

# Lab 4: Carlpedia Project

## Objectives

- Evaluate and finish the Carlpedia mockups
- Distill the general design principles that apply to this website
- Finish the final papers
- Write executive summaries for ITS
- Prepare presentations for ITS

## Introduction and background

Over the past three weeks, you have evaluated the current design of Carlpedia, thought carefully about the ways it is and is not serving its users, formed hypotheses about how it could better serve its users, conducted experiments to test your hypotheses, and proposed a redesign of the site based on your experimental results. You're now in the home stretch of the project! In a few days, you'll present your site redesign to ITS and submit your final writeup and design for evaluation. In today's lab, you'll have the opportunity to provide some final feedback to your classmates on their prototypes (and receive feedback from them) and prepare to make your final edits to your design.

## Your tasks today

We'll start lab this week with another, more informal round of user testing, with your classmates as subjects. You'll use these informal results to determine what changes you will need to make to your mockups. You'll also have the opportunity to work on your presentations and executive summaries for Monday, as well as your papers.

## Final testing of mockups

- Set up your mockup program on one of the lab computers.
- Select one of your group members to facilitate the testing for your mockup.
- The rest of the members of your group will be testers for the other groups.
- If you are a tester, visit each of the other groups' mockups in turn. The facilitator for each group will give you a task (or a series of tasks) to perform using the mockup. Follow the facilitator's instructions. After you complete the task, you may give the facilitator verbal feedback on the mockup if you'd like.
- If you are a facilitator, have each tester go through the task or tasks you used in your original user tests. Note how the testers interact with your mockup (you might want to take notes as they are completing the tasks). Keep track of any other feedback they give you as well.

After you've completed this round of informal user testing, get back together with your group. The facilitator should share his/her observations from the user tests. As a group, you should then

determine what changes are warranted based on the results, and whether any of these are feasible to address by the project's due date. Are there bugs in your program that need to be fixed? Are there cosmetic issues with the site? What functionality issues were uncovered?

## Group discussion

- What did your group discover about this website's usability in your user testing?
- Do these discoveries support the usability principles that we've been reading about and discussing?
- Will these discoveries apply to other websites?

## Putting together the final touches

For the rest of today's lab, you can work on any of the following:

- Finish editing your final reports on this project.
- Write a one-page executive summary to share your critical findings and propose your changes to ITS.
- Create a 10-minute presentation of your mockup, along with persuasive arguments for your mockup to present to ITS.
- Address the bugs and issues in your code uncovered during user testing.

## Homework: Preparing for Monday

Monday's class involves formal presentations to ITS pitching your site redesign. In addition to the presentation, you will hand in an executive summary of your paper, which we will give to ITS. We've discussed elements of good presentations in class, and you've received feedback from Amy, Mija, and your classmates on your first presentations last week. Below are some resources and reminders of best practices in these areas.

## Professional Presentations

Your presentations on Monday should be **10 minutes long**. You will not be able to include all of the details from your paper in this time and give a good overview of your prototype, so you will need to pick the most important content to focus on that will make a persuasive argument for your design changes.

Tips on making professional presentations:

- Practice! Feel free to use aids, such as notes in PowerPoint or notecards.
- Be persuasive in your presentation of ideas and use of evidence.
- Look the part. Dress in a professional manner that will inspire confidence in your audience in what you want to say. Forming a good first impression is the first step of making a persuasive argument.
- Practice! Make sure that you know who is going to say what when. The transitions between speakers should be smooth. **You should have the timing of your presentation fixed, because we will cut you off when your time is up regardless if you are finished.**
- Have a main point and an argument structure: introduction, body, conclusion
- Make effective use of visuals: don't let the visuals distract from your content

- Consider your audience in your use of language. Avoid jargon (e.g., "affordance") and slang (e.g., "awesome"). Remember that your audience may consist of expert Carlpedia users, but that they might not have background in usability design.
- Use effective body language. Don't slouch, stick your hands in your pockets, or play with your hair. Make eye contact with your audience. Practice!
- Use effective vocal presentation. Avoid excessive use of filler words, such as "um" and "like". These characteristics and the use of a rising intonation at the end of sentences can make you appear uncertain of your statements.
- Know your resources. You can make use of the [SpeakEasy \(http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/speakeasy/\)](http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/speakeasy/), your professors or your peers as you prepare.

## Executive summaries

An executive summary is a short version of a larger document, generally intended for high level managers that want a sense of what's going on and why but who don't have the time to read the original report. For the Carlpedia project, your groups will be writing an executive summary for ITS, outlining the main changes that you propose and the rationale behind them. This document should be no longer than one page (single-spaced, 10 or 12 point Times or similar font, 1 inch margins). Your group can attach no more than one page of labeled images to your summary. You should use APA Style citations and references, but your references list can be on a separate page.

Your executive summary should have the following structure:

- A title and your names at the top
- A 1-3 sentence overview of the problems areas that you will address.
- 2-4 subsections with headings that give your main changes and a very brief reason for implementing those changes.
- A conclusion/summary that includes and/or consists of a list of proposed changes

Not all of the writing needs to be in complete sentence or paragraph structure, but it should be intelligible and not ambiguous. For example, the list of proposed changes could be a bulleted list. The two key elements are the conciseness and readability of the final document. I would recommend having someone naive to usability and Carlpedia read your summary to make sure that you are writing to an appropriate audience. (Nick would be great at this!).

You will be graded on the following criteria:

1. The summary should be written for your audience (ITS).
2. The summary should be persuasive.
3. The layout of the summary should be visually appealing (I.e., make use of white space through the use of headers, bulleted lists, etc.).
4. The summary should have a clear organization of topics. Transitions between ideas are less important than they are in the more formal paper.
5. The summary should summarize many of the main points that you make in your longer paper. The time you spend on each topic does not need to be proportional to the time spent in the formal paper, e.g., you will probably not spend a lot of time on your study in

the summary. There should be a summary of main suggested design changes.

6. Each of your main design changes should have some evidence to support it.

Please upload your executive summaries to Moodle by 11:30am Monday, so that we have time to print out copies for our guests from ITS.

For more background information, read the Wikipedia entry on executive summaries at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive\\_summary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_summary)

## **Final Paper**

Revise your papers, based on your peer feedback and on comments from Mija. The final drafts are due Wednesday, October 12, before class, posted to Moodle.

## **Programming**

Your task for this assignment is to make final edits and modifications, based on your testing and the feedback of your classmates, to your mockup code. The final version of the code is due Wednesday by the start of class.

Your final program is worth 25 points and will be evaluated on the following criteria:

### **Execution/Correctness: 5 points**

- Program runs to completion with no errors
- Interface represents the prototype faithfully and correctly
- Interactions with the interface (button presses, menu selections, etc.) result in the correct and expected behavior (changes to the interface, actions, etc)

### **Program structure and style: 10 points**

- Elements are logically grouped and labeled with appropriate comments
- Variables and functions are named appropriately and descriptively, using Python conventions
- Data is passed between functions correctly
- Objects are instantiated and utilized appropriately to represent the design and functionality of the page
- Functions perform a single, clear task
- Program uses correct Python syntax
- Overall, the program is readable and easy to follow

### **User-centric design: 10 points**

- Interface functionality is clearly implied by the configuration of graphical objects
- All expected elements of the interface are clearly represented in the display
- Colors, fonts, etc are appropriate for the interface and imply hierarchies/functionality
- Interface functionality clearly follows prescribed metaphors, etc.
- Design incorporates course readings and concepts appropriately
- Input is solicited from the user in clear and predictable ways; no unnecessary data is collected

- Output is presented to the user in clear and concise language, with a clear purpose