"Instruction...that just bugs me!"
Using Card-Sorting to Arrange Menu Items on an Academic Library Webpage
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INTRODUCTION & SCOPE
We conducted card-sorting exercises to learn user preferences for arrangement & naming of 7 menus (at right) & 37 menu entries under them which appear at the top of each UCSD Library web page.

In ½ hour, one-on-one sessions, participants used speak-aloud protocol while arranging paper cards to represent their preferred organization of the information. An observer took notes & asked follow-up questions.

15 volunteer participants from 9 disciplines (9 undergrads & 6 grad students) received a $10 campus gift card as an incentive.

VALUE
- Low-tech way to get direct user feedback.
- Low-cost, and fairly quick & easy.
- User quotes can be compelling.
- Group or individual can analyze results.
- Use insight to establish library-wide standard language for website, signs, publications, etc.

CHALLENGES
- Results showed very different thinking between librarians & participants for catalogs, instruction, and searches.
- Hard to get action when user insights don't align with librarian thinking.
- Action is most likely with advance buy-in from those responsible for website.

SELECTED OBSERVATIONS
Participants...
- Were very confused over meaning of Instruction & sometimes confused by Catalogs & Course Reserves.
- Thought "instruction" meant "how to use" the library, service, or website. They put it under Reserves thinking it would explain how to use reserves.
- Favored language to facilitate efficient, goal-oriented actions.
- Discarded or isolated items they didn't understand, saying they wouldn't click on something that was confusing. Used Services & Help as catch-alls.
- Did not create new menu solely for tech-related entries, as theorized.
- Were not concerned that some entries were duplicated on multiple menus.
- Had only mild preferences for the order of entries on each menu.
- Knew that Catalog entries for Search...UCSD, San Diego, UC, Worldwide searched library resources, not the Web.

ADD or DELETE
- Make new web pages & entries tailored to faculty and to those new to the library.
- Add About... entries or mouseovers to clarify what reserves, databases, and catalogs are and to better explain unclear entries like Get Started.
- Delete confusing Ask-a-Librarian entry under Ask-a-Librarian menu.
- Eliminate Catalogs as a menu heading.
- Consolidate Catalogs as a menu heading.
- Subject Librarians to renamed Contact Us menu. 

RENAME or REARRANGE
- Reorganize entries into mega-menus to clarify & show relationships among entries.
- Move entries under Catalogs to Research Tools or to new menu called Search.
- Place renamed Course Guides entry on Reserves menu.
- Change Ask-a-Librarian menu to Contact Us.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Subject Librarians to renamed Contact Us menu.
- Consolidate Catalogs as a menu heading.
- Subject Librarians to renamed Contact Us menu.
- Change Ask-a-Librarian menu to Contact Us.

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