LIS455 Usability and User Experience Research
Fall 2016

Instructor: Rong Tang

**Website Usability Report for Simmons College:
Insight into the Prospective International Student Experience**

Douglas Upton, Rachel Karasick, Saffana Anwar, Sawyer Newman

12.13.2016

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report addresses the need to identify usability issues that may be encountered by potential graduate and undergraduate applicants to Simmons College and seeks to uncover and understand any barriers that an international student may encounter during the decision and application process. As a usability study, this report also encloses metrics on user satisfaction derived from specific site content (e.g. information about student life) and from the general experience of using the website.

The product that is studied in this usability test is the recently redesigned website of Simmons College (www.simmons.edu). The more specific subsets of this website that are studied are the homepage, the student life section, the social work graduate school program pages, the events calendar, the visit scheduler, and the application portal for prospective students. The test objectives are to collect qualitative and quantitative information about website usability in order to produce a data-driven synopsis of the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction of the Simmons College website for prospective student website users.

The method that informed this usability test was the use of task-based scenarios, utilizing a moderator and the think-aloud method. We conducted six sessions with individual participants and used Morae Recorder and Observer to record and collect data about each test. The focus was on recruiting three current high school students and three potential graduate applicants (mid 20's and 30's, currently finishing a Bachelor's degree or recently graduated) in order to capture the prospective undergraduate and graduate perspectives. Pre-session interviews were conducted in order to collect participant demographics and get a better sense of comfort levels with technology, as well as to capture previous experience with college websites and online applications. The user testing consisted of 17 tasks divided into two standardized scenarios delivered to each group of test participants. The tasks covered our main test objectives, which are to understand the usability of student life sections, resources for international students, and the application process and requirements. A post-session interview was conducted after the tests to gain a better sense of user satisfaction and gain insight into any pain points encountered during the test.

The results of the usability testing pointed to issues with the website's taxonomy (including organization and hierarchical structure of the web pages) and issues with the clarity and surrounding context of language used on the website. A cross analysis of search style and ratings of task difficulty gives insight into how participants use the website and how this can affect their ability to find the information they seek. Additionally, with special focus given to the user experience of international students within this study, language proficiency was cross-

analyzed with time on task and number of mouse clicks to demonstrate the impact that language proficiency can have can have on efficiency and effectiveness.

The recommendations that emerged from this study correspond with the outcomes of our data analysis and our own heuristic evaluation. Specific areas of the website for adaptation or improvement are discussed in the recommendations section of this study, and are delivered through content inventories and are presented visually through wireframes. The recommendations include sections discussing improvements to relevant user specificity, taxonomy, language clarity, and visual design.

Introduction

In the fall of 2016, the UX team *Simmons Usability Splendid* prepared a usability study designed to help understand the user experience of the externally-facing side of the Simmons College website. Although the full website is designed to serve a variety of user types, including faculty, current students, and alumni, this study focuses on potential applicants to the college. Simmons' website was recently redesigned in order to broaden the visual appeal and project the college identity consistently across the site. Additionally, the redesign was focused on dividing external and internal contents of the site in order to present an organized, attractive, and navigable site for external applicants to use.

One of the goals of the site redesign was to increase traffic and support the application pipeline from all pages of the site. Additionally, the new site has been set up to better measure use and web traffic metrics. Key performance indicators from the newly redesigned site indicate that visits to the homepage are up 12%; academics page are up 7%; 'Request Info' page is up 7% for undergrad visitors and 332% graduate visitors; the 'Visit' page is up 120% for undergrads, and is down 39% for graduate visitors. Lastly, and quite significantly, visits to the application page are up 30% for undergraduates and 62% for graduates.

The request for the usability study emerged from a need to better understand the redesign's impact on potential applicants to the college, and on users visiting the website for the first time. With the overarching goal of the website being to inform and recruit students, this is an essential study to conduct in order to understand where users may be confronting roadblocks or impediments to finding the information they are looking for on the website. Additionally, there is a specific need to understand how non-traditional students approach the website, including potential Dix Scholars, honors students, or international applicants. The specific scope of this study will be on international applicants, which will provide insight into how specific subgroups of the applicant pool use the website. The overarching need of the usability study is to ensure that users can complete tasks in an efficient manner, and that any potential barriers to applying are identified.

The main focus of the study is to better understand how users who are potential applicants to the graduate and undergraduate programs use the Simmons College website. The three specific usability questions that this test will answer are: 1) Are there any difficulties using the website from an international prospective student perspective? 2) Can applicants get a sense of what student life is like at the college? and 3) Are there any barriers to applying? In addition to these questions, there is a particular interest in determining if all users can find out about upcoming

events happening on campus. The persona that we identified for both user types (graduate and undergraduate) also has an international student background. Although the Simmons website has undergone forms of usability testing in the past, a more formal and lab-based usability test utilizing Morae software was prepared in order to answer usability questions.

Primarily, the study is designed to reveal pain points for potential applicants looking at the Simmons College website for the first time. Additionally, one of the most difficult aspects of creating an academic website is successfully communicating what student life on campus is like to potential students—this usability test will specifically seek feedback on this important element. On a more practical level, the significance of the test will be to provide recommendations for website feature adjustments and to identify navigation issues that can be addressed by the Simmons web team. Recommendations will be delivered in the form of heuristic evaluation, wireframes, content inventory, and an analysis of the usability task scenarios.

Product Description

Beginning in 2014, Simmons College undertook a comprehensive overhaul of its enterprise information architecture (IA). At the most basic level, this was a transition from an amalgamation of disparate websites into an integrated, unified college-wide website governed by an automated Content Management System (CMS). The overriding imperative of this project has been to increase the effectiveness of the college website as a recruiting tool, allowing prospective students to gain a better understanding of life at Simmons. This enhanced IA creates a more streamlined user experience, which helps to facilitate this goal.

The overhaul of the website has been an interdepartmental effort led by the Technology and Marketing groups. This effort involved the formation of a web content team, multiple stakeholder interviews, a holistic content inventory utilizing "GatherContent" collaboration software and a strategy review, as well as contracting with an agency to undertake design and user experience (UX) planning and testing. The move to a unified IA has led to the enforcement of new website governance, maintenance, and training processes across the college.

One of the most tangible results of these efforts to enhance the IA of the Simmons College website is the interface design. Given that a first priority of the website is to inform and recruit prospective students, a conscious decision was made to abandon the previous taxonomy that mimicked the college's division into its various component schools. Instead, a more generic "program-first" structure was chosen that groups all academic programs together in the web interface, regardless of where they are situated institutionally. In this way, content related to

programs of study is now organized in a fashion more naturally aligned to prospective students' pre-existing mental models. These prospective website visitors are likely to be unfamiliar with the institutional structure of Simmons College, and therefore the previous taxonomy divided by "schools" added an unnecessary layer of complexity. There was also a significant reduction in redundant content and overall page count in an effort to further simplify the interface.

Further simplification is evident in the website's layout. The homepage was redesigned to allow for more real estate to explain Simmons' unique value propositions. Programs, not schools, were brought to the forefront for the reasons mentioned previously. Throughout the website, a visual and tonal consistency conforms to the college's "Visual Identity System Guidelines." Photos of real students, faculty and alumnae/i are featured abundantly. Persistent calls to action are employed across all site pages for "Apply," "Visit," "Request Info" and "Support" to guide prospective students towards performing critical next steps for recruitment.

Behind the scenes, improved functionality was paramount as well. An easily sustainable maintenance was a key concern from the outset of the project. Keeping the site accurate and current was addressed through distributed governance. Ensuring that website users are completing tasks in an efficient way was a core guiding principle of the re-design. Ultimately, the success of the overhaul is predicated by how well these efforts have eliminated barriers to applying to Simmons College by making sure the website is effective for all prospective student populations.

Test Objectives

The test objectives for this study are focused on student life, resources, and the application process. A further objective is to gain greater insight into website usability for prospective international undergraduate and graduate students. These usability test objectives are pursued through task-based testing of the Simmons College website and the features it offers to students of this demographic group. This usability team provides recommendations based on the data analyzed from the user testing, heuristic evaluation, and content inventory. Theoretically, this data will facilitate a better understanding of the barriers that specific prospective student populations face when exploring Simmons College as a potential institution to pursue their higher education.

Review of Related Research

After finalizing the usability test sessions, the *Simmons Usability Splendid* UX team conducted literature reviews of relevant areas of the usability field in order to provide background

information for this report, as well as to guide revision recommendations for the Simmons website. The reviews that were performed explored topics such as cross-cultural usability testing, mixed-method usability research, and the impact of information architecture on usability. The research in these areas can help inform the international user perspective, and can also provide guidance on how to address navigational difficulties in organizing large, information-heavy websites for multiple user groups.

Information Architecture

During the usability study of the Simmons College website, questions about information architecture (IA) emerged as test participants navigated through the website using different pathways. Further research was conducted in order to probe questions about the theoretical and observed dynamics of why an enhanced IA can privilege certain groups over others. In the future, emerging advances in technology may ultimately enable a more personalized and egalitarian experience for all users. The preliminary findings of the IA research point to three themes that prevail in the relevant literature: Enterprises can prosper with an enhanced IA; usability can increase with an enhanced IA; and an enhanced IA may not equally accommodate different sub-groups.

Although the literature on this topic employ a variety of research frameworks, almost all arrive at a similar finding, indicating that organizations that "own" the corporate website are more likely to successfully achieve their enterprise-level goals. Burford identifies "owning" the corporate website as one of four foundational constructs: Owning, negotiating, enacting and knowing IA.

Stanković & Čavić's research explores a hypothetical application of 'Behavioral Advertising' to the realm of higher education and speculates on a possible transformation of pedagogy there. Their genius is to suggest that universities create behavioral maps of prospective students based on data mined from students' online behavior and then target communications accordingly. This would represent the direct application of Behavioral Advertising to the realm of higher education. Their guiding principle is intriguing and demonstrates that more research is warranted on the application of Behavioral Advertising to the realm of higher education specifically, as well as the application of the predictive analytics associated with Behavioral Advertising on website browsing and discovery in general.

Enhanced IA Impact
Yu & Roh also provide insight into how enhanced IA increases usability. The dynamic that they identify is the cognitive overload of hypertext navigation and how superior design can help

reduce it (Yu B & Roh S, 2002). This notion is explored extensively in Burrell's case studies of a "facet strategy" in the provision of large, complex sets of results to users in contemporary retail websites offering travel bookings, car sales, etc. Range sliders that enforce a minimum or maximum value, or sliders that incorporate histograms are examples of a facet strategy and together work to reduce cognitive overload as defined by Yu & Roh. The idea of a facet strategy may benefit some elements of the Simmons website, especially when it comes to sorting through graduate programs or including digital tools to quickly navigate through the application.

Eschenfelder identifies dynamics similar to Roh & Yu: When organizations provide customers with a uniform set of structural cues to an easily-learned IA, then navigation and information seeking are facilitated as cognitive overload is reduced (Eschenfelder, 2003). She goes even further to hypothesize that the overall web classification scheme (links represented on a homepage, choices embedded in global navigation bars and the taxonomies governing the organization of information) work symphonically to aid usability.

In a return to Burford's "owning" of web IA, Eschenfelder's study provides testimony from a participant who vigorously advocates for providing a "one stop shop," enabled by enhanced IA and delivered online to both clients and staff alike, that is focused on a seamless user experience regardless of the touch points (Eschenfelder, 2003).

IA and Sub-Unit Prioritization
When moving from a piecemeal website with different departments controlling content into one centralized and unified website (as Simmons did in the website redesign project), dissonance can arise in the final product. Burrell identifies this notion when he states that "one size does not fit all…for different types of audiences, you often need a different interface (Christiansen, 2010)."

Hjørland has developed a helpful theoretical basis for why certain sub-units are privileged in unitary, CMS-controlled websites. Web classification schemes underpinning the IA of CMS enterprise websites are composed of links represented on a homepage, choices embedded in global navigation bars and the taxonomies governing the organization of information (Eschenfelder, 2003). Such components are essentially ontologies, and Hjørland posits that "Ontologies are not just neutral reflections of an objective reality, but are constructed from a world-view that is fruitful for some purposes and values, though at the expense of others (Hjørland, 2012)." This was reflected in the inherent design bias observed by the *Simmons Usability Splendid* research team when the Simmons College website tended to default to the

navigation scheme of an undergraduate student user regardless of the identity of the various test participants (i.e. graduate or undergraduate student).

Future Incarnations of Enhanced IA

Greengard provides evidence about how predictive analytics has given rise to Behavioral Advertising that makes what was previously unimaginable now mainstream (Greengard, 2012) in terms of deeply understanding customers and deploying advertising that appropriately matches their intent. This begs the question, could the monitoring of online behavior and the creation of highly accurate user profiles—so commonplace now in Behavioral Advertising—lead to corresponding and highly effective "Behavioral Taxonomies" in which the IA of websites adjusts dynamically to the ontologies most suitable for a given user?

Burrell speculates about the promise of "dimension search" that might ultimately involve dialoguing with a search tool (in the same manner as one might communicate with a librarian) in what he calls "faceted discovery" (Christiansen, 2010). One *Simmons Usability Splendid* test subject, the youngest high school participant, called for such an interface when she suggested during the Post-Test Interview that the website could ask her questions designed to help her find what she is seeking. College websites may soon consider applying elements of cognitive computing, personalized ontologies, and faceted discovery to further enhance their IA.

Cross-Cultural Usability Testing

Usability studies and user experience tests are great tools to better understand how your intended audience interacts with a product, website, tool, or software application. But what is the impact of a diverse, international group of test participants? How does this affect usability testing when your study group members grew up on completely different sides of the globe?

This is another research question that arose during the usability test on the Simmons College website. The persona that was developed to test the site was an international student interested in pursuing a Simmons education at the graduate or undergraduate level. Among the tasks, we explored how a student might navigate to the sections of the website designed to assist international students with the full application process. During the tests, multiple participants mused on what they might 'actually do' if they were looking at the website for the first time from the mindset of different culture, or how they might interact with our website if English were not their first language. For four of our participants, this was speculative, but for two, it was representative of their perspectives having grown up in Thailand and China. During the tests, the *Simmons Usability Splendid* research team began to recognize far deeper areas of inquiry when it comes to performing cross-cultural usability testing.

Across the literature in the field of global UX research, there is discussion of symbolism, cognition and mental modeling, cultural markers, language and translation issues, and cultural context. Additionally, this topic explores relational concepts and borrows heavily from the fields of psychology and anthropology to better understand how cultural diversity impacts usability. Lastly, researchers are making use of cross-cultural comparative studies to understand specific differences between countries or regions.

Beyond Translation

Early conversations about global usability explore international interfaces in software design, and describe the need to conduct multiple usability engineering methods in order to create interfaces for an international audience. The main argument is that it takes much more than a simple language translation for high levels of cross-cultural usability to be accounted for. At the "Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems" in 1990, a panel of experts including Nielson, Del Galdo, Sprung, and Sukaviraya, discussed emerging issues. Although the initial focus of the panel discussion is on the need to move beyond language, there is also broad investigation of cultural context. The authors move into a fuller conversation around how to use, "... the lexical, syntactic, semantic, and conceptual layers of the language model as a classification scheme" (Nielsen, 1990) to better systematize usability analysis across cultures.

Another widely-cited, early conversation about the cross-cultural dimensions of usability is from the "4th Conference on Human Factors and the Web" in 1998. The conference paper of particular significance was presented by Wendy Barber and Albert Badre, and it coined the term 'Culturability,' or the intersection of usability and culture. Their research hones in on cultural markers, which they believe can be used to "distinguish cultural/genre specific design elements" while similarly reinforcing the idea that "creating or retrofitting software for other countries requires attention to technical detail that goes beyond mere translation" (Barber & Badre, 1998). In their paper, the authors discuss a methodology of pattern identification that can be used to investigate the semantic meaning of certain terms, as well as an analysis of how different cultures interpret colors, shapes, and font styles, and use spatial organization.

Developing Cultural Models

The need to understand usability across cultures (beyond simple translation measures) continues to be an ongoing area of research in the field of usability research. One of the key methods that has emerged to study this usability topic is the development of cultural models. This method relies heavily on the field of psychology in its investigation of "cultural models in terms of the characteristics and content of folk theories and folk psychology [which] have been important to social scientists for centuries" (Clemmensen & Plocher, 2007).

The idea of using cognitive modeling to create specific user interfaces for localized populations to enhance usability is the focus of other research in the field. Unlike Clemmensen and Plocher's line of research into universality, others are seeking to create models to inform the development of localized software and interfaces. Using an investigative strategic model, Jagne and Smith-Atakan (2006) created a model designed to go beyond the typical analysis of cultural signifiers such as date/time, language, and cultural attributes like color. The research team has also developed a strategic model that examines the cultural constructs behind 'assimilated metaphors'. By using a combination of ethnographic study and participant observation, they create a model of cultural context to apply to user interfaces.

Case Studies: Comparative Analysis Between Nations
Another recurring technique in the literature is the use of comparative studies between specific populations. These cross-cultural comparisons in usability and UI design considerations are conducted in specific national contexts, but produce findings that can be applied to the larger usability field. These studies seem to be either regionally focused to find subtle or complex cultural differences in within cultures, or can also be a bit more widely distributed, focusing on macro diversity between cultures in usability testing. While these tests are useful in understanding cultural difference in mental models, they rely on having identified specific countries or regions for comparison. In the future, if Simmons is interested in identifying countries from which they hope to recruit applicants, the comparative studies conducted by Clemmensen (2011), Dong & Lee (2008), and Smith (2012) can provide background information.

Researchers in the field have been tackling these issues in response to the increasing pace and scale of global interconnectedness: "since the onset of rapid technology advancement, we now live in a 'small world' with an increasingly global marketplace." (Jagne & Smith-Atakan, 2006). Questions about semantics, imagery, symbolism, and cultural markers have taken precedence, and continue to be explored using ethnographic studies, social-cognition theory, and cultural modeling. Many of the studies cited in this section are focused specifically on products, experiences, and websites of a commercial nature. As Simmons' website does serve a key marketing function for the school, further research into cross-cultural usability of higher education websites could benefit Simmons in the future.

Mixed-method Usability Research

Information Science has undergone field-wide paradigm shifts throughout the course of its history. Most significantly has been the shift from a systems-oriented research process to a user-oriented research process, which has its origins in the 1960s (Case & Given 2016). This

shift is largely responsible for a subsequent shift in research methodology from quantitative to qualitative. More recently, there have been further shifts from the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy to mixed-method research. While mixed-method and multi-method research are often used interchangeably in Information and Social Science literature, multi-method research refers to the combination of two or more qualitative methods and mixed-method research "highlights the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in the same research project" (Zachariadis et. al 2013).

The methodological tussle between quantitative and qualitative relates to the epistemological differences between positivist and interpretive worldviews. These issues fall within the paradigm cultivator that substantive theory has created within Information Science (Venkatesh 2013). By comparison, critical realism has given way to the most recent paradigm shift in Information Science research by "opening up a particular methodological space that lies between empiricism and interpretivism" (Mingers 2004). It is also important to note that critical realism encompasses *the real* (all of reality), *the actual* (perceivable reality), and *the empirical* (measurable reality) (Zachariadis 2013), which collectively represent a hierarchical representation of reality that creates a framework which allows quantitative and qualitative data to work collaboratively towards the same goals of interpretation.

Critical Realism avoids the pitfalls of qualitative-only and quantitative-only research methods and the suppositions these worldviews create over the entire body of research – as "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Newman 2008) while quantitative research is deductive and exists in relation to a theory, because it itself is theory testing (Newman 2008). Research based in Critical Realism accepts both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to collect and analyze data that creates a holistic interpretation of reality and closes the gap between empiricism and interpretivism.

Within Information Science, there is not currently a large body of research or writing that focuses on data outcomes of research. Instead, a larger portion of writing is available on research methods, where *method* is the underlying approach (or paradigm) that the researcher adheres to. However, since data sets are so dependent on research design (and in Usability Research: test design), research methods are largely focused on within this review. Through a comprehensive analysis of methodological implications of Information Science research (with a focus on mixed-methods research), these implications will be drawn out to focus increasingly on the specific effects that research methods have on data sets and data analysis. This analysis keeps with contemporary Information Science trends, as mixed-methods research guidelines have only recently been proposed (Venkatesh 2013) and there is room for

further study, especially in regards to specific application to Usability Research and data analysis.

Mixed-method research, as outlined and advanced by Zachariadis and others in 2013, Newman in 2008, and Venkatesh in 2013, is the current state-of-the-art paradigm when it comes to Information Science research and subsequent data collection and analysis. Three highly influential voices on the topic of mixed-methods research are Zachariadis et. al (2013), Newman (2008) and Venkatesh (2013). Their articles, two of which were published in MIS Quarterly's special issue publication on *Critical Realism in IS Research*, all describe the rise of Critical Realism as a paradigm shift that has superseded the past two shifts in Information Science Research; these first two foci being quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods. Zachariadis proceeds to analyze and defend the methodological implications he finds that result from the application of mixed-methods research. His work shows that mixed-methods research techniques not only uncover trends ongoing in the research situation, but he was also able to develop robust inferences of data trends (Zachariadis 2013).

These researchers, by thoroughly outlining definitions of Critical Realism and mixed-methods research, creating theoretical models and through demonstration of case study application, successfully demonstrate how mixed-methods research is the newest paradigm shift in Information Science and that its application will allow the Information Science field to generate richer and more comprehensive research.

In light of common and recommended practices in usability testing design, Usability Research has the tendency to use mixed-methods research but does not recognize it specifically as such because of the disconnect between Usability Research (practitioner focus) and Information Science research (academic researcher focus). Practitioners would benefit from looking at academic trends in research methods research, as even though both quantitative and qualitative methods may be regularly used, studies would very likely become more comprehensive and purposively holistic. Information research has undergone an important shift from a qualitatively oriented research method style to a multimethod research approach that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative data in order to achieve a holistic and better represented understanding of the situation undergoing study.

Method

Participants:

Criteria

Since one of the main test objectives was international student recruitment (for undergraduates and graduates alike), the focus was on recruiting prospective students with a certain degree of a foreign/international background.

For the prospective undergraduate participants, the team set the criteria of recruiting a high school age group (preferably Juniors and Seniors), and because Simmons College undergraduate programs are exclusively for women, the preference was to have participants who would identify as such. The criteria were more flexible for the graduate participant pool due to the lack of age and gender constraints. For the prospective graduate testing, the team planned to recruit individuals already well into a bachelor program, or recent graduates.

Recruitment

Since this usability testing required participants to take on the prospective undergraduate and graduate personas, the team established and advertised the following:

> "**FREE GIFT CARD FOR TESTING WEBSITE!** We are doing a study on Simmons College Website User Experience. Potential participants would complete series of prompts with guidance. It would take about an hour. **AND YOU GET A FREE STARBUCKS GIFT CARD!**
>
> **HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!**
> - Are you a High School senior?
> - Are you looking for colleges?
> - Are you familiar with internet browsing?
>
> **UNDERGRADUATE PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!**
> - Are you an Undergrad senior?
> - Are you looking for a Grad program?
> - Are you familiar with internet browsing?

Due to time constraints and the unique situation of the age group the team was working with, one of the most effective methods was to recruit participants via personal contacts. Since the team had existing contacts within high school and college communities, the recruitment

posters were circulated to them and their peers. Within the first week, six participants for testing (three for undergrad and three for graduate) were confirmed.

Scenario

Setting
The testing took place in the usability lab, located in the Palace Road Building on Simmons' campus. The usability lab consists of two rooms, an observer and a user room. These two rooms are connected via a one-way mirror which also works as a partition, enabling the observing team to observe the user without any interference.

Both of these rooms are equipped with computers (Dell) and Morae software (recorder and observer), which assists with video recording the user and their online activity, movement, facial expressions, mouse movements, clicks, etc. The lab also has an eye tracking instrument but it was not used for this study.

Persona
Since this usability study was focused on two separate groups, undergraduates and graduates, the team developed different personas for each. After consulting with our site supervisor, Mary Delaney, and our professor, Dr. Rong Tang, the usability team established the following personas for our user testing.

<u>Undergraduate Persona</u>
Li Chang Chang is a 17-year-old high school student from Shanghai, China. She is comfortable with technology but is unsure if she will have any compliance issues with her current Chinese hardware or software in the US. She has studied English in China, but has never had the opportunity to speak it around many native English speakers. Chang Chang is exploring the possibility of enrolling in an American university. Some of the things she is concerned about are:
- What is student life like in the Boston Area? Especially for international students?
- What resources are available for international students in these colleges?

<u>Graduate Persona</u>
Liana Chopra is a 25 years old, recent college graduate. She moved from Delhi, India to pursue her undergraduate studies. She likes living in the Boston area and would like to pursue her Master's degree locally as well. She is not very adept at technology and knows that might be a barrier when applying to schools since mostly everything is done online. Even though she's

been in the US for the last 4 years, she still considers herself an international student and is concerned about the following things when applying for her Master's:

- What resources are available for international students in these colleges?
- How are the faculty? Their research? Will they be great mentors for her?

Tasks

Overall, the user testing consisted of 17 tasks. The undergraduate participants had 10 tasks and the graduate participants had 9 tasks. Two of the 17 tasks were the same for both group of participants. The tasks covered our main test objectives, which were student life (organizations), resources for international students, and the application process/requirements. For the graduate persona, we asked our participants to use the Social Work program as their focus in order to standardize testing. The official script for scenario and the tasks can be found in Appendix I, pages 60-63.

Pre-Post-Session Interview/Survey

There were 6 sessions in total (3 for undergraduate participants and 3 for graduate participants). Each of these sessions lasted about an hour. They included a pre-session interview and a post-session interview.

The pre-session interview mostly focused on gathering participant demographics, understanding their comfort level with technology (particularly with web browsing), and getting a better sense to what exposure, if any, they might have had with browsing other Colleges' websites.

The post-session interview focused on usability and the intuitiveness of the Simmons College website and asked the participants to reflect on their test experience. It also gathered information in regards to the interface and the satisfaction rate of the College's website and browsability. The complete list of pre and post-session interview questions can be found in Appendix I, pages 61 and 64-67, respectively.

Usability Sessions

Testing Space/procedure

As mentioned above, the sessions took place in the usability lab, located on the Simmons College campus. The lab consists of two rooms, observer and user rooms, with the one-way mirror in between, which would play a crucial role when observing the participants without interfering with their "live" sessions.

Both of the rooms are equipped with computers, which have the Morae software installed. The Morae software consists of three parts, which are Morae Observer, Morae Manager and Morae Recorder. Morae Recorder was used to capture the video and the audio, on-screen activity, and mouse input of the participants. Morae Observer and Manager allowed the team to observe the participants facial expressions/experience, flag tasks/set markers, watch interactions on-screen, make notes/comments, analyze the collected data (via raw data sets, graphs, etc).

A typical session started off with the team arriving at the lab earlier than the participant, to set up the computers and the configuration of both rooms. The team also made sure there were no last-minute snafus with the Morae software since the testing would be primarily conducted using this software. Once the configuration was set up, the participant was brought into the lab and greeted. They were then introduced to the rest of the team and given an overview as to what these team members were doing in the observation room. The participant was then shown to the user room and seated with the moderator.

The moderator read the script, which gave a brief description as to what the testing was about. The participant was also given the disclaimer about the independent nature of the study. The participant was encouraged to give honest feedback, and was reassured that their feedback would not hurt anyone's feelings.

The participant was then provided with two consent forms, one for them to keep, and one for us to have on file. After the consent forms were signed, the pre-session interview was conducted to collect basic demographic information, as well as to gauge the comfort level of internet use/exposure for the participant. Once the interview was done, the participant was briefed on the "think aloud" method and how they would go through the series of tasks. To avoid inconsistency and confusion, the team decided to provide a printed slip with one task at a time to the participant after they finished the previous one, and asked them to read it aloud before beginning a task. This gave the observation room team members a clear delineation between tasks. Participants were also informed about the extent of asking for assistance or clarification in regards to the tasks.

Once the tasks were completed, the participant was asked to complete the post-session interview to measure the satisfaction and the comfort level of browsing and accomplishing tasks using the Simmons College website. This interview focused on the interface/layout design of the website as well. Once the testing was done, the participant was thanked for their time and valued input, and was given the incentive, which was $15 gift card to Starbucks. For the

complete script of the consent form, disclaimer, pre-post session interview and tasks, refer to Appendix I, starting on page 68.

Team members' roles:
Our team consists of four members and they are: Saffana Anwar, Rachel Karasick, Sawyer Newman, and Douglas Upton.

To be consistent with the interactions and the results, Saffana Anwar was designated to be the Moderator for all sessions. As mentioned above, the moderator would sit beside the participant, walk through the script, disclaimer, hand out consent forms, conduct the pre-and post-session interviews, distribute the tasks, thank them, and show them out.

Rachel was the note-taker, Sawyer was the observer, and Doug was the Morae expert/data logger. Due to the nature of the roles, Rachel, Sawyer and Doug were in the Observation room during testing. Even though team members had designated roles, they all assisted one another with tasks as needed.

Test sessions' time period
The test sessions spanned over the course of three days (Oct 20, 21 and 22), with two hours (one hour for each participant) in each day with the testing done back to back with half an hour of reprieve in the middle. The complete test schedule with the respective participants could be found in Appendix II, page 69.

Measurements

Data points have been recorded and analyzed in order to produce a data-driven synopsis of the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction of the Simmons College website. Quantitative and qualitative measurements are used in order to capture a thorough and holistic understanding of the usability of the Simmons College website.

Data points used to compile quantitative metrics were logged both during and after testing sessions with Morae usability testing software from TechSmith, and by noting quantifiable occurrences and patterns in post-test analysis.

Qualitative data comes from observations made during the testing process and during the post-test survey. They include user quotations; points of confusion, surprise and delight users expressed; notes on navigation styles; and suggestions users had for improvements that could be made to the site. It is intended that these qualitative measurements add substance to the

singularity of the quantitative data points of a small number of test participants. These observations can be found in the appendix in Appendix V. Test maps (pages 83 to 88).

Data Processing and Analysis

Efficiency

Metrics collected to reflect the efficiency of navigation and task completion were 1) time on task, and 2) number of mouse clicks. These data sets were chosen because, cumulatively, they are the best indicators for the amount of time and effort spent on each task—the two main components that determine efficiency.

Mouse movement was not chosen as an indicator of efficiency because we found that it varied substantially from user to user, as some were expressive with their mouse movements as they worked through their thought processes while "thinking aloud".

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was recorded through Morae by assigning a difficulty score to each task completed by a participant and by a post-test analysis of errors made during each task.

Task difficulty is rated on a 3-point scale: *Completed with ease (score of 0)*, *Completed with difficulty (score of 1)*, and *Failed to complete (score of 2)*. These three grades were then coded with the colors green, yellow, and red, respectively.

The *Difficulty of task ratings* are calculated by dividing the total achieved score by all participants who attempted the task by the total potential score of the task. This rating shows the average level of difficulty the participants had completing the task.

Equation:

$$\frac{total\ score\ achieved\ by\ all\ involved\ participants}{total\ potential\ score\ of\ the\ task} \times 100\% = task\ difficulty\ rating$$

Errors focused on within this study are navigation errors. Due to the browsing-centric nature of the Simmons College website, there are many paths a user can take to reach the information they seek. The presence of the search box located in the upper right hand side of every page of the Simmons College website means that a user can almost never reach a dead end. Therefore, *errors* within this study are instances when a user has navigated to a page on the website where there were no clear options (search bar omitted) for them to continue "browsing forward" in their search.

The other major type of error users made were believing tasks to have been completed when they were not. These instances are not included within the error count per task because: 1) these errors were critical enough to always lead to task failure, 2) this type of error was only ever made one per task, and 3) these errors point to a different class of issues related to the specificity and clarity of page content and language. There were also instances where users did not completely believe a task to be completed because of the perceived quality or lack of context of a piece of information. These errors point to a lack of clarity and relevant specificity to a user.

Satisfaction
After each of the usability tests were conducted, the moderator collected information about user satisfaction with the Simmons College website. This was done by asking a series of survey questions of our participants, asking them to rate their satisfaction on a 7-point scale, and recording their freeform elaboration to the questions. In addition, the moderator asked a series of quick true-or-false questions at the end of the survey to assess satisfaction with specific site elements, such as typography, use of white space, etc.

During the post-interview portion of the test sessions, one of the note-takers in the observation room typed up transcriptions of the participant's answers, and checked these transcriptions against the video recordings captured by Morae. In addition to the transcriptions, the note-taker documented the numerical ratings of satisfaction given by the participants. These data have been entered into spreadsheets, divided into separate sections far quantitative and qualitative information. The data was cleaned and analyzed using basic statistical methods, although due to the small sample size of each subgroup (3 potential undergrad participants and 3 potential graduate participants) some statistically insignificant measurements, such as the median, have been omitted from the results discussion.

A Special Note on Qualitative Data Analysis
Qualitative data analysis points to all of our target areas of usability: efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction. As mentioned in the previous section, qualitative data was recorded in the form of observations. These observations are those made during the test scenarios by the test facilitators of the users' behaviors and, to an extent, the observations made by the user of the functionality of the website.

These observations were then sorted and categorized into the fewest number of groups possible. The groupings that emerged are 1) clarity and relevant specificity, 2) taxonomy, and 3) navigation. There are both positive and negative components to each of these classifications.

Not only will these classification groups help to add some backstory to the graphs produced by the quantitative data, but they also create an overall narrative for this study. These groups will frame our analysis and subsequent recommendations as they represent the recurring strengths and failings that users found with the Simmons College website.

Some groups of qualitative data were directly cross-analyzed with quantitative data in an effort to find data trends. This can be seen in data presented on language and search type. Qualitative data has also been captured through test maps, which can be found in the appendix. These maps show the paths users took when attempting to complete each task of their test scenario and are coded to show completion/failure of task, navigation errors, comments, and some navigation choices.

Results

Participant Demographics

	U02	U05	U06	G01	G03	G04
Age	16	17	16	26	27	34
Gender	female	male	female	female	male	male
First Language	Mandarin Chinese	English, Tamil	English	Thai	English, Khmer	English
Language Grouping	English as Second Language (ESL)	Multilingual	English-only	English as Second Language (ESL)	Multilingual	English-only
Grew up in	China	Cambridge, MA	Cambridge, MA	Thailand	Lowell, Mass	MA
Boston area?	2 years	whole life	whole life	3 years	2 years	9 years
Current student?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Highest level of education	high school, current junior	high school, current senior	high school, current junior	graduate school, current	undergrad, current junior	PhD
Web browsing skills, 1-7 scale	3	5	6	6	5	5
Visited Simmons' website before?	no	yes	no	no	yes	no
Other college or university sites you've visited	Boston College, Boston University	UMass Boston, Brandeis, UMass Lowell, MIT, Harvard	none	Northeastern, UC Davis	Pratt, Northeastern, MassArt	MIT, University of Rochester
Online app skills, 1-7 scale	4.5	5	4	3	6	6

Table 1

We worked with half female and half male participants, and successfully recruited several international participants (U02 and G01). Additionally, 66% of our participants were either multilingual or spoke English as a second language. For our undergraduate applicant persona, we focused on recruiting current high school students to evaluate the website (U02, U05, U06)

and for our graduate applicant persona we recruited professionals in their 20's and 30's who might consider a graduate program (G01, G03, G04). In total we conducted six usability studies, three per persona.

Performance Results
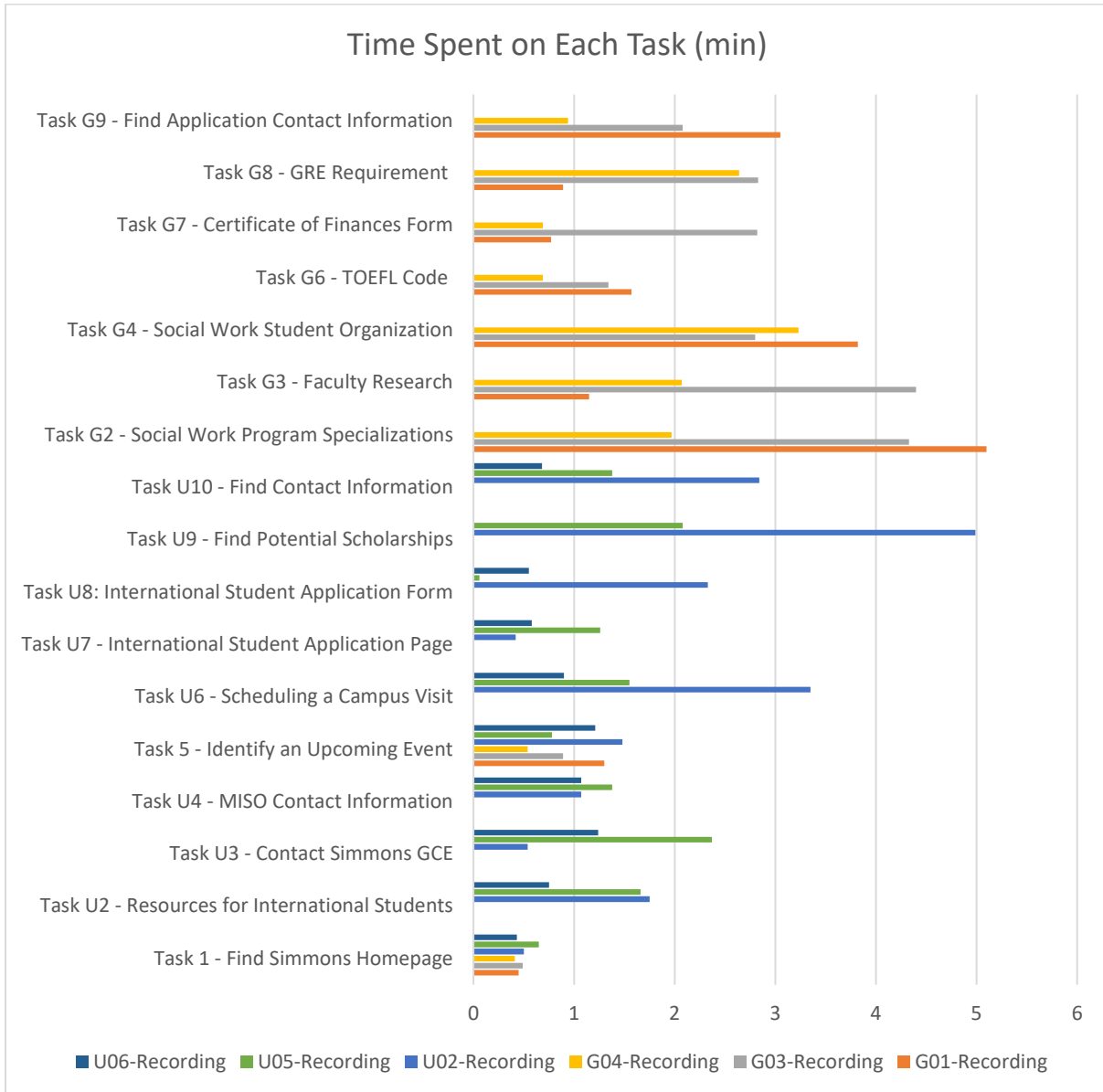
<u>Efficiency</u>

Chart 1

Chart 1 shows the amount of time (in minutes) that each test participant spent on every task they attempted during the test scenario. Note that at least 3 participants were given every task and Tasks 1 and 5 were the only tasks given to every participant in the test.

We can see from these numbers that on average, users completing the prospective undergraduate student task scenarios were slightly faster than the users completing the prospective graduate student task scenarios. The average time on task for undergraduates is 1.38 minutes, where the average for graduates is 1.92.

This difference could indicate that information pertinent to prospective undergraduates is made more readily available, and perhaps is given locational preference over information that prospective graduate student need. This case is strengthened by the navigational pathways graduate student users found themselves being directed through, where by clicking and following links, they would find themselves being directed to information specifically for undergraduate students.

I)   Number of Mouse Clicks per Task
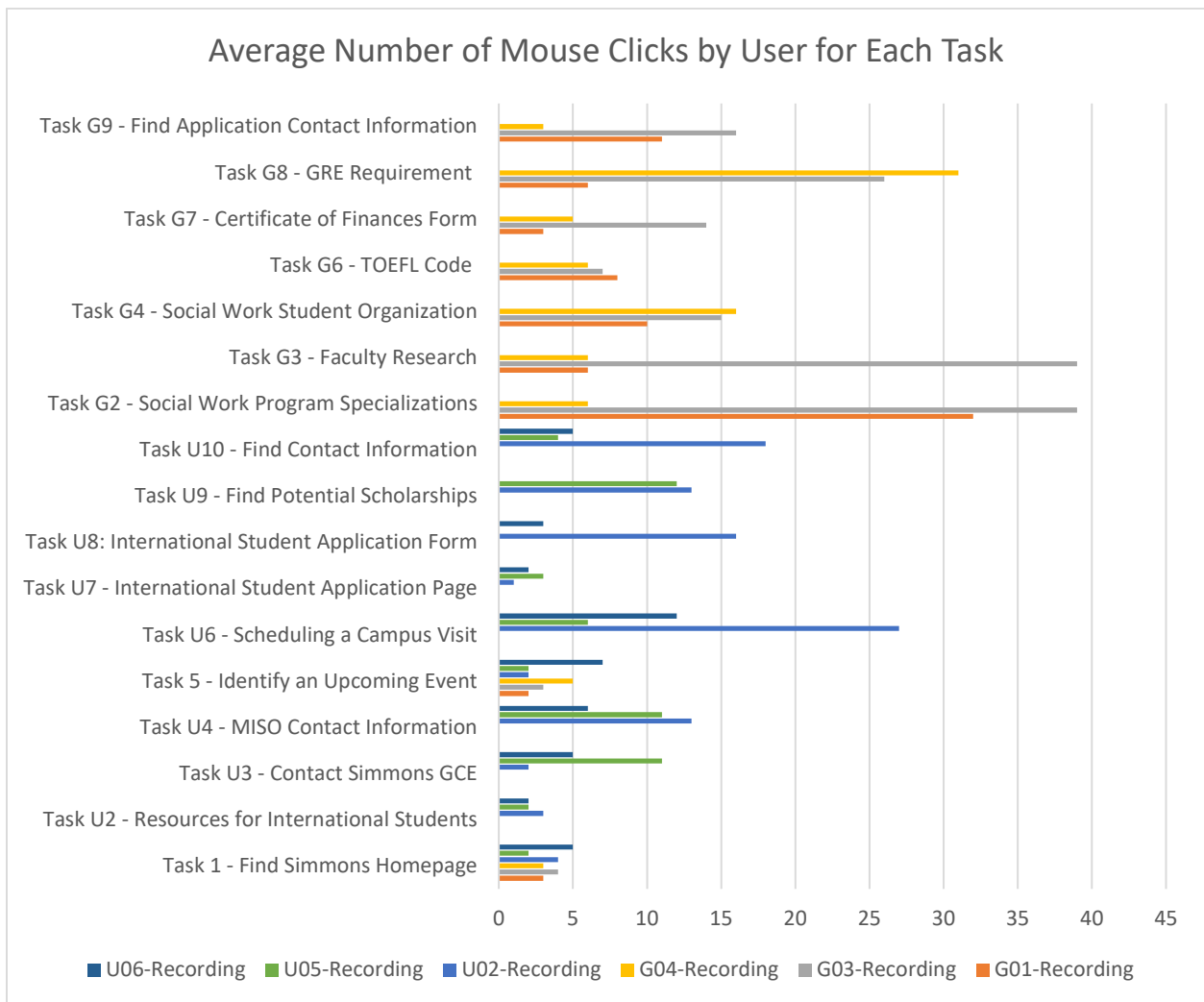
Chart 2

Chart 2 shows the number of times participants clicked the mouse during a given task. These numbers indicate the general difficulty users had in navigating through the website searching for their desired information. This metric is well suited to evaluating the Simmons College website because users are most likely to search this website via browsing rather than by using a search bar.

The average number of clicks for all prospective undergraduates completing each tasks was 7 clicks, where prospective graduates averaged 12 clicks per task. Like time on task, this comparison suggests that undergraduates have an easier time navigating the Simmons website.

Effectiveness
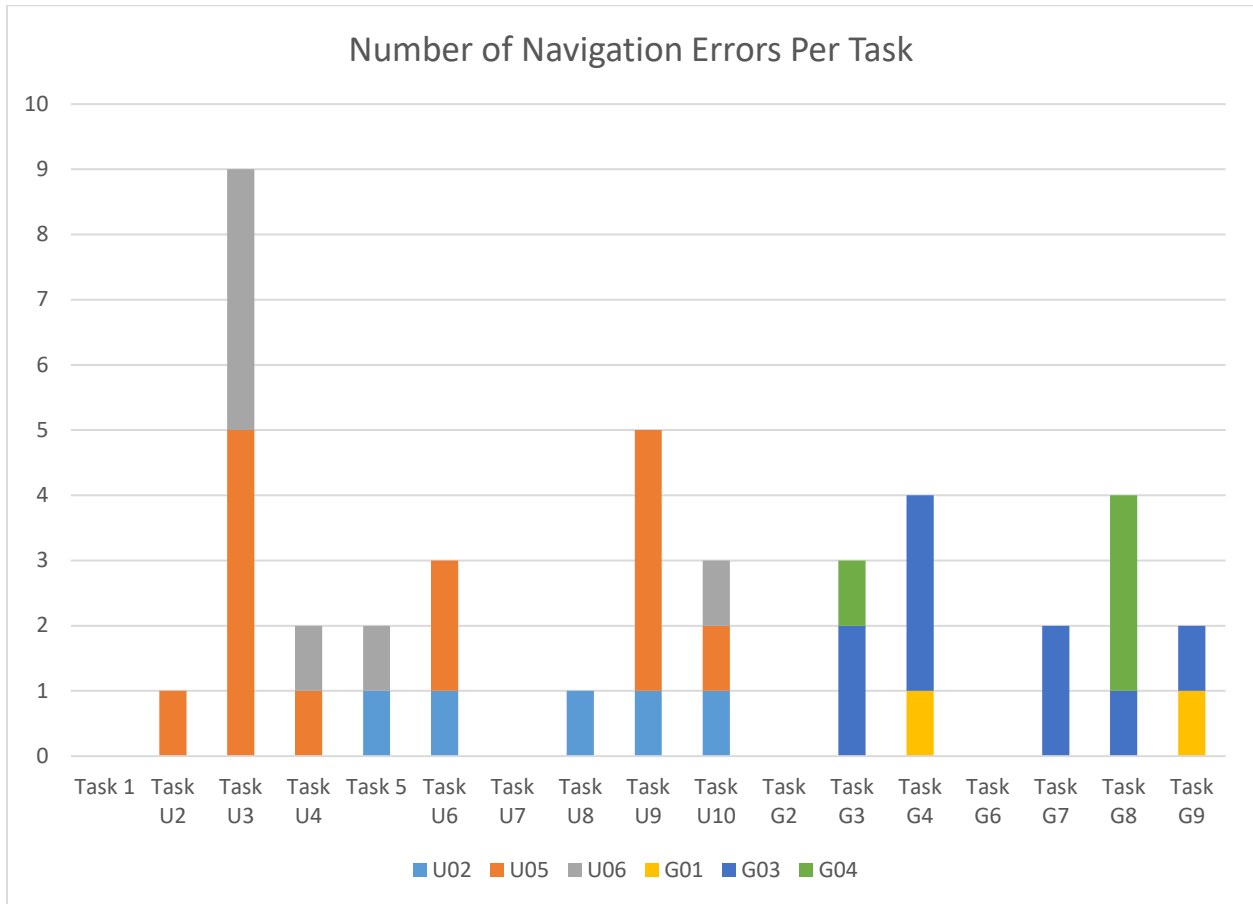
Chart 3

This stacked bar chart visualized the number of errors made by each user during each task, as well as the total number of errors made by all users during each task.

Success Distribution by Task
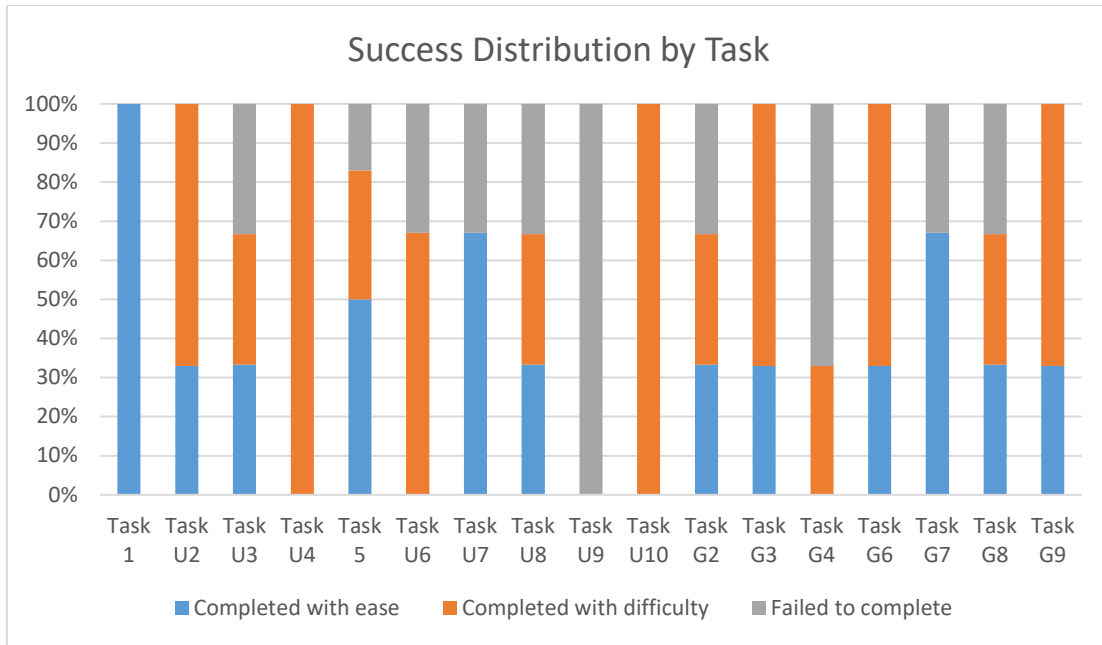
Chart 4

This table shows the percentage of students who either completed with ease (blue), completed with difficulty (orange), and failed to complete (grey). Unlike seeing the number of errors per task, this success distribution shows the overall relative success/difficulty each user had with a task.

Number of Failed Tasks vs. Task Difficulty

Chart 5

Further parsing out task failure, Chart 5 overlays the calculated difficulty rating with the number of failed attempts at each task. While similar to the chart directly above, this chart shows which tasks were the most difficult to complete. It also shows that while some tasks had no failed attempts, ever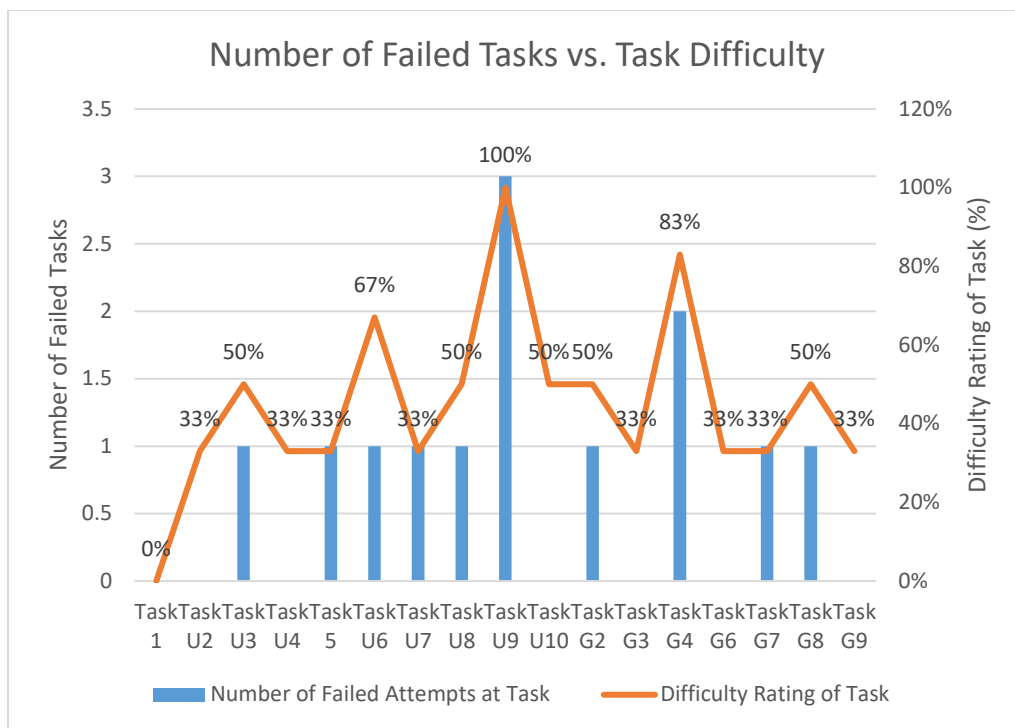y task (Task 1: Find the Simmons website excluded) involved some level of difficulty. Task U2, Task U4, Task U10, Task G3 and Task 6 serve as examples of this.

This shows there were many failed attempts at tasks and that (partially because of our small sample size) 6 out of the total 19 tasks had no failed attempts. Further (barring Task 1), each of these tasks still had at least a 33% difficulty rating. Two of the tasks with the highest failure rating were tasks U9 and G4. Task U9 asked undergraduate participants to locate scholarships for international students, and task G4 asked graduate participants to locate student organizations affiliated with the social work program.
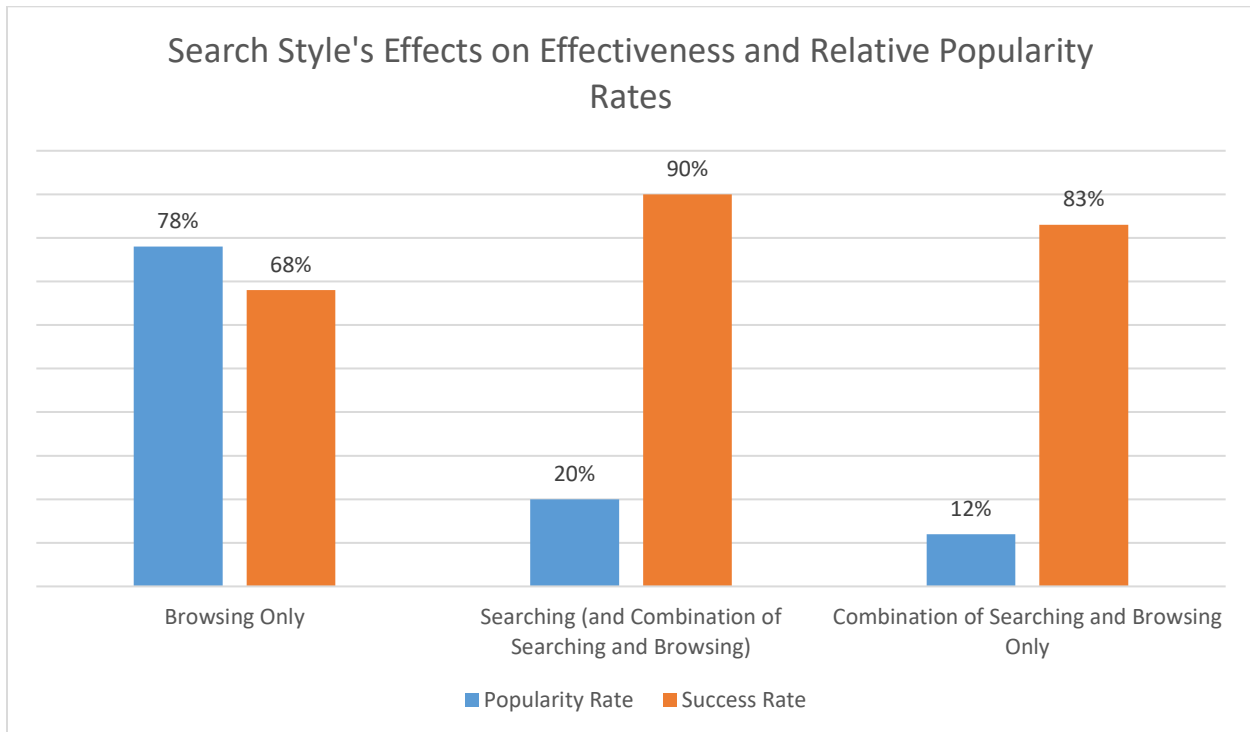
Chart 6

Through the observation of the search methods of each of the participants in relation to task completion, we found three search method styles addressed in this graph. Browsing Only, Searching, and Combination of Searching and Browsing Only.

Browsing Only includes searches where the participants did not make any use of internal or external search bars to search the entirety of the Simmons website. Here, the use of search

bars or boxes that facilitate the search of specific portions of web content are counted as browsing, as they are targeted searches or filtering, rather than general or "blind" searches. For example, the use of either of these two search boxes are considered in this report as Browsing, not Searching.
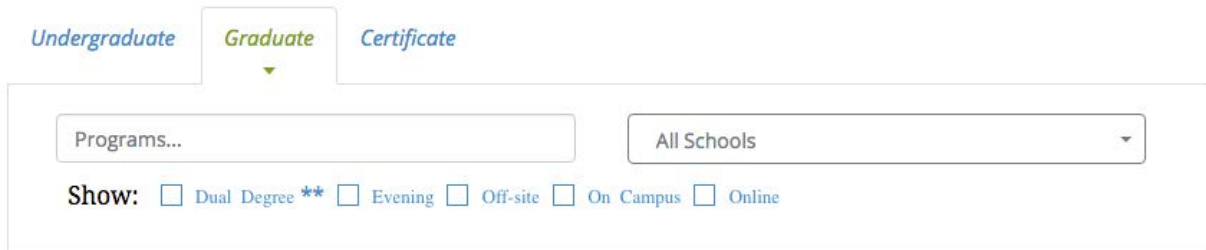
Figure 1: Targeted search box to filter graduate programs
http://www.simmons.edu/academics/graduate-programs
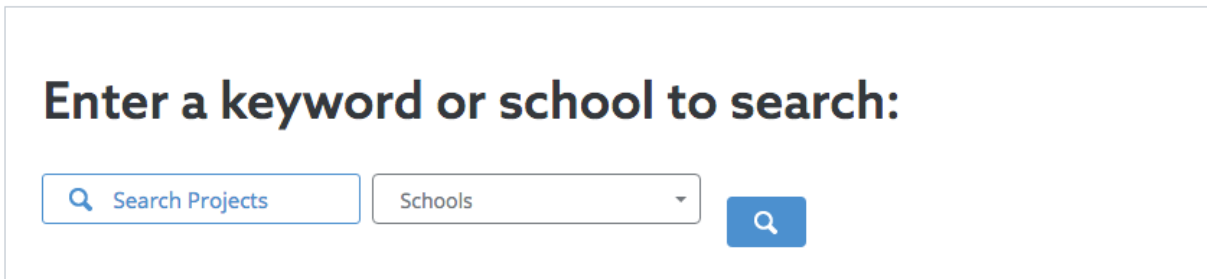
Figure 2: Targeted search box used to filter faculty research projects
http://www.simmons.edu/academics/research

Searching (and Combination of Searching and Browsing) includes tasks that were attempted and/or completed through use of internal or external search bars and encompass attempts that represent a more blind search.
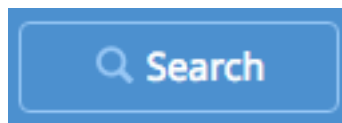
Figure 3: General search bar found at the top right corner of all www.simmons.edu webpages

Finally, tasks users completed using both searching and browsing were observed separately and categorized as *Combination of Searching and Browsing Only*. Together, these comparisons shed insight on search type preferences that individuals may have when approaching the Simmons website, as well as the success rate they are likely to have with a particular method. The popularity and success rates were calculated with the equations that follow:

Popularity rate calculation:

$$\frac{Number\ of\ tasks\ using\ a\ particular\ search\ method}{Total\ number\ of\ tasks} \times 100\%$$

Success rate calculation:

$$\frac{Number\ of\ non-failed\ tasks\ using\ a\ particular\ search\ method}{Total\ number\ of\ tasks\ that\ used\ this\ particular\ search\ method} \times 100\%$$

<u>Effects of Language on Efficiency and Effectiveness</u>
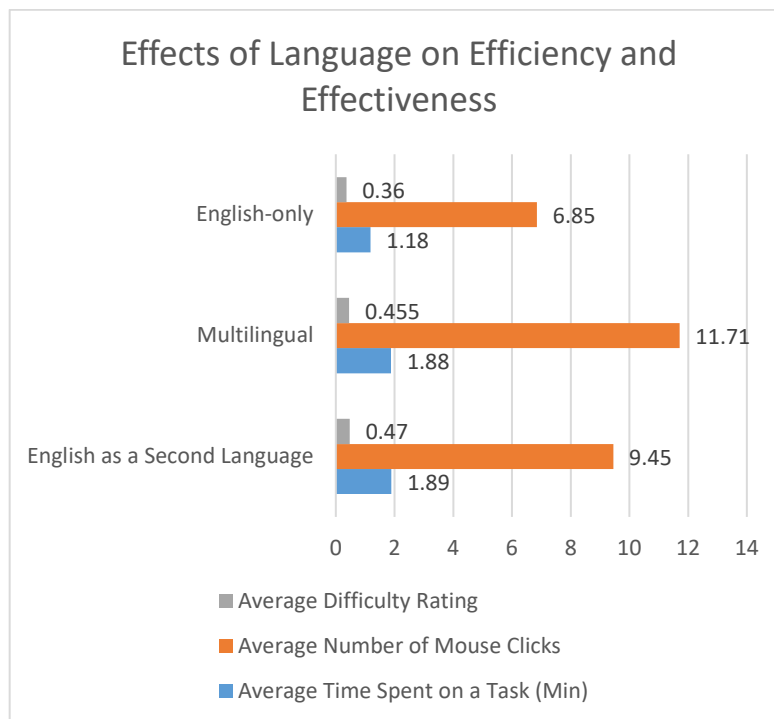
Chart 7

Here, language categories are as follows: English-only speakers are those who only speak English. Multilingual speakers are users who use more than one language at home and are proficient at each of these languages. English as Second Language (ESL) users are those who read and speak English, but are most comfortable reading and speaking in their native language. The latter two groups are perhaps most relevant to our research focused on prospective international students, with the English-only group acting as a control for comparison.

Language has some effect on efficiency as can be seen through comparisons of Time on Task and Number of Mouse Clicks. Multilingual and ESL users were found to take about 46% longer on tasks than English-only speakers and have a higher number of mouse clicks per task (52% more mouse clicks for Multilingual users and 32% more clicks for ESL users). Despite this, there was minimal difference between difficulty ratings for these three groups (36% difficulty rating for English-only users, 46% difficulty rating for Multilingual users and 47% for ESL users). Therefore, language does not seem to have an effect on effectiveness within the parameters of this test.

Satisfaction

At the end of each usability test, our moderator asked a series of questions designed to elicit qualitative satisfaction data from our participants. Each participant was asked to rate their response numerically, and also encouraged to respond verbally to each question. Some participants were very engaged and saw it as an opportunity to provide feedback, whereas others were a bit more focused on scoring their experience quantitatively.
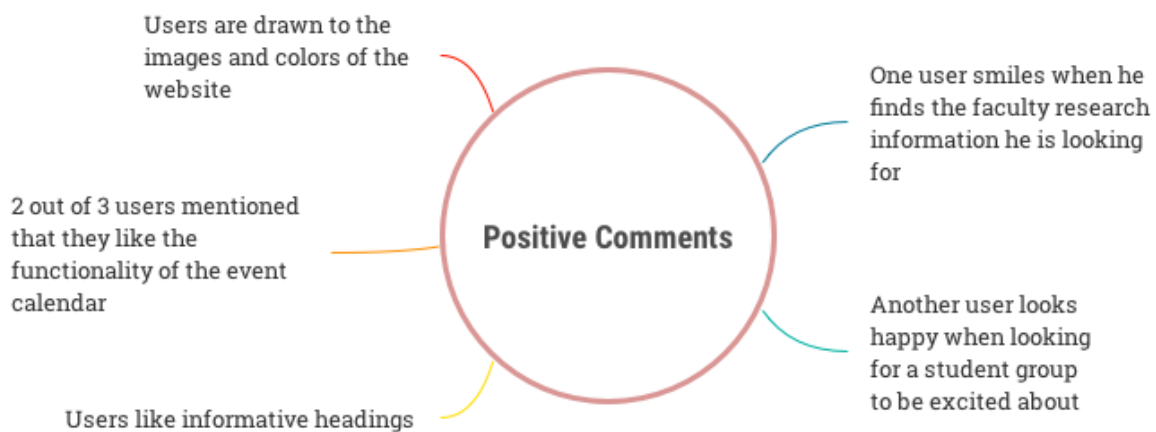
Figure 4: This diagram shows what participants liked about the Simmons website. We can see here that our users appreciated intuitive functionalities and page layouts, and looking for information that related to their personal interests.

Much of the most meaningful qualitative information came from this section of the post-session interview. Below we have included the scoring from the Likert Scale for each question, as well as relevant quotations from the participants who provided feedback. For full numerical scores and transcripts of the post-session interview, please see Appendix IV, pages 70-82.
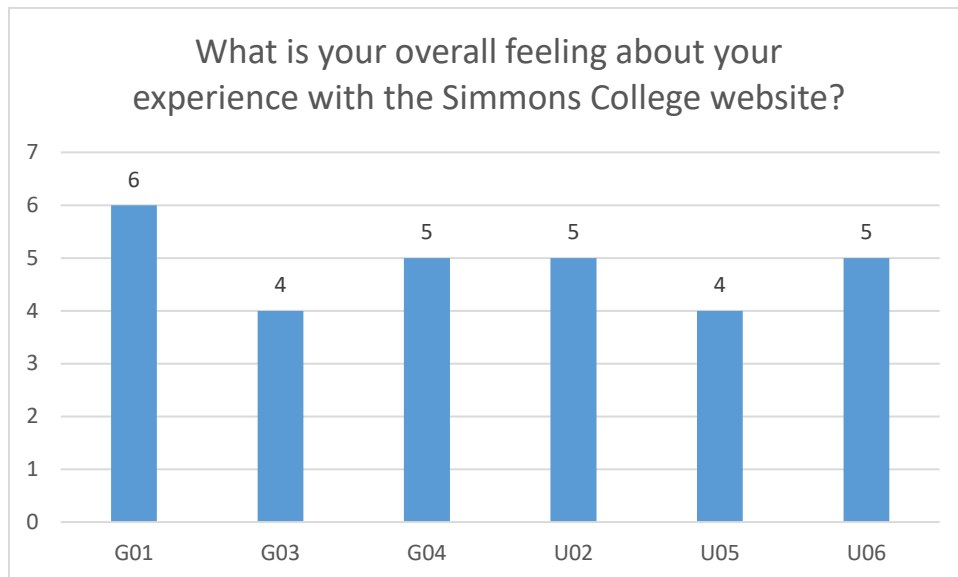
Chart 8

This post-session question provided a scale where 1 = 'I didn't enjoy using the website at all' through 7 = I 'enjoyed using the website very much'. On average, undergraduate participants scored the overall experience of using the Simmons College website at 4.67, and graduate participants gave it a 5. The combined rating of all six participants had an average of 4.82. This was one of the lower ratings given in the post-session interview across the board.

Graduate participant quotes:
- G01: "Some of the university websites that I've been to, you can't find what you're looking for. But this one you can. The layout is not overwhelming."
- G03: "The only thing is maybe the organization of information could be more intuitive. I know this is common in a lot of sites with undergrad and graduate sections. Every time I went to the graduate social work program it seemed like it would default back to the undergrad."
- G04: "I felt like the student organizations was a little bit difficult to find. I don't think that's uncommon though - finding real things about student life is actually pretty difficult on academic websites."

Undergraduate participant quotes:
- U02: "It does help me understand better. But I think even if I look through the website, I cannot really know the school. Because all the schools, they have the same information."
- U06: "I think it should have a 'Contact Us' [page]. If you click on international students, there needs to be contact info right there on international students page.

How satisfied are you with the Simmons College website?

Participant	Score
G01	6.5
G03	3
G04	5
U02	6
U05	6
U06	5
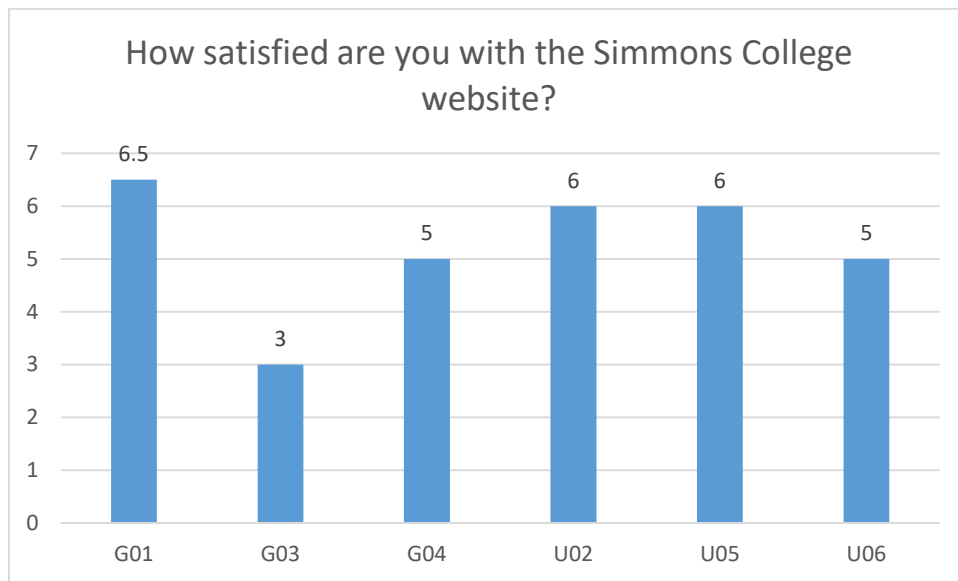
Chart 9

This post-session question provided a scale where 1 = 'unsatisfied' through 7 = 'satisfied'. On average, undergraduate participants scored their satisfaction with the Simmons College website at 5.67, and graduate participants gave it a 4.83. The combined rating of all six participants had an average of 5.25.

Graduate participant quotes:
- G03: "Specifically, with the tasks I was given, not everything was straightforward as it could be […] this is a website where it is very comprehensive, which is great, but there were a lot of quick things that if I wanted to find would be buried somewhere. So I appreciate that is has all this information and is comprehensive, but I think there are things that as a student I would want access to in a more intuitive way."
- G04: "I was able to find the things I needed and I did from what I could tell, finding the calendar and the programs seemed pretty straightforward. Only a few things too more than a few clicks to find."

Undergraduate participant quotes:
- U02: "I can find all the information I want to know."

- U06: "It's a lot of information to take in. I think contact information would be ideal. Some of it might just be that I'm not sure about what some of the tabs mean by things like 'Provost' [etc]."

How useful do you think this website is for learning what student life is like at Simmons College?

G01	G03	G04	U02	U05	U06
6	4	4	6	7	7

Chart 10

This post-session question provided a scale where 1 = 'it's not very useful at all' through 7 = 'It's extremely useful'. On average, undergraduate participants scored the student life portions of the website at 6.67, and graduate participants gave it a 4.67. The combined rating of all six participants had an average of 5.67.

This question had the largest divide in scoring between undergraduate and graduate participants, with a 2-point difference between their average scores. This may represent a need to consider how student life information is displayed for potential graduate students.

Graduate participant quotes:

- G01: "When I clicked on student life I would want to see what life at Simmons looks like. I would say it's extremely useful. But I couldn't find what I was looking for in student activities.
- G03: "I would say that it definitely has a great student life feeling to it. When I clicked student organizations there were so many, it was nice to know that there was so much engagement. The calendar was boring to look at, visually. I think under activities and organizations ... it would have been nice to see a separate category for grad students. It feels very geared towards to an undergraduate experience.
  [Note: while looking for "Diversity and Inclusion" events on the main calendar, participant found no results]

35

- G04: "For facts about the program, it was easy. But finding out about student life is hard. That was the hardest thing… If I was just starting from scratch and trying to decide what it is like, I might just click on the 'student life' section and if I started here I would get to this pretty quickly. But once I'm at the Social Work website, there isn't really student life information."

Undergraduate participant quotes:
- U05: "I actually like when they had links and videos that toured around the city and the college, it gave me a view of what the college would be like. I like that they included info about the city, because as an international student it would alleviate my stress about coming to this college."
- U06: "It seems like they tell you, they have a lot of stuff about it, it seems OK. It has its own tab and it seems like it narrows it down quite a bit."

How useful do you think this website is for learning about the requirements to apply to Simmons College?

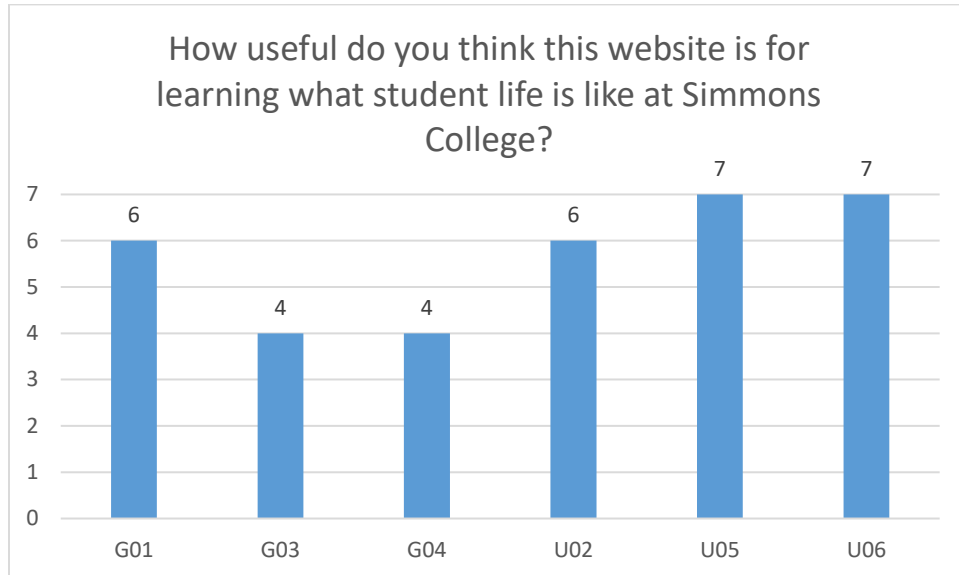|	G01	G03	G04	U02	U05	U06
	7	5	6	6.5	6	6
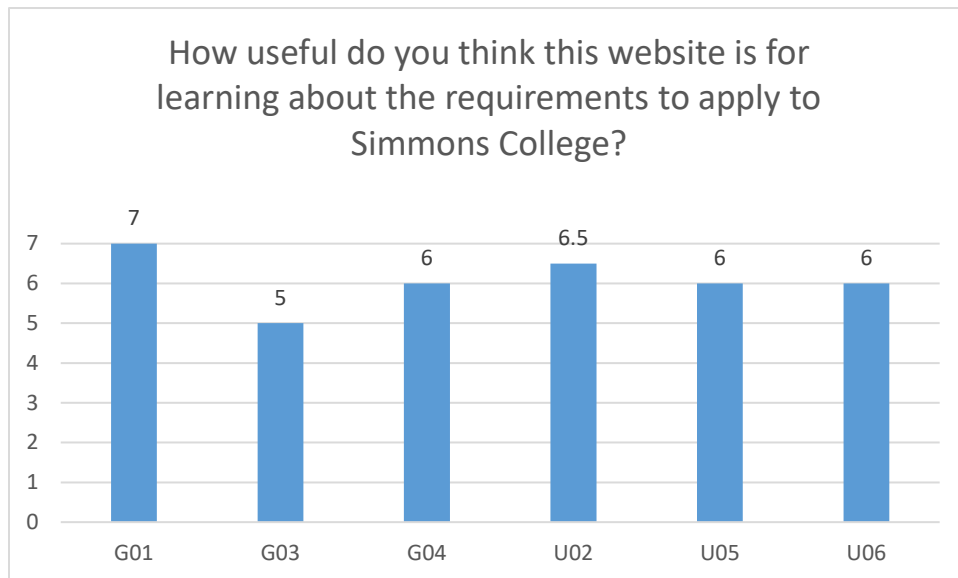
Chart 11

This post-session question provided a scale where 1 = 'it's not very useful at all' through 7 = 'It's extremely useful'. On average, undergraduate participants scored the application and requirement portions of the website at 6.67, and graduate participants gave it a 6. The combined rating of all six participants had an average of 6.08.

