

# User Research:

## Upper Sandusky Community Library

This document presents the results of the user research and persona generation for the upcoming website redesign of the Upper Sandusky Community Library.

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## Background

The Upper Sandusky Community Library is interested in redesigning their website with a focus on making information more easily accessed by their users. It is the opinion of the stakeholder that the overall organization of the site content could be better designed to achieve this goal. In addition to redesigning for ease of use by the patrons, the redesign needs to be simplistic enough to allow for easy maintenance by the library staff.

## Summary

User research in the form of a literature search, and stakeholder interviews was performed to better understand the needs and desires of municipal library website users. Specifically, the goal of the research was to discover the libraries key website audiences, their goals and motivations when using the site, and what functionality is important to their desired tasks.

## Methodology

### Research Protocol

Brief 10-20 minute interviews were conducted with staff members from the Perry Sippo Library and Jackson Public Library. Interviews were conducted in a conversational manner. A script was developed and loosely followed to maintain the flow of conversation and information, but the conversation was allowed to develop more organically.

### Interview Script

The interview questions below were chosen to aid in the identification of key library website users, their goals when using the library website, the actions they take to accomplish their goals, their pain points, and desires.

1. What is your role within the library?
2. Can you describe one or two "typical" library website users?
3. What types of goals are these users typically trying to accomplish when they navigate to the site?
4. What actions do site users typically take to achieve their goals?
5. Are there any existing website functions users struggle to use or locate?
6. Have users requested any information or functionality be added to the website?
7. From where do users typically access the library website (onsite, offsite, mobile, etc....)?

## Literature Search Findings

In addition to the library staff interviews, a literature search was performed to uncover any additional known information about typical municipal library website users. Four sources were utilized to further establish our understanding of library website users.

### Libraries at the Crossroads

- Women, parents, younger people and those with higher levels of education are more likely to use library websites or mobile apps
- 66% of users searched the catalog for library materials
- 55% of users reserved or placed holds on library materials
- 47% renewed a book, DVD or CD
- 42% conducted research or searched for homework help
- 39% used an online database
- 33% read book reviews or looked for book recommendations
- 23% of those visiting the library in the past year did so to look for or apply for a job

### Pew Research- Library Services in the Digital Age

- 82% searched the library catalog for books, CDs, DVDs.
- 72% got basic library information (hours/location).
- 62% reserved books, CDs, and DVDs.
- 51% renewed a book DVD or CD.
- 51% used an online database.
- 48% looked for info about library programs or events.
- 44% got research or homework help.
- 30% read book reviews or got book recommendations.
- 30% checked/paid fines.
- 27% signed up for library programs or events.
- 6% reserved a meeting room.

### Meet Them in the Moment: Engaging Public Library Patrons When It Matters Most

- The slump of library engagement continues after college unless it is jumpstarted by some action or need such as moving to a new community, job loss, or new parenthood.

### Quotable Facts about America's Libraries

- Reference librarians in the nation's public and academic libraries answer nearly 6.6 million questions weekly.

## Key Findings

Through analysis of the literature findings, and the information provided during the interview process, a number of key user characteristics have been determined.

### Typical Users

The research revealed that women, parents, and people with higher levels of education tended to most frequently use library websites. While there did seem to be periods of one's life where library usage did decline, it was found that certain events also lead to increased usage, such as, parenthood, job loss, and retirement.

### Goals

While individual users often have different goals or motivations when accessing a library website, the research did reveal that there are a number of common tasks amongst users:

1. Library Catalog Search
2. Basic Library Information Search- Hours/Location
3. Reserve Books or Other Library Materials
4. Online Database Use
5. Library Program/Event Search
6. Research or Homework Help

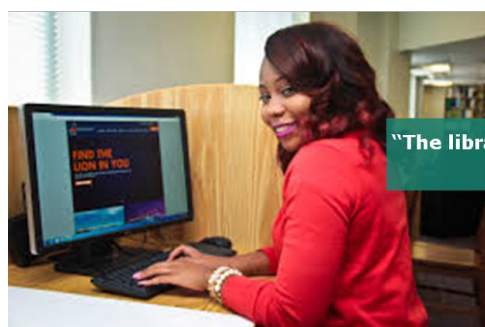
### Desires

It was found that most patrons desire convenience when utilizing the library website. The average website user is busy, and desires an experience that helps them save time while still accomplishing the same goals they could if they paid a visit to the library. They want to be able to clearly and easily understand the labels and layout used on the site so that the information they seek is easy to discover.

