

# Home page usability summary

Summer-Fall 2018

Linda Anderson

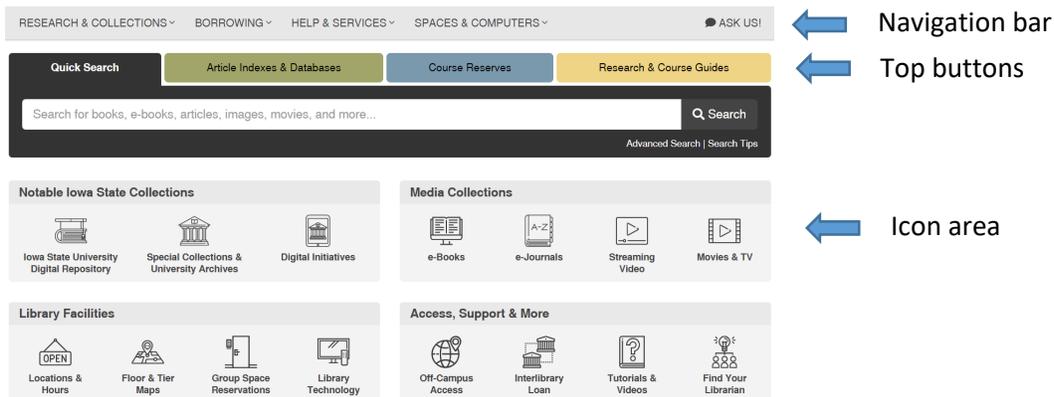
A new home page design for the ISU Library website was implemented in August 2017. This redesign was influenced by an X's and O's study conducted to find out which elements of the home page were deemed important and not important by study volunteers. Recommendations were to make "Floor and tier maps," "Reserve a Library Space," and "Hours" (display today's hours) more visually noticeable. Although Research & Course Guides were one of the most circled items in the study, three commenters asked for a section listing information by major, so while it seems to be desired, it may not be recognizable.

Tasks in the interview script started out with general questions about how the participant usually does their research and how they use the website, then asked them to take a look at the home page, noting what strikes them, what they find confusing, and what is something new that they would find useful, before moving on to specific tasks.

The study also provided information about Quick Search and various other library web pages.

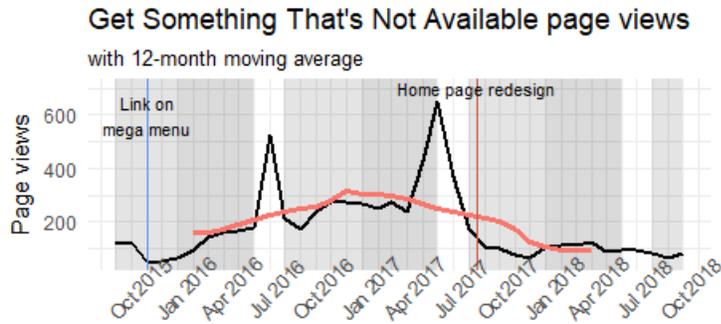
There were nine participants in the study: four graduate students, four undergraduates (one summer research intern from another university), and one unaffiliated who had a master's degree (for this participant, the test took a different course, as she was concerned with finding TOEFL and GMAT materials).

Some terminology used in this report is defined in this graphic:

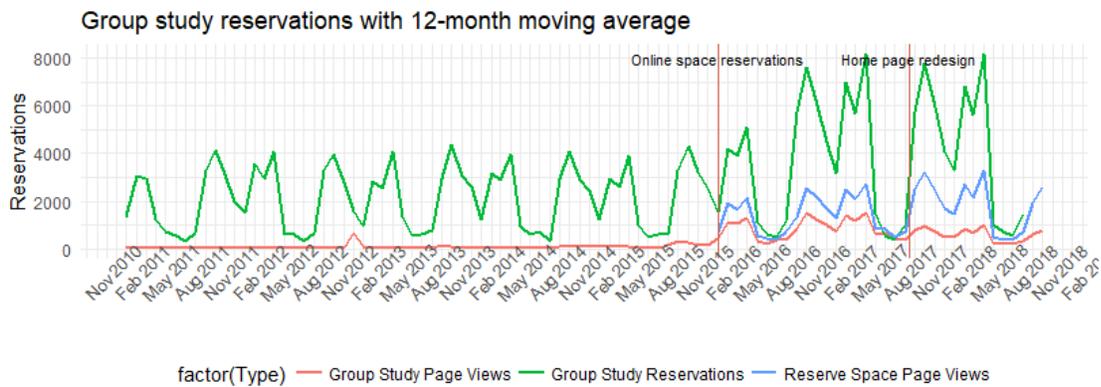


The redesign seems to be largely successful in terms of being able to find information. Four participants clearly said that it was well-organized or easy to use or find what they need. No one said the opposite. All but one participant found the Hours page (one elected to use Chat instead). Seven participants found liaison librarian contact info, group study room reservations, laptop checkout info, and Interlibrary Loan info, six found Research and Course Guides, and five found the Digital Repository (one through the AID page and one through searching for "dissertations" and finding the Finding Dissertations & Theses page).

Both the navigation bar and the icon area seemed to be useful, although some individuals gravitated to one more than the other. It's possible some pages are less visible than they were when we had mega menus from August 2015 to August 2017. As an example, the "Get Something That's Not Available" and the "Group Study Rooms" pages:



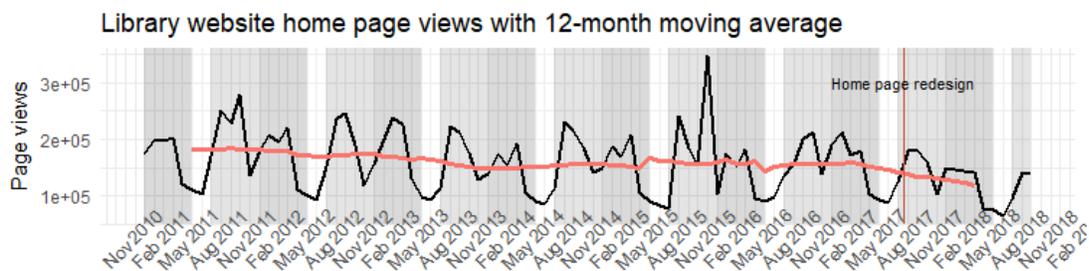
The "Reserve Space" page is directly linked on the home page now and in the previous version, while the "Group Study Rooms" page is linked in the menus.



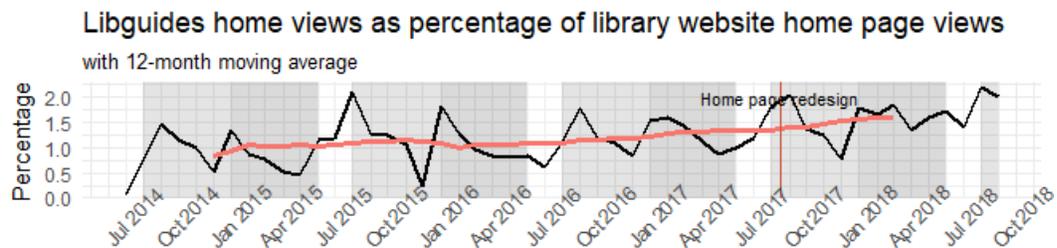
A tally of individual results is in Appendix A, and the questionnaire is in Appendix B.

### Some statistical indicators

It has become too difficult to calculate website visits with our many platforms, but home page views can be used to put other statistics in context. Home page views have been decreasing slowly before the redesign, and perhaps slightly faster afterward.



Views of the Libguides home page as a percentage of website home page views have continued to increase slowly, up to about 1.5%.



## Possible problems:

### Notable Collections

To participants, it is unclear what Digital Repository, Special Collections and University Archives, and Digital Initiatives are. Participants tried clicking on them to find other things. The text on the Digital Repository home page explains clearly what the Digital Repository is, but in Special Collections, people often go exploring for the wrong thing. For example, a participant tried “Technical Leaflets” in Special Collections for the task aimed at finding Libguides. Another person thought Libguides would be under Notable Collections.

