User Experience Research Report: Interviews, Personas and Scenarios

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Executive Summary

Consumers Energy is currently in the process of redesigning their website in an effort to make it more modern and responsive to customer needs. This report presents the findings of interviews with current and potential Consumers Energy website users and their important characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes. Interviewees were recruited based on census data by age and distributed by gender and education.

Key Findings:
- The mobile site does not meet user needs.
- The site is out-of-date and unattractive.
- Interviewees were skeptical about Consumers Energy's role in green energy.
- Some interviewees are uncomfortable with using the "Auto-Pay" function.
- Interviewees only visit the site to pay their bill.
- Interviewees would like more granular energy usage data.

Recommendations:
- Increase simplicity, ease of navigation, and responsiveness of website.
- Send early notifications of upcoming bills with single-click payment features.
- Provide early notifications of upcoming payments sent out through email.
- Unify Consumers Energy's messaging and role in green energy.
- Provide monetary incentives for visiting the website.
- Expand client access to their energy use records.

Information from client interviews was synthesized into personas and scenarios to assist in the redesign of the Consumers Energy website.

Introduction

Consumers Energy is the primary public utility company in western and northern Michigan, providing energy to more than 6 million of Michigan's nearly 10 million residents (Census, 2010). The Consumers Energy website (www.consumersenergy.com) is the main electronic resource for customers, offering a centralized location for company information, educational resources, bill payment, and power outage reporting. In addition to providing these services, the Consumers Energy website is a critical brand touch point for the company.

Customer complaints related to the website have increased in recent years, with customers voicing discontent over difficult and non-responsive transactions. In response, Consumers Energy has launched a complete website redesign, which began in January 2014 and will continue for approximately 18-24 months (Customer Experience Design, 2013). The first goal for this redesign is to make sure the website is responsive for all devices. Second, Consumers Energy wants to create relevant and meaningful content, guided by personas, user scenarios, and site analytics. Third, the website redesign seeks to keep customers coming back with a memorable and enjoyable experience. Finally, Consumers Energy wants its website to increase the operational efficiencies of the overall organization.

In this study, we were interested in broadening our knowledge base of current and potential Consumers Energy users through qualitative interviews, investigating their goals, attitudes, and behavior patterns related to Internet use. Discovering each of these aspects of the Consumers Energy website client base will allow the company to better address its goals for redesign.

Methods

1. **Target population:**
    We recruited current and potential adult, residential Consumers Energy website users. Business customers were excluded at the request of our client.

    Lacking customer demographic data, our stakeholder suggested approximating our population via Michigan census data. The U.S. Census for Michigan in 2010 indicates that 62.5% of individuals are 18-64 years of age and 14.6% are 65 years of age and older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Males and females are approximately evenly split in their distribution. The majority of Michigan's population has a high school education or higher (88.7%) and about a quarter have a bachelor's degree or higher (25.5%).

    Based on this information and our client's specification that we focus on current and potential users, our inclusion criteria for interview participants required them be Consumers Energy customers who use the Internet at least once a month. Within this restriction, we recruited for the following age ranges:
    *   2 individuals 18-34 years old
    *   1 individual 35-44 years old
    *   1 individual 45-64 years old
    *   1 individual 65 years old or above

    Individuals under 18 years old were excluded. An even mix of males and females were recruited from a range of educational backgrounds.

2. **Recruiting Methods:**
    Two methods of recruitment were used for our study. First, our client contact at Consumers Energy recruited company employees' family and friends. Second, we asked a classmate from Western Michigan to recruit friends and family members in the Consumers Energy service area. Interviews were contacted by phone.

    No compensation was offered to participants for participation in this study.

3. **Summary of Participants Recruited:**

    U1: Male: 18-34 years old
    Occupation: Student/clerical worker
    Marital Status: Single, no children

    U2: Male: 18-34 years old
    Occupation: Non-profit manager
    Marital Status: Single, no children

U3: Female: 18-34 years old
Occupation: Independently-employed eBay seller
Marital Status: Married, one young child

U4: Male: 45-64 years old
Occupation: Retired automotive teacher
Marital Status: Married, one grown child

U5: Female: 65+ years old
Occupation: Retired teacher
Marital Status: Married

Note: A female user in the 35-44 age group was originally recruited for interviews, but we were unable to make contact with her to schedule an interview. Due to this unforeseen circumstance, a third 18-34 year old female was recruited in her place.

4. **Interview Question Overview (see Appendix C: Interview Guide):**
   Our interview questions included the following categories:
   - *General/Demographic Information*: Age range, occupation, daily activities
   - *Technology Comfort*: Comfort level for computer and smartphone technology
   - *Internet Use*: General comfort level using the Internet, how he/she uses the Internet, and a comparative evaluation of other websites
   - *Use of Consumers Energy Website*: How the individual uses the Consumers Energy website, their goals, motivations, and impression of website transactions and overall website feel

5. **Interview structure:**
   Interviews were scheduled ahead of time and took place by phone. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and was recorded with participant consent. The interviews were semi-structured to allow the interviewer freedom to explore different themes, following the basic question set in Appendix C. Two individuals from the research team were present during the interview: an interviewer and a note-taker.

6. **Interview Analysis:**
   After each interview, the interviewers debriefed the research team, summarizing the most salient points. Transcripts and audio recordings were shared with the team.

   After completing all interviews, the team held an interpretation session to discuss common characteristics, preferences, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals from the interviews. These formed the basis for personas and scenarios. Specific problems and successes with the Consumers Energy website were also discussed and used to flesh out user scenarios.

Findings and Recommendations

Summary

In the interviews we found that consumers seldom used mobile devices to access consumersenergy.com because the mobile version has very limited functionality. Although all consumers were comfortable paying their bills online, some of them did not want to use the Auto-Pay feature because they wanted to have more control over their bills. Consumers found the full site confusing; commonly used features were hard to find. Few users access the educational or green energy pages or trust the information provided there. Users also noted that they appreciated bill payment features on other websites which utilized single click features and preferred modern, simplified website design to the look and feel of the current Consumers Energy website.

Key Findings:

Finding #1: The mobile version of consumersenergy.com has very limited functionality.

> *Evidence: Four out of five users we interviewed have a smartphone and rated themselves as proficient. The mobile site has significantly less functionality: (1) Report an Outage, (2) Estimated Restoration Time, (3) Outage Map, (4) Gas Rate Calculator, (5) Energy Efficiency, and (6) Contact Us. The desktop site offers more functionality such as pay bills, see previous bills, see payment history, and see previous usage, which are not available on the mobile site.*
>
> *Consumers Energy does not have a responsive website (one that automatically adjusts what is displayed depending on screen size). Instead, it redirects users to a site that is independent of the desktop site. One customer complained, "One thing you should work on is a better mobile version of the website." Four out of five of our interviewees pay their energy bill online.*
>
> Severity of Problem (1-5): 5

Recommendation #1: Consumers Energy should make its site responsive.
All of the content available on the desktop website should also be accessible on the mobile website but adjusted to the smaller screen size. This can be accomplished by putting content in grids. As the viewport gets bigger or smaller, the website would adjust the grids according to how much space there is on the view port. This responsiveness can be done with media queries in cascading style sheets (CSS). In addition, consider making an app available in Google Play or Apple App Store.

Finding #2: Most interviewees thought the Consumers Energy website looked utilitarian and not aesthetically pleasing. The site has not kept up with newer technologies, usability standards, and design guidelines that are available.

> *Evidence: When asked about the appearance of the website participants said the site was "fine," "functional," "utilitarian," and "okay." A customer disclosed, "I don't think it's the prettiest website… it's just very utilitarian…just the green side bars…it's not pretty." Another customer indicated, "it's sort of simple working."*
>
> *Consumers Energy has not kept up with web technologies that comparable utility websites have used. When speaking of Sprint, a customer expressed that there are "a lot of pretty photos…videos if you want to see the latest and greatest." Another customer thought the Consumers Energy website was "fine, but [it] hasn't kept up with overall web standards."*
>
> Severity of Problem (1-5): 4

Recommendation #2: We recommend keeping the site simple easy to read and navigate.
The company should take advantage of dynamic CSS effects, such as animated hover and transition states, carousels, and accordions. To make the website more stylish, use a clean font, web-friendly color palate, and large, high-quality photos. To make the site more usable and accessible, create user-friendly forms, cut content, and remove multiple links that go to the same page. To make website more engaging, use responsive technology for the navigation drop down menus and/or perhaps consider upgrading its hosting technology.

