

# Review of my.monash portal

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Findings & Recommendations – Monash University

*Version 1.0 — 11 July 2005*



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# 1. Executive Summary

In May 2005 the Flexible Learning and Teaching group (FLT) at Monash University requested The Hiser Group (Hiser) to undertake a review of the university's enterprise information portal, *my.monash*.

The aims of this review are to:

- Determine the user requirements that people currently have for the portal, and
- Evaluate how well the portal is meeting those requirements.

In particular, the FLT team seeks a deeper understanding of:

- How **valuable** the portal is to current users –  
More specifically, what contributes to, or detracts from it being a valuable tool?
- How **usable** the portal is –  
With particular reference to the design and conceptual model, navigation and findability, user satisfaction and the provision of information and resources.
- The direction the portal needs to take in order to **balance the needs** of stakeholders and users.

The following user groups were identified as being key for this review:

- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate students
- General staff
- Academic staff
- Researchers

The following activities were conducted to answer the questions posed by Monash:

- 7 stakeholder workshops  
These aimed at understanding the goals and direction for the portal.
- 17 focus groups with participants representing the 5 key user groups  
These were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the portal and to generate ideas for improving the portal.
- An online survey was conducted over a three-week period generating 6613 responses.  
This provided quantitative data about the value of the portal and people's subjective satisfaction with it.
- 13 usability testing sessions  
By observing participants doing real tasks using the portal we were able to assess how usable the portal is and identify areas for improvement.

## 1.1 Key findings

The *my.monash* portal is a highly valued tool for many people, especially undergraduate students. The survey responses from all groups showed high levels of subjective satisfaction with the portal.

Focus groups determined that the portal is primarily perceived by all user groups as a "tool for students" and to a lesser extent an "out-of-office tool". The portal's reliability was also a noted strength.

The general staff and researcher groups reported:

- Less need and inclination to use the portal, and
- Fewer portal features being relevant to them.



Key factors contributing to low usage of the portal include:

- Very low awareness of the features and benefits of the portal. Some participants in the general staff focus groups questioned:
  - If we're meant to use it, why wasn't I told about it at the induction course?
- A general confusion about the role of the portal, its boundaries and its relationships with other systems. For example, focus group participants raised questions such as:
  - Why should I use the portal when I can get what I need from the Monash website?
  - Why do we have a website and a portal anyway?
  - Why use the portal when our department already has a (better) system?
- For some groups – particularly general staff and researchers – the reality is that the features and services currently offered by the portal are of little value.

The usability evaluation went quite well with high success rates for the tasks undertaken. Generally once participants had found where to do a task, the task itself posed few problems. The key issues were around finding the right place to start tasks.

Problems contributing to this include:

- Home page “clutter” – too much information on the home pages makes finding things difficult and discourages users from exploring and getting to know the portal.
- Grouping and labelling of information could be improved, particularly for some of the tabs, but also for section headings and link labels.

## 1.2 Key recommendations

### Improving portal features

Many suggested improvements were for existing features such as email, the Marketplace, news and library access. Other key user requirements that were identified include:

- Providing more **targeted and relevant information** to users based on factors such as their role, faculty, campus, etc.
- Allowing users to **easily customise** the appearance and content on their portal.
- Providing a “**single sign-on**” to systems.
- Smoother transitions and **better integration of systems** are required, particularly between the portal and MUSO/WebCT, but also for WES and library systems.
- Features to improve **interaction and collaboration** such as discussion forums and chat.
- Providing **better research resources** and allowing users to store content– e.g. links, files, work notes – in a central area.

### Improving portal support

Strategic issues were also identified that need to be addressed for the portal's success to continue and thrive.

There are a number of organisational barriers impacting the portal's uptake as the preferred channel for information and service delivery. **Senior management support** for the portal needs to be strengthened in order to overcome these barriers.

Currently there is a distributed model of responsibility for the portal – i.e. spread between ITS and the Steering Committee – making it difficult to set and achieve priorities. Assigning “ownership” of the portal to a single person who has the authority to address the organisational barriers is likely to result in both:

- Increased success for the portal, and
- More efficient use of portal budget and resources.

One of the early initiatives of the owner's role needs to be the development and documentation of a portal strategy. This is needed to:

- Clarify the portal's role, boundaries and objectives, and
- Define operational policies – e.g. how and when services are removed from the portal

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Project background

In May 2005 the Flexible Learning and Teaching group (FLT) at Monash University requested The Hiser Group (Hiser) to undertake a review of the university's enterprise information portal, *my.monash*.

#### About the portal

The portal was launched in June 2000 after a trial in 1999. It is developed and maintained by the FLT team within the Application Services department of Information Technology Services (ITS). A team of in-house developers use open-source technologies to develop and maintain the portal.

The portal's development is overseen by a steering committee composed of staff members from a range of areas – including ITS, Student and Staff Services Division and the Library.

According to the original Expression of Interest for this project, *my.monash* aims to be the primary information and communication tool for the university's staff and students. Its business goals are to:

- Aggregate relevant information, links and other online resources in a secure personalised environment.
- Provide the university community with a “gateway” to the resources they are likely to need based on their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide user-centred, flexible electronic resources in the areas of learning and teaching, administration, research and community.

#### About this review

The aims of this review are to:

- Determine the user requirements that people currently have for the portal, and
- Evaluate how well the portal is meeting those requirements.

In particular, the FLT team seeks a deeper understanding of:

- How **valuable** the portal is to current users –  
More specifically, what contributes to or detracts from it being a valuable tool?
- How **usable** the portal is –  
With particular reference to the design and conceptual model, navigation and findability, user satisfaction and the provision of information and resources.
- The direction the portal needs to take in order to **balance the needs** of stakeholders and users.

The FLT team at Monash are already aware that the portal is a key tool for undergraduate students, but the needs of other users are much less understood – particularly researchers and general staff members. Part of the focus of this review is to establish what requirements are **common** to all groups of users versus those that are **specific** to a particular group.

More detailed objectives of the review and the approach taken to address these questions are provided in *Section 3 – Research Methodology*.

## 2.2 About this document

### 2.2.1 Structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Executive Summary – summarises the findings and recommendations of this report
- Introduction (this section) – provides background information for the project
- Research Methodology – outlines the approach taken for this review
- Summary of findings – answers the key questions from the original Expression of Interest
- Findings from stakeholder workshops – presents findings related to the portal's goals and direction
- User requirements for *my.monash* – presents findings from focus groups and an online survey
- Usability testing of *my.monash* – presents findings and recommendations from usability testing of the portal
- Summary of recommendations – provides a single list of all recommendations in the report
- Appendices – includes a list of materials supplied electronically with this report and a list of all issues arising during the usability testing.

### 2.2.2 Intended audience

This document is intended for Monash University staff who are involved with the direction, development and maintenance of the *my.monash* portal. This includes:

- The FLT team
- Members of the portal steering committee
- Other Monash staff who have input to the portal.

A number of people who volunteered for activities in this review requested that the findings be made available to them. The steering committee will be responsible for deciding whether to make this report more widely available to participants and other Monash staff.

## 2.3 Scope of review

The *my.monash* portal provides access to a significant number of online resources and key software applications within Monash. For example:

- Web Enrolment System (WES) – In addition to handling enrolments online, this provides information such as academic records, exam schedules and fees.
- Course and Unit Publication Information Database (CUPID) – an online database providing information about the units and courses offered at Monash. Students can access information while staff can also edit data.
- WebCT/MUSO – the university's learning management system, providing online facilities to support learning and teaching.

The scope of the review is restricted to the portal itself rather than any issues that may have been raised about specific applications accessed via the portal.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Our approach

The original brief from Monash provided 13 specific questions to be answered by this review. We therefore proposed four activities that would help to answer these questions (as shown in Table 1).

This section outlines the research methodology undertaken for each of the four activities. See *Section 4* for a summary of findings answering these questions.

### 3.2 Key user groups

Monash identified the following key user groups (cohorts) to include in this study:

- Academic staff
- General staff
- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate students
- Researchers

For some of our activities, more specific profiles within each cohort were targeted. For example:

- The postgraduate focus group participants were people doing course work (rather than higher degree research, who were included in the Researcher group), whereas
- For the online survey, participants indicated which of the groups they belonged to, with many respondents indicating multiple roles.

The following descriptions of the research methodology provide more specific details of who was involved with each activity.

Question	Stakeholder workshop	Online survey	Focus Group	Usability Testing
1. How can <i>my.monash</i> best serve the needs of its various user groups?	✓	✓	✓	
2. Does <i>my.monash</i> provide the kinds of information and resources that users expect and/or want?	✓	✓	✓	
3. Are users aware of the extent of resources contained in or accessible through <i>my.monash</i> ?	✓	✓	✓	
4. Is the best use made of the home page screen real estate?				✓
5. Are the content areas represented by tabbed navigation organised and labelled in a way that makes sense to users?				✓
6. Does <i>my.monash</i> provide information and resources that are relevant and useful?	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Does it provide too much?	✓	✓	✓	
8. Can users find the information they require quickly and efficiently?				✓
9. Where there are multiple pathways to electronic resources (via <i>my.monash</i> and other Monash websites), which do users prefer? Why?			✓	
10. How satisfied are users with the information and resources provided by <i>my.monash</i> ?		✓		✓
11. How satisfied are they with the design of <i>my.monash</i> ?		✓	✓	✓
12. What frustrates users most about <i>my.monash</i> ?			✓	✓
13. What do users like most about <i>my.monash</i> ?			✓	✓

Table 1: Questions posed by Monash mapped to Hiser activities used to determine answers

### 3.3 Stakeholder workshops

#### Aims

The aims of the stakeholder workshops were to:

- Identify the goals of the portal – both for the short and longer term.
- Understand the organisational goals that the portal currently supports and identify goals that could be better supported.
- Gain an increased awareness of the specific goals of organisational units – in order to understand how the portal can better support them.
- Identify barriers that prevent the portal being fully utilised by staff and students.

Note: In some instances the stakeholder workshop acted more as a focus group to establish the needs of particular groups; however all sessions contributed to a greater understanding of the portal's objectives.

#### Participants

Stakeholders for the *my.monash* portal vary in role and their level of involvement. For example, our stakeholder workshops included members of:

- ITS – responsible for the daily operation and maintenance of the portal,
- The portal steering committee – who are from a range of areas both within and external to ITS, and
- Organisational units – who provide content via the portal.

While these groups were specifically targeted, the FLT team also wanted to include people from parts of the organisation where the portal has less of an impact, such as research staff. While these people may not yet be stakeholders, a better understanding was sought of ways in which the portal may support them in the future.

Seven stakeholder workshops were conducted between 17<sup>th</sup> May and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2005 for the following groups:

- Information Technology Services  
This group represented those responsible for the operational aspects of the portal.
- Student and Staff Services  
This division provides significant support to students and staff for administrative matters ranging from student enrolments to staff HR functions.  
They provide many services via the Monash website and the portal.
- HR Systems  
Part of the Student and Staff Services Division, this group provides key HR systems and services such as employee self-service functions (independently of the portal).
- Community  
Participants representing support services ranging from catering and bookshops through to financial aid, health and chaplaincy services.
- Learning and Teaching  
A varied group representing those who support both staff and systems development for improving the quality of learning and teaching at Monash.
- Research  
Participants representing research staff from both specific faculties, and the Research Office (which provides support across the University).
- Library  
Participants representing a range of Monash libraries, including those on campuses other than Clayton.

### Session structure

Six of the seven stakeholder sessions were conducted as workshops, with the HR Systems group conducted as a less formal interview (due to space and time constraints).

Participants were issued with a pre-session questionnaire that asked about:

- Their role and time spent in this role at Monash
- Their organisational unit and its goals and challenges
- Their level of involvement with the *my.monash* portal

After introducing the session and participants, the stakeholders' general perceptions of the portal were gathered through a group exercise.

This was followed by a brainstorming activity to ascertain:

- The current ways the portal supports their organisational unit
- The ways they would like it to support them in the future
- Barriers that prevent the portal being used more effectively.

## 3.4 Online survey

A survey was used to provide quantitative data relating to the portal across a broader range of users.

We employed an online tool ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) to undertake this survey over a three-week period. People were invited to respond to the survey via Monash Memo and a global email. As added encouragement, we provided respondents with the chance to win a \$100 Monash bookshop voucher.

The survey aimed to find out about the portal in terms of:

- **Usage** – How much do groups use the portal? What reasons do people give for not using the portal frequently?
- **Value** – How valuable is the portal to users?
- **Content** – What information and services do users value most? Is there any content that is not relevant?

Table 2 shows the specific questions asked through the online survey.

### Notes regarding the analysis of the survey data

The number of survey responses (6613) was significantly more than anticipated, so the time budgeted for analysing these results was insufficient.

For the open-ended questions – i.e. 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 – we were able to assess individual responses for the smaller user groups – i.e. Researchers, General staff and Academic staff – however the larger groups were processed using automated queries.

The impact of this is that for the open-ended questions:

- For some of these questions, totals may not be shown
- The numbers reported for these groups are estimates, however we are confident that they are in the “ballpark”.

Question	Related to
<p><b>Q1. Which of the following best describes your role at Monash University?</b></p> <p><i>Choose all that apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate student</li> <li>• Postgraduate student</li> <li>• Academic staff</li> <li>• Researcher</li> <li>• General staff</li> </ul>	Usage
<p><b>Q2. How long have you been using the my.monash portal?</b></p> <p><i>Choose one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never used it</li> <li>• Less than 6 months</li> <li>• 6 months to 1 year</li> <li>• 1 to 3 years</li> <li>• More than 3 years</li> </ul>	Usage
<p><b>Q3. How often do you access the my.monash portal?</b></p> <p><i>Choose one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than once a day</li> <li>• Several times a week</li> <li>• Once a week</li> <li>• Several times a month</li> <li>• More rarely e.g. once a semester</li> </ul>	Usage
<p><b>Q4. What are the most important services and information for you in the portal?</b></p> <p><i>3 single-line input fields were provided</i></p>	Value
<p><b>Q5. How does the portal help you in your daily work or study?</b></p> <p><i>Open-ended question</i></p>	Value

<p><b>Q6. Rate level of agreement with the following statements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The portal is a valuable tool for me</li> <li>• The portal makes me feel like I can actively participate in the Monash community</li> <li>• The portal contains all the information I require</li> <li>• I can easily find things in the portal</li> <li>• I can do what I need to quickly</li> <li>• The portal is easy to learn</li> <li>• I enjoy using the portal</li> <li>• Compared with other ways of doing things, the portal saves me time</li> <li>• Help is available when I need it</li> <li>• I don't feel "lost" when using the portal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value</li> <li>• Value</li> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Usage</li> <li>• Usage</li> <li>• Usage</li> <li>• Value</li> <li>• Value</li> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Usage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q7. Please list any content that is not relevant or useful to you.</b></p> <p><i>Open-ended question</i></p>	Content
<p><b>Q8. What new features, services and information would make you use the portal more often?</b></p> <p><i>Open-ended question</i></p>	Content
<p><b>Q9. If you could change one thing about the portal, what would that be?</b></p> <p><i>Open-ended question</i></p>	Content
<p><b>Q10. What new technology would you like to access through the portal?</b></p> <p><i>Choose all that apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chat rooms</li> <li>• Alerts shown on the portal (where an alert is an important message that is personally relevant to you)</li> <li>• Requesting and receiving information via SMS</li> <li>• Better integration with MUSO/WebCT (e.g. one click access to lecture slides)</li> <li>• Unified events calendar (showing all events on your campus)</li> <li>• None – the existing technology is fine</li> <li>• Other (please specify) (<i>open-ended question</i>)</li> </ul>	Content

Table 2: Questions asked through the online survey

### 3.5 Focus groups

While the survey provided **quantitative** data about the value of the portal and the needs that people have, focus groups elicited richer **qualitative** data about the value of the portal and the needs that people have.

#### Aims

The focus group aimed to understand different user groups':

- Perceptions of the current portal
- Likes and dislikes regarding the current portal
- Ideas for features, services and information to improve the portal

#### Participants

We conducted 17 focus group sessions between Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May and Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2005 with 3 – 8 participants in each session.

- 18 undergraduate students (across 3 sessions)
- 14 postgraduate students (across 3 sessions)
- 26 researchers (across 4 sessions)
- 27 general staff (across 4 sessions)
- 16 academic staff (across 3 sessions)

The participants provided were samples across such characteristics as gender, home campus and local/international students.

The majority of participants reported that they use *my.monash* fairly frequently (with 11 using it rarely).

#### Session structure

The 1.5 hour sessions included the following activities:

- Preliminary time to complete the consent form and demographic questionnaire
- “*my.monash* as a car” – a brainstorm activity to gather perceptions of the portal
- Strengths and Weaknesses – initially an individual brainstorm, followed by group discussion about the portal’s current strengths and weaknesses
- “My ideal portal” – again individuals would list their ideal features for *my.monash*. These were then consolidated into a single list
- “Money spend” – participants were given \$250 in Monopoly money to “spend” on the features that were most important to them. This prioritises the features suggested by the group, to give use insight into their value across groups
- At the end of the session, participants were provided with a Monash bookshop voucher.



Figure 1: Photo of "Money spend" activity

## 3.6 Usability testing

### Aims

Focus groups and online surveys rely on participants **remembering** what the portal is like to use. One of the disadvantages of such techniques is that what people **actually do** can be quite different.

The benefit of usability testing is that it allows the “real world” to be simulated with participants being observed as they complete real tasks. As such it is a powerful technique to uncover specific usage issues in the portal – particularly:

- Examining how meaningful users find grouping and labelling of content.
- Determining whether users perceive the home page to be cluttered – and what (if anything) could be removed to reduce any clutter.
- Establishing whether the portal’s navigation model and orientation cues help users to achieve their objectives efficiently.
- Uncover any aspects of the portal that cause confusion for users.

### Environment

In these 1.5 hour sessions, the participant and a facilitator were in one room with observers located in an adjoining room. A portable video camera captured an “over the shoulder” view of the participant’s computer screen and conversation – which were relayed to the observation room.

### Session structure

In the 1.5 hour session, participants undertook the following activities:

- Preliminary time to complete an initial consent form and pre-test questionnaire then receive an introductory briefing about the session.
- Initial exploration of the home page – including participants’ reactions to the amount of information and their expectations of content to be found under each tab.
- Participants then completed tasks – after each task, they were asked to rate how easy the task was to complete and how confident they were that they had successfully completed the task.
- After the completion of tasks, further exploration of tabs took place to determine how well the content on each tab matched the participant’s expectations.
- A post-test questionnaire then captured participants’ opinions about their overall experience with the portal.

### Participants

13 sessions (1 pilot plus 12 others) were conducted between Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

We had planned that the 12 sessions would sample:

- 2 undergraduate students
- 2 postgraduate students
- 2 academic staff
- 3 researchers (including both research staff and higher degree research students)
- 3 general staff

Note: For reasons beyond our control, 3 of the 12 participants did not meet the planned profiles; as a result some audience-specific tasks were undertaken by people who were not part of the intended user group. These sessions still provided valuable input and have been included in the findings data.

## Tasks

All participants completed 5 tasks common to all user groups. Additional audience-specific tasks were defined for specific user groups:

- 2 additional tasks for general staff (one of these was also done by academic staff)
- 1 additional task specific to undergraduate and postgraduate students
- 1 additional task for academic staff

The tasks and intended audience are shown in Table 3.

Task	Description	Audience
A1	You have a library book on loan and would like to renew it. Renew the book from your portal.	All
A2	You have been told you need to meet with Nathan Bailey regarding an IT issue. Locate his contact details then send him an email requesting a meeting.	All
A3	You would like to find out if Monash University recycles paper. Find this out using the portal.	All
A4	Your favourite website is Yahoo ( <a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a> ) and you visit it regularly. You'd like to have quick access to Yahoo from your <i>my.monash</i> portal – find a way to do this.	All
A5	You have been using the Internet a lot in the last week and you want check what the system has recorded as your current level of internet use.	All
G1	Some students have asked you when the exam has been scheduled for FRN2010. Find out this information using the portal.	General & Academic staff
G2	You are interested to know what current job vacancies there are at Monash. Use the portal to find out what job vacancies are available.	General staff
S1	You are nearing the end of your degree and have been told you need to apply to graduate. Use the portal find the application form for this.	Undergrad & Post grad students
L1	You are the lecturer for the subject "ABC1234" and you need to let your students know that next Monday's lecture is cancelled. Use the portal to pass this message on to students.	Academic staff

Table 3: Usability testing tasks defined for various user groups

## 4. Answers to specific questions in the Monash brief

This section provides the specific answers to the 13 key questions posed in the original brief from Monash.

### 1. How can my.monash best serve the needs of its various user groups?

To best serve the needs of the portal's direct users (i.e. staff and students) **and** its stakeholders, action is required at both the strategic and tactical levels.

#### Strategic initiatives

Many of our participants (from all user groups) raised questions regarding the role and boundaries of the portal.

These need to be **better defined** with appropriate guidelines so that:

- Users can be presented with clearer messages,
- Those considering providing content to users can more easily determine which is the more appropriate place to deliver their content – the portal or Monash website (or both), and
- Those who develop and maintain the portal can more easily set priorities.

A key requirement will be senior management's **strengthened support** for the portal. While the portal has dedicated and enthusiastic supporters in the FLT team and on the Steering Committee, *my.monash* currently lacks:

- Strategic direction that aligns the goals of the portal with those of the University,
- Senior management champion(s) to drive the success of the portal, and
- Operational policies to support maintenance and development of portal services.

*(continued on next page)*

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(Question 1 continued) **Tactical changes to my.monash**

One of the key goals of the portal is to provide information to users based on their roles and responsibilities. This is fairly limited at present, although there are some differences in portal content based on whether the user is:

- A staff member or a student
- Studying/teaching subject units versus no relationship with subject units

The risk of approximating a “one size fits all” approach are that:

- User groups don’t necessarily see that the portal is for them (which is currently the case – e.g. for staff), and
- Individuals have problems locating desired content amid the “clutter” and are discouraged from exploring the portal (also currently the case).

To meet the needs of the various user groups, the portal therefore needs to:

1. Know the individual’s role and only provide information that is relevant to them.
  - The portal should also recognise and cater for those people with multiple roles.
2. Allow people to customise the (default) information that is available to them.
  - They should be able to easily turn features on and off
  - Provide a default setting that provides users with a sense of the range of information and services available, without overwhelming them.
3. Provide key services that are of value to each user group.

Further information about features valued by each of the user groups is provided in *Section 6.1.3 – Ideas to improve portal*.

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**2. Does my.monash provide the kinds of information and resources that users expect and/or want?**

This question addresses users' **attitudes** to the portal's overall value<sup>1</sup>.

Our work has identified that most user groups consider the portal to be a tool for students:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate students report that it is a valuable tool for them – approximately 90% value the portal, and half strongly value it.
- General staff reported little need to use the portal, as there are other ways to access the services and information they require (e.g. email can be accessed via their desktop client).
- Some academic staff consider the portal a useful “out of office” tool, particularly for those who work part-time or travel.

There was a mixed response across staff about the portal's perceived value. For example:

- Some academic staff reported that the portal significantly improves communication with their students and commented that they “wished something like that was around when I was a student”.
- Many general staff indicated a preference for using the Monash website to find the information and services they require. This is partly due to low awareness of portal's benefits but also because some of the portal's key strengths are not required by most general staff. For example, most general staff have a dedicated computer and have little need to work from home, so the following features are not needed:
  - Remote access to email, and
  - The ability to store links in the portal rather than on a specific computer.

Based on our focus groups we have prepared the following statement that reflects the requirements common to all user groups:

*The my.monash portal needs to be a **single** place where I can:*

- *Access the core **information I need** and other information I **opt** to receive,*
- ***Communicate and collaborate** with those I need to, and*
- ***Choose** how much I want to participate in the Monash community.*

<sup>1</sup> Question 6 addresses the **actual** value of portal features.

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**3. Are users aware of the extent of resources contained in or accessible through my.monash?**

Low awareness is a significant problem facing the portal, particularly for general staff.

This is both in terms of the:

- Specific features and services available to users and how they could benefit from them, and
- Boundaries of the portal versus the applications to which it provides access.

Unfortunately, an awareness campaign targeted at general staff is unlikely to succeed in increasing long-term portal usage because the portal does not contain enough features that this user group would consider valuable.

To increase usage within this group the portal would need to:

- Provide access to valuable functions (e.g. employee self-service functions, easy ways to generate student email lists, etc.),
- Ensure that information irrelevant to general staff was not shown in their portal (e.g. remove “Teaching commitments” from their home page), and
- Allow staff who directly support students and colleagues to switch views when providing support.

Once the portal provides such features, a campaign to increase awareness is more likely to succeed for the general staff cohort as well as other user groups.

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#### 4. Is the best use made of the home page screen real estate?

Focus group participants raised home page clutter as a significant issue. Usability testing therefore focussed on the likely impact of this on users and what screen elements could potentially be removed<sup>2</sup>.

The impacts of the home page clutter on users include that they:

- Have difficulty finding information – as they need to read the page in detail, rather than being able to easily scan sections.
- Are discouraged from exploring the portal – because they perceive that it will take a long time to find things among the clutter.

The summary area (showing email quotas and books on loan) is a key area that people notice and use, but other sections of the home page can be easily overlooked by users. For example:

- Some participants reported that they don't like to scroll vertically, so they don't explore the information below the fold<sup>3</sup>.
- The “boxes” of information (each area with a blue heading) are similar in appearance – some participants reported that nothing in particular stands out as being important.
- One participant queried the position of the “boxes” of information within the 3 columns. He expected each of the columns to have a specific rationale. For example:
  - The left-hand column used for things related to my work/study,
  - The middle column used for administration information, and
  - The right-hand column for broader information like news.

While there are no hard and fast rules that require 3-column designs to have specific rationale, bringing similar information and functions together is likely to be beneficial to users. For example:

- On the staff home page, the Monash news (“Monash Memo”) is in the left-hand column and “The Age” headlines in the right-hand column. Bringing these “news” areas together is likely to seem more logical to users.
- On the student home page, there is a “quick search” facility at the bottom of the page. This is likely to be overlooked by some users as other search tools are located in a single place at the top of the page (e.g. Google, Monash website, Staff Directory).

For more information about the areas of the home page that participants thought were most and least valuable see *Section 7.4 – Results from Home page exploration*.

<sup>2</sup> Question 1 addresses the advantages of filtering content by user group, and providing individual control over content areas.

<sup>3</sup> “Below the fold” is a term borrowed from newspaper publishing. It is used in web design to refer to information that does not appear in the first “screenful” of content (and must be scrolled down to) – so that is it not immediately apparent to a website visitor (and may be missed).

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**5. Are the content areas represented by tabbed navigation organised and labelled in a way that makes sense to users?**

No, many of the tabs have names that are too broad and give little indication about their actual content.

Participants who had not previously explored each of the tabs had difficulty guessing what may be in each one.

The more problematic tabs were:

- My Info
- My Community
- My Pages / My Links
- My Research

The problem with the “My Research” label was not only its breadth, but the use of “My” in the label. Some participants commented that this implies that the user can control the contents and/or that the information is targeted specifically at them because of its relevance.

Once people went into each tab there were also problems ascertaining what was in the tab. For example:

- While the links on the left-hand side generally referred to other pages of information within the tab, not all participants were clear about where these would take them.
- The “home” page of the tab often contains many separate functions that can only be discovered by scrolling down the entire length of the page (often several screenfuls of information).

We **recommend** that card sorting be done with users to determine more appropriate grouping and labelling of information. Long pages with disparate sections would benefit from summarising the contents of the page somewhere above the fold (e.g. using “On this page” links).

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**6. Does my.monash provide information and resources that are relevant and useful?**

This question addresses the **actual** value of portal features<sup>4</sup>. In the “Top 5” answers of survey respondents, Email and Library were the features common to **all** user groups.

The focus groups revealed the following features were valued by **all** user groups:

- Email
- Library access
- The summary area on the home page
- Weather
- Marketplace
- Discussion forums

For more information about what features are valued by specific user groups see *Section 6 – User requirements for my.monash*.

**7. Does it provide too much?**

The *my.monash* portal does not suffer from having too much information.

The actual problem is that many users are provided with information that is not relevant to them. Combined with the clutter on the home page, this can lead to a perception that there is too much “stuff” that has little value.

The online survey asked respondents to list any content that was not relevant or useful to them. Rather than producing a list of features that could potentially be removed from the portal, this list demonstrated that features seen by some people as highly relevant can be seen as irrelevant by others.

For example, Marketplace was a feature nominated in the “Top 5” responses from all user groups as being not relevant or useful. This in direct contrast to the focus groups where all user groups nominated Marketplace as a strength of the portal.

While some of the portal’s features may be relevant to specific groups (e.g. “My Units” is only applicable to people studying or teaching subjects), many other features can only be deemed relevant by individual users. For example, the value of headlines from “The Age” is very subjective and it would be best to allow users to choose whether to display this information in their portal.

