UMKC University Libraries
Usability Study Report

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# UMKC University Libraries Usability Study Report

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Executive Summary

LibGuides are a one-stop location allowing students to self-serve in their subject areas making them an essential tool in bringing virtual library resources to our patrons. We examined the perceived problem that LibGuides are not easily accessible on the Library’s website by testing six students, none of whom had received library instruction. Our high-level findings are as follows:

1. Does the website adequately advertise the existence of or efficiently lead students to specific LibGuides and/or the LibGuides home page?

The collected data demonstrates that the website neither adequately advertises nor effectively leads students to LibGuides and post-test survey responses support the data. In their first attempts to find a LibGuide from the home page, all participants struggled, and five out of six failed. The majority began their search in the tabbed Library Search Tool, providing no clear links to LibGuides. Not knowing what they were looking for, most participants viewed successful paths, in many cases leading them to a LibGuide. However, once there participants did not recognize the LibGuide as their objective (indicating that LibGuide pages might be confusing to users). In their second attempts to find a LibGuide, the effect of learning enabled all but two participants to find one.

2. Beginning at the home page, what path(s) do testers take to locate LibGuides?

Participants generally skipped over the Library Site Search and opted to begin in the more prominent (but ineffective) tabbed Library Search Tool. From there, they typically viewed the left navigation menus, looking at but ignoring the “Information on My Topic” link under Find Books, Articles... They also viewed the student box at the bottom of the page, often choosing the “How Do I Start My Research” link. Participants tried the course reserves link and the UMKC Research link, perhaps due to the phrasing of tasks.

3. If users want librarian help in finding additional information outside the LibGuides, are they able to find contact people and methods of communication?

All participants were able to find subject librarian contact information. Surprisingly, after learning about LibGuides, only half the participants returned to them for this information, suggesting that LibGuides are not the easiest tool to find on the website and/or the users do not fully understand their usefulness. The remaining participants used various links on the home page to navigate to the Subject Liaison Librarian page for this information.

Detailed recommendations for changes to the website are provided in the Recommendations section of this report and include:

Short term
- Choose a single name for LibGuides and use it consistently in the website.
- Create multiple direct links to LibGuides on the home page.
- Clarify the header and librarian information provided in LibGuides.

Long term
- Create and implement a LibGuide marketing plan.
- Continue to examine and refine the Library Site Search.
- Revise the “How Do I Start My Research” page.
Method

**Study Objectives**

Like all academic libraries, UMKC University Libraries faces a changing population of students. Studies show the current, born-digital generation has a preference for "one-stop shopping" and "self-service." They want to get all their information in one place and they want to do it without assistance from librarians. In addition, the majority of UMKC's 14,000 students are part-time commuters with work and family obligations. They have limited time on campus and, like digital natives, do much, if not all, of their library research on the Internet and rarely, if ever, set foot in the library.

In order to meet the needs of these students, the University Libraries is working to bolster its virtual presence. In the last two years, the Libraries completely redesigned an outdated website and subscribed to web-based subject guide software to create "one-stop" collections of resources for students. The subject liaison librarians have spent hours creating LibGuides for their subject areas that can act as "teachers" when the librarians aren't available or consulted. The Librarians believe LibGuides are one of the most important teaching tools they have in the online arena. Unfortunately, they also report feeling that the LibGuides are "buried" in the website. They are concerned many students are unable find them, particularly because their existence is not well advertised.

This test was conducted to examine these perceived problems with LibGuide integration in the Library website, gather relevant usability data, and make recommendations for website improvements with regards to LibGuides.

Note: On the day before usability testing began, the web site developers rolled out an enhanced search for the Library Site Search, returning LibGuide(s) as part of the results. We discussed the possible implications of this change to the usability study. We felt that the usability test would provide the web site developers early feedback and information on this newly-enhanced search. While the enhanced search results would more often reflect the existence of LibGuides, an open question still remained: would participants recognize LibGuides even if they found them in the search results? This corresponded to the first research question, so no test plan changes were required.

**Research Questions**

In particular, the following questions were examined:

4. Does the website adequately advertise the existence of or efficiently lead students to specific LibGuides and/or the LibGuides home page?

5. Beginning at the home page, what path(s) do testers take to locate LibGuides?

6. If users want librarian help in finding additional information outside the LibGuides, are they able to find contact people and methods of communication?
Participant Characteristics

We recruited six participants with the following characteristics:

- None of the participants had any previous library instruction.
- Five of six participants were aged 18-34 and the remaining participant was in the 45-54 age range.
- Two were female and four were male.
- Half were graduate and the other half undergraduate students.
- Four participants were UMKC students.
- Internet experience was mostly Advanced or Expert, with just two participants reporting either Novice or Average experience.
- University Libraries website use was evenly distributed from never to several times per day.

Method

This usability study gathered assessment data about the effectiveness of LibGuides on the UMKC University Libraries website. Participants performed three tasks related to LibGuides with varying degrees of success.

Within-subjects design

The six participants each attempted all three tasks, all starting with Task 1. However to counterbalance the effect of learning, they conducted the remaining two tasks in a different order.

Session outline and timing

Test sessions ranged from 30 to 45 minutes. Moderators used 15 minutes of each session for pre-test permissions, introductions, and background and post-test debriefing interviews. (The Appendix contains participant permission and information forms.) See the Test Environment, Equipment, and Logistics section of this report for details on testing locations and environments.

Pre-test arrangements

Participants reviewed and signed nondisclosures and recording permissions. See Appendix – Consent Form.

Introduction to the session – See Appendix - Moderator Script.

Background interview – See Appendix - Participant Information Form.
Tasks

Participant conducted one task at a time. First, moderator read the task aloud then provided participants a printed copy of the task. This allowed participants to refer to the question for clarification or spelling.

For counterbalance, the tasks were performed in the following order by the participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Task Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1, 3, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1, 3, 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Instead of the even split in performing counterbalanced tasks, four participants performed the tasks in order (1, 2, 3) and the remaining two performed the tasks in counterbalanced order (1, 3, 2). We did not notice any impact to the study.

Post-test debriefing – Using Appendix – Post-Test Debrief Form, moderators gathered final input from the participants and followed-up on individual problems participants experienced.

Session schedule

The six sessions were conducted November 16-20, 2009, in Kansas City, MO, and Michigan.
Tasks

Participants spent anywhere from 15 to 35 minutes on the three tasks. The tasks and their success criteria are as follows. All started from the homepage.

1. You have to write a research paper about the history of environmentalism in America. At the end of the last lecture, your professor said there is a page on the library website that will help you find information to get started. Find this page. Be sure to verbally point out or display the page to indicate you are done with the task.

   Success criteria – As testing proceeded and we learned the wording of the task was insufficient, success criteria was simplified to: Participant found/recognized and pointed out or displayed one of the following pages:
   - Environmental Studies LibGuide (http://libguides.library.umkc.edu/environment)
   - American History LibGuide (http://libguides.library.umkc.edu/americanhistory)

2. Starting from the home page, find another path to a LibGuide on Film Studies. Be sure to display the page to indicate you are done with the task.

   Success criteria – As testing proceeded, success criteria was simplified to: Participant found and displayed the Film Studies LibGuide (http://libguides.library.umkc.edu/film) using a different path than Task 1

3. If you wanted additional help on researching a Marketing topic and wanted to meet with a librarian who has a focus in business...
   - What is the name of the librarian you could contact?
   - What ways can you contact this librarian?

   Be sure to verbally point out or display the answers to indicate you are done with the task.

   Success criteria – As testing proceeded and we learned the wording of the task was insufficient to ensure LibGuide usage, success criteria were broadened to:
   - Participant found and pointed out or displayed the Marketing LibGuide (http://libguides.library.umkc.edu/marketing) AND pointed to or said out loud librarian’s name (Chris Le Beau) AND pointed to or said out loud the contact methods (any or all of the chats - meebo, MSN Live Messenger, Yahoo - and email, phone number)

---OR---
   - Participant used some other path (e.g., Contact Us) to locate the information AND pointed to or said out loud librarian’s name (Chris Le Beau) AND pointed to or said out loud the contact methods (chat, contact form, email, phone number)
**Test Environment & Equipment**

Simulating approximately 30% of user experiences and ensuring similarity of test environments between two states, usability test sessions took place in three controlled locations (all of which were located off of low-traveled hallways and were fairly quiet).

- Four of the six sessions were conducted in a library classroom at the UMKC University Libraries.
- One of the remaining sessions was conducted at a work conference room at i3Logic in Pontiac, MI.
- The final session was conducted in a sound-proof study room at the Warren Public Library in Warren, MI. (Originally, this session was to have been conducted at i3Logic, but scheduling conflicts necessitated a change in location.)

