

Field Study Report: Library Signs

Field Study Report: Library Signs	1
Introduction	1
Tasks:	1
Individual Finding	2
Overall Analysis	4
Next Steps	5
Missed Opportunities & Shortcomings	5
Reflection	5

Introduction

Before conducting the field study, we brainstormed 4 tasks for participants outlined below. These tasks gave us insight into user behavior and identified pain points of the digital library screens. We observed 3 MSU students navigate their way through the MSU Library's digital signs. We assigned one interviewer to ask the participant questions and present the tasks while the rest of us observed and took notes at a distance. We swapped roles between participants. An analysis of our findings and takeaways are reported below.

Tasks:

[SPEAKER] For each task, please narrate your thoughts aloud and explain what you're doing (even if you don't know what to do!). There is no right or wrong answer to each task, we want to observe how you navigate through each task. When you feel comfortable that your task is complete, please say "Done". Please return to the Home screen after each task.

1. Locate the library Maker Space on the screen (without looking at your physical surroundings)
 - a. This task tests the "Find a Location" page.
2. Show and tell where you would find the Therapy Dog Thursday event. Where and when is it?
 - a. This task tests the "Home" page's information hierarchy and organization and/or "Events" page information hierarchy.
3. Find where a book with call number NC16 would be located in the library.
 - a. This task tests the "Find a Book" page
4. Show and tell where you would find library assistance.
 - a. This task tests how a user would locate assistance on the screen (Ask a Librarian or otherwise).

Individual Finding+

Person 1: Kristin M

- Major: Comparative Cultures and Politics
- Minor: Japanese
- Year: Sophomore
- How often they go to library:
 - once over two months; during the day to study alone in the study rooms
- How often do they use the screen:
 - have never interacted with them but have seen them around

Task 1

- Clicked **Maps** and immediately looked at the floor color key
- Initially clicked first floor and went floor by floor
 - Navigated left to right on screen
- Found Maker Space on 2 West, but clicked through multiple floors and wings first.
- Spent lots of time looking at each floor map for all the labels to find “Makerspace”

Task 2

- Clicked on **Events** Page
- Immediately able to find time/date of event of interest
- Read the bolded words (event titles) prior to any other information
 - Looked at event name first before time and date to see if they could make it to the event

Task 3

- Clicked **Find a Book**
- Stopped to read on-screen paragraph to clear confusion
- Scrolled through call number menu options looking for specific numbers
- Tried to interact with the map after clicking ‘N’
- Expected to see the specific call number on the interactive list
 - Thinks there should be a search input

Task 4

- Clicked **Ask a Librarian**
- Noticed that the help options given were for very specific topics
- Expected the library assistance shown on screen to be with helping find a book, not with specific course subjects

Final comments:

- N/A

Person 2: Emerson C

- Current major: English
- New major: Chemistry
- Minor: Japanese
- Year: Freshman
- How often they go to library:
 - Maybe twice entire year (for group project)
- How often do you use screen:
 - Never

Task 1

- Clicked **Find a Location** and evaluated options based on alphabetical order
- Unable to click on desired location, restarted task
- Clicked on **Maps**
- Was uncertain what floor, started going through the floors from the first floor
 - Go to second East
 - Go to second West
 - Found it

Task 2

- Clicked on **Events** Page
- Found it immediately
- Tried to click on event title

Task 3

- Clicked **Find a Book**
- Paused - didn't know what a call number is
- Read through screen information
- Scroll through and find "N"
 - Did not click on it to view map

Task 4

- Clicked **Ask a librarian**
- Said that "Depending on whatever topic, you can view people who are knowledgeable in each subject"

Final Comments

- Pretty concise
- Find a book: would be nice to physically search through titles as their library does

Person 3: Anna S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major: Animal Science - Year: Freshman - How often they go to library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 3 times a week; Do homework - How often do you use screen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never 	
Task 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clicked Find Location - Clicked through tabs alphabetically to find the Makerspace name - Clicked on title to look at map - Found it on the map after a little confusion 	Task 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hit Events - Tried to tap on each event - Looking through the events that pop up
Task 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clicked on Find a book - Pauses to read - Never looks for books at the library, unsure of next step “I honestly don’t know” - Confusion when presented with the map 	Task 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goes to Ask a Librarian, clicks and slides through pages - Information presented is expected, just didn’t expect the categories they showed
Final Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternates between swiping and touching the arrows to move between screens 	

Overall Analysis

Generally, most participants encountered some sort of confusion along the way doing their tasks. This issue was most prevalent during Task #3, where they were asked to find a book and its call number. Additionally, some sort of expectation was set for certain elements, such as being interactive. However, these expectations would not be met and would either further their confusion or alter their course of action to complete a task. Though there were not many differences between participants, all but one chose “Find Location” in their effort to complete Task #1. Instead, they clicked on “Maps.”

Overall, this shows us that we should design the new digital signs user interface with not only more simplicity to avoid complication and confusion with users, but implement clearer word choices to better convey the use of certain functions.

Next Steps

Conducting this field study allowed us to gain insight on users and their possible paths they may take when using the signs. Using the data we have collected, we hope to create a more user-friendly interface and a generally better experience with the signs. These revisions will be implemented into the final project.

Missed Opportunities & Shortcomings

The primary issue we faced while conducting this study was summoning the confidence to approach a random user for testing, as we only pre-selected two out of the three of our users. We spent 40 minutes trying and failing to ask people to user test for us because we were nervous, which was time we could have used to write this report. However, we ultimately conquered our fears and were able to find a third user who was willing to participate in our study.

Reflection

The field study was overall very successful and informative. We struggled more with finding a final participant more than anticipated, but eventually persevered and got all of the testing done that was needed. The note taking and data collection aspect of the assignment was very enjoyable and will be a big help for our final design.