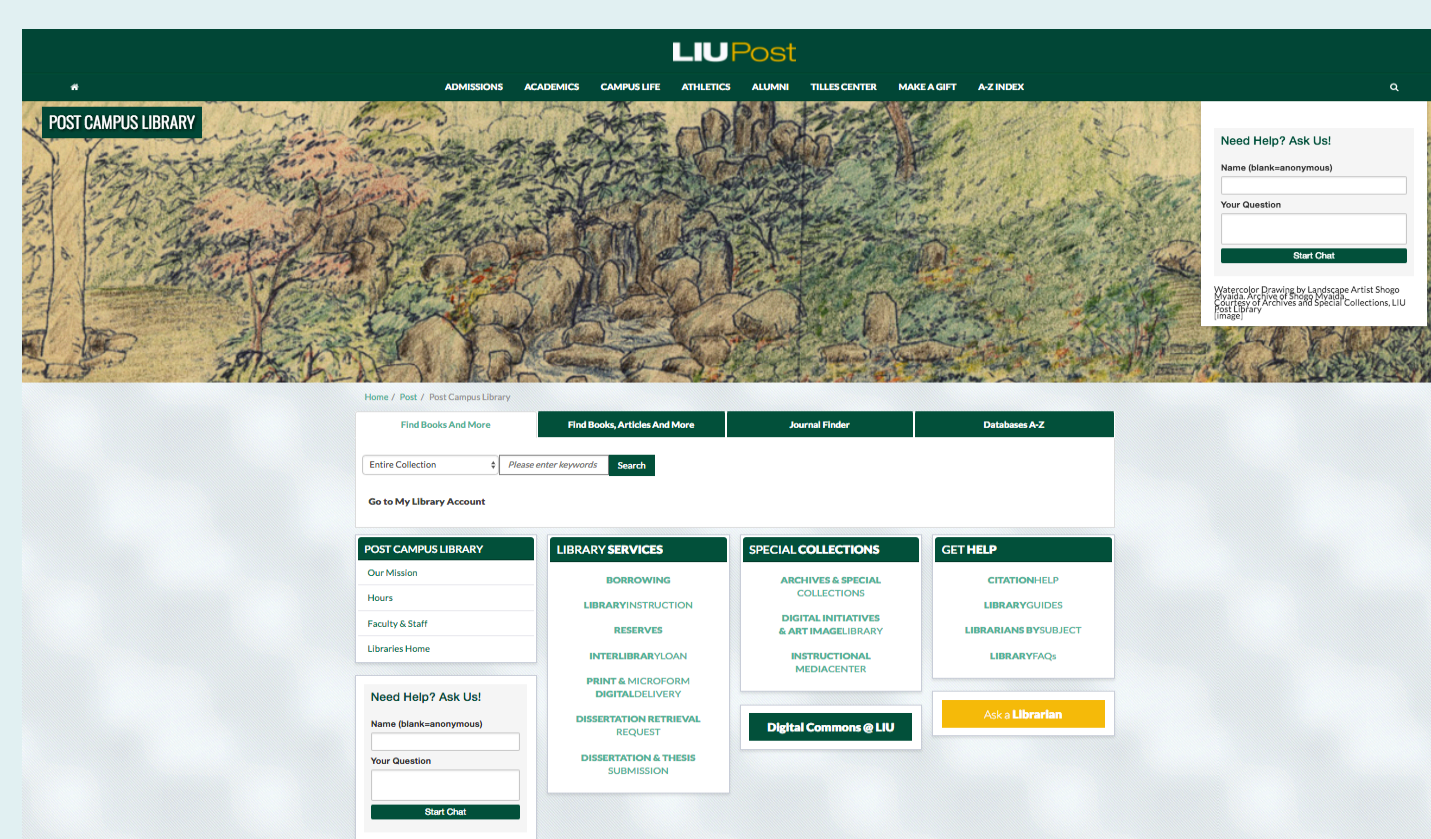


ABSTRACT

The webpage of LIU Post Library offers a search engine to locate resources for a variety of tasks. Due to the inconsistency of feedback, this usability project was designed to evaluate the webpage based on both cognitive walkthroughs and heuristic principles. The findings include several shortcomings though the website design proved functional and pleasing: platform inconsistencies, functional deficiencies related to the primary search capability, and layout design that causes unnecessary scrolling and disrupts the logical flow of information.



OBJECTIVES

The LIU Post Library website was redesigned in 2016, receiving mixed reviews. This usability study aims at achieving the following objectives.

- Focus on the LIU Post Library front page, especially key user functions: search & help.
- Assessing usability dealt with consideration pertaining to ease of use, effectiveness, and satisfaction of user experience.
- Enhance user efficiency and improve user satisfaction.

METHODS

Persona Design

Three personae were chosen from the target groups:

- Undergraduates: *Uninterested Undergrad Ursula*
(Priority: broad and basic reference needs, save \$ & time, flexible, maintain scholarship)
- Graduates: *Go-getter Gary Grad*
(Priority: deeper and focused scholarly research needs, funds, time)
- Faculty: *Tenure-track Tracy*
(Priority: efficient course construction, availability of resources for students; resources to produce publications and collaborate in their field)

Cognitive Walkthrough

Tasks:

- *Ursula*: researching an assigned topic using keywords
- *Gary*: getting help through “Ask a Librarian” feature
- *Tracy*: finding instructor support for a class textbook

Walkthrough search scenario for above three persona, with following three criteria:

1. Will users know what to do? How well does that action description match the user’s goal?
2. Will users see how to do it? Is the correct action available in the interface?
3. Will the user know if he/she has made the right or wrong choice

Heuristic Evaluation

- Principles evaluated:
 1. match between real world and system
 2. flexibility and efficiency of use
 3. aesthetic and minimalist design
 4. structure of information.
- Procedure:
 - Individual Inspection
 - Group Inspection

RESULTS

Problems from Cognitive Walkthrough:

Ursula Undergrad:

- Location of “Quicklinks” feature is obscure
- Failure in inheritance of campus choice to library collection result
- Failure in supporting novice users who don’t use Boolean search

Go-getter Gary Grad

- No indication of availability of Live chat option
- Inconsistent layout across Mac and PC platforms

Tenure-track Tracy

- Absence of course resources linked to textbooks
- User must leave Post Campus Library website to search further

Problems from Heuristic Evaluation:

- Task sequence does not parallel user’s work processes (P1)
- Info not always presented in simple, natural, and logical order (P1)
- Not anything significant was noted (P2)
- Key info not visually obvious (P3)
- Need to scroll has been accentuated with navigation facilities at bottom of screen (P3)
- Library front page comprises too many topics at once (P4)
- Lack of Boolean logic help (P4)
- Webpage contains four columns, with the most important information on the right side (P4)

CONCLUSION

- “Quicklinks” feature should be included as Menu choice on LIU Home Page
- Boolean operators using a dropdown menu near search engine
- Green dot indicator next to librarian chat option
- Providing an indication of type of additional instructor support available (i.e. link)