In June 2017, the Article Indexes & Databases (AID) link on the library website was changed from the AID pages developed in-house to the Libguides A-Z list. Also in June 2017 and also affecting article searches, Quick Search was switched to the new Primo interface. In August 2017, a new home page design was implemented.

Tasks in the interview script were written to explore volunteers’ usual methods of searching for articles, which could include using Quick Search, Google Scholar, going directly to a specific database, or using the AID page to get to a known database. Only one participant reported used the AID page to search for a new database as part of their usual routine.

If the volunteers did not use the AID page in the initial part of the interview, they were asked to look on the home page for other ways to search for articles, and eventually were asked to use the AID page. As a final task, volunteers were given a description of Research Guides not containing the word “Guides” and asked to find them.

There were 10 participants in the study, including 4 undergraduates (3 seniors and 1 sophomore), 4 graduate students, one postdoc, and one visiting scholar. In addition, results from 4 participants in the Quick Search study who demonstrated AID use were included. All four of the undergraduates from the AID study had taken Library 160.

Differences between the new and old AID pages include (see images in Appendix A):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current AID pages (Libguides)</th>
<th>Former AID pages (developed in-house)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject list dropdown with 46 subjects</td>
<td>Subject list dropdown with 47 subjects, including data types such as Conference Proceedings, News, Patents &amp; Trademarks, and Standards &amp; Specifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No subcategories</td>
<td>Subcategory dropdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database Type dropdown with 13 types</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendors/Providers dropdown</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search box</td>
<td>Search box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha index list</td>
<td>Alpha index list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined filtering effect of all dropdowns, search box and alpha index</td>
<td>No combined filtering effect, except subject category and subcategories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Starting Points with one database (Academic Search Complete)</td>
<td>Get started with these general article databases: two databases (Academic Search Premier and Google Scholar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New databases list</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph of description for each database</td>
<td>Popup paragraph of description for some databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete A-Z list is displayed on entry page</td>
<td>Except for Get Started databases, no databases are listed on entry page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dense presentation on entry page</td>
<td>More white space on entry page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Bets databases at top of subject area databases</td>
<td>Best Bets databases at top of subject area databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to related subject guides and librarian</td>
<td>Links to related subject guides and librarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible Problems

1. What is the intended purpose of the search box?
   a. Is it ok to use it to find a broad subject area instead of using the subject dropdown ("Industrial Engineering")? Results don’t show Best Bets but do seem to include most of the same databases. Four participants did this.
   b. Does it work well to use to filter after using the subject dropdown ("finance")? One participant did this.
   c. It does not work to search for a specific keyword ("glucoamylase"). One participant from the Quick Search study tried it.
   d. The first four hundred search terms (sorted from high to low for number of searches) for March 2018 were downloaded from the LibGuides statistics. After filtering for Location=A to Z, each term was assigned a type of specific database or journal, broad subject area, or specific topic.
      i. 262 searches for a broad subject area
      ii. 567 searches for a specific database or journal
      iii. 749 searches for a specific topic
   e. The top specific topic searches:
      marijuana 28
      customer service 19
      compost in cities 17
      united states and education and funding 13
      GPS 12
      social media 12
      breast feeding 10
      fungicides 10
      legalization marijuana 10
      gmo 9
      branding calves 8
      Jim Thorpe 7
      fast food 7
      leadership 7
      vegan 7
      herbicide 6
      native 6
      photoreduction experiment 6
      happiness 5
      megalodon 5
      serial killers 5
      youth unemployment 5
   f. Good starting points: since the top specific database search term is “ebsco” and others are “ebscohost” and “Ebsco host”, it may be a good idea to add that terminology to “Academic Search Complete” in the “Good starting points” section. They may be looking for this general search database that they are familiar with, but don’t recognize by this name.
      Top specific database searches:
      ebsco 66
      pubmed 28
      scopus 28
      google scholar 20
2. It is not obvious that Article Indexes & Databases would include other types of databases besides article databases. Three participants found other types of databases on their own in the Database Types dropdown on the AID page. One used Quick Search to find statistical datasets, two found the other database types after being told to look on the AID page, one found them after being told to look at the top of the AID page, and three didn’t find them or said they didn’t need anything.

3. Alpha index: four participants used the alpha index to explore databases by subject area, for example, “I” for Industrial Engineering, or “M” for Molecular Biology. Three participants used the alpha index to get to a known database by name.

4. Vendor dropdown: it may be of some use to a few users, while adding some burden to others.

5. Combined filtering effect of using dropdown choices, search box, and alpha index. This caused confusion for a three people, who ended up with no or few results or noticed that the number of databases per subject was changing but didn’t understand why. The Clear Filters button did not seem to be noticed.

6. Complexity of page. A participant in the Quick Search study said “I never use this, it’s too chaotic.” A participant in the AID study said “I don’t have a bad opinion of this page - I immediately start filtering so it’s not overwhelming.”
   a. Suggestion 1: have a link to another page for the new databases, to remove some of the content and make it easier to focus.
   b. Suggestion 2: Shorten the individual database descriptions. See https://guides.library.duke.edu/az.php for an example.

7. Comments on subject list: A grad student in the Quick Search study expressed confusion because her subject area is interdisciplinary and she did not know which subject area to pick. Another grad student had trouble because while his area is Hospitality and Events Management, that subject area also includes Apparel, which is completely different. An undergraduate suggested “Instead of the dropdowns and the complete list of databases, list the subject areas on the page. There should be a second criteria - Biological Sciences and subcategories.”

8. Finding the Research and Course Guides after hearing a description of the Guides: No one noticed the Guides button on the home page without it being pointed out. One noticed a Guide from the AID page, two found them through Find Your Librarian, and one got there through Help & Service -> For You -> Services for Students. The participants thought the Guides were useful when they found them, although they had a different idea about what they would find there before they looked.

A tally of results is in Appendix B. The interview script is in Appendix C.
Web Page Views and COUNTER Usage Data

Server log web page views

Page view server-side statistics from AWStats and the LibGuides Statistics module were combined and graphed below. There may be differences in the ways the server logs are parsed, and therefore the two may not be directly comparable, but the page views appear to be down some now, even if the high counts in fall 2016 are ignored.

When the AID pages were in the lib.iastate.edu domain, they were listed as one of the sub-results for the library in a Google search for “iowa state university library.” This is no longer true, possibly since they are not in our domain now.
Since visits to the library website are decreasing, and since it is difficult to calculate visits across our different platforms, home page views were used as a proxy for visits. A ratio of AID page views to library website home page views (as a percentage) is presented below.

**AID page views as a percentage of website home page views**

![Graph showing AID page views as a percentage of website home page views]

**DB1 COUNTER Statistics**

DB1 COUNTER statistics files from the “collect” myfiles drive (Y:/Usage Stats (ER)/DB1 reports) were aggregated and de-duped. Total Result Click counts are plotted below. The data are available through 2017. While the usage data may be influenced by AID page usage, databases may also be accessed by other means, such as through Quick Search, directly to a specific database, or through LibGuides.

“**Result Clicks** count all the clicks originating from the result list displayed by a search or browse. This includes links to external resources, as well as records included in the databases on that platform.”

https://www.projectcounter.org/quick-guideresult-clicks-record-views/

**Databases Usage Counter Report Result Clicks**

![Graph showing databases usage counter report result clicks]

![Graph showing databases usage counter report result clicks]
The low counts in 2015 and 2017 are the result of low counts from the EBSCOhost databases and the spike in September 2017 is from a large spike in Factiva. These EBSCOhost data appear questionable, as the peaks in the low semesters are less than a third the peaks in the higher semesters. This pattern is seen in many of the individual EBSCOhost databases.

The plot below excludes the EBSCOhost and Factiva data and shows a higher peak in fall 2017. As seen by the dashed line, about half of the fall 2017 peak comes from ProQuest.

COUNTER data may not be reliable enough to detect any effect from the switch to the LibGuides AID. Additionally, databases are accessible in other ways, and many of the users may be looking for a known database, rather than trying to find new databases for their subject, which probably would not be affected as much by a switch in interfaces.
Appendix A

Current and old AID pages

Article Indexes & Databases
Find the best library databases for your research.

457 Databases found

A

AAPG Datapages
The world's largest professional geological society. The Datapages are an archive of geological publications by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and over 40 other societies and publishers.

AATA Online
AATA provides abstracts of literature related to the preservation and conservation of our material culture heritage. As a part of the Getty Conservation Institute the database also includes subject-specific bibliographies.

ABI/INFORM Global
Search worldwide business periodicals for in-depth coverage of business and economic conditions, management techniques, theory, and practice of business, advertising, marketing, economics, human resources, finance, taxation, computers, and more.

Academic OneFile
A comprehensive collection of authoritative periodicals and scholarly journals in biology, chemistry, criminal justice, economics, environmental science, history, marketing, political science, psychology.

Academic Search Complete
This database covers almost all subject areas and is especially good at interdisciplinary areas. Good place to start for basic term papers. It contains full-text articles for more than 6,500 journals.

Chilton's Library
Get the detailed information you need to tackle vehicle maintenance and repairs - simply select your vehicle make, model and year to get started.

Corporate ResourceNet
Designed to meet the diverse information needs of today's

Article Indexes and Databases

Get started with these general article databases:

- Academic Search Premier (EBSCO)
- Google Scholar

Find databases by subject/research area:

--- Select subject/research area ---

--- Select subcategory ---

Submit

Find databases by TITLE (begins with):

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Show all

Find databases by TITLE:
Enter words from database name

Submit

Research Materials

WorldCat
Appendix B.
Table includes results from Quick Search study, when the participant demonstrated AID page use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Graduate students/postdoc/scholars</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary source for articles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Search</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AID page to get to a known database</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AID page to search for databases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Scholar</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct to a database (ArXiv, Web of Science)</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td></td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/seldom uses articles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e-Journals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On AID page</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used search box in combination with dropdowns for specific topic (“glucoamylase”)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used search box alone for broad subject area (“anthropology”, “data”)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used search box in combination with dropdowns for broad subject area (“finance”)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Subject dropdown</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1111111111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought their subject was not appropriately included in list</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Database Type dropdown for Articles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Database Type dropdown, other type</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>111111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used alpha index to get to a known database</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used alpha index to explore databases by subject (“I” for Industrial Engineering)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made comment about or tried Vendor dropdown</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After combining dropdowns, alpha, etc., did not clear the filters and got confused.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Script for AID page testing

Date:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Status: _____Fr _____Soph _____Jr _____Sr _____Grad _____Faculty _____Staff

Hi, ___. My name is __________. Thank you for coming here today to help us improve the library website. As part of this process, we are asking users like you to do some tasks involving finding articles.

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about you and how you use our web pages. There are no right or wrong answers to my questions. We’d like to know what you really think, so we can make our website work better for our users. As we do some of the tasks I’d like you to think out loud as you show me how you would do something. If I use words or terms you’re not familiar with, please feel free to ask for clarification.

You may skip any questions that you don’t feel comfortable answering and may withdraw at any time. Now for a few questions, starting with some background questions (above).
1. How long have you been at ISU?
2. What is your subject area?
3. How frequently do you use the ISU library website?
   _____Daily   _____Once a week   _____Monthly   _____Quarterly   _____Never
4. Have you taken Library 160? [if undergraduate] or [have you ever taken a course in searching the library (ours or another library), or has someone showed you]?
5. Show me how you would search for material for a research paper. What steps would you take to do this? This could include using something besides the library.
6. Starting from the Library’s home page, what do you see that could help you search for scholarly or peer-reviewed articles? Are there any that you haven’t tried before? Don’t click on it yet. What do you think you will find there?
7. Choose one that you didn’t use in the first task, click on it, and take a look at it. Tell me what strikes you about it. How would you use it?
8. [If they haven’t gone to the AID page yet.] Go back to the home page. Have you ever used Ebsco or Web of Science or a similar database to find articles? How do you find it?
9. [If they haven’t gone to the AID page yet, ask them to go back to the home page. Where else could you find databases?]. [On the AID page.] What strikes you about this page? Do you see anything you would use?
10. How would you use this page to find an article about a topic from your major?
11. How would you find a database that is specific to your major? Do you know of one already? Please look for one that might be helpful.
12. (back to home page) Librarians have written some pages providing all types of information about specific resources for different subject areas. If you don’t know where to start, they can be helpful. Where would you find those? [On Libguides page]. What strikes you about this page? How would you use it to find information?
13. (On specific Guide) – Do you see anything useful here? What would you use?
14. Do you ever need other types of data or information, such as statistics or images, or some kind of specialized reference, besides articles? Do you think the library has that? How would you find that?
15. Overall, what do you think about [the AID page] and finding articles or databases through the library?
16. Do you have any other comments about the Library website?