

Note taking

Car hire | Websites

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Project objectives

1. Learn the value of conducting usability tests in your research
2. Build your skills in this extremely important research technique
3. Create a bank of insights that will be used during all future projects
4. Photograph and document everything you do to build your portfolio

Tasks

1. Watch the recordings of two usability tests (for desktop or mobile, depending on which path you've chosen).
2. Take detailed notes. Don't just write down everything the user says and does. Focus on the goals, behaviours, context, positive interactions, and pain points for each participant.
3. Finish with a conclusion on the main points you've learned.

Participant A

Robbie, Facilities Manager from Finglas, North Dublin

Internet access via	MacBook - personal Lenovo Thinkpad - work Smartphone (iPhone) Broadband at home
Internet usage	About 50% personal and 50% for work
Frequently used apps	Booking apps eg gym Music / reference
Usability testing experience	No



Experience of car rental

Rented a car in the past?	Yes. Once or twice in the last year or two, but did it daily on behalf of customers in a previous role as a hotel concierge.
Familiar online car hire?	Yes
In which countries?	UK only when hiring for himself
Usual medium for booking	Predominantly online
Websites used	Thinks it was Hertz. Can't remember how selected, but probably googled "car rental Manchester airport"—possibly did a quick comparison
Brand loyalty	No

Most recent experience of hiring a car

Reason for hiring the car	Travelling to wedding, flew to Manchester airport and picked up the hire car to drive the remaining journey. Decided to rent car well in advance along with other travel bookings.
Most important factor when renting	Price was the first driver for it as it was only a short trip (so comfort and luxury probably didn't come into it)
Type of car rented	Probably a Ford Focus – 4 door (<i>might mean 5?</i>) decent boot for 2 large suitcases. Had a radio.
Comparison when booking	Can't remember but says it is within his nature to check he is not being ripped off.
Any worries or concerns when renting the car	Always apprehensive that everything will work out on the day of travel, eg whether they will have the car you booked.
How was this experience	Fluid and quick - we just wanted to get on the road and everything went quite smoothly [appears to be talking about the experience picking up the car rather than reserving it.]
Would you do anything different next time?	Would probably follow the same process in the future.

Task 1

Brief



Travelling to England with a friend next summer and want to hire a car from the Sixt website.

- Pick up: 7th June, London Gatwick
- Return: 13th June, London Gatwick
- Vehicle specification: Automatic transmission

Video link: <https://uxdesigninstitute.wistia.com/projects/y52utme4z9>

Home page

Timestamp	Note
14:47	“My eye is sort of drawn to the search bar at the top... the search details... the ‘find the location’ ”
15:03	“I’m aware of the ...images and the...full flexibility and the ads....I don’t think they can be ignored...I want to try and get to the details important to me as quickly as possible”
16:18	Types in ‘London’ as the location and says he expects to see Gatwick in the drop down, which he does and clicks.
16:39	‘Return at pick up location’ tickbox - Participant reads it and keeps the box ticked.
16:43	Opens calendar by clicking on ‘Pick up date’
16:56	Calendar: “Say if I was looking to book in December of next year I would have to click 12 or 13 times to go across...”
17:24	Selects ‘pick up date’ and then moves mouse to ‘pick up time.’ The calendar stays open and the ‘drop off date’ selection follows the cursor as it moves.
18:00	“To proceed I suppose I’m showing offers?”

Overall view of homepage / search bar:

18:16	“Yes it was intuitive.“ “I presume it is their sales strategy rather than to say ‘search’ to say ‘show offers’.”
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Vehicle selection

Timestamp	Note
19:20	Notices and comments on the ordering of results from low to high price.

Key:
Behaviours “Quotes” | +ve -ve

Timestamp	Note
19:20	Notices and comments on the ordering of results from low to high price.
19:38	Recognises filter options across the top to pull in the search. Finds and clicks toggle for automatic vehicles as per brief.
20:48	Clicks the results page to get out of the 'vehicle type' filter. This action selects one of the search results. Participant scrolls up and down, and thinks the selected vehicle is a banner ad. "To me I'm taking that as there are nine vehicles available that match my search, but there and there's just sort of four that I'm viewing there at the moment... Maybe slightly confusing with the banner ad going across... Am I missing something?"
22:33	Search results: "I do think it's very well presented... The uniformity is good... the way that the images are displayed... The information seems to be well provided."
23:10	The caveat 'or similar' in search results - "That would stick in my mind that it might not necessarily be a BMW series 1."
23:35	"To see... if it is 49.50 a day or when you click in it does it give you it's only 49.50 a day on a Tuesday."
24:20	Double clicks on a vehicle icon, which instantly opens and closes the vehicle details., then double clicks again. Scrolls up and down. Takes 25 seconds to single click to get to vehicle details. "It doesn't seem to be bringing me into information about that. Or is it? It does give me the choice to click the image I think..."
25:20	Looking at details of a vehicle: "I'm sorry that's not it. That's confusing to me because I clicked on the image of the BMW but it's presented a Mercedes in the image."
26:21	Looking at details of a vehicle: I think it's good that they have given the total for the week." Participant compares this price with another two vehicles in the search results.
27:25	Double clicks on a vehicle again, which opens and closes the vehicle details instantly.
28:20	Notices the additional fee for pay later.
29:19	Presses select and goes to choose protection and extras.

Choose insurance and extras

Timestamp	Note
29:35	Looking at 'Your offer includes': "Looks like a more formalised version confirming the booking. I think that's a positive. It gives me a breakdown of what's included in it."
29:55	Looking at 'extras': "I like the icons that it uses."
30:05	Clicks 'Price details' "Yes, I probably would be happy to click through on that."
30:37	When asked, struggles to verbalise what loss damage waiver is - does give an explanation but does not draw on the "GBP1200 financial responsibility" text written on the page.
31:21	Gives a good explanation of unlimited mileage.

Timestamp	Note
31:51	Adds additional driver “It was quite easy.”
31:03	When adding a driver: Squints at screen “Day/unit?”
32:27	Notices that when additional driver is selected the tile has turned white and then checks whether this is the case by adding and removing a few other extras. “Have they turned from black to white once I have selected them I wonder?” “That’s quite a nice feature....I was quite sure of it.”
33:38	Looking at the list of extras participant misreads “Receipt by mail” as “Receipt by email”
34:05	Clicks on and off ‘Receipt by Mail’ a few times as it goes black and white. Might be uncertain about something but nothing is verbalised.
34:16	Clicks ‘Continue’ to proceed out of extras.

Closing comments

Timestamp	Note
Overall thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Thought it was quite straightforward to be honest.” • “Probably possibly got a little bit sort of slowed down when I started selecting the vehicle. I had BMW in my head, but now when I think about it it was BMW or similar... but the background vehicle was Mercedes and that was possibly confusing me.” • “It looked quite slick.... Easy enough to navigate I would say.”
Liked or disliked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It was quite simple.” • “My eye was immediately drawn on the first page to the search criteria.... That was quite easy to find. I enjoyed the simplicity of it I suppose.”
Expected but didn't see	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When I did click on the category for the BMW ... maybe a picture of the possible cars it could have been, maybe the 3 or 4 cars, or a larger picture to save confusion.... It’s one from this group.”
Surprised by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Enjoyed the use of colour. Quite simplistic but a nice touch with the black turning to white.”

Task 2

Brief



Road trip from London next summer.

