

Airline Websites

Usability Test Notes

Purpose:






- To assess the usability of two competing airline websites on desktop; Aer Lingus and Eurowings.
- To establish the user's context, goals, behaviours and pain points, specifically within the flight booking process.
- To pinpoint areas for improvement and to ask users for their insights and suggestions.

Format:

The 60-minute session is divided into two parts:

1. First, we will ask the participants some questions about their experiences in booking flights in general.
2. Then, we'll ask them to go through the booking process for two airlines; Aer Lingus and Eurowings.

Legend:

-  **Context** The situation and external factors that surround the user.
Example: the user has access to broadband in their home.
-  **Goals** The tasks that users want to complete.
Example: booking a flight on a specific date, for the best price.
-  **Behaviours** The steps users choose to undertake, in order to reach their end goals.
Example: choosing to type their destination or select it from a list.
-  **Pain Points** Stumbling blocks that users encounter when trying to achieve their goals.
Example: an error message.
-  **Suggestions** User's ideas for improvement, that will help them to achieve their goals.
Example: search feature needs a clearer 'call to action'.

Participant 1

1.0 Test preamble

The moderator explained the purpose and set up of the usability test, as outlined in the Usability Test Script.

2.0 Background questions

Personal questions:

What's your occupation?

Homemaker.

Where do you live?

Drimnagh, Dublin 12, Ireland.

How do you access the internet?

iPad or mobile phone.

Do you own a laptop or desktop?

No.

Do you have broadband?

Yes.

Do you use apps on your smartphone?

Yes.

What sort of apps do you use?

Ryanair, Aer Lingus (for checking in etc), games, social networks, sports. A variety.

Travel website usage:

What sort of travelling do you do?

For pleasure.

How frequently do you fly?

3 holidays this year, and 2 mini breaks.

Where do you fly to?

P1 went to Dubai in February for 5 nights for a 60th birthday party. Lanzarote in March for St Patrick's Day with friends, for a week. Benidorm in April for a friend's 50th birthday. P1 is going back to Benidorm in October with different friends. She also went to Liverpool twice for two day trips, for dress shopping and a fitting for her daughter's 21st birthday.

How do you book the flights?

Online.

Where do you book your flights?

Ryanair, Aer Lingus. P1 confirmed that she has never used aggregator websites.

5:55 "So I've done a a bit of flying this year [laughs]"

P1

Travel website usage continued:

Describe the last time you booked a flight online.

The last trip P1 booked was on the 14 June and it was a day trip with Ryan Air to Liverpool. P1 started by getting passenger numbers - 7 were going. P1 confirmed that it was the second trip to Liverpool that year, so she already had the details on her phone. P1 logged in, looked for dates and times that suited and booked everyone in.

7:34 *"It was very, very straightforward."*

Price, then time.

What was most important when booking that flight? Date? Time? Price?

7:44 *"Price first of all, yes. Then time."*

Did you compare prices?

P1 explained that her sister-in-law was on the Aer Lingus app looking at prices, while she was on the Ryanair app. She said they do this simultaneously to avoid prices going up. She confirmed that they were both in the same room.

8:10 *"If we're on a website looking at the price and then go out [of it], we have this thing in our head, that something is going to happen to change the prices. So we were doing it simultaneously. She was on the Aer Lingus app, while I was on the Ryanair."*

How many people were travelling with you?

Seven in total.

Did you book for everybody or just yourself?

P1 confirmed that she was responsible for booking tickets for everyone, because they decided to go with Ryanair rather than Aer Lingus.

8:49 *"I was responsible [for booking] because we'd done away with the Aer Lingus price."*

How did you communicate with the other travellers?

P1 confirmed that they were face-to-face, sitting beside one-another and didn't share information via phone calls, texts etc when making booking decisions.

P1

3.0 Tasks

Scenario:

- P1 lives in Cork and is planning a trip to Faro in the Algarve, Portugal
- P1 would like to travel during October half term (Monday 28 October-Friday 1 November)
- P1's first choice is to fly out on the Saturday before half term (26 October)

Task:

- Visit Aerlingus.com
- Book return flights from Cork - Faro
- Depart on Saturday 26 October
- 7 nights / 2 people
- Show me how you'd do it

Homepage:

What do you see on this page?

What are you looking for?

What will you do next?

- P1 noticed that the right location (Ireland) and language 'English' had been automatically selected at the top of the page.
- She selected 'Cork' as her 'origin' airport from the drop-down list and clicked 'Confirm'.

Drop-downs:

What are you looking for?

What do you see?

- **User didn't notice the flight search function in the centre of the page, as the advertising imagery at the top of the page pushes it just beyond the fold.**
- **User hovered over the main navigation bar, and the secondary navigation dropped down. This covered the majority of the webpage and, again, prevented her from seeing the flight search function in the centre of the page.**
- **Instead, P1 used the main navigation bar to find the flight search page, via 'Plan and Book' > 'Book' > 'Flights'.**

Flight search page:

Explain what you see on the page.

- P1 notices that 'Cork' is already selected as the departure airport, and that the 'Return' option is already selected.

P1

Flight search page continued:

What does promo code mean?

Why did you select the calendar instead of typing in the dates?

Do you think there was a problem, why you didn't see it straight away?

What would help to make it stand out clearer?

Results page:

What do you see on this page?

Do you like that feature?

- P1 explains that if you have a promotional offer, you'll get a code. She clicks the box and confirms that you can type it directly into the box.
- P1 types 'Faro' into the destination box and selects the airport from the suggestions below.
- The user selects her outgoing date from the calendar (26 October). She clicks the arrow to get the following month up to select her return date.
- **P1 confirms that she always uses the pop-up calendar and hasn't typed in dates before.**

13:43 *"I do that because I can make sure it's the right day."*

- P1 clicks the drop down arrow and clicks the plus sign next to 'Adults' to add another adult passenger.
- **P1 struggles to find the next step to 'Search Flights'.**

14:16 *"Okay... Oh 'Search Flights', yeah, it's in front of me there. It's highlighted so I should have seen that quicker [laughs]."*

14:36 *"No, I just presumed it was going to be further down the page; I thought the page was longer."*

14:47 *"Maybe a more stand out colour? That colour [teal] maybe just blends in a little bit. If it was red, or yellow; a more primary colour, I think it would [stand out]."*

- **P1 suggests a brighter colour to help the 'Search Flights' button to stand out.**
- **P1 explained that the search results are for the date she chose, but she can see dates either side of it as well.**

15:32 *"Yes, because if my option wasn't available, I wouldn't have to go back and put the other dates in. So that does work. So straight away I can see that the only other day, besides the 26 October, is the Thursday beforehand. So that's grand."*

P1

Results page continued:

Is there anything else you'd like to see on this page?

- P1 explains that the results give her the flight times and flight duration.
- **P1 suggested that it would be useful if the results could confirm if these were the only flights of the day, if there were no other flight times available.**

16:02 "If there were other times available, or if it could just say 'one flight daily' if not... Yeah, I'd like that."

- **P1 confirms that the price is clear on the page.**

16:30 "So straight away I can see that my date is available, and the price, without having to look any further."

What would you do next?

What does 'Saver', 'Plus' and 'Advantage' mean?

- P1 explains that she'd look at details of the return flight below.
- P1 clicks on 'Fares' for the outbound flight.
- P1 explains that 'Saver' is the standard option with a 10kg cabin bag. She confirms that she doesn't know what Avios points or Tier credits are.
- P1 adds that when you pay more you can take your 20kg suitcase, select your seat, and get priority boarding.

Which one do you think you would go for and why?

17:38 "I would go for this one [the 'Saver'], because... like a couple of years ago when you were going and you had your big suitcase, you'd bring all your toiletries and your creams and now there's supermarkets everywhere. So, I know your getting a few extras with that [the 'Plus'], but it's an extra €60, and you could spend €5 when you're over there to get what you need."

18:10 "Maybe if it wasn't on a personal level and it was business... then you might go for the 'Advantage' option."

Do you think the options are communicated well?

- **P1 confirms that the options are communicated effectively.**

P1

Results page continued:

Proceed with your selected flights.

- P1 struggles to work out how to proceed to the next stage of the booking.

18:36 "Okay... I can't find where to book?"

- P1 clicks on the date and then the time for each flight, which doesn't do anything.
- She then clicks into the 'Price/fare options' again [where she should select her preferred fare from 'Saver', 'Plus' or 'Advantage' options], but she seems unsure and comes out of it again.
- She scrolls down the page.
- She tries clicking on the 'Flight Details'.
- The user has been searching for the next stage for a minute now.
- The moderator hints that the total price is €0, suggesting that the user hasn't selected a flight option yet. The user clicks on the 'Total' price in the corner.

20:50 "So, I thought there should be something there, but I can't see anything to actually book the flights."

- The user clicks into the 'Price/fare options' once again, and realises she can select the flight price in there.
- The page shows the final price for the outbound journey for two people. P1 comments that the original price was per-person, which she seems surprised about.
- Once again the user is confused as to how to select the return flights. She tries clicking on the price and the time.

21:28 "Oh I'm forgetting how I've done it [laughs]."

- Finally, the user clicks into the 'Price/fare options' for the return flight.
- It has taken over 3 minutes for the user to work out how to select the flights.
- Once again, the user comments that the price is double what she had expected it to be, because she thought the original price was for two passengers.

What do you need to do for the return journey?

P1

Results page continued:

What does price lock flights mean?

22:09 "Lock in that price, so that if I go out and then come back, they're not going to be more expensive."

Do you find that feature useful?

22:20 "Yes, it would be."

And it's clear?

22:25 "Yep."

- As the user doesn't mention it, it's not clear if she understands whether there is a price involved for this service.
- User clicks 'Proceed' and moderator confirms that the task is complete.

Conclusion:

Overall, what did you think of that experience?

22:58 "Yeah, it was okay. Just when I clicked on [the fares] and the options came up, it didn't prompt me to choose. So that's what threw me. It didn't prompt me... But otherwise it was very straightforward."

23:19 "And I would like the 'Search Flights' icon button to be a different colour, maybe. Just a little bit more stand out."

Was there anything in particular you liked or disliked about the process?

- **The user confirmed that she liked that you only needed to type your outbound airport in once, and it remembered it throughout the process.**
- **P1 reiterated that she needs a clearer prompt to select the fares on the flight 'results page' and continue with the booking process.**
- **She added that the 'Flight Search' button on the flight search page also needed to be clearer.**

Was there anything you expected to see but didn't?

24:40 "No."

Was there anything you were surprised to see?

24:51 "No."

P1

3.0 Tasks

Scenario:

- P1 is planning a trip from London to Barcelona
- P1 would like to travel during October half term (Monday 28 October-Friday 1 November)
- P1's first choice is to fly out on the Saturday before half term (26 October)

Task:

- Visit Eurowings.com
- Book return flights from London - Barcelona
- Choose any London airport
- Depart on Saturday 26 October
- 7 nights / 2 people
- Show me how you'd do it

Homepage & drop-downs:

What do you see on this page?

What are you looking for?

What will you do next?

- P1 clicked 'Discover' in the main navigation but realised it wasn't for booking flights.
- **P1 used the main navigation bar to find the flight search page, via 'Book' > 'Flights'.**

Flight search page:

Explain what you see on the page.

- P1 explained that you could choose your departure airport from the list underneath the flight search feature.
- User added that she could choose 'London (All Airports)' as she didn't have a preference.
- **P1 clicks 'London (All Airports)' from the list of departure airports, which autofills the flight search feature.**
- **User decides to type her destination airport, rather than choose it from the list below.**
- **P1 clicks 'Search for flight' button, which she comments is much clearer on this site.**

28:32 *"Nice bright 'Search for flight'."*

- **However, user has missed filling in her preferred dates and an error message prompts her to add these before she can proceed.**

P1

Flight search page continued:

Why did you choose to type the dates in rather than use the calendar?

So it was leading you to do that?

Results page:

What do you see on this page?

What do you think about that?

So which would you choose?

28:40 "Aha. Now it just said 'Outgoing flight' and 'Return flight' before I clicked on that (Search for flight button). It didn't suggest that you put your dates in there. There was no little markings or prompts to say, 'you need to put your dates in'."

- P1 doesn't use the calendar feature below which, in the last task, she said she prefers to use. P1 types the dates in instead.

29:24 "I think it was because this [DD/MM/YY] was actually here."

29:36 "Yeah, to do that. Now I didn't even notice I did that [laughs]. Yeah, it was just because I was following the lead on it."

- P1 clicks on the 'people', and clicks the plus sign next to 'Adults' to add another adult passenger.
- User clicks 'Search for flights'.

30:50 "So it's telling me now that there's one from London Stansted and one from London Heathrow on the day I want. It's telling me the time. Aha, but there's a stop over. It's not a direct flight."

31:11 "No, it's too short a flight for a stop over. For me, personally."

- P1 comments that it is good that she is told that it is a stop over at this stage, before she goes any further in the booking process.
- P1 adds that the page is also telling her the price from each airport, and that one is more expensive than the other.
- P1 confirms that she'd go for the cheapest option (London Stansted) but adds that if she lived in London, she'd take into account the distance to each airport from her house.
- P1 comments that there isn't much difference between the departure times (only 5 minutes).
- P1 clicks on the 'Flight price', then comes out of it, and looks at the return flight instead.

P1

Results page continued:

What does 'Basic', 'Smart' and 'BIZclass' mean?

32:51 "It would be the same [as with Aer Lingus].. I think there's 3 levels across all airlines."

- P1 doesn't realise that she is now looking at the return flight, and is confused that the price is more expensive than before.
- User scrolls up and down the page, looking confused.

Is that the return price?

33:57 "It could be for the return, yes."

Was it clearly communicated which is which?

34:13 "Well it doesn't tell you whether it's for two people."

What does the 'Flex option' mean?

- User scrolls back up to the outbound flight and clicks on the 'Flight price'. She then selects the 'Basic' option.
- User notices the 'Add flex option' and explains that it gives you the option to change your flight times up to 40 minutes before departure.
- P1 comments that it doesn't say how much the 'Flex Option' costs.
- User scrolls down and selects the 'Basic' option for her return flight.
- User clicks 'Continue to service selection'.
- A pop-up appears notifying the user that she has chosen an 'Open-jaw flight'.

What would you do next?

36:09 "Oh, now I didn't check that. The departure airport in your selection is different... Okay..."

- User clicks the 'X' on the pop-up and checks her selection.

36:18 "Okay, so where am I flying back into? I'm flying back into London Heathrow. Well that's no good to me, because my car's in Stansted [laughs]!"

Let's assume you can get a taxi, so we can proceed with the booking.

- User clicks 'Continue to service selection' and then 'Continue to step 2' on the pop-up.

P1

Results page continued:

Is the message clear?

- P1 commented that she likes that it warned her about the different departure and return airports, as she hadn't noticed that. She confirmed that the message is clear.

More services page:

How do you feel about that?

- User says that the 'more services' page gives her the option to add on a bag or book a seat. She doesn't notice that this prompt is asking her to upgrade to the 'Smart' ticket, which she decided against earlier in the process.
- User confirms again that she doesn't want to add these services and scrolls down the page.
- P1 notices that all her itinerary is listed on the right hand side of the page and that her flight change is in Germany.

What's your next step?

37:53 "Yeah, it's grand. I'm happy enough. I've just noticed I'm going to Germany as well."

- User scrolls down and confirms, once again, that she doesn't want to add luggage, or special baggage, or seating.
- She clicks 'Confirm' to continue.

How do you feel about this page?

38:43 "Yeah, but is it really necessary, because on the page beforehand you can pick business class, advanced or basic, so I think that's basically the same stuff. I didn't click into any of it, but maybe I could have booked... more legroom? If I went up with the price. But I'm happy enough that [my choice] met my needs."

Conclusion:

Overall, what did you think of that experience?

39:34 "It's the first time I've ever used it [the website]. It wasn't too daunting. A couple of the little prompts were handy."

- P1 reiterated that she chose to type in the dates rather than use the calendar, because of the DD/MM/YY prompt. She added the calendar was still helpful because she looked at it to double check the dates were a week apart.

P1

Conclusion continued:

Was there anything in particular you liked or disliked about the process?

Do you think the difference of airports could have been communicated better?

Was there anything you expected to see but didn't?

Was there anything you were surprised to see?

40:18 *"It was fairly easy. It probably would have been easier if I'd have known about this website."*

- P1 said she liked the date formatting prompt.
- **P1 said she thought it could be clearer on the 'Results page' that the departure and return airports that she selected were different.**
- P1 reiterated that the pop-up message was clear.

41:18 *"Yeah, so before going on you got the chance to rectify that. But I did like the fact that it was a big warning that you got. That you couldn't miss it."*

41:38 *"No."*

- P1 said she was surprised when the warning message popped up, but that it was very useful.

P1 Conclusion

Context:

- P1 accesses the internet on her iPad and smart phone.
- P1 uses travel apps on her phone to book flights, check in and access her boarding passes.
- P1 travels for leisure.
- P1 travels in groups of friends or family.
- P1 has had 3 holidays and 2 mini breaks this year so far.
- P1 books her flights via Ryanair and Aer Lingus.

Goals:

- P1 prioritises price over flight times. She would, however, consider which departure airport is nearest to her home.
- P1 values the ability to quickly access information about flights either side of her chosen date, as this saves time and enables her to make an informed decision.
- P1 wants transparency in pricing throughout the booking process.
- P1 values clear communication about what's included in the different ticket levels.
- P1 likes it when a website remembers or guesses her choices correctly eg. language, location, departure airport etc.
- P1 values clear prompts throughout the booking process.
- P1 wants to be clearly notified about red flags as early in the booking process as possible eg. unusually long flight times, stopovers etc.
- P1 wants to be informed if there is something unusual about her booking eg. departure airport is different to returning airport.

Behaviours:

- P1 usually searches for flights on two devices simultaneously, to avoid price hikes.
- P1 tends to use the main navigation bar to find what she is looking for.
- P1 says that she usually uses the calendar to choose departure and return dates, but in the second task she opts to type in her dates instead. She confirmed that even when she didn't select dates from the calendar, she did use it as a visual reference to check that the selected days were correct. This shows that it is important to have both options available to users.
- User switches between typing her departure and destination airports into the field, and choosing from a list. This shows that it is important to have both options available to users.

Pain Points:

P1 Conclusion

- P1 didn't notice the flight search option on the Aer Lingus homepage. This may be because the advertising pushed the feature just below the fold, or due to the navigation bars obscuring the view when the user hovered over them. However, using the main navigation (as opposed to looking on the homepage) may be a learnt behaviour, as the user opted to use it in the second task too.
- P1 struggled to find prompts to continue with the booking process in both tasks. On the Aer Lingus website she struggled to find the 'Search flights' button.
- The drop downs for different ticket options on the search 'results page' proved to be a stumbling block on both websites. It takes the user over 3 minutes to work this out on the Aer Lingus website, and this caused confusion and frustration. Even after P1 worked out how to do it for the outbound flight, she struggled to find it again for the return flight. The Eurowings website had a similar feature, and once again it proved to be confusing. I think the additional step of the dropdown adds to the complication and frustration of this stage in the process.
- On both websites, the user finds it difficult to distinguish whether the prices on the 'search results page' are for one person or two. P1 is then shocked to see the price double when the second passenger is added in the final stage. This could be made clearer throughout.
- On the Eurowings website, the user misses the departure and return date fields.
- It is not clear to the user how much the 'Flex option' costs.
- P1 doesn't appreciate being asked to upgrade her ticket, or to add baggage after she has already made her selection. This infers that the user has made the wrong decision and may add to their frustration. It also gives them an extra step to complete. This step is added for up-sell purposes and is understandable in terms of business needs, rather than usability.

