

University of Calgary Library Website Redesign Project

Focus Groups Report

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Submitted by:

**Don MacMillan
Susan McKee
Shawna Sadler**

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1. Introduction

Information Resources recently began the process of redesigning the Library website. Usability testing was conducted for University of Calgary students and faculty in December 2003, and the *University Library Website Usability Study Report* was produced in March 2004. The next stage in the redesign project was to hold focus groups for Information Resources staff. The purpose of the focus groups was to find out staff members' content and services priorities for the new Library website. This information will help guide the redesign process.

2. Methods

Email messages were sent out to Library staff to solicit participation. Sessions were conducted between March 22nd and March 31st. There were five sessions held, each with between five and eight participants. The sessions consisted of a series of five questions; the session moderator led the discussion and a recorder took notes. Sessions were audio taped. The questions are listed in attached Appendix A.

In total there were 31 participants from 14 locations:

Location	
Access Services	2
Bibliographic Services	1
Circulation/Reserve Services	1
Client Services	8
Collections Services	1
Document Delivery Services	2
Gallagher Library	2
Health Sciences Library	6
Image Centre	1
IR Administration	1
Information Technologies	1
Law Library	3
MADGIC	1
Special Collections	1
Total:	31

3. Results

All three study group members were involved in recording and analysing the data. Notes from the sessions were transcribed and verified against the audiotapes. As the data was analysed, common categories were identified. The data was then organized into standard themes and subthemes for coding purposes. Results presented in questions one to four include comments mentioned by at least one or more participants. For report purposes, the results have been arranged by question and then grouped by theme. Verbatim quotes from individual participants have been chosen from the data to illustrate certain points.

Question 1: Tell us about your experiences as users of the Library Website. What do you use it for?

Tasks performed:

- Reference
- Research
- Instruction Sessions
- Renewing Books
- Booking Workrooms
- Checking Library hours
- Verification of DDS requests
- Formatting APA, MLA
- Personal use

Content and Services links used:

- Black Bar links
- Catalogue
- Article Indexes
- Quick Links
- Electronic Resources - Electronic Journals
- Subject Resources
- Services
- About the Library - Library Staff pages
- What's Happening

Comments:

- "Use all aspects of website all day"
- "Never use the main Library page"
- "Library webpage rules my day from beginning to end"

Question 2: What are you hearing from end users about the Library webpages?

a) Functionality

- *Searching*
 - Users compare our web pages to Google - want one stop searching with a broadcast or federated search capability
 - Should be a search box in the same location on the main page and all other pages
- *SFX*
 - Can be very slow. Also causes confusion when different windows open up and when the Library does not have full text
- *DDS*
 - Users don't use this feature properly. They are confused by the term DDS and often don't check the catalogue first before ordering documents

b) Authentication

- Integration of all three existing authentication systems would be useful
- Users would prefer to authenticate only once in a session
- Instructions are too wordy and are sometimes pushed down the screen
- Users confused when sent to circulation desk to resolve problems
- Calgary Public Library's "My Card" system popular

c) Navigation

- Often heard: "I didn't know you could do that", "how did you find that?"
- Pathways to content and services are not clear - resources buried too deep
- Users can't find resources on their own; need to be shown path several times
- "Breadcrumbs" feature (obvious navigation path) needed
- Contextual help such as: drop down menus, mouse hover, ALT tags would be helpful
- Alphabetical listing of services would be a good feature

d) Design

- *Layout*
 - Often heard: "website is not intuitive"
 - Users are overwhelmed by website
 - Users want a simple website designed for their research purposes
 - A subject-based webpage orientation would be more useful
 - Website is unattractive and "dated"
 - Users often don't realize text on left side are links to resources
 - Many users don't see or use the links on the black bar