Both participant groups scored this question fairly highly—from which we can infer that the application and requirements are fairly clearly described by the website. Several of the graduate participants did mention that it took them a while to determine whether or not GRE scores were required in order to apply to the program.

Graduate participant quotes:

- G01: "Extremely useful. I would give it an A."
- G03: "I remember that even though I couldn't find GRE, there did seem to be a fairly exhaustive list of requirements, which is useful to have. I also appreciated a brief paragraph about each of the requirements. Again, just consolidating all of the information into an easy checklist."
- G04: "I think I was able to find the things I needed to find if I were going to apply to the MSW. The program departments were pretty easy to find and the requirements for the application were easy to find. It took me a little while to find out about the GRE."

Undergraduate participant quotes:

- U02: "Even if I go to the admission page it tells me the next step for applying, but I don't really know what they want from the student. I think sometimes I needed help finding things. I think I was reading some not really relevant things and not finding the answer."
- U05: "It had everything I wanted, like links to print an application and common app. It's directing me to the common app and then I have to figure it out—as an international student I wouldn't have known what the common app is."
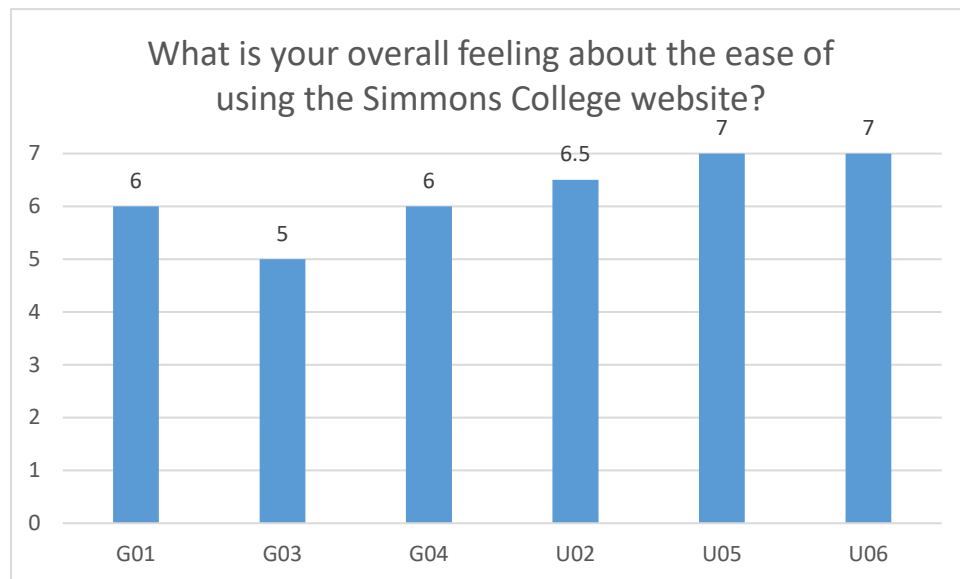

Chart 12

This post-session question provided a scale where 1 = 'It's not easy at all to use this website' through 7 = 'It's extremely easy to use this website'. On average, undergraduate participants scored the application and requirement portions of the website at 6.83, and graduate participants gave it a 5.67. The combined rating of all six participants had an average of 6.25.

This question had one of the highest scores for undergraduate participants, indicating that they did not feel that navigating the site was particularly difficult.

Graduate participant quotes:
- G01: "I think it's easy to use. I couldn't find the activities, and I had some questions about how to apply, but couldn't find the exact answer. Applying wasn't intuitive."
- G03: "For the most part, most things I would eventually be able to find."
- G04: "There are only a couple things I couldn't find right off the bat."

Undergraduate participant quotes:
- U02: "It was easy. At first I wanted to search for the multicultural group, I just used the search button. Also searching for admissions contacts."
- U05: "One, I like how it's set up, how the links are set up. Two, I just have to scroll through this website to see some of these links. It's not like I have to manually search for things. The way this is set up is really concise."
- U06: "It's fairly well organized. It's good for a site that has a lot of information. It has a search bar which is always very useful. If I were going to college, I would want to look at what courses there are. I would want to look for what students' lives are like there."

Interpretation of Results

Our team found three major trends that formed from our qualitative observations and were backed by our quantitative data. We found issues with the website's taxonomy (namely the organization and hierarchical structure of the web pages) and issues with the clarity and surrounding context of language used on the website. These issues led to navigation errors, and a misunderstanding of page content. This misunderstanding was seen noted in two major ways. First, some users thought tasks were complete when they were not (seen in the testing scenarios of users G01, U02, U06). Secondly, and more surprisingly, some users found the information that would have allowed them to complete a task, but did not think that this information was correct (seen with users G01, G03, and G04).

We can see from our research results that users are not easily able to find desired data within the Simmons College website. Though the website is designed to look browsing-friendly—78% of users browsed for an answers to their task scenarios—browsing only led to successful task completion 68% of the time (see Chart 6 on page 29). In contrast, users performed a combination of searching and browsing 20% of the time and this method yielded a 90% task success rate (Chart 6). Further, users made frequent navigation errors by clicking links that took

them further from the information they needed to complete tasks. These navigation errors point to issues with the website's taxonomy.

With special consideration given to international students, we cross-analyzed language proficiency types with effectiveness and efficiency metrics. This line of inquiry revealed that while users who were non English-only speakers were not as efficient in task completion, overall, there was not much disparity in their ability to effectively complete tasks (see Chart 7 on page 31). This suggests that there are links and navigation routes that are better suited to an English-only audience and could put members of different nationalities or language groups at a disadvantage when it comes to website navigation. This disadvantage could lead to fewer international students and non-English-centric American students from applying.

These results have led us to focus our recommendations around changes in website taxonomy and language use on individual webpages in an effort to improve the overall navigability and comprehensiveness of the Simmons College website.

Recommendations

The Simmons College website is a large website that caters to many different stakeholders, each of whom have different and sometimes conflicting interests. It is the intention of this report to propose recommendations to improve the usability of the Simmons College website based on its research findings and analysis, which are based on the specific user experience of potential international students. However, it should be noted that these recommendations were formulated while taking the larger context of this website into consideration. The themes found within this study are applicable to all of the stakeholders of this website. Therefore, the logical backing and the basis by which recommendations are applied is relevant to most, if not all, pages of the site.

The major hindrances to website navigability came through taxonomy issues and lack of clarity and relevant specificity to the users' interests. Along with the general look and feel of the website, these were also features that were able to elicit the most satisfaction from users when executed well. Users enjoyed comprehensive features (like the events calendar and the basic functionality of the top navigation bar), informative headings, and information that was clearly related to their interests. This suggests that fixing the issues that are currently present will greatly increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of the Simmons College website.

While looking for information on the GRE, participant G03 observed that "this website has tabs within collapsible tabs and then long lists." This comment was made after the user had clicked

over 25 times and was presented with a long block of text which he suspected to contain the information he needed. This participant was not able to find concrete information on the GRE requirement.

Looking at the same task (Graduate Task 8: Is the GRE required for applying to the Masters of Social Work Program?), Participant G04 was able to find this information, but was not confident that this is the information he is searching for because it does not contain the phrase "GRE" (see below).

Note: Standardized test scores are not required.

Figure 5

http://www.simmons.edu/admission-and-financial-aid/graduate-admission/ssw-master-of-social-work

General and sometimes repeated usability issues encountered within the website have been categorized using Nielsen's Heuristic groupings and given ratings out of 5 for severity and difficulty of fixing.

Our recommendations, which correspond with the outcomes of our data analysis and our own heuristic evaluation, are proposed and documented via content inventories, and presented through wireframes. Different web pages were analyzed using these tools in an effort to cover a wide range of proposed changes.

Heuristic Evaluation

Once all the testing was done, the team conducted a Heuristic Evaluation of the Simmons College website (pages relevant to the tasks), using Nielsen's method. Nielsen's heuristics method is based on "10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design", which was developed by Jakob Nielsen in collaboration with Rolf Molich in 1990.

This method uses the severity scale ranging from 1-5 (5 points scale). In this severity scale, a rating of 1 indicates that there is "not a usability problem"; a 2 represents a "cosmetic problem"; a 3 represents a "minor problem"; a 4 represents a "major problem"; and a 5 represents a "usability catastrophe" – which calls for urgent correction. The "Difficulty of Fixing" rating is also conducted on a 1-5 (5 points scale), where a rating of 1 indicates that a problem is easy to fix and a rating of 5 indicates the problem is difficult to fix. The Heuristic Number indicates the heuristic quality (based on Neilson's model) of the website being referred to. (See Appendix VIII. for Neilson's Heuristics scale on page 109).

#	Problem	Severity Rating	Difficulty of Fixing Rating	Heuristic Number
1	The website has many levels.	4	5	7
2	No option for language translation.	2	2	3
3	Terms and jargon may be unfamiliar to international students	3	3	2
4	There are links with different titles that lead to the same page.	4	4	10
5	There are links with similar titles that lead to different pages.	4	4	10
6	Language is not always specific to the user or clear.	3	2	10
7	Form to schedule a visit has a vague error message.	4	1	5,9
8	Form to Schedule a visit crashes if an error is made.	5	1	5,7
9	There are often times large blocks of text	3	2	8
10	Groups, headers, use of bolding and categorization is not consistent	3	4	4

Table 2

Content Inventories

Content Inventories and subsequent content audits were conducted for the following pages of the Simmons College Website: *Academics* (http://www.simmons.edu/academics) and

Resources for International Students (http://www.simmons.edu/resources-for/international-students). The Content Inventories and notes for revisions can be found in the Appendix VII, pages 91-108. Because these spreadsheets inventory individual items on these webpages, the resulting recommendations tend to be word changes, deletions, or moving an element to a different place on the page.

Wireframes

We are pleased to note that our study participants generally appreciated the look and feel of the Simmons College website. It earned an average rating of 5.25 out of 7 on a Likert scale, where 1 indicated "unsatisfied" and 7 indicated "satisfied." There was also unanimity in thinking among participants that the website's graphics are indeed pleasing. However, as noted in our interpretation of results, we found issues with the website's taxonomy (namely the organization and hierarchical structure of the web pages) and issues with the clarity and surrounding context of language used on the website.

It is for these reasons that we have chosen to depict mock-ups using actual images of the website in its current state, rather than traditional wireframes, in order to most effectively illustrate the possible impact of some of the changes that we recommend as a result of this research study, while preserving those attributes of the Simmons College website that work well. Where a new element is recommended, a wireframe of that element has been superimposed over the actual website image in order to convey a possibly enhanced altered state.

It is important to note that improvements to the underlying taxonomy and overall Information Architecture of the Simmons College website, while requiring an enormous amount of "behind-the-scenes" work, won't always necessarily be immediately visible to the user. In fact, study participants appreciated the basic functionality of the top navigation bar as is. However, small changes are suggested based on user feedback gathered through our research. In its present iteration, the top navigation bar currently appears like this:
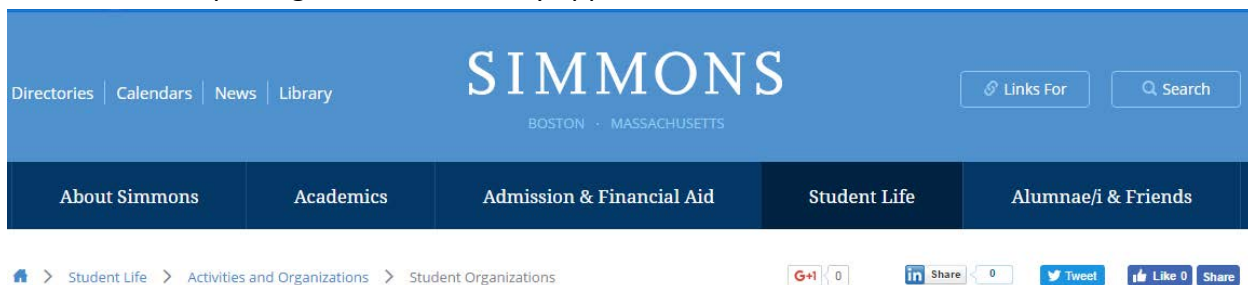
We suggest that having social media links appear on every page as they relate to each specific page seems unnecessary, especially when general social media links appear in the bottom navigation bar that pertain to the institution as a whole. Plus, social media links that have zeroes in them such as those displayed in the above screen shot may inadvertently bias the user into thinking the page is somehow insignificant or unappreciated by others. Therefore, we recommend removing the set of social media links found in the top navigation bar, in favor of retaining them solely in the bottom navigation bar.

The top-right button labeled "Links For" attempts to engage users in ways that reflect the priorities of the College for this website, assumedly catering to the perceived imperatives of specific populations (e.g. "Future Undergrads," "Future Grad Students," etc.). It is for this reason that we recommend moving those links down to the bottom navigation bar and making these target populations constantly visible, in the hopes of even more readily engaging them, rather than hiding these important invitations to engage under a "Links For" button. (The impact of this suggestion will be apparent later in this section, when the bottom navigation bar is depicted.)

Also, all of our study participants appreciated having the ability to search the site, but sometimes they made use of search tools available outside of the Simmons College website (e.g. Google), so for this reason we recommend making the native search tool far more prominent in the top navigation bar. Additionally, some participants reported that they did not immediately notice that there was a search bar available because it was too well-camouflaged within the header. Finally, the "About Simmons" link may serve better by being located on the extreme right, rather than the extreme left, to put it within closer proximity to a more prominent search bar. We heard feedback that the contents of the "About Simmons" section were unclear to prospective students (one undergraduate test participant was unfamiliar with the word "Provost") or relevant to their immediate needs, which would be another rationale for moving it towards the right-hand side of the page.

The combination of these simple changes would result in a top navigation bar that looks like this:

It is perhaps in the next section, the central body of a typical Simmons College webpage, where the results of enhancements and improvements to the overall Information Architecture of the Simmons College website would most notably be perceived by users. We have chosen to depict a single webpage tested as part of our study, the "Student Organizations" webpage (http://www.simmons.edu/student-life/activities-and-organizations/student-organizations) for purposes of dramatic illustration and as a representation of the general recommendations that have emerged from our research regarding information seeking and browsing. Here is a portion of how the central body of the "Student Organizations" webpage currently appears:

The page continues to sprawl below, with a grand total of almost 50 similar boxes that when selected individually expand to reveal hyperlinks, but that provide little context or preview of what will be found when clicked. Mystery abounds amidst a surfeit of choices, and this quickly tends to lead to confusion and information overload for users.

Unfortunately, this condition is quite common across the Simmons College website and there may not be a quick or easy fix. However, one possible approach was suggested by our youngest participant—an international high school student—who expressed during the Post-Test Interview that perhaps the website could ask her questions designed to help her find the information that she is seeking. Such an interactive search tool, applying fuzzy logic to metadata and actual page content, could perhaps begin to better approach the "gamified" user interface that can be observed in the mental models of many young adults.

Such an approach would significantly abbreviate the initial encounter with the Student Organizations webpage (and indeed most College webpages) to something that looks more like this:
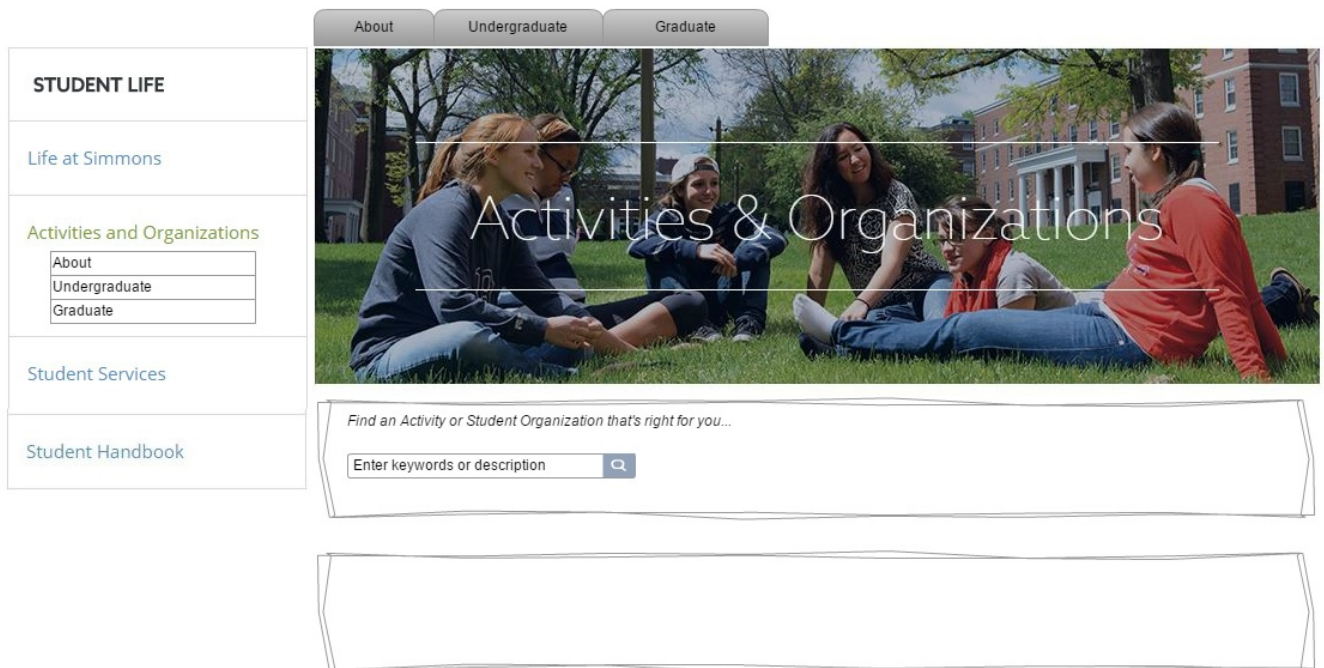
additional tabs, so that initial search results are not lost). At the end of the results returned by the interactive search tool would be the link that reads "Don't see the type of organization that you'd like to join? START ONE!" It's important that this link appear after a user has first attempted to see a type of organization that she'd like to join. This is because we wouldn't, after all, want her to start an organization that actually already exists. Interestingly, because

this particular button (for starting a new organization) is distinctive and offset on the existing page, it immediately caught the eye of one of our test participants and she felt compelled to click on it before actually ever reviewing any of the organizations that already exist.

Recognizing that the proposed change to an interactive search tool as described here is profound and perhaps slightly abstruse, it's important to state clearly that the rationale for such an interactive interface is to prevent the rapid information overload frequently observed in our research study. By more gently easing users into the information on the Simmons College website that most likely meets their specific needs, we hope to significantly amplify the ease with which browsing is accomplished. Alternatively, in the proposed revision the user could quickly jump to a curated set of results for either an undergraduate or graduate interests by clicking on either the tabs above the Activities & Organizations image, or by clicking on the corresponding subcategory hyperlinks found in the left navigation bar. These two alternative pathways would ultimately lead to the same information, but would hopefully result in a greatly simplified navigation experience in order to arrive there.

It is understandable that this proposed enhancement begs the question, why incorporate such an interactive search interface when similar ones already exist outside the Simmons College website that could potentially accomplish the same goals for the user? The answer to that question lies in the fact that Simmons College has no control over the results produced by such external search interfaces, with their distracting banner advertisements and the possibility that results might even include hyperlinks to the College's competition. By incorporating such an interactive search tool directly within the Information Architecture over which the College itself has control, the corresponding results can be more readily tailored to the aim of increasing the website's marketing and recruitment potential. A spinoff of this approach would hopefully be a much more enhanced navigability for users who are already members of the Simmons College community as well. Further research into the potential and actual impact of such an interactive search tool is definitely warranted.

Moving back into the realm of simple, concrete recommendations, we now proceed to the bottom navigation bar that currently appears like this:

Academics

Undergraduate Programs
Graduate Programs
Certificate Programs
Continuing & Professional
Education
Faculty
Research
Schools

Admission & Financial
Aid

Undergraduate Admission
Graduate Admission
Student Financial Services
Visit Simmons
Request Information

Student Life

Life at Simmons
Activities & Organizations
Student Services

About Simmons

Why Simmons
Leadership
Work at Simmons
Conferences and Lectures
News
Administrative Offices and
Services
Contact Us

Alumnae/i & Friends

Connect
Give
Events
Alumnae/i Directory

Resources For

Future Undergrads
Admitted Undergraduates
Students
International Students
For Parents and Families
Faculty and Staff
Alumnae/i and Friends
For Media

Athletics

Directories

Library

Contact Webmaster

Online Privacy Policy

© 2016 Simmons College | 300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115 | 617-521-2000

Simmons Social Media Hub

Once again, the goal of our recommendations for enhancing this portion of the user interface is to simplify and flatten the organizational structure of the website by removing visible layers of hierarchy as much as possible. It is also important that the overall real estate occupied by persistent navigation bars be reduced to only what is absolutely necessary, in order to help further diminish recurrent information overload.

As stated earlier, the College has identified specific target populations for whom effective engagement is paramount and these should be clearly identified in the bottom navigation bar. Furthermore, several study participants bemoaned the lack of an obvious "Contact Us" tool as is commonly found on commercial websites where any manner of interaction and communication can be addressed. Combining these aspects together, an enhanced bottom navigation bar may look something like this:
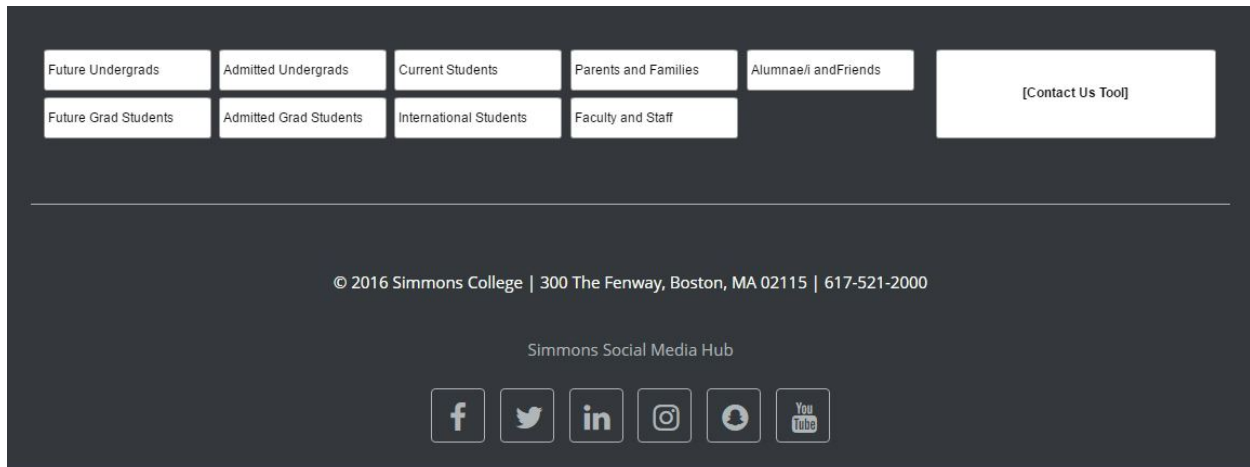
Clicking on any of these new persistent hyperlinks would lead the user to an interactive search tool that would provide personalized results tailored specifically to members of the target population, as depicted in the wireframe for the central body of the webpage just discussed. In addition to the respective interactive search tools, matching tabs and left navigation bar subcategories would quickly lead to curated results that reflect the perceived imperatives of these specific populations. Finally, the persistent "Contact Us" tool would ensure that both prospective students and current members of the Simmons community are always provided an opportunity to engage whenever and however they might desire.

Through this series of wireframes, we have attempted to depict a range of changes from minor to substantive, but we recognize that we have done so without respect to actual cost in terms of labor and other resources that may be required. We certainly respect the fact that efficient and economical solutions are ultimately the purview of designers and engineers. Through this research on usability, however, it is our intent to suggest where resources should be targeted and the most likely directions in which optimal solutions may be found.

