

# "I Know It's In Here Somewhere": Using Student Interviews to Improve the Search Experience

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# Introduction and Purpose

- Evaluate how students are finding electronic resources
- Evaluate usability of the library's website as it pertains to electronic resource access
- Develop and implement a strategy for providing access to electronic resources

# ECU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Required for human research
- Each member of the research team required to complete training

## Sample introduction paragraph for Exempt survey research:

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled “Improving Access to Electronic Library Resources” being conducted by librarians at East Carolina University in Academic Library Services. The interview will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand how library users find and access electronic library resources. Your responses will be kept confidential, and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. Your participation in the research is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. There is no penalty for not taking part in this research study. Please call Patricia Dragon at xxx-xxx-xxxx for any research related questions or the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at xxx-xxx-xxxx for questions about your rights as a research participant.

# Methodology

- Set up in lobby with two laptops
- Students greeted by ALS student library employee
- Conducted 60 interviews asking three questions about e-resource access
- Noted student's class rank and any details of search process

# Interview questions

## Assignment A

- Watch the video *A Slave Of Love*. It's available streaming from the library.
- Read the book *Essays of Travel* by Robert Louis Stevenson. It's available as an e-book from the library.
- Write a research paper on sleep deprivation in students. You must cite 3 journal articles.

# Interview form

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Student status: freshman\_\_ sophomore\_\_\_\_ junior\_\_\_\_ senior\_\_\_\_ other\_\_\_\_

Question sheet: A B C D

Question #1:

\_\_\_\_\_ Summon

\_\_\_\_\_ Blacklight

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Located item: Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_



Notes:

# Library Homepage before



One Search for articles, books, & more ... Q

[Library Catalog](#) | [Database List](#) | [Google Scholar](#) | [E-Journal/E-Book Portal](#) | [New Titles](#)

-  Reserve a Study Room
-  Check My Account
-  Free E-Textbooks
-  Poster Printing
- Connect with us**
-   
-  Ask a Librarian
-  View Maps and Directions
-  Schedule Instruction Session
-  Consult Our FAQs
-  Borrow Equipment
-  View Research Guides
-  Use Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

