Fall 2009 Usability Results

This page is maintained by Nicole Hennig, Web Manager & Usability Specialist of the MIT Libraries. The User Interface Group plans and conducts usability tests for the libraries' web sites and other interfaces.

For complete details on the tests and methods, see:
Usability tests - Fall 2009 (wiki space - MIT Libraries staff only)
Download the test questions. (PDF)
Download the test questions with answers and observer notes. (PDF)

1. Homepage
   - Detailed list of problems

2. Rotch Library site
   - Detailed list of problems

3. Publishing Services LibGuide
   - Detailed list of problems

MIT Libraries' Staff
Web
MIT Libraries'
Public Web

Fall 2009 usability questions - MIT Libraries

MIT Libraries Home Page Questions
http://libraries.mit.edu

1. You are in course number 2.006 taught by Hosoi. How would you find the list of reserve items?

2. You are taking 1.018J/7.30J Ecology 1: The Earth System and you remember a librarian came to class and said there would be a guide about library resources specifically set up for the course. Can you find this?

3. How would you find the article listed below?


4. How would you find journal articles about the use of green roofs as a method of sustainable architecture?

5. You want to do a search in the library database called “Web of Science.” How would you find it?

6. You would like to renew one of your books online. How would you do that?

7. You are having trouble locating a journal article. How would you contact library staff for help?

8. You’ve heard that graduate students can get borrowing privileges at certain Harvard Libraries. Find the web page that gives further information about this.
9. You're doing research in organic chemistry and you need to find some properties of organic compounds. Where would you find a page guiding you to the best resources on this topic?

10. You're starting to work on your thesis, but aren't finding all the information you need. How would you contact a librarian that specializes in your subject area?

11. How would you suggest we purchase a book not currently owned by MIT?

12. You've heard the library offers classes on using citation software such as RefWorks and EndNote. Where would you find information about the upcoming schedule of classes?

13. Where can you find out about library services and resources that will help you when publishing an article?

14. Do you use your phone to access the web? With our new mobile site you can now easily look up library hours and locations, submit a question via a web form, and read our news blog. Are there other library-related tasks you would like to have optimized for mobile access?

15. Find the Rotch Library home page.
Rotch Library Site Questions
http://libraries.mit.edu/rotch

1. How would you get help with a project using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software?

2. Where would you find information about the architecture of MIT buildings?

3. You are writing a paper about the architect Tadao Ando. What resource would you try first to find some articles about his work?

4. You are an artist and would like to exhibit your work in the Rotch Gallery. Where can you find more information?

5. Where can you find images of historic buildings to use in a class presentation?

6. You are in an Urban Studies class – where would you find a list of the best resources for your research?

7. How would you contact one of the Architecture or Planning librarians for help?

8. Return to the MIT Libraries home page.
UNDERGRADS ONLY

Mini Site Questions
http://libraries.mit.edu/mini

1. You are in course number 2.006 taught by Hosoi. How would you find the list of reserve items?

2. You are taking 1.018J/7.30J Ecology 1: The Earth System and you remember a librarian came to class and said there would be a guide about library resources specifically set up for the course. Can you find this?

3. How would you find the item listed below?


4. You would like to renew one of your books online. How would you do that?

5. You are having trouble locating a journal article. How would you contact library staff for help?
FACULTY/GRADS/RESEARCHERS ONLY

Publishing Services Guide Questions
http://libguides.mit.edu/publishing-services

1. Look at this site for a minute or so, and get a good feel for what the site is about. Take your time and let me know when you are ready.

Tell me what the purpose of this site is. What would you come here to find out?

2. Where can you find out the impact factor of a specific journal you are thinking of publishing in?

3. What tools are available to manage your literature sources and citations?

4. Where can you find out if your funding agency has requirements about making your research publicly available?

5. Where can you find information about managing your research data?

6. How can you get help if you have more questions about retaining rights to your work as an author or about the new MIT Open Access policy?

   ...if you have more questions about managing your data?
   ...if you need help finding literature related to your research?