In support of the informal poll results (80% of those responding access the site using either a desktop or laptop computer), test participants used one of two systems: a desktop workstation or a laptop. Both the workstation and laptop are Windows-based operating systems running Internet Explorer (IE) 7 and TechSmith’s Morae Usability Testing and Market Research software (V3.1). Both systems met the minimum requirements for Morae V3.1.

Participants interacted with the system using a keyboard and mouse and were connected to http://library.umkc.edu through a T1 Internet connection.

The laptop used a built-in web cam and external microphone. The desktop used an external camera and microphone.

The Morae Recorder configuration file was initially configured to run without Picture-in-Picture (PiP) to circumvent the laptop’s limitation of using PiP (i.e., Morae Recorder crashed when the laptop used PiP and no recorded data was saved or recoverable). Group testing revealed that the Moderators using the desktop could enable PiP, then save/send the recording to the laptop. The laptop’s Morae Manager could easily and without error import the desktop PiP recordings. The reverse was also true (laptop recordings imported in desktop Morae project). For analysis, each group member’s Morae project had four had PiP-enabled and two no-PiP recordings.

**Moderator Role**

Each KC/Detroit team member performed the Moderator role twice (not including practice sessions), for a total of six (6) test sessions. Test sessions were conducted without in-room Observers.

The Moderator sat next to the participant while the session was conducted (there were only two people in the test room at a time). Each Moderator used an agreed-upon, pre-tested moderator script (see Appendix – Moderator Script). Each Moderator read the script aloud verbatim during the test session.
Each Moderator needed to help the participants through various parts of Tasks 1 and 2 and also asked unscripted follow-up questions in an effort to better understand the participant's thoughts and actions. The Moderators refrained from offering help until such time as the participants gave indication they were frustrated. The initial suggested completion times were not strictly adhered to in an effort to gather more information about participants’ thoughts and actions. By refraining from providing help, Moderators gave them enough time for participants to work through obstacles and generate further data regarding placement and marketing of LibGuides.

Soon after each session, each Moderator jotted down additional thoughts and summarized impressions of the test. These thoughts were emailed to the other KC/Detroit group members the same day the tests occurred. Paperwork for each participant was collated and shared with the other KC/Detroit team members within 24 hours of completing the test.

Moderators marked their recorded sessions (i.e., logged tasks and marked observations, errors, and other Morae markers within Morae Manager). These marked recordings were exported from Morae Manager as “Project Components” (*.mpca). The marked recordings were shared through screecast.com accounts (to handle the 100-250MB sized files), the imported into each group member’s Morae Manager project for analysis.

Following group discussion, additional new Morae markers were created and applied to the recordings to analyze the results more thoroughly using the following rubric:

- Acceptable paths from the home page included:
  - How Do I Start My Research? from Student Box at bottom of page
  - How Do I... | Start My Research? from the left hand navigation
  - Using the Library Site Search Tool
  - Find Books & Articles | Information on My Topic from the left hand navigation

- A primary "error" (Morae marker "X") was something that could only occur from the home page, including:
  - Using UMKC search (upper right hand box)
  - Using the tabbed Library Search Tool (middle of screen; any tabs, like Library Catalog or Database search, Google Scholar) (middle of screen)
  - Using Database search (middle of screen)
  - Other searches and navigation links not listed as acceptable paths

- New markers were created to further delineate participant actions:
Task 1: Investigation data

Task 1, Find a Page, was very problematic. Five out of six participants failed the task completely and only one participant completed it with difficulty. (See Figure 1 for the distribution of successful completion of tasks for all three tasks.)

![Success Distribution by Task](image)

Figure 1 - Distribution of successfully completed tasks.

Completion times for Task 1 varied from 3:39 minutes to 15:59 minutes. The time on task varied greatly due to a number of factors -- primarily because the participants were asked to think aloud and the moderators often prompted or probed participants for more information.

Most errors focused around the participant actually starting research on the Task 1 topic, not looking for resources to help them research.

By the numbers:
• 66% of all errors were made using the tabbed Library Search Tool
• Participants returned to the Home page 26 times
• Participants reached How Do I Start My Research six times
  o One participant used the Subject Guides link
  o Five participants scanned past it
• Participants reached Information on My Topic twice.
• Course reserves were accessed five times by three participants
• UMKC Research link was chosen by two participants
• One-third of participants used the Library Site Search Tool while attempting Task 1, but did not recognize the results.

Two-thirds of the participants found an appropriate LibGuide during testing but did not recognize it as their objective.

