

## **Does Our Web Site Work? Combining Orientation and Usability**

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Orientations are days filled with teaching new students and residents how the university works. They are overwhelmed with information. Each year the Library is included in the orientations, and as new orientation items have been added, the Library time has become shorter. In 2002 the Library had from 60 to 90 minutes with each group.

The Research and Reference Department began looking for a new way to get basic library information to these students in the time allotted, without overwhelming them. At the same time, the Library Web Management team was looking at a way to get participants for a web usability test. The two groups decided to come up with an orientation session that could also look at web usability.

A list of the most important things new students and residents would need to know in order to use the Library effectively was given to the Web team, which resulted in a series of questions on how one could find these on the Web Page. These questions, along with a rating sheet, were used as the basis for the orientation sessions. Participants were given 15 minutes to answer the questions and write any comments about the web page. The rest of the orientation was spent going over the questions in more detail.

The result of this collaboration was that the Library's part of the orientation got higher reviews than in the past. Participants liked being able to get right into using the web page, rather than having it shown to them first. And, the usability test showed that the web page was working, and that the majority of participants felt it was easy and efficient to use.

For more in-depth information, see the published article:

Crum, J, Judkins, D., Zeigen L. A Tale of two needs: usability testing and library orientation. *Computers in Libraries* 23(1):22-25, January 2003. (Available full-text in Academic Search Elite)

### **Bios:**

Dolores Zegar Judkins is head of Research and Reference Services at the Oregon Health & Science University Library (OHSU). Since getting her MLS in 1973 from the University of Oregon, she has worked in a variety of libraries, including as a Peace Corps librarian in Honduras and at Multnomah County Library. She has been at OHSU since 1982. She developed the first HTML class at OHSU in 1996. Her e-mail address is judkinsd@ohsu.edu

Laura Zeigen is the Web Manager at the OHSU Library. In addition to 5-plus years spent searching for the perfect Web interface, she has over 7 years of experience teaching web development. She will be receiving her M.A. from Portland State University and hopes to start working on her Library degree this fall. Her e-mail address is zeigenl@ohsu.edu

Janet Crum is head of Library Systems and Cataloging at OHSU. She currently supervises the library's Web development efforts. She has an MLS from the University of Washington. Her e-mail address is crumj@ohsu.edu