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# Interview results

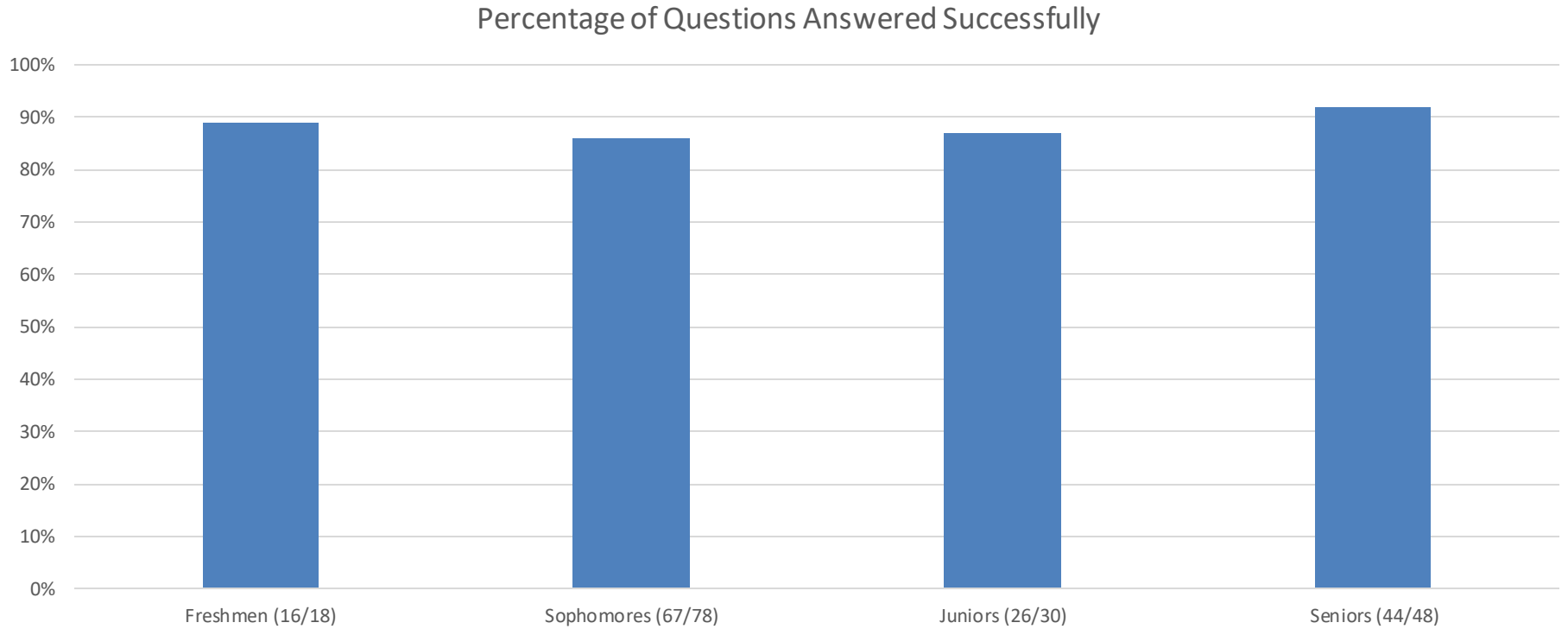




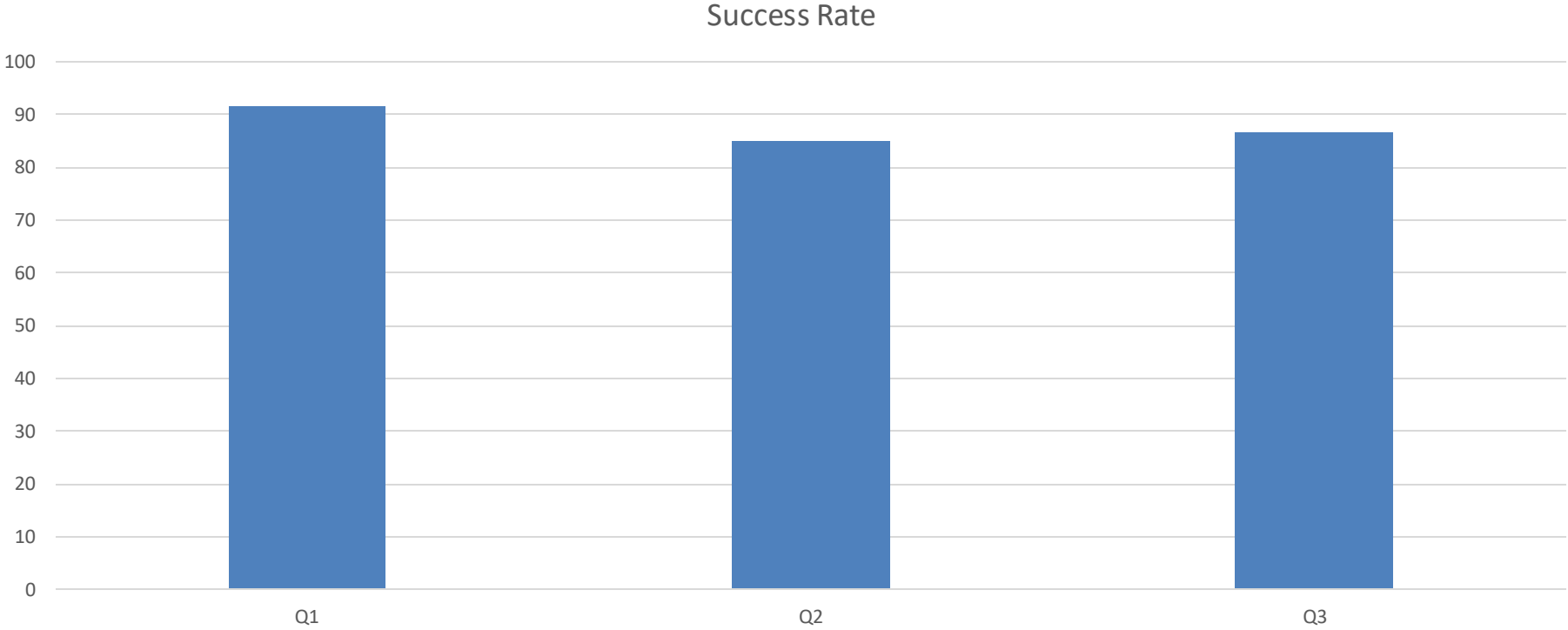
# Interview data

- Student status (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, grad)
- Search tool selected
- Number of strategies before success
- Number of strategies before quitting
- Observations/Notes

# No significant difference between classes



# Success rate high on all questions

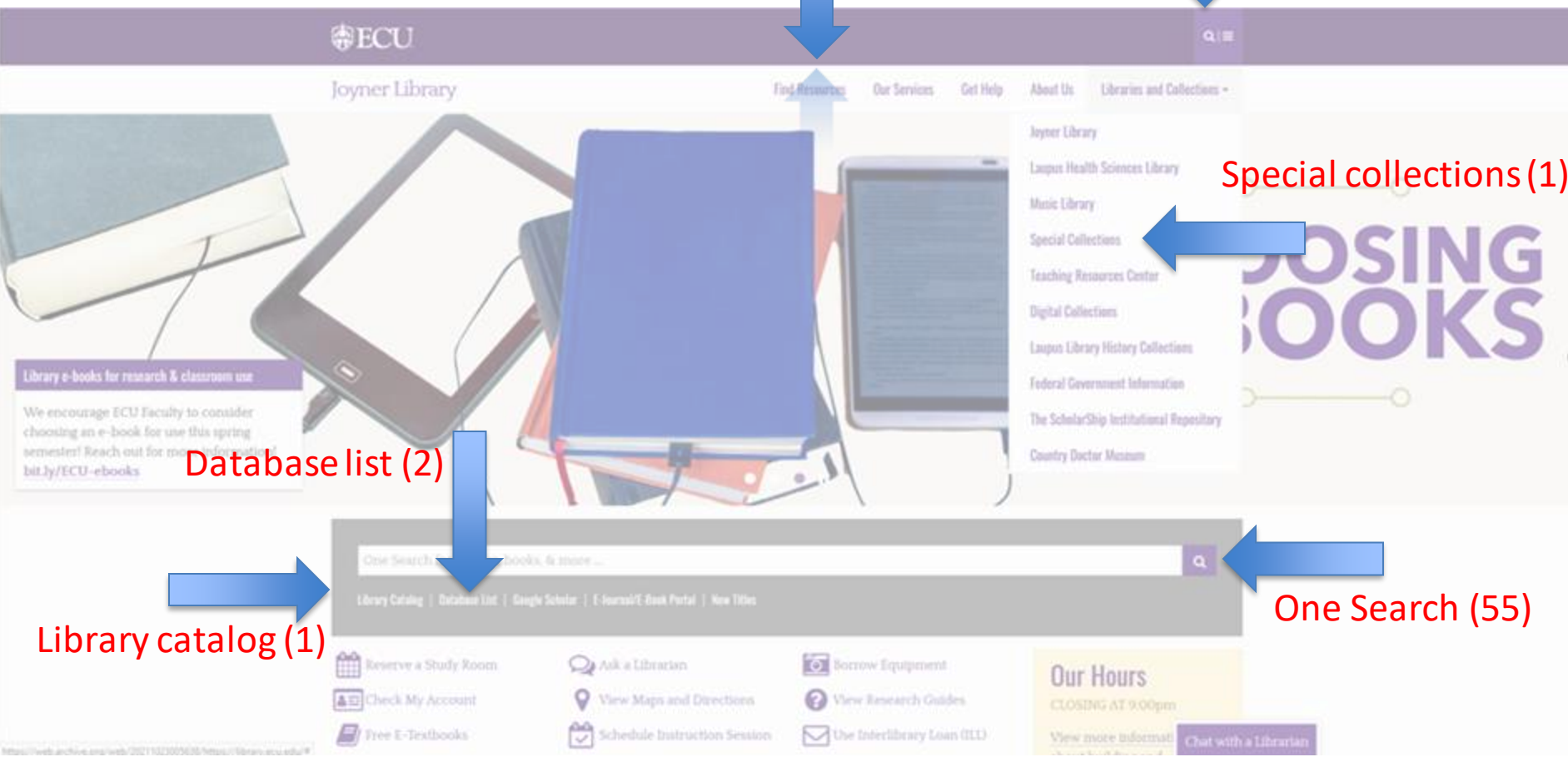


# Question 1: Streaming Video

Homepage (60)

Find Resources(6)

ECU Magnifying glass(4)



Database list (2)

Special collections (1)

Library catalog (1)

One Search (55)

YouTube (1)

Video Conferencing (1)

Success (55)



# Question 1: Streaming Video

## Successful (55)

- One Search (54)
- Library catalog (1)

## Unsuccessful (5)

- Incorrect tool used (3)
- Did not want to try (1)
- Typo/user error (1)

# Question 2: Ebook

Homepage (60)

Find Resources(3)

The screenshot shows the ECU Joyner Library homepage. At the top, the ECU logo and 'Joyner Library' are visible. A navigation menu includes 'Find Resources', 'Our Services', 'Get Help', 'About Us', and 'Libraries and Collections'. A large banner features images of books, a tablet, and a laptop, with the text 'Library e-books for research & classroom use' and a promotional message. A search bar is located below the banner. A dropdown menu is open under 'Libraries and Collections', listing various library services. At the bottom, there are several service tiles and an 'Our Hours' section.

Annotations with blue arrows point to the following elements:

- Find Resources(3)**: Points to the 'Find Resources' link in the navigation menu.
- Digital collections (2)**: Points to the 'Digital Collections' link in the dropdown menu.
- One Search (34)**: Points to the search bar.
- Library catalog (1)**: Points to the 'Library Catalog' link below the search bar.
- Free E-textbooks (10)**: Points to the 'Free E-Textbooks' service tile.
- Ejournal/ebook portal (25)**: Points to the 'E-Journal/E-Book Portal' link below the search bar.



Free E-textbooks (10)

