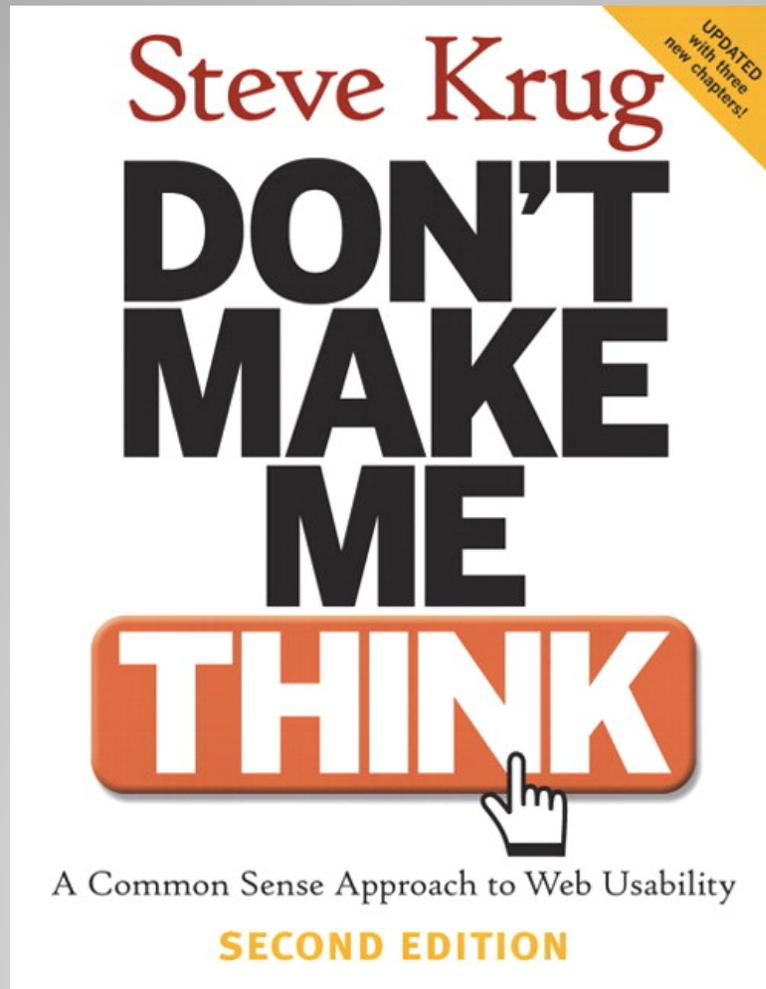


Writing for the Web

Sara Snow, GRA
Technology Integration Services



Usability 101

Web pages should be

- Self-evident
- Obvious
- Self-explanatory

Users should be able to “get it” without expending much effort thinking about it.

How do users read on the Web?

They don't!

- **79%** of users scan instead of read.
- Readers with above-average intelligence read about **20%** of text.

