



Good Road Network Usability Study

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Overview

This usability study is a combination of usability testing observations and exploring the website with visual design, UX, security and functionality considerations in mind. It is my hope to increase the understanding of how the Good Road Network (GRN) site comes across to typical users. The intent is to provide some insight that may improve the user experience in the final implementation of the site.

The testing environment was set up at Office Junction in West Seattle on two days, February 20 and 27, 2016. The venue had an testing room, and a observation room. In the testing room was a laptop and two chairs, one for the participant and the other for the moderator. The observation room was equipped with an audio and video feed from the testing room to enable observers to evaluate testing sessions. Projected on the observation screen was the desktop as it appears to test participants and a smaller picture-in-picture screen showing the participant's reactions to the observation group. I found the setup was basic, but supplying everything needed for a proper usability test.

I participated in seven test observation sessions and also served as moderator on one session. Five of my observation sessions were in person and two were conducted using YouTube videos recorded at the test site. Testing sessions tended to last about 30 minutes.

After all the testing was finished on the two dates, we were invited to perform our own testing of the GRN site. I visited the site on at least five occasions to evaluate it. My method was simply to explore the site from the home page through the site in ways that seemed logical, and make comments along the way, usually with screen-shot images to illustrate what I was referring to. Any comments of mine in the observation sessions appear in brackets with italic text.

Summary comments of my site exploration and the test sessions are at the end of their respective sections.

The focus of this critique of the GRN website was to provide feedback about the site design and any functionality issues I might discover. The goal was simply to provide another pair of eyes with a focus on improving the GRN website as it approaches the launch date. The ten general heuristic principles set forth by Jakob Nielsen (*Nielsen, 1995*) were used as guidelines to follow for evaluation. A severity scale of P1-P5 was used to rate the issues encountered on the site. This scale was suggested by David Wall. I made some adjustments to the scale by creating a composite of other severity rating standards I have used in the past (*Sauro, 2013*).

Severity	P Rating	Description
1	P1	Catastrophic error preventing task completion or usability
2	P2	Severe issue leading to task failure and extreme user irritation
3	P3	Major issue that creates delay or confusion, occasional failure
4	P4	Minor usability or design problem
5	P5	Cosmetic, annoyance, or enhancement issue

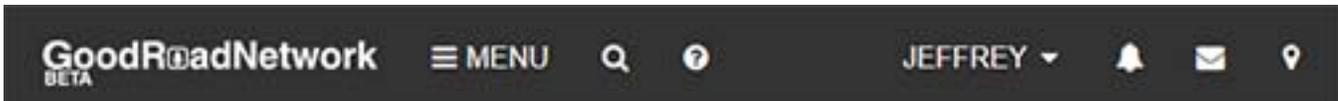
This assessment was performed on a laptop using Windows 10, an Asus Transformer tablet (Android 4.2.1 Jelly Bean), and Samsung Galaxy Note 3 phone (Android 5.1.1 Lollipop) so it does not attempt to evaluate the GRN experience in the Apple sphere. Testing was also performed using the development tools available in Mozilla Firebug and Google Chrome.

I should mention that I am not a musician. I am a UX/web designer and graphic designer with over twenty years experience. But I have had many friends through the years who are musicians and have been

involved in many of their activities. They have been in various music genres, and varying levels of activity, from touring bands, musicians who stick close to home, and songwriters. While that provides me with a little perspective, I recognize that it hardly makes me an expert in the music business. But this exposure informs some of my design assessments.

Good Road Network Website Usability Study

Header & Main Menu:



The header is laid out very cleanly. It is responsive and works well on each device tested.

P3: The layout of the header menu is a little confusing. The MENU pull-down deals with Band or performer issues while the “JEFFREY” menu deals with Artist issues. Otherwise these are rather similar. Similar items that could be confused should either be separated by some visual element that makes their difference clear, or they should be next to each other to make whatever contrast noticeable. As it is, they are separate and no immediate clarity evident.

Since the MENU pull-down deals with band/performer issues, it should be labeled accordingly, not generically. Perhaps it could be populated with the band/performer name with the word Menu following. This may present some problems with long band names, however.

The artist’s named menu works well because it identifies the subject. So if the user would see their band/performer name first, and then the artist name, it would be much more clear what was contained in each menu before opening either. This would also serve to enforce the difference between Artist and Band in the user’s mind, a concept that proved to be a source of confusion in the testing sessions.

What’s more, the menu indicators, a hamburger for the MENU and an arrow for the artist are inconsistent. They should really be the same since they indicate the same function. So either two hamburgers, probably never seen before, or two arrows.

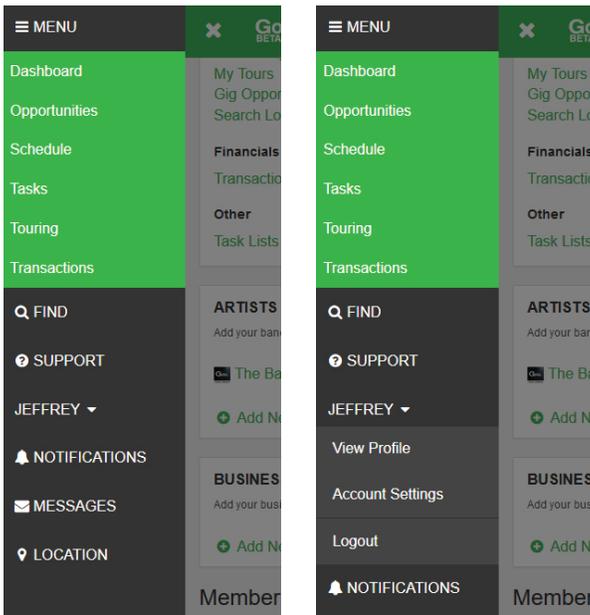
The arrangement where the band/performer menu was first, followed immediately by the artist menu would also necessitate the other utility menu items together. Users tend to not look at the utility items until they absolutely need to, so this grouping makes more sense.

