USER RESEARCH REPORT

Infomation Architecture
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OVERVIEW

Davinci is an Academic Evaluation Report System, which is used by students and faculty within the school system. This program allows you to look at class schedules, grades, credits, registration, and much more. It is also a great place to find out information like who is your advisor, where your classes are taking place, and class descriptions when investigating which classes you are interested in taking. This program is being evaulated in order to find a way to emprove the current condition of the site while making it easily accessible to its users. Within this research we are trying to identify the problems that users have when trying to find specfic information. Usually when users are accessign this program they are there for a specfic task we want this informaiton to be easily accessible for them to locate in order to allow for a simple and easy process.

The specfic problem of this assignment was to focus on the user finding the program evaluation part of the system accessing the information on this and then signing out. Within this research I found generally people were frustrated with the overall hierarchy which lead to general confussion in where to locate the program evulation and understanding the information.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

David

Olivia

Alo

Group Research

We started our research by first discussing the differnt IDEO methods. We wanted to chose eight to focus on, two within each cateogory. The four categories are Ask, Learn, Look, Try. From these main topics we were able to narrow down further into methods we could apply to our research in order to find clear problems and create solutions that would allow users to achieve the tasks they need on Davinci.

For the group ask my group chose to focus on the topics narration and extreme user interviews. Narration,as they perform a process or execute a specific task, ask participants to describe aloud what they are thinking. Extreme User Interviews, identify individuals who are extremely familiar or completely unfamiliar with the product and ask them to evaluate their experience.

Within the group learn we chose to use the methods flow anaylsis and competitive product survery. Flow Analysis, represent the flow of information or activity through all phases of a system or process. Competitive Product Survey, collect, compare, and conduct evaluations of the product's competition.

While investigating the options within the group look we focused on fly on the wall and personal inventory on ways to research Davinci and its users. Fly On The Wall, observe and record behavior within its context, without interfering with people's activities.Personal Inventory, document the things that people identify as important to them as a way of cataloging evidence of their lifestyles.

Within the group try we discussed several options and concluded with the two methods paper prototgtaying and be your customer. Paper Prototyping, rapidly sketch, layout, and evaluate interaction design concepts for basic usability. Be Your Customer, ask the client to describe, outline or enact their typical customer's experience.

These methods allowed use to know how to develope our research and gave us a clear plan. We tested these methods on

ourselves, Alo, David and Olivia. To start we went through the process of logging in, identifiying program evuualation, accessing the information on it, and signing out. Through this action we observed we all got to the page differently as well as logged into the program differently. We noticed how even students with technology background and knowledge of how DaVinci works there still was different ways of getting to the same information.

Throughout our research and discussion we noticed the negative impact of the typographic treatment throughout the site. Better hierarchy would allow for easier navigation throughout the site as well as less frustration accessing simple information in a timely manner. Through flow charts and other methods we also noticed that students mostly only use daVinci for program evaluation, class schedule and registration/search sections. Within the program we also all discussed how there was no personailty within the design of the program. We wanted to know how this site could represent the student body and faculty better within its design. Some conclusions we came to were adding more imagery since most people that attend MassArt are very visually inclined as well as adding ways to personalize the site such as being able to add a profile picture and access a page with all your personal information at your fingertips.

User 1

To go further past our group research I decided to interview my friend in Industrial Design, Matther Meyer. I started by taking notes of his natural way of logging into Davinci. He said he always would google search davinci first then click on the link to go to the Mass Art website then click on the link for daVinci. He said he could never remember the name of the website so the little amount of time he used it, he would just google it. When first arriving to the site he was not able to access it because of cookies. This is another problem that many users have with davinci. Many times it is unable to be accessed through certain internet browsers, such as safari. While observing him he knew davinci well so navigation and completing the task I asked him to was not hard for him to accomplish. We also discussed things they would like to see davinci be able to do such as: teacher comments, being able to sign up for meetings, and student profiles. Overall he was unhappy with the overall asthetic of the site and felt there was too much information repeated multipule times throughout the site making it frustrating to find the information you truly needed.