Suggestions:

P1 Conclusion

- P1 suggests a brighter colour to help the 'Search Flights' button to stand out.
- P1 suggested that it would be useful if the search results could confirm if they were the only flights that day, or if there were no other flight times available. Eg. 'End of search results' or 'One flight per day' or 'No flights available'.
- P1 reiterated that she needs clearer signposting in order to select the fares on the flight 'results page' and continue with the booking process. This was the case for both websites.
- P1 said she thought it could be clearer on the Eurowings' 'Results page' that the departure and return airports that she selected were different.

Participant 2

1.0 Test preamble

The moderator explained the purpose and set up of the usability test, as outlined in the Usability Test Script.

2.0 Background questions

Personal questions:

What's your occupation?

Administrator.

Where do you live?

Leitrim, Ireland.

How do you access the internet?

On Macbook and iPhone.

Do you have broadband?

Yes.

Do you use apps on your smartphone?

Yes.

What sort of apps do you use?

Email, health apps (an Inner Balance app from HeartMath), WhatsApp, Instagram, social media, Facebook. Skyscanner.

Do you have any other travel apps?

The wallet. Skyscanner. P2 used to have the Aer Lingus and Ryanair apps when she was frequently flying before Covid.

5:21 "I use the 'Wallet', just for handiness sake, for my boarding passes and stuff like that."

Travel website usage:

What sort of travelling do you do?

P2 frequently travels to Asia (Indonesia and Bali), and to the US.

How frequently do you fly?

About once a month, prior to the pandemic. P2 confirmed that she has travelled to Canada, Italy, and Indonesia so far this year.

How do you book the flights?

P2 uses Skyscanner first, to see what's flights are available, to compare prices and check connections. P2 then checks the prices of her chosen flights with the airlines directly, and books through whichever is the cheapest.

Do you use Skyscanner on your phone or desktop?

Both, but P2 prefers to use Skyscanner on desktop because it's a bigger screen.

P2

Travel website usage continued:

Describe the last time you booked a flight online.

What was most important when booking that flight? Date? Time? Price?

Were you travelling alone?

Can you think of a time that you have travelled with someone else and how you went about the booking process?

How did you share information about the flights?

The last trip P2 booked was to Canada. **She searched for flights on Skyscanner on her computer, from Dublin to Montreal. She selected return flights, and put in her preferred dates. P2 found an Air Canada flight on Skyscanner that she wanted to book. She looked on Air Canada's website, and found it was cheaper, so she booked through them directly.**

For the Canada trip it was the dates, because I was meeting someone in Montreal on those dates. P2 confirmed that she would have booked it regardless of price, as she had to go on the trip. P2 added that the connections were also important for the return flight home.

Yes.

P2 confirms that she usually books for the whole party and that they'd communicate via WhatsApp.

11:50 "Quite often I'm the person that people ask to book things [laughs]. So I'm usually the one that they message... Because I've travelled a lot, so they trust me to find the best deal. So they'd text me via Whatsapp and say let's go to Italy for these dates and I'll go off and research."

P2 usually pays for the whole party, and they transfer her the money. P2 went on to describe a scenario where her friend brought her tickets as a gift.

12:37 "Recently my friend wanted me to go and visit her in Italy, and she said 'tell me the dates you want to come'. She wanted to bring me there as a gift. So I said I could come on these dates and she went to the Ryanair website. She just asked me for my email address and she booked the tickets for me, and emailed me the confirmation."

P2 confirmed that they shared screenshots via What's app, and her friend emailed her the final booking confirmation.

P2

3.0 Tasks

Scenario:

- P2 lives in Cork and is planning a trip to Faro in the Algarve, Portugal
- P2 would like to travel during October half term (Monday 26 October-Friday 30 October)
- P2's first choice is to fly out on the Saturday before half term (24 October)

Task:

- Visit Aerlingus.com
- Book return flights from Cork - Faro
- Depart on Saturday 24 October
- 7 nights / 2 people
- Show me how you'd do it

Homepage:

What do you see on this page?

- A pop-up prompts P2 to put in her location, preferred departure airport and language. P2 selects 'Ireland' and 'Cork' from a dropdown list and the language changes automatically to Ireland (English).
- **The first thing P2 notices is the 'No change fees for all travel' banner in the middle of the screen. P2 suggests that it is too big and that most people will be aware of the changes to travel during this time.**

17:26 *"It takes up most of the screen and I don't think it's necessary."*

- P2 scrolls down to enter her flight search on the homepage, and doesn't use the main navigation.
- P2 notices that it has already populated her departure airport, 'Cork'.
- P2 types 'Faro' as her destination and selects it from the suggestion below.
- P2 uses the calendar to select her dates.

