

DePaul University College of Computing and Digital Media

CDM Site Usage Survey

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Methodology.....	2
Findings	5
Demographics	5
Frequency of visitation to cdm.depaul.edu	6
Reasons for visiting cdm.depaul.edu	7
Task completion at cdm.depaul.edu.....	8
Information most relevant to students	8
Most requested additions to the cdm.depaul.edu website	10
Satisfaction when using the cdm.depaul.edu website	11
How students access cdm.depaul.edu.....	11
Recommendations	12
Appendix	13
Survey Form	13

Executive Summary

Between the days of May 16th and 27th, a survey was conducted in an attempt to determine the usage habits and core frustrations experienced by DePaul University students when using the public facing cdm.depaul.edu website. The survey was primarily conducted through an online form created with the help of surveymonkey.com. A link to this survey was sent to e-mail lists of various CDM student groups, distance learning students and was also placed on the DePaul CDM Facebook page. Additionally, the survey was conducted in-person with paper and online forms in the CDM lobby. A total of 279 responses from current DePaul students were collected during this time. While a majority of students were enrolled in CDM, some were students from other DePaul colleges who were enrolled in a CDM course during the spring quarter. The questions focused on identifying important tasks and areas of information perceived to be most relevant by CDM students as well as how often the students visited cdm.depaul.edu. More information on the sample of students and the rationale for the questions can be found in the methodology section.

Overall, results show that DePaul students visit the CDM site frequently although there was some confusion about the differences between the public cdm.depaul.edu website and the private, Single Sign-On controlled areas such as COL and myCDM. Regardless, the survey results indicated that students frequently visit cdm.depaul.edu and its hosted sites through the academic quarter. Some of the most frequently accomplished tasks performed by these students included learning about classes and planning their upcoming class schedules, consulting the degree planner, learning more information about staff and faculty and looking for news, events and academic opportunities.

Other findings indicated that students were unsure of the functional and task oriented differences between COL/myCDM and the public-facing cdm.depaul.edu website but it is unclear if this is a result of poor survey wording or the cause of a larger underlying problem. Further research is suggested to help clarify a distinction between COL/myCDM and the public facing cdm.depaul.edu site. Additionally, an overview of suggested features and functionality is presented in the context of tasks examined. More information can be found in the methodology section.

Methodology

On May 16th a URL link to a Survey Monkey form was provided to faculty sponsors of the Computer Science Society, Digital Divas, HerCDM and DeFrag. It was also distributed to every student enrolled in a distance learning class during the spring quarter and published on the DePaul CDM Facebook page. In order to get as many responses as possible surveys were also administered in the CDM lobby during the school week. On May 27th the survey link was closed and the final response count was tallied at 257.

The survey consisted of 1 demographic question, 4 multiple choice questions, 2 short answer questions and 1 Likert Scale question that attempted to quantify satisfaction. The multiple choice questions addressed how frequently students visited the website, how the website was accessed, and what were the most frequently completed tasks. The short answer questions asked what information was most

relevant to students and what additional information should be included on the CDM website. A copy of the questions used can be found in the appendix.

Because a large number of students were expected to receive the online form an effort was made to get as many in-person surveys completed as possible. A table was set up outside of the 1st floor CDM lab and students were asked to fill out the survey in exchange for donuts. These in-person surveys were conducted from Monday, May 17 to Thursday the 20th during regular CDM class times. Students were primarily targeted as they left the building when it was assumed they were leaving class. Paper forms were used initially but were quickly replaced with laptops that were connected to the manual data entry feature of Survey Monkey. This made collecting the responses much more efficient and easier to handle.

The most relevant demographic information collected included degree of study, graduate or undergraduate status and on-line student status. A student was considered an on-line student if they were enrolled in at least one distance learning class during the spring quarter. Students were also asked how many years they have been at DePaul but the answers provided were not as helpful due to their variation in wording.

Another multiple choice question was used for question 2 in order to determine how often students visited cdm.depaul.edu. Some students showed confusion in differentiating between COL/myCDM and the public cdm.depaul.edu site. Since there was no distinction given in the question, there is a chance that some students may have been confused about the specific functionality of each site. However, the findings indicate that many students are using a DePaul CDM hosted site during the quarter.

