Interface Proposal

Submit in Canvas by October 19, class time
Format: Microsoft Word document
Please include all of your team members' names and your team name on the assignment.
13 points total: This is a group assignment; everyone receives the same grade for this project.

While the first part of this course was structured around analysis, in the second part of this course, we will turn to critically creating interfaces. We will work in self-selected teams of 4-5 people to design our own interfaces. Working in teams is a useful skill to have as a writer and communicator. For instance, if you are working with a team to build a website for a small business, you will have to work with the company to develop a website that they like too, and you will need to work with computer programmers and information technology specialists.

For this assignment, your **main task** is to write an **500 to 750 word** proposal about the interface that your team will design. To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to look ahead to the final major projects for this course (the Graphic User Interface Prompt and the Interface Design Memo). The purpose of this assignment is to help you plan how you will work with your teammates to meet the assignment goals, and to give me a chance to give you feedback. To be clear, this is ***not*** a binding document; you can and probably will adapt along the way. However, if you choose to make any drastic changes, please reach out so we can make sure to keep you on the right track.

Proposals are generally pretty prescriptive, and this one is as well. It will include the following sections with these headings: **(1)** Introduction/Summary **(2)** Context and Background **(3)** a Problem/Benefit Statements **(4)** Description of the Interface and technical skills **(5)** Research Plan, Division of Labor, and Timeline **(6)** Concerns/Questions.

Introduction/Summary:
This section should include a basic overview of the proposal. Although it comes first, I suggest you write it last. It should include an overview of the context and background, followed by your scoping, framing, and problem/benefits statement, and a brief description of your proposed interface.

Context and Background:
For this section, please describe the contex and background for readers who are not a part of your community. This should address the ***"who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how"*** of the interface that you are proposing to design and build. Think about the following questions:
- ***Who*** are the specific community that you hope to benefit? What are your community's interests? What do they value? What do they know? Even if your community is broadly the University of Michigan, that is still a specific community with specific resources and needs. Students have different needs and resources than faculty, for instance.
- ***What*** is the specific topic of the interface? ***What*** is the existing practices and resources have the community has developed to address some issue, or what is a resource do you know about that you would like to share?

*This assignment meets the course outcomes (3) Collaborate with a team to plan an interface and design that responds to their community. (4) Create, adapt, and design interfaces for their local communities at the university, and (5) Articulate their design choices and processes to explain the impacts of their design choices.*Since all arguments are situated, please note that myself and your peers are the audience for this paper.

- ***Where*** are these resources already located? ***Where*** would this interface be accessed?
- ***When*** would community members want to access those resources? Are they always available?
- ***Why*** would these community resources be more beneficial housed in an interface? ***Why*** did the community develop those resources and assets in the first place?
- ***How*** will these resources be beneficial to the community, and ***how*** will they be translated onto the interface?

You do not have to answer those questions in that order. The purpose of this section is to justify the scoping, framing, and problem/benefits statement in the next section. You may include some initial research here about your audience, how people use or access the type of interface that you are proposing etc., although it is not necessary at this point. If you do include sources here, make sure to correctly cite them both in-text and in an end of paper reference page.

Problem/Benefits Statement:
Costanza-Chock points out that "The way that a problem is conceived and framed has real implications for the range of possible solutions." Problem statements and solutions should be developed through an asset-based approach that works alongside community for whom the product (in this case, an interface) is developed in an ongoing process. Obviously, due to the time constraints of this couse, we will not be able to fully realize this imperative. However, we can still practice implementing these asset-based approaches. Thus, this short section will broadly outline your **goals**, and how your interface will extend existing resources and benefit the community that you just laid out. You might think of it like a mission statement.
This section will broadly follow the format:

- ***"This interface will benefit X community in Y and Z ways by extending the existing community resources and practices of A, B, and C."***

You can change the grammatical form once you have filled it in but start with something simple.

Description of the Interface and Technical Skills:
For this section, you will need to be specific about your plans for the interface design itself. I will be looking for the following elements"

- What specific free website-builder will you be using for this assignment?
- Tentatively, what will be on the five different pages of the interface?
- Tentatively, what will the navigation system look like?
- Tentatively, what two images or videos will you use? How will you source them and cite them?
- Tentatively, what will the text of the interface cover?
- We have yet to talk about accessibility in more depth, but how do you think you can make your site accessible? (This can be brief!)
- None of the sites that I have suggested require you to have significant technical skills, but have you checked to make sure this site lets you do all of the things that you want/need to do to complete this assignment?
- What online resources exist for you to look up how to do things on the website builder of your choice? Please locate some external resources that you can use as you build the interface. Most sites have a Support page or guides to answer most of your questions. (See Wix Support for example). Please include the titla and URL for that page here. You

can also located any other outside resources, like YouTube videos. Please include those links here as well.

