

Appendix A: Heuristic Evaluation

This heuristic evaluation of UMass Amherst's Continuing and Professional Education website was conducted for the purpose of analyzing one of PCE's competing websites. This helped to inform the usability test conducted on PCE's own site.

Note that the original page numeration has been removed to avoid confusion.

Heuristic Evaluation:
UMass Amherst's Continuing and Professional
Education Website (www.umasslearn.net)

By Brian Klotz
10 October 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
User Story/Scenario.....	4
Visual Ratings Guide.....	5
Evaluation Findings.....	6
Findings and Analysis.....	12
Conclusion.....	14

Introduction

For this heuristic evaluation, one reviewer analyzed the website for the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) department with the goal of improving its usability.

The heuristics chosen with which to examine the site were Whitney Quesenbery's "5Es." The CPE website is content-rich and has a wide scope, so the flexibility offered by the broad categories of the 5Es allowed for the breadth of the site's content to be properly assessed. Quesenbery defines the 5Es as follows¹:

- **Effective** – How completely and accurately the work or experience is completed or goals reached
- **Efficient** – How quickly this work can be completed
- **Engaging** – How well the interface draws the user into the interaction and how pleasant and satisfying it is to use
- **Error tolerant** – How well the product prevents errors and can help the user recover from mistakes that do occur
- **Easy to learn** – How well the product supports both the initial orientation and continued learning throughout the complete lifetime of use

With these heuristics and the persona of "Bill" (see **User Story** below), the reviewer evaluated the site from the perspective of a typical user performing common tasks.

Each usability issue was given a ranking of relative urgency based on the reviewer's informed opinion. These categories are:

- **High-Priority**
- **Medium-Priority**
- **Low-Priority**

These rankings will allow for problems to be addressed in order of descending importance, with the understanding that limited time and/or resources are a factor.

In the "Evaluation Findings" section, the usability issues are organized based on the 5Es and include a visual indicator of their rank. In the "Findings and Analysis" section, issues are presented in descending order of rank.

¹ Barnum, Carol M. *Usability Testing Essentials*. Burlington: Elsevier, 2011. Print.

User Story

Bill is 26 years old. He currently works in retail at a big box electronics store. He is comfortable with technology and using the web.

He attended college for a year and a half before dropping out to care for a sick family member. He has been meaning to go back to finally get his degree, but has never gotten around to actually doing it.



Now, however, he is realizing that without a degree, he cannot move forward in his career, so he is looking for a continuing education program where he can obtain one – preferably in the business field, so he can move up the ladder at his current place of employment. Therefore, he wants to keep his day job, so taking classes part-time and online would be ideal.

He feels apprehensive about going back to school, but knows it is something he must do. He expects the site to provide him with the information he needs to make a decision as to whether or not he should enroll. He expects this information to be presented in a clear, easy-to-understand manner.

Scenario

Bill has located the site for UMass Amherst's Continuing and Professional Education department. There, he wishes to:

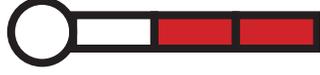
1. Learn about why he should choose CPE.
2. See if they have an online undergraduate business degree program.
3. Find out how much classes will cost.
4. Find out what the deadline is to apply for the spring semester.

Visual Ratings Guide

High Priority



Medium Priority



Low Priority



Evaluation Findings

Landing Page

CPE Classes



Fall 2012
Enroll Now



Winter 2013
Enrollment Opens October 17



Save time - register for classes directly in **SPIRE**. Click **here** to find out if you're eligible.



Search for Classes

Undergraduate Admissions Page

Application Deadlines

All application materials (application, fee, essay, resume, and official transcripts from all schools attended) must be received by this date to be considered.

For CPE programs (BBA, HTM, BGS & UWW):

Entering fall semester - April 15

Entering spring semester - October 1

For CPE Nursing programs (RN-BS & Second Bachelor's in Nursing):

February 1

See the [application instructions](#) for specific information about the process including the admissions standards, which vary by program. To complete an application, [click here](#).

“Effective” Issue

The site does not list Spring 2013 classes, despite the application deadline for the spring (October 1) having already passed. Prospective students would be much more likely to enroll for the spring if they knew what classes will be offered, even if the classes are subject to change.

Suggestion:

Update the site to list Spring 2013 classes. If necessary, include a note that classes are subject to change. Also, remove all references to how students should “start making plans” for the Fall semester and replace them with something more timely.



UMass Amherst: Continuing and Professional Education

www.umasslearn.net/programs/undergraduate/online-bachelor-business-administration

Home ▶ [Programs](#) ▶ [Undergraduate Degree Programs](#) ▶ Online Bachelor of Business Administration

ISENBERG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Online Bachelor of Business Administration

The Isenberg School Online Business Degree Completion Program

Earn your credentials at the business school that has received the highest ranking among public undergraduate business school programs in the Northeast in *Business Week's* annual survey, *The Best Undergraduate Business Schools*.

Earn the same prestigious degree and study with the same outstanding faculty as students in our highly acclaimed on-campus program. Keep working while you make progress toward your degree from your own home and at your own pace. Our unique emphasis on integrating online students into our on-campus learning community lets you benefit from discussions and networking opportunities with colleagues, faculty and notable alumni. Discover why our instructors have been ranked fourth in the nation by the Princeton Review — and why you don't have to sacrifice educational integrity for the convenience of an online degree.

Program Details

Prerequisites: A successful applicant will have the equivalent of at least one year of study at the undergraduate level or 27 transferable college-level semester credits, including completion of the Isenberg predictor courses, with a B or better; Financial Accounting, College Writing, Calculus, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Statistics.

While a 2.5 is the minimum GPA required, the applicant pool tends to have at least a 3.0 GPA.

Format: The required business courses are entirely online.

SEARCH FOR CLASSES

REGISTRATION CART

PROGRAMS

- ▶ Graduate Degree Programs
- ▶ Undergraduate Degree Programs
- Online BS in Hospitality and Tourism
- Online Bachelor of Business Administration**
- Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)
- RN to BS in Nursing
- Second Bachelor's Track in Nursing
- University Without Walls Degree Completion (B.A., B.S.)
- ▶ Online Programs

“Effective” Issue



One of the prerequisites listed for the Online Bachelor of Business Administration is “completion of the Isenberg predictor courses,” yet no further explanation of these is given. If a user has not met this requirement, there are no instructions for how to do so.

Suggestion:

Include an explanation (either in the form of a link or additional text), of what the Isenberg predictor courses are and how the user can take them if (s)he hasn't already.



“Efficient” Issue

The fees are only listed separately. There are no totals. Users want to know how much they have to pay without having to go to a series of pages and do the math themselves.

Suggestion:

Place the fees into a table so users can easily see them at a glance. If a fee merits explanation, use footnotes.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.umasslearn.net/financial-info/fees-expenses. The page title is "UMass Amherst: Continuing and Professional Education - Fees and Expenses - Mozilla Firefox". The page content includes a navigation menu with links for "About CPE", "Classes", "Programs", "Admissions", "Registration Info", "Financial Info", and "Student Services". Below the menu, there are sections for "SEARCH FOR CLASSES", "REGISTRATION CART", and "FINANCIAL INFO". The "FINANCIAL INFO" section is expanded to show a list of fees and expenses:

- ▶ Fees and Expenses
 - Payment of Fees
 - Class Fees
 - Registration & Late Add Fees
 - Ind Study / Practicum / Thesis / Dissertation / Internship Fees
 - Graduate Service Fee
 - Undergraduate Entering Fee
 - Undergraduate Commencement Fee
 - ID Card Fee
 - Returned Check Fee
 - Recreation Fee

Below the list, there is a link for "Annual/Corporate Billing".



Fees and Expenses

To help you plan your future, we've compiled a list of all the fees and expenses you're likely to encounter while studying at UMass. Please note that fees for textbooks are not included in this list.

- [Payment of Fees](#)
- [Class Fees](#)
- [Registration & Late Add Fees](#)
- [Graduate Service Fee](#)
- [Undergraduate Entering Fee](#)
- [Undergraduate Commencement Fee](#)
- [ID Card Fee \(optional\)](#)
- [Returned Check Fee](#)
- [Recreational Fee \(optional\)](#)



Register for a Fall class now

Start Making Plans

Registration for fall classes is now open. Classes fill up fast, so don't wait too long! Check out our **Fall classes** and start making your plans now.

Invest in Yourself

Let us help you connect to excellent, convenient, and flexible online and campus-based opportunities to meet your personal and professional academic goals.

- Complete a degree
- Take a course
- Experience online learning at its best
- Earn the respected credentials you deserve

Learn more about our **programs and offerings**.

CPE Classes



Fall 2012
Enroll Now



Winter 2013
Enrollment Opens October 17



Save time - register for classes directly in **SPiRE**. Click **here** to find out if you're eligible.



Search for Classes

Admissions



Apply Now

More Information

Request More Information

[Click here](#)



UMass Amherst is a *GI Jobs* Military Friendly School and a top choice for student veterans. [Click here to learn more...](#)

Technical Support Questions

For usernames, password resets, or technical support for online classes, please call 1-888-300-6407 or use the [live text chat](#).



“Engaging” Issue

The only piece of information on the landing page that speaks to what CPE is and why the user would want to enroll is a small text box in the lower-left corner, half of which is below the fold.

Suggestion:

Expand this section and move it up to be more prominent. To make space, the “More Information” section can be moved down.





> ENROLL NOW!

> Interested in ONLINE LEARNING?

Register for a Fall class now

Start Making Plans

Registration for fall classes is now open. Classes fill up fast, so don't wait too long! Check out our **Fall classes** and start making your plans now.

Invest in Yourself

Let us help you connect to excellent, convenient, and flexible online and campus-based opportunities to meet your personal and professional academic goals.

CPE Classes



Fall 2012 Enrollment Now



Winter 2013 Enrollment Opens October 17



Save time - register for classes directly in SPIRE. Click [here](#) to find out if you're eligible.



[Search for classes](#)

More Information

Request More Information

[Click here](#)



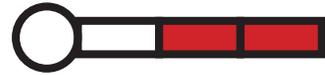
UMass Amherst is a GI Jobs Military Friendly School and a top choice for student veterans. [Click here to learn more...](#)

“Error Tolerant” Issue

The landing page encourages users to click a link to register for classes in SPIRE, but doesn't explain what SPIRE is. If they click on the link to find out, the SPIRE site will open in the same window.

Suggestion:

Include a brief explanation after the word SPIRE, such as “UMass Amherst's online student information system.”





