The Usability of Electronic Finding Aids during Directed Searches

DLF Forum
April 21, 2004
New Orleans, Louisiana

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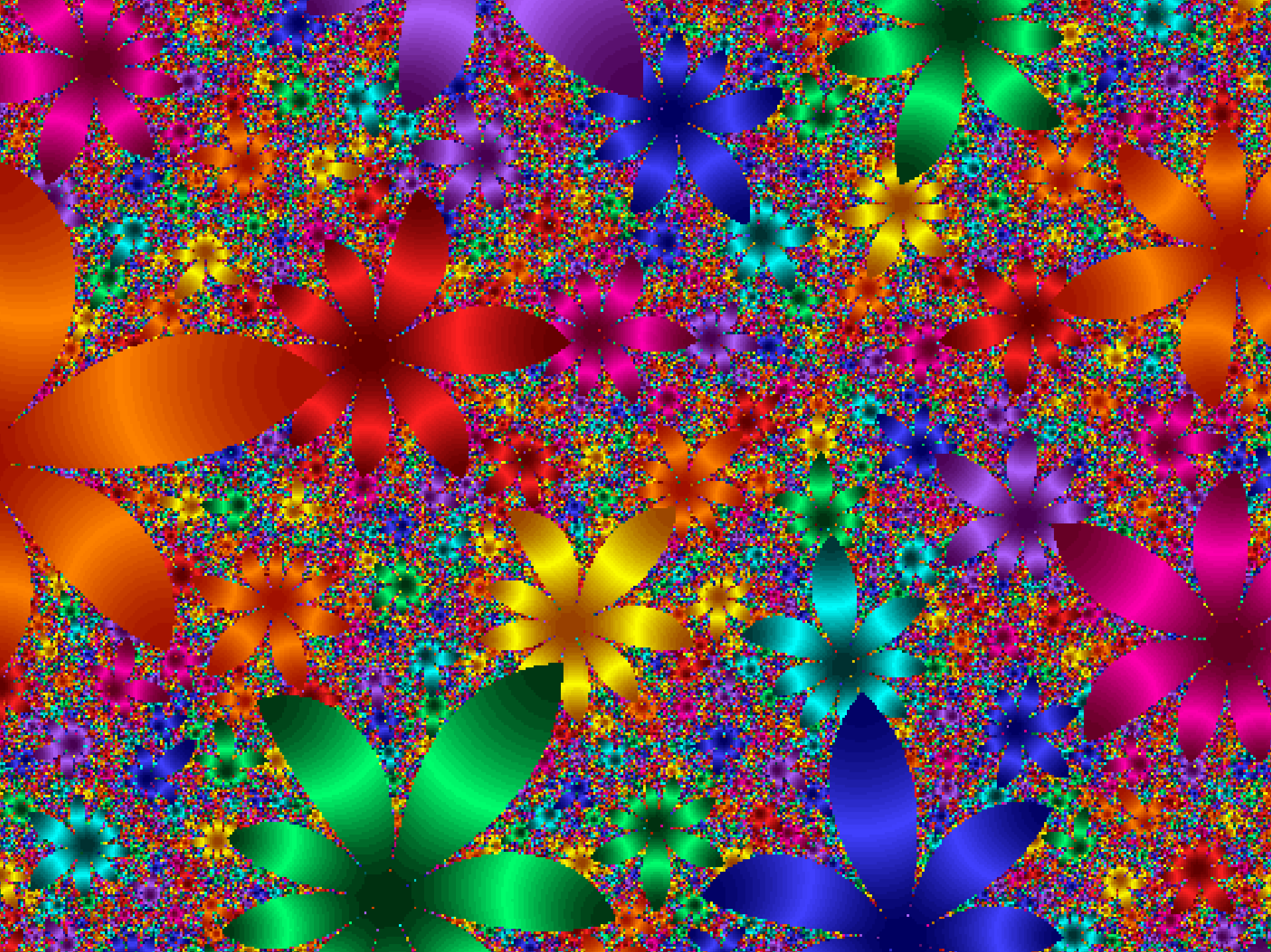


introduction

- archival chaos and “messiness”
- development of descriptive standards (incl. EAD)
- two issues largely unaddressed
  - user perception and use of finding aids
  - which designs facilitate effective search strategies?

goals, background, and scope

- **focus: user interaction**
- **most user studies non-electronic**
- **studies of archival description not user centric**
- **study limited to directed searches**
  - **materials user strongly suspects might exist, where he/she has a search term in mind.**
- **also tests significance of domain and system expertise**

methodology, slide 1

- **focus on looking for collections, looking for folders**
- **website (ASP driven)**
  - **survey instrument for demographics, experience**
  - **8 usability tasks → directed searches**
    - collection-level interfaces
      - 11 option via links→ University of North Carolina Mss Dept
      - 3 option, search, browse by subject or unit → UIUC
      - 2 options, search and alpha list → OAC
      - 1 option, alpha list → Princeton Public Policy Papers
    - folder-level interfaces
      - PDF→ Northwestern
      - non-searchable EAD, left nav bar → TARO, U. Houston
      - HTML, top table on contents → Princeton
      - searchable EAD w/ two pop up windows → Yale

Task Number 1

The first task is a dry run to show you how the system works. In this task, like the others that follow, a webpage will be loaded in the top part of your screen. Using this webpage and any links or search tools you wish, find the **PHONE NUMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ARCHIVES**

When you have found it, record the phone number in box located in the red bar at the bottom of your screen. Then click the 'Submit' button. If you cannot find the phone number, click the 'I give up' button.