In addition, University Archives seems to be a more logical place to look for faculty publications and dissertations than does the Digital Repository.

Five participants were confused by the Notable Collections set, including one who was confused by the scope choices in Quick Search. Three participants, while not having previous awareness, figured it out easily by clicking and looking.

Possible ways to address this include making the names of the collections (at least on the home page) sensible to users or adding some explanatory text. The [Stanford Library](#) has done both of these, using the terms “Online exhibits” and “Digital repository” and adding a bit of text.

### Locate button and floor/tier maps

In Quick Search, the Locate button is not easy to see and not as easy to deal with as having the floor link displayed in the result, as it formerly was. The StackMap solution should help.

### Off-Campus Access and Distance Learning Guide

When asked what they would do if they have trouble accessing an article from home, three said they would use ILL, two said they would use Ask Us! or ask at the front desk, one found the Get Something That’s Not Available page and under the Error Message heading found the link to the Off-Campus Access page, one remarked that she is confused by the multiple sources sometimes presented in Quick Search, and one found the Distance Learning Guide and found off-campus access information there.

Comments about the Distance Learning Guide: "so many words - I don't know where to start. Put 'See more' instead of all the info. Put bigger headings and more space between sections." He remarked that because he didn't have his glasses on, it was particularly hard to read compared to other pages.

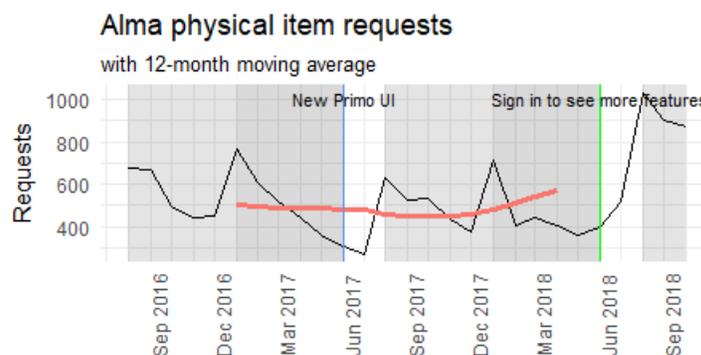
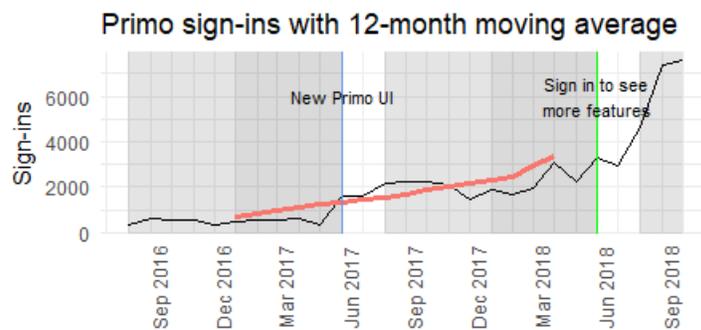
Although this is just one person's comments, reading and applying the advice in chapters 3 and 5 of "Don't Make Me Think" by Steve Krug to this guide could offer improvement.

### Request item, sign in to see more features, and ILL

It is difficult to find out how to request an item.

In the usability interviews, "Sign in to see more features" did not seem to be compelling. Users have to click on "more features" to realize they need to sign in to see the request links, but "more features" doesn't necessarily convey "request". No participants clicked on "more features" during the study. Without signing in, the user sees "REQUEST OPTIONS:" but no request options.