“Easy to Learn” Issue

The name of the site is “UMass Amherst: Continuing and Professional Education,” but the URL is “umasslearn.net.” This could cause confusion in the user, especially since the rest of UMass Amherst’s website uses the base URL of “umass.edu” and the term “UMassULearn” is never used on the CPE site.

Suggestion:

Change the URL to something more logical and appropriate to the content, such as “umass.edu/cpe.”

Findings and Analysis

High Priority

“Effective” Issue - The site does not list Spring 2013 classes, despite the application deadline for the spring (October 1) having already passed. Prospective students would be much more likely to enroll for the spring if they knew what classes will be offered, even if the classes are subject to change.

Suggestion:

Update the site to list Spring 2013 classes. If necessary, include a note that classes are subject to change. Also, remove all references to how students should “start making plans” for the Fall semester and replace them with something more timely.

Analysis:

Sites that are updated frequently are more trustworthy, since users have reason to believe its information is accurate and up-to-date. Conversely, out-of-date information lessens the ethos of a site.

Plus, prospective students want to know which classes will be offered in the next full semester. Since this is a crucial factor in students’ decision-making, the lack of this information on the site will cause them to look elsewhere.

“Efficient” Issue - The fees are only listed separately. There are no totals. Users want to know how much they have to pay without having to go to a series of pages and do the math themselves.

Suggestion:

Place the fees into a table so users can easily see them at a glance. If a fee merits explanation, use footnotes.

Analysis:

Internet users are conditioned to having content summarized for them. They should not have to navigate a network of individual pages in order to calculate how much they will have to pay in fees.

In addition to placing a time-consuming burden on the user, this setup could be interperated as a means of hiding the true cost of the CPE program. Needless to say, trustworthiness is critical for an institution of higher learning, and issues of money are of particularly great concern to students. Since this problem involves both, it is important to address.

Medium Priority

“Engaging” Issue - The only piece of information on the landing page that speaks to what CPE is and why the user would want to enroll is a small text box in the lower-left corner, half of which is below the fold.

Suggestion:

Expand this section and move it up to be more prominent. To make space, the “More Information” section can be moved down.

Analysis:

A site should state its purpose first and foremost. While many users will come to the site already knowing what CPE is, one cannot assume that this is the case without running the risk of losing potential students.

Likewise, since the landing page is the first - and possibly only - thing users will see, it should do more to convince them why they should choose CPE, since they could be undecided and may not elect to click on the “About CPE” link.

Placing this information primarily above the fold is important because Internet users typically spend 80% of their time looking there².

“Error Tolerant” Issue - The landing page encourages users to click a link to register for classes in SPIRE, but doesn’t explain what SPIRE is. If they click on the link to find out, the SPIRE site will open in the same window.

Suggestion:

Include a brief explanation after the word SPIRE, such as “UMass Amherst’s online student information system.”

Analysis:

Users unfamiliar with UMass Amherst will likely not know what SPIRE is. A reasonable response to this would be to click on the link to learn about it, but if they do so, they will be brought to the SPIRE page with no way to return to the CPE page - a situation that could cause confusion and frustration in users.

“Effective” Issue - One of the prerequisites listed for the Online Bachelor of Business Administration is “completion of the Isenberg predictor courses,” yet no further explanation of these is given. If a user has not met this requirement, there are no instructions for how to do so.

Suggestion:

Include an explanation (either in the form of a link or additional text), of what the Isenberg predictor courses are and how the user can take them if (s)he hasn’t already.

Analysis:

Users need to know whether or not they can meet the prerequisites for a program before deciding whether or not to enroll, but there is no reason to expect that they would know what the Isenberg predictor courses are. New or unfamiliar information such as this should therefore be accompanied by an explanation of some sort to keep users on the site.

Low Priority

“Easy to Learn” Issue - The name of the site is “UMass Amherst: Continuing and Professional Education,” but the URL is “umasslearn.net.” This could cause confusion in the user, especially since the rest of UMass Amherst’s website uses the base URL of “umass.edu” and the term “UMassULearn” is never used on the CPE site.

Suggestion:

Change the URL to something more logical and appropriate to the content, such as “umass.edu/cpe.”

Analysis:

Internet users are used to extensions of a site containing the base URL. By failing to abide by this convention, the site may cause users to question its connection to UMass Amherst - a connection that contributes greatly to the site’s ethos.

The use of a “.net” domain rather than a “.edu” damages the site’s credibility as well, since “.edu” sites are known to be associated with educational institutions, while “.net” is a generic domain that can be used by anyone.

In addition, the unusual URL may make the site difficult to find, as “umasslearn.net” is less logical than something like “umass.edu/cpe” would be.

² Nielsen, Jakob. “Scrolling and Attention.” *Alertbox: Jakob Nielsen’s Newsletter on Web Usability*. 22 March 2010. Web. 10 October 2012. <<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/scrolling-attention.html>>

Conclusion

In navigating the site through the eyes of a user, the reviewer did not find a large number of issues, but those he encountered should be addressed in order to improve the usability of the site.

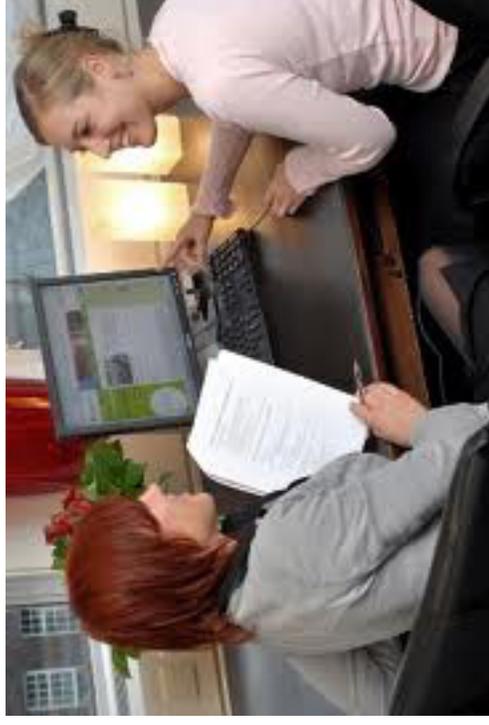
Information on the site - and in particular information that is of great importance to students, such as classes and fees - should be complete, up-to-date, and displayed in an efficient manner.

Also, the site as it stands makes a number of assumptions about the user that are not necessarily true. Prospective students may not know what SPIRE is, how to meet the “Isenberg predictor course” requirement, or even why they should enroll in CPE.

Obtaining a more logical URL is a less critical concern, but still one that should be addressed if possible.

At each step in the process of navigating the site, a user could become frustrated and decide to leave - something that needs to be taken into consideration when approaching the design and information architecture of the site.

For future testing, small-scale, qualitative tests would be beneficial. Following the movement of users as they think aloud will give valuable insight into how the typical user approaches the site and where they encounter issues.



A typical usability testing setup.

Appendix B: Personas

Bill



Male

24 years old

Occupation: Customer Service at Best Buy

How comfortable with using the Internet
(scale of 1-10): 10

“I get frustrated when there is no clear navigational path from the homepage to the program I’m interested in.”

Bill attended college for a year and a half before dropping out to care for a sick family member. He has been meaning to go back to finally get his degree, but has never gotten around to actually doing it.

Now, however, he is realizing that without a degree, he can never move forward in his career, so he is looking for a continuing education program where he can obtain one – preferably in the business field, so he can move up the ladder at his current place of employment. Therefore, he wants to keep his day job, so taking classes part-time would be ideal.

Bill wants to know the reputation of a program before enrolling. If he can’t get the degree he wants from a quality institution, he doesn’t want to waste his time. He also wants to know that the classes are within a reasonable driving distance for the same reason.

Stephanie



Female

28 years old

Occupation: Mother

How comfortable with using the Internet (scale of 1-10): 8 (“I’m very comfortable, but I’m sure there are people who know way more than me.”)

“Cost is important to me, because choosing to go to school is such a major decision that planning is necessary – and that includes financial planning.”

Stephanie has a B.A. in Education, but wants to obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. However, she just had her first child two years ago. Since she is a stay-at-home mom for the time being, she wants to get her MAT online.

Cost is very important to Stephanie. She is responsible with money and likes to plan ahead, so she wants to make sure she can afford a program before enrolling in it. Likewise, she wants to easily be able to find the requirements and prerequisites for enrolling in a program.

Stephanie expects a welcoming, encouraging tone from an academic website.

Appendix C: Test Plan

To avoid confusion and redundancy, the project timeline, appendices, and original page numeration have been removed.

Professional and Continuing Education Website Usability Test Plan

Researcher: Brian Klotz

11-14-2012

Contents

Introduction	3
Problem Statement and Test Objectives	4
User Profile	4
Testing Methodology and Tasks/Scenarios	5
Number of Participants	5
Tasks and Scenarios	5
Scenario #1	5
Scenario #2	5
Test Procedure	6
Test Environment	6
Testing Equipment	6
Data Collection	6
Project Timeline	7
Appendix A: Personas	8
Appendix B: Participant Screening Questionnaire	10
Appendix C: Pre-Test Questionnaire	12
Appendix D: Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #1	13
Appendix E: Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #2	14
Appendix F: Video Release/Consent Form	15

Introduction

The purpose of the usability test for UMass Dartmouth's Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) website is to collect feedback as to how users navigate the site, how easily they can find the information they need, and what their impressions of the site are.

Kathryn Salmon, PCE's Director of Marketing, wishes to improve the usability of the site. She is particularly concerned that prospective students may have difficulty finding information that will encourage them to enroll in PCE classes. Frustrated users are more likely to leave the site before learning if PCE is right for them, so therefore enhanced usability would aim to prevent this.

The conceptual framework by which this test will define usability is the "5Es" conceived by usability expert Whitney Quesenbery. These are¹:

- **Effective** – how completely and accurately the work or experience is completed or goals reached
- **Efficient** – How quickly this work can be completed
- **Engaging** – How well the interface draws the user into the interaction and how pleasant and satisfying it is to use
- **Error tolerant** – How well the product prevents errors and can help the user recover from mistakes that do occur
- **Easy to learn** – How well the product supports both the initial orientation and continued learning throughout the complete lifetime of use

This test plan contains:

- Problem statement and test objectives
- User profile
- Testing methodology and tasks/scenarios
- Test procedure
- Project Timeline
- Questionnaires and other materials to be used in testing, in appendices:
 - Appendix A: Personas
 - Appendix B: Participant screening questionnaire

¹ Barnum, Carol M. *Usability Testing Essentials*. Burlington: Elsevier, 2011. Print.

