INNOCENCE PROJECT

UNMODERATED REMOTE USER TEST REPORT

ADALYN LOU   YUAN MA   WEI WANG
HANNAH BAUER   DIEDRE BROWN

PRATT INSTITUTE
SPRING 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Image 1. Marion Coakley was arrested and sentenced for the rape of a Bronx woman in October 1983. With the work of lawyers, Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, in December 1987, Chief Administrative Judge Burton Roberts overturned Coakley's conviction, marking the first victory for the Innocence Project (O'Sullivan).

The Innocence Project website (https://www.innocenceproject.org/) serves as a conduit to inform the public about the organization's work, provide ways in which one can get involved, and provide potential donors with an online platform to provide a charitable donation(s). This usability report examines the website's use from the perspective of a potential donor.

THE TEST

Over the course of one week, our team of five experts used a third-party online user testing service to conduct sixteen unmoderated remote user tests of the Innocence Project website. The test users were instructed to approach the site as potential donors and were asked to carry out three tasks: support an exoneree, learn how to host a local fundraising event, and find the address to mail in their donation. The test user videos were analyzed by the team and used to determine three key issues potential donors encounter when navigating the website.

OUR FINDINGS

On the basis of our team's evaluation of the site and the user tests, we determined that a total of four significant problems exist for potential donors when accessing the Donate and Get Involved pages on both mobile and desktop browsers. These include:

Donate Page (on both desktop and mobile browsers):

- The navigation bar/hamburger present throughout the site is absent on this page.

- The donation pages of the Innocence Project and Support an Exoneree are similar.

- The question section (FAQ) does not exist on the mobile version of the page, making it difficult for users to immediately address issues they may have.

Get Involved (on both desktop and mobile browsers):

- The similarity between the Get Involved and Ways to Give pages caused users to be confused when they could not find the donation information they were looking for.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the simplest and most effective way to address the issues on both the Donate and Get Involved pages is down to a matter of condensing information through means of navigation and page layout. On the Donate page, we suggest:

- The addition of the familiar navigation bar/hamburger used throughout the site, as it will provide the user with a familiar interface.

- Add a feature that allows Support Exonerees be added as an option to the 'Select an amount' section.

- Add a Question (FAQ) section in the hamburger drop down menu on the mobile browser.

On the Get Involved page, we propose that as there are shared/overlapping functions on this and the Ways to Give page, that these two pages should be combined. By combining these two pages, we believe the user will feel less confused during the donation process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Image 2. Proceeds of the products purchased on the Innocence Project website directly support their efforts to free the innocent and reform the criminal justice system in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

Image 3. After serving 22 years in prison for a felony murder and robbery conviction in New Jersey, in 2018, Eric Kelley was exonerated on exculpatory DNA test results, which the Innocence Project helped obtain.

The presumption of innocence is a moral and political principle, based on a widely shared conception of how a free society…should exercise the power to punish. One element in this is the high value placed on the fundamental right not to be wrongly convicted. Another element stems from the huge disparity of resources between the State and defendant (Quintard-Morénas, 134).

Fighting to uphold fundamental rights and this principle of the presumption of innocence, in 1992, Barry C. Scheck and Peter J. Neufeld founded the Innocence Project at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York City. As a nonprofit legal organization, the Innocence Project, works to prove the innocence of wrongly convicted individuals in the United States. Their work is accomplished through the use of DNA testing, fighting for legislative reforms, and educating both the public and the courts "on eyewitness identification, cognitive bias, litigating false confessions and the use of unreliable forensic evidence and testimony in court" (Annual Report, 2018).

Similarly, the Innocence Project website (https://www.innocenceproject.org/) serves as a conduit to inform the public about the organization's work, provide ways in which one can get involved, and provide potential donors with an online platform for charitable donation(s). As the 2018 Annual Report stated that 72% ($10,265,121) of the Innocence Project operating revenue came from a combination of individual, foundation, and corporation charitable contributions (Annual Report, 2018), this usability report examines the website's use from the perspective of a potential donor.

UNMODERATED REMOTE USER TESTING

After assessing the functions of the Innocence Project website on both desktops and mobile browsers, our team of five usability experts determined that the best way to assess the functionality and understandability of the website for potential donors would be through unmoderated remote user testing. In unmoderated remote user testing, while being recorded, users are asked to complete a series of tasks and explain their actions as they accomplish said task. These recordings are then analyzed to identify potential areas for improvement of the website.

METHODOLOGY

Image 4. On the advice of his lawyer who stated that he risked a sentence of 200+ years in prison, Joseph Buffey pleased guilty to the 2001 rape and robbery of an 83-year-old woman. In May 2011, with the assistance of the Innocence Project, DNA testing through the federal database identified another man with felony criminal convictions.

This section explains our team's preliminary assessment of the Innocence Project website, how we defined a potential donor, describes our study's participants, and outlines the scenario and tasks we designed for the study.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF WEBSITE

Individually, each member of our team conducted a cognitive walkthrough of the site as potential donors, noting all parts of the website which furthered or lessened our ability to achieve our task. Then, we collectively pooled our expertise and created a list of characteristics and features of the site which enabled and did not enable us to complete our task of donating. From this list we devised a scenario and three tasks for potential donors visiting the Innocence Project website on both desktop and mobile browsers. The criteria for evaluation of the site and planning of the user tests was as follows:

1. Learnability: How easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design? Are instructions clear? Are instructions necessary? Do labels make sense? Do certain words are understandable?
2. Discoverability: Are common items easy for new users to find?
3. Efficiency: Once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
4. Errors: How many errors do users make, how severe are these errors, and how easily can they recover from the errors?
5. Satisfaction: How pleasant is it to use the design?
6. Memorability: When users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they reestablish proficiency?

DEFINING A POTENTIAL DONOR

In order to provide a comprehensive study focused on potential donors, our team researched the characteristics of charitable contributions to nonprofit funding in the United States. From a 2018 report by the National Center for Charitable Statistics – Urban Institute, we found that donations to organizations like the Innocence Project accounted for 30.4% of all charitable contributions . Furthermore, to understand the potential donor demographics, we examined the generational analysis from the Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact, which noted that though Baby Boomers (individuals born 1946-64) contributed nearly $60 billion to nonprofits, and are significantly more likely to give than younger generations, that there is a rise in contributions from Generation X (individuals born 1965-1980) and Millennial (individuals born 1981-1996) aged donors (Rovner 2018).
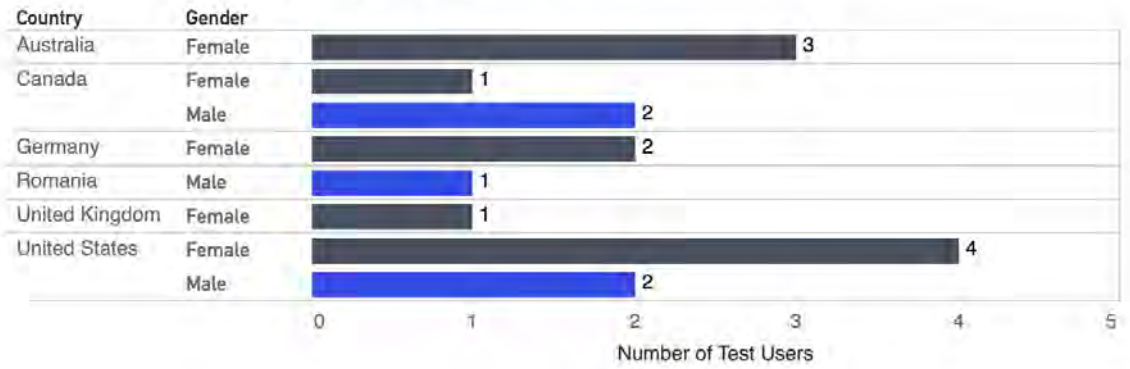
PARTICIPANTS

Over the course of one week, our team used a third-party online user testing service, UserTesting, to conduct sixteen unmoderated remote user tests, and selected for average web users, aged 18+. As the Blackbaud report also illustrated the high proclivity for donors to give online through a website or by mail, ten or our tests were devoted to accessing the website through a desktop web browser, and the remaining six tests examined the website through mobile devices.
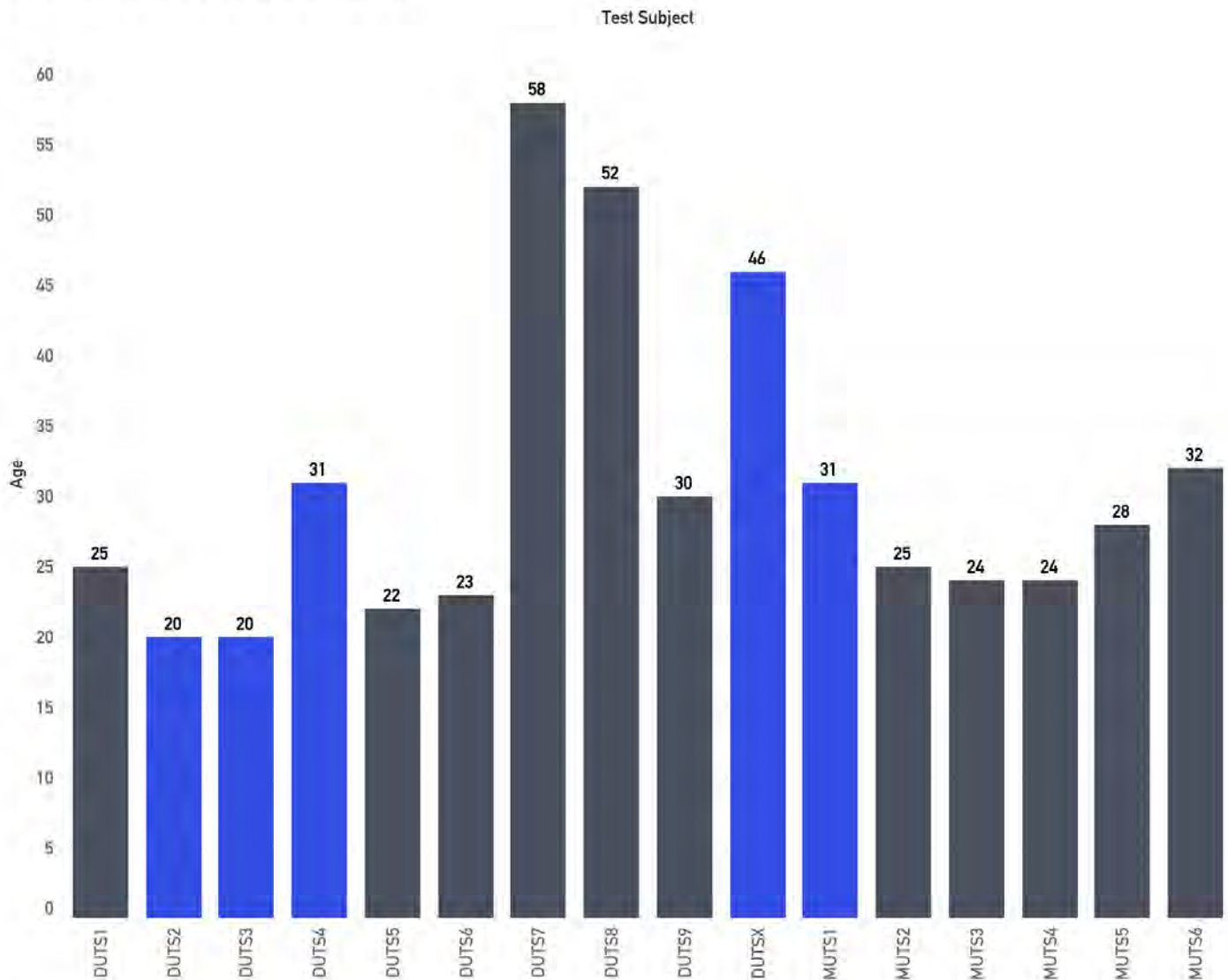
Of our sixteen users, **10** were international and **6** were from the United States. Our participants ranged in age from **20 to 58 years** with an average age of **30.7 years**. Of these participants, **11** identified as female and **5** identified as male. The income level of our participants ranged from **less than $19,999 to more than $200,000**, with an average income range of **$45,312.50 - $114,436.81** per year.

TEST USERS BY COUNTRY & GENDER

Country	Gender	Number of Test Users
Australia	Female	3
Canada	Female	1
	Male	2
Germany	Female	2
Romania	Male	1
United Kingdom	Female	1
United States	Female	4
	Male	2

Number of Test Users

TEST USERS BY AGE & GENDER

Test Subject

Age

DUTS1	DUTS2	DUTS3	DUTS4	DUTS5	DUTS6	DUTS7	DUTS8	DUTS9	DUTSX	MUTS1	MUTS2	MUTS3	MUTS4	MUTS5	MUTS6
25	20	20	31	22	23	58	52	30	46	31	25	24	24	28	32

The average age of all test users was 30.7 years (31.2 years for women; 29.6 for men)
DUTS = Desktop User Test Subject
MUTS = Mobile User Test Subject

EVALUATION TASKS/SCENARIOS

To determine the extent the Innocence Project website facilitated a user's ability to complete routine tasks associated with donation and hosting a fundraising event, our team proposed the following user scenario and tasks:

- **Scenario:** You recently learned of the work of the Innocence Project. You would like to support their efforts with a donation.

- **Task 1.** Find the page where you can support an exoneree.

- **Task 2.** You would like to host a fundraising event for The Innocence Project to collect donations from your community. Locate the page that provides information on how to do this.

- **Task 3.** Find the address to where you would send your donation by mail.

After completing a task, the users were also asked to select whether or not they were successful in accomplishing this task on a 6-point scale with measures ranging from "Yes, I'm sure I completed the entire task successfully" to "No, I was confused by the task instructions", and an option to verbally state other. Similarly, the users were also asked to rate the ease at which they completed the task on a 5-point scale with measures ranging from "Very Difficult" to "Very Easy".

The test was designed to not take more than a total of fifteen minutes to complete. Our version of UserTesting did not record the time per task for each user. Therefore, this report includes the time to complete all tasks plus any of the user's commentary. Overall, our participants completed the tasks in average of **10.68 minutes** (**4.25 minutes** minimum time to complete; **17.15 maximum** time to complete).

Chart 1. User test participants by age, gender, and country.

