

MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION:

High-Level UX Objectives and Content Strategy — Browse & Search Conceptual Framework in UX Flow Proposal

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April 5, 2016

HIGH LEVEL

PROPOSED STRATEGY:

- Develop scalable and well-organized information architecture that is versatile to different user behavior preferences for searching and browsing as a priority; This is the skeleton of the Site from which all content hangs.
- Build scalable functional features with an eye on the long-term product design goals but broken up into agile sprints toward achieving those ends.
- Refine and streamline visual design components for modular designs and product roll-outs of common features.
- Content message and brand positioning-driven considerations in content growth and browse experiences.
- More A/B Testing of content messaging and content labels as isolated variables from interactions and feature testing.
- Strengthen brand positioning aligned to current trends and education trends of the future and mapped to content strategy and functionality.
- Develop a seamless experience between all company divisions for an impression of a singular brand.
- More Targeted Persona-Segmentation Based on Roles through more relevant browse experiences from the homepage to segment landing pages and search preferences.
- Introduce More Personalization of Content via Capturing More Account Settings Preferences.
 - o Surface recommended products based on users' disciplines of interest and based on similar products users have bought before.
 - o More personalized segment landing pages upon log-in.
 - o Move beyond the limitations of site privileges granted by persona segmentation and toward more individual personalization-based account settings. This will enable us to accommodate users who have different roles and who shouldn't have to pick only one role to which they identify. They are given different privileges to view something based on their roles even if they span divisions or different roles even within one division.
- Keep content new and fresh to boost more repeat site visits especially on persona-segmented business division homepages for logged-in users as well as other key pages such as discipline landing pages and grade-level browse landing pages, etc. Ensure the fresh content areas are singled out prominently so people see them quickly and realize the site is always updated.

- o Develop content articles publishing schedule and strategy for lead gen and showcase featured new products based on seasonal sales and whatnot.
 - o Write and tag articles by various popular thematic topics and organizations e.g. Common Core, STEM, adaptive learning, literacy, AP Exams, SATs, etc. They can be trends in education tied to our product releases.
 - o Enable content articles searching by various popular thematic topics and organizations (see above). If there are common themes shared across PreK-12 and higher ed and other divisions, unify the checkbox options for fewer overlapping filters.
 - o Create more seasonal sales, promos, and messaging when appropriate also to give impression that the site is more timely and relevant throughout the year.
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- Improve Purchase Prompts and Reminders — Email Prompt Users to Buy Out-of-Stock Products that are “Saved for Later” in the Cart or in a Wish List.
 - Aspire to meet the American Disabilities Standard of AA for Accessibility Ratings.

BROWSE

THE OPPORTUNITY TO SOLVE:

- Key focus: Users seek recommendations on what to buy and how to compile and assess these options. Deliver curated content for their solutions research.
- Likely users: PreK-12 Administrators evaluating programs and other larger purchase decisions; higher ed professors exploring and comparing product content and format options; parents seeking supplementary material for their students; intervention instructors and other teachers who may be buying supplementary content.
- Content messaging has not been an isolated variable we have tested — We seem to be testing entire flows but not isolating content strategy itself for true A/B testing of pages we only vary content to see which messaging approach resonates better with different user roles from schools to higher ed. Isolating variables will enable us to pinpoint more accurately as to which factors are at play in lower-performing browse experiences.
- Browse and Search Flows Merge in the Browse / Search Results Page — Their purposes may need more refinement, especially in the browse paths so we may need to strengthen the browse for clear recommendations and persona-segmented curated content.
- Different types of users will seek different types of information and even the same users returning to the site may want to experience content and transactions or research differently depending on their role and where they are in the buying cycle. Also, taking into consideration with their increasing familiarity with the site and varying user preferences for site engagement.
- Content personalization / individualization beyond persona-segmentations limitations — we don't make the users feel unique or special or capture anything in their personal settings to customize their experience. Persona-segmentation recognizes that individuals within a group may have similar objectives and goals but personalization / individual customization recognizes the distinctions in needs of the individuals from their specific areas of study as a student and instruction specialization.

THE PROPOSED BROWSE SOLUTION:

- Present MHE's vision for how to understand our products, programs, services holistically.
- Develop more entry points to the site and key pages of the site to accommodate that not all roles have the same interests and some will want more recommendations with curated information and guidance from different perspectives. They may enter the same site at different times in either capacity with different goals and methods. The site needs to have a versatile way to present content based on user objectives.