Recommendations for improvements to taxonomy and Information Architecture
Taxonomy is so fundamental to Information Architecture and website functionality; most other changes or improvements will not be meaningful if the overall website structure is not optimized first. However, altering the taxonomy and corresponding Information Architecture of a site is also the most complicated series of revisions to make for the same reasons. This becomes especially apparent in a website as large as the Simmons College website.
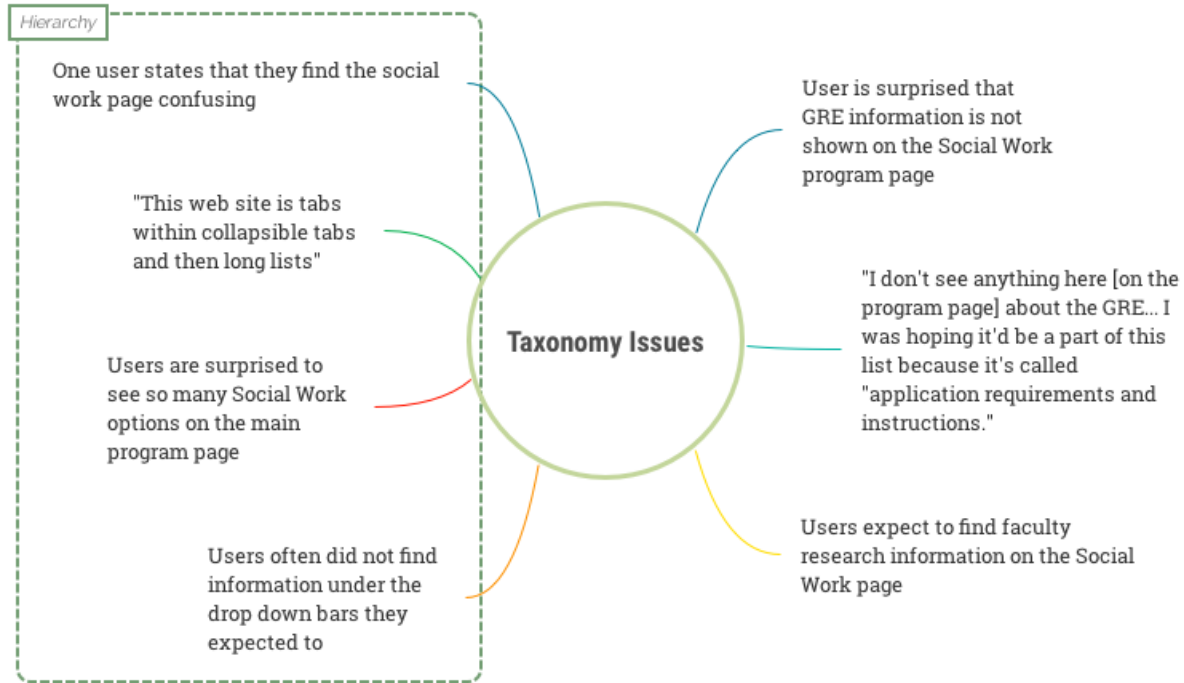
Figure 6: Participant comments, and team members' observations have been grouped into common themes. The qualitative findings represent issues users had related to the websites taxonomy (i.e. issues with the structure and hierarchy of the website).

In short, further testing and website analysis is required to determine how to optimize taxonomy and Information Architecture. Before further user testing is performed, Simmons should create a comprehensive site map to document the entire current structure for further analysis. Our user test scenarios revealed that it took users many clicks and a significant amount of time to find information they were searching for, and several tasks within the test were failed. This indicates that the website is difficult to navigate because it has more of a "deep" structure (having many hierarchical levels) than it is flat (having fewer hierarchical levels, though potentially more initial categories). A visual site map would confirm or deny this.

Next, using personas that represent the different stakeholders of the College, example pathways could be created to help flesh out the links between the different web pages at different levels of the hierarchy. Though having many different pathways to find information theoretically gives users more opportunities to find the information they seek, our user testing revealed that users were often confused by similarly worded links located near each other, and by seeing links for the same content on different parts of the webpage. These instances of confusion sometimes led to users first testing one link to see where the link took them, then going back to the original page to determine if the other similar link took them to the same place. Although seemingly very separate issues at face value, through this example, it becomes apparent that taxonomy and relevant and specific context are closely linked to the usability of

the Simmons College website's Information Architecture, and that both can be improved to enhance the pages' operability and users' ability to navigate successfully.

Card sorting would be a useful exercise to perform after a sitemap is documented, as it would address both of these areas of concern. Allowing users to control taxonomy and language choice in an open card sort would enable a team to gain insight into what users find to be the most logical naming convention for certain terms and links, and consider a proposed website IA structure. Further, by using representatives from each of Simmons stakeholder groups, slight differences in preferences and website use could be accounted for. This would allow for optimization for each group.

Though the Simmons College website is very large, work should be done to restructure the site so that it is more flat than it currently is. In its current state, the deep system is inefficient to navigate for users and has many pathways that lead to user error and disorientation.
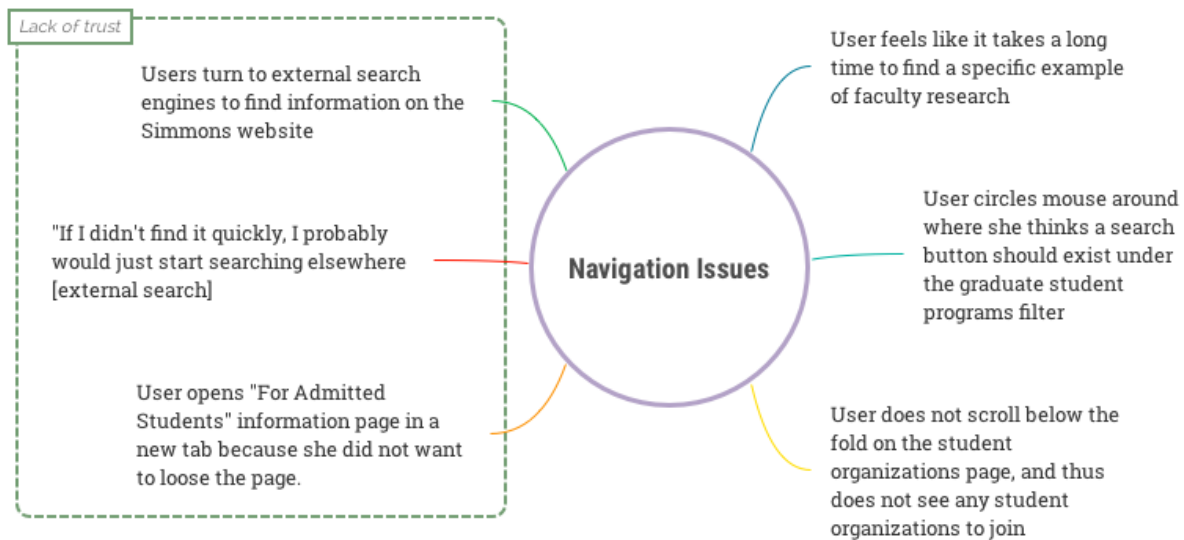
Figure 7: This spider diagram shows issues participants had with navigating through the website, their impressions they had of the website because of its navigability, and actions they took to resolve their problems (i.e. using external searches or searching for search buttons, and sometimes not completing tasks fully).

Recommendations for improvements to language clarity
Users appreciated instances in which headings were clearly labeled and information was well sorted and kept brief, such as the events calendar and the initial levels of the top navigation bar. Conversely, frustration and user error increased when they were presented with information that did not have enough context to confirm its relevance. Users were repeatedly

reluctant to read through large bodies of text. On occasion, this lead to using the "Control-F" search function, task failure, or obvious dissatisfaction.

In order to improve this quality of the web pages, a consistent use of language, visual differentiation of information, and descriptive link and heading terms must be enforced. First, language use and text formatting must be assessed throughout the website. Then, creating a language-based style guide would enable the consistent and clear language and formatting styles by those reformatting the website and by future content contributors. Textual content should be visually structured with consistent use of header size, boldness and general paragraph sizes. This will enable users to quickly scan through content to find the information they seek or to quickly pick up facts about Simmons that interest them.
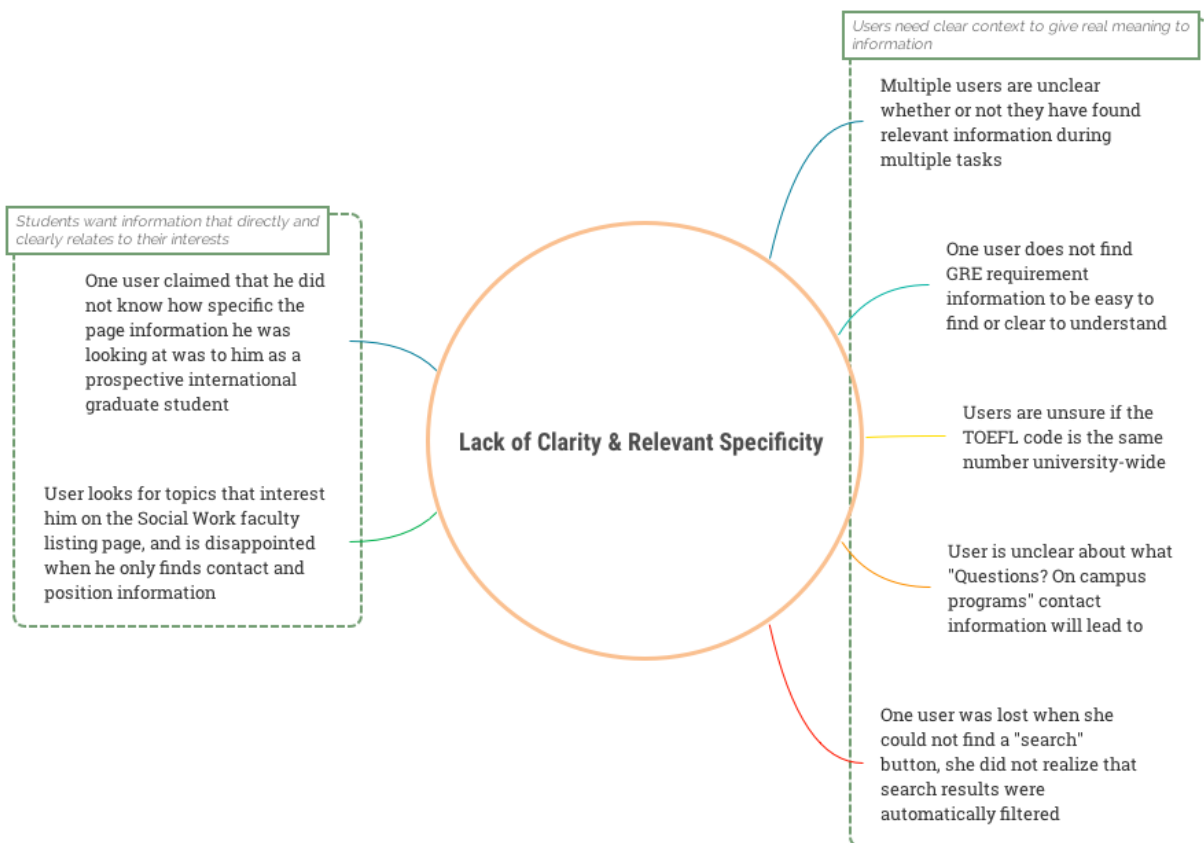
Figure 8: The presentation of language on the Simmons website has two main themes. 1) There is not always enough context or clarity to impart a clear message to site users and 2) students like reading information that is directly linked to their interests, but where not always finding these details. These issues resulted in users not knowing if or when they had found answers to their task driven questions. Taking this an idea further, these issues can also result in users not having a clear idea of college spirit or program culture.

Terms, page content, and web pages themselves should be assessed individually (this process has been started in the Content Inventories found in this report) to ensure there is enough context for users to feel confident in their understanding of the message that the College is

sending. For example, *TOEFL score* should be changed to something more specific, such as *TOEFL score for Simmons College* to indicate that it applies to the entire website—this was an issue that arose from some participants not understanding whether or not the code applied to the entire institution, or just a specific department. This lack of language specificity led to participants looking elsewhere on the site for confirmation of the code's accurateness.

Recommendations for relevant user specificity

During our tests, one of the activities that users received the most satisfaction from was looking for information that suited their specific interests, such as upcoming events, faculty research, and student groups. The users who performed in our tests did not seem impacted by promotional slogans or generalized phrases used in banners, but wanted specific details that could give them insight into what makes Simmons College a distinctive institution. Users liked images, but they wanted images that were not generic or interchangeable. Although they did not want to read a lot of information, users wanted to know relevant details. For example, test participants were surprised that Social Work faculty list did not contain a clear link to learn about faculty member's research interests or the classes they taught. After discussing this with our site supervisor, we recognize that the professor names are all hyperlinks to their research pages, though none of our participants realized this during testing. This may be due to how seamlessly the links fit into the overall page design—something could be done to make these links more obvious to users or even include hyperlinks in the box of contact information, labeled clearly as such.

More content that is useful and of interest to students (and potentially other stakeholders) should be added to areas of the web where these users are navigating to. As mentioned in the recommendations for taxonomy and Information Architecture improvements, part of this solution also comes from acknowledging navigation pathways and ensuring that these pathways lead to relevant information for the user. In our tests, international student personas were commonly routed to information that is more relevant to domestic students and graduate students were routed to resources specific to undergraduate students. However, in only addressing issues of page-by-page relevant user specificity, these issues can be fixed with content improvements.

Recommendations for visual design of the website

Overall, users were happy with the visual design of the Simmons College website. They enjoyed the colors, fonts, and that there were many images. Users responded positively to the layout and appearance of the homepage.

As mentioned previously, it was indicated that the use of relevant and compelling photos is preferable to those which are generic and interchangeable, as those seen in the grid listing of graduate programs. These were almost all close-ups of students' faces as they sat in a classroom. In order to improve upon this, Simmons can exchange these for new images that are more specific to individual programs. Ideally, these photos would show more action-driven scenes such as project work, collaboration, internship activities, or field work (as opposed to more stagnant classroom scenes).

Users are drawn to images, regardless of whether or not they portray useful information. The team observed that banners took up much of the "above the fold" space on some web pages, and this hindered the exploration of some users as they did not scroll down past the banner to look for more content. We also found that one user scrolled past a search that would have filtered graduate program options in order to view the images he saw lower on the page. In response to these findings, images should be used with the intent of drawing attention to a specific piece of information, or to lead users to a specific part of the page.

Conclusion

In seeking a better understanding of the user experience of potential applicants to the graduate and undergraduate programs, this study explored three specific usability questions: 1) Are there any difficulties using the website from an international prospective student perspective? 2) Can applicants get a sense of what student life is like at the college? And 3) Are there any barriers to applying? These questions are targeted by the tasks we developed for our testing scenarios, and are addressed in the satisfaction data and analysis from the post-test survey. In short, users found the site unintuitive and difficult to navigate. Users also found the site to be overwhelming in how it conveyed large quantities of data.

This report includes processed quantitative and qualitative data retrieved the testing scenarios, data analysis, and the recommendations formed from this analysis. General recommendations to improve language clarity and taxonomy are applicable to the entire website and will benefit all of Simmons stakeholders. Specific recommendations (which are logically backed by the generalized recommendations) are communicated through the wireframes and content inventories provided. These specific recommendations are made to pages on the site that are most applicable to prospective and/or international students because these areas of the site are more backed by the data of our tests. It is our intention that the general recommendations will be kept in consideration and applied during any future site enhancements. Our specific recommendations can be made immediately, and serve as concrete examples of ways in which the website can be improved based on the findings of our study.

The findings from the qualitative observations and quantitative data illustrated several key areas where Simmons College can implement usability improvements on the website. An important consideration is a review of the website's information architecture. During the usability tests, participants encountered navigational difficulty that was caused by an unclear hierarchy of the subpages, as well as redundancy in linking across all pages. There was an additional finding that there was a lack of understanding of language and context used on the site. Another important result of the testing sessions was the disparity in satisfaction feedback between graduate and undergraduate responses during the post-session interview. There was a general feeling that the website prioritizes undergraduate applicants over graduate applicants.

There are several concrete website modifications that can be made in order to respond to usability issues that were discovered during the testing sessions. A review of the consistency in language use, the visual differentiation of information, and descriptive link and heading terms would go a long way in improving the usability of the website overall. Additionally, test participants emphasized their appreciation of site elements that reflected specific student interests that would be unique to Simmons, such as upcoming events, faculty research, and student group information. They preferred this Simmons- and student- specific information over more generic slogans and generalized content.

This study recommends additional testing and website analysis in order to optimize taxonomy and Information Architecture. Some suggestions for supplemental testing include the creation of a comprehensive site map to holistically review the current structure of the website; creating and using personas that represent the different users of the College's website and generate pathways to enhance understanding of hierarchy issues; and employ an open card sort exercise to gather real feedback to improve site navigation. For more detailed information about these further research possibilities, see the discussion included in the Recommendations section of this report.

In regards to future usability research with the LIS 455 class, the Simmons Usability Splendid team would recommend a more targeted scope for testing that employs task-based scenarios. Fewer variables will enable a more thorough, conclusive test to be conducted in the usability lab in the future. By dividing our six test participants into two subgroups (undergrad and grad) and creating two separate task scenarios, we gained a broader view from the study, but sacrificed the comprehensiveness of the data that was collected.

The Simmons College website serves many stakeholders who have different uses for the website. While stakeholders can have conflicting expectations and priorities for website use,

prospective students serve as the focus group for the purpose of this study. Prospective student usability is of particular focus to Simmons, as the members of this audience typically use the site as new users. There is also an important link between the user experience of prospective students and enrolment - college website is the first and sometimes only point of interaction that a student will have with a university before deciding they will apply to the school. Further, international students are focused on here due to the concern the College has about potentially overlooking this important demographic. Being both new to the site and international users, this study takes into account users who are perhaps the most sensitive to website issues and the most likely and able users to decide they will not return to the website. This means that enhancing the usability for this audience will result in a better website for all of Simmons' stakeholders—one that uses clear, transferable language, a transparent organizational schema, and will result in more intuitive navigation.

References

Barber, W. & Badre, A. (1998). Culturability: The merging of culture and usability. 4th Conference on Human Factors and the Web. Retrieved from http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/marycz/hfweb98/barber/

Battleson, B., Booth, A., & Winthrop, J. (2001). Usability Testing of an Academic Library Web Site: a Case Study. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 27*(3), pp. 188-198. Retrieved from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S009913330100180X

Bourges-Waldegg, P., & Scrivener, S. (1998). Meaning, the central issue in cross-cultural HCI design. *INTERACTING WITH COMPUTERS*, *9*(3), 287–309.

Burford, S. (2014). A grounded theory of the practice of web information architecture in large organizations. *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology*, *65*(10), 2017–2034.

Christiansen, B. (2010, September 24). UIE Spoolcast Transcript: Mark Burrell's Search Patterns Revisited. Retrieved from https://www.uie.com/BSAL/trans/mark_burrell_followup_transcript.html

Clemmensen, T. (2011). Templates for Cross-Cultural and Culturally Specific Usability Testing: Results From Field Studies and Ethnographic Interviewing in Three Countries. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *27*(7), 634–669. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2011.555303

Clemmensen, T., & Plocher, T. (2007). The cultural usability (CULTUSAB) project: studies of cultural models in psychological usability evaluation methods (pp. 274–280). Presented at the Proceedings of the 2nd international conference on Usability and internationalization, Springer-Verlag. Retrieved from http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1769821.1769857

Dong, Y., & Lee, K.-P. (2008). A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study of Users' Perceptions of a Webpage: With a Focus on the Cognitive Styles of Chinese, Koreans and Americans. *International Journal of Design*, *2*(2), 19–30.

Eschenfelder, K. (2003). The customer is always right, but whose customer is more important? Conflict and Web site classification schemes. *Information Technology & People*, *16*(4), 419–439. https://doi.org/10.1108/09593840310509644

Goodman, E., Kuniavsky, M. & Moed, A. (2012). *Observing the User Experience: A Practitioner's Guide to User Research.* Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Greengard, S. (2012). Advertising Gets Personal. *COMMUNICATIONS OF THE ACM*, *55*(8), 18–20.

Hert, C. A., Carlson, G., & Wessel, B. (2012). Building User Experiences: Synchronizing User Experience Design and the Supporting Metadata and Taxonomy Infrastructure. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*, *39*(2), 26–29.

Hjørland, B. (2012). Is classification necessary after Google? *Journal of Documentation*, *68*(3), 299–317. https://doi.org/10.1108/00220411211225557

Jagne, J., & Smith-Atakan, A. S. G. (2006). Cross-cultural interface design strategy. *Universal Access in the Information Society*, *5*(3), 299–305. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-006-0048-6

Jatczak, N. (2013, November 4). Universities Website Usability Case Study - Berkely far ahead. Retrieved from http://blog.usabilitytools.com/universities-website-usability/

Newman, I. (2008). The Qualitative-Quantitative Research Continuum. In *Mixed Methods Research: Exploring the Interactive Continuum* (pp. 16-34). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Nielsen, J. (1995) 10 Heuristics for User Interface Design. Retrieved December 1, 2016, from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/

Nielsen, J. (Ed.). (1990). Designing for International Use (Panel). In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 291–294). New York, NY, USA: ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/97243.97298

Roy, S., Pattnaik, P. & Mall, R. (2014). A Quantitative Approach to Evaluate Usability of Academic Websites Based on Human Perception. *Egyptian Informatics Journal, 15*(3), pp. 159-167. Retrieved from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1110866514000309

Rubin, J. & Chisnell, D. (2008). *Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design, and Conduct Effective Tests*. Indianapolis: IN: Wiley Publishing Inc.

Sauro, J. (2012). Quantifying User Research. In *Quantifying the User Experience: Practical Statistics for User Research* (pp. 9-18). Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Sauro, J. (2012). Six Enduring Controversies in Measurement and Statistics. In *Quantifying the User Experience: Practical Statistics for User Research* (pp. 241-267). Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Smith, A., Dunckley, L., French, T., Minocha, S., & Chang, Y. (2012). Reprint of a process model for developing usable cross-cultural websites. *Interacting with Computers*, *24*, 174–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intcom.2012.08.001

Stanković, J. S., & Čavić, B. R. (2014). Behavioral Advertising in Building Clients' Loyalty. *Singidunum Journal of Applied Sciences*, 166–170. https://doi.org/10.15308/SInteZa-2014-166-170

Venkatesh, V. (2013) Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide: Guidelines for Conducting Mixed Methods Research in Information Systems. In *MIS Quarterly 37*(1), pp.21-54. Retrieved from: https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.simmons.edu/eds/detail/detail?sid=8ed4777b-f8e5-402d-b577-5958dda0c8ab%40sessionmgr102&vid=0&hid=126&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=85634550&db=bth

Yu B, & Roh S. (2002). The effects of menu design on information-seeking performance and user's attitude on the World Wide Web. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*, *53*(11), 923–933.

Zachariadis, M., Scott, S. & Barrett, M. (2013). Methodological Implications of Critical Realism for Mixed-Methods Research. *MIS Quarterly 37*(3) pp. 855-879. Retrieved from:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan_Scott3/publication/256456333_Methodological_Implications_of_Critical_Realism_for_Mixed-Methods_Research/links/0a85e539065f9838be000000.pdf

Appendix

Orientation Script

Hello and welcome. I would like to thank you for taking the time to come into our lab and work with us today. My name is Saffana, and I will be guiding you through this usability test. Doug, Sawyer & Rachel will be observing and recording this session from the other side of this one way mirror. We have water and snacks, feel free to help yourself. If you would like clarity on anything I cover during this orientation, please feel free to ask at any time.

Now I am going to read through this document to make sure I cover all of the information you need to know.

While you are here, I will be asking you to look at Simmons College's website (www.simmons.edu) and perform a number of tasks. Please know that we are testing the website, not you. By engaging in the tasks we have laid out for you, we will be looking for signs that the Simmons website operates as intended and for any opportunities where it can be improved. None of us here today have anything to do with the development of this website, so please don't worry about speaking your mind -- we are completely neutral!

With this in mind, it is very important that you think out loud during the test, in order to walk us through your thought process as you complete tasks. Examples of things you could say out loud: what you are looking at, what you are thinking or feeling, and what you are trying to do or plan to do next. There are no right or wrong answers, and there are no right or wrong ways to think about how to approach using this website.

Now, to move on to how this usability test will actually work: I will stay in this room with you so that I can tell you what your tasks are. I will give you a written copy of each task, one at a time, and will ask you to read each one aloud. My colleagues will be working in the observation room to record this computer screen and your reactions during this session. The test will last approximately 45 minutes. After we have finished, you will receive your gift card.

We have a consent form for you to sign. Two copies of this form have been provided, one for you to keep, and one on which we will need your signature as an indication of your willingness to participate in this educational study.

[Hand over two copies of the consent form to be signed by the participant. See appendix for form]

Now that we have covered this information and you have signed the consent form, do you have any questions for me? You are welcome to ask me questions during the usability test. However, if a question is about site function I will not be able to answer them right away because we would like to attempt to simulate a scenario where a website user is navigating this website while they are alone. If you would like to take a break at any point, please let me know.

II. Pre-session Interview Script

Before we begin our usability test, I have a few questions I'd like to ask you in order to get a better understanding of your background and your comfort level with technology.

How old are you?

What is your gender?

What is your first language? (e.g. the primary language spoken at home)

Where did you grow up?

How long have you lived in the Boston area?

Are you currently a student?

What is your highest level of education?

How would you rate your skills in internet searching, web browsing, and information gathering on websites? If you were to rate it on a scale, where would you place yourself and why?

← novice user   **expert user→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Have you visited the Simmons website before?

Have you visited other college or university websites in the past? If yes, what websites? Are there any that you have liked using? Are there any specific features that stand out to you?

