UX Design 1: Case Study 2

COSI – Dropdowns, Searches, and Redesigns

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Project Summary

The COSI (Center Of Science and Industry) mobile web page useability is decreased by excessively long drop-down menus, a search option that is disguised as a drop-down menu, and the design of the webpage is not as simple as the mobile app. The solution to this is: On the COSI mobile page, simplify the dropdown to mimic the menu on the COSI app. By condensing some of the pages and directing users to specific pages page confusion can be reduced. By using an actual keyword search it will provide the user with a faster and more logical page search, thus decreasing frustration. By redesigning the webpage to match more with the mobile app the user will have a more unified experience, the web page will be simpler, slimmed down, and have a cleaner more understandable graphical markers to direct the user to the desired location.

Purpose

Provide an analysis of the Web/mobile page and mobile app of cosi.org by focusing on extensive menu use, search functionality, and design uniformity.

About COSI

COSI is a national science center located in Central Ohio. Generating interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics and delivering our experiential, "hands-on fun" brand of learning for 55 years. A trusted educational resource for families, schools, and community partners, engaging more than one million people annually through onsite, offsite, and online experiences.

Computer
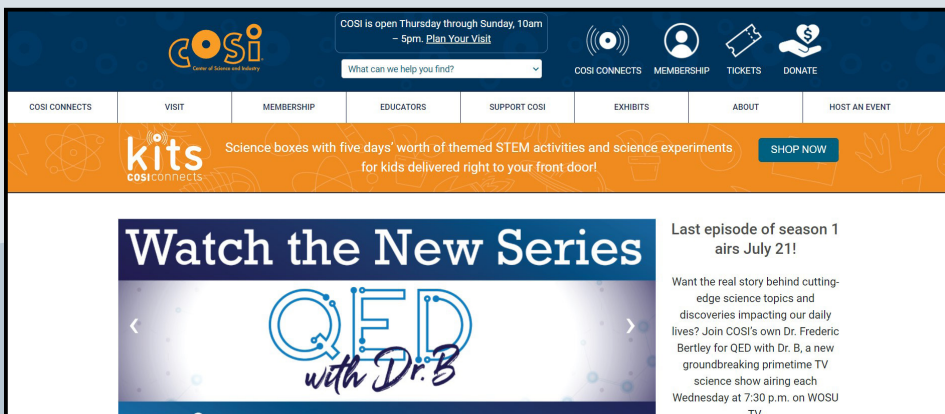
Mobile
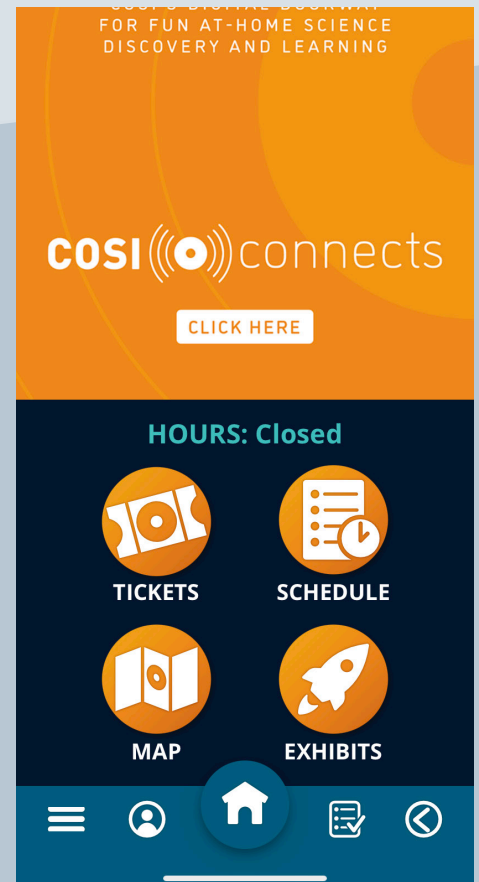
Study of alternatives to COSI
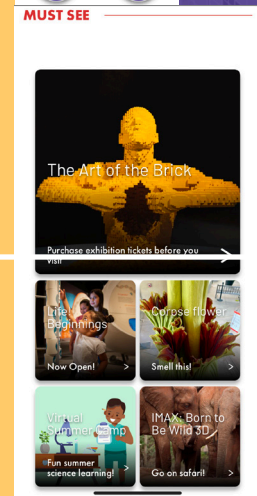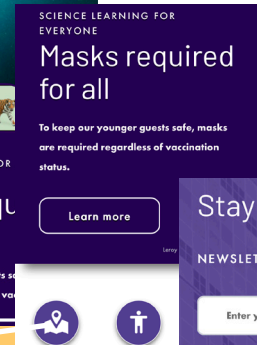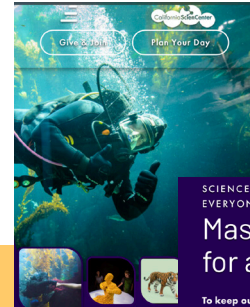
California Science Center:

The California Science Center aspires to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences, because we value science as an indispensable tool for understanding our world, accessibility and inclusiveness, and enriching people's lives.
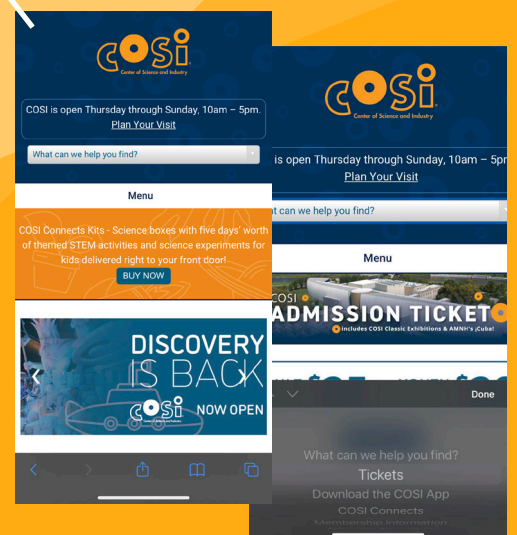
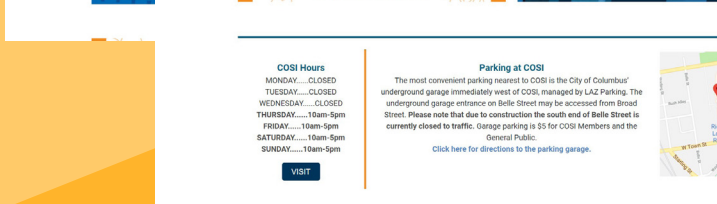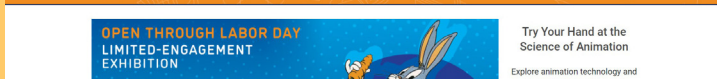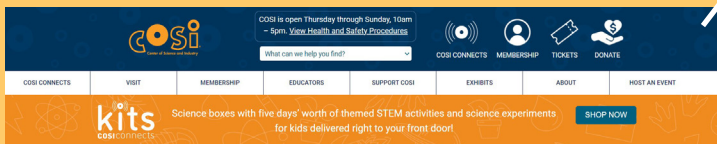*https://californiasciencecenter.org/*

Computer
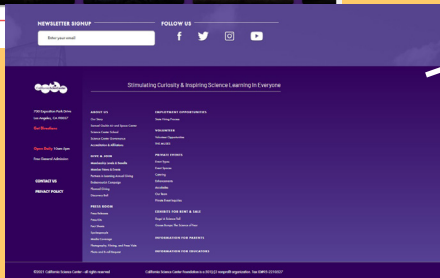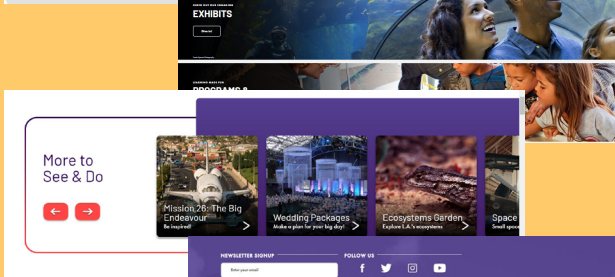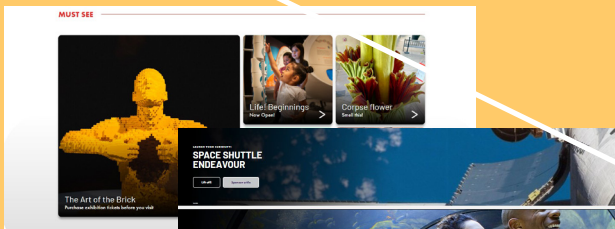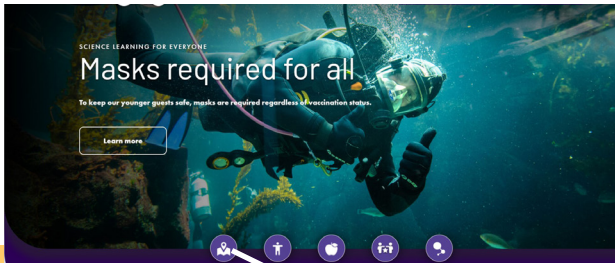
Mobile

The California Science center has more unified imagery and directional icons than COSI.

Both have unified branding colors and use of large eye catching images to attract customers.

Exploratorium

Located in San Francisco, California, the Exploratorium is a public learning laboratory exploring the world through science, art, and human perception. Its mission is to create inquiry-based experiences that transform learning worldwide. Its vision is a world where people think for themselves and can confidently ask questions, question answers, and understand the world around them. They create tools and experiences that help you to become an active explorer: hundreds of explore-for-yourself exhibits, a website with over 35,000 pages of content, film screenings, evening art and science events for adults, plus much more. We also create professional development programs for educators and are at the forefront of changing the way science is taught. We share our exhibits and expertise with museums worldwide.

https://www.exploratorium.edu/

Computer

Mobile

The Imaginarium Discovery Center

The Imaginarium Discovery Center opened in May 2010 at the Anchorage Museum. This hands-on science center includes 80 exhibits that make earth, life and physical science fun for all ages. Visitors can climb inside a giant bubble, hoist themselves vertically with levers and pulleys, and pet marine animals including sea stars. Displays put scientific ideas into an Alaska context.

https://www.anchoragemuseum.org/media/ museum-images/discovery-center

Computer

Mobile

Testers:

A small group of 3 testers where selected to do a task analysis of the COSI mobile page. Testers provided a stream of consciousness commentary providing comments and reactions that were logged during the use of the page.

Reactions:

Tester 1. Gender F, Age 34
• What's with this search?
• Oh God there is so many menus
• Damn I'm lost, this is confusing
• This could be simpler

Tester 2: Gender M, Age 72
• Oh jeez, a scroll wheel this isn't a simple search, can't I just type in my search?
• Wait the article I was reading just changed. Ah, it's a scrolling banner thing.
(user found this page annoying to use)

Tester 3: Gender F, Age 20
• I keep tapping on the search expecting to type something, that's not working I tapped tickets like 5 times and notings coming up.
That pisses me off.
• Open the menu? Ok, that's a bunch of options.
• I like the map
• They really are pushing those kits.

Problem 1: The never-ending drop-down.

On the mobile page of COSI, there is an accordion dropdown menu that has an overabundance of options that overruns the screen when it is activated the menu cascades down and continues to cascade down the screen. Testers have said that when using the mobile device or a smaller screen these menus make it "confusing" and "frustrating".

View of COSI in full screen web browser.

This drop down continues to cascade.
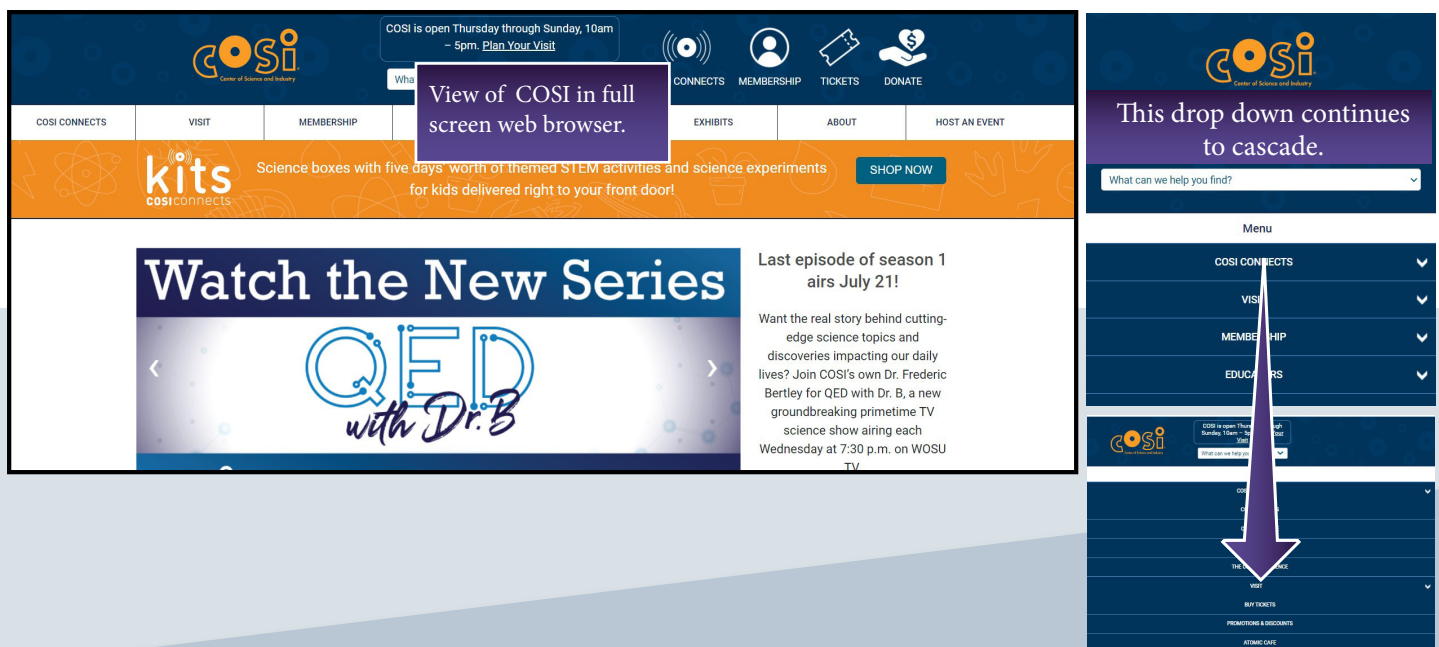
Solution:

Provide a singular "Hamburger" dropdown or slide-in menu that provides the links to necessary pages. By reducing the number of dropdown options the customer will have a simpler time navigating and will be less likely to get lost in an overabundance of menu options.

This dropdown is simple and easy to read. Instead of dropping down further it slides to the right, giving an option to go back

