NSDL SNAPSHOT, JUNE 2007: CLICKDENSITY METRICS

This snapshot report introduces a new webmetrics tool, Clickdensity (clickdensity.com). The tool records the positions of users' clicks on a web page. After a demo at Museums and the Web 2007,[1] NSDL-CI purchased a one month trial contract with Clickdensity. From May 22 to June 18 2007, the tool recorded the position of clicks by users on the NSDL front page. The distribution of these clicks is displayed in the 'heat map' figure on the next page – best viewed in colour – in which red and yellow areas represent the highest density of clicks.
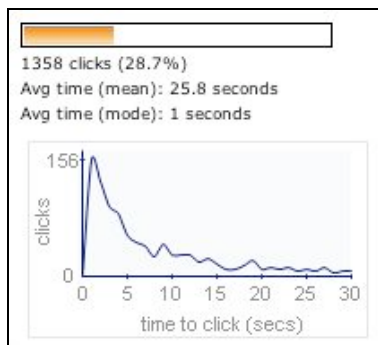
Most popular links

The most popular elements on the front page are the search query box and 'search' button (yellow and red in the figure). This finding correlates with Omniture and user testing data which show that searching is a key user task.[2] The most popular links in the left navigation are 'Resources for K-12 Teachers' and 'Resources for First-Time Users,' followed by 'Browse by K-12 Concept Maps' and 'Browse by Topic.' There are also clicks that do not fall on any links.
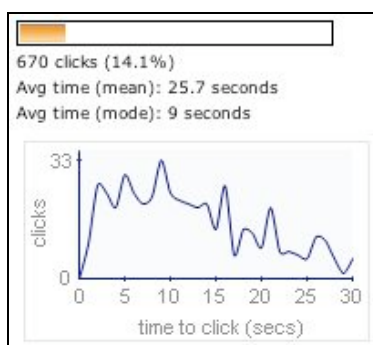
Spatial distribution of clicks

The majority of users click on a narrow horizontal band across the middle of the upper half of the front page. This pattern reflects findings from other website studies, including eyetracking studies, which show that website users typically scan and interact with a website mainly in a triangular-shaped area between the top and left borders of a page. From this point of view it may be worth considering reducing the pixel height of the top NSDL banner, in order to promote important front-page links, such as the Resources/Community links, up into this triangular area.
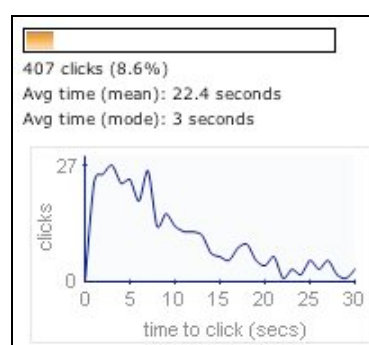
Temporal distribution of clicks

Clickdensity records how long users view a page before clicking on that page. Below are data for the three most popular elements on the front page: the search box (left), the search button (middle), and the K-12 concept maps link (right). Once the front page is loaded, the modal time for users to click on the search box is 1 second, suggesting that when users arrive at NSDL, many immediately begin to search for resources. The modal time to click on the search button is 9 seconds, suggesting that many users complete formulating their search queries quite quickly. Finally, visitors also identify and click on the 'K-12 Concept Maps' link relatively quickly, suggesting that NSDL has an important K12 audience. (Omniture webmetrics show that approximately 50% of visitors spend 15 seconds or less on the front page, and a further 20% spend 30 seconds or less. Note: Clickdensity reports only about 70% of the clicks reported by Omniture; the reason for this discrepancy is currently unknown.)

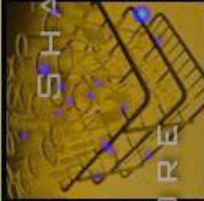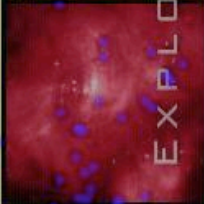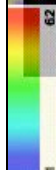1358 clicks (28.7%)
Avg time (mean): 25.8 seconds
Avg time (mode): 1 seconds

Search box

670 clicks (14.1%)
Avg time (mean): 25.7 seconds
Avg time (mode): 9 seconds

Search button

407 clicks (8.6%)
Avg time (mean): 22.4 seconds
Avg time (mode): 3 seconds

K12 concept maps

[1] J. Haynes & D. Zambonini. *Why Are They Doing That!? How Users Interact With Museum Web sites.* Museums and the Web 2007. http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/haynes/haynes.html
[2] *Usability: "Results, not Features."* http://eval.comm.nsdl.org/docs/06_searchresultspage.pdf

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Larger Text
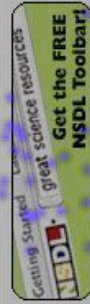
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