REPORTED TEST USER INCOME
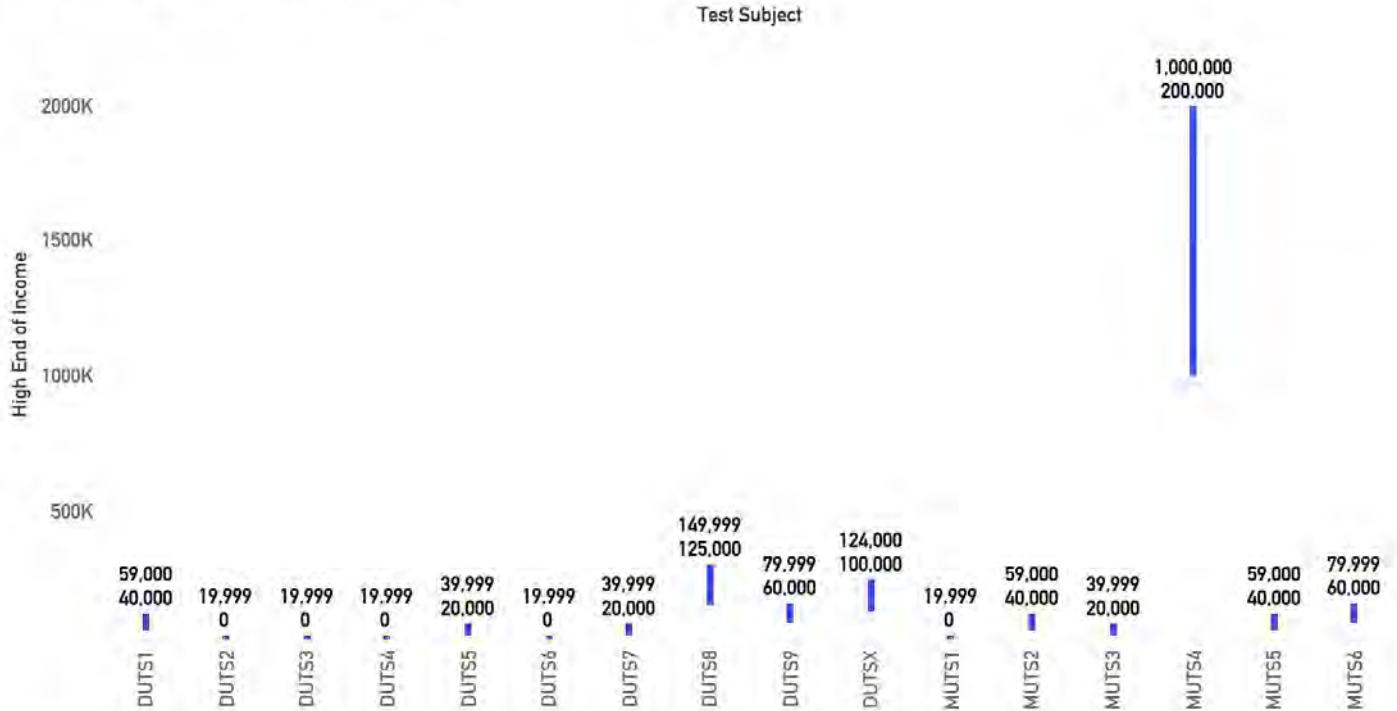
Test Subject

This chart shows the distribution of reported income among test users. The minimum and maximum values shown are in USD. Our users average reported income range was $45,312.50 - $114,436.81 (median values $30,000 - $49,499.50).
DUTS = Desktop User Test Subject
MUTS = Mobile User Test Subject

TEST USERS TIME TO COMPLETE TASKS
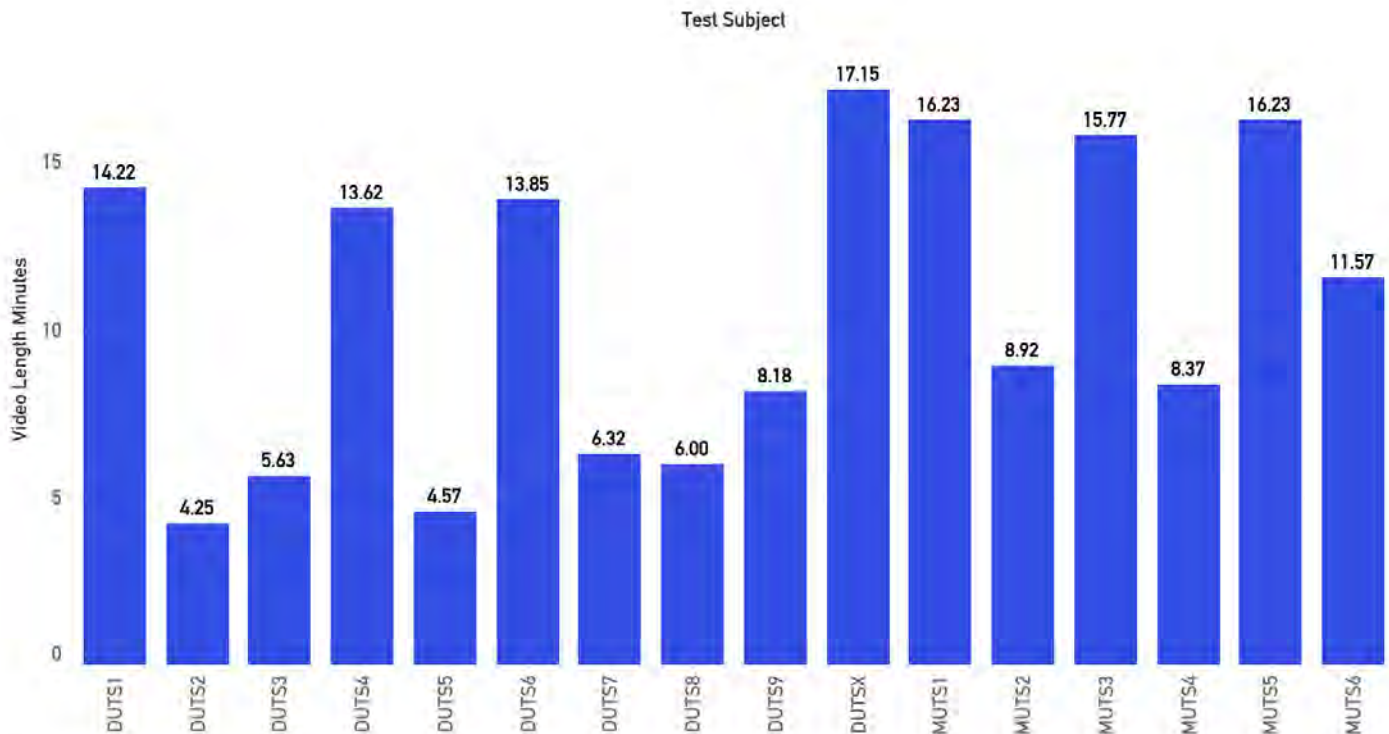
Test Subject

This chart shows the distribution of the time it took our test users to complete all tasks. The average user took 10.68 minutes to complete all three tasks.
DUTS = Desktop User Test Subject
MUTS = Mobile User Test Subject

Chart 2. User test participants reported income and total time to complete the study.

RESULTS &
RECOMMENDATIONS

Image 5. After surviving three and a half decades behind bars, on March 9, 2020 Paul Hildwin was released from prison thanks to the efforts of Kate O'Shea and Lyann Goudie, who led the retrial team since 2014.

The Innocence Project website (https://www.innocenceproject.org/) serves as a conduit to inform the public about the organization's work, provide ways in which one can get involved, and provide potential donors with an online platform to provide their charitable contributions. As the 2018 Annual Report stated that 72% ($10,265,121) of the Innocence Project operating revenue came from a combination of individual, foundation, and corporation charitable donations (Annual Report, 2018), this usability report examines the website's use from the perspective of a potential donor.

