

# **Usability Test of the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology Website**

Team Web Curators:  
Patrick McDonnell  
Jessamyn Smalenburg  
Jacek Spiewla  
Brian Wilson

Evaluation of Systems and Services  
SI 622 Section 02  
Dr. Mark Newman  
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## I. Executive Summary

Our team performed a usability test of the University of Michigan (U-M) Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology (IPCAA) website<sup>1</sup> with four test participants. In this report, we present test results and identify key findings and recommendations for the IPCAA website to improve its usability, functionality, and aesthetics.

The purpose of conducting a usability test on the IPCAA website was to answer the following research questions:

- Does the website support user tasks that achieve the site's goals?
- Do the website's structure and organization facilitate findability, navigability, and usability?
- What usability problems are inherent in the current website, and how can these problems be resolved?

To answer these questions, our team developed a test plan that outlined the objectives, target population and other supporting components for the usability test. We then distributed a screening questionnaire to several IPCAA-related undergraduate departments and proceeded to schedule selected test participants. At the same time, we developed supporting forms and completed a pilot test. Overall, our team completed four usability tests over seven days. Finally, we analyzed and consolidated the test data into a set of general, specific, and minor findings and recommendations

The key findings and recommendations resulting from the testing are as follows:

- Certain IPCAA web pages are lengthy due to the amount of information on them, causing users to feel overwhelmed and requiring them to scroll more
- Paragraphs are long and require greater reading effort
- Repetitive font styling de-emphasizes important text and makes it harder to scan for information
- Main menu items and page titles are unclear
- Sub-navigation menu is not readily understood on the part of the user
- The course listing is difficult to locate
- Graduate Advisor contact information is difficult to locate

Our team's recommendations for resolving these issues are included in the body of this test report. In our analysis, we indicate that some of our recommendations would be most applicable during a major website re-design. The majority of the issues, however, require only slight modifications to the existing design to enhance the IPCAA website's usability.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.umich.edu/~ipcaa>

## II. Client Description

IPCAA is a doctoral program at U-M centered on the arts and material culture of the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds. The program is formally sponsored by the Art History and Classical Studies departments and is located in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology on U-M's Central Campus. IPCAA is consistently ranked as one of the top classical archaeology programs in the country. The program and its web site serve several target audiences, including prospective and current graduate students, researchers, faculty members and visiting scholars.

The web site follows a tree-like organizational structure that branches out from the home page. The web site features a primary navigation menu at the top of each page that links to ten secondary pages: About IPCAA, Program Overview, Fieldwork and Museum Opportunities, Prospective Student Information, Current Student Information, Faculty and Staff Directory, Sponsoring and Cognate Units, U-M Resources, FAQ, and Contact Us. The secondary pages have sub-menus that navigate the web site user to more detailed sub-pages of the web site, where one has the opportunity to browse more specific topics pertaining to the program.

The IPCAA web site maintains a strong thematic identity. It has a blue color theme and a number of pages containing photos of archaeologically significant artifacts and scenes. Each page is adorned with IPCAA's distinctive logo of a sea-monster with dolphins, and the web site explains that the logo's "hybrid" quality represents the interdisciplinary nature of the program.

## III. Goals

The goal of performing a usability test on the IPCAA website is to identify usability issues by asking a set of test participants who represent actual site visitors to perform realistic tasks on the website. After observing and soliciting feedback from test participants, our team sought to resolve these usability issues with effective recommendations. As a team goal, we hope to gain an understanding of how to perform a usability test, including developing a test plan, recruiting, screening and scheduling participants, conducting the test, and analyzing test results.

## IV. Procedure

### **Step 1: *Creating a test plan***

Our team created a test plan (Appendix A) that detailed the purpose, research questions, goals, recruiting and development strategies, test forms, a task list, and a tentative testing schedule. We referenced Kuniavsky (2003, pp. 259-297) and Rubin & Chisnell (2008, pp. 65-91) to guide us in creating the test plan.

## **Step 2: Recruiting & Screening Participants**

The target population for the usability test was University of Michigan junior and senior undergraduate students enrolled in academic fields related to IPCAA, such as History and Classical Studies, who are interested in pursuing graduate study and who have never visited the IPCAA website.

With the permission of the Art History, Anthropology, Classical Studies, History, and Near Eastern Studies departments, we sent out a recruitment e-mail (Appendix A: Draft Test Plan - Recruitment E-mail) to each department listserv. To screen interested test participants, we included a link to a SurveyMonkey.com screening questionnaire (Appendix B: Screening Questionnaire) that asked about student status, interest in further graduate study, and familiarity with several U-M interdepartmental program websites.

We contacted those students who reported that they were juniors or seniors interested in graduate study and who have never visited the IPCAA website. As an incentive to perform the test, the team offered a \$10 Starbucks gift certificate. Due to scheduling difficulties with some juniors and seniors, we contacted screened sophomores as well. Overall, our team was able to recruit over seven individuals, but due to participant cancellations our final amount reduced to four.

## **Step 3: Preparing the test materials**

The test materials included the following:

- Agreement to Participate (Appendix D) to stipulate test regulations and get the participant's signed consent to participate, adapted from (Redish, 2007)
- Permission to Record (Appendix E) to ask the user for agreement to make video and audio recordings, adapted from (Redish, 2007)

Other materials included the following:

- Introductory Script (Appendix F) to acquaint the participant to the usability test process, based on Rubin & Chisnell (2008, pp.155-161)
- Pre-test questionnaire (Appendix G) to discover the test participant's first impressions of the IPCAA website and to ascertain their previous experience with graduate program websites
- Post-test questionnaire (Appendix K) to gather general feedback on the IPCAA website, specific aspects of the website, and tasks they performed
- Data Logging Form (Appendix J) to create a standardized data gathering form for test observers and the moderator

Most importantly, our team developed a list of 17 tasks (Appendix H) that a test participant within our target population could possibly perform on the IPCAA website during their investigation, application, and admission processes. This task list was divided into four thematic sections:

1. IPCAA Website Task A – Acquainting oneself with the IPCAA program as a prospective undergraduate (7 questions)
2. IPCAA Website Task B – Applying to the program and gathering additional program details (4 questions)
3. IPCAA Website Task C – Seeking degree advising, program planning, and pursuing financial aid opportunities as an admitted IPCAA student (4 questions)
4. IPCAA Website Task D – Additional post-admissions tasks to be completed if the test participant completed IPCAA Website Tasks A-C (2 questions)

#### **Step 4: *Performing the Test***

Prior to performing the IPCAA website usability test with recruited test participants, the team executed a pilot test with members of our own team participating as test subjects at the Duderstadt Center Usability Lab. During the pilot test, we focused on how to transition test participants through each stage of the test, and to revise our task list. Performing the pilot greatly helped us gauge the timing of the test and what observation to make.

Our team successfully tested four participants (Appendix O). The first two usability tests were conducted at the Duderstadt Center Usability Lab. The next two were conducted in the conference room at the Office of Student Activities and Leadership (SAL) in the Michigan Union. During the recruitment process we found that the majority of students were more willing to participate in the test if it was on Central Campus, which prompted us to change locations. At the Duderstadt Center Usability Lab, we used a Windows XP PC with Mozilla Firefox 3.0 equipped with a three-button mouse without a scroll-wheel. At SAL, participants used a Windows XP laptop with a corded two-button mouse with a scroll-wheel. At both locations, we used the Camtasia screen-capture software in combination with a webcam and a personal digital recorder to document the usability test.

Three members from our team - one moderator and two observers, conducted each usability test session. Prior to the participant's arrival, all of the test documents were prepared and distributed to the team based on their role (moderator or observer). The consent and permission forms were placed off to the side of the test computer so that participants could have a clear space to read and sign the documents prior to transitioning to the computer.

When a participant arrived she was met by the moderator and then introduced to the rest of the test team. The participant was then directed to fill out the Agreement to Participant and the Permission to Record forms. Subsequently, the moderator read the

introductory script, asked for questions, and then asked the participant to complete the pre-test questionnaire. On the last question of the pre-test questionnaire, the participant was asked to transition to the computer and write down their initial thoughts upon seeing the IPCAA home page.

Following the pre-test questionnaire, the moderator began screen-capture recording and the participant was given the IPCAA Website Task A. Each participant was given approximately thirty minutes to complete all 17 tasks (Tasks A – D). Once participants completed a task page they were given the next set until they completed all task pages or time ran out. When needed, the moderator gently reminded the participants to continue narrating their thoughts to the test team. During the test process itself, both the moderator and observers wrote their observations on data-logging forms. Specifically, the test team focused on problems the participant encountered while performing the tasks, task completion time, and their change in emotion or attitude.

When the participant finished the usability test, the moderator stopped the screen-capture recording. The moderator then gave the participant a moment to get refreshments that the test team provided. The moderator then gave the participant the post-test questionnaire at the computer and allowed her to navigate the website to help answer questions. At this time, the entire team left the room to discuss observations and brainstorm debriefing questions. Our team used a Debriefing Guide (Appendix L) to make sure we completed all necessary debriefing steps for all usability tests. On average, the observation discussions lasted about seven to eight minutes, and a list of five to ten questions was generated. The team re-entered the room and allowed the participants to finish the post-test questionnaire if they were still working on it.

