

Usability Test: *Online Journal Titles*

Recommendations

1. Add helper text or other contextual clues to the search box in the expandable New Search Options section. Users seemed confused about what they were searching for when they used this search box. For example, some users thought they were able to search the full text of articles or by subject or keyword. It needs to be clearer to users what they are able to search.
2. In the New Search Options pulldown, remove the A-Z list of journals. There are too many journals for this feature to be useful. Most letters return thousands of results which is not helpful for users.
3. Add a visual cue to draw users' attention to the New Search Options pulldown link.
4. Consider expanding the "New Search Options" pulldown by default. [Note that 4 out of 7 users were able to successfully find and use "New Search Options," so this may not be necessary; staff have, however, exhibited a preference for making "New Search Options" more prominent.]
5. Rename "New Search Options" to a more conventional phrase like "New Search."
6. Move the "search inside this journal" box higher in the journal information section. In its current position at the bottom of the result, it takes users too long to find it if a journal has many resources and date ranges listed.
7. Add a page header and breadcrumbs to help orient users, particularly when they are returning to the search results page.
8. Remove the unnecessary Home link and the unchangeable language drop down from the top right of the search results page.
9. Add a way to track usage of the search results interface, including use of links and features on the results page.

Background

Emily Daly and Gordon Chadwick conducted a think-aloud usability study with six participants on June 20, 2016 in the Perkins Library at Duke University. Four participants were graduate students while two were undergraduates. We also conducted a pilot test with one graduate student participant on June 15, 2016. No changes were made to the script after this pilot test. The study tested users' perceptions of a new search results page for online journal titles by asking them to complete search related tasks and provide feedback.

Questions we hoped to answer through this study:

1. Can users find information about online journals?
2. Can users find a specific article in an online journal?
3. How do users go about finding a new journal?
4. What do users like about the new results page?
5. What do users dislike about the new results page?

Key findings

1. Can users find information about online journals?

6 out of 7 (86%) users were able to locate the target journal by using the search box. However, 2 of 7 (29%) first tried unsuccessfully to browse using the A-Z list. Finding online availability and dates was typically not an issue for users, though 1 of 7 (14%) failed to select the resource which contained the most recent volume of the target journal.

2. Can users find a specific article in an online journal?

6 out of 7 (86%) of users found the target article in the target journal by searching within the journal's website interface. When prompted to try to find the article from the results page, 6 out of 7 (86%) users were also able to find and use the within journal search box. However, several users took a few moments to find this search box because of its position low on the results page, below the list of holdings.

3. How do users go about finding a new journal?

Despite staff concerns that the New Search Options pull down search box, 4 out of 7 (57%) users noticed and used New Search Options quickly, 2 (29%) were able to find it with some difficulty, and 1 (14%) was not able to find it and returned to the home page. 3 of 7 (43%) users had difficulty searching for a new journal using New Search Options because they tried to search for keywords or subjects instead of journal titles.

4. What do users like about the new results page?

2 out of 7 (29%) users reported liking the way that journal resources and available date ranges were laid out. 2 out of 7 (29%) users reported liking the New Search Options pulldown. Lastly, 2 out of 7 (29%) users liked the ability to search within the journal from the search bar in the results list.

5. What do users dislike about the new results page?

3 out of 7 (43%) users did not like that they did not know what the various search bars were for. 2 out of 7 (29%) users reported that they had trouble finding the New Search Options pulldown. 1 out of 7 (14%) users reported not being sure what page they were on when returning to the search results page after using an online journal.

Appendix A: Usability Test Script

DUL usability test: Online journal titles

&newejp=true

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

In an effort to improve access to online journals, we are testing how well our Online Journal Titles search works.

I will be asking you to complete a couple of tasks involving finding online articles and journals available through Duke Libraries. 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:

- a) 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?

- b) Have you ever used the Online Journal Titles page [point to screen, URL: library.duke.edu/find/journal-titles] to see if we have a journal title available online?

- a. If yes, would you say that you use this page every day, every week, every month, or less often?
- b. If no, have you ever used the library homepage to find articles or journals?
- c. If yes, how frequently would you say use the library homepage to find articles or journals?

Now I'd like for you to complete four short tasks using this interface. 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 ONE

Your professor has encouraged you to read articles from the *Annual Review of Sociology*, and you'd like to see if the library has this journal available online. Use this page to see if Duke subscribes to the *Annual Review of Sociology*.

- a. Do we have this journal available in full text online?
- b. If so, which years of this journal are available online?

TASK TWO

You now want to read the most current volume of the *Annual Review of Sociology*. Show me how you would do that.

TASK THREE

Your professor has asked you read the article "The Sociology of Consumption: Its Recent Development," published in the *Annual Review of Sociology*. Show me how you would find the article, "The Sociology of Consumption." [*Encourage participants to use the Online Journal Titles interface; also fine to have them go elsewhere to see what they would do without prompting.*]

TASK FOUR

You would now like to search for another journal title. From here, show me how you would look up another journal title in any subject area you like.

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. What two things do you like most about this interface?
2. What two things do you like least about this interface?
3. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience using this search page?