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P1 User Study

Introduction

The design challenge our group decided to tackle consists of creating a website that will allow CDM students to easily upload and share their design projects with other CDM students. The website not only will allow students to share their work easily, but it will also be a means of allowing CDM students to explore, learn from, and be inspired by the art and design projects created by others just like them. As our target audience, the CDM students do not have a medium that allows them to specifically view these projects created by other CDM students. Projects can be shared by students through Facebook or Twitter, but often times they are not projected to nor do they reach to the vast majority of the students in the CDM who have different majors and interests. Due to this, CDM students are not able to showcase their work for feedback or entertainment purposes with other students, nor are they able to view what other students in various majors have created in specific classes or in their spare time. By creating a tool that would allow them to easily share their projects and view the design work on others, they would have a platform that they could simply access on their laptop or phone to view the art and design submissions. This tool would be beneficial not only for entertainment, but also as a means for inspiring and educating other CDM students. Students who are creatively stumped or are looking to expand their knowledge on design would be able to visit the site to learn new techniques they see used by other students. This learning process would allow them to analyze different perspectives of design that could help them add variety to their work. In short, this tool will be a

gateway allowing CDM students to easily share their music, art, and design with other CDM students for entertainment and educational purposes.

With this design goal in mind, we initially wanted to find out if students share their work and how that process is like for them. We wanted to research in-depth reasons of what the ultimate user goal was that propelled them to share their work and how they went about distributing it, specifically the websites or programs they made use of. Our group also hoped to gain insight on the creativity of the user. We wanted to understand how the design process begins for them. Specifically, what factors influenced the user to create their designs and how they felt about their projects once they were completed.

Methods

In order to learn more about CDM students and to properly obtain the information we needed, we constructed a list of roughly 15 interview questions. These questions were targeted towards CDM students of every year here at DePaul University. The questions all pertained to classes at DePaul that challenged their creativity and how students gained the inspiration they needed to accomplish the creative assignments in those classes. The reason why we chose questions to pertain to that subject matter was because the website we are designing is supposed to help students not only gain an entertainment value in seeing what other students have created here at the CDM, but also to gain inspiration or guidance for their class projects through the viewing of these various art and design pieces.

We interviewed a total of three students. Two of the students were working in which were people in the first floor CDM lab on September 24th and the 25th. The third interviewee was Kyle's brother, who is currently an ISM senior enrolled in his final quarter at DePaul. We began

the interviews by asking questions like what year the student was, what major they are studying, what laptop they have, and what their favorite class at DePaul was in order to learn more about the users themselves and what motivates them. Next, we asked the interviewees about their favorite classes here at DePaul and whether they ever took a class that truly challenged their creativity. With these questions we wanted to figure out what motivates the interviewee as well as how they go about finding inspiration for a project when they feel stumped and clueless. We followed up with questions regarding what websites the students visit. We did this to find out what they consult to get creative motivation, and also to get a sense of what they find visually appealing in a website. In order to get a better idea of what students created, we then asked about examples of class projects they were most proud of. We wanted to know what made these specific projects important to them and what gave them inspiration. Our next questions touched on the primary goal of our website, which is to offer a network of student projects for both inspirational and educational guidance. We asked if they would share these projects with other students in order to see if they would participate in our innovative tool. To see if our website would be beneficial, we wanted to figure out if students would be willing to access student projects themselves for both creative inspiration and to determine if certain classes pertain to their interests before enrolling.

Interview Questions Used:

1. Are you a CDM student? What year?
2. What's your major?
3. Do you have a laptop? What kind?
4. What is your favorite class you've taken?
 - a. Why is it your favorite?
5. Have you taken any courses at DePaul that have challenged your creativity?

- a. How did they challenge your creativity?
6. How do you find inspiration to fuel your creativity prior to beginning an assignment?
 - a. Can you give me an example?
7. Does your teacher have an influence on your projects?
 - a. What kinds of things do they help you with?
8. Do your professors display everyone's projects to the class once they are complete?
 - a. How does that make you feel to see their projects?
9. What websites do you visit that inspire you?
 - a. Do you share these websites with anyone?
10. When doing a creative project, do you find that seeing examples of other student's work helps or hinders your creativity?
 - a. Why do you feel that way?
11. Are there moments when you wish you could view a certain project you saw in class again? Why?
12. What would be your top three projects that you'd want to share? Why are these important to you?
 - a. How would you share them?
13. How did you find the inspiration for those projects?
14. If you could help students who are taking a class you previously took by showing them explains for your work, would you?
15. Before taking a class, would you benefit from seeing the design projects that were made throughout the quarter to see if you truly were interested in the course?

Results

We observed a couple of students in the first floor CDM lab the days of September 24th and 25th. We watched one student in particular working on modeling a shoe in Maya, who referred to sites like Reddit and Google search for tips and creative advice on the modeling

process. They stated that people on Reddit give them ideas, since many of them are professionals at what they do. The next student we observed was working on a project for a beginner's animation class. They stated that they took this course because various short films on sites like Newgrounds and YouTube inspired them. Their project consisted of them having to make a character morph into another character utilizing Adobe Flash. Since they were new to animation, they did not know exactly how to use the software so they consulted YouTube, the site that initially inspired them, for help.

Based on our observations and interviews, we came to conclude that CDM students enjoyed partaking in creative projects and often looked to the work of others for inspiration. The three interviewees all stated that among the classes they took at DePaul, their favorites were the ones that challenged their creativity and allowed them to explore new things. For instance, one student liked a class that let them explore the city and take photographs, while the other liked a class about ancient Egypt because it allowed her to travel back in time through visuals presented in class. When asked if there had been any courses that challenged their creativity, students said that they found themselves challenged creatively with design courses such as animation, digital cinema, and graphic design. It wasn't that creating the design was tough for them, it was the challenge of finding inspiration and enough time to bring the project to life. Often a great deal of time for them was spent on trying to come up with ideas for the project itself. According to the interviews, students felt more challenged when starting the project than when actually doing it, since they were unsure of where to go or how to go about doing it. When inquiring about their first steps, we found out that they will often consult social media websites, the internet, the work of other designers, and even museums for inspiration. Their most accessed websites for inspiration included: Reddit, Tumblr, Google, and Pinterest. Once their creative idea for the

project was formed, the students used programs such as Photoshop, After Effects, Illustrator, and word processors to complete the project. If the students were proud of their work upon completion, often times they said that they would resort to posting their artwork on sites like Facebook or Twitter. So, why not make a site that specializes in CDM student created projects?

Insights

After our group analyzed the observations and interviews, we were able to derive the following the insights:

1. Students' favorite classes are those that allow them to explore.
2. Students felt more challenged when starting a design project because they didn't know where to start or how to go about it. Some didn't have experience on the topic.
3. Getting advice from teachers helped students gain feedback to improve in their projects. They enjoy critiques and would like more of it if they could obtain it.
4. Students find creative inspirations and motivation from websites like, Pinterest, Google, Tumblr, and Reddit. (Social Media) Also by visiting art galleries to view other designers work, dreams, portfolios, and talking to others in the same field.
5. Students rely on social media like Facebook and Twitter to share their work with friends and family.
6. Student would like to help other students by showing them their previous work in case they get stuck.
7. Students would like to have the ability to see peer's projects to gain future inspiration.
8. Students used a plethora of programs to create their work. (Photoshop, Illustration, Text editors)
9. Students would find it beneficial to see projects done in certain classes before they take them because it helps them see if the subject matter would interest them. They would also get a good idea of what they will be able to accomplish and see how they would progress over time in that class.

10. Students would benefit from discovering new design and art projects made by DePaul students because the projects provide entertainment and inspiration. It will help them know how to stay on the right track and view different perspectives.
11. Students are most proud of their portfolios and design projects because they put a lot of effort into them.

Students' Creative Process

