

Exercise #4

Test Driving Some Library Websites for Usability

In this exercise, you will assess the usability of some representative library websites *and* the website of your library. You will look at things like: How easy or difficult is it to find information that library users might look for? How could they be made more usable? What usability principles do they ignore?

A. Instructions:

- Go to the library homepage assigned to you (URL provided in class) to work on each of the main questions below.
- Open a second browser window (Ctrl + N), and retrieve **your** library's website.
- Evaluate and compare the usability of both sites by answering the questions for the OTHER and YOUR library's websites.
- Pretend you are a user from the general public.

1. *How do I get to your main library building? What are your hours? When is reference service available?*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Answers easy to find? Yes /No Map/directions? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Answers easy to find? Yes /No Map/directions? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

2. *What are your fines for overdue books?*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Answers easy to find? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

What is the link to them called? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Answers easy to find? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

What is the link to them called? _____

3. *What online fiction books do you have?*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

What is the link to them called? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No # clicks to it? _____

What is the link to them called? _____

4. *I'm looking for cancer research articles, something more reliable than Google.*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Article database list easy to find? Yes /No Descriptions/directions? Yes /No What is the link to them called? _____ # clicks to the list? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Article database list easy to find? Yes /No Descriptions/directions? Yes /No What is the link to them called? _____ # clicks to the list? _____

OVER

5. *Can I use your website in languages other than English?*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No What are the links called ? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No What are the links called ? _____

6. *What search engines do you suggest I use if Google fails me?*

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No What link led to this info? _____

Are all the web resources listed still active? _____

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

Answer easy to find? Yes /No What link led to this info? _____

Are all the web resources listed still active? _____

B. Assessing the websites' compliance with website usability guidelines.

1. Did you readily know where to go for the majority of questions above?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

2. Are the names of the links intuitive for the intended audience?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

3. Is the layout easy to scan for what you want?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

4. Is there a pleasing amount of information on the page or too much?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

5. Did you get lost or get into the wrong place? Would an ordinary user make this error?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE:

6. Do graphics help you find what you want better than words?

Might a novice user think they're ads?

OTHER LIBRARY WEBSITE:

YOUR LIBRARY'S WEBSITE: