Mobile Web Design : Lazy Registration

This design pattern is part of the Mobile Web Design series.

Introduction

More often than not as an end user you would be interested in looking at the product, trying it out if possible, reading about it, taking a demo etc. before finally making up your mind whether you are interested in actually buying it or not. The same mindset works with the visitor to a webpage, they want to first explore the webpage before deciding to actually signup or register for the services. Sometimes the website require lot of user information like personal details, debit/credit card information, business address etc, which can be a long and time consuming affair which only a genuinely interested user would want to bother completing.

Sometimes because of the sheer amount of information expected of the first time user, bugs them so much that they end up abandoning the site even without looking through the features available. This is a loss of a potential user who could have given business to the company/merchants involved with the site.

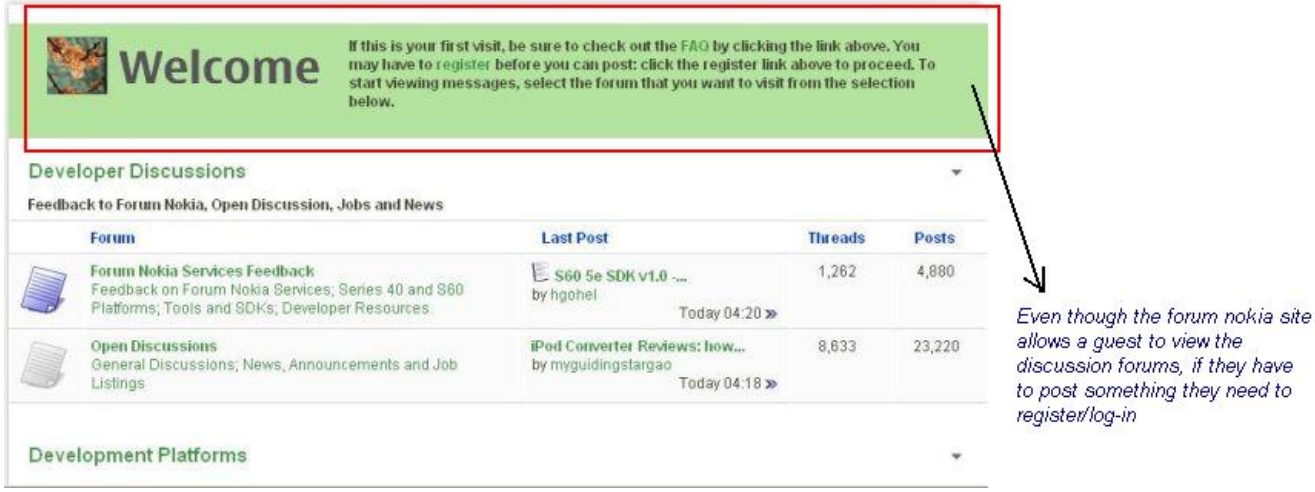
This is where the mechanism known as **lazy registration** comes into picture.

What is lazy registration

As the name suggests it's a lazy form of registration. The typical sign up/register yourself kind of forms have irritated the user no ends. The lazy registration mechanism allows the user to navigate through the site, allowing them to explore the potentialities available without asking them for a formal signup. This allows the user to view the contents of the site till a point where they might end up getting interested in actually being a part of it and that's where you ask the user to sign up.

Since the user has gone through the features and is rather impressed with the potentials at this point s/he doesn't mind spending a few minutes to enter in their information. This way you avoid losing a visiting user, whom you would have had you burdened them with sign-up first approach.

Lazy registration example on Nokia Developer



When to use

The lazy registration mechanism should be used in one of the following use case scenarios:-

- In cases where you know upfront that you are going to need a lot of information from the user to allow them to conduct formal business through the site.
- There are a potential set of feature/web pages that you can allow the user to visit without needing their registration details.
- You are confident about the offerings of the website, so you want the user to experience it and even compare it with your competitors.
- Allowing the user to investigate time incrementally by navigating through the site without a signup approach, to a point where you are confident they will get interested in your offerings.
- When you don't want to lose a potential customer by bogging them down with the signup first approach.

