

NTEN.org Card Sort

NTEN card sort exercises were conducted using the Websort online tool and were available to participants from June 8th - June 19th, 2009. The exercise was conducted as an open sort, which allowed users not only to create their own categories but also to label those categories.

145 users participated in the sort and were segmented into two audiences: active members (98) and inactive members (47). 47 content items were sorted.

Overall, items were sorted and grouped similarly among both audiences. There was more variance in the way categories were labeled, which is detailed below.

Observations

- Overall, the primary categories that emerged through the sort were: About NTEN, Membership / Member Resources, Blog, Events, Get Involved/Groups/Community, Learn/Research, Support NTEN, and possibly Conference. These are reflected in the tree diagrams below. Note that these are not necessarily the suggested labels for the categories.
- The primary category with the most variance is Events. Some included Conference in events, while some gave it its own category. Some categorized webinars as events, while others grouped them as learning/education resources (in the same category as research).
- In the comments, participants indicated that they would like to see certain items accessible from every page, such as “Donate.” This can be accomplished through a toolbar in addition to the main navigation, similar to what exists on the current site.
- Active vs. Inactive members:
 - Active members grouped Job Forums with all other types of online groups, possibly because they know this is where it’s located in the existing site. Inactive members were more inclined to create a unique Jobs category.
 - Inactive members grouped conference-related content with events, while active members were more likely to give the conference its own section.
 - Active members more often related support (sponsorship, donating) to “About NTEN,” while inactive members grouped it with community/groups. Overall, Support NTEN emerged as a possible primary category, as seen in the tree graphs below.

Challenges

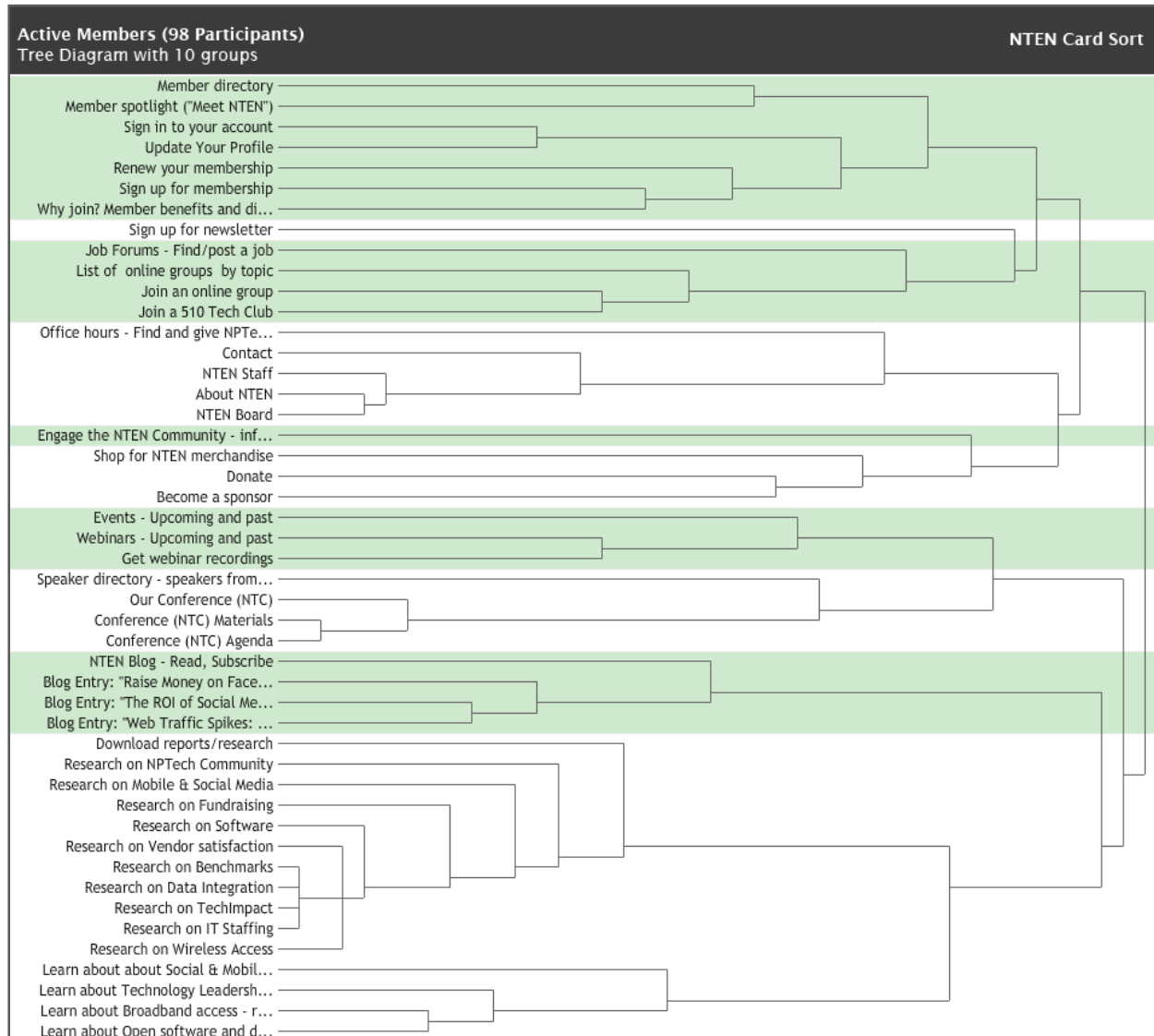
- There is a split between how users label categories. Some labeled by type of information, while others labeled by how they would use the information:
 - “Research” vs. “Learn” or “Education”
 - Learn/Education was then broken into topic areas
 - “Community” or “Groups” vs. “Get Involved”