Finding #3: Customers are skeptical of green energy information provided by Consumers Energy because they see the company as a "corporate polluter."

> *Evidence: Customers wonder why an energy company is trying to persuade them to read about green energy. When discussing the emails she receives on saving energy one interviewee stated, "…they tell me every month…I don't know why. They give me tips to change [my habits]." From the customer's perspective, this observation does not make sense: the more energy a customer uses, the more profit Consumers Energy makes. Another customer also indicated that Consumers Energy should be transparent about their motivations for promoting green energy.*
>
> *When asked about the educational material on green energy provided on the website, one interviewee commented, "They [Consumers Energy] might use 10% renewable, but the rest is still coal which is killing the planet.…that's targeted at people who have no fucking clue what's going on."*
>
> Severity of Problem (1-5): 3

Recommendation #3: Let people know what Consumers Energy has done to be a green energy company.
This may help win customers over and dispel myths of the company as a "corporate polluter." For example, if Consumers Energy is increasing its proportion of energy from renewable sources, or it allows homeowners who generate renewable energy to sell power back to the power grid, state this on the site. These points should be highlighted in one place on the green energy website.

If there are larger plans Consumer Energy is working to be more green, it can also use this section as a vehicle to let the public know. That way customers can learn how Consumers Energy is actively working to improve its energy efficiency and enlist its clients in helping this cause. Also, saying why clients should be green and how this helps *them* in saving money and improving the planet, and not just Consumers Energy's bottom line, could increase customer trust of green energy messaging.

Finding #4: Some customers do not trust "Auto-Pay" and want to have more control over making their monthly payments.

> *Evidence: Although all interviewees pay their bills online and appreciate how the online payment system makes their lives easier, some are still not willing to add the "Auto-Pay" feature to their accounts. Even among interviewees that acknowledge that Auto-Pay would simplify their transactions, some stated that they want to have more control over making payments. As a result, these users must log in to their accounts every month to make payments manually. For those who are not organized in paying their bills, they may forget to do so before their bill becomes due.*

> Severity of Problem (1-5): 5

Recommendation #4: Send notifications and one-click payment links to the customers through emails before the their billing due date.
We recommend Consumers Energy send one-click payment links to customers through emails before their billing due date every month, allowing them to pay their bills with one-click and avoid a late payment. This is a solution between making customers into Auto Pay and administering everything manually. This way money will not be taken from client's credit cards without their consent, and they can still enjoy the convenience brought of an Auto-Pay feature.

Finding #5: Customers lack a reason to come back to the Consumers Energy website.

> *Evidence: The interviewees do not visit the Consumers Energy website very often and know very little about it except for the payment system. For those who are enrolled in Auto-Pay, they visit the website only when they want to change their credit card information. For those who make a payment manually every month, they pay and leave the site without any incentive to*

read additional website information. Most customers have either ignored or never used the educational materials and outage reporting services on the website.

Severity of Problem (1-5): 2

Recommendation #5: Offer monetary incentives like discounts, cash-back and promotion codes to encourage customers visit the website more often. We recommend Consumers Energy offer bonuses such as discounts, cash-back or promotion codes to make customers visit the website more frequently and make full use of the information provided by the website. For example, if customers can get a bonus after reading the material and doing one or two multiple choice questions every month, they are likely to visit the site more often and make use of the materials. The company can also post the links to these activities on their Facebook page to attract more participants.

Finding #6: Customers want to compare their energy usage year-to-year by month (e.g. compare June 2013 with June 2012).

> ***Evidence:*** *The interviewees mentioned that they appreciate how the website attempts to provide historical payment records to let them have better control over their energy usage. However, clients can currently only compare adjacent months (e.g. June 2013 with May 2013), and they would like to see their usage over past few years and across seasons. This would allow them to have a better understanding of how their energy use and bills vary over time.*

Severity of Problem (1-5): 3

Recommendation #6: Provide energy usage record of the same period of time over the past few years on the eService Portal. Since it is more reasonable to compare the usage of energy in the same season, we recommend Consumers Energy add the same period comparison option to the home page of the eService Portal, so that customers can know whether they are using more or less compared with the same period over the past few years. Moreover, Consumers Energy can add a same-period historical average line to the bar chart so that the customers would have a more concrete idea about whether they should take measures to control their energy consumption. The option would provide the customers with more suitable benchmarks and would allow them to act more reasonably on energy saving.

Discussion

Limitation #1: Sample Size

Consumers Energy provides natural gas and electricity to more than 6 million of Michigan's 10 million residents. Because we only had 5 interviewees and only 1-2 interviewees in each age range, their opinions likely do not accurately represent the opinions of the larger population.

Limitation #2: Sample Selection

Our interviewees are either the extended family members of Consumers Energy employees or the relatives and friends of our classmate from Western Michigan. This convenience sample does not reflect random selection and is biased toward our contacts' characteristics. In order to obtain a representative sample, we would have needed to obtain Consumers Energy customer demographics, which are not available to us.

Limitation #3: Age Range Gap

Although we scheduled an individual in the 35-44 year old age range, this individual could not be contacted and we had to substitute her with an individual in the 18-34 year old age range. This leaves a gap in our understanding of individuals in the 35-44 age range and their respective motivations and goals for persona creation.

Limitation #4: Comfort Level with Internet and Technologies

All interviewees were comfortable with using Internet and technology in their daily lives in our sample, which may not be representative of the whole population. For those customers who have less experience with using the Internet and technology, they may have different opinions than our interviewees.

Conclusion

Our interviews revealed that customers are frustrated with the Consumers Energy website: it is not aesthetically pleasing, has limited functionality, and is not mobile friendly or responsive. Additionally some customers do not trust the Auto-Pay feature or green energy initiatives on the website. We recommend that Consumers Energy create a simple, mobile-friendly site, with single-click payment features, more detailed energy use histories, and streamlined information and resources.

References

Customer Experience Design. (2013). *The digital state of Consumers Energy*. Jackson.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *State & County QuickFacts: Michigan*. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26000.html

Cooper, A., Reimann, R., & Cronin, D. (1995). *About face*. Hungry Minds.

