

## **K-State Libraries Usability Team Report February, 2013**

### **Introduction**

K-State Libraries employ a user-centered approach to web design that makes our website easy to navigate, sought out by users, valid in content, and reliable in currency of information. This usability test was a study of library and institution-specific terminology used on K-State Libraries' website. It tests whether library patrons understand the terminology and prefer the terminology used when presented.

This test was done in the form of a survey. K-State students, faculty, and staff voluntarily answered questions that tested their understanding of selected terminology used on the K-State Libraries' website along with a set of questions that allow respondents to select the best term correlating to a description of services provided by K-State Libraries

### **Executive Summary**

After some deliberation by the team, 14 terms were selected for testing in this study, and an online survey was developed. 76 users completed the survey, with 29 of these identifying themselves as from the libraries. It is important to distinguish this because of the necessity of determining the difference between library staff perception of terms versus non-library users. These differences are apparent in the responses.

Many of our questions were based on terminology for various online resources, including eBooks, eJournals, databases, the library catalog, and K-State originated digital collections. Do users understand what these resources are and that K-State provides them? Is it important to distinguish between these types of resources? These are questions the Usability Team ponders.

Several useful recommendations, as listed below, were developed by the team. Some recommendations include changes in terminology and others suggest adding some concise definitions of terms to assist the user.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the usability test we make the following recommendations:

1. For terms that are unfamiliar to new users define the term, for example "...use RefWorks citation manager"
2. Have a glossary page
3. Use "chat" instead of "IM"
  - a. There will be some inconsistencies between the website and print for a while but it shouldn't be too confusing
4. Change "Research Consultation" to "Research Assistance"
5. Change the "research" tab to "resources"

- a. It may be worth running this by a focus group
  - b. Put hovers over each tab
6. More education of how “Get It” works earlier on may be helpful (students seem to understand it by junior/senior year)
7. Key match “document delivery” in the Google search

## **Methodology**

The team used brainstorming to develop a list of approximately 20 terms appearing on the Libraries’ website that might be confusing or unclear to patrons. After combining like terms and eliminating relatively esoteric items, the team arrived at a final list of 14 terms for testing. Because the team was interested in knowing whether users understand the term and also in knowing what other terms might be more appropriate, the team elected to develop a Link Choice Survey. In this type of survey, participants are given a task or scenario and asked which of several options (all viable and all essentially synonymous) they would choose when attempting to complete the task. In our case, we decided to create non-biased definitions of each term and present four to five viable terminology choices.

After choosing our terms and test design, we divided into pairs and divided the set of 14 terms evenly among the pairs. Each pair then drafted non-biased definitions and viable response options for each term. Later, all members of the team met to review all of the drafts and suggest revisions. Once the team finalized the wording of the definitions and the choice options and created five demographic questions, we applied for and received IRB approval to conduct our study. We then used Axio Survey to develop an online survey. The survey was made available to anyone who had the url for the survey. That url was distributed to K-State Libraries staff as well as to several specific faculty members who were asked to then distributed it to their students.

See Appendix A for a copy of the complete survey.

## **Results and Analysis**

Ninety-two people began our Terminology test, with 76 completing the test (82.6%). All drop outs occurred after completing the demographics questions, but before answering any terminology based questions. Overall, more than half (63.1%) of our responses were from faculty (34.8%) and staff (28.3%). Graduate students accounted for 10.9% and undergraduates 22.8%. Over 70% have visited the Libraries’ website too many times to count. We had at least one representative from each college begin the test.

Thirty-six people identified the Libraries as their department or college, 29 who finished the survey (80.6% completion). Comparatively, 83.9%, or 47 out of 56 people not identifying the library as their college, completed the survey. In the results below, Library Percent is the percentage of survey respondents, who self-identified as Libraries’ personnel, while Non-Library Percent is the percentage of respondents who did not identify themselves as working in

the Libraries. Write in answers in the 'other' category that referred to one of the supplied possible answers were re-coded to that supplied answer. These write-ins usually occurred with additional commentary about how the question was written, or to offer improvements in the wording of the questions.

Our first terminology question asked about our digital collections: K-State Libraries have several different assemblages of K-State history that are available electronically. These include biographies of the Notable Women of K-State, Historical photos of K-State, K-State Yearbooks and course catalogs, and K-State theses and dissertations. What term do you think best describes these resources?

<b>Digital Collections Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Historical Archive	13.8	6.4
K-State Historical Collection	48.3	72.3
Digital Collections	13.8	12.8
Digital Library	0.0	2.1
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	20.7	6.4

Other suggestions from Libraries' personnel included: Historical Collection about K-State, Digital K-State Historical Collections, K-State History Plus More, K-State Digital Collections, and Online Archives. People not associated with the Libraries' suggested K-State Historical Archive, Historical-KSU, and Digital K-State Historical Archive.

K-State Historical Collection received the most votes from each group, but this question also garnered the most suggestions. Respondents may have been biased based on the inclusion of the word 'historical' in the question. 86% of the responses included that word. While the digital collection does include historical documents it also contains more recent theses and dissertations.

Question number two: A service provided by K-State Libraries to borrow materials, such as books and articles, owned by other libraries. This is a service that is free of charge to K-State students, faculty, and staff. What would you call this service?

<b>ILL Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Borrowing Services	17.2	4.3
Interlibrary Loan	69.0	89.4
Get it!	6.9	2.1
No Answer	3.4	3.4
Other	3.4	0.0

One alternative to Interlibrary Loan was suggested by a Libraries' staff member: 'NOBU—Not Owned by Us'. Interlibrary loan was the most popular choice among both groups of respondents.

The third question asked about eJournals. During the previous usability test, it was noted that there might be some confusion between the difference between an eJournal and a database. The question: An electronic version of specialized, scholarly publications written by professors, scholars, and experts for researchers and professionals that can be found and read online.

<b>eJournal Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
eMagazine	0.0	0.0
Digital Journal	6.9	17.0
eJournal	58.6	55.3
Database	13.8	17.0
No Answer	6.9	2.1
Other	13.8	8.5

Other suggestions that were made to describe an electronic version of specialized, scholarly publications that are found and read online were: e-journals or e-articles, Online Resources, local scholarly research, and eArticle Collection. These were the suggestions of the Libraries' faculty and staff. Suggestions from outside the Libraries' included: Scholarly Articles, Journal available in digital format, Scholarly Publication Online, and Scholarly Publications or KSU Scholars Write. eJournal was chosen more than database

The next question was to choose a term that best described the physical location of the library's materials. Several people within the library had commented that patrons do not understand the term 'Stacks' and that another, better, term should be adopted. Question 4: Please choose the term that best describes this description: The series of bookcases and shelving that hold all of the libraries' physical materials that can be accessed by patrons.

<b>Stacks Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Primary Collection	3.4	0.0
Stacks	13.8	59.6
General Collection	41.4	17.0
Open Stacks	13.8	19.1
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	24.1	2.1

Libraries' faculty and staff also suggested Shelves (3 responses), Open Shelving, On-site Collection, Physical Collection, and Print Collection. One suggestion was made by a participant outside of the Libraries' and that was Library. The majority of Libraries' faculty and staff favored the term 'General Collection' while almost 60% of the Libraries' patrons that participated in the survey identified 'Stacks' as the best, or most recognizable term.

The next question also dealt with the database versus eJournal issue, but focused on databases: A collection of information, usually an electronic file record for books and/or periodicals.

<b>Collection of Information</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Databases	41.4	42.6
Online Resources	24.1	17.0
Online Articles & research	3.4	19.1
Citation Index	10.3	6.4
eJournals	3.4	8.5
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	13.8	6.4

Write in responses for 'Other' by non-library personnel included: eCollection, Catalog, and Comprehensive Database. Library personnel write-ins included: Directory of Online Resources and digital resources. The 'other' category also contained responses from the Libraries' group criticizing the question and its wording. 'Databases' was selected by the majority of respondents in both groups.

For the next question it was suggested by a Libraries' employee that patrons do not know what Refworks is. Refworks is one of several citation management tools available to patrons, but is the focus of more workshops and classes. Question number 6: A web-based tool that allows you to collect, organize and store citations and create bibliographies. Please choose the tool that best fits the description.

