

SI 622

SI Website Academic Section – Interviews,  
Personas, and Scenarios

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## Executive Summary:

This report details the results of the five interviews our group in SI 622 in order to systematically evaluate the Academics section of SI website. As most students in SI use this section of the site in order to accomplish tasks, we believe that it will be off most benefit to our fellow students for us to focus on redesigning this part of the site. Users were identified by a mixture of in-person and online recruiting. Candidates were expected to be current students in the graduate program here at SI and were expected to be at least somewhat familiar with the website. The key findings are described as follows:

- Information relevant to users attempting to select courses is scattered over several different areas of the site
- Users of the SI website do not wish to spend a long time on the SI website and would prefer that they can accomplish what they need to in a short period of time
- The search function on the SI website does not work.

The recommendations are as follows:

- Redesign the search box so that its clear what users can search for and how they should search for it.
- Develop a filtering mechanism which allows users to view lists of courses offered in the current term which count towards a particular specialization.
- Move all pieces of information relating to courses and degree requirements to one section
- Make it easier for the user to quickly locate the information he is looking for and leave the site.

## Introduction:

The Academics section of the University of Michigan School of Information website (<http://si.umich.edu/academics>) is designed to provide information and resources to two main user groups: prospective and current students. These two groups of users can be further subdivided by the type of degree being sought. The academics section contains a very large amount of information covering a broad range of topics: admissions; sources for monetary help; course and degree requirements for informatics, MSI, and Ph.D. degrees; additional resources like rooms that can be reserved; details about student life on campus and in Ann Arbor; and information about the Office of Student Affairs. Much of the academics section pages are intended to serve both major user groups.

The SI website has recently migrated to a new content management system. Our client is eager to discover how to make the best use of their site within the current constraints. In particular, our role is to focus on usability issues. In the client interview, they mentioned they would like a

more studied approach to learn what their user population is actually experiencing, and how the structure of the site is impacting what the user is thinking. They are interested in how the things they have already done are working or not working. They are interested in whatever we can recommend regarding the usability for any of their user groups.

In this stage of the project, we set out to learn more about what actual users are thinking, experiencing, and trying to accomplish. We did this by interviewing five current users. We reviewed the interview notes for key patterns or significant points. Using what we learned from the user interviews, we then constructed three personas and scenarios. These will help us keep our focus as we conduct further usability study methods. We will also have gained more certain insight into what the users value from the website, and what they most want.

#### Methods:

First we interviewed our client to establish what they want to gain from our study, and to learn from their knowledge about the academics website and its users. We then began brainstorming about what information we wanted to collect from the user interviews. We determined three main research questions that we wanted to explore to help us focus our successive usability analyses:

- 1) What motivations do people have for using this site?
- 2) How easily and confidently users navigate through the site. Do they understand how the content on the site is organized and what the labels mean?
- 3) How do users feel about using the site?

We decided to focus on the current users of this site, and designed interview questions to find answers to our main research questions. From this, we constructed an interview guide (See Appendix B). After the interviews, we reviewed the notes for significant patterns or findings, and constructed personas and scenarios (see Appendix A for definitions of Personas and Scenarios).

#### Target population:

Because we were looking for patterns, and because the motivations and behaviors between the user groups were perceived to be so different, we chose to focus on just one main user group for our interviews. We chose to focus on the presumably largest user group--current MSI students. As it was harder to gain access to prospective students, we choose to focus on current students,

#### Recruiting methods:

To recruit the five interviewees, one of the group members posted a request for interviews on his Facebook page. In addition, several group members asked current SI students in their other SI courses. In the end, one interviewee was recruited by the Facebook posting, while the other four were recruited from asking other students in person. To get a mix of demographics within our

user group, we approached both males and females of differing ages. In addition, we asked students from several different MSI specializations and both first- and second-year students. As incentive for participating in the interviews, each participant was told that they would receive \$5 gift cards for Starbucks.

#### Summary of Findings:

All three of the findings presented here are interconnected. The first finding is that users must simultaneously navigate between different areas of the site in order to plan their course schedule. The second finding is that the search function does not work properly in addition to the fact that students are deterred from using the search field is not obvious what they can search for or in what format they would type a string into the search field in order to produce into the search field in order to produce the desired results. As students cannot use the search field to produce the desired results, they are compelled to spend more time simultaneously navigating different sections of the website. Finally, the third finding is that most users visit the site infrequently, which means that they may forget much of the navigation.

#### **Finding #1: The information relevant to users attempting to select courses is scattered over several different areas of the site**

Our interviews suggest that users have to collect information from different areas of the site when selecting courses. When probed about this, users expressed a range of emotions, from being mildly frustrated to feeling quite irritated. One task in particular that caused this frustration was finding which courses counted for a particular specialization. U05 mentioned having to open tabs when navigating the SI website in order to pull up the pages showing degree requirements as well as the TAPs sheets. In addition, U03 mentioned that it was quite painful flipping back and forth between the course catalog and MSI degree components to figure out which courses counted for the IPOL specialization. U03 suggested that the SI website might benefit from a search function which allows students to filter courses by specialization. That is, a student can select to view courses which only count for the HCI specialization, for example.

For recommendations about improving the site, first of all, the group agrees with U03's suggestion that a filtering mechanism would indeed make finding relevant courses on the site less of a challenge. Based on our interviews, this is one of the most important recommendations that we can offer. One way to implement this would be to redesign the search box so that it is clear to users that they can search for specific courses as well as courses within a concentration. As U03 mentioned, it is ambiguous exactly what a student is expected to enter into the search box (for more on this, see Finding #2), so redesigning the search box in the course catalog would help solve multiple concerns.

Also, all information relevant to selecting courses could be centralized in a single subsection of the website. Currently, the course list and the MSI degree requirements are located in separate areas of the Academics section of the SI website. This design presents inconveniences to users, as it requires them to navigate different areas of the website simultaneously in order to locate the relevant information. Moving all pieces of information relating to courses and degree requirements to one section of the site will hopefully allow users to spend less time puzzling over where information is and hence experience less frustration about using the SI website. The severity of the problem of having to navigate between several different areas of the website is acute enough that we would also strongly support this recommendation. Although, students have the option of talking with SI professors, peers, academic advisors, or e-mailing si.all.open for course recommendations, having the information on the web is useful as a reference that students can use, for example, when signing up for courses on Wolverine Access.

**Finding #2: Searching capabilities are limited in the SI website,**

Closely related to the first finding is the finding that the search box on the SI website is rather nonfunctional and nondescript. It is nondescript in that several users were unclear about what exactly to enter into the search box and what results they should expect to get. For example, U02 searched for “internships” in the search box, hoping to find the registration form in order to sign up for a PEP internship. However, the first results that the search function returned were several short articles profiling students who had completed internships in past years as well as the advertisements for SI events tailored to students who were searching for internships. Also finding the search option in the course catalog to be of little help when searching for the words “PEP” or “internship”, U02 was forced to go through each of the pages in the course catalog in an attempt to locate a link to the PEP course and along with it, the PEP registration form. This too was burdensome as the course catalog was spread out over the course of many pages. But U02 was hardly the only user to have difficulties with the search function. U04 noted that search results from the SI search bar are often articles that happen to have the term rather than what the user actually intended to search for. Both U04 and U05 mentioned using Google Search to compensate for the deficiency of the SI search, which leads our team to believe that while this problem is moderately annoying, it is not too severe as user can use the Google search to work around it.

In fairness, there are instances in which the search function on the SI website works properly. For example, if a user enter a student’s name into the search field, the search result returns the student’s directory page as the first result. However, as emphasized previously, it is not clear what users can enter into the search box. U01 reported being unsure of what the search field allowed users to search for, whether it was topics, people, courses, or TAPs sheets. In addition, users expressed confusion over how to properly enter in data when performing a search. For

example, when searching for people, U01 was unsure whether to enter in a user's unique name or separate their first and last names with a comma. Finally, several users expressed distrust for the search function. U04 noted that if a user does not know what they are looking for, the search function is not helpful.

As students are used to typing in fairly generic terms into Google and letting the search engine do the heavy lifting, this may explain why many students use Google search as a wrap-around. To improve the search function on the SI website, the design must clarify what users can search for. While there are several possible designs, one improved search field might look similar to Stanford University's website. In this design, the text "search web or people" is displayed by default inside of the search field. Users can choose which one they want to search by selecting some check-box or radio button. The search returns a page displaying tabs so that a user can easily modify his search. For example, if a user wants to search for people with the name "Stanford" instead of information about Stanford University, he can just select the "people" tab instead of having to perform a new search altogether. The purpose of presenting this design is not to suggest that the SI website emulate the search function of Stanford's homepage, but rather to illustrate one possible way to redesign the search function as well as what kinds of features make for a good design. As not all students may realize that they can use a Google search to help them search for information on the SI website, this may prove helpful to SI students.

### **Finding #3: Users have no desire to remain on the site for very long.**

Although this finding is not a surprise to the group or to the client, we found that our interviewees wanted to spend as little time as possible on the site, as expressed by U03 who stated that if he/she was spending more time than necessary on the site, that he/she was doing something wrong. In addition, U05 mentioned not visiting the site too often as it required a lot of clicks to navigate through the content. Evidence for this can be seen when users have previously located an item on the site but forget where they originally found this item in subsequent visits, because they visited the site so infrequently. U01 mentioned finding the TAPS sheet originally on the site but forgetting where it was located and subsequently regretting not having stored locally. U05 stated not wanting to go to the site too often because the site requires a lot of clicks to navigate between pages.

This is in fact a rather important problem to pay attention to as users, like U05, getting impatient with the amount of time they have to spend on the site means that more users could use the site. Implementing the other two recommendations will help to cut down on the amount of time that a user has to spend on the site. For example, having a better search function will allow for users not to have to spend as much time browsing the site contents for the relevant information, as will

centralizing the information. By implementing these recommendations, we hope to create a more convenient experience for SI students browsing the site.

#### Discussion:

Although the pool of subjects represented a wide variety of ethnic diversity, all of these subjects were of fairly similar age and at least had enough technical expertise to feel comfortable using the Internet. Had this study included individuals who felt less comfortable with using the Internet, the results might have been different. Nonetheless, given the fact that SI attracts many students from technical backgrounds and that many fields in SI involve programming or studying digital resources, the group felt as though it would be harder to recruit an SI student with an aversion to technology and thus chose to not worry about these users. We feel that the needs of most SI students will be addressed by interviewing users who are at very least adept at using the web.

In addition, due to the fact that U01 was ill, the first interview was conducted over the phone rather than in person, which presented several disadvantages. For one, as the phone's reception was not always clear, communication was tricky at times and caused the two group members conducting the interview to struggle to capture what was said and to ask appropriate follow-up questions. In addition, inviting U01 to give examples of the points made in the interview was difficult given the fact that we could not see U01's screen. We attempted to compensate for this by inviting U01 to use the SI website as needed and then to direct us to the appropriate location. Nonetheless, the team members felt like this made the interview more formal which in turn may have restricted the degree to which the participant felt comfortable sharing information. Finally, further contributing to the perceived formality of the interview was the fact that U01 did not have access to body cues of the group members conducting the interview. Nonetheless, the fact that several of the concerns that U01 voiced about the SI website, such as navigating the course catalog, came up in subsequent interviews provides encouraging support for the notion that the interview was at least partially successful in obtaining data.

Finally, the academics section of the SI website has two main user groups: prospective students and current students. For this assignment, we were only able to conduct five interviews. Since, we were looking for patterns, we decided to focus on just one group, namely current students. Future studies could focus on the experience that prospective students have with the site. One question that could be discussed is whether prospective students are hurt by not having a separate channel tailored to their needs.

## Conclusion:

Our stakeholder interview revealed that the Academics section of the SI website is currently a work in progress and has several potential problems. Our five user interviews revealed that the site currently forces users to click through several pages worth of content on the site in order to find what they are looking for. The main reasons for this are that information about courses and degree requirements are located on separate sections of the website and the search function does not work properly. We recommend that the SI web design team consolidate several sections of the website and redesign the search function so that students can quickly locate the information they are looking for and have a successful experience on the SI website. While our results are limited by several aspects of the interviewing process, including only recruiting five users, we were able to learn about the behaviors of real-life users of the site and more fully understand the issues that they encountered.

## **References:**

Cooper, A., Reimann, R., & Cronin, D. (2007). *About face 3: The essentials of interaction design*. Indianapolis, IN : Wiley Publishing.

## Appendices

### A. A quick note about personas.

The personas are not actual people, but represent composite profiles of several of the site's users. By attaching key behaviors, motivations and goals to a persona, we can quickly bring to mind behaviors and motivations of actual users. Personas serve as a touchstone, protecting against the tendency for a vaguely defined user to change characteristics to fit whatever viewpoint happens to be in the mind of the person discussing them at the moment. They also remind us of who the main users are, so we don't start focusing on the few outlying users. (Cooper, 2007, pp. 75, 79-81). Scenarios capture common tasks and goals. As we work through various methods for usability, the scenarios will help us to maintain our focus on what the users are trying to accomplish and how they do things (Cooper, 2007, p. 112).

### B. Interview Guide

#### **Introduction**

My name is \_\_\_ and I'm part of a group this semester who are evaluating the usability of the SI website as part of SI 622. The purpose of this interview is to assess the overall usability of

the SI website in particular the “Academics” section of the SI website, which contains a lot of information about courses, degree programs at SI, and other academic resources for SI students. At this stage, we’re not looking for redesign suggestions for the website so much as just a general overview of why people actually use the site as well as how they actually perform tasks within the website.

While your comments might be incorporated into our project report, your identity will not be shared. We will maintain your anonymity. [If interviewing team decides to record the session, which the instructions say we should do, be sure to say that the sound recording will be erased at the end the semester, and get their permission to use the recording device.]

We would like to record this interview on audio. The recording is for our purposes only. It will not be shared with anyone else outside this group, it’s just to make it easier for us to capture what was said in this interview should we need to refer to it later. After the course is finished, we will erase it.

In light of all this, would it be all right with you to record this session?

### **Repartee Questions:**

Before we begin the interview, we’d like to know a little about you. So tell us...

