



studio + interactive

Usability Report

Mayor's Office of Community Technology

Prepared for:

Tom Cullen
Mayor's Office of Community Technology
818 Pollard Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30315
404-880-7220

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. PROCEDURE	3
3. PARTICIPANTS.....	3
4. DEMOGRAPHIC GRAPHS.....	4
5. TASKS	7
5.1 TASK 1	7
5.2 TASK 2	8
5.3 TASK 3	9
6. POST QUESTIONNAIRE	11
7. POST QUESTIONNAIRE GRAPHS.....	11
8. OVERALL COMMENTS.....	14
9. CONCLUSION	15
APPENDIX A	16
APPENDIX B	17
APPENDIX C	19
APPENDIX D.....	20
APPENDIX E	21
APPENDIX F	22

1. INTRODUCTION

On Friday, June 6, 2003, Studio Four Interactive conducted a usability testing on the first version of the website redesigned for the Mayor’s Office of Community Technology. The purpose of this usability testing was for random users to visit the site, perform various tasks, and give feedback once complete. By gathering this information, Studio Four Interactive will be able to make minor adjustments to the site to pull together a final version of the site that will be suitable to the public.

Website usability is defined as the measure of how an individual user actually navigates, finds information, and interacts with a website. As such, it is an immediate and indisputable way to learn what does and what does not work with the current site at hand. In Studio Four Interactive’s usability testing, we asked a random panel of users furnish us with a certain bit of information. This included:

- Demographic information
- Answers to a series of tasks to complete on the site
- Overall ratings of various areas of the website

2. PROCEDURE

The testing ran for two hours, with no set time restraint to complete the tasks. A random user come into the room, was greeted by one of the team members who gave a brief description of what the usability was about. That team member then requested that each participant sign a consent/release agreement that acknowledged the following:

- The user must agree not to talk about the website to anyone.
- He/she could withdraw from the testing at any point without penalty.
- He/she understood that their answers would help to aid the final version of the website.
- He/she understood that their name would not be used in any public documentation of the study.

Upon agreement with these things, the user was escorted to a computer where they could begin the actual usability testing.

The next step for the user to complete was a general demographic questionnaire, which would supply Studio Four Interactive with information that would assist in defining the audience profile.

After the demographic information was recorded, the user was given three tasks to complete using the ACT website. These tasks were taken from user scenarios created earlier in the planning phase. The tasks allowed the user to go to various sections of the site and record information. By doing this, Studio Four Interactive would be able to better understand which areas of the website were intuitive and user-friendly, and which areas might need to be better defined.

Finally, the user was asked to fill out a post-use questionnaire which contained questions regarding the overall experience of the site. This was made of checkboxes with a final space for any additional comments.

A sample of the documentation mentioned above can be found in Appendix A through Appendix F.

3. PARTICIPANTS

The majority of the users that participated in Studio Four Interactive’s usability testing were students from the Art Institute of Atlanta, making the main age range between 18 and 24. The students were from various majors of study,

such as Graphic Design, Media Arts & Animation, Multimedia & Web Design, and Photography. The gender of the participants was evenly distributed.

Other questions asked were related to computing and other information regarding internet-savviness. Most users own a computer, and more applicants were comfortable with Microsoft Windows, rather than with Macintosh (the usability testing was performed using Microsoft Windows). Most users either use the internet daily or several times a week, and the level of experience was divided between intermediate and expert; there were no participants that considered themselves beginners.

Finally, users were asked how they use computers. The participants were encouraged to check as many choices that applied. Popular answers included email, games/entertainment, word processing, graphics, and research.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC GRAPHS

Below are illustrated representations of the information gathered from the demographic questionnaire.

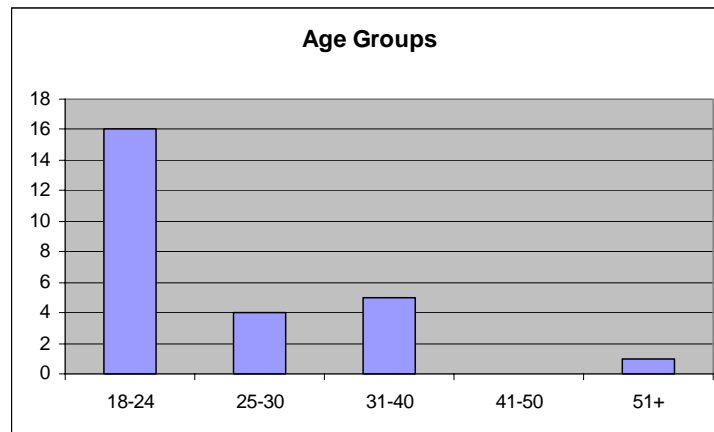


Figure 1: Age Group of participants

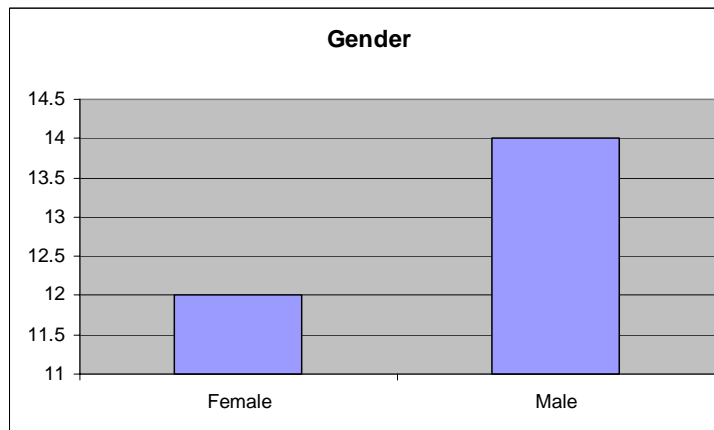


Figure 2: Gender of participants

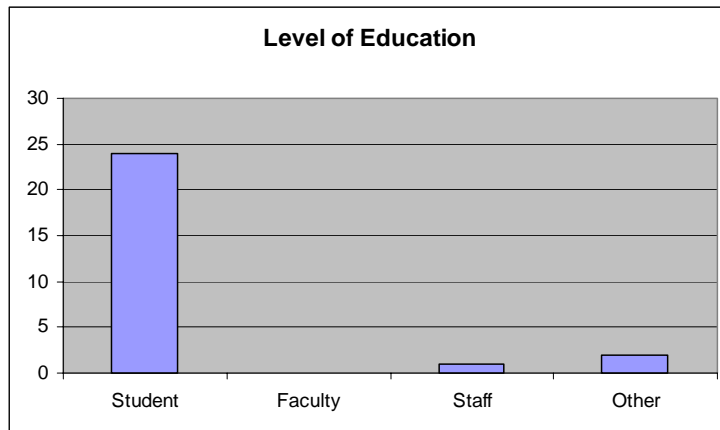


Figure 3: Participants' Level of Education

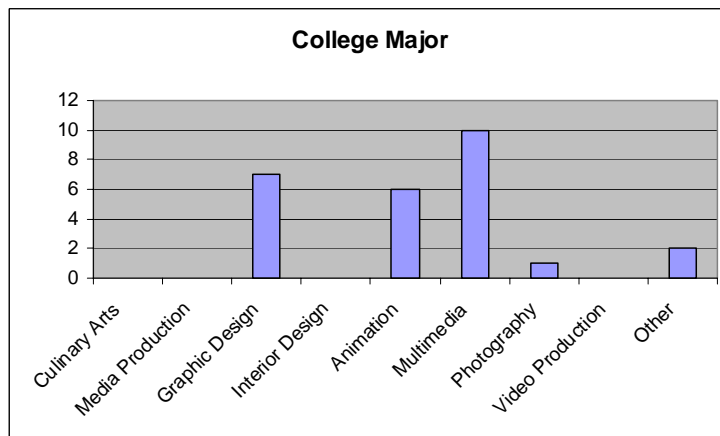


Figure 4: College Major (if applicable)

