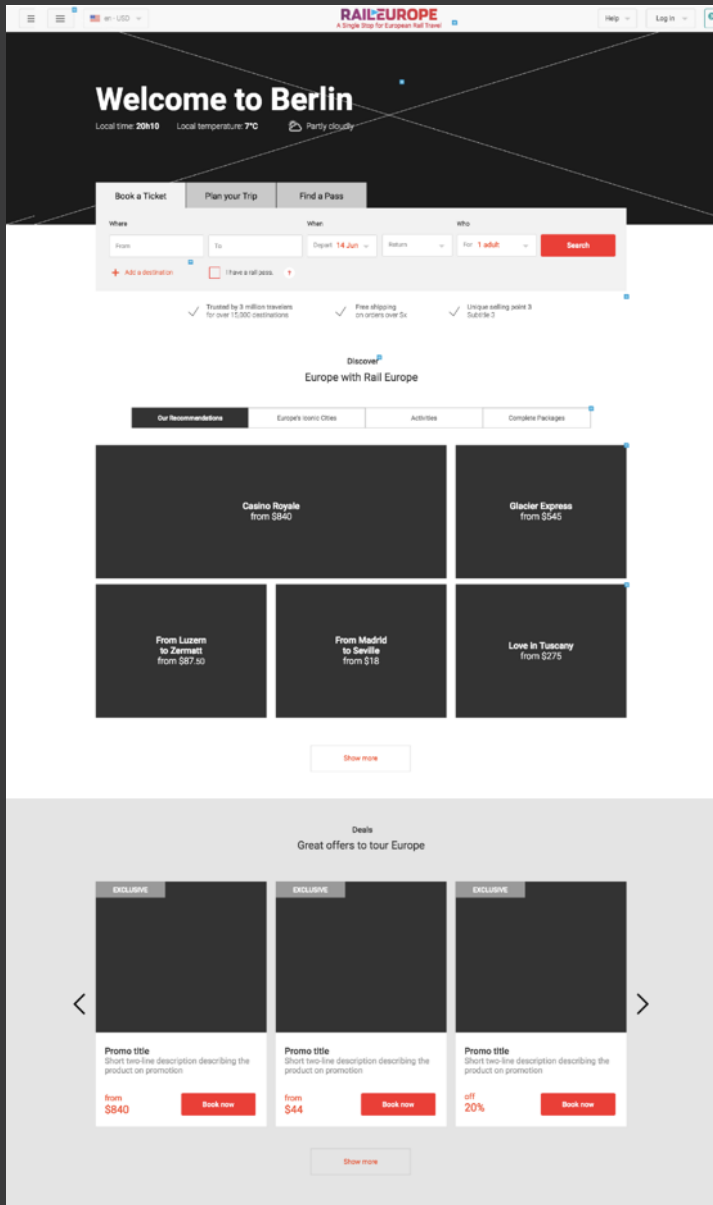
Website
B2B



Mobile Site
B2C



~~Mobile apps~~
~~B2@#)(\$!~~



EN1000

RAIL EUROPE

HELP

LOGIN

WELCOME TO RAIL EUROPE

N°1 DISTRIBUTOR OF RAIL TICKETS AND PASSES

BOOK A TICKET

FINO A PASS

PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHERE

WHERE

WHERE

From

To

Depart

For

SEARCH

75 years of experience

3 million travelers

15,000 destinations

DISCOVER

Europe with Rail Europe

Most Popular

Europe's iconic cities

Activities

Complete Packages

Casino Royale

from \$840

Glacier Express

from \$545

From Luzern to Zermatt

from \$87⁹⁰

From Madrid to Seville

from \$18⁹⁰

Love in Tuscany

from \$275

SHOW MORE

DEALS

Great offers to tour Europe

FREE EXTRA DAYS

28 COUNTRIES

EURAIL GLOBAL PASS

Free extra days! 2 days with a 15-day, 3 days with a 22-day and 5 days with...

FROM \$343

BOOK NOW

EXCLUSIVE

EUROSTAR ONE WAY RATE

Preferred high-speed train network to travel between main cities like London...

FROM \$44

BOOK NOW

DEAL

BRITRAIL PASS & BRITRAIL ENGLAND PASS

Travel across the rail networks of multiple neighboring countries with one rail pass. Perfect to explore Europe in all its diversity.

