
UW Libraries Usability Testing

Summer 2002: The Information Gateway's
"Get It" Section – Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The purpose of this test is to evaluate the usability of the redesigned "Get It" section of the Information Gateway. Questions considered include:

1. Are the users able to find common information such as fines, account information, and instructions?
2. This information is available from multiple areas; does that fact hinder navigation in any way?
3. Is there a difference, in terms of ease of use, between the category names "Borrowing/Delivery" and "Circulation?"
4. Is there a difference, in terms of ease of use, between the links "View Your Record" and "Your Library Account?"

The eight participants who agreed to take part in the test include six female and two male subjects, the majority of which have used the Internet for more than five years. The favorite and most frequent activity among this group of participants was research. The test consisted of a questionnaire to obtain demographic information, a series of tasks to test performance of the website, and finally a post-test questionnaire to collect user feedback. The test itself included eight questions involving three areas:

1. The "in your own words" section evaluated user's expectations for several keyword terms.
2. The "find resources" questions measured the participant's ability to locate common pages on the information gateway.
3. The "manage your account" questions measured the participants ability to use the information gateway to perform certain tasks.

The results of the study show that the "find resources" and "manage your account" tasks were completed by a large percentage of participants (79% and 75% respectively.) However, the percentage of participants who were able to complete the tasks within the benchmark times were low (38% and 50% respectively.) The conclusion, therefore, is that minor changes need to be made to the Information Gateway to make it more intuitive.

Grouped Tasks		% Participants Performing Correctly	% Participants Performing Correctly (within benchmark)
In your own words	Q1, Q2	100%	94%
Find Resources	Q4, Q5, Q7	79%	38%
Manage your account	Q3, Q6, Q8	75%	50%

The recommendations suggested by this study include:

1. Continue using the term "Borrowing/Delivery."
2. Change "Loan Code" to the more intuitive "Your Borrowing Rights and Responsibilities."
3. Make the "Your Library Account" available under the "Services" category.
4. Use status description matrix available as a pop-up guide and link all catalog results status terms to.
5. Change "For Visitors" category to "For Visitors and Others" under "Services"; Include service information for extension students, staff, visiting scholars and visitors under this heading.
6. Either copy "Contact Us" link to help section or create an "Ask a Librarian" link in the help section.