Not Just Another LibGuide
Applying UX Design to Take Research Guides to the Next Level

Chloe Barnett, Instruction & Reference Librarian, Westminster College
Susannah Woodbury, Learning & Development Specialist, Willis Towers Watson
Project Background
In the Summer of 2017, Giovale Library developed unique on-brand research guides targeted to our community. This project was a collaboration between Westminster College librarians, a Library and Information Science graduate student, and the college’s Web Team.
How it All Started...

• **Research guides:** online tools that connect patrons to research resources in a discipline or subject area

• Important teaching and learning resources

• We were not where we needed to be...
Get Help

Need Research Help?

- 801-832-2250
- Email
- Chat (8:30-5:00 weekdays)
- Meet with a librarian
- Find library staff by name

1. Tutorials — tips about using library databases and tools
2. Research Guides — point you in the right direction to start your research.

INFORMATION LITERACY REQUIREMENT

Contact Chloe Barnett to fulfill the requirement: cbarnett@westminstercollege.edu
801-832-2266

GIVE US FEEDBACK

Leave a comment for the Library Director
Research Guides

These guides recommend databases, websites, and books for different subjects. They can be a good starting point for a research assignment.

1. Business & Management
   1. International Business & Marketing
   2. Leadership
   3. Researching a Company
2. Education
3. English Literature
4. Gender Studies
5. History
6. Government Sources
7. Philosophy
English Literature

DATABASES
1. Academic Search Premier - multi-disciplinary database that includes library resources.
2. JSTOR
3. LION - information is sorted into biographical data, literary criticism, overviews, and links.
4. MLA International Bibliography - comprehensive list of books and articles about "languages, literatures, folklore, and linguistics."
5. Project Muse

WEB SITES - GENERAL
1. Bartleby library - Bartlett's Quotations, Bartleby Verse, and Books online.
2. BookSpot - a great site to find out about all types of book awards; authors online; publishers and lots more!
3. The Internet Public Library - Online Literary Criticism Collection
4. Voice of the Shuttle - an excellent index of the world's online literary resources, maintained by Alan Liu of UC Santa Barbara.

WEB SITES - SUBJECT SPECIFIC
1. A Celebration of Women Writers - The Celebration of Women Writers recognizes the contributions of women writers throughout history. Women have written almost every imaginable type of work: novels, poems, letters, biographies, travel books, religious commentaries, histories, economic and scientific works. Our goal is to promote awareness of the breadth and variety of women's writing. You can browse the site by name, century or country.
2. Gender Inn - The database consists of bibliographic records pertaining to feminist literary criticism and gender studies focusing on British and American literature. In addition, great emphasis is placed upon the inclusion of general resources and introductory texts in feminist theory. As the database has a declared interdisciplinary orientation we also include feminist literature on pedagogy, sociology, history and psychology. The content of this database has been collected and recorded at the chair of Prof. Natascha Würzbach at the English Department at the University of Cologne.
3. Literature & culture of the American 1950s - outstanding interdisciplinary and multimedia site for students and scholars of this time period
4. Voices from the Gaps - Women Writers of Color - this site is maintained by the University of Minnesota as an instructional Web site focusing on the lives and works of North American women writers of color.
HISTORY RESEARCH PORTAL

This is a portal to several research guides designed to assist the history students @ Westminster College.

1. Books
2. Journals & Databases
3. Archives
4. Evaluating Sources
5. Reference Sources
6. Primary Sources
7. History 240/390/490 - Current

Created by: M. Diane Raines, Library Liaison to the Westminster College History Department

Contact Info:

M. Diane Raines
Technical Services / Serials Librarian
Westminster College Giovale Library, Room 111
1840 S. 1300 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
Email Diane Raines
(801) 832-2260

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Opportunities for Change

- Branding and website redesign
- Susannah!
We Know...Everyone Uses LibGuides

But we developed our own research guides using Sitefinity, the content management system that supports the Westminster College website.
What is UX Design?

User Experience (UX) is a design process that encompasses the entire interactive experience of the end-user. It is a user-centered approach to designing for physical and digital spaces.

A systems-centered design approach asks, how will the user adapt to the system?

A user-centered approach asks, how will the system adapt to the user?
UX Elements & Design Strategies

UX Elements
- Usability refers to how intuitive the product is for users to learn and use efficiently
- Visual and emotional appeal of the design contributes to user satisfaction, such as any navigational requirements and preferences

UX Strategies
- User research & analysis
- Comparative analysis of alternative products
- Wireframe design
- User testing
- Stylistic documentation
Getting Started
User Research

- Understanding users and their needs is an important part of UX Design

- Common techniques for user research: interviews, surveys, user portraits / personas, think aloud protocols

- Who are your students? What do they value? What do they struggle with in research?

- Susannah met with librarians for informational interviews
In UX Design, it is important to look at examples of alternative products. Considering examples gave us ideas about visual design, content, and navigation and helped us think about how our users might interact with our research guides.
Designing Wireframes

- Communicate navigation and content specifications with the team
- Conveying visual design preferences
- Feedback and design iterations early in the process
- Can be designed with free, user-friendly tools such as MockFlow
Choosing Navigation Options

Accordion-Style Navigation

Anchor Links

Tab-Based Navigation
In addition to organizing the information within the guides, we needed a template to organize the guides themselves.
First Design Iteration: Landing Page

- Started with two guides: English and Sociology
- Finding the guides was intuitive to initial participants
- Look and feel was on-brand for the college
First Design Iteration: English Research Guide

- Tab-based navigation

- Five tabs:
  - Background Sources
  - Find Books
  - Find Articles
  - Citing Sources
  - Subject specific tab
    (English: Find Literature Online; Sociology: Find Data)

- Librarian profile

- Top of each section includes info about what can be found in the section
Preliminary User Testing & Design Revision
Conducted preliminary user testing with library student employees.

User testing is a key feature of any UX project.

Testing can be done at any stage of the design process, and can be done several times.

This round of testing was not research that was sanctioned or approved by the IRB.
Writing a Test Plan

INTRODUCTION & GOALS
Giovale Library is testing its research guides for maximum usability among students and staff.

The goals of this study were to:
- Establish whether participants were able to navigate to and around the research guides
- Determine if participants found the guides lacking in any content areas
- Gather emotional reactions from participants about any features that were particularly exciting or frustrating
- Determine if participants could establish their “next steps” e.g., figure out where they need to look if they want to contact a librarian with questions or concerns

TEST PARTICIPANTS
This study will utilize 4-5 participants of varying ages and backgrounds. Participants were student workers employed by the library, but had limited library backgrounds.

- Identify key areas where your design needs improvement
- Stay on track; respect the participant’s time
- Know what you are testing for
- Acts as a guideline, but can be flexible
### User Test Participants

#### Knowing who your participants are is crucial for both analyzing the results and understanding your end-user

#### Determining what conflicts of interest might prevent a participant from completing the test will save you time and ensure accurate results

#### Rare occurrence but it can happen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>4 total participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(s)</td>
<td>18-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| User goals                 | Which reasoning best fits your motivations to use the library research guides?  
   - I am trying to find the best way to find information for my research project  
   - I need to contact the subject librarian for my major  
   - I need to know how to cite my sources  
   - I don’t know how to start my research project |
| Screen-out criteria        | (Include any details that would exclude participants from adequately participating in the research - this particular project doesn’t have any.) |
| Technical criteria         | Do you have:  
   - Access to the guides on the Westminster site?  
   - Access to GriffinSearch? (e.g., student or staff login information) |
| Current Westminster student/employee | 4/4 |
## User Testing Scenarios

- Provide context so users can engage with the guides in a way that mimics how they would use the guides in a real-life setting
- Good scenarios should be actionable and realistic
- Avoid giving clues or leading them to the answer
- No “right” or “wrong” answer in user testing

### Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| 1. Discover goals & motivation | **Background Information:**  
  - In the past 6 months, how often do you search for information on the library’s website?  
  - In the past 6 months, how often have you attempted to access information using library resources? Were you successful?  
  **Start participant off on the main page of the guides before starting to dig into the guide:**  
  - What are your initial reactions to the look/feel/layout of the guide?  
  - Who do you think the intended audience is?  
  - What is most compelling about the guide? Where are you most interested in looking first?  
  - Do you have any expectations of how the guide will work (i.e., how it will function to help you achieve your research goal)?  
  - Do you have any expectations of what kind of content you would want to see featured on the guide (i.e., links to outside sources, citation information, notable/canonical resources, etc.?) |

### Scenario 1

You have a research project to complete. Your professor has recommended that you start the research process using the Givale Library’s research guides. You go to westminstercollege.edu to begin your search.

