Reimagining Harvard’s LibGuides

Kris M. Markman, Ph.D.
Online Learning Librarian, Harvard Library
@DiscourseMarker
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Snapshot of LibGuides at Harvard
• Migrated from v1 to v2 of LibGuides June 2015
  - 6/1/14-6/1/15; 588 pub guides, 10% <50 views
• Fall 2015 792 published guides, 368K views
  - BUT approx. 20% guides <50 views
• As of 2/14/16: 1544 guides, 828 published; >100 owners
What we did
• Think-aloud usability testing before migration on v1 guides

• Eye-tracking testing on v1 and v2 guide

• Guide analytics & focus groups
Research Questions

• What is the optimal way to design guides and organize content?

• Do the guides cause information overload?

• Are there jargon problems on the guides?

• How can guide content help solve student research problems?
Usability Testing

- Undergraduate and graduate students from across disciplines, $N=13$

- Participants performed five basic tasks using two different v1 guides that were completely new to them and were asked to think out loud while performing the tasks.

- Qualitative data
Results
70% had never seen a LibGuide
What do students say?
“I’m usually just looking for fast answers. I don’t have time to read all this.”

“I’m reading, I’m reading… I’m bored and don’t want to read anymore.”

“There’s sooo much information. This doesn’t work for my needs.”

“Need to simplify the wording so your eye isn’t bombarded the minute you open the page.”

“Students don’t want to read about how to do research… they just want to do it!”
“This one says ‘Ask Me’ with the person’s name...I’d be more prone to ask this person.”

“There’s two people...this one doesn’t have a photo...it’s harder to realize it’s a person.”

“There’s two people...um, I’d just go with the person on the left.”
Eye-tracking testing
Eye-tracking mechanics

1. An eye tracker consists of cameras, projectors and algorithms.
2. The projectors create a pattern of near-infrared light on the eyes.
3. The cameras take high-frame-rate images of the user’s eyes and the patterns.
4. The image processing algorithms find specific details in the user’s eyes and reflections pattern.
5. Based on these details, mathematical algorithms calculate the eyes’ position and gaze point, for instance on a computer monitor.
Buddhist Studies

Images

Artstor searches more than one million digital images in the arts, architecture, humanities, and sciences from museums, libraries, and archives, including Harvard. Harvard ID and PIN required.

Hint: Use buddhism* (with the asterisk) to search both Buddhism and Buddhist.

Hint: Add a country or regional name to your search.

Hint: See especially the John Linrothe Collection of Tibetan and Buddhist Art and the Carl Strom and Jennifer Strom Collection of Asian Buddhist Monasteries Art.

Hint: See how Artstor can be used in the classroom under "Using Artstor."

Search HOLLS+ or VIA for digital images of items in Harvard libraries.

Browse the Hedda Morrison Photographs of China from the Harvard-Yenching Library.

Search the Harvard Art Museum’s illustrated online database.

Images in print can be found by looking through reference books in Ref. BL80 (etc.), Ref. BQ, and Folio BQ. For example: Herbert, Patricia. The Life of the Buddha. London: British Library; Petaluma, Calif.: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1993. [Ref. BQ882 .H47 1993; Harvard Library locations from HOLLS+]. This work includes reproductions of the art of two Burmese manuscripts in the British Library.

Also see Finding Public Domain & Creative Commons Images, a Harvard Law School Library research guide.
• RQ: What is the optimal placement for the navigation menu in LibGuides?

• Each participant \((N=26)\) completed same two tasks on two versions of same guide (tabs, left nav)

  - You need to find videos related to Buddhism.

  - Using the navigation menu, go back
Tabbed navigation
Finding Information Quickly

Encyclopedias and dictionaries are great sources of quick information. In addition, they will often list the more important works on the topic—the first works to consult if you want to know more. When the authors of an entry are identified, you can learn their academic credentials.

Call numbers listed are those at Andover-Harvard Library. Other copies in the Harvard Library are indicated with a link.

Note also that general encyclopedias and dictionaries of religions (Ref. BL31) and general works on religions (BL80, etc.) will also have entries on Buddhism.

