1)   Principal Investigators: Pembroke King, Bethany Dietrich, Stacey Knight, Denise Groll

2)   Project Title: Card Sorting: Assessing Information Architecture for the Durick Library Website Redesign

3)   Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of this study is to evaluate *how* SMC students navigate and group the information found on the library website for use in developing the new site iteration coinciding with the greater college web redesign. Specifically, this research seeks to examine ways to achieve the following outcomes:

   1. Clarify terminology used in navigation and in links
   2. Group links more logically and intuitively (to the students)
   3. Update layout to simplify the process of finding desired info on page
   4. Enhance user ability to access tutorials or guide pages for remote how-to's/ digital assistance

The data is meant primarily for internal use to improve library services and systems, but depending on the findings, the investigators may choose to publish or present to library colleagues at a local or national level.

4)   Location: Saint Michael's College campus, Durick Library primarily

5)   Description of Participants: Participants will include library interns, library student employees, and students enrolled in Prof. Amy Redman's AN 209 Research Methods of Anthropology. We expect total participation to include approximately 20 people with a mix of class years being represented. We will be studying student understanding of key terms from existing library website links, but we will also be interested in seeing how class year and academic major impact their card sorting rationale.

6)   Participant Recruitment Procedures:
a.   Investigators Stacey Knight and Pembroke King will visit Amy Redman's AN 209 class on March 4th[th] to describe the purpose of the project, the methods that will be used to gather the data, and invite the students to participate. The students will not be offered any inducement beyond the educational benefit of participating in a study that will overlap with some of the methods they are learning this semester in the course.
b.   A handout of the project description will be given to all students while recruiting (see Appendix A)
c.   Students will be informed that their participation in the project is voluntary.

7)   Participation Procedures:
a.   Phase I (Open Card Sorting): The class will be divided up into two sections. The first half of the class will participate in a "open" card sorting exercise. Using the online tool Optimal Sort, students will be shown a set of 30 "cards" with different terms on them. The terms are from the

current library website links. Participants will then group the terms together using whatever logical, intuitive criteria they determine. There can be as many or as few groups as deemed appropriate by the student. Participants will make note of any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion, as well as verbalize what words they associate with the overarching theme of each of their "groups" of terms. We will ask the participants to notify us when they encounter any terms that are unclear, and we will manually take notes on these instances.

b.   Phase II (Closed Card Sorting): The other half of the class will subsequently complete a "closed" card sorting exercise using the same method as Phase I, but this time given the categories in which to sort the same 30 terms. Again, Participants will make note of any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion, as well as verbalize what words they associate with the overarching theme of each of their "groups" of terms.

8)   Participation Risk: Participation risk is minimal due to the online nature of the exercise. Participants may be weary of producing "incorrect" groups of terms, but the ambiguity of the results will be made clear beforehand. Participants may feel embarrassed to verbalize points of confusion or suggest titles for their groups.

9)   Participant Consent: All participants will be made aware of what they will be asked to do and the purpose of the study before their involvement in the research. Participants will sign a consent form before involvement. The data will be kept confidential.

10) Participant Debriefing: After each phase of data collection, the participants will be thanked for their involvement in helping the library improve its website and digital services offered.

Appendix A

Card Sorting

Introduction
Card sorting is a method of assessing library web terminology and information architecture in order to reveal patterns of mental association between digital locations of information, and the words the website uses to indicate such.

Study Objectives: The main purpose of this study is to evaluate *how* SMC students interpret and navigate through the current library website in order to highlight areas for usability improvement moving into the upcoming redesign process. Specifically, this research seeks to examine (but is not limited to) the following questions:
1. How do students interpret the terminology currently used on the library website?
2. How do students logically move through the website navigation?
3. What kinds of associations do students make between the different information links on the library website?

Project Design:

Phase I: Open Card Sorting | March 6th

The class will be divided up into two sections. The first half of the class will participate in a "open" card sorting exercise. Using the online tool Optimal Sort, students will be shown a set of 30 "cards" with different terms on them. The terms are from the current library website links. Participants will then group the terms together using whatever logical, intuitive criteria they determine. There can be as many or as few groups as deemed appropriate by the student. Participants will make note of any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion, as well as verbalize what words they associate with the overarching theme of each of their "groups" of terms. We ask that participants notify us when they encounter any terms that are unclear, and we will manually note these instances.

Phase II: Closed Card Sorting | March 6th

The other half of the class will subsequently complete a "closed" card sorting exercise using the same method as Phase I, but this time given the categories in which to sort the same 30 terms. Again, Participants will make note of any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion, as well as verbalize what words they associate with the overarching theme of each of their "groups" of terms.

Phase III: Report back to participants on our general findings and ideas for improvement.

Appendix B: Phase I and Phase II Terms and Categories

Phase I:

1. Library Catalog
2. Articles
3. Books
4. Encyclopedias
5. Journals
6. Newspapers
7. Reserves
8. Videos
9. Research by Subject
10. Databases
11. Hours
12. Cite Sources
13. About the Library
14. Staff
15. Research Resources
16. Library Services
17. Get Research Help

18. Information for Students
19. My Account
20. Schedule a Research Appointment
21. Archives
22. FAQ
23. How Do I?
24. New in the Library
25. Contact Us
26. Interlibrary Loan
27. New Books
28. Events
29. Policies
30. Recommend a purchase

Phase II:

Same terms as Phase I, but provided with established categories pulled from the original 30 terms.

Appendix E: Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Scenarios and Focus Groups as part of a Saint Michael's College Library Web Redesign User Experience Study Purpose

 The Durick Library at the Saint Michael's College is conducting an assessment of library web usability. You are invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to examine students' navigation through the information available on the current library website. Specifically, this research seeks to examine (but is not limited to) the following questions:

1.   How do students intuitively group related information found on the website?

2.   How accurate is the library website terminology in conveying the information available grouped within links?

3.   Are there aspects of the website that could be simplified/clarified/made easier for student use/accessibility?

We will use the information collected to improve library services.

Procedures

The study will be broken down into three phases.

Phase I: Open Card Sorting
The class will be divided into two sections. The first half will complete Phase I, the other Phase II. Using the online tool Optimal Sort, you will be shown a set of 30 "cards" with different terms on them. Participants will then group the terms together using whatever logical, intuitive criteria you determine. There can be as many or as few groups as you deem appropriate. We ask that you notify one of the moderators when you encounter any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion. Once you are finished grouping all 30 terms, we will ask you to verbalize what words you associate with the overarching theme of each of your "groups" of terms.

Phase II: Closed Card Sorting
Phase II involves the same process as Phase I, but you will be given the titles of categories under which to sort the terms into. We ask that you notify one of the moderators when you encounter any terms that cause grouping hesitation or confusion.

Phase III: Analysis
Data received during the completion of both the open and closed card sorting exercises as well as feedback from the verbalizations will be analyzed. After completion of the analysis, the library will report out on our general findings and make recommendations for change.

Note: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without negative consequences.

Benefits and Risks

Your participation may benefit you and other Saint Michael's students by helping to improve library services. There are no inherent risks to you for participating in this study. Though you may feel like we are looking for specific results, there is no right or wrong way to sort the cards and terms. Everyone is asked to respect the privacy of the other group members. All participants are asked not to disclose anything said within the context of this study, but it is important to understand that other people in the study with you may not keep all information private and confidential.

Confidentiality

Anonymous data from this study will be analyzed by library staff and reported to other library staff and administrators. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results. Study records, including this consent form signed by you, may be inspected by the administrators. The results of this study may be presented at a meeting, a conference, or published; however, your identity will not be disclosed.

The data obtained in this study will be kept confidential. Access to files will be restricted to professional staff.

Consent

The purpose of the study and the nature of the tasks and questions have been explained to me.
I consent to take part in web based card sorting exercises related to this topic.
I consent to notes being taken on my process verbalizations.
My participation is voluntary. I understand that I am free to leave the study at any time. If I decide not to participate at any time during the card sorting exercises, my decision will in no way affect the services I receive at the library or elsewhere in the college.
None of my experiences or thoughts will be shared with anyone outside of this study unless all identifying information is removed first. The information that I provide during the study will be grouped with answers from other people so that I cannot be identified.

IRB Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or well-being as a research participant, or any dissatisfaction with any aspect of this research study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at Saint Michael's College which has granted approval for this study. The Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Ari Kirshenbaum, can be reached by email (akirshenbaum@smcvt.edu). In addition, Diana Hoppe, administrative assistant for the IRB can be reached at dhoppe@smcvt.edu or at 802.654.2206.

I have read the above information about this study and I understand what it involves. I agree to participate, and I understand that I am doing so voluntarily and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Print name   Date

Signature