**Starting on the main Westminster page:**

Where would you go to find the guides? (Where would you click, and why?)

- What influenced your navigational decisions?
- Rate your difficulty in finding the guides on a scale of 1-10. (Have them explain reasoning.)
- How confident do you feel on your ability to find the guides again on a scale of 1-10? (Have them explain reasoning.)
- Could you find what you were looking for?
- Is there something missing that you expected to see?
- Could you tell what the page was about?
- Does anything seem too hidden/obvious?
- Is the site easy to read (font color, size)?
Second Design Iteration: Revised English Guide

- Darker navigation bar for better visibility
- Updated librarian’s information for clarity
- Revised navigational tabs, visual design, sizing, some content
Developing Best Practices
A Style Guide is:

- A living document that acts as a resource for current and future content
- Includes content recommendations, language, grammar, formatting, and tone needed to create research guides that are stylistically uniform

### STYLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Content types & hyperlinks**
  - Hyperlinks should always be accompanied by a brief statement describing the source and its benefit to the user.
  - Links to sites, audio, or visual material should be tested for accessibility and usability.
  - Links that require access to Westminster databases need to include the permalink prefix that can be found on the CE
tua Services page of the main website.

- **Voice & tone**
  - Writing should be understandable to users of various research levels.
  - Writing should be free of jargon and acronyms.
  - Tone should be authoritative, informal, accessible for users of varying language abilities.

- **Format**
  - Content should be passed to the IS team in a well-organized document with clear instructions.
  - All necessary photos and links to databases and outside sources need to be provided in the document.
  - Any special instructions should be thoroughly documented and communicated to the team.

- **Grammar & punctuation**
  - Content provided in the document should reflect the correct grammar and punctuation that will appear on the published guide.

- **How to submit content for future changes and new guides**
  - Updated content for published guides should be passed to the IS team in the same well-organized format as the original guide.
  - Updates and edits should be clearly called out to the IS team.
  - New guides for publication should follow the content and style recommendations laid out in this document.

### CONTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the basic content recommendations for each research guide. Additional information may be required for subsequent guides depending on the subject area.

- **Background Sources**
  - This section should include essential information with which to inform the discipline. Information and links provided on this tab should consist of courses that are found outside of databases.
  - A short paragraph describing what background sources are used for, and their importance.
  - A written description of the discipline.
  - Links to canonical information sources, such as the OED or the Dictionary of Literary Biography.

- **Field Books**
  - This tab should be used to provide images of books relevant to the subject, semester, or course, as well as literature-specific sources.
  - Popular titles of important national tests, including images of the text.
  - Link to DiscoverSearch.
  - Link to brief description of WestLib.
  - Link to brief description of InterLibrary Loan (ILL).
  - Information, links, and details about how academic library consortia and how students can participate.

- **Find Articles**
  - This tab should be used to provide database-specific sources.
  - Link to 3-5 subject-specific research databases arranged by relevancy.
  - Each database should include copy describing the database (description copy can be copied from database resource descriptions on the Westminster Databases page).

- **Find (Subject-Specific Tab)**
  - This tab can be used for providing information specific to the subject and is adaptable to fit the information needs.

- **Citing Sources**
  - This tab will be used to provide criteria for proper citation styles and plagiarism.
  - What constitutes plagiarism and criteria for evaluating quality sources.
  - Details on the citation style the discipline requires (i.e., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
  - Links to reputable bibliographic citation guides for the discipline.
  - Links to credible sources on citing information (e.g., Purdue OWL).
Research Guide Template

• Ensures consistency between guides. Helps librarians create new guides without duplicating content / work.