1. Where are you from?
2. What attracted you to SI?
3. What are your professional and educational backgrounds?
4. How comfortable would you say you are at using computers? Web sites? (1 not at all - 10 very)

### **Background questions:**

1. What is your specialization?
2. How long have you used a computer? What kind of platform do you use the most?

### **Questions:**

1. What kinds of tasks do you perform most on the SI website?
2. Can you describe the last time you used the SI website? Feel free to demonstrate this on the computer.
3. Is there anything you particularly enjoy about using the SI website?
4. Is there anything you particularly don’t enjoy?
5. How confident are you that you will find the information you are seeking.

6. Does the SI site meet your expectation of how an academic institution's website should function?
7. Does it look like how you think an academic institution's website should look?
8. How well is the information arranged? Is the site easy to navigate? Is it easy to locate information?
9. How helpful is the SI website in comparison with Wolverine Access when, for example, you register for your courses?
10. Do you have any opinion about the aesthetics of the SI website? Perhaps, comment on the color scheme or the layout of the menus?
11. What do you think about the alumni/faculty profiles listed on the site?
12. Do you find the course descriptions on the site useful? Did it help you decide your courses? How about the "academic resources" and "student life" sections?
13. If you could give a student one reason why they should go to the SI website, what would it be? Why this reason?

**Research questions:**

1. What do you think about the experience of using the SI website?
2. Why do people use this site? What motivation do they have for using it?
3. How well is the information arranged? Is the site easy to navigate? Is it easy to locate information?
4. What is the affect of having so much information on the SI website?

**C. User Interview Notes**

**Interview 1:**

Interviewer: David Ross. Note-taker: Bethany Huseman

**Background questions:**

Age: 22 years old.

Specialization: HCI

In first year of school

Considers self to be quite tech savvy. On a scale of 1-10, U 01 would rate self a 9, because there has got to be some things doesn't know.

Is a PC, Windows 7 person. Does not like Mac.

Undergrad at Michigan.

**Question #1: Which tasks do you do the most on the website?**

U01 1. Used the admissions part a lot before being admitted.

U01 2. As an admitted student, U01 just uses the courses information.

U01 3. Isn't sure if uses any other part.

**Question #2: Do you find it easy to do the tasks you want to do when you look at the site/are looking for courses?**

U01 4. "Oh hell no. I have the hardest time trying to find classes.

U01 5. Really confusing. Like there's three different kinds of course lists, and

U01 6. just to find cognates, you can find like on a really obscure part of the site.

U01 7. It's not updated. It's really very frustrating."

**Question #3: What do you think of all of the options for viewing the courses, do you find it helpful, or have difficulties with that?**

U01 8. Thinks the different options for viewing courses is redundant.

U01 9. Wishes all of the course information would be in just one list.

U01 10. Thinks the course list is a list of all of the different classes and that the catalog is the same thing. "I don't get it."

**Question #4: Is there anything about the website you particularly enjoy or find useful, entertaining or helpful?**

U01 11. Finds the side bars with the random people are interesting because there are a lot of people that U 01 knows.

U01 12. Does't really look at the events page.

U01 13. Basically just looks at the courses pages.

U01 14. Thinks the interface of the site looks really clean and everything is easily readable. So U 01 tends to know where they are going.

U01 15. Thinks there is like way too much information.

**Question #5: What information would you cut out?**

U01 16. Would have one courses page instead of 3.

U 01 17. Feels like the lists of all of the different degrees and the summaries should be on the pre-admissions page because sees them as irrelevant to current students.

**Question #6: When navigating through the site for your courses, how confident are you that you are going to get the information that you are seeking?**

U01 18. [Displayed hesitance about confidence in finding what they are seeking.]

U01 19. Is confident that they will find classes. However, U01 is frustrated because the information says a class will be available in a particular semester, but then it isn't.

**Question #7: How well do you think the website is arranged overall? Is it easy to find information?**

U01 20. Yes and no. U 01 thinks it is easy to find the overall topic that you are looking for, but when looking for a very specific bit of information, and presented with 3 pages that look like they should do the same thing it gets a little confusing.

**Question #8: Titles are redundant, course list, course... Do you find those titles helpful?**

U01 21. The titles make it easy to know that they are looking at the right topic, they believe they are in the right area.

U01 22, However, when it comes to finding specific information, U 01 is not sure which of the "five choices", they might need.

**Question #9: Do you know where to go for figuring out your degree requirements?**

U01 23. “Oh God!, the taps sheet? I have no idea where to find that. That took me a long time to figure out, and I think I had to email the advisor. .. And I think she linked me to it, or something. I, I don’t know. I just saved it to my desktop so that I wouldn’t have to go back.”

**Question #10: Do you use the search function?**

U01 24. Is confused by the search function. Is not sure what to can be searched for—a topic, or can we look up people too?

U01 25. Figures that if you put someone’s name in the search box, you should be able to see their profile come up. U01 isn’t sure what to enter to look up people--last name-comma-first name, or the uniquename?

**Question #11: Have you used the very top bar with options like Facebook? Found it helpful?**

U01 26. Uses the People function to look up class mates, when recognizes them but doesn’t know their names.

U01 27. Has never used the login function. U01 has no idea why you would log in.

**Question #12: Do you use the social media stuff like Facebook or YouTube?**

U01 28. Doesn’t use the social media links. Thinks it is dorky if everyone on Facebook can see that they were using the SI umich website.

**Question #13: Does the SI website look like you expect an academic website to look?**

U01 29. Really likes the background with all the different vectors and the crazy shapes. From the artistic standpoint, thinks it is really pretty.

U01 30. Thinks the site looks a little funky for an educational website. Thinks the banners are in need of much better pictures. The current pictures look very unprofessional compared with the rest of the design of the website. Pictures are awkwardly cropped, and very amateur looking.

**Question #14: How helpful do you think the SI website is in general? Compared with Wolverine access courses stuff?**

U01 31. Wolverine Access is needlessly complicated to use.

U01 31a. You can know what course you want to take, but you have to know the actual specific course number or go through several pages to choose the course.

U01 32. Wolverine Access is just as complicated as the SI site, but in a different way.

**Question #15: Do you find the layout of the menus (at the left, on the top, the very, very top) helpful?**

U01 33. The very top navigation bar is interesting, but not necessarily helpful. If you got rid of that, it would make no difference. It is interesting.

**Question #16: What do you think about the other two bars?**

U01 34. "You know, excess is not always good." [in response to thoughts about the other two navigation bars.]

**Question #17: So it's too excessive. There are too many options there?**

U01 35. There is just too much going on everywhere. There's side bars under sidebars, and there's the side bar at the side.

**Question #18: Does having so much going on hinder you from finding what you are looking for?**

U01 36. No, but it is pretty redundant.

**Question #19: Do you go elsewhere for some of the academics functions other than courses?**

U01 37. Goes onto the degree components site before each semester begins, just to be sure that they are taking the right classes.

**Question #20: Do you use any non-SI site tools for things available on this site?**

U01 38. Doesn't think so. Comes to the site for courses, because doesn't know where they would have them anywhere else.

U01 39. Was and undergrad at the University of Michigan, so already knows the student life stuff and doesn't use those pages.

**Question #21: Do you use the actual class descriptions?**

U01 40. Some professors are better at selling their classes than others, but U 01 does pick classes depending on what the summary says.

**Question #22: Do you ever use the academic resources stuff?**

U01 41. Hadn't seen the academics resources pages before. Guesses it could be a good way to reserve meeting rooms and that, but isn't sure.

U01 42. So far U 01 has not reserved meeting rooms. U 01's classmates have always done it so far.

**Question #23: Do you think you could figure out how to reserve the rooms? Is it clear?**

U01 43. Is sure they could figure out how to reserve rooms somehow. "If I have problems, instead of using this, I would just email the whole school. That's my alternative to using this website I guess."

U01 44. Had problems finding a cognate. Found the cognate list, but thought it was just recommendations from fellow students, not an official list. Found that the list was outdated and not a lot of the classes were being taught any more. U 01 had to turn to email instead. U 01 was really frustrated, because couldn't be ever know exactly what to take.

**Interview 2:**

Interviewer: Bethany Huseman. Note-taker: Shuo Yang.

**Background questions:**

Age: 23

Specialization: HCI

Very computer literate. Has done a lot of software design and 3D graphics.

Enjoys designing websites.

Mainly a Mac user(OS 10.7) but does use PC (Windows 7).

U02 1. This was one of the few schools applied to, because very few schools have HCI specializations.

**Question # 1: Can you share your experience of the last time you used the SI Academics website?**

U02 2. Last used the site about a week ago to look for information about the PEP internship.

U02 3. Was trying to figure out what the PEP procedures are and what the mentor and stuff meant, how many hours for each credit, etc.

U02 4. Went to the website and tried to figure out where the PEP information should be. Went to Academics and tried to find it under MSI.

U02 5. Was a bit confused, because PEP information is usually under the courses.

U02 6. It took a while to navigate the courses, because the course list has multiple pages.

U02 7. Because it was taking a while to click through multiple course pages, U02 tried to use the search box to search “internship” but nothing showed up.

U02 8. Had to go through all of the catalogs, because at that time, U02 didn’t know that the internship is considered an independent study course.

U02 9. Vaguely remembered the PEP course number from a previous time U02 went to the website, but it wasn’t there in the course list.

U02 10. Could have searched for the PEP stuff, but the search list is big and confusing.

U02 11. Eventually went to degree components, because knows PEP internship is part of degree components. There U02 found the small, in-text link for the PEP page. There U02 found, somewhat, a description of the process of the pep internship.

U02 12. Went to the PEP form and filled it out.

U02 13. The PEP internship information links that are needed are all links within paragraphs.

U02 would have felt more sure that they had found the all of the needed information if the right-hand bar had had the links of the needed things--a list of required tasks. Otherwise, you have to read the whole thing to find out what is this link and how does it work?

**Question #2: Throughout the process, did you have a good sense of what you wanted to do next, or were you uncertain?**

U02 14. Had a vague idea from taking the PEP internship seminar.

U02 15. Because U02 took the PEP seminar, knew something had to be submitted, but was vague on exactly which documents had to be submitted.

U02 16. Had to read the whole paragraph to make sure was on the right page. Would have much preferred having things as bullet points.

**Question #3: Did the process take as long as you expected?**

U02 17. Finding the PEP documents took longer than expected, because had to go back and forth between pages to see if was missing something.

U02 18. The pep and internship information covers a few screens. You have to scroll up and down through all of the text to find the pertinent form at the bottom. When you go to the form, you realize it doesn't have everything you are looking for, so you have to go back to the page with all of the text and read it again and go back to the form. A lot of flipping back and forth.

**Question #4: How did you feel during the experience of working through this?**

U02 19. After submission, was wondering if had found and completed all of the required forms.

U02 20. Uncertainty about possibly missing some important PEP information resulted in U02 emailing the Careers Office to check whether everything was in order.

**Question #5: You said you resort to searching but you find that confusing because of the results?**

U02 21. Doesn't know how the search box works.

U02 22. Searches return everything, but the first result is past internships, instead of the current registration form, and it is a PDF that could be mistaken for an actual page.

U02 23. Finds search results very confusing: the current registration is nowhere to be seen in initial screen of search results. There are a lot of broken links.

**Question #6: When you think about the SI site in general, how would you sum it up?**

U02 24. Thinks HCI schools usually have bad sites, but the new site has a very slick design.

U02 25. The new site is not very U of M in its colors.

U02 26. The biggest problem is the broken links. The page structure of the new site is different, so using links in the emails from the Careers office found nothing. They were probably using links from the previous website. You have no idea where the information is now.

**Question #7: In a situation like that, how do you go about finding the information you originally wanted?**

U02 27. If U02 knows where it might be, tries to search. Otherwise will just give up.

**Question #8: What other sources do you turn to?**

U02 28. Tries to use Google search if having trouble finding information on the site.

**Question #9: Do you prefer to browse or to search?**

U02 29. Only browses in the home page to see what is happening, what is new, faculty accomplishments, etc. Other than that U02 doesn't browse.

U02 30. Tends to use the site to just go after what U02 specifically wants. Mostly that is in the academics section.

**Question #10: What are the key tasks you come to the site to accomplish?**

U02 31. Mostly uses the site to look at course descriptions and when courses will be offered.

U02 32. Mentioned that many courses actually change when they are offered.

U02 33. Takes a look at the list of courses available.

U02 34. Download the taps sheet to see if there are any changes.

U02 35. Uses the career website to find the iTrack link.

U02 36. Usually doesn't use the news and events, because gets the news from the SI main page.

U02 37. Uses the degree components in the SI section.

**Question #11: What other tools you use?**

U02 38. Uses Wolverine Access, because even if the SI site says a course is being offered, it may not be. Even the academic advisor didn't know the course wasn't being offered that semester. Can be sure in Wolverine Access which classes are actually being offered and can be registered for.

**Question #12: How frequently do you use the site?**

U02 39. Uses the site once every two weeks on average, but if really need it, maybe twice a week.

**Questions #13: What are you trying to do? [Interviewer is having troubles figuring out how U02 mainly comes to the site for course stuff, but uses it so often]**

U02 40. Comes to the site to find course and PEP information.

U02 41. Comes to find contact information and the SI address.

U02 42. Before coming to the school used the faculty profiles as well.

**Question #14: What is drawing you to the site as frequently as you use it, are you checking it that often for your courses?**

U02 43. Uses the site so frequently, mainly just check back, for like a minute, on the SI main page to see what is new and what is happening.

**Question #15. What do you particularly enjoy about using the SI website?**

U02 44. Likes showing the site off to other people because it looks cool.

U02 45. Thinks it is mainly a tool for prospective students, because they don't have access to all of the things the current students do.

**Question #16. Is there anything you don't particularly like?**

U02 46. Doesn't like the broken links and the search function.

U02 47. Was confused by the redundant navigation where the left navigation doesn't match the order of the navigation in the main contents box. At first, thought the two sets of links were different. Then tried to match them and figured out they were the same.

**Question #17: Do you have a preference for using left or in-box navigation?**

U02 48. When arrives at the Academics main landing page, might use either set of navigation.

U02 49. When not on the Academics main landing page uses the left navigation, because that is what we are used to—faceted navigation on the left.

U02 50. Thinks the site could actually use the first page for a basic paragraph of what MSI is, instead of duplicating the links on the main page. Though, using the main page for links with some description might be helpful to people who are new to the site.

**Question #18: How confident are you that you will find the information you are seeking?**

U02 51. Is not very confident that they will find the information they are seeking. For example, U02 is not sure how to find how many cognates to take. U02 finds a list of cognate courses, but is left wondering if allowed to take more than 6 credits. Things like that.