- Pick up: 7th June, London Gatwick
- Return: 13th June, London Heathrow
- Vehicle specification: Automatic transmission

Video link: <https://uxdesigninstitute.wistia.com/projects/y52utme4z9>

Home page

Timestamp	Note
39:20	“It’s a bit busy when I come onto the page. There’s a lot going on.”
39:29	“I do see on the left hand side it says pick up location. Seems a slightly convoluted way of collecting the initial... location and dates.”
40:10	“I’m not particularly drawn to the right side of the screen... It just looks like an ad... Initially I just want to get sorta stuck in and see what’s available...”
40:48	“Thats a good first stop pick up location United Kingdom. That might save people a little bit of time going down through a long drop down menu full of countries.”
41:18	Selects United Kingdom and says expects to see further options appear, which is what happens.
41:33	Enters ‘Gat’ and selects London Gatwick from the drop down list.
41:42	Clicks on box for ‘Drop off location’ and sees Heathrow as one of a small number of options - “That’s good”
42:16	Clicks on date to the left of the arrow and uses forward arrow to click through to June. Does not use the drop down.
42:32	Clicks on date on the right of the arrow - “Just presume that, yeah, this is the return”
42:35	Takes until 43:20 to make a selection. Clicks month drop down, hovers over year, appears to miss that the year can be changed. Clicks forward arrow, month drop down, forward arrow (month name stays blank), clicks out of field, then back in - ends up selecting June 2022. “Sorry I just got a bit stuck there.”
43:25	Notices times and leaves as they are.
43:35	Reads driver age and leaves as it is.
43:40	“Promo code - It’s possibly a missed opportunity if they had promo code with brackets to say.... 10% or 15% discounts available or something like that... I might even google green motion promo codes. But that probably convolutes the booking experience.”
45:05	Clicks “search” - sees error ‘number of days is over the maximum number bookable.’ Goes into dates and uses back arrow to scroll through 12 months to correct it. - “I wonder did I book it for a year.”

Key:

Behaviours **“Quotes”** | +ve -ve

45:43	Clicks search
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Vehicle and package selection

Timestamp	Note
46:00	Dismisses cookie notice - “affects the viewing.”
46:10	“It has a clear breakdown. I like the way it has the different compartments across the way.”
46:24	“it does remind me though that I actually didn’t select the type of vehicle that I was looking for I suppose.” - this task is next in the flow.
46:44	Identifies the Peugeot 208 surrounded in the green as the vehicle being promoted.
47:17	“Again it does give you a nice image of the vehicle. It gives you options based on... price or what type of package...and it gives you an opportunity to sort of compare them all right across the way.”
48:00	When asked what Go contactless means - scrolls back to the top (has seen it but not read it?). “Something like that probably would appeal to me. But it doesn’t grab me...”
48:57	When prompted about automatic transmission - scrolls down first then up and finds filter, but takes a good ten or so seconds. - “If I was looking for a filter I would usually look up top right of the page...”
49:12	Mouse seems to hover momentarily over vehicle types before moving down to the transmission drop down.
51:05	“It seems like an apples for apples comparison right across the way” However in describing what is being compared the user talks about everything apart from the insurance excess.
52:05	Clicks ‘Book premium’

Booking summary & options

Timestamp	Note
52:23	“I like to get to these pages because... it puts in a nutshell what you’re signing up for. It’s quite sorta succinct. It’s also sorta quite official.”
53:26	When asked how they would add friend as a driver. Scrolls up first. Then down. Then clicks ‘additional driver’.
54:41	“It would be good to have the price displayed at the top...” of the booking summary page.
55:20	“When you added the additional driver at your 10 euro a day, as soon as you clicked on that [it would be good if] You could actually see the amount going up.”

Closing comments

Timestamp	Note
Overall thoughts	<p>“Probably found it a little more confusing, particularly on the first page... there was quite a lot going on, and just on the left hand side side... of the page to draw your eye to it, but not as obviously as the previous one, and I didn’t pay a huge amount of attention to what was on the right hand side of the screen. I probably dismissed it as advertisements.”</p> <p>“If it came down to sorta personal preference and confidence in that I was booking the right thing, I would say the first site that I used I would have had more confidence...”</p>
Likes or dislikes	<p>“The site seemed a little bit more basic than the Sixt one. The Sixt one seemed a little more warmer... a bit more professional I suppose.”</p>
Expected to see but didn’t	<p>“When it came to adding that additional driver...without having to scroll... that sorta rolling total of where you were...that would have increased or decreased as you selected or deselected... that would have been handy to have.”</p>
Surprised by	<p>“The thing about contactless probably should have been pushed more to explore that....if that was probably explained or pushed a little bit more, I probably would have availed of it”</p>

Participant B

Kate, from Milltown, Dublin, works in Finance

Internet access via Laptop
Phone
“The websites for some services are better on your laptop vs your phone”
Has broadband at home

Frequently used apps Social media, Utilities, Bookings, Email



Experience of car rental

Rented a car in the past? Yes, for leisure

In which countries? France and Spain

Booked from airport or not? Both from airport and also not from airport.

Usual medium for booking Always online.

Websites used Expedia, Booking.com, google companies in the area, see what's on offer through travel company. Liked Gocarrental.

Most recent experience of hiring a car

Reason for hiring the car Going on holiday to outskirts of Bordeaux and could not rely on other types of transport. Booked the car and transport together.

Most important factor when renting Price - to get to the location and short journeys, so other factors weren't as important. Also wanted something that felt secure on the road (not too small, and something reliable).

Type of car rented Ford Focus, 5 door, 1.4 or 1.2 engine.

Comparison when booking Think it was Gocarrental, and also googled Hertz, Avis. They were in and around the same price. Expedia was a little cheaper but further from airport so would not do that again.

Any worries or concerns when renting the car Checking the age of the car and the model to make sure it was reliable. Also reliability of the company - better if well known or promoted through Expedia.

How was this experience [Answered by the researcher - Good]

Would you do anything different next time? Choose a supplier that is at / closer to the airport.

Task 1

Brief



Travelling to England with a friend for a road trip.

- Pick up: 7th June 2021, London Gatwick
- Return: 13th June 2021, London Gatwick
- Vehicle specification: Automatic transmission

Video link: <https://uxdesigninstitute.wistia.com/medias/s4ley6v250>

Home page

Timestamp	Note
21:40	Participant identifies the search bar straightaway.
22:00	Changes currency to EUR.
23:08	Clicks on 'Find a location' - enters 'London Gatwick and selects the airport from the drop down list.
23:35	Skips pick up location and does not comment on it, but at 24:45 seems to be pretty confident the vehicle is going back to Gatwick.
23:32	Clicks on 'Pick up date' to open calendar and scrolls right until June and selects 7th June.
23:51	With calendar open, moves mouse to 'pick up time.' The calendar stays open and the 'drop off date' selection follows the cursor as it moves. "I might not have booked my flights at this stage so I might just leave it..."
24:00	Moves cursor back and selects a return date.
24:04	Clicks return time and selects 11pm - "I might put that later in the day - you're probably more likely to be covered for the whole day then."
24:15	Clicks pick up time and selects 8am. - "If you go over a certain hour then you get charged..."
25:03	Clicks 'Show offers' to proceed.

Vehicle selection

Timestamp	Note
25:10	Identifies filter - "I like to check these out because they can make a big difference to your search."

Key:

Behaviours **"Quotes"** | +ve -ve

Timestamp	Note
25:23	Clicks on automatic only filter.
25:27	Clicks drive age drop down which defaults to 30+, then selects 30+ - “I’m 30 so I’ll put in that.... Over 30...”
25:36	Adjusts ‘No of seats’ filter to 5.
25:41	Clicks on sort field and leaves it on ‘Lowest price first’
25:56	The filters - “yeah they’re very visible there”
26:48	Scrolls down list of cars to look at range.
27:12	Thinks about clearing filters to see what can get with none of the filters on, but decides that the filters selected are necessary.
27:57	Clicks on one of the vehicles to see more details. “They kinda pop up there...it worked as I expected it to.”
28:44	Reads symbols showing vehicle attributes. Driver age requirement icon - “21 years, I don’t know what that means.”
28:48	Notices options for pay online or pay later.
29:12	Clicks on price details - “Premium location fee - ok...What’s that cause it’s London or something... You don’t really know what that means.”
29:55	Tries to reconcile price per day presented in the vehicle tile with the price displayed on ‘Price details’ - “That doesn’t add up does it?”
30:35	Clicks select to progress to next screen.

Choose insurance and extras

Timestamp	Note
30:42	Reads through ‘Your offer includes’ section
30:53	Gives a good explanation of mileage limits / unlimited mileage when asked.
32:06	When asked about Loss Damage Waiver - “God I actually don’t know what that means.”
32:35	Clicks additional driver, uses drop down to select “1”, Ref the price - “jumped up a bit there!” , “it’s kinda good [that it gives a total price for the rental with the additional driver] because it’s transparent then.....” “It could be beneficial to have it broken out [by cost of additional driver as well as total]”
34:50	Does not select prepaid fuel - “that seems expensive”
35:20	Clicks ‘show more extras’ which reveals ‘Receive invoice by mail’ and misreads this as ‘email.’ Understands after some conversation - “We say post”

Key:

Behaviours **“Quotes”** | +ve -ve

Timestamp	Note
36:27	“Loss damage waiver - still don’t really know what that is”
36:39	Clicks on price details. “Still, again, I really don’t know what premium location fee is.”

Driver details page

Timestamp	Note
30:42	Reads through ‘Your offer includes’ section
38:15	Reads that debit cards may be accepted at some locations - would want to know whether they are accepted at her destination.
38:25	Clicks on ‘I’ by Gatwick - says she would paste address into google. Then reads on and finds that the desk is in the terminal. “Would try to save those details or take a picture on my phone.”

Closing comments

Timestamp	Note
Overall thoughts	“I thought the experience was pretty easy and straightforward...” “there isn’t really any comparison, so I would have to go and do my own comparison search.... Is it actually the lowest price option that I could get” “You might look into those premium fees there” to understand what the premium location fees are.
Liked or disliked	“Liked how easy the filter bar was - the way it was set out was really clear. The actual navigating the website is very easy.”
Expected to see but didn’t	- No map of kiosk in relation to airport. - Ambiguous about whether a debit card will be accepted to pay for this particular rental. - No explanation of loss or damage waiver and what level of insurance cover is provided.
Surprised by	Surprised about how much the additional driver was.

Task 2

Brief



Road trip from London with a friend next summer.

- Pick up: 7th June, London Gatwick
- Return: 13th June, London Heathrow
- Vehicle specification: Automatic transmission

Video link: <https://uxdesigninstitute.wistia.com/medias/s4ley6v250>

Home page

Timestamp	Note
44:19	Very quickly skims over the 'Green Motion Car and Van Rental Section and focuses on the search section "I straightaway can see this Pickup location and bar so I'm kinda looking at that."
44:35	Sees 'Contactless car rental' is unsure what it means (though makes a pretty good guess) - doesn't see 'Learn more' option. "I don't know what that means. Is it just that you pay with your card and you don't have to go in and talk to someone?"
45:12	Pick up location: clicks United Kingdom
45:14	Pick up location search box - enters 'Gate' and selects London Gatwick from the drop down.
45:20	Clicks on drop off location, selects Heathrow from the list. "That's pretty handy."
45:35	Search box - "Straight in front of you, pretty easy for you to know that's where you'd enter your details."
46:06	Clicks on date to left of arrow which brings up calendar, clicks right to advance a few months and then uses the drop down to select June, and then 7th.
46:15	Calendar automatically appears for return date, participant selects 13th without missing a beat.
46:20	Clicks on return time - but does not change them as flight times are not known for this trial.
46:30	Participant makes no reference to driver age field on search form.
46:34	"I don't have a promo code so I'm going to say Search now and see what comes up" Clicks search.

