

Card Sort Analysis

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Purpose

To better gauge user expectations upon landing on the HPP page, we conducted a card-sorting study with three participants. Participants organized 40 card items in a meaningful way and assigned names to each category they created. Analyzing the study's results revealed important insights into how users mentally grouped information and the weaknesses of the current website's information architecture.

Methods

Using the Optimal Workshop Card Sorting tool, we created a list of 40 items representing all important information available on the website. We then sent a link to the participants and asked them to group items in a way that made sense to them, such as based on their perceived similarities. The participants were also asked to name the groups they created. An instructor observed the participants as they completed the study. If they had any questions about the meaning of an item, the instructor would direct them to its definition.

Items that participants could not group were placed in their own, separate categories. Participants were instructed not to create sub-groups. The test had no time limit and participants were allowed to create as many groups as they needed.

Results

Using the dendrograms provided in the card sorting tool's analysis section, we observed the agreement rate of participants' item categorization through the best merge method. After analyzing participant patterns, we were able to estimate what kinds of information should be on each page during the redesigning process, as well as how they should be organized.

Based on the results, we came up with 6 categories, as listed below:

Categories

1. About HPP

General information about the HPP and a list of possible medical degrees students can pursue through the program's curriculum.

2. Medical School Application Process

Information on how to apply to medical school and what sort of help the HPP can provide throughout the application process. This also includes required documents, exams, referral letters, and experiences to be considered for acceptance.

a. Timeline

Deadline information for different stages of the medical school application process, such as the exam, interview, referral letters, etc.

b. Review Process

General information about the application review process, timeline, and possible individuals/resources to reach out to for additional information.

c. Application Help

Resources the HPP provides to aid applicants in applying for medical school.

d. What to Do After Acceptance

Things to consider and do after acceptance into medical school. Additional information specifically catered to each school, and hyperlinks to their websites.

3. Career Development

Resources that HPP students can access to further their experience and education in the healthcare field.

a. Research Opportunities

Information about the types of research opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

b. Service/Internships

Information about types of internships/service opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

c. Clinical Experiences

Information about clinical and apprenticeship opportunities available to students (link to their websites).

4. Alumni Resources

Information about Alumni resources, such as the CMU Alumni Network, direct contact with student ambassadors, and social media group handles for external communications. Additional information includes resources on career opportunities and employers known for hiring CMU graduates.

5. Faculty Resources

Information for faculty members, such as financial compensation and referral letter requirements. Also includes research opportunities and publications by other faculty members.

a. Letter of Recommendation FAQ

How to write and submit a letter of recommendation for medical school applicants, as well as deadlines.

b. What Medical Schools Look for in Applicants

Recommended letter components and structure for medical school applications

6. Contact Us

Contact information of the main HPP directors is provided to users for inquiries. This includes direct contact with student ambassadors, advisors, and faculty representatives. Also includes a hyperlink to the networking opportunities page (same as the alumni resources networking page).

The six categories proposed cater to our four main personas. Current CMU and prospective students can learn more about the HPP program, how it will help them in the medical school application process, and career development opportunities through the first three categories. CMU Alumni will find all relevant information in the fourth category, while the fifth category is for faculty members (advisors and/or professors) who are supporting HPP students during the medical school application process. Finally, the sixth category serves as a resource for all groups to connect with program directors and learn more about the HPP.

Comparison to the HPP Website

The categories suggested differ from the HPP website's current information organization and structure across two aspects:

1. The HPP uses fewer categories than it should

The HPP website organizes its information into five main categories. However, the card sort study shows that users feel the information should be divided into more categories. Participants created a median of eight categories to group all the essential information.

2. Unclear distinctions between components of the HPP application process and the application process for medical schools

The HPP website provides information not only about applying to its program but also about the medical school application process. However, participants in the card sort study struggled to consistently separate and categorize this information. For example:

- One participant grouped both HPP application information and medical school information into a single category titled “Academic.”
- Another included “Incoming Students Application” for the HPP program under their “Med School Application Info” category.
- Two participants created separate categories for recommendation letters instead of grouping them with other medical school application details.