Have you ever completed an online application before? If so, what type of application was it? Please rate your comfort level with filling out online applications a scale:

← not at all comfortable   **extremely comfortable →**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Usability Test Scenario 1: Undergraduate Persona

Undergraduate Tasks

You are an international student who about to graduate high school in your home country. You are considering Simmons College for your college education. Before you make a final decision to apply, you are hoping to get a better feel for the school, so you turn to the Simmons College website.

Task 1: Please navigate to the homepage of Simmons College website.

You are interested in learning more about specific resources for international students at Simmons College, and wonder how Simmons supports its international student community.

U2: Find the Resources for International Students page.

U3: How would you contact Simmons Center for Global Education?

Next, you want to get a sense of what the student life is like on campus. You decide to find more about the student groups and events that Simmons offers.

U4: Who would you email if you were interested in joining the Multicultural International Student Organization (MISO)?

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.

You decide that you would like to visit Simmons to get a feel for campus and its location in the city of Boston.

U6: Find the form to schedule an individual campus visit.

You have decided that you will be applying to Simmons. You want to find out more about the application process.

U7: Navigate to the application page for an international student.

U8: Download the application form international students are required to fill out.

U9: Find the financial aid page to learn more about potential scholarships for international students.

U10: If you have any questions about the application process, who will you contact? Find the contact information.

Usability Test Scenario 2: Graduate Persona

Graduate Tasks

You are a recent college graduate and you are considering Simmons College to continue your education through their graduate program in Social Work. You are an international student, and you are hoping to get a better feel for the program, faculty, and student life to see if it would be a good fit for you. You turn to the Simmons College website to learn more.

Task 1: Please navigate to the homepage of Simmons College website.

To start, you would like to learn about the Social Work Program.

G2: What specializations can you choose under the Social Work program?

G3: You want to learn more about faculty research, and you wish to talk to a professor whose recent research is on homeless veterans. How do you find the professor's name and phone number?

You want to get a sense of what the graduate student life is like on campus. You decide to find more about the student groups and events that Simmons offers.

G4: Find a student organization affiliated with the Social Work program that you would be interested in joining.

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.

You now have decided that you will be applying to Simmons Social Work Program.

G6: What is Simmons' TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Institution Code?

G7: View the Certificate of Finances form.

G8: Is the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) required for applying to the Masters of Social Work (MSW) program?

Since you plan to apply for a Master of Social work for the Fall 2017 Semester, you would like to proceed with your application and obtain further information.

G9: After you have started your application, you have more detailed questions in regards to the program. Find the contact information.

Post-session Interview/Survey Script

Simmons College Website Usability Study
Post-Session Interview Script

We sincerely thank you for participating in our research study. As a final part of today's experience, we are interested in learning about your thoughts regarding using the Simmons College website to explore what student life is like at Simmons and to begin the process of applying to study at Simmons.

Please answer the following questions to express your opinions about what you experienced:

1) *What is your overall feeling about your experience with the Simmons College website?*

←I didn't enjoy using the website at all   **I enjoyed using the website very much→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

2) *How satisfied are you with the Simmons College website?*

←Unsatisfied   **Satisfied→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

3) *Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning what student life is like at Simmons College?*

←It's not very useful at all   **It's extremely useful→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

4) *Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning about the requirements to apply to Simmons College?*

←**It's not very useful at all**   **It's extremely useful→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

5) *What is your overall feeling about the ease of using the Simmons College website?*

←**It's not easy at all to use this website**   **It's extremely easy to use this website→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

6) *How likely are you to recommend the Simmons College website to a friend?*

←**extremely unlikely to recommend**   **extremely likely to recommend→**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**

Please explain your reasons for circling the number that you chose above:

7) Please mark the two tasks that you liked the best, and then explain why:

___ **learning more about resources for international students**
___ **finding student groups of interest to you**
___ **looking for an upcoming event**
___ **checking out faculty research** (grad only)
___ **scheduling a campus visit** (undergrad only)
___ **looking for admissions information**
___ **finding and downloading the application**

Please explain your reasons for marking these two tasks above:

8) Please mark the two tasks that you liked the least, and then explain why:

___ **learning more about resources for international students**
___ **finding student groups of interest to you**
___ **looking for an upcoming event**
___ **checking out faculty research** (grad only)
___ **scheduling a campus visit** (undergrad only)
___ **looking for admissions information**
___ **finding and downloading the application**

Please explain your reasons for marking these two tasks above:

9) If you could make one significant change to the Simmons College website, what change would you make?

10) Compared to the other college or university website(s) that you described to me before we began this test, does the Simmons website appear to be superior or inferior? Which specific parts do you feel Simmons' site is more effective?

11) Do you have any other questions or further comments about the Simmons College website?

12) Please indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false:

_____The homepage is attractive.
_____The overall site is attractive.
_____The site's graphics are pleasing.
_____The site has a good balance of graphics and text.
_____The colors used throughout the site are attractive.
_____The typography (lettering, headings, titles) is attractive.
_____The homepage's content makes me want to explore the site further.
_____It is easy to find my way around the site.
_____I can get to information quickly.
_____It is fun to explore the site.
_____It is easy to remember where to find things.
_____Information is layered effectively on different screens.
_____The homepage is attention-getting.
_____Information is easy to read.
_____Information is written in a style that suits me.
_____Screens have the right amount of information.
_____The site effectively communicates the Simmons College identity.
_____The information is relevant to my needs.
_____The site is designed with me in mind.
_____The site's content interests me.
_____The site's content would keep me coming back.
_____The site has characteristics that make it especially appealing.
_____The site reflects progressive, leading edge design.
_____The site is exciting.
_____The site is well-suited to first-time visitors.
_____The site is well-suited to repeat visitors.
_____The site has a clear purpose.
_____I always felt I knew what was possible to do next.
_____It is clear how screen elements (e.g., pop-ups, scrolling lists, menus) work.
_____My mistakes were easy to correct.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Consent Form

Simmons College Website Usability Research Study

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

There is no risk associated with this research study, and your participation will be honored with a $15 Starbucks gift certificate when the study session is complete.

This study is being conducted for a class project as part of LIS 455: Usability and User Experience Research at the Simmons College, School of Library and Information Science. The instructor of the course is Rong Tang, Associate Professor, who has applied for and received IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval for this educational study. If you have any further questions about the ethical dimensions of this study, you may contact her at rong.tang@simmons.edu.

We will be using data collected during usability tests to analyze the usability of the Simmons College website. We will also be collecting video and audio recordings of your session, which will only be used for the purposes of this class assignment, and will not be distributed or used for anything beyond the class.

Two copies of this form have been provided -- one for you to keep, and one on which we will need your signature as an indication of your willingness to participate in this educational study.

Thank you for your participation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Simmons Usability Splendid
Test Session Schedule

- Thursday - October 20, 3:30 - 7:30 PM
    - 3:30 - 4:30 pm = Grad test - **G01**
      (confirmed)
    - 5:00 - 6:00 pm = U02

- Friday - October 21, 4 - 7 PM
    - 4-5 pm = Grad test - **G03**
      (confirmed)
    - 5:30 - 6:30 pm = Grad test - **G04**
      (confirmed)

- Saturday - October 22, 10 - 1 PM
    - 10-11 am= Undergrad test - **U06**
      (confirmed)
    - 11:30 am - 12:30 pm = Undergrad test - **U05**
      (last minute alternate participant brought in after cancellation)

- BACKUP DATE: October 28, 12 PM - 4 PM

	G01	U02	G03	G04	U05	U06
How old are you?	26	16	27	34	17	16
What is your gender?	female	female	male	male	male	female
What is your first language? (e.g. the primary language spoken at	Thai	Mandarin Chinese	English, Khmer	English	English, Tamil	English
Where did you grow up?	Thailand	China	Lowell, Mass	Masschusetts	Cambridge	Cambridge
How long have you lived in the Boston area?	3 years	2 years	2 years	9 years	whole life	whole life
Are you currently a student?	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
What is your highest level of education?	graduate school, current	high school, current junior	undergrad, current junior	PhD	high school, current senior	high school, current junior
How would you rate your skills in internet searching, web browsing, and information gathering on websites?	6	3	5	5	5	6
Have you visited the Simmons website before?	no	no	yes	no	yes	no
Have you visited other college or university websites in the past? If yes, what websites? Are there any that you have liked using? Are there any specific features that stand out to you?	Northeastern - not good. UC Davis - good	Boston College Boston University	Pratt Northeastern MassArt	MIT University of Rochester	UMass Boston Brandeis UMass Lowell Northeastern MIT Harvard	no
Have you ever completed an online application before? If so, what type of application was it? Please rate your comfort level with filling out online applications	3	4.5 Yes. High schools, summer camps, etc.	6 Online job applications, study abroad.	6 Grant applications, etc.	5 Yes.	4 Yes. Setting up accounts online.

Quantitative Data						
	U02	**U05**	**U06**	**G01**	**G03**	**G04**
What is your overall feeling about your experience with the Simmons College website?	5	4	5	6	4	5
How satisfied are you with the Simmons College website?	6	6	5	6.5	3	5
How useful do you think this website is for learning what student life is like at Simmons College?	6	7	7	6	4	4
How useful do you think this website is for learning about the requirements to apply to Simmons College?	6.5	6	6	7	5	6
What is your overall feeling about the ease of using the Simmons College website?	6.5	7	7	6	5	6
How likely are you to recommend the Simmons College website to a friend?	6.5	6	7	7	3	6
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the best, and then explain why:	international student resources looking for an upcoming event	international student resources scheduling a campus visit	looking for an upcoming event scheduling a campus visit	checking out faculty research admissions information	checking out faculty research finding student groups of interest	checking out faculty research looking for an upcoming event
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the least, and then explain why:	scheduling a campus visit finding and downloading the application	finding student groups of interest to you admissions information	finding student groups of interest finding and downloading the application	international student resources looking for an upcoming event	international student resources looking for an upcoming event	finding student groups of interest to you admissions information
The homepage is attractive.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

	Quantitative Data					
	U02	U05	U06	G01	G03	G04
The overall site is attractive.	N	Y		Y	Y	Y
The site's graphics are pleasing.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The site has a good balance of graphics and text.	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
The colors used throughout the site are attractive.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
The typography (lettering, headings, titles) is attractive.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The homepage's content makes me want to explore the site further.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
It is easy to find my way around the site.	Y	Y ?	Y	Y	N	Y
I can get to information quickly.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
It is fun to explore the site.	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
It is easy to remember where to find things.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Information is layered effectively on different screens.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
The homepage is attention-getting.	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Information is easy to read.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Information is written in a style that suits me.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Screens have the right amount of information.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The site effectively communicates the Simmons College identity.	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y

	Quantitative Data					
	U02	**U05**	**U06**	**G01**	**G03**	**G04**
The information is relevant to my needs.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The site is designed with me in mind.	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
The site's content interests me.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
The site's content would keep me coming back.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
The site has characteristics that make it especially appealing.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
The site reflects progressive, leading edge design.	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
The site is exciting.	N	N	Y	N	N	N
The site is well-suited to first-time visitors.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The site is well-suited to repeat visitors.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
The site has a clear purpose.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
I always felt I knew what was possible to do next.	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
It is clear how screen elements (e.g., pop-ups, scrolling lists, menus) work.	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
My mistakes were easy to correct.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y

Qualitative Data (Undergraduate Persona Participants)			
	U02	**U05**	**U06**
What is your overall feeling about your experience with the Simmons College website?	(5) I felt it's OK because I can see the keyword I wanted to search on. However I think if I were interested in the school, I would need to find much more, and I might go to "About Simmons" first. Overall it was good. I think it is a website that tells you things about it later, for example for admission + aid it will tell me that student financial services in green. It does help me understand better. But I think even if I look through the website, I can not really know the school. Because all the schools, they have the same information.	(4) It could be a 5 too, but I felt like while they had all the links the way I wanted, they were pretty much clustered in groups which when I found one thing, I couldn't find another thing. I feel like things were on the bottom instead of the top. I would have preferred more at the top, so when I come to a page I could look for it. The [information in] clusters in general was good, it had most the information I needed under the categories -- at the same time I felt like depending on how much time I have if I were looking quickly, I might not have thought about the bottom [navigation].	(5) A little too well organized. I like it because there are big categories. I think it should have a "Contact Us." If you click on international students, there needs to be a contact info right there on international students page.
How satisfied are you with the Simmons College website?	(6) I can find all the information I want to know.	(6) Contact information and videos and things to help me. But I feel like they could have given more information. In regard to resources - where it says future undergrad - when I went to undergrad I couldn't immediately find where multicultural things are. If they had everything listed on one page it wouldn't have taken me so long to look for it.	(5) It's a lot of information to take in. I think the contact information would be ideal. Some of it might just be that I'm not sure about what some of the tabs mean by things like "provost" etc.
Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning what student life is like at Simmons College?	(6) When I clicked the calendar it seemed useful.	(7) I actually like when they had links and videos that toured around the city and the college, it gave me a view of what the college would be like. I like that they included info about the city, because as an international student... it would alleviate my stress about coming to this college.	(7) It seems like they tell you, they have a lot of stuff about it, it seems OK. It has it's own tab and it seems like it narrows it down quite a bit.

Qualitative Data (Undergraduate Persona Participants)			
	U02	**U05**	**U06**
Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning about the requirements to apply to Simmons College?	(6.5) I think the school is such a big organization, it hard to put every idea and how they operate into the website. Even if I go to the admission page it tells me the next step for applying, but I don't really know what they want from the student. I think sometimes I needed help finding things. I think I was reading some not really relevant things and not finding the answer. I think according to the [task situation] it was easy.	(6) It had everything I wanted - links to print application and common app. It's directing me to the common app and then I have to figure it out As an international student I wouldn't' have known what the common app is.	(6) Some of the things are not clear for where to go to find information.
What is your overall feeling about the ease of using the Simmons College website?	(6.5) It was easy. At first I wanted to search for the multicultural group, I just used the search button. Also searching for admissions contacts.	(7) One, I like how it's set up, how the links are set up. Two, I just have to scroll through this website to see some of these links. It's not like I have to manually search for things. The way this is set up is really concise.	(7) It's fairly well organized. It's good for a site that has a lot of information. It has a search bar which is always very useful. If I were going to college, I would want to look at what courses there are. I would want to look for what students lives are like there.
How likely are you to recommend the Simmons College website to a friend?	(6.5) Even if it has a lot of information, if you just know what you're going to look for you can just search for it.	(6) I would ask my friend if they wanted to go to Simmons. Depending on what they're looking for, if they're just looking to see what Simmons is like I would definitely recommend the site to them. They might also get a sense of where they're going if their an international student. A good sense of Boston and what the camps is like. If they're just looking for the app or the common application I would send them somewhere else for more information.	(7) If they were interested in applying here... If they have lived in Boston... I know lots of people that want to stay here. This website tells you a lot about everything. Go to student life, see if you're interested.

Qualitative Data (Undergraduate Persona Participants)		
	U02	**U05**	**U06**
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the best, and then explain why:	**learning more about resources for international students** There is a very obvious page for international students, and it is so much information that I can know. **looking for an upcoming event** I know my instinct to go to calendar, to see some events.	**learning more about resources for international students** The first one is relevant to what I'm looking for as an international student. It would show me what I need in the process of coming to school. Depending on what I need I would know whether or not it is offered. I would have a sense of does this school have everything I would need in school. **scheduling a campus visit** To get an in-person view of the school and what they're offering, to get a vibe of the school. It was easy for me to find.	**scheduling a campus visit** **looking for an upcoming event** Events were fairly recent, I could see what's going on now. You can see what's going on on a normal basis.
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the least, and then explain why:	**scheduling a campus visit** There are so many types of campus visits. I wish it was clearer. **finding and downloading the application** **finding a student group** I needed to know what the groups are. (Could find this easily during the interview portion and found it easy to find out more about groups. Did not like the specificity of question and wasn't clear, wanted to browse but searched directly for MISO during the test instead)	**finding a student group** It kindof felt confusing at first, and then until I found it I felt nervous about it. **looking for admissions information** Because even though I went to the website looking for admissions info it was easy, I felt like it didn't have all the information that I wanted on it. When I started looking for I didn't se it on top, the direct link. I had to scroll down to the bottom for international student information. I didn't think to look in the right place, it took more time.	**finding a student group** **finding and downloading the application** I don't always like downloading a PDF before I can see what I'll be downloading. An image of what I'll need to fill out later would be good. Or an online form.

	U02	U05	U06
Qualitative Data (Undergraduate Persona Participants)			
If you could make one significant change to the website, what change would you make?	One very good idea is to -- do you know there is a kind of a thing called a "T" -- so for example "are you looking for this?" and then "Yes" or "No" and then if you click "Yes" then it directly leads you to the next [page] -- it's like a game. For example, "What program are you interested in?" and then "Art" or "Literature" and then it would lead you to the next. That is good. Something interactive. I learned a thing in biology class it is said "Does this creature have two legs" " and I say "No" then it says "Does it have a read dot on it's head?" and then it leads you to the final correct answer. I think that is super efficient for this type -- like I'm going to visit the college, and it will just ask you "Do you want to go with a person?" or "Are you with a student?" and it will lead me.	Could be less links on the bottom and more direct links on the top.	Contact us tab.
Compared to the other college or university website(s) that you described to me before we began this test, does the Simmons website appear to be superior or inferior? Which specific parts do you feel Simmons' site is more effective?	[Searched for comparative websites to look at them side by side - Boston College] I just really like the whole website of Boston College, and for Simmons -- it is more words and smaller. I like BC better, and then something highlighted, it draws by attention.	Compared to most websites it seems superior. Simmons sight has a search bar on it, which a lot of other colleges don't. Helps more to narrow down. I didn't really notice it [during the test]. Search bar on the side a bit bigger would have made it more noticable [instead of a button that pulls up a search box]. More effective because it has everything in a neat, organized manner. Lots of links, directories, calendars, etc. I especially liked the calendars link - easy access when I was looking for events.	N/A

Qualitative Data (Undergraduate Persona Participants)			
	U02	**U05**	**U06**
Do you have any other questions or further comments about the Simmons College website?	I think it would be good if this had more of a characerics to show more of its personality. So, for example, for Boston College, it shows different things highlighted, some clear things highlighted [on the home page - pointed to large facts in boxes about the college]. Bigger font. Something [page element] small [mixed with] something big. Have more personality there. Show more culture of Simmons.	Other than the search bar and the links on the bottom, there's not much more I would change. I went to an external search tab in Google because I didn't originally see the search bar. If I didn't immediately see the nav link I was looking for I would do a search.	I've been taking media design. The layout and typography are good.

Qualitative Data (Graduate Persona Participants)			
	G01	**G03**	**G04**
What is your overall feeling about your experience with the Simmons College website?	(6) I feel like they are concise. When you come to the home page, it represents the university. It makes me thing "Oh, cool, I want to go to this school." Imagine that if you are sitting in your home country, and you've not been to Boston or seen the campus before, you visit the website. Some of the university websites that I've been to, you can't find what you're looking for. But this one you can. The layout is not overwhelming.	(4) Design wise it's nice - compelling images. The way it's designed is good and professional. The only thing is maybe the organization of information could be more intuitive. I know this is common in a lot of sites with undergrad and graduate sections. Every time I went to the graduate social work program it seemed like it would default back to the undergrad.	(5) I got all the information I needed, and the tasks didn't take too long. Some of the things were not totally clear. Finding out about GRE did take a few steps, and actually required me to *read* the website. Also I felt like the student organizations was a little bit difficult to find. I don't think that's uncommon though - finding real things about student life is actually pretty difficult on academic websites.
How satisfied are you with the Simmons College website?	(6.5) I couldn't find the student activities.	(3) Specifically, with the tasks I was given, not everything was straightforward as it could be. I think this is a website where it is very comprehensive, which is great, but there were a lot of quick things that if I wanted to find would be buried somewhere. So I appreciate that is has all this information and is comprehensive, but I think there are things that as a student I would want access to in a more intuitive way.	(5) I was able to find the things I needed and I did from what I could tell, finding the calendar and the programs seemed pretty straightforward. Only a few things too more than a few clicks to find.

Qualitative Data (Graduate Persona Participants)			
	G01	**G03**	**G04**
Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning what student life is like at Simmons College?	(6) When I clicked on student life I would want to see what life at Simmons looks like. I would say it's extremely useful. But I couldn't find what I was looking for in student activities.	(4) Just based on the two tasks? Calendar and student orgs. I would say that it definitely has a great student life feeling to it. When I clicked student organizations there were so many, it was nice to know that there was so much engagement. The calendar was kind of boring to look at, visually. I think under activities and organizations ... it would have been nice to see a separate category for grad students? It feels very geared towards to an undergraduate experience. [Note: when looking for "Diversity and Inclusion" events on the main calendar, participant found no results. Yet this did not affect his opinion here.]	(4) For facts about the program, it was easy. But finding out about student life is hard. That was the hardest thing, but I didn't actually click on the section that said "student life". If I were just generally interested in student life, this is what I would click on. For the task I was looking for specific clubs. There is a section on the website with things for graduate students under student life. If I was just starting from scratch and trying to decide what it is like, I might just click on the "student life section" and if I started here I would get to this pretty quickly. Once I was on the social work section I had a harder time navigating to student life info. Once I'm at the Social Work website, there isn't really student life information.
Based on today's experience, how useful do you think this website is for learning about the requirements to apply to Simmons College?	(7) Extremely useful. I would give it an A.	(5) I remember that even thought I couldn't find GRE, there did seem to be a fairly exhaustive list of requirements, which is useful to have. I also appreciated a brief paragraph about each of the requirements. Again, just consolidating all of the information into an easy checklist.	(6) I think I was able to find the things I needed to find if I were going to apply to the MSW. The program departments were pretty easy to find and the requirements for the application were easy to find. It took me a little while to find out about the GRE.
What is your overall feeling about the ease of using the Simmons College website?	(6) I think it's easy to use. I couldn't find the activities, and I had some questions about how to apply, but couldn't find the exact answer. Applying wasn't intuitive.	(5) For the most part, most things I would eventually be able to find.	(6) There are only a couple things I couldn't find right off the bat.

Qualitative Data (Graduate Persona Participants)		
	G01	**G03**	**G04**
How likely are you to recommend the Simmons College website to a friend?	(7) It's good. It's easy to navigate, and it's clear what the requirements are, which is the most important for students.	(3) If I had a friend who was also interested in Social Work? I mentioned that it was nicely designed, but at the same time there wasn't anything too memorable. I'm not sure if I understand the Simmons brand. It just didn't feel... it feels almost too generic. But this is coming from someone who has an arts [background].	(6) A friend who was interested in applying to the MSW program? Would I tell them to google it or go to the website? If I were interested in it, I would say yeah, just go to the website. I got the sense of the program. This does tell you about the masters, it does explain what they do. I would say sure, yeah. I do think that I had difficulty figuring out a couple things. [Note: changed from a 5 to 6.]
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the best, and then explain why:	**checking out faculty research** The reason I would want to continue my masters is either because I'm interested in the school or the faculty - a place where I can see what faculty who will teach me, see who does what research **looking for admissions information** It's clear what the requirement for admissions are, so that I will know what I need to prepare.	**finding a student group** **checking out faculty research** As a student those are two things -- I don't think anyone ever really enjoys looking through admissions things, ever, but finding like-minded students in the community is really important, and seeing who will be potentially mentoring you and their views, and their work. [note: this speaks more to what would be important to an incoming student rather than usability]	**looking for an upcoming event** Upcoming events calendar was the easiest for me **checking out faculty research** I liked looking at faculty research because I was actually able to see what they are doing. It allowed me to picture myself here.
Please mark the two tasks that you liked the least, and then explain why:	**learning more about resources for international students** As an international student, we need support, especially in writing, public speaking and presentations. **looking for an upcoming event** Important because we want to get involved and feel like a part of the school.	**learning more about resources for international students** Looking for resources - I felt it was buried **looking for an upcoming event** The calendar event I found a category that was interesting to me and nothing came up. Also it was kind of boring [overall].	**finding and downloading the application** Finding the GRE info was difficult. **finding a student group** Student groups one was a little hard, just in terms of finding student groups that were specifically associated with the Social Work program. It was the least straightforward.

Qualitative Data (Graduate Persona Participants)			
	G01	**G03**	**G04**
If you could make one significant change to the website, what change would you make?	It's pretty good. I would say about the more detailed questions -- having a specific person's name to contact is important.	I would create more of a prominent, separate webpage for international students who want to do the graduate program. It doesn't really make it seem that exciting. There should definitely be something like a Google plug-in where the site automatically translates language. If I were interested in a school for Italy and I don't speak Italian...I don't see anything that is speaking explicitly to an international graduate student. It looks like it speaks to an international student on exchange or to an undergrad.	I actually really like the way that on the main page it tells you - the section about student life. It is one the hardest thing to find out about a college. Less so for graduate schools. [Navigated to grad student section of website] Here there is a section for the program, career - these are things that you want to know about, what the work is like. You're a little more in control of what your life is like [as a grad student]. But that said, I think I would be interested in knowing what it is like to be a graduate student and what non-school life is like.
Compared to the other college or university website(s) that you described to me before we began this test, does the Simmons website appear to be superior or inferior? Which specific parts do you feel Simmons' site is more effective?	Superior. When you click on the school that you want to go to, and it lists everything, it's all there. You can see the programs of the school.	Truthfully, I would say inferior. I think that there is something about going onto the graduate social work... there's something about all of these images that feel very similar, which makes sense for the brand... but for social work I don't want to see a white male gazing off in class, I want to see people in action. I feel that Northeastern is really good at defining their departments. Like, you can see that there's a clear culture in each of their departments. Their college of Art, Media and Design - they are still following the brand standard of Northeastern, but it has a completely separate feeling. I was looking at their school of social science, and it was the same font and layout, but it was more clear[ly differentiated].	I think that the Simmons website is very similar to many other college websites, in that it's a challenge to present all the different things that people want to know when they're coming to school. There's a lot of different things. There are sections of different things, alumnae, how to apply -- I would put it on par with the average college website. The MIT website stands out because it's weird. They have all the same kinds of information, but it's really compact and kind of bizarre, in a different way from University of Rochester -- which is more similar to the Simmons website. It's got a lot more color than the MIT website, it's a lot more aesthetically pleasing. It appears to be on average.

