

Booking.com

Hotel Reservations Unmoderated Mobile Testing

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Summer 2023 USABILITY II (UXD-60114-004)

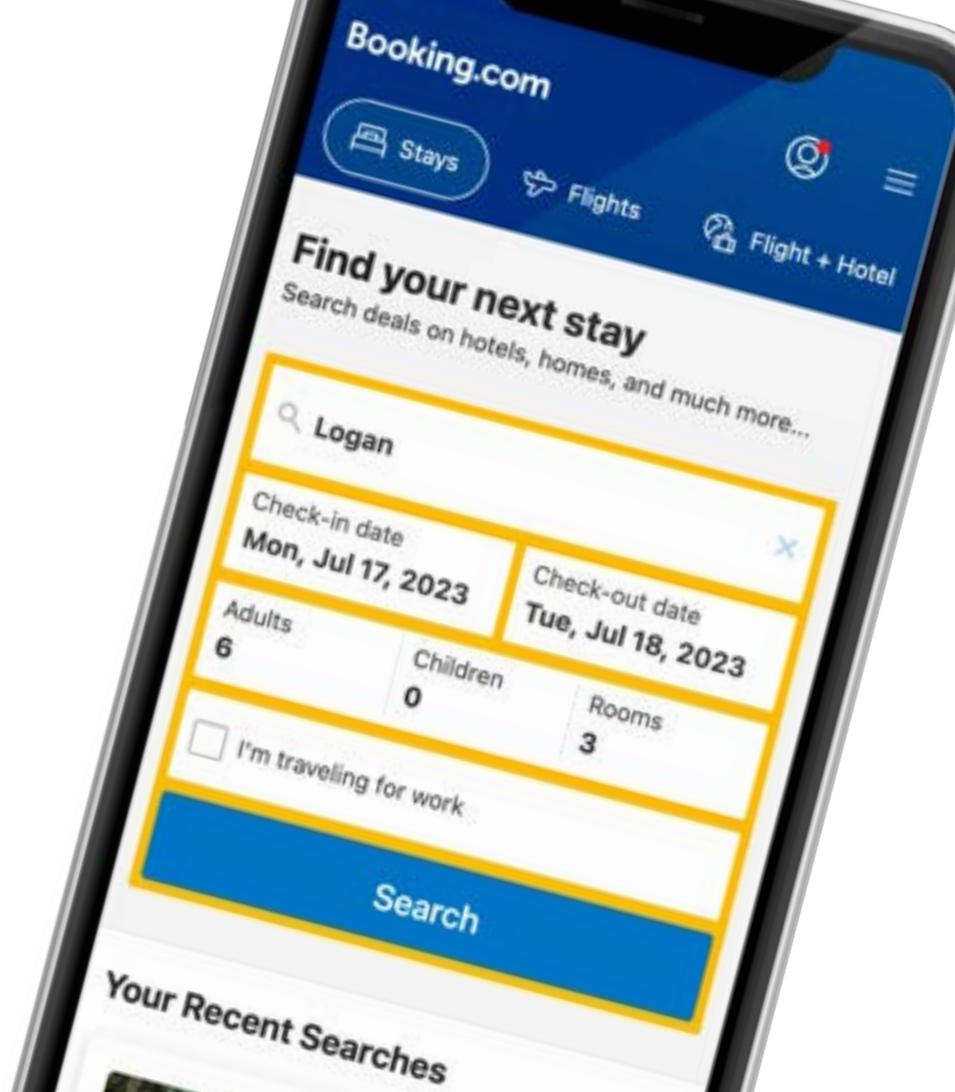
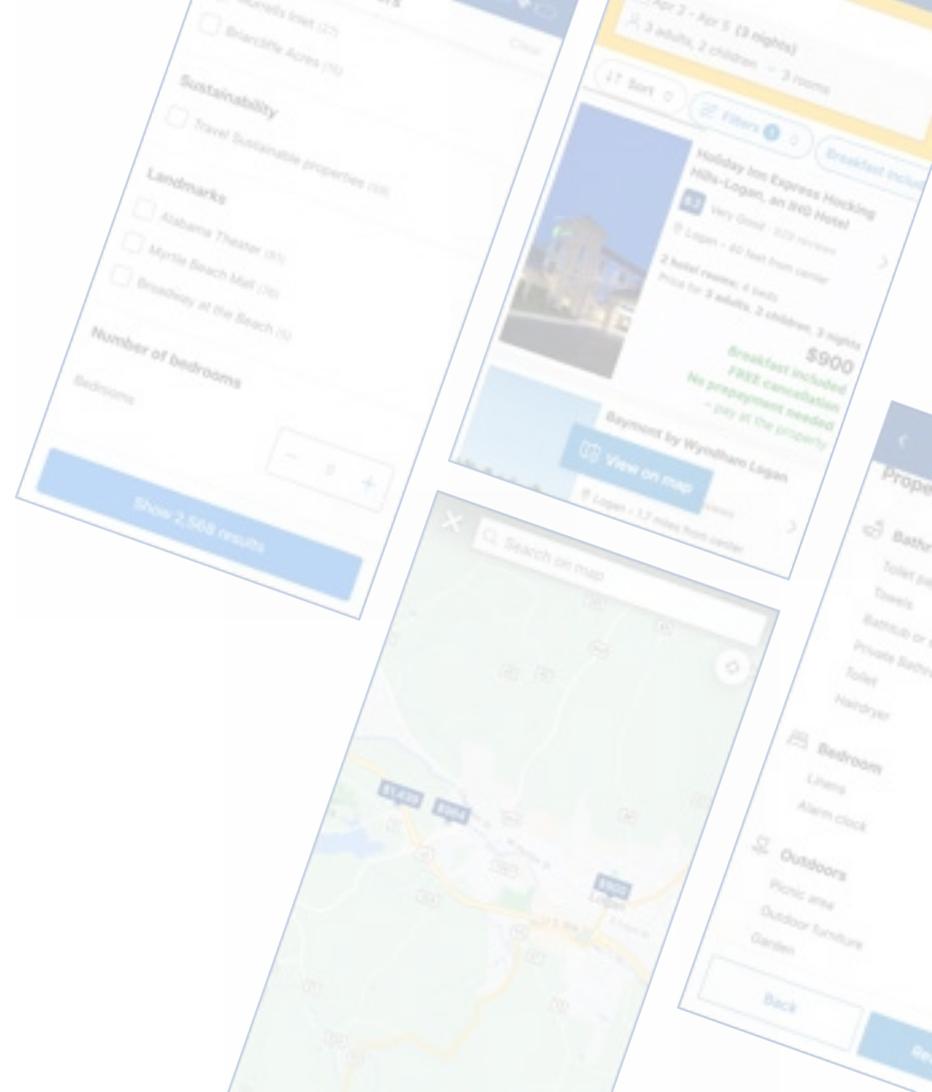