You can redisplay these instructions at any time by clicking the INSTRUCTIONS button on the left side of the red bar.

When you have fully read the instructions, click the "next" button to proceed to the test.

Next

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ARCHIVES HOLDINGS

Browse
by Subject
by Campus Unit

Search for:
Go!

Advanced Search

Go to series:
Go!

Instructions

Send Us E-mail

Search Instructions

This website provides a searchable interface for the University of Illinois Archives' control card system. Before beginning your search, please note that **this database searches only summary records for the material in the archives**, not the detailed box listings. It **does not** include holdings in the ALA Archives.

The database includes records for over 5,500 archives or manuscript collections. The materials have been arranged according to the archival principle of provenance, into a three-part classification scheme of record group, record sub-group, and record series.

The database may be queried using the navigation bar on the left side of the screen.

The basic search looks for a keyword found in the title and description fields in the database. An Advanced Search allows keyword searching of specific fields, limited by beginning or ending dates if desired. Keyword searches are most useful if you are looking for a materials regarding a person, subject, or place regardless of the unit under which such materials are classified.

If you get too many hits when searching for a keyword, try "Browse by Subject." This feature allows for alphabetical browsing of the controlled subject terms which the Archives uses to describe the records we hold.

"Browse by Record Group" allows direct access to lists of archives or manuscripts sorted by record group and then by sub-group. This type of search is most useful if you would like to browse the records of a particular college, department, or unit.

INSTRUCTIONS

The Record Series Number for the Lorado Taft Papers is: No. Submit -or- I Give Up

Texas Archival Resources Online

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Learning. Leading.

Nikki Van Hightower Papers, 1967-1997

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Van Hightower, Nikki
Title	Nikki Van Hightower Papers
Dates:	1967-1997
Abstract:	Nikki Van Hightower has been an outspoken activist in the women's movement and a leading proponent of equality for women in the city of Houston. Her papers include correspondence, memoranda, reports, studies, speeches, commentaries, press statements, publications, diaries, photographs and clippings.
Quantity:	14 boxes; 7.5 linear feet
Identification:	uhwnvh96

methodology, slide 2

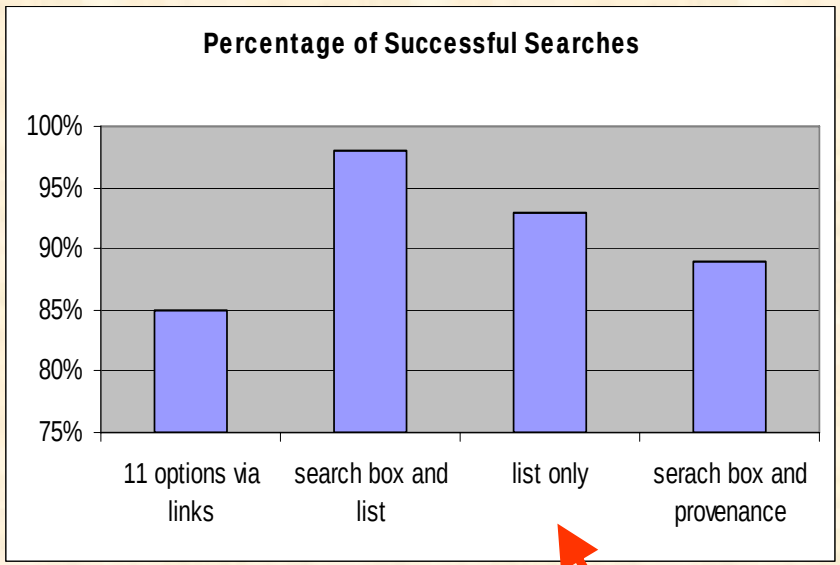
- administered it both on and off-site
- during the test
  - system recorded answers and time spent search
  - observer recorded mouse movement, reactions
  - on site → post test interviews
  - off site → web form comments
- after the test
  - coded, queried and analyzed data
  - ran descriptive stats
  - t-tests (measures significance of two sets of paired means, an indication if differences likely to be be replicated in population)
  - correlated times to survey results
  - transcribed interviews, examined submitted comments

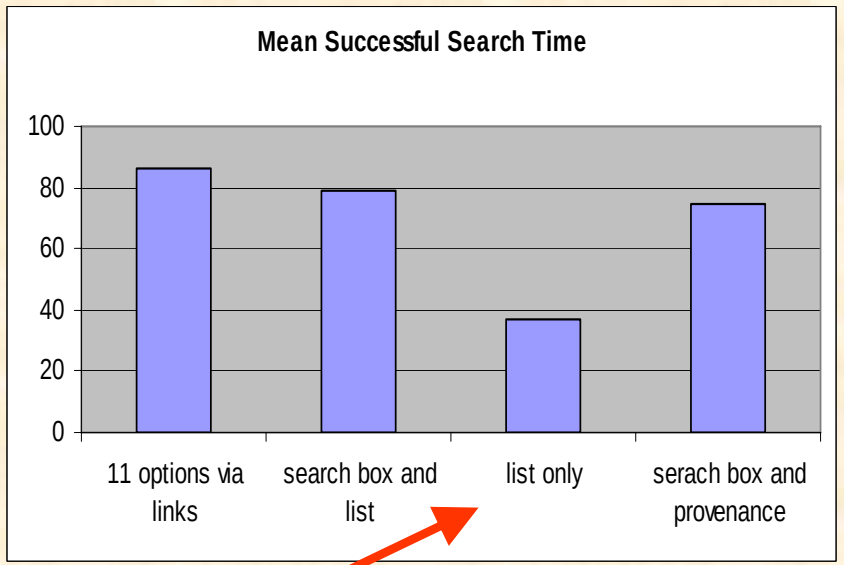
results, sample characteristics

- **respondents**
  - **89 participants; 35 on-site, 54 off-site**
  - **On-site mostly students (77%), off site archivists librarians (51%)**
  - **2/3 female**
  - **domain experts**
    - 32% archivists
  - **systems experts**
    - 21% “power users” or better
  - **interview comments show tensions over service expectations**

Quantitative results, collection search

- tasks with fewest search options most successful
- alpha lists worked well
- Princeton design fastest, t-scores show significance





Princeton design

PUBLIC POLICY PAPERS

Collections marked with e have online finding aids; those marked with have been recognized by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference finding aid competitions.

A-B C-D E-F G-K L-M N-R S-U V-Z

The Mudd Manuscript Library gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Independent College Fund of New Jersey for their assistance in making many of these finding aids available electronically.

Woodrow Wilson reviews Allied troops while in France prior to negotiating the Treaty of Versailles, 1918. From the Papers of Woodrow Wilson Project.

A-B

Adams, Henry, Papers
American Association for the Advancement of the Humanities Archives
American Civil Liberties Union, 1917-1950 e
American Civil Liberties Union, 1950-1995 e
American Civil Liberties Union: Atlanta Office Records
American Civil Liberties Union: Washington, D.C. Office Records e
American Committee for Devastated France, Records of the e
Americans United for Separation of Church and State Archives e
Armour, Norman, Papers e
Armstrong, Hamilton Fish, Papers e

Manuscripts Department

ONLINE FINDING AIDS AND GUIDES

Search the Manuscripts Department Website (includes online finding aids and web pages with information about the Department and online exhibits)

Please note: Many Manuscripts Department finding aids and guides are not yet available online. Check with Manuscripts Department staff about access to collections not represented on this site.

Online Finding Aids:

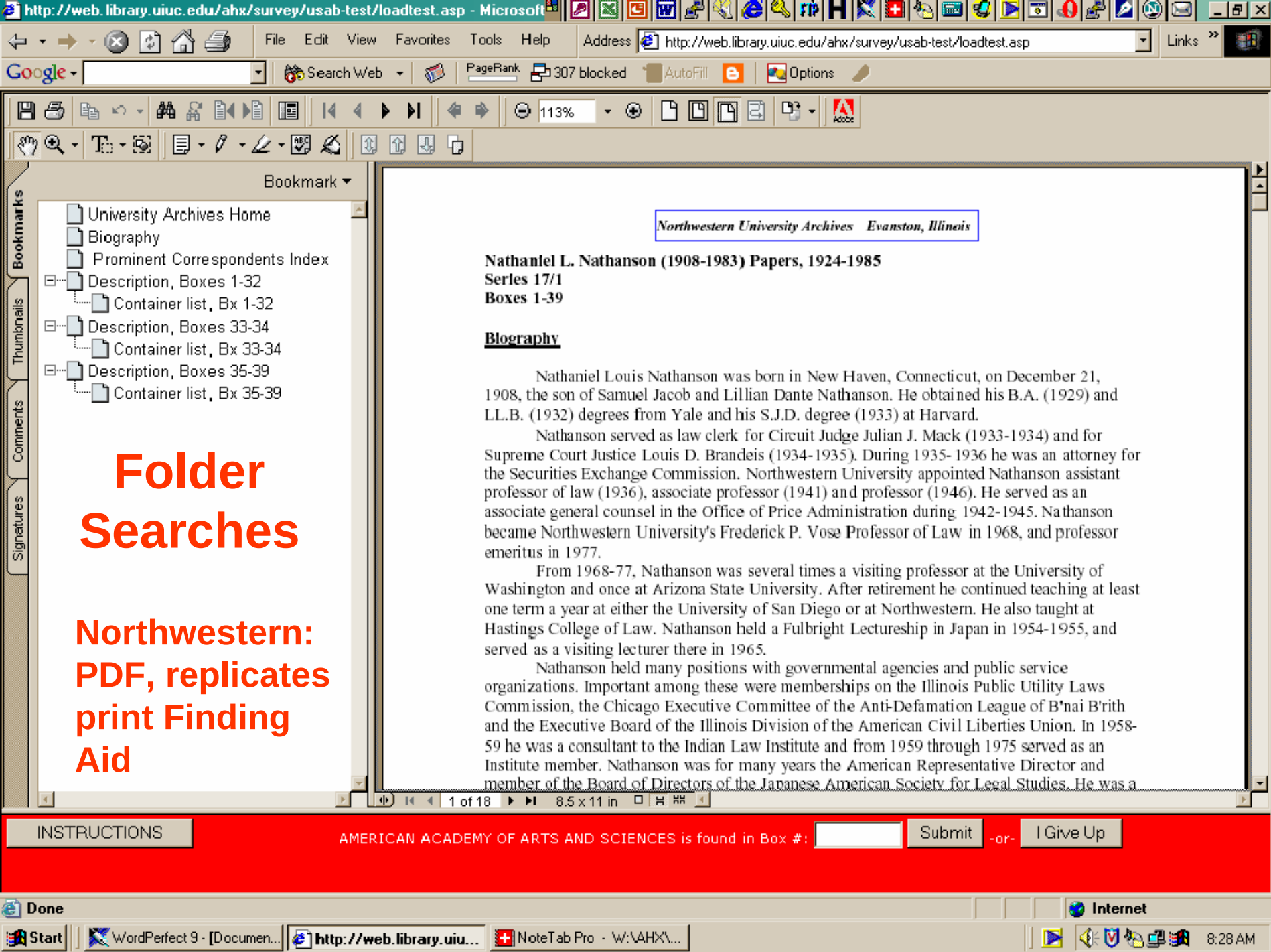
Southern Historical Collection and General and Literary Manuscripts (browsable alphabetical lists)
Southern Folklife Collection (direct access to online Southern Folklife Collection finding aids also accessible through the browsable alphabetical lists)
University Archives
African American Resources Collection (materials gathered by North Carolina Central University and made available through the Manuscripts Department)

Online Guides:

Guide to African American Documentary Resources in North Carolina
Guide to Publishing Archives and Collections
North Carolina Writers in the Southern Historical Collection
Selected Business History Resources
Women in Country Music Discography

INSTRUCTIONS

The manuscript number for the Samuel Hairston Papers is: # Submit -or- I Give Up


http://web.library.uiuc.edu/ahx/survey/usab-test/loadtest.asp - Microsoft
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Address http://web.library.uiuc.edu/ahx/survey/usab-test/loadtest.asp
Links
Google
Search Web
PageRank
307 blocked
AutoFill
Options
113%
Bookmark
Bookmarks
Thumbnails
Comments
Signatures
University Archives Home
Biography
Prominent Correspondents Index
Description, Boxes 1-32
Container list, Bx 1-32
Description, Boxes 33-34
Container list, Bx 33-34
Description, Boxes 35-39
Container list, Bx 35-39
Folder Searches
Northwestern: PDF, replicates print Finding Aid
Northwestern University Archives Evanston, Illinois
Nathaniel L. Nathanson (1908-1983) Papers, 1924-1985
Series 17/1
Boxes 1-39
Biography
Nathaniel Louis Nathanson was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on December 21, 1908, the son of Samuel Jacob and Lillian Dante Nathanson. He obtained his B.A. (1929) and LL.B. (1932) degrees from Yale and his S.J.D. degree (1933) at Harvard.
Nathanson served as law clerk for Circuit Judge Julian J. Mack (1933-1934) and for Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1934-1935). During 1935-1936 he was an attorney for the Securities Exchange Commission. Northwestern University appointed Nathanson assistant professor of law (1936), associate professor (1941) and professor (1946). He served as an associate general counsel in the Office of Price Administration during 1942-1945. Nathanson became Northwestern University's Frederick P. Vose Professor of Law in 1968, and professor emeritus in 1977.
From 1968-77, Nathanson was several times a visiting professor at the University of Washington and once at Arizona State University. After retirement he continued teaching at least one term a year at either the University of San Diego or at Northwestern. He also taught at Hastings College of Law. Nathanson held a Fulbright Lectureship in Japan in 1954-1955, and served as a visiting lecturer there in 1965.
Nathanson held many positions with governmental agencies and public service organizations. Important among these were memberships on the Illinois Public Utility Laws Commission, the Chicago Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Executive Board of the Illinois Division of the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1958-59 he was a consultant to the Indian Law Institute and from 1959 through 1975 served as an Institute member. Nathanson was for many years the American Representative Director and member of the Board of Directors of the Japanese American Society for Legal Studies. He was a
1 of 18
8.5 x 11 in
INSTRUCTIONS
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES is found in Box #:
Submit
-or-
I Give Up
Done
Internet
Start
WordPerfect 9 - [Documen...
http://web.library.uiu...
NoteTab Pro - W:\AHX\...
8:28 AM