7. As an author or as a potential author, what did you find most useful on this site? Do you have suggestions for other information that should be here?
Fall 2009 usability questions - MIT Libraries

Observer name:
Tester name:
Status (circle one): undergrad | grad | faculty | other:
Dept:

Before you start:
- clear your browser history
- be sure Barton Catalog is the default search tab selected
- make sure LibX is off (if using Firefox)
- if using the student's computer, make sure you can see the screen clearly and that it's bright and large enough to see what they are doing
- when taking notes about search questions, be sure to indicate if user chooses a radio button other than default

Read this to the volunteer:

Today we are testing a few different sites: the MIT Libraries home page, the Rotch Library site, and [if faculty, grad or researcher] the Publishing Services guide.

I'm going to ask you to do some things in each site and I'd like you to "think out loud" about what you are clicking on and why. The more you can explain your thought process, the more helpful it will be to us. I may need to ask you to pause occasionally while I take notes.

Remember, this is not a test of you, it's a test of the sites. Do you have any questions before we start?

When we are done, I'll be happy to explain anything that was confusing during the test.

End of test
Thank the user and tell them that's the end of the test. Feel free to answer any questions they had or explain anything that you think confused them and would be good for them to know.

Remember to give them the Amazon gift card!

Type up your notes immediately, and post here next to your name: https://wikis.mit.edu/confluence/display/LIBUI/Usability+tests++Fall+2009
MIT Libraries Home Page Questions (~20 minutes)
http://libraries.mit.edu
User should return to the home page for the start of each new question

1. You are in course number 2.006 taught by Hosoi. How would you find the list of reserve items?

   **Answer:** Reserves tab > search by course number

2. You are taking 1.018J/7.30J Ecology 1: The Earth System and you remember a librarian came to class and said there would be a guide about library resources specifically set up for the course. Can you find this?

   **Answer:** Help/More help > Tips & Guides/Course Pages

3. How would you find the article listed below?


   **Answer:** Vera E-journals & Databases tab > look up the journal
   or Full Text Finder on either Vera tab
   or Vera Multi-Search
   or other:

4. How would you find journal articles about the use of green roofs as a method of sustainable architecture?

   **Answer:** Vera MultiSearch tab > search “green roofs” in either default tab or art + architecture

5. You want to do a search in the library database called “Web of Science.” How would you find it?

   **Answer:** Vera E-journals & Databases tab > search for web of science
6. You would like to renew one of your books online. How would you do that?

   **Answer:** Your Account (under Barton tab or under Borrow or renew)

7. You are having trouble locating a journal article. How would you contact library staff for help?

   **Answer:** Ask Us! – orange button in upper right or under Help

8. You’ve heard that graduate students can get borrowing privileges at certain Harvard Libraries. Find the web page that gives further information about this.

   **Answer:** All services, A-Z > Harvard Libraries
   or under Borrow or renew > Circ FAQ > Borrowing + Requesting
   or under Borrow or renew > More borrowing + delivery options

9. You’re doing research in organic chemistry and you need to find some properties of organic compounds. Where would you find a page guiding you to the best resources on this topic?

   **Answer:** Research guides by subject > Chemistry
   or Research guides by subject > Properties of materials & chemicals

10. You’re starting to work on your thesis, but aren’t finding all the information you need. How would you contact a librarian that specializes in your subject area?

    **Answer:** Research consultations under Help
    or More experts under Ask the Expert

11. How would you suggest we purchase a book not currently owned by MIT?

    **Answer:** More borrowing + delivery options under Borrow or renew > Suggest a purchase

12. You’ve heard the library offers classes on using citation software such as RefWorks and EndNote. Where would you find information about the upcoming schedule of classes?
Answer: Classes & workshops under Help

13. Where can you find out about library services and resources that will help you when publishing an article?

Answer: All services, A-Z > Publishing Services

14. Do you use your phone to access the web? With our new mobile site you can now easily look up library hours and locations, submit a question via a web form, and read our news blog. Are there other library-related tasks you would like to have optimized for mobile access?

15. Find the Rotch Library home page.

Answer: List of Libraries in blue bar at top

Rotch Library Site Questions (~10 minutes)
http://libraries.mit.edu/rotch

1. How would you get help with a project using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software?

Answer: GIS tab

2. Where would you find information about the architecture of MIT buildings?

Answer: Subject Guide for MIT Buildings

3. You are writing a paper about the architect Tadao Ando. What resource would you try first to find some articles about his work?
Answer: Avery Index on home page or one of the architecture subject guides and then Avery from there.

4. You are an artist and would like to exhibit your work in the Rotch Gallery. Where can you find more information?

Answer: Exhibitions pages – guidelines PDF linked from the top of the page.

5. Where can you find images of historic buildings to use in a class presentation?

Answer: Finding Images guide. Links to DOME or ARTstor.

6. You are in an Urban Studies class – where would you find a list of the best resources for your research?

Answer: Urban Studies Research Guide

7. How would you contact one of the Architecture or Planning librarians for help?

Answer: Ask Us or Contact Us page

8. Return to the MIT Libraries home page.

Answer: Link in right hand Quick links menu.
UNDERGRADS ONLY

Mini Site Questions (~15 minutes)
http://libraries.mit.edu/mini

1. You are in course number 2.006 taught by Hosoi. How would you find the list of reserve items?

   Answer: Tutorials > Barton Basics > Searching for Reserves > Reserves (NOT EASY!)

2. You are taking 1.018J/7.30J Ecology 1: The Earth System and you remember a librarian came to class and said there would be a guide about library resources specifically set up for the course. Can you find this?

   Answer: Tutorials > More tips & guides > Course pages

3. How would you find the item listed below?


   Answer: Search > Find articles on your topic > [enter article title]

4. You would like to renew one of your books online. How would you do that?

   Answer: Search > Your account (in upper right)
   or Request > your account

5. You are having trouble locating a journal article. How would you contact library staff for help?

   Answer: Search > Need help? Ask Us! (lower right)
FACULTY/GRADS/RESEARCHERS ONLY

Publishing Services Guide Questions (~15 minutes)
http://libguides.mit.edu/publishing-services

1. Look at this site for a minute or so, and get a good feel for what the site is about. Take your time and let me know when you are ready.

[when ready, have them minimize the window]

Tell me what the purpose of this site is. What would you come here to find out?

**ANSWER:** Just write down what they say. Ellen wrote, “The goal of the site is to reflect our services as related to publishing. We want users to realize that our services connect to their publishing enterprise, and to give them another way ‘in’ to our services that is relevant to them.”

[bring window back up]

2. Where can you find out the impact factor of a specific journal you are thinking of publishing in?

**ANSWER:** Making an Impact > Track the Impact of Your Research OR Planning > Finding Impact Factors

3. What tools are available to manage your literature sources and citations?

**ANSWER:** Research, Analysis & Writing > Organize references with citation management software

4. Where can you find out if your funding agency has requirements about making your research publicly available?

**ANSWER:** Planning > Funding Policies
5. Where can you find information about managing your research data?

**ANSWER:** Research, Analysis & Writing > Manage and Publish Research Data

6. How can you get help if you have more questions about retaining rights to your work as an author or about the new MIT Open Access policy?

...if you have more questions about managing your data?

...if you need help finding literature related to your research?

**ANSWER:** Ellen’s profile; Kate’s profile; Questions box > Find a librarian by discipline

7. As an author or as a potential author, what did you find most useful on this site? Do you have suggestions for other information that should be here?
# Homepage Usability Results - Fall 2009

This page is maintained by Nicole Hanng, Web Manager & Usability Specialist of the MIT Libraries. The User Interface Group plans and conducts usability tests for the libraries’ web sites and other interfaces.

## Fall 2009 usability results

### Detailed list of problems

Site tested: MIT Libraries homepage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>the problem</th>
<th>brainstormed ideas</th>
<th>follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vera - exact title search is picky and doesn't work for things like &quot;Web of Science&quot; where something else is in title</td>
<td>For major databases, see if it's possible to add another Vera record with only exact title.</td>
<td>Don't do anything about this right now. Solution is bigger than the problem!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The box on the Multi Search results progress page is invisible.</td>
<td>Move the box to the left a bit.</td>
<td>Move spinner to the right/center, so it's closer to the box on the right. (Nicole will talk to Wendy about later)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Homepage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Some didn't think that new resources should be listed on the blog as news and events.</td>
<td>Consider changing the name &quot;news &amp; events&quot; to be more comprehensive.</td>
<td>No action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Harvard borrowing information difficult to find</td>
<td>Link to the info from more obvious places</td>
<td>Adding it to homepage soon. (Darcy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make more obvious on Circ FAQ</td>
<td>DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Include link on homepage to access non-MIT Libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Many looked at the citation software guide for class information (it is only there when a class is currently scheduled.)</td>
<td>Recommend that staff add a link to classes offered on related LibGuides (all classes, not just for citation software)</td>
<td>Recommend that all the LibGuide authors add events and classes. (Remlee) Ask IAP coordinators to add reminding people to add classes to LibGuides in documentation for next year. (Remlee) DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Branding of Vera and Vera Multi Search is still a problem. Users aren't sure which to use for what.</td>
<td>Call the MultiSearch tab &quot;Vera: Find Articles&quot;</td>
<td>On tab and in search box header, change it to &quot;Vera MultiSearch: Articles&quot; &amp; change embeddable box. DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Suggest a purchase link is hard to find</td>
<td>Add link to more obvious places, maybe in one of the Library Services sections</td>
<td>Adding to homepage. (Darcy: think about suggested purchase page and how to make it more usable, then Nicole will ask Wendy to implement.) DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Course pages links are hard to find (Many looked under classes and workshops)</td>
<td>Link to &quot;course pages&quot; from more places (ex., subject LibGuides)</td>
<td>Change name of &quot;Course Pages&quot; to &quot;Class Guides&quot; (Marion). DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Proposed Solution</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A-Z lists link is small.</td>
<td>Make it bigger, or set it apart somehow</td>
<td>Mock-up some solutions to somehow make it look clickable. (ex., add arrow, make bigger, move to the top right of services header, also add link at bottom of services) (Allison)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Site index was used a lot, but hard to find.</td>
<td>Change the name from Site Search to Site Index. This is what people are looking for. Make the site index like the research guides with collapsible categories?</td>
<td>No action for now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ask Us button sometimes missed (the top orange one)</td>
<td>Add another button to bottom of page</td>
<td>No action for now. People are finding Ask Us text link under &quot;Help.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Many use Google as primary discovery method, not browsing. How can we be more Googleable? (i.e. Want to be able to Google &quot;MIT web of science&quot; to find the link to the resource)</td>
<td>Create a list of all of our databases outside of SFX, so that the list is indexed and findable through Google</td>
<td>Talk to Rich for possibilities for making databases Google-able. One idea: Auto-generate a file of all of our databases (with get URL) as a plain web page. (Nicole) Add to future agenda (Nicole).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Grad student used bookmarks a lot. Would do a search and then mark to come back.</td>
<td>Promote our bookmarkable URLs more?</td>
<td>Tweet, blog about how to find and bookmark getURLs. (Allison will draft blog story, Remlee will tweet.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Most, if not all, would use Google or Wikipedia for searching an unknown topic, not Vera Multi (or another library resource).</td>
<td>Try to make as many inroads to library resources from Google &amp; Wikipedia. Market LibX more, since it's a great bridge</td>
<td>Talk about strategically adding things to Wikipedia (BITs tutorials) in RISG. (Remlee) Blog LibX once a semester, from different angles (off campus, screenshot of Wikipedia articles, searching) (Remlee) Think about posting videos in YouTube. Talk about with Angie / RISG. (Darcy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Most only use the Library for known item searches</td>
<td></td>
<td>No action now. Barton, Vera, and future tools need to remain good for known item searching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A strong argument for using Google Scholar - one can find the more important articles and then use their bibliographies to expand research. Note: this success varies by discipline, more successful for science than architecture/humanities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No action now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Many looked at the Course Reserves tab to find Course Pages, but it's not listed there.</td>
<td>Add the link there. Could we make dummy pages in Barton for this so they would appear in</td>
<td>Add the link to &quot;Class Guides&quot; in the Course Reserves tab. (Allison) Consider creating records for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a course reserves search?</td>
<td>course pages. (Darcy will talk to Roshni to mock up an example &amp; think about workflow. Then Remlee can bring to RISG.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A high use of “find in page” was observed.</td>
<td>Have a comprehensive list to facilitate this.</td>
<td>See 12 above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>One tester nearly refused to take the test because he/she would just use Google.</td>
<td>We should test the searchability of the site, not just the browseability.</td>
<td>Try the usability test questions ourselves by searching Google, and not through the home page. (Darcy and Nicole - Darcy will send a TT.) In upcoming usability tests, have some students do the normal test, and have some start with Google for the same questions. (Nicole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grad student loves LibX, but not everyone knows about it.</td>
<td>Market LibX more!</td>
<td>See 14 above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mini site confusing.</td>
<td>Get rid of the mini site, since the new home page search box does what the mini was designed to do.</td>
<td>Add redirect from mini to homepage, and have the mini go away. (Nicole tell Marion from Mini to home page, and tell original group that it's going away.) <strong>DONE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 22 | Undergrad liked the person on the sidebar of Libguides. | Talk more people into including their profile picture on LibGuides, and think about putting peoples' picture on non-LibGuide pages | In future:  
  - Keep encouraging people to include photos.  
  - After reorg, consider testing business cards with social media. |
**MIT LIBRARIES**

