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Redesigning an Academic Library Website: Process and Lessons Learned

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Overview

- Introduction

  - [Our ACRL Poster](#)

- Content Review

- UX & IA

- Collaborating with Stakeholders

- Lessons Learned & Next Steps

Learning Outcomes

- Understand best practices for a library website redesign through iterative gathering of feedback, user testing, content review, and rethinking structure to produce a high-impact, user friendly website.

- Analyze current websites for potential improvements as well as opportunities for gathering information from internal and external users to support data-driven website design and organization.

- Identify strategies for collaborating with stakeholders and interpreting varying needs to develop and implement a shared website vision.
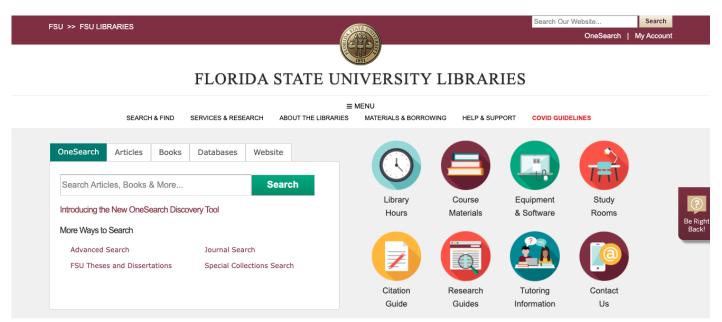
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Do you have an active role in developing and designing the website for your organization?

Is anyone in the process of a refresh or redesign?

Planning a "Refresh"

- Technical opportunity provided opportunity to refresh our website

- Four phases: feedback gathering & user testing, content review, design & testing, and infrastructure upgrade and implementation

Our Website Purpose Statement

The FSU Libraries website seeks to provide low-barrier access to library collections and services in order to support the teaching, learning, and research activities of Florida State University as well as effective and meaningful engagement with library staff, services, and tools.

Establishing Goals

- Improve frontend experience / more efficient tools and workflows for internal content creation & editing

- Improve pages for language / less jargon (with user-focused content), accuracy, and clarity

- Reduce barriers for tasks our users most want to accomplish

- Simplify / streamline navigation & search systems (with mobile, touch-screen in mind)

- Seamless integration of services & resources

- Explore design principles to improve website consistency and aesthetic
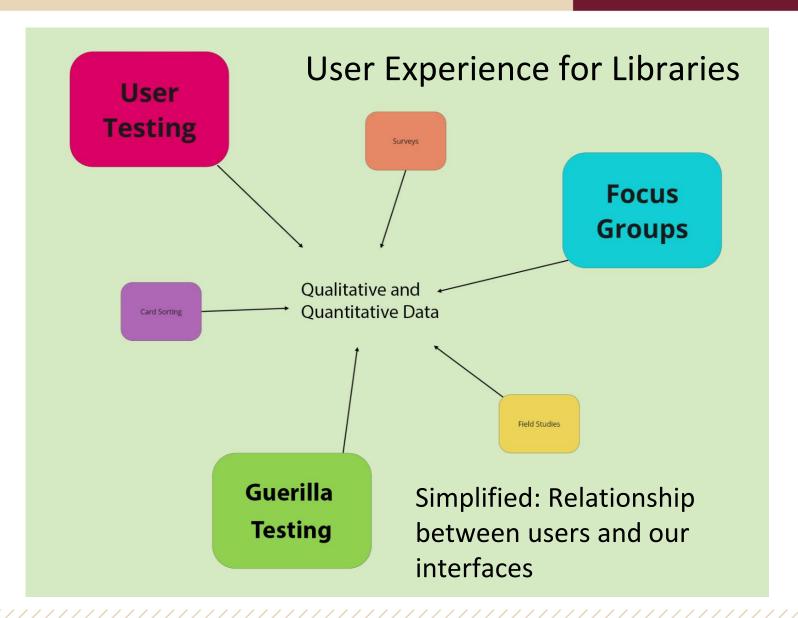
Content Review

