The Transformation of User Experience in the MSU Libraries

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Rethink It Conference
August 11, 2015
What is User Experience?

“It’s just a [formal] process for figuring out what we should have been doing all along…”*

“What would we be doing in this building if we weren’t being dead?”**

*Person walking, talking behind me while walking to Niemeyer Hall, 8/10/15
**Lee Van Orsdel, Rethink It Plenary, 8/10/15
Why should libraries care about UX?

Paradigm Shift
- Users are an annoyance
- Users are the core of what we do

Pressure!
Adapt and stay relevant
- Ubiquity of information
- Competition
- Digital natives

Fill the Gap!
- Assumptions: design for librarians
- Evidence-based: design for users
How does this translate in UX?

**Paradigm Shift**
- Build and sustain a culture of talking and listening to your users!

**Relevancy**
- Assessment
- Measure the impact/value of library to the community at large

**Fill the Gap**
- User-Centric Design
- (Design Think!)
- Participatory Design
Transformation of UX at MSUL

2011: Disparate assessment efforts across library units and divisions

2012: Usability team initiates iterative web design; User Experience Work Group formed

2013: New User Experience Librarian hired

2014: User Experience becomes official unit under Public Services Division

2015: 4 librarians, 1 support staff, 1 student employee
SWOT Analysis
(Unit Retreat – November 2014)

**Strengths:**
- Diverse skill sets, expertise, and experiences
- Administrative support and staff buy-in

**Weaknesses:**
- New unit; new supervisor; lack of experience as formal unit
- Unclear expectations from other units

**Threats:**
- Territorial issues with other units
- Political pushback: recommendations not acted on

**Opportunities:**
- Promote collaboration on UX projects in unit and with other library units and divisions
- Respect skills and experiences brought to table by all unit members
- Develop new skills to enhance participation in UX projects
- Continue to work with data to enhance holistic user experience for MSUL
Growing Pains
(Unit Retreat – November 2014)

**Issue:**
Action is not taken, or not fully taken, on recommendations made by UX Unit after considerable time and dedication to a project resulting in frustration.

**Action Steps:**
- Involve stakeholders in the project when feasible to give them greater sense of investment.
- Develop a contract or guidelines for UX Unit Project undertaking.

**OUTCOME:** Develop UX Consultation Request Form; Invite stakeholders to UXWG meetings for collaboration.
**Issue:** Develop an assessment cycle to establish benchmarking across multiple years?

**Action Steps:** Develop a sustainable assessment program for MSUL

**OUTCOME:** Developing systematic process for collecting and reporting library-related data; Sharing project reports on UX Intranet; Unit web page with Mission statement and G’s & O’s.
User Experience

Mission Statement

The mission of User Experience in the MSU Libraries is to develop and sustain a culture of assessment and evaluation and to provide data-influenced, user-centric recommendations for planning, design, implementation, and enhancement of library services, spaces, and collections.

Services & Goals of the Unit

- Assess and evaluate the MSU Libraries' spaces, services, and collections - measuring impact and value, appraising for optimal usability, and providing data-influenced recommendations to stakeholders for enhancement and/or improvement.
- Collaborate with other library units/division on user experience projects in order to communicate across projects and to serve as a local resource and expert on user experience.
- Represent user experience to the MSU and CIC communities - developing working relationships with user experience professionals in the wider communities - acquiring and sharing knowledge on methodologies, best practices, and standards.

MSUL User Experience: http://lib.msu.edu/ux
Defining the role(s) of UX at MSUL...

**Service Points & Processes:** Evaluation of service and access points, both physical and virtual, for optimal user-centric design and continual improvement

**Assessment:** Measuring the impact/value of the MSU Libraries

**Data Analysis & Visualization:** Analysis of project-related data or data collected by other units in collaboration with UX; visualization of data to tell the story for data-influenced decision making

**Statistics/Data Inventory:** Systematic collection and reporting of library statistics; Management of in-house data inventory
UX Consideration: Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI)

How We’ve Grown!

Then (2012): 1.5


1. Decisions are made based on staff’s preferences, management’s pet projects. User experience [of patrons] is rarely discussed.

2. Some effort is made toward improving the user experience. Decisions are based on staff’s gut feelings about patrons’ needs, perhaps combined with anecdotes from service points.

3. The organization cares about user experience; one or two UX champions bring up users’ needs regularly. Decisions are made based on established usability principles and studies from other organizations, with occasional usability testing.

4. User experience is a primary motivator; most staff are comfortable with UX principles. Users are consulted regularly, not just for major decisions, but in an ongoing attempt at improvement.

5. User experience is so ingrained that staff consider the usability of all of their work products, including internal communications. Staff are actively considerate, not only toward users but toward their coworkers.

Source: http://www.sheldon-hess.org/coral/2013/07/ux-consideration-cmmi/
How would you HACK the Library?
(Library Open House – September 2014)
Possessions:
- Books
- Notebooks
- Laptop
- Cellphone
- Food/drink

Activities:
- Sitting in group
- Reading/writing
- Using laptop
- Using phone
- Using library computer
- Using headphones
- Sleeping
- Browsing (in stacks)
- Talking to another patron
- Eating/drinking

Seating Sweeps/Space Study:
Spring 2014
Results of Space Study – Guerilla Survey (Spring 2014)

Reasons for Visit

- To study alone: 35%
- To study in a group: 13%
- To print, scan, or copy something: 12%
- Other: 9%
- To meet a colleague or peer: 8%
- To use a library computer: 13%
- To get a book or journal: 9%
- To meet with a librarian: 2%

Reasons For Selecting the Main Library

- Collections: 7%
- Environment: 12%
- Food: 2%
- Hours: 2%
- Location: 16%
- Quiet: 39%
- Services: 8%
- Space: 7%
- Technology: 9%

Legend:
- Traditional library “hardware”
- Quiet, convenience and environment
How does UX affect our services at MSUL?

**Space study:**

- More functional seating (vs. additional seating);
- More power sources (vs. more computers);
- Wayfinding (touchpoints; heat maps; computer/room availability);
- Consultation with administration on space design;
- Participatory design with Experience Architecture Project Management class.
How does UX affect our services at MSUL?

**DeskTracker:**
Reference statistics influence staffing (less desk, more chat) and wayfinding content

**Collaborative Technology Labs (CTLs):**
Low usage (what?!?!!); new reservation system; digital signage with point of need reservation capability

**Website:**
Iterative design
Design, test, launch, test, design, launch, etc.
Thank You!

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