Unit Template Mockup Testing Results

Test Objective

To ensure consistency across all UW Libraries websites, a set of templates for the UW branch libraries was developed. The goal of this UX Cafe session was to determine initial reactions to the interface and concepts of the new unit templates. The test participants were shown paper prototypes of the home pages for the following units: Foster, OUGL, Special Collections, Friday Harbor, and Government Publications.

Participants

We tested five students during the hour and a half we were set up in the Research Commons (being the first week of summer quarter and a sunny day may have been the reasons behind such low traffic). We tested again the following week in Odegaard and had six more participants.

We had one sophomore, three juniors, two seniors, two recent graduates, a summer student, a non student, and another we neglected to ask class status. The areas of study were history, civil, mechanical, and bio engineering, library science, public health, math, and a new transfer hoping to enter the CSE program. Seven of the participants had used the Libraries website for finding articles, resources and/or databases. Two only used it to look up hours, one had used it once for orientation, and the new transfer had never used it.

Methodology

Participants were shown one or two of the paper prototypes and asked a series of questions beginning with whether everything they expected to see on the UW Libraries unit page was there and if not what they thought was missing along with their overall impression of the prototype page. The facilitators then directed their attention to the headers and asked if the phrasing made sense or if there was anything they would change. Moving on to the content below the headings, participants were asked what was more important and why and if the order of the information made sense, and whether the descriptions were helpful. Facilitators then asked participants how they would find a specific non-fiction book and whether they would use a search box if there was one on the page.

Results

- Major observations
  - What was expected and overall impression of the interface: There are a lot of words to read (Gov Pubs prototype) but having the locating area in the center was helpful. Collections and guides made sense on some but not all (Gov Pubs yes, Foster no). Several people commented on having too much to read. Another preferred the sparseness of Foster and the bullet points. Three commented that tweets are not important. One even said the Libraries site is for research not

social media. Another said she prefers a calendar over tweets. The different font weights for subheadings and descriptions was preferred by most because it looked less cluttered than having a page with all bold, purple text. Someone did not understand the difference between Spotlight and What's happening.In general people expect to see a search bar and useful links at the top of the page.

- ○ Is anything missing: Many noticed that the search bar was missing.
- ○ Headings phrasing: For most the headings and sections made sense but the subheading text could be bigger for readability. Collections and Guides is confusing to some because it is not obvious if it is a guide to using the collection or a guide to books.
- ○ What was most important and order of content: The order is ok. Order makes sense having the left column for finding materials and the center for equipment and services (OUGL). One person said he does not look at anything in the header or above. Another said the order of everything requires more readings since it is not organized alphabetically. A couple people said they use newspapers more than maps and would prefer the order to be switched. Hours and location are important to most everyone but many use google to find that information.
- ○ Descriptions: Having them is helpful and saves a step from having to click first to find more information or understand what a link is going to lead to.
- ○ Book search: Those who do research start with basic search and refine with facets. Three said they would select course reserves or Good Reads first (OUGL). One was unsure of where to start searching for a book on Foster and other homepages that did not have a search box.
- ○ Search box: Some commented that the subpage search boxes look like they are limited to that section so they only use the one on the homepage. Two said they did not notice the smaller search box in the subpage headers. Another said the search box is not super helpful and they only use it to find books. However, another user said they only use the search box and don't use the links under the tabs.
- Next Steps:
  - ○ Recommendations include:
    - i. Leaving the three columns in the order of Collection information on left, Services in center, and hours on right.
    - ii. Adding short descriptions to the lists of links
    - iii. Using a variety of font weights to ease reading: Subheadings can be bold if description is regular text.
  - ○ Christine will finalize the unit templates based on feedback from this and other testing.

For more information contact libuse@uw.edu