

How to redesign a virtual library website: a case study

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This abstract presents how we redesigned, with user-centred design methods, the way we organize and present the content on the UOC Virtual Library website. The content is now offered in a way that is more intuitive, usable and easy to understand, based on criteria of customization, transparency and proximity.

The techniques used to achieve these objectives included benchmarking, interviews and focus groups during the user requirement capture phase and user tests to assess the process and results.

During the initial requirement capture phase, obvious problems were identified, such as users being unaware of a large number of resources, tools and services; confusion arising from the different tools to search the collection, and too much information and content that was not contextualized or targeted properly.

As a result, concise and well structured texts were written in a language that users could understand. The decision was taken to better explain the processes and services. This aided access to written information and helped transmit values of quality, transparency and proximity. In turn, to aid access to content, it was organized in terms of user needs, rather than in terms of the Library's tools as had usually been the case. We chose to offer one simple point of access to resources with a search engine with a single search field. Likewise, the structuring of all the content and information was adapted to each user profile so that each of them could know the specific conditions for their profile.

These actions, designed to help users better and more easily understand the services and resources, were assessed and validated with different user tests to ensure they responded to the needs and problems identified in the analysis phase. This meant that we were able to produce a more usable, useful and intuitive website for our users.