A Grand Experiment

» Citizens react when their library hosts a traveling exhibition.

BY PENNY TALBERT

In the summer of 2015, the Ephrata Public Library in Ephrata, PA, performed an experiment. We took a stable, seemingly inert, control subject—science—and poured it into a community that is largely Anabaptist and conservative Christian in its faith. We added a variable to this experiment by asking the question: "What Does It Mean to Be Human?" **(see Image 1)**, a question that required the observer to ponder current scientific findings and draw his or her own conclusions about humanity.

Then, we placed this bubbling mixture over the heat of religious fervor and traditionalism. The results were no less than explosive, making an impact far beyond what we had envisioned and engendering reactions that, in some ways, are still being felt a year later.

A NATIONAL TREASURE

Curators at the Smithsonian Institution's Hall of Human Origins selected nineteen libraries nationwide to participate in this grand experiment—a traveling exhibition, *Exploring Human Origins,* meant to frame this profound question: What does it mean to be human? The purpose of the exhibition was to spark a conversation, not to change people's minds about their beliefs or force people to believe in evolution.

The exhibition—large panels, touchscreen kiosks, a hands-on skull display, along with a replica of a statue located in the Hall of Human Origins—would fill our library's lobby as well as available space among the stacks.

The Ephrata Public Library, located in the heart of Amish Country, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has a population that is diverse, but not in the way you might think. We have all the "typical" diversity—with the addition of a large plain community consisting of Amish, Mennonite, Brethren, and many other sects of the Anabaptist arm. Many in these communities are heavy library users. Many are also Young Earth Creationists. Interestingly, they rarely object to materials in the library or its programs. We offer science programs specifically for home-schooled children and, when we bring in scientists, many of

our homeschooling families attend as part of their curricula.

Our library felt the Smithsonian exhibition was something that our community needed. We felt that by focusing on the question of what it means to be human, individuals could move past their differences and find that common thread that ties us all together. Ultimately, if individuals learn to listen to each other and find that common ground, we could bring about effective solutions to the larger, far more serious issues our community faces.

PLANS UNFOLD
When we received word that we had been awarded one of the coveted grants to host *Exploring Human Origins,* the library's director of development, Joy Ashley, and I immediately began planning. We enlisted some individuals from the community to participate in a Community Advisory Panel, a requirement of the grant, and we began meeting to plan our outreach.

I purchased collection materials I knew we would need and Joy reached out to potential sponsors to fund our ideas. We drove to Washington, D.C. to spend three glorious days in the "for authorized personnel only" parts of the Smithsonian Institution for training with the other librarians hosting the exhibition as well as the ALA's Public Programs Office.

Less than an hour into the orientation, though, I realized that we were going to have some issues. Our community was not going to be as accepting as the communities represented by the other libraries in the room. The more other librarians spoke about their program plans, the more I began wondering about the response we were going to get at home.

INITIAL REACTION
As soon as we announced the exhibition locally, emails started arriving in my inbox. I began getting visits. Both Joy and I were accused of "waging spiritual warfare" on our community. Many of our usual sponsors refused to have any involvement with the project, citing religious convictions or a fear of a public backlash to their businesses.

We tried to use every opportunity to steer the conversation to the opportunities the exhibition would bring. Even within our organization, the staff worked through their own opinions and feelings about the exhibition. We held an in-service day to specifically address the issue of having respectful dialogue. We practiced diffusing arguments and guiding conversations to more constructive topics. Even with all that practice, some employees still found it difficult to have any conversation at all about the exhibit or the ideas around it.

We were not the only ones to receive feedback. Members of the Community Advisory Panel, who had volunteered their time to help the library win the grant, started to receive public pressure to stop their support. The panel was comprised of community members including a local pastor, a homeschool family, a member of the local media, a library board member, and others. Their goal was simply to promote the exhibition's visit to Ephrata and reach out to local groups to let them know the purpose of the exhibition—to spark dialogue.

Not everyone saw it that way, and I ex-pected we'd have some patrons who would object to the content of the exhibit.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES
Public libraries in conservative Lancaster County are often the main resource for homeschooling materials for a thriving community of traditional homeschoolers, cyberschoolers, and unschoolers. All of these groups have different needs, which we have taken time to learn and for which we create specialized programs. Many are very conservative. I was not surprised when I began getting letters, emails, and phone calls from these patrons.

Then again, there were some of these patrons who went about their business and didn't have a problem with the exhibition. "To each his own," one of the homeschooling mothers said to me. "There are so many things I disagree with," she told me, "we're using [the exhibition] as a teaching moment." And many parents did. We heard more than a few parents explain to their children that even though the scientists may believe one way, they believe another because it is in the Bible. When I happened upon these parents, I always tried to compliment them on their teaching skills.

What I admired most about our homeschooling families is that, although they were deeply upset that the library chose to host the exhibition, they were also respectful and kept communication lines open throughout what turned into a boycott of our library.

I received emails from patrons who visited us on a sometimes-daily basis, explaining the reason they were boycotting the library, telling me they'd be back as soon as the exhibition was gone and that they were going to miss all of the staff and the special care they always put into homeschool services.

That's not to say there wasn't dialogue, some of it requiring a quick summary of the rules of civil conversation. We had to avoid judging each other. We had to respect each other's beliefs. We had to take time to listen to each other.

