

***My UW-Madison* Pilot Survey of Biology Majors**

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Background

As part of the ongoing pilot testing of the *My UW-Madison*, approximately 560 biology undergraduates were given access to the student portal during the Fall '00/'01 semester. The overarching goal of *My UW-Madison* is to give students a tailored view of instructional resources available to them, such as course materials, timetable information, and library access, as well as information about campus life and student finances. A working model of *My UW-Madison* was developed and students were introduced to the portal via a series of email messages sent to them throughout the semester. Part of the evaluation of *My UW-Madison* involved a series of focus groups and a survey administered at the end of the semester. The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Troubleshoot the service by pilot testing the portal with real students
- Gauge student acceptance and use of the portal through web hit stats and a survey
- Determine appeal of various modules in the portal and desire for potential modules

Methodology

A web-based survey was determined to be an appropriate medium to field a questionnaire, since the portal was itself web-based and a comprehensive list of student emails was available. A questionnaire was developed with members of The *My UW-Madison* advisory board. This questionnaire was posted on a website and each student was sent an email explaining the purpose of the survey and its location. Most users simply needed to click on the URL within their email application. Each student received a unique URL, ensuring the security of the site.

Of the 551 students contacted, 114 completed the survey for a response rates of 21%. This corresponds to a margin of error of +/- 8.2%.

The respondents in this survey include students who remained Biology majors throughout the semester and those who transferred into other programs. According to records obtained at the end of the semester, 422 of 560 students remained Biology majors. All students who were declared Biology majors at the beginning of the semester were given access to *My UW-Madison*, sent a monthly email update on status changes, and were solicited for participation in this survey. Thus, even non-Biology majors could have used *My-UW Madison* during Fall semester and their responses can be considered as informative with remaining Biology majors. It may be that many switched into related majors such as Bacteriology, Botany, Genetics, etc. and would have found the *My UW-Madison* modules as useful as when they were Biology majors. At any rate, these individuals were given continued access to the portal.

Thirty-four percent of the 114 respondent in this survey had dropped the Biology major during the semester. While they were somewhat more likely to have not used My UW-Madison than Biology majors (80% versus 67%, respectively), this difference was not statistically significant.

Notes on Data Reporting

Not all students answered all questions, so the number of respondents included in each item may vary. Because of this, the number of valid respondents is included in each table below. Also note that the margin of error may be greater for questions in which relatively few of the students responded.

A copy of the survey instrument as it appeared on the web is located in Appendix B. This may be useful in providing explanations for response option descriptions.

Summary

- According to this survey, less than a third of the pilot students used *My UW-Madison*. This figure awaits evidence from web hit statistics. Regardless, many students did not opt to use the portal this semester, the major reason being a lack of time. Another common reason cited by respondents was a lack of knowledge of *My UW-Madison* and what it could accomplish for them.
- Those who did use the portal tended use it between a half and one hour per week.
- Overall, *My UW-Madison* was given a rating of 78 out of 100, similar to the overall rating given it in focus groups (76).
- The Financial tab fared relatively poorly, both in this survey (70) and focus groups (69). Further, when asked to rate the usefulness of future features of *My UW-Madison*, respondents gave Financial Information moderate usefulness ratings compared with other potential features.
- Response to including online registration, more course information and a personalized calendar was--not surprisingly--very positive. Online registration has been a well-documented priority among students for years.
- Among the portal's users, few used it as their start page (23%). However, other data hinted that students were not uniformly knowledgeable about how a portal is defined (see Question 30).
- Ownership and operating system data mirrored that obtained in campus-wide surveys.

1. Did you use or visit *My UW-Madison* at any time during this semester?

Only 28% of respondents had used or visited the *My UW-Madison* site during the semester. There was some indication that the question wording was ambiguous, in that a student may have visited the site once, but did not have enough experience to speak informatively about the portal. Future versions of this question should be more carefully constructed to take into account such idiosyncracies.

Besides providing a measure of use among the pilot students, this question functioned as a screening tool; only those students who indicated they had used *My UW-Madison* were asked about their experience with the portal. Non-users were asked to indicate reasons why they did not use the portal and then taken to Question 19, which tried to determine interest in possible additions to the service.

| | n=112 |
|-----|--------------|
| Yes | 27.7% |
| No | 72.3% |

2. What are the reasons you did not use *My UW-Madison*? [Check all that apply]

This question was only asked of non-users. Besides time constraints, many respondents indicated that they were not aware of the service or what it was. These comments were solicited by the “other” category and the verbatim responses are reported in Appendix A at the end of this report.

| | n=81 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Did not have time to use it | 50.6% |
| Not enough computer experience | 2.5% |
| Could not get logged in | 0.0% |
| Could not get the help I needed | 0.0% |
| Other | 37.0% |

3. Approximately how many **hours per week** did you use *My UW-Madison*?

Those respondents who used *My UW-Madison* reported using it an average 1.06 hours per week (SD=1.8).

| | n=31 |
|------------------|-------------|
| Less than ½ hour | 32.3% |
| ½ hour to 1 hour | 51.7% |
| More than 1 hour | 16.1% |

4 - 10. Using a scale of 0 (Not Useful at all) to 100 (Extremely Useful), please rate the usefulness of each of the following modules in *My UW-Madison*. If you did not use a module, check "Did not use".

The modules in the table below are ranked according to use. The Academic module was the most used while Finance was used least. The best ratings were given to Campus Life, Library and Academic modules. Interestingly, My Front Page received the poorest rating.

| | Did not use | Mean rating |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Academic | 15.2% | 75.7 |
| My Front Page | 21.2% | 61.8 |
| My Record | 21.2% | 72.8 |
| Calendar | 42.4% | 68.2 |
| Campus Life | 45.4% | 81.4 |
| Library | 54.5% | 75.8 |
| Finance | 63.6% | 70.0 |

11 - 17. Using the same scale of 0 (Not Useful at all) to 100 (Extremely Useful), please rate the usefulness of each of these features of *My UW-Madison*.

As with the table above, the features below are ranked according to use. The Personalize feature was most popular but rated relatively poorly. Notice that while many of the other ratings are quite positive, they were not used by many respondents.

Overall, respondents gave the portal a rating of 78.3. It is somewhat puzzling that 12% of these respondents indicated they did not use *My UW-Madison*. Possibly, these individuals did visit the *My UW-Madison* site, but felt they did not use it enough to form an overall opinion. This again indicates that the concept of “use” may be more complex than thought.

| | Did not use | Mean rating |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Personalize | 42.4% | 63.6 |
| Add/Delete Modules | 54.5% | 77.1 |
| Logout/Timeout | 69.7% | 82.5 |
| Edit/Minimize/Maximize | 69.7% | 83.9 |
| Help | 70.0% | 63.5 |
| Print | 87.9% | 92.5 |
| Overall | 12.1% | 78.3 |

18. Would you recommend that other students and faculty use *My UW-Madison* if it were made available to them?

This finding may be useful for promoting *My UW-Madison*; the vast majority of users would recommend it to other students and faculty.

| | n=32 |
|-----|-------------|
| Yes | 81.3% |
| No | 18.8% |

19. What additional features would like to see in *My UW-Madison*?

Only 9 of the 33 users responded to this question and their comments varied somewhat. The responses to this question can be seen in Appendix A.

20 - 26. If the following features were added in the future, how useful would they be to you? Please use the 0 (Not Useful at all) to 100 (Extremely Useful) scale to rate each of the following features.

Both users and non-users were asked the rest of the questions contained in this survey. Below are the average usefulness ratings for potential features that could be added to the portal. Detailed course information and online registration were rated very positively. Additional personalization and news features were considered not very useful.

| | Mean rating (n=102) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Detailed information about course structure, grading, and instructor background | 94.2 |
| Online registration | 91.1 |
| A printable calendar | 82.0 |
| Web-based e-mail | 75.1 |
| Financial information | 75.0 |
| Additional personalization | 48.6 |
| Worldwide news, stock quotes, and other syndicated content | 46.1 |

27. What other features and/or information would you like added to *My UW-Madison* in the future?

About 18% of respondents answered this question and their comments are not easily summarized. These are listed in Appendix A.

Demographics and Descriptives

28. How would you describe yourself as an Internet user?

The majority of student considered themselves moderate or “experienced” Internet users. See Appendix B for definitions.

| | n=106 |
|-------------|--------------|
| Power user | 23.6% |
| Experienced | 69.8% |
| Novice | 6.6% |

29. Do you use the *My UW-Madison* portal as your start page when connecting to the Internet?

Only users answered this question, indicating that about 23% used the *My UW-Madison* portal as their start page.

| | n=31 |
|-----|-------------|
| Yes | 22.6% |
| No | 77.4% |

30. Do you use any other portals as your start page when connecting to the Internet?

Thirty-eight percent of respondents said they used another portal as their start page, but a quick look at the portals they listed in Appendix A indicates that some respondents were confused by the concept of “portal.” For example, some respondents listed the UW home page as a portal.

| | n=101 |
|-----|--------------|
| Yes | 37.6% |
| No | 62.4% |

31. What type of computer do you currently use at the UW?

The vast majority of respondents are PC users. These figures are similar to those campus-wide found in annual Student Computing Surveys.¹

| | n=106 |
|-----|--------------|
| PC | 89.6% |
| Mac | 17.0% |

32. Do you own a computer?

About 80% of respondents own their own computers, which is also in line with campus-wide data.