- F-shaped pattern

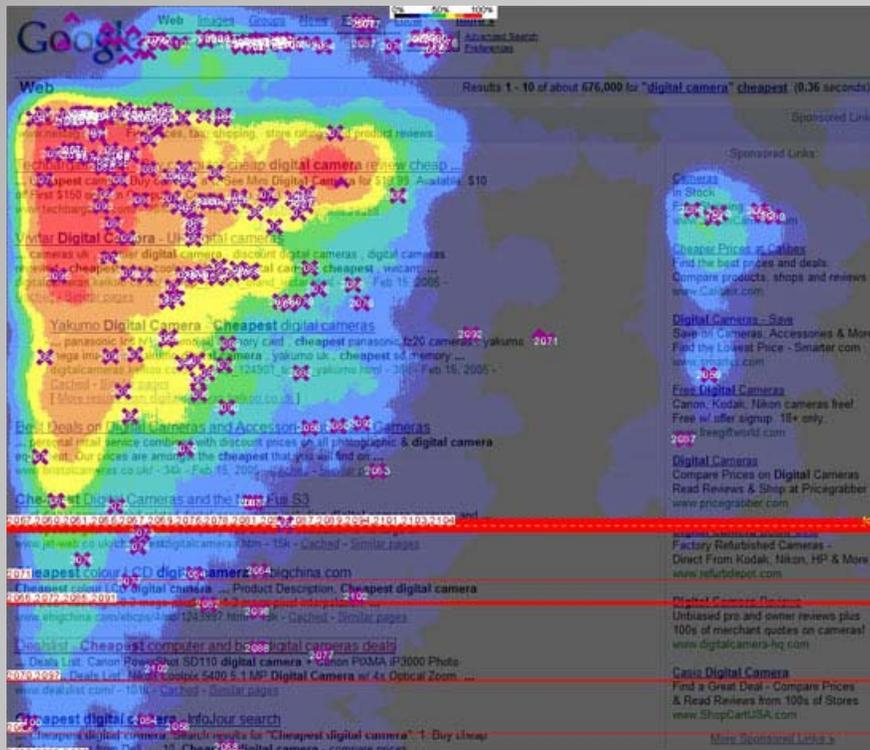


We satisfice!

We don't choose the best option; we choose the first *reasonable* option.

- We're in a hurry.
- No penalty for guessing wrong.
- In a poorly designed site, weighing options may not improve our chances.

- F-shaped pattern



What is good enough?

- Page layout
- Navigation features
- Images
- Highlighted keywords, such as links
- Meaningful subheadings
- Lists

What can we do?

How can we make our content meaningful?

Omit Needless Words

“Get rid of half the words on each page, then get rid of half of what’s left.”

- Steve Krug

Getting rid of unnecessary words:

- Reduces the noise level of the page.
- Makes the useful content prominent.
- Makes the pages shorter and scannable.

Having less content above the fold encourages exploration below the fold.



Use Plain Language

- Avoid jargon
- Use familiar words
 - Can be collected using open-ended surveys, viewing search terms, and market research
- Define Acronyms and abbreviations
- Use abbreviations sparingly

Use Plain Language

Library terms often cited as being misunderstood or not understood

- Database
- Library catalog
- E-journals
- Index
- Interlibrary loan
- Periodical
- Serial
- Reference
- Resource
- Subject categories, such as *Humanities* or *Social Sciences*

Use Plain Language

Terms often cited as understood well enough to foster correct choices

- Natural language “target words”
 - *Find books*
 - *Find articles*
- Terms accompanied by additional words or mouseovers to expand on their meaning

Avoid Jargon, Acronyms, and Abbreviations

The screenshot shows the Indiana University Libraries website. At the top left is the IU logo and "INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON". A navigation bar includes "Faculty", "Graduate Students", "Undergraduates", "Visitors", and "IUCAT". The main heading is "Libraries". Below this is a search bar with a "SEARCH" button, a "Ask a Librarian" link with a photo, and a "BOOK-MARK" button. A secondary navigation bar contains "RESOURCE GATEWAY", "SERVICES", and "SUBJECTS". On the left, a "Quick Links" menu lists: "Getting Started", "About the IUB Libraries", "Departments and Staff", "Jobs and Libraries Human Resources", and "Events Calendar". Below this is a "Connect with us online" section with icons for Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, RSS, and LinkedIn. The main content area features a "FEATURED EXHIBITS" section with a photo of women in a library and the text: "Celebrate Women's History Month with two displays in the Wells Library - one on 'firsts' for women at IU and one on the impact of Title IX. Read more about them...". Below this is a "TOP RECOMMENDED RESOURCES" section with a red border, listing: IUCAT, OneSearch@IU, ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search (EBSCO), ERIC (EBSCO), Factiva, Google Scholar, JSTOR, LexisNexis Academic, MLA International Bibliography, PsycINFO, Web of Knowledge, WorldCat, and HathiTrust Digital Library. To the right, there are sections for "NEWS & EVENTS" (with a sub-heading "One Book, One Bloomington"), "ALUMNI & FRIENDS", and "COMING SOON".



