User-Centered Audit with Recommendations

The ABQ Public Library Website

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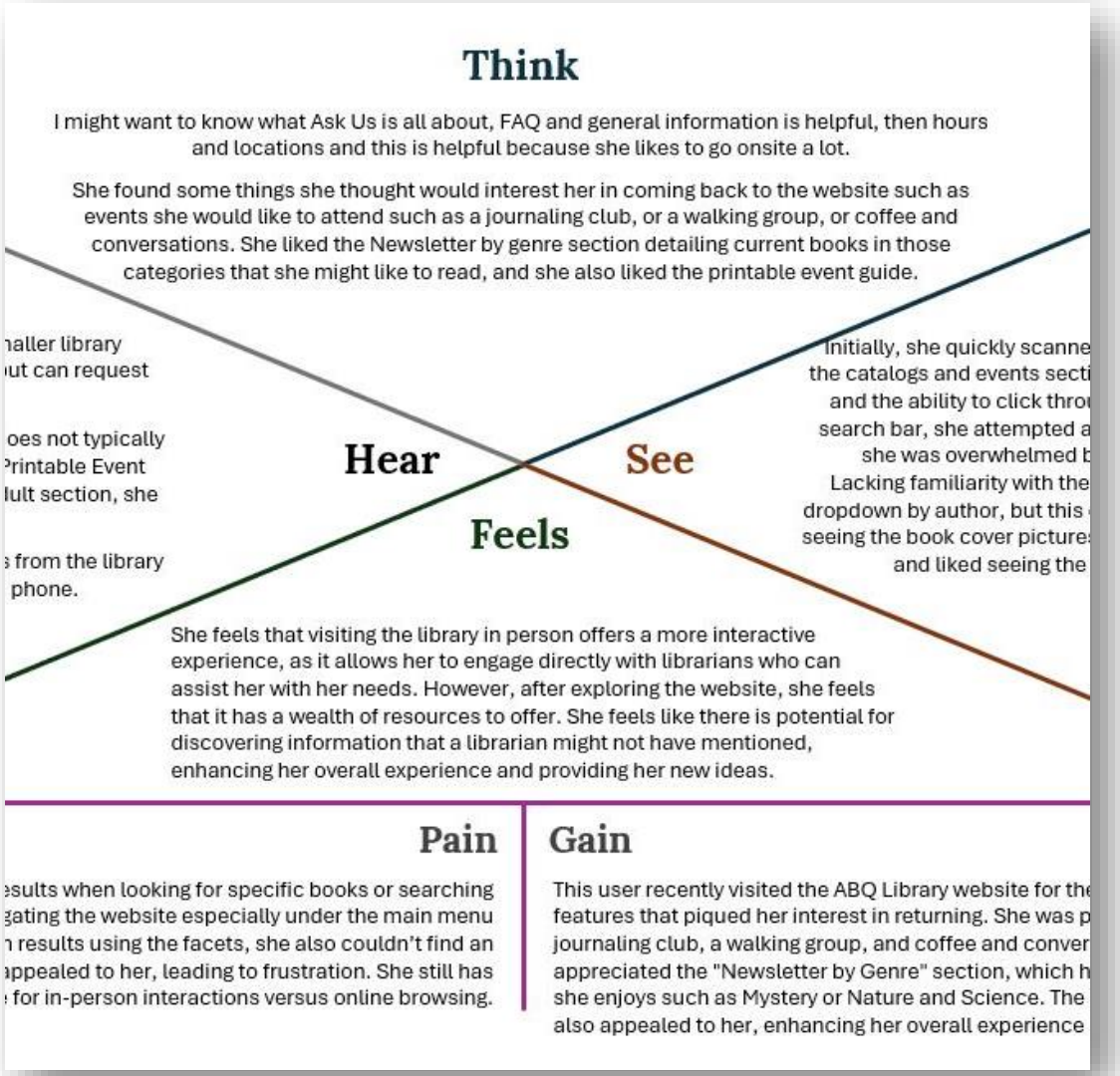
The ABQ Public Library Website

- **Website Chosen for Audit**
  The website I've chosen to audit is the ABQ Public Library Website, found at this URL: https://abq.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default.
- **Typical Users of the Website**
  A typical user of this website may consist of various demographics and interests, including students and researchers, general library patrons, parents and caregivers, job seekers and career builders, community event attendees, seniors and retirees, people with disabilities, and digital media users.

Empathy Map

- **Persona Focus**: The persona I created for the empathy map centers around **seniors and retirees**.
- **Preferred Assistance**: While they prefer in-person assistance at the library, they are eager to explore additional opportunities online once comfortable with how to use the website.
- **Value of Visuals**: They particularly value a visually engaging website that complements the content, especially when searching for upcoming events or discovering new book recommendations.
- **Key Design Features**: Clear visuals and easy navigation are key to enhancing their experience and encouraging them to engage with the library's offerings online.



