

# Heuristic Evaluation of myZou



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# 1 - Users and Tasks

1. Define the target audience(s) by:
  - Identifying who they are
    1. Students at the University of Missouri including students cross enrolling from UMSL, UMKC, S&T, Mizzou Online, and to a lesser extent, faculty. Given that we are all students and cannot access some of the features that faculty have access to, we will be focusing on Students.
  - What are their needs
    1. View and manage important aspects of student life. This includes enrollment, financial aid, residential life and other academic records.
  - What they want to do with the system
    1. View their class schedule
    2. Plan, enroll and drop courses
    3. View academic records and request transcripts
    4. Manage financial information, view billing statements and accept/decline awards and financial aid
    5. View information regarding residential life
    6. Manage personal information
    7. View important dates related to any of the above
    8. Access tuition fees payment center
      - a. View bill
      - b. Pay bill
  - What is the context in which they will use the system
    1. Planning future semesters
    2. Enroll in courses
    3. Staying up-to-date on current semester activities
    4. Viewing records related to previous semesters
    5. Paying student account bills

Sources:

University enrollment information for the 2019 school year:

<https://enrollment.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Fall-2019-Student-Body-Profile.pdf>

The Missouri University registrar provides videos on their website. The videos include a description for registration <https://registrar.missouri.edu/registration/myzou-videos.php>

This link provides information of myzou <https://mizzouone.missouri.edu/task/all/myzou>

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## 2 - Evaluation by Caitlin Waters

For this evaluation I used the Google Chrome web browser on a Mackbook Pro using macOS Mojave version 10.14.6.

### 2.1: Visibility of system status

*The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.*

#### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

3 points

#### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

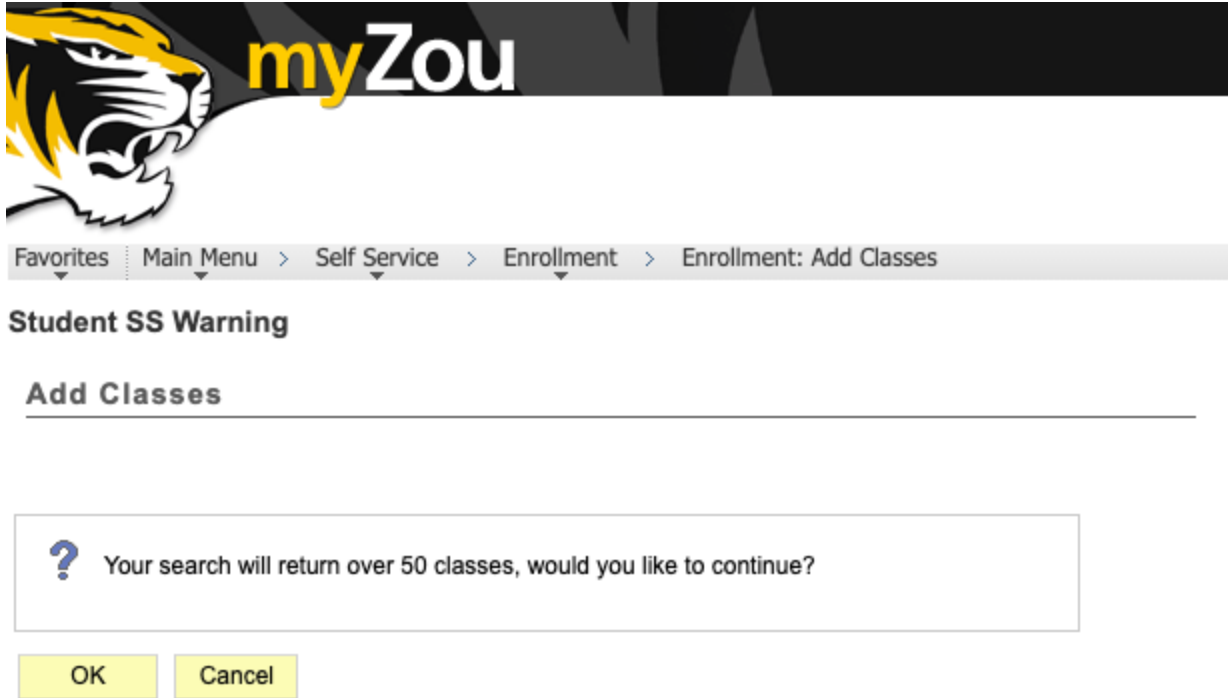
Low to no problem

#### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

Through most transitions, loading is indicated by a spinning wheel in the corner. This feedback helps to show that a page is loading even if it takes longer than expected. I did find several instances, however, where that spinner did not appear and the page was simply blank until it loaded. Also, in such situations as

enrollment where page loads are expected to be large, the following warning message is sometimes displayed:



## 2.2: Match between system and the real world

*The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.*

### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from "Not satisfied at all" to "Very satisfied"*

4 points

### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with "No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem."*

No Problem

### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

The words and syntax used throughout myZou are very intuitive for me as a user. Given that the majority of Mizzou students are from the United States, specifically Missouri (as am I), it would stand to reason that the majority of users would also find the terminology and wording easy to navigate. My only confusion is with “Self-Service” and “Student Center.” In the navigation bar, the Student Center is listed under Self-Service, however, I find Student Center to simply be a more user-friendly version of everything included in Self-Service. Personally, I think it would make more sense to do away with Self-Service entirely and just call that navigation segment Student Center but that is a minor nitpick.

### **2.3: User control and freedom**

*Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.*

#### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

2 points

#### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

Minor problem

#### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

myZou’s issue in this regard is not so much the lack of an “undo” option but that there is no clear “back” button or easy way to return to the previous page. For instance, when I go to look at my financial aid (which I have not screen shot for my own privacy), I have to first select the year before it takes me to a new page with that information. If I picked the wrong year or want to view a different

one, there is no clear way to go back one page. Clicking the back button in your browser even takes you *all* the way back to the Student Center. This should be a relatively simple step but instead, the user must go all the way back out and restart the process over.

## 2.4: Consistency and standards

*Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.*

### Satisfaction

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

2 points

### Problem Severity

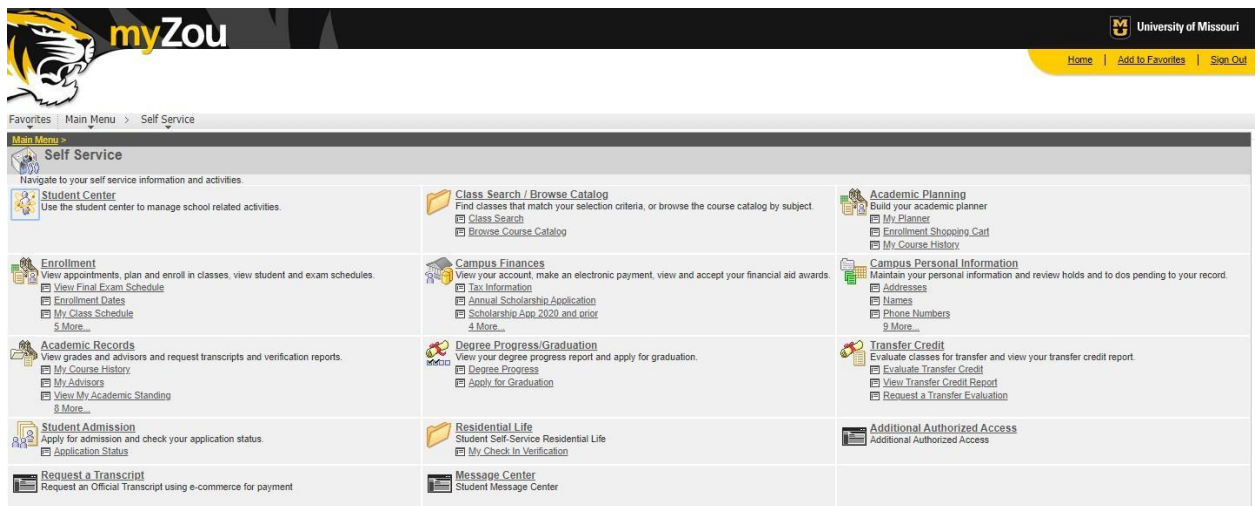
*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

Low problem

### Rationale

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

While I would say that the terminology and words are relatively consistent throughout myZour, their interfaces are a bit lacking in that regard. For instance, in the Self-Service section there is a rigid grid layout:



There are many colorful icons and sub-sections displayed. Then to contrast that with the Student Center:

**Academics**

Grades  
Search  
Plan  
Enroll  
My Academics  
Schedule Planner  
Request Degree Audit  
Transcript Audit Trail  
Cart Letter Audit Trail  
Enroll: UMKC, S&T, UM-SL

other academic...

