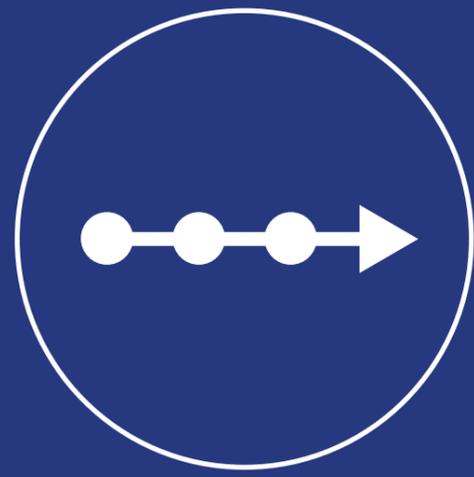




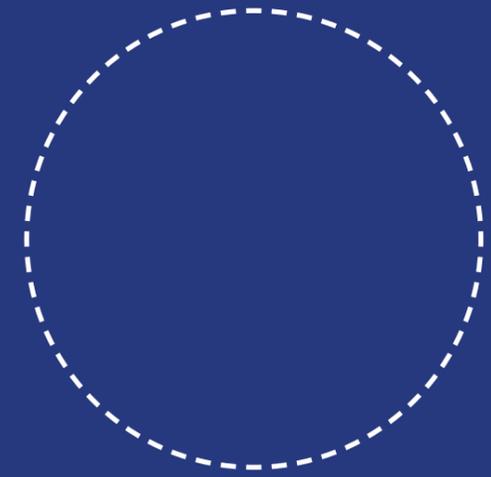
People



Process

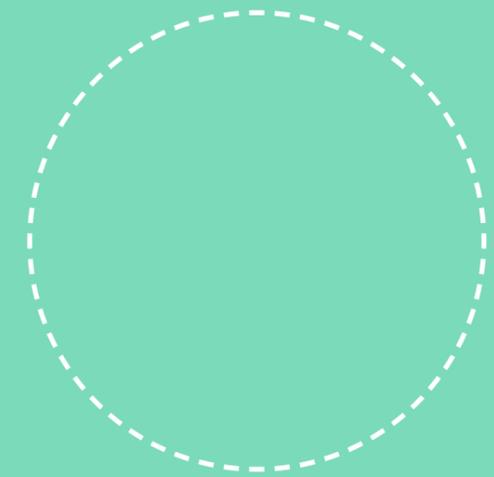


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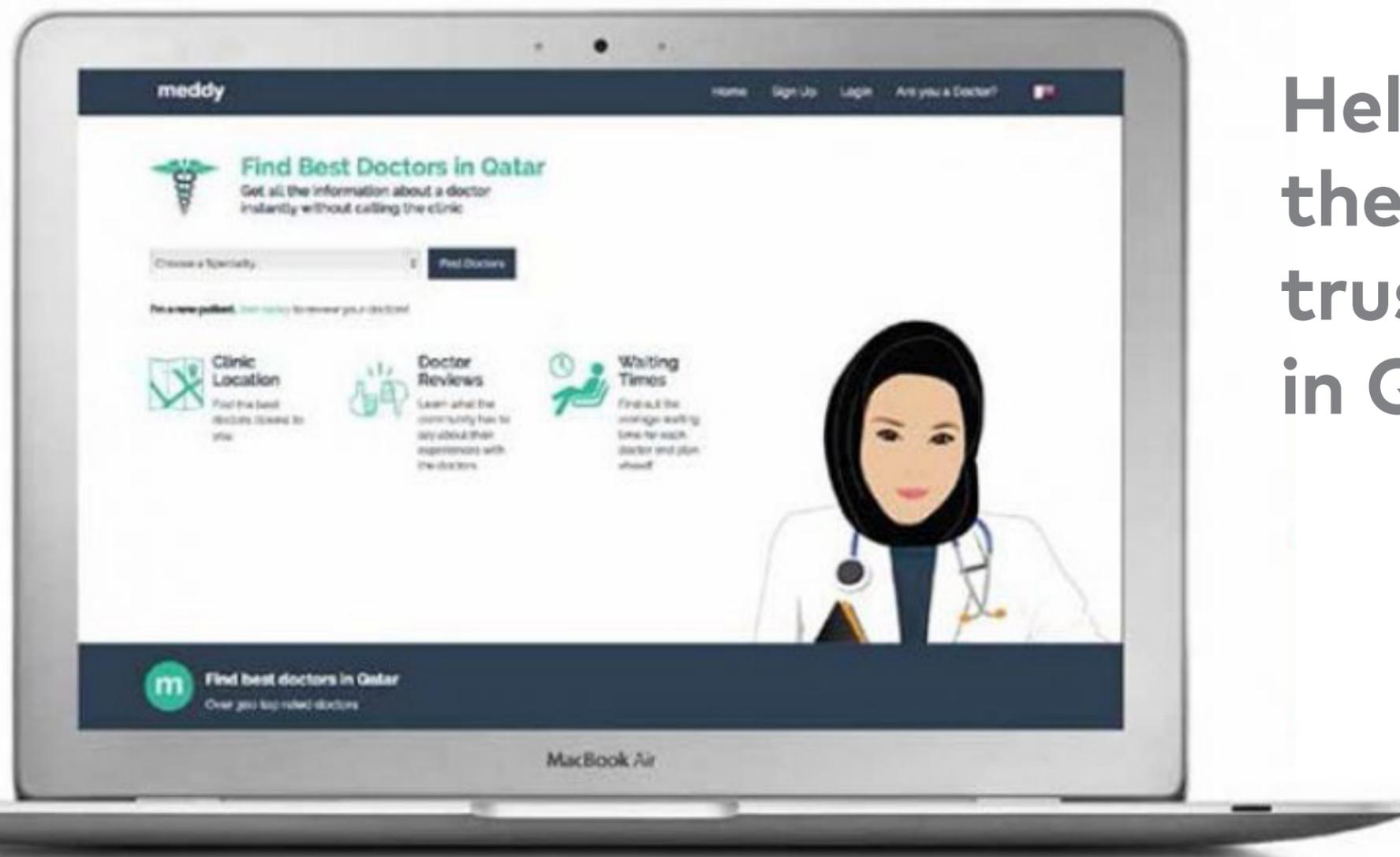
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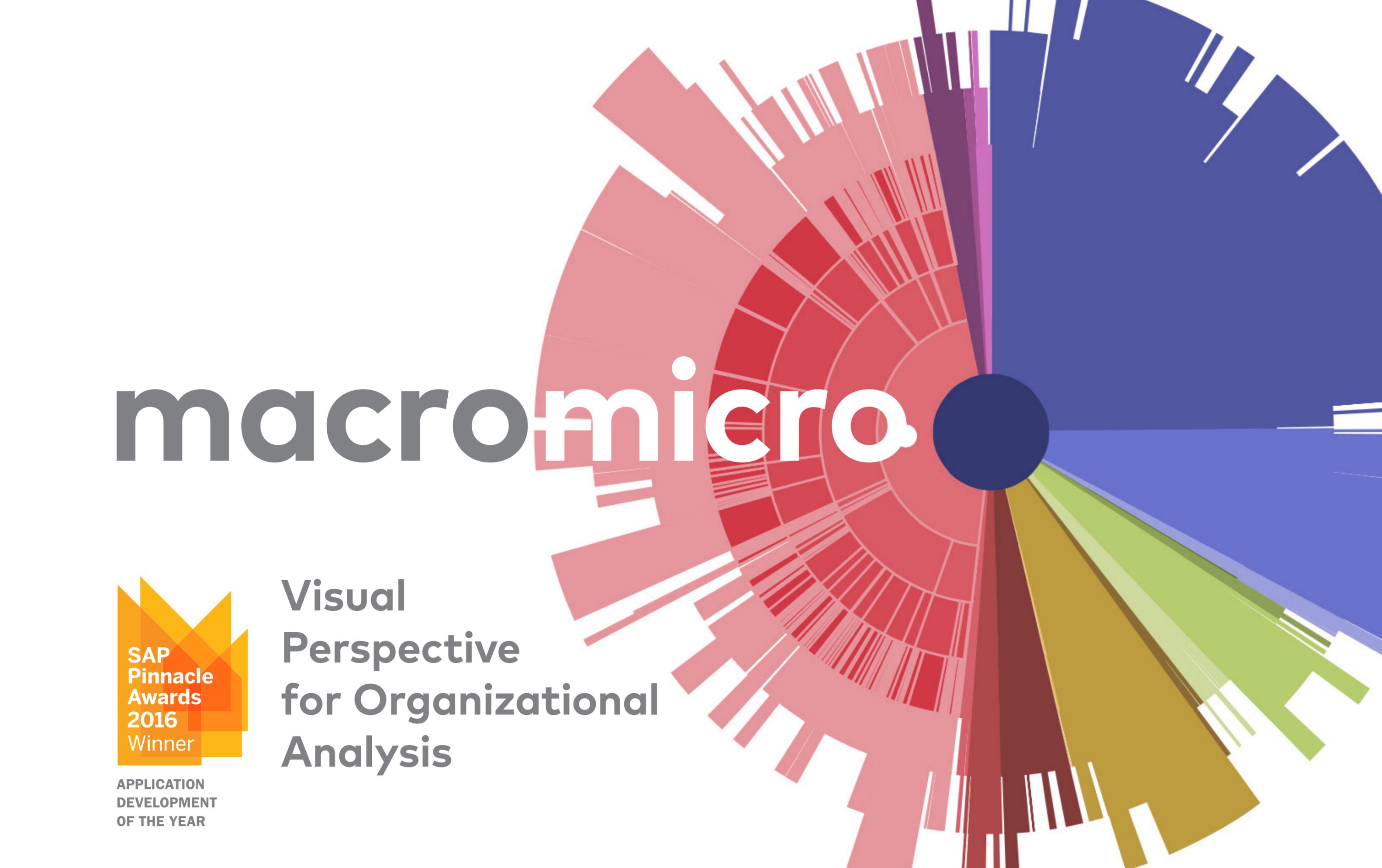


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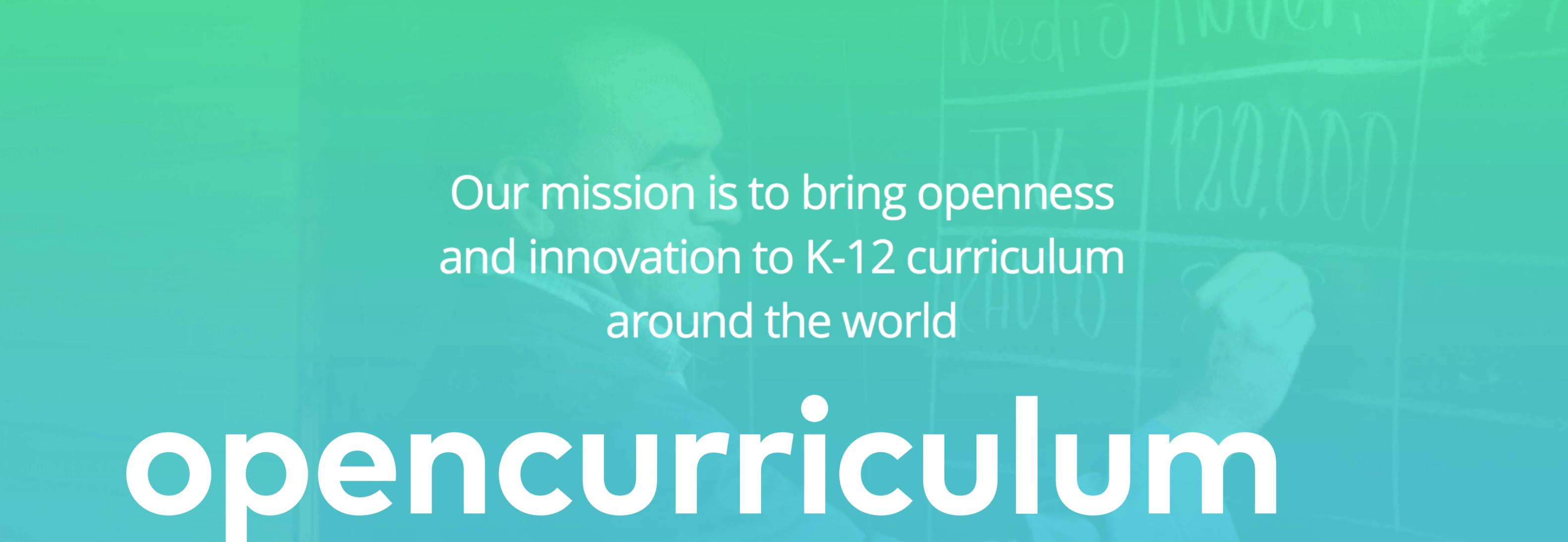
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The background of the top half of the slide is a teal-colored image of a classroom. On the left, a teacher is seen from the side, looking towards a chalkboard. The chalkboard is filled with handwritten text in white chalk, including the words "Medio", "TV", "KAVIO", and "120,000".

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Although I agree with much of what you say in this column, one thing jumped out with which I must strenuously disagree. It is a minor supporting point to your overall thesis, but it hit home with me.

You state that the Obama administration must “insist on...preserving No Child Left Behind’s accountability standards, no matter what the teachers’ unions say.” As a college educator and not a member of any union, I must object. No Child Left Behind has been deleterious in many respects, but the one outcome which I see on virtually a daily basis in my history courses is the students’ lack of ability to “think”.

Your dream is inverted. Health care reform must come first. Hospitals will need immediate relief from the wave of patients that won’t be able to pay as the economy continues its downward spiral. Access to health care in the greatest country in the world shouldn’t be determined by your employment status.

Mr. Brooks: Your dreaming should be aimed at Limbaugh, Hannity, Savage, Richard Scaife and others on the right who, already on Wednesday, began the vitriol. President-Elect Obama delivered his version of a dream for getting us off the track of the last eight years. The GOP is shattered. It needs to regain some credibility by asking President-Elect Obama what they can do to help right the ship. For example, the Senate GOP will have a tremendous amount of pressure not to abuse the filibuster power that they MAY have. They can begin by helping to fulfill the Obama agenda and not setting up roadblocks with partisan filibusters. The populace has spoken in landslide proportions in support of a dream. It cannot be compromised by measures such as you propose. The GOP must say “How can we help?”

The ability to analyze, synthesize and generally operate at cognitive levels beyond memorization and application of formulae is atrophied or absent in the majority of students I teach. They have no capacity for assessing information they received and making measured judgments about it and its import. I have students coming to my office constantly who tell me that they study for hours and hours but just don’t “get it.” They do work so hard and come to me feeling so helpless, frustrated and, to quote many of them, “stupid.” I explain to them the difference between what they were doing in high school and what is expected of them in higher education, and give them study regimens designed to help them learn a different way. Some just cannot “re-train” their brains, but the majority of students who apply themselves to the new regimen see steady improvement. It’s a joy to see the light of comprehension in their eyes and to watch the rising self-confidence manifest itself in their classroom performance and in their writing.

NCLB is single handedly responsible for the current state of affairs. Although many many

David Brooks makes at least one point that needs to be refuted, and energetically. That is his call for the Obama administration to “postpone contentious fights on things like card check legislation.”

For the last 50 years, our labor relations system has allowed the balance of power to shift relentlessly in favor of employers. This is evident in illegal firings of workers when they use their lawful rights; the use of permanent replacement workers when workers dare to engage in work stoppages; the rise of contingent employment in place of stable, secure jobs; and the general sense of precarity that a growing proportion of American workers has endured.

Infusing democratic provisions into US employment relations (as the card check system would do) should be viewed as a vital part of economic policy and an effort to achieve greater economic equality –not as some left-wing power grab.

Where was this voice of David Brooks when the Republicans were dismantling government as documented by another conservative Republican, John Dean, in his thoughtful book, Broken Government?

It’s time we stop describing issues as being on a right/left continuum, or a conservative/liberal one, and start looking upon government’s role in terms of whether it makes sense or not, whether it works in practice or not. Health care insurance is a good example. Nearly every other first world country has a single-payer health insurance system resulting in lower costs and better outcomes. It works. That’s what matters, not whether it’s “right” or “left.” It should not be an ideological decision. It should be a practical one.

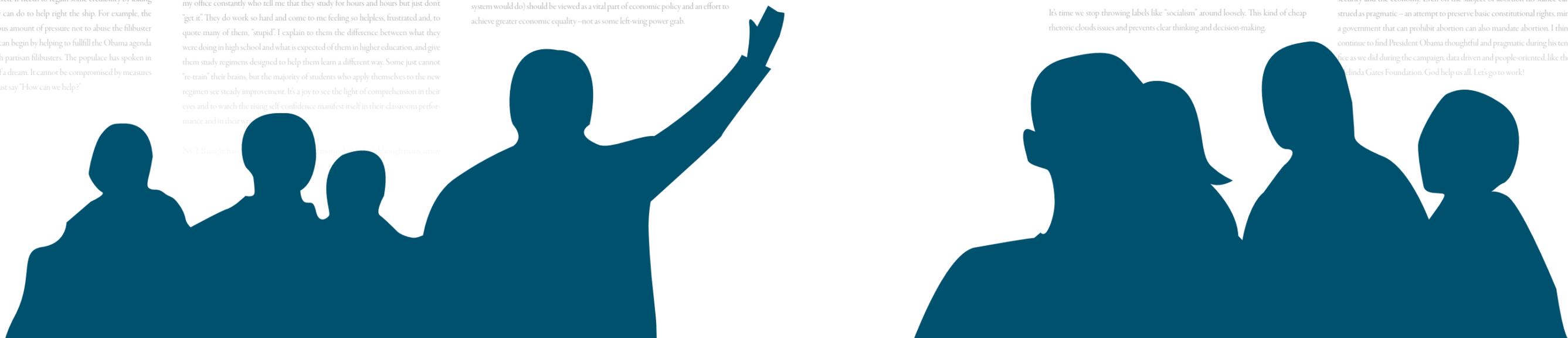
No one should go broke as a result of his or her health.

