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Askwith Library Services - Guerilla Test of Advance Media Booking Service

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Project Cover Sheet

Project	<p>Askwith Library Services <i>Guerilla Test of Advance Media Booking Service</i></p> <p>The Askwith Media Library has recently introduced an online booking service that allows patrons to reserve media materials online for classroom instruction and personal use. Staff and Faculty have special permission to access the online booking service via Mirlyn.</p>
Committee & Members	<p>Usability Working Group</p> <p>Kat Hagedorn (chair), Suzanne Chapman, Michael Creech, Karen Downing, Anne Karle-Zenith, Shana Kimball, Gurpreet Rana, Robert Tolliver</p> <p>Julie Piacentine & John Suciu (student interns)</p>
Report Info	<p>Report Author(s): Julie Piacentine & John Suciu Contact Information: ul-usability@umich.edu Report Date: December 2007; Last Revised: December 2007 Date Submitted to PARC: January 2008</p>
Objectives	<p>The purpose of this test was to assess the overall usability of the Advance Media Booking interface, to identify any common problems users encountered with the interface, and recommend possible changes to improve the interface.</p>
Methodology	<p>Method – Informal “Guerilla” User Tests 5 participants Dates of study: November & December 2007</p>
Results & Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two of 5 participants noted that the required date format is unusual• Many participants had difficulty navigating to cancel a request• Three of 5 participants noted that the confirmation message is not sufficiently prominent

Recommendations

- Provide explicit instructions for user to check on previous bookings and how to cancel a booking
- Use Month/Day/Year for the date format when scheduling a booking
- Use a calendar icon or text label instead of the [...] button
- Emphasize the confirmation message when a patron completes a booking
- Give specific users permissions that allow them to book an item for more than two days
- Move the Go button to the bottom of the page
- Use the word “Cancel Booking Request” instead of “delete” to cancel a booking
- Provide an interface that allows patrons to make multiple online bookings

Introduction

The Library recently implemented a new feature by which faculty and staff may reserve Askwith Media Library materials for specific dates and times from within Mirlyn. This service is known as the Advance Media Booking service and it extends an existing service, through which patrons may reserve materials by contacting the Askwith Media Library staff. Because the interface is designed by and purchased from an outside vendor, it is not entirely customizable. We acknowledge these limitations, but aim to recommend changes that are possible even in light of this constraint.

The test sought to assess the overall usability of the interface and to identify any common problems encountered by users. The test was designed to move participants through the entire interface in order to assess its overall usability. We identified that changes to text size and color, placement of elements on the screen, button labels and the inclusion of instructions at specific points within the interface will dramatically improve the usability of the interface. These recommendations and the results on which they are based are described in detail below.

Methodology

Participants were recruited with the assistance of Jeff Pearson of the Askwith Media Library (AML) and from the University of Michigan community at large. Jeff contacted AML patrons who might be willing to participate via email. Other test participants were acquaintances of the testers who were not necessarily familiar with AML or the Advance Media Booking service.

Participants consisted of four faculty members and one staff member of the University of Michigan. Three of our faculty member participants had used the Advance Media Booking service prior to the test while the two remaining participants had no prior experience. All of our participants had some experience using Mirlyn. Their experience with Mirlyn varied from using it “once or twice a semester” to “many times a week.”

All 5 participants answered all questions of the 9-question test. Testers led participants through a search in the Library Catalog, Mirlyn, for a specific material held at AML and then asked to complete and comment on a series of tasks using the Booking interface. Tasks addressed the following elements of the interface: date display and format, button placement and labeling, and prompts and instructions (or the lack thereof) within the interface.

