Usability Testing – Library Website
Spring 2016

Document Outline
- PART I – Background
- PART II – Task Summaries & Recommendations
- PART III – Additional Discussion Items & Observations
- PART IV – Connection to Annual Assessment
- Appendix A – Undergraduate Student Questions
- Appendix B – Graduate Student Questions

PART I - Background

Context
In spring 2016, the web team conducted usability testing of the website, launched on Drupal in June 2015, with a total of seven sessions with undergraduate and graduate students.

Overview of Participants
- 7 individuals - 2 males, 5 females
- Class Standing: 3 freshman, 2 juniors, 2 graduate students
- Areas of Study: economics (2), earth science systems, computer science, biology, health psychology, interdisciplinary humanities
- Two of the seven participants were undergraduates who worked in the library. One has worked with us for multiple semesters while the other student was a recent hire with limited experience in the library.

Recruitment
Undergrad students were recruited from those who attended a library session in spring 2016 and expressed a willingness to be contacted for usability sessions. Since some scheduled undergraduates did not keep their appointments, we did arrange to conduct sessions with two library student assistants. Sara contacted grad students individually to ask if they would participant.

Reported Library Website Use
Participants ranged from infrequent library website users (1x this year) to fairly frequent users (2-3x per week). Participants noted that they primarily used the library website for research purposes -- accessing databases (5), journal articles (3) and Melvyl (2). Individuals also mentioned visiting the website for library hours, news & events, and collaborative work room reservations.

Undergraduate students were asked to complete 13 tasks while graduate students were asked to complete 10 tasks. Grad students were not asked to locate FAQs (task 5), upcoming events (task 7), or social media (task 13). All other questions were similar though the wording of the

original undergraduate questions was often changed for graduate students in order to make the questions more closely related to scenarios they may encounter in their teaching and research.

Most tasks were completed on a laptop though participants were asked to complete some tasks (6 & 7) on a mobile phone (iPhone 5) in order to assess the library website's responsiveness.

Users were also asked some questions that were not linked to a task in order to gauge their expectations or to ask their impression of the website.

All sessions included the same facilitator (Sara) and a note-taker (Benjamin Bocanegra, Elizabeth Salmon, Sarah Sheets, Elizabeth McMunn-Tetangco).

The next portion of the report gives an overview of the success rates for each task along with pathways participants took and/or challenges they experienced. Some recommendations are also included.

PART II - Task Summaries & Recommendations

Task 1: Locating Library Hours
100% of participants (7/7) successfully completed this task. Three participants clicked on the Date/Hours information on the navy navigation bar (far right). Three others used *About Us > Hours* while one person Googled the answer.

Recommendation(s):
- None

Task 2: Locating a Library Room for 12 People
42.9% of participants (3/7) successfully completed this task. Of the three who successfully completed this task, two had challenges. Only the library students who had worked with us for some time completed this task with relative ease.

Individuals used a number of pathways to access room reservations. For instance, they navigated to *Use the Library* on the main navigation bar. They also clicked the *Use Library Space* green bar and side links on other pages. **All** participants gravitated toward the *Reserve a Room* link. Once at the Campus Reservation System (CRS), there was often some confusion. One participant started to reserve a collaborative work room and then discovered that it was not large enough. Someone was on the Meeting Room page in CRS, where appropriately sized rooms were located, but was initially confused by the areas for tabling listed on the same page. Another participant clicked *Make a Reservation* in CRS and discovered that he unexpectedly remained on the same page. Sometimes participants returned to other library pages to locate additional information about the rooms but this was always **after** they went to CRS. Even those who returned to pages with information about the rooms seemed to have challenges locating room capacity information even when skimming pages.

Recommendation(s):
- Work with Campus IT to see if some short/basic instruction can be placed in CRS?
- Re-consider the organization of room information to more clearly highlight basic information such as who can reserve, capacity limits, and equipment available.
- Create a short tutorial on finding and reserving room. Link from room pages (permanently) and/or Spotlight (at the beginning of the semester).

Task 3: Connect from Off Campus (VPN)
100% of participants (5/5) successfully completed this task. There was often some hesitation but all participants did find the link in relatively little time.

Recommendations:
- None

Task 4: Find a Book in Melvyl
100% of participants (7/7) successfully completed this task and did so in the same way and with ease. All participants typed the desired title in the search box for Melvyl at the upper right. One participant asked why this box started with the language *Books, articles …* while all the others started with a verb. This participant thought it could just say something like *Search for books*.

