



# Usability for Tough Times

*Budget Usability*

Suzanne Chapman  
User Experience Department

Ken Varnum  
Web Systems Department

**M** Library  
University of Michigan

Image by flickr user alancleaver\_2000

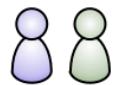
# Who Are We?

## Usability Core Group

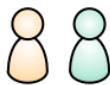
2 year term



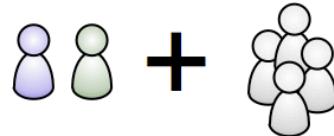
1 chair



4 core members



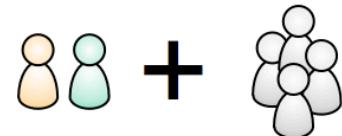
## Usability Task Force (UTF)



short term (4-6 months)

2 core members  
+ 3-4 members  
+ 1 stakeholder

## Usability Task Force (UTF)



# What is Budget Usability?

aka "discount" or "informal" or  
"do it yourself"

It's not just about the money...  
It's also about the time and  
effort.

It's qualitative, informal, and  
unscientific.

Our definition:  
Anything that you can do with  
low overhead that involves  
users interacting with a site.

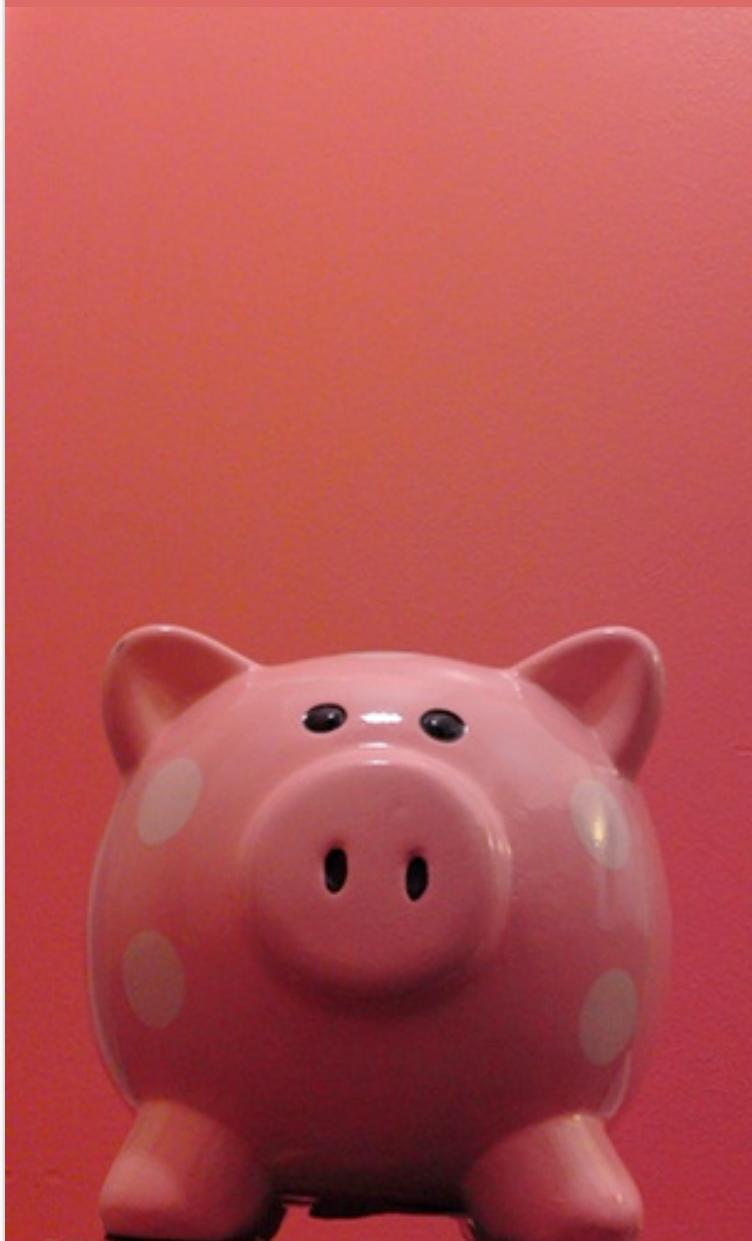
*"The purpose isn't to prove anything; it's to get insights that enable you to improve what you're building"*

– Steve Krug

Image by flickr user electrofantastic

# Why Use Budget Methods?

- Quick answers to simple questions
- Faster
- Easier
- Cheaper
- Targeted
- More staff participation



# When to Use Budget Techniques?

When you just want a quick reaction to something.

- Link label
- Placement of something
- Findability of some piece of content
- Attitude towards a design
- Do users get it?





# How to Use Budget Techniques?

- Early and often
- Alongside usage statistics & user feedback
- In conjunction (or in preparation for) larger evaluations
- With a grain of salt

Image by flickr user sergesegal

# Participants

- Anywhere from 6-100+
- Where & how to find participants:
  - "in the wild" & on-the-fly!
  - links from website
  - emails sent to departments via Subject Specialist Librarians
- Incentives: candy, MLibrary gadgets, or a few "blue bucks" each

Image by flickr user faultypixel



# Lessons Learned & Tips

- Test the test. Time spent piloting the test is time well spent.
- Articulate your expectations but be flexible.
  - Just want general feedback? Ask an open question.
  - Want to solve a specific problem? Ask a direct question.
- Iterate. Know when to admit that something didn't work well. Refine and repeat.

