

# Usability Evaluation: User Testing

Ticketmaster

<https://www.ticketmaster.com/>

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# 1 Usability Study Methods

## 1.1 Procedures

I conducted a remote moderated usability study over Zoom. To track time, I used my phone's stopwatch application. I created a formatted sheet on a notepad with divisions for task performance, time performance, and observations that come from the study. The sheet was filled as the study progressed. Created a dummy account for users to get access to tasks that require an account. I sent invitations to my participants in the form of calendar invites. I then sent participants an informed consent form to be filled out before the test. After the study concluded, I sent out System Usability Scale surveys I created on Google Forms.

## 1.2 Recruitment

### How the participants were recruited.

I recruited my participants in person. I conducted a short verbal screening survey with 12 individuals, out of which I selected five. The questions I asked are as follows:

1. Have you ever used Ticketmaster?
2. How often do you attend entertainment events that require booking a ticket?
3. Do you intend on using Ticketmaster for your ticketing needs shortly?

The participants are university students residing in the USA. Out of the five participants selected, four are students (M1, M2, M4, M5) and one participant has been working for a year (M3). Only two individuals out of these have used Ticketmaster (M4 and M5). The participants are between the ages of 21-30.

## 1.3 Participants

I conducted a pilot study with 1 person. My main usability study consisted of 5 participants.

The typical users in my previous assignment consisted of art, music, or sports enthusiasts residing in the USA, who might sign up for Ticketmaster to book their tickets. My recruited participants show interest in the above genres of entertainment.

The age group mentioned in the previous assignment is 18-44. The age group for my study is between 21-30. In my previous assignment, I wrote that the technical experience is not expected, but my recruited users have competent to expert technical experience.

My recruitment pool was limited to university students owing to time and geographical limitations.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

PID OR Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Education	Job	Technical Experience	Date of Eval
Pilot: P1	25	F	Graduate	Student	Proficient	11-14-2022

Main: M1	27	M	Graduate	Student	Competent	11-14-2022
M2	25	F	Graduate	Student	Expert	11-15-2022
M3	30	F	Graduate	Designer	Proficient	11-15-2022
M4	22	M	Graduate	Student	Expert	11-16-2022
M5	20	F	Undergraduate	Student	Proficient	11-16-2022

## 2 Usability Study Tasks

### 2.1 Pilot Study

#### How was the task list tested before it was utilized?

I conducted a moderated in-person usability test with P1. I observed how they completed their tasks and encouraged them to talk me through their process as they navigate the website.

- The initial set of usability task questions
  1. Tell me how many 'Fine Art' events are happening within a 25-mile distance of New York City between Christmas to NYE?
  2. How many Tennis Events are happening Internationally on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2022?
  3. Check if Shaina Twain's concert at Columbia, MD has the option to add Parking to your ticket.
  4. What is the final price you pay for the cheapest ticket for Blink 182's Baltimore Concert?
  5. How much does ticket insurance cost for this show?
  6. Select the ticket from the previous task and go to checkout. Find a way to cancel your order without hitting the back button of your browser.
  7. Can you find how many rows offer a Wheelchair accessible ticket for Jo Koy's show at Capital One Arena, Washington, DC?
  8. How many categories of Entertainment Guides does Ticketmaster have for Music?
  9. Tell me how many ticket deals offer tickets under \$40 for Queens, NY?
  10. Find the Offer Code to buy 2-for-1 Tickets for any of the Tomlin X United events.

**How you refined the wording of tasks during the pilot study? Provide an example or two of how you improved task wording or your overall usability study protocols.**

- For task #1, I decrease the date range to task to decrease the time spent counting the no. of events. The tasks are to be selected for just one date – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.
- Task #2: Reworded the task to “How many International Tennis Events are happening in September 2023” as no definite ones were happening on the said date. I could find events in September 2023. Also, Ticketmaster lists a few events as “International” and I reworded the task to keep it standard for the site. I also mentioned that international here means outside the USA. The reworded task is, “How many international tennis events are happening outside the USA on September 2023.
- I changed task #4’s event to the event searched in task #3. I was able to maintain a flow of the tasks without the need for a new event.
- In task #6, I gave the user an option to use the back button of their browser. I wanted to observe how many users give up after searching for the ‘cancel order’ button. The task was reworded to “Select the ticket from the previous task and go to checkout. Find a way to cancel your order”

## 2.1 Usability Tasks

- Task #1.** Tell me how many ‘Fine Art’ events are happening within a 25-mile distance of New York City on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022?
- Task #2.** How many international tennis events are happening outside the USA in September 2023?
- Task #3.** Check if Shaina Twain’s concert at Columbia, MD has the option to add Parking to your ticket.
- Task #4.** Now that you’re here, what is the final price of the cheapest ticket?
- Task #5.** How much does ticket insurance cost for this show?
- Task #6.** Select the ticket from the previous task and go to checkout. But you’ve now changed your mind and want to go back. Find a way to cancel your order.
- Task #7.** Can you find how many rows offer a Wheelchair accessible ticket for Jo Koy’s show at Capital One Arena, Washington, DC?
- Task #8.** How many categories of Entertainment Guides does Ticketmaster have for Music?
- Task #9.** Tell me how many ticket deals offer tickets under \$40 for Queens, NY
- Task #10.** Find the Offer Code to buy 2-for-1 Tickets for any of the ‘Tomlin X United’ events.

