

Memorandum

To: Dr. Rhonda Stanton
From: Hallee Hinds
Subject: Usability testing report for the Professional Writing Recruitment Guide
Date: November 9, 2017

This report over the usability testing of the Professional Writing Recruitment Guide will explain what factors were targeted, what questions were asked, and how the readers answered and participated in each test. This memo will also organize all the information gathered from testing the document.

Testing Participation

For this usability testing sequence, I worked with six readers who evaluated my document. For the purpose of this report, I will refer to each person as readers A, B, C, D, E, and F. This test focused on the primary audience's opinions and feedback. By testing only the primary audience, I was able to understand what students want to see when they look at this recruitment guide; it gives me some insight as to what will attract students and encourage them to pick up information for the Professional Writing Program as opposed to other programs in the English Department.

Design Elements Tested

For my usability tests, I chose to test the color, typeface, arrangement, tables, and call-outs. These seemed like key components of my document because even though I asked specific questions, I can utilize my readers' answer in many places throughout my document as a whole. I linked these design features to the four of the five Es, including efficiency, effectiveness, error-tolerance, and engagement. I used these to make sure that my document is efficient in providing information, effective in getting across the overall concept and ideas, tolerant to errors so they readers can easily catch back up if they miss a piece of information, and engaging so that the reader *wants* to continue reading the guide.

Testing Questions

For my usability tests, I asked each reader the same six questions, which are listed below. They include a variety of measurement methods. The first question asked was "How does the order and layout of the topics keep you interested or distracted? Is there anything you would change, such as the order or page layout for certain topics?" This question focuses on the efficiency of the document, while having the reader participate in a think-aloud session to provide feedback. The second activity focused on efficiency as well, and also focused on arrangement. This activity was to "Locate the office phone number for Dr. Lyn Gattis," and to measure this activity, I used a stopwatch to measure how long it took each reader to find the information. Another question used in my testing procedure was "Where would callouts with student

testimonials and tips be most effective throughout the booklet? Point out the specific locations that would draw your attention most,” and to measure the readers’ responses, I used another think-aloud session to focus on the document’s effectiveness.

In the second set of questions, I asked my readers to focus on two different Es from Quesenbery’s five Es. The next task was to “Explain the differences between the BS and BA majors for the Professional Writing Program,” which targets the document’s error-tolerance by focusing on using the reader’s task-success. Another question I asked was “Does the use of Missouri State branding colors make the booklet easier to read than if it were in black and white? Does it make you feel like it could be something made by the University?” and was measured by using a scale of 1 to 5. This question focused on the document’s engaging qualities. The final question I asked my readers to answer was “Does the use of 2-3 different Missouri State branding typefaces make the booklet more distracting or more appealing? Please describe what you think should be done differently, and why.” This question was also an engaging question, and I had my readers complete a short-answer test to answer it.

Testing Protocol

The usability tests for this document were completed in a timespan of two days. Three of the tests were completed on Wednesday, November 8, 2017 and three were completed on Thursday, November 9, 2017. The setting of the tests varied because of time constraints, however, each test was completed at a desk while sitting across from the reader. Each reader was provided with a print copy of the document, as well as a laptop to view the document in color, with more specific margins that are true to the document. Each test took about ten minutes, and each participant was given the same scenario, involving the idea that they were a new student at Missouri State looking to learn more about the different degree programs in the English Department. After each test concluded, I let each reader ask any questions they had about the document, which also provided me with information to use in revising my document.

Testing Outcomes

After completing all usability tests, I am able to see more clearly what needs to be changed and/or adjusted in my document. All of my readers were able to correctly and efficiently locate information about the differences between the Professional Writing BS and BA options. Each test, though, provided me with new feedback for each of the other questions, with only some comments and ideas overlapping.

Reader A

Reader A answered the question about arrangement by stating that although no sections needed to be moved, there were some that could be clarified because they had similar subject content. She also suggested that certain sections be combined to create an overarching topic of resume-building. It took Reader A approximately 5 seconds to locate Dr. Gattis’ office phone

number, which is a good estimated amount of time, especially considering that the table of contents lacks detailed titles in this draft of my document.

When asked about where to add student contributions such as testimonials, tips, and advice, Reader A suggested that a testimonial should definitely be added to the page that discusses job outcomes. She would like to see a testimonial from someone who graduated from the program and currently has a career in the Professional Writing field. She also felt that the use of Missouri State branding colors was extremely effective, making the document easier to read. She rated it a 5 on a five-point scale. She also decided that the document definitely felt like something that would be produced by the University, also giving this area a rating of 5 out of 5.

The final question Reader A answered was in regard to the use of several Missouri State branding typefaces throughout the document. She wrote that using more than one typeface makes the document more appealing because it clearly funnels the information from the big picture to the little picture.

Reader B

Reader B stated that all the topics seemed to be arranged in a logical order, and she would not change anything about the topic layout. It took Reader B roughly 10 seconds to find the contact information for Dr. Gattis, which is slightly longer than other readers, but is also understandable due to the lack of detail in the current table of contents.

