

UCSC October 2004 Findings – Summary Document

Google

1. Users don't value Google as an academic resource, in general. Users have been warned about the reliability of Google results by their professors, and they believe that most Google results are irrelevant and untrustworthy. Said one user, "A Google search will probably give me celebrity gossip."
2. Some users believe that Google can be a tool for helping determine search terms and for narrowing down topics because it "works every time" and "It's really fast."
3. Users would never go through an intermediate site to get to Google.

If Google remains in the list of databases searched...

4. Some users want the URL to be part of the search results record in order to judge the relevance and reliability of the website.
5. Users were confused by the "External" link.
6. The presence of the UC-eLinks button confused users, since it has nothing to do with Google records.
7. Users were confused by the "External" and "Title" hyperlinks, which use the same words but link to different places.

Wait Screen

1. Users expressed a strong desire for an uncluttered, distraction-free wait screen – nothing flashing or streaming.
2. All users found the current wait screen to be acceptable; they just need to know that computer hasn't crashed and Internet connection is still up.
3. Users are willing to wait as long as they think that they will get useful results. Their perceptions of time depend on this belief.

General vs. Subject-Specific FindIt

1. Users were asked whether they would prefer a general FindIt or a subject-specific FindIt. The results are as follows:

Test participants:	General (3) Specific (3) Both (1)
Focus group participants:	Specific (4)

User Perceptions

1. **Library Credibility:** Users trust the library and librarians as sources of reliable, relevant information. To paraphrase one user, if you can't trust the library to give you good information, who can you trust? The same user stated that he "almost take[s] it for granted that these [academic databases] are going to be reliable sources".
2. **FindIt's Credibility:** Users become suspicious of FindIt if it doesn't behave as they think it should. The lack of consistency of search results instills doubt in users. The lack of transparency and clarity in how FindIt handles "records found" versus "records retrieved" further confuses users.
3. **Database Content:** Users aren't sure what each database contains. Users want descriptions of databases in order to make informed choices about which databases to use. Lacking descriptive information, they make assumptions and try to guess by looking at the name of the database.
4. **FindIt's Purpose:** Novice users view FindIt as an index of databases.
5. **Native Interfaces:** Users think that the advantage of native database interfaces is the availability of greater options for limiting searches.

Search Options

1. Users want the ability to limit results to full text.
2. Users want the ability to limit by journal title.
3. Users want the ability to limit by format.

Full Findings Document located at:

http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/metasearch/core_ucsc_oct2004usability.pdf