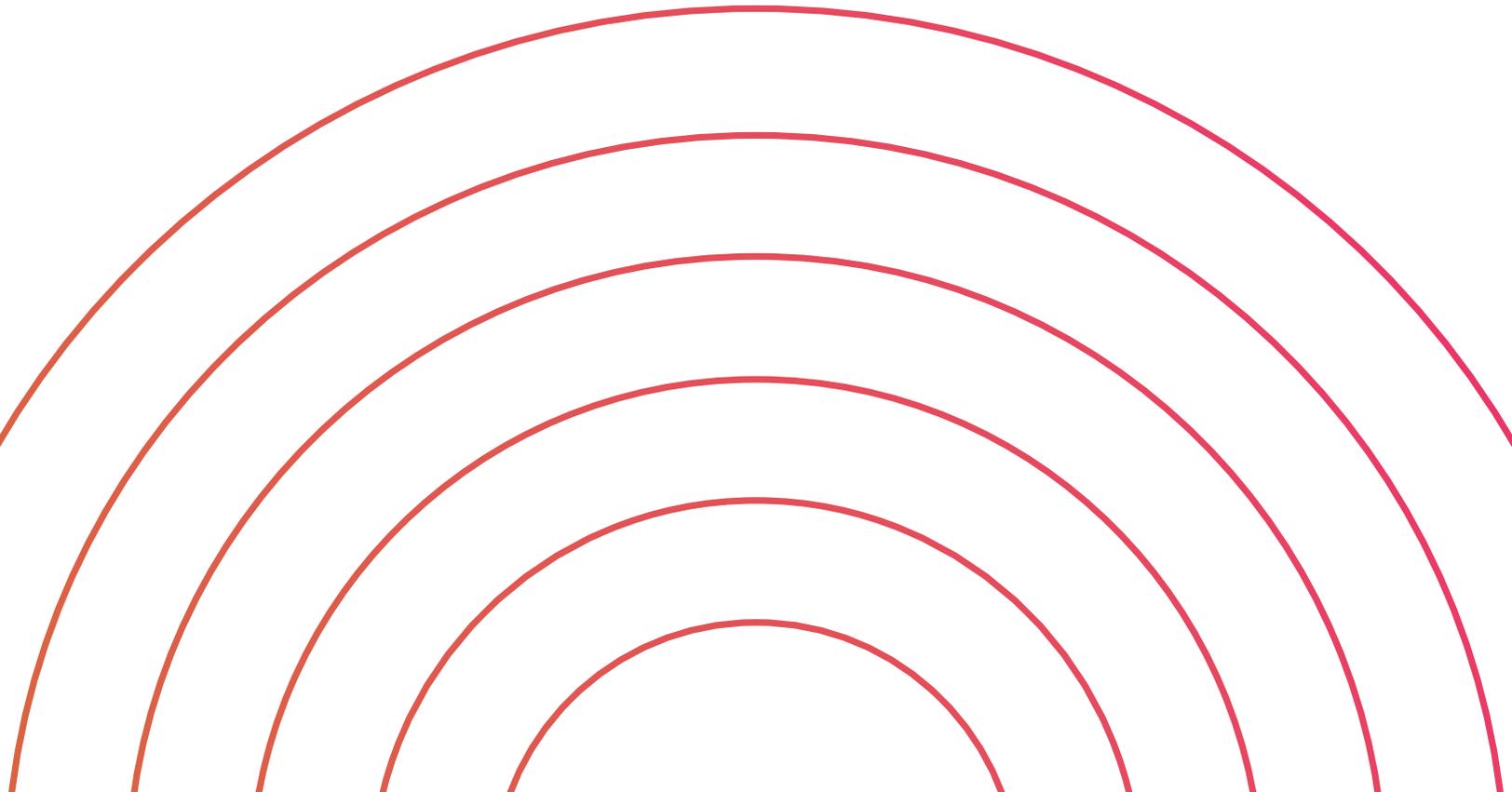




Finding the Right Doctor

What really matters to patients



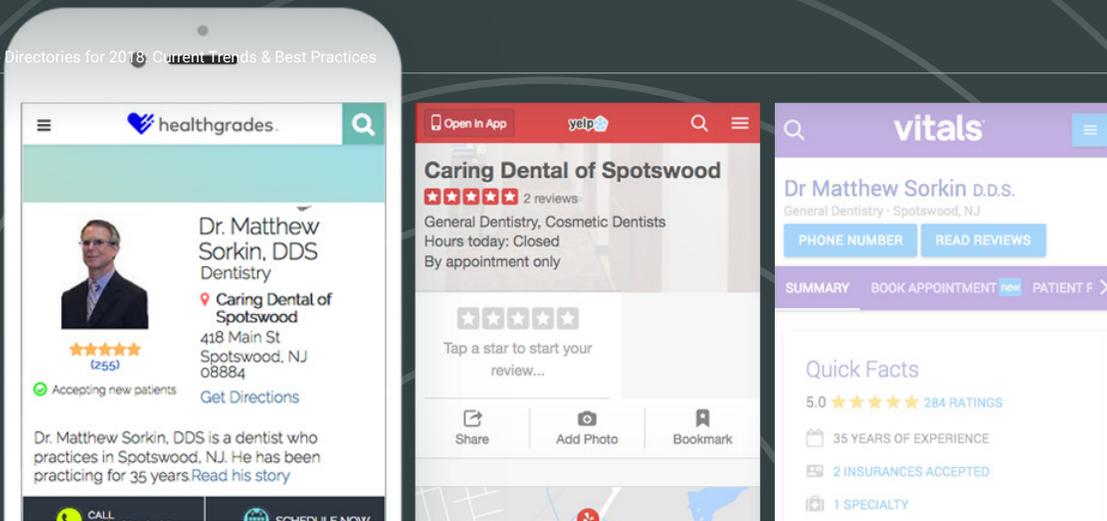


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The Power of Surveys

When we decided to redesign our directories, we realized that we needed to take a step back and figure out how to create the most user-friendly search process imaginable.

Why? Because for the average person, searching for a provider online has become an overwhelming experience, and it involves navigating through and filtering out gargantuan amounts of data—names, titles, education, practice information, locations, addresses, insurance, and specialties.

We figured if even we were having trouble juggling all these fields in our own searches for our kids' doctors—and building and navigating hospital directories is our life—then it was safe to assume that everyone else was, too.

