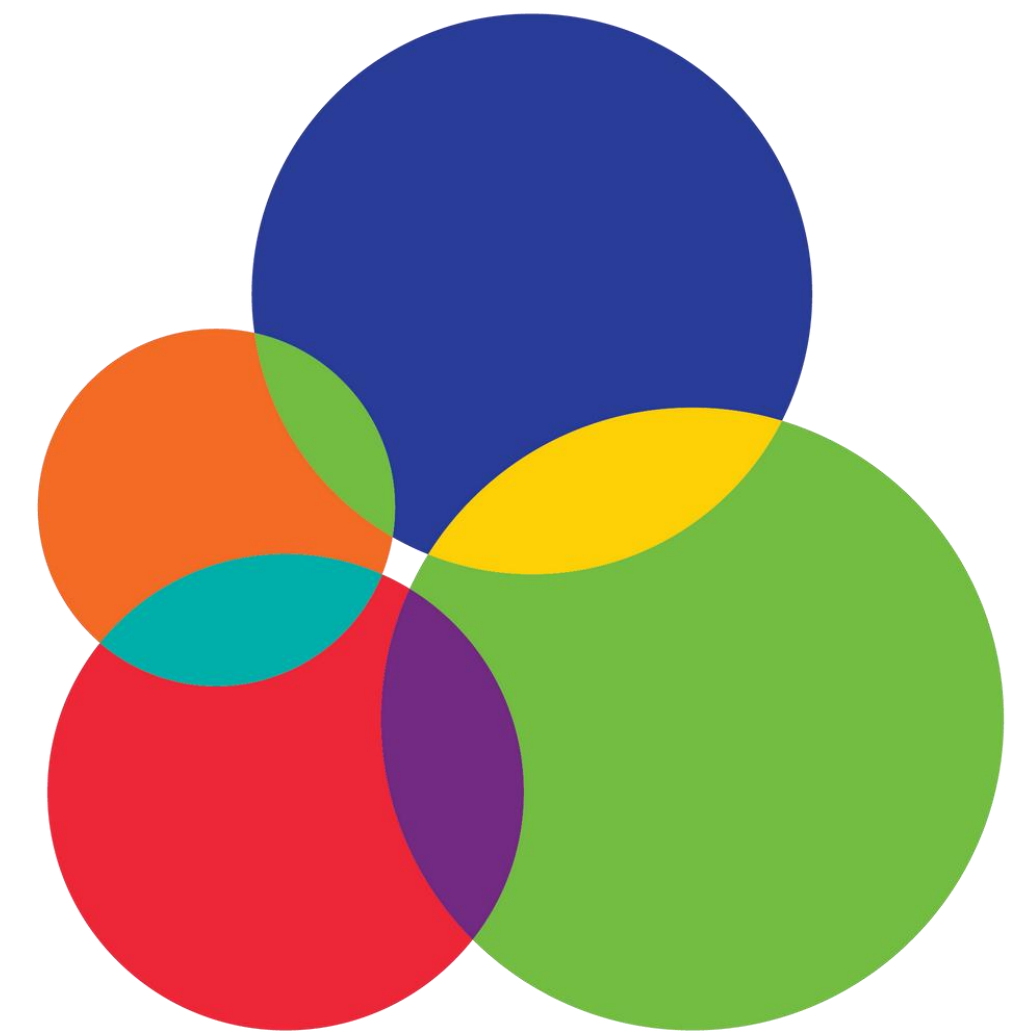


# Grace A. Dow Memorial Library Website

## User Research/Testing Results

Emma Brown  
April 2020

<https://www.gadml.org/>



GADML

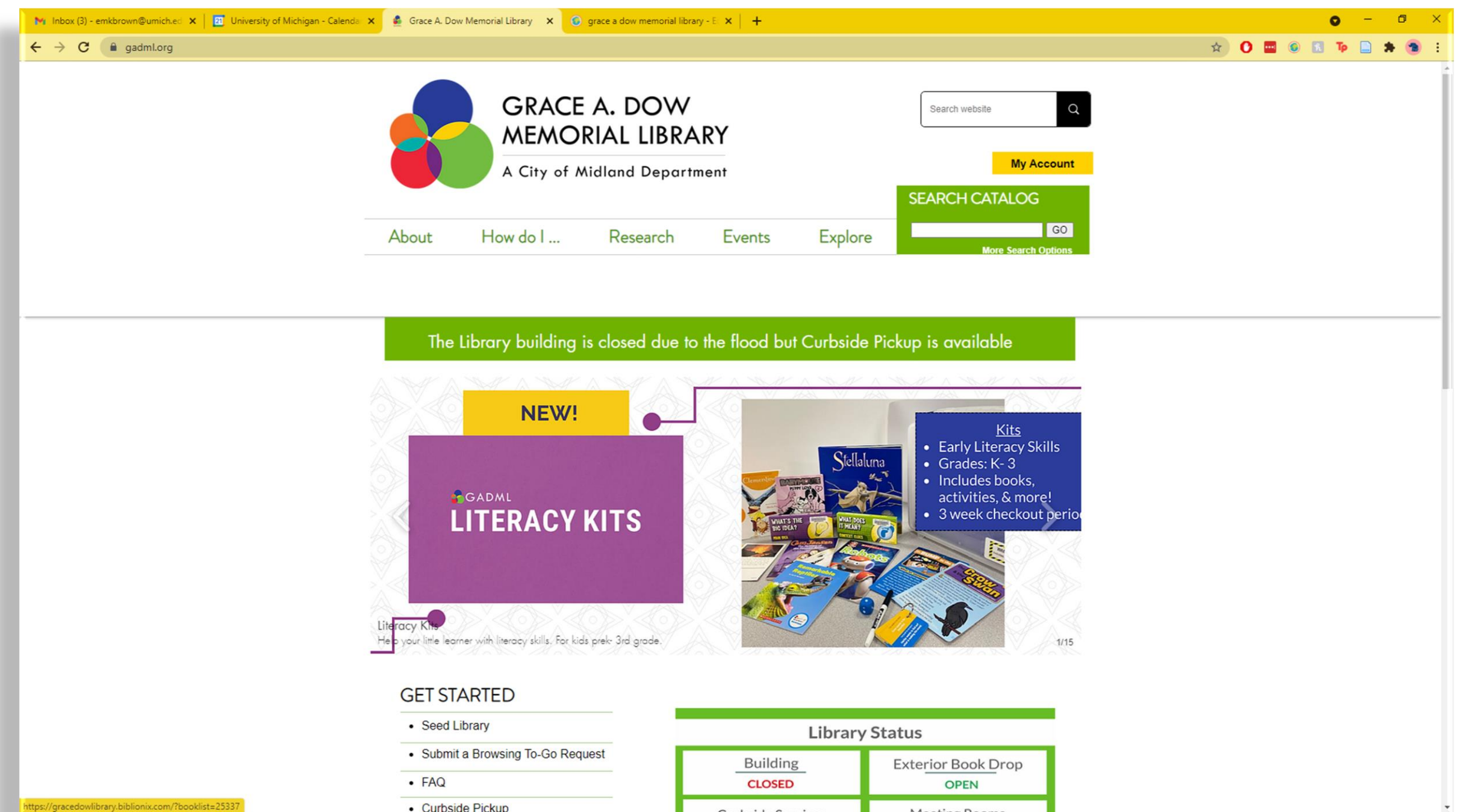
# Overview

- **Background & Goal**
- **Method**
- **Questions**
- **Usability Test**
- **User Survey**
- **Key Findings**
- **Opportunities & Next Steps**
- **Appendix**

# Background

Despite a 100-year flood which damaged half the building and an ongoing pandemic preventing in-person browsing and events, The Grace A. Dow Memorial Library (GADML) continues to provide its patrons many resources through its online presence. GADML recently launched a new, independent website after existing only as a page within the City of Midland's government site for many years.

Because the library building is currently closed to the public due to construction & COVID-19, GADML's online presence is more important than ever – but the website had never undergone any kind of usability testing and no user research had been conducted. After speaking with a library supervisor about their concerns regarding the current website, I offered to conduct usability testing and user research to determine how the website could be optimized to meet its users' needs.



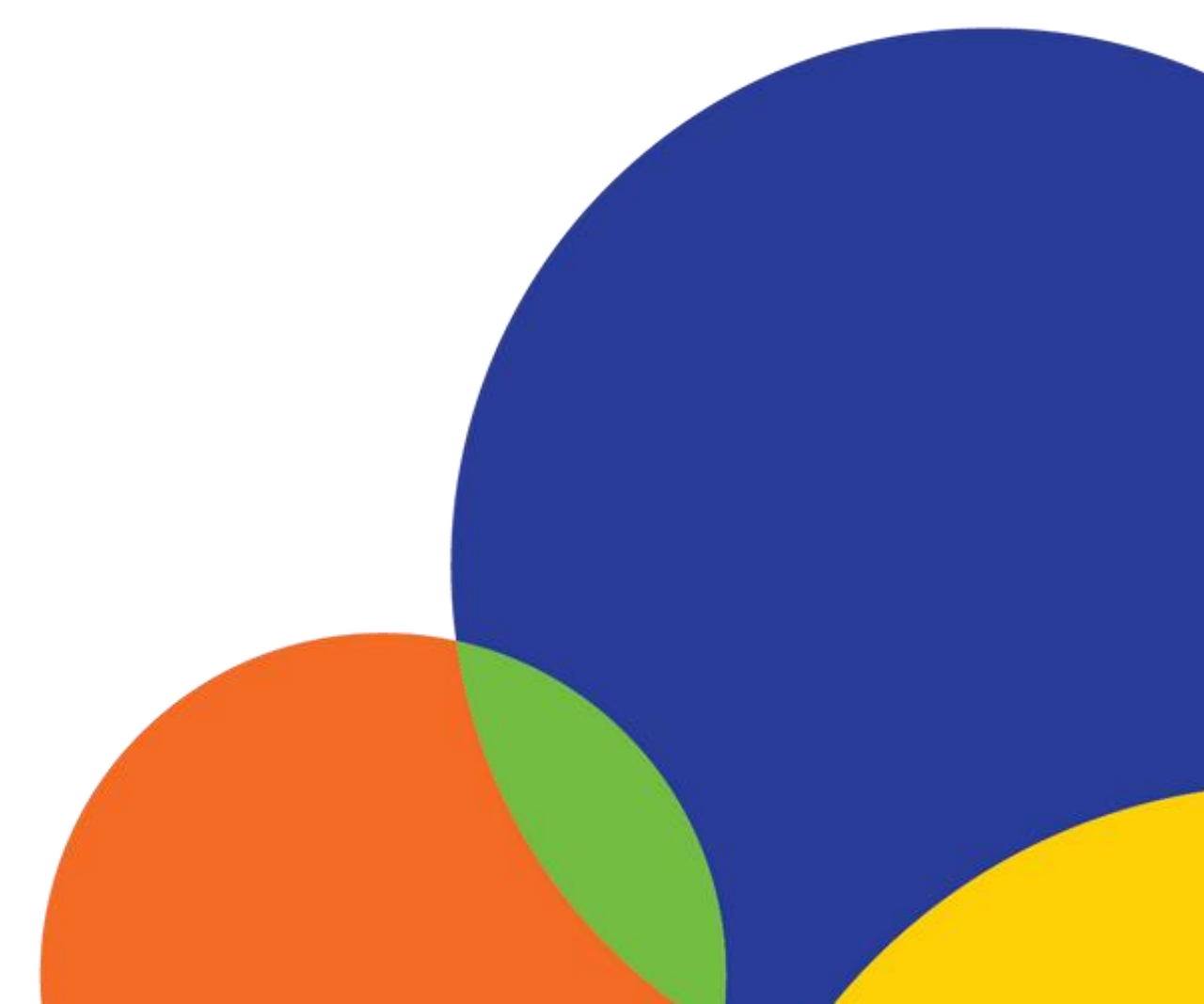
GADML's current website homepage

**The goal of this research was to gauge current user satisfaction, discover pain points, and determine changes that would improve the user experience of this site.**



# Research Questions

1. How easy is it for users to find **online resources**?
2. Is **important information** like hours/location easily accessible?
3. How effective is the current **main menu** in guiding users to resources?
4. Do users enjoy the current **style & layout**?





