

Amy Nicole Roberson. A Usability Study of a Website for Digitized Oral Histories. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2009. 60 pages. Advisor: Dr. Deborah Barreau

This study tested the usability of the Advanced Search, Browse Theme by Collection, and Excerpt View pages of the *Oral Histories of the American South* website. These pages allow users to access audio and transcripts for over 500 oral histories from the *Southern Oral History Program* from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries. The study found that participants were satisfied with the search and browse options available via the site. The results also suggest a few minor changes to the layout of the pages to improve usability and satisfaction.

Headings:

Information needs/Evaluation

Internet/College and University Libraries

Oral history

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Use studies/Archives

A USABILITY STUDY OF A WEBSITE FOR DIGITIZED ORAL HISTORIES

by
Amy Nicole Roberson

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2009

Approved by

Dr. Deborah Barreau

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| List of Figures | 2 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 4 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 7 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology | 12 |
| Chapter 4: Results | 19 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion | 46 |
| Chapter 6: Conclusion | 51 |
| Chapter 7: Works Cited | 52 |
| Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire | 55 |
| Appendix B: Usability Observation | 56 |
| Appendix C: Follow-up Questionnaire | 58 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: OHAS. Available at http://www.lib.unc.edu/sohp | 6 |
| Figure 2a: OHAS advanced search page, part 1 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py | 15 |
| Figure 2b: OHAS advanced search page, part 2 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py | 16 |
| Figure 2c: OHAS advanced search page, part 3 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py | 16 |
| Figure 3: OHAS browse page | 17 |
| Figure 4: OHAS sample “Excerpt View” page | 18 |
| Figure 5: Results from Advanced Search tasks | 20 |
| Figure 6: Oral History audio and text options | 21 |
| Figure 7: Example of two scroll-bars on “Listen Online with Audio Transcript” page | 22 |
| Figure 8: Interview ID field | 23 |
| Figure 9: Subject Place search box | 24 |
| Figure 10: Keyword Search box | 25 |
| Figure 11: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton” for Task 6, example 1 | 26 |
| Figure 12: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton” for Task 6, example 2 | 26 |
| Figure 13: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton” with OR selected at the top of each column for Task 6 | 27 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 14: Boolean Search “frank porter graham AND anne queen” for Task 7 | 28 |
| Figure 15: Boolean Search with multiple instances of names for Task 7 | 28 |
| Figure 16: Boolean Search “frank porter graham OR anne queen” for Task 7 | 29 |
| Figure 17: Keyword Search “William C. Friday” and Subject Date “1965” for Task 8 | 30 |
| Figure 18a: Boolean Search for “William C. Friday” and various instances of name | 30 |
| Figure 18b: Boolean Search for “William C. Friday” and various instances of name | 31 |
| Figure 19: Boolean Search “William C. Friday AND 1965” for Task 8 | 31 |
| Figure 20: Browse Theme page | 34 |
| Figure 21: Results from Browse Theme by Collection tasks | 35 |
| Figure 22: Audio and Text with emphasis added | 36 |
| Figure 23: Women’s Movements and Women’s Activism themes | 37 |
| Figure 24: Search for “Pollution” on Browse Theme page | 38 |
| Figure 25: Excerpt View page | 39 |
| Figure 26: Interview breadcrumb | 40 |
| Figure 27a: Suggested location of See Entire Interview link | 40 |
| Figure 27b: Suggested location of See Entire Interview link | 41 |
| Figure 28: Suggested wording of Headings and Links relating to listening and viewing audio | 41 |
| Figure 29: Interviewee drop-down menu | 49 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

Archivists have been concerned with the preservation of archival materials as their collections have continued to age. Digitization has created a new format to preserve and access these materials. The next step, for many institutions, is to provide online access, moving away from the traditional model of visiting the archives for unique material. By doing so, archival materials are increasingly available via the Internet, many free of charge. As a result, the community of users has grown and materials, once only available to users with the means to travel to a special collection or hire an independent researcher to photocopy materials, are accessible to a larger group of people. Furthermore, these materials are available around the clock via the Internet and users have come to expect this ubiquitous access.

As early as the 1990s, archives were beginning to use computer technology to preserve and provide access to oral histories, many of which were recorded on audio media that is becoming obsolete.¹ The Southern Oral History Program (SOHP), for example, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) was created in 1973 “to foster a critical yet democratic understanding of the South - its history, culture, problems, and prospects”² and used many of these now obsolete media. In response to the mass digitization of archival materials, the University of North Carolina at Chapel

¹ Chen, C., "Computer Technology to Preserve and Access Endangered Oral History Recordings in Alaska," *Microcomputers for Information Management* 9.3 (1992): 191-5.

² Southern Oral History Program, "Mission," Southern Oral History Program Center for the study of the American South, http://sohp_wp.unccsas.webfactional.com/about/our-mission/.

Hill Libraries (UNC Libraries) applied for a grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The three-year project's goal is to

Select, digitize and make available 500 oral history interviews gathered by the Southern Oral History Program (SOHP). These 500 are being selected from a collection of over 4,000 interviews, housed at the Southern Historical Collection, that cover a range of fascinating topics.³

This study is concerned with the usability of the *Oral Histories of the American South (OHAS)* collection, created by the grant described above and located within the larger *Documenting the American South (DocSouth)* digital collection at the UNC Libraries (see Figure 1). This collection is preserving fragile oral histories while expanding access to users. The site allows users with Internet, anywhere in the world, to access these valuable histories. Moreover, these efforts and others have expanded access to archival materials, including oral histories, through increasingly sophisticated web interfaces. Because archivists and librarians may not be readily available to address the needs of distance users, the web interface must be intuitive for those who may not be able to speak immediately with an archivist or librarian about the collection.

This study will test users' satisfaction and use of the "Advanced Search" (Figure 2), "Browse Collection by Theme" (Figure 3), and "Excerpt View" (Figure 4) pages. Doing so will allow designers to create more usable interfaces that will increase the efficiency and satisfaction of those using the site. Furthermore, the study will provide a better understanding of human-computer interaction in practice, influencing future interface design.

³ UNC University Libraries, "Oral Histories of the American South," UNC University Libraries, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/index.html>.

DOCUMENTING
the American South

powered by Google

Search All Collections Search

[Highlights](#) | [About](#) | [Collections](#) | [Authors](#) | [Titles](#) | [Subjects](#) | [Geographic](#) | [Classroom](#) | [New Additions](#)

Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South

Keyword Search

Advanced Search

Collection Themes

- Charlotte
- Civil Rights
- Environmental Transformations
- Piedmont Industrialization
- Southern Politics
- Southern Women

Browse by:

Select One

Podcast

[About this Collection](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH



"Oral Histories of the American South" is a three-year project to select, digitize and make available 500 oral history interviews gathered by the Southern Oral History Program (SOHP). These 500 are being selected from a collection of over 4,000 interviews, housed at the Southern Historical Collection, that cover a range of fascinating topics. This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Charlotte: Integration is a major focus of these interviews. A large portion of the interviewees were students at West Charlotte High School during its transition from a traditionally black school to an integrated one. Other important topics include business and politics in Charlotte.

Civil Rights: Race and civil rights are subjects that naturally appear across all five of the areas represented by these interviews; this group of interviews focuses largely on integration at Lincoln High School in Chapel Hill and the roles of African American employees at the University of North Carolina.

Environmental Transformations: A group of 21 interviews focusing on environmental issues across the state of North Carolina.

Piedmont Industrialization: Textiles have long been a vital part of the southern economy, a fact amply reflected in these interviews, but other sectors have also grown in importance over the past several decades. In addition to mill workers, interviewees include business leaders who have contributed to the changing business landscape in the South.

Southern Politics: These oral histories stretch back to 1973, the very beginning of the Southern Oral History Project, and include many interviews with prominent politicians from across the political spectrum. Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, and Andrew Young appear in this collection along with Lester Maddox, George Wallace, and Jesse Helms.

Southern Women: These interviews reflect the influence of women in science, medicine, education, law, politics, activism, as well as in factories, where a significant portion of the workforce was and is made up of women.

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Home](#) | [UNC University Library](#) | [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

 **UNC**
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

© Copyright 2004 by the University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, all rights reserved
Copyright / Usage Statement
URL: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/>
Last updated March 21, 2009

Figure 1: OHAS. Available at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/sohp>

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Oral histories are powerful representations of specific historical times and events.

As Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, director of the Southern Oral History Program, wrote,

The use of personal recollections as historical evidence is scarcely a recent or startling innovation. On the contrary, history itself is—in its broadest definition—our collective memory of the past. Interviews provide a means of conveying the uniqueness and integrity of individual lives, while at the same time broadening the research base upon which our understanding of general patterns is predicated.⁴

Thus, oral histories are invaluable tools for researchers. Oral histories have become increasingly popular as technology allowed for easy recording of these voices. In addition, those interested in social history find that oral histories capture the intricacies of average people and their everyday lives. As Hall goes on to explain,

Neither individuals who have led essentially private lives, nor grass roots politicians, nor those who have built the infrastructure of institutions and communications networks which sustain both female and ethnic subcultures ordinarily leave behind written records. Records which are created are seldom preserved. Interviews, then, may often serve as an indispensable avenue into the lives of those who are otherwise hidden from history.⁵

So, “the erosion of written forms of evidence, the growth of social history, the multi-disciplinary nature of modern scholarship, and the search for teaching methods appropriate to changing times,” have fostered a stronger interest in oral histories.

⁴ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "Documenting Diversity: The Southern Experience," *The Oral History Review* 4 (1976): 19.

⁵ Ibid.

OHAS allows users at any location or time to access these important materials. Visitors to the archives are able to consult archivists about finding, playing, and using oral histories. This is not the case for materials via the Internet. A patron may access the site at a time when the library is closed. So, usability is a central concern for this project as well as any digital collection or library.

Many academic libraries have utilized usability testing in order to better serve users in response to a focus on user-centered design.⁶ Automated systems, like digital libraries and collections, lack human assistance to guide patrons through the search process, yet “information systems will achieve wide acceptance only if they are easy to learn and use relative to perceived benefits.”⁷ In addition, studying digital libraries and collections provides a great opportunity for the information science field to “advance both theory and practice.”⁸ This is especially true as the literature involving research on the usability of sites housing oral histories is limited, yet there are many articles written about the technical aspects of digitizing oral histories.⁹

⁶ See Brenda Battleson, Austin Booth, and Jane Weintrop, “Usability Testing of an Academic Library Web Site: A Case Study,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 27.3 (2001): 188-98; Carole A. George, “Usability Testing and Design of a Library Website: An Iterative Approach,” *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 167-80; Dominique Turnbow, et al., “Usability Testing for Web Redesign: A UCLA Case Study,” *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 226-34; Leanne M. VandeCreek, “Usability Analysis of Northern Illinois University Libraries’ Website: A Case Study,” *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 181-92.

⁷ Christine L. Borgman, “Psychological Research in Human-Computer Interaction,” in *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology, Volume 19*, ed. Martha E. Williams, 33-64 (New York: Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc., for American Society for Information Science, 1984).

⁸ Gary Marchionini, Catherine Plaisant, and Anita Komlodi, “The People in Digital Libraries: Multifaceted Approaches to Assessing Needs and Impact,” in *Digital Library Use: Social Practice in Design and Evaluation*, ed. Ann P. Bishop, Nancy A. Van House, and Barbara Pfeil Buttenfield, 123 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

⁹ See Trevor James Bond and Michael Walpole, “Streaming Audio with Synchronized Transcripts Utilizing SMIL,” *Library Hi Tech* 24.3 (2006): 452-462; W. Hall, “Oral History Fast Forward: From Audiocassette to Digital Archive,” *Colorado Libraries* 26.44 (2000): 9-10; Eric Weig, Kopana Terry, and Kathryn Lybarger, “Large Scale Digitization of Oral History: A Case Study,” *D-Lib Magazine* 13.5-6 (2007); Leslie Wykoff, Laurie Mercier, Trevor Bond, and Alan Cornish, “The Columbia River Basin Ethnic History Archive: A Tri-State Online History Database and Learning Center,” *Library Hi Tech* 23. 22 (2005): 252-264.

Despite the scholarship on usability, issues raised in the 1980s still persist.¹⁰

Borgman explains that “technology-oriented” individuals eventually learn systems “no matter how poorly designed.” However,

The situation is different with the new community of users. Most of them lack both a technological orientation and the motivation to invest in extensive training. The new class of users sees a computer as a tool to accomplish some other task, for them, the computer is not an end in itself. This new generation of users is much less tolerant of “unfriendly” and poorly designed systems. They have come to expect better systems and rightly so.

...Indeed, an important issue is whether the user should adapt to the computer or the computer adapt to the user. Computers have turned out to be much harder than we had expected, and design and training problems have resulted. We have had many calls for more “user friendly” systems, but we don’t understand human-computer compatibility well enough even to agree on what “user friendly” means. Thus we are left with several distinct challenges 1) we need to determine what factors make computers difficult to learn and use; 2) we need to define a set of characteristics for “user friendly” systems; and 3) we need to apply the research to design.¹¹

As Borgman continues to explain, these challenges remain but other aspects of design are a concern, such as how users carry out tasks, the motivation behind those decisions, and the interplay between the computer and the task. “Today people have higher expectations of information systems. Digital libraries should be easy to learn, to use, and to relearn. They should be flexible in adapting to a more diverse user population”¹² Also, Greenstein identifies five key challenges facing digital libraries in the future, one of which is connecting and mobilizing user groups. As Greenstein writes,

To re-engage its user communities, the digital library will work on several levels and in ways that are dictated by purely local circumstance. Work in at least one area may benefit from some greater community-wide attention, notably in the development and application of quantitative and qualitative methods that help

¹⁰ Christine L. Borgman, “Designing Digital Libraries for Usability,” in *Digital Library Use: Social Practice in Design and Evaluation*, ed. Ann P. Bishop, Nancy A. Van House, and Barbara Pfeil Battenfield, 88 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

¹¹ Borgman, “Psychological Research,” 33-34.

¹² Borgman, “Designing Digital Libraries,” 89.

assess users' needs and interests in light of their behavior in, and use of, contemporary online environments.¹³

So, usability studies are an important step in facing the challenges set out by Borgman and Greenstein. According to Dillon and ISO 9241, usability is the “effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction with which the specified user can achieve specified goals in particular environments.”¹⁴ Jakob Nielsen outlines five facets of a usable system. They are Learnability, Efficiency, Memorability, Errors, and Satisfaction. Each is described below.

Learnability: The system is “easy to learn so that the user can rapidly start getting some work done with the system.”

Efficiency: “Once the user has learned the system, a high level of productivity is possible.”

Memorability: “The system should be easy to remember, so that the casual user is able to return to the system after some period of not having used it, without having to learn everything all over again.”

Errors: A system should have a low error rate. “If [users] do make errors they can easily recover from them.”

Satisfaction: The system is “pleasant to use.”¹⁵

Because each community of users has unique needs and may react to an application differently, system specific usability testing, based on these attributes, should be conducted in each case.¹⁶ Marchionini, Plaisant, and Komlodi also write that institutions

¹³ Daniel Greenstein, "Digital Libraries and their Challenges," *Library Trends* 49.2 (2000): 297.

¹⁴ A. Dillon, "Beyond Usability: Process, Outcome, and Affect in Human Computer Interactions," *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 26.4 (2001): 58.

¹⁵ Jakob Nielsen, *Usability Engineering*, (Boston: AP Professional, 1993), 26.

¹⁶ Borgman, "Designing Digital Libraries," 90-91.

must customize design and evaluation for each digital library because each community is unique.¹⁷

Designers and evaluators must be alert to new applications and goals, new user communities that may emerge, changing needs and abilities of existing user communities, new technological development, changing information processes and capabilities, and new possibilities for data collection and manipulation.¹⁸

Because usability studies strive to address user needs and concerns earlier in the development stage, they may allow institutions to save valuable time and resources in the long run.

Notes and audio recordings have been successful tools in assessing the usability of digital libraries.¹⁹ Dillon notes that traditional usability studies, derived from the definition supplied by ISO 9241 (effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction), focus too heavily on the speed and accuracy of task completion. He offers another method, POA (Process, Outcome, Affect), that aims to “identify what makes interactive experience more interesting or appealing to the user” and includes “Aesthetics, *Perceived* usability, Learning over time, Cognitive effort, Perception of information shapes, Intention to use, and Self-efficacy.”²⁰ Thus, traditional measures of usability, i.e. time spent per task, number of mouse clicks, etc., were not as effective in evaluating this site. As Dillon goes on to write, “[We] must learn to look at the processes, outcomes, and affect beyond simple task measures of efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction” to reflect the whole of the user experience.²¹

¹⁷ Marchionini, “The People in Digital Libraries,” 124.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, 125-126.

²⁰ Dillon, “Beyond Usability,” 63.

²¹ Ibid, 67.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study tested the usability of the “Advanced Search” (Figure 2), “Browse Collection by Theme” (Figure 3), and “Excerpt View” (Figure 4) pages. The purpose was to uncover any usability and design issues associated with *OHAS*. Although usability tests are typically conducted in a laboratory setting, an observational strategy was employed here to allow the researcher to explore participant interactions in greater depth. In general, the study provided a better understanding of human-computer interaction in practice and will hopefully influence future interface design, especially for digitized oral history websites.

A recruitment email was sent to faculty members in the American Studies and History departments at UNC-Chapel Hill. Potential research participants were asked to communicate via email or phone with the Principal Investigator (PI) to set up an individual appointment to take part in the usability study. The letter also asked potential participants to forward the email along to other faculty and students in their departments. Thus, two users groups, faculty and undergraduates, were recruited for this study. Faculty are often studied in tests such as this, to determine the usefulness of a library resource for personal research as well as course planning.²² Furthermore, undergraduates are a

²² See Elsa F. Kramer, "IUPUI Image Collection: A Usability Survey," *OCLC Systems and Services* 21.4 (2005): 346-359; Maggie Dickson, "CONTENTdm Digital Collection Management Software and End-User Efficacy," *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2.2-3 (2008): 339-379; Karla Saari Kitalong, Athena Hoepfner, and Meg Scharf, "Making Sense of an Academic Library Web Site: Toward a More Usable Interface for University Researchers," *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2 (2008): 177-204; Bonnie Oldham W., "Focus Groups and Usability Testing in Redesigning an Academic Library's Web Site," *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2 (2008): 219-246.

common user group in studies focused on library web resources. As the current undergraduate was around two to five years old when the Internet came into existence, many assume they are comfortable using the web to search for information. However, studies have shown they are not necessarily adept at searching for scholarly resources available via library web pages.²³ Thus, it is important to observe undergraduates' ability to use library resources in hopes that these systems are usable to this population group.

The study sessions lasted thirty to forty-five minutes and consisted of three sections: a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix A), usability observation (Appendix B), and a follow-up questionnaire (Appendix C). The demographic questionnaire ensured participants were eligible to participate in the study (participants must be 18 years of age or older). Moreover, the questionnaire provided context by which to understand the results, including occupation, faculty or undergraduate status, and experience with *OHAS* and *DocSouth*.

The usability tasks focused on three pages from *OHAS*, the "Advanced Search" (Figure 2), "Browse Collection by Theme" (Figure 3), and "Excerpt View" (Figure 4) pages. The PI and *OHAS* designers chose tasks for each section. There were a number of ways to complete each task but for the purposes of this study, users were expected to use a particular page to complete a task. For the "Advanced Search" page, participants were expected to use two or more search parameters to complete the task. First of all, participants were expected to set the "Scope" of their query by selecting either

²³ A. J. Head, "Beyond Google: How Do Students Conduct Academic Research?" *First Monday* 12.8 (2007); W. Holliday and Q. Li, "Understanding the Millennials: Updating Our Knowledge About Students," *Reference Services Review* 32.4 (2004): 356-366; S. V. Lombardo, & K.S. Condic, "Convenience or Content: A Study of Undergraduate Periodical Use," *Reference Services Review* 29.4 (2001): 327-337; N. Parker-Gibson, "Library Assignments: Challenges That Students Face and How to Help," *College Teaching* 49.2 (2001): 65-70; Diana Oblinger and James L. Oblinger, *Educating the Net Generation*, (Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE, 2005).