SUMMARY OF TASK COMPLETION

TASK1

All desktop participants believed that they successfully completed Task 1 (Support an Exoneree), though two stated that they "I can't say that I am sure that I completed the task successfully, because I did find where I could make a donation, but I don't know if it's for a specific individual. So, I would honestly have to say that I am not sure...Not a difficult task, but just need a clarification." Out of the six mobile users, only one user was unable to complete the Task 1.

TASK 2

While all desktop and mobile users marked that they completed the Task 2 (Host a Fundraising Event), the change in wording from the Get Involved page to the Hold a House Party to Raise Awareness of Wrongful Convictions page caused many users (three desktop and three mobile users) to double check that they were on the correct page. Similarly, one desktop user and one mobile user each believed that "Create a Facebook Fundraiser" and "Host a local fundraising and educational event" were the same thing.

TASK 3

In this sequence, ten participants (4 mobile and 6 desktop users) found the mailing address just by scrolling to the end to the Hold a House Party to Raise Awareness of Wrongful Convictions page. Eleven participants (4 mobile and 7 desktop users) found the mailing address by using the Contact dropdown under the More menu within the navigation bar. Four desktop users, recalled seeing this information on the Donate page and navigated there to find the address to mail their donation. And, only one expert evaluator found the mailing address and form by clicking the 'Donate By Mail' paragraph on the Ways to Give page.

OUR FINDINGS

On the basis of our team's evaluation of the site and the user tests, we created a list of observed problems and noted their severity.(See Appendix A.) From this list, we determined that a total of four significant problems exist for potential donors when accessing the Donate and Get Involved pages on both mobile and desktop browsers. These include:

- Donate Page (on both desktop and mobile browsers):

  - The navigation bar/hamburger present throughout the site is not present this page. All users had difficulty accessing the organization's homepage once completing the donation task.

  - The donation pages to the Innocence Project and Support an Exoneree are similar. It would be helpful for users to select who or what their donation will go towards on one page.

  - The question section (FAQ) does not exist on the mobile version of the page. This makes it difficult for users to immediately address issues they may have.

- Get Involved (on both desktop and mobile browsers):

- The similarity between the Get Involved and Ways to Give pages caused users to be confused when they could not find the donation information they were looking for.

DONATE PAGE ON DESKTOP AND MOBILE

Remote user testing illuminated the fact that users are experiencing confusion on both the mobile and desktop versions of the Donate page. As visible in **Box A of Figure 1**, the navigation bar, present through out the Innocence Project website, is absent on this page. One user even stated that "the page would be more effective if I didn't have to click the back button to get back to the homepage, and had access to the menu/toolbar at the top." Though clicking the blue Donate button throughout the site leads the user to a new browser tab (https://support.innocenceproject.org/give/), navigation via a navigation bar would allow the user to explore other areas of the site seamlessly.

Another issue user testing revealed is that on both the desktop and mobile versions of the Donate and Support Exonerees After Release look nearly identical (**Figures 1 & 2**). To simplify matters, we suggest that Support Exonerees be added as an option to the 'Select an amount' section enclosed in **Box B of Figure 1.** This addition would give the user more agency over the use of their charitable donation and make them feel more a part of the process.

An additional issue inhibiting ease of use on the Donate page for potential donors is that the Questions (FAQ) section, shown in **Box C of Figure 1,** is not present on mobile browsers. Both our team and the test users assumed that the FAQ would be contained in the hamburger drop down menu; however, this was not the case. **Box D of Figure 3** illustrates that this menu only provides login and sharing functions.
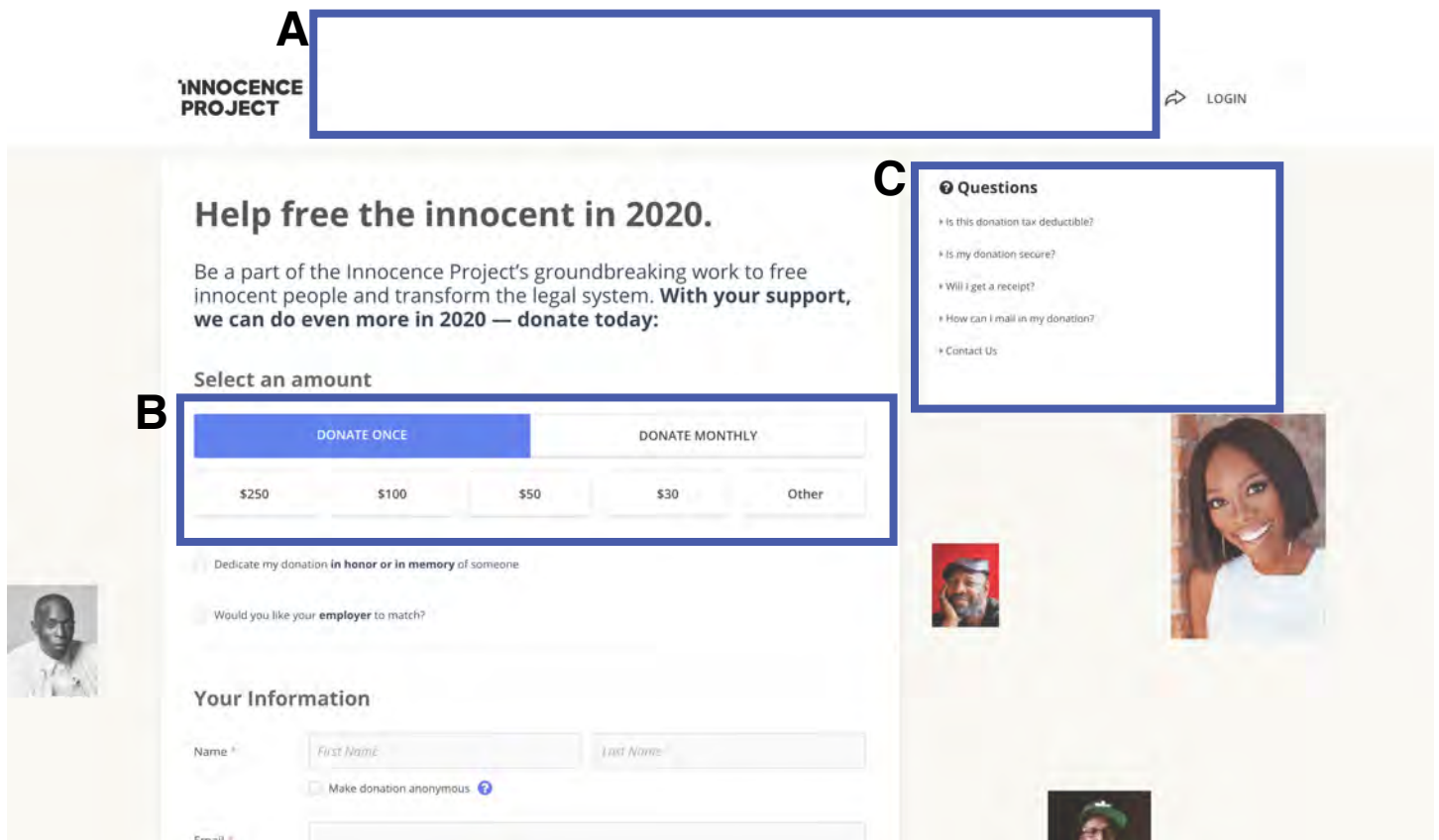

Figure 1. The Innocence Project Donate page on a desktop browser.