Landing pages for potential thematic and niche user interests:

o Case Example 1: Disciplines / Subjects Landing Pages

A second- or third-grade teacher may need to teach all subjects — Users would be interested in products for a certain grade level for all subjects with grade levels being more of interest than a specific subject. We may want to consider content for landing pages for key grades that may have unique challenges and objectives such as AP / Honors prep college senior year. Disciplines-related pages would show thought leadership for that specific discipline/subject and highlight programs or products for a variety of subjects for a given grade.

o Case Example 2: Educational / Grade Levels Landing Pages

A college professor and student specialized in a particular field or has chosen a major and a minor for studies may be more interested in content for a specific discipline only. Grade Levels-related pages would show thought leadership for that specific grade level and highlight products for a variety of subjects for a given grade.

o Case Example 3: Exams prep-based or Important Events / Milestones-Based Pages

- o Case Example 4: **Assessments or Educational Themes** e.g. Adaptive Learning, Common Core, Stem, etc. Provide thought leadership and recommended products and programs along each major theme of interest.
 - o Case Example 5: **Communities-Based Pages for Various Roles** such as school administrators, teachers, professors, parents, traditional-age students, adult ed students, continuing ed, homeschool parents, Hispanics, etc. Could we prescribe recommended products for each of these groups on these landing pages and articles that speak to their pain points and how solutions solve their issues?
- **Landing pages with other interests or perspectives for content browsing:**
 - o Case Example 1: **Programs** — Landing Page would introduce concept of programs and organize programs by ways that interest users.
 - o Case Example 2: **Digital Platforms** — The Landing Page would introduce the concept of digital platforms and used an expository approach to help people understand how it works and s and organize programs by ways that interest users and help them choose between platforms in comparative analyses.
- **Buying Cycle-Focused Content Strategy** — Identify Buying Cycle Stages for each division and each key persona. Map content to where the users are along that journey. Present relevant content journey along that journey.
 - o Define the questions our customers might be thinking and answer them along that buying cycle flow. Present the content as if building a case for why to consider programs and why this program or that program is based on the users' expressed interests.
- **Leverage two different types of “advance organizers”** content strategies proven to help people learn about new services and products and assess them for various purposes along these stages:
 - o **Expository** — Ideal in introducing new product genres or concepts that may be unknown to the users: Use *analogy-based content* to help users learn about MHE services and products referencing things to which they may be familiar.

Case Example 1: Perhaps, Programs may be considered a “curriculum-in-a-box” or “Prescribed Curricula” or “Bundled Product Recommendations.” How might we explain programs in such a way a school district administrator or a state board can understand how we see them and help expedite their process of learning about these offerings

Case Example 2: Could Digital Platforms be thought of as interactive Learning Apps or Adaptive Learning Apps? Is apps a more recognizable analogy framework than a platform?
 - o **Comparative** — Ideal method for users who now have an introduction to our product lines and our competitors. How do we help them draw comparisons between our similar products and programs to make more informed decisions along the lines of what they want to know? How do we distinguish our products from our competitors? Comparison charts and any type of content presented side-by-side automatically invite users to perceive a contrast between options.

Case Example 1: How do PreK-12 administrators perceive differences between similar MHE program offerings and decide which one to contact the sales rep for the appropriate ones?

Case Example 2: How do we help Higher Ed faculty distinguish the best format option for them or their students at this time in terms of their personal time investment in learning our digital platforms? How do help them decide which digital platform to buy and when to consider ALEKS over CONNECT and other products?

Case Example 3: How can we improve and standardize content pieces to highlight key differences between editions as well more quickly in PDP and PLP scenarios?

- **“Inverted Pyramid” Content Strategy** — Present content in increasing levels of granularity per user interest in content engagement; pages seem to lack a larger framework to interpret page content’s main purpose in expository presentation content and not enough to make informed assessments in comparative situations reviewing platform-against-platform.
 - o Content per Page — On each page, start off with content that is arresting but more general but as users scroll down, provide more granular details and value to reflect users’ growing interest in the content.
 - o Browse Path — Present compelling content upfront with key benefits but as site visitors become increasingly more interested in content in prescribed defined browse path, the content ideally becomes more detailed and granular to reflect users’ growing content interest.

- **Stronger and more Apparent Information Hierarchy**
 - o **More Typographic Contrasts in Scale** — Currently, content mostly about the same text size; present more contrast in typographic scale to accent key information and more content that pops for relevant content.
 - o **More Scannable Text w/ More Obvious Key Takeaways** — Content’s font size is quite large and thus, not as conducive for scanning content quickly for an overall impression of key message takeaways. Currently, layout with large text sizes requires a lot more scrolling to get the entire context of the page. Design for “inverted triangle” content strategy (see above.)
 - o **Content Chunking** — Leverage this content strategy to reduce cognitive download with related information grouped both conceptually and visually to chunk ideas together for perceived less information to process per page.

- **Clear Messaging and Key Call-to-Action Established**
 - o Determine what you want to be the key message on each page and ask users to see if that message is apparent.