PCL
Perry-Castañeda Library

PCL Basics

The **Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL)** is The University of Texas at Austin's main research library. It embraces all subject fields, with the strongest holdings in the humanities, social sciences, business, and education. Open to everyone, we welcome your visit!

Location:
101 E. 21st Street
Austin, TX 78705
(SW Corner of 21st St. and Speedway)

Ph: (512) 495-4350
Fax: (512) 495-4296

[Map](#) and [Mailing Addresses](#)

Hours

Building

Monday-Thursday : 7am-2am
Friday : 7am-11pm
Saturday : 9am-11pm
Sunday : noon-2am
Tuesday, May 15 : closes at 7pm

Check Out (Circulation/Reserves) Desk

Monday-Thursday : 8am-11:45pm
Friday : 8am-7:45pm
Saturday : noon-7:45pm
Sunday : noon-11:45pm
Tuesday, May 15 : 8am-6:45pm

[more hours](#)

Featured



Looking for study space equipped with electrical outlets? Look no further than the brand new furniture on the 6th floor of PCL!

[Find out more about study spaces in PCL.](#)

Use a Glossary

The screenshot shows the University of Kentucky Libraries website. At the top left is the logo "UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY Libraries". To the right is a search bar with "Libraries Worldwide" selected in a dropdown menu and a "Go" button. Below the search bar are navigation tabs: "Articles & Books", "E-Journals", "Databases", "Site Search", "Research Guides", and "Guided Search". Below these are links: "Our Libraries", "Services", "About", "Research Tools", "Help", "Site Index", "Ask-a-Librarian", "Feedback", and "Giving".

Glossary of Library Terms
This is a list of terms often used in libraries and academic research.

[A][B][C][D][E][F][G][H][I][J][K][L]
[M][N][O][P][R][S][T][U][V][W]

A

abstract
A summary of an article, book or chapter.

academic journal
A periodical containing scholarly articles in a recognized field of study.

advanced search
In some databases, an option for searching which enables a more complex combination of choices of subject, author, format, etc.

and
A word used to narrow an online search, e.g.:
arrow finds 86 items
bow finds 309 items
but *bow and arrow* finds only 12 items, because both terms must be found in the same record.

archived
Saved (in storage or online) in a retrievable form.

archives
historical records or public documents stored for posterity and researchers. Also the places where these are kept.

B

barcode
A small machine-readable symbol composed of black and white lines. In the library these are 13 characters long. Used for checking out books. The barcode number allows access to library resources from home.

bibliography
List of citations to articles, books, etc. May range from a works-cited page to a whole book listing works on a certain subject. An *annotated bibliography* has brief explanatory notes for each citation.

Use Plain Language

Users prefer simple and informal writing

- Promotional language imposes cognitive burden
- Use descriptive words, especially in the first sentence of each paragraph
- Use active voice
 - Books may be checked out until 5:00.
 - You may check out books until 5:00.

Descriptive first sentences

BASICS

The Mighty Mathematician You've Never Heard Of

By NATALIE ANGIER

Published: March 26, 2012

Scientists are a famously anonymous lot, but few can match in the depths of her perverse and unmerited obscurity the 20th-century mathematical genius Amalie Noether.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



SPL/Photo Researchers

GROUNDBREAKING Emmy Noether's theorem united two pillars of physics: symmetry in nature and the universal laws of conservation.

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Albert Einstein called her the most “significant” and “creative” female mathematician of all time, and others of her contemporaries were inclined to drop the modification by sex. She invented a theorem that united with magisterial concision two conceptual pillars of physics: symmetry in nature and the universal laws of conservation.

Some consider Noether's theorem, as it is now called, as important as Einstein's theory of relativity; it undergirds much of today's vanguard research in physics, including the hunt for the almighty Higgs boson. Yet Noether herself remains utterly unknown, not only to the general public, but to many members of the scientific community as well.

