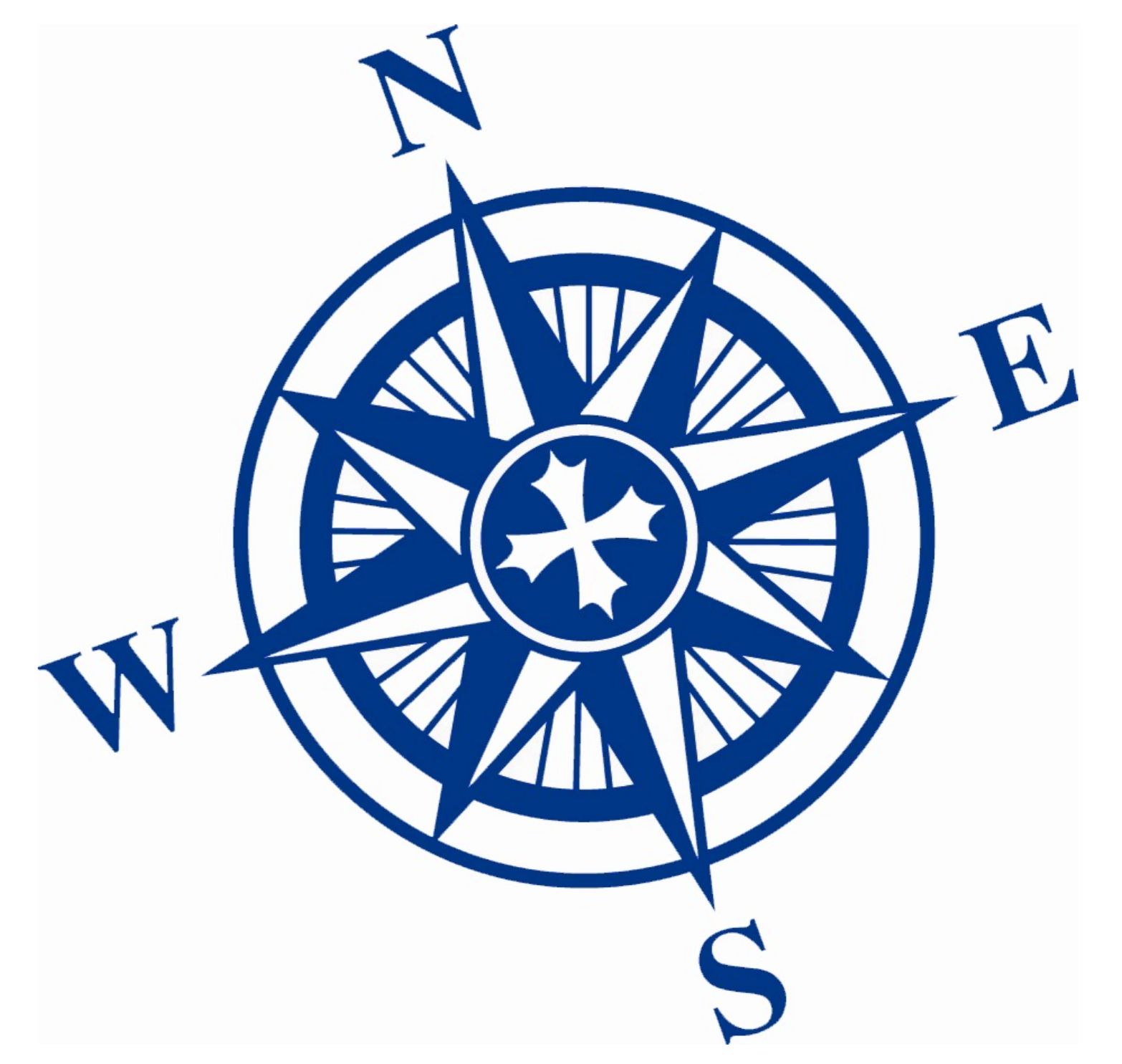


# Users as Compass:

## User Testing to Ensure Smooth Sailing From Catalogue to Shelf



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### Purpose

Develop user-centred, consistent, and plain language location code displays for the Western Libraries online catalog to help improve user navigation of the library system and increase the efficiency of item retrieval.

### User Tests

- We developed seven tests to evaluate the location code displays for six Western Libraries locations.
- Each test had between 5-10 scenarios for users to respond to.
- Test facilitators asked participants the following three questions for each scenario:
  1. Can you show me on the map where you think you would find this item in the library?
  2. Can you explain why you pointed there?
  3. For how long do you think you can borrow this item from the library?

