Usability test report: Digital Collections

Recommendations to consider

1. Put button to request item for on-site use in the Item Info section or the right sidebar.
2. Reword "Start Over" to clarify that it takes the user back to the collection's main page.
3. Reword "Back to Search" to clarify that it takes the user back to the search results.
4. Make the Download button visible without the user having to scroll down to see it.
5. Allow users to navigate between different images using keyboard arrow keys.

Background

Emily Daly and Emma Boettcher conducted usability testing on the W. Duke & Sons Digital Collection in the Perkins lobby on October 7, 2015 from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. A pilot was conducted with a graduate student the previous day. The test consisted of a short set of background questions, five tasks, and two post-test questions. The test lasted approximately 5-7 minutes. See Appendix for usability test script.

Questions we hoped to answer through the test included the following:
- How do users search or browse for items from the collection homepage?
- How do users employ facets while searching or browsing for items?
- How do users navigate within and zoom in on items?
- How do users get back to the homepage using links on the collection page?
- How do users download items from the collection?
- How do users try to request items for use in real life?
- What do users like most about the site?
- What do users dislike most about the site?

Participants

Eight individuals completed the test; the test was piloted by an additional graduate student in engineering management. Participants included one staff member (13%), four undergraduate students (50%) and three graduate students (37%). They represented the following departments: public policy, computer science, statistical science, economics, and biology. Two students (25%) were undeclared.

Key findings

How do users search or browse for items from the collection homepage? How do users employ facets while searching or browsing for items?

Participants were asked to select an album of trading cards that used to be sold in packs of cigarettes.

- Four participants (50%) used search to find an album.
    - One participant (13%) only got one result and returned to the homepage to browse.
    - One participant (13%) used the facets on the results page to narrow his results to "album."
- Three participants (37%) selected "cigarette cards" from the left sidebar on the homepage, then narrowed their results using "albums."
    - One participant (13%) looked at the facets on the results page without using "albums," but eventually used "albums" to narrow the results.
- Three participants (37%) selected an item that was highlighted on the homepage.
    - Two participants (13%) selected a card and tried to see if it was connected to a scrapbook.
    - One participant (13%) was able to use information about the materials on the homepage to decide if the item was an album before clicking through.

How do users navigate within and zoom in on items?
Participants were asked to navigate to a page with some text on it and zoom in on the page until they could read the text.

- Three participants (37%) used the top navigation to move through the album.
- Three participants (37%) used the sidebar to move through the album.
- One participant (13%) tried to use the keyboard arrow keys to navigate through the album.
- One participant (13%) tried to use the item information to tell if there was text in the album.
- Five participants (63%) used the + sign in the top navigation to zoom in on the text.
- Three participants (37%) used the trackpad to zoom in on the text.

How do users get back to the homepage using links on the collection page?
Participants were asked to return to the collection's homepage without using the browser's back button.

- Three participants (37%) used the link to the collection to the left of the album.
- Three participants (25%) used the Back to Search link.

- One participant (13%) used the link to the collection on the search results page.
- One participant (13%) used the Start Over link on the search results page.
- One participant (13%) clicked on the Rubenstein link, then returned to the search results page, then selected Start Over.
- One participant (13%) selected the Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Collection, then, when back on the item page, clicked on the More Duke Digital Collections link, and was not able to get back to the W. Duke & Sons collection page.
- One participant (13%) selected the Digital Repository logo at the top of the page and after clicking on the various collections and was not able to get back to the W. Duke & Sons collection page.

Two participants (25%) said they would use the back button if not instructed to find an alternative route.

How do users download items from the collection?
- Four participants (50%) right-clicked an image and selected "Save image as…" to download the item.
    - One participant (13%) discovered the Download button later in the tasks.
- Four participants (50%) used the download button to download the image.
    - Two participants (25%) stated that they were going to right-click and "Save image as…" but discovered the Download button and used that option instead.

How do users try to request items for use in real life?
- Five participants (63%) looked at Item Information for information on how to request the item.
    - One participant (13%) thought the Series information would help them physically locate the item.
    - One participant (13%) thought the Collection number would help them physically locate the item.
- Five participants (63%) would contact the library or a librarian for more information.
    - Two participants (25%) would use the links under Contact to talk to someone for more information.
- Five participants (63%) were able to determine that the item was part of the Rubenstein collection.
- Three participants (37%) clicked on the Guide to the Collection for information on how to request the item.
    - One participant (13%) would use the "Request for on-site use" button to request the item.
    - Two participants (25%) did not find the "Request for on-site use" button and either kept searching for more information or gave up.

- Two participants (25%) would search the library's main catalog to find the item.
  - One participant (13%) tried doing so but was unsuccessful.

What do users like most about the site?
In a post-test interview, users were asked what two things they liked most about the site. Most commented on visual aspects of the site.
- Six participants (75%) commented on the picture viewer and the ability to zoom and see the sidebar after hovering over it.
- Two participants (25%) commented on the thumbnails and being able to see what an image looked like on the search results page and homepage without clicking through.
- Two participants (25%) commented on the layout and interface generally, saying that they liked it or that it was good design.
- Two participants (25%) commented that they liked the homepage, particularly the fact that the images changed and that it presented an overview of the collection.

What do users dislike most about the site?
- Three participants (37%) commented that they couldn't figure out how to find the physical item from Rubenstein Library.
  - One participant (13%) wanted information about finding the physical item, even if it was just contact information, on the Item Info section.
- Three participants (37%) commented that the layout and navigation were unclear or unnecessarily complicated.
  - One participant (13%) was used to seeing nested trees of menus and had a hard time figuring out where things were.
  - One participant (13%) commented that he thought library websites were "pretty clunky" because they had too many links, and noticed this especially on the Collection Guide.
  - One participant (13%) commented that the scale on the page was too high and he had to scroll down too much.
- Two participants (25%) made three comments about the wording of the site.
  - One participant (13%) thought "Start Over" on the search results page was vague.
  - One participant (13%) thought the wording for "Source Collection" was too similar to "Collection."
  - The participant who found and would use the request button (13%) thought it was unclear, and thought "Download" would be clearer, so she may not have understood what "on-site use" meant at all.
- One participant (13%) wanted a faster way to get back to the original size of an image he had zoomed in or out on, but figured out that he could click on the thumbnail in the sidebar to restore it to the original size.

- One participant (13%) commented that he wasn't sure about how to search for a specific document or item in the collection, and thought it would be helpful to have a table of contents or some guidelines on searching.

Appendix: Digital Collections usability test script

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

We are trying to understand more fully how students, faculty and staff interact with a website for finding and using library materials that have been digitized. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers and that we're testing a tool – not you.

Okay, first some general questions:

Are you an undergrad, grad student, faculty member, staff member, or visitor to Duke?

a.   If you are an undergrad, what year are you?

b.   For undergrads: What is your major? For grads, faculty, staff: What department are you in?

Now I'd like for you to complete five short tasks using the W. Duke & Sons Digital Collection, which includes all kinds of advertising materials and collectibles from tobacco companies (point to https://repository-pre.lib.duke.edu/dc/wdukesons). It would be really helpful if you would share your thoughts and observations as you are completing the tasks, so try to think aloud as much as you can. Like I said, there are no right or wrong answers.

TASK ONE

This collection includes trading cards that used to be sold in packs of cigarettes. You're interested in viewing an album of these cards. From this page, https://repository-pre.lib.duke.edu/dc/wdukesons, find the albums of cards, and select one.

TASK TWO

Now, find a page in the album that has some text on it, and zoom in so you can read it easily.

TASK THREE

You would now like to go back to the homepage for the W. Duke & Sons collection. Show me how you would get to the homepage without using the back button.

TASK FOUR

Now, find an item on this page that looks interesting. You'd like to save it to your computer to look at later. Show me how you would do that.

<u>TASK FIVE</u>

You'd like to see the actual item you've just saved. Where is it physically located? Show me how you would request this item so you can see it in "real life."

Okay, that concludes our tasks. I have a couple of questions I'd like to ask you about your experience – feel free to leave this page open if you like.

POST-TEST INTERVIEW

1)   What two things about this site did you like best?

2)   What two things about this site did you like least?