Success (51)

# Question 2: Ebook

## Successful (51)

- One Search (33)
- Ejournal/Ebook portal (18)

## Unsuccessful (9)

- One of the ebooks was not in the portal (5)
- Incorrect tool used (2)
- Typo in search (1)
- Could not recognize ebook in results list (1)

# Question 3: Journal articles

Homepage (60)

Find Resources(4)

ECU Magnifying glass (1)

ECU

Joyner Library

Find Resources

Our Services

Get Help

About Us

Libraries and Collections -

- Joyner Library
- Laopus Health Sciences Library
- Music Library
- Special Collections
- Teaching Resources Center
- Digital Collections
- Laopus Library History Collections
- Federal Government Information
- The Scholarship Institutional Repository
- Country Doctor Museum

Google Scholar (5)

Digital collections (1)

Database list (10)

Ejournal/ebook portal (10)

Library catalog (4)

One Search (42)

Research guides (4)

Success (52)





# Question 3: Journal articles

## Successful (52)

- One Search (41)
- Databases (6)
- Google Scholar (5)

## Unsuccessful (8)

- Incorrect tool used (6)
- Searched wrong thing (1)
- Couldn't determine which database to use (1)

# Observations

- "I know it's in here somewhere"
- Students repeatedly executing the same search in the same place even though no results were being returned
- Some students turned to databases that they were familiar with or search strategies they were trained to use in their disciplines
- Search skills did not appear to be influenced by class. Some freshmen were skilled at searching while some seniors were not
- Many students scrolled up and down the homepage before executing a search
- Students often expressed feeling like they were failing. We had to remind them that we were testing our website.