<b>Citation Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Citation Builder	10.3	27.7
Refworks	13.8	21.3
Reference List Builder	13.8	6.4
Citation Manager	55.2	38.3
Citation Linker	0.0	0.0
No Answer	0.0	4.3
Other	6.9	2.1

Other suggestions were: Bibliography Builder and citation tool (Libraries') and Zotero (non-Libraries' personnel). From the responses, what this tool does is more important than the specific product. Of the non-Libraries' respondents, the upperclassmen recognized the name Refworks, which makes sense as they would have taken classes and workshops focused on this product.

Next we asked about the Library Catalog: an online informational listing of all materials owned or provided by the library.

<b>Online info Listing Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Library Inventory	3.4	8.5
Library Database	0.0	10.6
Library Catalog	69.0	74.5
Library Collections	17.2	6.4
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	6.9	0.0

An alternative, suggested by a Libraries’ employee, was EWO – Everything We Own. From the responses we received, the catalog was the most frequent choice from both groups.

K-State Libraries use the term ‘Get It’ and its associated Get It button to direct patrons to the location of an item, whether it is a book, an article in a database, or an item they will have to get through Interlibrary Loan. But do patrons recognize this brand? Question 8: A service that will help you find an item while in a database or in the K-State Libraries catalog (online or in print), or suggests you acquire the item using interlibrary loan.

<b>Get It Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Find It!	24.1	48.9
View Now	0.0	2.1
Find Full Text	13.8	10.6
Get it!	58.6	31.9
No Answer	0.0	0.0
Other	3.4	6.4

We received one suggestion from a Libraries’ employee: EWO Plus—Everything We Own Plus What We Don’t and from the non-library sector other write ins were: Information desk, Search for resources, and Locate. Find It and Get It received the most votes. Libraries’ employees selected Get It! More often than Find It!, but our users selected Find It! more often.

Is there a better term for an electronic book? Do patrons realize that electronic books are available through our databases? Question 9: Please choose the term that best describes this description: A book or book chapter available via a library database.

<b>Ebook Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Ebooks	55.2	40.4
Online Books	20.7	19.1
Digital Books	13.8	29.8
E-Reader Books	0.0	10.6
No Answer	0.0	0.0
Other	10.3	0.0

From the Libraries came the suggestion of e-books. “??” was also written in. We are unsure if that is a suggestion, the respondent was not sure what was being asked, or if they were unhappy with the choices, but could not suggest anything else.

The K-State Libraries’ homepage features six navigational tabs: Libraries Home, Research, Services, Help, About Us and Ask a Librarian. We wanted to know if users identified the term research with the tools and collections listed under this tab, or is there a better term. This prompted Question 10: K-State Libraries provides a selection of tools and collections to help you find scholarly materials. What would you call this selection?

<b>Tools &amp; Collections Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Research	20.7	14.9
Library Resources	34.5	68.1
Online Resources	13.8	6.4
Help	3.4	4.3
No Answer	10.3	0.0
Other	17.2	6.4

Suggestions from the Libraries’ included: Scholarly Search, Research Resources, FindIt, Research Tools, and research assistance. Suggestions from outside the Libraries’ included: Search tools, Research Tools, and Research Help. The most definitive answer was from the users not associated with the Libraries, ‘Library Resources’.

A staff member from Interlibrary Services department suggested the term ‘document delivery’. She felt either patrons did not know about this service, or that they did not know what it entailed. Question 11: K-State Libraries provide a service where we will scan up to 50 pages of a book or articles on the shelf and make them available to you. What would you call this service?

<b>Doc Delivery Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Campus mail	0.0	0.0
Document Delivery	44.8	38.3
Email pdf	6.9	10.6
Scan and send	37.9	46.8
No Answer	0.0	2.1
Other	10.3	2.1

Libraries’ suggestions were: Gopher Service, GetIt, and get it soon, while a user from outside of the Libraries suggested ‘Exerpt E-document’. Document delivery and the action-oriented Scan and send were the most popular answers. Libraries’ personnel preferred Document delivery, while users not employed by the Libraries preferred Scan and send.

Currently, setting up appointments with a librarian are referred to as Research Consultations on our website; but is that the best term to describe the range of services that fall under this title? Question 12: Anyone can make an appointment to meet with a librarian for in-depth help with any or all of the following topics: how to find and organize sources about a topic, how to cite sources, how to obtain sources, how to make it easier for others to find articles and books one has published. This meeting can take place in-person, by phone, or online. What term do you think best describes this service?

