

ENGL 7080: Document Design

Interoffice Memorandum

To Dr. Derek Ross
From Kaitlin Coyle
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Subject Usability Test of Hispanic Heritage Infographic

Introduction

As Mirel (2013) mentions, the goal of an artifact/document is to be usable and useful. Usability is a measure of the document/artifact's ease of use, while usefulness measures the user's ability to fulfill their purpose. Nurkka (2010) presents the same concepts as "do-goals" and "be-goals."

To measure the usefulness and usability of my infographic, I created a usability test consisting of task-based scenarios, think-aloud processes, a post-test interview, and product reaction cards. These are all usability tests that Kiewe (2006), Barnum and Palmer (2010), and [Barnum \(n.d.\)](#) detailed in their articles.

Results

The two user task scenarios that I created are detailed below.

1. You are attending Auburn's Latinx Student Alliance meeting, something you have never attended before. You see this "National Hispanic Heritage" infographic and it catches your eye. You are eager to learn more about the culture, so you stop and read the infographic. Read about the definitions of "Hispanic" and "Latino" and tell us what you learn.
2. While reading the infographic, you remember one of your friends told you that their mom is from Panamá in Central America. Locate both Panamá and the Central American region on the infographic's map.

Observing users engage in the task scenarios revealed several things. First, while the definition for "Latino/Latina/Latinx" was clear, the user did not understand the definition of "Hispanic" and stumbled across the wording. The user paused and read the following sentence three times: "The word's historical 'Spaniard' meaning is why many US-Latin Americans reject it." The user's think aloud process revealed that they did not understand what the "historical" meaning of Spaniard was, suggesting that the wording was confusing.

The second task-scenario revealed that the user easily located Central America, stating it was distinguishable because each region was labeled in a different color; however, the user was unable to locate Panamá. This suggests that for users to distinguish countries, regions need to be labeled with country names. This would increase the user's knowledge by displaying the number of countries that constitute Latin America, but also further fulfill the document's purpose of explaining the diversity, fluidity, and complexity of Latino/Hispanic identity.

During the post-test interview, I asked the user the following questions:

1. How did the infographic's color scheme make you feel?
2. Was there anything particularly difficult about understanding the infographic?
3. Based on the infographic's title, what information do you expect to see?

Regarding the first question, the user stated they felt the colors “popped” and had good contrast, suggesting the color scheme was aesthetically pleasing. The second question revealed that the user believed the pie chart was too small and hard to read. For the third question, the user stated that they expected to learn about the “history” and “heritage” of Latino/Hispanic culture from the infographic’s title.

The user chose the following product reaction cards from [Microsoft's Desirability Toolkit](#) (Barnum, n.d.) to describe the infographic:

1. “Useful”
2. “Attractive”
3. “Efficient”
4. “Clear”
5. “Novel”

For the word “useful,” the user stated the infographic was informational, but not overwhelming. The choice of “clear” was attributed to the clarity of the infographic’s design and organization; however, the user stated the wording could be improved.

This test revealed several things about my infographic. While the user felt that the document was both useful and usable (aesthetically pleasing), clarifying the definition of “Hispanic,” providing clear labels for countries, and increasing the size of certain graphics would improve the infographic’s usefulness.

Overall, this test revealed that the user has a positive experience navigating the document. This means the document is usable, and users can successfully complete “be-goals”—feeling fulfilled and satisfied as they interact with the document; however, the primary purpose of the infographic is to inform users of the complexity/fluidity of Latino/Hispanic identity, and the user failed to understand this complexity. This suggests that the document is more usable than useful, and more emphasis needs to be placed on the infographic’s information for it to *truly* encourage deep, analytical thinking (Cairo, 2013).