Executive Summary

New York University Libraries house an incredibly large collection of items that will not only benefit the students and faculty members at NYU, but students and faculty members at many other universities. Interlibrary Loan can take anywhere from 7-10 business days depending on where the item is coming from, which is why NYU decided to join the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. As a member of PALCI, NYU is allowed to participate in an expedited borrowing program called E-ZBorrow. Because E-ZBorrow consists of only 50-60 nearby libraries, NYU can guarantee a 3-5 business day delivery time for the majority of items.

In order to assess the usability of the E-ZBorrow catalog, a Cognitive Walkthrough was done. Ordering an item through E-ZBorrow was selected as the task to be completed. A group of three Pratt Institute students that had no prior knowledge of the E-ZBorrow catalog were asked to complete the task as first time users. Notes were taken during the walkthrough and those notes were analyzed. Recommendations were determined in order to improve the quality of the first time users’ experience. It was recognized that one area of the NYU Libraries’ website and two areas of the E-ZBorrow catalog could be updated to better serve the user in completing the task.

1. In order to better promote the service of E-ZBorrow, the link to the E-ZBorrow catalog should be much more prominent on the main NYU Library page. To do this, the E-ZBorrow catalog link should be moved from the “My Workspace” section of NYU Libraries’ main page to the “Quick links” section.

2. In order to increase the clarity of what needs to be done from the search results page of the E-ZBorrow catalog, the e-book version should not be displayed, and if it must appear it should not be the first result in the search. The best case scenario for solving this problem is to have a way to filter out the e-book results so they are not displayed.

3. In order to increase the clarity of the Search Results page even more, the icons for each item that indicate which is the e-book and which is the physical item should be moved closer to the title of the item. This move would also help with the problem of distinguishing e-book items from physical items. In addition to moving the icons closer to the titles, the user should also be able to click on the icons in order to get to the request page.

4. In order to clarify the right action to take to request an item, the language that tells the user to “Click here to request” on the page should be edited or removed. To improve the user response, the language on the page should be closer to suggesting the correct action such as “Click the drop down menu to select a pick-up location. Then click ‘Request’”
5. In order to improve the clarity of the search results page further, E-ZBorrow should consider removing the list of libraries at the bottom of the Request page. The list does nothing to assist or clarify what the user should do to request the item and it causes unnecessary confusion.

The suggested improvements came from the observation of first time users attempting to navigate the E-ZBorrow catalog and request an item to be delivered to NYU. If implemented, the user experience should be improved for both new and old users alike. The navigation of the site should get easier and there should be less confusion for all user types.
Introduction

New York University Libraries house an incredibly large collection of items that will not only benefit the students and faculty members at NYU, but students and faculty members at many other universities. Interlibrary Loan can take anywhere from 7-10 business days depending on where the item is coming from, which is why NYU decided to join the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc, which to Library users is referred to as E-ZBorrow. Because E-ZBorrow consists of only 50-60 or nearby libraries, NYU can guarantee a 3-5 business day delivery time for the majority of items.

As E-ZBorrow is still a relatively new service at NYU Libraries, there are a few issues both on the end of the staff and on the user that need to be worked out. There are a few small changes and adjustments that can be made to the E-ZBorrow catalog’s search and request pages that can improve the overall use and navigation that will aid in the ease of requesting items.

The goal of this report is to ease the access of use of the E-Zborrow online catalog, and clarify the correct action sequence of the task for first time users.

Methodology

This report details the use of the E-ZBorrow Catalog by first navigating from NYU Library’s website in order to request the item to be delivered to NYU Bobst Library from the E-ZBorrow online catalog using a Cognitive Walkthrough method as detailed by The cognitive walkthrough method: A practitioner's guide (Wharton, et al.1994).

The walkthrough was directed by the manager of E-ZBorrow for New York University. In line with the Cognitive Walkthrough, inputs of the walkthrough were defined before the walkthrough took place including: who the users are, a task to be completed, correct action sequence, description, walkthrough of the actions for the task with the appropriate questions asked at each interval (Wharton, Rieman, Lewis & Polson, 1994, 2-3). The target user was easily defined, as only certain user types are able to request E-ZBorrow items at NYU. The task defined was requesting an item from the E-ZBorrow catalog, as the main function of the catalog is to request an item.
Target User

The target users for E-ZBorrow through NYU Libraries are NYU Faculty, Administrators, Master's Students, Staff, Undergraduates, Guest Borrowers, TAs, Employee Family, and Postdoctoral Students. Abu Dhabi and Shanghai Faculty, Administrators, Staff, and Undergraduates are also able to use E-ZBorrow through NYU Libraries.

