Redesigning the Portal to Texas History: A User-centered Design Approach Involving the Genealogical Community

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The IOGENE Project
IMLS Award LG-06-07-0040-07
Outline

1. Project Background
2. User Studies: Challenges
3. Current Status
Portal to Texas History

Digital gateway to cultural heritage collections in Texas libraries, museums, archives, historical societies, and private collections.

Contains primary source materials: maps, photographs, books, diaries, letters, postcards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>40,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Files</td>
<td>6,688</td>
<td>324,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors per month</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
User-Centered Design

• Goal: Redesign the system to match how users want to interact with the content in the Portal to Texas History

• Users
  – Students and faculty
  – Any web user is our user

• Project Focus: Genealogists
Genealogists

- Increasing interest in genealogical research
  - 73% (2005, USA)
- Increasing number of seniors
  - 2011 – 2031: +10,000 per day
- Increasing use of Internet for genealogical research
  - 24% of all users; 36% of seniors (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other Studies</th>
<th>IOGENE Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (female)</td>
<td>73%*</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (&gt;51 years)</td>
<td>87%*</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience (average)</td>
<td>14 years**</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Kuglin, 2004, New Zealand; **Drake, 2001, CA State University - Fullerton
FamilySearch: Pilot

Search for Your Ancestors

Search millions of indexed records for your ancestors. Browse through images of records waiting to be indexed. More records are being added every month.

Find Your Ancestors on Record Search

Do Your Part. Become an Indexer.

Join thousands of volunteers around the world who are helping to make more new records available online through FamilySearch Indexing.

Find out more

Search for Your Ancestors in a Specific Collection By Region

Selected Region

Collection News

29 Apr 2009 - Two new collections have been added to Record Search: Alabama Statewide Deaths 1900-1974 (indexed data only, no images).

http://pilot.familysearch.org
FamilySearch: Pilot

http://pilot.familysearch.org
FamilySearch: Pilot
FamilySearch: Pilot

Search for Your Ancestors in a Specific Collection

Select a Region: World Map

or View all collections
Research Process

Search or Browse
Contents

Evaluate
Results

Investigate Items
• Images
  • Photographs
  • Maps
  • Postcards
• Texts
  • Books
  • Journals
  • Diaries
  • Letters
  • Postcards

Select Items

IOGENE Project
• Focus Groups
• Usability Testing
• Comment Log Analysis

Participants
• Members of Genealogical Societies
• Portal Users

IOGENE http://iogene.library.unt.edu
Our digital library operations and planned direction require rethinking to enable discovery of collection content in a manner familiar to genealogists.
Challenges

Name Search
- Fielded name search
- Soundex search

Advanced Search
- Desired search fields
- Familiar object types

Relevance
- Weighting of fields
- Results display

Object Record
- Location information
- Format
Challenges

Search Results
• Serial publications
• Ready access to hits
• Limits
  – First name
  – Date range

Object Navigation
• Multi-page objects
  – Navigate to sections
  – Describe pages without numbers
  – Navigate among hits

Citation
• Format
• Save/download

Rights
• Partner agreements
• Save/download
• Creative commons licenses
Meeting Requirements

• Some, but not all, requirements are best met by **code**
• Interface **design** can meet requirements
  – Search results: list, grid, brief displays
  – Printing: Pages formatted for printing
• **Metadata** practices can meet requirements
  • Consistent implementation of name data
  • Object types consistent familiar to user class
• **Documentation** can meet requirements
  – Help Guides: Major features
  – Resource Guides: Key classes of users
"Map of Texas with parts of the Adjoining States. Compiled by Stephen F. Austin."

View the Full Record

**Description:** Hand-colored map showing empresario colonies, towns, roads, and physical features

**Creator:** Unknown

**Location:**

**Creation Date:** Unknown

**Partner(s):** Star of the Republic

**Collection(s):** Star of the Republic Museum Objects

Resources for Educators:

We offer teaching materials that connect your students with primary source historical documents to dramatically enrich their learning. [See all resources.]

Feedback:

If you are having problems, need to report errors, or have questions or comments for the staff, please use our [Feedback Form].
Lesson Learned

• In the 3-4 year interval between project proposal and project completion, much changes

• Supporting the workflows of users means understanding what is best done on your site and what is best done on the sites of others
Collaboration & Sharing

it’s about the content
Confirmation

• Open source solutions promote agile application development
• Separating UI design from system infrastructure is good practice and optimizes differential talents
Process Model Draft
Portal to Texas History
http://texashistory.unt.edu

IOGENE Project
http://iogene.library.unt.edu

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Thank You