The Process

Original Research Idea
In the UX world, people often describe a great user experience as one that creates delight. I wanted to know where delight happens - or could happen - in the academic library user experience.

Planned Methods
• Focus on grad students and upper-year undergraduates
• Semi-structured interviews about what brings them delight during their research process
• Love letters to what made a particular research project really great,

Competing priorities (also requiring user research)
• Assessment of the library’s discovery layer, Summon (for Senior Management)
• Redesign of library subject guides (for Web Committee)

Response: Cram it all in!
• Start with undergrads in Fall Term, grad students in Winter Term
• Add a second interview with the same participants

Expectations
• Quick Research Ethics Board (REB) review, based on past experience
• New Student Library Advisory Committee will help with recruitment

Response: Can’t stop now!
• Restructure undergraduate interviews to cope with time constraints
• Ask participants to help recruit other participants

Research Artifacts

How it Went

😊 What Was Great!
• Single recruitment process for three projects
• Easy to combine the projects: students’ research process at the core
• User research stayed high priority because others were depending on results
• Two interviews instead of one gave a better overall understanding of participants
• Increased rapport in second interview; easier to talk about delight
• Great user insights for subject guides project led to:
  • Substantial redesign of our guides
  • Surprisingly solid staff buy-in for the redesign
  • More in-depth user perspective on Summon

😔 What Was Not So Great
• The subject guides and Summon projects took priority; analysis of the delight piece not yet completed
• Requiring two interviews may have hampered recruitment (though participants received a $10 Starbucks gift card for the 40-minute first interview and a $20 card for the 20-minute second interview)
• Due to slow response from REB, undergraduate interviews were not as far apart in the term as planned, so had to restructure the second interview

Summing Up
The pros of this project vastly outweighed the cons!
• Combining similar projects streamlined:
  • An increasingly long and picky REB process at my university
  • Recruitment
  • Combining curiosity-driven research with job-related user research was a sneaky and wonderful way to fit my own research among other responsibilities
• As long as there is a similar theme, participants don’t seem to mind different angles of inquiry
• If I hadn't combined projects, my research on delight would still be unfinished and may never have started; at least now I have the data!