Just to be clear, I am suggesting something like this:

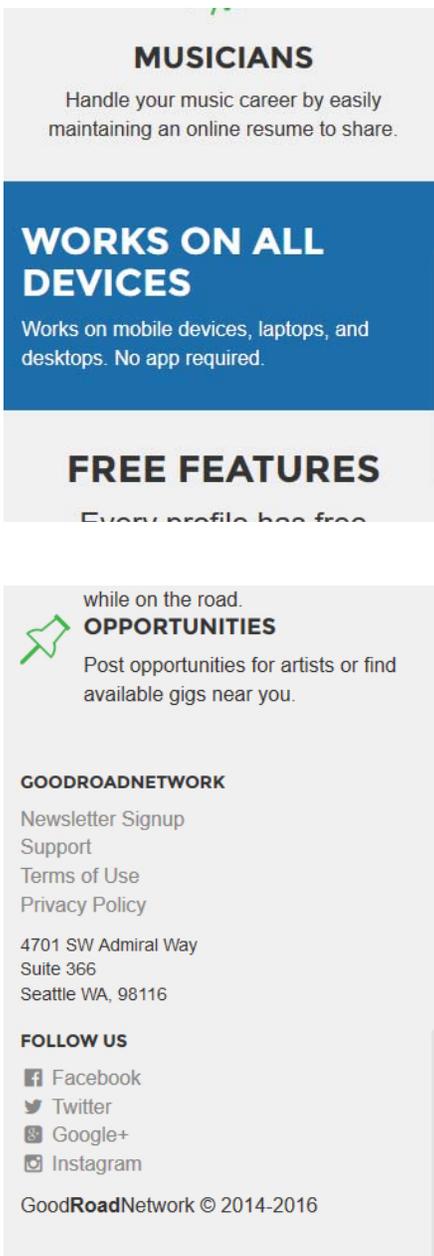


Header & Main Menu - Opportunities:

The Opportunities button on the main pull-down links to a non-functional page displaying code. I am assuming you know this already.



In phone mode, the menu buttons are a good size for finger and thumb manipulation. The color scheme follows that of the site overall and serve to break up navigation terms into somewhat logical groupings. The previous comments referring to the grouping of menu items would apply here as well.



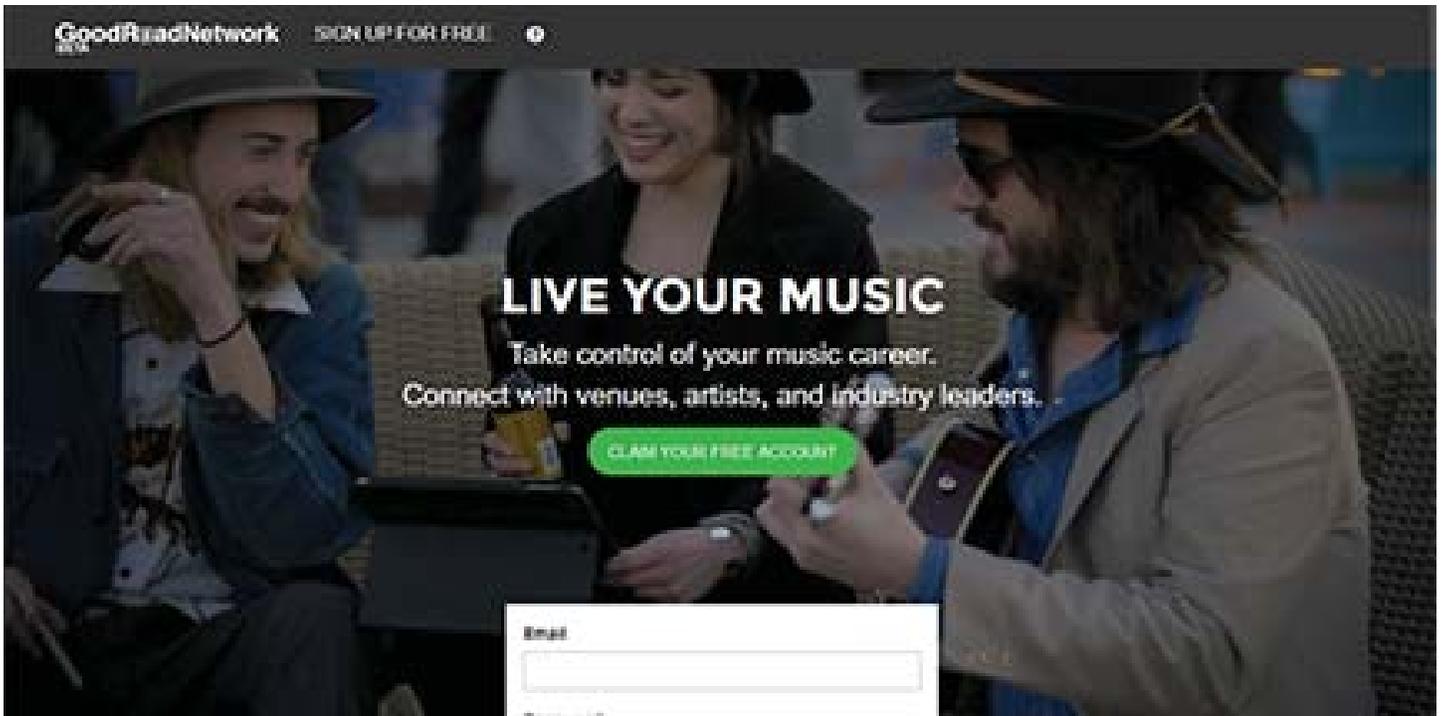
P3: The menu in phone mode however has one odd feature. There is no obvious way to log-out from this menu. Unless the user already knows to touch on his/her name and then see the cascading menu showing the logout button, there will be some confusion. Logout should always be a primary-level menu choice.

In phone and tablet mode, this page responds beautifully.

P5: The only design comment I would make is that while most of the sections are centered, there is one, "Works On All Devices", that is left-justified and I can't determine why it should be different. If this is supposed to catch the users eye, it does, but since there is no real call-to-action (CTA) involved, it seems unnecessarily jarring.

P5: The contact information at the bottom should probably have a larger left margin to bring it visually more in line with the rest of the content, especially since there is so much white space available there.

P3: Since the social media links are live here, they should be larger so a finger can actually manipulate them. Since the site will conceivably be used on the road, that is in a moving vehicle, a slightly larger size would work better. Consider the conditions of most of the vehicles musicians have when they are starting out.



Home Page:

The login page is an excellent intro to the site. The image cleverly shows three people chatting together, one on a tablet, and one playing a guitar. This conveys what musicians might be doing with the GRN site.

