



# MSN TV Heuristic Evaluation

Final Report

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The goal of this study was to assess the usability of the MSN-TV website through a heuristic evaluation. This involved identifying potential usability issues based on given usability heuristics, usability principles and the overall experience, and providing recommendations to avoid those issues.

Many tasks used in this evaluation did not encounter any issues, and most of the issues encountered were generally low in severity, so the overall experience was not bad. However, there were still some core tasks that did encounter medium to high severity issues, creating a number of opportunities for improvements that can enhance a visitor's overall experience.

## Key Findings

Many tasks were in fact accomplished with few or no issues, and most issues encountered would not keep a user from completing the task.

Those tasks accomplished with no issues included:

- Interacting with the video
- Viewing recommendations
- Finding highly rated/ranked shows
- Viewing airing channels and times of an episode
- Viewing information about episodes
- Viewing the DVD selection

There were however, some core tasks which did encounter issues. These included:

- Add a show to your favorites
- Identifying movies broadcast in High Definition
- Search for a TV show or Information
- Browse to a TV series
- Watch a TV series from the beginning
- Navigate back to HP/Series (from video)
- Setting the TV location and provider
- Find photos of a show
- Rate a TV show

Recommendations to address issues are provided and include:

- Enhance the visibility of current browsing functionality, such as tabs for filtering and column headers for sorting
- Add additional sorting and filtering functionality to ease the task of finding both episodes (with videos) and featured videos
- Assure the relevancy of search results is clear through highlighting search terms and using discerning result headlines
- Provide easy access to additional content while watching a video
- Assure familiarity and accessibility to all areas of the site with common navigation and displays

## Purpose & Aims of the Study

The goals of this study were:

- Assess the usability of MSN TV website
  - Identify areas of the site having potential usability issues
  - Provide recommendation to alleviate the potential issues
- Begin evaluation of the site, in preparation for a usability study
  - Identify key areas to focus on
  - Begin establishing a task list

## Product Tested

The product tested was the live MSN TV website (<http://tv.msn.com>), accessed through the office network. The sub-categories addressed in the study include:

- TV Listings
- Tonight's Picks
- Reality TV
- New on DVD
- Browse TV Shows
- Photos

entertainment | celebs | movies | music | tv | more

MSN home | Mail | My MSN | Sign in

msn tv | Web | bing

Home | TV Listings | Tonight's Picks | Reality TV | New on DVD | Browse TV Shows | Photos | News | Blog | Superfans

Turn Ons & Turn Offs  
Where Are They Now?  
2009 Daytime Emmy Awards  
The Thrill of the Chase  
See What's New for Fall

**Turn Ons & Turn Offs: Country Rocks Primetime**  
Taylor Swift at the CMA Festival, plus the return of "Greek" and more  
ALSO: FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

advertisement

**SCORE FASTER WITH LIVE STATS**

**WATCH FULL EPISODES**

**BIG BROTHER** | Watch Now | More Info  
**EUREKA** | Watch Now | More Info  
**DEFYING GRAVITY** | Watch Now | More Info  
**America's Got Talent** | Watch Now | More Info

**primetime tonight** Choose a TV provider  
TV Listings for Tuesday, September 1

	8:00 PM	8:30 PM
ABC	Crash Course	
CBS	NCIS	
CW	90210	
FOX	Hell's Kitchen	
NBC	America's Got Talent	

Repeat | New | View all TV listings

**TV ESSENTIALS**  
**Interview Central**  
Q&As with your favorite TV celebs

**TONIGHT'S PICKS**

**10 Things I Hate...**  
When Walter (Larry Miller) goes out of...  
(8:00 PM on ABCF)

**90210**  
Navid and Adrianna (Michael Steger,...  
(9:00 PM on CW)

**Flipping Out**  
Jeff takes charge and begins to...  
(10:00 PM on BRAVO)

**PHOTO GALLERIES**  
**'Survivor: Samoa'**  
Meet the 20 new castaways

**The Fashionably Stylish 'Mad Men'**  
A look at the show's fashion

**FEATURED VIDEO CLIPS**  
**'Flipping Out' Sneak Peek**  
Jeff makes her new assistant Rachel cry

**'Addicted to Beauty' Sneak Peek**  
Dianne's staff learns modeling

**'Andrew Zimmern's Bizarre World'**  
Andrew explores Cuba's cuisine

**TV NEWS** | TV Blog

George Carlin gets another shot at Emmy respect  
Sept. 1, 2009, 9:45 AM EST

ESPN Reporter Erin Andrews to Break Her Silence About Nude Video  
Sept. 1, 2009, 7:19 AM EST

L.A. fashion designer's sentence: gets 59 years to life  
Sept. 1, 2009, 2:25 AM EST

Monday's 'Jon & Kate Plus 8': A Family Divided  
Aug. 31, 2009, 8:08 PM EST

**DAILY TV RATINGS** | Weekly TV Ratings

Sunday, Aug. 30th, 2009 (in millions)

1. Wizards of Waverly Place: The Movie (Disney)	11.43
2. Dateline (NBC)	6.55
3. NFL Preseason: New England at Washington (CBS)	6.29
4. Monk (USA)	4.98
5. Lights, Camera, Take Action (Disney)	4.85
6. Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?-9 p.m. (Fox)	4.51
7. Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?-8 p.m. (Fox)	4.32
8. Psych (USA)	4.08
9. 20/20 (ABC)	4.07
10. Southland (NBC)	3.69

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**MORE TV**  
Follow MSN TV on Twitter  
Top FOX Sports Photos  
Message Boards  
Entertainment on MSN Mobile  
MSN Toolbar: News Access

**POP UP VIDEO**  
**Shaq in the Saddle Again**  
Catching up with the host of "Shaq VS"

**SummerSlam Diary**  
WWE's popular pay-per-view event comes to our writer's hometown; did it live up to the hype?

**'Pop Up Video' Favorites**  
We pick some of our favorite clips from the iconic series

MSN TV Home Page as used in this evaluation

# Methodology

This was a tasked-based heuristic evaluation, with observations based on established usability heuristics and principles (see Appendices A, B), conducted by a single evaluator.

## Date and Location

This evaluation took place in the Microsoft Bravern 2 location, from Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> through Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

## Procedure

### Establishing Tasks

Prior to conducting the evaluation, an informal survey was conducted, to affirm typical tasks and goals of visitors to a TV-oriented website (see Appendix C). From this survey primary goals and key tasks of visitor were identified, specifically, watching past TV episodes, watching current TV episodes, watching featured videos, and viewing the TV listings.

A set of 44 tasks were then established, reflecting typical visitor behavior on the site. These tasks touched most areas of the website, with concentration on the core tasks identified in the survey (see Appendix D).

### Observations

The evaluation consisted of stepping through the tasks, attempting to accomplish each task as a regular visitor would. Any difficulty, confusion or potential of, was noted, along with the usability principle being violated.

In addition to the established principle and heuristic, these observations took into consideration the experience as a whole, including knowledge and experienced gained while on the site and from other TV-oriented websites.

### Severity Rating

Each issue encountered was designated a severity rating, indicating the potential for failure based on the given heuristics and principles, and the overall experience.

## **Competitive Review**

Following the MSN TV evaluation, an informal competitive review was performed on the Yahoo TV and AOL TV websites. The goal of this review was to get a sense of how other sites organize and display content, and how they address some of the issues identified in this evaluation.

## Task Success Metrics

During this evaluation, 44 tasks were performed, simulating typical visitor behavior on the site. Out of the 44 tasks, 24 were performed without encountering any issues.

Tasks are listed below, with their respective rating, as per the issues encountered. Ratings for the tasks are based on the same severity ratings used to rate the issues.

The severity of each task is indicated and is based on the following criteria:

Severity	Description
1	Issue prevents one from completing a task or causes data loss <b>Ex:</b> A “save” button is not visible, so one uses the “close” function on a window and loses their data.
2	Issue causes one significant delay, confusion or frustration <b>Ex:</b> A search UI is lacking filtering ability, causing a one to manually step through several pages of results.
3	Issue may be cosmetic in nature, causing minor irritation <b>Ex:</b> Various buttons serving the same purpose use different terminology.

Details about the issues encountered are provided in the Detailed Analysis section which follows.

### Task Severity Summary

Task		Severity
1	Browse the Home Page	3
2	Search for a favorite TV show	2
3	Return to HP	
4	What’s on TV tonight? (> PrimeTime tonight?)	
5	What are some of the new shows this fall?	
6	What are some recommendations for tonight?	
7	What are some recommendations for Friday night?	
8	What time is it on?	
9	What else is on at that time? (> TV Listing)	
10	Set the locale and provider	2
11	View listing for Friday Evening	
12	Only view movies	

13	Change the time reference	
14	Read more information on a movie	3
15	Change the locale and provider	
16	What movies are in HD?	1
17	Add a show to your favorites	1
18	Return to HP	
19	Find the airing channel and times of the next showing of 30 Rock (Browse to a TV series)	2
20	What happened in the last episode?	
21	Watch an episode	3
22	Play with the Video Controls (length, full screen, pause)	
23	Share this video with a friend	
24	Watch a video related to the show	3
25	Navigate back to HP (from video)	2
26	Find a TV show starring Steve Carell (> Search "Steve Carell" )	
27	Read a review	3
28	Watch a recent episode	3
29	Return to HP	
30	Find photos of The Office	2
31	Watch the series Arrested Development – from the beginning	2
32	Rate an episode	2
33	Back to HP	
34	Find out about the Seattle contestant on Top Chef (> Search "top chef Seattle")	3
35	What happened in the season finale of "Lost"? (> episode / News?)	
36	Return to HP	
37	What are some of the highest rated TV shows?	3
38	How about for the week?	3
39	What are some new releases on DVD	
40	View more information about the series	
41	Attempt to purchase one of the available DVDs	
42	What are some of the top rated Reality shows?	3
43	Watch a video of a Reality show	
44	Have any TV actors been arrested lately? (> news)	

## Detailed Analysis

The follow pages contain details of the issues encountered while conducting this evaluation. Along with each issue is a bullet point indicating the usability principle or heuristic used to identify and explain the issue, and the severity rating of the issue.

Following each issue is an explanation of the issue and of how it was encountered, and a screen shot showing the page the issue(s) were encountered on.

In addition, recommendations are provided, as suggestions on how to resolve the issues.

The severity of each issue is based on the following criteria:

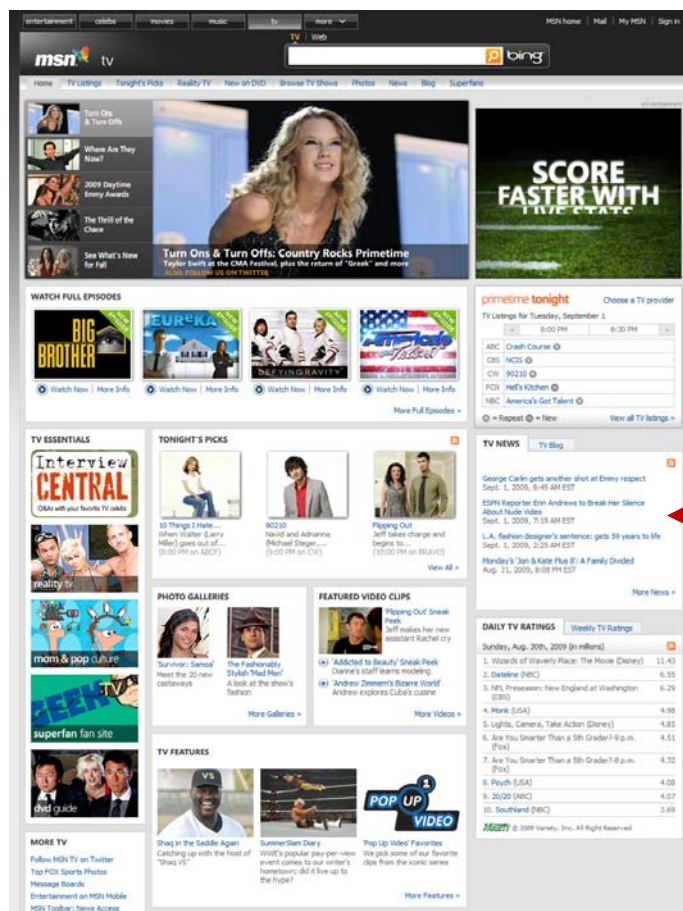
Severity	Description
1	Issue prevents users from completing a task or causes data loss <b>Ex:</b> A “save” button is not visible to a user, so they use the “close” function on a window and lose their data.
2	Issue causes users significant delay, confusion or frustration <b>Ex:</b> A search UI is lacking filtering ability, causing a user to manually step through several pages of results
3	Issue may be cosmetic in nature, causing minor irritation to the user <b>Ex:</b> Various buttons serving the same purpose use different terminology.

## Key Entry Pages

### Home Page

<p>TV News links (in right column) tend to look like sponsored links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

The right column is a common location for ads and sponsored links on websites. The position and formatting of the TV News may cause it to be mistaken for sponsored links. Unless content is easily identifiable as MSN TV content, visitors may treat the information as though it were ads or sponsored links.



MSN TV Home Page

#### ➔ Recommendations

- Improve distinction between MSN content and ads or sponsored links
- Provide users control to turn off animated feature / slide show
- Provide additional Full Episodes through horizontal slider control

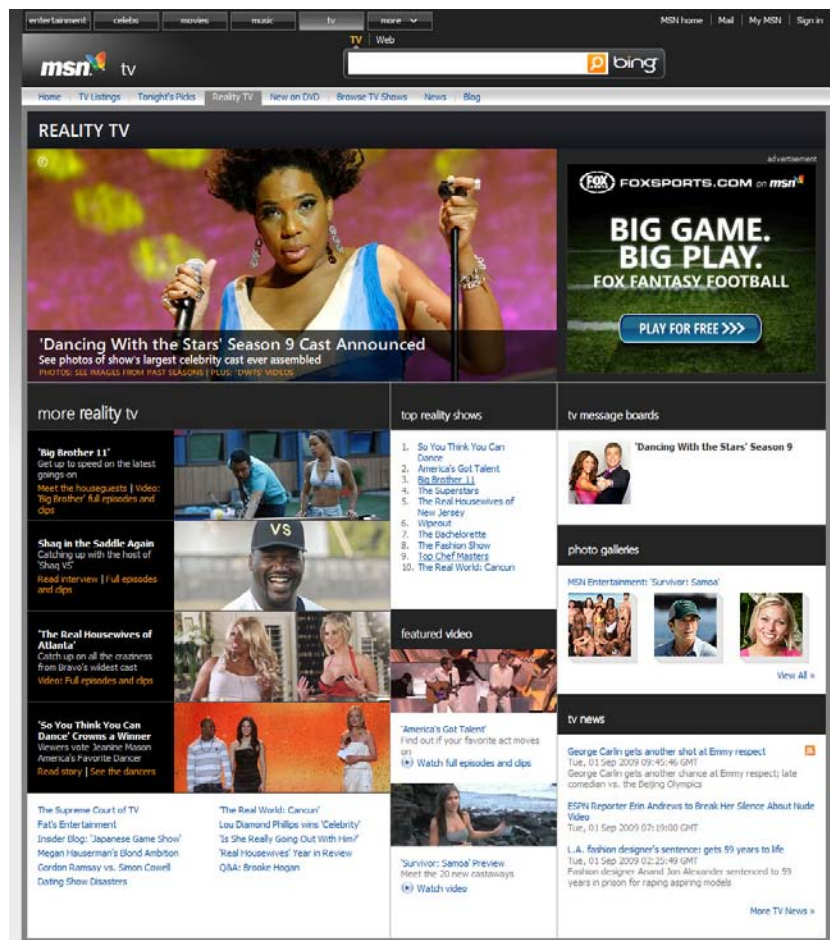
## Reality TV

The content below the featured display, seems to lack organization

- Proximity & Grouping

2

The content on the lower portion of this page lacks the hierarchy of information that is found on the Home Page, such as clear section headers, followed by photo, headline and copy. The current layout makes it difficult to focus on one area at a time and decreases the association of text with its respective header, and photo with its respective text.



