

UX Café Report

Conducted on February 18, 2020

Research Question: Are people successfully locating Omni when searching for resources?

Methodology

Methodology used was a task analysis, alternating between two separate tasks. The reason for having two separate tasks was to see if individuals looked in different places when looking for a book or a journal.

Task 1: Please try to find the library book, “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats”

Task 2: Please try to find the latest issue of the electronic Journal, “Nature Climate Change”

A few specific goals of this study were:

- to see if the term “Catalogue” made sense to users trying to find resources
- to see if individuals looking for journals would still use the catalogue.

Results

The task analysis had 8 participants: Task 1, n=4; Task 2, n=4

Data gathered with this sample size is not statistically significant, and should not be used quantitatively. However, Nielsen and Landauer have demonstrated that 4 users is still enough to identify around 75% of issues in a system¹.

Finding 1: The biggest breakdown observed in these usability tests was around choosing the wrong search bar. In both task groups, at least one user attempted to use the site search bar in the top right corner of the library website to search for their book or article, and were ultimately unsuccessful in their search because of it.

Finding 2: A few individuals looking for a journal article used the “E-Journals” Serials Solutions link under “Find”, rather than the catalogue.

Finding 3: When choosing between different search surrogates in Omni, participants frequently noted the resource type or date as being factors in which surrogate they chose.

Finding 4: Nature Climate Change has two similar-looking search surrogates, but only one of them provides online access, which confused some users.

Additional feedback: In addition to these tasks, we had the following unrelated user feedback:

One user expressed frustration at how difficult it can be to find publications by a specific faculty member (both on faculty websites and in the library). Another user expressed that they’re having a hard time finding certain known items in the new system.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Provide stronger visual indicators that the site search function on the library website is not a catalogue search, or make it less visually prominent.

Recommendation 2: Identify the specific value Serial Solutions has over Omni in terms of searching for journals---If Serial Solutions is considered the superior option for journal searching leave as is. If not, change this link to direct to Omni's Journal Search page.

Recommendation 3: This finding demonstrates the importance of high quality metadata, and shows that it's important for CMDA to continue working to ensure that dates and resource types are complete and accurate in our records.

Recommendation 4: Where a serial is represented by multiple different records, it's important to ensure that all of these records have value, and to ensure that the difference between these records is clear at the search surrogate level.

¹Nielsen, Jakob, and Landauer, Thomas K.: "A mathematical model of the finding of usability problems," *Proceedings of ACM INTERCHI'93 Conference* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 24-29 April 1993), pp. 206-213.