“Interview” or “Excerpt” from the “Search Scope” drop-down menu and an appropriate “Cluster,” both found in the first set of search parameters located on the “Advanced Search” page. Next, other terms should be entered, using options such as “Interviewee,” “Subject Date,” “Subject Location,” or a combination of the above using the “Boolean Search” option. For the “Browse Collection by Theme,” participants were expected to browse for a particular subcategory through a hierarchy of terms. Next, participants were asked to complete a task associated with the “Excerpt View” page. The final portion of the study consisted of a follow-up questionnaire designed to gauge the participants’ overall perceptions of the site.

During the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. However, the qualitative data was more helpful in observing the usability of the site. As discussed in the literature review, usability and satisfaction of a system go beyond the accuracy and speed at which tasks are completed. Oral feedback offered a better understanding of use and satisfaction as participants often explained their paths, intentions, and feelings while completing the tasks.

The participants met with the PI in Davis Library room 245 which contained two laptop computers equipped with Morae, usability software that recorded on-screen activity and audio while allowing for live observation. The participant was greeted by the PI and provided with a consent form that he/she was asked to read carefully (Appendix A). The PI was available to answer any questions the participant had. If the participant chose to take part in the study, he/she was asked to sign the form. The PI also signed the form, verifying that any questions asked by the participant were addressed.

Next, the PI asked participants to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix C), completed on paper. Upon completion of the demographic questionnaire, the usability observation began. The PI sat beside the participant to guide the study. Once the Morae recorder was enabled, onscreen activity was recorded and time-stamped. In addition, the verbal responses were recorded but video recording was disabled for this study to protect the privacy of the participant.

The participant was shown the homepage for *OHAS* and given a brief history of the project by the PI as well as an explanation of the study. The participant was then asked to navigate to the “Advanced Search” page, shown in Figures 2a-c.²⁴



Figure 2a: *OHAS* advanced search page, part 1 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py

²⁴ To depict the image of the Advanced Search page clearly, it has been divided in three sections. It exists on the Internet as a single web page.

General

Keyword search: ?

Interview ID (e.g. A-0001):

Interview or Excerpt Title:

Interviewee:

Interviewer:

Subject Date

Dates of events described in the interviews.

From year: To year:

Subject Place

Places described in the interviews.

City:

County:

State:

Or select from dropdown list

Figure 2b: OHAS advanced search page, part 2 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py

State:

Or select from dropdown list

Boolean Search ?

AND

Text

Text

Text

Text

Text

OR

AND

Text

Text

Text

Text

Text

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Home](#) | [UNC University Library](#) | [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

 **UNC**
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

© Copyright 2004 by the University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, all rights reserved
Copyright / Usage Statement
URL: http://docsouth.unc.edu/global/include_php.html?include=footerinside.html
Last updated April 02, 2009

Figure 2c: OHAS advanced search page, part 3 of 3. http://docsouth.unc.edu/cgi-bin/sohp/search_form.py

The PI asked the participant to discuss his or her impressions of the web page. Following these verbal responses, the PI asked the participant to complete a number of tasks. The PI read each task to be completed, allowed the participant to complete and discuss the task, and then moved to the next. The PI also asked participants to elaborate on his/her interactions with the site. Questions varied depending upon individual experiences with the web page so a script was not used, as each possible scenario could not be determined beforehand. A hard copy of the tasks was also provided to the participant for reference (Appendix B). The same technique was applied to the “Browse Collection by Theme” (Figure 3) and “Excerpt View” (Figure 4) pages.

DOCUMENTING
the American South

powered by Google™

Search All Collections Search

[Highlights](#) | [About](#) | [Collections](#) | [Authors](#) | [Titles](#) | [Subjects](#) | [Geographic](#) | [Classroom](#) | [New Additions](#)

Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South >> Browse by Collection Theme

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH



Alphabetical List of Oral History Interview Topics

Browse Collection by Theme

- [Environmental Transformations \(76\)](#)
- [General \(357\)](#)
- [Piedmont Industrialization \(278\)](#)
- [Race and Civil Rights \(411\)](#)
- [Southern Politics \(276\)](#)
- [Southern Women \(277\)](#)

[About this Collection](#) · [Acknowledgments](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Home](#) | [UNC University Library](#) | [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

 **UNC**
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

© Copyright 2004 by the University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, all rights reserved
Copyright / Usage Statement
URL: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/browse/themes.html>
Last updated March 21, 2009

Figure 3: OHAS browse page

DOCUMENTING
the American South

Search All DocSouth Collections

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South >> Interview >> Excerpt

EXCERPT FROM **Oral History Interview with Richard Arrington, July 18, 1974. Interview A-0001. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)** [See Entire Interview >>](#)

Role of the Alabama Democratic Congress

Arrington confirms that the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) is Alabama's strongest black political organization. He emphasizes the importance of organization in achieving progress for black Alabamians. He worries that black politicians are split in their support for the ADC, and he hopes that he can help mediate this dispute.

[About this Excerpt](#) - [Citing this Excerpt](#) - [Full Text of the Excerpt](#)

| About this Excerpt | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Interviewer | Jack Bass |
| Interviewee | Richard Arrington |
| Interviewee | Richard Arrington |
| Excerpt Length | 0:07:13 |
| Start Time | 00:40:10 |
| Stop Time | 00:47:23 |
| Subjects | Southern Politics > POLITICS AND CULTURE > Regional Culture Southern Politics > POLITICS AND CULTURE > Politics and Race Race and Civil Rights > BLACK RESPONSES TO CHANGE > Political Responses |

Citing this Excerpt

Oral History Interview with Richard Arrington, July 18, 1974. Interview A-0001. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) in the Southern Oral History Program Collection, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Full Text of the Excerpt

Figure 4: OHAS sample "Excerpt View" page

Upon completion of the tasks, participants were asked to complete a brief follow-up questionnaire about their experiences with the site, in a Word document (Appendix C). The participant was provided with a copy of the consent form and given ten dollars for their participation in the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Participant Demographics

A total of ten individuals participated in this study, eight females and two males. Eight participants were undergraduates and two were faculty members. Of the ten participants, three had experience with either *OHAS* or *DocSouth*. One faculty member noted using *DocSouth* for slave narratives but never *OHAS*. Another faculty member noted using *OHAS* in class instruction and SOHP for interviews related to academic research. One student had used *OHAS* briefly for an American Studies assignment.

Usability: Advanced Search Page

General Impressions

The initial impressions of the advanced search page were positive. Four participants noted the clean, organized look of the site. In addition, three participants commented on the appropriateness of the website's color. Carolina Blue is a color *very* familiar to those with ties to UNC-Chapel Hill.

Although mostly positive, some participants expressed confusion about certain aspects of the page. While six of the ten participants were unsure as to the meaning of "Cluster" in the "Search Scope" box, one noted that reading over the terms in the drop-down list explained this concept and two found the clusters helpful. Another participant noted that he/she did not understand the difference between "Excerpt" and "Interview,"

the options available in the “Search Scope” drop-down menu. Two of the participants immediately commented on the “Subject Date” field and thought it would be useful in refining searches. Although the amount of information was overwhelming for one participant, most noted that having many parameters to search by would be helpful. While six of the ten participants did not understand “Boolean Search,” two found the help button useful in exploring the concept, and one found “Boolean Search” to be helpful.

| Advanced Search: Time Each Participant Spent Per Task (in seconds) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Task* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Participant | 1 | X | 63 | 60 | 84 | X | X | 24 | 50 | 23 | 30 | 30 |
| | 2 | X | 90 | 26 | 43 | 39 | 19 | 17 | 25 | X | 16 | X |
| | 3 | 23 | 47 | 23 | 61 | 20 | 44 | 59 | 22 | 29 | 14 | 29 |
| | 4 | X | 64 | 16 | 43 | 12 | 18 | X | 21 | 10 | 25 | 83 |
| | 5 | 69 | 11 | 26 | 12 | 20 | 25 | 50 | 45 | 17 | 32 | 53 |
| | 6 | X | 75 | 89 | 52 | 30 | 23 | 30 | 36 | 28 | 24 | 37 |
| | 7 | X | 21 | 17 | 8 | 16 | 12 | 30 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 18 |
| | 8 | 19 | 35 | 16 | 44 | 18 | 12 | 10 | 17 | 19 | 17 | 42 |
| | 9 | X | 54 | 13 | 9 | 20 | 59 | 26 | 18 | 22 | 19 | 19 |
| | 10 | X | 53 | 26 | 14 | 35 | 24 | 43 | 23 | 57 | 19 | 69 |

**X=did not complete task*

Figure 5: Results from Advanced Search tasks

Task 1: Search for all interviews relating to “Civil Rights.”

As seen in Figure 5, the majority of participants did not complete this task as they chose “Civil Rights” from the “Cluster” list under the “General” heading (see Figure 2a). Choosing “Scope” or “Cluster” alone yields no results but the participants perceived this as the most effective way to retrieve interviews related to “Civil Rights.” They thought this was a system error and proceeded to the next task. Of the three participants who retrieved results from this search, two selected “Interview” from “Search Scope” and

entered “Civil Rights”²⁵ in the “Keyword search” box. Another participant left the default value for “Search Scope” as “Excerpt,” chose “All” from the “Search in cluster” list, and entered “Civil Rights” in the “Keyword search” box. Overwhelmed by the results, 1,127 excerpts, he/she clicked on “Refine your search” to explore ways of narrowing the retrieval set.

In addition, one of the participants who completed the task played the audio file for an interview in the results list. The participant chose “Listen Online with Text Transcript,” as depicted in Figure 6, because it was the first link on the page, after selecting the interview.

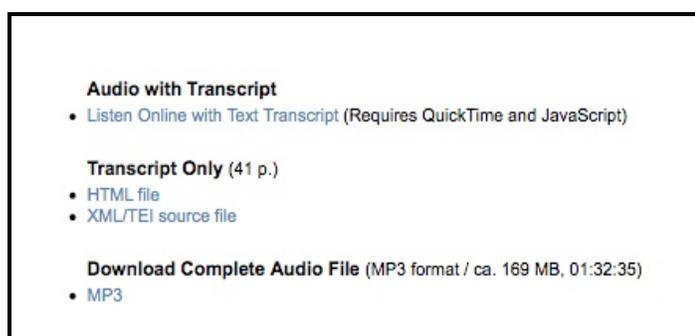


Figure 6: Oral History audio and text options

Although the participant expected the audio to automatically start, he/she liked the fact that it did not, allowing him/her to read ahead, especially since the audio is somewhat fuzzy. One participant found the page to be confusing as it contained two scroll bars, as seen in Figure 7.

²⁵ Note that the double quotes around search terms are used to distinguish these from surrounding text and were not used in the actual search. Single quotes depict user-supplied quotations around search terms.

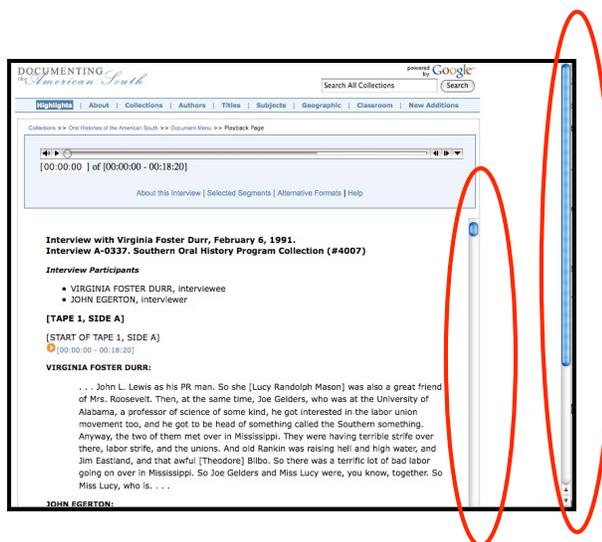


Figure 7: Example of two scroll-bars on “Listen Online with Audio Transcript” page

Task 2: Search for an interview with an ID number of C-0016.

Four participants did not search specifically for interviews by selecting “Interview” from the “Search Scope” drop-down menu and retrieved fifteen *excerpts* instead. However, one participant did refine the search, choosing “Interview” from the drop-down menu after noticing the results did not include interviews. One difficulty many of the participants encountered was the correct format for entering “Interview ID.” The “Interview ID” must be typed in a particular format and an example is included to the left of the search box as shown in Figure 8. One participant expected the format example to be on the right. Although six participants did not initially enter this information correctly, five noted that the example was helpful. In addition, one participant suggested adding an error message to let the user know that the information was entered incorrectly. Participants eventually discovered the proper way to format the “Interview ID” search term.

The image shows a search interface with a 'General' tab. It contains several input fields and dropdown menus. The 'Interview ID (e.g. A-0001):' field is highlighted with a red circle. The other fields are: 'Keyword search:' (with a search icon), 'Interview or Excerpt Title:', 'Interviewee:' (with a dropdown menu showing '--Select an Interviewee--'), and 'Interviewer:' (with a dropdown menu showing '--Select an Interviewer--').

Figure 8: Interview ID field

Task 3: Search for all interviews containing information about the 1930s.

The most common method to complete this task was using the “Subject Date” field and entering “1930” to “1939.” There was some confusion about how to enter date ranges as one participant noted that a search from “1929” to “1940” may be best while another preferred to search a broader range of dates, “1925” to “1945,” thinking that events that take place in one decade are not necessarily isolated to that particular time period. Again, six participants overlooked the “Search Scope” field and did not select “Interview” from the drop-down menu, retrieving excerpts instead.

Task 4: Search for all interviews containing information about the place, Macon Georgia.

While all participants retrieved results for this task, six did not select “Interview” from the drop-down “Search Scope” menu and retrieved only excerpts. One participant spelled out “Georgia” in the “State” box, retrieved no results, and refined the search, typing “GA” instead. All other participants entered the postal abbreviation for Georgia, “GA,” explaining that the small box indicated this was the correct format. Many of the participants voiced the desire to begin typing in the state name and have a list to choose

from, rather than remembering the postal abbreviation or using the location drop-down menu. Three participants suggested adding a drop-down menu for the state abbreviations. Furthermore, one participant said that he/she would search Google for state abbreviations if not known. While there is a location drop-down menu, it is not formatted consistently, as seen in Figure 9. For example, “AL” appears at the beginning of all locations for Alabama but the same is not true for California and many other states. In addition, it is not alphabetized by the city name, creating some confusion for participants.

Figure 9: Subject Place search box

Task 5: Search for all selected segments from interviews dealing with the Great Depression.

Due to an oversight, one participant was not asked to complete this task. Six participants entered “great depression” into the “Keyword search” box, retrieving 282

excerpts. One of these participants then decided to use the “Boolean Search,” entering “great” AND “depression,” retrieving 106 excerpts. Similarly, one participant searched for “Great Depression” using both the keyword and “Boolean search” boxes, returning 103 excerpts. Another participant decided to search by years, “1920” to “1929,” retrieving 328 excerpts and another entered only “depression” into the “Keyword search” box with 163 excerpts.

Task 6: Search for all selected segments from interviews dealing with either Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton.

One participant spent an extended length of time on this task and did not retrieve any results while other participants used a variety of methods to retrieve excerpts dealing with Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton. Three participants utilized the “Keyword search” box to conduct this search. One participant used the terms “jimmy carter or bill clinton” and another “jimmy carter bill clinton.” Another participant utilized the help button, shown in Figure 10, to learn more about the “Keyword search” box.



Figure 10: Keyword Search box

The help menu directed the participant to an outside page. From here, the participant discovered the OR operator and entered “‘jimmy carter’ or bill clinton.” One participant searched “Excerpt” and then used the “Boolean Search” box to enter “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton,” demonstrated in Figure 11, returning one excerpt.

The screenshot shows a 'Boolean Search' interface with two search groups. The first group is connected to the second group by an 'OR' operator. The first group has a dropdown menu set to 'AND' and contains five text input fields, with the first field containing 'Jimmy Carter'. The second group also has a dropdown menu set to 'AND' and contains five text input fields, with the first field containing 'Bill Clinton'. A yellow circle highlights the 'Search' button at the bottom left.

Figure 11: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton for Task 6, example 1

Two participants also used the strategy in Figure 11, returning 36 excerpts. One of the participants who initially used a keyword search went back and used the strategy depicted in Figure 11, also returning 36 excerpts. Two participants utilized the “Boolean Search” but entered the search terms as shown in Figure 12, finding 36 excerpts.

The screenshot shows a 'Boolean Search' interface with two search groups. The first group is connected to the second group by an 'OR' operator. The first group has a dropdown menu set to 'OR' and contains five text input fields, with the first field containing 'Jimmy Carter' and the second field containing 'Bill Clinton'. The second group has a dropdown menu set to 'AND' and contains five empty text input fields. A yellow circle highlights the 'Search' button at the bottom left.

Figure 12: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton” for Task 6, example 2

Yet another participant returned 36 excerpts by entering the search shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Boolean Search “Jimmy Carter OR Bill Clinton” with OR selected at the top of each column for Task 6

Thus, there was little consistency in how the participants utilized the “Boolean Search” box, yet they felt it to be useful and appropriate for this type of query.

Task 7: Search for all interviews that William C. Friday gave.

Due to an oversight, one participant was not asked to complete this task. Of the nine asked to complete the task, four participants used the “Keyword search” to find excerpts rather than interviews, neglecting to select “Interview” from the “Search Scope” drop-down menu. Another participant did a keyword search on “William C. Friday” and selected “Interview.” Three participants chose “Interview” from the “Search Scope” drop-down menu and used the “Interviewee” menu to find William C. Friday. Finally, one participant did a keyword search for William Friday and limited the search to “Interview”. Noting the large number of results, the participant clicked on “Refine your search” and selected “William C. Friday” from the “Interviewee” drop-down menu. Many of the participants were unsure as to how the list of interviewees was arranged but eventually discovered it was alphabetical by last name.

Task 8: Search for all selected excerpts from interviews that deal with Frank Porter Graham and Anne Queen.

Seven participants utilized the “Boolean Search” box to complete this task and five of these used the technique shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Boolean Search “frank porter graham AND anne queen” for Task 7

One participant, knowing that Graham went by many names and recognizing that “Anne” may be spelled in multiple ways, used the “Boolean Search” depicted in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Boolean Search with multiple instances of names for Task 7

Finally, another participant who used this search box completed the task as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Boolean Search “frank porter graham OR anne queen” for Task 7

Three participants utilized the “Keyword search” box, searching “frank porter graham anne queen,” “frank porter graham or anne queen,” or “frank porter graham + anne queen.” Participants who used the “Boolean Search” box for this task had more consistent results.

Task 9: Search for all selected excerpts from interviews dealing with William C. Friday and the year 1965.

Three participants entered “William C. Friday” in the “Keyword search” box and “1965” to “1965” in the “Subject Date” field while two participants selected “William C. Friday” from the “Interviewee” drop-down menu and searched “1965” to “1965.” The former returned 13 excerpts and the latter 11 excerpts. Another participant utilized the “Keyword search” and “Subject Date” fields, entering “1965” only in the first field, shown in Figure 17, retrieving 21 excerpts.

The screenshot shows a search interface with two main sections: "General" and "Subject Date".

General

- Keyword search: ?
- Interview ID (e.g. A-0001):
- Interview or Excerpt Title:
- Interviewee:
- Interviewer:

Subject Date

Dates of events described in the interviews.

From year: To year:

Figure 17: Keyword Search “William C. Friday” and Subject Date “1965” for Task 8

Another participant familiar with the variations of William C. Friday’s name, used the search techniques depicted in 18a and 18b, completing the former and refining the search with the latter.

The screenshot shows a Boolean Search interface with two columns of search criteria.

Boolean Search ?

Column 1 (Left):

- Operator:
- Text
- Text
- Text
- Text
- Text

Column 2 (Right):

- Operator:
- Text
- Text
- Text
- Text
- Text

Operator:

Search:

Figure 18a: Boolean Search for “William C. Friday” and various instances of name

Figure 18b: Boolean Search for “William C. Friday” and various instances of name

Another entered “1965” to “1965” in the subject date and decided to enter “William C. Friday” in one of the text field boxes in the “Boolean Search,” returning the same number of results as those entering “William C. Friday” in the “Keyword search” box. Finally, another participant used the “Boolean Search” for both the name and year, as seen in Figure 19, returning 0 results.

Figure 19: Boolean Search “William C. Friday AND 1965” for Task 8

Task 10: Search for all interviews containing the term “women’s liberation.”

Six participants found 221 interviews by entering “women’s liberation” in the “Keyword search” box and selecting “Interview” from the “Scope Search” menu. Three

participants retrieved 907 excerpts with a similar search but did not choose “Interview” from the “Search Scope” drop-down menu. Another participant selected “Interview” from the “Scope Search” menu but used the “Boolean Search” box to type in “women’s liberation,” retrieving 7 interviews. This participant chose the “Boolean Search” box rather than the “Keyword search” box, believing the former searched the full-text of the interview while the latter only the abstract on the results page.

Task 11: Search for all interviews given by William C. Friday in which he discusses desegregation.

Five participants retrieved two interviews by selecting William C. Friday from the “Interviewee” drop-down menu and entering “desegregation” in the “Keyword search” box. Three participants completed the above search but did not select “Interview” from the “Search Scope” menu. Another participant selected “William C. Friday” from the “Interviewee” drop-down menu and entered “desegregation” in the “Boolean Search” box, retrieving two results. This was the participant who, as mentioned earlier, believed the “Boolean Search” would find the terms in the full-text of the interview whereas the keyword search only queried the abstract found on the results page. Finally, one participant used the “Keyword search” box to enter “desegregation and William C. Friday” after having difficulty finding the name in the “Interviewee” drop-down list.

Browse Collection by Theme Page

General Impressions

The image of the “Shotgun Houses” located on the “Browse Collection by Theme” page was very well received. For one participant, the “simple image” would help them remember the page. Two participants eventually clicked on the picture to learn more about the image. Other participants commented on the clean, simple look of the page. A few participants suggested adding more images or changing the background color to make the page more inviting. Furthermore, participants were drawn to the numbers beside each theme and liked knowing where the bulk of the information was located. Others, looking at the number of interviews for each, were overwhelmed by the larger number and said they would be more likely to use the search page as they can refine and narrow the search to their liking. However, one participant was “stunned by the limited number of topics.” After browsing the themes, this participant said, “[The] homepage is so simple it doesn’t appear to be that many topics but I actually think there are a lot of topics.” The participant suggested, as did others later in this section of the study, an expandable menu at either the first or second level of browsing so topics of potential interest are not overlooked. An expandable menu might also help participants who felt overwhelmed by the larger number of interviews in each category, explained one participant. It seems that many of the participants were unaware that the categories contain subcategories.

DOCUMENTING
the American South

powered by Google

Search All Collections Search

[Highlights](#) | [About](#) | [Collections](#) | [Authors](#) | [Titles](#) | [Subjects](#) | [Geographic](#) | [Classroom](#) | [New Additions](#)

Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South >> Browse by Collection Theme

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH



Alphabetical List of Oral History Interview Topics

Browse Collection by Theme

- [Environmental Transformations \(76\)](#)
- [General \(357\)](#)
- [Piedmont Industrialization \(278\)](#)
- [Race and Civil Rights \(411\)](#)
- [Southern Politics \(276\)](#)
- [Southern Women \(277\)](#)

[About this Collection](#) · [Acknowledgments](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Home](#) | [UNC University Library](#) | [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

 **UNC**
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

© Copyright 2004 by the University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, all rights reserved
[Copyright / Usage Statement](#)
 URL: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/browse/themes.html>
 Last updated March 21, 2009

Figure 20: Browse Theme page

| | Task* | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Participant | 1 | 36 | 37 | 26 |
| | 2 | 41 | 26 | 19 |
| | 3 | 11 | 38 | 10 |
| | 4 | 86 | 46 | 14 |
| | 5 | 36 | 38 | 15 |
| | 6 | 45 | 75 | 22 |
| | 7 | 18 | 13 | 8 |
| | 8 | 49 | 30 | 15 |
| | 9 | 34 | X | 38 |
| | 10 | 32 | 40 | 38 |

*X=did not complete task

Figure 21: Results from Browse Theme by Collection tasks

Task 1: Find all interviews that relate to Southern Politics and the Democratic Party.

Play the audio for one of these interviews.

Each of the ten participants located interviews about the Democratic Party. The second and third levels of themes are not ordered alphabetically or by number of interviews, creating some confusion for the participants. As mentioned above in the general impressions of the page, five participants noted they would like to see subcategories without advancing to the next screen and again suggested including expandable menus. A few even expected to find a search box to narrow the results.

When asked to play the audio for one of the interviews, each participant was able to do so. Nine participants chose “Listen Online with Text Transcript” although they initially hovered over “MP3,” noting it was a familiar term. For those who had chosen “MP3” earlier in the usability study, they actually preferred listening to the audio online because they did not have to download a file to the computer and the audio was somewhat fuzzy, so the transcript aided their listening. The online player does not

automatically start; participants must click on the play button. Although most expected the player to start automatically, they preferred that it did not, citing frustrating experiences on sites such as YouTube and MySpace where audio and video clips do so. One participant made an important note about the presence of the audio and transcript on the same screen. In the example shown in Figure 22, Jimmy Carter is discussing racism and politics. Reading the transcript, you would not notice the emphasis Carter placed on “a” in the sentence circled below. This format, according to the participant, is great for fully understanding the interviewee’s tone and meaning.

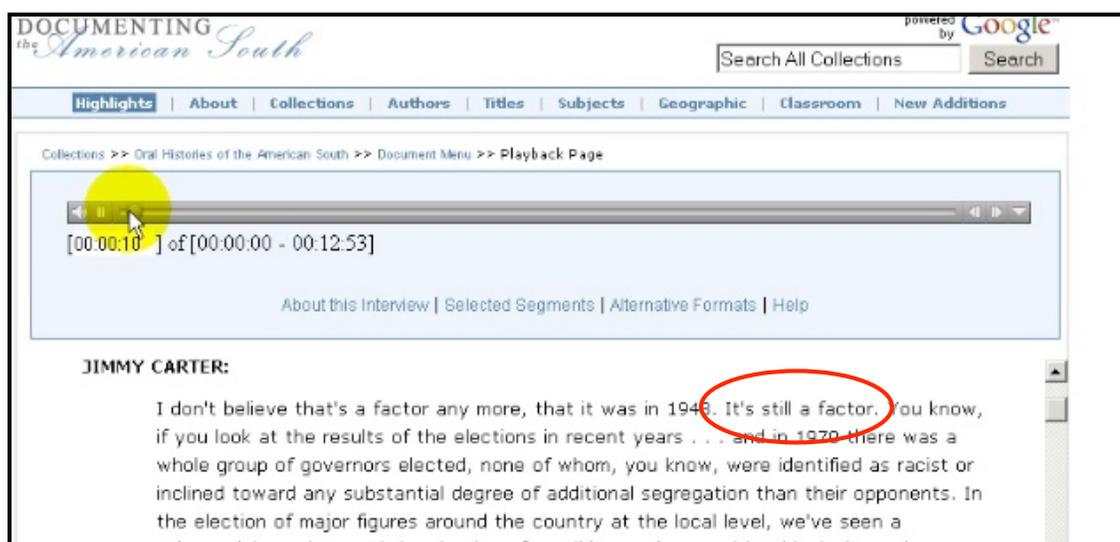


Figure 22: Audio and Text with emphasis added

Task 2: Find all interviews relating to Women’s Suffrage.

This task was especially problematic for participants in terms of which subcategory to choose. After selecting “Southern Women” from the first screen, nine participants were unsure which category to choose, “Women’s Movements” or “Women’s Activism,” depicted in Figure 23. One participant browsed interviews under the “General” heading but eventually found interviews by selecting Southern

Women → Women's Movements → Suffrage. Three participants were expecting a search box to help them narrow the results.

DOCUMENTING
the American South

powered by Google™

Search All Collections Search

Highlights | About | Collections | Authors | Titles | Subjects | Geographic | Classroom | New Additions

Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South >> Browse by Collection Theme >> Southern Women

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Alphabetical List of Oral History Interview Topics

Browse Collection by Theme

Southern Women

- WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS (77)
- WOMEN'S ACTIVISM (92)
- WOMEN AND WORK (115)
- GENDER AND GENDER RELATIONS (80)
- SEXUALITY (81)
- FAMILY AND DOMESTIC SPHERE (198)

Results (most relevant first)

Oral History Interview with Eulalie Salley, September 15, 1973. Interview G-0054. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)

Eulalie Salley, a suffragist from South Carolina, describes the effort of American suffragists to bring about the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, the issues that mobilized male and female supporters of women's suffrage, important leaders in the movement, and the issues facing women today.

Oral History Interview with Julia Virginia Jones, October 6, 1997. Interview J-0072. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)

Julia Virginia Jones traces the development of her professional career, which culminated in a federal judgeship. She illuminates the impact her gender had on her growth in the legal field.

Figure 23: Women's Movements and Women's Activism themes

Task 3: Find all interviews dealing with pollution.

This task was also troublesome for many participants. Seven participants believed interviews relating to "Pollution" could be under a number of categories. One participant also noted that the themes are not listed alphabetically, thus making it harder to locate the appropriate heading. One participant worried that some interviews may be overlooked since "pollution" could fit within multiple categories. The participant said, "Then I start

worrying about how it got cataloged and I start liking your Boolean search engine...” For this participant, and others, the search engine becomes the preferred method of retrieving results. For example, one participant chose to use the “Search All Collections” search box to complete the query, depicted in Figure 24. Search terms entered in this box retrieve results from the entire *DocSouth* collection, not just the current collection.

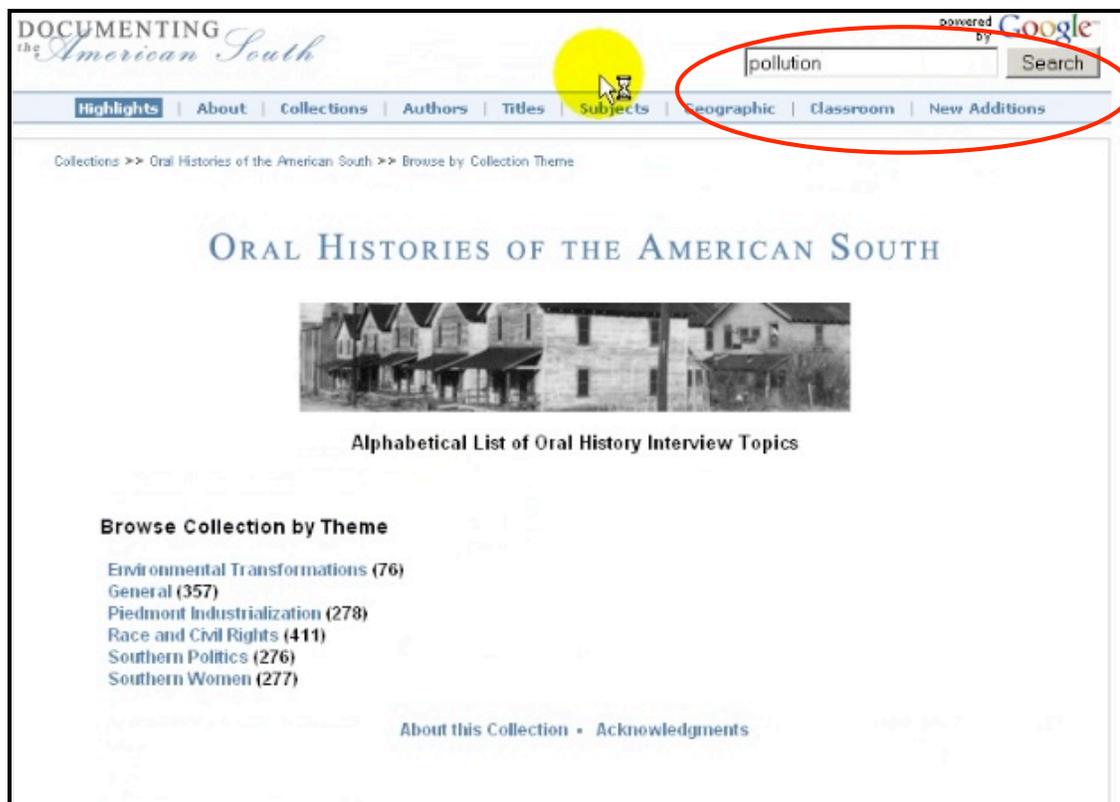


Figure 24: Search for “Pollution” on Browse Theme page

Excerpt View Page

General Impressions

The participants were especially appreciative of the citation information for the excerpt. One participant noted “Sometimes they stick this kind of stuff in the corner.” Other participants noticed the text of the excerpt and suggested they may not even listen

to the audio if this information was provided, in order to save time. The “Subjects” were also helpful, according to many participants, so they may find similar excerpts. Furthermore, the quick links, “About this Excerpt,” “Citing this Excerpt,” and “Full Text of the Excerpt,” were helpful for the participants. It should be noted that Richard Arrington is listed twice in “About this Excerpt” section of the page. In addition, Arrington is listed twice in the “Interviewee” drop-down list on the “Advanced Search” page.

The screenshot shows the 'Excerpt View' page for an oral history interview. At the top, there is a search bar and the logo 'DOCUMENTING the American South'. The main heading is 'ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH'. Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Collections >> Oral Histories of the American South >> Interview >> Excerpt'. The excerpt is titled 'Oral History Interview with Richard Arrington, July 18, 1974. Interview A-0001. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007)'. A link 'See Entire Interview >>' is provided. The excerpt text is 'Role of the Alabama Democratic Congress' and describes Arrington's views on the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). Below the text are links for 'About this Excerpt', 'Citing this Excerpt', and 'Full Text of the Excerpt'. The 'About this Excerpt' section contains a table with the following data:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Interviewer | Jack Bass |
| Interviewee | Richard Arrington |
| Interviewee | Richard Arrington |
| Excerpt Length | 0:07:13 |
| Start Time | 00:40:10 |
| Stop Time | 00:47:23 |
| Subjects | Southern Politics > POLITICS AND CULTURE > Regional Culture Southern Politics > POLITICS AND CULTURE > Politics and Race Race and Civil Rights > BLACK RESPONSES TO CHANGE > Political Responses |

The 'Citing this Excerpt' section provides the following citation: 'Oral History Interview with Richard Arrington, July 18, 1974. Interview A-0001. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) in the Southern Oral History Program Collection, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.' At the bottom, there is a link for 'Full Text of the Excerpt'.

Figure 25: Excerpt View page

Task 1: Find the link to navigate back to the full interview.

Although the participants liked the information displayed on this page, many had difficulties finding the audio clip for the interview. Two participants utilized the “Interview” link in the breadcrumb, shown in Figure 26, to navigate to the entire interview and audio.

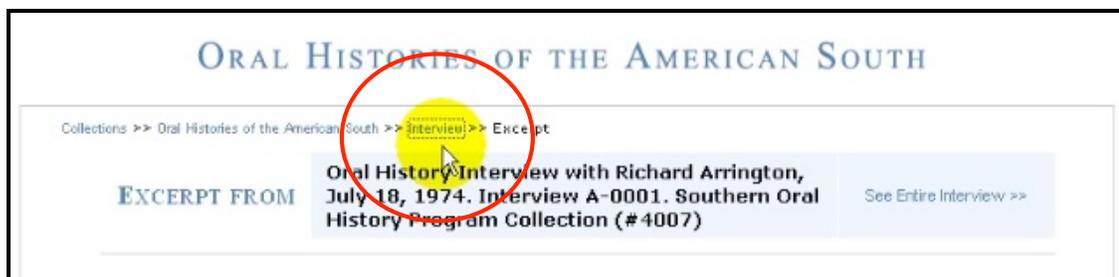


Figure 26: Interview breadcrumb

One participant suggested moving the “See Entire Interview” link below the excerpt title as depicted in Figure 27a.

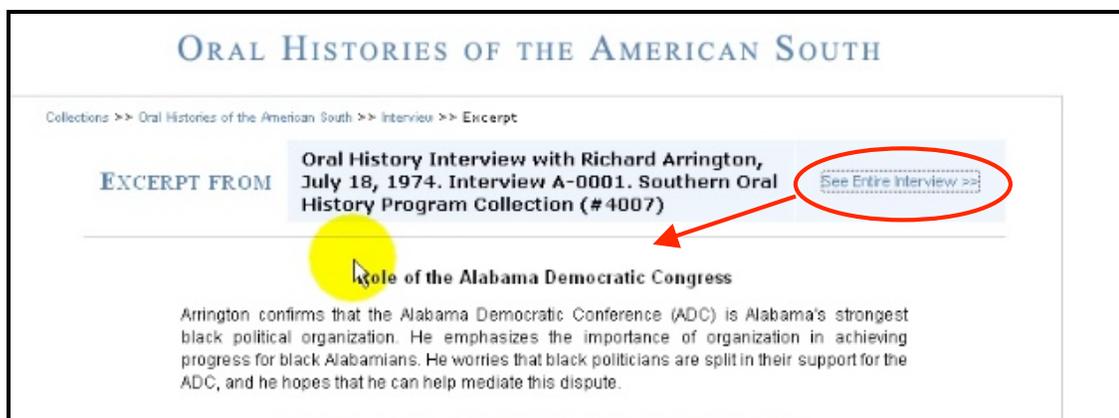


Figure 27a: Suggested location of See Entire Interview link

Others expected the “See Entire Interview” link to appear with the other links on the page as they are “telling you things you can do [from this page]” (see Figure 27b).

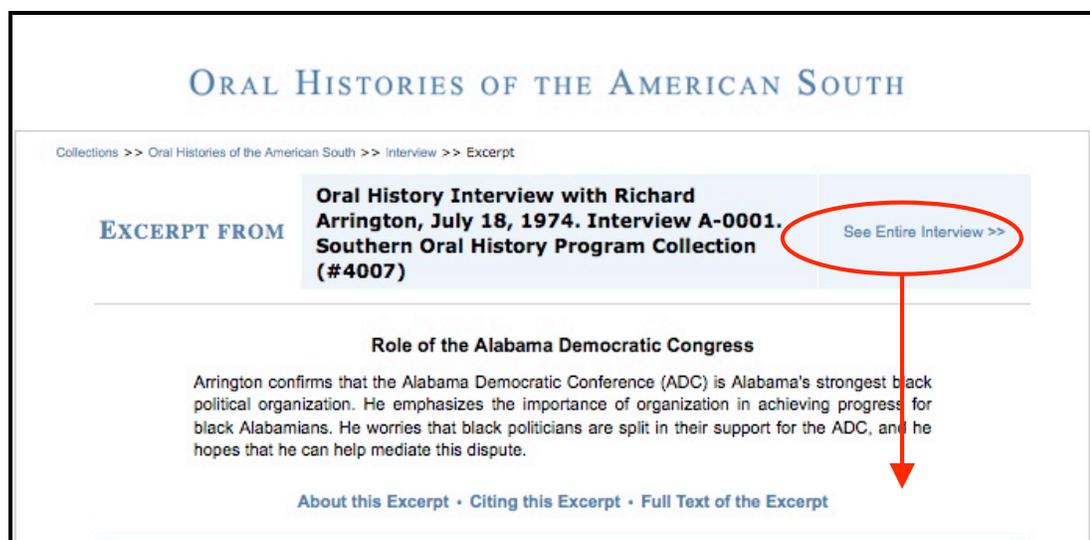


Figure 27b: Suggested location of See Entire Interview link

Once participants navigated to the interview page they started playing the audio from the beginning of the interview, rather than playing the audio from the excerpt. Given more time, some may have found this particular audio clip, as some recognized the start and stop time on the excerpt page, as well as the segments in the online text transcript. One participant, in particular, would like to have played the audio from the excerpt page. Also, participants suggested changing the terminology on the “Excerpt View” and “Interview” pages to be more simplistic, such as “Audio,” “Transcript,” or “Both,” shown in Figure 28.

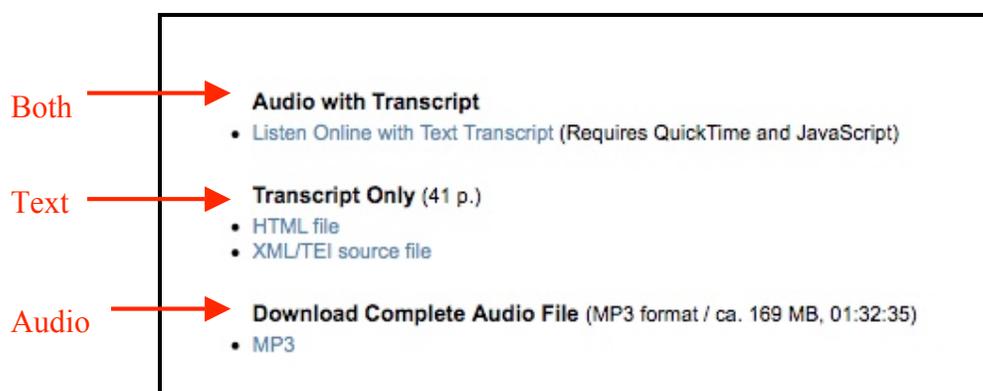


Figure 28: Suggested wording of Headings and Links relating to listening and viewing audio

Follow-up Questionnaire

1. What is your overall experience with the site?

The participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the site in the follow-up questionnaire. The participants found the site to be clean and appropriate for general or specific searches. One participant noted that it was a useful place to find oral history interviews and would consider it among all of the possible resources for class projects. Some things about layout of site should change “but compared to other library sites, it was easy to use.” Others noted that a few “glitches” need to be worked on, such as the alphabetization of various lists and drop-down menus, but were pleased nonetheless. Referring to the “Browse Collection by Theme” page, one participant wrote, “The links were a bit difficult to anticipate where it would navigate me.”

2. Would you be more likely to use the search or browse page to identify oral histories related to your projects? Please explain.

Participants would use the browse page if looking for background information or researching an area with which they were unfamiliar. However, most participants reported they would use the search page more often. For example, “I would be more likely to use the search page since most of the time I would be writing about a pretty specific topic. The browse page was not all that intuitive and so wouldn’t be as helpful for me personally.” Another participant wrote,

I would use the search, just because I am used to typing in a general search category and going from there. I am not usually very comfortable with categories that others use, which sounds suspicious, but it’s really just that it’s easier to type in what you want in a general sense and then work to narrow your results from there.

So, for many participants, the search page provided “more control over the search results.” One participant did prefer the browsing page for retrieving interviews.

3. Do you find the searching and browsing pages helpful? Please explain.

Answers for this question were similar to those for Question 2 of the follow-up questionnaire. Participants found both pages helpful as they complement each other. Again, the search page was preferred as it was “more specific and direct” but one participant suggested making the “Boolean Search” option clearer. Furthermore, the browse page was not as helpful to some. As one participant noted, “I didn’t like the browse pages because I had to go through several pages to get to what I wanted and then had to search that last page to find it.” According to one participant, “A full listing of all of the subcategories would make [the browse page] more helpful.” He/she suggested adding expandable menus for the categories on the browse page.

4. What do you think of the navigation of these web pages?

Participants reported that the site was fairly simple to navigate, noting that it was similar to other web pages used in the past. One participant wrote,

The navigation is pretty simple. Again, nothing too hard. I would relocate the link for ‘view entire interview’ so that I am not confused on what it actually means of what information can be viewed from the link. You want to make sure that the search is as easy as possible. I want to spend time dissecting the interview, not the actual search.”

A few participants suggested adding clearer links to the homepage but others felt the breadcrumbs allowed for easy navigation. Overall, the participants were satisfied with the site’s navigation in the follow-up questionnaire.

5. *If you were doing research or covering a topic in a course, would you be likely to use these web pages to inform your research? Why or why not?*

Eight of ten participants reported that they would use the *OHAS* site for research. “I would be likely to use them because they include good primary resources. It is especially helpful that the interviews are presented in audio format and in transcriptions.” Two participants reported they would not likely use *OHAS*. One participant wrote, “It probably would not be the first place I went for information because other sources would be my first choice.” One barrier to the use of oral histories was time. “I would probably look first to other print materials just because it takes a lot of time to listen to interviews. If the class called for it specifically, then I would use these web pages.” Some participants perceived even the excerpts as “too long.”

6. *Would you prefer to access oral histories via the Internet or by visiting a library? Please explain.*

All ten participants wrote that they would prefer accessing oral histories via the Internet as this was most convenient and time efficient. For example, “I love going to libraries, but when on a deadline, I much prefer to access information as quickly as possible.” Another participant, a professor, wrote,

Honestly, by the internet. It is easier to combine it with other research and teaching materials that are at specific locations – home, office, and classroom. Also, I can work in a people-friendlier environment (coffee, snacks, sweat pants and weird hours – EARLY morning and late night!).

Another participant also noted, “I think that most people will access these online just because it is so easy. I think they will be more listened to, as in, more people will think of oral histories as a usable source because they can be found online.”

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overall, participants were pleased with *OHAS* and found it to be a usable site. Interestingly, the undergraduates and faculty had similar reactions and experiences with the site. As noted above, most would use *OHAS* if an assignment or research project warranted use of oral histories. As expected, participants preferred accessing these materials online as it saves time and can be done from any location, at any hour of the day. The participants used these search and browse options because the study was focused on testing the usability of these pages. However, many participants, and users in general, may prefer the simple keyword search on the front page of the *OHAS* site. Thus, the study may have altered the way participants would have normally searched for information on the site as they were asked to specifically use the “Advanced Search” and “Browse Collection by Theme” pages. Although the amount of time spent per task was collected, it was not useful in determining the usability of the pages as many participants explored the pages and discussed their experiences with *OHAS*, creating an inaccurate depiction of the amount of time spent on each task.

Although participants felt the site easy to navigate, a few changes will make the site more easily accessible. Participants often overlooked “Search Scope” when searching for interviews, retrieving excerpts instead (see Figure 2a). The term “Search Scope” was not well defined for participants. At the very least, the default search should be “Interview,” rather than “Excerpt” to more closely resemble the results retrieved from the basic keyword search on the homepage or the “Browse Theme by Collection” page. If

this is not possible, a radio button setup may be used so users see both the “Interview” and “Excerpt” options at once, rather than having to select from a drop-down menu. In addition, the “Search in cluster” field was confusing to many participants (see Figure 2a). For examples, the first task for the “Advanced Search” page asked participants to find all interviews relating to “Civil Rights.” Only three participants were able to complete this task. The participants believed that choosing “Civil Rights” from the “Search in cluster” list would complete the task. Instead, the search returned zero results. Additional help information may allow users to better understand this functionality. It may also be possible to allow researchers to select only from the cluster list and still retrieve results. Another option may be including an error message for this type of search.

Because of the “Advanced Search” page’s layout, many participants were unclear as to how many search parameters should be used. The breaks in the different search boxes added to this confusion. Rather than creating separate boxes for “Scope,” “General,” “Subject Date,” “Subject Location,” and “Boolean Search,” suggested one participant, designers may consider eliminating the white space between each.

Because participants had difficulty identifying the best way to use the “Boolean Search” box, this option should be streamlined. One of the possibilities would be to create a single column, much like that used in Ebsco and other article databases. In addition, an example might be useful. This information could be included under a help menu to maintain the clean look of the page. As is, the “Help” button is not particularly useful in assisting users with the “Boolean Search” box. In addition, the “Help” button for the “Keyword search” box should include a few examples of common search syntax to ensure users do not exit *OHAS* to find this information. Finally, a “Help” button for

“Subject Date” may give users a better understanding of how to enter single and multiple years under this search parameter as this was unclear for some participants.

Another suggestion for the “Boolean Search” box is to re-label “Text” as “Keyword.” One user, a professor, perceived the “Boolean Search” to search the entire interview while the keyword search only searches the blurb located on the results page. This may be attributed to the fact that older systems offered a “keyword” search but this only searched one aspect of the metadata, for example, title. Consistency in wording may clear up this misconception and allow users to better understand *what* they are searching when utilizing the “Boolean Search” option.

The information in some of the lists, including the “Interviewee” and “Interviewer” drop-down menu, as well as the themes on the “Browse Collection by Theme” page, should be reorganized. As seen in Figure 29, for example, interviewees are listed alphabetically by last name but this is not easily noticeable for those reading from left to right. Reorganizing the list so it appears “Last Name, First Name” may save users time. Also, the themes should be listed alphabetically on each “Browse Collection by Theme” page to better assist users.