Participant G01

This user was an ESL individual

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage

- ✅ User lands on Simmons College Homepage

Graduate Task 2: What specializations can you choose under the social work program?

- User hovers over "Academics" in the top nav and clicks on "Grad Programs" link
- User scrolls up and down on page to gain understanding
- ↗️ Uses search box to find Social Work program
- ❌ Finds Social Work program page, believes task is complete

Graduate Task 3: You want to learn more about faculty research and wish to talk to a professor whose recent research is on homeless veterans. How do you find the professor's name and phone number?

- From Social Work Program page, user clicks "Research" link from left nav
- Uses search box to perform keyword search
- ✅ User finds article on relevant research and the faculty member's contact information

Graduate Task 4: Find a student organization affiliated with the Social Work program that you would be interested in joining.

- Hovers over "Student Life" in the top nav and clicks "Activities and Organizations"
- Clicks "Student Organizations"
- User does not scroll down
- 🚩 Clicks "Don't see the type of organization you'd like to join? Start one!" button
- ❌ Task not complete, task called by moderator

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.

- Clicks "Student Life" in top nav
- Scrolls down
- Clicks the first upcoming student event link she sees
- ❌ User believes the task to be complete, but it is not

Graduate Task 6: What is Simmons' TOEFL Institution Code?

- Clicks on "Admission and Financial Aid" from top nav
- Clicks "Requirements and Deadlines" under "Graduate Admission"
- Clicks Social Work (MSW)
- Clicks "International Students"
- ✅ Finds TOEFL code

Graduate Task 7: View the Certificate of Finances form

- ▶️ User asks what the Certificate of Finances form is
- From the Social Work (MSW) page, user clicks "Tuition and Fees" from center drop down list
- ❝ User verbalizes the need to remember that she is an international student
- 🔄 Changes mind, and instead looks under "International Students" drop down
- ✅ Finds the Certificate of Finances form

Graduate Task 8: Is the GRE required for applying to the Masters of Social Work program?

- From Social Work (MSW) page, user clicks "Application Requirements and Instructions" drop down
- Reads through text
- ✅ User finds information

Graduate Task 9: After you have started your application, you have more detailed questions in regards to the program. Find the contact information.

- From Social Work (MSW) page, user sees "Questions? On-campus Program:..." contact info
- ❝ *Definitely not [this one] based on what I have done because it is about programs not an application advisor*
- User clicks on "For Admitted Students" link from left nav and opens in new tap
- Decides to click the first "Contact Us" link she sees
- 🚩 Clicks "Contact us" under the Alumnae/i and Friends top nav
- ✅ User gives up and decides to use the contact information she initially avoided

Participant G03

This user was multilingual

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage
- ✓ User lands on Simmons College Homepage

Graduate Task 2: What specializations can you choose under the social work program?
- User hovers over "Academics" section in top nav and clicks "Graduate Programs"
- Scrolls down Graduate Programs page until he finds the Social Work Programs
  - 📝 *I see all of these...?*
- Clicks "Social Work (MSW)
- Clicks "Clinical Specializations" drop down bar
  - 📝 *I would assume it is this?*
- ✓ Sees list of specializations

Graduate Task 3: You want to learn more about faculty research and wish to talk to a professor whose recent research is on homeless veterans. How do you find the professor's name and phone number?
- 🚩 From Social Work (MSW) page, user clicks "Faculty" drop down bar
- Types in search bar at top of page "homeless veterans research"
- 🚩 Clicks on "Interprofessional Education and Social Work" pdf
- Finds "Research" tab
- ✓ Navigates to correct research and faculty information

Graduate Task 4: Find a student organization affiliated with the Social Work program that you would be interested in joining.
- User navigates back to Social Work (MSW) page
- 🚩 Looks for clubs or leadership programs
- Clicks "Student Life"
- 🚩 Clicks "Activities and Organizations"
- 🚩 Clicks "Student Organizations"
- ❌ Does not find student organizations related to Social Work
  - 📝 *That's a really good list but not all of these are very straight forward*

📝 *I'm going to look for a calendar*

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.
- Clicks "Calendars" link at top left of page
- ✓ User chooses an event category

Graduate Task 6: What is Simmons' TOEFL Institution Code?
- Hovers over "Admissions" in the top nav
- Clicks "International Students"
- Clicks "Ready to Apply?"
- Clicks "Requirements and Deadlines"
- ✓ Finds TOEFL code under undergraduate information
- User is unsure this number is correct
- Clicks "Graduate Admission"
- Clicks "Social Work (MSW)"
- Clicks "International Students" drop down
- ✓ Finds TOEFL and realizes it is the same
  - 📝 *This website is tabs within collapsible tabs and then long lists*

📝 *It's confusing because it keeps directing me back [to resources for] non-international students*

Graduate Task 7: View the Certificate of Finances form
- Hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav
- Clicks "Student Financial Services"
- 🚩 Clicks "Forms and Publications"
- Uses control+F search to look for form and does not find it
- 🔄 Goes back to Admission & Financial Aid in top nav
- Clicks "International Students"
- Clicks "Financial Services"
- Clicks "For International Students"
- 🚩 Clicks "Student Accounts" from left side nav
- Clicks "Student Financial Services"
- Clicks "For International Students"
- ❌ User gives up

Graduate Task 8: Is the GRE required for applying to the Masters of Social Work program?
- Hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav
- Clicks "Graduate Programs"
- Scrolls down to Social Work link
  - 📝 *I would realistically leave the program page open as a tab*
- 🚩 Clicks on "Program Requirements" drop down
- Does not find GRE information
- 🔄 Returns to top nav, hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid"
- Clicks "Graduate Admission"
- Scrolls down and clicks "Social Work (MSW)"
- Clicks "Application Requirements and Instructions" drop down
  - 📝 *I don't see anything here about the GRE, I was hoping it'd be a part of this list because it's called Application Requirements and Instructions*
- ❌ Does not find GRE information

Graduate Task 9: After you have started your application, you have more detailed questions in regards to the program. Find the contact information.
- Hovers over "Academics" in top nav
- Clicks "Graduate Programs"
  - 📝 *The search bar is small and the images made me want to scroll down*
- User just realizes there is a search bar to filter through the graduate programs and uses it to find the social work program page
- 🚩 Clicks "Request Information" button on right side of page
- 🔄 Returns to top nav, "Admission & Financial Aid
- Clicks Graduate Admission
- Clicks "Social Work (MSW)
- ✓ Chooses "Questions? On-campus Program:" contact information

This user was an English-only speaker

Participant G04

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage
- ✓ User lands on Simmons College Homepage

Graduate Task 2: What specializations can you choose under the social work program?
- User clicks on "Academics" link in top navigation bar
- ↗ Changes mind and types "Social work" into search bar at the upper right side of webpage
- Clicks "School of Social Work" link
- Hovers over "Programs" in top nav
- Clicks on "Our Programs" link
- User clicks on blue "four different specializations" link under Social Work Specializations header
- ✓ User sees the specialization options

Graduate Task 3: You want to learn more about faculty research and wish to talk to a professor whose recent research is on homeless veterans. How do you find the professor's name and phone number?
- From the Social Work Page, user clicks "Faculty and Research" link from top nav
- ⚑ Clicks blue link: "Browse our faculty profiles" link under Social Work Faculty center header
- ↗ Uses search bar at upper right side of page to type "veterans"
- Changes search query to "homeless veterans"
- Finds article on homeless veterans
- ✓ Reads the professor's name and phone number

Graduate Task 4: Find a student organization affiliated with the Social Work program that you would be interested in joining.
- ↻ Returns to Social Work page
- User hovers over the different headers in the top nav
- ❝ *If I didn't find it quickly, I probably would just start searching elsewhere...*
- User determines they see nothing useful to them
- ↗ Uses Google to conduct an external search for "Simmons social work student organization"
- ✓ Clicks link that takes him to a list of Social Work student groups
- User does not initially realize this page is giving him the information he is looking for

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.
- User returns to home page
- Clicks "Calendars" link at upper left hand side of page
- ❝ *This is actually showing me a lot of interesting things, academic and not academic*
- Views upcoming events

Graduate Task 6: What is Simmons' TOEFL Institution Code?
- Uses Google to conduct an external search for "Simmons college TOEFL"
- ✓ Finds TOEFL code directly within the search results and does not reenter the Simmons website

Graduate Task 7: View the Certificate of Finances form
- ❝ User says he does not know what the Certificate of Finances form is
- Uses Simmons internal search bar to type "certificate of finances form"
- Clicks link to "Moderate Special Needs (Certificate)"
- Clicks "For International Students" drop down from center part of page
- ✓ Finds link to the Certificate of Finances form

Graduate Task 8: Is the GRE required for applying to the Masters of Social Work program?
- User navigates back to the Simmons homepage
- Uses Simmons internal search and types "MSW GRE requirements"
- ❝ *That is not what I'm looking for*
- ⚑ Clicks link titled "Academic Policy"
- Uses upper right hand corner search bar, types "Social work"
- Clicks "MSW Master of Social Work | Simmons College" from center
- ⚑ Clicks drop down bar titled "Program Requirements"
- Clicks "How to Apply" drop down bar
- Clicks "Application Requirements"
- ❝ *If I was thinking about 'do I need to take the GRE or not?' I would probably look for the words "GRE"*
- ⚑ After seeing the large amount of text, user uses control+F function to look for "GRE", but this yields no results
- ✓ User reads through text and finds "Note: Standardized test scores are not required," but is not sure that this is the information he is searching for
- ❝ User suggests that the term "GRE" appears on a heading level

Graduate Task 9: After you have started your application, you have more detailed questions in regards to the program. Find the contact information.
- User stays on the "Social Work (MSW)" page
- Clicks "Apply now"
- ✓ User decides he will use the "Questions?..." contact information on the right side of the page

85

Participant U02

This user was an ESL individual

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage
- ✅ User lands on Simmons College Homepage

Undergraduate Task 2: Find the resources for the International Students page
- Hovers over "Student Life" tab in top navigation bar
- Hovers over "About Simmons" tab in top nav bar
- ↗ Types in search bar at top right of page: "International student"
- Clicks "International Student" result
- ✅ Reads through page and decides that the topics shown are resources for international students

Undergraduate Task 3: How would you contact Simmons Center for Global Education?
- Types in search bar at right top of page: "Global education"
- Clicks link called "Center for Global Education"
- ✅ Sees contact information

Undergraduate Task 4: Who would you email if you were interested in joining the Multicultural International Student Organization (MISO)?
- Types in search bar at upper right side of page: "MISO"
- Clicks link for MISO
- User feels unsure that this is the correct page because it has "International Student Organization" as a header
- Reads page content and decides this is the correct page to be on
- ✅ User finds the email link

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.
- User hovers over "about Simmons" in top nav and reads subheadings
- User hovers over "Academics" in top nav and reads subheadings
- Hovers over "Student Life" in top nav and reads subheadings
- 🚩 Clicks "Activities & Organizations" under "Student Life" in top nav
- Clicks on "Calendars" at upper left side of page
- User does not initially realize that the events are displayed at the center of this page
- ✅ User recognizes which events are avalible to attend

Undergraduate Task 6: Find the form to schedule an individual campus visit.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav
- Clicks "Visit Simmons" under this header
- Clicks "In the Heart of Boston"
- ↻ User does not watch the video, clicks back
- User is taken all the way back to the calendar page from Task 5, so she clicks to go forward again to the "Visit Simmons" page
- Scrolls down
- Clicks "Visit Simmons" button at bottom of page
- User is surprised that she is navigated to the same page
- Clicks "For Undergrad" center box
- Clicks "Arrange a Visit" center box
- 🚩 Clicks "Schedule an Individual Visit" center box
- Clicks "schedule an individual visit" link within text at top of page
- ✅ Sees form

Undergraduate Task 7: Navigate to the application page for an international student.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid"
- Clicks on "International Students" link
- Sees the "Ready to Apply" link but does not click
- ❌ User thought the task was complete, but it was not

Undergraduate Task 8: Download the application form international students are required to fill out .
- From same page, user clicks "Ready to Apply?"
- Clicks "Apply" under "Undergraduate Admission" center box
- 🚩 Clicks the "Apply" button under The Common Application
- ↻ Goes back and reads through all page options
- ✅ Finds and clicks on the international student application pdf

Undergraduate Task 9: Find the financial aid page to learn more about potential scholarships for international students.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav
- Clicks on "Student Financial Services"
- 🔠 I don't know what is the difference between scholarship and financial aid so I will search it
- ↗ User seeks more information about scholarships through an external web search
- User returns to Simmons website that was left open in a tab
- Clicks on "Financial Aid" link from left navigation bar
- 🚩 Clicks on "Scholarships" link from center box
- Looks for information for international students, but does not see any
- ❌ Clicks "Undergraduate Scholarships" center box

Undergraduate Task 10: If you have any questions about the application process, who will you contact? Find the contact information.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" drop down in top nav and clicks it
- Scrolls down
- User thinks about clicking "Request Information" button at bottom of page, but does not
- Clicks "Undergraduate Admission" link from center box
- User sees "Contact Us" information and would rather request information than call or find an admission counselor
- 🚩 Clicks "Request Information"
- Clicks "Connect" link from right side of page
- From "Connect" page, user clicks "admission counselor" link from center of page
- ✅ Sees counselor options and their contact information
- 🔠 Why are there admission counselors for specific states?

86

Participant U05

This user was multilingual

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage
- ✅ User lands on Simmons College Homepage

Undergraduate Task 2: Find the resources for the International Students page
- 💬 *I just want to discover what life is like here first*
- 🚩 User clicks "Housing" within "Student Life" from top navigation bar
- User scrolls and reads through the page
- 💬 *But does this directly correspond to what I want?*
- User sees a link for "International Student" resources in the page footer and clicks it
- Sees page containing resources for international students

Undergraduate Task 3: How would you contact Simmons Center for Global Education?
- ⟳ From "Life in Boston" page, user goes back to "Student Life"
- 🚩 Clicks "Student Services"
- Clicks "International Student Advising"
- 🚩 ⟳ Goes back to "Student Services" page
- 🚩 Clicks "International Student Advising" box
- 🚩 Clicks "Immigration" from left side of page
- 🚩 Clicks "Employment"
- ↗ Uses external search, types: "Simmons Center for Global Education"
- ✅ Finds page

Undergraduate Task 4: Who would you email if you were interested in joining the Multicultural International Student Organization (MISO)?
- ⟳ Quickly jumps between a number of different pages to find a link or text he saw earlier in the test
- 🚩 User navigates to the "For International Students" page
- Clicks "Activities & Organizations" link from footer
- Clicks "Student Organizations" from center box
- Clicks "MISO" center box
- ✅ Reads contact information for MISO

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.
- User looks at the top of the page for a calendar link
- User sees and clicks "Calendars" link at upper left side of page
- ✅ Sees listed events

Undergraduate Task 6: Find the form to schedule an individual campus visit.
- 💬 User says his first instinct is to explore for answers to see if anything stands out to him
- 🚩 User navigates to "Undergraduate Admission Calendar" from the "Visit" page
- User hovers over the different tabs in the top nav
- Clicks on "Visit Simmons" under "Admission & Financial Aid"
- 🚩 Clicks on link for list of upcoming events for undergraduate programs
- ⟳ Goes back to the "Visit Simmons" page
- Clicks "For Undergrads" header in center box
- Clicks "Arrange a Visit" center box
- Clicks "schedule an individual visit" link from text above drop down headers
- ✅ Sees form

Undergraduate Task 7: Navigate to the application page for an international student.
- User scrolls down to bottom footer
- Clicks "Undergraduate Admission" under "Admission & Financial Aid"
- Clicks "How to Apply" header link from box at center of page
- 💬 *Should I look at all these things? Do they apply to what I want?*
- Looks at "How to Apply" page
- ✅ Sees link to "International Student Application (PDF) and clicks it

Undergraduate Task 8: Download the application form international students are required to fill out.
- ✅ This task was completed during Undergraduate Task 7

Undergraduate Task 9: Find the financial aid page to learn more about potential scholarships for international students.
- User navigates to "Undergraduate Admission" page
- Clicks "How to Apply" header link from center box
- Clicks "Tuition & Fees"
- 🚩 Clicks "Undergraduate Programs"
- ⟳ Returns to "Tuition & Fees"
- Clicks "Financial Aid"
- 🚩 Clicks "Scholarships" (these are scholarships for domestic students)
- ⟳ Clicks back to escape from pdf
- Scrolls down to footer
- Clicks "Admission & Financial Aid"
- Clicks "Undergraduate Admission"
- 🚩 Clicks "For Transfer Students" from box in center of page
- ⟳ Returns to "Undergraduate Admission" page
- Clicks "Student Financial Services" from left nav
- Clicks "Tuition and Fees"
- Clicks "Undergraduate"
- ⟳ Goes back to "Tuition and Fees" and clicks "Financial Aid"
- 🚩 Clicks "Scholarships"
- ❌ Finds information on scholarships for domestic students but not international students

Undergraduate Task 10: If you have any questions about the application process, who will you contact? Find the contact information.
- User explores the headers within the top navigation bar
- 💬 I can't seem to find everything I want at the top
- User scrolls down to footer
- Clicks "Undergraduate Admission"
- 🚩 Clicks "How to Apply" from center of page
- ⟳ Returns to "Undergraduate Admission" page and clicks "Contact Us" center box
- ✅ User decides he would contact any of the advisors listed

This user was an English-only speaker

Participant U06

Task 1: Navigate to the Simmons College Homepage
- ✅ User navigates to the Simmons College homepage

Undergraduate Task 2: Find the resources for the International Students page
- User hovers over the different sections of the top nav in search of information pertaining to international students
- Clicks "International Students" link under "Admission & Financial Aid" header in top nav
- ✅ Sees "For International Students" page

Undergraduate Task 3: How would you contact Simmons Center for Global Education?
- 🚩 User clicks "Request Information" button at bottom of page
- 🚩 Clicks "Contact Us" link at right side of page
- 🚩 Clicks "Admission and Financial Aid"
- 🚩 Clicks "International Students"
- ❌ User does not complete task

Undergraduate Task 4: Who would you email if you were interested in joining the Multicultural International Student Organization (MISO)?
- 🚩 User hovers over "Alumae/i & Friends" top nav tab and clicks "Alumnae/i Directory"
- ↗ Types in search bar at upper right side of page: "MISO"
- Clicks link titled "International Student Organization"
- ✅ Finds email after browsing page

Task 5: Identify an upcoming event on campus that you would be interested in attending as a student.
- User hovers over sections in top nav
- 🔄 User returns to home page
- Clicks "Join the Celebration of all things Simmons" located in top banner
- 🚩 Clicks "Simmons Fund Monday"
- Sees events and calendar links on the left side of page and clicks
- ✅ Finds events

Undergraduate Task 6: Find the form to schedule an individual campus visit.
- User hovers over "About Simmons" in the top nav
- Hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in the top nav and clicks "Visit Simmons"
- Clicks "Request Information" from bottom of page
- Clicks drop down bar under "I'd like information on" to see options
- 🔄 Returns to "Visit Simmons" page
- Finds "Come visit" link under "For Undergrads" in center of page but does not click
- ❌ User does not complete task

Undergraduate Task 7: Navigate to the application page for an international student.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav and clicks "International Students"
- Clicks "Undergraduate Application" link under "Ready to Apply"
- ✅ User finds web page containing information on international student applications

Undergraduate Task 8: Download the application form international students are required to fill out.
- User clicks "Apply" link from > Undergraduate Admission > For International Students page
- ❌ Clicks link for undergraduate application form, not for international students

Undergraduate Task 9: Find the financial aid page to learn more about potential scholarships for international students.
- User hovers over "Admission & Financial Aid" in top nav and clicks "International Students"
- Clicks "Financial Aid" header from box in center of page
- Scrolls through and reads page
- ❌ Believes task is complete, but it is not

Undergraduate Task 10: If you have any questions about the application process, who will you contact? Find the contact information.
- Navigates back to "Admissions & Financial Aid" through bread crumbs
- Clicks "Undergraduate Admissions"
- 🚩 Clicks "Get Started" link under "How to Apply"
- 🔄 Goes back
- Clicks "Contact Us"
- ✅ Decides she would contact any of the people from this list

G01	U02	G03	G04	U05	U06
T1 User identified more strongly as a graduate student than as an international student	User feels like she can find a lot of information on the site, but she does not have a good feel for the school	TG9 User dislikes link to email. Would rather be shown email address	TG3 Looks for topics that correspond with his own interests on the faculty profiles page	TU10 "I can't seem to find every thing I want at the top [navigation bar]"	T5 Furrowed brow when looking at the homepage
TG2 User leans in while reading, furrows brow in concentration	User thinks that the navigation is good, but there is not enough information	TG3 User smiles after finding information on the faculty research he was looking for	TG4 Seeks clarification for question	User thought links were clustered well but the bottom footer navigation was more useful than the top navigation	TU6 User thought they completed this task, but they did not
TG2 User does not understand what "specializations" are	TU2 Participant was unsure if she has found the correct page (she did)	TG3 User feels like this task took a long time to complete	TG4 "If I didn't find it quickly I probably would just start searching elsewhere [using an external search]"	Wants less page with more information	TU7 Moderater needs to remind the participant they should identify as an international student
TG2 Makes surprised sound when seeing the various options for Social Work programs	TU2 User leans in closely to look at the international student drop down from the top naviation	TG2 "I think it's interesting how I clicked graduate program and then I clicked here [link to Social Work page] and I still have these options [undergraduate & graduate links on the left side navigation bar]... it's a little confusing... I don't think I need this to be here."	T5 "This [calendar] is actually showing me a lot of interesting things, academic and not academic."	User liked exploring and learning about the student experience	TU8 Task incorrectly completed. User was presented with non international student specific info, despite navigating from a page for international students. This is the likely cause for the error, coupled with not reading closely
TG2 User circles mouse over where she thinks there should be a search button under the graduate program filter/search box	TU4 User seeks clarification of task	User suggests a language translation option for international students	TG6 User does not know if TOEFL code is specific to him or if it's different for different groups of people	TU2 Thought that thinking as a domestic student would be more useful when learning about student life	User thinks there should be a seperate top navigation tab for contact information
TG2 Leans in and furrows brow when reading through Social Work program page	T5 User seeks clarification of task	TG8 "I don't see anything here about the GRE... I was hoping it'd be a part of this list because it's called application requirements & instructions"	TG8 User thinks that headings are informative	TU3 Associates the word "center" with being a physical place	TU2 User not sure that task was actualy completd (it was)
TG3 User seeks clarification of question	TU2 User browses the top navigation headers thoroughly	TG3 User frowns when reading through research pdf that is not relvant	TG8 GRE information is not clearly worded or obvious in intention	TU3 Uses search engine search	TU2 User expects CGE to be under International Students page
T5 User rubs neck and face when looking for graduate student information on "Student Life" page	TU6 User seeks clarification of task	TG2 User seeks clarification of task	TG9 Shows avesion to clicking "email" link. He does not like when eamil software launches	TU4 User discovers you cannot get to student orgs via international student page	
TG6 User does not understand why there are multiple SW options	TU6 Grabs monitor when looking at a student life page	TG2 "I don't think any of these would really help be except for maybe "clinical specializations"	TG4 user thinks he will find faculty information on the Social Work page	TU6 First instinct is too explore for answer to see if anything in particular stood out to him	
TG4 User is surprised that she does not find SW related student organizations on the Student Organizations page	TU6 User is surprised when a video about life in Boston starts playing	G2 User is unsure that he has found the correct information	TG4 user does not initially realize that the page is the correct place he can find the information he needs	This user heavily relies on footer navigation	
TG4 ser expects Student Life page to be too broad to include Social Work student groups	TU6 User is surprised how she is redirected to "visit Simmons" information	TG8 "This website is tabs within collapsable tabs and then long lists"	TG4 User feels like he only found partial information	TU9 User thought task was completed, but it was not	
TG4 User leans in when looking at content on Student Organizations page	TU8 Makes confused sound when reading through text	TG3 User furrows brow and leans closer to screen when looking for and through faculty information	T5 Finds calendar interesting and event information easy to find		
T5 States confusion about the meaning of the "Start one!" button on the Student Organizations page	TU8 Confused about "My Common Application" site	TG3 User does not like that the Social Work faculty page does not include the faculty members' areas of expertise	TG7 User does not know what the Certificate of Finance Form is		
T5 User seeks clarification of question	TU9 User does not know what scholarships, grants and financial aid are.	TG2 User finds the Social Work page confusing	TG8 User completes the task, but he does not feel like he		

T5 Circles mouse arund photos on student organizations page	TU9 User is surprised when learning about scholarship requirements	TG4 While looking at Student Organizations page, user says, "That's a really good list but not all of these [student orgs] are very straight forward."	TG9 Seeks clarity for question		
T5 User does not scroll below the fold on the student organizations page	TU9 "I don't know what is the difference between scholarship and financial aid so I will search it," proceeds to search in external search engine	TG9 "The search bar is small and the images made me want to scroll down"			
T5 User loks happy when looking for a student group to be excited about	TU10 Seeks clarification of task	TG9 User does not know how specific the page information is to him			
TG7 User does not understand what the Certiicate of Finance Form is	TU10 User was tempted to click "request info button" but doesn't	TG8 Thinks the GRE information should be one of the information tabs			
TG7 User acts surprised when she does not find the Certificate of Finance Form under "Tuition Information"	TU10 User grabs computer monitor to look at text when working through task	TG4 User rubs face when giving up on task			
TG8 User leans in when scanning text, looking for GRE score information		T5 User is surprised there are no upcoming diversity events			
TG9 When user sees "Questions? On campus programs [contact information]..." She says, "Definately not this one based on what I have done because it is bout programs, not an application advisor"		T5 "I like that there are these event categories on the side, that helps."			
TG9 User opens "For Admitted Students" information page in a new tab, presumably because she is worried that this information is not pertinent to her and she does not want to loose her place in the website		TG6 User is unsure if information on the TOEFL code information he finds is pertinent to him, he thinks there may be different codes for different departments or different types of students			
TG9 After looking for contact information in several places, the user gives up and decides to use the "Questions?..." information she originally wanted to avoid		TG8 user is surprised that GRE information is not on the programs page			
TG9 User leans closer to wcreen when looking for contact information		TG8 User wants to leave SW page open as itsown tab to quickly refer back to			
		TG7 User does not understand that the Certificate of Finance form is			
		TG7 User says that he would not know where that sort of form would be found			
		TG7 "I'm having a really hard time finding this [Certificate of Finance Form]."			
		TG7 "It's confusing because it keeps directing me back [to resources for] non-international students."			