**This Week's Schedule**

Class	Schedule
IS_LT 7315-02 LST (72368)	Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET
IS_LT 9421-01 LST (59605)	INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET

Weekly Schedule  
Enrollment Shopping Cart

**Finances**

My Account

Use the TouchNet link below to:

Search for Classes  
Secure File Upload

**Holds**  
No Holds.

**To Do List**  
No Outstanding To Do's.  
More

**Message Center**  
New Messages (2)  
details

**Milestones**  
No Milestones

The layout is quite different. The style of the headings change, there are now accordions instead of just links. Also it should be noted that the only way to get to the Self-Service page at all is from the menu on the homepage shown here:

**Menu**

Search:

- My Favorites
- UM Processes and Reports
- Self Service
- Reporting Tools
- PeopleTools
- UM E-Consent
- UM E-Mail
- Emergency Mass Notification
- My Personalizations

However that menu is ONLY shown on the homepage and does not appear anywhere else on the site. These inconsistencies can be confusing for users who are not familiar with the system.



## 2.5: Error prevention

*Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.*

### Satisfaction

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

4 points

### Problem Severity

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

No problem

### Rationale

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

Error messaging (and the prevention thereof) is quite prevalent on the myZou page - which is very good when dealing with such sensitive and important processes. The enrollment section, in particular, has many steps along the way to ensure that the student is confident in their decision before finalizing their class selections.

There are modal popups in certain circumstances such as this:



Then each step has a pause that allows students to review their selections before proceeding to the next step. The number of steps is also clearly shown at the top of the screen so that students know where they are in the process along the way :

## Add Classes



### 1. Select classes to add

To select classes for another term, select the term and select Change. When you are satisfied with your class selections, proceed to step 2 of 3.

IS\_LT 9480 has been added to your Shopping Cart.

2020 Fall Semester | Graduate | Univ of Missouri - Columbia

Change Term

Open  Closed

Add to Cart

Enter Class Nbr

Find Classes

Class Search

My Planner

#### 2020 Fall Semester Shopping Cart

Delete	Class	Days/Times	Room	Instructor	Units	Status
	IS_LT 9480-01 (57771)		INTERNET	D. Adkins	3.00	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Then if something would prevent moving on to the next step there is an appropriate error message to let the user know why:

## Add Classes



### 1. Select classes to add

To select classes for another term, select the term and select Change. When you are satisfied with your class selections, proceed to step 2 of 3.

You do not have a valid enrollment appointment at this time.

2020 Fall Semester | Graduate | Univ of Missouri - Columbia

Change Term

Open  Closed

Add to Cart

Enter Class Nbr

Find Classes

Class Search

My Planner

#### 2020 Fall Semester Shopping Cart

Delete	Class	Days/Times	Room	Instructor	Units	Status
	IS_LT 9480-01 (57771)		INTERNET	D. Adkins	3.00	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

I feel in general, this is all handled quite well throughout myZou but I would prefer to see more of the modal-style messaging as opposed to waiting until the next page loads to give the necessary feedback.

## 2.6: Recognition rather than recall

*Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.*

### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from "Not satisfied at all" to "Very satisfied"*

4 points

### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with "No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem."*

No problem

### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

Overall, myZou is not afraid to provide information and does not skimp on the details, leaving little for the user to have to recall from page to page. If anything, I feel like myZou has almost the opposite problem in that it gives *too much* information all the time which can be overwhelming.

In my previous screen shots for #6, it can be seen that even between steps of a process, all the information is carried through between screens. This is good in that it keeps the user from forgetting where they are in the process but can be back in that the *new* information (such as the error message) can become lost.

## 5.7: Flexibility and efficiency of use

*Accelerators — unseen by the novice user — may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.*

### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

1 point

### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

Relatively severe problem

### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

As someone who has used this system since 2007 when I first enrolled as an undergrad, I consider myself a very experienced user of the myZou system. With that being said, the processes that I go through to enroll or check my grades are the exact same as everyone else that uses the site. There is no quick way to get through processes and I still have to go through each step over and over to get where I know I need to go. A great example of this is back in enrollment. I know ahead of time that when adding classes, I want to go straight to the search function, however I still have to go through Self-Service or the Student Center > Enroll > Add Class > Select Term > Click on Search and *then* enter all of my search criteria.