Appendix A Screenshots

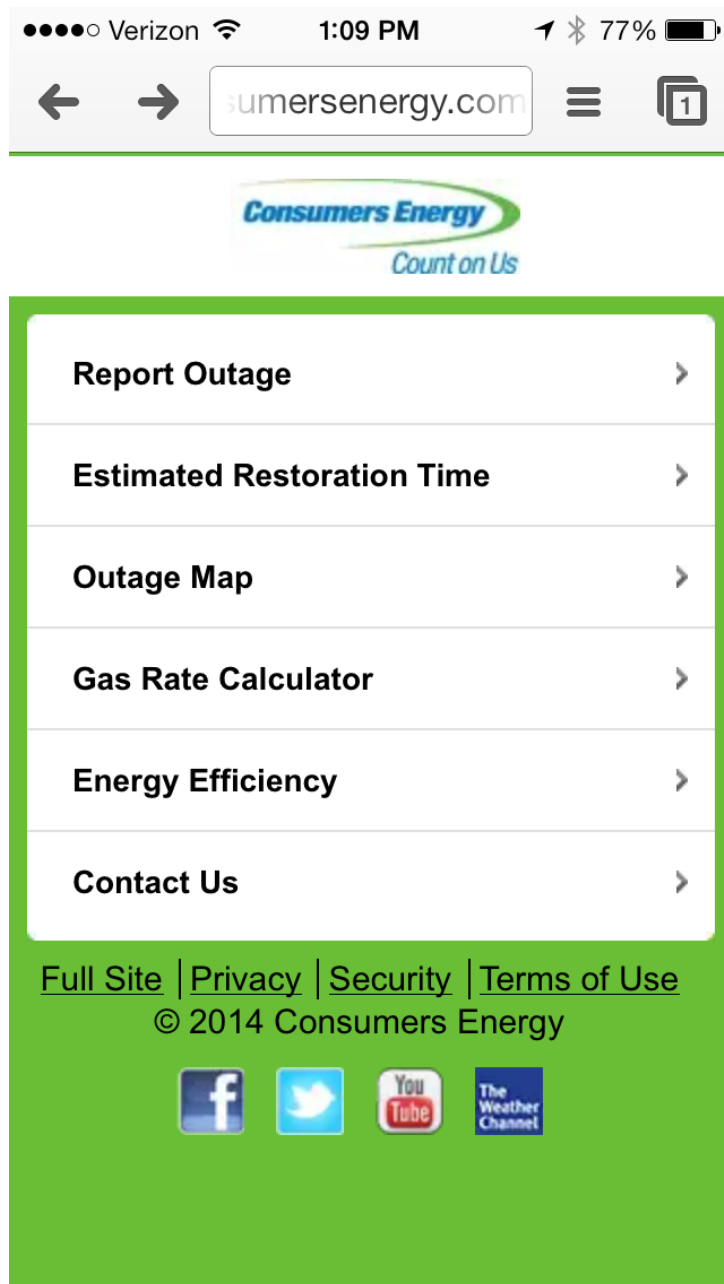Figure 1. Consumers Energy Mobile Website
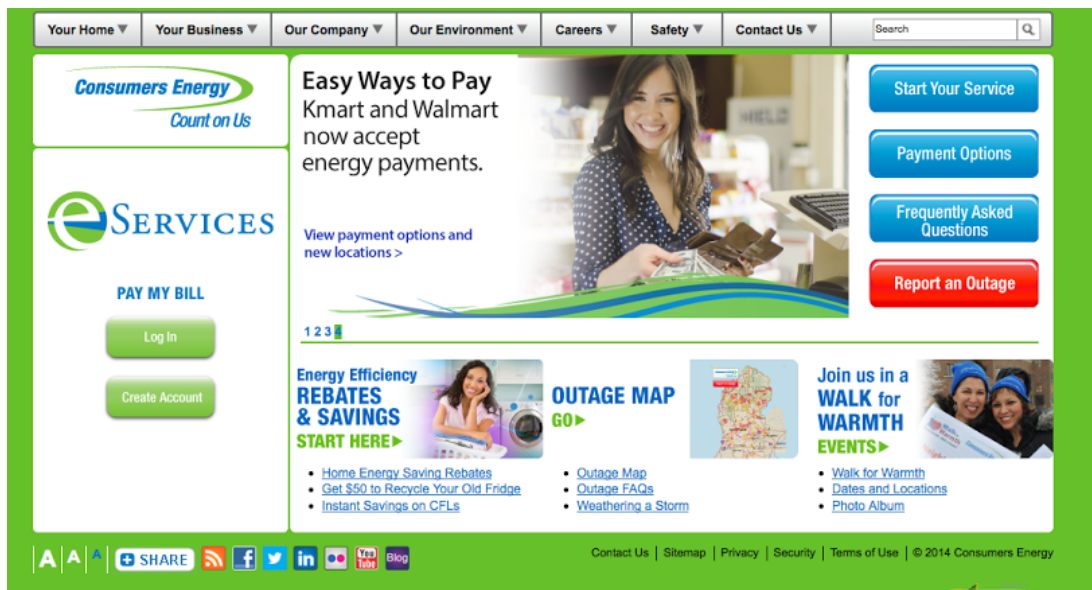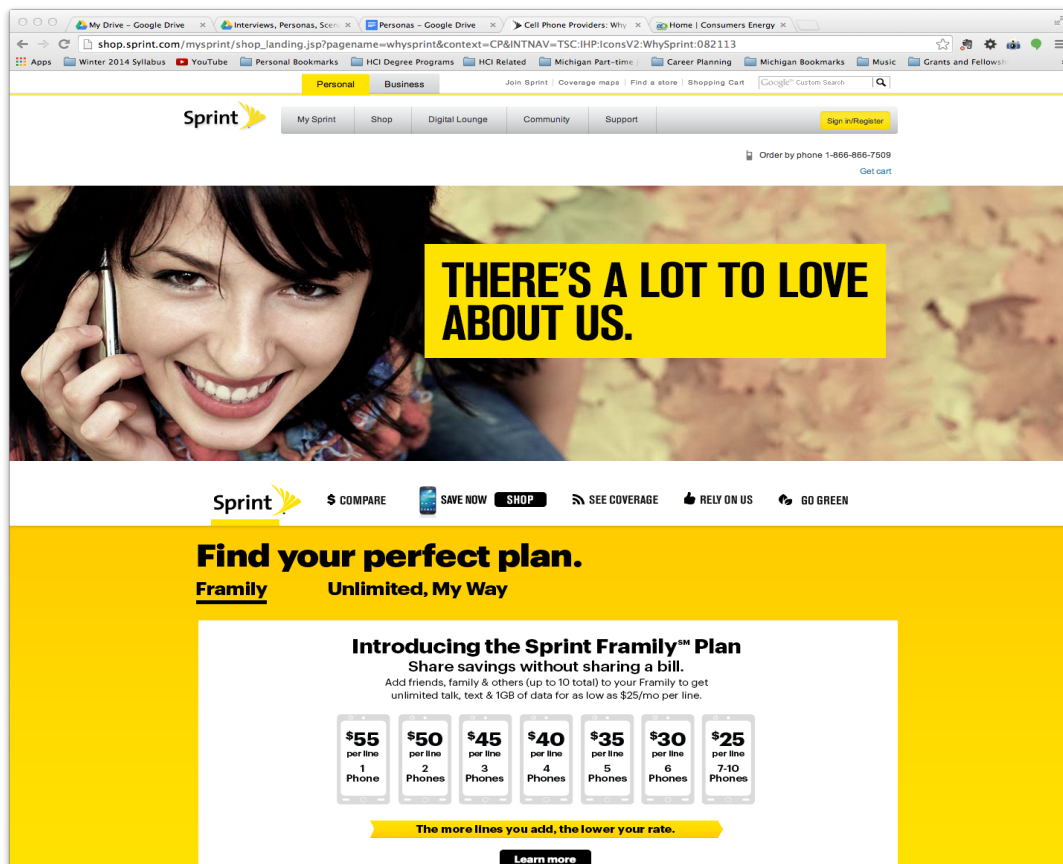
Figure 2. Consumers Energy Webpage

Figure 3. Sprint's Website

Appendix B Personas and Scenarios

Personas

Personas are imaginary characters based on the behaviors, goals, and motivations, of real people that have been interviewed (Cooper, 1995). In order to give designers a better perspective on potential users of their system, personas are a concrete way to conceptualize specific sets of users of different demographics, characteristics and technology competencies.

Our personas are based on the interviews we had with five individuals of varying age groups, gender and marital status who are users, or potential users, of the Consumers Energy website. We synthesized the expectations, preferences, behavior patterns, and knowledge of each interviewee to develop three different personas.

These personas are shown on the following pages.

Scenarios

Scenarios represent success stories. They give the context of how a specific persona might interact with a system in a way that fulfills their goals (Cooper, 1995). By creating these scenarios, we offer insight into how current systems might be improved or changed to address user needs.

Scenarios follow personas on the following pages.

Primary Persona

Connor McFreely

29 years old, male, white
Residence: Grand Rapids, MI
Family: Married with one child
Occupation: Master plumber

Connor McFreely is married with a 2-year-old child. He and his family live in Grand Rapids, MI and recently purchased a home. Connor works as a master plumber, putting in long hours for the family. Income can be variable over the seasons for the McFreely's since plumbing work isn't steady and his wife works as a teacher. Connor cooks big dinners for the family on weekends and loves to go out hunting or play ice hockey with his buddies in his free time. He takes care of paying bills for his family, but he wants it to take as little time up as possible. With new home ownership, the CE energy bill is one more to take care of and he wants to make sure his bill payments match how much electricity his family is using.

