



User Test Results

April-May, 2008

Psychology grad student- 3rd year

MP4 | 260MB | 39 minutes | 4/4/08

Major takeaways

- Interests as potential grad student included program information such as faculty, research interests, publications and the department/school's ranking. She was also interested in cost as well as quality of life information such as campus scenery, housing info and general info on Denver and the mountains
- Relied on Google to find info because she couldn't find it on the DU site. She thought DU's search function wasn't good (she couldn't find info on the psych department based on a search of "psychology")

Problems encountered

- She didn't notice the right hand column sidebar navigation at all. She gravitated to the "at-a-glance" box instead. When asked to find tuition info from the program page, she was unsuccessful. She tried to go to the homepage and find it from the top down.
- She thought the "current students" tab in the header was very subtle and she didn't notice it until we began to ask questions about how a current student would use the homepage. She did say that once she found it, it would be easy to go to that area on future visits.

Video highlights

- 5:30—Finding accounting program info from the home page. At 7:30 she says "That was pretty easy."
- 9:20—Likes the "at-a-glance" program highlights
- 19:05—Likes that we've taken a research based approach to the re-design (i.e. we listen to students)
- 21:00—Difficulty with finding psychology degree as an undergrad
- 27:10—She thinks it makes sense for site to revolve around programs instead of schools/departments
- 30:30—She states that it's initially weird to house the psych department pages inside the umbrella DU site's design, but that it is ultimately better to have it work that way instead of as a separate site
- 31:35—In terms of the discussion above at 30:30... "I don't really see the benefit to having different looks for different sites."
- 32:05—A positive reaction to the social calendar idea on the home page.
- 36:20—Her issues with Webcentral
- 37:25—About the home page. At 37:55 she says "It's very attractive."

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Emphasize sidebar links and/or de-emphasize "at-a-glance" information on internal pages.
- Add relevant content at appropriate points (i.e. show or link to ranking information for psychology department and programs).
- Ensure that we use language on undergraduate pages that is understandable to an audience that largely doesn't understand common terms used in a university setting (such as concentration, BA, BS, etc when explaining programs).
- Add meaningful content to the "current students" landing page instead of just a login.

Psychology/theater undergrad student- 2nd year

MP4 | 142MB | 21 minutes | 4/4/08

Major takeaways

- She doesn't use the web extensively so her test may be indicative of a "newbie's" experience with the site
- She thought of accounting as a school and not a subject. She couldn't articulate why. It was simply the way she approached the task
- She felt the information presented at the program level was everything she would want- program duration, financial aid/tuition, admission criteria
- She finds the admission page useful and can't think of any other info she would need or want
- She would rely on global search to find specific information
- She continuously says the site provides her the kind of information she would want based on the task
- She didn't see the 4 column list of links at the bottom of the home page
- Likes that a study abroad link is on the home page

Problems encountered

- Couldn't navigate to accounting info via the "find by school or college" page. She resorted to a search. She eventually got there with some prodding, but it wasn't easy or intuitive for her. She saw, but didn't consider using the find by subject page.
- She said on the undergraduate task that she would click on "concentration" to get all the information on the psychology program. This isn't quite the case. The concentration page would give information about the psych concentration only, not the other psych programs. Info on those programs would be accessible, but not within the concentration page.
- Doesn't understand some of the study abroad information on the current site, but did find good information overall.

Video highlights

- 5:30—About her difficulty using the "find degrees by school or college" page... "I'm sure I would have figured that out eventually."
- 10:30—Her flow to find undergraduate information on the psychology program
- 14:35—Overall thoughts on whether the site is ease to use given her difficulty finding program info on accounting. 14:45 "...it wasn't difficult."
- 15:35—Her experience with the study abroad information on the current site and how she interacts with the current site
- 19:05—Thoughts on why she relies on search to the extent that she does to find information. At 19:24 she says "I'm pretty decent at navigating sites, but I get confused on our, the one we have now, so it's just faster just to search it than to click around."
- 19:50—Open ended opportunity to talk about the new site under development. At 20:00... "I think it's pretty... I know I like it more [than the current site]."

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Think about and incorporate alternate ways to get to content types for people who may approach tasks differently than expected.

