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Git-542

Site name: Alumni section of PES University website

Site URL: <https://alumni.pes.edu/>

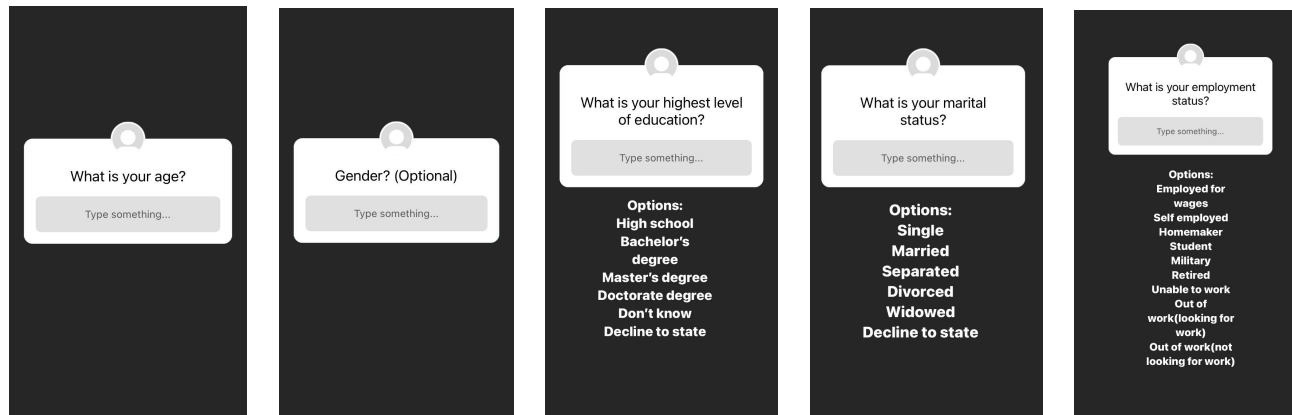
User Research

Introduction:

User research is the process of using various techniques to understand the user, their needs, and their behaviour. Some of the techniques implemented are observation, surveys, focus groups, interviews etc. I have implemented two of the methods, survey and interviews, to gather information about current and potential users of this site/similar sites.

Survey:

I used Instagram as a medium to send a survey and increase the number of responses. I asked a total of 10 questions. The following are screenshots of the survey questions:



The image displays five sequential screenshots of a survey interface. Each screenshot features a white question card with a speech bubble icon at the top, a text input field, and a list of options. The questions are: 1. 'What is your age?' with a 'Type something...' input field. 2. 'Gender? (Optional)' with a 'Type something...' input field. 3. 'What is your highest level of education?' with a 'Type something...' input field and options: High school, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate degree, Don't know, and Decline to state. 4. 'What is your marital status?' with a 'Type something...' input field and options: Single, Married, Separated, Divorced, Widowed, and Decline to state. 5. 'What is your employment status?' with a 'Type something...' input field and options: Employed for wages, Self employed, Homemaker, Student, Military, Retired, Unable to work, Out of work(looking for work), and Out of work(not looking for work).

What is your age?

Type something...

Gender? (Optional)

Type something...

What is your highest level of education?

Type something...

Options:
High school
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
Doctorate degree
Don't know
Decline to state

What is your marital status?

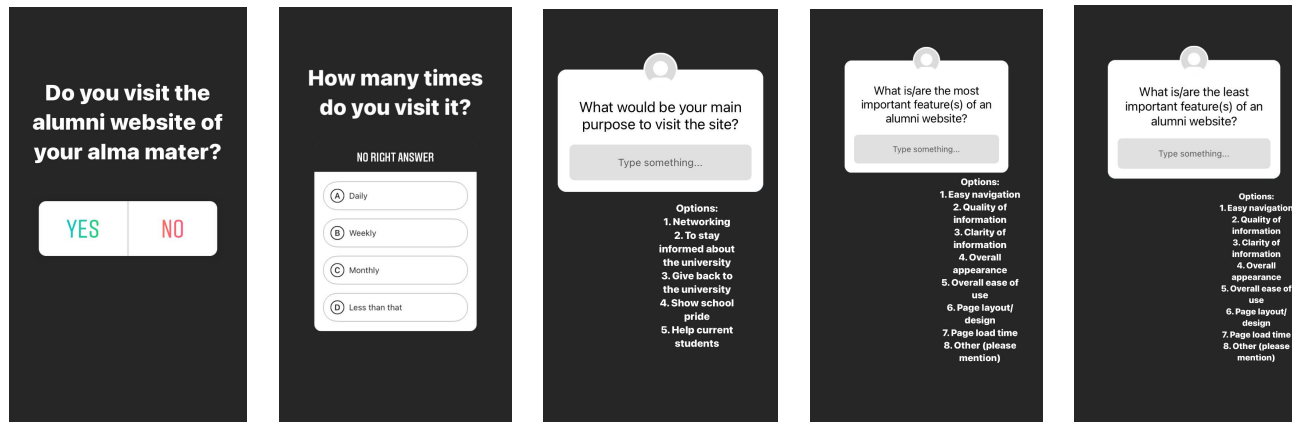
Type something...

Options:
Single
Married
Separated
Divorced
Widowed
Decline to state

What is your employment status?

Type something...

Options:
Employed for wages
Self employed
Homemaker
Student
Military
Retired
Unable to work
Out of work(looking for work)
Out of work(not looking for work)



An average of 15 people responded to the questions. I noticed that not all of them responded to all the questions.

Responses:

The following are the responses to the questions, in the same order of the questions in the screenshots:

1. 15 people responded to this question. The age range of the responses was 19-30
 - a. 19: 1 person
 - b. 20: 2 people
 - c. 21: 2 people
 - d. 22: 8 people
 - e. 23: 1 person
 - f. 30: 1 person
2. 15 people responded to this question. The participants either identified as male or female (3 male and 12 female)
3. 15 people responded to this question. The average highest level of education was a Bachelor's degree.
 - a. High School: 4
 - b. Bachelor's Degree: 9
 - c. Master's Degree: 2
4. 15 people responded to this question. All of them are 'single'.
5. 15 people responded to this question. The average answer was 'student'.
 - a. Employed for wages: 6

- b. Self-employed: 2
 - c. Student: 7
- 6. 15 people responded to this question. All of them chose 'No'.
- 7. 13 people responded to this question. All of them chose 'Less than that'.
- 8. 6 people responded to this question. 1 of them chose two options. The most common answer was 'networking'.
 - a. Networking: 4
 - b. To stay informed about the university: 2
 - c. Show school pride: 1
- 9. 5 people responded to this question. Most of them chose multiple options. The most common answer was 'Quality of information'.
 - a. Easy navigation: 2 votes
 - b. Quality of information: 4 votes
 - c. Clarity of information: 3 votes
 - d. Overall appearance: 2 votes
 - e. Overall ease of use: 4 votes
 - f. Page layout/Design: 3 votes
 - g. Page load time: 2 votes
- 10. 2 people responded to this question. 1 of them chose two options. The most common answer was 'Overall appearance'.
 - a. Easy navigation: 1 vote
 - b. Overall appearance: 2 votes

I noticed that most people read the survey questions but chose not to answer them. Even the ones that answered the questions, didn't answer all of them.

Interviews:

I interviewed 4 people in total, 3 of whom were alumni of PES University. The following are the interview questions:

- A. Demographic questions:
 - 1. What is your age?
 - 2. What gender do you associate yourself with?
 - 3. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

4. What is your marital status?
5. What is your employment status?

B. Site-related questions:

1. What is your first impression of this site?
2. Is there anything that is immediately off-putting to you about this site?
3. What do you think this site does?
4. What are you thinking as you look at this site/any comments?
5. When do you think someone would visit this site?
6. Does this site look similar to another site?
7. What do you think you'd gain from this site?
8. Does the site look visually appealing to you?
9. Where would you start?
10. Is there anything about the site that confuses you?

C. Tasks: *

1. Can you try and find information about academic programs and admission to the university?
2. Can you navigate to the section about the clubs and activities of the university?
3. Can you try to search for something that you don't know where to find?
4. Can you try and find how to share any article that's on the website? Are you satisfied with the share options provided?
5. Can you find the different research centers available at PES University?
6. Can you access the alumni network?

D. Concluding questions:

1. Overall, what do you like most about the site?
2. What do you dislike most about the site?
3. Would you visit a site like this?
4. What would you want to change about the current version of this site?
5. What do you feel about these links opening in new tabs? Would you prefer if they opened in the same tab?
6. Overall thoughts?

* Rating for each of the tasks:

- 1- Extremely difficult to perform
- 2- Difficult to perform
- 3- Neutral
- 4- Easy to perform
- 5- Extremely easy to perform

Responses:

Question	Response
A1	The respondents were between the ages of 19 and 22
A2	All the respondents were female
A3	The average level of education completed was a Bachelor's degree
A4	All the respondents were single
A5	One of the respondents was a student while all the others were 'Employed for wages'
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three respondents felt that it was a good site, like any average website.• One felt that it was an average site that could be better. Felt that the developers didn't put in a lot of effort and it looked like they didn't care much about the site.
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The picture in the background occupies a lot of space, the people in it look more like freshman (not alumni). Overall, it is an unenthusiastic picture. More effort could've been put into choosing and sizing it.• The latest story in the news section of the homepage is dated 2019, which gives the impression that the page is not very active and outdated.• The logo of the university on the top seems a little misaligned.
B3	<p>It is a site to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect with other alumni of the university• Connect with the university and learn more about it• Donate or contribute to the university

B4

POSITIVES

- The color combination is pleasant
- Like that there are pictures in many places adding more color to the website
- The homepage looks good
- The 'students around the world' map is nice
- The dynamic 'announcements' and 'testimonials' is good
- 'Join Alumni Network' button is easy to find
- The 'email' option immediately opens email app and the 'join network' immediately opens the network page, which is good
- The provision of filters and 'browse by' tags is good
- The add to calendar option, link to directions on Google Maps, and share options for events is really good
- The information and design of the 'About Us' page is good
- The pictures used are of good quality
- The 'sign up with email' option is good (to join alumni network)

NEGATIVES

- The 'About Us' tag is extremely misleading (They expected it to be about the alumni association not the university) and links to a completely different website
 - The new website that opens has a very different layout and is confusing if you don't notice the URL change
- The website is pretty static, including a carousel for images or other forms of dynamism will make it more interesting
- More information about what's on the alumni network should be provided
- News should be somewhere on top instead of the bottom of the homepage
- Clearer and more direct links to the different pages is needed
- Some of the pictures are irrelevant (Like the picture of students on the homepage, or the picture for faculty on the about page. There are more students than faculty in that picture). More effort should be put into choosing the right pictures.
- The homepage picture is repeated in the 'About Us' page
- Most of the links open in different tabs which is very annoying
- News and articles look outdated which is off-putting
- The like button lets a single user like multiple times and doesn't let them unlike after liking it. This is really strange.
- Including the date with the stories (In Alumni Story) would make it better
- The filters for the different events is in the bottom of the page and is easily missed. It should be at the top
- The newsletters tab should be more prominent, it is easy to go unnoticed
- The date on the newsletter thumbnail and the actual date of the newsletter don't match
- The join us page looks impersonal at first sight
- Some pages are aesthetically nice but others are terrible (News, Events, Alumni Story). Can put more effort into making consistent webpages. Should make them less monotonous.
- Information provided is good but the website is confusing in terms of navigation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many pages are over-crowded and cause a lot of confusion • There is nothing that binds or provides continuity to the different new articles. It looks very disorganized. • The 'Alumni Story' and 'News' tabs link to the same page • An option to manually change the testimonials or announcements on the homepage should be present. It is really annoying to wait for them to change when you want to see all the information. • The information about events should be more interesting. It's only plain text with few features. It doesn't attract the user. • The mobile app has lesser images and has some negative space • The navigation menu isn't very efficient in the mobile app (it is misleading and more options should be available) • The website needs to have more alumni-related information, rather than information that'll help current students • Overall, more effort needs to be put into making the website more user-friendly
B5	To connect with alumni, to get information about the college, to help someone through the admission process. Probably not often because the site isn't very popular. So it is hard to visit it unless specifically referred to.
B6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of the respondents said it wasn't similar to anything they had seen • The other 2 respondents said that it was similar to any other average university websites
B7	Connect with other alumni, find jobs, get information about the university and it's events, get a platform to spread awareness about your current work/accomplishments.
B8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of the respondents found it appealing, one of whom thought it would be better if the background image on the homepage occupied lesser space • One of the other respondents felt it was an average looking website. "It's okay. Some of the pages are really good and others are really bad" is what she said. • The last respondent gave it a 5/10 and said it wasn't very appealing.
B9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the respondents said the first thing they would do was scroll through the entire homepage • Three of the respondents said they would click the other options in the order that they are present after scrolling • The other respondent said she would click the 'Alumni Story' page. She said "Since the site is for alumni and that is the only tab with 'Alumni' in it, I want to click that".