Education
• Associate's degree

Technical skills
• Computer skill
■■■■□

• Smartphone skill
■■■■□

• Checks email many times a day

• Uses laptop and smartphone

Lifestyle
• Works long hours
• Takes care of family
• Pays the bills
• Enjoys cooking, hunting, and ice hockey

Goals
• Pay bills online quickly
• Check meter reading against online report
• Review payment history

Challenges
• He is the sole bill payer for his family
• He distrusts auto-pay features
• Income is variable based on the season

Image available at https://lh6.googleusercontent.com/-AfXWAwfiWw0/AAAAAAAAAAI/AAAAAAAAAAA/bjbpmUTViJk/photo.jpg

Scenario 1: Connor McFreely

After a long day of work, Connor sits down on the couch with his phone to check his email. He clicks on an email that says, "Your Consumer's Energy bill is ready to view." He groans. Another bill to pay and this one has always been a pain. He has to track down his checkbook and enter in his bank account information every time; the site won't save his payment information.

He grabs a beer out of the fridge and then sits down with his phone again. He taps on the link to the Consumer's Energy site. It looks different from last month when he logged in. The site seems cleaner and more organized than when he last saw it. "Maybe they've finally upgraded this dingy old thing," he thinks. There's a large field for him to enter his login information and a big "Pay my bill" button. That seems clear, he thinks.

The next page that appears lists his current bill amount, along with the meter reading. Off to the side there's comparison information: what last month's bill was and what his bill was last year at this time. He confirms the amount to pay and enters his checking account information. There's a checkbox to save the payment information; he clicks it. A new calendar feature allows him to quickly change the date the payment will go through, so he moves the payment back a week, after his next paycheck.

He presses "Confirm" and takes another sip of his beer. He's already more relaxed, thinking that next time with this new site the new payment process will be even more painless.

Secondary Persona

Eleanor Miller

46 years old, female, white
Residence: Kalamazoo, MI
Family: Married, 3 adult children
Occupation: HS History teacher

Eleanor Miller is a history teacher at Central High School in Kalamazoo, where she lives with her husband of 25 years. Her children are now grown-up and in college, and she's getting used to her life as an empty nester. Although she teaches from Monday through Friday, and lesson plans take up a large portion of her afternoons, she keeps Friday nights reserved for get-togethers with friends where they share their passion for cooking and baked goods. On the weekends, she indulges in the latest pop novels and catches up on Facebook with friends and family. Eleanor keeps meticulous track of her finances with an eye toward early retirement, so she likes to be able to plan for all her bills. Because she bakes so frequently, and gas prices for her stove are higher during the winter months, she has started looking at the ways she can "go green" and save energy as a way to cut costs.

Education
• Bachelor's degree

Technical skills
• Computer skill
■■■☐☐

• Smartphone skill
■■■☐☐

• Checks email once a day

• Uses desktop computer

Lifestyle
• Family oriented, but enjoying being an empty nester with her husband
• Uses Facebook to keep up with kids and friends
• Enjoys baking, reading, and gardening

Goals
• Keep expenses level month to month
• Compare electricity usage year to year
• Switch to using green energy before retirement

Challenges
• Doesn't trust CE's energy initiatives
• Gets lost on complex websites
• Energy bills high due to extreme weather

Image available at http://www.flickr.com/photos/russell_reno/441137424/

Scenario 2: Eleanor Miller

Today is a very special day for Eleanor. She's just finished her masterpiece: a double raspberry cheesecake for a baking party tonight in which her friends will be choosing the best baker. As she smells the light aroma of raspberries and cream, her hectic morning spent rushing to grade high school history tests of the Napoleonic War seems to fade away. Then she remembers: "Shoot! My Consumers Energy bill is due!" She has been struggling to pay her bills on the Consumers Energy site because it's just too complicated, but it's too late for a paper bill, so she's going to have to use it now. "Who uses all the extra features on that site, anyway?" she wonders every time she visits it. "I just want to pay my bill!"

After work, she drives home, just a little over the speed limit, so that she can log on to her Consumers Energy site and pay her bill before the party. She gets home a bit earlier than she expected and decides to spend a couple minutes finding out what her daughter is up to through Facebook. When she logs on, she sees a status from her friend, Mary, in her feed that surprises her: "Paying my bills online was EASY for ONCE! Consumers Energy rocks!" "Rocks?" she wonders. "That confirms my suspicion that Mary has 'rocks' in her head. Consumers Energy's website is ridiculously confusing!" Still, she is curious and logs in to the Consumers Energy website to see what has changed.

As soon as she is on, a large instruction shows her where to click to pay, and all the features are clear and organized. "Wait, did I log on to the right site?" she wonders. Following the clearly displayed instructions, she clicks on the button to set up her monthly payment.

"Eesh," she thinks, looking at a bill that is much higher than expected, "maybe I should check out their 'green energy tips' to see now I can use less energy. Oh, my addiction to baking!" After easily setting up her payment plan with just a few clicks, she clicks on a page for green energy resources. All the information on this page is listed clearly with bullets and a question and answer section that gives her a few helpful green energy tips. Eleanor is impressed and decides to be more green in her energy use in the future.

After logging out, she reopens her Facebook page. "I can't believe I am doing this," she thinks. Scrolling down her newsfeed, she gives her friend's Consumers Energy comment a "thumbs up" adding "Consumers Energy really does rock! Check out their green energy section! Oh, and Mary, you might want to get some tips on how to save energy because you're going to have to bake up a storm on that old electric stove of yours to beat the raspberry cheesecake I'm bringing over!"

She closes her laptop. It's time to show the crew who is top chef.

Tertiary Persona

Chuck Davidson

67 years old, male, white
Residence: Saginaw, MI
Family: Widowed, 2 children, 7 grandkids
Occupation: Retired; mechanic & Navy

Chuck Davidson is a retired mechanic living in Saginaw. He lives alone with a small garden where he spends some time on gardening the small vegetables. He is enthusiastic with cars and searching for cars information on the Internet with computer. Since his kids are living in southern part of state, he organized family trip once a year. He is not familiar with paying bills on line. With the help and encouragement from his kids, he is willing to learn how to pay the bills on line because he hopes to lead his own life with more convenience. So far, he is still trying to pick up the skills of paying the bills and familiar with the CE web site.

Education
• High school diploma

Technical skills
• Computer skill
■■☐☐☐

• Smartphone skill
☐☐☐☐☐ (N/A)

• Checks email once a day usually, sometimes less often

• Uses desktop computer

Lifestyle
• Leads quiet life; home is small, but sufficient
• Sees family about once a month (live 1+ hr away)
• Enjoys working on cars, likes tinkering with things and keeps small vegetable garden

Goals
• Keep utility costs low since he's on fixed income
• Maintain power in bad weather
• Learn new tricks and tips from his tech-savvy kids

Challenges
• Limited computer skills lead to frustration
• Relies on kids to learn how to navigate web tools
• Needs to live frugally due to fixed income

Image available at http://farm3.staticflickr.com/2786/4501657464_2c250d43b1_o.jpg

Scenario 3: Chuck Davidson

Chuck is sitting on his front porch watching the last bit of the sunrise. His kids and their families will be here shortly; it's the annual birthday party for all the grandkids.

After the kids get settled playing in the yard and snacks are laid out on the porch table, Chuck and his son, Mark, get a minute to catch up. Mark knows that his dad had quite a rough winter given all the bad weather. Whenever they talked on the phone his dad would complain about how high energy costs had gotten. At least Chuck could keep from freezing with his generator, but that didn't make the bills any less painful. Chuck asked his son if he knew any way to cut the bills back. His son off-handedly commented that maybe he should pay online and save the cost of a stamp each month. His son chuckled and thought for a minute. Maybe he could help his dad save more than $0.50.

