

Field Study

- Introduction / Summary of project
- Summary of methods used
- Findings and next steps
- Discussion of missed opportunities / shortcomings
- Appendices / other information as you see fit

Our user tasks:

- 1) Find the book “To Kill a Mockingbird” using the Touch Board.
- 2) Find the Librarian focusing in the Philosophy major using the Touch Board.
- 3) Find the room/location of the “Makerspace” in the library using the Touch Board.

Introduction / Summary of project

For the study, our group took many things into consideration when finding the flaws within the libraries navigation screens. We found three willing candidates that could demonstrate their ability to complete a task using the touch boards. After trial and error we were able to pinpoint the issues for the screens functionality. Some key takeaways about the screens are its lack of intuitiveness, responsiveness, and directions to locating a book/place throughout the library. With these key takeaways we are now able to develop new design iterations of the libraries touch boards.

Summary of methods used

We began by creating the tasks that could be completed using the four screens we chose in our heuristics project. The three that we deducted could be a good representation of how users interact with the libraries touch board were; find the book “To Kill a Mockingbird” using the

touch board, find the librarian focusing in the philosophy major using the touch board, and find the room/location of the “Makerspace” in the library using the touch board. We asked two students, one being an upperclassman who has gone to the library before, and one being an underclassman who had never been, and a faculty member. This way, we could get varying results from our user research.

Findings and next steps

What we found during our user testing and research was that the main issue when it came to the touch board was the touch sensitivity of the screen, and the previous knowledge of book call numbers the user has to have. Starting with our first task, which was finding the book “To Kill a Mockingbird” both students had a difficult time, as the screen presented “Use call number to find a book.” This is not very intuitive, as the user might select the first letter of the book they chose to find their book. For example, both students had to either look at their phone or ask the front desk librarian to receive an accurate call number. When the faculty member was assigned this task, she knew the call number by heart, and jumped around the map until she found the correct section, contrary to our students. Even after this, the students were confused on where to go for their book, as the library map and directions aren't very telling on the path they need to take to find their book. In all, seeking for the call number just to get started and not having a pathfinder for the user rids the touch screen of its productivity of actually helping the user find the book.

With this, we move onto our second task, being finding the librarian that is focusing in Philosophy. For each category of users, this was pretty instinctual, they all selected “find a librarian” and scrolled until they found “Philosophy” in the alphabetical list of majors. One

student said they felt as though they needed to touch the philosophy librarian so they could learn more, rather than just an email and a phone number. Generally, this task was easy to complete for each user that we tested.

Last, we asked our users to find the location of “Makerspace” in the Library. The student users did this by selecting “Find a Location”, and scrolled in the alphabetical list until they reached “Makerspace.” Although this was an intuitive process, this is where the touch sensitivity of the screens began to become very poor, as each time they were hit nothing popped up, or the scroll action would be enabled. It took a while for the user to actually get to the map of the building. Not only this, but it doesn't give directions on where they can actually go to find this location. Both students emphasized that it would be helpful if there were some kind of dotted line to tell them the path they need to go to complete this task. The faculty had a different method of completing this task, they selected “Map” and immediately clicked to the floor it was on. Because they already had knowledge of where the makerspace is, they did not say much when it came to the directions of the suggested map. In total, We found that the interactivity of the board greatly hindered the location finding process, even when it is a relatively simple task.

In conclusion, this user testing gave us much insight to the usage of the boards, as most faculty just know where things are by heart, and students eventually give up on the board and go to the front desk for help. Our next steps for the team would be creating a thoughtful way for users to find their books just by using the board, a pathfinder when it comes to viewing the touch board's maps, and making it more sensitive to touch for future users.

Discussion of missed opportunities / shortcomings

When conducting the field study, few opportunities for interviews presented themselves. When attempting random selected interviews of screen users, rarely would we even see an individual take a glance at the screen. This was surprising, as we as a group concluded that these screens have potential to greatly benefit the navigation of our beloved multi-story library. Taking a step back after concluding the field study, there are a few alterations that could have been implemented. After discussing with the group, leaving a survey/questionnaire would help increase our sample size. Doing so could also allow respondents to feel more comfortable pointing out the flaws in the system.

Appendices / other information as you see fit

After conducting the field study on multiple different types of users, we found that the overall map feature could be improved to lead the user to their desired location due to how the map is oriented and organized. Another feature we found was lacking was the actual touch sensitivity, as it could be enhanced to detect lighter touches because it did not always register when a user was touching the screen. If these minor changes were added to the current system, they could easily better the user experience for everyone in the library.