

This audit is based on a user experience audit described in the September 1998 "Why Most Web Sites Fail" Report by Forrester Research. (Forrester's audit was itself based on software evaluation techniques.) Forrester used a simple pass-fail method which we have expanded to a rating system with zero as a reflection of bad user experience and 3 reflecting excellent user experience.

On Jan. 5, 2001 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., User Experience Director Dan Willis conducted this survey of DailyShopper.com. The test was conducted using WPNI's broadband Internet connection. A 17" monitor was used. Overall notes below are followed by a numerical overview of the audit. This is followed by an examination of the user experience of the product's branding. The final information is the actual audit itself, which includes very specific notes, when appropriate.

## Overall notes on DailyShopper's user experience

DailyShopper.com's product provides an acceptable user experience if its fatal error is corrected. The product excels in creating a simple, uncluttered experience and has some well designed tools. Unfortunately, they have an unacceptable problem with their registration where registered users are forced to re-enter information and don't receive promised benefits. They also seem too easily swayed by large advertisers to sacrifice the logic of their sale-searching tools. In two areas (MyDailyShopper and Buy Online), user value propositions seem like weak excuses to justify business strategies that do little for the user.

## Audit averages

We have followed Forrester's audit in its organization of four specific areas of the user experience:

**Payoff:** Do content and function meet needs and expectations?

**Courtesy:** Does the interface respect time --- not waste it?

**Trust:** Does the site work consistently --- not break easily?

**Intelligence:** Does the site proactively aid users to achieve goals?

### Meets user needs and expectations

Avg. rating

2.3

Comment

With the exception of the Radio Shack area (described later in this document), DailyShopper excels in these features.

### Respects user's time

Avg. rating

2.6

Comment

### Builds user trust

Avg. rating

2

Comment

While the product is sufficient otherwise, registration problems are unacceptable.

### Provides proactive aid for user goals

Avg. rating

1.5

Comment

This is not an area that fits well within the DailyShopper business model.

KEY

0

Not at all

1

Insufficiently

2

Sufficiently

3

Very much so

## Effectiveness of co-brand

Judging by the use of DailyShopper on the Baltimore Sun's online site, there is a great deal of flexibility allowing the removal of the registration function when needed and the ability to move product-essential links. The lack of dueling brands is refreshing (DailyShopper opts for a "powered by" approach).

## Audit

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Information is relevant and complete.

Rating  Comment

DailyShopper would have earned a 3 for this item if they hadn't shown a willingness to sacrifice the logic and user experience of the site for a major advertiser. The basic approach to helping users find sales at local businesses is sound. The shopping list feature is well conceived and executed (even in the details: the printer friendly function is especially well done). The Deal Detective provides real value to users above and beyond simple searches. But the product gets pulled back down to a 2 rating because of the user disconnect built into the Radio Shack area. DailyShopper's primary tool is to "browse today's sales in your neighborhood" but a user selecting Radio Shack is delivered the irrelevant slogan "You've got questions. We've got answers" and a list of categories that turn out to be items on sale on the Radio Shack Web site (see figure 1).

2. Users can conduct transactions online.

Rating  Comment

3. The site is organized by user goals.

Rating  Comment

The MyFavorites functionality is a strong feature for this item. The "last day" tag added to appropriate search results is a nice detail. MyDailyShopper is, in fact, just a registration tab. There is a harmful misalignment between this reality and the link being displayed like user-goal tools Deal Detective, Shopping List and Coupons. Also, users are frequently presented above-the-fold information that is all introduction with little content and are forced to scroll to see the response to their searches.

KEY

Not at all

Insufficiently

Sufficiently

Very much so

RESPECT FOR USER'S TIME

4. Users can find content at the second level of the site.

Rating

Comment

5. The text is legible, especially on buttons and menus.

Rating

Comment

6. Navigation elements are clearly visible.

Rating

Comment

7. Visitors can find content at the third level of the site.

Rating

Comment

8. The site is free of irrelevant content.

Rating

Comment

9. Words and links and prompts are consistent.

Rating

Comment

10. The text is in plain English, avoiding jargon.

Rating

Comment

11. Pages are uncluttered.

Rating

Comment

KEY

Not at all

Insufficiently

Sufficiently

Very much so

USER TRUST

12. The site reliably executes important tasks.

Rating

Comment

While the main tool is reliable, the registration process is unacceptable. Users who are logged in and click on the MyDailyShopper tab are treated as if they are no longer registered, even when MyFavorites material is still displayed in the left column (see figure 3). Also, a registered user still has to enter their address info to get closest stores (see figure 4).