P5: I might prefer an image where the guitar is more visible, as it is obscured by some of the text and the login box.

Member Wall - Account Settings

The Account Settings page from the Member Wall allows the user to set a large number of preferences for all kinds of issues related to touring. The page responds very well.

P4: Under Personal Details, the hotel rating asks that the user specify what rating of hotel they prefer. Unless the user already at the 5-star hotel level, I am sure most people have no idea what the other star levels actually mean. Some other rating scheme might be developed, or a choice of hotel ratings with a description of what the star levels mean and a price-based scale. The difference between a \$40-a-night room and a \$100-a-night room is immediately obvious to almost anyone.

P5: A brief explanation about what the Custom Page Link refers to might be in order.



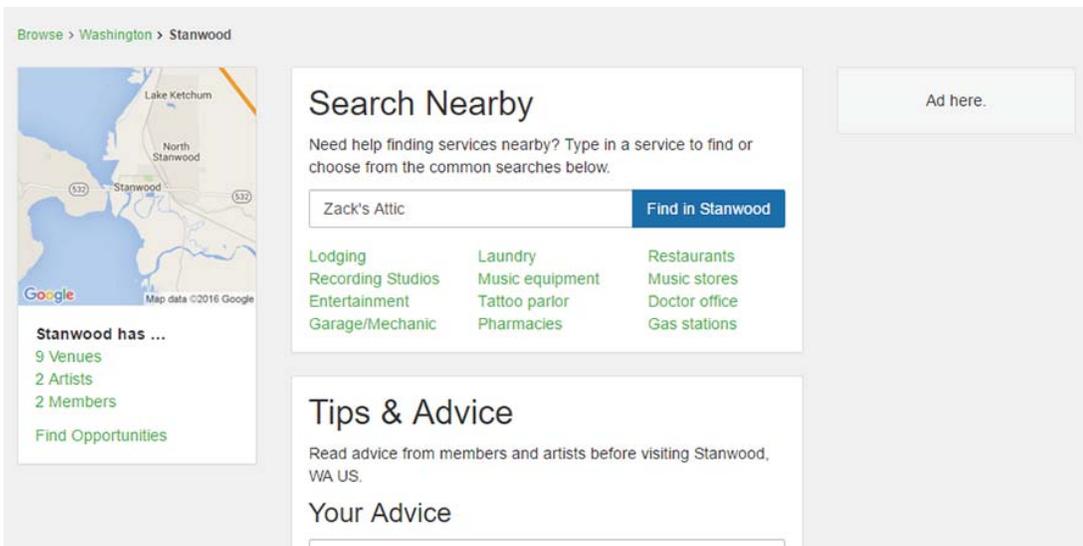
Member Wall - Search Locations

P4: Just reaching this page seemed like quite an accomplishment for test participants. The logic to getting here didn't connect with almost half of the test subjects. a link to this page needs to appear at the top of the Bookings page (see Observation Test Comments). This great feature gets lost in the process in 42% of the tests.

P3: The location names for the states, provinces, and cities within the states are in alphabetical order, but they should sort vertically, not horizontally. As it is now, the user needs to go back and forth between columns to find a desired location which is very counter-intuitive.

It is excellent that these listings include Canada and Mexico.

Following the trail we used during the participant usability testing attempting to find a venue in Stanwood, Washington, the user arrives at this page:



Featuring so many merchants and services that musicians on the road would need an excellent feature. I would repeat the term "Venue" in the listing under the search box. It is logical to have Venues added there since that would be another critical term users would search for there. This is less of an issue on a phone since "Stanwood has" appears at the top and more readily noticed, but on a laptop or tablet it

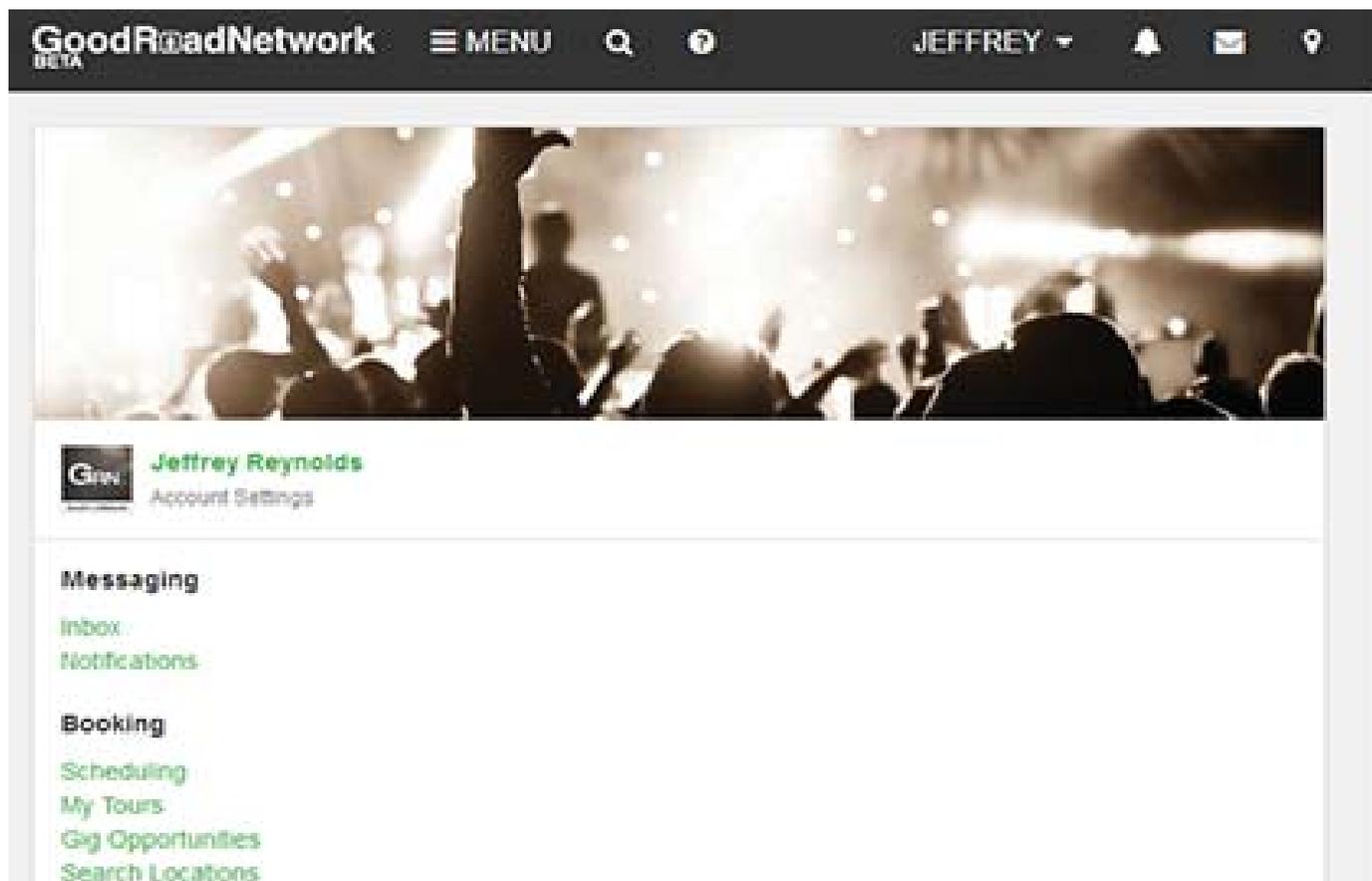
would be better to include Venues in both locations. This is an area that created a lot of confusion during the test sessions.

Member Wall - Businesses

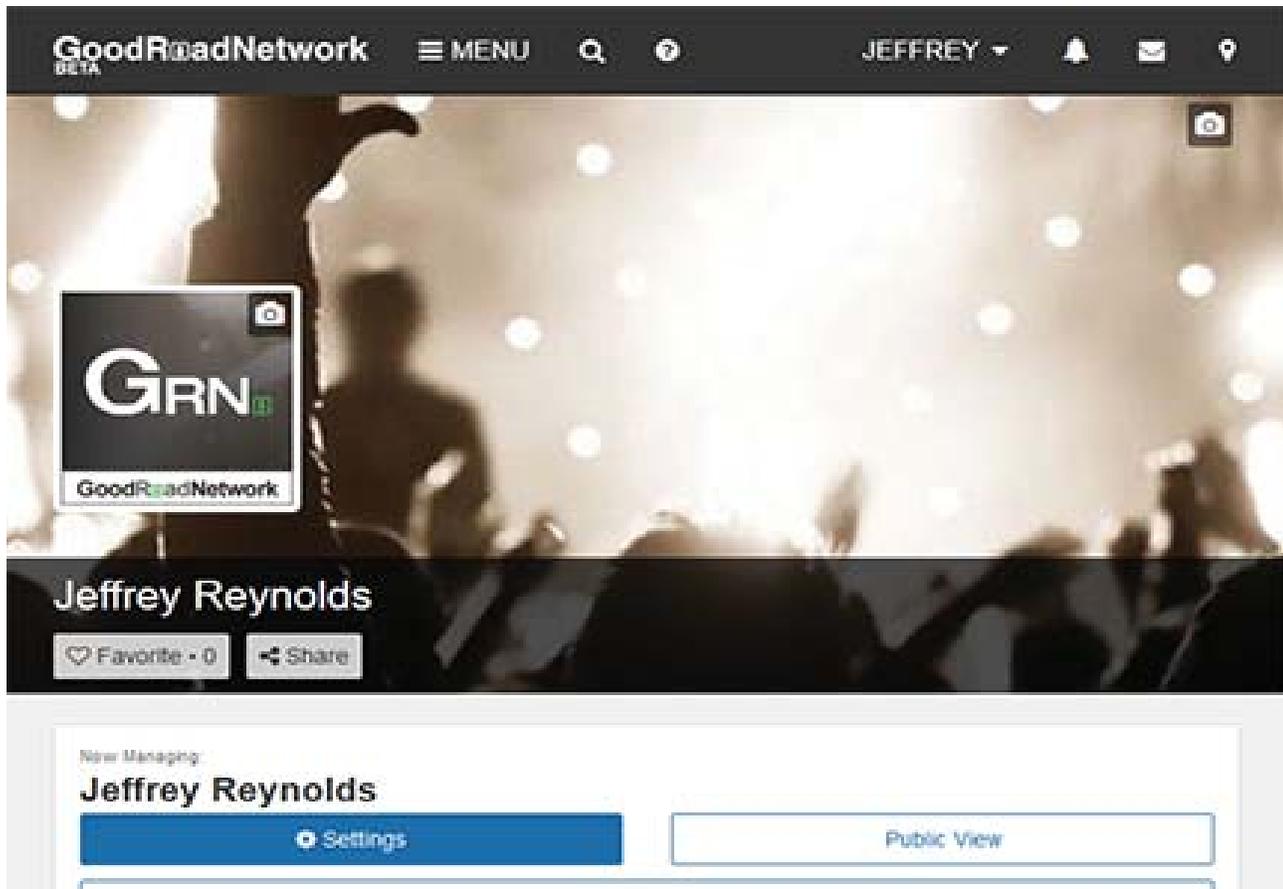
P5: Add your business or venue here? I am an artist. Or a band. A one-line clarification of what this is for might be good. As a new user, I am not sure what Businesses means in this context.

Dashboard vs. Artist/Band Pages

P3: When at the Member wall, when using the pull-down menu to access the dashboard, it sends me here:



When I click on the pull-down labeled "JEFFREY" I click on Profile and I get here:



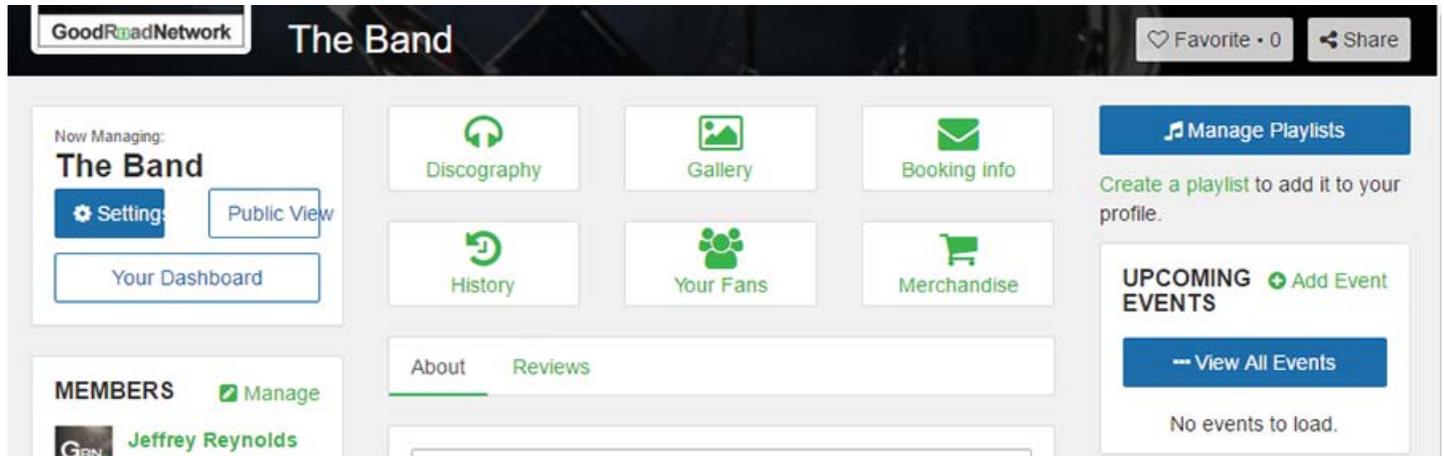
Neither of these pages are clearly labeled as to what they are. As it is, I thought the first image was the Member Wall and the second image was the dashboard when it is the opposite (I think). And this is after having been exposed to the site for two weeks. this confusion was experienced in 3 out of seven test sessions

DashBoard and Artist/Band Page - Breadcrumbs

P3: There are breadcrumbs on some pages but not others. Breadcrumbs should be featured on the Dashboard and Artist/Band pages and throughout the site to aid the user in navigation and location awareness. Constant location awareness is one of the principle usability standards set forth by Jakob Nielsen (*Nielsen, 1995*). The user should always be aware of where they are in the site and be able to back out to a previous location. This site has so many diverse features that it is easy to get lost. Some of this is simply that the developer's logic might differ from mine, but that can easily be overcome by including breadcrumbs on all pages.

Artist and Band Pages

P3: There are some breaks in the button text on the left sidebar on the Artist and Band pages that require media query attention. This is at about 1192px wide through around 984px wide, before the buttons break to full page.



P5: Tiles shown above could have some indication of which have been populated perhaps by changing the color or thickness of the outline. This feedback may subtly encourage members to fill in this information.

General Visual Design Issues:

The imagery chosen for the Member Wall and Dashboard could be more dynamic. There are numerous sources for music photography. One that comes to mind is to tap the rich source of photographers in Seattle who appear at concerts to shoot. I am sure that they would love to get some credited exposure by providing some exciting concert images for little or no compensation while GRN is in its early stages.

Functionality Issues:

On one of the two test dates it was anecdotally indicated that younger users tended to work the site more intuitively. This actually may or may not be the case. Across the public, some people tend to be more tech savvy or tech interested than others. If GRN is to serve the entire musician community, developing the site to be easily functional for all types and ages would be desirable.

To help all users, and by extension GRN, some form of Tool tips should be available throughout the site, especially in the Booking pathways.

There seems to be no clear way to delete an artist or band.

Security Issues:

There are some security issues regarding fans that have come up in discussions of the GRN site. All artist tour reviews of venues, restaurants, and lodging must be secure and available only to artist once they create a tour with at least one booking. If not secure, fans could access this information to easily predict an artist's movements in a particular city.

There must be some screening functionality to prevent fans from registering as artists in order to access private tour information like lodging and dining preferences, and histories. Perhaps this can be accomplished by making tour lodging and dining reviews and preferences available to an artist only after one tour venue had actually been booked.

Another issue is how to properly vet the venues. There needs to be a way to determine that a venue is legitimate. Here in Seattle that is easy to establish, but once venues from all over the country are registered, that could prove difficult. What would prevent someone from posing as a venue and getting payment from bands who later discover there is no venue, or some other kind of fraud?

Charging a nominal fee is a traditional way to screen out undesirable participants. A large number of fans posing as artists could be deterred by charging a membership fee. So far this concept runs counter to GRN concept, but it is worth discussing.

Personnel from venues should not have access to any artist reviews of venues, lodging, or dining, as this could negatively affect an artist in the future. Shared artist reviews of venues are an important resource GRN makes available to other artists, making the whole touring process easier and more predictable.

Future Considerations

It was mentioned at one of the meetings that once GRN had a sizable number of venues in any city, they could provide a packaged entertainment page for local weekly papers that focus on entertainment. This would provide a valuable service to the weeklies, and to GRN's clients and venues. This could become a

revenue stream as any combination of the publications, venues, and musicians could pay for this service.

Some server space for a press kit would be a real advantage to an artist or band. I understand that server space is expensive at this stage, but having that at a central location that the artist can access while on the road would be convenient. It might also be a good idea to provide some kind of template or guide for assembling a press kit for those artists who have never created one before. As it stands now, bands do have space to store photos, so perhaps this could be extended to press kits. For now, some instructions on setting up a Google Drive would be convenient for the user for easy on-the-road access to press kit and other publicity materials.

In the future server space could be rented to members to provide a location for audio and video clips, graphic elements, and press kits for the band.

Imagery for the site could be tailored to the user's genre of music.

Summary

Overall, for such a new site, there were relatively few issues encountered, and only one with a severity above P3 (see Observation Session Comments). This is quite an accomplishment. The GRN site has an overall consistent look and feel. It could be a little more visually engaging, but it has such a wide demographic reach that a heavy hand with any genre-specific imagery might tend to push away some potential users. If GRN was geared only toward rock musicians, it would be simple to design around that theme.

It is clear that a great deal of thought and discussion has gone into the features included in the GRN site. It is very clever to have food preferences and allergies, gear preferences, and clothing sizes here.

This is overall an impressive concept brought to a really great fulfillment. It is obvious that a lot of work and dedication went into this site.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #1
02/20/16 2:25PM -3:00PM 35 minutes
Jordan/Harrison B – musician
David Wall - Moderator
Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Some login and connection difficulties

Jordan easily entered artist information

Jordan had to enter Add Artist info again

In looking for Finding Venue Jordan Goes to Tour Manager, then Search

Jordan finds Venues

Jordan says he wants email URL on Booking page

Jordan says would look up Google for venue information

Second time Jordan sees link to venue website [*maybe put that link near the top of venue listing?*]

Jordan easily gets venue information after using link and then reaches booking info.