- Appendix C: Pre-test questionnaire
- Appendix D: Post-task questionnaire for task #1
- Appendix E: Post-task questionnaire for task #2
- Appendix F: Consent/video release form

Problem Statement and Test Objectives

Although the PCE website is currently live and in use, it is actively being updated to address both internal and external usability complaints. These issues include:

- Information may be difficult to find.
- The content may not be clear and understandable.
- The left sidebar menu may be too cumbersome.

Much of the copy has recently been revised in an effort to make it more readable and understandable for users. However, none of the content – new or old – has been user-tested.

As such, the goals for this test are to learn:

- users' expectations from site
- if commonly sought-after content is findable and understandable
- if organization is logical
- whether or not the copy is effective

The knowledge gained from these goals will in turn help the product achieve its overall goals for improvement, which are as follows:

- increase enrollment in PCE
- decrease complaints (internal and external) about lack of site usability
- enhance “stickiness” of site

The goals for both the test and the product itself were derived from interviews with the client, Kathryn Salmon, as well as individuals who match the criteria of the user profile (see below).

User Profile

The user profile was generated based on discussions with the client, and is intended to represent one of the two larger populations of potential PCE students. Since this is a small-scale study, the other major group— which includes older students and career-changers – will not be analyzed at this time, but would be worthy of future research.

Since the goals of this test are to improve the usability of the site for *prospective* students who have little to no prior experience with the site, current PCE students will be disqualified as testers. As the profile calls for experienced academics in roughly their mid-to-late 20's who balance school- and job-related responsibilities, graduate students will fulfill the role of tester nicely.

Therefore, the qualifications are that the tester:

- is a current graduate student
- is not already familiar with the PCE website
- has a job (an assistantship would qualify)
- is between 22 and 30 years old
- uses the Internet at least 7 hours/week
- has used academic websites before

The user personas that were created to guide the design of this guide can be found in **Appendix A**.

Testing Methodology and Tasks/Scenarios

Number of Participants

This will be a small-scale test with three to four users, which should be sufficient to obtain useful data.

Tasks and Scenarios

All scenarios will begin with the tester on the website landing page (www.umassd.edu/pce). Since the PCE website is a part of the larger UMass Dartmouth site, if at any point the tester leaves the page being tested, they will be instructed to return to the previous page.

Scenario #1

You are considering taking classes at PCE, but aren't sure if it is the right choice for you. You have gone to their website to find out.

Task

Take three minutes in total to look at the main page and the "Why UMass Dartmouth PCE?" page (you may go back and forth as you wish). You will be instructed to minimize the page once time has expired. At that time you will fill out the appropriate post-task questionnaire (**Appendix D**).

Objective

This will determine whether or not the landing page and "Why UMass Dartmouth PCE?" page are effective in persuasively communicating what PCE has to offer students. This is crucial because if users are not engaged by these pages, they may not remain on the site to look at the rest of the content.

Scenario #2

You have decided that you are interested in taking classes through PCE, but want to know some more specific information before you make your final decision.

Tasks

Locate the answers to the following questions that you have:

1. In what three towns/cities does PCE hold classes? (Online does not count.)
2. Are there due dates for applications?
3. If you have previously taken courses at UMass Dartmouth, where should you indicate this?
4. How much would it cost (including tuition and fees) to take an online MBA graduate course?
5. Does PCE accept MasterCard to pay for classes?

6. When must you withdraw from a course in order receive a refund of all tuition and fees?
7. On what day do courses begin for the Spring 2013 semester?

After this is completed, fill out the appropriate post-task questionnaire (**Appendix E**).

Objective

How easily the user can find and interpret the information, how long it takes them to do so, and if they can recover from errors along the way will determine if the site's navigation is logical, as well as if the content is findable and scannable.

Test Procedure

Test Environment

Testing will occur in the field – on campus at UMass Dartmouth. A quiet area will be used to minimize distractions.

Testing Equipment

- A laptop
 - connected to the Internet
 - has a built-in webcam
- Pen and paper

Data Collection

The researcher will observe each test and record what occurs. This will include not only how easily the tester is able to complete the tasks, but also their thoughts throughout, as they will be instructed to think aloud as they work through each task. In addition to the researcher's notes, the tester will be recorded in both audio and video (with their consent – see **Appendix F**) using the laptop's built-in webcam.

As this will be a small-scale study, the data collected will be mostly qualitative. The tester will give their thoughts and impressions of their experience both during the task as well as in writing on the pre-test and post-task questionnaires (**Appendices C, D, and E**, respectively).

Some quantitative data will be collected as well. The researcher will record the length of time it tasks the tester to complete each task in Scenario 2. While this metric would be more useful with a larger sample, it will still provide insight into how easily users are able to find information on the site.

Appendix D: Screening Questionnaires

Since the researcher had been in contact with all of the testers prior to screening, their contact information was not collected on the screening questionnaires.

PT

PCE Website Usability Study Participant Screener

Recruiter Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am conducting a study on how people use the website for UMass Dartmouth's Professional and Continuing Education program. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify to participate. If you are selected, you may choose to participate in the study, which will take no more than one hour of your time.

Candidate

Name: Cassandra

Age: 28 (if younger than 23 or older than 30, terminate)

Are you currently enrolled in a university or college as a graduate student?

Yes No (Terminate)

Are you currently enrolled in one or more Professional and Continuing Education classes at UMass Dartmouth?