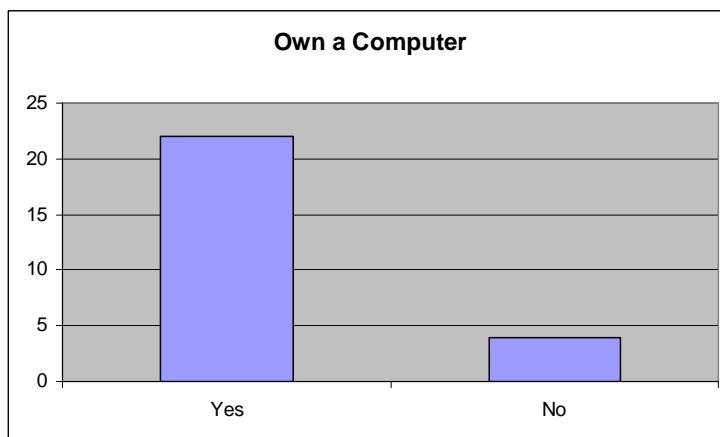


Figure 5: Percentage of Computer Owners

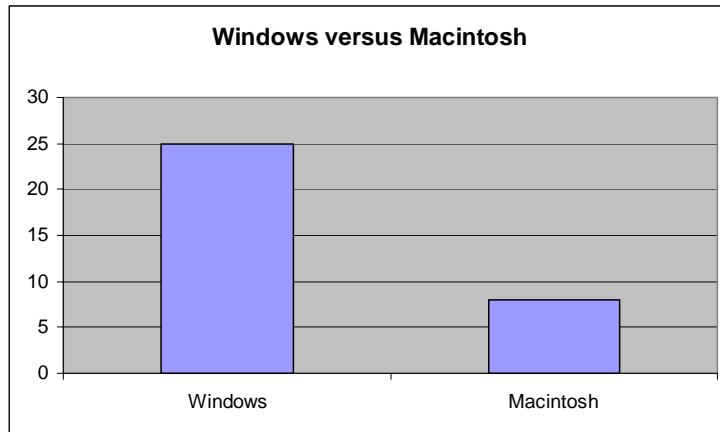


Figure 6: Percentage of Windows versus Macintosh Users

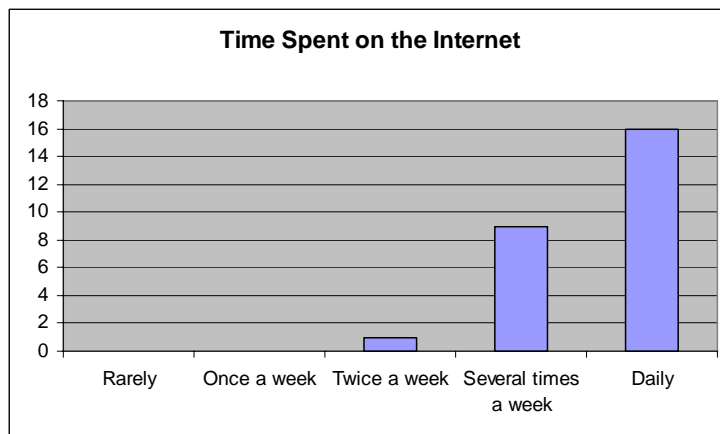


Figure 7: Amount of Time Spent of the Internet

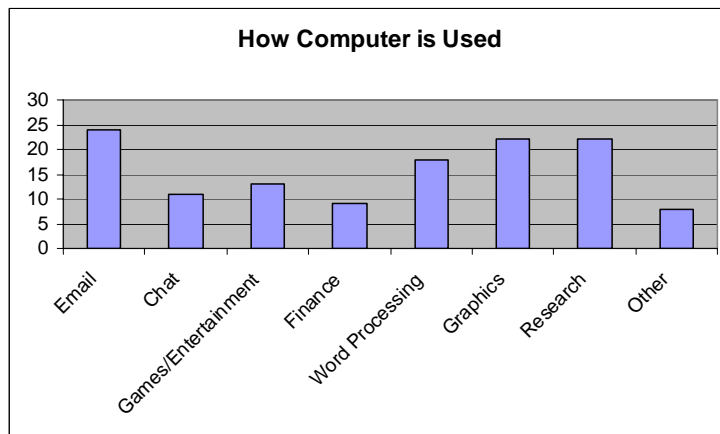


Figure 8: Computer Uses

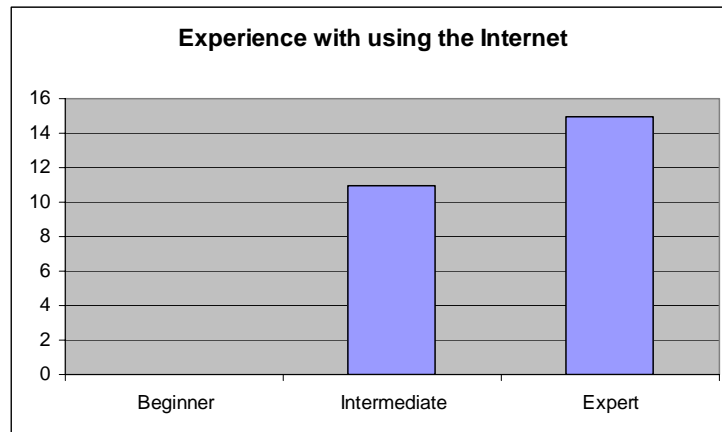


Figure 9: Level of Experience

5. TASKS

The next step for the users to complete was a series of tasks that would allow them to utilize different areas of the website. These tasks were taken from scenarios sited in the information architecture of the website created in the planning phase. They are tasks that a typical user might want to execute on the finished site. As a result, the user was able to cover every section of the site, and indicate whether or not the site itself is usable to a person that has never been there before.

After the user answered a series of questions in each task, he or she was asked if they thought they were successful in completing the task. If they were not able to, they were asked why they thought they were unsuccessful.

Studio Four Interactive intends to analyze the responses given to find out what things need improvement. By taking note of constant problems with various users, our team can pinpoint what sections need to be reworked so that we can ensure the best website possible for the Mayor’s Office of Community Technology.

5.1 Task 1

Task Description:

Your friend Bruce is on the Board of Education, and has heard a lot of talk about the Atlanta Community Tech (ACT) website. In order to get a better understanding of what this site is used for, he has asked you to research what the site is about. He would also really appreciate it if you could find out if there are any publications written about ACT.

The primary goal of the first task was to find out if users would be able to locate general “about” information. Secondly, Studio Four Interactive was interested to see if users would be able to understand where to find information within the sub-navigation.

