

A/B Bento Usability Test

Recommendations

1. As mentioned in an earlier study, including additional information about the records on the results page would speed up bibliography writing for users. Specifically, adding publisher information for the books records would be enough for users to create MLA and Chicago style citation. One user in this study mentioned that having citation information, ideally already formatted, would help expedite her research.
2. Searches for books retrieved no results on 37.5% of the tests. Days after the initial test, Julie Riegel retested the same search terms used by the volunteers, and retrieved results from the catalog. This leads us to believe that the online catalog was down, which biased the results of this test. Since one large difference between Duke's Bento page and Cornell's Bento page is the amount of results that show up on that first page, we recommend repeating this test.
3. Though only one user vocalized that Duke's page took a lengthy amount of time to load, the page seemed to lag on multiple searches. Finding ways to quicken the load time would help improve the experience through the perspective of the users.

Summary

On Monday, November 28, from 10:00am to 11:00am, Thomas Crichlow and Julie Riegel conducted an A/B test to on the Duke University Library's (DUL) Bento search tool (<https://library.duke.edu/>). By comparing Duke's site to Cornell Library's Bento search interface (<https://www.library.cornell.edu/>), we retrieved information on the features that user's appreciated, and ways to improve Duke's Bento interface.

Background

We asked eight students, one student who conducted a pilot test and 7 who were part of the official usability study, to perform two tasks, followed by a post-test interview. Of those students, 62.5% were undergraduates and 37.5% were graduates. Students represented a variety of majors, including German, Economics, Public Policy, Engineering (environment and electrical), Management, and Environmental Science. Each interview lasted roughly 10 minutes.

The 1st and 2nd portions of the test asked students to explore Duke's Bento site and Cornell's Bento site. Three volunteers started with Cornell's site, and five started with Duke's site. See Appendix for full survey script.

Questions we hoped to answer through this study:

1. Where do students begin their research, and why?
2. What are features that they like about DUL's Bento search? What seems confusing?
3. What are features that they like about Cornell's Bento search? What seems confusing?

Key findings

1. Several users (37.5%) appreciated the separated video section on Cornell's page
2. Several users (37.5%) verbalized uncertainty on whether they preferred multiple results on Duke's page, compared to the limited results on Cornell's page.
3. Users appreciated many features on Duke's bento site, including:
 - Seeing multiple formats in one place (50%), with the option to expand their search based on media (25%)
 - Three-column organization system (12.5%)
 - Many results on the first page, but not overburdening (37.5%)
 - Useful information on the first page, including title, author, date, image of the book cover, and place in the library(37.5%)
 - Results in languages other than English (Chinese and Russian) (12.5%)
 - Great use of blue/green contrast for the titles and results, and clean design of the page(25%)
4. Volunteers disliked the following things about Duke's site:
 - 50% complained about the amount of results, though 37.5% ultimately thought that seeing many results is better than fewer
 - Duke's Bento site brought up subject headings with no results (websites, research guides, etc), which took up space on the page (12.5%)
 - The page took a lengthy amount of time to load (12.5%)
 - Users brought to our attention that more subsections, such as newspaper articles (12.5%) and a videos (25%) would be useful for browsing
 - Patrons' search terms yielded no book results (37.5%)
5. What users appreciated about Cornell's site:
 - a. Not too much content on the first page, (37.5%)and it summarizes the search better than Duke's site (12.5%)
 - b. Cornell's use of large titles and icons (37.5%)
 - c. Separate videos section (25%)
 - d. Bar at the top and to the left to navigate page and see expanded results (25%)

- e. Books show up in search (same keywords used on Duke's site, but books did not show up) (37.5%)
- 6. What they disliked about Cornell's site:
 - a. Fewer results—prefers more options (37.5%)
 - b. The design is plain or boring (37.5%), but one student did not think this was important when searching for resources (12.5%)
 - c. First page showed only English version of resources
 - d. Availability of book (shown by a teal check mark) is ambiguous to one user

Appendix:

DUL Usability Test: Duke Bento A/B test

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

We are considering making changes to the Duke University Libraries' website, and we are trying to understand more fully how students, faculty and staff interact with the site to find library books, articles, and other materials. 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, or visitor to Duke?

- a) If you are an undergrad, what year are you?
- b) For undergrads: What is your major?
- c) For grads, faculty, staff: What department are you in?

Think of the last time you did research, either for academic or personal reasons. Where did you start your research? Why did you choose that place to start?

Have you ever used the Duke Libraries website (<https://library.duke.edu/>) 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?

I'd like you to complete a short task using the Duke Libraries website. 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: Duke Bento Site (Alternate with Cornell Bento Site)

Think of a topic you're currently thinking about or researching for a class, project or personal interest. (If none, suggest Russian Literature, African Contemporary Dance, etc.)

- a) Use this search page [<http://library.duke.edu>] to search for books, articles or other resources that would help you as you research this topic.
- b) Take a moment to consider the results and interface.
- c) What types of resources or materials do you see?
- d) Do you see anything on this page that would be useful to your research? What is it?

TASK TWO: Cornell Bento Site (Alternate with Duke Bento Site)

Think about the same research topic as in task one, but use this page to find materials.

- e) Use this page (<https://www.library.cornell.edu/>) to search for books, articles or other resources that would help you as you research this topic.
- f) Take a moment to consider the results and interface.
- g) What types of resources or materials do you see?
- h) Do you see anything on this page that would be useful to your research? What is it?

POST-TEST INTERVIEW

- a) What two things about Duke's website did you like best?
- b) What two things about Duke's website did you like least?
- c) What two things about Cornell's site did you like best?
- d) What two things about Cornell's site did you like least?

e) What is your preference between the two pages?

a. Why?

f) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience with these pages?