IAM Site Information Restructure

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Content Analysis

To analyze the content of the IAM site, we found it most useful to scan through the site's Google Analytics results. Through Google Analytics, we found a great amount of useful information regarding user flows and behavior patterns as they navigate the IAM site. In order to come to a consensus over the site's most visited pages and most likely users, we analyzed the following aspects through Google Analytics:

- Most visited pages
- Least visited pages
- Common entry points
- Length of time spent on each page
- Error pages
- User location

Here's how each of these analyses helped us out:

Most visited pages: We found out that the majority of pages with the most views and visits were pages intended for students, student workers, and future students interested in the department. This is partially how we came up with those three main categories for our information restructure.

Least visited pages: The least visited pages allowed us to rule out pages from the navigation and remove what was unnecessary. These included pages that led to errors or pages with outdated information. Many of these pages such as the "Dept and Class Blogs" page contain information as old as 2014.

Common entry points: We found out that most users visit the IAM site from a search engine, or directly from the homepage link. Through this information we inferred that the site's visitors are probably either interested students or current students who access it daily from the department computers.

Length of time spent on each page: These tidbits of information helped us out with discovering the most and least popular pages as well. Once again, pages such as error pages or pages with outdated information did not have much time spent on them by users. Student worker pages were very popular with time spent on them; letting us know that student workers use the IAM site a lot.

Error pages: Some of the pages in the list of IAM links on Google Analytics were titled with error messages. When following these links, we were able to decipher which sections of the site they came from and rule out those areas.

User location: We were very intrigued by the locations of the IAM site's users. We found that the site has visitors from all over; all the way from the US to places such as Brazil or Australia. Considering that students from abroad cannot easily visit the department in person, we decided its web presence is very important for those users. This in part helped us decide to create a "prospective students" section which contains information helpful for future students interested in the department.

Heuristics Analysis of iam.colum.edu

Task	Channel
Find a Tutor	Website (browsing)
Look for Program Descriptions	Website (browsing)
Browse department FAQ	Website (browsing)

Principle	Context & Expectations for Review	Pre Test Score
1. Clear	Users go in looking for certain information such as tutoring or program descriptions and get overwhelmed by either too much information or not enough information. The paths to get to where they want are unclear.	C
2. Findable	The issue with finding department program descriptions is also present here. One would assume they could find the different programs on the IAM site, but they are not there. The FAQ is filled with too much information displayed in an overwhelming manner. It is not easy to find one specific thing a user is	C

	looking for without scrolling down and searching for it.	
3. Accessible	Some information isn't available, though it may seem as if it is. When it comes to finding information on certain departments and majors, there isn't even a page that explains that.	C
4. Useful	Looking for description of any IAM program is useless because most of the information is unavailable. Also, when looking for assistance in some of the listed areas do not have any available tutors which makes it useless to list them at all.	C
5. Communicative	There is certain information that should be communicated through the site that is not. This principle is also violated through the lack of program descriptions within the department. Some of the most necessary department information is not communicated.	B
6. Valuable	A lot of the site's information	B

	is valuable. Though some things are out of date, which can be misleading. The order of what is displayed on the page raises questions on what they think is most valuable.	
7. Credible	When looking into the IAM site some of the information is out of date which can mislead the user	C
8. Learnable	For the most part, the IAM site has a lot of great information about the department that makes it very learnable. The problems fall in the organization and display of this information.	A-
9. Delightful	Overall, IAM site isn't very delightful to use. There are few hover states and even fewer animations that could make the site anymore than just a display of information	D
10. Controllable	The IAM site is relatively easy to control. However, there are some glitches that takes you to an 404 page or unwanted site and most of the information is unorganized	B

1. Clear		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
While trying to find a tutor, there are several links that lead to different aspects of tutoring. This is overwhelming to the user. It would be more useful to just have one tutoring page with all the links. If a user wanted to find the programs this department offers, there are no links available to show them that information.	Critical: The user might not be able to complete the task or not getting the exact information they were looking for.	Users would find information quicker and would be more inclined to use the site again.
2. Findable		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
If a user was looking for the degree requirements of the Interaction Design program, it is not openly available or easy to find on the IAM site. This is information that should be accessible through the front page. If a user was looking up how to compress files on the FAQ page, they will scroll down just to find that the question is there with no answer. It is blank.	Critical: The site has lots of issues with findability. There are misleading links, nonexistent links, and pages that should exist on the site that do not.	The site would become more useful to IAM students if findability issues were addressed. As of right now, students do not use the site much because the information they are seeking simply isn't there or could be better found elsewhere.

3. Accessible		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
Let's say you want to find information on internships and you click on the internship link. It would take you to a post with information from a year ago, so recent internships are not accessible.	Critical: The IAM site has to have up crucial information available and up to date. Students could miss out on vital opportunities if certain information isn't there.	Users will get the information they need and less confusion will occur.
4. Useful		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
There are some lists of tutoring areas that are totally useless because the department does not have any tutor available and do not offer any other source or help for tutoring those specific areas.	Medium: The most important areas which a student would need help are covered by a tutor in the department. However having a piece of useless information can mislead the user or create organizational problems in the site	With this fixed, the user would find the tutor they need more quickly and efficiently, rather than trying to find the right area of tutoring going through all the unnecessary list
5. Communicative		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
If a student is transferring to Columbia and found the IAM site, they might want to see the programs the department offers. In order to see this information,	Medium: While there is a lot of good information communicated, it is not necessarily communicated in the most efficient way. There are also some very	If communication issues were fixed, the user would have a shorter and more fulfilling experience finding the information they need. The IAM site should

they'd have to visit the actual Columbia site and leave the IAM department site because the information is not communicated through there.	important aspects missing, such as the program descriptions. Users can probably find the information elsewhere, so they will end up leaving the IAM site.	communicate all IAM information on its own without users having to redirect to a different Columbia site.
6. Valuable		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
Some of the student resources that probably clicked on the most are further down the page and hard to find.	Low: Theses issues will more than likely be cleared up when other heuristics are taken care of. This site has value purely because it has information that students need.	This site will be much a much more valuable resource when better IA is implemented.
7. Credible		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
If students were looking at the FAQ of the IAM department for some general information they could get confused because some of the information is out of date. Sometimes they are using images of old oasis.	Medium: The FAQ information should always be up to date with so the new students can find the right information about any inquiry they could have at the start of the program	The users could find the right information that they need.
8. Learnable		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed

If a student was looking to find links to tutorials or FTP help, they could be found in many areas like the tutorials page or the FAQ page. The pages themselves could be better organized and condensed to make for an easier experience finding the learnable information.	Low: There is potential for the IAM site's learnability to be great. It has lots of great resources to provide, it's just a matter of providing those resources more efficiently.	If all "learnable" sections were condensed into one larger section, it would be very easy for users to find the information they need specific to learning. The user experience would then become quicker and leave the user more satisfied.
9. Delightful		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
There are many links they could be put into dropdowns that would not only clean the site up, but make it more "fun" to interact with.	Low: This sites purpose is to get information to the user. The importance of making delightful interaction as important.	Site users may more inclined to use the site if it was more fun/smooth.
10. Controllable		
Finding	Severity	Impact if Fixed
There are some times when the user can click the back button to go to the main page and a message of "A Server Error Has Occurred" is displayed even though the user did not do anything out of the ordinary.	Low: It affects the overall experience of the IAM site	The overall experience of the site would get improved

IAM Site Card Sort

To try to get a better sense of how typical iam.colum.edu visitors would naturally group the elements of the site, we decided to do a card sort. The tool we chose to use for this is called Optimal Workshop. We found that it was the most to the point card sorting software plus it was easily shareable. Below are the cards we used followed by the individual documentation for each of our test subjects.

Advising	Dept and Class Blogs	Class Recordings	Email Lists	IAM Copyright Policy
IAM Transfer Student	Internships	Learning Outcomes	Partners	Student WEb Space
Tutorials	IAM Grade and Attendance Policy	Wiki	IAM Dreamspark	Currently Working
FAQs	Faculty Resources	Find a Tutor	Rate a Worker	Trouble Report
Work Request	Worker Schedules	Classrooms	IAM Map	Tweets
News	Events			

Testing Subject: Elaine
Age: 56
Subject was challenged to card sort 30 cards from the sidebar navigation of iam.colum.edu.
Evaluation method: Cards were sent to the user to be sorted out online.

