

Branding, Search Engine Optimization, & Usability: Competing Interests & Required Components for Success—Usability Perspective



Position Statement

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How Branding, SEO, & Usability Contribute to Website Success



- SEO: Pull visitors to website
- Branding: Express identity and push messages
- “Usability”: Pull visitors into successful experience
 - Heuristic evaluation
 - User testing and contextual research
- How do heuristic evaluation & user research fit within SEO and branding activities?



Usability & Branding: In Concert

- Branding enhances usability by:
 - Building trust
 - Creating recognition
 - Increasing comfort in exploring



Usability & Branding: In Conflict

- Real estate allocation: Branded content vs. information above the fold

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Name: [Nicole Appleberry](#)
Position: Associate
Organization: Ferguson & Widmayer, P.C.
Practice Areas: Employee Benefits; 401(k) Plans; ERISA; Taft-Hartley Plans; Multi-Employer Benefits; Probate; Estate Planning; Taxation
Office: Ann Arbor, Michigan (Washtenaw Co.)

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Branding

1 Search Result

Usability & Branding: In Conflict

- Labeling clarity: “clean UI” vs. meaningful labels

The screenshot shows the AT&T website homepage. At the top left is the AT&T logo. To its right are links for 'Find a Store', 'Coverage Viewer', 'Español', 'Cart', and a search bar. Below this is an orange navigation bar with 'EXPLORE', 'SHOP', and 'SUPPORT' buttons. To the right of these buttons are links for 'myWireless Account', 'Log in', and 'Sign up now'. A red box highlights the 'EXPLORE' and 'SHOP' buttons. Below the navigation bar is a large banner for 'budget-wise Free camera phones' featuring three AT&T phones. To the right of the banner are several smaller promotional tiles: 'iPhone 3G', 'Add A Line', 'Add Wireless, Subtract up to \$50*', 'Packages & Deals', 'GoPhone', and 'Share Our Strength'. At the bottom of the page are four category labels: 'Top Selling Cell Phones', 'New Cell Phones', 'Wireless Quick Links', and 'Help and Support'.

What's the difference between **EXPLORE** and **SHOP**?



Usability & Branding: In Conflict

- Budget: reduced commitment to user research
 - Heuristic evaluation only
 - Focus groups instead of usability testing (better than none!)
 - Single cycle of usability testing (better than none!)
 - Surrogate users



Usability & SEO: In Concert

- Good SEO creates good usability

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REQUEST A QUOTE
You will receive an immediate response.

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Superior Capabilities for Printed Circuit Board Assembly

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Saline Electronics offers the latest technical capabilities to meet your most demanding project requirements for circuit board assemblies. Whether we produce your product with BGA, Micro-BGA, Surface Mount or Through-Hole Technology, Electronics works closely with you, the customer, to ensure that you are 100% satisfied.

