

Usability Report

University of Chicago Website

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Research	3-5
Analysis & Evaluation	6
User Background	7
Findings	7-12
Conclusion	13
Appendix	14-25
Addendum: Reflection Question	26
Addendum: User Testing Notes	27-34

Introduction

I will be evaluating university websites and testing their usability. It is my goal to determine how easy these websites are to use in a variety of tasks, including navigation, university application, and finding content. I will be evaluating six websites, going into detail on one of them, and conducting a usability test with outside users.

Research

I reviewed six websites. These websites are:

- Indiana University: <https://www.indiana.edu>
- DePaul University: <https://www.depaul.edu/Pages/default.aspx>
- Loyola University Chicago: <https://www.luc.edu/>
- University of Illinois at Chicago: <http://uic.edu/>
- Purdue University: <https://www.purdue.edu/>
- The University of Chicago: <https://www.uchicago.edu/>

Similarities

These websites had a number of similarities. All of the university websites start out on a home page, and contain similar information. The focus of these websites is giving information on the university, and the call to action on these websites is directing the user to apply. All of these websites contained multiple areas to apply to the university, although they chose to put the application in different areas. Similarly, all of these websites contained information on research done at the university, with some universities dedicating a spot in the navigation bar for research, while others simply integrated it into a webpage. The university websites all contained information on the university, campus life, alumni, news and events, as well as information on the individual schools and majors.

Differences

Despite these similarities, these websites also contained many differences. The University of Illinois at Chicago (<http://uic.edu/>), DePaul University (<https://www.depaul.edu/Pages/default.aspx>), and Loyola University Chicago (<https://www.luc.edu/>) all contained an “apply now” button on the home page, in addition to the other sections of the website that contained these buttons. Similarly, Purdue University (<https://www.purdue.edu/>) contained an area on their home page to access the application account. The University of Chicago (<https://www.uchicago.edu/>) and Indiana University (<https://www.indiana.edu>) websites contain no way to apply from the home screen, however the Indiana University website does contain a button on the home screen that reads “find out how to apply”. Some universities chose to include media to showcase the university. The Indiana University website contained a virtual tour and videos on the home page, the Purdue University home page contained a map, and the University of Chicago homepage contained a campus video.

These websites contained differences in how information on the various majors was accessed. On the Indiana University, DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Purdue websites, majors can be accessed by going to “academics” page of the website, with a complete list and search function entered. On the Loyola University Chicago website, the only way to access majors is to use the navigation bar, as there is not a separate page to go to first. On the University of Chicago page, there is no separate academics page, as the majors and their respective colleges are all listed on one page. Another difference between these websites can be seen in the navigation bars. The navigation bars on the DePaul University, Loyola University, and University of Illinois at Chicago websites have additional drop down items when hovered over. The Indiana University and Purdue University navigation bars do not. While the University of Chicago navigation bar does contain drop down items, it only works the first time a user enters the website, and after the user begins to navigate around the website the drop down functions do not work.

Website Rankings

After evaluating the six websites, I created rankings based on four categories (see Appendix Figure 1). The rankings are:

Layout

1. Purdue University: A
2. Loyola University Chicago/University of Illinois at Chicago: A-
3. Indiana University: B+
4. DePaul University: C+
5. University of Chicago: C

Navigation and Page Links

1. Indiana University/Purdue University/University of Illinois at Chicago: A
2. Loyola University of Chicago: A-
3. DePaul University: B+
4. University of Chicago: B-

Design

1. Purdue University: A
2. Indiana University/DePaul University/Loyola University Chicago/University of Illinois at Chicago: A-
3. University of Chicago: B

Content

1. Indiana University/Loyola University Chicago/University of Illinois at Chicago/Purdue University: A-
2. DePaul University: B+
3. University of Chicago: B

I chose to evaluate the University of Chicago website due to the low ranking it scored in every category. The University of Chicago website was ranked last in every usability category, meaning users are the most likely to struggle using this website out of the websites that were tested. A usability test on this website will give better insight into the specific issues that should be fixed.

Analysis & Evaluation

The University of Chicago website does not contain elements that are user friendly. The layout fails to prioritize tasks and direct users towards to the call to action, applying to the University. The navigation is inconsistent and confusing to navigate. While the overall design received a “B” ranking, meaning that the website could use only minor changes, the website does not emphasize the call to action, the University application. Further, the content is not user focused or ranked in order of importance. The University of Chicago website would benefit from usability changes.

The first usability issue I will explore through user tests is the issue in both layout and design of the call to action being hard to find. It takes many steps to find the University application. It cannot be directly accessed through the home page. Further, it takes many steps to access the application. After navigating to the “admissions” page, the user must click on “apply to college”, which prompts a new webpage in a new tab with many options. Further, once the user enters this new tab, they are unable to go back to the home page. Not only is it hard to find the application, but once the user accesses the application, they will not be able to access the home page to gather any information that they might need.

The second usability I will explore through user tests is an issue with the navigation bar. The University of Chicago website contains two navigation bars-one on the top and one below it. This is confusing for the user, as it not clear which navigation bar to use. Further, the first time a user enters the website, the bottom navigation bar has drop down options that appear when a user hovers over the various sections of the navigation bar. However, after the user clicks on a section in the navigation bar, these drop down options do not work. While the drop down menus contain helpful information, they can only be accessed when the user first enters the website. The two navigation bars and drop down menu issue on the University of Chicago website pose usability problems for users.

The third usability issue I will explore through user tests is an issue with navigation on the website. Many sections in the navigation bar of the website take users to a new web page. In the top navigation bar, every section except the top three-“students”, “faculty”, and “staff”-take the user to a new page, and once the user enters this new web page they are unable to return to the main website. In the bottom navigation bar, the sections “civic engagement”, “global”, and “campus life” take the user to a new website. The civic engagement website gives the user an option to return to the original website, but the other two websites do not. This navigation issue poses usability issues for users.

User Background

I conducted usability tests with four users (see Addendum: User Testing Notes). User A is a freshman studying biology at the University of Chicago. They spend approximately two hours a day on websites and described their experience level using websites as moderate. User B is the parent of a University of Chicago student and works as Director or Strategic Events for a non-profit organization. They spend approximately two to four hours a day on websites and described their experience level using websites as expert. User C is the parent of a University of Chicago student and works in information technology. They spend approximately one hour a day on websites and described their experience level using websites as expert. User D is a senior at Indiana University studying computer science. They spend approximately two hours a day on websites and described their experience level using website as expert. All of the user tests tasks took under 10 minutes, as users quickly grew frustrated trying to complete tasks.

Additional questions were asked to gain insight on the issues they faced.

Findings

The first usability issue that was tested is the hard to find application. Users were asked to apply from the home page first and later asked to apply to the University in as few steps as possible. All four users quickly grew frustrated with the difficulty in accessing the University application. The University of Chicago homepage does not include a way to access the application (see figure2). The application can be accessed by using the drop down menu in the navigation, however once the user clicks on it they are taken to a page with many options (see figure3 and figure4). Users B and D chose this option to access the application. User B rated the ease of accessing the application a 2 on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest. User D rated the ease of accessing the application a 3 on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest. Users A and C chose to click on the admissions page as opposed to using the drop down navigation. Both struggled given the many choices that are offered on the page. User A rated the ease of accessing the application a 3 on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, and User C rated the ease of accessing the application a 3. This averages to a rating of 2.75 out of 5 in ease of accessing the application. Users A and B were expecting to see a straightforward “apply now” button, and were surprised there was not one. User C was expecting to be taken directly to the application upon clicking apply, and was surprised at the number of steps that needed to be taken. All of the users expressed frustration in the difficulty required to access the application.



Figure2: a screenshot of the University of Chicago home page

A screenshot of the University of Chicago's website showing a navigation bar with dropdown menus. The "About" menu is open, displaying options like "Undergraduate", "Graduate", "Apply", "Costs & Aid", "Campus Tours", and "Odyssey". The other menus (Admissions & Aid, Academics, Research, Medicine, Civic E) are shown as simple text links. To the right, there is descriptive text about joining a community of bright minds.

Figure3: a demonstration of the navigation bar drop down menu

[**> APPLY**](#)
— APPLY —
First-Year Applicants
[Application Plans](#)
[First-Generation
Applicants](#)
[Rural & Small-Town
Applicants](#)
[QuestBridge
Applicants](#)
[Home-Schooled
Applicants](#)
[International
Applicants](#)
Transfer Applicants
[Veterans](#)
[Preparing for College](#)
[Class of 2023 Profile](#)
[Essay Questions](#)

At UChicago, you are more than your GPA or test score.

UChicago welcomes students from all backgrounds, and each application at UChicago goes through the same holistic review process. There's no one piece of information—academic and extracurricular records, essays, letters of recommendation, or SAT/ACT scores—that alone determines whether or not you would be a good fit for the College. Instead, we want you to, through your application, show us who you are in your own voice. What is your story? Why did you choose to pursue certain opportunities? What activities are most meaningful to you? The very best way to approach your UChicago application is to simply be yourself and write in your own voice. We care about you and who you really are, not what you think we want to see in an application.

A Student-Led Introduction to UChicago



Current students describe academic and social life at the University of Chicago by sharing their experiences.

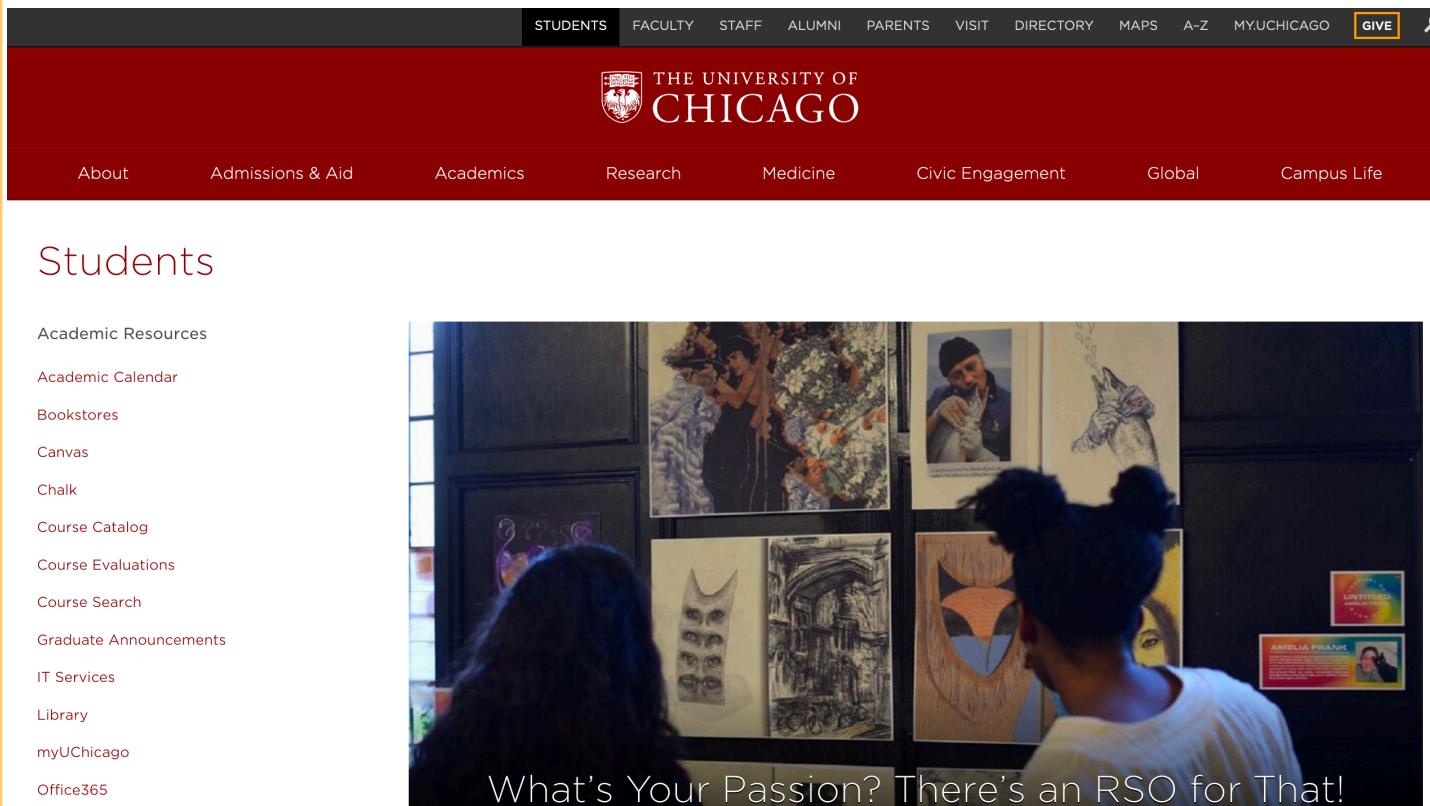
Required Application Materials

Figure4: A screenshot of the application page



Figure5: A screenshot showing the two navigation bars seen on the website

The second usability issue that was tested was the issue of the website containing two navigation bars, as well as the issue of the drop down navigation not working once the user navigates around the site. Figure5 demonstrates the two navigation bars seen on the website. Further, once a user clicks on the navigation bar, the drop down menus stop working. These issues proved frustrating for users. When asked to choose between the two navigation bars to find information, Users A and B chose the top navigation bar and Users C and D chose the bottom navigation bar. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, the average rating in how easy it was to decide between the two bars was 4.375. However the students page (see Figure6) in the top bar, and the campus life page (see Figure7) in the bottom bar take users to completely different pages. While users do not feel as though they are struggling, they are missing information with either choice. Users were also asked to demonstrate the drop down menu issue. The users were asked to click on the admissions page and then use the drop down menu to apply to the University. The drop down menu did not work for any of the users, and they all gave the ease of applying through the navigation bar a 1 on a scale of 1-5. This issue poses serious usability issues.



