



Case Study 2

Yelp Bookmarks & Collections

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Yelp: A UX Case Study



Overview

Yelp was founded in San Francisco in 2004 to **connect people with local businesses**. The site has pages devoted to individual businesses where Yelp users can submit a review of their products or services using a star rating system. It also acts as a hub for businesses to update contact information, hours, services and more. Since the company's inception, users have contributed to over **180 million reviews** and its desktop website currently gets **63 million unique visitors** per month.¹

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to **identify problems within Yelp's Bookmarks and Collections** to ensure users can accomplish tasks with the least amount of friction.

Bookmarks allow users to save or "bookmark" places to a single location. **Collections** were introduced in 2018 and expanded on Bookmarks to provide more organization and accessibility. **Design thinking** will be used to propose solutions and create a seamless and **improved user experience**.

Summary of Problems



Discoverability

Bookmark function is not shown in search results.



Top Navigation

Bookmarks are missing from the top navigation menu.



Profile Navigation

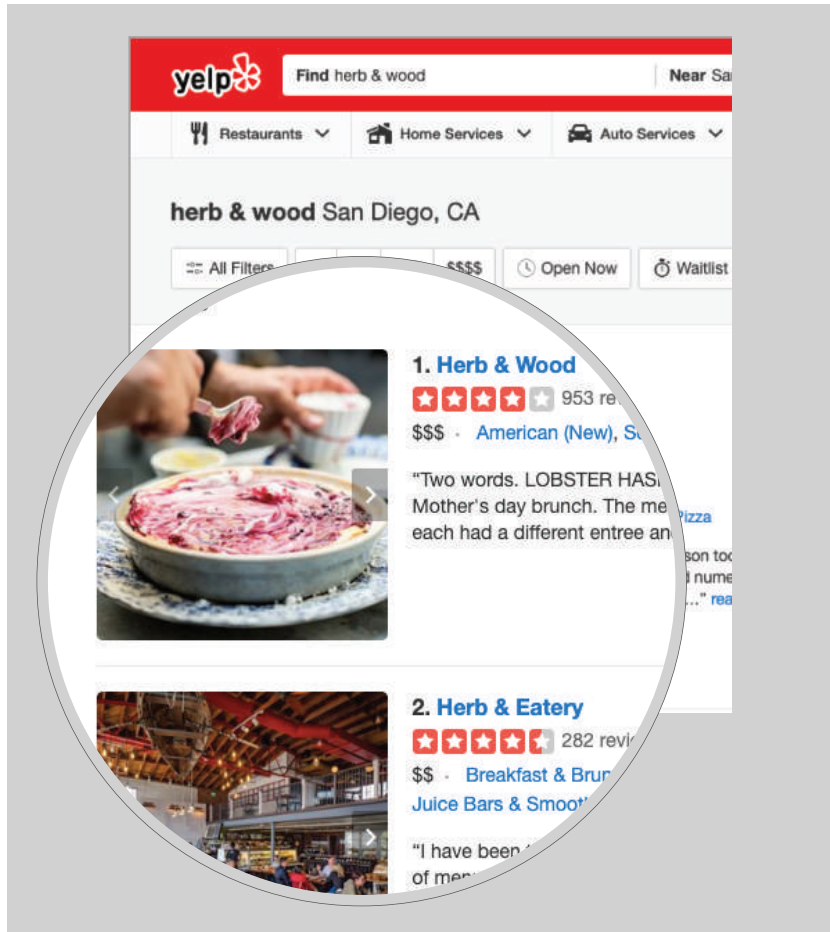
Bookmarks and Collections get lost in the user's profile page.