I do believe that the Student Center page is meant to help this situation by having the “key” pieces of information all in one place and easy to jump between.

myZou University of Missouri

Home | Add to Favorites | Sign Out

Favorites | Main Menu | Self Service | Student Center

Caitlin's Student Center

**Academics**

Grades  
Search  
Plan  
Enroll  
My Academics  
Schedule Planner  
Request Degree Audit  
Transcript Audit Trail  
Cert Letter Audit Trail  
Enroll: UMKC, S&T, UMSL

other academic... [X]

Deadlines URL

**This Week's Schedule**

Class	Schedule
IS_LT 7315-02 LST (72368)	Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET Th 5:30PM - 6:50PM INTERNET
IS_LT 9421-01 LST (59605)	INTERNET

Weekly Schedule ▶  
Enrollment Shopping Cart ▶

**Search for Classes**

**Secure File Upload**

**Holds**  
No Holds.

**To Do List**  
No Outstanding To Do's.  
More ▶

**Message Center**  
New Messages (2)  
details ▶

**Milestones**  
No Milestones

**Finances**  
My Account

Use the TouchNet link below to:

It provides a lot of information at a glance that can help people get where they are going more easily. But once you get into the process you desire, it still takes a long series of monotonous tasks that could definitely benefit from streamlining.

## 2.8: Aesthetic and minimalist design

*Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.*

### Satisfaction

*Score 1-4 points from "Not satisfied at all" to "Very satisfied"*

1 point

### Problem Severity

*Identify with "No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem."*

Severe problem

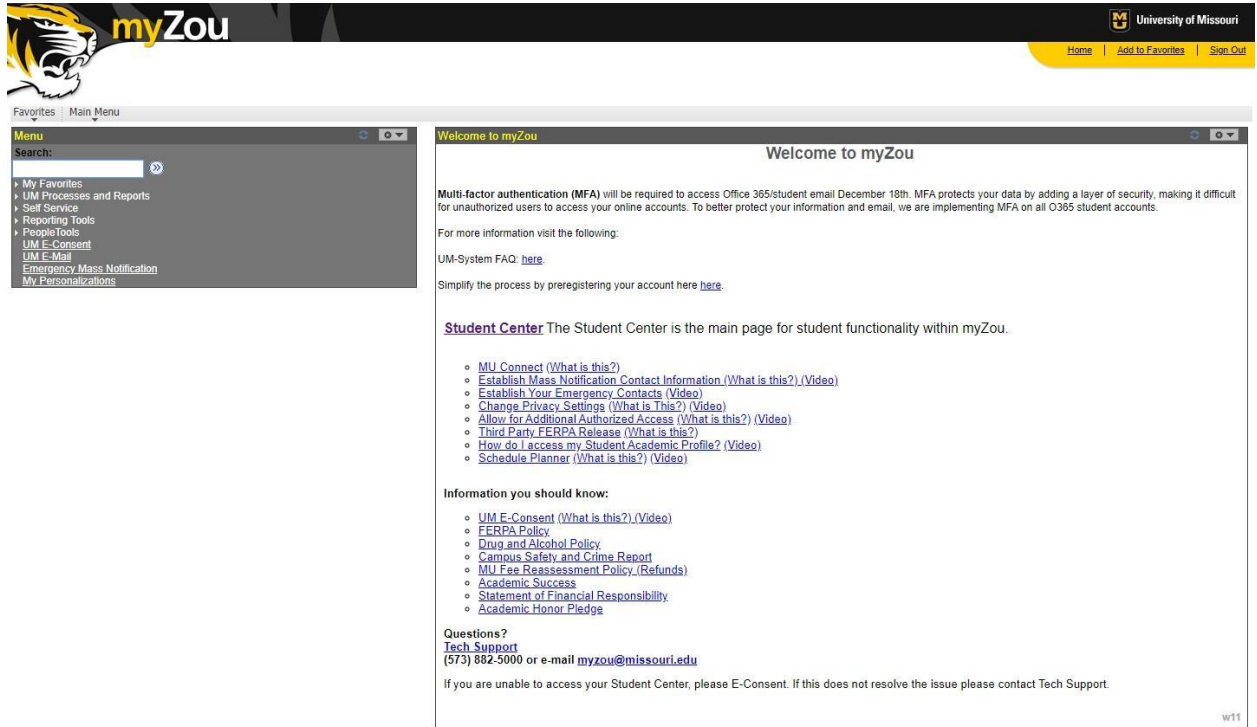
### Rationale

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

As I mentioned previously in #6, myZou is often overwhelming with the amount of information it provides to the users. Furthermore, there is little to no hierarchy with the display of this information so it is difficult for the user to determine what is most important or where they should be going. In my opinion, a good User

Interface should guide the user from one place to the next but myZou just has so much *stuff* that you often don't know where you should be going.

