

Team 'Ease the Squeeze'



The Squeeze



Overview

Client

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Research Questions

- Are downtown commuters able to easily locate and access the transit planning information they need on the website?
- Are the tools and information presented on the website enough of a catalyst to help commuters change their commuting behavior?

Project Scope

Seattletraffic.org website

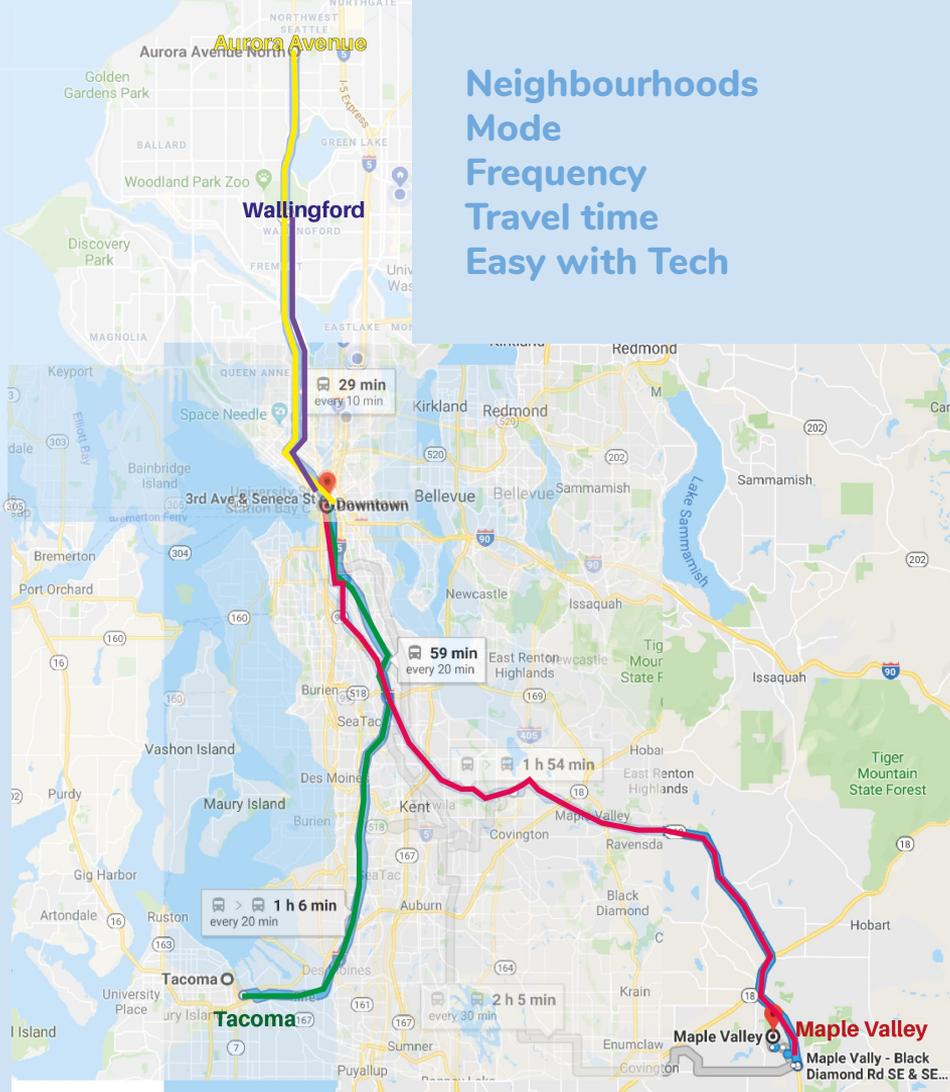
Users

1. Participants must be over the age of 18.
2. Participants must commute to or through downtown Seattle at least once a week.
3. Participants must own a smartphone.



Google
Forms

We received 121 responses, from which we culled a list down to 10 people. Of those 10, two were selected for a pilot study, five were selected for the actual study, and three were held as alternates.



Users' Demographics



Test Environment & Methods

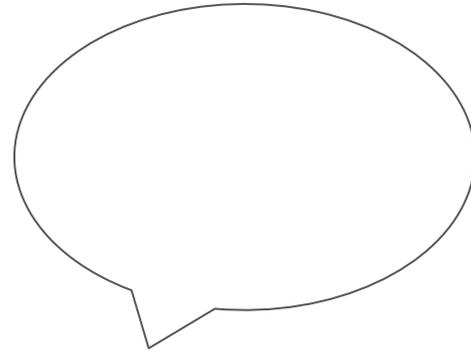
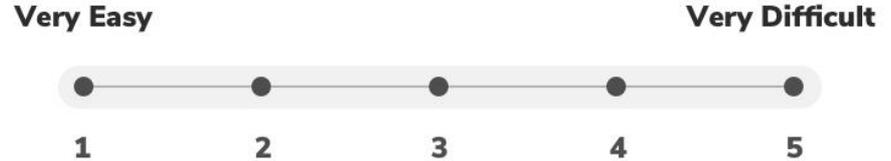
- In-person usability testing in a quiet study room on campus
 - Pre- and post-testing questionnaire
 - Think-aloud tasks on website
- Tested the Seattle Traffic website on mobile
- Collected data through video, audio, and screen recordings (Zoom app)

Task List

1. Explore the website.
2. Locate resources that can identify issues related to your current commute.
3. Locate resources to plan an alternative commute.
4. Assess the usefulness of the Traveler's Map.
5. Locate one or more sources of daily traffic updates and sign up for them.

Data Overview

- Quantitative data
 - Rating scales
- Qualitative data
 - User's background information
 - General impressions
 - Expectations
 - Pain points
 - Feedback



Findings - Severity Scale

Severity Rating	Description
1	minor usability problem → low priority to fix
2	creates significant delay and frustration → high priority to fix
3	prevents completion of a task → imperative to fix

Homepage

www.seattletraffic.org





Findings - Homepage

“I have to say I’m astonished by the amount of the text that they put in here. It’s just, it’s just bad.” - P6

Finding: There is too much information on the homepage.

User Data: 6 of 7 participants expressed this during the study.

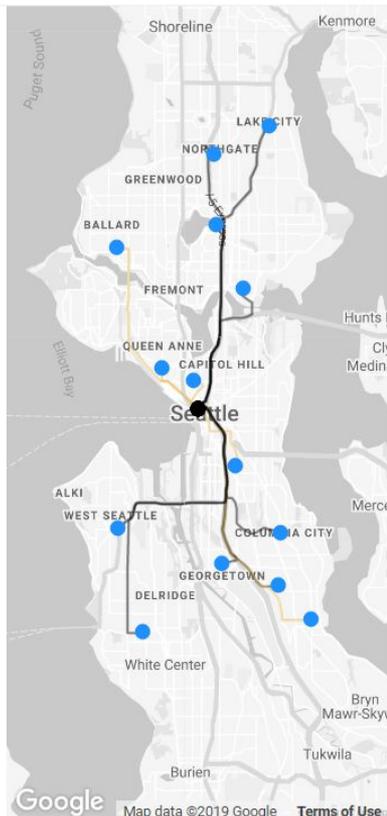
Severity Rating: 3

Recommendations:

- Show a timeline of major projects.
- Customizable filters.
- Resources should be “succinct and upfront.”



Current Traffic



ROUTE	TYPICAL	NOW	IN 45 MIN
Ballard to Commercial Core	21	18	22
Columbia City to Commercial Core	20	20	21
Georgetown to Commercial Core	16	16	17
Green Lake to Commercial Core	24	24	26
Lake City to Commercial Core	36	34	37
MLK at Holly St to Commercial Core	21	20	21
North Beacon Hill to Commercial Core	15	13	14
Northgate to Commercial Core	28	32	33
Rainier Beach to Commercial Core	25	24	27
South Lake Union to Commercial Core	11	10	12
Uptown to Commercial Core	12	11	13
University Campus to Commercial Core	25	22	23
West Seattle Junction to Commercial Core	16	15	16



Findings - Current Traffic

“Is this all driving? Well it doesn't say anything about public transit and there are pictures of cars.” -P3

Finding: The Current Traffic page appears to be targeted to people who drive.

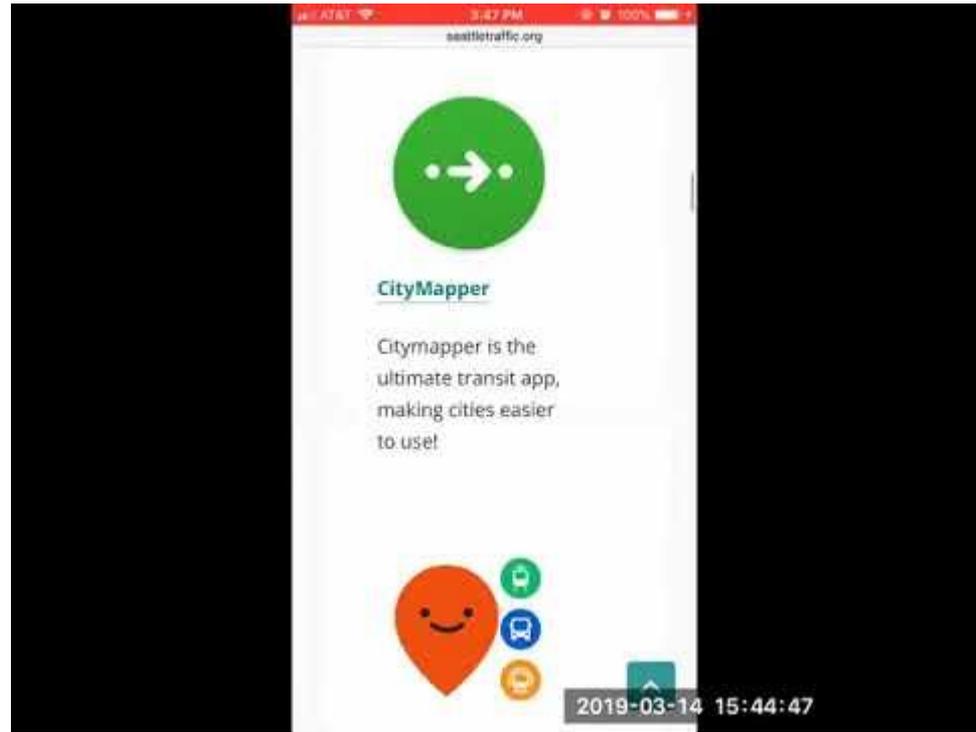
User Data: 4 of 7 participants expressed this during the study.

Severity Rating: 2

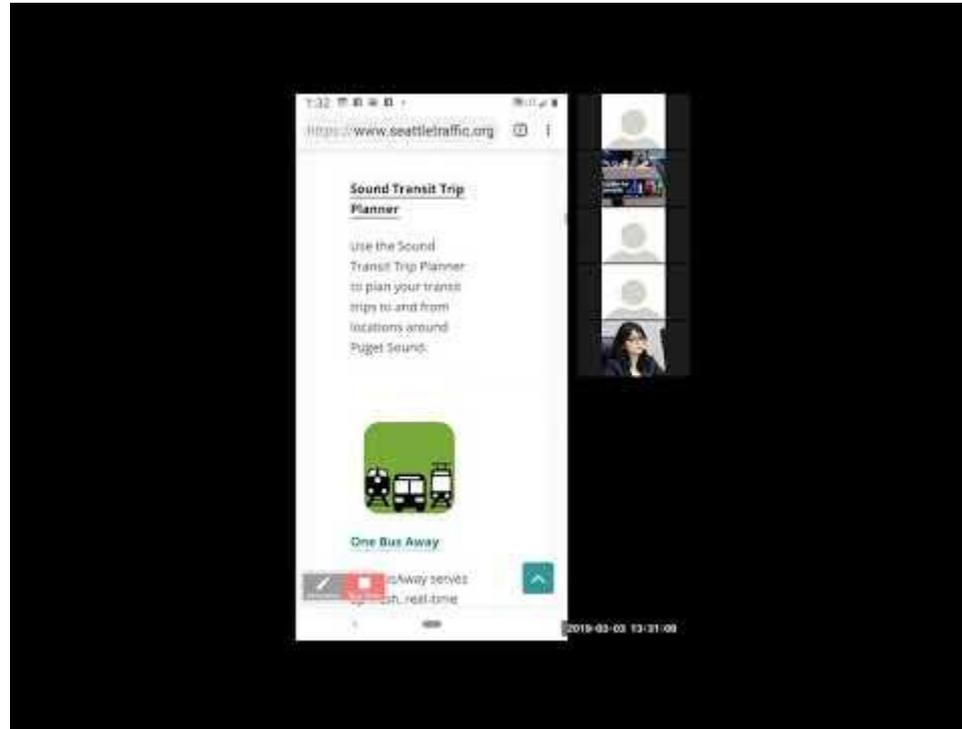
Recommendations:

- Remove this page.