Results

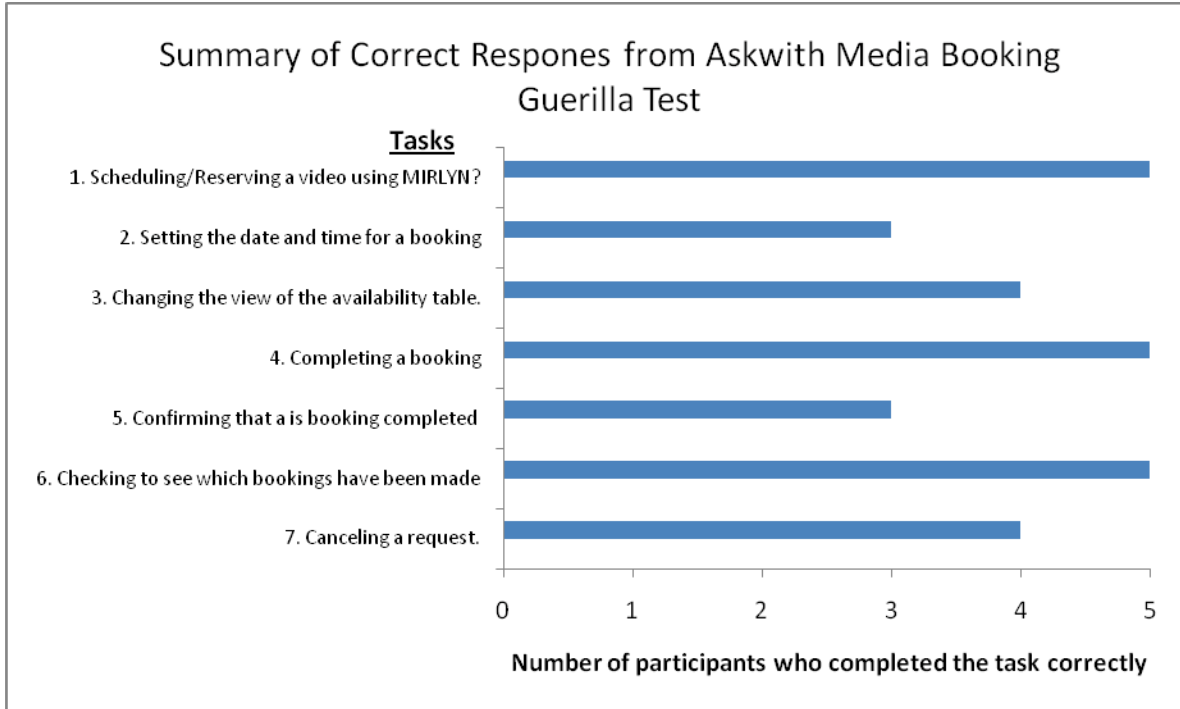


Figure 1: A summary of correct responses of the Advance Media Booking guerilla test.

Overall, our results showed that a majority of participants could complete the tasks tested in our guerilla test. The tasks that presented the most difficulty to our participants were making bookings using Mirlyn, using the “My Account” feature to check which bookings have been previously made, and clicking on the small blue arrows to modify the week being viewed on the Availability Table. Although the majority of participants completed all tasks successfully, this does not mean that they performed tasks without any difficulty. The difficulties that participants faced will be addressed in the sections below.

For a full screenshot of the booking interface, see Appendix C.

Scheduling/Reserving a video using Mirlyn

	Current Location	Collection	Call Number	Vol. : Issue	Online Link	Status/Due Date
Expand	Askwith Media Library	Room 2002 Shapiro				On Order
Booking	Askwith Media Library	Room 2002 Shapiro	VIDEO-D 29899-D	h0126		12/13/07
Expand						
Booking	Askwith Media Library	Room 2002 Shapiro	VIDEO-D 29899-D	h11511		12/12/07
Expand						

Figure 2: Patrons must click the "Booking" link to reserve media.

Three out of the five participants correctly clicked on the “Booking” link to initiate the online-booking process. For one participant, there was confusion between the “Booking” and “Expand” links because it was difficult to discern if these were two separate links or a single link. The other participant who did not complete this task successfully thought she had scrolled to the bottom of the page, however, her screen displayed the “Owning Location” of the film, illustrating

that she did not actually scroll down to the bottom of the page. She reported that the scroll button on her mouse had not been working properly.

Checking to see which bookings have been made

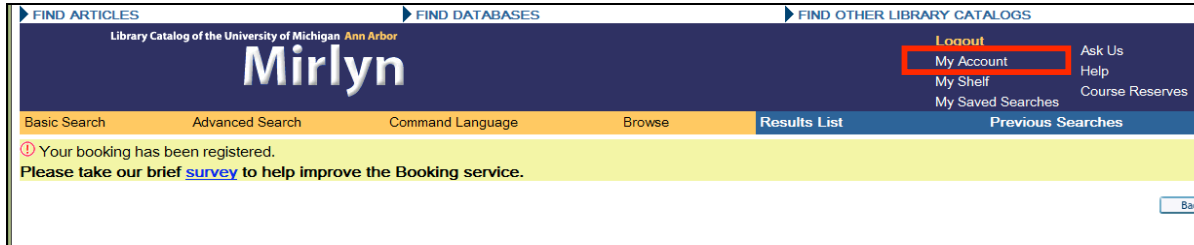


Figure 3: Users must click on "My Account" to see which bookings they have made.

Only three out of the five participants completed this task successfully. Three of our participants, two of whom completed the task correctly, were very unsure about which item to click on. This was indicated by the amount of time it took before they made their selection. One participant, once they clicked on "My Account", did not know where to find the "Booking Requests" button once she was on the "My Account" page. She later commented that she did not notice it since the buttons on top of the "My Account" section are extremely close together.

Changing the view of the Availability table

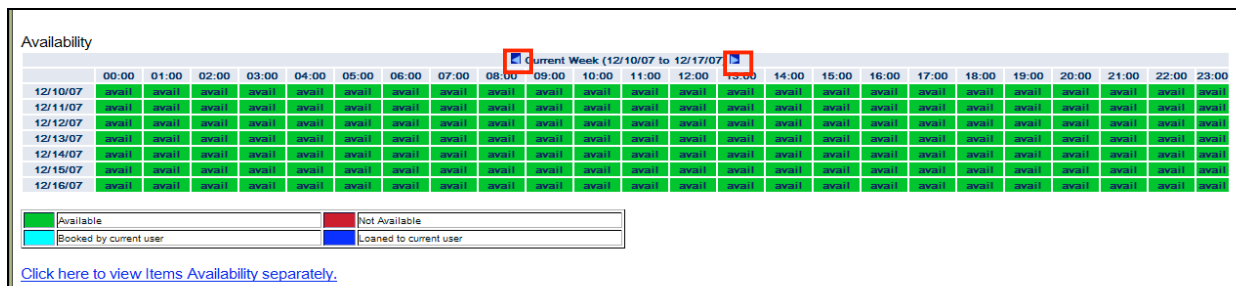


Figure 4: The online booking availability table. To change the week being viewed a user must click the blue arrows (circled in red).

For this task, the participant must click on the blue arrows located at the top of the table in order to change the week being displayed on the screen. One of the participants who performed this task correctly informed us that the only reason she scrolled down to the bottom of the screen to view the Availability table was because we had instructed her to scroll below the fold previously. Moreover, one participant could not even find the Availability Table since she thought the "Go" button was the last item on the screen. Clearly, one of the difficulties of this task is the placement of the Availability table. It seems this participant used the "Go" button as an indication that they had reached the bottom of the page.

Confirming a booking

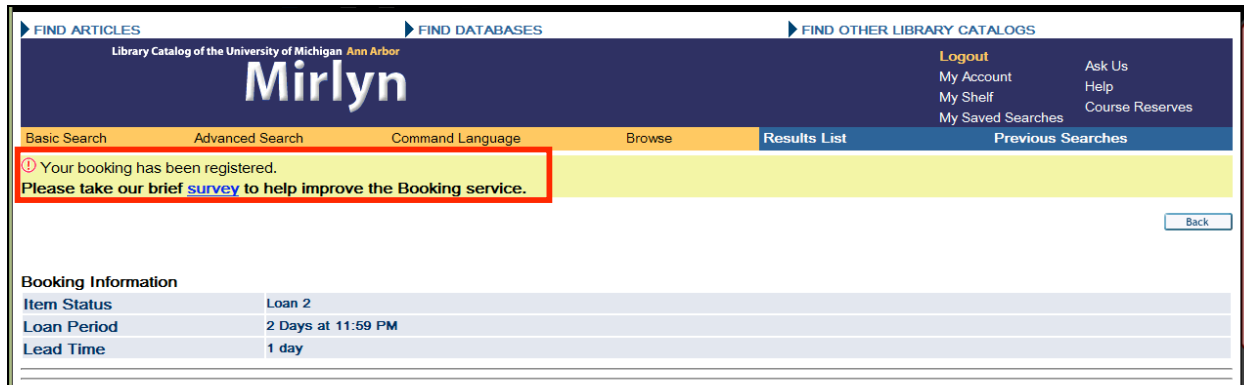


Figure 5: Patron must view the above message in order to know that their booking has been completed.

Four out of the five participants noted that their booking was completed by identifying the red exclamation point and message at the top of the booking screen. Although only one participant did not see the confirmation message, three participants made comments that the exclamation point and confirmation message were either not very visible or that it was not entirely clear at first that the booking was complete since they were returned to the beginning of the booking screen.

Setting the date and time for a booking

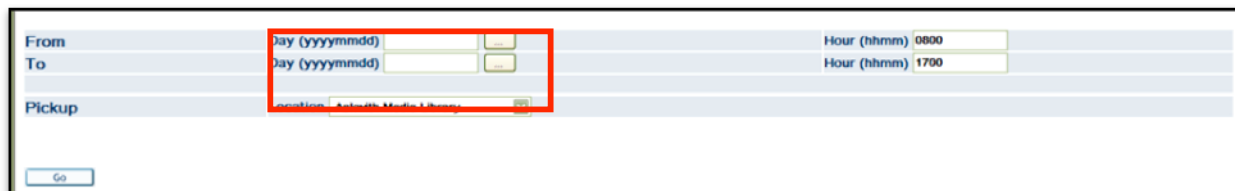


Figure 6: The date selection screen of the online booking interface.

Although all five participants completed this task successfully, four out of five of them commented that the date format was unconventional. Currently, the date format that is used is year/month/day which is not normally used when setting the date. In addition, when we probed our participants with the question, “If you clicked on the “...” button what would you expect to happen”, three out of five participants did not expect a calendar to appear. The two participants that did use the “...” to schedule a booking informed us that they clicked this button only out of curiosity, not because they knew that a calendar would appear once the button was clicked.

Also, two participants attempted to book a film past the two day maximum for reserving a film. Interestingly, they noticed the restriction message located on the top of the screen but they were curious to see if the online booking service still allowed them to reserve the film beyond two days.

Canceling a request

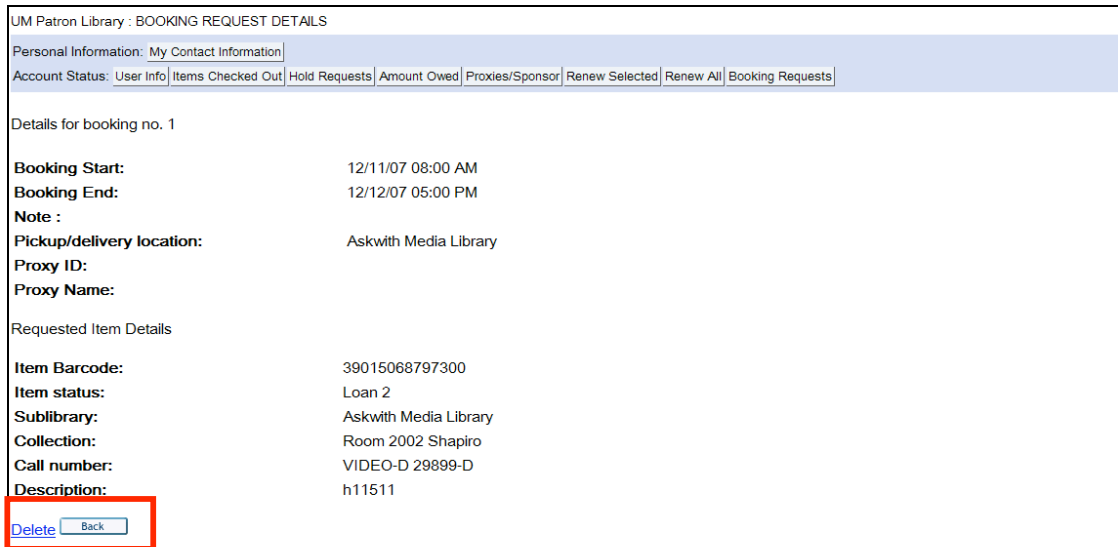


Figure 7: To cancel a booking request users must click the "Delete" link when they view the "My Account" page.

All of our participants successfully cancelled their booking requests by first clicking on the number link and then clicking on the delete button. Two of our participants found the use of the word delete was rather awkward and instead favored using the word “cancel” to remove their booking request. We also feel that most of our participants were successful at completing this task since the numbered link was the only possible clickable option on the interface. Only one participant noticed the instruction on the top of the screen, which says “to view details for a specific booking request, click on the numbers in the left hand column”.

