Teaching Tech Comm Certificate Webpage Usability Report

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Overview

- Background and Introduction
- Research Questions
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Background and Introduction

Teaching Technical Communication Graduate Certificate

Offered by the College of Arts & Sciences

Available: 🌐 **Online**

Print

- Website for the Graduate Certificate in Teaching Technical Communication that includes all information for prospective applicants
- Disorganized, text-heavy, and repetitive webpage
- Two pages for one certificate
- https://www.depts.ttu.edu/english/tcr/CTTC/CTTC-overview.php

English / Technical Communication & Rhetoric

Graduate Certificate in Teaching Technical Communication

Apply Here

Certificate applications are reviewed twice a year:

- Submit all materials by October 15 to begin your program in spring semester of the next year.
- Submit all materials by March 15 to begin your program in either the summer or fall of that year.

Research Question

- Research Question:
  - How well can users locate and identify program information, required materials, and contacts for the website?

- Though the website had other testable qualities, like poor navigation and repeated information, we wanted to see how easily users could find the website itself, application requirements, contact information, and required courses.

Methods of Data Collection

Entertaining	Reliable	Instructive	Slow
Trendy	Easy to Use	Insufficient	Straightforward
Boring	Effective	Intimidating	Stressful
Cumbersome	Efficient	Intuitive	Time-consuming
Simple	Familiar	Jargon-filled	Simplistic
Complicated	Fast	Stupid	Technical
Confusing	Frustrating	Modern	Trustworthy
Sensory overload	Hard to use	Outdated	Understandable
Difficult	Helpful	Organized	Unhelpful
Discouraging	Inconsistent	Overwhelming	Useful
Distracting	Informative	Robust	Wordy

- Completed a user background questionnaire and signed consent forms
- Performed real-world tasks on the site while thinking aloud
  - Locate application requirements for the Teaching Technical Communication Certificate at TTU starting at a search engine.
  - Begin at the Teaching Technical Communication Certificate webpage, locate a theory course, and say "I'm done" when you find it.
  - Starting on the Teaching Technical Communication Certificate page, find the contact information and say "I'm done" when you find the contact information.
- Answered questions about their overall experience
  - What did you like most about the Teaching Tech Comm Certificate webpage?
  - Did you find any aspect of the Teaching Tech Comm Certificate webpage frustrating?
  - If you could add one thing (perhaps a button or link) to the Teaching Tech Comm Certificate webpage, what would that be?
  - **Product Reaction Cards**

Test Participants

We recruited participants who resemble the characteristics of users based on our understanding of the variety of user personas.

Participant 1: Female, 19, Community Partner, Bachelor's, Used English Department website before (uses less than once a month)

Participant 2: Female, 22, Graduate Student, Bachelor's, Used English Department website before (uses a few times a month)

Participant 3: Male, 26, Attorney, Law Degree, Never used English Department website before

Results

Participant #1 found scenario 3 the hardest to complete (8 minutes)

Participant #2 rated the tasks as very easy, quick completion time for all (1 min)

Participant #3 found scenario 1 the hardest to complete (10 minutes)

Results Cont.

Building from the Certificate to the MA in Technical Communication

All of the courses in the certificate also apply to the MA in Technical Communication, so students wishing to develop their credentials even further can apply to continue their studies and enter the MATC program. Texas Tech is proud to offer its MA in Technical Communication both onsite and online. The degree is identical to the one we offer on-site.

For more information about the certificate in teaching technical communication, you may contact the Certificate Coordinator, Dr. Christiana Christofides.

CTTC - How to Apply

Applying for the Certificate in Teaching Technical Communication has several steps:

- Complete the Texas Tech graduate school application process
- A nonrefundable $65 application fee is required.
- Completed Graduate Application for Admission form
- Current resume/vitae
- Three letters of reference
- Distance Learning Agreement (if you're applying to an online program)
- A 500-700 word essay indicating the following:
  - Your interest in teaching technical communication
  - Any previous experience teaching technical writing
  - How the certificate fits in with your career goals and objectives, specifically how it will advance your career
  - If applicable -- if you are currently enrolled in a graduate degree program, how completing the course in the graduate certificate complements your degree plan

Likes: 1) Application review dates at the top, 2) Categories of courses, 3) All information on one page, courses listed, application requirements section

Frustrations: 1) Contact information and application requirements not being first, 2) none, 3) everything all the same color/ font-- difficulty in navigation, non-descriptive headings, contact info in the middle of the page; courses are prioritized over application requirements

Recommended changes: 1) sidebar for navigation, 2) contact information moved to the top, 3) contact information moved to the side or top
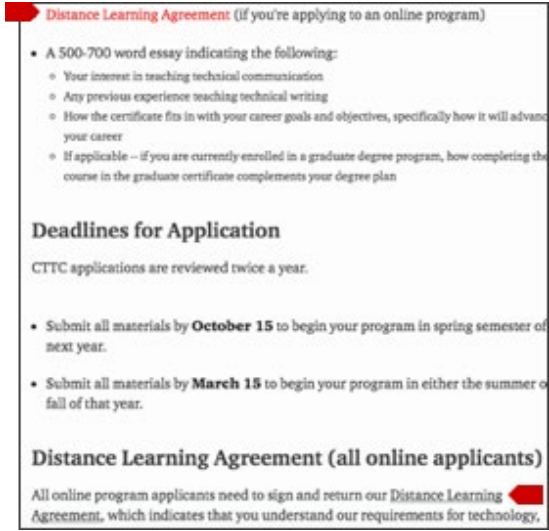
Product reaction cards:

- *Words added:* #1 - unorganized, #2 - none, #3 - dense
- Words repeated by more than one participant: Intimidating, Cumbersome, Time-consuming, Frustrating

Recommendations

- Create sidebar for navigation*
- Re-label contact information section and move to top of the page
- Move application requirements to the top of the page
- Remove repetitive content
- Fix broken links
- Create consistency in visual elements

*solves several of the problems