

How to Stop Being a Librarian

Student-Centered Library Guide Design and Content Curation

Melodie Gardner, MLIS
Library Technical Assistant II

Paper Session 1A
11:50 – 12:00



SCMLA 2019: Squaring the Circle
Savannah, GA | October 11th, 2019

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Information Seeking Behaviors

Librarians

- Trained on search skills and information evaluation and retrieval
- Know the “right way” to search for information
- Teach patrons how to find and evaluate resources and information (basic Information Literacy)

Patron Users

- Search skills “trained” on Google
- If it gets results, then isn’t that the “right way” to perform a search?
- More interested in how quickly they can obtain a relevant result than in evaluating how authoritative those results are



User Search Behavior and Guide Design

According to Sinkinson, Alexander, Hicks, et al in *Guiding Design: Exposing Librarian and Student Mental Models of Research Guides*:

...librarians often have a very fixed view of research, which **steers and legitimizes their research guide design**. Nonetheless, previous research has shown that students and librarians have different mental models of the research process.³¹

...While librarians recognize that students approach research differently, research guides often reflect **librarian models** of research rather than replicating student preferences.

...While librarian participants clearly consider and recognize user mental models and needs, there remains a contradiction between espoused and enacted pedagogies.³² These findings highlight the need for continued and thoughtful conversation about instructional design as applies to research guides.



Librarians, Users, and Guide Design

Librarians are bad at turning off our research training and looking at content and guide design from our User's point-of-view.

Librarians are actually trained out of the two main information seeking behaviors our Users engage in:
Satisficing and Relevancy.



Satisficing

Definition:

- Settling for something we know may not be the best possible choice, but that, at the least, meets our essential needs.¹

Satisficing Example

What is the distance, in miles, between the earth and the moon?

Possible Answers

Google

238,900 miles

Nasa Space Place

Average of: 238,855 miles

Nearest: 225,623 miles

Furthest: 252,177 miles

Timeanddate.com

On Oct. 11th, 2019 the moon will be between 252,177 to 251,722 miles distant from the earth



Relevancy

Definition:

The ability (as of an information retrieval system) to retrieve material that satisfies the needs of the user.¹

Relevancy Example

Based on the description below, does this Database contain survey instruments?

Example Database with Relevant Description

ERIC: Survey Instruments

- Under Search Options (bottom of search screen), change Publication Type to Tests & Questionnaires; abstract page provides further information
- Contains more than 1.3 million education-related items and topics from 1966 – Present; sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education



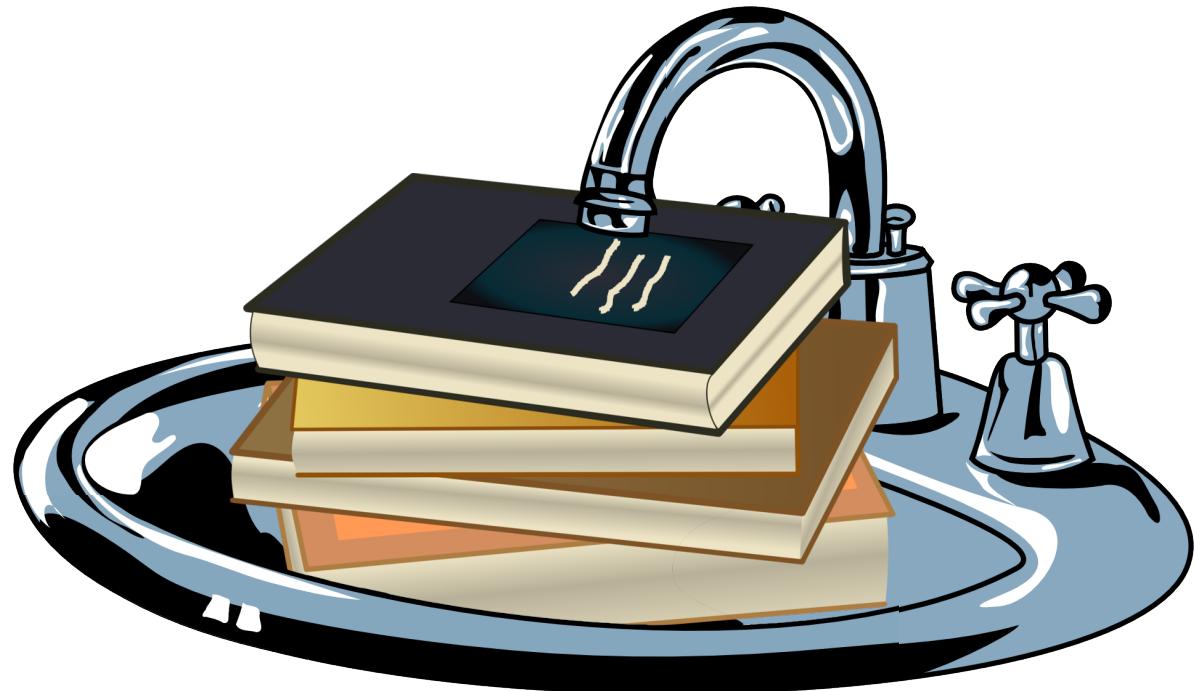
Relevancy, Satisficing, and Guide Design

Relevancy:

- How is this content relevant for the users of *this particular guide*? How is this relevancy communicated to the guide's user?