The screenshot shows the University of Chicago website's homepage. At the top, there is a dark grey header with links for STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, ALUMNI, PARENTS, VISIT, DIRECTORY, MAPS, A-Z, MY.UCHICAGO, and a yellow GIVE button. Below this is a red banner featuring the university's crest and the text "THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO". The main content area has a white background. On the left, there is a sidebar with links: About, Admissions & Aid, Academics, Research, Medicine, Civic Engagement, Global, and Campus Life. The main content area features a large image of two people looking at a wall of posters or artwork. Overlaid on this image is the text "What's Your Passion? There's an RSO for That!". To the left of the image, there is a list of links under the heading "Academic Resources": Academic Resources, Academic Calendar, Bookstores, Canvas, Chalk, Course Catalog, Course Evaluations, Course Search, Graduate Announcements, IT Services, Library, myUChicago, and Office365.

Figure6: A view of the students page accessed from the top navigation bar



About Us

Get Involved

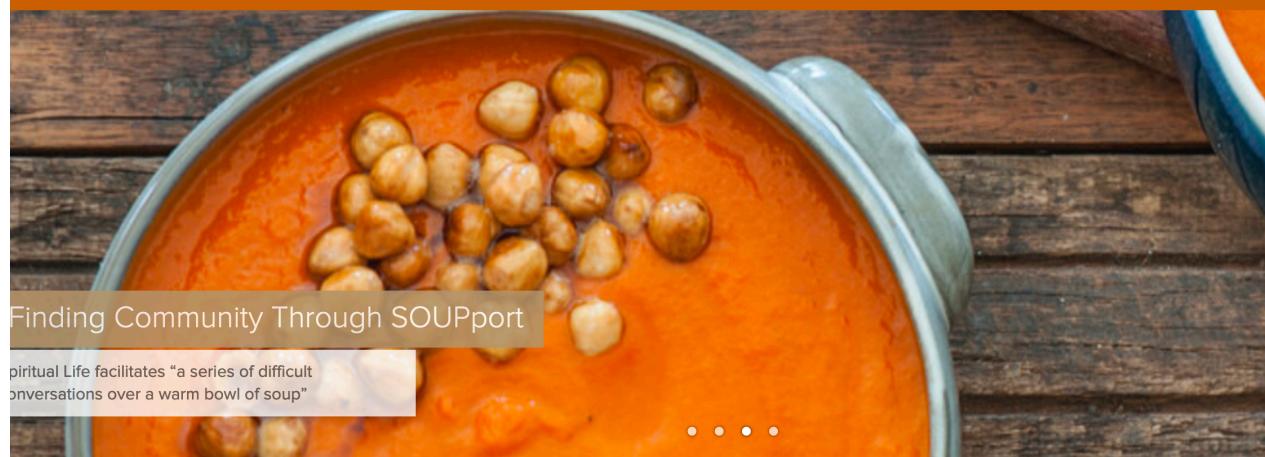
Get Help

Resources

Diversity & Inclusion

MAR 29, 2020: CSL Programs and Services in Spring Quarter

Learn more about Campus and Student Life programs and services during the remote Spring Quarter.



Here to Help

Figure7: A view of the campus life page accessed from the bottom navigation bar

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Civic Engagement

Figure8: The words on the red bar (“The University of Chicago”) are a link on the civic engagement page to take the user back to the University home page

The third usability issue tested was the issue of navigating to the main web page after navigating to a new page. On some of the pages, there is a link to return to the main University of Chicago web page, while on others there is no way to return back. Users were first asked to choose a page of their choosing and navigate back to the home page without using the back arrow. All of the users chose pages where clicking on the logo returns the user to the home page, although User B was unaware that clicking on the logo would return to the home page. The users were then asked to navigate to the civic engagement page and return to the home page. As is seen in Figure 8, the page does not have a logo, but it has a small link in the left hand corner to return to the home page, and all four users were able to find this. Users were finally asked to click on the visit page in the top navigation bar and navigate to the home page. All of the users clicked on the University of Chicago logo, but this brings users to a new web page that is not the home page. Users A and D were able to take multiple steps and go through multiple pages to get back to the home screen, while Users B and C were unsuccessful in returning to the home page. These inconsistencies in returning to the home page proved challenging for users.

When asked closing questions, users were asked if they would use the University of Chicago website or an outside source for information on the University. Users A, B, and C said they would use the University of Chicago website, while User D said they would use an outside source. When asked what the biggest problem they had while using the website, User A said that things are not explicitly labeled and the user has to search for information, User B said that there were too many choices, User C said that they had to search for information too much, and User D said that pages are formatted differently and not all of them take the user back to the home page. There is a common complaint that users have to search for information and it is not easy to access, and this creates many usability issues.