OFF 20%

BOOK NOW

SHOW MORE

EXPERIENCE

What we do for you

75 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Experts in European travel
We are the leading authority of European rail travel representing more than 33 railroads.

LEARN MORE

3 MILLION TRAVELLERS IN 2014

Leading provider of European rail products
Each year we help millions of visitors discover the rich heritage and scenic landscapes of Europe by train.

LEARN MORE

15,000 DESTINATIONS IN EUROPE

Offered in a single source
Create your own custom itinerary with our wide range of products and services.

LEARN MORE

ENJOY

Flexibility with rail passes

Travis and Lisa's ski trip to the Alps

Travis and Lisa are avid skiers. They wanted to do a tour of different alpine locations in Europe and experience local culture where there were all...

LEARN MORE

FINESARY

France → Germany → Switzerland

RAIL PASS

Europe Select 3 Country Pass

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RAIL EUROPE

HELP

LOGIN

Rail Passes

Rail passes give you unlimited travel within one or multiple cities and countries, along with discounts, benefits and bonuses. You get to make last minute travel plans and save money.

CUSTOMER STORIES

What can you do with a rail pass?

"I couldn't afford visiting as many cities as I did in France that summer without a rail pass"

Sofia bought the France Pass

"We ended up discovering cities in Germany and Austria that we hadn't even heard of before"

David & Maggie bought the Euro Select 3 Country Pass

"We got to freely hop on and off just at the train, but also boats and buses in all of Switzerland"

Alberto bought the Swiss Travel Pass

RAIL PASS IN 3 STEPS

How does it work?

Choose the right pass

Enjoy seamless train travel across one country or across multiple countries.

Explore Pass Finder

Get seat reservations

Seat reservations are required on most high-speed, scenic and night trains.

Book Seat Reservations

Activate & travel

Activate your pass at the station on your first day of travel, and off you go!

Questions? Read our FAQ

PASSES

What kind of passes are there?

SINGLE-COUNTRY PASSES

Enjoy seamless train travel across the rail network of one country. Perfect to explore multiple cities and towns in France for example.

All single-country passes

MULTI-COUNTRY PASSES

Travel across the rail networks of multiple neighboring countries with one rail pass. Perfect to explore Europe in all its diversity.

All multi-country passes

SWISS TRAVEL PASS

Unlimited travel on trains, buses and boats, plus free access to over 400 museums. There isn't a better way to discover Switzerland.

All Swiss travel pass

PASS FINDER

Find the perfect pass for your trip in Europe.

Which countries or cities do you want to visit?

FIND MY PASS

COMPARAISON

Rail Passes vs. Train Tickets

Rail Pass

Individual Tickets

Best for traveling to more than 3 cities

Children travel for free most of the time

Often includes travel bonuses

Need to book seat reservations separately for most trains

Discounts often available for two or more people traveling together

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✗

✗

✗

✗

✗

Have an itinerary in mind?

Not sure if your itinerary would fit better with a rail pass or with individual tickets?

START COMPARISON

FAQ

Common Questions

We know passes can sometimes seem confusing, but really they're quite straightforward. Here are answers to common questions:

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RAIL EUROPE

HELP

LOGIN

Brussels Belgium → Paris France

2 adults

Tue, 14 Jun, 16

MODIFY

Earlier trains

6:13pm

6:37pm

6:59pm

7:09pm

7:35pm

7:43pm

7:53pm

1198

158

155

182

182

198

182

2nd class

2nd class

2nd class

2nd class

2nd class

2nd class

2nd class

1248

1130

174

1130

1284

1192

1284

1st class

1st class

1st class

1st class

1st class

1st class

1st class

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RAIL EUROPE

HELP

LOGIN

Brussels Belgium → Paris France

2 adults

Tue, 14 Jun, 16

MODIFY

TRIP DETAILS

6:13pm

Brussels Midi

1h 22 min

TRAVEL

6:37pm

Paris Nord

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Exchange & Refund - \$82

Upgrade to 1st Class for only \$19

ADD TO CART

TOTAL PRICE FOR 2 TRAVELERS

\$55

ADD TO CART

RAIL EUROPE

VIEW ALL COUNTRIES

VISA

MasterCard

Amex

Apple

Paycom

Rail Europe

Book Now

Europe by Train

Get Help

Deals

Mobile apps

Press Relations

Corporate

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RAIL EUROPE

HELP

LOGIN

Find the perfect pass for your trip in Europe.

FIND MY PASS

EURAIL GLOBAL PASS

The Euro Global Pass gives you unlimited travel on the national rail network of all 28 participating countries. The best option if you want to see the most of Europe.

FROM \$534

LEARN MORE

BUY THIS PASS

EURAIL FRANCE, GERMANY & SWITZERLAND PASS

Unlimited travel on the national rail networks of France, Germany and Switzerland, giving you the chance to experience the beauty and diversity of these 3 countries.

FROM \$338

LEARN MORE

BUY THIS PASS

EURAIL SELECT PASS

Choose the Euro Select Pass for unlimited travel on the rail networks of 2, 3 or 4 adjoining countries. The single best way to see more of Europe for less money.

FROM \$229

LEARN MORE

BUY THIS PASS

EURAIL BENELUX PASS

Extensive travel on the national rail networks of Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland, with some access to the rest of Europe.

RAIL EUROPE

VIEW ALL COUNTRIES

VISA

MasterCard

Amex

Apple

Paycom

Rail Europe

Book Now

Europe by Train

Get Help

Deals

Press Relations

Corporate

RAIL EUROPE

VIEW ALL COUNTRIES

VISA

MasterCard

Amex

Apple

Paycom

Rail Europe

Book Now

Europe by Train

Get Help

Deals

Press Relations

Corporate

B2C Wireframes (pre-rework)



<http://s65vy0.axshare.com>

Graphic design screens



<http://ttgwnd.axshare.com>

usability testing

the goal

Verify that what we design actually works

Verify that what we design actually works

Hypotheses can be wrong.
Design requires humility.

What are the limits (inherent
to any kind of test)?

Verify that what we design actually works

What are we testing with? A
fully-functional HTML site, a
prototype, just images?

How do we know that
something „works“?

*Hypotheses can be wrong.
Design requires humility.*

*What are the limits (inherent
to any kind of test)?*

✚ **Clear objectives**

✚ **Moderation + observation**

✚ **A prototype**

*What are we testing with? A
fully-functional HTML site, a
prototype, just images?*

✚ **Well-defined tasks**

*How do we know that
something „works“?*

A good test needs

Clear objectives

What are you testing, exactly?

Well-defined tasks

What should the participant (try to) do?

A prototype

What are they going to be „playing” with? How functional is it?

Moderation + observation

Avoid bias bias, leading, observe where users click, what they say, think

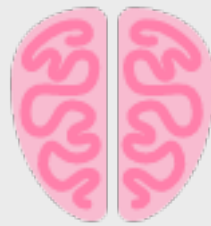
and

🔪 Test participants

Who are we actually testing the design on?

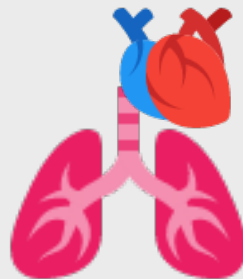


Animation:
Oliver Sinn



usability

the anatomy of a [^]test



the objectives

we wanted to know

- ✦ If people were able to use the website
 - ✦ to buy a point-to-point ticket
 - ✦ to build an itinerary using the interactive map
 - ✦ to buy a rail pass
- ✦ if they were able to understand rail passes
- ✦ how they would ^(subjectively) react to the new design



Lesson

Share and validate these objectives with the client early in the project.

Since everything that follows depends on defined objectives, you don't want these to change (too much) later on.

the tasks

(stuff we'll make our users do to see if our objectives are met)

we wanted users to

1. buy a point-to-point ticket
Brussels — Paris, 14 June 2016 around 5pm
2. try to learn about and buy a rail pass
Eurail 3-Country Select Pass (FR, CH, DE)
3. build a multi-city trip using the interactive map
Starting from Paris, a circuit through 4 other cities in 3 countries
4. compare between two alternate designs
for the train search results page

Rail Europe: Screens to Prepare for User Testing (macro view)

Task 1: Point to Point Tickets

Home
Booking Form: Tickets

Search Results
Cards, select one price

Search Results
Train Details

Search Results
Train Details, Flexibility

Search Results
Train Details, Upgrade

Search Results
Train Details, Add to Cart

Task 2: Understand Rail Passes and Seat Reservations, Pick a Pass

Home
Booking Form, Rail Passes

Rail Passes (overview)
Full Page, real content

Rail Passes (overview)
Pass Finder module

Pass Finder (page)
Pass Details

Rail Pass Product Page
Pass overview, choose validity

Rail Pass Product Page
Add Pass to Cart

Task 3: Interactive Map

Home
Booking Form, Trip Planner

Interactive Map
Starting city

Interactive Map
Add cities, add activity, complete a circuit itinerary

Interactive Map
Book itinerary

Interactive Map
Choose travelers

Task 4: Compare two designs of the Search Results page

Search Results: Cards
Compare schedules, select

Search Results
Train Details

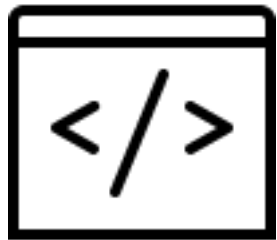
VS

Search Results: List
Compare schedules, select

Search Results
Train Details

the prototype

choices, choices...



HTML Prototype

dynamic,
real data possible

*requires graphic design
+ prod work*



Axure Prototype

interactive,
semi-dynamic

*quicker, interactive but
design/identity missing*



Linked Images

somewhat interactive,
not dynamic at all

*requires graphic design
work (but not prod)*



Lesson

Clearly explain to the client the *benefits*, *costs* and *limitations* of each kind of prototype.

The choice should depend on test objectives and resources available.

Test prototype



<http://ttgwnd.axshare.com>

participant recruitment

(significant) markets



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The US



Copyright © Free Vector Maps.com

China ^{growth!}



Copyright © Free Vector Maps.com

Japan

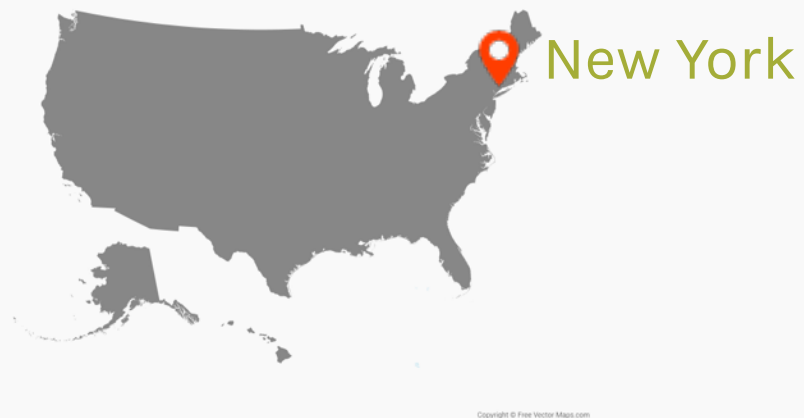


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Brazil ^{growth!}

test locations

also, places with Razorfish presence



The US

Razorfish New York

375 Hudson St, 9th Fl
New York, NY 10014

5—6 April, 2016
10(+1) participants



China^{growth!}

睿域营销咨询(上海)

19/F, Henderson 688 Plaza,
No. 688 West Nanjing Road,
Jingan District, Shanghai

7—8 April, 2016
10 participants

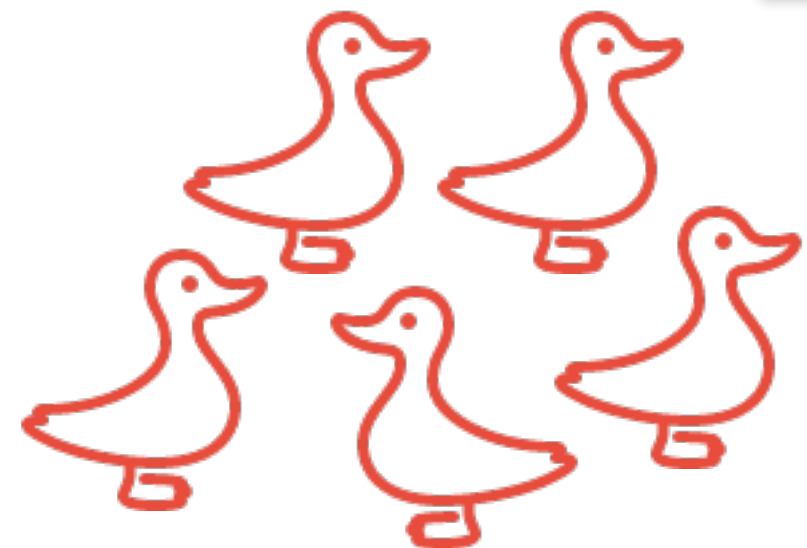
about panels...



