Assessing Effectiveness of Communication and Collaboration Platforms at USMAI Partner Campuses

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Overview

Project Context

Methods

Findings & Analysis

Recommendations & Next Steps

Project Context

USMAI

17 libraries

700+ staff

Campus and functional contacts

11+ working groups

Communities of interest

Shared staff, systems, and knowledge

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Current Tools

Websites

- USMAI Staff Site
- USMAI Public Site
- USMAI Collaborates

Email lists (30+)

Ticket tracking systems

Web conferencing software

Rogue tools

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Key Drivers

- Expanding scope of USMAI
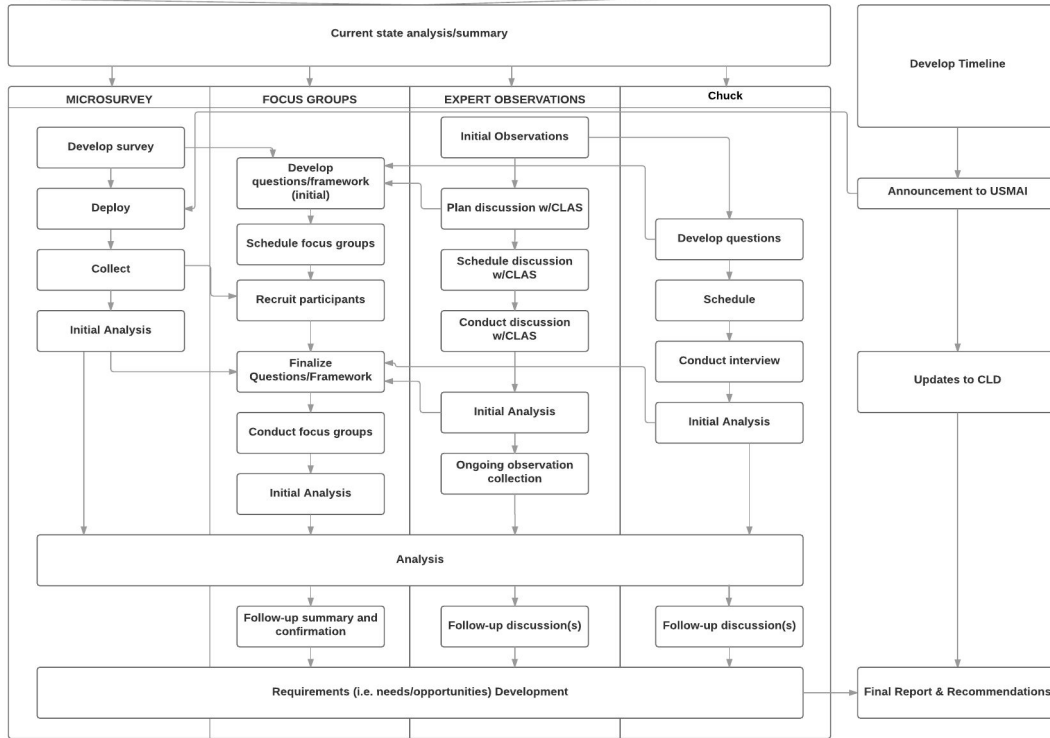- Desire for increased engagement
- Aging Drupal platform

Methods

Methods used:
- Online survey (Net Easy Score)
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations

Data Collection Methods (July to October 2016)

Findings & Analysis

Engagement in USMAI leads to increased awareness

users actively engaged in USMAI groups were found to have greater awareness of USMAI initiatives, practices, and procedures

certain functional areas, such as ILL, require users to actively correspond or collaborate with consortial partners at other campuses

those who are not actively engaged in groups feel that their level of awareness is substantially lower

special challenge for new staff who have not yet had an opportunity to engage

USMAI platforms and campus-specific system choices are overwhelming

multisite nature of the USMAI web infrastructure

content authors uncertain where to collaborate, where to publish - leading to lower likelihood of consistent communication (minutes, reports, etc.)

users are not sure what information should be made available for public consumption or reserved for internal use only

multiple information silos requiring different logins - don't visit sites often, can't remember usernames/passwords

distributed nature of the consortium members + varying institutional practices related to communications and collaboration = complications, inefficiencies

Lack of visibility in USMAI group activities

user comments and observations:

Hard to know in which group content will be located and where content from the old groups is now

The reorganization reduced visibility of group and committee activities and made it difficult for those outside of a group to assess the group's activities

Resources are not located where you expect them to be in USMAI sites

Materials are sometimes buried under old group pages

Mix of historical content and current procedures/policies that makes information discovery challenging

Reaching the right audience with communications is difficult

Many audiences, many avenues:

Campus Contacts

Listservs

AlephRx

USMAI Public Site

Trust is essential to communication and collaboration

trust:

how it is formed, how it impacts participation, and how USMAI platforms help or hinder trust-building between consortial partners

many of our communications platforms such as listservs leave users with an uneasy sense of posing questions to an anonymous audience

users noted that in-person meetings represented the quickest method for building trust

Recommendations & Next Steps

Develop Unified Web Portal

USMAI Staff +

USMAI Public +

USMAI Collaborates +

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Unified Web Portal

Information Architecture Assessment

Recommended Communication & Collaboration Tools

- Document collaboration

- Web Conferencing

- Event scheduling tools

- And more!

Create New Content

- New staff training materials

- Event planning resources

- Consortial initiatives dashboard

- Guidelines & best practices

Lightweight Communication Platform

Technical Specifications

Appendix II. Requirements for web portal

#	Category	Requirement	Prioritization (L/M/H)
	Role-based access		
	Role-based access	Roles are configurable by system administrators	H
	Role-based access	Roles can be easily added/removed from user accounts	H
	Role-based access	Multiple roles can be assigned to user accounts	H
	Role-based access	Individual user accounts can be created and managed easily	H
	Role-based access	Users can initiate account creation through the system	M
	Role-based access	Users can set/reset/recover their passwords	H
	Role-based access	Users can build personal profiles tied to their account - to include position title, institution, skills, responsibilities, group membership, interests, etc.	M
	Role-based access	The system can notify users and close user accounts based on configurable parameters like inactivity	L
	Role-based access	Access restrictions to specific content can be configured by users with appropriate permissions	H
	Role-based access	Viewing of content can be granularly restricted to specified roles	H

Non-system Recommendations

- Value of in-person meetings

- Future roles for campus contacts

- Review group expectations

Next steps

- Investigate platform options for development of new unified web portal
  - Consortial collaboration tools
  - Lightweight communication platform

- Starting early FY2018

Questions?

Read the report: https://go.umd.edu/usmai-comm-coll