No one should pay more for health insurance—or worse, be denied it—because of a pre-existing condition. Why should someone’s life be destroyed financially, as well as in terms of health, by a serious illness like multiple sclerosis? No one chooses to have MS. It’s not a result of lifestyle decisions. This country needs medicare for all. It’s not a matter of right/left, it’s a matter of the best solution to a problem that’s collectively strangling us individually and collectively.

It’s time we stop throwing labels like “socialism” around loosely. This kind of cheap rhetoric clouds issues and prevents clear thinking and decision-making.

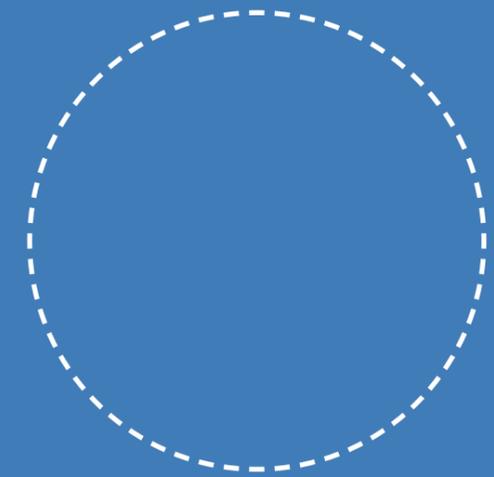
How could anyone disagree with that? Bush has genuinely and clearly offered full assistance with the transition. He was obviously moved by the election of our first black president. Now, if Nancy Pelosi and her ilk (total lack of professionalism and class) would get out of the way, maybe Americans will be served by their president. If not, it will be the same old partisan bickering and we might as well have simply elected Hilary Clinton.

I hope much of your dream comes true. I think that the electorate shares your dream, and that is why we elected Barack Obama to be our President. He has not sounded like a liberal to me in this campaign, but like a thoughtful pragmatist. He is thoughtfully pragmatic about the economy, about fighting an immoral and expensive war in Iraq, about the distribution of health care dollars, about energy and its relation to security and the economy. Even on the subject of abortion his stance can be construed as pragmatic -- an attempt to preserve basic constitutional rights, mindful that a government that can prohibit abortion can also mandate abortion. I think we will continue to find President Obama thoughtful and pragmatic during his tenure in office as we did during the campaign, data driven and people-oriented, like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. God help us all. Let’s go to work!



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Is an Accessible Website a More Usable One?

Sarah Mustafa . smustafa@qatar.cmu.edu . Advisor: Selma Limam Mansar . Honors Thesis in Informations Systems, Ditchon College, April, 2014

Minds
Q16

Background

Accessible websites are ones that disabled people are able to interact with despite their disabilities. The Web accessibility Initiative (W3C, 2005) sets up guidelines, and standards for the Web. Governments, including Qatar (MADA, 2013) have been pushing organizations and website owners to make their websites accessible. Until laws are passed, convincing website owners is proving to be a challenge.

On the other hand, website owners seek to make their websites usable to increase interest and traffic on their sites. There is hardly any effort needed to convince website owners to invest in usability testing.

This thesis investigates whether it is possible to demonstrate that an accessible website is a more usable one? If such claim appears to be true, website owners might be willing to invest in making their websites more accessible to gain in usability.

Methodology

Stage 1:

Select related themes websites for assessments

Stage 2:

Assess accessibility through 2 tools: WAVE (WebAIM) and Color Contrast Analyser (The Paciello group)

Stage 3:

Produce unified usability framework

Stage 4:

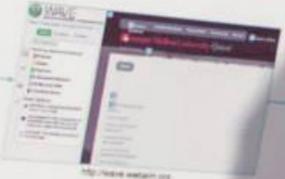
Perform usability assessment through usability framework

Stage 5:

Find correlation between accessibility and usability

Frameworks Outcome

Accessibility Framework



Multi Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT)

Element	Check	Weight
Language Check		0.1
Color contrast is below the minimum ratio of 4.5:1		0.2
Use of links for navigation		0.1
Missing ALT text for images		0.1
Missing heading elements		0.1
Check		0.1
Other elements		0.2