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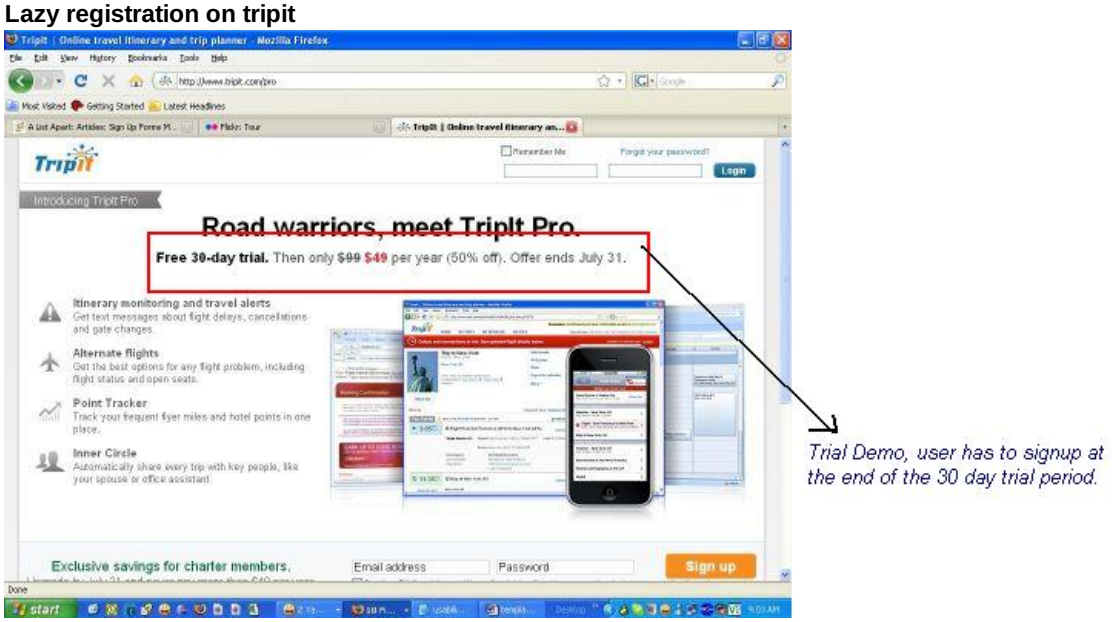
Lazy registration on tripit



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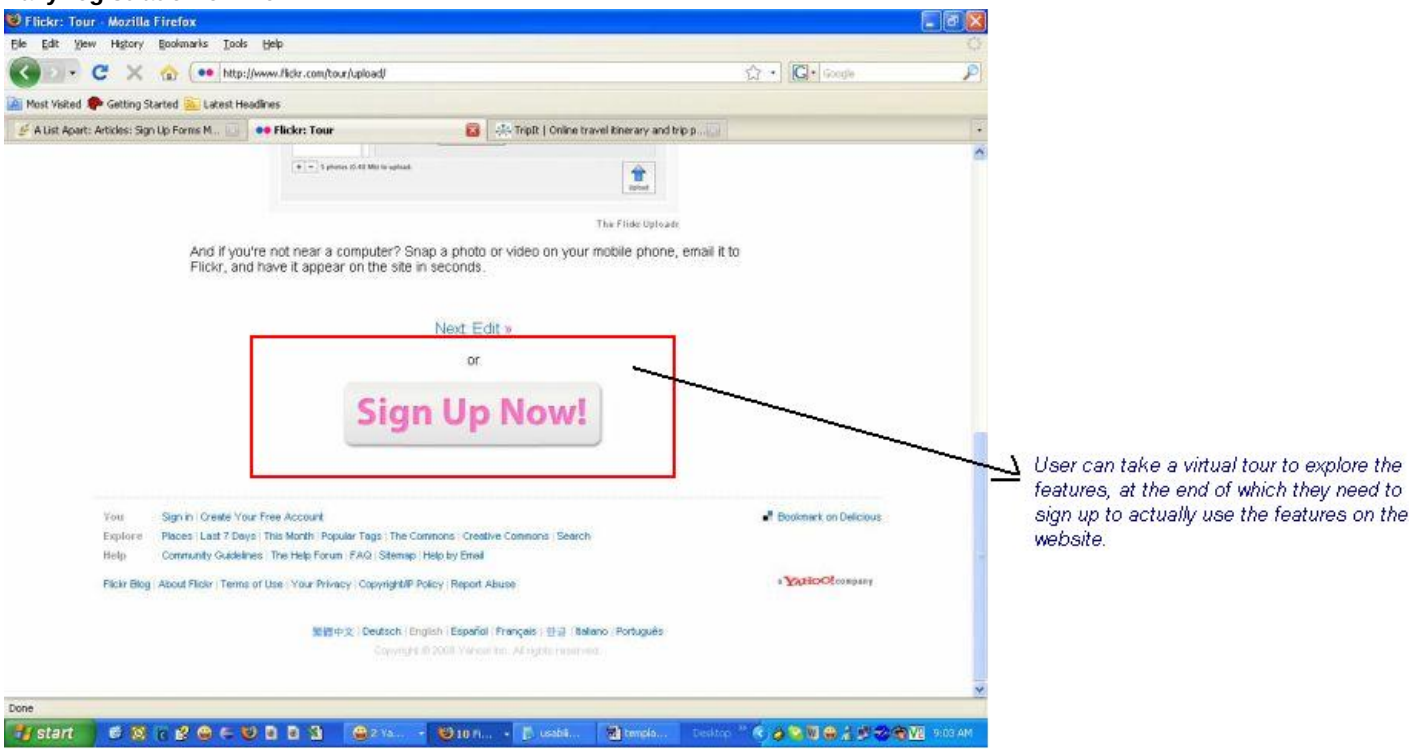
Lazy registration on flickr