These errors suggest that information about the HPP application process and the medical school application process may need better distinction and clarifying labels to avoid confusion.

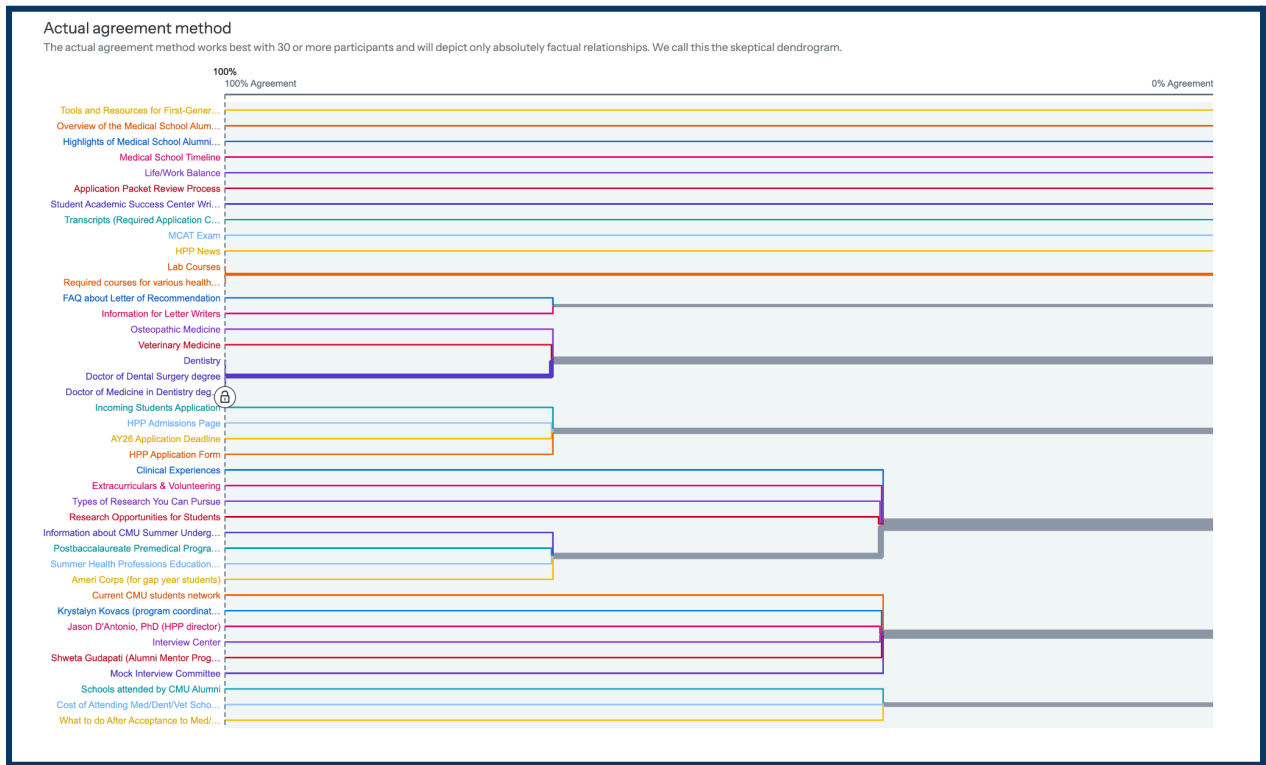
Key Takeaways

Card sort studies provide valuable insights into user expectations of information organization upon landing on a website page. Our card sort analysis reveals a discrepancy between how participants mentally categorize the content found on the HPP website and its actual organization. We believe that these discrepancies explain why participants confused HPP information and medical school information during our user testing scenarios.

To improve navigation, the HPP website will need to adopt more categories and clearer labels that align with how its users naturally think about and group the website’s content.

