



Extreme MAKEOVER

WORTHINGTON LIBRARIES ONLINE EDITION

Blueprint

prepared

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by

Kara Reuter

with

Stefan Langer,

Lisa Fuller,

Susan Allen,

Olga O'Neil,

and

the Digital Library Team

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Introduction

Since its inception, the Worthington Libraries' Web site was envisioned as "a 'real' library ... available anytime, anywhere."¹ As such, the Web site plays a vital role in upholding and realizing the mission and vision of the library as a whole. However, in its present state, the Web site does not effectively uphold the mission to *promote equal access to information*. Nor does it adequately realize the library's vision to *promote services and programs*.

Indeed, the Worthington Libraries Strategic Plan 2005-2008 identifies a redesign of the Web site as a high priority action item for just these reasons:

Redesign and reorganize the library's Intranet and Web site to make them more accessible and to better highlight available services and resources.

A redesign is likewise mentioned as an objective in the 2007 Technology and Equipment Replacement Plan:

Redesign Library Web site ... to make it more accessible, easier to navigate, and understandable to service groups like seniors, persons with a disability, children, and those who speak English as a second language.

This redesign process – dubbed EXTREME MAKEOVER: WORTHINGTON LIBRARIES ONLINE EDITION – has been undertaken to bring the Web site in line with the library's mission and vision. The anticipated outcome is a Web site worthy of the Library of the Year.

¹ Worthington Libraries Online Marketing Plan. (2001).

Background

Looking back

Dynamism

The current incarnation of the library's Web site was launched in 2001. At the time, the Web site was cutting edge with its dynamic, interactive Flash interface, contributing to the library's stated goal "to be a part of the digital revolution."² As an indication of its success, the Web site was honored in 2002 as the first recipient of the netConnect Award for a small public library Web site.

Decline

The Web site's initial triumph occurred in the years after the so-called "dot-com bubble" burst. Elsewhere, the overuse of Flash and a general disregard for accessibility and usability have often been attributed to the failures of many businesses, most famously boo.com, named the sixth biggest dot-com flop.³ In the aftermath of the dot-com bust, such needlessly "flashy" technology earned the ire of Web designers. Usability expert Jakob Nielsen even proclaimed Flash "99% bad" and observed that "the presence of Flash on a website constitutes a usability disease."⁴

Stasis

Despite such strong proclamations against the technology on which the Web site relies, in the intervening years the library's Web site has not undergone any kind of redesign. The dynamism of the site's interface overlays what has become a restrictive page layout and site structure. Library staff members have become increasingly frustrated with the library Web site for the difficulty it presents in showcasing and highlighting new information and report that patrons struggle to complete common tasks. In nearly seven years – a generation (at least) in Web time – the Web site has become dated and does not meet the needs of the vibrant, diverse community served by Worthington Libraries.

² Request for Proposal; PROJECT: Redesign and Promotion of the Worthington Public Library Web Site. (2000).

³ German, Kent. (2005). Top 10 dot-com flops. *CNET*. http://www.cnet.com/4520-11136_1-6278387-1.html

⁴ Nielsen, Jakob. (2000). Flash: 99% Bad. *Alertbox*. <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20001029.html>

Looking around

Web 2.0

Since the dot-com bust, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has led the effort to develop Web standards and refocus Web design on accessibility. One of the W3C's primary goals is to promote *universal access*, in which information is made available to

all people, whatever their hardware, software, network infrastructure, native language, culture, geographical location, or physical or mental ability.⁵

This goal has been succinctly summarized as “Web for Everyone... Web on Everything.”⁶ At the same time, a second generation of Web sites – popularly referred to as Web 2.0 – has emerged with a primary focus on users, emphasizing highly interactive, community-oriented features.

Library 2.0

The library community has embraced the Web 2.0 concept and, under the guise of Library 2.0, has likewise advocated universal access and user participation. Librarian and blogger Michael Stephens has envisioned Library 2.0 colloquially:

As we reach out to users, we must remember *all of the folks* we serve... Library 2.0 will be a meeting place, online or in the physical world, where [library users'] emotional needs will be fulfilled through entertainment, information, and the ability to create [their] own stuff to contribute to the ocean of content out there.⁷

Stephens furthermore outlines several distinct Principles of Library 2.0, which emphasize portability, openness, participation, flexibility, and warmth.

⁵ W3C. (2005). W3C in Seven Points. *World Wide Web Consortium*. <http://www.w3.org/Consortium/Points/>

⁶ Jacobs, Ian. (2007). About W3C: Goals. *World Wide Web Consortium*. <http://www.w3.org/Consortium/mission>

⁷ Stephens, Michael. (2005). Do Libraries Matter: On Library & Librarian 2.0. *ALA TechSource*. <http://www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2005/11/do-libraries-matter-on-library-librarian-20.html>

Looking ahead

Web 3.0?

Lest we become too comfortable in the world of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0, some have begun to speculate about the emergence of Web 3.0, which may offer better structured information spaces, wider application to non-browser devices, and greater emphasis on open-source technologies. Whatever specific changes Web 3.0 may bring, we can be sure that change is on the horizon.

Extreme makeover

In order to uphold the library's mission and vision, the new Web site will need to shed its current Flash interface and face a major redesign in keeping with contemporary and forward-looking standards and ideals. By looking to the principles of Library 2.0, the Web site can do its part to provide equal access to information, promote existing services and programs, and furthermore offer exemplary service in its own right. To avoid stasis, the Web site will also need to look ahead to future developments.

