

Information Architecture II: Final Deliverable

May 7, 2017

Submitted by: Dylan Golcher

Project Overview

The Upper Sandusky Community Library contacted us specifying that their website needed to be redesigned with regard to content organization and easier access to information. After examining the website, we concluded that the following key areas needed to be addressed in order to produce a cleaner, more organized interface:

- **Labeling:** facilitate discoverability of categories and links within the website by making them unambiguous and understood
- **Navigation:** orientation and direction within the website must be well understood so users can go where they need to without becoming lost or otherwise confused
- **Search:** the internal search system, whether browsing or universally searching, must be displayed or organized in such a way that users can access it quickly, simply, and directly

One of the other problems the website's staff mentioned in their e-mail to us was that they felt the website looked dated and needed to be refreshed with a more modern appearance. As part of the redesign, we considered this and made changes accordingly.

In terms of how the website was organized, we noticed that the organization schemes being used were topical and alphabetical. We determined that these schemes made sense for the type of content the website provides, so they were not completely changed as a whole in the redesign.

We took note of exactly what work needed to be done and how long it would take us to complete. This was our initial timeline:

		Week						
Activity		Week 1 3/13-3/19	Week 2 3/20-3/26	Week 3 3/27-4/2	Week 4 4/3-4/9	Week 5 4/10-4/16	Week 6 4/17-4/23	Weeks 7&8 4/24-5/7
	Project Brief	X						
	Learn/ Understand Users & Context		X	X				
	Content Labeling, Taxonomy				X			
	Assessing Labeling, Taxonomy					X		
	Putting it all together						X	X

While we did meet our goal in time, there was considerable effort put forth (detailed in the rest of this report) that lead us to creating the type of product we felt will best serve the library's needs.

User Research

To better understand library website users and their information needs, we conducted research in the form of interviews and literary review. With the feedback we received and knowledge we acquired, we developed user personas and a list of tasks ranked by priority that are most important to users.

Interviews

For the interviews, we contacted two former librarians who worked at a library branch in Mercer County, New Jersey with five questions pertaining to library patrons and what specific needs they were looking to fulfill upon visiting the library or contacting the librarians for help with the website. The questions were as follows:

- 1. Describe what a typical day was like in regards to the work you used to do at the library.*
- 2. Generally speaking, who were the people visiting the library to use the website and what were they most interested in doing?*
 - How old were they?*
 - Were they familiar with the website?*
 - Were they visiting to conduct academic research, was it simply for leisure, or for other reasons?*
- 3. Compare the difference between people seeking help via e-mail support versus people asking questions in the library. Did one of those groups tend to ask more or fewer questions?*
 - Explain some of the differences, if any*
 - What were some of the questions or problems you received?*
- 4. Were there any issues with the site's navigation, labeling, or organization of content people approached you with that made their experience difficult or otherwise caused them confusion?*
- 5. Since you left the library, the website has undergone several changes and updates, mainly to the amount of content that is there for items other than books. Do you feel these updates help to serve the needs of library patrons better than before? If so, why?*

Literary Review

For the literary review, we looked at two articles that focused on library users and library website evaluation. Here are the articles and a brief synopsis of their contents:

Who Uses Libraries and What They do at Their Libraries

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/09/15/who-uses-libraries-and-what-they-do-at-their-libraries/>

Written by: John B. Horrigan

This article provides quantitative data regarding library website users. The information is organized with charts and graphs that separate users by various qualifiers, including age, gender, ethnicity, income, and community type. The article also shows the reasons people visit library websites and how libraries can be helpful in performing certain tasks. The statistics in the article are concrete and provide valuable feedback in understanding who is using library websites and why.

Usability evaluation of an NHS library website

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1365-2532.2003.00450.x/full>

Written by: Catherine Ebenezer

This article focuses less on who the users are and more on what they want and need from a library website. A study was performed using participants from different genders, technological experience levels, and professions to understand the usability of the library website; moreover, what works well, what doesn't, and how it can be improved. The participants' responses focused on numerous aspects of the website, including labeling, organization of content, and navigation.

What Was Learned

From both the interviews and the literary review, we learned that library website users tend to be younger, female, and educated as well as generally more experienced with websites having similar content. We also learned that library website users wanted an a simple, straightforward interface so they could accomplish tasks quickly and easily. As far as what users are looking to do specifically, we discovered that browsing the library catalog, reserving items like books, e-books, and DVDs, and doing academic research all ranked as important, high priority tasks. Lower priority tasks included reserving meeting rooms and finding recommendations for books.

