

Competitive Analysis of the Digital Scholarship Lab Website

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Executive Summary

This report is a summary of the findings and recommendations established after comparing the Digital Scholarship Lab's website, to the websites of their competitors. By comparing the DS Lab's site to their competitor's sites, we were able to determine and evaluate similarities and differences between the sites, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

We approached this comparison by first determining four distinct competitor sites, and researching their makeup in regards to their overall sites, their individual pages, and usability/accessibility. Competing websites were evaluated individually and in a side-by-side comparison, and after individual research and group discussion our recommendations were established as follows:

- Make the search functionality more visible and optimized
- Make social media more accessible to visitors of the website
- Overhaul the design and layout of the "Our Team" page
- Consider changing the contact us to a portion of the webpage instead of a Qualtrics form
- Add a map of how to get to the space and a map of the space itself
- Consider changing the formatting of the website (i.e. to a one-page layout, etc.)

Based on our findings we developed this list of recommendations for improving the Digital Scholarship Lab's website, and present a discussion on the potential limitations of our analysis.

Introduction

The Michigan State Digital Scholarship Lab is a state-of-the-art technology lab, opened in February 2018. The space in the MSU Library features technologies such as VR headsets, a computer lab with advanced Mac and PC workstations, as well as a 360-degree immersive visualization room that accommodates up to 15 students. The space is available to the public and welcomes users of any discipline or level of experience. In order to aid in presenting information regarding the space and allow for sign-ups for specific areas of said space the lab has its own website.

Methods

For this portion of our research, each group member individually completed a comparative analysis of competitor environments of the DS Lab. We first searched for environments similar to the DS Lab on and off MSU's campus based on influence from our initial stakeholder interview about what the space is as well as our previous research. We decided on the following sites:

- **Direct Competitor:** [MSU Library](#). The MSU library offers similar services to the DS Lab. People can reserve rooms, professors can bring classes in and the library has a variety of resources, including books, access to databases, research guides and the librarians themselves.
- **Indirect Competitor:** [MSU Hatch](#). MSU Hatch is a coworking space for students to develop their business ideas. Students can collaborate and use resources provided by Spartan Innovations.
- **Partial Competitor:** [The Hub MSU](#). The Hub helps MSU by creating, identifying and accelerating new ways to collaborate learn research and deliver instruction at MSU.
- **Parallel Competitor:** [DS Lab Richmond](#). The Digital Scholarship Lab at Richmond University is a project based organization that develops digital humanities and social science projects and seeks to contribute to research beyond Richmond.

Each individual group member then analyzed the sites on scale of 1 to 5 as shown below:

1. Not Acceptable
2. Below Average
3. Passable or Average
4. Above Average
5. Close to Perfect

This scale was chosen in order to give a solid middle option to use for analysis as well as to have variables in the middle that would be used more often than the extremes of 1 and 5. These numbers were rarely used in the analysis due to the nature of the website being professionally done but needing work in order to make better. Once the scale was decided on each group member was given time to do their personal competitor analysis.

We then applied this quantitative scale sites, as well as qualitative observations to the four competitor sites on individual analysis matrices. The analysis matrix consisted of a few general site component criteria as well as the pages from the DS Lab website. This allowed for broad overall comparison, but also in depth comparison of specific site content pages. The complete competitive analysis matrix can be found in Appendix A. and Each individuals' analyses was averaged to give each competitor a final score. This final score is not indicative of the individual characteristics of the websites but it is useful in understanding how the characteristics work together to create a comprehensive website experience. Highly rated categories from different competitors were selected for closer analysis on how the success of the competitor's website can translate to the DS Lab's success.

