Sample Expert Review

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Global Navigation Issues

*Support for keyboard input is inconsistent*

Allowing users to trigger links and other page elements with the keyboard is important for those who cannot, or prefer not to, use a mouse to navigate a site. However, some areas of the Aquent can only be triggered with the mouse.

For example, while users can trigger the link to the Home page using the keyboard, none of the other menu items in the global navigation respond to keyboard input. Users must use the mouse to reveal the submenus.

Interestingly, if the mouse is used to reveal a submenu, these links can be triggered by the keyboard. The Learn More menu item is one example of this: the submenu can’t be revealed using the keyboard. But if the mouse is used to reveal the submenu, the submenu links can be triggered using either the keyboard or mouse.

The MyAquent Login box works the same way: the box itself can’t be triggered with the keyboard, but once revealed, all the form fields, buttons and links within the box can.

**Recommendation**: Consider adding `onfocus` and `onblur` events to all `onmouseover` events in the global navigation menu to allow keyboard access to all items.

*MyAquent Login box is hard to close*

The MyAquent Login box appears whenever the user mouses over the menu item in the global navigation. Unlike the other menu items which disappear whenever the user moves the mouse off of the live area, users must either click on the "x" icon to close it or mouse over a different menu item in the global nav.

While having the login box persist until the user makes an intentional change is very useful, there are only certain intentional changes that close the box. For example, if the user clicks off the box into the body of the page, the box does not close. This could be frustrating, particularly if users don’t notice the close icon.

**Recommendation**: Allow users to close the login by clicking outside the box.
**Required field doesn’t indicate it’s required**

When users select “Email” as the best way to reach them, the Email field below should change to indicate that it’s required. (In this design, required fields are black, optional fields are gray.)

The system actually does require users to provide an email. Submitting the form without one does trigger an error message.

**Recommendation:** Make sure the label for the email field displays as required when users select the “email” option in the “best way to reach you” element.

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**Select an Agent box disappears**

The Select an Agent search box comes up on MouseOver, but if the mouse slips off the active area (or sometimes even when it doesn’t) the form disappears. If a previously searched keyword comes up, the search button is even more difficult to trigger.

**Recommendation:** Keep this available until the user either triggers the Search button or the user clicks or tabs off this area.

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**Registering on MyAquent**

**Password instructions disappear**

Upon first arriving at the Registration page, there are instructions for how to create a password. But once a user tabs to or clicks on the text field, the instructions disappear.

Users may not notice the instructions for this text field until after they’ve arrived there.

**Recommendation:** Don’t remove the password instructions until after the user has created the password and moved to another field.
Instructions don’t specify how to create a “strong” password

The only instructions about creating a password are that it must be at least 6 characters long. However, when typing in a six-character password, it becomes evident that more is suggested than simply six characters. The words “weak”, “normal”, “medium” and “strong” show up depending on what password the user created, but no information is provided that explicitly tells the user what qualifies as “weak”, etc. The only way a user can figure that out is through trial and error.

Recommendation: Specify what qualifies as a strong password.

Red asterisk isn’t defined until the end of the page

The red asterisk next to nearly all form labels is not defined until the very bottom of the page. So users encounter the symbol before ever being told what it means.

Recommendation: Define the asterisk prior to the first instance on the page. Alternately, do away with the asterisk altogether and instead state at the beginning of the form that all fields are required except where noted.

Required field is “strictly voluntary”

The affirmative action information is listed as required (due to the presence of the red asterisk) but the instructions explicitly state that providing the information is “strictly voluntary”. This seemingly contradictory information is due to the system’s need to have the user select something, even if it’s “Not Disclosed”.

Recommendation: Consider using “Not Disclosed” as the default selection for these combo boxes. Also consider changing the way required fields are addressed by stating at the top of the form, “All fields are required except where noted” or something to that effect.

Forms with only one field don’t need to specify it’s required

The instruction that this field is required is probably unnecessary, given that it’s the only field on the form.

Recommendation: Get rid of it.
Issues Checklist

The following table provides a checklist of issues identified during the expert review organized by severity rating. Because different teams are responsible for different parts of the site, the checklist also indicates the location or individuals responsible for the fix: the main Aquent site, MyAquent section, or individual content editors.

The severity ratings use the following definitions:

- Catastrophic—Error causing irrevocable loss of data or damage to the hardware or software.
- Severe—Problem causing possible loss of data. User has no workaround to the problem.
- Moderate—Problem causing no permanent loss of data, but wasted time. There is a workaround to the problem. Internal inconsistencies result in increased learning or error rates. An important function or feature does not work as expected.
- Minor—Problem causing no loss of data but slows users down slightly, minimal violations of guidelines that affect appearance or perception, and mistakes that cause irritation but are recoverable.
- Minimal—Problem is rare and causes no data loss or major loss of time. Minor cosmetic or consistency issue.

There were no catastrophic or severe issues identified during the expert review.

Moderate Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email confirmation references a link which doesn’t exist</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced search help link is broken</td>
<td>MyAquent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minor Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for keyboard input is inconsistent</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required field doesn’t indicate it’s required</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Locations page may not be clear</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select an Agent box disappears</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No simple search is offered</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords modify search options</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice options obscure search tool tip</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same keywords produce different search results</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtering only works from advanced search</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No advice is offered when a search returns zero results</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated attempts using Contact Me produces inconsistent results</td>
<td>Aquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Password instructions disappear</td>
<td>MyAquent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search results page doesn’t list search query or number of results</td>
<td>MyAquent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>