

Usability Analysis: Killlearn Lakes Elementary School

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Usability Analysis

Step 1: Sponsor's Main Tasks

What are the goals of the sponsor?

- To convey information about the school to parents, potential employees, and the community at large.
- To reduce phone calls and other time-consuming conversations by providing easy access to frequently asked questions, such as school hours, location, and upcoming events.
- To maintain a calendar of events inclusive of all school departments.
- To use the site as a tool in teaching elementary school students about Internet navigation and basic computing.
- To share new information with faculty and exchange files.

What are the goals of the users?

- To learn more about the school, its faculty, and its programs.
- To gather statistics on the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, such as test scores and national recognitions.
- To gain an impression of the environment at the school through multimedia and other sources.
- To find links to supplemental educational material and learning games
- To find basic information about the school, including hours of operation and the backgrounds of school administrators
- To access information quickly and easily

What tasks are common to all informational websites in this category?

This website is in the category of “Education – K-12”. All school web sites have a primary goal of communicating the quality of the institution, upcoming events, and basic information. Common tasks depend on the type of user. The three common user groups are parents, students, and faculty.

Parents

Parents visit school websites in an effort to gather information about the school and to find their children’s work. “Information” here refers to school hours of operation, names of administration and teachers, contact information of school employees, etc. A more modern use of websites is the publication of student work, even at the elementary school level. Parents access the website to see the product of their student’s effort at school. The following is a list of potential tasks parents may perform:

- Find a brief history of the school, including when it was established
- Find the names and short biographies of school administrators
- Find an overview of the teaching philosophy of the child’s teacher
- Find the hours of operation of the school as well as when the office is open
- Find a list of books available for checkout from the school library, including reading level information and Accelerated Reader point value
- Learn how to become a member of the Parent-Teacher Organization
- Plan for upcoming school events
- Access school contact information, including phone/fax numbers, street address, and map
- See a student project in digital form
- Read newsletters reporting on the current state of the school
- See multimedia from past school events

Students

Students need to be able to access information regarding classroom assignments, announcements from their individual teacher, and educational links. While this content goes beyond basic information, and is therefore not found on the home page, it should be easily accessible in a logical navigation system that makes sense to young users. Students will need to accomplish the following tasks:

- Quickly navigate to the teacher's homepage
- Access assignment instructions in universally accessible formats (PDF, RTF, HTML)
- Read announcements from the teacher's desk
- Plan for upcoming events in the classroom at the school at large
- Find a list of books available for checkout from the school library, including reading level information and Accelerated Reader point value
- Find teacher contact information and initiate communication with teachers
- Access links to educational games and supplemental material

Faculty

The faculty members of a school use the website for easy access to online applications, such as email, grade books, and attendance tools. They also login to post classroom information and assignment instructions and publish classroom projects. Finally, faculty members need to access basic information such as school announcements, educational links, and upcoming events. Here are the expected faculty tasks:

- Post content easily and quickly
- Create an image of individual classroom settings through descriptions and multimedia
- Post assignment instructions in universally accessible formats (PDF, RTF, HTML)

- Access email and use it to communicate with other faculty as well as parents
- Access other applications necessary for effective instruction
- Access links to educational material and lesson plans
- Plan for upcoming school events

Step 2: Scenario\Question Development

Scenario (Question Setting):

You are a fifth grade teacher at Killlearn Lakes Elementary School. You have a page on the website where you are expected to post information so that students and parents can access it. You also have two children who attend the school; one is in Kindergarten and the other is in Second Grade. As a parent, you use the website to access information about events coming up in the earlier grades as well as information about their teachers and projects. Because your children are so young, you have to help them access educational material and other information through the site.

Questions (Task-orient, related, and in order):

1. You want to find out the mission of the school along with a brief history of its existence. What would you do?
2. Now that you are familiar with the school, you want to find out more about its current faculty, including teachers and administrators. How would you find this information?
3. Specifically, you have been told that your child is enrolled in [teacher name]'s class. You want to find out more about her teaching style and experience. How would you get to these details?
4. You have a question for the school that you do not anticipate will be answered on the website. You decide to call the office. How do you find the phone number?

5. You have heard that the school is a “Blue Ribbon School”. Without leaving the site, how do you find out more about this award and what it means?
6. As the first day of school approaches, you have questions about your child’s bus route, school lunch prices, and where the school is located. Where do you look for these items?
7. You are interested in the extra-curricular activities and opportunities to get more involved with other parents at the school. Where do you find out about upcoming events?
8. You want to encourage your child to read more. Where do you find a list of books available for check-out from the school?

Step 3: Formal Protocol

Script

Good [time of day]! My name is [name] and I will be working with you today to evaluate Killlearn Lakes Elementary School’s new website. We sincerely appreciate your participation today.

We are testing a new version of the Killlearn Lakes website. To gather information on how easy this site is to use and navigate, I will be asking you to perform a series of tasks and verbally explain your actions. Do everything the way you normally would if you were browsing this site by yourself at home. Remember that this is a test of the site, which is still under development, and not a test of you.

There are no foreseeable risks to this study. However, if you should feel the need to terminate your participation in this test at any time, you may do so without any adverse affects.

Because this is a study of the usability of the site, I may not be able to completely answer all of your questions. However, feel free to ask questions as you see necessary. Try to speak your

thoughts, as every part of the user experience is valuable in evaluating the effectiveness of the site.

While you are performing the tasks, I will take notes such as how long each task takes, your comments and questions, and other relevant data. Any additional comments you wish to share about the strengths or weaknesses of the site will be taken into account as we continue the site's development.

Do you have any questions? [Answer questions]

Let's begin.

Questions

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Step 4: List of Potential Testers

- Brenda McGalliard, Principal, Killlearn Lakes Elementary School
- Joy Green, Media Specialist, Killlearn Lakes Elementary School
- Jo Curry, First Grade Teacher, Killlearn Lakes Elementary School
- Dillon Cook
- Max Cook
- Sarah Morgan
- Robert Vandergriff