Key Findings

The most important information that we gained from the numeric analysis is an overall view of how well the websites perform against each other. The category averages also help us pick out specific pros and cons between each of the websites. The best website overall according to the averages is the Hub's closely followed by the main MSU Library website. This is good news because it is likely that the design constraints for the library's main site and the Hub's website are similar to that of the Digital Scholarship Lab site, making the comparison similar and more useful in adopting features from. This doesn't mean these websites succeeded in every category and it also doesn't mean that we would advise just copying what these websites have done. Some of the things that work good for the main library site and the Hub's website will not work or apply to the Digital Scholarship Lab and this must be taken into account.

The specific features that the DSLab should adapt, depending on feasibility are as follows: improve the visibility of the search feature, add a dedicated social media feed or use direct links, use a photo grid layout for the team page, similar to the Hub, create a contact form similar to that of the Hatch, include a map of how to get to the space as well as a map of the space, and consider benefits and drawbacks of an overall layout switch to a one page layout like the lab at Richmond.

The search feature on the DSLab's website works quite well for searching through the information on the website. This is helpful for users who might want to simply search for what they would like instead of looking for it. Making this feature more noticeable would save time for casual users of the site.

Making sure that social media is visible is also something that our competitor websites had done better. Having an embedded feed might not be the most important thing but having a good set of social media icons that link to their respective networks might be a good idea.

An overhauled "Our Team" page would be good for improving the site in comparison to the competition. The "Our Team" page is not as aesthetically pleasing on the Digital Scholarship Lab as it is on other websites. Having a more modern formatting, possibly with pictures of team members, if they so chose, would do a lot in making the website look nicer.

Creating a contact page or section that worked as part of the website was something that the Hatch did well. It had a simple contact form with information on how to reach them and even included a map of where to find their physical location. This is a nice feature considering how big the library is. It would be a nice touch to have a map to the library itself as well as a map of the library that directs the user to the space and shows the space's layout. These changes seem like something that could be implemented to the DSLab website however, the Qualtrics form might be an important aspect to

the DSLab and that should be understood before changing this part of the website.

The switch to a one-page layout might be too drastic of a change for the Digital Scholarship Lab to take but it would be a massive overhaul for the form and functionality of the website. The Digital Scholarship Lab at Richmond did this well for their website and it worked very well. The MSU DS Lab may have more information that would not display well on the single page layout, but this switch is something we will be considering in our user testing.

Discussion

While we try our best to plan everything out and prevent mistakes, there will always be some mistakes or something that could have been done better. When analyzing our research there were a couple of lessons we learned:

While we understood that one of our group members was an employee of the MSU Hatch, we had not taken into account how that may affect their perception and criticism of the space's website. When analyzing the data we were able to find that they were much more critical of the space than other members of the group. While we are still able to gather useful qualitative information from their analysis of that space's website, the quantitative data becomes an outlier.

When analyzing our data it is troubling to see when one group member was unable to find a specific section in a site while another person has. It can also be troubling to find when two different pages are associated with a specific

comparable page by two separate members. Unfortunately, based upon how we ended up designing our methods we were largely focused on eliminating groupthink. Due to this focus, group members were left on their own to find certain pages and the aforementioned problems occurred in a couple places in our data. While it should be considered that the sites in question may simply have made it difficult to find specific page information that was being looked for, it is also important that we reflect on our methods to see how we may have been able to mitigate such problems.

It is important when considering our recommendations that these shortcomings are taken into account. That being said, there is still a lot of important valid data to be gained from our research. Overall, we have learned throughout our research process and eliminated a lot of issues that were present in past analyses that are not present in this one and we have learned for future research from this analysis.

Conclusion

After completing our comparative analysis we found that the MSU DS Lab had many great aspects to their site of which their competitors did not. That being said, we were also able to find some things that the space's competitors are doing that we feel would greatly improve the DS Lab's site. Based on our analysis the recommendations that we believe the DS Lab would benefit greatly from are as follows:

- Make the search functionality more visible and optimized
- Make social media more accessible to visitors of the website
- Overhaul the design and layout of the "Our Team" page
- Consider changing the contact us to a portion of the webpage instead of a Qualtrics form
- A map of how to get to the space and a map of the space itself

- Consider changing the format of the website to a one-page layout

These recommendations are based on data from our quantitative analysis and overall recommendations from discussion about the qualitative elements of each website that we compared the Digital Scholarship Lab to. We will be using these recommendations to design mockups for a redesign that we will present to users for testing.

References

Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab -

<https://dsl.richmond.edu/>

Michigan State HUB for Innovation in Learning and Technology -

<https://hub.msu.edu/>

Michigan State Hatch Coworking Space -

<http://msuhatch.com/>

Michigan State Library -

<https://lib.msu.edu/>

Competitive Analysis on A Budget -

<https://www.palantir.net/blog/competitive-analysis-budget>

Appendix A:

Bank Competitive Analysis Matrix:

Competitive Analysis Matrix				
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)				
Aesthetics of Site				
Mobile Enabled				
Customer Service Type				
Site Pages				
Home				
Using the Lab				
Contact (A form)		EX: Same as Below		
Contact Us (An information page)		EX: 5/5 Information and Form Contact are consolidated and succinct. Included map is also a nice touch.		
Technology @ The Lab				
Our Team				
Accessibility				
FAQ				
In the News				
About the Lab				
Social Media				
Search Function				

Data Collected:

	Group Results: Quantitative Competitive Analysis			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	<u>MSU Library</u>	<u>MSU Hatch</u>	<u>The Hub MSU</u>	<u>DSL Richmond</u>
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)	Ryan:- Joe: 4 Jonnie:- Sarah:3	Ryan:- Joe:3 Jonnie:- Sarah:4	Ryan:- Joe:3 Jonnie:- Sarah:5	Ryan:- Joe:4 Jonnie:- Sarah:4
Aesthetics of Site	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:2 Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe:5 Jonnie:2 Sarah:4	Ryan:3 Joe:5 Jonnie:4 Sarah:5	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:4 Sarah:4
Mobile Enabled	Ryan:3 Joe:5 Jonnie:4 Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe:3 Jonnie:3 Sarah:4	Ryan:5 Joe:3 Jonnie:5 Sarah:5	Ryan:5 Joe:5 Jonnie: 5 Sarah:4
Customer Service Type	Ryan:- Joe:- Jonnie:3 Sarah:-	Ryan:- Joe: - Jonnie:5 Sarah:-	Ryan:- Joe: - Jonnie:5 Sarah:-	Ryan:- Joe: - Jonnie:5 Sarah:-
Site Pages				
Home	Ryan:3 Joe:3 Jonnie:2 Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:2 Sarah:4	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:4 Sarah:5	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:4 Sarah:4
Using the Lab	Ryan:3 Joe:5 Jonnie:4 Sarah:3	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:1 Sarah:N/A	Ryan:2 Joe:4 Jonnie:5 Sarah:3	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A
Contact (A form)	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:N/A Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe:5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4
Contact Us (An information page)	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:2 Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe: 5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4	Ryan:3 Joe: 4 Jonnie:N/A Sarah:3	Ryan:1 Joe: N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:4

Technology @ The Lab	Ryan:3 Joe:N/A Jonnie:1 Sarah:3	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:3 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A
Our Team	Ryan:2 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:3	Ryan:3 Joe:3 Jonnie:1 Sarah:4	Ryan:4 Joe:4 Jonnie:5 Sarah:5	Ryan:1 Joe:4 Jonnie:4 Sarah:4
Accessibility	Ryan:3 Joe:5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:3	Ryan:1 Joe: N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:2 Joe:N/A Jonnie:5 Sarah:N/A	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:3 Sarah:N/A
FAQ	Ryan:3 Joe:5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A
In the News	Ryan:1 Joe:5 Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:N/A Sarah:N/A	Ryan:2 Joe:4 Jonnie:3 Sarah:3	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:N/A Sarah:4
About the Lab	Ryan:2 Joe:5 Jonnie:2 Sarah:3	Ryan:4 Joe:3 Jonnie:2 Sarah:2	Ryan:4 Joe:5 Jonnie:4 Sarah:5	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:3 Sarah:4
Social Media	Ryan:5 Joe:5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:4	Ryan:4 Joe:N/A Jonnie:4 Sarah:N/A	Ryan:5 Joe:5 Jonnie:5 Sarah:5	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:3 Sarah:3
Search Function	Ryan:4 Joe:5 Jonnie:3 Sarah:5	Ryan:1 Joe:N/A Jonnie:4 Sarah:N/A	Ryan:3 Joe:4 Jonnie:5 Sarah:5	Ryan:1 Joe: N/A Jonnie:3 Sarah:N/A

Note: In the group averages, N/A was counted as a 1.

	Group Average: Competitive Analysis			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)	3.5	3.5	4	4
Aesthetics of Site	2.25	3.75	4.25	4
Mobile Enabled	3.75	3.5	4.5	4.75
Customer Service Type	3	5	5	5
Site Pages				
Home	2.5	3.5	4	3.75
Using the Lab	3.75	1	3.5	1
Contact (A form)	3	4.5	4	4
Contact Us (An information page)	3.25	4.5	2.75	1.75
Technology @ The Lab	2	1	1.5	1
Our Team	1.75	2.75	4.5	3.25
Accessibility	4	1	2.25	1.5
FAQ	4.25	1	1	1
In the News	2	1	3	3
About the Lab	3	2.75	4.5	3.5
Social Media	4.5	1.75	5	3.25
Search Function	4.25	1.75	4.25	1.5

Group Totals (out of 70 possible points)				
Group Member	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond

Sarah	44	33	51	40
Ryan	50	37	40	31
Jonnie	38	30	52	37
Joe	57	35	49	39
Average	47.25	33.75	48	36.75

Notes from Initial Stakeholder Interview

1. Background

- a. "In one sentence, what do you guys do?"
 - i. "I don't know yet, we are still finding our way on how to talk about the space"
 - ii. "We are still inventing the space, to a certain extent that will always be true"
 1. Shrinking to a more comfortable level
 2. Primarily, (funded on a teaching/learning grant) an educational space more than a research space. More of an undergraduate space for learning with computationally intensive technology.
 - iii. "Foster creativity and collaboration"
 1. With faculty
 2. With grad students, undergrads
 3. With community partners
 - iv. "Access to, support for, and fostering the community around the use of technology in education throughout the university."
 1. Not doing our job if we are not providing access
 2. Creating a community around these transformative technologies
 3. Impact learning with technology.
- b. "Is it free to use the space/services you offer, or does it cost money?" ✓
- c. "What is your budget for this project, in terms of timing and resources?" ✓

2. Motivations

- a. "What are your motivations behind the redesign?"
 - i. "What do you want to add to the website?"
 1. User stories and test cases
 - a. Testimonials and Examples
 - b. Give reasons why
 - c. Show how this is different from other computer labs
 - d. Benefits of communication
 - e. Tell what it is for

b. "What is your reasoning for wanting a redesign?"

3. Desired outcomes

a. "What experience are you wanting for your users?"

- i. "Make it easier for people to book the things that are bookable."
- ii. "4 different room booking systems"
 1. Systems are not owned.
- iii. "Form some connections"
 1. MSU Digital Humanities Group
 - a. Lot of buy in
 - b. More crossover between MakerSpace and MSU DH and the DSL
- iv. "What can I do here?" and "How can I do that here?"
- v. Define Digital Scholarship in different ways
 1. Use cases
 2. Personal implementations
- vi. Contact Us important, using the lab was important, room bookings, and hours
 1. Top row is important and thought about
 2. The rest of the rows are not as important
 3. The bottom row is for hardcore users.
- vii. Maximum Sustainability!!!!
 1. Less work for other developers
 2. Maximum turnaround
 3. Should be able to run by a lot of people
 4. Drag and drop design isn't as important
 5. Time to write code
 - a. Prefer to write code
- viii. Reflect the aesthetic of the space with the website
 1. Modern, Bright, Desirable
- ix. Menu was made in order for fast and painless use.
 1. There was no content available
 2. Can't have an empty homepage
 3. Hitchcock Theme

4. Users

a. "Who do you think your users are currently?"