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Executive Summary

From July 6th to 17th, 2023, seven volunteers participated in unmoderated mobile usability testing through UserZoom Go and Loop11 platforms to evaluate Booking.com.

Goals

The main goals are to explore users' challenges when booking accommodations with multiple requirements and identify the methods users use to acquire property information. It aims to analyze the user process for comparing listings and evaluate the simplicity of the (non-account-based) email sign-up process. Ideally, this study would uncover sources of frustration and difficulty that users may experience and better understand how users perceive the website.

Top Recommendations

- Optimize email sign-up on mobile devices by placing it in the menu or footer.
- Property sharing and property comparison needs better visibility
- Only display sign-in and reward prompts once per session for infrequent travelers who may prefer not to sign in or download an app.
- Make accessibility filtering visible on the mobile site and test alternative wording against "disabled guests."
- Provide a tooltip for why work travel results may differ from leisure travel.
- Highlight check-in times and include information about the property's early check-in policy.

Results

5 of 7
couldn't find an email sign-up without creating an account.

5 of 7
couldn't find a way to share or compare listings via the site.

3 of 7
had issues with Google sign-in or "Genius" popping up repetitively.

3 of 7
missed or were confused about the "facilities for disabled guests" filter.

3 of 7
missed or were confused by the "I'm traveling for work" checkbox.

3 of 7
couldn't find any check-in information

About

Booking.com strives to make travel more accessible to everyone. It connects millions of travelers to unforgettable experiences, an array of transportation options, and amazing accommodation choices - from cozy homes to luxurious hotels.

