

OAC Second Round Usability Test Findings

OAC Redesign Project

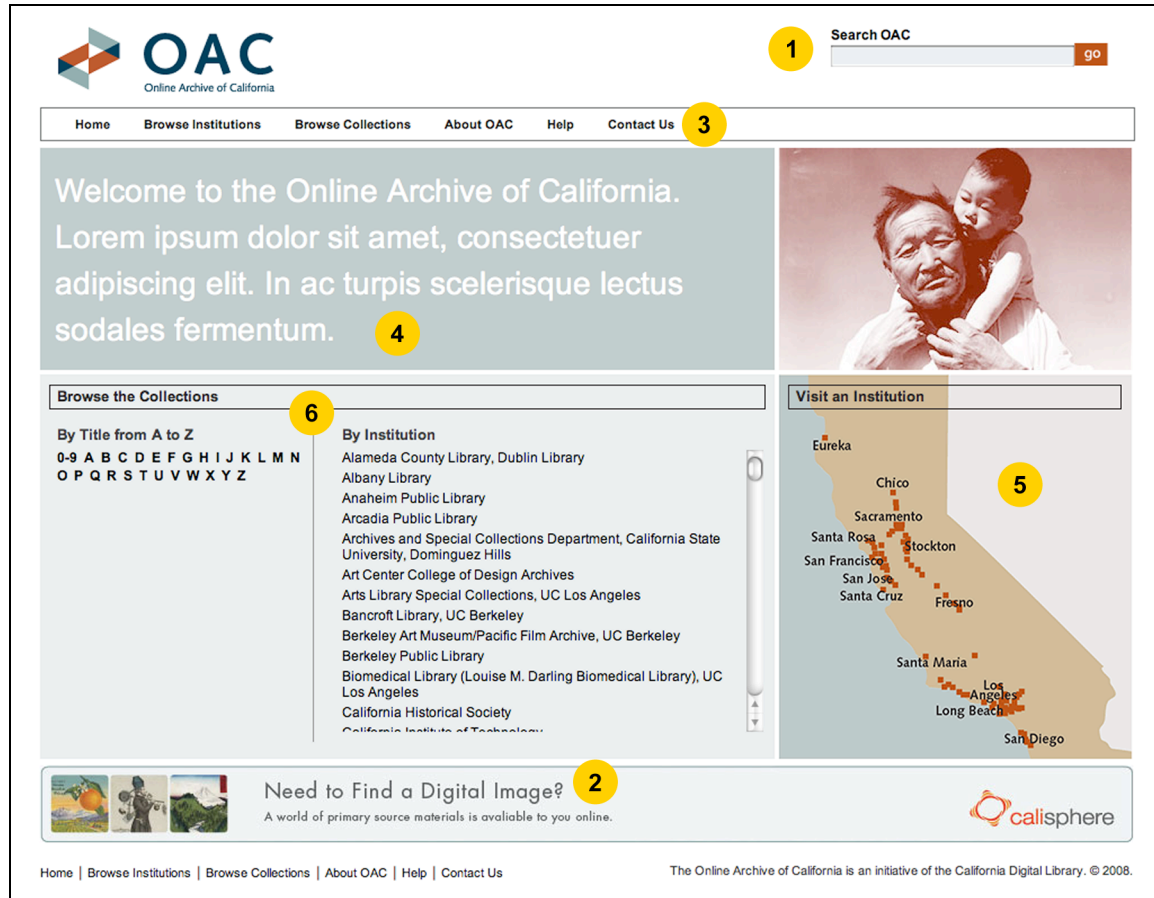
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Last modified: 23 June 2009

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Findings and Recommendations

Figure 1: Homepage



1: Global Search Box

The global search box is where users expected it to be. One user noted the absence of an advanced search function.

2: Calisphere Bar

Users are drawn to the Calisphere bar at the bottom of page because of the colorful images and tagline "Need to Find a Digital Image?". They are curious, and they want digital images. One user was not sure if "digital image" meant scanned letters and journals or digital photographs and art.

Users who clicked through to Calisphere realized that they had navigated off OAC. One user expressed that "this [Calisphere] seems like more fun," because things are chronologically and thematically organized.

3: Global Navigation

One user complained about the small font size used for the global navigation. She would like the addition of small icons or some other visual separator to make the links easier to scan.

Recommendation: Consider increasing font size and adding icons or separators.

4: Welcome Text

One user noted that the welcome text takes up a lot of space, so she hopes that it will "have some decent information" to justify the use of that amount of space.

5: Map

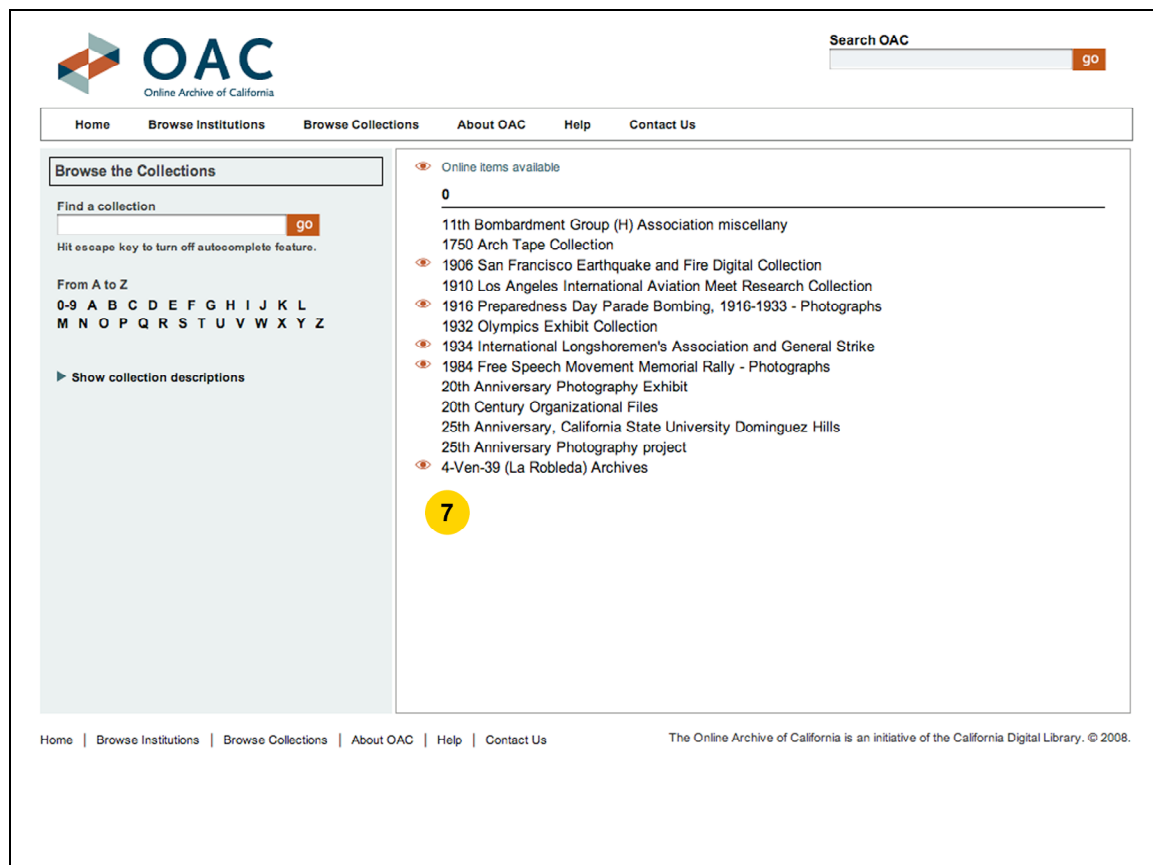
One user assumed that the map was not "clickable to zoom" and noticed that hovering didn't give institution names. Another noted that "the map is the most striking thing, but everything is in subdued colors."