Recommendation(s):
- Change wording found in Melvyl tabbed search box. E.g. Search for books, articles, ….

Task 5: Locate FAQs
20% of participants (1 of 5) successfully completed this task. Most participants expected FAQs to be located under *About Us* though one participant expected to find it under *Use the Library*. The participant who found it, did so under *New? Start Here*. No one seemed to scroll down far enough on the home page to see *FAQs* in the set of links immediately under the Ask a Librarian chat bubble graphic.

Recommendation(s)
- Add FAQs to the *About Us* menu. [Note: This is already done.]

Task 6: Locate Library Map (Mobile)
100% of participants (7 of 7) successfully completed this task. Most found this by using the hamburger menu button. They selected *Use the Library* to find maps. One participant did click the *Use Library Space* green bar. A number of users had a tendency to scroll down on the page before returning to the hamburger menu.

Recommendation(s):
- None

Task 7: Find Upcoming Events (Mobile)

100% of participants (5 of 5) successfully completed this task. Four of the five participants ended up at the Events Calendar where they could see upcoming events. One individual ended up at Library News & Events (events in a list). Three of the five navigated from the *About Us* category in the main navigation menu. One individual went to *Use the Library* for this information while one individual used the *Use Library Spaces* green bar. One participant did remark that the Events calendar was hard to read on the mobile device. The language of *Events Calendar* seemed to resonate with individuals more than the language of *Library News & Events*.

Recommendation(s):
- Revisit Events calendar. Note that one individual did equate the hours page with the events calendar. Note the challenges of viewing this on a mobile device while at the same time seeing users gravitate toward this language.

Task 8: Borrowing Privileges

71.4% of participants (5/7) successfully completed this task. Two participants selected *Use the Library > Borrowing Privileges*. Another individual found the Borrowing Privileges page via a side link after first selecting *My Library Account*, in the upper blue bar. One participant started looking under *About Us* and then gravitated to the FAQS and remained stuck there. Once in FAQs, the individual searched for the term *DVD* as a way to find information about borrowing privileges. One participant did not engage in the task due to an interest in streaming video rather than the DVD format. The primary challenge may be in making the connection between a checked out DVD and borrowing policies.

Recommendation(s):
- No formal recommendation. It may be worthwhile to look at borrowing information available on the web page versus information in the FAQs related to borrowing.

Task 9: Renewing an ILL Book

100% of participants (7 of 7) successfully completed this task. One participant found this a bit challenging. Participants took different pathways to find an account where they could renew an item. Four individuals chose *My Library Account* (upper blue bar) while the other three chose *Use the Library* and then either selected *Interlibrary Loan* or *My ILL Requests*. One individual remarked that *My ILL Request* sounded like an account. Once on the My Library Account page, individuals tended to chose *My Library Account* (Worldcat option) primarily since it was the first of two options listed. Participants did not seem particularly interested in proceeding to the second option.

Recommendation(s):
- Discuss. Should there be clarifying information about the differences between My Library Account and My ILL Request? The path taken may determine whether or not an

individual knows whether both accounts exist. Does this matter? Can library staff distinguish the differences between the two?

Task 10: Locating a Database in a Subject Area

57.1% of participants (4 of 7) successfully completed this task. Note that three of the participants focused on finding journal articles and passed over just finding a subject database that would work for the desired topic. (The question asked of undergraduates may be partly at fault here.) Undergrad and graduate students were asked two slightly different questions. The two successful undergrads clicked on the Databases tab and chose *Select all databases* and then chose a category on the databases landing page. Both graduate students started at the Database tab to either search for or browse to databases to locate Sociological Abstracts. Those who become more focused on finding articles, rather than a suitable database, used the articles tab and/or journal tabs. Two of the students looking for articles started at the journals tab with searches for *self-driving cars*. In terms of database selection, one student mentioned that she used databases recommended by her faculty member. Another participant mentioned that she would likely use the library guide created for her class as an avenue for getting to databases.

Recommendation(s):
- Use library instruction as an opportunity to clarify between article and journal searching.
- Should search terms placed in one box e.g. at Melvyl tab, disappear when another tab is clicked? One user expressed frustration at this.
- During the testing, we discovered that the journal search merely spins if on the guest network. Tom is followed up with campus IT and this appears to be resolved. Users on the guest network can now search successfully via the journal finder.