MSN TV Reality TV

### ➔ Recommendations

- Improve organization of content
  - Provide some hierarchy of information, improving the association between section headers and content
  - Provide separation of distinct content
  - Avoid an abundance of dark areas, which tend to compete with the photos for attention

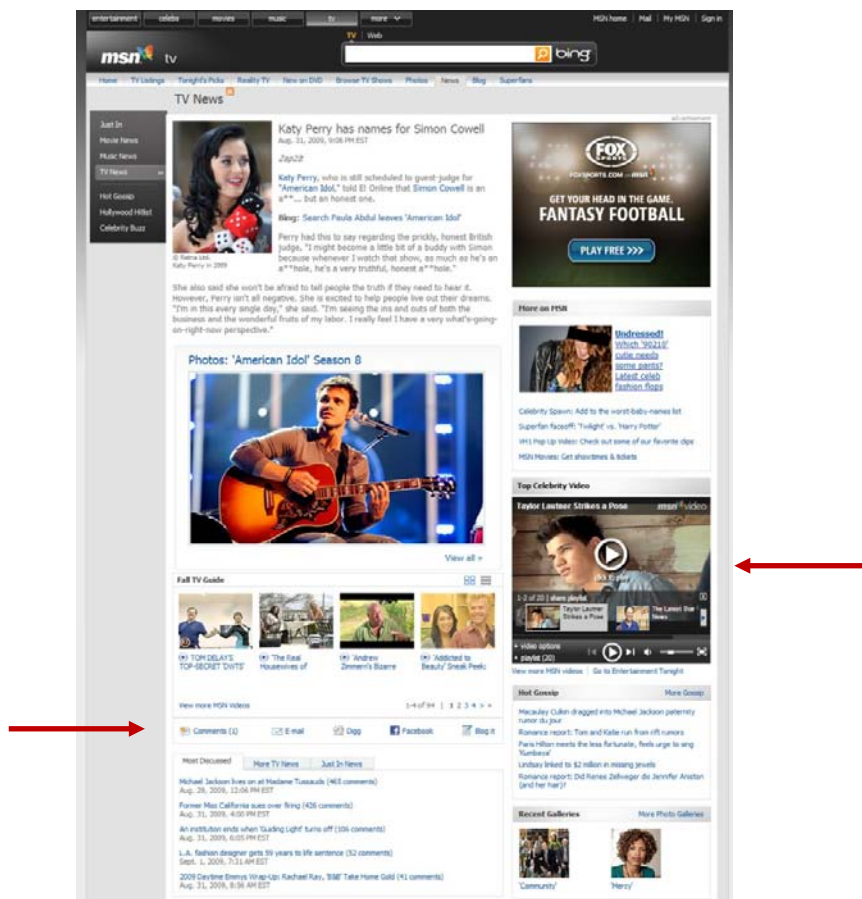
## TV News

<p>Content displayed in the right column may be considered ads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

As on the Home Page, the right column is a common location for ads and sponsored links on websites. Unless the content is distinguishable as site content, it's liable to be considered ads.

<p>The module "Comments / email..." is positioned away from its related content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity &amp; Grouping</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

The module containing "Comments, email, digg" is located far down the page, but these functions are associated with the news story located further up on the page. These are liable to be overlooked or be associated with the wrong content.



MSN TV News page

### ➔ Recommendations

- Improve distinction between MSN content and ads or sponsored links
- Position content and functions close to their associated content

## Search

<p>The relevancy of search results is not always clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p>
---	-----------------

Search is liable to return several pages of results, and it's not always clear from the result headers why some listings appear in the result set.

<p>Missing indication of how many results were returned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
--	-----------------

Search is liable to return several pages of results, and it's not known how many pages or listings one may have to sort through to find what they're looking for.

<p>Missing the ability to jump to beginning or end with numeric page navigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

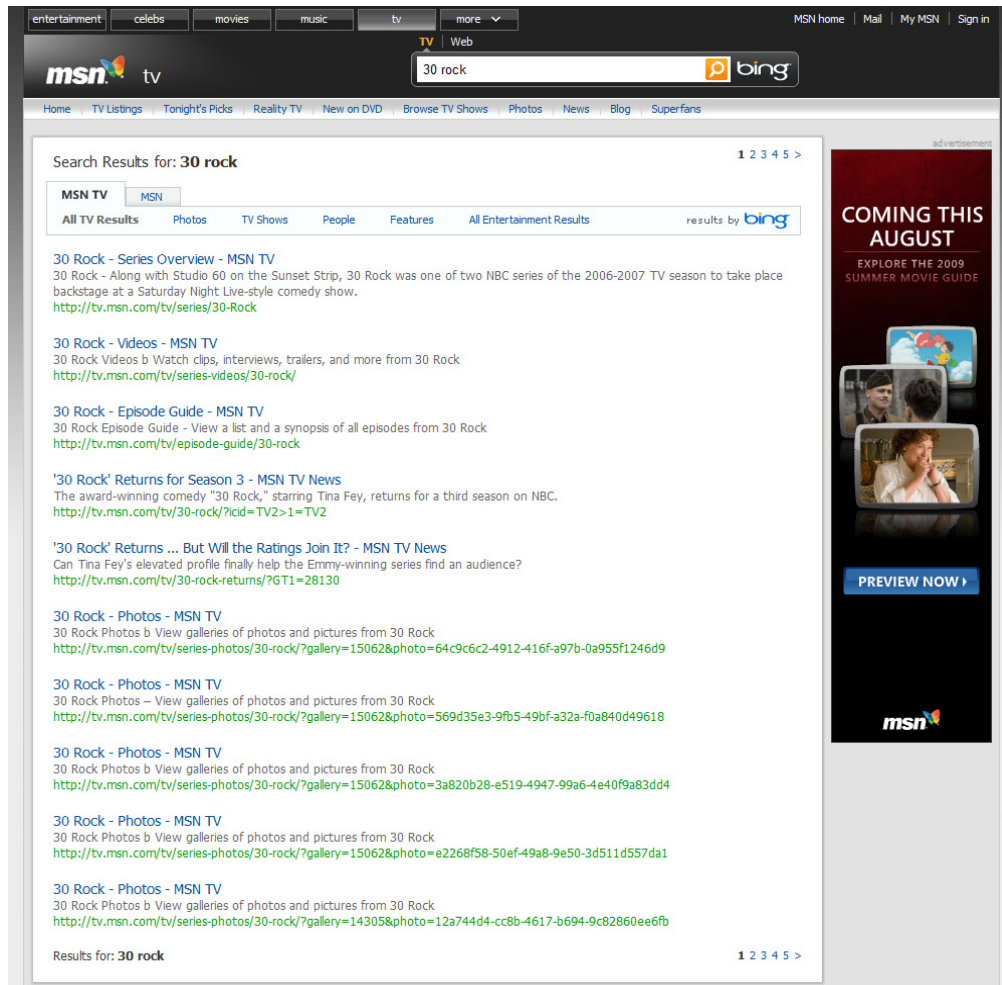
After one steps through a few pages of results, there is no easy way to return to the beginning of the result set, they must go page by page to get back to the beginning.

<p>There appear to be redundant listings (20+ photo results)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

Results found in certain areas of the site (photos, tonight's picks) are listed in the result set, but all use the same result headline. These results lack unique, distinguishable information, and look like redundant listings.

<p>Visibility of filters can be improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Saliency</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

There are filters located at the top of the search results, displayed as blue links on a light blue background. Considering the number of pages of results that can be returned, the use of these filters should be encouraged.



Example of Search Results

## ➔ Recommendations

- Highlight search terms as they appear within results. This will draw the visitor's attention to details of the result description, in addition to the result headline, and allow the visitor to better determine the relevancy of the result to their query.
- Add the number of the results returned. This will provide the visitor a better sense of what the search found, allowing them to better decide whether to read through the current results or perform a different search.
- Add first and last page links to the page number links. This will allow the visitor to easily jump to either the end or back to the beginning of the result set.
- Use unique or distinct search result titles. This will allow a visitor to easily decipher the result listing, instead of having to click through to view the content, and will avoid what appears to be redundancy and poor search experience.
- Encourage the use of filters by increasing their visibility. These filters are valuable to the visitor, and increasing their visibility with higher contrast graphics and text should increase their usage.

## Search Spell Check

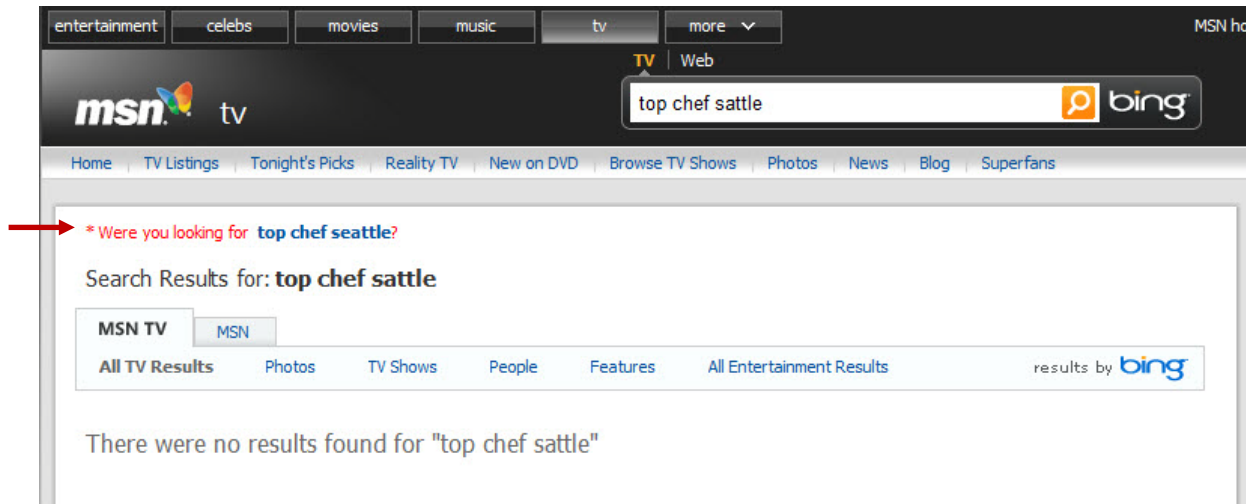
Search Spell Check seems to be inconsistent <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>User Model</li></ul>	3
--	---

Two separate searches were performed:

1. Searched for “married with childrn”
  - No suggestions
2. Searched for “top chef Sattle”
  - Does provides suggestions



Spell Check for “married with childrn”



Spell Check for “top chef sattle”

### ➔ Recommendations

- Provide a consistent spell check experience

## Search Options

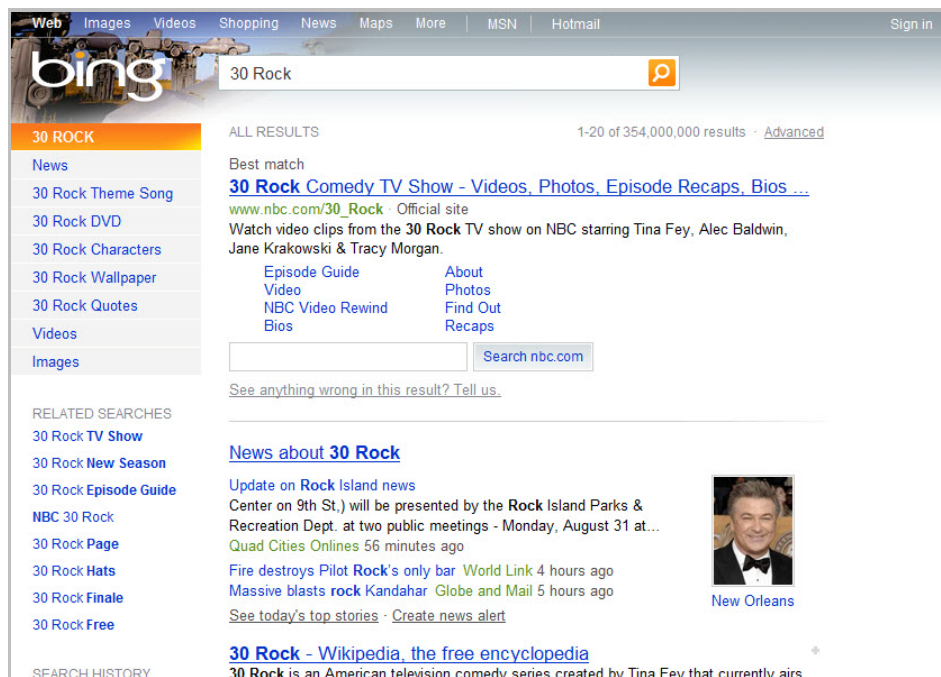
### Options set to TV, click “bing”

Results include listings outside MSN-TV	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	

Using the “bing” button with the “TV” option selected, one expects bing to search within MSN TV, but search returned results from the entire web.



Search from header, with “TV” option selected



Using the “bing” button returns results from the internet, not just MSN TV.

### ➔ Recommendations

- If “TV” option is selected, search should only return results within MSN-TV

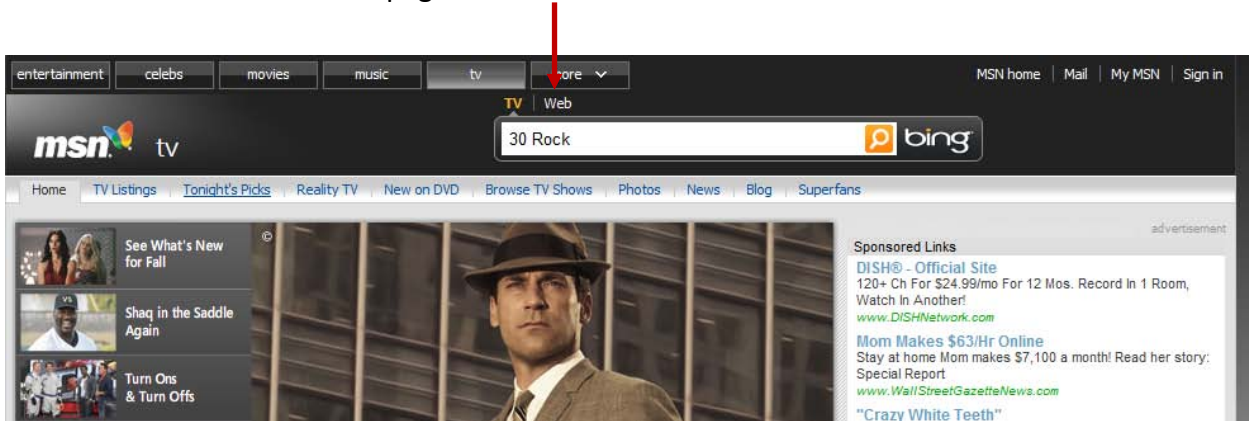
### Select Search Option “Web”

Takes one away from MSN-TV to bing search

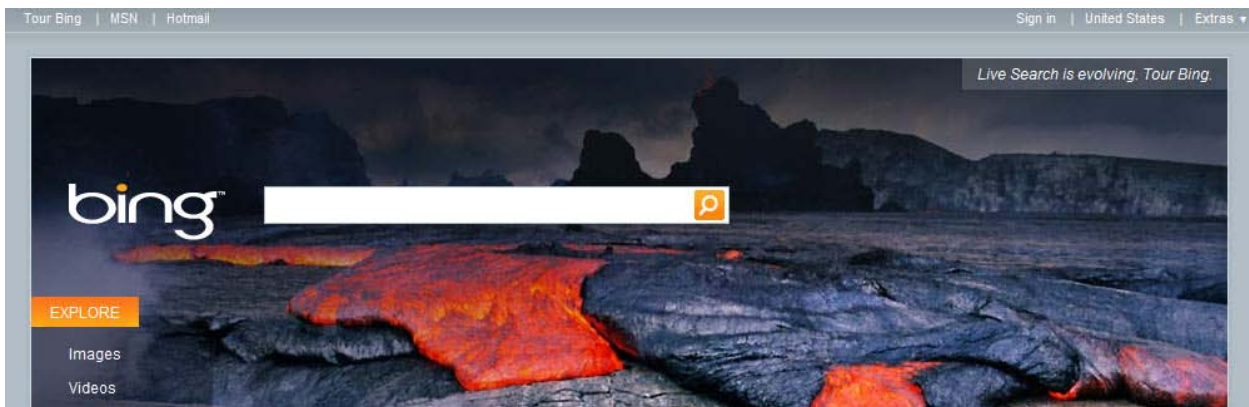
- User Model

3

Expected the “Web” link (adjacent to “TV”) to behave like a tab or option, and allow one to search the web from current page.



Search from header, select the “Web” option



Selecting the “Web” option from MSN TV search, opens a new browser loaded with bing search.

### ➔ Recommendations

- Allow one to select an option to define what type of search they want to perform, and perform the search from the current page
- Only use one search button

## Browse

### Browse TV Shows

<p>Tabs were not immediately visible and tend to blend into background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	2
---	---

The top tabs under “Browse TV Shows” are valuable for visitors to filter their listings. Unfortunately they were not noticed until the 3rd or 4th attempt to narrow the listings to the desired content.

<p>Alpha letters/links are small, can be difficult to click</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	2
--	---

The alphabet links are also a valuable way to filter and navigate through the TV listings, but the letters are rather small and can be difficult targets to click on.

<p>Low visibility of highlighted alpha selection (after a letter is selected)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	3
--	---

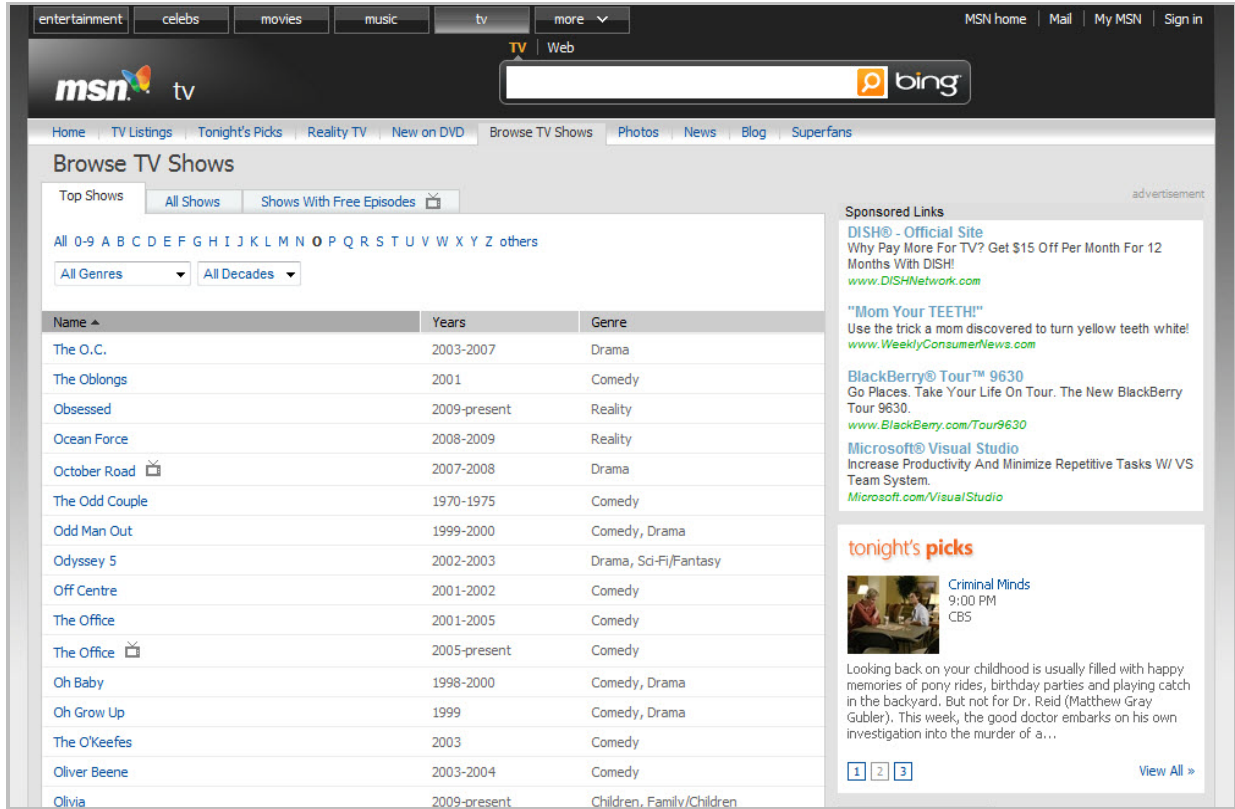
After an alphabet link is clicked on, it changes from blue to black, which produces low contrast highlighting the selection made.

<p>Current filters are somewhat limiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	3
--	---

Even after one uses the current filters, there can still be a fair number of listings to view. Additional of filters would be beneficial to the visitors.

<p>Tabbed filter reads “free episodes”, where other reference uses “full episodes”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency</li> </ul>	3
--	---

The reference to “free episodes” is inconsistent with other references to watching episodes, and may lead one to think there is other content that is not free.



Browse TV Series

## ➔ Recommendations

- Increase visibility of tabs and selected tab. The contrast between these tabs and the background can be enhanced, making them more noticeable to visitors and possibly increasing their usage.
- Increase size of alpha links and make space around each character clickable. Increasing both the size and the clickable area can ease the task of finding one's desired show.
- Enhance the contrast between the selected letter and others (maybe utilizing the "clickable" space around the letter). This will increase the visitor's awareness of the selection as they view and further filter their listing.
- Accessibility to watching episodes can be increased with the addition of new filters. A couple suggestions that would help visitors find desired episodes to watch include:
  - Display only Current or Active shows
  - Display shows with recently added videos
- Use the word "full" in place of "free" to be consistent with other areas of site

## Browse Episodes

Listings are lacking filter ability, making it difficult to find episodes with videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

In the provided scenario / screen shot, the episodes with videos are not displayed on the first page, so one must step through pages of listings until they find the available videos.

Poor visibility of sorting ability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

Series episodes are displayed starting with most recent. To watch a series from the beginning, one must access the last episode listed. The column headers provide sorting ability, but they don't stand out or appear as clickable links.

Some shows have a lot of episodes, which can be cumbersome to browse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

Shows that have been on the air for several years are liable to have a few hundred episodes. Browsing these episodes can be improved through additional grouping and navigational aids.

#	Name	Orig. Air Date	Video
58.	<b>Untitled</b>	04-05-2009	
57.	<b>Fakin' It; Family Ties; Exit Strategy; Development...</b> George Sr. gets a new lawyer; Buster fakes a coma to avoid testifying; Michael tracks down his long-lost sister, ... <a href="#">Full summary</a>	02-10-2006	
56.	<b>Fakin' It</b> Michael plays the family lawyer in a mock trial; Buster pretends he is comatose; Lindsay fights for Buster's rights; ... <a href="#">Full summary</a>	02-10-2006	
55.	<b>Development Arrested</b> Michael tries to keep the family from selling their shares of the stock; Lindsay uncovers a secret; George-Michael... <a href="#">Full summary</a>	02-10-2006	
54.	<b>Exit Strategy</b> Michael and Buster travel to Iraq; George-Michael throws Maebly a surprise party; a prosecutor tricks Tobias into... <a href="#">Full summary</a>	02-10-2006	
53.	<b>Family Ties</b> Michael tracks down a woman who may be his sister; Tobias and Lindsay make separate dates with the same trainer.	02-10-2006	

TV Episode Guide

### ➔ Recommendations

- Add a filter to view only 'episodes with videos'. This will increase accessibility to those episodes/videos not displayed on the default view.
- Increase the visibility of sort headers. Most of the column headers are links, but that's not readily apparent.
- Improve general browsing of episodes through grouping by season.

## Browse Featured Videos

Missing ability to filter or sort videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

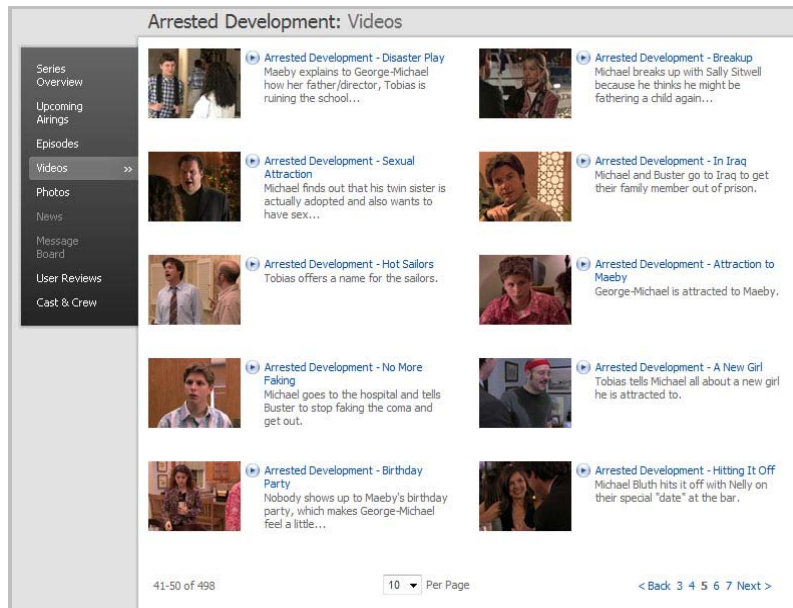
When browsing featured videos, one is liable to encounter a few hundred listings. There is no ability to sort or filter the listings, so one may have to step through several pages of listings to find a desired video to watch.

No indication of video length or airing date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

The listings provide some information, but are lacking information such as length or airing date.

Missing ability to jump to beginning or end with numeric page navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

After one steps through a few pages of results, there is no easy way to return to the beginning of the result set, they must go page by page to get back to the beginning.



Featured Video listing

### ➔ Recommendations

- Add sorting ability such as 'highest rated', 'most viewed', 'recently added'.
- Provide more video information, such as user rating, length, airing date.
- Add first and last page links. This will allow the visitor to easily jump to either the end or back to the beginning of the result set.

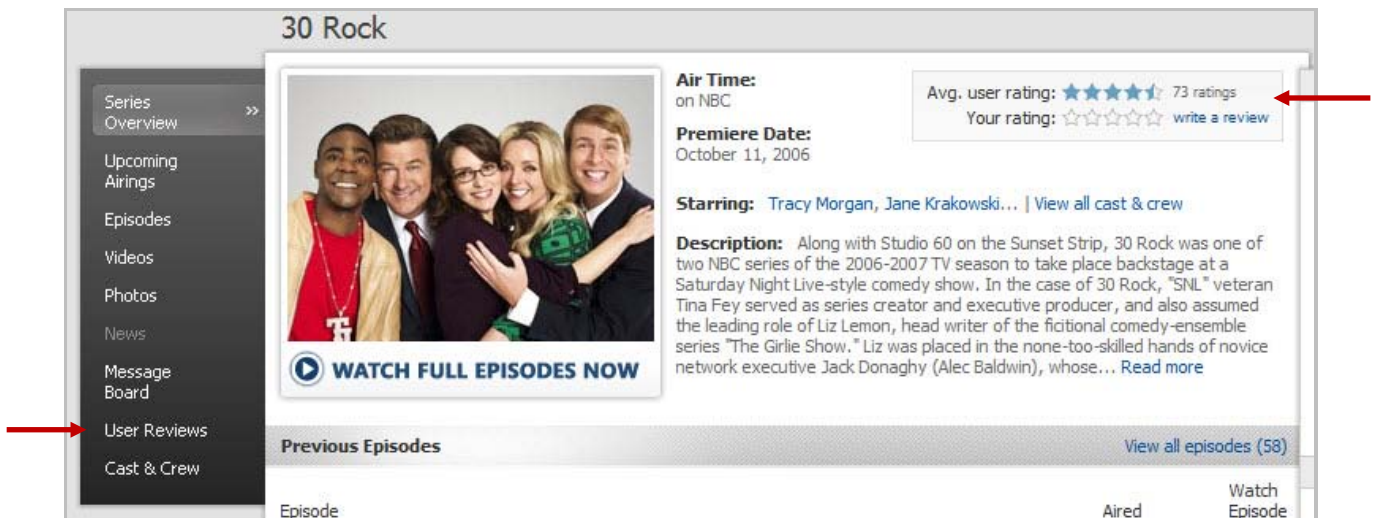
## Series Overview Page

<p>“User Reviews” is displayed separately from user ratings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

When looking for “User Reviews”, the first place they were expected to be displayed was with the User Ratings. Reviews were found in the left navigation column.

