Blackaeonium Project - Summary of information from usability studies

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Users were asked to consider the use of the system in the context of accessing artworks and creative media content as either an audience-user or as an author/creator of the artworks or content or as an archival documenter (where appropriate).

1. **Ease of use** – was it easy to use? Were there any stumbling blocks in accessing the content?

Some labelling needs improvement – additional labelling or different labelling to make it easy for the lay-person to know what certain options are such as "use" and "setup" – maybe change the global labeling to something else like "search" or "enter the archive" and "admin" – more like a blog (*Wordpress*) dashboard.

Initially required some instruction – but more related to what kind of content to add rather than the mechanics of using forms.

Drop-down menus where possible are good because it's easier to add content and select from a finite list.

2. **Consistency** – are the interfaces consistent in design and menus/prompts etc? global navigation?

Locate global navigation in the top menu bar on all pages.

Tabs not popup windows for some content – have one popup for inventory detail, but all links from there to appear in tabs in the one popup not multiple popup windows.

Different page titling to see the short name in the tab.

Adding data / editing data has consistent interfaces, navigation made sense. "Use" page is intuitive but possibly not all users would understand search types like "series".

3. **Feedback** – do actions provide adequate feedback? Do you know what's happening at all times?

More feedback for links – sometimes it is not apparent which link is for the documentation and which is for the object itself.

Tag cloud could be narrower with results showing in the right-hand column, users might not be aware they need to scroll down, make the window bigger. Links to objects from tag cloud as tabs not popup windows.

Feedback is appropriate for data entry – when data is added or edited there is full feedback on the transaction and access to the ID numbers etc.

4. **Organisation** of functions & interactivity – are menu items grouped appropriately?

Overall, menu items are grouped appropriately.

More shortcuts like the "favourites" option with the Group creation interface – not having to escape so much to get back to previous pages.

Items are grouped appropriately for Inventory data entry.

5. Did you encounter any **errors** and how were they handled?

No PHP/MySQL errors while user testing. No linkage breaks.

Some XML output is problematic. Need to implement the XML *cdata* attribute to prevent poorly formed output.

Occasionally the *getID3()* function stops working, but this is a problem with the ISP – sometimes the files from that folder disappear for no reason. When replaced via FTP, it works again.

6. Did the system **respond** well to your actions? If you clicked on something did something happen in a timely fashion?

Overall, response time was good in most areas.

Rhizome circle view – a bit slow when there is a lot of content, a preloader would be good if possible. Also, in the same section, when there are lots of nodes, it's hard to click on them, perhaps make the text a hyperlink instead or as well as the node.

Any lags in response time due to network problems. If network is working response time is good for adding data and uploading files.

ADSL2 or cable Internet connection (or faster) is the best.

7. **Simplicity** – was the system simple / complex? Was it intuitive to use?

Overall, most users found the system complex – especially initially, but after a short while, were able to navigate fairly easily.

Requires some simple instructions for non-archivist or non-artist users to prompt initial access & engagement.

The system is simple for data entry. Lots of fields but straightforward to use – standard form fields for data entry.

8. List any **positives or negatives** in using the system to engage with the artworks and creative content

Positive: simple aesthetic is good, immediate access to artistic content (splash page) is good.

Draggable interface and accordion interface is very good.

RSS feed option is good.

Rhizome tree view and tag cloud is very good way of navigating through content. Creating new objects from existing object data is a very good way of making the data entry easier

Negative: navigation & popup windows, perhaps a bit difficult for some people to use and understand.

It can be frustrating to use the system with a slow Internet connection – especially to upload objects.

It can be difficult to do Inventory data entry, having the archival system window open, and the

window showing the object for description etc. all on the desktop. Ideally 2 monitors works best.

9. **Wish list** – if you could imagine any possible (or even impossible) developments to make this system better what would they be?

More *jQuery* and *AJAX* for overlays and scrollable items.

Integration with Google maps for location or "coverage" data.

Consider incorporating more *HTML5* - make the whole site *HTML5* compliant to make better use of video, audio and other rich media content.

Screens for Mobile devices – to view and upload content.

Enable saving of X,Y & Z-index positions of draggable <DIV> elements for Groups.

Have 2 monitors for data entry: 1 for the database; 1 for the object to be uploaded – perhaps need a 2 or 3 step process where the object is uploaded and can be seen in the same window as the form fields for describing the content.

Auto-capture object dimensions and file size to make data entry quicker and easier.