Understanding how MIT faculty, students, and researchers work

The new MIT Libraries User Experience Group

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Why do libraries need a user experience group?
Focus on...

All aspects of the user’s interaction with the product or service:

.... how it is perceived, learned, and used.
physical + virtual

UX design & strategy
UX is multi-disciplinary

- psychology
- anthropology
- sociology
- computer science
- graphic design
- industrial design
- cognitive science
Ethnography

Study of people and communities within their own environment
Ethnographic methods

Primary methods:
- participant observation
- formal/informal interviews
The UX cycle

discover

feedback

prototype

design
Scope - UX group

- **Assessment**
  user needs studies, usability testing, surveys of our users' needs, gathering and interpreting stats on use of *virtual and physical spaces*

- **Virtual sites design and production**
  libraries web site, including all web, mobile and other public-facing interfaces that we can control or customize

- **Physical locations design and strategy**
  the design and strategy related to services in our libraries physical locations

- **Marketing & communication**
  Work together with Marketing & Communications area to set the direction for system-wide marketing and communication.
UX group

- 3 UX librarians
- web manager
- web editor (.5)

- 4 other librarians, 20% contributing role

- 1 web UI developer, 20% contributing role
Examples of our work
mobile web sites

later this year, MIT iPhone app
Continuous cycle of usability testing

Usability Tests

This page is maintained by Nicole Hennig, Web Manager & Usability Specialist of the MIT Libraries. The User Interface Group plans and conducts usability tests for the libraries' web sites and other interfaces.

Fall 2009
- summary of tests
- Results:
  - card sorting - home page categories
  - traditional test - new home page, new Rotch Library site, Publishing Services LibGuide

Spring 2009
"Paper" prototype tests of new home page
- test description
- results meeting notes

Nov. - Dec. 2008
- summary of tests

Dec. 2007
- Vera Multi-Search
- DSpace/DELL

1999 - 2006
Usability tests

http://libstaff.mit.edu/usability/
Study of Library Spaces
A study of why, when, and how library spaces are used by the MIT community

a. Hours study
b. Task survey
c. Flip charts

Friday, March 4, 2011
Digital scholarship at MIT

a study of how *new technologies and formats* are changing how MIT scholars find and use information

- 15 users: undergrad, grad, faculty, researchers
- keep a diary of their academic lives for 1 week in March or April
- 1.5-hour interviews

Friday, March 4, 2011
Sample interview questions

- Describe any tasks you did during the one-week period related to finding information, including understanding, organizing, sharing, citing, teaching, presenting, or publishing.

- How is your studying or research changing because of new technologies?

- What are some typical or common pain points in your processes?

- For the tasks described above, how did you do them differently five years ago? What has become easier and what is still difficult?
MIT’s culture

- figure it out on your own
- didn’t always think of libraries as a place to get help
- some unfamiliarity with our more innovative services
Improvements made

- more self-help services, video tutorials
- liaisons program (Tracy’s group)
- new marketing group
A place to test new services

MIT Libraries

Betas & Widgets

About betas

The MIT Libraries are experimenting with new technologies and services to help make access to information easier. The tools below are in “beta” form and have been created or adapted for the MIT community. They are still being tinkered with, but we’d like you to try them out and tell us what you think!

To receive updates on new betas & widgets, follow the betas & widgets category of the news blog.

What works well? What doesn’t? Have you written any scripts or tools yourself? Let us know! Email us at betas-lib@mit.edu.

PubGet for MIT & PubGet Mobile

Pubget makes getting access to full-text documents in life science easier and faster. Instead of search results requiring several clicks to view the papers, with Pubget, the search results are the papers. Pubget allows you to save, manage and share papers.

To try Pubget for MIT, visit Pubget and set your institution to MIT. After entering your affiliation, when you search for articles, Pubget will display the full text articles that MIT subscribes to right in the search results screen. If MIT doesn’t subscribe to the full text, you’ll see the abstract along with links to order it from another institution.

Have a mobile device? Try Pubget Mobile to find articles and open them with your favorite mobile pdf reader or reference manager, like Papers, iBooks, Evernote, & Stanza.

- Posted December 10, 2010

MIT's WorldCat Mobile

You may already be familiar with MIT’s WorldCat for searching libraries beyond MIT,
Some current betas

Borrow an iPad from the Lewis Music Library

Want to check out an iPad for a few hours? The Lewis Music Library has purchased an iPad to lend to MIT faculty, students, and staff. It contains over 85 music apps, along with an iTunes library holding over 3,000 sample tracks and video clips from the library’s recently-received CDs and DVDs. Borrow an iPad for 4 hours (no renewals or overnight loans). First come, first served.

The iPad was purchased with money from the Class of 1982 Music Library Fund.

We’d love to hear ideas on how you would use an iPad in your work at MIT, especially with library research. Tell us about it!

- Posted May 6, 2010

Amazon Kindles in the Hayden Library

Have you caught on to the Kindle craze? Want to try one before you commit to buying one?

The Humanities Library owns 3 Amazon Kindle e-book readers that are available to borrow for one week. Each Kindle comes with a few books already installed, and you can also download free book previews from Amazon. Ask us or stop by the front desk of Hayden Library to add your name to the waiting list to borrow, and we’ll contact you when one is available.

Have thoughts or comments about the Kindle? Contact us.

- Posted October 8, 2009
Some betas “graduate”

About beta graduates

The following tools & services started out as betas, but proved to be successful enough to graduate. They’ve earned their place as graduates by passing these criteria:

- The beta has received positive user feedback (from more than a handful of users).
- It has been demonstrated that the MIT community is using it.
- MIT staff are able to provide long-term support, or the tool is supported by a trusted and reliable resource outside of MIT.

**Dewey Research Advisor**
starting points for specific research questions in the fields of business, management, and economics.

**Firefox button for off-campus journal access**
bookmarklet button that allows quick, easy access to journals from off campus.

**LibX - MIT Edition**
a Firefox extension that adds a toolbar for quickly searching the Barton catalog, Vera, and Google Scholar. Embeds links to MIT resources in Amazon, Google Scholar, and more.

**Podcasts on scholarly communication**
series of podcasts organized by the Libraries’ Scholarly Publishing and Licensing Consultant.

**RSS feeds for new books**
RSS lists of new books, CDs, and DVDs by subject.

**Twitter**
latest news on events and services through the @mitlibraries Twitter feed

**Vera Multi-Search**
new version of Vera adds the ability to simultaneously search several databases at once.

**Video tutorials**
short online videos that show how to use library tools and resources.

**Virtual Reference Collection in del.icio.us**
integrates many free and recommended resources and makes them available via RSS, or to browse.
Some don’t

About the beta graveyard

While many beta tools and services of the MIT Libraries are great successes, others haven’t been as fruitful. Some criteria that we use to take a beta out of service include:

- No way to support it
- Superseded by another tool or service
- Unproven user need for the service

As Henry Ford said, “Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” We’ve learned something from each of the tools that we’ve tried and have used the knowledge in planning future services.
Emerging technology subgroup

**Who:** 3-4 members - any area of the libraries

**When:** 1 semester only, then rotates to new members

**What:**
- each member chooses one technology to explore
- research it during the semester
- report findings back to the group
- bring ideas that show promise to the UX strategy group - consider as betas
Marketing
Social media

MIT 150 timeline Tuesday

MIT 150 book of the day

Retweeting happy users

Conversations

Promoting study space
Workshops

Apps4Academics

iPhone/iPad apps & mobile web sites for your academic life

http://libguides.mit.edu/apps
Challenges

- meeting the needs of the diverse MIT communities

- they are working globally, not just on campus at MIT

- new & changing fields of study, more interdisciplinary work
Challenges

- moving away from a focus on physical collections
- new formats, not just text
- changing technologies
Why have a User Experience Group?

understanding our users + expertise of our profession & our staff

leads to....
Innovative services....
... that improve the work & lives of MIT students, faculty & researchers

impact
In the lab or in the field, MIT impacts all walks of life through the technology developed at the Institute and through the people who learn, work and train here. MIT’s students, faculty and staff — supported by our alumni, donors and industry partners — are able to turn hands-on research into answers for the world’s most pressing problems.

industry
Since its founding, MIT has fostered a problem-solving approach that encourages researchers to work together across departments, fields, and institutional boundaries. The resulting collaborations have included thousands of fruitful partnerships with industry and other leading research institutions.

global
MIT is committed to solving the world’s most pressing problems, and its students and faculty eager to do the hard — but fulfilling — work that entails.

energy
The MIT Energy Initiative (MITEI), established in September 2006, is an Institute-wide initiative designed to help transform the global energy system to meet the needs of the future and to help build a bridge to that future by improving today’s energy systems.
Thank you!

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