

DIGITAL TATTOO

USABILITY STUDY – 2010

Methodology:

In August 2010, three groups of students, graduates, undergraduates, and secondary, were given a 1-hour test with various tasks and searches to perform on the Digital Tattoo website. These students were then queried about their experiences in doing these tasks and about their overall impression of the site. The purpose of the test was to assess the usability of the Digital Tattoo website and the relevance of content to a broadly defined target audience. The university students were from UBC and the high school students were from Vancouver Island. In total, 18 individuals partook in the study: four graduates, seven undergraduates, and seven secondary.

Executive Summary

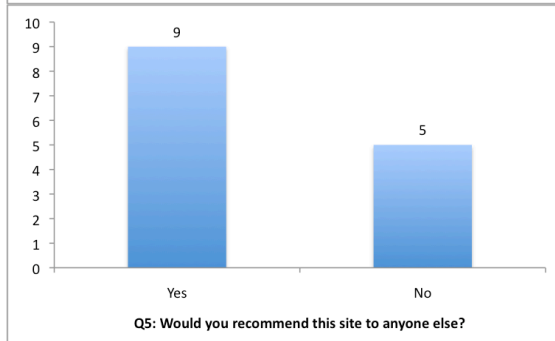
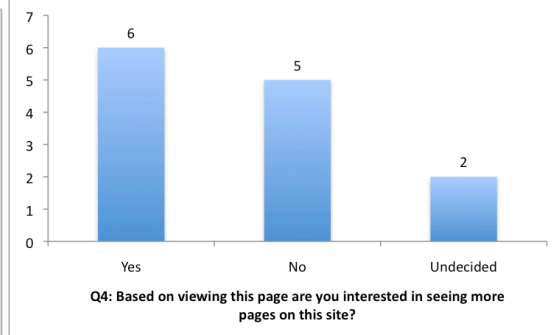
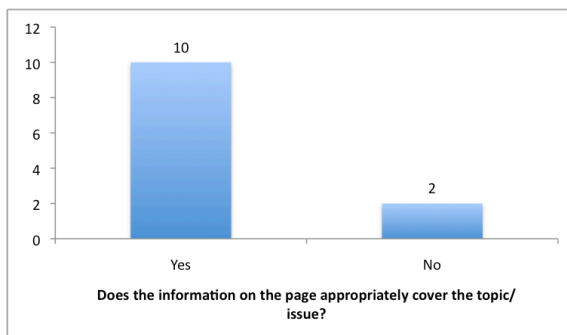
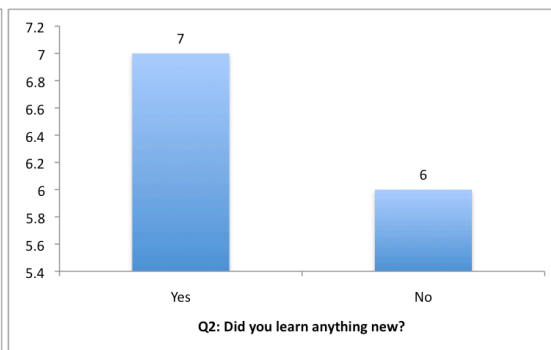
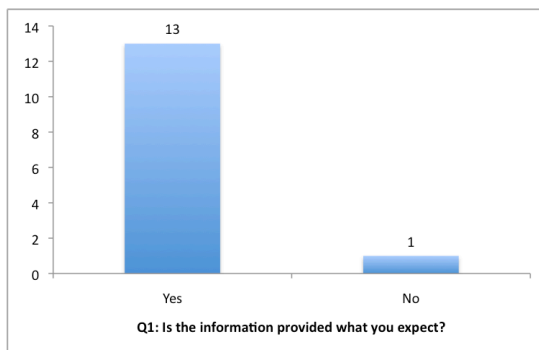
There was a general consensus for a need to simplify the home page and re-assess 'distracting' elements such as uneven sidebars, excessive text, and 'unnecessary' scrolling. Many respondents also identified that it was unclear where/how to begin their navigation of the site and confusion regarding the purpose the 'check-yourself' application. Most subjects liked the Digital Tattoo colour scheme and logo, finding it interesting and enticing. A few, however, considered it a bit too 'dark.' Other general comments were to add a search box as opposed to a tag cloud to search the site, and to clearly explain the pedagogy and purpose of the tutorial model. Beyond the landing page, most respondents said they found Digital Tattoo straightforward and easy to navigate. Some, however, said they were unable to keep track of what they had viewed on the previous page and were hampered by the lack of a simple 'search' option to find content they were interested in. Most respondents said they appreciated the accessibility of the writing, examples, hyperlinks, and polls.

Users in the graduate and undergraduate groups tended to associate the site with the idea of 'protecting' themselves rather than 'managing' their online identities. Teen impressions tended to be different. They associated the site more with online identity and managing their content than 'protecting' themselves. This is an interesting finding given the perception of youth being more risk orientated in terms of their online behavior. Responses seem to indicate that teens have both a more positive idea of web identity and a stronger interest in managing that identity to their advantage than other cohorts. The only statistical contrast between the groups surveyed was the graduate cohorts' desire for more in-depth information. Graduates were also more inclined to consider the Digital Tattoo site as something to recommend to teenagers as opposed to themselves. This highlights something Digital Tattoo has been giving consideration to for some time in terms of the direction of Digital Tattoo content – determining its target audience. The graduate responses suggest the need for further discussion about Digital Tattoo's target audience.

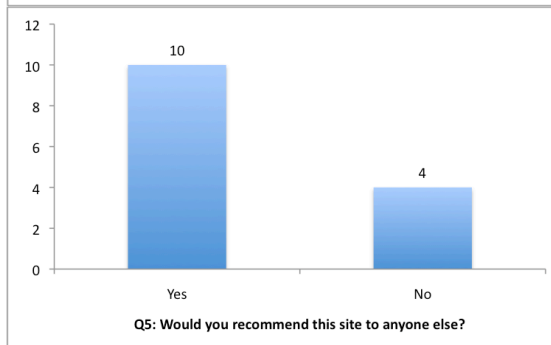
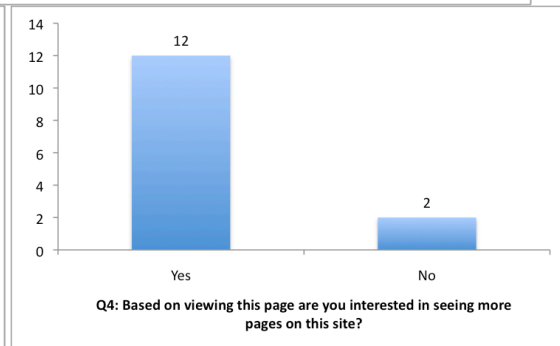
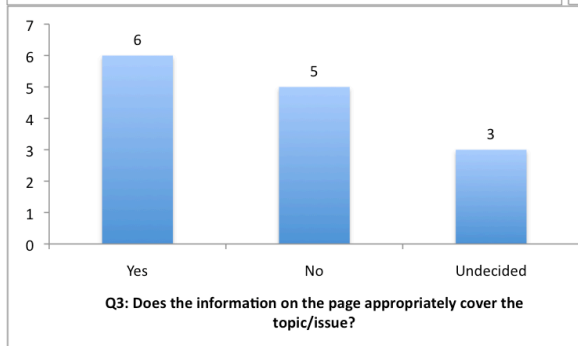
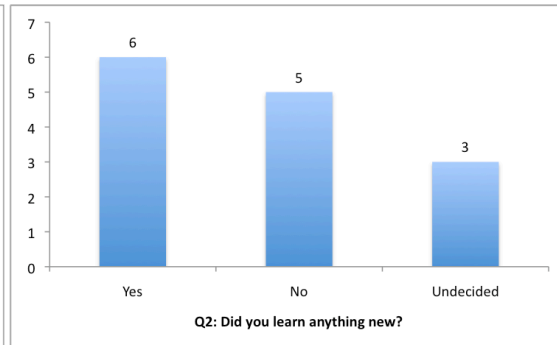
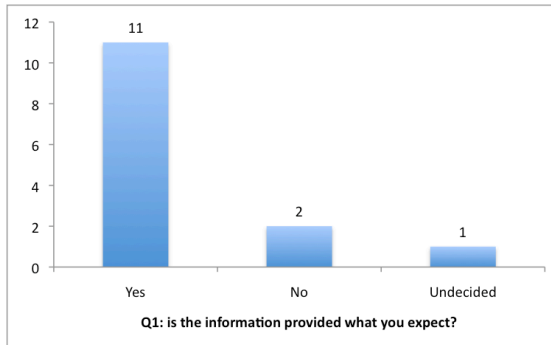
Content Analysis:

Respondents were given two pages to navigate. Teens were asked to go to “Texting” and “Employers Dig for Dirt.” Graduates and undergraduates were asked to view “Intellectual Copyright” and “Employers Dig For Dirt.” Each group were then asked to reflect, yes, no, or undecided, to five questions regarding their experience on the page – yes meaning a positive response, no meaning a negative response, and undecided meaning a neutral response. The results give a sense of what/if users are learning from Digital Tattoo content and if the content is useful to them and their peer groups. Note: there are occasional discrepancies in the number of responses for each cohort as some users did not respond to the yes, no, or undecided options.

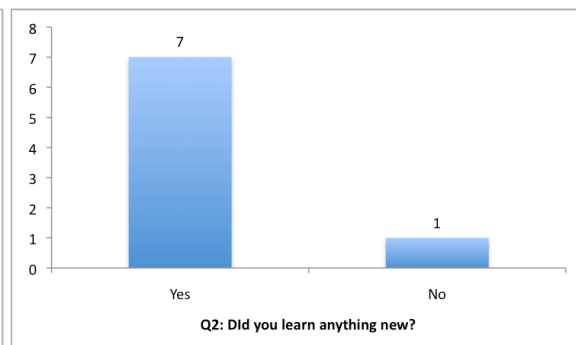
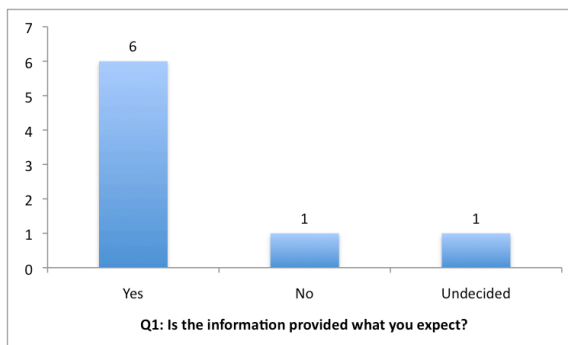
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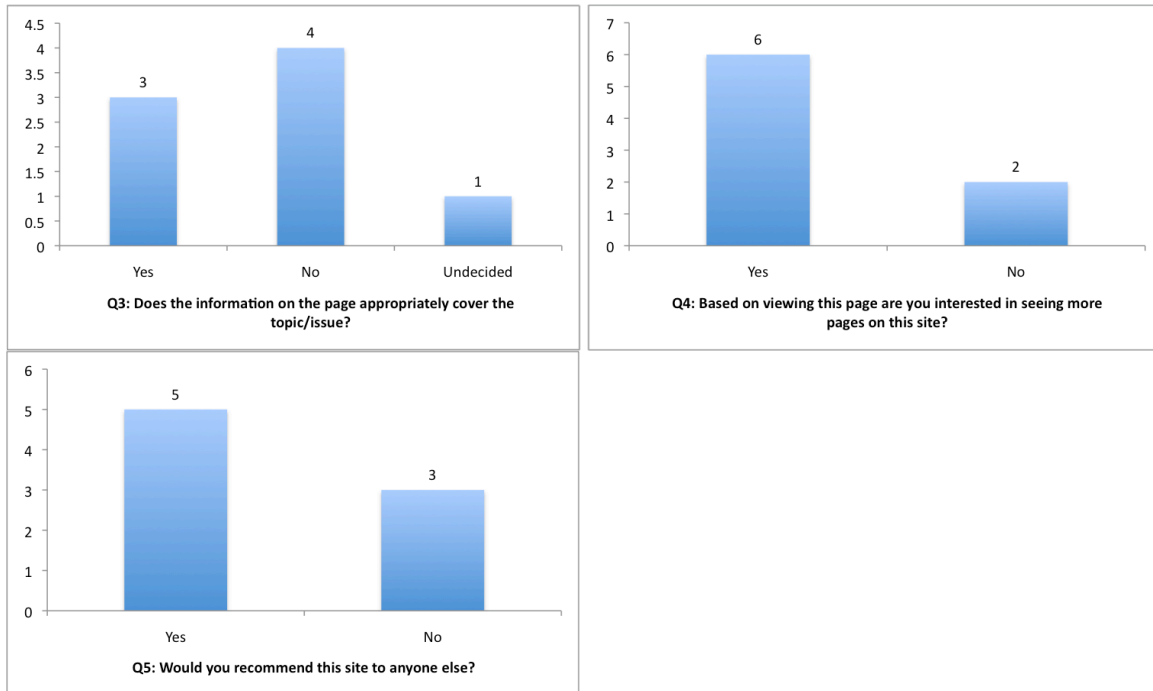