On our part, library staff arranged a special preview tour of the exhibition for area clergy, complete with a question-and-answer time with the co-chairs of the Broader Social Impacts Committee for the Human Origins Project, a group of clergy working with the exhibition. Newspaper articles covered the exhibit and, more importantly, the conversation. It was, after all, the reason we had brought this exhibition to our community.

Image 2: Jill Hilt, President of the Friends of the Ephrata Public Library with husband, Bob, at the Preview Night of Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean To Be Human?.

The library also hosted an invitation-only reception to present the exhibition to community leaders the evening before the public opening. **(see Image 2).** Dr. Richard Potts, curator of the Smithsonian Institution's Hall of Human Origins, was on-site, as well as the exhibition's co-chairs Dr. Jim Miller and Dr. Connie Bertka. Attendees had an opportunity to tour the exhibition and speak one-on-one with our guests from Washington, D.C. During my opening comments, I read one of my favorite quotations by author Jo Godwin about libraries, which seemed so very fitting for the occasion:

"A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone."

Those gathered had a hearty laugh because the crowd had also seen the editorials in the paper. At that point, the general public had not yet seen the exhibition. They were simply upset about the idea of the library hosting it.

PUBLIC OPENING

The following morning, as the exhibit opened to the public, the rest of our community came—those who were curious, those who were upset, those who loved science, those who loved religion. Conversation filled the halls of the library—respect-ful, civil discussion. Standing there as people wound through the exhibition, discussing panels and exploring ideas, I was confident we'd done the correct thing, bringing this grand experiment to our community.

As things moved along, however, it became clear that there were other groups in our community unhappy with the library's decision to host *Exploring Human Origins*. A group called Young Earth Action began a website with the warning: "For 6,000 Years The Devil Has Been Questioning God's Holy Word. Now His Deception Has Come To Ephrata."

The site included information about the exhibit, a schedule of events, tips of entering our "What Does It Mean To Be Human" essay contest, suggestions on words to write on an interactive portion of the exhibition (the "sticky notes" wall), and a blog.

Even more antagonistic "Letters to the Editor" began appearing in our local and city papers. People began leaving me disrespect-ful voicemails and criticizing me personally, questioning my motives for applying for the exhibition. At one point, things became heated enough that a local pastor left a voicemail on my office phone, telling me that, though he is very opposed to the exhibition, he wants to apologize on behalf of the Christians in our town for their very poor, un-Christian like behavior. For some reason, that voicemail meant so much.

CONFRONTATIONS ESCALATE

Then came the charges of pornography. The statue, a reproduction of the bronze created by the contemporary paleo artist, John Gurche, of a curious two-year-old homo neanderthalensis learning from his mother **(see Image 3)** was one of the highlights of the exhibition. We moved it proudly to the entrance of the library atop a large pedestal to allow for easier viewing. It is a beautiful piece of art.

Yes, the baby is nude. Yes, the mother is topless. I could not argue that fact. We had some patrons who would bring their children into the library, shielding their eyes until they made it through the lobby and past the statue. People took to social media **(see Twitter Posts)**. And, shockingly enough, the police received phone calls reporting the pornography on display at the library.

We tried to provide programs that would encourage dialogue, present all sides of the issue, and bring perspectives to our library that may not be ones that our patrons had been exposed to in the past. For example,
• We held an educator's workshop for

Image 3: A reproduction of the bronze statue created by the contemporary paleo artist, John Gurche, of a curious two-year-old homo neanderthalensis learning from his mother was one of the highlights of the exhibition.

librarians and teachers with Dr. Briana Pobinar from the Smithsonian Institution to introduce educators to the set of replica skulls. These skulls have become part of our permanent collection and can be checked out by educators for use in their classrooms.

• We hosted a local theologian and author, Dr. John Soden, a professor at Lancaster Bible College whose book explores the creation account based on how the original audience would have understood the

Twitter Posts: Examples of the posts sent to the library objecting to the exhibition's signature statue.

Bible's teachings.

• We invited a Native American band to come and do a storytelling and musical performance to share how their culture interprets the creation story.

• We screened documentaries that examined our humanness.

 The majority of our community took advantage of these opportunities and, no matter what their beliefs, reacted well to these programs by Smithsonian and local scientists, as well as theologians and geneticists. Programs were well-attended and conversation was, for the most part, respectful. By judging the reactions of those who attended these events, it appeared we had accomplished our goal.

And, as all public libraries must do, we held a fundraiser to fund the whole thing. 'Sharing the Bread," a farm-to-table dinner, was a first for us. Prepared by former White House Chef John Moeller, participants enjoyed a decadent dinner of locally-grown items and then participated in a live auction. Despite the controversy that accompanied *Human Origins: What Does It Mean To Be Human?,* in the end we did what humans have been doing for thousands of years— we broke bread together.

AFTERMATH

After packing up the exhibition and sending it off to the next site in its trip around the country, we all breathed a sigh of relief here in Amish Country. It was truly a grand experiment for all--one that taught the library about our community, and one that taught our community about the library. It challenged the strength and dedication of the library's board of directors and staff, some of whom had personal objections to the content of the exhibition.