We **recommend** that the portal should be improved by:

- Providing only relevant information – based on such factors as the user’s role, department, campus, course, memberships, etc.
- Allowing users to customise the portal by allowing specific features to be “turned on or off” (e.g. news)

<sup>4</sup> Question 2 addresses users’ **attitudes** to the portal’s overall value

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**8. Can users find the information they require quickly and efficiently?**

Our usability testing sessions showed that – once people have learned where something is – they can generally find it again quickly and efficiently (although there were some exceptions to this).

Many of the usability problems we identified occur when the user is unfamiliar with something's location within the portal:

- There are **so many** links that users are discouraged from exploring.
- Some participants assumed the tab labels indicate the scope of the portal, so they tend to only examine those, rather than the areas “below the fold” of the home page.
- When people expect an item to be in a location and it's not there, they may assume it is not in the portal.

We **recommend** card sorting with each user group to gain a user-centred view of where people expect to find information. Card sorting can also establish which labels are unclear and identify user-appropriate alternatives (as earlier recommended for Question 5).

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**9. Where there are multiple pathways to electronic resources (via my.monash and other Monash websites), which do users prefer? Why?**

Most staff and researchers will access information in the way that is most familiar to them, as they expect this will be the quickest way to find it. In most cases, this is using the Monash website to find information and services.

General staff, in particular, reported that they preferred to use the Monash website to find out Monash-related information. Many were unclear about the role of the portal – e.g. why should they use the portal when the information is on the Monash website?

One staff member reported that the time of day will impact whether they access email via the portal or through their desktop client – as the speed of the email system fluctuates with traffic.

Another staff member said their choice of resource would depend on whether they had a single task to do on a single system, or a range of activities to do (in which case the portal may be their preferred option).

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**10. How satisfied are users with the information and resources provided by my.monash?**

Based on the online survey and focus groups it is evident that students are most satisfied with the information and services provided by the portal. This is confirmed by their higher usage of the portal (as reported by the FLT team during the stakeholder workshop).

The online survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the statement:

*“The portal contains all the information I require”*

All groups agreed with this statement with:

- 52% of undergraduate students agreeing and 19% strongly agreeing
- 52% of postgraduate students agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing
- 40% of general staff agreeing and 8% strongly agreeing
- 38% of academic staff agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing
- 48% of researchers agreeing and 12% strongly agreeing

The focus groups revealed that general staff and researchers are not drawn to the portal for particular information and resources. Both of these groups also had particular difficulty coming up with ideas for information and services that would improve the portal, probably because of the prevailing attitude that the portal is a student tool.

A list of ideas generated in the focus groups for improving the portal is provided in *Appendix B – Focus group ideas for improving the portal*.

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## 11. How satisfied are they with the design of my.monash?

The online survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with a number of statements about the value, subjective satisfaction, effective navigation and supportiveness of the portal. The results from these statements are positive for all user groups. For more details see *Section 6.2.5 – Rating statements (Question 6)*. However, visual design was more problematic.

Visual design is a very personal choice and it is impossible to find a single design that everyone will like. Even among our activities, the participants varied in their opinion of the design.

For example:

- The focus groups contained a mix of opinions – where some people strongly disliked the design and others liked it.
- While the online survey did not specifically ask how satisfied users are with the design of *my.monash*, it asked respondents to identify one thing they would change about the portal and “Visual appearance” ranked as the:
  - Number 1 item for 4 undergraduate students, postgraduate students, general staff and researchers,
  - Number 2 item for the academic staff group.

Contrasting that, a significant number of respondents said they wouldn’t change anything.

- The usability testing asked participants to identify the 3 things they liked most and least about the portal. Responses were generally positive with:
  - 5 out of 13 participants volunteered that they liked the layout (this was the highest ranked “like” for the portal)
  - 2 out of 13 participants volunteered that they liked the colours
  - The only negative about the design was that 3 out of 13 participants reported disliking the clutter (previously discussed in Question 7).

Rather than trying to place a “number” on the degree of satisfaction, it may be more useful to note:

- A significant number of focus group participants, particularly general staff, commented that the portal should have the same visual design as the Monash website. They felt this is important as it would:
  - Make the portal more familiar or “comfortable” to work with, and
  - Help to reinforce the Monash identity.
- When talking about their perceptions of the portal, focus group participants from all user groups noted that (although the portal isn’t “flashy”) they don’t want or need it to be. Participants were very clear that they wouldn’t want to sacrifice ease of use or access speed for visual effects.
- One of the recurring comments about the portal’s visual design was that it is too “text heavy” and that icons (like those used in the summary area) can help to draw attention to particular features. However, care should be exercised that visual clutter is not aggravated by overuse of icons.

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## 12. What frustrates users most about my.monash?

Focus group participants from all user groups identified the following frustrations:

- The email facility provided in the portal does not have many of the features that people have come to expect – such as the ability to create folders for storing emails and having an address book for contact details.

Such expectations have increased over the years, particularly as more web mail clients are available. While the portal has a link to a “full webmail client” many people may not notice this link (at the bottom of the email page) and/or understand what the link name means.

- Having to sign-on to different systems is frustrating, given the number of systems people need access to. Some participants questioned why they continually need to sign-on; others saw it as a good security measure when dealing with personal information.
- The cluttered home page, in particular where elements are not relevant to them. For example, participants from campuses other than Clayton expressed a desire to see more information specific to **their** campus.
- Users of the Marketplace feature described frustrations attributed to system misuse – including:
  - People posting items multiple times to “get to the top of the list”
  - Entries being inappropriate (e.g. selling assignments)
  - People “running businesses” via the Marketplace instead of using it for personal reasons.

Other than these issues, most participants did not report strong frustrations with the portal.

However, it’s possible that – if the portal doesn’t provide information and services that people expect – rather than becoming frustrated they simply lower their expectations and/or stop using it.

Most participants just ignore irrelevant-seeming content and only focus on what they deem to be relevant. The risk of this is that – as new features are added – people may not discover these, as they are less inclined to explore the portal.

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**13. What do users like most about my.monash?**

This question was answered by asking:

- Focus group participants to identify strengths of the portal, and
- Usability testing participants to list the 3 things they like most about the portal.

As well as the strengths noted in Question 6 above, other characteristics that were mentioned by focus group participants include:

- Convenient access – being able to access the portal remotely, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Reliability – while most participants reported that the portal isn't prone to crashing or having unreasonable periods of "downtime", some academic staff expressed concerns that relying too much on the portal increases its risk of becoming a "single point of failure".
- Easy to use – many participants, particularly students, reported that the portal was fairly simple to use and learn.

The "Top 5" things that usability participants liked most about the portal are:

- Layout – 5 out of 13 participants
  - Amount of information – 4 out of 13 participants
  - Library access – 3 out of 13 participants
  - Links to Monash and outside sites – 3 out of 13 participants
  - Summary information area on homepage – 3 out of 13 participants
-

## 5. Findings from stakeholder workshops

Seven stakeholder workshops were conducted in order to understand the current strengths of the portal and the goals that stakeholders have for the direction of the portal. This section discusses identified:

- Goals for the portal
- Current strengths of the portal
- Barriers to it being used more effectively

### 5.1 Goals for my.monash

There is consensus among stakeholders that there should be a single portal to support staff and students, but there is confusion about how this is to be achieved, particularly due to the lack of clarity about the portal's role and boundaries.

#### Current portal goals

According to the original brief issued by Monash, the portal aims to be the primary information and communication tool for the university's staff and students.

Its business goals are to:

1. Aggregate relevant information, links and other online resources in a secure personalised environment.
2. Provide the university community with a "gateway" to the resources they are likely to need based on their roles and responsibilities.
3. Provide user-centred, flexible electronic resources in the areas of learning and teaching, administration, research and community.

#### Identified stakeholder goals

Additional goals for the portal were identified by stakeholders. They believe the *my.monash* portal should:

- Enhance and support the "Monash experience" for both students and staff.
- Provide distributed ownership of content so that content owners have the control they need to maintain content – which in turn should reduce the need for FLT resources to make changes
- Empower students, teachers and researchers.
- Become the "channel of choice" for communication and collaboration.
- Improve staff productivity.

## Proposed usability goals

Designing for usability<sup>5</sup> improves productivity and user satisfaction, and guarantees that an application or website can be used to its greatest potential to achieve business goals.

One approach to designing usable software is to develop a structured framework to support the design and evaluation of a website's navigation and screen layout. This framework includes **Usability goals** – definitions of what “Usability” means for a particular website, expressed as a set of objectives to meet the needs of the business and user (with a specific context) performing specific tasks.

Stakeholders and users want the portal to be:

- **Simple to use** – Complexity needs to be reduced. If this means providing fewer things done well, that's what most participants would prefer.
- **Easy to learn** – Users do not receive training so the portal needs to be intuitive, with self-evident services and information.
- **Agile** – Easy to integrate with other systems and technology.
- **Relevant to me** – Providing targeted content and default content that is based on users' roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>5</sup> “Usability” is an aspect of a system (or website) that describes the ability of users to use it to full advantage – where the technology does not hinder users, but rather assists and supports them.

This can be summarised as “making the technology transparent” so that users can complete their tasks without the computer getting in the way. More broadly, it also encompasses the quality of the user's experience when interacting with technology to achieve their goals.

- **Flexible** – If profiles exist based on multiple roles, allow users to swap between profiles (e.g. lecturer and student) and create new profiles to suit changing environments (e.g. at home, travelling overseas, etc)
- **Easily customisable** – Many people want to control how the portal looks and the content that is supplied, but stipulated that it must be easy to turn things on and off (and not be able to turn off things I really need, in ignorance of their value).
- **Reliable** – Particularly in terms of system availability and security
- **Accurate and timely information** – Information needs to reflect the real world in real-time (e.g. cancellations of classes).
- **Efficient** – it must create *less* work for users (particularly staff) rather than more.

## 5.2 Current strengths

Stakeholders agreed that the portal's current strengths are:

- It's a great tool for students, particularly undergraduate students.
- It allows core information to be pushed to students.
- It provides remote, convenient (24 x 7) access to resources
- It improves communication between students and staff (e.g. through discussion forums).
- It supports both:
  - Learning and teaching needs, and
  - Promoting a sense of Monash community (e.g. through Marketplace).

Focus groups also discuss the strengths of the portal from a user perspective. See *Section 5.2 – Current strengths* for details.

## 5.3 Barriers to portal use

We examined two key types of barriers, those that prevent:

- People **using the portal** on a day to day basis, and
- Business owners **providing more content and services** via the portal

### Usage barriers

Key reasons more people don't use the portal include:

- There are minimal features to support staff and researchers.
- There is a low awareness of both the portal's capabilities and its role.
- The multiplicity of systems within Monash University means that there are usually multiple ways to access information and services.

General staff in particular felt that they can get everything they need elsewhere.

### Barriers to provision of services

Barriers to providing portal content and services fall into the following categories:

- Strategy is needed to clarify the role and value of the portal
- Portal ownership and management structure
- Technical
- Organisational

### Strategy is needed to clarify the role and value of the portal

We have not discovered a clearly documented strategy for the portal. Our stakeholder workshops found little evidence of the portal's development being directed by the strategic goals of the University.

Without a clear direction for the portal, the key risks are that:

- The portal may be superseded by other systems providing key content via their own web interfaces – with the risk that users will need to hop in and out of multiple systems scattered across the University.
- There is inefficient use of resources and budget – planning how to support unclear goals is difficult and rapidly fluctuating operational goals can cause increased stress and frustration among staff.

There is also a need to develop operational policies to support the portal's ongoing maintenance and development. For example, how are services “turned off”:

- What criteria are used to measure services?
- How frequently?
- Who needs to “sign-off” on a service being removed?

### Portal ownership and management structure

Stakeholders agreed that setting priorities can be difficult in the complex and rapidly changing environment of Monash University. This can be compounded by the fact that the portal does not appear to have a single business owner or “champion” to drive its success.

Through its members, the *my.monash* Steering Committee provides much-needed access to views from a range of organisational areas within Monash. Members who participated in the stakeholder workshops highlighted some of the problems facing the committee including:

- As with any committee, there is not always agreement on priorities – which can result in priorities fluctuating too rapidly and/or key decisions not being made in a timely manner.
- The portal steering committee has limited influence on the operational plans for the portal – i.e. because the FLT team supporting the portal is structurally within a different area of the University, they may receive conflicting priorities from their direct management (as opposed to from the steering committee).

### Technical barriers

The technology used to implement the portal has some limitations that prevent the portal integrating with key university systems e.g. SAP. This limits the portal’s ability to provide access to core information and services.

### Organisational barriers

Organisational issues identified as barriers to provision of content and services include:

- Lack of funding and skilled resources
 

The FLT team is at a point where budget is being consumed by maintenance work, leaving little for developing new features that would enhance the portal.

Lack of resources within this team impacts their ability to service other parts of the University. As a result there is some perception that they will not be able to meet the timeframes set by the business.
- Control issues
 

Some groups within the University feel that providing services via the portal will reduce the amount of control they have over their content.

Others provide their own intranets and systems (e.g. for communicating within the department or faculty) and don’t want to be “forced to use an inferior system”.
- Communication issues
 

There are a number of communication issues, for example:

  - Locating key people within Monash University to drive and champion the portal among various user groups can be difficult.
  - Some of the stakeholders who provide content via the portal feel that better collaboration is needed with both business owners and end-users, particularly during the design phase.

## 6. User requirements for my.monash

The key activities used to derive user requirements were:

- Stakeholder workshops
- Focus groups, and
- Online survey

This section discusses the key findings from these activities.

### 6.1 Findings from focus groups

#### 6.1.1 Perceptions of the current portal

By asking focus group participants to describe the portal in terms of a car, we elicited a number of their key perceptions about the portal. While there were some exceptions, the participants were generally positive in their perception of the portal.

##### Undergraduate students

Most of the undergraduate students see the portal as a useful, reliable and simple to use tool that provides all the features they need – as well as some that they don't need. It isn't flashy and/or exciting, but it helps them do what they need to.

##### Postgraduate students

Postgraduate students generally think the portal is a reliable way of getting things done, but is a bit dated with too many features. The number of extra features makes it difficult to find the ones they need to use. Postgraduate students also commented on the visual appearance as being fairly bland and lacking identity.

##### Researchers

Researchers described the portal as having too many features that aren't relevant or helpful to them and indicated that it is missing some core functionality that would support them. Many believe that the portal is just for undergraduate or postgraduate students doing coursework. While some researchers commented on the portal's reliability (e.g. as a "good engine"), others suggested that it has "promise" that it doesn't live up to.

##### General staff

General staff members find the portal to be reliable yet cluttered with features that are of limited value to them. The clutter makes it difficult for these people to find what they need; several participants suggested that they need to find "the manual" as it doesn't seem intuitive to use. Some of the participants indicated that they had low awareness of the portal and its features. Others questioned why the portal is needed as there are other ways to do things.