Diverse

or (or two) each of many
different kinds of profiles

*results might vary, no
control variable*



Focused

a group consisting of
mostly similar profiles

*results w/ higher
confidence, but narrow*

How do you constitute
Similar profiles and yo
Very different profiles a
have a control variable

Having a large sample
it's expensive, takes a
simply might not be ne



Lesson

Have a frank conversation with the client about recruitment criteria. It's tempting to have it reflect market segmentation, but it's not always possible (or sensible).

Oh, and be nice to the project managers who organise all this; this bit's no fun.

New York

Shanghai

Customers



Lesson

Respect's people's privacy.

Make sure we're only contacting people who are okay with being contacted. Well also need to precautions not to transfer user data via insecure channels.



Lesson

Don't think of these tests as *scientific* or as *proving* or *disproving* something.
That's not the point.

The idea is to get the design in the hands of (random) people and see how they react, what we can learn.

the protocol
aka. the user manual
aka. the moderator's guide

a protocole
a guide to running/moderating the test
in one small, light, digestible package



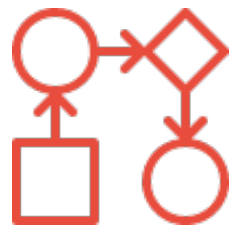
Session Introduction



Test Objectives



Pre-test Questions

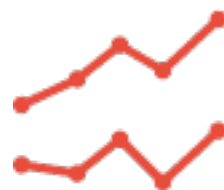


Breakdown of Tasks

a protocole



Task Prompts/Verbatim



Data Measures



Closing Remarks



Lesson

Keep the moderator's guide short, direct and readable. Use simple language.

You want people to actually read this.

format

5 min

Introduction + Ice Breaker

(aka. Operation Get-The-Participant-Comfortable)

10 min

Pre-test Questions

15 min

Task 1: Point-to-Point Tickets

10 min

Task 2: Rail Pass

15 min

Task 3: Interactive Map

5 min

Task 4: Comparison

5 min

Post-test Questions + Closing

(aka. Operation Get-The-Participant-Comfortable)

moderator's guide, pdf



<http://ttgwnd.axshare.com>



Lesson

The test protocol/moderator's guide should be short and to the point.

No one reads long documents.

testing + results

tests in new york

recordings

 *.../test-videos*



Lesson

The test protocol can either be followed very closely, or be used more loosely as a guide on which to base the moderation.

Both are valid, but being able to adapt around the participant is important.



Lesson

*in our case, an American
Express prepaid debit card*

Don't forget the incentive!

And the incentive can be expensive if you
decide to run the tests in Manhattan. *\$150 min.
\$300 normal.*

the results

the results, in one slide

1. Virtually everybody liked the design (no, really!)
„modern”, „pretty”, „clean”, ...
2. Date selection was a bit of a problem
We put a time selector in the date selector that confused some users
3. Rail Passes were still not very well understood.
Most people didn't read the text and had no idea what „validity” meant
4. The interactive map did remarkably well*
*Adjustments to the nav necessary, but prototype surprisingly usable
5. the two designs fared more or less equally well
with a slight preference for our new „cards” design, especially in China

results: client presentation



RE-usability-results.pdf

What happens next?

„Rework”

*aka. making optimisations and changes to fix
things that didn't work so well*



Lesson

Scope is important at this stage *focus* the team's energy on the most *important, critical optimisations*.

We made a list of recommendations, *UX, Creative, Copy, Tech*
categorised them by *area of responsibility*
and requested the client prioritise them.



AMaA

ask me (almost) anything

No, really. Whatever you want to know about usability testing, the project, about Rail Europe, black holes, German grammar...

thank you
merci
danke
grazie
धन्यवाद
谢谢