

Observations made of Archeology undergraduate students working with TimeWeb on October 17, 2000

Students worked together or separately during class time in a large computer lab. The instructor did a refresher demonstration of TimeWeb, then gave them a question sheet to work on.

- Sept started by introducing the assignment and TimeWeb's role in it
 - She stated to the class that she hoped TW would work this time, but that she had a backup plan if it did not work
 - She did a demo of running a query and gave a bit of a refresher on TW since it had been a while since they used it
 - During the demo, her screen started flashing in TW...she told the students it had happened to her before, that it was really annoying, that she had reported to the higher powers, and that they had no idea why it was doing that.
- When the two women started working together, only one of their computers had been able to load TW and they both worked off of E's computer for a while
- They generated a query with 3 things in the top bin and found 0 sites
- They ran another query with 1 thing in top and 2 in bottom and found 0 sites
- E expressed her confusion saying "There's no sites?"
- The two women were often discussing other things during the class period, but it didn't seem to distract them too much from completing the assignment
- They ran another query with 1 in top and 1 in bottom and again found 0 sites
- They did another query with 1 in top and 1 in bottom and got some results
- Another woman nearby was having problems with a debugging error and reported it to Sept who proceeded to interrupt class and tell the students that they may get a debugging error, what the cause of it was, and that they would have to exit the browser and relaunch the program in order to fix it
- The student who reported the problem was obviously frustrated and she had already relaunched the program once and now had to do it again.
- The two women I was observing were still working off of E's computer, but it also got the debugging error...they decided to just move to S's computer
 - S commented that they could just switch back and forth (to avoid losing time due to the error)
- They then ran a query on S's computer with one in top and one in bottom and they got back 9 sites
 - They first looked at the map view, but then quickly moved to the timeline and examined it
 - They then moved back to the map view and clicked on some of the individual sites to get more detailed info at E's suggestion
 - I noticed that S was having difficulty navigating between the many open windows that TW creates

- They looked at more of the sites from the query and looked at dates of the sites
- They did a new query and got 3 sites
 - They looked at the map and then the timeline
 - They again went back to the map and clicked on sites to get more info
- This whole time S has been taking notes and filling in information on the green assignment sheet
- They do another query with human remains on top and early stone age, Ashluaund on bottom and get 18 sites
 - They looked at the timeline to get a date
 - Then went back to the list to get an end date
 - The end date of a couple of sites was 0, which they thought was odd, but wrote it down any way
 - Sept later commented that some sites had the wrong dates in the database and that sites dated 0 were inaccurate—there was an error
 - They went back to the map view and clicked on individual sites to get further info
 - They came across a “Page Not Found” while looking at individual sites
 - They just went on saying “Oh, that’s not there.” And that they couldn’t get the information from that site
- They have now completed the top portion of the green sheet and are moving on to a new question
- They do a new query
 - S did some searching in the categories to find what to put in the query
 - Meanwhile, E was working on her own computer and put 5 things in the top and one in the bottom and ran a query...she got back sites
- S checked her email while E was doing the query, but she spent probably less than a minute on it and was quick to get back to work
- They now began to work off of E’s computer
- E’s screen started to flicker (as Sept had warned them), but E quickly fixed the problem by expanding the window a bit by dragging the edge
- They decided that they needed to do a more individualized query
- They then worked off both computers, but still they worked together

- E said they were supposed to draw a picture of something, so she took the paper and pen and tried to trace off the screen, but it didn't work, so she hand-drew the maps
- They then moved onto another question
- On E's computer, they went back to the class website and were looking at other resources (mainly maps)