U02 52. Mainly the uncertainty that U02 will find what they are seeking comes from the broken links that came from the site moving. U02 doesn't know if the content from the broken links has been linked yet to the new website.

U02 53. Is also uncertain about finding information, because knows that some courses aren't in the course list, which makes U02 suspect there may be some other courses that should be there but aren't.

**Question #19: Does the site meet your expectations for what an academics site should be?**

U02 54. For the most part, but the graphics are below standard. The whole layout and theme is good, but the pictures kill that. They are usually below standard.

**Question #20: Just to confirm, which sections do you use, and which ones don't you use at all?**

U02 55. Doesn't touch the academic tabs not related to U02's degree.

U02 56. May look to see if there are funding opportunities.

U02 57. Probably has only looked at the academic resource page once.

U02 57a. Usually doesn't have to look for more information. Usually can get the information from friends.

U02 57b. Plus knows quite a bit of it already, because has already been to that section of the site once before, and most things won't have changed.

U02 58. For the most part, information will find U02 or U02 will already know it.

**Question #21: Do you ever log in to use the website?**

U02 59. Does log in to change their profile.

U02 60. Recently logged-in to upload resume.

**Question #22. Do you use the social media links?**

U02 61 Added the social links before being accepted into the school.

U02 62 Still uses the social media links to keep up to date on events.

**Interview 3:**

Interviewer: Shuo Yang. Note-taker: David Ross

**Background questions:**

Specialization is IPOL, Age: 24.

**Question #1: What do you think of the aesthetics of the SI website?**

U03 1. Thinks the SI website has very ugly pictures in general.

**Question #2: What about on the main site?**

U03 2. The background is very pixelated / the images are just weird

U03 3. Is not interested in the faculty/alumni profiles on the side.

- U03 4. U03 does not like the "like science" picture on the main page of the site.
- U03 4a. Looks at the picture and doesn't even read what the link says.
- U03 4b. Picture makes no sense and U03 is turned off from exploring the link further.
- U03 5. U03 says that in the picture advertising the SI networking fair, the "whirlpool" logo is too noticeable. In addition, the user sees the back of a guy's head and part of the girl's face.
- U03 6. The picture advertising the SI exposition is awkward / emphasizes wrong things.
- U03 6a. The SI logo is awkwardly overlaid by the SI logo and the students' faces are covered up by the blue overlay as well as by the letters.
- U03 6b. Would have preferred a mural instead for this picture and have the expoSition part down on the left-hand corner.
- U03 7. Noted that the quick links on the main page, was the only place where you could go to find a link titled "prospective students"
- U03 8. However, U03 noted that all that quick link took you to was a collection of links and that this was just too much information for a prospective student.
- U03 9. The SI website didn't tell a story for prospective students about what SI is.
- U03 10. In comparison, the U-M School of Art and Design had a separate channel for prospective students, which had a bunch of videos on it to help prospective students see what was going on around the school.
- U03 11. Thinks in general, for prospective students the site needs to be arranged like a story, with each page naturally progressing into the next.
- U03 12. Currently, you really need to drill down deep until you find out where to apply.

**Question: Does this look like how you would expect an academic institution's page to look like?**

- U03 13. Does look like an academic institution's website, but thinks SI could do better with how they designed the webpage

U03 14. Wanted a bread crumb trail displayed on the top of the page that lets you know where you've been and offers you a tether so that you can backtrack if you find yourself in the wrong area of the site.

U03 14a. Did not find the breadcrumb trail on the sidebar obvious.

U03 15. U03 noted that the pages within the "Student groups" appeared marooned from the site as you went from one page to another, like when you clicked on SIIP

### **Question #3. Do you use the navigation bar at the top?**

U03 16. Has no idea what the "Login" was supposed to do

U03 17. Does find "People" useful

U03 18. Thinks search should be more prominent when searching for people (and that it should be clear that you can use search to find people).

U03 19. Went through the directory of MSI students, went from page-to-page using ctrl+F to type in the first name of the person U03 was searching for, as U03 didn't know that person's last name.

[Insight (from David): what if you don't know how to spell their first name or their last name?]

U03 20. Noted ugly picture of dean Mackie Mason and too much text in the message from the Dean.

### **Questions #4. How do you use the search box?**

U03 21. Tried a few searches on it and noted that it worked for the most part.

U03 22. Noted that there were some cases where you had to search for the exact thing you were looking for (e.g. searching for "Admission" you found "Heather Carpenter")

U03 23. Would like the search box to be more prominent

U03 24. Noted that it wasn't clear exactly what results you might expect the search bar to return.

U03 25. Would like option to select if you want to search for people or courses.

**Question #5. How is your experience with going through the course catalog?**

U03 26. Wanted the search feature to be more prominent when searching for courses

U03 27. Was uncertain what the difference was between titles "Course list" and "Course catalog." It wasn't clear just from the titles what clicking on them would produce.

U03 28. Wants a drop-down menu in the course list menu (with a little arrow to indicate a drop-down menu) when a course was highlighted.

U03 28a. In the drop-down menu, U03 wanted a brief description of the course (2-3 sentences) which would give U03 the option of being taken to a separate page if U03 wanted to find out more information.

U03 29. Doesn't like current design of being taken to a separate page with course information, because it presents another layer to navigate with a click.

U03 30. Finds it unclear exactly WHAT specialization or requirement each course counts for.

U03 31. Wanted to have some kind of filtering system so that you could click on your specialization and search for a bunch of courses that counted for your specialization

U03 32. Found the "Course title" unhelpful, because it didn't produce anything unless you knew exactly what you were searching for.

U03 33. Wanted the information about which specialization a course counted for on the page describing each course as opposed to being taken to a separate page with course info.

U03 34. Had some uncertainty about what the calendar format's color scheme conveyed

U03 35. Thought that the courses should be clickable because a pointer appears over them when you move the cursor over a course.

U03 36. Noted the same for Faculty/student profiles. Felt like you should be able to click on an image instead of having to go to a smaller box (e.g. "read more" and click on it.)

**Question #6: How was your experience with the MSI degree components / MSI specializations?**

U03 37. The redundancy was not a good thing in U03' opinion as it resulted in having to go back-and-forth between the Course catalog and MSI degree components to note which courses counted for U03's specialization. It was very painful.

U03 38. Finding the TAPS sheets was hard.

U03 39. Had difficulty finding the PEP credits information.

U03 40. Thought that it would be helpful to have separate channels for prospective students, so they could have a site more like a story rather than just a collection of links--"all right, I'm interested in this program, what do I need to do to apply? It's nice to have just action, rather than "just reaching another series of doors."

U03 41. As a current student, doesn't want to be shown all this content. Would like a narrower range of information.

U03 42. Wants the site to be minimal, in order to allow people to find what they're looking for quickly and get off the site.

U03 43. Feels like if they are spending more than a minute on the site, U03's doing something wrong.

**Question #7: What was your overall experience of the site?**

U03 44. What you could/couldn't click on wasn't clear in several areas of the site.

U03 45. Prefers drop down menu instead of the current system. Wants site to show you where you were.

U03 46. Prefers a landing page with the following choices: current student / prospective students / find out more about SI; quick links for career; quick links for prospective students; about faculty/staff.