**Rotch Site Usability Results - Fall 2009**

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**Fall 2009 usability results**

**Detailed list of problems**

*Site tested: Rotch Library*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the problem</th>
<th>brainstormed ideas</th>
<th>technical notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 MIT Libraries logo in header is not a link to the main Libraries homepage. Some thought it was broken.</td>
<td>maybe remove the link entirely to reduce the confusion.</td>
<td>- due to Wordpress templates, it is not possible to insert a 2nd link in the header.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The link for exhibition guidelines was easily overlooked.</td>
<td>Make the type boldface to be more prominent.</td>
<td>-DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 &quot;Try this first&quot; links were overshadowed by the slideshow. Also, some didn't understand that they were links to databases.</td>
<td>Reduce size of the slideshow. add explanatory text to further describe the links/resources.</td>
<td>-DONE -DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Visual collections information was difficult for some to find.</td>
<td>Change name of link to &quot;Find or Finding Images&quot; instead of &quot;Images.&quot; Add highlight or quick link on home page</td>
<td>-DONE -Added Visual Collections as a Quick Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Slideshow images were too large</td>
<td>Reduce size of slideshow.</td>
<td>- DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Some users had difficulty finding who to contact about the Rotch Gallery</td>
<td>Add this information to the &quot;Contact Us&quot; page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tabs were sometimes overlooked (banner blindness)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Some users didn't think to find information about architects in a resource labeled for architecture</td>
<td>Change label to &quot;architecture/architects&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Note: This might not be necessary for the target population who is familiar with the subject area.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Many did not like links opening in new windows and would prefer to be able to use the back button.</td>
<td>Discuss this policy in general at UIG.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Publishing Services LibGuide Usability Results - Fall 2009

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### Fall 2009 usability results

#### Detailed list of problems

Site tested: Publishing Services LibGuide

<table>
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<tr>
<th>the problem</th>
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<th>technical notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Profile pictures largely ignored. Users didn’t think to contact either person listed.</td>
<td>Insert links to the profile pages instead of having a long description on the guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The difference between the Publishing Services guide and the Scholarly Publishing site was confusing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Some users (grad students) were hesitant to contact the libraries about this type of information and indicated they would be more likely to contact their faculty advisor.</td>
<td>Add a faculty tips area? This might give added credibility to the resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Users had some trouble finding information about impact factors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The site had too much text overall.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 It was difficult to find this guide from the Libraries’ home page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Users were not aware that this resource existed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Some users questioned whether the research resources should be included with this guide, since that part really comes before someone thinks about publishing.</td>
<td>Pare down the content to just include the resources that are unique to publishing. The most useful features according to testers were: finding impact factors, selecting a journal, and funding sources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Home page was fairly blank.</td>
<td>(see #1, 5 &amp; 8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Comment: The original concept for the guide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Suggested names for the guide:

Testers were asked to offer ideas for an improved or more intuitive name for the guide.

- How to Publish
- Library resources for Publishing
- Help for Publication
- Researchers’ tools
- Helping researchers every step of the way
- Beyond finding, every step
- Publishing your research
- Getting ready to publish

- Publish at MIT
- Guide to getting published
- Steps/hints for publishing a scholarly paper