User Experience Research Report

User Interviews

Team Visionaries

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Executive Summary

The ProQuest ETD Administrator is a crucial system for electronic submissions of dissertations and theses. The focus of this interview report is on the student audience. Our team aims to identify areas to enhance usability and satisfaction in both system navigation and post-submission communication process.

After consulting with clients, we developed a focused interview strategy and conducted five Zoom interviews to understand student authors' experiences and challenges. Participants reported satisfaction with the system's efficiency and communication but pointed out issues with legibility and instructional content. Based on our analysis, we recommend adding instructional videos, clarifying formatting requirements, and introducing pop-up explanations for technical terms to enhance the submission process.

Introduction

System Introduction
The main tasks of the system can be divided into four parts: filling in publishing information, uploading documents, confirming submission and payment, and communicating with administrators after submission.

Goals and Research Questions
Our study is driven by the overarching goals of identifying the needs of graduate student authors and improving the user experience of ProQuest's existing system. Therefore, our research questions are as follows:

- What factors contribute to user satisfaction with the overall experience using ProQuest ETD Administrator?
- What are the common issues encountered by users?
- How do users perceive the flow of communication between them and the system/administrators? Do they find it efficient?

To better investigate these questions, the interview method helped us gain in-depth insights into specific experiences, complementing existing feedback with student-focused perspectives. This approach enabled us to pinpoint improvements and validate assumptions, thereby delivering tangible value to the client.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

During our stakeholder interview with Lane Bowman, we discussed ProQuest's challenges, such as uncertain communication pipeline and limited site customizability, alongside its competition with Bepress: Digital Commons. Bowman highlighted efforts to improve user experience and product awareness, offering crucial guidance for system enhancement.

Methods

To gather information about the user experience on ProQuest ETD Administrator, we conducted interviews with five graduates who had used the site within the past one to two years. Our target population: individuals with master's or PhD degrees, who had recent experience using ProQuest. We reached out to 8 candidates provided by our client as well as a group of professors at the University of Michigan.

The users we interviewed were all recent graduates who had submitted their dissertation through ProQuest. They represented a wide range of studies, from the sciences to engineering. We structured the interview to highlight and expand upon user-identified pain points, constructing questions to be as neutral as possible.

- We conducted the interviews via Zoom meeting, as 4 out of 5 of our interviewees expressed a preference for remote communication
- For the duration of the interview process, we teamed up in pairs (i.e. one interviewer and one note-taker)
- We scheduled interviews for half an hour, but conversations ranged from 15 to 25 minutes
- We began each interview by asking probing questions about the user's education and familiarity with ProQuest, then delved further into their unique experiences
- Questions ranged from preference-based to focused more on specific experiences (see Appendix A).

After completing the interviews, our team reviewed the recordings, transcripts, and notes to synthesize a list of key findings. We compiled notes for each interview in a Figma document, arranging them side-by-side to better observe patterns across interviews. Based on this process, we've separated user feedback into three main categories: instructional clarity, supplemental content, and communication and status-tracking.

Findings and Recommendations

Summary Results

In general, users described their experience navigating ProQuest ETD Administrator to be efficient and unchallenging. However, frustrations with the site's text-heavy and at times lacking instructional content were observed, along with general confusion regarding the process of ordering paper copies. When questioned, users described the revision process as satisfactory, and 4 out of 5 viewed the current method of communication as sufficient. Overall, results point to site legibility being the system's largest pain point, an issue which could potentially be mitigated through the use of videos, icons, and updated instructions. The following categories are listed by priority, from most critical to least.

Key Findings

Instructional Clarity
- Users mentioned they desired **further instruction** throughout the submission process—one interviewee brought up the idea of having **instructional videos** to help demonstrate
- Information on the **"Pre-order copies"** page was described as being **"all together"** (I-4), hardcover and softcover sections could be further separated for legibility (See Fig. 2)
- One user mentioned that the **"Register U.S. Copyright"** page could benefit from **reordering**/further instruction (See Fig. 3)

Supplemental Content
- Regarding feedback on the revision process, one user noted "the specific **formatting** is something that I'm not familiar with at all" and that, had they not received a LaTeX template from an alumni, their "dissertation submission would have been delayed significantly." (I-1)

Communication and Status-tracking
- One user mentioned that they would appreciate the option to **purchase copies** or **edit preferences** after submission
- Users felt **email notifications** were sufficient during the revision/approval process
- Users found ProQuest fairly easy to use, **progress-tracking** checkboxes were particularly helpful (See Fig. 1)

Recommendations

While our interviewees reported the submission process to be unchallenging, most felt that additional instruction could be implemented to further streamline the experience. One interviewee described the process as "standard" and "run of the mill," noting that "there wasn't anything that seem[ed] novel or super helpful" (I-4). Implementing the following recommendations could significantly enhance the usability of the platform.

Instructional Clarity
- One user suggested instructional videos, saying, "I think it would be helpful if [...] you guys would have a short video to explain different licenses [...] like pop-up videos or some links to YouTube" (I-1).
- Add additional info icons users can interact with for more in-depth explanations
  - Reformat and add tooltips that provide more context to help users understand copyright-related terms
- Users also suggested redesigning the "Register U.S. Copyright" page, describing the current layout as "a little confusing just because it's not clear if you should be doing that or how" (I-5)
  - Rearrange and reword headings to make copyright information explicitly clear

Supplemental Content
- Provide templates to help reduce time spent on format-centric revisions

Communication and Status-tracking
- Allow users to edit preferences and purchase copies after their paper has been submitted

Discussion

During interviews, we gained valuable insights into ProQuest's user experience, structured around three sub-themes: background, preference, and specific experience. Addressing background information first and foremost allowed us to establish a dialogue with the interviewee, encouraging them to share their experiences. We then asked about their overall perspective as ProQuest's users. Many interviewees seemed uncertain of where to start discussing their preferences, especially if their interactions with the platform occurred some time ago. Consequently, the order of our questions could be considered a shortcoming. Instead of starting with broad opinions, guiding participants to recall their process might be more effective.

Next steps involve making the experience on ProQuest ETD Administrator smooth and positive by ensuring that user-friendly navigation and clear guidance is accessible throughout. Given the results of the interviews, a potential starting point would be to investigate which instructional format users prefer, whether it be through written guides, interactive tutorials, video demonstrations, or any other formats.

Conclusion

Throughout our interviews, most users were satisfied with how ProQuest ETD Administrator performed. The biggest takeaway from our key findings was that users found the system slightly overwhelming. As suggested by interviewee I-1, instructional videos could be implemented to help promote clarity. A recommended next step would be looking into options for instructional material such as video demos or short text pop-ups.

Appendices

Introduction

Our team has created three personas—fictitious characters based on information collected in our interviews—to better illustrate the feedback we received. The following characters embody a combination of different aspects we observed during the interview process, ranging from educational backgrounds to individual goals and needs. We've also formulated persona "success stories" that demonstrate an idealized version of ProQuest's system. Our goal is to highlight how our recommendations might help improve the user experience for students submitting theses/dissertations.

To construct our personas, we created a Figma document in which we pasted our notes for each interview. Using our combined notes, we identified common themes and unique characteristics. The three main themes derived from our interviews are formatting issues, purchasing and submission status confusion, and text-heavy interfaces causing legibility concerns. We crafted our personas to each represent one challenge we discovered. Scenarios were then designed to show each persona using ProQuest in a way that overcomes their specific challenges, highlighting the system's capacity to support users efficiently.

These personas and scenarios aim to illustrate how ProQuest can evolve. By addressing issues identified in each persona, the ProQuest system can potentially meet the nuanced needs of its diverse users, and ultimately achieve the vision described in scenarios of how successful ProQuest can be with user-focused enhancements.

Persona 1

"I'd love to see increased intuitiveness and legibility on ProQuest."

AGE	28
JOB TITLE	Full-time Student
EDUCATION	Master's
LOCATION	Norfolk, Virginia

USER PERSONA

Ariel Johnson

ABOUT

Ariel is a graduate student at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She's hoping to graduate this upcoming spring with a PhD in Human-Computer Interaction and is currently in the process of submitting her dissertation through ProQuest.

GOALS

- Receive approval for her dissertation through ProQuest
- Experience a quick and easy revision process

NEEDS

- Access to a template guide or pointers on how to properly format her paper
- Needs clear instructions on copyright & licensing
- Prefers visual format for instructions, possibly something animated

PAIN POINTS

- Text-heavy instructions on the "Register U.S. Copyright" page were confusing to internalize
- Confused on how to format her paper, wishes there were guides

USER SCENARIO

Ariel Johnson, a Human-Computer Interaction student nearing graduation, was informed by her university that she'd need to submit her dissertation through ProQuest ETD Administrator. She had created an account and started the submission process, but became frustrated with the text-heavy instructions. Her university had offered little to no information on copyright and licensing options, so she wasn't sure exactly how to proceed.

Fortunately, she was able to find a demo detailing the process on ProQuest's Instructions page. She watched the video and revisited the copyright and licensing options, better equipped to understand the process and make her selection.

