

Hardest Decisions & Redesign Skeleton

This PDF outlines the hardest decisions that we made in redesigning the information architecture. Throughout the whole redesign process, we compared and contrasted between the five college websites as well as previous redesign examples found here: (COGS187A: Home > Assignments > Grade Redo IA) <http://beta.thiscourse.com/ucsd/cogs187a/wi14/assignments/4f0a969c90776c807c000045>.

Personas & Competitive Analysis

During our first meeting, we brainstormed the personas we needed to create. We focused on five different users (high school student, parent, undergraduate, professor, and alumni) based on the information that Georgia State University academic website provides, from lectures and previous work examples, and our overall discussion about relevant users. We also outline what we should keep in mind when building these personas. We wanted to capture beyond their basic background information and dive deeper into the user's motivation and intentions. We discussed ways to create empathy for each individual persona. We divided the work so that each person worked on two personas and the person who worked on one persona began creating the template for the competitive analysis. We evenly distributed the competitive analysis so that each person reviewed 2 college websites of their choice. We set two different Google Docs to pool in our work from the week.

Work Distribution

We regrouped at the end of the *midterm* week and began the meeting by updating each other what we have accomplished and what still needs to be finished in terms of the previous work distribution. We moved into a discussion on what we want to see on our redesign website. We drew up different design ideas on paper and kept everything simple. We divided the next steps of the project based on everybody's skills. Cindy was responsible for organizing the personas and competitive analysis PDFs as well as the content of the redesign website (Academics, Research, Contact). Victoria managed the coding, design, and overall skeleton/outline of the redesign website, and created the hardest decisions and skeleton outline PDFs. Tiffany handled the coding and design of the directory and contributed to the content of the 'About GSU' & "Research" of the GSU redesign website and Competitive Analysis PDF. Come the third meeting, we panned out the skeleton template and content of the redesign website. By the fourth meeting, the majority of the meat of our website has been completed and we focused on the last 10% of the details (w3school validator, links, etc). As a team, we redesigned a website we hope you will enjoy!

Redesign Decisions

After completing the competitive analysis, we reviewed the information architecture of the sites and made note of the navigation links that were most popular. We outlined the navigation skeleton on a loose-leaf paper and began building our redesign around these ideas. Because we did not have a strong background in html/css/js, we spent a lot of time researching what was do-able and what will work for our design ideas.

One of the hardest parts during the brainstorm for the redesign was dividing the navigation into two main categories. We decided that the left sidebar navigation should include links that are applicable to the general public (Home, About, Academics, Admissions, Research, Athletics, and Contact). The top navigation bar (top navbar), on the other hand, would provide quick-links that cater more to users who fall under a specific persona (Students, Parents/Visitors, Faculty, and Alumni). We wanted to make the top navbar and the sidebar fixed so that users have access to different pages immediately; this prevents users from having to scroll up and down the pages. We implemented three different ways for users to navigate back to the homepage (via top navbar, left sidebar through the logo, and footer). By having fixed items on the page, it helps users feel less overwhelmed with the overload of tabs and sub-level pages. Additionally, having a left sidebar offers familiarity and reminiscence to many websites we (and most likely many other people) have experienced.

We wanted to create a website that is predictable. All of the second-level pages are structured the same and consistent to each other. The sidebar is updated with relevant links to specific sections of information on that page. We wanted to reduce and minimize the tree and branches of sub-level pages. We thought shallow-level pages would appeal more to users because it reduces the chance of users feeling lost in the complexity of the website. With the fixed sidebar, users can quickly browse through sections if they cannot find what they are looking for in the section they just selected.

The rearrangement of items was another aspect of our hardest decisions. We organized the homepage into a grid-like system, mimicking that of a 5-grid/advanced-grid layout with a fixed sidebar (10 Rock Solid Website Layout: <http://designshack.net/articles/layouts/10-rock-solid-website-layout-examples>). We thought this would allow the page items to compliment each other and aid the users find what they need as quickly as possible (they are organized into boxes). For each of the second-level pages, we divided the page into two columns - one for the sidebar and one purely for the content of the page. As mentioned, each section is linked to a navigation link on the sidebar so that users can jump around in the page. We created large paddings between the sections to indicate that they are different sections; the page layout is spacious and liberating on the user's eyes. By having a column just for the content, users don't have to scan over the webpage for its

entirety; it just lets the users focus on what is present and in front of them.

Overall, we made big changes to the way users navigate the page, the information architecture and how content is divided on the website, and offer consistency and predictability on all pages.

Feel free to check out our GitHub: <https://github.com/titse/COGS187GROUP>! Enjoy.

Redesign Skeleton

Main Navigation (Left Sidebar)

Homepage

About

History
Word from the President
Departments
Administration
Community

Academics

University Library
Degrees & Majors
Colleges
General Catalog
Academic Calendar

Admissions

Prospective Students*
Undergraduate*
Transfer Students*
Graduates*
Financial Aid/Scholarships*
How to Apply*

Research

Centers & Institutes
Facilities & Services
Resources
Economic Development

Athletics

Contact

Frequently Requested
Contacts
Mailing Address
Emergency Contacts

2nd Navigation Bar (Top Fixed Nav)

Students

Student Life
Course Catalog
Finances
Campus Organizations
Recreation
Academic Schedule
Counseling & Advising

Parents & Visitors

For Parents & Visitors
Campus Map
Parking
Finances
Getting Involved

Faculty

About Faculty & Staff
Facilities & Services
Research
Finances
Human Resources

Alumni

About GSU Alumni
Getting Involved
Events

Key:

Functional Links

*Lorem Ipsum