## News



Bonn named new Associate University Librarian for Publishing

Register for Our Undergraduate Research Course

Jonathan Rodgers Honored With MELA Award

## Events



Oprah Author Pick - Uwem Akpan  
Back in the USSR: Ann Arbor's Ardis Publishing and Russian Literature  
Library Used Book Sale

## Did You Know?



You can find what new books have arrived on campus. [more]

## Giving to MLibrary



How to Make a Gift  
Making a Gift Online  
Planned Gifts

## SPOTLIGHT 1

**The Galileo Manuscript**

The Michigan Galileo Manuscript, celebrating its 400th birthday, is on display through December 22 in the Audubon Room of the MLibrary Gallery in Room 100 of the Hatcher Library. Here Galileo drafted a letter explaining the usefulness of the telescope, and later used it to analyze data and conclude that he had discovered the moons of Jupiter.

[more]



## QUICK LINKS

My Account  
EJournals  
Library Hours  
Outages  
CTools  
Wolverine Access

## MTAGGER

TAG THIS PAGE MTAGGER  
books databases front gateway home  
home page Information journals library  
library gateway library homepage library  
portal library search mlibrary news

## SITE FEEDBACK

Do you use a mobile device to access the web?  
Tell us more by [taking our brief survey](#).

We welcome your [feedback](#) on our web site.

Known Problems (updated 10/9/2009)  
Coming Soon (updated 10/12/2009)

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**M**Library

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**Search** MiLibrary Articles Catalog  
Find books, journals, databases, web pages GO

**Browse** - Select a Subject

**Get Help** Ask a Librarian Using the Library

**Spotlight:** 1 2 3

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**more**

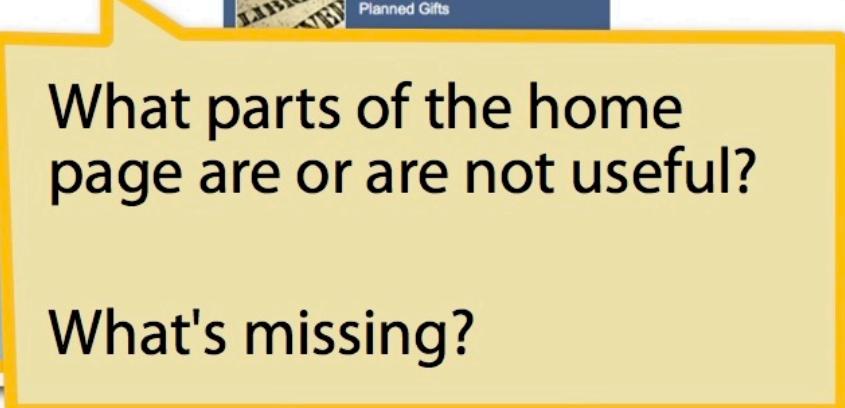
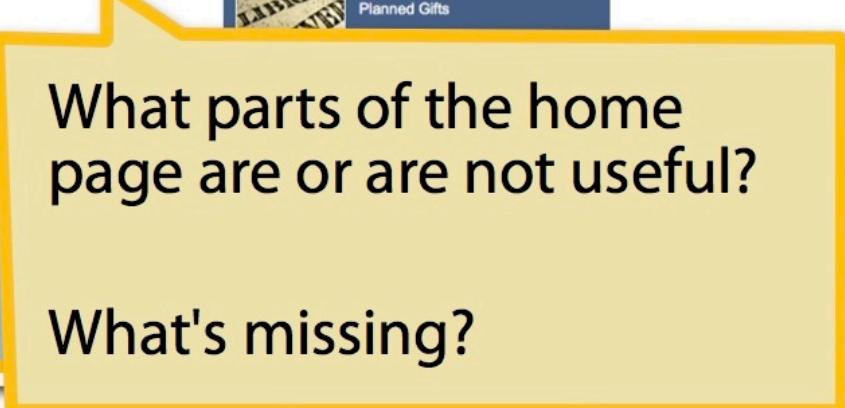
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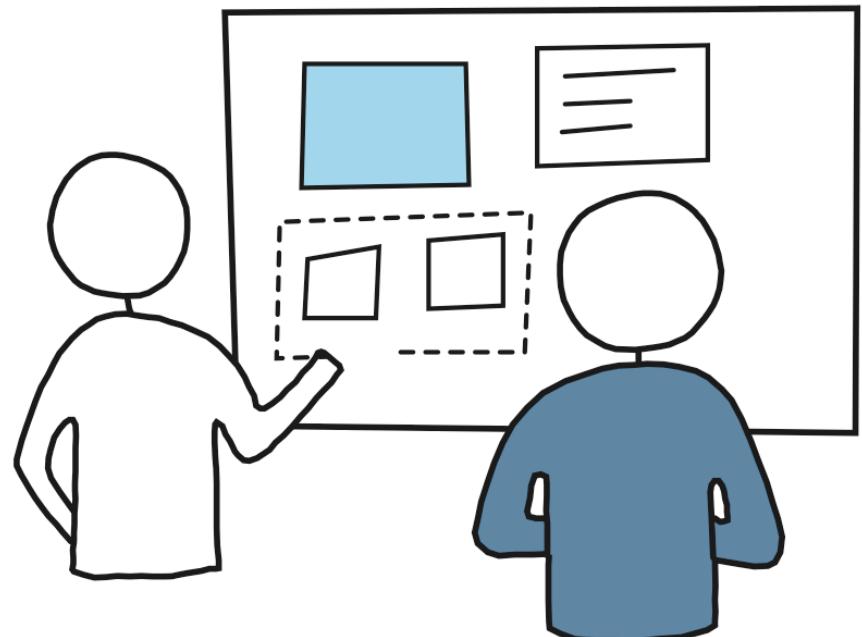
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**What parts of the home page are or are not useful?**

**What's missing?**



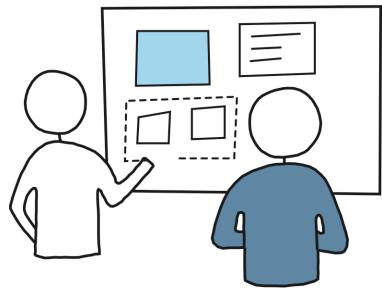
# Participatory Design



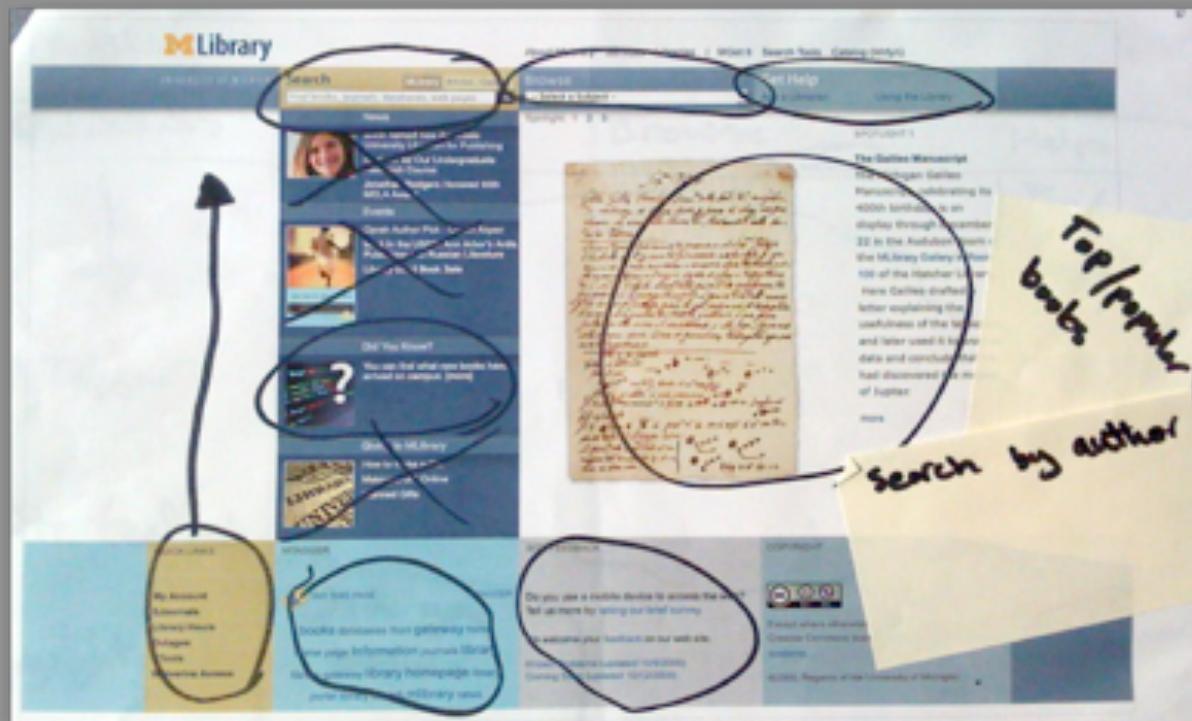
Actively involve users in the design process.

(inspired by Nancy Foster)

