

2010-10-02

# Usability for Tough Times - Budget Usability

Chapman, Suzanne; Varnum, Kenneth J.

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# Usability for Tough Times

*Budget Usability*

Suzanne Chapman  
User Experience Department

Ken Varnum  
Web Systems Department


**M**Library  
University of Michigan





Image by flickr user alancleaver\_2000

# Who Are We?

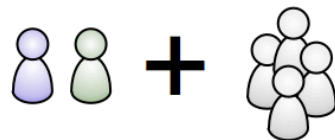
## Usability Core Group

2 year term

 1 chair

  4 core members  

Usability Task  
Force (UTF)



short term (4-6 months)  
2 core members  
+ 3-4 members  
+ 1 stakeholder

Usability Task  
Force (UTF)



# What is Budget Usability?

aka "discount" or "informal" or "do it yourself"

It's not just about the money...  
It's also about the time and effort.

It's qualitative, informal, and unscientific.

Our definition:  
Anything that you can do with low overhead that involves users interacting with a site.

Image by flickr user sarabc

*"The purpose isn't to prove anything; it's to get insights that enable you to improve what you're building"*

– Steve Krug

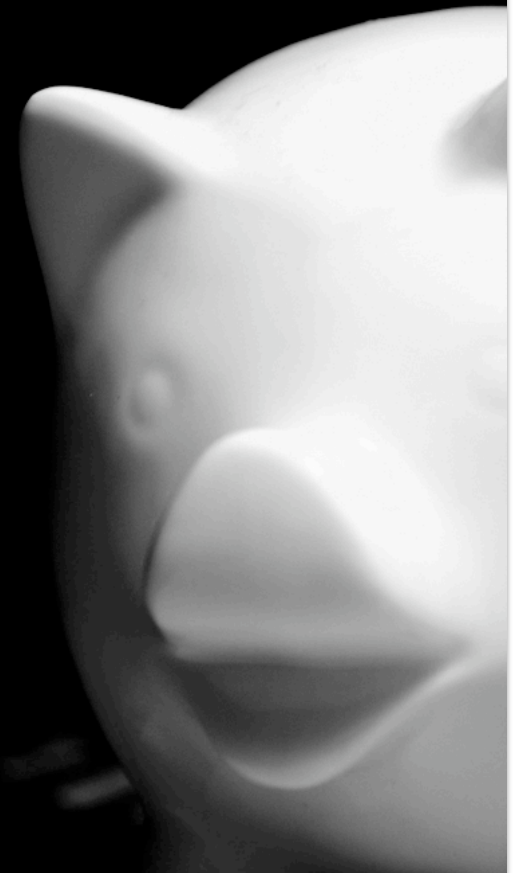




Image by flickr user electrofantastic



# Why Use Budget Methods?

- Quick answers to simple questions
- Faster
- Easier
- Cheaper
- Targeted
- More staff participation

# When to Use Budget Techniques?

When you just want a quick reaction to something.

- Link label
- Placement of something
- Findability of some piece of content
- Attitude towards a design
- Do users get it?





## How to Use Budget Techniques?

- Early and often
- Alongside usage statistics & user feedback
- In conjunction (or in preparation for) larger evaluations
- With a grain of salt



# Participants

- Anywhere from 6-100+
- Where & how to find participants:
  - "in the wild" & on-the-fly!
  - links from website
  - emails sent to departments via Subject Specialist Librarians
- Incentives: candy, MLibrary gadgets, or a few "blue bucks" each

Image by flickr user faultypixel



# Lessons Learned & Tips

- Test the test. Time spent piloting the test is time well spent.
- Articulate your expectations but be flexible.
  - Just want general feedback? Ask an open question.
  - Want to solve a specific problem? Ask a direct question.
- Iterate. Know when to admit that something didn't work well. Refine and repeat.

News



Bonn named new Associate University Librarian for Publishing  
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Events



Oprah Author Pick - Uwem Akpan  
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Library Used Book Sale

Did You Know?



You can find what new books have arrived on campus. [more]

Giving to MLibrary



How to Make a Gift  
Making a Gift Online  
Planned Gifts

Spotlight: 1 2 3



SPOTLIGHT 1

The Galileo Manuscript

The Michigan Galileo Manuscript, celebrating its 400th birthday, is on display through December 22 in the Audubon Room of the MLibrary Gallery in Room 100 of the Hatcher Library. Here Galileo drafted a letter explaining the usefulness of the telescope, and later used it to analyze data and conclude that he had discovered the moons of Jupiter.

[more](#)

QUICK LINKS

- My Account
- EJournals
- Library Hours
- Outages
- CTools
- Wolverine Access

MTAGGER



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home page Information journals library  
library gateway library homepage library  
portal library search mlibrary news

SITE FEEDBACK

Do you use a mobile device to access the web?  
Tell us more by taking our brief survey.

We welcome your feedback on our web site.

Known Problems (updated 10/9/2009)  
Coming Soon (updated 10/12/2009)

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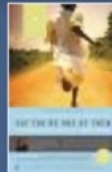


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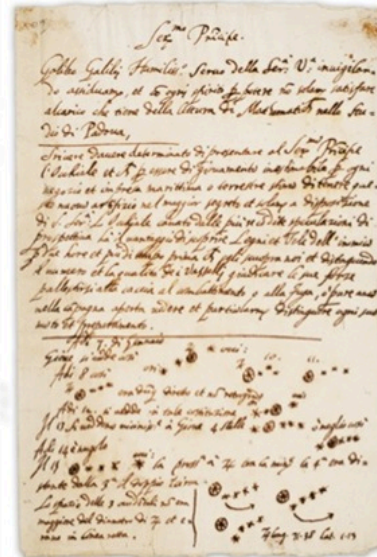
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more

What parts of the home page are or are not useful?

What's missing?

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access the web? survey.



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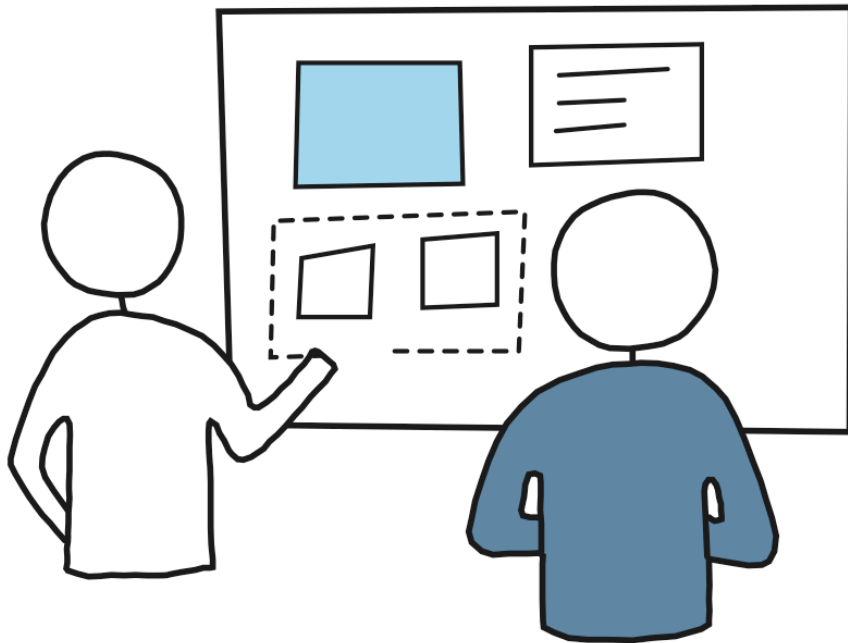
r web site.

009)

9)

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# Participatory Design

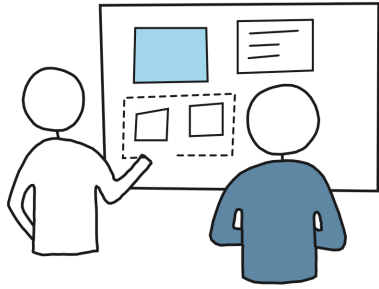


Actively involve users in the design process.

