I Don’t Think I Click: A Protocol Analysis Study of Use of a Library Online Catalog in the Internet Age

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Abstract
A protocol analysis study was undertaken to explore how a Web-savvy generation of library users searches the online catalog. Eighteen users, including experienced and novice searchers, were recruited. Participants agreed to be recorded and to express their thoughts aloud while searching. Analysis of these data has revealed several distinct trends. Most notable among these trends has been the impact of Internet search engines on user expectations. Given the influence of the Web, these assumptions are likely common throughout higher education. This research reveals where bottlenecks occur and provides insights into how libraries can design systems that help users around trouble spots.

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Some library catalogues have already begun with the changes, making library catalogues more user-friendly and also visually attractive. According to the results of our expert study, traditional library catalogues should first apply better searching and navigation systems, and only after the basic functionality of the catalogue is improved should they go to the next level and apply Web 2.0 tools. Of course there are still numerous questions opened and many answers will be available only after the new features are applied and in use. I don’t think I click: a protocol analysis study of use of a library online catalog in the internet age. College and Research Libraries, 65(6), 525-563. OCLC. Think-aloud protocols are a widely used method for the usability testing of software, interfaces, websites, and (instructional) documents. The basic principle of this method is that potential users are asked to complete a set of tasks with the artefact tested, and to constantly verbalise their thoughts while working on the tasks. In the case of retrospective thinking-aloud, participants are immediately exposed to a recording of the entire process they went through, which places the method more or less in an intermediate position between concurrent and retrospective research, and makes it less vulnerable to criticism. The object of this study was the online library catalogue (UBVU) of the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The Internet (contraction of interconnected network) is the global system of interconnected computer networks that use the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link devices worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries a vast range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked