

**STRAY**collective

# Assignment 08: Usability Evaluation

SI 622: Needs Assessment and Usability Evaluation

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# 1. Executive Summary

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This report documents the results and findings of five usability tests conducted during the process of a systematic evaluation of the online portfolio and course management tool Digication. The University of Michigan's School of Information (UMSI) within the curriculum of its Practical Engagement Program (PEP) courses currently uses Digication. Our targeted participants consisted of current graduate students at UMSI who have yet to take the PEP course, and therefore had no experience using Digication. Information gathered from these tests allowed us to better answer the following questions: What are major usability flaws that prevent users from completing the most common tasks? How easily and successfully do users complete the most common tasks?

Our client, Kelly Kowatch, who represents the Career Development Office (CDO) at UMSI, contacted participants. Our team then conducted usability tests with each of the five participants. After each test, we analyzed the data to identify key findings, and also identified issues in the testing process.

Key findings:

- Digication is not user friendly because in many aspects the site is either not visually engaging or is unresponsive.
- Digication leads users to feel frustrated, stupid, and annoyed.
- Due to unclear site structure, Digication routinely leaves users lost and confused.
- Users expect all the activity of one student (including portfolios and discussions) to be available through that student's profile page.
- Digication's fundamental tasks are difficult for many users to complete.

Based on these findings, we generated actionable recommendations that will support user goals and improve overall user experience. Some of our key recommendations include:

- Redesign the site to be more aesthetically engaging: include more visual contrast, hierarchy, and organization.
- Regular debugging should be done to ensure smooth utility for users.
- Navigational elements should be added to help users determine their current location.
- Create a single "People" search that will search for both portfolio and course activity.
- Reevaluate the core functionality after researching the needs of Digication's users.

## 2. Introduction

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Digication is an online portfolio creation platform marketed to academic institutions. The portfolio creation process is meant to be straightforward, making it easy for students to showcase their work. Adding to its usefulness for academic institutions, Digication has many of the functionalities of an online course management tool as well.

Our investigation focused on a specific subset of Digication's audience: Master of Science in Information students at UMSI. The CDO at UMSI currently uses Digication to manage its PEP internship classes. This

course curriculum consists of two main components: a public facing portfolio where students document their internship work, and reflective, written assignments to be submitted to the course instructor. By completing the PEP course curriculum online concurrently with those internships, the CDO is able to track students' progress on these deliverables and the students are therefore able to receive credit.

The PEP internship classes are managed through the course management side, which functions as an online course. Students interact with their fellow classmates through discussion boards where they comment on each other's work. Assignments are posted and emails are sent out to remind students that assignments are approaching. Once the students post the assignments, 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 has finished. Through improving the usability of their website, Digication will find students more willing to invest time in the site and create more professional portfolios as a result.

To better discern student needs by observing their engagement with the site, we focused on the following questions through usability testing:

- What are major usability flaws that prevent users from completing the most common tasks?
  - a. How easily and successfully do users find a specific post in the discussion section and reply to it?
  - b. How easily and successfully do users find a portfolio based on specific criteria?
  - c. How easily can participants create a portfolio and add different types of content?
  - d. How easily can participants create a portfolio and customize the look and feel of the template?
- How easily and successfully do users complete the most common tasks?

## 3. Methods

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### 3.1 Selecting Participants

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Our targeted participants were current graduate students at UMSI who have not taken the PEP course, and therefore had no 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.

### 3.2 Recruitment

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The CDO sent emails directly to prospective participants. 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. We also felt that this would remove any possible bias associated with personal contacts as participants.

### 3.3 The Participants

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All five participants were first year masters students. Among the five, four were female and one was male. They represented a distribution of UMSI specializations, computer skills, and three different native languages (including English). [See Appendix A].

## 3.4 The Tasks

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We designed the following task in order to test the usability of Digication. The tasks mimic some of the most important aspects of Digication. (For more detailed description see Appendix). Tasks were rotated to ensure that the sequence of tasks did not influence the results. J

- 1) Create a Portfolio
- 2) Edit/add content to a Portfolio
- 3) Find and comment on a discussion post.
- 4) Search for a portfolio of a particular specialization.

## 3.5 The Tests

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Tests were conducted in pairs with one moderator and one note taker. These roles rotated and all team members had the chance to be both a moderator and a note taker. Participants were contacted ahead of time to find out which computer operating system they were most comfortable with so we could provide an ideal setup for them. Four participants noted they were more comfortable with a Mac, one was more comfortable with a PC. In the testing room, the participant's computer (also known as the "primary computer") was attached to the wall monitor so that both the note taker and the moderator could view the participant's mouse movements without having to look over their shoulder. A secondary computer was used to record the facial features and the voice of the participant. Diagram A shows this setup in its most generic form.

SEE TESTING IMAGE

## 3.6 Data Analysis

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Following usability tests, our team analyzed the data by creating concise notes essential information gathered from participants (also known as affinity notes) and identified key findings. We also identified issues in the usability testing process and made small adjustments for each subsequent test.

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

Broke each test down into notes that evoked one clear distinguishable statement  
Gathered the notes into major categories of similarity, from which common findings were derived  
Further prioritized findings according to actionable items and based on the scope of the research (49-73).

## 4. Findings and Recommendations

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4.1. Finding 1: Digication is not user friendly because, in many aspects, the site is either not visually engaging or is unresponsive. Not addressing these issues could result in users not trusting the system.

### 4.1.1 Finding: Color and layout of the site:

---

The color scheme of Digication failed to direct user attention to important areas of the site. The participants tested related that the uniform grey color or lack of useful color throughout the system makes Digication seem unwelcoming and confusing while they were attempting to scan pages for important messages and actions. Multiple users noted the lack of contrast, while another told us how the yellow colors on the assignment announcements indicated “caution,” though he was “not sure why [he] needed to be cautious.

Users also disliked how the site was laid out, finding the cramped spacing did not allow for easy identification of prioritized tasks. User 1 found both the threaded and the flat views of the discussion very hard to read, while User 5 found page layouts to be too tightly packed to make sense of pages’ organization. Additionally, the searched results page in the discussion section, displays the results in a form of grouped links. This grouping made the Users 1, 2, and 4 think that the links displayed in a group are related, which unfortunately is not the case and the participants ended up clicking on the wrong link instead.

#### 4.1.1.1 Recommendation: More Color

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There should be more contrast incorporated into the color scheme of the site. However, care should be taken to ensure that the colors chosen conform to users’ expectations about what colors might indicate.

#### 4.1.1.2 Recommendation: More visual Hierarchy

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The site should provide more visual hierarchy and should attempt to conform to the commonly accepted Gestalt principles, a theory which refers to visual perception. The theories attempt to describe “how people tend to organize visual elements into groups or unified wholes when certain principles are applied,” leading to a better comprehension of the organization of those visual elements (“The Gestalt Principles”). Digication should pay special attention to the principle of “proximity,” which is defined as when “[o]bjects...are near each other (relative to other objects) [they] appear grouped, while those that are farther apart do not” (Johnson 11).

### 4.1.2 Finding: Button Feedback

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Users were often confused by the poor response of the buttons. For example, when User 4 attempted to save and publish a Rich Text Format module, s/he was unsure if the save had actually worked. S/he then repeated the save then publish action at least five times before realizing that his/her work had indeed been saved. This was a result of two issues: the “save” button, once clicked, showed no visual change to indicate that the action had been completed. Also, User 4 did not originally see the saving process indicator (indicated by the browser’s in progress signifier) because it happened too quickly.

#### 4.1.2.1 Recommendation: More Responsive Buttons

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The “save” button should change and respond to changes within the system. For example, the word on the save button should change to “saved” after the action has been completed. Or, the button should become unavailable until other changes are made. Likewise, after users have successfully uploaded an image, the instructions should still not read “upload image,” but rather should change to “replace image” while showing a preview to confirm that the picture has indeed been uploaded.

#### 4.1.2.2 Recommendation: Timing on actions

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Finally, as noted above with User 4, the timing on the save function should be changed. According to web design expert Jeff Johnson in his work *Designing with the Mind in Mind*, for humans to recognize status changes in a website, certain time thresholds must be met. We recommend that the saving status dialog box appear on the screen for at least 1 second before disappearing (Johnson 161). This is the shortest time that a person needs to recognize that an action is taking place.

### 4.1.3 Finding: Error Feedback

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Four of the five participants encountered error messages on the first page of the portfolio creation process. Users are required to select a number of options to set privacy and tagging options. However, these required fields are not explicitly indicated, and no default option is selected. Most of the users selected a privacy setting but skipped over the tagging options. This caused an error message when they clicked on “save.” At this point, only two users were able to identify where the errors occurred and were able to remedy the situation. One participant was not able to figure out what the error message was referring to and gave up on the task.

(SHOW IMAGE OF PORTFOLIO CREATION)



### 4.1.3.1 Recommendation

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Required fields should be indicated clearly to prevent errors from occurring, and default settings should be provided for those required fields in case users still fail to complete those required fields.

### 4.1.4 Finding: The search function on Digication returns confusing results that causes users to give up:

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When users used certain search/browse functions the results were not accurate . For example, when participants searched for “Somesh Rahul” through the “People” navigation (see image below)they were taken to his profile page. However, the portfolios listed on Somesh’s page did not belong to him. In fact, users discovered while searching other profiles, the same four portfolios appeared under other students’ profiles as well. Users did not know what to make of this surprise. [SHOW IMAGE OF PEOPLE]

Users were also confused by the “browse by category” feature in the gallery because they did not know what sorts of criteria to expect under the general term “category.” Searching by “browse by category” also yielded confusing results. For instance, browsing for Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) portfolios returned not only portfolios belonging to HCI students, but a smattering from all specializations. After seeing these results, User 5 simply gave up. User 4 wrongly assumed that an archives portfolio must belong to an HCI student since the system returned it as such.

#### 4.1.4.1 Recommendation

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The search functionality should be examined to ensure that it is consistently returning the correct results. Only portfolios authored by the student should be returned. Steps should also be taken to ensure that portfolios are properly categorized.

## 4.2 Finding 2: Digication leads users to feel frustrated.

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During testing, users expressed some degree of frustration. For example, User 5 was very frustrated by each task, stating that Digication made him/her feel “frustrated, stupid, annoyed”. When confronted with widely incorrect/unexpected search results, User 5 exclaimed, “WOW.” to display how aghast s/he was. User 2 thought the site was frustrating and “not obvious” in its use. User 3 stated that the entire process of the usability test was “extremely frustrating.” User 1 screamed “Come on!” while trying to upload an image and getting an error. Finally, User 5 felt like the site was “not ready, and that it was not built for all users in mind.”

### 4.2.1 Recommendation.

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Digication needs to be redesigned with the user in mind. To ensure that the redesigns are effective, we recommend performing iterative designs with frequent usability trials on targeted areas of the site. We also recommend that the site be thoroughly tested and debugged before release.

## 4.3 Finding 3: Resulting from unclear site structure, Digication leaves users routinely lost and confused.

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Digication's navigation elements are useless to users when it comes to finding their current location within Digication. Following a series of failed attempts to discern their current location, User 5 quoted, "Site is really confusing, there is no way to know where the user is." Additionally, User 4 was not able to figure what portfolio page s/he was editing because the use of underlining in the navigation was not clear enough. Moreover, the current website navigation is confusing and hinders the users from effectively navigating between the sections of their choice, as was indicated by User 2 telling us that s/he "has to remember" how to return to the portfolio creation dashboard rather than being intuitively directed back to that page by the website. Furthermore, the site hinders users' ability to go back and forth between pages. User 5 repeatedly complained about having to use the "back" button of the browser, rather than a functionality from the website.

### 4.3.1 Recommendation #1: Display Current Location

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Navigation elements should display a current or active state. For instance, if a user is on the homepage, then there should be some kind of visual feedback that s/he is indeed on the homepage. One way of implementing this feedback is for the homepage link in the global navigation render as a different color than the rest of the links to indicate current location. There are many other ways to elicit this type of visceral feedback, changing the color is merely one suggestion.

### 4.3.2 Recommendation #2: Create Breadcrumbs

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Users should be able to see the structural navigation trail; that is, the hierarchy of where they came from. One of the methods to implement this is by using the "breadcrumbs" functionality, but we would recommend further research to determine the best practices and the best representation for Digication's structural navigation trail. There are industry standards and practices in implementing breadcrumbs, such as Smashing Magazine's article "Breadcrumbs in Web Design: Examples and Best Practices." With the implementation of breadcrumbs, users will be able to easily navigate back and forth between pages.

### 4.3.3 Recommendation #3: Improve analytics

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Site-analytics should be used to assess the most visited areas of the website and links to those areas should be included in the global navigation (this process should not be repeated often as it might lead to user confusion). Moreover, site-analytics can be used to determine the user paths/flows through the website and this data can be used to see the navigational bottlenecks. Hence, the users will be able to find information on the website without any hindrances.

## 4.4 Finding 4: Users expect all the activity of one student (including portfolios and discussions) to be available through that student's profile page.

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The majority of participants encountered difficulty when completing the task of searching for a fellow classmate's discussion post. Often, users searched for classmates using the “People” search[Box] in the global navigation. There is also the “People” search in Courses[Circle]-which yields different results. (See below)

### IMAGE OF TWO PEOPLES

However, the global “People” link only leads to information about portfolios, and does not include coursework activity. Essentially, users were searching for information in the wrong section of Digication — where they should have been searching in the “courses” area, they were stuck searching in the “portfolios” area. User 3 grew extremely frustrated during this task because his/her search only yielded portfolio information where s/he expected to see a comprehensive list of all activity belonging to a certain person s/he searched for. Users 4 and 5 also encountered similar issues. Though most users eventually figured out that they needed to search for discussions within the “courses” area, the experience left them frustrated.

### 4.4.1 Recommendation #1: Create single search

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Digication should create a single, pervasive search feature that will return a student's profile page, which includes both portfolio, and course related information about that student. For privacy reasons, a student's specific course activity (such as discussion posts) should only be revealed to a searcher who is enrolled in the same course. In addition, a student's profile page should show accurate information about the student's portfolios and courses.

## 4.5 Finding 5: Digication's fundamental tasks are difficult for many users to complete.

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The goals of Digication include providing a platform for creating an online portfolio as well as easy interaction between the students participating in a course (as discovered during the stakeholder interview and confirmed through past user interviews). All of our usability tasks were designed to focus on these fundamental processes. However, we were flabbergasted to discover that even those basic and necessary tasks were extremely difficult for many of our users to complete.

(IMAGE OF FAILURE)

A more clear idea could be attained by looking at the table below:

As indicated by the table above, the five test participants were able to successfully complete only seven of twenty possible tasks. Users volunteered that they would quit, did quit, or completed the task partially or incorrectly more often than they were successful.

### 4.5.1 Recommendation #1:

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We believe the first step is to reassess user expectations of the system and to realign Digication with these needs while following industry-wide best practices. Thorough testing should be done before delivering the product. Moreover, the product should be tested with a wide range of students, matching the diversity of the user base at UMSI and presumably at other client institutions.