**Question #8: Have you logged in to the intranet and used it?**

U03 47. Looking for the PEP stuff took forever in intranet

U03 48. At least info is on the intranet

U03 49. Finding stuff is a pain on the intranet, because it's not clear to site.

U03 50. Is not really clear why the intranet was there. What's the purpose of having one?

U03 51. Noted that the search function is good on the intranet

#### **Interview 4:**

Interviewer: David Ross. Note-taker: Bethany Huseman.

#### **Background questions:**

Age: Mid-20's.

Specialization: Archives and MPI. Interested in the preservation of information.

Comfortable using computers for word processing and the internet, but also easily picks up other programs that they need to use.

Considers self to be confident in navigating the Internet.

Has been using a Mac since November. Has used PC before then, so is comfortable on both.

Attended undergrad at a small liberal arts college in Michigan.

Masters in English,

For post-secondary education, attended a school in the UK.

Looked for SI schools that fit U04's interests.

U04 1. So much information is emailed to SI students that U04 figures that is where all the information is at.

U04 2. The extra bars and boxes on the SI website just become white noise to U04.

U04 3. Figures any important information will be emailed.

#### **Question #1: What do you use the site for most?**

U04 4. Uses the SI classes info whenever U04 is getting ready to do registration.

U04 5. Particularly uses the taps and class descriptions when getting ready to register.

U04 6. Uses the site to seek information needed to fill out U04's concentration and graduation requirements.

U04 7. Is aware of the news and events, but really doesn't use it.

U04 8. Relies mostly on si.all instead the news and events section.

U04 9. Doesn't check the SI site regularly, but goes to it when needs something related to SI.

**Question #2: How easy do you find the site to navigate?**

U04 10. Finds the site somewhat easy to navigate.

U04 11. The search doesn't return useful information.

U04 12. Not sure if the poor search box results lie with self. Sometimes U04 doesn't know what U04 is looking for—U04 wonders if U04 has used the wrong terminology.

U04 13. Search results from the SI search bar often are articles that just happen to have the term, instead of being what U04 wants.

U04 14. Finds that going to Google and searching is much more likely to give the correct page.

U04 15. The SI search box searches often return things related to what U04 is looking for, but not really what U04 is looking for.

U04 16. Browsed when investigating the site, like when U04 was a prospective student evaluating the schools.

U04 17. Now that U04 is a current student, U04 tends to know exactly what U04 wants, so U04 uses the search box so that U04 can quickly get the information and leave the site to do other things.

**Question #3: How helpful do you find the courses section?**

U04 18. The courses section is moderately helpful.

U04 18a. Is just looking for TAPS.

U04 18b. Is looking for what U04 has to have, and checking it off of U04's list.

U04 19. Has had problems finding lists of courses.

U04 20. Considers it a lot of work to click on a course and then click back out.

U04 21. Finds the courses feature useful if U04 knows what U04 is looking for, but not so useful if U04 is looking to fill a space, but isn't sure with what U04 wants to fill it. U04 finds talking to professors, and other lists more useful in that case.

U04 22. Remembers finding a page when U04 was looking to register. It had information about each class and when it was offered, but U04 wasn't sure where, and is now even unsure if it was an SI page.

U04 23. Finds the website kind of weird in that, it has got tabs that seem really intuitive, but U04 finds self not sure where to find something.

U04 24. Knows the wanted information has got to be there somewhere, but spends way more time looking for a particular thing than U04 wants.

U04 25. Not sure if inability to easily find particular information/forms is just self, because U04 hasn't used the website lots.

U04 26. Tried to use the site to find the particular information and wasn't having much success, so U04 was like "you know what, never mind."

U04 27. Knows there is information somewhere on the website which lists the different classes in conjunction with the semesters they tend to be offered (i.e. Fall or Winter). However, U04's not sure where to find it on the SI website.

U04 28. Is surprised that the admissions stuff is in with the academic stuff for current students.

U04 29. Expects the admissions stuff to be on a separate page.

U04 30. The extra "admissions" information is just white noise which U04 ignores.

U04 31. Uses course lists, catalogs things like that.

U04 32. Always comes across sought information randomly--It never seems intuitive where U04 finds it.

**Question #4: How easy is it to find your TAPS?**

U04 33. The first time, U04 couldn't find it, because the SI search box was fairly unhelpful. But then was able to find them fairly quickly at another time.

U04 34. Is uncertain which navigation tab an item it would be under. Kinda have to search for it under weird places.

U04 35. Thinks there would be an easy and quick way to get to the cognates, but they are at the lower levels.

U04 36. A lot of times, U04 can eventually find the TAPS, but U04 has to search within other things, like tabs that may be related, but U04 is not sure.

U04 37. Thinks TAPS-like things should be findable more directly.

U04 38. Likes the in-text links, but thinks there should be a more centralized thing where you can access things like the TAPS sheet.

**Question #5: Do you use the intranet?**

U04 39. Only uses the intranet when has to.

U04 40. Has logged in because U04's taking 690. Also U04's profile requires it.

U04 41. Doesn't log in often, often isn't doing anything that requires U04 to log-in.

U04 42. No one has really talked about logging in, so U04 is not clear on what the advantages would be.

U04 43. Usually knows what U04 is looking for more by talking to people.

U04 44. Would like it if could easily see courses by specialization. Would like to filter by the classes being offered in U04's specialization that semester.

U04 45. Usually knows what wants to learn from classes, but not necessarily exactly what the class is.

U04 46. Doesn't really want to click from page to page when looking at classes.

U04 47. Wolverine Access is nice because U04 can compress the list to just the title, and expand titles of interest. U04 doesn't have to deal with a new page.

U04 48. Creates own Excel file with class times and dates when trying to pick classes. U04 doesn't feel like we have a good tool for arranging and testing different schedules. U04 isn't sure if such a tool actually exists, and U04 just isn't aware of it.

U04 49. Uses faculty adviser as a sounding board, to be sure that what U04 is doing sounds good.

**Question #6: How does U04 like the site's aesthetics?**

U04 50. Isn't the type of person with strong opinions, but U04 doesn't have an adverse reaction of dislike, nor does the site strike U04 as unprofessional, clunky or cheap.

U04 51. Sees the highlighted picture blurbs more as a school's face to present to potential students, instead of as something of interest for current students.

U04 52. Instead of using the highlighted blurbs, hears about what is going on by things like email, Facebook and other ways U04 is connected with SI.

U04 53. Comes to the site for specific purpose. Not to explore.

**Question #7: How easy do you find the site to navigate?**

U04 54. Has gotten better at navigating the site--U04 now knows the few links that U04 tends to need to use.

U04 55. If needs to search, U04 will use Google search to find things quicker.

U04 56. As far as some of the other information, U04 will go straight to the library site, instead of going through the SI site to it.

**Question #8: What did you think of the site as a prospective student?**

U04 57. Thinks that SI's overly complex website is part of the applications test. If you can't navigate their site, the school doesn't want you to apply.

U04 58. As a perspective student, U04 would go to admissions right away.

U04 59. Likes that the apply online is not buried, which is very good.

U04 60. All the things you need to know as a prospective student are right there. Like, Am I interested in attending this school? What things do I have to gather to submit when I apply?

**Question #9: Does this site feel like you expect an academic site to feel?**

U04 61. Yeah. It has the similar layout with general links on the top, and drop-downs on the side, and text in the middle.