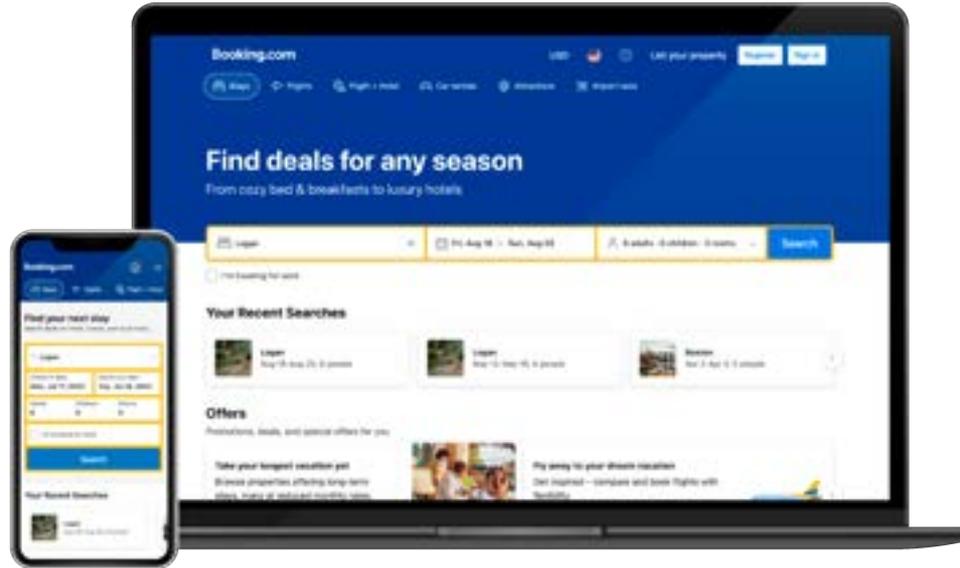
Expectations

The website aims to create an easy booking experience for potential travelers, whether for business or leisure.

This study aims to reveal potential problems that may occur during the user's journey and pinpoint areas of needed improvement.

Recruitment

The participants were recruited in person and online through social media and group discussion platforms. They were made aware that they would not be compensated for taking part in the study. Unmoderated testing was carried out on Android OS devices and Apple iPhones using the Loop11 and UserZoom Go testing platforms.



Methodology

The administrator recruited participants for this study through both online and in-person means. The administrator gave the participants information about the testing process and asked for their availability and willingness to participate. Testing took place from July 6th to July 17th, 2023.

Remote mobile sessions were conducted using UserZoom Go and Loop11 testing platforms. Participants encountered technical issues such as service degradation, application crashes, and device incompatibility.

Before beginning their session, participants received an informed consent statement and were given the option to withdraw at any time. Participants were prompted to think out loud and verbalize their thought process.

At the start of each session, the study asked participants to review the homepage of booking.com and share their thoughts on what the website offered. Later on, the participants answered questions about a previous task or provided feedback after the testing session ended.

Testing duration averaged 24 minutes and 44 seconds between the 7 participants.



UserZoom
Now part of  UserTesting

Loop¹¹

Participants

Individuals of various ages and genders were recruited to participate. Two male and five female participants between 20–55 years old were asked to complete a series of tasks and asked questions about their experience. Only two participants gave permission for their phone’s camera to be on to record non-verbal cues and reactions.

 Participant 1 Late 30s, Male Lyndhurst, OH Session Duration: 25: 46 Userzoom Go	 iPhone	 Participant 2 Late 30s, Female Savannah, GA Session Duration: 15:45 UserZoom Go	 iPhone	 Participant 3 Late 40s, Male Strongsville, OH Session duration: 11:30 Loop11	 iPhone Note: Frequent business traveler	 Participant 4 Early 20s, Female Cincinnati, OH Session duration: 35:35 Loop11	 iPhone
 Participant 5 Mid 20s, Female North Olmsted, OH Session duration: 34:05 Loop11	android 	 Participant 6 Early 50s, Female Twinsburg, OH Session Duration: 13:47 Loop11	android 	 Participant 7 Early 30s, Female Cleveland, OH Session Duration: 13:30 Loop11	 iPhone		

Tasks & Recommendations

Task 1

Explore Booking.com Homepage

"For today's tasks, you'll be using Booking.com. Take a moment to review just the homepage and describe what you see and its offering."

Follow up question

What is the purpose of booking.com?

"This site helps with all things travel. It might have initially started with hotels. Maybe they added on or stays on their big feature because it's first...an overall travel experience."

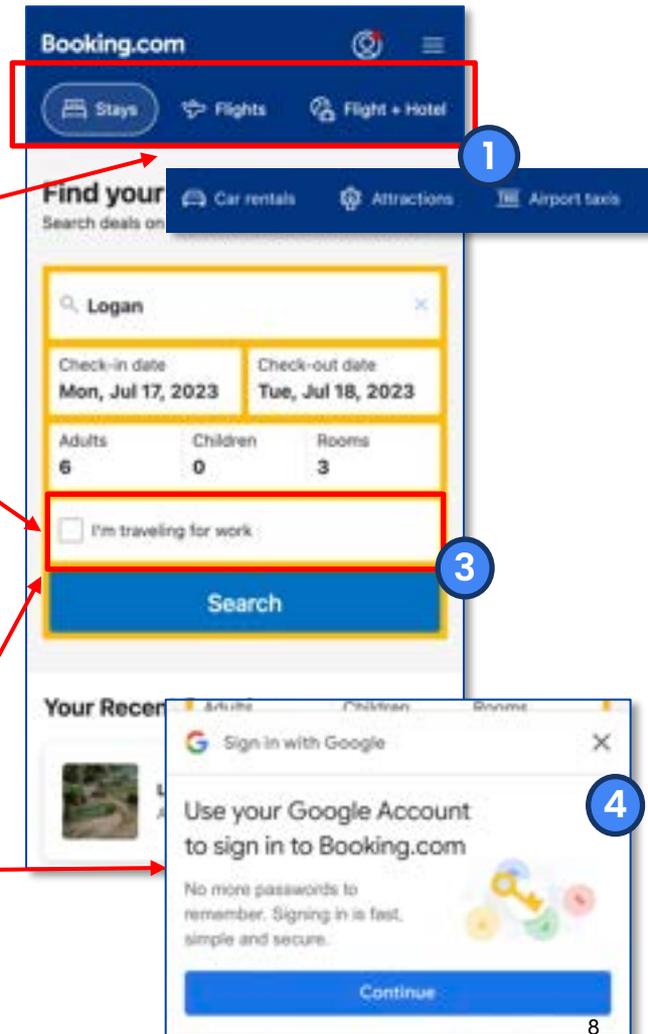
"Assuming this is a big website that partners with companies, maybe?"