Scrolling through Tools



Tools Page



Findings - Tools Page

“You need to tell me why I need this thing.” -P2

Finding: There are too many options and unclear descriptions.

User Data: 4 of 7 participants expressed this during the study.

Severity Rating: 2

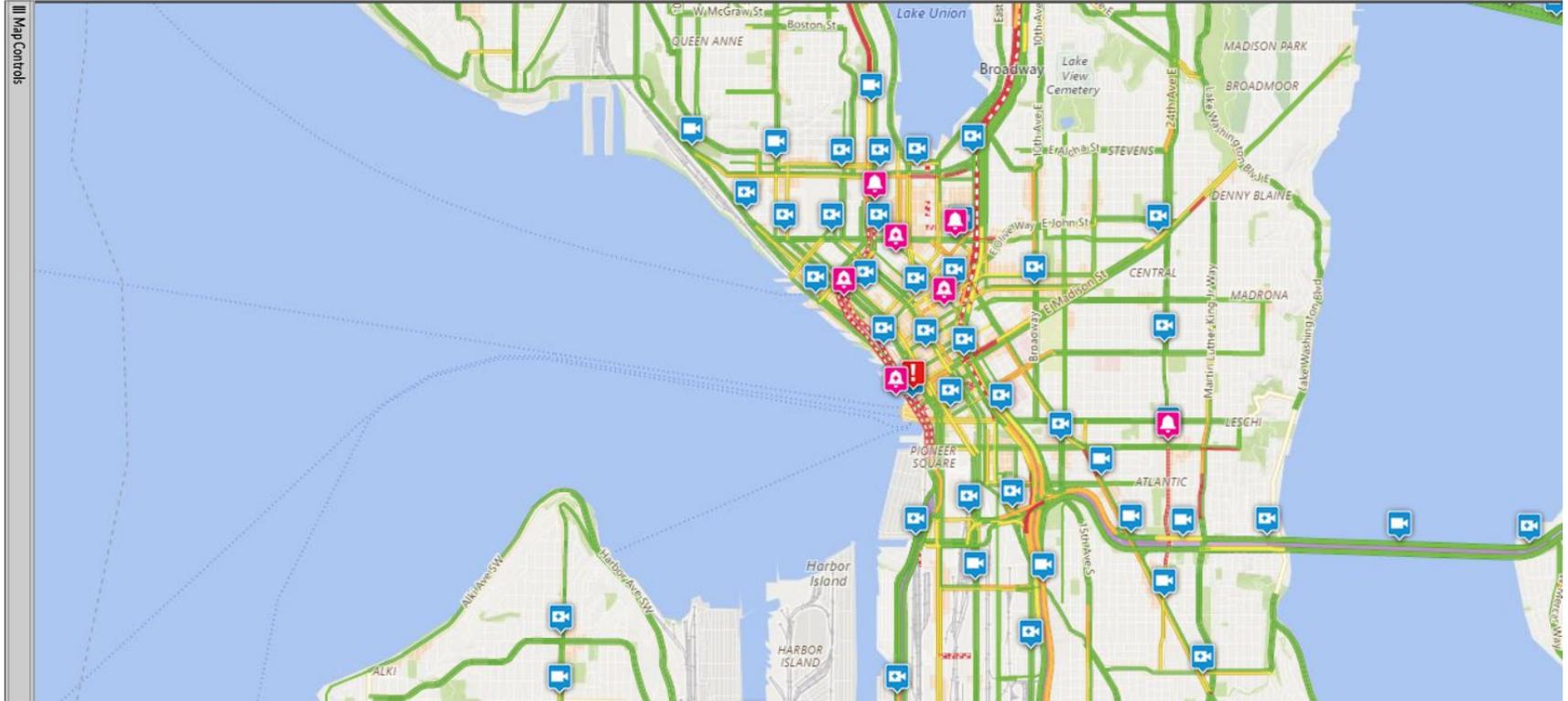
Recommendations:

- Offer filters customizable to style of commute.
- Provide more detailed descriptions and comparisons.
- Provide dropdown menus, horizontal scrolling, or both.

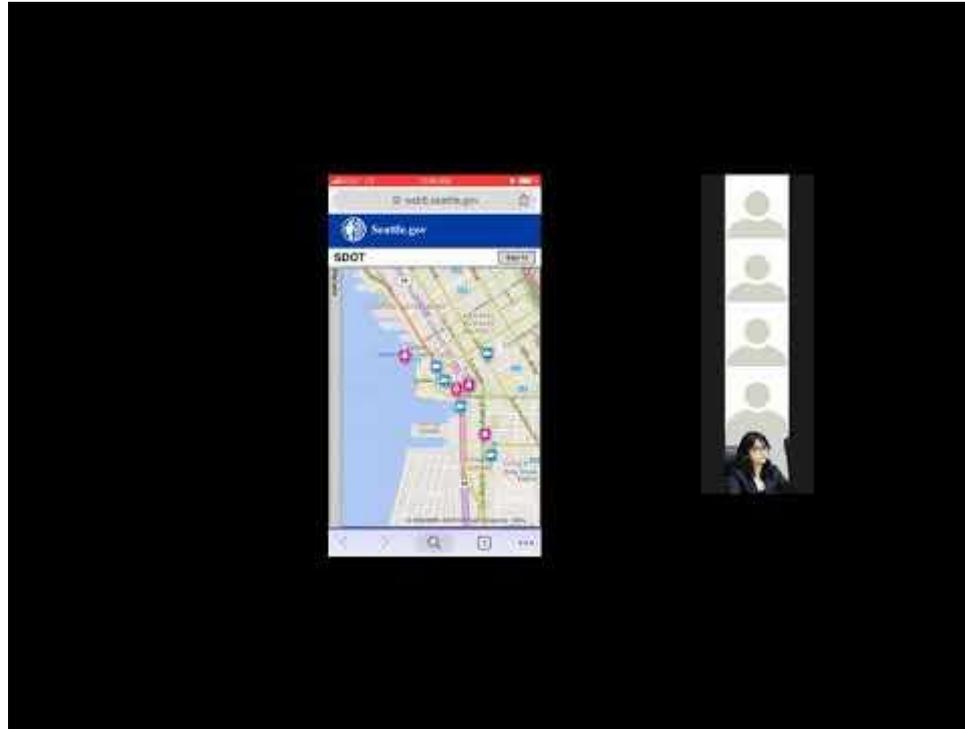
Traveler's Map

Department of Transportation Sam Zimbabwe, Director

Welcome Guest!



Findings - Travelers Map



Findings - Traveler's Map

Moderator: "The Traveler's Map? Let's discuss that a little bit more."

P1: "The one I hated?"

Finding: The Traveler's Map is not easy to understand.

User Data: 7 of 7 participants expressed this during the study. 2 of 7 participants independently found the legend in the Traveler's Map during the study.

Severity Rating: 3

Recommendations:

- Make the legend more noticeable and more detailed.
- Focus alerts on *traffic impact*.
- Change the name.

Subscribe to Email Alerts

Sign up and get traffic alerts sent to your inbox.

Our subscription services are here to help you plan your trip. By subscribing, you can choose email updates twice per day: once before your morning commute, and once later in the day to help you plan your trip home. With the latest travel times, tips and suggestions for your commute, and traffic alerts, this personalized message is here to help you travel quickly and safely to your destination. If you live, work, travel, or play in any of these neighborhoods, we encourage you to sign up to stay up to date on the latest information to help you plan your trip.

Sign up and get traffic alerts sent directly to you! It's free and easy – just choose your corridor (you can choose multiple!) and type your email address, then click "Sign Up." You will receive an email to your inbox, asking you to confirm your subscription. You must confirm in order to begin receiving your messages.

Check out the ["Current Traffic"](#) page for real-time traffic information at any time of the day!

- Columbia City
- Georgetown
- Green Lake
- Lake City
- MLK at Holly St
- North Beacon Hill
- Rainier Beach
- South Lake Union
- University Campus
- Uptown
- West Seattle Junction
- Westwood

E-mail address:

Sign Up

Findings - Subscribe



Findings - Subscribe to Email Alerts

“I’m a big fan of text alerts. I feel a lot of pressure to keep my inbox clean.” -P1

Finding: Email alerts is not the preferred way for receiving notifications.

User Data: 7 of 7 participants preferred text or app alerts to email alerts.

Severity Rating: 2

Recommendations:

- Offer customizable text alerts.
- Give page greater visibility and/or combine with Twitter feed.
- Reduce the amount of text.



Findings - Long-Term Commute Planning

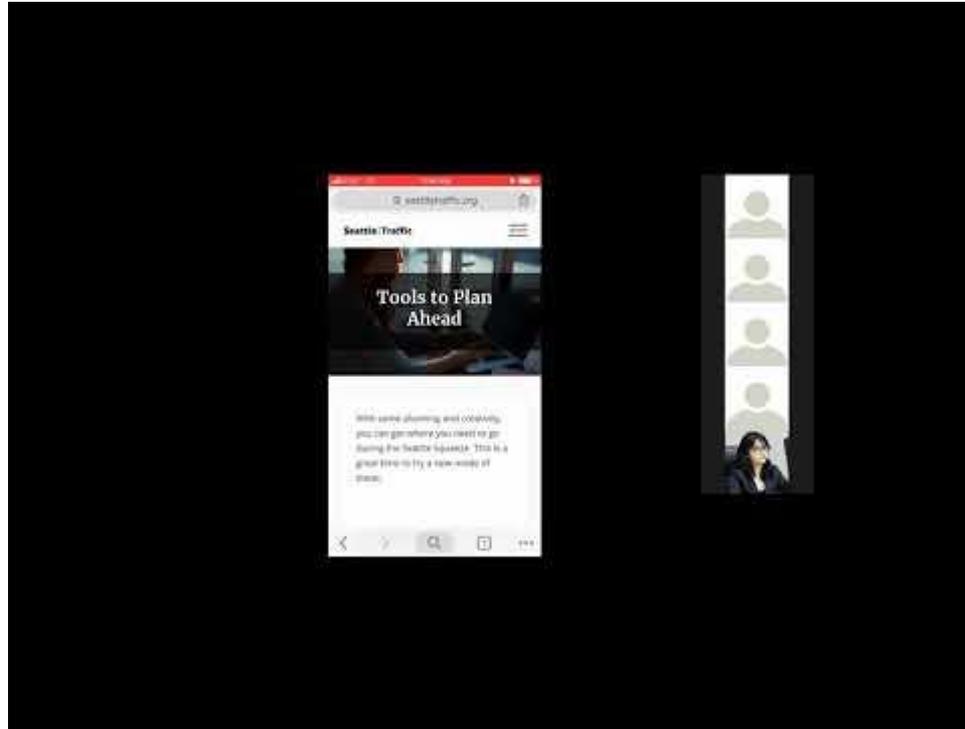
Post-Task Question: “Do you see yourself utilizing this website and/or the tools and resources found there for long-term commute planning going forward?”

2 of 7 participants said yes

5 of 7 participants said no



Findings - Overall



Findings - Overall Themes

“I just think the way it’s designed isn’t getting you to the answer to your question fast enough.” -P7

Issues

- The purpose and audience of the website is unclear
- Heavily driver-focused
- Twitter feed is difficult to locate
- Too much information
- SEO



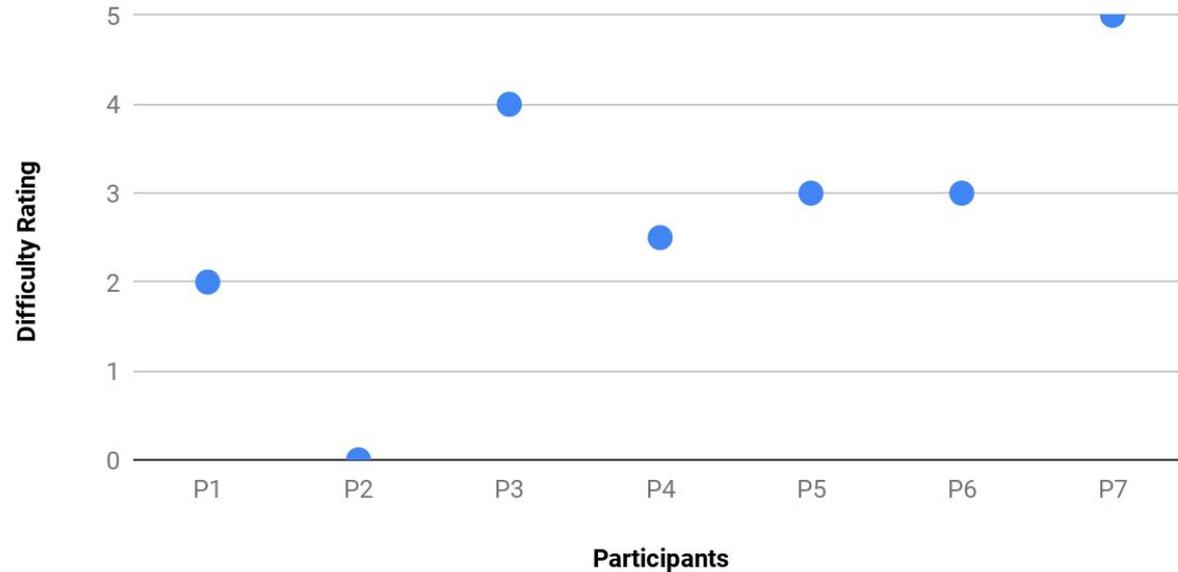
Recommendations

- More customization
- Combine valuable information
- Twitter feed is difficult to locate
- Focus information on commuter impact

Findings - Rating Scale

Task 2: Finding Resources for Current Commute

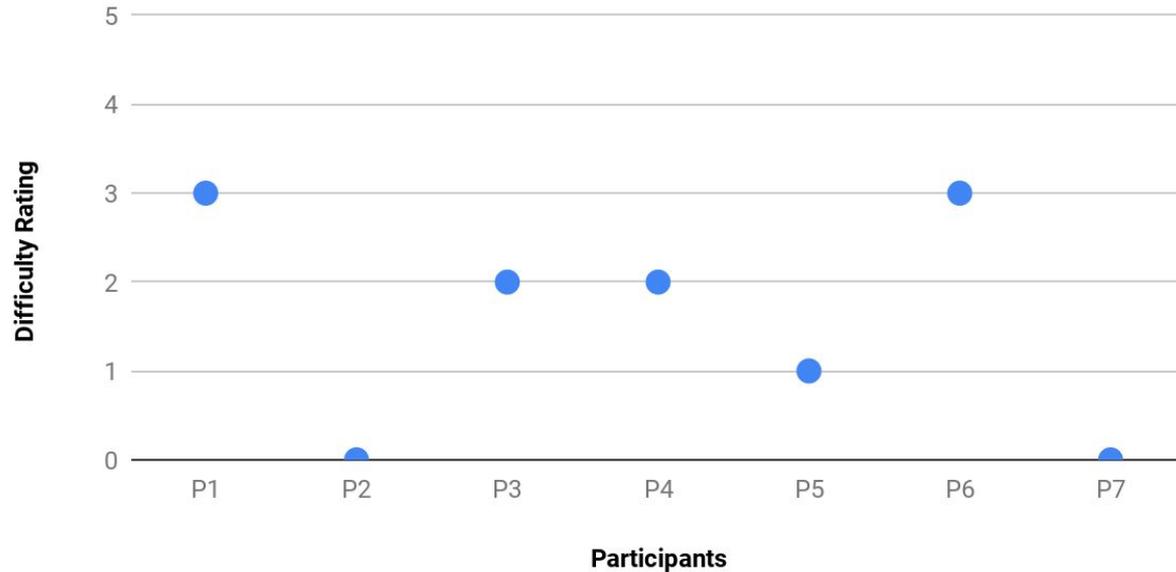
"Please rate the difficulty of this task." (1 = very easy, 5 = very difficult)



Findings - Rating Scale

Task 3: Finding Resources for an Alternate Commute

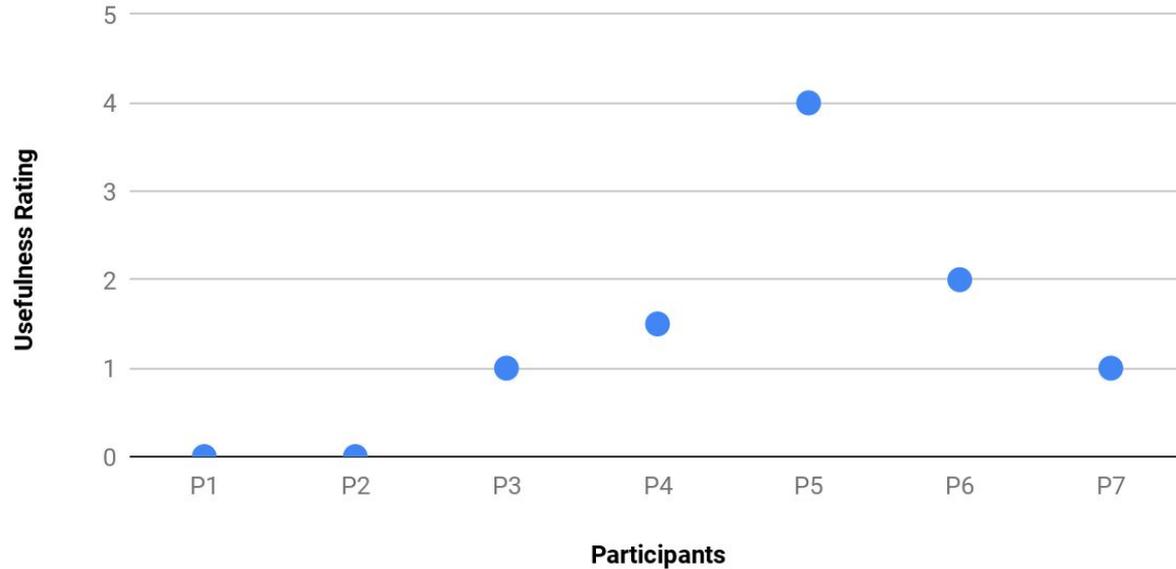
"Please rate the difficulty of this task." (1 = very easy, 5 = very difficult)



Findings - Rating Scale

Task 5: Email Alerts

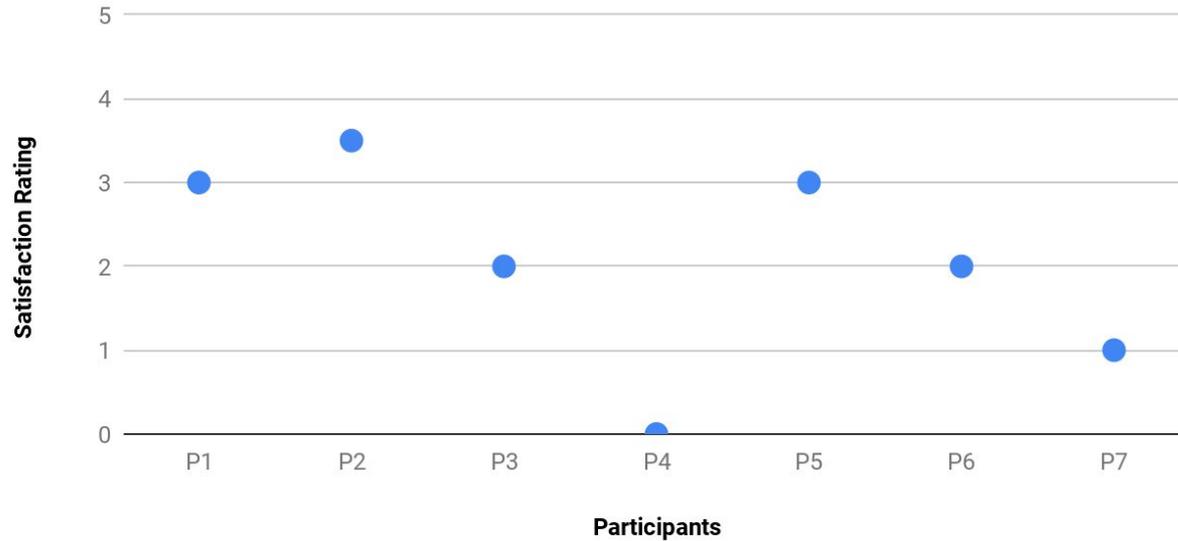
"How useful do you feel this information will be to you?" (1 = not very useful, 5 = very useful)



Findings - Rating Scale

Post-Test Questionnaire: Overall Experience with Website

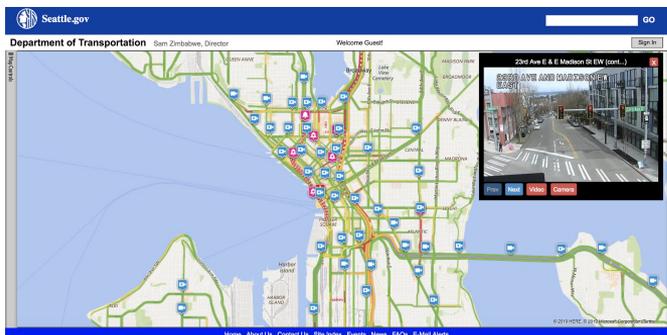
"Please rate your overall satisfaction with this website." (1 = very unsatisfied, 5 = very satisfied)



Findings - What Participants Liked

Post-Task Question: What did you like or find useful about the website?

- 5 of 7 participants said they liked the cameras on the Traveler's Map 
- 3 of 7 participants said they liked the blog posts. 
- 3 of 7 participants said they liked the visual design of the website. 
- 2 of 7 participants said they liked the Twitter feed 



Seattle Traffic HOME ABOUT CURRENT TRAFFIC **BLOG** TOOLS MAPS Q & A PARTNERS



3rd Ave Transit Improvements

February 26, 2019 // by Molly Wright



New 5th/6th Transit Pathway

February 26, 2019 // by Molly Wright

Limitations

- Didn't give people much time to read the blog or to learn more about Seattle Squeeze.
- No full-time car commuters participated in the study.
- Didn't assess use of the website over time.
- Didn't assess differences between mobile and desktop, focused only on mobile.
- Outside of our scope to have users evaluate external links and apps.
- Not able to analyze feedback for the email alert emails, since only one user was able to sign up.

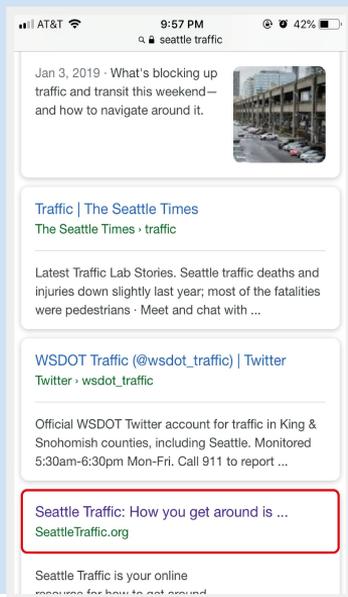


Heuristics

Severity Rating: 3

Discoverability

On the Current Traffic page, it's not clear what the blue dots in the maps mean.



Visibility

The home page and the tools page are too long.



Mapping to the Real World

The website uses certain jargons that are not user friendly. Eg: Commercial Core.