So, we set out to discover what people would like in a directory to make this process easier.

We created a quick, informal, three-question survey and collected responses nationwide from a vast array of sources—friends, family, acquaintances, coworkers, clients, social media, message boards, and listservs.

The more we know about user needs, the more we can anticipate our clients' needs when it comes to design.

Current State of the Art

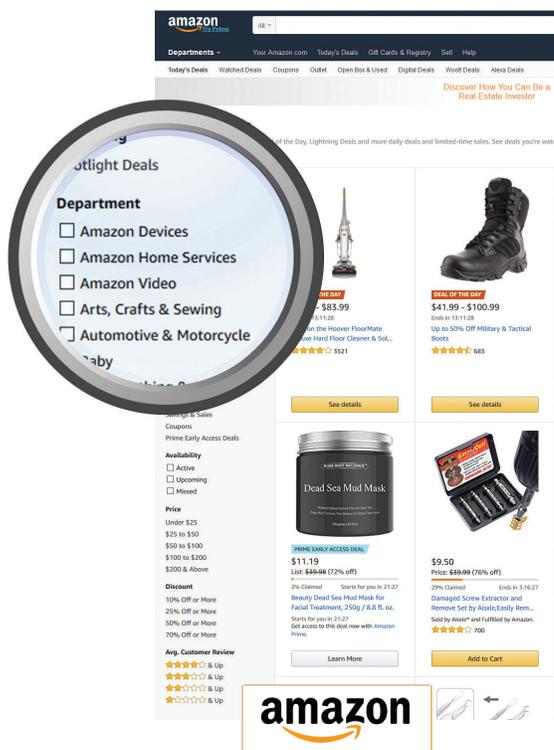
A lot has changed in the past decade of web design. As the world settled comfortably into the second decade of its serious relationship with the internet, increases in technology allowed for unprecedented speed. As websites got quicker, they could also hold more information—more than ever before, in fact.

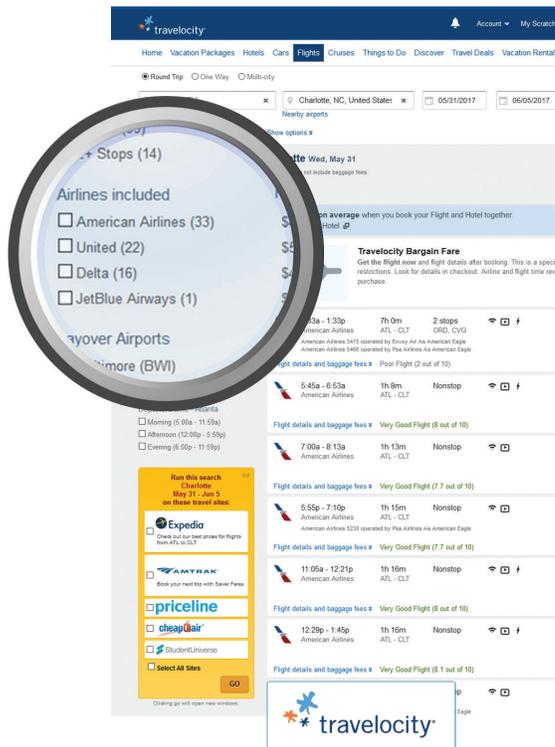
While this is a great jump forward for mankind, it also had the unintended effect of making website navigation extraordinarily complicated. “We have the ability, so we should use all of this space and speed to present vast amounts of information to our users” seems to have been the sentiment that carried the day.

And while this capability was absolutely necessary to huge ecommerce enterprises like Amazon and major flight-booking sites, the trend spilled over to many different industries, including healthcare.

THE CURRENT UBIQUITOUS SIDEBAR TREND

Sidbars are nearly everywhere today, and to be fair, they are incredibly useful in the right context—but it’s important to consider your audience, as well as your organization’s needs. In-depth, faceted searching is far more useful





to academic medical centers, where the criteria carry more weight. Community health systems, on the other hand, have an entirely different set of needs when it comes to searching.

In this study, we will examine the survey itself, as well as the insights we gained and how they affected the direction of our design.

Our Survey Methodology

We designed a Google survey and posted it on multiple social media sites, as well as across email and listserv channels. Doing this allowed us to grab actual consumer data (129 responses). Telephone interviews were also conducted with people looking for specialists (3 responses).

The data collected was used to develop user personas in order to prioritize what information was the most important on profiles. We also used it to determine how people searched for a provider.

Wireframes were then developed based on those findings and will undergo user tester later on to validate these findings.

SEARCH FREQUENCY

We decided to begin the survey with a quick analysis of how often and how recently people had been engaging in a provider search.

This was perhaps our most interesting takeaway from our survey:

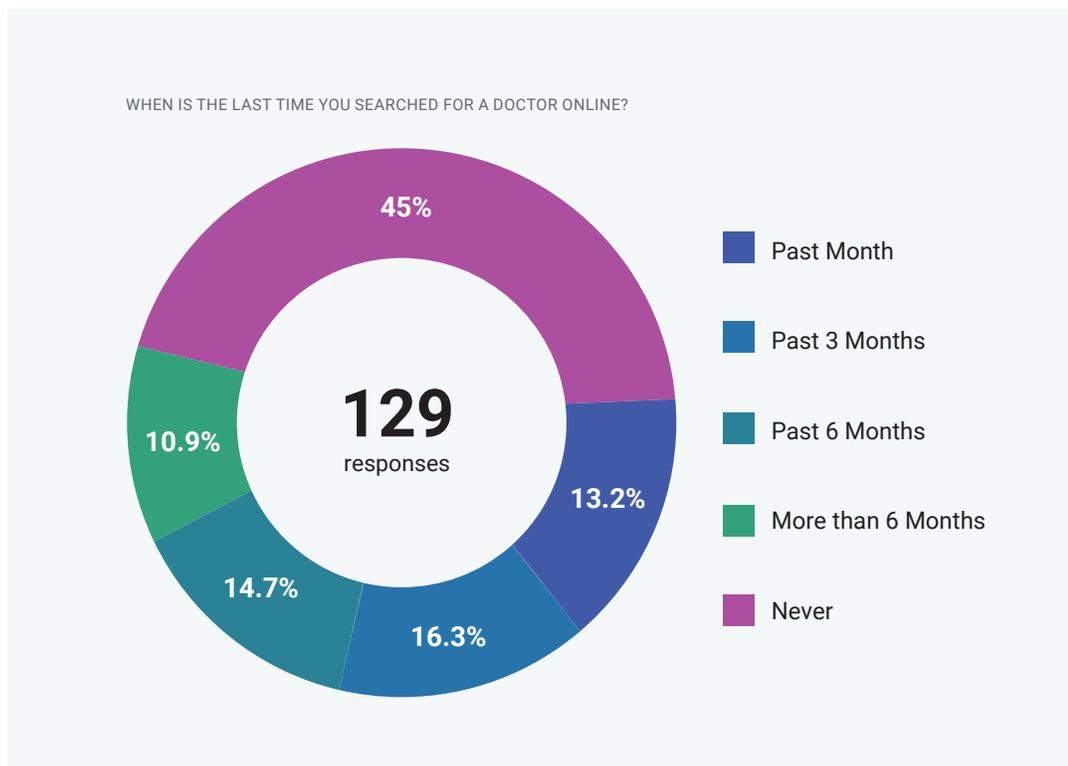
Of the respondents, nearly half have **NEVER** searched for a doctor online.

There are two main reasons that most likely explain this startling statistic:

- Most insured individuals visit their insurance providers'

website to find in-network doctors, thereby bypassing the hospital’s proprietary site.

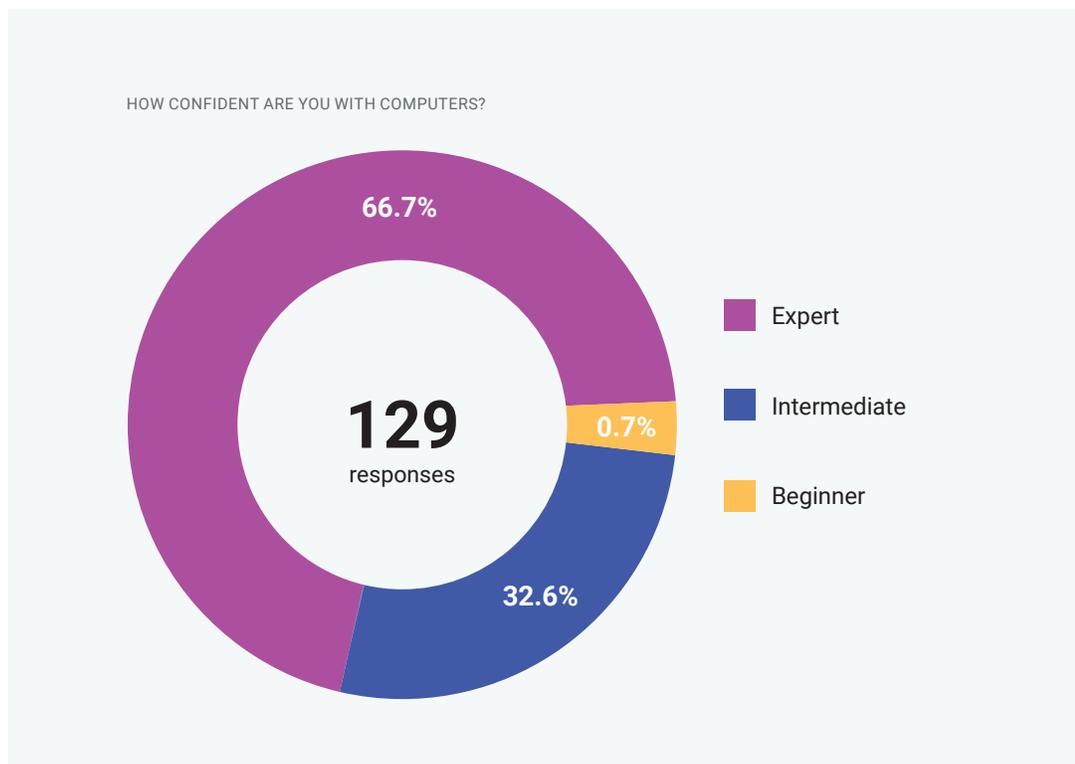
- Many folks still rely on old-fashioned, word-of-mouth referrals from friends or their PCPs.