Description:  
X/O & Ideal Design

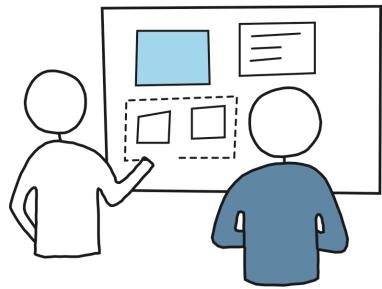


# Participatory Design

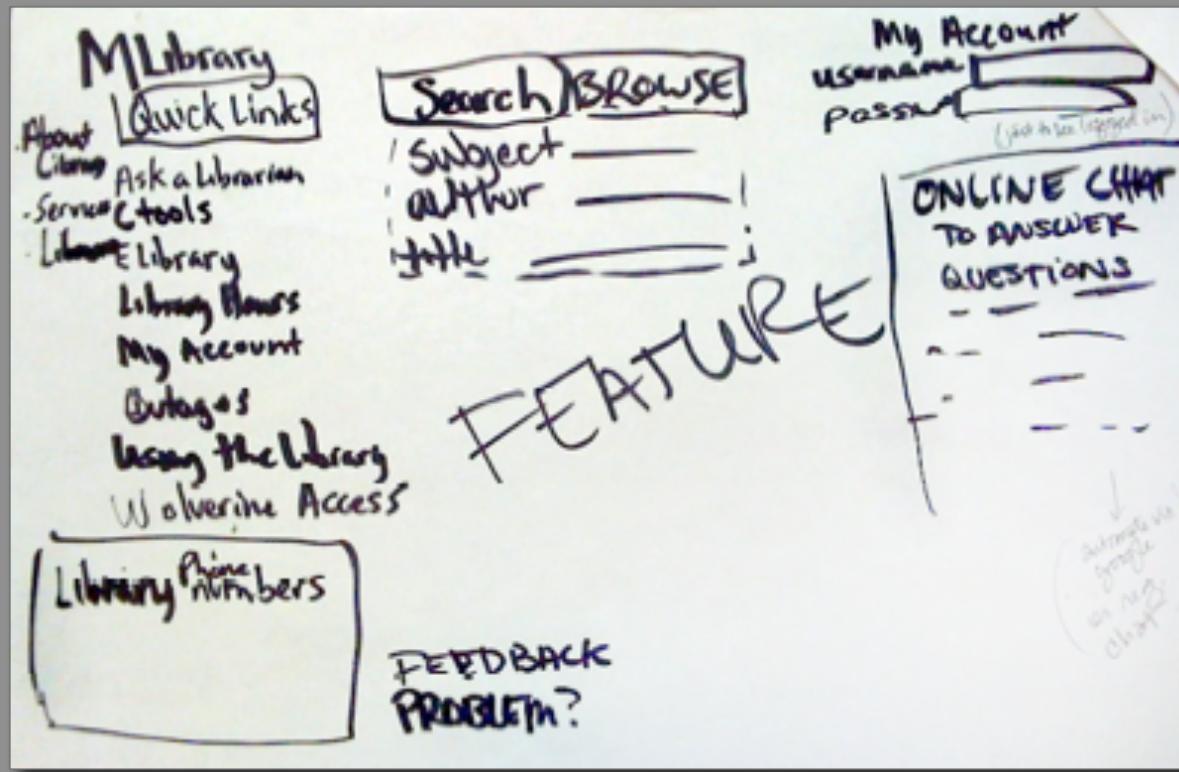


## X/O Instructions:

1. Circle the things you find useful
2. Put an X through the things you don't find useful
3. Add a note for anything that's missing



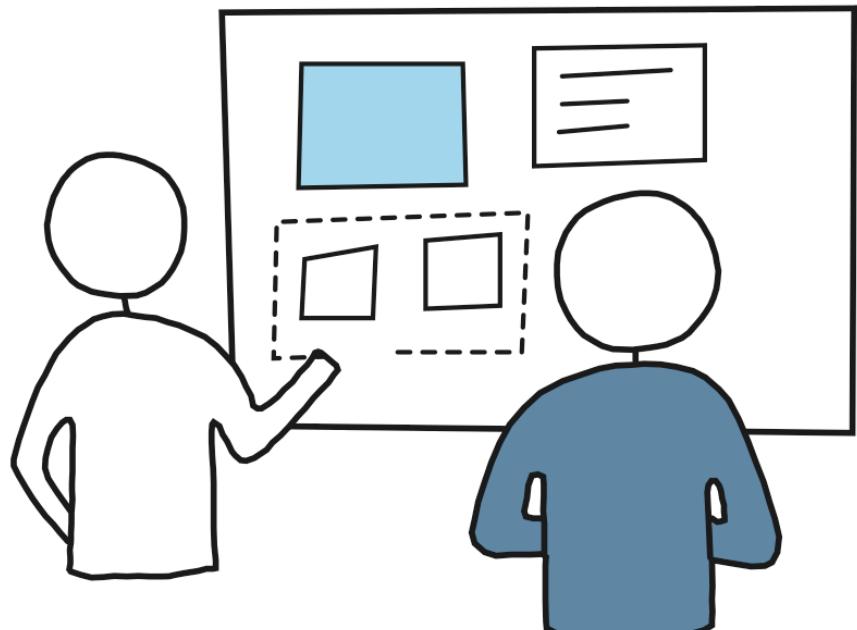
# Participatory Design



Ideal Design Instructions:

1. Draw your ideal library website.

# Participatory Design



Actively involve users in the design process.  
(inspired by Nancy Foster)

Description:

X/O & Ideal Design

36 Participants:

- 15 Undergrads
- 5 Grad Students
- 2 Faculty
- 15 Library Staff

Materials Cost: \$0

Incentives Cost: \$75+

Set up time: ~1hr

Test time: ~4hrs

Analysis: >12hrs

**15 undergrads**  
**useful stuff**  
**not useful stuff**

The MLibrary website interface is annotated with red circles and numbers, indicating the count of undergraduate students who found each element useful or not useful. The annotations are as follows:

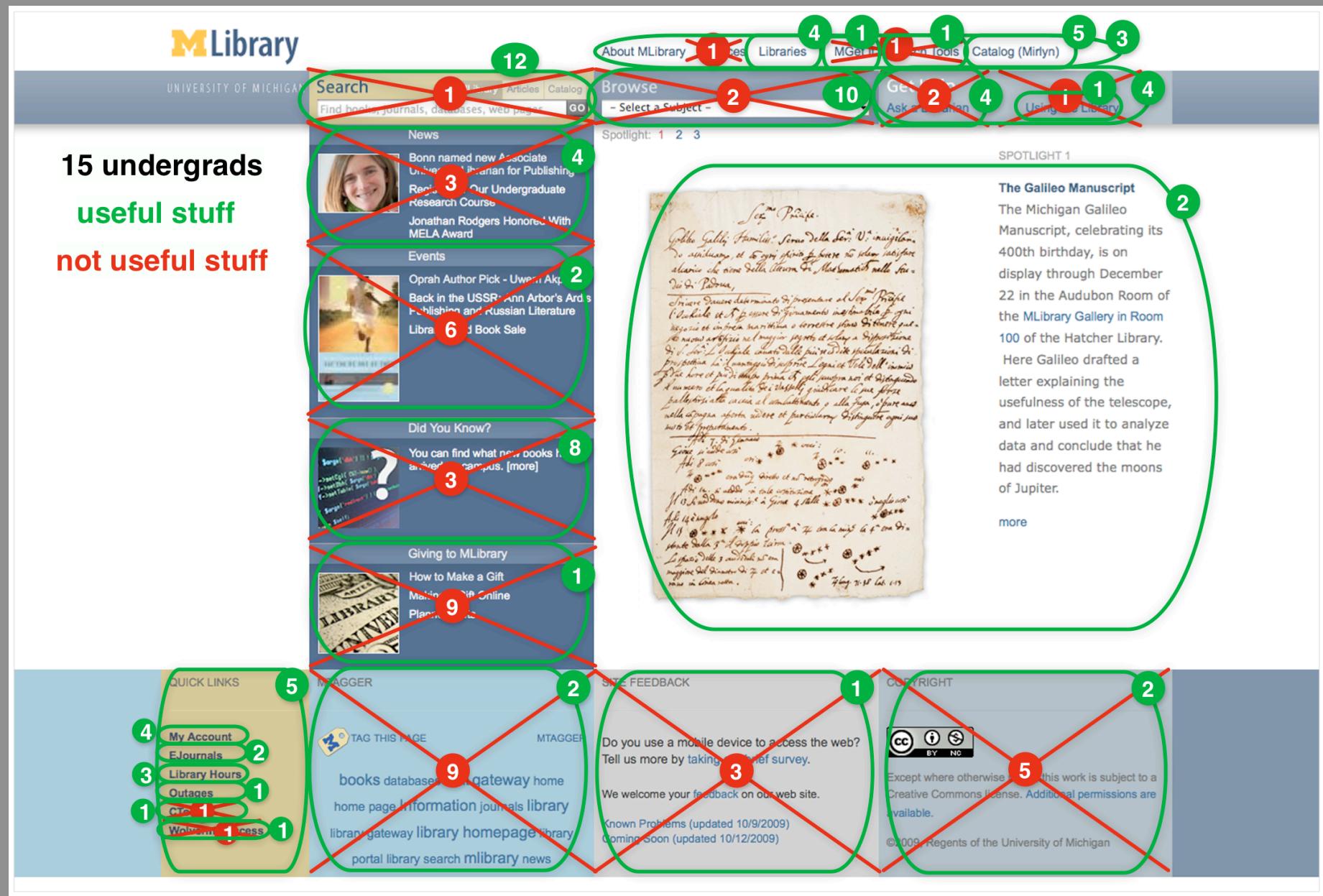
- Search:** Circled in green, with a red cross over it, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Browse:** Circled in green, with a red cross over it, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- About MLibrary:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Libraries:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- MGeri:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Help Tools:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Catalog (Mirlyn):** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 3.
- Get Involved:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- Ask a Librarian:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 4.
- Using the Library:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 4.
- News:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 12.
- Events:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- Did You Know?** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 8.
- Giving to MLibrary:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- QUICK LINKS:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 5.
- MTAGGER:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- SITE FEEDBACK:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- COPYRIGHT:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- My Account:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 4.
- EJournals:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- Library Hours:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 3.
- Outages:** Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- CTC:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Wolfram|Alpha:** Circled in red, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- books databases gateway home page information journals library portal library search mlibrary news**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 9.
- Do you use a mobile device to access the web? Tell us more by taking our brief survey.**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 3.
- We welcome your feedback on our web site.**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Known Problems (updated 10/9/2009)**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- Coming Soon (updated 10/12/2009)**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.
- The Galileo Manuscript**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- The Michigan Galileo Manuscript, celebrating its 400th birthday, is on display through December 22 in the Audubon Room of the MLibrary Gallery in Room 100 of the Hatcher Library. Here Galileo drafted a letter explaining the usefulness of the telescope, and later used it to analyze data and conclude that he had discovered the moons of Jupiter.**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 2.
- more**: Circled in green, labeled with a red circle containing the number 1.

**SPOTLIGHT 1**

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more



**5 Grad Students**  
**useful stuff**  
**not useful stuff**

**SEARCH**  
 Find books, journals, databases, web pages  
 go!

**BROWSE**  
 Select a Subject

**Get Help**  
 Ask a Librarian

**SPOTLIGHT 1**  
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[more](#)

**ABOUT MLIBRARY**  
 Services | Library News | Tools | Search | Catalog (Mirlyn)

**NEWS**

- Bonn named new Associate University Librarian for Publishing
- Register for Our Undergraduate Research Course
- Jonathan Rodgers Honored With MELA Award

**EVENTS**

- Oprah Author Pick - Ifwem Akpan
- Back in the USSR: Ann Arbor's Ardis Publishing and Russian Literature
- Library Used Book Sale

**Did You Know?**

You can find what new books have arrived on campus. [more]

**GIVING TO MLIBRARY**

How to Make a Gift  
 Make a Gift Online  
 Planned Gifts

**QUICK LINKS**

My Account  
 EJournals  
 Library Hours  
 Outag  
 CTOR  
 Wor Access

**TAGGER**

**SITE FEEDBACK**

Do you use a mobile device to access the web?  
 Tell us more by taking a brief survey.

We welcome your feedback on our site.

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**2 Faculty useful stuff**

**not useful stuff**

**M Library**

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Search

About MLibrary Services Lib 1s | 2 It Search Tools Catalog (Mirlyn)

Browse

Spotlight: 1 2 3

Get Help 1 Ask a Librarian Using Library

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MTAGGER

TAG THIS PAGE

books databases front gateway home home page Information journals library library gateway library homepage library portal library search mlibrary news

