

Project Proposal

Sharon Public Library: Information Architecture Redesign

06.30.2020

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UXD 60111: Information Architecture II

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of how the information is currently organized on the Sharon Public Library website and mentions other issues that were found. It also outlines a proposal of information architecture (IA), user research, and design work that Jessica McDuffee will perform to assist Sharon Public Library with the redesign of their website.

This work will include interviews to help determine who the target users are and how to best meet their needs. Then, multiple solutions will be designed and tested, and the results will be documented and shared during each phase of the project.

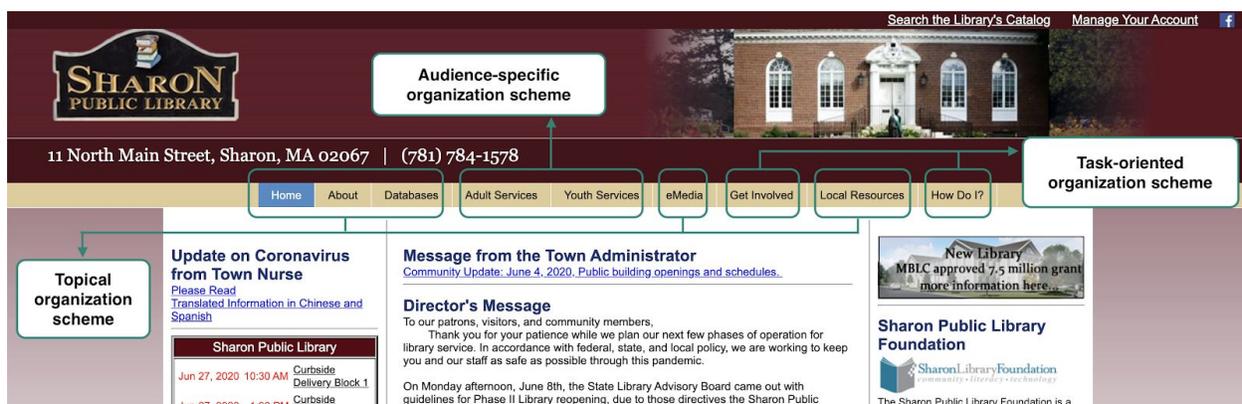
The proposed IA work will provide valuable insight to help Sharon Public Library organize the information on their website better, so patrons can find what they are looking for in the most enjoyable and intuitive way possible.

Background

Library Director, Lee Ann Amend, contacted Jessica McDuffee on behalf of Sharon Public Library to help with the redesign of their website. Lee's primary objective for this project is to improve the organization of the site's content and information, so it can be accessed easily. She would also like the look of the website to be updated and have a more welcoming feel. Since this is a small library, they are not able to perform this redesign in house.

Current State of the Sharon Public Library Website

The image below shows the dated look of the current website's home page and points out the organization scheme used for the global navigation, which is a hybrid approach using topical, audience-specific, and task-oriented categories.



Additionally, the home page has a three column layout with a chronological event list on the left and numerous contextual links throughout. The font size is very small, and the page is overcrowded with information, making it difficult for patrons to locate the information they are looking for.

The image below shows the subcategories listed in the drop-down menu under the “About” section. This list is repeated in the left column of each page, providing a means for local navigation and allowing the user to see where they are on the website by highlighting the category and subcategory in blue. This method is used for all the sections of the website listed in the primary navigation, with the exception of “Home.”

The screenshot shows the Sharon Public Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Search the Library's Catalog" and "Manage Your Account". Below this is the library's logo and address: "11 North Main Street, Sharon, MA 02067 | (781) 784-1578". A primary navigation menu includes "Home", "About", "Databases", "Adult Services", "Youth Services", "eMedia", "Get Involved", "Local Resources", and "How Do I?". The "About" dropdown menu is open, listing subcategories such as "Collection", "Directions", "History", "Holiday Schedule", "Mission", "Library Policies", "Staff Directory", "Trustees", "Library Value Calculator", and "Sharon Public Library Building & Feasibility Study". The "Collection" subcategory is highlighted in blue. The main content area, titled "Our Collection", describes the library's holdings, including over 80,000 items, special collections, books in various languages, and newspapers like *The New York Times*, *Banker & Tradesman*, *Business Investor's Daily*, and *The Patriot Ledger*.

The “Search the Library’s Catalog” and “Manage your Account” links at the top of the global navigation take the user to a new website (shown below) with a shared database for all the libraries in the Old Colony Library Network.

The screenshot shows the OCLN Library Catalog website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Log In", "My Account", "Library Information", and a help icon. Below this is the OCLN logo and the text: "OCLN Library Catalog. OCLN Libraries are closed. See your library website for information. Need a library Card? Get an eCard Today!". The main content area features a search bar with "All Libraries" and "All Fields" dropdowns, a "SEARCH" button, and an "Advanced Search" link. A "Hottest Holds - All Libraries" section is visible, featuring a book cover for "The good liar [videorecording]" by Bill Condon, published in 2020.

Other Issues

Adding some accessibility features would help make the website more welcoming and the information more easily available for people with disabilities.

Project Plan

This section provides an overview of the activities and scope of work that Jessica will perform for Sharon Public Library. She will also be giving and receiving feedback from her teammates throughout the project.

Phase One: Understanding Users and Context

In phase one, Jessica will recruit two target users and/or stakeholders, then schedule interviews with them. Next, she will prepare a research protocol and conduct each session online or in person. Using the notes and observations from these interviews as well as information she collected from a literary search, Jessica will detail her findings in a user research document. This document will also include primary and secondary personas and a list of tasks the site should support, organized by priority and persona.

Phase Two: Content, Labeling, and Taxonomy

In phase two, Jessica will begin designing an improved organizational system for the website. She will do this first by performing a content analysis, which will include the content that is currently on the website and any missing content that should be created. Next, she will decide on a primary organizational scheme, create a sitemap of the proposed redesign, and load the new taxonomy into an online program called Treejack.

Phase Three: Assessing Labeling and Taxonomy

In phase three, Jessica will begin testing her new design using Treejack. To do this, she will create a list of retrieval tasks and add them to the Treejack project. Next, she will recruit four target users, then schedule and perform four user tests. With the help of her teammates, she will analyse the data, then prepare a document to elucidate the research and results.

Phase Four: Putting It All Together

Phase four will contain three parts: designing, testing, and documenting. First, Jessica will sketch paper wireframes of the home page and several key workflows. Second, she will test these designs with four target users using an online program called Chalkmark. Third, she will make any last revisions to her designs based on the results of the research and prepare a final document that brings all the pieces of the project together.

Timeline of Activities

Here is a timeline of the above activities that Jessica will complete over the next six weeks. The items in **bold** are the primary deliverables that will be submitted to the library director at the end of each phase.

Activity:	Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Phase One: Understanding Users and Context							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit target users and/or stakeholders Scheduling interviews Create a research protocol Conduct and record two interviews Conduct a literature search Create primary and secondary personas Create a list of tasks the website should support, organized by priority and persona Create a draft user research report 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give and receive feedback from teammates Submit the revised user research report 							
Phase Two: Content, Labeling, and Taxonomy							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a content analysis Choose a primary organization scheme Create a sitemap Give and receive feedback from teammates Load the revised classification scheme into Treejack Submit a document containing the revised content analysis, organization scheme, and sitemap 							
Phase Three: Assessing Labeling and Taxonomy							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm user tasks with teammates Add tasks to the Treejack project 							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit target users ● Schedule user tests ● Conduct four user tests using Treejack ● Analyse the data with teammates ● Submit a report of the research and results 				X		
Phase Four: Putting It All Together						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sketch paper wireframes of the home page and several key workflows ● Give and receive feedback from teammates ● Load revised wireframes into Chalkmark ● Recruit target users ● Schedule user tests ● Conduct four user tests using Chalkmark 					X	
					X	
					X	
					X	
					X	
					X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document results of the research ● Give and receive feedback from teammates ● Submit final research and design report 						X
						X
						X