Thanks to the demo, Ariel was able to submit her dissertation on time with the copyright options she desired. Her paper was approved shortly after and she graduated on time.

Persona 2

USER PERSONA

Jane Bly

ABOUT

Jane is a last semester PhD student studying Mechanical Engineering. She finished her dissertation and submitted it on the ProQuest. However, when she turned the paper in, she was noticed that the template given by her university was unaccepted by the ProQuest platform. She hopes that she can complete the process as quick as possible to get her graduated degree on time.

"Getting the formatting right should be easy."

AGE	34
JOB TITLE	University Staff
EDUCATION	PhD
LOCATION	Ann Arbor, MI

GOALS

- Receive approval for her dissertation through ProQuest
- Experience a quick and easy revision process

NEEDS

- Looking for a design tool that helps to cut down unnecessary time and effort
- Receive feedback on her progress whenever needed before presentation

PAIN POINTS

- Facing delays due to a mismatch in the template and formatting and late responses from ProQuest.
- Cannot rely on other people's opinion because they are highly subjective
- Certain situations require different tools to communicate her thoughts
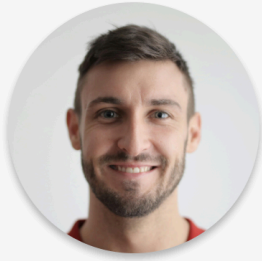
USER SCENARIO

Jane Bly, a final semester PhD candidate in Mechanical Engineering, sit down at her desk to tackle the last major milestone before graduation: submitting her dissertation through ProQuest. Right after she dragged her documents to the upload window, Jane noticed a section beside showcasing some example images of what properly formatted dissertations look like. Comparing them to her own work, a slight discrepancy caught her attention. Just as she noticed it, ProQuest's automated formatting check highlighted the same sections, with more details she hadn't found out. With a few quick keystrokes, Jane adjusted her document and click "submit". This time, she was full of confidence.

With a click, her dissertation was on its way to being reviewed. ProQuest didn't keep her waiting too long. Within a week, an immediate alert, echoed by an email, advised her of a slight misalignment with her university's requirements. This was the only and an easy issue Jane had to fix. She quickly made the necessary changes and sent her dissertation again through ProQuest.

No more issues were notified. Jane received a digital certificate of her dissertation being successfully filed well before her graduation deadline. She was proud to have completed her requirements ahead of schedule.

Persona 3

"Having an easy way to purchase my dissertation is important to me."

AGE	32
JOB TITLE	Research Assistant
EDUCATION	Master's
LOCATION	Lowel, Massachusetts

USER PERSONA

Frank Robbins

ABOUT

Frank is a PhD student currently studying Microbiology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in Lowell, Massachusetts. He has submitted his dissertation using ProQuest ETD Administrator but has faced confusion regarding the purchase options for hard copies of his dissertation. Consequently, Frank missed the chance to receive his paper copies.

GOALS

- Receive hardcover copies of his dissertation
- Have clear communication with Administrators and to complete his thesis

NEEDS

- Having prompt notifications about his submission status via email
- Have options with different hardcover copies of his dissertation
- To be well-informed regarding the information of purchasing

PAIN POINTS

- Felt left in the dark about his submission status due to infrequent updates from ProQuest
- Issues navigating the "Pre-order copies" page: Confusing purchasing options, missed the opportunity to purchase copies in his submission
- No restrictions of copies purchase was informed during the process; didn't realize that "Pre-Order" section is the last chance for copies ordering

USER SCENARIO

Frank Robbins, a PhD student at UMass Lowell studying Microbiology, had submitted his dissertation through ProQuest several weeks ago. While he was waiting for feedback/approval, he remembered that he'd neglected to purchase any physical copies of his paper during the submission process. At the time, purchasing copies had seemed slightly overwhelming, so he'd decided to put it off until after he'd submitted his paper.

He revisited his account on ProQuest and found the option to purchase copies. He re-read the purchasing instructions and was able to purchase the hardcopy versions of his dissertation. He was fortunate enough not to go through the entire process of re-submitting his dissertation after missing his opportunity to purchase the hardcopies in his original submission.

After he went through the purchasing process, Frank received a notification that his hardcopy purchases had been confirmed and that they would be shipped to his address. A week later, Frank received his hardcopies at his address and he was now satisfied.

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Good afternoon,

My name is __, and I am joined by my group member, __ from Team Visionaries. We're graduate students at the University of Michigan School of Information. As you have heard, our team is doing a consulting project with ProQuest this semester, evaluating their online submission system for theses and dissertations. This interview will take about 30 minutes. I'll ask you some questions and our notetaker will jot down some notes. There are no wrong answers to any of these questions - we are simply here to learn more about your experience with ProQuest ETD Administrator.

Before we dive into our discussion, I'd like to lay some groundwork to ensure we're both on the same page and that you feel at ease throughout our conversation.

Firstly, we want to thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. If at any point during our conversation you feel uncomfortable or prefer not to answer a particular question, please let us know. Your comfort is paramount, and we want this to be a positive experience for all.

After our interview, our team may reach out to you for any clarifications or additional information. This will help us ensure that we've accurately captured our conversation and the insights you've shared.

If it's alright with you, we'd like to make an audio and video recording of our conversation. This is purely for our reference, to ensure that we don't miss any valuable insights you provide. The recording will not be shared publicly or with anyone outside of the members in our team. May I have your permission to proceed with the recording?

Okay let's go ahead and begin the interview.

Background Information:

Before we begin, we'd like to know a little more about you. Would you mind telling us a little about yourself? Your name, where you're from, things like that.

1. Are you currently a student? Or an alum? Could you tell us a little about your education?
2. Have you ever used ProQuest's product before? How do you primarily use the platform?
3. Have you used other online publication sites in the past? How was your experience? How would you compare your experience from other sites to ProQuest?

Preference:

4. What are your base expectations in using ProQuest ETD Administrator? What would an effective experience submitting your thesis/dissertation look like to you?
5. What are some features you would be drawn to in an online publishing system?
6. What works well for you on ProQuest and what do you think needs improvement?

<u>Specific Experience:</u>

7. Can you tell us about your last experience of submitting/receiving dissertation, whether or not using ProQuest ETD Administrator?
8. Could you walk us through your experience communicating with your administrator as a student submitting their thesis/dissertation?
9. Have you encountered any issues when communicating during the revision process?
10. What are some ways communication could be streamlined between the parties involved in the submission/publication process?
11. What are some features you enjoy and find most useful on ProQuest?
12. Is there anything you expected the site to do for you/do differently, but it turned out not to?

That marks the end of the interview. Before we conclude, are there any questions you have about the interview or how we'll use your input in our project?

If anything else occurs to you after we leave, please don't hesitate to let us know by email. I'll link it in the chat. As we mentioned, we may be in touch with you to ask a few follow-up questions. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with us today!
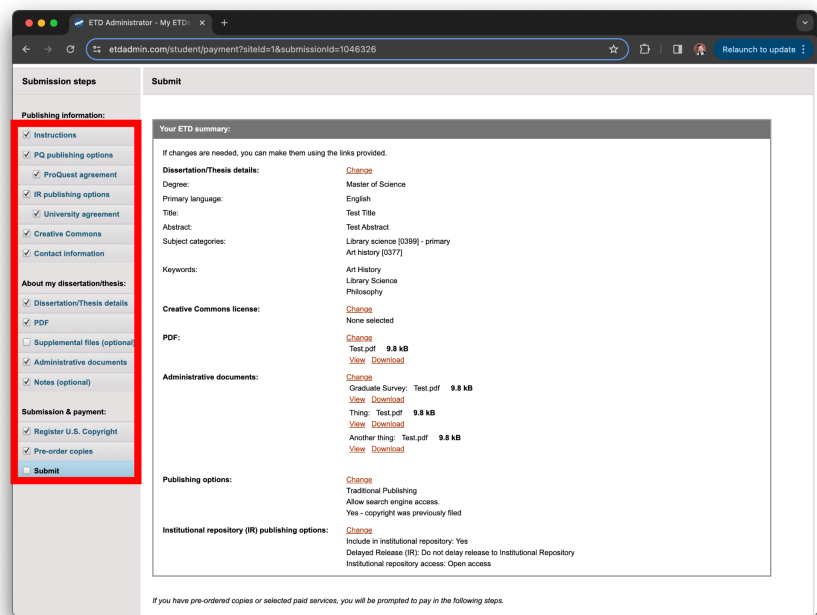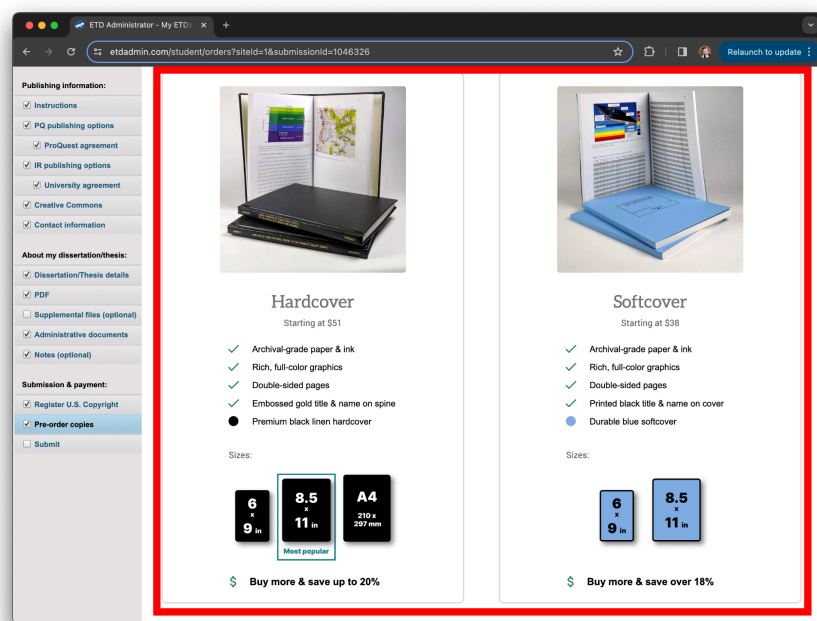
Appendix B

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Register U.S. Copyright

Congratulations on the completion of a momentous milestone in your career!