| | n=106 |
|-----|--------------|
| Yes | 80.2% |
| No | 19.8% |

33. Year in school:

Without similar data about the population of students to whom this survey was sent, one can say little about whether the following two tables represent aberrations from normal. The respondents to this survey were overwhelmingly female freshman, but this may be the case with biology majors piloting the portal.

| | n=105 |
|-----------|--------------|
| Freshman | 61.0% |
| Sophomore | 13.3% |
| Junior | 14.3% |
| Senior | 11.4% |

34. Gender:

| | n=106 |
|--------|--------------|
| Female | 74.5% |
| Male | 25.5% |

¹ see <http://www.doit.wisc.edu/research/00student/trends/index.html>

Appendix A - Verbatims

Q2, Other Verbatims

did not know about it
Did not think it would be useful
didn't feel the need to use it
Didn't feel the need to use it.
didn't have to
didn't hear about it
didn't know about it
didn't know about it.
didn't know how to use it
didn't know it existed
didn't know it existed
didn't know what it was
didn't need it
didn't really need it
Didnt know about it
don't know what it is
Don't know what it is
Don't really know how it benefits me
dont know about it
Frankly didn't care to
Have never heard of it
I'm not sure what My UW-Madison is.
I'm not sure what website it is. If it's "www.wisc.edu", I use it quite frequently.
i didn't really know what it was
I didn't want to use it. I didn't have any reason to use it.
I don't have any clue what it is
i don't know what it is
I don't know what it is
I dont even know what it is.
I have no clue what My UW-Madison is.
never heard of it
Never heard of it
never needed to use it
no need to
not sure of biology major
not sure what it is
what is it?

Q19 Verbatims

*Faster loading *something like a DARS report, but immediate access *usable weather module
*email link to advisor *module like Biology Course Info for all classes on campus *instead of
(or maybe in addition to) a class list, a class grid (like on EASI)

A check-off sheet personalized to show what courses are left to take for graduation.

a more complete off campus housing list

a way to connect with other students using My UW-Madison?

Most students just their computers to get to MSworks(or the equivalent), Netscape, or to their e-mail. Having a personalized screen, seems a bit redundant to the services that are already available through WiscWorld. Maybe I'd be motivated to use it mo

Nothing, it is very complete.

Other Website References, be able to create our own web links.....

personalized calendar system that would enable the student to add information to the calendar and which could also send them email reminders.

Web based e mail, online class registration, my options to personalize 'My Madison', ability to sync your desktop calendar (ie office 200) with the online calendar and the ability to add dates important to you and customize the calenday more.

Q27 Verbatims

A direct access!!!! Install an icon into the university system computers, so one can just go directly there. That will not help me at home(already installed wiscworld), but at least it'd help when I'm using the Unversity computers.

add the stock quotes, news headlines

Additional information on courses that should be taken for each major, or a detailed (path) that a student would follow while registering for classes. This would ensure that the correct classes are being taken that are required for a students major. -

Allow it to be used as a server to make a personal web page through the school.

I'd like to know exactly what it is and how to get to it... sorry, i guess i live in a cave or something

I don't know about anything else, but #21 definately!!!

I don't know what My UW-Madison is!!!!

I think I am going to have to visit it again first.

I think that My UW-Madison is a good idea, but it really needs to be redesigned. The Front page would be really good if it had more necessary information. For example, I would like to see a course schedule on the Front page so I would know where i was

If most of these were to be added the site would be perfect.

Maybe a listing of all the cultural, musical, and other fun events going on. Or maybe past students reviews of different professors and what they're like.

naked ladies

none

None

None that I can think of right now.

Past test scores from Professors.

Pictures of Cool UW events

please make on-line course registration avaiable!!!!!!

see previous

Surveys on courses taken

The ability to easily access any web formatted homework, review information, lecture notes etc. I realize that can be found on Web CT, but that does not always function properly.

The background of teachers and classes would be great! If you could get HONEST student feedback and class averages regarding certain classes and Professors, I would definitely use your program!

Q30 Verbatims

ARCH start page
dellnet
Excite
Gateway.net
Google
hotmail
Hotmail
hotmail, yahoo
<http://hotmail.com>
msn
MSN
msn, netscape
MSN, Netscape
msn.com
netscape
UW homepage
webcrawler
What's a portal? Sorry guys.
wisc.edu
wisconsin homepage
wiscworld homepage
www.go.com
www.hotbot.com
www.mail.yahoo.com
www.metacrawler.com
www.wisc.edu
www.yahoo.com, www.wisc.edu, www.yahoo.co.uk
yahoo
yahoo on internet explorer

Appendix B - Survey Instrument