**WEBSITE QUESTIONNAIRE – Contextual Dynamics Lab**

*[DESIGN-RELATED QUESTIONS]*

1. Please provide your logo draft ideas in editable (.AI or .EPS) file formats as an email attachment when returning this questionnaire.

See attached. I’ve been playing around with variants of Dartmouth Green (see second question), but I want to note that I don’t absolutely need to have Dartmouth Green be a part of the logo. The important thing is that the logo will (in layers): draw the viewer in by looking interesting/engaging; excite the imagination; and finally (when thought about more deeply) communicate the idea of surrounding context changing over time and influencing how information is processed. Feel free to completely scrap what I’ve come up with and go in a new direction.

1. What color(s) do you feel best represent your lab? [If you would like to use specific colors that you have worked with in the past, please provide their RGB or CMYK values here.]

I’d “ideally” like to incorporate various shades (and/or tints) of Dartmouth Green: RGB = (0, 112, 60) to integrate somewhat with the department’s webpage and Dartmouth’s main page (although I don’t need the page to match stylistically, since those pages’ styles change every so often anyway). I was imagining a bright looking page with mostly white and grayscale elements, with Dartmouth Green (or shaded/tinted Dartmouth Green) highlights integrated throughout. To draw attention to the most exciting elements, I was thinking bright primary (or near primary…like purple/plum!) colors would look neat.

I also like light blue/cyan, especially when combined with grays and used sparingly. I tend to like simple geometric patterns or textures (diagonal lines, hexagons/triangles in a repeating pattern, small dots, etc.).

The above being said, I don’t want to constrain your design vision. For example, to achieve a really neat look, it would be perfectly OK not to use *any* Dartmouth Green on the site or logo. I do want the logo to fit in nicely with the website, but it’s much more important that the site looks cool than that it fits in with other sites.

1. If you would like to work with a particular font(s), please note the font name below or describe a font style that you like.

I’ve been playing around with Co Headline, Proxima Nova, and Tondo. I also like Avenir. For headings, I’d ideally like something more exciting, and possibly italics/bold/allcaps.

I also like to use Comic Book font on my posters, and I could see it being cool on a webpage (or falling completely flat and looking gaudy!).

I’m not 100% set on these fonts, though. In general I want the site to look really clean, minimalist, fun, and somewhat futuristic if possible. And possibly quirky in some way—but I don’t want to make it seem like I’m not 100% serious about the work I do. I just want to give the illusion that I’m not 100% boring while doing it.

1. What is the personality of your lab [e.g., caring, trustworthy, resourceful]?

Analytic/technical, creative, interesting, quirky, fun, and scientifically rigorous. I want to grab attention without being unnecessarily flashy. Like as someone continues to look deeper into the lab (maybe something catches their eye), they realize that it’s more and more interesting the more they look. I also want to convey the idea of “nonchalant rigor.” In other words, I want to make the complicated stuff look interesting and fun rather than scary, while at the same time making it clear that we are doing real (and important!) science that will leave a mark on the scientific world.

1. If you had to describe your lab in only two words, what would they be?

“Creative” and “fascinating”

1. Who is the ideal audience for your website?

Initially, I will be using the website to recruit students, RAs, and postdocs. These people will likely be clicking quickly through the web pages of everyone in the department and spending a few seconds up to a few minutes on each one. I need them to be intrigued and want to work with me. I also want to convey technical rigor because I want “computer science types” to be sucked in. But I also want to recruit people who will be fun to work with, and I’m hoping some quirky touches can help accomplish that. I might also want to include a section on living in the Hanover area and how it’s so amazing (with some pictures of beautiful nature/wildlife)…but I don’t want to make it seem like I’m “selling” the place either.

The other very important audiences are colleagues (e.g. who I want to invite me to give talks, read and reference my papers, write me good reference letters for grants and job promotions, grant me tenure, offer me jobs, etc.), collaborators (who will download my software/data), and people making funding decisions (grant agencies and funding organizations who want to know that their money has been or will be well spent). These audiences will be extremely important in the long term, but are less important initially while I’m trying to set up my lab. I could imagine restructuring the web page as the lab’s needs shift, if needed.

1. Name the top 3-5 audiences your lab interacts with regularly.
2. Students/postdocs looking to work in my lab
3. Students looking to participate in experiments
4. People wanting to learn more about what I do (students, colleagues, prospective employers, funding agencies, etc.)
5. If your lab was an animal, what type of animal would it be? Why?

It would be an octopus, because octopi are smart, great at solving complicated puzzles, and can adapt to their changing surroundings with ease (or blend in when needed). It’s difficult to notice an octopus if you just a fish swimming by (like it’s difficult to notice the situation you’re in if you’re not paying close attention), but the octopus (context) can have a huge impact on a fish’s (your) life. And when you do notice an octopus it can be beautiful and even surprising.

1. What organization or company brand do you most admire? Why?

I most admire Google. More than any other company, they have created a set of products that are widely useful to a huge percentage of the developed world and they are constantly re-evaluating, re-vamping, and re-inventing how things can be done even better. I use Google’s services every day and would be hugely set back if Google disappeared. They integrate their best ideas across their different products (e.g. when they improve how web pages are searched, they re-use the same search algorithm in gmail, calendar, youtube, maps, etc.). For many of their products (search, email, maps, video, smartphones), they have taken a good idea that already existed and then taken it to the next level by revolutionizing how the world did that thing. I want to do this with my research: make tools that everyone never knew they needed but that they use every day to catapult their own work to the next level; discover “new” interesting patterns that have been there all along hiding in plain sight; and become a leader in the field so that my lab can help to shape its future.

1. List 2-3 websites that you really like (and explain what you like most about them, as well as links to 2-3 websites you dislike (and describe why).