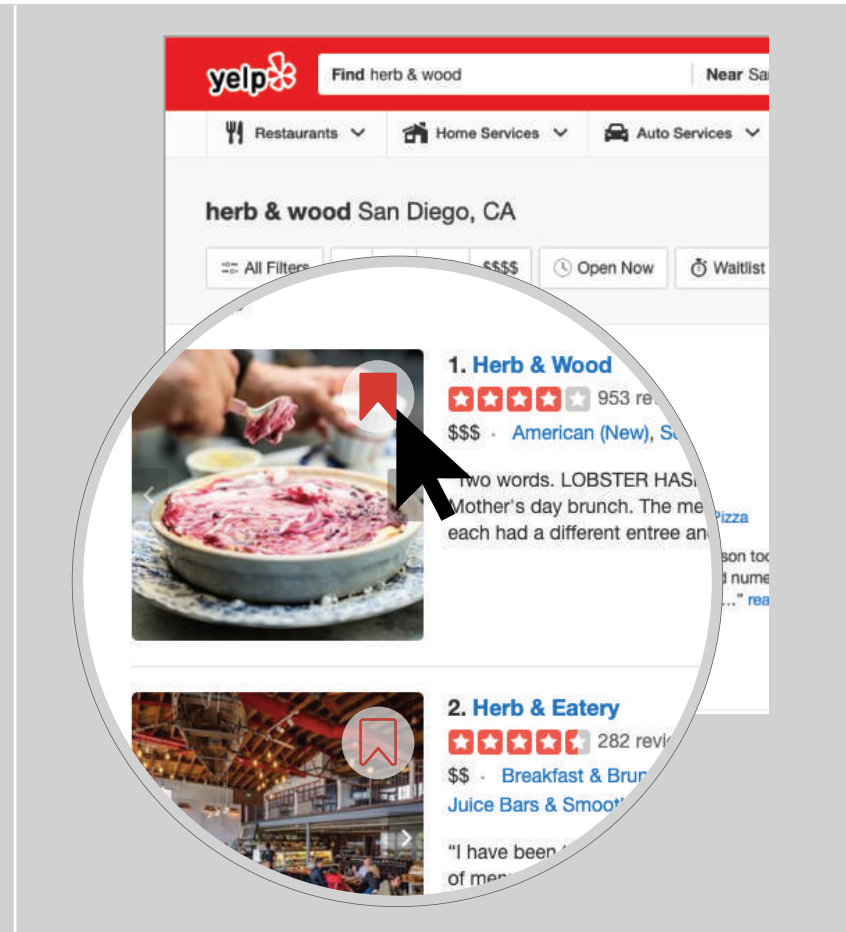
Problem #1: Discoverability



Issue



Solution



Problem #1: Discoverability



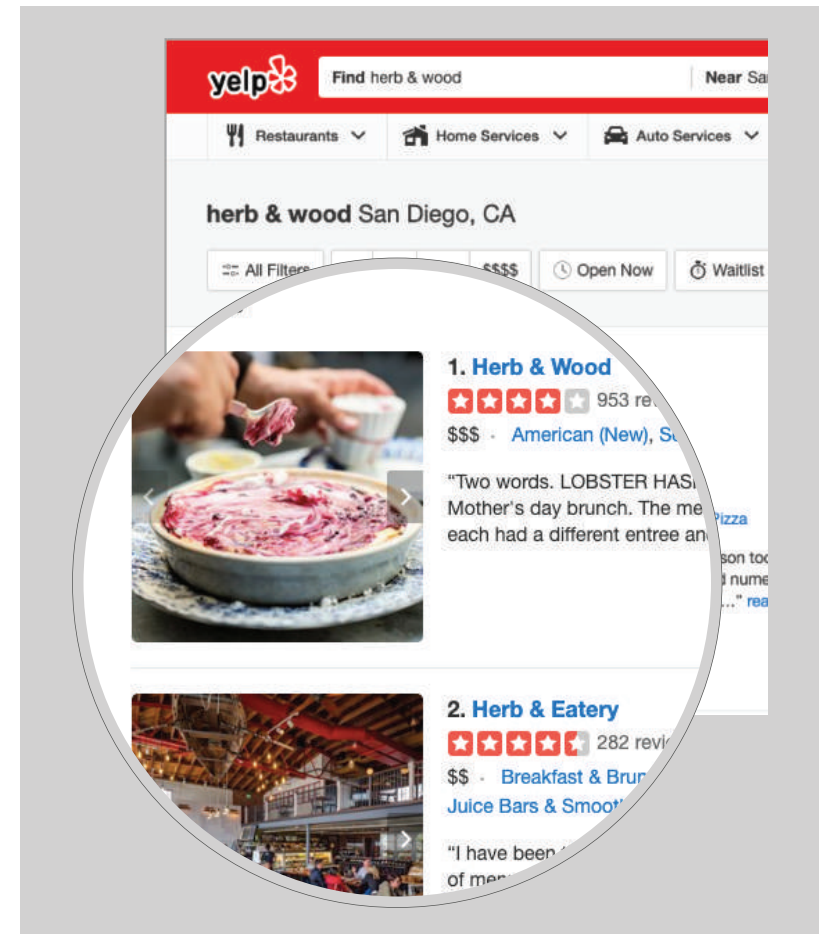
The Problem

Users cannot bookmark places from the search results page.

