

Taylor Community Library Information Architecture

Final Report

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I. OVERVIEW

Background & Introduction

The Taylor Community Library is looking to update and redesign their website to be more usable. This will be done through revising the information architecture of the website. Information architecture “focuses on organizing, structuring, and labeling content in a way that is effective and sustainable” (<https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/information-architecture.html>). The information architecture of the Taylor Community Library website is in need of an overhaul to improve the user experience. The ultimate goal of this redesign is to advance ways in which users are able to find information they are looking for.

Current Website Organization

The Taylor Community Library’s current site features a topical organizational scheme which means that information and content is organized based on subject matter. Additionally, the organizational structure of the site is a top-down approach following a fairly strict hierarchy of information. The global, or primary, navigation present is very limited and does not feature key tasks the website should support. The website does a good job of letting users know where they are in the website through the use of breadcrumbs. There are a few instances of being redirected to different websites throughout. There is no designated space for programs and users must search through the Events calendar to find activities. Labels are vague and could often times indicate different content than what is intended. Overall, the organization and labeling of this website are where most of the issues lay.

Project Plan

Below is the timeline of the completed project:

Activity	Week	1	2	3	4	5	6
User Research: developing interview protocol, interviewing stakeholders, synthesizing results		X	X				
Creating new Information architecture: Content analysis, classification schemes, sitemaps				X			
Assessing new information architecture					X		
Iterating, Testing, Finalizing results						X	X

II. USER RESEARCH

In order to gain understanding of what user’s goals and needs may be, interviews with two librarians from our local library, to act as stakeholder proxies, were conducted. A literature review to compare already established information with the new findings that were uncovered in the interview process was also done.

Interview Results

Two librarians at Old Worthington Library in Worthington, Ohio were interviewed. The librarians interviewed were: Chris, female, age 71, who has been a librarian for 40 years and Lauren, female, age 52, who has been a librarian for 26 years.

It was found that the average demographics for library site users are broken out into two groups- high school students and parents. Users are accessing the website on both desktop

and mobile phones. Depending on the type of user, they are accessing the library site for a variety of different reasons, however there are some key behaviors that are common among the user groups. Most users are looking for hours, location (address) and closing information as well as searching to find out whether a book is in stock. Some other tasks that users are completing are looking for events going on at the library, applying for a library card, looking for homework help, looking for digital resources or collection information, checking account and paying fines, and checking for social media accounts. In addition to those tasks, it was also found that the search functionality of the website is critical to the usability of the website and should be prominently placed on the website.

Literature Review

A literature review was then conducted to further the understanding of users accessing library sites. All resources were found on EbscoHost. It was confirmed by Gambrell (2015) that “search is the primary action a user takes on the library website,” and as such, the search box should reside in a prominent place on the homepage. Additionally, users are often searching for information about the library including hours, location, directions, and building information (like closings). This information is also ranked highly among staff of the library as well (Duncan & Holliday, 2008). Also observed by Duncan and Holliday, library patrons are also often concerned with circulation- checking on availability of books and seeing if they can renew books already in their possession. Additionally, users are often confused when labels utilize ‘library’ jargon. It is recommended by Silvas, Theo & Koos that common everyday language that a user is familiar with should be used instead of a more library specific term.

Sources:

Duncan, J. & Holliday, W. (2008). The role of Information Architecture in designing a third generation library web site. *College and Research Libraries* 69(4), 301-318.

Gambrell, K. (2015). 7 Best practices for creating a user friendly library website. EBSCO POST. Retrieved from <https://www-ebsco-com.proxy.library.kent.edu/blog/article/7-best-practices-for-creating-a-user-friendly-library-website>

Isabel Mariann Silvis, Theo J.D. Bothma, & Koos J.W. de Beer. (2019). Evaluating the usability of the information architecture of academic library websites. *Library Hi Tech*, 37(3), 566–590. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.kent.edu/10.1108/LHT-07-2017-0151>

From this information, user personas were created. User personas are tools that we utilize to understand key goals and needs of a specific sub-set of users.

III. PERSONAS

CO-PRIMARY PERSONA



SYDNEY

Age: 17

Occupation:
High School Student

“I need help with my homework and the library has a lot resources, like tutors and subject matter books, that help me complete my assignments.”

BACKGROUND

Sydney is a senior in high school. Her favorite subject is English. All seniors at her school must complete a research paper before they graduate. She has chosen a topic for her research paper but is worried about finding credible, academic resources and hopes that someone at the library will be able to help her. She does not have a library card to her local library and wants to be able to create a library account/card online. In her free time, Sydney consumes digital media, like Ebooks and music, that she wants to get from the library cheaper than buying each download on a different platform.

FRUSTRATIONS

- Has never searched for academic resources using an online database and does not know where on the library site to find that information
- Does not have a library card and wants to be able to get one without having to go in-person to the library
- Does not have a lot of spending money for entertainment, like Ebooks, music or streaming services, and depends on the free resources the library provides

GOALS

- Find and use online catalog and database resources
- Get homework help
- Apply for a library card to get access to all the library has to offer
- Sign up for digital resources to access sources of entertainment or her free time

CO-PRIMARY PERSONA



MARIA

Age: 36

Occupation:
Stay-at-home mom

“I need to keep my young children involved in educational events throughout the summer so they are continually learning and meeting new friends.”

BACKGROUND

Maria is a stay-at-home mother to two children, 5 and 8. She wants her kids to always be learning about new things, especially during the summer months when school is out. She likes to take her kids to events at the library because they are always fun and educational and allow her children to meet new friends. Maria uses social media often to see what events are being advertised at the library. Often, while her kids are participating in events, Maria will browse the library looking for fun new titles that she can read in her spare time. Sometimes she browses the library catalog to find a bestseller and whether or not it is available to check out. Maria also wants to get her children their own library cards so they can check out books of their own.

FRUSTRATIONS

- Struggles to find the most up-to-date information about events either on social media or the library website
- Oftentimes doesn't know what to read for herself and doesn't have a lot of time to browse for new titles

GOALS

- Find the most up-to-date information about upcoming events
- Quickly find new books for herself on the online catalog
- Sign her children up for their own library cards

IV. TASK PRIORITY

The following is a task prioritization chart that showcases which persona is more likely to complete each task and how important the task is within the overall information architecture.

Task	Persona	Sydney the Student	Maria the Mom
High Priority Tasks			
Find library hours and location		X	X
Find book availability		X	X
Apply for a library card/create account		X	
Browse catalog		X	X
Find upcoming events			X
Medium Priority Tasks			
Get homework help		X	
Access digital resources (download EBooks, Music, etc.)		X	X
Low Priority Tasks			
Access social media accounts			X
Pay fines		X	X

