ALUMNI & CAREERS WEB CONTENT

Department Web Framework Users Group, May 24, 2016

Workshop Agenda

> Why include this content on a department site?
> Empathy maps: getting into students' heads
> Example career pages: how can we improve?
> Whole website: How else can we incorporate alumni and career content?
> Closing thoughts

Why have information about alumni and careers?

Common department goals

⬆ Majors

⬆ Enrollment

⬆ Alumni engagement

⬆ Donors

University Websites: Top 10 Design Guidelines

by **KATIE SHERWIN** on April 24, 2016

Topics: Web Usability   Young Users

Summary: Effective university websites can increase conversions, strengthen institutional credibility and brand, improve user satisfaction, and save time and money.

Universities that prioritize a good user experience leverage the website to contribute to larger institutional goals and see a clear return on investment. Based on our usability testing, the guidelines in this article can substantially improve the user experience on most college and university sites. The sad conclusion from our research is that most of these sites rank far below the usability levels expected on today's Internet.

User Research

In preparation for our report on university websites, we **tested 57 university sites** with 33 users (aged 16 to 68) in the United States, Canada, UK, and Taiwan. We recruited prospective students, both undergraduate and graduate, as well as parents of prospective students, and we asked them to perform exploratory tasks like, "*Imagine a teacher recommended that you look at [University]. Browse the website and see if it might be a good option,*" and more directed tasks like, "*Find out how much it costs to attend [University].*" We selected some universities for testing, but we also asked users to do any of their own pending tasks for schools of their choosing.

Why should universities care about usability? Aren't students smart and computer savvy? Well, even though you want high-IQ applicants, prospective undergraduate students haven't received the benefits of a college education yet and often have fairly poor research skills. While they know how to use computers,

Nielsen Norman Group Top 10 Design Guidelines for University Websites

6. Provide information about job placement after graduation, and link to it from the alumni section of the website.

Read all 10 and see examples at www.nngroup.com/articles/university-sites

Society is pushing STEM

Students are anxious about their future

Students want to be successful

WHAT DOES SHE
THINK AND FEEL?

What really matters to her?
What occupies her thinking?
What worries and aspirations does she have?

WHAT DOES SHE
HEAR?

What are friends, family and other influencers
saying to her that impacts her thinking?

WHAT DOES SHE
SEE?

What things her environment influence her?
What competitors is she seeing?
What is she seeing friends do?
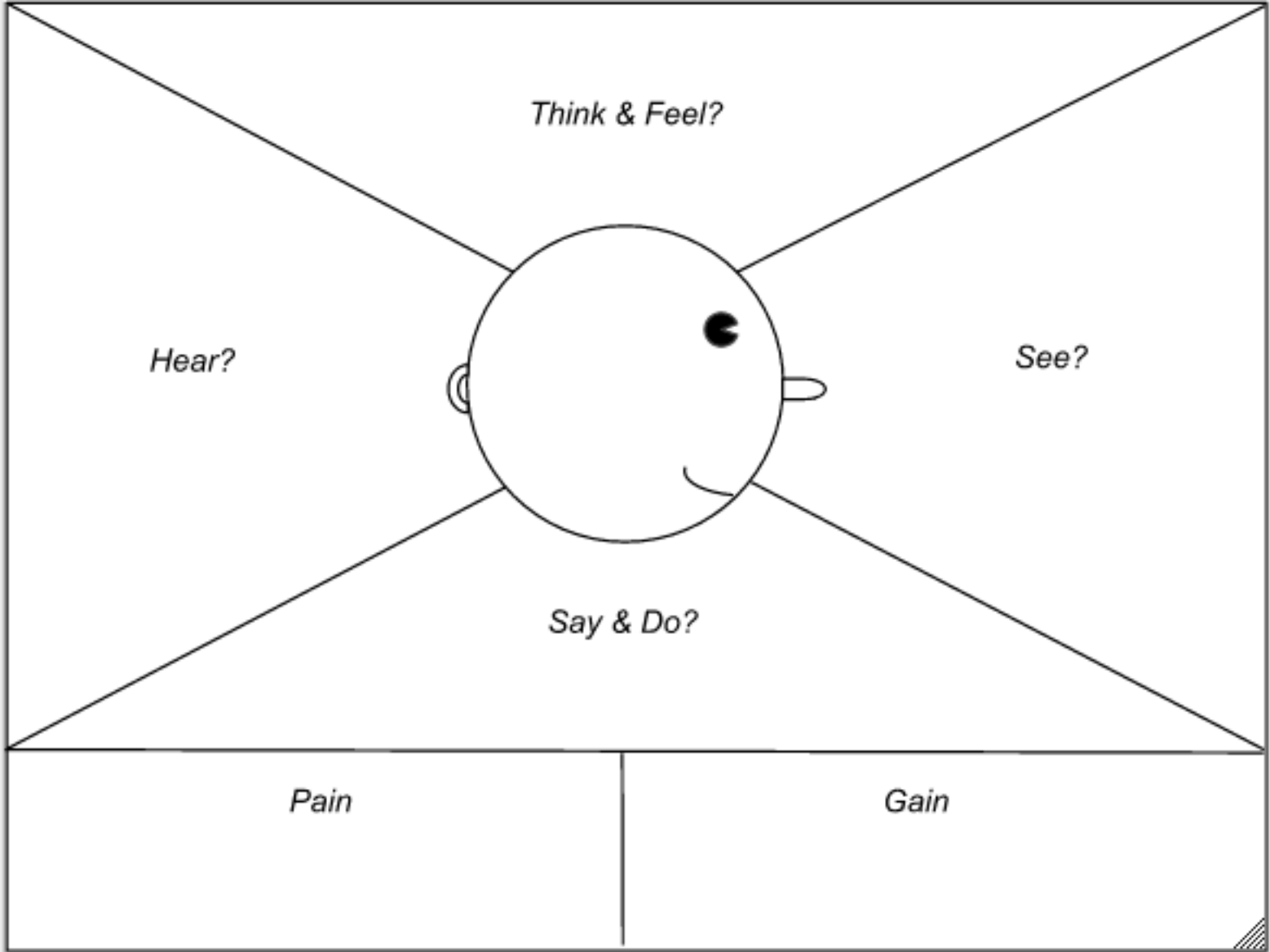
WHAT DOES SHE
SAY AND DO?

What is her attitude towards others?
What does she do in public?
How has her behaviour changed?

PAIN

What fears, frustrations or obstacles is she facing?

GAIN

What is she hoping to get? What does success look like?

Think & Feel?

Hear?

See?

Say & Do?

Pain

Gain

What do students and parents want to know?

WORKSHOP PART TWO: EXAMPLE CAREER PAGES

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Analyze example with a partner

> Put on your student hat: what is your reaction to this page?

> What information is provided? Too much? Too little?

> Are the tone and format appropriate?

> How could this page be improved?

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How else can we incorporate alumni and career content?

Closing thoughts? Questions?

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