<b>Appointment Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Research Consultation	51.7	29.8
Information Counseling	0.0	8.5
Research Help	13.8	12.8
Research Assistance	34.5	46.8
No Answer	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	2.1

A faculty member from outside of the Libraries’ suggested ‘Citation consultation’ for this service. This is a feature we should rename, or at least further test the terms research versus resources.

Which do patrons prefer? The term ‘Chat’ or ‘IM’ (instant message)? Or something else entirely? Currently we use IM in our Ask a Librarian brand, but is that still popular? Question 13: Several pages on K-State Libraries’ Website provide a box for conducting a written conversation with a librarian. After entering text into the box and clicking enter, a librarian will provide a written response. The history of the conversation will be displayed in the box. The conversation can continue for an unlimited amount of time and can include an unlimited number of written messages. What term do you think best describes this service?

<b>IM/Chat Question</b>	<b>Library Percent</b>	<b>Non-Library Percent</b>
Chat with a Librarian	41.4	48.9
Live Chat	13.8	12.8
Ask a Librarian	24.1	29.8
IM with a Librarian	6.9	8.5
Live Help	3.4	0.0
Talk to a Librarian	3.4	0.0
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	3.4	0.0

We only had one write in suggestion, from a Libraries’ employee, ‘Contact Us’. Chat was the overall favorite between the two groups, with roughly a quarter of respondents from each group selecting the umbrella term Ask a Librarian.



Finally, we wanted to test the effectiveness of our Ask a Librarian brand. Patrons are instructed in library orientations that the way to contact us and have their questions answered is by 'Clicking on the Ask a Librarian button' on the homepage. But do they listen? Question 14: Anyone who wants to know how to find information, cite sources, or locate sources online or in the library can learn how to do so by conversing with a librarian in-person, by phone, or online. What term do you think best describes this service?

Contacting a Librarian Question	Library Percent	Non-Library Percent
Ask a Librarian	69.0	72.3
Library Help	17.2	17.0
Reference	0.0	0.0
Research Help	6.9	6.4
Expert Advice	0.0	2.1
No Answer	3.4	0.0
Other	3.4	2.1

We received two write in suggestions: Talk to Us and Human Contact. Ask a Librarian was the predominant answer, especially among our patrons.

### Lessons Learned

As in with all projects, this one taught us several valuable lessons. Foremost, we learned that it is vital to develop definitions that do not include any terms presented as response options. In examining the patterns of responses to the terms we noticed that whenever a set of choices included a term used in the definition, that choice was picked most frequently. This error in item design made it impossible to draw clear conclusions about patron's terminology preferences for those items as their responses are likely to be motivated by a desire to be "correct."

Another lesson learned was that it is important to provide an "other" option for each item. A few individuals who took the survey reported that they would have liked to have suggested terms we did not present as response options. Those suggestions would have been interesting and potentially edifying. A short-answer "other" option would also have enabled respondents to provide reasons for their selections and to provide arguments against non-selected options. This information may also have been of use.

After distributing the survey to the K-State Libraries' staff, we became aware of concerns about what would be done with the results. Some staff expressed fear that we would take the results of the survey at face value and make changes to terminology based only on the evidence of this survey. In hindsight, we realize that it would have been wise to provide staff with more background about the purpose of the testing and the teams' intentions regarding use of the results. By doing so we could have allayed concerns and assured staff that we would use the survey results as recommendations for change rather than mandates for change.

We also learned that non-biased items can provide very useful insight into the preferences of our users, especially when the non-biased definitions are easy to comprehend. In those cases where we felt confident that the definition was simple and there was a clear favorite terminology choice, we found ourselves emboldened to suggest reasonable changes to terminology on our site and in our printed materials.

Respectfully Submitted,

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## Appendix A: Survey Items

### Demographic Questions

1. What is your status
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
  - e. Graduate Student
  - f. Faculty/Staff
  - g. Other
  
2. If you are an undergraduate, have you attended a university other than K-State?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Doesn't apply to me, I'm not an undergraduate
  
3. How often have you used the library?
  - a. Never
  - b. Once
  - c. Several times
  - d. Too many to count
  
4. To which age group do you belong?
  - a. 18-20
  - b. 21-25
  - c. 26-30
  - d. 31-45
  - e. 46-60
  - f. 61+
  
5. To which College does your major belong?
  - a. College of Agriculture
  - b. College of Architecture, Planning and Design
  - c. College of Arts & Sciences
  - d. College of Business Administration
  - e. College of Education
  - f. College of Engineering
  - g. College of Human Ecology
  - h. College of Veterinary Medicine
  - i. Other\_\_\_\_\_

## Terminology Questions

1. K-State Libraries have several different assemblages of K-State history that are available electronically. These include biographies of the Notable Women of K-State, Historical photos of K-State, K-State Yearbooks and course catalogs, and K-State theses and dissertations. What term do you think best describes these resources?
  - a. Historical Archive
  - b. K-State Historical Collection
  - c. Digital Collections
  - d. Digital Library
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. A service provided by K-State Libraries to borrow materials, such as books and articles, owned by other libraries. This is a service that is free of charge to K-State students, faculty, and staff. What would you call this service?
  - a. Borrowing Services
  - b. InterLibrary Loan
  - c. Get It!
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. An electronic version of specialized, scholarly publications written by professors, scholars, and experts for researchers and professionals that can be found and read online
  - a. eMagazine
  - b. Digital Journal
  - c. eJournal
  - d. Database
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Please choose the term that best describes this description: The series of bookcases and shelving that hold all of the libraries' physical materials that can be accessed by patrons.
  - a. Primary Collection
  - b. Stacks
  - c. General Collection
  - d. Open Stacks
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. A collection of information, usually an electronic file record for books and/or periodicals.
  - a. Databases
  - b. Online Resources
  - c. Online Articles & Research
  - d. Citation Index
  - e. eJournals

- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. A web-based tool that allows you to collect, organize and store citations and create bibliographies. Please choose the tool that best fits the description.
- a. Citation Builder
  - b. Refworks
  - c. Reference List Builder
  - d. Citation Manager
  - e. Citation Linker
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. An online informational listing of all materials owned or provided by the library.
- a. Library Inventory
  - b. Library Database
  - c. Library Catalog
  - d. Library Collections
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. A service that will help you find an item while in a database or in the K-State Libraries catalog (online or in print), or suggests you acquire the item using interlibrary loan.
- a. Find It!
  - b. View Now
  - c. Find Full-Text
  - d. Get It!
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Please choose the term that best describes this description: A book or book chapter available via a library database.
- a. Ebooks
  - b. Online books
  - c. Digital books
  - d. E-Reader books
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. K-State Libraries provides a selection of tools and materials to help you manage your scholarly activities and study. What would you call this selection?
- a. Research
  - b. Library resources
  - c. Online resources
  - d. Help
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
11. The Libraries provides a service where we will scan up to 50 pages of a book or articles on the shelf and make them available to you. What would you call this activity?

- a. Campus mail
  - b. Document delivery
  - c. Email pdf
  - d. Scan and send
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
12. Anyone can make an appointment to meet with a librarian for in-depth help with any or all of the following topics: how to find and organize sources about a topic, how to cite sources, how to obtain sources, how to make it easier for others to find articles and books one has published. This meeting can take place in-person, by phone, or online. What term do you think best describes this service?
- a. Research Consultation
  - b. Information Counseling
  - c. Research Help
  - d. Research Assistance
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
13. Several pages on K-State Libraries' Website provide a box for conducting a written conversation with a librarian. After entering text into the box and clicking enter, a librarian will provide a written response. The history of the conversation will be displayed in the box. The conversation can continue for an unlimited amount of time and can include an unlimited number of written messages. What term do you think best describes this service?
- a. Chat with a Librarian
  - b. Live Chat
  - c. Ask a Librarian
  - d. IM with a Librarian
  - e. Live Help
  - f. Talk to a Librarian
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
14. Anyone who wants to know how to find information, cite sources, or locate sources online or in the library can learn how to do so by conversing with a librarian in-person, by phone, or online. What term do you think best describes this service?
- a. Ask a Librarian
  - b. Library Help
  - c. Reference
  - d. Research Help
  - e. Expert Advice
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_