Usability Guidelines

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The following document contains guidelines for a usability test in reference to the local government website of Ross Township in western Pennsylvania. This website needs to be accessible to all Ross Township residents and anyone interested in events, classes, or renting a facility in Ross Township. The user base for this website has a profound diversity; therefore, the site needs to be extremely user-friendly, accessible, and readable. The evaluation laid out below is designed to test how easily the users can navigate the site, and in so doing, we will be evaluating the users' opinions of the organization, visual design, language, accessibility, and support of the website.
The website is located as follows: https://www.ross.pa.us/

Evaluation Guidelines
Organization
-   Identify how many departments and sections are within the main website (i.e., police, parks and recreation, public works, etc.)
Navigation
-   Navigate to the Ross Township activities and classes calendar. Identify the next available Knitters Club meeting.
Language
-   Check the outstanding warrants available through the police department portion of the website.
-   Identify the service company that has been deputized to collect real estate taxes and payments for sewage.
Accessibility / Support
-   Make a reservation at the Denny Park Pavilion for May 28th.
-   Identify supported technology on the site (i.e., VoiceOver, JAWS, NVDA etc.)
Visual Design
-   Identify the icons for the Parks and Recreation Department and Sustainability.

Tasking in a Controlled Setting
1) Navigate to the parks and recreation department. Create an account to sign up for a monthly pickleball membership. Enroll in the pickleball membership.
2) Navigate to the forms and rentals section of the website. Locate the "Deck Submittal Guideline" form and print out the form.
3) Navigate to the Police Department area of the website. Locate the online "Vacation Residence Checks" form and submit an inquiry for your current location.

Workplace Setting

A viable setting for an in-context test of the Ross Township website would be the Northland Public Library. This is a setting that is made available through the Ross Township government, and all employees within the library are government employees or volunteers. All citizens of Ross Township have access to this location, and as the tests need to advocate for all residents of Ross Township, this setting could be the most beneficial.

Post Test Interview

1) What are your first impressions of the website?
2) Name two things on the website you liked the least while navigating.
3) If you think about the website, what is the first word that comes to mind?
4) Do you consider the website ineffective, or did it serve its purpose for you?
5) If at any point while on the website you felt you needed assistance, did you feel that you could get that assistance through the website itself?

Post Test Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions with a number from 1 – 5 (1 meaning disagree strongly and 5 meaning agree strongly). Use the additional space for comments on why that grade was given.

1) The website was easy to navigate.

2) I was able to complete all tasks efficiently.

3) I did not feel overwhelmed while navigating the website.

4) The graphics and images on the website made the site better.

5) If I got lost on the website, I could find my way back to where I wanted to be.

6) The drop-down menus were helpful while navigating.

7) I feel as though I could navigate the website efficiently.

8) I understand the best way to get the information I need from the website.

9) The text on the website was easy for me to read.

10) I will use this website in the future.

Results

The site could be improved by modifying the search engine on-site; the current search engine does not yield relevant results, creating a frustrating user experience. The site could also improve with consistent drop-down menus. While navigating through the site, each department site within the main Ross Township website has its own specific drop-down menus, eliminating a grounding point for the user to help navigate back to a starting point. The website will benefit from consistency.

Conclusion

In accordance with the evaluation results, we have found that the main grievances reported by the users are with the accessibility and navigation of the website. Addressing the issues with the search engine and drop-down menus will increase the user experience and create a more successful website. When the issues are addressed, the evaluation has proven that the website can be successful, efficient, and accessible.

Work Cited

Markel, M., & Selber, S. A. (2018). *Technical communication*. Bedfor/St. Martin's.