

Usability Study University Libraries

Study Summary

Nine participants were given four tasks to gauge their success of using the libraries web site. They were then asked a series of follow up questions. All of them consented to using the Tobii eyetracking recording system.

Key Findings

- Users' eyes went straight to the functional part of the home page and ignored most of the graphics
- Some participants confused the articles search tab for regular search
- Most participants thought the layout and hierarchy of links was simple and easy to grasp
- Tasks that were easy to complete used link titles that contained part of the task. (Ex. Make an appointment with a librarian is similar to "Meet with a Librarian" so it was easy for participants to spot.)

Task Summaries

Making an appointment with a librarian

Task 1: You have a large research project that is going to take place over the next semester. You are in need of a librarian to answer some questions about how to find materials and get a tour of the library's many floors. How would you go about booking an appointment to meet a librarian in person to get some questions answered?

Making an appointment with a librarian

Conclusion: All participants were able to complete this task with a fair amount of ease. They went right to the "Meet with a Librarian" link on the homepage, and then followed the links and pages to make the appointment. The links were clear to the participant.

Library Hours

Task 2: You have a lot of assignments and find that the library is the quietest place to get work done. You're not sure how late the library is open at night. How would you go about finding the library hours?

Library Hours

Conclusion: This task was also relatively easy for participants to complete but they did not do it consistently the same way like the first task. Some participants found the time in the yellow banner towards the top of the homepage while others clicked on the "Policies" link and found it in the banner of that page. A couple of participants searched for hours with the search bar.

Suggestion: Leave the hours in the banner but maybe add a link under policies.

Purchasing a Book

Task 3: You've noticed that the library doesn't have your favorite book. How would you suggest the library make a purchase?

Purchasing a Book

Conclusion: This was the most difficult of the tasks as only one participant successfully completed the task. Some participants looked under "Ask Us" and clicked on the "Books & More" tab but found no results to lead them to a page to make a suggestion. Some participants said they were looking for a link that said "suggest" in the phrasing, but couldn't find anything similar.

Suggestion: Create a different path to the page other than the "How are we doing?" link at the bottom of the page.

Finding a Book

Task 4: You need to check out a book from the library on the history of the Congressional Elections. How would you do this?

Finding a Book

Conclusion: This task was moderately easy. All participants knew that they could look for a book with the search tab, but what made it difficult was choosing the right tab. Some participants searched for the book in the articles tab and didn't realize they were looking for a book in Ebsco. One participant realized he needed to click a different tab to search the first time he searched, but forgot the second time and searched for the book in the articles tab.

Suggestion: Change the grey text in the search bar so users are reminded they will be searching in articles

Layout & Design



This heat map shows that after viewing the home screen for 5 seconds, most of participants were looking at the functional part of the site with just a little time spent on the carousel and barely any time on the bottom graphics

Media: Circulation
Time: 00:00:00.000 - 00:00:09.438
Participant filter: All

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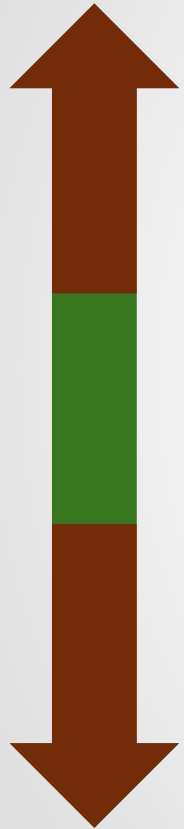
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On most of the content pages, the participants mostly ignored the images and went straight to the text, primarily the links. This heat map shows eye tracking for 10 seconds.

User Feedback About Design



"Bland"

"Boring"

"Simple and Easy to Use"

"Fits well within the KSU site"

"Unsettling" (no primary focus)

"Busy"

User Feedback About Homepage

- Carousel and graphics are distracting
- New windows are "clunky"
- "Not too many buttons"
- Checks events on homepage (PR major)

Quickjumps

Only one of the nine participants used the quickjumps menu during task completion. He opened it and glanced at it but I don't think he fully read/realized the options that were listed there because he closed it and never came back to it. Most participants said they didn't even notice it. One participant was slightly angry that he missed it and after going through it said, "it's all here, everything I needed to complete all of the tasks."

Suggestion: Add a "More" option to the link groups or just add another group that contains the links in this drop down