

Kenyon College  
User Testing Protocol  
April 7, 2008

## THE SAMPLE

Kenyon's Office of Public Affairs should locate 10-12 students willing to spend one to two hours reviewing the Web site. Ideally they should come from different grade levels. If at all possible, the sample should be weighted towards younger students, freshmen and sophomores. Everyone should bring their own laptops. If time allows, they can be asked to prepare answers to two questions: *What is the most important information you look for on a school's Web site?* and *How often do you use the Kenyon site, and what for?*

If appropriate, the students can be compensated; in the past, we've at least bought some pizzas.

## INTRODUCTION

One moderator (either from White Whale or Public Affairs) should do all the talking; all other observers should sit at the back of the room, behind the students. The meeting should be in a traditional classroom if possible, with desks facing forward. There must be enough room for everyone to sit comfortably; it shouldn't feel cramped.

The moderator introduces himself (or herself) and the other members of the team, and asks for (and writes down) the first names of all students attending. Opening language ought to sound something like this:

*You're here to help us evaluate the new Kenyon Web site. We have completely redesigned the site visually, and we've also reorganized the site's content into a new navigation architecture. Our goals have been first, to better reflect the real nature of the Kenyon community, and second, to make information easier to access.*

*We're hoping you will help us evaluate our success in both of these areas. First, we're going to give you a link to a beta version of the new site, and we'll have you just spend some time with it: click around, check it out, and tell us what you think. Then we're going to ask you to do a few specific tasks, and we'll see if the site makes it easy enough for you to get what you're looking for.*

We can take questions, if there are any. Then we begin the test.

## PART I: INTERVIEW

For starters, the moderator will ask the group for its answers to the questions posed before the testing. (If there wasn't time to solicit answers in advance, the questions can be posed at the very start of the presentation, to give students some time to think up some answers. And they can be projected on a screen, or written on a whiteboard, if appropriate.)

*What is the most important information you look for on a school's Web site?*

*How often do you use the Kenyon site, and what for?*

To make sure everyone responds, the moderator should ask each student one at a time for his/her answers (ideally, not in linear order but randomly selecting, to keep everyone engaged). The moderator writes down all the answers (and each of the observers ought to write down the answers as well, to ensure nothing gets lost). It's important to get everything; users' answers to these questions, as they'll be part of the third phase of the test.

As part of the answers to these questions, students are welcome to discuss their opinions of the current Kenyon site, although we're more interested in the positive ways they use the Kenyon site. Students may well answer that they don't use the site at all; in that case, we should ask a followup question about sites they *do* visit for Kenyon-related reasons. This should take perhaps a minute or two per student.

## PART II: FREEFORM SITE REVIEW

At this point, the moderator distributes Questionnaire Part A (attached to this document), reminding students to write their names on them. The students are given the Web address of the beta version of the site, and are given five minutes to click and surf around. The questionnaire asks general questions about the look and feel of the site, which the students can fill out in writing.

During this time, the moderator (with help from the observers if necessary) goes through the students' answers from Part I, and selects some of them to serve as tasks in Part III.

## PART III: SPECIFIC TASKS

Once the students are done, and have turned in Part A of the questionnaire, the moderator distributes Part B (and again, reminds them to add their names). Questionnaire Part B asks students to complete a particular set of 14 tasks (such as finding financial aid deadlines, visiting information, etc.).

Note: Although the questionnaire has 9 tasks pre-filled, these should be taken as preliminary and adjusted as needed before testing begins— ideally by someone separate from the information architecture development process.

The final 5 tasks on Part B will be left blank; at the start of this session, the moderator will announce these tasks (which students can write in) at the start of the session. The write-in tasks will be taken from students' answers in Part I.

For each task, students will be asked two questions: *Where did you find this on the site?* and *How easy was it to find this information?* At the end of the process, the students will be asked to turn the paper over and write any thoughts they have about the navigability of the site on the back. (This will allow everyone to see when the testers have finished their work.)

#### PART IV: OPEN DISCUSSION

By the time students have been through Parts I-III, they'll have a pretty good idea of how the new site works. The moderator will now introduce a period of open discussion with some language like this:

*By now you've gotten a sense of how the new site works. How do you feel about it? Do you think it works for, or "feels like," Kenyon? Obviously we're well along in the process, and we've had a lot of feedback along the way, but any comments or questions you have at all about the site are welcome.*

It's fine for students to be idly clicking through the site during this part, which they will be. And it's OK for the observers to participate more actively now, asking questions of their own if they've got them.

At the end of this discussion (which shouldn't take more than 10-15 minutes unless students are especially talkative), we collect the questionnaires, thank the subjects, and conclude the test.

KENYON COLLEGE  
SITE REDESIGN: USER TESTING

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire Part A:** Freeform site review

Testing site address: [www.beta.kenyon.edu](http://www.beta.kenyon.edu) (adjust as needed)

1. Does the new homepage seem intended for a particular audience? If so, whom and why?
2. Does it adequately represent what Kenyon's like?
3. There's an element of the homepage that invites student participation. Did you find it? (yes/no) Do you think you might be interested in participating?
4. Click through the site in any way that you feel like for a few minutes, and write down any impressions you have along the way, anywhere on this page (or on the back). And circle any of the following adjectives that you think apply to this design (adding more if you need them).

clean	busy	dynamic	lively	classic
outdated	modern	loud	unique	marketing
warm	cold	friendly	stylish	confusing
slick	clear	cheesy	quiet	interesting

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire Part B:** Specific tasks

Testing site address: [www.beta.kenyon.edu](http://www.beta.kenyon.edu) (adjust as needed)

Please use the new site to find the following pieces of information, and for each answer the corresponding questions.

1. *Information about deadlines for financial aid applications*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

2. *Information about where to park when visiting campus*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

3. *A list of all academic departments*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

4. *Opportunities for community service at Kenyon*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

5. *A list of Kenyon student groups*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

6. *Descriptions of Kenyon residence halls*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

7. *Swimming team scores and schedules*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

8. *Information for international applicants*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

9. *Information about Kenyon's biology program*

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

10. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

11. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

12. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

13. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?

14. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find it? (What link, path, etc.)

Was it easy to find? Did you expect to find it somewhere else?