# Method

1

Usability Testing

2

User Survey

3

Key Findings

4

Opportunities



# Usability Test

Collected data on performance and preference metrics of <https://www.gadml.org/> through a remote user test conducted through UserTesting.com to determine strengths & pain points.

18+ | United States | English speakers  
Conducted March 2021

- 3 users
- 10 tasks
- 4 post-test questions

Scenario: Users were asked to complete tasks and answer questions as though they were users who were interested in becoming a member of GADML and wanted to learn more about their organization and offerings.

## Task Examples

(full list in appendix 1)

You're interested in the library's resources for academics, like research databases. Find the Digital Public Library of America and open it in a new tab.

Think of something that you might look for on this website and describe it out loud. Now use this website to find what you just described.

Find out when the library is open on Wednesday and where it is located.

## Post-Test Question Examples

What did you like most about this site?

What frustrated you most about this site?

What do you think is missing from this site?

# User Survey

Collected data from regular users of any library regarding preferences & behaviors when using a library website to better determine users' desires for a library's website. Survey conducted through Google Forms.

18+ | Regular Internet User | Recent Library User  
Conducted April 2021

- 13 respondents
- 10 questions

Users were asked about their past library activity, current library activity, online & in-person library behaviors, and preference of online resources provided by a library.

## Question Examples

(Checklist options & full list of questions in appendix 2)

When you go to a library, what resources are you looking for?

Rate these online library resources in order of least to most important.

When you visit a library's website, what are you looking for?

What kind of content do you read the most?



# Key Findings & Opportunities

## Usability Test

1. The homepage needs reorganization – useful components are currently buried while less useful components are featured, and some components are missing responsive features
2. 'About' page could be improved to feature information summarizing the library's resources and contact information rather than a historical timeline
3. No easily accessible resources about books in languages other than English – a page guiding users to these resources would be advantageous

## User Survey

1. Books and academic articles/databases should be most prominently featured to website users
2. Online resources are important because library visits have greatly decreased – they should be featured as well
3. Library history is a nonessential part of the website that could be moved to a less prominent location & replaced with more important information

# Usability Test Findings – Strengths

**Main menu is logical, and each menu item is clear**

*Users gave a mean rating of 4/5 (5 meaning most satisfied) for their satisfaction with the navigation in the main menu*

**‘How Do I’ menu item is very useful**

*All users utilized the ‘How Do I’ menu item to complete tasks successfully*

**Users liked the design & color scheme**

*All users commented positively about the colorful design of the website*

**‘Get Started’ Component on home page is very useful**

*All users utilized this component to successfully complete tasks, and 2/3 made positive comments about this component*

# Usability Test Findings – Pain Points

## **‘About’ page content is not clear to users**

*2/3 users expected to find business information/resources but instead saw a timeline of the library’s history*

## **Lack of resources for books in languages other than English**

*One user wanted to find books in Spanish but found no information about non-English resources*

## **Inconsistent responsive design on the homepage**

*One user noticed some image links were responsive to hovering and others weren’t – they compared the non-responsive links to advertisements*

## **Slide shows on home page are distracting**

*One user said the slides moved too quickly to read and caused too much motion on the screen*

# User Survey Findings

38.5% of respondents have not checked a library book out in the past year

69% of respondents have visited a library's website in the last month

Books are the most important resource to be featured on a library's website, with academic articles and databases in a close second

77% of respondents thought library history was the least important resource to feature on a library's website

## Recommendations from respondents:

*Highlight recommended and popular books on the website, e.g. "Book of the week"*

*Feature academic articles and databases*

*Chat function to contact librarians*

*Personalized book recommendations for established patrons*

*Estimated wait time to check out popular books*

# Opportunities & Next Steps





# Opportunity: Homepage Redesign

- Remove slide show and replace with a featured grid list of recommended book titles, updated monthly
- Make 'Get Started' component larger and full width
- Create consistent responsive design on image links – shadow on hover
- Feature a list of academic databases/resources



# Opportunity: 'About' Content Revision

- Create a 'History' page located in 'About' section to separate content and clearly label it. Move history & timeline copy to this page
- Feature mission statement, summary of resources, hours, and location in revised 'About' page



# Long Term Opportunities for Growth

## Chat with a Librarian

- Create an online chat feature where users can ask reference questions over the internet rather than making a phone call

## Non-English Resource Section

- Introduce a webpage featuring books, articles, and other resources in languages other than English



# Next Steps

- Construct a low fidelity wireframe for a reimagined homepage with the changes listed earlier
- Brainstorm content & write copy for 'About' page
- Construct 'History' subpage to be located through a dropdown under 'About'



# Thank You!

Please contact me at [emkbrown@umich.edu](mailto:emkbrown@umich.edu) with any questions or comments.





# Appendix



# Appendix 1

## Usability Test: Complete Task List

1. You'll be shown a web page for 5 seconds and then asked to answer 3 questions. DO NOT go to Task 2 until you've answered those questions.
2. Without leaving the homepage, describe what you would select first. **\*\*Do not select anything yet.\*\*** If you would leave without clicking anywhere, please explain why.
3. Take two minutes to explore this website. Return to the homepage after two minutes and move on to the next task.
4. Please talk about the layout of this website. Does it flow logically? Do the navigational tabs make sense? [Verbal Response]
5. You're interested in the library's resources for academics, like research databases. Find the Digital Public Library of America and open it in a new tab. [Success: Yes, No]
6. Find out if the library has computers available to cardholders in the building. Explain your thought process as you find this information. Move on to the next task when you find the appropriate information or when five minutes go by. [Verbal Response]
7. Think of something that you might look for on this website and describe it out loud. Now use this website to find what you just described. Move on to the next task when you're done. [Success: Yes, No]
8. Find out how you can get a library card here. Explain your thought process as you find this information. Move on to the next task when you find the appropriate information or when five minutes go by. [Verbal Response]
9. Find out when the library is open on Wednesday and where it is located. [Success: Yes, No]
10. Please rate, in your opinion, how clear the main navigational tabs and subtabs are at the top of the page in helping you find various resources. [5-point Rating Scale: Not at all clear to Very clear]

## Appendix 2

### User Survey: Complete Question/Option List

Question	Options
How much time do you spend reading digital books, articles, reports, etc. per week?	Multiple Choice: 10+ hours, 5-10 hours, 1-5 hours, Less than 1 hour
Are you a member of any library? ex. Ann Arbor Public Library, University of Michigan Library	Multiple Choice: Yes, No, I don't know
What kind of content do you read the most?	Checklist: Books, Articles, Academic Publications, Blogs, Social Media Posts, Other (list here)
When was the last time you checked out an item from a library?	Multiple Choice: In the last week, In the last month, In the last 6 months, In the last year, More than one year ago
When you go to a library, what resources are you looking for?	Checklist: A book to check out, Music, Movies, Newspapers or Magazines, Computer access, Library event, Book recommendations, Other (list here)
When was the last time you visited a library's website?	Multiple Choice: In the last week, In the last month, In the last 6 months, In the last year, More than one year ago
If you have visited a library's website, what were you looking for?	Checklist: A book to check out, Research database, Academic article, Library event, Library location or hours, Book recommendations, Other (list here)
Rate these online library resources in order of most to least important.	Multiple Choice Grid: Academic databases, Book recommendations, Book catalog, Ebooks & Audiobooks, History of library
What resources or features would you like to see on a library's website?	Short Answer
Select the range in which your age falls.	Multiple Choice: 18-25, 25-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60+