Dean's Innovation Grants

Final Report

Date: September 27, 2017

Project Title: "How do I know if it's useful if I can't even get it to open?": Assessing Information Interaction to Improve Library Collections and Services

Project Team Members: Erin DeWitt Miller, Susan Smith, Emily Billings

Project Purpose

New information formats like e-books and online streaming video are now widespread in education (Matusiak, 2013). However, the usefulness of these platforms to supporting academic library users' information needs has not been sufficiently researched (Albertson, 2013; Richardson & Mahmood, 2012). This study involved applying usability testing methodologies to online streaming video and e-book platforms available through the UNT Libraries

Project Activities

- o Data for the online video usability study gathered in November and December 2016. 12 librarians and 12 students participated in the study, resulting in over 24 hours of recorded interactions and significant qualitative data gathered through a survey.
- o Data for the ebook usability study gathered in January 2017. 12 students participated in the study, resulting in over 12 hours of recorded interactions and significant qualitative data gathered through a survey.
- o Two national and one international conference presentations

Budget

Funds provided gift cards for research participants and allowed researchers to travel to various national conferences to present about this research.
$500 = 50 Amazon gift cards
$658 = 2017 ER&L Conference (presentation)
$856.34 = 2017 EBLIP Conference (presentation)
$2013.34 Total

Project Outputs/Outcomes

Two fully executed usability studies that provided valuable insight into our library patrons. Two national and one international conference presentations and an article is currently being written.
- Miller, E.J.D. (Author & Presenter), American Library Association, Invited, ALCTS/LITA Electronic Resources Management Interest Group Panel on UX and Library resources. (June

25, 2017).

- Miller, E.J.D. (Author & Presenter), Smith, S. (Author), Evidence Based Library & Information Practice, ""How do I know if it's useful if I can't even get it to open?": Assessing Information Interaction to Improve Library Collections and Services," Philadelphia, United States of America. (June 20, 2017 - Present).
- Miller, E.J.D. (Author & Presenter), Smith, S. (Author), Electronic Resources & Libraries, "How do I Know if it's Useful if I can't Even Get it to Open?," Austin, TX, United States of America. (April 2017 - Present).

Other Results (if applicable)

Anecdotal Information

Both librarians and students have a hard time using our online video platforms; both undergraduate and graduate students struggle with using our e-book platforms although they have different issues and different preferences.

Best Practices

Planning ahead and being extremely well-prepared is very important when doing usability testing. Face-to-face recruitment does not work. Meeting regularly with a key group of people (in this case Susan Smith and Allyson Rodriguez) is conducive to following through on lengthy research projects…and if another team member drops out or does not work out for some reason this kind of relationship provides support and continued collaboration that otherwise might not have been available.

Program Continuity

Even though the grant period has ended and we fulfilled our obligations, we are continuing to work on an article. Additionally, knowledge gained through the research process (both knowledge of our users and knowledge of the methodology) will continue to support the UNT Libraries through other studies and also through practical efforts like the Process Improvement Workgroup or the Assessment Workgroup, etc.