Running Head: KLES USABILITY

Usability Test: Killearn Lakes Elementary School

David Schubert; Thomas Atwood;

Nick Cook; James Golz

LIS 3267 Group J

Florida State University

November 1, 2007

Usability Test

Part 1: Test Script and Questions

Script

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

We are testing a new version of the Killearn 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

1. You want to find out the mission of the school along with a brief history of its existence. What would you do?

2. No w 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 detail s?

4. You have a question for the school that you do not anticipate will be answered on the web site. 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?

Part 2: Test Results – Overall

The usability tests conducted by our four team members provided invaluable feedback as to the effectiveness of our site. Users included parents, community members, and students. The test was given to nine unique subjects, and these subjects navigated the site at varying levels of ease, finding information in different ways.

The responses varied based on the age and background of the users. Younger subjects found the site easy to navigate, being confused only by the portions of the site that are not yet finished. Older users made suggestions about the layout and color scheme. Most users were able to complete all tasks, and there were no instances of completely unusual or unexpected behavior.

Some suggestions included renaming of certain menu items, including Teacher Resources and KLES Home; making certain information more prominent, such as the NCLB Blue Ribbon Award page; removing extraneous information in order to emphasize important content; changing the color scheme to highlight links and other navigational tools; and moving some items, such as the list of library books, to a more logical location.

Users also commented on the positive aspects of the site. The consistent layout and navigation system were received well, and the format of text makes it readable. Aesthetic content such as the slideshow on the home page also received high praise.

Necessary changes include renaming menu items, revising the writing throughout the site, emphasizing the navigational menu, and reorganizing some pages. However, compared to the old site, even this prototype is a major improvement. The usability test has shown that we are on the right track to a site that communicates information well, and taking the results into account as we continue to revise the site will make it even better.

Part 3: Test Results – Individual

Evaluator 1: James Golz

For the usability test, I had two individuals whose names are Phillip Carns and Jeffrey Wood attempt to find eight different items on the web site. One of these individuals is a personal friend of mine, the other a co-worker. Neither is a parent of a child. I had both users try to find the mission of the school (and history), information about the faculty, information on specific teachers, phone number for the school, finding out what "Blue Ribbon School" means, bus route/lunches/school location, extra-curricular activities, and list of books available to check out at the school library.

I took notes on my observations as each user attempted to find each of the eight items. From my notes, I saw that in trying to find the mission and history of the school, User 1 went and looked at the principal's message first before finding the history under its appropriate area. User 2 viewed the menu options under the KLES Home area of the site and found the history page rather quickly.

For the next task of finding the faculty information, both users performed quickly, looking under the parents section. From there, the two users were also able to accomplish the third task of finding information on a specific teacher, as the teacher index has hyperlinks to each teacher's information.

Next, I asked the two users to attempt to find Killearn Lakes Elementary School's contact number on the website. User 1 saw the "Contact Us" link at the top and went there to get the information. User 2 simply scrolled down and saw the contact information displayed at the bottom of the page. This proves that it is important to list this information in multiple places, as we did.

The next task was to find out what a "Blue Ribbon" school is. I noticed that both users immediately spied the prominent "No Child Left Behind" graphic that also mentioned Blue Ribbon School. Both users then clicked on the prominent graphic to get the information.

With that task completed, I had the two users backtrack to the main page and from there attempt to find bus route information as well as lunch prices and directions to the school. These three items are all featured under "Parent Information", and the two users had no trouble logically locating them there.

Next on the agenda was to have both users try to find out more about extra-curricular activities available at Killearn Lakes Elementary School. User 1 seemed somewhat unsure of where to navigate to within the site. He first tried the "KLES Home" section and then saw the "Classes and Programs" area, where he then found the extra-curricular information. User 2 simply looked first under Classes and Programs, where he found the extra-curricular activities information immediately.

Finally, I tasked the users with finding the list of books available to check out from the library. I noticed that both users had difficulty trying to find the list of books available for checkout at the library. Both users first tried going to the "Library" section of the Killearn Lakes website only to find a "Coming Soon!" page. I noticed both users then move their cursors over each section of the Killearn Lakes site to try to find where the information could be. Both users we a little confused and did not understand why the book list was located under "Parent Information" instead of Library.