Insights

Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
7	0	2.2	1:40

Recommendations

- Many participants missed the additional sub-navigation options (car rentals, attractions, Airport taxis).
 - Provide an affordance (that the menu has more options) to encourage horizontal scroll.
- Multiple participants questioned the reasoning for the "I'm traveling for work" checkbox.
 - Add a tooltip with the intention and how it affects search results.
- Multiple participants indicated that some filtering should be available before browsing results.
 - Provide a few top filters on the main homepage search box.
- Google Sign-in and "Genius" popped up multiple times, and participants expressed annoyance.
 - Once users dismiss those modals, they shouldn't trigger again until the next visit/session.



Task 2

Niagara Part 1

Scenario: You will be traveling to Niagara Falls (USA side) from August 18-20, 2023, for a weekend trip.

Find a room on the American side that you would like to reserve.

"Sustainability levels? I wonder how many people look at that when picking where to stay"

"It would be cool if the map had a toggle on/off for safe neighborhoods... because sometimes you get to hotels and they're in sketchy locations."

Insights

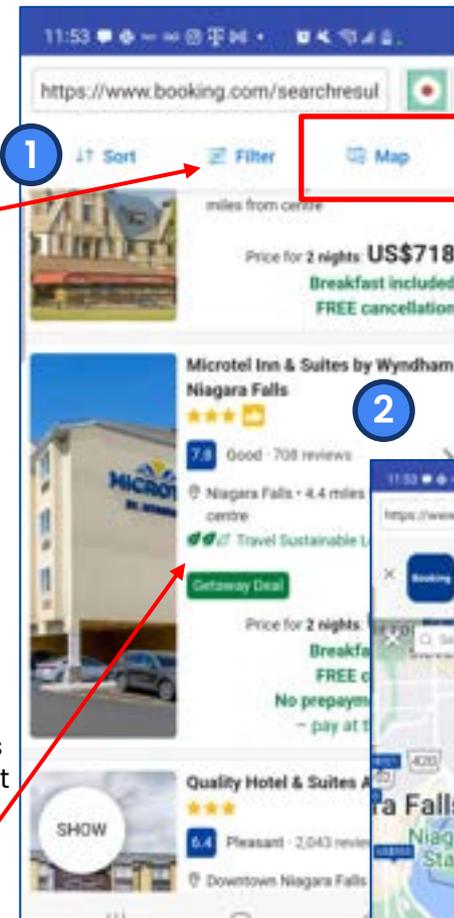
Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
7	0	13.9	3:15

Key Findings

- Most participants were able to find filter & refinement options in search results quickly, though not all chose to use filters immediately.
- Some looked for high-rated hotels, while others took notice of travel sustainability levels.
- Multiple users used the "map view" to ensure they got a location on the American side of the Falls.

Recommendations

1. Keep all three refinement options and make them "pop" as they get lost against all the listing details.
2. Or reduce some of the listing clutter.



Search results



Search results - Map view

Task 3

Niagara Part 3

Your visit to Niagara Falls (from 8/18-8-20), has suddenly become a friend's trip and needs to accommodate six adults. Your friends desire to stay at a location that offers both a pool and breakfast service.

"I selected 3 rooms, and it's showing me only 2 rooms and 4 beds. I'm a little frustrated because it's not giving me 3 hotel rooms like I asked for."

Insights

Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
7	0	14.3	2:27

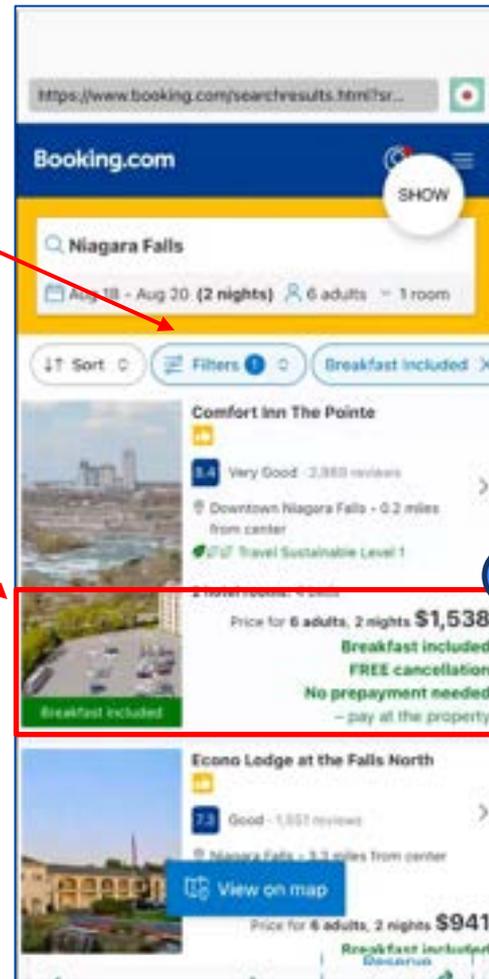
Key Findings

- Participants were able to filter their results and find places that included breakfast and pool options.
- Multiple participants expressed frustration when search filters didn't meet their stay requirements.
- Multiple participants didn't see breakfast call outs due to cluster of green on results and checked the property's amenity details to confirm.

Recommendations

1. Limit callouts in green to filters selected or add icons & spacing to make highlights stand out.
 - For example, a food icon for when breakfast is included.
2. Make sure listings are filtered out by the required criteria. Example: don't show 2 rooms options when users have asked for 3 rooms.

Search results



Task 4

Email Sign Up

Next Scenario: You want to register for email deals on hotels without creating an account.

Find where you can do that on the site.

"...Oh hey, I found the email sign-up finally."

Insights

Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
2	5	6	2:02

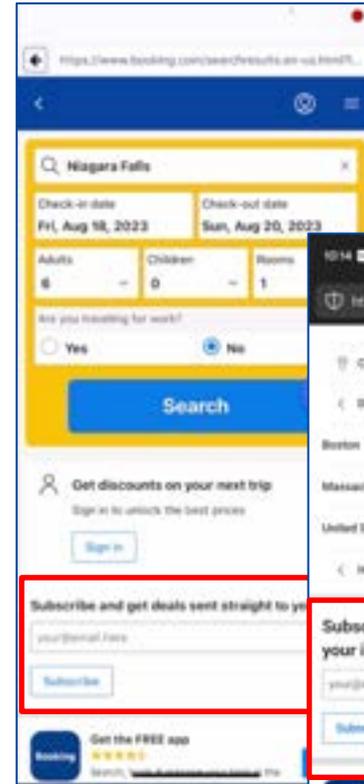
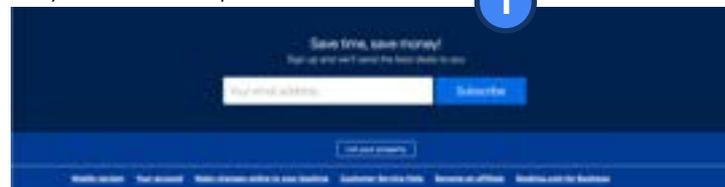
Key Insights

- 5 out of 7 participants could not find the email sign-up and looked in the menu and footer of the homepage.
- Multiple participants expressed they wouldn't want to sign up/in or download an app to get deals.
- 2 of the 7 stumbled upon email sign-ups accidentally or during later tasks.

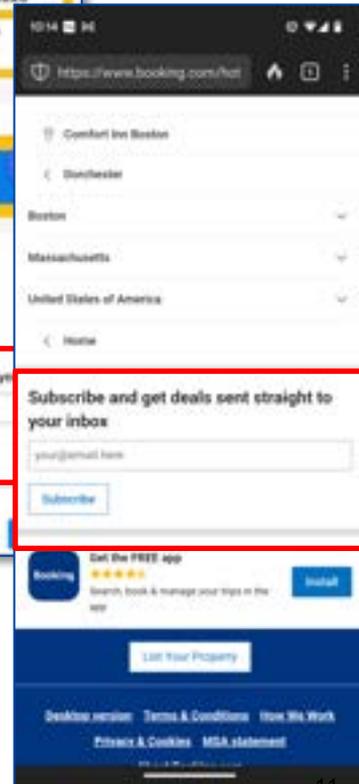
Recommendations

1. Don't hide the email sign up option – place in main menu or footer of homepage (like on desktop experience).

Every footer on desktop



Property details page



Task 5

Hocking Hills 1

Next Scenario: You're planning a family trip to Hocking Hills in Logan, Ohio, from May 12-16, 2024. Find a place to stay for three adults and two kids under six years old. One of the adults requires wheelchair access.