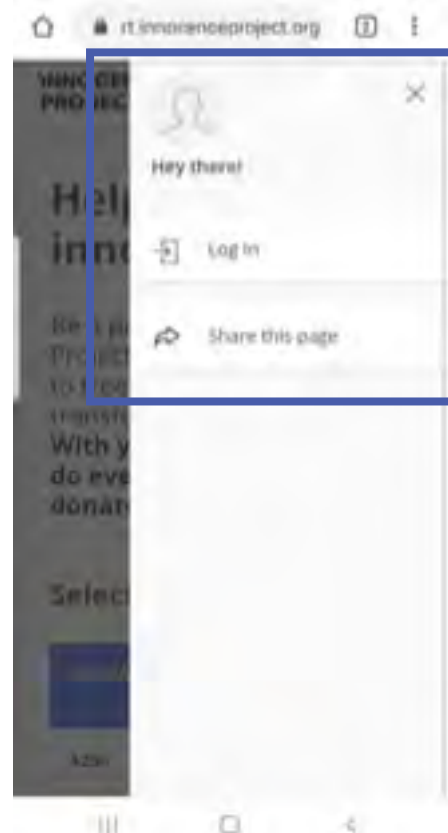**Figure 2.** The Innocence Project Support Exonerees After Release page on a web browser.

Figure 3. The Innocence Project Donate page on a mobile browser.

DESKTOP - GET INVOLVED PAGE

While completing Task 1, our team observed that instead of accessing the Ways to Give page to Support an Exoneree After Release (Figure 4), users would navigate to the Get Involved page (Figure 5) because it was more visibly present and its title suggestive of the desired action for this task. Though these two pages are similar and contain overlapping functions (blue boxes highlighted in Figures 4 & 5), the Ways to Give page contains specific information on how to Support an Exoneree After Release, while the Get Involved page does not. We also observed that when users navigated to the Get Involved page to complete this task, they often experience some frustration, as they could not find what they were looking for, and would just select the blue Donate button. Again, as these pages are very similar in function, our team proposes that their functions should be condensed into one page. By combining these two pages, we believe the user will feel less confused during the donation process.
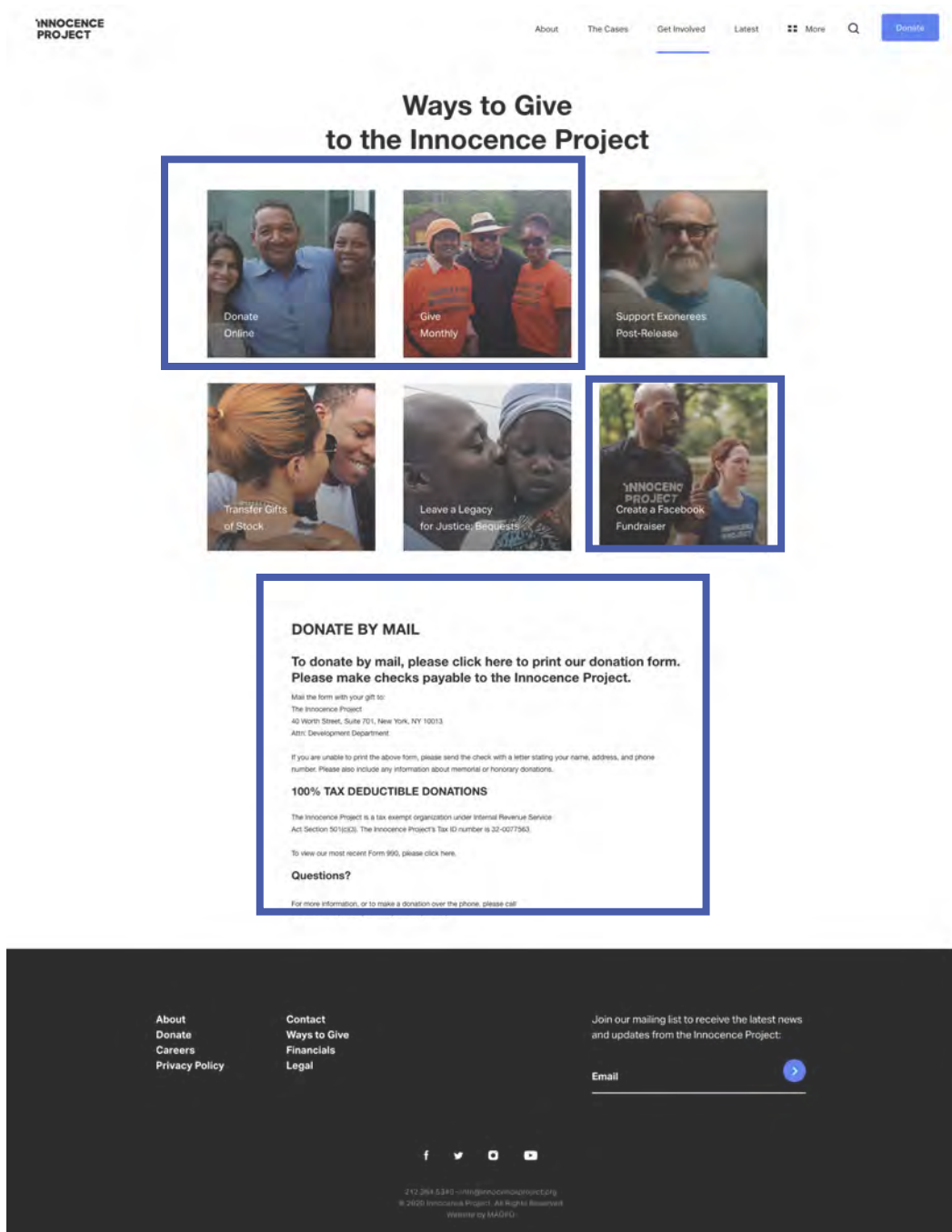

Figure 4. The Innocence Project Ways to Give page on a desktop browser.
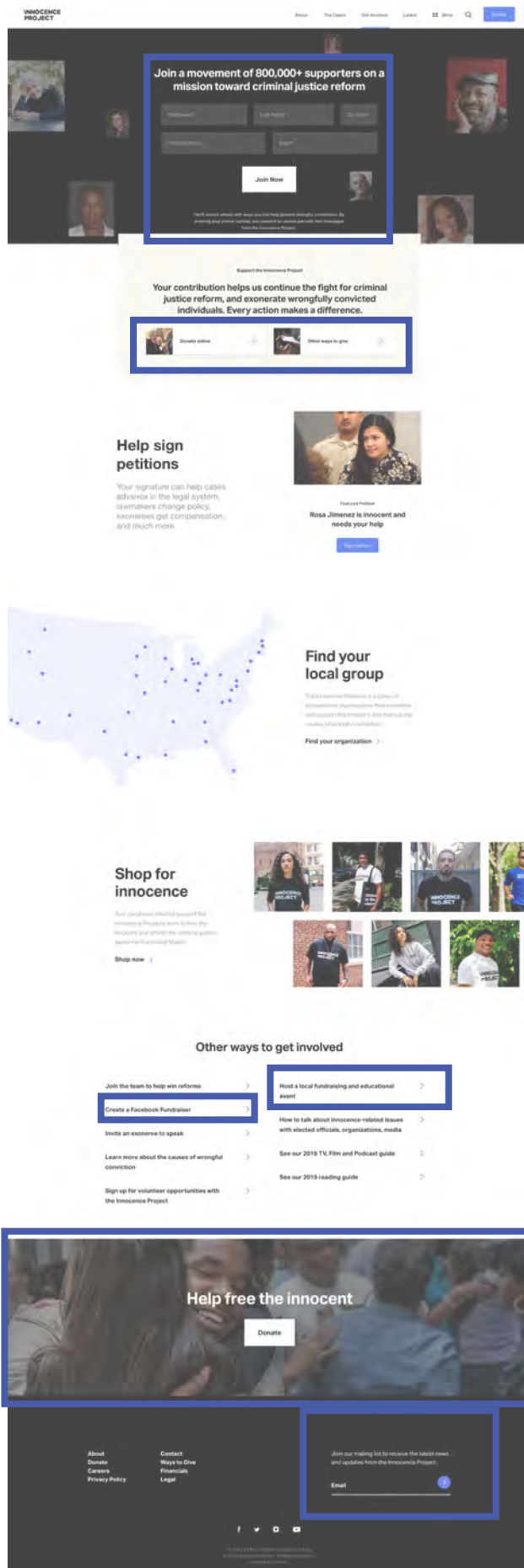
Figure 5. The Innocence Project Get Involved page on a desktop browser.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the simplest and most effective way to address the issues on both the Donate and Get Involved pages is down to a matter of condensing information through means of navigation and page layout. On the Donate page, we suggest:

- The addition of the familiar navigation bar/hamburger used throughout the site, as it will provide the user with a familiar interface.

- Add a feature that allows Support Exonerees be added as an option to the 'Select an amount' section.

- Add a Question (FAQ) section in the hamburger drop down menu on the mobile browser.

On the Get Involved page, we propose that as there are shared/overlapping functions on this and the Ways to Give page, that these two pages should be combined. By combining these two pages, we believe the user will feel less confused during the donation process.

Donate page – Desktop

Figure 6. Recommendation for the Innocence Project Donate page on a desktop browser.

R1 The consistent navigation bar stays on the donate section page to prevent users from confusions.

R2 We added a tab feature allows users to determine which type of the donations they want to select.

R3 The new FAQ feature will appear as a pop-up and a user can click the question mark icon to open and close the information panel.

R4 The pop-up panel of frequently asked questions allow users to eliminate confusions anywhere in the donation process. This feature improves user efficiency and reduce cognitive load.
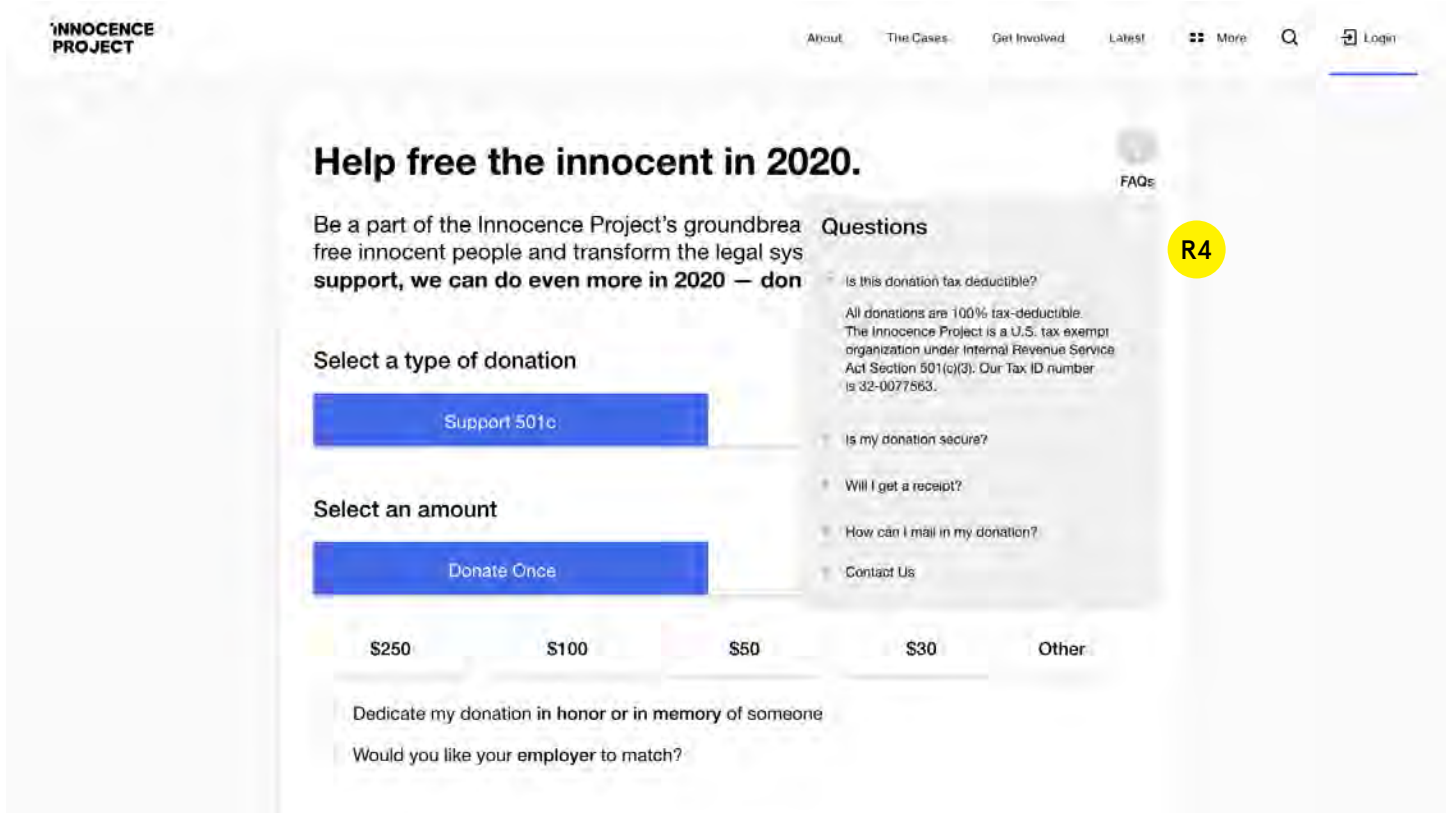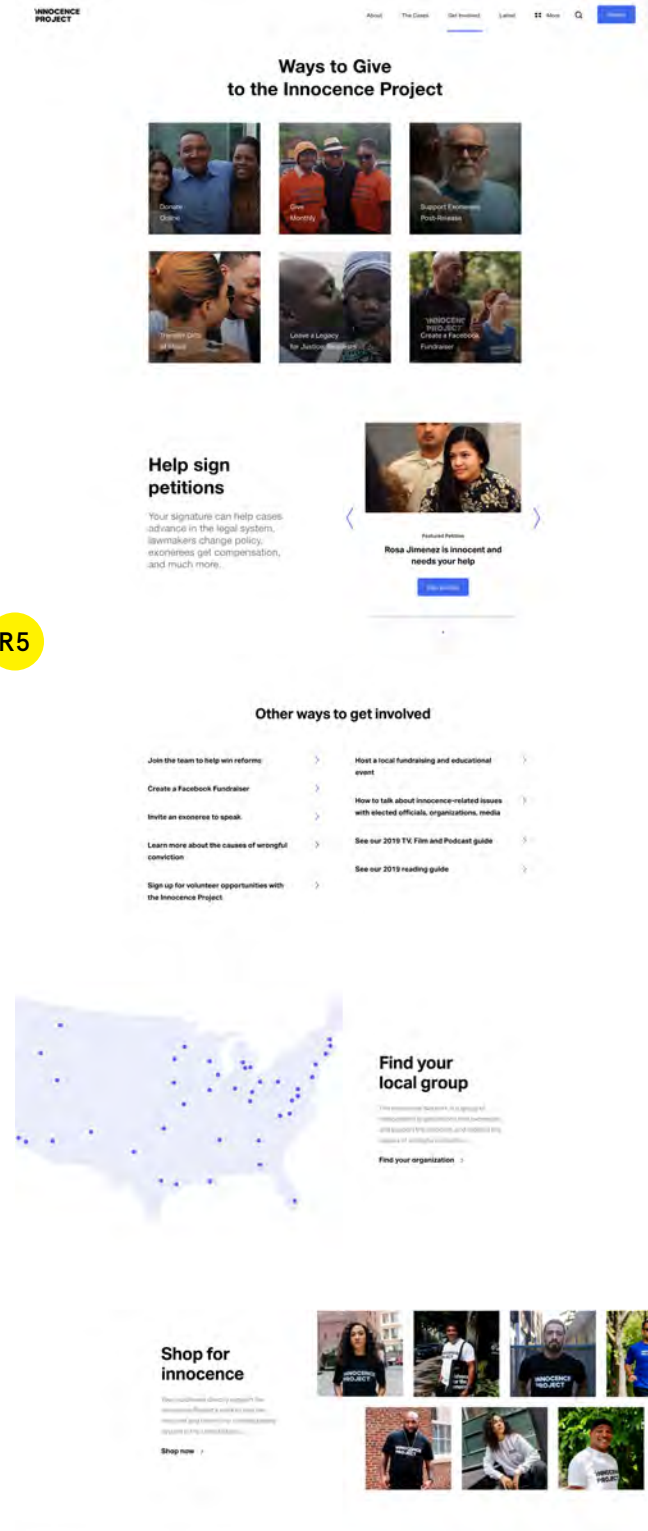