Recommendations

Provide explicit instructions for user to check on previous bookings and how to cancel a booking

As previously mentioned, many participants spent some time trying to discern where to click to check their previous bookings by using the “My Account” feature. Instructions should be provided on the booking confirmation page that explicitly tells the user that they should use the “My Account” feature and then select “Bookings” to check which films they have borrowed previously. Not only will this inform users on how to use this feature, but it can also act as an implicit message that users have completed their online booking. In addition, these instructions should also inform the patron that they can also use the “My Account” feature to cancel their booking as well.

Use Month/Day/Year for the date format when scheduling a booking

As mentioned in the results section, all of our participants mentioned that the date format was very unconventional. In order to make the online booking service more intuitive, a conventional format should be used such as Month/Day/Year.

Use a calendar icon or text label instead of the [...] button

The [...] button does not provide adequate information that users may select a calendar to input the date to schedule their booking. The calendar input screen is an extremely useful feature that users may prefer instead of inputting the date in the text field. Using an icon or labeling the button with informative text will be adequate in informing users that they can use a calendar to input their booking date.

Emphasize the confirmation message when a patron completes a booking

Emphasizing the confirmation message at the top of screen after the patron completes a booking will make this message more noticeable once a confirmation has been made. Although the text is in red and is markedly different from the rest of the screen, it may be too small to be noticeable. Having the color of the text red and enlarging the size of it should be adequate feedback that the user has confirmed their booking. (Although a confirmation email would be far more adequate.)

Give specific users permissions that allow them to book an item for more than two days

Two of our users mentioned that they would like to book items for more than the maximum time limit. This is because they would like to show a portion of the film in class and then show the rest of the film during discussion sections. This feature could either be implemented by allowing faculty members to extend time periods to borrow films, or the faculty member could indicate that they are reserving a film for class, which allows the patron to borrow the film for an additional number of days. We feel that this would be a useful feature not only for patrons but it will also reduce the workload of the Askwith staff since asking for extended borrowing periods currently must be done manually.

Move the Go button to the bottom of the page

Having the “Go” button at the end of the page will allow users to view the entire booking screen before they confirm their booking. In addition, based on user feedback, the “Go” button is a signal that they are at the end of the online booking process. Having this at the end matches user expectation and workflow. In this way, they can view all of the available options before they confirm their booking.

Use the word “Cancel Booking Request” instead of “delete” to cancel a booking

Two of our participants commented that when they cancelled a booking, they found the word “delete” to be an awkward name for the action, given that they wanted to cancel their booking

request, not delete the item. Although they may have been biased given the wording of the question which was phrased as, “How would you cancel a booking request?”, we feel that replacing “delete” with the word “Cancel Booking Request” would better match user expectations.

Provide an interface that allows patrons to make multiple online bookings

One participant commented that they make over twelve bookings in one sitting. Although we did not specifically ask how many bookings a patron usually makes during one session, it may be useful for patrons, especially faculty members, if they could make multiple bookings in one session rather than having to begin the online booking process multiple times in order to make more than one booking. There are several ways to possibly implement this. One way of doing this is having a “cart” feature, similar to the “MyShelf” feature that allows patrons to store media that they are interested in borrowing. Once they have completed finding all of their films, they can then use the online booking service to book each one of these films. Another way of doing this is providing a form in the online booking interface that allows the user to specify the number of films that they are interested in borrowing. After they select the number of bookings to be made, the online booking form creates multiple booking forms that allows the patron to select the times and dates for booking each individual film.

Appendix A: Test Script

The purpose of this test is to evaluate some of the difficulties that users may face when they book a film. We want to discover which aspects of the interface give users the most difficulty. Although we cannot make drastic changes to the interface because of the Mirlyn infrastructure, we may be able to add informative text to instruct users how to book their items. Below each screenshot is a list of questions that we will ask the user to answer. We are hoping we can test users on a computer, however, if this is not feasible, we can use screenshots and have users point to items on the interface to answer the questions.

Before the test begins tell the user:

You need to request the film, “Like Water for Chocolate.” After searching for the film using Mirlyn, you found that the film is located at the Askwith Media Library. You clicked the on the Askwith Media Library link and have been taken to this page.

1. Please indicate your primary affiliation to the University of Michigan (*you may select more than one*):

- Faculty: Professor Lecturer Researcher
- Staff (Please specify) _____
- GEO: GSI GSRA
- Other (Please specify) _____

2. Show us how you schedule or reserve this video using Mirlyn?

3a. Where would you click to set the date in which you would like to book your film?

3b. If you clicked on the “...” button what would you expect to happen?

4. Where would you click to see if the item is available a month from now.

5. After you have selected the date and time of your booking, what would you click on to complete your booking?

6. How can you confirm that your booking is completed? (Alternate wording: Did it work? Do you think it worked?)

7. If you want to see items you've already booked, where would you check?

8. How would you cancel a booking request?

9a. How many times have you used the booking service prior to this test?

9b. How often have you used Mirlyn?

Appendix B: Full Results

[U1, U3, U4, U5]: Faculty Members, [U2]: Staff Member

1. Show us how you schedule or reserve this video using Mirlyn?

[U1]: I had to inform the user to click booking. She was looking for a course reserves link and didn't see it. She scan the top of the page (above the fold) and nothing immediately suggested to her to click the book link since she did not scroll below the fold. I directed her to scroll down and then she saw the Booking link, which she then clicked.

[U2]: He first checks the top of the page to see if there are any clickable links. He scrolls down the page and immediately clicks the booking link.

[U3] She clicks booking right away.

[U4] "Booking"

[U5] "Booking Expand" - "It's not clear to me that those are two separate commands. I'm not sure where to click."

2a. Where would you click to set the date in which you would like to book your film?

[U1] She uses the text field to type in the date. She does see the restriction on the two day loan and wonders if she still loan it for a longer amount of time.

[U2] He clicks on the [...] button to set the date. He didn't expect a calendar to appear there, he was just curious to see what the button did since it was right next to the date text box. He comments that the date is in a very weird format.

[U3] She type in the date, she mentions that the date format is unconventional.

[U4] "..."

[U5] The text box. Subject noted that this is an odd date format.

2b. If you clicked on the “...” button what would you expect to happen?

[U1] She had no idea what the [...] button would show her. She said she would use the calendar feature in the future since the date format is very unconventional to her.

[U2] See previous question

[U3] She did know what to expect. It doesn't look to her that [...] would mean calendar or date. She says now that she knows about this she'll use this instead.

[U4] "I've done this already."

[U5] "No idea."

3. Where would you click to see if the item is available a month from now.

[U1] She sees the table and notices that it only displays the current week. She clicks on the dog ears to see the next week. She mentions that she finds it irritating that when she clicks on the dog ears, it refreshes the page and return her to the top of the page. She also mentions that the only reason she scrolled down to find the availability table was because of a previous question, whereby she forgot to scroll down previously. She wouldn't have thought to scroll down in this instance since the "Go Button" is located at the bottom of screen. Have this button at the bottom gives her the perception that all of the necessary information about booking is above the go button.

She also thinks that the link "View items separately" should at least say "ignore this link."

[U2] He clicks on the dog ears to scroll through the dates. As he clicks on them, he notices that his date is erased and re-enters it. He didn't know it was displaying the current week immediately, he says the text should be bigger.

[U3] She didn't know where to go. She thought that the [GO] button indicated the end of the page, so she did not bother to scroll down. Also, she mentions that she would like to progress through the weeks a lot faster, rather than at one increment at a time.

[U4] "I would keep clicking the right button until I got the date I wanted."

[U5] "Somewhere down where the dates and times display, but it doesn't seem possible. It's not obvious. I would like to just scroll further down and see more dates."

4. After you have selected the date and time of your booking, what would you click on to complete your booking?

[U1] She immediately clicks the Go button.

[U2] He clicks the Go button. He comments that he doesn't understand the "Loan 1 and Loan 2 terminology. He used to "Blockbuster terminology."

[U3] She immediately clicks the Go button.

[U4] Go.

[U5] Subject scrolled down below where dates and times display. "I don't see what to do next except to click Go."

5. How can you confirm that your booking is completed? (Alternate wording: Did it work? Do you think it worked?)

[U1] She immediately sees the red exclamation point at the top of the screen. She says that if she ever wanted a print out of the screen she would want it after the confirmation of her booking, not before she sees the confirmation page.