Undergraduate:



Graduate:

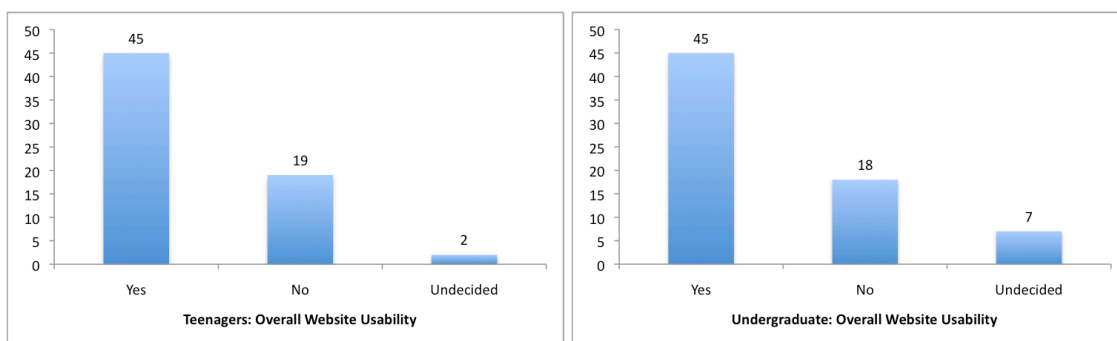


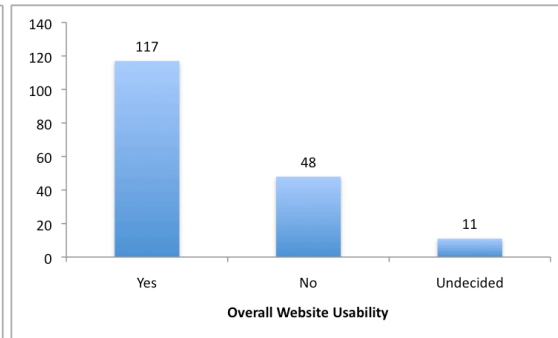
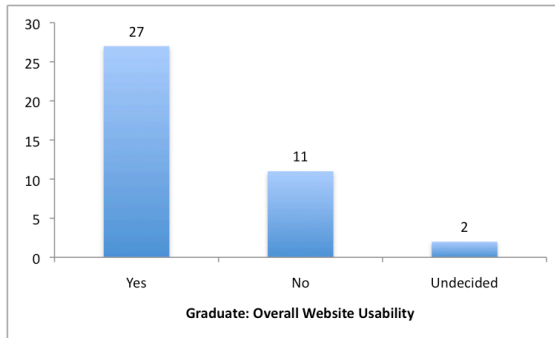


General conclusions show that a majority of visitors found what they expected to find when searching the site, were interested in seeing other pages based their initial searches, and that information on pages they searched was recommendable to others. Only in one category were responses negative. Graduates did not feel that the information on the pages they viewed adequately covered the topic/issues in question (Q3) – undergraduates gave a slight ‘yes’ margin to the same question (Q3). All respondents gave a narrow positive margin to “did you learn anything new?” (Q2) and teen responses show only a slight positive inclination to see more of the site based upon the page being viewed (Q4). Overall, responses to content show consistency across all cohorts suggesting reasonable appeal to a broadly defined target group.

