SWEN303

Team 25 Individual Report
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1.   Process and Contribution

Process

Personas:

The beginning of the design process for the group was with part 1, the personas and scenarios for our design. For this we took our experience from the previous assignment and applied that to this new project.

The personas used were designed with Cooper's Personas in mind, we also took facets from C&L and applied them to our persona design. This again was based off the previous assignment sample, which provided a useful structure which is straightforward and understandable.

Unlike my work on the previous assignment however, the inspiration for the personas was a more methodical and logical approach. At first, we looked at each other's previous work (on assignment two) and looked for an idea on what personas may be useful in designing the full ECS web presence. In doing so we came up with a list of potential personas all with varying degrees of user interaction with the system we would be designing.

When looking at the potential personas, I was taking into consideration what types of people would give us the broadest amount of interaction with the design space, and how much we could design around trying to make the experience of using the ECS website smooth and simple for them. Again, I was trying to avoid my personal bias from my experiences using the ECS systems.

At this point we looked at personas who would be using the ECS systems on a regular basis, as this would lead to multiple scenarios across a broad spectrum of the ECS web presence. Taking personas who would use the system, and catering the design to them allowed us to provide the best all round user experience, as designing the system so that it is smooth and easy for a regular user should also accommodate for personas that do not use the system as regularly as well personas who would only interact with the system in a one-off experience.

Scenarios:

The scenarios we developed were chosen to be a good snapshot of what our chosen personas would be using the ECS websites for, this is broad coverage regular use. Any irregular usage of the system is still in consideration; however, it is peripheral to the regular use of the system and the experiences of our chosen personas.

In developing these scenarios, we wanted to look at features of our innovative design, to highlight them in ideal circumstances for our chosen personas. As such we tried to create scenarios in which the focus of said scenario is the feature itself, these features were all designed with making the user experience smooth and simple for our chosen personas.

Focusing on these features helped us in visualising and cementing the designs of the features themselves. By developing these scenarios around features, the features became more streamlined, and even consolidate more of the old system features into our innovative designs.

In the previous assignment I did have some trouble coming up with scenarios to work well with usage of the ECS system. This was avoided on this project because of the need to highlight features and design a friendlier user experience for the personas. A lot of these ideas came to light whilst writing the scenarios, small features and design choices are easier to think of when attempting to give detailed user experiences in a concise written format.

Reflection.

Effective:

I found regular discussion on features and design changes was helpful in creating a solid consistent design, in which we all had input and could trim out bad or inconsistent ideas.

It was also beneficial to visualise our early design concepts on paper, many of these designs were revised on paper because of the simplicity of writing on top of designs.

As we moved onto a digital mock-up we each started work on our separate parts of the design, we were constantly asking and giving feedback to each other, effectively having each person working on multiple parts of the design simultaneously.

Ineffective:

We began the design process separately, from home, this proved very futile and very little was done. Once we had made the effort to meet up, ideas started flowing and the design process started progressing.

Moving from paper prototype to a digital one made simple things more difficult using unfamiliar technologies and it made it difficult to collate every one's individual work into a master file regularly.

Difficult:

It was initially difficult to get started on this project as it was large and intimidating, in terms of design there was a degree of difficulty in creating the digital mock-ups and sourcing images and shapes.

Contribution.

My Contribution:

I personally worked on the student menu, from initial paper concept to our final digital mock-up, location, contents and interaction. I also came up with the initial idea of the assignment portal as we call it, how it contains everything a need to deal with their assignments. The design of the assignment page was done by me.
I also conceptualised and designed the Lecture schedule page. The idea that we wanted a consistent layout for across all individual course pages came from me as well. The calendar concept came from me, and was designed from there by Andre.
I did the initial digital design of the sidebar and fixed menus, these were refined in various degrees by the rest of the group.
I made an initial site map design on paper and then on the digital report, this was redesigned when our design was finalised by the rest of the team.
Brief rambling overviews of the design concepts I worked on were added to the report, these also later cleaned up a little by the others.

Team Contribution:

The rest of the team worked about equally, the design report was mostly handled by them. Many of the other pages were worked on by them, and certain brilliant design choices came from them. I believe Hamid was the one who contributed the least, by a significant margin.

2. Design Critique
Features that work well.

Student Menu

I liked the design decisions we put into creating the student menu, having all a student needs at any time, available to them across all ECS websites gives the student a versatility I wish I had currently. The ability to pin any ECS page to the menu allowing the student to fine tune for personal use is very handy.
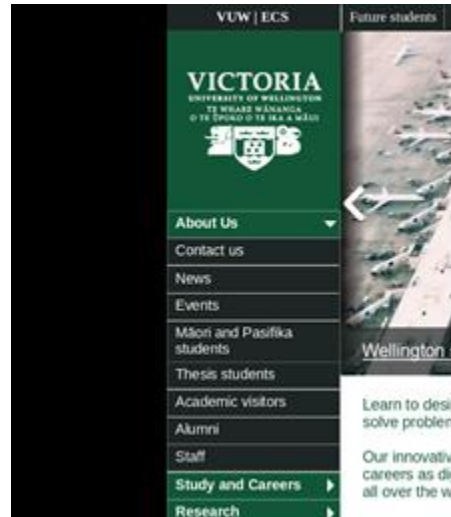This menu also has more features for lecturers and tutors.

