

If You Build It, Will They Come?

Measuring Student Preferences for
Self-Paced Library Learning Resources

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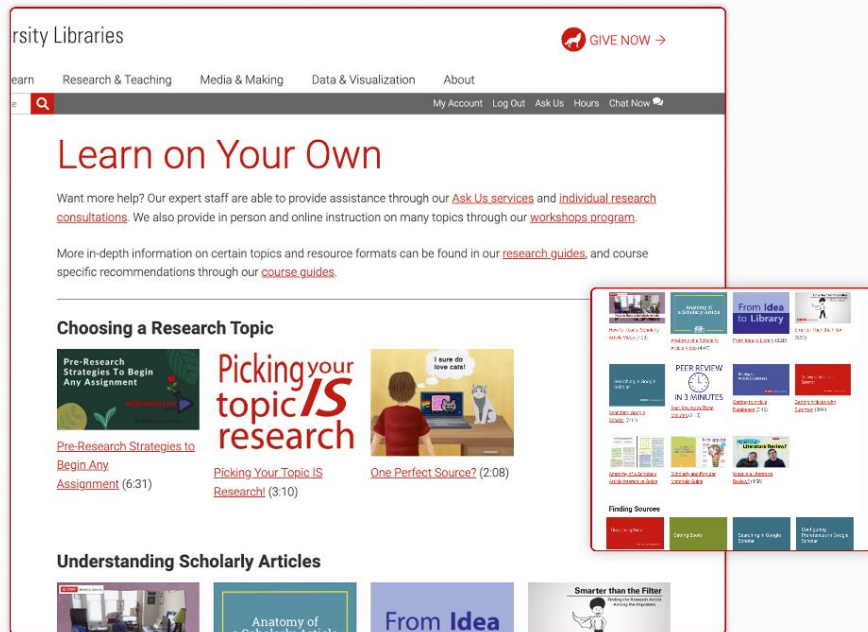


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Submit your Questions

<https://go.ncsu.edu/tutorial-questions>

Problem Space



NC State University Library Learn on Your Own Web Page

Institutional Context

Tutorial page redesign already underway to accommodate different formats.

ILS migration created an additional opportunity to reconsider which formats to produce and why.

Time and Skill Demands

Making high-quality video takes significant time, skills, and effort not always available for librarians with various responsibilities and training.

Which tutorial format do students find most engaging and effective for self-paced learning?

Research Methods

We used a three-phase approach to ensure our findings were **grounded in real student behavior, not assumptions.**

Phases 1 & 2: Student reflections on their help-seeking behaviors and preferences

Pilot Testing

- Tested protocols and timing with 2 students
- Refined interview questions based on unexpected AI responses
- Ensured clarity and feasibility for main study

Student Interviews

- Pop-up interviews with 15 students in library space
- Gathered feedback on how students find help resources
- Explored format preferences without showing examples

Research Methods

Interviews **capture what students say they would do rather than what they actually do**, we wanted students to interact directly with tutorial formats.

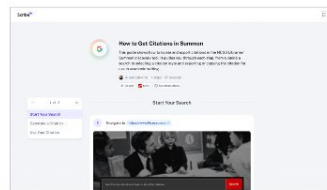
Phase 3: Think-Aloud Usability Testing

Usability Testing

- Moderated sessions with think-aloud protocol on Zoom
- Compared three instructional formats (video, interactive guide, step-by-step screenshot guide)
- Evaluated clarity, engagement, and likelihood of use

Finding and Creating Citations

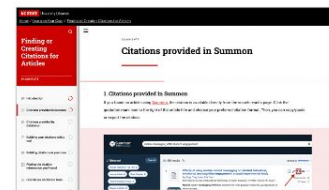
When you're ready to cite the sources you used in your project or paper, there are a few ways you can get those citations. We'll show you how.