Satisficing:

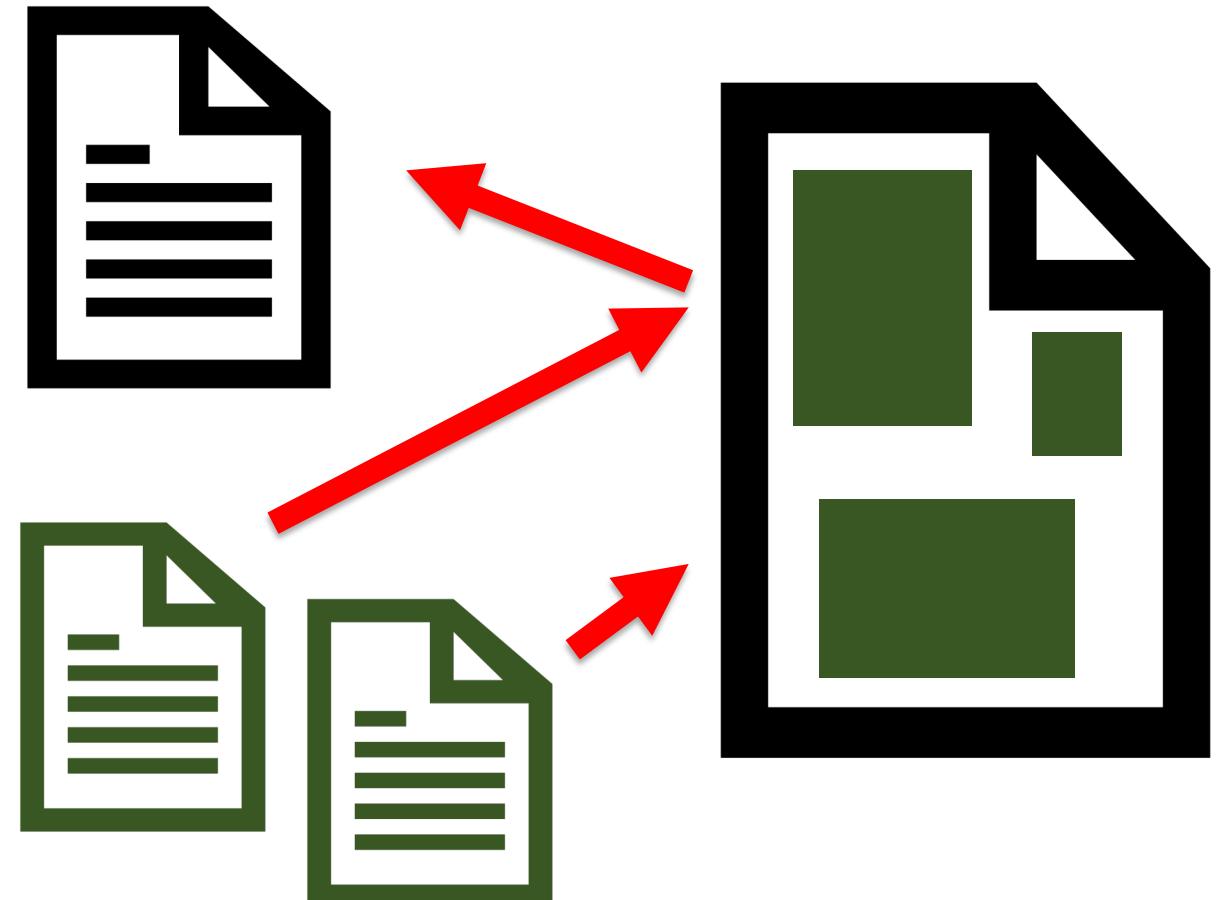
- Am I trying to give my guide users the content equivalent of a kitchen sink when all they really want or need is a water fountain?



Satisficing and Relevancy in Guide Design

Page Creation Options:

1. Create re-direct link for this page that leads to your generic guide, "How to Write a Research Paper"
2. Copy boxes from the guides "How to Write a Research Paper" and "JAMA Style Citations" onto the page and include links to the full guides on the right side of the page



Satisficing and Relevancy in Guide Design

Satisficing



Relevancy

Put important information on the top-left or center-top of the guide

Less is actually more, because users will not scroll to the bottom of a long list of links or a long page

State the obvious; because if it isn't obviously obvious, users won't see it

Create a standardized layout and follow it

Information not immediately relevant to the guide topic? Put it to the right

Only add links to relevant resources; there should not be more than 15 - 20 links per page; preferably only 10 - 15

Add topic or content headers and guide-specific descriptions to content

If users can find it, they will use it



Questions? Contact Me!

Melodie Gardner

Email: Melodie.Gardner@ucf.edu



Further Resources

1. Guiding Design: Exposing Librarian and Student Mental Models of Research Guides
 - <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/463980> [Open Access]
2. You Are Not the User: The False-Consensus Effect
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/false-consensus/?lm=change-blindness&pt=article>
3. Satisficing: Quickly Meet Users' Main Needs
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/satisficing/>
4. Simplicity Wins over Abundance of Choice
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/simplicity-vs-choice/>
5. Individualized Recommendations: Users' Expectations & Assumptions
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/recommendation-expectations/>
6. How Users Read on the Web
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-users-read-on-the-web/>
7. Horizontal Attention Leans Left
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/horizontal-attention-leans-left/>
8. Scrolling and Attention
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/scrolling-and-attention/>