Dictionaries & Encyclopedias

**Encyclopedia of Buddhism**
Call Number: Ref. BQ128.E66 2008

**Basic coverage:**
In approximately 800 A-to-Z entries, Encyclopedia of Buddhism provides easy access to the terms, concepts, personalities, historical events, institutions, and movements that helped shape the history of Buddhism and the way it is practiced today. A comprehensive introduction that provides an overview of the tradition, a chronology, cross-references, further readings, a bibliography, a thorough index, and about 60 black-and-white photographs complete this volume.
Results: Find videos
Time to 1st Fixation on AOI: 1.11 sec
$t_{TFF}(25) = 2.078, p = .05$

Total Fixation Duration: 5.22 sec
$t_{TFD}(25) = 2.475, p = .02$

Total Fixation Count: 313.15
$t_{FIXCOUNT}(25) = 2.475, p = .02$

Time to 1st Fixation on AOI: 2.42 sec

Total Fixation Duration: 1.98 sec

Total Fixation Count: 118.81
Buddhist Studies

Encyclopedias & Dictionaries

by Edward A. Jones
Call Number: Ref. BQ128 E60 2008
**Basic coverage:**
The Encyclopedia of Buddhism provides easy access to the terms, concepts, personalities, historical events, institutions, and movements that helped shape the history of Buddhism and the way it is practiced today. A comprehensive introduction that provides an overview of the tradition, a chronology, cross-references, further readings, a bibliography, a thorough index, and about 60 black-and-white photographs complete this volume.

by Damien Keown
Call Number: Ref. BQ130 K48 2003
**Basic coverage and online (with updates):**
This dictionary features broadly-ranging entries on the history and doctrines of the major Buddhist schools, information on the spread of Buddhism in Asia and the West, and coverage of issues of contemporary concern such as human rights, abortion, euthanasia, ‘engaged Buddhism’, and the role of women in Buddhist teachings.

**Encyclopedia of Buddhism. London; New York: Routledge, 2007.**
by Charles S. Prebish (Editor), Damien Keown (Editor)
Call Number: Ref. BQ128 E65 2007
**Comprehensive coverage:** Reflects the current state of scholarship in Buddhist Studies, its entries being written by specialists in many areas, presenting an accurate overview of Buddhist history, thought and practices, most entries having cross-referencing to others and bibliographical references. Contains around 1000 pages and 500,000 words, totaling around 1200 entries. Authors of articles are identified.

**Encyclopedia of Buddhism. New York: Macmillan Reference USA/Thomson/Gale,**
Overall observations & themes
• Many users have no idea what a guide is.

• The amount of content is overwhelming and perceived as complicated. V1 fonts too small.

• Searching is preferred to browsing/reading.

• Left navigation menu strongly preferred over top tabs.

• How-to guides used significantly more than other types.

• Guide content doesn’t always align with student needs.
Making LibGuides usable & useful
• Ground-up redesign of templates
  - Increased font sizes, white space, padding
  - Minimum 16 point type for body text
  - New profile boxes
  - Best practices guide for librarians
• Strong recommendation for left nav over tabs
• Make guides accessible as well as usable
• How-to guides that address specific problems may be more useful than subject guides.

• Guides should be framed specifically and explicitly.

• Improve guide discoverability

  - 2/3 of guide traffic in spring 2015 came from organic search
5 tips

✓ Entice Users
✓ Curate Content
✓ Write for the web
✓ Support Searching
✓ Offer Clear Ways to Get Help
Before & after
Research Help

Email us your questions or schedule an appointment with us!

Susan Gilman – sgilman@fas.harvard.edu
Research Librarian & Co-Liaison to Anthropology Dept.
I can assist you with finding materials for your research, navigating library resources, and keeping your notes and sources organized.

Janet Steins – steins@fas.harvard.edu
Associate Librarian for Collections & Research Librarian
Contact me if there is an item that you would like the library to purchase. I can also assist you with finding materials for your research.

Related Libraries

Tozzer Library
Tozzer's collection is devoted to all subfields of anthropology, with a special emphasis on materials relating to the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Other libraries
http://guides.library.harvard.edu/languageandliteracy
Thank You!