Texas Archival Resources Online

TARO/Univ of Houston: left-hand nav bar, cookbook style

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Princeton: Top table of contents; links to descriptive summaries of sub-elements

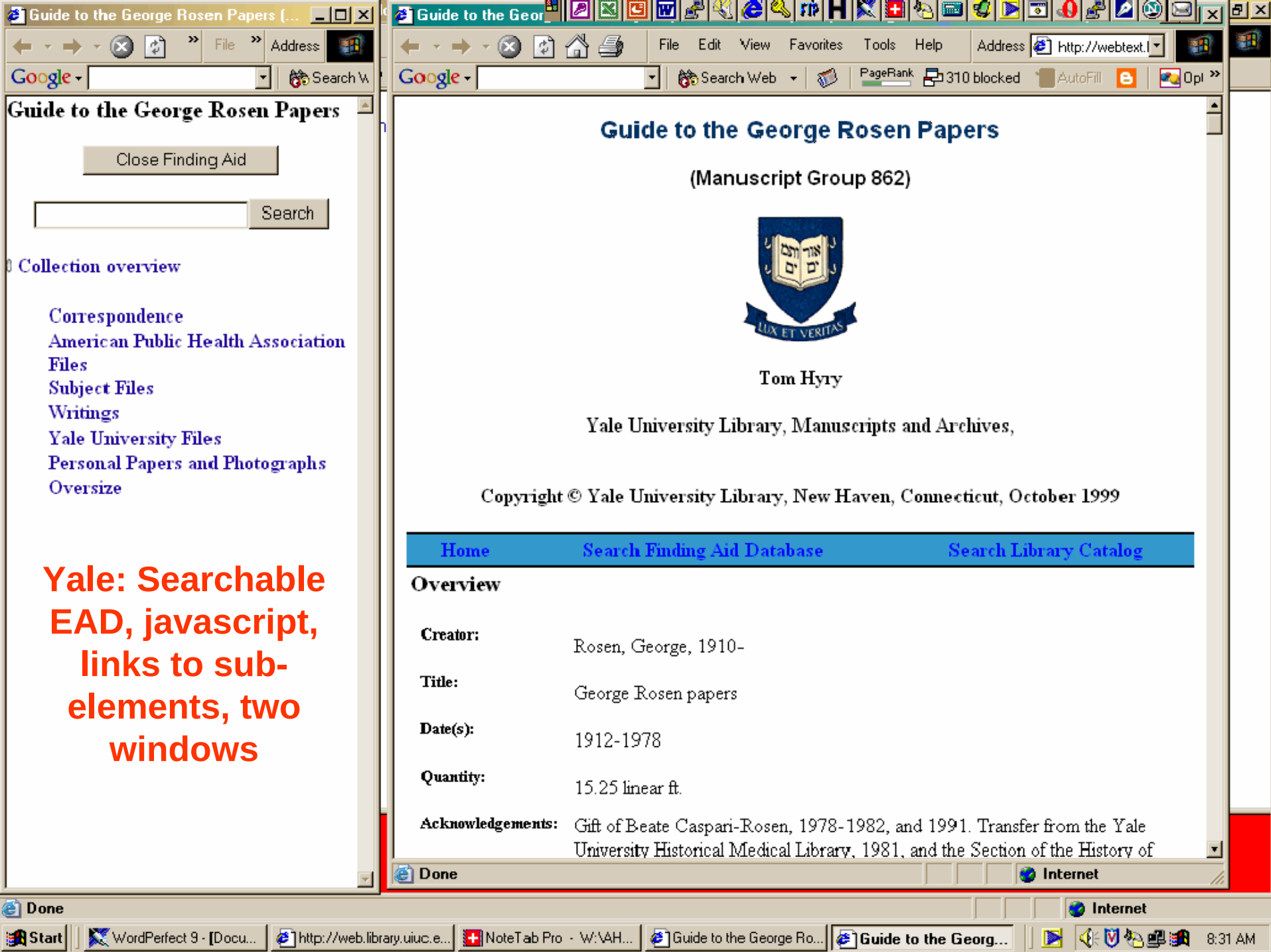
William E. Colby Papers

1935-1996
Bulk Dates: 1975-1995
MC#113

William E. Colby, c. 1990s

Introduction

William E. Colby, Princeton University Class of 1940, was a career agent in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Director of Central Intelligence from 1973-1976. However, the bulk of the collection documents his post-CIA career and contains correspondence, speeches, writings, newspaper clippings, and subject files that reflect Colby's professional and private interests.