These two reasons may account for the fact why consumers currently don’t flock en masse to provider directories. That being said, however, this could also mean there’s tremendous opportunity to help create that need. If consumers can be educated that hospital directories are invaluable resources, while at the same time user-friendly and easy to navigate, the perception may change.

OVERALL LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGICAL SKILL

Over 99% of those surveyed rated themselves as “intermediate” or “expert” level computer users. This statistic is important to note because at this advanced level of experience, they can be expected to use whatever setup hospitals throw at them. They have a baseline understanding of how websites and directories work. Their pain points come not from the technical aspects of navigation, but from an overall surfeit of information. Finding the right doctor can be like searching for a needle in a haystack.



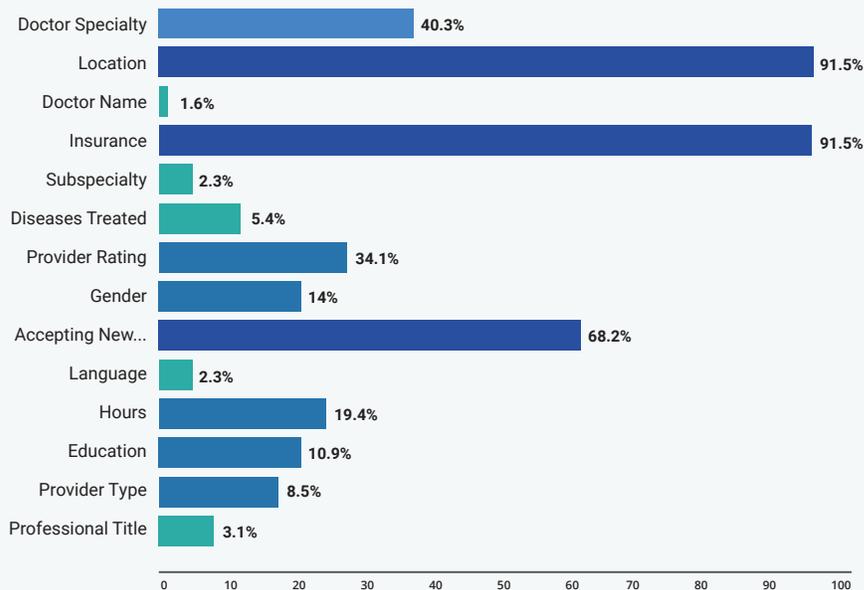
Far and away, what most respondents wanted to see while searching were:

- Insurance
- Location
- Accepting new patients

FINDING OUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Specialty and ratings were not far behind, but the rest of the options garnered below 20% each. Some were only 1%. This made us realize that there's only a few key things consumers want to search for initially—after that first search narrows down the enormous field, then they can continue filtering. This makes sense, and it would be pointless to spend minutes finding the perfect doctor only to find out that he's not covered by your insurance.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU LOOK FOR WHEN SEARCHING (MAX 6)?



Key Insights

USERS WANT THE RIGHT INFORMATION

There are dozens of ways you can conceivably search for a doctor, but for the average consumer, only a few key criteria are important. From the survey, we consistently saw that location, insurance, specialty, and accepting new patients should be prioritized.

DON'T MAKE USERS THINK

This phrase sums up our approach to usability thanks to Steve Krug's groundbreaking and incredibly informative book "Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web and Mobile Usability".

