CS-570 INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION
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ASSIGNMENT 2: CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY

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SOLUTION NAME

Assignment 2: Contextual Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has extensive career opportunities for those who are seeking one. Many departments recruit students to join their workforce since students offer the skills and talents that they require. Because of that, the UW-Madison Office of Financial Aid provided a job search platform for students.

Our project focuses on the User Interaction and User Experience components of the job portal.

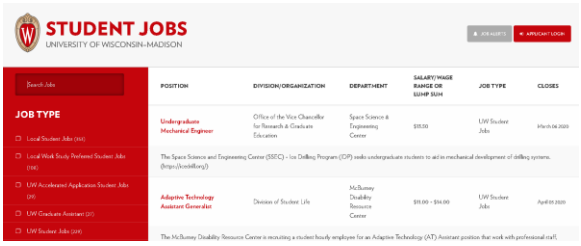


Figure 1 shows the main page of the job portal

As you can see, the website is cluttered, and it's difficult to search for the right job you are looking for. For instance, the job categories on the left-hand side are very extensive, it goes until the bottom of the page. Not to mention that not all categories are available. On top of that, we compared the UW student job portal to other mainstream job portals such as Indeed.com. Just by comparing both designs, we are determined that the filters and categorization can be improved. More filters such as pay rates and locations can be added to make the search functionality better.

As a group, we came up with two main users of the UW student job portal: undergraduate and graduate students. This is because the job categories in the job portal fit both main users.

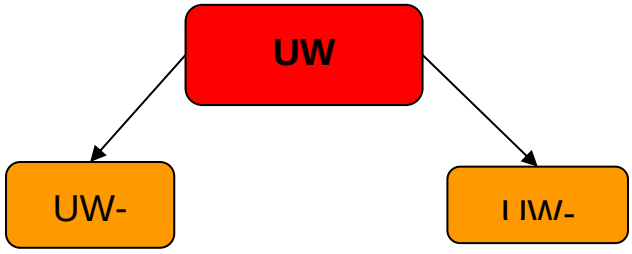
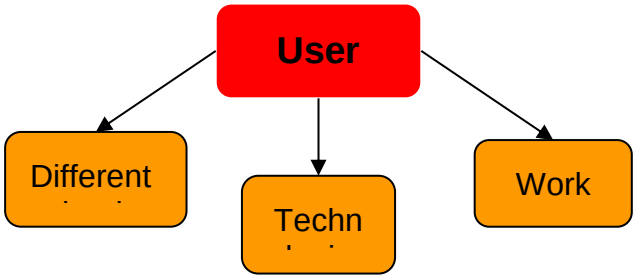


Figure 2 shows the main users of the job portal

To conduct a contextual inquiry, we have to interview users with different skills and backgrounds. The reason is to broaden our findings so that it applies to more students in UW-Madison. We came up with three criteria which are: different school years, technological



proficiency, and work-study eligibility.

Figure 3 shows the criteria to select users for a contextual inquiry

The context of the contextual inquiry needs to be in a college setting where students will be asked to access the UW student job portal and apply for a specific job. We would like to determine how students use the current website's functionality to search for a specific job, update their account, and lookup for job

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UNDERSTANDING

status. All in all, we hope that data collected from the contextual inquiry will give enough information for us to provide a better solution to the website.

First of all, we conducted contextual inquiry (CI) to extend the list of breakdowns experienced by a user when searching, updating, and modifying job search on the UW Student Job Portal.

We started the CI process by interviewing two students(users) from different school years; one is a Sophomore and another is a Junior. In addition, one of them has no experience using the job portal. During the interview, we used the Master-Apprentice concept where the user has to explain to us by talking out loud the steps they have taken. They had to perform four tasks which are: creating a profile, finding a specific job, updating references, and withdrawing the application. The context of the interview was designated by users themselves--computer science building and their apartment. It is important to allow users to select the context that they feel most comfortable with. During the interview, we recorded their audio and video, and then we transcribed the interview to extract important breakdowns. We believe that they provide extensive information to the whole process.

Figure 4 shows the interview session

During the interview, one of us is the moderator and others record audio/video while taking notes. The moderator provides the tasks and guides the users if they misunderstand the tasks. Audio/Video recording people tried to capture all the breakdowns the user was experiencing. And, the note taker wrote down the users' steps and reactions. We learned from the first interview that we should provide less guidance to the next user. Therefore, we were able to extract more breakdowns in the second interview.

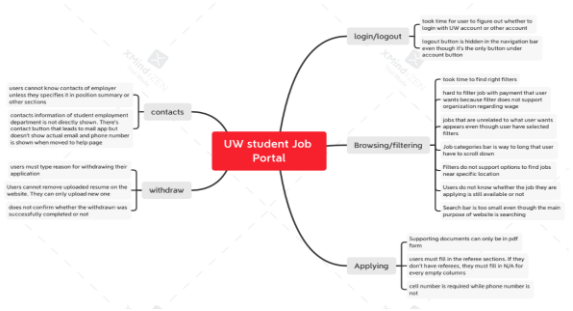

Figure 5 shows the affinity diagram

During organizing observed data, we focused on breakdowns and annotations. We decided to organize them in steps that lead users to different webpages and actions. During login and logout, we observed breakdown since users had trouble deciding which way to log in and finding a logout button that was hidden. The user faced breakdown while searching for a specific job, too. He had trouble finding the right category because the category bar was too long. Also, there were no filters regarding wages even though it's a website for searching for a job. So, the user had trouble looking for a job that pays the wage he wanted. After the

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INTRODUCTION

user found the job he wanted, he moved on to applying. During this process, the user had a breakdown while filling in the details of the referees. Apparently, the user did not have any referees and still had to fill in all the sections with “not applicable”. This took several attempts for the user to finish completely. Moreover, when the user was withdrawing the application, he had trouble looking for a way to remove the resume he uploaded. Eventually, the user can only update the new resume and cannot remove the old one. Also, when the user withdrew his application, he was not sure if it was successfully done since it just led him back to his home page.

Our ideation process revolves around understanding user breakdowns from the interview and work models. We believe that artifact, sequence, and flow model work best to provide us a better idea on how to improve the job portal. After interpreting the interviews, affinity diagram, and work models, we decided to focus on two main problems: job categorization and the website's UI.

From the artifact model, we were able to analyze the website layout figuring key structures such as footer, header and job listing table, parts such as title headers, buttons, and specific breakdowns that were caused in response to the current layout. In addition, we were able to figure out and understand the existing design not limited to the color scheme and patterns affecting visual preference and distinction. UI can be improved through the analysis of the positioning of different web structures such as the left filtering bar and the head categories such as job organization, job wage/salary can have increased functionality through sorting ability.

From the sequence and flow model, we found out that the user was having an issue finding a specific job that matches their interest. This is because the current job portal has a bad layout for the categories. The categories are extensive and difficult to interpret. During the interview, the user had to scroll down and compare an extensive list of jobs to determine the best pay rate. On top of that, the sequence model shows that the user was having a breakdown with the portal's UI. For example, there is no button that allows users to remove their resume from their account.

From the cultural model, we thought about the factors that led the users to use this website. Eventually, many of the jobs that the school hires are only posted on this website, so students must use this portal to search for a job.

In order to solve the two issues outlined: job categorization and website's UI, we have designed some sketches for the main page of the job portal (where most categorizations/filters occured) and the Account Page.

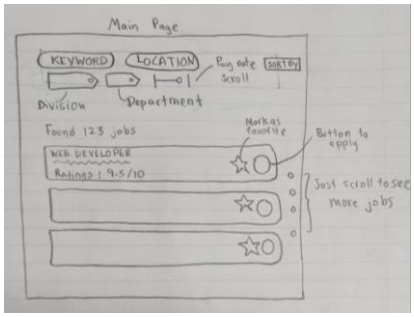

Figure 6 shows the Main Page layout.

We decided to redesign the layout and UX of the main page to improve categorization issues. The main page will have keyword and location text fields where users can search for jobs just by searching for keywords. It also has division, department, and pay rate filters. We also wanted to change how the job lists will appear. Every job will have its own bar that contains a summary of the job, ratings, favorite and apply button.

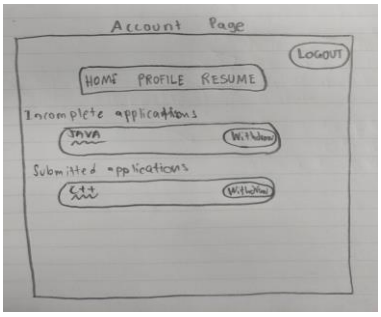

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Figure 7 shows the Account Page layout.

IDEATION

We also would like to focus on redesigning the Account Page. From our interview, the user was not able to locate the Logout button easily. Therefore having a Logout button would help benefit users.

PROJECT 1: WEB-BASED SERVICES

CONCLUSION

Our contextual inquiry process began with understanding the problem with our Web Interface: the Student Job Portal. First, we analyzed existing functionalities and dysfunctionalities from observing and using the website. We created tasks for the user to find any breakdowns from the user to determine redesign for any aspects of the website. Our focus was solely determining how we can design to better improve the functionality for the user. We began by conducting interviews and gathering data from our 1:1 observations to find deeper insight into our underlying problems assumption through the perspective of other users. First, we gave brief information on the reason for our interview and explained that they will be the "master" for this website explaining sequentially the steps that they will take to finish their task and we the designers will be keen "apprentice" focusing on the user. Despite any shortcomings faced by the user, we gathered useful data from the transcriptions and shared our design ideas and perspectives in our team interpretation sessions. We then translated our data through a process of ideation into the models mentioned above.

We will briefly talk about the different models. The physical model captured our general interviewee setting which was both a classroom for User 1 and an apartment living room for User 2. We were able to note all distractions and interferences that may have hindered the User to perform at an optimal level and general setting that may have caused any issues. The sequence model covered all the tasks that we assigned the user to take and every subtask the user decided to take to successfully complete our login, logout, create a profile, apply, and withdraw sequence. Flow model focused on communication and how we were able to effectively communicate to the user the tasks and the reverse communication from the user on how he or she responded to our tasks. We did notice breakdowns and issues that would be useful for a redesign. From that analysis, we created an artifact model showcasing the website's existing features and how we can improve the functionality of the parts, structure, and design for the user. Finally, the culture model studied the background of the user to determine the need for the website and how his or her experience can affect how they use or view the website

Our team will use paper sketches to ideate ideas for a redesign which will be later turned into a paper prototype that can be used to create a realistic model of a redesigned functionality of the website through a new and redefined sequence of steps to better assist the user. We will use the Adobe XD software to make a virtual design of what we come to in consensus as the optimal functionality model for the user and any set of users.

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FINAL SOLUTION