For instance, take the homepage:



The navigation is tucked to the side with most of the subnav hidden and the main body content is nothing but text and links. With the exception of the one line of text about the Student Center, all of the content is the same size and weight and has nothing but bullets to divide it. The Student Center link is also barely distinguished from the rest in that it is only perhaps 2 point sizes larger than the body copy. Given that it is not mentioned until several paragraphs down would still lead a user to think that it was maybe, just another page.

Another example is this page from enrollment:



IS\_LT 9085 - 01 Problems in Information Science and Learning Technology  
Univ of Missouri - Columbia | 2020 Fall Semester | Individual Study

**Class Details**

Status	Open <span style="color: green;">●</span>	Career	Graduate
Class Number	57767	Dates	8/24/2020 - 12/10/2020
Session	Regular Academic Session	Grading	Graded, A-F
Units	1 - 99 units	Location	Mizzou Online Off Campus
Instruction Mode	E-Learning 100% online	Campus	Main MU Campus
Class Components	Individual Study Required		

**Meeting Information**

Days & Times	Room	Instructor	Meeting Dates
TBA	INTERNET	<a href="#">Denice Adkins</a>	08/24/2020 - 12/10/2020

**Enrollment Information**

Add Consent	Instructor Consent Required
Enrollment Requirements	Graduate standing is required
Class Attributes	Requires Consent College of Education Fee Mizzou Online Semester Based

**Class Availability**

Class Capacity	5	Wait List Capacity	0
Enrollment Total	0	Wait List Total	0
Available Seats	5		

**Notes**

Class Notes Please contact instructor for course enrollment information

**Description**

Independent, directed study on a topic in the areas of information science and learning technologies. Prerequisites: departmental consent.

**Textbook/Other Materials**

Mizzou Store textbook information: <http://www.themizzoustore.com/t-textbook-terms.aspx>

[Return to Add Classes](#)

[View Search Results](#)

[Select Class](#)

While looking at a class and deciding if you want to add it, you have to scroll down past all this information to get to the button to continue. On top of that, the “view search results” and “select class” buttons are exactly the same, even though one of them goes back and the other goes forward. Ultimately, I feel like myZou would really benefit from reassessing their approach to content display. Vary up the font styles, the headings, compartmentalize some of the less important information to highly what is more relevant to the task at hand. It is good that all the information is there, but it can be too much at times.

## **2.9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors**

*Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.*

### **Satisfaction**

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

2 points

### **Problem Severity**

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

Minor problem

### **Rationale**

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

All the error messages that I encountered while using myZou were very easy to understand. They used plain language and made it clear what the problem was, however I did not find anything in the messaging to indicate how to resolve the errors.

Take this message on the enrollment page:




## Add Classes



### 1. Select classes to add

To select classes for another term, select the term and select Change. When you are satisfied with your class selections, proceed to step 2 of 3.

 You do not have a valid enrollment appointment at this time.

2020 Fall Semester | Graduate | Univ of Missouri - Columbia

Change Term

Open  Closed


Add to Cart

Enter Class Nbr

Find Classes

Class Search

My Planner

2020 Fall Semester Shopping Cart						
Delete	Class	Days/Times	Room	Instructor	Units	Status
	IS LT 9480-01 (57771)		INTERNET	D. Adkins	3.00	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Proceed to Step 2 of 3

I understand clearly what it means by “enrollment appointment” but there is no indication of what to do from here. In this situation, a link to “view my enrollment” dates would be very helpful.

## 2.10: Help and documentation

*Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.*

### Satisfaction

*Score 1-4 points from “Not satisfied at all” to “Very satisfied”*

1 point

### Problem Severity

*Identify with “No problem, low to no problem, minor, or severe problem.”*

Sever problem

## Rationale

*Provide rationales of your review/evaluation results. Why and how you propose the results of your satisfaction and problem severity.*

I found the support documentation of myZou to be quite hidden. On the home page there is a small blurb about contacting tech support if you have any questions, but there is no obvious link to a support portal or FAQ or other type of guide.