Digital media undergrad student- 3rd year

MP4 | 171MB | 25 minutes | 4/4/08

Major takeaways

- Frequent, daily web user. Uses the DU site primarily for the library, registration and Blackboard, directory too
- Checks DU's news items on the current site; likes sports, stories relating to his program of study, photos; didn't know DU Today headlines existed on the home page until very recently
- Likes the "find by..." degree pages with their expanding and collapsing directories
- Based decision on which school to attend on physical visits; didn't do much online comparisons of schools (considered DU, CU, Stanford)
- As undergrad, he considered classroom facilities, contact information (advising), program rankings, housing and what current students were doing as main information needs
- Likes red call to action buttons- obviously clickable
- Likes that multimedia has a place
- As a current student, he doesn't want to sift through a lot of marketing material; would rather have a dedicated area for current students
- Likes the color palette, use of icons

Problems encountered

- Doesn't like white space between header area and the page's main title and breadcrumbing- feels it separates the page too much
- Thinks there should be a reference to housing from the undergraduate section of the site, although he the information belongs in the student life section

Video highlights

- 3:45—He talks his way through the task of finding psychology program information with thoughts on architecture, design elements, etc. He gives an in-depth tour worth listening to in its entirety (about 5 minutes in length).
- 9:35—Discussion of the usefulness of the expanding/collapsing directories on the "find by..." degree pages.
- 12:50—His thoughts on the student life page
- 16:00—His thoughts on the home page. 16:45: "All the information I need, looking here, is right on the front page."
- 21:10—Had no difficulty knowing there was a specific section for current students
- 22:00—His issues with Webcentral
- 22:50—Relevancy of DU Today news and events

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Make plus and subtraction icons clickable as well as the words that follow. People seem to want to click on either or both.
- Tighten up white space area between header and main content on the page
- Add contextual links from undergrad and grad areas to student life section

Psychology grad student- 4th year

MP4 | 255MB | 37 minutes | 4/11/08

Major takeaways

- Daily web user in general. Uses Webcentral, Blackboard, Webmail. Finding forms at du.du is difficult- she'll bookmark forms once she finds them
- Used American Psychology Association (APA) to do her initial search for schools. Knew from APA that DU offered her program of interest
- Wanted application deadlines, average GRE scores and whether faculty members' research dovetailed with her interests, tuition, postgrad outcomes (percentages of graduates who went to work in various fields of psychology- industry, academics, etc.), size of program, class sizes, percentage of classes taught by professors vs. grad students, ration of faculty to students, undergrad research opportunities, honors, housing, info on city
- Doesn't care much for athletics or social calendar as a grad student, but sees value in it for an undergrad
- As current student, she'd want links to Webmail, Webcentral, Blackboard
- Finds current site's library tools and Blackboard difficult to access

Problems encountered

- Confused whether she was at prospective students area
- Does not know what "concentration" means on find a degree page and also thinks BA, BS may not be clear to a potential undergrad
- Doesn't know what "living & learning" communities are

Video highlights

- 6:05—Description of the new site design- hip, clean, easy
- 7:45—Find accounting info task was successful
- 11:15—While reviewing admissions info: "Admissions requirements checklist. That's perfect."
- 33:45—Expectations for current students landing page
- 35:15—Discusses her issues with current site's access to library pages

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Group BA and BS degree information on a single page in undergrad area to help visitors determine which degree is best for them
- Take out "living & learning communities" link on homepage and place the link in more contextual areas like housing, degree programs that are symbiotic
- Add direct access to the library, Webcentral, Blackboard and Webmail for current students

International Studies Undergrad student- 1st year

MP4 | 300MB | 51 minutes | 4/30/08

Major takeaways

- Uses the web extensively
- Doesn't use Webcentral unless he needs to
- When researching possible schools, he looked for photos of the campus, easy to use (would give him a clue about the technology capability of the school), program info, student life (although this was secondary)
- Current site doesn't do a good job of presenting life on campus outside of classes- feels much of the content presented is sports oriented.
- Info he does find on current site is dry, but does provide good info at times. At other times, it doesn't provide good info (such as May Days which he would consider a major student activity in the year). He also wants more pictures such as a slideshow of campus. Also wants info to be geared toward what makes DU different or better than other schools.
- Likes the new site's highlighting of Denver & Colorado within the student life area and also likes the social calendar idea
- Prefers version 2's homepage over version 3's
- Prefer's current site's color scheme over new site- it's warmer
- Finds the new site's content offering in the dynamic area useful and interesting
- Considers crimson and gold the school colors and that they should be used on the site