Q. Were you able to find general information about the site?

Almost every user was able to complete this question. The desired answer was in the about section. There were only three answers that did not say this. Two of the alternate answers indicate that the question might have needed to be stated more clearly. These answers included, “In global [navigation] bar (each page) and “Course and What

ACT offers”. The third respondent stated, “ACT.org”, which implies that he or she thought that it was necessary to go to another website to locate information about ACT.

Q. Can you list some companies that have participated in the development of ACT?

Of the twenty-six participants, there were six who were not able to find the correct information. The goal was to list any of the five companies and/or organizations that have participated in the development of ACT (SkillLearning, EarthLink, Cox Communications, BellSouth, Gateway). Alternate answers included, “Art Institute”, a list of general resource links, a list of the Cyber Center locations, and “National Technology Summit Atlanta”. There was one participant who did not respond.

Q. Which link will take you to the publications section of the site?

The correct response to this question was the Resources section. Of the twenty-six respondents, only five gave alternate answers. Of these users, answers given were, “Calendar”, “Community Portal”, “Courses”, and “Don’t Know”. One respondent left this question blank.

Q. Was the navigation confusing? Can you suggest any alternatives to make it more intuitive?

Overall, users thought that the navigation was easy to use. There was one write-in that stated otherwise, but gave no possible solution to the problem. Any other comments were suggestions on how to make things even more clear. Two users commented that it was not clear that the satellite dish logo would take the user back to the homepage. One user stated that putting publications under the Resource section was not very intuitive, but found it because it did not seem to fit anywhere else.

Most comments were positive. One user wrote, “Very easy to use, nice rollovers, and prominent status indicator.” Another stated that “it seemed easy enough for someone just learning to use a computer to navigate”.

Q. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

All of the respondents stated that they felt they had successfully completed the questions in Task One. One respondent noted that they were able to find all they needed quickly. Another wrote, “I do; I don’t feel confused”.

5.2 Task 2

Task Description:

You have heard about the ACT site and have heard that there are online courses that you can sign up for. You’d like to check out the list of online classes that ACT has to offer. You’d also like to find out what kinds of classes are instructor-led.

The primary goal of this task was to see if users could locate information about the classes that Atlanta Community Tech has to offer. Because this is an area that the Mayor’s Office of Community Technology wants to showcase, it is important that users can locate where to find these classes.

Q. List three (3) courses that ACT has available online.

Every respondent answered correctly except for one, who wrote, “Led Courses, Online, Enroll”.

Q. List two (2) of the instructor-led courses that may be taken at the Cyber Centers.

The correct answer for this question was Introduction to Computers and ACT’s After-School Computer Program. All but three wrote in the correct response. Other answers included, “HTML, XP, Fireworks” and “HTML”.

Q. Was the navigation confusing? Can you suggest any alternatives to make it more intuitive?

The general consensus was that the navigation was very easy to understand. One user commented that “the navigation was rather easy” and another commented that it was “effective”.

Q. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

With the exception of some blank answers, every user found this task to be easy and straightforward. Comments included: “Yes, I didn’t get confused.”; another even wrote, “Yes, I did! Yea me!”

5.3 Task 3

Task Description:

Jose is a student in the Atlanta area. He would like to see the calendar so he can see when courses start. In addition, Jose would like to look at a map of Atlanta to find out which Cyber Center is nearest him. Finally, he would like to enroll in an instructor-led course.

The primary goal of this task was to find other areas of the site that users might find useful. The calendar section would allow users to locate any upcoming information, the map will show them where to find the closest Cyber Center to them, and the enroll page is necessary to get information about taking a class through Atlanta Community Tech.

Q. Find the calendar. What happens on August 4, 2003?

The goal of this question is to find the calendar section and hover over August 4. An alt tag pops up with information about that date. Most users were able to find this information. There were two users who were unable to find the information. One wrote, “ACT test”, while another merely wrote “Don’t know—no info is available”.

One respondent who did find the information wrote, “I would work on [this because] at first I didn’t think it was working because I didn’t hover my mouse over it long enough.”

Q. Was the calendar information easy to understand? Was it clear how to find information on certain dates?

Only ten users found that the calendar section was easy to understand and use. One person answered no to both questions, and two people found that the information was easy to understand, but how to find the information was confusing, or vice versa. Two found it somewhat easy, but gave no other comment.

The remaining eleven people gave insight as to what they found troublesome about the section. The comments could be broken down into four groups: those who thought the alt tag was not enough, those who thought the links should be clickable, those who felt there should be additional text for each specific date, and those who would like to see the directions be a little bigger and clarifying.

Below is a graph that illustrates the findings of these eleven people.