Left navigation was the 2nd most popular area to investigate, with participants using Find Books, Articles,... and How Do I...? Participants also used the Audience boxes along the bottom of the page, but only as their earlier search attempts were thwarted, although they were frequently scanned for links.

Successful paths taken were:
• How Do I Start My Research? > Subject Guides
• Find Books and Article > Information On My Topic
• Through the Library Site Search

Several participants mentioned they would have gone to Google or Google Scholar. Most scanned pages, especially the “How Do I Start My Research” page very quickly, and nothing jumped out at them. Here is a link to a video (http://www.screencast.com/t/NWU2N2Rk) of a participant doing just that - reading the "How Do I Start My Research" page and seeing nothing recognizable to him.

Two-thirds of participants first attempted to use search capability to locate terms like "environment," "environmentalism," "America," "history," and combinations of these terms. When the search, whether using the Library Site Search or tabbed Library Search Tool, returned no recognizable results, three of these participants then switched to using on-screen navigation (left-hand or bottom of screen).

All but one participant reached either the "How Do I Start My Research" or "Information on My Topic" pages while attempting Task 1. Both these web pages are primary paths to LibGuides using on-screen navigation, but participants did not recognize the links as an appropriate solution for Task 1.

In Figure 2 below, extracted from a Morae recorded session, the participant has used an appropriate search for the term "film studies." Note that the first search result link (circled in red) is a link to the "Information on My Topic" page, which would take
the participant quickly to the correct LibGuide. Unfortunately, the participant is about to click on the scrollbar on the right, look past the link, then leave this page.

Figure 2 - Still image capture of participant with a successful search, but not recognizing the "Information On My Topic" link (in red) as the appropriate link.

**Task 2: Investigation data**

Significant learning occurred from Task 1, supported by reduced time to complete task and fewer mouse clicks for Task 2 than Task 1. This learning was expected and desired and as a result it enabled four of the six participants to successfully complete Task 2: one participant completed Task 2 with ease and three completed with difficulty.

The remaining two participants were not able to complete Task 2 for what looked to be two reasons:

1. One participant admitted to not understanding what a LibGuide was
2. Removing the Library Site Search option forced a participant to look at navigation options, and was not able to locate recognizable navigation links.

Task 2 was attempted and/or completed within a range of 1:20 to 6:11 minutes (average 3:25 minutes).

Using the definition of primary "error" in the Methods Section, Participants A-F committed 1, 5, 1, 1, 2, and 0 errors, respectively, in completing Task 2. These
primary errors from the home page included:

- Using the tabbed search tools for library catalog/databases/Google Scholar
- Visiting specific libraries
- Using the navigation link Find Books & Articles > Articles & Databases
- Using a UMKC-wide search, and
- Visiting a Research link.

Adding in the secondary errors, Participants A-F committed 2, 9, 1, 4, 2, and 0 combined errors, respectively.

The four participants who successfully completed Task 2 did so after reaching either the "How Do I Start My Research" or "Information on My Topic" pages. Neither of the other two participants reached either of these pages, even though they saw these pages during or after Task 1.

Below are the times that successful participants spent on or viewing "How Do I Start My Research" and "Information on My Topic" pages for Task 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Do I Start My Research</th>
<th>Information on My Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 seconds</td>
<td>5.8 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 seconds</td>
<td>6.4 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 seconds</td>
<td>7.0 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.6 seconds</td>
<td>6 seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completing Task 2 required few returns to the home page. Most participants initially used the same search they were taught for Task 1. Moderators allowed this to occur, then prompted participants to return to the home page and look for another path. After that prompt, participants who successfully completed Task 2 generally did not need to return to the home page, again, with the exception of one participant (who returned four additional times).

**Task 3: Investigation data**

Task 3 required participants to find contact information for a specific subject librarian. Although the goal of the test was to examine LibGuides, Task 3 did not specify that participants must use LibGuides. Because of this, the task was scored successfully completed if the participant found the correct information through any method using the Library's website.

If the original success criteria of using a LibGuide had been applied, only half the participants would have successfully completed this task. With the revised success criteria, all participants completed the task, four completing it with ease and two with difficulty.
Three participants used the Library's "Subject Liaison Librarian" web page to find the required information, while the other three used a LibGuide. Given that all participants were introduced to LibGuides in Task 1 (and four of the six had used LibGuides for Task 2 before completing Task 3), it is interesting to note that only half returned to LibGuides for Task 3. Those participants who used the "Subject Liaison Librarian" page arrived there via three different links on the Library's homepage: Contact Us, Ask A Librarian, and Subject Liaison Librarian.

