

Pre-Study Analysis

1. The landing page background is a picture of administrative building towers on Macon campus. It is an eye-catching background and the portal is available only for Mercer students so they should be able to recognize those.
2. The logo seems like MercerSpot is not part of the Mercer University. However, specifying official logo on each of the screens assures students about the eligibility of the website
3. The layout of the form and small description of the website on the home screen is clear. However, the fonts are hard to read.
4. The signup page is clear and easy to read. You can find users testimonials, which provide small information about what to expect on the website. Again, we have background full screen picture, which presents school of business at Atlanta Campus. The picture is darker on the sides to contrast the form.
5. After logging into the website I am welcomed which is letting me now that I am “inside”.
6. The two pictures with description separate two different functions of the website. In addition, small descriptions below the pictures are letting the user know what to expect when they access course/professor website. The fonts of the description should be changed because they are hard to read.
7. The logout button and Mercer University button should not be the same. They are confusing to the user. The logout button should be separated from the rest of the navigation.
8. The full screen background picture throughout the website represents building on Mercer Campus, which may distract the user a little bit. However, it provides a cool “touch” into the website.
9. After accessing the professor/course page, the navigation bar appears which is clean and easy to notice. The navigation bar provides easy access to home page and course button is always pressed letting the user now on what course they are currently on. On one side that might be an advantage but as user navigates, through the website he/she should be informed on what page they are currently on. Also, as user click on the tab which access different parts of the website a new option on navigates menu pop-up in different color which is very easy to notice, for example, as I click on topic the new “create new topic” in yellow color tab appears.
10. The forms are consistent through the website and each has label for what the form is.

Conclusion:

1. The overall layout of the website is well organized separating each parts of the contents
2. The background images are stunning but it take a while to load on slower internet connections.
3. The fonts on the whole website should be revisited because they are hard to read
4. The background of the container is a little distracting because the whole website has dark mood and background is very bright
5. Navigation bar looks like is not part of the website.
6. The number of buttons and navigation tabs are reasonable,

7. The professor and course pages layouts are identical, user should distinguish difference between course and professor page.
8. The layout is consistent throughout the website
9. Colors are consistent.

Cognitive analysis

Users come to the MercrSpot to complete specific task. They visit the website to gain information about the course/professor, access live stream class, read news posted by professors etc. The cognitive aspect involved in the analysis are perception, attention, memory, and decision making related to the issues of screen layout, information grouping, color, functionality, and multimedia.

When user enter the website for the first time, visual appearance of MercerSpot logo, which has Mercer University color palette next to the official Mercer University logo tells user that he is on eligible website. The whole page is kept in dark theme but signup button stands out through the bright background, which is easily noticeable for the first timers. However, the whole website has dark theme, which may be hard to read. Registration process involves using mercer email address, which is very often used by current students and used in log-in process as userid. On the home page, the pictures of professor and textbook attracts user eye to main features of the website. The two separate dropdown menu and submit buttons state that user can only perform one task at the time. Layout is consistent throughout the website that allows user for fast learning and task completion. The errors messages on the login and registration forms as well as throughout the website are clear indication of what happened and what need to be done. In addition, after performing tasks like posting a new topic, replying to current one, adding news and logging out, user is informed about the action through the messages. As user enters the professor page the picture and name of the professor appears confirming user that he access the right page. In addition, the image and name follow user as he travels through the professor page. Clear navigation menu bar appeared on the page, which stands out from the rest of the website. The additional elements like adding new topic, which appear on navigation menu as user access different parts of the website, are easily noticeable through using different color. All information's on the website are in plain English language. They are short and simple for the users. The features of the navigation are simple words such as home, news, topics that allow simpler completion of task. The stream live feature is very easy to use. The whole website is clear of irrelevant information, which provides minimalistic design.

Hypotheses

1. Mercer logo and description on the landing page should make user aware for who the website is designed

The MercerSpot website logo is an artistic design and the only thing that relates to the Mercer University are colors. Therefore, we want to see if users will understand for who the website is designed.

2. If the addition of the element in the navigation bar in different color would help user complete the task of creating the new topic or establishing a live stream session.

The “create topic” appears only after user clicks on topics elements on the navigation. Therefore, it should help user analyze the task in more realistic way, you need to access the topic page before you create one. The two next to each other, topic and create topic, may confuse user a little bit.

3. If the small description above course/professor choices on the home page after user log-in would direct him to the right place in order to complete the task

If teacher established an online live stream class user might be confused if he should access the course page or professor page to access live stream. Therefore, a small description is included, which should help user with making the decision.

