Usability findings for OU Campus Calendar (phase 1)
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Synopsis
As part of the process for launching the Campus Calendar (phase 1), OU Web Communications conducted a usability test to get user feedback and find any trouble areas within the site. The testing was performed on a MacBook Pro using Firefox 3 at a screen resolution of 1440 x 900. Each test was recorded (audio + video) using Silverback.

The following is a summary of findings, comments and recommendations based on these findings.

Tasks
We developed the usability test based on six tasks defined by Web Communications. The six tasks for the OU Campus Calendar (phase 1) are to find a specific time & print details for an event, find specific events belonging to an overall event (Howdy Week), find all events happening on a specific day, find the specific day of an event, find calendar help topics, and submit an event to the calendar.

Participants
There were six participants invited to the session, all were from the University of Oklahoma. Three students participated, two staff members participated and one student did not show up for the session.

Each participant was given a 1gb iPod shuffle and a 1gb OU Flash drive as an incentive for completing the usability test.

First Impression.
What is your first impression?
Four of the five testers were surprised by the amount of information on the first page (September 3rd, 2010). Two testers commented positively about the design.

“Doesn’t present like a calendar… on first glace, after you get to looking at it you can follow it. But, when you have so many things on one day, it’s hard to see everything at one time.”

“There is a lot of it (information) right off the bat.”

“There’s a lot of information on that first page…”

“’I am assuming these are headlines… Everything has today’s date, so I am assuming the information is current.”
“I like the layout, I like the fade in the back.”

“It’s a fairly streamlined designed, you’ve got the month view and listing by day. Fairly easy to see what’s going on.”

**Recommendations**

- On September 3rd 2010, six of the ten “events” on the first page of the calendar were Academic Calendar related, this definitely added to the “too much information” issue. However, in the future we might have days with 10 – 20 actual events, so an option would be to decrease the number of events showing on each page from 10 to something more manageable, maybe 4-6.

- Another option would be to place the “Academic Calendar Events” in a separate calendar. Although the dates for these things are very important, maybe incorporating an “Important Dates” list somewhere on the calendar could help to sort out Academic Dates from actual OU Events.

- Another option could be to place an importance on events so that actual OU Events would show up above Academic Calendar events.

**Task 1: Find a Specific Event Time and Print.**

You know there is a Women’s soccer game vs. Baylor on September 26th. Find out what time the match begins and print out the details.

All five testers used the grid calendar and clicked on the 26th of September, found the “Women’s Soccer: Baylor” event and expanded it.

One tester noticed that once the print icon is clicked, nothing prints so he would be responsible for printing the event with his browser.

One tester searched for a print link or button inside of the print-friendly view.

One tester missed the time completely and hovered on the URL to the athletics department, then decided to click on the “Learn More about this event.” Eventually finding the event’s time on the Athletics Calendar. From that point she was confused and gave up while searching on the Athletics Calendar.

One user mentioned the need to have a link to directions or a map.

“I am assuming I can click on the 26th, looks like it’s from 5-6pm.”

“I would be inclined to click on the 26th on the calendar... at the top I have the date and the time... I can click the print button. I see this, but what I notice is that it doesn’t bring up a print queue, so I would assume that I am responsible for printing it to my printer.”
"I see the game, so I’m going to mouse over it and a more info link pops up, which I’ll click on… I see the print icon which I’ll click and it comes up in a printer-friendly window. From there I will just use Firefox to print it.”

Scale for Task 1
How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?
Responses: 1, 3, 1, 2, 2
Average: 1.8

Recommendations
With the exception of one tester getting confused when she went to the Athletics site, all testers performed this task with ease.
• We should initiate the print function when print is clicked.
• Possibly increase importance of the event’s time either through placement, size or color.

Task 2: Howdy Week Event List.
You’re thinking about planning your schedule for Howdy Week. Find all the events associated with Howdy Week.

All five testers immediately went to the search box and searched “Howdy Week.”

Three testers were uncertain about the search results.

“There are two on August 27th… I really thought there were more, so I may not have had the right search parameters.”

“I see two events on Aug 27th, both of them have Howdy Week in the headline.”

“It seems to me that there would be more than that for Howdy Week, I’m not sure if there is some hiding… I notice its only searching from August 27th… so there may be some before that that it’s not picking up.”

“It was easy to find the information, but I don’t know if all the information is there.”

Scale for Task 2
How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?
Responses: 3, 1, 1, 1, 3
Average: 1.8

Recommendations
Task 2 was easy to perform.
• The accuracy of search results was questionable. We should look into the inaccurate search results; this is possibly a bug in the search functionality.
Task 3: All Events on Specific Day.

Find all the things happening on campus on November 20th.

All five testers immediately clicked on the right arrow in the calendar to move forward to November.

One tester mentioned “Home or Away” in the sporting event description would be helpful.

After clicking on the “more info” link, one tester was surprised by the lack on info for the “Football: Baylor” event.

One tester mentioned the possible need for a drop down menu on the months, so instead of clicking 12 times on the arrow to get to November 2011, he could simply select it from a drop down menu.

“I am going to click here to change the month to November…”

“Using the calendar, I’m going to shuffle over to November…”

“Click on more info… not really any info there, except for phone number. Well, there is a link to sooner sports that would probably be more informative.”

Scale for Task 3

How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?

Responses: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average: 1

Recommendations

Task 3 was extremely easy to perform.