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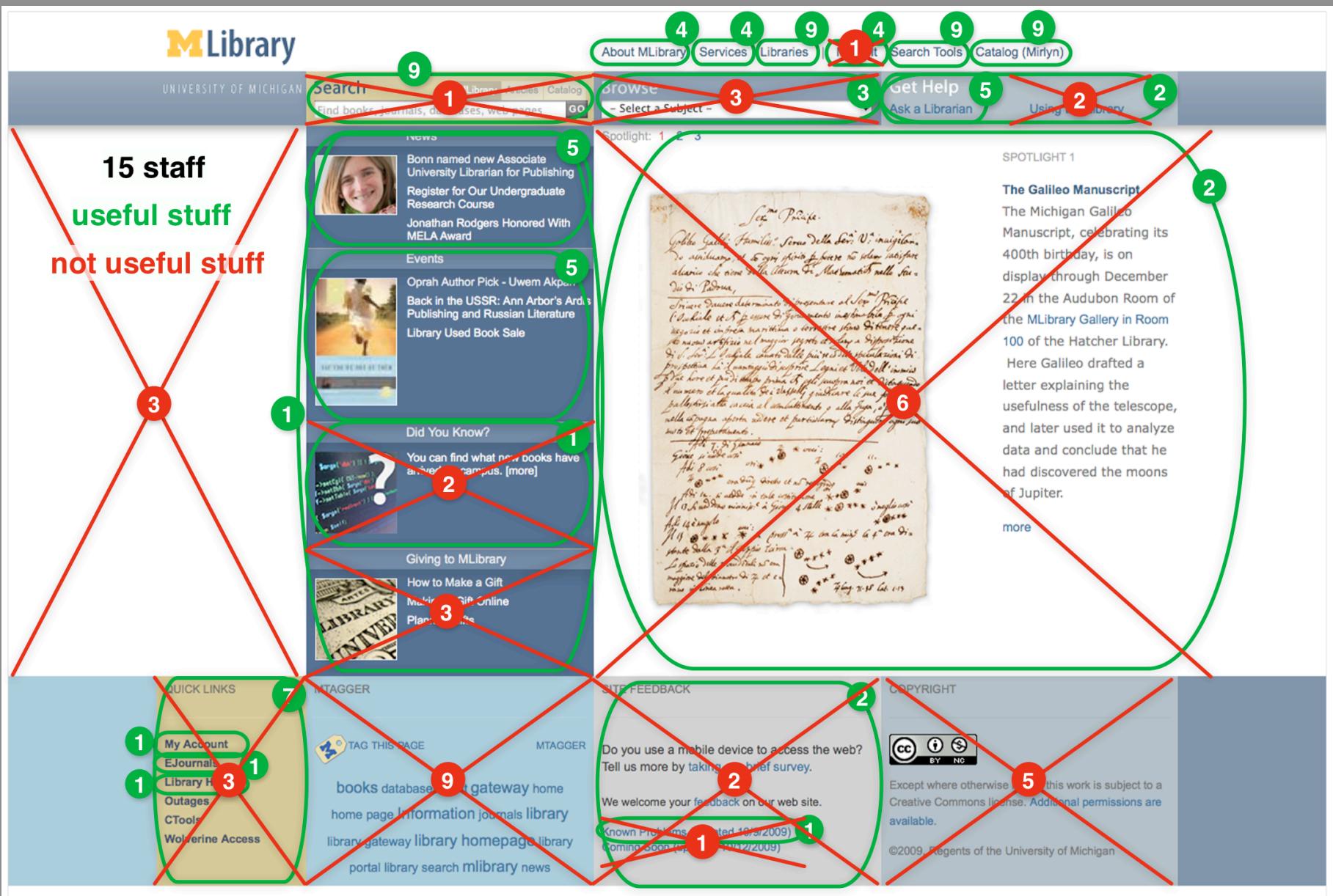
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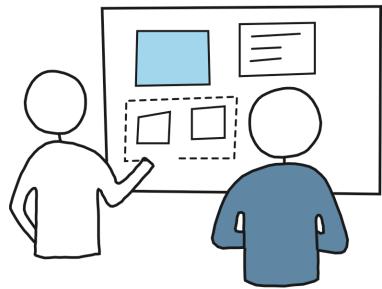
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more





# Participatory Design

**Undergraduate  
Students**  
(15 participants)

**Graduate  
Students**

(5 participants)

**Faculty**

(2 participants)

**Library Staff**

(15 participants)

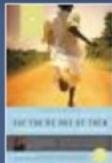


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Search MLibrary Articles Catalog  
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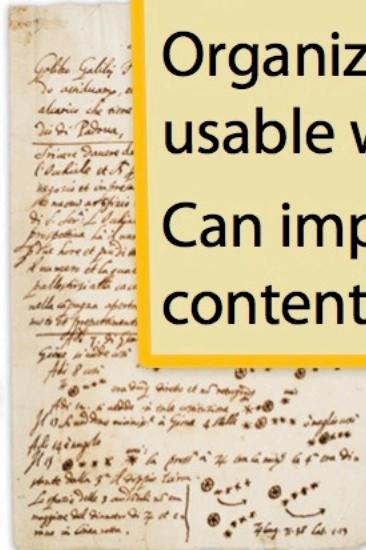
About MLibrary Services Libraries MGet It Search Tools Catalog (Mirlyn)

Browse  
- Select a Subject -

Get Help  
Ask a Librarian Using the Library

Spotlight: 1 2 3

**Right labels?**  
**Organized in a usable way?**  
**Can important content be found?**



had discovered the moons of Jupiter.  
more

QUICK LINKS

My Account  
EJournals  
Library Hours  
Outages  
CTools  
Wolverine Access

MTAGGER

TAG THIS PAGE

books databases front gateway home  
home page Information journals library  
library gateway library homepage library  
portal library search mlibrary news

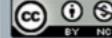
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# Card Sorting



Ask users to sort a series of cards, each labeled with a piece of content, into groups that make sense to them.

## Description:

Did a combination of sessions with individual participants and groups.

## 158 Participants:

- 18 Undergrads & Grads
- 140 Library Staff

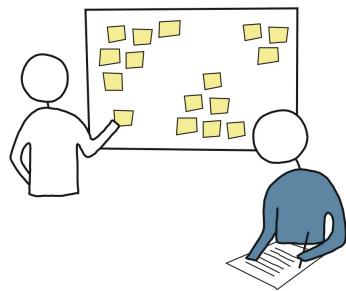
Materials Cost: \$0 / \$125 for online tool.