Mark suggested that they go sit at his computer and go to the Consumer's Energy site. Chuck replied he wasn't sure why they'd go there for help, they seemed to keep the lights on well enough. Mark offered that sometimes energy companies have tips for weatherproofing your home or discounts for seniors. In fact, on the Consumer's Energy website Mark was able to find both. He sat back a minute to let his dad read through the material. Everything was clear and straightforward - bold headers and bullet points helped break things down into easily readable chunks of information. Mark and Chuck made a list of a few weatherproofing materials to pick up at the store later that weekend. They also made sure that Chuck's date of birth was in his account information so that he could receive the 5% senior discount.

Mark backed his chair away from the desk. "We'd better go outside and see how much trouble the kids have been up to." Chuck smiled, "Maybe tomorrow you can show me that fancy way to pay."

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

My name is _____. This is my colleague _____. Today we are going to ask you some questions about how you use technology and how that relates to the Consumers Energy website. We want to find out how you do things and what you like. Do you have any questions for us before we start?

Do you mind if we record our conversation? It's only for note-taking purposes; all of our data will be anonymized.

General / Demographic Info
- First off, I'd like to confirm that you are you in the ___ age range. Is that correct?
- If you are comfortable, would you mind telling us your occupation?
- What are your top priorities of things that you need to get done during the day?

Technology Comfort
- How comfortable are you with using computers? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)
- How comfortable are you with using smart phones? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)

Using the Internet
- How often do you use the Internet? *Yesterday, how often did you access the Internet during the day?*
- Where do you access the Internet (school, home, work, etc)?
- What do you usually do when you are on the Internet?
    - *Prompt if necessary: For instance, email, reading, paying bills, shopping, social media.*
- How do you usually access the Internet?
    - *Prompt if necessary: For instance, laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone.*
- Do you pay any of your bills online? (If yes, ask questions below)
    - Can you tell me about your experience with those sites?
    - What do you like about that website? *Ask follow-up questions if necessary.*
    - Do you have any dislikes about that website? *Ask follow-up questions if necessary.*
    - Why do you like that site? (What makes it easy to use?)

Using consumerenergy.com
- Have you ever been to the Consumers Energy website?
    - If so what have you used it for?
    - If not, why?
    - What is your overall impression of the site?

- o Which devices (computer, laptop, tablet) have you used to access the site?
- o Where do you access the site from? (home, work or school)
- What do you like about the Consumers Energy website? *Ask follow-up questions if necessary.*
- Do you have any dislikes about the Consumers Energy website? *Ask follow-up questions if necessary.*
- The site has a number of educational and resource pages. Are you aware of these pages?
  - o Have you ever used them before?
  - o *Ask follow-up questions if necessary.*
- The site also has a place to report or view outages. Have you used this part of the site?
- Have you ever paid your bills on the website?
  - o Why or why not?
  - o Can you tell us about the experience of paying the bill on website?
- Is there anything you'd like to see added or changed to make the Consumers Energy site better?

That covers what we wanted to ask, is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for participating today. We appreciate your time and help with providing your thoughts on our product. Your input will help us improve the Consumers Energy website and make it a better. Thank you again!

Appendix D: Interview Transcript

User 1: Male, 18-35 Years of Age

Conducted 2/12/14, 9:00 PM- 9:30 PM

Color Coded Interviewer Key

Blue= Katrina Lanahan

Green= Michael Grisafe

Interview Start: 9:00 PM

What is your highest level of education?

I have 19 credit hours. The equivalent of a junior undergrad.

What do you do for a living?

I work for the City of XXXX XXXXX. Office work, I guess.

What do you feel like are your top priorities of things you need to get done during the day?

Getting my workout done, getting my schoolwork done. Cooking is always important, I mean eating obviously. If you don't know how to cook, you are not that valuable to me as a human being.

<Katrina laughs>

I'm a Michigan beer and wine enthusiast and surely love good beer. Especially living in Grand Rapids.

So, the next couple of questions are about technology. How comfortable are you with using computers on a scale of 1-5, where 5 is the highest?

I would say a 4.

And how comfortable are you with using smartphones on a scale of 1-5?

Pretty comfortable.

So if you were to put it on a scale of 1-5?

I would say a 5. I'm pretty proficient on smartphones, but I don't know how to write code on computers, so I'd say 4.

How often do you use the Internet?

Daily.

And if you were to break it down, how much you are on the internet per day; what would you say?

Well, Monday through Friday, probably a lot more, because I'm at work. I'm on at least, like, 3 hours. On the weekends, probably half an hour to forty-five minutes per weekend day. Probably 3 hours on a weekend if you average it out.

Excellent. And what do you usually do while you are on the internet? Like read your emails, pay your bills, social networking…

Mostly reading educational articles: Mother Jones, Nation….checking Twitter. I use Twitter a lot to get news updates.   And then secondarily, social media, like Facebook. Well, I guess Twitter is social media too. Most of it is educational though.

And how do you usually access the Internet? Via laptop computer, desktop, smartphone?

Desktop at work Monday through Friday for the most part. Secondarily, on my smartphone.

Do you pay any of your bills online?

Yes.

Can you tell me about your experience using a bill-paying site; what that is like for you?

Yeah, online, I use Credo Mobile [http://www.credomobile.com/]. It's awesome. Michigan Credit Union for my car payments…uh, then Consumers. I've had really bad problems with them in the past. They won't let you create an online bill-paying account unless you have automatic payments, and I will never use automatic payments. Because if a company screws up, like they do now and then, they can charge more. And I don't agree with that. But Consumers won't let me set up an account without it being automatic payment from my bank account or credit card, so I have to still mail a check to them.

Ok, so you still mail in checks to the Consumer's Energy site because of that frustration?

Yup. They have this shitty office, with bullet holes in the glass and it would take me longer to go there than to just mail it.

Yeah, it can be really frustrating when things are not working the way you want them to. So out of those sites you mentioned, do you have any particular likes about them? Things that they do well?

Credo is really awesome; I just give them my phone number and" quick-pin password," and then it is just one button click to pay the bill or view the bill. And they automatically save my credit card information, so I just have to click a button, fill it in, click a button and it is done.

So, it seems really straight-forward; it's one click; it saves your debit card information and very easy to flow through. Other than the trouble with the online payments with Consumers Energy, do you have any dislikes about other bill-paying sites?

Not really. Michigan Credit Union is pretty easy. I have PNC but I don't have any bills with them, but it is easy to navigate my debit card transactions.

You said it's hard to navigate transactions?

No; it's easy. Once you click on a login and a button, you are in and out.

So with your debit card transactions, what makes it easy to complete- when you are talking about the Michigan Credit Union?

Yup. That is really easy. Like making my car payments. I can just click the "quick pay" button and select the amount I want to transfer and hit submit, and boom.

So our next questions are all about the Consumers Energy site specifically. So can you tell us in general what you use the website for?

Not much. The only thing I have recently used it for, like in the past month, I live in an apartment and I will go check how accurate their reading is versus my reading. And there is a tool that shows me how to do that online. It is easy to locate that on the website. Other than that, I'd really like to pay my bills online, but like I said, I'm not going to do automatic for all the reasons I stated.

So when you are comparing the meter readings, are they pretty accurate compared to what is outside your apartment? The kilowatts are really close. It may come down to the equivalent of 45 or 60 cents off.

Ok; perfect.

The site has a whole bunch of educational resources and things like that, have you ever used those on the site before?

Yeah, I see those but they have so much bull, it's laughable. They might use 10% renewable, but the rest is still coal which is killing the planet. Yeah, I saw it, but do I use it? No. That's targeted at people who have no fucking clue what is going on.

<Katrina laughs> All right, fair enough. They also have some information on reporting outages. Have you ever used something like that on the site?

I would but I live in an apartment complex, so if something goes out, the maintenance guys are on it. I don't have to work on it. It's one of the good things about livin' in an apartment.

Ok, great.

Michael: One other thing related to how the website looks. When you went to the website…how did….I'm trying to figure out how to say this…Do you remember what the website looked like…did you access it on your phone or did you access it on your desktop computer?