Protect Your Research

Take the next step towards protecting your intellectual property by registering your copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office. Because of the availability of content on the open web via repositories and other avenues, registering your U.S. copyright can be a significant benefit for the protection of your work. ProQuest can file all your paperwork with the U.S. Copyright Office immediately upon your dissertation approval and delivery.

No-effort Filing

Filing through ProQuest requires no additional work from you and once registration is granted, it ensures that your rights are secured to the fullest extent allowable under U.S. law. ProQuest's experienced professionals process tens of thousands of applications with the government a year, helping to streamline the process and allowing authors to focus on launching and accelerating their careers.

Copyright Protection Benefits

Registering with the U.S. Copyright Office establishes your claim to the copyright for your dissertation/thesis and provides certain protections if your copyright is violated. Once registered, your dissertation or thesis becomes eligible for statutory damages and recovery of attorney fees. Registration of a work is required prior to being able to sue for copyright infringement, and you may claim statutory damages and attorney's fees only for infringements occurring after your work is registered. Statutory damages are set out in Title 17, Section 504 of the U.S. Code, and range from $750-$150,000 USD per infringement. This contrasts with infringements occurring prior to copyright registration which are only eligible to recover actual damages with no recovery of attorneys fees.

More Benefits of Registration

- Registration establishes a public record of the author's copyright in a work
- The registration certificate serves as *prima facie* evidence of validity in court (if you register within five years after publication).
- Registration made prior to commencement of the infringement, or within three months of the first publication, entitles the owner to statutory damages and attorneys' fees.

If you wish, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing will act on your behalf as your agent with the U.S. Copyright Office and apply for copyright registration as part of the publishing process.

ProQuest will:

- Prepare an application in your name
- Submit your application fee
- Deposit the required copy or copies of the manuscript
- Triage any issues that arise with filing
- Mail you the completed certificate of registration from the Library of Congress

1. Previous U.S. Copyright Registration

Has registration for your published dissertation/thesis, or for an earlier version of the manuscript, been made with the Copyright Office?

🔘 Yes - copyright was previously filed ⚪ No

2. Requesting ProQuest to file for U.S. Copyright Registration

Because copyright was previously filed, ProQuest will not file for United States Copyright on your behalf.

[Save & Continue]

Submission steps

Publishing information:
- ☑ Instructions
- ☑ PQ publishing options
  - ☑ ProQuest agreement
- ☑ IR publishing options
  - ☑ University agreement
- ☑ Creative Commons
- ☑ Contact information

About my dissertation/thesis:
- ☑ Dissertation/Thesis details
- ☑ PDF
- ☐ Supplemental files (optional)
- ☑ Administrative documents
- ☑ Notes (optional)

Submission & payment:
- ☑ Register U.S. Copyright
- ☑ Pre-order copies
- ☐ Submit

Appendix C

University of Michigan ProQuest Evaluation

Consent to take part in research

I _____ voluntarily agree to take part in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves speaking with team members in an interview setting, answering questions about my experience submitting my thesis/dissertation.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the team's research paper and shared with representatives at ProQuest.

I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher Names and Contact Information

Kay Malan, kmalan@umich.edu
Sufyan Hammoudeh, sufyanh@umich.edu
Zi Wang, ziwan@umich.edu
Henry Jackson, henryjac@umich.edu
Catherine Zhou, cathzhou@umich.edu

Signature of research participant

_____ Date _____
Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

_____ Date _____
Signature of researcher

Appendix D

Kay: Alright. Okay so before we begin we'd like to know a little more about you. Would you mind telling us a little about yourself? Your name, where you're from--

I1: Uh, yeah, my name is [omitted] and I just got my- well I finished my PhD defense last November and I submitted my dissertation last December so now I'm, uh [unintelligible] PhD, I'm waiting for my diploma.

Um, yeah so, well and I majored in mechanical engineering. Is this sufficient?

Hello? It seems you're freezing?

[At this point zoom quit unexpectedly for me, I managed to get back into the meeting room a few minutes later]

Kay: Okay. There we go. Sorry about that! I guess we're having…technical difficulties? Is that--? Was that--?

I1: Uh yes. Sometimes your voice is a little bit choppy. Maybe you can turn off your video so it- so it might sound better? Is that an option?

Kay: Yeah, of course! Of course.

I1: Yeah well.. I just introduced myself. Is that sufficient?

Kay: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah. Sorry about that. Okay, so you said you were a recent graduate. You just submitted your PhD dissertation? Um--

I1: Yes.

Kay: Could you tell us a little about your experience with ProQuest? Was it ProQuest that you used to submit your actual thesis?

I1: Yeah, so ProQuest is the platform I used to submit my dissertation and I, well I think the overall experience has been smooth and I just followed the instructions from the email that was sent by my university and I followed the instructions and submitted all the documents one by one and then clicked next steps and yeah and then, uh the dissertation was pending for review and sometimes-- not sometimes, and then the staff

from ProQuest or my university, they [unintelligible], tell me hey, I have some formatting issues, I need to reformat my dissertation in certain ways.

And then I-- yeah, I followed their advice and then resubmitted my dissertation and then resubmitted again and then it's been approved so overall it's been quite smooth. And it's actually so smooth that I don't even remember the name "ProQuest." Because I just clicked a few buttons and then everything is taken care of. It doesn't really-- I don't have a lot of memory for using it because it just-- uh, yeah, a really smooth experience for me.

Kay: Oh wow, well that's great! Glad to know it went smoothly.

Um, could you tell us a little bit about your base expectations for using a program such as ProQuest? Like, what would the most effective experience submitting your thesis look like to you?

Anything you would like to change about your experience?

I1: Yeah, well, for ProQuest I think it would be great that-- if ProQuest can provide some LaTeX or word templates for different universities for dissertation submission. Because I certainly did-- I submitted my first draft and then I had to resubmit it again because it seems I used the wrong template.

But, uh, well I have to reach out to my seniors who graduated already for their template and some of them did not even keep it with them. I use LaTeX and some of them use Word. Well, I had to find the person who used LaTeX, use their template, and then copy everything and then resubmit again.

But, if ProQuest can provide such a thing, that would be great! Um, I actually don't know whether you guys have it or not, but if ProQuest had this template for different universities, for different degree levels, that would be very convenient. That's in my opinion.

Kay: Definitely, definitely. I think, you know, a template that goes between different universities would be a great idea. Could you--? I don't know if you included this in your introduction, haha I think I missed it- what was the university that you went to again?

I1: Oh yeah, it's the University of Massachusetts Lowell, but actually I didn't include this information. Uh yeah, it's University of Massachusetts Lowell, it's the Massachusetts branch.

Kay: Okay great. Great great. And then, so you mentioned the template as a feature you'd like to use-- or see in a publishing system online. What do you think works well specifically for ProQuest?

I1: Uh, I don't understand the question. Can you repeat it again?

Kay: So, maybe, harkening back to your experience submitting your thesis over ProQuest–

I1: Yeah.

Kay: What do you think was the most streamlined and effective feature?

I1: Oh, uh, most effective? Oh, actually I think the current streamline is already effective, because I just need to follow the instructions and click next and submit all the additional, well, all the required documents. And I don't think that a lot of things require a lot of effort. I think the required effort is quite reasonable.

However, I do have this back and forth in terms of the formatting of my dissertation, um yeah I'm thinking that if universities collaborated with ProQuest that it can have this thing available to students before they submit or before they start writing their dissertation I think it'd save a lot of time. Um, yeah.

Kay: Okay yeah, definitely. I want to expand a little bit on the back and forth you had on the formatting that you mentioned, can you tell us a bit about your experience using-- going back and forth with your administrator, or communicating [unintelligible]--

I1: Yeah, so well after my initial submission and they come back to me, uh, I don't know who--? Maybe it's staff from my university, maybe the staff from ProQuest, actually I don't remember who came to me, but the other person comes to me and tells me the formatting is not accepted and because there are a few pages, um [unintelligible] a few of the pages are formatted wrong, and well again I use LaTeX to write it and I reached out to some of my seniors and they're using Word, most of them are using Word.

So actually what we-- now so it's [unintelligible] to format LaTeX based on Word and I actually found quite a few person, well quite a few person but fortunately there was also one guy who also used LaTeX before and he shared me his template and then I just resolved this issue quite effectively, otherwise though if I only had Word and I was using LaTeX, I think I would have to spend a significant amount of effort to do the formatting,

because-- um, also I used LaTeX for it's been six or seven years, but I really never format anything myself. I'm always using a template and just writing stuff and then including the figures and then working on the text.

But the specific formatting is something that I'm not familiar with at all, um yeah, well, if I didn't find this guy who actually had a LaTeX template, I think my dissertation submission would have been delayed significantly. Because I would have to work with-- on something that I'm not familiar with to create a few pages that need-- satisfy a lot of requirements, that'd be tough I think. But fortunately, I finally got a template, and resolved the problem.

But um, one thing that surprised me was that even in my university, even in my department, they don't have such a template. I asked some person in my department, asked them "do they have a template?" They told me they don't. Yeah so that's why I want to bring this up. But once I got a template, um, it's really just copy and pasting work and it's really easy to get it done.

Kay: Okay, yeah. No definitely. In that revision process could you tell us a bit about how you felt about the communication between you and the advisor? People who were giving you feedback on your work?

I1: Well, in terms of the formatting, I think the communication was quite clear–you either have it or you don't have it and the response to me was pretty efficient I think. Most of them said unfortunately they don't have it, they don't have a Word version. That's uh, and also my advisor, he also used Word, so he cannot really help me too much on that. But again, fortunately there was another guy I reached out to and he helped me. It's a result.

Kay: Okay, definitely. Definitely. So talking about the communication, do you think there's a way that it could be streamlined between the parties involved? Do you think there was maybe a time in between you sending your thesis and getting feedback back and things like that that you might have wanted more communication between? More information--?

I1: I think in terms of communication the email is sufficient. I don't know whether we need to build a specific checking software on this platform, but I generally think the email was sufficient for me. Because, yeah, I think the ones they sent me on being improved or accepted. I know it, so it's done, right? Well, I think so far the current status of the communications is sufficient for me. I do not have anything to add on.

Kay: Okay perfect, great to know. Is there anything you expected the site to do for you that it did differently? Didn't do?

I1: Oh yeah, and another thing, yeah. Once I-- I don't have a clear memory of it but I seem to recall I submitted my draft and then [unintelligible] thing about the license, they had a bunch of licenses and they asked me to select a license--

Kay: Mhm.

I1: --a few license options and based on the different license options I think the fee I need to pay is different. Well, I think the license options is actually something that confused me. I do not really know what license I need to select, so what I do is just call my senior again, ask them what they have chosen, and they just told me "hey you choose this," and I choose this and I click next step and I think it would be helpful if on that page you guys would have a short video to explain different licenses, you know, like pop-up videos or some links to YouTube and if you can explain these different licenses better, then I might better know which one to choose. Um, yeah.

Kay: Okay definitely, that's really helpful feedback. Um, so maybe-- I wanna talk a little bit more about the video idea, do you think it would be helpful to have it on the page itself? Do you have any ideas about the format?

I1: Yes, that's what I recommend. I highly recommend some embedded pop-up video right next to the specific license, like once you have your mouse onto that option, something pops up and I can choose to have a video explain what is this license specifically about. Yeah, that'd be great.

Kay: Okay definitely. Do you have any other ideas for features of the website that could be improved? Something that didn't work as well for you during your submission process?

I1: Um, no. No, I think that the rest of [unintelligible] it's good.

Kay: Okay, great. And have you ever--

I1: Oh, well actually, somehow I actually found maybe something else. Maybe you could put another video, like a general instruction video on the first page, right? So where you have a video to introduce licenses you can put another video to introduce the whole pipeline. On the first page, I don't think you guys have it right now. Do you have it? I don't see it.

Kay: Um, I don't believe so. I can check on the demo here real quick.

Suf: I believe they do[unintelligible]

Kay: They do? Have a video on the--?

Suf: No, no I don't believe they do- it could be, there could be instructions on, possibly on YouTube. I did not see anything on their site, no.

Kay: Yeah, I'm seeing only written instructions. So maybe something like a video walk through would be helpful?

I1: Yes. Uh, on the first page. So when the university sends out the link in the email, so it would be helpful if the video is embedded right into the link the university sends to us, so that once we open that link there's an instruction video, or… yeah.

Kay: Okay, [unintelligible]--

I1: And a better way would be animation video, it's just-- yeah, well I like to watch animated videos in terms of explaining things about the license or the whole pipeline, but that's up to the developers.

Kay: Definitely! So maybe, you're saying something animated, something that appeals to a wider audience.

I1: Yes. Make it very brief, uh-- two minutes? Three minutes? Very brief. And have it in central content.

Kay: Okay great, yeah that's really--

I1: Instead of one person talks in front of a camera, people may have a hard time remembering at all.

Kay: Mm. So definitely something that includes visuals? Easily understandable.

I1: Yes.

Kay: Okay perfect! And I just wanted to check real quick, have you used any other online publication sites? Such as Bepress or something like that?

I1: Well, for dissertation, this is the one our university sent it to me, so that's something I used, but if you're talking about-- well, but I do have a lot of other paper publications that's-- IEEE, I mean, I'm not sure whether they're the same thing, but for my paper publications I use different platforms. IEEE or ASME, these are specific journal sites [unintelligible] I don't think we're talking about the same thing here.

Kay: Okay, well just any online publication sites. Like do you have any experience with other sites that you might be able to compare to your experience using ProQuest?

I1: Oh well uh, IEEE or Archive or ASME, haha.

Kay: Yeah so maybe like-- if you could explain the experience using one of those sites and how it, you know, compares to your experience using ProQuest. How was the user experience more effective? Less effective?

I1: I think now, I actually think they're quite similar. Yeah I, well, I don't know the answer to the question. Sorry about that.

Kay: Okay. No, you're totally fine, you're totally fine. Okay, let's move onto another question. Mmkay, so you mentioned before that you were happy with how seamless the experience was through your university–you mentioned you didn't know the name because it was a very--

I1: Yeah. It was a really short process for me. The longest one was when I asked the other person for the template. That I think took the longest time. But once I got it I just opened the link again and I did the things, it took two or three minutes-- oh and also the license, right? I just asked about which license to choose but uh, yeah it doesn't give me a lot of [unintelligible]

Kay: Okay perfect, so for the final question I'm just gonna ask real quick: is there anything besides implementing a template system and creating a short description video that would help people move through the site that would make it more streamlined and seamless and make it an even quicker and better experience?

I1: Could you repeat the question? I'm sorry.

Kay: Besides implementing a template system and the video we discussed, is there anything you would do to improve this site? Make it a better experience?
I1: Uh, I don't have an idea now.

Kay: Okay perfect, that's totally fine. Well you've given us some really great feedback and that marks the end of the interview.

So before we conclude, are there any questions you have about the interview? What we discussed inside of it or how we'll use your input in our project?

I1: No no no, you're totally fine. I don't have anything to ask.

Suf: Sorry, just a quick question, I just missed this part, what university did you attend again?

I1: University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Suf: Massachusetts, okay. Got it, thank you.

I1: Yeah.

Kay: Alright, and then if anything occurs to you after we leave please don't hesitate to let us know by email. You can send it back at the email we contacted you at.

I1: Okay.

Kay: And then we're all good. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today.

I1: Bye bye, have a nice day.

Suf: Bye.

Catherine: Um, so let's go ahead and start. First of all, can you tell us a little bit about your background? Are you currently a student? Or like a little bit about your education background?

I-2: Yeah, educational background or current position?

Catherine: Both.

I-2: Um, yeah, so, um, I have my PhD from Northwestern in media technology and society. Also have my master's from there. Did my undergrad at Vassar College. Um, got my bachelor's in double major in political science and media studies. So yeah, and currently a faculty member at University of Michigan School of Information.

Catherine: Okay, so you finished your education.

I-2: And yeah, right now is the stuff.

Catherine: Okay, I'll list it. So, uh, like, when is the last time you write your dissertation?

I-2: Um, I finished my dissertation in 2022.

Catherine: For your master program?

I-2: For my PhD. PhD.

Catherine: Okay. Um, and have you ever used ProQuest's product? Did you use ProQuest's product for your PhD dissertation?

I-2: Yeah, I had to upload my dissertation to ProQuest to file it with the university.

Catherine: How would they all experience using the system?

I-2: Overall, it was fine. Yeah.

Catherine: Um, the platform that you use is called ProQuest ETD administrator.

I-2:I think I believe, I believe so. That sounds correct.

Catherine: So other than ProQuest, do you use any other, um, online publication sites? No. No, just only ProQuest?