When Dave Goldberg, a physicist at Drexel University who has written about her work, recently took a little “Noether poll” of several dozen colleagues, students and online followers, he was taken aback by the results. “Surprisingly few could say exactly who she was or why she was important,” he said. “A few others knew her name but couldn't recall what she'd done, and the majority had never heard of her.”

 RECOMMEND

 TWITTER

 LINKEDIN

 SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

 PRINT

 REPRINTS

 SHARE



Noether (pronounced NER-ter) was born in Erlangen, Germany, 130 years ago this month. So it's a fine time to counter the chronic neglect and celebrate the life and work of a brilliant theorist whose unshakable number love and irrationally robust sense of humor helped her overcome severe handicaps — first, being female in Germany at a time when most German universities didn't accept female students or hire female professors, and then being a Jewish pacifist in the midst of the Nazis' rise to power.

Through it all, Noether was a highly prolific mathematician, publishing groundbreaking papers, sometimes under a man's name, in rarefied fields of abstract algebra and ring theory. And when she applied her equations to the universe around her, she discovered some of its basic rules, like how time and energy are related, and why it is, as the physicist Lee Smolin of the Perimeter Institute put it, “that riding a bicycle is safe.”

Ransom Stephens, a physicist and novelist who has lectured widely on Noether, said, “You can make a strong case that her theorem is the backbone on which all of modern physics is built.”

Noether came from a mathematical family. Her father was a distinguished math professor at the universities of Heidelberg and Erlangen, and her brother Fritz won some renown as an applied mathematician. Emmy, as she was known throughout her life, started out studying English, French and piano — subjects more socially acceptable for a girl — but her interests soon turned to math. Barred from matriculating formally at the University of Erlangen, Emmy simply audited all the courses, and she ended up doing so well on her final exams that she was granted the equivalent of a bachelor's degree.



RESEARCH AT UH

Libraries

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Libraries

The **UH Libraries** are made up of the M.D. Anderson Library (main library) and four smaller branch libraries with specialized collections in **Architecture and Art, Music, Optometry**. The **O'Quinn Law Library** in the **UH Law Center** and the Library and Hospitality Archives in the Massad Family Library Research Center and Hospitality Industry Archives at the **Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel & Restaurant Management** are other specialized libraries on campus. They are administered separately from the UH Libraries.

The M.D. Anderson Library's collections include **rare and archival materials**, information published by **U.S. and Texas government agencies**, and **high-use, course-related materials**.

The UH Libraries provide a pleasant and well-appointed environment to accommodate users' learning and technological needs. Quiet study areas and group study rooms are available to all users in the M.D. Anderson Library. Study areas are also available in Architecture & Art Library, Music Library, Optometry Library, and Pharmacy Library. The UH Libraries are well equipped for users' technological needs. The Academic Research Center located in the M.D. Anderson Library offers



RELATED LINKS

- [The Office of Graduate & Professional Studies](#)

Make Content Scannable

- Group related information and functions.
- Use meaningful headings and subheadings.
- Ensure that labels clearly reflect the information and items contained within the category.
- Use bulleted and numbered lists.
- Use boldface font.
- Leave plenty of whitespace.

Related Information and Meaningful Headings



[FAL Home](#) | [About FAL](#) | [Resource Guides](#) | [Services](#) | [Collections](#) | [Recent Arrivals](#) | [Library Calendar](#) | [Exhibits](#)

Collections

General

With over 500,000 books, scores, and pamphlets focused on the core subject areas of art, art history, music, theatre, and dance, the FAL has one of the largest such collections in the Southwest.

With the addition in July 2009 of the collection of the former Audio Visual Library, the subject matter extends beyond the Fine Arts to include the Liberal Arts. In addition to educational DVDs and videocassettes, the collection includes numerous feature films and television shows available for 7-day loan.