<p>Photo displays “Watch Full Episodes Now”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

After reading the text on the photo “Watch Full Episodes Now” expected to go to a list of episodes to watch, but actually loaded a video.



Series Overview page

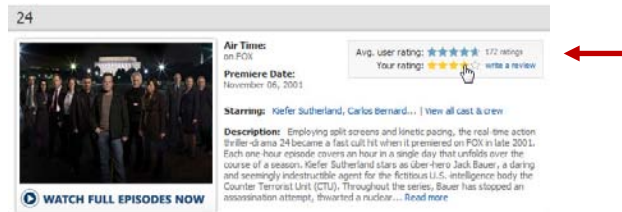
### ➔ Recommendations

- Position “User Reviews” with ratings. That is where one can write a review, so one should be able to view reviews from that location.
- Change text to singular verbiage “Watch Full Episode Now”

## Rating an Episode

<p>Unclear whether the system accepted one's rating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>	2
--	---

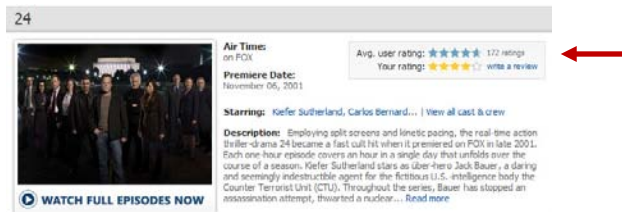
After going through the process of rating an episode and being able to change it, there's no indication whether the system actually accepted the rating or not.



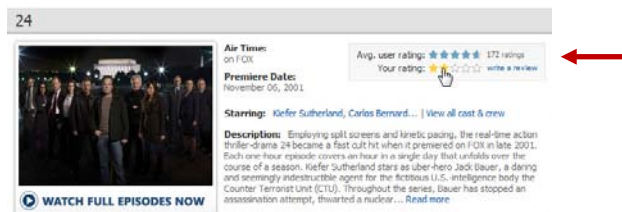
Select a rating



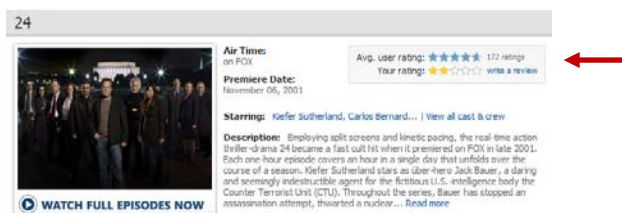
Sign in



User rating is displayed



Can change the star rating



New rating is displayed, but count didn't change

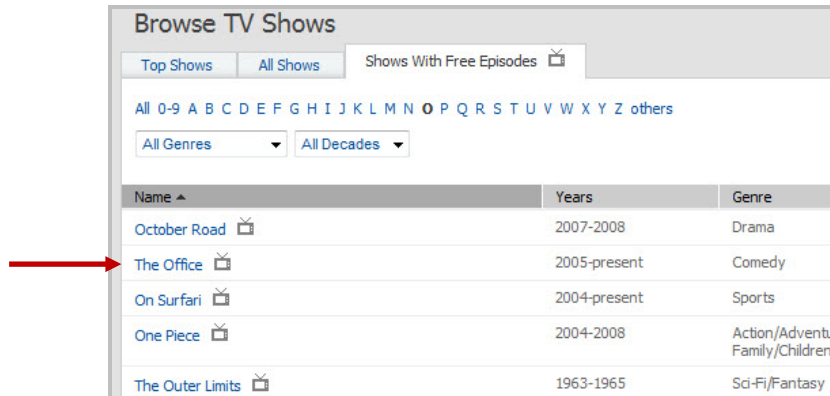
### ➔ Recommendations

- The system should provide feedback about user's action

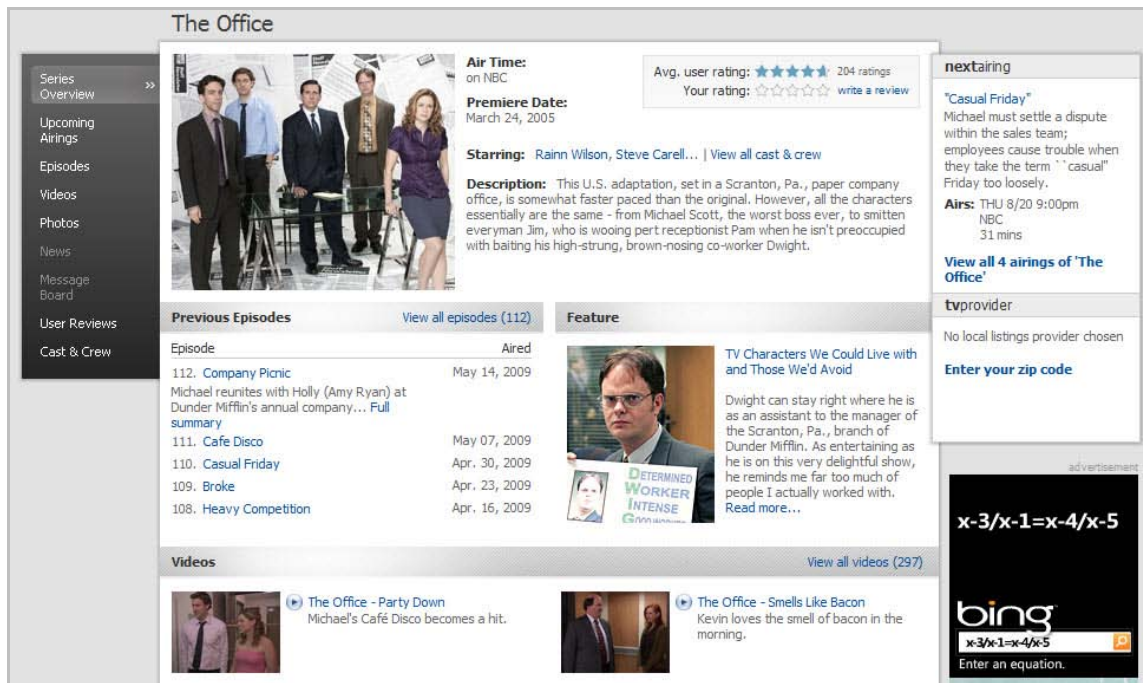
## Episodes to Watch

Episodes are available to watch, but cannot access from the Overview page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility &amp; Efficiency of use</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

The “Browse TV Shows” listing indicates episodes for “The Office” are available to watch, but there are no links available on the Series Overview page to access the episodes. (Viewable episodes were found on the 3rd page of episode listings.)



Browse TV Shows, indicates episodes are available for “The Office”



No links to watch episodes from the “Series Overview”

### ➔ Recommendations

- Assure links are available to watch episodes

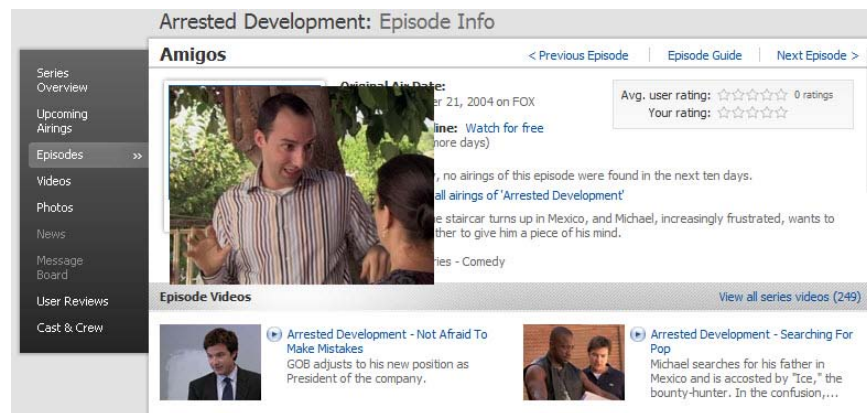
## Episode Information

Photo is not formatted properly for the display

- Aesthetic & Minimalist design

3

When viewing the “Episode Info” page, accessed from the “Episode Guide”, the main photo does not fit the provided space.



Episode Info page, as accessed from Episode Guide

### ➔ Recommendations

- Assure photos are sized properly

## Watching Videos

There is no navigation available to return to where one was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User Control &amp; Freedom</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

There is no navigation available on the video page, to allow a visitor to return to their previous page. There are two links available, but one leads to “hulu” and the other leads to an odd “TV Shows” page. One must use their browser’s back button to return to a prior page.

Inconsistent page to page user experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency; Visual Momentum</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

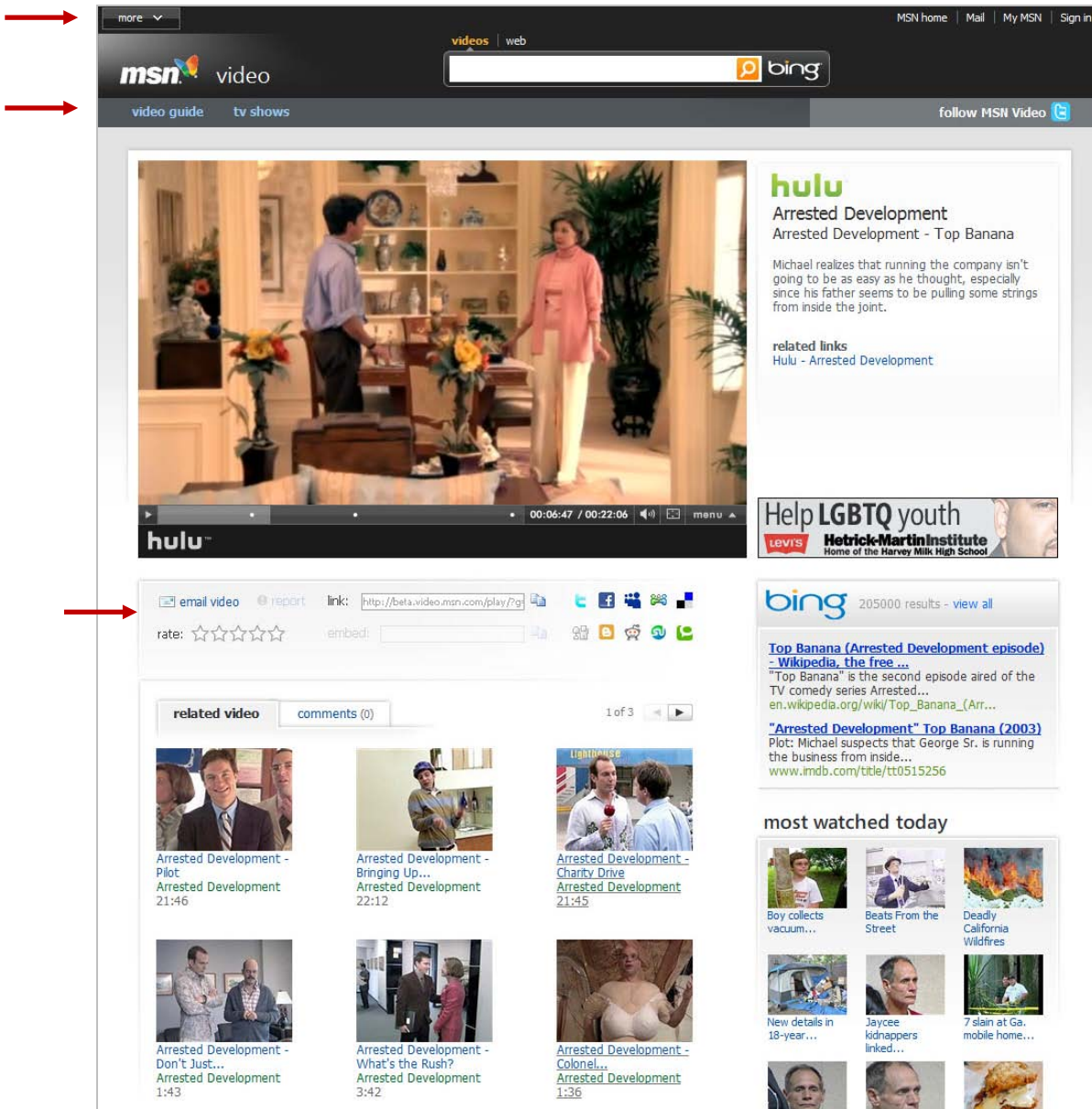
There is a lack of consistency in the user interface when one clicks through to watch a video from the MSN TV site. The video page is lacking common elements such as the top MSN Entertainment tabs and the TV navigational tabs. In addition, one loses the context of the TV series/episode, limiting the access to other TV content.

The “Related Video” tab combines video clips and episodes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User Model; Consistency</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

The tab “related video” under the video display contains both episodes and videos. Survey participants did not make the distinction between videos (as featured clips) and full episodes. This content is also organized separately within the TV series pages.

Background boxes are really faint, could use better separation between sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity &amp; Grouping</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

The social networking icons (twitter, facebook etc.) seem to float on the page above the related video section. There are boxes encompassing these elements, but they are not very visible.



Watching a TV episode

## ➔ Recommendations

- Provide visitors easy access back to the page they came from. At a minimum provide links to “Series Overview” and “TV Home”.
- Maintain the common “TV” user interface and easy access to additional content by showing videos within the TV context.
- Maintain the distinction between videos and episodes, by using a separate tab for episode listings.
- Use more salient boxing and grouping of elements

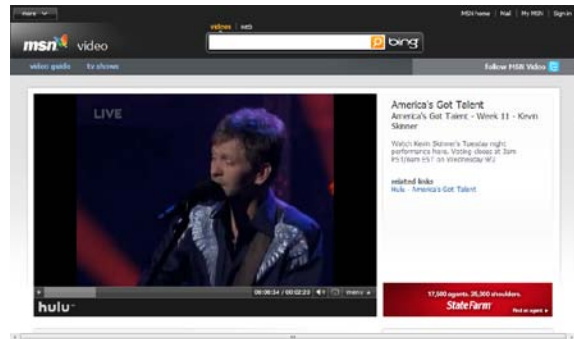
## Watch a Featured Video

Inconsistent user experience – resulting in multiple video players

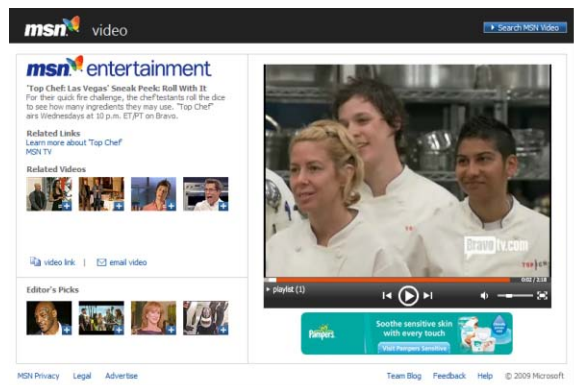
- Consistency; Visual Momentum

2

Watching a video from different TV shows, can result in three different video experiences.



