Usability & Design Working Group Documents

Western Libraries Departmental, Committee, and Working Group Documents

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Western Libraries Undergraduate Student User Persona (Erin Murphy)

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Recommended Citation

Primary Persona: First-Year Undergraduate

Erin Murphy is an 18-year-old first-year student at Western Washington University. She was born and raised in an affluent Seattle suburb, where she excelled academically in school and participated in a number of extracurricular activities.

At the beginning of the year, Erin moved into a double-occupancy room in the Ridgeway campus residence, which she shares with a close friend from her neighborhood who attended the same high school. The room is tidy but crammed full of the two students' possessions. Erin is Neurodiverse, with a diagnosis of ADHD from childhood, and manages the diagnosis with medication and alternative testing strategies. She has registered with the disability Resources for Students office but is still learning the process for receiving accommodations in classroom settings – which is more stressful than she thought it would be. Erin uses a Mac Book Pro with a 14" screen. The laptop usually sits on her crowded desk, but she sometimes brings it to the library and connects to the high-speed WWU wireless network from there.

Erin's work style is common among university students of her age. She frequently multi-tasks, and when she's using the library web site or other sites, it's likely that she's also doing one or more of the following at the same time: checking Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, sending emails, listening to music, and texting on the phone. She is accustomed to web sites that are interactive, mobile-friendly, and easy to use but is willing to make the effort to learn a more complex site if she sees positive results.

Erin isn't yet sure which major she'll choose, and in her first year she is taking only general university requirement courses. For these classes, she has used Google as her primary search engine. Erin's professors often place requirements on the articles she needs, such as asking that they be scholarly or peer-reviewed (she does not know exactly what these terms mean), and sometimes they specify that she find a certain quantity of articles or other sources. Usually she is looking for articles related to a specific topic or discipline.

GOALS:

- Find books and articles for class assignments as quickly and easily as possible.
- Start to become familiar with library resources.
- Learn how to get help for class assignments.

SCENARIOS:

1. Erin has a class assignment to write a short research paper for History 104. Her professor requires the following sources: one scholarly article, one book source, and one internet source. She is not sure where to begin!

2. Erin is working in her dorm room at 2:00am and needs some peer-reviewed articles for her Communications 101 assignment. She is not sure what that term means or how to go about finding out. She heard that she can access the library web site from her dorm room so she hopes she can find some articles online.

3. Erin would like to learn how to use the library more effectively. She feels frustrated about how difficult finding sources for her assignments seems to be – things are much different from high school! She wonders how to get more help and might even be interested in taking a library research class if there was one.