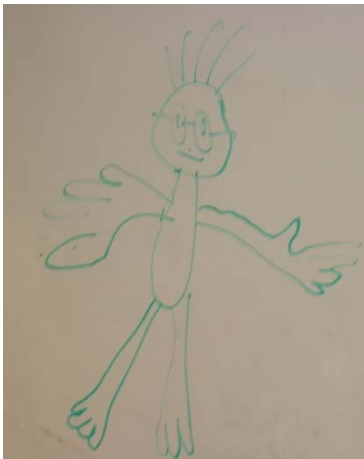


JoCoKids Usability Study Report

On Saturday, April 25 the Web Content Team ran usability studies on the JoCoKids site with children aged 6-11. A total of 11 children participated in the study. Although technical glitches limited the team from completing the study as designed, the team benefited from asking the most important questions of the study, and by simply watching the children interact with the Web site and talking to the children about what they liked and didn't like. The team was also able to solicit feedback on a paper prototype of a revised JoCoKids site, and the prototype design and concept received excellent reviews from all of the participants.

The Study Confirmed:

- **Almost exclusively, children use the Web to play games.** Kids like the most popular games like Webkins and Hot Wheels, but they also like educational or library-related games, too— if the games are fun and interesting. For example, Coolmath.com was mentioned, and one child played with Josh's puzzle on JoCoKids for about 20 minutes—she said it was hard but also fun.
- **If there isn't an extremely compelling reason for kids to use a Web site, they won't have much patience with slow or spotty connections.** Even when the Internet access is conking out, kids will tolerate it to play Webkins. But they might also just stop playing online altogether and go draw on the marker boards (as documented below). The study also confirmed that Josh appeals to children as they thought it was fun to draw pictures of our moderator. (In the interest of full-disclosure, after one child started drawing pictures of Josh, Erica encouraged the others to do the same because she knew that colleagues in the online library world would appreciate drawings. Josh is a superstar.)



- **Kids look to see what other kids are doing and copy them.** Often the kids would watch each other and copy each other's Web behaviors or want to click where someone else did. Kids like to do what everyone else is doing (like playing Webkins). It's not a negative thing to do something that's been done before.
- **Boys will click on a rocketship pretty much every time.**
- **Children are very visual and are attracted by video , avatars, and fun graphics (they all liked the JoCoKids graphics).**

- **Children do not ignore text (but text should be used in small doses).** One girl noticed that one of the reviews was written by a 5th grade girl, so she said she would like to read that book because she is in 5th grade, too.
- **Experienced Library-using kids go directly to the catalog and skip right over the Web site— just like all experienced patrons.**
- **Kids are surprised that the Library would have a site just for them.**
- **Kids want to participate and engage—even if it’s just pushing buttons or sliding something back and forth—they want to make things move.**
- **Kids had a hard time finding how to get to the kids’ page from the Library’s home page.** Need an image that shows them where to enter for kids’ stuff. The Library’s “main” site needs to work for all Library patrons.
- **Kids don’t think of the Library Web site recommending fun, cool sites for them to visit or explore.**

Suggestions and Ideas from the Participants:

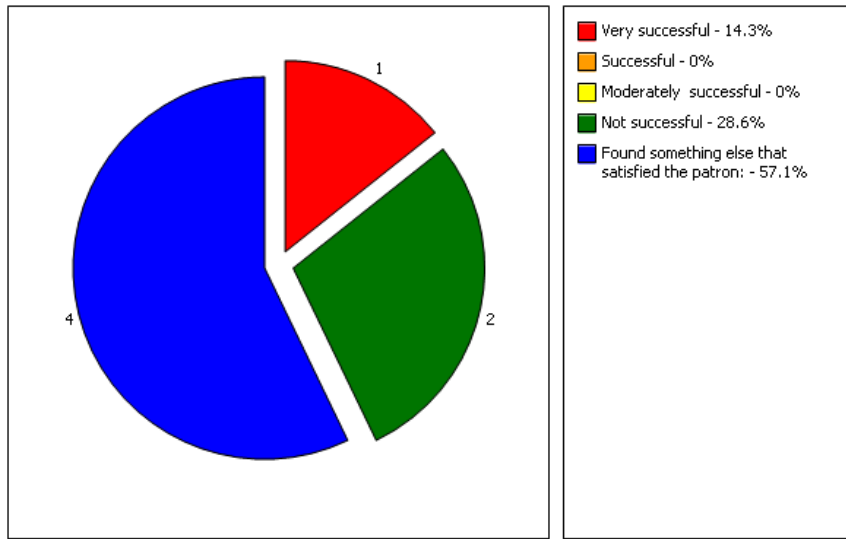
- A kid-only catalog where children could search for books and movies that were just for children rather than having to sort through all the holdings for adults.
- Would like to be able to create their own books and then their books would go on the library shelves.
- Liked "what your librarian is reading" idea –and would expect to find librarians’ names and what they do at the library in that area as well.
- Liked the idea of doing video book reviews, and some would like to do a book review together with their friends.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Make JoCoKids less dependent on text for communication and navigation; use more icons, images and video.
- Make the featured content of JoCoKids less focused on programs and more focused on books, kids’ creative works, and kids themselves.
- Feature kids in videos up front reviewing their favorite books (with their friends if they want to review together) and talking about what’s coming up in the Library that month.
- Develop a graphic or some sort of visual clue on JoCoLibrary to ensure kids can find JoCoKids.
- Investigate possibility of a kids-materials-only catalog search and interface.
- Provide a list of recommended games, and make the list more visual—by using representative icons like TeenTechBingo—rather than a text-based list. Also, promote the page to staff and patrons because people don’t think of the Library providing this information, so they won’t go looking for it.
- Continue to promote library staff with avatars and information about library staff’s picks and job information.
- Consider having JoCoKids be the default Web site on computers in the children’s areas of the libraries.



Looking at the Library's Web site, where would you go if you wanted to find information for kids?



Measures*

Very successful = *found the answer in the shortest path*

Successful = *found the answer without backtracking*

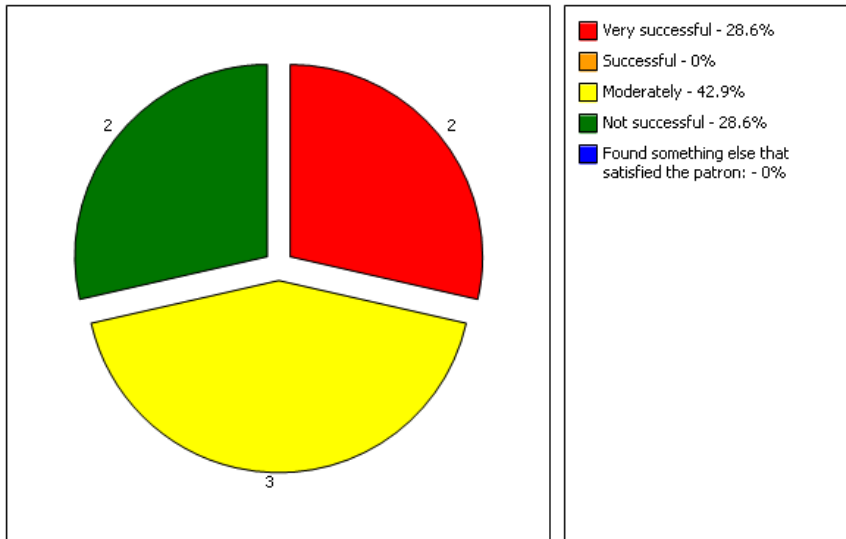
Moderately successful = *found the answer after backtracking once or more*

