Special Collections Web Usability Testing:
A Case Study at the University of Washington Libraries

Previous site (2005-2012)

**Areas of concern:**
- Many users approach the collections looking for materials by format, not along curatorial boundaries
- Breadth of resources not adequately represented
- Unclear where novice researchers should start
- Many resource/data silos
- Outdated content
- Style and presentation not inline with UW Libraries guidelines

**Issues identified through testing and addressed:**
- Format-based approach to accessing materials
- Quick links provide access to the most commonly requested resources and forms
- Reviewed and updated every bit of web content
- Consistent use of language and terms throughout site
- Subject-based access to materials now provided through LibGuides
- Minor changes to our digital collections site to ensure consistency and clarity
- Overall look and feel of site updated to conform with current Libraries practices

**Issues and concerns still to be addressed:**
- User interface of finding aid system
- For novice researchers, finding aids are overwhelming and difficult to understand
- Use more easily understood location names for materials in online catalog
- Better integration between systems / provide as much one-stop shopping for Special Collections’ materials as possible
- “Bookbag” functionality to order photographs from our digital collections