

Usability Testing Report:

Accessing online articles

Summary

On June 23, 2015, Emily Daly and Hollie White conducted usability testing in the lobby of Perkins Library. We interviewed six participants between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. The test piloted and modified a week prior with a DUL student assistant. The test consisted of three pre-test questions, three tasks, and five post-test questions; each participant completed all pre-test and post-test questions and two of the three tasks (i.e. Task One and either Task Two-A or Task Two-B). Each test took approximately ten minutes. See Appendix for full usability test script.

In this test, all six participants were asked to consider a topic of interest and demonstrate how they find online articles to support their research using the web browser and research tool of their choice. We then asked three participants to show how they would locate a known article from the Link 2.0 'We don't have access to this online' interface (see <http://bit.ly/1FkNDPZ>) and three participants to show how they would locate a different known article from the Link 2.0 sidebar (see <http://bit.ly/1wNODgA>). These tasks were followed with questions related to participants' experiences and recommendations for improvements accessing online articles.

Participants

The six participants who completed this test included two sophomores, two graduate students, one staff member and Duke alumni (PhD student, class of 2009), and one DUMC first-year resident and represented the following departments: environmental science, Kenan Institute of Ethics, liberal studies, and psychiatry; the two sophomores have not yet joined departments.

Five of the six participants (83%) were familiar with 'get it Duke' or 'Find at Duke' links and said they use these buttons or links "all the time" when doing online research. Of these five, three (60%) conduct the majority of their research on campus; the two participants who conduct the majority of

their research off campus used an off-campus simulator to complete this test. One participant had never used the DUL homepage or associated interfaces.

Key Findings

1. Participants began their searches for articles on their chosen topics from the DUL homepage (2 participants), Google Scholar (2 participants), or Google (1 participant). One participant (16%) who started at the DUL homepage said she has used course guides created by librarians to conduct online research “almost primarily.” One participant (16%) opened both Google Scholar and the DUL homepage simultaneously, saying that he likes to “flip back and forth between them.” Three users (50%) said they like to supplement their initial Google or Google Scholar searches by searching for full text or accessing specific journals through the DUL website or by searching Web of Science, which she has bookmarked on her computer.
2. Participants had a range of expectations for the ‘Problems getting this? We can help!’ or ‘Report a problem’ link, available in the ‘We don’t have this online’ interface and sidebar: Two participants (33%) expected a way to chat with a librarian; two participants (33%) expected a short form (one of these users said “form or ILL”); one expected an FAQ (and then said, “but the form is nicer”); and one expected a way to email a librarian.
3. No participants had used the ‘Problems getting this? We can help!’ or ‘Report a problem’ link before this test. When asked to click the link, three participants (50%) think the form is “nice” or “useful,” while three say the form is not helpful at this point, as they are interested in accessing the full text of the article as quickly as possible.
4. When asked if this test session had been similar to what researchers typically experience on their own, all six participants said that the test session was fairly similar.
5. Four of six participants (67%) said they are successful accessing full text of articles they believe should be available at Duke 90-95% of the time. One (16%) said he is successful accessing full text 80% of the time. [Note that one participant had not used DUL interfaces before this test, so we did not include her response.]
6. Participants described numerous approaches when asked what they do when they are unable to find the full text of articles: Three participants (50%) “give up” and try to find another article; other participants said they contact librarians for help, look for online resources in print, request articles through ILL, or use Google or PubMed to try to access online full text.

Key Findings: Task Two-A, 'We don't have this online' interface

1. One of three participants (33%) said she had never seen or used this interface.
2. Two of three participants (67%) clicked one of the green 'Request' buttons to gain access to the article; one participant (33%) searched for the title using the masthead search.
3. Two of the three participants (67%) paused to consider whether they are 'Medical Center' users or 'University' users when exploring the green 'Request' buttons.

Key Findings: Task Two-B, Link 2.0 sidebar

1. Two of the three participants (67%) who completed Task Two-B (Link 2.0 sidebar) searched for the known article title they had been asked to locate through the 'All search' on the DUL homepage or through Google Scholar; both were successful in finding PDFs of the article.
2. One of the three participants (33%) who completed Task Two-B (Link 2.0 sidebar) said he would use the dropdown menu to locate the full text of the article if he was unable to locate it on his own [Note: Participant didn't actually engage with the dropdown without being prompted].
3. When asked to describe the functions available from the sidebar, participants noticed they could search the catalog to see if article is available in print (one participant mentions that he would not do this), request articles through Interlibrary Loan, and contact a librarian for additional help.
4. When asked to explore the sidebar, one participant (33%) tried using the dropdown menu and was impressed with its functionality, although she would like to be able to determine directly from the dropdown menu exactly where the article she is looking for is available as a PDF. Another participant said she would never use the drop-down menu but instead request it through Interlibrary Loan.

