

Designing "seek librarian assistance" concepts into the UTA Library homepage with librarian's terms

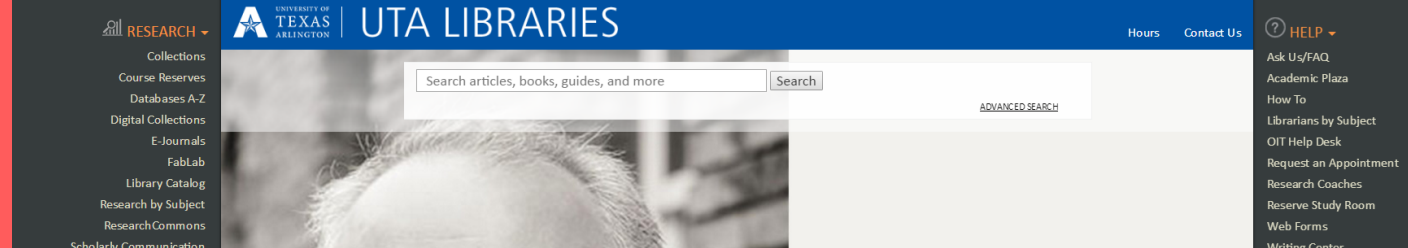
Two questions were posed to students:

Q1. When looking for help from a librarian for information related to your **major**, what link would you choose?

Q2. When looking for help from a librarian for information **outside your major**, what link would you choose?

Terms Proposed by Librarians

- Librarians by Academic Subject
- Librarians by Expertise
- Librarians by Academic Discipline
- Librarians by Area of Expertise
- Librarians by Specialty
- Areas of Expertise
- Assistance by Expertise
- Librarians by Subject (current)



PURPOSE

Two usability studies were run to validate terminology from librarians for the libraries homepage. In both studies, each student was presented with paper mock-ups of the homepage and asked to find information using different search goals.

STUDY 1 (N = 13)

	Miss	Hit
Q1	22%	78%
Q2	21%	79%

In Study 1, the terms were located on the right side of the screen. A search was scored as a "hit" if the student pointed to one of the proposed terms and a "miss" if not. Most searches were hits. Of these, 86% were "Librarians by Academic Subject" for Q1. None of the terms was prominent for Q2.

Students did not choose a substantial number of the terms from librarians. For Q1, these included *Thesis and Dissertation Info*, *Research by Subject*, *Ask Us*, and *Librarian Instruction*. For Q2, they included *Ask Us*, *FAQ*, *Research Commons*, and *FabLab*.

Two questions emerged. Did students miss because the terms did not resonate with them? Or did they miss because they never searched the right side of the page?

STUDY 2 (N = 14)

	Miss	Hit
Q1	33%	67%
Q2	46%	54%

To examine whether if Study 1 was tied to the location of information, we switched the terms from the right to the left side of the page. If misses were simply due to search failure, then shifting the terms to the left side should have resulted in fewer misses. Instead, the misses increased (and hits decreased). Therefore, placing the terms on the right side is a good design decision. Unfortunately, the data do not address the mismatch between the librarian-generated terms and student knowledge or expectations about librarians' roles for helping them in their search goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The terms are not intuitive. We are losing +21% of students when it comes to finding librarian help.

- Place Terms on the right side.
- Use *Librarians by Academic Subject* instead of *Librarians by Subject*.
- Do more research about student search strategies relating to seeking librarian help. We want -5% misses.