V. NAVIGATION STRUCTURE

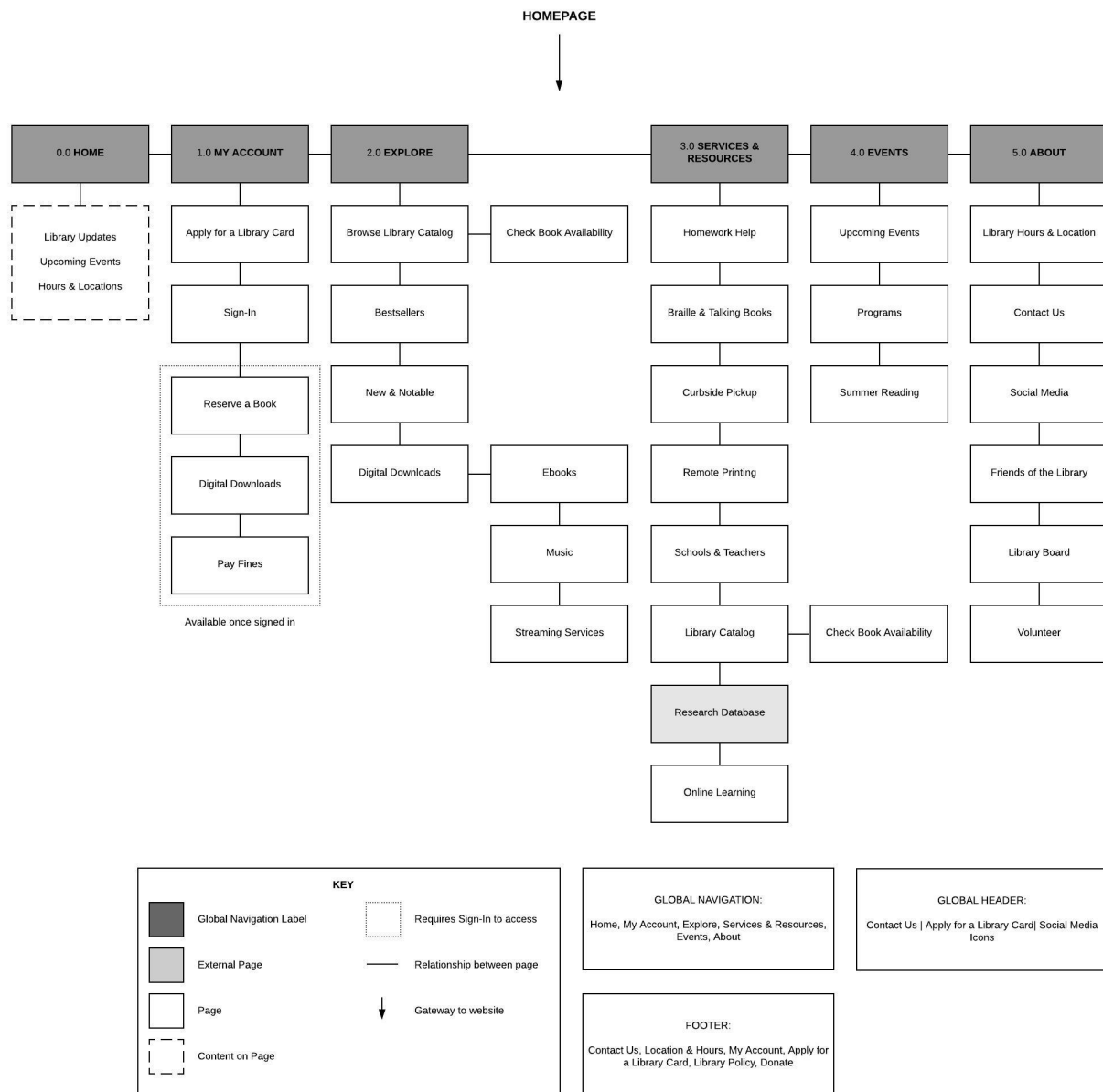
Based on the research done and the content inventory and analysis, the classification scheme that was proposed for this project is a hybrid topical and task based organizational scheme. This means that things will be organized by tasks that users' are looking to complete and topics that users' are interested in learning more about. This hybrid scheme was chosen because users' of library sites are looking both to complete goal-oriented tasks and understand and find specific topics while using the website.

VI. SITEMAP

A preliminary sitemap was created having been informed by our research and content inventory analysis, utilizing our topical/task based organizational scheme.

This information architecture was then tested through a program called TreeJack. Through those test results, we learned that there were a few modifications that needed to be made to our original information architecture. Those changes include: making the social media its own tab within the global navigation, creating a sub-menu underneath “Library Catalog” to include “Check Book Availability,” creating another sub-menu under “Digital Downloads” to include Ebooks, Music and Streaming Services, and placing “Homework Help” and “Online Learning” in the same section of the navigation.

