Usability Testing on Indeed Report

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Abstract

This study examines the relevance of job suggestions and the efficiency of the Indeed application process. Six college students from various majors were recruited and assigned a fictitious persona to evaluate their interactions with the website (See Appendix C). Participants were provided Indeed accounts to search for and apply to job listings, simulating a real-life job search. Screen recordings captured participants' activity, measuring the time spent on applications and the frequency of encountering irrelevant or sponsored job listings. A post-task questionnaire was given to assess user satisfaction and the perceived complexity of the application process (See Appendix A1). Our results indicated that participants primarily engaged with the top four job listings, with diminishing attention to listings further down the page. Additionally, the job application process was found to be time-consuming and complex, with a significant portion of time spent navigating the platform. Based on these findings, we recommend changes to Indeed's layout, such as expanding the initial viewable area of job listings and improving the readability of job descriptions.

Introduction

Indeed offers multiple advanced filtering options, such as job type, location, industry, and pay, yet users often face a time-consuming process when applying to multiple jobs on the website. Despite Indeed's ongoing efforts to enhance the user experience through continuous research into job-seeker interactions, we believe there is room to further streamline the process. We will conduct usability tests focused on job search efficiency and the relevance of job suggestions to better understand the user experience on Indeed and identify any areas for improvement. These usability tests will be used to gather data on how users interact with the website, particularly time spent applying to jobs and the frequency at which they encounter irrelevant or sponsored job listings. The results of these usability tests will be analyzed to assess user satisfaction with the application process as well as with the alignment of job suggestions with user expectations. This report will detail any insights on key findings, such as user frustration levels and suggestions for streamlining the job search and application process.

Purpose

Our study aims to test the relevance of job postings for users and measure the time applicants spend on the site. Our previous observations show us that job suggestions on Indeed are often irrelevant to the applicant's qualifications and preferences, so we will evaluate the navigation bar that applicants use to find the best-fit job positions. Our research aims to investigate several key aspects of the user experience: the effectiveness of suggested jobs, the frequency of encountering sponsored job positions, and the amount of time applicants spend applying for jobs. We will analyze how these factors impact the overall user experience and efficiency of the job search process on Indeed. We hope to provide valuable insights that can enhance the usability and relevance of job listings on the website by identifying these areas for improvement.

Research Goals

Our research aims to evaluate the relevance of job suggestions on Indeed based on the applicant's field of study and level of experience, as well as the time required to complete an application. Preliminary observations indicate that Indeed occasionally suggests positions that are not relevant to the applicant's qualifications, often instead favoring job listings from companies that pay extra for promotional placement. In our study, we will quantify the frequency with which participants encounter promotional positions and assess the relevance of job suggestions to their preferences.

Based on our preliminary assessment of Indeed and using our user persona, we anticipate that Indeed will present a significant number of irrelevant job positions, especially for our made-up persona (See Appendix C). From here, our goal is to identify necessary improvements to enhance the job application process on Indeed, making it simpler and more efficient, as well as reducing user frustration and time spent applying for jobs. Our study will provide actionable insights for optimizing job matching algorithms and improving the relevance of job listings, benefiting both users and employers.

Methodology

We will have six participants who will be tested in a private interview room. We will be using the Chrome browser on MacBook and Windows computers for participants to conduct the test. We will be collecting notes over the test through OBS screen recordings.

Participants

Participants included six college students from different majors recruited through convenience sampling. Each participant was assigned a made-up persona (see Appendix C), developed specifically for this study. The use of real students as our participants necessitated the creation of a Google form to collect participants' names and emails along with a confidentiality disclaimer ensuring the protection of their personal information.

Materials

A Google form was used to collect participants' contact information and consent for participation. Each participant was provided with an Indeed account that contained a fictitious resume that corresponded with their made-up persona (See Appendix C). A detailed instruction page was provided by the researchers to guide the participants through the usability testing, this included specific steps to ensure internal consistency. OBS screen recording software was also utilized to capture participants' interactions on the website. This allowed the researchers to measure the time spent on an application and the number of clicks during the job search and application process. A post-task questionnaire was administered to participants at the end of the usability test to gather feedback on participants' experiences (See Appendix A1). Figma prototyping software was also used to make wireframes and Indeed website mockups.