- i. Space vs Website
 1. CAL and SPD faculty
 2. Other community members
 - a. May need to use the sight to figure out what it is
 - b. Off-campus
 3. Undergraduates
 - a. Through Google
 - b. Few places on campus to link to this space

- 4. Information is targeted to faculty stakeholders.
 - a. Bought in
 - b. Interested
- 5. "Power User"
 - a. Graduate students.
 - b. 20+ hours a week for months on end.
- 6. Partners for co-creation
- 7. Campus administration
- ii. As a space for work, just like the rest of the library.
- iii. Collaboration with other colleges
 - 1. Not currently, have begun the process of communication
 - 2. Inspiration from the Hub
 - a. Direction from there
- b. "Who do you want to be your users in the future?"
- c. "Are you planning the website around your users?"
- d. "How have you designed with accessibility in mind? And what further improvements could be made?"
 - i. Accessibility standards need to be kept.
- e. Analytics
 - i. Not started yet.
 - ii. Done through the library but not through CAL servers.
 - 1. Unknown server.
 - iii. Intention of having that.

5. Communication plan

- a. "What is the primary or ideal method of contacting the project managers for us to reachout to?"
 - i. Through Josh
- b. "Are you open to meeting in person at a later date to get more information and feedback on the work that we have been doing?"
 - i. Yes
- c. No Social Media for the DSL
 - i. Social Media for the library has left
 - ii. #MSUDSLab
 - iii. Email list might be a good start
 - 1. Formal list, unused
 - 2. Not a lot of people who have signed up for it
 - 3. Part of the problem is the speed of implementation
 - iv. Put out our own marketing
 - 1. Too much time doing the thing
 - 2. Not enough time to talk about it

6. Constraints

- a. "What branding constraints do you have for the redesign?"

- i. “What standards are mandated by the University or other overseers?”
 - 1. Yes, University Branding
- ii. “Do you have a logo or other branding that you would like us to use?”
 - 1. “If not, are these assets something that you would like to be created?”

Appendix B:

Group Member Evaluations - [Comparative Analysis Matrix Template](#)

A. Group Member A Evaluation

	Comparative Analysis Matrix			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)	In theme with MSU, has a lot of information, just needs a bit more organization	Still part of MSU, modern theme, some areas don't apply as much	Related to msu, colors are nice but there is too much information	Theme is nice, a single page is simple and might be a good layout but this site does not have a lot of information
Aesthetics of Site	4, color and theme are nice	4, theme is modern	3, colors are nice but there is too much going on the homepage	4, the aesthetics are this site's best feature
Mobile Enabled	3, adaptable	4, adaptable	5, adaptable	5, adaptable

Site Pages				
Home	3, has a lot going on but gives the user a lot of information to let them choose what they want to do	4, not too cluttered and gives a lot of choice	3, has a lot going on but it is all useful information	3, the home page is really the only page of this website
Using the Lab	3, gives a list of links for how to use the various services that the library has but could be presented better	1, page not available	2, the exact page doesn't exist but there are ways that users could pitch their idea to the hub	1, this section does not exist
Contact (A form)	4, there are many options to contact the library but it can be a bit confusing if you don't know what you want	4, good form with additional options on contacting	3, there is a form and a map but it is hard to get to	3, there is a standard form
Contact Us (An information page)	4, there is a ton of options for contacting but could be a bit cleaner	4, the information is helpful and the embedded map is a nice idea	Same page as above	1, this doesn't exist
Technology @ The Lab	3, there is a resource page but this lists a variety of resources not just technological ones	1, this page does not exist	3, there is a page that gives information about the space but not about specific tech	1, this section does not exist