Jordan attempts to add hotel, asks do I add as expense? .. J makes many attempts but fails

Jordan adds event easily.

Jordan looks for place to stay in Stanwood again, looks for a while and goes to search. Then Jordan goes to State and City Searches "68 Cities in Washington". Jordan suggests regional approach to venues and accommodations. Jordan locates accommodations.

Jordan says he loves the accommodations map display.

Jordan goes to tracks page and plays track. Very easy.

Jordan adds tech credits to song and feels good about that feature.

Moderator asks to do one more task. Want Jordan to find Zach's Attic venue page. Jordan goes to Event page, then gets to Venue page. On Zach's Attic page Jordan fills in Press Kit information and adds message, a very long message (hello, this is a test... this is only a test...) and successfully completes operation.

Comments: Jordan feels there is good flow but there are some complexity issues. Suggests some kind of feedback for sending a press kit send like progress or a confirmation. Wants sent message to persist in case original did not send.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #2
02/20/16 3:00PM -3:33PM 33 minutes
Chris Moreno – SCC
David Wall - Moderator
Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Chris signs up and checks email for password. Some difficulty getting started with login and connection. Takes a long time.

Chris adds Artist easily and edits genre easily.

Chris Adding Member to band, clicks to it directly, adds new member easily.

Chris uses breadcrumbs to return to Dashboard.

Adds Event easily.

Moderator explains entering Venue and suggests Zach's Attic. Chris appears to complete this, but there is a problem, the Event doesn't appear. Chris did not add the date, and once corrected, the Event appears.

Moderator asks to find Dashboard while Chris is on Dashboard.

Chris adds a tour by going to tour manager. Enters basic tour information.

Chris adds album by going directly to Discography.

Comments: Chris says overall is "busy". Comments that portals to different areas could be centralized or differentiate more. Also mentions that the Dashboard is so visually daunting that he might procrastinate to fill out information or just not fill it out at all.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #3
02/20/16 3:30PM -4:12PM 35 minutes
Zach and Sierra from Melodramus – musicians
David Wall - Moderator
Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Zach initiates sign-up process goes easily. Waiting for password. Lots of band talk. Comes out of test room to get signal on phone for password.

Sierra takes over and completes sign-up and logging in.

Sierra quickly enters band information.

Sierra quickly adds new artist easily. Comments that page is like Facebook wall.

Another connection problem interrupts the process.

Sierra tries to re-engage a few times. Finally connection is restored.

Sierra gets to Dashboard and adds member to band easily and then adds a couple more.

Sierra hesitates to return to Dashboard and tries to link band's Facebook page. She succeeds easily.

Sierra adds album to discography easily. Says she enjoys that process.

Moderator asks Sierra to navigate to Dashboard while she is on Band page. She appears confused.

Moderator asks to find venues. Sierra tries a couple of things and goes to Search window. Venue that appears has no information about it.

Moderator asks if there is anything that should be on Dashboard that they don't see. Sierra says no.

Moderator asks to find Stanwood. Sierra easily does that and locates Zach's Attic quickly. Sierra wants to add a date to the venue. Sierra hesitates at Send Press Kit. Then Sierra enters Press Kit information easily and sends.

Sierra sets up tour picking Tour from pull-down menu. Sierra enters information easily. Sierra says enthusiastically "This is cool!" Sierra says that again emphatically.

Sierra on tour manager and enters dates but briefly stumbles on AM/PM.

Moderator asks Sierra to Map the Tour but the connection won't allow it.

Moderator suggests checking out lodging. Sierra does not see the Lodging button at right and looks around for a while. [*suggest Lodging button more emphatic, not just underlined word*] with button in stack at left as well.

Sierra and Zach check out lodging map for West Hollywood and get very excited. "Awesome!" Moderator describes expensing feature with \$/day feature. They love it.

Comments: Zach and Sierra very enthusiastic about GRN. They particularly love the features that make the ancillary duties of a band easier, like the lodging mapping and the discography features. Sierra hesitated at a few operations where the UI is not as clear as it might be.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #4
02/20/16 4:45PM -4:30PM 45 minutes
Steve Mullen – SCC
David Wall - Moderator
Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Signing up, Steve signs up easily. Steve needed cue from Moderator to access password from phone. Steve eventually logs in.

Steve enters artist easily but connection fails resulting in another long wait.

Once connection re-established Steve is on Dashboard.

Steve goes directly to Add Member adds member easily.

Moderator asks to select all permissions for new member and Steve enters them manually instead of Select All.

Moderator asks Steve to look up Zach's Attic in Stanwood to add a gig. Steve goes to pull-down menu and stops at Start a Tour. Goes to Search, enters Zach's Attic and finds it that way. Steve clicks on Zach's Attic and tries to book the band. Gets to Booking page, goes back, and then returns. The Send Press Kit doesn't register as the first contact to venue. Moderator explains process and Steve proceeds to fill out Press Kit information quickly.

Moderator asks to return to Dashboard. Steve looks around for a while and then goes to footer menu to navigate.

Moderator asks to Steve send message to other band member reminding him to bring monster cable. Steve goes to Tasks and names task "Monster Cable". Steve creates another task. Moderator asks how else Steve might do that from the Task page. Steve again adds another task and assigns it to band member's avatar. *[Why at this point does the Dashboard have a different number of center buttons than at other times? Now there are four when before there were six?]*

Steve finds Skills Page easily.

Steve has no questions.

Comments: Steve seemed hesitant throughout the process. Steve did not seem to take the time to check out the entire screen but rather jumped at the first element that showed any promise. Once at the proper location his success at an operation came easily as long as it was filling something out.

Good Road Network Usability Test

Test Session #5

02/27/16 28 minutes

Aaron Brown - Musician

David Wall - Moderator

Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Aaron signs up easily. Moderator asks him to create a band. Aaron starts to add Band on dashboard... can't find where to do it at first. Aaron confused about whether to add band as Artist or if he is the Artist. Aaron looks at account settings a few times and asks about whether this is right. Aaron assumes he is a band and needs to add people to him to populate band. Aaron goes to New Artist page and resigns to registering AaronBrownBand and fills in all information. This is not really the name of the band he wanted to register.

Error checking doesn't like aaronbrownband.com. Moderator asks why that might be. Developer interrupts and mentions that Aaron has clicked on empty box and erased the http:// in the email box and needs it to add the email [*really?*]. Aaron adds it and seems to successfully complete operation but site locks up as it is adding new member. Moderator leaves room to talk to devs to tell them about problem.

Moderator asks Aaron to add him as member of band. Aaron goes to Artist Settings again, looks around for a while, goes back to Artist page, looks around some more, returns to band page and looks around. Chooses Members-Manage and adds David Wall as member easily. Aaron chooses all but publish rights for David and stops at email. Moderator mentions adding members in system should populate information automatically. Aaron successfully completes adding second member.

Moderator asks Aaron to book a show at Zach's Attic in Stanwood, Washington. Aaron goes straight to Booking tile on band page but gets stuck there. Clicks on Booking Agents and gets confused. Goes back to Artist Members and is stuck there, too. Goes back to band pages and looks around. Looks at Upcoming Events. Says it seems like Booking section should be the place to go but it dead-ends at Booking Agent.

Moderator suggests to go back to Dashboard and start over. Back at Dashboard, Aaron explores around for a while. Moderator ask what else someone hoping to book a date might look for. Aaron looks around and looks at Events and asks about that. But he says it seems like he would have to book before adding an event. Aaron is confused and asks about whether he has booked yet. Moderator says no.

Moderator asks what else would you look to book. Aaron looks around a lot more. Goes to Touring, then Transactions, then Opportunities. Moderator asks if he was completely stuck [*which he clearly is*], where would he go? Aaron choose Dashboard from the pull-down MENU.

He arrives at Dashboard and is confused because he thought the Band page was the Dashboard. Clicks on his Artist page. Thought that was Settings before. But clicks on Artist page again and thought that it was Dashboard. Clicks on Schedule-Booking and is stumped again.

Moderator asks how he would find a venue in Seattle. Aaron goes to Business. Stumped there. Clicks on Locations. Gets to Washington State. Asks where was the venue? Moderator at this point says it doesn't matter. Aaron picks El Corazon in Seattle. Aaron searches for El Corazon but misspells it and doesn't find it in Search. Gets to the venue listing page where there are 84 venues. Frustrated that he has to look through all 84. Says there should be venue search or they should be arranged alphabetically. Something. Scrolls through and finds it. On El Corazon page he says he will request a booking with them.

Moderator asks how he would do that. Looks at Take Ownership. No. Report Business. No. Overview. No. Clicks on Booking tile and then Booking Agent. Concludes they are not set up on GRN. Says he would call them or email them to request booking because contact info is there even though El Corazon is not in GRN.

Moderator asks him to find Zach's Attic in Washington. Aaron looks in Seattle, WA page and searches for Zach's Attic. Then clicks on Washington in breadcrumbs and asks what town. Moderator tells him Stanwood. Clicks on Stanwood and enters Zach's in Search. Gets Zach's Smoke and Beverage on map. Asks if that was it.

Moderator says where else on page would you look. Goes back to Stanwood page and sees 9 Venues on left sidebar, clicks on that and finally finds Zach's Attic. On Zach's page Aaron clicks on Booking and send press kit and enters name, date, and message. Says he would assume that his press kit was sent at that point but there is no confirmation. Moderator asks what he thinks of that process. Pretty good, but there was confusion at beginning about how to book.

Then Aaron mentions that he thought all the Band and Booking information would be on the Dashboard at the same time. Also says if he knew the venue it would be easier to find. But big cities like LA would have hundreds of clubs and there should be an alphabetical menu at the top or something to make the search easier.

Moderator asks how he feels about the overall process, could he moderate someone through this est process? Aaron says he would have to play with it a lot more to feel comfortable. Moderator asks if he would be okay moderating with David Wall in the room. Aaron says it would be okay if he knew the site better.

Moderator offers to explain how the site works. Aaron says yes, please do. Moderator explains that user is to enter themselves as artist and system allows them to be a member of a band, or many bands, or a solo performer. So Artist is person, and both Members and Bands have profiles and pages. Aaron finally gets it and realizes that his band page is actually another Artist page.

Moderator leads him to Schedule page from Band page. Moderator asks what Status terms mean to him. Aaron goes through Pending, Public, date, etc. Moderator says to assume that he has date at El Corazon. Aaron enters it into the schedule and finds that easy to do. Moderator explains that he would enter for whole band and not the collection of artist. Realizes that he can book as solo Artist and as Band.

[*Whew.*]

Comments: This session was a tough one. There were a number of issues Aaron has trouble with. The searching for a venue to contact went very long and was very confusing for Aaron.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #6
02/27/16 4:05PM -4:25PM 20 minutes
Roman – SCC
Katie Bajema - Moderator
David Wall - Moderator
Jeff Reynolds – Observer

Roman creates new user easily. Katie asks him to create an album and add some tracks to it. David adds that he needs to create a band before he does that.

Roman goes to New Artist and creates a band. Then he goes straight to discography and creates a New Album. He names the album, stumbles a little at adding a date, and then adds a track and uploads a file easily. Roman says this part is very intuitive. For some reason the track doesn't appear to be added so Roman adds it again. Track appears twice at bottom of page. Roman says that was "not fun" and that there should be some prompt or feedback to say the sound file was uploaded. Roman also comments that Discography may not be the most obvious term for that function.

David asks to listen to the song that was added. Roman clicks on the arrow on the song listing and nothing happens. Then Roman clicks on the song title and the sound file plays.

Kate asks Roman to add another person to the band. Roman goes directly to Add Musicians on Album page and begins to add a musician. David intervenes, saying that this is interesting [*Aaron had same problem, see his test notes*]. Roman did not realize that the Add Musician on the Album page is for adding musicians who contributed to the album or track.

Roman goes back to Band page and goes directly to Members-Manage and adds Katie's ID to his band easily. Roman begins to enter Katie's information but notices that some of the spaces are populated because they are already part of Katie's ID. David said he didn't know that feature. Katie is successfully added as member of Roman's band.

Katie asks Roman to book a gig. Roman goes back to Band page and goes to Booking-Booking Agents and is stumped. Roman goes to Search to look for the venue. David mentions that it is Zach's Attic. Roman finds venue in Search and goes to Booking and sends his press kit. Success.

