

Providing Access to Digitized Content Via the Finding Aid: A Usability Study

Delivery Via Finding Aid

- ▶ Provenance
- ▶ Biography
- ▶ General note
- ▶ Source(s)
- ▼ CORRESPONDENCE, 12.6 Linear feet

Series Description

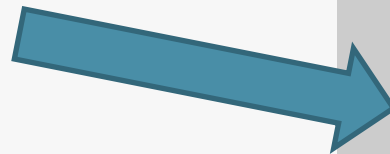
Consists primarily of the incoming and outgoing legal correspondence of S.D. Cabaniss. The series is divided into the following three subseries: Personal, Legal, and S.D. Cabaniss and Associated Attorneys. All incoming correspondence is arranged alphabetically and all outgoing correspondence is arranged chronologically. Incoming correspondence often contains multiple letters from the same individual and is thus sorted chronologically as well, after the initial alphabetical arrangement. The S.D. Cabaniss personal correspondence includes letters to and from Cabaniss and his extended family and friends. The series also includes a small portion of incoming and outgoing correspondence of Cabaniss's legal partners before the Civil War, including Hopkins, Parsons, Brickell, and Walker. After the war, correspondence is often addressed to and from his partnership, Cabaniss and Ward. Additionally, there is correspondence addressed to and from a variety of attorneys that Cabaniss was involved in litigation with, including James McClung, Reuben Chapman, and Shepherd. There is a small section of miscellaneous correspondence that could not be assigned to a case or to an attorney associated with Cabaniss which remains unarranged. The series concludes with letterbo to contain a mix of outgoing correspondence, primarily from Cabaniss and Ward, but also from Huntsville attorneys John H. Lewis and W. Garth, who were associated in casework with Cabaniss.

Components in Detail

PERSONAL

Incoming, A - B. Cabaniss Box 252.001 Folder 1

- Item 1 <http://purl.lib.ua.edu/150>
- Item 2 <http://purl.lib.ua.edu/151>
- Item 3 <http://purl.lib.ua.edu/152>
- Item 4 <http://purl.lib.ua.edu/153>
- Item 5 <http://purl.lib.ua.edu/154>



**Problem statement:
How usable is this??**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
Gorgas - Bruno - Hoole - McLure - Rodgers

ua > university libraries > acumen > S. D. Cabaniss papers > Item 2 acumen 2.0a

Home (Search) Browse Collections Print Acumen Feedback Expand All Collapse All

Item 2

Associated Records & Digital Assets

Thumbnail View List Details

Home (Search) Zoom In Zoom Out Fit to Page 1:1 Fill Window 25% [322px x 512px]

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
2 p.

▼ Location

REPOSITORY COLLECTION
S. D. Cabaniss Papers

COLLECTION NUMBER
252

Methodology

Efficiency:

Time on task, number of clicks

Effectiveness:

Successful task completion

Satisfaction:

Ranking of perceived difficulty and positive vs. negative comments

Learnability:

Improvement in time, clicks, and success over 4 tasks in a single session



Participants

Participant Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Educational Status*	G	G	U	G	G	G	S	G	U	G	U	U	U	U	U	U	PG	G	G	G
Educational Background in History		X		X		X										X				X
Previous Special Collections Experience	X	X		X	X	X	X				X		X		X	X	X			X
Previous Digital Collections Experience	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
English as a Second Language				X							X	X			X				X	

* U=Undergraduate, G=Graduate Student, PG=Post graduate volunteer, S=University staff



Procedure





- Task 1: Locate a piece of legal correspondence.
- Task 2: Locate an estate document.
- Task 3: Locate some kind of deed.
- Task 4: Locate a family history document or some other family item.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
Gorgas - Bruno - Hoole - McLure - Rodgers

ua > university libraries > acumen > collection acumen 2.0a

Home (Search)
Browse Collections
Print
Acumen Feedback
Site Map

"Robert Jemison, Jr. Papers" Collection

Title	Description
 Receipt for hire of slave, North East and South West Railroad Company, Alabama, for work by A. F. Alexander, April 6, 1859	Text
 Account of Expenses of Edith M. Booker from the Alabama Female Athenaeum, January 25, 1844	text
 Account statement from Brickell and Sledge to Robert Jemison, Jr., April 1, 1834	text
 Account statement from Clark Weir to Robert Jemison, Jr., April 24, 1833	text



Results: Efficiency, Effectiveness, Satisfaction

*of item-level described content,
compared to finding aid access:*

Efficiency:

35% less time, 48% fewer clicks

Not surprising: finding aid provides more context.

Effectiveness:

Success rates 7.5% higher

Not surprising: no EAD search function or navigation box.

Satisfaction:

Preferred by a ratio of 3:1

Not surprising: these are novice users.



Notable Comparison Between Participants

English as a second language

Difficulty with both interfaces!

