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.

Researchers’ 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
• Inform consent
• Screen capture consent
• Audiotape consent

Cheat Sheet
You are a medical student in his second year
Name: Oliver Steely
Barcode: 001234567
Your starting point is: http://curew.neomed.edu:308/

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

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 is 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.