13. Basic functions are always available.

Rating

Comment

14. The site gives feedback.

Rating

Comment

The registration glitches described in item 12 pulls the rating here down. It's worth noting that the e-mail communications and confirmations to users are done well.

15. The site performs with consistency and speed.

Rating

Comment

PROACTIVE AID FOR USER GOALS

16. Searches list retrievals in order of relevance.

Rating

Comment

The option to reorder alphabetically by description or by store name is left to the user's interpretation. Because of the nature of these product descriptions, the value of alphabetical listing is also suspect.

17. Users can save preferences or personalize.

Rating

Comment

See item 12 comments

18. Searches find most of the relevant content.

Rating

Comment

19. Visitors can interact to achieve their goals.

Rating

Comment

Not a feature set in the DailyShopper business model.

KEY

Not at all

Insufficiently

Sufficiently

Very much so

# User Experience Audit

Site audited: DailyShopper.com

URL: <http://DailyShopper.com/shop/index.asp>

Date and time of audit:  
1/5/01 11 a.m.

Auditor: Dan Willis, UE Director



Figure 1: Radio Shack creates a disconnect in the user experience to "browse today's sales in your neighborhood" with this treatment of the online sale items it wants to push.

The image shows a screenshot of the DailyShopper.com website with several UI elements highlighted by colored boxes and callouts:

- DailyShopper Help Navigation:** A box at the top left containing a dropdown menu with the text "Please select a topic".
- You'll get:** A yellow callout box on the right side of the registration form listing benefits: "personalization", "sale alerts", "great contests", and "and more!". It includes a "Sign Up!" button with a checkmark icon.
- Address Form:** A blue form titled "Please enter your address below:" with fields for "Email Address", "Street Address", "City" (containing "Centreville"), "State" (containing "VA"), and "Zip Code" (containing "20120"). It features a "go" button with a right-pointing triangle icon.
- Sign In Form:** An orange box at the bottom left with fields for "User Name:" and "Password:", a "Forgot your password?" link, and a "Submit" button with a checkmark icon.
- Zip Code Field:** A separate callout box for the "zip code:" field, which is empty and has a right-pointing triangle icon.
- Security Icon:** A small padlock icon labeled "security" is located near the address fields.

Figure 2: Submit button inconsistency abounds. (Clockwise, from lower right) A sign in "Submit" button with confusing icon is outside of the form's color area; The lowercase "go" button, with triangle, is included inside of the address entry form's color area; The DailyShopper help navigation drop menu has no button; The "Sign Up" button, with a different confusing icon and an exclamation point is encased inside of the "You'll get" color area; The ZIP code field has no words, just the triangle.



Figure 3: Users who have registered who click on the MyDailyShopper link in the upper right are treated as if they haven't logged in. This is in spite of the fact that personalized content is delivered in the left rail.

The screenshot shows the DailyShopper.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Deal Detective, Shopping List, Coupons, and myDailyShopper. The main header includes the DailyShopper.com logo and the current shopping area: Centreville, VA 20120, with a Change Area button.

Below the header is a search section titled "Browse today's sales in your neighborhood". It features three dropdown menus: "Choose a Local Store", "or a Brand", and "or a Category". To the right, there is a search box with a "go" button and a "help" link. An "advanced search" link is also present.

The main content area is titled "Stores" and features a featured store, "Abercrombie & Fitch". The store description says: "Check out today's sales, then go to the nearest Abercrombie & Fitch location to purchase and save." There are links for "Abercrombie & Fitch Home", "Map Closest Store", and "Locations/Store Hours".

Below the store listing is a registration form titled "Please enter your address below:". The form includes fields for "Email Address", "Street Address", "City", "State", and "Zip Code". The "City" field is pre-filled with "Centreville", the "State" dropdown is set to "VA", and the "Zip Code" field is pre-filled with "20120". There is a "security" icon next to the "Street Address" field and a "go" button at the bottom of the form.

At the bottom of the registration form, there is a message: "To skip this step in the future, register for free now!" with a right-pointing arrow.

The footer contains navigation links: Home, Help, Contact Us, About DailyShopper.com, Our Network, Privacy, and Terms of Use. Below these links is the copyright notice: "Copyright © 1999-2001 DailyShopper Network, Inc. All rights reserved."

Figure 4: Registered users are forced to re-enter information to get maps and directions.