



Personas & Scenarios:

University of Michigan PEERRS Web site

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Assignment 3
SI 622
February 2, 2006

Overview

PEERRS is a University of Michigan website consisting of educational modules and short tests covering basic rules, procedures and professional norms for the responsible conduct of research. It is required for some researchers, including all principle investigators, but recommended for anyone involved in research and scholarship. Participants will go through different modules based on the type of research they are doing and who they will interact with.

After completing the module, the user must complete a test covering the module they read. Once passing the test, they will be certified in that particular module and their name will appear on a list of all University members with certifications, which is available to anyone with a student, staff, faculty, or friends account. The certification will last 3 years, after which time they must complete the module and its accompanying test again. For primary investigators, failure to complete certification will result in funds being withheld from the study.

Our group will evaluate the user interface of the website and use the evaluations to make recommendations for improvements. The following pages contain three personas of typical users of the PEERRS web site and scenarios of situations these typical users might be in. These personas and scenarios will be used through the evaluation process to keep a specific and focused audience in mind. This will allow us to better understand who the users are and how they will interact with the PEERRS site.

Persona 1: Han Yen

Occupation: Graduate Student and Research Assistant

Class Status: 2nd year Graduate Student

Field: Electrical Engineering

Years in Field: 6 (all in academics)

Age: 24

Ethnicity: Chinese

Gender: Male

Marital Status: Single

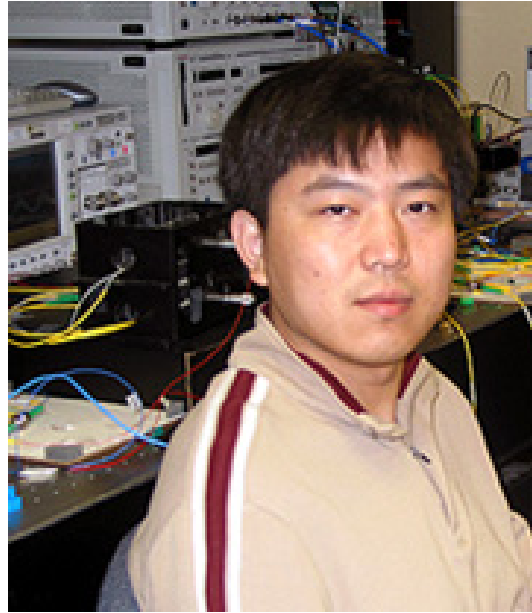
Income: \$8,100 stipend per semester, tuition covered by GSRA

Location: Ann Arbor, MI

Hometown: Saginaw, MI

Nationality: U.S. Citizen

Languages: U.S. English (Native), Conversational in Mandarin Chinese



Hobbies: Computer programming, playing video games, watching movies with friends, basketball, and cooking.

Computer Hardware/Software: Toshiba Laptop (2 years old), 17" screen, Windows XP, Pentium Processor, 1G RAM, 1280x854 screen resolution, Mozilla Firefox web browser, T1 connection at work, Wireless Cable internet access at home.

Han Yen is a 24 year old second year graduate student in the electrical engineering program at the University of Michigan. Han excelled in both math and science in high school, and planned to study mechanical engineering in college. He changed courses to electrical engineering after taking an introductory class in his sophomore year as an undergraduate. Currently, Han works as a graduate student research assistant for one of his professors. He is contemplating pursuing a PhD, but may decide to take some time off of school and pursue a job.

Han has been a member of the American Society for Electrical Engineers for the past 4 years, and has been the treasurer of EE student society in the past. He is currently a member, but does not have the time to devote to an officer position. He occasionally goes to the NCRB to play pickup games of basketball. However, his school and research keep him too busy to go as often as he feels he should.

Han was born and raised in Saginaw, MI, and has one younger brother who is currently a junior in high school. Both of his parents were born in China, and moved to the U.S. in their 20s. His father is a doctor and his mother is a researcher at a fortune 500 company. Growing up, Han's family had computers since he was in elementary school, and both of his parents are about average in computer proficiency.

Han himself has excellent computer skills, which he has used profusely in his electrical engineering work. He is proficient with word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, and statistical software and has taken programming classes in C++, Perl, Java, and Visual Basic. Though he owns a laptop with the Windows XP operating system, he frequently uses Unix and Linux in the course of school and research. He feels comfortable and natural using the web, has a personal website that he coded himself, and keeps a blog which he rarely updates.

Persona 2: Sarah Connley

Occupation: Medical Researcher

Field: Endocrinology

Years in Field: 7

Education: M.D. from U of M, B.S. in Biology from Stanford.

Age: 31

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Gender: Female

Marital Status: Married

Income: \$152,000/year (\$230,000 with spouse)

Location: Ann Arbor, MI

Hometown: Livingston, NJ

Nationality: U.S. Citizen

Languages: U.S. English (Native), Spanish (Fluent)

Hobbies: Reading, volunteering, volleyball, running

Computer Hardware/Software: Dell PC Desktop (6 months old), 20" screen, Windows XP, Pentium Processor, 512MB RAM, 1024x768 screen resolution, Internet Explorer web browser, T1 connection at work. At home: Dell Latitude Laptop.

Sarah Connley is a 31-year-old researcher in the endocrinology department of the U of M hospital. She has been researching for 3 years, following her medical residency at U of M. She has wanted to be a doctor ever since she had ACL surgery after a volleyball injury in high school. Her current research revolves around diabetes studies and treatments, where she is assisting the principle investigator. She is preparing a proposal for an additional study where she will be the principle investigator. Sarah enjoys working with people, and feels that this is a field where she can have the greatest impact. One day she would like to participate in the Doctors Without Borders program.

Sarah was married two years ago to her boyfriend of 3 years and is enjoying married life. When not working, Sarah volunteers at Mott Children's Hospital (usually once per week.) She enjoys talking about science and doing crafts with the children there in addition to keeping their spirits up. In the winters, she plays on an indoor women's volleyball league. In the spring and summer, she and her husband often go running together for exercise.

Sarah grew up with 3 siblings, 2 older and 1 younger in Livingston, NJ. Sarah's mother is a high school english teacher, and her father is in sales at a large company. Sarah has average computer skills, as do her mother and two of her siblings. Her father avoids computers as much as possible, but one of her brothers studied computer science at MIT. As the resident expert in the family, he is often called on to help his parents and siblings with their computer problems. Sarah is familiar with Microsoft Word and Excel, which she uses frequently in her research. She uses websites and search engines, however she doesn't have a deep understanding of how computers or software work in the back-end. At times, she feels anxious when asked to complete a task using an unfamiliar website or software program. She is not generally knowledgeable about new computer or technological trends, but has considered purchasing an iPod for when she goes running. The computer she uses for work was picked out and purchased by the head of the department.



Persona 3: Wesley Soloman

Occupation: Professor & Researcher

Field: Sociology

Years in Field: 30

Education: BS in Sociology from the University of Michigan, Masters & PhD in Sociology from Yale.

Age: 58

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Gender: Male

Marital Status: Married

Income: \$360,000/year

Location: Ann Arbor, MI

Hometown: Cleveland, OH

Nationality: U.S. Citizen

Language: U.S. English

Hobbies: Traveling, cars, chess

Computer Hardware/Software: At work: Gateway PC Laptop, 17" screen, Windows XP, Pentium Processor, 1GB RAM, 1024x768 screen resolution, Internet Explorer web browser, T1 connection. At home: Apple 15" Powerbook, 1GB RAM, DSL connection.



Wesley Soloman has been a researcher and professor at the University of Michigan's Sociology department for the last 25 years after previously teaching and researching at Western Michigan University. He is well liked by the undergraduate and graduate students he teaches for his sense of humor as well as his teaching style, and has received numerous awards for teaching. He has participated in various research projects throughout his career, though his primary interests are political sociology, culture, social theory, and American political history. Dr. Soloman is almost always the principle investigator or co-principle investigator for his research projects. He plans to retire in 5 to 7 years.

Dr. Soloman and his wife of 34 years have 2 children and 1 grandchild. Their daughters are 31 and 24 and college educated. He travels frequently with his wife, wanting to visit as many different countries as possible. He is very interested in Asian culture and has a trip to Taiwan planned for the spring. He also attends the North American Auto Show in Detroit every year as well as several sociology conferences where he presents the work he has been doing. He enjoys playing chess, and often annoys his children by trying to get them to play with him during holidays and visits.

Dr. Soloman often surprises his students with his knowledge of computers and technology. He is by no means an expert, but enjoys reading about and sometimes purchasing new gadgets. He recently purchased an iSight camera for his laptop and occasionally uses it to video iChat with his oldest daughter. Additionally, he set up a wireless internet connection in his home, though he doesn't know what service provider they have because his wife set up the installation and pays the bills. Dr. Soloman uses cTools for his classes, though he is often frustrated with the user interface. He is comfortable with Microsoft Office and using web sites. He very recently set up his first RSS reader.

Scenario 1: Han Yen

Han Yen began his work as a Graduate Student Research Assistant last January with Professor Wright, who has been with the University for 7 years. During the first week of work, Professor Wright asked him to register with the PEERRS website, complete a profile, and take any resulting tutorials. Professor Wright explained to Han that him completing these tutorials was not required by the University for the work he was doing, but that it was department policy that all researchers and assistants use the service.

Han used the University of Michigan search feature on the index page www.umich.edu and searched for “peers”, because that is how Professor Wright had pronounced it. Han was not able to find the correct website after looking through the results and browsing the categories on the University web site. After asking Professor Wright about the spelling, “PEERRS”, he searched again and came up with a page on the University of Michigan research website that had a short explanation of PEERRS. He clicked through to the actual application, clicked “Start PEERRS”, and filled out his profile information. He had no trouble navigating the site or creating his profile.

After filling out the profile, Han had 4 modules to complete of 29, 28, 23, and 19 pages. Three were listed as “required” and one was listed as “recommended”, however Professor Wright had asked him to complete all of the modules. Han began the first module, at first reading each page. After reading several pages he began to feel bored and thought the information was common sense, and proceeded to skim the rest of the module, stopping only twice to read about things he wasn’t familiar with. He proceeded to complete the first test after two tries. He had guessed on a few of the questions, and was able to guess again (correctly) for the two questions he had missed. He skimmed through the rest of the modules labeled “required”, and again took the certification test knowing some answers and guessing on the others. For the fourth and final module, labeled “recommended”, Han skipped straight to the test, and used educated guessing until he passed. It took him four tries to pass the test.

After completing the modules and tests, Han did not feel that he had learned much from them, but realized it was his own fault for not reading through them carefully.

Currently, he barely remembers having completed the modules and is not sure of the name of the web site where he took them. He is not aware of the timeline for re-certification or that re-certification is even needed.

Scenario 2: Sarah Connley

Sarah is currently applying for funding for a new study on diabetes that will use human subjects. When submitting forms for approval, she was informed that, as a principle investigator, she would have to complete the PEERRS research tutorials and pass a test for each tutorial to become certified. Without certification, she will not be able to receive funding for her study. ;

Sarah had a small amount of anxiety for several days because she was not familiar with this website and though she feels confident in her intelligence, has never taken an online test before. She asked a co-worker who she regards as intelligent and tech-savvy for help with the site. The co-worker walked through filling out the profile with her, and showed her how to click through the pages of one of nine modules in her profile. Sarah began with the first module, reading each page carefully and attempting to answer the questions in the module before looking at the answer. Her co-worker came back to walk her through the testing procedure. Sarah realized that it was much easier to use than she had anticipated, and got all the questions correct on the first try.

Over the three days Sarah completed the remaining modules, reading each one closely. However, she felt guilty that the readings were taking her away from “real” work. Sarah felt that she already knew most of the information presented in the modules from having been a researcher for the last four years.

Sarah knows that at some point in the future she will need to be re-certified, but isn't sure when and does not know how she will know when the time comes. She is a little worried that her certification will expire without her knowledge and the funding to her study will be withheld.