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Assessment Work Team Essence Notes

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The Assessment Work Team met on March 16 and approved the recommended next steps for our web usability tests (see attached). The only step that cannot be pursued at this time is from Cycle 1, that we explore the possibility of adding a local messages library to EDS to mediate navigational and service-related search in Discover. EBSCO reports it is not possible to add such a message library at this time, so the web usability co-investigators (Jeff, David, LiLi, and Ruth) will consider other options. Testing Cycles 2 and 3 will begin next week.

Bede reported he expects the web usability test results from Professor Wainford's class before the end of the semester. Their tests are focusing on different aspects of our website from what our co-investigators are doing.

Our LibQUAL+ survey results have been delivered, and Bede and LiLi are working on summaries to share with everyone by next week.

Our next meeting will be April 11.
Web Usability Study
Cycle 1 Summary and Recommendations
March 3, 2016

For Cycle 1, interviews were conducted from the library homepage using the tasks listed at the end of this report. Tasks were selected to provide baseline evidence of how students navigate the library website pursuant to completion of generic navigational tasks. Subjects included five undergraduate students ranging from Freshman to Junior, none of whom were library employees.

On February 17, the following Co-PIs met for 1.5 hours to review and discuss evidence collected during Cycle 1: Ruth Baker, Paolo Gujilde, David Lowder, Jeff Mortimore, Debra Skinner. CO-PIs identified the following usability issues as most significant:

1. **Gross Navigation**: Homepage header text did not adequately support gross elimination of link menus for specific navigational tasks, requiring subjects to evaluate and eliminate a larger number of candidate links for each task.

2. **Fine Navigation**: Subjects found it difficult to eliminate individual links as candidates, resulting in hesitation to click on links, and frequent backtracking and process of elimination when they did. Use of technical terminology absent explicit link text exacerbated these behaviors.

3. **Page Navigation**: Once arriving at certain interior pages, some subjects found navigating page content difficult due to presentation of text and/or insufficient differentiation of content via headers, images, or chunking.

4. **Use of Discover as a Site Navigation Tool**: Several students attempted to use Discover as a site navigation tool, interpreting “Search everything” to include the library’s website, physical spaces, and services.

Based on these observations, the CO-PIs recommend the following next steps:

1. Explore the possibility of adding a local messages library to EDS to mediate navigational and service-related searching in Discover, as well as consider revising the “Search Everything” language pending further baseline evaluation of the tabbed box.

2. For Cycle 2, explore alternative header, link menu, and link text options for the lower half of the right-hand column. Based on review of alternate linking structures, develop two alternate prototypes and conduct A/B study. Develop prototypes to support improved access to collection contents via the lower half of the right-hand column pursuant to eventual elimination of GALILEO link from myGS page.

3. For Cycle 3, a) develop generic navigational tasks for establishing baseline usability assessment of homepage tabbed box similar to Cycle 1, and b) prototype alternate layouts for select interior pages pursuant to improved intra-page navigation and conduct A/B study. Target Account Login and Services for Students pages for this cycle.

Contingent on time to develop Cycle 2 and 3 prototypes and tasks, cycles may run concurrently.
Cycle 1 Interview Task List

1. Take a moment to look around the library homepage and describe what you see. Describe the different sections, links, and features that you notice, and describe what you think each of them does. If you use a particular part of the library homepage already, explain briefly what you use it for.

2. You and a classmate have a class presentation coming up. You’ve heard the library has presentation practice rooms. Find the usage policy for the library’s presentation practice rooms and book a room for tonight at 8pm.

3. You checked out a book from the library a couple of weeks ago to use for the presentation and think it might be overdue. See if you can find the library’s checkout policies and renew your book from the library website.

4. Your professor says you need to cite your sources for the presentation in APA style. She says the library should have some tools to help you do this. You want to use the book you checked out from the library. Find the library’s citation style tools to help you cite the book in APA style.

5. Your classmate texts to say she can’t meet with you until this weekend. Find the library’s hours so you can reschedule when the library is open.