Watch a video of "America's Got Talent"



Watch a video of "Top Chef"



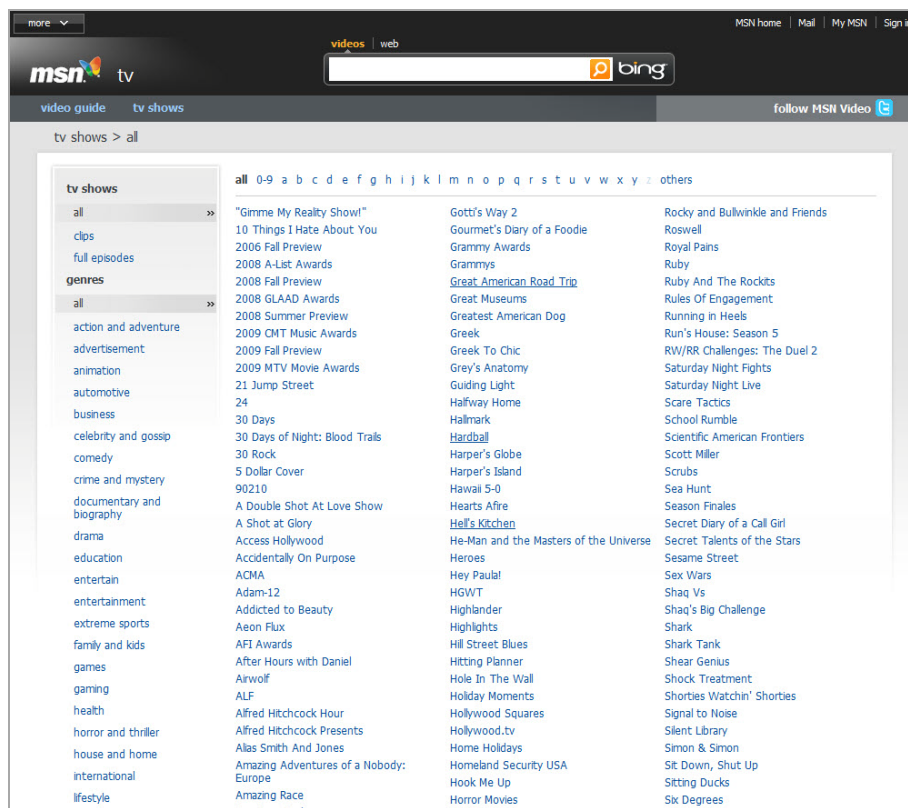
Watch a video of "Big Brother"

### ➔ Recommendations

- Maintain familiarity and provide a consistent video watching experience for the visitor.

## Link to TV Shows page (from watching a video)

<p>Odd page transition, new style of page presented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual Momentum</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<p>“TV shows” was selected on top, but not highlighted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<p>Lower case alpha links are even more difficult targets to select than others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<p>Left column filters don’t stand out as well as other pages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<p>Poor separation between Left navigational links, and content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity &amp; Grouping</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<p>A lot of content for user to look at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>



TV Shows, as linked from the Video page

### ➔ Recommendations

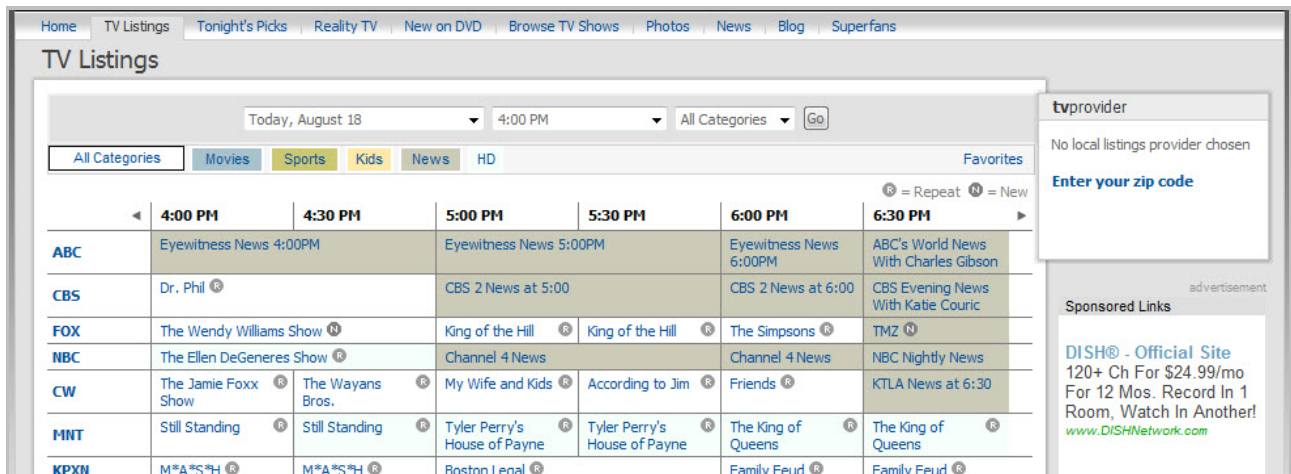
- Remove link to this page – direct visitor to TV Home, Browse Episodes or Series Overview

## TV Listing

### Location and Provider

<p>The “tvprovider” link and display is located off to the side away from the main content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity &amp; Grouping</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

The display and the link to set up one’s provider information are located off to the side of the main display.



TV Listings default view

### ➔ Recommendations

- Increase the visibility and accessibility of “tvprovider” by locating the display closer to the main functions, where visitor’s focus would likely be.

## Setting Location and Provider

<p><b>1.</b> The pop-up displays a lot of text for user to read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
--	-----------------

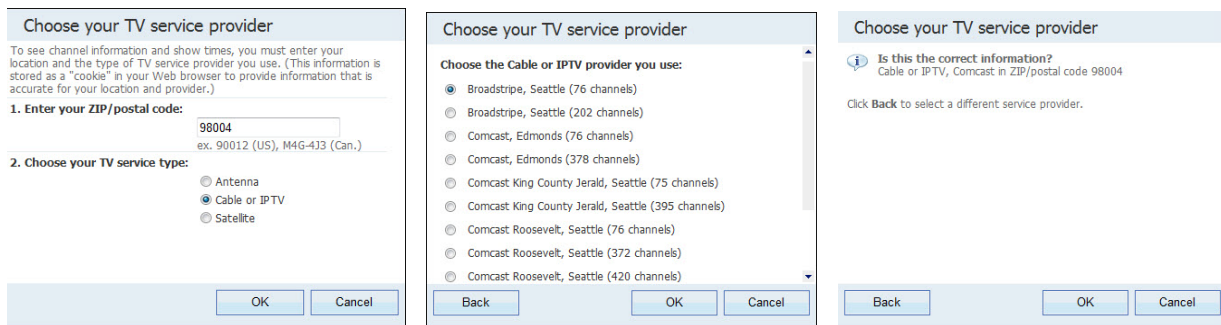
This pop-up contains a lot of information, some of which is incorrect (TV listings are displayed, but one’s local listings may not be displayed), and other information is not necessary (there’s no need to explain the use of cookies to a visitor).

<p><b>2.</b> The scrollbar is light and difficult to see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

After one provides their location and provider type, they are presented with a list of providers to select from. This list can be long and extend below the fold of the pop-up. Because the scrollbar is so faint, some visitors may miss it, and not be able to select the correct provider.

<p><b>3.</b> Information is not easily read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design; Match between system &amp; real world</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p>
---	-----------------

After selecting a provider, the visitor is asked to confirm their choices. The displayed text could be improved to enhance legibility.



1. Choose Provider – Initial display    2. Choose Provider – Select Provider    3. Choose Provider – Confirmation

### ➔ Recommendations

1. Shorten the text and provide a simple explanation of the purpose of the form.
2. Use a drop-down or make scroll bar more visible to assure visibility of the entire list of providers.
3. Re-format text to improve legibility and be easier to read at-a-glance.

## High Definition Listing

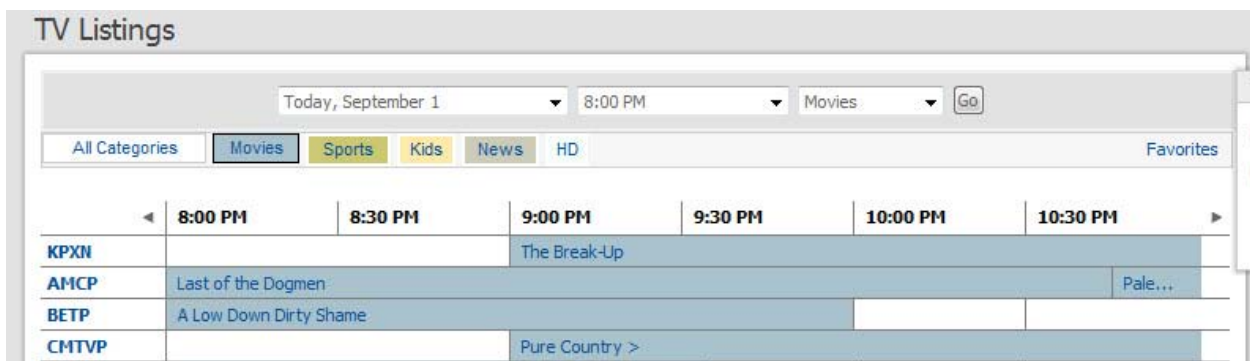
Cannot view a list of High Definition shows within a Category	<b>1</b>
---	----------

- User Model

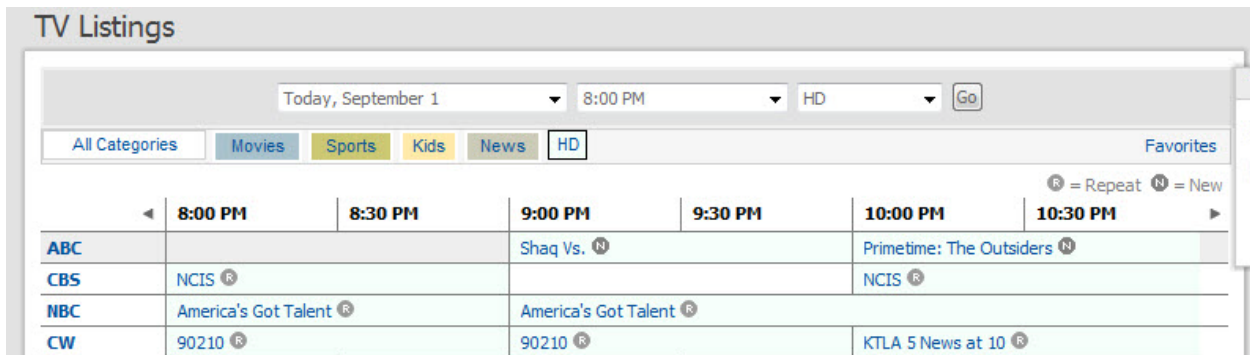
When viewing the TV Listings, there are filter tabs available at the top of the listing, allowing one to refine their view of shows. These include categories such as movies, sports and kids. There is also a selection for “HD”, high definition.

One can select and view individual categories, or they can select and view shows broadcast in HD. One cannot easily identify shows within a category as broadcast in High Definition.

Some channels are liable to broadcast shows as either HD or normal.



TV Listings: Viewing Movies only



TV Listings: Viewing HD only

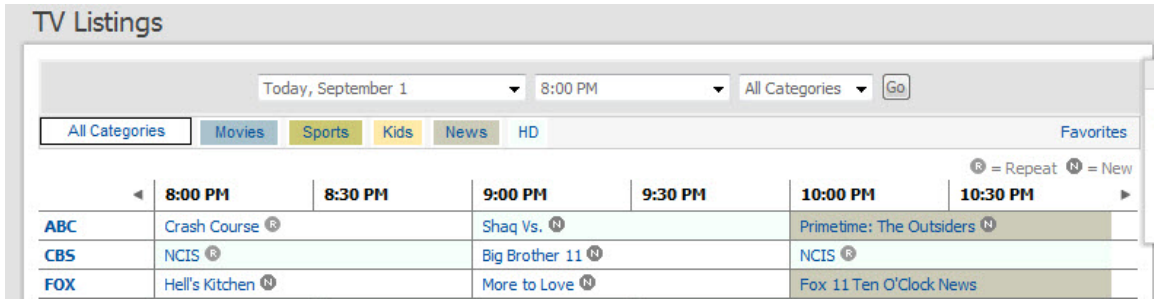
### ➔ Recommendations

- Indicate shows broadcast in HD using an icon, similar to “Repeat” and “New”, instead of treating it like a category

## Setting Favorites

Single word “Favorites” is somewhat ambiguous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

The word/link “Favorites” is displayed on the TV Listings page, but it’s not clear “who’s” favorites.



TV Listings view

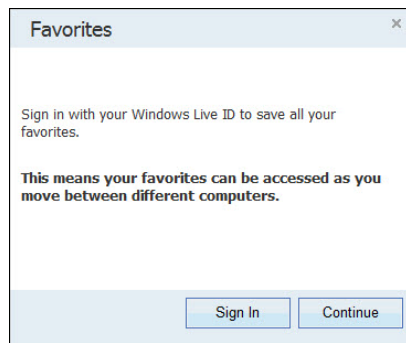
### ➔ Recommendations

- Use the term “My Favorites”

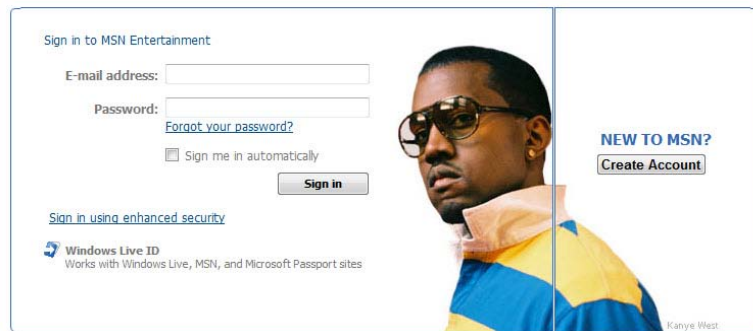
## Setting Favorites – Signing In

Sign in from Favorites Pop-up uses a different UI from other Sign-In pages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency; User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

From the Favorites pop-up, if one selects “Sign In” they are presented with a sign-in page, but it’s different from the other sign-in pages they may have encountered. It’s not clear if one signing in to MSN Entertainment or Window Live?



