CONNECT WITH YOUR USERS:

Usability Testing and How User Experience May Actually Work For You

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WHAT IS USER EXPERIENCE?

User Experience (UX) encompasses all aspects of a patron's interaction. For the library, it can include the building, services, and products/resources.

WHAT IS USABILITY TESTING?

Usability testing is evaluating a product or service by testing it with users. It is one part of the overall user experience.

Usability testing has three components:
1. Finding representative users
2. Asking the users to perform representatitive tasks
3. Observing what the users do, where they succeed, and where they have difficulty

OUR USER EXPERIENCE IN ACTION

Collaborative Learning Center

Motivation: Flexible space for collaboration and a renovation of the first floor of the library

Assessment: Observation, Mapping, Logged Data, Charrettes, Photo Diaries

Cost: Varies, but a good rule is $75-100/sq foot

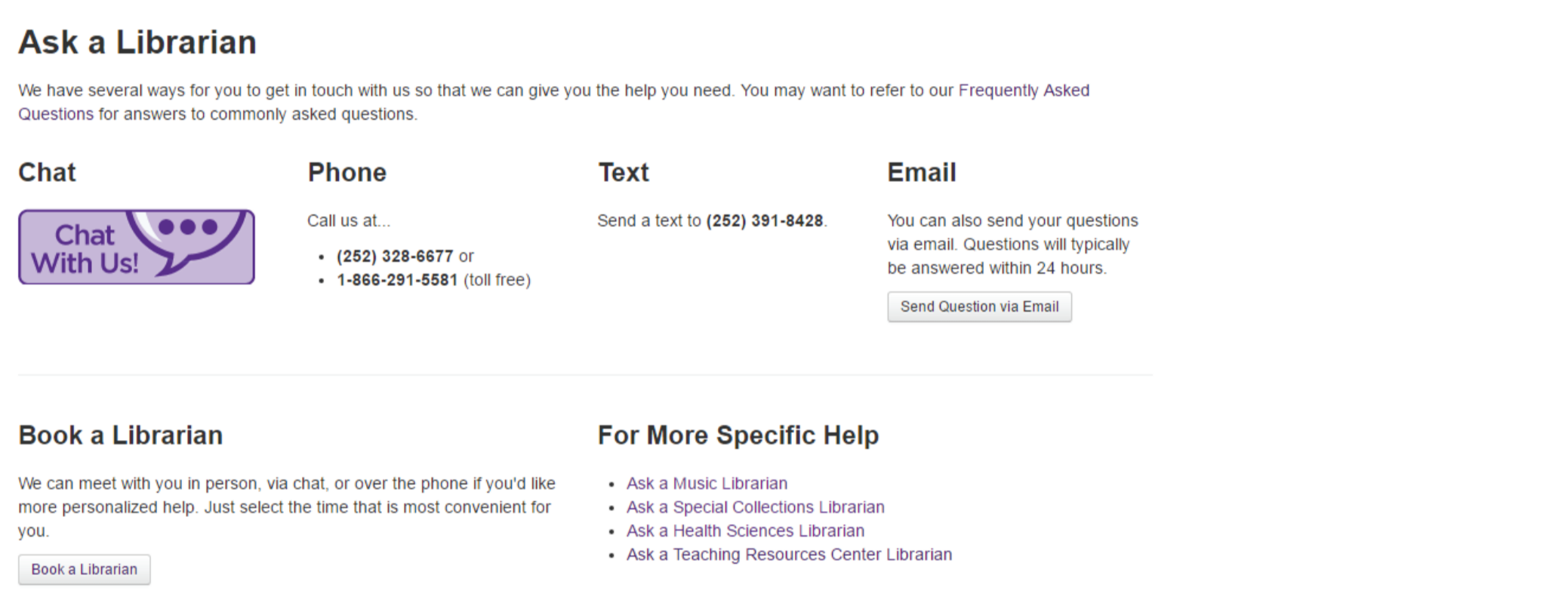**Results:** First floor of the library was redesigned with new furnishings and technology

Personas

Motivation: Needed representation of users to consult for projects when a full-blown UX study was not possible