Observations: Elaine ended up with several categories in the end. She had to condense them down because some had very few items in them. This shows that there is a lot of content on the site that belongs in many different areas. Instead of grouping it all together like the current site does, it might be useful to make a compromise with some smaller categories—but not too many detailed smaller categories as Elaine originally made.
Testing Subject: Ray

Age: 58
Subject was challenged to card sort 30 cards from the sidebar navigation of iam.colum.edu.
Evaluation method: Cards were sent to the user to be sorted out online.

Observations: Ray sorted through the cards pretty easily and came up with a good amount of categories in the end. The categories were a bit more specific and could easily be integrated for better overall information architecture. When creating our project we will reference these results to help narrow down the navigation.

Testing Subject: Chase
Age: 21
Subject was challenged to card sort 30 cards from the sidebar navigation of iam.colum.edu.
Evaluation method: Cards were sent to the user to be sorted out online.

Observations: Chase took his time and gave a lot of thought to where the cards should. He found that a lot of the cards could possibly go into multiple categories. I really liked how he separated the cards for students resources and help/tutorials. He explained to me that he thought that the student resources should be for getting services from the school, and help/tutorials should be for self help. He said he thought about make a few more categories, but he didn't want to go over five. He also said that he didn't know what certain cards meant, so we should consider making some of the names more obvious.

Testing Subject: Xianny
Age: 49
Subject was challenged to card sort 30 cards from the sidebar navigation of iam.colum.edu.
Evaluation method: Cards were sent to the user to be sorted out online.

Observations: Xianny was tested outside the usual demographic of the site on purpose. She had little understanding on what some of the cards meant, so that gave some idea of what some of the cards should be actually named or in what category they should belong to

Testing Subject: Corey
Age: 21
Subject was challenged to card sort 30 cards from the sidebar navigation of iam.colum.edu.

Evaluation method: Cards were sent to the user to be sorted out online.
Observations: Corey, along with many of our testers, found some of the terms to be pretty ambiguous, or have multiple places they could be placed. What I liked about his style was that he had a specific order for his categories, He put what he thought was most important in the beginning and least important at the end. Since he is a student, it's helpful to see what he believes users are going to click on most.

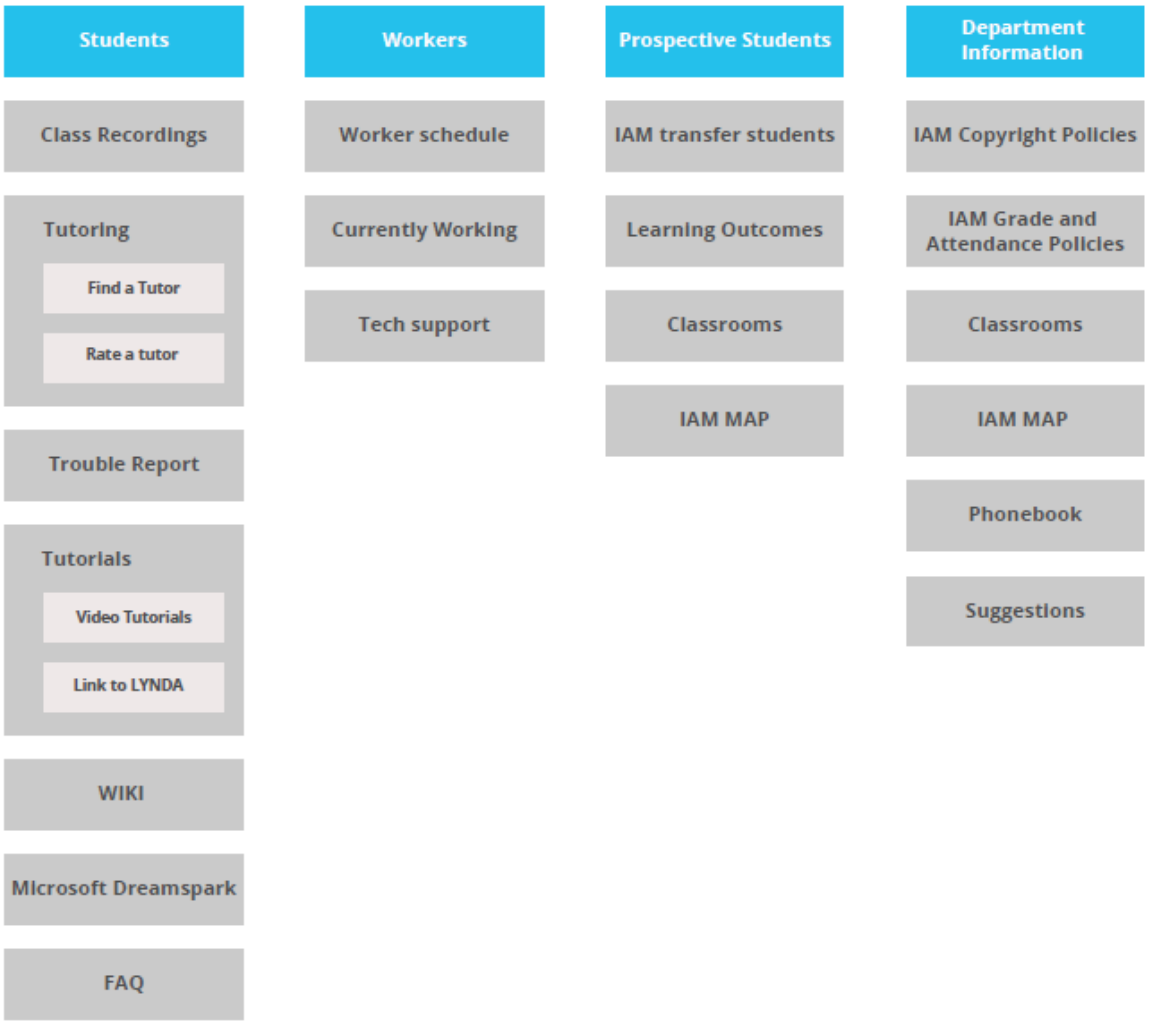
Affinity Diagram

Based on the results we collected from the content analysis, task analysis, and user testing/card sorting, our team reorganized the IAM site content into sections that make the most sense for its users. The major trends we recognized regarding the site's users were that students, student workers, and prospective students are the audiences most likely to use the IAM site. With this information, our team was able to restructure the navigation accordingly to those three major user categories:

Students
Workers
Prospective Students

Along with these three main categories, we decided a **Department Information** category would be useful for including IAM policies and contact information. Our content analysis also led us to realize there are many outdated and unnecessary pages on the IAM site. We created a list of those pages that could be removed and propose that they either be updated to the most current information or be removed altogether.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM



Removed categories:

Faculty Resources
Dept and Class Blogs
Internships
Email Lists
Student Web Space

These categories were removed due to outdated information, lack of page visits, or lack of usefulness to the site's audiences.

Conclusion

After developing each component of our case study, we came up with the final solution that the IAM site's main navigation currently requires the most attention and should be the object of focus while restructuring the information architecture. We decided that keeping the list of visible categories and links would be a good option for site visitors to quickly find what they are looking for. However, restructuring these links according to the new proposed categories with the major audiences in mind would make the site much more user-friendly.

New major categories to implement:

Students: Students visiting the IAM site should be able to immediately access the pages/information that are intended for them. The current site attempts to do this, but many of the links under the "For and about Students" section aren't necessarily relevant to that category or up-to-date. We recommend organizing this section with the pages listed in our affinity diagram.

Workers: Student workers are a very large majority of the IAM site's users, according to our Google Analytics results. Several pages of the IAM site are dedicated to student workers, so it makes sense that they would have their own presence on the site.

Prospective Students: There currently is no way for prospective students to access information about the department's programs or classes through the IAM site. International or out-of-state students will also need easy access to department information, so the site should display a new section dedicated to prospective students and the information they require.

Department Information: It makes the most sense to organize all department visiting/contact/policy information into one section as opposed to their own tiny sections. This type of information would be expected to all be in one area, so we decided to group it together.

By restructuring the IAM site's navigation according to these major categories, we believe its primary users would be able to access the information they need most quickly and efficiently. This information architecture will make for less confusion and overlap between categories as

well as rule out error pages and outdated pages. Overall, this structure would cater in the best possible way to each of the site’s major audiences.