- Formed Content Review Taskforce with the goal of assessing and improving overall content for clarity, accuracy, voice & jargon, and design, as well as determining "ownership" of pages

- Developed a workflow to score in each page to determine what content should be moved, improved, and retired

- Completed the work in a series of online sprints, scoring the top 500 pages our website [documented on this spreadsheet](#)

Content Review Workflow

1. Developing scope of content and architecture review (based on main goals and purpose of the website)

2. Reviewing content groups

3. Using Google Analytics to create a list of highly trafficked, medium traffic, low traffic, or no traffic pages

4. Auditing content (move, improve, retire) based on criteria; identify duplicate content

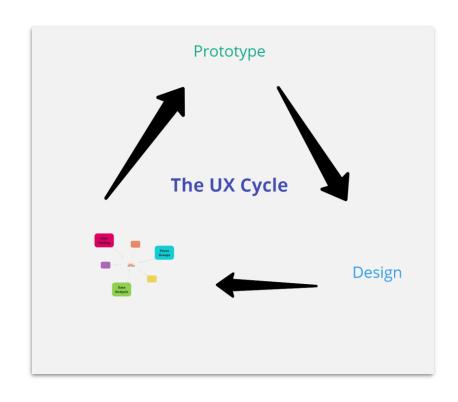5. Developing a list of pages to be retired, improved, or moved, as well as recommendations

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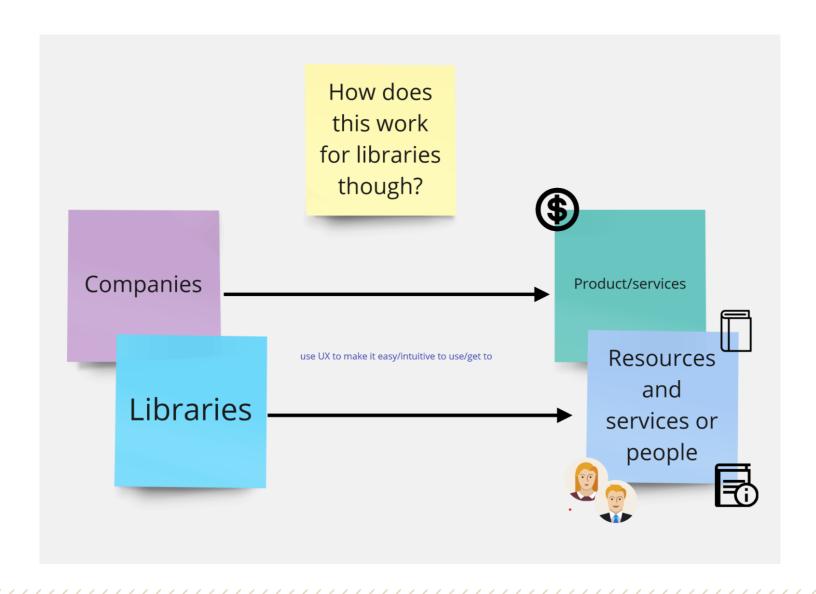LIBRARIES