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Meaningful URLs

Strong page title

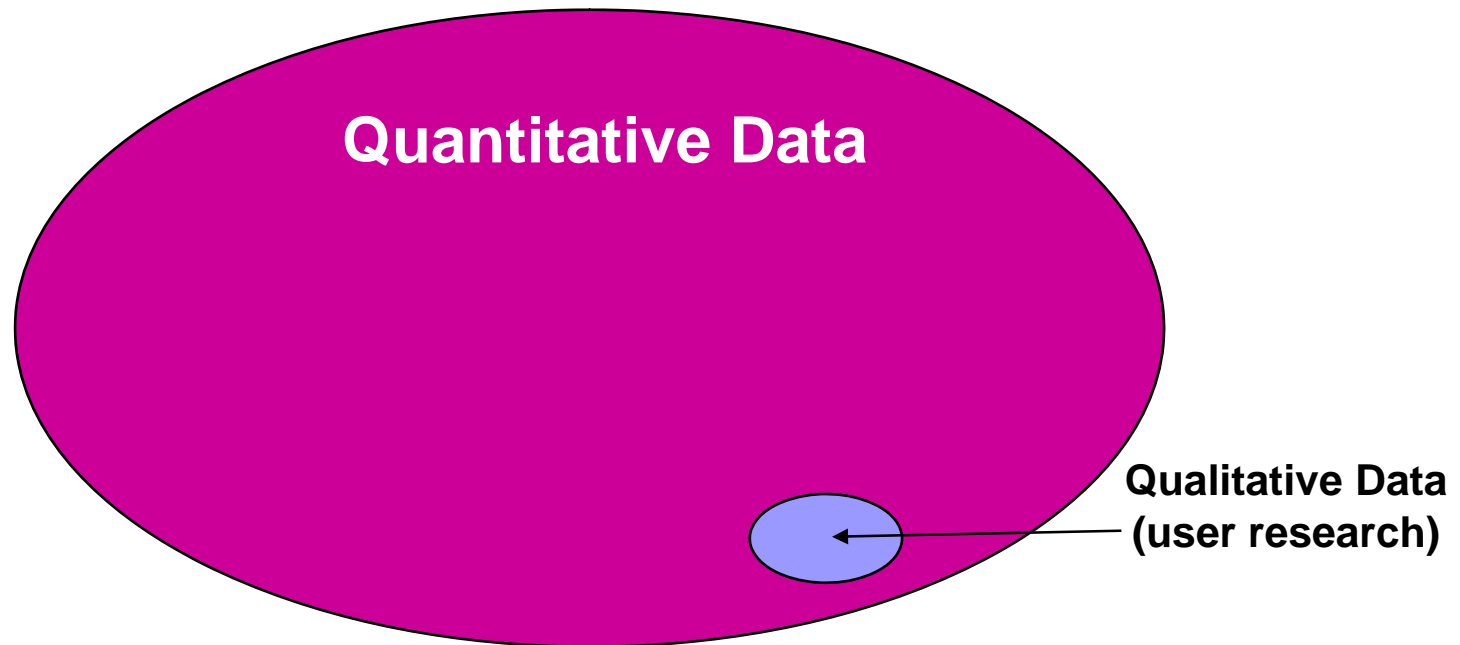
Purposeful first paragraph

Keyword-rich link text

Use of visitor vocabulary

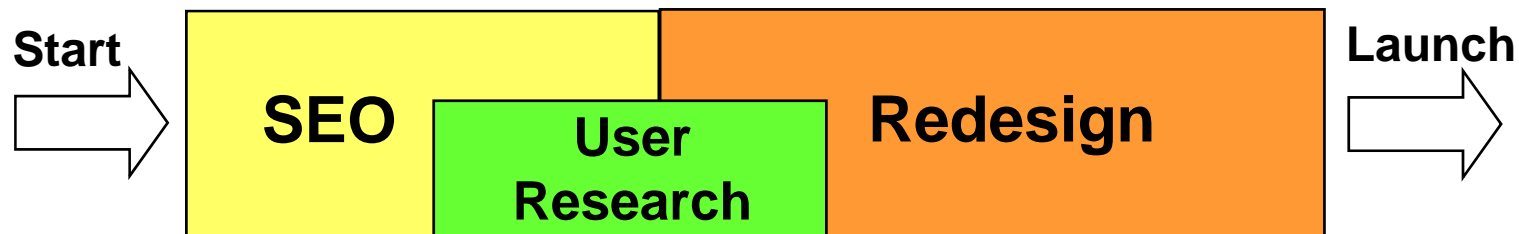
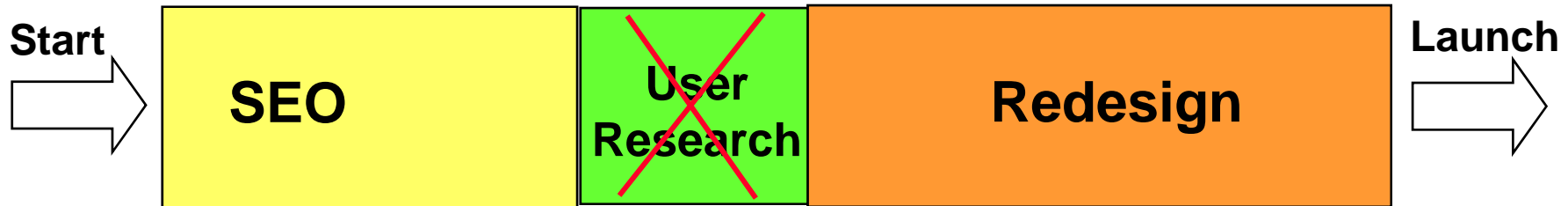
SEO & Usability: In Conflict