Recommendation: Consider making the map look more like a Google map, which many users recognize by the graphic design.

6: Browse the Collections Area

Users were split about the Browse area. Some liked the a-z title browse. Others thought that it wasted a lot of space. One user, who observed the prominence of the list of institutions, said, "It seems like it's assuming that people already know where they want to do their research." Another reported that the list didn't mean much to her because she's not familiar with many institutions. One user wanted the browse lists to be replaced by a "featured" collection or topic.

Figure 2: Browse Collections Page

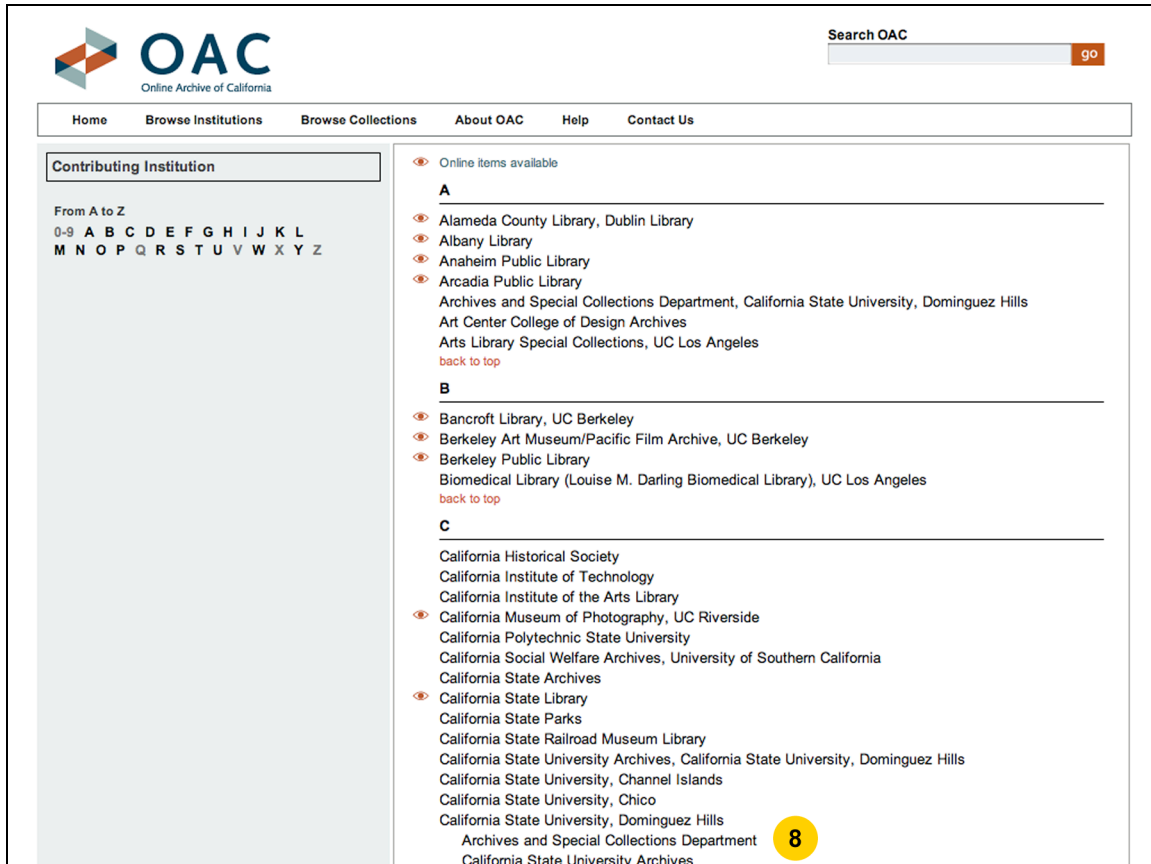


7: Browse Collections Page

It is not obvious that the default view shows a partial list. One user reported that he initially thought that the default was showing the entire list of collections. Adding to the confusion is the behavior of the default institutions lists, which shows the entire list. (See Figure 3.)

Recommendation: Make the default view for this page consistent with the rest of the site. Show the entire list.

Figure 3: Browse Institutions Page (cropped)

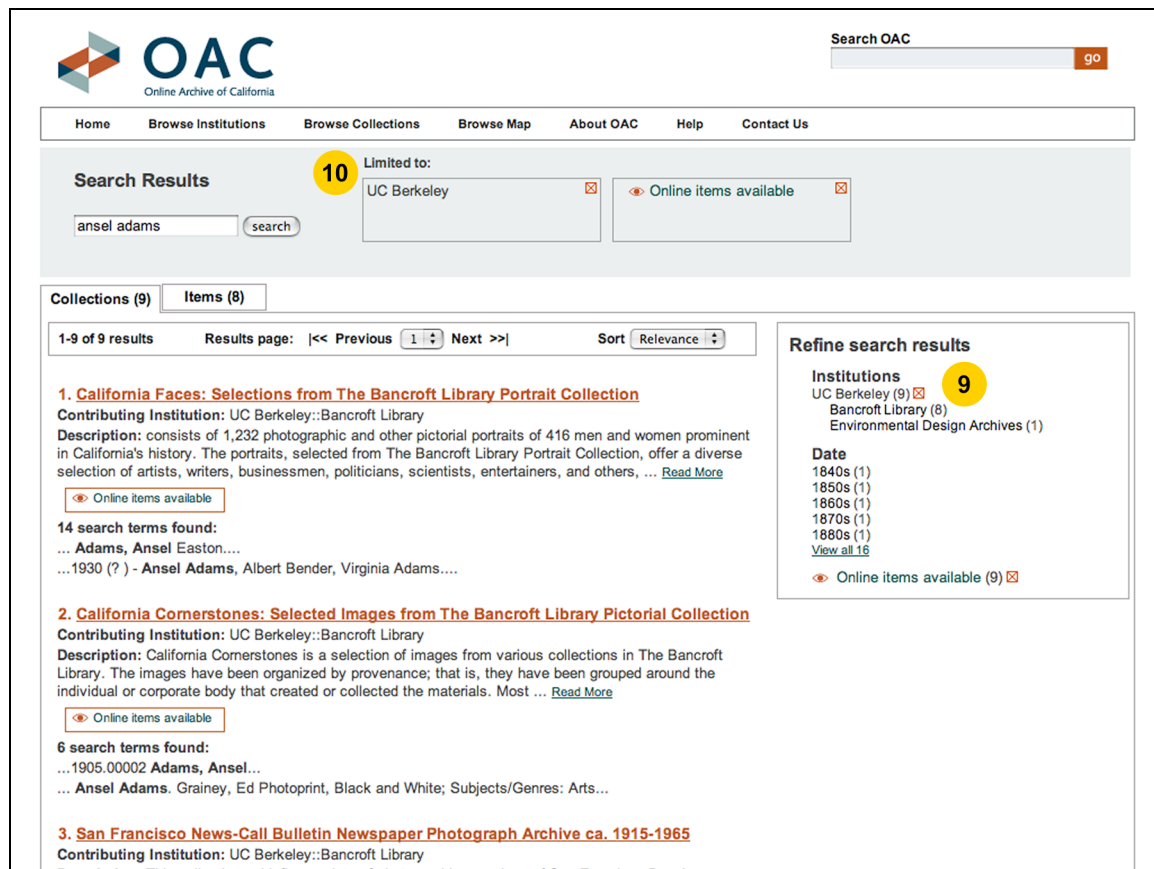


8: Browse Institutions Page

The default view of the Browse Institutions page shows the entire list of institutions. One user lamented the lack of geographical information on this page. There is no indication on this page that a map is available.

Recommendation: Consider adding a link to the map page on this page or adding a map link to the global navigation bar.

Figure 4: Search Results Page (cropped)



9: Facets

Most users did not click on the facets at all. One user tried clicking on facets, but was unsure about their behavior. (She was not convinced that her new set of results still pertained to her original search term.) Another user found the institutions facet helpful but wanted the list sorted by number of hits instead of alphabetically. She thought that this would lessen the amount of scrolling she would have to do.

10: Facet Labels

No user who chose a facet in the right sidebar clicked or noted through words or actions the presence of the facet labels.

Search

There are three main text entry boxes for searching content. One is the global search box located in the upper right corner of each webpage. Another is found on search results pages. (See Figure 7, #25.) Both perform sitewide search. A third box searches the current collection displayed. (See Figure 9, #26.)

All users noticed the global search box, but a few did not notice the other two search boxes. A few reported that the relationship between boxes was not clear. One user reported that the search boxes are somewhat confusing and need clarification. She explained that when navigating a website, she doesn't read. She looks for a box she can type in. On the OAC interface, there are three such boxes, and they all look the same.

The similarity of the search boxes sometimes leads to mistakes. One user typed her query into the “search this collection” box instead of one of the other boxes. When zero results were returned, she realized her mistake.

Another obstacle is the generic page title used sitewide. Every page uses “Online Archive of California” in the <title> tag, so taking advantage of tabbed browsing results in multiple tabs labeled “Online Archive of California.” One user tried to use the browser’s back button history to get back to a search results page, but every page listed was named “Online Archive of California.” She commented that those page titles needed to be more descriptive and say “search results.”

Recommendations:

Evaluate placement and labeling of search boxes. Move the one found on search results pages so that it is not directly below the “Search Results” heading. The current placement could imply a search *within* results functionality.

Use more descriptive page titles to aid in efficient navigation.

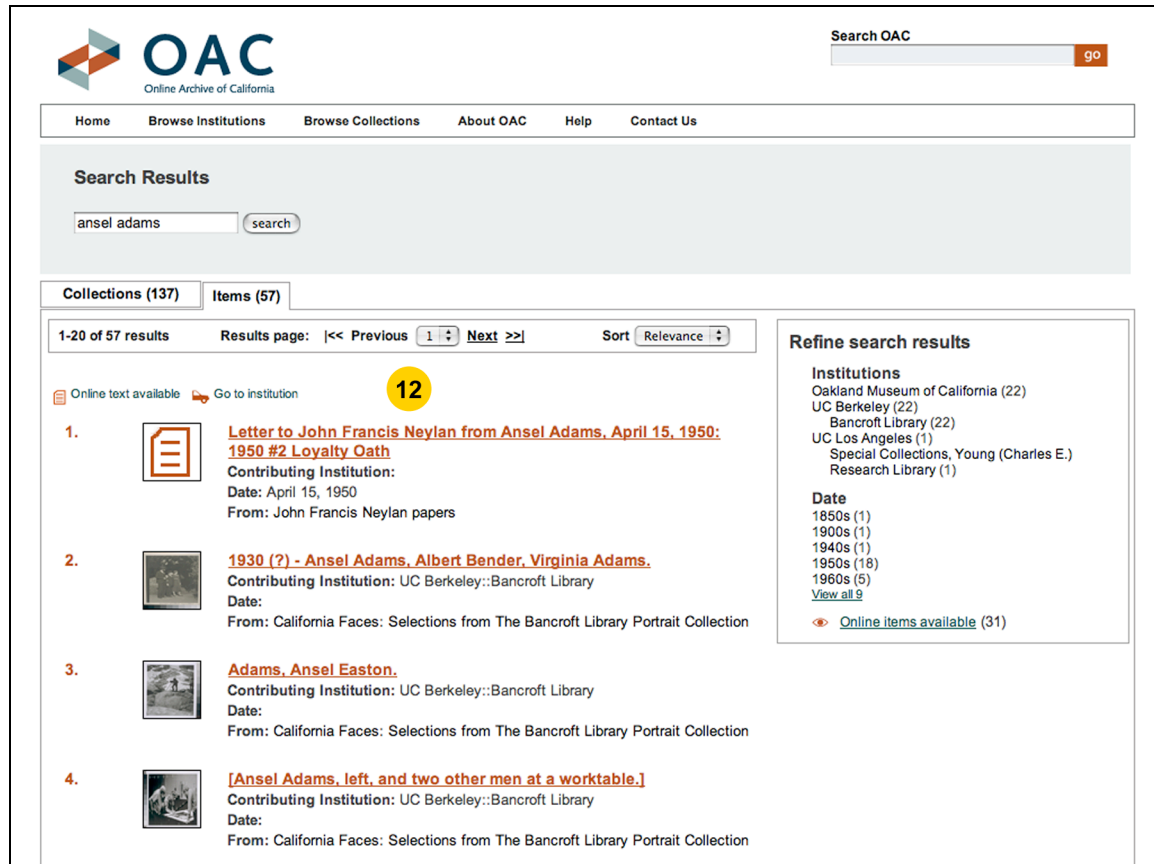
Figure 5: Institution Page (cropped)