## 2.2 Task List Rationale

Describe:

- **What tasks were chosen?**  
Tasks were chosen to keep the user scenarios listed below in mind.
  - Users purchase a ticket for a show of their favorite artist.
  - The user looking for accessible tickets for an event.
  - Users looking for good deals on the tickets.
  - Users looking for recommendations from Ticketmaster.
  - Users with gift cards, and vouchers looking for international events outside the USA.
- **Why do you think these tasks are important enough to evaluate?**

The range of tasks offers a variety of use cases for the website. While the website is primarily used for booking tickets for shows people are familiar with, it also involves the use of filters for people who don't know what they're looking for.

- **How tasks were chosen for inclusion in the task list.**  
Common user scenarios were listed for the website. The tasks were chosen such that it highlights the different pathways a participant can take to reach the same answer.

### 3 Results

- **The overall results of the user-based tests are as follows:**
  - The usability evaluation took between 20 mins to 30 minutes (~25 mins on average)."
  - **Task #1** on average took 1m 20s to complete. 2/5 users completed this task correctly by including the distance radius filter in their search. 3/5 did not use the distance filter because it doesn't appear when the event is searched using the search bar.
  - **Task #2** averagely took 3 mins to complete. Every participant first wanted to change the location to 'International' or 'World', which couldn't be found. 2/5 users completed this task correctly, by putting 'Tennis' in the search bar, which is the only way to access international events.
  - **Task #3** averagely took 1 min to complete. 5/5 got this task right. However, the method I had expected was to check 'add-ons' in the event listing, or go to the checkout page and check the parking ticket options. 2/3 participants found a separate parking ticket being sold by Ticketmaster for the event.
  - **Task #4** averagely took 45 s, except for M1 who took 2min 32s because they weren't. 0/5 got this task right. All participants failed to go to the checkout page to get the final price of the ticket and answered with the price mentioned on the ticket selection page. Additionally, the price for the ticket for M4 went to VIP mode and they couldn't find a way to undo it.
  - **Task #5** averagely took 45s to complete. 5/5 participants completed the task. The time taken by participants to complete this task ranged from 11s to 1m 20s. The text was observed to not be emphasized. M4 found the text in 11s, because they had hovered over the text in the previous task. M1 observed that adding the insurance to your cart doesn't change the cart total. "When will they charge my card?" they exclaimed in frustration.
  - **Task #6** averagely took 30s to complete. 5/5 participants completed the task. However, only 1/5 participants used the 'Cancel order' button provided on the screen. 4/5 used the 'back' button in their browsers to go back.
  - **Task #7** averagely took 2 min 15s to complete. 3/5 participants completed this task successfully and found the filter for accessible seating in the ticket selection page. 2/5 participants went to the event info to find the accessibility T&C which mentioned that one has to call the venue to enquire about accessible seats. T3 added that the seating map could also include symbols or colors that indicate that the row has accessible seating.
  - **Task #8** averages 1m 40s. 5/5 participants completed this task. Time is taken to find the guide ranged between 30s to 1m 30s. Each participant followed the same flow, which was: Click on Entertainment Guides > Hover over Music> Click on "See

more” and end up on the page that lists all music events> go back to Entertainment guides> Give the right answer.

- **Task #9** averages 1m 30s, with 4/5 users completing the task in under 1m because they didn't explore changing the location to Queens-NY, but chose to search for the event from the long list. M1, who completed the task in 2m struggled to find the location bar, which is inconsistent with the location bar in the rest of the site.
  - **Task #10** averages 1m 20s, with time performance ranging between 10s to 4m 16s. Every user, except M4, went to the event page, where they could only find the discounted seat filter and the option to enter the discount code. The code was mentioned under the text description of the deal on the Deals page, not the event description.
- **Individual Performances of Users:**
    - M1 – Got 7/10 tasks right. Was critical of the interface in terms of its intuitiveness and ease of use.
    - M2 – Got 6/10 tasks right. Was quick in performing task #6 and the slowest with task #10. They swept the entire page before clicking on any button.
    - M3 – Got 8/10 tasks right. Was quick in finding the location of seemingly hidden categories like Deals and Entertainment guides, despite having no experience using the website. In the SUS, they mentioned that the website needs consistent filters.
    - M4 – Got 7/10 tasks right. They struggled with the search function and choosing between two entries of the same event.
    - M5 – Got 7/10 tasks right. They were quick in clicking through different links to arrive at their answer.

Table 2: Task Time

PID OR Pseudonym	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7	Task 8	Task 9	Task 10
M1	1.13	2.39	1.10	2.32	1.37	0.52	2.10	1.57	2.01	1.51
M2	1.35	2.54	1.05	0.40	1.06	0.11	3.06	2.24	0.55	4.16
M3	1.09	3.30	1.26	0.27	0.41	0.85	1.34	1.33	0.27	0.48
M4	1.41	2.33	0.22	1.03	0.11	0.12	1.11	1.14	1.02	0.10
M5	1.16	2.19	0.45	1.30	1.23	1.02	2.50	1.39	0.47	1.25

Table3: Task Performance

PID OR Pseudonym	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7	Task 8	Task 9	Task 10
M1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
M2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
M3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
M4	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
M5	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

1 =Successfully Completed Task; 2 = Attempted, but did not Complete Task; 3 = Did not Attempt Task;

## 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Problems

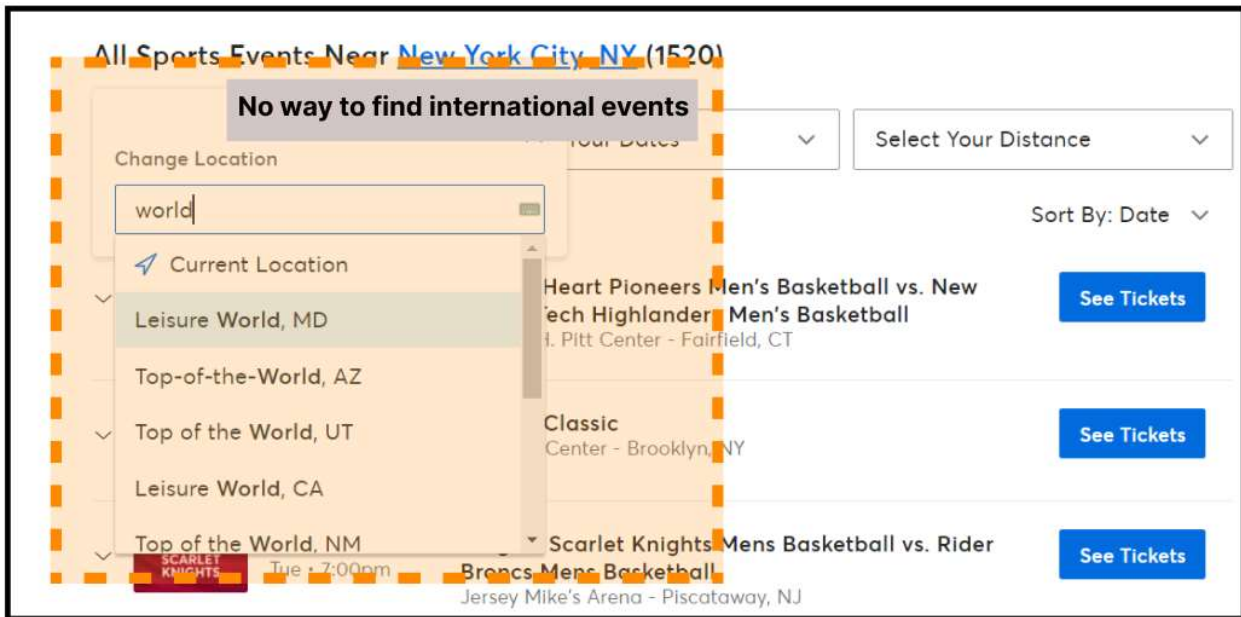
Interface problems discovered:

1. **Limited user control over search results.** Participants observed that while the filters were visible when the categories are selected, there is no way to filter the search result.