For the debrief session, the moderator started the digital audio recorder to capture the participant's feedback. The moderator asked the debrief questions and any other follow-up questions for clarification. While this was happening, one of the observers reviewed the participant's completed pre- and post-test questionnaires to ensure no key items were missed during the questioning and to find any submitted responses that needed clarification. After the moderator completed interrogating the participant, the observers were given a chance to follow-up with any general questions or specific issues from the pre- and post-test questionnaires.

Afterwards, the moderator made closing remarks, asked if the team could contact the participant if there were further questions, thanked the participant for their time, and presented them the incentive.

### **Step 5: *Analyzing results and generating recommendations***

Immediately following the usability test, the team reviewed all collected data and shared observations, team insights, and recommendations. We posted all analysis notes in a shared document for rapid syndication among team members.

## V. Findings

The findings that were uncovered during the course of the usability testing sessions are separated into general and specific findings, with the former encompassing more global issues encountered among multiple participants. The general findings include issues associated with: page and paragraph lengths and quantity of information presented at once, text and fonts, and menu items and page titles. The specific findings include issues associated with specific parts of the website, including difficulties with finding the course list and the Graduate Advisor, and issues understanding the sub-navigation menu.

In addition, minor issues include individual problems raised by test participants that did not have a large bearing on their overall completion of the test tasks. Some of the issues in this section include difficulties with locating the application deadline, specificity of the links to fieldwork locations, and locating dissertation topics. Evidence and recommendations associated with each of our findings are situated directly following the statement of each and every problem.

Limitations associated with our data collection include the sample size. While evaluating the system with a total of four users is extremely useful and has provided us with a wealth of data and problems to remedy, the addition of two to three more users would have been highly desirable. Also, the target audience that we decided to recruit from for the usability test was supposed to be comprised of juniors and seniors who are, or who have in the past, shown an interest in pursuing graduate study. Because of recruitment issues—scheduling and time conflicts, availability of participants and the usability lab itself, travel and time commitment required on the part of participants—we succeeded in testing one junior who is currently considering graduate school, one senior who is undecided about graduate education, and two sophomores who are considering graduate school. However, we are quite certain that these characteristics have not altered our results in any meaningful way.

Other possible limitations include the fact that all test participants were female, and that the Usability Lab computer mouse did not have a scroll-wheel. The former limitation, we hypothesize, could give the test results more bias towards the aesthetics of the website: all test participants were very pleased with this aspect of the site and gave it a high rating (Appendix N). The latter limitation could have made scrolling long pages on the IPCAA website more frustrating. We do not have the necessary evidence to support either claim, however.

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## VI. General Findings and Recommendations

### Problem:

Certain pages are lengthy due to the amount of information on them, causing users to feel overwhelmed and requiring them to scroll more.

### Evidence:

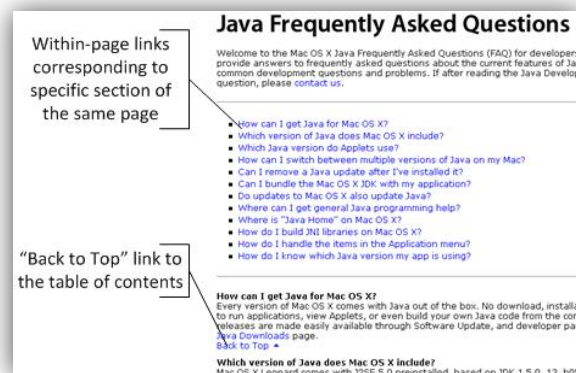
All usability test participants indicated that certain IPCAA pages were long. The primary culprits were the Fellowships and Financial Aid, Admissions and Prerequisites, and Prospective and Current Student FAQ pages. Users mentioned that they felt overwhelmed to some degree when navigating these pages in search of specific information. For example, when one user navigated to the Fellowships and Financial Aid page to find a specific fellowship and began to scroll through the long page, she said that she'd rather use the Internet browser's search function to find specific text instead of reading through the "walls of text."

One user also stated that the overall page length was not off-putting, but she felt that it was easy to get lost in the page content, even if the information she was looking for was right in front of her. Other remarks about the page length included "repetitious" and "intimidating." In the post-test questionnaire, the average user rating for the amount of information leaned toward "too much," with a normalized average of 4.5 out of 7, on a scale from "too little" to "too much" information. On an interesting note, no participants ever clicked the "Back to Top" link located at the bottom of all IPCAA web pages.

### Recommendation:

As a temporary fix, long pages such should have within-page links (see Figure 1) to help users find information faster. For example, on the Prospective and Current Student FAQ pages, questions should be converted to within-page links that automatically scroll the visitor to the corresponding section of text when they click on the link. After each section's end, a prominent "Back to Top" link should be displayed. On Fellowships and Financial Aid, a similar "table of contents" should be implemented and possibly organized by the fellowship giver, application deadline, country or region-specific, or the aid amount. The addition of images within the long pages should also help users to quickly recall where a specific piece of information is on the page.

As a long term solution, however, our team recommends that long pages that are more than a few screenfuls long be broken down into shorter pages.



**Figure 1:** Example of within-page links

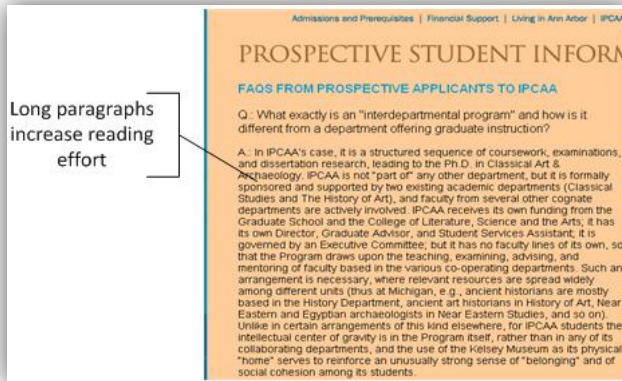
Source: <http://developer.apple.com/java/faq>

**Problem:**

Paragraphs are long and require greater reading effort.

**Evidence:**

Some users complained about the amount of reading that she had to do in order to find information. This applied to IPCAA pages such as Admissions and Prerequisites, Fellowships and Financial Aid, Prospective and Current FAQs (Figure 2), Mission, and History. This participant mentioned several times that these pages were “walls of text” and she found them frustrating and annoying to read. When asked to determine the regions of the world the IPCAA program is concerned with, the user found that the



**Figure 2:** IPCAA Prospective Student FAQ page

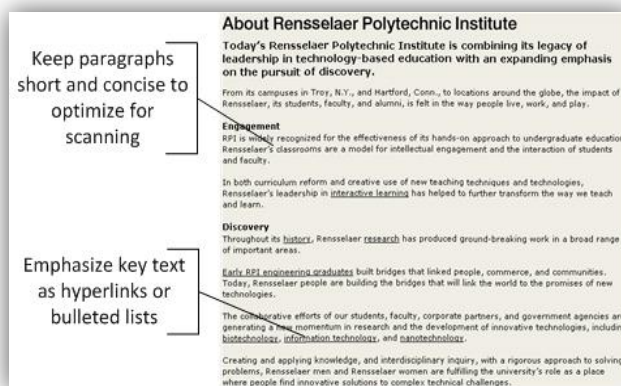
Mission and History pages gave too

much information. On the Fellowships and Financial Aid page, she stated that she had to stop scanning and read paragraphs to locate a specific fellowship, whereas she prefers to look for keywords.

U01 mentioned that bulleted lists and links helped her avoid reading the long paragraphs to find information. In addition, our team noticed that U01 highlighted text as she was reading through lengthy paragraphs. When asked about this behavior, she indicated that it helped her focus on specific text within a body of text that she was reading at that instant.

**Recommendation:**

Our team recommends rewriting long paragraphs on the aforementioned pages to make them smaller and more readable. Limit the number of words in a sentence to twenty and sentences in paragraphs to five (Leavitt, 2006), and use bulleted lists to facilitate keyword scanning and chunking information into smaller bits. Furthermore, the paragraphs on main navigation pages (About IPCAA, Prospective Student Information, U-M Resources,



**Figure 3:** Example of an effective paragraph length optimized for scanning

Source: <http://www.rpi.edu/about/index.html>

etc) should limit the amount of prose text (Leavitt, 2006). If a paragraph cannot be shortened, we recommend slightly increasing the spacing between lines to improve readability.

**Problem:**

Repetitive font styling de-emphasizes important text and makes it harder to scan for information.

**Evidence:**

Two participants had a negative perception of the font styling on the IPCAA website. U01 mentioned that there is no differentiation of fonts, which would have made it easier to find the application deadline on the Admissions and Prerequisites page. During the debriefing session, she mentioned that styled headings would have helped determine where content sections start and end, and a concise list of bulleted items to summarize content. When opening new pages, she focused on links, bulleted lists, and bolded text, which, as she stated, helped her avoid reading long paragraphs to find information. U03 also stated that she did not particularly like the site's font, and preferred the font used on the footer of the home page instead.