Task 11: Locate Videos in Database Collections

42.9% of participants (3 of 7) successfully completed this task. Those who successfully completed this task found *Subject & Course Guides* under *Research & Academics* though it was not always noticeable. One participant was looking for the language *class*. Another student who also looked under *Research & Academic* never located the guides and was expecting this content to be related to *tutorials*. One individual did not engage with the task and said, "email me". Two other participants were unsuccessful and tried links including *My Library Account* and *Supplemental Course Resources*. One of those same users expected to find the guide in *MyUCMerced* or CatCourses. Those who had received library instruction were more likely to complete this task though this was not always the case.

Recommendation(s):
- Revisit language for Subject and Course Guides.
- Revisit pathway to the guides. Can it be represent in another way and/or placed in a more visible location?

Task 12: Contact a Librarian

100% of participants (7 of 7) successfully completed this task. Most participants (4) selected *About Us > Ask a Librarian*. However, three other pathways were used too. One participant selected *Meet with a Librarian* under *Research and Academics*, another clicked the *Meet with a Librarian* link found beneath that Ask a Librarian chat graphic, and another clicked on the actual Ask a Librarian chat graphic.

Recommendation(s):
- None

Task 13: Locate Library Social Media
100% of participants (4 of 5) successfully completed this task. They located social media icons at the bottom of the library's home page. One individual who did find them first went to *About Us > Newsletter and Media*. One participant who did not locate them also took that same pathway.

Recommendation(s):
- Discuss whether or not to change the *Newsletter & Media* language to *Newsletter*. The term *media* may be misleading; yet, I believe *media* was used in case we wanted to include other published media items and or video content.

PART III: Additional Discussion Items & Observations

As students went through the process of completing a task or responding to questions, they often uncovered what was working well and what might be improved. Below are additional requests or observations made during usability sessions. These items are worthy of further discussion that may lead to fixes or enhancements.

Discussion

Hours related
- Explore the possibility of Closed/Open functionality. Requested as an enhancement to hours information.
- Include Hours information on the mobile site.

Search
- Ensure that searches for specific content in Google or on the website bring up relevant content. In the sessions, students relied heavily on the main navigation bar. However, we had one participant who relied heavily on search.
- This is probably out of our scope, but one participant desired a universal search that then parsed out content e.g. database content, resources, library info etc.
- Consider if a site search should be the primary search on the mobile site or if should be incorporated in some way. Right now the primary search on the mobile site is of Melvyl.

- Though limiters are present when a user selects databases (e.g. by subject) or conducts a database search, a participant expressed a desire for a search within a search. Note: Search capabilities in Drupal may be limited.

Navigation Menus
- Ensure drop-down menu as optimal on the mobile device. A participant noted that the page moves in the background when trying to select a link in a drop-down menu. Is this intended or not?
- Discuss main navigation categories. Overall, these were well received and usable though a couple individuals suggested that there was a lot within the menus. Should information be re-distributed in any way?
- *Maps* is under *Use the Library*. *Library Maps* is under *About Us*. Do we need both? At minimum, it seems we should name them similarly.

Homepage
- How can we best use the Spotlight space? Discuss how to optimize slideshow content. Suggestions for highlighting events (though we have News & Events) or instructional materials (e.g. search for a book). [I did notice a student using the spotlight as a way to answer a question.] A student suggested that this might be too much space for the Spotlight.
- Should we have a greater emphasis on showing events in date order on the home page? A student noted that seeing events for today and seeing events in the library building would be very helpful. Note: In many ways this extends past our website / library events and may include CRS bookings.

Other
- Ensure media/tutorial images and links take users to the actual item rather than a Drupal entry *about* the item that then requires another click.
- Ensure hovers still allow text to be easily read e.g. when hovering over color blocks on right side of Spotlight.

Additional Observations
- The tabbed search box is "hands down" the most valued part of the library's home page.
- Students readily scrolled on the mobile site. A number of participants did very little, if any scrolling, when completing tasks on the laptop.
- Some students brought up a comparison of the new site to the old site on their own. They liked the new site better.
- Participants described the site with words such as organized, clear, professional, and academic (in a good way).