- *Graphics*
 - o Some users like graphics/images, some don't
- *Text*
 - o There is too much text on the webpage; students are not willing to read large blocks of text
 - o Users often don't use the webpage image links because there are so many text links

e) Terminology

- Users don't understand Library terminology
- Terminology is by Librarians for Librarians
- Webpage should use more current terminology, i.e. "search engine" instead of "index"

f) Content

- Users want a clear pathway to other Library branches and units and more information regarding access to their resources
- Students want information about Librarians' qualifications, i.e. to determine the credibility of the Subject Resources pages
- Users like the Electronic Journals list, are now asking for an Electronic Books list
- Users want to find better information on training sessions and courses
- What's Happening section is hard to read - ignored by many users

g) Catalogue

- Users don't know what the catalogue is - can't find or use it properly
- Users are confused about different catalogues, i.e. main Library and Media Library
- Catalogue records are too long
- Records are difficult to interpret, particularly holdings and locations
- Users would like to place online holds from the catalogue
- Users are confused by red hyperlinks, should go back to blue

h) Article Index List

- Table format doesn't work well
- Middle column (subjects covered) often not read
- Students click on left column (title) instead of right (action - connect)
- Confusion between meaning of "key" and "additional"
- Users assume Library has all journals in article indexes
- Not kept up to date with new resources

Question 3: What are the most important Library services and content that should be highlighted on the opening page (i.e. links?)

- *Content*
 - o Catalogue
 - o Subject Resources, including a section on staff qualifications
 - o One section that combines the Article Index lists, Electronic Journals and all other electronic resources such as electronic encyclopedias
 - o Getting Started, Instruction Guides, Tutorials and contact information if further help is required
 - o Locations, clearly communicating where other branches are, including a campus map
 - o Library News
 - o Staff Directory, including phone numbers and email addresses
 - o About Us, explaining the staff structure and branches
 - o Software training, including schedules and locations
 - o Frequently Asked Questions
 - o Infonet

- *Services*
 - o My Library Card: renewals, holds and current activity (similar to Calgary Public Library or University of Victoria Library)
 - o Search box on homepage and subsequent pages in a consistent location
 - o Broadcast searching feature (simultaneously search all databases and catalogues)
 - o Library Feedback or Comments form
 - o Virtual Reference feature
 - o User friendly DDS function

Question 4: What new or redesigned features would make your jobs easier?

a) Terminology

- Simpler, user friendly and consistent terminology to facilitate website navigation

b) Design

- *Graphics*
 - Make the website look and feel like a library
 - More effective use of colour and graphics
- *Text*
 - Do not like current font selection
 - Less text on main page
- *Layout*
 - Library website should be educational tool, more pedagogical in nature
 - Prefer a cleaner, less cluttered page
 - More consistent and accessible Subject Resources
 - Library Catalogue and Article Indexes should be displayed more prominently
 - Top banner takes up too much space
 - Avoid using frames
 - Library website should be designed to “pull-in” or “attract” users

c) Functionality

- *Searching*
 - Would like a single search box at top of main page
 - Have DDS better integrated within the website so that users do not order materials that are held in the Library
- *Customization*
 - Staff want to be able to “customize” or “personalize” the website
 - Create personal bibliographies with SFX and save to customized page
 - Ability to change the size of graphics and fonts
 - Page should automatically fit to screen size (e.g. dynamically adjust to the different monitor sizes - no white space)
 - Want to see “My Account” where current circulation activity and workroom bookings are available
- *Status Indicator*
 - A system, similar to Information Technology’s current red and green light status system: <http://beaune.acs.ucalgary.ca/~itstatus/Main/> should be in place to advise users when electronic resources are not working
 - Current contact information should be displayed when the system is down

- *Graphics*
 - Have animated graphic to indicate that a file is loading or SFX is searching
 - Show graphic when username or pin are typed incorrectly
 - Indicate when a user is leaving the Library website, e.g. Air Canada, Hotmail sites
 - Continuing Education's site: <http://www.cted.ucalgary.ca/> is good for symbols and course availability - legend on side of page

d) Navigation

- Users need a simpler and more intuitive way to find what they are looking for
- “Breadcrumbs” or more consistent and predictable navigation path is required
- Use drop down menus from the black bar for more detail
- “Catalogue and Article Indexes should be on left side of black bar”
- Make the website design dynamic so it will evolve and stay current
- Branch/unit staff (and students) must be able to understand and navigate branch website as well as main Library website
- More effective links between main Library and branch sites

e) Content

- “What’s Happening” section is important for Library promotion and for general reference questions but should be presented better. Archive older announcements and create separate section for surveys.
- “Could have subject specific “What’s Happening” in the Subject Resource pages”
- Staff resources should be better organized, possibly by location or function - to improve accessibility and usefulness
- Should have a section for new Library resources, particularly electronic reference tools, similar to University of Victoria’s “New Resources”
- Role and function of branch Libraries need to be clearly defined
- Subject Resources pages need to be better organized to enhance accessibility
- Redevelop Article Index list to improve the look and navigation
- Make aggregators/publishers information more clear in Electronic Journals section
- Have a section for non-primary clientele such as alumni and community readers so that it is evident what resources are available to them

f) Catalogue

- Catalogue records should be more concise
- External Library catalogues should be easier to find
- Catalogue holdings and locations should be more consistent and user friendly
- “Put a floor plan and/or Library map on the website or on the SIRSI front page”
- Combine multiple journal records into one summary record (e.g. *Nature*)

- Need a more intuitive search function with a feedback feature such as Google's "Did you mean...?"
- Make journal title changes more obvious
- Should include the ability to place holds
- DDS option should be available after an unsuccessful search

h) Website Maintenance

- *Tools*
 - A set of consistent and easy to use templates should be available
 - There needs to be a seamless and user friendly method to update pages
 - "Library newsletter to list new products and What's Happening type information"
- *Responsibility*
 - Important to have unit or branch control over webpages
 - Need ability to make "global changes" to a group of webpages
 - Want subject pages updated more quickly
 - More people should have permission to update the website; not be dependent on one person
 - Some Library staff want to develop content and then give it to technical staff for loading
 - Library hours loaded for the term or year instead of just the current month

Other comments:

- "Page counter to track number of hits"
- "Welcome On Campus User"- to indicate that on campus use is different than off campus
- "Blog (weblog) may be useful"
- Website server capacity still a concern - different look on various browsers and slow response time during peak periods

4. Discussion of Results

This section highlights specific Library website issues that were discussed in all five focus group sessions.

Issues similar to those identified in the *University Library Website Usability Study Report* section 4.0:

- Terminology: should be simple and consistent throughout the website
- Navigation: intuitive pathways should be developed for academic purposes
- Searching: consistent location of search box throughout the website and integrated search feature (e.g. broadcast or federated to search all electronic resources)
- Design: the layout should utilize colour and graphics in a more efficient manner

Unique issues:

- Website maintenance: Staff clearly stated that an efficient process should be in place for updating and revising all Library website content and services. A balance must be achieved between centralized guidelines and unit interests. To this end, responsibility for maintenance should be distributed accordingly to ensure the website can be maintained in an efficient and timely fashion.
- Authentication: Staff consistently identified the user authentication process as too confusing and not well explained. There are too many authentication systems on campus and users do not usually read the lengthy instructions. This process and the display of the process should be simplified.
- Customization: Users should be able to personalize their Library account. The user could have a page similar to University of Victoria's "My Library Account" and Calgary Public Library's "My Card" where their profile displays books checked out, holds, workroom bookings and any notes on file. This concept could be extended to include a personal research page.
- Website organization: Concern was expressed that branch and unit pages are not well integrated within the main Library website. The organization of the site should reflect Library structure, to clearly communicate branch association with the MacKimmie Library. Currently the majority of the focus group participants (and staff) use their own branch or unit sites more than the main Library website.
- Branding: A standard look for the MacKimmie and branch locations is desired. A sense of integration could be accomplished with standard guidelines or templates.

Appendix A

Library Website Redesign Project Focus Group Questions

Goal:

We would like to find out what your content and service priorities are for the new redesigned website.

Key Questions:

- Tell us about your experiences as users of the Library website.
- What are you hearing from end users about the Library webpages?
- What are the most important Library services and content that should be highlighted on the opening page? (i.e. links)
- What new or redesigned features would make your jobs easier?

Wrap-up Question:

- Is there anything else you'd like to mention about the website and the redesign project?

Appendix B

External Library websites mentioned in the focus group sessions:

University of Alberta:

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/>

University of Victoria:

<http://gateway.uvic.ca/>

University of Manitoba:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/>

Memorial University:

<http://www.library.mun.ca/>

Mount Royal College:

<http://library.mtroyal.ca/>

Calgary Public Library:

<http://www.calgarypubliclibrary.com/>

Appendix C

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