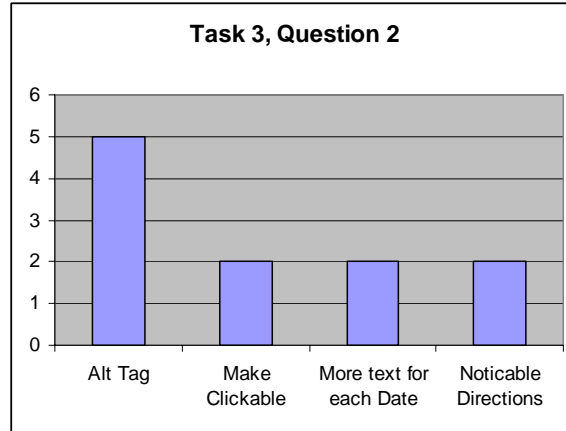


Figure 10: Problems with Calendar Section

Some of the comments about the alt tags included, “Alt tag is not enough” and that the “text is small and I almost missed how to find the info.” One user wrote that “it took a minute to see where the information would come up. Maybe include a window status to display the info.” Finally, one user commented, “The black dots [are] not intuitive as a ‘mouseover’.”

Q. Jose knows that the Ben Hill Recreation Center is the closest Cyber Center location to him. What is Ben Hill’s address? Off of what interstate can it be found?

For this question, the results were quite varied. Eleven of the respondents were able to find both the address and the interstate for the Ben Hill address, while others were only able to find either the address or the interstate, but not both. Finally there were several who were unable to find the answers at all. Below is a graph that illustrates the findings.

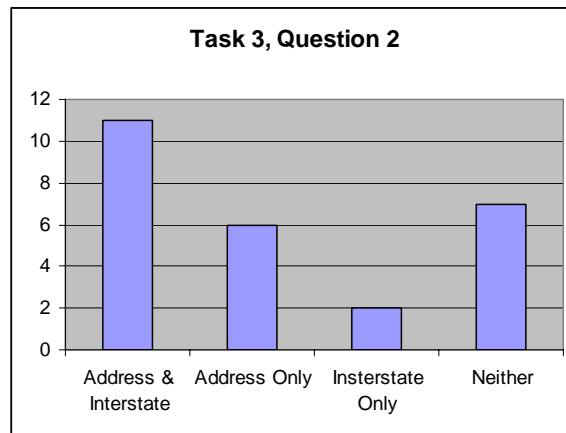


Figure 11: Results from Task 3, Question 2

One respondent wrote that the “map is unclear and hard to read.” Another suggested that the map “should maybe include locations in text format below the map as well; the black dots [are] not intuitive as a “mouseover”.”

Q. Please enroll Jose in a class. You can use fictitious information. Did you have any problems with the enrollment form?

For this question, the user was supposed to click on the enroll link, which would bring him or her to a form. Upon completing the form, the user would click submit. If all of the necessary information was not completed, an alert box would appear, telling him or her which section to complete. If all of the information was supplied, the user would be taken to a thank you page; this would let the user know that his or her information was received.

For the usability test, neither the alerts nor the submit buttons for the form were working. Therefore, most of the responses given indicated as such. Many people were confused by the error message upon clicking submit, while others simply wrote that they did have problems.

Below is a random list of some of the responses given for this question:

“After hitting “submit” button, the link was broken.”

“Error when submitting form.”

“Enroll—hit submit—took me to a page that is not working.”

“No form validation, should have indicators showing required fields, should have a “thank you” for submission page.”

Of the twenty-six respondents, two left no answer, and nine felt as though they had no problems with this section.

Q. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

Ten of the users felt that they had successfully completed the task. The remainder of the users said no, with comments regarding the enroll page. Many felt that they could not complete the task because there was an error page that displayed once they hit submit. One respondent felt that he couldn’t complete the task because he couldn’t find the map.

There were other comments that were generally related to this task; these were suggestions on how Studio Four Interactive might modify to make the use of the site better. These comments are discussed in detail in the overall comments section (Section 8) of the usability report.

6. POST QUESTIONNAIRE

After using the site, the participants were asked to rate the site in a series of questions broken into categories. These categories included design, color scheme, navigation, content, and layout, easiness of use, and whether or not they thought they might return.

For each question, there were five possible answers: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The final question gave the user the option to place open comments about the site as a whole.

7. POST QUESTIONNAIRE GRAPHS

Below are illustrated representations of the information gathered from the post questionnaire.