Favorites pop-up from TV Listings



Sign-in from Favorites pop-up

### ➔ Recommendations

- Use a consistent sign-in page
- Clarify the branding

## Setting Favorites – Signed In

Text continuously reads “Loading Favorite TV Shows...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

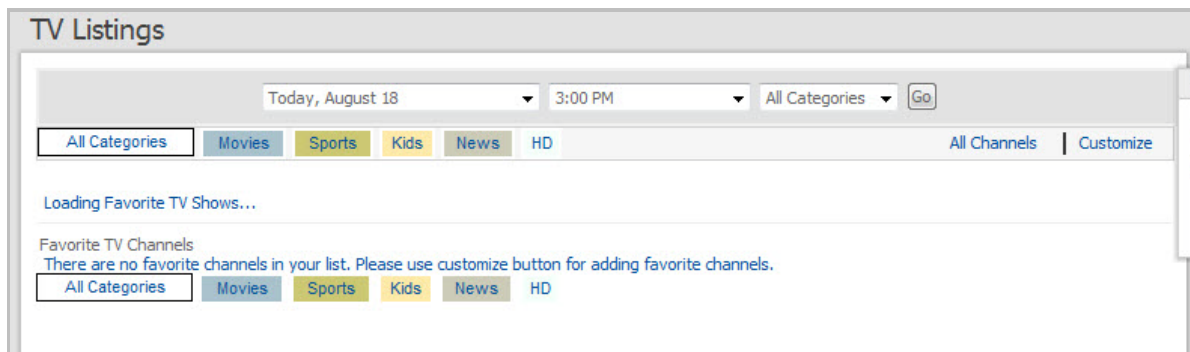
After one signs-in, they are presented with a page that contains some confusing messages, the text reads “loading favorite TV Shows” but it remains and never loads (one hasn’t selected their Favorites yet).

Text “Loading...” and “There are no favorite channels...” are both blue and underline with a mouse hover – but are not links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

Some of the text looks like links, but they’re not.

Text instructs user to use “customize button” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

The text instructs the visitor to use a customize “button”, there is no button available, but there is a “link”.



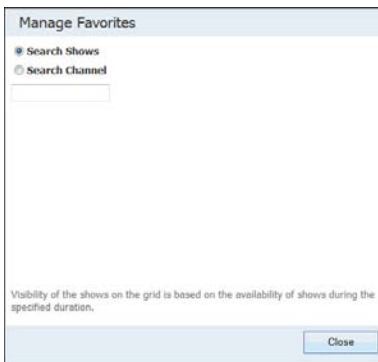
TV Listings view after signing-in

### ➔ Recommendations

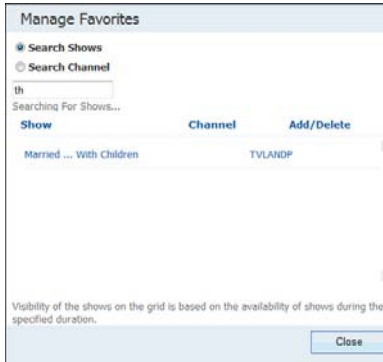
- Use correct and meaningful messaging
  - Don’t say loading at this point
  - Only use link style with true links
  - Use consistent terminology

## Setting Favorites – Customize

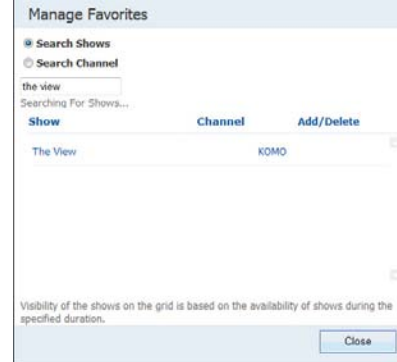
<p><b>1. Initial Customize pop-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop-up reads “Manage Favorites” but link reads “Customize”</li> <li>• Pop-up lacks instructive text</li> <li>• Confusing text at the bottom of the display</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>2. Begin entering the name of a TV show</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returns first show found with matching string</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>3. Enter entire show name</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returns correct listing</li> <li>• All displayed results/text highlights as links, but nothing is clickable</li> <li>• No apparent option to select/save your show</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p>



1. Initial Customize Pop-Up



2. Begin enter TV show



3. Enter entire show name

### ➔ Recommendations

**4. Initial Customize Pop-Up**

- Use consistent terminology
- Provide instructive text
- Use correct and meaningful messaging

**5. Begin entering TV show**

- Allow user to finish entering data before populating fields – suggest a “submit” button
- Only use link style with true links

**6. Enter entire show name**

- Only use link style with true links
- Allow one to enter multiple “favorites”
- Provide a clear “save” or “cancel” option

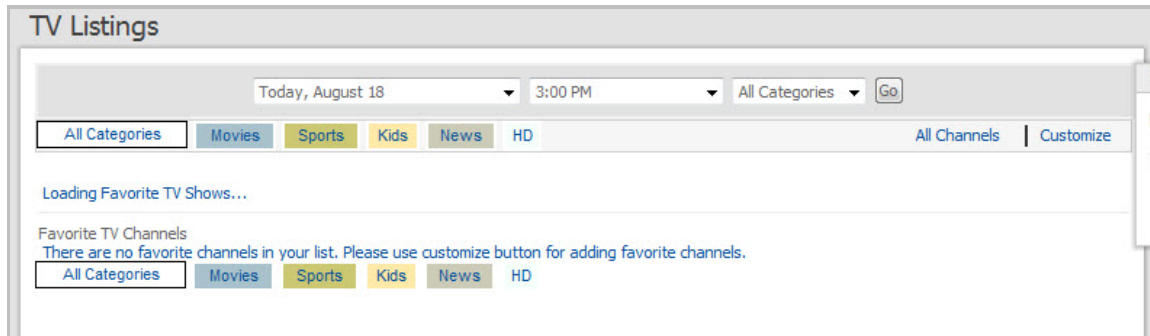
## Setting Favorites – Finish Customizing

Closing the customize pop-up displays the original page

- Flexibility & Efficiency of use

1

Clicking the “close” in the customize pop-up, simply returns one to the original display. There does not appear to be a way to load one’s favorites.



TV Listings view after closing the customize pop-up.

### ➔ Recommendation

- Provide an efficient method for the visitor to load their favorite TV shows.

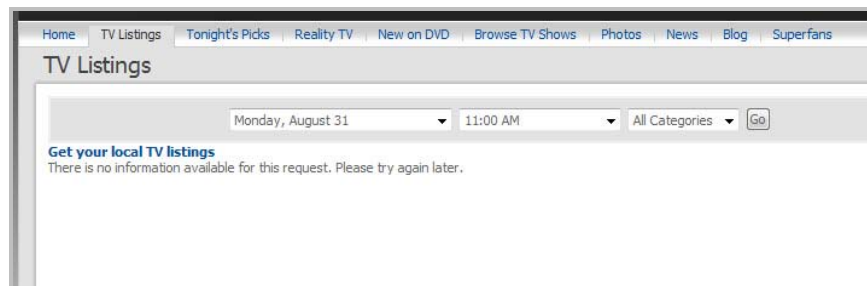
## Selecting Date

Selecting one of the furthest out dates results in an error

- Error Prevention

3

From the TV Listings page, if one selects one of the furthest out dates, it usually results in an error.



TV Listings Page, after the furthest out date was selected

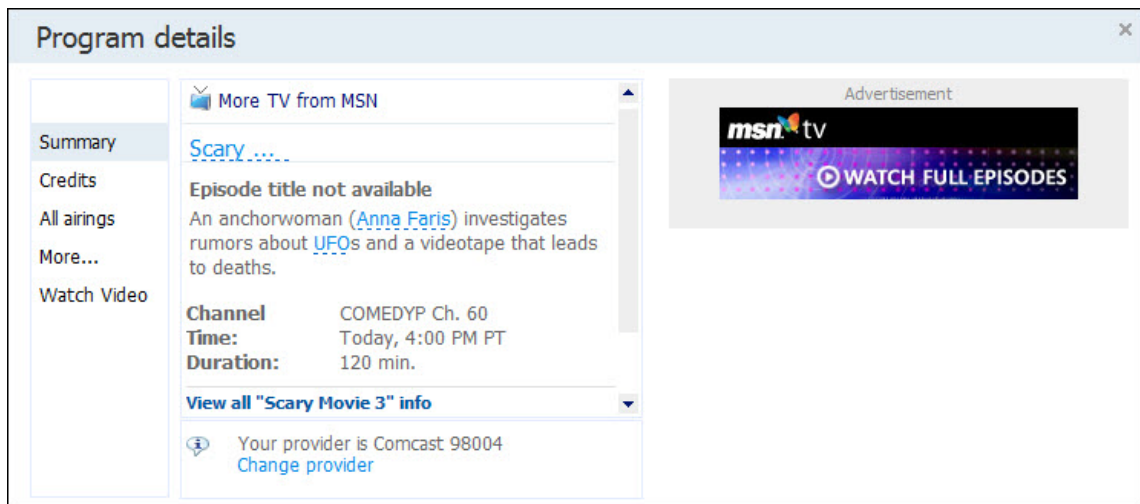
### ➔ Recommendations

- Don’t include dates without supporting content

## Viewing Movie Details

The follow is a group of issues encountered while viewing the Movie Details pop-up, accessed from the TV Listings page.

The link, “More TV from MSN” simply opens a new browser with MSN-TV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
The movie titles are cropped (TV titles are not cropped) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
Episode title has no supporting data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
Boxes separating information are not very visible, poor separation of content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity &amp; Grouping</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
Right side ad (“WATCH FULL EPISODES”) looks as though one can watch episodes of this listing – simply opens a new browser with MSN-TV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
Both “More...” and “Watch Video” have no supporting data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>



Movie Details pop-up, accessed from the TV Listings page

### ➔ Recommendations

- Avoid links that simply open a new browser window – not what the visitor would expect
- Don’t crop or abbreviate titles
- Don’t display information without valid content
- Enhance visibility of boxes and grouping with salient graphics

## Viewing Photos

Missed photo search in the right column <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Saliience</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

There is a search box available for the photo section, but it was overlooked completely.

Unexpected behavior after selecting an alphabet link <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User Model; Attention &amp; Saliience</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

Clicking an alpha link refreshes the entire page, taking one to the top of the page and spinning the photo carousel. Because one’s attention is drawn to the carousel, one may think the results are displayed in the photo carousel, but results are actually displayed below.

Photos appear to be organized by actor, not show <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User Model</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

While browsing for photos of “The Office”, the thumbnail displayed is from one of Steve Carell’s movies, not “The Office”. Clicking through, the only photos available are of Steve Carell. The photos seem to be organized by actor, not show, as expected.

Alpha letters/links are small, can be difficult to click <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Saliience</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

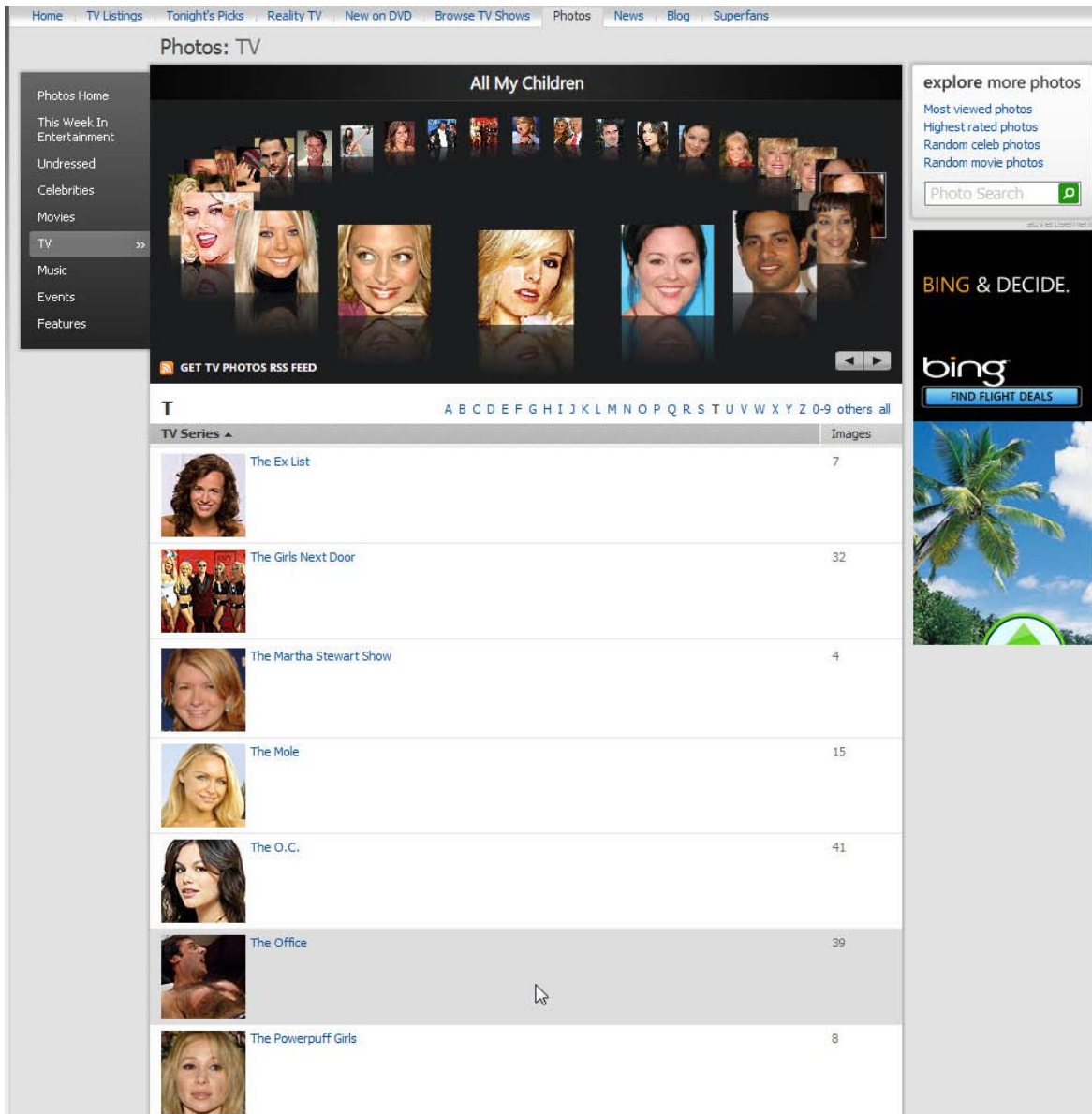
The alphabet links are rather small and can be difficult targets to click on.

Poor use of horizontal space in results listing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetics &amp; Minimalist design</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

The display of a single photo takes the entire width of the page, but there is no content to fill that space.

Each row containing a photo, highlights with the mouse, but is not clickable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User Model</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
--	----------

When moving one’s mouse around the photo listings, each row highlights as the mouse moves over it. In most UIs, this would indicate the area is “hot” or clickable as a link. That is not the case here, it simply highlights.



TV Photos display.

## ➔ Recommendations

- Re-position photo search close to the main part of the page, where a visitor's attention would be
- Control the position of the page when an alpha/letter link is selected
- Do not spin the gallery when an alpha link is selected
- Try to load, and default to "cast" photos for TV photo searches
- Utilize enhanced alphabet/letter links as recommended in other areas of the site
- Improve use of horizontal space
- Either do not highlight the row listing, or allow entire row to be clickable

## TV Ratings

Daily and Weekly ratings are displayed, but not for the current day and week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention &amp; Salience</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
---	----------

Daily and Weekly ratings are readily available, but they are not the current day or week. There is a date supplied but it is not immediately visible.

DAILY TV RATINGS		Weekly TV Ratings
Sunday, Aug. 16th, 2009 (in millions)		
1. Dateline (NBC)	6.15	
2. Neil Diamond: Hot August Night (CBS)	5.38	
3. Monk (USA)	5.31	
4. Psych (USA)	4.2	
5. 20/20 (ABC)	4.13	
6. Suite Life on Deck (Disney)	4.14	
7. Wizards of Waverly Place (ABC)	4.06	
8. Numbers (CBS)	4	
9. Ghost Whisperer (CBS)	3.56	
10. Supernanny (ABC)	3.2	
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Daily TV Ratings, as found on the Home and “Tonight’s Picks” pages

Daily TV Ratings	WEEKLY TV RATINGS	
Week of Jun 16th - Jun 21st, 2009 (in millions)		
1. NCIS (CBS)	10.39	
2. Two and a Half Men (CBS)	10.19	
3. The Mentalist (CBS)	10.12	
4. CSI (CBS)	9.72	
5. The Mentalist (CBS)	8.97	
6. So You Think You Can Dance?-Wed. (Fox)	8.48	
7. The Big Bang Theory (CBS)	8.42	
8. 60 Minutes (CBS)	8.31	
9. CSI: Miami (CBS)	8.25	
10. Criminal Minds (CBS)	8.04	
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Weekly TV Ratings, as found on the Home and “Tonight’s Picks” pages

### ➔ Recommendations

- Emphasize and make the date of the content more obvious to the visitor

## Further Research

It is recommended that a formal usability study be conducted to:

- Verify the current findings
- Test alternative UIs based on the current observations and recommendations

## Summary of Issues and Recommendations

The following is a summary of all the issues identified in this evaluation, including the severity rating, area of the site, issue and recommendation.

Severity	Area of site	Issue	Recommendation
1	TV Listing: High Def	Cannot view a list of High Definition shows within a Category	Indicate shows broadcast in HD using an icon, similar to “Repeat” and “New”, instead of treating it like a category
1	TV Listing: Favorites – Finish Customizing	Closing the customize pop-up displays the original page	Provide an efficient method for the visitor to load their favorite TV shows.
2	Reality TV	The content below the featured display, seems to lack organization	Improve organization of content – provide some hierarchy of information, improving the association between section headers and content; provide separation of distinct content; avoid an abundance of dark areas (headers and text background), which tend to compete with the photos for attention.
2	Search	The relevancy of search results is not always clear	Highlight search terms as they appear within results. This will draw the visitor’s attention to details of the result description, in addition to the result headline, and allow the visitor to better determine the relevancy of the result to their query.
2	Browse TV Shows	Tabs were not immediately visible and tend to blend into background	Increase visibility of tabs and selected tab. The contrast between these tabs and the background can be enhanced, making them more noticeable to visitors and possibly increasing their usage.
2	Browse TV Shows	Alpha letters/links are small, can be difficult to click	Increase size of alpha links and make space around each character clickable. Increasing both the size and the clickable area can ease the task of finding one’s desired show.
2	Browse Episodes	Listings are lacking filter ability, making it difficult to find episodes with videos	Add a filter to view only ‘episodes with videos’. This will increase accessibility to those episodes/videos not displayed on the default view.
2	Browse Episodes	Poor visibility of sorting ability	Increase the visibility of sort headers. Most of the column headers are links, but that’s not readily apparent.
2	Browse Episodes	Some shows have a lot of episodes, which can be cumbersome to browse	Improve general browsing of episodes through grouping by season.

2	Browse Videos	Missing ability to filter or sort videos	Add sorting ability such as 'highest rated', 'most viewed', 'recently added'.
2	Watching Videos	There is no navigation available to return to where one was	Provide visitors easy access back to the page they came from. At a minimum provide links to "Series Overview" and "TV Home".
2	Watching Videos	Inconsistency in page-to-page interface display	Maintain the common "TV" user interface and easy access to additional content by showing videos within the TV context.
2	Watching Videos	The "Related Video" tab combines video clips and episodes	Maintain the distinction between videos and episodes, by using a separate tab for episode listings.
2	Watch a Featured Video	Inconsistent user experience - three different video players can be encountered	Maintain familiarity and provide a consistent video watching experience for the visitor.
2	TV Listing: Favorites – Signed In	Text continuously reads "Loading Favorite TV Shows..."	Don't say loading at this point
2	TV Listing: Favorites – Signed In	Text "Loading..." and "There are no favorite channels..." are both blue and underline with a mouse hover – but are not links	Only use link style with true links
2	TV Listing: Favorites – Customize	1. Initial Customize pop-up Pop-up reads "Manage Favorites" Pop-up lacks instructive text Confusing text at the bottom of the display	Use consistent terminology Provide instructive text Use correct and meaningful messaging
2	TV Listing: Favorites – Customize	2. Begin entering the name of a TV show Returns first show found with matching string	Allow user to finish entering data before populating fields – suggest a "submit" button
2	TV Listing: Favorites – Customize	3. Enter entire show name All displayed results/text highlights as links, but nothing is clickable No apparent option to select/save your show	Only use link style with true links Provide a clear "save" or "cancel" option Allow one to enter multiple "favorites"
2	Accessing Photos	Missed photo search in the right column	Re-position photo search close to the main part of the page, where a visitor's attention would be
2	Accessing Photos	Unexpected behavior after selecting an alphabet link	Control the position of the page when an alpha/letter link is selected Do not spin the gallery when an alpha link is selected

2	Accessing Photos	Photos appear to be organized by actor, not show	Try to load, and default to “cast” photos for TV photo searches
2	Accessing Photos	Alpha letters/links are small, can be difficult to click	Utilize enhanced alphabet/letter links as recommended in other areas of the site
2	Rating an Episode	Unclear whether the system accepted user’s rating	The system should provide feedback about user’s action
3	Home Page	TV News links (right column) tend to look like sponsored links	Improve distinction between MSN content and ads or Sponsored Links Provide users control to turn off animated feature / slide show Provide additional Full Episodes through horizontal slider control
3	TV News	Some content in right column may be considered ads	Improve distinction between MSN content and ads or Sponsored Links
3	TV News	The module “Comments / email...” is positioned away from its related content.	Position content and functions close to their associated content
3	Search	Missing indication of how many results were returned	Add the number of the results returned. This will provide the visitor a better sense of what the search found, allowing them to better decide whether to read through the current results or perform a different search.
3	Search	Missing the ability to jump to beginning or end with numeric page navigation	Add first and last page links. This will allow the visitor to easily jump to either the end or back to the beginning of the result set.
3	Search	There appear to be redundant listings (20+ photo results)	Use unique or distinct search result titles. This will allow a visitor easily decipher the result listing, instead of having to click through to view the content, and will avoid what appears to be redundancy and poor search experience.
3	Search	Visibility of filters can be improved	Encourage the use of filters by increasing their visibility. These filters are valuable to the visitor, and increasing their visibility with higher contrast graphics and text should increase their usage.
3	Browse TV Shows	Low visibility of highlighted alpha selection (after a letter is selected)	Enhance the contrast between the selected letter and others (maybe utilizing the “clickable” space around the letter). This will increase the visitor’s awareness of the selection as they view and further filter their listing.
3	Browse TV Shows	Current filters somewhat limiting	Accessibility to watching episodes can be increased with the addition of new filters. A couple suggestions that would help visitors

			find desired episodes to watch include: Display only Current or Active shows Display shows with recently added videos
3	Browse TV Shows	Tabbed filter reads “free episodes”	Use the word “full” in place of “free” to be consistent with other areas of site
3	Browse Videos	No indication of video length or airing date	Provide more video information, such as user rating, length, airing date.
3	Browse Videos	Missing ability to jump to beginning or end with numeric page navigation	Add first and last page links. This will allow the visitor to easily jump to either the end or back to the beginning of the result set.
3	Watching Videos	Background boxes are really faint, could use better separation between sections	Use more salient boxing and grouping of elements
3	Link to TV Shows page	Odd page transition, new style of page presented	Remove link to this page – direct visitor to TV Home, Browse Episodes or Series Overview
3	Link to TV Shows page	“TV shows” was selected on top, but not highlighted	Remove link to this page
3	Link to TV Shows page	Lower case alpha links are even more difficult targets to select than others	Remove link to this page
3	Link to TV Shows page	Left column filters don't stand out as well as other pages	Remove link to this page
3	Link to TV Shows page	Poor separation between Left navigational links, and content	Remove link to this page
3	Link to TV Shows page	A lot of content for user to look at	Remove link to this page
3	TV Listing: Location and Provider	The “tvprovider” link and display is located off to the side	Increase the visibility and accessibility of “tvprovider” by locating the display closer to the main functions, where visitor’s focus would likely be.
3	TV Listing: Location and Provider	The pop-up displays a lot of text for user to read	Shorten the text and provide a simple explanation of the purpose of the form.
3	TV Listing: Location and Provider	The scrollbar is light and difficult to see	Use a drop-down or make scroll bar more visible to assure visibility of the entire list of providers.
3	TV Listing: Location and Provider	Information is not easily read	Re-format text to improve legibility and be easier to read at-a-glance.
3	TV Listing: Favorites	Single word “Favorites” is somewhat ambiguous	Use the term “My Favorites”

3	TV Listing: Favorites – Signing In	Sign in from Favorites Pop-up uses a different UI from other Sign-In pages	Use a consistent sign-in page Clarify the branding
3	TV Listing: Favorites – Signed In	Text instructs user to use “customize button” – no button, but a link	Use consistent terminology
3	Accessing Photos	Poor use of horizontal space in results listing	Improve use of horizontal space
3	Accessing Photos	Each row containing a photo, highlights with the mouse, but is not clickable.	Either do not highlight the row listing, or allow entire row to be clickable
3	Search Spell Check	Search Spell Check seems to be inconsistent: 1. Searched for “married with childrn” - No suggestions 2. Searched for “top chef Sattle” - Does provides suggestions	Provide a consistent spell check experience
3	Series Overview Page	“User Reviews” is displayed separately from user ratings	Position “User Reviews” with ratings. That is where one can write a review, so one should be able to view reviews from that location.
3	Series Overview Page	Photo displays “Watch Full Episodes Now”	Link only shows single video, change text to singular verbiage “Watch Full Episode Now”
3	Viewing Movie Details	The link, “More TV from MSN” simply opens a new browser with MSN-TV	Avoid links that simply open a new browser window – not what the visitor would expect
3	Viewing Movie Details	The movie titles are cropped (TV titles are not cropped)	Don’t crop or abbreviate titles
3	Viewing Movie Details	Episode title has no supporting data	Don’t display information without valid content
3	Viewing Movie Details	Boxes separating information are not very visible, poor separation of content	Enhance visibility of boxes and grouping with salient graphics
3	Viewing Movie Details	Right side ad (“WATCH FULL EPISODES”) looks as though one can watch episodes of this listing – simply opens a new browser with MSN-TV	Avoid links that simply open a new browser window – not what the visitor would expect
3	Viewing Movie Details	Both “More...” and “Watch Video” have no supporting data	Don’t display information without valid content

3	Daily TV Ratings	Daily and Weekly ratings are displayed, but not for the current day and week	Emphasize and make the date of the content more obvious to the visitor
3	Browse Episode to Watch	Episodes are available to watch, but cannot access from the Overview page	Assure links are available to watch episodes
3	Episode Information	Photo is not formatted properly for the display	Assure photos are sized properly
3	View TV Listings	Selecting one of the furthest out dates results in an error	Don't include dates without supporting content
3	Search from Header	Option set to TV, click "bing" Results include listings outside MSN-TV	If "TV" option is selected, search should only return results within MSN-TV
3	Search from Header	Select Search Option "Web" Takes one away from MSN-TV to bing search	Allow one to select an option to define what type of search they want to perform, and perform the search from the current page Only use one search button

Table summarizing all of the issues and recommendations found in this study

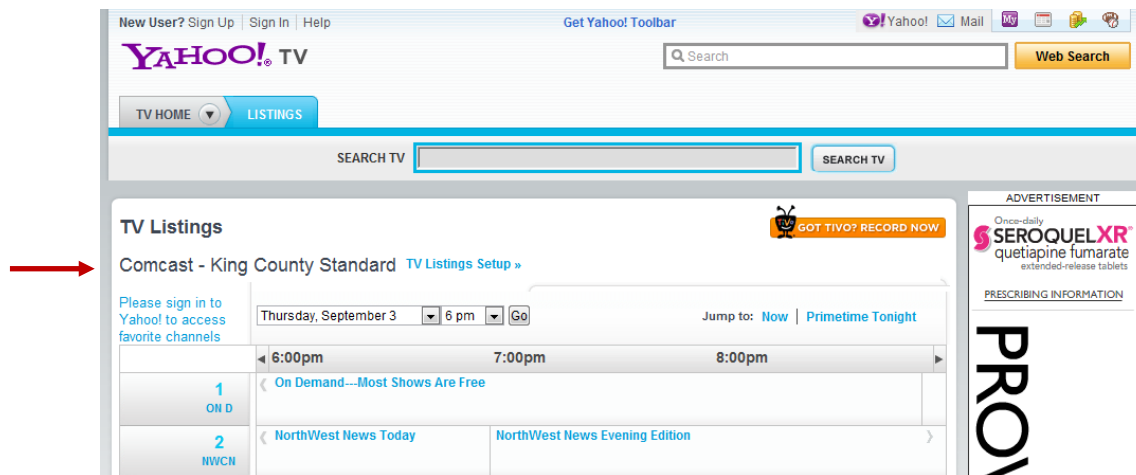
# Competitive Review

In addition to the Heuristic evaluation, an informal competitive review was conducted, to determine how other sites deal with situations that caused some issues on MSN TV.