Problems encountered on Current Site

- Not enough photos- he feels the site can be static, sterile and forbidding
- Wonders why the Living and Learning Communities page (in the core) highlights the Creativity and Entrepreneur programs and not the others

Problems encountered on New Site

- His instinct was to find psychology in "Arts & Humanities" instead of "Social Sciences."
- Finds version 3 homepage's "find a degree" grid too imposing

Video highlights

- 3:30 to 9:15—Discussion of the current site, specifically the process of finding undergraduate psychology information
- 9:15 to 25:00—Discussion of current site, specifically finding student life information
- 21:25—While surfing for housing information (the new housing site vs. the core) on the current site: "I almost feel like a lot of this content is redundant."
- 22:56—About the current site's housing info: "I do like the HRE page and the video tours."
- 25:30 to 38:00—Discussion of new site idea, both academics and student life
- 28:00—Once he went through the new site's approach to finding degree programs (in this case, psychology): "That's actually a good approach." At 28:45 he says: "Yeah, I feel this is a better approach."

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Make campus life info prominent for prospects as this is a major selling point
- Treat all the LLCs equally
- Add parking info to the housing area
- Make four column title text look clickable- they currently don't

- Make second level links more prominent- he didn't notice them
- Inject a sense of the university's history into the design

Music Performance Undergrad student- 1st year

MP4 | 176MB | 25 minutes | 5/5/08

Major takeaways

- Uses the DU site often- MyWeb daily
- Uses the web for research- personal and school and for entertainment
- First impressions are important- is the site talking to the right audience (i.e. students vs. parents)
- As a prospect, she wanted to know info on her major, faculty, classes and housing info
- Likes that the "find a degree" functionality is accessible on the home page, but ultimately likes version 2's four column layout
- She likes the program level description approach- it describes the differences between programs while also mentioning the 3/2 program, concentrations, etc.
- She likes having all admissions info on a single page- something that currently isn't easy to understand at the Lamont site
- Appreciates the conversational tone on the housing page as though she's being talked to specifically- it's personable
- Appreciates not having to click around a lot to get information- much of it is presented in meaningful groupings
- Design isn't as important as usability of the site.
- Doesn't like version 3 alternate design. She likes the cleanliness of version 3 instead.

Problems encountered

- Did not understand neither Lamont's programs (like the conservatory program) nor the differences in degrees (BA vs. BM)- she had to wait until her audition when Lamont gave her an overview of the programs. Even then, however, she still didn't completely understand.
- She doesn't understand that once at the program level, all the links are relevant to the program. She intends to find instrumental info at the Lamont page versus the program page.
- She didn't see the right hand side navigation.

Video highlights

- 3:32—She likes photo of Mary Reed on home page- "It's pretty."
- 4:00—She likes the hover effects on the home page, thinks it's "exciting"
- 5:20—Likes how the conservatory music program description page differentiates between the BA and BM
- 12:00—About admissions process (specifically auditioning) as it currently exists at Lamont: "I called people 'cause I couldn't figure [it] out online what my audition stuff needed to be."
- 13:37—About admissions information on current site: "I think I might have eventually found it. It was just really a long process."
- 19:57—About the housing page: "I definitely like this layout a whole lot more than how it is right now. Everything's easy to find for the most part."
- 20:17—About the overall design (version 3): "I like it. I like the pictures. It doesn't feel too busy, but there's all the information you need on it."
- 20:40—About the appropriateness of the design for the Lamont school: "Yeah, I did. And I think all the information was a lot more organized than I saw it last year."

Potential ideas to make the site more usable

- Use the 4 column layout on homepage instead of the "find a program" grid- it gives a better overview of the site's content.

