

# The Power of Two

## Advantages of Conducting a Usability Study – and Then Conducting It Again



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*At Richard E. Bjork Library, the librarians developed a usability study to identify weaknesses and recommend improvements in the website's user interface and functionality. Upon completion, the study was repeated to assess the updates.*



### Round 1 - Fall 2021

#### Results:

The study imparted a better understanding of how students interact with the website. It allowed us to determine needed updates and compile over 30 recommendations for website improvements.

#### Example:

**TASK 1:** You were told to contact the library's electronic resources coordinator but you forgot their name. Find their name and email address.

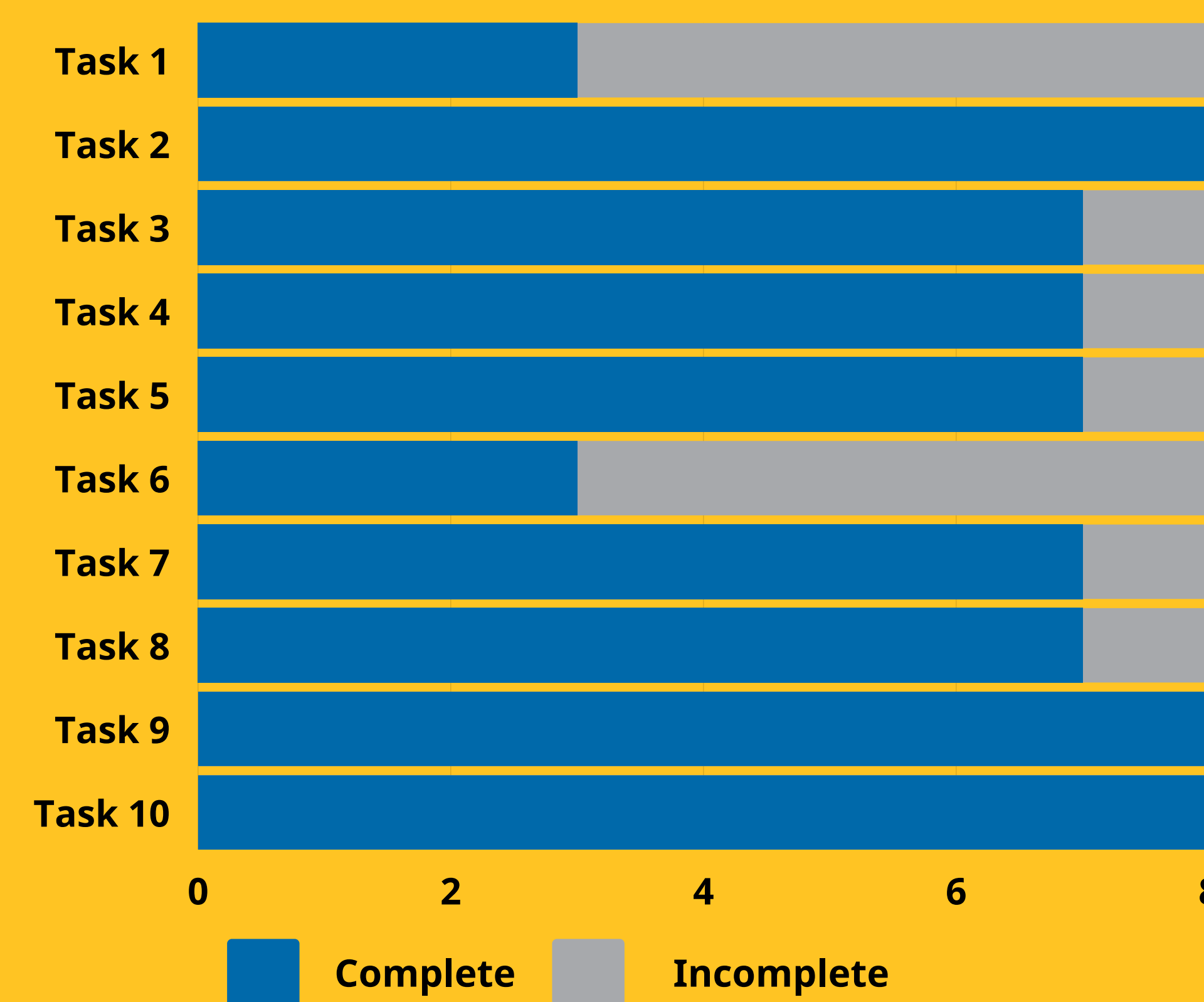
#### Task 1 Findings:

- Five out of eight (62.5%) volunteers did not complete the task.
  - Two gave up on the task; three ran out of time.
- Half of volunteers did not look in the *About* section for this.
- The label "Library Department & Directory" lacks a call to action.
- Half of volunteers clicked "ELO Resources" in the *Help & Services* menu simply because of its similarity to the task's job title. All other acronyms in this menu are spelled out.

#### Task 1 Recommendations:

- Relabel the "About" section to "About Us" to humanize it and encourage the idea of connecting to a person here.
- Relabel the "Library Department & Directory" link to "Contact Our Staff" to give this a stronger call to action.
- Relabel "ELO Resources" in the Help & Services menu as "Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO) Resources."

#### Completion Accuracy by Task



### Methods

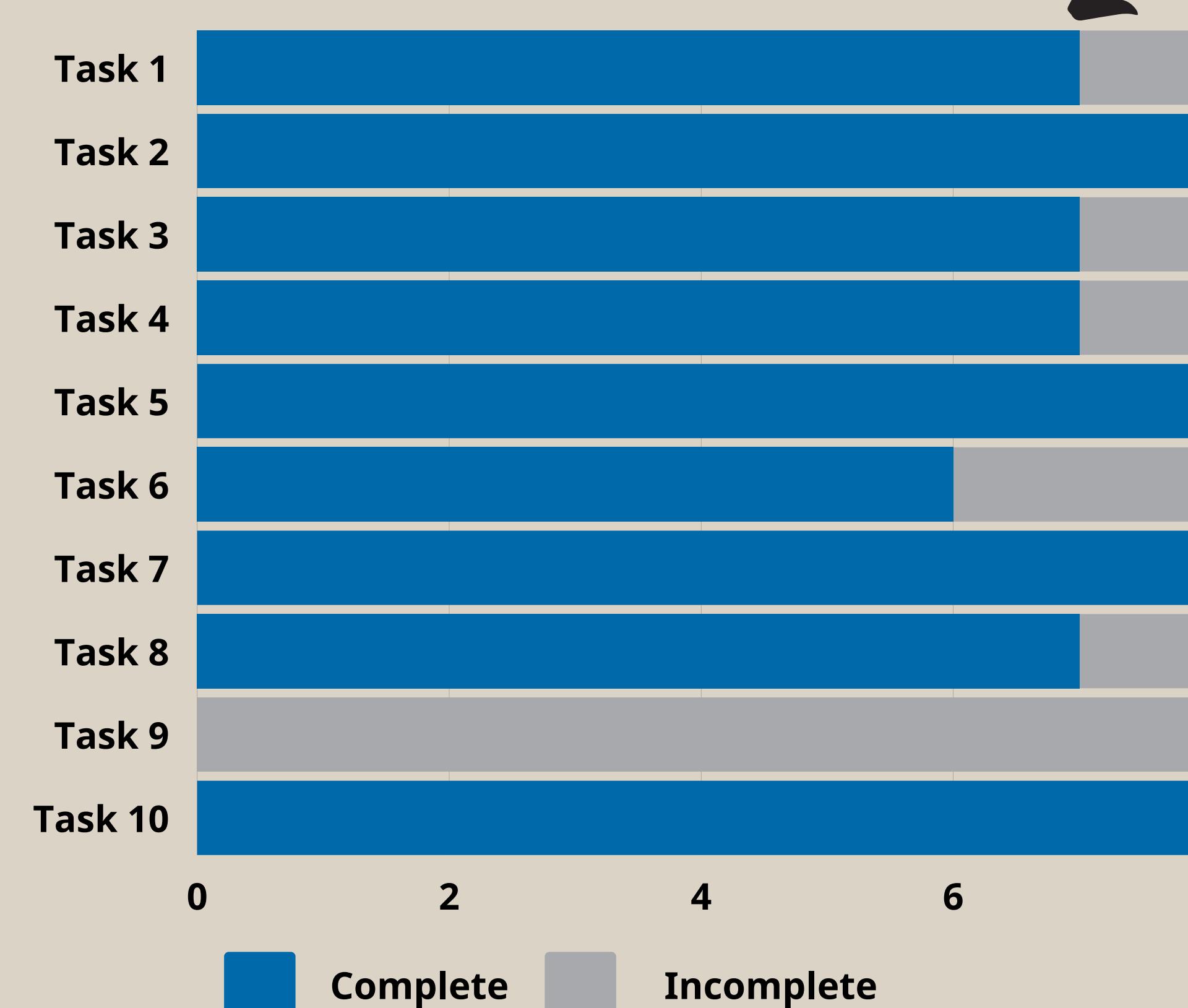
- Task-completion format
- IRB-approved; informed consent forms used
- 8 student volunteers recruited by social media, flyers, word-of-mouth
- Study performed using laptop and mouse
- Screen/voice captured via Zoom
- Notetaker took notes, timed tasks
- Interviewer read script, led session
- Script included:
  - intro & informed consent
  - 10 tasks (4 minutes for each)
  - 5 debriefing questions
- Students narrated tasks, indicated completion
- Campus food court voucher incentive (\$8 value)