Not successful = *did not find the answer*

Found something else = *self explanatory*

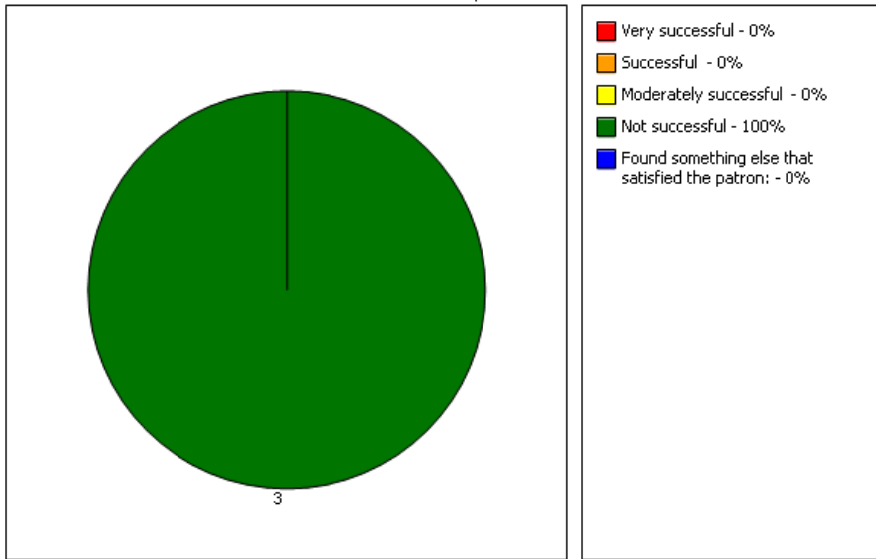
The overwhelming majority of patrons (85.7%) didn't find the JoCoKids site from the home page of the Library's site. 57.1% clicked on something else on the home page that looked like it might be for kids (featured images or the drop-down for "how do I?").

You want to find a new book to read. Where do you look?



Few patrons clicked on "reviews" from the JoCoKids site. More patrons clicked on the featured reviews (which is still successful) or clicked into the catalog to look for books they like (for example, "Junie B Jones").

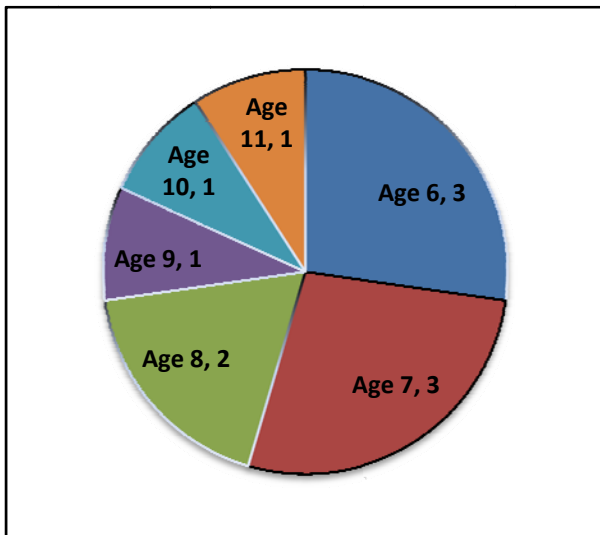
You want to find a new, cool site to explore. Where do you look?



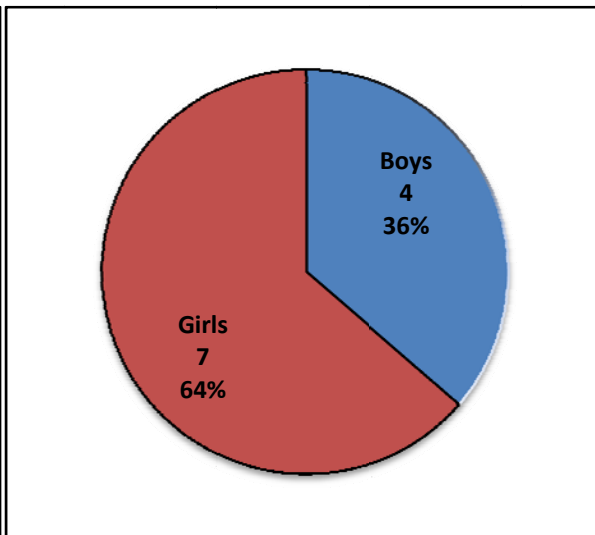
In general, patrons didn't expect the library to have a site for them or to recommend good sites they would like to explore.

Additional Study Details:

Number of Participants per Age



Gender of Participants



*Although there were 11 children participating, only 7 children's results are captured in the measures due to technical difficulties (screen capturing software did not work) and manual recording limitations with only 2 recorders. However, feedback from all 11 participants are included in the overall observations and suggestions.

Moderator: Joshua Neff

Recorders: David Carson & Erica Reynolds

Analysis: Erica Reynolds