Our Team	2, there is a lot of different pages that direct to teams, too much information to be useful	3, the page has a clean layout that clearly displays team members	4, there is a specific about our team page that is laid out in a clear way	1, this section does not exist
Accessibility	3, there is a page but it redirects to different locations	1, this page does not exist	2, this page exists but it is only to show that they meet standards	1, this section does not exist
FAQ	3, it is a good page that is helpful but it's a little difficult to find	1, this page does not exist	1, this page doesn't exist	1, this section does not exist
In the News	1, this page is not available	1, this page does not exist	2, this exists in the form of a blog	3, this section does exist and they are cited by major news organizations
About the Lab	2, this page does exist but is too cluttered to be useful	4, this page is short and well organized	4, a good about the lab page gives information in a good package	3, this section exists as a small paragraph
Social Media	5, they do have social media, they are active, it is prominently featured on their website.	4, they do have social media but it is not displayed prominently	5, they do have social media, they are active, it is prominently featured on their website	3, they have social media and it is featured on their site
Search Function	4, big search function prominently featured on the main	1, this feature doesn't exist	3, there is a search function off to the side	1, this feature doesn't exist

	page			
	50	37	40	31
	3.58	2.64	2.86	2.2
	4	3	3	2

B. Group Member B Evaluation

	Comparative Analysis Matrix			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)	3, search bar is at the top of the page, library hours for the day, events and quick links prominent and easy to see.	4, clean clearly defined sections, images related to the hub used in the header, the header images transition is a little too fast, there are some alignment issues and the hover effects are a little too subtle	5, bright colors used to accent, an image of the hub is prominent, navigation is easy to use	4, a little disjointed, a lot going on. The header image is very interesting, the colors are a bit weird and at times difficult to read text. The top nav is hard to see until you start scrolling. The text seems a little small at times. Clean layout, a little cluttered in news section, the scroll effect is horrible

Aesthetics of Site	3, very busy, dated could use a revamp. Lots of green and an image of the library is featured in the heading, Images along the bottom are hard to see	4, little dated, nice colors, hover effects too subtle, use of images and symbols help add depth and keep user engaged.	5, consistent branding and use of symbols, image of the hub is prominently featured, easy to read typeface, organized content	4, not quite there, but it has potential with a little refinement. the blue color is hard to read in the header image and the about section. a couple different grids used in each section, (one column, 2 different 3 column grids and a 4 column grid) the about and news sections have centered text and the latest maps have left aligned text.
Mobile Enabled	3 functional but very squished	4, mobile works well, the main content area things are a little squished	5, everything collapses down nicely, its easy to read and works well with the larger screen size site	4, text issues, some overlap and the text is too small to read easily
Site Pages				
Home	3, busy, a lot of information all at once, page hierarchy could use some work. I appreciate the search bar is top and center	4, clean and minimal, the slider transition is too fast and distracting, some alignment issues in the main content	5, consistent, image of the space at the top, nav is easy to see and use	4 really nice at first glance, solid identity /style choices (font/colors), font is too small to read at times and the top nav i difficult to see until you scroll down. with some tweaking this could be great
Using the Lab	3, good information, sad setup ,a bullet list of links its not user friendly or engaging.	N/A	(resources) -> 3 chaotic, hierarchy is ok, but the every other format for picture/text creates a zig zag affect and its difficult to read. and look	N/A