Katie asks Roman back to Band page and asks where booking should be on page. Roman says Booking on Band page is totally confusing. He would expect to see current bookings and venue access. That it stops at Booking Agents confuses him.

Katie asks Roman what he would associate Upcoming Events with? Roman says future dates and probably event times and venues. Not sure whether it would be like a blog or not.

Katie asks Roman how he feels navigation is organized. Roman says he feels it is fairly intuitive, that he might make the tiles larger since they would be used the most. He likes the location, and that they are in the center of the page.

Comments: Roman had no problem creating an artist and a band and adding a member. He went straight to discography and added an album but had a little problem with the adding the track and wondered why there was no feedback about whether it loaded or not. Roman generally found the site "fairly intuitive" but really stumbled contacting a venue for a booking. He found the Booking-Booking Manager page completely counter-intuitive. He found the venue by Search. He comments that booking is totally confusing.

Good Road Network Usability Test
Test Session #7
02/27/16 4:15PM -4:25PM 10 minutes
Alisa - SCC
Jeff Reynolds - Moderator
David Wall – Moderator

Alisa signs in quickly. She makes comments that the site looks young and hip, and somehow environmental, because of the green.

Jeff asks her to create a band. Alisa is on her Artist page and clicks on Artist-Add your Band or Artist and creates a band. She fills in the genres and notices that some of the terms fill in with icons for genres. Alisa successfully completes creating the band.

Jeff tells Alisa she needs to add a song. Alisa is on Band page, looks around, and goes to discography, because we had an earlier conversation about what that means, and clicks on blue Add Album. She says "It stands out clearly," and enters the album title and description and date. She is intrigued by the Explicit Content button, wonders what will happen and clicks on it. Success. Alisa wonders why Save and Add Another button is blue when Save and Close button and Close button are white. Clicks on Save and Close and it says there are no uploads. She clicks on upload and then back to Save and Close. Green feedback box says that track is loaded on the next page.

Jeff asks Alisa to add a member to the band. Alisa says she would go directly to Add Musicians on the Album page but since she observed Roman's session she realizes this is not the right way to do that. She goes back to Band page via the MENU and goes to Dashboard. Clicks on Add a Band or Solo Artist here and doesn't see what to do to add a member. Goes back to Dashboard and is still confused about what to do. Alisa says that Add New Artist to her means adding a completely new solo person. She clicks on this but is still not sure.

Jeff suggests going back to the Dashboard and exploring adding a new band member again. Alisa goes to Dashboard and looks at Task List, Profile, Settings, goes through all these and returns to Profile page.

Jeff suggests going back to Band page and trying to add a new member. Alisa returns to Band page and after a minute sees Members-Manage. Alisa clicks on this and easily adds new band member.

Comments: Alisa generally took to the site easily but with a somewhat different approach. She had quite a bit of difficulty figuring out how to add a new member to her band, however. Alisa would have added a member to her band from the Album page but had observed Roman's session and knew that was not the correct path.

Observation Session Comments:

By Nielsen standards these seven sessions are enough participants for a definitive report (*Nielsen, 2012*). The percentages of difficulties in this group will likely mirror percentages in the Good Road Network user population. The test sessions revealed many issues I would never have noticed in an exploration of the GRN site. This completely validates the worth of the tests.

P2: Most difficulties arose in the Bookings area. The Bookings tile on the Band page is a frustrating dead end for a lot of test participants. Three out of the seven test subjects, 42%, in this review had problems with the Bookings page and entering the process of searching for a venue by state and city. Two of those three used the Search function and bypassed the state/city route altogether because it was not obvious. The booking elements like searching for a venue by state and then city should be on the Booking page above the Booking Manager because it will be used more often by users when booking gigs. This issue rates a **P2** because it is central to GRN's mission.

P3: On the Album page, the Add Musicians needs to be clarified, like Add Album Musicians, or something like that. A few participants, 21%, got confused that this was a way to add musicians to a band. This was rated P3 because of user difficulties that could arise later on.

P3: The process of a user entering themselves into GRN as an artist and then these artists populating bands has been the source of a lot of confusion. Maybe a brief explanation on the home page, or a simple tag line like "Register as an artist, then go solo, or register your band" would at least introduce the concept to the user that the artist and the band are separate entities. This tag line outlines that in a simple way that might help them understand. This is a classic case of a concept being very clear to those developing it, while it may not register readily with users. Fortunately this is easily remedied.

P3: It is not clear to users that the Dashboard and the Artist or Band page are not the same thing, or often participants confused the two. I did on my first couple observation sessions. The artist and band pages have their names at the top. The Dashboard should have My Dashboard, MemberName's Dashboard, or just Dashboard in that same location. These pages need to be labeled what they are and they need breadcrumbs. Perhaps these pages could have a background color change as a visual cue.

P3: Venues on Venue listing page for a particular city should be arranged alphabetically.

P4: Users need confirmation and possibly a progress bar for sending a press kit.

P4: Remove the arrow on a music track because it prompts the user that this is what starts play. As it is now, only clicking on the track title makes the track play.

P4: Lodging button needs to be more prominent.

P4: Perhaps Add Artist should have a brief explanation after user's first log-in.

P4: Select All for band member permissions is easily overlooked. Perhaps this is a good thing, causing users to consider individual permissions.

P4: Why does the form box for the band's email show and/or require **http://**? Most people won't understand this if they accidentally click in the box and the **http://** disappears. If that happens the form will not accept the email address. This is unnecessarily picky. The **http://** can be easily added to the email URL on the back end.

P4: Similar to the press kit, a song upload does not provide progress feedback. The track listing once uploaded appears below the fold, so the user does not see that it is uploaded, causing multiple uploads in some cases.

P5: The term Discography among record collectors and music people is pretty obvious, but I wonder if younger musicians new to the business will know what that means. Two of the seven test participants had questions about this term, and there might have been two more if there hadn't been a discussion about it among David and the observers before the second day's sessions. So that would be a user failure rate of either 42% or 21%. Why not Albums? Almost everyone understands that term even if it is dated. At least it covers both CDs and vinyl.

Summary

Again, this is an impressive startup with a very impressive and important mission. These comments are meant to hone an already excellent product, smoothing out some of the rough spots that test participants have encountered.

Appendix

References

Nielsen, Jakob, "10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design," January 1, 1995, accessed March 11, 2016, <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/>

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