some thoughts about metadata and usability

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Metadata Working Group – 18 Nov 2011
in response to selected usability heuristics by Jakob Nielsen

Full list at:
http://www.useit.com/papers/heuristic/heuristic_list.html
Match between system and the real world

The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.
Match between system and the real world

• Avoid jargon

• Index this metadata well!
Match between system and the real world

Would students know what these mean?

http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/
Match between system and the real world

From “Bursar Services” page

Cornell Installment Plan

The Cornell Installment Plan (CIP), also known as the Tuition Pay Plan, is administered by Sallie Mae® and enables students and their families to make interest-free, monthly installments to cover each semester’s tuition and expenses. You must self-enroll each academic year. Enrollment must be done electronically or by calling Sallie Mae directly at (800) 635-0120. Get help with calculating your payments by using our Budget Tips.

Results from Cornell’s search page

Comprehensive Master Plan - Key Match
http://masterplan.cornell.edu/

Cornell University: Cornell Installment Plan
... Cornell Installment Plan. ... Enrollment in the Cornell Installment Plan will not enroll the student in a meal plan or housing program. ...

www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/bursar/studentsparents/paying/cip/index.cfm - 9k - 2010-01-12 - Cached
Consistency and standards

Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.
Consistency and standards

- Use the same terminology throughout a site and/or system of sites “Contact us”, “Purchase request”, etc.
- Another thought: should we have a common set of vocabulary terms for library web pages?
Consistency and standards

(with apologies for picking on the Olin/Uris site...)

Subject Guides

- Collections
- Services
  - Borrowing & Lending
  - Computing, Printing, Scanning & Photocopying
  - Equipment
  - Instruction
  - Research
    - About Reference
    - Ask a Librarian
    - Request a Research Consultation
    - Subject Guides

Uncategorized

Anthropology
- American Indian Studies
- Anthropology Research Guide
- Anthropology: Guide to Library Collections and Services
- Archaeology Research Guide
- Folklore, Fairytales, and Symbolism: A Research Guide
Recognition rather than recall

Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.
Recognition rather than recall

• Make clear labels and descriptions for key links on a page

• Employ breadcrumbs so that users know where they are within a page structure
Flexibility and efficiency of use

Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.
Flexibility and efficiency of use

- Ensure search supports queries for common tasks such as library hours, known item searching
- Make an advanced search option prominent
Flexibility and efficiency of use

The link to advanced search was there in July...
Flexibility and efficiency of use

Will dinosaurs **come back**? - Yahoo! Answers
answers.yahoo.com › ... › Earth Sciences & Geology
9 answers - Jan 22, 2009
In theory, dinosaurs could **come back** if scientists ever clone any, and **find** suitable habitat for them. Otherwise, with the exception of aves, ...

Now the link to advanced search is at the bottom of a search results page by the way, I searched for this...
Aesthetic and minimalist design

Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.
Aesthetic and minimalist design

- Make basic and comprehensive metadata displays clear and coherent
- Don’t overwhelm users with unnecessary metadata
The rest of the heuristics:

- Visibility of system status
- Error prevention
- Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
- Help and documentation