

To: Victoria Pifalo, Chair
Electronic Resources Quadrant
From: The Website Evaluation Task Force
Deborah Blecic (Convener)
Martin Brennan
Courtney Greene
Ellen Starkman
Mircea Stefancu

Date: May 30, 2003

Re: Report

Enclosed is the report of the Website Evaluation Task Force about ongoing and needed studies for the evaluation of the Library's web site.

Web Site Evaluation Task Force Report: Ongoing and Needed Studies for the Evaluation of the Library's Web Site

Ongoing Studies

The Website Evaluation Task Force surveyed the Library faculty and Staff via an e-mail posting to the lib-staff listserv, asking the following:

“The Electronic Resources Quadrant has appointed a Web Site Evaluation Task Force. The initial charge of the task force is to conduct an inventory of what projects are currently underway in the Library that in any way involve evaluation of any aspect of use of the Library Web Site. Projects may include usability and use studies of the website, portal, UICCAT/Voyager, electronic reserves, digital library, electronic resources (journals, databases, books) and any other aspect of the web site. Methods of study may include but are not limited to Webalizer statistics, transaction logs, vendor supplied statistics, and patron surveys or interviews.

If you are involved in a such a project, either as research or library work, please send a brief description of the project to Deb Blecic (dblecic@uic.edu) by Monday, April 21, 2003. If you are working with others, please include the names of all who are involved in the project. Thank you for your attention to this. “

The Task Force received six replies reporting seven ongoing projects:

- 1) Courtney Greene is planning a usability study for Fall 2003. This will build on a previous study conducted in Spring 2001 and will be a controlled study of the new website. Eight participants will be asked to complete a series of twenty tasks designed to test the design and organization of the UIC Library Web Site.
- 2) Ruth Holst reported that UIC will be participating in NLM's upcoming Internet Performance Evaluation which will involve a vendor downloading the UIC Library web page once per hour on a 24/7 basis for a period of time. This will slightly inflate statistics during this time period.
- 3) Peter Hepburn, Priscilla McGlaun, Ana Ortiz, Wenona Rhodes, and Nina Williams are using Webalizer statistics to aid in reviewing and revising the Daley Circulation Department web pages, trying to integrate lesser used pages into other pages and remove redundant pages.
- 4) Krystal Lewis, Kavita Mundle, and Mircea Stefancu are evaluating the ways in which the UIC user community accesses e-journals. They will be using webalizer statistics and exproxy logs in this research.

5) Steve Brantley, Krystal Lewis, and Annie Armstrong have completed a usability study of the MyLibrary Portal. The study involved 8 participants performing nineteen tasks. The results will be presented at the 2003 ALA conference in Toronto and are being written up for publication.

6) Sandra DeGroot is using web site statistics to study if the use of help guides has increased now that new links have been added to the LHS Gateway.

7) Sandra DeGroot, Jo Dorsch, Carol Scherrer, and Scott Collard are comparing statistics generated from the Digital Services web pages with the number of questions actually asked.

There are numerous studies underway that involve vendor supplied use statistics but not the library web site. These studies are not reported here.

Logs Being Collected

The Task Force also determined which statistics/logs were currently being collected and archived in the Library. These logs might serve as data for future projects.

Currently Collected:

Webalizer Statistics, archived in tigger (/usr/local/etc/httpd/htdocs/depts/lib/webalizer/)

- Current 12 months Stats are available online at: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/webalizer/> (which includes summary stats and ability to “View All URL’s”)
- Past month Stat reports are available from April, 2000 in the same directory and named “usage_yyyymm.html”—eg, to display the 12 month report from April, 2000 use the url: http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/webalizer/usage_200004.html

EZProxy Logs, archived currently in outreach (/WebSTAR Server Suite 4.2/uicstats/)

- See <http://outreach.lib.uic.edu/uicstats/> for inventory and summary reports
- Daily logs are available for analysis for most days since January 2003
- January 31 to March 12, 2001 reports are archived in tigger, see <http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/stats/webproxy/>

UICCAT Apache Logs, archived currently in outreach (see above)

- See <http://outreach.lib.uic.edu/uicstats/> for inventory and summary reports
- Monthly logs are available for analysis since December 2002

qUICsearch - Webfeat Usage Tracking (<http://66.167.20.178/newwut/>)

- Activity by Day, Hour of Day, Database, Database and Day

Those that might be helpful:

UICCAT logs – Ellen Starkman is looking into what logs are available to us given that much is centralized at ILC SO (ie, OPAC Log Export and Bib Usage Log Export Programs)

Suggestions for areas meriting further research or benefiting from formalized evaluation

Based on discussions at Task Force Meetings, we make the following recommendations for future projects:

- 1) A formal evaluation should be conducted with the next redesign of the Library Web Site, including both a pre- and post-redesign assessment. Faculty currently involved in web site usability studies should be consulted regarding design and implementation.
- 2) All of the logs currently collected, as well as future UICCAT logs, offer research possibilities. The Task Force recommends that archiving continue and that faculty be made aware of the existence of the logs for research purposes.
- 3) The ARL New Measures Project E-Metrics Initiative has asked participating libraries to collect the following statistic during the beta test : % of library visits that are remote. This involves separating out remote use of the library website and catalog from in-house use. It is not known at this time if this will become a permanent part of the ARL statistics, but if it does we will need to find a way to collect it. The statistic definition says that multiple web pages and images may be used by a user in a single visit, so the reporting of this statistic would involve software that would track when a visit by a user begins and ends.