

UBC Arts Co-op Hub Design Project Part 1

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1. Project Description

The UBC Arts Co-op Hub is the website students admitted to the Arts Co-op program use to help them find co-op positions, pre-employment training and resources, and post-employment and graduation guidance. The UBC Arts Co-op Program is concerned about the usability of the Arts Co-op Hub website, specifically with the organization of the mass information and increasing interactive content for preemployment resources. The goal of the Arts Co-op Hub marketing team is that the website can be a continuous and reliable source of information that students can use.

The main concerns of the Arts Co-op Hub are the ease of navigation for students, the amount of text and information displayed, readability, and making an easily digestible display. It is important for the Arts Co-op Program to increase the ease of use for the students involved in the co-op program, because a difficult website to navigate could discourage students from using the resources available to them. UBC Arts students pay to be part of the co-op program and have access to the resources, job search and advising that the program provides, so if they were to seek other sources because the Arts Co-op Hub is too difficult to navigate, it is not only a waste to the student, but it could also affect their future interest in the program. If users are unsatisfied with the service they are paying for, it discourages the students involved, as well as future participation. The Arts Co-op Program needs to ensure student satisfaction and success to fulfill their purpose as well as their goal.

This project consists of 5 group members, and the timeframe is approximately 2 months. Our main project contact is Heather Liao, the marketing director of Arts Co-op.

2. Supporting secondary research

The UBC Arts Co-op Hub's website is a private site for students who have been admitted to the program, where they get the information they need to search and prepare for a Co-op term. The UBC Arts Co-op team is concerned about Arts students' experience with the usability and the organization of the information on the Hub page. By looking at student reviews of their experience with the Arts Co-op program, competing school co-op program websites, and a UX design information website, we will find information that can help the UBC Arts Co-op Hub increase the usability of the website for students.

Many students share their experiences and advice about the Arts Co-op program on the discussion website, Reddit. The majority of students recommend doing the program and say that the process helped them find work and gain experience. In [Figure 1](#), the student describes that the "tailored" content of the Arts Co-op Hub search helped them find a position suitable for them (Sawa3, 2021). Similarly, in [Figure 2](#) the student expresses the benefits of the Co-op program but that some of the postings on the job board are not helpful and can be misleading (ScreechingSeagulls, 2021). There is a common theme of students praising the Co-op program

for the experience they were able to gain through it, but having difficulty with the job posting board. In [Figure 3](#), we see that after COVID, the student became so frustrated with the “job pool” they quit the program, yet they still were able to find value in the “advice” provided (ubcthrowaway99, 2021). Another student had a similar experience, as we can see in [Figure 4](#), and struggled to use “Simplicity”, so they stopped using the resource provided by the program, and did research on their own (storyofmylifedude, 2022). The themes throughout these comments were similar - that Simplicity and the job search feature were challenging to use and find what they were looking for, but they found the resume, cover letter, and job preparation resources helpful.

In our survey to students in the program, we ask a question about the amount of “clicks” it takes to find the information they are looking for, by providing the following example from the Hub’s website.

[Home](#) > [I’m on a Search Term](#) > [Guide to the Search Term](#) > [Resumes](#) > Designing Your Resume

This is a screenshot of the user having to visit four pages to find information about designing resumes. This aspect of information availability, and the extent of the search to find relevant resources on the Hub, concerned us about the user experience using this website. Yet the IEEE Brand Experience site explains that “measuring the ease of use on these sites cannot be determined just by the number of clicks but how effectively they can get to content on each of these sites” (IEEE.org, 2017). Therefore, according to the Reddit comments from students, the information they obtain from the websites “satisfies” their search, then there is not a “need to worry about how many clicks got them there”. Additionally, in Scott Berkun’s “How Design Makes the World” he states that “simplicity means value” and that designs with too much complexity or in need of too much instruction can be distracting for the user (Berkun, 2020). Yet, he continues to explain that “sometimes complexity and quality issues are worth it”, and that based on the context it can be good for the user to put thought into their interaction with the design (Berkun, 2020). Berkun and the IEEE Brand Experience site both encourage the complexity of design if it is significant and appropriate for the intended user.

Through this research, we have found that the usability of the Arts Co-op Hub website when it comes to resources that prepare them for a work position, is not the main concern for students. The UBC Arts Co-op Hub’s layout of information does not demotivate students' use as long as the information satisfies their search, but it could improve its ease of use in the job search resources and simplicity.

