Who Are We?

Usability Core Group
2 year term
- 1 chair
- 4 core members

Usability Task Force (UTF)
- short term (4-6 months)
- 2 core members
- + 3-4 members
- + 1 stakeholder
We aim to gather user input to help inform practical decisions about how to improve our access systems. Our assessments are part of a larger iterative design process.

We use methods that are relatively fast to design, execute, and analyze but that also have high return.

We do not typically conduct full-blown studies and we don’t generalize our data to represent all users.
Task Force
Shevon Desai (core group)
Julie Piacentine (core group)
Jonathan Rothman (stakeholder)
David Fulmer
Rebecca Hill
Saurabh Koparkar
Nancy Moussa
Mei Wang

What did we do?
Heuristic Evaluation
Online Survey
Guerilla Test
Heuristic Evaluation

Description:
Expert review of Mirlyn using standard heuristics.

Materials Cost: $0
Incentives Cost: $0
Prep time: 0
Analysis: ~15 hrs
Fourteen heuristics used in OCLC heuristic evaluations

What are standard heuristics?

1. **Visibility of system status**
   The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

2. **Match between system and the real world**
   The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

3. **User control and freedom**
   Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwelcome state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.

4. **Consistency and standards**
   Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow uniform and/or platform conventions.

5. **Error prevention**
   Even better than good error messages is a careful design that prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

6. **Recognition rather than recall**
   Make objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

7. **Flexibility and efficiency of use**
   Accelerators, unseen by the novice user, may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design**
   Dialogues should not contain information that is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

9. **Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors**
   Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

10. **Help and documentation**
    Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

11. **Affordances**
    Does the user understand what the text/graphic will do before they activate it?

12. **Use chunking**
    Write material so that documents are short and contain exactly one topic. Do not force the user to access multiple places for the same information.
Evaluated various types of Mirlyn web pages against standard heuristics.
Long list of stuff that can be improved!

Selected Findings:

• Inconsistent description within “holdings” tab (format vs. location)
• Icon to remove a facet is not intuitive (narrow search options)
• No “select all” option
• Limited print function
• Too many clicks to remove a “favorite”
Online Survey

Description:
Qualtrics survey linked directly from Mirlyn.

Participants:
• 500+ in one week!!!

Materials Cost: $0*
Incentives Cost: $50
Prep time: ~7 hrs
Analysis: ~12 hrs
Are users satisfied with Mirlyn search results?

How do known-item and subject searching compare?

Are there too many results? Too few?

How often do you do these searches?

Does satisfaction vary across user groups?
Online Survey

Results

• Respondents are generally satisfied with Mirlyn (87%)!

• Most respondents satisfied with known-item searching (86%)

• Majority satisfied with subject searching (72%), but large group remains neutral (17%)
General satisfaction

- Somewhat dissatisfied: 7%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 3%
- Very satisfied: 41%
- Very dissatisfied: 2%
Which label is most meaningful, true, and short?

Which label do users prefer? Why?
Guerrilla Testing

Quick and short answers to quick and short questions. Five minutes is our goal!

Description:
- Print mock-ups of alternatives to the ‘Available Online’ label

Participants:
- 29

Materials Cost: $0
Incentives Cost: $30
Prep time: ~8 hrs
Test time: ~7 hrs
Analysis: ~5 hrs
Guerrilla Testing

Key Findings:

- “Some Content Fully Available Online” & “Available Online” most preferred (9 votes each)

- Strong negative reactions to “Some Content Fully Available Online”

- Few suggested labels from users
Questions?

All past reports:  www.lib.umich.edu/usability

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