

Conference Report

A summary report of the usability interviews at MOBIUS

June 6, 2007

Demographics:

The participants included one media coordinator, three library technician/catalog librarians, four deans or directors, one 'head librarian', two reference librarians, and three access services/reserve librarians.

Twelve had ten or more years of experience using web technologies, and two had five to nine years of experience.

Eleven considered their skills to be proficient, while two said it was basic and one expert.

Two access the MCO website daily; three, weekly; seven, monthly; and two, yearly.

Eight didn't recall experiencing problems with the website in the past. Five did report having problems in the past.

Tasks:

1. *Logging in:* Ten had no problems, although one said that she never logs in and calls the Help Desk if she needs to; and another said that she didn't understand why she needed to log in (that was repeated by another user later). Four users had problems, and either couldn't remember their password or username, and we had to use the generic IE lab login.

2. *Password:* One user was unable to change her password; she said that she would call the Help Desk before attempting to change it. Of the rest, most were able to change their password without any problems. One discovered that she was able to change her erroneous personal information in the process. Some expected to see a 'change password' link under their profile.

3. *Help Desk problem report form:* Seven users completed the task without much comment. Five users said that they always either call or email the Help Desk; it takes too much time to fill out the form. One user commented that she likes that there are multiple ways to locate an option; she was able to see options on the right panel as well as on the tabs.

4. *Delivery problem report:* Seven users had no problem with the delivery report problem. Two users said that they would contact the Help Desk if there was a problem. Two wouldn't do this as "there is protocol and I would have someone else do it" or simply wasn't involved in that area of the library; two were unable to complete the task: one "tried to use right-side menu as well, but it was not successful. Then she would ask

the person in charge of delivery problem. If they could not help her, she would turn to the representative in her department.”

5. *Meeting minutes*: All users were able to locate the meeting minutes, but four users took some time clicking around before they were able to locate them. One person commented that there was too much text; she was only looking at the center column. The dates could be clearer. Perhaps instead of having the middle column pull up the first part of the document, it could show the date and place, or other important data (metadata about the document or keywords would enable better searching for documents).

6. *Cataloging standards*: There were a lot of comments about the location of the cataloging standards. Several said that the tabs are ‘unintuitive’; they went to the training, eResources, about, and governance tabs unsuccessfully. One user is a cataloger and went to Google to find the standards, but was unsuccessful. Three were unable to locate them at all, and one required prompting. The others found it after a while.

Comments: ‘I would have had to know known that there was an advisory council for (the cataloging standards) in order to have found them and that would have been a problem.’ One user said that she thinks memorandum of understanding and bylaws should be with cataloging standards; they should be under miscellaneous documents.

‘‘It would be good if there was a more visible option of increasing text size.’’ The user used the backspace button to reenter the text in the search box as the text was too small for the eye. The user was able to find the cataloging standard from the search result. However, it seems the search results are not sorted by relevance of results. It would be good to get a list of relevance starting from top to bottom.’’

The search results aren’t sorted by relevance; a search for cataloging standards doesn’t produce results that seem to be sorted in a good way.

7. *Bylaws*: All were able to find them; some quickly, others not. Some used the ‘site search’ function, and found it.

Comments: ‘‘Site has too many buried links, information overload.’’ The user did a search and said that the word ‘Search’ could mean either ‘Search this site’ or ‘search the web’

‘‘There is too much scrolling...it’s not obvious unless you scroll.’’

She had trouble finding this sort of information sometimes since she was not exactly sure how it was organized. She tried ‘‘governance’’ and was not successful. She used the search function and got the right answer.

8. *Uploading documents*: Nine users had never uploaded documents, and since this is a function reserved for committee heads, etc., we didn’t ask people to do it who hadn’t done it before. Of the four who commented:

One was not exactly sure what ‘upload’ means in this context. He would ask another librarian if he needed to upload a document. (He had uploaded documents before but didn’t remember).

‘‘Links on the (MOBIUS / Missouri) map would be helpful.’’

‘‘She would fill up a form for uploading.’’ (in other words, she would send a form/message to the Help Desk).

9. *Calendar*: This was probably the most problematic question. A couple who frequently use it quickly found the meeting, and pointed out that there are two ways to get to the meeting: either by going to the committee from the governance tab or by going to the calendar.

Eight users gave up. The calendar itself doesn't function well; the 'sort by group' function gave all users the SQL error. The SQL error is not understandable; it should provide more information about what went wrong. The dropdown menu was not easily seen. Some users felt that they got the scripting error because they did something wrong. "It would be challenging to find a meeting by looking through the calendar because 'for all (he) knows, they may meet once a year', and thus he wouldn't know how to find it.

The 'group sort' function doesn't work."

"there must be a faster way to do this."

"Says she always has problems with the calendar and just looks at the whole month without trying to search"

10. *Finding the director of Harris-Stowe*: Most of them had to leave the MOBIUS website to figure this one out; most went to 'member libraries' and found Harris-Stowe, which takes them to the HS library website and then they were able to find the answer. The People Finder does not work for this type of question, and several tried that way. Some tried the clickable cluster map, hoping that would bring up a list of schools that belong to each cluster. There should be some type of list that says which libraries are in each cluster. One found that when she searched by institution there is not always an indication of the person's position—there is contact information but not title.

Comments:

"I know that the delegates (to council) are generally the directors"; she was able to find him on the council list.

"One needs to know the structure of MOBIUS to know how to find the director"

"A little bit larger font would be good" (leaning forward to read it).

11. *Bylaws, redux*: All users found the bylaws again. The purpose of this was to find if visited links changed color, etc. However, most users just either knew where the bylaws were or did another search for them; they come up when you search the MOBIUS website. One user did comment: "I keep expecting to find them under the governance tab".

12. *Databases*: No users had any problems finding the databases to which MOBIUS subscribes, though one user wasn't sure if we were asking about the cafeteria plan or something else: "at the top of the e-Resources page it says that MOBIUS subscribes to 12 databases but only 11 are listed."

13. *Courier*: Five users did not find the correct information. One user commented that he would have thought that the courier would be under 'delivery'; it's not obvious. Several users noted that the information about the courier isn't up to date everywhere (in some places it still says that Lanter is the courier).

General comments from the users:

- They haven't posted any minutes for a long time. He thinks that there should be some kind of reminder: "Do you want to post your minutes?" Who has eligibility to see the minutes, anyway? Explain somewhere who has access to what.
- The groups are too protective of minutes and other documents; it would be helpful to see what others are doing.
- Overall, the look and feel of the site is good. However, there are some problems; some things aren't kept up to date.
- It should be easier to find what you're looking for; for instance, by using bold more often.
- There is too much scrolling through long lists. The links seem to be buried, and the pages are cluttered.
- Links on the map would have been useful.
- The site is not very user-friendly. She is aware of the structure of the site and so is able to find what she needs. The fonts are small and there is not much contrast.
- A majority of information is under the governance tab.
- It would be helpful for new users if there were more of a 'front page'.
- Not sure what is logging in is for. Often times she does not log in as she gets what she needs without logging in.
- Would like more guidance as to where things are (more than just the tabs). Would rather see the things people use more often placed at the front of the site instead of having the news on the front page.
- Having title listed with people's name, email and phone numbers would be very helpful. Thus, in that way, she could contact with the specific person by email or call.
- Links, menu, and resources on the right side should move to the left.
- The clusters map used to be interactive and some users miss that functionality. The clusters page is too long it's cumbersome to scroll all the way down.
- 'There is lots of information on the site but it's often difficult to find. That's why I said that my response is often to get on the phone.'
- 'You have to know to go into the subcommittees to find a lot of data'.