

# Usability Test Report: Online Journal Titles, Research Databases and Masthead search

## Summary

Emily Daly and Ian Sloat conducted usability testing on searching for online journal titles, research databases and an informational webpage in the Duke University Libraries website. The test was conducted at the temporary main entrance of Perkins library on October 29, 2014 from 1:00pm-2:45pm. A pilot test was conducted October 28. The test consisted of background questions, three tasks and six post-test questions and lasted approximately 10 minutes. See the appendix for the test script.

## Participants

Eight individuals (excluding our pilot participant) completed this test. Participants included four graduate students, three undergraduate students and one staff member representing the following departments: Art History, Public Policy, Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Global Health, Computer Science. One undergraduate has not yet joined a department.

## Key Findings

1. For the most part, participants did not appear to notice or otherwise choose to browse the subject list on the Research Database page.
2. Participants struggled to complete Task Two and appeared to find it difficult to navigate the Online Journal Titles results interface. One of eight participants (nine, including our pilot) successfully completed Task Two.
3. Many participants stated that they did not notice or “had never noticed” the eBooks, Online Journal Titles, Research Databases and More links in the Search Resources box on the Libraries homepage.
4. When searching in the masthead, participants stated that they liked using both the Bento results interface and a Google CSE results interface we employed prior to August 2014.
5. Some participants had difficulty locating the ‘RefWorks at Duke’ link in the Bento results interface; all participants successfully located the ‘RefWorks at Duke’ link in the Google CSE results interface.
6. There was no consensus among participants on what they expected from a masthead search from either the homepage or an internal page. Numbers were almost evenly split among expecting the masthead search to result in an All (Bento) search, expecting the masthead search to result in a site search (e.g. hours, FAQ, staff) and not knowing what they’d expect from the search.
7. Participants’ reactions to the Bento-style results interface were mixed: Some expressed that they like the categories of items; others find the results page confusing and believe it is harder to find items.

## Recommendations to Consider

1. Make the supplemental links (e.g. Online Journal Titles, Research Databases) in the Search Resources box on the Libraries homepage more prominent so people are more likely to notice and use these options.
2. Expand the options in the 'Browse by Subject' section on the 'Research Databases' page. Some participants struggled to find subjects in the current categories listings (e.g. one tester could not find 'Computer Science' because it is listed with Engineering even though it is not part of that department at Duke. Consider including guides in multiple categories (e.g. place the Advertising guide in both the 'Business' and 'Social Sciences' categories).
3. Clarify the functionality of the Research Databases search page to address that some participants believed they were searching the content of all Research Databases from this interface.
4. Add a link to 'Research Databases' to the 'Research Support' menu.
5. Add more drop-down options (e.g. Subject), or rephrase the current options on the Online Journal Titles portal page and results page, <http://getitatduke.library.duke.edu/>. Users appeared to have difficulty understanding the meaning or functionality of options like 'Title contains all words.' Similarly, 'Title equals' seems outdated.
6. Reorder the options for each resource result from <http://getitatduke.library.duke.edu/> so that database/resource options are arranged in chronological order by date coverage.
7. Recommend a redesign of <http://getitatduke.library.duke.edu/> to make the search results interface more usable.
8. Highlight the website category of materials in the All search results page. Participants tended to look to 'Articles' and 'Books & Media,' but often ignored the third column featuring results from 'Our Website,' 'Research Guides,' 'Images' and 'Other Resources.'
9. Add a 'Best Bets' section to the All Search similar to that on the NC State Libraries website. This will help people who do not know which section of the All search results to focus on.

## Results

### Task One:

Part A – Use the library homepage to find an article database or search engine that you can use to find articles for your research.

No. participants	
2	Used the 'Research Databases' link to look for a specific database
1	Used the All search to search for a subject within their field. Went to 'See all' to see everything available.
1	Used 'Books & Media' search and searched for JSTOR
1	Tried to use the Research Support menu and could not find a link to Research Databases. Went to the Search & Find menu and clicked 'Research Databases' and then found the LibGuide for his field. Said he would use one of the recommended databases in the lib guide.

1	Used the 'Article' search to look for articles on topic
1	When looking for Research Databases, says he Googles 'WorldCat' and then searches for resources there
1	When looking for Research Databases, says she goes directly to JSTOR or Google Scholar

Part B – Use the <http://library.duke.edu/find/databases> page to find the top databases in your subject area.