• Includes text of content that should be included on all research guides, as well as space for librarians to enter subject specific content.
Creating New Guides
Creation and Maintenance Guidelines

Creation and maintenance guidelines:

- Outline the procedure for creating new guides and the process for maintaining content.
- Primarily a training document.

CREATION OF NEW RESEARCH GUIDES:


2. Add content following guidelines in the Content Recommendations and Style Guide. Note: Some content is replicated across all research guides and is already included in the template.

3. Choose a banner photograph for your guide. This photograph should be related to the discipline and must be either an image from the Westminster College Approved Photography (Take a look at the Photography Drop Box) or an image with a Creative Commons Zero license. A good place to find CC Zero images is Unsplash.com. Include a link to the image at the top of the guide (there is a space on the template).

4. Submit your new guide as a request through the web request system: https://webrequests.westminstercollege.edu. The web team will add it to our Research Guides page with the proper formatting.

LIBRARIAN PROFILES:

Each Research Guide includes a librarian profile. If this is your first time creating a research guide, please send the web team a photograph of yourself as well as your contact info (name, phone number, email address) in your web request so that they can create your profile.

GUIDE MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES:

Subject Liaisons are responsible for maintaining their guides to check that links are correct, resources are current, and content is updated as necessary. Research Guides are intended to be "living documents" and content should be added and deleted as necessary to ensure they continue to meet the needs of our students.

To ensure that guides are reviewed regularly, librarians will be asked to go through their guides at the end of each semester (Fall, Spring, Summer Term). If updates are needed during these periodic reviews, they should be reported on this Updates Page (which will be shared with the web team).

Update periods for 2017/2018 are as follows:
- December 16 - January 10
- May 4 - May 14
- August 3 - August 20

If you need to make changes to a guide outside of the periodic update periods, do not hesitate to submit changes to the web team using the Web Request Form: https://webrequests.westminstercollege.edu
To get started creating a new guide:

- Librarians copy the template and enter content
- Save in Google Drive
- Download the draft guide as a Word Document
Send Document to the Web Team

Westminster College Web Requests
Please use your Westminster credentials to sign in.

All changes to the Westminster website must be submitted as a web request. Please provide detailed instructions along with all links, files, and photos necessary to complete your request. All proposed changes to the Westminster website must be reviewed for accessibility (Section 508 and WCAG 2.1) standards, visual and writing brand guidelines, and content (CMS) style guide compliance.

Tickets are typically assigned to a web team member within one week. Larger projects and more complicated changes typically require more time and discussion to complete. If the web team needs more information about your request, you will receive a message via email.

Requests made to individuals via phone or email cannot be honored, as the web team relies on the web request system to efficiently address open requests.

Uploading Multiple Files
You can upload multiple files to your request by creating a .zip archive.

- Instructions for creating a .zip on Windows
- Instructions for creating a .zip on Mac

Chloe, check the status of your open help requests below.
- Ticket summary not supplied by user (New Web Request)
  Ticket #236 — opened on 04-03-2018 @ 12:39 PM

Type of request
- Update existing website content
  - Create new content
  - Remove existing content
  - Update an existing form
  - Create a new form
  - Remove an existing form
  - Report an issue
  - Report a typo or mistake
  - Report inappropriate content

URL (required for all existing content)

Describe the change or issue

Attach all necessary files (text documents, images, etc.)
Combine multiple files into a .zip before uploading.

Then:
- Librarians submit document to the Web Team using Web Request Form
Student Employee Adds Content

The Web Team:

- Has access to guides that were hard coded in Sitefinity
- A student from the Web Team copies code and updates content to create a new guide
- Once guide is live, librarians are informed and double check content.
- Changes can be made easily by the Web Team or our Systems Librarian.
**Progress**

- Liaison librarians have been trained to create new guides.
- We now have eleven subject guides on the website.
- During Summer 2018, we hope to create guides for most of the major subject areas taught at Westminster.
User Testing
Goals of the Study

- Gather general information about how Westminster students might use the Research Guides.
- Establish whether participants are able to navigate to and around the research guides.
- Collect feedback about content and design.
- Gather emotional reactions from participants about any features they find particularly exciting or frustrating.
- Determine if participants can use the guides to contact the subject liaison librarian.
Research Methods

• Participants: Five Westminster Undergraduates
• Thirty-minute usability test
• Scenario-based think aloud protocol using the Psychology Research Guide
• Ten-minute post-test survey
• Compiled data and analyzed for general themes
Visual Design

• Most students commented on “clean,” “modern,” “simple” feel, implying that the design contributed to clarity and ease of use.

