# Web Advisory Group

## New home page - usability test results

**Site tested:** paper prototype of new home page for libraries.mit.edu

**Nicole Hennig, Web Manager**  
April 2004

**The Test**  
6 users were tested. 5 grad students and 1 undergrad. See detailed results for questions and answers.

## Results Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comments/Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: What would you click on to find out if we have a certain book?</td>
<td>- no problems: Everyone found Barton, either in quick links, under Search Our Collections, or Barton quick search One used &quot;how do I find a book?&quot; link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: It's the first time you've used our library and you want to know how to go about finding some journal articles that you need. What would you click on to find out how to do that?</td>
<td>- no problems: 3 picked &quot;how do I find an article?&quot; link, which is what we were looking for and the other 3 picked Vera or Research Help, which is logical.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3: What would you click on to find out what time Rotch Library closes on Fridays? | - no problem: all but one found Hours link - One user went to List of Libraries first.  
IDEA: Add prominent link to "hours" page on our "list of libraries page" in upper right, since some people might go there first. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you click on to find out when the 5 books you have checked out are due?</td>
<td>- no problem Everyone found &quot;your account&quot; link or would go in through Barton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What would you click on if you wanted to email a librarian for help with your research?</td>
<td>- no problem Everyone found &quot;Ask Us&quot; link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What would you click on if you want to request a book from a non-MIT library?</td>
<td>- no problem Everyone found ILB either under Borrowing + Ordering, the menu, or Barton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What would you click on to find and print out the full text of an article from the Journal of Cell Biology?</td>
<td>- no problem Everyone found Vera, one person would look in FAQs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDEA:</strong> Make sure we keep all our FAQs up to date, especially now that it will be more prominent.</td>
<td>Integrate Information Navigator questions into the General FAQ, such as &quot;how do I find an article?&quot; Answers would link back to Information Navigator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pretend that you are a wealthy person who wants to give a donation to the library. What would you click on?</td>
<td>- no problem Everyone found Giving link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You want to find out more about something called DSpace - a digital repository for MIT research, sponsored by the libraries. What would you click on?</td>
<td>- took a while, but most everyone found it under &quot;more quick links&quot; when they couldn't see it anywhere else. One person looked in FAQ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDEA:</strong> Add DSpace FAQ to our FAQs page. Also add a question to our general FAQ, called &quot;what is dspace?&quot; - link to that question in the DSpace FAQ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. You want to find a</td>
<td>- This is the age old problem of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**New home page usability test results: MIT Libraries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>People Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. You want to order an item from our remote storage facility (RSC).</td>
<td>Most people chose Borrowing + Ordering, which would get you there. Only two people found it under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you click on?</td>
<td>&quot;order forms&quot; menu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>IDEA:</strong> Make &quot;RSC: Remote Storage&quot; link be the visible link in the menu instead of ILB, since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ILB is already prominent elsewhere on the page and everyone found it easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also, most people go to RSC via Barton, so maybe it's not so critical how they find it on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>home page. They are already looking in Borrowing + Ordering, which works.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 12. You want to see a list of all the libraries at MIT. What would you   | No problem                                                                                         |
| click on?                                                               |                                                                                                    |

| 13. You want to look at old MIT yearbooks. You heard the archives has   | This was hard. Archives is in the "list of libraries" and also under "search our collections,"     |
| copies. Find the home page of the Institute Archives.                   | under the archives link at the top. People found it eventually in both places, but didn't feel   |
|                                                                          | they would.                                                                                       |
|                                                                          | It took people a while to find it. People looked in "more quick links" and it wasn't there.       |
|                                                                          | **IDEA:** Add Institute Archives back to quick                                                  |

## General comments and ideas:

- **IDEA:**
  Change link to Site Index to say:
  Site Search/Index
  
  ...so at least people will know web search is still there on that page.

- **IDEA:**
  On List of Libraries page, near the new "hours" link, also add this link:
  "Libraries: campus map"

  ... to make it more prominent.

- **IDEA:**
  Order of links under About Us should be this:
  List of MIT Libraries, staff, jobs, news, more...

- **IDEA:**
  Put HOURS link first in quick links, since Barton is already there as the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Links, since it's different and buried in the middle of unlinked things.</th>
<th>Barton quick search just above it. We know that SO many people come just looking for the hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- we worry about people still confusing Barton quick search with our web search.</td>
<td>IDEA: Make the default choice not &quot;keyword&quot; but &quot;title keyword&quot; - since that will suggest to people that it contains titles - it's our catalog, not a web search. Also will provide a smaller results set. Abd we're guessing most would be doing a known item search when using Barton from the home page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- people didn't know what would be in the order forms menu. This made us reconsider: is this the best division? quicklinks vs. order forms?</td>
<td>IDEA: We will discuss this further in WAG. Seems that the &quot;quick links&quot; are for things that are used very frequently by large numbers of users. This menu appears in the footer of many pages on our site, in addition to the home page. (with the same contents) &quot;Order forms&quot; did not seem logical or descriptive enough to our users. And some items don't belong in quick links but are there since we want to make them more prominent &amp; easy to find, and they don't logically fit elsewhere. (shall we call these &quot;special services?&quot; - see below) So we propose this division: Quick Links: (visible ones) - HOURS - BARTON library catalog - VERA - ASK US! - YOUR ACCOUNT - Renew books + more More quick links: (menu) - List of libraries + units - Virtual Reference --- order forms --- - Document Services - Interlibrary Borrowing - RSC: storage request - Suggest a purchase - Bookpage delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Services: (menu)
(still need to brainstorm better name)
  - DSpace at MIT
  - Metadata Services
  - Institute Archives
  - MIT Press

The quicklinks menu that appears on all other pages would be a merged list of the visible quick links and the more quick links, not including "special services."

- in our next generation web site we really need to re-think the category "Subjects + Courses"

IDEA:
Even though we were not planning to change any top-level category names this time, we've been discussing it.

Thoughts:
Since people don't know what's in Subjects + Courses, perhaps that name should go away.

Instead the new top level category names could be:

- replace Research Help with Ask Us

- replace Subjects + Courses with Help Yourself

All the things currently under Ask Us, could stay there - phone, email, instruction, etc. and we could add the list of subject experts which is currently in Subjects + Courses. Everything in the Ask Us category would be about getting help from our expert librarians.

Help Yourself could contain all the self-service pages, including much of what is now under Subjects + Courses, such as subject guides, publication type guides, course pages, and database cheatsheets.

This would promote self-service at the top level and perhaps be more descriptive of much of the content we already have.

This would of course mean extra work revising the nav bars on 2nd
level pages.

We'll discuss this further at the next WAG meeting.
Web Advisory Group

New home page - usability test results

Site tested: paper prototype of new home page for libraries.mit.edu

Nicole Hennig, Web Manager
April 2004

The Test
6 users were tested. 5 grad students and 1 undergrad.

fields: Urban Studies, MechE, Urban Studies, Urban Studies, Civil Engineering, unknown

previous use of our web site:
- has used the library web site a little bit, mainly Barton, to do research for his thesis
- Uses Rotch, Dewey and/or web site almost every day
- he has used the web site in the past, but not that often, mostly for Barton and Vera, and to find GIS
- only used web site a few times
- Uses web site a few times a week
- Uses web site ca. twice per week, mostly uses: Barton and VERA

Results Summary:

Questions

What would you click on first?

1. To find out if we have a certain book.
   
   - Barton link (under quick links)
   - Barton in the Quick Links menu
   - Clicked Barton under Search our Collections link in the center.
   "Collections--that means the things in Barton. Oh, it says Barton right here." He didn't notice the Barton quick search (ever) or the Barton quicklink (until later in the test).
   - Find a book? (under How do I...)
   - Barton quick search (change to Title begins with...)
   - Pointed to Barton link under "Search Our Collections".
   About 2 seconds later went, "Oh! that's great!" when she noticed the Quick Search.

2. It's the first time you've used our library and you want to know how to go about finding some journal articles that you need. What would you click on to find out how to do that?

   - Research Help category link or Ask Us (he didn't notice the "how do I" link)
- E-journals next to VERA
- Clicked on Vera from Search Our Collections because it was next to the word "e-journals", then noticed Vera quick link on the side.
- Find an article? (under How do I...)
- Find an article? (under How do I...)
- Pointed to "Find an article" under "How do I?"

3. To find out what time Rotch Library closes on Fridays.

- Hours (under quick links)
- HOURS
- Hours (under quick links), said he'd also click on About Us.
- list of libraries (under About Us)
- Hours (under Quick Links)
- Pointed at "List of Libraries" under "About Us"

4. To find out when the 5 books you have checked out are due.

- Your Account (under quick links)
- Your Account (she said Your Account before looking for it on the page)
- Barton (under Search our Collections) or Barton (under quicklinks) or the Search Our Collections page or the How Do I...Renew Books link. (He didn't see the Your Account Link under the quick links. When I pointed it out to him after it was over, he said he didn't associate Your Account with his Barton Account.)
- more... (under Borrowing + Ordering)
- Your Account (under Quick Links) - she called it "My account"
- By this time, she had already noticed "Your Account" under Quick Links and pointed to it.

5. If you wanted to email a librarian for help with your research.

- Ask Us (under quick links), or Contact Us in footer (he said both)
- Ask Us (she said Ask Us before looking for it on the page)
- Ask Us (under quick links), or Ask Us (under Research Help) or Staff Directory (under About Us)
- Ask Us! (under Quick Links)
- Ask Us! (under Quick Links)
- Pointed to "Ask Us" under "Research Help"

6. If you want to request a book from a non-MIT library?

- ILB text link under Borrowing + Ordering
- She'd look for the book in Barton and then request it through the ILB link in Barton/ she also found the ILB link under Borrowing & Ordering
- Borrowing + Ordering page. Did not see ILB in the pulldown menu, or notice it in the line under Borrowing + Ordering on home page.
- Interlibrary borrowing (under Borrowing + Ordering)
- Interlibrary Borrowing (under Order Forms drop-down menu)
- Pointed to "Interlibrary borrowing" under "Borrowing + Ordering"

7. To find and print out the full text of an article from the Journal of Cell Biology.

- "e-journals" part of Vera text link under Search Our Collections (he
never said "vera" out loud, just "e-journals")  
- VERA  
- Vera under quick links, or Research Help, or Ejournals link below  
Search our Collections. He said he'd look for the word "full text" in the  
search box (didn't realize the search box was Barton only). He also  
checked the More Quicklinks and Order Forms pulldowns, but was a  
little hung up on the word fulltext.  
- FAQs (under How do I...)  
- Vera (under Quick Links)  
- Pointed to VERA under Quick Links, said "I would search for the  
journal title in VERA."

8. Pretend that you are a wealthy person who wants to give a  
donation to the library.  
- Giving  
- Giving  
- Giving--but he wanted to type donation into the search box.  
- Giving  
- Giving  
- Pointed to "Giving"

9. You want to find out more about something called DSpace - a  
digital repository for MIT research, sponsored by the libraries.  
- More Quick Links - DSpace  
- She looked all over the page and didn't find it, then tried Quick Links  
and found it  
- Didn't know what DSpace was, but he said that he'd check Research.  
He did find it under the pulldown menu eventually, but he had to look  
at every other category first.  
- FAQs (under How do I...)  
- DSpace at MIT (under More Quicklinks); feels like she was cheating  
though since she already saw the options under the More Quick Links  
menu before the test started. [I agree - I feel like we can't effectively  
test the drop-downs until they are a live option.]  
- Took a while, finally pointed to "Search Our Collections" (from which  
there is a link).

10. You want to find a list of web sites and library resources for  
chemistry.  
- Barton quick search - keyword (didn't say Subjects + Courses)  
- Subjects+Courses/ She also said she'd try Vera or Barton  
- Confused by "web sites and library resources" asked if I wanted him  
to find articles or books. Said he'd go to Barton, and do a subject  
search for chemistry. He'd also try Subjects + Courses, but hasn't used  
those pages yet. He uses the subjects page to access GIS information,  
but hasn't looked at any of the other subject pages before, although he  
has used course pages.  
- Would type "chemistry" in the Barton quick search.  
- Hesitated for quite a while, but then would have chosen Subjects and  
Courses to see if chemistry was listed there (since other subjects  
were). She might have also clicked on Databases under Search our  
Collections. [Obviously just didn't understand the concept of subject  
pages.]  
- DID NOT SUCCEED. This was hard for her. Finally pointed to VERA,
said, "I would do a subject search in VERA maybe." When I said we were looking for things possibly other than electronic, she looked some more, and said "I just don't know."

11. You want to order an item from our remote storage facility (RSC).
- category link: Borrowing + Ordering (didn't point to Order Forms menu)
- Quick Links and List of Libraries and Units/ then she tried Order Forms and found it
She said that she wouldn't understand what the Order Forms menu is unless she clicked on it to see the choices.
- Didn't know what RSC was, but figured that he could get to it via the Borrowing + Ordering category link. Later on in the test, he saw RSC in the Order forms quicklinks menu.
- FAQs (under How do I...)
- RSC: Storage Request (under Order Forms)
- Pointed to Borrowing + Ordering, which makes sense to her, but she did say it didn't seem very clear that RSC would be there.

12. You want to see a list of all the libraries at MIT.
- list of libraries link under About Us
- She remembered seeing it under Quick Links and found it again.
- list of libraries link under About Us
- list of libraries (under About Us)
- list of libraries (under About Us); might also have just gone to the Hours page, since that is where she goes now (it has hours and phone numbers for each library).
- Pointed to About Us

13. You want to look at old MIT yearbooks. You heard the archives has copies. Find the home page of the Institute Archives.
- looked in More Quick Links, but it wasn't there, then tried Search Our Collections category link (which would have worked)
- She tried Quick Links but didn't recognize anything that would lead to Archives, then tried Order Forms, then looked for a search box on the home page, then said she'd use the quick search to search Barton.
- looked at About Us, list of libraries. Said he would use a site search for yearbooks or archives. He said that he liked that we had a search box with the pulldown operators, and that he hates it when web sites don't have a search box. (he didn't realize that the search box was for Barton until I pointed it out to him)
- Search our Collections (was first going to choose Research Help, but changed her mind)
- Hesitated quite a while. Eventually decided she would look under list of libraries (under About Us); but if that didn't work, would have clicked on Borrowing and Ordering.
- Another hard one. Looked around for a LONG time. Finally said, "maybe Search Our Collections?" but admitted it was sort of a wild guess. Archives is right at the top of that second-level page, though.

