UAH Library Website UX Report

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Prepared for UAH Library Website Board

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Link to Sway Presentation:

https://sway.office.com/kTy0tWG2II6eqaLC?ref=Link&loc=play

Executive Summary:

This document serves as a User Experience (UX) report for the UAH library website's home page and was compiled using survey data from UAH participants. For the test, we wanted to focus solely on users' opinions and how the participants went about finding certain things such as the search bar on the UAH library website home page. The sample size of this test is ten current UAH students. This sample was used because UAH students are familiar with university library websites and know what is needed in a university library website. Looking into the data obtained from the test, the first impression of the library home page is visually pleasing. The participant's experience with the search feature was good, with no responses falling below a rating of 3 out of 5. Regarding search bar location, responses were mixed. Regarding some sort of SSC connection, there was a response from 80% of the participants in favor of such a connection. The library website is set up relatively well and has no major weaknesses although four potential weaknesses have been identified: the library search bar may look too similar to the UAH search bar, the layout of the homepage may be confusing to some students, the library website contains no link whatsoever to the Student Services Center, and the home page may contain too many blog posts.

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1. Introduction

This document serves as a User Experience (UX) report for the UAH library website's home page and was compiled using survey data from UAH participants. The report, research, survey, and data collection were constructed for the purpose of the UAH library website board understanding how their site is used and if there are any improvements to be made. The library website board is not able to capture data as fine as the data contained in this UX report; this allows them to use this report to make meaningful changes that they otherwise might not notice. Through our survey and analysis of data, the UAH library website board will assess if changes need to be made or if the current design is satisfactory.

The user audience was current students at UAH. This is because they are the primary users of the library website and its resources, so they will have the most important and meaningful opinion about the website. They also are invested in the library website betterment because they use it, so they are very inclined to give insightful and honest answers. We chose to have the participants take a short survey that includes screen recording because students are busy. They are more inclined to take a survey that does not take up too much of their time. The screen recording allows us to analyze the test afterward rather than trying to catch all details in a short time.

2. Test Outline

For the test, we wanted to focus solely on users' opinions and how the participants went about finding certain things such as the search bar on the UAH library website home page, shown below:
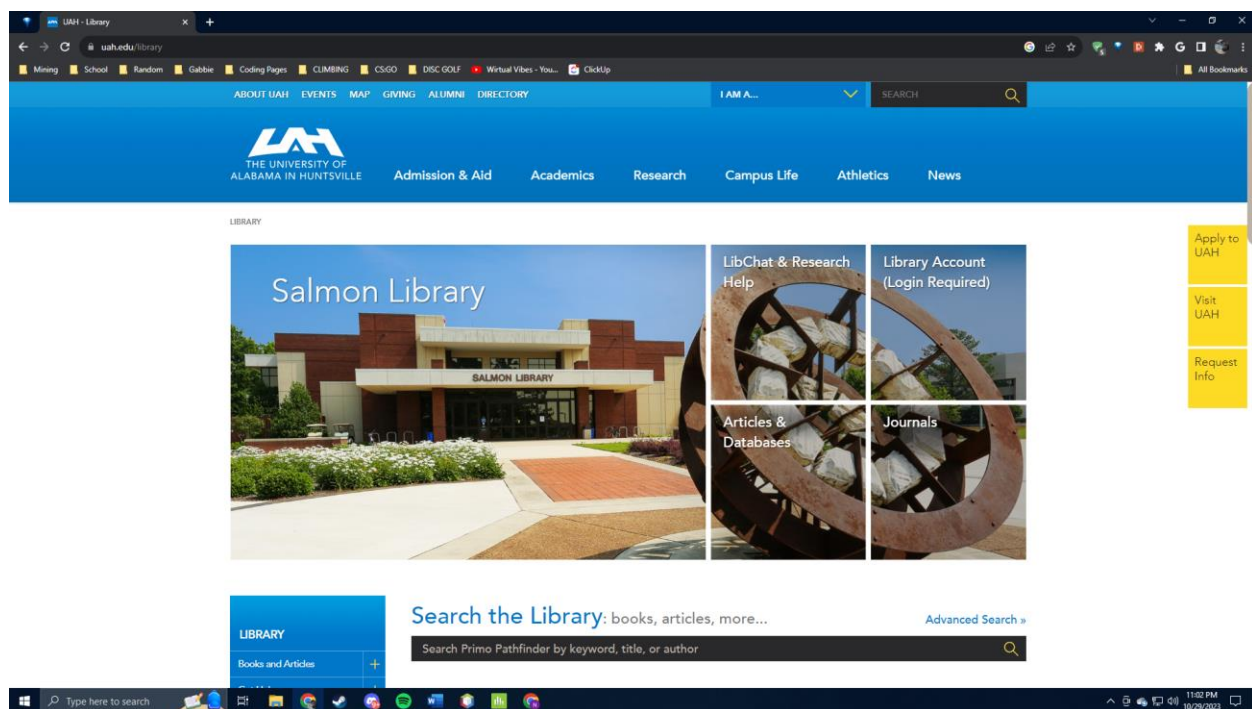
We used the tool UXtweak to give the participants the same set of questions and asked them to answer truthfully and completely. We also used Open Broadcasting Software (OBS) to analyze participants navigation and clicks on the home page after the test was conducted. These questions collected data about the participants, including major and year, as well as probing questions about the website home page and potential problems that we had identified. All data surveying, collection, and storage was conducted with UXtweak and OBS.

The recording was started at the beginning of the survey, and ended when the participants completed the survey. The first instrument used was UXtweak, which was used for the purposes of creating a link-accessible survey and collecting/compiling said survey data. The second instrument used was OBS, which was used for recording the testing screen while the survey was being conducted. The conditions for the test were a desktop computer with the same two Google Chrome tabs open: the UAH library home page and the UXtweak survey site. The participants started on the survey site but were able to switch between the survey site and the library home page for reference. The participants had as much time as needed to complete the survey.

3. Test Participant Details

The sample size of this test is ten current UAH students. The reasoning behind the sample size is based on research done by Jakob Nielsen and Tom Landauer. In this study, it is shown that there are diminishing returns on problems found when sample sizes get to five or more people. Because we have ten people, we are finding roughly 95% of the usability problems on the library website home page according to the research mentioned. This is more than enough, as it would take significantly more time and effort to find more participants than it is worth in knowledge gained. This sample of UAH students was used because they are familiar with university library websites and know what is needed in a university library website. The student year and academic major demographics of this study are diverse, and the corresponding lists are written in appendix A. One demographic we missed in our participants was Freshman students. Overall, the test sample was diverse which ensures that there is fair representation in the results of the test.

4. Findings

Looking into the data obtained from the test, it can be seen from the participant's first impressions that the library home page was well received. Many participants complimented the picture of the library and the layout of the page. One response in particular pointed out a potential problem that was not initially considered: "Shows a lot of posts for the rest of the content on the screen", referring to the ratio of blog posts at the bottom of the home page to other content. Another potential problem that some responses pointed out is that the layout is a bit confusing, with one respondent stating that it was "slightly confusing" and another respondent missing the search bar at first glance.

The participant's experience with the search feature was good, with no responses falling below 3 on the question "On a scale of 1-5, how was your experience with the search feature?" and 60% of responses being a perfect 5. This shows that the library search feature works as intended according to the ten participants that took the test.

Responses for the question "What can you say about the location of the search bar on the home page?" were mixed, with 50% of the participants having an issue with it. Some participants said that they "like that it is in an obvious location" and it is "Good", while others said that they were "thrown off with the UAH search bar" (referencing the search bar at the top-right of the page). One response states: "It's in a decent location, but I would prefer it to be above the Salmon Library picture rectangle or integrated with it somehow." This mixed data shows that there may be some weaknesses with the library search bar location.

In response to the question "Do you think that some sort of connection (such as an embedded link) to the Student Success Center website is needed? Why or why not?", there was a response from 80% of the participants that stated that they would like to see a connection to the SSC from the library website. One participant said it would "add significantly to the utility of the Libraries page," while another said, "yes because it is located within the library." One participant wrote that a link would not be beneficial to them,

but it may be beneficial to other students. A different student said, "it's not necessarily needed but could be put in the Quick Links sections since it's in the library." From these responses, it is believed students would prefer to have some sort of connection to the SSC from the library home page.

For the question "Describe your overall experience with the site. If any changes would be beneficial, please list them here," the vast majority of participants had a good experience and no issues. Two participants described their experience as "great" and "overall works very well." Two participants said that the search bar could be to "highlight" or "relocate" the search bar so that it is more easily findable, which echoes the responses from search bar location question.

Regarding the OBS recordings, they had very little insight. Initially it was determined that a recording would be useful to watch after the participants took their test to see their navigation of the home page. The duration of the survey was too short to generate any conclusions from these videos, but if there was a longer survey, they might have been useful to understand the navigation of the user. Some of the information gained was that a participant (Video 10 in Appendix A) used the MyUAH website to access the library. What was determined from this was that under the M. Louis Salmon Library tab, there is not an obvious way to access the library home page. The only way to access it is from the "more information" hyperlink at the end of the list. This feels extremely counterintuitive, but it may be out of the scope of what the library can change. Additionally, the website linked from the "Articles and Databases" hyperlink on the home page was found to be extremely slow (Video 6 in Appendix A). The website crashed during that session as well. These videos have been included in Appendix A at the end of this report.

5. Conclusions

The library website is set up relatively well and has no major weaknesses. The layout of the home page is nice, and the library search function operates extremely smoothly. Through the course of the study, four potential weaknesses were identified. Firstly, the library search bar may look too similar to the UAH search bar at the top-right of the screen. This causes confusion when people are searching for something in the library but use the wrong search bar to make their search. Secondly, the layout of the page may be confusing to some students, thus causing them to spend more time trying to find what they are looking for. Thirdly, the library website contains no link whatsoever to the Student Services Center, which may cause confusion for students trying to find information about the SSC on the library website. Fourthly, the home page may contain too many blog posts, which causes the page to look cluttered and unorganized.

Appendix A

Q1: What is your major?

A1: aerospace engineering

A2: Aero

A3: Computer Science

A4: Kinesiology

A5: Mechanical Engineering

A6: Computer Science

A7: Biology

A8: Aerospace engineering

A9: Computer Science

A10: Systems Engineering

Q2: What year are you?

A1: Sophomore

A2: Sophomore

A3: Junior

A4: Junior

A5: Sophomore

A6: Senior

A7: Junior

A8: Junior

A9: Senior

A10: Sophomore

Q3: What is your first reaction to the home page?

A1: well structured, organized, and looks nice overall.

A2: Extreme Indifference

A3: Shows a lot of posts for the rest of the content on screen

A4: Looks nice.

A5: Thats a good picture of the library

A6: I like the homepage and the image of the library and the UI with respect to the photos that flip and provide links.

A7: Technically organized, but on first glance slightly confusing layout

A8: The page was ok, but I still missed some details such as the search bar.

A9: Looks good, there is a lot of decorative space at the top where more useful information could be

A10: I do quite like the way it looks, and I am appreciative of the functionality/ease of use of the home page aswell.

Q4: On a scale of 1-5, how was your experience with the search feature?
A1: 5

A2: 3

A3: 5

A4: 5

A5: 4

A6: 4

A7: 5

A8: 4

A9: 5

A10: 5

Q5: What can you say about the location of the search bar on the home page?
A1: I like that it is in an obvious location. it makes searching for the things i need much more efficient and flow smoother.

A2: Have no problems with it.

A3: seems pretty central which is good

A4: It was a little confusing when I first saw it, I was confused and kinda thrown off with the UAH search bar and the library search bar.

A5: It doesn't stand out immediately, looks more like a graphic.

A6: The search bar was pretty simple to find and easy to use. The advanced search feature is pretty straightforward and easy to find as well.

A7: not in a very clear area

A8: I feel that the search bar is not placed in an easy-to-find location.

A9: It's in a decent location, but I would prefer it to be above the Salmon Library picture rectangle or integrated with it somehow

A10: Good!

Q6: Do you think that some sort of connection (such as an embedded link) to the Student Success Center website is needed? Why or why not?
A1: i think it would be helpful, since it connects and makes it obvious that the student success center is located within the library which i think is especially helpful to new students that may not be aware of this.

A2: I do feel like that would add significantly to the utility of the Libraries page.

A3: yes, its there in the library and is another resource to use there

A4: Yes, because studying options can be offered

A5: I would say yes because it is located within the library so it should be part of the library website.

A6: I do think that there should be some connection cause I think most students would correlate the SSC and the Library.

A7: yes, because it is located within the library

A8: I do, since that is a major service that the library provides within.

A9: It's not necessarily needed but could be put in the Quick Links sections since it's in the library

A10: It might be helpful to other people but I haven't felt the need for one on the homepage.

Q7: Describe your overall experience with the site. If any changes would be beneficial, please list them here.

A1: i like the site overall, there aren't any features/ changes i would change/ suggest adding. i think the layout is formatted in a way that makes finding information very straightforward.

A2: Rather neutral as it is on par with most universities libraries that I have used

A3: just reduce the amount of blog posts in the list at the bottom

A4: Seems nice!

A5: I have never had any issues with the library with the site so i would say it is set up pretty well.

A6: I had a pretty good experience aside from the Articles and Databases website and I don't think I would change much.

A7: overall works very well and is typically easy to find the information i need

A8: Overall the site was decent, but I would probably highlight where the search bar is more to help students find it more easily.

A9: Overall experience was great. My one suggestion would be to relocate the search bar to a more prominent location.

A10: I really like the uah homepage, form over function while also being quite sightly.

Works Cited

Nielsen, J. (2000, March 18). *Why you only need to test with 5 users*. Nielsen Norman Group. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/