

Usability Test: Duke Digital Repository, Part 1

Recommendations

1. Participants generally completed all three tasks with little to no difficulty. Though a few participants noticed discrepancies across page formats and expressed some confusion this and also about DDR terms (see point 2) when prompted for feedback, this did not affect their ability to understand the difference between fully available versus metadata only resources, request access, or download materials.
2. The terms “acquired materials” versus “digital collections” were not intuitive to most participants. Additionally, one participant noticed an inconsistency in terms across different pages (“digital collections” and “digitized collections” are used interchangeably). Consistently using less confusing terms like: “digitized collections” vs “born-digital materials” may be helpful. Alternatively, the library could consider merging these two collections and including a metadata tag about the method of acquisition. Participants expressed that it is not intuitive that the resources are organized according to how Duke acquired them, since this is not usually of primary interest to them when they are conducting a search
3. When moving from the unconfigured to configured views, participants were initially confused by the lack of download buttons on the bottom of the page, but all were eventually able to find the download link at the top of the page.
4. Participants liked collection item pages that provide a preview of the item before downloading.

Background

This is part one out of two usability tests of the Duke Digital Repositories (DDR). Both parts were designed to answer stakeholder questions about the usability of specific DDR functions. All test sessions were conducted remotely via Zoom by Audrey Siqi-Liu. Part one included basic tasks like downloading and requesting access. Participants were recruited from a list of students who volunteered to be contacted about library user studies and were not prescreened for previous DDR experience.

Part two involved using more advanced DDR functionalities, such as finding aids and catalogues, and participants were prescreened for prior experience with the DDR.

Questions we hoped to answer through this study

1. Do users understand the differences between resources that are metadata only versus resources that are fully available to the public?
2. Do users know how to use the contact form to request access to metadata only resources?
3. Can user download items across different interfaces (DC, non-DC admin sets)

Participants

Affiliation

2 graduate students

3 undergraduate students

Prior Experience with DDR webpages

2 participants with no prior exposure to DDR (never seen DDR pages before)

2 participants report only knowing about the Rubenstein Library digital repositories

1 participant has downloaded or accessed an item from the DDR online

Prior Experience with Finding Aids (at Duke OR other institutions)

1/5 participants has used the finding aid at Duke Library before

Prior Experience with physical collections (rare materials)

1 participant has used the Rubenstein Reading Room

2 participants know about the Rubenstein Reading Room

2 participants did not know about the Rubenstein Reading Room

Key findings

1. Do users understand the differences between resources that are metadata only versus resources that are fully available to the public?

All participants could immediately identify that the metadata only item was not available for download based on the “This file is not publicly available” flag at the top of the page. This was the first difference between the [fully available resource](#) and the [metadata only resource](#) tested that the participants identified in response to the question “Is there anything that stands out to you about this item that is different from the previous one?”

All participants were able to easily find and recount metadata attributes of both objects such as year, author, topic, format, copyright, etc.

2. Do users know how to use the contact form to request access to metadata only resources?

Yes, all participants found the request access form. Two participants were not sure what kind of access they would receive in response to the request – for example, would the form lead to scheduling an in-person appointment to view the physical object, or are they requesting a digitized copy?

3. Can users download items across different interfaces?

Yes, all participants were able to find the download links for all three item types eventually. Four of the five participants found the [configured DC image item](#) confusing because there were no download links at the bottom of the page. These salient green buttons were present for both the [unconfigured DC image item](#) and the [fully available resource](#), which they interacted with first. It is likely that they would not have found this confusing if they saw the configured DC image item first.

Three of the five participants mentioned that they wished there was a preview of the [DC pdf item](#) so that they could know what the item is without first downloading it.

4. Final comments

Two participants said that they found the study interesting and they would look into the repository items more now that they know more about them.

Appendix A: Duke Digital Repositories Pt.1 test script

My name is **[name]** and I will be walking you through our task today. I will mostly be reading from a script to ensure each testing session is as consistent as possible.

We're testing the usability of the Duke Digital Repositories and would like to hear your feedback.

We only have a few general questions to ask and **2 tasks**, it should only take around **[30]** minutes. Don't worry about going too fast or too slow. There are no right or wrong actions here because we're testing the website, not you. This is less about finding the correct information and more about the process in which you search. Feel free to provide opinions and feedback; it won't hurt our feelings.

Do you have any questions so far?

We would like to record each of your sessions to allow us and other library staff members who are not here today to debrief later and benefit from your sessions. If you are willing to let us have the recordings, here is the consent form and pre-test questionnaire, please read and sign it.

[Share Qualtrics Survey: https://duke.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0k3tVWmuOLGXjPE]

Now, let's begin our test. As you answer questions or complete tasks please tell us what you're thinking so that we can get an idea of your thought process.

[Start screen recording; Share: <https://repository.duke.edu/>]

We would like to get your general impressions on the Duke Digital Repository home page, which I have shared with you in the chat.

Based on this page and your prior knowledge, what are examples of some things you would expect to find in the Digital Repository?

What is your understanding of what the digitized collections and acquired materials are?

Task 1 – Full Access Items vs. Meta-Data Only

Now we would like you to compare different items that are part of Duke's Digital collections. I will share the link for the first one now.

[Share link for fully available item: [San Francisco / William Gedney Photographs and Writings / Duke Digital Repository](#)]

Based on the information on the page, what can you tell me about this item?

Example Follow-up questions [probe understanding of meta-data]:

Who is the creator of this item?

[make sure to ask] Which collection is this item a part of?

What is not as clear or confusing? What do you think it should be?

Is this item available to you for download?

[If participant cannot find download button] Could you try looking underneath the item title?

[Record response]

Now, I will share the link for the second digital collection item.

[Share link for metadata only item: [Information Digest \(John Rees\), 1982](#)]

Is there anything that stands out to you about this item that is different from the previous one?

Based on the information on the page, what can you tell me about this item?

Example Follow-up questions [probe understanding of meta-data]:

Who is the creator of this item?

Which collection is this item a part of?

What is not as clear or confusing?

[If they mention something that they're unsure about] What do you think it should be?

Is this item available to you for download?

If it is not available, could you show me how you might request access to it?

[Record response]

Task 2 – Downloading Items via different interfaces

In this second task, we would like to see if you can easily download repository items across different collection interfaces. I will share **four** links in total.

[Share link for RL item: [Travel Writing in the Time of Pandemic](#)]

Here is the first item. Based on the information on screen, what can you tell me about the collection that this item is a part of?

Please try to download the collection item.

Follow-up questions:

What is not as clear or confusing? What do you think it should be? What could make it clearer?

[Record response]

[Share link for DC Image item (unconfigured): [Durham Aerial Imagery \(USDA\) - 1966](#)]

Here is the second item. Based on the information on screen, what can you tell me about the collection that this item is a part of?

Please try to download the collection item.

Follow-up questions:

What is not as clear or confusing? What do you think it should be? What could make it clearer?

[Record response]

[Share link for DC Image item (configured): [Afro-American Society materials, 1969-1971 / Black Student Alliance records / Duke Digital Repository](#)]

Here is the second item. Based on the information on screen, what can you tell me about the collection that this item is a part of?

Please try to download the collection item.

Follow-up questions:

What is not as clear or confusing? What do you think it should be? What could make it clearer?

[Record response]

[Share link for DC pdf item: [Roger James Papers / Ruby](#)]

Here is the third item. Based on the information on screen, what can you tell me about the collection that this item is a part of?

Please try to download the collection item.

Follow-up questions:

What is not as clear or confusing? What do you think it should be? What could make it clearer?

[Record response]

Ask for final comments or questions.