This hamburger slide option is useful, it still allows drop downs but it is less intrusive
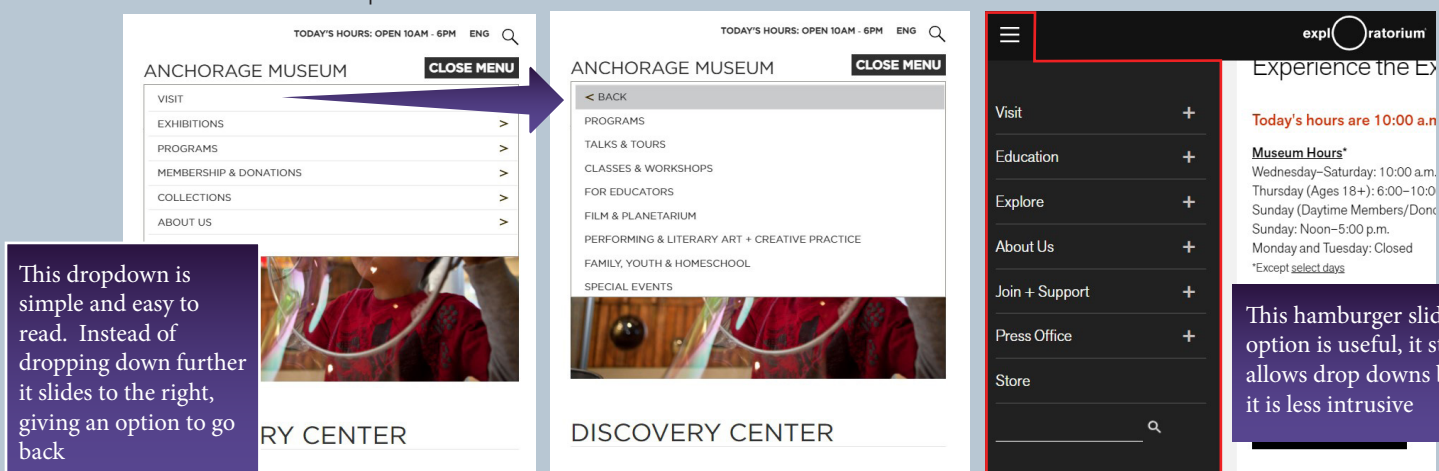
Problem 2: Redundant and unusable credit card information

The mobile version of the COSI page has a search option that is really just another form of a drop-down menu. This option is not only confusing it's not a real search option. After clicking on the search it brings up a small slide menu that allows the user to choose from a predetermined option, instead of acting like an actual search option that will seek out the keywords the client is looking for.
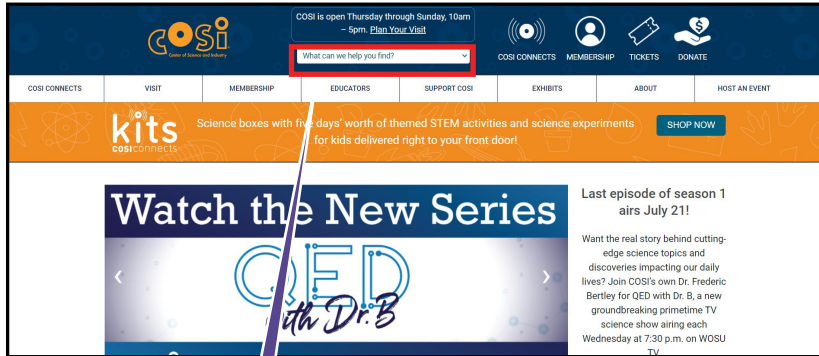
The search on the full screen page, still only provides a dropdown with auto populated search options.

This is a scroll wheel not a real search option.
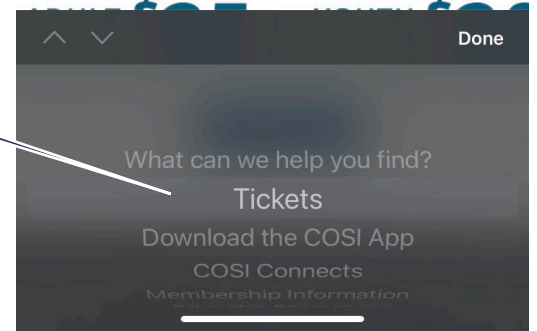
Solution:

Designing a search function in the web page would be the simplest and fastest way to assist in finding an item a client is looking for. Placing the search bar someplace easily seen on the page with the word "search" or a magnafying glass large enough for someone to see it quickly.

