

What is Informatics?

Defining "informatics" proves challenging. In general, informatics definitions are broad and do not incur specific meaning until applied by particular informatics communities (i.e., medical professionals, computer scientists, sociologists). To further complicate definition, informatics is often composed of various disciplines of study. These broad definitions can complicate how the value of informatics is promoted both within informatics communities and from the "outside" world. We grappled with defining informatics to clarify the definition for ourselves and for our fellow Information Studies students. This wiki aims to promote self-definition through community discussion. By promoting a user-centered perspective and participatory design and maintenance, we initiate the conversation for the informatics community at UCLA to begin defining itself in a format that can grow and change.

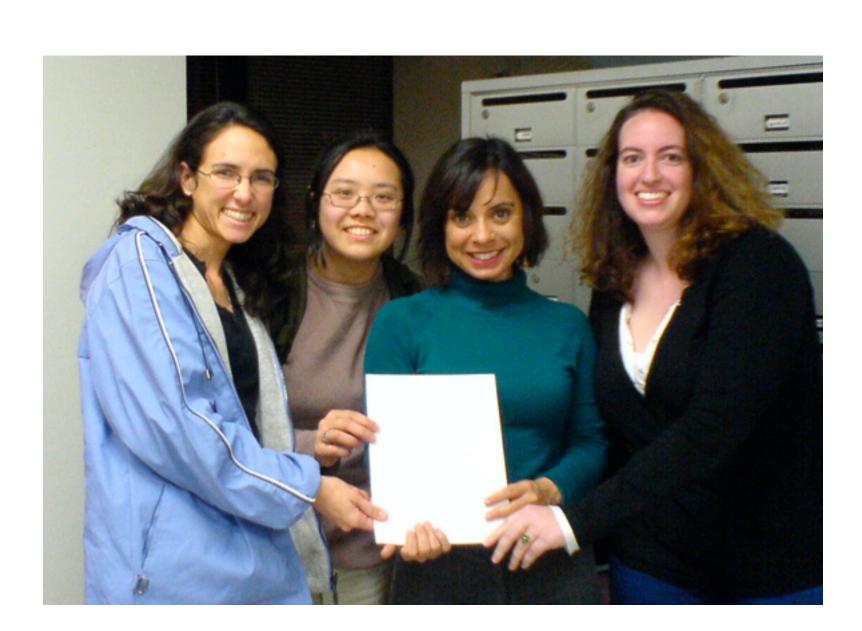
Why a Wiki?

Blogs, wikis, and other forms of online social networking act as valuable information channels, as well as virtual "places" where like-minded individuals can interact with one another. In particular, a wiki can promote self-definition through community discussion because all members can contribute and edit content. We developed the UCLA informatics wiki with the intent of facilitating collaboration, democratic contribution, and interactivity. We came to realize that this wiki had the potential to extend beyond our physical community at UCLA to become a resource for the global informatics community.

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Before





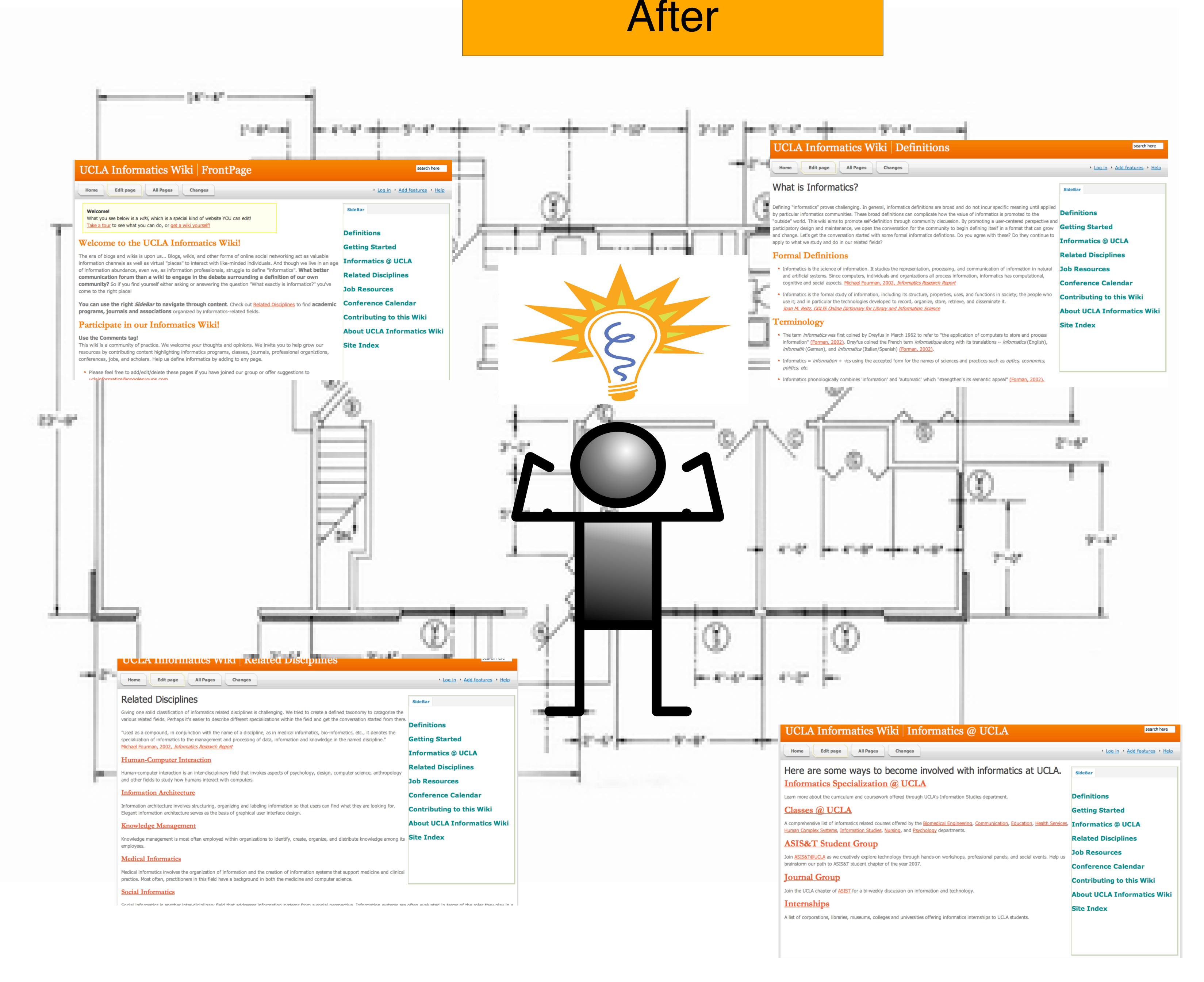
Jsability Study

Our usability study was based on the heuristic evaluation model proposed by Jakob Nielson (2005). We recruited four subjects who represented different levels of computer experience, as well as motivations for using the wiki. We first asked users to discuss their expectations of the wiki and then asked them to complete three tasks. Usability testing indicated that PBwiki's software suffered from limitations, most notably, the use of the SideBar as primary content navigation. Another software limitation was the pronounced display of the functionality toolbar across the top of the wiki. Our usability study results also encouraged our group to re-evaluate how to categorize content in the SideBar.



Competitive Analysis

Because there are few resources for informatics practitioners, we looked at other successful models that attempt to bridge disciplines related to information technology. The most successful model we found was the STS Wiki. We came to realize that the UCLA Informatics Wiki had the potential to extend beyond our physical community at UCLA to become a resource for the global informatics community, similar to how the STS Wiki functions as a global resource for the science and technology communities. We envision the UCLA Informatics Wiki being populated to the extent of the STS Wiki, and we hope it will serve a similar function in increasing knowledge about informatics and bringing informatics practitioners together.



UCLA Informatics Wiki

http://uclainformatics.pbwiki.com