## 5. Discussion

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While we stand by our methods and our analyses, we do wish to recognize a number limiting factors that may have affected how participants went about the tasks assigned. During our own analysis of the system, our team created multiple test portfolios. These portfolios and the portfolios created during previous trials eventually cluttered the system and possibly confused users. Users were to be creating their first portfolio, but there were several already present.

A similar issue occurred with the posting of philosophy statement reply. It is not possible to delete comments, so with each successive test an additional reply was posted. When the participant then went to look for their own reply it was more difficult to find their own amongst the clutter.

We also realized after the first few tests that the “about me” text that we had provided for users to upload in an area called “projects” did not make as much logical realistic sense as we had thought when designing the tests. We decided against changing it because it did not dramatically affect the previous tests and we wanted to preserve uniformity of process.

User 3 was unable to complete tasks that required the uploading of photos. However, it is more than likely the browser s/he was using, Chrome Canary (a Chrome development browser), was the culprit.

In general, our process is an imperfect attempt to evoke some of the processes required in the PEP coursework; when students are actually in the course some of the problems we ran into might not be as much of an issue. Students will be provided with more guidelines and instructions that might help students avoid some of the problems encountered by our participants.

## 6. Conclusion

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We were able to draw a number of important findings from our the usability tests. First, Digication is not user friendly because in many aspects the site is either not visually engaging or is unresponsive. Redesign the site to be more aesthetically engaging to include more visual contrast, hierarchy, and organization.

Second, Digication leads users to feel frustrated, stupid, and annoyed. Regular debugging should be done to ensure smooth using by users. Third, due to unclear site structure, Digication routinely leaves users lost and confused. We recommend adding navigational elements to help users determine where they are.

User also expects all the activity of one student to be available through the student’s profile page. We recommend creating a single “People” search that will search for both classwork and portfolio. Finally Digication’s fundamental tasks are difficult for many users to complete. Reevaluate the core functionality and users of Digication.

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 participants 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.

## 7. References

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1 APPENDIX A: Participant Profiles

USER	SPECILIZATION	COMPUTER	NATIVE LANGUAGE
1	TAILORED	MAC	English
2	LIS	MAC	English
3	IAR	MAC	English
4	HCI	MAC	Russian
5	ARM	PC	Spanish

### 8.2 APPENDIX B: TASKS & FILES

#### 1 Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery

A) Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.

i) Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

#### 2 Create a portfolio

A) Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.

i) Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.

ii) notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats  
if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show)

#### 3 Edit a Portfolio

A) Add a new part to your portfolio titled “Projects”, and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

i) Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

ii) notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)  
if users asks about “part” -- say “a separate area of your website that you might navigate to”

#### 4 Reply to a classmates discussion post

A) For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate’s post, who is also enrolled in “Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013.” First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul’s post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

i) Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

ii)notes: provide reply

If user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

TASK rotation:

user 1) 1,2,3,4

user 2) 4,1,2,3

user 3) 4,2,3,1

user 4) 2,3,4,1

user 5) 1,2,3,4

Equipment:

PC

Mac

need to have screen record and face recording capability

List of Assets to provide:

banner image (780px wide)

photos to upload (some under 20mb some over, different file formats)

videos to upload (some under 20mb, some over)

paragraph about yourself

reply to Somesh Rahul's post

## 8.3 APPENDIX C: Testing Script and Background

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Script:

Good afternoon. Today we are going to be testing the usability of the site Digication. We are going to have you complete a number of tasks that will help us evaluate the usability of the system. Remember we are testing the system, not you. If you have having problems completing a task it is not your fault, it is the system's. As you are working on each task, explain outloud what you are doing. We will be taping you as you work on the tasks as well as recording a screen capture of your mouse movements. Also, we did not design Digication so please be honest in your thoughts and feedback. We want to hear what you have to say, not what you think we want you to say.

Background scenario for user:

The following scenario is real: as a first-year masters student at SI, you will eventually need to complete an internship and enroll in the PEP class to earn credit for that internship. In this scenario, you are enrolled in "Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013." You will be asked to use Digication to submit online assignments as well as create an online portfolio to document the work you are completing



over the duration of your internship. These assignments will be visible to your classmates, and the portfolio will be visible to the public, including classmates, professors, and potential employers.

The following tasks are related to the goals set out for you during the PEP course.

## 8.4 APPENDIX D: Pre and Post Test Questions

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### **Pre test Qs:**

let user log in and have them poke around for a couple of minutes and familiarize yourself.  
have you ever used this site before?  
any first impressions of the site? (verbally)  
does the site look easy to use?  
what do you think it will do?

### **Post test Qs:**

CSUQ  
<http://oldwww.acm.org/perlman/question.cgi?form=CSUQ>

### **Debrief:**

Any general thoughts about this process?  
What were the most positive aspects?  
Most negative aspects/pain points  
When creating pages, did you notice the “sections”? What did you think?  
Demographic:  
Do you currently have an online portfolio?  
If they currently have an online portfolio, what was the experience of creating that portfolio like compared with creating one through Digication?  
What is your specialization?  
What is your native language?  
What is your level of expertise with computers? (novice, intermediate, expert)

### **List of Assets to provide:**

banner image (780px wide)  
photos to upload (some under 20mb some over, different file formats)  
videos to upload (some under 20mb, some over)  
paragraph about yourself  
reply to Somesh Rahul’s post

## 8.5 APPENDIX E: USER TASKS AND DATA ENTRY

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### **USER 1**

Demographic info  
Tailored-  
native language: English  
1st year

computer expertise: intermediate  
online portfolio  
yes but its not fully functional  
used Digication before?  
no, but attended info session

Task order: Gallery Search, Create Portfolio, Banner Image, respond to discussion

First Impressions

S/he thought that digication though has an old(“ancient”) look it looks fairly simple to use.\* (first impression)

1)Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery

Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.

Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

Goes into tom students existing portfolio at first and figures out after a few seconds that its the same users portfolio(their own portfolio)

Then types HCI in the main page by tag option but does not find relevant results.\*\*

s/he looks at other portfolios and sites “dell” in one of the images. s/he relates that its a friend's portfolio and selects it.

**TASK COMPLETED**

2)Create a portfolio

Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.

Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.

notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats

if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show)

when creating a portfolio directly clicks on button to create, but then realises that more information has to be filled in.(the radio button had no defaults and there was no indication that they were required) \*

Takes a lot of time to find out where the option to change the banner is. tries different options like sitemaps etc

Now adds image into a module by mistake trying to add image to the banner\*\*

Finally gets into the portfolio themes section and updates the banner image.(task successfully completed)

3) Edit a Portfolio

Add a new part to your portfolio titled “Projects”, and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)

if users asks about “part” -- say “a separate area of your website that you might navigate to”

Does not figure out where to put the title to the section of the page.

Somesh intervenes and then User1 realises that User1 has to name a section.

Replace button does not make sense to the user. User1 searches for an ‘add media button’. First didn’t see, then didn’t recognize as useful “replace media”.

Adds image with ease.

Selects video, does not spot any warning for the size limit. Chooses a file and exclaims 'come on!!!' when User1 spots an error. Does not see for the reason and uses the other file.  
Publishes all modules individually. Fails to spot the publish all button.  
cannot figure out how to change the privacy. Forgets how s/he reached to portfolio tools section.  
s/he does remember that the portfolio tools page is where s/he wants to go, but does not remember how s/he did go to that section.

#### **TASK COMPLETED**

#### 4) Reply to a classmates discussion post

For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate's post, who is also enrolled in "Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013." First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul's post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

notes: provide reply

if user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

By person search does not return somesh's portfolio \*

comes to directory now, and searches for somesh number of times. \*

confused as to how somesh's portfolio returns michael's statement. \*

When searched for somesh, it returns two portfolios that are not related to him at all.

Somesh helps them navigate to pep course.

Searches by people, finds the earliest one.

has difficulty viewing the all the statements in a small space.

cannot find somesh st, takes them to michael's statement

Uses ctrl+F to good effect to search for Somesh statement, replies to it and again uses ctrl+f to find it [task completed] \*

their confusion, when s/he click on the search result and reaches the kelly's discussion post rather than mine.

The search result returns 2 links, the 1st one is the discussion post link and the second one is to the reply.

This is very confusing because even if you search for the reply then too you will get the discussion link.

Because of the cramped space issue, s/he changes the view to the flat one. This was the mistake of their life.

We did not know this, but once you are in the flat view, the search result links do not take you to any place.

s/he flustered over this for like 5 mins and then when s/he changed the view back then s/he was finally able to use the search results link to come to the post. \*

#### **TASK COMPLETED**

Debrief:

Overall a frustrating experience, navigating thru portfolios. System has capabilities but isn't intuitive

Positive- search functionality if it works well

negative-

navigation terms confusing

discussion to difficult to navigate to

discussion look very 2003ish

Don't want to participate, does not want to make a portfolio using Digication

Pages section difference not clear but User1 figured out eventually \*

replace the media has to be add media

User1 thought that colors and links are not indicative enough that they can add navigation feature.

Will not use digication at all

Portfolio will not look good, if it does User1 would need a tutorial to find out how.

discussion task sucked!!! wrong linkings!!!

## USER 2

### Demographic info

LIS

native language: English

1st year

computer expertise: intermediate

online portfolio: no

used Digication before? no

### First Impressions

Used text and how page was structured to direct their process “Look around and see what jumps out”

User thought that the sight would be easy to use based on its appearance, but not\*

User thought site was “not over-exaggerated” color scheme wise (graynesS)

User did not know exactly what a portfolio was for: “projects of things that students have done”

### 1) Reply to a classmates discussion post

For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate’s post, who is also enrolled in “Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013.” First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul’s post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

notes: provide reply

if user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

After selecting student’s name in People tab (from Home), user “Doesn’t see Philosophy Statement”; wants Somesh’s posts to be cross-listed

Scrolling through notifications did not work as a way to find Somesh’s Philosophy statement, for this user “Trying to find this person, to see if he has updated anything”

Under Notifications, user scrolled up and down and hovered over entire entries (notification blocks) and was frustrated by perceived lack of ability to click through to entry mentioned. “Step 2 .. did not seem like something I would want to click on.”

Assignments “just takes me to my assignments”

User 2 could not find posts-site needs student profile information drop downs that also list assignments, was too cluttered-didn’t include

User 2 couldn’t find discussions, posts, new posts

User 2 can’t click on Assignment title link

[For PEP class assignment] Task not completed

### 2) Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery

Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.

Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

Unsure of how to sort student portfolios by academic specialization  
User had to go through each of the tabs on Directory to find appropriate By Tag  
For this user, when searching By Course no useful options  
[Find a portfolio] Task completed mostly successfully, but portfolio selected was not actually HCI Not actually an HCI portfolio

### 3) Create a portfolio

Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.

Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.

notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats

if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show.

“I’m sure there’s an easier way to do that” in regards to navigating from Directory back to Home (maybe USER 2 didn’t recognize it as “homepage”?)

When creating portfolio, had to go back through and select Privacy settings, after red error banner\*

User 2 thought most important options -create portfolio-were not prioritized in how site was configured

“Looking for place to upload an image and just reading information” not intuitive

When attempting to change banner image: “I guess I’m just confused”

“Add this module? I don’t know what this means”

User 2 was very hesitant to click on links they did not understand, such as “module”, because they would hover over the link for a while and then ultimately decide to avoid clicking it

“It’s telling me I haven’t added, choose a file” for inputting pictures

User used preview option in portfolio creation to create quick iterations on design, find out how choices affect appearance

“Publish this page? I don’t know that means”

“I just clicked Publish this and then I clicked Preview? I don’t know...”

Used Published to see how it looks

User went to settings to see if there was a way to upload banner

[Create a new portfolio] Task not completed-created portfolio without banner

### 4) Edit a Portfolio

Add a new part to your portfolio titled “Projects”, and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)

if users asks about “part” -- say “a separate area of your website that you might navigate to”

User 2 added section fairly easily, seemed to make sense to them

User 2 thought Sections seemed okay

“I feel like I’m missing something” when trying to add content through addition of module

“And I’m thinking how do I get back to the [add module] page, oh it’s add a module. I’ll have to remember that.”

User 2 used preview and published after uploading image was helpful

Uploads a video that is too big, doesn’t realize there is a limit until afterwards, realizes

“Says unable to process the [video] file, have to make sure” (error message that pops up isn’t specific, hard to read)

“Why is not showing up?” after loading video content--has to confirm presence through preview, published

Has to allow for quicktime to run through Chrome to allow video

[Add a new part] Task completed

## Debrief

User felt that if they had more time (than an hour) they would have spent more time trying to figure out functionality. Would have spent more time, sought in-system help, then contacted Kelly.

User 2 thought the site was frustrating, “not obvious” in how to use frustrating

User 2 thought the design looked simple, but was not in practice\*

## USER 3

### Demographic info

LIS

native language: English

1st year

computer expertise: intermediate

online portfolio: no

used Digication before? no

### First Impressions

Used text and how page was structured to direct their process “Look around and see what jumps out”

User thought that the sight would be easy to use based on its appearance, but not\*

User thought site was “not over-exaggerated” color scheme wise (graynesS)

User did not know exactly what a portfolio was for: “projects of things that students have done”

### 1) Reply to a classmates discussion post

For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate’s post, who is also enrolled in “Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013.” First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul’s post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

notes: provide reply

if user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

After selecting student’s name in People tab (from Home), user “Doesn’t see Philosophy Statement”; wants Somesh’s posts to be cross-listed

Scrolling through notifications did not work as a way to find Somesh’s Philosophy statement, for this user

“Trying to find this person, to see if he has updated anything”

Under Notifications, user scrolled up and down and hovered over entire entries (notification blocks) and was frustrated by perceived lack of ability to click through to entry mentioned. “Step 2 .. did not seem like something I would want to click on.”

Assignments “just takes me to my assignments”

User 2 could not find posts-site needs student profile information drop downs that also list assignments, was too cluttered-didn’t include

User 2 couldn’t find discussions, posts, new posts

User 2 can’t click on Assignment title link

[For PEP class assignment] Task not completed

### 2) Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery

Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.

Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

Unsure of how to sort student portfolios by academic specialization

User had to go through each of the tabs on Directory to find appropriate By Tag

For this user, when searching By Course no useful options

[Find a portfolio] Task completed mostly successfully, but portfolio selected was not actually HCI Not actually an HCI portfolio

### 3) Create a portfolio

Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.

Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.

notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats

if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show).

“I’m sure there’s an easier way to do that” in regards to navigating from Directory back to Home (maybe USER 2 didn’t recognize it as “homepage”?)

When creating portfolio, had to go back through and select Privacy settings, after red error banner\*

User 2 thought most important options -create portfolio-were not prioritized in how site was configured

“Looking for place to upload an image and just reading information” not intuitive

When attempting to change banner image: “I guess I’m just confused”

“Add this module? I don’t know what this means”

User 2 was very hesitant to click on links they did not understand, such as “module”, because they would hover over the link for a while and then ultimately decide to avoid clicking it

“It’s telling me I haven’t added, choose a file” for inputting pictures

User used preview option in portfolio creation to create quick iterations on design, find out how choices affect appearance

“Publish this page? I don’t know that means”

“I just clicked Publish this and then I clicked Preview? I don’t know...”

Used Published to see how it looks

User went to settings to see if there was a way to upload banner

[Create a new portfolio] Task not completed-created portfolio without banner

### 4) Edit a Portfolio

Add a new part to your portfolio titled “Projects”, and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)

if users asks about “part” -- say “a separate area of your website that you might navigate to”

User 2 added section fairly easily, seemed to make sense to them

User 2 thought Sections seemed okay

“I feel like I’m missing something” when trying to add content through addition of module

“And I’m thinking how do I get back to the [add module] page, oh it’s add a module. I’ll have to remember that.”

User 2 used preview and published after uploading image was helpful



Uploads a video that is too big, doesn't realize there is a limit until afterwards, realizes  
"Says unable to process the [video] file, have to make sure" (error message that pops up isn't specific, hard to read)  
"Why is not showing up?" after loading video content--has to confirm presence through preview, published  
Has to allow for quicktime to run through Chrome to allow video  
[Add a new part] Task completed

Debrief

User felt that if they had more time (than an hour) they would have spent more time trying to figure out functionality. Would have spent more time, sought in-system help, then contacted Kelly.  
User 2 thought the site was frustrating, "not obvious" in how to use frustrating  
User 2 thought the design looked simple, but was not in practice\*

## USER 4

User 4

Demographics

HCI

Has a portfolio-Used Django

Russian native language-but has not spoken it fluently in a long time, was self-deprecating about his/her English too.

Pre Test- Opens up a portfolio right away and starts to click around and opening options. Does not add anything.

Questions

1 Navigation seems confusing

2 No call for action

3 s/he thinks it will sort of be like a CMS type

### 2 Create a portfolio

*Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.*

*Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.*

*notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats*

*if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show)*

- Adds name and personalizes the url-makes a comment that s/he expected that.

- chooses a template but does not customize it(add a banner)\*\*

Chooses how it will be seen but not the tagging and gets an error. Quickly realizes the issue and fixes it.

Is now looking for the banner image. Understands what the banner image is and is not sure that anything on the page will work. Finally figures out that settings might fix this.

First adds a customize for the theme image(not the banner)

Then scroll down and see the banner uploads.

Picks an image.



Can't see the save image(forgets its down at the bottom of the page)  
Expects to see a preview right away  
I: I noticed that once uploaded the interface says choose image(not replace or choose a different)  
Finally hits save and see the banner is up on the top.  
Portfolio tools is confusing  
TASK COMPLETE

## 2) Edit a Portfolio

Add a new part to your portfolio titled "Projects", and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)

if users asks about "part" -- say "a separate area of your website that you might navigate to"

First tries to add a module first realizes that is probably not correct

Adds page calls it projects

Is still not sure what page s/he is on. (said later the underlining was not enough)

Stuck on adding material (not sure what the modules will do)

finds rich text and add text hits publish

Realizes s/he needs to hit save does so hits publish.

Gets stuck in a publish save loop. finally see's the saving motion but gets confused when it still says save.

Hits preview and realizes it saved.

Add module to add photos and has no problem. Expected a save button

Save button doesn't change state -- 'choose image' button doesn't change even after image is uploads

Adds video (too large)-published no problem.

Publishes all.

TASK COMPLETE

## 3) Reply to a classmates discussion post

For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate's post, who is also enrolled in "Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013." First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul's post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

notes: provide reply

if user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

Looks in people first does not find what s/he is looking for. wrong portfolios \*\*

Pretty quickly realizes s/he needs to go to course, then people, then somesh and discussions, clicked on "Somesh's discussions"

Goes to assignments at one point

Gets confused by the re:re and almost posted on somesh's reply post is about to post when s/he realizes and goes back and finds somesh's post. s/he posts.

To find the post s/he goes to people and find tom student and finds the one posted today. confused by military time

TASK COMPLETED

## 4)Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery

Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.  
Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

Goes right to portfolio gallery  
clicks on first one s/he sees: realizes that it is not HCI because s/he knows who the person is.  
S/he then finds the categories skips over specializations and then goes back and finds HCI.  
The same person s/he click on the first time comes back and decides even though s/he is not sure and decides he must be HCI.  
TASK SEMI COMPLETE

Debrief  
Assumed images would not be in RTF because of the seperate modules  
Felt e portfolio was presented well if navigation is kept out  
Modules were a pain point.  
Underline page is not intuitive would like to use color.  
2 save buttons on module the save notification is too small, make it clearer  
Flow is confusing.  
No clue between section and page.