It was desktop. I mean, it seems fairly navigable. It has their logo… this was a long time ago. I don't know if it has changed since I have been there. For the most part it seems pretty navigable. It seems user friendly. I didn't click on it, obviously, because I wasn't able to, it was a long time ago, but for the most part it seemed navigatable.

Ok, so let me know if I am putting words into your mouth, but it sounds like the website itself was easy to navigate, but your main complaint was the billing option. You would use it if you were able to make your payments and they weren't auto pay; everything else is usable it sounds like?

Yup.

Ok, cool, that's good to know. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the website that we didn't cover that you think is important for us to know as we are looking at, maybe, trying to improve the website and make things work a little bit better?

If anything just be a little more honest with their customers. I mean, let them know, right off the bat, maybe this is on there now. It's easier to give your phone number, set up your account and make a payment versus actually setting up an automatic payment. I don't know if they have changed that. You used to have to get set up with automatic payments to pay your bills online.

Cool. That is all we have for today. We really appreciate you taking the time and helping us with our project and providing us with input on the site. I know that Consumers Energy has told us that they are looking at doing a complete redesign of the site and our client contact is interested in making things better.

Well you guys are a hell of a lot cheaper than consultants. Ah corporate America. You gotta fucking love it. Well, if you guys need any more let me know.

We will. Thanks!

Interview End: 9:30 PM

User 2: Male, 18-35 Years of Age

Conducted 2/13/14, 3:00 PM – 3:20 PM

Color Coded Interviewer Key

Purple= Catherine Lu

Interview Start: 3:00 PM

First off, I'd like to confirm that your age first, what is your age range?

Oh do you need to say my real age? Or just a range? (haha)

It's ok you tell me a range

(haha) I am 29-year-old

If you are comfortable, would you mind telling us your occupation?

Sure, I work in a non-profit management.

What are your top priorities things that you need to get done during the day?

Getting stuffed down at work, cooking dinner.

How comfortable are you with using computer? And If I give you the scale from 1 to 5 and 5 is the highest.

Ok, If you give me the scale, I would say 5, very comfortable.

How comfortable are you with using smart phones? And If I give you the scale from 1 to 5 and 5 is the highest.

Yea, also 5.

How often do you use the internet? Like how often did you access the Internet yesterday?

Hours?

Ok, it is just estimate about how long did you access the internet.

I don't know. I use the internet all day. (haha)

Yea basically your job need to access the internet all day, right?

Well, I am online and have access to the Internet for my phone, so normally 8 hours on the work day. Doing research, email a lot. (haha)

Where do you usually do when you are on the Internet?

I access the internet at work and get home.

What do you usually do when you are on the Internet? For instance, email, reading, paying bills, shopping, social media.

All of the above. Yea I mean it depends on, I might use email, reading my book online, doing shopping and social media.

How do you usually access the Internet?

I have multiple devices to use, laptop for work, iphone for working myself, and ipad for working for myself.

Do you pay any of bills oneline?

I think I have the bills online.

Can you tell me about your experience with those sites?

I actually what I have done, I paid my bill through my credit care automatically. I pay my bill for consumer through the credit card on purpose that it can automatically pay it every month.

What do you like about that website?

I think I like the functionalities, complete the task through the website, I have no issue with that, and I don't have problem with clicking the function there.

So basically you think you can use the functions very smoothly right?

Yes absolutely, it is a one time thing and you don't even need to think about it.

Do you have any dislikes about that websites?

I think the certain websites you pay online you need numbers of click on line, and the windows to open up. Those are a little bit cumbersome and annoying and I give an example that I pay my water bill through Oakland County, but basically they requires couples different new windows opening up, that you have to work the process. Actually you can do a few times you will use to it, but I don't like the websites going through multiple windows, or multiples ways to accomplish it. So the simple and customer friendly is better.

Why do you like that website? Maybe you have answered that, but can you clarify for me?

I like about services where you can pay bill online, see how much your bill with, see the information about what included in bill, easily see previous bill, especially relevant something like for utilities, pervious usage. Especially for the utilities, it is helpful for add the information, the previous information. I don't care what I pay for in March 20-30th, I do care about in Feb of 20th 13 and Feb of 20th 12, and Feb of 20th 11. I can see my usage, especially gas to see, important for see how cold or how hot it is.

Well, okay, next part is about using consumersenergy.com. So we still have to measure this like about have you ever been to the Consumers Energy website?

Yes.

Ok. So if you have been to there, what have you used it for?

Err… so to clarify I haven't used it much because it has been…I think I said that it's sort of set-it-and-forget-it kind of thing… like when I said "hey, just go ahead and pay…" You know, just pull out from the credit card on monthly basis and I get an email saying, "Here is your bill amount", and they has bill information in terms of my usage which is great. I recently had to go on Consumers Energy website to update my credit card information, which I would be able to accomplish and that was fine. So yeas I answered your question… yes I have been and have been there occasionally.

So, okay, what is your overall impression of the site?

I think my overall impression of the site is that you know I think it's functional. I think there power statistics need to be improved a little bit but overall it's functional. And you know, it's okay.

Like when you use the website, which devices have you used to access the site?

I think mostly through my desktop and through my laptop. I don't think I have gone to the website… have accessed the website through any mobile devices…and I don't think… Do you have any mobile apps?

Em, I say no…I'm not quite sure whether Consumers Energy has the app for the mobile phone… it seems that you didn't have experience on the mobile phone for this website, right?

I have not used the mobile phone to access the website, no.

Ok, so…like where do you access the site from? At work, or home, or other places?

At home.

At home, okay. So what do you like about the Consumers Energy Website?

Emm… I like that once I log in I really like the energy year history… because once I log into the account on the page I can see information in terms of like what I owe, or you know, what's my upcoming bills… I like the history which is pretty available in terms of what I paid that kind of stuff…so, that's good.

So, do you have any dislikes about the Consumers Energy website?

Oh, yes. I think about what I've paid for, when I was working at my bills, you know, I basically have energy use history up to 4 years, so I got January 2013, January 2014 and that's great, but at the moment in time, I mostly care about… I really want to know what was January 2012, what was January 2011, what was January 2010…I care mostly about the months over a period of years so I can say, okay, am I using… am I demanding more services from gas over a specific month… you know, year, year, year… and that information isn't available…I am cool with the energy history but it doesn't tell me the information that I need in the current month…Because, you know, my house gets colder in the winter so I use a lot more services… I can't tell that because I only have one prior year.

Ok, gotcha.

And I would say just in terms of Your Home's aesthetics too, I think are a lot of startup companies and whatever have specific aesthetics that sort of clean, and it's sort of simple-working… and I think you can possibly make some improvements in terms of the overall aesthetics to the website that reached the competitors out-there right now instead of the standard website interface.

Ok, the site has a number of educational and resource pages. Are you aware of these pages?

I am and I just used the page today. So that's what we're going to talk.

So, have you ever used them before? So you just mentioned that you just used it today?

Emm yes I think I visited it in December also… yes I think I've used it before.

So, the site also has a place to report or view outages. Have you used this part of the site?

For outage information?

Yes.

I have no reason to use it… The outage is mostly about electricity and I don't use electricity from Consumers Energy… if the question is about DTE, I would say absolutely. For you guys, I have not.

Have you ever paid your bills on the website, on the Consumers Energy?

Emm, I just did it… So I set it automatic and my credit card is pulled…so technically I do but like I said, I just set it and I forget it.

So why do you pay your bills on your website?

How?

Why?

Oh, why. So it's much easier to pay bills and check things electronically than…than you have to write it and remember to write the checks and mail…

Can you tell us about the experience of paying the bill on website?

Em…tell my experience?

Yes.

So I have just recently updated my credit card information so I would be able to pay…I was able to edit my credit card information and I have it update by…em, I think it's my expiration date for my credit card…so that I was able to do it smoothly and didn't have any issue with it.

So, the last question is that is there anything you'd like to see added or changed to make the Consumers Energy site better?