4. If the limited placement of buttons and navigation tabs in the design will make navigation easy.

Only necessary elements are included in the navigational parts of the website. User do not see all the elements at once , the specific actions that relates only to exact pages are unveiled as user access that page. For example, when professor accesses stream page the live stream button appears that allows him to start live stream class. We want to see if it will allow user for faster completion of the tasks

5. The appearance of the professor picture on each of the professor pages should make user aware where he is.

As user travels through the website he may access various professor and course pages therefore, placing an image on each of the pages should assure user that he is where supposed to be. In addition, if student does not remember professor name can verify his identity through the picture.

6. If providing mercer email instead of personal will make student more keen to register

Only current students with valid @live.mercer.edu can register on the website. We want to see if users will be more willingly provide that information.

7. If requesting a telephone number during registration may increase abandonment percentage.

The website requests the telephone number, which may be strange for the user that does not want to share a personal telephone.

8. If dark theme of the website makes information hard to read

The dark theme requires using white fonts sometimes, which can be difficult to read because most of the people read black on white every day and human perception is used to that "option". We want to see if user can locate information easy.

Mercer Spot

Usability Test Plan

Filip Made

Overview

This document describes a test plan for conducting a usability test during the final stage of the development phase of **MercerSpot.com**. The goals of usability testing include establishing a baseline of user identifying potential design concerns to be addressed in order to improve the efficiency, productivity, and end-user satisfaction.

The usability test objectives are:

- To determine design inconsistencies and usability problem areas within the user interface and content areas. Potential sources of error may include:
 - Navigation errors – failure to locate functions, excessive keystrokes to complete a function, failure to follow recommended screen flow.
 - Presentation errors – failure to locate and properly act upon desired information in screens, selection errors due to labeling ambiguities.
- Exercise web site under controlled test conditions with representative users.

The MercerSpot.com is a project designed for current Mercer students and faculty. The 4 participants would be divided into two groups, professor and student in each. The testing of the subject interaction with the website will be conducted in lab sessions and remotely.

Summary

MercerSpot is an Mercer University student portal where they can seek more information about the courses offered at the University as well as professors. The website offers a discussion forum for each of the course where students can debate over the variety of topics concerning specific course or area of study. The website offers an online live session to students where they can attend the classes online. In addition, portal allows selling and buying textbook for current Mercer University students. The service offers variety of news surrounding Mercer University courses and professors.

Specific functions to be evaluated are:

1. Registration/Log-in process
2. Accessing course/professor page
3. Accessing stream class
4. Creating stream class
5. Creating topic on course forum
6. Responding to topic on forum
7. Selling textbook
8. Buying textbook
9. Posting news to course, professor, or mercer page.

The goal of the usability testing is to analyze ease of use and learning.

Methodology

One participant usually yields 1/3 of usability problems (Alan Dix). Therefore, a total of four would be used in a study. Two of the participants will be current students and two faculty members. In both groups one user will test the application in lab and other remotely. The lab testing will include talk aloud technique to allow users express his experience with the application. After the session participant would go through short interview. The remote user would be supplemented with a scenario and questionnaire. The tools used during the study will include: two types of browsers and eye tracking software. The measures collected during the study would include demographics, computer skills, satisfaction assessment, and suggestions for improvement.

	LAB	REMOTE
STUDENT	1	1
PROFESSOR	1	1

Location

Mercer University Atlanta campus computer lab.

Session

1. Session time should not last more than 60 minutes.
2. Before session start basic information about the participants' would be gathered e.g. age, sex, computer knowledge, etc.
3. Participants would be supplied with scenarios 5 minutes before the test starts.
4. After completion of the above mentioned scenario, user would participate in short interview which has on target highlight presentation and navigation errors.

Participants

The participants' responsibilities will be to attempt to complete a set of representative task scenarios presented to them in as efficient and timely a manner as possible, and to provide feedback regarding the usability and acceptability of the user interface. The participants will be directed to provide honest opinions regarding the usability of the application, and to participate in post-session subjective questionnaires and debriefing.

1. Two Faculty members
2. Two current students

Equipment:

1. Remote users:
 - a. Operating system: Variable
 - b. Browser: Variable
2. Lab sessions
 - a. Operating system: Windows 7
 - b. Browser: Google chrome
 - c. Audio recording device

Scenarios:

1. You do not know what computer class choose next semester, open a discussion topic to current student asking what they learn in INFM110 course.
2. Your teacher told you that next class will be online on new Mercerspot.com website. Try to access professor website and live stream class.
3. You just enrolled in new INFM110 course and you want to look for textbook that past student may have posted for sale.
4. Open a live stream session for your students.(Professor)

5. Post news to INFM 110 class.(Professor)
6. Dr. Liu told you that news about the courses she teaches are available at her website.
7. Post a news to your own page.(Professor)
8. You just finished your INFM110 class and want to sell your textbook.

Procedure

Lab Testing

Participants will take part in the usability test at Mercer University Atlanta campus computer lab. The participant's interaction with the Web site/Web application will be monitored by the facilitator seated in the same office.