Despite the controversy, I believe we accomplished what we set out to do. We sparked discussion. We fostered respectful dialogue. People who had never used the library before came to see the exhibition, attended programs, and learned the vital role our library serves. We learned to disagree respectfully, and we also learned to deal with the conflict that happens when there is opposition to our stance on an issue.

While the main goal of our journey was not to make a statement on the role of libraries, it may be the most important take-away from the entire experience. Every complaint was carefully addressed. Those leading boycotts kept in contact with library officials and were welcomed back with enthusiasm and no judgment.

Our community learned firsthand that a public library was a place for ideas and freedom to believe what you wished. They found a carefully selected collection of materials that addressed all their questions and concerns. No matter what individuals believed when entering, they could find items that were of interest to them. They also learned that we weren't going to take anything off the shelves simply because it didn't fit within their belief system.

In retrospect, our grand experiment was, indeed, a learning experience for our entire community. In the end, I believe it was a success. The library's role as a learning hub was most certainly reinforced, as were the core values of public libraries.

Despite the controversies that accompanied such an undertaking, I'd do it again—in a heartbeat. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Penny Talbert is the executive director of the Ephrata Public Library, Ephrata, PA. She can be reached by phone at 717-738-9291 ext. 100, or by email at ptalbert@ephratapubliclibrary.org. Also visit www.ephratapubliclibrary.org.
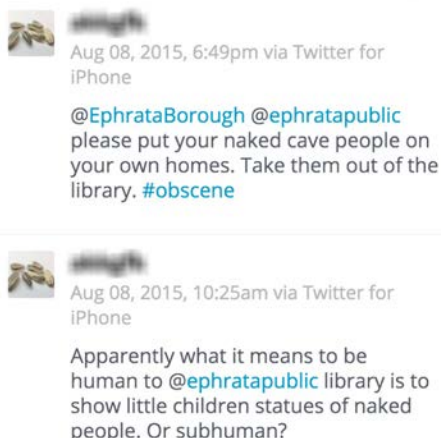
Strategic Library™

PRESENTER

Lori Bowen Ayre is a nationally recognized expert in library materials handling workflows, RFID, AMH, and self-service technologies. Her experience extends beyond assessment and procurement to a comprehensive understanding of all the factors that must be addressed to make these projects successful: the strategy, technologies, people, and practices, as well as change management and continual improvement processes. She believes in the transformational power of libraries and works to help libraries leverage technology to streamline back office functions, reduce operating costs, and improve and expand customer services.

This webinar will be of interest to anyone who wants to make the most of their materials-handling technologies, either at public or academic libraries.

The Strategic Library Webinar Series Continues!

5 Million and Counting: Libraries Serve People with Alzheimer's and other Dementias
May 17, 2016; 2:00pm – 3:00pm EST **Register >>**

Lions & Tigers & Buildings, Oh My! – Demystifying the Librarian's Role in Building or Renovating a Library
June 8, 2016; 2:00pm – 3:00pm EST **Register >>**

Think Outside the Book: Innovative Programs to Engage Adult Readers
September 28, 2016; 2:00pm – 3:00pm EST
Register >>

From Transaction to Transformation: Seizing the Opportunity of an RFID Implementation

April 27, 2016 from 2:00pm – 3:00pm EST

ALA President Sari Feldman's new Libraries Transform campaign communicates that libraries are more than places where circulation transactions take place, libraries can be transformative. And technologies like RFID, automated materials handling and self-service technologies are the tools that increase opportunities for libraries to provide enriching experiences to their communities.

Although RFID projects involve technical hurdles, they can be a fantastic opportunity to transform library services! If libraries only install the technology without changing how they use staff, they miss the chance to change the dynamics of patron-staff interaction.

ABOUT THE WEBINAR

Please join us for the latest event in the Strategic Library Webinar Series: From Transaction to Transformation: Seizing the Opportunity of an RFID Implementation. You will learn how to leverage an RFID initiative to:

- Fulfill your strategic goals
- Maximize transformational interactions with staff
- Build awareness of all library services
- Keep library staff in the foreground of library service
- Free up staff to do new things
- Properly adjust library spaces

Register Now

The registration fee is $39 with special group rates available. **Can't make it on April 27th?** Register now and we will send you an email with instructions on how to watch at your convenience after the event.

Please contact Jenny Newman with *Strategic Library* at jenny@libraryworks.com if you have any questions.

Transformation through Consolidation

» Learn how five libraries use different configurations of compact storage units to upgrade or refocus their collaborative spaces.

BY LORI COMPAS

As libraries change to meet the needs of their communities, their staffs face the challenge of finding space for modern uses while still accommodating ever-growing collections of books and other materials. By finding innovative ways to consolidate and compact their collections, libraries can free up space for meeting rooms, computer workstations, cafes, and other spaces for patrons to learn and interact while maintaining and even improving organization and collections care.

The five libraries featured here mounted their shelving units on space-saving compact storage systems, ultimately improving organization and access to materials while creating more opportunities for study and collaborative work.

A RENEWED CULTURAL CENTER

Compact shelving gave the historic St. Louis Central Library new life, creating spaces for a cafe, meeting areas, and an auditorium. The iconic, Italian-Renaissance-inspired library was designed by Cass Gilbert, one of the most famous architects of the early 20th century. The Carnegie-funded building has been visited by millions of people from all over the world, but after a century of constant use, the structure's historic majesty could not make up for its lack of modern amenities.