Format 1



Format 2



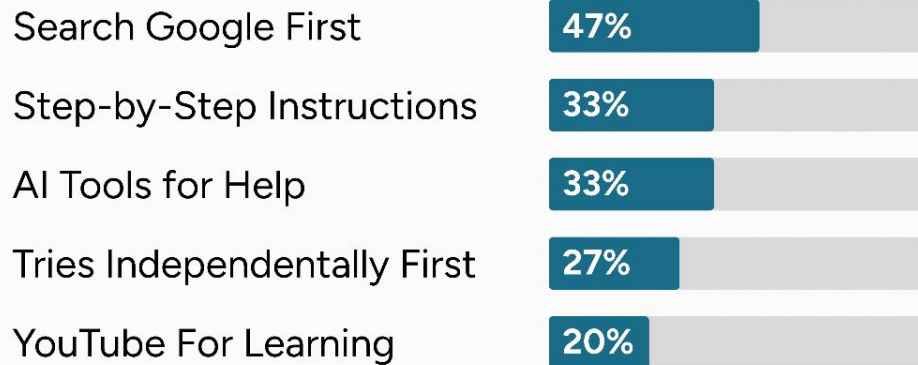
Format 3

The Three Mockup Prototypes Used in Testing

Insights: Phase 1 & 2 Interview Findings

Interviews Thematic Analysis

15 NC State students | % = students who expressed this preference



Student Voice on AI

Students valued AI not as a replacement for learning, but as a way to navigate toward information quickly, something responsive, direct, and easy to scan.

"You can ask AI, hey, these are the topics, give me more about these three. But in a video, they don't do it separately, they just cover everything as a whole."

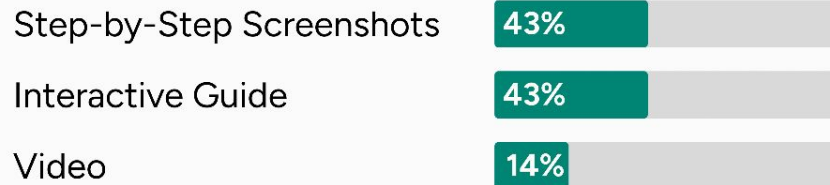
"ChatGPT is good because it's conversational, I can input my lecture files and it points me to the right section to read."

Insights: Phase 3 Usability Testing Findings

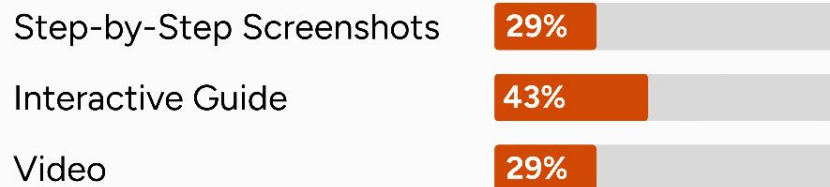
Think-Aloud Usability Testing

7 NC State students | % = students who expressed this preference | 3 tutorial formats compared

Initial Format Chosen:



Most Helpful Format:



In Their Own Words

The interactive guide kept students engaged and accountable. The step-by-step guide let them move at their own pace and get things done.

"I like the check marks on the side menu. It's sort of motivating to see how far I've gone... Having to click the buttons forces me to pay attention."

"Since the steps are displayed all at once, I can click through at my own speed, I don't have to slow down or go back to a previous step."

Key Takeaways

01 Format Should Match the Moment

- When in a rush, students want a short scannable quick-reference guide
 - When they have time and want to learn, they prefer a structured, interactive experience that guides them through the concept
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02 Scannable Visual Structure

- Screenshots and bold steps help students orient quickly without reading everything
 - When visual hierarchy is missing, students skip or abandon the resource
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03 Get to the Answer Fast

- Students seek help reactively, at the point of frustration, under time pressure
- Friction like redirects, long intros, or too many clicks reduces engagement

**Regardless of format preference,
students consistently valued:**

- Images paired with step-by-step instructions
- Scannable, concise content with no extra detail
- Clickable navigation with the ability to skip ahead
- Content hosted on a familiar, branded university website felt more credible and trustworthy

When we let students lead, we build things they actually use.

- Design for real behavior, not assumptions
- Offer multiple formats so students can choose based on their need
- Better formats = better engagement
- Built for libraries, applicable everywhere

Future Work

Use ScribeHow to create quick how-to guides for task-based tutorials, and use Articulate 360 to build interactive tutorials for more concept-based learning

Thank you!

Scan QR Code to Submit
Questions or Contact Us

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