- **Prepare for More Interdisciplinary Content and Specialization of Disciplines** — Present content in increasing levels of granularity per user interest in content engagement
 - o Content per Key Page — Add checkboxes to the discipline landing pages to the browse sub-disciplines section so users can surface browse / search results for more multidiscipline or interdisciplinary searches.
 - o Content in Important Browse Sequence — Test content on a sequence of pages to see if they lead to desired call-to-actions with each call-to-action goal met on each page.

- **Make browse and search experiences more distinct** per users’ interest in recommendations or power-searching:
 - o Checkbox options for disciplines are arranged alphabetically in the Browse path as it currently does and makes sense since users are exploring their options. However, I wonder if they should be organized by highest quantity matching in the search path.
 - o Search can show all disciplines that match keywords entered as it does now but browse should only show the disciplines that the users have selected from the discipline landing page.

- **More Customer Interviews & More Isolated Content Variable Analysis in A/B User-Testing of Content** — Present content in increasing levels of granularity per user interest in content engagement
 - o Content per Key Page — Test content on a sequence of pages.
 - o Content in Important Browse Sequence — Test content on a sequence of pages to see if they lead to desired call-to-actions with each call-to-action goal met on each page.

SEARCH

THE OPPORTUNITY TO SOLVE:

- Key focus: Users may already know what they want or are in the mindset of being ready to buy. The goal is to facilitate effective filtering to narrow results to exact products matching their requests. Improved focus on enabling efficient features-comparisons between options to buy.
- Likely Users: Students and parents; Instructors who know exactly either the type of product they want or the exact product itself. Repeat visitors familiar with the site and how to filter may also be ready to search after they have already conducted their research the first time around.
- Enable more intuitive and targeted searches by the user-
- Provide users with the ability to make more informed decisions and ascertain whether to get the next level of detail for each step in search results and on subsequent product detail and program landing pages.
- Browse and Search Flows Merge in the Browse / Search Results Page — Their purposes may need more refinement, especially in the browse paths so we may need to strengthen the browse for clear recommendations and persona-segmented curated content.
- Different types of users will seek different types of information and even the same users returning to the site may want to experience content and transactions or research differently depending on their role and where they are in the buying cycle. Also, taking into consideration with their increasing familiarity with the site and varying user preferences for site engagement.
- Content personalization / individualization beyond persona-segmentations limitations — we don't make the users feel unique or special or capture anything in their personal settings to customize their experience. Persona-segmentation recognizes that individuals within a group may have similar objectives and goals but personalization / individual customization recognizes the distinctions in needs of the individuals from their specific areas of study as a student and instruction specialization.
- Enable content article searches for lead gen and cultivate a brand perspective that we are leaders in the education sector, driving and reflecting trends.

THE PROPOSED SEARCH SOLUTION:

- Present MHE's vision for how to understand our products, programs, and services holistically.
- More user-testing needed to verify whether we have the ideal filters and checkbox selections available that people seek. Test whether our filter label names and checkbox options are intuitively named and include all the factors that the users will need. (We still need to keep in mind filter options have to scale to grow and be so well organized that users know where to go.)
- Standardize content presentation and descriptions so we can eventually enable users to do the following:
 - o Surface product and program descriptions on search results that include enough relevant info for users to know whether to click on a specific link to view that particular item or to consider another option.
 - o Feature product summary descriptions that are pertinent to general and specific search results.
 - o Enable users to compare products in the search results pages with checkboxes associated with each item. Content standardization will enable in the future the ability to compare products against each other on various attributes.

- o Current PDP and PLP pages don't feature content in a standardized approach with an inverted pyramid and type of content presented which makes it more difficult for users to compare similar products by content and features.
- Make browse and search experiences more distinct:
 - o Checkbox options for disciplines in the micro-filtering sidebar are arranged alphabetically in search and browse alike, but I wonder if they should be organized by quantity matching in search but for browse, the disciplines should remain listed alphabetically.
 - o Search can show all disciplines that match keywords entered in the micro-filtering sidebar as it does now but browse should only show the disciplines that the users selected from the discipline landing page.

Questions for Product Team & Stakeholders:

1. Which is the more important organizing principle among these ideas? Which is the strategy most suited to the process from below:
 - a. Lead the content strategy with showcasing disciplines-based thought-leadership and which establishes us as a credible, neutral authority on our top subjects and educational themes such as adaptive/personalized learning and common core, STEM, etc. Then use these related pages to drive users down to our recommended MHE products after we planted that context.
 - b. Lead content strategy with market segmentation of PreK-12 and Higher Ed users and demonstrate thought leadership in each area with a view of content as a multidisciplinary vision in the larger organizing principle. After our credibility is established there, we then drive users to MHE products that cross-disciplines.
 - c. What do the keywords for which we're performing well suggest about how our customers perceive our competitive strengths in certain solution genres and for specific products? Can we group these keyword types by common genre or significance that may inform our Browse taxonomy structure and URL directory setup?