First-Year Student Initiatives at an Urban Research University

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Role of the Library in University-wide Academic Orientation

iStart is a mandatory program for incoming first-year students
Peer Mentor Training

Student leaders, are selected to lead small groups of students.

• the Amazing Warrior Challenge
• a book discussion on the Summer Reading Experience book
• financial literacy and time management activities
• Warrior Service Day
Summer Reading Experience

A Hope in the Unseen
An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League
By Ron Suskind
Library Outreach to First-Year Students via a Customized Webpage

http://www.lib.wayne.edu/sites/fye/
The Process

The Charge:
• Develop a webpage for beginning students to support the university’s first-year experience initiative

The Team:
• Five librarians (Instruction Team Librarian, Web Librarian, Computing Services Librarian, two Information Services Librarians)
The Process

Goals for the page:
• To be “unlike” typical library pages
• Focus on the essential information
• Have fun!

Development
• Began Spring 2006
• Researched other libraries’ pages focused on first-year students
• Gathered ideas for content from first-year students
The Outcome

• A portal to guide students to the campus resources needed to support academic success debuted Fall 2006
• Provides “one-stop shopping” environment by bringing together library information and resources with university-wide services
• Design inspired by University of Minnesota’s Undergraduate Virtual Library (http://www.lib.umn.edu/undergrad/)
Library Services—renewing books, getting reserves, reserving study rooms, and other essentials, including Ask a Librarian!

The Assignment Planner, a time management tool

“Campus Connections” links to university services such as advising, class schedules, tutoring, places to eat, the Writing Center, and other “essentials”

Current day’s hours for the UGL

“Find Articles” a metasearch that generates a list of articles available online from selected fulltext library databases

“Find Books and Movies,” a WSU catalog search to locate materials in the library.

“Fun Stuff”—Students can read “Weird News” from Reuters RSS feeds or learn unusual facts (“Did You Know?”) from a whimsical family of librarian avatars.
Usability Testing & Page Effectiveness

TASKS

• Find the books on reserve for the BA 1010 class taught by Clinton Andrews.
• What time does the Undergraduate Library close?
• How do you renew books you have checked out?
• If you were assigned a project on 3/1/2007 and it was due on 5/1/2007, by what date would you need to find, review, and evaluate books?
• When does Priority Registration for summer classes begin?
• How would you find where Shapero Hall is located?
• Find a journal article on the global warming.
• Find out if the library has the book Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser and if it is available for checkout.
• Check your Wayne State e-mail.
Student Feedback

- Following the task completion portion of the testing, participants completed a short paper questionnaire.

  “You don’t have to search a lot to figure out what to do.”

  “I like the layout and I will probably use this site in the future for the majority of information I need. I like the inclusion of a “did you know?” Section and the weird news section.”

  “But I really like the Assignment Planner and how easy it was to find articles/books.”

  “If it were more advertised or known, then I am pretty sure students will use it on a regular basis.”