The “Excerpt View” page lists Arrington twice as the “Interviewee” and Carrie Lee Geringer, as seen in Figure 29, has two entries. A system error, possibly a special character in these names, may account for the double listing. Further research may uncover the cause of this error and allow designers to solve this issue.

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Advanced Search

Our advanced search tool offers a number of options to increase the accessibility of the content of our collection of interviews. Any combination of fields below may be used. Click the search button at the bottom of the page to see your results.

Scope

Search scope:

Search in cluster:

General

Keyword search:

Interview ID (e.g. A-0001):

Interview or Excerpt Title:

Interviewee:

Interviewer:

Figure 29: Interviewee drop-down menu

A drop-down menu for the “State” may assist users in selecting the appropriate postal abbreviation. Also, this will require users submit a postal abbreviation rather than typing out the state name, reducing the number of system errors. In addition, the “Location” drop-down menu shows some inconsistency. For example, “AL” appears at the beginning of all locations for Alabama but the same is not true for California and many other states. Verifying the appearance of headings for each cluster of states may help users more easily find the location they wish to search.

Many participants also suggested including expandable menus for the “Browse Theme by Collection” page. Doing so will allow users to access subcategories for a number of topics on one screen. This is especially helpful as many users were uncertain which category might contain the information they were tasked to find. Others users were unaware that subcategories even existed. Thus, expandable menus on the “Browse Theme by Collection” page will assist users in selecting appropriate categories and subcategories by which to browse. In addition, the number beside the category should be displayed

consistently. On the second level of the category hierarchy, the numbers are not in bold. This simple edit will create more consistency in the interface.

Finally, the listening options may be streamlined to better assist users. One participant suggested adding a direct link from the “Excerpt View” page to the appropriate audio segment may eliminate some of the confusion in navigation. Re-aligning links on the “Excerpt View” page, as shown in Figures 27a and 27b may also allow users to better locate the entire interview. Another possibility, depicted in Figure 28, recommends altering the language on the interview page to make the various listening and viewing options more apparent.

As noted by some participants in the follow-up questionnaire, not all research projects or assignments necessitate the use of oral histories. Outreach to those who may benefit from the use of oral histories may increase the use of the collection. Also, these implementations will hopefully increase use of the site. Future usability studies will allow designers to assess the usefulness of these changes. In addition, other user groups may be studied, including graduate students as well as primary and secondary educators to ensure a better sampling of the potential users.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to test the usability of the *OHAS* “Advanced Search,” “Browse Theme by Collection,” and “Excerpt View” pages. This study found that the pages were generally useable and effective for retrieving oral histories on the Internet. The participants liked the clean look of the pages and the rich content, especially the citation information and transcripts.

Despite the overall satisfaction with the site, a few changes should be implemented to ensure users are able to easily locate information. More examples of how to use particular aspects of the “Advanced Search” page, better layout of drop-down menus, and expandable menus on the “Browse Theme by Collection” page will go far in creating a better experience for users.

This study is an important first step in ensuring the usability of this invaluable resource. As little research has been conducted on the usability of search interfaces for digitized oral history sites, it was important to test the site. Also, because each user group differs, future usability studies on this system and others will enable designers to build better interfaces that strive to meet community needs.

Chapter 7: Bibliography

- Battleson, Brenda, Austin Booth, and Jane Weintrop. "Usability Testing of an Academic Library Web Site: A Case Study." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 27.3 (2001): 188-98.
- Bishop, Ann P., Nancy A. Van House, and Barbara Pfeil Buttenfield. *Digital Library Use: Social Practice in Design and Evaluation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.
- Bond, Trevor James and Michael Walpole. "Streaming Audio with Synchronized Transcripts Utilizing SMIL." *Library Hi Tech* 24.3 (2006): 452-462. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com> (Accessed March 16, 2009).
- Borgman, Christine L. "Psychological Research in Human-Computer Interaction." In *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology, Volume 19*, edited by Martha E. Williams, 33-64. New York: Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc., for American Society for Information Science, 1984.
- Chen, C. "Computer Technology to Preserve and Access Endangered Oral History Recordings in Alaska." *Microcomputers for Information Management* 9.3 (1992): 191-5.
- Dickson, Maggie. "CONTENTdm Digital Collection Management Software and End-User Efficacy." *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2.2-3 (2008): 339-379.
- Dillon, A. "Beyond Usability: Process, Outcome, and Affect in Human Computer Interactions." *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 26.4 (2001): 57-69.
- George, Carole A. "Usability Testing and Design of a Library Website: An Iterative Approach." *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 167-80.
- Greenstein, Daniel. "Digital Libraries and their Challenges." *Library Trends* 49.2 (2000): 290. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=4110989&site=ehost-live> (Accessed March 16, 2009).
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "Documenting Diversity: The Southern Experience." *The Oral History Review* 4 (1976): 19-28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3674939> (Accessed March 16, 2009).

- Hall, W. "Oral History Fast Forward: From Audiocassette to Digital Archive." *Colorado Libraries* 26.4 (2000): 9-10.
- Head, A. J. "Beyond Google: How Do Students Conduct Academic Research?" *First Monday* 12.8 (2007).
- Holliday, W., and Q. Li "Understanding the Millennials: Updating Our Knowledge About Students." *Reference Services Review* 32.4 (2004): 356-366.
- Kitalong, Karla Saari, Athena Hoepfner, and Meg Scharf. "Making Sense of an Academic Library Web Site: Toward a More Usable Interface for University Researchers." *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2 (2008): 177-204.
- Kramer, Elsa F. "IUPUI Image Collection: A Usability Survey." *OCLC Systems and Services* 21.4 (2005): 346-359.
- Lombardo, S. V., & K.S. Condit. "Convenience or Content: A Study of Undergraduate Periodical Use." *Reference Services Review* 29.4 (2001): 327-337.
- Marchionini, Gary, Catherine Plaisant, and Anita Komlodi. "The People in Digital Libraries: Multifaceted Approaches to Assessing Needs and Impact." In *Digital Library Use: Social Practice in Design and Evaluation*, edited by Ann P. Bishop, Nancy A. Van House, and Barbara Pfeil Bittenfield, 119-160. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.
- Nielsen, Jakob. *Usability Engineering*. Boston: AP Professional, 1993.
- Oblinger, Diana, and James L. Oblinger. *Educating the Net Generation*. Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE, 2005. <http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen> (Accessed March 1, 2009).
- Oldham, Bonnie W. "Focus Groups and Usability Testing in Redesigning an Academic Library's Web Site." *Journal of Web Librarianship* 2 (2008): 219-246.
- Parker-Gibson, N. "Library Assignments: Challenges That Students Face and How to Help." *College Teaching* 49.2 (2001): 65-70
- Southern Oral History Program. "Mission." Southern Oral History Program Center for the study of the American South. http://sohp_wp.unccsas.webfactional.com/about/our-mission/ (accessed March 2, 2009).
- Turnbow, Dominique, et al. "Usability Testing for Web Redesign: A UCLA Case Study." *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 226-34.
- UNC University Libraries. "Oral Histories of the American South." UNC University Libraries. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/index.html> (accessed March 22, 2009).

- VandeCreek, Leanne M. "Usability Analysis of Northern Illinois University Libraries' Website: A Case Study." *OCLC Systems & Services* 21.3 (2005): 181-92.
- Weig, Eric, Kopana Terry, and Kathryn Lybarger. "Large Scale Digitization of Oral History: A Case Study." *D-Lib Magazine* 13.5-6 (Apr, 2007). <http://www.dlib.org> (Accessed March 2, 2009).
- Wykoff, Leslie, Laurie Mercier, Trevor Bond, and Alan Cornish. "The Columbia River Basin Ethnic History Archive: A Tri-State Online History Database and Learning Center." *Library Hi Tech* 23.2 (2005): 252-264.

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes _____ No _____

2. What is your status/occupation?

Undergraduate Student _____

Graduate Student _____

Middle/High School Teacher _____

University Professor _____

Other _____

3. Are you male or female?

Male _____ Female _____ Prefer not to answer _____

4. Have you used *Documenting the American South* or *Oral Histories of the American South* before?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

If so, please describe:

Appendix B

Usability Observation

Web Page 1: Searching

Questions:

1. What are your initial impressions of the web page? What do you like? What do you dislike? (Please answer verbally).

Tasks:

1. Search for all interviews relating to “Civil Rights.”
Play the audio for one of these interviews.
2. Search for an interview with an ID number of C-0016.
Play the audio for this interview.
3. Search for all interviews containing information about the 1930s.
4. Search for all interviews containing information about the place Macon, Georgia.
5. Search for all selected segments from interviews dealing with the great depression.
Play the audio for one of these interviews.
6. Search for all selected segments from interviews dealing with either Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton.
7. Search for all interviews that William C. Friday gave.
8. Search for all selected excerpts from interviews that deal with Frank Porter Graham AND Anne Queen.
9. Search for all selected excerpts from interviews dealing with William C Friday AND the year 1965.

10. Search for all interviews containing the term “women’s liberation.”
11. Search for all interviews given by William C Friday in which he discusses desegregation.

Web Page 2: Browsing

Questions:

1. What are your initial impressions of the web page? What do you like? What do you dislike? (Please answer verbally).

Tasks:

1. Find all interviews that relate to Southern Politics and the Democratic Party
Play the audio for one of these interviews.
2. Find all interviews relating to Women’s Suffrage.
3. Find all interviews dealing with pollution.

Web Page 3: Excerpt View

Questions:

1. What are your impressions of this page?
2. How might you use this page?

Tasks:

1. Find the link to navigate back to the full interview.

Appendix C

Follow-up Questionnaire

1. What is your overall experience with the site?
2. Would you be more likely to use the search or browse page to identify oral histories related to your projects? Please explain.
3. Do you find the searching and browsing pages helpful? Please explain.
4. What do you think of the navigation of these web pages?
5. If you were doing research or covering a topic in a course, would you be likely to use these web pages to inform your research? Why or why not?
6. Would you prefer to access oral histories via the Internet or by visiting a library? Please explain.