- Once at the program level, add information or a gateway to get information on the particulars of a student's instrument- most likely on the "course requirements & descriptions" page and also specific audition info on the "admissions" page
- Add descriptions of the different programs on the degree programs page within the school view
- Place program level navigation on right side of page or somehow give it more prominence so people don't miss it. Also, give more prominence to second level links
- Make homepage feature content broadly based (she liked that the Alpine Club was featured on the homepage, but wondered why it didn't cover student clubs & organizations as a general category.
- Show dorm room layouts within the housing area

Pioneer Leadership Program- Group of 8 Freshmen

Part 1-LLC Discussion: MP4 | 73MB | 89 minutes | 4/30/08

Part 2-General Web Discussion: MP4 | 96MB | 26 minutes | 4/30/08

Major takeaways from Part 1- LLC discussion

- Applied to LLC because of a friend recommendation
- LLC websites not consistent and need an overall home page
- LLC pages are not persuasive
- Focus more on academics and residential
- Main difference for PLP is a minor in leadership
- A comparison table or overall look at each LLC would be beneficial, possibly a comparison table with all programs side by side, on one page.
- There is a live-in requirement, make sure this is spelled out on the site
- What are the requirements for the classes?
- Much interest in promotions for each site, including such items as community service, civic activities, internships
- Virtual tour of the hallway where you will be living
- Contact information for all faculty and staff more visible
- Blogs
 - Would not use a DU branded blog
 - Would use a blog dedicated to an LLC, great way to share specific information with people living there
- Alumni section to show what people are doing now, after the LLC and school
- They use Webcentral a lot
- Promote campus life more, especially the location and the free transportation
- Safety is a big plus for the LLC, promote it

Major takeaways from Part 2- general web discussion

- Examples of sites that the students like in general
 - Madonna: liked the layering of elements, glitz & glamour
 - Peroni: engaging
 - Ferrari: lots of info presented in a usable way, also liked rotating features
- Balance is needed between flash and sophistication
- Don't try to show that DU is racially diverse, students felt the university tried too hard in this regard, instead just focus on the diversity that does exist- religious, political, geographic, sexual orientation, etc.
- Try to show DU's tight knit community due to the school being small
- Not a 'rich, white kid school' as is often portrayed. Most of the students noted they were on scholarship.
- Photos on the site look 'staged'
- Learning disability programs are very popular but not advertised
- Would not use a DU branded blog, have a link from the site into Facebook or other social networking site that people will ultimately use anyway
- Grab the user interest and hold it

- Not particular about the site’s visual design as long as it’s engaging, sophisticated, and easy to use/find info. “Sophisticated” = classy.

Card Sort Highlights

We asked each student to write down the pieces of information they wanted to know about a university in order to make a decision on which school to attend. We then asked them as a group to place the cards into groups they thought were logical.

The major groups were:

- Academic programs
- Contact information and directories of offices, depts, schools
- Why DU/What is unique about DU?
- Campus life
- Visiting & Applying
- Tuition & Financial Aid
- Denver & Colorado
- Residential Life & Housing
- Photo Gallery- they thought this might not be a basic grouping, but something that should be easy to find

Here are the specific cards they had written for the exercise:

Main Category	Items grouped to create category
Academic Programs	Transfer of Credits Academic Programs Majors and Minors, and how to combine them Major: Business programs informational requirements and reputation Possible Majors available Course/Programs Offerings Lists of possible offered major programs Grad School Student to Faculty Ratio Size of Campus & Student Body Size Student/Faculty Ratio
Tuition & Financial Aid	Financial Aid & Scholarships (how much does DU give, REALLY?) Financial Aid Opportunities and Costs Scholarship Opportunities Financial Aid Information and Costs of Attendance Price (\$)

Visiting & Applying	<p>Visits</p> <p>Application Process</p>
Campus Life	<p>Fitness Center</p> <p>LLCs</p> <p>A list of extra curricular activities (i.e. club/intramural sports, campus clubs)</p> <p>Campus Activities</p> <p>Student Life (activities, clubs, and sports available)</p> <p>Activities around the school (location)</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Student Body (sexy factor)</p> <p>Activities</p>
Unique Offerings/Why DU?	<p>Athletics & Ritchie Center</p> <p>LLCs</p> <p>Cherrington</p> <p>Things that are truly unique: cherrington, global scholars program</p> <p>Universities reputation and rank</p> <p>Reputation</p> <p>List of Graduate schools that students who graduated from DU have been accepted to.</p>
Contact Info	
Residential Life/Housing	<p>LLCs</p> <p>Housing Info</p>
Denver & Colorado	<p>Location (stuff to do in surrounding area)</p> <p>Proximity to home or ease of travel (like how simple to get to DIA)</p> <p>What's around campus – city of Denver and public transportation</p> <p>Location and things it has to offer</p> <p>Location</p>