

Mobile First: Ensuring Your Library is Future Ready

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Outline

- Academic library mobile website research study
- Discussion of mobile web design
 - Importance of well-designed mobile sites
 - Should you build a separate mobile site?
 - Mobile + Content First Design

Mobile Usability Research

Purpose

- Determine the usability of current mobile library websites
- Extrapolate best practices for sustainable library mobile website design

Objectives

Research Question 1. What can we learn about the needs of academic library users in accessing and using mobile library websites and online information resources?

Research Question 2. What are the specific usability issues with the given mobile websites identified by academic library users?

Methods

- Usability testing approach
- 3 academic library mobile websites tested
- Participants: 6 former and current academic library users
- Testing consisted of:
 - assigned tasks
 - pre- and post-test interviews
- Assigned tasks focused on:
 - catalog searching
 - database searching

Findings

General Observations

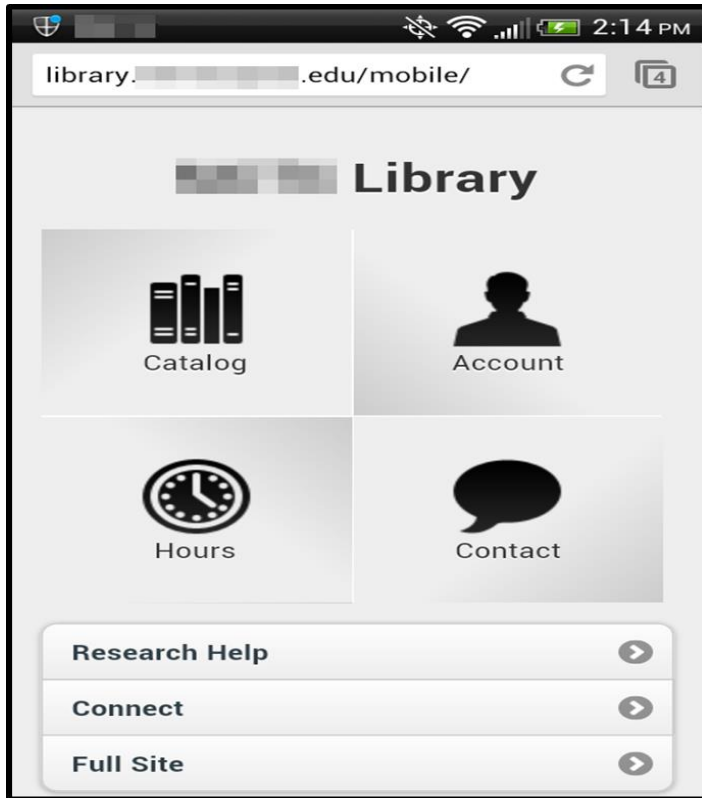
- Sites difficult to use for their main function of searching catalogs and finding articles
- Information architecture tended to be misleading and inadequate
- Good visual design/layout doesn't correlate to good usability

Findings

Needs of academic library mobile web users

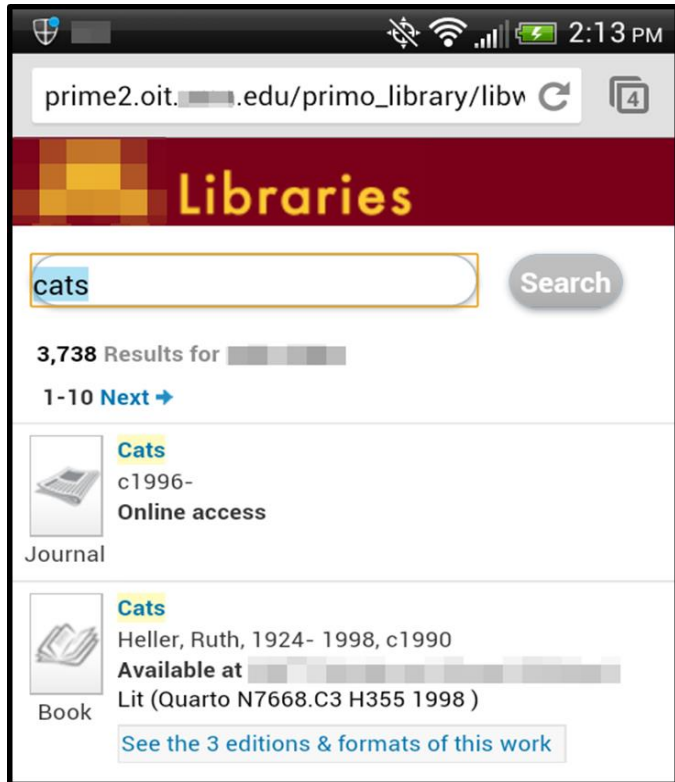
- Test participants expressed desire for one search interface
- Users prefer to have all content mobile optimized, as opposed to linking to full site for certain items