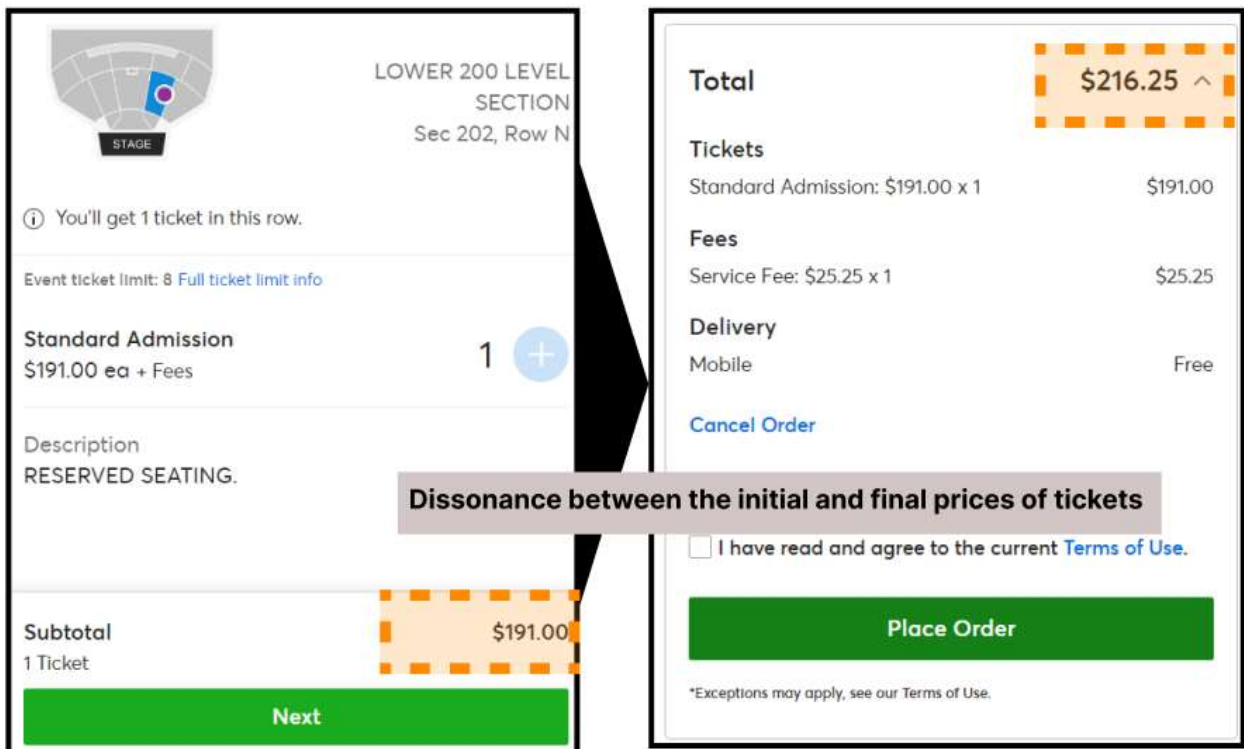
The screenshot shows the Ticketmaster website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Ticketmaster logo and search options. Below this, the page is titled "Arts & Theater Tickets". A search filter box is highlighted with a dashed orange border, showing filters for "Fine Art", "Dec 31", and "Distance: 25 mi". A message states "The filters are visible when you click on category". Below the filters, a search result for "Gustav Klimt: Gold in Motion" is visible. To the right, there is a promotional banner for "MIRANDA LAMBERT AND OTHER AMAZING ARTISTS". Below the search results, a section titled "58 Results for 'fine+art'" is shown. Under "TOP SUGGESTIONS", there are four event cards: "Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art", "Hot Works: Asheville Fine Art Show", "Cincinnati International Fine Art Show", and "Fine Arts Building". A message states "No filters for search results - hence a few participants skipped the filters". Below this, a section titled "EVENTS • 58 RESULTS" is shown, with a filter for "Near New York City" and a date filter for "DEC 31". A "Find tickets" button is visible at the bottom right.



2. **Lack of filters to reach certain events without the use of search.** The filters didn't allow me to choose all locations outside the USA around the world.



3. **The ticket price on the ticket selection page isn't the same as the final price with fees.** This led to none of the participants completing this task successfully.



4. Insurance price isn't visible explicitly. It hides in open sight. When insurance is opted for, it doesn't reflect on the cart value.


### Ticket Insurance

Get reimbursed up to 100% with Event Ticket Insurance for only \$16.22. \*Offer expires when purchase is finalized.

**The insurance price is concealed among other text.  
Adding the insurance to cart doesn't reflect in the cart value**

(including military obligation), and more, you can be reimbursed for this purchase. Why insure your tickets? Event ticket insurance protects your financial investment in the event tickets including taxes and shipping costs should you not be able to attend the event for a covered reason. Protection also includes parking and other event related items that have been added to your order.

**IMPORTANT** Temporarily accommodating certain COVID-19 claims to help protect your ticket (see links below)

 **Success! Your ticket purchase is protected.**

Another Ticketmaster customer protected their ticket purchase a minute ago

No, do not protect my ticket purchase. I understand this decision may put my \$216.25 spent on Shania Twain tickets at risk.

89,768 people protected their tickets in the last 3 days

**Free Look Period:** If you're not completely satisfied, you have 15 days or more (depending on your state of residence) to request a refund if your event hasn't occurred or you haven't filed a claim. Premium is non-refundable after this period.

