

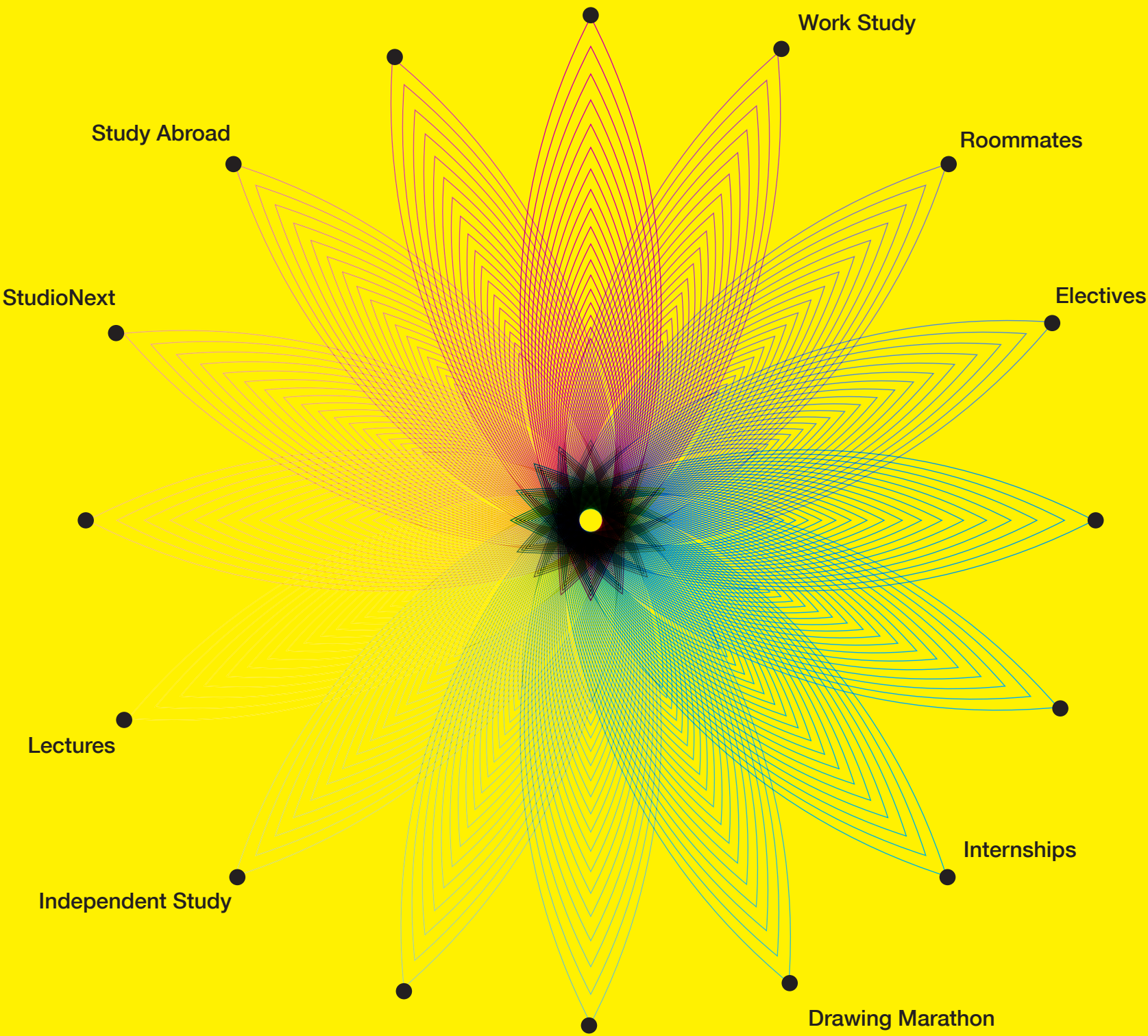
So, why PORTAL?

In the Fall of 2009, a very simple question was posed. “Why are the students at a University of so many disciplines, not sharing their knowledge amongst each other?” Who is to say that a dancer and graphic designer, couldn’t enhance each others learning experience through a shared knowledge network? Who is to say a film maker and an actor shouldn’t work together? Seemingly simple questions, turned into a vast political and personal journey into the world of academia with surprising results. Was the University really open and supportive of the suggested cross pollination?

CURRENT UArTS STATISTICS



CROSSROADS: POINTS OF VARIOUS DISCIPLINE INTERSECTION



A Study in Student Collaboration

Through a series of experiments, the study tried to engage the entire UArts community as a whole. The result: 5%. Of 2500 faculty staff and students, only 5% started a line of communication with us. Those, brave 5% of students, faculty and staff actually stepped up, asked what we were doing, and whole-hearted gave themselves up to the greater good. You see, these people are the proactives. These are the artists that look at something, and truly beg to ask the question of why? What are you doing here? And can I be a part of it? They chose to engage in a face to face manner, whether it be with a friend, associate, stranger or mentor.

Collaboration is in our blood. It’s the basis by which we were founded, and should be the driving force by which we move forward. So as we near our 25 year anniversary, how do we stand? Overall, yes, the University can help reduce the cognitive load of collaboration. It has massive over communication, under communication, and non-communication issues. One of the suggestions to help with these issues, deals with the portals to each building as a means of communicating events amongst the populace. The all inclusive UArts Information Board.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

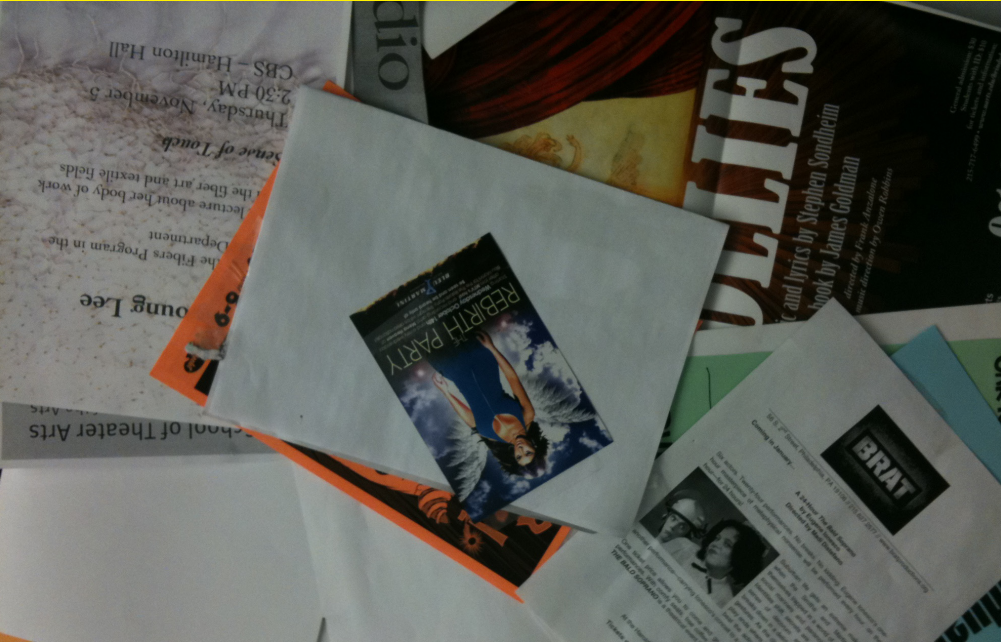


fig. 1.1 over communication: UArts message boards create muddy facades that are often ignored. Is this really what we want to represent UArts as Users walk into the building?



fig. 1.2 under communication: even as visitors visit the building, there is no directory services to point them to their destination. Galleries, lecture halls, and studio space go unused because they are basically unknown.



Results

Through a series of experimentation, interviews and group research, a theoretical answer to the mystery of “Who collaborates and how?” came down to one very simple answer. *The proactive people engaging in face-to-face relationships.* Of the 3000 people on campus, only 5% participation came across in each engagement. Only 5% discovered our events. Only 5% stood up and asked us what we were doing.

The fail-safe moment in which everyone engaged was by walking around, and causing moments of face-to-face contact. A term coined MBWA, or Management By Walking Around.

So moving forward we hope to reduce the cognitive load of the Users, thus making person to person engagement much easier.

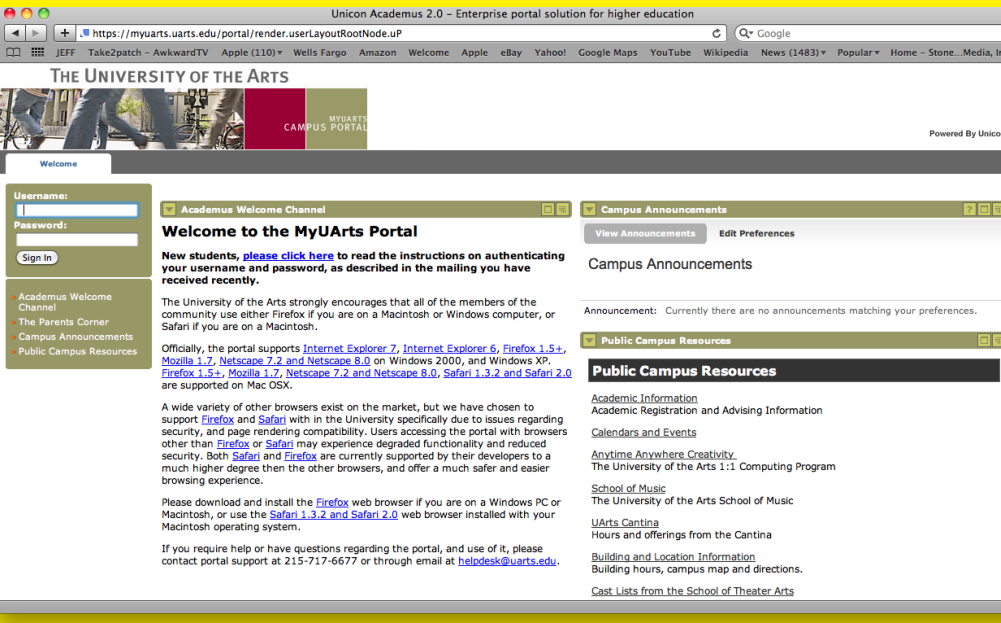


fig. 1.3 non-functional communication: UArts web services is currently a very disjointed multi-sign-in system. Students and faculty are tasked with gathering information from 3 separate sources. Each “portals” main complain is their difficulty to navigate and find information.