Usability Test of the iSchool Website

Methodology

Part One:

Lab Usability Test
- 5 participants
- 2 testers
- 1 laptop
- 5 performance tasks
- 7 qualitative questions

5 Performance Tasks:
1. Find the list of short-courses.
2. Find information about the Spring Showcase.
3. Who will be teaching Usability in Fall 2011?
4. Who is researching archives?
5. Find help with technology.

Crowdsourcing Usability Test
- 55 participants - 14 spammers
- 1 Amazon Mechanical Turk platform
- 4 performance tasks
- 6 open-ended questions

41 Participants
- 0 experienced users of this website
- 15 women, 26 men
- 19 to 51 years old

4 Performance Tasks:
1. What’s the GPA requirement for admission?
2. How many semester hours is needed to graduate with a master’s degree?
3. What are the faculty specializations?
4. Who provide financial aid?

Part Two:

Objective: To make the iSchool Website more usable to its audiences.

Problems Identified

There were long lists without any sort functions
- All five participants scrolled through this list looking for the class
- Four of the five commented on the need for a sort function.
- None of them realized there was a sort function.

There were invisible tools
- All five participants scrolled through this list looking for the class
- Four of the five commented on the need for a sort function.
- None of them realized there was a sort function.

Information on a single subject is divided between multiple pages
- "I honestly don't know what to do with this stuff." -- Participant 2

Menu options appear to overlap
- "What's the difference between Labs and Technology?" -- Participant 3

There was out-of-date information
- Dr. Ciaran Trace is not listed at all on the "Specializations" page.
- Kai Mantsch is still listed as the Web Manager in "Technology", "Support Staff."

Recommendations

- Font sizes should be increased.
- Links should be clearly and uniquely identified as links.
- Images should illustrate and enhance understanding of the text.
- Long lists should always have an obvious sort function.
- The terms used in the main menus should be specific and unambiguous.
- Web pages should be regularly checked for out-of-date information.
- Relevant pages should be cross-linked.
- Each main menu should be a portal to the entire website.
- Future testing should be done with the remaining five user groups:
  - Prospective Students
  - Current Students
  - Alumni
  - Faculty
  - Staff
  - Job-Seekers
  - Donors

Background pictures are not relevant to the iSchool.
- "Remove the yoga people, or at least give a hint on what are they doing there.” -- Crowdsourcing Participant