- 51% more time and 10% less success in the item-level interface
- 41% more time and 13% less success in the finding aid interface
- 80% preferred the item-level interface

No previous experience with digital collections:

Found finding aid interface significantly easier than those with digital collection experience!

- 42% less time
- 27% fewer clicks
- 12% more success



Results: Learnability

Paired-sample t- test comparing task 1 to task 4:

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	FirstClickJem1 - FirstClickJem4	-.39286	3.30605	.88358	-2.30171	1.51600	-.445	13	.664
Pair 2	FirstClickCab1 - FirstClickCab4	.00000	2.44949	.65465	-1.41429	1.41429	.000	13	1.000
Pair 3	TotClickJem1 - TotClickJem4	.714	2.813	.752	-.910	2.338	.950	13	.359
Pair 4	TotClickCab1 - TotClickCab4	-1.071	8.713	2.329	-6.102	3.959	-.460	13	.653
Pair 5	TotTimeJem1 - TotTimeJem4	2.143	13.061	3.491	-5.398	9.684	.614	13	.550
Pair 6	TotTimeCab1 - TotTimeCab4	5.786	44.295	11.838	-19.789	31.361	.489	13	.633
Pair 8	EffectCab1 - EffectCab4	-.14286	.53452	.14286	-.45148	.16577	-1.000	13	.336

No significant differences



Further Research Indicated

More tests on the finding aid interface to determine *what actually improves usability.*

Suggestions from the research include:

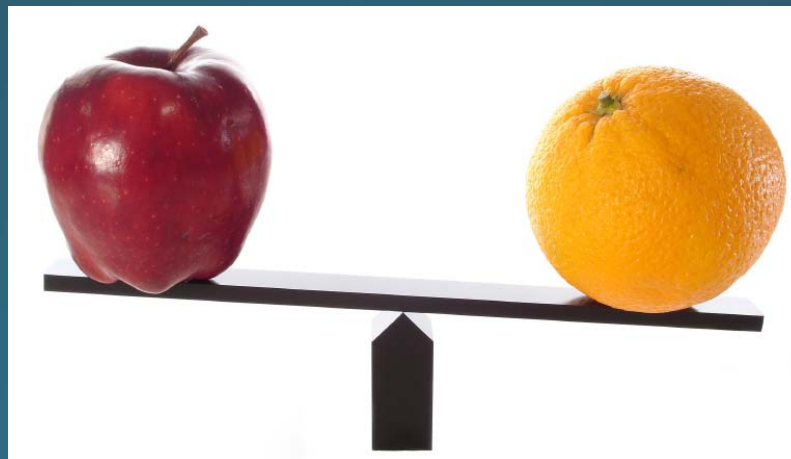
- *replacing archival terminology*
- *Providing search in page feature*
- *Providing navigation links for sections of the finding aid on the left*

THEN: learnability tests for novice users that span multiple sessions.



Conclusions

Don't compare item level access to finding aid access;
they aren't comparable.



Find ways to make the EAD more user-friendly.

*EAD delivery works for us; let's make it
work for our users!*



References

- Joyce Celeste Chapman, "Observing Users: An Empirical Analysis of User Interaction with Online Finding Aids," *Journal of Archival Organization* 8, no. 1 (2010)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332748.2010.484361>
- Cory Nimer and J. Gordon Daines III, "What Do You Mean It Doesn't Make Sense? Redesigning Finding Aids from the User's Perspective," *Journal of Archival Organization* 6, no. 4 (2008), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332740802533214>
- Wendy Scheir, "First Entry: Report on a Qualitative Exploratory Study of Novice User Experience with Online Finding Aids," *Journal of Archival Organization* 3, no. 4 (2006), http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J201v03n04_04
- Tom Tullis and Bill Albert, *Measuring the User Experience: Collecting, Analyzing, and Presenting Usability Metrics* (Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2008, 92-94.
- Tim West, Kirill Fesenko, and Laura Clark Brown, "Extending the Reach of Southern Sources: Proceeding to Large-Scale Digitization of Manuscript Collections," Final Grant Report for the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, *Southern Historical Collection, University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, June 2009,
http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/archivalmassdigitization/download/extending_the_reach.pdf
- Elizabeth Yakel, "Encoded Archival Description: Are Finding Aids Boundary Spanners or Barriers for Users?" *Journal of Archival Organization* 2, no. 1 & 2 (2004),
http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J201v02n01_06.

For more information: ...upcoming *American Archivist* article?

- University of Alabama Libraries, "Septimus D. Cabaniss Papers Digitization Project."
 - Project Site: <http://www.lib.ua.edu/libraries/hoole/cabaniss>
 - Wiki: <http://www.lib.ua.edu/wiki/digcoll/index.php/Cabaniss>
 - Display: http://acumen.lib.ua.edu/u0003_0000252