*"It's probably very good, but I've got by without it"*

##### Academic staff

The Academic staff responses fell into two groups – from those who taught IT versus everyone else.

- The non-IT staff generally found the portal to be reliable and useful, but for limited purposes. As with the other user groups, these staff commented on the portal being cluttered and difficult to use, but they did appreciate that it strives to cater for multiple audiences.
- Academic staff with IT backgrounds tended to be more aware of the limitations of the portal – explaining that it may have been leading edge a few years ago, but is now missing some core functions that are expected of portals (e.g. single sign-on and the ability to customise the portal content and appearance).

## 6.1.2 Portal strengths

Focus group participants volunteered the following strengths of *my.monash*.

Strengths	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Key strengths for all user groups</b>					
Summary area on home page	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email – particularly having remote access to this	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
My Library – including the ability to renew books and access library catalogues and databases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weather	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketplace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussion forums – particularly academic ones	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Learning &amp; teaching resources</b>					
Access to MUSO/WebCT <sup>6</sup>	✓	✓		✓	
Access to My Unit information	✓	✓		✓	
Daily timetable	✓	✓		✓	
Exam timetable	✓			✓	
Results	✓			✓	
Exam results via SMS	✓				
<b>Administrative support</b>					
WES / enrolment	✓	✓			
Access to academic record					✓
Change details	✓	✓			

<sup>6</sup> Monash University Studies Online (MUSO) is the University's internet-based teaching and communications platform based on the product WebCT.

Strengths	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Student/Staff links		✓	✓	✓	✓
E-services/ESS			✓	✓	
<b>Other features</b>					
News links	✓		✓	✓	✓
Monash information & news		✓	✓	✓	
My Community	✓	✓		✓	✓
Important dates	✓	✓	✓		
My Links	✓		✓	✓	
Calendar				✓	✓
Booking systems (Expert and Library Class)		✓			✓
It knows my name					✓
<b>Search related facilities</b>					
Quick search area					✓
<i>ask.monash</i>		✓			
Staff directory	✓			✓	✓
Search on <i>my.monash</i>		✓			
Access to external search (Google)	✓				
<b>Characteristics specifically noted</b>					
Reliable		✓		✓	
Design – consistent, use of tabs, well written		✓		✓	
Breadth of information				✓	
Central hub of information		✓	✓	✓	
Sense of identity/community		✓			✓
Technical issues – i.e. speed, displays well in other browsers		✓			

Table 4: Current strengths of *my.monash* (by user group)

### 6.1.3 Ideas to improve portal

The focus groups generated a large number of ideas for improving the portal (see *Appendix B* for details).

To prioritise these, participants were given \$250 of “fake money to spend” on the features that were most important to them.

This prioritisation activity helps understand which ideas are most important to each of the user groups (see Table 5).

Of each of the group's Top 10 ideas, the following are common to all:

- Improve email
- Ability to customise
- Single sign-on

Ideas common to 3 of the 5 groups' Top 10 include:

- Better integration with systems such as WebCT/MUSO
- Improve Library access
- Chat & forums
- Integrated calendar
- Data storage area
- Providing information that is relevant to the user's role and faculty

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
1	Improve email <b>19.72%</b>	Ability to customise <b>15.87%</b>	Improve email <b>20.68%</b>	Ability to customise <b>16.13%</b>	Improved email <b>19.94%</b>
2	Ability to customise <b>17.96%</b>	Improve email <b>11.35%</b>	Ability to customise <b>12.76%</b>	Improve email <b>13.13%</b>	Improved Library <b>14.25%</b>
3	Single sign-on <b>10.56%</b>	Calendar <b>10.89%</b>	Improve visual design <b>9.81%</b>	Information needs to be relevant to me <b>11.38%</b>	Ability to customise <b>11.86%</b>
4	Better integration of systems <b>7.63%</b>	Provide other information <b>7.42%</b>	Single sign-on <b>9.20%</b>	Single sign-on <b>8.25%</b>	Improve My Research <b>11.70%</b>
5	Improved Library <b>6.69%</b>	Entertainment area <b>6.55%</b>	Better integration of systems <b>8.90%</b>	Chat & Forums <b>6.75%</b>	Data storage area <b>8.16%</b>
6	Chat & forums <b>6.22%</b>	Single sign-on Chat & forums <b>5.68%</b>	Data storage area <b>6.01%</b>	Data storage area <b>6.00%</b>	Calendar <b>6.54%</b>
7	Marketplace <b>4.11%</b>	Alerts & reminders <b>4.51%</b>	Information needs to be relevant to me <b>5.46%</b>	Calendar <b>5.63%</b>	Single sign-on <b>6.16%</b>
8	Up-to-date information <b>3.99%</b>	Advertising area <b>4.22%</b>	Dynamic content <b>4.56%</b>	Better integration of systems <b>5.50%</b>	Information needs to be relevant to me <b>4.00%</b>
9	Improved search <b>3.05%</b>	Improved Library <b>4.08%</b>	Access to staff details/directory <b>1.98%</b>	Class lists for emailing <b>4.00%</b>	Support & admin information <b>3.77%</b>
10	Improve My Research <b>2.93%</b>	Easy to contact Alumni <b>3.49%</b>	Area for Important News/Messages <b>1.52%</b>	Online services <b>3.25%</b>	Provide other information <b>3.08%</b>

Table 5: Results of "Money Spend" activity – showing priority of each feature as % of total spent by each user group

## 6.2 Survey findings

### 6.2.1 Who were the respondents? (Question 1)

The first question of the survey asked respondents to indicate their role(s) at Monash.

6613 people started responding to the survey's questions. Of these people:

- 6480 respondents reported having a single role
- 133 respondents reported multiple roles.

This “multiple role” reporting means that 6613 respondents are reported as having 6765 roles – i.e. where a respondent indicated multiple roles, their responses have been counted for **each** user group.

The number of people reporting to be in each user group is shown in Table 6.

Things to note:

- As people were able to quit the online survey at anytime, the number of actual responses for each question varies, so this report will also indicate the **actual** number of respondents for each question (for each user group).
- Where percentages are given, has been calculated on the actual number of respondents for the **specific** question, rather than for the total user group (as defined in Table 6).

User group	No. of people with this role	Invalid responses removed		Remaining valid responses
		Number	%	
Undergraduate students	4728	400	8.5%	4328
Postgraduate students	1617	124	7.7%	1493
General staff	224	50	22.3%	174
Academic staff	128	12	9.4%	116
Researchers	68	15	22.1%	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>6765</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>8.84%</b>	<b>6164</b>

Table 6: Survey respondents by user group

Responses were judged to be invalid if:

- They only contained “nonsense” – e.g. random characters.
- Question 3 was the last question completed by the respondent. The first 3 questions were considered “background” information, so respondents who didn't reach question 4 were deemed to have provided too little information.

## 6.2.2 Use of my.monash (Questions 2 and 3)

Respondents were then asked how long they had been using the *my.monash* portal (Q2):

- Respondents indicating that had never used the portal were then asked about their reasons for this and taken to the end of the survey (see Table 7).
- Other respondents were then asked how frequently they used the portal (Q3). (see Table 8).

### Reasons for low usage

Low-usage respondents<sup>7</sup> were asked to identify reasons for their low usage. Identified issues include:

- Low awareness of the role and benefits of the portal.
- The portal is perceived as a great tool for students but not for staff.
- There are other ways to get the information e.g. via the Monash web site or the facility website (e.g. library, full mail client, etc.)

Length of use	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Never used it	24	10	3	3	1
Less than 6 months	1335	429	26	10	14
6 months to 1 year	346	200	24	11	7
1 to 3 years	<b>1997</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>21</b>
More than 3 years	626	241	56	<b>46</b>	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>4328</b>	<b>1493</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>53</b>

Table 7: Amount of time using *my.monash* by user group

Frequency	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
More than once a day	1564	523	44	39	19
Several times a week	<b>2310</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>21</b>
Once a week	287	144	21	10	4
Several times a month	119	108	20	13	4
More rarely	24	37	26	10	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4304</b>	<b>1483</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 8: Frequency of use by user group

<sup>7</sup> Those respondents who indicated they never or rarely used the portal.

### 6.2.3 Most important services and information (Question 4)

Respondents were asked to indicate the most important information and services available from the portal. Space was provided for 3 answers, but in some cases participants only provided one or two answers.

Table 9 shows the percentage of participants who nominated a particular feature ranked in order of popularity – i.e. the number of times a feature was mentioned. No weighting has been assigned based on whether the feature was mentioned as the first, second or third answer by the user.

The services appearing in the “Top 5” for all groups are:

- Email
- Library

The term “General content” as used by the Academic staff, General staff and Researchers, refers to:

- Comments about the portal such as:
  - “Clear instructions”
  - “Easy to access info”

OR

- Individual pieces of information were not worth separating into their own category – e.g. “University statistics”

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
# of respondents	3902	1445	165	109	52
# of suggestions	10,482	3905	377	277	135
1	Email <b>90.5%</b>	Email <b>76.82%</b>	Email <b>78.18%</b>	Email <b>81.65%</b>	Email <b>78.85%</b>
2	My Units <b>40.54%</b>	My Units / WebCT / MUSO <b>51.90%</b>	General content <b>25.45%</b>	Library <b>31.19%</b>	Library <b>48.07%</b>
3	Library <b>31.37%</b>	Library <b>42.79%</b>	E-services <b>16.97%</b>	My Units <b>24.77%</b>	Marketplace <b>26.92%</b>
4	Timetable <b>30.45%</b>	WES <b>19.38%</b>	My Units <b>16.36%</b>	Timetable <b>18.35%</b>	WES 15.38%
5	WES <b>17.25%</b>	Marketplace <b>13.28%</b>	Library <b>13.94%</b>	General content <b>17.43%</b>	General content <b>11.58%</b>

Table 9: Most important services and information by user group

#### 6.2.4 How it helps my daily work/study (Question 5)

Question 5 of the survey was an open-ended question that asked “How does the portal help you in your daily work or study?”

Although some respondents chose not to provide an answer (e.g. providing answers such as “nil”, “none”, etc.) others gave a clear indication that they didn’t think it helped them at all.

All user groups agreed that the portal regularly helps them to:

- Communicate with others
- Keep me up to date
- Access the library

Some ways it helps specific user groups are:

- Academic staff reported that it also helped them prepare teaching materials
- Postgraduate students reported that it helped them access study materials/resources

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
# of respondents	4271	1421	173	112	52
# of suggestions	4662	1811	230	194	88
1	Communicating with others <b>37.27%</b>	Communicating with others <b>39.62%</b>	Communicating with others <b>49.71%</b>	Communicating with others <b>51.79%</b>	Communicating with others <b>42.31%</b>
2	Help <b>19.50%</b>	Obtaining study resources <b>22.38%</b>	Keeps me up to date <b>25.43%</b>	Centralises resources <b>22.73%</b>	Accessing library <b>32.69%</b>
3	Accessing library <b>16.76%</b>	Keeping me up to date <b>16.75%</b>	Accessing library <b>7.51%</b>	Remote access <b>21.43%</b>	Centralises resources <b>17.31%</b>
4	Keeps me up to date <b>10.98%</b>	Accessing library <b>16.40%</b>	Exam timetable <b>6.94%</b>	Keeps me up to date <b>17.86%</b>	Helps me do admin Keeps me up to date <b>15.38%</b>
5	Contact details <b>9.13%</b>	Centralises resources <b>10.77%</b>	Obtain study resources <b>5.78%</b>	Prepare teaching materials Accessing library <b>13.93%</b>	
“It doesn’t help”	<b>1.08%</b>	<b>4.36%</b>	<b>13.29%</b>	<b>16.96%</b>	<b>9.62%</b>

Table 10: Top 5 suggestions for how the portal helps me (by user group)

### 6.2.5 Rating statements (Question 6)

This question asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with 10 statements aimed at understanding the value of the portal and the level of satisfaction.

Table 11 shows the statements rated by participants, grouped as follows:

- Value
- Subjective satisfaction
- Effective navigation
- Supportiveness

Each statement is shown below with its average score per user group. Average ratings are out of five where:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Following the table of average ratings, a breakdown is provided for each statement by user group.

Statement	All respondents	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Value</b>						
The portal is a valuable tool for me	4.34	<b>4.39</b>	4.28	4.18	3.85	4.10
Compared with other ways of doing things, the portal saves me time	4.01	<b>4.07</b>	3.94	3.44	3.46	3.58
The portal contains all the information I require	3.74	<b>3.79</b>	3.68	3.23	3.43	3.46
The portal helps me feel like I can participate in the Monash community	3.59	3.60	<b>4.28</b>	3.25	3.21	3.54
<b>Subjective satisfaction</b>						
I enjoy using the portal	3.88	<b>3.92</b>	3.84	3.53	3.54	3.73
<b>Effective navigation</b>						
I can easily find things on the portal	3.86	<b>3.91</b>	3.77	3.53	3.72	3.71
I can do what I need to quickly	3.98	<b>4.03</b>	3.87	3.66	3.73	3.88
I don't feel "lost" when using the portal	3.88	<b>3.94</b>	<b>3.75</b>	3.62	3.73	3.56
<b>Supportiveness</b>						
The portal is easy to learn	4.10	<b>4.15</b>	4.00	3.83	3.97	3.90
Help is available when I need it	3.54	<b>3.57</b>	3.49	3.30	3.38	3.44

Table 11: Average scores for value statements by user group

### The portal is a valuable tool for me

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	1%	6%	39%	<b>53%</b>
Post grads	2%	2%	7%	43%	<b>46%</b>
General staff	8%	6%	13%	<b>44%</b>	29%
Academic staff	4%	13%	9%	<b>42%</b>	32%
Researchers	2%	6%	10%	<b>46%</b>	37%

### Compared with other ways of doing things, the portal saves me time

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	3%	15%	<b>46%</b>	34%
Post grads	2%	6%	17%	<b>46%</b>	29%
General staff	7%	11%	29%	<b>37%</b>	16%
Academic staff	11%	13%	22%	<b>29%</b>	25%
Researchers	2%	17%	27%	<b>29%</b>	25%

### The portal contains all the information I require

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	8%	18%	<b>52%</b>	19%
Post grads	2%	9%	22%	<b>52%</b>	15%
General staff	7%	20%	25%	<b>40%</b>	8%
Academic staff	9%	13%	23%	<b>38%</b>	18%
Researchers	8%	10%	23%	<b>48%</b>	12%

### The portal helps me feel like I can participate in the Monash community

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	8%	34%	<b>40%</b>	16%
Post grads	3%	8%	31%	<b>40%</b>	18%
General staff	7%	13%	<b>38%</b>	32%	10%
Academic staff	12%	16%	25%	<b>34%</b>	13%
Researchers	4%	12%	29%	<b>38%</b>	17%

### I enjoy using the portal

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	3%	23%	<b>46%</b>	26%
Post grads	2%	4%	25%	<b>47%</b>	23%
General staff	5%	5%	37%	<b>39%</b>	14%
Academic staff	5%	8%	28%	<b>46%</b>	13%
Researchers	0%	6%	35%	<b>40%</b>	19%

### I can easily find things on the portal

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	6%	16%	<b>53%</b>	24%
Post grads	2%	8%	17%	<b>55%</b>	17%
General staff	5%	7%	28%	<b>49%</b>	11%
Academic staff	5%	8%	17%	<b>48%</b>	21%
Researchers	4%	12%	17%	<b>44%</b>	23%

**I can do what I need to quickly**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	3%	13%	<b>53%</b>	29%
Post grads	1%	6%	17%	<b>55%</b>	21%
General staff	5%	5%	25%	<b>48%</b>	17%
Academic staff	6%	7%	13%	<b>54%</b>	20%
Researchers	2%	4%	23%	<b>46%</b>	25%

**The portal is easy to learn**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	3%	9%	<b>52%</b>	35%
Post grads	1%	5%	12%	<b>56%</b>	26%
General staff	2%	6%	19%	<b>53%</b>	20%
Academic staff	1%	6%	13%	<b>55%</b>	25%
Researchers	0%	6%	21%	<b>50%</b>	23%

**I don't feel "lost" when using the portal**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	5%	15%	<b>53%</b>	25%
Post grads	2%	8%	18%	<b>53%</b>	18%
General staff	2%	9%	25%	<b>51%</b>	13%
Academic staff	2%	8%	21%	<b>59%</b>	16%
Researchers	4%	10%	29%	<b>42%</b>	15%

**Help is available when I need it**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Undergrads	2%	7%	36%	<b>41%</b>	14%
Post grads	2%	8%	<b>40%</b>	37%	12%
General staff	2%	10%	<b>50%</b>	32%	6%
Academic staff	4%	7%	<b>49%</b>	28%	13%
Researchers	0%	13%	<b>40%</b>	35%	12%

### 6.2.6 Please list any content that is not relevant or useful to you (Survey question 7)

This question aimed to find out which existing content on the portal is less relevant to each user group. Any decisions based on this data should also consider the data in question 4 about what is most important to users, as these are often conflicting both across user groups and within user groups.

For example the following features have been nominated as important features in Question 4 and irrelevant features here:

- “Timetables” (by Undergrads)
- “My Units” and “Marketplace” (by Post grads)
- “Marketplace” (by General staff)
- “Marketplace” and “Library” (by Researchers)

The outcomes of the focus groups also need to be considered. For example, in this question the “Marketplace” was nominated by all user groups as being irrelevant whereas focus group participants for all user groups nominated it as one of the strengths of the portal.

The most appropriate conclusions to draw from this data is that the relevance of certain features needs to be judged by individual rather than being considered a requirement of the entire user group.

It is also positive to note that had we included that common response of “It’s all relevant” this would have featured as the:

- Top answer for Undergrads and General staff with equal 1<sup>st</sup> for the Researchers,
- Equal 2<sup>nd</sup> for Academic staff, and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> for Post grads.

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
# of respondents	3634	892	116	70	32
# of suggestions	2561	1050	128	114	44
1	My Research <b>16.26%</b>	Marketplace <b>19.73%</b>	My Research <b>20.69%</b>	Marketplace <b>22.86%</b>	My Pages <b>18.75%</b>
2	My Community <b>12.88%</b>	My Units <b>16.70%</b>	News <b>18.96%</b>	My Community <b>21.43%</b>	My Community <b>15.63%</b>
3	Marketplace <b>12.22%</b>	My Pages <b>15.13%</b>	Marketplace <b>13.79%</b>	News <b>18.57%</b>	My Library Marketplace <b>12.5%</b>
4	My Pages <b>12.16%</b>	My Community <b>14.01%</b>	My Community <b>11.21%</b>	My Pages <b>17.14%</b>	
5	Timetable <b>5.15%</b>	My Research <b>13.68%</b>	My Links <b>10.34%</b>	My Research <b>11.43%</b>	Calendar Instant poll My Research Timetables <b>9.36%</b>
<i>“It’s all relevant”</i>	<b>31.89%</b>	<b>15.70%</b>	<b>21.55%</b>	<b>21.43%</b>	<b>18.75%</b>

Table 12: Top 5 suggestions for irrelevant content (by user group)

### 6.2.7 New features, services and information (Survey question 8)

While the aim of this question was to uncover new services and information needed for the portal, many respondents simply wanted improvements on existing functionality.

Existing features that people want improved include:

- Email
- Access between other system, particularly MUSO/WebCT
- Exam information
- Discussion forums
- Information provided about courses.

Postgraduate students in particular wanted sufficient information about electives up to 2 years in advance to help them plan their studies.

New features include

- Targeting information to individuals based on a range of characteristics (identity management)
- Ability to customise content
- Chat

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
# of respondents	2784	unavailable	97	61	31
# of suggestions	3466	unavailable	132	90	44
1	Improved email	Improved email	Improved email <b>15.46%</b>	Improved email <b>24.59%</b>	Improved email <b>16.13%</b>
2	Better system access	Better system access	Identity management <b>11.34%</b>	Calendar <b>16.39%</b>	News Uni news and info
3	Chat	Course-related information	Integrated calendar <b>9.28%</b>	Access to other systems <b>11.48%</b>	File storage area Customised content
4	Exam information	Other new functionality	Better system access	Customised content	Better research resources
5	Discussion forums	More usable and faster	Fun stuff (clubs & societies, travel, etc.) <b>7.22%</b>	Better research resources Chat <b>8.20%</b>	12.90%

Table 13: Top 5 suggestions for new features, services & information (by user group)

## 6.2.8 One thing you'd change (Survey question 9)

Table 14 shows the “Top 5” suggestions for one thing that people would like changed and with “Appearance” as a strong suggestion across all groups, some readers may assume that there is a strong dislike of the current visual style.

While this is true for some respondents it is not true of all. A more detailed look at the answers suggests:

- Many respondents were reacting to the cluttered appearance of the home page, rather than the actual visual style applied to the design.
- Many respondents seemed to be “fishing” for something to suggest so put half-hearted answers like:

*“I know it’s only cosmetic, but I’d brighten up the colours a bit”.*

- There were significant numbers of people who indicated that no changes needed to be made to the portal – e.g. in the Academic staff, General staff and Post grad user groups this answer was within the same range as the “Top 5” suggestions.

Some designers like to suggest that if they only thing people can want to change is the colours, then the other features and services must work pretty well for them.

While it is certainly important to address issues such as home page clutter, improving the visual appearance of the portal **should not** be viewed as the main priority for the portal based solely on these results.

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
# of respondents	2530	1144	128	85	37
# of suggestions	2094	1492	125	80	36
1	Appearance <b>29.41%</b>	Appearance <b>19.67%</b>	Appearance <b>32.03%</b>	Improved email <b>23.53%</b>	Appearance <b>24.32%</b>
2	Better integration with MUSO/WebCT <b>18.10%</b>	Improved email <b>11.37%</b>	Ability to customise <b>13.28%</b>	Appearance <b>22.35%</b>	Improved email <b>18.92%</b>
3	Email <b>15.02%</b>	Better integration with MUSO/WebCT <b>6.91%</b>	Better information organisation <b>12.5%</b>	Ability to customise <b>8.24%</b>	Single sign-on <b>10.81%</b>
4	Single sign-on <b>12.69%</b>	Single sign-on <b>5.42%</b>	Improved email <b>8.59%</b>	Calendar <b>7.06%</b>	Provide more info <b>8.11%</b>
5	<i>Unavailable</i>	Ability to customise <b>3.58%</b>	Single sign-on <b>5.47%</b>	Speed and reliability <b>5.88%</b>	Ability to customise <b>5.41%</b>
<i>“Don’t change anything”</i>	<i>Unavailable</i>	<b>19.14%</b>	<b>11.72%</b>	<b>15.29%</b>	<b>2.70%</b>

Table 14: Top 5 suggestions for one thing to change (by user group)

### 6.2.9 New technology for portal (Survey question 10)

4 of the 5 user groups agreed that the best way to improve the portal would be to provide better integration with MUSO/WebCT (with general staff preferring a unified events calendar).

Some of the suggestions for “Other” made:

- Single sign-on
- Improved email
- File storage
- Blogs
- A calendar that was not just events, but that could be managed by individual users

	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<i># of respondents</i>	3936	1349	140	113	52
<i># of options chosen by those respondents</i>	12014	3436	333	220	117
Chat rooms (instant messaging)	44.8%	38.9%	36.4%	23.9%	30.8%
Alerts	67.2%	57.8%	57.9%	42.5%	48.1%
Requesting and receiving information via SMS	38.1%	10.5%	26.4%	17.7%	28.9%
Better integration with MUSO/WebCT	<b>84.2%</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	29.3%	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Unified events calendar	60.0%	45.0%	<b>60.7%</b>	35.4%	40.4%
None	3.7%	9.7%	12.9%	10.6%	19.2%
Other	7.2%	8.6%	14.3%	12.4%	7.7%

Table 15: Choices for what new technology would improve portal (by user group)

## 7. Usability testing of my.monash

This section provides an overview of the findings from the usability testing including:

- Introduction to the aims of the testing
- Summary of identified issues
- Detailed list of the major issues identified along with recommendations for addressing these
- Summary of results from the home page exploration exercise
- A summary of each of the tasks undertaken
- Results from the post-questionnaire completed by participants

### 7.1 Introduction

The usability testing of the *my.monash* portal consisted of 13 sessions each of 1.5 hours duration. The aims of this testing were to:

- Examine users' reactions to the home page in terms of the amount of information shown and how information is organised.
- Establish whether each of the tab labels is meaningful to users and indicative of the likely content to be found there.
- Observe and note any difficulties that users have completing routine tasks on the portal.
- Gather some insight into the subjective satisfaction of portal users.

Refer to *Section 3.5* for more details of the research methodology used, including the tasks, participants and session structure.

The results presented here are across the 13 participants as a single group, rather than breaking the findings into individual user groups.

### 7.2 Summary of identified issues

The usability evaluation identified 40 issues. These issues were rated for severity based on their likely frequency, impact and persistence. A four-tiered classification scheme has been used, where issues are classed as:

- **Severe** – a critical usability problem that prevents a task being completed
- **Major** – an issue that causes significant frustration or delay
- **Minor** – an issue that causes some delay but users may be able to “work around” the problem.
- **Cosmetic** – an issue that can be overcome by users but does impact the efficiency with which they work

As shown in Table 16, the good points to note from the *my.monash* portal's test results are:

- No severe issues have been identified
- 25 of the 40 issues (62.5%) are minor or cosmetic

Severity	Number of issues
Severe	0
Major	15
Minor	19
Cosmetic	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 16: Severity of 40 issues identified

The 40 issues were also classified according to the type of problem, as shown in Table 17.

Type of problem	Number of issues
Labelling	9
Content was not where users expected it	8
Hidden information	6
Search facilities	6
Navigation and orientation	4
Too much information	3
Value of portal	2
Unclear feedback	1
Help	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 17: Issues identified according to type of problem

## 7.3 Major issues identified

The 15 major issues are described below in terms of their impact and suggested recommendations. Other issues are included in *Appendix C – Table of all issues from Usability Testing*.

No.	Description	Type of problem	Impact	Recommendation
1	The home page is too cluttered	Too much information	A cluttered home page can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it difficult to find desired links/information (nothing stands out, the words tend to merge)</li> <li>• Reduce people's desire to explore the portal (as a tool people are less inclined to want to explore it anyway as they tend to come with a specific purpose and have limited time available)</li> </ul>	Until the portal can provide more targeted information and the ability for users to customise content, aim to reduce the amount of information on the home page.  Also consider regrouping information so that related areas are near each other e.g. news, search tools, etc.
2	Much of the information on the portal appears to be duplicated both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the portal (e.g. home page tabs vs. blue areas, research directory x 2 in My Research tab)</li> <li>• Between sites (e.g. Monash web vs. portal, Library site vs. Portal, Email web client vs. Portal)</li> </ul>	Too much information	Duplicated information can cause confusion (e.g. about where the information should be) and adds to clutter.	Undertaking a card sorting activity to identify the more appropriate grouping and labelling of information should also confirm where (if any) multiple access points to certain information are needed.  Resolving duplication of functionality between the portal and other systems requires broader consideration and clarification of the role and boundaries of the <i>my.monash</i> portal.
3	Most people ignore information that they perceive is not relevant to them including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas on the home page</li> <li>• Entire tabs</li> </ul>	Hidden information	The risks of this are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People may overlook areas that <b>are</b> relevant or could be helpful to them</li> <li>• People are less familiar with other areas so if they need to use them, it can be harder to find what they're looking for.</li> </ul>	Improve the portal's ability to provide content based on a variety of factors relating to users such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their role</li> <li>• Campus</li> <li>• Faculty/discipline/course</li> <li>• Clubs and societies they have joined, etc.</li> </ul>

No.	Description	Type of problem	Impact	Recommendation
4	Some participants expect the scope of the portal to be limited to what's available view the tabs.  e.g. a few participants expected recycling information to be in the "My Community" tab because it seems to be about a "social conscience" feel.	Hidden information	When users can't see that the information they seek clearly fits into one of the tabs, it can be harder to find.  This can be compounded by the problem that many people don't understand what each of the tab contains.	Ensure the card sorting exercise (recommended previously) includes all content available on the portal, not just the information provided in tabs.  Any descriptions that accompany links need to be accurate (e.g. links to <i>ask.monash</i> were not sufficiently meaningful).
5	At least 3 of the tabs contain more than five disparate areas on the first page. This can make it difficult for users to get a sense of everything in the tab because most participants had to be encouraged to scroll through longer pages, at least 2 admitting that they don't like to scroll.	Hidden information	Without any idea of what is "below the fold" it is likely that some users will overlook information and services provided on the portal.	Providing a summary of the page contents above the fold, can help indicate the contents of longer pages (e.g. using "On this page" links).
6	Information isn't always grouped as participants expect it to be, e.g. groups on the home page vs. tabs	Content is not where users expect it	This slows users down when looking for information, particularly information that is not covered by the tabs. e.g. a tab for Employment/Enrolment information was suggested by some participants	Undertaking a card sorting activity will identify the more appropriate grouping and labelling of information.
7	Some tab labels were broad and general, making it difficult for participants to gain a sense of the content.  Tabs/areas that weren't as people expected or well understood included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Pages/My Links</li> <li>• My Info</li> <li>• My Community</li> </ul>	Labelling		As above.
8	Some links were not sufficiently meaningful – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of "More" links which should include additional detail, e.g. "More job vacancies"</li> <li>• Description associated with <i>ask.monash</i></li> </ul>	Labelling		Review link names to ensure they are meaningful. In particular avoid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "More" and "Click here" as link labels</li> <li>• Jargon that may not be familiar to all users (e.g. "Full webmail client")</li> </ul>

No.	Description	Type of problem	Impact	Recommendation
9	Use of "My" suggests information will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be relevant / targeted to person OR</li> <li>• Allow person to manipulate/control area</li> </ul> e.g. My Research	Labelling		Review the use of "My" on portal labels to ensure it is being used accurately.  Always try to provide the most meaningful label for links, tabs and labels rather than fitting in with a particular theme.
10	Services offered by the portal are not always valuable to the users e.g. My Research tab only contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Directory</li> <li>• Expert Seminar Booking system</li> </ul>	Value of the portal	People are less inclined to use the portal.	The focus groups and surveys elicited a large number of suggestions for content that may be more relevant to particular user groups.  Try to incorporate these into the portal.
11	Search results are not always relevant. Participants seem to be familiar with this and so expect that the relevance rankings will not help them.  (Additional note: We observed that people do make use of the title, description & URL when evaluating relevance)	Search	People distrust the search results and some avoid using it altogether.	Improve the search engine so that results are more relevant.
12	Search appears to return matches to any word entered as part of the criteria rather than "all words", thus the number of results is very high	Search	It's more difficult for users to find what they are looking for among larger numbers of search results.	Improve the way the search engine matches results.
13	One participant entered "bailey, nathan" into the Staff Directory search and no results were returned. This search should cater for the situation where the user does not know which is the first, second or third name of a person.	Search		The staff directory need should return records regardless of the order of names provided – i.e. Nathan Bailey and Bailey, Nathan should both return results.  When multiple words are entered the results should be ordered as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items that matches all words entered should be first</li> <li>• Items that match one of the words should follow</li> </ul>
14	Search results that require additional sign-on flag this in the description. This: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not always noticed and/or understood</li> <li>• Reduces the space for the proper description</li> </ul>	Search		Search results that need users to sign-in to see the item should be more visibly flagged, rather than using the description field.