Calendar
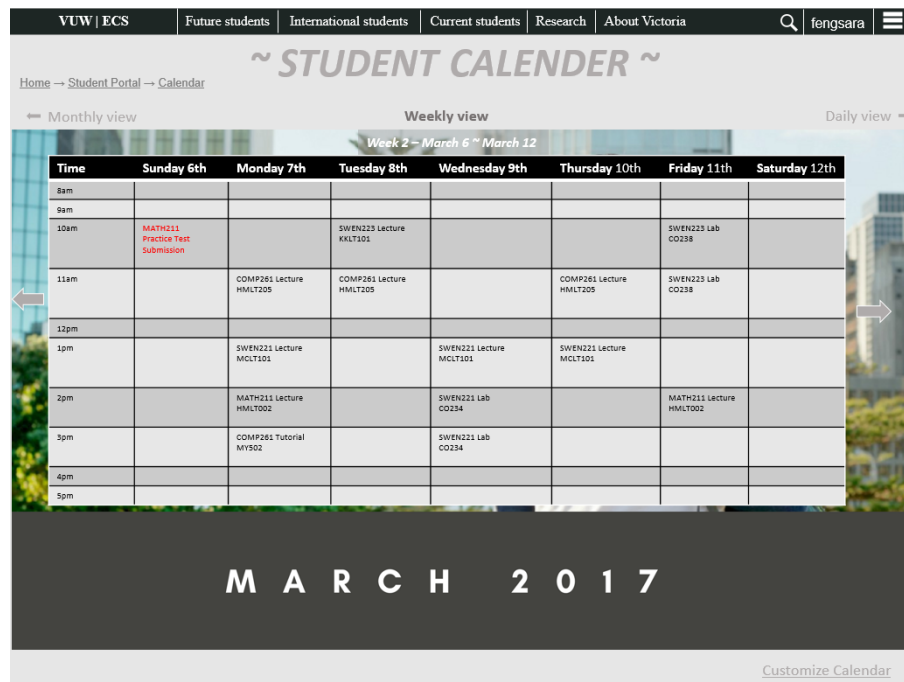
I like the calendar because having a specific location in which all the key dates and individual lecture times available would be so convenient, in comparison to the current system.

Remaining usability problems.

Hover Menus:

The hover menus can cause problems when the menu is expanded, moving the cursor too far past the open part of the menu would cause the menu to close, and the next may open instead.
To remedy this the menu could open outwards from the current menu and onto the screen further. We didn't want to obscure the feature page with a menu at any point. Another remedy would be to have to click to open the drop-down menu, this leads to somewhat unnecessary clicking on the users behalf.

Some pages in our design are too disjoint from the rest of our design, i.e. the calendar and forums, as they are only available through the student menu. This could be remedied by having a student resources page with a link somewhere on the homepage.

Having the side Menu be fixed as well as the top bar means there is a lot of empty unused space on every page, perhaps having a way to hide or shrink the side menu could be an option (could even pop back out when hovered over).

On the assignment page, the dates shouldn't need to be manually added, the data should be fetched from the university timetables on the server.
Also on the assignment page, if a student has many assignments, they may have to scroll down to find the next due assignment later in the trimester, this could be easily remedied by allowing the user to send assignments that are past due to the bottom of the list.

Assignment Marking Portal:

Course	Due Date	Status	Assignment
COMP261	6/3/21	MARKED	Assignment 1
COMP261	7/3/21	MARKED	Assignment 3
STAT193	8/3/21	PENDING	Assignment 2
COMP304	8/10/21	PENDING	Assignment 1
SWEN303	8/20/21	PENDING	Assignment 3
SWEN303	9/6/21	PENDING	Assignment 2
SWEN303	9/10/21	PENDING	Assignment 4

STUDENTID	MARK	FINALIZE
1234	90	AMEND
5678	90	SUBMIT
9101	90	SUBMIT
1456	90	AMEND
3457	90	SUBMIT
6789	90	SUBMIT
7890	90	SUBMIT

The assignment marking portal could lead to having too long of a list of students on the page, or having multiple sets of assignments obscuring each other. It is also unclear if it could be organised in anyway.
Potential remedies would be to implement some sort of tab system for each course, or a search, or a function that allows the marker to filter by status or course or any other way to allow the marker to succinctly get what he needs from the system.

The course homepages page could be improved by having a search feature as well as having them categorised.