Question 3 examined frequently accomplished tasks on the CDM website. The multiple choice responses for question 3 were determined by creating an initial list of categories through previous experience with the CDM website. A CDM student worker was then asked to pick the ones he felt were most relevant and the final questions were selected from there. Multiple choices could be selected for this question and as a result, the final number of responses to be grouped was 659. In an attempt to capture all possible student responses, an “other” option was provided with a short answer field for comments. This provided some valuable insights but was also filled with responses that were not relevant or could have been included in the listed choices. Notes about some of the selected responses are covered in the findings section.

The 4th question addressed the frequency of task completion when visiting the CDM website. Assuming that students went to the site with a task in mind, this question also had a comments section if the student never visited the CDM website. Though the findings are covered in the next section, this question was the straightest forward and almost no responders used the comments section.

Question 5 was a short answer question that asked students what information they felt was the most relevant on the CDM website. The short answer format was chosen in attempt to capture all possible student responses. In order to capture these responses in a format that could be quantified, categories were created to group them. With help from a student worker, 6 categories were created for question 5 based on the responses given by the student responses. In cases where students gave multiple

responses the responses were grouped into multiple categories as they applied best. The final 8 categories were:

- **Courses & Classes:** Included responses that requested additional class and course information or descriptions, or scheduling
- **Current Student Specific Info:** Included responses looking for information applicable to current students (i.e. transfer requests, financial aid, tuition, lab information, academic calendar, Loop Campus Information)
- **Career and Internship Info:** Responses that included mentions about internship information, job placement and assistantship opportunities
- **News & Events:** Responses that mentioned news or event information
- **Instructor/Degree Information:** Responses that mentioned staff/faculty information, research areas and CV information, CDM degrees, degree requirements
- **COL Specific:** Responses that clearly needed access to COL were included here. These responses included responses that stated “COL” as well as responses involving submitting assignments, locating course specific documents, viewing lectures, etc.)
- **myCDM Specific:** Responses that clearly needed access to myCDM were included here. These responses included specific mentions of “myCDM” as well as responses about viewing previous course syllabi, viewing the degree planner, signing up for tutoring or advising, & past course evaluations
- **N/A:** This category contained responses that could not be applied to the above categories due to a lack of response or an incorrect response

Question 6 was the final short answer response question that was intended to uncover the most frequently requested additions to the cdm.depaul.edu site. Like question 5, the short answer format was chosen in attempt to capture all possible student responses. In order to capture these responses in a format that could be quantified, categories were created to group them. Again, with help from a student worker, a total of 7 categories were created. In the cases where students gave multiple responses the responses were grouped into multiple categories as they applied best. The final 7 categories were:

- **Navigation/Structure:** Included responses requested improvements to site navigation, links, and organization of content
- **News & Events:** Responses that requested more news or events were included here, including requests for job fairs and guest speakers
- **Student opportunities/Information:** Responses that included requests for job listings, internship and assistantship positions, career help, scholarships, financial aid, & labs, clubs and organizations & degree specific events were included here
- **Courses/Classes/Degree/Scheduling Info:** Requests for more information about CDM degrees, degree requirements, class descriptions, course recommendations, class availability, detailed syllabi info & PHD requirements were included here

- **People/Faculty:** Responses that requested more staff/faculty information, updated research areas and CV information as well as recommended instructors for particular degrees of study were included here
- **COL/myCDM Specific:** Responses that requested easier access to COL/myCDM were included here. Requests for MSDNAA access and other software links were also included here
- **N/A:** This category contained responses that were not suggestions or could not be applied to the above categories. Additionally, responses with no comments or no requested features were included here

Question 7 used a seven point Likert scale to identify perceived levels of student satisfaction with the current CDM website. The question asked how pleasurable the students found the CDM site to use and asked them to rate their experience from 1-7. For this scale, 1 was the least pleasurable and 7 was the most pleasurable. A Likert Scale was chosen for this question because it allowed qualitative, subjective feelings about the CDM website to be captured in a way that could be easily quantified.

Question 8 was a multiple choice question that addressed where students primarily access the CDM website. For the sake of thoroughness and in an attempt to find more information, multiple choices could be selected for this question.