Task 3 typically required less prompting from the moderator than other tasks, giving the measure of time on this task more relevance. The times ranged from 0:36 seconds to 4:49 minutes. The average time was 2:15 minutes, but three participants took less than 1:30 minutes to complete the task. The two participants who took over three minutes, completing the task with difficulty, struggled to find information on the Subject Liaison Librarian page and the Staff Directory page (a logical choice of page, but one that doesn't contain the required information). Only one participant veered entirely off path to a completely unrelated page, but it did not slow him down greatly.

The Subject Liaison Librarian page provides only two contact methods (phone and email). Two of the three participants who used that page identified the email form as the only contact method (missing the phone number). The LibGuide provides the additional contact method of an embedded chat box. Two of the three participants using the LibGuide identified all three methods, while one missed the chat box. It is notable that two of the three participants using LibGuides spent some time looking at the page before they were able to locate the librarian information or understand that the picture they saw was the librarian and the contact information was underneath that picture. Here is a link to a video (http://www.screencast.com/t/ZGRlMmYxM) showing a participant becoming frustrated as he tries to find the information on a LibGuide.

**Discussion of Findings**

This section identifies the major findings distilled from the Results. The findings are numbered and in **bold** text with supporting discussion underneath each finding.

**Finding 1: The home page lacks sufficient advertising and description of LibGuides.**

Task 1, Find a Page, was clearly the most difficult task. The most prominent feature on the home page is the tabbed Library Search Tool and five of the six participants used it during the testing, which was considered an error for this study. Five of the six participants looked around the home page and moused over text for at least one minute before making their first attempt at finding the page. One participant entered a query into the Library Site Search 40 seconds into the test; he was the only participant to complete the task.

Toward the end of Task 1, several participants made more desperate
attempts to find the page by checking course reserves, using the UMKC Research link, and following other random links on the site.

Also, the survey at the end of the session asked participants to rate their level of agreement with two statements (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The statements and their average results are:

- “The UMKC University Libraries website adequately advertises the existence of LibGuides.” – Average score: 1.5
- “LibGuides are easy to find.” – Average score: 2.83

The results from all tasks and the final survey are supportive of the concept that the Library homepage needs to have more visible paths to LibGuides and should better explain what these resources are. The home page could more clearly advertise LibGuides: what they are, what they look like, what features they have, how they are used, plus provide direct links to LibGuide listings (e.g., LibGuides home page).

**Finding 2: The wording of the test tasks was unclear to participants, resulting in differing interpretations of what the task asked and dissimilar actions.**

In Task 1, participants demonstrated through actions or admitted verbally that the concept of what was being asked for was unclear to them - they did not know, nor were they provided, the term LibGuide, they did not understand the task wording itself, and they were unsure of what they were supposed to be finding. This resulted in participants trying to start research and locate specific books or articles instead of finding a LibGuide.

Once a user committed to a path, they often made several secondary errors by either refining a book search, investigating individual databases or links to database.

We attribute these actions to the vagueness of the task wording itself and the propensity of participants to begin researching the topic and identifying resources (based on their student experiences) instead of merely locating a "jumping-off" point from which they could start research, in addition to lack of LibGuide advertising on the home page.

For Task 2, several participants who were shown how to do a Library Site Search after Task 1 immediately tried to use the same search that would have been successful in completing Task 1. This was allowed to let participants gain a sense of success, then they were prompted to find “another” path. Inflection on the word “another” was needed to help make this task more clear.

Finally, Task 3 did not require the use of LibGuides to find librarian
Finding 3: The most successful paths for finding LibGuides were quite different (search tool versus navigation), suggesting the need to keep multiple paths available to reach LibGuides from the home page. These paths are the:

- Library Site Search Tool
- Left navigation
  - “How Do I Start My Research,”
  - “Find Books, Articles... Information On My Topic,”
- Bottom navigation “How Do I Start My Research”.

During Task 1, half the participants used one of the search tools on the home page and the other half used the navigation links.

The success of Task 2 involved two primary navigation paths from the home page: the link "How Do I Start My Research" and “Find Books & Articles” > "Information on My Topic." All four successful task completions used either the “Information on My Topic” page OR the sequential combination of the "How Do I Start My Research" and "Information on My Topic" pages. There was an even split between these paths. This suggests that both paths should remain in place and provide more opportunity for students to locate LibGuides.

The Library Site Search enhanced to return more LibGuide results the day before testing began, proved to be an effective method for locating LibGuides (once the concept of LibGuides was understood). Ideally, the Library Site Search would be as prominent as the tabbed Library Search Tool (which proved to not be an effective method for finding LibGuides).

Finding 4: The “Information on My Topic Page” successfully led participants to quickly locate an appropriate LibGuide, suggesting that its layout and formatting be retained or reused.

Most participants did not find the link for this page in the side navigation (“Find Books, Articles...” > “Information on My Topic”) during Task 1.

Interestingly, whenever this page was found, participants easily navigated to the appropriate LibGuide. All four participants successfully completing Task 2 spent only 5.8-7.0 seconds on this page.

While the page title "Information on My Topic" was not readily grasped as a listing of LibGuides, the layout of the page was very conducive to quick and easy use.

This suggests the format of the "Information on My Topic" page should
Finding 5: The “How Do I Start My Research” page was often found by participants. While considered in this study to be a successful path to LibGuides, the information on this page clearly needs to be presented in a better format to easily lead participants to LibGuides.

Five of the six participants found “How Do I Start My Research” in Task 1, but none used it as a path for find a LibGuide. Most skimmed it very quickly then dismissed the content.

As presented in the video clip referenced in the Results section, one participant more carefully skimmed the first two steps, but by the time the third step was reached, the participant was no longer paying careful attention.

Only two participants reached this page during Task 2 and spent an average of one minute reading through the page. After careful investigation of this page (which was significantly more careful than during Task 1), both participants found the "subject guides" link in the Information section.

The fact that participants did not find this page useful over Tasks 1 and 2 suggests that this page needs to be more user-friendly.

We feel that participants would have had better success on Tasks 1 and 2 if this page:
- Had more clearly delineated sections with better “chunking” of information
- Was able to be scanned more easily
- Had either a live search or the examples were more clearly identified as graphics
- Had a more obvious link to LibGuide(s).
Finding 6: Identifying librarians’ focus subjects and contact information was relatively easy and multiple paths are available to find the information. Participants experienced minor difficulties locating specific contact information, suggesting the need for improved layout on those pages.

Task 3, finding a specific librarian and their contact information, was the most successful of the three tasks. All users completed it and most did not struggle.

Only half the participants used LibGuides in spite of the study's focus on this resource (see earlier Finding about task wording). The other participants each used different links on the library's homepage to get to a listing of subject liaison librarians. This demonstrates the success of designing multiple ways of getting to the same place, a strategy the Library should try to employ for LibGuides. In addition, it has a number of possible interpretations regarding LibGuides:

1. LibGuides are not visible as a resource on the homepage (which may cause them to get less use than other, visible links).
2. Users may not associate LibGuides with librarians and/or subjects.

Participants completing Task 3 tended to find appropriate pages, but struggled to find the information on those pages. The test showed that the layout and information included on the Staff Directory Subject Liaison Librarian pages and LibGuides may be causing users some difficulty. In particular, the following issues were observed:

1. Users tended to immediately click a librarian's name arriving at an email form, but missed their telephone number.
2. Users had some difficulty reading and interpreting the subjects (labeled "departments") on the Subject Liaison Librarian page.
3. The Staff Directory page (used by only one participant) appeared to be difficult to read and lack helpful structure and information.
4. Users had some difficulty locating and/or understanding librarian profiles in LibGuides.

All this suggests that the Subject Liaison Librarian and Staff Directory pages may need to be redesigned. Further testing may help determine how to best organize them. In LibGuides, the librarian should be clearly identified as such using the profile title.
**Recommendations**

This section describes our recommendations to UMKC University Library's website. The recommendations touch on multiple areas in addition to the home page because successful completion of tasks involves a variety of paths from the home page. The recommendations are presented in groupings based on these paths, with both short-term and long-term recommendations identified.

The first priority should be picking a name for the guides and using it consistently through all areas and pages of the web site. Participants generally felt that *LibGuide* was a fine name for the resource (and *Library Guide* was also suggested), once they understood the concept. For the purposes of this Recommendations section, we will use "LibGuide(s)".