- Content for sporting events could be fleshed out more.
- Adding “Home Game” or even “V.S.” in the title as well as adding something more descriptive than “Baylor” in the sporting event details would be helpful to the user.
- A drop down for months would be a good idea, depending on our use cases. If we start to have events 1-2 years out that are being heavily viewed, we should make them more accessible. However those events could be searched for as well.
Task 4: Last Day of Fall Semester.

Find out the last day of Fall ’10 semester.

Four of the five testers immediately clicked the “Academic Calendar” link in the left column, taking them to the admissions site. All five testers clicked on the “Fall 2010 Academic Calendar” link taking them to the Fall 2010 Academic Calendar page.

One user searched “Fall Semester Schedule” before discovering, and clicking, the “Academic Calendar” link in the left column.

Four of the five testers scrolled down while scanning the page and ultimately becoming frustrated by trying to find the information.

Two users failed to find the information all together despite successfully navigating to the page with the information on it.

All five testers expressed concerns with the formatting of the page and offered suggestions on how to better organize the information.

“I guess it helps that I have worked here so long so I know to look at the Academic Calendar, but I have always felt that our academic calendar was never laid out very well.”

“Because everybody cares what the last day of the semester is… I would put it in bold and I would put it in crimson.”

“I’m looking at this and its kind of jumbled…meaning that, you’ve got August, November, December, August, November, December… Chronologically would be better for me.”

“Being that I haven’t found it yet, I would say it’s pretty difficult…”

“It was pretty easy to find the Academic Calendar, but that specific thing… I couldn’t find it.”

“The Academic Calendar is a little hard to view just on the straight list, if things were bulleted or offset it would be easier.”

Scale for Task 4
How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?

Responses: 7, 9, 5, 1, 3
Average: 5

Recommendations
Task 4 was somewhat difficult for users to perform.
• Starting from the calendar, testers could easily navigate to the Academic Calendar; however once on the Academic Calendar page, testers had trouble finding the specific information.
• It seems the tables on the Admissions site are not styled. We should add CSS to style the tables and offer help organizing the information based on the feedback from this study.

Task 5: Find Calendar Help.

Find Calendar help topics.
One tester searched “Help” before finally giving up on the task.

One tester scanned around and ultimately clicked on the “Contact Us” link in the footer and assumed this was the help section.

One tester scanned around and finally decided to click on “Academic Calendar” before giving up on the task.

Two testers scanned around and decided to click on the “Feedback” tab. Both testers were confused once they got into Get Satisfaction, spending time scanning and clicking around but ultimately failing to find the Help Topics.

“Normally with Help, I would look… I’m not real sure…”

“I would think that there would be an FAQ section right down at the bottom, I don’t see it.”

“I would be inclined to click “Feedback”, The “Feedback” is a little intuitive, but not as obvious as “Help.”

“I see I can ask a question and view other ideas, but that isn’t finding help topics.”

Scale for Task 5
How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?
Responses: 10, 10, 10, 2, 10
Average: 8.4

Recommendations
Task 5 was very difficult for testers to perform.
• We should spend some time reworking Get Satisfaction making the Help topics easier to find and also examine how users are using Get Satisfaction.
Task 6: Submitting an Event.

Your student group is hosting a study group that you would like to be open to campus. Submit your event to the calendar.

All five testers immediately clicked on the “Submit Event” link.

One tester requested integration with ListServes, so if you made an event for Panhellenic it would send a notification to all people on the Panhellenic ListServ.

Scale for Task 5
How easy was it to find this information (rate how easy or hard it was to find on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?
Responses: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1
Average: 1

Recommendations
Task 5 was extremely easy for testers to perform.
• No recommendations at this time.

Debrief Questions.

1) Overall, how difficult or easy was it to find the information you were looking for? (on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult)?
Responses: 3, 3, 1, 3, 3
Average: 2.6

2) Thinking about the tasks you were asked to perform, which was the most frustrating or challenging task? Why?
   “Finding help topics. The setup is pretty easy but if there was a problem, it might be hard to find help.”
   “Help. It’s not easy to find.”
   “Looking for Help – nothing was labeled “help” specifically, but I assumed Feedback was along the same lines.”
   “The help information task – There was nothing that said “help” or “calendar information”, so I couldn’t find the help info.
   “Finding the last day of class. The list was not in chronological order.”

3) Overall, what do you like about the OU Campus Calendar?
   “Very easy navigation & search features. Love the design template. NICE JOB.”
“The easy navigation – scrolling through the months & selecting days was a breeze. The design was also very streamlined, very slick.”

“Easy to navigate! Very user friendly.”

“The dates make it easy to navigate.”

“I like how quick the “at a glance” for the day is.”

4) Overall, what do you dislike about the OU Campus Calendar?

“Too much info on one page (2 pages for one day?) Events need more info (football home or away.)”

“It would be tricky to navigate if you didn’t have computer experience, I personally had no problems, but I can see how others would.”

“No pictures for events!”

“You have to be specific in what you are looking for. Time range search needed.”

“The inability to find help.”

5) Are there things or features you think they should add to the site?

“I would like to see an ability to set a reminder for an event, I wanted to see via email or text message.”


“Maybe add the potential for thumbnail images to associate with events. WIMGO does this for example.”

“In addition to the daily view, and weekly view would be cool. Also, the help info.”

“A scroll ticker at the top of events for the day. Something that would encourage users who weren’t looking for a specific event to participate and get involved.”