I-2: Mm-hmm. ProQuest was what was required by the university. To file as part of submitting our dissertation. So once you passed, um, you had like about two weeks to make any changes that you wanted, either you wanted or that were required. Um, most of my change revisions were not required. They're just changes I wanted to make. Um, and then as a part of the process of successfully turning in your dissertation to the university, like filing it, one of the things you had to do was upload it to ProQuest.

Catherine: Okay. So first you file that to your university and then upload them to the university. And then you send them to the, uh, ProQuest systems.

I-2: I think, no, you upload to ProQuest and then ProQuest sends you, um, like some kind of certification that had been successfully uploaded on the platform. And I think you provided that to the university as part of finishing your dissertation. And then I had to get sign offs from my committee members, but like as part of the, what I had to show to the university, I had to show that I had uploaded it to ProQuest.

Catherine: I see. Um, so the ProQuest, uh, product is recalled by your university, like your university work with the ProQuest and then they required the students to upload your dissertation to the ProQuest.

I-2: Correct. Yeah.

Catherine: So, so there is no like option or alternatives for you guys to choose like which side you want to use.

I-2: No. Nope. Okay. I was not. I was not under the impression that I had an option.

Catherine: Okay. Yeah. Um, so I can skip the competitor questions because you only use the ProQuest. So, uh, can you like walk us through your experience communicating with administrators as a student submitting your thesis?

I-2: Um, yeah. I'm trying to remember. So I did, cause I did this in May of 2022. Um, so it's been a little bit, um, but yeah, I think I had to go on to the ProQuest platform. Um, I believe there was a specific formatting, but I can't remember if the formatting was required by ProQuest or my university.

Um, I had to upload the dissertation. Um, I had to go to the document.I do remember it asking me questions about whether I wanted like hard copies of my dissertation back. Um, also it asking me if I wanted it to be embargoed, which I didn't know I was going to be asked. Um, it was a pretty seamless process.

And then I think, um, I got an email like that had been uploaded into the system. And then I think I got, um, like an email like a couple days or weeks later that it had been like successfully filed on ProQuest.

And that if I had made any mistakes or like anything wasn't correct, they would like send it back to me. Um, but I didn't get mine sent. I know other people did, but I didn't get mine sent back to me. So the formatting must have been correct.

Catherine: Okay. But, um, the website like didn't show if your, uh, submission was correct.

I-2: Right.

Catherine: They just like, is there a status bar for you to check? Like if your submission?

I-2: Nope. Uh, I don't remember seeing one. It just said like, you will like get an email update, like either that it was being sent back and you fix something or that it was successfully uploaded. Um, I don't, I don't believe that there was a way for me to like check in between. Um, I think you just had to wait.

And see, I mean, it wasn't that, it wasn't that long of a time in between, but like, yeah, I think it was just like, you did it and they're like, we're going to check it. And if it's right, then we'll send you an email. If it's not, we'll send you an email.

Catherine: Okay. So did you ever start to like check by yourself or are you just waiting for the emails?

I-2: I think I just waited for the email.Um, I don't think I would have known how to check myself. Like, I don't think there was any instructions. I'm like, I don't, well, I don't remember getting any instruction on like, this is where you can see the status. I just remember being like, you'll hear from us. So I kind of just like, was like, okay, I guess I just wait for an email.

Catherine: Got it. Um, so as you mentioned, there is like hard copy kind of thing. I do know, like they provided a hard copy. They like charge you 60 bucks or something. Um, you think like you need that? Is it a good thing for you to like have a copy?

I-2: I mean, I did, I ordered one. Um, I thought it would just be nice to like have it, you know, somewhere on like printed form. I mean, I had like printed my dissertation to have on me during my defense. But I printed it at like FedEx and it was like two binders that were like this thick. So like it was like, I thought it would be nice to like have a hard copy to look at like in the future. Like kind of just like for posterity kind of thing. So I appreciated the option to like get it printed. Um, and I still have my copy.

Catherine: Yeah, you will be proud of yourself like sometime like later in the future. Like when you have a hard copy.

I-2: Yeah, it's just nice to like have like, oh, this is my dissertation. Like no one's gonna see it. And there's probably still some typos in it. But like, you know, I think it's like a nice thing to have the option of like getting it bound if you would like it, you know, or I mean, I didn't give it to anyone, but I could see like people wanting to give it to someone.

Catherine: So you think it's worth it to pay for the hard copy? Right?

I-2: I think so. Or at least to have the option.

Catherine: Okay. And do you think anything that needs to be improved about the progress, like when you're doing your submitting your dissertation? Like if, if there anything confused you or maybe it's like too long ago.

I-2: Yeah. I think it's a long time to go but like I'm trying to. I mean, not really. I think because mine went through pretty seamlessly, like it didn't get sent back like that it was pretty okay for me.

I know other people did get their sent back and they were like, that felt kind of annoying just because you don't know in between like if you're going to have to make it like it would be nice if I know they have some kind of instructions to try to avoid that. But like, yeah. I think it's something where it's like, tells you if you have a mistake before having to wait. But like for me, because my spine, it was like, a little bit of an issue like I didn't have to go back and do it again.

Just because there is like a time deadline on a lot of them like because I have to. So for me I know that in order to graduate. By the end of that semester, I had to file all those documents with the university by a certain time.

So like anything that would elongate that process is probably stressful for somebody trying to meet a graduation deadline. Yeah.

Catherine: Yeah. So, like your experience overall is, it is kind of smooth right?

I-2: Yeah, because my, my experience was pretty smooth like mine didn't get sent back it like went up. It said it's fine. I use the email to find it. So I just filed my dissertation and then I was done. Seems like it's pretty smooth.

Catherine: So is there like any feature you found as helpful for your submission, like the most impressive features.

I-2: I would say, no, not that I can think of, like it was pretty standard like a pretty standard upload. Platform. There wasn't anything that seems like novel or super helpful. Oh, pretty like run of the mill. Standard.

Catherine: Okay. Yeah. Because I noticed that the website is kind of like text heavy. Is this a would be a problem for you? Text heavy?

I-2: It was fine.

Catherine: You just, you just follow the instructions right?

I-2: Pretty much. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Catherine: Um, because I think I don't have any other questions because like, since like your process is like pretty smooth and you get every step done and then just waiting for the emails that there is no like back end force.

I-2: Yeah, my process was like pretty smooth. Yeah. As I said, it didn't mind didn't get sent back. I uploaded it. I got an email that like it was being processed and then I got up email like a week or so later. That was like, it was successfully uploaded. So yeah, for me it was pretty smooth.

So for the proQuest issue. I do wish I had known. Well, either known in advance or known more about like the embargo option. Because that caught me by surprise. But I

don't know if that's on ProQuest or if that's on like departments to advise students on whether or not to embargo them but I just didn't know that was an option. And so I was like, unsure of if I should embargo it or not so like, I don't know. That felt like surprising and unclear but that was the only thing. In my process that I was like, Oh, I wasn't expecting that or I don't know if I should do that or this feels unclear on why I should embargo this.

But I know some people like, have those conversations with those their advisors and maybe I just didn't know to have that conversation before I submitted so I don't know if that's on them or if that's on me.

Catherine: So like an embargo for dissertation. I was thinking the same questions like what does that mean?

I-2: Yeah, there's an embargo. So like some people choose to embargo their dissertation, which means you like you file it on ProQuest and it's on the site but it's not actually available to people to view.

One of the reasons people embargo is if they would like to publish their dissertation elsewhere either in papers or as a, as a book, and they feel like having it publicly available would be detrimental to that process. In terms of like publishers or journal editors feeling like the material is not original enough because it's published in a form somewhere else because some places are like we don't want to publish it if it's already published somewhere. And ProQuest isn't really publishing but it does make it publicly available. So that's why there's an embargo option.

And again, that was something that I actually learned about when I was uploading it onto ProQuest I wasn't aware that that was an option or that's something that people did. Especially people who are looking at it.

I feel like people who are looking to turn their dissertation into a book I feel like sometimes like to embargo it because they don't want people like reading it and citing the old version or citing their dissertation version while they're trying to get the book version out or something like that.

Catherine: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, so you wish like that embargo option can be explained like more explicitly on the website.

I-2: Yeah, like why you would want to do it or like, yeah, or like, because I was just caught off guard by it I think. Yeah, like why you would want to do it or like, yeah, or like,

because I was just caught off guard by it I think. So and then I started wondering oh should I embargo my dissertation?

Why would I want to like, what are the, you know, and again those are questions I guess you could have with one's advisor and stuff but it was just something that I didn't know about until the option was presented to me on ProQuest.

Catherine: Right. Oh, I think that's pretty much I have, I think, Thank you. thank you. All for your interview with us like we really really enjoy your um we are really enjoying this conversation and like we because you you're like definitely your um experience with progress is
really smooth and pleasant yeah that that's a lot of a good thing so you you wouldn't struggle by the

I-2: Um yeah thank you so much yeah good luck with your project

Catherine: All right thank you thanks for your time have a great one, [omitted]. Bye.

Suf: All right, cool. Thank you very much. Alrighty. So let me just pull out the questions here for myself. Here we go. Okay. So just, you know, we just want a little bit of background information on you. So are you currently a student and could you tell us a little bit about your education?

I-3: I am no longer a student. Just graduated from Oldman University in December with a PhD in community college leadership. And so my education, I actually have a bachelor's degree in English, master's degree in Special Education from George Mason University, and then a PhD in English. And so I'm currently a student. I'm currently a student at the University of from Old Dominion.

Suf: Okay, nice. Thank you. Have you ever used ProQuest product before, like ETD Administrator, or have you used maybe another platform?

I-3: You mean like just before recently?

Suf: Yeah, yeah. When you're probably like conducting your thesis or your dissertation?

I-3: Yes, yes, I have used it.

Suf: Nice. And now can you tell us probably about your experience using that platform?

I-3: You know, actually, the platform was, I want to say like, you know, uncharacteristically easy to use. You know, so like initially, so I guess like when, and sorry, it's hard to remember like exactly the chain of events, but so when my committee said, okay, you know, it's fine for you to go ahead and submit it to ProQuest, right, to the administrator. You know, so I did that. I went through the process. It was a very easy process. And then I think that I guess somebody from the university has to further approve it.

So, you know, so it was going through the channels. And I have to tell you that it was great, because every time it kind of got to another stage, I would get an email to where it was. And then, so then eventually it, you know, has now gotten published. But I'll tell you that in the, like in the interim, I did have like a couple of questions. So I had to send an email. And I mean, they like responded right away with my, you know, with the answers and, you know, followed up to make sure that there wasn't anything else that I needed. I mean, I had a great experience.

Suf: Thank you. Is there anything, just to add on to that, is there anything maybe like you would have liked to see, you know, like improved maybe on their end, like something that you would suggest?

I-3: So the only thing, and this is really not a big deal, but I think the only thing is that, so when I was initially submitting it, I, for some reason, I, because, you know, I want just like a, like a printed copy of my dissertation, right? Like a bound copy, you know, just to have. So when I initially submitted it, I did not choose that option, but, you know, knew that I wanted it. So I went back and I emailed and I, and I asked if, you know, I could still go in and request a copy, you know, you pay for it, whatever. And the email back was that the only time until it's published that I had the opportunity to get to, you know, purchase a bound copy was when I was submitting it.

So I was like, oh, because I think, and maybe it did say that, but, you know, so I thought like, if anything, it would be great to like really make that known upfront or, you know, find a way that you can just also order it kind of along the process.

So like now, you know, now it's published and, you know, so I got the email and then that email when it's published says, you know, do you want to purchase whatever? So, I mean, that's not like a major thing, but, you know, if I had known that, like, I couldn't do it later, I probably would have just done it then.

Suf: Yep. I totally understand that. I definitely get it. Have you used any other publication sites, probably like such as BePress in the past, other than ProQuest?

I-3: Not yet. No. Not yet. Okay. Yeah. I'm working on some articles, but not yet.

Suf: That's cool. That's cool. Alrighty. And when you were using ProQuest EDT, this might be like, maybe a very similar question to something I asked already, but did it meet your, you know, your base expectations?

I-3: Yeah, it did. It did. And I guess just to kind of add onto that is, you know, it's kind of funny because at, you know, at the end when it's ready to be published and everything, and then they're like, okay, go ahead and submit it. And you're like, okay, like, well, what is that? Like, now what do I do? You know? So actually we didn't get much direction from the university, which was fine. I mean, it's fine. So I went into like, we have like a PhD Canvas site, right? That has, like resources.

So I went in and they had outlined how to go ahead and do that. And so, you know, so I went through the, looked at the process and, and, you know, I mean, it's kind of

intimidating, I guess, because, you know, like you're finally done with this darn dissertation. And so you just, you know, so you just want to get rid of it. But I will say that, you know, not having any direction from anybody, but, you know, logging in and going through the process, it was like extremely easy, honestly. It was great.

Suf: Yeah. That is great to hear. Were there any, like, just also follow up, were there any like features that you kind of liked about- about the ProQuest site? Was there anything that drew your attention?

I-3: I guess, you know, I guess we can add this to the features is the fact that with every stage that it went through, I got an email so that it would let me know where it was in the process, which was great because, you know, otherwise you would have no idea, but like you get an email and say, okay, it's been accepted. You know, it's been accepted or, and you're like, oh my gosh, this is great.

So it's, so you knew it was moving along. It wasn't like you submitted it and then you don't hear anything for, you know, and I understand like, it takes a while, that's fine. But the fact that it was sending me emails along the way was great.

Suf: Gotcha. And those emails were from administrators, correct?

I-3: Correct. Right.

Suf: So yeah, just to add onto that, like how was that experience communicating with the administrators? Like, were they very straightforward? Do you think maybe they could have been a little bit better at communicating or would you prefer, or in way of communication other than email?

I-3: They were great. I mean, honestly, and, and I think, I think, I can't remember if it gave a phone number, but I mean, I just sent an email and, you know, you would get like an automatic reply back that says like, okay, your email has been accepted or whatever. And, you know, it'll be in the queue, but then, I mean, even like on the weekend, I would get an answer back. So, I mean, they're very responsive, very straightforward, answered my questions. Like they were great.

Suf: Oh, great. Okay. Gotcha. And when you were doing your like dissertation process and your thesis, what kind of like, was the feedback pretty like formal? Was it like very, you know, like, did it help you make your thesis better? Cause when we, of course we did a little demo process and of course, you know, there's the administrators will give you feedback on your thesis and dissertation. So was that feedback helpful?

Did you have to kind of maybe have someone else view your thesis again through the university?

I-3: So the way I think it worked from, from Old Dominion side was that I think once I submitted it, it went to somebody in ODU and I never got any feedback back. I just got the email that said that I guess it was approved and went to the next stage. So I never had to do anything. I didn't have to do anything with it after I submitted it.

Suf: Oh, that makes sense. Yeah, no, that, that makes sense. Definitely. Yeah. That definitely makes sense.

Um, let's see here. I'm just trying to see if there's any other questions.

I-3: I guess I didn't know that, like that. Yeah, I guess not. I think about it. I guess they could have sent it back. Right. But no, I guess I was lucky.

Suf: No, of course that totally makes sense. Yeah, no, that, that doesn't make sense. Um, we're just master's students. So like we, we're not exactly PhD, so we don't know exactly how sometimes this process works, but, um--

I-3: Okay. Just master's students. I don't think, but that's great that y'all are, are there. Keep going. Yeah. We're getting close. That's good.

Suf: So, um, I guess my next question, cause I, let's see, I went through already, um, some of these here as in like, you already mentioned improvements. You have already mentioned, you know, the communication part was great. Um, let's see. I know there is a part, um, on the site with the licensing. How was your experience with that?

I-3: Um, can you remind me what that would be? Cause I don't know that I.

Suf: Sure. So yeah. So on the ProQuest site, uh, they give you an option if your thesis or dissertation is not already licensed that they give you the option to do that on their site. So I was wondering like if you had the opportunity to look through that or if you, if you already had your license and maybe you--

I-3: No, you're right. I remember that now. So I did opt to have it licensed.

Suf: Okay. And how was your, uh, like process with that? Was that a little bit easy again, just straightforward as usual?

I-3: Yeah, it was straightforward. It was just like a step in the process as I was submitting it. And yeah, I mean, everything was easy, honestly. No, it was, it was fine. It was fine.

And then, you know, and that's the thing is like, I don't know what happens on the, like on the backend when they, when they do all their magic and everything is going through the steps and gets approved. Like I have no idea. But whatever they did, it was very smooth. They kept in communication and I had no problem. I was like scared to death, like, oh my God, what, what in the world is this whole process? But, you know, once I got into it and just kind of sailed through, it was easy.

Suf: Perfect. Perfect. Well, I'm glad you had a great experience with that. That's, you know, that is terrific. Um, is there anything you expected the site to do the site for you to do like differently, but it turned out not to? Like, is there anything that you have in mind, you know, or--

I-3: No, I guess, I guess just the only thing would have been, um, you know, a greater explanation of the fact that I, that I had that one opportunity to purchase those when I started.

Um, so, you know, like making that clearer would be great or, you know, giving you the option, like, you know, like you could just log on and do it again you know and and do it like whenever because I remember I was like well because I didn't have time to do it right then or something and so I thought well I'll just go in and do it like another time so I you know a week later or something I went into the site and and I tried to find where I could just purchase it and like I couldn't find it anywhere so that's why um you know the first time I emailed the um the administrator and then you know she sent me a note back and said you know it was only at this stage or at the end so that was fine um but you know but it did I was kind of frustrated because I was like where where is this like I can't find where you can buy it but obviously I know now why but again you know some more because you know I think as a as a PhD you know student when you're finishing like you know you do want to kind of get this thing to put on a shelf you know so

Suf: Definitely yeah, thank you for that, um I guess probably one of my more final questions would be um we when we uh asked other users about this site they had trouble with the formatting and submitting that through ProQuest because they were a little bit picky with that, um how was your experience with that did you have to format your thesis or dissertation a certain way or the way you kind of had it was just perfectly fine?

