Hydra UX interest group notes from Hydra Connect 2

Working Group: UX 2014-10-03
Notes -- Andrew Rouner

ATTENDING: Emilie Meade OH, Mark Notess IU, Kevin. Reiss, Eviiva Weinraub OR, Chris DeLuca ND, Dan Brubaker Horst, Joseph ----- from Brown University.

Has anyone participated in Hydra UX calls? There’s a page on wiki: Hydra UX Interest Group.

Formed after first Hydra Connect in January, of about 10 people.

Had show and tell on calls, then had fewer people, no calls since July. Maybe pick up again in Nov.

There are also notes from the session in SD. Chris Awre and Pat Hwse and Mark were the ones organizing calls. More of an interest than working group.

What should we talk about?

EW: I'm curious how you do UX on other projects, and why/how is it different with Hydra?

MN: my experience is it's no different--if there is a difference it's the community. Julie Rudder and I have discussed co-developing Avalon.

It's not the first academic project I've been involved in where UX has gotten a lot of lip service but UX has really taken a back seat to developers.

EW: interested in getting input in UX earlier on and not just have debs talk to them about colors

MD typically devs don't want to do that.

Developers are more interested in doing this

EMILY we always started with wire frames, we're a for-fee shop, so we would want to show clients something ahead and say is this what you want? You get much better buy in.

EW we still say here's the delivered product?

We do that too.

It's kind of easy to do that with Hydra. We don't have a dedicated UX person and we wind up with a prototype. We're trying to do a branding consistency effort across apps in Drupal and Wordpress and wanting to leverage patterns from those.

There are a lot of rich things emerging .... Widget type approaches.

One of the challenges white an Agile approach avoiding big design up front. Wrapping minds around core use cases. But the back end front end divide.... he's very much, I want to rewrite the whole thing...but then, You want to spend this time what will users get? Maybe more maintainable code...but we need to deliver every sprint.

I'm all about delivering product to real customers, not that devs don't care about that. Interested in finding ways for them to .. Sometimes we make up use cases and they can tell that. But we can expose them to real use cases and make that empathy exist.

Findings ways to generate that empathy with the users and pressures they deal with. I don't think I've done as good a job on that with Avalon as I could have. Bootstrap looks hideous.

That's the thing I think can bring a team together is a shared customer need.

Just because you say Oh here you go, doesn't mean it makes sense to (users). Move to Hydra 7 wasn't difficult technically but the interface blew up.

Julie and I had to sit down and detail all the differences between old and new interfaces to devs.

I'm coming new to Hydra...is there a set of gems that this is Hydra 7? Hydra-head. Main design dependency is Rails bootstrap. The move from 2 to 3.

It was a little time consuming.

There was a session in workshops on how it's more about ordering CSS files and you can include a variables files in Blacklight. There was a github project that did a lot of it. Anything that has a default can be overwritten.

Jesse from Stanford.

Are those overwrites for branding or useability concerns? Are there things we should be trying to change in Blacklight in out foe the box.

It's easy to change its branding, but not in what pieces appear when. It's a reasonable question to say what BL gives is even more complicated. I don't know how to get that conversations back to those developing BL. We should come up with something and propose requests.

MN I have no idea myself what those changes would be. I know we contributed some stuff to BL little but useful.

But they do affect UX.

Is Hydra beholden to BL in near term? Yes. All solution bundles operate under that assumption. Is Hydra anchored to a ship not easy to maneuver?
I think that RDF always seems to go from an asset to liability. So there's way more interest around RDF than around UU libraries in a conference like this. A lot more users need to be developing apps that look like x or do y.

I don't know where else it would come from except from core devs with a strong interest in UX.

Who are the main institutions punching BL? Mostly Stanford. And Justin. They did a lot of work for Spotlight. They have commuter calls but not usually its own conference. BL is used for other stuff. Used for OPAC? Useability wise what are the issues with BL? The ability to move things around.

Maybe there should be a call for usability for BL?

Is accessibility a major concern for everyone? Yes absolutely.

BL has done some work on that.

If you look at BL out of the box it looks like an OPAC: facets, page results etc.

But when you start doing images or media or hierarchical in nature or multimedia, how you want to model things....

Say you have an opera CD. The music and the booklet. Or paged media with sections... When you start wanting to deal with media like that those needs aren't addressed in BL.

There was a browse interface of images and I thought Pinterest looks so much nicer than this. A lot of white space and small images, not very social media-ish.

BL is good for what it does, as a basic system you can use.

I just ran an accessibility checker on BL wave / Web ping.org and no major alerts.

Anyone have issues on responsive design? Had to design things mobile first. Once you get it mobile first it works well.

I would advocate mobile first for almost everything. We've steered away from saying we support admin function on mobile.

There are other accessibility concerns on backend.

When you mentioned that some sites look library-ish instead of internet-ish? At these sites layout is mostly the same. It's like the dreariness of institutional software. They were talking about Sakai but moving the discussion to Facebook made discussion take off. LMS. Somewhat similar issues with library apps.

Others would say why would you compare our catalog to Pinterest which is trivial? It's hard to put level of granularity we have in something looking like Pinterest.

Stanford kind of did that with Searchworks they dressed up BL.

Unless this working group. Is there a real interest in making sites more flashy so people will use them more? Is there a real commitment to that? I'm trying to think what is he goal of this working group? Users are still going to want that flash?

Pinterest gets 200 million a day. What do our catalogs get? A custom bike web site gets more hits a day than Oregon Digital in a month.

But it is like apples and oranges. We can move to a more elegant design but that doesn't necessarily translate into higher traffic.

Some stuff in there is boring, but maybe the presentation doesn't have to be.

Sometimes library staff are more interested in staff functionality than for users. Usage over several years to digitized audio in Variations has been flat and main reason is probably because of YouTube

It's partly because we don't have related videos etc. some people say problem with online is you can't browse the stacks--but sure you can. But I don't see Hydra doing a lot of that. Interesting ways of stumbling on cool new things.

Libraries don't even want to save patron information.

I don't think BL has recommender systems.

As you work with librarians, they might have different ideas for what might be related.

I think related items are something users are becoming used to.

One thing you brought up related to Hydra, the default and well developed interface is BL.

If the platform doesn't offer a lot of options for presentation, that's a problem so maybe it's not a good platform for presentation.

Stanford Searchworks does seem to be a good example of what you could do.

I think people would be happier if the SW view was the default for BL. As the SW gallery view probably was contributed back.
Having a UX evaluation would be helpful on BL and providing feedback to community.

I would want to start with use cases. Would be difficult not to start with use cases. It might be easier to start with Hydra applications than in the applications.

There’s a decently large list of implementations.

Evaluating BL, one of my gripes is no way of compacting results.

Also that you never get to information between a third or halfway down the page because of breadcrumb branding etc. Context creep.

Question: if you weren't using BL what would you use?

Elastic search or Whoosh.

The other search is Sunspot but there's no UI at all.

I think the answer is we are beholden to BL. We may have a compelling reason to do more with it.

My basic tension is that they're trying to make it easy to stand up something out of the box, as opposed to trying to be able to do something different with it.

Have more semantically named styling.

If you look at their SASS they do some of that but it's not consistent. Are we trying to re theme things or rearrange stuff?

I'd ask if there's anything we want to do on this collectively?

For instance, show our different apps, talk about UX problems we've encountered. And out of that we come come up with proposals to make BL / Hydra better in UX. I like to start with concrete stuff.

If we had some kind of goal to provide devs feedback.

The call for a community of practice is helpful.

CD I see the value of showing people the work that's been done on projects but does that really getting to the capabilities of the tool? There would be value in exploring full capabilities of BL? Where's the edgy stuff?

MN I don't know if I'd start with BL. I'd start with mock ups.

Yeah that's totally in line with how I'd go about it. What's the next gen interface for their library system. I really like what they did over here and there. Could we combine it together? Could BL do all of at? Then you'd be pushing it's capabilities.

Maybe having regulars calls isn't enough?

What if we had a Hydra designer community where next time someone is wire framing she also put it in a place where designers firm other projects would see it?

I think that would help. Bent it probably needs a little annotation: the user need I was trying to solve was this.

We talk a lot about end user experience, but we shouldn't have to be all reinventing the wheel.

I think having more deliberate sharing on apps would be moving toward a pattern library / style guide.

In calls fizzling out, maybe have one isn't be responsible of doing a walk through of what they haves, in case there was nothing else going on.

But maybe we need instead. In a edition to ann asynchronous approach. We can use something like Dribble. A tool to share designs.

It could be based through Confluence where you get notifications after changing a page?

Is there a subgroup of this group that would propose something we could do in a November call?

I'll go back and talk with my UX designer about this.

What's a good basic approach? What's a good platform to try? Or we can talk about it on the call.

I would plan for first Thursday in November for call. 11:30 EST.