Basically it boils down to this: the more users have to navigate and make choices on a website, the more frustrated they'll become. It's the designers job, then to make their online path self-evident, so they can focus on the task at hand (selecting a doctor) instead of how to maneuver to do so.

USERS WANT SIMPLICITY

We heard pretty loud and clear that users don't want the search process cluttered with extraneous items. Users should know instantly what they're supposed to be doing when they search.

SECONDARY INFORMATION

Criteria like education, reviews, gender, etc., are only important after

primary criteria have been met (location, insurance, and specialty).

DON'T OVERWHELM THE USER

When presented with too many choices, it can be overwhelming. Decision fatigue is a real thing that happens. And if they decide to quit searching, that's one less patient that will visit your office.

PUT THE TRUST BACK IN HEALTHCARE

Users find ratings and reviews important, but they don't seem to be sure they can trust them. We need to show that the ratings are statistically valid and explain how they were obtained.

SELECTIONS FROM FREE-RESPONSE COMMENTS



Little info is good, too much and my eyes glaze over.



When searching for a doctor online in larger cities, the results can get overwhelming. I was looking for a psychiatrist in the Atlanta area and tried to narrow it down as much as possible, but it still gave me over 100 results. I just need like 10 and I can make a decision from there, but more than 10 can easily get overwhelming.

SELECTIONS FROM FREE-RESPONSE COMMENTS (cont.)

“ Why do I have to go to 800 different sites to find all the info I need? I just want reviews, phone numbers, and a picture all in one place!!

“ Ratings/reviews are becoming an increasingly higher priority now that seemingly everything is reviewed online.

“ I don't use reviews, if there are reviews. People aren't going to review unless its excellent or horrible.

“ I do get frustrated sometimes with how often I find a doctor online, call the number listed, and then find out that their office no longer exists or never existed at all.

Refine Your Search

Provider Last Name:
Search by last name...

Provider First Name:
Search by first name...

Specialty:
Need help with specialties?
 Allergy and Immunology (2)
 Anesthesiology (3)
 Cardiovascular Disease (5)
 Dermatology (1)
 Emergency Medicine (5)
Show More Specialties...

Subspecialty:
 Adolescent Medicine (12)
 Blood Banking/Transfusion Medicine (1)
 Cardiovascular Disease (6)
 Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (1)
 Clinical Neurophysiology (6)
Show More Subspecialties...

Keyword Search:
Search by keyword...

Location:
Within 1 mile of:
Search by location...

Additional Search Criteria

Tailoring the Design

Using the information we gained from our survey, we redesigned the look and feel as well as the functionality of our basic directory layout for consumers. It went from this (left):

To this (below):

