

*Instructions* by Doris H. Clack (1990), have dealt with the practical issues of authority work, but, as change affecting technical services and cataloging continues to accelerate, librarians struggle to compete in the changing information environment and to deal with ever changing ways of doing well what we do. *Maxwell's Guide to Authority Work* is a welcome resource for twenty-first-century librarianship and is sure to become a classic.

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***Usability Testing for Library Web Sites: A Hands-on Guide***. By Elaina Norlin and CM! Winters. Chicago: ALA, 2002. 112 p. \$32 paper (ISBN 0-8389-3511-7).

Norlin and Winters give us a basic guide for implementing usability testing for library Web sites. The book gives an overview of usability testing, its purpose, benefits, design recommendations, and includes a section on how to get "buy-in" to justify the need for usability testing.

The authors describe two types of "buy-in"—passive and active. Passive buy-in means that people go with the proposed idea because they "have to," unlike active buy-in in which people go with the proposed idea because they "want to" (19). The ultimate purpose of buy-in is "to rally the necessary partners who agree that your idea makes sense and is worth achieving" (19). Indeed, motivating library staff and stakeholders to implement usability testing is essential for the success of a usability project.

The authors argue that librarians have often adopted a "we know best" philosophy when designing Web sites, using technical language that may be ambiguous to many users. Usability testing could help librarians eliminate ambiguity and develop a common terminology and language that meet user needs. The book has a section on the needs of persons with disabilities. This is an important issue to consider not only when testing Web sites, but also when designing them.

The book describes various assessment tools to gather data, such as print and online surveys, as well as focus groups. It gives an example of a survey and a set of sample questions to

use for focus groups. In addition, it suggests the development of specific tasks to give to participants who will test Web sites. The sample of tasks the authors present, however, lack questions about interface design and navigational features of Web sites.

The authors advocate a moderator and a recorder for each participant during testing. However, this method may be costly in terms of time and effort. If a library is seriously embarking on a continuous usability testing project, the library should consider acquiring a usability laboratory. Such a laboratory allows the observer and the participants to communicate easily using microphones and speakers within the room where the testing takes place. Most importantly, the cameras the laboratory is equipped with can record the participants' online activities, facial expressions, and verbalization; thus, the observer can collect both quantitative and qualitative data that may provide a holistic view of the participants' assessment of the sites.

The book makes a positive contribution to the literature of usability testing in that it emphasizes user-centered design, provides a systematic approach to testing Web sites, and is written in nontechnical language. Novices to the topic of usability testing can use this book to obtain basic information about the topic and how to get their usability project started. Those who need advanced information about usability testing should consult Jakob Nielsen's site at [www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com). —*Dania Bilal* ([danial@utk.edu](mailto:danial@utk.edu)), *Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville*