



Sveglio: A Virtual Guide to Everything Coffee

ZACHARY FOOTE

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LIBR555: INFORMATION DESIGN – SYSTEMS

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Mission Statement

Our mission is to develop a one-stop solution for casual, yet curious coffee drinkers – those who want to start exploring coffee’s many different permutations and possibilities. Our product, Sveglio, is a website that uses faceted classification to provide users helpful guides to different coffee styles, flavor profiles, brewing methods, and beverage types.

To date, all of this information is spread a bit haphazardly throughout the Internet. Many coffee brewing and style guides appear primarily as mass-media listicles (in Huffington Post, CNET, Lifehacker, Paste Magazine, and so on) or as supplements to coffee storefront companies (for Starbucks, Trees Coffee, Stumptown, *et cetera*). Meanwhile, independent coffee guides on the web, like coffee-brewing-methods.com, The Coffee Wiki, or The Perfect Grind, tend to present clunky navigation menus or incomplete information. By contrast, Sveglio aims to give beginner coffee enthusiasts a polished, informative, and mobile-responsive experience so they do not have to skip across multiple sources to get the details they want.

Goals and Objectives

As an organization, we aim to:

- Listen to our potential users to better anticipate their information needs
- Use a clean, intuitive layout to make our product easily navigable
- Use interactive devices (like sliders and dropdown windows) that correspond to different properties of coffee styles, brewing methods, and beverage types so users can tailor what they see according to their tastes/preferences
- Become a top result for search engine queries like “coffee guide” through search engine optimization and increasing popularity
- Partner with other companies, especially artisanal roasters and brewing equipment makers, to flesh out illustrative do-it-yourself approaches to making coffee

Major Stakeholders

Our primary stakeholders are coffee lovers who are beginning to make the jump from simply consuming coffee drinks to making them on their own. We expect this group will compose the lion’s share of our userbase, because we position ourselves as a learning tool for a rapidly-changing industry. We are not necessarily looking to attract those who are already professionals, like baristas, to use our site because they very likely already know most of the information we plan to offer. Instead, we may, in fact, solicit knowledge and advice from these professionals, giving them due credit for helping build our content base. As our website grows in name recognition, we may also attract additional stakeholders – producers of coffee and coffee-making accessories. We will be willing to collaborate with these companies, but we will also want to keep them at arm’s length to preserve our own autonomy. We would prefer not to become a mouthpiece for any one company.

Major Users

The major users of this website are increasingly interested in coffee and want to make inroads into “coffee culture,” but they may be unsure of where to begin. Because there are lots of different kinds of coffee, and many ways to prepare it, the sheer number of options at their disposal are considerable from the outset. Therefore, they might need some help to parse it out. Our users will find a singular, comprehensive reference tool that isn’t too complicated to use, but also includes some customizable aspects that indulge both their curiosity and their personal preferences.

Demographically speaking, our userbase might skew younger. Recent evidence shows “Millennials, a demographic between ages 19 and 34, are pushing U.S. demand to historic records” and that they account for “44 percent of coffee in the United States” (Heath 2016). The same may well be the case in Canada, a country that shares demographic affinities with its neighbor to the south. We do not, however, want to leave older users in the lurch. Writing about the gradual extinction of the “early bird” special that once appealed to thrifty-minded seniors, Jaya Saxena points out that retiring Baby Boomers “have different expectations about what retired life should look like – mostly, they do not want to be reminded in any way that they’re old now, especially if they can afford that luxury” (2018). This shift in tastes and attitudes, when applied to our own project, reveals another potentially fertile userbase – retirees with newfound time on their hands to learn about a whole world of coffee, and funds they might be willing to spend on it.

With this in mind, we understand our userbase as a whole, whether older or younger, will also have some degree of disposable income. Coffee is not necessarily a “cheap” interest; the costs of buying coffee itself begins to add up even before one adds coffee brewing equipment and accessories into the equation. However, users *do* want to get as much value as they can from their purchases. Before users even get to a point of purchase, they may do some initial investigations to determine which brewing methods (and requisite equipment) might suit their wants. In this circumstance, Sveglio can serve as a brand-nonspecific finding aid.

Data-Gathering Methodology

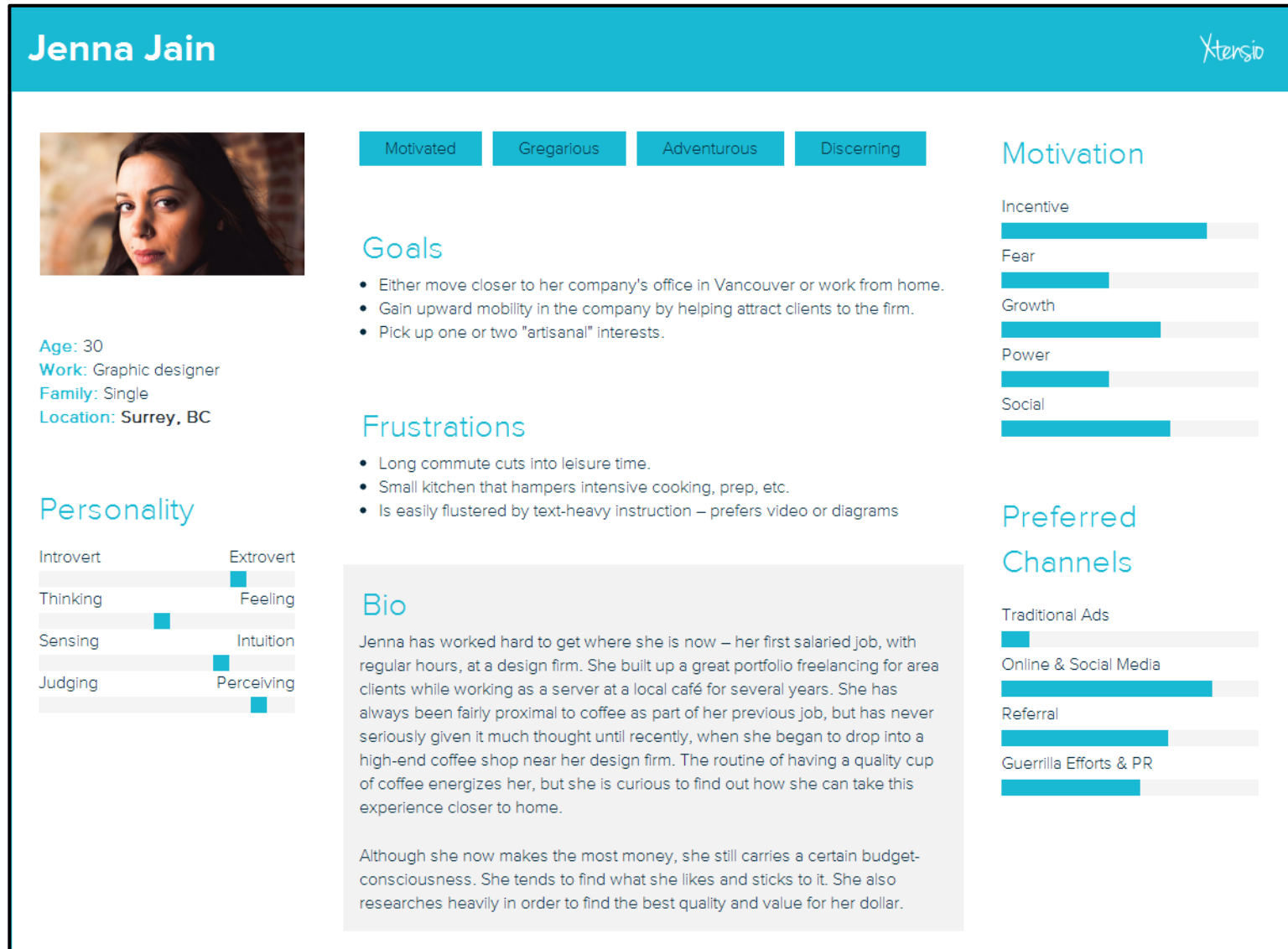
We asked self-identified coffee drinkers ten questions – first about their coffee habits, and then about their experiences (coffee-related or non-coffee-related) navigating the Internet. Because we value candid feedback, we opted for the spontaneity of the verbal interview setting instead of a written questionnaire. We are aware verbal interviews could result in less nuanced responses, but we are also interested in gathering any emotional feedback that would otherwise be absent from the questionnaire. With face-to-face interviewing, we can also clarify and refine our questions on the fly to better suit our interviewees.

User Needs Interview Questions

These questions are intended for individual respondents but may be repurposed for a focus group setting as the interviewer sees fit.

1. How often do you drink coffee?
2. Why do you typically drink coffee?
3. How often do you buy coffee drinks at a coffee shop versus making them at home? Why do you think this is the case?
4. When you purchase coffee (either in a coffee shop, in a grocery or specialty store, or online), what factors play into the types of coffee you buy? How might these factors change based on the setting you are in?
5. When making coffee at home, how do you typically prepare it?
6. Have you ever attempted to look up information on different coffee bean styles, coffee drinks, or different methods to make coffee on the Internet? If so, what were your experiences trying to find this information?
7. What other approaches, if any, have you taken to find out more about discovering and making coffee?
8. When you navigate websites for information (ex. shopping or news), what design features do you find most intuitive or convenient?
9. Conversely, what features do you find inconvenient when navigating a website for information?
10. Imagine a website that acts as a “comprehensive guide” to preparing your own coffee. Can you picture a feature or two, or perhaps some content, for this particular website that you personally might find useful?

User Personae



Christopher Rowland

Xtensio



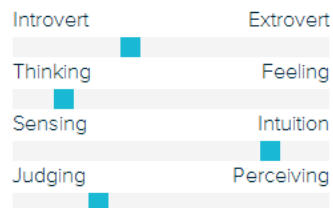
Age: 55

Work: Retired computer programmer

Family: Married, no kids

Location: Calgary, AB

Personality



Assured

Analytical

Headstrong

Reserved

Goals

- Develop a few hobbies in the next year or two.
- Travel to some "bucket list" cities with his partner.
- Keep a healthy exercise and diet regimen.

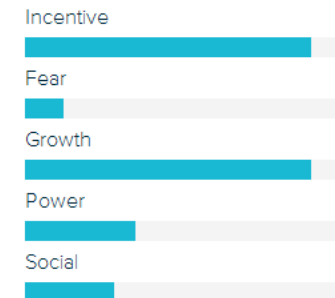
Frustrations

- Inertia, or the idea of falling into "stationary" patterns
- Inattention to detail and incomplete information, leading to lack of context when researching
- Needless abstractions that don't lead to foreseeable solutions

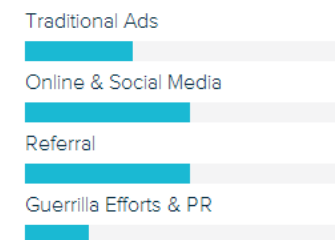
Bio

Christopher has depended on coffee for most of his professional life to get him through long nights of programming. For a while now, he has thought about putting in effort to better understand the beverage he's passively consumed for years, but he's never had the time. A changing work environment at Chris's company essentially forced him into retirement a few years early. Though his ego was a bit bruised by this turn of events, he has found his rhythm and has increasingly embraced the retired life. Now he has more opportunities to tinker around with different diversions between the occasional freelance gig.

Motivation



Preferred Channels



Information Inventory and Architecture



Task Analysis

Scenario 1

A user who wants to mitigate frequent heartburn needs to find coffee bean varieties with low acidity from a list of options.

1. Visit the Sveglia homepage.
2. Choose “Bean Varieties” from the banner menu near the top of the homepage.
3. A full list of bean varieties will display in alphabetical order in the main field.
4. By default, all the faceted customizations located in the interface just below the banner menu will be greyed out and inactive. To activate the **Acidity Slider**, click the red OFF button next to it.
5. The button will switch to ON and turn green. The **Activity Slider** will turn bold, indicating it is now an active filter for the inventory. By default, the activity slider’s indicator will be set at the middle of the continuum or **MEDIUM** acidity. The left end of the slider indicates **LOWEST** acidity while the the right end indicates **HIGHEST** acidity.
6. Pull the indicator on the slider all the way to the left. The main field will refresh, displaying *only* the beans that create very low acidity levels.

Scenario 2

A user wants to find cold, milk-based coffee beverages to prepare for mixed company on summer weekends from a list of options.

1. Visit the Sveglia homepage.
2. Choose “Beverages” from the banner menu near the top of the homepage.
3. A list of beverages will display in alphabetical order in the main field.
4. By default, all the faceted customizations located in the interface just below the banner menu will be greyed out and inactive.
5. To activate the **Milk/Non-Milk Toggle**, click the red OFF button next to it.
6. The button will switch to ON and turn green. The toggle’s indicator will default to the toggle on the right side, **Non-Milk**.
7. To change it to **Milk**, either click on the word **Milk** located to the left of the toggle, or click on the empty space in the toggle widget.
8. The toggle indicator will shift to the left. The main frame will refresh, displaying *only* milk-based beverages.
9. The button will switch to ON and turn green. To activate the **Hot/Cold Toggle**, click the red OFF button next on it.
10. The toggle’s indicator will default to the option on the right side, **Cold**.
11. The main frame will refresh, displaying *only* cold *and* milk-based beverages, in coordination with the **Milk** toggle.

Scenario 3

A user wants to find inexpensive approaches to brewing coffee from a list of options.

1. Visit the Sveglia homepage.
2. Choose “Brewing Methods” from the banner menu near the top of the homepage.
3. A full list of brewing methods will display in alphabetical order in the main field.
4. By default, all the faceted customizations located in the interface just below the banner menu will be greyed out and inactive. To activate the **Cost Slider**, click the red OFF indication next to it.
5. The button will switch to ON and turn green. The **Cost Slider** will turn bold, indicating it is now an active filter for the inventory.
6. By default, the activity slider’s indicator will be set at the middle of the continuum, the **medium cost range** denoted by two dollar signs (\$\$). Meanwhile, the left end of the slider indicates the **lowest cost range** with one dollar sign (\$) while the right end indicates **highest cost range** with three dollar signs (\$\$\$).
7. Pull the indicator on the slider all the way to the left. The main field will refresh, displaying *only* those brewing methods that cost the least relative to the rest of the brewing methods.

Scenario 4

A user knows the bean variety they want to find in-depth information on (Ethiopia Yirgacheffe), but they cannot remember how to spell the second word.

1. Visit the Sveglia homepage.
2. Find the search bar in the top right, denoted with a magnifying glass icon.
3. Begin typing in “Ethiopia...” The predictive text will display three different results for three different Ethiopia cultivars in the dropdown, plus an option to search all pages for the word “Ethiopia.”
4. “Ethiopia Yirgacheffe” will be the third one on the list, since it is the last of the three alphabetically. Click the word or the link target space next to it.
5. The user will be whisked to the Ethiopia Yirgacheffe bean profile page, which contains a wealth of information on the bean’s origins, roast pairings, roast methods, aroma and flavor profiles, and more.

Scenario 5

A friend of a user bought the user a coffee with subtle citrus notes the user found pleasant. Now the user wants to find coffee beans with the same or similar flavor profile.

1. Visit the Sveglia homepage.
2. Choose “Bean Varieties” from the banner menu near the top of the homepage.
3. A full list of bean varieties will display in alphabetical order in the main field.
4. By default, all the faceted customization categories located in the interface just below the banner menu will be greyed out and inactive. To activate the **Flavor Profile Dropdown**, click the red OFF button next to it.
5. The button will switch to ON and turn green. The dropdown box will turn bold, indicating it is now usable.
6. Click the arrow next to the dropdown box. Find the word **Citrus** from the list in the dropdown.
7. Click either the word **Citrus** or the link target space near the word.
8. The dropdown box will retract, and the word **Citrus** will display in the gray field at the top of the dropdown. The main field will refresh, showing *only* those bean varieties known to exhibit citrusy flavors.

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

Yellow indicates feedback of interest. These interviews have been lightly edited for clarity.

Participant #1

Interviewer: How often do you drink coffee?

Participant 1: Let's see... all day, every day. So I think about half a pot in the morning and half a pot at night.

And why do you typically drink coffee?

I drink it because I enjoy it. Not for the caffeine or anything – just because I enjoy the flavor. Ever since I quit smoking, I've enjoyed the flavor of coffee more than I ever have in the past.

How often would you say you buy coffee drinks at a coffee shop versus making them at home?

That's a tough one. I'd say probably two to one. **I probably make about twice as much coffee at home.** I'll probably drink it every other day in a coffee shop.

Why do you think this is the case? Why do you think you make more coffee at home instead of, um...

Oh, **it's just much more convenient to make it at home.**

Mhm.

It's easier – I got a coffee grinder, and I just love making it at home, so...

Okay. So when you purchase coffee, either in a coffee shop, or a grocery store, or even online, what factors play into the types of coffee you buy?

Well, I like the darker roasts? Anything that's a darker roast, I prefer that as opposed to anything else. There's actually less caffeine in a darker roast. That's one of the major reasons, and then the flavor, as a whole, I think the darker flavors taste better to me.

When making coffee at home, how do you typically prepare it?

Typically, I'll grind it in a grinder, and then I have an automatic drip here. A Bunn coffee maker.

Have you ever attempted to look up information on different coffee bean styles, coffee drinks, or even coffee brewing methods on the Internet?

I have not. Usually by word of mouth is where I get information. You know, somebody will tell me a good brand and I'll go and try that, or I'll go to new coffee shops and buy new beans I've never had before and try it myself. I really don't use the Internet to research coffee.

Can you tell me a little bit more about those other approaches, particularly with word of mouth? Who do you typically ask, I guess?

I actually talk to my brother-in-law, Scott, and sometimes I'll talk to Vicki, who is the owner of Kool Beanz [a local coffee shop] and she'll give me some recommendations. And that's about it.

In general, when you navigate websites for information – let's say, for shopping, getting news, or something like that – what's a design feature or two that you find intuitive or convenient?

Design features on the Internet?

Yeah, like on a website.

Okay. So what I prefer is **I like pages where I can see a large list of items at one time, as opposed to having to scroll through pages and pages – I like to see fifty items on one page.** As opposed to having, like, six items per page. I just like everything to be there in front of me, and a nice quick visual diagram.

So almost like an infinite scroll, kind of? Like, things just keep loading as you scroll through?

Absolutely. Absolutely. I just scroll down, and the items are right there on the page. And then **I can click on the item, get a description maybe on the side window, as opposed to actually opening up another web page, having to open another hyperlink.**

Alright, so, conversely, what features do you find *inconvenient* when navigating a website?

Like I said, having to click on one page that opens up a second webpage for that product, and then if you want to go back, you have to close that page or scroll back to the first tab to open up or look at a second item that takes you to another page... that just drives me absolutely insane.

[Laughs] Okay. We've been rolling through this pretty quick, but: imagine a website that acts as a "comprehensive guide" to making your own coffee. Can you picture a feature or two, or maybe some content for this particular website that you personally might find useful?

Well, **a video is always nice... like a "how-to" video is a nice feature on the page, you can just click on it. And like I said, I'm all about staying on one webpage. I don't like having to go to another webpage. Having a video built in on the page would be fantastic.**

Participant #2

Interviewer: Okay, so, my first question is: how often do you drink coffee?

Participant #2: Every day.

Every day. And why you typically drink coffee?

Because I like the taste... and I have a caffeine addiction.

[Laughs] And how often do you buy coffee at a coffee shop versus making it at home?

That... varies. Um... [pause]

Based upon?

I was working from home, so I made coffee from home all the time, and now I'm working in an office that has free coffee, so I drink the free coffee there, which I guess is like making it at home. So... let's say I drink two cups of coffee a day on weekdays – that makes ten cups of coffee a week. And I would maybe buy two coffees a week? Like, five to one making...

Making coffee at home over buying it in a shop?

Yeah.

Because it's most convenient for you, based on your own circumstances?

Well, yeah, and because the coffee I make at home is better than what I buy in a shop. The coffee I make at work is worse, but it's free.

[Laughs] Okay, so, when you *do* purchase coffee, either in a coffee shop or a grocery or specialty store or even online, what factors play into the types of coffee that you buy?

I'll buy expensive coffee, but I won't buy obscenely expensive coffee. Mostly I look for flavor directions? 'Cause I'm slowly starting to figure out the types of coffee I like. And then I buy coffees I haven't had before in the types of flavors I like, or coffees I've had before that I like.

How might these factors change based on the setting you're in? If you're in like, a coffee shop, or a grocery store, or wherever.

Grocery stores usually have kind of mediocre coffee all the time. And coffee shops usually have whatever coffee beans they sell you, at like, Starbucks, unless you're at a nice coffee shop, and

then I don't usually know what anything is, and I ask the salespeople to sell me something. Um, what was the question?

I guess, um, you're answering it! How might these factors based on the setting you're in, like your circumstances, I suppose.

As to what type of coffee I buy?

Yes.

Oh, yeah, so it's mostly, like, the selection kind of determines what I'm going to look for when I buy coffee. When I think of buying coffee at a coffee shop, I think of a Starbucks, where I really don't have much of choice as to what type of coffee I get. I went down to, like, whatever, I don't know what it's called now, but they have actually different varieties of coffee and I'm looking mostly for what flavors are in the coffee.

When you make coffee at home, how do you typically prepare it?

I have a Moka Pot.

Wonderful. Have you ever attempted to look up information on different coffee styles, coffee drinks, or different methods of making coffee on the Internet?

Yes, I have.

What were your experiences in trying to find this information? Or maybe just outline one or two experiences that you've had.

I guess, overall, it's pretty easy to get info on different types of drinks. Like, if you Google image search the poster that shows you this is a latte and this is a cappuccino and this is the other thing with a bunch of cream in it or whatever. So that's super straightforward. What I had a harder time with is figuring out... the Moka Pot is, especially, super finicky, and it's one thing to find coffee that I like, and I know for a Moka Pot I'm supposed to grind it to a certain grind, but am I making it terribly and that's why it's bad, or is it the Moka Pot that just makes coffee I don't like, or is it the beans that I don't like? And just kind of figuring out whether I'm doing it properly and what a properly made cup of coffee with this coffee brewing device is supposed to taste like?

Interesting.

It's mostly like reading Reddit, and like, coffee forum-type things, with people like "this is the intro-newbie guide for how to make coffee with this device." And then, you know if you use water at this temperature and brew it for this long and then you're supposed to get good coffee out of that, and then whether you like it or not is then a result of the beans and not you sucking at making coffee.

So it almost takes a community of people to suss it out?

Yeah! Yeah.

What other approaches, if any, have you taken to discover more about coffee?

Yeah! Alex.

Who is Alex?

He's a friend of mine from Edmonton who works at, like, a legit coffee shop. He works at a job where he knows how to make coffee and I say "Hey, Alex, what kind of coffee device do I want?" So I guess, like, consulting with a professional.

Changing gears for a minute – when you navigate websites for information – for example, to shop, or to seek out news, or something like that – what's a design feature or two that you find most intuitive or convenient?

Oh, God. Um... so there's a couple of things... there's community website like Reddit or forums or whatever, and there's like online shops. And in an online shop, I want to be able to filter products by a bunch of different criteria and not necessarily by brand? I was buying vacuums just last week. And it doesn't help me to filter vacuums by brand, 'cause I want to cross-shop brands, but I want to filter by *do they have this feature or that feature*. So for coffee I'd want to be able to filter by like maybe country of origin, but honestly I don't really care about that, so I want to filter by flavor properties and price, obviously, and like, shippability to my address, maybe.

At the same time, any information that the store is showing me, I have the fundamental distrust for because of capitalism, so I have to go back to a community-driven resource where I can read reviews and other people's opinions. And then there's the whole thing where you have to make sure the companies aren't astroturfing that community and all that bullshit – but like that's a lot harder to search and you might be reading an article where they are coincidentally talking about the brand of coffee you're thinking about buying. But... it's hard.

Okay, that's a pretty good answer. Conversely, what features do you find inconvenient or annoying when navigating a website for information?

It's usually like a lack of features that I find annoying rather than specific things.

That's a feature, I guess – a feature being a lack of features.

Can you give me examples?

Um... I think things that I find annoying are just like pop-in boxes whenever I'm trying to... especially on news websites when I'm trying to read what I'm trying to read and all of a sudden it's like "You obviously love great journalism!"

“Please give us five dollars!” I use adblockers and Javascript blockers and whatever else. I guess in terms of e-commerce, it really bothers me when I can’t figure out shipping information ahead of time, or at least at some point in my ordering process. Even Amazon is terrible. You have to click all the way through before you find out shipping costs. Because we live in Canada and online store either won’t ship here or will ship here for eighty dollars. It’s stuff like that.

So my last question is: imagine a website that acts as a “comprehensive guide” to preparing your own coffee. Can you picture a feature or two, or maybe some content, for this website that you personally might find useful?

I would expect it to have several indexes. So one index like *these are the types of coffee drinks* and I can like click through and figure out how to make them. And *these are the different coffee making devices* and click through and *these are the coffee drinks they’re useful for*. I guess I haven’t done that much research on coffee? So like a beginner’s guide to... I’ve been talking about flavor directions and people have been talking about flavor directions but most of the time I have no idea what these words mean. It’s like when people talk about flavors in wine, and it’s like, okay, I’ll remember the things that I’ve drank one time that I liked, but I don’t actually know what they’re taking about with the words. So like, guides to understanding that.

A breakdown of what the categories mean, I guess?

Yeah. What would be really useful is a step-by-step guide on how to use a certain device, like an espresso machine, like, whatever, you have your shitty espresso machine and that kind of sucks, ‘cause you bought it at the [department] store and it’s not like the fancy ones at the coffee shops. But keeping that in mind, this is the grind size you want, the water to run through for this long, and that kind of step-by-step guide with brew times and that – that would be super useful.

Participant #3

Interviewer: How often do you drink coffee?

Participant #3: Pretty much every day.

How many cups do you drink in a typical day?

Typically one or two.

Okay. And why do you typically drink coffee?

Because I'm a tired zombie, and I need it to wake up in the morning.

Okay. Are there any other reasons?

It tastes nice. I like the taste of coffee.

How often do you buy coffee drinks at a coffee shop versus making them at home?

Maybe once or twice a week at someplace on campus like Ike's, which is kind of crappy coffee, and then occasionally at a nicer coffee place like JJ Bean or a place in the neighborhood.