3. Supporting primary research

Our primary research consisted of collecting qualitative data through a survey, and both qualitative and quantitative data through interviews with students in the program. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback and evaluation of the existing Arts Co-op Hub website. The survey begins with a brief explanation of the research purpose, it has 15 multiple choice questions, and one optional question at the end for users to input their contact information if they are willing to participate in an interview (see Appendix [Document 1](#)). Our second data

gathering technique was conducting semi-structured interviews. The participants were given the study protocol and gave verbal consent for participating (see Appendix [Document 2](#)). The interview consisted of 26 closed and open-ended questions to attain both quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were asked about their current usage and experience with the Arts Co-op Hub, as well as allowing them to expand on their opinions, while noting down any pain points (see Appendix [Document 3](#)).

Both of these data gathering methods had the limitation of only being able to recruit participants who are either currently in Arts Co-op - or have been in the past - as the Arts Co-op Hub is a secured website that the public cannot access. Thus, we could not solely rely on sending out the survey to our personal network, as only one of our group members was involved in Arts Co-op and were acquainted with students in the program. We attempted to reach out to our personal network, but the majority of our participants came from our project contact and marketing director of Arts Co-op, Heather Liao. She sent out the survey through the Arts Co-op newsletter, Arts Co-op social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram, the Arts Co-op Job site - Symplicity, as well as emailing Arts Co-op students. From these methods, we gathered 59 total participants for our survey, whose answers were recorded via Google Forms, which were then transferred onto a Google Sheets form. Of the 59 survey participants, 9 of them expressed interest in participating in the interview by submitting their contact information. Of the 9 participants who did so, we successfully conducted a full interview with 7 of them. We conducted these interviews via Zoom video call, and recorded their answers by note-taking. The timeframe that the survey was available was one week, and all 7 interviews were conducted in the span of 4 days.

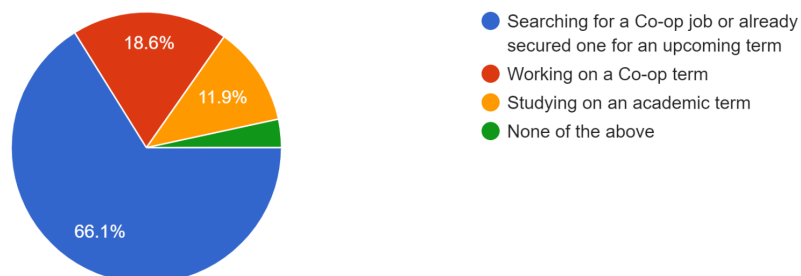
4. Data analyses

The qualitative data gathered from the Google Forms survey results were viewable in the Google Forms website, and from there was transferred to a Google Sheets document for us as a group to view all at once. The responses for this survey was required, apart from the last question asking for contact information for the interview, so the questions had a 100% response rate from the 59 participants. The responses for each question consisted mainly of the given choices, with a few participants choosing to input their own response in the "Other" option.

The survey results can be viewed through Google Forms summary, where pie charts and bar graphs are provided, along with the percentage and frequency count of each answer.

Question 1:

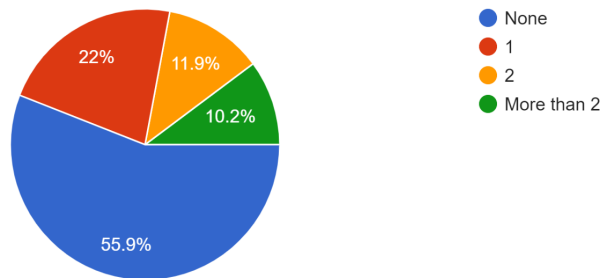
What is your current status in Arts Co-op?
59 responses



Question 2:

How many Arts Co-op work terms have you completed so far?

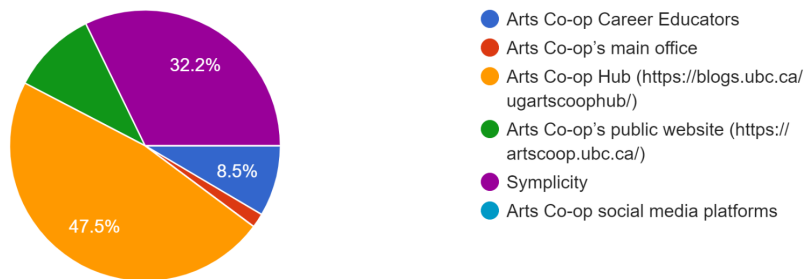
59 responses



Questions 3:

When you are seeking information about Arts Co-op, which resource do you visit first?