Additionally, some wanted to be able to access all resources (research, webinars, etc.) by topic area in addition to content type. A few participants mentioned this specifically in their comments.

- Difficult items:
 - Sign Up for Newsletter -- Some grouped it into a community/connect section, some grouped it with account management tasks, and others included it in “About NTEN”
 - Find/Post a Job – Some gave this its own category (as reflected in the tree graphs), while others grouped it in the Community category.
 - Engage the NTEN Community – Often grouped with Donate and Sponsor an Event (forming a “Support NTEN” category), but also grouped into About NTEN and Community/Get Involved.
 - Office Hours: Find and Give NP Tech Help – Although there was a high level of agreement on how to categorize this item, it was most often grouped in “About NTEN,” rather than Community/Get Involved. There may be a misunderstanding about what this item is.

With the exception of Office Hours, these items can be seen in the tree diagrams below as falling into their own categories. We’ll want to revisit them in the usability testing portion of the project.

Active Members (98 Participants)

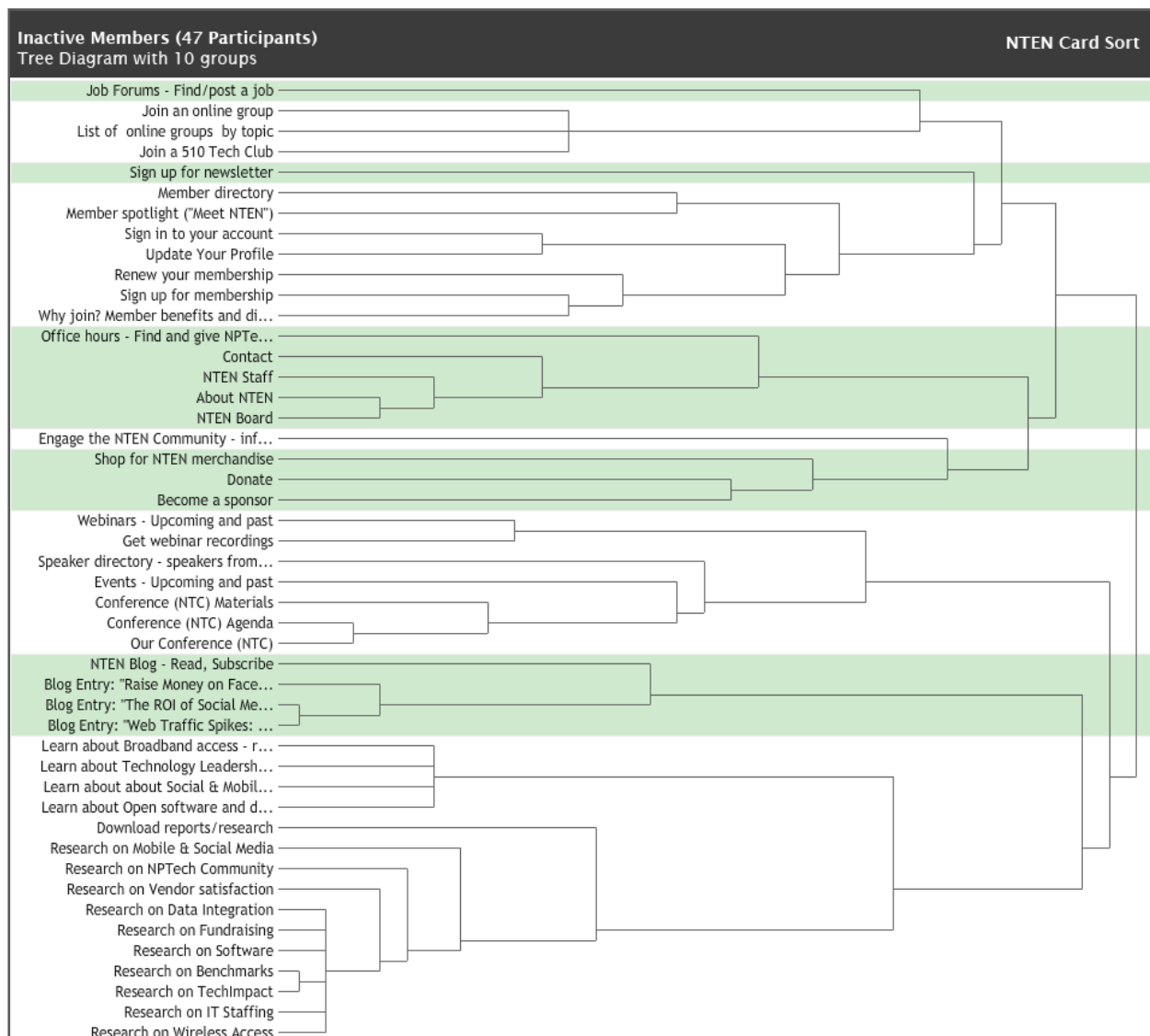


Comments from Active Members

- I labeled one section "Other" because none of the items seemed to fit in any of the other categories. I didn't think they belonged together either.
- I'm not clear (without going to the actual site) what the difference is between "research" and "learn". Also I would like to see events and webinars broken up into past and upcoming categories rather than lumped together.
- Reports and research - should be in two places both in a single place - (reports/research category) and by topic (Software, social media, staffing, etc) - In other words, should be sorted using Drupal taxonomy or something similar, similar tagging. This strategy can be used on blog posts, condensing data by topic in a specific location.

- I had a hard time fitting everything into the space provided, which seemed to want to limit it to 3 columns and did not expand at the bottom to accommodate one column being longer than another. Hopefully what I've provided makes sense. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback, I've had a tough time using the current website effectively (yet still refer people to it all the time based on content). :)
- Within each group, the items are not listed in the order I would like, but without going back and adding them in reverse order, I can't see how to easily change it.
- Some of the content I would have live in two places. For instance, Join and Renew Membership should also live in Your NTEN Account IMHO.
I separated Research / Toolkits, Webinars, and The NTEN Conference from Services (even though they are all services) because I felt these were NTEN's flagship initiatives, thereby deserving special space on the website.
Within any given category, I imagine some of the pages as being more "senior" than others in the architecture hierarchy. For instance, Join an Online Group and List of Online Groups in Services may fall under a more senior page titled Online Groups.