Conclusion

Users struggled to complete tasks given to them on the website. There were inconsistencies between pages and users felt as though they had to search too much for information. To increase ease of use for users, the University of Chicago website should simplify the application process. Instead of making the user navigate through many pages, there should be a simple apply button available on both the home page and application page so that the user can easily access the application. The second recommendation I have is that the University of Chicago website should consolidate their two navigation bars into one navigation bar. This will ensure that users are able to receive all information on the first try, and not guess between the two navigation bars. This will create a more straightforward and enjoyable website for users. Further, the drop down navigation bar issue needs to be fixed. Users should be able to access the drop down menus from any page of the website. Finally, the University of Chicago website needs to create unity among the various pages. All of the pages users are taken to should contain a consistent and easy to see way to navigate back to the main page. By implementing these changes, the University of Chicago website will be more user friendly. After these changes are implemented, further testing should be conducted to ensure they have been implemented in the most user friendly manner. These changes will create a website that is easy to use.

Appendix

Figure1: Website usability forms

Website Usability Worksheet

How usable is your site? Where should you focus your usability testing?

Grade EACH CATEGORY on a scale of A to F

Give each item in each category a PLUS (+), CHECK (/) or MINUS (-)

A – Absolute confidence by user

B – Better usability with minor adjustments

C – Change or modify to improve

D – Difficult / challenging for user

F – Frustration / people fleeing your site

What website are you evaluating? <https://www.indiana.edu>

Layout B+

B Clear “call to action” on the home page

A- Clear emphasis and hierarchy

B Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links A

A Navigation is easy to find and available from every page

A Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within

A Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections

A Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens

(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)

B+ Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color

A Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)

Indiana University (part 1 of 2)

Design A-

B+ Color palette has adequate range of contrast

(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)

A No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently

A Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired users

B+ Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid

A Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create user flow

A Related content placed more closely together -- proximity

B+ Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design

A Use of principles of design evident in the site

A Overall design is appropriate and consistent

Content A-

A Content is relevant to site topic and to audience

A- Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance

(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)

A Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"

A Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users

B Social media accessible and easy to find?

A Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors

Indiana University (part 2 of 2)

What website are you evaluating?
<https://www.depaul.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

Layout C+

C Clear “call to action” on the home page

C+ Clear emphasis and hierarchy

B- Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links B+

B Navigation is easy to find and available from every page

A Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within

B Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections

A Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens

(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)

B Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color

A Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)

DePaul University (part 1 of 2)

Design A-

A **Color palette has adequate range of contrast**

(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)

B+ **No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently**

A- **Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired viewers**

A **Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid**

B- **Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create unity**

A **Related content placed more closely together -- proximity**

B **Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design**

B **Use of principles of design evident in the site**

B **Overall design is appropriate and consistent**

Content B+

A **Content is relevant to site topic and to audience**

B **Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance**

(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)

A **Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"**

A **Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users**

B- **Social media accessible and easy to find?**

A **Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors**

C **Content is scaled down, with no unnecessary words**

A- **Error messages, form fields and pages in general are clear and**

options are explained when possible

What website are you evaluating? <https://www.luc.edu/>

Layout A-

- A Clear “call to action” on the home page
- A- Clear emphasis and hierarchy
- B Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links A-

- A Navigation is easy to find and available from every page
- A Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within
- B- Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections
- A Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens
(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)
- A Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color
- A Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)

Loyola University Chicago (part 1 of 2)

Design A-

- A-** Color palette has adequate range of contrast
(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)
- A** No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently
- B** Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired viewers
- A-** Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid
- B** Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create unity
- A-** Related content placed more closely together -- proximity
- A-** Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design
- A-** Use of principles of design evident in the site
- A** Overall design is appropriate and consistent

Content A-

- A** Content is relevant to site topic and to audience
- A** Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance
(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)
- A** Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"
- A** Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users
- B** Social media accessible and easy to find?
- A** Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors
- C** Content is scaled down, with no unnecessary words
- A** Error messages, form fields and pages in general are clear and options are explained when possible

Loyola University Chicago (part 2 of 2)

What website are you evaluating? <https://www.purdue.edu/>

Layout A

- A- Clear “call to action” on the home page
- A Clear emphasis and hierarchy
- A Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links A

- A Navigation is easy to find and available from every page
- A Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within
- A Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections
- A Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens
(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)
- A Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color
- A Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)

Purdue University (part 1 of 2)

Design A

A **Color palette has adequate range of contrast**

(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)

A No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently

A Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired viewers

A Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid

A Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create unity

A Related content placed more closely together -- proximity

A Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design

A Use of principles of design evident in the site

A Overall design is appropriate and consistent

Content A-

A Content is relevant to site topic and to audience

A **Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance**

(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)

B Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"

A Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users

A Social media accessible and easy to find?

A Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors

B- Content is scaled down, with no unnecessary words

A- Error messages, form fields and pages in general are clear and options are explained when possible

What website are you evaluating? <https://www.uchicago.edu/>

Layout C

- C**___ Clear “call to action” on the home page
- B-**___ Clear emphasis and hierarchy
- C**___ Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links B-

- B-**___ Navigation is easy to find and available from every page
- B**___ Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within
- C-**___ Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections
- B**___ Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens
(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)
- B-**___ Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color
- A**___ Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)

University of Chicago (part 1 of 2)

Design B

B- Color palette has adequate range of contrast

(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)

- A__ No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently
- B__ Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired viewers
- A__ Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid
- B__ Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create unity
- A__ Related content placed more closely together -- proximity
- C__ Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design
- B-__ Use of principles of design evident in the site
- B__ Overall design is appropriate and consistent

Content B

A__ Content is relevant to site topic and to audience

B- Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance

(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)

- B-__ Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"
- A__ Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users
- A__ Social media accessible and easy to find?
- A__ Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors
- C__ Content is scaled down, with no unnecessary words
- A-__ Error messages, form fields and pages in general are clear and options are explained when possible

University of Chicago (part 2 of 2)

What website are you evaluating? <http://uic.edu/>

Layout A-

- A **Clear “call to action” on the home page**
- B **Clear emphasis and hierarchy**
- A- Tasks prioritized on page

Navigation and Page Links A

- A **Navigation is easy to find and available from every page**
- A **Navigation labels make sense and represent the content found within**
- A **Navigation is consistent in design, location and connections**
- A **Navigation works on mobile as well as larger screens**
(Large enough buttons for fingers? Functional?)
- A **Links have active/hover effect and are an emphasis color**
- A **Links are descriptive (i.e. not “click here”)**

University of Illinois at Chicago (part 1 of 2)

Design A-

- A-** **Color palette has adequate range of contrast**
(Can the content still be read by colorblind individuals?)
- A** No more than 3 typefaces, used and applied consistently
- A-** Clear typographical hierarchy? No text is too small for sight-impaired viewers
- A** Design elements are lined up. Evidence of an underlying grid
- A-** Repeated design patterns, elements or treatments to create unity
- A** Related content placed more closely together -- proximity
- B** Emphasis / Call to Action for the site supported by the design
- A** Use of principles of design evident in the site
- A** Overall design is appropriate and consistent

Content A-

- A** Content is relevant to site topic and to audience
- A** **Content easy to scan and ranked by relative importance**
(Clear hierarchy with whitespace, headers, bullets?)
- A-** Language is visitor centric: "you" not "we"
- A** Tone, language and material appropriate for expected users
- B** Social media accessible and easy to find?
- A** Content is free of grammatical and spelling errors
- C** Content is scaled down, with no unnecessary words
- A** Error messages, form fields and pages in general are clear and options are explained when possible

Addendum: Reflection Question

I think I was successful in creating tasks for each usability issue. My tasks helped illustrate that there was an issue. I used a mix of open ended and straightforward tasks to try and eliminate any bias and allow the user to explore as they normally would, while also including specific tasks to demonstrate usability issues I was exploring.

Addendum: User Testing Notes

User A

Background:

-freshman at the University of Chicago studying biology

-approx time per day on websites: 2 hours

-on a scale of beginner, moderate, expert, or other, what would you say your experience level in using websites is: moderate

Opening Questions

1. Have you visited this website before?

Yes

2. If you have visited this website before, what did you use it for?

Accessing student page, college information, application information

3. What information do you expect to find on this website?

College Information

Usability issue 1: hard to find call to action (application)

1. Apply to the University from the home page

Scrolled through the page quickly and looked for an apply button; carefully browsed through the home page again; after 28 seconds wanted to click on admissions

2. Apply to the University in as few steps as possible

Clicked admissions in the nav bar (didn't use drop down); once on admissions page scrolled to the bottom and tried to find apply on there; continued to scroll up and down and struggled to find application; after 45 seconds used search function; first option was application for Booth Graduate School; used back button and found the undergraduate application (~1 minute)

3. After accessing the application, return to the main home page from that screen

Clicked on "the college" in top right; takes to a different page (general undergraduate college); scrolled to bottom of page and examined; after 38 seconds clicked on the logo and was taken to a different page of the undergraduate college website; from there clicked on the logo and was able to access the main page after 1 minute 35 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the application?

3

5. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the home page from the application screen?

2.5

6. What was the most difficult aspect of finding the application page?

No button specifically labeled; had to search and look around as opposed to application being there

7. Was there a feature relating to applying you were expecting to see?

Apply now button; there is a button on the undergraduate college website, but not on the main website

Usability issue 2: 2 navigation bars/drop down issue

1. Choosing between the 2 navigation bars given and using only one, find information on student and campus life.

Used top navigation bar: chose student and found in 4 seconds

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to choose between the 2 navigation

bars?

3.5

3. Click to the admissions page. Now access the University application using only the navigation bar with no additional clicks.

Typically uses touch screen on Microsoft Surface; tried to use finger but couldn't; tried to use mouse and couldn't; 37 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to use the navigation bar to access the application?

1

5. What was the most difficult aspect of using the navigation bar?

It only works when you first visit the site

6. What was the easiest part of using the navigation bar?

Nicely labeled

7. Was there anything you were surprised to see with the navigation?

It doesn't work once you actually use the website

Usability issue 3: navigation takes users to new websites and they can't get back

1. Click on a section in the navigation bar of your choosing. Now, get back to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Chose medicine; clicked logo on top and it worked; 10 seconds

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

4

3. On the bottom navigation bar click on the civic engagement tab. After being taken to the civic engagement section, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

There is a small link in the top left corner; found immediately

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

3.5: just as easy, but less obvious

5. In the top navigation bar click on the visit tab. After being taken to the visit page, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Clicked on UChicago logo on top; doesn't work; clicked on undergrad admissions in top right corner; taken to undergraduate college admissions website; clicked logo on bottom of that page; clicked on "the college" and then that logo worked; 53 seconds and multiple steps

6. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

2.5

7. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was the navigation of the website to use?

3.5

Closing

1. In the future if you needed information on the University of Chicago would you use this website or an outside source?

This website

2. What was the biggest problem you had while using this website?

Drop down navigation issue; things aren't explicitly labelled; have to continue to search after you click where you think you should be

3. Did you find this website useful?

Yes

4. What was the best part about this website?

The use of pictures

User B

Background:

-University of Chicago parent and Director of Strategic Events for a nonprofit company

-approx time per day on websites: 2-4 hours

-on a scale of beginner, moderate, expert, or other, what would you say your experience level in using websites is: expert

Opening Questions

1. Have you visited this website before?

Yes

2. If you have visited this website before, what did you use it for?

Helping daughter apply and paying tuition

3. What information do you expect to find on this website?

General information on the college

Usability issue 1: hard to find call to action (application)

1. Apply to the University from the home page

Scrolled for 30 seconds and got frustrated and stopped

2. Apply to the University in as few steps as possible

Clicked on drop down navigation “apply”; once on page struggled to find application; took 2 clicks to find common app. 45 seconds

3. After accessing the application, return to the main home page from that screen

Unable to do; stopped after 13 seconds of scrolling

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the application?

2

5. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the home page from the application screen?

1

6. What was the most difficult aspect of finding the application page?

There were too many options; after clicking apply have to continue to click to try and find it

7. Was there a feature relating to applying you were expecting to see?

An “apply here” button that directly links to application

Usability issue 2: 2 navigation bars/drop down issue

1. Choosing between the 2 navigation bars given and using only one, find information on student and campus life.

Chose top navigation bar; took 15 seconds

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to choose between the 2 navigation bars?

4

3. Click to the admissions page. Now access the University application using only the navigation bar with no additional clicks.

Unable to do; had click back to about page; still unable to do; 40 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to use the navigation bar to access the application?

1

5. What was the most difficult aspect of using the navigation bar?

Aren't able to click on anything or be brought anymore

6. What was the easiest part of using the navigation bar?

Easy to see and readily available

7. Was there anything you were surprised to see with the navigation?

After using the navigation bar, drop down no longer works

Usability issue 3: navigation takes users to new websites and they can't get back

1. Click on a section in the navigation bar of your choosing. Now, get back to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Chose research. clicked about (a separate page); unable to find; although logo there, was not obviously a home button and user thought there were no home buttons; 35 sec

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

1

3. On the bottom navigation bar click on the civic engagement tab. After being taken to the civic engagement section, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Clicked the small return button top left. took 20 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

4

5. In the top navigation bar click on the visit tab. After being taken to the visit page, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Clicked on logo but was never able to get back on main page; took 40 seconds; could not do

6. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

1

7. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was the navigation of the website to use?

2

Closing

1. In the future if you needed information on the University of Chicago would you use this website or an outside source?

This website

2. What was the biggest problem you had while using this website?

Too many choices; needs to be simplified

3. Did you find this website useful?

Yes, but not especially so; takes a long time to find what you're looking for

4. What was the best part about this website?

It has a lot of information

User C

Background:

-UChicago parent; works in Information Technology

-approx time per day on websites: 1 hour

-on a scale of beginner, moderate, expert, or other, what would you say your experience level in using websites is: expert

Opening Questions

1. Have you visited this website before?

Yes

2. If you have visited this website before, what did you use it for?

General information about college

3. What information do you expect to find on this website?

Majors, classes, information about dorms, campus, cost

Usability issue 1: hard to find call to action (application)

1. Apply to the University from the home page

Scrolled through; unable to find; attempted for 37 seconds

2. Apply to the University in as few steps as possible

Took some time to look through all of the navigation; clicked admission; then clicked apply to college; then scrolled through the apply to college page and struggled to find application; clicked under a drop down and chose common app after struggling to choose between choices; 57 seconds

3. After accessing the application, return to the main home page from that screen

Scrolled through common app; unable to return to home page; attempted for 27 seconds; attempted to click through "find college"

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the application?

3

5. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the home page from the application screen?

1

6. What was the most difficult aspect of finding the application page?

Having to read descriptions and guess as to which one probably had the application in it

7. Was there a feature relating to applying you were expecting to see?

Expected to click apply and be brought to the application

Usability issue 2: 2 navigation bars/drop down issue

1. Choosing between the 2 navigation bars given and using only one, find information on student and campus life.

Chose bottom one with section campus life; in a follow up decided could not find adequate information on campus life from the tab he had chosen; clicked through various links on the campus life page; browsed for 2 minutes; after 2 minutes was able to find information on athletics but still didn't feel like found adequate information on campus life.

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to choose between the 2 navigation bars?

5; said it is easy to choose but commented on the inability to use the navigation to return to the home screen

3. Click to the admissions page. Now access the University application using only the navigation

bar with no additional clicks.

Scrolled for 20 seconds before stopping and saying it could not be done

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to use the navigation bar to access the application?

1

5. What was the most difficult aspect of using the navigation bar?

Can't use roll over after you click; too much information in menus

6. What was the easiest part of using the navigation bar?

Topics were clear

7. Was there anything you were surprised to see with the navigation?

Too many submenus and too much information

Usability issue 3: navigation takes users to new websites and they can't get back

1. Click on a section in the navigation bar of your choosing. Now, get back to the main web page without using the back button or retying the URL.

Chose academics; knew to click on logo took 30 seconds

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

5

3. On the bottom navigation bar click on the civic engagement tab. After being taken to the civic engagement section, return to the main web page without using the back button or retying the URL.

Was able to find top left link in 14 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

4

5. In the top navigation bar click on the visit tab. After being taken to the visit page, return to the main web page without using the back button or retying the URL.

Clicked logo on top; after that didn't work tried bottom; couldn't get back to home page; 25 seconds; browsed for another 30 seconds attempting to find a way

6. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

1

7. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was the navigation of the website to use?

4

Closing

1. In the future if you needed information on the University of Chicago would you use this website or an outside source?

This website

2. What was the biggest problem you had while using this website?

Had to search for the information too much

3. Did you find this website useful?

Yes

4. What was the best part about this website?

Attractive looking website

User D

Background:

-Senior at Indiana University studying computer science

-approx time per day on websites: 2 hours

-on a scale of beginner, moderate, expert, or other, what would you say your experience level in using websites is: expert

Opening Questions

1. Have you visited this website before?

No

2. If you have visited this website before, what did you use it for?

N/a

3. What information do you expect to find on this website?

General information on the University

Usability issue 1: hard to find call to action (application)

1. Apply to the University from the home page

Scrolled through page for 30 seconds before stopping

2. Apply to the University in as few steps as possible

Clicked admissions, roll down bar, then apply; clicked graduate “apply”; chose application for Booth School of Business in 30 seconds

3. After accessing the application, return to the main home page from that screen

Took ~3 seconds; grad school app had hyperlink

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the application?

3

5. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy would you say it was to access the home page from the application screen?

5

6. What was the most difficult aspect of finding the application page?

Having to look through the navigation bar to find it

7. Was there a feature relating to applying you were expecting to see?

No

Usability issue 2: 2 navigation bars/drop down issue

1. Choosing between the 2 navigation bars given and using only one, find information on student and campus life.

Hovered over bottom bar; chose campus life in bottom bar; 35 seconds; after couldn't get back to homepage because the logo given on campus life takes you to main campus life page and not general university website

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to choose between the 2 navigation bars?

5

3. Click to the admissions page. Now access the University application using only the navigation bar with no additional clicks.

Tried to hover over all tabs; none of them worked; 30 seconds

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was it to use the navigation bar to access the application?

1

5. What was the most difficult aspect of using the navigation bar?

Doesn't work once you click on a page

6. What was the easiest part of using the navigation bar?

When it works it has helpful information

7. Was there anything you were surprised to see with the navigation?

That it stops working

Usability issue 3: navigation takes users to new websites and they can't get back

1. Click on a section in the navigation bar of your choosing. Now, get back to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Chose research; clicked logo and it worked; 10 seconds

2. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

5

3. On the bottom navigation bar click on the civic engagement tab. After being taken to the civic engagement section, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Scrolled to bottom and tried to click logo; after 26 seconds found small link top left corner

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

2

5. In the top navigation bar click on the visit tab. After being taken to the visit page, return to the main web page without using the back button or retyping the URL.

Clicked on main logo on top; doesn't work; scrolled to bottom but that link didn't work; hovered over navigation bar; clicked on college admissions—>the college and was able to use that logo to get back; 45 seconds

6. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was that task?

1

7. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the easiest, how easy was the navigation of the website to use?

4

Closing

1. In the future if you needed information on the University of Chicago would you use this website or an outside source?

Outside source

2. What was the biggest problem you had while using this website?

The different pages aren't formatted the same; don't all have links back to main site in the same places

3. Did you find this website useful?

No

4. What was the best part about this website?

The pictures were helpful