Why It's A Problem

The **primary objective** of Bookmarks and Collections is for users to **bookmark businesses** to save for later. Bookmarking is a helpful feature for users and should be visible at all times. The **Visibility Principle** of Designing Interaction states that the more visible an element is, the more likely users will use it.² **If users can't see it, they won't use it.**

Contextual inquiry revealed that **users are unaware that Bookmarks exist on Yelp**. A survey was given to five individuals who are both occasional and frequent users of Yelp. When asked if they bookmark places to revisit later, four out of five participants answered they did not know the feature existed but would **find the feature helpful** completing their tasks.



If users want to bookmark a business, they are forced to open up its individual Yelp page and leave the search results page.



Problem #1: Discoverability



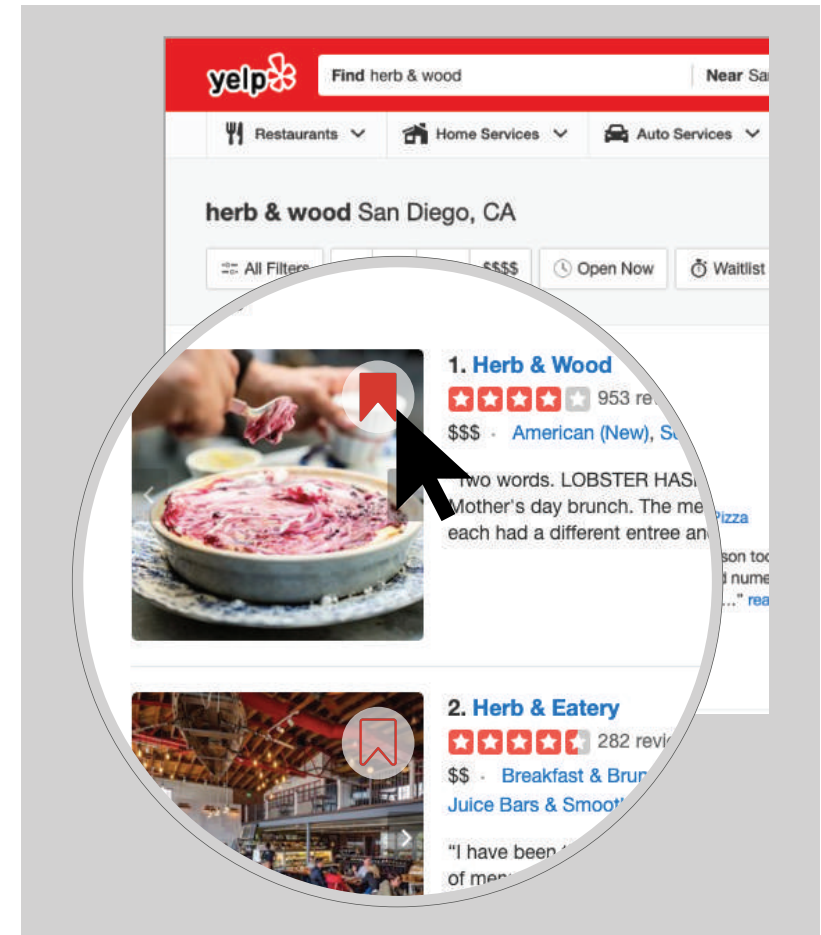
The Solution

Provide the bookmark feature on the search results page.

Justification

The **Bookmark icon** is a **popular affordance** that is understood by the average user.³ Placing the icon as a clear call-to-action on each search result will be the first step for users to discover this feature.

Instead of clicking through individual business pages, users can bookmark places **without leaving the page**. Making the interface respond directly to the user's interaction follows the **Make It Direct principle** of User Interface design and will save users time and hassle.⁴



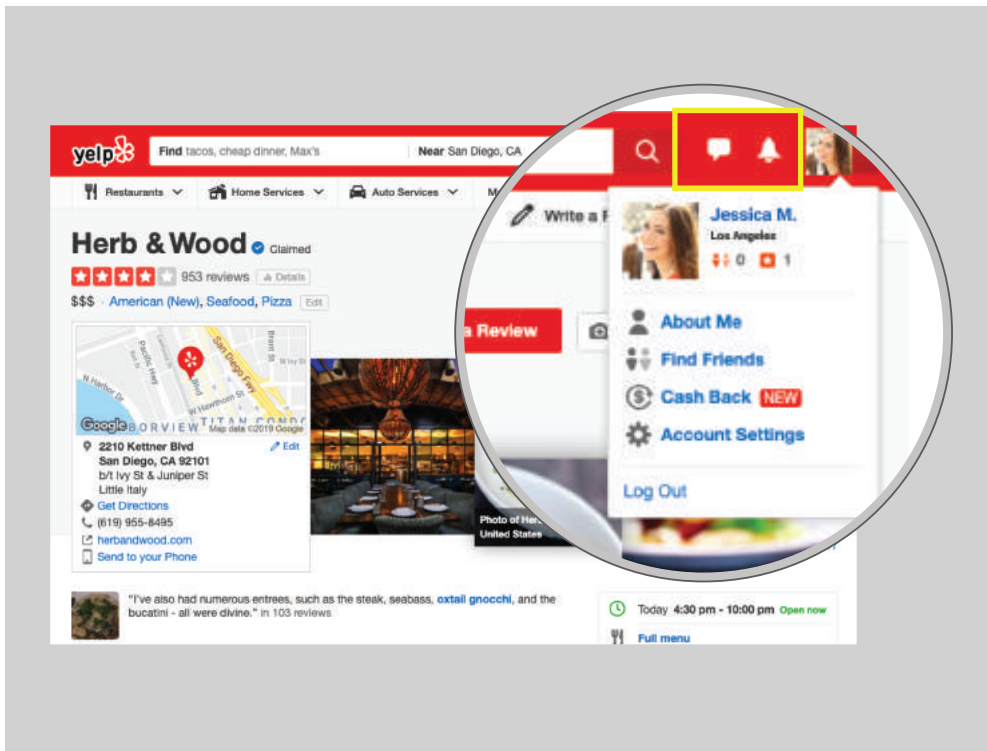
When a user hovers over the bookmark icon, it changes to red and invites the user to action.



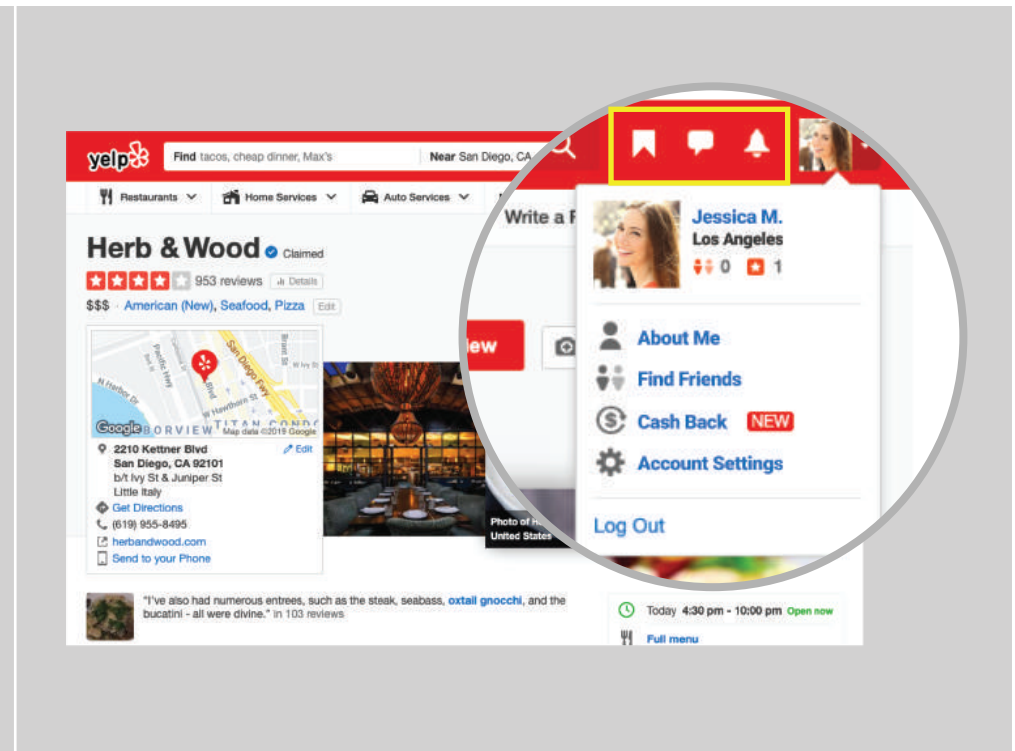
Problem #2: Top Navigation



Problem



Solution



Problem #2: Top Navigation

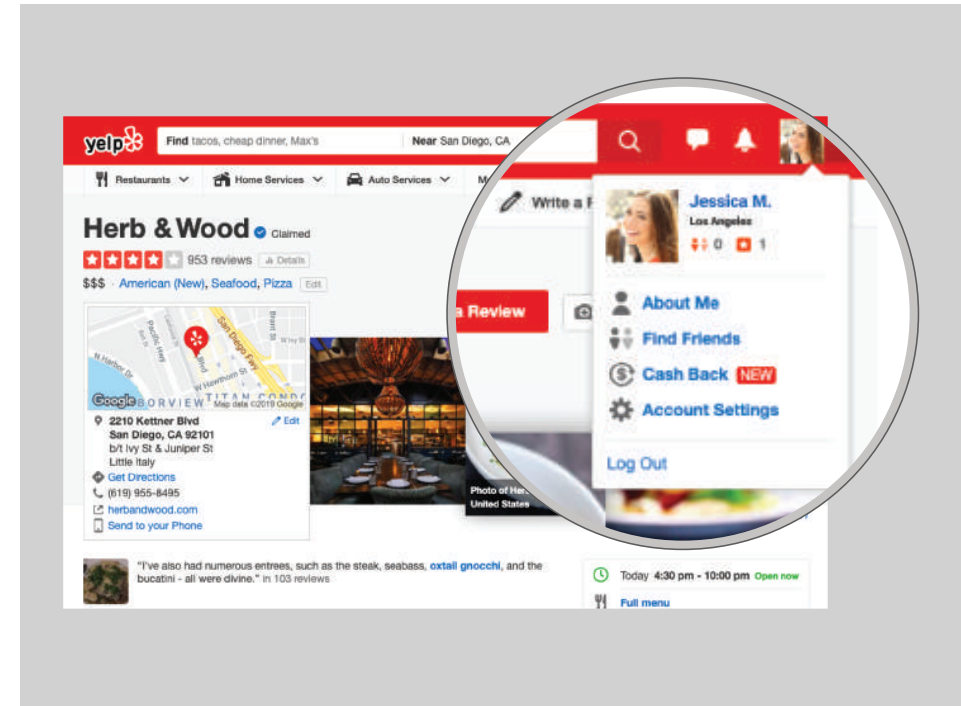


The Problem

Users cannot access Bookmarks or Collections from the top navigation menu.

Why It's A Problem

Task analysis revealed how frustrating it is for users to currently **find and access their bookmarks**. Three participants were asked to find a business, bookmark it, and then locate it where it was saved to. **All three had trouble** with this task. Bookmarks and Collections are only accessible in the profile section of a user's Yelp account. Participants had to click through several links until they were successful. According to the **Economy of Motion principle**, the more clicks a user has to do to complete a task, the more frustrating and annoying an experience will be.⁵



Bookmarks and Collections are not accessible through the top navigation menu nor the user's drop-down menu.



Problem #2: Top Navigation

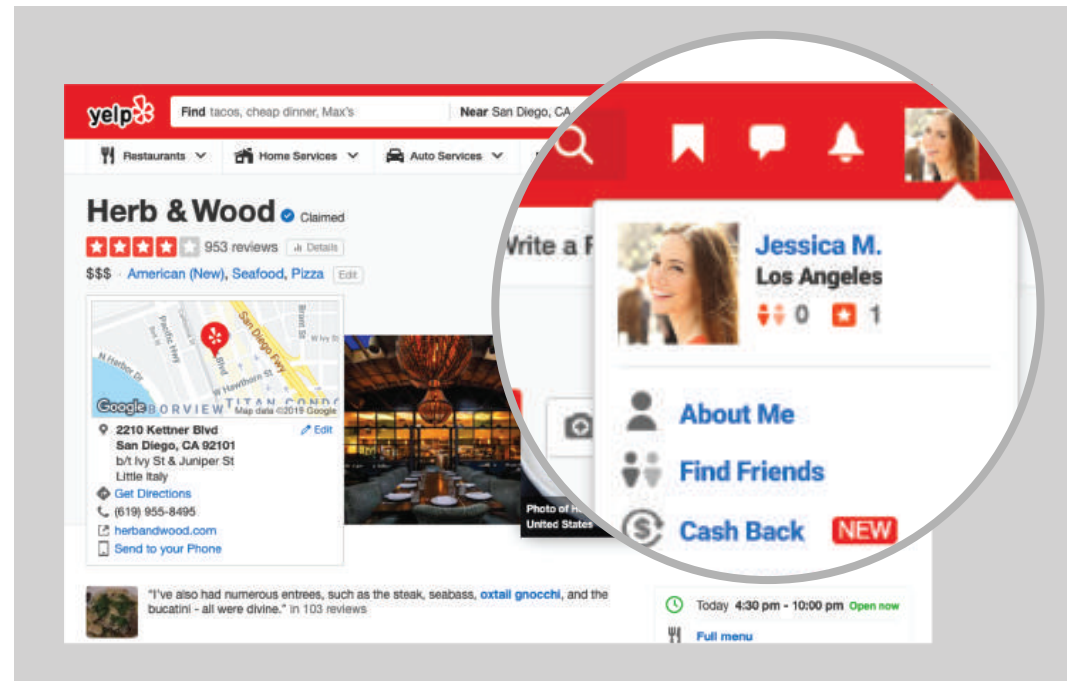


The Solution

Add access to Bookmarks and Collections from the top navigation menu.