			terrible. some images are grainy	
Contact (A form)	see below	4, form on the same site, and a map, the contrast between the background and the form fields is not enough	(engage ->connect) -> 4 clean and easy to use, a map is a nice touch, not much info on the page	4, simple but functional
Contact Us (An information page)	3, again great information, bad set up, spacing between sections is inconsistent and its difficult to differentiate between them	4, form on the same site, and a map, the contrast between the background and the form fields is not enough	footer -> 3, very minimal, and no email, formatting is good	see above
Technology @ The Lab		N/A		N/A
Our Team	(resources)->3 good info provided, another bullet list of links	4, pictures of each team member, leading is too small for the text, descriptions would have been nice	5, clean and consistent, the images are all the same shape and size, the text is descriptive but minimal, couldn't get the links for each person to work.	4 solid, a decent size paragraph for each team member, the image seems small comparatively. with some formatting could be much better. why so much centered text???
Accessibility	(general info -> accessibility) 3, side nav is weird, again all the information is there and it's good, formatting it in an engaging and user friendly way is their main problem	N/A	N/A	N/A

FAQ	(general ->faq) 4, set up is a little better, not great to read but ok, user can browse by topic and see the most common questions. main nav disappears, which is weird	N/A	N/A	N/A
In the News	N/A	N/A		4, formatting issues, the centered text doesn't look good, this doesn't match the 3 column grid in the next section.
About the Lab	3, great info, but its a bunch of bullet list links	2 Text formatting is terrible, paragraphs are too wide to read, few headings are used, the color of the quote is too light	5, clean and easy to read, images used, information about the space and people who work there included as well as what they work on	4, one paragraph description, very simple. more information would be nice, images of the lab would be too.
Social Media	4 links to social media in the about section, a hover effect would be nice, also this would be good to have in the footer all the time	N/A	(footer) 5, provided, they also have a blog, I wish there was a hover effect to indicate its a link	3, one twitter section, which is weird,
Search Function		5 N/A	5, works nicely,	N/A
		3 2.71	3.64	3.42
		3 3	4	3

C. Group Member C Evaluation

	Comparative Analysis Matrix			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond

<p>Overall Site (likes/dislikes)</p>	<p>4 - Overall with how massive the site is it works well. Aside from the homepage which I think could be a little better, the overall site is quite good, and more professional than most other MSU sites.</p>	<p>3 - Site has quite a few problems and could definitely use a redesign.</p>	<p>3.5 - The site has a lot of content and unfortunately I think it makes it very difficult to manage. They do a good job in some areas, but others fall short.</p>	<p>4 - Flow and overall content is very professional. With tweaks to issue portions and some more clarity on the space (FAQ section would go a long way) it would be a 5.</p>
<p>Aesthetics of Site</p>	<p>4 - The massive amount of content can be jarring at times</p>	<p>5 - No major aesthetic issues, aesthetic is minimalistic and not jarring.</p>	<p>5 - No major aesthetic issues, aesthetic is minimalistic and not jarring.</p>	<p>4 - Aesthetically great, but there is major contrast issues in the header.</p>
<p>Mobile Enabled</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>3 - Poor responsiveness. Works on mobile, but there are problems with layout for things like half screen view, etc.</p>	<p>3 - Poor responsiveness. Works on mobile, but there are problems with layout for things like half screen view, etc.</p>	<p>5 - Works very well on mobile.</p>
<p>Site Pages</p>				