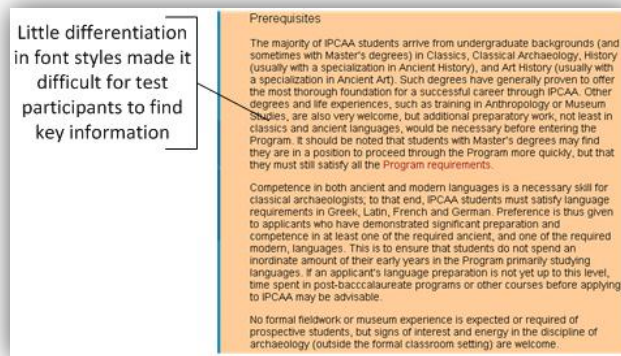


Figure 4: IPCAA Admissions and Prerequisites page

**Recommendation:**

To facilitate faster finding of information, the IPCAA website should optimize their fonts for scanning and for emphasizing key information on each page. For example, the site should use a consistent set of heading styles to communicate the hierarchy and organization of page content on pages such as Admissions and Prerequisites, Fieldwork, and Core & Associate Faculty. Bold text should be used sparingly to emphasize key information, such as the application deadline on the Prospective Student Information page. This recommendation can be easily applied to improve the existing IPCAA website in the short-term.

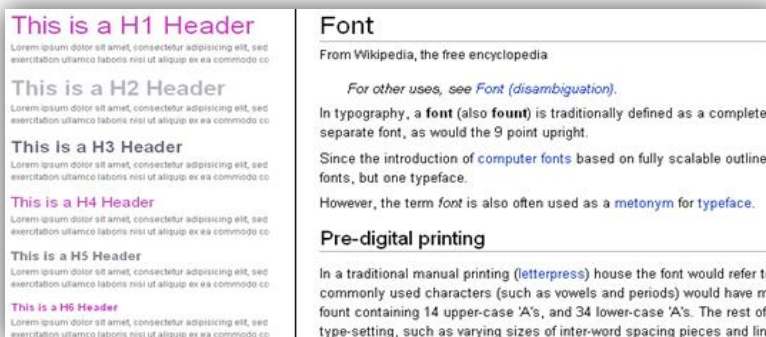


Figure 5: Example usage of headings styles (left) and font styles (right) for emphasizing keywords and information organization

Source (left): [http://demo.yootheme.com/jan08/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=50](http://demo.yootheme.com/jan08/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=50)  
Source(right): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Font>

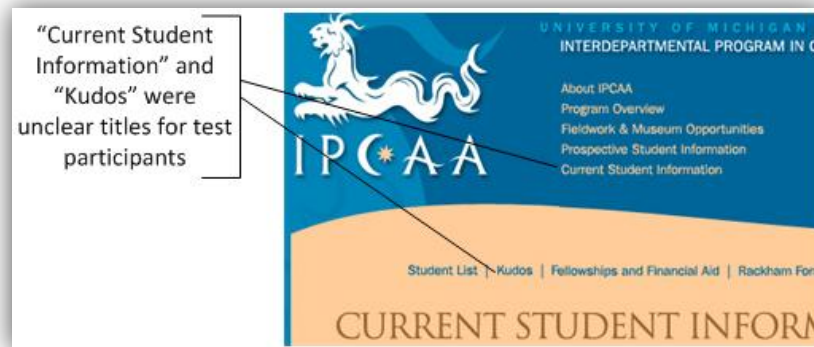
Problem:

Menu items and page titles are unclear.

Evidence:

Participants did not have a clear understanding of the Kudos page. Some participants used the page to find alumni dissertation topics, thinking that it was an alumni list. The page heading explains that the page lists the accomplishments of current students, but participants did not notice this and believed it was an alumni list. One participant mentioned that Kudos was a “cute” term, but better if it was named “Graduated Students.”

In addition to misunderstanding the Kudos page, participants had different meaning for what the Current Student Information menu item meant. For example, U03 and U04 both thought that Current Student Information was information about current students rather than information for current students. The page actually lists both of these items.



**Figure 6:** IPCAA Current Student Information page

Finally, U04 had a difficult time juggling between the Core Faculty, Associate Faculty, Executive Committee, and Staff pages in trying to find the Graduate Advisor. The menu items did not have meaning for her and she suggested the four pages be merged into one.

Recommendation:

The IPCAA website menu and sub-navigation menu items should clearly reflect the information contained within those items (Leavitt, 2006). We recommend renaming the Kudos page to “Student Accolades” or “Student Distinctions,” and Current Student Information to simply “Current Students.” In addition, on the Faculty and Staff Directory page, having a separate link to a comprehensive directory of all faculty, staff, and current students on one page should minimize the need for users to search the three sub-pages to find related information.

## VII. Specific Findings and Recommendations

### Problem:

Course list is difficult to find.

### Evidence:

In trying to locate the course list, test participants searched as many as eight pages on the IPCAA website and spent approximately three and a half minutes searching. Participants looked for the course list on these pages: FAQ, Sponsoring & Cognate Units, Rackham Forms, Faculty and Staff Directory, Program Overview, Prospective Student Information, Current Student Information, and U-M Resources.

One user clicked through all the main navigation menu items to in hopes of finding a course list link in the sub-navigation menu, but went on to abandon this task after feeling frustrated. Another user unsuccessfully searched the Faculty and Staff Directory pages to determine if individual faculty members placed a list of taught courses in their profiles.

U04 initially could not locate the course list on the FAQ pages, but found later found the list in the IPCAA student handbook. It should be noted that the course list on the IPCAA website and the course list in the IPCAA student handbook do not match. When asked about participant preference of where the course list should be located in the current main navigation menu, participants responded with Current Student Information and the FAQ pages.

### Recommendation:

Our team recommends that the IPCAA website should add a course list link in sub-navigation menu. Next, this new link should be made more visible by adding it to the sub-navigation menu on the Current Student Information page. Furthermore, the course list link should be cross-referenced as a frequently asked question on the Current and Prospective FAQ pages, and as a bulleted item link on the Program Overview page. We also recommend that faculty profiles on the Core Faculty and Associate Faculty pages have a list of courses taught on their page profiles.



**Figure 7:** IPCAA Current Student Information page

The course list on the IPCAA website and the course list in the IPCAA student handbook should be kept current. Finally, the list should be made available as a downloadable PDF document, which could be an extracted copy of the list in the IPCAA handbook.

**Problem:**

IPCAA Graduate Advisor is difficult to find.

**Evidence:**

In general, test participants had difficulty locating the IPCAA Graduate Advisor. U01 scanned job titles on the Core Faculty, Associate Faculty, Executive Committee, and Staff pages. As well, U01 looked through Current Student Information, Fellowships and Financial Aid, Rackham Forms, and Current Student FAQs for the Graduate Advisor before abandoning the task in frustration. Interestingly, some users (U01, U02) did find the page that the information was on (Executive Committee) but still did not see the information.

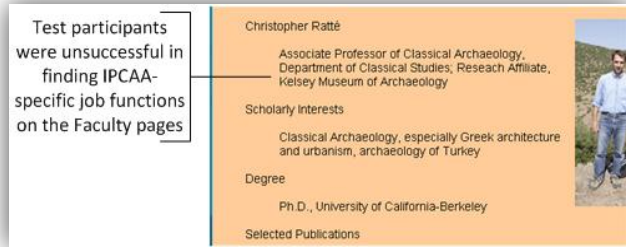


Figure 8: IPCAA Core Faculty page

U04 was also unsuccessful at locating the Graduate Advisor, and stated that she would have to resort to contacting the Graduate Program Coordinator if trying to reach the Graduate Advisor.

Moreover, U04 expected the IPCAA Graduate Advisor’s contact information to be located on the last question of the FAQ pages. She mentioned that FAQs are typically designed so that the last question provides contact details for additional help.

U03 did locate the Graduate Student Advisor on the Executive Committee page, but had to back to the Core Faculty page to get his e-mail address. The average time to complete this task was approximately three and a half minutes.

**Recommendation:**

First, our team recommends that faculty job titles, such as Elaine Gazda (Director) and Christopher Ratté (Graduate Advisor), be added on the Core Faculty page profiles beneath their names. Second, IPCAA Executive Committee member names should be

converted to links that point to the individual’s IPCAA profile on the Core or Associated Faculty pages. Third, Executive Committee members who are not core or associate faculty should have their names linked to their respective departmental home page profiles, if applicable. Finally, the Current Student FAQ page should list a link to the Graduate Advisor’s profile.

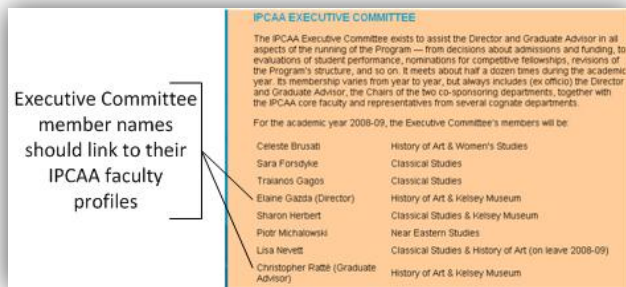


Figure 9: IPCAA Executive Committee page

Problem:

Sub-navigation menu is not readily understood.

Evidence:

One test participant did not realize that the sub-navigation menu was a navigation element and that its menu items were merely page descriptors written in a small font. After realizing that it was, she thought that the links were within-page links.

Recommendation:

To ensure that users initially notice the sub-navigation menu and understand its purpose, we recommend changing it to a vertical menu located on the left of the page content. As another option, we recommend altogether eliminating the sub-navigation menu by embedding it within a drop-down main navigation menu. These

recommendations should be considered when completing a major redesign of the IPCAA website. As a temporary fix, however, the sub-navigation menu items should be increased in font size and converted to plain text instead of text as a graphic. This will save the user

time in locating the menu, it will allow the sub-navigation menu font size to be controlled through the browser, and it will improve the website's search engine optimization.

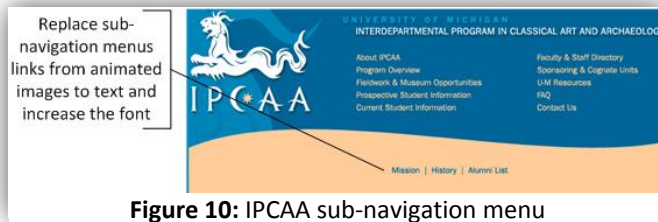


Figure 10: IPCAA sub-navigation menu

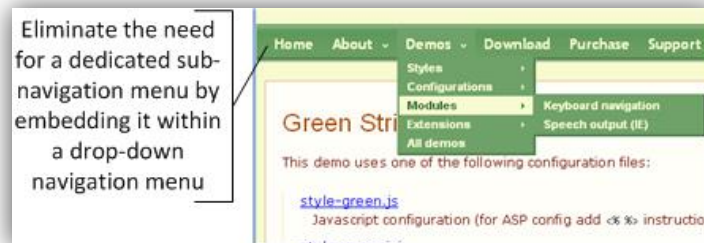


Figure 11: Example of a drop-down navigation menu

Source: <http://www.udm4.com/demos/style-gree.php>



Figure 12: Example of a vertical sub-navigation menu

Source: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/about/index.html>

## VIII. Minor Findings and Recommendations

### Problem:

Application deadline is difficult to locate.

### Evidence:

U02 found the page containing the application deadline (Admissions and Prerequisites), scanned through the content, but did not see the text. After a few minutes of searching through other pages (Program Requirements, Prospective Student Information, and IPCAA Handbook), then saying that she does not want to read through all the pages, she navigated back to the Admissions and Prerequisites page and found the information in the beginning of a paragraph following a list of bullets. U02 stated: "I guess I didn't read enough."

### Recommendation:

Since the application deadline is a key piece of information for a large target audience (prospective students), this information should not take an excessive amount of time to locate. We recommend that the application deadline be in bold, colored font so that it stands out from the rest of the text. Additionally, we recommend that it be moved closer to the top of the page, where it is more easily noticed.

### Problem:

Naming fieldwork locations by city causes confusion

Many IPCAA students become engaged, and gain valuable experience, with archaeological fieldwork sponsored directly by the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, which has a long and storied history of activity in many parts of the Mediterranean. Currently active field projects involving IPCAA students include large-scale excavation and remote sensing of Hellenistic and Roman levels at a tell site, Tel Kedesh, in the northern Galilee, Israel (under the direction of Professor Sharon Herbert), exploration and excavation of the Middle Kingdom cemetery at Abydos in Egypt (under the direction of Professor Janet Richards), and a major new excavation of Gabii near Rome (under the direction of Professor Nicola Terrenato).

- [Click here to learn more about the Kelsey Museum's history of Mediterranean fieldwork](#)
- [Click here to learn more about Tel Kedesh](#)
- [Click here to learn more about Abydos](#)
- [Click here to learn more about Gabii](#)

**Figure 14:** IPCAA Fieldwork page: fieldwork sites without exact names of countries in the links

- A curriculum vitae or résumé, including work experience, evidence of travel, museum or fieldwork, or other relevant activities in the fields of Classical Art and Archaeology
- A statement of purpose and a personal statement, detailing and conveying your interest and enthusiasm for the field of classical archaeology, and why IPCAA might be an appropriate place for you to undertake graduate study. A length of about two or three pages for each statement is recommended.
- Three letters of recommendation, preferably from teachers from whom you have had classes or practical experience in archaeology and classics.
- A sample of writing, such as a term paper for a class, or a senior thesis (optional, but strongly recommended).

The annual application deadline is January 1st. All materials must be submitted and in hand by that date, and applicants should take responsibility for ensuring this happens (e.g., attempt the GRE examination in good time for IPCAA to receive the results).

All applications are reviewed by the IPCAA Executive Committee in January/February. Admission is then granted to a small number of applicants, who are invited to visit the Ann Arbor campus (usually in early-mid March). This visit, which is funded by IPCAA and the Rackham Graduate School, provides an excellent opportunity to meet faculty and students, and see the full resources of the Program and its University setting. Nominations to fellowships and other offers of financial support are made shortly thereafter. Acceptance or rejection of an offer of

**Figure 13:** IPCAA Admissions and Prerequisites page: Application deadline is embedded within a long stream of text making it hard to locate.

### Evidence:

U04 saw the link to Abydos, but didn't recognize it as being located in Egypt. This participant also commented that Gabii doesn't immediately sound Italian.

### Recommendation:

We recommend adding the name of the country next to the fieldwork site link. For example, "Click here to learn more about Gabii in Italy."

Problem:

Dissertation topics are challenging to find.

Evidence:

U03 had difficulty finding dissertation topics, and she did not think to click on Kudos. The word “Kudos” does not clearly indicate what content is located on the page, and this led to some confusion on the part of the participants. That is, prospective students may have a more challenging time locating certain content on the site because the label “Kudos” does not indicate whom or what that section is detailing.



**Figure 15:** Sub-navigation menu that gives no indication that dissertation lists are found under Student List and Kudos

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Kudos section should be divided into two separate sections, publications on the one hand, and awards on the other hand. Prestigious awards, including grants and fellowships, should be placed separately under the title Current Student Awards. Secondly, we recommend that publications by current students be placed on a separate page under the heading, Current Student Publications. Finally, we recommend that books by former students be listed on a separate page that is associated with the list of past students and their currently held positions.

Problem:

Contact information for graduate advisor and coordinator are not grouped with associated information, and their respective roles are not clearly distinguished.

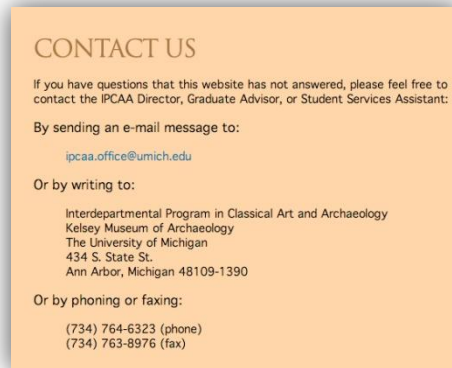
Evidence:

There are no names of recipients on the Contact Us page. Under Staff, Alex Zwinak’s e-mail address is not found on the staff profile, causing one participant to remark that perhaps the graduate coordinator is not supposed to receive direct e-mails. When finding the Graduate Program Coordinator’s name and an e-mail address, U03 mistook the Program Director, Elaine Gazda, for the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Recommendation:

On the Contact Us page, specify who will be receiving the message if the user sends an e-mail to the address provided. Knowing to whom to address the e-mail can help guide the content and topic of questions asked. Additionally, we recommend making the distinction between the roles the Graduate Program Coordinator, Graduate Advisor, and

Director, to give prospective applicants a clear understanding of who to contact for their specific questions.



**Figure 16:** IPCAA Contact Us page lacks names of e-mail recipients

**Problem:**

Footer of home page is not actually at the absolute bottom of the page, and the white font distracts from the background art.

**Evidence:**

The footer is rises above the absolute bottom of the page, and the white font is in stark and distracting contrast to the teal/blue background color. U01, who appreciated the aesthetics behind the design of the website, found this somewhat distracting.



**Figure 17:** Screenshot of IPCAA home page footer showing starkly contrasting font colors

**Recommendation:**

Compress the height of the footer so that it rises as little as possible above the absolute bottom of the page. Changing the text color to contrast less drastically with the background color can also make the text less distracting in an aesthetic sense, yet still readable when the viewer needs to access the particular pieces of information contained in the footer.

### Problem:

List of commonly used U-M travel awards does not indicate whether or not the awards can be used for travel to *any* region, or only to *specific* regions.

### Evidence:

U02 felt confusion while viewing the Commonly Used Travel Awards PDF, stating that she's not sure whether they can apply to travel anywhere, or only to specific fieldwork locations.



### Recommendation:

If all of the awards on the list may be applied to travel to any location, indicate this at the top of the page, just under the title Travel Funding. If specific awards may only be applied to travel to certain locations, indicate the specific locations in the brief description of each award.