This report represents the culmination of the planning phase of EXTREME MAKEOVER: WORTHINGTON LIBRARIES ONLINE EDITION, bringing together findings from an extensive review of staff and community needs, the existing Web site, and the Web sites of peer institutions.⁸ This report provides a blueprint for the redesigned Web site, structured according to Jesse James Garrett's "planes of user experience."⁹ The *strategy* summarizes user needs and best practices resulting in overall site objectives, related to *scope* (the site's content and functionality), *structure* (the information architecture), *skeleton* (the page layout and navigation scheme), and *surface* (the site's look and feel). Finally, this report introduces an additional plane related to *foundation* (the backend infrastructure supporting the Web site).

⁸ Full reports from each phase of the review are available on the Worthington Libraries Intranet in the Digital Library Team area.

⁹ Garrett, Jesse James. (2003). *The Elements of User Experience*. AIGA: New York.

Strategy

This section on strategy lays out the goals we seek to accomplish for our organization and for our patrons with the Web site. To establish the key components of the strategy, information was gathered by speaking directly to staff members and patrons to establish user needs and looking to our peers to identify best practices in Web design. The synthesis of user needs and best practices results in specific objectives to be met with the redesigned Web site.

User needs

In keeping with the user-oriented, participatory nature of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0, the redesign process began by seeking input from staff and community members regarding their wants and needs, through a sticky-note session, focus group discussions, and card-sorting sessions.

Scope

Content requirements

Catalog & account

The clear message that emerged from focus group participants is that the catalog with its associated account functionality is the most important part of the library Web site. One participant spoke of the catalog as our “standard of care,” or the essential service that people expect us to provide. Several participants in focus groups discussions and card sorting sessions noted that they use the catalog to exclusion of all other areas of the Web site. Staff agreed that the catalog and the account functionality should be highly visible within the Web site.

Programs & events

Focus group participants acknowledged that they rarely turned to the Web site for information about library programs, instead receiving information only via print mailer and email and in-library promotions. However, they agreed that such information should be featured prominently on the new Web site. Staff members were particularly interested in a calendar that would permit display of current and upcoming events on the homepage.

“I don’t even know what else is available. I only thought I could look up books.”

– Focus group participant

“It’s extremely important that the library should list the programming.”

– Focus group participant

“Easy access to what’s going on at the library *today!*”

– Staff sticky note

“More intuitive access to electronic resources that we spend so much \$ on!”
– Staff sticky note

“Featured electronic resource that rotates.”
– Staff sticky note

“Give me ideas!”
– Focus group participant

“Upcoming or new releases for patrons to reserve.”
– Staff sticky note

“The library has a nice marketing set up as you walk in. Can you do a virtual representation?”
– Focus group participant

“Library contact info on front page.”
– Staff sticky note

“Kids section that is child friendly.”
– Staff sticky note

“I don’t think about using the library for other Web sites—I go to Google.”
– Focus group participant

Research databases (& featured resources)

Many staff members suggested that research databases should be more prominently featured in the Web site. Indeed, focus group participants rarely mentioned databases and acknowledged that they did not use them often; card-sorting participants also did not create dedicated sections for databases. Staff members furthermore suggested that individual research databases be promoted on the homepage to encourage greater use.

Book lists (& featured books)

Several focus group participants expressed interest in book lists, bringing up bestsellers and materials for children in particular. Many focus group participants also expressed an interest in accessing lists of recent acquisitions. Likewise, several staff members suggested that the Web site “showcase” or “highlight” new releases (e.g., books, DVD’s, and CD’s). A few focus group participants furthermore noted that they enjoyed browsing book displays in the library and suggested that the Web site feature the books already on display.

About the library

Several focus group participants acknowledged frequently accessing the Web site for information about library locations and hours and nearly all of the patrons who participated in card-sorting sessions included sections they labeled “about” or “administration.” Staff members likewise emphasized the importance of highlighting library hours and contact information on the homepage and in the site architecture, with several suggesting the creation of a dedicated “About us” category to house such information.

Audiences

Staff members wanted to see sections of the Web site that cater to special audiences, including children and seniors. Although focus group participants did not bring up audience-specific content, half of the patrons in the card-sorting sessions produced categories with resources for children and/or teens.

Online resources

Focus group participants remarked that they do not look to the library for directories of Web sites. One staff member suggested that premium resources may be obscured among the often out-of-date Web links in the Virtual Reference Room.

"I want *library* information from the library."

– Focus group participant

"NFZ (No Flash Zone)"

– Staff sticky note

"I don't like the Web site to be flashy. The flashiness is distracting."

– Focus group participant

"It would be nice to subscribe to areas of the calendar you wanted."

– Focus group participant

"Amazon's search is awful, but I do go for the reviews."

– Focus group participant

"It would have to be rainy – nothing else to do [for me to write a review]."

– Focus group participant

"How can I access it on my Treo?"

– Focus group participant

"Encourage patrons to discuss library programs using interactive tools."

– Staff sticky note

Community information

A few focus group participants spoke about being distracted by community information on the Web site not directly related to library services and events, referring to it as "static" or "noise."

Functional specifications

Interface

Focus group participants and staff alike remarked on their frustration with the Web site's Flash interface, downplaying "bells and whistles" and "flashiness," which they said were "distracting" and "annoying." One staff member called for a "no Flash zone."

Targeted alerts

Focus group participants described their satisfaction with email alerts about upcoming programs and new releases, but wished for alerts tailored to special interests. Focus group participants and staff members alike spoke of wanting RSS feeds to subscribe to specific calendars.