Em… yes I think by overall point, and I really don't have a lot of feedbacks beyond this…but just, you know, you could possibly improve your aesthetics a little bit in terms of the interface, the tabs, how they look like…it could look simple and clear… and also provide us with more information on usage…like I said usage on month basis for going back 4 years ago or 5 years…so I can see in January in the past 5 years…and mostly gas…and it would allow me to say, yes, that makes sense or that I can say hey baby I get a leak in my house…

Cool…Yes I think this covers what we wanted to ask. Is there anything you would like to add or you want to share with us?

Emm…not at all. I think that's pretty much. Yes I think I probably have more feedbacks for you guys but also Curt has some electricity customers for you… because I know you guys may have got a lot of information from people… but no, I don't think I have other things to say, really.

So, we thank you for participating today. We appreciate your time and help with providing your thoughts on our product. Your input will help us improve the Consumers Energy website and make it better. So we want to thank you again.

Sure, no problem.

Interview End: 3:20 PM

User 3: Female, 18-35 Years of Age

Conducted 2/14/14, 9:15 AM-9:37 AM

Color Coded Interviewer Key

Green= Michael Grisafe

Purple= Catherine Lu

Interview Start: 9:15 AM

Thank you so much for taking time today to speak to me.

No problem.

So how were you recruited? Was it through Curt at Consumers Energy?

Yeah, my brother works for Consumers Energy. He contacted me.

Perfect. I was just wondering how you were recruited. So basically we are going to ask you some questions about computer literacy and what you think of their website. Is it ok if we record your interview? We will take out your name and any identifying information when we make a transcript. We are recording just for accuracy sake.

Yeah; that's fine.

I also have with me here my colleague, Catherine, and she is taking some notes to the side here.

Hi.

Hey, Catherine.

So we are going to ask you some questions about technology, but first off I want to confirm that you are in the 18-35 age range. Is that correct?

I am. Yes.

And if you are comfortable, would you mind telling us your occupation?

My occupation?

Uh, huh.

Self-employed.

Ok. So in a typical day, can you tell me some of the top priorities of things you need to get done?

Like for my business?

Like for anything. What do you usually do in a typical day?

Oh, what do I do… So I run my business. So I sell things on eBay and Amazon. So I do some shipping. I have a son, so, you know, take care of him. Trying to toilet train him….uh…cook for my family. Exercise. Stuff like that. Pretty dull, but that's about it.

No, that's fine. Then I want to ask you some questions on technology use. How comfortable are you with using computers on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest?

Um, I'd guess I'd say five.

Ok. Is that because, it sounds like you use it for Amazon all the time and things like that for your business?

Yeah.

Ok. And how comfortable are you with using smartphones on a scale of one to five?

Very. Five.

Ok. So how often do you use the internet? For instance, yesterday, how often did you access the internet?

Eight hours plus. Like all day.

And if you had to do a percentage of how much of that was for business versus personal use, what would that be?

Oh, I'm bad. It's going to be 50-50.

Ok. Where do you usually access the internet from? Is it from your home or from some other location?

Typically home. I work from home, so yeah.

Is it usually a laptop computer that you access it from?

I have a desktop actually.

Is that where you access the internet from the majority of the time?

Yes.

Ok. So what do you usually do when you are on the internet? For instance, email or selling things through Amazon or shopping. What kinds of things do you do?

I'm always in Gmail, you know, I have my business account up all the time. Amazon's up. That's for both selling and buying. Ebay regularly. I do social media stuff too. I do a lot of reading, blogs, news. I use the internet sometimes to watch TV, Playbox, Netflix, Hulu, all sorts of stuff. ESPN3 from time to time.

Do you pay any of your bills online?

If I can get away with it, yes.

Can you tell me about your experience with any one of those sites that you pay your bills on? For instance, what is one site that you pay your bills on?

Well, I pay my Sprint bill online. That's fine. I don't really know what to say about that. It's easy. You just set up a log-in and sign in. "Pay-my-bills" really two or three steps up and you are done.

Do you have any problems with the website?

For paying my bills, no. For paying my bills I've never had any difficulties that way.

Just to reiterate, what are some of the things that you like about that website? You said that it was easy to click some of the buttons, or what are some of the things that work for you on that website?

It is very clear where you are going. There aren't too many options. I think there's maybe four or five different, at the top, you know, their version of a tool bar. There's four or five different options, and I think the first one is "Pay Your Bill." Clear as day. You can't miss it. There's nothing more annoying than going on a website and you see a hundred different things. It's like, I want to do the most basic thing. I want to pay my bill. I think that's about the most basic thing.

Ok.

So easy to find. No muss, no fuss, just "boom," you're there.

So I want you to think about one of the worst websites you have to deal with in terms of paying your bills, and tell me what you don't like about that website.

Hmmm…

Or maybe an experience you had where you no longer use a website to pay your bills because you had such a bad experience.

Oh gosh…I'm trying to think…that's a tough one because most of my bills I pay through Chase Autopay. I don't know if I have an example for you where I just stopped, you know what I mean? I don't know if I have an example of a website that's frustrated me to that point. I just usually do it through Chase and have the date set up, so I don't really think about it honestly.

Ok. What about using Consumers Energy?   Have you ever been to the Consumers Energy website?

Yes.

What do you use the Consumers Energy website for?

Outages. I've used it for that, and I used it once to call about a downed line.

And was it easy for you to do both of those transactions on the website?

Well, the downed power line was. That was maybe a couple clicks to find the phone number. That wasn't hard at all. Where I did run into issues, and I don't know if you are covering this at all, but I had a power outage, so of course my internet was down. So I was trying to catch that on the outage map for my smartphone and that didn't go very well.

And what about that didn't go very well?

I couldn't see the map. I couldn't get any information. And that is the one time you would really need the outage map, when your power is out and you don't have the internet. You know what I mean?

So that portion of the website, when you access it through your smartphone; it is hard to get to the outage map you are saying?

Yes.

That is good to know. Do you usually access it while the power is not out through your desktop computer or through your mobile device?

When the power is out I usually do it through my phone or my tablet. Yeah. Mobile device.

But normally you access the Consumers Energy site on your desktop computer? Is that correct?

Yes, if the power is on. If the internet is down, naturally I go to my cell phone because I can still use mobile.

On the Consumers Energy website, what do you like about the site? Is there anything that works particularly well? Or things that don't work well? Other than what you've just articulated.

I think it's easy to get to what you want to get to. The outage map is right there. I'm pretty sure there is a "pay your bills" thing right there; I don't pay my bills that way. I think there are links up there about everything you could possibly want. The stuff is right in front of your face. It's not even the side tool bar or up on top. It's right there, dead center; you can't miss it. I like that about it. I don't think it's the prettiest website, but honestly, for what you guys do, I don't think that matters. You know what I mean?

Maybe you could speak more about its aesthetics, or why you don't think it looks that pretty?

Oh, I don't know. It's just not….there is no…It's just very utilitarian, which is fine, that's what you guys are after, just the green side bars… you know, there's nothing….it's not pretty….It's not ugly. I guess I am getting kind of nit-picky.

No, we want to hear all of the things you don't like about it, because we are going to try to fix it up.

I honestly think aesthetics, for what Consumers Energy does, that should be the least of their worries.

What do you think should be a top priority of something a customer should be able to do on the website?

You know being able to pay your bills quickly. Being able to see what is wrong with your bill, um, getting to the outage map. Being able to see that estimator that tells you when you are going to get your power back. I'm sure there's all sorts of things I'm not thinking of you can use Consumers for. I'm sure there's all sorts of other things that I just don't need.

You mentioned that you pay a number of your bills online, but you don't pay your Consumers Energy bill online. Why don't you use their website to pay your bill?

We just have autopay set up with Chase. I couldn't really tell you. It's just set up that way. I've been dealing with Sprint because Sprint irks me. Honestly, it's more of an insult to Sprint than it is a slight to Consumers, if that makes any sense. I've never had any problems paying them. You can just set up the date and there's nothing to it. So you just spend an hour and pay all your bills. So it is not anything that Consumers is doing wrong it's just easier on me.

And when you initially set up that autopay, did you have to go through Consumers Energy to set that up? Or did you set that up directly with Chase's website?