The screenshot displays the OAC website interface for the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley. At the top, the OAC logo and name are visible, along with a search bar labeled "Search OAC" and a "go" button. Below the logo, a navigation menu includes links for Home, Browse Institutions, Browse Collections, Browse Map, About OAC, Help, and Contact Us. The main heading for the institution is "Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley". Below this, it states "Collections with online items: 207" and "Physical collections: 10296". A "View larger map/directions" button is present. The "Browse the Collections" section features a search bar with a "go" button and a yellow circle containing the number "18". Below the search bar, there is a "Hit escape key to turn off autocomplete feature." message and a list of collections starting with "A". The "Online items available" section lists various collections, including "A. A. Eremin papers, [ca. 1954-1963]", "A.A. Maslenikov journals, 1904 Feb. 2-[1905?] July 9.", "Aaron D. Riker journal to California : ms., 1852-1853.", "Aaron Holmes letters : San Francisco, 1850-1853.", "A.B. Dickinson papers, 1880-1958.", "Abajian, James de T. Collection of Black (African-American) ephemera.", "Abba Ptachya Lerner papers.", "Abe Mellinkoff papers, 1953-1992.", "Abel Sterns papers, 1846-1864.", "Abia A. Selover statement and biographical sketch, 1886.", "Abigail Leland Miller papers, [ca. 1903-1936]", "Abner H. Barker letters : ALS, 1852-1873.", "Abner Lawrence Raffety papers, 1881-1922.", "Aboriginal British Columbia : Victoria : ms., 1878.", "Abraham Haskel Taub papers, ca. 1948-1975.", "Abraham Holtzman collection on the Townsend movement, 1933-1952.", "Abraham Lincoln Brigade photos from the Spanish Civil War, and views of the Mexican revolution of 1929 [graphic]", "Abraham Lincoln Collection, 1931.", "Abraham Lincoln collection of papers , 1861-1865.", and "Abraham Lincoln Fellowship records, 1930-1935." A yellow circle containing the number "11" is positioned next to the "A.A. Maslenikov journals" entry.

11: Institution Homepage

One user, who arrived at this page through the Get Items link in the Collection Guide header section, stated that it was confusing to be taken to a huge list of collections when coming from a specific one.

Figure 6: Items Tab



12: Items Tab

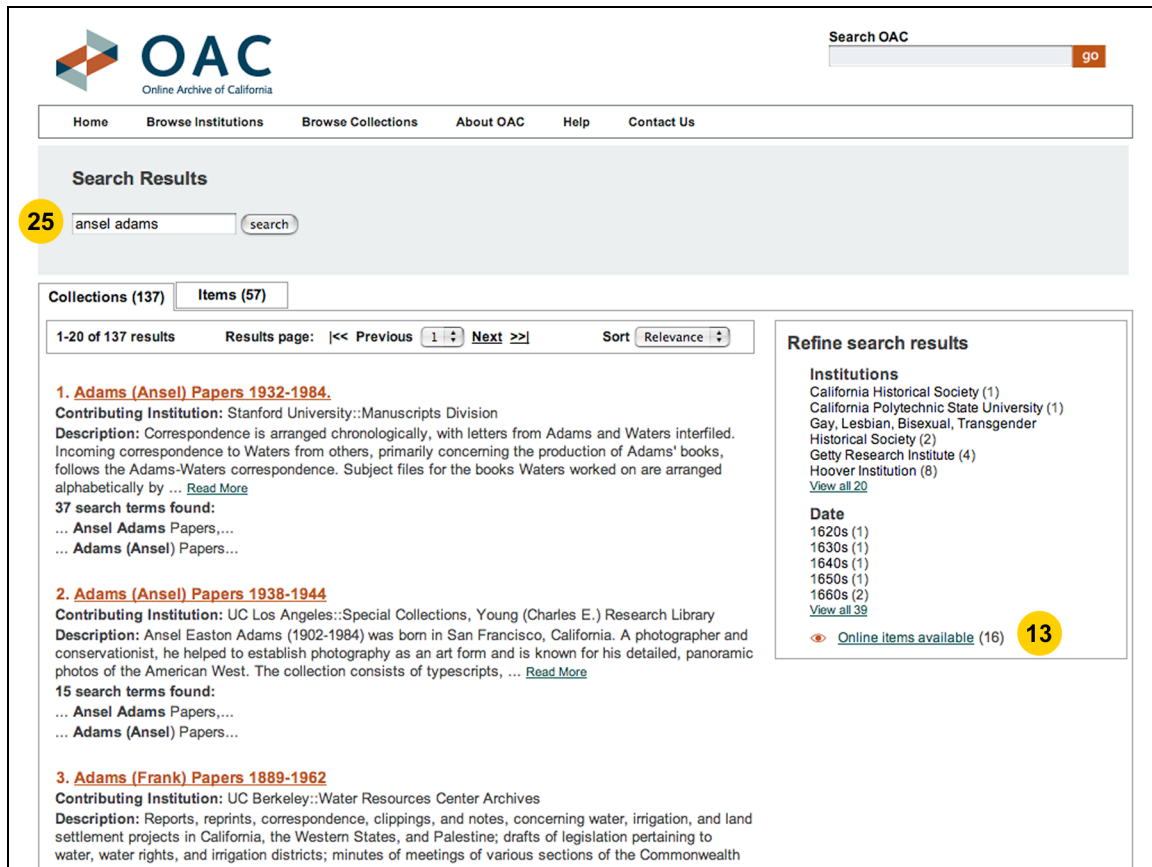
Two users clicked on the Items tab. One assumed that the items were part of a single collection and expressed a desire for a way to keep track of the items she viewed during a session. She observed, "This is a little bit of a rabbit hole to go down." This supports the mental model of items being contained within collections. Items do not exist on their own in this model; they are always part of collections. Another user was surprised to find zero items returned for his search.

