



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

LIBRARY
SERVICES

Student Life & the Library: a holistic UX approach

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What is UX?

“User Experience (UX) is about how someone feels when using a product or a service”

(Schmidt & Etches, *Useful, Usable, Desirable: Applying User Experience Design to Your Library*, 2014)

- In a library context: signage, staff interactions, emails & chat, web pages, books, ebooks, eresources, databases, study spaces, furniture, lighting, computers, laptops, skills sessions etc!
- Going beyond a survey – ethnographic or reflective practices
- What people do, what people say, and what people say they do
- Evidence/user driven change



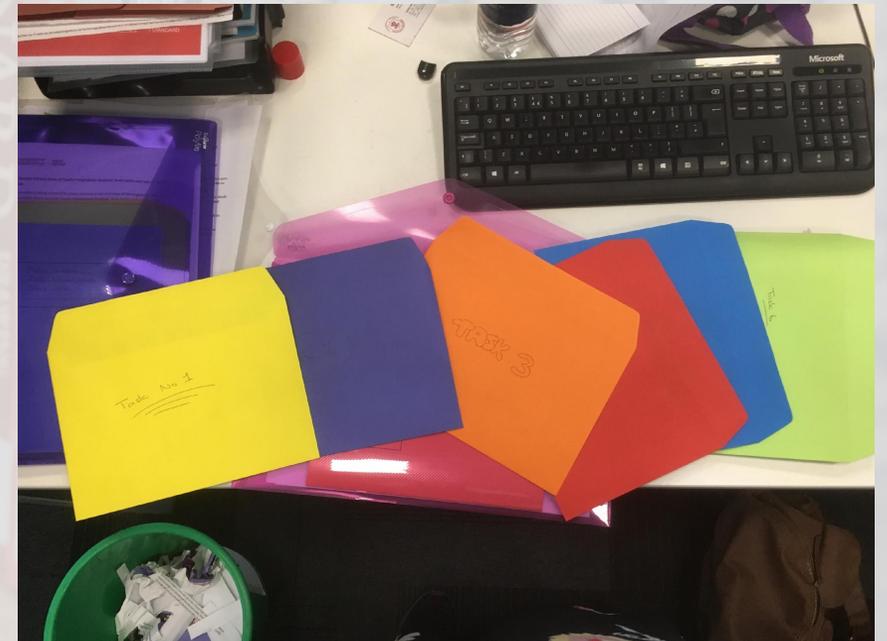
Why a cultural probe 2023?

- We had 2 specific services to look at: access to online help and access to online training
- BUT: no similar study since June 2019
- Student lives and learning very different 4 years later
- Targeted 'access to service' questions but a broader feel



What does it involve?

- 10 students from across colleges (no MDS 😞)
- Hired and paid via WorkLink
- Set 9 tasks to complete over two weeks
 - Some advice would be nice
 - Love letter/break up letter
 - If students did libraries...
 - Photo diary (typical day)
 - Customer journey map
 - Video blogs (looking for assignment materials)
 - Cognitive map
 - Reflective writing x2





Activity: Arrange a session for essay writing tips

TO activity	Search Academic Skills Centre website (Library services)	Read information on "making a one-to-one appointment" website - conditions, what they can offer etc.	Deciding if this is a right service for me -> they can help with understanding of feedback, so yes	Fill in Booking Form - bottom of website	Waiting for their response & time of a session (not 31st year) (then attend)
Touch Points	Use University of Birmingham Intranet	"Making a one-to-one appointment" website	Some website, part "what we can help with"	Same website, bottom of the page	check my university email
Gain point "practice"		A lot of useful information about how the sessions work	Useful part of website, easy to understand	Easy to complete and submit	
Barriers "negative"	Not easy to find ABC website from UoB intranet	(Maybe even too much?)			Very busy during term-time, they require at least 5 working days' notice -> I can wait for long time
Insights/opportunities	Improve finding the website (more direct way)	Could be better arranged (text)			Have more skills advisors so shorter waiting time



IF STUDENTS DID LIBRARIES...

LOCKERS!!! to be able to leave bags and laptops and go for a study walk break or to study in or something without a drinker bag.

RELAXED AREAS
to encourage casual reading for enjoyment beyond course requirements!
I forgot for first year that I could borrow books beyond my course and read classics I'd always wanted to! Perhaps **ALWAYS CLUB** to connect with like readers and discuss books. Option to sign up for book recommendations from the book club via email.

GREEN SPACES
to encourage rest and study breaks! perhaps a flower garden with benches to take a break from the screen.
perhaps some permanent chess boards or other games for a study break room. Table tennis & pool! A room dedicated to taking study breaks & having a healthy balance.