### Tickets

Standard Admission: \$191.00 x 1	\$191.00
<b>Fees</b>	
Service Fee: \$25.25 x 1	\$25.25
<b>Delivery</b>	
Mobile	Free


[Cancel Order](#)

\*All Sales Final - No Refunds

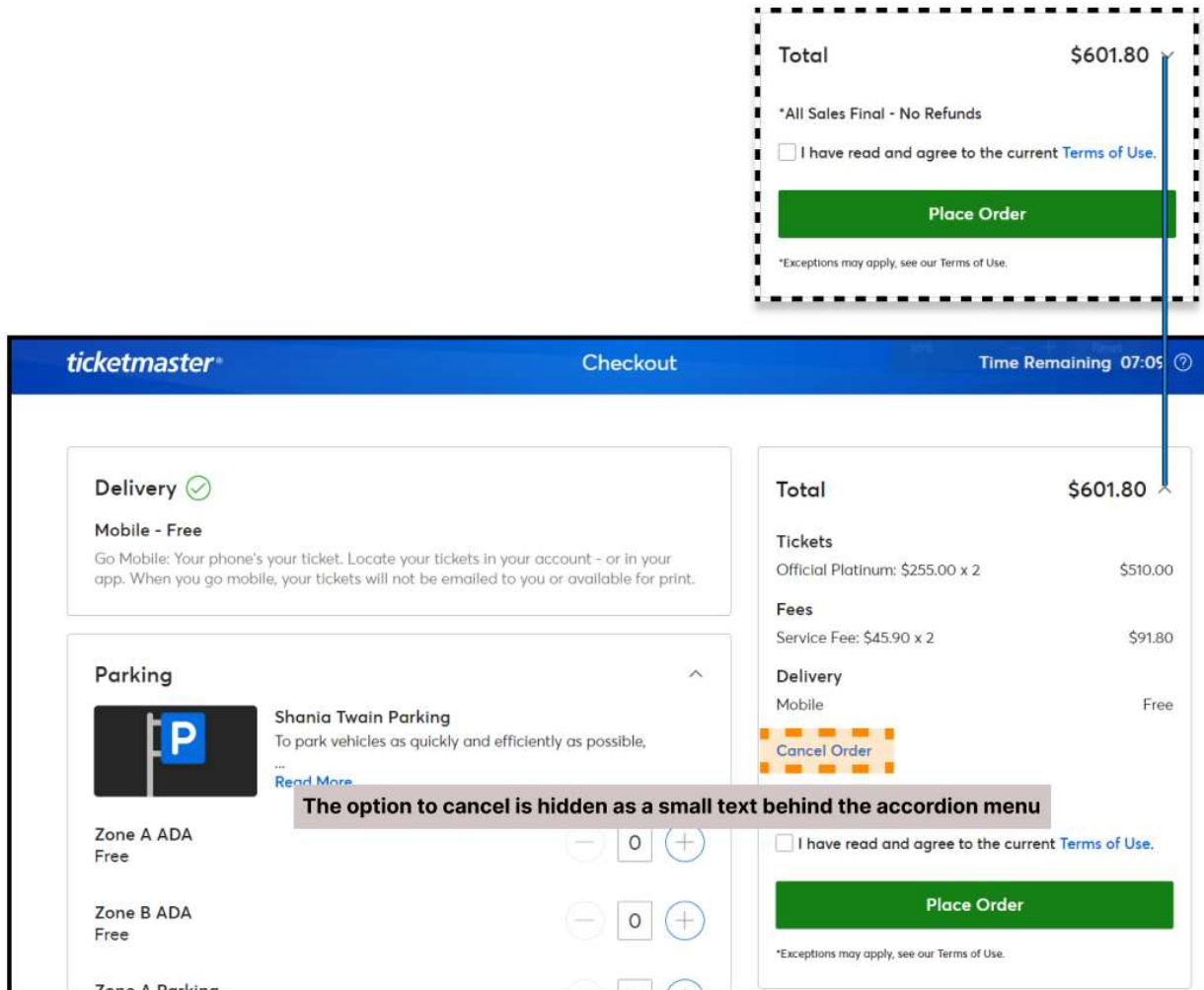
I have read and agree to the current [Terms of Use](#).

**Place Order**

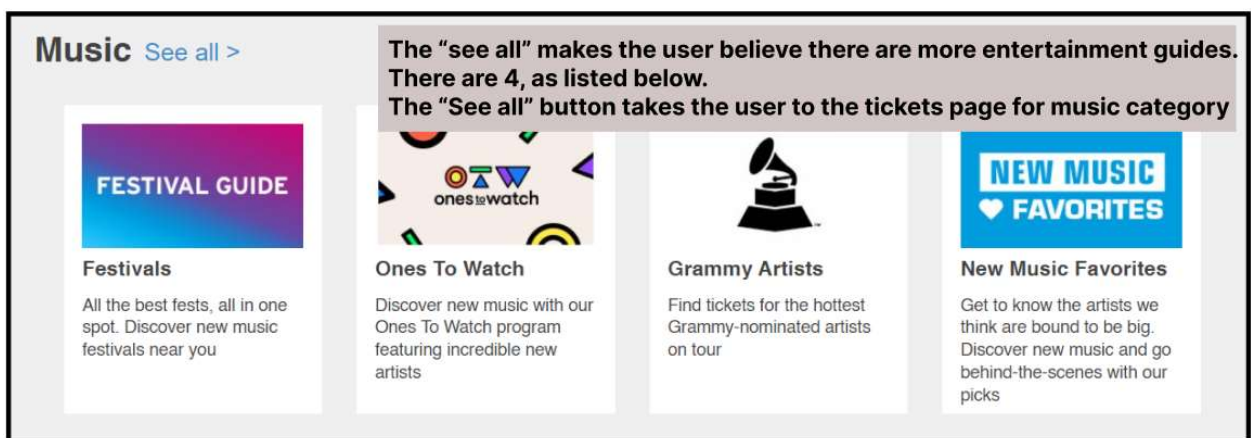
\*Exceptions may apply, see our Terms of Use.