**Figure 18:** The heading on the list of Commonly Used Travel Awards PDF, along with the first item on the list. There is no indication of the locations to which the awards can be applied, or whether they can be applied to any location

## IX. Conclusion

Our team conducted a usability test on the U-M IPCAA website in order to uncover usability problems and suggest improvements to the website in this regard. In this report, we present the test's results, findings and recommendations.

In our test methodology, we draw from the published test methods in Kuniavsky and Rubin & Chisnell to guide the test process. We developed a draft test plan and recruited and screened participants to fit our target user population. Participants were U-M students selected on the basis of their course of study, desire in pursuing graduate work, and having a lack of previous experience with the IPCAA site. In sum, our team completed four usability tests and analyzed the data to produce general, specific, and minor findings.

The key findings include:

- Certain IPCAA web pages are lengthy due to the amount of information on them, causing users to feel overwhelmed and requiring them to scroll more
- Paragraphs are long and require greater reading effort
- Repetitive font styling de-emphasizes important text and makes it harder to scan for information
- Main menu items and page titles are unclear
- Sub-navigation menu is not readily understood on the part of the user
- The course listing is difficult to locate
- Graduate Advisor contact information is difficult to locate

The majority of uncovered usability issues can be resolved with small changes to the existing design. In other words, a major redesign is not required to improve the usability of the IPCAA website. Our team suggests that revising the current website would be less costly and time-consuming than a complete redesign and may be a viable option for the IPCAA department.

## Appendix

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## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan

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### Purpose

To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Interdepartmental Program of Classical Art and Archaeology in terms of usability, functionality, and aesthetics.

### Research Questions

- Does the IPCAA web site support user tasks that achieve the site's goal(s)
- Does the structure and organization of the website facilitate findability, navigability, and usability?
- Based on the results of the usability testing sessions, what are the primary problems with the website that we uncovered with the participants?
- How severe is each problem?
- How can each problem be remedied?
- What is the nature of the participants' impressions and thoughts about the website, based on the post-test questionnaire?

### Recruitment & Screening

- Individuals who have not used the IPCAA website
- High proficiency in Internet use
- Junior and senior undergraduates interested in graduate study

Plan A: department of history, classical studies, art history, anthropology, ancient languages

Plan B: non-IPCAA-related undergraduate department (physics, architecture, etc...)

### Population

- Prospective IPCAA students visiting the website for the first time

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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### Recruitment E-mail

Here's your chance to help redesign a University of Michigan website!

Our project team of School of Information graduate students is performing a professional usability test on a website and needs your help.

The test takes approximately one hour, and you will be rewarded with a \$10 gift certificate to a local coffee shop for participating.

Your feedback will directly influence the redesign of an important academic website at the university.

If you are interested in participating, start helping by taking this less-than-one-minute questionnaire:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zcOvcOrLgIxnR7dMo8jnEQ\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zcOvcOrLgIxnR7dMo8jnEQ_3d_3d)

### Screening Questionnaire

Thanks for taking our usability test survey!

1. Student Status:

- Freshman (terminate)
- Sophomore (terminate)
- Junior (continue)
- Senior (continue)
- None of the above (terminate)

2. Are you interested in graduate study?

- Yes (continue)
- No (terminate)
- Not Sure/Undecided (continue)

3. What is your level of proficiency with using the Internet?

- Very experienced (continue)
- Somewhat experienced (continue)
- Not very experienced (terminate)
- Not at all experienced (terminate)
- Not sure (terminate)

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

---

4. Have you ever visited one or more of the following University of Michigan websites?  
(Check all that apply)

If you have never visited any of the websites, please skip to the next page. (continue)

- Interdepartmental Program in Greek and Roman History (continue)
- Interdepartmental Program in Medicinal Chemistry (continue)
- Interdepartmental Degree Program in Women's Studies and Sociology (continue)
- Interdepartmental Concentration Program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (continue)
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Women's Studies and Psychology (continue)
- Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Macromolecular Science and Engineering (continue)
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History (continue)
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in English and Women's Studies (continue)
- Interdepartmental Concentration in Public Health Genetics (continue)
- Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology (terminate)

<Next Page>

Thank you for answering our questionnaire.

We will be finalizing a list of candidates and will be in touch with you within the next 3 days to arrange a time and date to perform the test.

The test itself will require approximately one hour of your time at the Duderstadt Center on North Campus during the week of March 23-27.

As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$10 gift card to a local coffee shop, and we will provide you with snacks during the test.

Please enter your e-mail address where we can reach you: <text entry field>

<End Screening Questionnaire>

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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### Scheduling

We have reserved the Duderstadt Center Usability Lab during these times:

- Mon Mar 23 8:30pm - 10pm (test run)
- Tue Mar 24 4pm - 8pm
- Wed Mar 25 10am - 4pm
- Thu Mar 26 4pm - 8pm
- Fri Mar 27 1pm - 5pm

### Test Tasks

(Order at the moment places a few easier tasks first as a "warm up")

**(1) (Easy Task) Find the name and contact information of the IPCAA Graduate Program Coordinator.**

IPCAA Home Page > Faculty and Staff Directory > Staff > Alex Zwinak

**(2) Find information that would tell you how many years the IPCAA program has been in existence.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > About IPCAA > History. Program founding date is located in last sentence of second paragraph.

**(3) Determine the areas of the world that the IPCAA program emphasizes.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview. Areas of emphasis are listed in 1st sentence of 1st paragraph on page. Mediterranean and Near East.

**(4) What does "interdepartmental" mean? Locate a definition for interdepartmental in the context of IPCAA, and a description of how this differs from a typical department offering graduate instruction.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > FAQ. This is FAQ question #1.

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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**(5) Determine one ancient and one modern language needed to fulfill the IPCAA program language requirement.**

One solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > Admissions and Prerequisites. Requirements are listed in 4th paragraph on page. Greek or Latin, and French or German.

**(6) Find contact information for a professor associated with the IPCAA program with whom you could further discuss the ancient language requirements.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Faculty and Staff Directory > Associated Faculty. Prof. David Potter.

Solution A: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview > Program Requirements. At bottom of page click on Preliminary Examination FAQ. Download FAQ document. Open document. Answer is contained in response to Q #3. Winter Semester of third year.  
Solution B: Similar information is contained in the IPCAA Handbook on page 16.

**(8) Find the names of three current students who have published works in the last three years.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Current Student Information > Kudos. Names could include: Marcello Mogetta, Lydia Herring-Harrington, Alexander Nagel, Seth Button.

**(9) Determine where to find dissertation topics presented by former students.**

**(10) Locate the title of the dissertations written by two different alumni who currently hold professorships from MIT and Bowdoin College.**

IPCAA Home Page > About IPCAA > Alumni List > James Higginbotham & Naomi Horowitz

**(11) Locate and download (to the desktop) the document which details the regulations governing the PhD program.**

Solution: There are multiple solutions to this task due to multiple links to handbook. One solution would be: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > IPCAA Handbook > Click Here.

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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**(12) Locate the course numbers for Dissertation Research in Classical Archaeology.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview > Program Requirements > Course Information (bottom of page). Course number 990 or 995 located at end of Classical Archaeology list.

**(13) Locate the reading list for one of ancient language reading examinations.**

Solution: The readings lists for Latin and Greek are contained in Appendix D and E of the IPCAA Handbook.

IPCAA homepage > Program Overview > Program Requirements > Language Examinations (bottom of page). IPCAA handbook referenced in last sentence at bottom of page. Does subject download handbook a second time (task 8) or open handbook on desktop?

**(14) Determine how to find the website for an excavation in Italy that involves IPCAA students.**

IPCAA homepage > Fieldwork and Museum Opportunities > Fieldwork > Click here to learn more about Gabii > Kelsey Website Info page on Gabii

**(15) Travel and study abroad is one of the attractive aspects of the IPCAA program. Find one fellowship or award that would support study in Egypt, and one that would support study in Italy.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Current Student Information > Fellowships and Financial Aid. From list on page: "American Research Center in Egypt" and "American Academy in Rome"

**(16) Find the link to the location/building in which IPCAA is housed.**

IPCAA Home Page > UM Resources > Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

**(17) Determine how students typically fund their studies during Year 2 of the program.**

**(18) Locate the fellowship that is awarded to graduate students who wish to conduct research in Turkey.**

IPCAA Home Page > Current Student Information > Fellowships and Financial Aid > American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT)

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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**(19) Locate the link to the website from which you can download PDF files of important forms.**

IPCAA Home Page > Current Student Information > Rackham Forms > Top of Page

**(20) Finding housing in Ann Arbor can sometimes be difficult. Determine where you could locate IPCAA suggestions for Ann Arbor area apartment complexes.**

**(21) Find out roughly how many students are accepted into the IPCAA program each year.**

**(22) Locate the deadline date for an admission application to the IPCAA program.**

**(23) The program does look very interesting, and you decide to speak to an IPCAA faculty member before applying. Find the name and email address of the Graduate Advisor so that you can schedule a meeting.**

Solution: IPCAA homepage > Faculty & Staff Directory > Executive Committee. Scroll down list to see that Chris Ratte is the Graduate Advisor. Then need to go to Core Faculty page to find Chris Ratte's email

### Pre-Test Questionnaire

The purpose of the pre-test questionnaire is to discover first impressions, whether participants value the product, and to ascertain their previous experience.