One user was confused by the "Go to institution" placeholder icon/image in the items list. "There's a truck image [in the Items tab], and I don't know why that's there.... I'm still not sure about the truck."

Recommendations:

Consider ways to help users learn the meanings of icons used on the site. Explore ways to clarify the relationship (or lack of relationship) between collections and items.

Figure 7: Search Results for "ansel adams" (cropped)



OAC
Online Archive of California

Search OAC go

Home Browse Institutions Browse Collections About OAC Help Contact Us

Search Results

25

Collections (137) Items (57)

1-20 of 137 results Results page: << Previous 1 Next >> Sort Relevance

1. Adams (Ansel) Papers 1932-1984.
Contributing Institution: Stanford University::Manuscripts Division
Description: Correspondence is arranged chronologically, with letters from Adams and Waters interfiled. Incoming correspondence to Waters from others, primarily concerning the production of Adams' books, follows the Adams-Waters correspondence. Subject files for the books Waters worked on are arranged alphabetically by ... [Read More](#)
37 search terms found:
... Ansel Adams Papers,...
... Adams (Ansel) Papers...

2. Adams (Ansel) Papers 1938-1944
Contributing Institution: UC Los Angeles::Special Collections, Young (Charles E.) Research Library
Description: Ansel Easton Adams (1902-1984) was born in San Francisco, California. A photographer and conservationist, he helped to establish photography as an art form and is known for his detailed, panoramic photos of the American West. The collection consists of typescripts, ... [Read More](#)
15 search terms found:
... Ansel Adams Papers,...
... Adams (Ansel) Papers...

3. Adams (Frank) Papers 1889-1962
Contributing Institution: UC Berkeley::Water Resources Center Archives
Description: Reports, reprints, correspondence, clippings, and notes, concerning water, irrigation, and land settlement projects in California, the Western States, and Palestine; drafts of legislation pertaining to water, water rights, and irrigation districts; minutes of meetings of various sections of the Commonwealth

Refine search results

Institutions
California Historical Society (1)
California Polytechnic State University (1)
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender
Historical Society (2)
Getty Research Institute (4)
Hoover Institution (8)
[View all 20](#)

Date
1620s (1)
1630s (1)
1640s (1)
1650s (1)
1660s (2)
[View all 39](#)

[Online items available \(16\)](#) 13

Figure 8: Full Results (miniaturized)



13: Online items available link: "The first question is 'can I get it online.'"

Users did not see the "online items available" link in the right sidebar. Even when the link was present on the screen, users expressed a desire for an indication of whether results from their search were available online. The small font size and icon used are too subtle for users to pick out on a page filled with text. Furthermore, once users scroll down, the right sidebar no longer remains in view. So unless users notice the link initially, they are unlikely to find it after scrolling down. (Figure 8 shows how long the search results for "ansel adams" is.) One user who was looking for a photograph of Ansel Adams said, "I struck out. at this point I'd be trying Google Images."

Over the course of the session, most users did learn to look for the “eyeball.” One user suggested that the eyeball icon be placed next to the title in search results in order to make it more visible. However, two users still engaged in random clicking within certain sections of a collection guide to see if there were any hyperlinks that might lead to online images.

Figure 9: Search Results for Manzanar

The screenshot shows the OAC search results page for the query 'manzanar'. The page layout includes a header with the OAC logo and navigation links, a search bar, and a main results area. The results are categorized into 'Collections (75)' and 'Items (1168)'. The first result, '1. Manzanar War Relocation Center Records 1942-1946', is highlighted. A yellow circle with the number '16' points to a red box containing an eyeball icon and the text 'Online items available'. The page also features a 'Refine search results' sidebar with filters for institutions and dates.


16: Online items available link

The “online items available” box link found in the main panel was overlooked by some users. One user did not see this box and had to navigate to the collection guide page of each result to determine whether there were items available online. She looked in the header sections of the collection guides and noted the presence or absence of the “no online items” icon.

Recommendation:

Make the indications for online items more obvious. The current design and placement of those indicators are too subtle for users to pick up easily.

Figure 10: Collection Guide Page with Search Term Highlights



Search OAC
go

[Home](#)
[Browse Institutions](#)
[Browse Collections](#)
[About OAC](#)
[Help](#)
[Contact Us](#)

[> Home](#)
[> UC Los Angeles](#)
[> Special Collections, Young \(Charles E.\) Research Library](#)

Collection Guide

Collection Title: Finding Aid for the Manzanar War Relocation Center Records, 1942-1946

Collection Number: 122

Get Items:

21

Offline. Contact UC Los Angeles::Special Collections, Young (Charles E.) Research Library

Online items available

Collection Overview

Description

The Manzanar War Relocation Center was located in the Owens Valley in Central California. The United States Army initially established the camp as the Owens Valley Reception Center under the management of the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), March-May 1942. On June 1, 1942, Manzanar was reconstituted as a War Relocation Authority (WRA) center. Its peak population was 10,121, and the majority of its internees came from pre-World War II Japanese American communities in the Los Angeles basin. The collection consists of files collected and maintained by Ralph Palmer Merritt (Director of the Japanese Relocation Center at Manzanar, California) including files of the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), the War Relocation Authority (WRA) records and correspondence from April 1942-December 1945, a history of the Manzanar Center (5 volumes), daily records of the Block Managers, Ralph Merritt's office files, and a two volume index of all evacuees at Manzanar. There are also books, clippings, copies of the Congressional Record, reprints of committee hearings, and magazines documenting the history of Japanese and Japanese Americans in the United States and their interment and military service, photographs and photographic negatives documenting activities and people at Manzanar, and approximately 170 photographs by Ansel Adams of the Manzanar War Relocation Center on 14 x 18 inch mats. The collection also contains copies of various newspapers and printed materials such as the Manzanar Free Press.

