

Library unveils new centralized Web site

The new Knight Library Web site proves helpful to some and confusing to others

Andrew Shipley
Freelance Reporter

Fresh, intelligent, attractive — these are qualities many people will probably be seeking in their life as the 2002 fall term begins in earnest. This year, students and faculty can seek out inspiration in an unlikely source: the new Knight Library Web site. Strange as it may sound, these were precisely the traits the library staff had in mind when it set out to give the old site a much needed makeover.

"The trick was to mix usability," said Juanita Benedicto, social sciences reference librarian and the li-

brary's Web site coordinator. "We wanted to design a system that worked for experienced users but was also beginner-friendly."

Benedicto said a large number of library users are freshman and undergraduate students who often arrive at the reference desk "overwhelmed by what the library has to offer" and frustrated by a Web site where it's not even obvious how to do a simple search. Complaints like these provided the guidelines for creating the new site, she said.

Revamping the Web site was no simple task. J.Q. Johnson, head of the Web site implementation task force, said there are more than 7,000 Web pages on the site, and some departments within the library operate independently.

Due to the sheer amount of infor-

mation, the old Web site was "extremely decentralized," he said, requiring multiple links to reach basic search options. For infrequent users, simply beginning a search was a source of headaches.

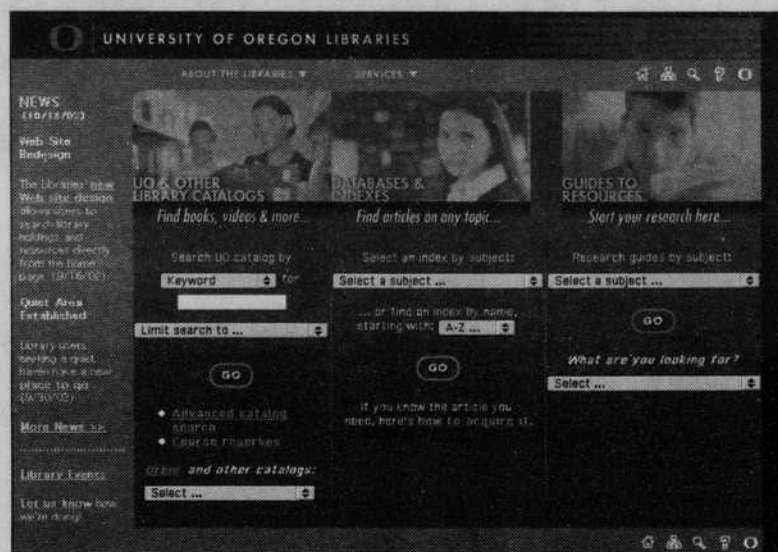
"We focused toward a user-centered design, especially emphasizing user navigation," said Web site committee consultant and creative advisor Kelly Ann.

Now, when users open the site, both basic and advanced search options are presented immediately, with instructions and help options written in common language, rather than in what Ann calls "library terms."

Following usability research, Ann also sought to give the site a more visual feel. "The old site was all text, not very attractive," Ann said. "The new design is graphic-heavy, giving the site a more modern feel."

In addition to simplified search options, the new site emphasizes the latest library news and resources. Major news, such as the establishment of a silent study area in the old periodicals section, is displayed on the opening page, as is quick access to a comprehensive and up-to-date news page. The library's schedule is also easily accessible on the initial page.

Despite these changes, the question still remains: Is the new site really any better? So far, responses



have been mixed.

"From a staff perspective, the site puts all the information you are looking for in one place. It is much easier to use," said Andrew Howell, manager of the library's information technology center.

Some students, however, were less positive. Brian Robertson, a freshman and first-time library user, felt there was simply too much information presented at once.

"There was so much stuff on the first page, it was really cluttered," he said. "The menus were just confusing."

Benedicto acknowledged the

mixed response and said the committee will continue to conduct user research and adapt the site throughout the school year. The site is a work in progress, with only 10 percent of the 7,000 sites fully updated, and Benedicto, Ann and Johnson all agree the site will evolve with the needs of the users.

"One of the new features of the site is a 'Let us know' link, and all responses are welcomed," Benedicto said. The library Web site is at libweb.uoregon.edu.

Andrew Shipley is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

University groups provide tastes of different interests

Whether students' hobbies are the waltz, Wittgenstein or world peace, the University has a club for their interests.

Arwen Ungar
Freelance Reporter

The University abounds with opportunities to join clubs for different interests, which often allow students

to interact with people who share common interests in a fun, easy-going and open atmosphere. While some groups are at the forefront of the campus community, others are rarely spotlighted — here are some students might not hear about.

Oregon Ballroom Dance, for example, was organized in the early 1990s by the Eugene community to introduce people to the fun of social dance.

Students can learn how to dance the cha-cha, the rumba, the waltz and the swing. Jennifer Keller, the club's president, joined in her freshman year. "I was new to Eugene and wanted to meet people; everyone was diverse and friendly," Keller said.

During dances the club listens to different types of music, new and old. The club hosts beginning and inter-

Turn to **Clubs**, page 9B

wanna
volunteer...

for credit?

Outdoor School
Be a camp counselor for a week! (one night orientation)
Earn 2-5 upper division credits!

Building Blocks
Teach 5th graders about higher education once a week and take them on a field trip to the university!
Earn 2 upper division credits!

Once a week seminars!
Earn 2 upper division credits for seminars PLUS 1 upper division credit for every 30 hours of volunteer work!

Human Services
Volunteer anywhere in the community!

Public Schools
Volunteer in any public school!

Leadership
Shadow a leader of the community or become a student leader yourself!

community internship program 348-4351

Office of

Academic Advising

Drop-ins or Appointments Welcome

- Graduation Requirements
- Academic Planning
- Choosing a Major
- Academic Standing Issues
- Pre-Health and Pre-Law
- Disability Services (164 Oregon Hall; 6-1155)
- Free Workshops

364 Oregon Hall
346-3211

<http://advising.uoregon.edu>

Free

Lectures, Performances and More!
From the Oregon Humanities Center.

October 29
Watch and discuss the award-winning documentary, *Trembling Before G-d*, with director Sandi DuBowski

November 13
Wander the Oregon Trail with Lewis & Clark expert Stephen Dow Beckham

March 5
Ponder the words of creative writer and environmental philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore.

March 31
Enjoy the music of renowned Dutch violinist Jaap Schröder.

For more information about our events, call 346-3934, visit our website at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~humanctr/>, or stop by our office at 154 PLC and pick up our newsletter, which includes a calendar of many of the University's Fall term events.