LibGuides Usability Testing

Customizing a Product to Work for Your Users

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University of Washington Libraries moved to LibGuides in Summer 2009
- Easier authoring and dynamic content

Replaced subject guides list with LibGuides Home Page
- Created basic guidelines and templates for UW subject guides
- Few requirements led to lots of variation

UW LibGuides “live” in September 2009
Education

This page offers the top recommended resources for this subject.

Finding Articles [help]

- **ERIC (EBSCO)** or **ERIC (CBA)** - ERIC indexes journal articles, documents and books
- **PsycINFO** - Covers academic, research, and practice literature in psychology and related disciplines; 1872 to the present.
- **Education Fulltext** - Despite the name not all articles are available fulltext

Finding Books and Dissertations [help]

- **UW Libraries Catalog** - Books, journals, videos and more
- **WorldCat Local** - Searches materials at UW, Summit, and libraries worldwide
- **Dissertations and Theses Fulltext**

Librarians

- **Seattle Campus**
  - Laura Lilard (info)
  - lll@u.washington.edu
- **UW Bothell Campus**
  - Venta Silins
  - ventas@u.washington.edu
Lauren's Test Guide
This is my 4th test guide.

New Books at Odegaard Library
- Innocence (DVD IEF 220) by Ludovic Hadzihalilovic
- HALF JAPANESE: THE BAND THAT WOULD BE KING (DVD VADV 001)
- Are you “Building Social Skills in the Preschool Child”?
- Baseline Day VHS Party
- New Media - July 2009

View RSS Feed
Comments (0)

Welcome
Welcome to the Subject Guide for [Your subject area here]. These pages provide access to resources - article databases, catalogs, reference books, websites for [Your subject area here]. These pages were created by the librarian responsible for [Your subject area here].

Choose a tab above for information about specific research types.
For subject guides in other areas of study, see the complete list here.

Comments (0)

Have Questions about the Library? (Documents/files box ex.)

- Get to Know the UW Engineering Library
- The 3rd floor after the Nisqually Earthquake

Comments (0)

New Books
- The Brooklyn Bridge: The story of the world’s most famous bridge and the remarkable family that built it. - Elizabeth Mann

Reference Librarian

Alyssa Deutschler

Online Chat / Networks:

Contact Info:
UW/CCE Campus Library,
L1B-2106
425-352-3160
Send Email

UW Libraries LibGuides Template Example Summer 2009
Usability Testing

- Usability Testing Started in December 2009

- Study Goals
  - Identify problem areas of the newly implemented system
  - Determine and improve guides’ usefulness
  - Identify users’ needs and adapt a vendor solution to meet them
Method

- 10 Students – 7 Undergrad, 3 Grad
- Test format
  - Pre and Post-Test and Post-Task Questionnaires
  - Six Tasks
  - X’s & O’s Exercise
- Varied Tasks by Subject and Format
- Lab & Equipment
  - Morae
Findings
Overview

- Main Issues:
  - Homepage layout
  - Navigation from general to specific guides
  - Search functions

- Findings Groupings:
  - Provide guidance and context
  - Provide a more consistent layout
  - Improve navigation
  - Follow best practices for the web
Guides Should Provide Context and Guidance

- **Issues**
  - Perceived scope of the library catalogs
    - Users often thought the search boxes were scoped to the subject they were currently on
  - Questioned the difference between the catalog on the library homepage and within the guides
  - Misuse of the top search box
    - People used the search boxes without noticing or changing the drop down search options
Guides Should Provide Context and Guidance

- Students were confused about resources that lacked descriptions (research databases and search boxes)
- Users had trouble finding format specific information
  - Users expected format options within the subjects’ pages
Guides Should Provide Context and Guidance

- User Requests
  - More subject-specific information on the guides – less general research help
Guides Should Provide a More Consistent Layout

- **Issues**
  - Users frequently didn’t notice the tabs located on top of the guides
  - Inconsistent layouts among guides confused users and made it harder to find resources
  - Users felt many guides’ homepages lacked a focal point and weren’t sure of their next steps
Guides Should Have Better Navigation

- **Issues**
  - The path from main guide to sub-guide was inconsistent and not fully apparent
  - The list of guides on the homepage was too long for users to read
Guides Should Follow Best Practices for the Web

- Issues
  - Users didn’t read long tabs
  - Database acronyms were confusing to students (such as JSTOR)
  - Students missed rollover database descriptions
  - One user mentioned she preferred static text because rollovers forced her to remember information when comparing resources
Next Steps after Usability Testing
Remodeling Data into New Guidelines