Home	3 - Super busy, to the point of being jarring.	4 - The direct and straight to the point approach is great. If they are going to have a rotating gallery, I would like to see some sort of current content.	4 - Busy, but functional and aesthetic	4 - Contrast is AWFUL for the navigation, but the page is aesthetically pleasing and seems alive. It is nice to see what seems to be current work.
Using the Lab	5 - Navigation displays clear choices of library use	N/A	4 - Functional and informative, but I would like to see a link to where I can get help in a specific area, etc.	N/A - Doesn't seem like they make the lab open to the public.
Contact (A form)	4 - aesthetic is bad	5 - Same as Below	4 - Functionality wise it is fine, but there is 0 indication of where the message goes, etc. The map to where they are physically is a nice touch.	4 - Functionality wise it is fine, but there is 0 indication of where the message goes, etc.
Contact Us (An information page)	4 - Would be nice to have an actual map	5 - Information and Form Contact are consolidated and succinct. Included map is also a nice touch.	4 - This content is in the footer. Would've liked to see something about office hours so i could come in.	N/A
Technology @ The Lab	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Our Team	N/A	3 - Photos are all different sizes and aside from titles, we don't know what anyone does	4 - They manage their large team info very well. There are quite a few issues with functionality likely due to an improperly used WYSIWYG	4 - Slightly text heavy for a one page site.
Accessibility	5 - Content for accessibility is nicely divided into appropriate categories in the overall accessibility page	N/A	N/A	N/A
FAQ	5 - Content is organized nicely and search works well	N/A	N/A	N/A
In the News	5	N/A	4 - They have a similar page about their annual report. The page is busy, but functional.	4 - Small section dedicated to news about the lab's projects. The article descriptions are quotes without a lot of context leaving much to be desired for someone looking to quickly glance at the articles

				written about the space.
About the Lab	5 - For the amount of content it is very good	3 - Busy, Headings are hard to differentiate.	5	4 - The about is more of a mission statement. It is also somewhat vague on what types of projects they actually do.
Social Media	5	N/A	5 - They are active and seem to create quality content on multiple platforms.	4 - They have a twitter and it seems they stay relatively active.
Search Function	5	N/A	4 - Functional, but not optimized.	N/A
	4.36	2.71	3.75	3.07
	4	3	4	3

D. Group Member D Evaluation

	Comparative Analysis Matrix			
	Direct	Indirect	Partial	Parallel
Sites	MSU Library	MSU Hatch	The Hub MSU	DSL Richmond
Overall Site (likes/dislikes)				
Aesthetics of Site	2 - I think it works, but it's not really aesthitcally pleasing	2 - not great, it works but it definitely doesn't look good	4 - very simple and clean site, just very text heavy	4 - clean ui, minor readable concerns

Mobile Enabled	4 - yes, but it doesn't look amazing	3 - yes, but doesn't look great	5	5
Site Pages				
Home	2 - eh, looks okay, but has a lot of info and I feel overwhelmed	2 - not great, not branded well	4 - amazing, clean, branded well, just text-heavy	4 - it's great, it really is, but just kind of lengthy and not a lot of descriptions explaining what's going on
Using the Lab	4 - they make it easy to find everything about "using the library"	1 - doesn't really talk about the "using the space" anywhere	5 - pitching projects, events, connecting, great options available	N/A - couldn't find any "using the lab" sections
Contact (A form)	N/A - if it exists, I couldn't find it	5	5 - just hard to reach, at the very bottom of the screen	5
Contact Us (An information page)	2 - bullet points everywhere!	5 - info is solid and easy to read	N/A	N/A
Technology @ The Lab	1 - couldn't find this anywhere	N/A	N/A	N/A
Our Team	N/A - if it exists, I couldn't find it	1 - missing some pictures, and even some interns, and even has old interns that don't work there anymore (I know this because I work there)	5 - solid, but had trouble loading videos	4 - text heavy

Accessibility	5 - they have a whole page and an email devoted just to accessibility	???	5 - looks good to me	3 - overall, okay, but just a few issues not being able to read things in the navbar
FAQ	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
In the News	N/A - if it exists, I couldn't find it	N/A	2 - Student success page maybe? Looks great tho, just doesn't talk about "in the news" at all	N/A
About the Lab	2 - bullet points everywhere!	2 - very text heavy and not readable	4 - quick simple description	3 - quick "about us" description
Social Media	5 - very active on twitter, facebook, ig, and youtube	4 - facebook page, twitter, and ig are all very active, but no where to be found on the site	5 - solid, facebook twitter & ig	3 - only Twitter, but seems somewhat active
Search Function	3 - works okay	N/A	5	N/A
	2.93	2.5	4.42	3.64
	3	2	4	3