Melissa Oblitas

Professor Thomas Krichel

LIS 650

November 27, 2011

**Pratt**

The first issue with the Pratt Institute library science website is how cluttered its homepage is. The largest difficulty with the site is that the chief mode of navigation between various points in the site is in small print, to the left, while large and essentially meaningless type dominates the central area of the page. The chief navigation that users would tend to use holds only links to general information about Pratt. There is absolutely no visual hierarchy when you do discover where the links to the other library science pages are. A link to basic information about the program is given the same weight as a link to information about the international program.

The text on the homepage is full of relatively meaningless phrases, such as: “We foster creativity and innovation for the digital world - our cutting-edge seminar/lab classrooms designed for participatory hands-on learning experiences inspire students to be high academic achievers and to be leaders in the LIS field.” This text is followed by several lengthy paragraphs filled with links which have absolutely no headings, making the page extremely unscannable. On the homepage alone there are three overused words (current, available, and online). Once you begin to delve into the site beyond the homepage there is quite a bit of happy talk in the text, such as, “Welcome on behalf of Dean Giannini and the faculty, students and staff to the Pratt School of Information and Library Science. We invite you to explore our Web site to learn more about our exciting programs and learning opportunities.” In the text across the site long words are used instead of short ones, and long sentences are used in lieu of short simple sentences.

Throughout the site Krug’s second law is broken because some of the link names are ambiguous. Before clicking it is difficult for me to tell the difference between degree programs and advanced certificate programs. Furthermore, though Pratt Institute is not a corporation it is essentially a business trying to draw in clientele and it should strive to employ Nielsen’s guideline for corporate homepages. Unfortunately, it fails to provide a tagline or brief explanation of what the site is and there is no real emphasize on the site’s high priority tasks. And, as already stated, the navigation area is over-formatted.

It must be said that when traveling away from the homepage it is easy to return to it, though the link is still on the wonky navigation bar on the left side of the page. Additionally, your current position on the website is highlighted. However, because the navigation bar also encompasses several other Pratt graduate schools, when you move away from the homepage you find that both the page you’re on and the homepage (which you are not on) are highlighted. The site does use a hierarchal breadcrumb arrangement to great effect. By providing only seven main areas of navigation from the homepage, and the expanding upon them when the user moves further into the site the user is not initially overwhelmed. If it were possible summarization could be used to eliminate the need for a user to see links to the other Pratt divisions once they get further into the library science information. Truncation, or having a more link, might be a beneficial way of hiding these additional Pratt Institute facilities.

There is a search feature clearly evident on every page, though upon conducting an actual search I found that the results pointing to the same page were not consolidated.