

2010

Budget Usability without a Usability Budget

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Committee Structure

The MLibrary Core Usability group is charged with supporting the organization's usability needs. The group consists of 5 members: a chair who specializes in User Experience and 4 members from public services and information technology, whose primary job responsibilities lie elsewhere.

The core group regularly convenes project-based task forces. Task forces are made up of staff volunteers with an interest in usability and/or the project. Task force members design and conduct tests using a variety of methods.

- 28 staff members participated on 4 project task forces over 2 years
- 6 different systems evaluated
- 10 reports produced

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

Usability Task Force (UTF)

2 core members
+ 3-4 members

Standard Methods

- comparative evaluation
- heuristic evaluation
- card sorting
- guerrilla testing
- paper prototyping
- participatory design
- formal user tests
- surveys
- individual interviews
- focus groups

Budget

Usability doesn't have to be complicated and time-consuming. We favor more straightforward, "budget" techniques as a means to the most interesting and useful results.

Ⓚ = \$0

Ⓢ = \$1-\$25

ⓈⓈ = \$25+

2010 Library Website Task Force

Usability Task Force (UTF)



- November 2009 – April 2010
- 3 methods used for 4 different evaluations
- Approximately 200 total testing participants
- Open staff session held at the beginning of the project to solicit feedback

FINDING: Marked as *useful* by all user groups but many included suggestions for refinements.
RECOMMENDATION: Evaluate current usage statistics to validate findings and fine tune functionality.

FINDING: Content found under libraries, departments, services is extremely difficult and complex to organize. Names used to describe these things are not easily understood and require descriptions.
RECOMMENDATION: Offer descriptions when possible. Explore new categories: Administration, Libraries/Locations, Publishing, Getting Help, Getting Things.

FINDING: Relatively few markings with a mix of *useful* and *not useful*.
RECOMMENDATION: Since staff consider content available here (Ask a Librarian & LibGuides) to be valuable, this section needs to be more prominent.

FINDING: Varied drastically by user group: undergrads didn't mark it much either way, grad students & faculty mostly marked as *not useful*. Many staff noted that it takes up too much space.
RECOMMENDATION: Re-evaluate scope of content to include more content that is considered to be *useful* (News, Events, & Did You Know?). Consider minimizing.

FINDING: Mostly *useful* to all user groups.
RECOMMENDATION: Continue to use section and keep content current.

FINDING: Mostly *useful* to undergrads.
RECOMMENDATION: Expand scope and make focus on undergraduate topics.

FINDING: Overwhelmingly marked as *not useful* by all user groups.
RECOMMENDATION: Move to footer and minimize to one link.

FINDING: Majority marked as *useful*, but a few individual links marked *not useful* & a few notes added for missing links. Many added notes requesting more prominent placement.
RECOMMENDATION: Fine-tune links listed and move to more prominent location.

FINDING: Section labels found to be confusing (and inconsistent with browse results page). Not enough metadata is displayed for catalog results.
RECOMMENDATION: Rename section labels and add more metadata to catalog results (author, publication information, format).

FINDING: Outages not understood or considered to be useful. More than half of users requested addition of Webmail link. Quick Links label works well.

RECOMMENDATION:

Before:

After:

My Account

EJournals

Library Hours

Outages

CTools

Wolverine Access

My Library Account

Online Journal List

Library Hours

Outages

CTools

Wolverine Access

FINDING: Most participants preferred a different order.

RECOMMENDATION: Reorder 1st column: databases, catalog, online journals (renamed) & 2nd column: website, research guides (renamed).



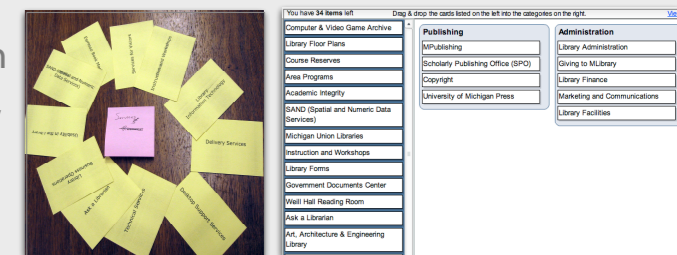
Card Sorting *Organization of Services/Departments/Libraries*

The goal for these tests was to recategorize content on the web site currently grouped under Services, Departments and Libraries.

Group Paper Card Sort for Students

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- 18 participants: undergrads, grad students (divided into 4 groups)
- Organized 84 cards representing half of this content
- This method allowed us to see interaction among students, hear thought processes, and better understand confusing labels



Individual Online Card Sort for Library Staff

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- 140 staff completed exercise
- Provided more data, but didn't expose the thought process



Guerrilla Testing *Quick Links and Search & Browse Results*

The goals were to determine a) the order of the headings on the search results and the browse results pages, and b) to fine-tune the contents & labels for the Quick Links section.

We call this "guerrilla testing" because we hope to get quick and short answers to quick and short questions. Five minutes is our goal!

Quick Links

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- 20 participants: undergrads, grad students
- Shown the current Quick Links section without its title-- asked to name the section and describe where each link went
- Then asked what links they would most like to see in a grouping of links like this one



Search & Browse Results

Ⓢ

- 12 participants
- Asked to search or browse on a topic of interest to them
- Then asked to view results, reorder the headings, and suggest alternative headings



Participatory Design *Library Gateway*

The goal for this exercise was to gain a better understanding of which tools and sections of the Library website's home page the participants found most and least useful.

- 37 participants: undergrads, grad students, faculty and Library staff
- Asked to circle the things they find useful, make an X through the things they don't find useful, and add a note for anything they think is missing