Below is the final version of the sitemap:

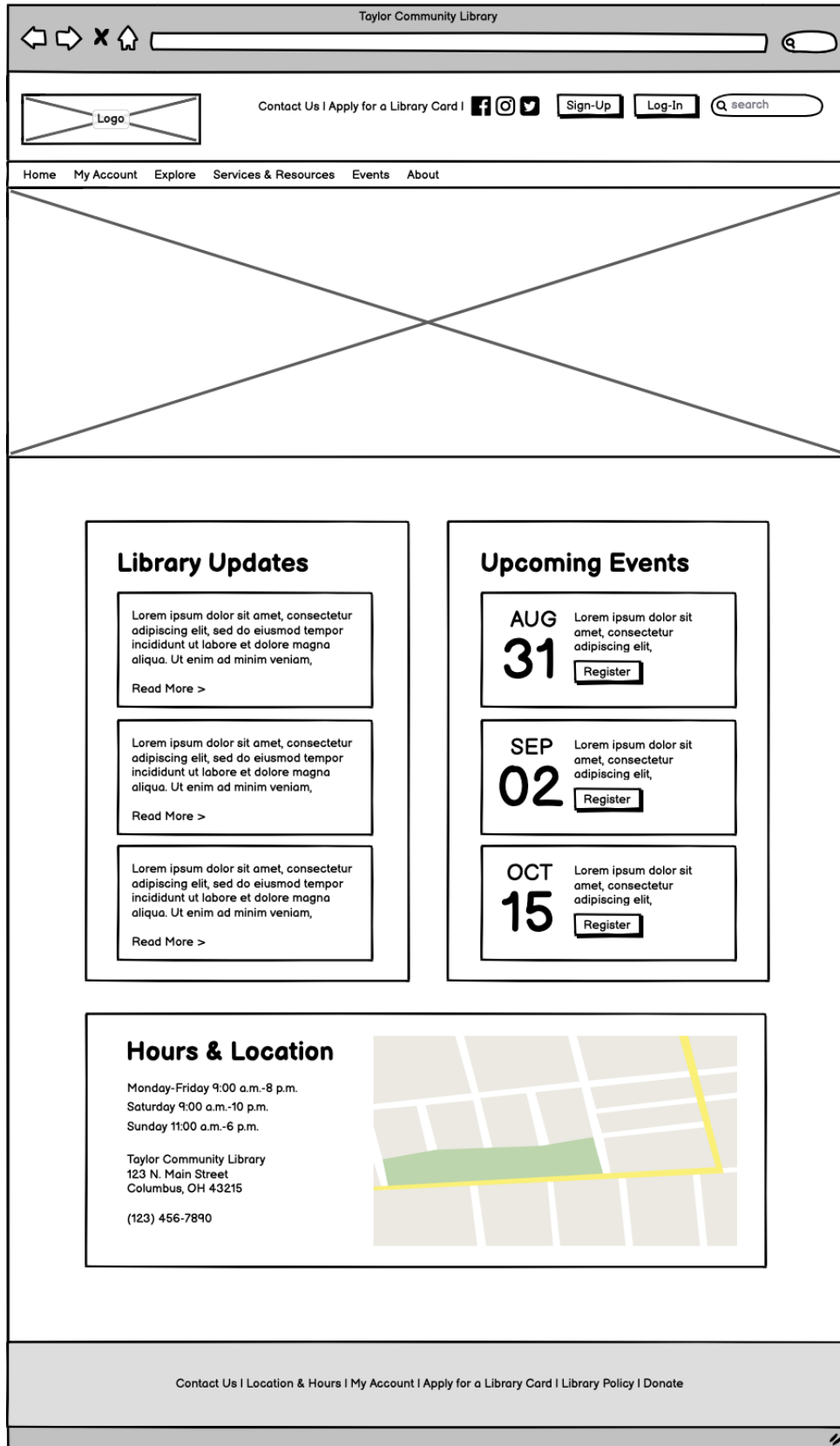


VII. WIREFRAMES

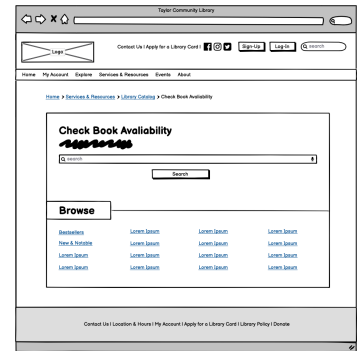
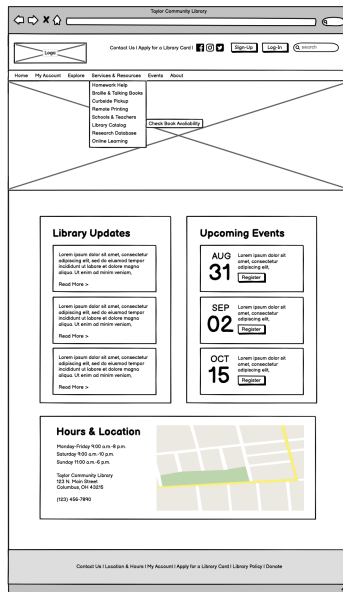
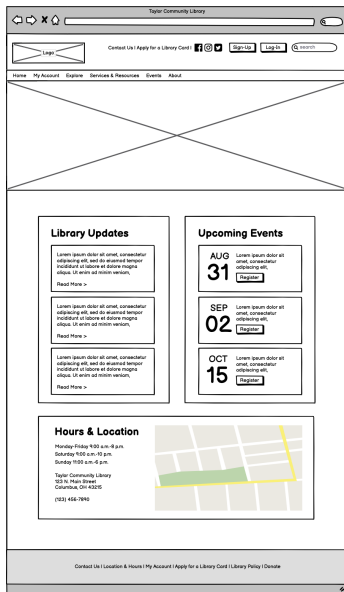
A set of preliminary wireframes and workflows, done with paper and pencil, were created and peer reviewed. These reviewed wireframes were then made digital and tested using a tool called Chalkmark. From here, four participants were asked to complete 6 different tasks that were based on the task prioritization chart completed during the research phase of the project. These tasks challenged users to find information