No.	Description	Type of problem	Impact	Recommendation
15	Search did not permit use of Boolean operators e.g. AND, +, etc	Search		Improve the search engine to allow the use of Boolean operators. Although many people are not aware of how to use these, this is likely to be beneficial to more "advanced" searchers.

Table 18: Major issues identified and associated recommendations

## 7.4 Results from Home page exploration

The first activity for test participants was to explore the home page to:

- Gain a sense of people’s impressions of the portal home page,
- Determine whether they understood what each of the tabs would contain, and
- Understand what parts of the home page are (not) of value to users.

### What caught people’s eye?

When explaining their initial reactions to the home page, 9 of 13 participants indicated that the following areas caught their eye:

- The summary information area – 4 participants (of 13)
- The image and welcome message – 3 participants
- The “middle” area (including timetable/staff links) – 2 participants

### Comments about the home page

Comments made by more than one participant during the home page exploration included:

- It’s very busy/cluttered – 5 participants (of 13)
- I’m more likely to use the Monash website or a department/campus site – 4 participants
- It’s just the right amount of information (huge) – 4 participants
- All this is not relevant to me – 2 participants
- I haven’t scrolled down before – 2 participants

### Areas of the home page that were of high and low value to participants

Highly valuable	No. of participants	Less valuable	No. of participants
Summary info area	8	Monash memo	7
Important dates	7	Instant poll	7
Marketplace	7	Teaching commitments	5
Library	7	My Links	4
Staff links	4	<i>ask.monash</i>	4
News headlines	4	News headlines	4
Monash news/memo	3	Important dates	3
Email	3	Marketplace	3
Weather	3	Allocate+ / timetable	2
Search engines	3	My Community	2
My Units	3	WES (enrolment system)	2

Table 19: The things participants valued most and least about the home page

## 7.5 Summary of tasks

This section summarises the tasks undertaken by participants and highlights the key issues that arose.

Task A1 – Renew a library book		
<b>Task details</b> You have a library book on loan and would like to renew it. Renew the book from your portal.		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
92% (12 out of 13 participants)	4.3	4.3
<b>Summary of task findings</b> Many participants were familiar with this task and had no trouble going to the “My Library” area, then choosing one of two links that would take them to the Library Catalogue page.  Although all 13 participants got to this page, one was confused about where they were and thought they were not in the right place to complete the task (so failed).  This task highlights the need to provide smooth transitions between the portal and external systems. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The links to the library catalogue are not as clear as they could be. For example, some participants thought the “Full library record” link would provide the library record of the item on loan, whereas others thought it would go to the user’s library record.</li> <li>The “library catalogue” page slowed participants down as they had to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise where they were – i.e. they’d been taken to an external library system whose visual appearance is significantly different to both the portal and the Monash website.</li> <li>Realise that the “catalogue” page provides many functions (not just searching the catalogue).</li> <li>Locate the option to “Renew a book”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> After choosing an option to move forward, users were taken to a sign-in page at which point the task was concluded.		

Task A2 - Find contact details for a staff member		
<b>Task details</b> You have been told you need to meet with Nathan Bailey regarding an IT issue. Locate his contact details then send him an email requesting a meeting.		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
92% (12 out of 13 participants)	4.5	4.9
<b>Summary of task findings</b> One participant didn’t find the staff directory search facility so couldn’t complete this task. Some of the other participants also had difficulty finding the staff directory, but then were able to complete this task successfully.  One participant entered “Bailey, Nathan” as the search criteria and no results were returned. When they retried this using “Nathan Bailey”, they commented that this is “poor” because it is increasingly common to not know which part of a name is the given name versus the surname.  Generally the information that was provided in the contact details was sufficient for participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant would prefer the label for the phone number to be changed from “Voice” to “Phone”.</li> <li>Some participants wondered what the “More” links would provide, given the amount of detail on the results page. We <b>recommend</b> that links be given more descriptive titles than just “More”. Although this can take up more space, it provides users with more idea about what to expect and is also more meaningful for those using screen-reader software.</li> </ul>		

Task A3 - Find out if Monash University recycles paper		
<b>Task details</b>		
You would like to find out if Monash University recycles paper. Find this out using the portal.		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
23%	2.8	3.4
3 out of 13 participants		

### Summary of task findings

The aim of this task was to establish whether participants would use the *ask.monash* facility to find an answer. Apart from two participants who were familiar with *ask.monash*, participants used the search facility to try to locate an answer, with many commenting that they would use the Monash website rather than the portal for such a task.

Key findings were:

- Awareness of the *ask.monash* facility is very low among all user groups
- The brief descriptions of *ask.monash* provided in the portal are potentially misleading to users:
  - The Home page describes it as “Your online help system” which some people interpreted as providing help about using the portal
  - The Help page describes it as “Online enrolment and administration information” when its scope appears to be broader than that.
- The search facility needs to be improved in a number of ways, including:
  - Providing more relevant results
  - When the search criteria includes more than one word the results returned should be for items that include **all** the words rather than **any** one of the words.
  - We observed that the description field of the search results is often used to indicate that the item is secure and the user will need to sign-in to view it. Ideally this should not be needed (as the user has signed-in to the portal).

If this can't be avoided, don't use the description to notify users as this reduces space available for describing the content of that item and may not be noticed.

Task A4 – Add a link to your portal		
<p><b>Task details</b></p> <p>Your favourite website is Yahoo (<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a>) and you visit it regularly. You'd like to have quick access to Yahoo from your <i>my.monash</i> portal – find a way to do this.</p>		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
<p><b>100%</b></p> <p>13 out of 13 participants</p>	<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>4.6</b></p>
<p><b>Summary of task findings</b></p> <p>While this task had the maximum success rate, there were some problems with both the way the task was posed and in task performance.</p> <p><i>Task issues</i></p> <p>This task was specifically worded to avoid phrases like “add a link” as this may have led participants to the “My Links” facility. It took some participants a while to understand what they were being asked to do.</p> <p>Some thought a link to “Yahoo” would already be available somewhere on the portal (as there is a link to Google). In fact, one participant located a link to Yahoo in the Quick Search facility and thought the task was asking about that.</p> <p><i>Task findings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many participants did not expect to be able to add links to the portal, especially those who tend to only use one computer (e.g. general staff who have a dedicated PC). These participants indicated that they would use their browser's facility for this.</li> <li>• After a link has been added, the subsequent screen is very similar with a subtle message that the link has been added. At least one participant didn't see this message and thought they were being asked to confirm that they wanted to add the link.</li> <li>• Most people felt the need to go to the home page to confirm that the link had been added. Many participants commented that they expected a change to be noticeable “above the fold” of the home page.</li> </ul>		

**Task A5 – Find current level of internet use****Task details**

You have been using the Internet a lot in the last week and you want check what the system has recorded as your current level of internet use.

Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
92% (12 out of 13 participants)	4.8	4.9

**Summary of task findings**

Participants generally found this task easy to do, particularly as the summary information area on the home page shows quota information.

The person who failed this task found the right page but provided email quota information rather than Internet usage information.

Key findings from this task include:

- Staff tend not to worry about quotas as much as students, as they assumed they had unlimited Internet use.
- Some staff participants questioned why Internet usage indicated a cost but said nothing about **who** that was being charged to.
- Participants tended to use the “More quotas” link from the home page, rather than going to the “My Info” tab, probably because the link is more specific. The “My Info” tab didn’t match participants’ expectations – most participants expected their personal details to be available in the tab.

**Task G1 – Find an exam timetable****Task details**

Some students have asked you when the exam has been scheduled for FRN2010. Find out this information using the portal.

Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
83% (5 out of 6 participants)	4.3	4.0

**Summary of task findings**

This task highlighted the impact of home page clutter.

The “Staff Links” section of the home page contains an area for searching for exam timetables, but many participants had difficulty finding this.

Most participants quickly scanned the home page:

- Some wondered whether it would be available in any of the tabs (e.g. “My Units” and “My Library”)
- Two of the participants tried the search engine

It was only when participants did a **detailed** examination of the page that they found this search area.

Participants were generally satisfied with the resulting information. However they suggested:

- It would be better to show the actual starting time rather than “AM”.
- It would be good to also show what time reading of the exam paper commences.
- The venue was not clear to all participants – linking it to a more detailed description may be helpful.

Task G2 – Find job vacancies		
<b>Task details</b>		
You are interested to know what current job vacancies there are at Monash. Use the portal to find out what job vacancies are available.		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
67%	4.3	5.0
(2 out of 3 participants)		
<b>Summary of task findings</b>		
<p>Only a small number of participants undertook this task. This may weaken our conclusions, but they are included here as “food for thought”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most participants expected to find job vacancy on the Monash website rather than the portal.</li> <li>• Participants used the link on the home page – but when prompted to find it another way, only those who had previously seen “My Community” were able to find it.</li> <li>• One participant looking in the “My Community” tab expected there to be a link to it in the left-hand navigation, rather than having to scroll down.</li> <li>• One participant commented that only showing 3 job vacancies was a bit misleading, as users may only think that there were 3 jobs being offered.</li> </ul>		

Task S1 – Find a form to graduate		
<b>Task details</b>		
You are nearing the end of your degree and have been told you need to apply to graduate. Use the portal to find the application form for this.		
Task success	Ease of Use rating	Confidence rating
100%	4.0	4.8
(4 out of 4 participants)		
<b>Summary of task findings</b>		
<p>Participants were all able to get to the point where they would need to sign-in to the WES system to get the form.</p> <p>Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one participant indicated that they would probably use the Monash website to get this form, rather than the portal.</li> <li>• The “Graduation” link on the home page takes users to an anchor on a page within the “My Info” tab. When asked where they were, most participants were unclear – but this did not prevent them completing the task, as the link they needed was clearly apparent.</li> <li>• When faced with the need to log into WES to get the form, one participant commented that they expected they would need to search for the form again in that system, rather than being taken directly to the form.</li> </ul> <p>While we were unable to check the actual behaviour of WES, this last finding raises an issue that portals need to be aware of.</p> <p>When “deep-linking” into external sites, it is important to minimise any rework that users may have to do. For example, having found a link to a form in the portal, the user would ideally be taken <b>directly</b> to that form rather than needing to start their search again on another site.</p> <p>If it is not possible to go directly to the form, try to minimise how much effort users must make at the portal side of it. For example, rather than having users do an extra “click” to locate a specific form, provide a general link to forms (that indicates these are found on the external site).</p>		

Task L1 – Inform your students that a class has been cancelled		
<b>Task details</b>		
You have been using the Internet a lot in the last week and you want check what the system has recorded as your current level of internet use.		
<b>Task success</b>	<b>Ease of Use rating</b>	<b>Confidence rating</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Summary of task findings</b>		
We are not able to draw meaningful conclusions from this task, as only 2 people undertook it – and one of those was a General staff member rather than academic staff member.		
One key piece of feedback from the Academic staff member was that they would not use the portal for this type of message. Instead they would use email, as they expected that more students would check their email than the portal.		

## 7.6 Other results from Usability Testing

In addition to being observed undertaking specific tasks, participants completed a post-test questionnaire to capture their opinions immediately after having using the portal. Table 20 shows the ratings for the first 5 questions of the questionnaire.

Question	Rating (out of 5)
<p><b>How easy do you think the my.monash portal is to use?</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Very difficult” = 1</li> <li>• “Very Easy” = 5</li> </ul>	3.85
<p><b>While working with the my.monash portal, how did you feel?</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Very frustrated” = 1</li> <li>• “Not at all frustrated” = 5</li> </ul>	3.88
<p><b>Compared to what you expected, did you get through the tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Much slower” = 1</li> <li>• “Much faster” = 5</li> </ul>	3.38
<p><b>Did you always know what to do next while using this website?</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I was often confused” = 1</li> <li>• “I always knew what to do” = 5</li> </ul>	3.81
<p><b>Was the placement of buttons and information on the screens logical?</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Not at all logical” = 1</li> <li>• “Very logical” = 5</li> </ul>	3.77

Table 20: Post-test questionnaire responses

## Unfamiliar terms

Participants were asked to note any terms they were unfamiliar with.

Term	No. of participants
My Pages	5
My Research	2
Allocate+”	2
WUMS	2
My Community	1
My Info	1
My Links	1
URL	1
Class booking system	1
CHEQ	1

Table 21: Unfamiliar terms identified by test participants

## Likes and Dislikes

Participants were asked to list the 3 things they liked most and least about the *my.monash* portal.

Like	No. of participants	Dislike	No. of participants
Layout	5	Email (missing features)	4
Amount of information	4	Cluttered home page	3
Library	3	Doubling up of information	3
Links to Monash and outside sites	3	Hard to find info	3
Summary info area	3	Information not relevant to me	3
Colours	2	My Research tab	3
Contains everything I need	2	Lack of single sign-on	2
Easy to access	2	Search engine	2
Logical to follow	2	Wordiness / text heavy pages	2
Remote access to email	2		
Weather forecast	2		

Table 22: The things participants liked most and least about *my.monash*

### How you would describe the my.monash portal

Participants were asked what 2 or 3 words they would use to describe the portal to a colleague.

Term	No. of participants
Easy to use	4
Informative	3
A wealth of info about Monash	2
One stop information portal	2
Useful	1
A great resource for students	1
Worth a look	1
Detailed info but need time to learn to use	1
Relatively secure	1
An email account with weather and marketplace	1
Too broad	1

Table 23: Words participants would use to describe portal

## 8. Appendices

### Appendix A – List of related materials provided electronically

Rather than increasing the size of this document by including the related material as Appendices, the following files are being provided electronically.

Activity	Artefact	File
Stakeholder workshops	Pre-session questionnaire	MON1 Stakeholder Questionnaire.doc
Focus groups	Questionnaire for Staff	MON1 Questionnaire Staff.doc
	Questionnaire for Students	MON1 Questionnaire Student.doc
	Questionnaire for Researchers	MON1 Questionnaire Researcher.doc
	Results of focus group pre-questionnaires	MON1 Focus Group Pre-Questionnaire results.xls
Online survey	Original set of survey results data Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is being provided as a raw data in MS Excel spreadsheet.</li> <li>Email addresses have been removed to protect privacy of respondents</li> </ul>	MON1 Survey data.xls
Usability testing	Pre-test questionnaire for Staff	MON1 Pre-Test Questionnaire - Staff.doc
	Pre-test questionnaire for Students	MON1 Pre-Test Questionnaire - Student.doc
	Pre-test questionnaire for Researchers	MON1 Pre-Test Questionnaire - Researcher.doc
	Task rating sheet	MON1 Task Rating Sheet.doc
	Post-test questionnaire	MON1 Post-Test Questionnaire.doc
	Results of usability testing pre-questionnaire	MON1 Usability Testing Pre-Questionnaire results.xls
	Results of usability testing post-questionnaire	MON1 Usability Testing Post Questionnaire results.xls

Table 24: Related material being provided electronically

## Appendix B – Focus group ideas for improving the portal

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Theme 1: Let me customise the portal easily</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>What to customise</b>					
Colours	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Page layout	✓		✓	✓	✓
Home page appearance	✓		✓		
Tabs shown	✓		✓		
Content (general)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Links - add them more easily e.g. one click	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
News sources	✓		✓	✓	✓
Upload photos / photo gallery	✓		✓		
Backgrounds (e.g. photos)	✓	✓			
<b>About customisation</b>					
It must be easy to turn customised content on & off (e.g. list with checkboxes)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Don't let me turn off core things by accident	✓				
Default page should be spartan				✓	
Allowing customisation may make it harder to support students as their portal may be very different.				✓	
<b>My Info tab</b>					
Would prefer my customisation options / things I've signed up for to be in this tab, rather than quota information.			✓		✓
<b>My Links</b>					
Some find it useful, but 7 links is too limiting	✓	✓			✓
Need a way to ensure inappropriate links can't be added				✓	
People don't understand benefits of My Links (why are they needed when I have my own computer)			✓		

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Smart customisation</b>					
Monitor my viewing habits and customise the portal based on that	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Harvest frequently used links (by me and others like me) and provide them as defaults					✓
<b>Theme 2: Improve email functionality</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>What to improve</b>					
Provide the functionality of a standard web mail client	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Address book (with predictive text)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create filters	✓				✓
Create folders	✓				✓
List by thread	✓		✓	✓	
Save as Draft facility	✓			✓	✓
Bulk forwarding	✓				
Keep copies of emails that have been forwarded		✓			
Attachments can be tricky	✓	✓			
Navigation between emails needs to be smoother - i.e. deleting an item goes back to the inbox rather than the next item, blocks of emails are not easy to move between)	✓	✓		✓	✓
Allow users to direct emails from external accounts to the monash account	✓		✓	✓	✓
Give me a permanent email address	✓				
Make my email address more identifiable as me		✓			✓
Link my student & staff email accounts			✓	✓	✓
Allow auto-refreshing of inbox contents & alert to new emails		✓		✓	✓
Allow spell-checking		✓			✓
Access Sent Items folder remotely				✓	✓
Spam filter		✓		✓	✓
Mobile access to summary info e.g. SMS me the number of emails I have		✓			✓
Email directed to portal seems to be delayed		✓			
When replying to an email, can't see original text		✓			

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Poor ability to search for emails		✓	✓	✓	
Set rules to flag emails for my attention (e.g. from a particular lecturer)		✓			
Email formatting (eg. Bold, italics)		✓			
Signatures		✓			
Let me choose how to be notified of new email messages				✓	
Let me compress & archive emails				✓	
Read out my emails				✓	
Let me send voice mails				✓	
Out of office			✓		
Set up mailing lists from address book			✓		
Subscriptions			✓		
Email quota is too low	✓	✓			✓
<b>Too many global emails</b>					
Need a way to distinguish between relevant emails and less important ones	✓	✓			
Provide targeted information via the portal rather than email	✓				
<b>Theme 3: Improve the way I collaborate and interact with staff &amp; other students</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Discussion forums</b>					
There needs to be more forums available in the portal (rather than within applications e.g. MUSO, WebCT) e.g. Unit, Faculty, Common Interest forums & Create your own	✓	✓	✓		✓
Need to show several posts on a page	✓				
Need better viewing of posts e.g. by thread, date, etc	✓			✓	
Need to be uncensored		✓			
Hard to post to				✓	
Lacks ability to search posts				✓	
Want a proper news group clients				✓	
Replying to post hard because original text not shown				✓	

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Instant messaging (chat)</b>					
For social info	✓				
For learning e.g. locating other students and chatting online	✓	✓			
<b>Staff directory</b>					
This feature was requested, but it already available within the portal. It may not have sufficient visibility.					
Too many results are returned for staff directory.					✓
Ensure staff names are links to email addresses		✓			
Need details of full phone directory			✓		
Ability to bookmark someone's contact details			✓		
<b>Student directory</b>					
It would be good to be able to enter a subject name and provide a list of student email addresses	✓	✓		✓	✓
Make it easier to search for student email addresses		✓			
Provide a way to contact past students		✓			
<b>Other ideas for interaction/collaboration/sharing</b>					
Task/To Do List shared with supervisor				✓	✓
Common way of sharing links e.g. blogs, wiki					✓
Support collegiality among staff via video linking, particularly across campuses				✓	
Area for researchers & supervisors to interact & share files				✓	
<b>Theme 4: Know who I am and provide information relevant to me</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Provide information based on my: - Location / campus - Faculty - Course / Discipline - Time of year	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Time zones - provide time zones (e.g. for conference calls)					✓
Know where I am in the world				✓	
<b>Multiple views</b>					
Need to be able to view what students see			✓	✓	

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Create views for mobile devices, dial-up access			✓	✓	
Need to be able to switch between staff, student, academic			✓		
<b>Theme 5: Provide up-to-date information when I need it</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>My Library</b>					
Alert/Remind me when my books are due	✓	✓			
<b>Timetable</b>					
Provide a weekly and/or monthly view rather than a daily view	✓				
Include the class location	✓				
Show alternative classes (in case I can't make it to the one I'm meant to be in)	✓				
Make sure the information is accurate and up-to-date (e.g. class cancellations & room changes should be shown)	✓	✓			
<b>Calendar</b>					
Unify the daily timetable and exam timetable	✓	✓		✓	
Display important dates (related to my role)	✓	✓			✓
Display Monash events (e.g. for the clubs & societies I'm in)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide a reminder service	✓	✓		✓	✓
Personal, editable		✓	✓	✓	✓
Allow filtering of calendar and multiple view		✓			✓
Searchable					✓
Assignment due dates		✓			
Integrate with desktop calendar so I can synch with mobile devices				✓	
View my and others availability			✓	✓	
To do/Task list			✓		
<b>Alerts</b>					
Grants		✓			✓
Scholarships		✓			✓
Travel		✓			✓

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Conferences					✓
Lectures, seminars & academic events on stuff related to my course		✓			
Let me choose what alerts to received and in what format			✓		
<b>News</b>					
Provide local, national and international news sources	✓	✓			
Provide Uni info (e.g. policy changes)	✓	✓	✓		
Provide Monash uni news		✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide stories of Monash in the news (wider community)		✓	✓		✓
Let me choose my news source and the type of news I want to receive (e.g. sport, politics, etc)	✓			✓	✓
Campus news		✓	✓		
Event news for things I'm interested in that are not course-related		✓	✓		
Provide ads for promotions, competitions & discounts		✓	✓		
Provide link to news source rather than displaying headlines				✓	
Only provide uni-specific info on portal and link to external sites				✓	
Education stories/new			✓		
<b>Weather</b>					
Some were not sure whether news & weather were in the portal. It may not be obvious enough.	✓				
Provide a 4-day forecast	✓		✓		
Provide external links to BOM					✓
<b>Theme 6: Aggregate my learning/teaching resources and keep them up-to-date</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Provide an area for access to external info sources (e.g. VTAC)			✓		
Provide a single point of access to databases & systems I use/nominate	✓		✓	✓	✓
Better integration between Callista, Allocate Plus & Syllabus Plus			✓		
Let me generate study statements from Callista			✓		
Show alternative class times (e.g. in calendar)	✓				
Show a list of classes a particular lecturer is taking	✓				
<b>Monash Lectures Online (Library)</b>					

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Good to have lectures online but it takes forever to listen to them. Would prefer to download lecture and listen to at my own convenience	✓				
<b>MUSO</b>					
When it is mandatory to use MUSO for assessments, this isn't fair to people who don't have internet at home	✓				
<b>My Units</b>					
Some have good amounts of information, while others have little more than what's in the handbook. At a minimum a reading list should be required. The more information that is available, accurate and up-to-date, the better it is for students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
There is some confusion between MUSO, WebCT and the portal. Also between Unit pages and Lectures Online. These need to be better integrated.	✓			✓	
Information must be up-to-date	✓	✓		✓	
Provide external links that are relevant to my unit on the My Unit page		✓			
Would prefer My Units page to link to Lecturer's website rather than handbook information		✓			
There seems to be extra work required to update portal pages with changes to unit information				✓	
Changing some details if difficult - If I don't have authorisation who does?				✓	
Currently needs to add/delete my own teaching commitments - would prefer a central repository.				✓	
Tell me how many students have view my subject information/materials				✓	
Provide a standard way to submit marks for assignments/ongoing work.				✓	
Automate subject evaluation process				✓	
<b>Theme 7: Let me sharing &amp; access information in the format I want</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
How do I get data out of the timetable? E.g. XML				✓	
How can I upload text file to portal?				✓	
It won't interface with my data in my format				✓	
Let me write scripts to query my data e.g. XML from Callista				✓	
Replicate my work environment wherever I am in the world			✓		
<b>Theme 8: Provide better research resources</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Let me control what appears in the My Research area and let me add things to it.	✓			✓	✓
Allow me to save my work & notes to My Research tab and to search across this					✓

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Provide a list of publications I've written that I can maintain here					✓
Provide a list of all research being done at Monash					✓
Provide a list of all journal & magazine subscriptions that Monash subscribes to.			✓		
Increase internet quota so I can download more research resources		✓			
Be able to search for and download full-text content (e.g. that has been PDF'd)	✓	✓			✓
E-journals		✓			✓
Where lists of articles are provided, ensure these link to full paper or at least instructions on where to get full paper		✓			
<b>My Library</b>					
Let me generate lists of previously borrowed resources, e.g. to generate a bibliography	✓	✓			
Provide better access to my library record		✓	✓		✓
Provide better access to library databases		✓			✓
Integrate DocDel					✓
Provide access to overseas libraries					✓
<b>Provide a File Storage area for collaborating and research</b>					
Remote access to files/storage area		✓	✓	✓	✓
Needs to be secure & backed up					✓
Tell us it's secure & backed up					✓
Access for me and others I choose		✓	✓		✓
Provide remote access to network servers			✓	✓	
Provide remote access to my hard disk			✓	✓	
Provide SSH access Monash Unix servers				✓	
Let me backup my computer to portal				✓	
<b>Theme 9: Consider including “missing” information &amp; services</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Provide fun stuff like Quote/Word/Fact of the day or On this day at Monash	✓	✓			
Provide information on clubs & societies	✓	✓			✓
Event news should be in My Community and my calendar	✓	✓	✓		✓

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
What's happening in Melbourne? / About Melbourne for international students		✓			
Shuttle bus times		✓			✓
Public transport info		✓			✓
Links to facilities e.g. booking tennis courts		✓			✓
Interactive maps/building search that provides: - directions - nearest parking & number of spaces left		✓	✓		
Some applications need particular software so an upfront list of software requirements would be handy (e.g. MUSO needs Java; Lectures Online needs Real Player)	✓	✓	✓		
Provide entertainment news e.g. - music, travel, sports, TV guide - piped radio stations, games - movie reviews		✓			
Provide Monash sports news		✓			
Provide information on research grants & ethics				✓	
Provide access to budgets for research and teaching accounts (SAP)				✓	
Stream parking permit process by moving it online			✓		
Provide a key area for important messages (e.g. shooting) or relevant headlines (e.g. WES opens today)			✓		
<b>Faculty information</b>					
List of contacts and their email/contact details	✓	✓			
Policies & regulations	✓				
Link to faculty pages on Monash website	✓	✓			✓
Course requirements eg. Before enrolling	✓	✓			
Majors	✓	✓			
Link to course pages		✓			
Faculty info needs to be updated and kept up-to-date		✓			
<b>Forms</b>					
Travel					✓
Faculty					✓

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Departmental					✓
School					✓
Ethics					✓
Scholarship forms			✓		
Forms available via Staff Services			✓		
<b>E-Services / ESS</b>					
Provide remote access to personnel info & services (e-services / ESS)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Make it easier to contact Admin/Personnel		✓			
<b>University wide info</b>					
Policies & regulations			✓		
<b>There are also some hard to find &amp; use services</b>					
Lectures online is hard to find	✓				
WES is hard to find	✓				
Allocate Plus is hard to find	✓				
There's no direct link to MUSO from the portal home page	✓			✓	
MUSO is hard to navigate around				✓	
Functions that are hidden within applications aren't always evident to users (e.g. users may not be aware of other WES functions like change of address)	✓	✓			✓
Expert booking system is hard to find					✓
Quota system needs to be clearer and easier to find					✓
Course info for potential future subjects is difficult to find		✓			
WES is clunky, hard to use particularly when making changes		✓			
Link to John Medley Library is not obvious		✓	✓		
Time table can be hard to find				✓	
Calendar is hard to find				✓	
<b>My Community</b>					
Needs to be better organised	✓				