- Challenge of Flexibility: 100+ Subject Guides
- Listed and prioritized changes
- Patron Personas helped inform changes to guidelines
- Staff Forum: Presented results and asked for feedback
- Checklist for Librarians eased transition to new template
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Provide static descriptions under each database for users to scan | - Users didn’t want to remember what a rollover description contained.  
- Users wanted descriptions of the databases they were presented. | Users have a general preference for static text/information -- upfront, not buried, so they don’t have to mouse-over in order to access.   
P2 wrote “Too little info” next to the database links on the History guide during the Xs & Os activity. |
| Supply short descriptions of what search boxes include | Users wanted short descriptions of the search boxes they were presented. | P5 wrote “blurb” next to the search boxes on the Dance guide.  
P3, “[would like to see] explanations on functions of the search engines.” |
| Place the most important information in the top center of the page | The center of the page is often used for boilerplate information leaving users confused, and unsure of what to do next. | Time after time, user’s eyes were drawn to the center of the page, as seen through observation and the Xs & Os activity. |
| • To increase visibility, tabs should be a contrasting color from the background and other colors used on the page | - Users didn’t always notice the tabs right away.  
- Lack of coherence with the color schemes of the guides.  
- Users felt the tabs were part of the UW site not the guide | In guides where the tabs were a more saturated color, participants seemed to notice the tabs quicker.  
Users expressed a preference for tab content to be repeated in the body of the page, with explanations |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>How To</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 : Your guide must have a Home page with the look shown above. The easiest way to do this is to copy the Home page found on 2 ADMIN-Subject Guide Template and then fill in your own information. The Home page must have a 2 column layout with box titled “What’s in the Guide” filling the left column (with nothing above it) and the Profile box at the top of the right column.</td>
<td>See how to create the new Home page: <a href="http://bit.ly/Homepg">http://bit.ly/Homepg</a></td>
<td>Students felt disoriented when landing on a guide without a Home page. Making the Home pages have the same distinct layout (2 columns: profile on right, What’s in the Guide on left) across all the guides help make it more recognizable and orienting as users move around the site and across guides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 : The “What’s in the Guide” box will start with a description of the subject area and what is contained in the guide. This description should be no more than 80 words in length. An example description is provided on the 2 ADMIN-Subject Guide Template. After this description you will list, in bold, each of the titles of the tabs on your guide and describe what the user will find when they click on it. These descriptions should be short (limited to a few words). Note that you may have to come back and change this later, as you may be adding or changing tabs that are on your guide. The template will give you space for adding an image to the “What’s in the Guide” box. An image is required in this space. The image you add should be no more than 250 pixels wide. Vertical images work best.</td>
<td>See suggestions for wording here: <a href="http://bit.ly/d5qD9g">http://bit.ly/d5qD9g</a> and here: <a href="http://bit.ly/1HdmjZ">http://bit.ly/1HdmjZ</a> Tips on adding an image to this box: <a href="http://bit.ly/ImageSz">http://bit.ly/ImageSz</a></td>
<td>Students were ignoring the librarian “welcome” introduction on the page, content that occupies prime real estate. The introductory box should let users see first and foremost what the guides are for. A short bulleted list is much easier to scan than a paragraph of text. Many students claimed they were unsure what the tabs meant. Providing descriptions of them will help solve this problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 : Your profile box should only exist on the Home page of your guide.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The profile box provides useful content but uses too much screen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Required Changes: First Priority

The top priority for changing the UW LibGuides is that each guide have a Home page with the same, basic 2-column layout and content. Steps 1-5 will show you how to create that layout. You can complete these steps in any order, or you may prefer to start your Home page from scratch.

Your guide must have a two column layout with a “What’s in the Guide” box at the top of the left column. This box lists the tabs found in the guide, with a description of what the user will find there.

Any additional content (see requirements in Step 4 & 5) must appear below the “What’s in the Guide” box & Profile.

Excerpt from LibGuides Checklist for Librarians
New Home page/tab Template

- Orient users to the guide
- Provides consistency across guides
- Shifted extraneous content
Civil & Environmental Engineering

This is a guide for doing research in Civil and Environmental Engineering. You will find links to recommended databases to help you find articles, books and websites in this subject area.

Last update: Aug 19th, 2010  URL: http://guides.lib.washington.edu/civilengineering

Welcome to Resources for Civil and Environmental Engineering

Welcome to the Subject Guide for Civil and Environmental Engineering. These pages provide access to recommended research resources - article databases, catalogs, reference books and web sites for CEE. These pages were created by Julie Cook, the librarian responsible for managing the resources and instruction in CEE.

Choose a tab above for information about specific research types.

For more resources in Engineering, Science and Technology please see the Engineering Library homepage.

Questions or Comments about this Guide?

Was this information helpful?

Yes  No  Don't know

How useful is this content?

(1 = Not so much, 5 = Extremely)

Please provide comments to help improve this page:
LibGuide utilizing post-Usability Testing Recommendations
Music Guide
Quick access to the top music resources
Last update: Oct 9th, 2010 | URL: http://guides.lib.washington.edu/music | Print Guide | RSS Updates | SHARE

What's in the Guide

This guide provides links to the most useful databases and resources for researching Music. Use the tabs to navigate through the pages of this guide.

