

Coursera Assignment #3 - Heuristic Evaluation / Grant Patten

Using Nielsen's heuristics.

Scale: 0 - don't agree that this is a usability problem, 1 - cosmetic problem, 2 - minor usability problem, 3 - major usability problem; important to fix, 4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

Website: <http://www.momondo.ca/>

Summarize the task: Booking a flight from Toronto to Paris, comparing options.

The screenshot shows the momondo website interface for searching flights from Toronto, Pearson Intl (YYZ), Ont. to Paris (PAR), France. The search parameters are set for a return trip on February 20th to February 27th for 1 passenger in Business class. The results are sorted by 'Best' (2,193 CAD, 10h 05m average). A red circle highlights the 'Best' option. Below the search results, there are filters for 'Stops', 'Max Flight Duration', and 'Preferred Ticket Class'. The flight details for the 'Best' option show an Icelandair flight from YYZ to CDG with a 1-stop connection in Paris, departing at 20:10 and arriving at 11:45. The price is 2,193 CAD. Other options include GalaTravels (2,211 CAD), BuyMyTrip (2,193 CAD), and FlightHub (2,193 CAD). A 'Go to Site' button is visible for the selected flight.

Heuristic name: Help and documentation

Description: The “Best” flight option doesn't include any explanation/documentation on the criteria for “Best”. I was left wondering how momondo determined what makes the “Best” flight, out of the available options. If user doesn't know how “Best” is being determined, they might feel reluctant to make that selection. This could be solved with a simple on-hover alt text element. Hovering over the “Best” image on the webpage currently displays no information. (using updated Chrome browser)

Severity number: 2 - minor usability problem

Website: <http://www.momondo.ca/>

Summarize the task: Looking at least/most expensive weeks/months of year to book flight from Toronto to Paris.



Heuristic name: Match between system and the real world

Description: This chart, *Flight Insight for Toronto to Paris*, could be more useful if it corresponded better to how people generally think. The x-axis is listed in weeks of the year, from 1-53. But in their relation to time, people don't generally think "I'm in the 33rd week of the year now." They generally think more in terms of months, e.g., "I'm in the second week of February now." The travel tip on the right says April 24 to May 27 is the cheapest time to fly to Paris. But when I look at the chart, I am left wondering which weeks of the year correspond to those dates. Therefore, interpreting this chart is fairly difficult because it does not correspond to my mental model of time, and I'm sure that most people share my mental model.

Severity number: 2 - minor usability problem

Website: <http://www.momondo.ca/>

Summarize the task: Looking at airports and seeing how expensive they are to fly to/from.



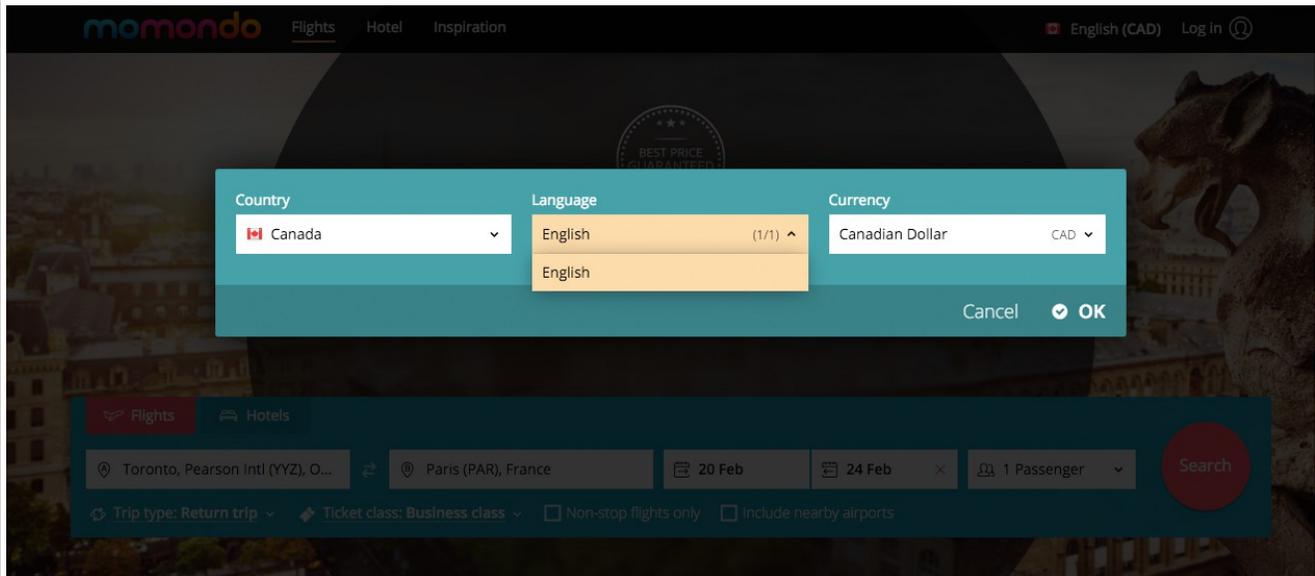
Heuristic name: Match between system and the real world

Description: This chart, showing combinatorial options of airports and impact on price, could also be more useful if it didn't rely on system-oriented terms. YKF-CDG, YTZ-CDG, YZ-ORY and YZ-CDG are system-oriented terms representing each airport, obviously, but it is likely that few users would have the acronyms for these airports memorized. I certainly do not. These acronyms do not correspond to the user's language, which is usually "Pearson", "Porter", "de Gaulle", *etc.*, when referring to airports. This problem could be solved by implementing an on-hover alt text element over each acronym, providing the full airport name, or making those acronyms hyperlinks to more information rather than static text elements, as they are currently.

