

User research on a budget

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Why talk to users

- Improvements need feedback
- You are not the user

User research: understand users' needs,
motivations and behaviors





Usability evaluation: observe how users interact with a product

A photograph of a forest with a tree trunk in the foreground showing blue and red paint markings. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees.

Ask the right question

Good research questions

- Well-defined
- Limited in scope
- Actionable

Weak research questions

- “What do people like about our website?”
- “What are the our least popular pages?”

Good research questions

- “What information most influences our customers’ purchase decisions?”
- “How are the people who sign up for our newsletter finding our site?”
- “Why do our return visitors come back?”

Techniques



Analytics

- Visit data
- Click and scroll tracking
- Search analysis

Areas of expertise

- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Assessment & Evaluation
- ☐ Associations, Networks, & Other Groups
- ☐ Boards/Governance
- ☐ Communications & Marketing
- ☐ Educational Programs & Resource Centers
- ☐ Facilitation
- ☐ Facilities
- ☐ Financial Management
- ☐ Fundraising & Development
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Interim Management
- ☐ Legal Services
- ☐ Management & Operations
- ☐ Planning & Organizational

Counties served

Experience (75+ hrs.) in

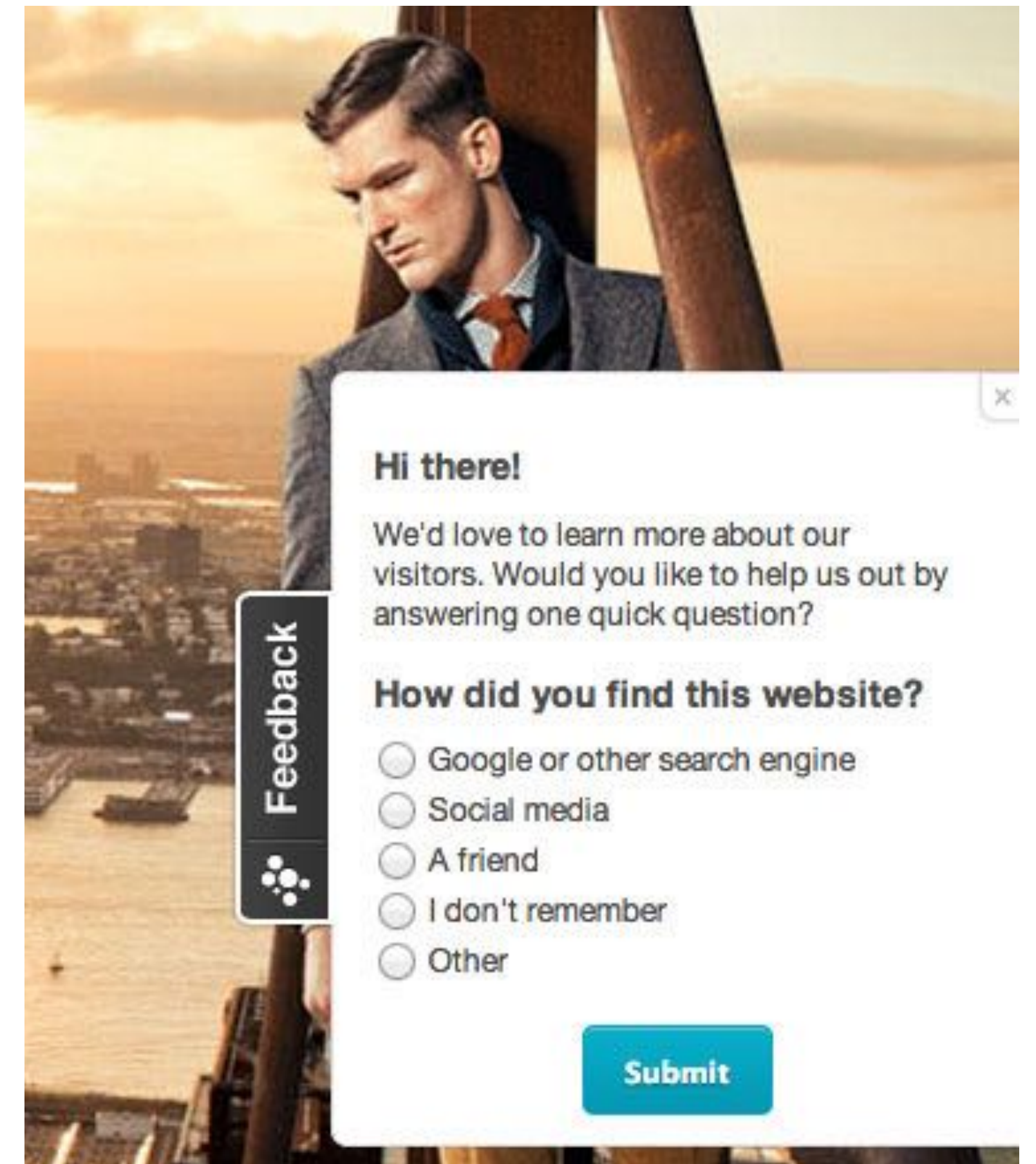
Foreign languages

Communities of color

Other special populations

Surveys

- Get you lots of data quickly
- Can capture live feedback
- Writing good questions is hard



Feedback

Hi there!

We'd love to learn more about our visitors. Would you like to help us out by answering one quick question?

How did you find this website?

- ☐ Google or other search engine
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ A friend
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Other

Submit

Writing surveys

- Stay under ~10 questions, 1-2 difficult/sensitive
- Put easy questions first
- Ask one thing at a time
- Be careful with multiple-choice answers
- Offer free response

Card sorting

Users categorize
and label items

Choosing the right
items is essential

Run pilot sorts!



Tree Tests

- Test out a defined navigation structure
- Independent of site design

Task 2 of 10

You're almost ready to sign on your first mortgage and just received all of your information from your lender. It's a lot of information to look over. You want to find advice on important things to review before you sign.

Home

▼ Understand financial products and services

Auto loans

Bank accounts and services

Credit cards

Credit reports and scores

Debt collection

Fraud and scams

Money Transfers

Mortgages

Payday loans

Prepaid cards

Student loans

First click tests

- Record where users click on a design to complete a task
- Quickly test without prototypes

Writing scenarios

- Scenarios set context, offer motivation
- Be detailed, but avoid hints

A/B Testing

- Measure behavioral impact of changes
- Test one thing at a time

Usability testing

- Think-aloud protocol
- Moderator + observer
- Short, open-ended scenarios



Further resources

Boxes and Arrows

Just Enough Research by Erika Hall

Rosenfeld Media books



Thank You!