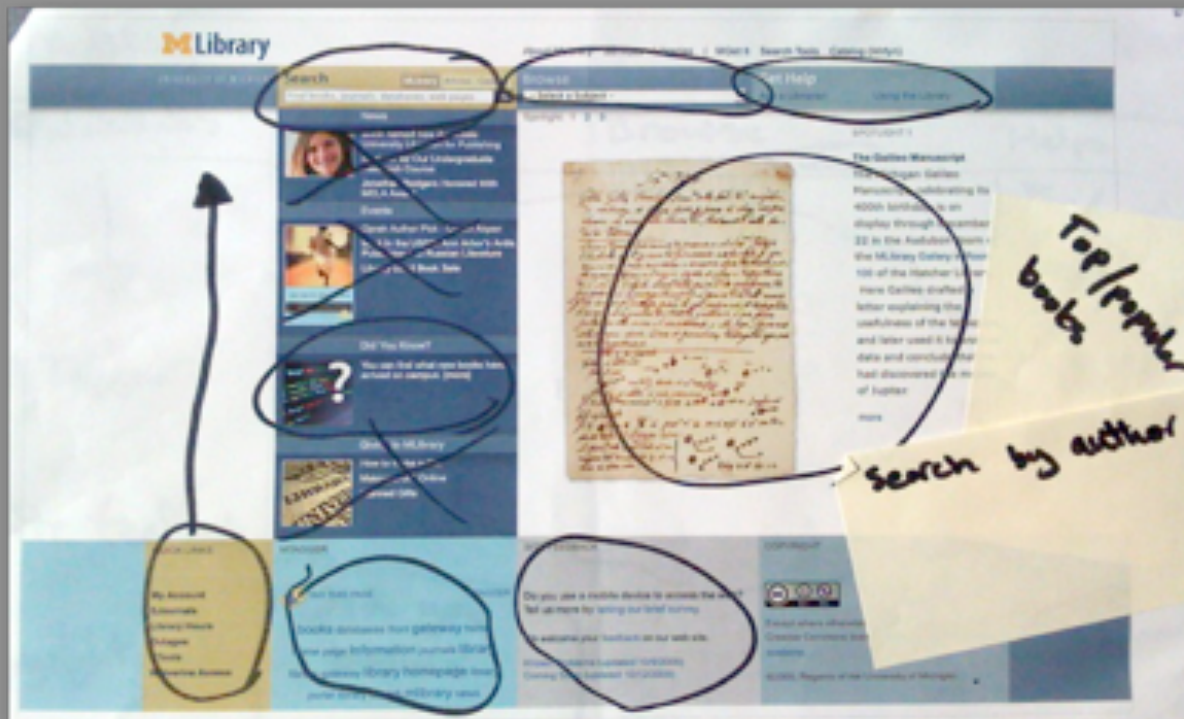
(inspired by Nancy Foster)

Description:

X/O & Ideal Design

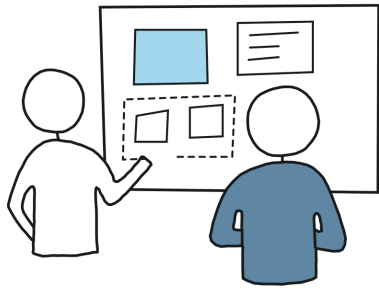


# Participatory Design

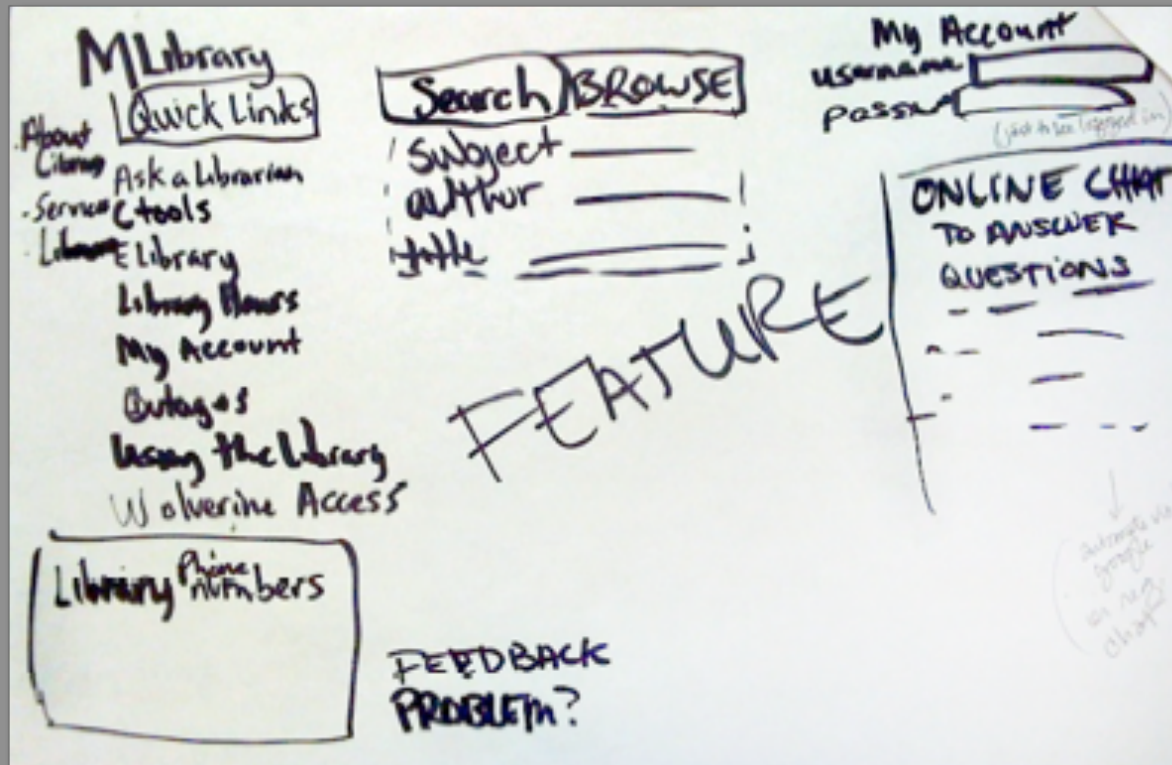


## X/O Instructions:

1. Circle the things you find useful
2. Put an X through the things you don't find useful
3. Add a note for anything that's missing



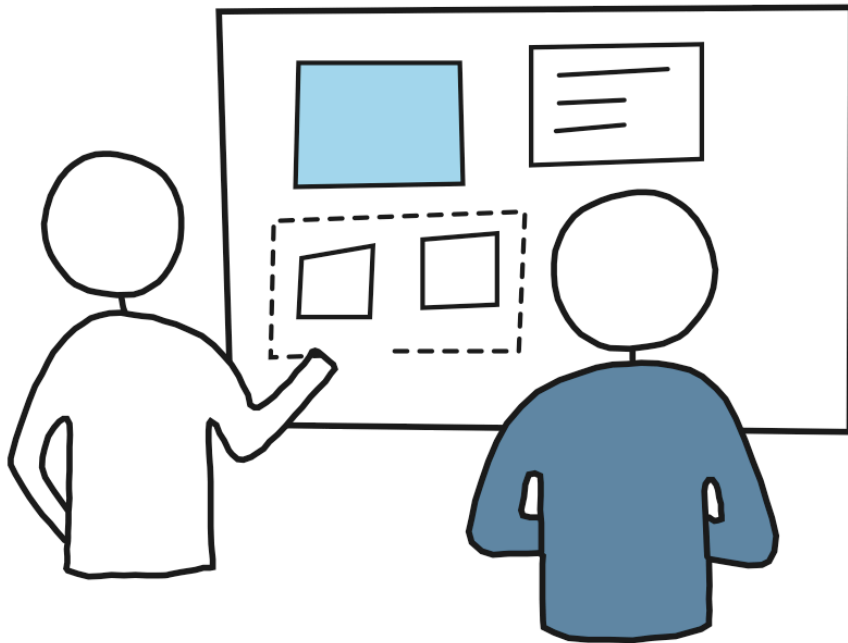
# Participatory Design



## Ideal Design Instructions:

1. Draw your ideal library website.

# Participatory Design



Actively involve users in the design process.

(inspired by Nancy Foster)

Description:

X/O & Ideal Design

36 Participants:

- 15 Undergrads
- 5 Grad Students
- 2 Faculty
- 15 Library Staff

Materials Cost: \$0

Incentives Cost: \$75+

Set up time: ~1hr

Test time: ~4hrs

Analysis: >12hrs



15 undergrads  
useful stuff  
not useful stuff

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Did You Know?

You can find what new books I have on campus. [more] 8

Giving to MLibrary

How to Make a Gift 1

Make a Gift Online 9

Plan a Gift

Spotlight: 1 2 3



SPOTLIGHT 1

**The Galileo Manuscript** 2

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- My Account 4
- EJournals 2
- Library Hours 3
- Outages 1
- Webmail 1
- Access 1

MAGGER 2

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5 Grad Students  
useful stuff  
not useful stuff

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QUICK LINKS **2**

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**3** EJournals  
**3** Library Hours  
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CTools  
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Search Find books, journals, databases, websites

BROWSE - Select a Subject -

Get Help Ask a Librarian Using Library

2 Faculty useful stuff not useful stuff

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15 staff  
useful stuff  
not useful stuff

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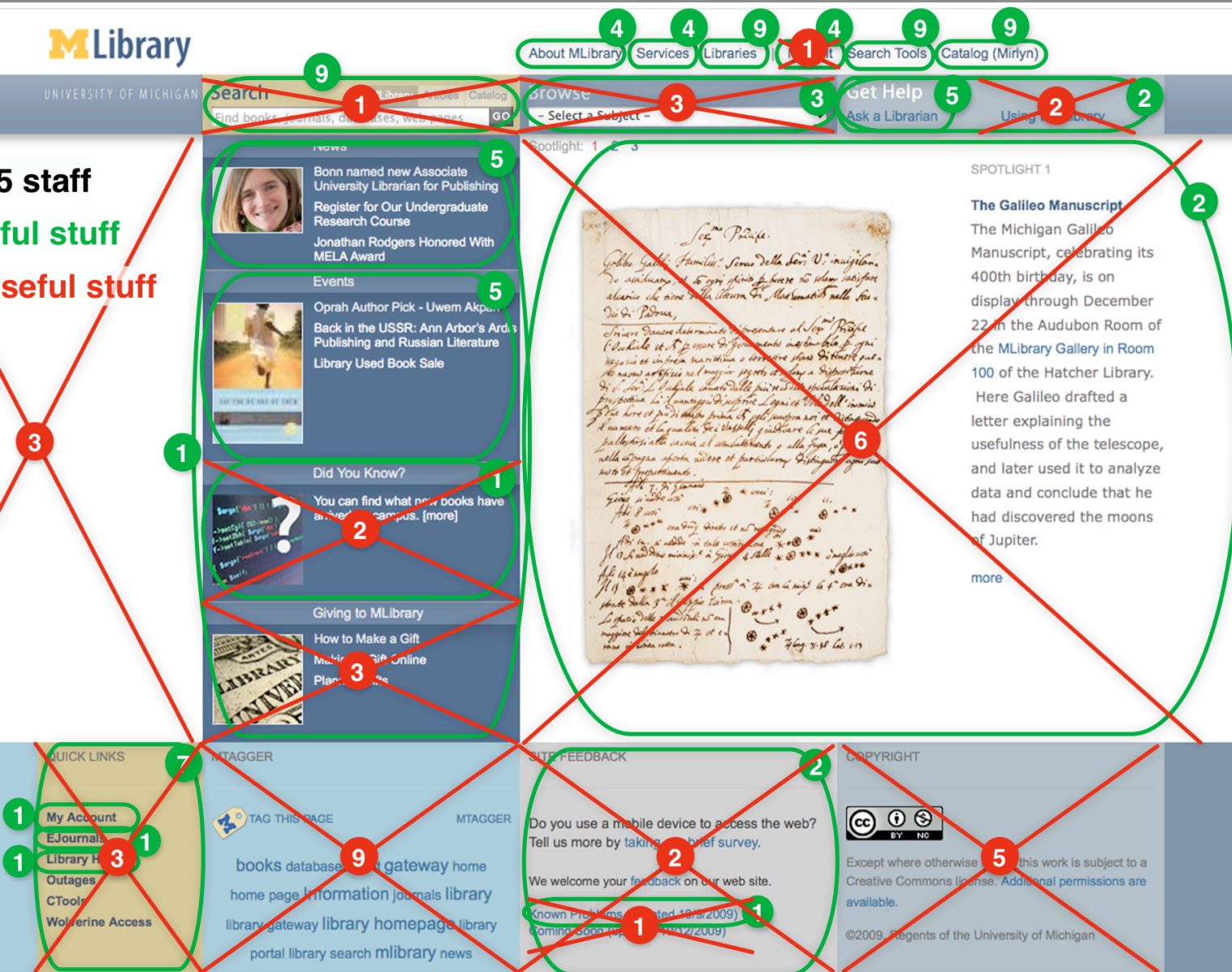
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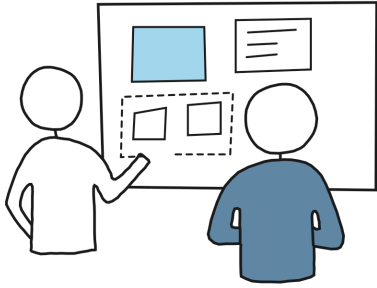


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# Participatory Design

**Undergraduate Students**

(15 participants)



**Graduate Students**

(5 participants)



**Faculty**

(2 participants)



**Library Staff**

(15 participants)

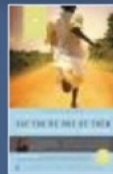


News



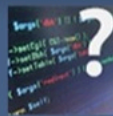
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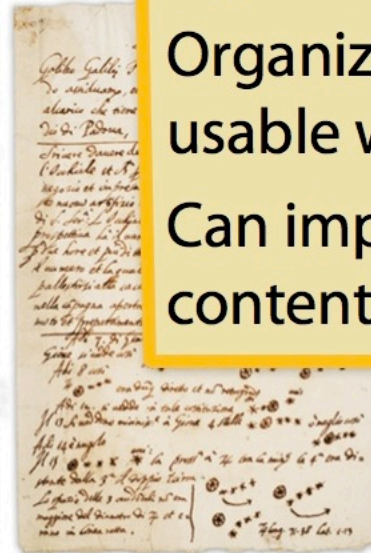
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Spotlight: 1 2 3



Right labels? Organized in a usable way? Can important content be found?

had discovered the moons of Jupiter.

more

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# Card Sorting



Ask users to sort a series of cards, each labeled with a piece of content, into groups that make sense to them.

## Description:

Did a combination of sessions with individual participants and groups.

## 158 Participants:

- 18 Undergrads & Grads
- 140 Library Staff

Materials Cost: \$0 / \$125 for online tool.

Incentives Cost: \$90

Set up time: ~3hrs

Test time: ~2hrs

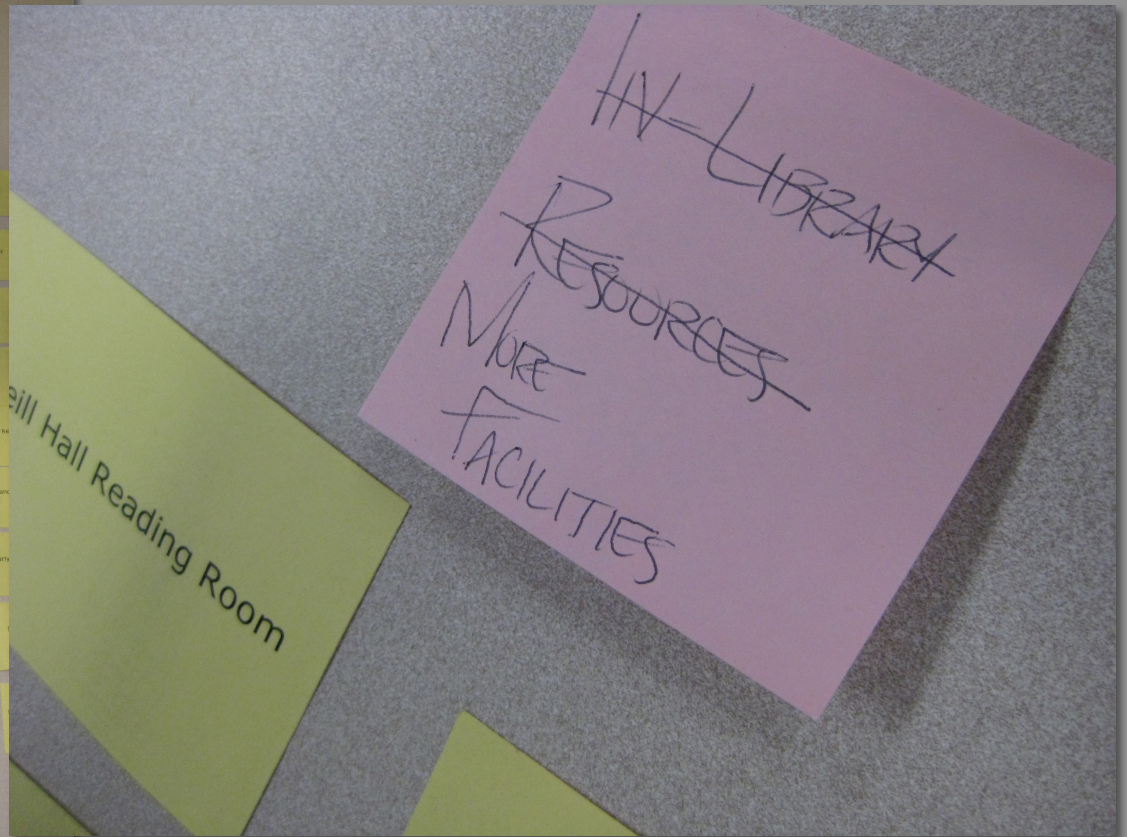
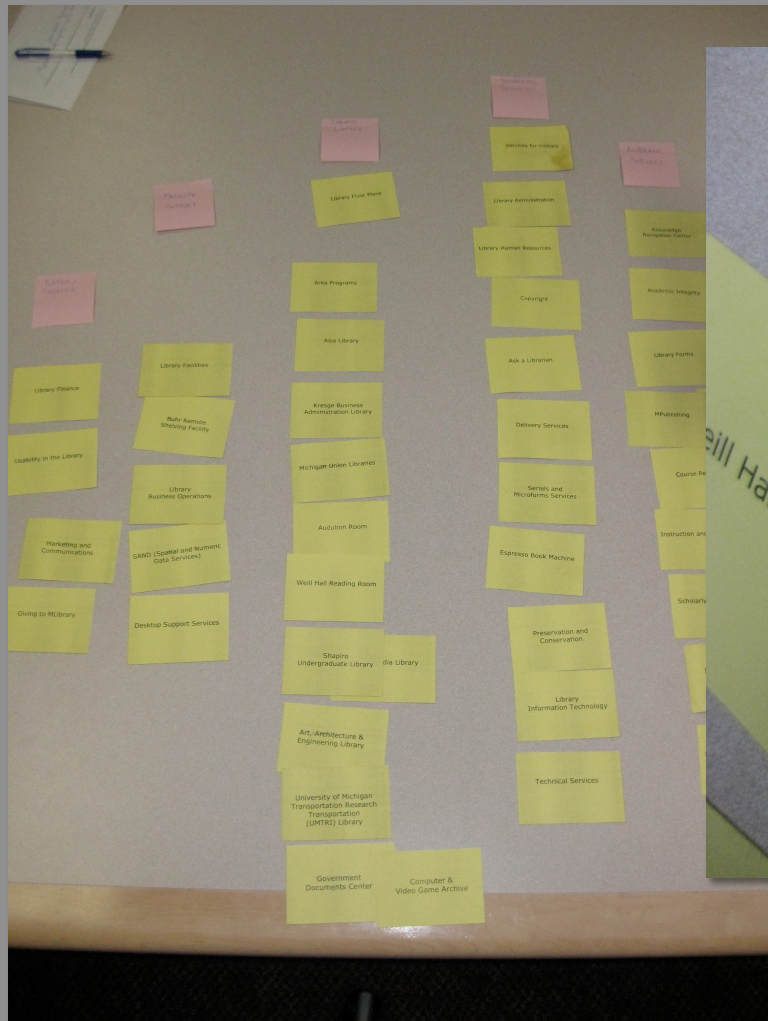
Analysis: >10hrs





# Card Sorting

- *Services/Departments/Libraries*



Group paper card sort



# Card Sorting

- *Services/Departments/Libraries*

You have 34 items left      Drag & drop the cards listed on the left into the categories on the right.      [View](#)

Items	Categories
Computer & Video Game Archive	<b>Publishing</b>
Library Floor Plans	MPublishing
Course Reserves	Scholarly Publishing Office (SPO)
Area Programs	Copyright
Academic Integrity	University of Michigan Press
SAND (Spatial and Numeric Data Services)	<b>Administration</b>
Michigan Union Libraries	Library Administration
Instruction and Workshops	Giving to MLibrary
Library Forms	Library Finance
Government Documents Center	Marketing and Communications
Weill Hall Reading Room	Library Facilities
Ask a Librarian	
Art, Architecture & Engineering Library	

OptimalSort online card sort

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Right contents? Right label? Right location?

QUICK LINKS

- My Account EJournals Library Hours Outages CTools Wolverine Access

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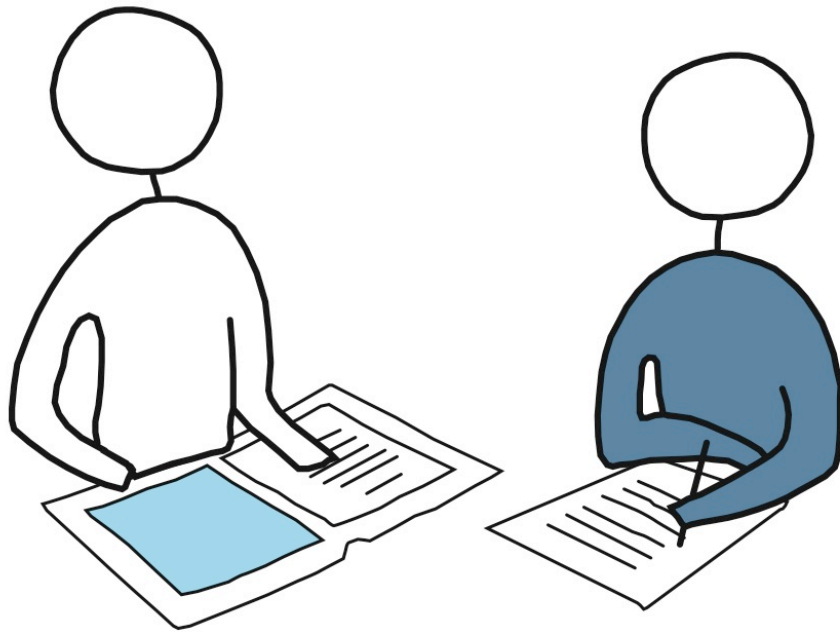
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# Guerrilla Testing



Quick and short answers to quick and short questions. Five minutes is our goal!

