

2009-12

MLibrary Website - Quick Links Guerilla Test

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<https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/106787>

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Usability Report Cover Sheet

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| Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall Project: MLibrary Website• Project Title: Quick Links Guerilla Test |
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| Online Report Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• http://www.lib.umich.edu/node/2204 |

Usability Report

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Introduction

The MLibrary main gateway page includes a group of links on the bottom (footer) of each page called "Quick Links." These links are meant to provide convenient access to some of the most frequently used and/or most requested links related to both library and university business.

The goals of this test were to determine if:

- The labels for both the group and each link within the group were clear and accurately described where users expected to go
- The links included in this grouping were what users want and need

* This report describes a usability assessment performed by the MLibrary Usability Group and Task Force. Usability assessment is a part of the iterative design process used to develop new systems and services at MLibrary. This report describes one test in a series of tests performed at one point in the iterative design process. Sample sizes are small and findings serve only as clues to help guide decisions. Implementation of any recommendations should take these limitations into account.

Test Description & Methodology

Test Description

Initially, participants were asked to name which web links they used most frequently. Participants were then shown a screenshot of the MLibrary website footer with the Quick Links section highlighted and the title of this group of links removed. They were asked to think of a name for this list of links and to describe where they would expect each link within the group to lead. After answering these questions, the participants were provided with a description of where each link leads and asked if he/she could offer a clearer label for any of the individual links.

The Quick Links screen at the bottom of the main gateway page, as shown to the users:



Finally, the tester took the screenshot away from the participant so that he/she could not see the current list of links, and asked what links they would most like to see in a grouping of links like this one.

Methodology

- Guerilla Test
- Number of participants: 14 individuals, as well as 2 groups of 3 individuals each that provided answers reached by consensus.
- Status of participants: 2 PhD students, 2 graduate students, 10 undergraduate students, and 2 groups of 3 undergraduate students each (group responses are treated as a single response, and are noted as "group" in Appendix 2).

- Individuals were recruited for the test on the first and second floor of the Shapiro Undergraduate Library
- No incentives were offered
- The test took approximately 5 minutes

Results & Recommendations

1. Group title "Quick Links" should remain unchanged

The current grouping title appears broad enough to cover links outside of the Library's domain as well as Library links. Testing showed little confusion about this title so it is recommended that the title "Quick Links" remains unchanged.

2. Rename "My Account" to "My Library Account"

Three participants assumed both "My Account" and "Wolverine Access" would take them to essentially the same location. By changing the link label to "My Library Account," this might create less confusion for them.

3. Add a link to web email in Quick Links

Nine participants responded at the beginning of the test that they wanted a link to web email (Question 2), and six students responded at the end of the test that they wanted a link to web email (Question 6). While 10 out of 15 of these responses could be construed as a link to any email client, we would recommend that it be a link to the University of Michigan web email service (<http://webmail.umich.edu/>).

4. Change "EJournals" to either "Online Journals" or "Online Journal Titles"

Seven participants were not able to tell where "EJournals" led. To distinguish this link from databases, the recommendation would be to rename it. From discussions within the Usability Task Force, we recommend that stakeholders consider adding "Online" to the label and removing the "E." However, due to the complexity of renaming the service (e.g., evaluating the page title for the current EJournals sub-site), more usability testing is also recommended in order to discover a better name for the service.

5. "Outages" link should be removed from Quick Links

The label "Outages" was confusing to eleven participants tested, but no intuitive or succinct alternative names were suggested. Ideally, information on technical problems covered by the current outages link would be placed more contextually, within the EJournal listings. This solution is currently not possible in the short term. Google Analytics usage statistics show that the Outages link has relatively low usage so the recommendation would be to remove the Outages link from the home page and provide it instead on the main eJournal pages.

6. Keep "Wolverine Access," "CTools" and "Library Hours"

There was no confusion on where "Wolverine Access," "CTools" and "Library Hours" links would take users, and all but three of those tested felt that these links are helpful and should be included in a group of links on the library home page.

Lessons Learned

- Participants seemed to enjoy being interviewed and didn't expect or need an incentive for the 5 minutes or so required to complete the test.
- Participants were intentionally shown a screenshot of only the Quick Links portion of the library home page in order to remove from view other portions of the website that might influence their responses. However, the partial screenshot of the website may have created unnecessary confusion for participants as they attempted to figure out exactly what the Quick Links would be used for on the web page. Therefore, the group felt that it would be better to show the group of links within the larger context of the entire web page in order to provide them with better context.
- The initial question, "Which web links do you need to access most?", was too general and participants had no context for answering it, since it was at the beginning of the interview. A better question would include the phrase, "links you need to access when doing homework or when performing research," or something similar.

Appendix 1: Test Script

Hi, could you spare about 5 minutes to give us your opinion?

[If they answer No:]

No problem. Thanks for your time.

[If they answer Yes:]

1. Thanks a lot. My name is _____ and I'm a librarian here at the University. My colleague _____ here will take some notes as we talk. We're going to ask you some questions about the links on the Library website. But first, what is your status at the university?

[Write it down.]

2. Thank you. So our first question for you is: Which web links do you need to access the most?

[Scribble, scribble.]

Okay, great. Now we're going to show you a screenshot of a section of the library homepage.

[Show them a screenshot with the title "Quick Links" blanked out.]

3. Based on the links that you see here, what would you call this grouping of links?

[Note their answer.]

4. OK. And what do each of these link labels mean to you? Where do you think they lead?

- My Account:
- EJournals:
- Library Hours:
- Outages:
- CTools:
- Wolverine Access:

Okay. Now to make sure we're on the same page, I'm going to quickly describe to you where each of them actually leads:

- My Account: The portion of the library catalog in which you can see your checked out items, renew them, see what you have on hold, etc.
- EJournals: Lets you browse through a list of journals that the library subscribes to that are accessible online.
- Library Hours: Shows you when we're open.
- Outages: Gives you a list of current online problems and issues.
- CTools: Takes you to the portal that contains course sites and project sites.

- Wolverine Access: Takes you to the university's administrative website.

5. Now that you have a good idea of where these links lead, can you think of a clearer label for any of the individual links?

[Note any response.]

6. Great, thanks. [Take away the screenshot.] And one last question: Now that we've described the function of each link, which links would you most like to see in this grouping?

[Write down their answer.]

Thanks so much for your time. We really appreciate it. Have a great day!

Appendix 2: Responses

Status of participants: 2 PhD students, 2 graduate students, 10 undergraduate students, and 2 groups of 3 undergraduate students each (group responses are treated as a single response, and are noted as "group")

1. Which web links do you need to access the most?

- Web Mail (2)
- Email (5 individual, 2 group responses)
- CTools (3 individual, 2 group responses)
- Library Catalog
- Ask a Librarian
- MFile (group response)
- Wolverine Access (2 individual, 2 group responses)
- Databases (2)
- EJournals (those specific to my subject)
- Online Journals
- Google (4)
- Gmail (2)
- Google reader (2)
- Craig's list
- Social work library homepage
- Google maps
- Blogger
- Facebook (4 individual, 1 group response)
- Chinese Facebook
- BBC World
- New York Times (2)
- ABC News
- ESPN
- Weather
- Wikipedia
- Yahoo Answers

2. What would you call this grouping of links?

- "My Library"
- "MLibrary"
- "Sources"
- "University Links"
- "Menu"
- "Options"
- "Important Links"
- "Commonly Accessed Links"
- "Links" (2 individual, 1 group response)
- "Helpful Links" (group response)
- "Useful Links"
- "Resources" (2)
- "Michigan Links" or "University of Michigan Links"

- "Quick Links" (3)
- "Common Links" (1 individual, 1 group response)
- "Favorites" (group response)
- "Frequently Visited Sites" (group response)
- "Library/University Links"

3. What do each of these link labels mean to you? Where do you think they lead?

- My Account
 - a. to see what books you have checked out, records related to the library
 - b. account information (2)
 - c. login, library books borrowed, library account
 - d. My Account & Wolverine Access seem to be the same links
 - e. books checked out, statuses (2)
 - f. stuff that's checked out (group response)
 - g. Umich ID
 - h. ???
 - i. books on reserve or checked out
 - j. your individual library account: username, Refworks, etc. (group response)
 - k. library account (2)
 - l. Michigan / University of Michigan links
 - m. Your Wolverine Access account
- EJournals
 - a. databases
 - b. where you would search for papers
 - c. links to online journals
 - d. don't know (4 individual, 1 group response)
 - e. professional journals that the library has
 - f. blogs
 - g. blog or something
 - h. link to databases
 - i. journals readable online (group response)
 - j. online readings
 - k. electronic journals
 - l. database of sources
- Library Hours
 - a. every library and their hours
 - b. to check library hours
 - c. when the library is open (3)
 - d. when library is open, holiday/break hours
 - e. all libraries (group response)
 - f. library hours (3)
 - g. hours (2)
 - h. when open
 - i. times libraries are open (group response)
 - j. hours library is open
 - k. hours open

- Outages
 - a. don't know (8 individual, 1 group response)
 - b. current campus problems
 - c. when something is down, interface is changing
 - d. power outages – which libraries (group response)
 - e. what happens when we have outages
 - f. outages of the site
 - g. books that ran out
 - h. maybe like my account

- CTools
 - a. CTools course material
 - b. CTools account
 - c. CTools interface
 - d. CTools (2 individual, 1 group response)
 - e. obvious (6 individual, 1 group response)
 - f. CTools for classes
 - g. personal course lists and stuff
 - h. courses I'm in, journal articles for courses

- Wolverine Access
 - a. Wolverine Access for course registration, etc.
 - b. Another way to get to Wolverine Access
 - c. to the Wolverine Access log in
 - d. Wolverine Access – university account
 - e. Obvious (7 individual, 1 group response)
 - f. Wolverine Access (2 individual, 1 group response)
 - g. Personal Umich account

4. Now that you have a good idea of where these links lead, can you think of a clearer label for any of the individual links?

- My Account
 - a. "My Library Account"
 - b. My Library Account – so it doesn't get mixed up with Wolverine Access account
 - c. change to something else

- EJournals
 - a. "Library subscribed eJournals" (group response)
 - b. "UM subscriptions" (group response)
 - c. "Recent journals of interest" (group response)
 - d. "Electronic Journals" or "Online Journals"
 - e. "Subscriptions"
 - f. change to something else

- Library Hours – no alternative labels offered

- Outages

- a. outages could be better – current technical problems
 - b. "Library bulletin"
 - c. "Library updates/announcements"
 - d. change to something better
 - e. "Online problems" (group response)
 - f. "Services that need repair"
 - g. "What we're fixing / working on" (group response)
- CTools – no alternative labels offered
 - Wolverine Access
 - a. change Wolverine Access to "Student Business or "My Wolverine Account" or "My Umich Account"
5. Now that we've described the function of each link, which links would you most like to see in this grouping?
- Would like to see:
 - a. email (3)
 - b. CTools (4 individual, 2 group responses)
 - c. Wolverine Access (3 individual, 2 group responses)
 - d. library Account
 - e. My Account (1 individual, 2 group responses)
 - f. library hours (2 individual, 1 group response)
 - g. database Link [search tools?]
 - h. search box for the library or university wide
 - i. University of Michigan Directory
 - j. library catalog
 - k. webmail (3)
 - l. MFile (group response)
 - m. MPrint (group response)
 - n. Ask a Librarian
 - o. EJournals
 - Leave these out:
 - a. Outages - put somewhere else (group response)
 - b. Outages - take out of link list, just post outages on main page.
 - c. CTools (easy enough to get there)
 - d. Wolverine Access (easy enough to get there) (2)
 - e. Hours