Background

The **Manzanar** War Relocation Center was located in the Owens Valley in Central California; the site was used by Paiute-Shoshone Indians for centuries until it became a Euro-American fruit-growing settlement, 1910-35; the United States Army initially established the camp as the Owens Valley Reception

View entire collection guide ?

PDF (331.21 Kb)
HTML

466 hits

Search this collection

manzanar

26

go

☒ Entire Collection Guide
☐ Online Items

Table of contents ?

466 Search hits
Clear search hits

Overview
Full overview

23 hits

14

Container List

War Relocation Authority (WRA): Administrative and Personnel Management Handbooks, Reports

Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) - Manzanar File

1 hit

War Relocation Authority (WRA) - Manzanar file

20 hits

Manzanar Relocation Center - Daily reports of block managers to Town Hall

1 hit

Manzanar Relocation Center - Town Hall Records

2 hits

Ralph P. Merritt (Project Director) Office file

4 hits

Far Eastern Propaganda Analysis files

Alphabetical file of newspaper clippings re: WRA, Manzanar, etc.

1 hit

Manzanar Relocation Center - Numbered photographic negatives and prints

2 hits

Manzanar Relocation Center - War Relocation Authority photographs

6 hits

Manzanar Relocation Center - Ansel Adams photographs

14 hits

[Home](#)
[Browse Institutions](#)
[Browse Collections](#)
[About OAC](#)
[Help](#)
[Contact Us](#)

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14: "Hit" Highlights

Three users noticed the yellow "hits" highlighting. One user commented that it's not obvious what a "hit" is. Another was confused because in the collection guide he was viewing, the full overview had one hit, but a sublevel had two hits. He also wanted the list to show only headings with hits with priority given online items.

- 11 -

Figure 11: Collection Guide Page

OAC
Online Archive of California

Search OAC go

Home Browse Institutions Browse Collections Browse Map About OAC Help Contact Us

> Home > UC Berkeley > Bancroft Library

Collection Guide

Collection Title: War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945

Collection Number: BANC PIC 1967.014--PIC

Get Items: Offline. Contact UC Berkeley::Bancroft Library
 Online items available

Collection Overview

Description The War Relocation Authority (WRA) records represent the official documentation of the United States agency created to assume jurisdiction over the Japanese and Japanese Americans evacuated from California, Oregon, and Washington by the Western Defense Command, the Fourth Army, and the Wartime Civilian Control Administration (WCCA) during January/February of 1942. During its existence from March 1942 to 1946, the WRA controlled the administration of the relocation centers, administered an extensive resettlement program, and oversaw the details of the registration and segregation programs. Included in their records are administrative files, official publications, reports and surveys, legal papers, correspondence, and photographs and scrapbooks. All of the records except the photographs have been cataloged as BANC MSS 67/14 c.

Extent 88 volumes and 8 boxes (ca. 7000 photographic prints) : black and white; various sizes
317 Kodachrome slides : black and white and color
57 negatives : film, black and white

Restrictions Publication Rights The photographs in this collection were taken by photographers working for the U.S. Government. Generally speaking, works created by U.S. Government employees are not eligible for copyright protection in the United States. However the photographs may be under copyright in some foreign countries, and privacy and publicity rights may apply. All requests for permission to publish photographs must be submitted in writing to the Curator of

View entire collection guide ?
• no PDF • HTML [1073 hits]

Search this collection
manzanar go
☒ Entire Collection Guide ☐ Online Items

Table of contents ?

1073 Search hits [Clear search hits](#)

Collection Overview
[Collection Details](#) [1 hit]

Series Descriptions

- Series 1: Colorado River Relocation Center (Poston, Arizona), 1942-1945 (bulk 1942-43).
- Series 2: Gila River Relocation Center (Rivers, Arizona), 1942-1944 (bulk 1942-43).
- Series 3: Granada Relocation Center (Amache, Colorado), 1942-1945 (bulk 1942-43).
- Series 4: Central Utah Relocation Center (Topaz, Utah), 1942-1945 (bulk 1942-43).
- Series 5: Heart Mountain Relocation Center (Heart Mountain, Wyoming), 1942-1945 (bulk 1943-44).
- Series 6: Jerome Relocation Center (Denson, Arkansas), 1942-1944.
- Series 7: Beet Workers (Near Milliken, Johnstown, Keensburg and Prospect), 1942.
- Series 8: Manzanar Relocation Center (Manzanar, California), 1942-1943. [2 hits]
- Series 9: Minidoka Relocation Center (Hunt, Idaho), 1942-1943.
- Series 10: Rohwer Relocation Center (McGehee, Arkansas), 1942-1944 (bulk 1942-43).