There is also a link on the homepage to the UM-System FAQ, but it does not actually talk about myZou and is more focused on multifactor authentication and Office 360.

What I did manage to dig up, is that if you click on this specific link here:

The screenshot shows the myZou website interface. At the top left is the myZou logo with a tiger head. The top right has navigation links: Home, Add to Favorites, and Sign Out. Below the logo is a 'Menu' section with a search bar and a list of links: My Favorites, UM Processes and Reports, Self Service, Reporting Tools, PeopleTools, UM E-Consent, UM E-Mail, Emergency Mass Notification, and My Personalizations. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to myZou' and contains the following text:

**Welcome to myZou**

**Multi-factor authentication (MFA)** will be required to access Office 365/student email December 18th. MFA protects your data by adding a layer of security, making it difficult for unauthorized users to access your online accounts. To better protect your information and email, we are implementing MFA on all O365 student accounts.

For more information visit the following:

UM-System FAQ: [here](#).

Simplify the process by preregistering your account here [here](#).

**Student Center** The Student Center is the main page for student functionality within myZou.

- [MU\\_Connect \(What is this?\)](#)
- [Establish Mass Notification Contact Information \(What is this?\) \(Video\)](#)
- [Establish Your Emergency Contacts \(Video\)](#)
- [Change Privacy Settings \(What is This?\) \(Video\)](#)
- [Allow for Additional Authorized Access \(What is this?\) \(Video\)](#)
- [Third Party FERPA Release \(What is this?\)](#)
- [How do I access my Student Academic Profile? \(Video\)](#)
- [Schedule Planner \(What is this?\) \(Video\)](#)

**Information you should know:**

- [UM E-Consent \(What is this?\) \(Video\)](#)
- [FERPA Policy](#)
- [Drug and Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Campus Safety and Crime Report](#)
- [MU Fee Reassessment Policy \(Refunds\)](#)
- [Academic Success](#)
- [Statement of Financial Responsibility](#)
- [Academic Honor Pledge](#)

**Questions?**  
**Tech Support**  
(573) 882-5000 or e-mail [myzou@missouri.edu](mailto:myzou@missouri.edu)

If you are unable to access your Student Center, please E-Consent. If this does not resolve the issue please contact Tech Support.

w11

It will take you off site to the Office of the University Registrar website. This site has a series of helpful articles on how to use myZou including a “first-time” user guide and several video tutorials.

The fact that this information is so hidden is incredibly unhelpful. I doubt that the average user would be able to find it and would certainly not be able to search for it or through it to find specific information they need.

## **5.11: Conclusion**

Ultimately, I find myZou to be a highly functional piece of software that could massively benefit from changes to organization and visual layout. While it provides plenty of good information and feedback to its users, it tends to overcompensate by dumping all information at once with little in the way to break it up or guide the user through to different sections and processes.

I have been using myZou for over ten years and I can say that it looks almost identical now as it did back in 2007. Furthermore, the site is not responsive so I can only imagine that the user experience on a smartphone or other smaller devices would be incredibly difficult. I feel that some of the inconsistencies through the site also probably have come about from features being added or changed throughout the years without updating the existing infrastructure to match.

Personally, I would love to see myZou get a refresher to its design and layout to match the current web standards and trends but as it stands, it serves its purpose and does so reliably and consistently.

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## **3 - Final Thoughts**

As expressed in the above evaluations, Group 6 found that myZou is an overall well functioning piece of software that has room for improvements. Many of the lower scoring sections focus on the aesthetics/visual design, information organization, and lack of support accelerators. MyZou would benefit from an updated visual design that is more cohesive with the rest of the sites affiliated with University of Missouri. Targeting the issues of typography and stark, clashing backgrounds is especially important as such issues may result in missed links and frustration for the student user.

Aside from issues of aesthetics, myZou suffers from information overload on a number of pages. This issue runs the risk of overwhelming the user and potentially causing important or necessary information being overlooked. Finally, addressing the lack of support accelerators and bringing them up to industry standard would increase the overall ease of use for users of all technical aptitudes. These few adjustments would massively impact the usability of myZou and bring it inline with the industry standards of 2020.