

KSU User and Stakeholder Research Plan

The Kent State University's registrar office has received complaints from students about the usability and design of the registration system. To approach the students concerns the group will complete research to help establish goals of the project. Key problems to be addressed with the project include interface clarity, ease of use, steps required to complete class registration and finally aesthetic design of the interface.

In order to better address the key problems we must complete the following objectives during the research phase of the registrar interface project:

- Establish registrar goals, timeline, budget and concerns
- Complete contextual inquiry with individual student users to establish goals and needs while using registrar's website
- Conduct electronic surveys of students using the interface and conduct surveys of students visiting the registrar's office in person
- Increase usability and navigation of interface and update process of registering for classes
- Establish design principles based on data gathered

Once research from stakeholders and users is complete we will establish a list of priorities and take this back to the registrar staff and discuss necessary steps of action to complete any required changes to design, layout and language on the website. The data captured through surveys will inform any design changes that need to be completed and the observations with interviews will inform the process update of registering for classes in a step by step process that can be simplified or expanded based on user input and team observations of students completing registration for a class. Once data is brought back to stakeholders the team will then create a timeline for the design and redesign of the register for a class task interface. Once complete the team will measure success by completing observations and interviews with the new process and rolling out the new design to students with a fresh online only survey to establish if the needs of users and the goals of the potential redesign of the registrar's website are successful.

| Method | Research Goal for this Method | Reason why this technique will support the research goal | Sample Items (questions to ask, what to look for in observations) | Recruiting: where will we find participants? How many? What kind of people will we recruit? | Time Table: if project is to be completed in 6 months indicate time for each |
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| Focus Group with Stakeholders | Discover goals, timeline, expectations, budget and concerns about the project. Discuss common issues they have seen when students attempt to use interface to register for classes. | Focus group will allow staff at the registrar to discuss common goals and issues. Will give team an idea of expectations and serve to set timeline and budget and technical constraints for the project. We want to understand the organization as a whole to better meet their needs. (Goodwin, 2009) | Invite all staff levels to the focus group, we need service desk experience up to management experience. Ask service individuals what problems they have seen over and over. What are they typically helping students do? What are the expectations the staff has for this potential redesign? What is the timeline and budget the group has? | Ask directs in the registrar's office to invite all staff to the focus group. Expect a few members from each department. | ASAP |

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| Survey students visiting the registrar's office | We want to discover what issues students have experienced while trying to access the website and why they decided to visit the registrar in person. | This will support the research goal of discovering user needs. First must understand problem to solve it. (Goodwin, 2009) | What brings you to the registrar's office today? Have you used the registrar's website to register for classes? If you could change one thing about the website what would you change? Offer university swag as a gift for taking the time to complete the survey. | Goal would be to obtain a minimum of 50 responses from a variety of students (freshmen through senior). | Create survey and deploy team to complete surveys, 2 weeks. |
| Intercept Survey on registrar's website | Gain insight into problems encountered at the source. | This technique will allow the team to discover user needs, problems encountered, and specify functionality and design aspects of the interface. (Brinck, 2010) | Provide a short, multiple choice survey that asks specific questions about the usability of the register for classes function and the overall design of the website. Why did you visit the website? Where you able to complete the task? Why or why not? How would you rate the aesthetic design of the website? How would you rate the organization of the website? | Ask participants to complete the survey at the beginning of their visit, creating a pop up survey that can then be completed when student has finished browsing registrar website. Goal is 25-50 completed surveys. Students will be chosen at random to win money to campus coffee shop for completing survey. | Complete online surveys at the same time completing in person surveys. 2-3 weeks. |
| Observe users utilizing registration function of registrar's website and follow up with a short interview on the users' experience. | Goal of observations will be to find out where students are having difficulty in the process of registering for classes. | Using observations will clue team into the functional specifications required when completing specific task of registering for a class. (Brinck, 2010). | Test user on complete class registration transaction. Interview will ask questions about specific points in transactions: finding a class, adding a class, confirmation. | Recruit at least 10 volunteers at the registrar's office while completing surveys. Random sampling of students including freshmen to seniors. Participants will receive funds toward campus coffee shop or sandwich place. | Recruit and write interview questions during survey portion of research. Schedule interviews and complete them within 6 weeks of initial start of project. |