

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in the My Manchester for staff Pilot. The first phase of the pilot is complete and we're now counting on pilot users to continue to be involved in the next stage as we work to improve the site further, based on the feedback we've received.

The purpose of the pilot is to demonstrate, test and refine the concept of My Manchester for staff, acting as a single entry point to all of the applications, tools and resources that staff and post graduate researchers use; ultimately, replacing StaffNet and Staff Portal.

Comments and feedback

The most popular way to provide feedback has been through the comments and suggestions button which is included on every page of the pilot site. Those who participated in the focus groups said they also found these sessions very useful.

Initial feedback was mixed. Positive feedback was received about the concept of one home page for everything, a single search for contacts, library and StaffNet content and the links in to useful sections of programs such as eProg.

Negative feedback centred around the appearance of the homepage and the relevance of content. The initial pilot homepage design was felt by most users to have too much text and to be too cluttered and the way news was displayed was not popular.

Feedback was also received that the search tool is not effective and some users prefer to use Google instead. Unfortunately this is determined by the University's configuration of search and improving search is outside of the scope for this current project.

The most frequent negative comment was that the home page content isn't relevant to staff from all areas and has too heavy a focus on academic and research areas. The content reflects the fact that roughly half of the University's staff are academic or research however the ratio of support staff to academic and research in the pilot was five to one. Consequently a large proportion of pilot users felt content was less relevant to them.

Overall participation in the pilot was quite good with more than 90% of pilot users using the site to some extent, however a large proportion of users logged in less than 8 times over the course of the ten week pilot. Targeted surveys to these users show that this was largely due to the initial unappealing layout of the front page and the lack of relevant content.

What we have done in response

The interim solution to the issues around layout of the homepage and the amount of text, was to reduce the amount of text used for links so that none ran over two lines, as well as removing some of the less useful links in each category. Users were also given the ability to add favourites and to make items “sticky” which ensures they remain at the top of category to keep them visible.

To create a less cluttered and more appealing home page the “metro” interface has been developed, which uses large coloured boxes with small amounts of text. The feedback to the release of this has been positive but as it was released towards the end of the pilot, the impact so far may have been limited.

The feedback regarding the News section of the homepage led to users being given the ability to hide the news column. The column re-appears at the start of each day to ensure that users are aware of new news items.



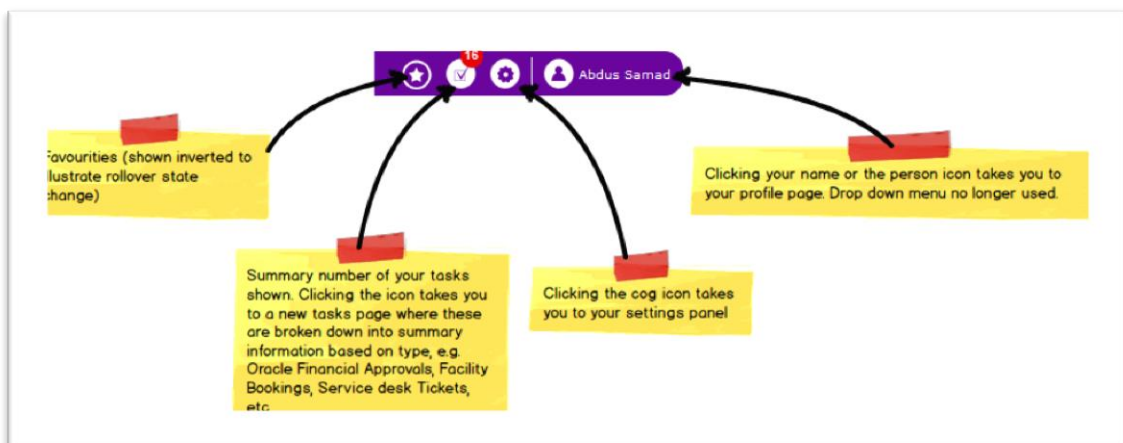
“Metro” style view

Not yet seen the “Metro” view? Try it out by clicking on your name in the top right corner, then selecting My Settings, then choose the ‘Metro’ Theme from the drop down menu and Save Settings.

What's next?

Four new pieces of work have been identified, the first two will address issues with the relevance of content. In the longer term there is a plan to integrate all the functionality currently provided through StaffNet and Staff portal in to the My Manchester for Staff site within the next year.

- The development of “personas” which will present users with relevant links based on the area they work in. Initially this will be selected based on their place in the organization but the end goal is for users to be able to select which persona they feel suits them best. It is expected that the first stage “personas” will be complete by mid-July.
- The ability to merge category boxes and favourites will allow staff to organise, add and hide links from the default view. Initially this will be via a grid view, accessed through My Settings which will allow users to move links between categories as well as adding and removing their own. This will later be replaced by a drag and drop interface within the home page. The grid view should be available by the end of July.
- The third priority for development is the modification of the header bar to incorporate tasks, creating a dedicated icon which includes a numeric indicator of how many tasks you've got. Clicking the icon will take you to a new dedicated task page which will provide a high-level overview of where tasks have come from (eg; Oracle Financials) and summary information. From this page tasks would also link to the original application.
- The fourth and (for now) final improvement we're working on is integration of news in to the “Metro” view to provide a more integrated appearance. This paves the way for a later piece of work to deliver a new news and events system. The header bar and the integration of news should be complete by the end of the summer.



Proposed new header view

If you would like to give us your thoughts on the header bar, there is a [question of the week topic](#) in the community section of the pilot.

Finally ...

We'd like to thank you all for your participation, feedback and patience with the first stage of the My Manchester Pilot. As you can see we have a lot more planned and we hope you will continue to be part of the pilot and to help us in developing the content which is most relevant for you.