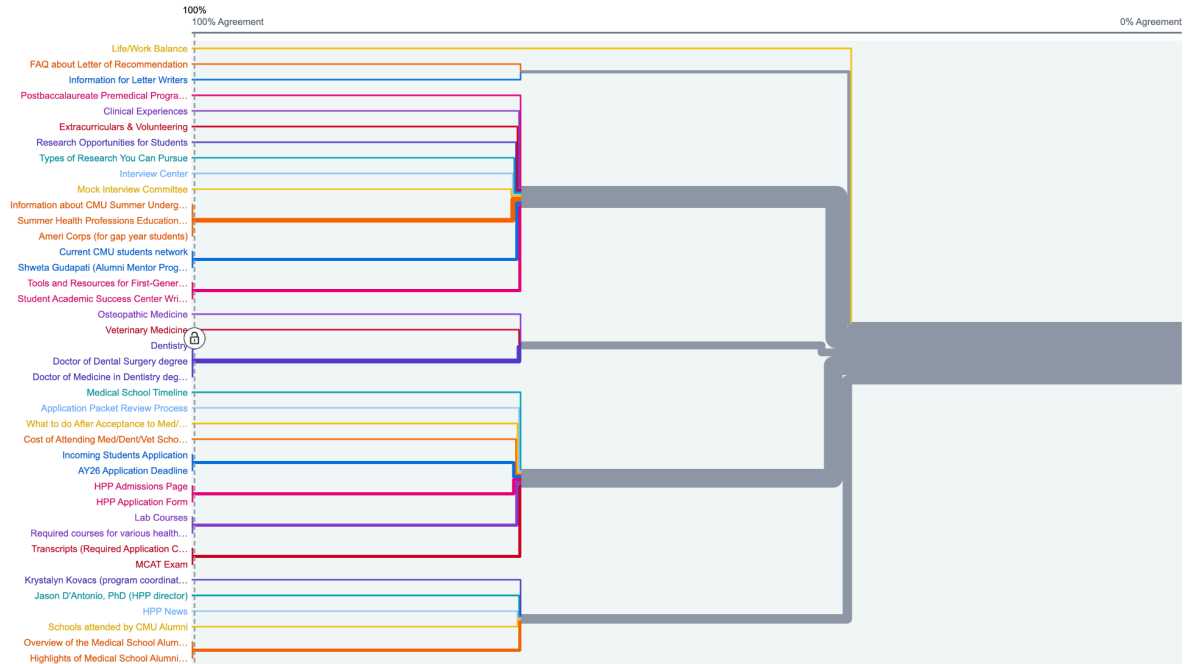
Appendix

Dendrograms



Best merge method

The best merge method often performs better than the actual agreement method when your study has fewer participants. It makes assumptions about larger clusters based on individual pair relationships.



List of Card Items

1	Osteopathic Medicine	21	Summer Health Professions Education Program
2	Current CMU student network	22	Ameri Corps (for gap year students)
3	Krystalyn Kovacs (program coordinator)	23	Tools and Resources for First-Generation Medical School Students
4	Jason D'Antonio, PhD (HPP director)	24	Shweta Gudapati (Alumni Mentor Program Coordinator)
5	Lab Courses	25	Overview of the Medical School Alumni Mentor Program information
6	Incoming Students Application	26	Highlights of the Medical School Alumni Mentor Program
7	Required courses for various health profession programs	27	AY26 Application Deadline
8	Schools attended by CMU Alumni	28	HPP Application Form
9	Clinical Experiences	29	FAQ about Letter of Recommendation
10	Dentistry	30	Information for Letter Writers
11	Doctor of Dental Surgery degree	31	Medical School Timeline
12	Extracurriculars & Volunteering	32	Mock Interview Committee
13	Veterinary Medicine	33	Life/Work Balance
14	Types of Research You Can Pursue	34	Application Packet Review Process
15	Information about CMU Summer Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship (SURA)	35	Student Academic Success Center Writing Support for Writing Personal Statements

16	Research Opportunities for Students	36	Transcripts (Required Application Component)
17	HPP Admissions Page	37	MCAT Exam
18	Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry degree	38	Cost of Attending Med/Dent/Vet School
19	Postbaccalaureate Premedical Programs (gap year program)	39	What to do After Acceptance to Med/Dent/Vet School
20	Interview Center	40	HPP News