Once both users completed all of the tasks, I thanked them for their time and sent them on their way. Following my observations, changes I can suggest are:

Move the library's book listing to the library section of the menu instead of parent information

Make the faculty information a little more prominent – this will automatically occur as the current faculty information page is from the old site, and the new site's style sheet will automatically make faculty information more readable

Keep the rest of the layout the same – both users could everything else rather easily

The parent information section is very well done, keep it the same (exception being the library portion)

Everything else seemed easy enough for the two users to find

Evaluator 2: David Schubert

I administered the usability test to both of my parents, as they fit the audience of people who might use a site like this. With four children, they understand the need to access information online, especially in the elementary years.   My mother is even more equipped for this type of usability testing, as she is an elementary school teacher.

I tested my mother (User 1) first. Immediately I noticed that she is a content-focused browser: she does not notice or enjoy using navigation tools such as menus and search functions. When the home page did not mention anything about school history, she was unable to find this information. However, she did comment that as a parent, school history would not be the kind of information she was looking for. Question 2 was a little more challenging. She had difficulty finding teacher information because the "Teacher Information" menu item confused her. She recommends renaming this "Teacher Resources". Eventually she found the teacher information under the "Parent Info" menu item.   She commented on the hard-to-read styles of the Staff Contact page from Question 4. Fortunately, this page is from the old site, and it will be redesigned using the new styles, which she liked.

Question 5 (Blue Ribbon School) was very difficult for this user. She finally found it hidden in the menu, but never noticed the link to it in the left column of every page. This is because the icon (which says "No Child Left Behind") blends in with the page and is not built on a universal metaphor. Once she found the page, she criticized its content, stating that the unimportant information listed on the page detracts from important facts and figures. She quickly found the information requested in questions 6 and 7. For question 8, she looked for the information under the Library section of the menu. When this portion of

the menu is finished, a link will be here to the list of books, so in essence she looked in the right place. However, at the moment all she was able to find was a page that said "coming soon".

User 2 fully embraced the navigational tools built in to the site. He began with the search tool, typing "mission" to find the information requested in Question 1. He found the school's history quickly using the menu links. Like User 1, he was confused by the Teachers menu item, which should be renamed "Teacher Resources". He eventually found the requested information through the Classes and Programs section. Questions 4-7 were easy for this user, although the way he found the Blue Ribbon information requested in Question 5 took much more effort than necessary. Like User 1, this user expected a list of books to be available under the as-yet-unfinished Library section.

The biggest needs evidenced by these users are changing the title of the Teacher Resources menu section, moving the Blue Ribbon seal, and completing the Library menu section. Other possible changes include emphasizing navigational components and pruning extraneous information. Overall the users found the site useful and appealing.

Evaluator 3: Thomas Atwood

I administered the usability test of our prototype website to Robert Vandergriff and Sarah Morgan. I noticed that they found the site extremely easy to run through. They were able to answer the questions easily and navigate through the site smoothly. They were able to browse the site and find everything that they wanted. They commented on how nice the layout was and how well the site seemed to flow from link to link. Nothing really unusual happened; it all seemed to flow smoothly. They were able to find the events that were happening with the school, including times and dates. They were able to find all of the staff information and were able to find the contacts when necessary. They were also able to see some pictures that were offered throughout the site. One thing that I thought was nice to hear was

that they were happy about the site and they wish that their elementary school's website had offered features like this one to their parents.

 One thing that they had a small problem with is the links. They found it somewhat difficult to find the links due to color scheme. They said that they could find them but it took some searching to do so. However, once they discovered the menu they were able to get from link to link without any problems.

Evaluator 4: Nick Cook

The test subjects found the tasks to be very simple and easy to complete. No task took longer than a few seconds. The fact that some of the pages took them to off template pages proved to be annoying to many them. This problem would not exist in a completed site.

One reoccurring snag in the tasks was finding the blue ribbon award page. The KLES home tab proved to be a misleading name for the location. I feel this issue may be fixed by the simple act of changing this tab to About KLES or removing the home portion of the tab.

Of the three users tested, one had no problems at all with the site. The first user tested disliked the main navigation system, but was unable to offer any suggestions as to how it may be improved. This user and the third user both commented on the difficulty of finding the Blue Ribbon page, a task which we as designers thought would be very easy. This should be fixed in the site revision.