Alright. And then versus making at home?

Oh, versus making it at home. So, I make it at home most days... usually on campus is when I forget or need mid-day coffee to stay awake. And elsewhere, on the weekends I go to other places as like a treat.

You kind of already answered this but: why do you think this is the case? Why do you think your ratio is what it is?

I'm usually out of the apartment so much that I feel like it's out of necessity. I need coffee at that moment because I'm addicted to it. And I can't make it at home because I'm not at home. And then, with the other aspect of the ratio, for something nice over the weekend, I think it's just like, an occasional thing, a treat, so it's not that often.

And so, when you purchase coffee, whether in a coffee shop, a grocery or specialty store, or online, what factors play into the types of coffee you buy?

That's a pretty broad question. Obviously, price. My partner and I, we kind of settled on this one brand they sell at London Drugs, which is really close to us. And they sell it in bulk, too. So we've figured out that we really like this one, and we get it in bulk because it's more cost-effective. And

what do we like about it? It's, um... a fairly dark roast, somewhat fruity, but not, like, too fruity. Yeah, just like a really basic taste.

Just to follow up on that – how might those factors change based upon the settings you're in? A coffee shop versus in a grocery store or purchasing beans on the Internet...

I feel like in a coffee shop, I'm getting one cup of coffee, so it's... not less of an investment, but you're not stuck with it for days, potentially weeks if it's not the right choice. I'm *more* open to trying new things in a coffee shop? With making coffee at home versus getting it at a coffee shop, where it's, like, very fresh and just brewed and they do it in a skilled way, I think there's certain roasts, certain beans that work better when you're doing it at home? In, like, a French press or drip coffee machine. A whole lot better, flavor-wise.

It sounds like the threshold is a lot higher in a store for making an informed choice?

Mhm.

Just because of the price and... you want to be sure you like it?

Yeah. Obviously, you still have to try new things, take some risks, but I tend to gravitate toward the same things once I know what I like. Like, why would I be stuck with something crappy for two weeks?

Right. So, when making coffee at home, how do you typically prepare it?

We usually do French press in the morning, and then I really like doing pour-overs, too – but that doesn't work as well for two people, when you and your partner are making coffee together. But if we have different schedules on a certain day, I'll do a pour-over.

Excellent. Have you ever attempted to look up on different coffee bean styles, or coffee drinks, or maybe different methods to make coffee on the Internet?

Um... yes. Not so much coffee bean styles, although I could stand to learn more about that... I've typically looked up information on different coffee drinks. There was a brief period where I thought I might try to be a barista, so I was trying to brush up on my knowledge. That didn't happen, but I learned a little bit from that reading. I think another part of that is I can't really make different coffee drinks at home beyond coffee? French press or pour-over are pretty much our options, because I don't have an espresso machine. I don't have any milk foam machines? Just very straightforward. So, I haven't delved much into that either. But I definitely, when I first got my French press, I was looking up, you know, *How do I use this? What's the best timing for it? What's the best water temperature?* Those kinds of things.

Going a little deeper into that – what were your experiences in trying to find this information? How easy was it to find this information? Where did you did it, if you can remember?

Oh gosh. Um...

It's fine if you can't remember.

I don't remember. I just kind of Googled it, and then found an article. I don't remember what website it was on. And Wikipedia has some good pages for certain drinks.

What other approaches, if any, have you taken to find out more about discovering and making coffee? You kind of mentioned you wanted to be a barista at some point...

Yeah. I mean, I didn't get very far in that endeavor. I think some of it is just serendipity – just trying different things in coffee shops. Like “I don't know what this thing is; I'm just going to order it.” And just try it and maybe look it up after to see if I can figure it out. Just experimenting a little bit in that way.

Hm. I guess, to shift gears for a second – generally speaking, when you navigate websites for information, what kinds of design features do you find most intuitive or convenient?

Can you maybe narrow down what kinds of websites or information design features you're getting at?

I can try – so... even when you're trying to look up online shopping websites or things like that, or even on informational websites like a news website or something like that, what are those little web design features that have stood out to you as “this is a good feature that makes sense to me.”

Okay, I see what you mean. Taking Amazon, for example, when you're searching for something, there's a bunch of filters, or facets, that come up on the left, on the sidebar. In theory, those are really helpful. Because you're like “Oh, I'm looking for this thing – oh, there's a filter for what material this is. Or what size. Great – I can narrow this to all the gloves that are a size small.” Well, it *seems* great, but then those aren't consistently applied. Then it becomes, okay, what am I accidentally eliminating by doing this filter? I'm using gloves as an example of something I've purchased recently. Or, this is pulling up a bunch of things that *aren't* the right size. Basically, I think that faceted systems can be really helpful, but you have to have that quality control. Otherwise, there's like a doubt in the user's mind, *like okay, this isn't applied correctly*, therefore you have to do *more* searching, more facets to try and get a comprehensive search.

When you talk about facets, do you mean that these facets have to be semantically well-articulated?

Not just that, but also, they have to be applied correctly to the results. If you had a facet that was “drinks with milk,” you could say “milk drinks” or “non-milk drinks,” and then if you had a latte in “non-milk drinks,” then the user doesn't trust your system anymore. And that's sort of what I feel like Amazon is like.

What other features might you find *inconvenient* when navigating a website for information?

Yeah, kind of what we just talked about, but I'll try to think of another feature. Uh... **this is maybe like more design, less information architecture, but obnoxiously big buttons.**

Go on.

Like, I want to be able to see what I need to see, the view I'm looking at, or if it's a mobile site, I want to be able to get to it easily through a single menu press. I'm trying to think of an example.

Do you think that extends to websites that have large introductory pages?

Oh, yeah.

Just anything that's too big?

The bootstrap template that every startup website uses. Tangent, but there's a spoofy website that generates random, from Markov chaining, like, startup pages. Basically, fitting in, like, jargon and fake CEO bios into that template. **But the thing about the template is that there's just – giant image, big text, and then you scroll down to like big chunks, big sections, but there's so little information. And that's like the entire website.** Just one page that you have to like scroll through forever because everything's so giant. It's like, really commonly used as this one template, so I'd say avoid that.

Okay. So my last question is – you ended up delving into this a little bit earlier – but imagine a website that acts as a “comprehensive guide” to preparing your own coffee. Can you picture a feature or two, or perhaps some content, that you personally might find useful?

Maybe having different sections for drinks versus beans. I would want them to each have their own dedicated filters and descriptions. Not have it be “oh, I'm filtering by beans now.” I'd rather go to a separate page for that. **A combination of being able to explore and browse and have that serendipity but also be able to search for something specific. Searching by name – “okay, what is a flat white?” I should be able to figure that out. Also, I should be able to say, “I'm interested in an espresso drink with milk and microfoam,” and use those filters to get to a flat white.”** Going both directions.

Participants #4 and #5

Interviewer: So my first question for you both is: How often do you drink coffee?

Participant 4: I drink coffee in the morning. At least two cups.

Participant 5: I have one cup of coffee in the morning and that's it.

And why do you typically drink coffee? Might sound obvious, but...

P4: I certainly do need it a kind of get myself going in the morning. I think I've totally succumbed to the addiction part of coffee. I find if I don't, I sort of get foggy and sometimes get a headache as well. I kind of need it to get me started.

P5: I just like it. Sometimes I skip it, when I'm rushed or something, but it's normally part of my breakfast routine.

Excellent. How often do you buy drinks at a coffee shop versus making them at home? And why do you think this is the case?

P4: I will mostly make mine at home, and again, it's just purely functional. You know, when I'm just kind of trying to get myself going for the day, it's easiest. That said, I do have my favorite coffee shop where I certainly like to treat myself to specialty coffee, but it really is a treat, and only something that I indulge in every now and then.

P5: I just like regular coffee, and I rarely have a second cup of coffee beyond the morning, so my husband usually makes me coffee and hands it to me in bed in the morning. I do my coffee even before I get up, and then I don't have any more for the rest of the day. Very, very rarely, if I have a meeting with someone and it's going to be in a coffee shop, I'll get a coffee, but I never order like a cappuccino or anything. I'll sometimes get an espresso, but mostly I'll just get a plain coffee anyway.

Okay, so when you purchase coffee in a coffee shop, or a grocery store, specialty store, online, whatever – what factors play into the types of coffee you buy?

P4: I can't even say that I even have a real conscious effort in what it is I'm looking for. I think it's real spur-of-the-moment. Again, I'm similar to my friend here to the left – I enjoy your average drip coffee and anything specialty beyond that is just spur-of-the-moment. What I'm in the mood for and what I'm feeling like. I bet I'm probably prey for advertising, and you know, maybe a seasonal coffee being promoted, I'll be more swayed toward that if I'm in a shop and looking to kind of treat myself, so...

P5: I pretty much exclusively buy medium-roast, fair-trade coffee. But I'm not especially picky about the brand. I do have a favorite, but I can't remember what it's called. I buy whole beans and grind them myself. I usually just buy bags of the vacuum-sealed, fair-trade medium roast.

When you're making coffee at home, how do you typically prepare it?

P4: Mine already comes pre-ground. The bare-bones, basic setup – I have my lovely little coffeemaker. I don't have filters, I don't like to have the actual filter. But yeah – your average coffee preparation through a drip coffee machine.

P5: I have a coffee grinder. I grind the beans and I use a Melitta pour-over with unbleached paper filters. Fairly fine grind, into a heated cup. Then I add milk. Lots and lots and lots of milk.

Have you ever attempted to look up information on different coffee bean styles, coffee drinks, or brewing methods on the Internet?

P4: I have. My husband and I have a couple of friends who are really coffee aficionados. It's a part of their social media presence. They love to advertise the different coffees that they're trying, that they've gone to different places to try, so that's certainly kind of perked my interest. From seeing some of their posts, that's kind of prompted me to look up mostly local shops, that's mostly of interest to me. And if there's something they, like, couldn't praise higher, then my interest is piqued.

P5: I've looked at coffee-making devices online, but I've never looked at buying coffee beans online because I'm not that particular. But because Melitta changed the design of their pour-over cones, and they used to just sit on the top of the cup, and there was plastic – but anyway, that's always how we made coffee at my house growing up. My mom always made it one cup at a time as a pour-over. And when I went to replace mine, they've got this little ring thing and they sit above the cup, so the coffee is pouring – there's basically no insulation now? Then I was looking at different pour-over things and I found one that kind of looks like a cross between a pour-over and a French press. It has a little switch on it, so you can put your filter and grinds in and you pour in the water and it sits in there until you release it. It kind of pours out, drains out. It's a pour-over, but it's got a valve on it. But it broke almost right away, so now it's just a pour-over? But it sits on the mug and seals the top of the mug, so at least it holds the heat in. It just doesn't have this fancy little switch anymore.