Typical User

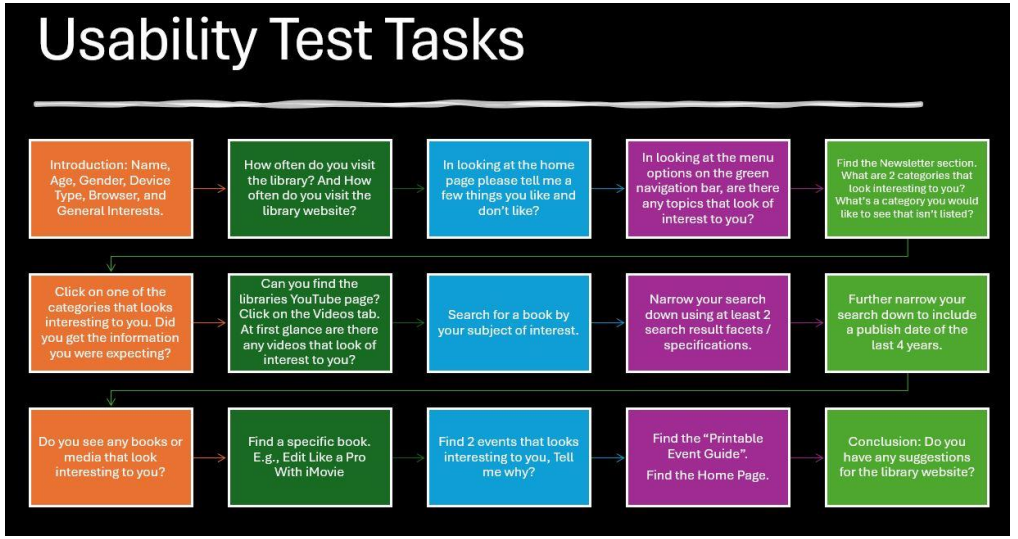
- **Search the Catalog**: A typical user of this website will utilize various features to enhance their library experience. They will search the catalog to locate specific items for borrowing.
- **Explore Events and Programs**: Users will explore events and programs such as workshops, lectures, and book clubs, and discover book recommendations and reviews.
- **Access Essential Library Information**: Users will also access essential library information, including hours, locations, and contact details.
- **Seek Research and Educational Resources**: Additionally, they may seek research or educational resources, access digital materials such as e-books, audiobooks, and streaming media, and manage their accounts, including renewing items.
- **Online Help and Support**: A user will also likely want to access online help and support.

Initial Impressions

- **Comprehensive Redesign**: My initial impressions of the ABQ Public Library website suggest that it would benefit from a comprehensive redesign to bring it up to modern standards.
- **Responsive Layout**: Key areas for improvement include the implementation of a responsive layout that makes better use of space and organizes content more efficiently.
- **Consistent Font Choices**: The website would also benefit from consistent font choices in terms of size, type, and color, which would help establish a clearer content hierarchy.
- **Unified Color Scheme**: Additionally, the color scheme should be unified for a more cohesive and user-friendly experience.
- **Enhanced Branding**: Branding could be enhanced with the development of a recognizable logo, while the site's content could be made more engaging and use more personalized features per audience groups.
- **Aesthetic and Navigation**: I found the overall aesthetic to be unappealing compared to other modern library websites, and the navigation could be streamlined and further improved for greater functionality and ease of use.

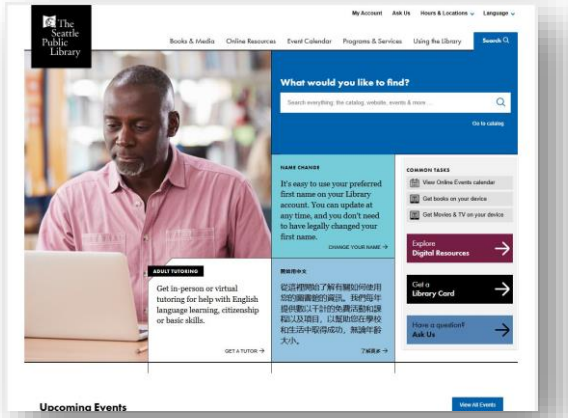
Usability Test Results

- **User Testing Overview**: Two young adult users participated in a usability test, completing both exploratory and specific tasks on the website to provide insight into their thoughts, motivations, preferences, and dislikes.
- **Design and Navigation Feedback**: Both users felt the website would benefit from a design update to optimize space usage and create a more modern look. Additionally, they suggested adding a "Home" button to the main navigation for easier access.
- **Event Organization and Presentation**: The users expressed interest in some of the events offered but felt that the event listings could be better organized and presented. They preferred the layout of the Printable Event Guide as it allowed for clearer visibility of event offerings and scheduling.
- **Newsletter and Content Expectations**: Both users found the newsletters to be unhelpful and anticipated more detailed content under the topics they selected. They also expressed a desire for a section dedicated to current news events.
- **Search Functionality Issues**: Users found the "Limit Search Results" feature unintuitive and initially attempted to use the "Sort By" function, which did not effectively narrow the search results.
- **YouTube Page Discovery and Preferences**: The users had difficulty locating the YouTube page at first, but once found, they appreciated the videos – though they noted that only certain videos were of interest to them.