The renovation project involved a variety of solutions to create a safer building, free up square footage for collaborative spaces, and conserve the library's woodwork and other historic features while modernizing its appearance and functionality. The outdated central stack area, which was constructed from a steel-framed, self-supporting structure, was of particular concern, given that it posed a major fire hazard and was not seismically sound.

During a two-and-a-half year construc-

Image 1: LED lighting was installed on cantilever shelving in the remodeled St. Louis Central Library. These fixtures not only attract the eye but also illuminate the aisles in lieu of additional lighting, which might have detracted from the historic chandeliers and ornate ceilings. LED lighting is energy efficient and less expensive to operate that traditional florescent bulbs. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.

Image 2: Custom glass end panels were used in areas with LED lighting integrated into the shelving. The glass panels are subsequently illuminated, making the stacks look almost like works of art and creating a design feature unique to the St. Louis Central Library. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.
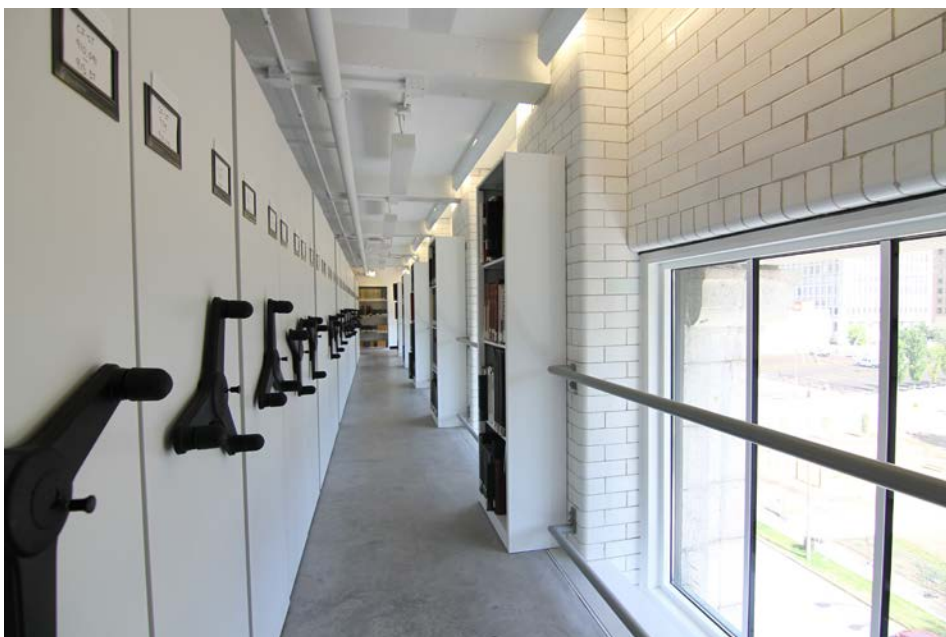
Image 3: The stacks were consolidated in compact shelving units mounted on rails. Eliminating previously wasted aisle space freed up square footage for new uses. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation

tion project, the library's four million volumes were moved both into both a temporary off-site warehouse, purely used for storage during the renovation, and into a nearby off-site long-term storage facility. During this time, the self-supporting stack structure was completely removed from the library and new floors were constructed and outfitted with Spacesaver compact shelving.

The use of compact shelving enabled the library to consolidate the collection from a seven-tiered central system into three interior mezzanine-like floors along with the basement level of the library **(see Image 1)**.

Not only does the new stack space meet fire and seismic codes, but it's also brighter and easier to navigate and truly maximizes the interior floor space **(see Image 2)**.

The Central Library re-opened during the St. Louis Public Library's centennial year of service, and the library is now a blend of old and new, where ornate wooden ceilings and dramatic chandeliers meet high-tech computer labs, sleek glass walls, and exposed concrete floors **(see Image 3)**. The high-density mobile storage systems used throughout the library also helped open up existing spaces for new functions, includ-

ing a café, classrooms, and meeting spaces, along with a teen room, which incorporates study areas, lounge seating, and a small theater-like TV viewing area **(see Image 4)**. The library also added a full-size auditorium for community events.

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Efficient off-site library storage is about much more than simply finding a place to store books. For the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it's a way to honor the library's commitment to students and maintain its reputation as one of the top research universities in the world.

Ten miles southwest of the vibrant energy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, an unassuming warehouse sits just off a wooded country road in Verona, Wisconsin. From its modest location and stature, not many would guess that this warehouse is currently home to more than 100,000 volumes of rare books, manuscripts, and thesis works, with the goal to store well over a million volumes in the space over the next several years.

For UW-Madison, the warehouse and its archival book storage represents more than just a place to store library materials: With 42 libraries located all over the campus, it's also a critical investment in the future of the university's library system.

The university committee entrusted with space management realized that if alternative space for library shelving and materials could be made available, approximately 30,000 square feet of library space across the campus could be renovated to provide study spaces, computer-enhanced learning facilities, and updated library services **(see Image 5)**. At the same time, UW-Madison ranks as one of the most prolific research universities in the world, and the university recognized the ongoing need for physical resources in addition to digitized materials. In order to stay competitive, staff knew they needed keep the resources they currently possessed and retain the capacity needed to expand the collections. Most importantly, however, they needed to keep all materials safe and useable for future and current researchers.

Library staff knew these two priorities could co-exist, so they started researching the most efficient way to store as many volumes as possible in the university's 10,000-square-foot Verona Shelving Facility. Working closely with the facility's architects as well as library staff, Spacesaver's sales

Image 4: Consolidating and compacting storage throughout the library created space for a café, an auditorium, and meeting rooms. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation

Image 5: Moving seldom-used volumes to an offsite high-bay storage system has freed up space in libraries across the UW-Madison campus while still providing students and other researchers access to these materials. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.

Image 6: The McKillop Library created room for a makerspace and other collaborative work areas by mounting traditional library shelving on mobile carriages that move along rails installed in the floor. The system frees up space that had been previously been wasted in the aisles between shelving units. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.

team, project managers, and engineers designed an XTend® high-bay archival shelving system with moveable carriages, with shelving units 18.5' high and just over 60' long. The system features more than 5,300 useable shelves, each with a maximum capacity of 768 pounds. All of those numbers translate into one important one: The archival book storage system has an estimated capacity of over 1.2 million volumes, which means the UW Libraries can responsibly plan for the future.

The high-bay system works in tandem with the facility's infrastructure, from climate control and the fire suppression system to the archival system used by library staff. The aisle floors were outfitted with a wire guidance system that automatically guides the facility's order picker to protect the equipment and to ensure user safety while the lift is in operation. "I often refer to shelving as a lynchpin, because we're doing other things with the space that the print

once occupied," said Ed Van Gemert, UW-Madison's vice provost for libraries. "We're completely rethinking how we're using the spaces in our libraries today."

A MAKERSPACE FOR STUDENTS

Salve Regina University uses compact shelving to maintain convenient access to traditional stacks while freeing up space for a makerspace and other collaborative work areas.

The rise of digital technology and the need for collaborative workspaces has created demand for more open and flexible areas in libraries of all sizes. While some institutions have funding to build additions or an entirely new facility, others must find innovative ways to make room for these new uses while remaining within the same building footprint.

The McKillop Library at Salve Regina University fell into the latter category. The staff wanted to maintain the library's traditional stacks, but they also wanted to embrace

new ways for patrons to interact with the collection and use the library space—and they wanted to avoid new construction. They began planning a repurposing project by designating areas for quiet study and collaborative work areas, as well as rooms for academic services and tutoring.

To maintain the stacks, they consolidated the library's book collection on a compact shelving system. The system consists of traditional library shelving mounted on 22 carriages, which allows the shelving units to move along rails installed in the floor (see Image 6). This system eliminates wasted aisle space by storing the shelves close together, and staff and patrons use an electronic control system to easily open an aisle when and where it's needed.

The library's new compact storage system has freed up a variety of areas for collaborative work. Large tables and whiteboards are now located throughout the library for students to use, and each space allows students to work on projects in a group
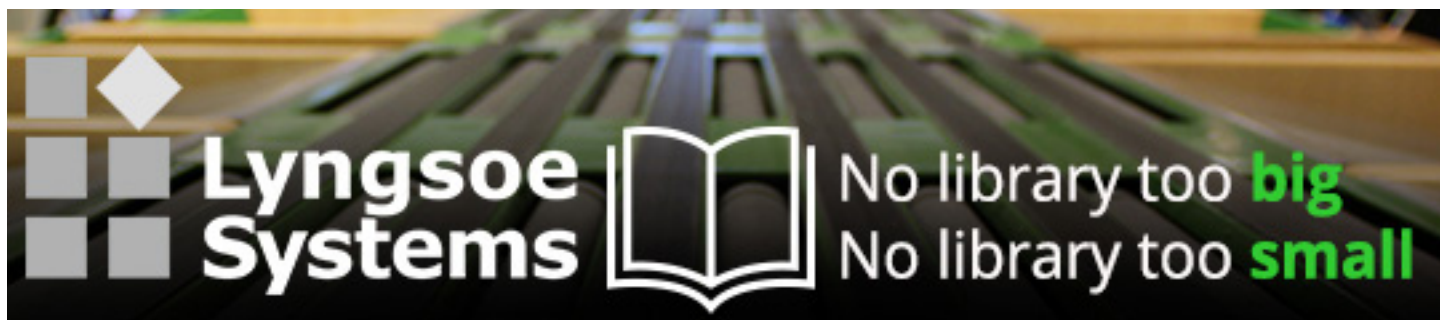
Image 7: The makerspace allows students to access tools — such as a laminating machine — that they need to use for projects but are generally too expensive and impractical to purchase. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.

setting. The curriculum resource center has given more students a place to go for help with their work outside of the classroom, and there's also a makerspace that includes a button maker, a cri-cutter and a laminator **(see Image 7)**. According to Director of Library Services Olga Verbeek, a lot of students, especially education majors, use the makerspace to complete class projects.

HONORING THE PAST, RESPECTING THE PRESENT

Gettysburg College needed archival library book storage to protect historic documents, but library staff also wanted to respect students' needs for more space for study and research.

Located adjacent to the historic Gettysburg Battlefield, Gettysburg College is steeped in history. The college was established prior to the Battle of Gettysburg and its buildings were used for signal work and medical aid by both Union and Confederate troops during the famous battle.