**University Libraries home page – Placement of LibGuide Links**

Short-term

- Left navigation under “Find Articles, Books...” We further recommend making "LibGuides" the first link on the sub-menu that appears
- In Student box at the bottom of the page
- Use "LibGuide" in place of "subject guides" on the "How Do I Start My Research" page

Long-term

- Place a link to LibGuides home page in error message when no result are found in the Library Site Search
- Create a LibGuides tab in the tabbed Library Search Tool

**Library Site Search Tool**

Long-term

- Research the ability use the term LibGuide in the search -- “environmental studies LibGuide” failed to return a link to a LibGuide
- The ability to make suggestions or extrapolate terms. For instance, when “history of environmentalism” is entered, can the search tool displays items containing environment and environmental.
- Change text in the search return to displays the term LibGuide first in the title.
- Investigate relevancy in items returned. For instance, why does the LibGuide for Film Studies come up fourth with a relevancy of 58%?
“How do I Start My Research” page

Short-term: Consider changing the example search boxes to be more clearly "example only" (i.e., ensure participants understand that that area is not a live search area).

Long-term: Apply Information Mapping to this page to make the page more easily scanned, like:

- Reduce the amount of copy
- Create more targeted bullet points
- Use more white space
- Delineate sections more clearly

“Information on My Topic” page

Short-term

- Change name to LibGuides
- Change title of the page to LibGuides

Long-term: With the enhanced Library Site Search yielding more LibGuide results, web developers plan to retire this particular page and replace it with a direct link to the LibGuides home page link. We recommend that when this occurs, the page should use a similar layout and format as the current "Information on My Topic" page because of the success participants had once they found this page.

LibGuide Pages

Short-term

- Add University Library Header
- Craft guidelines for the title and descriptions of LibGuides to clarify the value of this resource for users.
- Ensure LibGuides do not have broken links or blank areas.
- Identify the librarian profile boxes with a heading that includes the term "librarian" to help the user understand who this person is.

Long-term

- Change Favicon to be consistent with University Libraries Website
- Perform Usability Testing on LibGuides pages
Marketing Plan for LibGuides

Long-term

- Ensure current Library instruction materials include LibGuide information
- Request that professors/instructors include references to LibGuides in their course syllabi and/or materials
- Gather professor and student input for LibGuide "comments" sections
- Work with Campus IT to create links to LibGuides in Blackboard
- Consider creating a short, 30-second "commercial" or "tutorial" on LibGuides, made available on the home page
  - This would help advertise LibGuides on the home page, supporting other searches (e.g., a new LibGuide search tab), to bring awareness to the fact that LibGuides exist.
  - Pull material from current library instruction that mentions LibGuides (what they are, how to use them)

Library staff listings

Long-term

- Conduct usability testing on the Subject Liaison Librarian and Staff Directory pages. In particular to determine:
  - What kind of information should be on the Staff Directory and how should it be organized?
  - How easy is it to find a subject librarian on the Subject Liaison Librarian page.
- Include each librarian's telephone number on their individual email form (in case the user misses it on the previous page).
Appendix

Usability Study Forms & Checklists
UMKC University Libraries Usability Consent Form

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our usability test to improve the UMKC Libraries website. This will help make the website more user friendly for students, faculty, staff, and visiting scholars. Be assured we are testing the website, not you.

Before you begin the test, please read the following and sign at the bottom indicating that you understand and agree with these conditions.

Duration: The entire test should take no longer than 35 minutes. You may take a break if needed at any time.

Information Collection: During the test, you will be asked to complete task associated with the library website. We will also ask you to fill out an online survey about your experience with the website as well a few debriefing questions. Please include as much information as possible; any feedback helps with the development of the site.

Voluntary Participation: If for any reason you need to leave the session, inform the facilitator and you are free to withdraw.

Audio/Videotaping: The session will be recorded on video and software will be used to capture website navigation movements. During the session, only your first name will be used to maintain your privacy. The audio/video recordings and software capture will be available to those conducting the study and accessed using a unique number assigned to the data. Personal information will not be used.

Confidentiality: By signing this form, you give your consent for the Usability Research team to use your voice, likeness, comments, and audio/video for the purpose of evaluating the University Libraries and in any professional publications or at any professional meetings. Your full name and personal information will not be used.

Please sign below indicating that you understand and agree with the above terms.

Signature: ________________________________________

Printed Name: ______________________________________

Date Signed: ________________________________________
Participant Information Form

Age or Age range: 
- [ ] 18-24
- [ ] 25-34
- [ ] 35-44
- [ ] 45-54
- [ ] 55-64
- [ ] 65+

Gender: 
- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

Grade Level: 
- [ ] Undergrad
- [ ] Graduate

Are you a UMKC student? 
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Internet Experience: 
- [ ] Expert
- [ ] Advanced
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Novice

Previous attendance of a UMKC Library Instruction Program*:  
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

*Library instruction includes:
- An instruction session taught by library staff in one of your classes.
- A research consultation with a reference librarian.
- An extended reference question with library staff.