on the website using the proposed information architecture depicted in a series of wireframes.

The major findings within this test is that there needs to be a more obvious place to apply for a library card since it is a high priority task of library patrons. This will be added by including a link to the Apply for a Library Card page to the global header, between Contact Us and the social media icons.

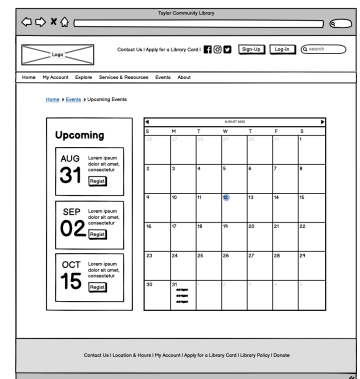
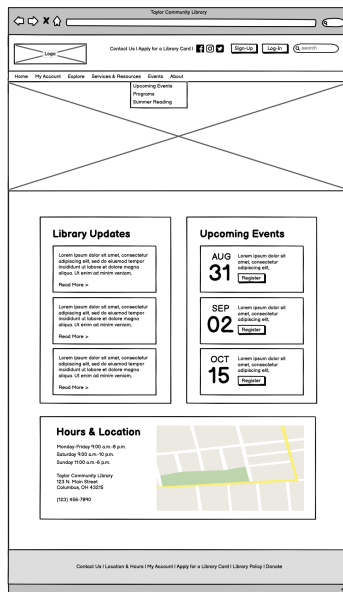
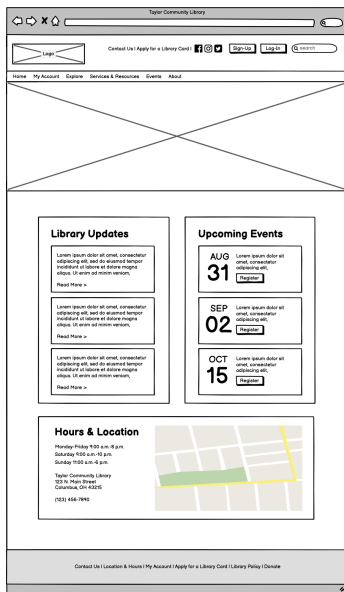
Below are the final wireframes/ workflows.



Homepage



Check Book Availability Flow



Check Upcoming Events