

Assignment 2: Rapid Prototype Storyboard

Team 2B:

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Intro:

Our group investigated the use of the PolyCat UI amongst fellow Cal Poly students. We passively observed a few dozen students using the system within the campus library and off-site from campus. Our goal was to aim for unbiased results by not interfering with users interacting with PolyCat in any way. We began the investigation by visiting the library and observing users interacting with the PolyCat system. After our team watched several people and noted the most common visible actions. Based on our team's results, we built our storyboard around fictional characters in a hypothetical but probable session with PolyCat . Our goal was to try and identify potential improvements for PolyCat's Graphic User Interface to better help everyone achieve a more intuitive feel and faster interaction times using PolyCat.

Theme:

The PolyCat system fits the usability studies theme because we are trying to improve the application of the system through the understanding of the prospective user. By using an existing system where there is a need for improvement, our study tries to identify potential improvements of the user interface on the system. Our hope is to tailor this library resource into something better recognizable by our fellow students and faculty.

Main Task:

The main task we observed was a prospective user trying find a resource within the Cal Poly Campus Kennedy Library. We wanted to view a user using the system within campus resource and outside of school property and create a storyboard of the most common actions that we observed. The storyboards can be viewed on Blackboard.

Activities Relating to the Task:

The first activity relating to the main task requires the user to access the PolyCat system. This can be done by using

a terminal in the library, or from a remote computer accessing the tool over the Internet. The next activity requires the user to search for the desired resource. The UI has multiple tabs; each tab relating the the search constraints used to find the desired resource. The tabs within the UI are WORD, AUTHOR, TITLE, SUBJECT, CALL NUMBER , AUTHOR/SUBJECT, and JOURNAL TITLE. The user must first decided what tab to use when searching for their resource. When the user has chosen a tab, they will then enter key words relating to the resource within the constraints of the search tab. The search will commence when the user clicks on the search button. If there are any results, the UI will navigate to a results page. It is the responsibility of the user to assess the validity of the results and write down the reference number of the resource. A search that has no corresponding results will simply print out a message to the screen, and doesn't really give any further directions to the user.

Assumptions:

We assumed that all potential users of PolyCat needed a resource within library, whether it was a book or video. We also assumed all users had some computer literacy and either able to interpret the Dewey decimal system given or able enough to ask for help to find the book location. Knowing English was also important because there are no language options in the PolyCat. The users of the terminals requires the library to be open during operational hours. However, any user could access PolyCat online through the Internet at any time. Due to certain privacy restrictions, we were only able to view the users in their natural environment. Without verbal interaction with the users, successful PolyCat sessions were viewed when a user writes down information on a piece of paper after a session, and proceeds upstairs to find the book. Unsuccessful PolyCat sessions were viewed when a user does not write down any information after a session and either left the library, or proceeded to the Reading Room.

Resources:

The resources identified are Kennedy Library, on-campus computer terminals, any computer with Internet access for off-campus users. All of these resources led to PolyCAT.

Additional Resources:

Additional resources includes the the Internet and librarians accessible from: <http://lib.calpoly.edu/ask/> or accessible at Robert Kennedy Library.