40

Users Tested

7

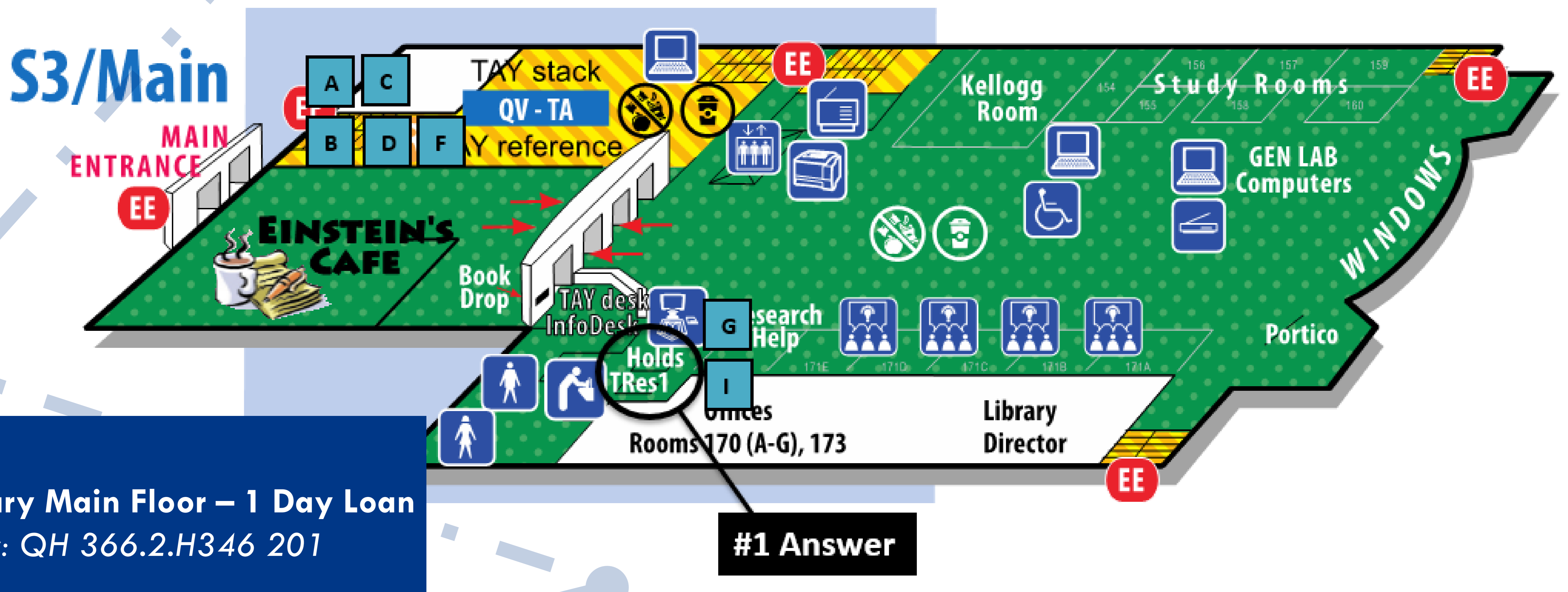
Different Tests

49

Test Scenarios

8

Test Facilitators



### Test Facilitators

- Test facilitators all attended an orientation and training session where they learned some basic principles of user testing and were given the opportunity to practice facilitating the tests.
- Each test facilitator received a facilitator guide, script, response booklets for each participant, and an answer key.

### Participant Recruitment

- Participants were recruited on-the-spot, typically in the library location that corresponded to the test being conducted.
- Test facilitators informed participants that the test would take no more than 15 minutes.
- Participants were compensated with a \$5 food services gift card.

## Outcomes & Results

### Lessons Learned About User Testing

- 1 It requires a lot of time to do well.
- 2 Consistency is very important. Your facilitators should also be aware of this before you begin testing.
- 3 User testing is an ongoing process. We identified further areas for testing as a result of our initial tests.
- 4 It is well worth it — you will always be surprised by your results.

### Results

- 1 All navigation tools (maps, signs, and OPAC location code displays) **must** use the same language and have all of the same areas labelled.  
i.e. If your library signage refers to your front desk as the “Service Desk”, your maps and location code displays should also say “Service Desk”. And if it is labelled on one navigation tool, it should be labelled on all of them.
- 2 Users are looking for the quickest way to an item and may not always consider all of the information available in a navigation tool. So keep it simple.