Website's Accessibility Score

Usability Framework

Criteria	Questions	Score
Navigability	It is easy to identify where am I on the website	
	Clickable items visually indicate that they are clickable	
	Links labeled with anchor text that provides a clear indication of where they lead	
Attractiveness	Global navigation is on every page	
	The use of colors is balanced in the page	
	The page layout is structured and organized	
	Media (graphics, videos, and audio) is well used	

Criteria	Questions	Score
Navigability	It is easy to identify where am I on the website	
	Clickable items visually indicate that they are clickable	
	Links labeled with anchor text that provides a clear indication of where they lead	
Attractiveness	Global navigation is on every page	
	The use of colors is balanced in the page	
	The page layout is structured and organized	
	Media (graphics, videos, and audio) is well used	

Collect Data

Perceptual Component Analysis (PCA)

Website's Usability Score

Future Work

- 1. Complete Usability Framework
- 2. Find Correlation between accessibility and usability
- 3. Usability Assessment method

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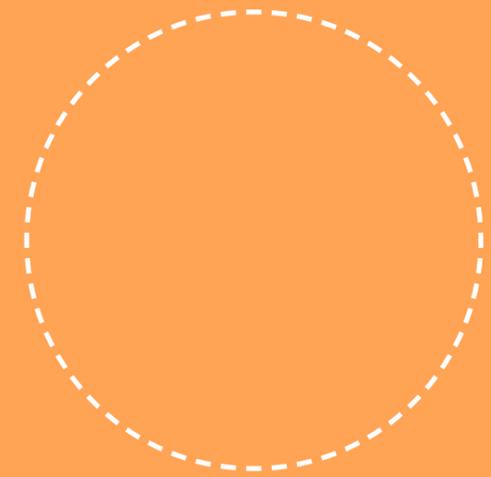
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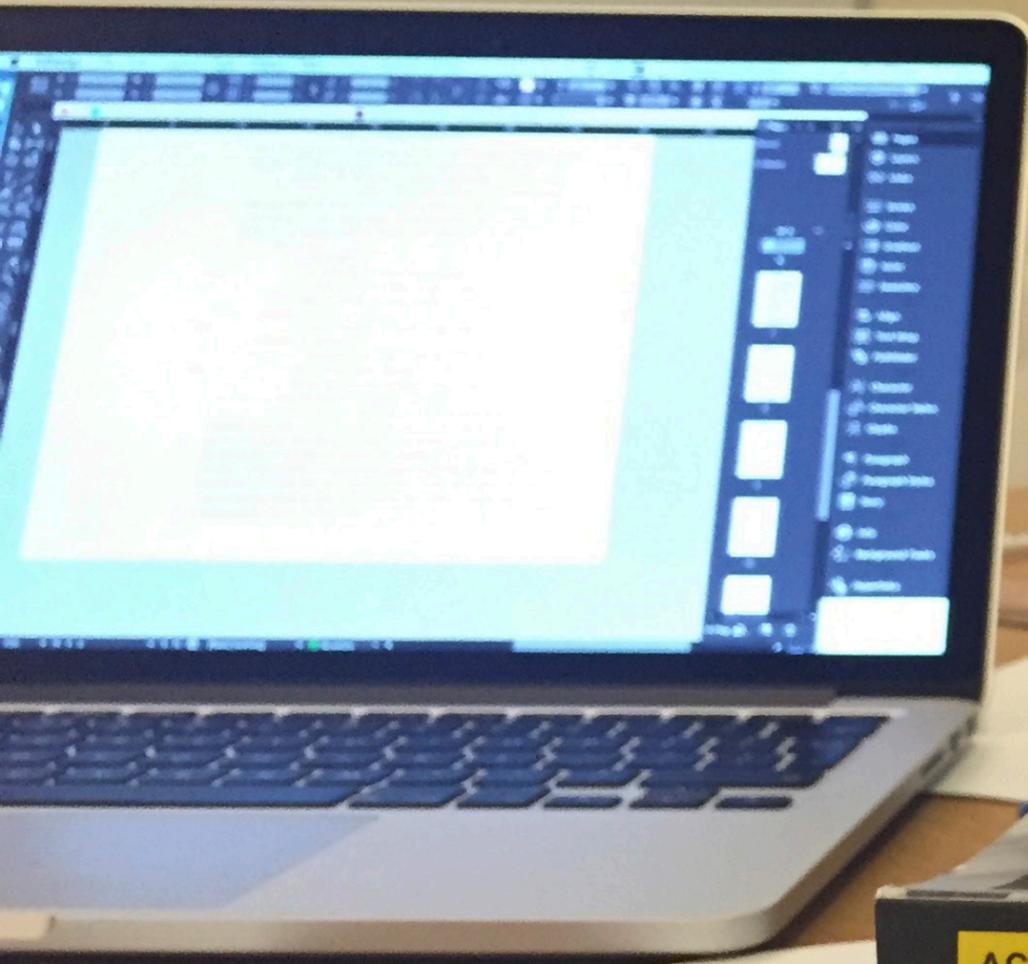
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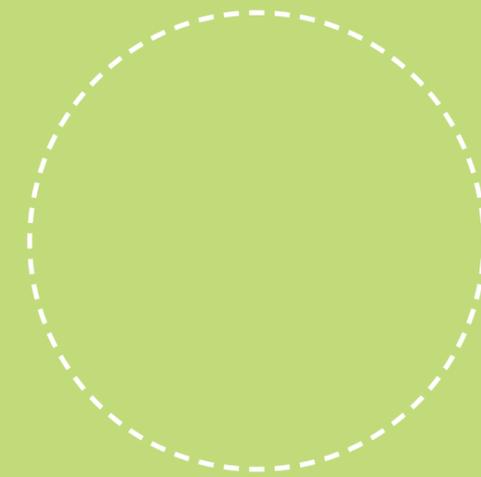
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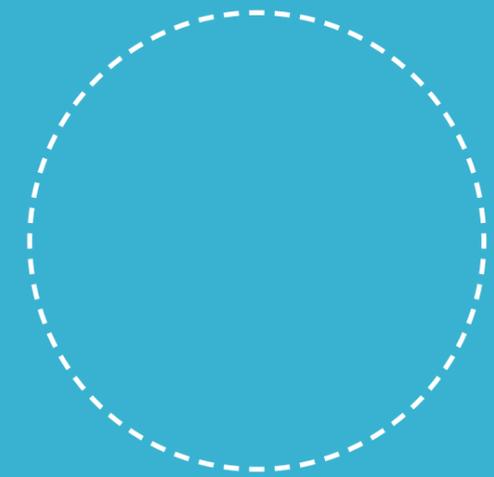


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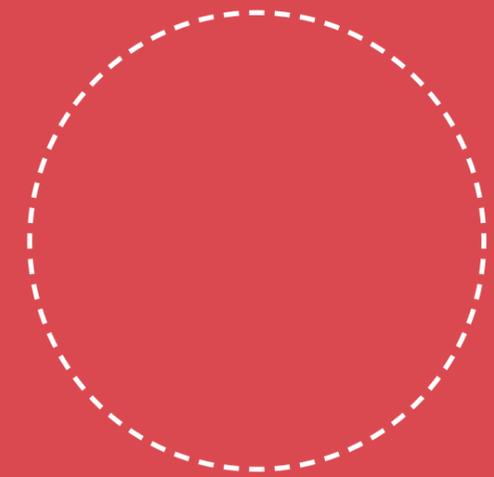
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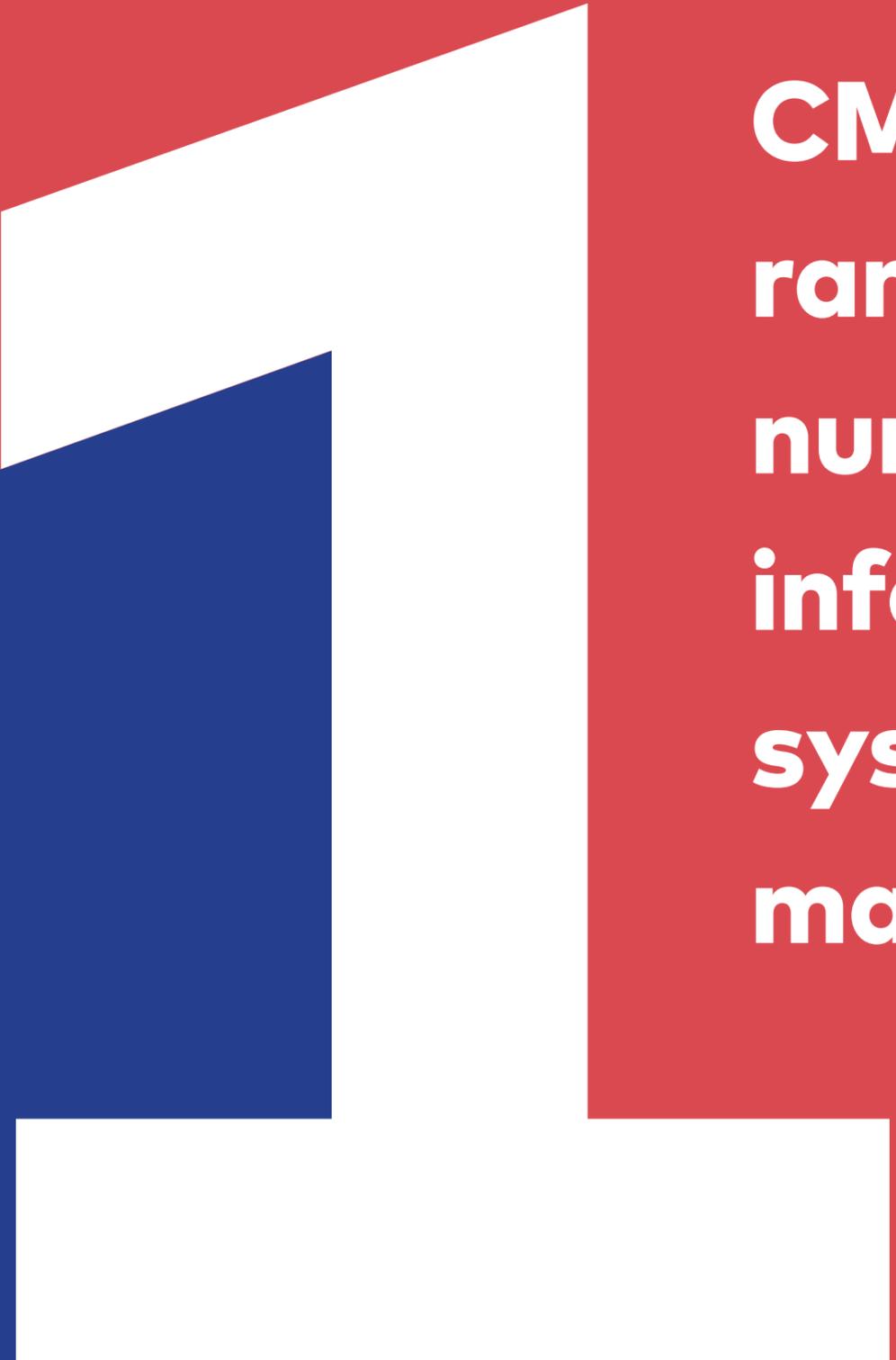
