Web Advisory Group

GIS web site usability test results

Site tested: http://libraries.mit.edu/gis

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The Test
8 users were tested. The test consisted of 9 questions, plus an open-ended question for comments.

Results Summary:

The following is a draft of the observed problems and brainstormed solutions from a meeting on Sept. 4, 2002. The solutions will be implemented sometime during September.

All 8 testers found the answers to all 9 questions, with the exception of 1 person who did not find #7 or #8, and another person did not find #1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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| question 1:  
- thought "people" link would get him help  
- "contact us" link should stand out more | - add "contact us" link as permanent last headline on home page |
| question 2:  
- users thought links would take them to pages that told them about how to download software  
- not sure how to get software | - change page to list of software, each title should link to 2nd page that describes how to get it  
- get rid of chart format  
- divide page into sections, one for software available through MIT and one for other software projects |
| question 3:  
- not clear on "in the libraries" vs. "on the web"  
- people don’t understand that you | - change to "Spatial Data on CD-ROMs" |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 4:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- should not have to unzip files: don't use Powerpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- items in content not linked, have to go to sidebar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- convert Powerpoint to PDF version and to HTML version
- training/index.html change bold headings to links
- change software + hardware to just software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall problem for all questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- in sidebar, no cue to show you which page you're on, all links look the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- use of + and - instead of bullets is confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pages don't have standard format for how they are named</td>
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- remove SSIs, un-link the page you're currently on
- put subcategories right up under the category, don't leave blank line between
- use * or • for bullets
- standardize names of pages, like this: training: overview training: basics (apply this to all pages of site)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 5:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- it's not clear what data libraries own</td>
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- not a web issue
- people don't understand that some things aren't on the web

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 6:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- the Research category name is confusing, not sure what would be in it</td>
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<tr>
<td>- looked for &quot;courses&quot; as a word</td>
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<tr>
<td>- thought there should be EAPS link</td>
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<tr>
<td>- when looking for courses, clicked on link to Architecture dept. first</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- change broad category of "research" to "Teaching + Learning", make broad category of "Training" a sub-category of it, called "Tutorials"
- remove long, wordy paragraph on this page: research/teaching.html
- add headings to break into 2 sections: GIS classes offered at MIT IAP courses (non-credit)
- add course numbers to course names
- link to websites for all classes
- remove whole last paragraph (containing lab exercises link)
- new subcategory names for "Teaching + Learning"

Research becomes Projects
| Question 7: | Teaching becomes Courses + Workshops
Facilities (remove it)
People becomes Faculty + Others and add:
Tutorials |
|---|---|
| - unclear GIS is part of Rotch Library, didn't understand how hours are presented
- confusion between hours for GIS Lab or hours for GIS Assistance or Rotch open hours | - put Rotch hours right on the page and keep up to date when hours change each semester
- change "mission" to "overview" - put on its own separate page, add heading:
**How we can help you**
(instead of calling it "mission") |
| Question 8: | - get rid of hardware, call it software
- change training to tutorials and put under "teaching + learning" (see above) |
| - links in sidebar have names too similar to main headings (software/hardware)
- found sidebars confusing | |
| Question 9: | - change name to "faculty"
- change links:
Name [web page] [email link]
- remove "dept. of"
- remove double bullets |
| - tester was looking for a page that said "faculty," not "people"
- inconsistent links to faculty web pages or email addresses | |
| Additional comments: | - add new page listing where scanners and printers are, called "Hardware" |