Competitive Analysis of Competing Sites

Overall Navigation - Top Navigation Link Items

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
Study With Us	About	About	Study at Cambridge	Admissions	Study
Our Research	Academics	Admissions	About the University	Research	Research
Business and Enterprise	Admissions	Education	Research at Cambridge	News & Events	Business
Alumni and Supporters	UCLA in the Community	Research	Staff	About	Departments
Study With Us	The Arts	Community	Current Students	Staff	International
International Students	Campus Life	Life@MIT	Alumni	Alumni	About
Distance Learning	Health System	Initiatives	Business	Divisions and Departments	News
Open Day Visits	Research	Impact	Colleges and Departments	Local Community	Events
Request a Prospectus	Athletics	News	Libraries and Facilities	Visitors	Contact
		Events	Museums and Collections	Students	
			Email and Phone Search		

Our case study on UL's website indicates that their main navigation in the lower half of the home page is distinctly unique from other the 5 other websites we have tested. The mini navigation separates the few chosen user identifying options from the website's footer bar (containing related site links related to: contact, staff, students, and site visitors). UCLA's first highlighted navigation contains the aforementioned navigation bar at the very top of the page -- though it is not the first thing users are drawn to. Specifically, the navigation on the Bruin site is divided into two divs separated by the university logo. The first selection provides the user with immediate identifiers that help filter the large number of visitors on the site from unrelated pages. The second navigation bar that sits beneath the logo contains the main selections users often refer to when visiting the website to inquire information about the university, and they include a few links that are both shared and unique across the board of results gathered from the other websites we tested: admissions, community outreach, the arts, campus life, health care, research, and athletics. These main links are also showcased visually below in a carousel container that scrolls through images accompanied by short copy about the opportunities each of these elements of the university have to offer. MIT's website showcases a navigation bar that is unconventionally vertical compared to the other websites we've tested. The aesthetic style of the homepage is designed with a young user demographic in mind -- the students. We see this representation manifested in the background picture, a tribute which has been paid to

the university's intramural football team. However, the navigation system does illustrate a likeness to the next website we tested, UO, in the same sense where main link elements serve grouping purposes to narrow down and provide similar selections nearby in the next paragraph line or drop down menu. UOY resembles the layout used by UCLA where the header bar consists of two navigation systems. The first navigation consists of identity links that help redirect site traffic to relevant areas of the system as well as a search bar for ease of information access for determined users. The second navigation breaks down the popular directory selections made by visitors of the university website. Overall, we saw a general inclination of our tested websites to incorporate a lateral horizontal navigation system with an assisting Google search bar function.

Navigation Element Count

Main Navigation Components

Element	Count
About	5
Academics/ Education/ Departments	5
Admissions	3
Alumni	3
Community	3
Research	6

Sub Navigation Components

Element	Count
Current Students	6
Prospective Students	2
Visitors	6
Jobs	4
Alumni	6
Staff	6
Business	3

Final Selection of Trending Navigation Items

Current Students	Staff	Alumni	Research	About	Visitors

(Description of the 2 chosen categories top nav items have been divided between)

All of the university websites we browsed tended to split their navigation into two different panels, the main navigational bar containing general information about the university such as "About", "Academics", "Admissions", "Research", and "News". UL did not place "About" in their either navigational bar, but it did show up in a link farther down the front page. In a secondary navigation bar, usually placed off to some side of the page contains more user-centric links such as "Current Students", "Prospective Students", "Visitors", "Alumni", "Jobs", "Business", "Staff". The purpose of having the user-centric links as a secondary navigation bar and not the main one could be because while these topics are important to any user, they are not primary to what the university it all about. The first thing each of these universities wants to do is tell visitors about themselves and what they are doing, so that is why they highlight these topics in the main navigation bar even if the frequency that these are clicked is lower than the topics linked in the secondary navigation. Another reason these universities may have chosen to highlight themselves and the work that they do over having more-accessible links could be because they are all research universities. Though they are also teaching institutions, research is what drives the universities' fame and funding.

(Description of the top navigation items trending - possible pros/cons)

The trending top navigational items are almost all user-centric, and specific to a certain user should they visit the website. These include "Current Students", "Staff", and "Alumni". The other two items that are not so user-centric and more university-centric are "Research" and "About". These all make good navigational items because a user can easily select a link that they identify with to get more information on whatever they are searching for. The user can identify with one of the user-centric navigational items and if those do not match, they could possibly be looking for just more information about the university or it's work, both which fall under the university-center navigational items.

About

About Elements

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
About us and our values	Overview	Visiting	How Universities and Colleges Work	Organisation	Awards and Achievements
Facts, figures and evidence	Missions & Values	Maps	History	Facts and figures	Mission and strategies: the University Plan
History and campus	Facts & Figures	History	Visiting the University	Oxford people	Departments, Offices, and Sections
Times Higher Education Awards	Awards & Honors	Offices + Services	Term dates and calendars	Increasing access	About the campus
University publications	History	Institute Facts	Map	International Oxford	Sustainability
Discoveries	Impact & Accomplishments	MIT Mission	Publications	Developing Oxford	Visiting the University

Our College Structure	Rankings	Administration	News	Jobs	Maps and Directions
Professional Services	Careers	Rankings and Awards	Giving to Cambridge	History	Contacting People
Charity status	Iconic & Influential Alumni	Research and Educational Initiatives	Jobs		History of the University
Press Office	Centers & Institutes		Public Engagement		
Strategic Vision	Leadership		Media Relations		

Element	Count
History	6
Awards	4
Facts & Figures	4
Mission Statement / Values	4
Research / Publications	3
Jobs	3
College Structure	2

Final Selection of 'About' Items

History
Facts & Figures
Mission Statement
Awards
Research / Publications

Description of each of the elements included in the final section

Many of the items in each of the university's 'About' section varied, and some of the items that were not immediately visible in the about page were under some other tabs within the about page. Though the different universities about pages did not all contain the same highlighted information, we were able to find most of the same information within the page, just within one of the links. We decided to take the topics that most defined a university and what it was all about and use those for our final selection. We thought that "History" would talk about the university over the years, covering any major changes and highlighting any historic details. "Facts and Figures" would give users a first hand glance into any notable statistics and

quirky details about the university. "Mission Statement" would showcase what the university is all about- what it strives to be, and what it aims to do. "Awards" can show the university's prestige and show off all the good things they've done to deserve the awards. "Research and Publications" would be a good topic to highlight what the university has already produced for society, and what they are currently working on.

Current Students

Current Students Elements

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
Learn at Leicester	Student Resources	Advising and Academic Support	Home	New Students	Student Home
Health and Welfare	Resources Centers & Offices	Academic Planning and Tools	New Students	Academic Matters	New Students - Welcome!
Money and Jobs	Student Support Services	Research	Cambridge Life	Fees & Funding	Studying at York
Campus Guide	Financial Aid & Services	Housing, Dining and Transportation	Your Course	Visa & Immigration	IT and online services
Accomodation	Housing & Campus Life	Activities, Arts and Recreation	Academic Resources	Oxford Life	Campus and the City
Career Development Service	Get Involved	Personal Support and Wellness	Student Health	Health and Welfare	Support, welfare and health
Students Union	Calendar, News & Events	Public Service	Fees and Funding	Graduation & Leaving Oxford	Work, Volunteering, and Career Planning
Sports and Recreation		International Opportunities	Complaints and Appeals		Housing and Money
		Professional Development	University Information		Leisure and Culture
		Careers, Jobs and Internships	Services		If things go Wrong
		Finances	IT resources		
		Safety	Policy		

Element	Count

Tuition and Financial Aid	4
Health and Welfare	4
Housing / Accommodation	4
New Students	3
Learn at _____ / Life at _____	3
Jobs and Work	3
Recreation	3
Resources	2

Final Selection

Tuition and Financial Aid
Health and Welfare
Housing / Accommodation
New Students
Learn at _____ / Life at _____
Resources

The items in the 'Current Students' section were typically very well organized in a navigation bar of some sort, so regardless of the content they were pretty easy to access, aside from the Leicester site. The topics on each of the current students pages varied a decent amount from page to page, as no topics were present throughout all six websites. We decided to go with the most common and practical. 'Tuition and financial aid' are important to all students, as it is something every student must go through. 'Health and Welfare' are also important, so students know how to deal with sickness on campus. 'Housing and Accommodation' falls under the same category of 'Tuition and Financial Aid'. 'New Students' is important because it is the quick and easy tab where new students can get a quick rundown of what they need to know. We picked 'Learn at ____ / Life at _____' to attribute to a more "advanced" version of 'New Students'; it has info about resources and what to expect at the University. Finally, we picked 'Resources' even though it had a low count, because we feel that it is important for current students to have an easy link to their equivalent of the "My Triton Link".

Research

Research Elements

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
Our Global Challenges	Overview	Labs + Centers	News	Research Strategy	Research Home
Research with us - academics and PhD students	Opportunities for Partnerships	Lincoln Lab	Features	Divisions	Research Performance
Departmental and Thematic Research	Undergrad Research	Libraries	Discussion	Research Impact	Expertise
Current Research	Graduate Research	Research by Topic	Video and Audio	Libraries	Commercial Facilities
Research Assessment Exercise	Research Centers & Institutes		Spotlight On….	Partnerships	Featured Research
	Libraries		Research at Cambridge	Support for Researchers	Research Units
	Administration Overview		Innovation at Cambridge		Women in Science (Athena SWAN)
			Centres and Institutes		Partnerships
					Contact Us

Element	Count
Overview/ Strategy/ Challenges	6
Student Research	2
Partnerships	3
Current/Featured Research	3
Facilities and Libraries	4
Focused Research by Topic	4

Final Selection

Overview/ Research Strategy
Research Areas and Topics
Facilities and Libraries
Featured Research
Partnerships

Our final selection of research website elements include both the broad and definitive system localities. The first selection that would provide users with a general idea of their location within the system would be the overview or general research strategy page. Majority of our websites tested positive as successful cases of efficient grouping of large amounts of information into shorter collectives of "areas" or "research topics". Additionally, including a facilities and libraries element in the research navigation bar would make the user's exploratory process much smoother by providing possible courses of action or execution. It would be beneficial to also include a featured research link to promote and showcase areas of current research that may illuminate readers or require additional financial support. Navigation bars are great tools for the system to outline at the forefront important information for visitors. Lastly, partnerships would be a great addition to the navigation bar witihin research -- it presents a specialized and increasingly specific course of action for determined university website users.

Alumni

Alumni Elements

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
How we support you	Alumni Services	Slice of MIT Headlines	News	News	News
Support us	Get Informed	Social Media	Events	Events	Latest Event News
News, events, reunions	Get Involved	Alumni Profiles	Get Involved	Groups	About Yorkspace (Alumni Assocation)
Stay in touch	Alumni Association	Leadership	Benefits	Offers	For Alumni
Useful links	Transcript Services	Networks	Shop	Discover	For Donors

About us	Campus Services	Benefits & Services (Alumni Association)	Travel	Inspire	For Students
Transcripts & certificates	Ticket Information for UCLA Athletics	Volunteering	Magazine	The University Shop	Grapevine
Contact us	UCLA Magazine	Alumni News	Sport	Email forwarding	Get in touch
Graduates Magazine	Ways to Volunteer	Events	Contact	Update Details	History
Volunteering Opportunities	Support UCLA	Give Now	Online Giving	Give to the University	Supporting the University
	Alumni Address Change	My Account			Login to your account

Element	Count
News	6
Support Us	6
Events	5
Login to Account / Update Account Info	4
Get Involved / Volunteering	4
Alumni Association	3
Magazine	3
Transcripts	2

Final Selection

News
Support Us
Events
Update Account Info
Get Involved
Alumni Association
Magazine

Most of the university Alumni pages had the same information, just listed differently or placed under different tabs, but one could generally find out all the same information on one website as the other. Some universities didn't have an outright "Alumni Association" or a "Magazine", but these still had other methods of having the same things. For example, one would ask for contact info to stay in touch but not have a alumni association, and others had lots of news bites but no magazine to place the news bites.

For the final selection, we chose "News" because the university would always want to keep Alumni up to date on what the university and the alumni's peers have been doing. "Support Us" is an obvious way for alumni to pay it forward with donations or volunteer for events. "Events" invite alumni back to the university to keep a good relationship with other alumni, students, and staff/faculty. "Update Account Info" can contain lots, such as "Transcripts", "Updating Addresses", "Updating Emails", etc. "Get Involved" would speak to the alumni who want to get back in touch with the university, who can at a glance see what they can do. "Alumni Association" is globally used by all universities, and it would benefit all of the universities to have one listed as an overarching group for alumni to join. "Magazine" is a good way to send out periodic updates and highlight certain events to alumni who actually care about what is happening with the university.

Staff

Staff Elements

University of Leicester (UL)	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	University of Cambridge (UC)	University of Oxford (UO)	University of York (UY)
Employment at Leicester	Human Resources	Getting Around	News	Contact Search	Home Directory
How do I…?	Environment, Health & Safety	Taking Care of Business	Features	Finance	Finance
Training and personal development	Insurance & Risk Management	Create + Communications	Appointments	Training & Development	Administrative services
Announcements	Child Care	Career + Personal Growth at MIT	Newsletter	Health & Safety	Research
Latest News	News	Managing Your Benefits	Brand Resources	Job vacancies	Working at York
Information for New Staff	Employee Services	Find It A-Z	University Governance	Pay dates	Leisure and Culture
Academic Departments	Housing & Hospitality	Connect with Colleagues	Research Staff	Salary scales	Support, Welfare, and Health
Offices and Services	Facilities Management	Culture of Development	Teaching Staff	A-Z services	Policies and Strategies
Telephone/Email directory	Mail, Document & Distribution	Computing Help Desk	The Reporter (Journal)	IT Services	IT and online services
Travel and	Transportation &	Employee	Discussion Forum	New to the	External

parking	Parking	Benefits		University	Relations
Teaching/Research Support	Administrative Support	MIT Human Resources	Hermes Webmail	Policies & procedures	
Financial matters	Finance & Payroll	New Employee Orientation	Search Staff Directory	Travel & transport	

Element	Count
Directory	6
Human Resources	4
Finances	4
New Employee Resources	3
Transportation & Parking / Travel	3
Services	4
Policies	3

Final Selection

Directory
Human Resources
Finances
Services
Policies

Our final selections include the most popular navigation elements for the staff page within the systems of our tested websites. The most obvious option includes the directory link made available to visitors of the web because they provide us with a locus point of spatial recognition. The second invaluable link includes the human resources page as an optimal asset of the system. It serves the purpose of incorporating important information for staff members of the university. The finances page is an optimal destination for staff members who are seeking information related to their university position. A majority of the sites we tested were able to exhibit strong demonstration of these few main elements. The next selection that would increase efficiency would be a repository that encapsulates the different services available for the staff members. UL describes this kind of service as office services, MIT illustrates this option within a drop down menu bar coined managing your benefits, UCLA indicates this as educational and developmental benefits, UO does a great job at providing an umbrella destination named A-Z services, and UOC describes these additional resources as brand resources, and finally UOY describes this kind of destination in two

different ways including: IT and online services and administrative services. Our tests indicate the importance of university systems to include the specific locations home to the collective of university employment information.