

# User Experience Research Report

## Survey

### Team Visionaries

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[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wiByYF-EgdCWqV\\_CQqdLtGUhYZtkLqWVPe1RjUk8-s8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wiByYF-EgdCWqV_CQqdLtGUhYZtkLqWVPe1RjUk8-s8/edit)

## Executive Summary

Through analyzing our round of user interviews, we identified two key findings. One, users tend to find the online purchasing feature challenging, and two, instructions were generally perceived as text-heavy and somewhat vague. Due to limited sample size, it is inconclusive whether or not these findings are representative of the overall user experience. Therefore, we have to construct a survey instrument in order to gather a more diverse dataset. This will help us validate whether the insights gained from the interviews are widespread issues that influence the overarching user experience.

After discussing with our clients, we decided to include questions with different scales, both broad and specific. For the broad questions, we expected to learn users' overall attitudes towards the product, while for the specific questions, we are trying to understand how users are intending to use the product, and which factors will affect their decision-making throughout the submission process. Ultimately, we created a survey which investigates the following aspects:

1. **Demographic:** Provides us the background information of users, which can help us to understand our user base.
2. **General Feedback:** Captures the overall satisfaction and pain points about the user experience.
3. **Instructional Content:** Aims to evaluate the clarity of guidance and identify user preferences regarding the format that can best facilitate their journey.
4. **Purchasing and Publishing Options:** Understand the logic behind users' decision-making process

## Introduction

### Goals and Research Questions

After meeting with our clients to discern their primary needs, we established the research goal of our survey to complement the insights gained from our initial interviews. Our research goal is to identify the preferences and pain points of graduate students submitting dissertations to ultimately enhance the user experience of ProQuest. To achieve that, we have structured three research questions which directly reflect the areas we aim to investigate through the survey responses.

1. What in general drives user satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the ProQuest ETD Administrator, particularly in terms of specific features or functionalities that users found helpful or challenging?

2. How do users evaluate the clarity of instructions and prefer instructional formats for an improved experience?
3. How do users choose between traditional and open access publishing, and what are their experiences with ordering physical copies via ProQuest?

The logic behind our choice of research questions is deeply rooted in our initial findings and client discussions, highlighting areas for improvement in instructional clarity and the publishing and purchasing process, which our clients care most about. We believe that a detailed survey can provide a broader dataset to validate the preliminary insights, offering a more generalized but more reliable understanding of user needs. The actionable feedback that reflects the more diverse perspectives of graduate students could help us better contribute to the system's enhancement.

### **Obstacles**

Regarding the potential hurdle of sampling, identifying specific groups of students who have used ProQuest while maintaining the diversity of our sample presents a challenge. Moreover, based on what we have experienced during the interviews, users may have difficulty remembering specific details about their experience, leading to less precise responses that may not accurately capture their true sentiments or challenges encountered. Additionally, ProQuest has undergone updates recently, meaning that feedback collected might reference an outdated version of the system.

### **Sampling**

The sampling method we've chosen to pursue is purposive sampling, meaning our goal is to gather qualitative data from participants with relevant knowledge and experiences (e.g. using the platform). Given that ProQuest ETD Administrator's user base consists of students and institutions whose goal is to publish theses/dissertations, the intended sample population for our survey would be graduate students currently in the process of submitting their academic papers. Sampling students with fresh experience (e.g. recent graduates who have written a thesis or dissertation) using the platform would generate meaningful results concerning the platform's strengths and weaknesses.

### **Pilot Instrument**

To evaluate the functionality of our survey, we conducted a pilot test with a small group of individuals via convenience sampling. The survey was formatted and distributed

using Google Forms (See Appendix). Though not all of the testers were a part of ProQuest's user base, they were able to give us valuable feedback on the clarity, length, and wording of our questions. The following changes were made as a result of our initial testing.

- The overall length of the survey was reduced
- Some short/long answer questions were reformatted or deleted
- Several questions were reworded to promote clarity
  - "Please describe your area of study" was changed to "Please list your area(s) of study."
  - "In which format would you prefer the platform to guide you through the submission process" was changed to "Please select the format of instructions that you feel would best expedite the submission process."
- "Rate your satisfaction with your overall experience" was changed to the more meaningful "how likely would you be to recommend ProQuest ETD Administrator to a friend or colleague?"

## Discussion

The survey instrument we created serves as a lens through which we can examine the intricacies of graduate student engagement with ProQuest ETD Administrator. By incorporating a diverse selection of query types, our approach is designed to capture a qualitative understanding of the user experience within the program. This enables us to take a deeper look at factors that contribute to the usability and functionality of the platform from a user standpoint, shedding light on specific aspects that contribute or hinder the submission process.

Nonetheless, we did encounter challenges when creating our survey instrument. The specificity of our target audience (graduate students at the thesis or dissertation submission phase) introduces the potential for sample bias skewed towards individuals with recent or notable interactions with ETD Administrator. To get around this, it is important to include a balanced representation of the graduate student population, incorporating users with different disciplines and levels of interaction with the system.

In regards to survey deployment, we recommend a strategy that leverages established academic channels to maximize response rates and gain a demographically representative sample. This includes disseminating the survey when students are most likely to engage with ETD Administrator, such as immediately following thesis or dissertation submission. Utilizing academic networking platforms and targeted emails

could facilitate a broad but focused reach to the intended audience. To encourage honesty and openness in responses, ensuring respondent anonymity is critical. We also suggest including incentives to increase user participation and to ensure a timely response rate.

# Appendix

## Survey Instrument

Link: <https://forms.gle/PnupGRUee5G9jakD6>

3/8/24, 4:00 PM

Thesis/Dissertation Submission Survey

### Thesis/Dissertation Submission Survey

This semester, our team is working together with ProQuest to improve their online thesis and dissertation submission portal. We're looking to gather feedback concerning the platform's instructional content, communication channels, and about the current user experience in general. We appreciate your answers and thank you for your time.

1. Please select the option that best represents your current situation.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ I am currently enrolled in a graduate program
- ☐ I have received a graduate degree
- ☐ Neither of these options apply to me

2. If you are enrolled in a graduate program and/or have received a graduate degree, please list your area(s) of study.

\_\_\_\_\_

#### General Feedback

3. What made you choose ProQuest ETD Administrator?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ School requirements
- ☐ Recommendation from others
- ☐ Network search
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How likely would you be to recommend ProQuest ETD Administrator to a friend or colleague?

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

(Very unlikely)

5. Have you encountered any difficulties with the following:

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Confusing interface
- ☐ Inefficient back and forth process
- ☐ Formatting issues
- ☐ Checking your submission status
- ☐ Text-heavy instructions
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. If applicable, describe a time when you ran into an issue using ProQuest. How did you solve the problem?

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7. Please describe any features you liked or thought were particularly helpful.

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#### Instructional Content

8. Please rate the clarity of the instructions provided for each section.

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Very unclear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear	Very clear
<b>Publishing Information</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Dissertation Details</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Submission &amp; Payment</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Did you seek additional help or clarification from support channels when following the instructions on ProQuest ETD Administrator?

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes

☐ No



10. Please select the format of instructions that you feel would best expedite the submission process.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Video demo
- ☐ Tooltips
- ☐ Text-based instructions
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Purchasing and Publishing Options

11. Which publishing option did you select for your submission?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Open Access

12. Please describe your decision-making process when selecting publishing options. What made you choose traditional over open access or vice versa?

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13. Did you order physical copies of your thesis/dissertation through ProQuest?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. If so, please rate your experience purchasing copies via the platform.

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very easy
(Very difficult)						

15. Please describe any issues you may have encountered during the purchasing process.

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