## **USER 5**

Demographic info  
ARM  
native language: Spanish - Not so good at english  
computer expertise:  
As a user: Expert  
As a programmer: Beginner  
online portfolio  
not a portfolio but owns a website  
building own online portfolio compared with Digication?  
used dreamweaver it was a lot easier  
would not like to use digication for making portfolio as it “makes life complicated”  
used Digication before?  
no

Exploration Phase:  
User finds the show all button on the homepage confusing, as clicking on it has no effect.  
terms like assessment group makes no sense and why is it placed on the home page.  
coming back to the page, after clicking a link, is not clear, says “Why do i have to use the back button in the browser?”  
Complains that home page has too much info and is confusing  
after the exploration states that the site seems confusing

1 Search for a Portfolio using the E-portfolio Gallery  
Find a portfolio of an HCI student and find the contact information for both the student and the contact information organization they worked for and orally read it out loud.  
Task completed when: User goes to gallery and finds a portfolio that matches the criteria, user reads out loud the contact info of the student and organization.

clicks on show all button thinking that it will show all the portfolios that there on digication, gets confused when nothing happens.

By Course tab on eportfolio directory page seemed confusing as the user expected to see the list of courses corresponding to the SI courses, like SI 588 etc. User expected to find the HCI student by looking at the course numbers.

By Categories is confusing, because what do you mean by term “categories” and says that when clicking by categories adds to further confusion because by categories have more categories inside it and that too in a long lengthy page.

User was highly confused when saw the results given by clicking category -> specialization -> HCI. The first result was of IPOL. Exclaims WOW!!

Goes back and again repeats the process and this time click the second result, and this time it was ARM, gets really furious.

On the by category page user is confused by seeing the list of locations, says that why is that relevant, and then says that International, does not make sense as the term is relative to each student.

tries to search by title and by tag and is confused seeing the blank search field, says that i think you need to know what you are searching before hand to make use of these search bars.

confused by the title and tag page, as they look exactly the same.

Goes to home and tries the course tab there, frustrated and not seeing HCI anywhere exclaims “Very Confusing”

Says My courses is confusing because i have only one course added and then too it is in plural form.

Says that in real life his/her time is really very important and s/he would like to waste it searching, better to email the person and ask it directly. Gives Up

## 2 Create a portfolio

Create a new portfolio and upload a banner image to your portfolio.

Task is completed when: User creates the portfolio and uploads a header when customizing a portfolio theme, saves the image.

notes: provide header image for user to upload (780px), provide multiple photos of different sizes and file formats

if user asks about banner image, then we show example (find example of banner image to show)

Says that “I am very visceral person and this site is the complete opposite, colors like grey, white and green are very dull” Green buttons are hard to spot, but the user is able to spot the create portfolio button after a little struggle.

the edit button on the create eportfolio page makes the user think that it is to edit the portfolio and not the url.

after clicking the edit and editing the link, does not know what to do next, tries hitting enter several times, but state does not change. Says that there should be some confirmation message that the edit was success.

“Choose a template on left” - confused the user and the user exclaimed “who's left?”

Gets really irritated when hits the create button and gets the errors, says that why they did not specified the compulsory fields beforehand and then is unable to notice the areas where the errors have occurred.

Gets really frustrated and Gives Up.

## 3) Edit a Portfolio

Add a new part to your portfolio titled “Projects”, and add three types of content: a short paragraph about yourself, upload a photo, and upload a video. Make sure all this content can be seen by others.

Task is completed when: User adds a page or a section, adds text, and adds an image either in rtf or in the media module, uploads a video, then publishes the page.

notes: provide short paragraph about them, photo, provide video to upload (20mb or less)

if users asks about “part” -- say “a separate area of your website that you might navigate to”

TASK NOT ATTEMPTED SINCE PORTFOLIO NOT CREATED

#### 4 Reply to a classmates discussion post

For a PEP class assignment, you are tasked with replying to a fellow classmate's post, who is also enrolled in "Practical Engagement Program Internship Course - Winter 2013." First, find the area where you are able to view and submit posts. Then, find Somesh Rahul's post which contains his personal philosophy statement and reply to it. Finally, find and view the posted reply.

Task is completed when: User finds the correct discussion post, replies to the post, then finds and views the posted reply

notes: provide reply

if user cannot find discussions section, give them direction (to lead them to test the post reply sequence)

Goes to the people and tries to find the person by name, get confused as there is no Search button besides the search field. Says that the Go button should be consistent for both the search fields.

after finding that all the portfolios which were returned for the user are not of users, gets really frustrated and angry.

User is tries to find the portfolio of the person thinking that the post will be there in the portfolio tries to find the person by the search by name in the eportfolio directory page, but is surprised to see no portfolio by that name appears after the search [unlike the previous search the user tried].

the message "Want to create a new eportfolio" got after doing the search on the eportfolio directory page really confuses the user and the user exclaims "Why will i create the portfolio for this person?"

Says that Ctools is much useful and GIVES UP on this task.

#### Debrief Questions:

Site is really confusing, there is no way to know where the user is

Tags and Title both are like the same, what is the difference, it is really confusing

there is no back button on the site, how to go to the page where i came from, i have to use the browser back button again and again

the info on the site is very compact and not revealing, which further confuses the user of what to do next.

the site makes the user feel - Frustrated, Stupid, Annoyed

This site is not easy to use

it is not ready for every kind of user, it should not be built thinking about knowledge [user means computer expertise] of people, it should be easy for every user.

Search returns weird results

for search sometimes you have to use enter button and other times the Go button, it should be consistent.

Gestalt--the spacing is not far enough, or close enough, to communicate how meaning is constructed on the site