Personas & Task Priority Table

Based on the research conducted, we developed the following personas that reflect the needs and goals of the typical library website user. The first persona is primary (closest to the ideal user) while the next two are secondary.

Jane, Working Professional (Primary Persona)



Background

Age: 35
Gender: Female
Location: Philadelphia, PA
Education: BA in Marketing
Occupation: Public Relations Strategist
Income: Median
Technological Experience: High

Narrative

At 21, Jane got her degree in Marketing from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Shortly after graduating, Jane began working at a marketing agency where she's been ever since.

Recently, Jane decided she wanted to diversify her portfolio and learn more about advertising and marketing, so she became a member of her local library branch. She knew this would allow her access to books, e-books, and audiobooks on relevant topics, giving her knowledge for a more successful future.

"I want to have quick access to relevant information without having to sift through a bunch of different pages"

Goals & Tasks

- Search library catalog for information on relevant topics
- Find reviews and recommendations on books relevant to her field of work
- Have access to help through instant chat or e-mail
- Needs an interface that is simple, intuitive, and familiar to her based on similar sites she has used in the past

John, Student (Secondary Persona)



Background

Age: 19
Gender: Male
Location: Princeton, NJ
Education: Currently getting BA degree
Occupation: Student
Income: Low
Technological Experience: High

Narrative

After graduating high school and having a strong interest in history, John decided to attend the College of New Jersey to get his degree in Historical Studies.

While his course materials give him a basic understanding of the material, John wants to take things a step further by visiting the local library to discover additional resources that will help him learn more about his field of study

"Visiting the library will help me find reliable sources, like peer reviewed, academic articles that I need for research."

Goals & Tasks

- Search library catalog for information on relevant topics
- Have access to library database for academic research
- Connect with librarians to help find specific information on different topics

Maggie, Retiree (Secondary Persona)



Narrative

Maggie retired at the age of 58 after working for nearly 30 years in the agriculture business. Since she is no longer working, Maggie is able to focus on one of her favorite leisure activities: reading.

Recently, Maggie decided to organize a book club so her and her friends could meet to the discuss books they read.

"I absolutely love meeting with my friends to discuss books."

Goals & Tasks

- Browse library catalog for books
- Reserve meeting space at the library for book club
- Find reviews and recommendations for books
- Connect with librarians to help find specific information on different topics