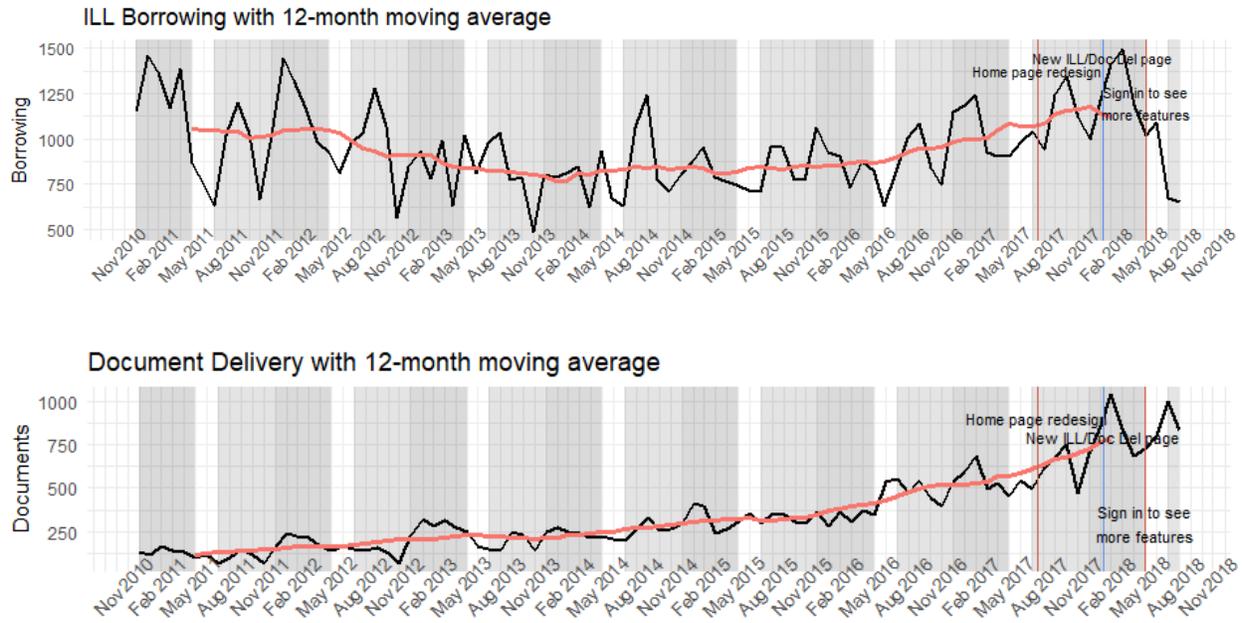
However, the number of sign-ins has almost tripled since the "Sign in to see more features" banner was implemented, and the number of physical item requests (pick-from-shelf and hold) has increased as well. Perhaps the new Pick-from-Shelf service is contributing. The "Added features" page received an average of 242 page views in August and September.



Recommendation: consider changing text to "Sign in to request, save searches, and more" and link to the current Added Features page.

- Request dialog is rather cryptic. If searching ISU Libraries, it doesn't say what kind of request it is (recall/hold, interlibrary loan). One participant became confused by seeing only the pickup location options. The Partner Library search is more clear.
- [Recall or Hold](#) page says "Use the Request Item feature in Quick Search" but does not say how to find the Request Item feature.
- Partner Libraries information is lacking. One participant searched the website for "partner library" to find out what it was and did not read the news article about it, probably because the title did not say "partner library."

- The ILLiad logon page doesn't say that it is for Interlibrary Loan. One participant clicked on the Distance Students Request Here link (which goes to ILLiad) and wasn't sure what ILLiad was.



Interlibrary Loan borrowing and Document Delivery requests were already increasing before the latest home redesign. Document Delivery requests have continued increasing afterward but not ILL. The ILL counts above do not include TRAC borrowing. ISU patrons have borrowed only 58 items through TRAC from August 2017 through September 2018.

#### “Full Text”

A participant asked what was the difference between “Full text available” and “Online Access”. Another participant did not realize that “full text” means electronic access.

#### Too much content on home page?

Put a News button at the top (two participants). “I never scroll down,” “there’s too much stuff.” Participants did scroll down the page when they were asked to look at the page and say what they noticed, but it isn’t clear that they would normally do that.

#### Other comments

- Add information about other equipment and loan periods to the Laptop Checkout page.
- Add contact information under Fines and Missing Items (Done).

