



Card Sort Findings Report

UWP 104T: Technical Writing

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Introduction

I am designing an online portfolio and I have created a wireframe sitemap of how I want to structure my online portfolio. Before I create the portfolio, I wanted to enact some user centered design principles. Therefore, I conducted a card sort. The goal was to receive objective feedback on how users might organize my online portfolio.

Methods

Overview of Process

- 1) I prepared pieces of paper labeled with sections of my online portfolio.
- 2) Set-Up: I Invited three participants for 10 minute sessions into a computer lab at Olson on the UC Davis campus.
- 3) Led-Session: I explained to participants the goal of the session. I asked them to think aloud, lay out the cards and then let them get to work. After they felt they were done, I asked them why they chose to arrange the way they did. Some altered their results slightly and some kept them the same. My three participants were Jennifer, Luis and MJ.

Method Details

The method used to conduct my user research was an [open card sort](#). Card sorting is a process to evaluate the information architecture of a site, user manual or other digital or written document. In a card sorting session, user participants will receive a deck of unorganized cards, pieces of paper or use software to organize the content into groups that make sense to them. Then they are asked to describe the name of each group and why they chose to arrange the groups the way they did. In an open card sort, we get to learn how users would both organize the content as well as how they would label each category.

I used the one-on-one technique with the think-aloud protocol. With this method, I observed participants in person while getting live feedback of their reactions and thought processes. I provided 9 pieces of paper with the sections of my site. I did not provide the title of the pages such as "Home Page", "Skills", "Projects", etcetera because I wanted to get objective feedback on how users would organize my content.

Results

Participant 1: Jennifer

1. Lays out all the cards
2. Experience: Put "AT&T" and "UCD research assistant" together
3. "Not sure what design is"
4. Home: Placed "View Resume" beneath "Bio" together
5. Projects: Put "Photos" and "Lego Manual" under "Design"
6. Experience 2: Puts "Business Data Miner" under "Software Engineering"
7. Please refer to the appendix for reference to the card sort for Jennifer

Participant 2: Luis

1. Lays out all the cards
2. Put "Business data miner" under "Software Engineering"
3. Home: Places "Bio" as separate category
4. Design: Puts photos under design
5. Experience: "AT&T" and "UCD research assistant" experience put together
6. Projects Put "Lego Manual" as separate category
7. Resume: Put "View Resume" as a separate category
8. Please refer to the appendix to view the card sort for Luis

Participant 3: MJ

1. Views all cards by laying them out
2. "I don't know where design goes"
3. Home: "Bio" with "View Resume" + "Design" underneath it
4. "Photos" placed as separate category
5. Work Experience: "UCD RA", "Software engineering", "AT&T"
6. Projects: "Lego Manual", "Business data miner"
7. Please refer to the appendix to view the card sort for MJ

Global Similarities:

- Participants put “AT&T” and “UCD research Assistant” in the correct category (experience)
- There were no major similarities between my sitemap and the participants card sort. Please refer to the errors below as to why this may be.

Global Differences:

There were many differences between how I conceived my sitemap versus how the participants organized it.

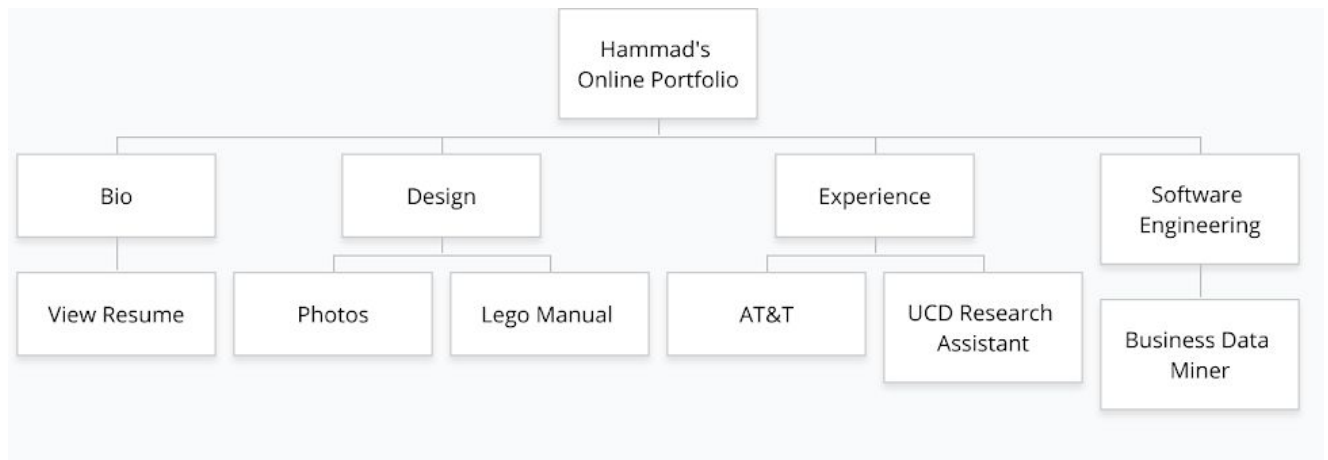
- Participants placed “View My Resume” under “Bio” instead of under a separate tab as I had it.
- “Business Data Miner” was often categorized under “Software Engineering” instead of “Projects” as I had it.
- “Photos” were often placed under “Design” instead of a separate “Gallery” tab as I had it.
- Each card sort was different among themselves, but these were the major trend of differences from my sitemap.

