

# 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 representative 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



**Tiffany Dupree**  
23 years old  
Classification: Graduate Student  
Area of Study: Counselor Education

"I strive to do the best that I can in both work and school."

**Ideal, Reality and Time Spent**  
Tiffany is a 23 year old second year graduate student in the College of Education working on her masters degree in Counselor Education. Her typical week is spent splitting her time between going to class, doing homework outside of class, working, and spending time with friends and family.

**Goals**  
Tiffany would like to learn as much as she can to become the best in her field. She wants to graduate feeling that she is competent and educated.

**Frustrations**  
Although she realizes that the work is necessary to accomplish her goals, Tiffany gets frustrated with the amount of graduate work she needs to complete.

**Tasks**

- Writing papers
- Participating in lectures and on discussion boards
- Studying
- Taking quizzes and tests
- Creating presentations

**Library Interactions and transactions**  
Tiffany spends between 2-3 days a week in the library. She uses the databases for information and she likes that she can get coffee and use the study rooms when she needs it. The library allows her to find research articles, and print what she needs for her classes. Most importantly, it is a great place for her to meet and collaborate with her classmates.

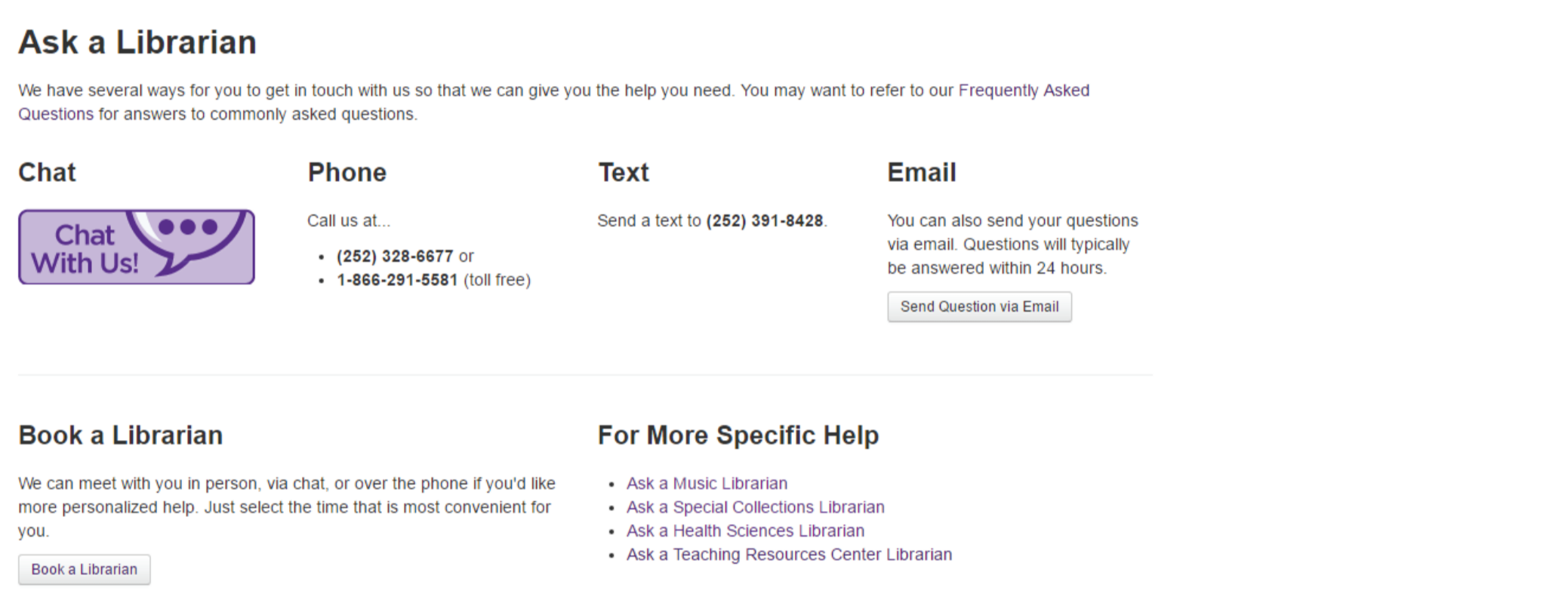
### Personas

**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



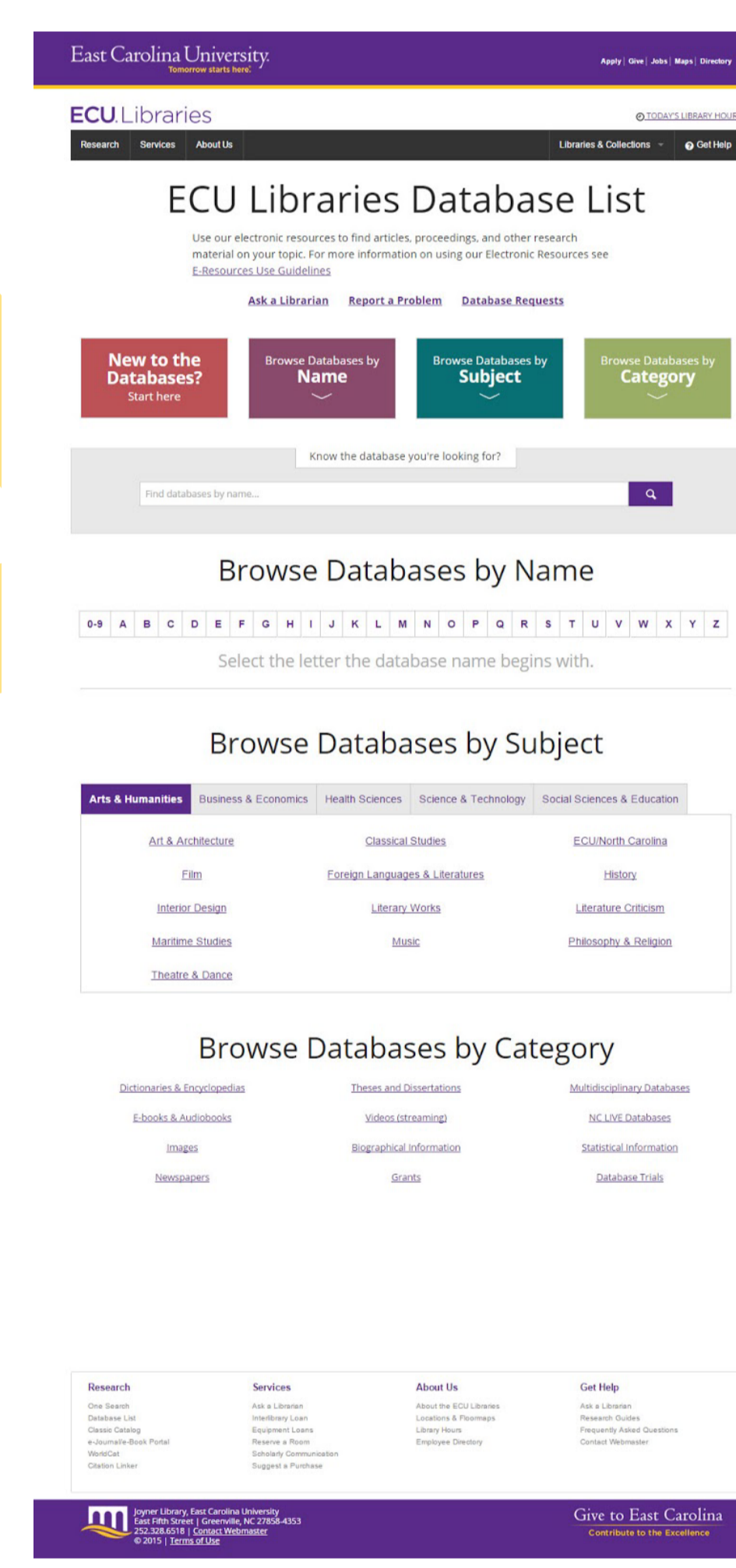
### Ask a Librarian Pages

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

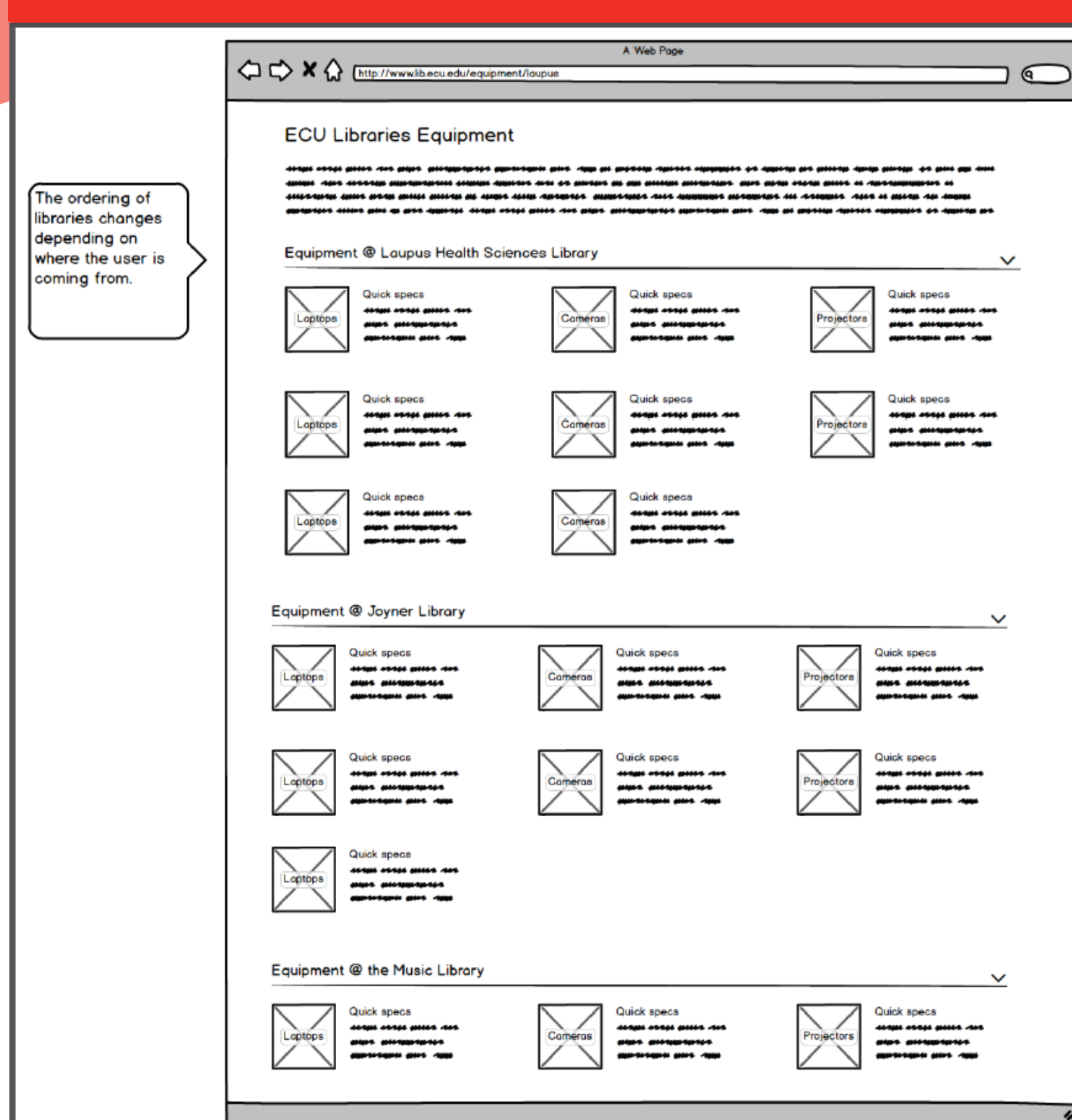
### Small Groups & Advisory Board

- \* Multiple 2-3 person groups
- \* Reported back to existing Discovery Advisory Board (DAB)
- \* 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
- \* 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/2811cRK>