Below is an analysis of total responses for the five content analysis questions above, charting only the responses, yes, no and undecided, and not the questions themselves. The results are broken down for each cohort, graduate, undergraduate, and teenagers, as well as for the aggregate group.

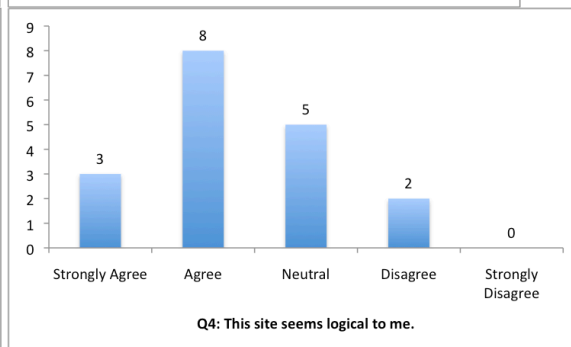
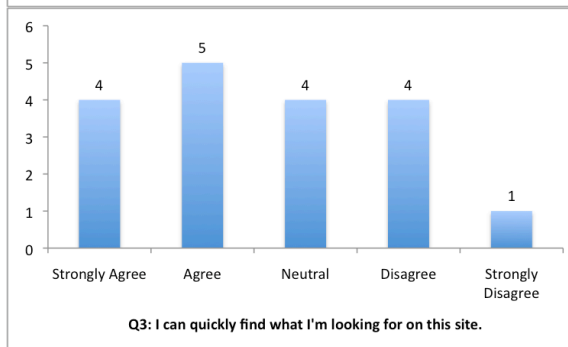
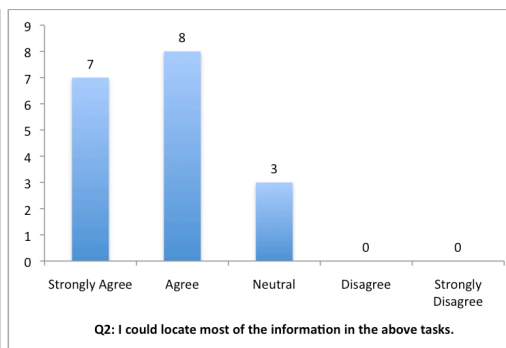
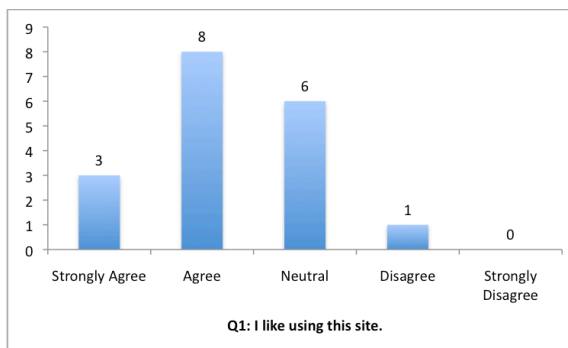
Total group content response:

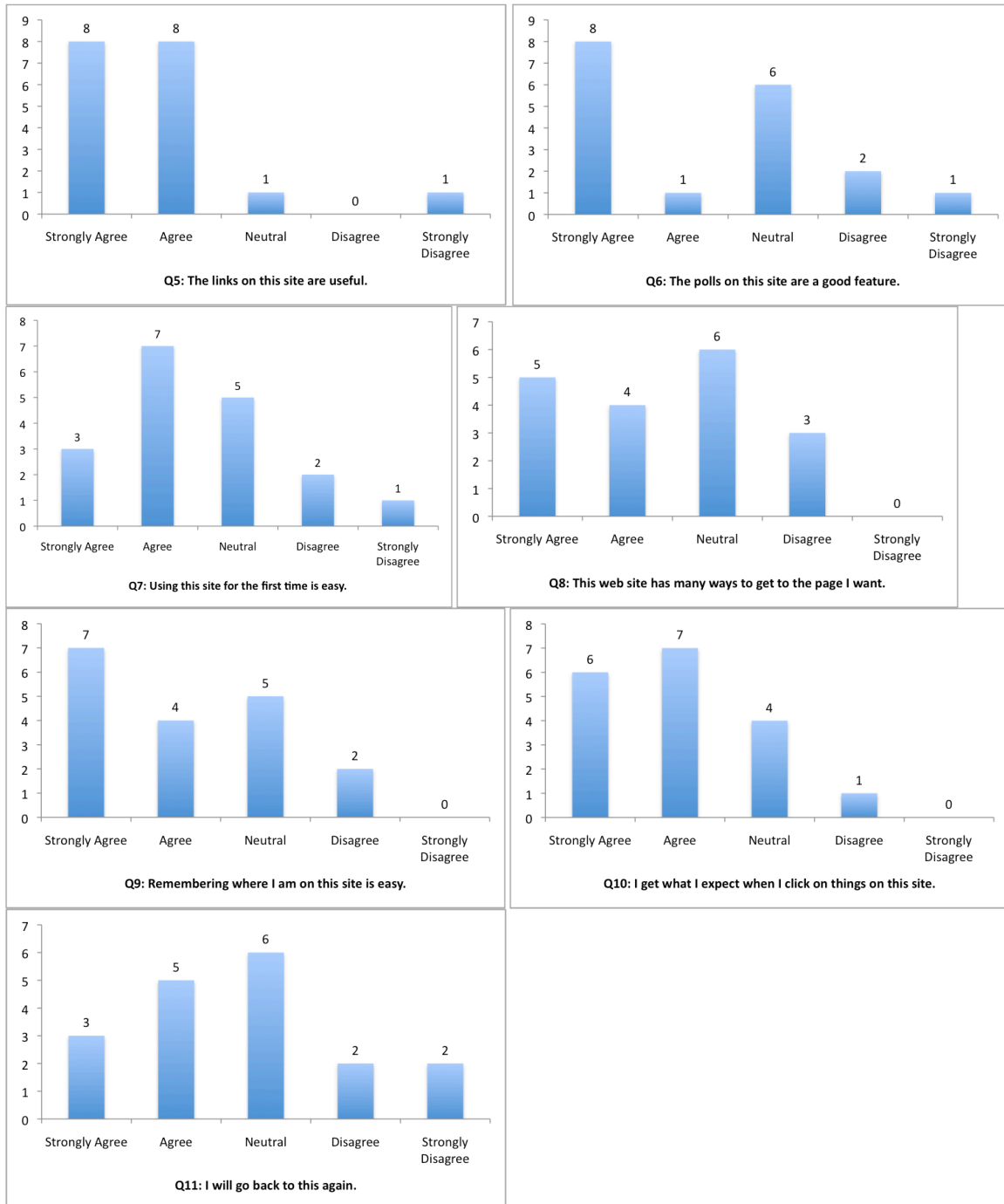




Navigating the Website:

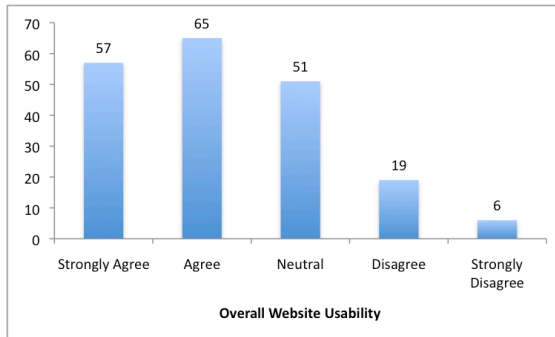
After being given various tasks, such as finding a specific page, taking a quiz on the site, and responding to a blog post, users were asked to respond in one of five degrees, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, to eleven usability questions. Answers to these questions give a sense of how user friendly the Digital Tattoo site is and how well visitors can access the information they are seeking. The response of all three groups, grads, undergrads, and teens were pooled together for the results below.