Key					
Lack of clarity/ relevant speficicity	Positive things	Taxonomy issues	Text/diction issues	Other	Navigation issues

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			Student Life Page		
0	**Home**	Student Life		Keep	Split into 2 (for UG & G separately to avoid confusion.
1	**Top Horizontal Navigation [Header]**				These links should be the footer **[Bottom Navigation]**
1.1	Directories	People Directories		Keep	
1.2	Calendars	All Events		Keep	Calendar doesn't seem to be consistent, especially when narrowed down. Ex: SLIS calendar should reflect the activities that are happening w/i SLIS (perhaps merge w/ weekly events email that goes out? Or dole out the responsibility to someone who sends out the weekly events emails?)
1.3	News	News		Keep	
1.4	Library	Welcome:Library:Simmons College	Takes us to the Library Homepage. No obvious link back to Simmons homepage	Keep	Perhaps add a "**Back to Simmons Homepage**" link?
1.5	Simmons Homepage	Simmons College		Keep	
1.6	Links For	N/A		**DELETE**	Not obvious this has many links. This should be deleted and space should be used to make "**Search**" bar bigger (with white background)
1.6.1	Future Undergrads	Future Undergrads		Keep	
1.6.2	Future Grad Students	Future Grad Students		Keep	
1.6.3	Admitted Undergrads	Admitted Students		Keep/revise	Seems like 1.6.3 to 1.6.6 have many repition/overlapping sections

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			Student Life Page		
1.6.4	Admitted Grad Students	Admitted Students		Keep/revise	Seems like 1.6.3 to 1.6.6 have many repition/overlapping sections
1.6.5	Current Students	Students		Keep/revise	Seems like 1.6.3 to 1.6.6 have many repition/overlapping sections. 1.6.6 and this section has many overlapping links. Ex: AARC, Connections (under General Info).
1.6.6	International Students	International Students		Keep/revise	Seems like 1.6.3 to 1.6.6 have many repition/overlapping sections
1.6.7	Parents and Families	Links for Parents & Families		Keep	
1.6.8	Faculty and Staff	Faculty and Staff		Revise/Delete	1.6..5 and this section has many overlapping links. Ex: AARC, Connections. Is this section necessary?
1.6.9	Alumnae/i and Friends	Alumnae/i and Friends		Keep	
1.7	Search			Keep/revise	This search bar should be more obvious. Delete "**Links for**" and extend this to include white backround.
2	**About Simmons**	About Simmons		Keep	This and 2.1 are same link. Keep one and remove other.
2.1	About Simmons	About Simmons		Delete	This and 2 are same link. Keep one and remove other.
2.2	Why Simmons	Why Simmons		Keep?	
2.3	President and Leadership	President and Leadership		Keep	
2.4	Provost	Provost		Delete	This link is available under 2.3.

			Student Life Page		
	Navigation title	**Page title**	**Observations from user testing & team comments**	**Recommendation**	**Additional Notes**
2.5	Conferences & Lectures	Conferences & Lectures		Keep/revise	If there is section for **Faculty/Staff**, perhaps this sections should be relocated to that.
2.6	Administrative Offices and Services	Administrative Offices and Services		Keep/revise	This section should be relocated to **Admissions/Contact Us**
2.7	Centers, Organizations and Institutes	Centers, Organizations and Institutes		Keep/revise	This should relocated to **Student Life**
2.8	Work at Simmons	Work at Simmons		Keep	
2.9	Contact Us	Contact Us	Strong interest in having a more visible "Contact Us" button	Keep/revise	This sections should be separate tab, similar to/along with **Top Navigation Bar**
3	**Academics**	**Academics**			
3.1	Undergradute Programs	Undergradute Programs		Keep/revise	Programs with multiple sections (ex: ones with online counterpart) should be consolidated.
3.2	Graduate Programs	Graduate Programs		Keep/revise	Programs with multiple sections (ex: ones with online counterpart) should be consolidated.
3.3	Schools	Schools		Keep/revise	This should be split into UG and Grad
3.4	Academic Calendar	Academic Calendar		Keep	
3.5	Center for Global Education	Center for Global Education		Keep	
3.6	Certificate Programs	Certificate Programs		Keep	
3.7	Continuing & Professional Education	Professional Education		Keep	

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			Student Life Page		
3.8	Course Catalog	Course Catalog		Keep/revise	Why doesn't this have ALL schools' catalog?
3.9	Faculty	Faculty Search		Keep/revise	Shift this to **Faculty/Staff** section for more visibility
3.10	Research	Research		Revise/Delete	This section doesn't seem necessary or should be consolidated. Seems very sparse
4	**Admission & Financial Aid**	**Admission**		Keep	
4.1	Undergradute Admission	Undergradute Admission		Keep/revise	Have another section for DIX scholars (what is it?)
4.2	Graduate Admission	Graduate Admission		Keep	
4.3	Student Financial Services	Student Financial Services		Keep	
4.4	Request Information	Request Information		Keep	
4.5	Visit Simmons	Visit Simmons		Keep/revise	All the Grad programs should be consolidated to "For Grad" (similar to that of "For UG")
4.6	International Students	International Students		Keep/revise	all of the links/sections in this page should be reviewed for relevancy to **International Students**
4.7	For Admitted Students	For Admitted Students		Keep/revise	Same as 1.6.3/1.6.4
5	**Student Life**	**Student Life**		Keep/revise	Separate sections for UG and Grads?
5.1	Athletics	Athletics	Goes to athletics website. No link back to Simmons website unless you hit the "back" button	Keep/revise	Perhaps add a "**Back to Simmons Homepage**" link?

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
					Student Life Page
5.2	Activities & Organizations	Activities & Organizations		Keep/revise	What's the difference between 5.2 and 5.5? Picture for this and 5.4 is the same
5.3	Student Services	Student Services		Keep	
5.4	Life at Simmons	Life at Simmons		Keep	Picture for this and 5.2 is the same
5.5	Student Organizations	Student Organizations			What's the difference between 5.2 and 5.5?
5.6	Housing	On Campus Housing		Keep	
6	**Alumnae/i & Friends**	**Alumnae/i & Friends**			
6.1	Alumnae/i & Friends	Alumnae/i & Friends			
6.2	Connect	Connect			
6.3	Give to Simmons	Give to Simmons			
6.4	Events	Events			
6.5	Reunion	Reunion			
6.6	Give	Give Back			
6.7	Alumnae/i Directory	Alumnae/i Directory			
6.8	Contact Us	Contact Us			
7	**Blocks/Sections**				
7.1	What's life like at Simmons?	N/A			This is geared towards Undergraduates, but that's not evident until the video starts playing. Target audience should be indicated somehow, because "life" for Undergraduate students can be defined differently than "life" for Graduate students (e.g. focus on extracurricular activities v. focus on relationships with professors)
7.2	Life at Simmons	Life at Simmons			[See comments for 7.1 (What's life like at Simmons) above]

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
**Student Life Page**				
7.2.1	Life in Boston				[See comments for 7.1 (What's life like at Simmons) above]
7.2.2	Housing				[See comments for 7.1 (What's life like at Simmons) above]
7.3	Simmons Athletics	Simmons Athletics			[See comments for 7.1 (What's life like at Simmons) above]
7.4	Activities/Organizations	Activities/Organizations			
7.4.1	Student Organizations	Student Organizations		delete	This is redundant
7.4.2	Events & Traditions		Participants indicated that this is vague and needs explanation. One participant expected to see a calendar from this link.	revise	
7.5	Links for Grad Students				
7.6	Current Student? Portal Login		This applies to all students, so perhaps should be floated to the top	revise	
7.7	Student Services				
7.7.1	Health & Wellness				
7.7.2	Academic Support				
7.7.3	Career Development				
7.8	Simmons Student Handbook		This applies to all students, so perhaps should be floated to second from the top	revise	
7.9	Links for Commuters				
8	**Buttons**				

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			Student Life Page		
8.1	Visit Simmons				
8.2	Apply				
8.3	Request Information				
8.4	Support Simmons				
9	**Bottom Navigation [Footer]**				These links should mirror the header **[top navigation]**
9.1	**Academics**				
9.1.1	Undergraduate Programs				
9.1.2	Graduate Programs				
9.1.3	Certificate Programs				
9.1.4	Continuing & Professional Education				
9.1.5	Faculty				
9.1.6	Research				
9.1.7	Schools				
9.2	**Student Life**				
9.2.1	Life at Simmons				
9.2.2	Activities & Organizations				
9.2.3	Student Services				
9.3	**Alumnae/i & Friends**				
9.3.1	Connect				
9.3.2	Give				
9.3.3	Events				
9.3.4	Alumnae/i Directory				
9.4	**Athletics**				

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
	Student Life Page				
9.5	**Directories**				
9.6	**Library**				
9.7	**Contact Webmaster**				
9.8	**Online Privacy Policy**				
9.9	**Admission & Financial Aid**				
9.9.1	Undergraduate Admission				
9.9.2	Graduate Admission				
9.9.3	Student Financial Services				
9.9.4	Visit Simmons				
9.9.5	Request Information				
9.10	**About Simmons**				
9.10.1	Why Simmons				
9.10.2	Leadership				
9.10.3	Work at Simmons				
9.10.4	Conferences and Lectures				
9.10.5	News				
9.10.6	Administrative Offices and Services				
9.10.7	Contact Us				
9.11	**Resources For**				
9.11.1	Future Undergrads				
9.11.2	Admitted Undergraduates				
9.11.3	Students				

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			Student Life Page		
9.11.4	International Students			keep/revise	all of the links/sections in this page should be reviewed for relevancy to **International Students**
9.11.5	For Parents and Families		"For" is redundant	revise	
9.11.6	Faculty and Staff				
9.11.7	Alumnae/i and Friends				
9.11.8	For Media		"For" is redundant	revise	This seems like a subsection of "**News**" (9.10.5 & 1.3). Perhaps this link is unnecessary.
10	**Social Media Section**				
	Simmons Social Media Hub	Simmons Social Media Hub		Keep/revise	Very useful; has all the social media links in one apge. Would be more used if it's **bolded** or made to **stand out** somehow.
10.1	Facebook	Simmons College | Facebook		Keep	
10.2	Twitter	Simmons College (@SimmonsCollege) | Twitter		Keep	
10.3	LinkedIn	Simmons College | LinkedIn		Keep	
10.4	Instagram	Simmons College (@simmonscollege) Instagram photos and videos		Keep	
10.5	Snapchat	Add me on Snapchat!		Keep	

	Student Life Page				
	Navigation title	**Page title**	**Observations from user testing & team comments**	**Recommendation**	**Additional Notes**
10.6	YouTube	simmonscollege-YouTube		Keep	

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
0	Home	International Students		Keep	
1	Header	Header and top		Keep	
1.1	Header - Item 1	Directories		Keep	
1.2	Header - Item 2	Calendars	Not all participants could find the calendar link during testing.	Revise	make more noticeable
1.3	Header - Item 3	News		Keep	
1.4	Header - Item 4	Library		Keep	
1.5	Header - Item 5	Simmons Homepage		Keep	
1.6	Header - Item 6	Links for	No test participant used this drop-down menu.	Delete or revise	make more noticeable
1.6.1	Header - Item 6 Section 1	Future Undergrads		Keep	
1.6.2	Header - Item 6 Section 2	Future Undergrads		Keep	
1.6.3	Header - Item 6 Section 3	Admitted Grad Students		Keep	
1.6.4	Header - Item 6 Section 4	Current Students		Keep	
1.6.5	Header - Item 6 Section 5	International Students		Keep	
1.6.6	Header - Item 6 Section 6	Parents and Families		Keep	
1.6.7	Header - Item 6 Section 7	Faculty and Staff		Keep	
1.6.8	Header - Item 6 Section 8	Alumnae/i and Friends		Keep	
1.7	Header - Item 7	Search	Feedback that while feature was useful, it blended in to the header and wasn't easy to find at first.	Revise	add white space to signify search entry form
2	Top Nav			Keep	
2.1	Top Nav - Item 1	About Simmons	Redundancy of Top Nav Item 1 and Section 1	Delete/Move	This section mostly has info that a prospective student would not be interested in, or in some cases, understand the meaning of. Recommend moving to the right-most side of the navigation.

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
2.1.1	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 1	About Simmons		Revise	"About Simmons" listed twice
2.1.2	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 2	Why Simmons		Keep	
2.1.3	Top Nav - Item 1 Section	President and Leadership		Keep	
2.1.4	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 4	Provost	One undergrad test participants was not sure what "Provost" meant	Delete/Move	Many of the terms in this section are not relevant to new visitors or target audience.
2.1.5	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 5	Conferences and Lectures	"and" used	Revise	Use "and" or "&" consistently throughout navigation.
2.1.6	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 6	Administrative Offices & Services	"&" used		
2.1.7	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 7	Centers, Organizations & Institutions	"&" used		
2.1.8	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 8	Work at Simmons		Keep	
2.1.9	Top Nav - Item 1 Section 9	Contact Us	Several test participants mentioned a desire for a more concrete, general "Contact Us" button on the homepage	Revise	Add general "Contact Us" item to navigation. Include very general links, as well as centralized contact information (that will then be forwarded to specific Simmons departments based on the request)
2.2	Top Nav - Item 2	Academics		Keep	
2.2.1	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 1	Undergraduate Programs		Keep	
2.2.2	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 2	Graduate Programs		Keep	
2.2.3	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 3	Schools		Keep	
2.2.4	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 4	Academic Calendar		Keep	
2.2.5	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 5	Center for Global Education		Keep	

International Students Page

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
2.2.6	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 6	Certificate Programs		Keep	
2.2.7	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 7	Continuing & Professional Education		Keep	
2.2.8	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 8	Course Catalog		Keep	
2.2.9	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 9	Faculty		Keep	
2.2.10	Top Nav - Item 2 Section 10	Research		Keep	
2.3	Top Nav - Item 3	Admission & Financial Aid		Keep	
2.3.1	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 1	Undergraduate Admission		Keep	
2.3.2	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 2	Graduate Admission		Keep	
2.3.3	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 3	Student Financial Services		Keep	
2.3.4	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 4	Request Information		Keep	
2.3.5	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 5	Visit Simmons		Keep	
2.3.6	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 6	International Students		Keep	
2.3.7	Top Nav - Item 3 Section 7	For Admitted Students		Keep	
2.4	Top Nav - Item 4	Student Life		Keep	
2.4.1	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 1	Athletics		Keep	
2.4.2	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 2	Activities & Organizations	All very undergrad focused, no link or evidence of graduate orgs or activities	Revise	Add specific graduate school information or links to this section.
2.4.3	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 3	Student Services		Keep	
2.4.4	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 4	Life at Simmons		Keep	
2.4.5	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 5	Student Organizations		Keep	
2.4.6	Top Nav - Item 4 Section 6	Housing		Keep	
2.5	Top Nav - Item 5	Alumnae/i & Friends		Keep	
2.5.1	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 1	Alumnae/i and Friends	Redundancy of Top Nav Item 1 and Section 1	Revise	

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
2.5.2	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 2	Connect		Keep	
2.5.3	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 3	Giving to Simmons		Keep	
2.5.4	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 4	Events		Keep	
2.5.5	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 5	Reunion		Keep	
2.5.6	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 6	Give		Keep	
2.5.7	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 7	Alumnae/i Directory		Keep	
2.5.8	Top Nav - Item 5 Section 8	Contact Us		Keep	
3	Nav Feature 3	Breadcrumb	No one used or made note this during testing.	Ambivalent	
4	Social Elements		These social elements are not heavily used, nor relevant to this type of webpage	Remove	
4.1	Social Element - Item 1	G+1		Remove	
4.2	Social Element - Item 2	LinkedIn (Share button)		Remove	
4.3	Social Element - Item 3	Twitter (Tweet button)		Remove	
4.4	Social Element - Item 4	Facebook (Like + Share buttons)		Remove	
5	Section 5	We're Here to Help	Some of the sections were single links, while some contained text with additional sub-links. Consider making this more uniform across the sections in order to make functionality of section boxes more apparent to users. Additionally, this section should be able to be translated into multiple languages.	Revise	Revise section functionality. Also change "We're here to help" link to "International Student Advising" and delete the link below.

Confusion with some box titles being sole links, and other boxes having text with in-text links within them - revise to standardize box functionality across the page. |

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
5.1	Section 5 - Item 1	"International Student Advising"	Same as link above, has a more informative title and is smaller	See revision above.	in-text link (see above)
5.1.2	Section 5 - Item 2	Immigration		Keep	link in list (see above)
5.1.3	Section 5 - Item 3	Employment		Keep	link in list (see above)
5.1.4	Section 5 - Item 4	Student Life		Keep	link in list (see above)
6	Section 6	Explore Boston		Keep	
7	Section 7	Ready to Apply?	After clicking this link, it is not clear to users where they should go next	Revise	
7.1	Section 7 - Item 1	"undergraduate application"	This link takes users to international student information	Revise	in-text link (see above)
7.2	Section 7 - Item 2	"admissions page"		Revise	in-text link (see above)
8	Section 8	Living on Campus		Revise	
8.1	Section 8 - Item 1	"videos"	"videos" is a link but not "pictures"	Revise	in-text link (see above)
9	Section 9	Financial Aid		Keep	
9.1	Section 9 - Item 1	"financial aid options"		Revise	in-text link (see above)
10	Section 10	Diversity and Inclusion		Keep	
10.1	Section 10 - Item 1	"Watch what students have to say about our campus culture."		Revise	in-text link (see above)
11	Section 11	Women's College Advantage		Keep	
12	Section 12	Find Your Place	Why link to the athletics program but not student orgs? Both are mentioned.	Revise	
12.1	Section 12 - Item 1	"athletics program"		Revise	in-text link (see above)
13	Section 13	About Simmons		Keep	
14	Section 14	Questions?		Keep	
14.1	Section 14 - Item 1	"admissions counselor"		Revise	in-text link

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
14.2	Section 14 - Item 2	"@WomanOnCampus"		Revise	in-text link
15	Bottom Nav				
15.1	Bottom Nav - Item 1	Visit Simmons		Keep	
15.2	Bottom Nav - Item 2	Apply		Revise	sub-buttons for grad + undergrad
15.3	Bottom Nav - Item 3	Request Information		Keep	
15.4	Bottom Nav - Item 4	Support Simmons		Keep	
16	Footer		These groups have many sub links, some of which are redundant	Revise	Regroup by role (Prospective Students, Current Students, Faculty, Alumnae, Media, Staff, etc.)
16.1	Footer - Item 1	Academics		Revise	
16.1.1	Footer - Item 1 - Section 1	Undergraduate Programs		Revise	
16.1.2	Footer - Item 1 - Section 2	Graduate Programs		Revise	
16.1.3	Footer - Item 1 - Section 3	Certificate Programs		Revise	
16.1.4	Footer - Item 1 - Section 4	Continuing & Professional Education		Revise	
16.1.5	Footer - Item 1 - Section 5	Faculty		Revise	
16.1.6	Footer - Item 1 - Section 6	Research		Revise	
16.1.7	Footer - Item 1 - Section 7	Schools		Revise	
16.2	Footer - Item 2	Student Life		Revise	
16.2.1	Footer - Item 2 - Section 1	Life at Simmons		Revise	
16.2.2	Footer - Item 2 - Section 2	Activities & Organizations		Revise	
16.2.3	Footer - Item 2 - Section 3	Student Services		Revise	
16.3	Footer - Item 3	Alumnae/i & Friends		Revise	
16.3.1	Footer - Item 3 - Section 1	Connect		Revise	
16.3.2	Footer - Item 3 - Section 2	Give		Revise	
16.3.3	Footer - Item 3 - Section 3	Events		Revise	
16.3.4	Footer - Item 3 - Section 4	Alumnae/i Directory		Revise	

International Students Page

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
16.4	Footer - Item 4	Athletics	Items 16.4 through 16.9 seem to be a catch-all grouping	Revise	
16.5	Footer - Item 5	Directories		Keep	
16.6	Footer - Item 6	Library		Keep	
16.7	Footer - Item 7	Contact Webmaster		Keep	
16.8	Footer - Item 8	Online Privacy Policy		Keep	
16.9	Footer - Item 9	Admission & Financial Aid		Keep	
16.9.1	Footer - Item 9 - Section 1	Undergraduate Admission		Keep	
16.9.2	Footer - Item 9 - Section 2	Graduate Admission		Keep	
16.9.3	Footer - Item 9 - Section 3	Student Financial Services		Keep	
16.9.4	Footer - Item 9 - Section 4	Visit Simmons		Keep	
16.9.5	Footer - Item 9 - Section 5	Request Information		Keep	
16.10.	Footer - Item 10	About Simmons		Keep	
16.10.1	Footer - Item 10 - Section 1	Why Simmons		Keep	
16.10.2	Footer - Item 10 - Section 2	Leadership		Keep	
16.10.3	Footer - Item 10 - Section 3	Work at Simmons		Keep	
16.10.4	Footer - Item 10 - Section 4	Conferences and Lectures		Keep	
16.10.5	Footer - Item 10 - Section 5	News		Keep	
16.10.6	Footer - Item 10 - Section 6	Administrative Offices and Services	Services looks like a separate link in this list	Revise	Have text all on one line
16.10.7	Footer - Item 10 - Section 7	Contact Us		Keep	
16.11	Footer - Item 11	Resources For		Keep	

	Navigation title	Page title	Observations from user testing & team comments	Recommendation	Additional Notes
			International Students Page		
16.11.1	Footer - Item 11 - Section 1	Future Undergrads		Keep	
16.11.2	Footer - Item 11 - Section 2	Admitted Undergraduates		Keep	
16.11.3	Footer - Item 11 - Section 3	Students		Keep	
16.11.4	Footer - Item 11 - Section 4	International Students		Keep	
16.11.5	Footer - Item 11 - Section 5	For Parents and Families		Keep	
16.11.6	Footer - Item 11 - Section 6	Faculty and Staff		Keep	
16.11.7	Footer - Item 11 - Section 7	Alumnae/i and Friends	This is redundant	Remove	
16.11.8	Footer - Item 11 - Section 8	For Media		Keep	
16.12	Footer - Item 12	Simmons Social Media Hub		Keep	
16.13	Footer - Item 13	Facebook		Keep	
16.14	Footer - Item 14	Twitter		Keep	
16.15	Footer - Item 15	LinkedIn		Keep	
16.16	Footer - Item 16	Instagram		Keep	
16.17	Footer - Item 17	Snapchat		Keep	
16.18	Footer - Item 18	YouTube		Keep	

Neilson's Heuristic scale for reference:

	Heuristics	Conformance question
1	Visibility of System Status	Are users kept informed about system progress with appropriate feedback within reasonable time?
2	Match between system and the real world	Does the system use concepts and language familiar to the user rather than system-oriented terms? Does the system use real-world conventions and display information in a natural and logical order?
3	User control and freedom	Can users do what they want when they want?
4	Consistency and standards	Do design elements such as objects and actions have the same meaning or effect in different situations?
5	Error prevention	Can users make errors with good design would prevent?
6	Recognition rather than recall	Are design elements such as objects, actions and options visible? Is the user forced to remember information from one part of a system to another?
7	Flexibility and efficiency of use	Are task methods efficient and can users customize frequent actions or use short cuts?
8	Aesthetic and minimalist design	Do dialogues contain irrelevant or rarely needed information?
9	Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors	Are error messages expressed in plain language (no codes)? Do they accurately describe the problem and suggest a solution?
10	Help and documentation	Is appropriate help information supplied, and is this information easy to search and focused on the user's tasks?