User Experience for Libraries

User Testing

Surveys

Focus Groups

Card Sorting → Qualitative and Quantitative Data

← Focus Groups

Field Studies

Guerilla Testing

Simplified: Relationship between users and our interfaces

The UX Cycle

- Prototype
- (Test)
- Design
- Test

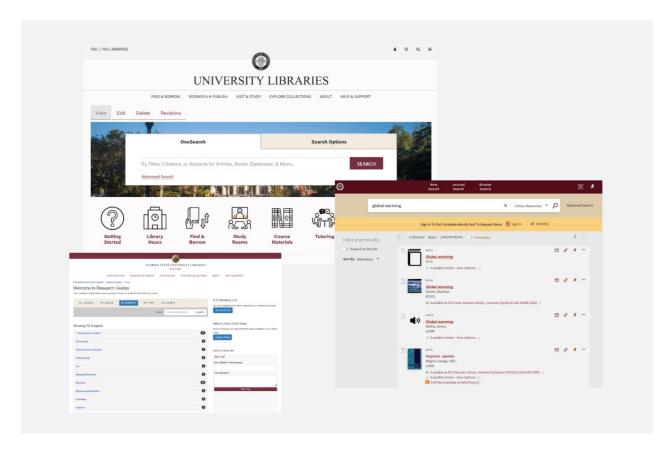## Rinse and Repeat

How long? As long as your system exists

UX and IA

Problems and Obstacles

Teaching people how to use a website

Users we can instruct directly — Our librarians, Our Staff

Users we cannot instruct directly — FSU Students, Anyone else, FSU Faculty

UX and IA

Problems and Obstacles

Interface Overlap

Accessibility First

Know the current guidelines and recommendations BEFORE design starts:

- WCAG 2: https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/
  - Some basics include:
    - Alt-text for all images
    - Contrast and colorblind requirements
    - Nested headings for screen readers
- Your institution may already have the tools per government requirements
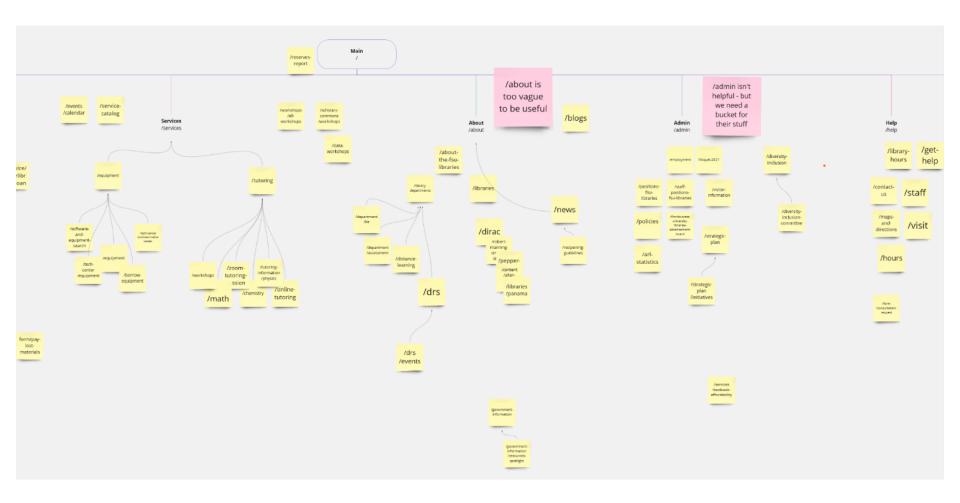 - Find them and use them!
  - Free options: https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/

IA: Information Architecture

"Organizing, structuring, and labeling content in an effective and sustainable way"

So what is good IA? Knowing where you are and what you're doing by the context of the page you're on.
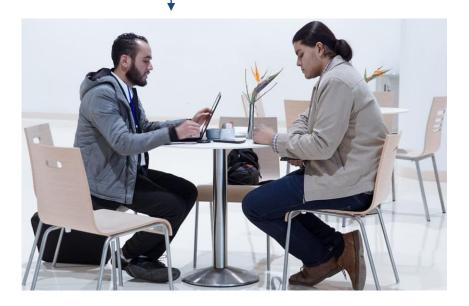
IA: Information Architecture

UX and IA

Our data gathering tools:

- Focus Groups (internal)
- User Interviews (external)

User interviews and testing (the fun part!)

- IRB
- Compensation
- Scheduling
- The Tasks + Script
- Consent

Testing in three easy steps

- **Introduction**: names, record, consent
- **The Tasks**: let them fail, ask probing questions
- **Thank**: thanks! fill out survey, compensation

Presenting Findings to Stakeholders

- Keep it concise and relevant to your audience
- Don't try to inflate or misrepresent figures (50% instead of 2/4)
  - Show or explain how X users had Y problem
- Don't blame the users, don't blame the audience
  - Don't blindside with findings
- Always offer a solution (even if it's not a good one)
- Define what feedback you want or need to prevent runaways

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Don't go at it alone!