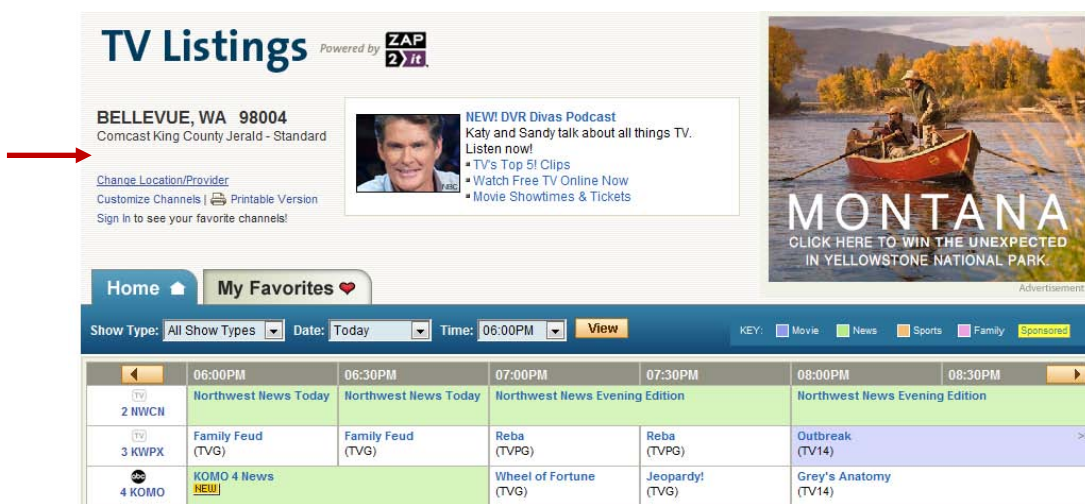
The sites used in this evaluation were Yahoo and AOL.

## TV Listing Location and Provider

Both Yahoo and AOL position the links and information about the visitor's location and provider close to the TV listings.



Yahoo TV Listings



AOL TV Listings

## Search

MSN, Yahoo and AOL all provide search within the respective channel one is on, and across the internet.

### Yahoo

Yahoo provides the visitor with two distinct search boxes, one to search within the channel, the other to search the web.

### AOL

AOL provides a single search box with multiple options, which allow the visitor to perform several types of search from a single location.

## Tabs

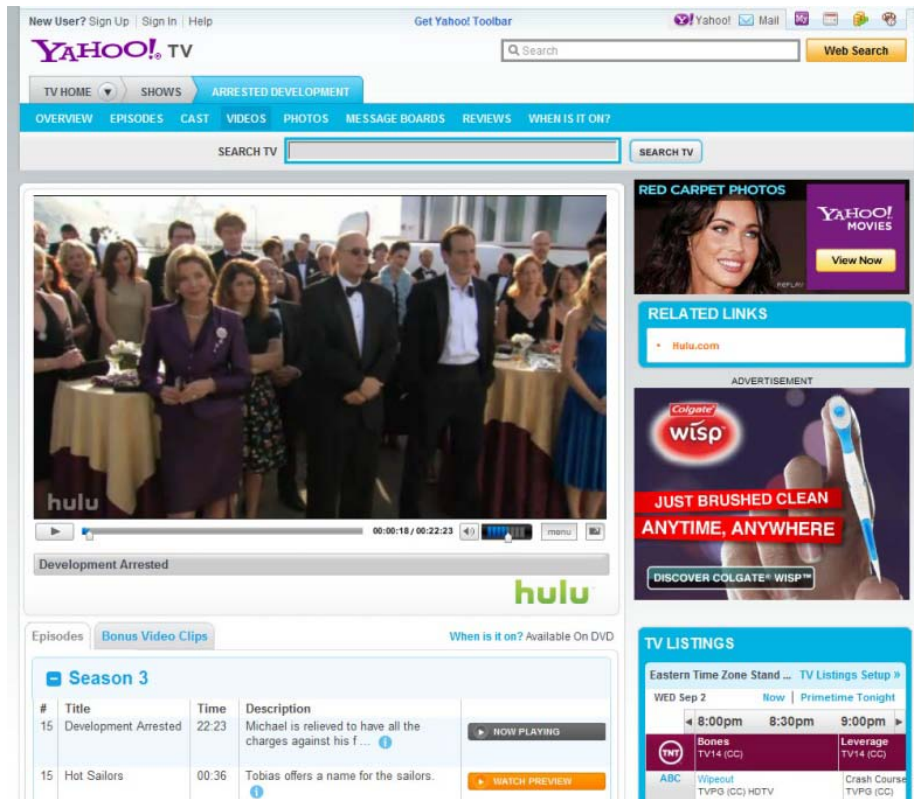
Both Yahoo and AOL use large text and (especially AOL) high contrast graphics in their tabs, which makes for quick and easy visibility and accessibility of content.

## Context

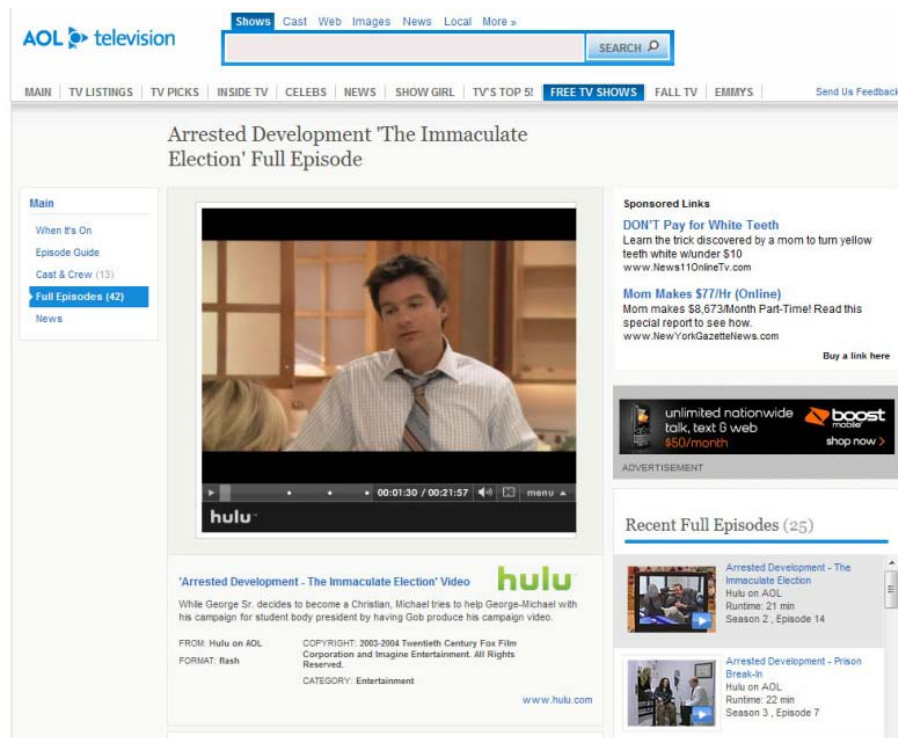
Both Yahoo and AOL display videos within the context of the TV show. When watching videos, one always has easy access to all other show related content, including access to other videos or episodes.

## Separation of Content

Both Yahoo and AOL distinguish between Episode listings and Episode videos: each site has a link to access all episodes, containing episode information, and a separate link to access only those episodes that have videos available to watch. This allows for easy access if one wants to just the videos of episodes.



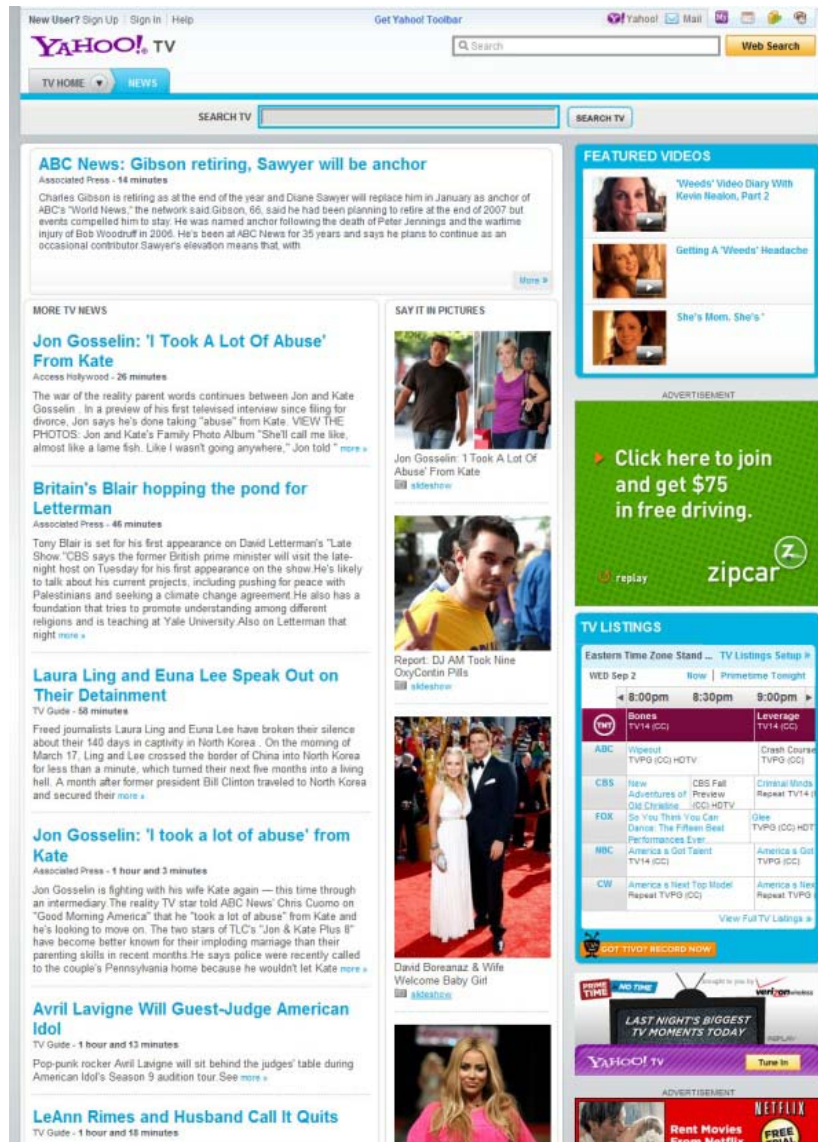
Yahoo video display, showing how Yahoo addresses Search, Tabs, Context and Episode Content



AOL video display, showing how AOL addresses Search, Tabs, Context and Episode Content

## Content vs. Ads

Yahoo distinguishes between their content and right column ads through the use of color coordinating of their own content. When their own content is displayed in the right columns, it's outlined in the same color that is established for the page tabs.



Yahoo displays their right column content in a color-coordinated outline.

## Appendix A: Usability Heuristics

(From Nielsen\*)

1. **Visibility of system status** - The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.
2. **Match between system & real world** - The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.
3. **User control & freedom** - Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.
4. **Consistency and standards** - Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.
5. **Error prevention** - Even better than a good error message is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.
6. **Recognition rather than recall** - Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another.
7. **Flexibility & efficiency of use** - Accelerators may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.
8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design** – Every extra unit of information competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.
9. **Helps users recognize and recover from errors** - Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.
10. **Help and documentation** - Help or documentation should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

\*Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D., is a User Advocate and principal of the Nielsen Norman Group. Dr. Nielsen founded the "discount usability engineering" movement for fast and cheap improvements of user interfaces and has invented several usability methods, including heuristic evaluation

## Appendix B: Usability Principles

(As interpreted from Wickens\*)

1. **User Model** - A system should operate in a manner familiar to the user. The design should take into consideration the user's perspective, including context, knowledge and expectations of behavior. (Similar to Nielsen's "Match between system and the real world")
2. **Attention and Salience** - It's important that the necessary information and functionality be clearly visible to the user and easily located.
3. **Consistency** - Maintaining a familiar experience through a common representation of elements and behavior will help reduce a user's mental workload and maintain user's performance.
4. **Proximity and Grouping** - Elements related to one another, those accessed sequentially or providing support to others, should be located close to each other or show relationship through common or encompassing graphic representation.
5. **Feed-forward** - A user should be able to infer a sense of expectations or knowledge of what behavior is being invoked before they take any action within a UI.
6. **Feedback** - Acknowledgment of a user's action should be displayed, either indicating progression of the response or confirmation of the action taken.
7. **Noise and Distracters** - A UI should avoid unnecessary information or graphics that draw the user's attention away from the intended content.
8. **Visual Momentum** - There should be graceful transitions between pages of a UI, achieved through a consistent representation of UI elements, common anchor points and a continuous mapping of system functionality.

\* Christopher Wickens is a Professor Emeritus and Former Head, Human Factors Division, Institute of Aviation, University of Illinois and author of several publications within the Human Factors industry.

## Appendix C: User Survey

20 Microsoft employees were asked the following questions:

1. About how much TV do you watch?
  - To identify avid TV viewers
2. How frequently do you visit TV oriented websites
  - To identify users who have used these type of sites
3. What are the more common things you do on these sites?
  - To identify common tasks
4. What difficulties do you recall encountering while using these sites?
  - To identify common problems

Most Common Tasks	Responses	Most Difficult Tasks	Responses
Watch Past / Missed Shows	9	Downloading Player / Player Compatibility	5
Watch Current Shows	7	Finding Desired Content	2
Preview New Shows	5	Watching Shows in Sequence	1
View TV Schedule	5		
Watch Special Events	4		
Look up Recommendations	3		
View Show Information	2		

## Appendix D: Task List

1	Browse the Home Page	23	Share this video with a friend
2	Search for a favorite TV show	24	Watch a video related to the show
3	Return to HP	25	Return to HP
4	What's on TV tonight? (> Prime Time tonight)	26	Find a TV show starring Steve Carell (> Search "Steve Carell" )
5	What are some of the new shows this fall?	27	Read a review
6	What are some recommendations for tonight?	28	Watch a recent episode
7	What are some recommendations for Friday night?	29	Return to HP
8	What time is it on?	30	Find photos of "The Office"
9	What else is on at that time? (> TV Listing)	31	Watch the series "Arrested Development" from the beginning
10	Set the locale and provider	32	Rate an episode
11	View listing for Saturday evening	33	Back to HP
12	Only view movies	34	Find out about the Seattle contestant on "Top Chef" (> Search "top chef Seattle")
13	Change the time reference	35	What happened in the season finale of "Lost"? (> episode / News)
14	Read more information on a movie	36	Return to HP
15	Change the locale and provider	37	What are some of the highest rated TV shows?
16	What movies are in HD?	38	How about for the week?
17	Add a show to your favorites	39	What are some new releases on DVD
18	Return to HP	40	View more information about one of the series
19	Find the airing channel and times of the next showing of 30 Rock (> Browse to a TV series)	41	Attempt to purchase one of the available DVDs
20	What happened in the last episode?	42	What are some of the top rated Reality shows?
21	Watch an episode	43	Watch a video of a Reality show
22	Play with the Video Controls (length, full screen, pause)	44	Have any TV actors been arrested lately? (> news)