Findings

Demographics

- Of the 257 responses received, 110 were undergraduate students and 145 were graduate students. 1 response said “neither” and one response was left blank. These responses were the only outliers.
- 127 responses indicated they were in-class students and 130 indicated they were on-line students during the spring quarter
- 215 students had majors that fell within the CDM umbrella of schools. 9 had majors that fell outside of this umbrella and 33 students did not have a major selected or did not include one when they took the survey.
- Students were asked the number of years they have been in their degree program but due to the great variation in the format of the responses (i.e. 2, 2010, .25) this question was omitted from further investigation

These numbers indicate that although a great deal of effort was put into receiving on-line responses, an almost equal number of in-class and online students were represented in the survey. Further, most students were considered students of CDM, which means they generally had more familiarity with the CDM website and the information available there. An almost equal number of graduate and undergraduates responded to the survey as well, keeping almost all students equally represented. The raw survey data results provided by Survey Monkey were not formatted in a way that enabled the demographic information to be related to the overall responses. For instance, there was not an

easy or reliable way to identify what specific information graduate students were looking for, nor was it possible to identify what areas of the CDM site are most relevant only to undergraduates. The raw survey results are included in a separate Excel spreadsheet for further review and analysis.

Frequency of visitation to cdm.depaul.edu

Question 2 asked, "In the past quarter, about how many times have you visited the CDM website?"

- 179 (69.6%) visited the CDM site 5 or more times during the quarter
- 38 (14.8%) visited the CDM site 2-3 times during the quarter
- 23 (8.9%) visited the CDM site 4-5 times during the quarter
- 17 (6.6%) visited the CDM site 0-1 times during the quarter

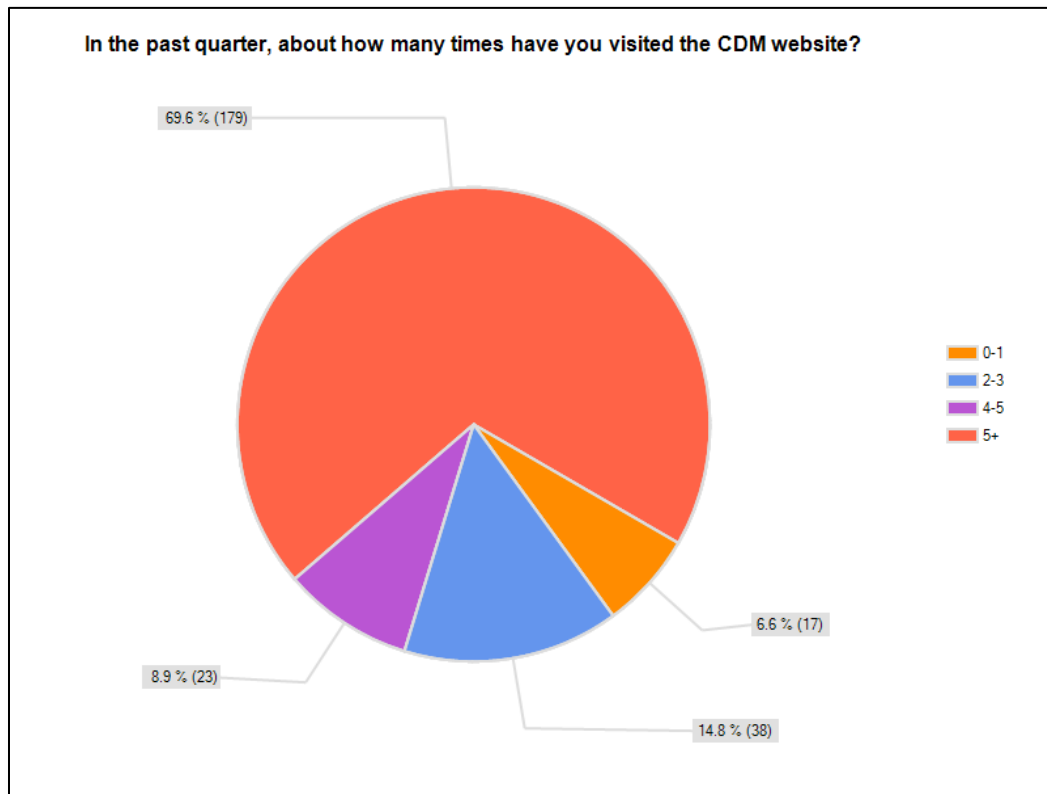


Figure 1 : Frequency of Visitation

It is a possibility that some responders confused the public facing cdm.depaul.edu website with similar sites hosted by CDM such as COL and myCDM as was mentioned in the methodology section.

Furthermore, increasing the scale of days included in the questionnaire may have provided a more detailed analysis of how often students visit the CDM site since the majority of responses fell within the "5+" category. Despite this, the findings indicate that the majority of students surveyed frequently visit a CDM hosted site throughout the quarter.

Reasons for visiting cdm.depaul.edu

Question 3 asked, “Why do you visit the CDM website?” and asked responders to check all answers that applied. An “Other” choice and short answer field were provided to capture data outside of the preselected answer choices. Because multiple answers could be selected for this question, a total of 659 responses were counted within 5 categories in addition to a short answer prompt for “other” responses. The percentages are out of a total of 257 individual responses and are included to show the most popular responses among all students.

- 213 (82.9%) visited the CDM site to learn about classes to take
- 188 (73.2%) visited the CDM site to plan their schedule
- 147 (57.2%) visited the CDM site to learn about staff and faculty
- 57 (22.2%) visited the CDM site to find out about relevant news & events
- 54 (21.0%) visited the CDM site for other reasons

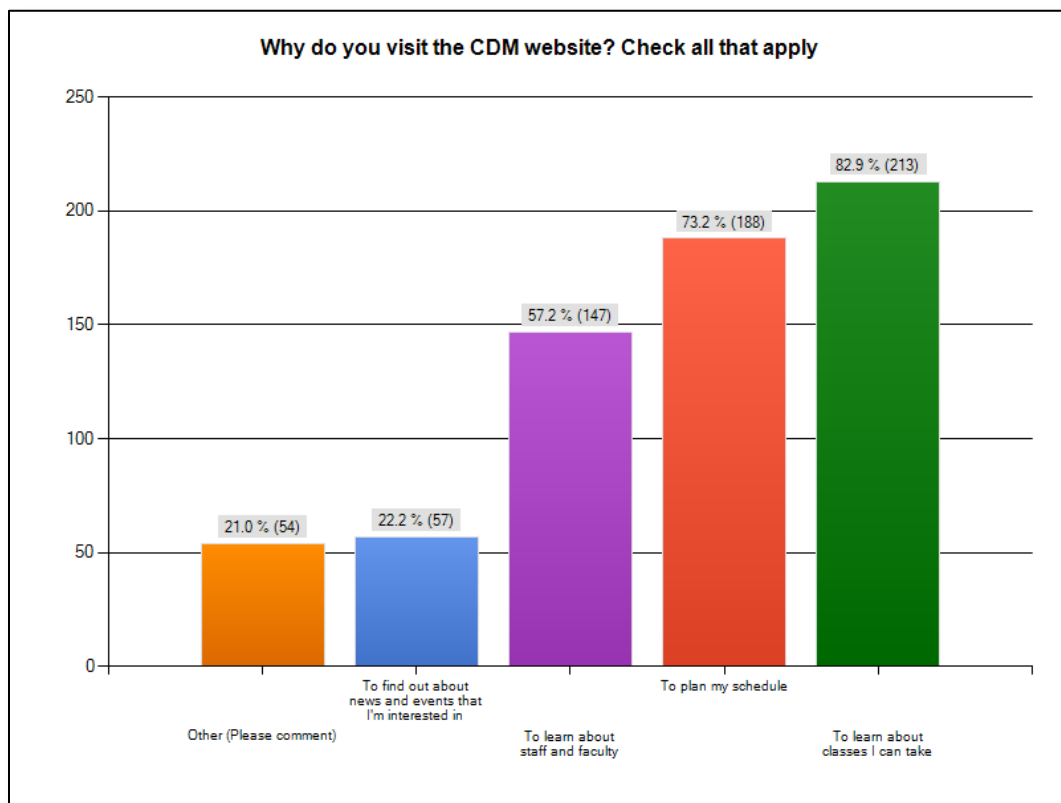


Figure 2: Reasons for Visiting

Responses that fell in to the “others” category included accessing MSDNAA software, using the degree planner, logging in to COL or myCDM and searching for student centric information such as graduation information, scholarship and assistantship positions.

Task completion at cdm.depaul.edu

Question 4 was a multiple choice, single answer question that asked, “If you visit the CDM site with a specific task in mind, how often are you able to accomplish this task?” The percentages are out of a total of 257 individual responses and are included to show the most popular responses among all students.

- 175 (68.1%) very often accomplished
- 72 (28.0%) sometimes accomplished
- 8 (3.1%) not very often accomplished
- 0 (0.0%) never accomplish their task
- 2 (0.8%) never visit the CDM site

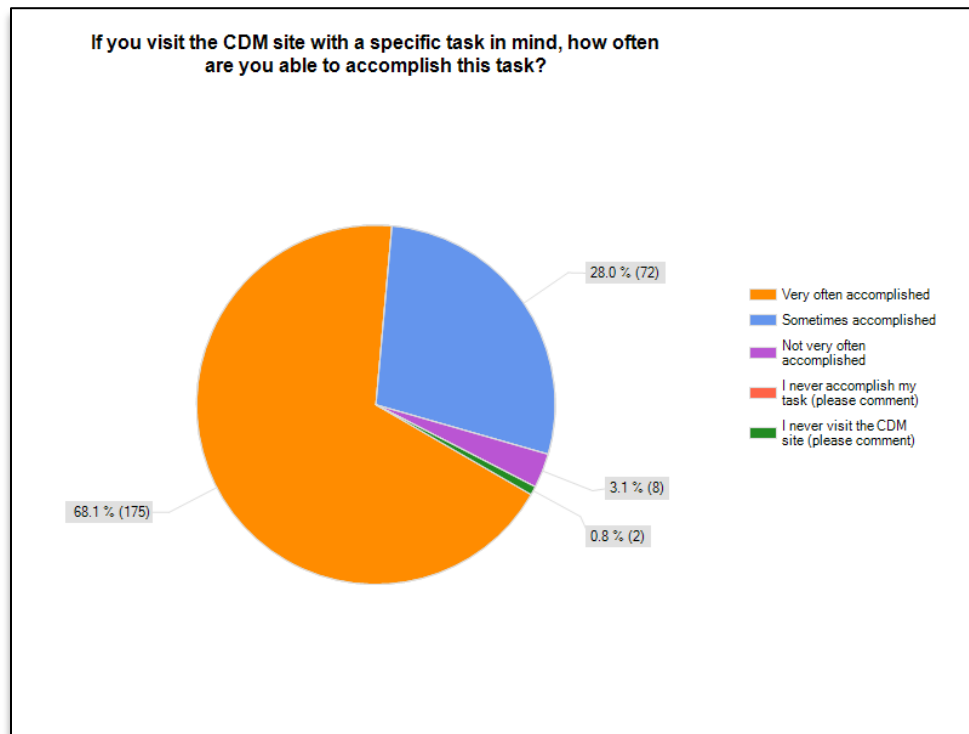


Figure 3: Task Completion Rates

Although an option for never accomplishing the task was given, no one chose that response. Even more surprising, 2 responded that they never visited the CDM site at all. With the majority of responses indicating that tasks were accomplished, it seems likely that students find valuable information on the CDM site even if it takes effort to find it. Further research is suggested to uncover deeper patterns behind student tasks.

Information most relevant to students

Question 5 was a short answer question that asked, “As a CDM student, what information do you find the most relevant?” Responses are grouped in the categories described in the methodology section above.

- Courses/classes : 132
- Instructor/degree information: 93
- myCDM specific: 56
- Current student specific information: 34
- News & Events: 18
- COL specific: 9
- Career & internship information: 7
- N/A: 24

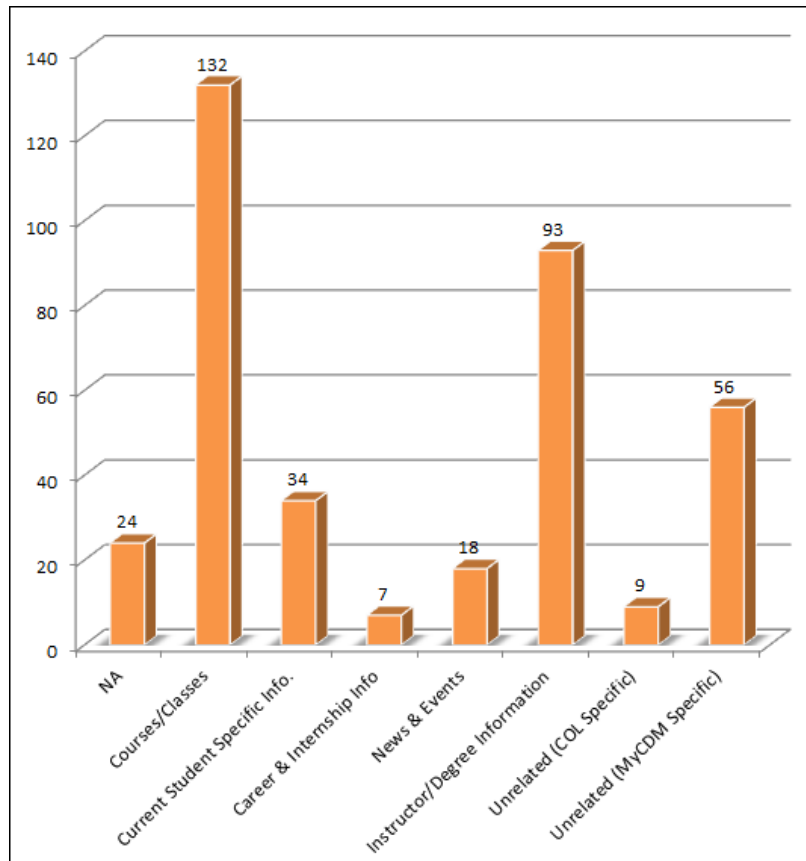


Figure 4: What's Relevant?

Because the short answer form provided students with the opportunity to share multiple things they found to be relevant, a total of 373 individual items were grouped into the above categories. With courses/classes and instructor/degree information being the most popular categories there is reason to further examine what specific information about classes and instructors students find helpful. Design improvements to the CDM site may be suggested to improve the location of this information.

Most requested additions to the cdm.depaul.edu website

Question 6 was a short answer question that asked, “As a CDM student, what kind of information would you like to see on the CDM website?” Responses are grouped in the categories described in the methodology section above.

- Courses/classes/degree/scheduling : 51
- Student opportunities/specific information: 41
- News & events: 32
- Navigation/structure: 15
- COL/CDM specific: 15
- People/faculty improvements: 14
- N/A: 102

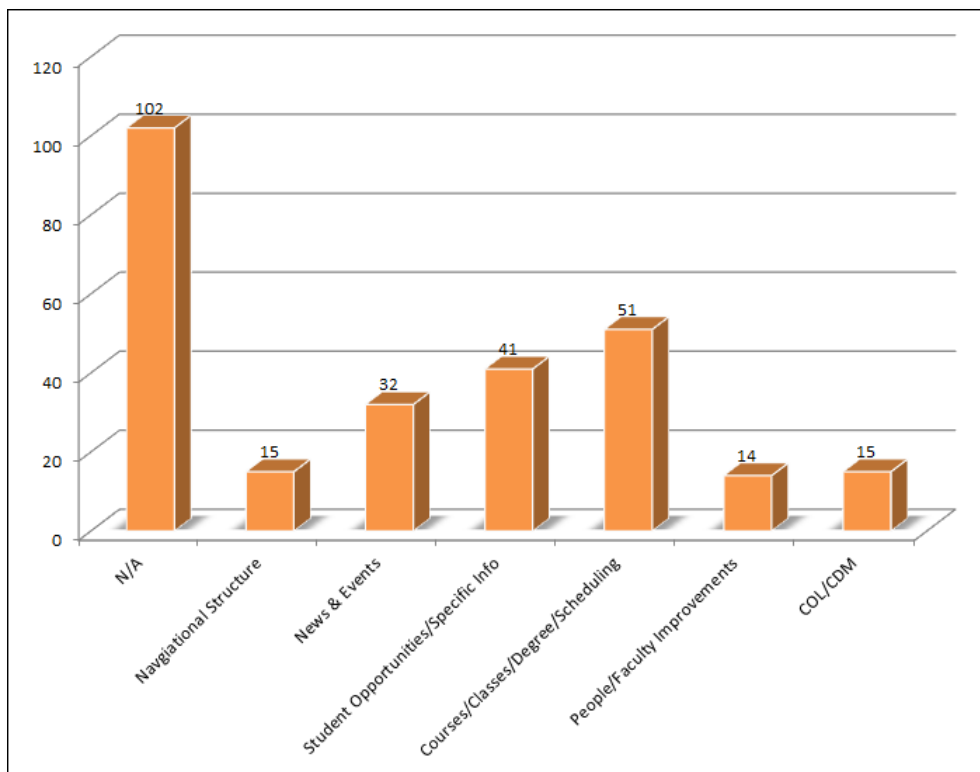


Figure 5: Requested Additions

The clear outlier in this case was the NA category due to many students having no recommendations to share. Some of the most requested additions to the CDM site were more detailed information about courses, degrees and opportunities for students, some of which can already be accessed on the public facing cdm.depaul.edu website. Using the top two most requested categories as a frame to base further research on student goals when visiting the CDM website is recommended. A cognitive walkthrough or direct observation session with current students may reveal more information about how students locate relevant information and where they may fail to notice other information.