Research Plan, Division of Labor, and Timeline:

For this section, you will need to outline your plan to accomplish the requirements for the final project. Please include the following elements:

- What other research do will you need to do to complete this project? Do you need to do more research about your audience? Do you need to do more research about how they might access your site? Do you need to do more research about the content that you will include on your interface?
- Who will complete which tasks as you work on the interface? Who will do research? Who will write the text? Who will find images? Who will work on the interface design and layout? Who will add the textual and visual content into the design?
- Please create a timeline for how and when you will complete these tasks. I suggest working backward from the due date and giving yourselves soft internal deadlines. While you can simply list out dates for when tasks will be completed, you can also use online Gantt chart creators, which you can find here, here, or here.

Concerns/Questions:

This last section is not often included on proposals, but I have included it here for this assignment, since I recognize that you may still have questions. Please include any questions or concerns that you have about completing the assignment here, so that I can address them. If you do not have questions or concerns, you can omit this section.

Successful proposals will:

- Use **headings** and **include all of the sections** above with all the necessary components.
- Have a **clear central scope, frame, and problem/benefits statement** that clearly addresses the context and background.
- Demonstrate a **clear plan** for how to work with your team to design, create, and build the interface.
- Be **organized**. This means they will use paragraphs, use topic sentences, introduce definitions and terms where they are appropriate, and provide necessary background for readers.
- Use an **academic writing style and prose**. I recognize the validity of multiple languages and grammars. However, since I am your audience for this paper, please broadly follow the standard academic conventions in the papers that we have read. This means that if you use outside sources for this assignment, you will include in-text and end of paper references for the scholarly sources above.

Steps:

1. First, you will likely use much of the writing that you start here on your interface and in your final memo! So, I suggest starting this assignment by first and foremost looking ahead to those assignments.
2. To begin thinking about the content of your interface, I suggest thinking about your experiences here at the University of Michigan and in Ann Arbor. What kinds of online resources and interfaces do you wish you had either now or when you moved here? What

is an interface or website that you think would contribute to the community or would have been benefitial to you and your fellow students in some way?

3. Next, think about what kinds of interfaces or websites would help address whatever you think could improve or benefit your community in some way. Following a Design Justice framework, think about what community resources already exist. (Scoping and Framing Questions for Problems/Benefits Statement Handout should help with both of these steps).

4. Third, think about your own technical skills and the free website builders that I have included in this class (including, but not limited to: [Google Sites](#), [Weebly](#), [Wix](#), [Wordpress](#), or [Squarespace](#), or any other ones that you find online and are comfortable using). Although we have already looked at some free website builders in class, I encourage you to play around with them and decide which ones you like outside of class too. What affordances of each of these sites do you find easy to use? Which ones are more difficult?

5. Once you have decided on an interface that you want to build that you are technically capable of building, ask yourself basic questions about the context:
    o *Who* is the audience? The University of Michigan is a big school, so you might need to tailor your website to your particular community within the University of Michigan. What are your community's interests? What do they value? What do they know?
    o *What* information do you want to convey?
    o *Where/How* will the audience access the interface? Will audiences access the interface in Ann Arbor? Before they arrive? How will they access the site? Will they use their phones or desktop/laptop devices?
    o *When* will they access the interface? What are the current events going on around the interface? Is it responding to a specific situation? You might also think about what audiences' emotional states might be when they access the interface. So, if you collate resources for an emergency situation, people may be distraught and want answers quickly. Alternatively, if you are writing a food blog, people might access that in their free time when they are in a good mood, or for inspiration.

6. Next, look at the prompt and think about how you can distribute tasks among your team members to complete the interface. You might think about distributing tasks like such as initial research (collecting information about how to design the site or to include on the site), initial design and interface set up, creating materials and content to put onto the site, proofreading and editing content, testing and editing the interface design, and checking to ensure that the interface meets the criteria on the prompt.

While I have suggested these steps here, please remember that this will likely be a reciprocal process; you will likely revise and change the proposal.

Rubric

Please note: I have included this rubric here for clarity and transparency about my expectations. However, all of these criteria are linked to each other and cannot be separated.

	Excellent	Good	Developing
Introduction/ Context and Background 2.5 points	The authors have thoroughly answered the *"who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how"* of the interface that they are proposing to design and build. The proposal provides all necessary background information to validate the Problem/Benefits Statement, but they do not provide extraneous information that is distracting or unnecessary. The authors have clearly considered their specific communities and the existing resources that these communities have already developed. The authors have clearly thought about how they can develop an interface to build out these existing resources and why an interface is necessary.	The authors have answered the *"who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how"* of the interface that they are proposing to design and build, although they may skim some answers, or not provide enough detail. It may also provide extraneous information that is distracting or unnecessary. The context and background may not be well connected to the Problem/Benefits Statement. The connections may be implied, but not specifically stated. The authors have a pretty good idea of their specific communities, although they may have done less work considering the existing resources that these communities have already developed. The authors may be less clear about how they can develop an interface to build out these existing resources or why an interface is necessary.	The authors have not answered one or more of the *"who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how"* aspects of the interface that they are proposing to design and build. They may significantly skim some answers, or provide very little detail. The context and background are not well connected to the Problem/Benefits Statement. The authors have included little about their specific communities, and there is little about the existing resources that these communities have already developed. The authors are unclear about how they can develop an interface and why an interface is necessary.
Problem/Benefits Statement 2 points	This section outlines the team's **goals**, and how the interface will extend existing resources and	This section outlines the team's **goals**, although the goals may be **vague**. The statement is less clear about	The team's **goals** are very **vague,** and it is unclear about how the interface will extend