No. Participants	
3	Browsed 'Databases by subject' to find a LibGuide.
2	Would search for the database they always use, just from this page instead of the home page.
1	Attempted to search her topic – Cuban Embargo; after getting no results, searched for JSTOR
1	Changed the search dropdown to Subject and searched for 'Biomedical Research'
1	Had never used the Research Databases page (did not complete this task)

Task Two:

Part A – Use the library homepage to see if we have *The Journal of Higher Education* available

No. Participants	
5	Did an 'All Search' and clicked on the first result in the 'articles' section [NOTE to Jacquie: this link leads users to Personnel Journal rather than The Journal of Higher Education]
1	Used the 'Books & Media' search and located online access
1	Went to 'Search and Find' and then to 'Research Databases.' Tried to search for it there and could not find it.
1	Used the 'Online Journal Titles' link on the homepage but could not locate the journal title. Tried to use Search & Find and look for articles.

Part B – For what years do we have it available online?

No. participants	
6	Could not find it
1	Found that we have it as far back as 1982 (incorrect answer)
1	N/A

Part C – Use the <http://library.duke.edu/find/journal-titles> page to determine if we have *The Journal of Higher Education* online

No. Participants	
3	Tried to search for it and could not find it

3	Tried to click on J to find it, did not work, went back to try to search for it.
1	Used the search bar from this page and found it
1	Did not complete task

Part D – For what dates do we have it online?

No. Participants	
5	Could not find the journal
1	From 1930 to present. The way the results were shown for the Journal of Higher Education was weird, not alphabetical, but also not chronological. There seemed to be no order in how the different databases that offer the Journal of Higher Ed were listed. (Only correct answer!)
1	1930 to 2012
1	Did not complete the task

### Task Three:

Part A- Show me how you'd locate information about RefWorks using the library website.

No. participants	
2	Did a masthead search and found it in the 'Our Website' section of the Bento results interface
2	Did a masthead search and quickly found it in the Google CSE results interface
2	Went to 'Research Support' menu, then went to 'Citing sources' and clicked on 'Citation management tools' to find it
1	Looked in 'Search and find' and went to 'Theses or dissertations,' then did an All search and clicked on Articles but realized that wasn't right. Went to 'Research Guides' in the All search and found a LibGuide on the Medical Library page.
1	Clicked on Ask a librarian and said he would use the Chat to find info about RefWorks

### Post Test Interview

- A) Share your thoughts about your experience finding databases in the first task. What would you change to enhance your experience? What would you change to improve this page?
- Does not like the All search; cannot find the databases that they are looking for
  - More categories are needed in the list.
  - Comp Sci at Duke is not part of Pratt, so it should be listed with Science not Engineering.
  - Would like the search bar on the database page to do more. Searched for impressionism and would like to find journals that deal with that.
  - Would like some notes on Boolean searching or other searching tips on the page to help.
  - Natural inclination is to use the All search and then narrow it down, rather than the databases page

- Likes the databases page because it is broken down by subject so you can easily find something applicable.
  - Would now click on Research Databases rather than just doing an All search
  - Books & Media doesn't create different lists, so it is easier to look through. You don't need to think about what list you need to look in to find what you want
- B) Share your thoughts about your experience finding online journals in the second task. What would you change to enhance your experience? What would you change to improve this page, <http://library.duke.edu/find/journal-titles> ?
- 5 people mentioned their struggles and frustration in not being able to find it
    - “Would be nice if showed up from the All search”
    - “Just too many results”
  - 2 people want the search bar to be changed to include more options in the drop-down list.
  - 1 person wanted a popularity rank to help find things.
  - 1 person now thinks it is easier to use ‘Online Journal Titles’ to find a journal
  - 1 person said it's easier to find journals using ‘Books & Media’
- C) From the Libraries homepage, what would you expect to find by using the masthead search?
- 3 people had no idea and would probably never use it
  - 2 people thought it would produce results for all library resources (e.g. articles, books, databases), as well as information about the library
  - 3 people thought it would produce results only for library-related information such as hours and FAQs, rather than books and databases.
- D) From an internal page, what would you expect to find by using the masthead search?
- 4 people think the masthead search from an internal page would be an All search
  - 2 people think it would be results about the library itself – hours, FAQ, etc.
  - 1 person thought it would show results particular to that page or portal
- E) What are your thoughts about seeing this page [Bento results interface or Google CSE results page, depending on the page participants saw in Task Three] from both of the homepage and internal sites instead of the one you used earlier?
- Overall, 6 people had positive things to say about Google results CSE, and 5 people had positive things to say about the Bento results interface. Three people had positive things to say about both interfaces.
  - Positives for Google CSE results interface include the following:
    - Likes this results page because it is easier and similar to Google
    - Nice when looking for specifics
    - Search is good if you know what you are looking for

- Prefers this interface because it eliminates the unimportant stuff for him. If he wanted books and databases he would have done an all search from the homepage, does not want that stuff in the masthead search.
- Likes this interface better because it's more specific and easier to find what you are looking for
- Interface is less overwhelming and more traditional
- Positives for the Bento results interface include the following:
  - Seeing the categories, he likes that way better than Google CSE
  - Interface is good if you are unsure of what you are looking for.
  - Likes this interface because it takes you to everything. If you are searching and need help, it will show you all the possibilities.
  - Prefers this interface; shows everything and the division makes it easier to see what you are looking at
  - Like the categories of this interface
  - Overall, this interface is better because it gives you everything, and you can just find what you are looking for there.

F) Anything else you would like to tell us?

- Not a fan of the new All search; understands that it is nice for undergrads doing a broad search, but a pain when trying to look for specifics.
- The bento style results help structure the results

#### Appendix: DUL usability test script – Masthead Search, etc

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

We are trying to make improvements to the Duke Libraries homepage, and we'd like your input.

I will be asking you to complete 3 tasks using the Duke Libraries website. 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?

- a. If you are an undergrad, what year are you?
  - b. If you are an undergrad, what is your major?
  - c. If you are a grad student or faculty or staff member, what department are you in?
2. Have you ever used the Duke Libraries website to search for books, articles or other materials to support your research?
- a. If yes, would you say you search for materials from Duke Libraries every day, every week, every month, once a semester, or less often?

3. Have you used the Duke Libraries ALL search this fall?

Now I'd like you to complete a few tasks. 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: Think of a topic you're currently thinking about or researching for a class, project or personal interest.

- a. Use the library homepage to find an article database or search engine that you can use to find articles for your research [provide more context for "database," as needed].  
*If user doesn't get to <http://library.duke.edu/find/databases/> on his own, direct him there now.*
- b. Now you need to find the top databases in the subject area you're writing your paper about. Use this page, <http://library.duke.edu/find/databases/>, to find databases in this subject area.

TASK TWO: You'd like to see if Duke Libraries has online access to the *Journal of Higher Education*.

- a. Use the library homepage to determine whether or not we have this journal available online.
- b. For what dates do we have this title available online?

*If user doesn't get to <http://library.duke.edu/find/journal-titles> on her own, direct her there now.*

- c. Use this page to determine whether or not we have this title online.
- d. For what dates do we have it online?

TASK THREE: You've heard that Duke Libraries subscribes to RefWorks, and you'd like to learn more about how to use RefWorks.

- a. Show me how you'd locate information about RefWorks using the library website [guide half of our testers to dev.library.duke.edu and half to library.duke.edu]

Okay, that concludes our tasks. I have a few questions I'd like to ask you about your experience using the Libraries homepage.

POST-TEST INTERVIEW

- a. Share your thoughts about your experience finding databases in the first task. What would you change to enhance your experience? What would you change to improve this page, <http://library.duke.edu/find/databases/>?
- b. Share your thoughts about your experience finding online journals in the second task. What would you change to enhance your experience? What would you change to improve this page, <http://library.duke.edu/find/journal-titles/>?
- c. From the Libraries homepage, what would you expect to find by using this search box [point to masthead search]?
- d. From an internal page, what would you expect to find by using this box [point to masthead search from any internal page]?
- e. What are your thoughts about the possibility of seeing this results interface,

<http://library.duke.edu/find/all?Ntt=refworks> [OR <http://dev.library.duke.edu/search-results?q=ref+works>], from masthead searches both on the homepage and other webpages in the Libraries site?

- f. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience using the Duke Libraries homepage or any of the pages we used today?