Satisfaction when using the cdm.depaul.edu website

Question 7 used a 7 point Likert scale to address the levels of satisfaction students had with the CDM website. 1 was the least satisfactory and 7 was the most satisfactory.

- 75 (29.2%) chose 6
- 46 (17.9%) chose 5
- 34 (13.2%) chose 7
- 32 (12.5%) chose 2
- 29 (11.3%) chose 4
- 27 (29.2%) chose 3
- 14 (5.4%) chose 1

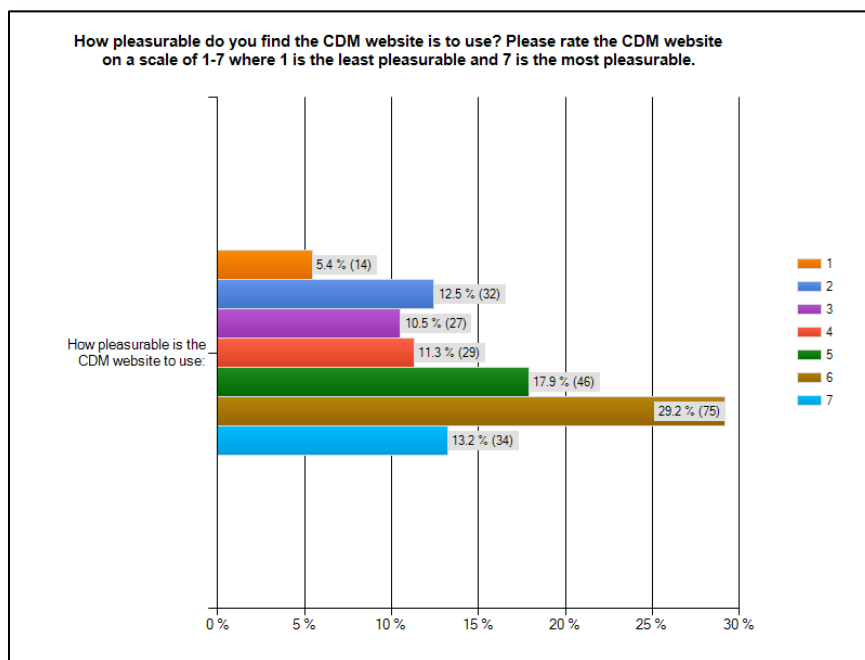


Figure 6: Satisfaction Rates

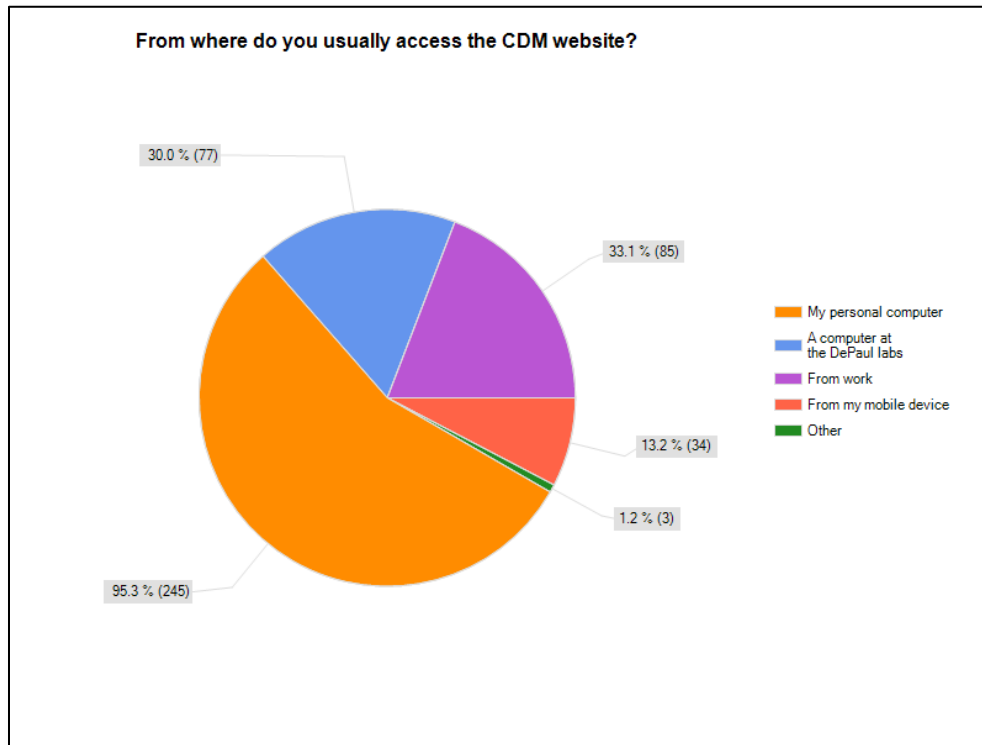
While the majority chose favorably on the scale, 12.5% chose 2, which was a low rate of satisfaction. The wording of this question may have also confused some students who were unfamiliar with this type of rating scale.

How students access cdm.depaul.edu

Question 8 was a multiple choice, multiple answer question that asked students, “from where do you usually access the CDM website?”

- 245 (95.3%) accesses it from a home computer
- 85 (33.1%) accessed it from work
- 77 (30%) accessed it from the DePaul labs
- 34 (13.2%) accessed it from a mobile device

- 3 (1.2%) chose “other”



Overwhelmingly, students primarily access the site from a personal computer. A choice for a mobile device was given on this question to probe for a need to design a mobile version of the CDM website. At this time it does not seem necessary to tailor the site for mobile use because only a minority number of students reported accessing the site from a mobile device.

Recommendations

In order to further understand how students access COL/myCDM and the public facing cdm.depaul.edu website a detailed analysis of how students accomplish tasks on the CDM website is recommended. Some of the categories created to capture relevance and requested additions to the CDM site could be developed into task scenarios and use cases that could be used in usability testing or direct observation sessions with CDM student participants and a CDM HCI researcher. Direct observation studies and usability testing of the site framed with the information from this survey should uncover detailed information about how current CDM students accomplish tasks and navigate the CDM site when looking for important information. A more short term suggestion involves a slight restructuring of the current