Justification

Going back to the **Visibility Principle** of design, if users can't see something, they will not use it. Placing the recognizable bookmark icon alongside the other main navigational icons **gives users better access** to their Bookmarks and Collections. The icon's **affordance will invoke recognition rather than recall** from users and greatly decrease the amount of time needed for a task.



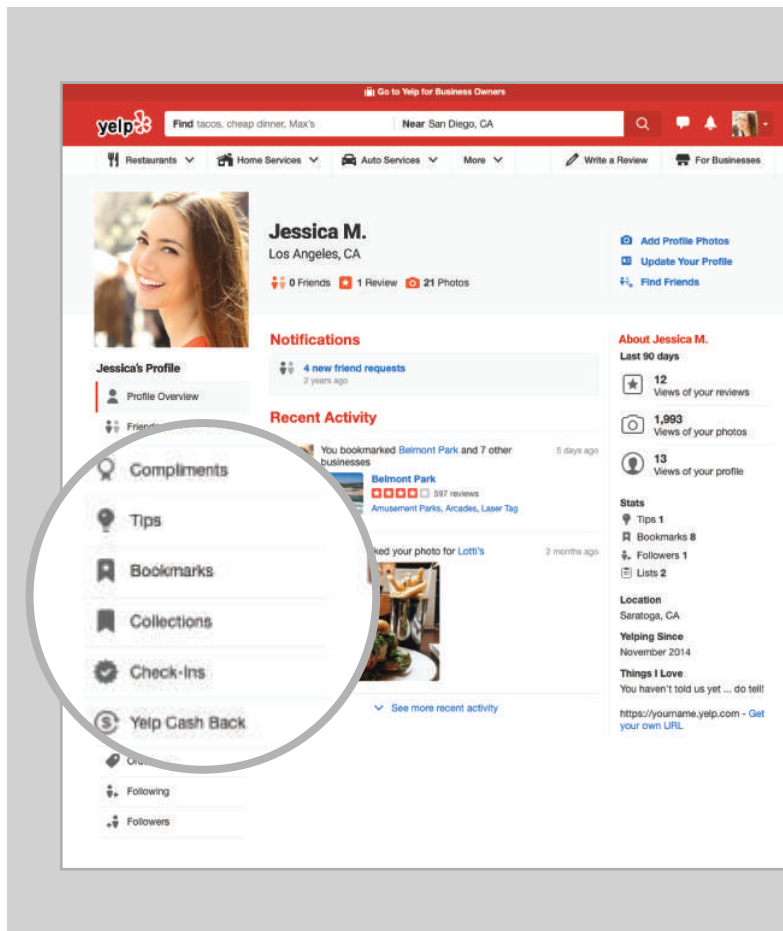
A bookmark icon has been added to the top right-hand corner of the top navigation menu. Its affordance will aid users in understanding its purpose.