- This was really fun. My org is redesigning our site, and I wish we could do a card sort like this. Thanks for the opportunity to play!
- "Donate" option should be on every page. It should be listed as its own category and be very easy process.
- First, this is a superb way to get feedback. I found only 1 item I felt could be in more than one of my own groups. I look forward to hearing more about this process.
- Links to some things should be on more than one page, i.e., member & newsletter signups and research downloads/lists
- There are one or two items that could reside in multiple places - for instance download....
- The Tech Topics/Research/Webinars stuff all seems to belong under a top-level "learning" category. I don't know enough about the "office hours" feature to feel like I've put it in the right place. It might go under the learning category described above.
- I'd like to be able to list some of these items in multiple lists ("donate" for example).

Inactive Members (47 Participants)



Comments from Inactive Members

- Card sorting is fun. Please do some user testing of the new IA... what users say they want is often different from what works.
- I see the "Learn about..." as its own navigation area -- maybe four callout boxes on the home page and a nav menu that persists throughout the site somehow, with quick links into each of the four subject areas. I've also filed four items under the heading "Cross-post," because I think they belong in a couple of different places: "Become a sponsor" seems like it could be highlighted in the Events section but perhaps the info could live permanently under "Connect." "Why join?" could sit under "Connect" and "Member Services." "Conference (NTC) Materials" could sit under both "Events" and "Research." "Get webinar recordings" could live in "Events"

(alongside the webinar info), but I think it could potentially have its own top-level nav link as well. It probably doesn't belong in "Research" since most of your research is more formal than your webinar content, but perhaps it could also be linked from that section.

- Put the blog into NTEN Community 2. Alternative Title for NTEN Community - Everybody's Talking 3. Include a Search function 4. Need cross referral between sections
- Ideally I'd show inter-relationships between boxes, such as between Events, Membership Benefits, and Get Involved, and the relationship between blog entries, research categories, and events using keywords. The big blocks of info (such as Research, Get Involved, and Events) could be further broken down into sub-categories.
- This is a cool tool. Even better if you could reorder the group lists - I'd have to take everything out of the group and re-assign it to change the order, I reckon.
- You should split research proposal, their results etc from blog entries which I have put in current but ephemeral. Research goes out of date slowly but blog entries on the same topics can become irrelevant overnight. My preference would also be for a customized home page that runs my account in a sidebar and perhaps gives me the ability to tag and rate content then populates the home page with content of that type or from that source preferentially.