Guide to the George Rosen Papers
Close Finding Aid
Search
Collection overview
Correspondence
American Public Health Association Files
Subject Files
Writings
Yale University Files
Personal Papers and Photographs
Oversize
Yale: Searchable EAD, javascript, links to sub-elements, two windows
Guide to the George Rosen Papers
(Manuscript Group 862)
LUX ET VERITAS
Tom Hyry
Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives,
Copyright © Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut, October 1999
Home
Search Finding Aid Database
Search Library Catalog
Overview
Creator:
Rosen, George, 1910-
Title:
George Rosen papers
Date(s):
1912-1978
Quantity:
15.25 linear ft.
Acknowledgements:
Gift of Beate Caspari-Rosen, 1978-1982, and 1991. Transfer from the Yale University Historical Medical Library, 1981, and the Section of the History of
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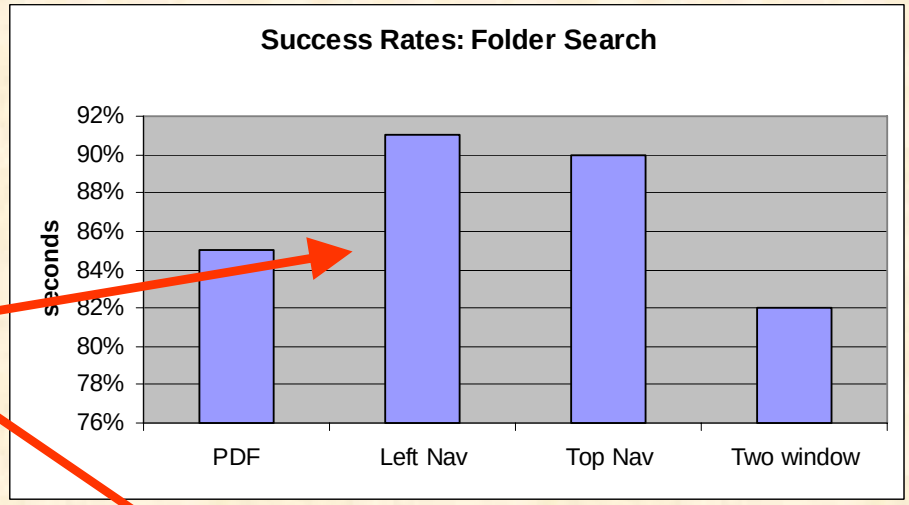
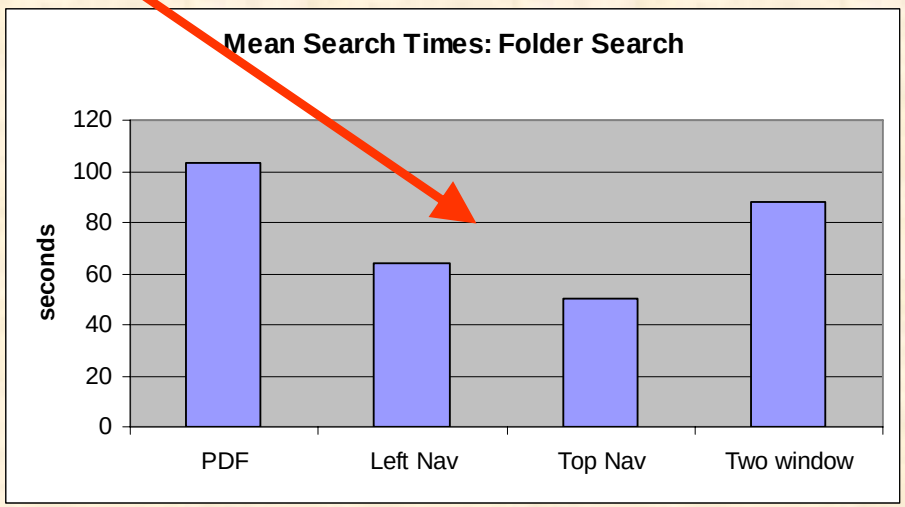
http://web.library.uiuc.e...
NoteTab Pro - W:\AH...
Guide to the George Ro...
Guide to the Georg...
8:31 AM