Errors:

- I did not anticipate that we would be doing an open card sort. I assumed it would be a closed card sort so I wrote the labels of my cards in such a way that the participants would place them under predefined categories. However we conducted an open card sort, so the would-be tabs of the site were omitted.
- Secondly, I did not bring enough cards for all the sections of my site. I believe the lack of cards might have skewed the results, but may have also helped as it's best to limit the number of cards to avoid analysis paralysis during a card sort.
- My site map was very large so I chose only a few categories from each section. This may have resulted in the differences I observed.

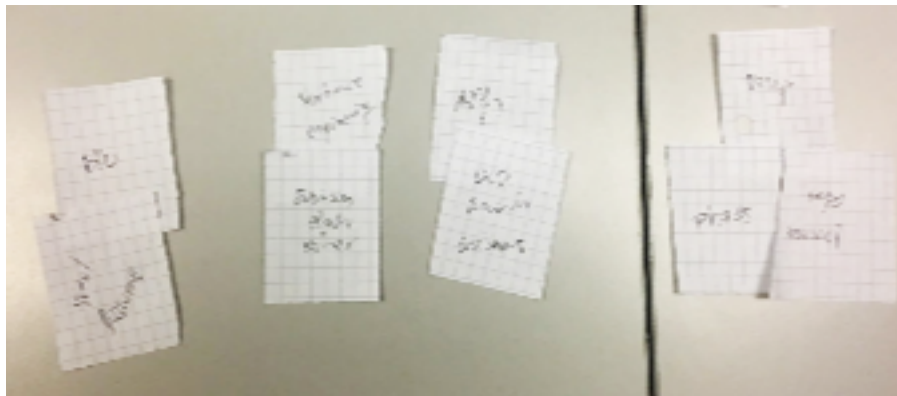
Discussion

I will use the information from the card sorting sessions to reconsider how I organize categories on my website. Since I have an existing website, I will primarily be using this feedback to re-organize my existing portfolio based on how the users arranged the card sort. However, I may omit some of the card sort suggestions as I feel I didn't do the process full justice. I believe my card labels should have been more descriptive. In addition to the card sort, I will conduct one-on-one sessions to receive feedback on my existing site. I received some feedback on my portfolio during down-time in between sessions. Overall, I received helpful feedback from the card sort and I believe even though it was not consistent with what I had conceived, it benefited me because at the end of the day I want the user experience of my site to be pleasing. Based on the information I collected in the card sort, I would arrange the sitemap as follows:

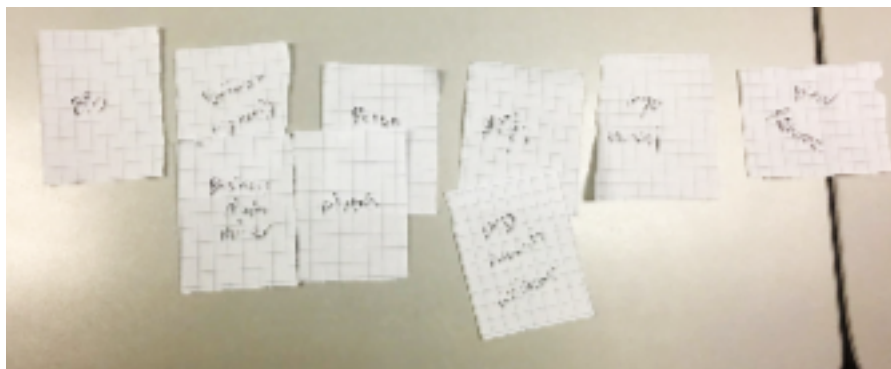


Appendix

Jennifer's Card Sort



Luis's Card Sort



MJ's Card Sort