Procedure

Participants were given an informed consent form on a Google form at the beginning of the study containing information about the purpose of the study and what would be expected of them during the study. Participants also provided contact information (i.e., name and email) along with a disclaimer about the confidentiality of their data. Using the Google forms that the participants filled out, the researchers created a username and password for each participant's Indeed account. Participants were then directed to an instruction page that detailed the steps they needed to follow. First, they were asked to log in to Indeed using the provided credentials by the researchers. Second, they navigated to their profile to familiarize themselves with their persona (See Appendix C). Next, participants searched for job listings that aligned with their user persona and were told to only apply to jobs they believed were a good fit and had agreeable working conditions. Participants applied to as many or as few jobs as they would in a real-life scenario. After completing each job application, participants were instructed to right-click the submit button instead of left-clicking as a way to signal that they 'submitted' the application without actually having submitted it; after, they returned to the search page and continued the process. After completing their search and applications, participants were instructed to click the "Continue to Next Section" button to proceed to the post-task questionnaire. Lastly, participants completed a four-question post-task question to gather feedback on their experiences (see Appendix A). With the results from our usability testing, we were able to determine what needed to be improved in order to streamline the application process.

Results

In our research, we were able to determine where users are spending most of their time and attention on Indeed. From our scroll map results, you can see that the applicant's attention goes mostly to the top of the page, and very few people scroll down (See Appendix B1). We also noticed that most of the attention goes to the top four jobs listed, and the further down the job listing is

the less likely it is to be seen by the user. It seems that the average user will only ever end up applying for the first jobs they see and not the job best suited to them

Our click map results displayed that the applicants most often click on the apply now button, the search bar, and the name of the position that is being promoted, as well as a few clicks on the profile icon (See Appendix B1). The majority of the clicks taken to apply for a job were on the job application itself which is shown in our Clicks to Find .vs. Clicks to Apply (See Appendix B3).

Our total time to apply to a job line graph shows that the more positions that an applicant applies for, the more time they spend on the website. However, our Time to Apply vs. Time Spent Finding pie chart shows that 61% of the time a user spends using Indeed is on the application process and only 39% of the time is actually on the Indeed website (See Appendix B4).

Our results for our total clicks to apply for a job the clicks vary; in the graph the results are inconsistent. Looking back at our first pie chart we can see that a staggering 86% of clicks are during the application process and only 14% of clicks are used to find a job (See Appendix B3). This suggests that the job application process is not very efficient.

By increasing the number of jobs seen by the user, there is more likely to apply to more jobs. Furthermore, it seems that if we make the job application process faster then users will get less exhausted and apply to more jobs overall. This will increase both the retention of the user on the site and the number of successful applications.

After the user applied to the jobs they were given a questionnaire which gave us insights into their frustrations (See Appendix A1). The answers varied from suggesting it was super easy to apply to jobs to very difficult (See Appendix A2). All but one user however said that it would be beneficial to them if the job application was quicker. The same user did however suggest that it would be helpful if there was a “longer stream of recommended jobs” (See Appendix A2).

Recommendations

Our research shows that the best way to get more people to apply for jobs would be to increase the number of jobs they are shown. A mockup of the suggested edits was made using Figma (See appendix B5). Our solution is to widen the tabs where the job list is shown and make them vertically shorter. This will allow you to display a similar amount of information over a shorter distance, which means that users who do not scroll down the list will see more jobs. To conserve even more vertical space we recommend moving the filter options to the left-hand side so that there is more vertical real estate available for job listings.

To allow users to get a better understanding of the jobs they are applying to we would widen the job description to take up more of the right-hand side of the screen giving more room for text, as well as have it automatically expanded so that the user does not have to scroll inside a small box to

read the job description. This should ensure the user has a better understanding of the jobs they are applying to.

Appendix A

This appendix contains the questions asked and analyzed during the usability test.

Post Task Questionnaire

1. How would you rate your experience finding and applying for jobs on Indeed?
    a. Very Challenging
    b. Challenging
    c. Neither Challenging or Easy
    d. Easy
    e. Very Easy
2. How complicated was the process of applying for a job?
    a. No, the process is not complicated
    b. A little, the process is a little complicated
    c. Yes, the process is complicated
    d. Very, the process is very complicated
3. Do you feel that a quicker application process would benefit you?
    a. No, I would not benefit
    b. Yes, I would benefit
    c. Other
4. Do you have suggestions to improve the time spent on the application process?

Figure A1. The questionnaire was given to the user after completing the test.