Figure 7. Recommendation for the Innocence Project Donate page with FAQ section extended on a desktop browser.

Get Involved page – Desktop

R5 We combined contents of "Ways to Give" page and "Get Involved" page into one page to avoid repetitive and confused information. The new layout applies a new hierachy by revising the sequence of features. According to the user test results, this new layout can help users find intended information accurately and donate to specific projects.
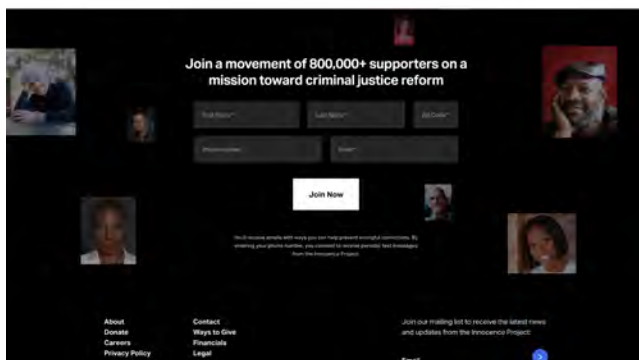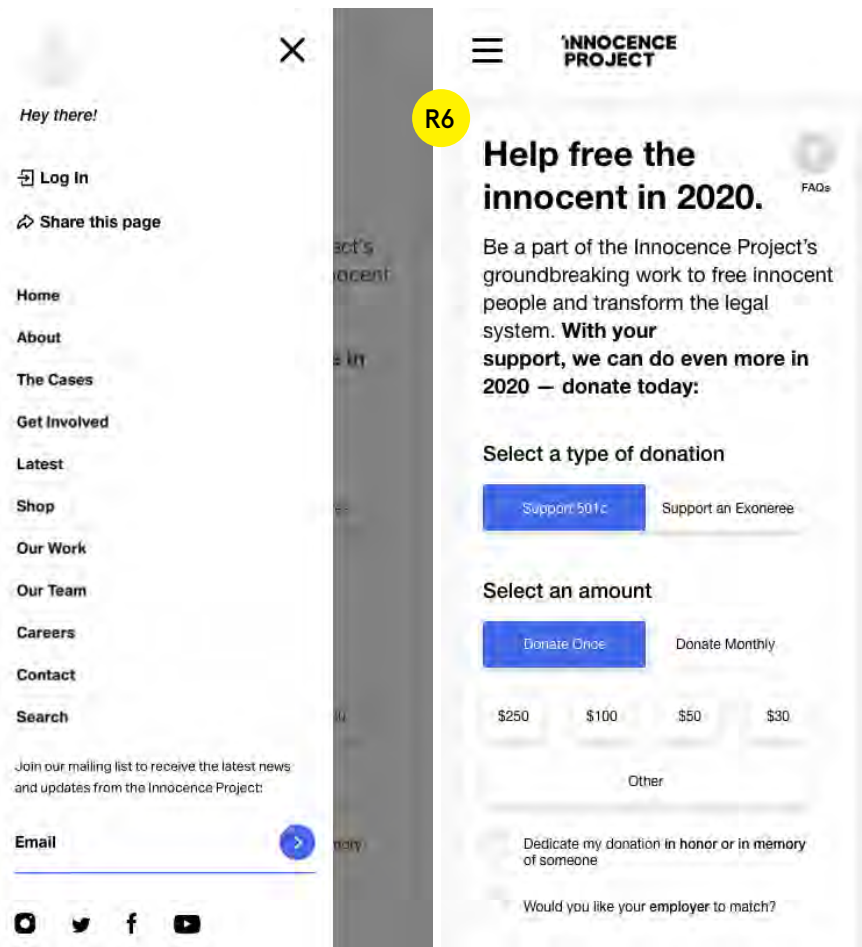
Figure 8. Recommendation for the Innocence Get Involved page on a desktop browser.

Figure 9. Recommendation for the Innocence Donate page on a mobile browser.

R6 There are three main changes are made on the mobile interface, as showed in figure 9v. First, it was changed corresponding following the desktop version, adding the option of donation to let users know that they can donate for specific projects. FAQs buttons were added on the mobile version, users can click to view frequent questions, such as donation mail address.

For the design of the navigation, the location and logic of the Burger Menu on the donation page better be the same with the Burger Menu on the homepage, but only add login and forwarding functions. This can reduce user confusion and mistake.

R7 The FAQ feature has the same visual style as the desktop version. Visual consisitency improves user experience.
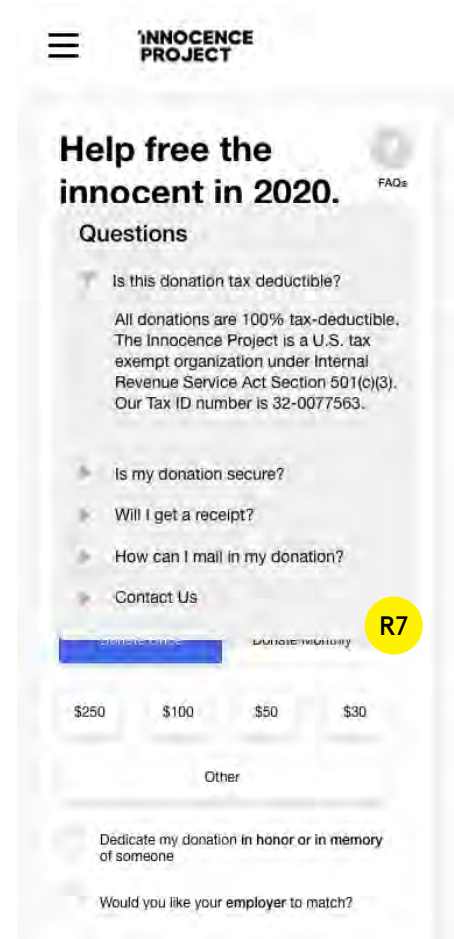
CONCLUSION

Image 6. After serving 20 years, in 2001, Marvin Anderson became the ninety-ninth person in the United States to be exonerated due to post-conviction DNA testing. Today, he serves as Chief of the Hanover, Virginia Fire Department and on the Board of Directors for the Innocence Project.