CAFE
I love that UoB library cafe uses so good to go to reduce food waste and also providing cheaper food options. **lots of microwaves**

LIBRARY APP for phones rather than using internet browser to check books - which is a bit slow and not streamline.

maybe more functional options available in the library.

maybe borrowable **blue light glasses** to protect eyes from screen light damage!

BORROWABLE AUDIO BOOKS
to listen to when walking between classes / also find audio easier to digest than visual reading!

Dear library,

I need to say what's on my mind. While it's been a great past year and a half with you in some regards there's some things I can't ignore and think I deserve better.

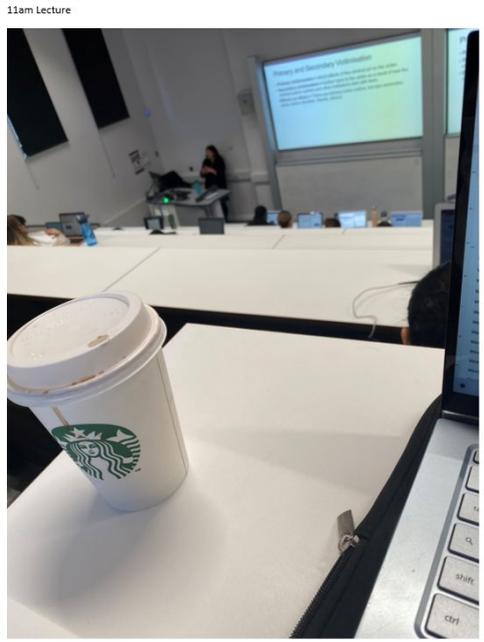
I often get frustrated using your online resources because the software feels old and not as updated and streamline and fast as it could be. I find google scholar can be easier to search for academic articles than find it @ Bham. It should be a smooth and enjoyable experience to navigate online software but I find it can add frustration and I can't wait to get it done.

More and more I find myself spending time in study spaces in other buildings than you. Although no one else does 24 hours opening - if there was the option I'd go elsewhere. I love study spaces such as Harding law or Aston webb because they much more individual and group booths, natural light and more spread out seating so I'm not as easily distracted.

Although your microwave is very convenient it always seems to be grimy and often there's a queue for it. And I find cafe food to be so overpriced! Very few of us students have five pounds a day to spend on a mediocre sandwich that could be made for less than 50p at home. I would love it if a wider range of food options were available - and for dinner too!

For these reasons I'm starting to think that I can do university life quite well with out you!

While I thought that I appreciated the ways you enhanced





Outcomes: Library Services (practical)

- Practical suggestions, e.g. for changes to booking forms, simplifying language on web, update our phone message, improve Wi-Fi.
- We need interactions (not just services) to be accessible, e.g. passing a shelfmark to a dyslexic, dyscalculic person forces them to self-declare.
- Peer to peer advice and testimonials are invaluable and we need to gather them
- There is a lot the library gets right (loans system, booking forms)



Outcomes: Library Services (wider)

- Understanding different assessment methods
- Library staff are kind and helpful, and this heavily informs their view of the library as a whole.
- LS Teams (e.g. systems librarians) get to “see students”
- The library is seen as a comforting and motivating space with the right “vibes”
- The library is a nexus - where else on campus do 8000 lives cross over every day?



Outcomes: Library Services – Value of the library

The library is:

- A space for intellectual curiosity
- A space for transformative education
- A place of comfort, safety and light
- A place of love and care



Outcomes: Library Services – Value of the library

2

Be curious from the beginning!

I like the discussion and collaboration

I feel so much peace sitting by the window. I enjoy watching the bright sun or even the raindrops.

The staff check on the students – it's such a caring gesture. They woke me when I was napping to check that I was ok. It was 6am and I had worked through the night.



Outcomes: a holistic view

- Students' lives are complex – concerns around paid work, money, health, disability, family, friendships, and finding a space to belong
- These students work hard - long days
- Challenged assumptions, e.g. student digital skills, awareness of work/life balance
- Reminds us that nothing we do sits in isolation
- The library plays an important role in student's everyday lives



UX survey reveals everyday life of students

- Investigates library practice but also changing lives of students
- UX methodology affords a broader, richer, qualitative picture





Have a go!

- Two tasks to choose from
- Drawing or writing task (envelopes in front of you)
- Before you all pick writing! We mean doodle, and you can! (example?)
- 5 mins..
- Reflect on the activity: how could you use in your library? How did it make you reflect?



Reflections on task

Your thoughts?

Our thoughts:

- List of tasks vs the real experience
- Bring up forgotten thoughts?



Questions?

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