

## Stakeholder (Proxy) Interviews for Sharon Public Library

### Methodology

Stakeholders from SPL were not available, so two librarians from other libraries were interviewed. The interviews were approximately 55–60 minutes long. They were conducted remotely using Zoom and were recorded using audio and/or video.

### Key Findings

#### Patron types and demographics

Both of the librarians who were interviewed shared their experience with a wide range of patrons visiting the library — from babies to seniors, homeless people to ultra wealthy, GED candidates to PhD graduates, and computer illiterates to tech savvy individuals. Neither of them had specific demographic information for online patrons, but both of them mentioned the following three categories of people with whom they interacted with frequently:

- Parents with young children
- Seniors and retired individuals
- Teenagers and young adults

#### Goals, tasks, and pain points

Both of the librarians pointed out similar needs and challenges for each of these groups of people, including the following:

- Parents with young children
  - Look for materials and activities to entertain their children and foster learning.
  - Want to check out large volumes of books.
  - Are having difficulty with the limited number of ebooks available to check out at a time compared with paper books (ebooks cost more for libraries, so there are more restrictions).
- Seniors and retired individuals
  - Prefer printed materials to digital materials.
  - Often need more tech support to utilize the library website services.
  - Have expressed feeling safer using the library online instead of in person since they are at higher risk during the pandemic.
- Teenagers and young adults
  - Are interested in books from the juvenile and young adult fiction genres.

- Utilize the online chat feature more and are generally more tech savvy.
- Get involved with community programs and online events.

### **Changes due to the pandemic**

It was impossible for either of the librarians to talk about the library's operations, patrons, and usage without making a distinction between how things were before the pandemic compared to how things are currently. Since the libraries have been closed, they have had to work from home and move most (if not all) their programs online. This has resulted in a greater reliance on the library website, more demand for digital material, and reduced access to library services for those individuals who do not have their own computer or wifi.

## **Group Research Synthesis**

### **Types of users**

- Parents of all ages of children
- Young adults
- Retirement aged users
- Refugee
- Jobless
- Employees (Staff)
- Book Club users
- Homeless
- Brick and Mortar
- Attorneys
- Educators

### **Demographics**

- 65+
- 13-19 (teens)
- Mid 20s to 40s (parents)
- Tweens
- College students
- Split of male to female was close but weighted to more female
- Non-traditional families (grandparents, single parents)
- Income
- Occupations
- Education

### **Common tasks**

- Tech help

- Resource help
- IT support
- Resume help (job resources)
- Research papers (help with word processing)
- Identify library books
- E-resources
- Literary help
- Library help
- Library programming
- Ebooks/Audiobooks
- Policies (how old do kids need to be to be dropped off)
- Use of physical materials
- Booking a room
- Ancestry
- History of city/house

### Goals

- Search for and reserve materials
- Check account status
- Pay fines
- Digital library card
- Searching online resources for research
- Finding library events and programs
- Hours
- Sort and browse materials
- Finding phone
- Book a room

### Pain points

- E-books are more expensive, so quantities are more limited
- Hours aren't convenient
- Having trouble browsing site for materials
- Seniors having difficulty adjusting to technology/accessing e-books
- 3rd party vendors for various systems (Overdrive, Hoopla) — no control over sites
- Trouble finding how to search the catalog
- Taxonomy (labels and jargon)
- Reservations to book a room (can't book online)
- Difficulty finding transportation to library
- Might not have computer/wifi

## Devices

- Kindle Paperwhite
- Smartphone/iPhone
- Overdrive and Libby apps
- Macbook
- iPad
- Older Acer laptop

## Successes

- Chat — especially during pandemic
- Staff is excellent/helpful
- Library facilities are helpful
- Able to update website through the the blog (real-time data)
- Contactless book pick-up was going well
- Online programs (virtual storytime, beekeeping classes)

## Interview Guide

Basic structure and timing:

| Elapsed Time           | Activity                          |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 minutes   0:00-0:10 | Introduction and informed consent |
| 5 minutes   0:10-0:15  | Warm-up questions                 |
| 10 minutes   0:15-0:25 | Library patrons                   |
| 15 minutes   0:25-0:40 | Context and content               |
| 10 minutes   0:40-0:50 | Opportunities for improvement     |
| 5 minutes   0:50-0:55  | Participant questions and wrap-up |

