ATHENS ERA

User Experience Research Plan

Kelly May Sheehan & Zoë Phalen

OUR TEAM

DIGITAL CREATORS

KELLY MAY SHEEHAN

ZOË PHALEN

Emerging Media Master's Student at
The University of Georgia, based in
Atlanta, Georgia
Co-Creator of Athens Era

Emerging Media Master's Student at
The University of Georgia, based in
Atlanta, Georgia
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emerging Media Capstone Introduction

Athens Era acts as a portal to transport the public to local artists online. Through this website, users may explore several pieces of work that are tied closely to Athens, GA, communicate with artists, help support small businesses, and bring home a piece of Athens with them.

Athens Era is a digital platform offered through a website that creates a personal experience for users to browse local art and buy it online. Designed for the Athens area, Athens Era will provide a platform for Athens-based artists to maintain a small e-commerce store and communicate with potential buyers. By limiting the audience to Athens neighborhoods and surrounding communities, Athens Era ensures that local artists are receiving the most direct exposure to their intended audiences.

Our research goals include understanding usability levels of buyers and sellers, as well as the pain points encountered. We want to gain a clear understanding of the thought process of users and how this site may be valuable to them. We hypothesize that artists will be interested in selling, but unaware of how to get started and buyers will be captivated by the artwork and seek out credibility. Since buying and selling is a risk involving money, users will prioritize details and credible information and processes. These usability tests are critical to the development of the project, as we design the user interface of the site to best support the users. Without user feedback, we are unaware of how the site may be causing issues and negative emotions. We plan on providing a widely accessible and understandable product.

RESEARCH GOALS

OBJECTIVE 1

We plan to gauge user confidence and usability levels on first visit. Understanding our target audience's perspective and desires for their experience will guide our direction for improvements.

OBJECTIVE 2

We intend to identify problems and their level of severity. With task scenarios and unsuccessful attempts and dissatisfaction, we will identify crisis points in user flows, which we can modify for success.

METHODOLOGY

Roles

As a partnership, we've split up the roles for Kelly May to act as the **interviewer** and Zoë as **notetaker** and **data collector**.

Interviewer:
- Receives participant consent and encourages honest feedback
- Impartially reads and follows the usability protocol
- Asks participant for clarification of feelings and additional thoughts/ suggestions

Note Taker:
- Diligently record participant's actions, reactions, emotions, pain points, and interview details, as well as points to come back to and reassess after the recording is complete

Data Collector:
- Measures and records time on task and binary metrics.
- Records participant feedback.

Sampling

Population

- Athens residents, ages 18–75
- UGA college students, alumni, faculty, and staff
- Artists in/ in relation in Athens
- Those is search of original artwork online

METHODOLOGY

Frame & Method

The sample chosen will be a wide representation of our population, accounting for a diverse range of demographics, of whom are specifically interested in buying and/or selling art. Due to the two distinct user groups, we will conduct our research slightly differently for each group and their needs. We will interview 4 artists and 6 buyers, 10 in total, with a slight emphasis on the buyers, as we intend most users of the site to be potential buyers. We have created two personas below to demonstrate these two target groups.

Recruiting for the interview will be shared by both partners. In order to identify an accurate sample, we will survey user demographics and functions, such as age, residency, career, and interest in selling/buying artwork. The interview will occur virtually, so all interactions may be recorded as the interview takes place. This will allow for in-depth observations used in our analysis. There is an opportunity to interview in-person with a laptop, while recording virtually as well. This may allow for a more personal connection to the interviewee and provide a more comfortable environment to share responses and give full and honest answers. We may encounter difficulties finding artists in Athens due to our disconnect to being physically located in Atlanta as well as not having enough credibility to artists who sell on their own.

PERSONAS

Age: 25
Location: Athens, GA
Gender: Female
Race: Black

Anika James

"I graduating from UGA, with a major in Graphic Design. I'm living in Athens, pursuing my artistic passions and working part-time."

Goals

- grow her small art business
- connect to buyers in and outside of her community
- express her brand

Biography

Anika is a young, black female from Georgia who is small art business owner. She enjoys the diversity of Athens, loves to stay involved in local events and activities. She loves connecting with an audience but has a hard time finding interested buyers. She is busy with her other job, so she needs an easy solution.
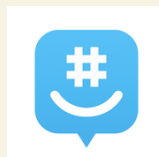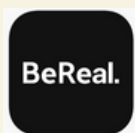
Frustrations

- feeling too busy to pursue her art business
- feeling unattached from the community

Frequently Used

Age: 58
Location: Albany, NY
Gender: Male
Race: White

Gary Holmes

"I've always wanted to develop an art gallery and now that my kids are gone, it's time to refocus on myself. I want to find art that I can relate to from my time at UGA."

Biography

Gary is an empty nester whose children recently moved out. His hobbies include golf, reading, and house parties. He is entering his sophisticated era and saving for retirement. He wants to redecorate his office and give off a tasteful vibe. He is also a proud alum from UGA and would love to find something that reminds him of the college town.

Goals

- develop as an art collector and impress guests
- honor his college experience
- be unique

Frustrations

- finds it hard to express himself
- is inexperienced collecting art or decorating walls
- lonely and feeling disconnected

Frequently Used

TESTING INSTRUMENTS

SCRIPT

> **Web browser should be open to Google or some other "neutral" page**

Hi _____. My name is _____, and I'm going to be walking you through this session today
.
Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You probably already have a good idea of why we asked you here, but let me go over it again briefly. We're asking people to try using a Web site that we're working on so we can see whether it works as intended. The session should take about an hour.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that we're testing the site, not you. You can't do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don't have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the site, I'm going to ask you as much as possible to try to think out loud: to say what you're looking at, what you're trying to do, and what you're thinking. This will be a big help to us.

Also, please don't worry that you're going to hurt our feelings. We're doing this to improve the site, so we need to hear your honest reactions.

If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since we're interested in how people do when they don't have someone sitting next to them to help. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

SCRIPT

You may have noticed the microphone. We're going to record what happens on the screen and our conversation. The recording will only be used to help us figure out how to improve the site, and it won't be seen by anyone except the people working on this project and our instructors. And it helps me, because I don't have to take as many notes.

If you would, I'm going to ask you to sign a consent form for us. It just says that we have your permission to record you, and that the recording will only be seen by the people working on the project and our instructors.

> **Give them a recording permission form and a penWhile they sign it, START the SCREEN RECORDER**

Do you have any questions so far?

OK. Before we look at the site, I'd like to ask you just a few quick questions.

First, what's your occupation? What do you do all day?

Now, roughly how many hours a week altogether—just a ballpark estimate— would you say you spend using the Internet, including browsing and email, at work and at home?

And what percent of that time is spent shopping online or viewing online marketplaces?

What kinds of sites are you looking at when you shop online?

Do you have any favorite Web sites?

OK, great. We're done with the questions, and we can start looking at things.

 First things first, I'd like you to fill out this pre-test survey.

SCRIPT

Send/hand pre-test survey to participant. Do not look over their shoulder while they fill it out.

Thank you! Now I'm going to ask you to look at the Athens Era website.

Click on the bookmark for the site's Home page.

First, I'm going to ask you to look at this page and tell me what you make of it: what strikes you about it, whose site you think it is, what you can do here, and what it's for. Just look around and do a little narrative.

You can scroll if you want to, but don't click on anything yet.

Allow this to continue for three or four minutes, at most.

Thanks. Now I'm going to ask you to try doing some specific tasks. I'm going to read each one out loud.

I'm also going to ask you to do these tasks without using Search. We'll learn a lot more about how well the site works that way.

And again, as much as possible, it will help us if you can try to think out loud as you go along

UX RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Purpose
The researcher, Kelly May Sheehan, is conducting a usability study to evaluate the design of Athens Era. The results will be used to help improve the site design. This test is being performed as part of a sequence of capstone classes in the Emerging Media Masters program. The study will take approximately 1 hour.

Procedures
As a subject you will be asked to:

1. Fill out a pre-test survey.
2. Complete a series of tasks on the site while being observed and recorded.
3. Complete post-test survey.

Confidentiality and voluntary participation
Participation in this usability study is voluntary. The descriptions and findings will be used to compile a report about the site's effectiveness. However, at no time will your full name be used. With your permission, I would like to take photos, videos, and notes to share with faculty members at the University of Georgia's New Media Institute; as well as other Emerging Media Masters students in my group.

You are at liberty to withdraw your consent to the experiment and discontinue participation at any time. If you have any questions please contact: Kelly May Sheehan, (678)-457-0840 / kelly.sheehan@uga.edu. You can also reach out to my instructor, Leah Moss, at leahmoss@uga.edu.

By signing below, you are indicating you understand the information on this form:

Participant Signature: Date:

TASK TABLE

Task	Success or Failure	Observations
Task 1: You recently came across the 'Mr. Fox' painting and want to see more by the artist. Locate the artist's shop and view their other paintings. **Post-Task Question:** Without utilizing the search feature, did you encounter any roadblocks reaching the destination?	Success / Failure	
Task 2: You just checked your tracking information, and it says that your Athens Era artwork has arrived. You can't find the package anywhere! Who should you contact first to resolve this issue? **Post-Task Question:** What should you do after contacting the seller?	Success / Failure	
Task 3: You are considering opening an online art shop with Athens Era, but you're not entirely convinced. You want to check a couple more things. What percentage of a transactional proceed is given to artists on Athens Era?	Success / Failure	

Task 4: You're planning a long weekend trip to Athens from the 9th-11th. You're not quite sure what's on the itinerary yet. Are there any art events happening that weekend? **Post-Task Question:** How would you learn more information about this event?	Success / Failure	
Task 5: You've made a few purchases on Athens Era and finally decided to create an account to keep track of your orders from now on. What information does the account registration page require to create your user profile?	Success / Failure	
Task 6: You just realized that you signed up with the wrong email. How do you change the email attached to your account to the correct one? **Post-Test Question:** What other fields may be updated after registration?	Success / Failure	
Task 7: You really want to shop locally for holiday gifts this year. Your mom has been begging for painting to put in the foyer. She doesn't have a preference for style or artist. However, you're on a budget. What is the most inexpensive work of art currently available on Athens Era?	Success / Failure	

Task 8: You've decided that you want to sell your art on Athens Era. You completed the registration, but you don't have access to your own shop yet. What must happen after submitting your registration in order to have access? **Post-Task Question:** What sort of things will this process ask of you?	Success / Failure	
Task 9: You're tired of typing in all of your card info every time you make a purchase on Athens Era. How can save a payment method to be automatically stored for future transactions?	Success / Failure	
Task 10: You're in a pinch and need a last minute gift for your art-obsessed best friend. Unfortunately, you don't follow art trends, and you just need to find what's popular. What is the name of one of the current most popular works of art?	Success / Failure	

Thanks, that was very helpful.

Do you have any questions for me, now that we're done?

Wonderful!

I have one last favor to ask of you. I'm going to send you a link to the post-test survey. Please fill out this within 24 hours while this site is still fresh in your mind. And that's it! Thank you for your time.

PRE-TEST SURVEY

1. Have you ever purchased a work of art using an online marketplace?

○ Yes
○ No

2. Have you ever purchased a work of art from a small artist or business?

○ Yes
○ No

3. Shopping locally is important to me.

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

4. Supporting small businesses is important to me

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

5. I prefer the convenience of shopping online

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

6. Finding art that I like is:

difficult   O   O   O   O   O   easy

7. Shopping online is:

complicated   O   O   O   O   O   stress–free

8. Supporting my community is:

not important   O   O   O   O   O   necessary

9. What motivates to buy a work of art?

10. What factors most greatly impact your online shopping experience (positive and negative)?

POST-TEST SURVEY

1. Was your overall experience on Athens Era positive?

O Yes
O No

2. Would you be more inclined to purchase artwork with a website like Athens Era?

O Yes
O No

3. I can easily understand the purpose and mission of Athens Era

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
O	O	O	O	O

4. I can easily navigate the Athens Era website

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
O	O	O	O	O

5. I am likely to visit Athens Era in the future

strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
O	O	O	O	O

6. The navigation of the website is:

disorganized   O   O   O   O   O   organized

7. The process to become a vendor is:

confusing   O   O   O   O   O   straight-forward

8. Updating my user profile is:

challenging   O   O   O   O   O   simple

9. What improvements would you make to the Athens Era website?

10. What features did you most enjoy about the Athens Era website?

SYSTEM USABILITY SCALE

1.I think that I would like to use this website frequently.

2.I found the website unnecessarily complex.

3.I thought the website was easy to use.

4.I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this website.

5.I found the various features in this website were well integrated.

6.I thought there was too much inconsistency in this website.

7.I would imagine that most people would learn to use this website very quickly.

8.I found the website very awkward to use.

9.I felt very confident using the website.

10.I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this website.

Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

PRODUCT REACTION CARDS

Simplistic
Inviting
Clean
Irrelevant
Approachable
Dated
Valuable
Consistent
Boring
Effortless
Comprehensive
Stable
Easy to use
Motivating
Compelling
Disconnected
Satisfying
Fun
Entertaining
Inspiring
Slow
Appealing
Understandable
Incomprehensible

Organized
Accessible
Confusing
Useful
Fresh
Creative
Relevant
Impressive
Ordinary
Energetic
Stimulating
Enthusiastic
Empowering
Exceptional
Predictable
Impersonal
Convenient
Effective
Difficult
Frustrating
Clear
Powerful
Customizable
Hard to Use
Fast

Attractive
Efficient
Poor quality
Inconsistent
Uncontrollable
Familiar
Overwhelming
Unpredictable
Complex
Unrefined
Rigid
Engaging
Annoying
Busy
Expected
Advanced
Essential
Straight Forward
Stressful
Time-Saving
Innovative
Dull
Responsive

Unapproachable
Distracting
Meaningful
Trustworthy
Old
Intuitive
Cutting edge
Intimidating
Time-consuming
Ineffective
Helpful
Too Technical
Personal
Exciting
Professional
High quality
Usable
Friendly
Connected
Compatible
Undesirable
Reliable
Sophisticated

ANALYSIS

During JMRC 7015: Emerging Media Capstone, we will conduct and implement our research plan as described, with potential modifications as we see fit. Modifications may arise from early testing and changes to our beta. From our user-testing results, we will analyze our notes, observations, user task success/fail rates, number and severity of pain points, and direct user responses.

- Tasks will be analyzed by time spent and success rate. When calculating rates, we will be using a 95% confidence interval due to our sample.
- Pre and post-test surveys will be built, reported, and analyzed through Google Forms. We will use the charts created to display our data and findings.
- From the System Usability Scale, we will calculate our score and determine if the usability is above average or not, which will indicate the severity of our issues and ultimately, our user-testing goal, of understanding user confidence and level of usability on the site.
- Our product reaction cards will be analyzed by each word's meaning and how it portrays user emotions, as well as by mode of words that are chosen more than once by all of the participants, which may indicate a widely experienced emotional experience/ perception
- Major and minor issues will be categorized by user group: buyer or seller, as well as level of importance to a user flow
- The results may be characterize to the population, as the sample should accurately represent the population. We should communicate our results with confidence intervals, as the results come from a small sample in comparison to the population.

CONCLUSION

Athens Era will continue to improve before its official launch. With the user experience research plan, we will identify and recruit interviewees to represent our target market and population. User-testing will involve a virtual interview with pre and post test surveys, a system usability scale, and product reaction cards to gather needed information on the user experience for both the buyer and seller personas. Survey and interview questions are created with intentions to understand the user experience, users needs, and frustrations. Tasks are chosen based on the critical points is journey maps we predict to occur, such as how to creating a vendor account, login execution, and purchasing artwork. We will analyze results using metrics, such as time and success of tasks, length and detail of positive and negative responses, and emotional response, such as tone of voice and facial expressions. Testing results will provide insight on user perspectives, which will guide our future design modifications to the site.