I need a specialist in...
No preference

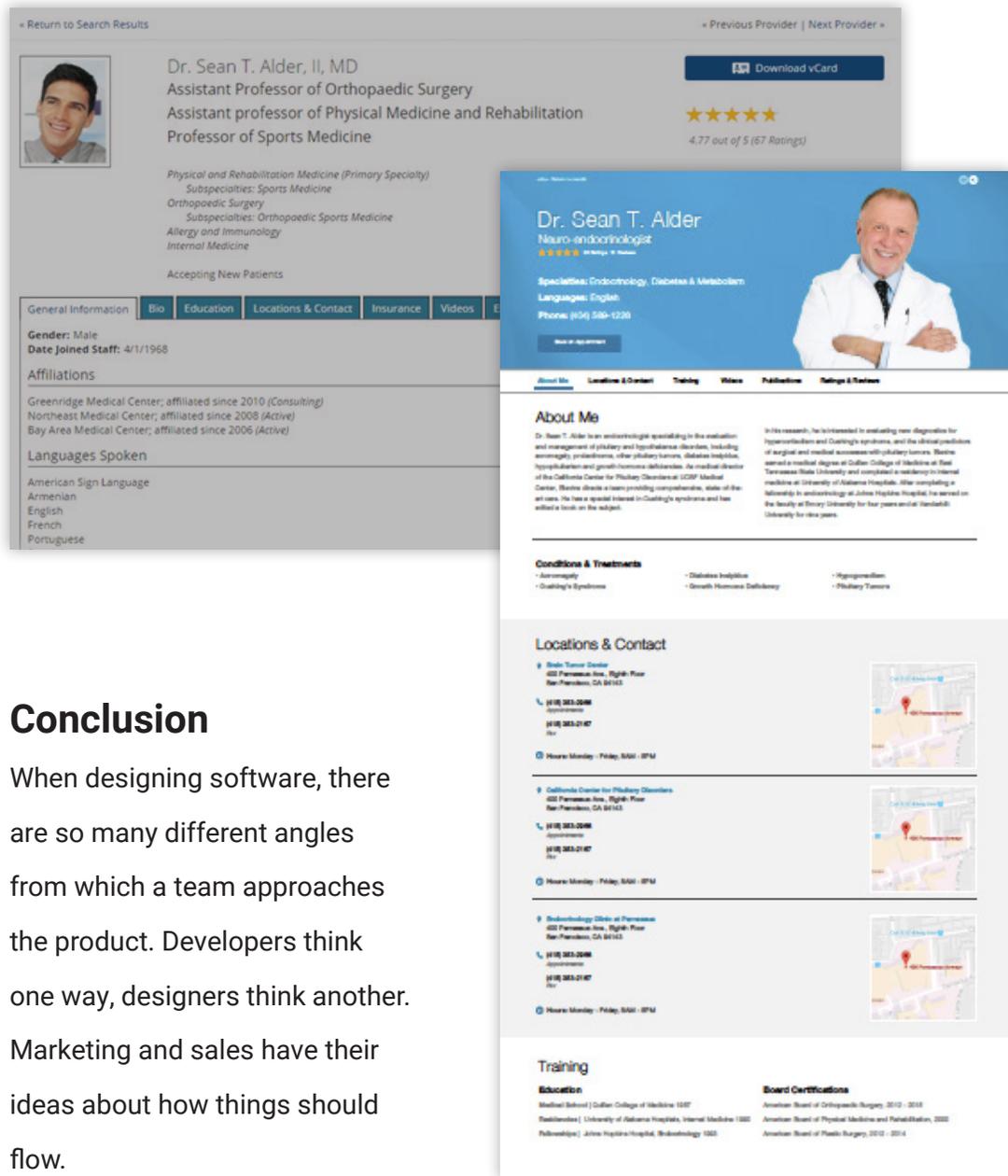
Located near...
Search by location...

1,745
Providers Found
START A NEW SEARCH

Search by keyword... Search by last name... Gender Affiliation

The focused, top navigation provides a clear place to start a search. Underneath, consumers can filter their search by the boxes most relevant instead of an entire left-hand panel of onerous options that may or may not even apply to them. Once they narrow down based on their primary criteria, they can then filter down even more among the results.

We didn't just stop at the search functionality, though. We also used this opportunity to change up how the information is displayed on a provider's biographical profile page. Several survey respondents had commented that they were barraged with information once they finally managed to find the right doctor.



Conclusion

When designing software, there are so many different angles from which a team approaches the product. Developers think one way, designers think another. Marketing and sales have their ideas about how things should flow.

But often times, all of these experts can't predict how an average consumer thinks and feels. A simple survey, as we have learned firsthand, can shed incredible

amounts of light on things we take for granted. Our online search survey, while short, influenced how we redesigned our search bar for consumer-facing sites. All we had to do was listen to what people were saying.

Surveys are just one small part of the user testing and experience process, something Doctor.com is dedicated to incorporating into every phase of our design process.

About Us

Doctor.com is the first platform built to help healthcare providers deliver a better customer experience at every step of the patient journey. Doctor.com's industry-leading data management technology has enabled unique integrations with the most prominent healthcare directories, search engines and social media platforms. As a result, more than 20,000 healthcare organizations have been empowered by the platform to enhance their digital presence and credibility, increase patient trust, and grow their business. Doctor.com was founded in 2012 and is headquartered in New York City.

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