Task

Requesting the item “Green Grass Tango” from the E-ZBorrow Catalog to be delivered to Bobst Library

Correct Action Sequence

1. Navigate to library.nyu.edu
2. Click “E-ZBorrow” link from Library main page
3. Log-in to NYU log-in screen
4. Enter “Green Grass Tango” in Search bar
5. Click on the title of the item (not e-book version)
6. Select “Bobst Library” as the pick-up location
7. Click “Request”

A group of three students from the Pratt Institute were assigned with completing this task. For each step of the task the main priority was to analyze the ease of use of the E-ZBorrow catalog. In order to evaluate the ease of use, each user was asked the following four questions while completing each task:
   1. Will the user try to achieve the right effect?
   2. Will the user notice if the correct action is available?
   3. Will the user associate the correct action with the effect trying to be achieved?
   4. If the correct action is performed, will the user see that progress is being made toward solution of the task?

(Wharton, Rieman, Lewis & Polson, 1994, 2-3).

During the evaluation, the users were asked each question during the task and notes were taken for each question. An answer of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ was given for each question, at which point the evaluator could determine if the step in the task was a “success” or “failure”.

4
Results and Recommendations

It was recognized that one area of the NYU Libraries’ website and two areas of the E-ZBorrow catalog could be updated to better serve the user in completing the task.

Increase Visibility of E-ZBorrow Link

The recommendation for increasing the visibility of the E-ZBorrow Catalog link is to move the link location from the “My Workspace” Section of the front page to the “Quick Links” section of the page.

Fig. 1: New York University Library Homepage

The “My Workspace” section of the page is frequently used by repeat Library patrons. In
terms of usability first time users that are specifically looking for the E-ZBorrow catalog
will most likely be looking at the middle of the page under “Quick Links” before their eye
goes up to the My Workspace section. In order to better promote the service of E-
ZBorrow, the link should be much more prominent on the main page.

**Increase Clarity of Search Results Page**

There are quite a few problems with the results page of the E-ZBorrow catalog. While it is
positive that the first item in the Search Results is in fact “Green Grass Tango” it is the e-
book version of the item. It is problematic that the e-book version appears before the
physical item, as e-books cannot be requested via E-ZBorrow. If the e-book version is
selected the user will be told the item is not requestable and they will be prompted to
request the item from InterLibrary Loan. The only way to successfully request this item
is to navigate to the actual book version from the search results page.

**Recommendation: Increase Clarity of Search Results Page**

In order to increase the clarity of what needs to be done from the search results page, the
e-book version should not be displayed, and if it must appear it should not be the first
result in the search. The best case scenario for solving this problem is to have a way to
filter out the e-book results so they are not displayed to users that cannot request the e-
book version.

Fig. 2: E-ZBorrow Catalog Search Results Page
Increase Clarity of Search Results Page: Section 2

There are icons that indicate which one is the e-book and which is the physical item, but they are too far to the right to be helpful. Some users may also try to click the icon to get to the request pages instead of clicking the title of the book which is the correct action to link to the request page.

Recommendation: Increase Clarity of Search Results Page: Section 2

In order to increase the clarity of the Search Result page even more, the icons for each item should be moved closer to the title of the item. This move would also help with the problem of distinguishing e-book items from physical items. In addition to moving the icons closer to the titles, the user should also be able to click on the icons in order to get to the request page. That way they could click the title or the icon and both behaviors would be correct.

Fig. 3: E-ZBorrow Catalog Search Results Page

Increase Clarity of Search Results Page

The correct task once the user arrives at the Request page is to select their desired pick-up location from a drop down menu. However, there is confusing language above the
drop down menu that says “Click here to request this item from E-ZBorrow” even though there is nothing on the page to click to Request the item.

**Recommendation: Increase Clarity of Search Results Page: Section 1**

In order to clarify the right action to take in order to request an item, the language on the page should be edited or removed. It is a little misleading to tell the user to click something when there is nothing to be clicked. To improve the user response, the language on the page should be closer to suggesting the correct action such as “Click the drop down menu to select a pick-up location. Then click ‘Request’”

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**The green grass tango, Beryl Gilroy**

**Author**  Gilroy, Beryl  
**Title**  The green grass tango  
**Publication**  Peepal Tree, Leeds, England, 2001  
**Subject(s)**  Dogs, Human-animal relationships in literature, Guyanese fiction  
**ISBN (s)**  1900715473  
**Physical Description**  Book, 138 p. - 21 cm

Click here to request this item from E-ZBorrow.

