Web Usability and Libraries: Selected Bibliography

General Usability Resources

Nielson, a Ph.D. in computer engineering with a specialization in human-computer interaction, has published this occasional online column since 1995. Some frequently consulted columns include those on "eye flick" studies and how web pages are read, on the use of color for usability, and on writing for the web.

Provides an overview of recent research on human perceptions of color and their implications for web design and usability.

The textbook for usable web design.

Using standards and structure to create usable sites.

Libraries and Usability Testing

Report on a recent survey of usability study practices in ARL libraries.

Describes three testing formats: pluralistic walk-throughs (scenario-based testing), heuristic evaluation (evaluation against standards), and task-based.

Overview of and advice on usability testing, with a particularly helpful discussion of the benefits and drawbacks to different testing techniques.

Though now dated, a great source for locating publications on particular testing approaches as well as usability resources.

Specific Approaches and Case Studies

method: direct observation

method: direct observation

method: direct observation using screen capture
methods: analysis of log files, a staff survey, and a card sort test

method: direct observation with screen capture

methods: written pre-test, direct observation


Summarizes recent usability test research and provides pointers on developing meaningful questions in task-based tests.

Describes the nature of usability information that can be gleaned from server logs.

method: direct observation

method: direct observation


methods: card-sorting, prototype web sites on paper, direct observation with screen capture

method: remote observation with screen capture

Discusses screen-capture tools and their application in usability testing scenarios.

methods: focus groups, card-sorting, paper prototyping, and direct observation


methods: questionnaire, direct observation and follow up discussion