Key Recommendations

1. Provide a way for users to chat with a librarian directly from the Link 2.0 sidebar. Options include the following:
 - a. Add an icon that is linked to the Libraries' online chat service
 - b. Link 'Report a problem' directly to a chat widget, and change the link text to 'Report a problem (live chat)'
 - c. Link 'Report a problem' in the Link 2.0 sidebar to a modification of <http://library.duke.edu/research/ask> that includes an embedded version of the Qualtrics

- form we currently display alongside options to chat with or email a librarian, and change the link text to 'Report a problem (live chat)'
2. Design the sidebar to make it more prominent and less "seamless" so users are more inclined to see and interact with it.
 3. Integrate the Medical Center's ILL service with the University's ILL service so users don't have to determine which button or link to click in order to request items.
 4. Place the 'Problems getting this? We can help!' link inside the 'We don't have this online interface' box so users are more inclined to see it.
 5. Make more obvious that 'Have you checked the catalog for this book or journal in print?' and 'Problems getting this? We can help!' are links. Indicate through numbers or bullets that they are steps in a process of accessing the desired item.

Appendix: DUL usability test script, Accessing online articles

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

We are trying to understand more fully how students, staff and faculty access online articles and journals, so I will be asking you to complete a few tasks involving finding articles online. 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. For undergrads: What is your major? For grads, faculty, staff: What department are you in?
2. Have you ever seen the "get it@Duke" button or "Find at Duke" link when looking for online articles, journals or books?
 - a. If yes, have you ever clicked on it?
 - b. If yes, would you say that you use this button or link every day, every week, every month, or less often?

3. Do you do most of your online research on campus or off campus?
 - a. If you conduct online research off campus, approximately what percentage would you say is off campus (e.g. 50% off campus)?

[If participant reports conducting most research off campus, direct him or her to off-campus simulator for tasks 1 and 2; otherwise, have participant use standard browser.]

Now I'd like for you to complete three short tasks related to getting online articles. 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

Consider a topic you're currently researching, and show me how you'd find articles or other sources to support your research. Feel free to use whatever websites or search tools you'd use on your own computer. *[Observe participants as they go through their typical process or steps to find online articles; ask questions, as appropriate.]*

Have three participants complete Task Two-A and three participants complete Task Two-B

TASK TWO-A

Your professor has suggested that you read the article, "Teachers' perspectives on the third grade retention policy at the primary grade level." You've located the article online, but when you click the 'get it at Duke' button, you see this page, <http://bit.ly/1FkNDPZ>.

- a. Show me what you would do to get this article if you were taken to this page.
- b. What would you expect to have happen if you click "Problems getting this? We can help!"
- c. Have you seen this page before?
- d. If yes, what did you do the last time you saw it?

TASK TWO-B

Your professor has suggested that you read the article, "Evaluating Community Readiness to Implement Environmental and Policy-Based Alcohol Abuse Prevention Strategies in Wisconsin." You've located the article online, but when you click the 'get it at Duke' button, you see this page, <http://bit.ly/1wNODgA>.

- a. You'd like to read this article online. Show me how you would do that.

- b. What else can you do from this screen? [*Observe whether they notice they can report a problem with the article, find the article from another source or request a copy through ILL*]
- c. What would you expect to have happen if you click “Report problems to a librarian”?
- d. Have you seen this sidebar before?
- e. If yes, what did you do the last time you saw it?

Okay, 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.

POST-TEST INTERVIEW

1. Was your experience today similar to what you typically experience when conducting research online?
 1. If today’s experience was different, what made it different?
2. When conducting online research, what percentage of the time are you *successful* getting to the full text of articles that you believe *should be available* for you to view online (e.g. 50% of the time)?
3. What did you do the last time you were *unable* to access an article that you believe you should have been able to access online?
4. If you could improve or change your experience getting full-text articles online, what would you improve or change?
5. Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your experience getting online articles?