I'm pretty sure we just set it up with Chase; it's been years so I could be wrong about his. I think all we needed was some information on what bill we get sent, and I think that was it. It's been like seven years. I'd be lying if I said I remember.

So go back to how the website looks. What are some websites that you use that you think look really slick or really have it together in terms of how they look?

Hmmm… that's a good question…gosh….I was thinking about Sprint again and when you go in there, there are just a lot of pretty photos and stuff like that. Videos, if you want to see the latest and greatest. And Consumers seems to have videos up too, which is good I think.

Have you ever checked out any of those videos or any of their educational resources that they have on the site?

No, and the only reason I haven't is I know about it from the radio PSAs and when there is a storm they have commercials all over: "don't touch downed power lines," you know. I feel like I have seen a lot of it, but it is nice they have that information up.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Consumers Energy site or how we could work on improving it that we didn't cover?

I think the one thing that you guys should work on is a better mobile version of the website. You're in Ann Arbor, you'll appreciate this: So last year during the Stanley Cup playoffs, game five versus the Blackhawks, my power went out. I didn't like that. So I was trying to go on my phone to see when the power was going to come back on so I could see if I needed to go elsewhere to watch the game. So, I couldn't see the outage map, I couldn't find the number. I ended up having to Google the number to find out who to call to get the estimate on it. So I think people are usually pretty annoyed when their power goes out. If you can't figure out when your power is going to come back on; I think you are prone to making people extra mad. I think naturally if your power is out and your internet is down, and you have people with smartphones now, you are going to be using your mobile networks from Sprit or whoever. The mobile website better be in good shape or you are going to be having the problems I had. That could be the one big thing for me. That was not fun.

And you weren't even able to find the number on the site to report the outage, you said?

No, I wasn't…it was not pretty… it did not go well.

Have you ever tried to access any of the other areas on your mobile device to see if they function for you?

No, just that one time. After messing around with it for fifteen or twenty minutes, I was fed up. So no, that was about it.

Well, I think that covers all the questions we wanted to ask you about the site. And we want to thank you, once again, for taking the time today to speak to us.

No problem. I hope my information was valuable.

No, definitely. You information was valuable. We really appreciate it.

Thank you so much and have a great day.

You too. Bye.

Interview End: 9:37 AM

User 4: Male, 45-64 Years of Age

Conducted 2/13/14, 5:30 PM-5:50 PM

Color Coded Interviewer Key

Red= Robert Wang

Interview Start: 5:50 PM

First off, I'd like to confirm that you are you in the 45-65 year old age range. Is that correct?

Yes

If you are comfortable, would you mind telling us your occupation?

Retired teacher - auto (car) repair

To find out things you value, can you tell me what your top priorities of things are that you need to get done during the day?

Retired, so work on car
Work on whole car, whatever needs to get repaired or redone
Go on trips - cruise, camping up at Lovington State Park
Cooking, cook all the meals, priority that needs to get done
Don't watch much TV
Use the Internet - read the newsletter sometimes; look up parts for cars; information on Repairs; going on trip - maps, information, hotels; reading Yahoo news, Yahoo search (refers to sites I want, familiar with it); Yahoo mail, also have webmail through AT&T

How many times do you check your email a day?

Might be once a day

How comfortable are you with using computers? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)

5; in job use computers for everything, teaching program, auto sites to buy parts, took computer classes years ago

How comfortable are you with using smart phones? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)

I don't have one. Never, thought about getting one, but don't like reading internet stuff on an iPhone, it's just too damn small. Like looking at whole picture, print it out. Too small.

How often do you use the internet?

Once today, but depends on what I'm doing at the time. Three or four weeks back I was on 5-6hrs a day; now maybe an hour a day.

Where do you access the internet (school, home, work, etc)?

Home

(Already told us that use internet for research related to car work) Can you tell us about other things you do on the Internet?

Look at finance and brokerage accounts
buy things, auto sites, info blogs

Any social media - Facebook or Twitter?

No interest in Twitter - don't want life sitting on internet.

How do you usually access the Internet?

Used to have desktop but took a crap, now just use laptop

Do you pay any of your bills online? (If yes, ask questions below)

UM bill for daughter, but that's about it. Mostly just do that paper thing where I mail the check. I do pay utility bills, well it's automatic, so I don't really pay them online.

Did you set that up?

It's been set up for years, not sure how set-up

What do you like about that website, for the UM bill?

Well, don't like anything about it
Well, has an account set-up, automatically takes it out of checking account
Fairly simple, cumbersome in one spot, can't remember where, the way they have it set up. Initially it was cumbersome to set up.

Have you ever been to the Consumers Energy website?

Nope, I don't believe I have
Can't think of any reason, unless switched to bill pay

Seem like savvy computer user, why not go to CE site?

Well, they turn the lights on, so I see no reason to go there
Doesn't interest me
Keep track of own utility receipts. They send you a thing, I could tell you what it was 3-4 years ago.

Is there anything you'd like to tell us about your Consumers Energy experience?

Well, they supply the electricity so as long as the lights come on, I don't have any complaints. If there's a storm or something… but I bought a generator about 6-7 years ago.

Have you ever reported an outage?

Yea, on the phone
But bought a generator
Before I had a laptop

Interview End: 5:50 PM

User 5: Female, 65+ Years of Age

Conducted 2/14/14, 4:00 PM-4:20 PM

Color Coded Interviewer Key

Orange= Wei Wang

Red= Robert Wang

Interview Start: 4:30 PM

First off, I'd like to confirm that you are you in the over 65 age range. Is that correct?
65

If you are comfortable, would you mind telling us your occupation?
Teacher

What are your top priorities of things that you need to get done during the day?
Work, catching up on laundry and dishes.

How comfortable are you with using computers? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)
Very comfortable

How comfortable are you with using smart phones? (Scale 1-5; 5 being the highest)
Very comfortable has iPhone

How often do you use the internet? *Yesterday, how often did you access the internet during the day?*
Probably 2 hours

Where do you access the internet (school, home, work, etc)?
At school and at home

What do you usually do when you are on the Internet?

Checking email, facebook, don't shop all that much, although…
Checking email, facebook, don't shop all that much, but I do some online shopping, actually the third thing would be bill pay.

So email is because you're a teacher, so email is mostly for work?
No

How do you usually access the Internet?

Laptop most often.
Desktop at work.

Robert: I was wondering if you could back-up a bit. When you said you check your email, what kind of email do you check?

Hotmail, I never change so I've had it for years.
I understand that's uncool but I kept it.

I was wondering, is it mostly to keep in touch with relatives or family members?

Yeah mostly, I also have several stores, they email me when they have sales, and I get emails when someone comments on facebook that I've commented on as well.

So store sales emails are also important to you?

Yes

Also, I just wanted to ask you about your Facebook...yeah...I think it is really hip that you're doing that, my mom just sent me a Facebook request. I thought that was really cool. How do you use Facebook?

I have many many many many friends. I use Facebook because I know what everyone's up to. We all check in with each other.

Do you pay any of your bills online?

Yes

Can you tell me about your experience with those sites?

In terms of whether they're difficult, I have had no difficulty paying my car loan which is through a credit union, or my DTE, or consumers bill, cable bill... I think those website are very user friendly and I haven't had any issues.

Robert: Can you tell me more about the user friendliness? What do you like about it?

Website are not too confusing, not a lot of stuff…. "Do you want to pay your bill?, click here, yes. OK." They've stored my bank info.

Do you have any dislikes about that website?

No. The only problem is I have one credit card. It's not due until the 28th. If I I don't correct them, they're not going to take it out of my account until the 28th. And I will be wondering...why haven't they taken my money? So on that one site, I always have to remember to change the date. But that's the most difficulty that I ever run into.

What do you like about that website?

No, not that particular site
that's the only difficulty I have. The other sites are very easy to use, very clear what you need to do..like I said they store my bank info unless I want to pay a different way, I just click. I don't have to waste stamps, or go to a mailbox, it's just cool thing

Interview End: 4:20 PM