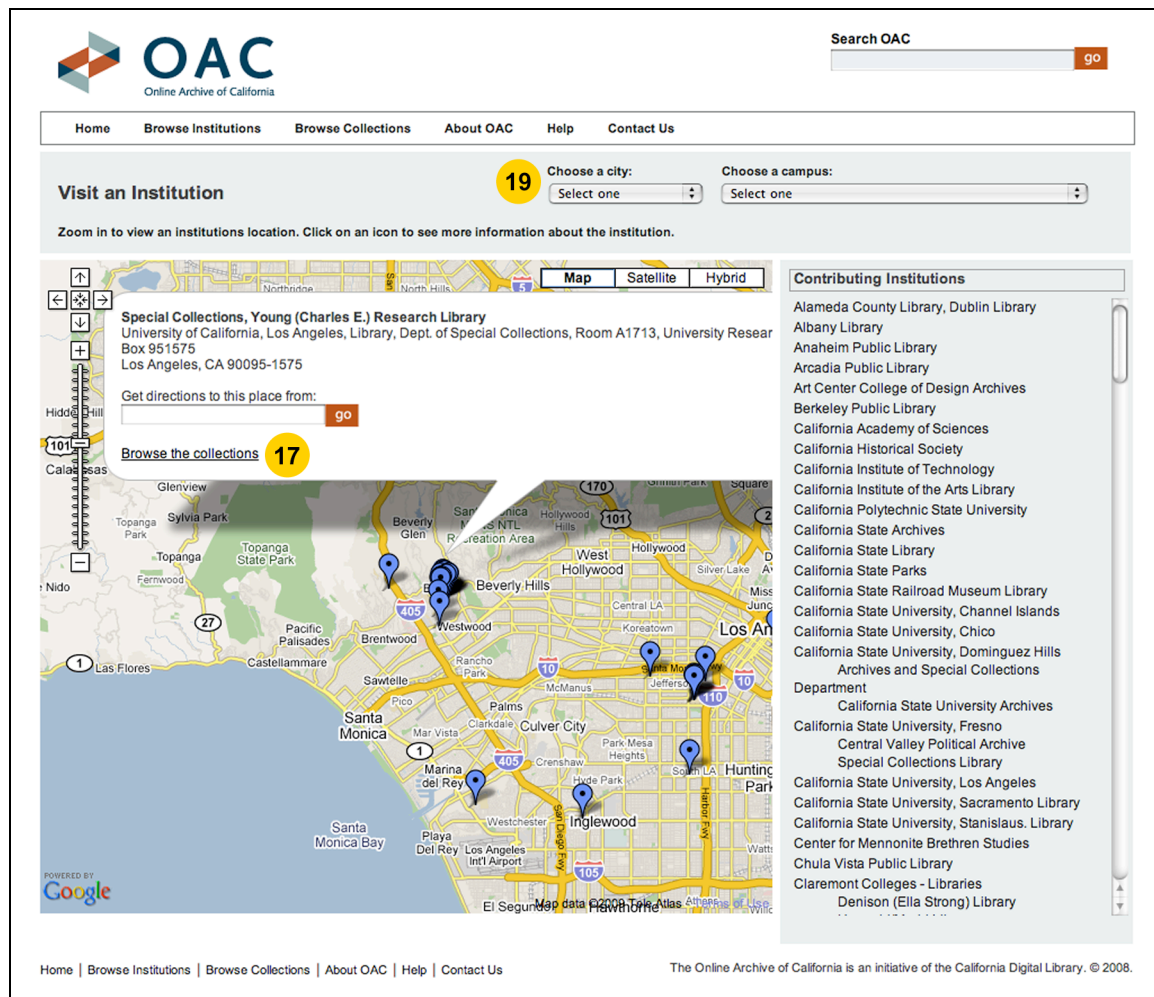
15: no PDF link

Two users interpreted “no PDF” to mean that there were no photographs available online. When viewing webpages, most users make quick decisions about what things mean based on their previous experiences. Certain terms are associated with very specific things. These two users associated PDF with image, so naturally no PDF meant no image.

Recommendation:

Consider eliminating the “PDF” text instead of displaying “no PDF” when a PDF is not available.

Figure 12: Map Page



One user noted that the map page is helpful because it provides an idea of the range of institutions represented in OAC. She suggested that the institution light up on the map when the cursor hovers over the name of the institution in the right sidebar.

17: Browse the collections link

One user reported liking the “Browse the collections” link in the institution bubble. However, almost too much information comes up. “There are no headings overall.... You have to sort through a lot of information.” Apparently overlooking the search box in the left sidebar, this user continued, saying that she would like a search box with the list of collections. (See Figure 5, #18.)

19: Choose a city

One user reported that he didn’t care about cities, he cared about areas. A city is “a political distinction that doesn’t have any meaning to me.” Instead, he wanted the ability to define both a geographical area and a topic.

Figure 13: Collection Guide

The screenshot shows the OAC (Online Archive of California) Collection Guide for the 'Finding Aid for the Manzanar War Relocation Center Records, 1942-1946'. The page is divided into several sections: a header with the OAC logo and search bar, a navigation bar with links like 'Home', 'Browse Institutions', and 'Browse Collections', and a main content area. The main content area includes a 'Collection Guide' section with metadata (Collection Title, Collection Number, Get Items), a 'Collection Overview' section with a description and background, and a 'Table of contents' section with a list of items and their hit counts. Annotations 20 through 26 highlight specific UI elements: 20 points to the printer icon in the 'Get Items' section; 21 points to the 'Offline. Contact UC Los Angeles...' link; 22 points to the 'Online items available' link; 23 points to the 'View entire collection guide' link; 24 points to the 'Full overview' link; 25 points to the 'Container List' link; and 26 points to the 'Search this collection' search bar.

20: Saving/Printing Information

Most users looked for a printer icon when they were asked how they would take the information on the collection guide page with them. Users who didn't see a printer icon reported that they would copy and paste desired information into a Word document or just use the browser's print function. Those who mentioned the browser's print function noted that they weren't sure what would be printed, since the page uses frames. One user who found the PDF link said that she is used to databases where one first clicks on a printer icon before getting a PDF or a link to a PDF.

Recommendation:

Consider replacing the PDF link with a printer icon. Ensure that the page layout supports easy copying and pasting.

21: Offline items contact link

Like the "Browse the collections" link on the map page, the "Offline. Contact x..." link does not keep the context of where users are coming from. The new page overwhelms users with information. One user clicked through to the institution page and couldn't remember the title of the

collection she had come from, so she had to click back. Another could not find the collection she had come from on the institution page.

Figure 14: Online Items on Collection Guide Page

The screenshot displays the OAC Collection Guide page. At the top, the OAC logo and navigation links (Home, Browse Institutions, Browse Collections, About OAC, Help, Contact Us) are visible. A search bar is located in the top right. The main content area is titled 'Collection Guide' and includes the following sections:

- Collection Title:** California Faces: Selections from The Bancroft Library Portrait Collection
- Collection Number:** 23
- Get Items:** Offline. Contact UC Berkeley::Bancroft Library; Online items available
- View entire collection guide:** PDF (1.75 Mb), HTML
- Search this collection:** Entire Collection Guide, Online Items
- Table of contents:** Overview, Full overview
- Online Items:** 1 - 20 of 1231 results. Results page: << Previous 1 Next >>.

The 'Online Items' section features a portrait of Ansel Adams, 1902-1984, with a yellow circle labeled 22. Below the portrait is a description: 'Guest speaker - Ansel Adams of Carmel, California, at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Bancroft Library, University of California - Berkeley Campus. Sunday, May 14, 1967. The book under his arm is entitled: "Valley of Salt, Memories of Wine" by Louis Nusbaumer, Edited by George Koenig.'

The 'Table of contents' section lists various individuals and their dates, including Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984; Adler, Kurt Herbert, 1905-1988; Alvarado, Juan Bautista, 1809-1882; Aspinwall, William Henry, 1807-1875; Atherton, Gertrude Franklin Horn, 1857-1948; Austin, Mary Hunter, 1868-1934; Bade, William Frederic, 1871-1936; Baldwin, Elias Jackson ["Lucky"], 1828-1909; Bancroft, Hubert Howe, 1832-1918; Bandini, Juan, 1800-1859; Barrows, David P., 1873-1954; Bartlett, Washington, 1824-1887; Bartlett, William Chauncey, 1818-1907; Becholdt, Frederick Ritchie, 1874-1950; Belden, Josiah, 1815-1892; Bender, Albert Maurice, 1866-1941; Benton, Joseph Augustine, 1818-1892; and Bierce, Ambrose Gwinnett, 1842-1914.

