Northeast Ohio MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Usability Testing: User Feedback on NEOMED's New Web OPAC Design

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Objective

In 2011 the Northeast Ohio Medical University library conducted a usability study on the new Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). Users were observed as they navigated and searched the OPAC, followed by an interview. Data gathered helped determine how the library could improve the usability of the OPAC interface.
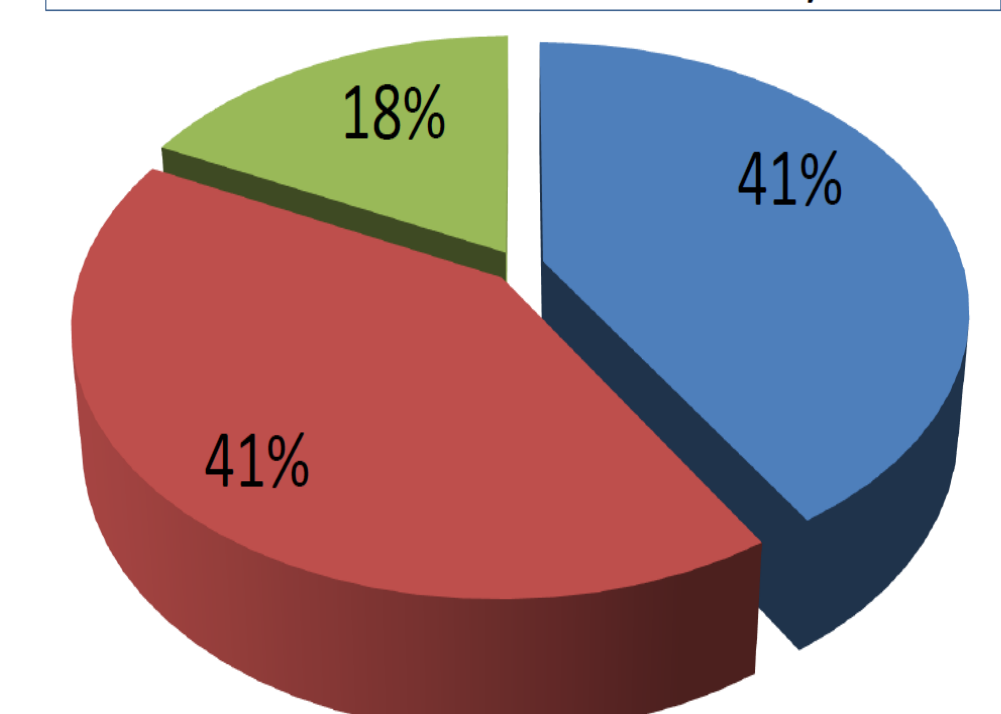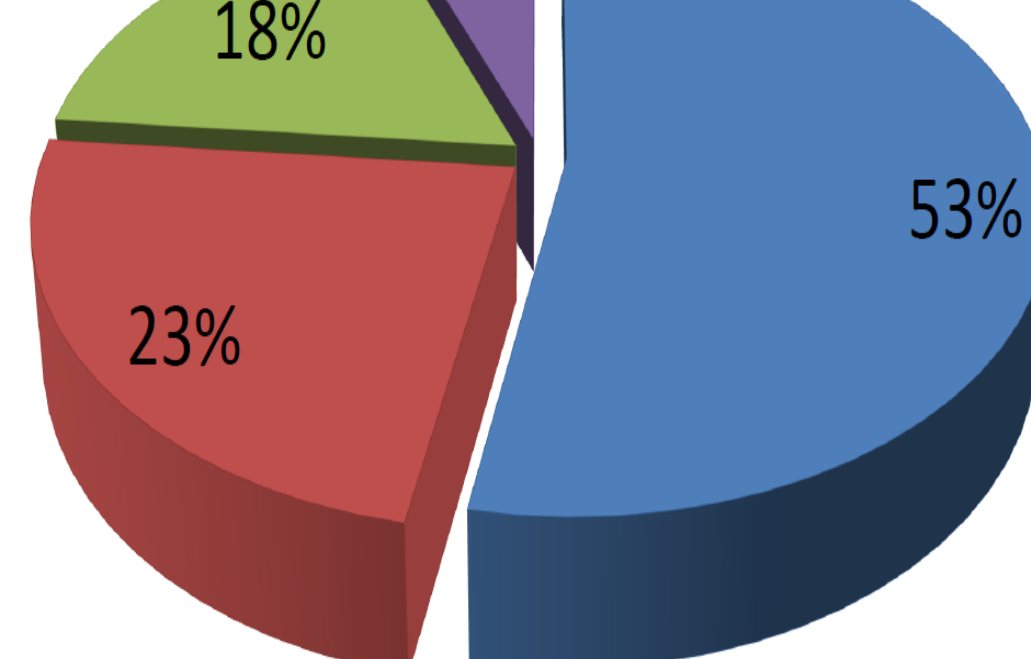
Methods

Recruitment & Participants

Out of 692 potential participants, 17 replied to the survey regarding availability to participate in study

- Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

41% / 41% / 18%

NEOMED status of 17 potential participants

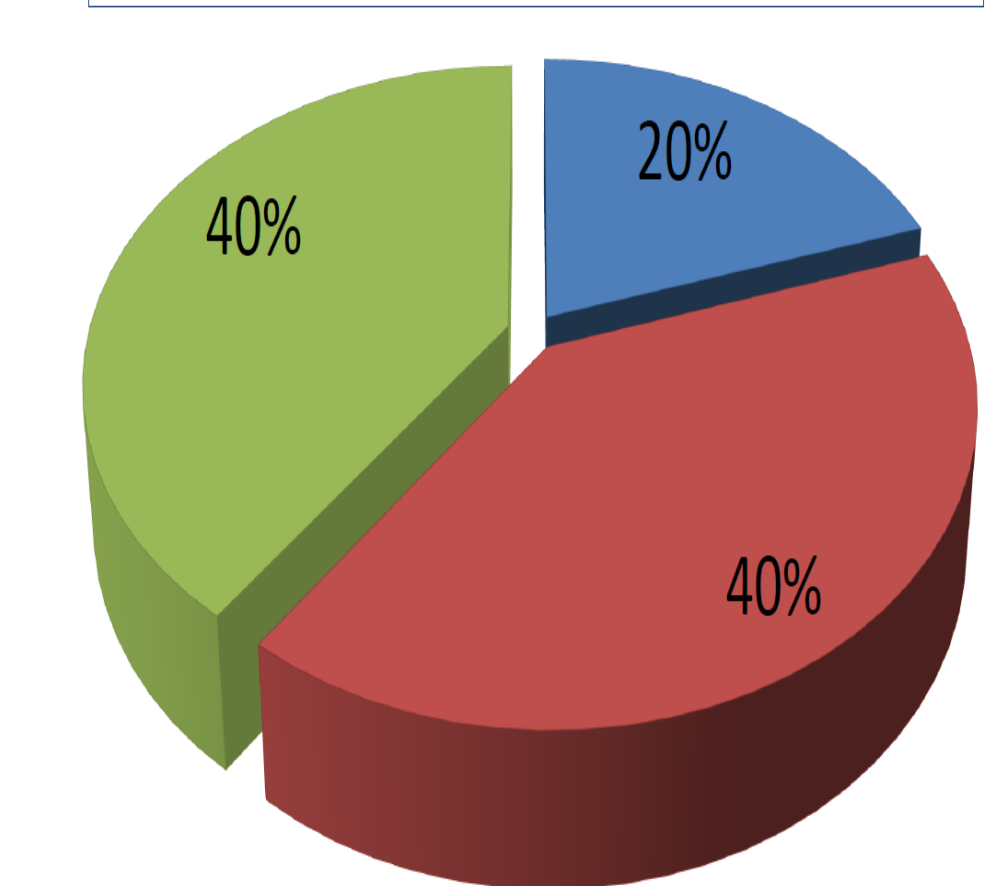■ Faculty ■ Students ■ Staff ■ None

53% / 23% / 18% / 6%

Approximately how often do you use the library's catalog?
- Weekly
- Seldom
- Once a week
- Not very often
- Every few weeks

NEOMED status of the 5 participants
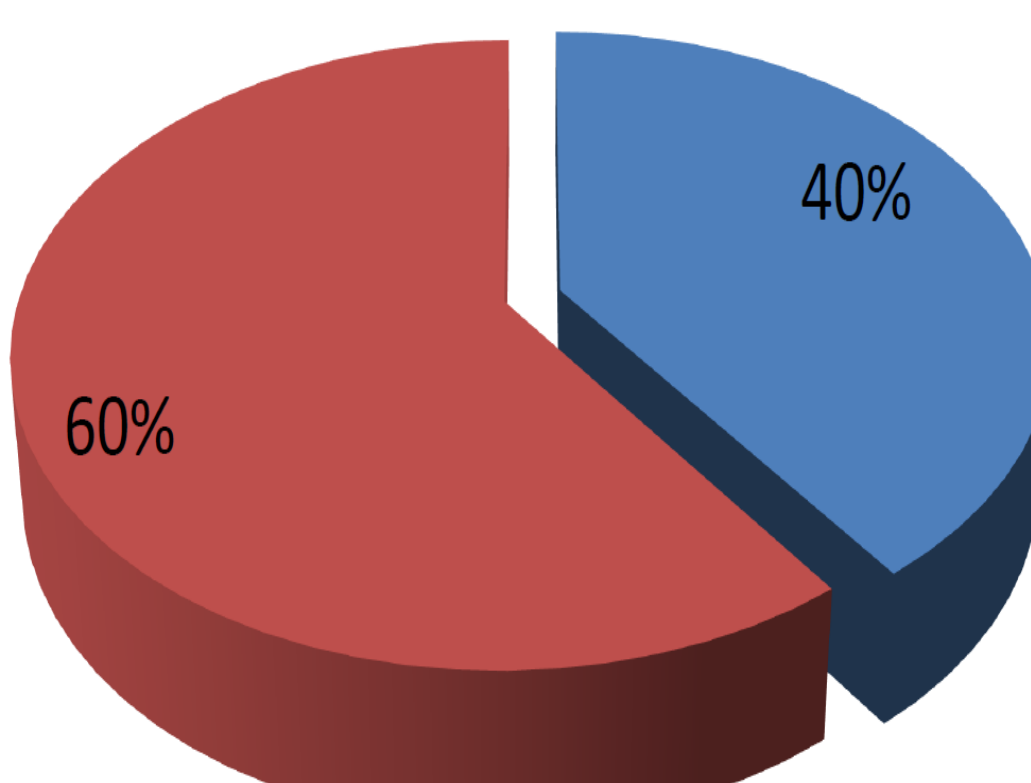
■ Faculty ■ Students ■ Staff

20% / 40% / 40%

2 of the 5 participants had OPAC Instruction/orientation

■ Yes ■ No

40% / 60%

Researcher's Script

- Welcome participant
- Sign consent forms
- Start Camtasia
- Conduct pre-testing interview
- Share *Cheat Sheet*
- Start usability testing
- End usability testing
- Conduct post-testing interview
- Thank participant for time
- Stop Camtasia
- Reflect on session and immediately write up notes

Consent Forms

- Informed Consent
- Screen Capture Consent
- Audiotape Consent

Cheat Sheet

You are a medical student in his second year

Name: Oliver Skelly

Barcode: 001234567

Your starting point is: http://crusher.neomed.edu:2082/

Academic Profile: You are Oliver Skelly and you are a second year medical student searching the library's online catalog for materials on pathology. You will first check your library account then renew a book that you previously checked out. Your Barcode Number is *001234567*

Next, you will search for books, save one to a Book Bag then search for a journal before ending your session.