CDM site. The creation of a student centered area that would contain highly visible links to myCDM & COL, MSDNAA, advising information and course information may help students accomplish their goals faster. Although much of these links and information can be found on the current public CDM site the content is scattered over various pages and condensing this content into one easily identifiable section is an easy way to meet the requests of students.

Appendix

Survey Form

CDM Site Usage Survey

1. Default Section

The goal of this survey is to examine how often DePaul CDM students use the CDM.DePaul.edu website. Your responses will be used to improve the quality of information made available at the DePaul CDM website.

* 1. Please enter your demographic information.

Degree of Study

Undergrad or Graduate Student?

Years in program?

Are you an on-line student?

* 2. In the past quarter, about how many times have you visited the CDM website?

0-1

2-3

4-5

5+

* 3. Why do you visit the CDM website? Check all that apply

- To learn about classes I can take
- To learn about staff and faculty
- To find out about news and events that I'm interested in
- To plan my schedule
- Other (Please comment)

Other (please specify)

CDM Site Usage Survey

* 4. If you visit the CDM site with a specific task in mind, how often are you able to accomplish this task?

- Very often accomplished
- Sometimes accomplished
- Not very often accomplished
- I never accomplish my task (please comment)
- I never visit the CDM site (please comment)

(Please specify)

* 5. As a CDM student, what information on the CDM website do you find most relevant?

* 6. As a CDM student, what kind of information would you like to see on the CDM website?

* 7. How pleasurable do you find the CDM website is to use? Please rate the CDM website on a scale of 1-7 where 1 is the least pleasurable and 7 is the most pleasurable.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How pleasurable is the CDM website to use:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 8. From where do you usually access the CDM website?

- My personal computer
- A computer at the DePaul labs
- From work
- From my mobile device
- Other

Other (please specify)

CDM Site Usage Survey