Send out a call…

…but emphasize action

You will be training, so train yourself first

This group will become your advocates

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Our Findings

Don't use these findings to make changes to your website

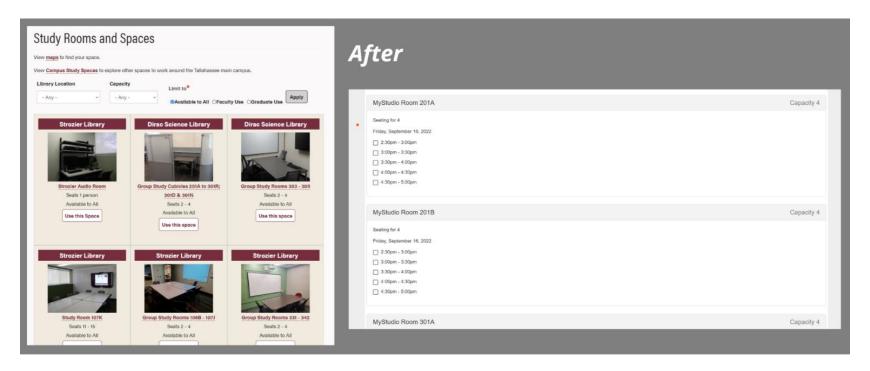Do use these findings as jumping off points for your own user testing!

Our Findings

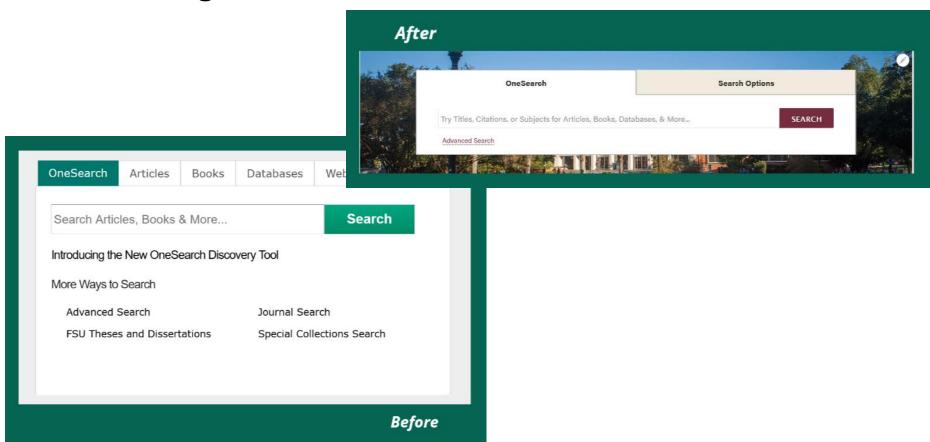Room booking was convoluted and non-accessible

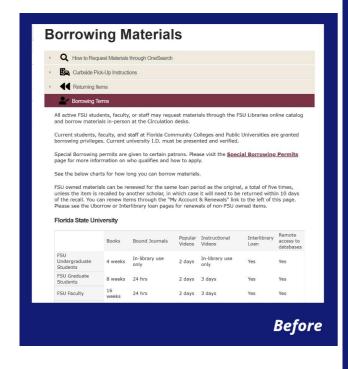## Our Findings
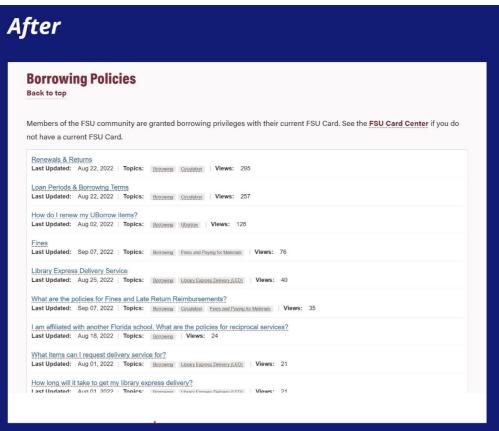