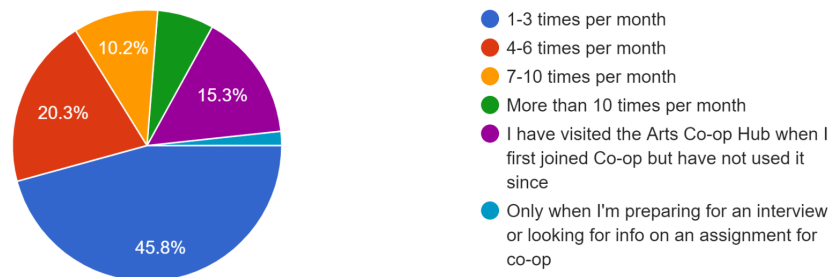
59 responses



Question 4:

How often do you visit the Arts Co-op Hub?

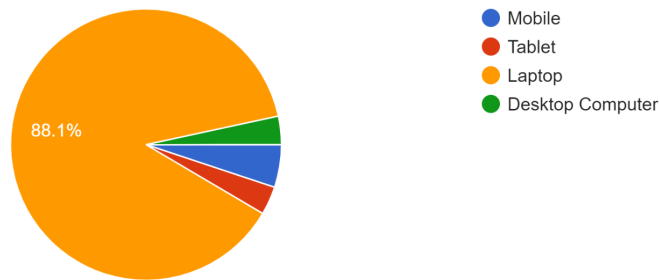
59 responses



Question 5:

If you visit the Arts Co-op Hub, what device do you typically use?

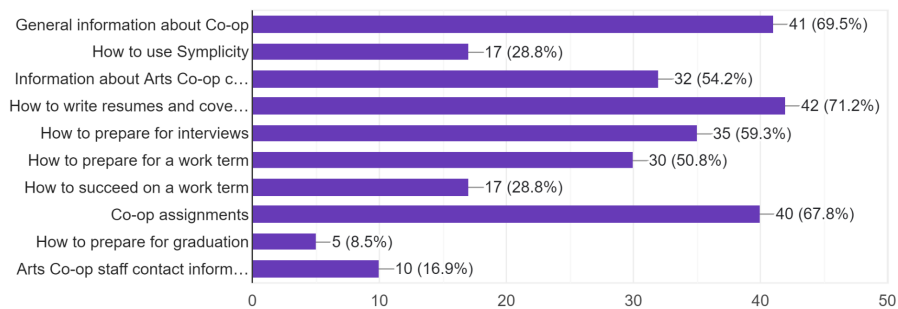
59 responses



Questions 6:

Which of the following have you visited the Arts Co-op Hub for? (Select all that apply)

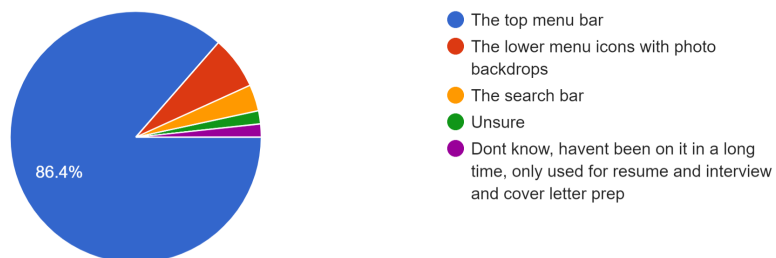
59 responses



Question 7:

When visiting the Arts Co-op Hub website to find specific information, where do you normally start navigating?

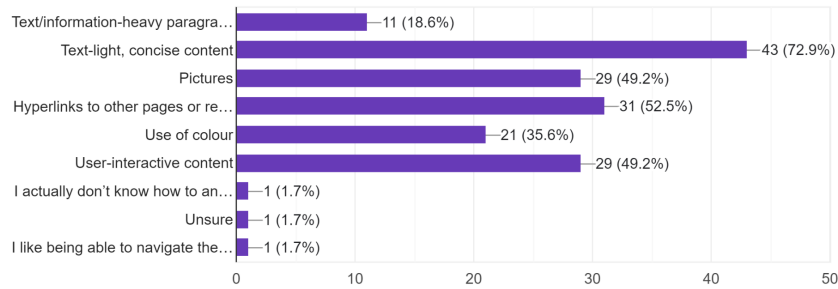
59 responses



Question 8:

When looking through a page of information on the Arts Co-op Hub website, which of the following properties would you prefer to see? (Select all that apply)

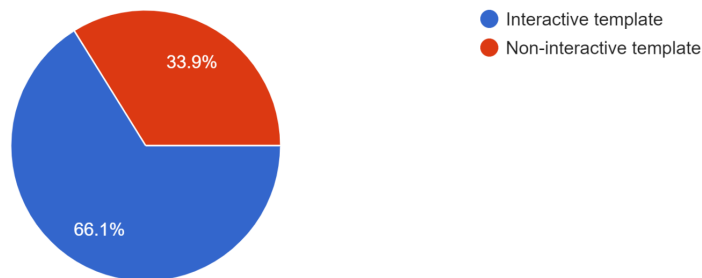
59 responses



Question 9:

Which of the following visuals would you prefer to view?

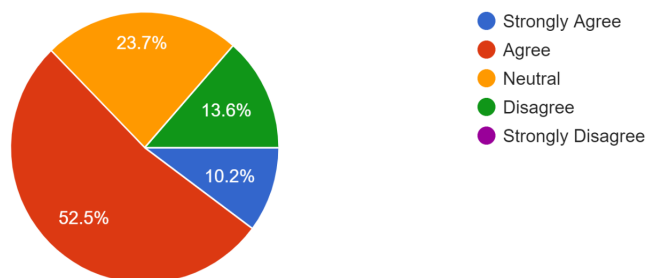
59 responses



Question 10-15 - Likert Scale Questions:

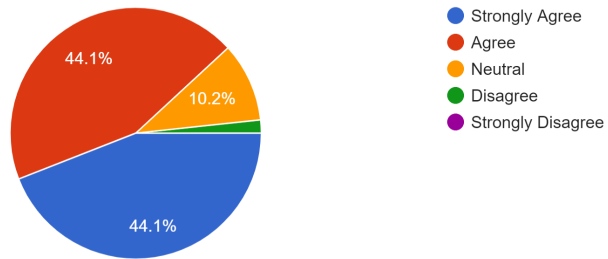
The Arts Co-op Hub is interactive and encourages me to use the resources provided.

59 responses



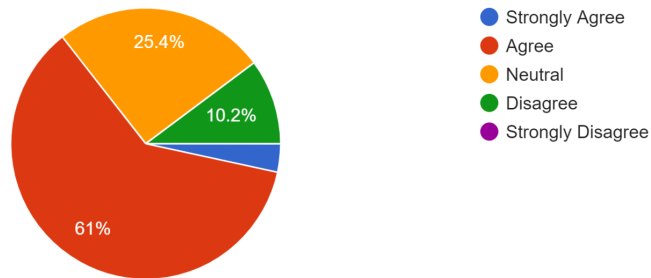
In general, my engagement reading a webpage depends on how easily I can get to the content and how this content is organized.

59 responses



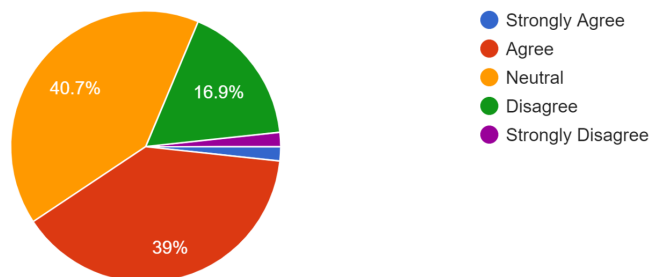
The information presented on the Arts Co-op Hub is usable and organized.

59 responses



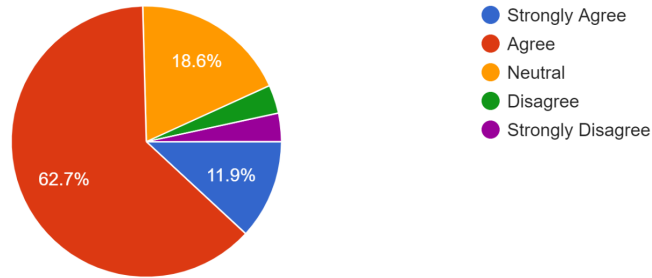
I can easily locate specific information I am looking for on the Arts Co-op Hub.

59 responses



I feel comfortable navigating through the different sections of the Arts Co-op Hub.