The college's Musselman Library is entrusted with promoting an in-depth understanding of the area's history, which means preserving and providing access to a variety of primary source materials, including more than 14,000 rare books, manuscripts, maps, and other items (to view the library's layout, click here). Its staff is responsible for storing these delicate materials in a way that maintains their integrity while still allowing scholars to retrieve them for research.

Before new storage solutions were installed, library staff struggled to find a balance between protecting the special collections and providing collaborative workspace. The rare books require a highly regulated environment, which typically requires extra space or dedicated special collections rooms. "In our collections room, we needed to have a shelving solution that was going to help us care for those materials, make them retrievable, but also keep the temperature, humidity, and airflow as stable as possible," says Carolyn Sautter, director of special collections and college archives.

At the same time, the library is focused on serving the 2,600 students of modern-day Gettysburg College. Library staff estimates that about 1,800 students visit the library every day to access books and research materials, and the students use the library for quiet study and to collaborate on group projects and presentations.

Staff wanted to consolidate storage to free up space for collaborative and study areas in its Special Collections area while still maintaining stable temperature and airflow to preserve the materials **(see Image 8)**. By incorporating compact shelving into the third floor, more books could be relocated there from the fourth floor. The space freed up on the fourth floor, allowing Special Collections to be transformed into a research and study area with custom-built perforated library book shelving that allows

» **The St. Louis Central Library consolidated its collections to create a more modern appearance and free up square footage for meeting areas and other community spaces.**

air to not only flow from side to side but also up and down through the shelves.

Library staff was thrilled to protect the precious collection, provide for safe and convenient retrieval, and create space for other uses while avoiding the expense of an addition or new construction. "A smart shelving solution is the best solution to caring for this plethora of material that we're always going to need to save," said Sautter. "It will actually make it possible to care for those books with the integrity that they deserve."

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Compact shelving at the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library helped consolidate the library's collections, which in turn improved collections management and created room for collaborative study.

The Zimmerman Library serves all the functions of a typical research library, with the added responsibility of serving as a repository for federal documents, the university's archives, and The Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections (to view the library's layout, **click here**). Over the past century, the library's various collections had expanded into every space available, including areas that were difficult to access and keep at a steady temperature and humidity level. The situation concerned staff, faculty, and students who needed to find and access materials, and the lack of space led to a difficult work environment from a conservation perspective. It also meant that rare or fragile documents were not stored in optimal environmental conditions for preservation.

To rectify the situation, library staff conducted a high-level inventory and assessment. This included locating items in various collections, assessing the space in the building's existing structure, and determining strategies regarding how to use the space most effectively to store, preserve, and provide access to materials.

The local Spacesaver team worked with library staff to understand staff workflow, analyze the collections and the amount of

Image 8: Perforated shelving allows air to circulate not only along the aisles, but also up through the shelves themselves, creating a better environment for rare books, manuscripts, and other historic documents at the Musselman Library at Gettysburg College. Photo credit: Spacesaver Corporation.

space that was needed to store them, and create a storage plan. The ultimate goal was to create storage systems that would support staff and improve collections management by placing items that are most frequently accessed together and close to staff work areas, reducing the amount of staff time required to retrieve items.

To lower costs while freeing up space, the library's existing shelving units were installed on mobile carriages that were mounted on rails on the floor. The library was able to increase its storage capacity by storing the shelves close together, eliminating wasted space between the aisles, and sliding the shelves apart to create wider aisles only when needed.

The entire library was transformed by this strategy, but two areas are of particular significance. Relocating reference materials to compact storage in the basement allowed for the creation of the Learning Commons, a large, flexible learning and collaboration space. The other major change involved consolidating rare and fragile items and relocating them to compact storage in the basement as well. This meant that these items could be kept in a clean, climate-controlled environment that was also more organized and accessible to researchers, and

staff could do preservation work in the same area in which collections are stored.

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR LIBRARY

Libraries are changing for the better, providing more opportunities for community members to learn new facts and skills, share ideas, and ultimately improve their lives. When communities or universities want to renovate library spaces, it's important to engage a team of architects, designers, and storage experts who not only understand the needs of books and materials, but who also understand and appreciate emerging and established trends in storage and space design.

Finally, a word about funding: Most public and university libraries are eligible for special contract pricing under state contracts and other contracts, such as the National Joint Powers Alliance. Learning about these options before making commitments can make the process cost effective as well as an important investment in the future of the library's constituents. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Lori Compas is Content Marketing Specialist with Spacesaver Corporation. She can be reached by phone at 920/563-0782 or through the company's website: **www.spacesaver.com**.

Taking UX Data Offline

» Gathering data on user experiences with a library's website can have applications far beyond the original intent.

BY CARRIE MORAN

Usability has been defined as "the extent to which a product or system can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use."[1] This definition could be applied with a wider lens by adding the word "service" along with product or system to reflect that usability should be assessed outside the confines of a computer.

User experience (UX), as defined by pioneers Jakob Nielsen and Don Norman, "encompasses all aspects of the end-user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products."[2] Thus, user experience research is any activity that attempts to examine the way in which a user interacts with a product or service.

UX research can be time consuming, but is one of the most valuable exercises a library can perform. UX projects are often undertaken with a focus on an online platform or service, such as a library website. There are various methods available to perform this research, and many can be applied for no or low cost. And the data collected from UX research can be applied to myriad library services, and can inform library decision making and strategic planning efforts.