U04 62. Surprised by the red instead of the gold, since this is a UM school.

U04 63. Likes the blue. It is easy to look at and U04 likes the dimension. Basic background, so it doesn't look cluttered and fills in instead of being a blank white space.

U04 65. Course requirements are the number 1 reason U04 uses the academics site.

U04 66. Has tried to reserve rooms, but found it a nightmare that U04 doesn't like.

U04 67. Hasn't really tried to use the facilities information on this site. U04 hasn't tried to find it on this site.

**Interview 5:**

Interviewer: David Ross. Note-taker: Bethany Huseman.

**Background information:**

Age: In 20's.

Specialization: LIS and may add ARM.

Year in MSI program: 1st year.

Technical Expertise: Fairly competent with computers. "Can navigate Word well." Familiar with how websites operate—high school and undergrad education required it.

Computer Platform: Mac Book Air

Educational Experience: University of Michigan for undergrad.

U05 1. Drawn to the school because LIS is more information AND technology driven than some traditional programs.

**Question #1: What do you mostly use this site for?**

U05 2. Mostly uses the academics site to find the requirements for classes in their specialization

U05 3. Wants to graduate on time and doesn't want to take any longer than necessary.

U05 4. Likes to check what the class options are.

U05 5. Likes to check how the class options fit into U05' specialization and overall requirements.

U05 6. When registering for this semester, wasn't always sure where to go—course list, catalog or schedule?

U05 6a. Experienced uncertainty because not all courses were present in the class schedules.

U05 6b. Experienced uncertainty because there is different content in each courses tab.

U05 7. Found the calendar overwhelming, because requires a pre-understanding on how to read it.

U05 8. Used the course descriptions and the information for when classes were available, then went to Wolverine Access for the rest.

U05 9. The class descriptions add some concreteness, even though some are vague.

U05 10. The class descriptions are useful, because they give some idea of the thematic issues that will be covered by the class.

**Question #2: Do you find the site easy to use?**

U05 11. Couldn't find U05's TAPS sheet.

U05 12. Resorted to the Intranet to find TAPS, instead of working hard to find it in the academics section.

U05 13. Is not certain how the Intranet fits with the rest of the site. Thinks the Intranet is slightly separate from the website, but a sub page, but is not certain.

U05 14. Finds it difficult to flip between specializations and academics pages to be sure U05 has everything that U05 needs.

U05 15. Thinks it might help to have hyperlinks directly to the course listing.

U05 16. Tries to ignore si.all, because it is a lot [body language and tone suggest that it is practically an overwhelming lot]

U05 17. Tries to rely on the SI academics site.

U05 18. Uses the SI academics site to try to maximize their degree.

U05 19. Did go to the faculty advisor, but just to confirm what U05 had already done on own by using the site.

U05 20. When viewing long lists of classes, has to open a separate tab to determine which courses are overlapping.

**Question #3: Do you use this site for other tasks?**

U05 21. Reads the blurbs when sees the alumni and student spotlights.

U05 22. Does not click on profiles' blurbs to read more.

U05 23. Has a very specific purpose whenever comes to the SI website.

U05 24. Is very deliberate about not being distracted from original goal for coming to the site.

**Question #4: How would you perceive this site as a perspective student?**

U05 25. The aesthetics are fairly good: well designed and rather stylistic.

U05 26. The site is very engaging for prospective students.

U05 27. Admissions is a subheading below academics—U05 would move it up for immediate access.

U05 28. Finds the information to be a lot to take in.

U05 29. For students who have already worked through all of the information, it would be nice to have a separate apply online section.

U05 30. There is a lot of white noise on this website

U05 31. This site does a nice job of representing what SI is about 'connecting people in new ways'

U05 32. Likes the fonts and bullets.

U05 33. The website's blue background fits in well with UofM

**Question #5: What do you think about the amount of text?**

U05 34. Generally only reads the headers and finds them self explanatory.

U05 35. The content beyond the headers and blurbs is not something U05 focuses on.

U05 36. Reads the course descriptions.

U05 37. Course descriptions is the primary site U05 uses.

U05 38. Finds the course descriptions sidebar very helpful as a brief summation of all of the information covered. Finds it useful because it summarizes the gritty, practical info of what is being offered.

U05 39. Has read through the site several times because it outlines what you need for your degree, including details about the GPA to maintain.

**Question #5: How easy is it for you to find the information you want?**

U05 40: Has less extensive engagement with information that isn't as obvious on this site. Claims it is due more to a lack of interest on U05's part than a lack of caliber on the materials part.

U05 41. Has found the PEP to have a nice outline of what one needs to do.

U05 42. Likes to have a clear idea of what U05 needs to do to get to a particular goal.

U05 43. Finds SI specializations pages organizations made them a little harder to work with.

**Question #6: How confident are you that you will find the information you are looking for?**

U05 44. Is fairly confident will find the information they are looking for.

U05 44a. Goes to the same places over and over.

U05 44b. This is an information based program, so U05 presumes they will be careful to provide the important information.

U05 44c. Has faith in the system.

U05 45. Recommends that people get familiar with the course catalog.

U05 46. If doesn't know much about what U05 is looking for, will rely on a Google search tied to the school. Does this because searching by using Google is a learned habit.

U05 47. Might also click on tabs where U05 thinks information might be.

U05 48. Will also investigate FAQs when seeking for information.

**Question #7: Do you log in?**

U05 48. didn't even know about the Intranet for the 1st month or so.

**Question #8: How frequently do you use the site?**

U05 49. Uses the site 2-3 times per month

U05 50. Uses the site to be sure they are still on track and to schedule

U05 51. Tries not to go to the SI site that much. Otherwise U05 will end up over-stressing about academic progress, which becomes a hindrance.

U05 52. Also tries not to go to the SI site often, because using the site requires a lot of clicks.

U05 53. ends up with many windows open, which creates unwanted clutter.

## **Primary Persona #1: Alice Garrett**



***"It's not perfect at some things, but SI website enriches my ability to connect with people at SI."***

### **Basic Information:**

- Single female, from Los Angeles, CA
- Age: 23
- Education: First-year MSI student
- Specialization: undecided
- Technical expertise: 4/5

### **Objectives:**

- To locate the e-mail addresses of her 501 group members.
- Learn about upcoming SI events
- Find SI 502 place out policy

### **Needs**

- To connect with the people and resources at the School of Information.
- To plan out her schedule for the current semester as well as for the winter semester.

### **Background:**

Alice is a first-year full time student just entering the masters program in the University of Michigan School of Information. Alice doesn't yet know what she's going to specialize in, although much to Dean Jeff Mackie-Mason's delight, she is considering a specialization in IEM.

Alice is fairly comfortable using computers and the internet. While she is walking around, she enjoys surfing the internet on her tablet, a back-to-school gift from her parents. Finding the si.all.open listserv to be too much information to keep track of, she prefers to use her tablet to browse the SI website in periodically to see what events are going on in the School of Information. As she starts her career at SI, Alice is working on planning her course schedule for the upcoming semester and forgot to take the 502 place-out exam in the summer before she enrolled at SI, so she wants to learn who to contact in order to place out of SI 502. In addition, she has misplaced the sheet of paper on which she wrote down the names and e-mail

addresses of her group members for SI 501, and so she's using the SI people directory to track down the names and e-mail addresses of her group members.

### **Primary Scenario #1:**

Alice received an email from SI Registrar stating that the SI 502 place-out exam will take place sometime in the Winter. However, it does not mention any other details beyond this. From orientation, Alice knows that every student at SI needs to take 502 or have some equivalent programming experience. However, from her undergraduate experience, Alice knows that sometimes universities allow students the options of placing out of courses if they have taken an equivalent course somewhere else, such as at a community college. Alice knows that SI 502 covers the Python programming language and she has taken a course at her college on that language. Alice wonders whether SI will allow her to place out of SI 502 using the course she took in undergrad as a substitute.

She heads on over to the SI website and is confronted with a collection of various links. Alice wonders why there is no direct header saying "SI 502". After all, she wonders, if it is such an important course, why does the website make it more obvious where to find the information? Nonetheless, Alice trusts her navigation skills and is confident that she will be able to locate what she is looking for. She looks for items on the site that have the information scent of SI 502 and quickly selects the "Academics" tab in the top navigation bar. Next, Alice clicks on the section "MSI degree components", thinking that it will lead her to her destination. She is not disappointed as she locates a link to the SI 502 place-out policy tucked away in the paragraph titled "Foundations." Alice wonders why this link is not more obvious, but is glad to have located it. Clicking on this link, Alice does not find any explicit statement about whether SI accepts substitute courses, but she infers that the placement test is the only way to get out of the course. She is also relieved to find a paragraph titled "how do I prepare" which contains links to SI 502 course materials. Alice congratulates herself for having found it, feeling like she has outsmarted the School of Information web design team, however she wonders how successful a less internet-savvy individual would be finding the place out policy...

## **Primary Persona #2: Bryan Stevenson**



**"I want to get the most from my education."**

### **Basic Information:**

- Male, married, from Ann Arbor, MI.
- Age: 29
- Education: Second semester MSI student
- Specialization: Human-Computer Interaction
- Technical expertise: 3.5/5

### **Objectives:**

- Locate courses which count for the HCI specialization and identify those which sound interesting.
- Look up which professors are teaching the courses he's interested in and find out what their research interests are.

### **Needs:**

- To plan out his courses so as to accommodate his working schedule To connect with the people and resources at the School of Information.
- To plan out his schedule for the current semester as well as for the winter semester.

### **Background:**

Bryan is an returning student back in school for a second master's degree after being laid off from his job as a social worker. Fortunately, his wife is supporting him throughout school and SI gave him a very generous scholarship for returning students, so he does not have to work full time while he goes to school. Nonetheless, Bryan holds a part-time job as a UX designer at the Hatcher Library in order to support his family and in order to give him some exposure to the field of Human-Computer Interaction.

While Bryan enjoys being back in school, he laments how much time he feels obligated to spend in front of a computer to keep up with what's going on around SI. Bryan somewhat enjoys using a computer, but feels as though he is behind his peers, every time he reads about a link on si.all.open that someone posted. Bryan looks forward to planning HCI courses for the upcoming semester...

### **Primary Scenario #2:**

This first time he planned courses, Bryan sat down with an SI academic advisor who helped him out. In his first semester, Bryan took SI 501 and SI 502 to satisfy the basic requirements. This time, before he goes in to meet with the advisor, Bryan wants to see which HCI courses are being offered in the upcoming winter term as well as to begin to develop a schedule.

Bryan pulls up the SI website and starts browsing the course list. He sees a tab titled "Courses" and under that several different links with very similar titles, including "Course catalog", "Course list", and "Class schedule." Bryan wonders what the difference is between each of these formats. Clicking on several of these links, he finds out. He discovers that "Course List" takes him to a list of courses and that clicking on one of the items in this list will take him to a page with a course description as well as some information about when the course is being offered, who's teaching it, and how many credits it's worth. Bryan backtracks and continues to look around the "Courses" section for a chart with a better format. However, Bryan does not see any listing for which specialization the course counts for, so he pulls up another tab and navigates on over to MSI specialization, locating the list of courses which count towards HCI. Continuing his search through the "Courses" section of the SI website, Bryan discovers a link which takes him to a page which displays a calendar view of which times each week when a course is offered. "This seems helpful", Bryan thinks to himself as he can see which course is being offered when and get a sense of whether his courses will fit in with his job schedule. He tries to click on some courses in the calendar, expecting to be taken to a course description, but nothing happens. Bryan feels frustrated with the dis-connectedness of the site and how he has to refer to multiple pages to find the information he is looking for. "Surely, there must be an easier way" he thinks to himself. He eventually gives up and schedule an appointment with an academic advisor. In addition, he considers asking si.all.open for advice.

### **Primary Persona #3: Claire Tseng**



**"I don't have spare time. I only briefly check the SI website to make sure that I am on track. I leave once I have what I'm looking for."**

#### **Basic Information:**

- Female, single, from Chicago, IL
- Age: 26
- Education: Second semester MSI student
- Specialization: IAR
- Technical expertise: 4.5/5

Claire is a second year full time MSI student, specializing in Information Analysis and Retrieval. She has a bachelor's degree in computer science and would definitely classify herself as a computer geek, although she has the looks of a supermodel. She built her first computer at 13 and in her spare time, she writes Facebook and iPhone apps, which give her some more experience using the latest tools in software development. She strives to run her life as efficiently as possible and has little patience for websites which waste her time. Claire is considering applying for a Ph.D program and wants to learn more about the projects that SI faculty are working on.

Claire checks SI Website often because he is applying for a Ph.D. program. He wants to know more about the projects SI faculties are working on.

#### **Primary Scenario #3:**

Claire wants to locate the TAPS sheets on the SI website, as she is looking to evaluate her progress towards completing her IAR specialization. She selects "Academics" and then the list of MSI specializations. She soon selects IAR and scrolls down, thinking that the TAPS sheet is

located somewhere in the text of the website. Not finding any link, she scrolls up the page and finds that the TAPS sheet is hidden on the side of the webpage (see Figure 1). “That’s strange”, thinks Claire, “nothing is ever located there and yet they choose to put the TAPS sheet there for some odd reason.” She notices thought that there is a lot of clicking required and downloads the TAPS sheet for future reference so that she doesn’t have to keep going back to the SI website to download it again.

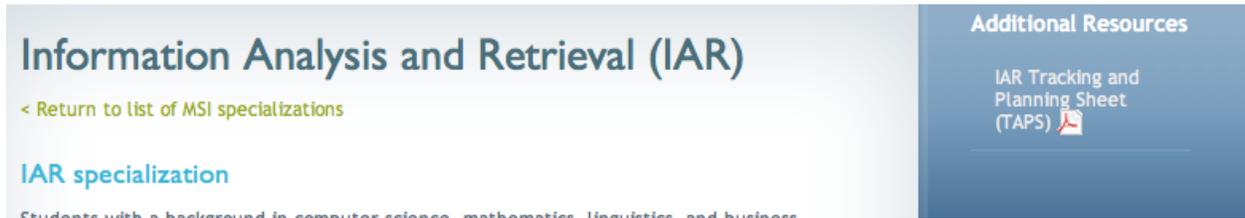


Figure 1: TAPS sheet for IAR located in the right-hand column of the SI website.