Usability Issues



No link to journal articles or databases on landing page

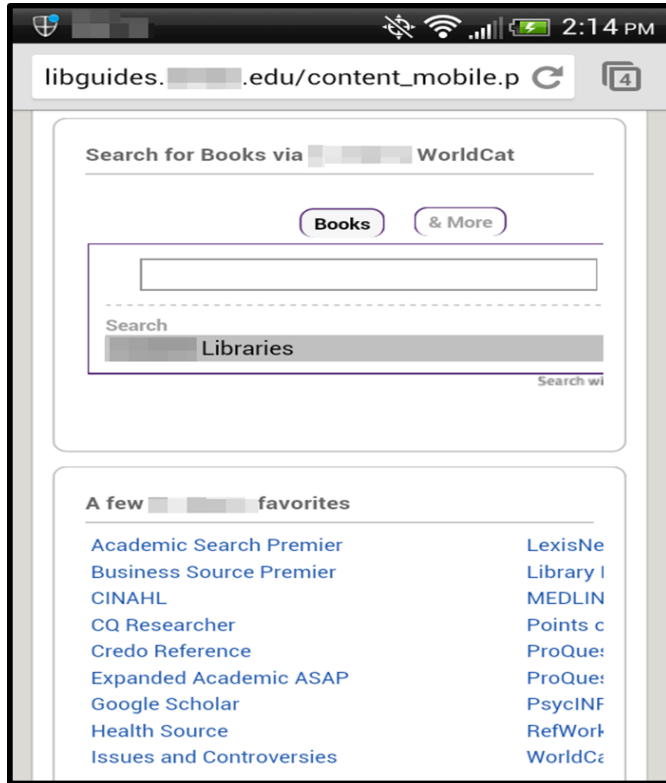
Usability Issues



Inadequate and/or non-existent search filters in catalog

- Even participants who were less familiar with libraries said they wanted to see filters.

Usability Issues



Not optimized for mobile devices:

- Content cut off
- Redirects to full site for catalog and databases

Usability Issues

- Information architecture that is misleading and/or inadequate
- No links back to the home page
- Required to retype queries each time a new search is attempted
- Content on landing page doesn't fit onto one screen and requires excessive scrolling

Discussion

- Importance of well-designed mobile sites
- Should you build a separate mobile site?
- Mobile + Content First Design

Importance of well-designed mobile

- Only get one chance to make an impression
 - When asked if they would attempt to look up a website on a desktop or laptop that didn't work on their mobile device, 68% of users said they would opt to give up on that site instead.

Importance of well-designed mobile

- A new digital divide
 - A 2013 Pew Internet study reports that 85% of people aged 18-29 use their phone to go online, with 50% using their phones for Internet access almost exclusively
 - 25% of all US mobile Web users are mobile-only, rarely using a desktop

Separate mobile site?

2 main ways of approaching mobile web design

- 2 sites with 2 different designs
- 1 site modified with responsive design to fit all screen sizes

Jakob Nielsen, Usability Guru, argues that “good mobile user experience requires a different design than what’s needed to satisfy desktop users. Two designs, two sites,

Separate mobile site?

Which should you choose for your library?

Jakob Nielsen is wrong about mobile sites

- 2 different sites approach further exacerbates the new digital divide
- Mobile isn't just "on the go" anymore
 - A smaller screen size doesn't mean the user wants less content

1 site modified with responsive design is better for our users.

Mobile + Content First Design

Responsive design requires a new design approach.

- **Mobile First:**

Thinking about the mobile user first in the design process.

- **Content First:**

Giving the site's content first priority over every other aspect in the design process.

Mobile + Content First Design

- Mobile First + Content First = User First
 - Prepares you for the future
 - Forces you to focus on what's important
 - Positions you to be on the cutting edge of trends
 - Librarians are well suited to this task