PART IV: Connection to Annual Assessment
2015-2016 Assessment Plan, Strategic Plan
- One outcome in our 2015-2016 assessment plan included ensuring library users could easily find library resources and services on the redesigned website. To measure this, we targeted a 90% successful completion rate for 90% of assigned tasks during usability test. Two of our participants were able to successfully complete 90% of the assigned

tasks. We can continue to improve our website to help users find the information they want and need from our online presence.

- http://libguides.ucmerced.edu/Strategic_Agenda

Appendix A: Undergraduate Student Questions

Pre-Questions
1. What is your major and year of study?
2. Would you consider yourself a frequent or infrequent visitor to the library's website?
3. What are you most likely to come to the library website for?

Laptop
4. You want to know the library hours for May 14th? What are they? [Hours]
5. You are the head of a club and are hosting a meeting for 12 people. Can you find a room in the library that will accommodate your needs? [Rooms]
6. A friend told you that to access library resources from off campus, you need the VPN. Where can you find more information about this on the library website? [VPN]
7. You are looking for a book called *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. Does the UC Merced Library own it? [Melvyl, books]
8. You want to find the FAQs on the library's website. Where are they located? [FAQs]
9. We have some links on the right hand side of the page. What would you expect to find under 1) New? Start Here 2) Improve Your Research
10. What information is most noticeable and/or useable to you on the home page?

Mobile
11. Locate a 2nd floor map of the library. [Maps]
12. You want to find out about upcoming events in the library. Where would you look? [Events]
13. If you check out a DVD from our library, how long can you keep it? [Borrowing]
14. Is the information you see on the mobile device in the order most useful to you? [Mobile content]

Laptop
15. Where would you go to renew a book you got through Interlibrary Loan? [MyILLRequests]
16. You are in an Engineering class and have to find journal articles for you paper on self-driving cars? Look for a database that you think looks promising for this kind of research. [Databases]
17. Your professor wants you to find videos but from a library database. How might you find a database that has this type of content? [Databases]
18. You attended a library session for your class and the librarian made a guide for it. Can you locate the guide for the Anthropology 112 class? [Library guides]

19. You have been told that you can meet with a librarian if you have questions about your research. How are you going to get in touch with a librarian? [Contact Us / Research Consultation]
20. If you wanted to follow the library on Twitter or Facebook, how would you find us? [Social Media]

Closing Questions
21. If you could change one thing about the library website, what would it be?
22. If you could keep one thing about the library website, what would it be?

Appendix B: Graduate Student Questions

Pre-Questions
1. What is your area of graduate work?
2. Would you consider yourself a frequent or infrequent visitor of the library's website?
3. What are you most likely to come to the library website for?

Laptop
4. You want to know the library hours for Saturday, May 14th on commencement weekend. What are they? [Hours]
5. You are holding a meeting for 12 graduate students. Can you find a room in the library that will accommodate your needs? [Rooms]
6. You are looking to see if you can obtain Wellington and Szcerbinksi's book called *Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. How do you go about determining this? [Melvyl, books]
7. We have some links on the right hand side of the page. What would you expect to find under 1) Graduate Students?
    a. Follow-Up: Does this page "Graduate Students" provide you the type of information you would be looking for?

Mobile
8. You want to know what floor of the library has a book with the call number H62.C6963 1994? Where does the library provide this information? [Maps]
9. If you check out a DVD from our library, how long can you keep it? [Borrowing]
10. Is the information you see on the mobile device in the order most useful to you? [Mobile content]

Laptop
11. Where would you go to renew a book you got through Interlibrary Loan? [MyILLRequests]
12. You frequently use the database Sociological Abstracts. How do you normally go about accessing this database? [Databases]

13. You are interested in introducing more video content into a course. You heard that video content might also be available in library databases. How might you find a database that has this type of content? [Databases]
14. Your students attended a library session for your class and the librarian made a guide for it. Can you locate the guide for the Sociology 15 (Beattie) class? [Library guides]
15. You are encouraging students to contact the library for research assistance around their final papers. Where do you direct them for options for contacting a librarian? [Contact Us / Research Consultation]

Closing Questions
16. If you could change something about the library website in order to make it more useable (valuable) for you, what would it be?
17. What is valuable about the library website that should be retained (functionality, content etc.)?
18. What is your overall reaction to the library's home page and its menus?
19. Any other comments?