ASSESSING THE USER EXPERIENCE OF AIRLINES WEB SITES IN MALAYSIA BASED ON CUSTOMER-CENTERED DESIGN

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Abstract

The explosion of the World Wide Web has significantly transformed the airline industry. Hence the online ticketing has become a famous and convenient way. As a result, the demand towards this system has tremendously increased. This system supports to reduce the service cost hence presents the possibility to offer cheaper fare. Consequently, the customer is offered with vast range of airlines web sites. Obviously they prefer a site that is more usable. The fundamental problem that motivates this study is to find the factors that determine customer acceptance of the airlines web site. Through the experimental study, the features of three airlines web sites in Malaysia, which are AirAsia (www.airasia.com), Malaysia Airlines (www.mas.com.my) and StarAir (www.starair-online.com) have been analyzed. We present a theoretical framework that highlights the importance of (1) convenient booking flow; (2) efficiency; (3) ease of use; (4) interactivity; and (5) attractiveness; to attract the customers. The result of this research provides a basis for better user experience assessment of the airlines web sites. We end with suggestions for better airlines web site usability based on customer centered design.

Key words: user experience, e-commerce, usability.

1. Introduction

The development of the Internet and World Wide Web in the mid 1990s has significantly transformed the airline industry [2]. The online ticketing has become a famous and convenient way to book airlines tickets. As a result, demands towards this system have also been increased. Consequently, many airlines companies start to implement the online ticket booking system. Unfortunately, some airlines web sites did not take much into account the importance of usability. Usability is the crucial aspect for the web site. Usability rules the web; if the customer cannot find a product, they will leave. Hence, usability has important role of attracting the user to buy the product or using the service of the web site. The user expects a web site that is easy to use and effective.

We suggest that usability factors such as site booking flow, efficiency, ease of use, interactivity and attractiveness can improve the user experience. We were motivated to assess the level of usability among airlines web sites especially in Malaysia. Also, as far as we concern, at the moment there is no statistical evidence that reports the usability level of airlines web site in Malaysia.

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