1. How long have you been looking for graduate programs?
2. Approximately how many times per week do you view graduate program websites?
3. To what degree would you say graduate program websites affect your view of the program?
4. What do you like about graduate program websites?
5. What do you dislike about graduate program websites?
6. What general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website?

[Recruiter: Show the home page for the IPCAA website but don't have the user interact with it]

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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### Post-Test Questionnaire

The purpose of the post-test questionnaire is for you to share with us your impressions of the IPCAA website, and if possible, how the website has shaped your impression of the Program. Your feedback is very important to us, and we would appreciate it if you would be as honest and candid as possible in your responses.

1. After having gone through the website in more depth, what general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website?

[Recruiter: If participant did not respond, during the debriefing ask him/her to give specific examples of things that stood out to them on the IPCAA website]

2. Were the tasks you completed consistent with how you would use graduate program websites?

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how difficult did you find the tasks you completed today?

[Recruiter: Based on the answer, choose which line of questioning from the two below]

a. If the tasks were somewhat hard, what about them made them so?

- What would have made the tasks easier to complete

b. If the tasks were easy, what about them made them easy?

- If the tasks were easy, what would have made them more difficult?

3. How much do you think the IPCAA website would influence your decision-making if you were currently searching for a doctoral degree program in Classical Archaeology?

4. How does the IPCAA website compare to other graduate program websites you have used?

5. How would you describe the following aspects of the IPCAA website? (circle one number per question)

Amount of information:

Too little 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Too much

Quality of information:

Low quality 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 High quality

Ease of use:

Hard 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Easy

## Appendix A: Draft Test Plan (Continued)

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The design, color, and layout:

Unattractive 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Attractive

Organization of information:

Messy 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Organized

Navigation:

Complex 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Simple

6. What did you like about the IPCAA website?
7. What did you dislike about the IPCAA website?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about?

### Debriefing Guide

[Recruiter]:

1. While the participant is taking the post-test questionnaire, go through collected notes and identify general high-level issues; did the participant have a consistent problem for many of the tasks? Next, identify the specific issues (marked with a "!" on the collection sheet)
2. After the participant has finished the post-test questionnaire, ask them a very general open-ended question such as "So, what did you think?" or "How did that go?" and collect their response.
3. Ask the participant about the high-level issues.
4. Ask the participant about the low-level issues.
5. Review the participants' pre and post-test questionnaires and ask about any extremes in their answers.]

## Appendix B: Screening Questionnaire

### Questions

Thanks for taking our usability test survey!

**Student status:**

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- None of the above

**Are you interested in graduate study?**

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure/Undecided

**What is your level of proficiency with using the Internet?**

- Very experienced
- Somewhat experienced
- Not very experienced
- Not at all experienced
- Not sure

**Have you ever visited one or more of the following University of Michigan websites? (check all that apply)**

**If you have never visited any of the websites, please skip to the next page.**

- Interdepartmental Concentration in Public Health Genetics
- Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in English and Women's Studies
- Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Women's Studies and Psychology
- Interdepartmental Program in Greek and Roman History
- Interdepartmental Concentration Program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Macromolecular Science and Engineering
- Interdepartmental Degree Program in Women's Studies and Sociology
- Interdepartmental Program in Medicinal Chemistry

## Appendix B: Screening Questionnaire (Continued)

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### Yes

Thank you for answering our questionnaire.

We will be finalizing a list of candidates and will be in touch with you within the next 3 days to arrange a time and date to perform the test.

The test itself will require approximately one hour of your time at the Duderstadt Center on North Campus during the week of March 23-27.

As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$10 gift card to a local coffee shop, and we will provide you with snacks during the test.

**Please enter your e-mail address where we can reach you:**

## Appendix C: Screening Questionnaire Results

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### Usability Test Screening

1. Student status:			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Freshman		1.3%	1
Sophomore		16.5%	13
Junior		35.4%	28
<b>Senior</b>		<b>43.0%</b>	<b>34</b>
None of the above		3.8%	3
<i>answered question</i>			<b>79</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>0</b>

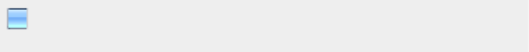
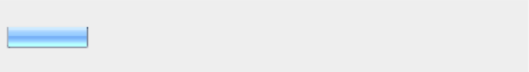
2. Are you interested in graduate study?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		79.7%	63
No		2.5%	2
Not Sure/Undecided		17.7%	14
<i>answered question</i>			<b>79</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>0</b>

## Appendix C: Screening Questionnaire Results (Continued)

3. What is your level of proficiency with using the Internet?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Very experienced		59.5%	47
Somewhat experienced		40.5%	32
Not very experienced		0.0%	0
Not at all experienced		0.0%	0
Not sure		0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>			<b>79</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

4. Have you ever visited one or more of the following University of Michigan websites? (check all that apply) If you have never visited any of the websites, please skip to the next page.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Interdepartmental Program in Greek and Roman History		18.2%	6
Interdepartmental Program in Medicinal Chemistry		9.1%	3
Interdepartmental Degree Program in Women's Studies and Sociology		12.1%	4
Interdepartmental Concentration Program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies		24.2%	8
Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Women's Studies and Psychology		9.1%	3
Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Macromolecular Science and Engineering		0.0%	0
<b>Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History</b>		<b>42.4%</b>	<b>14</b>
Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology		21.2%	7

## Appendix C: Screening Questionnaire Results (Continued)

Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in English and Women's Studies		3.0%	1
Interdepartmental Concentration in Public Health Genetics		15.2%	5
<i>answered question</i>			33
<i>skipped question</i>			46

5. Please enter your e-mail address where we can reach you:		Response Count
		47
<i>answered question</i>		47
<i>skipped question</i>		32

## Appendix D: Agreement to Participate

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### Agreement to Participate in the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology Website Usability Test

Patrick McDonnell, Jessamyn Smallenburg, Jacek Spiewla, Brian Wilson  
School of Information  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI

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We are a team of graduate students at the University of Michigan conducting an on-going evaluation of the University of Michigan (U-M) Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology (IPCAA) website as a course project for the U-M School of Information (SI). As part of the evaluation, our team is conducting a usability test to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the IPCAA website.

#### **Recruitment**

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a junior or senior undergraduate student, proficient with using the Internet, interested in pursuing graduate study, and have never visited the IPCAA website prior to today.

#### **Test Description**

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to perform a one hour usability test involving:

Using a computer

Performing tasks on the IPCAA website

Answering pre/post-test questionnaires

Responding to questions during a debriefing session with team members

#### **Risks and Benefits**

Participating in this usability test will not put you in any harm or danger. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationship with U-M, IPCAA, and SI. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue the test at any time without prejudice.

Throughout the duration of the test, our team will provide refreshments for your comfort. After the test is completed, we will compensate you with a \$10 gift certificate.

**Confidentiality**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. Our team will use an ID number to refer to your information throughout the study and in our published test report, and the connection between your identity and the ID number will be kept confidential. All identifying information will be destroyed at the end of the semester.

**Right to Discontinue Participation**

You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

If you have any additional questions or concerns at a later time, please contact our team at [webcurators@ctools.umich.edu](mailto:webcurators@ctools.umich.edu) or our professor, Dr. Mark Newman at [mwnewman@umich.edu](mailto:mwnewman@umich.edu).

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate.

If you agree to these terms, please print your name, sign, and date below:

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Permission to Record

---

### Permission to Record

Patrick McDonnell, Jessamyn Smallenburg, Jacek Spiewla, Brian Wilson  
School of Information  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI

---

Thank you for participating in the IPCAA website usability test. We will be making audio and video recordings of you while you participate in the usability test.

Only the IPCAA website usability test team (listed above) may use these recordings solely for the purpose of analyzing the results of the study and to supplement their handwritten notes.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential during the use of the recordings.

All audio and video recordings will be destroyed at the end of the semester.

---

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

I have read the information and give my consent for the use of the audio and video recordings as indicated above:

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Introductory Script

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Hello, I am [ your name ].

On behalf of our team, the School of Information, and the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archeology, IPCAA for short, we would like to thank you for joining us today.

In a moment you will participate in testing the IPCAA Website. The point of this test is to evaluate how well the website functions, its ease of use, and the design value. We will use your observations from this usability test to help in the redesign of the IPCAA website.

You will be given a list of tasks to complete while I observe and take notes of your progress. Making mistakes is part of the process, so don't worry if you have difficulties. We want to emphasize that the website is the only subject of evaluation. You are not being evaluated in any way.

Once you are directed to the website, I will not be able to talk to you or answer your questions. While you are completing the tasks, please continuously narrate your thoughts about the process, including any questions or difficulties you may have. I will take notes on what you narrate, to be discussed at the end of the usability test.

