

Goal

The goal of this usability test was to identify areas of improvement for the [Campus Y website](#) and discover the features of the site which prevent an intuitive user experience.

Instruments

The following is a list of instruments I utilized to complete the user tests. These materials were never visible to the user, and the forms were completed by me after the tests were complete.

Final Script:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aqJirtjUq8MBqfVgDP7nGhkpANFc22V9a9RjaKZlPok/edit>

Consent Form:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uFjT0gDRaX-SZ6l3Q923x4FJAOz-gQQ5KVk0NcLrKk/edit>

Summary

For my usability tests for the Campus Y website, my subjects were full-time students who spend between 12 to 16 hours a week browsing the web or checking their email. Both subjects use the web in order to access sakai for school work and social media for entertainment. While only one of the two subjects I tested use the internet to receive news, they both seem interested in reading about events that are closely related to how things will affect their personal lives. This seemed to reflect their thoughts on the news stories on the Campus Y website.

The largest complaint from my users on the Campus Y website was the layout of each page and how the site was structure. When my users were met with a difficult task, they would use the command F function to help them find the information they need. This research will help to explain some major and minor areas that could be improved to help future users have a more engaging and pleasant experience while navigating the Campus Y website.

Positive Findings

Reserving a Room and Becoming a Member

Interestingly, none of my users had issues finding where to reserve a room in the Campus Y or to become a member of the Campus Y. Within 10 seconds both users were able to complete this task. Using this information could be beneficial in figuring out how to restructure the site architecture by evaluating where this information was placed and why it was so easily accessible for the users. Organizing items in the correct category would help the architecture in many ways.

News Stories

Both of my users also found the news stories that are posted on the homepage to be interesting. They mentioned that they helped convey what the Campus Y is about. The only issue they seemed to have with the news stories was how they were laid out on the website. One user said that it seemed outdated and that there are better aesthetic ways of presenting this information. This user also mentioned that the text was uneven and that the responsive design was not particularly done well.

Major Problems

Site Architecture

There are five menu items on the Campus Y website that are meant to help navigate the user through information presented in the site. Unfortunately, the site architecture is unorganized, which makes it difficult for users to find the information they are looking for. For example, the most difficult task for users to complete was to find the co-chairs for Stage Play. Both users first attempt at finding the co-chairs was looking under leadership in the about section. Often times, when my users were asked to find contact information about committees or looking for committees themselves, they would try searching in the connect section of the site. This represents issues of misplacement of information throughout the site architecture, which causes major concerns for users to find the information they need.

Organization of Content

Another large issue with the site is how content is organized on the pages throughout the site. My users would often become confused when they landed on a page because of the text heavy information. This demonstrates a lack of hierarchy throughout, which can overload the user before realizing where they are in the site. This proved to be a major concern for reserving a room through the Campus Y. Another example of this is the committees page. When users were asked to find the co-chairs for the Stage Play committee, they used a search function instead of scrolling in order to find the information for the committee. Going through all the text heavy information in the site made it more time consuming for my users to skim through the information. This led to frustration when trying to complete tasks.

Minor Problems

Photos and Videos

Both my users found the photos and videos to be dull and uninteresting. One user stated that the pictures weren't ugly, but they were mediocre and boring to view. Another user stated that the pictures and videos would be more interesting if they represented more of what the Campus Y is about. Both users agreed that the pictures and photos took away from the engagement of the site. If the photos and videos were replaced with a much more interesting transition of actions and events, then the engagement of the site would attract more users.

Navigational Controls

Both users agreed that the navigational controls were frustrating to deal with. For example, in order to see subcategory items beneath the menu items, you have to click in order for a dropdown to appear. Users agreed that this should be done with hover states instead.

Another issue is differentiating between what is plain text and what is a link. For example, on the committee's page both my users were unsure if the names for each committee were a link. This is one of the reasons why one of my users was unable to find the co-chairs contact information for Stage Play. One user even hovered over the title asking me if they found Stage Play, but it didn't have any contact information. In order to fix this, there needs to be a hierarchical difference between the surrounding text and what is a link.

Takeaways

Usability tests were conducted using two participants for the Campus Y website. The participants were given tasks to complete while they were being observed through their navigation process. All participants showed some strong correlations relating to problems with the site. My observations gave me some clear ideas on what needs to be improved in the site. From these observations I have made some recommendations that would solve these problems.

Main Navigation

Restructuring the main navigation and renaming the items to better match the subcategories would help users find information much easier.

Recommendation: Formulating a site architecture by organizing information in groups would help us understand the categories throughout the site much better. We could then test users' abilities to navigate through the new site architecture in order to see the improvement from the older site architecture.

Restructuring Layout and Design

Since my users had issues reading through the information and figuring out the difference between a link and plain text, working on the layout and hierarchy of the site would help alleviate these issues.

Recommendations: In order to tackle this problem, I would need to start by redesigning the layout of each page by creating wireframe templates. This would help figure out what hierarchy works best for the site. Another issue I noticed was the inconsistency of the typography throughout the site. I plan to create a style guide based on users' preferences to come up with the best hierarchy possible for the site.