User 2

The second user I researched was a student at attends Emerson, Scott Dennis. Surprisingly the general comments I received from him were a lot better than the Mass Art students. I believe this could be because he was only using it for one thing and not having to use it on a basis of finding important information. He found the general look of the website to be most unpleasant. He was hoping for a more 'modern' and 'sleek' design that would allow the user to have a better understanding of the navigation in the website as well as an easy experience on the eyes. You should be able to quickly find the information and then leave the site. He stated the most frustrating aspect about this site was that the logging in time exceeded the time it actually took to complete the task of finding the information he needed. He also was using the mobile application where he said he would constantly have to zoom in to be able to read the information on the screen since the website was not adapted to conform to a mobile version.

OTHER SCHOOLS / COMPETITION
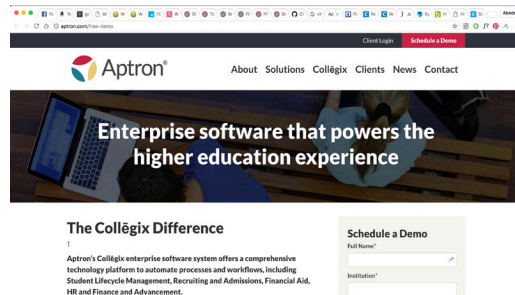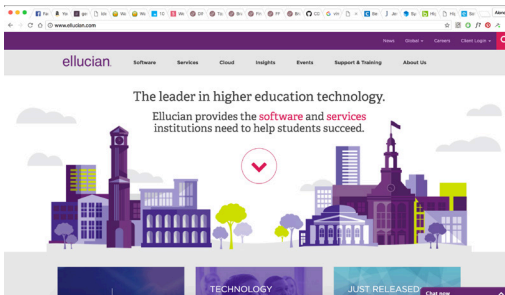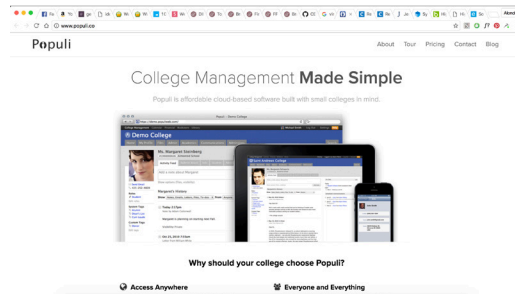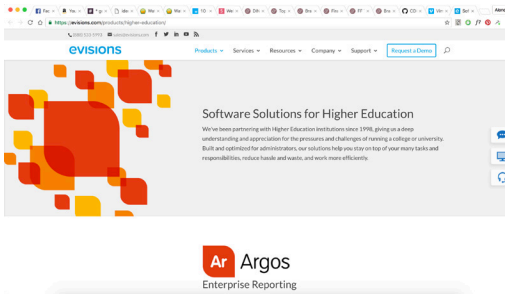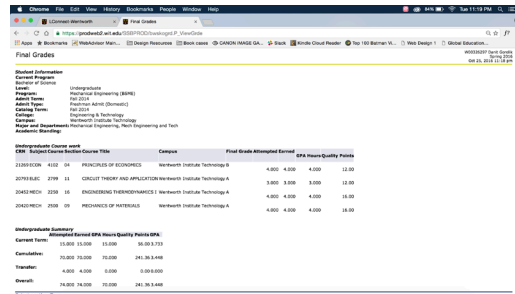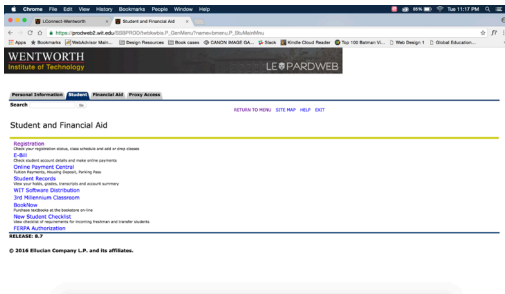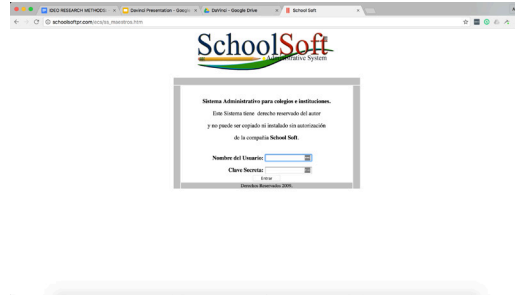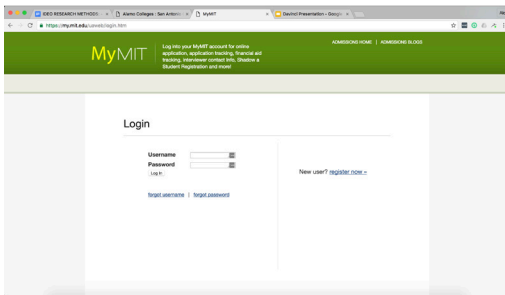
DAVINCI
WALK-THROUGH

The homepage has repeated elements that are confusing to the user, useless information and distracting graphics making the page overwhelming for users visually. The repeated menu causes confusion to users. The menu options is also unnesscary. There is no reason why the user needs to know their postition at the school. Davinci should already have knowledge of this information.
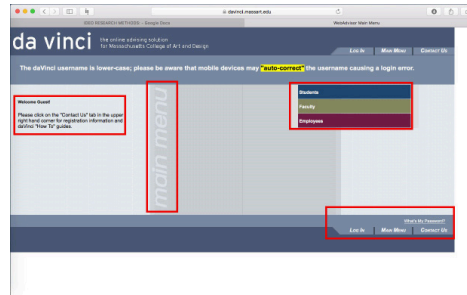

Log-in action is spread across the page to far, making your eyes work harder to read simple information. Also the alignment of the text makes it harder to read. Also the language the program uses is not accurate for the action the user is doing.
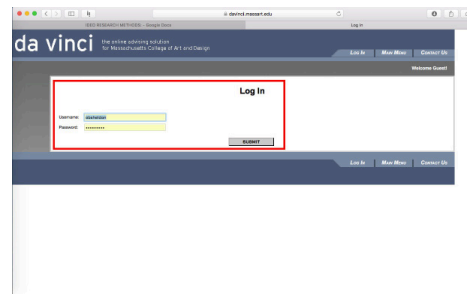

After logging in the user is left with another unnesscary menu that just adds time to siging in making the user frustrated within their often busy schedule. Also there should be no indication of 'forgot password' since the user has already logged in and used their password to get to this page.
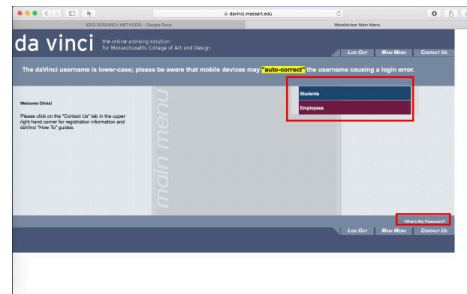

Within the main menu there is unnessary information. It also is too tiny and is not organized in a useful way with the user in-mind. Program evaluation is repeated twice in seperate areas within the menu. Also once again if you have already logged into the program there is no point in having links to find your username and password. That would be troubleshooting for the Log-in page.
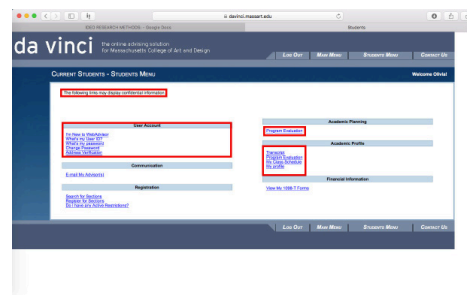

