MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 18, 2018
TO: President & Director of SALTS, Kelly Hall
FROM: Muhannad Nouri
SUBJECT: Website Usability in the Digital Age

Subject and Purpose of Proposal
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The Interaction Design Foundation states that website usability is the level of difficulty associated with using a website (What Is Usability?, n.d.). In order for a website to be considered "usable", it has to be easy to use and find the information they are searching for from a user's perspective. Moreover, it is important to pay close attention to the usability of your website as it contributes to the overall user experience.

My objectives in this report are to explain the important components and advantages of website usability, and the methods associated with performing a usability study on your website.

The Importance of Website Usability
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There are multiple different factors that contribute to the overall usability of a website, it is not a single measure from which usability is determined. There are six important factors to consider with regards to website usability (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

Firstly, your website must have an intuitive design behind it. Users should be able to painlessly navigate your website and understand the layout with ease. Secondly, the ease of learning is an important factor as it displays how quickly a user can accomplish basic tasks on their first encounter. In addition, the efficiency of use of your website displays how quickly users complete basic tasks whether they are repeat users or first timers. Moreover, the memorability factor of a website exhibits whether a user is able to remember your website enough to use it successfully in repeat visits. Additionally, a crucial measure to a website's usability is a user's error frequency and severity of errors. For instance, if an accidental mis-click on your website were to delete the user's account without warning, then that would significantly hurt the website's overall usability for committing a simple error.

Lastly, the final measure of a website's usability is subjective satisfaction when it comes to using the website. Although, such a measure can be highly subjective, the best approach to take is to investigate if the majority of your users enjoy using your website, since satisfying everyone may not be possible or a reasonable goal to achieve.

The benefit of website usability that it helps the user meet their goals in the shortest time possible, it is about providing excellent customer service (What is Website Usability & Why Is It Important?, n.d.).

Typical Methods to Conduct a Usability Study
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A typical method that researchers used to measure and improve website usability is to ask the user to accomplish some of the most common basic user tasks in a limited time period (Usability Testing, n.d.). The user is given a limited time window to complete a set amount of tasks without interference. This allows the researchers to closely observe and record how the user interacts with the website as if it were a living breathing creature. Additionally, the researcher in certain occasions may ask the user to vocalize their thought process as if they were talking to themselves to better understand the decision-making process.

List of Resources
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Usability Testing. (n.d.). Retrieved from
http://www.usabilityfirst.com/usability-methods/usability-testing/

US Department of Health and Human Services, Usability Evaluation Basics. (2013, October 08). Retrieved from https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html

What is Usability? (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/usability

What Is Website Usability & Why Is It Important? (n.d.). Retrieved from
http://health.usf.edu/is/blog/2018/03/13/what-is-website-usability--why-is-it-important