User Testing of an SFX Menu Redesign

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Outline

• Current menu and known issues
• Test menu and decisions involved
• Results
  – Searching for articles
  – Menu decisions
  – bX recommendations
  – Direct linking
• Changes
• Implementation issues
Texas A&M University

- University
  - 55,000 + students and faculty
  - Branch campuses in Galveston, Texas and Doha, Qatar

- Libraries
  - Main library with 5 branches
  - Spending over $7 million per year on electronic resources
Testing Process

• 21 Volunteers
  – 2 faculty, 1 researcher, 13 graduate students, 5 “professional” students
  – All departments – English to Veterinary Medicine
  – No sound for 2 of them

• Asked to find 3 articles – 2 we chose for them, 1 citation they brought themselves
  – Searches targeted at their research areas
    • Interested in their evaluation of bX
Testing Results

• Default search
• Menu changes
• bX
• Direct linking
Testing: Search Preferences

Testing New SFX Menus

Search by:

- Article citation
- Journal title
Journal Title Search
Article Citation Search
Results: Initial Search

- **Numbers**
  - Journal title – 12 (57%)
  - Citation – 8 (38%)
  - Google Scholar – 1

- **Reasons**
  - Familiarity
  - Typing/spelling concerns - journal title is shorter
  - Not sure what to find behind “Article Citation” link
Results: Journal Title

- Success rate
  - Successful – 17 (89%)
  - Not successful – 2 (10%)
  - Skipped/Not available – 2

- Reasons for failure
  - Searched article title in journal title field
  - Spelling/typos
Results: Article Citation

• Success rate
  – Successful – 4 (19%)
  – Partially successful – 5 (23%)
  – Not successful – 12 (57%)

• Reasons for failure
  – Expected to be able to search by author or article title – like Google
  – Want to fill in as little as possible
  – Do not think in terms of journal, volume, issue, etc
Results: Final Search

- Numbers
  - Citation – 15 (83%)
  - Journal title – 3 (16%)
  - N/A – 3

- Success rate
  - Citation (55%)
  - Journal title (100%)
Decision: Default Search

- Keep the journal title search as the default
- Continue to downplay the citation search
- Modifications to the citation search page
Revised Citation Search
Results: Full Menu

• Generally successful

• Problems
  – Journal at a glance info often not seen
    • Newer graduate students more interested in the peer-reviewed info

• Finding help
  – Would not report a problem – assume the problem is at their end
Post-Testing Changes
Results: bX Recommendations

• Generally understood how links in the bX recommendations box worked
• Frequently misunderstood how recommendations were gathered
  – Do not read the bX header
  – Assumed citations from article or based on keywords in article title
  – Got it once the Amazon comparison was made
Results: bX Recommendations

• Asked users to evaluate the quality of the recommendations
  – Generally satisfied with results
  – Sometimes recognized the authors/article titles and approved
  – Interesting quibbles
    • Students need help focusing not more options
    • Relying on human interpretation and therefore unreliable
Post-Testing Results

• Spring bX usage stats
  – 9772 total bX links clicked on
  – 9297 clicks lead to full text (95%)
  – 475 did not (4.9%)
Direct Linking Banner
Results: Direct Linking

• Preferred direct linking (when it worked)
• Banner blindness
  – Problems finding link to full menu
  – Problems finding link to help
• Wanted “journal at a glance” info on banner
Post-Testing Changes
Direct Linking Banner

• Implementation Issues
  – Vendors who don’t allow banners
  – Direct link conflicting with security settings for some vendors and some browsers
  – Problems with all the Javascript in the banner
    – ours and Ex Libris’

• Have given up for the moment
Overall

- Resolved the question of the default journal search
- Improved the menu
- Found bX useful and used
- Problems with direct linking banner
Questions?
For More Information

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