Collection Guide Page

One user reported that she was used to seeing page navigation in a left sidebar, so she had to get used to using the links on the right. Most users seemed to find the "Table of contents" links useful, and one stated that she liked it very much. However, several users reported becoming "lost" after exploring the collection guide and the table of contents links. They had difficulty knowing where in the collection they were.

Recommendation:

Explore ways to make the relationship between the links in the table of contents and the main content frame more obvious.

22: Viewing Online Items within the Collection Guide

One user complained about the current layout, which requires too much scrolling. She stated that a tiled layout would be easier to scan. This user also felt that having static frames did not make the best use of screen real estate.

Recommendation:

Consider a tiled view of online items. Calisphere's implementation is a good example.

23: Collection Location Information

"My first question is where is it."

More than one user suggested that the location information be moved to below the title of the collection. They expected this link to lead to contact information for the institution and wanted to be able to quickly determine whether or not the institution loaned materials out.

Recommendation:

Give institution information prominence by listing it below the title and using a bigger font size.

24: Information on the Collection Guide Page is Difficult to Parse

The following summarizes the comments from one user, who echoed the sentiments of other users:

- The page is not visually divided in a way that leads you to important parts. There's no real hierarchy. "I'm just given an undifferentiated block of text."
- The text is very hard to read. Why is worthless information given same visual priority as title?
- "Everything's about the same size.... [labels] are very tiny." "View online item" is in tiny letters with no thumbnail.
- The "Full overview" link is not easy to notice.

Recommendation:

Increase the base font size. Give visual emphasis to important links and information.

MARC vs. EAD

Nothing helpful was uncovered during this round of assessment. Most users did not talk about any differences between the two record types. Only one user noted that one had more detail than the other. She observed that there seemed to be less indexing of Sontag's materials, because the right sidebar information was missing.

Appendix A: OAC Usability Session Details

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of this second round of assessment was to determine the usability of the redesigned OAC site using a fully functional prototype.

The main objectives targeted include the following:

Homepage

1. Determine users' reactions to the different browse behaviors.
2. Determine users' expectations for browse behavior.

Global Search Results

3. Determine whether users are able to navigate using facets.
4. Determine users' perceptions of the collection tab and the items tab and the relationship between them.

Items Tab

5. Determine whether users know how to find and navigate to an online object.
6. Determine whether users understand what the car icon means and what actions they need to take to view non-online items.

Search: Drilling down to the collection guide

7. Determine how users interpret search "hits" and keyword highlights.
8. Determine how users interpret and use the "Search this collection" feature.

General Collection Guide

9. Determine whether users notice the difference in data between MARC and EAD collection records.
10. Determine how users interpret the car and eye icons – i.e., what do they mean to users.

Map

11. Determine general usability of the map feature.

Participants

We contacted three librarians and two graduate coordinators at UC Berkeley to aid in finding participants for this OAC study. Jane Lee created a recruitment email and survey and asked the coordinators and librarians to distribute these items to any email list they thought would yield a suitable pool of participants.

Nineteen people responded to the recruitment survey. Six were selected based on their availability and experience with OAC and archives. Their participation was confirmed via email.

Shortly before testing, one person had to cancel, so five people participated in this round of usability testing. All five were graduate students at UC Berkeley and none had previous experience with OAC.

Method

For this assessment, we used the latest working prototype of OAC on a laptop running Firefox on Windows XP. Rachael Hu facilitated the sessions, and Jane Lee observed and took notes on a computer. A digital audio recording of each session was made with the participants' permission.

Participants were asked to come to the California Digital Library offices in Oakland for their sessions. After signing in with security, participants were directed to the fourth floor, where Jane or Rachael greeted them. In the conference room where the sessions were held, participants met the other facilitator and were asked to make themselves comfortable.

Each session began with an explanation about the purpose of the session and a demonstration of the “thinking aloud protocol.” Rachael went over two release forms – one for the study and one for the audio recording – and asked participants to sign the forms if they agreed to participate. After thanking participants for their willingness to help improve OAC, Rachael handed them an Amazon.com gift certificate.

The first question about how participants conduct their research was designed to make participants feel at ease and lead them into the rest of the session. (The complete list of questions used during the sessions is provided in Appendix B.) At the end of each session, participants were thanked and escorted to the lobby.

Appendix B: Tasks

Warm-up

1. Tell me about your research topic. What are you interested in?
2. How do you conduct your research? How would you describe what you do to someone who wanted to use your methods? Which online resources do you use, if any?
3. What are your top sites for everyday/non-academic questions? What do you like about them?

Prepared Task [Entry point]

4. Scenario: You are looking for information on Japanese internment during WWII. You have arrived at this page after conducting a Google search. What can you tell me about this page and the information that you are looking at?
 - a. Does this collection have information specifically about Manzanar? How can you tell?
 - b. Is it possible to view an item from this collection on this website? How can you tell?
 - c. Try to locate and print a photograph from the Manzanar camp.

User-Defined Tasks

5. Could you walk me through how you might look up something of interest to you and talk about what you're doing and why? Tell me any reactions you have to the site as you get yourself oriented.
6. Now that you have found _____ (online or not), how would you get a hold of the actual, physical item.

Prepared Tasks

[Global Search Results]

7. Please find a photograph of Ansel Adams. As you look, please take your time and remember to think aloud and narrate what you are looking at and what you are doing.
8. You are writing a paper on the writer Raymond Chandler, and you know that he wrote letters to Hamish Hamilton. How would you view the original letter?

[Map]

9. Imagine that you're going to be attending a conference in LA [or wherever] and you'd like to see if you could do some research while you're there.
 - a. What kind of prep work might you do using the OAC site before you leave for your trip?
 - b. On the collection guide page, what information would you need and how would you take a copy of this information with you to the archive?

[MARC vs EAD]

10. Find two collections related to Susan Sontag. Take a look at the two collections and share with me your reactions. (i.e., collection guides)

[Homepage]

11. Could you tell me what draws your eye and any thoughts that are coming to mind? I'm interested in hearing your reactions to what you're seeing.
12. Talk about any terms or labels on the site that confused you or you weren't sure what they meant.

[Overall]

13. Could you talk with me about any other areas of the site that were giving you trouble and your overall reactions to the site?