18:00 *"If they have a calendar like this, I like to scroll over instead of entering [the date] in. I just like to see the month clearly."*

P2

Homepage continued:

- P2 clicks the drop down arrow and clicks the plus sign next to 'Adults', and 'Apply' to add another adult passenger.
- P2 clicks 'Search Flights'.

Results page:

Describe what you see on this page.

- P2 explains that the page is showing an available flight from Cork to Faro on the 14 October.
- **P2 is confused by the fact that the landing time is central on the page, right under the date, and thinks this reads as the take off time.**

19:51 "Oh, it's a bit confusing actually [laughs], because it looks to me, when I first looked at it, like I was leaving Cork at 1:30pm, but really it leaves at 11am. I would find that confusing. Even for me, and I book a lot of flights. I would prefer to have the departure time, under the date and the landing time further to the right."

- **The user adds that the departure time should be the most prominent time, as that is more important to users.**

21:19 "I don't care what time I get there, once I know I'm on the plane, I'm there, and I get there when I get there. When the plane lands is not necessarily as important as the departure time."

- **P2 commented that she thinks the page looks a bit plain and there isn't much colour.**

22:04 "There's not much colour on the website. Erm, it seems kinda plain. Yes, it's in their colours but it's a very basic looking website."

What would you do next?

- P2 scrolled down to look at the return flights. The user commented that there are no other flights available on the selected dates.
- P2 clicked on the price for the outbound flight.
- P2 talked through the differences in the ticket prices eg. baggage, priority boarding, lounge access etc.

What does 'Saver', 'Plus' and 'Advantage' mean?

P2

Results page continued:

- P2 explained that she would probably book the 'Plus' option, but would check how much it would be to pay for the lounge and fast track separately, to see whether it was worth upgrading to the 'Advantage' ticket.

24:10 "I'd be thinking, I'll go for the 'Plus', and then I'll go and figure out whether I want to do the fast track or the lounge access and how much that would cost to do myself. To see if there is any benefit for me to book it in the 'Advantage' [option]."

- P2 decides to go for the 'Saver' option and said she will price up baggage etc to add nearer the time.
- P2 selects the saver price for the return flight.
- P2 explains that 'price lock flights' means you can reserve a ticket at that price for 24-hours so you can decide the next day if you want to go-ahead and book.
- P2 wouldn't use this feature, but said it might be useful for group bookings or people on a budget.

26:50 "Not for me. The way I shop; either I want to do something, or I don't, and for me I've never done that on the Aer Lingus website. I guess it's a good option for groups of people, maybe?"

- User clicks 'Proceed' and moderator confirms that the task is complete.

Conclusion:

28:25 "Very easy. Easy to book."

- P2 outlined that the website should already know her country, language etc and the first pop-up assumed she was in America.

29:00 "After flying with Aer Lingus for probably 27 years... They should know whether that's me and that I'm here. As a user it's one less pop-up, that I could avoid, if they had my IP address and could make some assumptions."

What does price lock flights mean?

Do you find that feature useful?

Overall, what did you think of that experience?

P2

Conclusion continued:

Was there anything you expected to see
but didn't?

Was there anything you were surprised to
see?

- P2 reiterated that the placement of the flight times on the results page was confusing. She added that lots of people book flights last minute and might not notice the departure time until they got to the airport late.

30:41 "Everything other than that was fine; very easy to follow, very easy to understand. Smooth in terms of user experience, not too many pop-ups, apart from the first page."

- P2 suggested that the Covid information of the homepage took up too much space.
- P2 said that she'd prefer if there wasn't the three ticket options, and that baggage etc were add ons later.
- P2 said that if they had an option to add a 10kg bag into the hold, she'd book that.
- P2 said that all airlines need clearer messaging on baggage, and to stop changing the rules.

32:36 "That's the reason why I go off and I don't book any baggage and then I go back in and decide what I want to bring [later], because they've changed their baggage allowances so many times over the years, and so many airlines have done this. I guess, I want to get booking the flight out of the way first, because it doesn't seem to be as easy just to add a bag."

- P2 confirmed that the only surprise was the placement of the times on the results page.

3.0 Tasks

Scenario:

Task:

Homepage / flight search:

What do you see on this page?

What are you looking for?

What will you do next?

Was there any particular reason that you didn't type in these fields?

P2

Task 2: Flight and date selection (Eurowings):

- P1 is planning a trip from London to Barcelona
- P1 would like to travel during October half term (Monday 26 October-Friday 30 October)
- P1's first choice is to fly out on the Saturday before half term (24 October)

- Visit Eurowings.com
- Book return flights from London - Barcelona
- Choose any London airport
- Depart on Saturday 24 October
- 7 nights / 2 people
- Show me how you'd do it

- P2 clicks on 'departure airport' and chooses 'London (All Airports)' from the dropdown.
- P2 clicks on 'destination airport' and chooses 'Barcelona' from the dropdown list.

36:42 "I'm seeing it's very easy to find Barcelona, so I don't need to type it in, really. I can just click."

- P2 selects her dates from the calendar view.
- P2 seems a little bit confused when no calendar shows for the months that have no flights, but scrolls right to find October.
- P2 is unable to choose Saturday 24 October as there are no flights that day, so she opts for Sunday 25 October.
- P2 is prompted to select passengers, she uses the plus sign to add another adult.
- P2 explains that she would rather click, than type during the booking process, as it is quicker.

38:40 "Laziness [laughs]... Also I'm used to clicking on Amazon, or any other website, to add something to an order, as opposed to typing in how many I want."

- P2 clicks 'Search for flight'.

P2

Results page:

Describe what you see on this page.

Did you get all the information you needed from this window?

What does 'Basic' and 'Smart' mean?

- P2 said that the departure and arrival times were clear.
- P2 noticed that there is a stopover, therefore it isn't a direct flight. **She said she'd want to know more information about this and was curious what the '5:30' meant. She clicks on the 'i' button and more information pops up. Now she is clear that the the stopover is 1:50, and that the total travel time is 5:30.**

40:31 "Ahh so I can see the layover isn't too long; it's 1 hour 50, because when it had the 5:30 on the previous page I thought 'Ehh is the layover 5:30?' Is it that my flight leaves at 5:30? But it's clear on this [pop-up] that the total travel time is 5:30."

41:06 "Yeah [nods], there's nothing else I'd need from there at all. It's very clear."

- **P2 is unclear how to close the pop-up and suggests adding an 'X' in the top right hand corner.**
- **P2 notices that she can select a 'Basic' or 'Smart' ticket, but questions why it shows her the BIZclass option when it isn't available, and seems frustrated by this.**

41:26 "So I can see that BIZclass isn't available to me and I'm already saying 'why not? - Why don't I have that as an option? If it's not an option, why tell me that I can't have it, if it's not there!?"

- P2 confirms that 'Basic' means you check-in online and you can take hand luggage, but it might have to go in the hold. **She questions whether that means she will drop it off at the check-in desk and whether she'd need to secure it with a lock.**

42:40 "If my bag's meant to be onboard with me, then I want it onboard. Like, I want it with me."

- P2 confirms you can take hold luggage with the 'Smart' option. **She questions what 'Preferred seating' means.** P2 guesses that as a 'Smart' traveller you get priority in taking your hand luggage onboard. She adds that you get priority boarding and the option to check in at the airport or online.

P2

Results page continued:

Which ticket option would you choose?

What does the 'Flex option' mean?

Would you use this service?

Going back to the results page, what does the 'From £4 save your price' message mean?

Conclusion:

Overall, what did you think of that experience?

- P2 notices that you can change your booking up to 14-days before your flight, free of charge and that you just pay the difference. P2 says this is a good idea.
- User confirms that she'd go for the 'Smart' option, and clicks this for the outbound, and then the return flight.
- P2 confirms that it gives you the option to change your plans at the last minute (up to 40-mins before departure).
- P2 doesn't notice the price for this addition on the page, and instead clicks into the 'i' for more information to find out the price, but it isn't listed there.
- P2 thinks that it sounds like a good idea, but questions whether in reality you'd be able get in touch with the airlines to change your flight at short notice.

49:10 "I'm feeling as a consumer, like that all sounds great, and you tell me this but the reality can be something different. I don't know if this is relevant to this, or usability, but that's what goes through my mind. Like that's brilliant on paper, and when I'm booking, but the reality isn't always the same."

- At first, P2 is confused by the wording of the message. She then realises that it is similar to the Aer Lingus website and it means you can lock in the price for a £4 fee.
- The moderator asks P2 to continue to checkout, and she selects the fees for the 'Flex option', which she hadn't noticed before. She thinks these are the standard fares of the flights. She also doesn't notice the hike in price.
- Conscious of time limitations, the moderator advises the participant that they'll finish the task there.
- P2 stated that the task was made easier because she had the option to select all airports in London, and that the destination of Barcelona was also easy to select. She said this saved her time.
- P2 added that the website is more colourful and less bland than the Aer Lingus website.

P2

Conclusion continued:

- P2 confirmed that the booking calendar was easy to use.
- **However, P2 reiterated that it took her a minute to find the calendar. This is because the first couple of months had no dates available.**
- **P2 adds that she likes using a calendar because sometimes she books with US companies and they have the date the other way around.**

53:30 "I find that [a calendar] easier because a lot of the companies I've travelled with before are US based and they have the date the other way round."

- **P2 concludes that the Eurowings was easy to follow and navigate.**
- **P2 said the only thing that confused her was the 'From £4 save your price' feature and suggested this could be reworded.**

53:45 "The only thing that threw me was the £4 save your price thing, because I thought 'what was that about?'. I realised when you asked me the question, but they could probably word that a little bit better."