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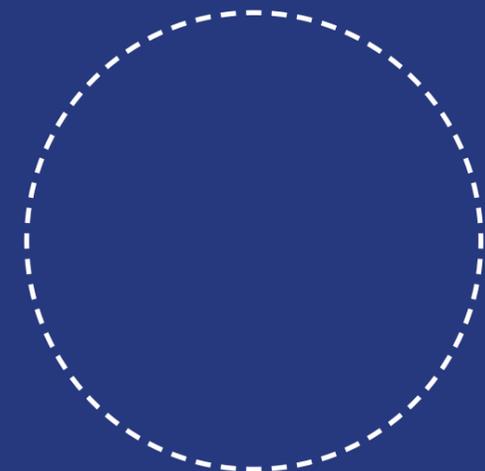
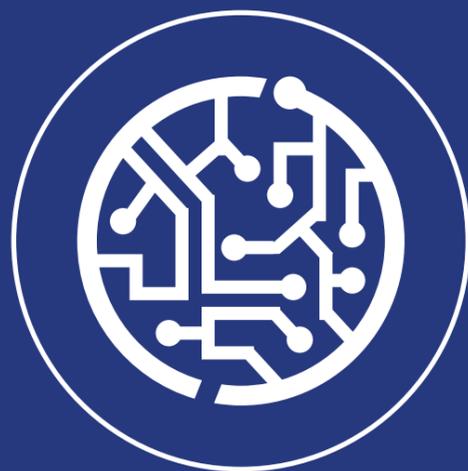
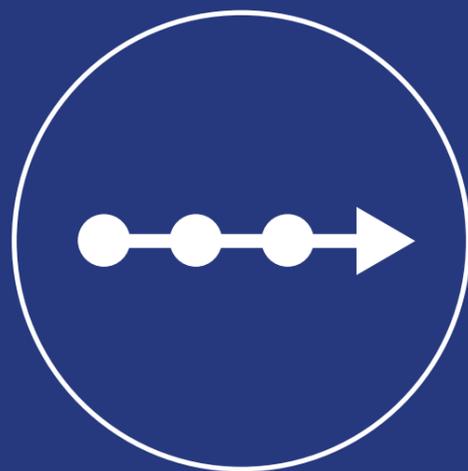
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