After you have completed the tasks, you will be given a short follow-up questionnaire about your experience. When you are finished, we will discuss any remaining thoughts you have about the IPCAA website.

Before we begin, I'd like to have you fill out a pre-test questionnaire. When you are finished, I will direct you to the website to complete the test.

## Appendix G: Pre-Test Questionnaire

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Subject ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pre-Test Questionnaire

1. How long have you been looking for graduate programs?
2. Approximately how many times per week do you view graduate program websites?
3. To what degree would you say graduate program websites affect your view of the program?
4. What do you *like* about graduate program websites?
5. What do you *dislike* about graduate program websites?
6. What general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website?

## Appendix H: User Tasks

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### IPCAA Website Task A

Assume that you're one year away from getting your undergraduate degree. You're interested in applying to graduate programs related to the study of classical art and archaeology and you are starting to research such programs on the Internet. This morning, you performed a Google search for graduate programs in your field and you found IPCAA at the top of your search results. Find the following information about IPCAA:

1. Determine the areas of the world in which the IPCAA program emphasizes.
2. Find out how students typically fund their studies while in the IPCAA program.
3. Find the names of three current IPCAA students who have published works within the last three years
4. Travel and study abroad is one of the attractive aspects of the IPCAA program. Find one fellowship or award that would support study in Egypt, and one that would support study in Italy.
5. Find three (3) dissertation topics presented by former IPCAA students.
6. Find out roughly how many students are accepted into the IPCAA program each year.
7. Find the link to the location/building in which IPCAA is housed.

## Appendix H: User Tasks (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task B

After a few weeks of research, you've decided to apply to the IPCAA program for your graduate studies. Before you start applying, you need to understand a few more details about the program.

1. Locate the application deadline date to the IPCAA program.
2. Find and download the document that details the regulations governing the IPCAA program.
3. Determine what languages are required for fulfilling the IPCAA program language proficiency requirement.
4. Find the IPCAA Graduate Program Coordinator's name and an e-mail address that could be used to contact this person.

## Appendix H: User Tasks (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task C

Congratulations, you've been admitted to the IPCAA program! Your first order of business is to get degree advising, plan out your program, and apply for financial aid.

1. Find the IPCAA graduate advisor's name and e-mail address so that you can schedule a meeting.
2. Locate the course numbers for a dissertation research course in the subject of classical archaeology.
3. Preliminary Exams are an important part of the Doctoral program process. Locate information that describes the point in your studies at which you would take your Preliminary Exams.
4. Find a fellowship that is awarded to graduate students who wish to conduct research in Turkey.

## Appendix H: User Tasks (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task D

1. You have taken several Master's-level Art History courses at another university. Find a form that could be used to transfer your credit to the IPCAA program.
2. Finding housing in Ann Arbor can sometimes be difficult. Determine where you could locate suggestions for Ann Arbor-area apartment complexes.

## Appendix I: User Tasks with Solutions

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### IPCAA Website Task A

Assume that you're one year away from getting your undergraduate degree. You're interested in applying to graduate programs related to the study of classical art and archaeology and you are starting to research such programs on the Internet. This morning, you performed a Google search for graduate programs in your field and you found IPCAA at the top of your search results. Find the following information about IPCAA:

1. Determine the areas of the world in which the IPCAA program emphasizes.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview. Areas of emphasis are listed in 1st sentence of 1st paragraph on page. Mediterranean and Near East.*

2. Find out how students typically fund their studies while in the IPCAA program.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > Financial Support. Information is located in two tables about halfway down the page.*

3. Find the names of three current IPCAA students who have published works within the last three years

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Current Student Information > Kudos. Pick three names from list on page. Names could include: Marcello Mogetta, Lydia Herring-Harrington, Alexander Nagel, Seth Button.*

4. Travel and study abroad is one of the attractive aspects of the IPCAA program. Find one fellowship or award that would support study in Egypt, and one that would support study in Italy.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Current Student Information > Fellowships and Financial Aid. From list on page: "American Research Center in Egypt" and "American Academy in Rome"*

5. Find three (3) dissertation topics presented by former IPCAA students.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > About IPCAA > Alumni List. Four of the first five names listed on this page have dissertation topics provided.*

## Appendix I: User Tasks with Solutions (Continued)

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6. Find out roughly how many students are accepted into the IPCAA program each year.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > Admissions and Pre-Requisites. Information is in first paragraph on this page.*

7. Find the link to the location/building in which IPCAA is housed.

*Solution: IPCAA Home Page > UM Resources > Kelsey Museum of Archaeology*

## Appendix I: User Tasks with Solutions (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task B

After a few weeks of research, you've decided to apply to the IPCAA program for your graduate studies. Before you start applying, you need to understand a few more details about the program.

1. Locate the application deadline date to the IPCAA program.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information. Date is located in first paragraph on page.*

2. Find and download the document that details the regulations governing the IPCAA program.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > IPCAA Handbook > Click Here.*

*Note: There are multiple solutions to this task due to multiple links to handbook.*

3. Determine what languages are required for fulfilling the IPCAA program language proficiency requirement.

*One solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > Admissions and Prerequisites. Requirements are listed in 4th paragraph on page. Greek or Latin, and French or German.*

4. Find the IPCAA Graduate Program Coordinator's name and an e-mail address that could be used to contact this person.

*Solution: IPCAA Home Page > Faculty and Staff Directory > Staff > Alex Zwinak*

## Appendix I: User Tasks with Solutions (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task C

Congratulations, you've been admitted to the IPCAA program! Your first order of business is to get degree advising, plan out your program, and apply for financial aid.

1. Find the IPCAA graduate advisor's name and e-mail address so that you can schedule a meeting.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Faculty & Staff Directory > Executive Committee. Scroll down list to see that Chris Ratte is the Graduate Advisor. Then need to go to Core Faculty page to find Chris Ratte's email.*

2. Locate the course numbers for a dissertation research course in the subject of classical archaeology.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview > Program Requirements > Course Information (link at bottom of page). Course number 990 or 995 located at end of Classical Archaeology list.*

3. Preliminary Exams are an important part of the Doctoral program process. Locate information that describes the point in your studies at which you would take your Preliminary Exams.

*Solution A: IPCAA homepage > Program Overview > Program Requirements. At bottom of page click on Preliminary Examination FAQ. Download FAQ document. Open document. Answer is contained in response to Q #3. Winter Semester of third year.*

*Solution B: Similar information is contained in the IPCAA Handbook on page 16.*

4. Find a fellowship that is awarded to graduate students who wish to conduct research in Turkey.

*Solution: IPCAA Home Page > Current Student Information > Fellowships and Financial Aid > American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT)*

## Appendix I: User Tasks with Solutions (Continued)

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### IPCAA Website Task D

1. You have taken several Master's-level Art History courses at another university. Find a form that could be used to transfer your credit to the IPCAA program.

*Solution: IPCAA Home Page > Current Student Information > Rackham Forms > Top of Page*

2. Finding housing in Ann Arbor can sometimes be difficult. Determine where you could locate suggestions for Ann Arbor-area apartment complexes.

*Solution: IPCAA homepage > Prospective Student Information > FAQ. List of apartments is last item at bottom of page.*

## Appendix J: Data Logging Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Event types:** (Observation is description of “because” for event)

**(S)art** – user starts task

**(S)urprise** – user is surprised

**(C)onfusion** – user is confused

**(O)ther** – as required

**(E)nd** – user finishes task

**(A)bandoned** – user abandons task

**(F)rustration** – user is frustrated

**(!!) Follow-up** – ask during debriefing

Task Number	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Event	Observation

## Appendix K: Post-Test Questionnaire

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Subject ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Post-Test Questionnaire

The purpose of the post-test questionnaire is for you to share with us your impressions of the IPCAA website, and if possible, how the website has shaped your impression of the Program. Your feedback is very important to us, and we would appreciate it if you would be as honest and candid as possible in your responses.

1. After having gone through the website in more depth, what general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website?
  
2. Were the tasks you completed consistent with how you would use graduate program websites?
  
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how difficult did you find the tasks you completed today?
  - If the tasks were somewhat hard, what about them made them so?
    - What would have made the tasks easier to complete?
  
  - If the tasks were easy, what about them made them easy?
    - What would have made them more difficult?

## Appendix K: Post-Test Questionnaire (Continued)

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4. How much do you think the IPCAA website would influence your decision-making if you were currently searching for a doctoral degree program in Classical Archaeology?
  
5. How does the IPCAA website compare to other graduate program websites you have used?
  
6. How would you describe the following aspects of the IPCAA website? (circle one number per question)

7.

<b>Amount of Information:</b>									
Too Little	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Too Much	
<b>Quality of Information:</b>									
Low Quality	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	High Quality	
<b>Ease of Use:</b>									
Hard	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Easy	
<b>The design, color, and layout:</b>									
Unattractive	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Attractive	
<b>Organization of Information:</b>									
Messy	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Organized	
<b>Navigation:</b>									
Complex	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Simple	



## Appendix L: Debriefing Guide

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Subject ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Debriefing Guide for Usability Test Moderator

#### While the participant is taking the post-test questionnaire:

1. Glance through the data collection log and identify general high-level issues
2. Ask yourself: did the participant have a consistent problem for many of the tasks?
3. Glance through the data collection log and identify specific issues that you marked [(S)urprise, (C)onfusion, (A)bandoned, (F)rustration, (!!) Items for follow-up, etc..] Use a highlighter for this task.