## Personas

Two primary and three secondary personas were created based on the research findings.

### Primary



## Sara

**"The library is important to me, not only for professional use, but personal use. I value all that it provides my students and family."**

### GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Save money by borrowing resources for her students
- Find programs online to encourage her students to develop their love of learning
- Encourage her students to utilize the library to find homework help when needed
- Teach her students how to research the information they need for assignments

### FRUSTRATIONS

- It's not easy to find desired information on the site
- There's no search feature on the main page to help with information discovery
- Some of the program information is outdated

### PRIMARY TASKS

- Search the library catalog
- Reserve materials online
- Search for basic library information
- Renew Borrowed materials online

### SECONDARY TASKS

- Get research or homework help
- Read book reviews/get recommendations

### ONLINE TASK SKILL LEVEL



AGE	46
LOCATION	CANTON, OH
OCCUPATION	TEACHER
FAMILY	MARRIED, 3 KIDS
PROFILE	THE PROFESSIONAL

### BIOGRAPHY

As a busy professional and mother, she values the flexibility the website offers in allowing her to search for, reserve, and renew resources online.

With funding tight at work she appreciates the ability to search for and bring new resources into her classroom as needed without the expense of purchasing items her students may only need for a short time.

## Primary



# Chris

"I love all of the programs and learning opportunities the library provides for my children."

### GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Save money by borrowing resources for his children
- Find programs and events online to encourage socialization and instill a love of learning in his children
- Save time and frustration by searching for resources and information online

### FRUSTRATIONS

- It's not easy to find desired information on the site
- There's no search feature on the main page to help with information discovery
- Some of the program information is outdated

AGE	34
LOCATION	MASSILLON, OH
OCCUPATION	STAY AT HOME DAD
FAMILY	MARRIED, 2 KIDS
PROFILE	THE PARENT

### BIOGRAPHY

As a parent, Chris is always looking for activities to do with his kids. He enjoys coming to the library because it allows his children to socialize with other kids, while learning at the same time.

Living on one income, he appreciates the ability to save money by borrowing materials from the library rather than buying books and DVDs his kids may quickly grow out of.

Keeping his kids schedules in mind, he values the convenience reserving and renewing materials online provides.

### PRIMARY TASKS

- Search the library catalog
- Reserve materials online
- Search for basic library information
- Renew Borrowed materials online
- Ask the librarian for help

### SECONDARY TASKS

- Search for library programs and events
- Read book reviews/get recommendations

### ONLINE TASK SKILL LEVEL



## Secondary



# Beverly

"I like to be able to stay active in my community by volunteering at the library."

### GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Save money by borrowing books and other materials
- Foster a love of reading for her grandchildren by bringing them to programs and events at the library
- Stay involved with her community by volunteering her time

### FRUSTRATIONS

- It's hard to navigate the program pages, and some pages have out-dated information
- It's difficult to find the library catalog on the website
- The website labels are confusing so it takes a while for her to find what she is looking for

AGE	70
LOCATION	CANTON, OH
OCCUPATION	RETIRED
FAMILY	MARRIED, 4 CHILDREN
PROFILE	THE RETIREE

### BIOGRAPHY

As a retiree, Beverly has a lot of time to enjoy her passion for reading. She typically reads multiple books a month, so she enjoys being able to save money by borrowing books.

She likes to stay active in her community and socialize with others by volunteering her time to work at the library and their events.

Beverly has multiple grandchildren who she entertains on the weekends. She enjoys bringing them to the library programs, and borrowing books and DVDs for them when they are with her.

### PRIMARY TASKS

- Search the library catalog
- Reserve materials online
- Search for basic library information
- Renew materials online
- Ask the librarian for help

### SECONDARY TASKS

- Search for library programs and events
- Read book reviews/get recommendations

### ONLINE TASK SKILL LEVEL



## Secondary



# Bailey

"I like to be able to easily search for information when my school library doesn't have what I need."

### GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Search for materials she can't find at her school library
- Seek the help of the librarians to discover resources and databases, and obtain homework help
- Conveniently search for resources and information online
- Reserve space for her and her friends to meet

### FRUSTRATIONS

- It's difficult to find information and databases on the website
- There is no search function to help with discovering the information she needs
- She can't pay her late fees online
- It's hard to use the site on her mobile device

AGE	16
LOCATION	GREEN, OH
OCCUPATION	STUDENT
FAMILY	SINGLE
PROFILE	THE STUDENT

### BIOGRAPHY

As a student involved in many activities, Bailey finds that her time is limited so planning becomes very important when she has a large research project due.

While she has a library available to her at school, it doesn't always have all of the resources she needs. She like the flexibility of being able to check the community library website to find additional resources.

Bailey also like having the ability to get together with friends to research projects or hang out.

### PRIMARY TASKS

- Search the library catalog
- Reserve materials online
- Search for basic library information
- Renew materials online
- Use online databases
- Ask the librarian for help

### SECONDARY TASKS

- Get research or homework help

### ONLINE TASK SKILL LEVEL





## Secondary



# James

"As a new graduate, I love that I can have access to so many resources to help in my job search for free."

### GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Save money by utilizing free library resources for his job search
- Seek the help of the librarians to discover resources and databases that will help in his search
- Conveniently search for resources and information online

### FRUSTRATIONS

- It's not easy to find desired information on the site
- Navigating to some of the databases is confusing
- There is no way to search for general information on the main page

AGE	24
LOCATION	NORTH CANTON, OH
OCCUPATION	UNEMPLOYED
FAMILY	SINGLE
PROFILE	THE JOB SEEKER

### BIOGRAPHY

James is a recent college graduate. He is ready to find a professional job that will utilize the skills he has obtained through his education.

Given his limited resources, he enjoys coming to the library to take advantage of the help he can obtain from the librarians, and the resources he couldn't otherwise afford on his own for his job search.

He appreciates that he can access these resources through the website from home, as well as, at the library.

### PRIMARY TASKS

- Search for basic library information
- Use online databases
- Ask the librarian for help

### SECONDARY TASKS

- Get research or homework help

### ONLINE TASK SKILL LEVEL



## Site Tasks

Utilizing the knowledge gained from the library staff interviews and literature search, a task list was created to aid in the determination of what functionality the site should include. Tasks were prioritized from high to low based on their mentioning by both the interviewees and literature, as well as, the likelihood of their use by the identified personas. High priority tasks are those that are more desired and likely to be used frequently by the various personas, with the low priority tasks being those that are less likely to be used or desired. The tasks are arranged below by persona and priority.

	Personas				
	Sara The Professional	Chris The Parent	James The Job Seeker	Bailey The Student	Beverly The Retiree
TASKS					
High Priority					
Search the library catalog	X	X		X	X
Reserve library materials online	X	X		X	X
Search for basic library information (location, hours, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X
Renew borrowed materials	X	X		X	X
Use online databases			X	X	
Ask a librarian for help		X	X	X	X
Medium Priority					
Search for library programs/events		X			X
Get research or homework help	X		X	X	
Read book reviews/get recommendations	X	X			X
Low Priority					
Check for/pay fines	X	X		X	
Reserve a meeting room	X			X	
Search for volunteer opportunities					X

## Next Steps

Utilizing the knowledge we've gained about the library website users from our research, our next steps are as follows:

1. **Perform Content Analysis:** To determine necessary site content.
2. **Classification Scheme:** We will select a primary site classification scheme for the organization of the site content.
3. **Create a Sitemap:** The sitemap will add labeling and taxonomy for the classification scheme. In addition, it will represent where the high priority tasks are accessed.

## Resources

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