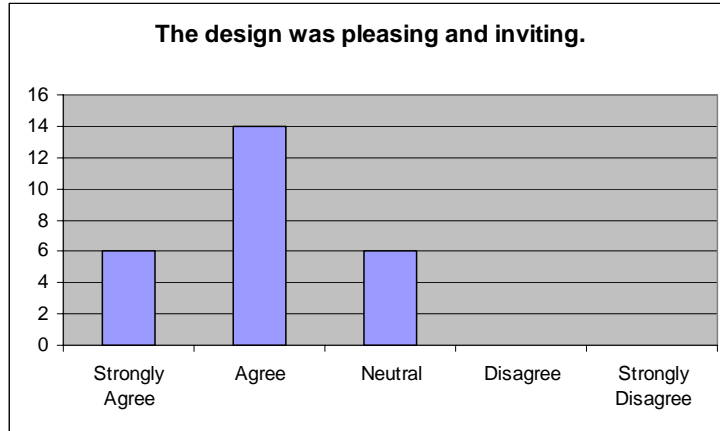


Figure 12: Overall Design

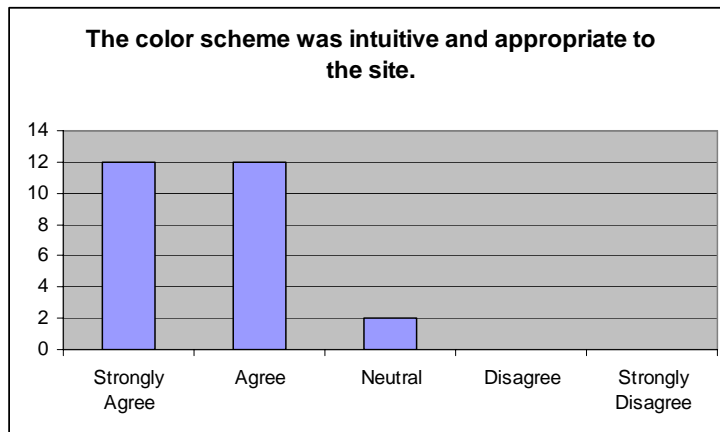


Figure 13: Overall Color Scheme

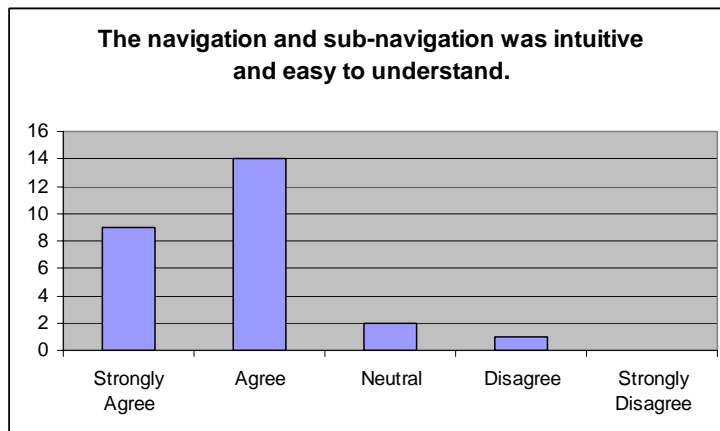


Figure 14: Overall navigation/sub-navigation

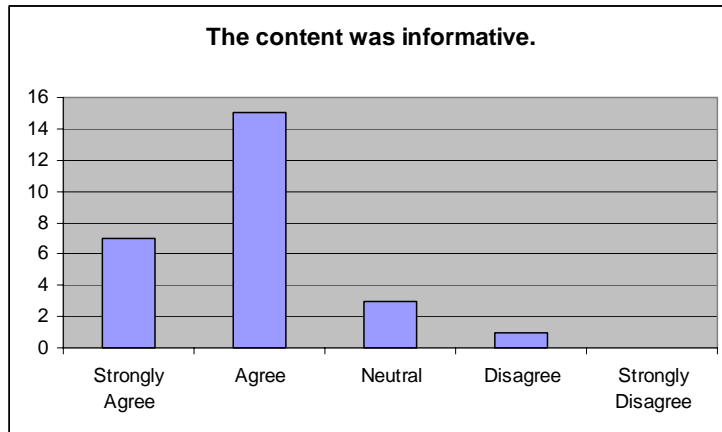


Figure 15: Overall Content

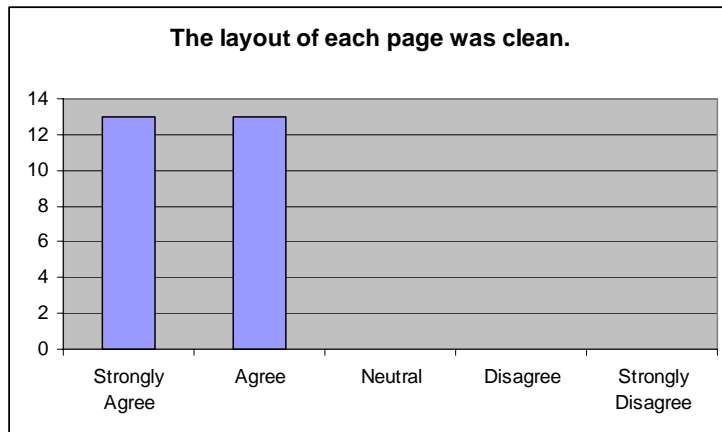


Figure 16: Overall Layout

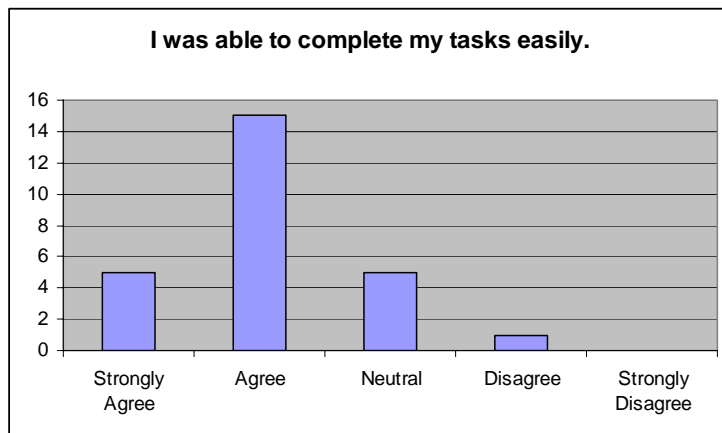


Figure 17: Overall Ease of Use

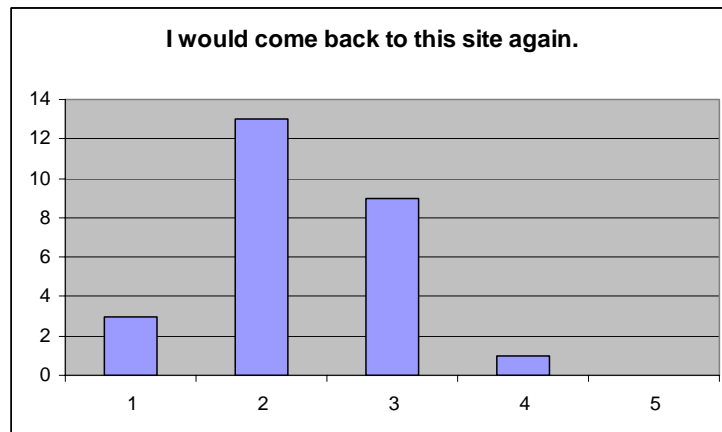


Figure 18: Desire to Return

8. OVERALL COMMENTS

The final question of the post questionnaire was to allow users to supply Studio Four Interactive with any additional comments that they might have in making this site better. Because some users wrote comments in task areas, all comments have been compiled in this section. Seven respondents made no further comments.

The comments made spanned over an array of things. A couple of users commented on the homepage, mentioning that there were spelling errors (“Atlnata?”). A couple users felt that making the satellite dish a link to the homepage was not intuitive enough. Other users felt that the layout of the homepage was not consistent with the other pages (“It seems a little unorganized and chaotic, because of the pictures not consistently laid out.”).

Some raised the issue that there were things that should be more active links, such as the courses offered (“I was hoping to find out more information about each course.”), or other text on the homepage (“CCC Newsletter Link?”).

Most users noted that the enroll page must be corrected so that each required field is validated, and that the user receives a thank you page when he or she has hit submit.

In the community portal site, it seemed that many users thought the map would benefit with additional text, rather than with just the map. One user even suggested that the navigation link “Community Portals” should be changed to “Map”.