"Oh! facilities for disabled guests...I feel like that's such a weirdly worded phrase"

"I'm finding nothing for a handicap room"

Insights

Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
5	2	15.3	2:42

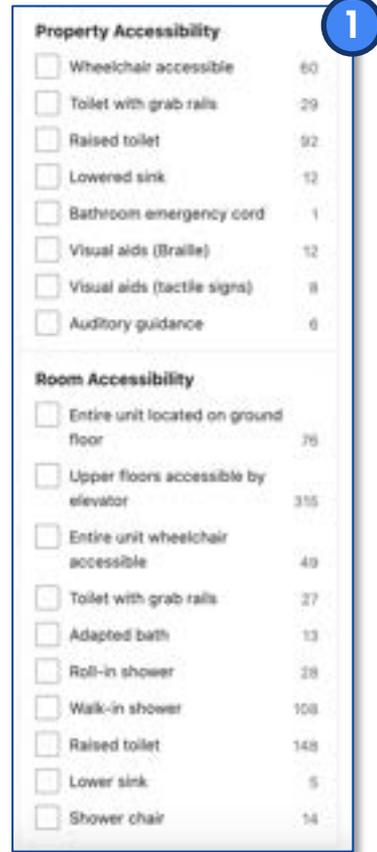
Key Insights

- 3 of 7 participants missed or were confused about the "facilities for disabled guests" filter
- Participants used words like "handicap", "wheelchair accessibility", & "ADA accessible"

Recommendations

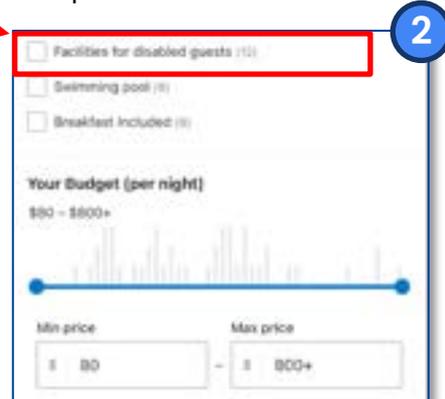
1. Make accessibility filtering visible on the mobile site like it is for desktop users. 
2. Test alternative wording for the "disabled guests" option. 

Desktop Filter Options



Property Accessibility	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair accessible	60
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet with grab rails	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Raised toilet	92
<input type="checkbox"/> Lowered sink	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom emergency cord	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual aids (Braille)	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual aids (tactile signs)	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Auditory guidance	6

Room Accessibility	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> Entire unit located on ground floor	76
<input type="checkbox"/> Upper floors accessible by elevator	315
<input type="checkbox"/> Entire unit wheelchair accessible	49
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet with grab rails	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapted bath	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Roll-in shower	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk-in shower	108
<input type="checkbox"/> Raised toilet	148
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower sink	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Shower chair	14



Facilities for disabled guests (1)

Swimming pool (1)

Breakfast included (1)

Your Budget (per night)

\$80 - \$800+

Min price: \$ 80 Max price: \$ 800+

Mobile Filters

Task 6

Hocking Hills 2

Assume a place near Hocking Hills looks perfect, but you want en suite details, and if you're allowed to arrive before 3 pm.

What would you do?

"Hmm...I don't really see an option [to check-in early]"

ok...when can I check in?... I feel like I would call in. Where is this detail? I'm sure it has it on here somewhere...I don't think it would be in facilities...I don't even see where you can do this."

Insights

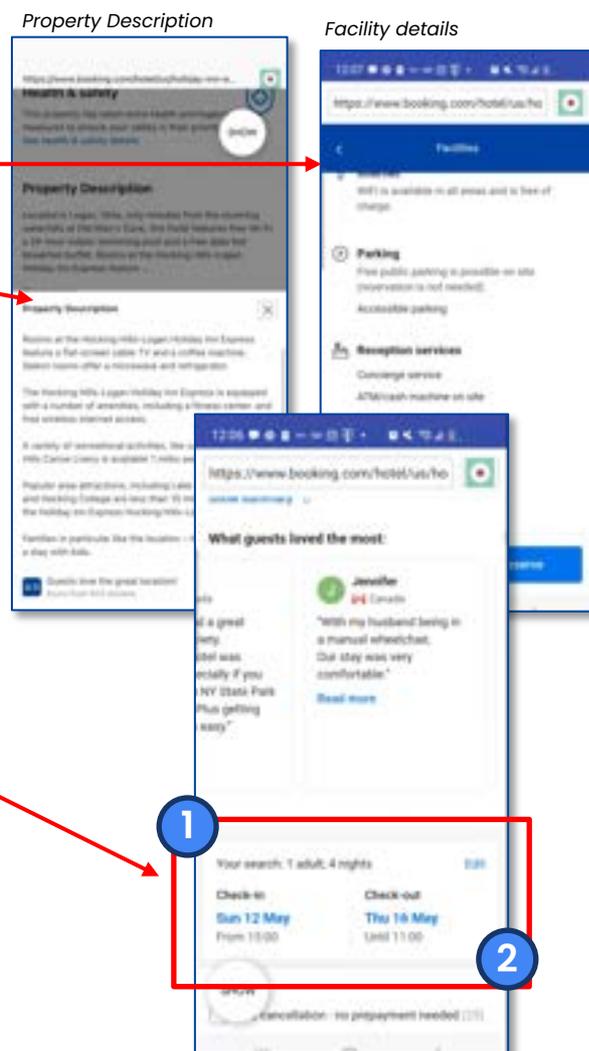
Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
0	7	6.3	3:00

Key Insights

- Most participants checked property descriptions, facilities details, and/or filters for check-in or early check-in times.
- 3 of 7 missed or could not find check-in times.
- 4 of 7 participants said they'd call the hotel directly to see if they could check in early.

Recommendations

1. Highlight check-in times so they are bolder, stand out, and higher in the page's hierarchy (with or near other details). Don't hide or bury.
2. Include information or a link about the property's early check-in policy so users don't have to call.



Task 7

Business Trip

Final scenario: You're planning a 1-day business trip to Boston, MA, near the Convention center on Oct 2-3, 2023. Your boss wants a small list of hotel options for price comparison before approving the trip.

"I would just send some screenshots of each of these [listings]."

Insights

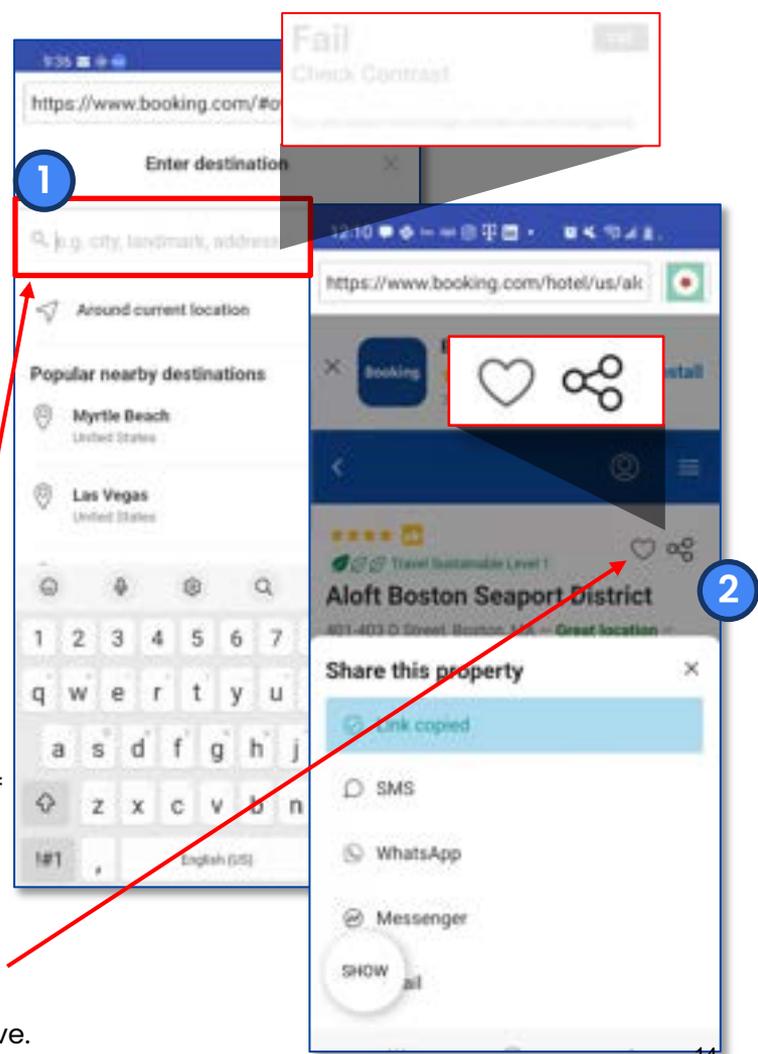
Complete	Abandoned	Avg. Pageviews	Avg Duration
2	5	9.7	3:40

Key Insights

- Many participants didn't know to search for landmarks, like "convention center".
- Only 2 of 7 found the share button to "compile a list" to email.
- No participants used the heart icon to add properties to a favorites list.