Book reviews

Many staff members expressed interest in providing opportunities for patrons to review and recommend books. Focus group participants said they were unlikely to post their own ratings and reviews, but acknowledged that they value others' book reviews and recommendations at Amazon.com and would welcome such features on the library Web site.

Other functionality

Although mentioned infrequently, focus group participants and staff members suggested several other functionalities to consider introducing with the redesign, such as:

- Support for mobile devices;
- Discussion forums;
- Widgets; and
- Browser toolbar.

“I do ‘Ask a Librarian’ because I get frustrated searching for things.”

– Focus group participant

“I’d use some parts of the Web site if they were easier to get to.”

– Focus group participant

“Easy to use and find what you need.”

– Staff sticky note

“Labels on the first page are very important.”

– Focus group participant

“Call things what our patrons would call them.”

– Staff sticky note

“Intuitive navigation.”

– Staff sticky note

“I really like when there’s ways to access something using multiple methods.”

– Card sorting participant

“When new library events are posted, have links to library resources that are related.”

– Staff sticky note

Structure

Information architecture

Focus group participants commonly expressed frustration with the Web site’s structure, which they said they struggled to navigate effectively. Participants spoke of locating information in the Web site as “trial and error” and described their efforts as “burrowing,” “pecking down,” and “drilling through.” Participants described the time and effort they spent locating information on the Web site and several spoke of giving up. Staff members suggested that the site be organized according to the “essential” resources and services. In a similar vein, card-sorting participants often grouped frequently used content into convenience categories, such as “Quick Info” or “New User.”

As outlined above, both staff members and focus group participants wanted easy access to the *catalog*, *research databases*, *programs*, *featured resources* (both books and research databases), and information *about the library*, as well as audience-specific information for *teens* and *children*. Many participants in the card-sorting sessions furthermore made a distinction between materials in the collection that are available in-person to borrow and less tangible online resources.

Terminology

Focus group participants spoke about confusion related to the terminology used for menu labels and headings on the homepage. Similarly, a few staff members remarked on terminology, eschewing “fancy names” in favor of the vernacular of the patrons. Participants in the card-sorting sessions offered specific suggestions for menu labels, such as “Classes” or “Activities” (rather than “Programs”) or “Search” or “Find” (rather than “Catalog”).

Skeleton

Navigation scheme

As noted above, focus group participants often complained about the difficulties related to navigating the Web site. A desire for clear navigation and ease of use was one of the major areas of consensus among staff. Focus group participants also often expressed an interest in *browsing* and several wished for more opportunities for *discovery* of materials, identified as key components of the in-person library experience. A card-sorting participant appreciated multiple paths to Web site content. One staff member

suggested that the Web site provide links to related materials across sections of the site.

“The link to ‘My Account’ has to be big, right there on the center of the homepage.”
– Focus group participant

“People like Google because it gives the information they want quickly and without clutter.”
– Staff sticky note

“I use Google to go somewhere else. The library is a destination.”
– Focus group participant

“Make a library Web site that invites the user in.”
– Focus group participant

“Pictures on the homepage would draw more attention.”
– Focus group participant

“[Use] 2 or 3 colors that complement each other and are aesthetically pleasing.”
– Staff sticky note

Layout

Focus group participants also expressed frustration in locating resources and services on the screen, complaining that links are “hidden in small text.” Several people recommended using better emphasis to delineate important areas of the site, such as account access. Similarly, staff often used words such as “clean,” “crisp,” and “uncluttered” to describe the Web site so that important information will “pop out.”

Surface

Tone

Focus group participants described the library as a “destination.” In comparison to other online services, library services are “value-added.” Focus group participants singled out human communication, warmth, and user-friendliness as the unique aspects of the library. One person referred to the library as a “personal assistant.” Others expressed an interest in a Web site that offers “a portal to the library experience.” Staff similarly spoke of evoking warmth, “homey-ness,” and a human touch with the new Web site.

Visual design

Focus group participants frequently described the site as text-heavy. Some spoke about wanting to see “eye-catching ads” on the homepage with pictures as well as blurbs promoting events and services. Staff also suggested that the site include more graphics, including photos of the libraries’ interiors. Staff furthermore suggested that the site be more colorful, with a warmer, complementary color scheme, with a suggestion to draw from the architecture and interior design of the libraries themselves to create continuity between the physical and the online spaces.

Best practices

The redesign process also undertook a peer review to study the Web sites of public libraries and other community-oriented institutions. The process identified common features amongst the Web sites, which people may have come to expect from Web sites in general and public library Web sites in particular. At the same time, notable absences among the Web sites present an opportunity for the new Web site to introduce innovative features.

Scope

Content requirements

All of the library Web sites reviewed included content in the following broad areas:

- *Library resources*
(including catalogs, databases, and reference services);
- *Programs and services*
(including calendars);
- *Readers' services*
(including reading lists, electronic resources, and program information);
- *Audiences*
(including content for children, teens, and speakers of other languages);
- *About*
(including locations and hours, contact information, staff and administration details, etc.); and
- *Utilities*
(including search, help, sitemaps, and account access).

Many of the non-public library Web sites reviewed (including national libraries, museums, and universities) offered sections for *Visitors*, which typically provide information such as location, hours, directions, maps, parking availability, and on-site services, such as cafeterias and gift shops.

Functional specifications

Nearly all of the public libraries offer some basic functionalities, such as:

- Search;
- Dynamic calendar;
- Chat
(often through statewide services such as KnowItNow); and
- Newsletters.

A few public libraries offer interactive and multimedia functionality, including:

- RSS feeds;
- Blogs;
- Discussion forums; and
- Podcasts.

Only one or two public library Web sites support portable access to library content, through:

- Widgets, gadgets, and toolbars;
- Mobile devices; and/or
- Social networking sites.

Despite the W3C's call for "Web for Everyone," only a few of the public library Web sites reviewed offer functionality to enhance accessibility. A few of the public libraries in major metropolitan areas offer multilingual versions of their Web sites. Only two public library Web sites permit users to customize the appearance of their Web site by changing font size. None of the public library Web sites validate according to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards.

Most public library Web sites offer only static HTML homepages. A few of the public library Web sites use dynamic submenus to offer visitors a preview of each top-level section's contents and to quickly jump to information in the Web site. While few of the public library Web sites offer an interactive or animated teaser on their homepages, many of the other Web sites reviewed do. Most commonly, these sites offer "slideshows" promoting several programs or resources.

Structure

Information architecture

Several of the public library Web sites reviewed include a dozen or more top-level sections on their Web sites, making it difficult to know where to start. Many of the sites mix and match broad content categories with individual pages in their top-level navigation (e.g., "Library Services A-Z" and "Ask a Librarian"). Others have top-level sections that are not parallel (e.g., "Catalog" and "Do Research"). Many organize content according to an institutional orientation, with links to "Catalog," "Collection," or "Databases."

The best of the library Web sites reviewed include between five and nine top-level sections (in keeping with Miller's "magical number seven" principle, which states that people are limited to retaining 7 ± 2 items in short term memory¹⁰). Several of these Web sites use a faceted approach to accommodate different modes of access to content, such as by audience, format, and/or task. While a few public library Web sites use verb phrases for some section headings (e.g., "Ask a Question"), several of the non-library institutions carry such headings through the entire site architecture (e.g., "Visit," "View Great Art," "Learn & Play," and "Get Involved"), reflecting the ways that people use their resources.

¹⁰ Miller, George A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *The Psychological Review* 63: 81-97. <http://www.musanim.com/miller1956/>

Skeleton

Navigation scheme

Several public library Web sites do not offer consistent navigation schemes, particularly at the local level. In some cases, top-level pages do not adhere to a standard layout, leaving visitors to feel as though they have left the site when traversing the site architecture. Some sites do not do a good job of revealing the site architecture, making it difficult to predict where to find desired information. In many cases, the navigation scheme does not offer wayfinding cues, making it easy to get lost in the site after a few clicks.



– National Library of New Zealand



– Kent State University Library

The best library Web sites offer consistent global and local navigation schemes in combination with breadcrumb trails to assist in wayfinding, as with the National Library of New Zealand's Web site. In a few cases, the Web sites use color to distinguish top-level sections.

A few Web sites offer expanding submenus for global and local navigation elements to offer people a preview of the site's offerings before clicking.

Several Web sites also include cross-references on their content pages, linking to related content elsewhere on the site, as with the Kent State University Library's Web site.

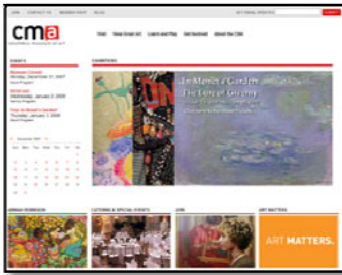


– Seattle Public Library

Layout

Many of the public library Web sites reviewed are overloaded with graphics or text (or both), causing pages to look crowded and feel overwhelming. In some cases, graphics are inconsistent in size, style, and arrangement, making the pages appear disorderly. Often layouts feel boxy, with sharp edges.

Other public library Web sites produce well-balanced, cohesive layouts, as with the Seattle Public Library. These sites generally employ consistent style in graphics and type treatment, resulting in orderly layouts and easily scannable pages.



– Columbus Museum of Art



– Columbus Jewish Community Center



– Seattle
Public Library



– Columbus
Metropolitan
Library

Surface

Tone

Several non-library institutions maintain a welcoming tone in their Web sites through their use of graphics and language, as with the Columbus Museum of Art and the Columbus Jewish Community Center.

Photos of staff and/or members introduce a human element, while graphics of institutional resources and materials communicate the institution's unique character.

At the same time, language using the imperative form of verbs, such as "Visit," "Join," and "Learn and Play," invites visitors to relate to the institution on a personal level.

Visual design

Many public library Web sites use neutral color palettes that appear dull or dreary. Others go the opposite route and use big blocks of bright colors that appear loud or garish.

Other public library Web sites use both bright and muted colors in sophisticated combinations, as with Seattle Public Library and Columbus Metropolitan Library. Many of these Web sites incorporate the color scheme into the navigation scheme to subtly distinguish between sections across the site.

Objectives

Drawing upon the user needs and best practices outlined above and in keeping with the library's mission and vision and, the Web site will be redesigned to meet the objectives outlined below.

In conjunction with the in-person library experience, the Web site serves the full range of information needs of the diverse Worthington community by:

- Promoting use of – and extending access to – library resources;
- Supporting the ways that patrons use the library;
- Facilitating easy location of information in the site and on pages;
- Maintaining a warm, welcoming atmosphere; and,
- Anticipating and responding to changes in library services as well as advances in technology.

Specific action items related to each objective are outlined below.

