Beyond Anecdotal: CONTENTdm and the User Experience

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Why Usability?

Usability is a term used to denote the ease with which people can employ a particular tool or other human-made object in order to achieve a particular goal. [thank you Wikipedia]

- Effective
- Easy to use
- Bug free
- Satisfying experience

[ what is it all about? ]
Goals of the Study

The following initial goals were established by the MDL usability team:

1. Users can easily locate content by place, person or topic.
2. Users are able to discover ways to use the content another time.
3. Users find the content and layout of the home page useful and valuable.

Tasks

- Searching by place
- Searching by topic
- Find items by topic
- Searching by person
- Using “My Favorites”
- Help on interpreting the materials
- Keyword search
- Find information on contributing organization
- Advanced Search
- How to contact a contributing organization
Two Days in the Room

8 Lucky Participants

- 1 Undergraduate Student
- 2 High School Students
- 2 Middle School Teachers
- 1 College Faculty
- 2 Members of the General Public

[ How did they use it? ]

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17 October 2008

Two Days in the Room

Usability Role Assignments

- Narrator
- Logger
- Help desk
- Eye-Tracker Observer

[ How did we track our users? ]

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Debriefing

At the end of each session, the users are asked a series of questions—a chance to add any final thoughts or opinions.

A few examples:
- What did you find to be the most easiest about the web site design?
- What was most difficult or confusing about the design?
- If we could change only one thing, what should it be?

[ Any last words? ]

The Matrix

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1 = Showstopper

2 = Major problem

3 = Moderate problem

4 = Minor problem

+ = Good thing

C = Comment

N/A = Not applicable/ No action

[ What do we make of all this? ]
What Works

- Front page searching
- Records view
- My favorites
- Layout/appearance

[ What did we do right? ]

Things We Can Fix

- Wording changes
- Coloring/font issues
- Metadata/controlled vocabulary

[ Who needs to fix what? ]
Things That Are Out Of Our Hands

Not everything can be changed on our end. For some issues we will continue to be dependant upon CONTENTdm and their release schedule. We called these issues the “refer to OCLCs”

- Date range searching
- Narrow search results
- Finding search terms in metadata
- Search behavior/truncation
- Behavior of “add to my favorites”

Desirability Matrix

Please choose five words that best describe this site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attractive</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Informative</th>
<th>Stressful</th>
<th>Straightforward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>Discouraging</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Too simplistic</td>
<td>4 of 8 users</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Distracting</td>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>Time-consuming</td>
<td>Too Technical</td>
<td>7 of 8 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy</td>
<td>Dull</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Easy to use</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Too Technical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluttered</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complicated</td>
<td>Efficient</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Understandable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>Unhelpful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concise</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>Polished</td>
<td>Useful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confusing</td>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>Vague</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded</td>
<td>Hard to read</td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>Wordy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[Who needs to fix what?]

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Minnesota Reflections

Questions?

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