# Conclusions

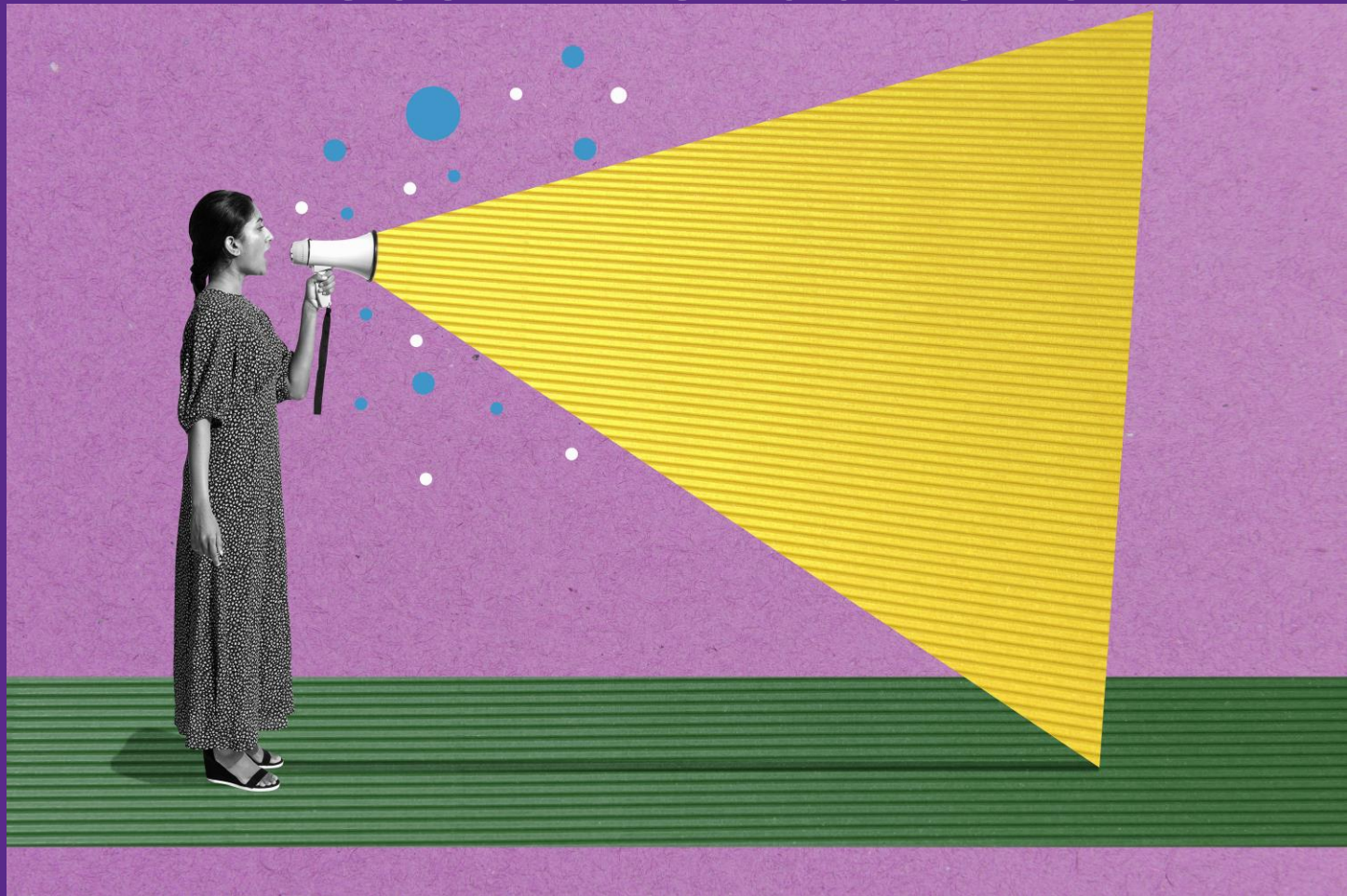
## Key observations:

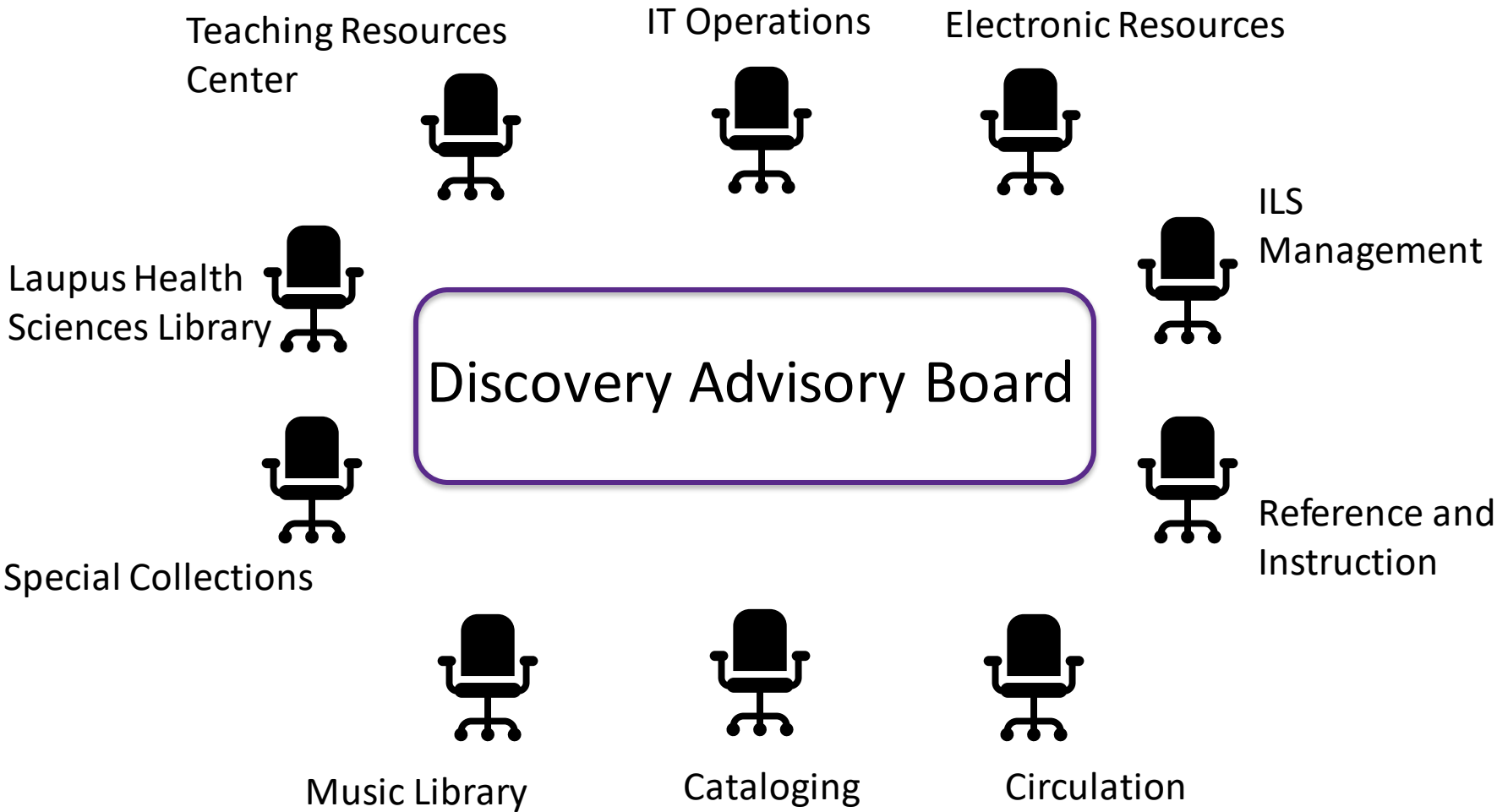
- Although One Search was the 1st or 2nd choice for most students, they did have difficulty identifying the best place to start.
- Many students made one or more incorrect choices before they chose the right place to search.
- The library catalog was rarely used.