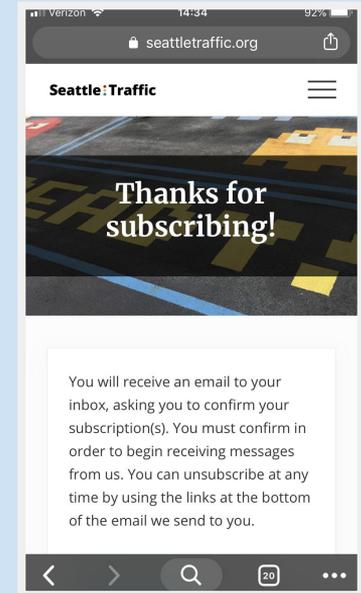
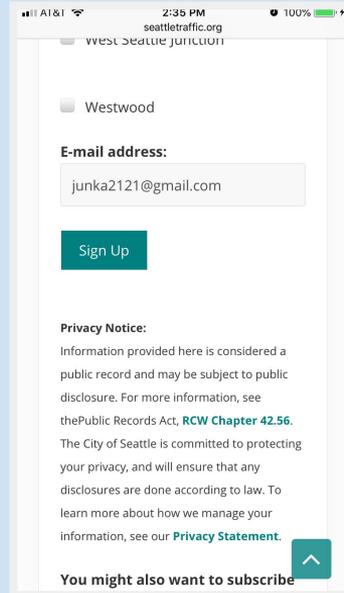
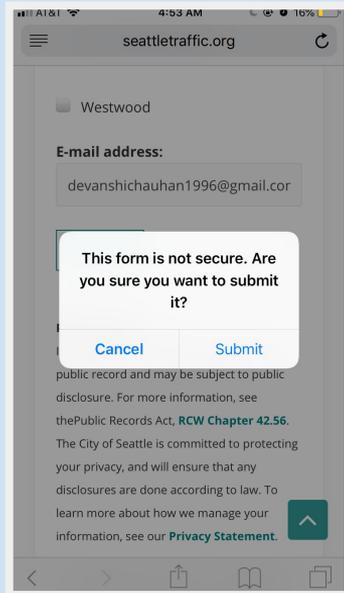
Names of certain elements do not align with user expectations. Eg: The partners page has relevant twitter feed that many users value but never go to because of the name.

Heuristics

Severity Rating: 3

Error Prevention

Wrong Sign up message: When a user tried to sign up for the emails, they entered their email without checking any of the neighbourhood boxes, and they still got a confirmation.

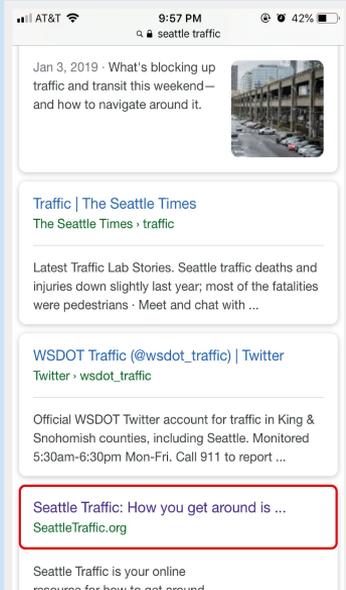


Heuristics

Severity Rating: **2**

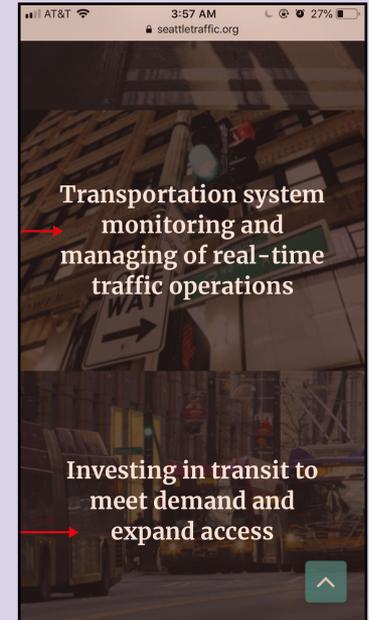
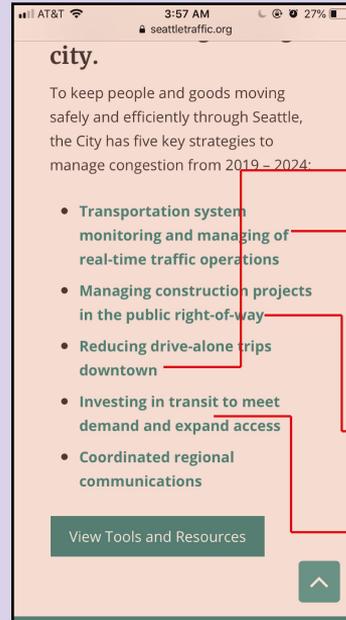
Discoverability SEO

On googling seattle traffic, this website is 7th on the 2nd page.



Consistency

There are buttons and links on the same page that lead to the same place.

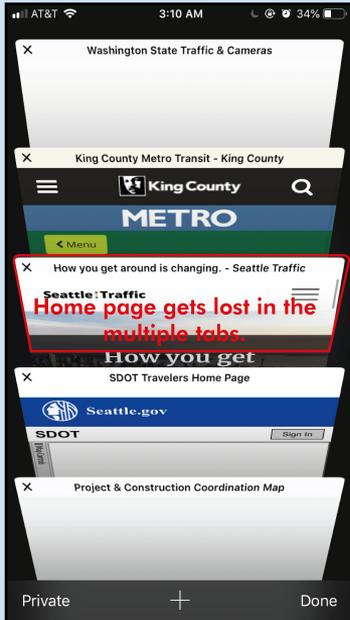


Heuristics

Severity Rating: 2

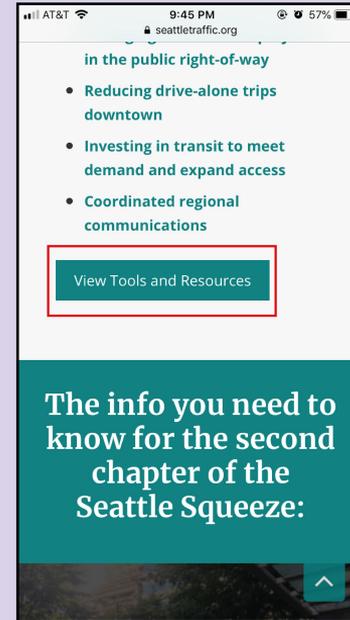
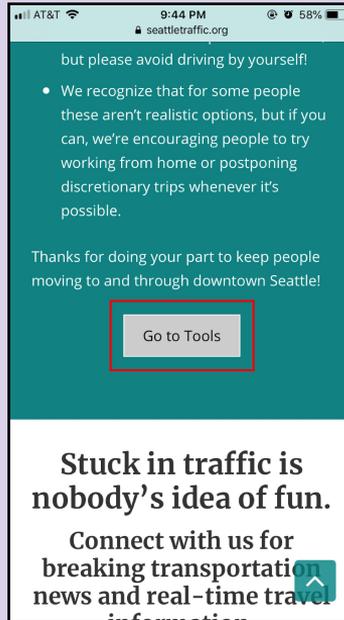
System Status

User is unaware of the opening of new tab.



