Usability Test: Rubenstein Library Navigation

Recommendations

Navigation

1. Make the primary Rubenstein Library navigation more visible to users instead of embedding it in a banner image. Visually indicate that the navigation is specific to Rubenstein Library rather than DUL as a whole. Making the menu items visually distinguishable as well as indicating that the menu is specific to Rubenstein Library pages may increase the amount of interaction with this navigation menu.

2. Maintain consistent navigation across all sub-pages within the Rubenstein Library website. Inconsistent navigation causes confusion and sometimes leads users to unintentionally interact with the main DUL website navigation and get lost.

3. Further test category names and organization of the primary navigation menu to determine if reorganization would be beneficial.

General

1. Include library hours on additional pages besides the Rubenstein Library home page. Appropriate locations may include a page in the “About Us” section, the “Visit” page, or the “Using the Reading Room” page.

2. On the Rubenstein home page, visually indicate that the listed upcoming library hours are Rubenstein Library hours. Add a header above the listed hours identifying the hours as library hours, or reorder the content so the hours appear above the “Log In” and “Ask Us” buttons.

3. More explicitly display information about using the Rubenstein Reading Room in order to access materials for research. Participants were unsure how to access materials from Rubenstein’s collections.

4. Reduce the amount of content on the Rubenstein Library home page. Though visually appealing, participants found the content to be overwhelming when trying to complete tasks.

Background

This study was conducted to evaluate the ways in which library patrons interacted with the Rubenstein Library website navigation. The study was developed and conducted by Natalie Castellano with Thomas

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Crichlow taking notes, and it took place in the lobby outside of the entrance to The Perk on April 11, 2018.

Questions we hoped to answer through this study:

1. Are users able to successfully use the primary navigation on the Rubenstein Library home page?
2. How do users typically navigate to additional content once on a Rubenstein Library sub-page?
3. How do users interact with the newly implemented breadcrumb dropdown navigation menu?
4. Are users able to successfully find information about visiting Rubenstein Library?
5. Are users able to successfully find information that is only listed on the home page (e.g., hours)?

Participants
Seven participants were recruited for this study from the lobby of Perkins Library outside of the entrance to The Perk. Four were undergraduate students, two were graduate students, and one was a staff member. Participants had varying levels of familiarity with the Rubenstein Library website.

Key findings
1. Are users able to successfully use the primary navigation on the Rubenstein Library home page?
   i. Less than 1/3 of participants successfully found information using the Rubenstein Library primary navigation. One participant gave up when trying to use the primary Rubenstein navigation, saying they had “no idea how to find [the information]” using the navigation menu. One participant said that the categories “were not clear where to go.”
   ii. Three out of seven participants unintentionally used the main DUL navigation instead of Rubenstein navigation during tasks as the difference between the two was not clear.
   iii. Over half of all participants (4/7) commented that the Rubenstein Library home page felt too cluttered, busy, and “had a lot of things going on.” This may have provided a distraction from the main Rubenstein navigation bar when they were attempting to find information. Additionally, one participant commented that they thought the Rubenstein navigation menu was an image rather than an interactive area with menus and another expressed confusion about whether the navigation was specific to Rubenstein.
2. How do users typically navigate to additional content once on a Rubenstein Library sub-page?
   i. Almost all participants navigated using the browser’s back button instead of utilizing navigation menus. This may have been due to a lack of consistent menu options across pages on the Rubenstein Library website.
ii. When on a page with a vertical sidebar navigation menu, such as a page about a particular collection, 80% of participants followed links presented in the sidebar to find information.

3. How do users interact with the newly implemented breadcrumb dropdown navigation menu?
   i. Only one out of seven participants clicked the Rubenstein Library breadcrumb to navigate back to the Rubenstein home page.
   ii. Only one out of seven participants expanded the Rubenstein Library breadcrumb dropdown navigation menu.

4. Are users able to successfully find information about visiting Rubenstein Library?
   i. When planning a visit to Rubenstein Library to use the Reading Room, four out of seven participants expected Rubenstein Library hours to be listed in additional locations besides on the home page. Expected locations included on the “About Us” page, “Visit” page, or on the “Using the Reading Room” page.
   ii. No participants navigated to the “Visit” page when planning a trip to use the Rubenstein Library Reading Room.

5. Are users able to successfully find information that is only listed on the home page (e.g., hours)?
   i. All participants successfully found the hours on the home page.
   ii. Two out of seven participants were not confident that the hours as listed were accurate and wanted further confirmation. It was unclear if the hours were for all facilities within Rubenstein Library as well as if the hours listed were hours in which the “Ask Us” feature was available.
   iii. Over half of participants (4/7) provided positive comments about the ease of finding the hours on the home page.

Appendix A: Rubenstein Navigation 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 the Rubenstein Library website. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers and that we’re testing a tool – not you.

Pre-Test Questionnaire

First, a few general questions:
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June 20, 2018

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?

c) For grads, faculty, staff: What department are you in?

Have you ever used the Rubenstein Library website?

a) If so, what did you use it for?

Now I’d like for you to complete three short tasks using the Rubenstein Library website. It would be really helpful if you can 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 1**

First, imagine that you want to conduct research using Rubenstein Library’s resources in one of their collections. Please visit a page dedicated to a collection of interest from this section (point). Now, tell me how you would access any materials in this collection. What must you do in order to see the item(s) in person?

**TASK 2**

Next, find out how to use the Rubenstein Library Reading Room. Please tell me what items you are allowed to bring into the reading room.

**TASK 3**

Now, find information about what time you can visit Rubenstein on Friday to access these materials.

**Post-Test Questions**

Thank you, that concludes our tasks. I have a few questions I’d like to ask you about your experience – feel free to leave this page open.

1. What did you like best about using the Rubenstein Library website?

2. What did you like least about using the Rubenstein Library website?

3. Was there anything that was particularly easy or difficult to find?
4. The library recently implemented new navigation menus for the Rubenstein website. What are your thoughts on this navigation? Feel free to explore the menus.

5. When you are typically searching for information on a website, do you prefer using menus or a search? Why?

6. Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your experience using the website?