Assessment: guerrilla in-person surveys

Cost: Multiple $5 Starbucks gift cards and staff time
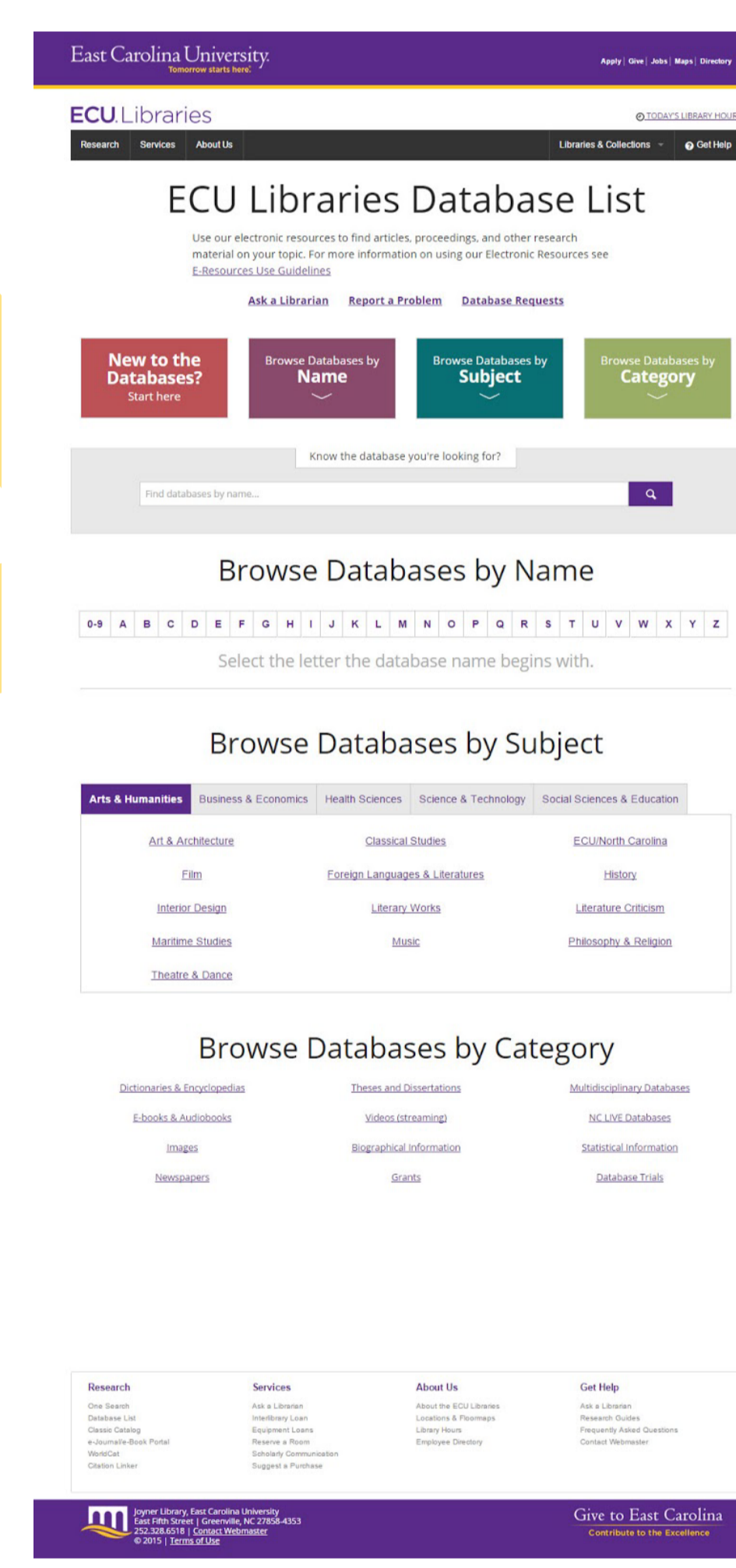
Results: 8 personas created

Ask a Librarian Pages

Motivation: Multiple service desks in the building, but all of the Ask a Librarian pages were different, making contact information difficult to find

Assessment: Observation, comparisons

Cost: Staff time

Results: All desks have the same contact page layout

Database List Page

Motivation: Database List needed redesign

Assessment: Large-scale, formal UX testing using the Morae software

Cost: staff time and branded library items

Results: Website redesigned; UX strategy for library system was explored and staffing responsibilities were investigated.

Note: See section below for results of formal study of staffing.

STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES

Consultant & Task Force

* Consultant was a professor at the university hired to teach UX

* Task Force included librarians from large, two library system.

* Members were chosen based on their job roles

* Charge was to determine UX strategy for libraries

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* Format was unwieldy

Large Group

* Consultant left the group, so Task Force attempted to work as large group

* Format was good for training phase and determining what needed to be done

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* Difficulties in determining when to move to the next phase.

Small Groups & Advisory Board

* Multiple 2-3 person groups

* Reported back to existing Discovery Advisory Board (DAB)
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* Format was great for testing phase and analysis

* Format was much easier to get work done

Other Options & What Works For Us

* Could have one person who has UX as their primary job role

* Multiple people could have UX as part of their job roles
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* We have applied a combined approach - UX is in 2 librarians' job descriptions and we employ "hot teams" by project

FUTURE STUDIES
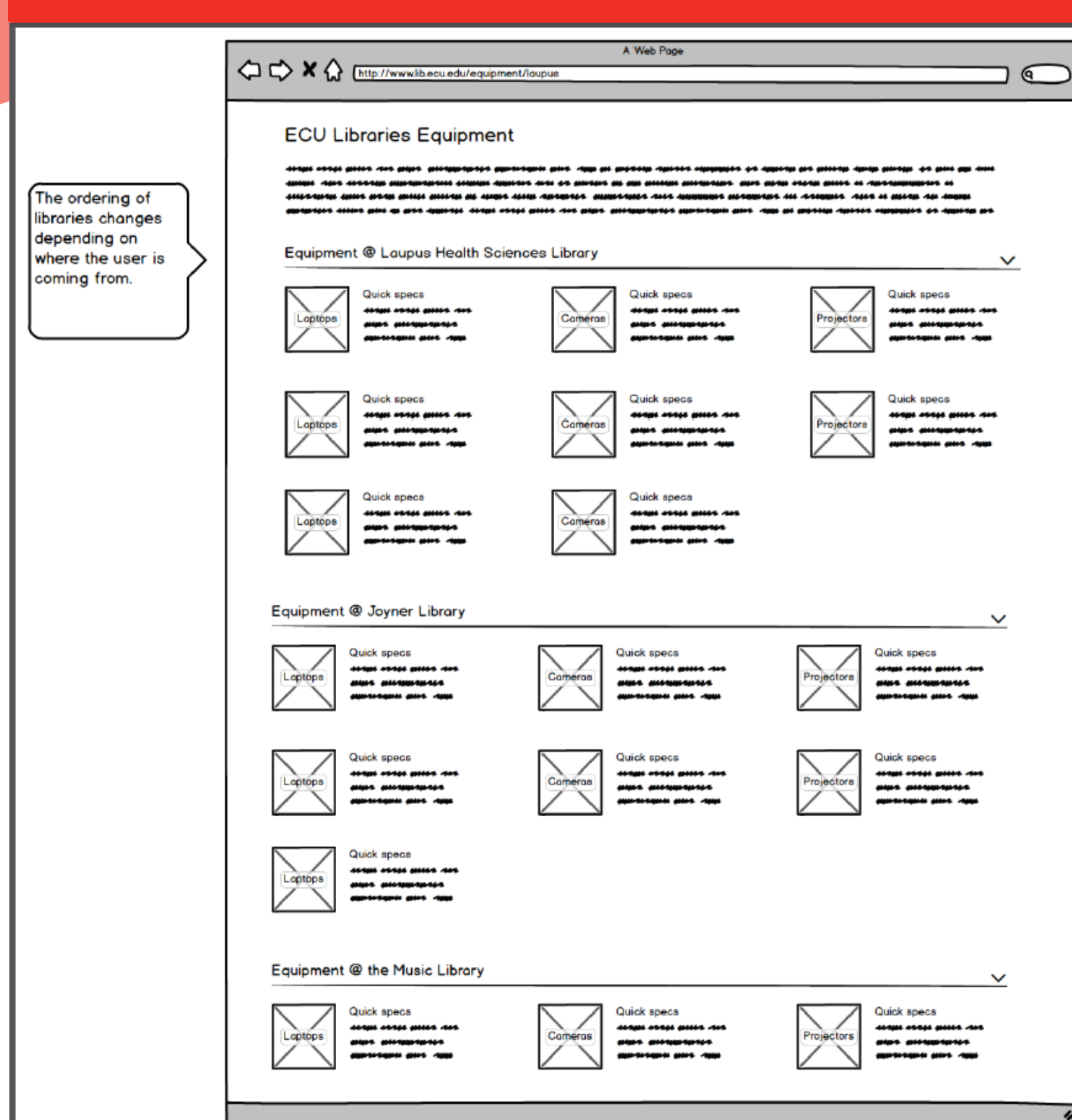
Motivation: Equipment page has too much information and it's difficult to see at which library the equipment is located

Assessment: Guerrilla UX testing

Cost: Staff time, possibly $5 Starbucks cards

HOW CAN YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR USERS?

Accessibility

* Adding subtitles to video
* Alternative text in LibGuides
* Reviewing building codes
* Reviewing databases

Building Updates

* Use focus groups, interviews, surveys, photo diaries, and other methods to gauge needs of users

* Add wheelchair ramps and other building add-ons

Policies & Signs

* Creating necessary signs and maps and placing them in most useful places

* Reviewing policies for currency

* Review rules for branches

Website Usability

* Ensure responsive web design

* Create personas of users for consideration with design decisions

* Review usage statistics

FURTHER READING

Book: Schmidt and Etches (2014). *Useful, Usable, Desirable*. ALA Editions.

Article: To read our article, "Our experience with user experience: Exploring staffing configurations to conduct UX in an academic library," please visit this link: http://bit.ly/28I1cRK