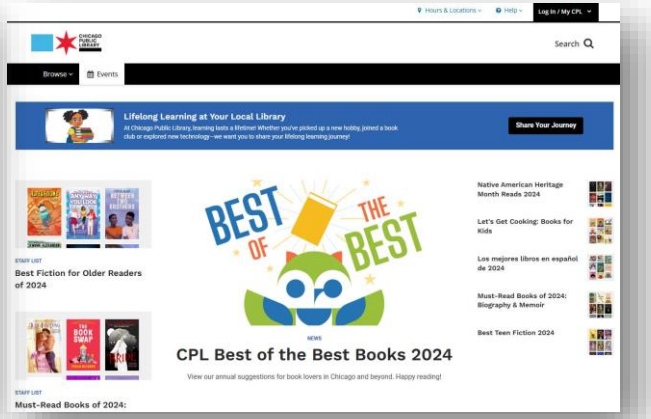
Basis for Recommendations

My recommendations are informed not only by the empathy map and user testing results but also by an analysis of four prominent library website redesigns: **Seattle Public Library**, **Los Angeles Public Library**, **Chicago Public Library**, and **Jefferson County Public Library**. These websites exemplify best practices across six key goal areas: enhancing user experience, creating a modern and visually appealing homepage and site design, improving search functionality, presenting clear and engaging calls-to-action (CTAs), showcasing relevant events and programs, and providing easily accessible resources of interest.

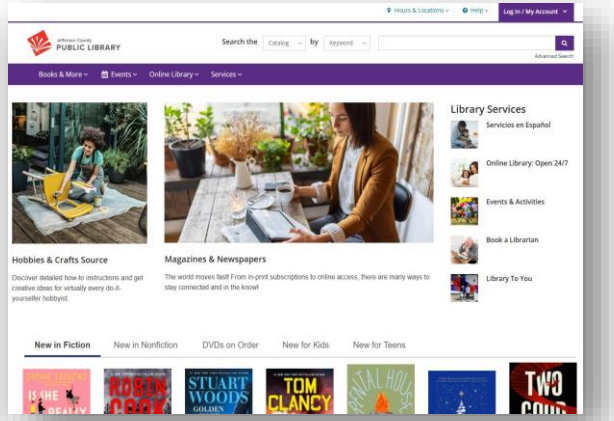


Seattle
www.spl.org

Los Angeles
www.lapl.org



Chicago
www.chipublib.org



Jefferson County
https://jeffcolibrary.org

Example of Seattle Website Redesign Project:
https://www.spl.org/using-the-library/using-this-website/website-redesign

Recommendations to the Organization

Based on the 6 primary goals, my recommendations would be as follows:

1. Enhancing User Experience through Intuitive Navigation

- Revise the structure of the main navigation to improve usability, including the addition of a "Home" button or icon, separate from the logo.
- Update the search bar functionality for greater efficiency and modernize the design by utilizing more white space and ensuring design elements like color and fonts are unified.
- Streamline the sub-menu items in the main navigation to reduce clutter, making them easier to navigate.
- Consider implementing mega-menus to improve readability, as seen on sites like JeffcoLibrary and CPL. Utilize an easy to access domain name.

2. Creating a Modern and Inviting Homepage and Site Design

- Incorporate features from the recommended library websites to refresh the homepage with a modern look and feel.
- This includes adding user-friendly and personalized content for various audience groups and using a logo and tagline that clearly represent the organization.
- For example, integrate the Events section from the CPL site, the book sliders from JeffcoLibrary, and improved calls-to-action (CTAs) like those on the SPL site to enhance user engagement.

3. Improving Catalog Search Functionality and Refinement Selections

- Enhance the "Limit Search Results" feature to make it more intuitive, drawing inspiration from the clean and user-friendly design of the JeffcoLibrary site.

4. Presenting Engaging & Clear Calls to Action (CTAs)

- The SPL website excels at displaying effective CTAs, such as “Explore Digital Resources,” “Get a Library Card,” “Have a Question? Ask Us,” “View All Events,” and “Latest News” or “Shelf Talk Blog.”
- Incorporating similar, clear CTAs will improve user interaction and guide users toward key actions.

5. Showcasing Relevant Events and Programs of Interest to Different Audiences

- The event presentation models on CPL and SPL offer useful examples for showcasing upcoming events.
- Categorizing events by audience, such as “Events for Adults,” “Events for Kids,” and “Events for Teens,” creates a more organized and user-friendly experience for visitors.

6. Providing Easy-to-Find Resources of Interest to Engage Specific Audiences

- Create a dedicated section for eBook services that encompasses not only eBooks but also magazines, audiobooks, music, and video content. Refer to the CPL website's approach at the bottom of the homepage for inspiration.
- Develop a categorized section for the library’s YouTube videos, tailored to different audiences and interests.
- Create a series of “How To” videos that show users great things about the library website and tools.

Final Thoughts

- The ABQ Public Library and its website offer a wealth of valuable resources to the public.
- However, many individuals may not be aware of these offerings or may hesitate to adopt the technology due to various barriers.
- By updating the website to align with the six primary goals, the library can significantly increase its visibility and foster greater engagement among users.