OBJECTIVE

**Promote use of –
and extend access
to – library
resources.**

Scope

To effectively promote the use of – and extend access to – library resources, this section outlines action items related to content requirements and functional specifications, including existing content and functionality to preserve and to weed; new content to produce for the redesign; and, future content to consider adding after the initial launch of the redesigned site.

Content requirements

Existing content

Weed

- Remove outdated information resources and materials, including:
 - Resource guides;
 - Reading lists; and
 - Web links.

Preserve & repurpose

- Provide information about visiting and using the library.
- Provide access to the catalog and its associated account functionality.
- Provide access to the range of library resources and services, including databases, resource guides, and reference services.
- Showcase what’s happening at the library in a dynamic calendar of programs and events.
- Highlight multimedia content produced by the library.
- Provide information about the library as an organization, including history, mission, administration, staff, and opportunities to get involved.
- Provide dedicated areas bringing together materials, programs, and services for children and teens.

New content

- Showcase the breadth and depth of the library’s collection with sections for “New Releases” and “Featured Resources.”
- Describe the services available in-person at library locations, including:
 - Computers & software;
 - Wireless access;
 - Printing & copying;
 - Friends book sale;
 - Café service; and
 - Lounge areas.

- Incorporate third-party sites (such as MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube) into the Web site's architecture.
- Represent items on exhibit at library locations, including:
 - Thomas Worthington Murals in the OWL Reading Room;
 - Artwork scattered through the libraries;
 - Worthington Room display cases; and
 - Power Walls.

Future content

- Expand Spanish section of the Web site.
- Provide librarians' book reviews and recommendations.

Functional specifications

Existing functionality

Weed

- Remove MyLibrary functionality.

Preserve & repurpose

- Offer access to library programs through podcasts and videocasts.
- Offer catalog search capability from the homepage.

New functionality

- Introduce accessibility and personalization tools, including:
 - Ability to change font size, for those with visual and/or manual impairments; and
 - Ability to change color scheme, including a high contrast version suitable for those with visual impairments.
- Introduce live "what's new" updating on the homepage.
- Introduce instant messaging / chat reference capability.
- Improve support for mobile devices.
- Increase the availability of RSS feeds.
- Add online Application for Employment.
- Add online Volunteer Application Form.

Future functionality

- Introduce distributed authorship capability for select staff members to update and maintain areas of the Web site.
- Explore making access to library resources and services portable by introducing features, such as:
 - Facebook Apps;
 - Google Gadgets;
 - Macintosh Dashboard Widgets; and
 - Firefox and Internet Explorer browser toolbars.
- Explore the introduction of community features, such as book reviews and tagging.
- Explore the introduction of participatory technologies, such as a discussion forum or wiki.
- Explore further customization options for the homepage, such as:
 - Changing color schemes;
 - Showing or hiding content modules;
 - Rearranging content modules; and
 - Changing default page view.

OBJECTIVE

Support the ways that patrons use the library.

Structure

This section sets forth action items related to the information architecture for the redesigned site and presents diagrams of the global architecture and collections to ensure that the site effectively supports the ways that patrons use the library.

Information architecture

- Limit the number of top-level sections to 7±2.
- Differentiate between in-person and digital resources and services.
- Use meaningful terminology to describe resources and services. (Avoid jargon and specialized terminology.)
- Use language that invites visitors to engage with the library.
- Highlight frequently used resources and services.
- Highlight content targeted for different audiences.
- Highlight common tasks.
- Adhere to usability and accessibility standards.

Site maps

Global architecture

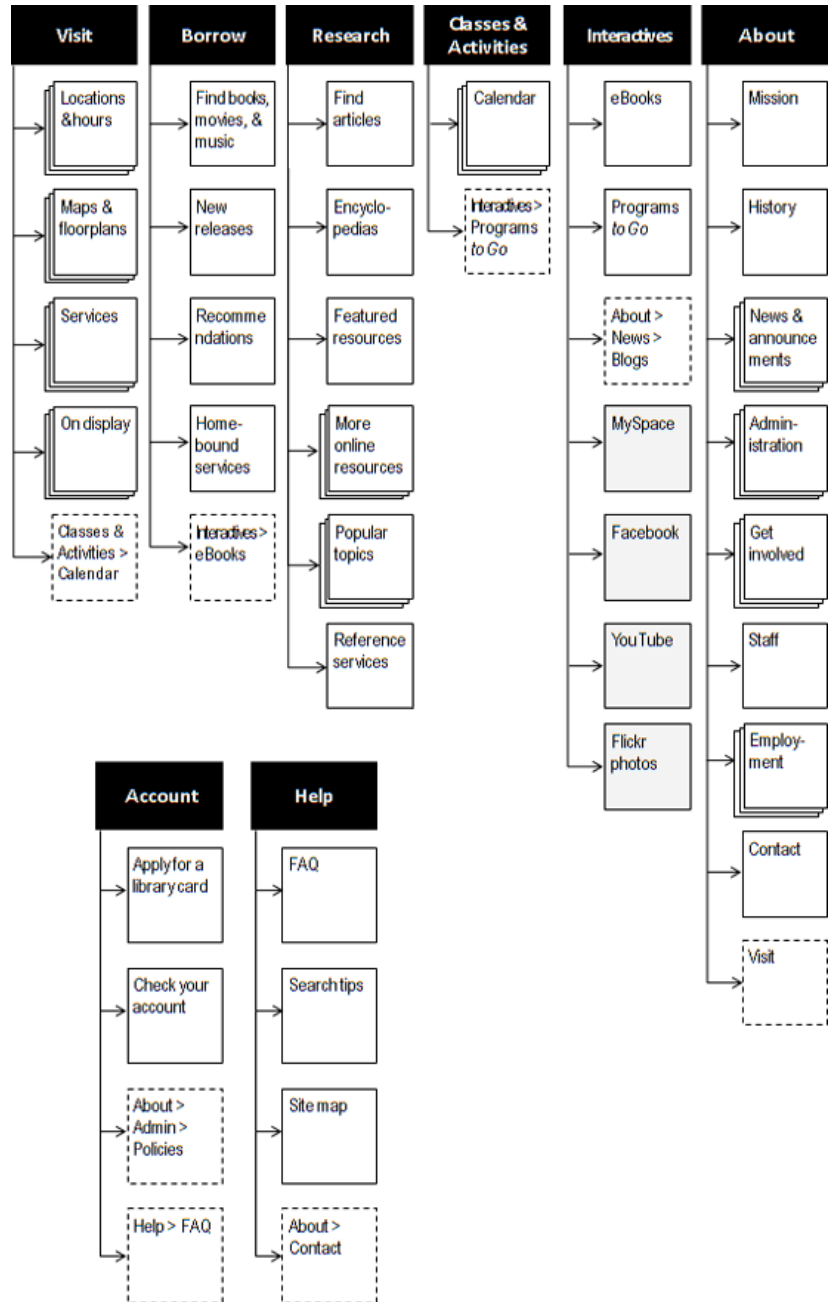
The global sections of the site reflect user needs expressed by patrons as well as best practices employed by peer Web sites.