	benefit the community as established in the previous section. The statement should be **specific**, and it should clearly address the context section laid out.	how the interface will extend existing resources and benefit the community as established in the previous section. The connection between the statement and the context is implied, but not explicit.	existing resources and benefit the community as established in the previous section. The connection between the statement and the context is very unclear.
Description of the Interface and Technical Skills 3.5 points	This section addresses all of the required elements with specific details to demonstrate a clear idea of how the interface will meet the Interface Design Prompt criteria. The authors have clearly experimented with the website builder site to determine their own technological abilities and that they can complete the assignment using the site they have chosen. This includes locating outside resources which are viable supports.	This section addresses all of the required elements, although the details may be vague. There is still a clear plan for how the interface will meet the Interface Design Prompt criteria. The authors may not have clearly experimented with the website builder site to determine their own technological abilities, or they may have located minimal resources that will not necessarily be helpful.	This section does not addresses all of the required elements, and/or the details are very vague. There is not a clear plan for how the interface will meet the Interface Design Prompt criteria. The authors have not clearly experimented with the website builder site to determine their own technological abilities, and they have not located external resources.
Research Plan, Division of Labor, and Timeline/Questions 2 points	The team has clearly laid out (1) what research has yet to be done, (2) who will do what tasks, and (3) soft internal deadlines for when each task will be completed. The team uses specific details. The team has a clear plan for how to complete the assignment.	The team has laid out (1) what research has yet to be done, (2) who will do what tasks, and (3) soft internal deadlines for when each task will be completed. All of these elements are present, but they are less clear. The team has a plan for how to complete the assignment, although the plan is less clear.	The team is either missing one of the required elements [(1) what research has yet to be done, (2) who will do what tasks, and (3) soft internal deadlines for when each task will be completed] or all of the elements are cursory. The team does not have a plan for how to

			complete the assignment.
Organization 1.5 points	The proposal follows the organization above and uses appropriate headings. The paragraphs and sentences are organized logically, by which I mean that the reader can follow from one idea to the next. The paper "flows" from one idea to the next. Scholarly sources are situated where they are useful. Key terms are defined where they are first used. Important ideas that the reader needs are introduced and explained before moving into another topic that requires the reader to understand the first topic. The proposal uses transitional phrases and paragraphs. Paragraphs have clear topics and topic sentences.	The proposal follows the organization above, but does not have clear headings or uses incorrect headings. The organization of the proposal is somewhat clear, and the paper has some flow. However, the connection between ideas may be less clear. The paper may give some relevant context and background where necessary, but more may be necessary. The proposal may introduce terms and not define them, or the paper may define terms after the term has been used. The author may introduce an idea much too early before an audience needs it, or after the concept has been discussed in depth. The paper may use paragraphs, but the paragraphs may not have a clear, organizing idea. The paragraph may have a topic sentence, but the ideas in the paragraph may not support that topic sentence. The proposal may use some transitional phrases, but those transitional phrases	The proposal does not follow thr organization above or use headings. The organization of the proposal is not apparent, and it is unclear how one idea stems from the previous one. The paper does not give relevant context and background. The paper does not define terms where they are necessary, if it defines them at all. The paper either does not use paragraphs, or it does not use them well. There are no topic sentences, or central organzing ideas to paragraphs. There are no transitional phrases.

		may not accurately direct the reader.	
Language **1.5 points**	The language is clear and adheres to academic writing well, with few issues. Writing is coherent and expresses the writer's ideas well. Teachers and peers can understand the text with little difficulty. The text is broken up into paragraphs and meets the required word count. Follows appropriate reference style format (headers, reference pages, etc.) *Remember: I am your audience.*	There are a few grammatical, word choice, or spelling issues that deviate from academic writing, or the language is cumbersome or wordy enough to make the ideas unclear for teachers and peers. Paragraphs are very long, or there are transitions that do not make sense. The paper meets the required word count. Mostly follows appropriate reference style format (headers, reference pages, etc.). *Remember: I am your audience.*	Writing is confusing and hard to follow for teachers and peers, and there are many issues with grammar and spelling that interfere with readers' understandings. The paper has few or no paragraphs. The paper is under word count. The paper barely follows appropriate reference style format (headers, reference pages, etc.)., or the paper does not follow an appropriate reference style format at all. *Remember: I am your audience.*