59 responses



Question 16:

After viewing the above example, please select the sentence that best represents your experience when navigating to a page you are looking for on the Arts Co-op Hub:

59 responses



The interview results were recorded via note-taking, with separate documents for each participant. The answers were then combined and transferred to a Google Sheet, with a snippet seen below. See Appendix [Document 4](#) for the link to the full form.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from these participants through the survey and interviews give us valuable insight into the experiences of real co-op students' experiences using the Arts Co-op Hub. From the survey, we learn that the majority of the participants (39 out of 59) are currently in a search term, and the most voted options for the question "Which of the following have you visited the Arts Co-op Hub for? (Select all that apply)" were "How to write resumes and cover letters," "Co-op assignments", and "General information about co-op." We can use this information to emphasize search term resources, job application preparation resources, and co-op assignment guidance when implementing our redesign plan. Additionally, in terms of preferred properties seen on a webpage, the participants voted the most for "text light, concise content," "hyperlinks to other pages," and "pictures," which the current website is lacking in many areas. Another aspect to be considered during our redesign process is the H5P interactive elements of resume designing, cover letters, and more, which 39 out of 59 participants stated that they preferred over the non-interactive elements. However, the current H5P elements are hard to find and have a few usability flaws, which will further be discussed in the interviews summary. Furthermore, 52 out of 59 participants stated that they use their laptop to access the Hub, so our team will focus on working with laptop screen interface.

Our 7 interview participant responses and affinity diagram highlights important concepts surrounding user experience of the Hub. The participants expanded on their experience of the H5P interactive features, general navigational experiences, and many gave suggestions for us to implement towards our redesign. We asked all of our participants to try navigating to a H5P interactive page, where they mostly picked the resume design resource, but 5 out of 7 people stated that this was difficult to find. Furthermore, while many participants deemed the resource to be helpful, there were complaints that the interactive buttons lead to pop-up boxes that cover up the entire resume, as well as buttons over blank areas, which led to inconvenience of confusion. Additionally, many participants either agreed that the Hub is difficult to navigate and find information, or that personally they had no trouble as they were already acquainted with the site, but that they can see how it would be difficult for a new user to learn. Another recurring complaint was that the search bar did not take them to the page they needed to go, but rather just gave them a click path. 5 out of 7 participants also relayed that they either prefer less clicks getting to certain information, or that they would have preferred it has a new user getting acquainted with the site. Finally, 6 out of 7 participants agreed that a general support page where students can connect with staff and peers would be helpful; participants gave suggestions to this idea, such as a "reddit type of forum," "document of previous co-op students" to see past experiences, "AI chat support," and more.

5. Persona

Proto-Persona: Amber the Arts Student



Amber the Arts Student

3rd Year Student in the Arts Co-op Program
Arts Co-op Hub Primary User
Area(s) of study: Media Studies

[Factors that influence behaviour, such as demographics, goals]

Bio

- Accepted into the Arts Co-op Program in October 2022
- Currently on a search term for a co-op job
- Uses the Arts Co-op Hub 5 times per month

Goals

- Making sure her resume, portfolio, and cover letters are strong
- Apply to well-paid and relevant co-op positions and receive job offers
- Succeed in her first co-op work term

Motivations

- Easily obtaining information about Arts Co-op
- Connecting with Co-op staff and peers
- Professional experience

Skills

- Communication
- Graphic design
- Digital marketing
- Critical Thinking

[Needs, obstacles, desires]

- Feels overwhelmed from all the different sections of the Arts Co-op Hub
- Has trouble navigating to information she is looking for
- Struggling to balance co-op assignments and job applications with coursework
- Wait times are too long to book a time with her co-op advisor for further inquiries
- Looking for resume and cover letter help

Final Persona: Amber the Arts Student

Amber the Arts Student



ABOUT

👤 20

📍 Vancouver, BC

🏫 UBC 3rd Year Media Studies

Amber was recently accepted into the Arts Co-op program in October, 2022. She is currently on a search term for her first co-op job, and uses the Arts Co-op Hub approximately 5 times per month.

"I'm excited to be accepted into Arts Co-op and want to make the most out of it, but I need help preparing for my first work term."

