User Experience Strategies for Every Library: Yes, Even Yours!

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Hennepin County Library

HCL is a public library system serving the city of Minneapolis and surrounding communities:

- forty-one libraries
- online resources
- outreach service.

Our patrons and users are comprised of a diverse population of 1.2 million Hennepin County residents in an area of 611 square miles.

www.hclib.org
Metropolitan State University

11,505 total students

6,220 full-year equivalent (2015–2016)

90% undergraduate students

43% students of color

2% international students

32 = average age of students

15–83 = age range of students

9 librarians + 2 lib administrators
Normandale Community College

14,632 credit students

6,837 student full-year equivalents

58% part-time students

38% students of color

74% age 24 or younger

6 librarians (5.6 full-time equivalents)
User Experience (UX)

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<th>Metro</th>
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Qualitative and Quantitative, often inform each other
"User experience" encompasses all aspects of the end-user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products."

- Don Norman and Jakob Nielsen Nielsen Norman Group

“Most of our users' experience of the library occurs online and through software regardless of whether the user is physically present in the library.”

- Libraries are Software by Cody Hanson
A Landscape of User Research Methods

**Behavioral**
- Eyetracking
- Usability Benchmarking (in lab)
- Usability Lab Studies
- Moderated Remote Usability Studies
- Unmoderated Remote Panel Studies
- Unmoderated UX Studies
- True Intent Studies

**Attitudinal**
- Participatory Design
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Concept Testing
- Diary/Camera Studies
- Customer Feedback
- Desirability Studies
- Card Sorting
- Intercept Surveys
- Email Surveys

**Qualitative (Direct)**
- Natural use of product
- Scripted (often lab-based) use of product

**Quantitative (Indirect)**
- De-contextualized / not using product
- Combination / hybrid

KEY FOR CONTEXT OF PRODUCT USE DURING DATA COLLECTION

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And You?
Usability Testing

- One of a variety of tools and measures to evaluate your website (including analytics)
- Methods vary but at the core is observing users as they use your website
- Tests yield a mix of qualitative and quantitative data
Why Do Usability Testing?

- Test new features or areas in development
- Increase awareness of issues or possible areas of development, as well as to help prioritize known issues or features
- Understand your website from the perspective of the user
Monthly (mostly) Testing at HCL

Since May 2015 we have conducted 61 individual tests (3 tests per testing day)

Tests usually last 30-45 minutes and we ask participants to complete 4-5 tasks
Usability Testing Room at HCL
Observation Room at HCL
After each round of HCL testing the testing team submits a report that is posted on the staff web. Report includes:

- Participants’ perceived task success
- Participants’ actual task success
- Participants feedback and comments
- Issues identified by observers
- Recommendations to address usability issues
Testing for Mobile at Metro

Mobile Usage

- 90.4%
- 7.4%
- Mobile
- Tablet

- Desktop

Image of a person testing mobile devices.
Flash Usability Testing at Normandale
## Fast and Cheap Usability Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What We Did</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
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<tr>
<td>3-5 minute tests</td>
<td>• 2 people (one to run and observe test, one to recruit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 task per test</td>
<td>• Laptop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 user tests per task</td>
<td>• Task cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High foot-traffic times = 6-7 tests/hour</td>
<td>• Clipboard, pen, and paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Large sign and candy</td>
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Usability Testing Limitations

It’s important to keep in mind:

• Usability testing is not indicative of how all users behave, only the particular users that participate.

• Usability testing is one important source of user experience data that also includes website analytics, patron comments and questions received through multiple channels, and general usability research and best practices.

• Usability testing shows you what is not working, but figuring out how to fix it is another matter.
User Personas & User Journey Mapping at Metro

Photo by Rich Harrison
Drawing by Diane DeRosier
Focus Groups and Surveys at Metro
Q4 What is the most common reason you use the Library website?

Answered: 250  Skipped: 7

- Finding resources...
- Checking my library...
- Getting directions...
- Seeking assistance...
- Getting information...
- Obtaining e-reserves...
- Other (please specify)

[Link to survey results]
Card Sorting at Metro

OptimalSort

LIBRARY STAFF DIRECTORY
FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
COURSE RESERVES
TEENS KNOW BEST Community BOOK CLUB
INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS
U OF MN BORROWING CARD
HANDOUTS / HELP GUIDES

Community
INFORMATION for ALUMNI
ARCHIVES

Results link
Participant link
A/B Testing Wireframes at Metro
Recruitment & Incentives

At Metro

At Normandale
HCL recruits volunteers from friends and family, regular volunteers and Library Friends’ members, and through public website. Try to have staff backup.
Implementation Considerations

We don’t run right back to our desks to start making changes after UX work.

Team assesses findings from all participants and other data and changes are—

● discussed
● prioritized
● implemented
Implementation Considerations

Ability to immediately enact changes may be limited

Factors include:

- Resources (staff time, money)
- Technical considerations and limitations
- Governance
- Impact on other library services
Sharing, Collaborating & Getting Support
Institutional Involvement

Invite staff to observe usability tests

And remember, IT staff can be your friends

Where there’s a will donut, there’s a way
Some user testing is better than none.

- Commit to small, frequent, iterative changes
- You will learn from every test and get better and better
Our users are **not** broken.
"We need to exercise a disciplined empathy."

Sumana Harihareswara “User Experience is a Social Justice Issue” The Code4Lib Journal Issue 28
Feminist authors in particular have often called for changes in the way in which the social and human impact of technology is evaluated. They have stressed the need to base such evaluation on the experience of those who are at the receiving end of the technology.

- Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*
Tools and Resources

Axure (free educational licenses)
Optimal Workshop
SurveyMonkey
UXPA MN (monthly trainings)
IAI (Information Architecture Institute)
LibUX


Image attributions

Post-It wall: https://www.flickr.com/photos/dolske/9029594967

Donuts: https://pixabay.com/p-1988584/

Square peg round hole: https://www.flickr.com/photos/epublicist/3546059144

Contact us!

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We are happy to share scripts, tips, and pool our resources. Access some here: http://bit.ly/UXLTC