Just Because It’s Called Access Services Doesn't Mean They Can Access It!

What Usability Testing of Library Systems Reveals About Access Services Websites

Wendy Wilcox
Access Services Librarian
Olin, Uris and Kroch Libraries
Cornell University
Why Usability and Access Services?

---

I NEED A MINOR CHANGE TO OUR WEBSITE.  

GIVE ME YOUR BUSINESS CASE FOR THE CHANGE AND I'LL PRIORITIZE IT FOR THE QUEUE.  

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WRITE A BUSINESS CASE FOR ONE LITTLE CHANGE.  

I CAN'T JUSTIFY CHANGING MY PRIORITIES WITHOUT ONE.  

GAAAA!!! WHY CAN'T WE DO THE SIMPLEST THINGS IN THIS STUPID COMPANY???!

TRY ONE OF THESE CORPORATE POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS PILLS TO DULL YOUR MEMORY OF THESE EVENTS.

WHAT? WHERE AM I? WHO ARE YOU? YOU WERE JUST LEAVING.

THEY'RE PLACEBOS, BUT I FIND THAT THEY SOLVE 20% OF MY PROBLEMS.

I NEED YOUR HONEST FEEDBACK ON OUR NEW WEBSITE DESIGN.

THE LAYOUT LOOKS LIKE A PSYCHOPATH'S PHOTO WALL. THE COLORS REMIND ME OF TOE FUNGUS AND DESPAIR.

I'LL SAY, "NEEDS WORK." IT FEELS LIKE SATAN IS LICKING MY BRAIN!
### QuestionPoint Chat Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:35:01</td>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>Chat Transcript: I need to renew a book that I thought was due today but was actually due yesterday. An error occurs when I try to renew from my account. Help!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35:01</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Note: Patron's screen name: Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35:17</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Librarian 'Cornell Librarian 1' has joined the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35:42</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Hi! I'll check on this for you. Back in a moment...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:36:41</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>The best thing would be for you to contact directly the Library Public Services office. I will send you the contact info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:37:06</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Phone: 255-5069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:37:28</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:libpublicservices@cornell.edu">libpublicservices@cornell.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:37:40</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Am sorry I can't fix it for you directly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:41:30</td>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>Okay thanks, can I have a phone number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:42:14</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>255-5069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:42:30</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>I also just sent you an email because it looks as though we lost our connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:43:06</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Thanks for using our chat service. Hope our connection works better next time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:43:16</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Chat service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:43:17</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Librarian ended chat session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:43:20</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Note: Set Resolution: Answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:43:31</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Note: Set Description: Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:29:42</td>
<td>Librarian 1</td>
<td>Closed by Librarian # 128985.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Kind of Questions are Patrons Asking on QuestionPoint??

"Can you check out laptops from Olin up until 10 pm today?"

"I was interested in checking out RC78.7.N83 M756 2003. Is there any way to request it at the Mann circulation desk or do I need to find it myself on the shelves?"

"If a book is “temporarily shelved at Uris Library Reserve”, is there any way I can still get that book?"

"I had a book recalled but I am not going to be back in town for at least a month. How do I return the book?"

"Please tell me when I originally check out the following book: Magical Thinking: True Stories by Augusten Burroughs."
During a three month period, CUL Librarians responded to 1057 questions via QuestionPoint Chat Reference service; 685 questions related to Access Services issues.
Usability Testing is....

"Watching people try to use what you're creating/designing/building, with the intention of (a) making it easier for people to use or (b) proving that it is easy to use."

Steven Krug Rocket Surgery Made Easy: The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems
Usability Testing at CUL

The User Assessment and Usability Group is comprised of IT staff, web designers, and public service staff. The group facilitates usability testing for library-related clients.

The group relies on a number of methods for gathering user feedback. The most common methods utilized are Paper Prototyping, Raw Usability Testing, and a Cognitive Walkthrough.
Usability Testing with Five Users

![Graph showing the relationship between the number of test users and usability problems found.](http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000319.html)

Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, March 19, 2000

"Why You Only Need to Test with 5 Users" [http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000319.html](http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000319.html)
Paper Prototyping

A website prototype is constructed from paper and tested in the same manner as a "formal" usability test, except that a person acts as the "computer" to make the prototype functional for the test subjects.
Raw Usability Testing

Stakeholders are brought in to watch as the users work through the usability test in real-time. Observers take notes then discuss user responses together over lunch.
Cognitive Walkthrough

Usability team members review a website and work through a list of tasks, user actions and system displays. The team then compiles feedback for the client. Faster and cheaper than testing with users and often provides valuable feedback. Often used as test prior to bringing in real users.
Most Usability Testing is Sponsored by Unit Libraries for their websites

Olin & Uris Libraries
Cornell University Library
Clark Physical Sciences Library
John Henrik Clarke Africana Library
Sidney Cox Library of Music and Dance
Engineering Library
JOHNSON Cornell University Management Library
FINE ARTS LIBRARY
AS Content on the Main CUL Website