## As a result we need to:

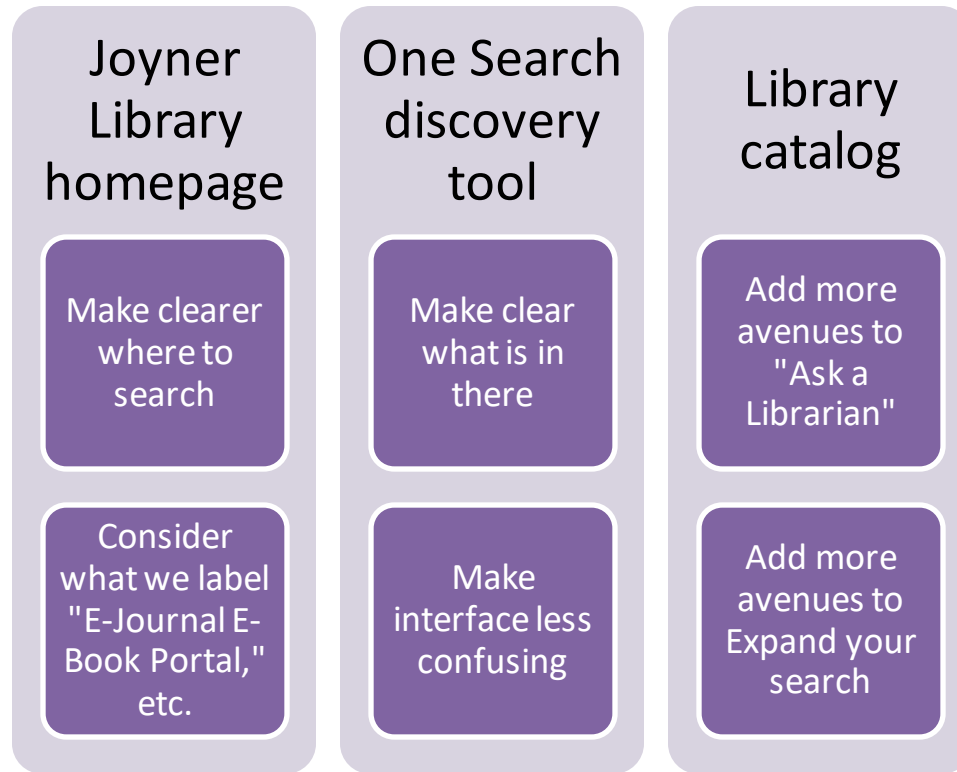
- Fine-tune search interfaces
- Consider how we represent electronic resources in One Search

# Recommendations





# Recommendation to DAB



# Task Forces

- Met independently
- Short-term
- Focus on immediate benefit (not a complete overhaul)
- Discussed the suggestions and/or questions we had
- Came to a consensus and provided recommendations to DAB

# Tracker Spreadsheet

GROUP	RECOMMENDATION	CURRENT STATUS	RESULTS	DATE COMPLETED
Home Page	Change color of search box to be always purple or have a background image	Done	Background image was preferred and incorporated into the redesign	
Home Page	Consider changing name of "E-journal E-book Portal" link to something less confusing that clarifies what patrons should click on that link for	Done	Results of survey indicated Online Journals and eBooks as preferred choice for renaming	8/2/2023
Home Page	Consider removing links out of OneSearch box	Done		
Home Page	Consider the "Free E-Textbooks" link - relabel or relocate?	Done	Keeping current label	
Library Catalog	"More Information about this title" dropdown bar: Change the color of the bar from black to purple	Done	Background color has been changed to #592A8A, which is the official "Purple" from the ECU Branding page	6/12/2023
Library Catalog	"More Information about this title" dropdown bar: Change the label text to read "Click here for more information about this title"	Done	Label updated to "Click here for more information about this title"	6/12/2023
Library Catalog	"No results found for your search" page: Add "Ask a Librarian" link to the page underneath the current content and place it at the same level as "Try modifying your search"	Done	Ask a librarian section was added at same level as "Try modifying your search"	6/12/2023
Library Catalog	"No results found for your search" page: Relocate the "Expand your search" box to the bottom of the display for the mobile interface	Done	Box relocated to the bottom for the mobile interface; this change is also visible now on search result pages that have actual results as well	6/12/2023
Summon	Consider removing open access facet	Done	Discussion with DAB indicated reasons to keep in place	
Summon	Consider removing the facet "physical books in library catalog" as it could be confusing to users who might not know the difference between it and "library catalog."	Done	Physical books facet removed from One Search	6/14/2023
Summon	Consider which services we have enabled and determine what can be disabled to make the interface less cluttered.	Done	Topic Explorer service disabled in One Search sidebar	
Summon	E-journal / ebook portal – should we default to journals and send people to catalog for ebooks	Done	Results of survey indicated keeping the default option to "all"	



# Changes



# Library Homepage before

ECU

Joynrer Library

Find Resources Our Services Get Help About Us Libraries and Collections

SETTING SAIL

*Fall*

**PEN HOUSE**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

One Search for articles, books, & more ...

Library Catalog | Database List | Google Scholar | E-Journal/E-Book Portal | New Titles

- Reserve a Study Room
- Check My Account
- Free E-Textbooks
- Poster Printing

Connect with us

f t i

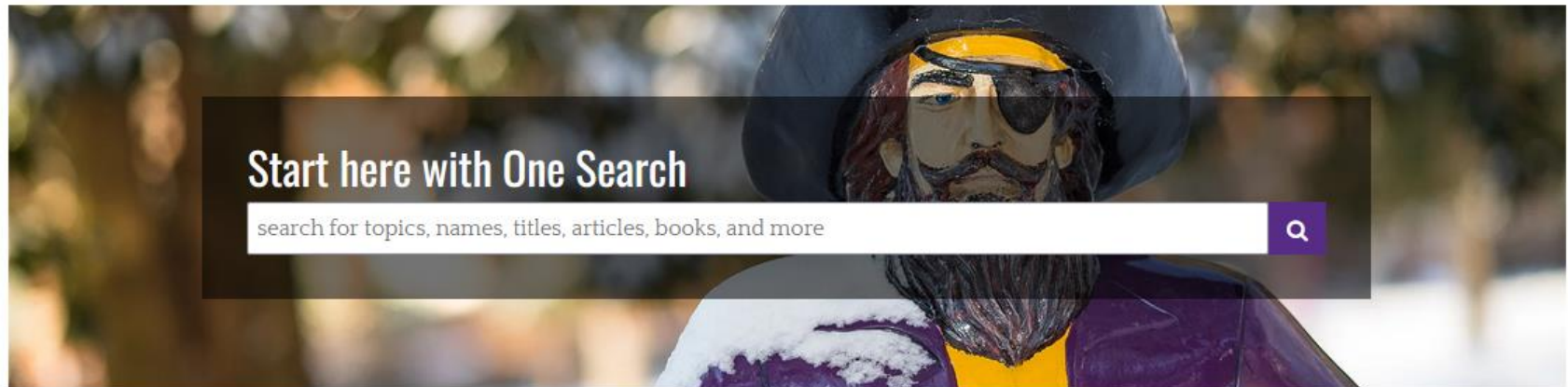
- Ask a Librarian
- View Maps and Directions
- Schedule Instruction Session
- Consult Our FAQs

- Borrow Equipment
- View Research Guides
- Use Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

**Our Hours**  
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Chat with a Librarian

# Library Homepage after



## Start here with One Search

search for topics, names, titles, articles, books, and more

### Find Resources

- Library Catalog
- Databases
- Google Scholar
- Online Journals and eBooks
- Free E-Textbooks



### Popular Services

- Reserve a Study Room
- Check My Account
- Borrow Equipment
- Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
- Record a Presentation

### Get Help

- Ask a Librarian
- Schedule Instruction Session
- Research Guides
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Maps and Directions

## TODAY'S HOURS

OPEN 24 HRS.

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# Other changes

- Removed some facets from One Search
- Disabled One Search Topic Explorer
- Changed the colors of dropdown bars in the library catalog
- Added help links on library catalog pages for unsuccessful searches
- Removed 11,500 e-journal records from the library catalog
- Removed 200,000 extremely minimal vendor records from the library catalog

# What's next?

- Review remaining items on tracker
- Prioritize
- Implement

# Questions?

# Thank you!

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