Consistency

Buttons have inconsistent names.

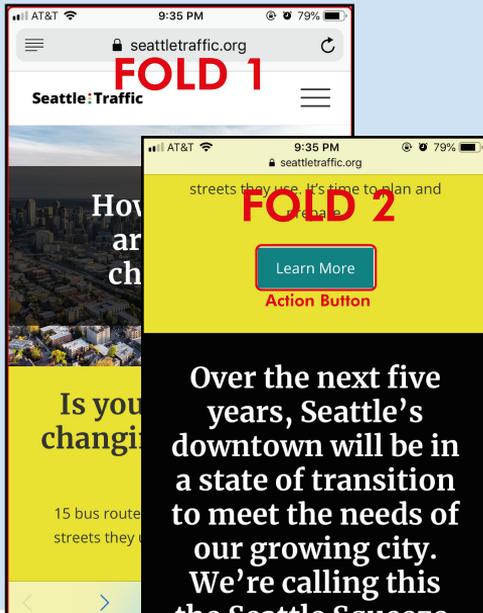


Heuristics

Severity Rating: **1**

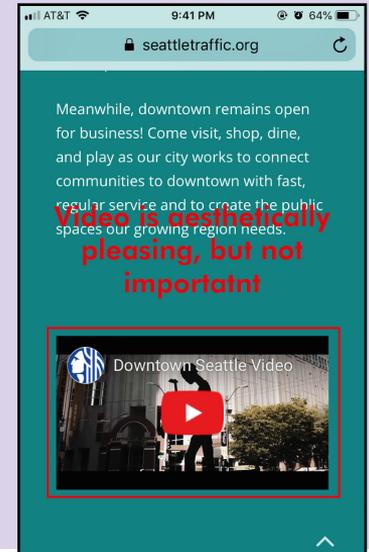
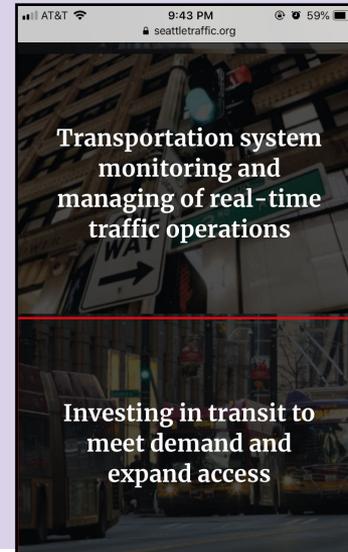
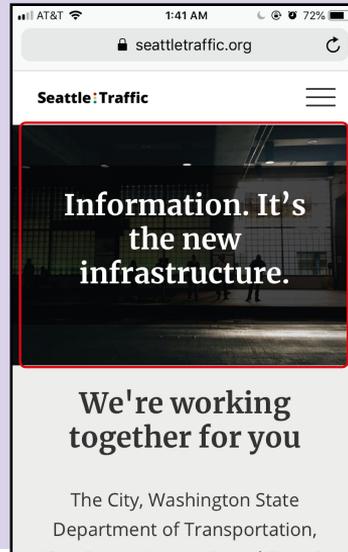
Discoverability

Action Buttons are below the folds, leading to delay in achieving user goals.



Simplicity

There are a lot of aesthetically pleasing elements like the pictures on top of the pages that have very little functionality, removing these might help reduce the fold count and thus get the user to desired/relevant information faster.



Heuristics

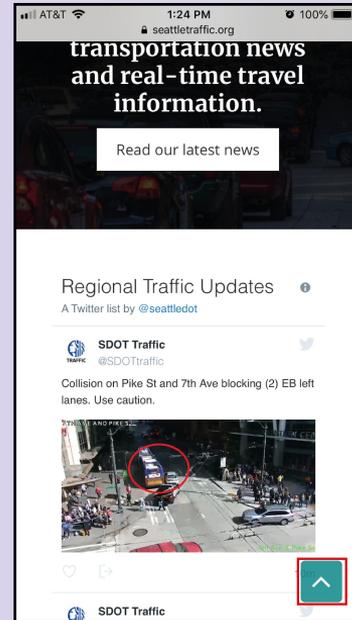
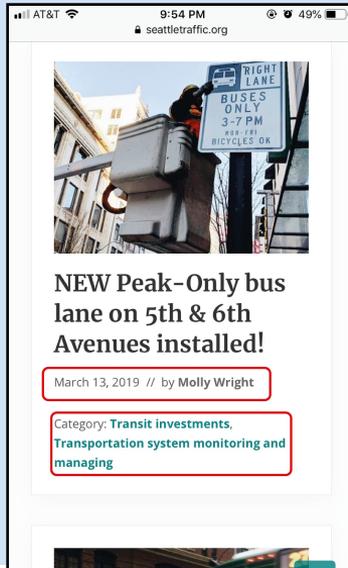
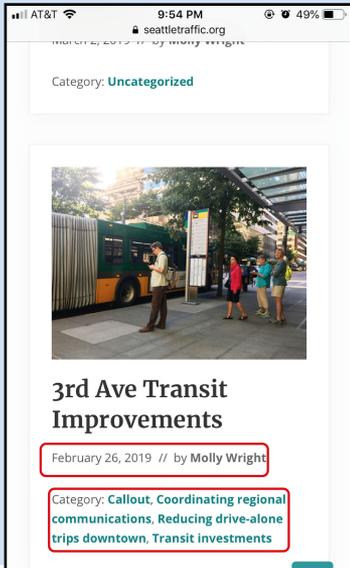
Awesomeness rating: **100/100**

Blog Posts

Blog pages on the Blog Tab have impeccable categorization with dates and relevant tags making it easier for users to get relevant information quicker.

Ease of use

Every page has a “go to top” button that is very helpful.



Reflection & Learnings

- Recruiting participants is much harder than we anticipated.
- Implementing a more efficient data-collection system would save time and focus our questioning.
- Conducting a pilot study was very important.
- Vetting of technology beforehand is important, but problems will still arise.
- Client communication was paramount.
- It's important to learn how to regain control of the conversation as the moderator.
- Going off-script isn't always a bad thing.