I-3: I guess the way I had it was fine because again I didn't I didn't hear anything back so I mean I'm kind of glad at this point that I didn't know that was an option because I've really been worried yeah I had no idea like I thought you just submitted it and then you know and then yeah so I guess and I apologize I don't 100% remember but I don't know if when you're going through the process of submitting it you're going to have to submit it and then you're going to have to submit it and then you're going to have to submit it like does it tell me that you know you it goes through these processes and you know you could be contacted at any time to you know edit it change it whatever I I don't know so I guess I didn't even know that having it sent back to edit it change it whatever was even an option so I'm not sure if did I see that before I can't remember but for some reason I didn't know all this and I'm kind of glad I didn't.

Suf: For sure, yeah um okay--

I-3: Well I mean if that makes sense.

Suf: No no no of course, that makes perfect sense. Thank you for that, um, well that's about all the questions I have here I mean this was, you know, thank you for all your answers you were very straightforward, you know you're very informative. We really do appreciate that. Do you have, maybe, any questions for us on our end that you know you may be interested in?

I-3: No I was just curious what master's program are you all going through?

Suf: Uh, so me and Kay in our group we are in the MSI program which is uh at the University of Michigan School of Information and so many of us are doing doing uh different things like for example I'm on User Agile Development which is like a little bit of software development and UX combined um I believe Kay I think you're on
UX is that correct?

Kay: Yep, UX Research and Design.

Suf: Yeah, so our group is kind of like a mixture of of uh both like User Agile and User uh UX Interface and Design

I-3: I see so yeah that's awesome so like your group kind of just chose to do the um ATD sort of thing or uh

Suf: We're actually- we were given.

I-3: Oh you were given-?

Suf: Yeah, when they were giving out of the companies though we we did put them in as like one of the ones that we did want to work with so yeah so they were one of our options um we were able to have them as our clients and I mean so far it's been it's been a great experience and again we thank you for for taking the time out of your day to you know meet with us and you know have us interview you

I-3: Oh of course, no anytime. I'm glad you know I mean believe me I've been in your situation so like you know if I can help you absolutely because I completely understand what that's like so--

Suf: We appreciate that, we appreciate that.

I-3: Of course. Well thank you all so much and um if you have any questions or need follow-up or whatever just let me know but um best of luck with your um you know with your research and um i'm sure that they will be very happy to hear the results

Suf: Alright, thank you very much. I hope you have a great day.

I-3: Thank you so much, you all too.

Suf: I appreciate it, alright bye-bye.

I-3: Bye-bye

Zi: Okay, so let's go ahead and start the interview. Okay, so before we begin, we'd like to know a little bit about you. Would you mind briefly introducing yourself? Like your, yeah, where you're from and maybe your education background and the--

I-4: Sure.

Zi: --current work.

I-4: Sure. So my name is [omitted] and I recently graduated from Iowa State University, which is where I'm based at- with the masters in human computer interaction. And currently, I'm job searching and hoping to do that in UX, UX design.

And I recently used Proquest submission for my thesis paper. So, that's, so I'm interested in learning more about it and by participating in this research.

Zi: Yeah, yeah, thank you for sharing. So you said you just graduated from the university and sent your dissertation. Was ProQuest the only site you use for submitting a thesis, that kind of thing?

I-4: Oh, somebody through my graduate college for my school in Proquest. So, so yeah.

Zi: Yeah.

I-4: It's ProQuest.

Zi: Is it? And like, do you have any other experience of using those kinds of publication sites or just proquest?

I-4: Just ProQuest.

Zi: Okay, yeah, so how was the overall experience of using ProQuest? It would be helpful if you can walk us through each step of the process you're using.

Zi: The site.

I-4: Sure. So I, it was like 2 months ago, so I don't like remembering exactly the details, but I remember that Experience-wise, it was smooth and I didn't like to encounter any challenges or frustrations.

Zi: So. Maybe just, what kind of step? What did you do first while you were using the site and what did you do last?

I-4: Sure. So if I still like can remember, I can't like remember vaguely, but It was like a link that the graduate college from my school that was sent to my email and when I click onto it I have to like fill in like a bunch of information.

I-4: And then after that I had to like upload my thesis people. Into the portal and then after that it was asking me if I want to like make it as a printed book.

I-4: Coffee And then after that I had to like feeling some contact information like who is gonna approve and like Yeah, who is going to approve and then and then I summated.

I-4: The application.

Zi: Yeah. Yeah, great. So when it comes to communication with the administrator website, do you submit your dissertation multiple times to the site for formatting revisions?

I-4: Yeah, it was just one time.

Zi: One time, okay,and how did you know that your process is totally completed and how does the site notify you about the status like if you have some issues with your decision submission.

I-4: I got notification from my email.

Zi: Oh, so all the communication is done by email, right? Huh. Okay, so how do you feel about that?

Zi: Do you think the communication feels like it's efficient enough?

I-4: I think I think the communication is pretty efficient because I I really like go to the Progress website to keep checking my status, but I do have that my email app on my phone so when I get a notification then I it directed me to the progress portal

Zi: Okay, I see. So how long did it take? To get back from the site.

I-4: To like one when I had to like edit or

Zi: It's just like they, how long it took for them to notify you that you have complete all the process and yeah.

I-4: I think it took me I think it's about like 2 to 3 weeks. And then, yeah, you know, you find me that I have to make some changes.

I-4: Sorry, I think it took like one week that, for them to notify me that I have changes that need to be made.

I-4: And then after that, I submit it again and then it took them like About like 3 weeks to get back to me saying that it got approved.

Zi: Oh, so 3 weeks sounds like a pretty long period, so during a process did you feel like at any point you feel that you oh I have to check the status.

Zi: Like too curious about and worried about the process of your submission.

I-4: I think I wasn't really like worried about it because it was during it was approaching near the Christmas holiday so a lot of people are like not available and like I myself was like occupied with some things as well So I wasn't really worried about it.

Zi: Okay, great. Yeah, that's good feedback. So sounds like you had an overall good experience using progress.

Zi: And, is there anything? Like you expect a site to do for you or do something differently, but it turns out not to do.

Zi: I know that it's a super smooth process for you, but I still wanted to learn if there's any small issues and difficulties while using the site.

I-4: Sure.

I-4: Is it okay if I like to go back to my progress portal too? Kind of refreshment ring.

Zi: Let's see.

I-4: Give me a second. Okay.

I-4: Yeah.

I-4: So I went up when it comes to I think ordering the physical copy of the book I was a little bit confused about

I-4: I think like how am I going to get the copy? I think it was like some information that I was a bit confused about that.

I-4: And so I had to reach out to. The graduate college to ask more information about that. But I don't remember exactly what the information is, would you?

I-4: Like me to like go back and check it or this is fine.

Zi: I guess they should be fine. Does it take a long for you to go back to sight you check?

I-4: Let me. Let me try to log in. Okay. Yeah, okay okay.

I-4: I'm on the portal right now and yeah, so. It was the pre-order copies. So it was like the second last stage.

I-4: And he was asking me if I wanna hardcover or the softcover. And I guess like I was like overwhelmed by the prices and Does section of like the price per copy?

I-4: That has like one to 2 copies with $51 and like etc. And then in terms of like hardcover, yeah, like 3 types of hardcover, but I was only able to see one type of hardcover.

I-4: With the visual in terms of the in terms of the visuals So that was the thing that I was sleeping confused.

Zi: Okay.

Zi: Oh, so you're asking for external help to explain more on how the hard copy or the types of hard copy looks like?

Zi: And like how do you help solve this kind of this problem? How the I mean. Yeah, how did they help you to solve the problem?

I-4: How? Did they help?

I-4: I think. The graduate college. Person like assistant Can't explain to me with

I-4: I guess like trying to explain like what the differences is in in words. And also like by providing like examples on Like how big or how small it is based on like real comparison.

I-4: Okay.

Zi: And yeah, do you think the information they provided to you or sufficient for you to understand? How your Yeah.

I-4: Yeah, I think I think it was sufficient for me to understand.

Zi: Okay, great. So yeah, and, do you have any suggestions on how to do some kind of improvements, especially in terms of the issues you encountered or maybe in terms of any the communication between a system and a user as well as between the administrator and the students.

I-4: I think communication wise there's no Not a huge problem, it was like It was quite clear and I liked the fact that it got notified to my email.

Zi: Then how about snow? Then sorry. Then how about the overall flow of the host system? Like the instruction?

Zi: The status checking, things like that.

I-4: I think the over instruction was pretty clear as well. It's just, like as I mentioned, ordering the book, maybe the hard cover information can be grouped with like the heart cover part and then the soft copy.

I-4: Self-cover can be grew with like the self-copy information. Because now it's like all together.

Zi: Yeah.

I-4: But that's like a more of like a UI designed feedback.

Zi: This isn't fine. We are speaking for like all kinds of feedback from all kinds of prey and aspects.

Zi: And yeah, so talking about some. Good, elements, what like works well for you on the progress like which kind of features you enjoy and find the most useful or maybe most impressive on the site.