## Description:

- Print out web page
- Approach someone “in the wild” & ask if they can spare 5 min.
- Ask 1-2 short questions

## Participants:

- 20 undergrad/grad

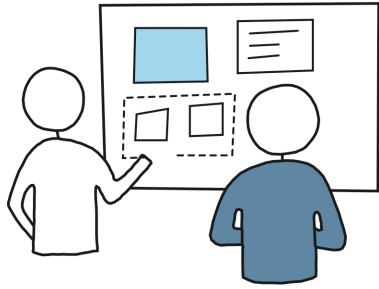
Materials Cost: \$0

Incentives Cost: \$0

Set up time: ~2hrs

Test time: ~2hrs

Analysis: ~4hrs



# Guerrilla Testing

## Before:

### QUICK LINKS

**My Account**  
**EJournals**  
**Library Hours**  
**Outages**  
**CTools**  
**Wolverine Access**

## After:

### QUICK LINKS

**My Library Account**  
**Online Journal List**  
**Library Hours**  
**Webmail**  
**CTools**  
**Wolverine Access**

## Contents:

- Removed/added links

## Labels:

- “Quick Links” is good
- Some link labels revised

## Location:

- Not good! Needs to be more prominent

# Online Guerrilla Testing



Automated version of paper guerrilla test to reach a larger audience.

## Description:

“Survey” distributed via Subject Specialist Librarians, news items, and directly from access system interface.

## Participants:

- In progress

Materials Cost: \$0\*

Incentives Cost: \$0

Set up time: ~1hr

Test time: 0

Analysis: ~1hrs



diplomatic history

GO

- Recommended Resources by Subject -



Advanced ArticlesPlus Search

ArticlesPlus

BETA! Tell us what you think about our new discovery tool (or read more about it).

Refine Search

- Limit to articles from scholarly journals
- Exclude newspaper articles
- Limit to articles with full text online
- Add results beyond MLibrary

Publication Date

- 2000-2009 (74650)
- 1990-1999 (34996)
- 1980-1989 (10450)
- 2010-2019 (4218)
- 1970-1979 (1972)
- \*-1949 (1546)
- more...

Format

- Newspaper Article (67413)
- Journal Article (56691)
- Dissertation (3996)
- Book Review (504)
- Trade Publication Article (426)
- eBook (305)

Your ArticlesPlus Search for 'diplomatic history' found 129412 results. Showing 1 - 20.

Sort: Relevance

Select All

Selected items (0): List | Email | Export | Clear

Making diplomatic history

by Anonymous

Foreign Policy Issue 126. Date: 09/01/2001. Start Page: 98.

Format: Journal Article

"... sites have the potential to reshape the future study of diplomatic history...." more...



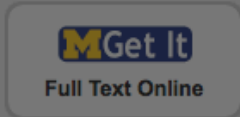
DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

by LUIS DE ONIS

Niles' weekly register Vol. 44, Issue 1142. Date: 08/10/1833. Start Page: 393.

Format: Journal Article

"... communicated to or emanating from congress, which, under the title of "American State Papers," embraces the whole documentary history of the United States, from..." more...

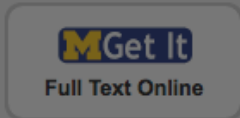


Diplomatic history

by Luis De Onis, James Madison

Niles' weekly register Vol. 44, Issue 24. Date: 08/10/1833. Start Page: 393.

Format: Journal Article



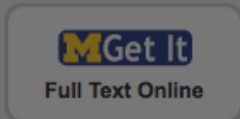
What Bandwagon? Diplomatic History Today

by Jessica C E Gienow-Hecht

The Journal of American History Vol. 95, Issue 4. Date: 03/2009. Pages: 1083-1086.

Format: Journal Article

"...; and third, the attractiveness of diplomatic history and its practitioners stems from more than the field's methodological concepts - the history of the field is a good..." more...



# Questions?

All past reports: [www.lib.umich.edu/usability](http://www.lib.umich.edu/usability)

Suzanne Chapman ([suzchap@umich.edu](mailto:suzchap@umich.edu))  
Ken Varnum ([varnum@umich.edu](mailto:varnum@umich.edu))