Appendix A: Tally of individual results, color-coded by individual:

	Undergraduate	Graduate student	Total
<b>Most striking</b>			
Quick Search	111	1	1111
Top buttons (AID, etc)	11	1	111
Icons	111	11	11111
Items in nav bar menu	11		11
Footer/contact info	1		1
<b>Confusing</b>			
Icons			
Two search bars	1		1
Article Indexes & Databases	1		1
<b>Something new</b>			
Services for Students, Researchers, Instructors	1	1	11
Tutorials & Videos		1	1
Movies & TV	1	1	11
Guides		1	1
Reserve spaces online	1		1
Check out laptops	1		1
Special Collections	1		1
New Arrivals	1		1
Digital Repository		1	1
<b>Trouble retrieving article</b>			
ILL		111	111
Distance Learning Guide		1	1
Ask Us/ front desk	11		11
Confused by multiple sources	1		1
Get Something That's Not Available – Error message	1		1
<b>Manage citations</b>			
Searched QS or website 'endnote', 'citations'	1	1	11
Help & Service ... Cite Sources		1	1

For Students ... Cite Sources	1		1
Found Libguides (asked about recommendations from librarians)	111	111	111111
Ask Us		1	1
Found how to make an appointment with a librarian	1111	111	
Hours Saturday	1111	111	1111111
Used Chat		1	1
Group study room	111	1111	1111111
Laptop checkout	111	1111	1111111
Find DR (find work published by faculty and dissertations)	11	111	11111
Find Dissertations	1		1
University Archives	11		11
Returned a book, still owe fines			
Ask at front desk	1	1	11
Chat/Ask Us	111	11	11111
Read something under Borrowing	11	1	111
Find floor for call number			
Already knows		1	1
Locate button	1	11	111
Floor & Tier Maps or Call numbers	111		111
Get book that's not available			
ILL	111	1111	1111111
Request in QS	11		11
Get Something That's Not Available page		1	1

## Interview Script for new home page 2018

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Date:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Status: \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

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Hi, \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for helping us test the library website home page. To do this, we are asking people to do some tasks using our home page. We would like to see how you use it, and if any changes should be made to make it easier to use.

There are no right or wrong answers to my questions. We'd like to know what you really think, so we can make our website work better for our users. I'd like you to think out loud as you show me how you would do something. Please feel free to ask for clarification whenever needed.

You may skip any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering and may withdraw at any time. We'll start with some background questions.

1. How long have you been at ISU?
2. What is your subject area?
3. How frequently do you look at the ISU library web pages?

\_\_\_\_ Daily    \_\_\_\_ Once a week    \_\_\_\_ Monthly    \_\_\_\_ Quarterly    \_\_\_\_ Never

4. Have you ever taken a course about using the library (such as the course here for undergraduates – Library 160)?
5. How do you usually start your research? Please show me – it can include something besides the library.
6. Show me how you would do something you typically do on the library website.
7. Please take a look at the home page. What strikes you, or what do you notice first? Do you see anything that is puzzling or is confusing? Do you see anything that looks interesting or useful that you didn't know about?
8. Your instructor said you need to find some scholarly articles for your paper. How would you go about doing that?
9. What would you do if you have trouble logging in to see an article, when you are at home in your apartment?
10. You are assigned to write a big paper, which will have a lot of citations of articles. Where would you look to find information about managing the citations/bibliography for your paper?

11. You would like to find some recommendations from librarians without actually asking for help. There are pages for specific subject areas or majors that give information about good places to look for articles, books, or special websites for that subject area. Where would you look for these pages?
12. What if you actually wanted to talk to a librarian who knows about your area? How do you make an appointment with them?
13. What time is the library open this Saturday?
14. You need to work with some classmates on a project and you'd like to get a private room to work in. How would you do that?
15. There are laptops you can check out here. How do you find out about them?
16. We have a place on our website where you can find work published by faculty and other work done at the university, such as dissertations. Can you find that?
17. What would you do if you returned a book but it's still showing as checked out and you owe fines?
18. You have a call number for a book you want. How do you find out what floor it is on?
19. There's a particular book you want, but it's not available here. Either it's checked out, or you can't find it in Quick Search –looks like we don't own it. How would you find out about getting it?
20. What do you think is missing on the library website or what could be improved?
21. What do you like about the library website?