Learn by Doing
Website UX Research for Academic Libraries

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Danielle T. Daugherty, Institutional Repository Coordinator - Robert E. Kennedy Library

Designing for Digital | March 8, 2023
Project Partners

HEATHER L. CRIBBS
Systems Librarian
Technical administrator of systems, applications, and platforms

DANIELLE T. DAUGHERTY
Institutional Repository Coordinator
San Jose State University
M.L.I.S. candidate
Core Tenet

"It is a deliberate process in which students, from day one, acquire knowledge and skills through active engagement and self-reflection inside the classroom and beyond."

— Learn by doing
https://www.calpoly.edu/learn-by-doing
Website History

Website support and development
- Custom WordPress theme and design developed in 2013
- Complex web applications and integrations for active News & Stories (blog) and promoting library events

Content management and governance
- Early efforts encouraged content creation and maximalist approach to information delivery
- Web governance taskforce adopted within strategic goals as broken links continued to grow without oversight

ITS centralization of services
- Campuswide initiatives to rebrand and optimize technology support
- Without dedicated personnel to support website updates and security risks, migrated to external hosting and support Summer 2022
Project Objectives

ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES
- Ease of use
- Meets users’ needs
- Strengthen web environment

DESIGN OBJECTIVES
- Centralized navigation
- Informative labels
- Predictable organization

DESIRED OUTCOME
An improved web environment driven by experiential design and user needs and expectations to enhance access to virtual services.
UX Research Study and Website Redesign

“The Kennedy Library's digital environment, which comprises user-facing web interfaces, discovery platforms, and virtual portals that act as end-user gateways to a range of library materials and services, is being evaluated and improved as part of this project. We are working to understand what our users' need and critically evaluate the current website environment. We will also work with our users to discover the challenges and barriers they experience when using the website. Lastly, we will work to improve the website’s user experience by incorporating end-user perspectives within the development and design process.”

- Ari Goodman (Fall 2022-Winter 2023 UX research student Intern)
Phase 1  
*Fall Quarter 2023*

- **Accessibility Scans** to identify major issues through Chrome Lighthouse metrics
- **End User Interviews** with students and faculty to discover pain points and expectations for site performance
- **Stakeholder Focus Groups** with REKL staff, librarians, and administrators
- **User Persona Creation** to highlight the diverse needs within our userbase
Phase 2
Winter Quarter 2023

CARD SORTING

In depth analysis into our information architecture and organization to address jargon and website navigation

CONTENT ADMINISTRATOR ASSIGNMENT

Consolidate, simplify, and update information, especially content related to accessing services and resources

PROTOTYPE CREATION

UX student research interns create lo-fi to hi-fi mockups of possible webpage designs using Figma
Phase 3  
Spring Quarter 2023

- Drupal development environment to build new site designs
- Formal usability testing to ensure we are meeting the precepts of HCI
- Marketing of new site by creating campus communication plan and outreach to support transition
- "Ribbon Cutting" ceremony and celebration to document monumental accomplishment
Card Sorting
Qualitative Research Method

Goal
Determine information architecture of new website

Process
Participants group similar items into categories

Result
Data informs new navigation menu based on experiential design
Qualitative Research: Tools and Supplies

SOFTWARE: Optimal Workshop OptimalSort
HARDWARE: 5 computer terminals in library lobby (one accessible station)
INCENTIVES: Coffee and donuts
METHOD: 3 in-person, 1-hour sessions
RECRUITMENT: Proximity, i.e., UX research student interns engaging with library users as they enter the building
SUPPLIES: Laminated list of card labels for participant recall; hand sanitizer; Clorox wipes
DEI Alignment

“Use the physical spaces of our library building and our digital spaces to foster a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment by emphasizing the Library’s value for diversity, equity, and inclusion and clearly showcasing the Library’s efforts and activities that promote the advancement of DEI on the library website, and ensuring that the Library website and building are fully accessible and, as educational spaces, express the diverse cultures and identities of our campus and regional community.”

-REKL 5-year DEI Action Plan
Learn by Doing Team

Justin Lau
UX research student
Project Manager
Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Computer Science

Ari Goodman
UX research student intern
Fall 2022-Winter 2023
Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies

Michael O’Bryan
UX research student intern
Fall 2022-Winter 2023
Business Administration

Sujanya Srinath
UX research student intern
Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Computer Science

Mira Shlimenzon
UX research student intern
Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Computer Science
1. Introduction to REKL web ecosystem of systems that deliver library services, including front-facing digital platforms and virtual gateways which assist users in discovering and accessing resources.

2. Content inventory and system’s scope to address overwhelming amount of information, out-of-date or inaccurate links, and overall tone of message.

3. Audit and recommendations for current improvements and ongoing oversight.
Challenges

Retention of unpaid UX research student interns

Developing and scheduling in depth modules for phases of the project under a fast-paced quarter system

Accomplishments

Successful user research report deliverable shared with all library stakeholders

Conducting UX research in real time through card sorting with motivated and hungry students
Questions?

Thank you for listening.

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References


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