"My Account" in October 2012; still labeled "My Account" despite user feedback..
ENGL 1105: FWS: Writing and Sexual Politics

Overall course guide: ENGL 1105: Sluts, Spinsters, and Drag Queens: Sexual Norms and Deviations (Fall 2012)

Seminar 101
Term: Fall 2012
Instructor: Roth.N (ntr9)
Meeting Time: 02:55PM - 04:10PM
Reserve Items (9):

- **2001 a space odyssey**
  Call #: Videodisc 4849
  Status: Available, Uris Library Reserve

- **Barry Lyndon**
  Call #: Video 920
  Status: Available, Uris Library Reserve

- **Clockwork orange**
  Call #: Videodisc 4860
  Multiple copies

- **Dr. Strangelove, or, How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb**
  Call #: videot disc 1013
  Status: Available, Uris Library Reserve

- **Eyes Wide Shut**
  Call #: Videodisc 4882
  Status: Available, Uris Library Reserve

We are willing to confuse users trying to access course reserves in order to no mislabel the course guides that are also accessible via the course reserve page.
Information on renewing items, fines, and library accounts are found according to patron status; 3 clicks into the website!

How do our users understand the difference between all the delivery options?

Reserves are NOT mentioned as a borrowing or delivery option; located under course help!
The Fine Arts Library, located on the third floor of Rand Hall, houses research material for architecture, art, and city and regional planning. We also provide equipment for the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning (AAP) and research assistance to the wider Cornell community. Please stop by to browse our collection, find a quiet place to study, or access our services for your research or production needs.

Are you interested in taking pictures of the Fine Arts Library? We would love to have more images.
Fines

Notices

**Courtesy notices** are sent four days before a book is due, and four days after it is due. **Availability notices** are sent the second day and the fourteenth day after a book is due. **Available books** is received at the designated pick-up library. **Recall notices** are sent the day after a book is recalled by another user. **Fine/fee notices** are sent the day after the fine is incurred.

Library notices are sent by email to the borrower's NetID address (NetID@cornell.edu). If you prefer another type of email address, such as you@department.cornell.edu, please configure your mail preferences so that NetID mail is routed to the preferred address. Please go to http://www.whoiam.cornell.edu and follow the instructions for routing mail. Note that failure to receive a courtesy or overdue notice does not relieve the borrower of responsibility to return or renew borrowed materials by the due date.

**Overdue Fines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Fine Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>$.75/day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$.04/minute or $2.40/hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>$2.00/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalls</td>
<td>$3.00/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Undergraduate Policies

Loan Periods

- The regular loan period for books is 42 days. Most items are renewable.
- Special materials such as journals, DVDs, laptops or reserve items may be loaned for shorter periods such as hours and days. Check with individual libraries for specific loan periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Fine Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>$.75/day*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$0.04/minute or $2.40/hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>$2.00/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalls</td>
<td>$3.00/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty and Staff Policies

Loan Periods

- Books: The regular loan period for faculty and staff is one year, and may be renewed as often as desired. All borrowed materials are subject to recall by other users and must be returned by the new due date (usually 9 - 14 days from the date of recall). All borrowed materials must be returned, regardless of due date, if the borrower leaves the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Fine Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>No charge*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$0.04/minute or $2.40/hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>$2.00/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalls</td>
<td>$3.00/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equipment

Cage equipment is available to College of Architecture, Art, and Planning (AAP) students, students enrolled in AAP courses, and AAP staff and faculty.

For your multimedia production and presentation needs, the Fine Arts Library loans cameras, camcorders, tripods, light kits, black and white backdrops, data projectors, laptops, digital audio recorders, speakers, microphones, and more. See the Inventory for complete list (Laptops are available to all library card holders).

Please note: We no longer offer SD memory cards in camera and camcorder equipment kits. See Recommended Memory Card Specifications and Purchase Outlets.

AAP students can use their Cornell ID card to borrow equipment for up to 24 hours. Loans longer than 24 hours require supervisory approval and a completed Reservation Request Form submitted at least 24 hours in advance (see Policies for details).

The equipment cage is open during all regular library hours.

Policies
Inventory
In Development

Coming soon: Textbook Finder, Chemical & Physical Properties Finder

Check out the Virtual Shelf Browser being developed at Harvard. The image to the right shows what our books might look like in their system.
Themes Revealed from Usability Testing on AS Content...

Lending policies and fines need to be both findable and understandable. Students need to know HOW to use the library before they will feel comfortable using the library!

Hours, equipment & laptop availability need to be immediately located

Accessing course reserves is a problem on the main CUL page and Unit Library websites.

Students do not understand how to USE their account online to place requests, renew, check fines, and more.

Fix the misunderstandings between the language we use and the language patrons understand. Read "Library Terms that Users Understand by John Kupersmith, 2012."
What Can You Do??

TEST your site!!!

Consider the terminology on library websites and in library policies.

Find out what feedback your library has already gathered on library websites and access services.

Offer access services staff to help staff chat reference.

Get involved in the design of your library's website.

Check unit library pages for access services content; suggest linking to main AS content maintained by AS staff.