Post Task Questionnaire Answers:

User ID:	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Easy	No, the process is not complicated	Yes, I would benefit	n/a
2	Challenging	A little, the process is a little complicated	Other: I find it very helpful that it would take you to the website to apply if it couldn't hand your application to the employer.	The application process felt as if I was applying for an entry-level job when the jobs were listed to pay 70,000 a year. I think instead of having the profile insights there taking up most of the space when looking at the job description, it would just highlight the qualifications you have listed on your Indeed profile. I think it would also benefit indeed if there was a way to have a generalized search of what you're looking for because it became frustrating to try and search all of the possible names that employers could use to list a job that requires a Computer Science degree, specifically a bachelors. The process that took the longest was trying to find a job that my qualifications could satisfy when every single job listing I clicked on was asking me if I could use every software under the sun. I understand it is to make the application process easier, but I would at least like to look at the job listing. It made it confusing for me.
3	Easy	No, the process is not complicated	No, I would not benefit	I'd like a longer stream of recommended jobs and fewer jobs in that stream that I do not qualify for.
4	Very Challenging	Yes, the process is complicated	Yes, I would benefit	n/a
5	Challenging	A little, the process is a little complicated	Yes, I would benefit	n/a
6	Easy	No, the process is not complicated	Yes, I would benefit	n/a

Figure A2. The answers are given by the users from the questionnaire.

Appendix B

This appendix contains the visual aids and graphs used and analyzed during the usability test.

Graphs and Visual Aids

Scroll Map:

Figure B1. Visual representation of where the participants spend most of their focus.

Click Map:

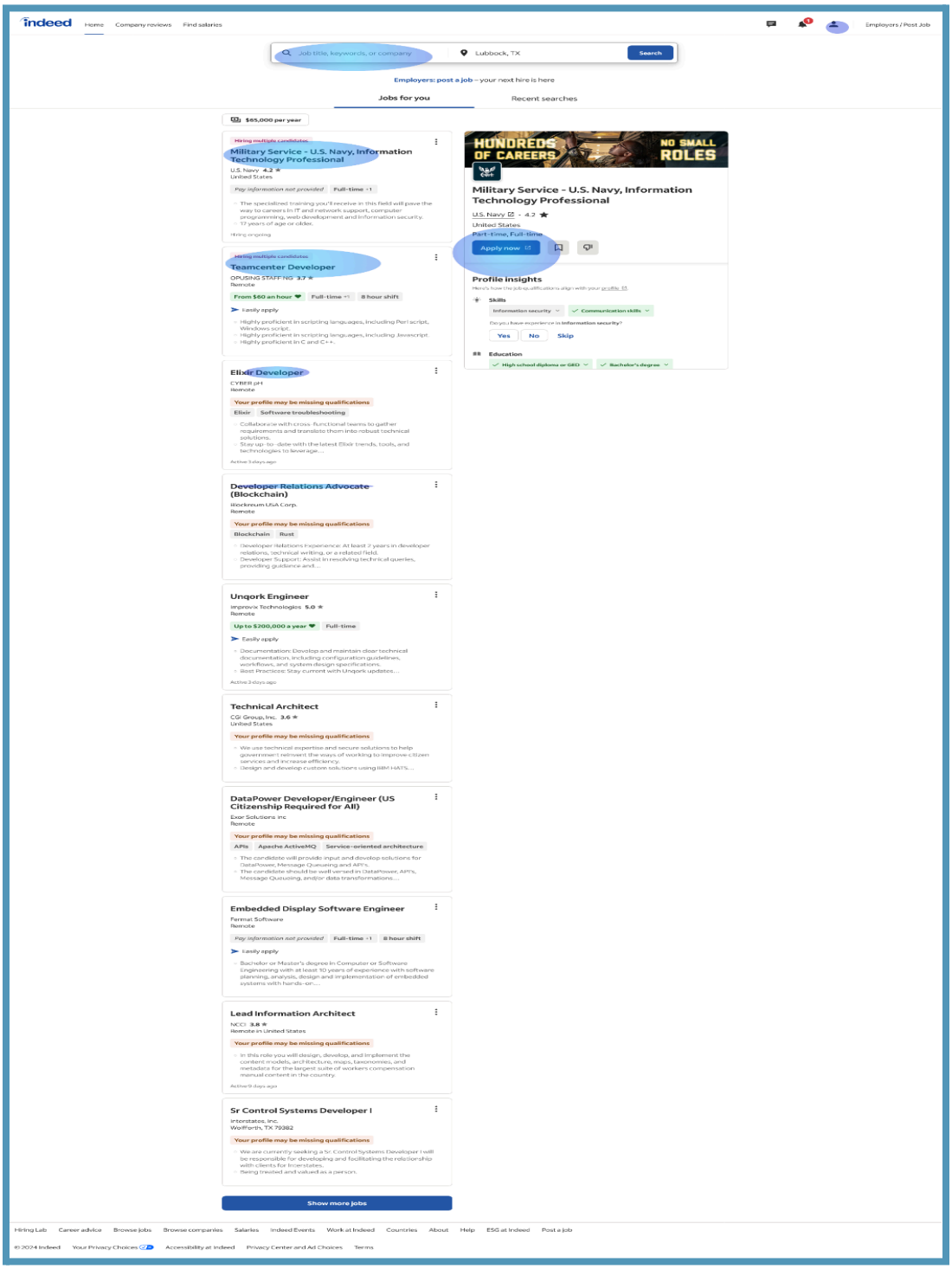

Figure B2: Visual representation of where most of the clicks are being received.

