Presentation Notes

Usability testing: web team committed to doing usability testing at least twice a year. Followed methods from Rocket Surgery Made Easy

- Simple, quick
- Script, list of tasks

Usability Test Results:

- Not good!
- Students unable to navigate website, often confused or disoriented in LibGuides

*Easy to do testing, easy to identify problems, hard to figure out fixes*

What happened?

- Attachment to LibGuides.
- Librarians love, easy to use, much freedom.
- But librarians had no training in writing for the web, principles related to usability

Students thought LibGuides

- Confusing – too many decisions
- Too cluttered/ too many tabs/ too many boxes/ text heavy
- Inconsistent language and labeling from page to page
- Where is the search box?

How to fix?

- Simplify
- Standardize – reduce orphans
- Don’t fix the user, fix the website
- The web team made a “style guide” – a LibGuide that explained how to make a guide and a template from which to copy content.

Attempt to fix:

- Willing, but attached to creations
- Slow or no progress (busy, will get to it)
- Overwhelming (where to start?)
- Hard to explain copy vs. link

What we actually did
Jennifer DeJonghe  
Katherine Gerwig  
Life after usability testing: Finding the path from problem to process improvement  
Library Technology Conference 2014

- Standardized language used on tabs  
- Standardized format  
- Linked tabs and boxes back to the template  
  - Required taking a long view and taking into account how much flexibility we wanted in content for specific tabs/boxes across all subject guides  
- Added a Welcome landing page  
  - Addition of an image required quite a bit of time, some familiarity with image attribution guidelines, some familiarity with the subject, learned some image manipulation skills  
- Adjusted format so that there would be only one row of tabs for all subject guides  
- Removed links to materials that linked back to the catalog (physical materials)  
- Tested all links  
  - If a link no longer worked tried to find updated link

Things discovered along the way

- Created style guide pages for lesser used style guides  
- For subject areas requiring more than one style guide had to make decisions on creating combination tabs  
- Some guides needed fleshing out  
- Having one person do the conversion resulted in more standardized guides (no ownership made it easier to delete, look at problem areas and search for solutions, resist the urge to compromise the guidelines)

Cultivating relationships with librarians

- People think of their guides as their own creation  
- Necessary to have firm guidelines (unless it was specifically stated in the guidelines, NEVER delete without asking first) and good communication  
- Earn the trust of librarians  
  - Communication  
  - Adherence to guidelines  
  - Willingness to problem solve  
  - Offer suggestions  
  - Go above and beyond

What the intern learned (Selling points)

- Experience with a widely used library content management system  
- Made web work much less scary and mysterious  
- Editing other people’s work  
- A project to call my own
Why would you want an intern?

- Ownership/pride
- Consistency
- Neutrality
- For the profession

How to keep it from happening again?

- Continual usability testing
- Training
- A dedicated LibGuides coordinator
- Annual list of maintenance tasks to keep up LibGuides