When Reader B was asked about where student contributions would be most effectively placed in the booklet, she said that the introduction area would be a beneficial spot. Student testimonials for each topic in the introduction would be helpful and attention-grabbing. Although she was able to easily find the differences between the Professional Writing BA and BS options, she did suggest that I change the bolding and ordering of some of the degree requirements so the differences stand out more. When asked about Missouri State color use in the document, she said it made the document easy to read, and gave it a rating of 5 on a five-point scale. She said that it looked like it was becoming similar to a University creation, and gave this section a rating of 3.5 out of 5. She said the final copy would be more similar because of the designs being utilized so far.

For the final question, Reader B stated that the use of multiple typefaces made the document much more appealing. She suggested that I create more differentiation between my second and third heading styles because they look too similar. She also noticed a typo, where the heading of the page was added twice, which will be deleted in the final copy of the document.

Reader C

Reader C noticed right away that making the table of contents more detailed would greatly help the flow of the different topics and their order. He stated that a concluding piece needed

to be added after the faculty contact information to wrap up the document. He also suggested switching the order of the internship information with the information regarding how to navigate MyMissouriState. He took about 20 seconds to locate Dr. Gattis' office phone number, which is longer than I hoped, however, he agreed that a detailed table of contents would have gotten him there much more quickly.

When asked about his opinion of where student testimonials and advice should be placed, he thought adding some to the beginning of the booklet would be helpful, as well as scattering about 5 more throughout the text, with another larger one at the end of the booklet. After asking Reader C about the colors of the document, he rated it a 4 out of 5 and said that for the most part, the Missouri State branding colors made the document easy to read. He rated the document 5 out of 5 when asked about whether the document looked like one that the University would publish.

Reader C also said that by using 2-3 different branding fonts, the text in the document looked much more organized, making it easier to read.

Reader D

Reader D stated that the MyMissouriState information should be placed before the course description information because even if the student is not involved in the Professional Writing Program, he/she will still need to know how to navigate their MyMissouriState page. This, though, was her only suggestion for adjusting the placement of topics. She also only took about 3 seconds to find Dr. Gattis' office information, which means that the information was fairly easy for her to find.

When Reader D was asked about where she thought student contributing information would fit best, she said that a testimonial near program information would be helpful. She specifically would like to see a student testimonial about why they chose to pursue a BA or BS degree instead of the other. Reader D rated the use of color with a 5 out of 5, meaning that she thought the document needed color to be at all readable. She also gave the document a rating of 5 for the question asking about whether it looks like the University would publish this document.

She also thought, when asked if the use of 2-3 different fonts made the document more appealing or more distracting, that the multiple font use made the document much more appealing. She said it greatly helped with the organization of information, and ability to separate different sections of information.

Reader E

Reader E stated that all the sections of the booklet seemed to be placed in a logical order, but the MyMissouriState information page could be moved more toward the front of the document

for easier readability. He also took only 7 seconds to find information about contacting Dr. Gattis, which, again, is relatively fast for not having a properly detailed table of contents.

He also stated that adding student testimonials would be helpful to have on each two-page spread. He said that by having one on each page, the text is more broken up, making the sections easier to read. He also rated both sections with a 5 out of 5 when asked about whether the colors make the document easier to read and if the document looks like one that would be created by the University.

Reader E wrote that using the different typefaces is very effective, especially when reading, because it draws your attention to each section. You can see each section as a separate unit that fits together, but you can really see that they do have their own individual components.

Reader F

Reader F said that the order of the topics was laid out well, but some areas may not be needed for targeting an undergraduate audience. For example, she said that the information on Graduate Assistantship positions may be too much information for a student just looking for undergraduate information. She also suggested that I explain what GEC classes are within the Requirements section of the booklet for easier reader understanding. It took Reader F approximately 6 seconds to find Dr. Gattis' office phone number in the text. This number is relatively similar to the other readers used for this testing sequence.

Some areas that Reader F suggested adding student testimonials are near the job outlook section, the involvement section, and the BearCLAW section. This will give the reader more insight to what other students experienced in the Professional Writing Program. Reader F rated the color use in the booklet a 5 on a five-point scale. She also said the booklet looked like a production of Missouri State, giving it a rating of 5 out of 5.

Reader F said that the use of multiple typefaces is very appealing because you can see the difference between body text and headings. The different typefaces break up the text, making the document easier to read.

Revisions

There are several revisions that will need to be made to the document, as well as many additions. Each reader gave valuable input to the future success of the document. To revise my document, I intend to address each question, comment, and concern from my usability testing readers. I will move my topic sections around as requested by my readers, as well as add the information and descriptions they noticed was lacking. I will also add student testimonials and tips for prospective Professional Writing majors to read. One other thing I will do to improve my document is adjust my heading styles so that they differ more from each other and from the

body text of the document. All of the feedback gathered in these tests will be contributed to the final copy of the Professional Writing Recruitment Guide.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information I have gathered from my usability tests, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at hmh522@live.missouristate.edu to discuss your concerns.