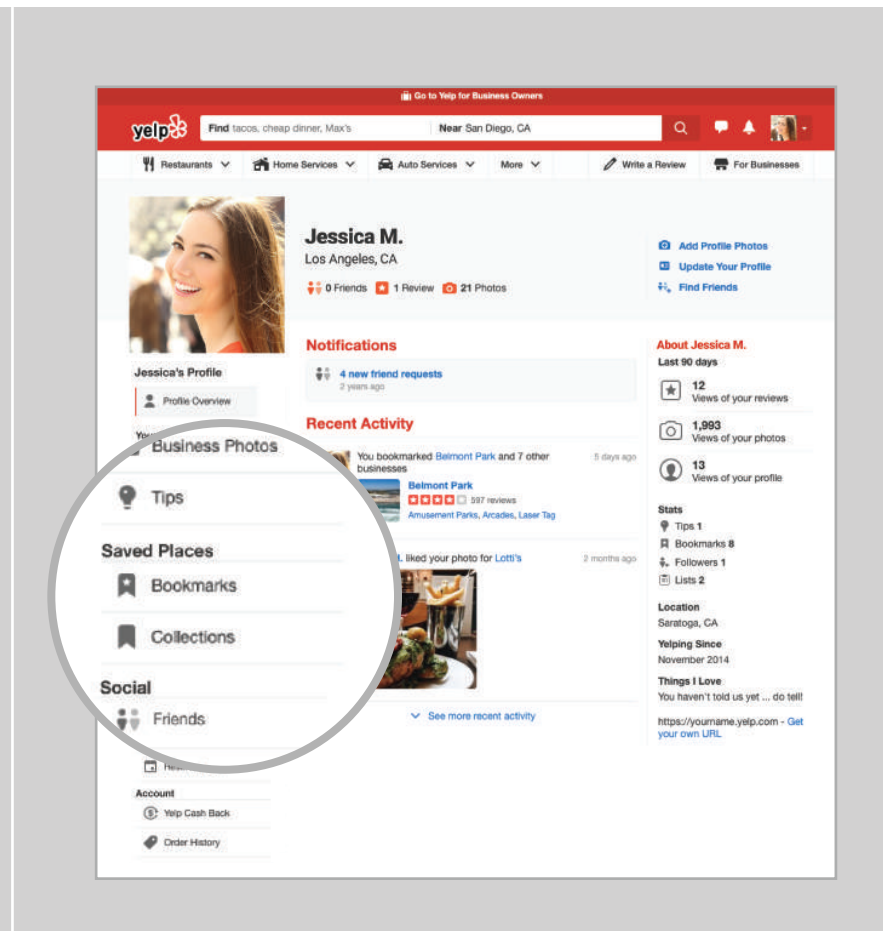
Problem #3: Profile Navigation



Problem



Solution



Problem #3: Profile Navigation



The Problem

Bookmarks and Collections are not distinguishable from other links on a user's profile page.

Why It's A Problem

A user's profile section features a **vertical tab menu** on the left side of the page (Figure A). The links all share the same color, text size, and font, and their corresponding icons also share the same dimensions and color. The **Gestalt law of proximity** states that **elements close to one another appear to be grouped**, so it's hard for users to distinguish different links from one another.⁶ When a user glances at these tabs, it takes extra mental effort to complete their task. Users should be able to their saved places without exerting extra cognitive energy.

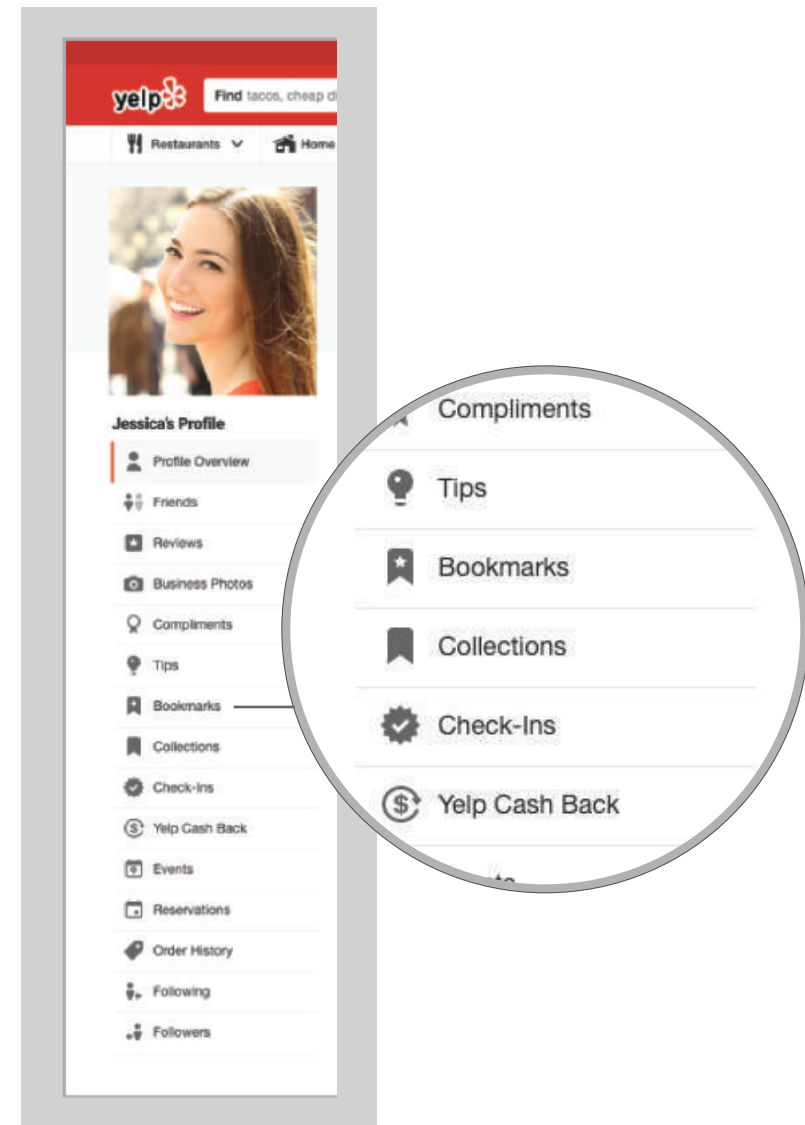


Figure A: Yelp's current design. Bookmarks and Collections get lost amongst other links on the Profile's side tab menu.



Problem #3: Profile Navigation



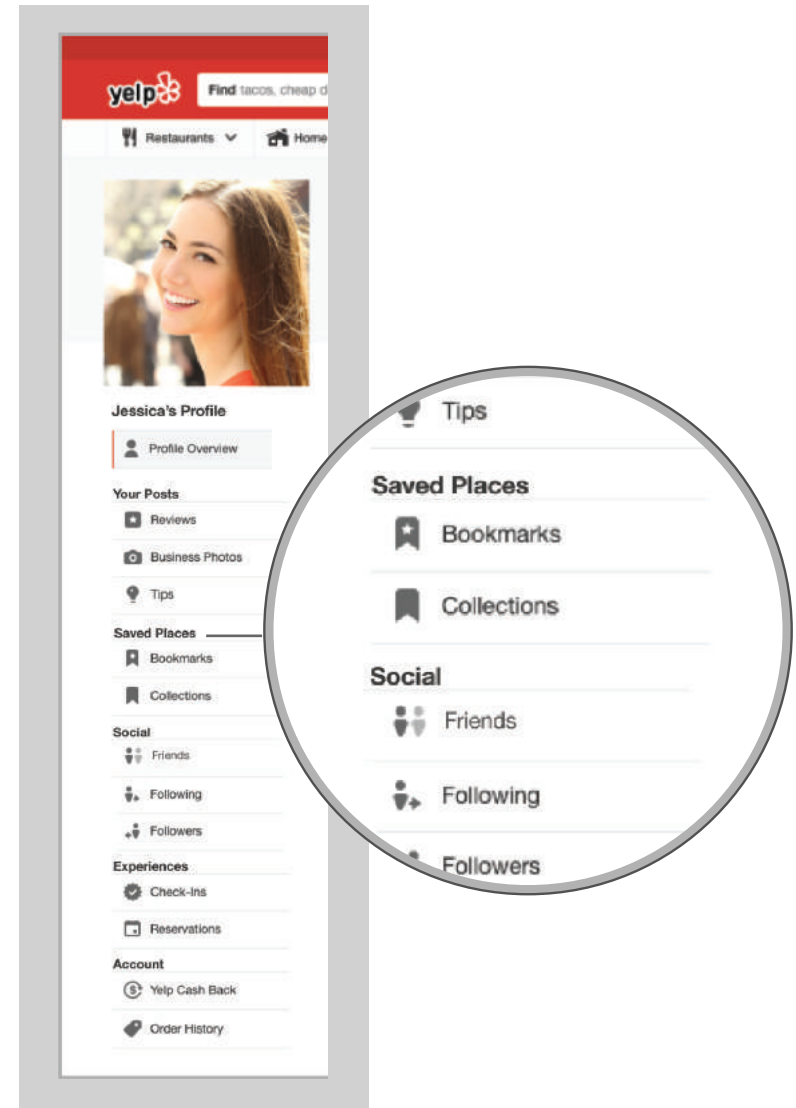
The Solution

Create categories for links.

Justification

The redesign creates a **variety in the site's elements**: it maintains a unity in visual experience while still representing the different links of a user's profile in a distinctive way.⁴ Category titles use text boldness and a slight offset to differentiate from the other links.

Bookmarks and Collections have been categorized under the category **Saved Places**. Others include **Your Posts** (content users have uploaded to Yelp such as Reviews, Business Photos, and Tips) and **Experiences**, which includes where users have checked in and reservations.



The redesign chunks links into separate categories and creates clarity with variety.

Conclusion



While Yelp is a wildly successful application used by millions of people around the world, there are several opportunities to create a better experience for its users. Giving more direct access to bookmarked locations could help increase the chances of users frequenting those places and contributing to local economic growth. Finding better ways to facilitate and grow those connections can strengthen the relationship between users and the businesses around them. Making an effort to bookmark a store is the first step, and deciding to revisit it may be the most important.

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