The two options seen here are logical areas to have a search bar. Placing the search at the top of the page allows the user to jump into the search without doing any looking around the page, Placing it at the bottom of a slider menu makes it so the user will look through the options and if they don't see what they want they can use the search

Problem 3: Design continuity

Design continuity, make the mobile page more like the app.
On a mobile device, space is limited and content is king. The web and mobile pages have a similar but different feel compared to the app. Branding might be close but it doesn't feel like a unified design. In the interest of keeping confusion low and branding unified a redesign of the main mobile page is suggested. keeping in mind Gestalt's law of Similarity, put simply elements that look similar seem like they are in a group.
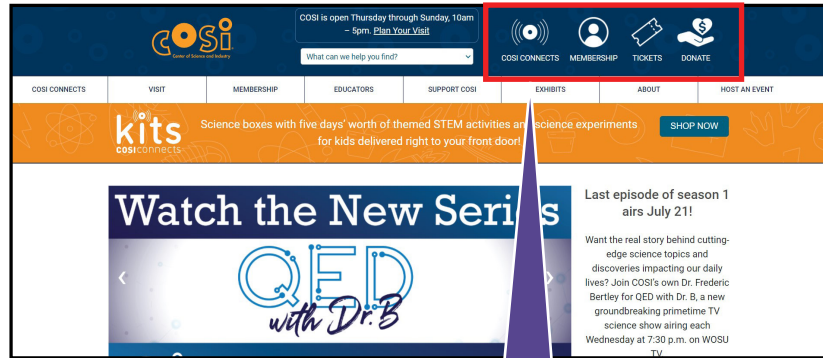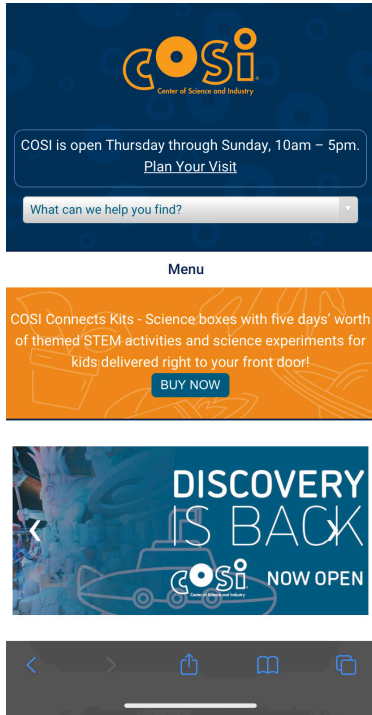
There is not a continuity between icons.

Solution:

The web page needs to be updated to match the mobile app. Providing a clean, simple design that directs the client to the area needed highlighting tickets, schedules, area maps, and exhibits.

The COSI mobile page should use elements of its app. The simple design elements make it navigating the page faster and with more ease.

Symbols help with navigation.

Attractive images encourage users to click on events.

Conclusion

Making education more entertaining to youth can be a difficult task. COSI (Center Of Science and Industry) provides this kind of service, reaching out to a vast audience of all ages. One of the biggest goals is to get people in the doors. To do this a webpage needs to be simple, to the point, and be able to entice customers to go to more activities. The mobile page is even more important, with more people using phones and tablets to make decisions and purchases it falls on the design and functionality of the mobile page to get the customer set up and out to pay as fast as possible.

By simplifying the menus of the mobile page to fall in line with the mobile app or other educational entertainment locations, can decrease confusion and visual chaos on the page.

The customer needs the feeling that they can find what they need quickly and without digging. Building a search option into the page allows the customer a fast option to pull up the areas in the web page with little to no difficulty.

A unified web page is important. Updating the mobile page to match the mobile app will unify the COSI pages making them more in line with one another. The aim is to always keep a clear, unified page that is simple to navigate in order to make the customer happy with the product.