B10	The links open in new tabs, the 'About Us' tab leads to a completely different website (they expected information about the alumni association), the email provided is for the admissions department (most alumni wouldn't need that), some of the pictures are irrelevant, the like button present with the article thumbnails is clickable but doesn't like the article, the date in the newsletter thumbnail doesn't match the actual newsletter date.
D1	Homepage looks good, Alumni Story is a nice feature, all the information is organized, it has a platform to connect with other alumni and apply for jobs
D2	The links open in new tabs, the 'About Us' tab is very misleading, most of the website is static (that is boring), the news is outdated, the layout of some of the pages is bad (like news, alumni story), the newsletter tab is not prominent enough and is easy to miss.
D3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of the respondents said they wouldn't visit unless specifically referred to • The other 2 respondents said they would visit only the alumni site of <i>their</i> alma mater to be connected to it
D4	The "About Us" tab is very misleading (change the name), include more information about the alumni association, make the website more dynamic, make links open in same tab, make pictures more relevant, show all filters at the top of the pages rather than bottom, make the pages look less congested, keep the navigation menu consistent throughout the website.
D5	It is very annoying. Would rather have the links open in the same tab.
D6	Overall good and informative website, needs a few tweaks that'll let the users put in less effort (especially in terms of navigation).

Tasks	Interviewee 1		Interviewee 2		Interviewee 3		Interviewee 4	
	Rating	Comment	Rating	Comment	Rating	Comment	Rating	Comment
C1	3	It would be easier if the university logo was linked to the main university homepage	2	About Us' is misleading . Didn't think she'd find this information from that tab.	4	The 'About Us' links to a very different website and is confusing/misleading	2	Used the mobile web-app and accessed the pages through the navigation menu on top. The 'Programs and events' and 'About Us' options in the menu are misleading and cause confusion.
C2	3	Needed to look for it a little bit	1	So many tabs on each page is confusing	3	About Us' is misleading . Takes time to find the tabs	4	Knew about the 'About Us' tab so it was easy to find. Otherwise, it would have been hard.
C3	2	There is no substring matching. Some of the searches don't return results even if full string is entered	2	There is no substring matching. Some of the searches don't return results even if full string is entered	4	About Us' is misleading . Takes time to find the right category of tabs. But once found, search results are satisfying.	5	No comments

C4	3	LinkedIn is a useful option, but the others are not that useful. More options are needed.	4	It's good but more options are needed. At least a 'share link' option.	4	More options are needed, especially a 'share link' option.	4	More options are needed, like 'WhatsApp', 'Instagram' or at least a 'share link' option.
C5	3	The 'About Us' tab is very misleading. It takes time to go to that page, but it is easy from the 'About Us' page	2	The 'About Us' tab is very misleading. It takes time to go that page, but it is easy from the 'About Us' page	4	Knew about the 'About Us' tab so it was easy to find. Otherwise, it would have been hard.	3	Links open in new tabs and the new tabs have different menus. This dynamic menu causes confusion.
C6	4	Job information is present but login is required for anything other than viewing.	4	Doesn't like scrolling. Would mostly miss the links.	5	No comments	3	An option to 'join network' could be present in the navigation menu of the mobile version. It would be easier to find it.

Conclusion:

The survey revealed that most people don't visit alumni websites and that the most important quality in an alumni website is the quality of information it provided. However, the interview revealed that, while the quality of information is important, the clarity of information and design/layout is equally important to access all the information effortlessly. Overall appearance was the least important feature according to the survey but the interview revealed that bad appearance can add to making the user impatient, hence worsening their overall experience.

The most important feedback for the website, from the interviews, is about the 'About Us' tab being misleading. This shows how a small uncertainty in names/titles can cause tremendous amounts of confusion to the user. Most of the feedback is about the little things that we as designers/developers tend to ignore, but user's eyes catch immediately.

Another important lesson from the survey: Send surveys to as many people as possible. This improves the likelihood of getting responses because most people tend to read the survey and ignore it (The number of people that read the survey is a lot more than the number of people that actually answered it).

References:

1. *Alumni section of the PES University website:* <https://alumni.pes.edu/>
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