

IT521 Usability Test of a Web Authoring Tool: WIX  
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**i. Wix: A Web Authoring Tool.**

Wix.com is a web design platform that is free and marketed as professional yet easy to use because of the intuitive nature, pre-designed templates, free images and tutorials available. All 3 members of the team had previously selected Wix as their portfolio hosting site. In a synchronous class session for IT521, Dr. Howard provided examples of portfolios completed by past IT Online graduates. Our group noticed that the portfolios we found to be well designed and professionally done were created using Wix. Therefore, Wix is the tool that was chosen to conduct our usability test.

**ii. Genre of Tools for Selection**

Description of the genre of tools in which this item falls. Include the names of two competing tools, or tools that were also considered for the test and why they were not selected.

The team discussed four website building options that included; Wix, Google Sites, WordPress and Squarespace. These sites are in a genre of website building tools that are quick to set up, optimized for mobile and are cost effective. The factors our team considered were: cost, complexity of the process and intuitive nature of the product itself. Keeping cost as low as possible was a central goal for our test. Google Sites is a simple website building tool and was not chosen because the group felt it was too simple and lacked a professional nature. Our group members have used Google Sites in the past and felt that its simplicity worked against it and restricted users' ability to customize their pages. WordPress is complicated and can require plug-ins and is not as intuitive. Its higher-end templates have to be purchased, which would work against our low-cost goals for the usability test. WordPress also charges monthly or annual fees depending on the options that are selected. Squarespace was discussed and was considered to be professional yet cost-ineffective. There is a free trial available for Squarespace, but once the trial runs out there is a monthly fee required to use the platform.

**iii. Description of the generalized target that you feel you are designing for**

The team was looking for a website authoring tool that could be used for higher education portfolio hosting. All three members, currently in graduate school, agreed that they were building their portfolio in Wix and had conducted preliminary testing of the functionality briefly yet mostly successfully. One member was aware of the TN 4-H program that had over 200 secondary education students using Wix to host portfolios that gave confidence to the target audience of undergraduate students to perform the usability test. Age range and reading level of the testers was assumed to be at the undergraduate level however we did not give special consideration to gender or other demographic characteristics of the testers.

**iv. What features do the web authoring tool provide to users? What do these features afford?**

Wix affords users the ability to design and create high quality and professional-looking websites for personal pages, blogs, portfolios (which is our use case for the purposes of this test), or businesses. Users can choose from a wide variety of pre-made templates that can be customized to meet their needs. Wix pages also provide a mobile editor so

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users can optimize their page for viewing on mobile devices. Drag and drop functionality allows users to quickly rearrange elements on their pages without requiring them to know how to write code using HTML or CSS. While not part of our usability test, Wix also affords users the ability to create an online store using their e-commerce platform.

**v. What are the likely tasks that the user will engage in with the web authoring tool?**

Users will log in with a pre-made account and will navigate the Wix interface to complete a list of assigned tasks. They will be asked to rearrange and customize certain elements of the page by editing pre-existing text, uploading a provided headshot image, and changing the background image of their page. The users will also add and remove social media links and edit the navigation bar by creating a new page, renaming a page, and deleting a page. Finally, they will be asked to preview their site and save their changes. These activities represent tasks that we anticipate an average user would perform while creating a portfolio page in Wix.

**vi. The methods you employed to execute the test. (Describe your “low cost methods”.)**

As part of the planning process we decided to use free resources to eliminate any potential costs for the group and the participants.. The users were given free gmail accounts to use to login and create a free wix site. They were provided an instructions with specific tasks listed and a free headshot picture to upload. Quicktime is a free screen recording software and was used to document the process.

**vii. Provide your usability test results.**

The users participated in pre and post test surveys. The pretest showed that  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the users had experience using web authoring tools, had edited a website and used WordPress. None had previous experience with Wix. They were asked how comfortable they were with technology and the responses varied: 6-9 with an average of 7.66. The post-test showed that 2 users indicated that Wix was user friendly and rated an average of 7.5 while the third user rated it a 2. This split in scores was indicated again when asked if they would consider using Wix to build their own website with 2 users rating an average of 7.5 and the third rated it a 1.

The three users took an average time of 11:07 to work on the task with a high of 12:26, a low of 9:15 and the deviation was 3:11.

Task 1. Sign into Wix. Two users had difficulty signing in to the site and tried to sign up instead. Self corrected.

Task 2. Open the editor took from 22-35 seconds for the users to complete with one using the help feature to successfully find it. Once they found the editor the next task seemed intuitive.

Task 3-5 The users were successful and expedient and all completed the following close to 2:30: Personalize the Text, change the picture and change the background.

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Task 6: Change the social media icon. This task probably required more specific directions as they hesitated. Two users took 30 seconds and one 1:10, however one user deleted the icon.

Centering the Social Media icons had two users trying to center automatically the third deleted her icon.

Task 7: In the navigation bar, Add a page, remove a page, and rename a page. This section the users were not as successful and took from 1:20-3 minutes and only 2 of the 3 were able to complete the task. One was stuck in blog mode and unable to edit the navigation bar at all. The other 2 users were able to preview the site, log out and complete the post-test.

#### **viii. Conclusions drawn from the test.**

Overall, Editing content and adding photos were an easy task. The changing and updating navigation task appeared to need more instruction as it is a more complex request and the users had difficulty. One user tried right clicking to make changes where others did not try this feature and all accomplished the task.

It seems the overall navigability and abundance of editing tools made the task more complicated. Users had a hard time finding exactly where to go even starting out their page edit.

The group agreed that based solely on the usability testing we individually would not have chosen Wix. However, based on class breakout sessions and investigation of other IT portfolios, each has chosen to build their professional portfolio website in Wix. The decisions to build in Wix were made prior to the usability test.

#### **ix. Tool recommendations for potential users**

Given more time the tool is very valuable, but in a testing scenario the users had difficulty with the more complex tasks. We chose Wix because we liked the portfolios that other IT Online students had created using the platform.

If you are using it for the first time, we would recommend starting with one of the available templates rather than starting from scratch. Choosing a suitable existing template and customizing it to meet your needs would likely save time and frustration. The built-in help feature can help with understanding how to use the product, and taking advantage of tutorial resources like LinkedIn Learning would also be helpful. Try to limit the scope of what you are trying to create to avoid being overwhelmed by the number of options.

#### **x. Plausible future design improvements specific to the tested tool as they related to design failures discovered in your test.**

There were several areas that were not as easily accomplished as others that leads to a need for design improvements. It seems like the navigation bar/pages are a bit difficult, the standard edit button seems hidden and basic navigation within the edit tool wasn't intuitive. We found these surprising based on the wide-spread use of this tool within the IT Portfolios sites visited..

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The addition of easy to follow breadcrumbs would help with navigating your site; one of our testers became lost in the Blog tool and had trouble finding her way out. A more robust new user experience to guide users through site creation and editing would be helpful in keeping new users from being overwhelmed by the number of options available in Wix.

**xi. Plausible improvements to your execution of planning of the usability test itself.**

Although the team went through the instructions for the usability test, several tasks were more difficult than others and needed more specific instructions. The Gmail login that was provided for creating the sites confused two of the users. Users seemed to be confused by the social media bar task, and the navigation bar task could have specified which pages the users were to delete and rename. These tasks were deliberately kept vague in an attempt to not guide the users too much as we did not want to influence user behavior in a way that might compromise the goals of our usability test. In future testing we believe it would be possible to provide more guidance to users without giving them strict instructions.

For this test we recorded the users' screen activity using QuickTime, but in future testing we would consider using a program that would automatically calculate the number of screen clicks that users perform during the test. Tallying the number of clicks would provide us with information on overall usability of the product; if users spend considerable time and energy clicking icons across the screen hunting for what they need, it may indicate that the product is less user-friendly.

**xii. References of cited sources.**

No references cited