First and foremost, the global architecture emphasizes in-person use of the library's full range of services with the *Visit* section. Next, the architecture provides access to library resources, differentiating between (primarily) in-person and (primarily) online access with the *Borrow* and *Research* sections, respectively.

The *Classes & Activities* section brings together library programs and community events into a dynamic calendar. The *Interactives* section brings together online-only downloadable or multimedia content and off-site social content. Information that describes the library as an organization is gathered in the *About* section. Finally, support functions — *Account* and *Help* — round out the global architecture.

GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE KEY

- A** Global section
- Stacked boxes Sub-section
- Box Sub-page
- Dashed box Duplicate link
- Gray box External link



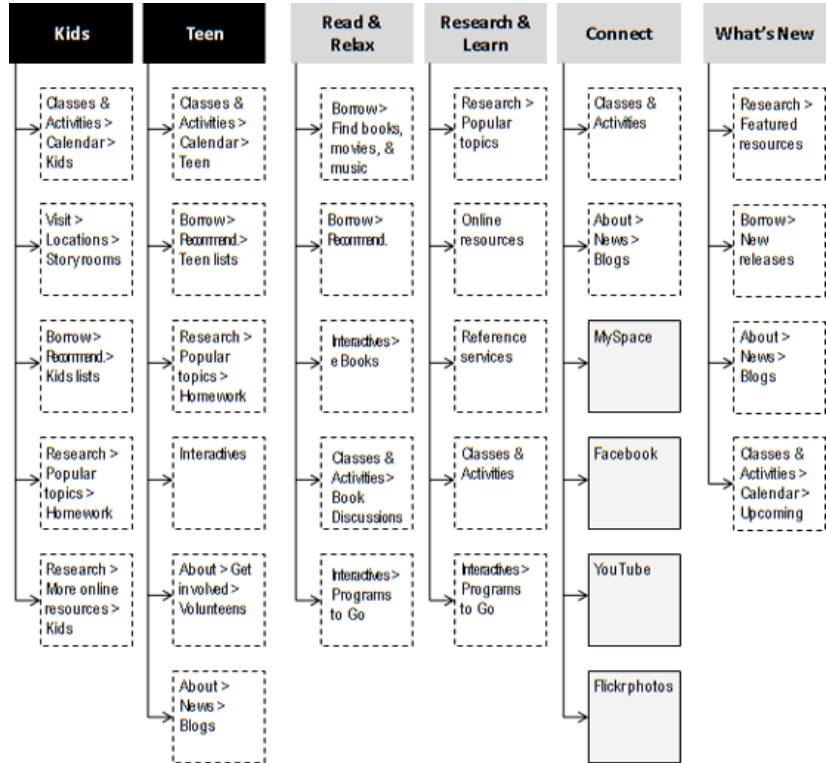
Sub-sections that consist of multiple pages are represented by stacked boxes in the diagram above. A few of the sub-pages and sub-sections are linked from multiple top-level sections; duplicate links are represented by the dashed boxes. The *Interactives* section houses several external links, as represented by gray shaded boxes.

Collections

To support multiple modes of access to content, collections bring together content from across the site for specific audiences and tasks.

COLLECTION KEY

- A** Global collection
- A** Homepage collection
- Duplicate link
- External link



The *Kids* and *Teen* collections represent key audience segments and are incorporated into the global navigation. The other collections – *Read & Relax*, *Research & Learn*, *Connect*, and *What's New* – represent key tasks that visitors can undertake from the homepage.

OBJECTIVE

Facilitate easy location of information in the site and on pages.

Skeleton

To ensure that the site effectively facilitates easy location of information, this section outlines action items relating to information design and navigation design and presents wireframes for the homepage and a content page.

Information design

- Facilitate access of information by presenting text at a readable width and chunking main body content with headings.
- Use consistent type styles to create scannable pages and to differentiate among important elements.
- Identify and link related materials to support discovery.