Incentives Cost: \$90

Set up time: ~3hrs

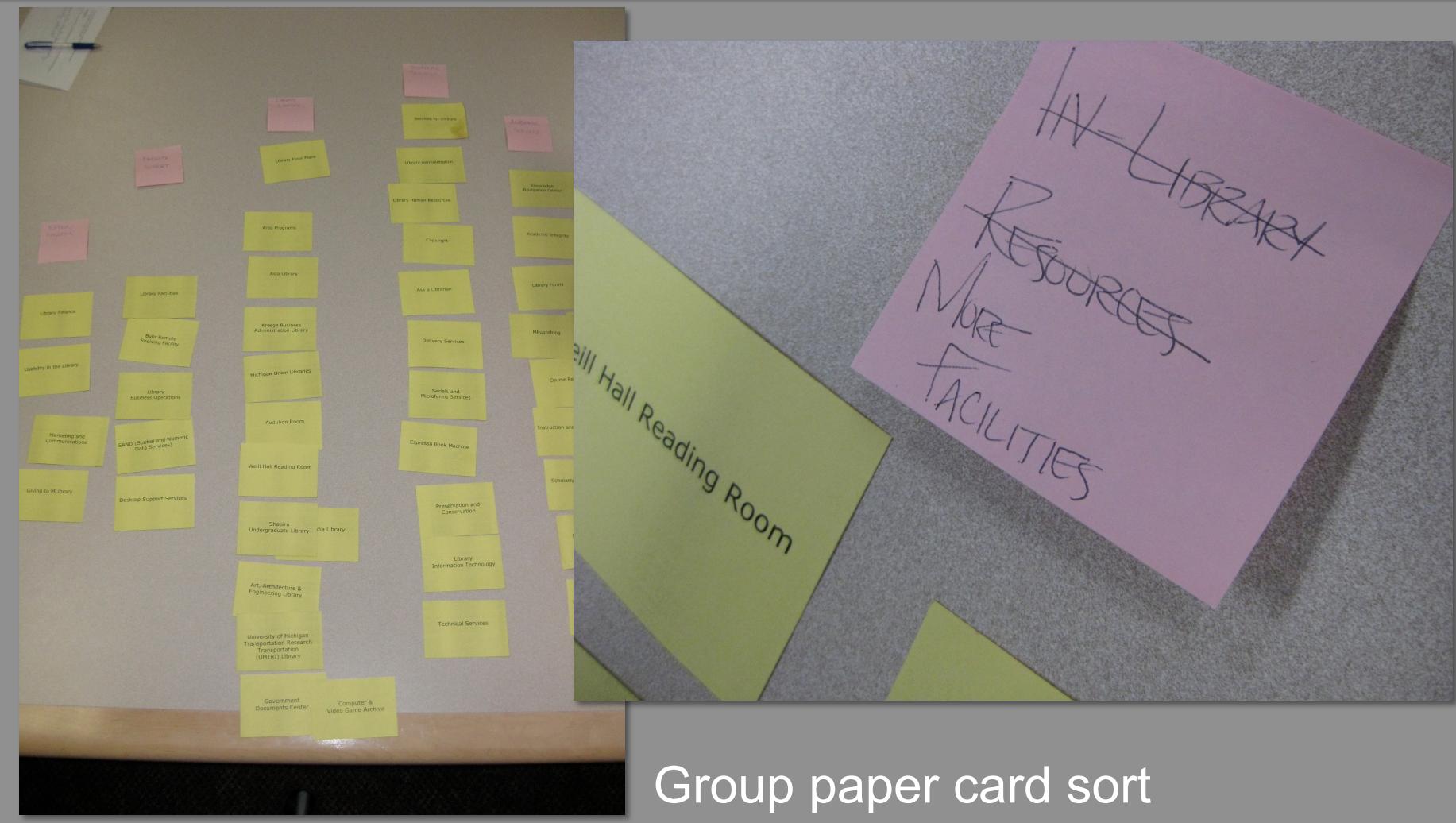
Test time: ~2hrs

Analysis: >10hrs

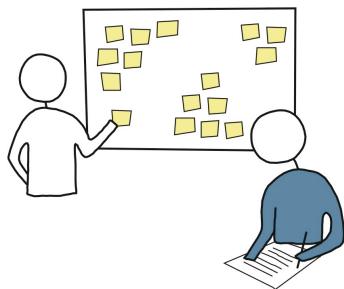


# Card Sorting

- Services/Departments/Libraries



Group paper card sort



# Card Sorting

- Services/Departments/Libraries

You have 34 items left

Drag & drop the cards listed on the left into the categories on the right.

[View](#)

- Computer & Video Game Archive
- Library Floor Plans
- Course Reserves
- Area Programs
- Academic Integrity
- SAND (Spatial and Numeric Data Services)
- Michigan Union Libraries
- Instruction and Workshops
- Library Forms
- Government Documents Center
- Weill Hall Reading Room
- Ask a Librarian
- Art, Architecture & Engineering Library

## Publishing

- MPublishing
- Scholarly Publishing Office (SPO)
- Copyright
- University of Michigan Press

## Administration

- Library Administration
- Giving to MLibrary
- Library Finance
- Marketing and Communications
- Library Facilities

OptimalSort online card sort

Right contents?  
Right label?  
Right location?