Finally, users pointed out that there were general inconsistencies that can be easily corrected, such as keeping fonts the same. One participant noted, “Make all text fonts ‘san-serif’.” Another saw that “text wraps around the picture [in the FAQ section,] but other pages don’t.” Other users found that the pop-up windows would benefit more if they were formatted like other pages; one suggested, “Add a picture of the mayor and one of Jabari on their messages.”

Studio Four Interactive was happy to find that there were some users that felt the site was in excellent form. Of these four, one user even said, “We as students at the Art School need to have more events like this because it was very fun.” Another noted, “I think the site was well designed, presentation crisp.”

9. CONCLUSION

Studio Four Interactive found the usability testing quite helpful in pinpointing what is working and what needs work within the ACT website. Taking every comment into consideration, it will better aid the team in finalizing the best website it can for the Mayor’s Office of Community Technology.

After reviewing all of the feedback, Studio Four Interactive was able to see areas of the site that need the most work. The enroll and thank you page will need to be reformatted so that it validates the form and gives the user a functioning thank you page. The calendar page will be adjusted so that users will both know how to operate it, as well as making the alt tags bigger. Finally, the community portals page will be adjusted so the names and locations of the Cyber Centers will be available in text form in addition to the map of Atlanta.

Other considerations will be made to elements that require consistency, such as spelling, font faces, active links, and pop-up window elements.

APPENDIX A



Consent and Release Agreement

You have been asked to take part in the usability of a redesigned website. Studio Four Interactive has developed a new website for the Mayor’s Office of Community Technology. The site itself is referred to as Atlanta Community Tech, as it is a place for anyone in Atlanta to visit where he or she can learn more about technology. In this site, users can find information about his or her community as well as learn more about technology by taking a class.