Navigation design

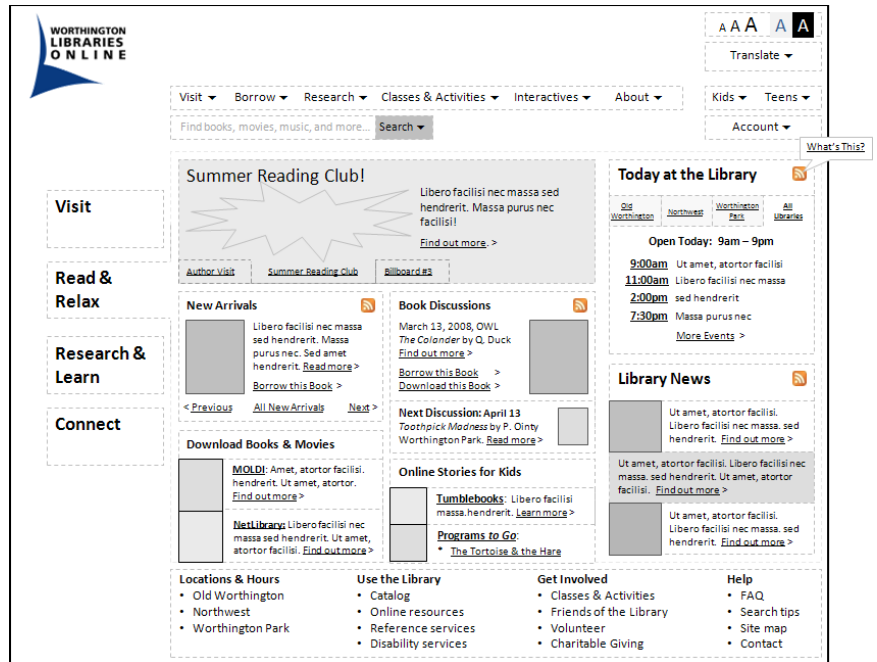
- Provide consistent, persistent global navigation.
- Provide consistent local navigation.
- Provide shortcuts to related content with supplementary navigation.
- Provide links to frequently used resources in courtesy navigation.
- Support wayfinding with breadcrumb trails and color-coding.

Wireframes

Homepage

The homepage welcomes visitors to the library by acting as a portal to the activities that visitors can complete, both in-person and online. At the same time, the homepage introduces visitors to the site's navigation scheme, offering a "bird's eye view" of the available content and functionality.

A wireframe for the homepage is presented and described below.



Branding is located in the upper left corner of the page. Just to the right of the logo, the global navigation includes the global architecture outlined above. The *Audience* collections are included in line with, but set apart from, the global navigation. Together these elements represent the site's top-level sections.

Just below the global navigation is a multi-purpose search box, which toggles from searching the catalog to searching databases to searching the Web site. The *Account* section is presented in line with the search box. Together these elements represent the most frequently-used aspects of the Web site.

Accessibility and customization tools are always on top in the upper right corner of the page. This functionality is stacked above the *Audience* collections and the *Account* link, forming a personal tools region of the page.

Together, all the elements above constitute a header which appears on every page of the Web site.

The homepage collections – *Read & Relax*, *Research & Learn*, *Connect* – along with a redundant *Visit* link, appear in the left sidebar as tabs, representing the core activities visitors can complete at the library. On the left two-thirds of the page, each tab provides links to featured resources, programs, and services related to each activity. For instance, the *Read & Relax* tab might include a large slideshow promoting the Summer Reading Club, along with smaller teasers linking to new releases, book discussions, eBooks, and podcasts. The content

within each tab is fully modular; individual elements can be expanded, collapsed, or reorganized as necessary. (Although the *Read & Relax* tab is illustrated above, the *Visit* tab will load by default.)

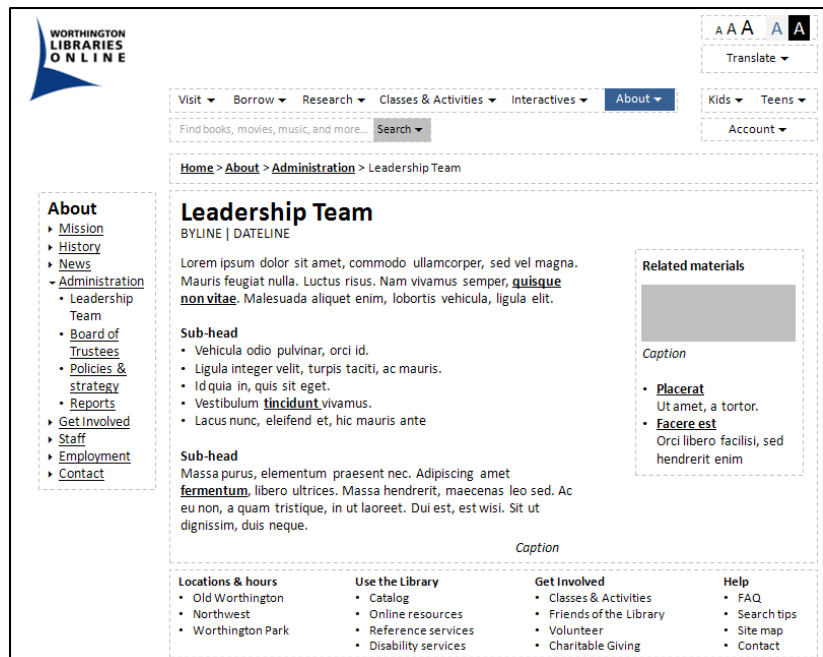
The homepage's right column presents the day's hours and schedule of classes and activities, accessible by library location, as well as the latest library news and announcements. Blurbs will appear along with small graphics, when appropriate.

On the homepage (and across the site), small subscribe buttons permit visitors to subscribe to RSS feeds to keep up to date with new resources and events.

Finally, the footer houses the courtesy navigation, including the *Help* section and one-click access to some of the most frequently used content from every page. The footer appears on every page of the Web site.

Basic content page

A wireframe for a basic content page is presented and described below.



The header appears at the top of the page, exactly as presented on the homepage. To aid in wayfinding, the selected section is highlighted in the global navigation.

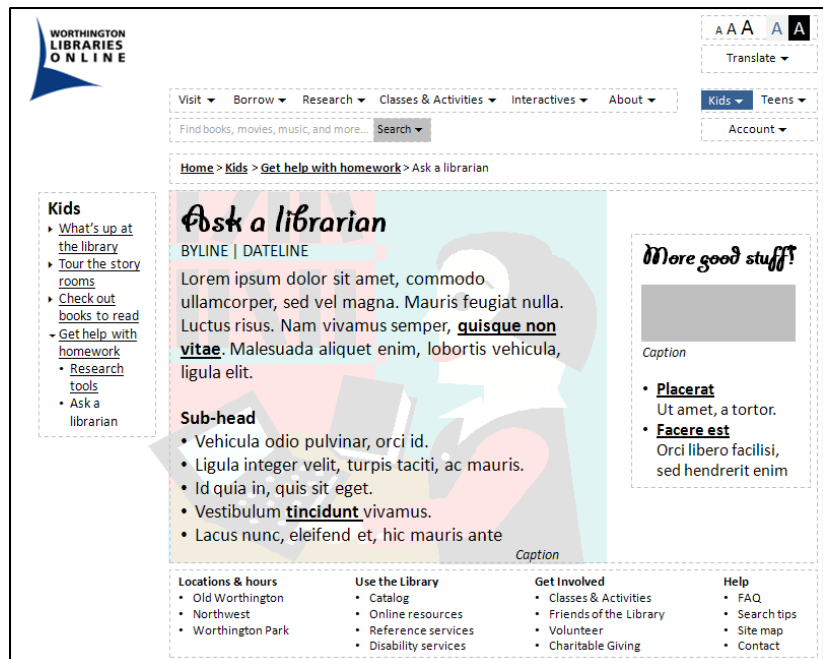
Just below the header is a breadcrumb trail indicating the current location in the site architecture. Local navigation for the selected section is included in the left sidebar, including secondary links and their subsections.

Content is included in the center of the page, with a main heading and a main body, presented at a readable width and clearly chunked sections delineated with sub-headings. A byline, dateline, graphics, caption, and in-line links are included as appropriate. The right sidebar houses the supplementary navigation, including cross-references to related sections and/or materials.

The footer appears on the bottom of every page, exactly as presented on the homepage.

Collection page

Collection pages – for children and for teens – are a variation of the basic content page.



The collection pages have the same header and footer and navigation elements with the same basic layout as the basic content pages, but have a different look and feel, with different color schemes and different font styles and sizes suitable for children and for teens.¹¹

¹¹ Not necessarily as pictured.

OBJECTIVE

Maintain a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

Surface

This section outlines action items relating to the tone and visual design for the Web site to ensure that the site effectively maintains a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

Tone

- Use language that personally engages patrons, using the first person and imperatives (“We believe...”; “Join us!”).
- Create a feeling of warmth with photos of people, both staff and patrons.
- Connect the Web site to the library locations with photos of the library spaces.

Visual design

- Use bright and muted colors in sophisticated combinations.
- Use consistency in layout to create unity across the site and to achieve predictability.
- Use balance and proportion to help focus the eye on important sections of the page.
- Use consistency in type treatment and graphics, including sizes and styles, to create easily scannable pages.
- Use variety in type treatment and graphics to break up the rhythm to emphasize the most important element(s) on a page.

OBJECTIVE

Anticipate and respond to changes in library services as well as advances in technology.

Foundation

This section outlines action items relating to the Web site infrastructure to ensure that over time we are able to anticipate and respond to changes in library services as well as advances in technology.

- Adhere to W3C standards to produce valid code to ensure compatibility, accessibility, and searchability.
- Maintain a “future-proof” design by:
 - Using semantic markup to separate content from presentation;
 - Managing a flexible, scalable architecture; and
 - Employing a modular interface design.
- Deploy a robust content management system.
- Produce and maintain a style guide outlining design standards and publishing procedures.
- Monitor site usage statistics.
- Continually assess user and staff needs.
- Stay informed about best practices in Web design.

Conclusion

The EXTREME MAKEOVER redesign process was undertaken to develop a plan to bring worthingtonlibraries.org inline with the library's mission and vision to effectively promote the library's services and programs and to promote equal access to information. The redesign process began with a planning phase that explored staff ideas and patron needs and has resulted in this blueprint, which lays out the objectives and action items that must be accomplished during the upcoming production phase of the EXTREME MAKEOVER.

By meeting the objectives and accomplishing the action items outlined above, the redesigned Web site will revisit its original goal to be "a 'real' library ... available anytime, anywhere" but with a contemporary and forward-looking emphasis on accessibility, participation, ease-of-use, warmth, and innovation.