Yes (Terminate) No

Have you ever used an academic website before?

Yes No (Terminate)

Have you used the UMass Dartmouth Professional and Continuing Education website more than once in the past year?

Yes (Terminate) No

Are you currently employed?

Yes No (Terminate)

(If yes,) what type of employment is it?

Full-Time

Part-Time

Graduate Assistantship

Other

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with using the Internet? 8

On average, how much time do you spend on the Internet per week?

Less than 3 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 3 and 7 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 7 and 10 hours _____

More than 10 hours _____ ✓

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you are selected to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a release form that allows us to videotape your activity for research purposes.

Please provide us with your contact information so that we may inform you if you are selected.

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

TI

~~Appendix B~~ Participant Screening Questionnaire

PCE Website Usability Study Participant Screener

Recruiter Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am conducting a study on how people use the website for UMass Dartmouth's Professional and Continuing Education program. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify to participate. If you are selected, you may choose to participate in the study, which will take no more than one hour of your time.

Candidate

Name: Jenaling

Age: 17 (if younger than 22 or older than 30, terminate)

Are you currently enrolled in a university or college as a graduate student?

Yes No (Terminate)

Are you currently enrolled in one or more Professional and Continuing Education classes at UMass Dartmouth?

Yes (Terminate) No

Have you ever used an academic website before?

Yes No (Terminate)

In the past six months, have you spent more than one hour on the UMass Dartmouth Professional and Continuing Education website?

Yes (Terminate) No

Are you currently employed?

Yes No (Terminate)

(If yes,) what type of employment is it?

Full-Time

Part-Time

Graduate Assistantship

Other

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with using the Internet? 10

On average, how much time do you spend on the Internet per week?

Less than 3 hours _____ **(Terminate)**

Between 3 and 7 hours _____ **(Terminate)**

Between 7 and 10 hours _____

More than 10 hours ✓ _____

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you are selected to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a release form that allows us to videotape your activity for research purposes.

Please provide us with your contact information so that we may inform you if you are selected.

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

Td

~~Appendix B~~: Participant Screening Questionnaire

PCE Website Usability Study Participant Screener

Recruiter Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am conducting a study on how people use the website for UMass Dartmouth's Professional and Continuing Education program. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify to participate. If you are selected, you may choose to participate in the study, which will take no more than one hour of your time.

Candidate

Name: Danielle

Age: 25 (if younger than 22 or older than 30, **terminate**)

Are you currently enrolled in a university or college as a graduate student?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

Are you currently enrolled in one or more Professional and Continuing Education classes at UMass Dartmouth?

Yes (**Terminate**) No

Have you ever used an academic website before?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

In the past six months, have you spent more than one hour on the UMass Dartmouth Professional and Continuing Education website?

Yes (**Terminate**) No

Are you currently employed?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

(If yes,) what type of employment is it?

Full-Time

Part-Time

Graduate Assistantship

Other

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with using the Internet? 10

On average, how much time do you spend on the Internet per week?

Less than 3 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 3 and 7 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 7 and 10 hours _____

More than 10 hours J

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you are selected to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a release form that allows us to videotape your activity for research purposes.

Please provide us with your contact information so that we may inform you if you are selected.

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

T3

~~Appendix B~~ Participant Screening Questionnaire

PCE Website Usability Study Participant Screener

Recruiter Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I am conducting a study on how people use the website for UMass Dartmouth's Professional and Continuing Education program. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify to participate. If you are selected, you may choose to participate in the study, which will take no more than one hour of your time.

Candidate

Name: Tol

Age: 23 (if younger than 22 or older than 30, **terminate**)

Are you currently enrolled in a university or college as a graduate student?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

Are you currently enrolled in one or more Professional and Continuing Education classes at UMass Dartmouth?

Yes (**Terminate**) No

Have you ever used an academic website before?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

In the past six months, have you spent more than one hour on the UMass Dartmouth Professional and Continuing Education website?

Yes (**Terminate**) No

Are you currently employed?

Yes No (**Terminate**)

(If yes,) what type of employment is it?

Full-Time

Part-Time

Graduate Assistantship

Other

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with using the Internet? 8

On average, how much time do you spend on the Internet per week?

Less than 3 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 3 and 7 hours _____ (Terminate)

Between 7 and 10 hours ✓

More than 10 hours _____

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you are selected to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a release form that allows us to videotape your activity for research purposes.

Please provide us with your contact information so that we may inform you if you are selected.

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

Appendix E: Pre-Test Questionnaires

Cassandra

PT

Pre-Test Questionnaire

1. When choosing a school/academic program, what factors are most important to you?

COST / ACADEMIC INTERESTS - WOULD THE PROGRAM
FULFILL MY INTERESTS
(COURSES OFFERED)

2. Describe the general tone that you would want from a university website?

INVITING - UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT NEEDS -
EFFICIENT - PROFESSIONAL

3. When looking at the site for a school/academic program for the first time, what are the first 3 pieces of information you would look for?

- COST / TUITION
- COURSE LISTINGS
- ~~AREAS~~ CAREER POTENTIAL

4. What categories of information would you expect to see on an academic program's website?

- academics - (degrees / programs)
- tuition and financial aid
- ~~campus life~~
- about / history of college or program
- career offerings w/ obtained degree
- course listings

5. What are some things that tend to frustrate you about academic websites?

ALWAYS SO MANY LINKS! HAVE TO SEARCH THROUGH
MULTIPLE PAGES IN ORDER TO FIND SOME SPECIFIC
INFO IN A RANDOM SPOT (MAYBE THIS IS JUST UMASS.)