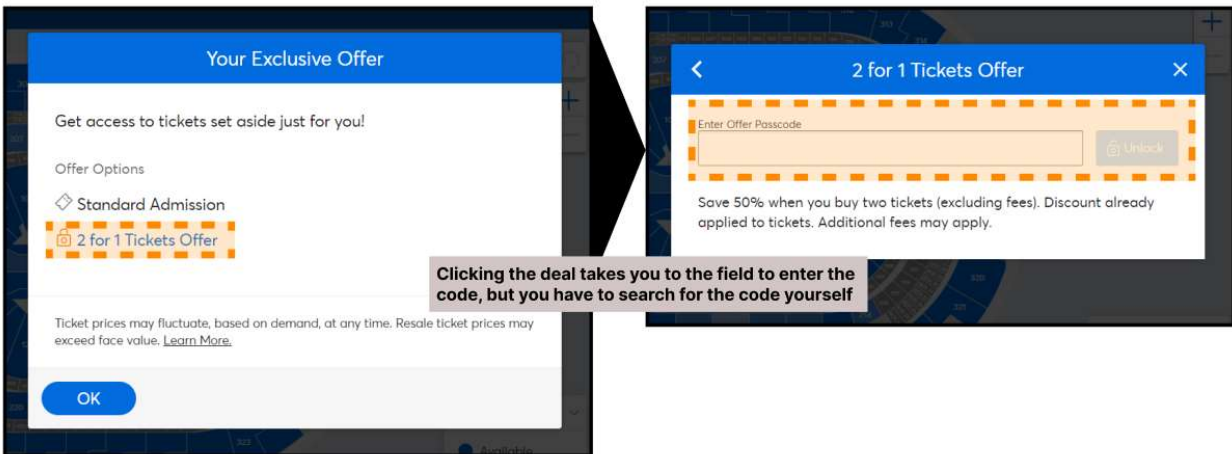
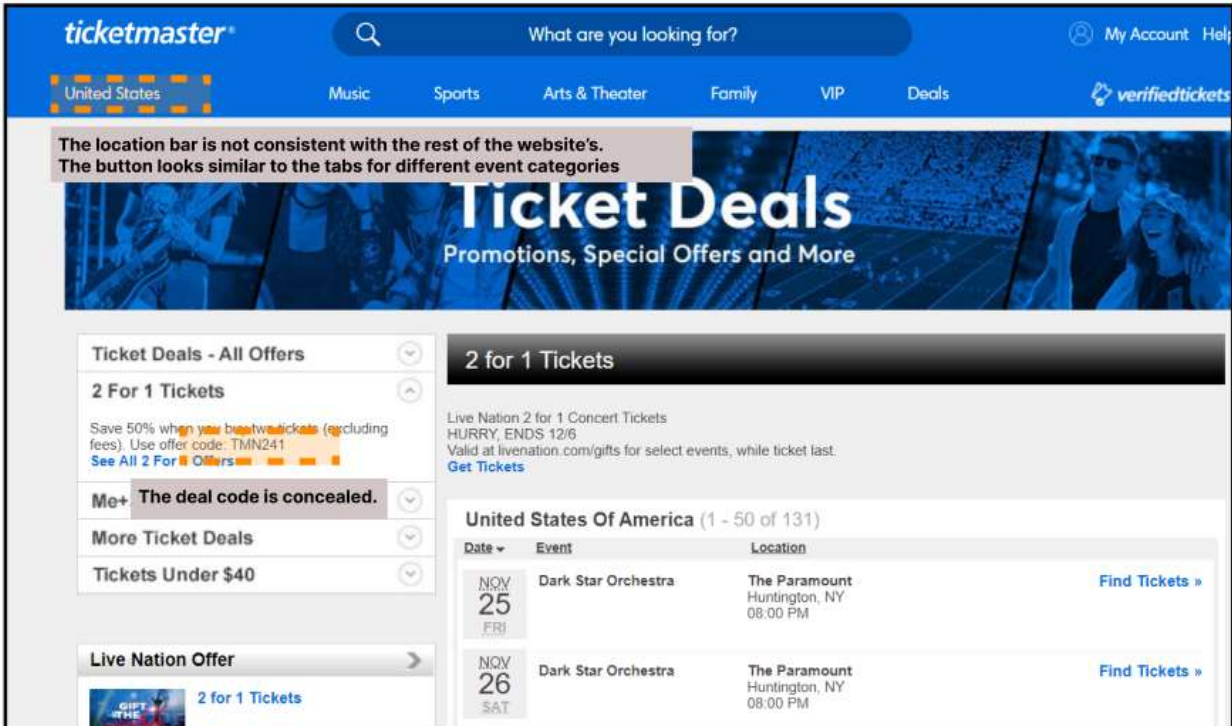
5. **The option to cancel the order is not prominent.** Participants ended up using the back button of the browser to cancel orders



6. **The buttons for the entertainment guide are misleading.**



- 7. The location bar for the 'Deals' page is not consistent with the rest of the site. The actual deal codes are hidden in the text description of the deal filter. The event description doesn't consist of the code.







## 4.2 Improvements

### Suggestions for Improvement

- The addition of filters in the search results brings flexibility in use. Some participants prefer using the search function if they are looking for something specific, like a genre.

58 Results for "fine+art"

### TOP SUGGESTIONS

			
Fine Art Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art	Miscellaneous Hot Works: Asheville Fine Art Show	Miscellaneous Cincinnati International Fine Art Show	Fine Arts Building

Fine Art Events Near [New York City, NY](#) (1)

Fine Art | Dec 31 | Distance: 25 mi | Reset | Sort By: Date

### EVENTS • 58 RESULTS

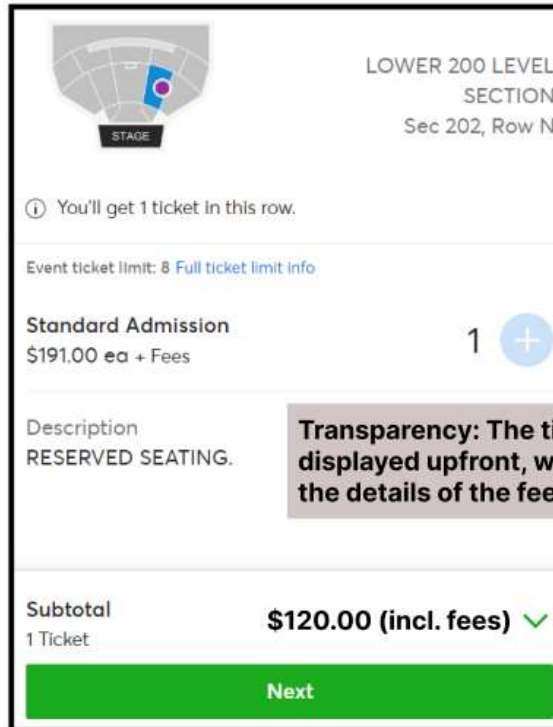
Near New York City

NEAR YOU

DEC 31 Sat 11:00 AM  
Gustav Klimt: Gold in Motion

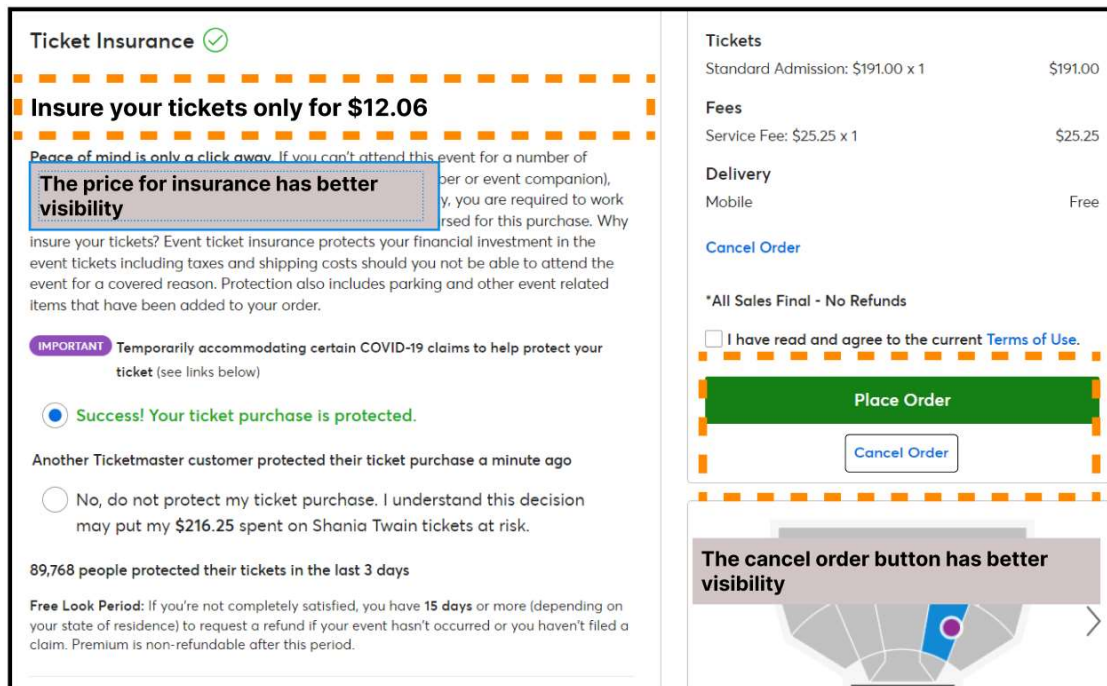
[Find tickets >](#)