• Most students liked the use of images.

• Students noted that the design matched the look of the Westminster College website.

“I loved everything about it! Aesthetically it was very simple yet modern feeling. The information was all easy to find and everything seemed well placed. It felt very thought through.”
Student Expectations Regarding Content

Participants recognized that research guides are:
- Tools for Westminster students actively pursuing research in the disciplines
- Contain information about resources selected by librarians because they are relevant and trustworthy

Some participants expected that research guides:
- Would work like a filter
- Would contain a citation tool
- Would link to specific sources (articles, books, data, etc.)

Students did not intuitively understand the concept of a “Research Guide” or know right away how to use one.
● Participants wanted more guides.

● Students suggested adding a short description at the top of the page that would help users determine what research guides are and how to use them.

**Action Item:** Add text to help students understand the purpose and function of the guides.
Content: Psychology Guide

- Students appreciated descriptive information

**Action Item:** Ensure that all guides contain descriptive information that defines key terms, clarifies concepts, explains resources, and helps students navigate through the research process.
Students had difficulty navigating to the Research Guides once they were on the library homepage.

- Two were successful.
- Two navigated to GriffinSearch (EBSCO Discovery Tool).
- One navigated to the database list.

Difficulty might be attributed to placement of Research Guides link and/or to lack of familiarity with Research Guides.

**Action Items:** Promote Research Guides and teach students to navigate them in classes and research help appointments, and implement design changes on the library website so that the link to the guides is prominent.
Navigation

- Students easily navigated to the Psychology Guide.
- Students did not have difficulty using tabbed navigation, but did have difficulty locating specific resources.
  - Students had confidence that they would be able to return to the guides and remember how to use them efficiently.
  - Students indicated that the design itself facilitated efficiency and memorability.

"I appreciate that [the Find Data and Statistics tab is] very similar to the other tabs as far as look and feel. That way I don't feel like I have to learn how to navigate the new tab."
Starting Research Using the Guide

- Only two students indicated they would start research on the default page, Find Background Info.

“I would add a list or tutorial of sorts (a "start here" button) that would guide someone who is doing research in a field they aren’t familiar with. (It seemed like the 'background info' tab was getting there but the label of the tab seemed too ambiguous).”

**Action Items:** Change landing page to “Find Articles” or change “Find Background Information” tab to a more instructional “Start Here” tab that would help guide students through the beginning stages of research in a new discipline
Librarian Profile

- Only one student navigated back to the Psychology Research Guide from the main page of the library website when asked to find the librarian’s contact information, despite the fact that many students commented on the librarian profile when they visited the guide.

**Action Items:** Improve labeling on the librarian profile and create a “Contact a Librarian” page on the library website that links back to the research guides.
Next Steps

- Promote Research Guides
- Implement design changes
- Gather data on guide usage
- Additional user testing
Conclusions
Working with Grad Students

- **Benefits for grad students:**
  - Opportunities to work on real-world projects
  - Apply concepts from library school in a real-world setting *(especially crucial for distance learners)*
  - Opportunities for networking and learning from practicing librarians
  - Able to complete a substantial project with limited time or resources *(a benefit to all involved!)*

- **Benefits for the library and library staff:**
  - New perspectives and experience
  - Motivation toward a goal
  - Opportunities for supervisory experience
  - Opportunities for new collaborations!
Considerations for Your Library

- Do you have documented best practices to help your librarians create research guides?
- Have you conducted user testing for your research guides?
- Do you have a creation/maintenance schedule for updating your research guides?
- Do your students know what research guides are, what they are useful for, or how to begin to use them?
- You never know unless you ask!