Clicks to Find .vs. Clicks to Apply:

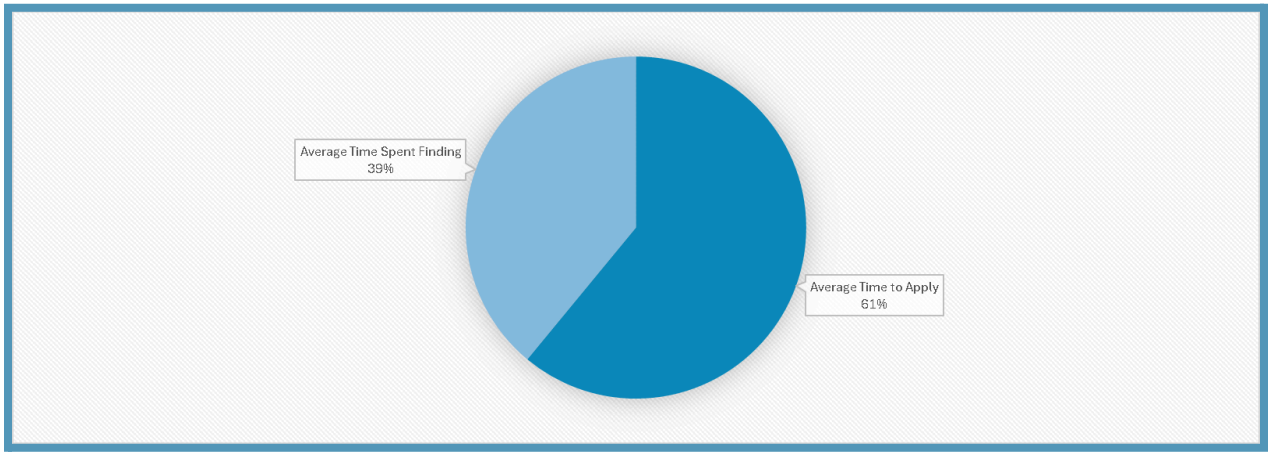

Figure B3: Visual representation of the Clicks to Find .vs. Clicks to apply, but in a pie chart.

Time to Apply .vs. Time Spent Finding:

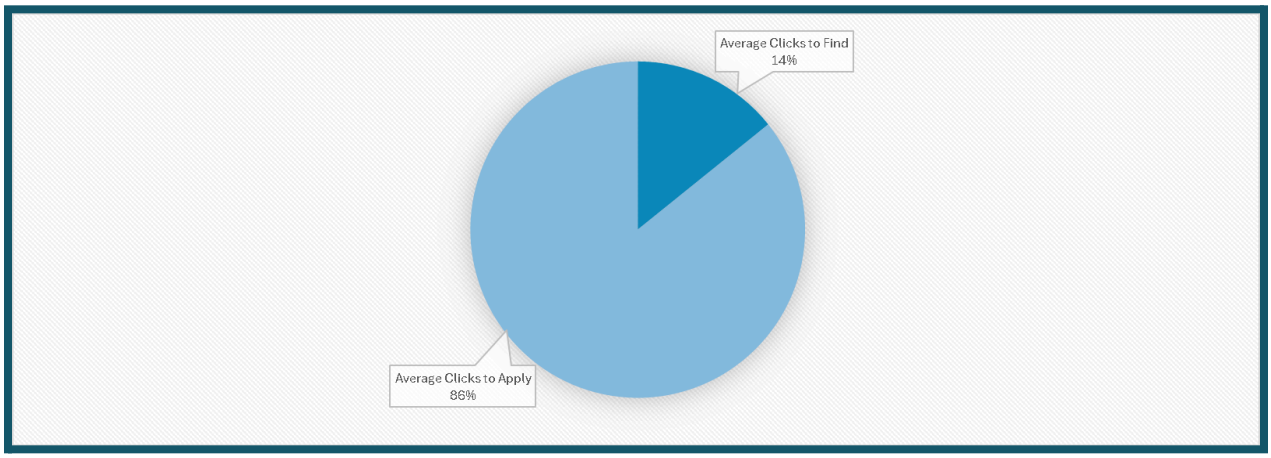

Figure B4: This is the pie chart visual representation of the Time to Apply .vs. Time Spent Finding.

Figma Mockup:

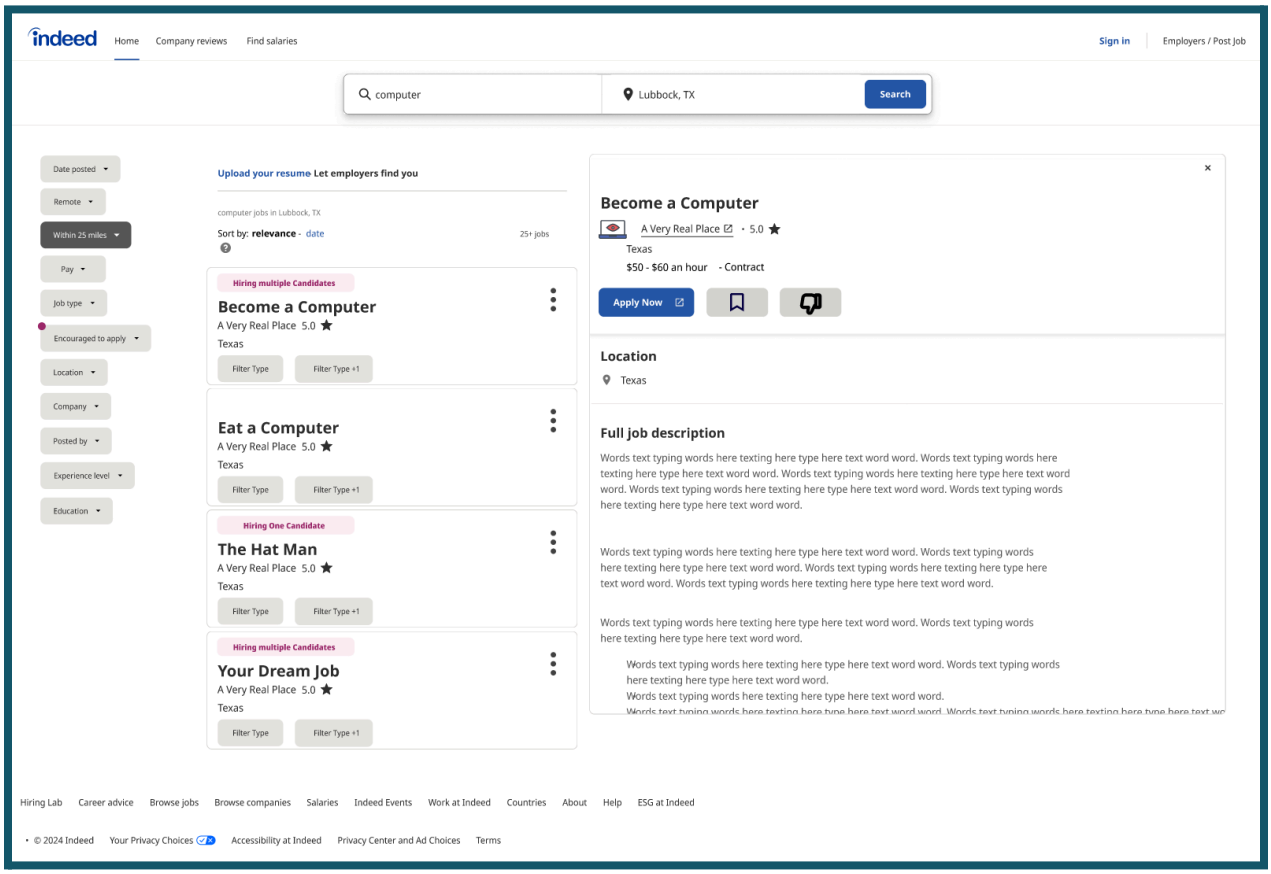

Figure B5: This is the mockup for the suggested improvements to the Indeed website made with Figma.

Appendix C

This appendix contains the persona's resume participants used during the usability test.

Persona

John Doe

(123)456-7890 | tu27904@gmail.com | Lubbock, TX

Experience

Nonprofit Organization | Lubbock, TX
Web Development Intern | 06/2023 - 08/2023

- Developed and maintained the organization's website, enhancing user navigation and responsiveness across devices, which increased engagement by 15%.
- Implemented content updates using WordPress, ensuring site accuracy and alignment with organizational goals.
- Collaborated with the marketing team to integrate SEO best practices, boosting the website's organic reach.

Skills

Python, Javascript, SQL, HTML, CSS, React, Node.js, Git, Wordpress

Education

University of Technology | Lubbock, TX
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science | 05/2024

Figure C: This is the sample resume given to the user to use as their persona.