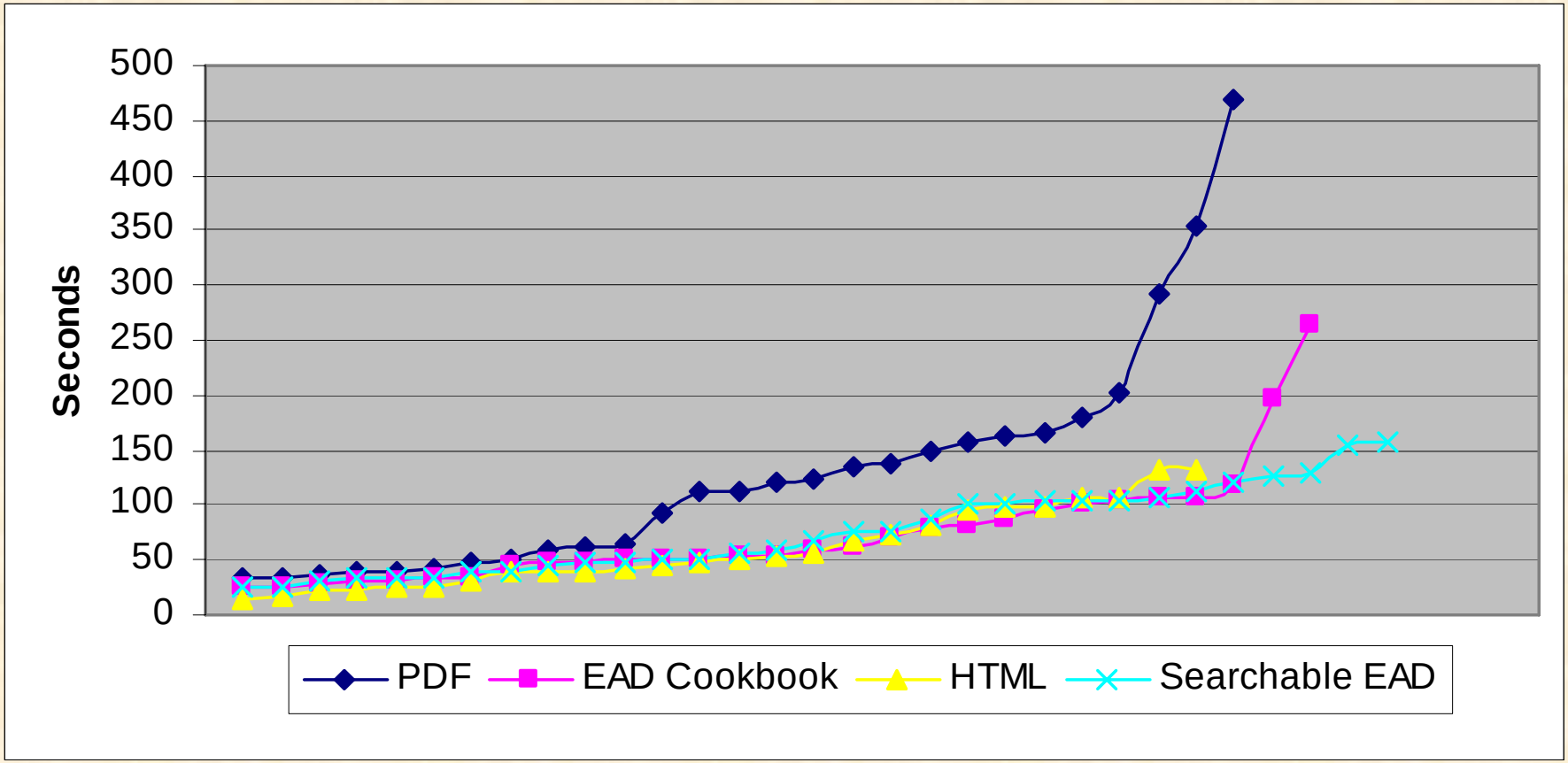
folder search results, slide 1

- overall success rates 82-91%
- top TOC functionally superior based on t-scores
- left nav bar also very good
- most difficulty using PDF
- t-scores show results valid for population





