

# Needs Assessment Project – Dining Hall Information

SI 422

This is work that was done for the class SI 422 at the University of Michigan, titled “Needs Assessment and Usability Evaluation”. A majority of this class was spent on the needs assessment part of title, where we each explored a different problem that we face and discovered what needs were present related to these problems.

## Scope

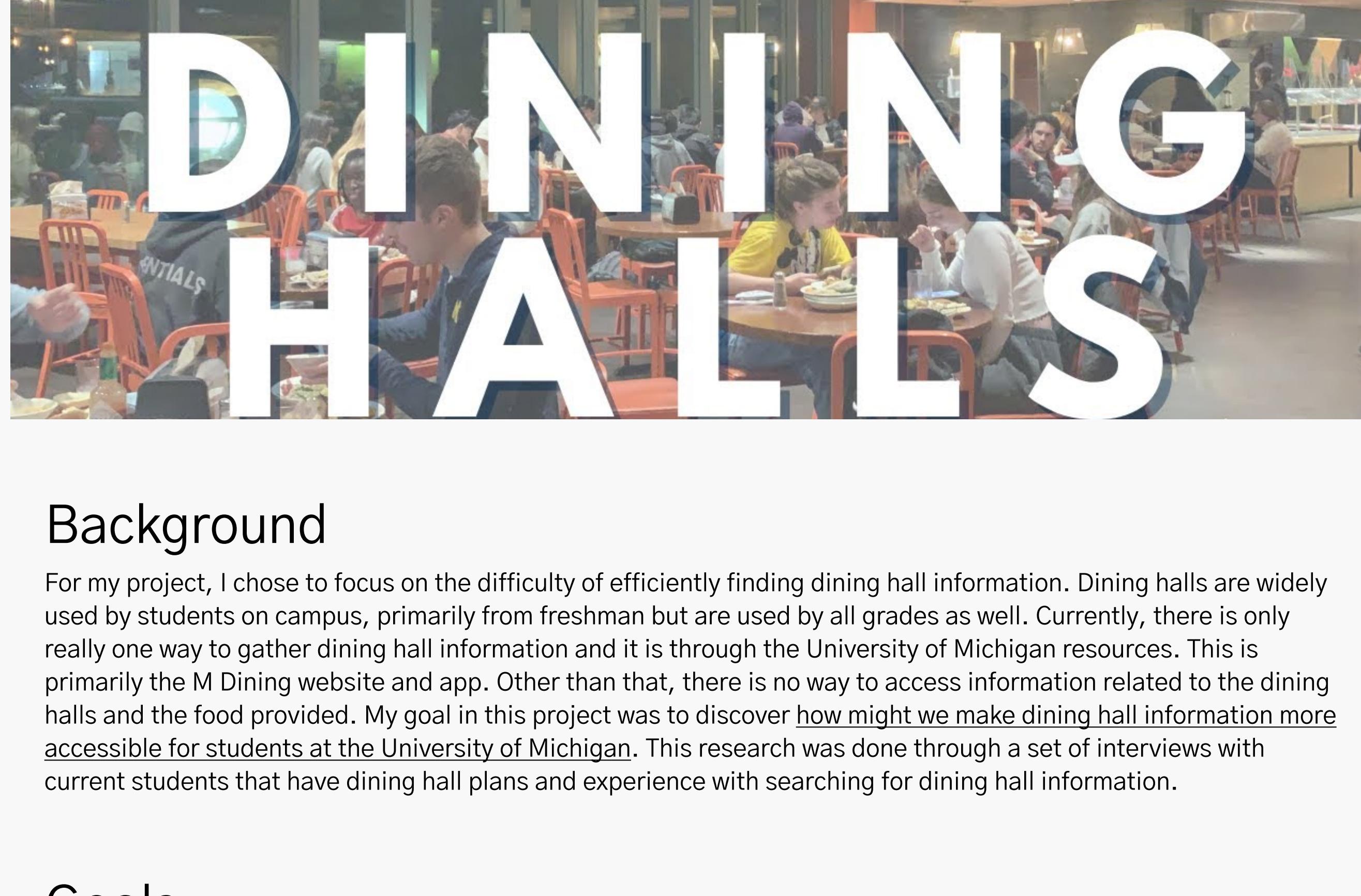
Qualitative user research

## Tools

Figma, OtterAI

## Timeline

3 months



## Background

For my project, I chose to focus on the difficulty of efficiently finding dining hall information. Dining halls are widely used by students on campus, primarily from freshman but are used by all grades as well. Currently, there is only really one way to gather dining hall information and it is through the University of Michigan resources. This is primarily the M Dining website and app. Other than that, there is no way to access information related to the dining halls and the food provided. My goal in this project was to discover how might we make dining hall information more accessible for students at the University of Michigan. This research was done through a set of interviews with current students that have dining hall plans and experience with searching for dining hall information.

## Goals

- Find out what information is most important/ least important for students to have access to
- Find out what are the current processes that students go through to find dining hall information that could be improved
- Find out student's current feelings on the available resources

## Format

- 5 Interviews
  - All interviews consisted of a contextual inquiry section where the participants were asked to walk through specific processes they go through with finding dining hall information (see attached interview guide and transcripts with data coding).
- Recruitment
  - Posted a flier at bulletin boards and sent the flier electronically into different groups in campus I am involved with (See attached flier)

## Sample Size

- 4 juniors, 1 freshman
- All participants are current students at the University of Michigan
- All participants currently have a dining hall plan and use it multiple times per week
- All participants have experience with the Michigan Dining Resources

Seen below: Example of interview transcripts with coding

P1: I feel like I just really like the website maybe should have a look like me more noticeable instead of it being difficult to navigate because I didn't know that like it was an option to click on it and icons come up. So maybe if there was like a little I don't know, just easier to like access, if that makes sense.

Commented [24]: I think the website could be more easily accessible

Interviewer: do you think that walking around isn't the most effective thing to do?

P1: so like it's kind of slower. Yeah, it definitely just like drags on the whole process. Yeah, just because I like most of the times where the dining hall I am in a time crunch. Like I shouldn't be looking at nutrition facts going around the station station. It should be a lot easier than that.

Commented [25]: I value quickness in the dining hall process

Interviewer: Alright, so now, like, let's pretend you're at the dining hall and you see a dish you've never tried before. How would you decide if you wanted to try it? Or not? And why would you do that?

P1: Honestly, if this is just brutal honesty, but if it came from the dining hall, and it was like, I had no idea what was in it, I think I'd ask the chef, like, personally, like ask what's in it? is like, I'm interested to announce them. But yeah, that's just me. Just me. But yeah, I probably would just ask, cuz, you know, the foods being made right there.

Commented [26]: I would ask the chef what is in food when deciding whether or not to eat a dish

## Insights – Gathered through data coding and an affinity diagram

### Important Information

- Menus are the most important thing for students to have access to
- Students also value saving time
- Students value avoiding crowds
- Students value knowing how other people's opinions on dishes
- Students do not value nutritional information as much

### Current Tools

- Students currently use the University of Michigan resources
  - There are no known alternatives
- Students use personal experience to avoid crowds

### Current Feelings

- Students find the current icon labeling system to be confusing
- Students are generally happy with the current resources

Seen below: Affinity diagram of codes found through in the interviews

Color Key  
Affinity Diagram

Research Question: How might we make dining hall information more accessible for students at the University of Michigan?

Legend: Green - #1  
Blue - #2  
Red - #3  
Yellow - #4  
Orange - Pattern but not theme

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