Advantages

Some of the key advantages of using this approach are:-

- You don't stand the chance of losing a potential customer if the services offered on the website are really good/compare well with the competition.
- Boosts user trust and confidence level in the site after they have taken a tour of sorts and seen that it is safe and trustworthy to do business on/through the site.

Lazy registration on amazon

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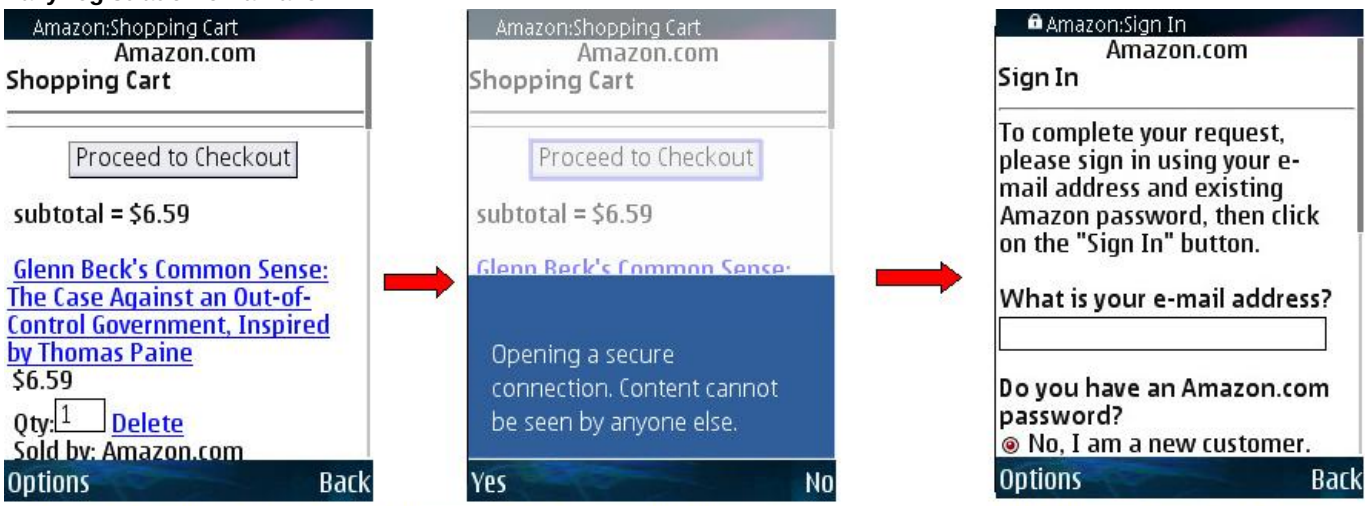
Amazon.com allows you to view, chose and add items to the shopping cart even when you are not signed in to the website.

Lazy registration on amazon



Item gets added to the shopping cart and payment module is opened without registration. *Only at payment registration is needed.*

- Allows incremental signup approach where you can smartly design the website navigation in such a way that the user doesn't go through a formal signup mechanism and yet at every step their information if captured till user has completed the signup.
- Does not put unwanted user crowd on the website, as a signup approach would do. There are lots of times people just browse and then leave without actually doing anything to generate revenues for the provider. A formal signup approach would have created such users in the system which a lazy registration would avoid.

Disadvantages

Some of the key disadvantages of using this approach however are:-

- You risk losing a user, with the 'try before you buy' approach because they might just navigate around and then leave without signing up.
- Unless implemented well especially while doing an incremental signup, the user might get suspicious that you are trying to gather data surreptitiously.
- Some users might be quite content with the limited/no signup features you provide them, obviating the need for them to actually signup.

Additional Resources

webjackalope.com

blog

lazy registration demo

ajaxpatterns.org

colorotate.org

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Final Word

It is a nice concept which if implemented well can boost the overall user confidence and trust level on your website, in turn generating more genuine user registrations and usage of the website. The features to be displayed through this mechanism have to be chosen carefully so that the user interest is maintained convincing them to finally sign up.

--- Added by Mayank on 30/06/2009 ---

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