## Moderator's Guide

Interview questions and script:

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Library: \_\_\_\_\_ Session #: \_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 10 minutes   0:00–0:10  | Introduction and Informed Consent |
| <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><i>Hello [participant's name], thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this research project today. My name is Jessica, and I am a graduate student at Kent State University, studying User Experience Design.</i></p> <p><i>For a class project in my Information Architecture class, we are analyzing library websites and getting to know the needs of library patrons. The end goal of this project is to create design solutions that make library websites more user-friendly, mainly by improving the navigation, labeling, and organization of information so people can find what they are looking for quickly and easily.</i></p> |                                   |
| <p><b>Informed Consent</b></p> <p><i>Before we begin, let's go over the informed consent form.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If in person, have them read and sign the form</li> <li>• If remote, read them the form and have them give their verbal consent</li> </ul>  |                                   |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p> <p><i>In a minute, I'm going to start recording our session. What questions do you have for me before we begin?</i></p> <p><b>START RECORDING</b></p>   |                                   |
| 5 minutes   0:10–0:15   | Warm-up Questions                 |
| <p><b>Welcome and Intention</b></p>   |                                   |

*[Participant's name], thank you again for taking the time to talk with me today. My intention for our interview is to gain a better understanding of your experience working at a library and the type of patrons you interact with as well as online patrons and the website content that is most valuable to them.*

## Day in the Life

*To begin, can you run me through a typical day in your life working at the library?*

*Can you describe (or tell me more about) your involvement with the library website?*

*Can you describe (or tell me more about) how you interact with patrons?*

**10 minutes** | 0:15–0:25

**Library Patrons**

## In-Person Demographics

*Can you describe the types of people who frequently use library services in-person?*

**Possible follow-up inquiries (if not covered in the previous answer):**

*Tell me more about the most common age or age ranges of in-person patrons.*

*Tell me more about their educational background.*

*Tell me more about their socio-economic standing.*

*Tell me more about their skill level using technology.*

## Online Demographics

*Can you describe the types of people who frequently use library services online?*

**Possible follow-up inquiries (if not covered in the previous answer):**

*Tell me more about how online patrons differ from in-person patrons.*

*Tell me more about the most common age or age ranges of online patrons.*

*Tell me more about their educational background.*

*Tell me more about their socio-economic standing.*

*Tell me more about their skill level using technology.*

**15 minutes** | 0:25–0:40

### **Context and Content**

#### **Context**

*What types of tasks are online patrons trying to accomplish when they visit your library's website?*

*Are there distinct user types that are trying to accomplish different things?*

*What do most people use the library website for? Why?*

#### **Content**

*What is the most popular content on your website? Why?*

*What content on the website gets utilized the least? Why?*

*What types of information do online patrons search for the most? Why?*

*What would make this information easier to access?*

*What is the most essential content the library website could not be without?*

*What information or content is missing or would be nice to have?*

**10 minutes** | 0:40–0:50

### **Opportunities for Improvement — Unmet Needs, Suggestions, and Desires**

#### **Opportunities for Improvement**

*What challenges or frustrations have you encountered when using your library's website?*

*What challenges or frustrations do your online patrons experience when using your library's website?*

*How would the website need to change to address these challenges (for you and your online patrons)?*

*What qualities would make this website easier and more enjoyable for you and your online patrons to use?*

### **“Blue Sky” Ideas**

*Now, let's set aside what we think is reasonable or possible and stretch our imagination for a minute. Let's pretend you have a magic wand and with the flick of your wrist you could create a digital library that could do anything you want. What would that be like?*

*What problem(s) would that solve for you and your online patrons?*

**5 minutes** | 0:50–0:55

**Participant Questions and Wrap-up**

### **Participant Questions**

*I've finished all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else about the library website, online patrons, or content that you'd like to add?*

*What questions do you have for me?*

### **Wrap-up**

*[Participant's name], thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today! I really appreciate you sharing your experience and insight with me. You have my number and email, so feel free to reach out if you have any further questions about today's research session.*

**END RECORDING**