The facilitator will brief the participants on the Web site/Web application and instruct the participant that they are evaluating the application, rather than the facilitator evaluating the participant. Participants will sign an informed consent that acknowledges: the participation is voluntary, that participation can cease at any time, and that the session will be videotaped but their privacy of identification will be safeguarded. The facilitator will ask the participant if they have any questions.

Participants will complete a pretest demographic and background information questionnaire. The facilitator will explain that the amount of time taken to complete the test task will be measured and that exploratory behavior outside the task flow should not occur until after task completion. At the start of each task, the participant will read aloud the task description from the printed copy and begin the task. Time-on-task measurement begins when the participant starts the task.

The facilitator will instruct the participant to 'think aloud' so that a verbal record exists of their interaction with the Web site/Web application. The facilitator will observe and note user behavior and user comments.

After all task scenarios are attempted, the participant will complete the post-test satisfaction questionnaire.

Remote testing

The participant will be seated at their workstation in their work environment.

The facilitator will supply the participant with informed consent that need to be signed and returned before the test starts. An hour before the test the participant would be provided

with task to be completed during the test. The participants than would be asked to complete the tasks within the one hour period.

After all tasks have been attempted, the participant will complete a post-test satisfaction questionnaire.

Usability test consent form

Please read and sign this form.

In this usability test:

- You will be asked to perform certain tasks on a website.
- We will also conduct interview with you.
- You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire.

Participation in this usability study is voluntary. All information will remain strictly confidential. The descriptions and findings may be used to help improve the web site. However, at no time will your name or any other identification be used. You can withdraw your consent to the experiment and stop participation at any time.

If you have any questions after today, please contact (name) at (phone).

I have read and understood the information on this form and had all of my questions answered

Subject's Signature

Date

Usability Consultant

Date

Remote participant questionnaire

1. Years using the Web: _____
2. Would you consider yourself comfortable with using the internet? (Circle one)
Novice 1 2 3 4 5 Expert
3. Do you normally use a Mac or a PC? Mac PC

4. Age Group:
- a. A.11-20
 - b. B.21-30
 - c. C.31-40
 - d. D.41-50
 - e. E.51-60
 - f. F. over 60
5. Gender:
- a. Female
 - b. Male
6. How often do you use the internet?
- a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Occasionally
 - e. Never

Questions:

Question 1 Do you feel that you successfully completed all the tasks on the task sheet?

Yes No

Question 2 In relation to other websites I have used, I found the MercerSpot wesbite to be:

Very difficult to use 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Very easy to use

Question 3 The menu items were well organized and functions were easy to find.

Strongly disagree 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Strongly agree

Question 4 I immediately understood the function of each menu item.

Strongly disagree 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Strongly agree

Question 5 The buttons were well organized and easy to find.
Strongly disagree 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Strongly agree

Question 6 I immediately understood the function of each button.
Strongly disagree 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Strongly agree

Question 7 I found navigating around the MercerSpot screen to be:
Very difficult 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Very easy

Question 8 My overall impression of the MercerSpot website to be:
Very negative 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 Very positive

Open - Questions:

1. Whether errors occurred, and, if they did, whether appropriate and helpful error messages were encountered.

2. Suggested improvements:

- ---
- ---
- ---

3. Is there anything that you feel is missing on this site?

4. Would you recommend MercerSpot to other users? Yes | No

5. Why?

Lab participant questionnaire

1. Years using the Web:_____
2. Would you consider yourself comfortable with using the internet? (Circle one)
Novice 1 2 3 4 5 Expert
3. Do you normally use a Mac or a PC? Mac PC
4. Age Group:
 - a. A.11-20
 - b. B.21-30
 - c. C.31-40
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6. How often do you use the internet?
 - a. Daily
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 - c. Monthly
 - d. Occasionally
 - e. Never

Questions:

The look of the website

What is your overall impression to MercerSpot? (its colors, fonts, graphic etc.)

What did you like least about the site? _____

Why? _____

What did you like best about the site? _____

Why? _____

Finding your ways around the website

Please comment how easy it was for you to navigate around the website?

Is it always clear where you are on the website? Yes___ No___

If No, please explain why you feel lost and perhaps suggest how we can avoid that

Please list what you consider the 3 important section of the website

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What other areas of the content would you add to the website?

Who do you think the intended audience is?

What would encourage you to return to this site in the future?

Interview Questions:

1. How easy was it to find MercerSpot information?
2. Were the navigation labels, page titles, headings and other terms accurate and easy to understand and helpful through the navigation?
3. Whether password-protected areas were easy to log into and use
4. Was the login page easy to log into and easy to use?

5. Whether errors occurred, and, if they did, whether appropriate and helpful error messages were encountered. If so, were the error messages appropriate and helpful?
6. How would you describe the process of establishing live stream class?