- **Displaying the fees with transparency, with details of the fees accessible to the users.**

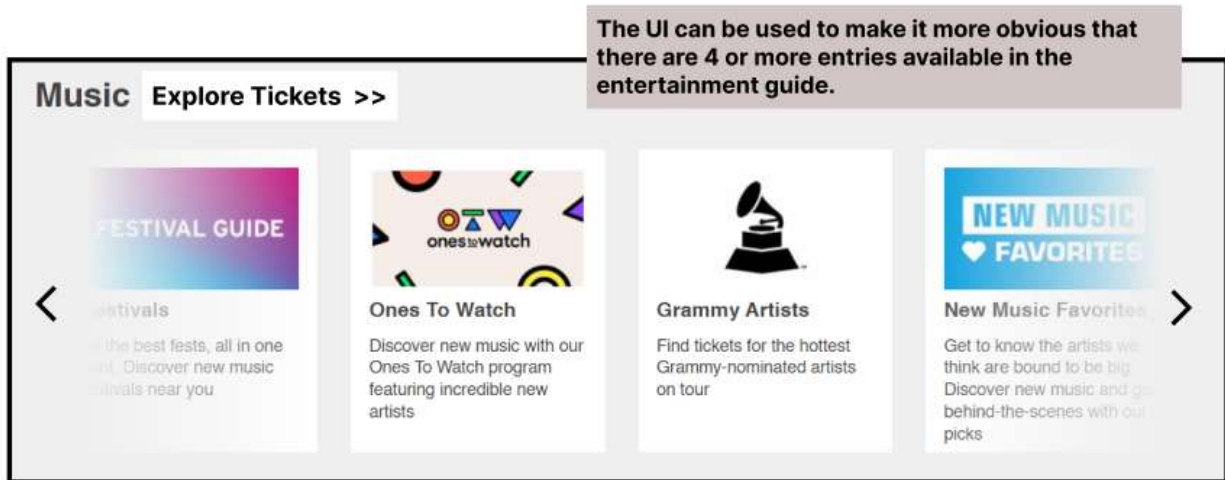


**Transparency: The ticket prices could be displayed upfront, with an option to view the details of the fees applied.**

- **Making the price of insurance tickets clear, while providing a clear way to cancel an order.**



- Streamlining the process of applying coupon codes for deals.



- Carousels on the website can improve by the use of icons and gradients



Of the various potential improvements that you discovered in the user-based testing and the heuristic evaluation, which would you prioritize as:

The top three improvements needed are as follows:

- 1) **Addition of filters to search results:** This is an important improvement as it eases the process of browsing through Ticketmaster for people who aren't looking for anything particular – especially queries outside the general. For example, I could be looking for tickets to immersive light and sound shows. Ticketmaster has no specific genre that would fall under. Having filters for search results could ease the process of finding such events.

- 2) **Transparency for ticket prices:** Each participant expressed displeasure at knowing that the actual ticket prices were more than displayed. It is important to improve this feature, as it is a dark pattern meant to deceive, and usually leaves a bad taste in one's mouth. Mentioning the fees upfront aligns with the business goals while building trust between the user and the platform.
- 3) **The clarity in the price of insurance, and a clear way to cancel an order:** The insurance price was difficult to find for almost all participants, even when it was opted for. It is important to let users know what they will be paying, or paying for. Also, the cancel button is hidden behind the accordion menu – which makes canceling a two-step process. It is important to give the user a mode to make their decisions.

## 5 Methodological Reflection

### 5.1 Comparison: Expert Review & Usability Testing

The visibility of the price of tickets was observed to be flawed in both, the expert review and usability test. Similarly, both tests highlighted that the method of canceling orders has not been made simple by the website.

### 5.2 Contrast: Expert Review vs. Usability Testing

In the heuristic review, I observed that the ticket selection page selects two tickets by default, and that might be a point of conflict for participants, but when it came to selection, the participants didn't note any issue with the tickets being pre-selected.

### 5.3 Lessons Learned: Expert Review vs. Usability Testing

The heuristic evaluation using Schneiderman's 8 Golden rules of Interface design was a solo exercise I conducted to understand the interface. It helped me expand my understanding of the metric used, and helped me compartmentalize my thoughts about the problems I experienced with the interface.

The usability testing activity allowed me to acquaint myself with the viewpoints of other individuals. It helped me understand that there can be different approaches that could help you arrive at the same answer. I witnessed five users use the same interface very differently from each other, and each test gave me clarity on the usability flaws of the website I chose.