Room booking was convoluted and non-accessible

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Our Findings

Don't burden your users with options (at first)

UX and IA

Our Findings

Users don't browse, they search and they like FAQs

Who are our Internal Stakeholders

- Public Services

- Subject Librarians

- Administration

- Marketing

- Outreach and Programming

- Technical Services

- IT (Information Technology)

Open Forums for Internal Stakeholders

Establish transparency and inclusivity from the very beginning through small, focused department-based groups that also offer an opportunity to manage expectations regarding the redesign timeline and goals.

Questions posed:

1. From your experience, what do you think the current website is doing well?
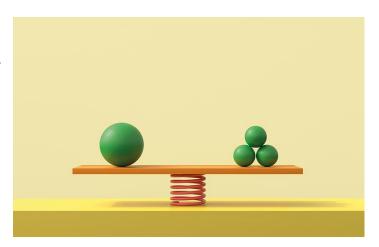2. From your experience, what aspects of the website have caused you issues?

Challenges

- Different backgrounds, roles, goals, and priorities

- Varying levels of technical expertise

- Navigating conflicting or contradictory feedback

- Technical capabilities and limitations

Finding Balance

- Considering user needs, industry best practices, and website goals while valuing stakeholders' perspectives

- Document and communicate decision-making rationale to stakeholders

- Find common ground and make reasonable compromises

- Evaluate feedback objectively

- Share iterations and seeking feedback
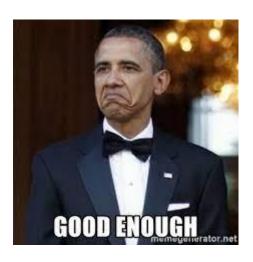
Collaborating with Internal Stakeholders

- Internal stakeholders are also end-users

- Internal stakeholders possess valuable expertise and experiences with our users

- Collaborating with internal stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the website redesign

- Stakeholders who feel valued and included are more likely to champion the website, promote its use, and contribute to its ongoing success
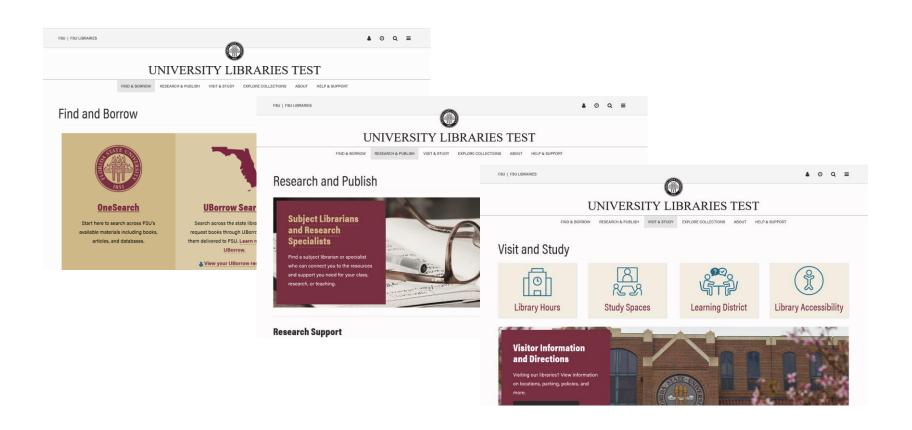
- Websites are never finished

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- Focus on a few number of important "wins"

- Backup your controversial decisions with data

- The success of your redesign depends on your stakeholders feeling like their input is valued

- An open process allows for everyone to see what is being said and what the redesign team is doing to incorporate stakeholder input

Next Step: Continuous Improvement

Reporting Structure

- Website Strategic Committee
- Website Content and Communication Committee

Website Content Review Process

- [Content Inventory](#)
- Content Ownership
- Reporting Structure

Discussion & Questions

Questions?

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