

### FOCUSED FEEDBACK

#### GETTING STUDENT INPUT ON USER INTERFACE DESIGN

Steve Jobs was once asked what was the secret sauce behind Apple's "look and feel." He gave a split second thought and replied, "Design is not what it looks and feels like. Design is about how it works." Jobs' perspective on design—as a driver of user engagement and productivity—has become a major competitive advantage for the US economy. It has also informed the PORTiCO team's recent series of focus groups on the student portal's design.

Throughout February and March, we have gathered small groups of students to discuss their candid... (Continue on p.2)



### COLD WAR WISDOM FOR DATA VALIDATION

#### TALKING HOT WASHES BEYOND COMPARE

At the twilight of the Cold War, an old Russian proverb was given new life by an American President. The President was Ronald Reagan and the proverb was "Trust but verify." At one point during their treaty negotiations, Reagan's Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev commented, "You repeat that at every meeting." To which the President responded, "I like it." The SIS team likes it too.

The proverb does a nice job of capturing the spirit of our data validation effort. With each data validation cycle—and we're now on our third pass—we're collaborating with Campus Management Corporation to align an array of external data but also testing the integrity of the data rendered by the system. Lisa Johnson, who is leading the charge,...(Continue on p. 3)

### MAKING GOOD BETTER

#### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COURSE REGISTRATION FLOW

When we surveyed active students a couple years ago, we sought to baseline how they perceived the course registration experience. At the time, most students rated their registration user experience as "good enough." That was good news for DAU but a challenge for the nascent student information system initiative. The challenge: How do you improve on good enough? ... (Continue on p. 2)



GATEWAY TO EXCELLENCE

"In God we trust. All others must bring data." – W. Edwards Deming

# The Update on PORTiCO

## Student Information System Project Brief

SPRING 2014—Volume 5 Issue 2

### DESIGN THAT WORKS (CONTINUATION OF FOCUSED FEEDBACK)

impressions of the initial student portal design. Their thoughts on design elements, including branding, navigation, imagery, and taxonomy (or labels used to identify feature-functionality of the system), will go a long way towards ensuring that we deliver a user interface with strong usability attributes.

Although focus groups are conversations with the target audience and not an empirical study, we have high expectations regarding the output of these sessions. Results from our first focus group session did not disappoint. Critique of our initial design was not sparing from this veteran group of PMT 352B students; however, their insight on what mattered and what could be improved was invaluable.

“We don’t register for classes everyday,” remarked one participant, “so we quickly need to know what steps to take and how long it will take us to complete the task. The design should be process-oriented.” Others noted that the draft portal’s taxonomy was not explicit enough. The discussion was lively and interactive. Notably, the portal design did get high marks for a simple and focused interface—a welcomed shift from the clutter of our current registration systems.

In all, a great start toward our objective: a design that works for the workforce. Next step: evaluate the usability of the student portal beyond design. We will continue to use the Update and the PORTiCO website to share our results. ★

#### USABILITY 5Es

Effective

Efficient

Engaging

Error-tolerant

Easy to Learn

### WHAT’S NEW ON THE WEBSITE



★ [March-April Key Dates for PORTiCO](#)

★ [Check SIS Functionality by User Role](#)

### BUILDING BETTER USABILITY (CONTINUATION OF MAKING GOOD BETTER)

A deeper look at the data and myriad comments revealed that “good enough” left boundless room for improvement. Although there were many recommendations for improving policy and process, when it came to the registration system, most students wanted a less convoluted experience. In short, simplify registration.

The SIS team took that message to heart and the results for a streamlined registration process are positive. In a usability review (comparing the student registration workflows of three online systems: the current registration system, the student information system at Ole Miss, and PORTiCO), we found significant improvement in PORTiCO’s registration process.

Among the improvements was a streamlined process that requires just six steps to complete registration for one or several courses. That compares favorably to the 17 steps (or clicks) required by Ole Miss and, at a minimum, 14 steps required by our legacy registration platforms. This streamlining of registration is just one aspect of usability but certainly, an important barometer of the user experience progress being made. We’ll provide additional examples in future Updates. ★

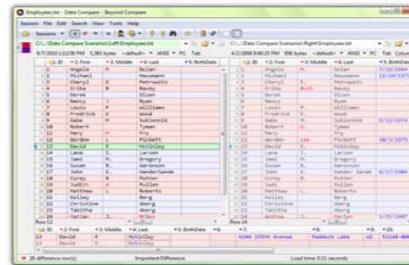
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### ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS (CONT. OF COLD WAR WISDOM)

believes that “system performance has significantly improved because we’re painstakingly reviewing granular details like schedule information, class dates, min/max sizes, and assigned instructors, and so on. But we’re also taking the time to put our minds together through hot wash sessions with Campus Management.” Ms. Johnson is confident that the combination of rigor, cooperation, and the helpful use of *Beyond Compare*, a data comparison application, will get us to data “hi fidelity.”

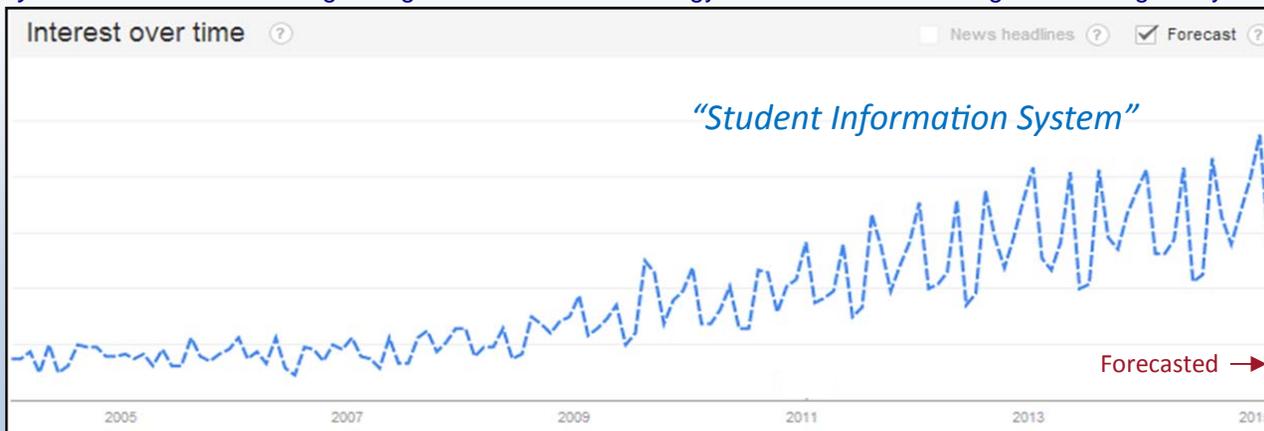


*Beyond Compare* application used by data validation team.

Thanks to the effort of an array of individuals from PRM scheduling, DAU regions, student support, SIS core team members, and Campus Management staff, each 8-day long data cycle has validated an increasing amount of data. These individuals capture data issues in an MS Excel tracking log. At the end of each day, the team leads review the issues raised and identify a resolution. While there is still much more data to validate, the process has become far more streamlined. It’s a process tied to an old adage but one that still resonates for this complex integration effort. ★

## Analytics

The chart below displays **Google Trend** analysis of global interest in the search term “*student information system*”. The trend shows growing interest in the technology as well as a broadening of interest globally.



## Project Milestones

Select date to view event brief on website.

### March 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			