

User Testing Report

Report Completed: April 30, 2020

User Test 1 and 2: April 26, 2020

User Test 3 and 4: April 27, 2020

Introduction

Hannah Monk, a senior in technical communication, conducted four off-campus usability tests using a prototype of the new design for the technical communication website using Wordpress and Zoom. All four tests were performed using the personal computer of the participant. Participants were asked a series of questions about what they knew about technical communication and what they looked or were looking for in a major. Their answers were written down on a notepad and recorded using the Voice Memos app.

Subjects then did four tasks using the Technical Communication website while they talked out loud to explain their thought process. Their screen was recorded while tasks were being performed.

After they used the website, subjects were asked another series of questions about their opinions on the information provided, the visual design, and the ease of use of the website. These answers were also written down and recorded using the same app. Each session captured the participant's knowledge about technical communication, navigational choices, task completion rates, comments, questions, and feedback.

Executive Summary

All four subjects did the usability test in their own homes on their own computers. Each session lasted about 30 minutes. The subjects were asked to answer three rounds of questions. The first round of questions was to find more about the participants themselves and their knowledge about technical communication and the Technical Communication website. The purpose of these questions was to find out if any of the participants would skew the results because of prior knowledge about the website or lack of interest in technical communication for the next two rounds of testing.

The second round of questions was to find out more about the usability of the website and the information flow by prompting the participants to interact with the website and do information seeking tasks. These questions helped provide quantitative data about length of time it took to do certain tasks and the number of errors made while completing tasks.

In the third round of questions participants were interviewed about their opinions on the information provided and the visual design of the website. This round of questions was to gather qualitative data through user feedback.

Users were unhappy or neutral about their experience while using this website. The test helped identify a few problems with the website:

- Users wanted to know about what students did with the major after graduation
- Users wanted to know if there were any relevant clubs to the major
- Lack of relatable images
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This document contains the participant feedback, task completion time, errors, and recommendations for improvements.

Methodology

Sessions

The test administrator contacted participants they knew had expressed interest in learning more about technical communication. Participants responded with an appropriate time and date they could do the usability study.

Each individual session lasted about fifteen to thirty minutes. During the session, the test administrator explained the test session then began the rounds of questions. The first round of questions asked:

- If they had heard of technical communication
- How they defined technical communication
- What their current education level and field was
- What skills and ideas they looked for in a major
- If they had ever used a website to find more information about a major or minor
- If they had ever used the B.S. in Technical Communication website

After these questions were answered, participants were asked to navigate to the Technical Communication website and the second round of questions began. The questions were not written down, but the user was allowed to ask for the question to be restated as many times as they needed.

The first task for this round was to read the image on the right side of the page out loud. This allowed for the participants to practice speaking their thoughts while using the website and get them comfortable using the website.

The next four questions were information finding tasks:

- How many credits must a student have in a concentrated study area to graduate?
- Is an internship required to graduate?
- What semester is it recommended to take English 314 according to the 4-year plan?
- Is English 350 required for a technical communication minor?

After the information finding tasks were completed, the participants were asked a final series of questions about their opinion of the website.

- What do you think about the available information?
- Did your definition of technical communication change?
- What do you think about the visual design of the webpage?
- Would this website persuade you to major or minor in technical communication?
- What do you think could be improved about this website?

The participants identified having the following characteristics:

Age

Prospective Student	0
Freshman	2
Sophomore	1
Junior	1
Total Participants	4

Gender

Male	1
Female	3
Total Participants	4

Computer Literacy

Low	1
Medium	3
High	0
Total Participants	4

Knowledge About the Technical Communication Major

Low	2
Medium	2
High	0
Total Participants	4

Results

Task Completion Success, Clicks, and Time

Task 1: Find the number of credits need in a concentrated study area

Correct Answer: 6

	<i>Final Answer</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Participant 1</i>	Correct	22 seconds
<i>Participant 2</i>	Correct	17 seconds
<i>Participant 3</i>	Correct	28 seconds
<i>Participant 4</i>	Correct	27 seconds

Task 2: Find if an internship is required to graduate

Correct Answer: required

	<i>Final Answer</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Participant 1</i>	Correct	18 seconds
<i>Participant 2</i>	Correct	23 seconds
<i>Participant 3</i>	Correct	19 seconds
<i>Participant 4</i>	Correct	22 seconds

Task 3: Find the semester it is recommended to take English 314 according to a 4-year plan

Correct Answer: Sophomore year, semester 4

Note: While sophomore year is the correct answer according to the 4-year plan, currently a prerequisite for English 314 is to be a junior so this information is out of date.

	<i>Final Answer</i>	<i>Clicks</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Participant 1</i>	Correct	1 click	28 seconds
<i>Participant 2</i>	Correct	1 click	22 seconds
<i>Participant 3</i>	Correct	1 click	26 seconds
<i>Participant 4</i>	Correct	1 click	32 seconds

Task 4: Find if English 350 is required for a Technical Communication Minor.
Correct Answer: not required

	<i>Final Answer</i>	<i>Clicks</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Participant 1</i>	Correct	1 click	22 seconds
<i>Participant 2</i>	Correct	1 click	26 seconds
<i>Participant 3</i>	Correct	1 click	32 seconds
<i>Participant 4</i>	Correct	1 click	23 seconds

Each of the tasks were created to explore how usable different aspects of the Technical Communication website is. Each question required 1 click. Users really liked the design of the tabs to find information about classes.

User Feedback

Question: What is the first thing you eye was drawn to when you opened this website?

Note: This question was asked prior to the tasks given as soon as the webpage was loaded.

	<i>Answer</i>
<i>Participant 1</i>	The red header and that the major is in the Department of English
<i>Participant 2</i>	The red navigation
<i>Participant 3</i>	The donate button
<i>Participant 4</i>	The Technical Communication title

Opinions on the Information Provided

Participant 1

"There's a lot of words. I think the top two paragraphs could go. They don't add much."

"I would like to know how marketable the major is. I want to know the job outlook and what kinds of fields you could go into and where you could work. There is nothing about that on this website."

Participant 2

"I don't really understand what the theory and history would be about or what practical skills you would learn. Shouldn't that be explained by the classes in that section?"

Participant 3

"I think it displays the class information really well, but it would persuade me to join the major. I think there should be more about why someone should join the major."

Participant 4

"I don't really want to read the words at the top. I think it's helpful there is a section for internships with what student did. It's also probably good that this major has a required internship"

Opinions on the Visual Design

Participant 1

"The information is really easy to read. I like the tabs. But I think there should be more images of students."

Participant 2

"There could be a header images of students at the top. That would be really eye catching!"

Participant 3

"It think the internship section is really well done. It has a lot of helpful information and the students look nice."

Participant 4

"It's fine, nothing special."

"There's a lot of text. Some of that could go away."

Opinions on What Could Be Improved

Participant 1

"I don't think the theory and principles sections are in the right place. I think they should be in the course information sections.

Participant 2

"Have more information about what student do after graduation. The internships are nice, but I want to hear from students who got a job."

Participant 3

"There should be more information about writing. In English 214, we learned more about technical writers than what this website is showing."

Participant 4

"Add more images of students interacting. The only images on the page are just headshots"

Question: Would this website persuade you to add a technical communication major or minor?

<i>Answer</i>	
<i>Participant 1</i>	I've been thinking about changing my major to technical communication. The website did not sway my decision, but I like all of the information on classes in this design
<i>Participant 2</i>	I like that it has information about the students internships. I thought technical communication was just writing, so yeah, this helps
<i>Participant 3</i>	No
<i>Participant 4</i>	Not me, but I think my sister might like this major

Recommendations

Move the two paragraphs at the top to their relevant tab section	None of the users wanted to read the information	Medium
Add more images of students, one at the top and another at the bottom	Users didn't think there were enough images of students. Adding users of happy students would help with adding a friends mood	High
Add the video of Abby above the internship.	She has an editing position at a large publishing company in New York now, so she can let students know people do get jobs with this major	High
Add images from STC	This will show technical communication students interacting and will show that we have a club!	Low

Conclusion

Participants really liked the tabs to learn more information about classes. It was much more usable than the original design. However, they wanted more images of students and to learn more about what technical communication are like.