Leveraging Wiki's Connective Intelligence in the UX Classroom

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Project Description

Collective intelligence refers to the shared intelligence that emerges from mass collaboration or the mass processing of information, particularly common to information communication technologies (Johnson, 1998; Lévy, 1999). Among these ICTs, wikis and Wikipedia emerged as a place for collaborative knowledge-making. In particular, studies in the early 2000s have focused on Wikipedia's ability to foster collective intelligence (Swarts, 2009) or collective action (Muller, 2007).

However, more recently, studies of collectivity have shifted to *connectivity*. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2013) describe connective action as a different kind of action economy because, unlike collective action, it does not rely on a distributive force since connective actions are rooted in a sharing economy. Wikipedia, and wikis more generally, reflect connectivity as connective intelligence in that edits and entries represent a constellation of *individual* expressions (Roberts & Xiong-Gum, 2022).

Our project, then, seeks to harness the connective intelligence of wikis to build a repository of user experience (UX) projects for both professors and students. Currently, few resources exist for teachers of technical communication looking to engage with UX teaching, despite UX's status as a growing field. Of the few sites available, Drs. Rose and Turner's UX Pedagogy provides a promising social space for sharing materials and connecting with other TPC UX instructors. Our aim is to augment existing resources, like this one, and provide a space for students to engage with UX work.

We envision this project as akin to Instructables.com and WikiHow.com, sites where public audiences can submit and/or edit instructions. However, instead of instructions, our repository would include user experience case studies and activities, such as "Prototypes of a library app" or "User sketching a photo transfer system." These wiki articles would provide both instructions for how to undertake the UX activity and examples of how different students have conceptualized the final product. Ultimately, our goal is to harness the connective intelligence of wikis to create a repository that is useful to both students and instructors.

Significance

This project has benefits to the SIGDOC community both pedagogically and theoretically. Pedagogically, the repository has a clear mission, which is to connect and build an archive of sharable and iterative teaching materials. Our project values sharing and difference over the flattening of student and instructor needs by housing a constellation of ways of designing and approaching designs. By returning to the wiki format, instructors are able to add to and share existing information that is not lost when migrating from one LMS to another or as students graduate. This repository seeks to demonstrate that knowledge, even teaching resources and

"finished student work" are always evolving to reflect changing student bodies, interests, and learning goals, thus echoing UX's iterative design process.

In terms of theoretical contributions, we will measure connective intelligence in action. In other words, we would like to determine whether the connective intelligence of wikis is successful. We would measure the number of contributors, their location, and kinds of contributions. Later, we will analyze these variables into a study. In short, our website will primarily act as an interactive repository, and, secondarily, as data for understanding how our repository is being used. Thus, this project will help us to better understand connective action and how to facilitate connective intelligence across the field in terms of teaching.

Methodology

Our first phase of the project will involve the initial development of the site. In early January, we plan to create the site and add the first set of UX activities. The site will be a WordPress site with a wiki plug-in that allows for collaborative writing. Toward the end of January, using another source of funding, we will hire a student worker to help us with the design and layout of the website. This site will be developed as we progress through the semester.

In the second phase of the project, we will begin implementing the site. The site will be used almost immediately after its launch by students in our courses. We are both teaching UX courses: Civic Media and Designing for Usability. Civic media, taught at Furman University, focuses on participatory methods and user experience to design mobile application prototypes for various user needs. Similarly, Designing for Usability, taught at University of Wisconsin-Platteville, combines elements of document design, technical communication, and user experience to explore how to solve usability problems with technical documents. For these courses, we plan to add a series of UX activities that students from both institutions can complete and provide feedback on. We'll then ask students to upload their responses to the activities, as well as an image of their final product.

After the courses have completed, we will assess strengths and weaknesses of the website. In June 2023, we will conduct a content audit and needs assessment to determine what content was added to the site and what additional content is needed.

After completing our assessment, we will enter into the third phase of our project, where we share our findings and encourage other instructors to implement the site into their courses. We would publicize our website to members of the TPC community and distribute our website on the attw listserv. Further, we hope to publish our findings in *Communication Design Quarterly.* Additionally, we plan to reach out for collaborators on the site. These collaborators should be willing to add UX activities to the site and have their students engage with using the wiki.

Budget

We are requesting $1,200 to fund this repository for three years. This includes salary, website hosting and domain registration, and incidentals. The table below outlines in detail how we will use this funding.

Item	Description	Amount
Salary	2 Professors @$400	$800
Website Hosting and Domain	WordPress Premium @$8/month x 36 months = $288 Free domain for 1 year + $20/year x 2 = $40	$328
Incidentals	Taxes, fees, plug-in costs	$72
		$1,200

Citations

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