Periodicals

Current journal issues are arranged alphabetically by title on open shelves located on the third level. Bound volumes of periodicals are shelved in call number sequence along with books on levels four and five of the library. Call numbers and holdings for bound periodicals are indicated in the [Library Catalog](#). Some of our journals are also available in digital form through our [Find a Journal](#) page.

Reference

The reference collection on the third level includes standard reference materials such as encyclopedias, directories, dictionaries, and bibliographies, as well as specialized materials such as iconographical dictionaries, discographies, and indexes to theatrical seasons. Catalogs of collections of major museums are also shelved here. A few selected titles are shelved in our Ready Reference section which contains more time-sensitive information.

Media

The audio-visual collection includes compact discs, DVDs, audio and videocassettes, videodiscs, phonodiscs, and interactive media. Holdings of these materials are listed in the [Library Catalog](#) and may be requested at the Circulation Desk.

Use the [Music Search](#) page in the Library Catalog to find CDs, DVDs, scores, and other audiovisual formats.

Microform

The Fine Arts Library has an extensive collection of materials in both microfilm and microfiche which is kept in cabinets on level 3. A state-of-the-art reader/printer is located nearby. Circulation Desk staff are available to help users with microform materials.

Lists and Boldface Font

- 1 **Pay attention to the title of your blog.** Don't put lots of thought and effort into your blog and blow off the title. That will leave your great article... unread. First impressions really matter, and titles are the "hook" to get your reader interested. Even if you spend a long time getting the title "just so", the rewards for your effort will be better.

Ads by Google

Make Money Online Enter simple contests everyday. Take home \$1000+ cash prizes!
www.prizes.org



🔍 Get their interest with a good 'hook'

- Think about how the title will look in the RSS feed. What titles make you click on RSS headings? Aim for the curiosity, interest, and even question angles.
- Keep the title as simple as possible.
- If you use shocking, controversial, or big claim titles, make sure the content meets the promise.
- Think about meeting a need.
 - Titles that express what people often worry or think about are popular. For example, "Losing weight without trying" would interest a lot of people!
 - Indicate the general topic, for those new to the subject or accumulating a broad base of information and reasoning. There will be a lot of these readers, but they'll probably just skim your article. Also indicate the specific topic, for those facing a specific issue. There will be fewer of them, but they'll need to read your special information carefully and may return for more. For instance, "Losing Weight with the Cabbage Soup Diet".
- Apply these principles to the title of each post, too.

- 2 **Look at it from the viewpoint of starting with the conclusion.** The idea of this is to lead with the essential point you're trying to make, allowing the remainder of the article to expound upon it. Making the point clear from the outset is better with web writing than leaving the ah-ha! moment until the conclusion. Remember, your reader may never get to the end to discover your pearls of wisdom. Give more up front to avoid your readers dashing off before reaching your brilliant finale.

- 3 **Use headings.** The wonderful thing about headings is that they help to guide your writing initially (fill in this bit, then this bit...) and they allow your reader to quickly look through the body of the post to see if the read is something they want to pursue further. Headings draw the eyes downwards,^[1] which is just what you want your reader to do when reading on screen.

Whitespace Affects Comprehension

- Increases reading speed
- Decreases comprehension

The following excerpt is from Eyes on the Prize, the companion guide to the public television series on America's civil rights struggle.

During the 1930s National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attorneys Charles H. Houston, William Hastie, James M. Nabrit, Leon Ransom, and Thurgood Marshall charted a legal strategy designed to end segregation in education. They developed a series of legal cases challenging segregation in graduate and professional schools. Houston believed that the battle against segregation had to begin at the highest academic level in order to mitigate fear of race mixing that could create even greater hostility and reluctance on the part of white judges. After establishing a series of favorable legal precedents in higher education, NAACP attorneys planned to launch an all-out attack on the separate-but-equal doctrine in primary and secondary schools. The strategy proved successful. In four major United States Supreme Court de-

Figure 1. Margins, Optimal Leading

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Figure 2. Margins, Sub-Optimal Leading

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Figure 3. No Margins, Optimal Leading

The following excerpt is from Eyes on the Prize, the companion guide to the public television series on America's civil rights struggle.

