Collaborative Assessment and Usability: Effectively Reaching Across Departments

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Instruction Librarians’ (Anne and Lisa’s) Observations about Students during FYS Instruction Sessions

- Once in Integrated Search, stayed there for bookmark search.
- Didn’t make use of (or “see”) tabbed search box.
- Used drop-down menus frequently.
- Watched: Documented on worksheet where students clicked.
- Listened: Overheard the students talk through the tasks together.

Usability Outcomes

- Students should have their next task from where they are.
- Students navigate towards navigation, not tabbed search box.
- Students don’t pay attention to the differences between search boxes.

Benefits of Collaboration

- Better usability testing.
- “Seeing is believing.”
- Propels and informs iterative design.
- One activity assessment.
- Active learning, and usability (more bang for your buck).
- Leads to more collaboration.
- Circulation staff asked for instruction session.
- Instruction improved by small website changes.

Future Plans

- For Instruction:
  - Change FYS instruction.
  - Tweet FYS exercise.
  - Increase communication/collaboration across departments in library.

- For Systems:
  - Refactored need for discovery service.
  - Iterative design and acceptance of “perpetual beta.”
  - Increase communication/collaboration across departments in library.

Quick summary!

Instruction librarians noticed interesting things that students did with website and invited Systems librarian to come observe students in classes = Awesome collaboration & awesome usability process!
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Enrollment: 13,145 in 2011
(11,903 undergrads)

Degrees:
- Bachelor’s (majors): 52
- Master’s: 31
- Doctoral: 2 (Marine Biology and Educational Leadership)

Randall Library
- 46 full time employees
- 18 librarians
- 9 providing instruction
- 2 in Systems

#1 Tenet of website redesign = do “usability testing”

Usability: “effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction with which as specified set of users can achieve a specified set of tasks in a particular environment”

Usability Testing: “a research and development method that involves end users who provide feedback on the web site design”

Traditional Methods of Usability Testing
- Usability Task Tests
- Motion/Click Recording
- Think-Aloud Technique
- Paper Prototypes

Problems with Usability Testing
- Planning and conducting testing requires effort and time
- Finding participants requires effort and bribes
- Participants are typically interested in the library
- Participants know they are being observed
- Tasks are simulated, not “real”
- Typically happens on a “beta” site

Library Instruction @ Randall Library

- AY 2011-2012
- 9 librarians teaching
- Course-related instruction sessions, workshops, and tours
  - 390 sessions
  - 458 contact hours
  - Teaching 9,252 users
- Credit courses offered
  - LIB 101
  - LIB 103
  - LIB 104

PLUS

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