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# NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND USABILITY EVALUATION RESEARCH REPORT: INTERVIEWS, PERSONAS AND SCENARIOS

SI 622 ASSIGNMENT #4

**Group 1: STRAY**collective

UMSI
Michigan

# 1 CONTENTS

## 2   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents five user interviews conducted during the process of a systematic evaluation of the online portfolio and course management tool, Digication. Digication is currently used by the University of Michigan's School of Information (UMSI) within the curriculum of its Practical Engagement Program (PEP) courses. Our targeted interviewees consisted of current graduate students at UMSI who had already completed the PEP course, and therefore had experience using Digication. Information gathered from these interviews allowed us to better understand the following: students' goals and needs when creating an online portfolio, students' needs when interacting with an online course management system, and how well Digication fit those identified needs.

Interviewees were contacted by our client, Kelly Kowatch, who represents the Career Development Office (CDO) at UMSI. Our team then conducted semi-structured interviews by following a flexible script. After each interview, we analyzed the data to identify key findings, and also identified issues in the interview process which we adjusted for subsequent interviews.

Key findings:

- Users are not fully aware of Digication's ability to incorporate features to customize online portfolios.
- Digication does not have the ability to produce unique online portfolios.
- Users who self-identify as needing an online portfolio already have one by the time they are introduced to Digication.
- The current format of the discussions area in Digication is difficult to read and conversations are hard to follow.
- The assignments page is difficult to navigate, and the color coding is confusing.

Based on these findings, we generated actionable recommendations that will support user goals and improve overall user experience. We also constructed three user models, using personas and scenarios, to represent distinct individuals who might use Digication. Moving forward, we will use the information gleaned from these interviews, along with the user models, to inform further analyses.

## 3   INTRODUCTION

Digication is an online portfolio creation platform, geared primarily towards academic institutions, where students can showcase their work and ideas. The portfolio creation process is meant to be straightforward and easy to produce quality work. Furthermore, Digication may also be used as an online course management tool.

Our investigation focused on a subset of Digication's target audience: Master of Information Science students at UMSI. The CDO at UMSI currently uses Digication to manage its PEP internship classes. The course curriculum consists of two main components: a public facing portfolio where students document their internship work, and reflective, written assignments to be handed in to the course instructor. By completing the PEP course curriculum online concurrently with those internships, the CDO is able to track students' progress and the students are therefore able to receive credit.

The PEP internship classes are managed like an online course. Students interact with their fellow classmates through the course management portion of Digication. Assignments are posted and emails are sent out to remind students that assignments are approaching. Once the assignments are posted by the students, the instructors are able to respond.

The CDO would like students to use their Digication portfolios as a way to showcase their work beyond the scope of completing the PEP course. However, students rarely return to their Digication portfolios after the course is over. Our project scope is to conduct a thorough evaluation of the Digication platform to improve usability from a student user's perspective. Our investigation is focused on determining what UMSI masters students need in order to achieve the following goals through the use of Digication:

- to market their work to potential employers through online portfolios
- to engage with their peers and review each other's work
- to use as an effective course management tool

As determined through our initial conversation with our client, users were either frustrated with or not taking full advantage of what Digication has to offer. To derive an understanding of students' experiences and perspectives with Digication, we investigated the following questions through face-to-face interviews:

- What is the ideal portfolio system that users would like to have?
- Why are users not using Digication to create portfolios outside of class?
- How do users experienced with coding and creating online portfolios view Digication?
- How effective is Digication in providing a reflective learning experience for students?

These questions were designed to be open ended to take advantage of expressive freedoms possible through face-to-face interviews.

# 4  METHODS

## 4.1  SELECTING INTERVIEWEES
Our targeted interviewees were current graduate students at UMSI who had already completed the PEP course, and therefore had experience using Digication. We created a list of characteristics, including specialization, nationality, and gender, that attempted to reflect the diversity of UMSI Digication users. We then sought out a number of people who fell into different categories within those characteristics.

## 4.2  RECRUITMENT
The CDO sent emails directly to prospective interviewees. Since the CDO is a part of the school's administration, we felt this method might generate a greater response than if we had sent emails out ourselves. The CDO sent out emails to twenty students, and from those who responded we were able to schedule four interviews. A fifth interviewee was recruited independently.

## 4.3   THE INTERVIEWEES

All five interviewees were second year masters students who had already completed the PEP course using Digication. Among the five, three were male and two were female. They represented a distribution of UMSI specializations, career aspirations, and three different nationalities. [See Appendix A Interviewee Profile table].

## 4.4   THE INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in pairs with one interviewer and one note taker. These roles rotated and all team members had the chance to be an interviewer and a note taker.

## 4.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Following each interview, our team analyzed the data by creating concise notes to distill essential information gathered from interviewees (also known as affinity notes) and identify key findings. We also identified issues in the interview process and adjusted our questionnaire accordingly for each subsequent interview.

After completing all five interviews, our team synthesized the major findings through the following process as outlined by Cooper et. al:

- gathered most common findings throughout all five interviews
- organized findings based three categories: interviewee's personal opinions, findings about the course structure itself, and findings about the usability of the Digication system
- prioritized findings according to actionable items and based on the scope of the research (49-73)

We constructed personas based on five characteristic continua derived from the analysis of interview data: need for an online portfolio, need for visual appeal (in relation to an online portfolio), computer expertise, work experience, and prioritization of academic or commercial portfolio uses. We created three distinct personas by spreading their characteristics across these five continua.  We then developed scenarios we felt to be typical of the interviewees and expressive of the total user group.

# 5   FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1   SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Following the interviews, we analyzed the data collected from the five interviews and discovered that the users are not completely aware of all the features that Digication has to offer. Moreover, the users dislike the look and feel of the existing portfolios on the platform. Furthermore, the expert users of Digication already have the portfolio, hence, never use Digication for creating one.  In addition, some existing features of Digication pose hindrance to the users' productivity rather than increasing it.

The findings listed below are in the order of their graveness.

## 5.2    FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION #1

### 5.2.1    Finding: Users are not fully aware of Digication's ability to incorporate features to customize online portfolios.

Interviewees explained that they assessed Digication based upon the overall look and feel of the site as well as upon the example portfolios they were able to see. Because the site was visually unappealing and the sample portfolios were not impressive, interviewees did not think they would be able to create a strong portfolio using Digication, and therefore did not take time to explore its capabilities. Almost all our interviewees also stated that the interface of Digication is not intuitive — they were not aware of its ability to embed multimedia. These factors contributed to users assuming that Digication has less functionality than it actually has.

### 5.2.2    Recommendations

Showcase portfolios should be created and shown to students as examples of what is possible with the Digication platform. To help introduce features to first time users, hints and suggestions could pop-up while they navigate the site. In addition, Digication workshops should be conducted, teaching users how to use the system efficiently for creating portfolios.

## 5.3    FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION #2

### 5.3.1    Finding: Digication does not have the ability to produce unique online portfolios.

Our interviewees stated the importance of visually unique online portfolios. The majority of our interviewees felt that the Digication portfolio platform does not provide enough options for customization. Because there are not many portfolio page layouts or themes to choose from, portfolios end up looking very similar to one another even after interviewees change the color and CSS style sheets. One interviewee even described the portfolios as "cookie cutter" portfolios.

In addition, users complained that the URL is long and messy, their own names get lost within the URL, and they are unable to customize the structure of the URLs.

### 5.3.2    Recommendations

Digication should provide more themes to allow users to customize their portfolios. In addition, Digication should provide an outlet that would allow more advanced users to work with their portfolio using HTML. To further make a portfolio memorable and identifiable, allow users to alter the URL address so that users' names come first, and then "umichsi.digication.com" comes second.

## 5.4    FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION #3

### 5.4.1    Finding: Users who self-identify as needing an online portfolio already have one by the time they are introduced to Digication.

Interviewees use online portfolios as an important vehicle in job and internship searches. Three out of the five interviewees already had existing portfolios to show prospective employers prior to using Digication. These interviewees had already invested time and energy in creating an online portfolio before they began to use Digication and saw no reason to create another portfolio.

### 5.4.2    Recommendations

Users should be introduced to Digication earlier in their time at UMSI — during first semester, if possible. Training should be provided so that students feel comfortable and confident using Digication, and also capable of utilizing its full functionality.

## 5.5    FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION #4

### 5.5.1    Finding: The current format of the discussions area in Digication is difficult to read and conversations are hard to follow.

Almost all of our interviewees mentioned the conversation threads are problematic and difficult to follow [see Appendix B Figure 1]. First, it is unclear how to respond to the desired post. Second, as each new reply is posted, that reply seems to appear as its own separate discussion rather than as a continuum of the original. Third, the viewing area where the forums text is displayed is very small and impairs readability.

### 5.5.2    Recommendations

Digication should re-evaluate its discussions sections and alter them for greater visual clarity and hierarchy. This will allow users to navigate the discussions section in a more effective manner. Moreover, the area where the text of the discussion is displayed should be enlarged to increase the legibility of the posts.

## 5.6    FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION #5

### 5.6.1    Finding: Assignments page is difficult to navigate; color coding is confusing

Most of our interviewees reported that the assignments page is too long; User C mentioned that it felt "bottomless." Because of this, the interviewees stated that it was difficult searching for desired information, such as upcoming assignments with impending deadlines. Moreover, the color coding displayed on the assignments page was confusing to the interviewees [see Appendix B Figure 2]. In addition, once inside an individual assignment page, it was difficult to return to the main assignment page.

### 5.6.2    Recommendations:

Digication should incorporate features like searching and sorting in its assignments page. This will enable users to find the information they are looking for more easily. All the assignments should not be displayed in a single page, as this increases the length of the page and makes it hard for the users to navigate through. The color coding aspect could be removed, or else the color scheme used in the assignments page should either be more intuitive or a key should be provided. In addition, navigation (such as a breadcrumb trail) should be offered so that users can easily see where they are within the assignments section so they may easily switch between the main and individual assignment pages.

# 6   DISCUSSION

Our investigation of the use of Digication by UMSI has been subject to certain restrictions. These limitations include sample size and the methods of collecting information. Moreover, we also synthesized some personality related findings, which have not been discussed in the report.

## 6.1   LIMITATION #1:

Time and budget constraints only allowed for five user interviews and one client interview. Therefore, all of our findings and related recommendations are based on these six interviews. Since it is difficult to represent the entire population based on only five users, we understand that our interviews might not fully represent the range of experiences that users have with Digication.

## 6.2   LIMITATION #2:

The process of collecting information through interviews is prone to bias because of the interviewer's perspective and the interviewees' interpretation of the questions. Although we followed a standard protocol for conducting the interviews, the interviewers at times deviated from this structure based on interviewee responses to collect the required information.

We attempted to mitigate such bias through a debriefing process which isolated the information gathered from the context in which it was gathered.

## 6.3   LIMITATION #3:

The interviewees we selected were based on some standardized selection criteria and may not have represented the entire population. Moreover, the standardized selection criteria that we used did not factor in user comfort with the English language and possible usage differences associated with this comfort. Furthermore, one of our interviewees tried to access Digication from outside of the US and faced problems with a UMSI/Digication firewall and low internet speed; we did not take these difficulties into consideration during the formulation of findings.

## 6.4   OTHER FINDINGS:

The interview and analysis process revealed additional insights into users' feelings and attitudes towards Digication. For example, some users were confused as to the priorities of Digication, considering it has both portfolio and course management functionalities.  This finding will help us to formulate our upcoming survey and subsequent report. Moreover, our team also synthesized some findings which were related to how students interact with the PEP course structure, and these findings were not directly related to the Digication system. One such positive finding is that users regularly repurposed work created in Digication to their other online portfolios.

# 7   CONCLUSION

We were able to draw a number of important findings from our interviews. First, Digication users are not aware of the variety of functionality available through the Digication platform. Providing examples and easily accessible tutorials might make users more aware and eager to implement greater variety in their portfolios. Second, users did not feel that Digication provided enough personalization for their portfolios. They wanted their portfolio to look and feel unique. Providing users with more themes and a more personalized URL will give the users the ability to portray their work and personality. Third, users who already had online portfolios were not willing to switch to a new system. We recommend introducing Digication earlier in the school year when many users are first starting to think about the need of such a portfolio.

Users also disliked the layout of the discussion section of the course management system, especially the small size of the text box and the way the comments are threaded. We recommend evaluating how the thread hierarchy is arranged and increasing the size of the textbox where the posts are displayed. Finally, users found the assignments pages hard to navigate. They found the color coding hard to understand, and they did not like how all the assignments were listed on one page since it required a lot of scrolling in order to find desired information. We recommend either doing away with the color code or providing a better key. We also recommend not listing all the assignments on one page.

As previously noted, this report and its subsequent recommendations are subject to significant limitations, particularly in regards to the number of users interviewed. We do feel that our specific interviewees were representative of the majority of the potential Digication users, however, and that the interviews in which they participated produced excellent data that will direct us in our further investigation.

# 8   RESOURCES

Cooper, A., Reimann, R., & Cronin, D. *Understanding Users: Qualitative Research*.  (2007).

# 9  APPENDIX

## 9.1  APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWEE PROFILE

| USERS | AGE | Gender | Specialization | After UMSI |
|-------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|
| USER A | 27 | MALE | HCI | UX Designer |
| USER B | 26 | MALE | LIS | Librarian |
| USER C | 24 | FEMALE | Tailored | Doctoral candidate |
| USER D | 26 | FEMALE | LIS and ARM | Academic environment |
| USER E | 28 | MALE | HCI | Development |

## 9.2  APPENDIX B: SCREENSHOTS OF THE SYSTEM



NOT Enough Indentation, if you move down, you are not sure of the parent post

The area provided for reading the discussion is not enough and it gets complicated with the use of multiple scrolls

**Figure 1**



Confusing color coding

**Figure 2**

## 9.3 APPENDIX C: PERSONAS AND SCENARIOS

**Davin Linwood (Photo from:** http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/african-businessman-listening-to-headphones-royalty-free-image/81860656**)**



> **"If cooking were as easy as coding, I'd be fat."**

| | |
|---|---|
| Age | 23 |
| Specialization | HCI |
| Computer Skills | Expert |
| Computer Type | Windows 8 laptop for school, PC at home (tricked out and customized) |
| Computer Usage | 10-12 hrs/day |
| Computer Tools | Advanced features, coding tools, graphics, email, browsing, word processing |
| Current job | Full time masters student |
| | Part time job: code monkey/computer consultant for IT on campus |
| Background/Interests | Gamer, hacker, techy, bad at cooking |
| | Came straight from undergrad -- little professional work experience |
| | BS in Computer Science from Penn State |

| | |
|---|---|
| Goals | Wants to work for either a large IT company or a startup in Silicon Valley |
| Needs | To create a professional, online portfolio to showcase his HCI and design work to potential employers |
| Ethnicity | Mixed race |

**(Goals & Personality)**

Davin is a hands-on type of person. When he's not busy gaming, he's busy writing and designing his own games and web applications, or else cheering for the Nittany Lions (especially when they play against the Wolverines). His goal is to work at an IT company or startup in Silicon Valley and eventually live in a tricked out condo. For now, he is doing everything he can to impress future employers and colleagues — this includes presenting a top-notch portfolio.

Davin is a whiz at computers and coding. As a computer science major, he is perfectly capable of building and managing an online portfolio from scratch. Designing and updating a website comes easily to him, and the visual look and feel of his portfolio is just as important as the content that goes into it. To position himself as a standout candidate, Davin works hard towards making his portfolio unique.
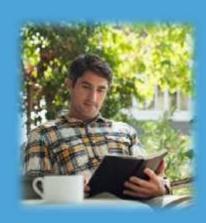
**Davin's Scenario - A day in the life:**

As a second year HCI student at the University of Michigan, Davin is preoccupied with job searching and applications. After completing a recent service project for local non-profit website, Davin sits down to update his online portfolio with this work.

Davin has had an online portfolio since senior year of undergrad. His portfolio is run off of WordPress, and is customized to his exact specifications. In fact, he designed and coded the skin (theme) himself. As he goes to update his portfolio, he remembers that he is currently enrolled in the PEP course and is creating a similar portfolio there through the use of Digication. He considers the possibility of incorporating this Digication portfolio somehow as a supplement to his primary portfolio as another networking tool.

After opening up his Digication portfolio, his first thought is to make it visually look similar to his primary portfolio, only he cannot figure out an easy way of altering the theme and layout of Digication to fit his needs. It is inflexible and visually unappealing, and it also has a messy, long url that would be embarrassing to show potential employers. After a glancing around, he quickly decides to ditch Digication as a means of showcasing his work.

**Martin "Marty" Hobson (Photo from:** http://www.gettyimages.com**)**



## "Connecting the right person with the right material at the right time can change their life."

| | |
|---|---|
| Age | 30 |
| Specialization | LIS/Archives |
| Computer Skills | Moderate |
| Computer Type | HP G62 laptop |
| Computer Usage | 5-6 hrs/day |
| Computer Tools | Composition, blogging, correspondence, coursework including a bit of coding. |
| Current job | Full time masters student |
| | Part time job: works for the Ford School's outreach department, where he blogs about life at UMich from the student perspective |
| Background/Interests | Enjoys spending time with his girlfriend, and likes cooking, camping, and hiking. |
| | Worked as a paralegal for seven years |
| Goals | Wants to work in an academic library anywhere in the United States. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Is interested in continuing to develop his writing voice while learning from others in the UMSI community. |
| Needs | Communicate with peers online |
| | Have an online presence that prioritizes the written word over design. |
| Ethnicity | White |

**(Goals & Personality)**

Marty loves using the written word and artifacts to connect people to each other and new ideas. He takes pride in his ability to explain himself in words, and he has found work during his time at UMSI writing a weblog for prospective students. Though he is becoming more comfortable with computers through his coursework, he primarily sees his computer as a means for organizing his materials facilitating his writing.

Martin sees himself as a well-rounded human, and feels like he is able to express that in his life outside of work through cooking, enjoying time outdoors with his girlfriend, and through reading and writing. Since joining UMSI, he's also found that he can find enjoyment through helping others to develop themselves through use of libraries and archives.

**Marty's Scenario - A day in the life:**

Though his duties with the Ford school are mostly related to writing, he is also occasionally asked to work a desk shift at their reception desk, and Digication presents Marty with his first opportunity to create a consolidated web portal for accessing material he's created; Marty has never had a web-based portfolio before. Marty is considering spending some time putting together a LinkedIn page, but does not see it as crucial to presenting his work. Writing samples and a resume mean more to him than a vehicle that emphasizes the visual, and he believes his employers will have a similar perspective.

Once introduced to the Digication system, Marty is confused with the purpose of the site: is it for managing assignment content, for looking at his peers' work, or for presenting his work to employers? He decides it's a combination of all three, and gradually grows more comfortable with the submission system while enjoying the opportunity to read about what all is happening in others' internships. In creating his own site, he spends "the bare minimum of time" on the display. He has some frustrations with the interface, particularly in regards to navigating from the assignments to the portfolio and in managing the discussion forums.

In reflecting on his work with Digication, he feels like he has pulled together some raw material that could be culled for future efforts in presenting himself. He does like having his postings and links in the same place, though, and plans to build off of this experience.

**Priya Mehrotra (**Photo from: http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/portrait-of-female-student-in-library-high-res-stock-photography/109378136**)**



> "The past is history, futures a mystery, the present is mine and I shall live it to the full."

| | |
|---|---|
| Age | 25 |
| Specialization | Archives & PI |
| Computer Skills | Novice |
| Computer Type | Windows 7 at work and at home. Dell 850 OptiPlex at work and Dell Studio 15 at Home |
| Computer Usage | 2-3 hrs/day |
| Computer Tools | Email, browsing, word processing |
| Current job | Full time masters student |
| | Part time job: communications assistant at the Museum of Modern Art on campus |
| Background/Interests | Likes listening to music, dancing, drinking tea, exploring new restaurants, travelling and hiking. Is a big foodie. |
| | B.Tech in Electrical Engineering from SRM University |
| Goals | Wants to work at either academic archives (at a university) or a large museum setting. Working at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC would be a dream come true for her. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Needs | To create a portfolio that is not that visually heavy but is 'pretty' and unique. |
| Ethnicity | Asian (Aryans) |

**(Goals & Personality)**

Priya is a person who lives by the moment. She is not that computer savvy but can do her work accomplishes simple tasks when she needs to. She is very whimsical by nature.  She completed her B.Tech in Electrical Engineering from SRM University in India, but was not very interested in the courses. She worked as an Electrical Engineer at GE for 2 years. She joined the Archives and PI specializations at UMSI after she became bored with engineering and needed a change. Fortunately, she has found a strong inclination towards the field and now believes that she should have always been an archives person rather than an electrical engineer. Her aim is to get a job in one of the top academic archives or in a large museum, such as the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

She wants to have a portfolio to show her work in the field of Archives to her potential employers. She wants a tool that is quick and easy, but at the same time provides her with a unique and 'pretty' looking portfolio. She is not that heavily reliant on the intricacy of the design.

**Priya's Scenario - A day in the life:**

Priya is currently enrolled in PEP. She is not that keen about a having a portfolio until she realizes that all her peers have already started making one. She starts to worry that she might not get the job she desires if she does not have a portfolio.

Owing to her handicap as far as computer programming goes, she wants something that is quick, easy and helps her make a unique portfolio. She decides to give Digication a try. As she builds her portfolio using Digication, she realizes it is quick and easy but does not look that "pretty". She tries to upload a cover picture, and gets frustrated when she realizes Digication does not have that feature. Priya browses her peers' portfolios on Digication, and sees that all of them have the same look and feel as hers. However, she decides that Digication will fit her needs for the time being — she just needs an online presence quickly — but she thinks about transferring to a new portfolio creation service for later.

She then calls up her friend, Raj, who is a computer guy. He suggests her to use Wordpress with an already available theme and customize it according to her needs. She now definitely feels that Wordpress is way more visually appealing, has a meaningful and short URL and is customizable to her needs.

## 9.4   APPENDIX D: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why did you choose digication as a system?
- What are the goals of the system?
- Are there areas where the system is not meeting those goals?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of using the system?
- Are there any questions about the system you'd like to have answered?
- Who are the intended and target users?
- What do they need to be able to do with the system? [For what purposes are the users currently using the system?]
- What are the consequences if they can't do those things effectively?
- Do you believe your users can do what they need to do now? If not, what are the barriers?
- What features of the system are most important to the users?
- What additional features are desired?
- Could you put us in touch with current or potential users for interviews?
- Can you help us distribute a survey to current or potential users?
- Can you help us identify and recruit potential users for usability testing?
- Are there any systems who have similar features?

## 9.5    APPENDIX E: USER INTERVIEWS Q&A

### 9.5.1    User A
**General:**
Tell us about yourself: [for personas]

- specialization
  - HCI
- year
  - 2nd Year
- age
  - did not tell
- job aspiration
  - to be an interaction designer
- previous job
  - years in a field/years professional experience
    - Have in all 3 years of experience, 1 year as an Interaction Designer and 2 years as a consultant
- technical background
  - coding (front end and back end?)
    - what is your experience with coding?
      - considers himself good in coding, rates himself 5/7
  - computer usage/competency (how to measure)
    - what do you use your computer for, typically?
      - for taking notes, web development, avid user
    - control question: what do you do when your computer is frozen?
  - design experience?
    - four years of undergrad in design, then 3 years of work experience and now 2 years of masters
  - what kind of computer do you use
    - uses a macbook pro
  - experience with CMS systems?
    - had experience with Drupal and learned wordpress
- first language?
  - screen translator?
  - what's your default language for your computer?
  - how comfortable are you reading and speaking in English
- experience with Digication
  - till now have used it twice, once for summer internship, and again for internship in fall semester

**1. What is the ideal portfolio system that students want to have? (WHY)**

- Do you currently have an online portfolio? More than one?
  - yes i have one at digication and one using wordpress
  - *What considerations do users think about when showing an online portfolio to clients and employers?*

- it should be easy to navigate through during the interviews
  - If Yes
    - What is your primary goal in having an online portfolio?
      - web presence
      - showcase work
      - showcase the thinking
    - What sort of information do you include on the portfolio?
      - i like the philosophy statement!!
      - work, designs etc.
    - How often do you update your portfolio?
      - used to update it regularly before getting the job
    - What CMS, if any, do you use?
      - Drupal, Wordpress
      - Why do you use this system?
        - it is very flexible
        - has many features like plugins etc.
        - it is easy to customize, hence does not act like a cookie cutter and is actually your face
      - What are you favorite features of the system?
        - because it has a lot many custom themes, plugins and is open source hence constant development in technology
        - good visual design feature
  - If No
    - Why not?
    - What steps would you take to create one?
      - *what are users needs in creating an ideal portfolio*
      - What is your primary goal in having an online portfolio?
      - What sort of information do you want to include on the portfolio?

**3. How do expert users (who are experienced with coding and creating online portfolios) view Digication?**

- similar questions with questions from Question 1
- digication is not good for showcasing work
- it is very basic and non customizable
- content in digication is on a personal level and is not very work related, it is more of a personal opinion

**2. Why are the users not using Digication to create portfolios outside of class even when the system is free to use? (WHAT)**

- What is your level of experience with Digication?
  - used it for 2 courses
- What did you think of Digication (overall experience?)
  - *Be specific: experience = bad/good? Ask to tell a story*
    - do not remember much of digication, always used it in a hurry
  - Pain points? Successes?

- - pain: not able to customize
    - Successes: loves the concept of philosophy statement, and even used the same in his current portfolio
    - Also, likes browsing through others portfolios and see what the other company's work cultures is like
- How do you learn how to use the system in both creating portfolio and fulfilling your coursework? Describe the process.
    - *are the users able to use the system without formal training?*
        - no, followed the steps mailed by Kelly
    - *UMSI direction?*
        - followed the instructions given in the assignment mail
- How would you feel about using Digication as a means to showcase your work?
    - content on digication it is not very work related, feels that the content on digication is more of a personal opinion rather than being work related
- What features of Digication you like the most?
    - be specific
    - the philosophy statement part
    - the basic concept of incremental learning and development behind the digication
- What do you like the least?
    - Describe any barriers for you in using Digication to accomplish your goals?
    - not able to customize
    - does not suit the design students
    - content created is too personal

**4. How effective is Digication in providing a learning/course management experience for students?**

- What do you look for /expect from an online course management system?
    - such as CTools, Coursera, Codacademy
    - that there are online lectures and other course material
    - is able to take notes online, in the course management system itself
    - have peer evaluation and should be easy to get in touch with other people taking the course
    - it should be easily accessible and you should not spend time learning the system first and then the course.
    - the notifications sent should be prioritized and not very notification should be sent
    - instructor interaction depending on the course, should be there.
    - should be able to get the instructor help on assignments
    - goals for the course should be set with the help of the instructors
- What online resources or tools do you expect an online course to provide in order to help you navigate the course?
    - *syllabus, schedules, email notifications, assignment descriptions, grades, etc*
    - note taking can be added as a feature
    - Tell me about about positive/negative experiences with using online course management.
    - course era is good but does not provided good peer interaction

- o really likes the lengthy mails sent by course era after the submission of each assignment, eliciting the individual performance with respect to the class performance and the points for improvements
- How much instructor interaction do you expect?
  - o Tell me about interacting with an instructor via an online course system
    - What were the positives and negatives surrounding that experience?
    - instructor interaction should be there depending on the course
    - initial goal setting of the course should be done by the instructors
- When submitting assignments online, what tools do you look for?
  - o *rich text editor? uploading features? drafts?*
  - o no, does not like the Rich Text Editors, likes creating the docs in google doc and then downloading and converting them in PDFs and then uploading them

### 9.5.2    User B
Tell us about yourself: [for personas]

- specialization- LIS
- year- 2nd Year
- age-26
- job aspiration- wants to work in academic library with maps
- previous job- clarke lib
    o years in a field/years professional experience- gained a lot of experience in SI. All of it in Clarke Lib. Layout of Lib spaces. Learnt about GIS, using technology. Uses Camtasia. Works with library guides and exhibitions
- technical background- beginner to intermediate (502, 539)
    o coding (front end and back end?) - not an expert coder.
        ▪ what is your experience with coding?- little bit
    o computer usage/competency (how to measure)
        ▪ what do you use your computer for, typically?--internet, wasting time on computer, writing papers, using it for screencast, GIS programs like arch. maps, working with servers, CAD, illustrator.
        ▪ control question: what do you do when your computer is frozen?- Force quit, ctrl+alt+del, nothing in particular, dont know what to do.
    o design experience?- minimal design experience,color changes etc
    o what kind of computer do you use?- mac at home, PC at work
    o experience with CMS systems? CTools

    it is a compulsion. favs: organized well when done properly by prof, assign,ent doc- listing all things needed to be included in the assignment. not favs: was not easy to list tabs. by default newest are last on the list. does not make sense, forums should be a tree with a complete vision of up and down the particular place, CTools outage can be a pain.

- first language? English
    o screen translator? No
    o what's your default language for your computer? English
    o how comfortable are you reading and speaking in English
- experience with Digication

Resonably good exp, no particular headache, difficulty of seeing the published view as a logged in user, MODIFIED HTML/CSS
**1. What is the ideal portfolio system that students want to have? (WHY)**

- Do you currently have an online portfolio? More than one? no portfolio at the moment
    o *What considerations do users think about when showing an online portfolio to clients and employers?*
    o If Yes
        ▪ How long have you had it?
        ▪ What is your primary goal in having an online portfolio?
        ▪ What sort of information do you include on the portfolio?

- What are the most important things do you consider when creating an online portfolio?
    - custom url?
    - how much do you take into account amount of storage space?
- How often do you update your portfolio?
- What CMS, if any, do you use?
    - Why do you use this system?
    - What are you favorite features of the system?
    - What are your least favorite features of the system?
- If no CMS, why not?
    - How did you create your portfolio?
- What features would you like to see in a system that helps you create your portfolio?
- If more than one:
    - why did you choose certain features
  - If No
    - Why not?- didnt invest time, no urgency, helpful but not vital
    - What steps would you take to create one? ask friends, go to websites and learn more, look and research
        - *what are users needs in creating an ideal portfolio* what kind of webpage in need, free, big URL X, color, layout, look and feel.
        - What is your primary goal in having an online portfolio?- it is expected to show my work and ability to employers
        - What sort of information do you want to include on the portfolio?- resume, interests and a little about myself. Some of my work and what I am doing currently.


**3. How do expert users (who are experienced with coding and creating online portfolios) view Digication?**

- similar questions with questions from Question 1


**2. Why are the users not using Digication to create portfolios outside of class even when the system is free to use? (WHAT)**

- What is your level of experience with Digication?- moderate only portfolio for summer internship
- What was the learning curve (if you've used it more than once?)- easy to learn, HTML CSS bit steep but possible
- What did you think of Digication (overall experience?)
    - *Be specific: experience = bad/good? Ask to tell a story*
    - Pain points? Successes?- No strong feeling. Kelly motivated me.
- How do you learn how to use the system in both creating portfolio and fulfilling your coursework? Describe the process.- donot not remember. looked at portfolio of others to get a better idea.

- How would you feel about using Digication as a means to showcase your work?- will consider it as a valid choice in the future.
- Were any materials you developed for Digication and the PEP class used in other ways?-For example in another portfolio. Nope. But i looked back at portfolio to get to know what i was thinking
- What features of Digication you like the most?change color, custom banner for the website. I created one of a the aerial view of Detroit.
  - be specific
- What do you like the least?- published view, editing tabs looked bad.
  - Describe any barriers for you in using Digication to accomplish your goals?
- If interviewee has completed coursework, what is your current level of interaction with using Digication?- none after the course.
  - why?- as there was no need.

**4. How effective is Digication in providing a learning/course management experience for students?**

- What do you look for /expect from an online course management system?- videos, podcasts, screencasts, concrete examples of what we have to do, just powerpoint slides donot give enough info.
  - such as CTools, Coursera, Codacademy- none except Ctools
- What online resources or tools do you expect an online course to provide in order to help you navigate the course?
  - *syllabus, schedules, email notifications, assignment descriptions, grades, etc*
  - Tell me about about positive/negative experiences with using online course management.-dig: '-ve'color coded blocks, no feedback ; ctools: '+ve' letter grade, number of points, room for assignment, dig: not recollect notifications
- What how much peer interaction do you expect from a system?
  - Tell me about a time when you virtually interacted with peers in an online system?- little bit of peer interaction: forums and chatrooms
    - What were the positives and negatives surrounding that experience?- cannot be casual as it is monitored, both positive and negative

      in digication all in diff internships. peer interaction was positive feedback and casual. eg positive comments on portfolios.
      no negatives.

- How much instructor interaction do you expect?

they should design their page, assignment tab to av out grade. Should know to use CMS to make it navigable.

  - Tell me about interacting with an instructor via an online course system NA
    - What were the positives and negatives surrounding that experience? NA
- When submitting assignments online, what tools do you look for?
  - *rich text editor? uploading features? drafts?*

i should be able to save as draft, save button. preview button. Upload button to directly upload files.

9.5.3    User C
**Tell us about yourself?**
2nd year
24
Tailored-Technology in Developing. Feels closest to CI interms of skills and back grounds
**What do you hope to do when you graduate?**
Phd-Seattle-I school designer who deploys tech for developing countries.
PEP class in fall finished in january
**What did you do before coming to SI?**
Went from Undergrad to Grad.
Internships in college,
Radio-Race relations non profit
Microsoft was a research assistant for an anthropologist in india
**What is your technical background?**
Resourceful person not a coder, does not have an intimate inderstanding of how a computer works comfortable with ftp, html and css.
would feel comfortable putting together an online portofolio from scratch.
**What is your experience with design?**
No formal desing experience, has builti a website for a non profit and from her experience with digital and audio.
**What is your experience with CMS?**
Has good experience with CMS(wordpress and Joomla no Drupal)
**What is your experience with Digication**
Portfolio
Digication only
**Do you have your own portfolio?**
Last year had own website, but there was not alot of direction so she it down.
Was a wordpress site.
Would go and update her digication site.
Own portfolio
**What are the most important things do you consider when creating an online portfolio?**
Wants it too look good.
Format is important.
Made jpeg images and then had text below.
Since she is not HCI her portfolio is mainly going to be her thoughts and fieldwork.
Would have some photos but mainly essays.
No projects perse that would need flashy content
**How much customization did you do?**
Did alot of customization
Did not look like a blog.
Had a banner across
Hosted on Godaddy and has their own site name.
Digicaition portfolio
**What did you think of Digication (overall experience?)**

- *Be specific: experience = bad/good? Ask to tell a story*
- **Pain points? Successes?**

Likes her digication portfolio.

visually unappealing is a little harsh

In an academic context

If you are a designer she would not recommend the site because it is visually unappealing

Liked how straight forward Digication was.  Compared to wordpress there was less removing of features and cobbling things together -There is a lot of time wasted.

Catch-22  with apple Iweb might look good and easy but it is clear that it does not belong to you.

Digication while barebones will allow your content to promiently featured. But would not allow for light boxes etc.

**How do you learn how to use the system in both creating portfolio and fulfilling your coursework? Describe the process.**

Used Digicaiton by opening it up and just starting to use it.

As she is thinking about it the more she wished she had a wordpress portfolio.

Digication for management but wordpress for visualization and customization

**Were any materials you developed for Digication and the PEP class used in other ways?-For example in another portfolio.**

Currently has digication linked to her link'd site.

Likes linkdin for network but allows for one to be involved in professional groups in the industry

Wants to show what she did on the internship.

Has an elevator ptich on digication that expands on the sentence that she has on Digication.

Digication is a supplement to linkdin which is the primary portfolio

Brings up apprehension about wordpress.

**What features of Digication you like the most?be specific**

Wants her digication to look better but for what see needs its fine

She likes how light weight it is and its ease.

**What do you like the least?**

Did not like how the color change as the only option.

The facts that its glued to the course makes it feel tethered and limited.

Maybe one day it will be a digital artifact that is online

**What did you like about the CMS side of Digication**

Felt there was value in the pep course

all the assignments were reflective

**What features did you like the least?**

The site itself was a disaster

i am not an instructions reading person

First time logging in

alerts are in red

dig down to find where the assignments.

Was hard to see what phase the assignment was in and it was hard to find the comments.

Site felt bottomless

I would take Ctools over digication anyday.

Only really used it for assignment

Might be threaded didn't look very threaded.

**(AT this point goes on to Digication to show us.)**

Dont want to see not finished steps, just see statuses of assignemnts

Color coding doesnt makes sense, doesnt mean anything

Have to dig through forums

Discussion window is too small -- trapped inside a small frame with scroll bar too much dead space

Hard to navigate threads -- who started the conversation? who responded with who?

Never enjoyed using the system

Always waited till last possible second to go in and use it

Not integrated with CTools why not just ctools? doesnt make sense to use digication

Likes portfolio side of Digication, but not the course mgmt side

CTools forums are better

Hierarchy gets lost -- too much going on

At once glance: status of assignments rather than going through and scrolling way too much

Would like to have it intregrated with CTools

Not getting a lot of value from the assignemtns portioon

Reporting hours is at a different place

Spread sheet of hours instead of tracking hours through iTrack

Strong well designed portfolio puts forward a good image -- this is important

Scrolling through the window for the forum post was very hard. (**Is show us this on the screen)**

**What do you look for /expect from an online course management system?**

Wants Better hierarchy like on ctools

Should not have to guess where you are going.

Did not have a pleasant time with digication.

Make it easier with one glance to see what is due. Does not like that you have to scroll down to see that is due.

**Continuation of what they did not like about Digication.**

Reporting hours on another program. Felt like it was an pisser to have some many different logins etc.

Itrack was not easy to use either for the hours.( also a pain in the ass)

Ctools for her is comfortable.

Eportfolio is good-CMS sucks

She does not like jumping through hoops. Not very organized.

Digication should have light boxes. And a littlle bit more sleeker porftolio.

Professional means having a lot of written work and needs to be pitched towards a specific goal.

Very clear that digication was not a personal website.

Would show potential employers her digication website but would have it be different.

Was not finished when she was applying to PHd but would have shown it if was finished.

9.5.4    User D

- 2nd yr Archives & Lib Sciences/PI
- duo specialization
- after graduation
  - job at academic environment
  - position where she can talk with people/libraries
- prior work experience
  - english teacher grades 6-12, but didn't like it
  - worked for medical supply company doing supply pricing
  - wrote for tech & gaming website for a year
- computing experience
  - taken computer apart and put it back to together before
  - coding
    - 502
    - python
    - list to do: HTML & CSS (limited experience)
- used Digication for PEP last semester
- do you have an online portfolio?
  - not right now
  - before: moodal
    - very easy to use
    - gets frustrated with technology easily
  - 2 for education
    - first one was one that everyone had to use (didn't like it)
- planning on making one
  - can't remember which one
- creating a portfolio
  - other friends customize things
  - she doesn't care as much about customization
  - primary goals
    - display skills and experience
    - prefer not to have to create one, but knows that she should
      - resume, contact, about, work, prior experience
      - combination of papers and visual
        - download able paper? haven't decided yet
        - click open to pdf
        - screen shots
        - short descriptions
    - professional, pretty, polished (easy to use and navigate, sleekness)
    - archives doesnt have as much projects of hci
  - ideal wishlist from portfolio creating tool
    - easy to customize
      - pre designed themes, but have enough choices bc dont want exact same layout if everyone else
      - not a lot of time to mess with code, wants to just pick something
      - blogger, tumblr, with pre designed themes

- customize backgrounds/pictures
- layout with main page and tabs
- easy navigation
- back button needs to work (not like CTools)
- access to code customization?
  - no, just want drag and drop. dont have time to figure it out.
    - needs to look up to date
    - needs to be lightweight, takes a short time to load, etc
    - want easy to make edits and changes
    - free/cheap
    - knows would need to pay for a domain name
    - youtube embedding
    - paper uploading/downloading, clickable pdf
  - storage space?
    - don't need infinite, just enough space to put all projects on
    - probably doesn't need a whole lot of space
- Digication
  - used it for part of last summer (dropped internship for credit), and more during last semester
  - using it for the second time?
    - dont remember much about using it the first time
    - had to look up how to use it again
    - accessing it is confusing
      - a lot of clicks/paths
    - didn't all come back to her. but maybe a little easier, not significantly
  - portfolio tool
    - made portfolio for class, but wouldn't use it in general
    - don't even remember what it looked like
    - didn't explore the tools
    - didn't seem useful or pretty enough to make it worth it
    - part of it was time constraints
    - confused by the site, where she was supposed to go
    - hard to navigate between the assignments and portfolio
      - do the assignments go directly to the portfolio?
    - couldn't find button that said "view your portfolio"
      - viewing portfolio is important
  - pain point features?
    - navigating btw assignments and portfolio area
    - was in an area where she thought she was working on the portfolio, but wasnt
    - thought at one point she had published the portfolio, but she actually hadnt
    - more than 1 portfolio - both appear in the same place
      - difficult figuring out which assignments go where
    - commenting/forum area
      - difficult what to comment on, and where her comments were going
      - had to open several tabs at once
  - not impressed, didn't find it useful, not something would want to use in the future
  - show to employers?
    - no

- only has information from one internship
- not enough info from that 1 project to have an entire portfolio
- would have to expand it, didn't seem like a robust enough portfolio software to expand (add resume, other projects, etc)
  - o any positives about the portfolio?
    - personal statement was useful (as part of class)
    - might show that statement to an employer
    - nice having a portfolio that's attached to the university
      - bc UM is a well known name
      - if url has UM in it
      - good to know that portfolio is available for lifetime
  - o never really browsed other students portfolios
- Course management tool (Digication)
  - o with both aspects, had to follow a guide from email
  - o not super user friendly
  - o annoying to have to enter hours through iTrack
    - but, no employer side to Digication to cater to internships
  - o master page w/all assignments:
    - annoying bc wasnt clear when things were due
    - no confirmation that you successfully submitted an assignemtn
    - had to go back and check
    - can't turn assignments in late online past due
      - would be good to have ability to turn in assignments after the due date
    - too much scrolling and reloading
    - no way to sort by current assignments, etc, had to scroll through and find every time
- CTools & Blackboard (undergrad)
  - o likes the assignments list view in CTools to be able to click on an assignemnt for more details. Digi just lays all of them all out, so the pages are large
- would like more homepage/dashboard feel
  - o assignments, forum, all layed out
    - didnt like clicking to forum to find syllabus
- course mgmt wishlist
  - o layout consistent over all courses if more than one course
  - o layer by layer backing out of pages (not like CTools)
  - o if it was clearer split between assignments, readings, and resources
  - o ability to turn in all formats
  - o ability to make comments when turning in all your assignments
- email notification
  - o did like the Digi notifications about due dates
- peer/instructor interaction
  - o only useful if an instructor will always respond
  - o digication
    - no general questions area
    - annoying because new comments don't show up as threads, it starts a new conversation
    - confusing to look at whole list and seeing each new response
      - only indication is RE

- commenting on other people's work
  - liked getting input from students
  - good for philosophical statements
    - would be helpful if course provided examples for assignments, no guidelines on length, etc
  - easy or hard to give feedback?
    - annoying to navigate btw where making comments and back to the main page, so kept several tabs open
- would like more instructor interaction
- cant find where to find grades for assignments
- didn't know there was a help section in digication
- features to include in digication?
  - portfolio: more ability to change backgrounds, layouts, easier to get to, "view portfolio" button
  - course mgmt
    - forum threads
    - easy to find grades
    - not all information for each assignment is on one page bc is super long page to browse
- process of submitting assignments?
  - confusing to find where to submit things
  - no way to upload docs, would prefer to upload documents
- guide to digication?
  - only to how to actually access it, not to use it
- major barriers overall
  - frustrating to use a diff software from everything else, why isnt it just a CTools site?
  - didnt offer options to creating portfolio
  - not pretty enough
    - not unique enough
    - needs to be smooth and polished and easy for employer to navigate
    - not easy to find a "design your portfolio" area
    - **didnt want it to look like its just a portfolio that school gave you**
      - nice to have name but, but not tha it looks exactly liek everyone elses port
  - didnt know how the links
  - couldnt figure out where to submit, and descriptions of the assignments
- using portfolio
  - not intuitive, but not difficult, would expect it be more complex (offer more options, more areas to customize)

9.5.5    User E
**Tell us about yourself: [for personas]**

- **specialization**
- **year**
- **age**

2nd year Somali born American, 28 years old.  Interested in working in data analytics for development organizations

- **job aspiration**
- **previous job**
  - **years in a field/years professional experience**

Used to work in broadcasting

- **technical background**

Very good with cameras, microphones, using computer to edit footage.  considers himself very capable with technical equipment, but not neccessarily coding.

  - **computer usage/competency (how to measure)**
    - **what do you use your computer for, typically?**
    - **control question: what do you do when your computer is frozen?**

Has hosted others' web pages before and it familiar with that, but it not primarily a coder.  Gives himself a level of intermediate skill level with computer coding.

  - **design experience?**
  - **what kind of computer do you use**

Uses an Apple Macbook computer, second Apple computer.  Uses PC computers at work, though.

  - **experience with CMS systems?**

Took online courses through Stanford online and Coursera.

- **first language?**
  - **screen translator?**
  - **what's your default language for your computer?**
  - **how comfortable are you reading and speaking in English**

Very comfortable, no screen reader

- **experience with Digication**

Summer course for PEP credit while working in Somalia

**1. What is the ideal portfolio system that students want to have? (WHY)**

- **Do you currently have an online portfolio? More than one?**

Has LinkedIn profile, uses that as his primary online portfolio.  Only published it earlier this year when he began his job search.  Would like to have an online portfolio for showcasing work and also for collecting more personal works as well--not just for job search.
Wants to further develop MSI directory page because that is what shows up at top on search
Puts coursework on LinkedIn; good way to network and find about open jobs; good recommendation system

        o   ***What considerations do users think about when showing an online portfolio to clients and employers?***
        o   **If Yes**
             ▪ **How long have you had it?**
             ▪ **What is your primary goal in having an online portfolio?**
             ▪ **What sort of information do you include on the portfolio?**
             ▪ **What are the most important things do you consider when creating an online portfolio?**

Wordpress is good for creating a portfolio because it is familiar, used for blogging
Wordpress is easy to deploy, customizable, and consumes little time
Will personalize domain for eportfolio to host on own servers from past work
Seeks to put bio, writing sample, project samples, and activities on ePort
Wants to be able to put video and photo media on ePort
Seeks to customize LinkedIn for how employer will look at site
Would like to expand coursework projects as listed on LinkedIn
LinkedIn does not give more space for the visual components

**3. How do expert users (who are experienced with coding and creating online portfolios) view Digication?**

- **similar questions with questions from Question 1**

Digication is another web-based interface, so familiar enough
Digi is not friendly and intuitive
Dial up connection caused problems for use
Hosted on SI server and so caused issues connecting-Server block for E. Africa
Trouble remembering interface since use

**2. Why are the users not using Digication to create portfolios outside of class even when the system is free to use?**

- **What is your level of experience with Digication?**

- **What was the learning curve (if you've used it more than once?)**
- **What did you think of Digication (overall experience?)**
  - *Be specific: experience = bad/good? Ask to tell a story*
  - **Pain points? Successes?**

Not enough time to blog for UMSI requirements
Wrote topics for WDI-Ross School funding and then would adopt them for UMSI requirements
Did not do assignments on deadline, only when K. Kowatch sent emails
Had to stay up late to do assignments due to local bandwidth issues
Had difficulty with both coursework and eportfolio interfaces
Uploading pictures was not easy
Only used it for minimum time necessary
Digication:  "limiting", "not cool", "not independent"
Digication URL too long, sounds like school project
Perceived as not ePort but school project
Did not repurpose, was instead repurposed from other work
No positives for digication

**4. How effective is Digication in providing a learning/course management experience for students?**

- **What do you look for /expect from an online course management system?**
  - **such as CTools, Coursera, Codacademy**

Thought Digication had poor data structure
Thought that B-School had better system, implementing Google apps
Gblog connects blogging, picasa
Hard for portfolio to come up on a public search
"Unneccessary to read others' Digication work"
User would have felt different about course, Digi, if from USA
Has not used Digication since course ended
MSI directory shows up very high for personal search, so user puts that as high priority
User opinion:  use more Google applications!
WDI-Ross program incorporated dropbox, youtube