Assignment #1
Project Brief
Upper Sandusky Community Library

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Background and Introduction

The Upper Sandusky Public Library is seeking a UX professional to redesign their current web-page. While offering a lot of information to the user, the information is scattered throughout the site and is difficult for users to locate. The emphasis of this project focuses on the information's accessibility. The site contains a wide array of information, including link access to the on-line catalog. This external link provides the user with a hybrid search system allowing them to search the library via multiple fields: title, subject, author, and ISBN. It also allows the user to search only the Upper Sandusky Public Library. Other information on the site is varied and combines task-oriented topics, such as tax information and reserving the on-site meeting rooms, along with topical organization including teen outreach programs and preschool story-time. The library also requests the updates be easy for their small staff to manage, as they are a small-town library of limited resources.

Assessment of Current Site

Currently, the website information is accessed primarily by three areas: the horizontal navigation in the masthead, the left vertical navigation, and the right vertical navigation. Content is displayed between the two vertical navigation areas. The site has a primarily hybrid organizational scheme. There are topical themes and task-oriented themes in combination with each other. For example, the Our Library and Our Collection areas suggest information about the task of checking out a book may be found therein. Topics such as Story-time and the Teen Advisory Board are found directly below Our Library and Our Collection. Inside of specific areas, more direct and exact organizational schemes can be found. Inside the Heritage Room, alphabetical anchors are used to browse the information, along with search capabilities related to names and dates. The Ellison Room also employs an alphabetical categorization to browse the die cuts in their collection.

Throughout the site, multiple access points are utilized. There are several internal links which allow the user to travel to various areas around the site, some of which continue in a loop. For example, the Common Readers Discussion link on the left side provides a link to the Program & Events page, which directs the user back to the Common Readers Discussion page. Other information accesses external links with no warning. The Community Links area in the horizontal navigation leads the user off-site to Yandot's Chamber of Commerce page.

Other Issues

There are several other challenges represented by the Upper Sandusky Community Library's site. Many of the information areas are ambiguous and the structure of the page allows the user to get lost easily. The lack of breadcrumbs and the existence of several looping links creates a confusing maze for the browser. There are also some very confusing visual cues implemented across the page. In several areas text is in a bold font, colored blue, and underlined. The underline commonly denoted a link which is clickable. In the case of the library's page, underlined information may only indicate something of hierarchical importance, not a link.

In many places, the organization systems need to be rethought completely. A chronological organization scheme seems very obvious in the Meeting Minutes by the Library Board of Trustees, however, all the minutes are in one very long page. Similarly, anchor jump links need to be implemented to help the user to quickly navigate the site.

Project Plan

The challenge will be to design an organization system with easily recognizable labels for the users. The following plan will be implemented to help the Upper Sandusky Community Library achieve the ease of use they are seeking.

WEEK 1

During the first week, a project plan and timeline will be created. This step will involve an overview of the Upper Sandusky Library website to establish a connection between the library's needs and the state of the current website. During this step, the UX professional will review the website and assess IA problems and opportunities for improvement. A project plan will be drafted detailing the process of improvement over the upcoming six weeks.

WEEK 2

After the initial review of the site, the needs of the user will be analyzed. This will include input from librarians at local municipal libraries who can discuss a typical user's needs while browsing the website. They will also help to determine context: when are the users accessing the library's website, what information are they inputting, and what are the common results. A literature review will also be conducted to gather knowledge about typical library website users. Based on this information, personas of library website users will be created. These personas will bring the library site browser to life, discussing their typical tasks, the context under which these tasks are performed, and the ultimate goals they are seeking to fulfill.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Activity							
Project Brief	�						
Research & Context		�	�				
Content, Labels, & Taxonomy				�			
Assessing Labels, & Taxonomy					�		
Iteration & Finalization						�	�

WEEK 3

At the end of Week 3, a research deliverable will be created, including research from the direct interviews of library professionals and from the literature review. It will detail both the protocol and outcome of the research completed throughout the two-week module. The completed personas will also be included.

WEEK 4

The next step includes a thorough inventory of the content currently housed on the site. Information will be then sorted into two sections: information to be used as-is and information to be reiterated and reused. Finally, using the inventory in conjunction with earlier research, a determination will be made of what information is missing and must be generated. A classification scheme will be chosen for the site to organize all information. This taxonomy will include the rationale behind the organization. Finally, a site map will be generated using the classification system and labels dictated by the inventory and research.

WEEK 5

Using Treejack, the design will be assessed to evaluate the taxonomy and labeling systems. Four participants will user-test the IA and the results will be analyzed. The data gathered will allow for revisions of the system and improvements will be made.

WEEK 6 & 7

Final iterations will then occur and paper sketches will be generated depicting the homepage, navigation, and key work-flows. Test sessions will be run with participants using Chalkmark. The final deliverable will include the project overview, research summarizations, personas, completed site map, navigation descriptions, navigation rationale, and finalized wireframe work-flows.