After clicking on Program Evaluation we find yet another menu that the program should already know about the account. The inconsistancy is evident with the use of color, typography, and alignment. Also language is not accurate to the tasks.
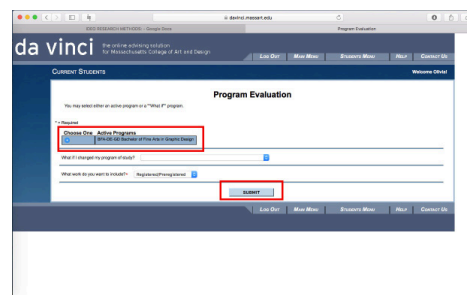
Finally in Program Evaluation there are too many levels of hier-
archy within the large menu that makes it confusing to read and
understand what is complete and what still needs credits. Also the
variety of colors meaning differents categories is unnecassary due
to the fact it is explained in the type.
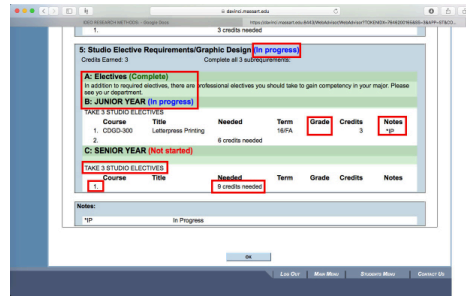
The variety of menus seems very cluttered within the screens. It
makes for confusion for the user and does not show a clear path
for the user to follow, which would allow them to get to and from
places easy without instruction.
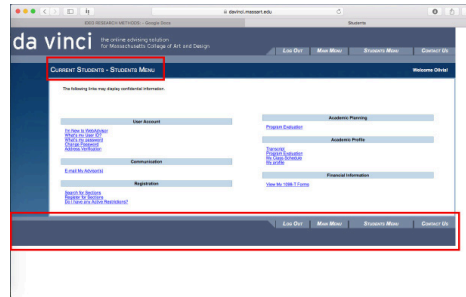
Finally the window that appears while signing out is just an un-
nessary window that makes the user click another button in order
to fully leave the site.
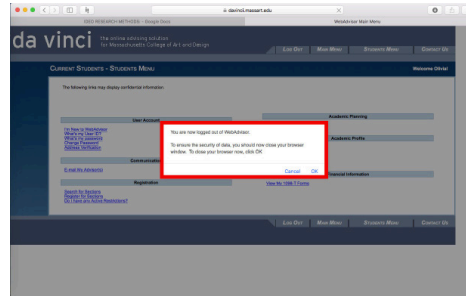
DAVINCI OVERVIEW

Overall the site has hierarchical issues, contrast issues, organization issues, and navigation issues. With these problems addressed it is now possible to start to think about solutions for making it an easier program for new users and frequent users to access and attain information they need in a timely manner. Overall in my solution to improve Davinci I would like to elimate repeated and extra information as well as making the navigation extremely clear and consolidating the information in a useful way.

STRATEGY

The platform I will be modifying for Davinci will be the web. I believe this is the most often used platform in which student and faculty access this information. Modifying this platform will allow for overall easier access to the program, with a hassle free environment.

Features that are important within the system include being able to access filtering, sorting, searching, and navigation. I will be featuring a general dashboard that is accessible at all points while using the site that allows for quick access to differnt pages. I also want students to be able to filter through classes while searching for a new semester as well as being able to filter through requirements or classes they still need to fill within the program evalution.

The overall experience I hope a user experiences using this website is organized easy to understand atomsphere that allows the anxiety of picking classes or understanding requirements for graduation melt away.