Vehicle and package selection

Timestamp	Note
47:03	"It's giving me some car option here."
47:25	Scrolls and searches for the filter for a few seconds, scrolling down first and then up. "I'm kinda looking now.... For this filter button, here I think.."
47:32	In the filter: selects pay online, changes currency to Euro, transmission to Automatic and passengers to 5.
48:05	"To find the filter - It took me a bit longer definitely."
48:33	Still expressing uncertainty about the meaning of Go Contactless (though seems to be making a reasonable guess).
49:15	Expresses uncertainty about whether the cars may be bigger than she needs. "I may have to look into that, I can't be too sure."
49:35	Starts comparing the packages.
50:18	Comparing packages: "I do like free cancellation particularly at the moment with Covid."
50:32	Comparing packages: "I'm starting to get a bit bogged down with this at this stage with this - it's a lot of information to take in."
50:50	Comparing packages: "I don't really like the look of that excess liability thing, being so high on the basic one but how come it's so much more expensive on the premium one."
51:45	Comparing packages: "I don't really know what excess liability means to be honest."
52:01	Selects Premium to proceed

Booking summary and options

Timestamp	Note
52:15	Scrolls down to optional extras and ticks 'additional driver'.
52:32	Unsure whether cost of additional driver has been added on. Scrolls up and down the page to compare the package price and total and tries to work it out in her head. "It's not really broken down, or no there 'extras pay now' there it is there. It's kind of a little bit not that transparent... Could just say additional drivers..."
53:26	Clicks proceed

Driver details page

Timestamp	Note
53:32	Terms and conditions - (sighs)
53:29	“I wouldn’t feel comfortable confirming and paying just yet now so I would probably go back and look probably through this [packages] again in more detail. But as I said I feel a bit confused.”

Closing comments

Timestamp	Note
Overall thoughts	<p>“Definitely found this one a little more confusing”</p> <p>“I feel like there are more hidden charges in this one.”</p> <p>“I don’t even feel comfortable with knowing what size the engine is here. 1L-2M I don’t know what that means.”</p> <p>“Maybe there’s more detail so in a way maybe it’s actually better....”</p> <p>“But I’d definitely want to go away now and have a think....I’d want to ask a few people, that security deposit, is that normal, is the excess liability normal.”</p> <p>“But it’s actually cheaper isn’t it.”</p> <p>Go contactless - “If that’s like their go to, their new big thing that they are trying to push, they need to make it clearer what it is.”</p>
Liked	<p>“Maybe it does actually give you bit more information which you might want.”</p> <p>“Drop off / pick up was quite easy to do.”</p>
Didn’t like	<p>“Not as friendly for navigating through as the other one.”</p> <p>“I definitely found the filtering wouldn’t have been as intuitive”</p> <p>“Didn’t like the big four different options selection - not really knowing why the basic one had such a massive security deposit behind it... that straightaway makes you feel like they’re pushing you to get the most expensive option.”</p> <p>“Search form should have been a bit more clearer from the side bar [remainder of home page].”</p> <p>“Didn’t really give information on go contactless.”</p> <p>“They are kinda assuming people are booking rental cars day in day out but most people are booking a rental car once or twice a year for a holiday or a road trip.”</p>
Expected but didn’t see	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maps - Explanations of key terms as tooltips(eg excess liability, mileage limits) - Cancellation in line with T&Cs unnecessarily opaque - should just say what this is eg up until x date <p>“So you’re clicking through and you’ve really got no idea what you’re signing up to I feel at this point.”</p>
Surprised	Security deposit (that it was so high on the basic package).

Conclusions

We have not yet completed the analysis module in this course, but a broad overview of the key points is as follows:

- On the home pages of both sites the users just wanted to get into the search. They were not interested in, and did not take in, any other information presented here.
- The calendar implementation in the search forms on both sites caused the users problems, but in different ways. The design of calendar inputs and their relationship to the forms they relate to, needs further thought.
- Filter positioning was ok on Sixt even though it appears to break with the convention of having filters down the left. On Greenmotion, the filters were hidden behind a button and users found them more difficult to find.
- The filters on the Sixt site dropped down to reveal their options. Participant A struggled to exit a filter that had dropped down. They clicked on the the page which had the effect of selecting a vehicle, which then confused them in viewing the list.
- On the Sixt site the search results are presented in tiles but selecting a vehicle has the effect of inserting details of the vehicle between one row of search results and the next. Participant A thought that this was a banner ad and wondered where the remaining search results were.
- On the Sixt site the driver age icon was not understood by the participants.
- The second click of a double click had the effect of negating the first click, and this was especially apparent on the Sixt site. One participant struggled to select a vehicle from the search results on the Sixt site.
- On the Sixt site Participant A was confused by the vehicle details showing a different image compared to the search results.
- Participants struggled to understand the fee breakdown on both sites. On the Greenmotion site the participants identified the lack of a running total, within view, as extras are selected.
- On both sites, the costs of extra items are presented 'per unit/per day' rather than for the duration of the hire.
- On the Sixt site both participants misread "Receipt by mail" as "Receipt by email."
- Both participants proceeded with more ease to view and select extras on the Sixt site compared to Greenmotion.
- Neither participant explored the insurance options on Sixt and it was not clear that they saw or understood the financial liability they would face in the event of an accident. Participant B was a little clearer about this on the Greenmotion site and (possibly as a result of understanding it better) felt "they're pushing you to go for the more expensive one." Although more transparent, the way the information is displayed seems to have led to some distrust on the Greenmotion site.
- Neither participant picked up on the explanation of the Go contactless product on the Greenmotion site.
- Participant B felt "bogged down" with the different packages offered on the Greenmotion site.
- Participant B highlighted the lack of clear information, including maps, of pick up and drop off locations as part of the confirmation process.
- Participant B also highlighted the lack of clear information about the acceptance of debit vs credit cards for the reservation and pick up of the vehicle.

Key:

Behaviours **"Quotes"** | +ve -ve

Learning points

DOCUMENT FORMAT

One of the learning points from my first assignment, competitive benchmarking, was that I really needed to think about the format of the document before getting too far into the assignment. So for this project I took one user and one test, and designed the template around that, which saved me a lot of reformatting time.

DETAIL

I particularly struggled with decisions about how much detail to provide in the notes, and erred on the side of more rather than less. I decided that it would be better to record the detail now, as this would save time going back and having to re-watch the video later. I suspect that once I have gone through a few rounds of research and analysis I will get a better feel for this.

CODING

Categorising behaviours and quotes as neutral, + or - isn't as easy as it sounds, and it is important to create consistency by defining these terms up front. I ended up with the following definitions:

+ : all comments which showed the site in a favourable light, all actions associated with positive comments, and all behaviours that helped the user achieve their goal.

- : all comments which showed the site in an unfavourable light, all associated actions, and actions that slowed or prevented progress towards the user's goals.

Neutral: Other behaviours and comments.

Where the participant did not describe their thoughts or feelings such as confusion I refrained from providing a best guess based on their actions.

TIME

I found that once I had the template in place, the note taking task took me about 4-5 minutes per minute of video. I was taking notes directly into the electronic template, rather than transcribing handwritten notes.

DESIGN AND MODERATION

This assignment was a valuable opportunity to observe someone else carrying out a usability test and I learned:

1. There is a difficult balance to strike between putting the participant at ease and following a script. On occasion the moderator:
 - Asked the user a question and then answered it for them
 - Led the user in the phrasing of questions
2. The usability test is not a 100% natural interaction with the website/software because the requirements to slow down, speak aloud and the interruptions affect the interaction. I was interested by the question 'what do you see' when some pages loaded as I wondered whether this might prompt more visual exploration than might otherwise occur.
3. It's clearly very important to pick up on and explore the participants' behaviours, and the challenge is to find the right moment to do this so as not to interrupt the task flow.
4. A key challenge for me will be to keep my usability test to time. Piloting may help but some participants will want to say more than others, which will affect timings.
5. If users are seeing more than one site or design, it is important to neutralise any presentation order effects through counterbalancing.
6. Users can visibly struggle with features and yet say they like them.

Key:

Behaviours "Quotes" | +ve -ve