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Figure 4. No Margins, Sub-Optimal Leading

Make Content Scannable

- Provide descriptive and unique page titles for each page.
- Use link labels and concepts that are meaningful and understandable.
- Match link names with their destination pages.

Match Link Names with Destination

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Home > Perry-Castañeda Library > About > **Locations Guide** Share Comment Print

PCL Perry-Castañeda Library

Home **About** Services Collections History New Books

- Hours
- Map
- Locations Guide**
- Service Desks
- Staff Contacts

Locations Guide

This guide to call number locations for materials in the Perry-Castañeda Library includes the PCL in Sections A-S, identified the ends of each row of sl...

Oversize books, which ha located in sections A and...

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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PCL Perry-Castañeda Library

Home **About** Services Collections History New Books

- Hours
- Map
- Locations Guide
- Service Desks**
- Staff Contacts

Service Desks

Borrower Services (Check Out Desk)	(512) 495-4300
Information and Research Help Desk	(512) 495-4250
InterLibrary Services (Interlibrary Loan and Document Express)	(512) 495-4134

Match Link Names with Destination



RECENT ARRIVALS – CHECK THEM OUT
When you are in the Fine Arts Library, make sure you check out the shelves marked Recent Arrivals. . . .

Catalyst
Be Transformed by Dance Friday, March 23 – 25, 2012 B. Iden Payne Theatre
<http://texasperformi> . . .

Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books 2 (MIMB II) Travelling Exhibition
On display in the Fine Arts Library are 87 books created by book artists from around the world. More . . .

more on FAL news

Fine Arts Library News

Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books 2 (MIMB II) Travelling Exhibition

Material Type: Uncategorized — Posted on March 14, 2012 at 4:05 pm

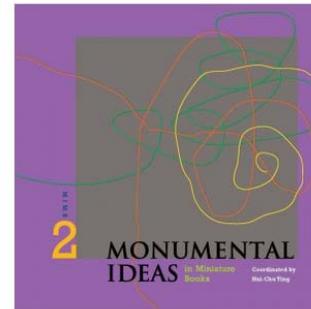
By:

On display in the Fine Arts Library are 87 books created by book artists from around the world.

More information about the books can be found at <http://mimb.org/>.

The books are on display until May 11.

Look for an announcement about a talk and reception soon.



Reviewer:

[View this item in the Library Catalog](#)

[Submit your own review of this item](#)

No Comments

Name (required)

E-mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

Content is King!

- Content should be a focus in every stage of development.
- Design and content inform each other!

What is the Effect of Improved Writing?

- 1997 Jakob Nielsen study
- Five versions of the same website
- Users performed the same tasks
- Measured usability
 - Task time
 - Errors
 - Subjective satisfaction

Site Version	Sample Paragraph	Usability
Promotional writing (control condition)	Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions that draw large crowds of people every year, without fail. In 1996, some of the most popular places were Fort Robinson State Park (355,000 visitors), Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166), Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum (100,000), Carhenge (86,598), Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002), and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446).	0%
Concise text	In 1996, six of the best-attended attractions in Nebraska were Fort Robinson State Park, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum, Carhenge , Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.	58%
Scannable layout	Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions that draw large crowds of people every year, without fail. In 1996, some of the most popular places were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Robinson State Park (355,000 visitors) • Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166) • Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum (100,000) • Carhenge (86,598) • Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002) • Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446). 	47%
Objective language	Nebraska has several attractions. In 1996, some of the most-visited places were Fort Robinson State Park (355,000 visitors), Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166), Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum (100,000), Carhenge (86,598), Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002), and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446).	27%
Combined	In 1996, six of the most-visited places in Nebraska were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Robinson State Park • Scotts Bluff National Monument • Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum • Carhenge • Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer • Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park 	124%

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- Usability in the Library: Resources. University of Michigan
www.lib.umich.edu/usability-library/usability-library-resources