Background

In the spring of 2020, information related to the COVID-19 pandemic was changing at an incredibly rapid pace. As a result, patron information needs were changing almost daily. The librarians managing the COVID-19 LibGuide needed a way to track which elements of the LibGuide were useful to their campus community and which were irrelevant. Heatmaps were the tool found to be most useful in identifying patron information needs in real time. Resources that received little to no traffic were eliminated from the LibGuide and replaced with more relevant content in order to keep the guide concise and navigable.

What is a Heatmap?

A heatmap is a color-coded representation of how users interact with a webpage. A heatmap alerts websites designers to popular or “hot” parts of the webpage.

A click map is a type of heatmap that displays where users click the mouse on a desktop device or tap the screen on a mobile device. Click maps help website owners track user engagement, such as clicks on buttons, links, images, etc., which in turn helps them optimize their pages. (https://www.hotjar.com/blog/click-maps/)

Reading a Heatmap

This click map uses a color scale from red to blue with red representing the high traffic areas.

From this click map generated during the first week of April 2020, we could identify the popular COVID-19 resources among our CU Anschutz campus community.

Lessons Learned

- Partner with IT to learn best practices for interpreting heatmap data
- Develop a schedule for regularly updating web content
- Consider the pace that information changes, not all topics are as dynamic as the COVID-19 pandemic

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Please contact us at: samantha.kennefick@cuanschutz.edu or vetter@csp.edu