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Assessment Work Team Essence Notes

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Assessment Work Team Meeting  
May 17, 2016  
Essence Notes

**Attending:** Bede Mitchell, Debra Skinner, Fred Smith, Jeff Mortimore, David Lowder, Paolo Gujilde, Lili Li, Rebecca Ziegler, Jocelyn Poole, Jessica Williams.

Sam Wainford’s class project to test our web pages was completed, and she has forwarded the results. According to Professor Wainford:

> Students this term were not as focused as in the past and their final reports are not up to my standards. The recommendations are not specific enough to be helpful.

Based on my own observations, students do not associate their library accounts with tasks such as book renewals or overdue book fees. If they realize that they have to log in to their accounts, they are put off by the extra step of acquiring a PIN and usually abandon the process.

Many of the students went directly to the [FAQs page](#) to find direction, but that page provided no help for the tasks they tested. An expanded FAQ for current students might be helpful.

The page on [Print Services](#) needs a link to the PDF map showing the printer locations on the 2nd floor.

Most students do not understand the acronyms used on the homepage and elsewhere. It’s obvious that most IT students rarely, if ever, use the library website for research. They do not understand the difference in the various databases. Information literacy is not so good among IT students, something that we as a department need to address in our curricula.

The [System Usability Scale (SUS) survey](#) was used again this term, but the results you see in the final reports are not going to be very reliable due to the small sample size of 30 responses. We had over 50 responses last year. Fewer than half my students completed the SUS survey in time to be counted and they did not successfully recruit others to complete the survey. Twelve of the anonymous responses came from another IT class of mine.

I have been asked to transition this Advanced Web Interfaces course to online format, which is going to be a challenge in terms of group usability studies like this when students are not actually in a classroom lab. I hope to keep the project going but it might have to take a different format.

We have thanked Professor Wainford for her continuing partnership with us, and for her observations which we will address in future cycles of our web testing.

Jeff Mortimore presented the findings and draft recommendations of the Co-Principal Investigators in our own web usability tests (see below). The Work Team agreed that the recommendations should be submitted to the Library faculty for approval.

The next meeting will be June 13 at 4pm.
Web Usability Study
Cycle 2 Summary and Recommendations
May 6, 2016

For Cycle 2, interviews were conducted using two homepage prototypes. Prototypes and tasks were developed to compare the impact of alternate lower right-hand column header and link layouts on subjects’ completion of several generic navigational tasks. Subjects included six undergraduate students ranging from freshman to senior, none of whom were library employees. Subjects were interviewed in two cohorts of three students (A/B and B/A) in order to randomize the order of presentation of each prototype. Task sequences for each cohort are included at the end of this report.

On May 6, the following Co-PIs met for 1 hour to review and discuss evidence collected during Cycle 2: Ruth Baker, David Lowder, W. Bede Mitchell, and Jeff Mortimore. Clement Lau attended as a guest pending his joining the study as a Co-PI.

CO-PIs identified the following observations as most significant:

1. A majority of subjects prefer Prototype A despite increased link density, mostly on the grounds that it supports task-oriented use and requires less drill-down compared to Prototype B. Furthermore, the presence of additional links under each menu appears to support improved navigational inferences.

2. Evaluation of each menu’s scope remains challenging for most subjects, especially with regard to differentiating “Spaces & Places and “Services” in Prototype A, and “Use the Library” and “Services” in Prototype B. The scope of these menus is not sufficiently differentiated to support improved navigational inferences, suggesting that they should be collapsed into a single menu.

3. Subjects’ difficulty understanding the scope of the “Search Tools & Collections” menu (Prototype A) and link (Prototype B) provides further evidence that unmediated novice users have difficulty navigating links at any level of sophistication or granularity. However, as observation #1 suggests, as users become more familiar with the resources and services available, they prefer increased link density on the homepage. This suggests that the library should focus features in the lower right-hand column on providing navigational aid for more advanced users, while focusing features in the tabbed box area on searching aid for unmediated novice users.

4. Each “More…” menu page should support re-directing the user to the more appropriate menu page in the case of navigational error on the homepage. Observation #2 is relevant here as reducing the number of menus may decrease the complexity of re-directing users via menu pages following such an error.

5. Consistent with Cycle 1 results, subjects often do not see the content area tabs on interior pages, making content on these tabs hard to find. Since we cannot adjust the appearance of these tabs, and since subject behavior varies so greatly with them, we should avoid using them, and instead focus on task disambiguation at the secondary page level.

Based on Cycle 2 observations, the CO-PIs recommend the following next steps. As these recommendations set out, the Co-PIs recommend extensive revisions to the lower right-hand column on the library homepage, as well as addition of or revision to several associated secondary pages. Based on Cycle 2 observations, and integrating existing liaison feedback from the recent “MyGS, Database List, and Homepage Revisions” survey, the Co-PIs have prepared the following prototype as an exemplar of how these revisions might look:
1. Revise the headings in the lower right-hand column of the homepage to correspond to the following three menus: “Research Help,” “Services,” and “Search Tools and Collections,” the latter of which previously was approved in the Faculty Meeting Consent Agenda, May 2, 2016.

2. With liaison feedback, identify links to be included under the “Research Help” and “Services” menus. Liaison feedback for the “Search Tools and Collections” menu has already been collected pursuant to implementation of the items approved in the Faculty Meeting Consent Agenda, May 2, 2016.

3. For each menu, include at the end of the link sequence a “More…” or similarly titled link to point to a context-relevant menu page. For each menu, this page should provide cross-linking to the other two menu pages in case of navigational error from the homepage, as well as comprehensive access to resources and services related to the menu. The layout of these menu pages should roughly follow the formatting of the menu page mock-ups prepared for the Cycle 2 prototypes (e.g., http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/library-research/search-find/).

4. Contingent on the final selection of links for each menu, revise or develop new secondary-level pages to support improved task disambiguation where appropriate. For example, if a “Citing Sources” link is included under the “Research Help” menu, revise the existing “Citing Sources” page to better disambiguate tasks. For example:

   http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/library-research/citing-sources/

   Or, if “Renew Books” is included under the “Library Services” menu, revise the existing “Your Accounts” page to better disambiguate accounts. For example:

   http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/library-research/your-accounts/

   Or, if “Book a Room” is included under the “Library Services” menu, consider developing a new disambiguation page that properly directs users whether they need to book a presentation practice room, the touchscreen table, a graduate study room, or a 13XX classroom.

   Cycle 3 of the usability study will provide further evidence on behalf of these revisions.

5. Pending approval and implementation of these recommendations, conduct a baseline study of the top right-hand column in order to coordinate content and links throughout the column. Follow up with a baseline study of all right-hand column changes during the 2016-2017 academic year.

6. Under the aegis of the Assessment Work Team, develop questions and conduct focus group activities with the members of the Faculty Senate Library Committee to solicit feedback on the library website, including ongoing and potential changes. Target early fall 2016.

Pending approval of these recommendations by the Assessment Work Team, a liaison survey will be prepared and distributed to solicit feedback on what links should be included under the “Research Help” and “Services” menus. The results of this survey will be used to prepare implementation-ready consent agenda items in time for the June Library Faculty meeting.
Today’s Tasks (A/B Sequence; Three subjects)

1. To begin, click on **Homepage Layout A**, take a moment to look around the library homepage, then 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. Using only the links in the lower right-hand corner of the library website, take a few minutes to complete each of the following tasks. Remember to think out loud as you work on the tasks:
   a. 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.
   b. 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.
   c. 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.
   d. 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.

3. Return to **Homepage Layout A**. For the following items, you don’t need to complete the task. Instead, just hover over the link that you think you would click on first to complete the task. Say out loud which link you would click:
   a. Find the database named *PsychINFO*.
   b. Find out which computers in the library have AutoCAD 2016 installed.
   c. Find out how to submit an Interlibrary Loan request for a book at another library.
   d. See if the library has the electronic journal *Memory Studies*.

4. Next, close **Homepage Layout A** and open **Homepage Layout B**, take a moment to look at the layout and links in the lower right-hand corner. Briefly describe what looks the same, and what looks different.

5. As before, using only the links in the lower right-hand corner of the library website, take a few minutes to complete each of the following tasks. Remember to think out loud as you work on the tasks:
   a. 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.
   b. 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.
   c. 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.
   d. 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.
6. Return to **Homepage Layout B**. Again, for the following items, you don’t need to complete the task. Instead, just hover over the link that you think you would click on first to complete the task. Say out loud which link you would click:

   a. Find the database named *PsychINFO*.

   b. Find out which computers in the library have AutoCAD 2016 installed.

   c. Find out how to submit an Interlibrary Loan request for a book at another library.

   d. See if the library has the electronic journal *Memory Studies*.

7. Lastly, close **Homepage Layout B**, take a moment to think about both versions, and reopen either **Layout A** or **Layout B**, whichever you think was easier to use and understand. Briefly describe what you like about it, what you don’t like, and what you think would make it easier to use.

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**Today’s Tasks (B/A Sequence; Three Subjects)**

1. To begin, click on **Homepage Layout B**, take a moment to look around the library homepage, then 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. Using only the links in the lower right-hand corner of the library website, take a few minutes to complete each of the following tasks. Remember to think out loud as you work on the tasks:

   a. 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.

   b. 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.

   c. 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.

   d. 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.

3. Return to **Homepage Layout B**. For the following items, you don’t need to complete the task. Instead, just hover over the link that you think you would click on first to complete the task. Say out loud which link you would click:

   a. Find the database named *PsychINFO*.

   b. Find out which computers in the library have AutoCAD 2016 installed.

   c. Find out how to submit an Interlibrary Loan request for a book at another library.

   d. See if the library has the electronic journal *Memory Studies*.

4. Next, close **Homepage Layout B** and open **Homepage Layout A**, take a moment to look at the layout and links in the lower right-hand corner. Briefly describe what looks the same, and what looks different.

5. As before, using only the links in the lower right-hand corner of the library website, take a few minutes to complete each of the following tasks. Remember to think out loud as you work on the tasks:
a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

6. Return to **Homepage Layout A**. Again, for the following items, you don’t need to complete the task. Instead, just hover over the link that you think you would click on first to complete the task. Say out loud which link you would click:

   a. Find the database named *PsychINFO*.
   
   b. Find out which computers in the library have AutoCAD 2016 installed.
   
   c. Find out how to submit an Interlibrary Loan request for a book at another library.
   
   d. See if the library has the electronic journal *Memory Studies*.

7. Lastly, close **Homepage Layout A**, take a moment to think about both versions, and reopen either **Layout A** or **Layout B**, whichever you think was easier to use and understand. Briefly describe what you like about it, what you don’t like, and what you think would make it easier to use.

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**Web Usability Study**

**Cycle 3 Summary and Recommendations**

**May 16, 2016**

For Cycle 3, interviews were conducted to collect 1) baseline evidence of how students navigate the homepage tabbed box and 2) feedback on prototypes of two interior pages. Tasks were developed to evaluate subjects’ completion of several generic navigational tasks with these assets. Subjects included five undergraduate students ranging from freshman to senior, none of whom were library employees. Subjects were interviewed in two cohorts (A/B and B/A) in order to randomize the order of presentation of each prototype. Task sequences for each cohort are included at the end of this report.

On May 16, the following Co-PIs met for 1 hour to review and discuss evidence collected during Cycle 3: Ruth Baker, David Lowder, W. Bede Mitchell, Jeff Mortimore, and Debra Skinner. Clement Lau attended as a guest pending his joining the study as a Co-PI.

CO-PIs identified the following observations as most significant:

1. Subjects have less difficulty navigating the tabs than the resources to which they provide access. For example, in several cases, subjects searched for catalog items in Discover, but had difficulty navigating the associated records.
2. Continued use of Discover to search for library services reiterates the need for mediation. Investigate “Item Exact Match Recommender” app as possible solution (recommended by EBSCO engineer at EDS Users Group meeting).

3. The most problematic tab for meaning is Articles+, not only for the tab’s title, but for what the tab contains. Subjects see the dropdown menu but not the A-Z database link list. The A-Z link list likely can be combined with the Discover tab (similar to Georgia State), in which case the tab could possibly be eliminated.

4. Patrons consistently looked to the right-hand column for service-related tasks (renew book, citation styles, find a librarian). As these services will be better supported in the right-hand column as a result of Cycle 2 recommendations, these services can be removed from the tabbed box. The Get Research Help tab either can be removed or simplified to focus on the Research Guides (similar to Georgia State or Valdosta).

5. Subjects consistently preferred the prototype versions of the interior pages, and consistently navigated tasks more quickly using them.

Based on Cycle 3 observations, the CO-PIs recommend the following next steps. As these recommendations set out, the Co-PIs recommend extensive revision to the homepage tabbed box, as well as revision to several interior pages based on the prototypes studied here. Integrating liaison feedback from the two previous cycles, the Co-PIs have prepared the following prototype as an exemplar of how tabbed box revisions might look:

http://georgiasouthern.libguides.com/prototypeA

1. Conduct the following revisions to the homepage tabbed box:
   a. Replace the existing tabs with a single content area under the library banner.
   b. Replace the three existing tabbed box search forms with a single multi-search form that defaults to Discover.
   c. Locate the A-Z Database link beneath the multi-search form.
   d. Locate a link to the Research Guides to the right of the A-Z Database link list, with adequate white space and text styling to differentiate it from the link list.
   e. Preserve additional catalog-related links at the bottom of the content area until they are absorbed or otherwise revised by Alma/Primo.

2. Pursue implementation of the “Item Exact Match Recommender” app in Discover.

3. Pursue revision of the following interior pages based on the Cycle 3 prototypes:
   http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/library-research/citing-sources/
   http://library.georgiasouthern.edu/library-research/your-accounts/
   a. Citing Sources
   b. Computers and Printing
   c. GIL Express Info
   d. Government Documents
   e. Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
   f. Library Liaisons
g. Online Tutorials
h. Request a Workshop
i. Schedule Instruction
j. Special Collections
k. Your Accounts