Background

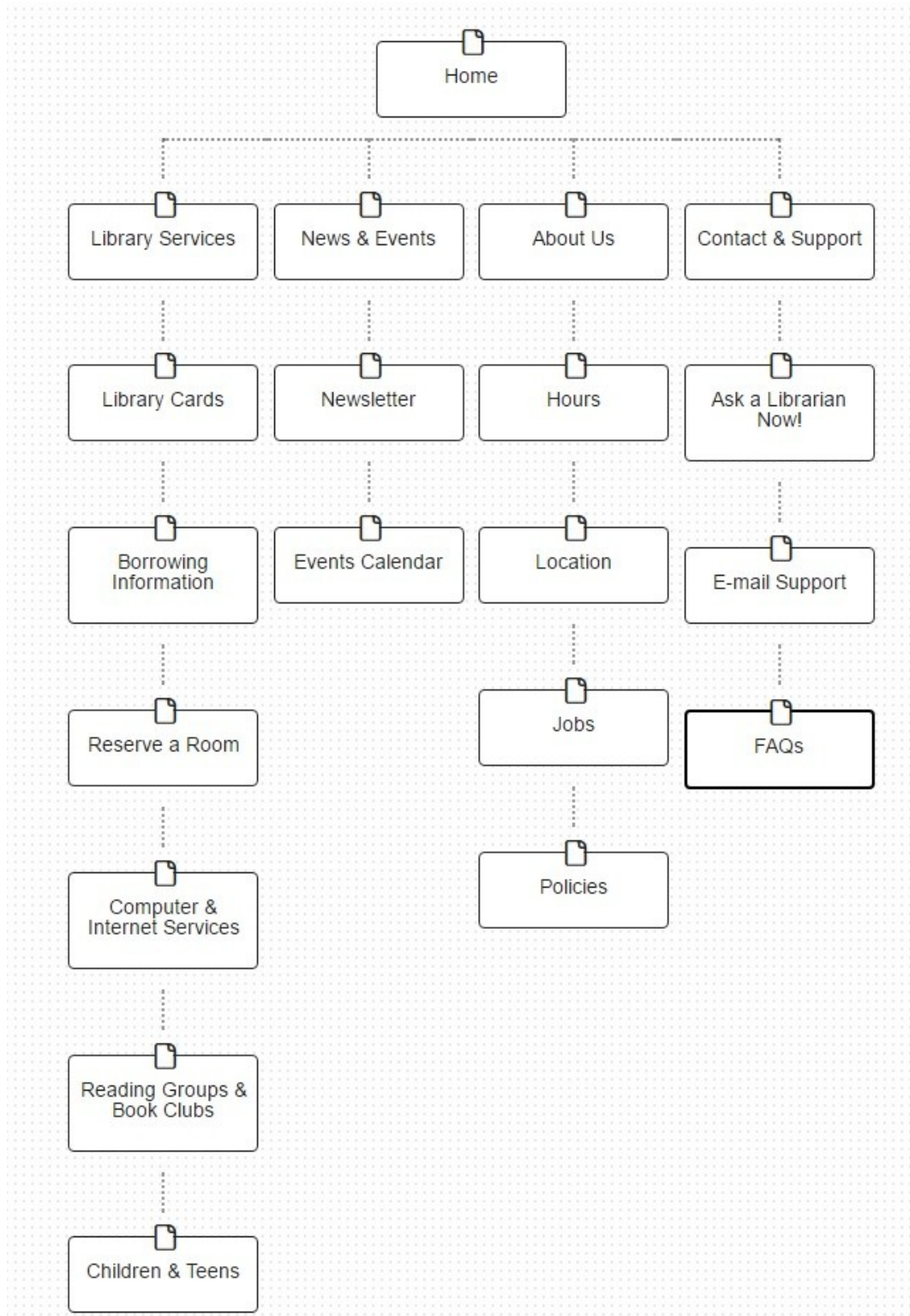
Age: 60
Gender: Female
Location: Lawrenceville, NJ
Education: BA in Agriculture
Occupation: Retired
Income: Low
Technological Experience: Low

After creating the personas and establishing their goals and tasks, the tasks were ranked by priority. The table below organizes and ranks these tasks along with the personas.

	Jane (Primary)	John (Secondary)	Maggie (Secondary)
High Priority Tasks			
Use library search and browsing system to locate books and other information	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connect with library staff	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reserve books	Yes	Yes	Yes
Database access		Yes	
Medium Priority Tasks			
Reserve meeting space at library			Yes
Find reviews and recommendations for books	Yes		Yes

Sitemap

The following sitemap was developed based on the aforementioned research and reflects the intention to create a simple and easily accessible information architecture.



Navigation Structure

The navigation structure shown above was guided by the common goal across this project of creating an interface that is simple, uncluttered, and easy to use. Many of the links and pages are organized based on mental models of where certain elements should be and what users are typically familiar with. The organization structure is hierarchical, meaning there is a top-down approach to displaying and arranging content. Important links, like the login button, for instance, are placed at the top of the page in a larger font so users can access this information more efficiently.

For simplicity, four main labels were chosen for the navigation bar at the top of the page, each containing a downward facing arrow to indicate to users that each label contains multiple pages. One of the biggest reasons users visit library websites is to browse the catalog and reserve an item, and while it is not shown in the sitemap above, a large, prominent search bar was placed in the header of the page so browsing is easy and unencumbered.

Certain page features, like “Ask a Librarian Now!”, can be accessed from the footer as well as in the primary navigation bar. The event calendar is also accessible from the sidebar in addition to the primary navigation bar. Directions to the library are shown in the header via a link to Google Maps, but are also displayed as a link in the footer. Having multiple access points for features like this assures that different mental models and expectancies of where things should be placed are more universal and widespread across the site so they are more findable.

Wireframe

Below is the final wireframe based on all research, analysis, and feedback. While this is the final version of the wireframe of this project, it is important to remember designs can and should continue to evolve over time. For now, we feel this best represents the goals of both the library and its users.

