Origin

The User Experience Unit of the Georgia Tech Library grew out of the Library's 2007 - 2011 Strategic Plan. The objective was to establish an independent team dedicated to understanding library usage that could discover and react accordingly to user needs. This arrangement allows the Unit to work widely across departments on a variety of projects, as well as to develop their own initiatives. In September 2007, Brian Mathews and Dottie Hunt moved from the Information Services Department to form the User Experience Unit; they report to Bob Fox, Associate Director for Public and Administrative Services.

The User Experience Philosophy

The chief objective of this unit is to study the users of the library, which in turn will help decision-makers plan, promote, and expand services.

- Where do users succeed?
- Where do they encounter confusion or frustration?
- What services are missing?
- What services are they unaware of?
- What are the best methods for communicating with them?
By attempting to answer these and related questions, the organization can improve not only customer satisfaction, but also the overall experience of the library. Simply stated, the core mission of the User Experience Unit is to make students, faculty, and staff more successful in their pursuits. This effort is accomplished by our partnering with other library departments, campus units, and student groups. Functionally, the Unit operates with a product design approach, in which ideas are taken from concept to implementation.

**Accomplishments**

Here are Unit accomplishments from September 2007 - June 2008:

- **Exam Cram, Fall & Spring Semester.** Partnered with Housing and academic departments to provide "last minute" assistance and review sessions for many freshmen courses. Over 300 students participated.
- **Stories.** Launched a graphical brochure/comic aimed at freshmen, designed to expose them to the library from a student point of view.
- **Flash in the Pan.** Worked with members of ISD to host a multimedia competition. Worked with Adobe and Marvel to secure prizes and guest judges.
- **Water Shortage Exhibit.** Worked with LEC, Campus facilities, Marketing & Communications, and student groups on a water conservation display.
- **2West Renovations - initial research.** Conducted interviews and focus groups, along with polls and prototype testing. Gathered feedback from 120 students.
- **Graphical & Multimedia Design.** Provides design work for CETL, Circulation, Counseling Center, OIT, Housing, Health Center, Scholarly Communication and Digital Services, and Information Services.
- **HVAC Renovation.** Provided communications support for the East Building Heating and Air project.
- **Second Life.** In collaboration with the College of Computing, offered free virtual land to the Georgia Tech community. Three professors used this platform for instruction.
- **Attended workshops/training/events:** Breather.org, American Institute of Graphic Arts, and the Atlanta Interactive Marketing Association.

**Professional Presentations:**

• Professional Publications:
  • "Social Eyes" *Journal of Web Librarianship*, a quarterly column.
• Peer Review Reader. *Journal of Web Librarianship*, *Library Quarterly*, and the American Society for Engineering Education
• Campus Service. Served as a freshmen experience mentor.
• Networking. Developed a network of 40 students who serve as unofficial advisors/consultants to the library, valued for their social, cultural, or academic connections.
• LibSHARE. Worked with the Library Systems department to test and initiate the new library intranet.
• Consultation. Provided onsite assessment and conducted focus group sessions for the University of Santa Barbara, Davidson Library.

User Experience Unit and the Library's Strategic Plan
The work of the User Experience Unit addresses the following objectives:

• **Goal I.1.1:** Work with students to customize and design Library resources and services that are intuitive to Georgia Tech students and that support their research and scholarship.

Objectives:

b. Seek opportunities to gain input from all students, including under-represented student populations and groups, in developing, implementing, and evaluating Library resources and services.

c. Foster opportunities to collaborate with student organizations, interest groups, and students in general in developing, implementing, and evaluating Library resources and services.

• **Goal I.1.2:** Develop and implement strategies for effectively marketing services and resources to students.
Objectives:

a. Assess how students use the Library's physical and virtual resources.

c. Evaluate the effectiveness of our marketing efforts with appropriate assessment tools.

- **Goal I.2.1**: Increase awareness and use of Library resources and services among faculty.

- **Goal I.3.1**: Collaborate with the Georgia Tech academic community to prepare information-competent graduates.

Objective:

e. Collaborate and partner with other campus programs that impact students' academic lives (e.g., OIT, Success Program, OMED, 1-to-1 Tutoring, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, President's Scholars Program).

Goals for 2008 - 2009

The User Experience Unit has three guiding themes: Assessment, Communications, and Partnerships.

- **Assessment & Evaluation**
  - To work with the Coordinator of the East Commons to assess space and service in the LEC.
  - To continue user research and planning for the 2West renovation.
  - To assist OIT with their brand development.
  - To conduct a study on Freshmen: Year 1 & the Library
  - To conduct a study of Sophomores: How library use changes
  - To continue working with Library departments to provide assessment and evaluation support.
Communications

- To incorporate video into the Library's communications strategy.
- To continue to highlight the "lifestyle" of the Library user.
- To build on the theme of "making things easier to find" in the Library.
- To initiate planning for faculty campaign.
- To coordinate a "name the metalib" contest.
- To work with other library units and campus partners on their marketing and communication needs.

Partnerships

- To continue building the Library's partnership with Housing and other opportunities for collaborative academic support.
- To assemble a group of Library beta testers.
- To expand the Student Advisory Group.
- To continue building the library's partnership with Campus Communications & Marketing (formally ICPA).
- To develop greater interactions with other Library departments and units on campus.