MLibrary

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Search MLibrary Articles Catalog

Find books, journals, databases, web pages GO

News

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Get Help Ask a Librarian Using the Library

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more

Image of the Galileo Manuscript

QUICK LINKS

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TAGGER

books databases front gateway home  
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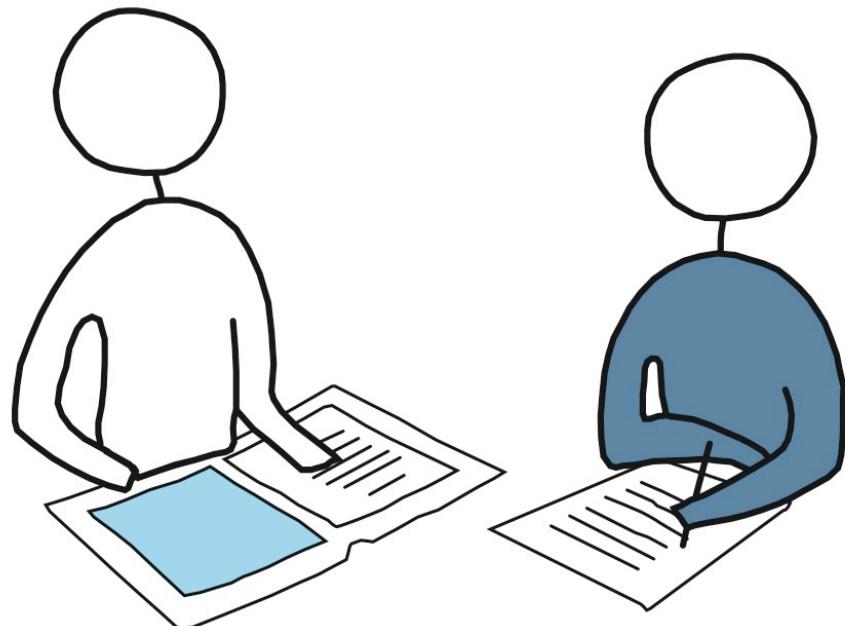
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# Guerrilla Testing



Quick and short answers to quick and short questions. Five minutes is our goal!

## Description:

- Print out web page
- Approach someone “in the wild” & ask if they can spare 5 min.
- Ask 1-2 short questions

## Participants:

- 20 undergrad/grad

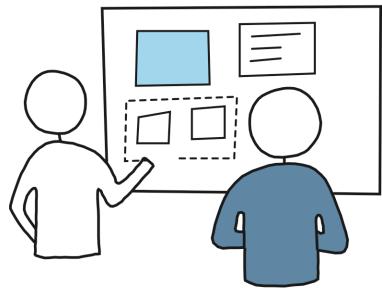
Materials Cost: \$0

Incentives Cost: \$0

Set up time: ~2hrs

Test time: ~2hrs

Analysis: ~4hrs



# Guerrilla Testing

## Before:

### QUICK LINKS

- My Account
- EJournals
- Library Hours
- Outages
- CTools
- Wolverine Access

## After:

### QUICK LINKS

- My Library Account
- Online Journal List
- Library Hours
- Webmail
- CTools
- Wolverine Access

### Contents:

- Removed/added links

### Labels:

- “Quick Links” is good
- Some link labels revised

### Location:

- Not good! Needs to be more prominent

# Online Guerrilla Testing



Automated version of paper guerrilla test to reach a larger audience.

## Description:

“Survey” distributed via Subject Specialist Librarians, news items, and directly from access system interface.

## Participants:

- In progress

Materials Cost: \$0\*

Incentives Cost: \$0

Set up time: ~1hr

Test time: 0

Analysis: ~1hrs

## ArticlesPlus

BETA! Tell us what you think about our new discovery tool (or read more about it).

Advanced ArticlesPlus Search

## Refine Search

- Limit to articles from scholarly journals
- Exclude newspaper articles
- Limit to articles with full text online
- Add results beyond MLibrary

## Publication Date

- 2000-2009 (74650)
- 1990-1999 (34996)
- 1980-1989 (10450)
- 2010-2019 (4218)
- 1970-1979 (1972)
- \*1949 (1546)

more...

## Format

- Newspaper Article (67413)
- Journal Article (56691)
- Dissertation (3996)
- Book Review (504)
- Trade Publication Article (426)
- eBook (305)

Your ArticlesPlus Search for 'diplomatic history' found 129412 results. Showing 1 - 20.

Sort: Relevance

 Select All

Selected items (0): List | Email | Export | Clear

 Making diplomatic history

by Anonymous

Foreign Policy Issue 126. Date: 09/01/2001. Start Page: 98.

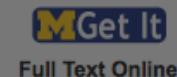
Format: Journal Article

"... sites have the potential to reshape the future study of diplomatic history...." [more...](#) DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

by LUIS DE ONIS

Niles' weekly register Vol. 44, Issue 1142. Date: 08/10/1833. Start Page: 393.

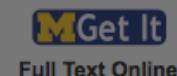
Format: Journal Article

"... communicated to or emanating from congress, which, under the title of "American State Papers," embraces the whole documentary history of the United States, from..." [more...](#) Diplomatic history

by Luis De Onis, James Madison

Niles' weekly register Vol. 44, Issue 24. Date: 08/10/1833. Start Page: 393.

Format: Journal Article

 What Bandwagon? Diplomatic History Today

by Jessica C E Gienow-Hecht

The Journal of American History Vol. 95, Issue 4. Date: 03/2009. Pages: 1083-1086.

Format: Journal Article

"...; and third, the attractiveness of diplomatic history and its practitioners stems from more than the field's methodological concepts - the history of the field is a good..." [more...](#)

# Questions?

All past reports: [www.lib.umich.edu/usability](http://www.lib.umich.edu/usability)



Suzanne Chapman ([suzchap@umich.edu](mailto:suzchap@umich.edu))  
Ken Varnum ([varnum@umich.edu](mailto:varnum@umich.edu))