Site Usability Test Report

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# Introduction

Our internal client project website serves as an information portal for the Technical Web Design Program. It is designed for past, prospective, and current students, academic advisors, parents or peers of students or anyone interested in the Technical Web Design Program. It provides access to information regarding courses description, program schedule, faculty contact, student work and contact, program resources, and server access.

We conducted a usability test on a few male participants. This is intended to determine the extent an interface facilitates a user’s ability to complete routine tasks. The test is conducted with a small group of potential users in a computer lab on-site with appropriate equipment. Users are asked to complete a series of routine tasks. Sessions are recorded and analyzed to identify potential areas for improvement to the web site.

The Compass group usability student-researchers conducted an on-site usability test using a WAMP version of the internal client project website located on two computer lab desktop computers and a mobile phone. One student-researcher captured the computer screen process and participant navigation choices during the study. Two data loggers were present in the testing site. The study captured each participant’s navigational choices, task completion process, comments, questions, and feedback, etc.

# Executive Summary

The Compass Internal Client Project team conducted a Site Usability Test at the British Columbia Institute of Technology Downtown Campus in Vancouver on the afternoon of April 30th 2015. The purpose of the test was to assess the ease and usability of our Internal Client Project Technical Web Design website design and architecture.

Three male Network Administrator Security Professional students participated in our Site Usability Test. Each individual test session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

In general participants found our Internal Client Project Technical Web Design website layout to be clear, friendly, and clean. One out of the three participants rated our website as quite easy to use and two out of three participants considered our website as average in complexity. Participants claimed our site architecture, interface and layout is logical, intuitive, clear, and friendly. Our “main navigation bar was helpfully labeled with pictographic icons,” and our design layout “was minimalistic without being sparse.” One out of three participants found our site manageable or felt indifferent while completing tasks. Two out of three participants would very likely recommend our site to people they know of being interested in the TWD program and one participant would likely recommend our site to others.

This Site Usability Test Report contains the participants’ background, internet habits, and level of tech-savviness. We include summaries for rating task completion on ease-of-use, overall experience, and likelihood of recommendation to others.

The Site Usability Test identified a few problems including:

* Confusion over servers, schedules page, students page
* Confusion over student project archive that it leads to student portfolios
* Difficulty understanding sidebar
  + Sidebar not noticeable
* Difficulty locating project archive, mobile menu, info button
  + Info button not noticeable
* Arrows hard-to-see
* Schedule Calendar unsuitable for mobile version
  + Text too small
* Icons on Faculty page misleading, confusing

# Methodology

## Sessions

The TWD Program instructor recruited student-participants via the Network Administrator and Security Professional Program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology Downtown Campus. Each individual Site Usability Test session lasted approximately thirty minutes. During the session, each member of the Compass greeted the student-participant, asked for their name and the test administrator asked questions from a pre-test survey. The test administrator gathered information regarding their background and internet habits as the two data loggers recorded information on their laptop computers. Student-participants were given task scenarios to complete by finding information on our Internal Client Project Site and later asked to fill out post-survey question.

The test administrator used the pre-test survey to gain a better understanding of student-participants’ background and level of internet use and skills:

* Their assessment on practicality of their own department program’s internal website
  + Frequency of use
* Preferred device for using internet
  + Length of time using device(s)
  + Types of activities done on device(s)
* Occupation
* Previous field of study
* Level of web-savviness
  + Web features
    - Icons
    - Search functions
    - Web layout
* How important to keep up with web trends

The test administrator gave student-participants our post-survey question for self-assessment of site usability:

* Ratings on ease or complexity for completing tasks
  + Using 4-point scale from 1 Not Easy to 4 Very Easy
  + Reasons for rating
* Two good or bad memorable experiences using site
* Ratings for experience performing tasks
  + Using 5-option scale ranging from Frustrating, Uneasy, Manageable Indifferent, Easy to Very Easy
* Rating likelihood of recommending site to others
  + Using 4-point scale from 1 Very Unlikely to 4 Very Likely

Nearing the end of each session, we welcomed questions from student-participants and answered the best we could.

## Participants

All three participants were male students from the Network Administrator and Security Professional program at British Columbia Institute of Technology Downtown Campus. Three student-participants were schedule over a two-hour testing session in the afternoon of April 30th. The first-participants was a part-time bartender at a bar, a free-lance photographer and full-time student. The second student-participant was full-time student only but worked within the Information Technology industry for several years before his studies. The third student-participant was a recent immigrant who has worked as a network administrator for ten years before coming here.

Role

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Network Administrator** | **Other IT Professional** | **Food Beverage Industry** | **Photographer** | **No IT Background** |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Student-participants attempted completion of the following scenario tasks:

* Find what topics and assignments are covered for a particular week within the schedule page
  + Review particular student web project
* Find out the times of Spring Break for a past intake period
* Find information on how and where to apply for TWD program
* Find tutorial links for particular program topics
* Find contact information for program administrator
* Find which faculty member teaches a particular topic and contact information for faculty member
* Discern whether or not there is final project nearing end of the program
* Find instructions to access program server

Results

## Task Completion Success Rate

All participants successfully completed Task 4, 5, 6 and 7 (find contact information for program administrator, find which faculty member teaches a particular topic and contact information for faculty member, discern whether or not there is a final project, and find instructions to access program server). Two out of three (66%) completed Task 1 and 3 (find how and where to apply for TWD Program, (find what topics and assignments are covered for a particular week within the schedules page, and find tutorial links for particular program topic). None of the participants were able to complete Task 2 (0%) (find information on how and where to apply to program).

Task Completion Rates

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant** | **Task 1** | **Task 2** | **Task 3** | **Task 4** | **Task 5** | **Task 6** | **Task 7** |
| **1** | YES | NO | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| **2** | NO | NO | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| **3** | YES | NO | NO | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| **Success** | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Completion Rate** | 66% | 0% | 66% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

## Task Ratings

After the completion of all tasks, student-participants rated the ease or difficulty for performing the tasks. The post-survey questionnaire involved ratings based on 4-point scale from 1 Not Easy to 4 Very Easy

Ease in Finding Information for Completing Tasks

* Two out of three participants (66%) rated the tasks as 4 Very Easy
* One out of three participants (33%) rated the tasks as 3 Easy

Experience While Completing Tasks

* Two out of three participants (66%) rated their experience of Site Usability Test as Easy
* One out of three participants (33%) rated their experience of Site Usability Test as Manageable/Indifferent

Likelihood of Recommendations for Site

* Two out of three participants (66%) rated their likelihood of recommending our site to others
* One out of three participants (33%) rated their likelihood of recommending our site to others

Most of the participants (66%) considered our site very easy to use or (33%) easy to use.

The majority of participants (66%) would very likely recommend our site to others interested in the TWD program and a minority of participants (33%) would likely recommend our site to others interested in the TWD program.

See table:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not Easy/Frustrating/Very Unlikely | Average/Uneasy/Unlikely | Easy/Manageable or Indifferent/Likely | Very Easy/Easy/Very Likely | Very Easy |
| Felt tasks were easy to complete | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Experience while performing tasks | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Likelihood of recommending site to others | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Percentage Agreed | 0% | 0% | 33% | 66% | 0% |

### Likes, Dislikes, Participant Recommendations

Upon completion of the tasks, participants provided feedback for what they liked most and least about the website, and recommendations for improving the website.

Liked Most

The following comments capture what the participants liked most:

* “Clear design”
* “Friendly website interface”
* “Main navigation bar was helpfully labeled with pictographic icons”
* “Clean visual layout was minimalistic without being sparse

Find Information for Application to TWD Program (Task 2)

Task 2 required participants to find where and how to apply to the TWD program.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Change** | **Justification** | **Severity** |
| * Add direct links to official BCIT homepage from Internal Client Project Site home or faculty contact page | None of the participants were able to complete this task | High |
|  |  |  |

# Conclusion

Implementing the recommendations and continuing to work with users (i.e., real lay persons) will ensure a continued user-centered website.

Most of the student-participants found the Internal Client Project site to be clear, user-friendly, helpful, minimalistic and very easy or easy to use. Having a central internal site to find information is important for all participants as they are students and refer to site frequently. Implementing the Site Usability Test results and continuing to improve the site for users will ensure a better user-centered website.

(changes)

- found that participants had a hard time finding the ‘more information’ region located in the footer. We added a line of type next to our information icon to clearly identify its purpose.

* We added a more prominent sidebar that showed a clear hierarchy by adding background blocks and colour differentiators.

we hope that by making these changes we strengthen our site navigation and make for a better user user experience.