

PROJECT 2

CRANWELL RECOMMENDATION REPORT



For Project 2, we will work in partnership with [Cranwell International Center](#), “the primary support service for the international community,” to help their office revise their [website for new students](#). Students who come to Virginia Tech from other countries must navigate a bewildering array of information if they want to study here. To support these students, Cranwell has developed a website intended to help new students make the transition to Virginia Tech. The staff at Cranwell believe that their website for new international students could be improved. That’s where we come in.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

For this project, you will be working in groups of 3-4 to study how Cranwell’s website for new international students might be improved. Each group will provide the staff at Cranwell with a set of recommendations for revising the website. **Note that any and all recommendations must be supported by research.** To accomplish this task, each group will produce the following four deliverables:

1. **Proposal (10%):** This proposal should be formatted as a memo, addressed to me. It should address: What web pages will you study? How do you propose to study its usability? That is, what people and sources will you consult, and how will you find them? How will work be divided within your group? What is your proposed timeline? (Group, 2-3 pp.)
2. **Recommendation report (40%):** This report should be addressed to the staff at Cranwell, specifically, Brian Bolton (Director), and Karen Howe (Community Liaison). Your report should address: What web pages did you study? How did you study its use? What did you learn about how people make sense of the web pages? How would you recommend that a web page be revised? What research supports this recommendation? Remember that all recommendations should be based on the results of your research. (Group, 3-5 pp.)
3. **Presentation (25%):** Describe and justify your recommendations for revising the web pages that your group was assigned. (Group, no more than 8 minutes)
4. **Post-project review (25%):** This should be a memo, addressed to me. Describe what you did during the project. Reflect on what you learned, how it relates to professional writing, and how you might apply it in the future. (Individual, 1-2 pp.)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this project that places you in a real professional writing situation, you will develop your abilities to:

- collaborate with a partner organization;
- identify options for studying how others use written documents (in this case, a website);
- implement your own research plan;
- analyze how institutional documents might more effectively support students from different cultures;
- develop and present a set of recommendations for the professional writing of your partner organization; and
- explore how professional writers negotiate the cultural and ethical implications of professional communication in the production of documents, by considering a range of stakeholders including institutions, partners, and end users.

Mission Statement

Cranwell International Center is committed to the university's globalization initiatives and serves as the primary support service for the international community. Cranwell International Center promotes intercultural exchange, fosters a welcoming environment, and enhances the experience of all university and community participants. We support the university's focus on teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement through our commitment to quality programming, strong advocacy, collaboration, a dedicated facility, and valuable services.

In other words, you should be learning how to improve an organization's written work—and, more importantly, how to improve it based on knowledge gained through research.

EVALUATION

Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Audience: This work effectively engages its audience through a clear, original, and interesting purpose that is appropriate for its intended audience. Tone is appropriate for its audience, and all deliverables are easy for the intended audience to follow (coherent, focused, clearly organized).

Research: All recommendations are supported with research. The research conducted makes effective use of reliable sources. Research methods show engagement with a variety of stakeholders, including project partners, the institution, and end users.

Visuals: Visuals are effectively used to facilitate the audience's understanding. Visuals elements include images, tables, charts, color, fonts, spacing, bullet points, etc.

Editing: Language is clear and concise with few to no grammatical issues. All deliverables are professional in tone and quality and suitable for use in a real professional setting.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK

One person per group should submit the proposal and recommendation report to his/her Scholar drop box. Each individual should submit his/her own post-project review to his/her Scholar drop box. All files should be in PDF format and named according to the guidelines outlined in the syllabus.

WORKING TIMELINE

- T 3/4 Introduce Project 2; group formation; audience analysis & usability testing.
- Th 3/6 Project 1 Presentations; proposal writing and project management.
-*Spring Break: 3/8-3/16*.....
- T 3/18 **No class meeting. Proposal due at 4:59 pm.** See PPT slides about information design.
- Th 3/20 **No class meeting.** Continue conducting research and analyzing findings.
- T 3/25 Progress updates; representing others; time to work in groups.
- Th 3/27 Feminist theory and technical communication; time to work in groups.
- T 4/1 Making recommendations; time to work in groups.
- Th 4/3 Discussion of reading; time to work in groups.
- T 4/8 **First draft of report due;** review workshop; group meetings with JSF; presentation sign up.
- Th 4/10 Practice presentations.
- T 4/15 **Project 2 Presentations; Recommendation Report & Post-Project Review due at 11:59 pm.**

A FEW INITIAL RESOURCES

The following blog post and articles will give you an initial understanding of the problem you've been asked to address:

- Green, Chuck. "How to Design a Smart, Functional Form."
- Sleiss, David. "Designing Public Documents." *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 12.1 (2004): 24-35. (Available from Communication and Mass Media Complete.)
- Schultz, Jessica R. and Beverly B. Zimmerman. "A Study of the Effectiveness of Information Design Principles Applied to Clinical Research Questionnaires." *Technical Communication* 47.2 (May 2000): 177-194. (Available from Communication and Mass Media Complete.)

To begin to understand this project, consider Karen Schriver's definition of **information design**. She says that such design is "concerned with creating texts (broadly defined) that integrate words and pictures in ways that help people to achieve their specific goals."

Ultimately, your task in this project is to assist Cranwell in creating a website that will most effectively help international students achieve the goal of smoothly transitioning to Virginia Tech.

LIST OF WEB PAGES

- Group 1**
 - Home
 - Resources
 - Contact
- Group 2**
 - Undergraduate
- Group 3**
 - Graduate
 - Exchange
- Group 4**
 - Orientation
- Group 5**
 - Calendar
 - Student Stories