GOALS

- Making sure her resume, portfolio, and cover letters are strong
- Apply to well-paid and relevant co-op positions and receive job offers
- Succeed in her first co-op work term

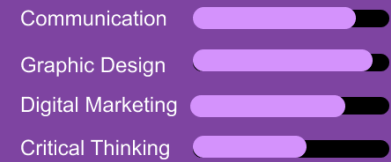
PAIN POINTS

- Feels overwhelmed from all the different sections of the Arts Co-op Hub and has trouble finding information
- Struggling to balance co-op assignments and job applications with coursework
- Wait times are too long to book a time with her co-op advisor for further inquiries

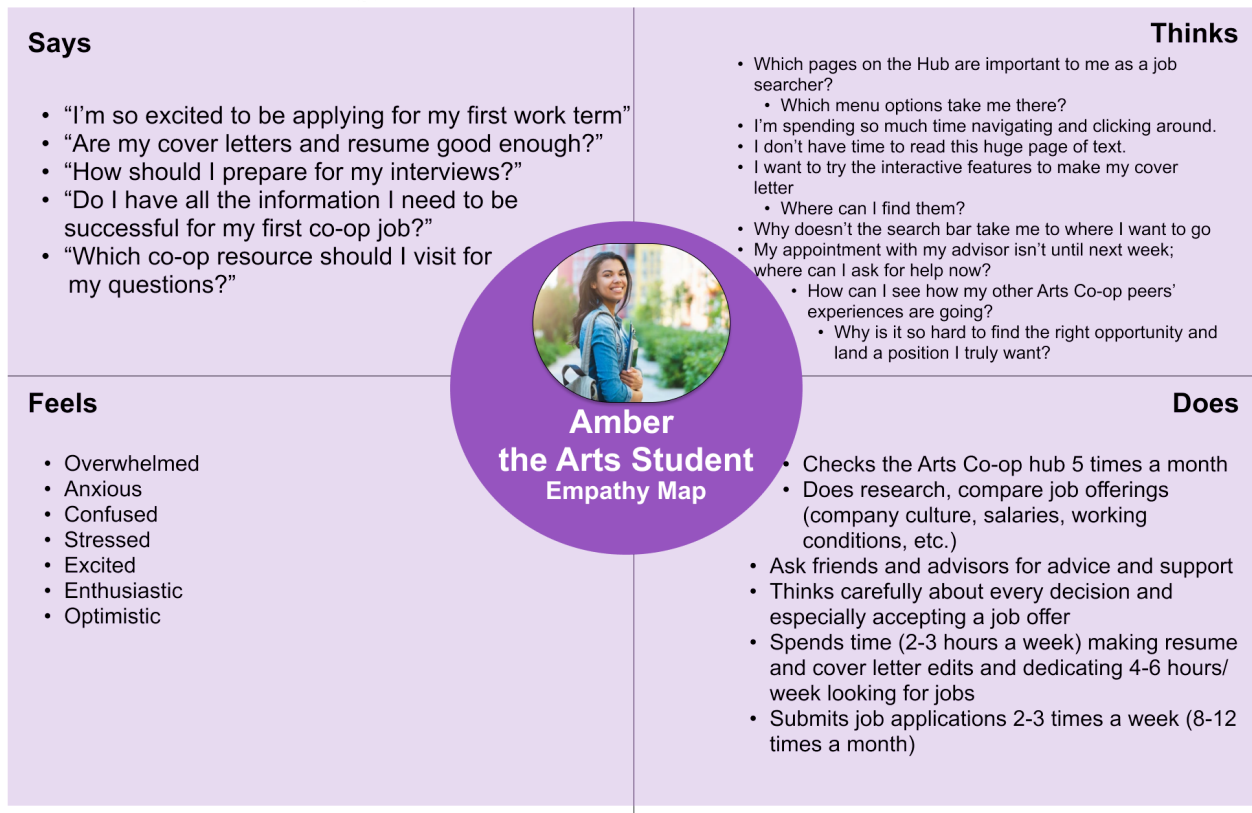
MOTIVATIONS

- Easily obtaining information about Arts Co-op
- Connecting with Co-op staff and peers
- Acquiring professional experience in a creative industry




