Yewno: Compiled usability testing results
August 2016

This document collects together the interesting or actionable feedback from users at MIT Libraries in early August. We tested with 6 librarians, 3 who had never used the tool (cold testers) and 3 who had recently attended a short demo and training session (warm testers). Some sessions were recorded.

Results and recommendations

1. Incorrect search performed (critical)
Users often typed the phrase they wanted to search and hit enter without looking at the UI which often resulted in a different search being performed since the tool chose from a generated dropdown that often did not match the typed phrase. Users then looked at the results thinking their search had been performed as typed; this lead to a lot of immediate confusion when the nodes did not seem to be related to their search. For example, one user searched for “global warming” and was given a search for “World war”

Recommendation: Only search on exact matches - prompt users to pick from the list or reword if an exact match doesn’t exist.

2. Search term removal (critical)
Several users tried to add or remove search terms from the search bar only to have the removed term reappear.

Recommendation: Removed terms should stay removed (bug?).

3. Single node click (critical)
Users clicked a node in the graph once to view more about it and were confused by the circular display shown. Some asked what the ordering meant - number of articles, importance, random - and most then clicked the central node or a secondary node to dig into that concept more and were instead returned to the main graph with no nodes highlighted so their term was lost. Most gave up on that concept at that point.

Recommendations: (1) A click on the central node in the circular graph should add the node to the graph as another search term on the “journey”; (2) A click on a secondary node in the secondary graph should recenter the circular graph on that concept; (3) If a user clicks
anywhere outside the circular graph, they should be returned to the main graph with the recently exited node highlighted.

4. Information sourcing confusion (critical)
Most of the users used the highlighted blue summary to grasp the basics of the concept, but did not connect the “i” icon with reading more and were not sure of the source of the summary. Several clicked the “i” icon and found it helpful but were disoriented about where the information came from and therefore how to put the information in context.

Recommendations: (1) Add a “more” link to the end of the (truncated) summary that links to the full description page; (2) Change the “i” icon link to state information about the summary (like the source); (3) Add some context/sourcing to the Yewno bar at top of the wikipedia page displayed from the summary.

5. Confusing icons (moderate)
The icons/options in the header (graph view toggle, print, history) were not clear and had no labels or hover text to help users understand them. Most knew the printer would print but did not understand the pin-print connection. A few testers switched the graph view and found it easier to use because it was more visually stable, but did not connect that it was a different view of the same information.

Recommendation: Add hover text to the icons.

6. Misunderstood bottom bar (moderate)
None of the testers understood what the bar along the bottom was for but were very interested once they were told what it was.

Recommendation: Add pole labels (“common” to “obscure” or similar).

7. Underused sidebar list (minor)
Very few users connected the graph with the list in the sidebar, only referring to it when a concept or connection was highlighted. Many users had a hard time navigating the graph and selecting the concept they were interested in and would have benefitted from using the list instead.

Recommendation: Subtly highlight the sidebar terms when the user hovers over a node encourage association.
8. Overlooked loading icon (moderate)
Many users did not notice the loading Y in the center of the empty screen and were not sure what if anything was happening. They then tried to edit their search and ended up with incorrect search terms or altered searches.

Recommendation: Darken the loading icon so it is clear that something is happening.

9. Unclear ordering of documents (moderate)
The users who looked closely at the related documents were unsure how those ones were selected, how to get more if those were not sufficient, found repeated articles that appeared the same but had different excerpts.

10. Unable to access articles or books (critical)
Several users were not able to access full text or find a way to get a book once they located it via Yewno - JSTOR, PubMed, and books were especially problematic.

11. Challenging to discover links between concepts (moderate)
None of the testers successfully discovered that the lines between concepts were clickable in the graph nor did they double click to add another major concept to their graph - leading them to miss a significant value. This is related to the “single node click” issue.

Recommendation: Make it easier to select multiple concepts - the “single node click” recommendations may be enough.

12. Unclear ordering of suggested search terms (critical)
Users commented that the suggested search terms shown while they were typing often seemed unrelated and confusing as to why they were suggested. They expected that the letters they were typing would exist in each suggestion and were also unsure about why the terms were ordered the way they were.