Select a Pickup Location: (None)  
Volume(s) Needed:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>E-ZBorrow Availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEMPLE</td>
<td>Paley Stacks</td>
<td>PR9320.9.G53 G744x 2001</td>
<td>Requestable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYU</td>
<td>NYU Bobst</td>
<td>PR9320.9.G53 G74 2001</td>
<td>Not Requestable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSU</td>
<td>UP-PAT PATTEE-3</td>
<td>PR9320.9.G57G74 2001</td>
<td>Requestable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increase Clarity of Search Results Page: Section 2

One of the most important parts of the task is to select a pick up location for the E-ZBorrow item. Right below the drop down where the pick up location should be selected is a list of lending libraries for the item. Users may think that the list of libraries are the available pick-up locations, especially if one of the options is NYU. In addition to this problem, users may also assume that they are able to select where the item is coming from in order to have a faster delivery time, but users do not have a say in where the request goes. The request is automatically filtered by the E-ZBorrow system, starting with larger libraries and working its way down in the queue.

Recommendation: Increase Clarity of Search Results Page: Section 1

In order to improve the clarity of the search results page further, E-ZBorrow should consider removing the list of libraries at the bottom of the page. The list does nothing to assist or clarify what the user should do to request the item, and it actually causes unnecessary confusion. The list of libraries is helpful to E-ZBorrow staff to see if any items are actually available to request via E-ZBorrow, but a better solution would be to have separate staff and user pages where the staff can see the list of lending libraries and the user cannot.
The green grass tango, Beryl Gilroy

Author: Gilroy, Beryl
Title: The green grass tango
Subject(s): Dogs, Human-animal relationships in literature, Guyanese fiction
ISBN(s): 1000745473
Physical Description: Book
130 p. : 21 cm.

Click here to request this item from E-ZBorrow.

Select a Pickup Location: (None)
Volume(s) Needed: 
Request

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Requestable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5: E-ZBorrow Catalog Item Request Page

Conclusion

In order to assess the usability of the E-ZBorrow catalog, a Cognitive Walkthrough was done. The task of ordering an item through E-ZBorrow was selected by the report writer, and a group of three Pratt Institute students that had no prior knowledge of the E-ZBorrow catalog were assigned with completing the task as first time users. Areas of improvement were recognized that if changed would improve the quality of the first time users' experience. It was recognized that one area of the NYU Libraries website and two areas of the E-ZBorrow catalog could be updated to better serve the user in completing the task. The goal of this report is to ease the access of use of the E-Zborrow online catalog, and clarify the correct action sequence of the task for first time users.
Appendix

The task at hand was to search for the item “Green Grass Tango” assuming that the item was available via the E-ZBorrow catalog.

**Step 1 : Success**

Navigating to library.nyu.edu

Success Story: Students that know nothing of the E-ZBorrow catalog, still know to start their search at the library.nyu.edu homepage.

**Step 2 : Success**

Click “E-ZBorrow” link from the Library Main page

Success Story: If the user knows they are looking for the E-ZBorrow catalog, they will know to look for a link. The link offers positive reinforcement as the cursor changes when it is hovering over the link.

**Step 3 : Success**

Log-in to the NYU log-in screen

Success Story: The log-in screen is clearly label and the user knows what needs to be done immediately.

**Step 4 : Success**

Enter “Green Grass Tango” in search bar

Success Story: The search bar is the main focus of the page, and there is a cursor blinking in the search box. Users will know immediately to type the title into the search box.

**Step 5 : Failure**

Click on the title of the item (not e-book version)
Failure Story: There are quite a few problems with this step in the process. First, the option for the e-book version appears in the list before the actual book version and if the e-book version is clicked the user will be told to request the item from InterLibrary Loan. The only way to successfully request this item is to navigate to the physical book version. There are icons that indicate which one is the e-book and which is the physical item, but they are too far to the right to be helpful. Some users may also try to click the icon instead of the title of the book which is the only correct link to the request page.

**Step 6: Failure**

Select “Bobst Library” as a pick up location

Failure Story: Students may be confused that above the drop down there is language that says “Click Here to request item”, but there is nothing to click. Students must click the drop down menu to select a pick up location. Also, the list of schools at the bottom of the screen look like they could be potential pick up locations and they are not necessary for the user to see in order to request the item. Users might also think they are able to select the lending library where their request will go. The pick-up location drop down should be closer to the top of the page.

**Step 7: Success**

Click “Request”

Success Story: There is a lot of positive reinforcement with this task. It is clear that after a pick-up location is selected the “Request” button should be clicked. It greys out when the mouse hovers over the button, and it immediately gives a request number and confirmation e-mail once the button is clicked.
References