In the process of trying to find all this information on the Internet, what were your experiences in finding the information that you wanted? Was it difficult? Was it easy?

P4: Related to my particular experience, often it was easier, at least within that platform, because they would be linking to other stuff via a hashtag or a reference to the actual social media site. And then from there, if I really wanted to, I could extend out to the company's website.

P5: Yeah, I'd say it was pretty easy. I saw the pour-over thing someplace else, so I didn't know what it was called or what to look for, so that made it a little bit tricky. But I just Googled until I found it.

[Participant 4], you already mentioned you had a network of friends. Have you taken any other approaches to find out more about discovering or making coffee?

P5: Well, where I grew up, when I was a kid, it was a pretty much exclusively Italian neighborhood, so my first exposures to coffee were like, you go to the Italian lady who has the giant grinder and the pots of beans and she scoops them, puts them in the bag and weighs them. The whole routine of how coffee happens is based on those experiences of going to the Italian coffee shops and espresso places when I was a little kid. Everything else just seems... I don't know, not silly, but just coffee is coffee. Just make coffee. Don't... fuck it up. [Laughs] To speak plain.

[Laughs] I may have to edit that out in the script.

P5: [Laughs] I didn't know if this was being transcribed or what.

That's okay. So... last three questions. Think about when you navigate websites in general. A shopping site, a news site, something like that. What's a design feature or two that you find particularly intuitive or convenient?

P5: I love faceted search. Especially if it's a shopping website. Beyond that, having, like, a site index page helps more than a search bar. A search bar can work well; it depends on how well the search is designed. But definitely faceted search is the best.

P4: Yeah, I definitely agree, that's a preference of mine when I'm shopping online. I also don't like having a lot of options, so in the little ribbon, the menu, not having several different pages, if it can be helped, is just my own personal preference. And then I really like, especially if I'm thinking about something like coffee, to be honest, I don't really go to the Internet to like search more. I told you my style and motive in drinking, consuming the beverage. If I'm going to the extent of actually going to a company, I want to learn about them. I love really in-depth "About" pages and I want to know more about their company, their history, their fair-trade practices, where they get their beans from. Something to that extent. That's really important to me. A pronounced, visible about page.

P5: I guess that's the thing with the coffee brand I tend to buy. It actually does have... like, they have quite a large variety, and they have single-source beans. Each package has a story about where it's from. Where it's grown, who the producer is, and their trade agreement. It's very transparent. If you have the motivation to, you can go and learn more about that particular coffee and how it's grown and produced, but I don't care as long as I know it's fair trade and it ticks my boxes, I don't really need to know more. It is nice that it's there, though, that information.

Excellent. So let's look at the converse of the last question. What features do you find inconvenient? Or, I guess, what's your pet peeve when navigating a website for information?

P4: I already mentioned mine. I just can't stand it when there's so many options under the dropdown menus. I like a simple, clean design. That's my personal pet peeve. Maybe I'm not as invested as I maybe could be. I'm lazy. I'm a lazy searcher!

Aw, you just get overstimulated...

P4: Yeah, let's take it from that angle. I don't like to be overstimulated. Certainly that is a part of it. For sure. I'm going to sit with that a little bit and think more.

P5: Well, I know that about six or seven years ago, it was really hot to have mega-dropdown menus. Like, it was just, The Thing. Suddenly you could do it and everyone wanted a mega-dropdown. You'd have, like, a menu item that would open this huge dialog with tons and tons of information. I remember working on websites and it was like everyone wanted that feature, and I thought it was really cool. In retrospect, I'm like, they're super, super annoying. What you're saying is basically you have to search like this: [make tracing gesture]. It's really information overload. It's not useful. It doesn't help you narrow your search. Or it narrows your search to the point where you may or may not find what you're looking for. As opposed to finding too much, you can get too exact, and it may just slightly be not what you're looking for. That's super annoying. I find lots of freebies and promotions on websites distracting. And if there's no information in the footer on the company or anything like that, I find that super, super, super annoying. If there no About page... if I'm trying to find the price of something and I can't find it because it's buried through three layers of information, I pretty much just walk away. And the same goes for anything. Shoes or coffee or anything else. If I can't find what I need quickly, I'll just go somewhere else.

P4: I'll say one another thing: I feel like too much information on a page – I really do like a minimalist approach and a lot of white space in order to take in what is being presented to me. I think that's a more contemporary website design practice, though, so I guess I'm responding to what's the trend.

I think you both kind of answered my last question, but I'll ask it anyway for posterity's sake: Imagine a website that acts as a “comprehensive guide” to preparing your own coffee. Can you perhaps picture a feature or two, or some content, for this particular website that you personally might find useful?

P4: Sure. I think design instructions, actual visual instructions would be something I would be interested in, yeah. If I'm going to a site that's going to talk about this, there might be some different apparatuses needed in order to make the best coffee. And that would be kind of interesting to see. I'm also a visual person, so I'm going to enjoy fun little illustrations, like the Ikea instructions. That's fun to me.

P5: If there's no video, I don't have time for it. If it's instructions for some technique or whatever, I want to see the video. I don't care how pretty the diagrams are; just show me that it works.

Appendix B: References

- Heath, T. (2016, October 31). Look how much coffee Millennials are drinking. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2016/10/31/look-how-much-coffee-millennials-are-drinking/?utm_term=.76a472021fef
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