Answers show strong consistency. The majority of respondents enjoyed the site (Q1). Respondents also agreed that the layout of the site, (once away from the landing page), made logical sense (Q4). Polls (Q6) featured as a popular item as did hyperlinked content (Q5). The ability to eventually locate information received a positive endorsement (Q2)(Q10), but the ease at which that information was found (Q3) shows an area of the site that could be improved. Neutral responses were more frequent for (Q7), (Q8), and (Q9, than other questions. This shows potential issues in locating where one is on the site, how to return to a page one has already viewed, or the problem of

going back to the home page without losing track of where a visitor has already accessed. (Q11) also had high neutral responses, but the majority opinion of all three cohorts is that they would visit the site again. Below is an analysis of total responses for all eleven usability questions charting only the responses to the questions, 'strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree,' and not the questions themselves.



QUALITATIVE IMPRESSIONS

The usability test started and ended with open-ended questions, six in total. The first three were: "What do you think this site is about?" "What did you notice first?" and "What do you think of the design?" Answers varied widely, but there was general consensus in several areas that appear in key word highlighting using wordles.

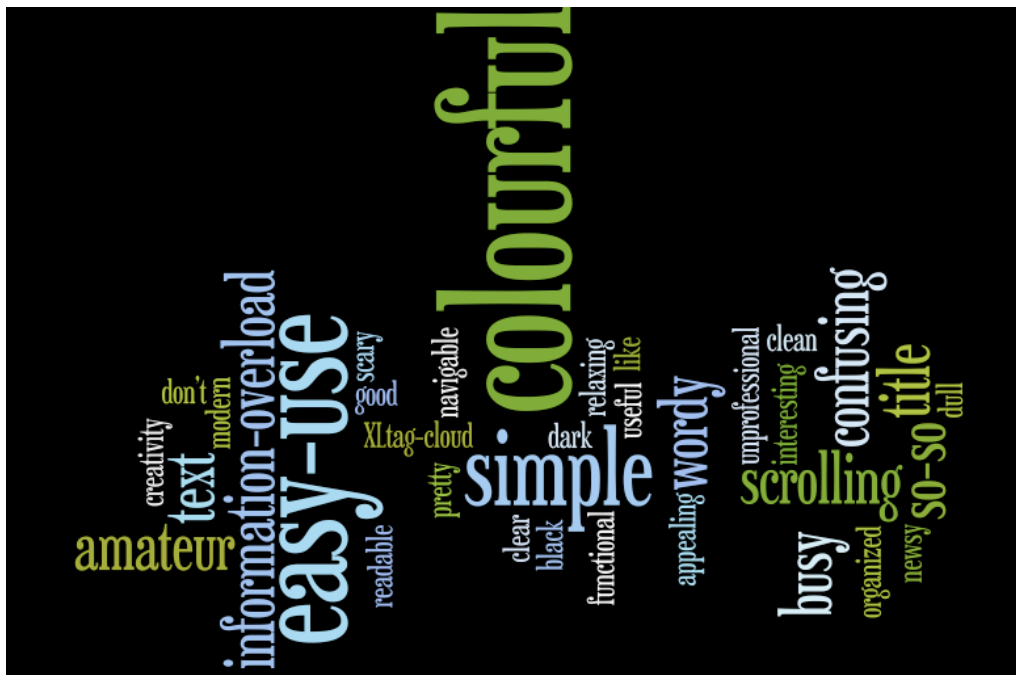
1. What do you think this site is about?