### Round 2 - Fall 2022

#### Results:

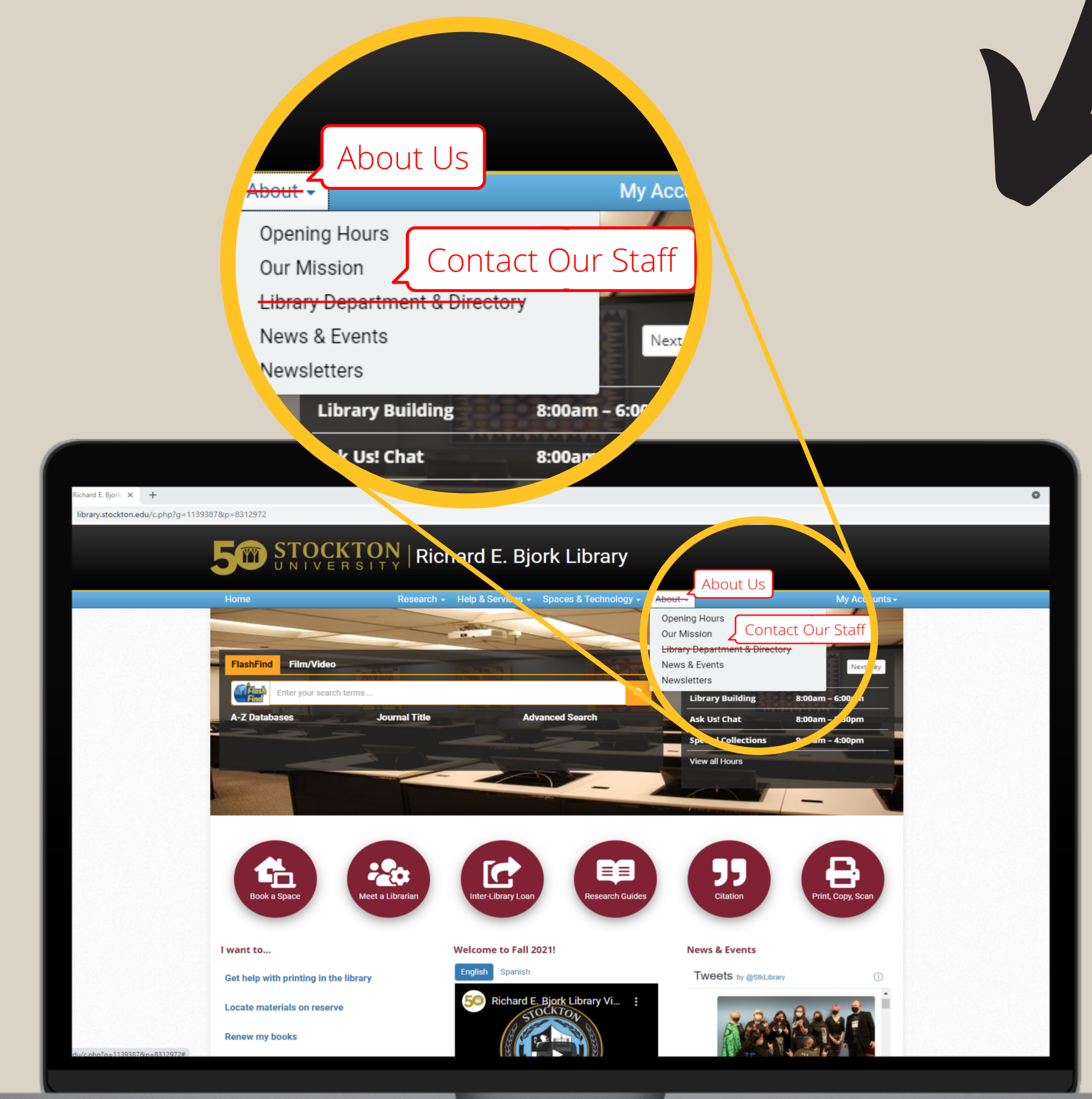
During the Fall 2022 term, we conducted a second round of website usability testing using the same methods and procedures as were employed in 2021. The purpose of this second round was to gauge the effectiveness of the changes and see if quantifiable improvements were made to the site.

#### Completion Accuracy by Task



#### Task 1 Finding:

- Once the recommendations from Round 1 were complete, Task 1 saw a 233% increase in completion accuracy rate.



### Data Analysis

- Reviewed transcripts/recordings
- Quantitative: Tracked time, mouse clicks, task completion
- Qualitative: Noted missteps, dead-ends, sources of frustration, comments from debriefing questions
- Calculated completion accuracy by task
- Listed findings for each task
- Produced 30+ recommendations based on findings (Round 1)
- Compiled a final report

### Conclusion & Next Steps

We consider these studies a success: we improved the website and learned a lot in the process. We will perform another Website Usability Study in the Fall of 2024 as a part of our three-year assessment cycle.