#### After the participant is finished with the post-test questionnaire:

1. Ask the participant to take a 2-3 minute break while you gather your thoughts
2. Step out of the room to meet with and collect any questions that the observers have for the participant

#### After the break is complete:

1. Start audio recorder
2. Ask the participant: "So, what did you think overall?" or "How did that go?"
3. Ask the participant about the high-level and specific issues you identified. Make sure you get to the root cause of the issues.
  - a. "Why did you do what you did during this issue?"
  - b. "What were you expecting?"
  - c. "What could have been done to resolve the issue when it happened?"
4. Briefly review the participants' pre and post-test questionnaires and ask about any extremes in their answers

#### Closing:

1. Ask the participant if it would be OK to contact them if the usability team has any remaining questions
2. Thank the participant for their time and give them the incentive
3. Stop audio recorder

## Appendix M: Pre-Test Questionnaire Responses

	U01	U02	U03	U04
How long have you been looking for graduate programs?	Past few months, not actively seeking quite yet. Just browsing.	I have not done much actual looking around. I have been interested in grad programs for about 3 years.	I have not started looking yet.	I've only thought about it in the last couple of months, and actively searched for a couple of weeks.
Approximately how many times per week do you view graduate program websites?	0-2	0-1	Rarely or never.	Rarely. Maybe once or twice, briefly.
To what degree would you say graduate program websites affect your view of the program?	Very much so. Easiest + most convenient way to search for them.	I think they are very important because that is how I get much of the information about the program, and a feeling for the program.	A somewhat moderate or high degree.	A lot. If the website is hard to navigate or looks too simple / too complex, it's a turn off.
What do you like about graduate program websites?	Ease of use + accessibility, good + true ? program descriptions	I like when I see pictures, and information about different areas of study.	A wealth of information displayed in an easy and organized way.	I enjoy nice presentations that can eventually give me specific information if I decide to get involved in my search.
What do you dislike about graduate program websites?	No particular dislikes	I dislike when I don't understand certain aspects that make me feel distant from the program, like no knowing terminology + having no explanation.	Disorganization, not really sure.	If they're too vague I just close the website. If they're too complex I get frustrated.
What general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website? (subject allowed to view IPCAA homepage)	Its pretty , small font at bottom distracts from the art that it overlays, font overall is kind of small, beautiful pictures	This website looks intriguing. I like the flowiness of the images. Very underwatery/mysterious. It looks like there are many clear + informative headings/sections of the site to look at.	Visually stimulating and pleasing. Well organized. Seems easy to navigate.	Pretty design, simplistic but not too flashy, and provides information at first glance without being messy.

## Appendix N: Post-Test Questionnaire Responses

	U01	U02	U03	U04
1) After having gone through the website in more depth, what general impressions do you have of the IPCAA website?	Nice color scheme + photographs. Links at top of page for each section were small.	I think this website is incredibly user friendly. They have a real good idea of what people want.	It was aesthetically pleasing, and overall I enjoyed using and navigating the website. I thought it was very clear and full of information.	It has an eye catching layout which is also relaxing and appropriate to the subject. The information is all there but I have to search a little.
2) Were the tasks you completed consistent with how you would use graduate program websites?	Yes, I would think so.	Yes. This is all important + necessary information that I would need to know to get a feel for the program.	Yes	Yes
3) On a scale of 1 to 5, how difficult did you find the tasks you completed today?	1 being easy + 5 difficult, it would be 2	2	3	3
3A) If the tasks were somewhat hard, what about them made them so?	Only certain tasks were, which focused mainly around contact information.	Because I had to click on links + scroll/read through some text.	There were some pages with a lot of information to scroll through, so it took a little more time but was not overwhelming.	Some things were buried in walls of text and/or filed in what I would considered my second bet for finding the info (as opposed to the first choice)
3Ai) What would have made the tasks easier to complete?	More direct about dept. categories + titles	If the website could predict exactly what I wanted to know in the exact order, maybe in a FAQ page	Linking to lower in the page under headings like fellowships and FAQ	Links at the top of the page to file better. Programs listed not just by type but by country.

## Appendix N: Post-Test Questionnaire Responses (Continued)

	U01	U02	U03	U04
3B) If the tasks were easy, what about them made them easy?	Labels @ top of each page + bottom made for easy navigation	The links of parts of the program were so clearly labeled, and the info/text inside was very straight forward	The site links at the top of the page made it easy to find different information from any page.	Mostly things were under titles that I expected them to be under. Word Document was expected and helpful.
3Bi) What would have made them more difficult?	<No response>	If there were excessive headings + introductions on the pages. Excess information – all this detailed [ <i>sic</i> ] stuff seems to be <del>only</del> in the handbook, where it should be.	If it was less organized.	More blocks of text, less key words to catch my eye.
4) How much do you think the IPCAA website would influence your decision-making if you were currently searching for a doctoral degree program in Classical Archaeology?	Initially it would make a difference, but as the narrowing process continued the influence of the website would decrease.	I think this website would influence me a lot because it is clear, informative + I get a good feel of what its like to be a student.	It would have an influence that is pretty moderate, reflecting on the structure of the program and institution but would not be a deal breaker.	At this point I don't think it would turn away from it, but I would definitely have to set aside some time to really use it and look at it. It would be a little frustrating but not a turn off.
5) How does the IPCAA website compare to other graduate program websites you have used?	have not used too many but it seems comparable	I haven't used very many. This could be because when I go to one, I get restless trying to find the information. This one is easy to use.	I was impressed by it and will remember it. I would say it compares quite well.	I haven't used too many but I think it's one of the nicer looking ones. It has character and isn't too intimidating.

## Appendix N: Post-Test Questionnaire Responses (Continued)

6) How would you describe the following aspects of the IPCAA website? (circle one number per question)									
Amount of Information	Too Little	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Too Much
					U03 U02	U04 U01			
Quality of Information	Low Quality	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	High Quality
							U03 U02 U01	U04	
Ease of Use	Hard	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Easy
				U04			U03 U01	U02	
The design, color and layout	Unattractive	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Attractive
							U02	U04 U03 U01	
Organization of Information	Messy	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Organized
					U01		U04	U03 U02	
Navigation	Complex	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	Simple
				U01			U04	U03 U02	

## Appendix N: Post-Test Questionnaire Responses (Continued)

	U01	U02	U03	U04
7) What did you <i>like</i> about the IPCAA website?	Colors + good overview of students + faculty	I like the layout – simple, direct.	The look and feel of using the website. I like the colors and felt like I had command over the website in that I could find what I needed.	The layout and colors are the best part. I especially liked the current student profiles.
8) What did you <i>dislike</i> about the IPCAA website?	Not being able to find contact of graduate instructor	Not much. I liked it completely.	There were a few pages with a lot of information (fellowships and awards) that were a little overwhelming.	Too many walls of text, needed more summaries or links that lead to more information. I'd rather click more if I know for a fact it's going to lead to information I want. If it's ambiguous I get reluctant.
9) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about?	Good luck	I feel very good about this program. After looking <del>for</del> around + reading this info I have a very good understanding of requirements + what I would do as a student. <del>This easy</del> This could be because I am somewhat familiar with <del>this</del> archeology [ <i>sic</i> ] at UM already.	I liked the pictures and information about faculty and current students.	Definitely [ <i>sic</i> ] simplify pages just one more time then you have already and it would be great.

## Appendix O: Summary of Participants & Task Completion Time

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Summary of general test participant information:

	<b>U01</b>	<b>U02</b>	<b>U03</b>	<b>U04</b>
Test Date	25 Mar 2009	27 Mar 2009	28 Mar 2009	29 Mar 2009
Test Time	~15:00	~16:00	~12:00	~13:00
Test Location	Duderstadt Usability Lab	Duderstadt Usability Lab	SAL Office, Union	SAL Office, Union
Student Status	Sophomore	Junior	Sophomore	Senior
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female

Summary of task completion time for test tasks (min : sec):

	<b>U01</b>	<b>U02</b>	<b>U03</b>	<b>U04</b>
A1	0:45	1:00	1:00	4:50
A2	1:15	2:30	1:40	2:35
A3	1:35	2:30	1:15	0:53
A4	2:05	3:00	3:50	3:36
A5	5:00	2:10	2:10	1:15
A6	1:00	0:50	0:50	0:25
A7	0:22	2:45	0:50	0:51
B1	1:20	4:40	0:35	0:40
B2	0:35	4:30	0:55	0:25
B3	0:45	0:50	1:25	1:40
B4	1:00	1:20	2:20	3:50
C1	5:00	2:50*	0:50	2:05
C2	5:30*	-----	3:20	3:28
C3	-----	-----	0:30	1:15
C4	-----	-----	??	1:40*
D1	-----	-----	1:50	-----
D2	-----	-----	2:00	-----

\* Moderator stopped test.

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