SKILLS



6. Empathy Map



7. As-is scenario

Steps →	Research and Preparation	Seeking Advice and Support	Writing Resume and Cover Letter	Job Searching and Application	Offer Acceptance or Rejection
Aspects ↓					
 Doing	Research and compare job offerings (company culture, salaries, working conditions, etc.)	Ask friends and advisors for advice and support	Spend time (2-3 hours a week) making resume and cover letter edits Dedicating 4-6 hours/week looking for jobs	1. Check the Arts Co-op hub 5 times a month 😊 2. Submit job applications 2-3 times a week (8-12 times a month)	Think carefully about the necessary decision and next steps to take for application acceptance 😊😟
 Thinking	1. I'm spending so much time navigating and clicking around. 😊😟 2. Do I have all the information I need to be successful? 😊😟 3. The Arts Co-op Hub is not as informative as I expected. 😊😟	1. I want to try the interactive features to get a better idea as to how I should make my cover letter. 😊 2. My appointment with my advisor isn't until next week, where can I find for help now? 😊 3. Are my cover letters and resume good enough? 😊	1. Where should I start? 😊 2. The website is too text heavy and cluttered, I can't clearly see the information I am looking for. 😊 3. I have to look through so many pages to find the resume and professional help tools I need. 😊	1. Why doesn't the search bar take me to where I want to go? 😊 2. How can I see how my other Arts Co-op peers' experiences are going? 😊 3. Which pages are more important for me to visit as a job searcher? 😊	Am I ready to take a term off? 😊
 Feelings	1. Excited 2. Enthusiastic	Overwhelmed 😊😟	Confused	Anxious	Optimistic Stressed

8. Needs Statements

- Amber the Arts Student, needs a way to better navigate text-heavy and cluttered information on the Arts Co-op Hub, so that she can digest and retain important information better.
- Amber the Arts Student, needs a way to optimize her time finding necessary information on the Hub, so that she can save time as a busy student balancing both course work and co-op job searching.
- Amber the Arts Student, needs a way to easily access the resume and professional help tools, so that her portfolio stands out to potential co-op employers during application time.
- Amber the Arts Student, needs a convenient way to connect with co-op staff and peers, so she can receive support and guidance for her first work term experience.

9. References

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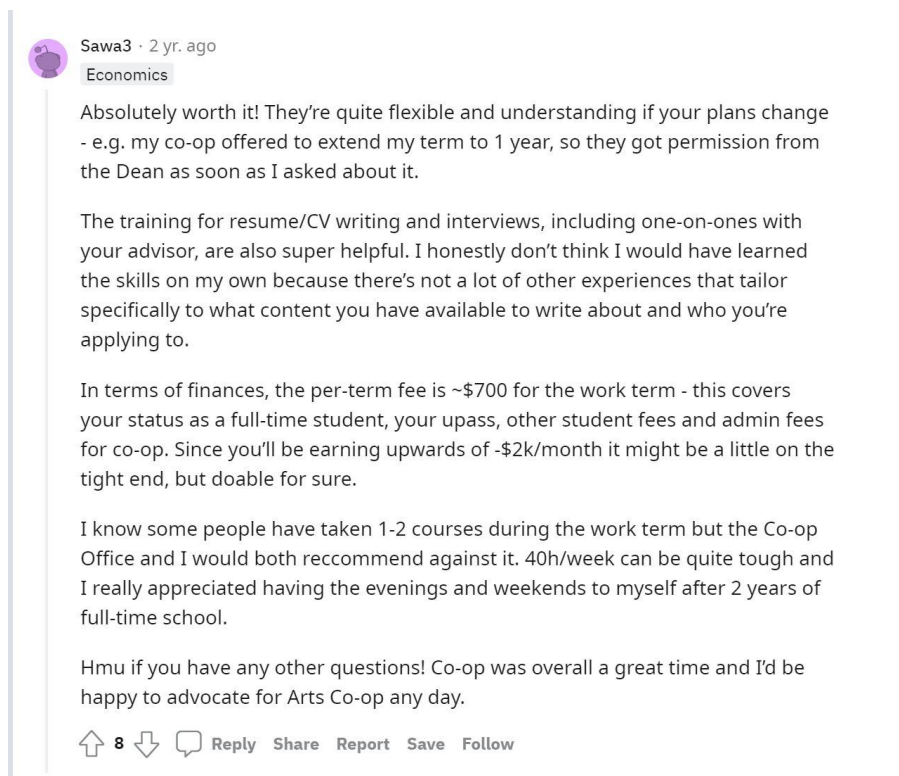
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10. Appendix

Figure 1



Sawa3 · 2 yr. ago
Economics

Absolutely worth it! They're quite flexible and understanding if your plans change - e.g. my co-op offered to extend my term to 1 year, so they got permission from the Dean as soon as I asked about it.

The training for resume/CV writing and interviews, including one-on-ones with your advisor, are also super helpful. I honestly don't think I would have learned the skills on my own because there's not a lot of other experiences that tailor specifically to what content you have available to write about and who you're applying to.

In terms of finances, the per-term fee is ~\$700 for the work term - this covers your status as a full-time student, your upass, other student fees and admin fees for co-op. Since you'll be earning upwards of ~\$2k/month it might be a little on the tight end, but doable for sure.

I know some people have taken 1-2 courses during the work term but the Co-op Office and I would both recommend against it. 40h/week can be quite tough and I really appreciated having the evenings and weekends to myself after 2 years of full-time school.

Hmu if you have any other questions! Co-op was overall a great time and I'd be happy to advocate for Arts Co-op any day.

8 ↑ ↓ Reply Share Report Save Follow

Figure 2



ScreechingSeagull · 2 yr. ago

Alumni | English Literature & History

Tell me (mostly) the worst things in your experience and the best things.

I did 5 work-terms, and the co-op program was totally worth it for me to gain job experience, explore different career paths, build a professional network, and very likely get bridged into a full-time position after grad. Getting paid is always awesome. Also got the opportunity to work in Ottawa and sight-see.

Paying the co-op fee sucks, having to do co-op assignments during the workterm, co-op conferences can be bleh, some postings in the job board aren't great or unpaid (know your worth, don't apply for unpaid internships).

Figure 3



ubctrowwaway99 · 2 yr. ago

Honestly, COVID changed it. Jobs are lower quality. I found it more stressful to follow their guidelines and have only their job pool so I quit. It was annoying to pay fees and go to seminars etc. However, it gave me really helpful advice and workshops in the beginning. It's really up to you. If you have a lot of good skills and already have good job prospects, this will just help you find the best of the best kind of jobs. However, if you don't have much work experience or don't know what you are interested, it may be really hard to land a job you like. Good luck!

2 Reply Share Report Save Follow

Figure 4



storyofmylifedude · 4 mo. ago

having done arts co-op, I would say the main advantage was just it forced me to apply to a lot of jobs and actually dedicate time to job-searching, resume-making, cover letter writing, etc whereas otherwise woulda prob been lazy

if you are more motivated than me, you can for sure find your own jobs! tbh sm of the jobs on the arts co-op are apply externally (esp for private companies) except maybe a few RA and gov jobs

my first co-op was self-search actually cause it was so rough finding one on simplicity

2 Reply Share Report Save Follow

Document 1

Survey Questions

Document 2


UX for Information Design – UBC Arts Co-op Hub Website

1. **Project Title:** UX of Arts Co-op Hub website.
2. **Investigators:** Dr. Olivier [St-Cyr](#), PhD (ostcyr@mail.ubc.ca) and the students in the class INFO 300 (Information and Data Design) in the School of Information at the University of British Columbia.
3. **Purpose:** The purpose of our study is to assess the usability and design of the current Arts Co-op Hub. To succeed in their project, the INFO 300 students need to interview Arts Co-op students who have used the Arts Co-op Hub before and gather insight into their experience.
4. **Process to be followed:** We will brief the participants about the purpose of the study, and explain the consent form to them. We will then engage the participants in a 15-20 minutes semi-structured interview where we will observe the user using the current Hub site and ask set questions, as well as allow the participant to share further feedback or insight they would like to provide.
5. **Participant selection:** Participants will be chosen from users who have filled out the Arts Co-op Hub User Experience survey and expressed interest in participating in an interview. They will be identified with the help of the Arts Co-op staff and selected based on their willingness to participate. In general, they will be users who are currently involved in Arts Co-op and who have recently engaged with the Arts Co-op Hub.
6. **Relationships:** Our relationship with the participants may be described as follows: no prior or existing relationship.
7. **Risk and benefit:** There will be no risks to the participants. The only benefit will be to contribute to the education of the investigators. Participants will be free to withdraw before or at any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
8. **Consent details:** We will brief the participants about the purpose of the study, and obtain their verbal consent to proceed.
9. **Compensation:** No compensation will be provided to participants.
10. **Information sought:** We will ask participants a series of questions related to their experience with using the Arts Co-op Hub through a semi-structured interview. During the interview, participants' answers will be recorded through note-taking.
11. **Confidentiality:** Information will be kept confidential by the investigators. Names or other identifying or identified information will not be kept with the data. The only other use will be to include excerpts or copies in the assignment submitted, but names and other identifying or identified information will not be submitted.








Document 3

 Interview Questions

Document 4

 Arts Co-op UX interview responses

Interviews

-  P1
-  P2
-  P3
-  P4
-  P5
-  P6
-  P7