2. What did you notice first?

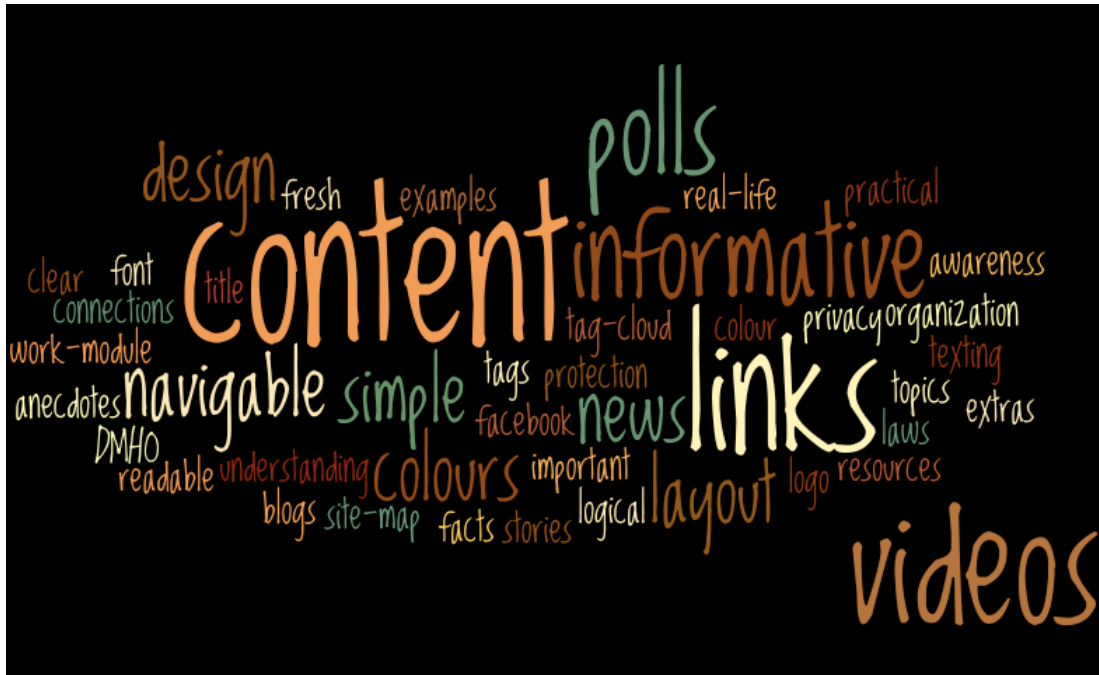


3. What do you think of the design?



At the end of the test, groups were encouraged to give any final thoughts through the following three questions: “What did you like about the site?” “What didn’t you like?” “Final comments/suggestions for improvements?” Again, answers varied across respondents but consensus on many ideas is seen in wordles.

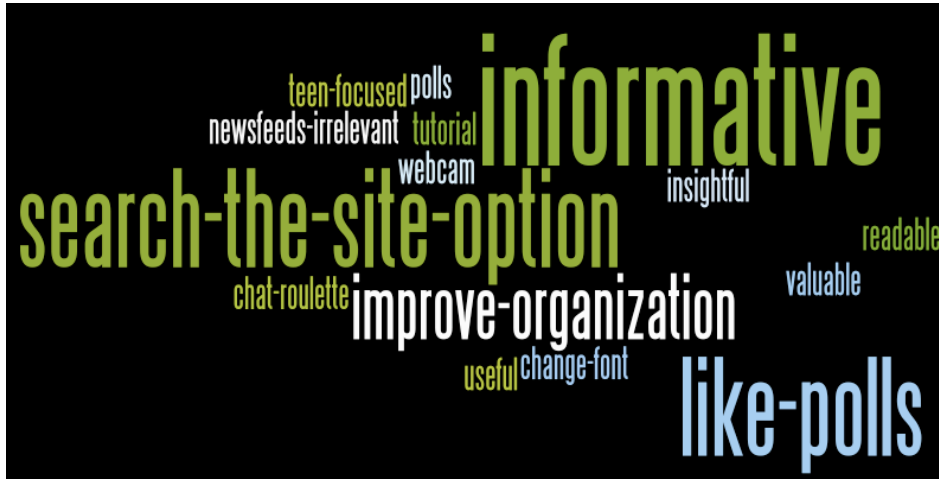
1. What did you like about the site?



2. Didn't like/Improvements



3. More comments/improvements



Suggestions and Changes:

Digital Tattoo has already moved forward with many of the suggestions, trends and observations coming out of the usability study. The landing page of the site has been simplified, excessive text has been taken down, and a new quizzing system that directs visitors to content based on their responses is in the works. We are also experimenting with ways of making internal searching of the site more streamlined and with fewer steps involved. Other small aesthetic changes, fonts and line spacing, have been made throughout the site. Blogs have been moved from the landing page to their tagged module pages, and a more concise explanation of how to use the tutorial format has been added.

Overall, Digital Tattoo is pleased with the usability testing responses. The study has reaffirmed the direction of Digital Tattoo's learning outcomes, strategies and content. It has also given important indicators as to how to improve Digital Tattoo content and resource delivery. We welcome any and all suggestions for further improvements.