14. You heard that we have tips on how to use the Web of
Science database. Find that page.
- databases part of the Vera link under Search our Collections category (said "databases") (didn't click on Subjects + Courses, of course)
- Vera Databases
- Research Help category link, or Search or Collections category link.
- Search our Collections
- Would go to the Web of Science database (which she uses a lot) and looked for a link there. Might also try the FAQ or under How do I... Find an Article?.
- Pointed to Research Help, said she might use "Ask Us"

Opinion questions

1. What do you find most useful on our web site?
- Barton catalog and the Your account features for renewing books
- She liked the Quick Links. She generally uses Barton and Vera and Hours, and rarely uses anything else on the home page. She liked the How Do I and FAQ links too. She said that the subjects+courses link is not especially helpful to her... she mentioned that she had looked on that page before and didn't find anything useful to her subject. She was not in favor of pages with too much on them, making it hard to find things.
- Barton and Vera and checking what books he has checked out in Barton
- Uses library web site to get to Massachusetts GIS info and other GIS services, and to get to course pages.
- List of Libraries (she would find hours there)
- great to have a quick Barton search on the home page (seemed to understand she would have more options going to Barton itself though)
- great to have a clear link to Vera; currently, even though she uses it all the time, she has to stop and look for Vera link; FYI, she does use Vera more than Barton
- Uses Barton and VERA a lot. Is glad they're still on top, and is glad about Barton Quick Search coming to new site.

2. What would you like to see on our web site that's not there?
- link to MIT home page (I showed him where it is in the new one) and a link to MIT webmail
- link to Library Web Site Search
- link to a map of where the libraries are on campus so that he doesn't have to enter the library into the MIT search engine to find out.
- What's new link, also would like to be able to search the web site (she understood that was different from Barton search).
- She would like to have a link to the most popular journals (and also databases) right from the top page. She didn't think the Digital Library of MIT Theses was important (I don't know anyone who uses that) and it would be better to have a drop-down menu that goes right to the most popular resources. She uses Science and Nature all the time and has to go every time from the home page, to Vera, to the search screen, then find it in the listings, then go to the site. I mentioned that since the Libraries cover so many disciplines it would be hard to pick a top 10 list that suited everyone. She still felt since most people were
scientists/engineers we should stress that, but then we also discussed the possibility of being able to personalize your top 10. Maybe through Your Account?
-"Your Account" -- Thank you for putting that on the home page!

3. Show old web page printout and new: Look at our current home page and the new page and give us your comments.

- He definitely likes the new one better. He says it looks better, aesthetically. Also it's more functional, in the old everything looked the same, in the new, things pop out at you more.
-She liked the old web page better than the new one. Barton and Vera were emphasized more. She said the old one had a cleaner layout and there are too many things on the new one. She also said that the color looks too light for an engineering school like MIT, it should be grayer. She would like to see the 20% of the information that's important and helpful on the front page. She would also like a "search this site" option on the front page.
-He likes the quicklinks on the left for their simplicity, although he didn't actually notice Barton or Your Account in the quicklinks until much later. He said he'd use those links most often (event though he didn't see them right away). He said that the new web site is more attractive, but the current one is simple and the color blocks and lists make it easier to see. He said that having three different widths on the columns was a little strange to him. He thought there was much more information on the current web page, but with the new site, "you can get to things like the Barton account, which is nice."
-Likes to look at the new one better - likes the lighter background.
-Thinks the new page is much cleaner and it is easier to pick out the most popular stuff like Barton, Vera and the hours - on the old page it is harder to find things. She likes the different main categories (I assume she means groupings, since the 5 headings stayed the same). She likes the bigger font - easier to read.
--The new page is much "cleaner" and will be easier to use, but the old design has great colors, is a cooler design.
--"What's Subjects + Courses? I don't know what it is so I never go there." (I showed her what's in there, and she said she felt the title "S + C" was not very clear.
--"HOURS" under Quick Links: "it seems a little lost, because it's not like the other things in that category. I didn't notice it [when she was doing question number 3]" (I guess she's right).
--Under "About Us": "I think the list of libraries is more important than Staff Directory and Jobs, so I think the order should be changed."