Severity number: 2 - minor usability problem

Website: <http://www.momondo.ca/>

Summarize the task: Trying to select French Canadian language.



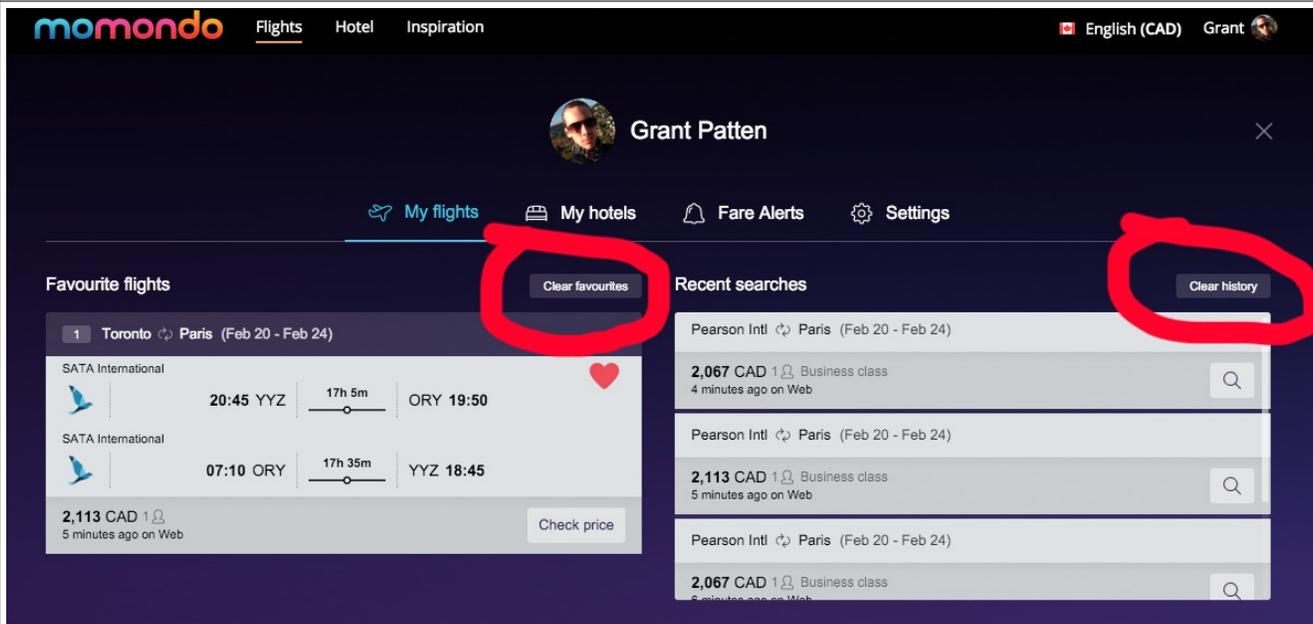
Heuristic name: Consistency and standards

Description: A French Canadian user would have no way of selecting their language from this dropdown menu because it is not available as an option, despite French being the official second language of Canada. This goes against consistency and standards established on most other high quality websites I've seen, where English and French are both provided as options under Canada. Bizarrely, a French Canadian user of momondo would have to (wrongly) select France as their country in order to find French as a language option. This could even be construed as insulting, to some French Canadian (especially Québécois) users.

Severity number: 3 - major usability problem; important to fix

Website: <http://www.momondo.ca/>

Summarize the task: Looking at my recent flight search history.



Heuristic name: User control and freedom & Recognition rather than recall

Description: Clicking on either “clear favourites” or “clear history” does the expected action, but offers no “emergency exit”; *i.e.*, there is no way to undo/redo that action. If a user clicks on either button by mistake, they will have lost their entire favourites list/search history, with no option to recover it, other than manually stepping through the flight search process all over again. A related usability issue is that the search list is not organized/labeled very clearly. Looking at the list, the only distinguishing feature between the flights is price. The user has to remember which flights correspond to each price. Clicking the magnifying glass icon brings the user back to the full search listing, rather than that specific flight. Therefore, it would be easier on the user's memory load to show the airlines in this list and also link to each specific flight from the magnifying glass icon, rather than full search listing (which also takes fairly long to load).

Severity number: 3 - major usability problem; important to fix