You will be working with a site that is still being developed. By taking part in this evaluation, we can study your comments and ratings so that the final site will be totally beneficial to a user once the site is available to the public.

During this session, there will be a facilitator present to answer any general questions you might have. However, any questions specific to the website cannot be answered; because we want to view how efficient our site is, we will need to know if there are questions that you might not be able to answer alone.

By signing this form, you agree to the following:

1. I agree not to talk about this website to anyone.
2. I may withdraw from the testing at any point without penalty.
3. I understand that my answers will help to aid the final version of the website.
4. I acknowledge that my name will not be used in any public documentation of this study.

Studio Four Interactive would like to thank you for participating in our brief survey.

If you agree with the terms listed above, please indicate your agreement by signing here:

Print your name _____
Signature _____
Date _____

APPENDIX B



Demographic Questionnaire

This questionnaire is used for Studio Four Interactive to assess results by audience demographics. Please answer each question as candidly as possible.

1. What is your age group?
 - 17 and younger
 - 18 – 24
 - 25 – 30
 - 31 – 40
 - 41 – 50
 - 51 and over

2. Please choose your gender:
 - Male
 - Female

3. What is your highest level of education?
 - High school
 - Some college
 - College graduate
 - Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your current position with this school?
 - Student
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Non-affiliated

5. If you are a student, what is your major?
 - Culinary Arts
 - Digital Media Production
 - Graphic Design
 - Interior Design
 - Media Arts & Animation
 - Multimedia & Web Design
 - Photographic Imaging
 - Video Production

- Other (please specify) _____
 - I am not a student
6. If you are a student, what quarter are you in? _____
7. Do you own a computer?
- Yes
 - No
8. Do you use Microsoft Windows or Macintosh?
- Microsoft Windows
 - Macintosh
 - I'm not sure/neither
9. How often do you surf the internet?
- Rarely
 - Once a week
 - Twice a week
 - Several times a week
 - Daily
10. What do you typically use a computer for (check all that apply)?
- Email
 - Chat
 - Games/Entertainment
 - Accounting/Finance
 - Word Processing
 - Graphics
 - Research
 - Other _____
11. How would you rate your level of experience using the internet?
- Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Expert

APPENDIX C



Tasks for the Atlanta Community Tech Website

Task One:

Your friend Bruce is on the Board of Education, and has heard a lot of talk about the Atlanta Community Tech (ACT) website. In order to get a better understanding of what this site is used for, he has asked you to research what the site is about. He would also really appreciate it if you could find out if there are any publications written about ACT.

1. Were you able to find general information about the site?

2. Can you list some companies that have participated in the development of ACT?

3. Which link will take you to the publications section of the site?

4. Was the navigation confusing? Can you suggest any alternatives to make it more intuitive?

5. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

APPENDIX D



studio + interactive

Tasks for the Atlanta Community Tech Website

Task Two:

You have heard about the ACT site and have heard that there are online courses that you can sign up for. You’d like to check out the list of online classes that ACT has to offer. You’d also like to find out what kinds of classes are instructor-led.

1. List three (3) courses that ACT has available online.

2. List two (2) of the instructor-led courses that may be taken at the Cyber Centers.

3. Was the navigation confusing? Can you suggest any alternatives to make it more intuitive?

4. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

APPENDIX E



Tasks for the Atlanta Community Tech Website

Task Three:

Jose is a student in the Atlanta area. He would like to see the calendar so he can see when courses start. In addition, Jose would like to look at a map of Atlanta to find out which Cyber Center is nearest him. Finally, he would like to enroll in an instructor-led course.

1. Find the calendar. What happens on August 4, 2003?

2. Was the calendar information easy to understand? Was it clear how to find information on certain dates?

3. Jose knows that the Ben Hill Recreation Center is the closest Cyber Center location to him. What is Ben Hill’s address? Off of what interstate can it be found?

4. Please enroll Jose in a class. You can use fictitious information. Did you have any problems with the enrollment form?

5. Do you think you successfully completed this task? If no, why not?

APPENDIX F



Post-Questionnaire for the Atlanta Community Tech Website

Studio Four Interactive would like to thank you for participating in our usability testing. Please give us your general feedback by answering the questions below. Your candidness will ensure the best possible version of the site.

Please check the answer that you think best describes your experience:

1. The design was pleasing and inviting.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

2. The color scheme was intuitive and appropriate to the site.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

3. The navigation and sub-navigation was intuitive and easy to understand.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

4. The content was informative.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

5. The layout of each page was clean.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

6. I was able to complete my tasks easily.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

7. I would come back to this site again.

<input type="radio"/> strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> agree	<input type="radio"/> neutral	<input type="radio"/> disagree	<input type="radio"/> strongly disagree
--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

8. Addition comments are *extremely* welcome:
