Mosaic Redesign: Project Proposal

Stuart Douglas
1214422
McMaster University
dougls2@mcmaster.ca

Matthew Pagnan
1208693
McMaster University
pagnanmm@mcmaster.ca

Rob Gorrie
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McMaster University
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Derek Dagworthy
1214937
McMaster University
dagwordj@mcmaster.ca

ABSTRACT

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

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Overview

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Suggested Improvements

Our suggested improvement is to have a dynamic element near the top of the home page which will provide useful information and links to pages of importance relative to the date.

For example, when close to exam season the element will display the students exam time table. During the course registration time frame the element will display information about course registration.

The items that are displayed on the dynamic element will also have permanent links on the page for users who wish to access those pages when they are not on display.

This dynamic element will help users find the information they are most likely looking for by making information more visible and easier to access.

We are also proposing to have a better, more logical layout for the system. Currently the pages with information on courses have a section for personal information. This section should instead be moved to the ”My Profile” section as it would make more sense to be located there. By moving sections that do not make logical sense to sections where they do make sense we will have cleared page space thus allowing us to increase the size of what is left on the page so it is easier for the user to find what they are looking for as well as giving us a spot to implement our dynamic element.

SOFTWARE SURVEY

Five student management systems from Canadian universities have been selected for review (including Mosaic). For each system, a brief description will be followed by a critique of the major usability flaws and strengths. From this, the main goals and tasks of users using the systems will be extracted. Finally, the two most important of those features will be further analyzed via hierarchical task analyses. Screenshots will be presented throughout each software review.

McMaster University (current) – Mosaic

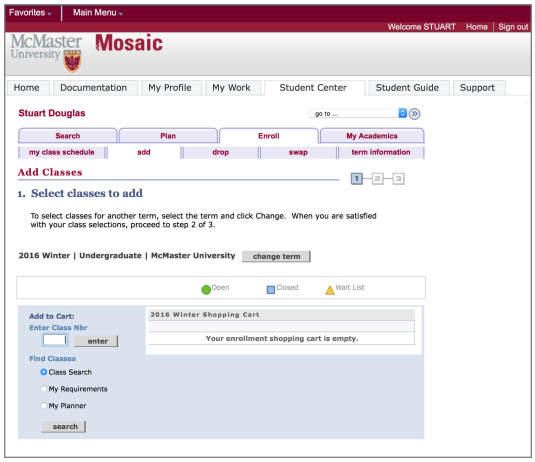

Figure 1: Selecting courses to enroll in – Mosaic

Description

The purpose of the software is to allow students to manage their courses (enrolling, dropping etc.), and view in-

formation about their current status (current timetable, enrollment status, financial balance etc.). The interface for the software consists of several distinct modules encapsulating different aspects of the software. These include Academics, Finances, Personal Information, and Admissions. The focus of this analysis is on two common tasks – enrolling in courses and viewing one's course schedule.

Critique

The largest usability flaws in Mosaic center around difficulty to access required information. Combined with an unintuitive and inconsistent navigation interface, the software is not very usable. The HTA for enrolling in a course demonstrates this through the large number of steps required to perform a routine and common task. Other functions are hidden behind dropdown menus, and are difficult to discover.

The navigation is separated into a top navigation bar separated by user-type (e.g. Students and Employees). Within the student center page, functions are separated into modules, an effective strategy to group related functions. Navigating to one of the sub-functions (such as enrolling in a course) presents secondary and tertiary menus below the main one. Navigation within one of these is handled by blue text hyperlinks back to previous pages. Native back and forward browser functionality does not work. There is little visual indication of where the user is beyond the navigation bars at the top, which do not go to a depth sufficient to cover all pages used when performing common actions, such as enrolling in a course.

McMaster University (pre 2015) – Solar

Description

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Critique

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Guelph University – WebAdvisor

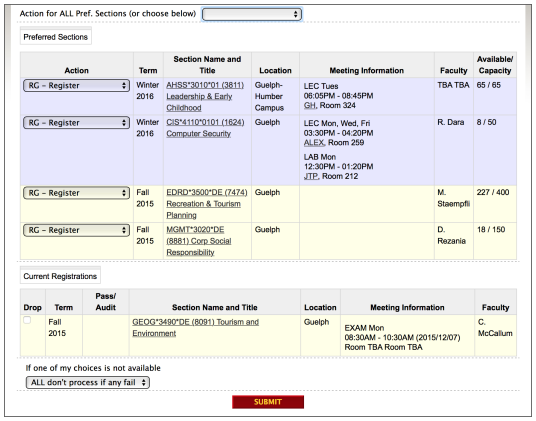

Figure 2: Registering for preferred courses – WebAdvisor

Description

Guelph's

Critique

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Carleton University – ??