- Quantitative data perceived as sufficient, without user input



SEO & Usability: In Conflict

- Schedule compression



Insights from User Research— Example 1: AAA Website “Facelift”

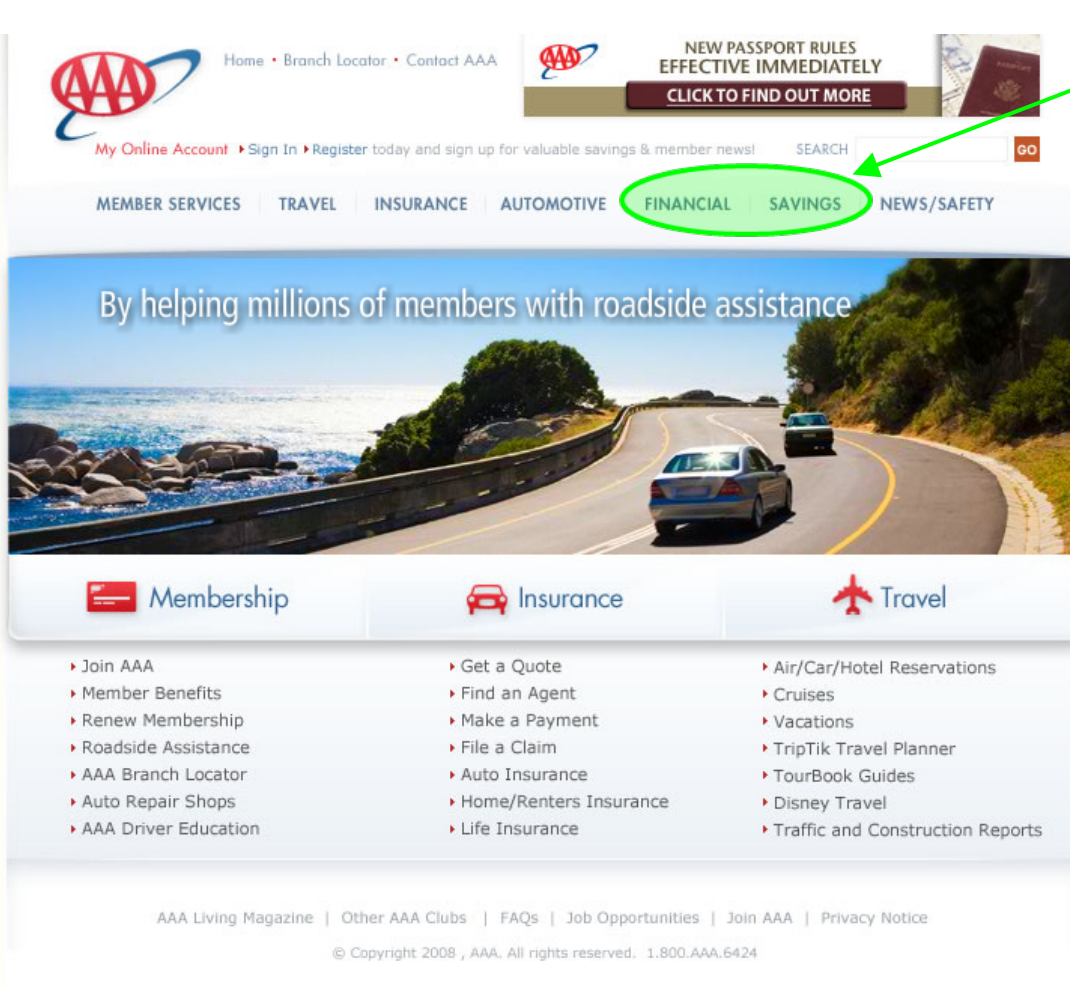


The screenshot shows the AAA website homepage. At the top left is the AAA logo. To its right are links for Home, Branch Locator, and Contact AAA, along with the phone number 1.800.AAA.6424. A promotional banner on the right says "FROM \$1,390 FOR A FAMILY OF 4". Below the logo is a "Sign In" and "Newsletter Sign Up" link. A search bar with "Enter Keyword" and a "GO" button is on the right. A horizontal navigation menu includes: MEMBER SERVICES, TRAVEL, INSURANCE, AUTOMOTIVE, FINANCIAL, SAVINGS, and NEWS/SAFETY. A large banner image shows a car on a coastal road with the text "If you're not a member, join us! ▶ Enroll today." Below the banner are three main service categories: Membership (with a red envelope icon), Insurance (with a red car icon), and Travel (with a red airplane icon). Each category has a list of sub-services:

- Membership:**
 - ▶ Join AAA
 - ▶ Renew Membership
 - ▶ Roadside Assistance
 - ▶ Member Benefits
 - ▶ Member Discounts
 - ▶ Auto Repair Shops
- Insurance:**
 - ▶ Get an Auto Quote
 - ▶ Find an Agent
 - ▶ Make a Payment
 - ▶ File a Claim
 - ▶ Auto Insurance
 - ▶ Home Insurance
- Travel:**
 - ▶ Air/Car/Hotel Reservations
 - ▶ Cruises
 - ▶ Disney Travel
 - ▶ U.S. & Canada
 - ▶ AAA Travel Agency
 - ▶ Directions & Maps — TripTik®

- 7 usability sessions to look at redesigned home page & 4 second-level pages

Confusion about Terms on Home Page



- If users don't click on choices, is it because they don't need them or don't understand them?
- Testing showed **“Financial”** and **“Savings”** confused 4 of 7 users
 - “I don't associate Financial and Savings with AAA”
 - “Savings—on auto insurance, if you're a good driver?”

Example 2: Alltel Website Redesign Testing



we've changed our site and want to know what you think > more

My Account | Store Locator | Send a Text Message | Merger Information

why Alltel? | phones & devices | accessories | plans | messaging & more | tones & downloads | shop online | support | business

my account log in

Not a member? Register now

Personal Business Prepaid

Forgot your log in information?

individual & family national plans

National Freedom

With a National Freedom plan, you get coverage all across the nation on America's Largest Network. Plus, you'll enjoy the power of choice and the freedom of flexibility with My Circle and Anytime Plan Changes. You get it all, so what's not to love?

	\$39.99	\$49.99	\$59.99	\$79.99	\$99.99	\$149.99	\$199.99
	sign up	sign up	sign up	sign up	sign up	sign up	sign up
My Circle® Number	1	5	10	10	20	20	20
minutes	500	750	900	1400	2100	4000	6000
additional minutes	40¢	40¢	40¢	35¢	25¢	25¢	25¢

add up to 4 lines for \$20 each/mo. add up to 4 lines for only \$9.99 each per month.

change your plan at any time without extending your contract

My Circle – call any 5, 10 or 20 numbers for FREE

With My Circle, you choose the unlimited calling that's right for you. You can even add lines for as low as \$9.99 per line. Plus, you're always in control. Change Your Circle numbers anytime.

National Freedom plans \$49.99 or higher include

- 5, 10 or 20 My Circle numbers – plus, change Your Circle numbers anytime
- Unlimited Mobile-to-Mobile Minutes
- Unlimited Nights and Weekends
- Free nationwide long distance
- Basic Voice Mail
- Caster ID
- 3-Way Calling
- No Answer Transfer
- Call Forwarding
- Call Waiting
- Pay-Per-Use Text Messaging

add messaging and more

My Circle Message Packs
Text, picture and video Your Circle for free AND get UNLIMITED mobile-to-mobile messaging.

Extended Night Minutes
Add two additional hours of talk time a day – unlimited calling starting at 7 p.m.

Wireless Network Protection
Protect your wireless handset from theft, loss, accidental damage and malfunction.

Alltel Roadside Assistance
Instant 24/7 access to roadside help if you're stranded.

view your coverage
With more coverage than anybody, Alltel keeps you covered from coast to coast.

my circle
Switch today and get unlimited free calling on any 5, 10 or 20 numbers – anytime on any network.

Roam Around the World
Introducing International Wireless Roaming for world travelers.

Alltel Connect™ e-Newsletter
Get news and updates:
• cool new phones & services
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- Participants with unlimited phone plans looked for comparable plans on Alltel
- They did not recognize “My Circle” as the equivalent
- They concluded Alltel offered nothing comparable



Components for Success

- Goal setting
- Skill blending
- Project planning
- Keeping sight of ROI of qualitative as well as quantitative research