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Website Usability Report : Spring 2018

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Report of the NPML Website Usability Assessment
Nelson Poynter Memorial Library (NPML)
University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP)

Compiled by Kaya van Beynen and Berrie Watson
Spring 2018

In 2017, the NPML went through an extensive strategic planning process under the guidance of new Library Dean, Catherine Cardwell. Emerging from this process were 2 strategic actions in relation to the NPML website (lib.usfsp.edu). These strategic actions were:

1. *Revise the library's website as a concise, accessible workspace that meets the needs of library users" and*
2. *Conduct user testing of the library's web site, resources, and spaces to provide an optimal experience for library users*

In response to these strategic objectives, the NPML Goal 1 committee conducted usability testing of the NPML website with USFSP faculty and students in the late Fall 2017 and early Spring 2018 semesters. This report is a documentation of the methods, results, and changes from the usability assessment of the USFSP library website

Methodology

Using the website usability testing template provided in the book "*Don't Make Me Think! : A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*" by Steve Krug, the Goal 1 committee adapted this script to library concerns regarding the NPML website. Two distinct assessment scripts were created, 1) for the USFSP faculty and 2) for the USFSP students. These assessments comprised of a series of questions asking the faculty and students to find various items on the front page of the library website. Interviewers were instructed to note how the faculty or student navigated through the library website, how long they searched, and whether they were able to successfully find the item.

Faculty were asked the following questions:

1. Find your selected works faculty profile
2. Where can your students get help with software within the library? For example Canvas, SPSS, video editing?
3. What workshops are available for faculty professional development in the library?
4. Say you teach an online course, find out more about getting it certified through Quality Matters.
5. Find the contact information for your liaison librarian.
6. Give feedback to the library.
7. The library has a special collection digitizing the Weekly Challenger Newspaper – find this collection.
8. Find the research guide for your program
9. Find CITL (the Center for Innovative Teaching & Learning)

10. Find the faculty services library guide.

The students were asked these questions:

1. Find this book: *Simply brilliant: how great organizations do ordinary things in extraordinary ways* by William C. Taylor
2. Do we have a textbook on reserve for one of your classes?
3. How late is the library open on Sunday?
4. Find the research guide for your major.
5. Request a research appointment with the librarian for your major.
6. Find a peer reviewed article on climate change.
7. Go to the Academic Search Premier database
8. The library has a special collection digitizing the Weekly Challenger Newspaper – find this collection

A total of 10 USFSP students and 12 USFSP faculty were recruited to participate in this study. Members of the Goal 1 committee met individually with students and faculty whereby they followed the usability testing script, asked questions, and noted their navigation patterns. These interviews took an average of 45 minutes to complete. Using a software application to record all actions on the website, including mouse clicks and text entries, the interviews were recorded as small videos for future study.

Members of the Goal 1 committee were then instructed to summarize their notes and submit their top three recommended changes to the library's homepage to the NPML Web Committee. The NPML Web Committee then reviewed these results, made a series of recommended changes, and ultimately were responsible for making these changes to the library homepage website design.

Results:

USFSP faculty and students reported liking the following items from the library website:

1. The clean look of the site
2. The prominent and intuitive icons
3. The rotating box was very helpful to all the searchers to find workshops and draw attention to library events
4. All faculty were able to easily find OLITS, CITL, and Quality Matters informationL
5. The Right Navigation bar was a popular go-to spot for faculty searching
6. The Center search box was a popular go-to spot for student searching
7. Everyone immediately went to the USFSP library page, and not to the USF library page

The following areas were identified for improvement and change on the NPML Website Homepage:

- Create a collections tab to better highlight Weekly Challenger, Briggs, FacultyAuthors, etc.
- A notification email to be sent through USFSP media and Harborside informing users of changes to distribute to USFSP community

- A directory of staff members, including job function and a picture was created. This group, called “People pages” -- allow users to better to indicate liaisons / instructional designers and other job functions to contact for assistance.
- Search box - Article + to indicate that articles plus other item types were indicated as the default search, with each area underlined as it is selected to search that area.
- In the top navigation, for two menu items add a link to a full listing for both “All Services” as well as “All Resources” groupings.
- Automate a daily library hours component to the main page, and Compress events & hours topics for improved white space management. The right pane extends to far down.
- Create an area to highlight special subcomponents of the library including, CITL, OLITS, STC, Archive, Spaces.
- Add visible cursor movement to indicate that users can scroll down below the screen fold
- Gary Austin will analyze libGuides search terms for further analysis of possible frequent search terms to add to more prominent areas of web pages.

These changes were subsequently related to the library web committee for consideration for altering the NPML homepage in March 2018.