Description

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Critique

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Waterloo University – ??

Description

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Critique

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CONCLUSION

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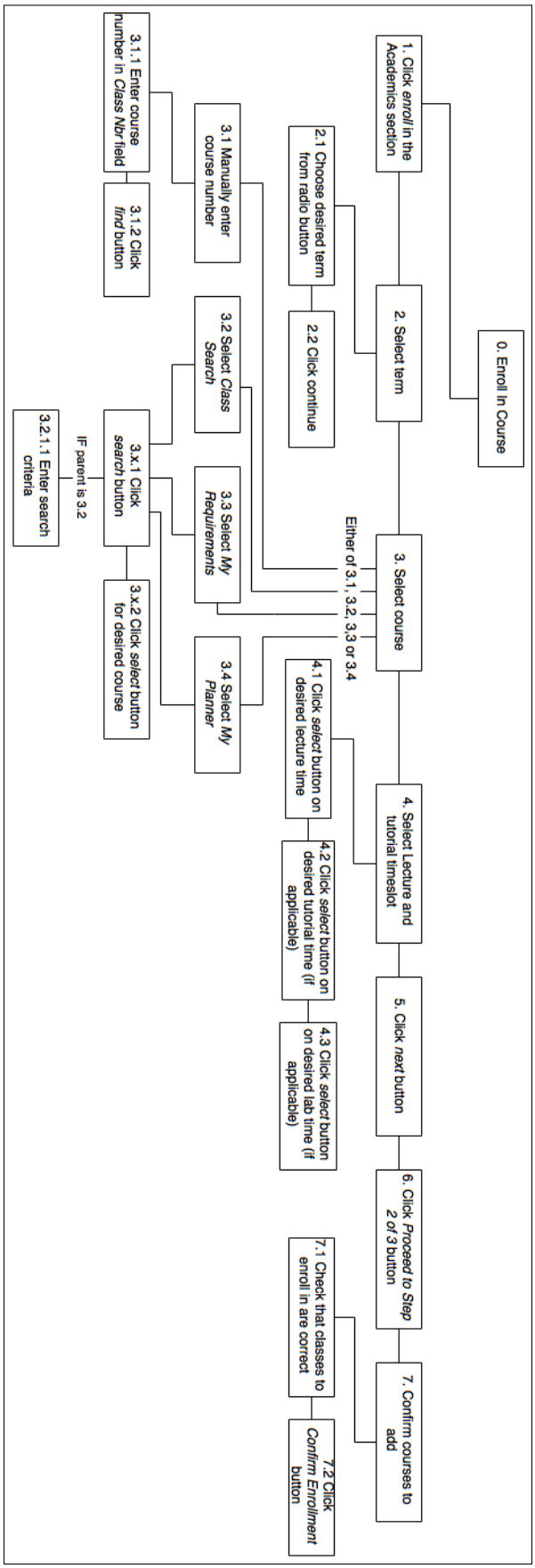
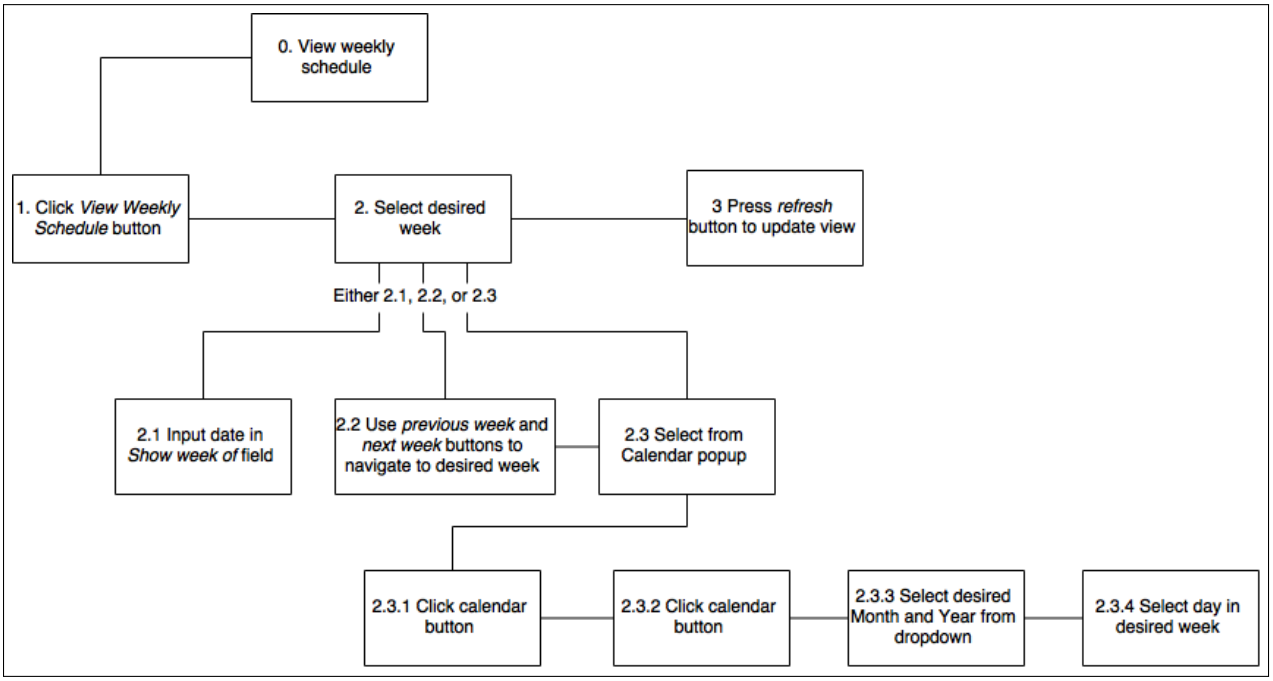
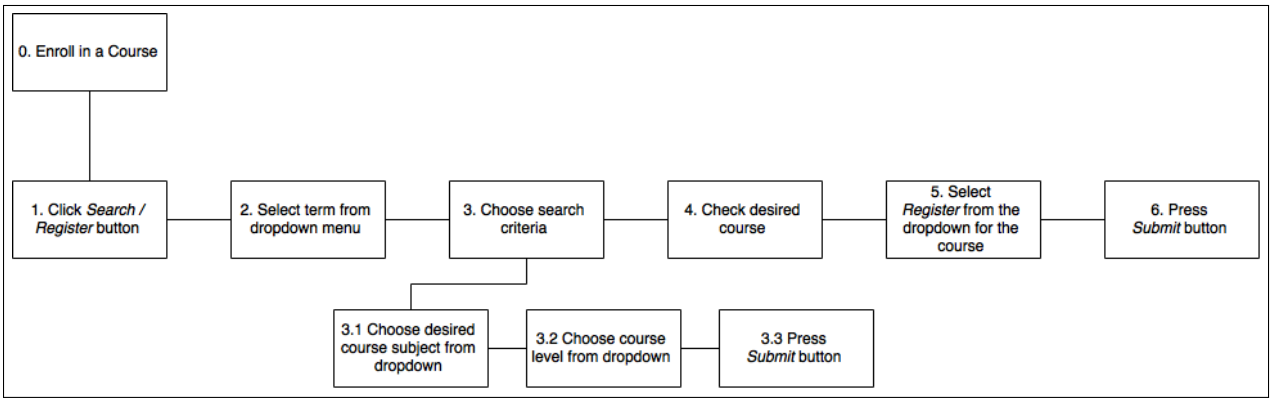
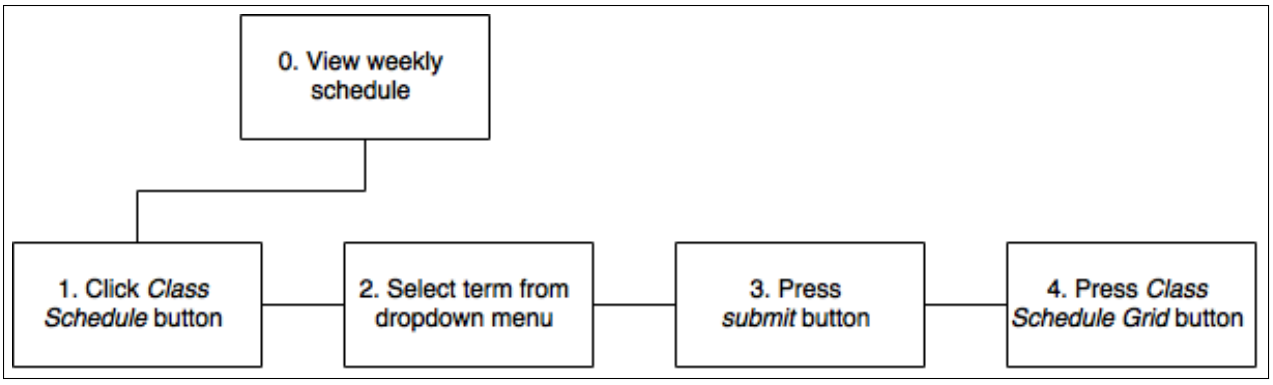
HTA - MOSAIC, ENROLLING IN A COURSE



HTA - MOSAIC, VIEWING WEEKLY SCHEDULE



HTA - WEBADVISOR, ENROLLING IN A COURSE



HTA - WEBADVISOR, VIEWING WEEKLY SCHEDULE