[U2] He sees the exclamation point. He finds it strange that it goes back to the booking screen and not somewhere else.

[U3] She scans the entire page. She doesn't know how to confirm that it has been booked. She comments that the display seems to be the same. I pointed the ! to her.

[U4] "The screen shows the booking start date and time that I entered."

[U5] Subject read the confirmation message at the top of the screen. "It should be centered & bigger, especially since this [the form input fields] is all here as if you never did anything."

6. If you want to see items you've already booked, where would you check?

[U1] She's seemed very unsure about what to click on. She scans the entire page and says that she might use My Account or My Shelf. I had to ask her to pick which one she would probably click on first. She clicks on My Account.

[U2] He is unsure about where to click. He first checks "Results list." He then checks My account. He scans "items checked out." He then clicks the bookings button.

[U3] She takes some time to think about this. Again she has no idea. I inform her that she can click on My Account. She does not notice the Booking Requests button. She says that the buttons should be laid out better by using more white space between the buttons.

[U4] My Account > Booking Requests

[U5] My Account > Booking Requests

7. How would you cancel a booking request?

[U1] She sees "Book requests at the top of the page. She reads the instructions at the top of the page and clicks on the number and then clicks the delete button.

[U2] Clicks on the [1] link. Clicks the delete button. He feels that delete is a strange word to use.

[U3] She clicks on the number. And clicks the delete button.

[U4] "Good question. I guess I'd click on the number & hit delete."

[U5] "Click the number and then delete. I think it would be better if it said 'Cancel my order' or 'Cancel my request'."

8a. How many times have you used the booking service prior to this test?

[U1] This was the first time she used the booking service

[U2] This is the first time he has used it.

[U3] She uses the booking service Once or Twice a Month. She has never booked online before.

[U4] Once a week

[U5] Once or twice a semester

8b. How often have you used Mirlyn?

[U1] Twice a week.

[U2] Once or twice a semester

[U3] She uses Mirlyn many times a week.

[U4] Many times a week

[U5] Once a week

Additional Participant Comments

[U1] She said she would use the service again. However, it would be nice if there was an option to reserve the video for a longer period of time. Perhaps a special permissions option. She reserves most of her videos at the beginning of the semester.

[U1] Also, when she checks her My Account to check which books she has, she feels the term "In process" is uninformative. She has already reserved several films which were reserved weeks ago, yet they still say "In process." She would like to know if the films are booked for her or not.

[U4] I place all my requests all at once, 12 in one sitting. My biggest problem is that I'd like to book it so my GSI can pick it up and show it to the class but then I want to have them go on reserve the next week. Jeff can do it but it would be nice to automate that process.

[U5] Redo this interface completely! Take it down to the bare bones and start over!

Appendix C: Interface Screenshot

▶ FIND ARTICLES
▶ FIND DATABASES
▶ FIND OTHER LIBRARY CATALOGS

Library Catalog of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and Flint

Mirlyn

Logout
[My Account](#)
[My Shelf](#)
[My Saved Searches](#)

[Ask Us](#)
[Help](#)
[Course Reserves](#)

Basic Search Advanced Search Command Language Browse Results List Previous Searches

Booking Information

Item Status	Loan 1
Loan Period	2 Days at 11:59 PM
Lead Time	1 day

Como agua para chocolate[videorecording] =Like water for chocolate /Miramax Home Entertainment ; Arau Films International ; Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y Las Artes ... [et al.] ; guion cinematografico, Laura Equivel ; produccion y direccion, Alfonso Arau..

Burbank, Calif. : Touchstone Home Video : Distributed by Buena Vista Home Entertainment, [2000?].

1 videodisc (ca. 105 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in..

From	Day (yyyymmdd) <input type="text"/> ...	Hour (hhmm)	<input type="text" value="0800"/>
To	Day (yyyymmdd) <input type="text"/> ...	Hour (hhmm)	<input type="text" value="1700"/>

Pickup Location ▼

Availability

📅 Current Week (12/10/07 to 12/17/07) 📅

	00:00	01:00	02:00	03:00	04:00	05:00	06:00	07:00	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	23:00
12/10/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/11/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/12/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/13/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/14/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/15/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail
12/16/07	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail	avail

 Available	 Not Available
 Booked by current user	 Loaned to current user

[Click here to view Items Availability separately.](#)

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