

Incorporating Information Literacy Frames in Document Design

ENG 319: DOCUMENT DESIGN

BACKGROUND

The final project is an initiative to investigate workplace information situation on our campus. It is part of the applied learning experience that seeks to fulfill the following student learning outcomes:

- Apply industry-standard digital affordances to solve design problems
- Experience problem-based learning (Ertmer et al., 2015, p.15) to solve real-life problems
- Expand technical vocabulary in the field of information and document design
- Gain professional understanding of information as a unit of analysis
- Recognize the function of situated context in influencing design outcomes
- Appreciate the concept of social contract as a relationship between the information designer and the client

The project is premised on problem-based learning approach by “integrating theory and practices, designing and conducting research, and applying knowledge and skill” (Ertmer et al., 2015, p.15) to solve real-life problems. The process of inquiry embodies the three frames of information literacy: (a) information creation as a process, (b) information has value, (c) searching as strategic exploration. Through your practice, you will directly explore these frames as you apply design theory, information mapping, and document design to solve context-based problems.

PURPOSE

This is an exploratory research project to understand workplace interruptions of administrative assistants, henceforth users, in three departments in the College of Arts and sciences.

- *Primary*: to investigate interruptions in task flow of administrative assistants (users) in the departments of communication studies, sociology and criminology, and psychology.
- *Secondary*: to design interruption maps using document design and data visualization and user experience (UX) principles to help users understand interruptions in workplace.

DESCRIPTION

Interruptions disrupt task flow in workplace, reducing the real time available to complete an activity. While few interruptions are routine and self-imposed, there are many that are unpredictable and uncontrollable, adversely affecting primary tasks.

For this assignment, you will investigate the forms of interruptions affecting administrative staffs (users) from three departments and create an interruption map, offering a visual understanding of the phenomenon. The goals of interruption map are to help users understand the following components:

- Context of interruptions (self-imposed, internal, external)
- Degree of interruptions (anticipated or positive and unanticipated or negative)

- Nature of interruptions (types such as digital versus human and sources such as email, phone, students, etc.)
- Magnitude of interruptions (time, frequency, and duration)
- Severity of interruptions (negligible, mild, disruptive)

The five components of interruptions determine the structure and conditions that shape workplace interruptions.

FORMAT

The main task is divided into two phases.

Phase I: research and prototyping [information creation as a process-IL1; searching as strategic exploration-IL3]

In a team of three, you will interview of the users from an assigned department. Your task will be to collect first-hand data to answer the five components of interruptions. You will also collect interruption logs of self-tracking data from your user that broadly tracks interruptions over a period of two weeks, divided into four two-hour blocks per day.

Based on the two sets of data, your team will code the information into understandable categories, visually representing interruption data through a prototype of the final map. The team will share the prototype with the user and conduct a brief usability test for feedback. At this stage, you need to include all the relevant categories and a layout indicating the connections among the categories.

Phase II: mapping and reflection [information has value -IL2]

At this stage, your team produces the final map incorporating the relevant qualitative data from the research. The final product includes a visualization of all interruptions for the user by embedding color-coded data, appropriate diagrams, relevant annotations, and explanatory textual information; additionally, the version must also map relevant “information” only as distinguished from “un-information” and “non-information”(as discussed in class).

The final product must incorporate user feedback into its design process to address and clarify task flow interruptions with respect to the five mapping goals outlined in the foregoing section. Your team may create a single map or can group interruptions into separate maps. The number of maps should not exceed three in total. In addition to the map, you will complete individual final reflection (500 word) discussing the research process (interview questions, usability test, design decisions), preparedness for the project, learning experiences, and impact of the work on others. The reflection will be based on the prompts provided by the instructor.

FINAL DELIVERABLE

- At least one but no more than three interruption maps (as a team)
- Reflection on project (individual)