

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/AAAAAAAAAI/AAAAAAAAAA/bjbpmUTViK/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?

- Which devices (computer, laptop, tablet) have you used to access the site?
 - 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?
 - Have you ever used them before?
 - *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?
 - Why or why not?
 - 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 online?

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 Sprint 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. Your 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 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