Usability Test Report: 'Get it @Duke' Sidebar

Summary

Emily Daly and Ian Sloat conducted usability testing on the functionality of the 'Get it @Duke' sidebar. The test was conducted at the temporary main entrance of Perkins library on June 9, 2014 from 11:30am-1:00pm. A pilot was conducted with an ADS student assistant prior to June 9th testing. The test consisted of background questions, three tasks and six post-test questions and lasted for approximately 10 minutes. The notes taken during testing were lost due to a computer error. See Appendix for test script.

Participants

Nine individuals (excluding our pilot participant) completed this test. Participants included one graduate student, two faculty members, one alumna and five undergraduates representing the following departments: biology, biomedical engineering, English, political science, Program II, bioinformatics and an undecided pre-med field.

Eight of the nine participants said they were familiar with and had used the 'Get it @Duke' button previously, and the ninth recognized it and realized he had used it after we started the test.

Key findings

1. If 'Get it @Duke' did not lead to a full text article right away, every participant said that they would use Google or Google Scholar as their next step in finding the article.

2. Only one participant engaged with the sidebar; everyone else appeared to think it was part of the page loading and ignored the sidebar entirely.

3. One participant said he typically ignores the sides of webpages because they are usually devoted to ads and so did not notice the sidebar.

4. When clicking 'Get it @Duke' led users to the 'We do not have this online' interface, numerous participants clicked the 'Problems getting this item? We can help!' button. Every participant then said they would not fill out this form, because they think it would take too long to get a response and they want the article immediately. Worth noting is that one participant acknowledged that librarians are always very responsive and that his concern with speed is unfounded; regardless, he would opt not to submit a form.

5. Participants said that the sidebar button is hard to see and hard to read because of the size, font and orientation of the text.

6. Participants said it is important that it be obvious that the sidebar can be expanded (or collapsed) and suggested the button label be a stronger call to action or place to go for help (e.g. 'Get help here!').

Recommendations to consider

For more information, please contact emily.daly@duke.edu

1. Clarify the text for the drop-down menu in the side bar, and remove library jargon. Few participants understood clearly the functionality of the drop down menu; others seemed to have a general understanding but seemed confused by the drop down labels and hint text.

2. Use the 'Get it @Duke' logo for the collapsed side bar. Eight of the nine participants expressed a strong preference for using 'Get it @ Duke' as part of the button branding because they recognize it and understand its function.

3. Keep the sidebar expanded, but give users the option of collapsing it if they wish. One participant suggested having the sidebar stay open only when full text is not available; otherwise, he recommended that the sidebar collapse automatically.

4. Make the sidebar button more visible, and use the a font that is easier for researchers to read when oriented sideways. Integrate 'Get it @ Duke' into the sidebar button.

5. Integrate an option to chat with librarians into the sidebar (Note: this was recommended by one participant).

Appendix: Usability Test Script

DUL usability test: "get it@Duke" (w/Helper Bar)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

In an effort to improve access to online articles and books, we are testing the functionality of our "get it@Duke" interface.

I will be asking you to complete a few tasks involving finding online articles, journals and books 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:

1. 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?

2. Have you ever seen the "get it@Duke" button 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 every day, every week, every month, or less often?

Now I'd like for you to complete three short tasks to test the "get it@Duke" interface. 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

You've just discovered the musician Arthur Russell and want to see if we have the book, Hold On to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene, 1973-1992, available online.

a. Use the Duke Libraries homepage to find out if we have this book available online. [Goal is for participants get to this page: http://bit.ly/1dc9wTV]

b. What if this were an error message instead of a page giving you access to the ebook? Show me what you would do next.

TASK TWO

You are now interested in using the database Academic Search Complete to do research on charter schools. Using this interface, search for charter schools [have Academic Search Complete open].

a. You're interested in the second search result – show me what you would do to get this article online.

b. What else could you do from this screen? Describe some of the other options you see.

TASK THREE

Now, let's go to this page [show participants http://bit.ly/1usXiRT]

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

b. What else could you do from this screen? Describe some of the other options you see.

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 did you find helpful or effective about using 'get it at Duke'?

2. What did you dislike or find confusing?

3. If you could change this sidebar [show sidebar, http://bit.ly/1usXiRT] in any way, what would you change?

4. What are your thoughts about this green button [point to 'Other options for full text' button]? If you could change the button in any way, what would you change?

5. Finally, what are your thoughts about adding one of these graphics [show designs, http://bit.ly/1okVmZV] to the green button? Do you have a preference?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience using "get it at Duke"?