Recommendations

1. Make example search criteria stand out more.
 - Hint text is not currently contrast compliant.
 - Provide examples or hints of how to search (eg "Tuscon, AZ" or "Grand Canyon National Park" or "1575 E. 36th St...")
2. Share, lists, and comparison tools need to be more discoverable and comprehensive.



Follow Ups

"What do you think about your experience today at booking.com - What did you like and dislike? What could be better?"

"What additional questions or comments about booking.com do you have?"

"Hard to get an idea of what a hotel is like based on images. I liked how it showed some of the amenities on the page...Overall I liked the platform."

"I liked the interface. Relatively easy to navigate. Rooms have pictures listed. I don't like how there aren't any reviews to tell about downsides of a hotel."

"Don't like sites like this because they're slow loading because they're 3rd party"

"Why is the VIP section called geniuses? Explorers would make more sense."

"Disappointed in not finding the email sign-up. They did excessive advertising of new places and locations. Might make things confusing for users."

"Like the map view - fairly easy to use and understand and search by location. Didn't like getting 2 room options when I specifically asked for 3. Didn't like that I couldn't find wheelchair or handy cap options. The site was laggy (slow.)"

"What is [Genius] about? Is this their frequent flyer program?"

"Much easier than other sites I have used in the past. I like that each page shows a lot of info (don't have to click on a bunch of stuff). Would like if their was a search icon on home page."

"Much easier than other sites I have used in the past. I like that each page shows a lot of info (don't have to click on a bunch of stuff). Would like if their was a search icon on home page."

"The options could be better in the initial search vs the results filtering...It's a lot like Concur so it's pretty simple to use."

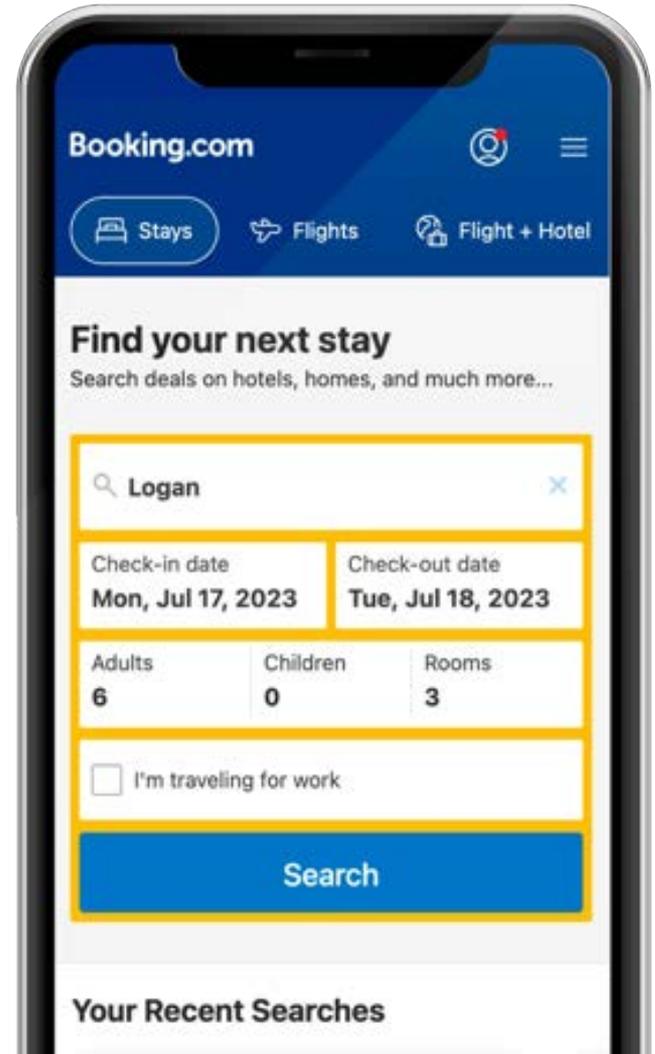
Conclusion

Most participants completed the study with positive outlooks on the site, despite some hang-ups they ran into. Most notably participants commented that the interface was easy and similar to other sites.

For a smooth user experience, the mobile website should offer the same features as the desktop version. This ensures seamless functionality across all devices for all users.

It would be ideal to test all the different functionalities and offerings on the site. The recommended changes documented here should be the first step before moving on to the flight booking functionality, etc.

To ensure comprehensive testing, it is advisable to conduct tests on various user groups for each section of the website. This includes testing novice and infrequent travelers as well as a more experienced group of frequent flyers.



Appendix

- [Original Testing Script](#) (Google Doc)
- [Raw Testing Data and Notes](#) (Google Sheet)