- **P2 said that the baggage (ticket options) were straightforward, but reiterated that she didn't like being shown the BIZclass option as it wasn't available to her.**
- P2 reiterates the points above, and adds that she preferred using this website as it was clearer and easier to use.

55:42 "No."

- P2 said that she was surprised to see the live chat in the bottom right hand corner, and wondered if she asked a question, whether customer service or a bot would reply.

Was there anything in particular you liked or disliked about the process?

Was there anything you expected to see but didn't?

Was there anything you were surprised to see?

P2 Conclusion

Context:

- P2 accesses the internet on her Macbook and iPhone.
- P2 uses travel apps on her phone to book flights, check in and access her boarding passes.
- P2 is a frequent flyer; flying at least once a month.
- P2 travels both long and short haul.
- She travels alone and in groups of friends.
- For group bookings, P2 usually researches and books flights for the whole party.
- P2 usually pays for the whole party in one transaction, and they transfer her the money.

Goals:

- P2 prioritises flight dates over price. Connections are also important to her.
- P2 likes to shop around to see if her preferred flights are cheaper elsewhere.
- P2 likes it when a website remembers or guesses her choices correctly eg. departure airport etc.
- For P2, departure time is much more important than arrival time.
- Price is important to the user when it comes to add ons. The user likes to price up the elements of the ticket prices individually, before she upgrades to a more premium fare eg. baggage, lounge, airport desk check-in.
- P2 prefers to book baggage after her flights are booked.
- P2 appreciates the fact you can change your ticket free of charge up to 14-days before your flight with Eurowings, and that you just pay the difference in price.
- P2 values clear communication about what's included in the different ticket levels.
- Time and ease of booking are important to the user.
- P2 values information that is clear and easy to follow, and websites that are easy to navigate.

P2 Conclusion

Behaviours:

- P2 prefers to use Skyscanner on desktop.
- P2 checks Skyscanner for flights first, then checks with airlines directly to see which are cheaper.
- The user communicates the available options to the group by sending screenshots via Whatsapp. She sends final confirmations via email.
- P2 uses the main search features on the homepage of both websites. She neglects the navigation bar throughout.
- P2 typed in her destination airport on Aer Lingus, and selected from a list on Eurowings.
- P2 would rather click than type when selecting airports or additional passengers, as this saves her time.
- P2 prefers to use a booking calendar to select dates rather than type as it prevents mistakes and saves her time.
- In the first task, P2 opted for the 'Saver' (lowest-priced) option and said she'd look at adding bags later. In the second task she opted for the 'Smart' (mid-range) option including bags. She seemed open to all three options. I think the use of the word 'Smart' ultimately made her think this was the smartest option and pushed the upsell.
- P2 wouldn't use the price lock feature, but thought it was useful for group bookings or those on a budget.
- P2 likes to be able to easily access more information when she needs it.

Pain Points:

- P2 is confused by the fact that the landing time is central on the Aer Lingus results page, right under the date, and thinks this reads as the take off time.
- The user was frustrated that she was prompted to put her country and language into the Aer Lingus website. The website should already be aware of this information and auto-populate it.
- P2 thinks that all airlines need clearer messaging on baggage and it would benefit the user if they didn't keep changing the rules on cabin bags.

Pain Points continued:

P2 Conclusion

- Initially P2 found the booking calendar a bit confusing on the Eurowings website. I think it is because the first couple of months had no dates available. It might be better if the calendar still shows, but the dates are greyed out, or there's some wording over it saying that there are no flights available during that month. Once the user scrolled over to October and dates appeared, she was fine.
- The user was unclear as to what the '5:30' referred to on the Eurowings results page. This could be clarified if it said 'total travel time: 5:30', or similar.
- P2 is annoyed that the Eurowings website shows her fare options for BIZclass when they aren't available.
- P2 is not clear as to whether hand luggage for Eurowings' 'Basic' fare needs to be dropped off at the check-in desk.
- P2 is not sure what 'preferred seating' means within the Eurowings fare inclusions.
- The user struggles to locate the price of the 'Flex option' on the Eurowings website. At the end of the booking process, she accidentally selects this as an add-on, which increases her total by £516, and she doesn't notice. This is a major red flag and needs to be clearer to users.
- P2 said that she doesn't trust the reality or value of the 'Flex option', so the fact that she's added it by accident is a problem.
- P2 is confused by the wording of 'From £4 save your price' on the Eurowings website.

Suggestions:

- P2 suggests that the 'No change fees for all travel' banner in the middle of the Aer Lingus homepage is too big.
- P2 finds the Aer Lingus website a bit plain, and basic and thinks it could benefit from more colour.
- P2 said she'd prefer it if there wasn't 3 ticket options, and that baggage was an add on later. P2 said that if they had an option to add a 10kg bag into the hold, she'd book that.
- P2 suggests adding an 'X' in the top right hand corner of the 'i' information pop-ups on the Eurowings website.
- P2 suggested that the 'From £4 save your price' feature be reworded on the Eurowings website.