The Innocence Project website (https://www.innocenceproject.org/) serves as a conduit to inform the public about the organization's work, provide ways in which one can get involved, and provide potential donors with an online platform for charitable donation(s). This usability report used remote user testing to examine the website's use from the perspective of a potential donor.

Most of the participants of this study found the Innocence Project website, easy to navigate, aesthetically pleasing, educational, and from a donor perspective, a nonprofit that is making a real difference in the world—one that they can see the value in their contribution. Our team of five experts also agrees with these sentiments. Furthermore, we believe that with some minor adjustments to the Donate and Get Involved pages that the ease by which a potential donor interacts with the site will be improved.

As one test user stated, "The more educated someone is about a certain issue, it's going to help them relate and connect, to empathize with what's going on here." And the same is true for donation run organizations—when donors can see value in their contribution and feel aligned with an organization's cause, they will continue to support that cause. Therefore, our team feels that by implementing our recommendations that emphasize navigation and clarity, the website will continue to support existing and potential donor interest.

REFERENCES

Image 7. Peter Neufeld (left), and Barry C. Scheck (right) circa 1992.

Annual Report 2018. (2018). The Innocence Project. https://www.innocenceproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/IP-AR2018_FINAL.pdf

The Nonprofit Sector in Brief 2018 | National Center for Charitable Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved March 9, 2020, from https://nccs.urban.org/publication/nonprofit-sector-brief-2018#the-nonprofit-sector-in-brief-2018-public-charites-giving-and-volunteering

O'Sullivan, R. (2018, March 8). The Innocence Project: A Short History Since 1983. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/innocence-project-short-history-1983/

Quintard-Morénas, F. (2010). The Presumption of Innocence in the French and Anglo-American Legal Traditions. The American Journal of Comparative Law, 58(1), 107-149. Retrieved 4 March 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/25652686

Rovner, M. (2018). The Next Generation of American Giving: The Charitable Habits of Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Matures. Blackbaud, Inc. https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-115/2/2018-Next-Generation-of-Giving.pdf

APPENDIX A – PROBLEM LIST

MASTER PROBLEM LIST

All problems were given a severity rating from 1 to 4, where 1 is a cosmetic issue and 4 a catastrophic function.

- No FAQ menu on the Donate mobile page. **[4]**

- Participants do not realize that they are being directed to different donation pages when they click the Donate button and when they select Support Exonerees Post-Release on the Ways to Give page. **[4]**

- The donation pages to Innocence Project and Support an Exoneree are similar. It would be helpful for users to select who or what their donation will go towards on one page. **[4]**

- Language inconsistent throughout. For example, when clicking "Host a local fundraising and educational event" users are directed to a page titled "Hold a House Party to Raise Awareness of Wrongful Convictions." Though these are similar in meaning, one user stated that they thought they had clicked the wrong button. The user then returned to the main menus and back to the Get Involved page three times, because of the difference in the titles. **[1]**

- Mail-in donation address on "Hold a House Party to Raise Awareness" page lacks the suite number present on other pages. Two users noted the difference, and stated that it should be added to the all addresses. **[1]**

- FAQ section on desktop version lacks prominence, and users are bypassing the information there. **[2]**

- The navigation bar/hamburger present throughout the site is not present on the Donate page. All users had difficulty accessing the organization's homepage once completing the donation task. **[3]**

- The donation pages to the Innocence Project and Support an Exoneree are similar. It would be helpful for users to select who or what their donation will go towards on one page. **[4]**

- The similarity between the Get Involved and Ways to Give pages caused users to be confused when they could not find the donation information they were looking for. **[4]**

- Two mobile and one desktop users preferred to use the Contact Us page to find the mailing address. However, there is no information on this page to inform the user as to whether or not they can send a check to this address. **[2]**

- No one knew that the Donate by Mail paragraph on the Ways to Give page was clickable as it looks like text and not a link a printout donation form. **[2]**

- The Get Involved page has various ways to provide support. The users were not sure what they are looking and spent a lot of time going through to find out. **[3]**

- Hold a House Party to Raise Awareness of Wrongful Convictions page has a lot of text and involves a lot of scrolling. One user stated, "This would be hard for people who are unfamiliar with technology, such as old people." **[2]**

- On the Donate page, the user believes that by selecting "In honor of..." from the Type radio button is the way to support an exoneree post-release. **[4]**

- When on the Donate page, three users were uncertain if they completed the task successfully as they did not see mention of supporting an exoneree. These users assumed that they completed the task because they found a way of giving a donation. **[4]**

APPENDIX B - USER QUOTES

QUOTES FROM USERS ON THE SITE

"These people were wrongfully convicted for this long...that's absolutely horrible" (repeated three times) - MUTS4

"You might send the donation to the wrong location." - MUTS5

"This is so amazing! This is the best thing I've ever done. This is such a stylish website, by the way." - DUTS1

The site is "aesthetically pleasing...and quite calming, which is a good space to be in if you are going to donate." - DUTS1

"I can't say that I am sure that I completed the task successfully, because I did find where I could make a donation, but I don't know if it's for a specific individual. So I would honestly have to say that I am not sure...Not a difficult task, but just need aa clarification." - DUTSX

"...the page would be more effective if I didn't have to click the back button to get back to the homepage, and had access to the menu/toolbar at the top." - DUTSX

"About section provides the full story...It shows the entire process...You're not just donating to support their [the exoneree's] legal fees." - DUTSX

"I feel that there is a strong effort to educate people on what's going on. To have them understand what, I would assume, the process is and what went wrong [for the exoneree]. The more educated someone is about a certain issue, it's going to help them relate and connect, to empathize with what's going on here. And certainly, providing this educational material does that." - DUTSX

APPENDIX C – LIST OF FIGURES

CHARTS

CHART 1. User test participants by age, gender, and country.

CHART 2. User test participants reported income and total time to complete the study.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1. The Innocence Project Donate page on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 2. The Innocence Project Support Exonerees After Release page on a web browser.

FIGURE 3. The Innocence Project Donate page on a mobile browser.

FIGURE 4. The Innocence Project Get Involved page on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 5. The Innocence Project Ways to Give page on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 6. Recommendation for the Donate page on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 7. Recommendation for the Donate page with FAQ section extended on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 8. Recommendation for the Get Involved page on a desktop browser.

FIGURE 9. Recommendation for the Donate page on a mobile browser.

IMAGES

IMAGE 1. Marion Coakley

IMAGE 2. The Innocence Project products.

IMAGE 3. Eric Kelley

IMAGE 4. Joseph Buffey

IMAGE 5. Paul Hildwin, Kate O'Shea, and Lyann Goudie

IMAGE 6. Marvin Anderson

IMAGE 7. Peter Neufeld (left), and Barry C. Scheck (right) circa 1992.