- **Find Books & Scores** - search for books on Music, musical scores and recordings
- **Articles** - search for articles and e-journals related to Music
- **Media** - stream media to your computer or search for UW-owned media materials
- **Reference Sources** - search online Music encyclopedias
- **Dissertations** - search for dissertations and theses
- **Primary Sources** - search tips for locating music manuscripts; information on UW-owned music special collections
- **Cite It** - links to RefWorks and books on music citation
- **Need Help?** - contact us via email, phone or view our online tutorials

Image: Music Library Upstairs study space, Room 113

Related Links & Guides

Related Subjects
- Audio Preservation/Restoration
- Ethnomusicology/World Music
- Art

Class Guides
- Music 162
- Muhst 212
- Muhst 497

Useful Links
- Music Library Homepage
- Music Library Hours
- Course Reserves

LibGuide utilizing post-Usability Testing Recommendations
More Description Provides Guidance and Scope

- Search Term Suggestions
- Database and Catalog Descriptions
- Template prompts librarians to create short descriptions and search strategies
Search UW Catalog for Books

UW Libraries Catalog

Keyword ▼ ▼ Entire Collection ▼ ▼
[Advanced search]

Tips for Searching the UW Catalog for Books on Fisheries:

- Try these subject headings: "Pacific salmon fisheries," "fishery management," and "longlining (fisheries)-bycatches;" or related subject headings such as "Chinook salmon fisheries," "escapement, fisheries," and "sustainable fisheries."
- Use the Advanced Search to limit your search to words in the title or subject, to items at a specific UW library, or by other criteria.
- Getting too few results? Try searching UW WorldCat for items available through the Summit consortium.
Improved Layout and Navigation

- Pre-LibGuides list of subject guides worked better for users
- Eliminated confusion with secondary pages or “sub-guides”
- Related content remains in same location throughout guides
Welcome to Subject and Class Guides

These pages provide access to library resources - article databases, catalogs, reference resources, web sites - organized by topic. These pages were created by the librarians responsible for the areas they listed.

Browse All 196 Guides (A-Z)

More Guides
- UW Bothell/Cascadia Guides
- UW Tacoma Guides

Helpful Links
- UW Libraries Home
- Libraries A-Z
- Find Articles
- Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
- Course Reserves
- Purchase Request
- Ask Us
- UW Libraries

Browse by Subject
You can also browse by Librarian
- "Class Guides"
- "General Research Help"
- Aeronautics & Astronautics
- Agricultural Studies
- American Ethnic Studies
- American Indian Studies
- Anthropology
- Architecture & Urban Planning (Built Environments)
- Art
- Atmospheric Sciences
- Bioengineering
- Biology
- Business
- Canadian Studies
- Chemistry
- Children's Literature
- Chinese Studies
- Cinema Studies
- Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Classics
- Communication
- Comparative Literature
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Dentistry
- Drama
- Digital Arts (Digital Arts and Experimental Media)
- Earth & Space Sciences (Geology & Geophysics)
- Economics
- Education
- Electrical Engineering

Featured Guides | Popular Guides | Recent Guides

- Visit these Featured guides:
  1. Citations and Writing
     by Steen Andersen; last updated on Nov 10th, 2019
  2. How Do I? by Christine Yurczenko; last updated on Nov 20th, 2018
  3. Image Databases & Resources by Denise Leff, Justin Yorkland; last updated on Nov 19th, 2018
  4. UW Writing Centers and Resources by John Holm; last updated on Oct 23rd, 2018
  5. Video: Find, View, More...
     by John Vatter; last updated on Nov 3th, 2018
  6. GIS and Geospatial Research and Discovery Project (Fall 2009)
     by Kathleen Collins, Ben Tucker, Amanda Stoll; last updated on Oct 25th, 2009

Library Guides

These pages provide access to library resources - article databases, catalogs, reference resources, web sites - organized by topic. These pages were created by the librarians responsible for the areas they listed.

Can't find what you're looking for? Ask Us!
New Subject Guides List post-Usability Testing
New Guideline Implementation

- Checklist provided step-by-step guidance
- Librarians given specific time frame to make changes
- Drop-in workshops for in-person assistance
- BRDG Team reviewed guides for compliance
  - Personal follow-up with librarians well received
Testing environment is different than the users’ natural work space

Future questions to explore:
- How users access the guides and if that can be improved
- How often guides are used for research
- How the guides compare with other help content provided by the Libraries
Wrap Up

- Usability study allowed us to examine a vendor’s product to better understand how to adapt it to our users.
- We were able to make changes to LibGuides based on data, not our opinions.
- Continued study will further help us understand our users’ needs to best serve their research requirements.
Questions?

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Lauren Ray -- olray@uw.edu