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
Label may not be sufficiently meaningful	✓				✓
<b>My Library</b>					
Links to renew books online is hard to find	✓				✓
The portal interface to search the library database and links to the library databases are not easy to use	✓	✓			
<b>Theme 10: There's too much in the portal - what's not so popular?</b>	<b>Yes</b>				<b>Yes</b>
The Instant Poll doesn't change so is of limited value	✓				
Not everyone values "My Community"	✓				✓
My Research is not valuable in its current form	✓				✓
Why is WES on home page?					✓
Timetable info is not needed					✓
<b>My Pages</b>					
Potentially redundant tab	✓				
There isn't a clear understanding of the difference between "My Pages" and "My Links"	✓				
<b>My Links</b>					
Some people don't use "My Links"	✓				
<b>Theme 11: Improve Marketplace</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Provide an email link to seller rather than posting responses	✓				
Need to warn students that they may get into trouble if they abuse system	✓				
Reduce multiple posts e.g. number allowed per hour		✓	✓		✓
Potentially separate accommodation					✓
Indicate how many times an item has been read (e.g. like Real Estate sites)					✓
Valued as part of portal	✓	✓		✓	✓
Provide online sales & auctions		✓			
Allow payments for marketplace online		✓			
Provide a way to track replies		✓			
Require certain fields to be mandatory (e.g. price) so its more info rich			✓		
Email me if something meets my criteria			✓		

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Theme 12: Help me access support services</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Provide a way to email counsellors (e.g. for problems)	✓				
Provide accommodation services	✓				
Provide health advice	✓				
Provide money management tips	✓				
Keep access to Uni jobs & Student employment office	✓	✓	✓		
Provide a quick list of campus services and their contact details (e.g. Drs, pharmacy)	✓		✓		✓
Make it easier to find my booklist (with prices)	✓				
Provide online access to Monash bookshop				✓	
Provide a payment facility for fees, fines, quotas, printing, etc (micro payments)	✓	✓			
Provide access to central photocopying & faxing service				✓	
Provide info about facilities in lectures theatres				✓	
Provide access to statistical services			✓		
Use portal as a staff induction tool			✓		
<b>Help me use portal</b>					
Provide information about the portal e.g. how it works, who is responsible for it e.g. where to get help	✓	✓	✓		✓
Need to increase awareness of what's on portal		✓	✓		
Need training on how it works			✓		
Provide portal help as live chat to real person			✓		
Provide generic help with contact numbers to real people			✓		
Let me know when portal has changed and what's news			✓		
<b>Ask Monash</b>					
Currently there is selective information, provide a broader range of information	✓				
It can be hard to use as the information structure only includes staff & student services.	✓				
Took too long to get back to me					✓
Trying to find IT help through Ask Monash isn't helpful			✓		
<b>Theme 13: Things need to work as I expect them to</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Search results need to be more relevant</b>					
Results are not always relevant.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The search should be more like Google e.g. with the ability to refine searches.	✓				
Provide an internal search engine for the portal	✓	✓		✓	
Allow me to store search results and search these					✓
Intelligent search engine should return links similar to those I've been looking at				✓	
Provide access to external search engines			✓	✓	
Provide reference look up tool (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus)			✓		
<b>Broken things cause users to lose faith</b>					
Quota system needs to work				✓	
Doesn't work well in all browsers		✓		✓	
Library loans is broken			✓	✓	
Broken links on Unit pages need to be changed (it was difficult to change these in the past)				✓	
<b>Theme 14: Improve the design of the portal</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Home page is too cluttered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Too much market place information on the Home Page	✓	✓			
Font sizes are too small	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Font used isn't "Funky"	✓				
Colour scheme is bland for some people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Too many features - where to start? Got to find the good ones		✓			
Make more consistent with Monash Branding Guidelines		✓	✓		
People pictures on log-in page can be a turn-off			✓	✓	
Need clearer access to portal home page from other pages				✓	
Needs to meet Web Accessibility guidelines			✓	✓	
<b>Tabs</b>					
The purpose and content of some tabs is unclear	✓				
Some people like the tab mechanism for distinguishing between information	✓				

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
<b>Windows Management</b>					
Allow multiple windows to be open when working on multiple applications. Want to be able to minimise and maximise like a desktop.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Refreshing content &amp; images</b>					
Promote sense that portal is changing/up-to-date through changing images & dynamic content		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Navigation</b>					
Links names can be confusing				✓	
Links don't always go where you expect them to				✓	
Takes too many clicks to get to info I need			✓		
<b>Theme 15: Portal role &amp; boundaries need clarification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Rather than linking to applications, encapsulate services within the portal	✓		✓		
Having both the portal and Monash University website can be confusing.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
It can be confusing to know where you are: e.g. - still in the portal - in an application - on another site	✓				
Opening sites in new browser windows may help to distinguish where you are	✓	✓		✓	
Some departments already provide their own tools - are we integrating, duplicating - What's the value proposition?			✓	✓	✓
Some people (e.g. lecturer & students) have their own home pages that act as their portal to info. What should the relationship with these be?			✓	✓	
Confused about objectives of the portal		✓	✓	✓	✓
Will using the portal more often affect my quotas?		✓			✓
There is low awareness of the portal, it's features & benefits. No training is provided to staff.			✓	✓	
Not all faculties encourage use of the portal				✓	
Should people be forced to go to the portal (some say yes, others don't want to rely on it).			✓		
<b>Which system/access point?</b>					
Confusion between WebCT and the portal and the role of each.				✓	
Functionality seems to be duplicated - why is this needed?			✓	✓	

Suggestions for “my perfect portal”	Undergrads	Post grads	General staff	Academic staff	Researchers
To be a single point of contact, portal must provide access to all systems (I'm authorised for)				✓	
<b>Why not use the portal to access things?</b>					
Familiar with URL so can go direct				✓	
Can find things more easily elsewhere			✓	✓	
System speeds vary during the day so go with whichever is fastest.				✓	
<b>Theme 16: Security and technology issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Having multiple log-ons causes user frustration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide a notice of when you last logged in	✓				
Ask for all security info upfront		✓			
Some people resist having portal open for long periods of time and/or set to their home page because it's a potential security risk.		✓			
Restrict Unit material, to enrolled students, tutors & teaching staff				✓	
Alert users not to open links - virus warnings			✓		
When portal times out it can be frustrating to have to log in again			✓		
<b>Technology issues</b>					
Potential problems with home networks (and multiple users)		✓			
Slow to use when using dial-up		✓	✓		
It should have a content management systems		✓		✓	

Table 25: Suggestions for improving the portal from focus group participants

## Appendix C – Table of all issues from Usability Testing

No.	Where was problem?	Description	Severity	Categorisation of issue
1	Home page	The home page is too cluttered.	Major	Too much information
2	All pages	Much of the information on the portal appears to be duplicated both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the portal (e.g. home page tabs vs. blue areas, research directory x 2 in My Research tab)</li> <li>• Between sites (e.g. Monash web vs. portal, Library site vs. Portal, Email web client vs. Portal)</li> </ul>	Major	Too much information
3	All pages	Most people ignore information that they perceive is not relevant to them including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas on the home page</li> <li>• Entire tabs</li> </ul>	Major	Hidden information
4	Tabs	Some participants expect the scope of the portal to be limited to the tabs. e.g. a few participants expected recycling information to be in the "My Community" tab because it seems to be about a "social conscience" feel.	Major	Hidden information
5	Tabs	At least 3 of the tabs contain more than five of distinct areas on the first page. It's difficult for users to get a sense of everything in the tab because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most participants had to be encouraged to scroll through longer pages, at least 2 admitting that they don't like to scroll.</li> <li>• There is no "On this page" summary above the fold, that would help indicate the contents of longer pages</li> </ul>	Major	Hidden information
6	All pages	Information isn't always grouped as participants would expected to be, e.g. groups on the home page vs. tabs	Major	Content is not where users expect it
7	Tabs	Some tab labels were broad and general, making it difficult for participants to gain a sense of the content. Tabs/areas that weren't as people expected or well understood included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Pages/My Links</li> <li>• My Info</li> <li>• My Community</li> </ul>	Major	Labelling

No.	Where was problem?	Description	Severity	Categorisation of issue
8	All pages	Some links were not sufficiently meaningful – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of "More" links which should include additional detail, e.g. "More job vacancies"</li> <li>• Description associated with <i>ask.monash</i></li> </ul>	Major	Labelling
9	All pages	Use of "My" suggests information will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be relevant/targeted to person OR</li> <li>• Allow person to manipulate/control area</li> </ul> e.g. My Research	Major	Labelling
10	All pages	Service offered by the portal are not always valuable to the users e.g. My Research tab only contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Directory</li> <li>• Expert Seminar Booking system</li> </ul>	Major	Value of the portal
11	Search results	Search results are not always relevant. Participants seem to be familiar with this and so expect that the relevance rankings will not help them.  (Additional note: We observed that people do make use of the title, description & URL when evaluating relevance)	Major	Search
12	Search results	Search appears to return matches to any word entered as part of the criteria rather than "all words", thus the number of results is very high	Major	Search
13	Staff directory	One participant entered "bailey, nathan" into the Staff Directory search and no results were returned. This search should cater for the situation where the user does not know which is the first, second or third name of a person.	Major	Search
14	Search results	Search results that require additional sign-on flag this in the description. This: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not always noticed and/or understood</li> <li>• Reduces the space for the proper description</li> </ul>	Major	Search
15	Search	Search did not permit use of Boolean operators e.g. AND, +, etc	Major	Search
16	Exam timetable search results	Participants didn't understand all of the labels used here e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time should be shown rather than just AM</li> <li>• Some mistook teaching campus for exam venue</li> <li>• Some one suggested venue names should be linked to better description of venue e.g. where is CRC Level 2?</li> </ul>	Minor	Labelling

No.	Where was problem?	Description	Severity	Categorisation of issue
17	Staff Links	It took many users a long time to find the Exam timetable area. The text heavy home page can make specific links difficult to find. People had to read through all the staff links to find this link, whereas most scan a page quickly so easily overlook this feature.	Minor	Too much information
18	Help	Some participants expected that the Help area would include a search facility	Minor	Help
19	Home page	The heading "Staff links" was too broad for one user who commented that staff could have many other sorts of links that wouldn't fit into this area. They suggested grouping some of the links into "Employment", etc	Minor	Labelling
20	All pages	All links on the left-hand side of tabs appear the same – i.e. they current page should not be a link and some form or orientation marker may assist people to understand that this is their current position.	Minor	Navigation & Orientation
21	My Community	Participants expected the John Medley Library to be available under the "My Library" tab. Some commented that it could be included in My Community as a secondary way of getting to it.	Minor	Content is not where users expect it
22	My Info	The contact details at the bottom of the "My Info" tab should probably be at the top of the page as many people were expecting to see these in this tab. Having to scroll to see them risks some people not finding them.	Minor	Content is not where users expect it
23	My Info	Within My Info there is no LHS link for "Student links" (which are available via home page), so when trying to find this info people can only go via home page.	Minor	Hidden information
24	My Info	When taken to the Student Services area of My Info, participants were not always able to tell where they were in the portal. due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being taken to an anchor link that is below the fold so orientation cues couldn't be seen</li> <li>• Even when participant realised they were in the "My Info" area, they didn't necessarily understand why they were in this section – i.e. previous visits to the "My Info" area didn't indicate that any student information was available here</li> </ul>	Minor	Navigation and orientation
25	My Info	For staff looking at their internet usage quota: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some didn't understand why a cost was given (e.g. who is paying this me? My department?)</li> <li>• There is no way of seeing what your total quota is.</li> </ul>	Minor	Hidden information
26	My Library	Section within My Library, called "My Library" it just links to various library sites & services. One participant commented that the use of "My" in this heading was misleading	Minor	Labelling
27	My Library	The difference between the links labelled "More" and "Full Library Record" were not always well understood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most assumed "More" was detail about the book</li> <li>• Most thought "Full library record" was about their own library record (e.g. what items I have on hold) but one thought it was about the book's record (e.g. who else has it on hold?)</li> </ul>	Minor	Labelling

No.	Where was problem?	Description	Severity	Categorisation of issue
28	My Pages / My Links	After adding a link the resulting message could be clearer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some participants thought they needed to confirm changes i.e. Didn't realise the link had been added and they were now able to edit it</li> <li>Most felt the need to visit the home page to confirm the link had been added</li> </ul>	Minor	Feedback
29	All pages	Most participants expected the LHS links to stay within the portal or go to an external (Monash) site. A few thought that links going external should somehow be flagged, but this was not a priority for most participants	Minor	Navigation and orientation
30	All pages	For some tasks participants commented that they were more likely to use another source of information (e.g. Monash website).	Minor	Value of portal
31	Home page / My Library	Many participants didn't "discover" the quick search feature (on the bottom of student home pages and also in the My Library tab). Perhaps this should be located with other search facilities	Minor	Content is not where users expect it
32	Home page / My Library	It was not always clear to participants what the quick search was for or would do. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One participant commented that having the Library Catalogue in the list was redundant give other links to the library.</li> </ul>	Minor	Hidden information
33	Home page	The staff directory was difficult for some participants to find. The search tools/radio button area doesn't stand out visually. Once found, this area seemed to be remembered.	Minor	Search
34	Home page	Participants were not always clear where links in the "Student Links" would take them, most expected it would be a mix of targets (e.g. systems like WES, Monash pages, etc). Once a participant had been taken to My Info to find student services info (graduation form) she expected that all information in the "Student Links" area of the home page would go to My Info (although she later changed her mind)	Minor	Navigation and orientation
35	Home page	After adding the link to Yahoo, most participants felt the need to check the home page for this link. Participants generally expected their links to be displayed "above the fold".	Cosmetic	Content is not where users expect it
36	My Community	One participant was strongly against the job vacancy information being in the "My Community" tab. He thought that it should just be in the HR area of the Monash website.	Cosmetic	Content is not where users expect it
37	My Community	Some participants did not expect WES & the SMS results links to be in the My Community tab as they are "related to my study"	Cosmetic	Content is not where users expect it
38	My Community	Some participants didn't expect computer training to be in My Community.	Cosmetic	Content is not where users expect it

No.	Where was problem?	Description	Severity	Categorisation of issue
39	My Pages / My Links	One participant was not familiar with the term URL used when adding links - perhaps "web address/URL" may be better	Cosmetic	Labelling
40	My Pages / My Links	If it is necessary to include "http://" as part of the URL, then consider providing this default text in the appropriate field	Cosmetic	Labelling

Table 26: Summary of all issues identified during Usability Testing