Pre-Test Questionnaire

1. When choosing a school/academic program, what factors are most important to you?

- cost
- proximity
- course subjects
- time

2. Describe the general tone that you would want from a university website?

- Informative yet friendly

3. When looking at the site for a school/academic program for the first time, what are the first 3 pieces of information you would look for?

- cost
- Programs/course subjects
- proximity to home/location

4. What categories of information would you expect to see on an academic program's website?

- General information about school
- Detailed information on each program

5. What are some things that tend to frustrate you about academic websites?

- Disorganization
- Too much info/not being able to find specific info
- Slow loading times
- ~~← [scribbled out text]~~

Pre-Test Questionnaire

1. When choosing a school/academic program, what factors are most important to you?

- prestige of program / school
- cost
- ~~access~~ - financial aid opportunities
- possibility of me getting job w/ program

2. Describe the general tone that you would want from a university website?

- Friendly, encouraging

3. When looking at the site for a school/academic program for the first time, what are the first 3 pieces of information you would look for?

- ~~Qualifications for applicant~~ Program overview
- application requirements
- cost

4. What categories of information would you expect to see on an academic program's website?

- cost / financial aid
- application info
- program overview
- contact information

5. What are some things that tend to frustrate you about academic websites?

- ~~data~~ difficult navigation — if I go to one page, but have trouble getting back to previous page

Joe

T3

~~Appendix~~ Pre-Test Questionnaire

1. When choosing a school/academic program, what factors are most important to you?

- Quality of professors
- #/ type of courses
- Professional orientation of program

2. Describe the general tone that you would want from a university website?

• Informative but casual

3. When looking at the site for a school/academic program for the first time, what are the first 3 pieces of information you would look for?

- Courses
- programs
- faculty

4. What categories of information would you expect to see on an academic program's website?

~~Academics~~ Courses, programs, faculty, admissions

5. What are some things that tend to frustrate you about academic websites?

Unclear navigation

Appendix F:
Post-Task
Questionnaires for
Scenario #1

Cassandra

PT

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #1

1. What is your initial impression of the site?

BECAUSE IT IS A WEBSITE FOR A UNIVERSITY THE CONTENT FOR THIS SITE IS RELEVANT TO THE ENTIRE SITE. WHILE THERE WAS A LOT OF INFORMATION TO READ, I THINK THE SITE DID A GOOD JOB OF BREAKING THAT CONTENT UP. INTRODUCTIONS ARE EASILY LOCATED AT TOP OF PAGE, MAKING FOR A FLOW OF INFO THAT FLOWS WELL.

2. Why would someone want to take classes at PCE?

- FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES
- FULL-TIME JOBS
- FINANCIAL ~~FOR~~ CONCERNS
- EXPLORING TOPICS

3. How effective do you think these two pages are in persuading visitors to sign up for PCE classes?

Not effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Effective

Explain your rating:

I THINK THAT THE CONCERNS THAT WEBSITE ADDRESSES ARE ONES THAT MOST POTENTIAL STUDENTS CAN RELATE TO AND THAT IT DOES A NICE JOB OF FULFILLING ~~THE~~ PCE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THOSE CONCERNS.

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #1

1. What is your initial impression of the site?

Well-organized and reliable - all of the needed information was provided and ~~easy~~ scanable.

2. Why would someone want to take classes at PCE?

They have a full-time job or other obligations that require a schooling schedule to be flexible - they cannot put school first.

3. How effective do you think these two pages are in persuading visitors to sign up for PCE classes?

Not effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Effective

Explain your rating:

A 10 would ~~not~~ provide a glimpse of what types of courses are available; I gave it a nine though because I think - based on the links I saw - that I could find that info easily.

Danielle

T2

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #1

1. What is your initial impression of the site?

- Scannable
- links of major categories I'm interested in
- ugly picture on page

2. Why would someone want to take classes at PCE?

- affordable
- flexible schedule
- reputable school

3. How effective do you think these two pages are in persuading visitors to sign up for PCE classes?

Not effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Effective

7 ~~8~~

Explain your rating:

I don't think I'd be ready to sign up based on these pages, but I'd consider contacting the School for more info.

Joe

T3

13

~~Appendix D~~ Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #1

1. What is your initial impression of the site?

Informative

- Made me want to learn more about the school
- Gave the program descriptions, which are the most important part, right up front.

2. Why would someone want to take classes at PCE?

- #1 ranked regional PCE University
- Wide range of programs
- Convenient hours and location.

3. How effective do you think these two pages are in persuading visitors to sign up for PCE classes?

Not effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Effective

Explain your rating: Very informative, but could be structured more effectively.

Appendix G:
Post-Task
Questionnaires for
Scenario #2

Cassandra

PT

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #2

1. Overall, how difficult was it to **locate** the information you wanted to find?

Very Easy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Difficult

Explain your rating:

IM IN THE MIDDLE ON THIS - THERE WAS A BIT OF CONFUSION AS TO ~~IF~~ THE LINKS I CLICKED ON WOULD TAKE ME AWAY FROM THE PAGE. ONCE I REALIZED WHERE TO LOOK I FOUND THE INFO QUICKLY ENOUGH.

2. Once you found the information, how **clear and understandable** was it?

Not Clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Clear

Explain your rating:

3. How **logical** is the organization of information on the site?

Not Logical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Logical

Explain your rating:

ALL As I mentioned above, I was a bit confused where to go, however the organization on the left sidebar made it easy to find what I needed. This was clearly defined.

4. What recommendations (if any) do you have for improving the site to make it easier to use?

I think that the info was clear and concise. LEFT SIDE COLUMN IS ~~VERY~~ ORGANIZED BUT THERE ARE QUITE A FEW LINKS. PERHAPS SOME OF THESE COULD BE COMBINED.

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #2

1. Overall, how difficult was it to locate the information you wanted to find?

Very Easy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Difficult

Explain your rating: At first, I had a hard time understanding the layout of the page, but once I got the hang of it, it became easier

2. Once you found the information, how clear and understandable was it?

Not Clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Clear

Explain your rating: The information was written in a straight forward manner

3. How logical is the organization of information on the site?

Not Logical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Logical

Explain your rating: The categories are arranged logically but the side menu was not prominent - info on the page itself was where my attention went

4. What recommendations (if any) do you have for improving the site to make it easier to use?

More stock photo; and examples of programs someone could enroll in.
from photographix (they ~~are~~ take photos of our students on our campus)

Danielle

T2

Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #2

1. Overall, how difficult was it to locate the information you wanted to find?

Very Easy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Difficult

Explain your rating:

The links were hard to find!

2. Once you found the information, how clear and understandable was it?

Not Clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Clear

Explain your rating:

I thought there was a lot of informative text, but it wasn't very scannable.

3. How logical is the organization of information on the site?

Not Logical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Logical

Explain your rating:

Pretty logical, though some of the categories on the left were confusing

4. What recommendations (if any) do you have for improving the site to make it easier to use?

-making table of content links more clearly apparent

Joe

T3

14

~~Appendix B~~ Post-Task Questionnaire for Task #2

1. Overall, how difficult was it to **locate** the information you wanted to find?

Very Easy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Difficult

Explain your rating:

Most was very easy. Some things I was expecting to be bold or a link.

2. Once you found the information, how **clear and understandable** was it?

Not Clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Clear

Explain your rating:

Very clear.

3. How **logical** is the organization of information on the site?

Not Logical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Logical

Explain your rating:

It made sense for a student looking to find out more information about the program.

4. What recommendations (if any) do you have for improving the site to make it easier to use?

Change up the fonts occasionally to set things apart.

Appendix H: Video Consent/ Release Form

The participants allowed for only their first names to be associated with this study. Therefore their last names and signatures have been blacked out on the following forms. The original forms are in the sole possession of the researcher.

PT

Video Release/Consent Form

I hereby give my permission to be videotaped in the PCE website usability test conducted on 11-7-2012 (date).

Only my first name may be reported in association with the session results.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the video and audio recording to the following parties:

- The researcher
- The client
- The class and instructor of the ENL620 class for the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

I further understand that the recording and any highlights extracted from it may be used in research, meetings, and presentations by these parties.

I waive any rights to the recording and understand that it may be used for the purposes described in this release form without further permission.

I understand that if for any reason I do not want to continue I can leave at any time during this recording session.

Printed Name: CASSANDRA 

Date: 11-7-2012

Signature: 

T1

Video Release/Consent Form

I hereby give my permission to be videotaped in the PCE website usability test conducted on 11-15-2012 (date).

Only my first name may be reported in association with the session results.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the video and audio recording to the following parties:

- The researcher
- The client
- The class and instructor of the ENL620 class for the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

I further understand that the recording and any highlights extracted from it may be used in research, meetings, and presentations by these parties.

I waive any rights to the recording and understand that it may be used for the purposes described in this release form without further permission.

I understand that if for any reason I do not want to continue I can leave at any time during this recording session.

Printed Name: JENALINA [REDACTED]

Date: 11-15-2012

Signature: [REDACTED]

T2

Video Release/Consent Form

I hereby give my permission to be videotaped in the PCE website usability test conducted on 11/19/2012 (date).

Only my first name may be reported in association with the session results.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the video and audio recording to the following parties:

- The researcher
- The client
- The class and instructor of the ENL620 class for the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

I further understand that the recording and any highlights extracted from it may be used in research, meetings, and presentations by these parties.

I waive any rights to the recording and understand that it may be used for the purposes described in this release form without further permission.

I understand that if for any reason I do not want to continue I can leave at any time during this recording session.

Printed Name: Danielle [redacted]

Date: 11/19/2012

Signature: [redacted]

T3

Appendix F: Video Release/Consent Form

I hereby give my permission to be videotaped in the PCE website usability test conducted on 11/21/2012 (date).

Only my first name may be reported in association with the session results.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the video and audio recording to the following parties:

- The researcher
- The client
- The class and instructor of the ENL620 class for the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

I further understand that the recording and any highlights extracted from it may be used in research, meetings, and presentations by these parties.

I waive any rights to the recording and understand that it may be used for the purposes described in this release form without further permission.

I understand that if for any reason I do not want to continue I can leave at any time during this recording session.

Printed Name:

Joseph [REDACTED]

Date:

11/21/2012

Signature:

[REDACTED]