Websites I like:

The Design Blog (<http://thedsgnblog.com/)>: minimalist, clean, visually engaging. The design engages without getting in the way. There are interesting places to look almost everywhere, but at the same time they make really good use of negative space which prevents the site from looking cluttered. It’s like my mind can “relax” in those empty spaces. I also like the diagonal pattern in the banner image.

99u (<http://99u.com/)>: minimalist, clean, neat looking (but easy to read and not distracting) fonts. Nice use of space.

Web Designer Depot (<http://www.webdesignerdepot.com/)>: minimalist, bold, nice colors. I like how the different elements are interactive and interesting. The titles and images grab attention. I also like the diamond pattern (and its bright but not overwhelming colors) on top of the menu bar. The logo is neat (especially when you mouse over it), too.

Websites I don’t like:

There are many terrible websites, but I’ve listed below two websites that look like they are attempting to implement the “clean and minimalist” style but (in my opinion) fail:

Santander Online Banking (<https://www.santanderbank.com/us/)>: many of the individual elements are OK, but the entire image does not fit together. Negative space is poorly used, making the look feel cluttered. As you scroll down the page, it seems like each section is in a totally different style and unrelated to the rest of the page.

LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/hp/)>: I dislike the gradient at the top (it doesn’t seem to match with the other components of the page). The layout is visually uninteresting and the elements are not well spaced out. There is a lot of space that feels wasted—if you compare the use of negative space with The Design Blog’s homepage, there’s probably more “blank” space on the TDB page but it feels like the LinkedIn page is much more cluttered, unbalanced, uninteresting, and distracting.

*[CONTENT-RELATED QUESTIONS]*

1. What is your lab’s mission or catch phrase?

Our lab has several goals:

1. Improve our understanding of how our brains represent contexts and situations, and how those representations evolve over time with short and long term experience
2. Develop computational models and neuroimaging tools that are broadly useful to the scientific community
3. Gain insights into memory and information processing that will help guide the development of clinical diagnoses, therapies, treatments, and interventions.
4. Communicate our findings to the broader community
5. Describe your lab (what you do). [Feel free to provide links to websites of labs that do similar work and, if possible, explain what differentiates you from them.]

In the Contextual Dynamics Laboratory (CDL), we study how our brains acquire, process, store, and retrieve information about our environment as a function of the current context or situation. We use computational models and powerful neuroimaging techniques to gain insights into these processes.

We focus on episodic memory (memory for autobiographical events), but we also study how context affects visual processing (e.g. color vision—how you interpret the color of one patch in your field of view is influenced by surrounding patches) and spatial navigation (e.g. you know where you are based on surrounding cues, and you use “background” cues to learn how to get around new places).

Other labs that do similar work:

Princeton Computational Memory Lab (<http://compmem.princeton.edu/)>: Uses computational models and brain imaging (mainly fMRI) to study episodic memory and context (and how it affects memory). My lab is different in that I focus primarily on “context” as a larger set of questions rather than focusing on “memory” as the main goal.

UPenn Computational Memory Lab (<http://memory.psych.upenn.edu/Main_Page)>: Research is on developing computational models of human memory, and on studying the neural correlates of episodic memory, the neurophysiology of human reward learning, and human spatial memory and cognition. My lab studies similar things but focusing on “context” as the main goal. I am also interested in the “dynamics” of context—how it changes over time.

Brainard Lab (<http://color.psych.upenn.edu/)>: Studies human color vision. My lab is primarily focused on how context affects memory, whereas the Brainard Lab studies color perception (which happens to be affected by context).

OSU Computational Memory Lab (<http://memory.osu.edu/)>: Similar to the Princeton and UPenn Computational Memory Labs. Their focus is on understanding how memories form and are retrieved and how that affects our behaviors. Mine is on how context affects those processes (e.g. how context affects how memories form and are retrieved; how context affects how memory formation and retrieval affects behavior, etc.).

Vanderbilt Computational Memory Lab (<http://memory.psy.vanderbilt.edu/groups/vcml/)>: They study the cognitive and neural dynamics of human memory (how we search our memories for recently learned material). My lab is similarly interested in the dynamics of memory formation and retrieval, but we study how context affects these processes (rather than studying them in isolation).

1. Provide all written copy that you would like to include on your website (research descriptions, personnel bios, contact details, etc.).

To be provided later— I’ll generally be working from the text on my current website (<http://caligari.dartmouth.edu/~jmanning/)>.

1. Please share links to all documents and materials you would like to include on your website.

I’ll want to include all materials linked to on these two pages:

<http://caligari.dartmouth.edu/~jmanning/publications.html>

<http://caligari.dartmouth.edu/~jmanning/software.html>

1. Please provide your CV and/or a bio written about you.

My CV is here: <http://caligari.dartmouth.edu/~jmanning/CV.pdf>

I don’t have a bio yet…

1. List any Calls To Action you would like to include (“Work with Us,” “Find Out More,” etc.).

Learn more; Lab News; Read our publications; Download our software; Download our Data; Work in the lab; Participate in experiments; Contact us

1. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your lab (or you) that will help guide the website design or content?

I want to be able to view the website on many different screen formats and resolutions (laptop, retina laptop, ipod/phone, ipad). I’ll also want to put the logo on scientific posters. I will also eventually try to incorporate a similar look into the lab’s social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter).

I was also thinking of posting some renderings of my lab design ideas, and/or blueprint sketches (would this go in a “lab news” section?).

And when we present posters or publish papers, I may want to include a thumbnail of an interesting portion of the poster/paper to help advertise it and say a bit about it. (This could happen on Twitter instead if it’s difficult to incorporate a “blog style” news feed into the site.)