How often do you use the library web site?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Once or twice a month
- [ ] Once or twice a week
- [ ] Daily
- [ ] Several times a day
**Moderator Script**

Good (morning, afternoon, evening) My name is ___________________. I want to thank you for taking part in the UMKC Library website user testing. I will be reading this script verbatim so all participants receive the same starting information.

To help set the context for this session, think about these questions: Would you expect professors to point you to resources you could use to complete your assignments? What types of resources have your professors provided? Would you want other resources available for you when your professor is not available?

These days, more and more students like the ability to work independently. To make that easier, on the UMKC Libraries site, librarians developed a variety of web pages to assist students in finding library resources. These pages are helpful when researching various topics. In this test, we are trying to find the best way to make sure students find these pages and that is what we are investigating today.

It helps if we are able to observe students actually using the web site. It’s important for you to know that YOU are not being tested -- the library web site is being tested. I didn’t design this site, so you don’t have to worry about offending me. We need your honest opinions. Since they are trying to improve the web site, any problems you have and find really help. Okay?

First I want to show you around the room. Here is the computer you will be using. It’s just like the computers in our computer lab. I’m sure you also noticed there is a microphone/video camera on the computer. We are going to be recording this session so that we have a way to review what you have to say and what you click on after this session is done. That way we can avoid distracting you with note-taking.

♣ The Audio/Video release waiver was signed when the participant signed up for testing or have them sign it now.

Now I have a couple of quick questions, then we can get started.

♣ Fill out the Background Questionnaire

Okay, now we are going to begin the testing. I’m going to ask you to complete a few tasks. Once you have completed those tasks, I have a few questions to wrap up the session. This shouldn’t take any longer than 30 minutes. As you are completing these tasks I’d like you to verbalize what you are doing and thinking. I know you are probably used to working at your computer silently but for this exercise, we need you to talk out loud about what you are doing. If one of the tasks takes a long time, I may ask you to move to the next task – if that happens don’t worry about it, you will have already told us what we need to know.

♣ Let participants visit different areas on the site to get familiar with the site layout. This is specifically important for non-UMKC students.

One last thing before we begin, we want to start each task from the home page and there are two ways to get there. One is to use the Home button on the browser (♣demonstrate) and the other is to click on the web site header (♣demonstrate).
I want to remind you again, YOU are not being tested.

♦ Start test

Are you ready for the first task? Start with the University Libraries home page. Participant clicks to return to home page; cue to log tasks later in recorded session.

Task 1: You have to write a research paper about the history of environmentalism in America. At the end of the last lecture, your professor said there is a page on the library website that will help you find information to get started. Find this page. Be sure to verbally point out or display the page to indicate you are done with the task.

Thank you, that provided a lot of great information.

Are you ready for the next task? Start again from the University Libraries home page. Participant clicks to return to home page; cue to log tasks later in recorded session.

Task 2: Starting from the home page, find another path to a LibGuide on Film Studies. Be sure to display the page to indicate you are done with the task.

You're doing great!

Are you ready for the last task? Start again from the University Libraries home page. Participant clicks to return to home page; cue to log tasks later in recorded session.

Task 3: If you wanted additional help on researching a Marketing topic and wanted to meet with a librarian who has a focus in business...

What is the name of the librarian you could contact?

What ways can you contact this librarian?

Be sure to verbally point out or display the answers to indicate you are done with the task.

♦ End test

This is just the information we needed to collect.

♦ Have them complete the online Morae survey

Thanks for helping with this web site testing. It really helps a lot. Your input will help improve the web site for everyone. Now I have a few more brief questions for you.

♦ Ask as many questions as you can from the Debriefing Questions and remain within the time frame.

Well, thanks again. We know your time is valuable. Here is a little thank you gift for helping us.
Post-Test Debrief

1. If you were telling your friends about these LibGuides, what would you call them?

2. [If the above question does not elicit much information] Can you think of any other names the library could use for these LibGuides?

3. Did you have any final questions or comments about the test, the tasks, or the website?
Post-Test To-Do List

1. Save Morae recording
2. Summarize test impressions and thoughts
3. Clean up the test area (and/or prep for next participant if scheduled)
   1. Clear browser cache/history before each test
   2. Remove papers and water bottles/cups
   3. Shut down IE and/or the computer system
4. Place markers on Morae recording
5. Share paperwork for each participant with the other KC/Detroit team members within 24 hours