Participants' Tasks

Task 1
Check Library Account and Renew a book that's due

Task 2
Search the Library's catalog for a specific book

Task 3
Search the Library's catalog for any non-specific book and save to folder

Task 4
Search the Library's catalog for non-specific book and use "More Like It"

Task 5
Search the Library's catalog for a specific Journal Title and Year

Results

Feedback From Post-Usability Study Interview

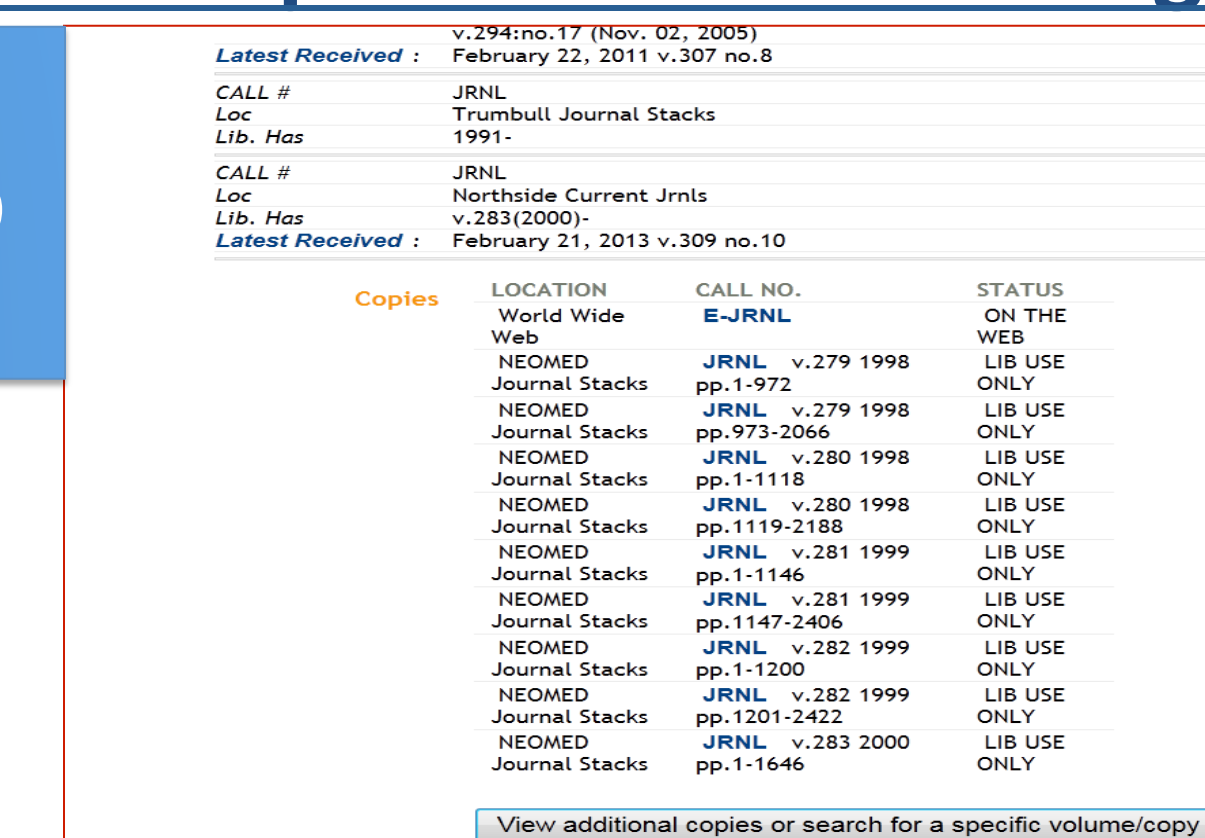**What did you like best about the catalog?**
- The appearance is nice and clean and clear.
- The "More Like This" feature is similar to a feature In PubMed.
- It's easy to navigate.
- The new location of the "My Library Account/Renew Materials" button.
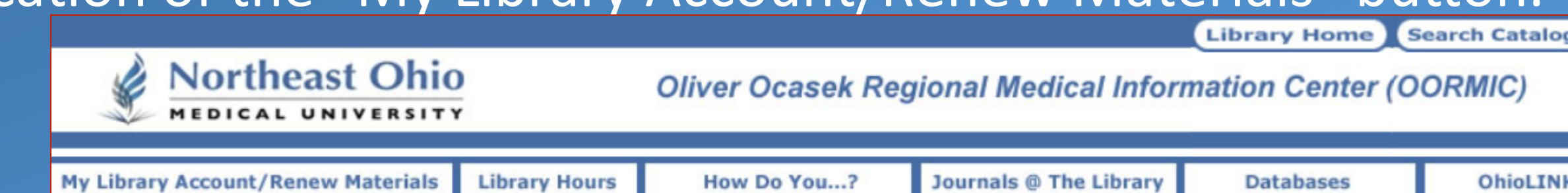
- Less steps to renew.
- The "Book Bag" feature.
- It's user-friendly.