I-4: I like that. When I am going through my submission steps, they have like a check box that I'm like computing this.

I-4: I think that made it like clear to know like what step I am at currently. So I like that and then also like that it was like separated into different categories.

Zi: Yeah, you mean a Okay. Yeah, that's it.

I-4: I think that.

Zi: So. Since you have a pretty smooth process, I guess I do not have much questions to you, but I guess my last question would be, what are your base expectations in using ProQuest ETD Administrator like what would an effective experience to maintain your thesis look like to you?

I-4: I think, my, like my expectation.

Zi: That's like-- maybe like in another word, what would you prioritize while using this kind of submission website?

I-4: I think what I prioritize is

I-4: The intuitiveness? And giving consistent Feedback? User feedback. And that can be, so for example, like having a progress bar, that is bar that I'm like 50% of like reaching to completing the form. So, be having like some sort of progress bar or like numbers I think that would be even better.

I-4: But I think they try to do a good job in making the check-- the box with that take on it and then I think the text size can be like bigger, a little bit like bigger.

I-4: Because since it was like a lot of information that a lot of information so maybe And then it's all like tax base, so it'd be something that is like, they can be more easily to be read in terms of legibility.

I-4: I think.

I-4: Oh, and then on the instruction? The first, the first, category it's like P 2 publishing options.

I-4: I was really confused about that because It just didn't make sense to me. Like the, I don't know if it's better if I share the screen or not.

Zi: Oh yeah, sure.

I-4: Okay.

Zi: Oh, I mean.

Zi: Is there a way I can't allow you guys to share the screen?

Kay: I think maybe one of us try sharing screen. Then there'll be, like a popup.

Kay: Is that how it works?

Zi: I'm looking at the sharing setting. And yeah, I said it to all participants can share the screen.

I-4: Okay, I got it.

I-4: Okay, cool. Yeah, so in this-- in this thing, I thought it was like something that I need to upload.

I-4: So I tried to click but there's nothing here and then this one I told like it's like a file that I need to upload the game but Oh, I wasn't sure what this through boxes were and.

I-4: The alignments were all wrong and then the icon. It's like, no waste.

Zi: Yeah. Like and some interface issues.

Zi: And also like you mentioned about the text heavy thing about the size, do you think it would be helpful if we could add any kind of visual stuff to the sides?

Zi: To help users to better understand the sites. Or you think the taxes. Enough to explain all they want.

I-4: I think the text itself is enough. Because since it's about there's not a lot of like visuals that I can think of like examples of visuals unless if you pull more icons, maybe that would be better.

Zi: Hmm.

Zi: Yeah, like we are considering about some kind of, maybe video instruction. And you make this.

I-4: Hmm.

Zi: Stuff to help people understand better understand the sites.

I-4: Yeah, I think that will work. Perfect. I think that would be really helpful.

Zi: Okay.

Zi: Okay, yeah. I guess I have no more questions for you and thank you for your answers.

Zi: So yeah, before we wrap up, are there any other questions you have? About interview.

I-4: I guess No, I, I didn't know.

Zi: Okay, great. So yeah, if anything else occurs to you after we leave, please don't hesitate to let us know by email, just the one that comes out with you about the conversation.

I-4: Okay.

Zi: Yeah. And. Great. So thanks again for taking the time meeting with us today.

Henry: All right so with that if you don't have any other questions, um, then I'm going to jump right into the interview.

Henry: So before we begin we'd like to know a little more about you so would you mind just telling us a little bit about yourself such as your name, where you're from and then the type of degree that you hold- things like that?

I-5: Sure um so name [omitted], so I'm currently or I was attending the University of Pennsylvania- that's where I completed this most recent degree. Before that I lived in Arizona, I did my undergraduate at University of Arizona.

I-5: I graduated there in 2017 and then came over to Penn and began a PhD program in Microbiology in the medical school so I just completed that August of last year, uploaded everything to EDT Administrator um roughly December-- no I think it was around September and that signified the completion of the degree and my graduation.

Henry: So you've used ProQuest's product before and did you primarily just use the um platform to upload your dissertation or thesis?

I-5: Yeah that's the only time I've used the platform.

Henry: Got you. Have you used any other publication sites such Bepress in the past and if so how was your experience with those?

I-5: I don't believe so.

Henry: You haven't, okay.

I-5: No so, I mean this was also the time that I was um technically the submitter so most of the time it's my principal investigator and usually we just go directly through scientific journals.

Henry: So as far as when you were using ProQuest ETD Administrator, um do you feel that it was an effective experience with submitting your thesis slash dissertation and if not how could that have been improved in your opinion?

I-5: Uh no, I thought my experience with it was positive overall- um, it was nice to have everything centralized and it was pretty simple to see the upload happen and then once everything was actually approved by the university that was easy to see as well.

Henry: And then if you can think of any, what would be some key features that would draw you into using an online publishing system like ProQuest?

I-5: Um that's a good question. Like I said, for my field usually we go through the journals themselves for publication so we don't really handle much of this end. I would say um but I think key features is just kind of an easy-to-view process so seeing the uploads um a big thing for our field as well is actually seeing like reviews and progress um so just getting more into the reviews and progress process and then just kind of the review process like seeing exactly where it is and how long it could potentially take to get those reviews out because sometimes it's a bit of a black box or that process right um so I think those are the biggest things that I can think of.

Henry: Very good. Back when you were using ProQuest, was there anything that you can remember that stuck out to you that worked well particularly when you were uploading that document to this interface? Like was there a specific aspect of it that you found easy to use or was there something that just stuck out to you that you enjoyed about it?

I-5: Um I remember um sorry I'm going to the website as well and try to remind myself exactly what I did uh I thought overall it was yeah I'm just reminding myself yeah so overall it was very nice just to have everything centralized because I also had in addition to the dissertation some administrative documents and extra stuff to upload so having that all in one place to actually upload and see it uploaded was very nice um pardon me yeah so I think that was um one of the benefits to it as well uh does that answer the question sorry I'm kind of drawing a blank on some of these.

Henry: No that's fine, that's perfect. So was that your um was you so you said using Proquest that was the only time you've ever uploaded a dissertation?

I-5: Uh, yes.

Henry: Okay and then if you can remember, could you kind of walk us through your experience um communicating with your administrator as a student um submitting your thesis or dissertation?

I-5: Uh sure yeah, so from the administrator um we get a checklist for graduation so just everything you need to complete um and then once we have that checklist you're essentially supposed to kind of pursue it on your own and then upload it to um edt administrator so once you have all the desired files so like we had to do an exit survey um there's some NIH requirements and just a few other like additional documents we had to upload so it was just going through step by step putting all of that into EDTA and then we set up um the deposit appointments which is where just setting up a time for them to actually look at the dissertation check formatting check documentation and then you get a approval probably within about 30 minutes to that point in time uh so that was the entire process for me

Henry: Um, and have you encountered any issues when communicating during the revision process?

I-5: Um no no not so far.

Henry: So if you have any, what are some ways that communication could be streamlined between the parties involved in the submission and publication process if you can think of any?

I-5: That's a good question– just a streamlined I thought overall from my experience it was fairly streamlined um to begin with um yeah I think it was fairly streamlined overall so I'm not really sure how to go even further than that.

Henry: Gotcha. So um another question we had was is there anything that you expected the site to do for you or do differently but it turned out not to do?

I-5: Um no I don't think so. I mean for everything I was doing it was pretty much just dragging and dropping files.

Henry: Right yeah, awesome awesome. Let me make sure I'm not missing anything here.

Henry: So just to wrap up um I guess I'll just ask your final thoughts and opinions on ProQuest, I know we kind of touched on what could be improved what could not be but just if there is anything additional that you think we may find useful um as far as when you were using ProQuest any other uh recommendations for improvement that you might have or things that you didn't like um you know just anything along those lines we'd be glad to hear about it.

I-5: Okay um no I think overall everything was pretty easy um it was very simple overall um I do remember looking at ordering copies of the dissertation I don't know if that's relevant at all um so that was it was kind of a nice feature, but I don't think I ended up doing it. And it was, at least in my field, the copyright was a little confusing just because it's not clear if you should be doing that or how you should be doing that. Because it does give you the option to register a U.S. copyright for a price. But for my field, I just did like Creative Commons. So, you know, that can kind of trip with a few students as well, just exactly for the field that they're into, what that copyright actually means and how necessary it is.

Henry: Okay, that makes sense. Perfect. Well, that actually went a little bit quicker than we were expecting. So that marks the end of the interview. Before we conclude, are there any questions that you have about the interview or how we'll use your input in our project?

I-5: No, no questions.

Henry: Perfect. So yeah, if anything else occurs to you after we leave, please don't hesitate to let us know by email. As we mentioned, we may be in touch with you in the future just to ask any follow-up questions regarding this interview today. And again, we thank you for your time speaking with us today.

I-5: Okay, great. Thank you so much. Good luck with the project.

Henry: Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

Suf: All right. Thank you.

I-5: Take care. Bye.

Henry: See you.

Suf: Bye-bye.