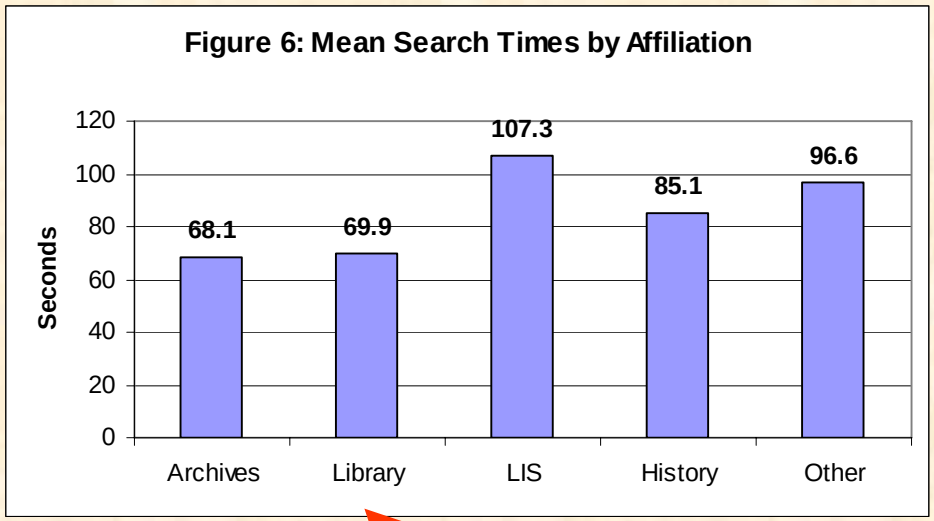
folder search results, slide 2

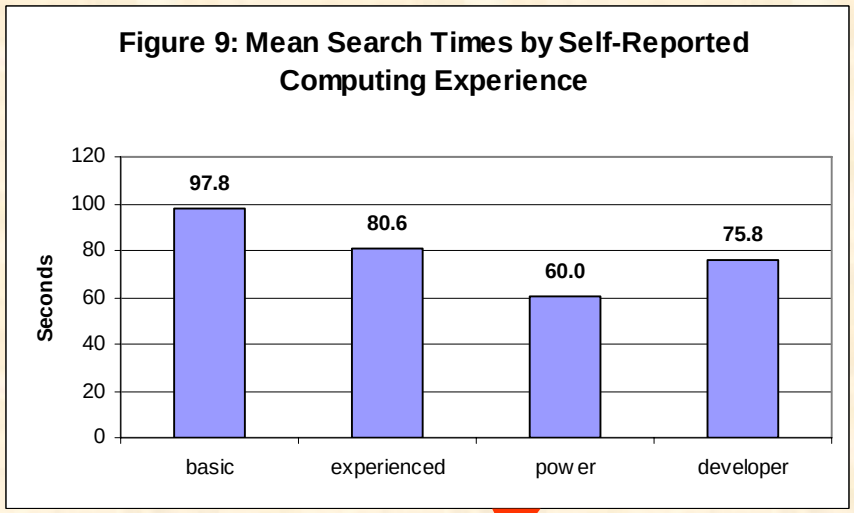


folder-level tasks, plotted search times on-site users only

survey / task correlations, slide 1

- speed not only imp. factor
- need finding aids and digital libraries that meet needs of novices, domain experts, and system experts
- these needs are very different

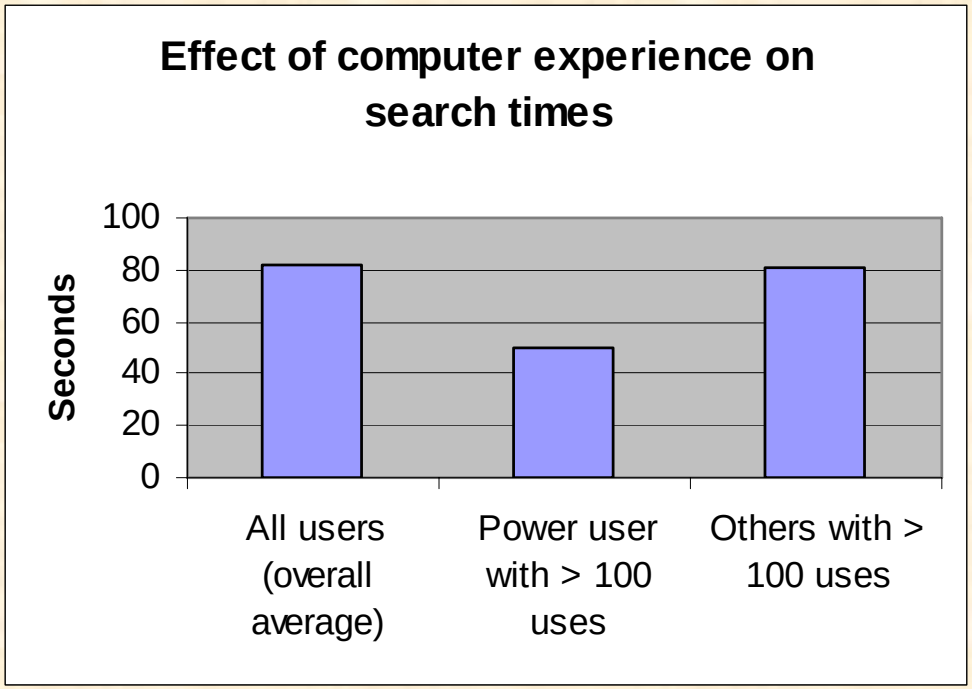




Domain and system experts

survey / task correlations, slide 2

- **speed in using electronic finding aids correlates more closely to computer experience (system expertise) than archival / library experience (domain expertise).**



suggested design features

(based on observations, interviews and, comments)

- need complete description and context for domain experts
- provide browse option alongside search boxes for systems experts
  - Will use a search box if available
  - . . . but actually find known items faster w/ lists
  - include option for search w/in single finding aid
- keep it simple
  - limit search options
  - no pop ups; beware complex javascript
  - don't break CTRL-F
  - PDF?
  - use standard search algorithms (Google-like)

linear format

Penny the Pup Papers

1935-1996
Bulk Dates: 1998-2001

default visited color

(hints CTRL-F will work)

Penny the Pup, ca 1990s

visual interest
(could move to right)

moderate number of links

to series descriptions w/ hyperlinks to folder list

Introduction

Penny the Pup, Purina University Class of 1998, was a career agent in the K-9 unit of the Urbana police department. The bulk of her collection includes speeches, writings, newspaper clippings, and subject files reflecting his professional and private interests in preventing crime and retrieving sticks.

Size: 8.31 linear feet (15 archival boxes, 3 8x10 boxes)

conclusion

this presentation, and a full version of the paper are available from a link at:

http://web.library.uiuc.edu/ahx/workpap/

I would like to thank the Research and Publication Committee of the University of Illinois Library, which provided support for the completion of this research.

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