Did you find any part of the catalog or the tasks performed confusing?
- Not knowing where to look for something.
- Trying to figure out the years that NEOMED has for a journal.

What did you like least about the catalog?
- How difficult it is to search because there are so many variables.
- Not knowing where things are. New students might have the same problem.
- It is difficult to figure out which journals we have on the shelf and which ones we don't.
- The "Modify Search" label was confusing in task 2.
- Not sure how "limit search to available items" differed from limiting the location to NEOMED.
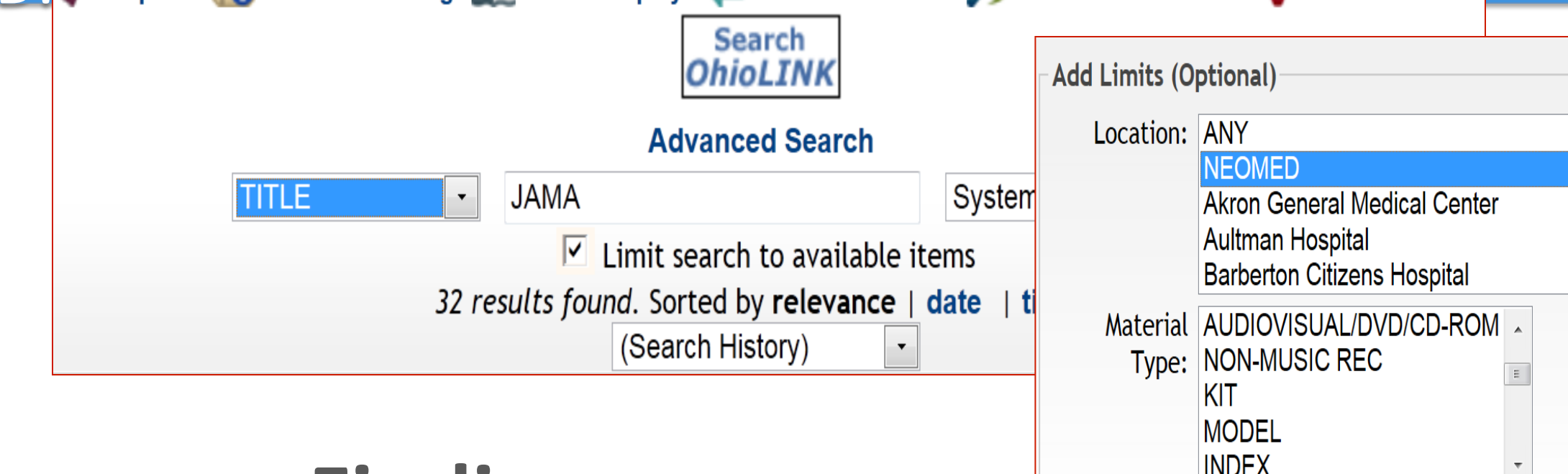
Findings

Divided into five distinguishable groups:

1. Clear clutter on initial results page.
2. Remove inconsistencies in modify/limit/sort search forms.
3. Add clearer clues, alerts, labels, guidelines and instructions.
4. Develop and/or invest in an A-Z list of databases/e-resources.
5. Fix glitches in the integrated library system (ILS).

Conclusion

Library staff is making changes based on our findings. For instance, we have updated labeling, cleared excess content and removed inconsistencies. We are implementing an A to Z journal list. Future studies will be used to continue to improve the usability of the new OPAC design.