

The View from the Other Side of the Screen: How Your College's Constituents View the Website

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Abstract:

With your school's web presence becoming the central communication medium, there is growing pressure from many internal audiences to have the website do more things, including (check all that apply): distinguish your College from the rest of the competition; provide more services for more audiences; allow users to find things in a more "logical" manner; customize the user experience; make it more visually appealing to users; attract more applicants; get more alumni to contribute; and, and, and

In the not too distant past the process was to get the webmaster, perhaps with the help of a knowledgeable commercial partner, to redesign and restructure the website using their combined experience. With many websites emphasizing more mission-critical services to user groups, it is time to incorporate web usability as one approach to getting your redesign done right. Seeing how your various audiences use the site often provides insights that are often unforeseen by designers or content providers. We will explore the background behind usability, see what technology is available to assist in conducting this kind of work, and look at some real-life examples of what can be uncovered.

Note: This paper was not available when the proceedings went to print. The authors will provide handouts at the session or make them available on the web or via email.