This article focuses on data collected and analyzed at the University of Central Florida (UCF) Libraries over an eight month period, from October 2014 to June 2015, and how that analysis was applied to the UCF Libraries' interfaces and services.

DATA GATHERING

The UCF Libraries formed a taskforce in September 2014 to tackle a website migration and redesign project. The goal of the taskforce was to build an entirely new, responsive website on the WordPress platform. The timeline was approximately nine months, with a target rollout date of July 2015. The group was comprised of librarians and library staff representing various departments and skill sets.

The taskforce applied the concepts embodied in UX projects to achieve their goals. The initial phase of a UX project involves gathering data from users, and the following methods were used by the taskforce.[3]

Personas: Establishing the demographic profile of a library's users by gathering data from the greater institution or community in which the library is situated is an important first step. For the UCF Libraries project, information was collected from the university on the population of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This information informed the development of personas, a well-established technique in the field of user research. As defined by Bedford, a persona is "a fictional, yet realistic, description of a typical or target user of the product."[4]

For the UCF Libraries project, the demographic information gathered was used to develop a list of potential users of the website: undergraduate students, graduate students, library faculty, library staff, UCF faculty, UCF staff, alumni, and community users. Personas were developed for each of these user types.

Idoughi, Seffah, & Kolski outline the purpose of personas as being a "communication tool, with the hope that the information personas contain will 'inspire' members of the design team while sustaining the whole user centered design process."[5] Persona building, therefore, is a key component to keeping project team members focused on the users of a product or service during decision making.

Google Analytics and Search Traffic: Another source of data gathered for the project was an analysis of Google Analytics

data from the current website, search traffic from the current website and LibGuides, and questions recorded by Ask-A-Librarian staff. These resources are often already available to libraries, and are valuable data sources because they do not rely on users' self-reporting or participation in a survey or other active approach.

Google Analytics is a free and robust tool for viewing user behavior on a website. For our analysis, we focused on a one-year period to examine pageviews, keyword searches, browser type, traffic and referrals, and device type. This analysis revealed which pages should be carried forward, how our users were coming to our site, and for which online environments we had to design. Results showed that eight pages accounted for 70 percent of traffic, and less than thirty pages accounted for another 15 percent. This information helped inform and guide the decision to trim the number of overall pages on the site.

This information was combined with an analysis of search traffic on various platforms. Website search traffic from September 2014 to November 2014 yielded 1627 searches, LibAnswers queries from October 2013 to September 2014 yielded 391 results, and LibGuides searches from October 2013 to September 2014 yielded 3,144 results.

The search traffic was sorted into six categories:
- Research (a query that was a research question),
- Resources (a query looking for a specific resource by name or type),
- Library (a query about library use),
- UCF (a query about the greater institution),
- Technical (a query about technology or login), and
- Other (miscellaneous queries).

Figure 1 shows the search traffic percentages for each type of query.

Environmental Scan: A major impetus for this project was a campus-wide shift toward WordPress as a website authoring platform. Throughout the project, websites from other campus organizations and departments were reviewed to ensure that the
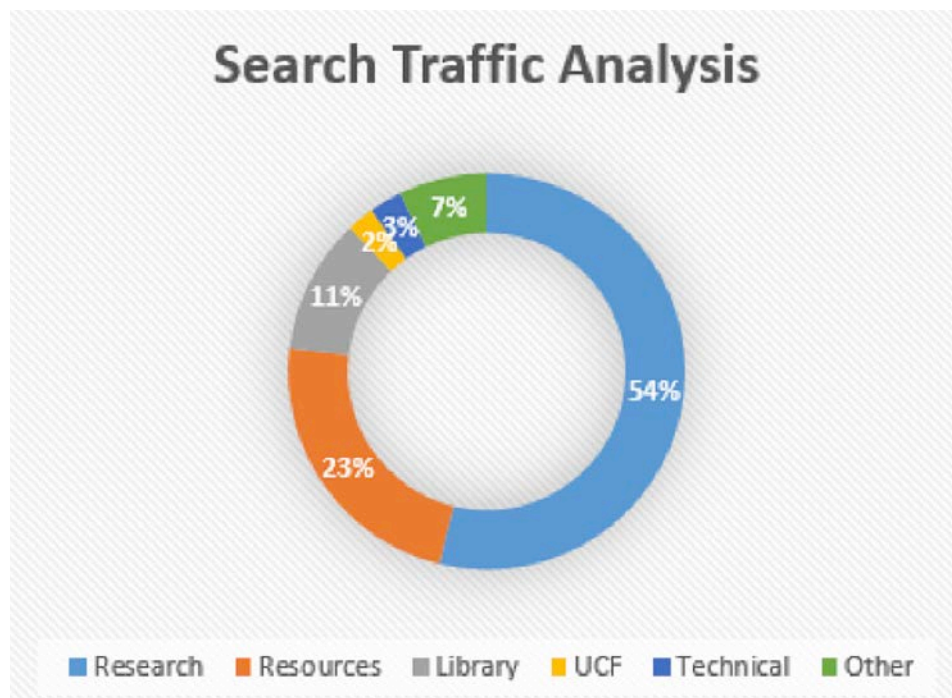

Figure 1: Search traffic percentages for each type of query.

library website reflected the website of the greater institution. Some of these sites were used as models for key features such as the staff directory.

Members of the taskforce also identified websites from other institutions to serve as examples of both good and bad design. Most of the examples were library websites, but a few sites from other fields or domains were included. The taskforce used compilations of award winners or other noteworthy sites to develop a list of sites to explore, which was made available to all library staff. These sites were analyzed to look for commonalities and key features to help guide the design process.

Surveys: An initial round of user questioning was implemented during the final three weeks of the Fall 2014 semester. Each week, one question was posted to Reddit. A separate question was asked of users virtually via Facebook and Twitter, and physically in the main John C. Hitt Library, two branch libraries, and six regional campus libraries. While the Reddit questions had low response rates, they gathered more in-depth feedback.

The questions asked via social media and in person received a total of 252 responses. The questions were:
- Fill in the blank! I go to UCF Libraries website to _____.
- Fill in the blank! I would use the UCF Libraries website more often if _____.
- What is the one thing you would change about the UCF Libraries website?

To gather in-person feedback at the main library, questions were printed on banners and displayed in the entry with sticky notes for users to respond. Many respondents answered with feedback about the physical library, rather than the library website. Answers were grouped into the categories shown in **Figure 2**.

One of the main populations using the library website is library faculty and staff. A survey comprised of four questions was distributed to all staff, with room for general feedback. These questions were:
- What is the one thing you would change about the UCF Libraries website?
- Fill in the blank! I go to the UCF Libraries

» **Members of the taskforce also identified websites from other institutions to serve as examples of both good and bad design. Most of the examples were library websites, but a few sites from other fields or domains were included.**
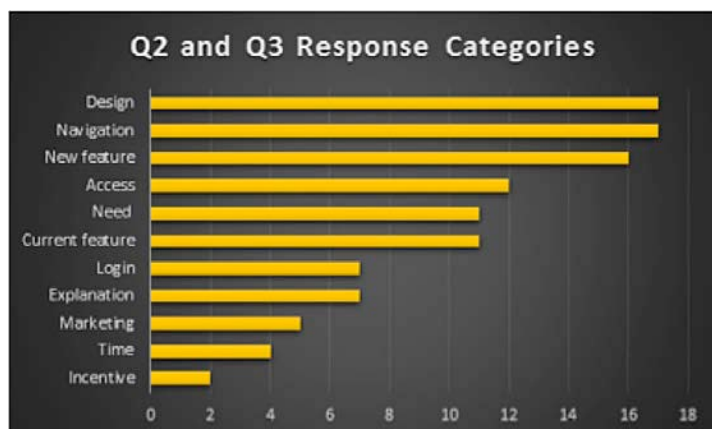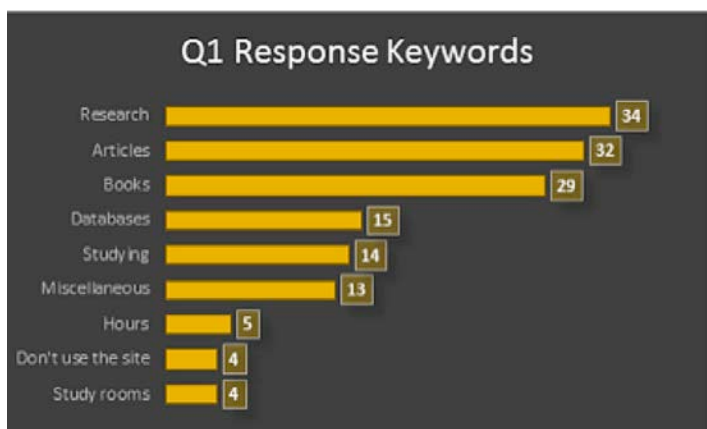
Figure 2: Answers from feedback at the main library were grouped into these categories

website to _____.
• Five items that should appear on the Libraries front page are:
• Three items that should not appear on the Libraries front page are:

The answers were analyzed for common trends and themes. These answers were presented to staff at open meetings, along with the other data gathered.

Card Sort: The next step in the UX research process is a card sort analysis. Card sorting is a technique for gathering feedback on how information should be organized. Users are presented with cards containing individual topics or items and are asked to group them in categories. These categories can be open, where the user labels the category, or closed, where the user is given a set of categories.

Card sorting programs have been developed to implement this technique online. The taskforce chose to purchase the Optimal Sort tool (**https://www.optimal-workshop.com/optimalsort**) from Optimal Workshop to deploy the card sort because it would be easier to distribute across locations, take less time to implement, and provide a more robust analysis. Participants were gathered using social media and by setting up an in-person station in the main library lobby. The cart sort activity drew 56 participants. **Figure 3** is a representative grouping from the card sort.

Usability Testing: The final round of UX research consisted of two rounds of usability tests, one conducted after the initial design had been built and another after changes from the first test were implemented. In the first round, fifteen users participated, and thirteen users participated in the second round.

This process recorded the steps [how were the steps recorded?] a user took while trying to accomplish a given task on the beta version of the website. The tasks were developed by the taskforce and attempted to cover the common questions users bring to an academic library website based on the previous user research. The user's frustration with a task and the comments they made aloud while attempting to complete the task were recorded [how and by whom?].

APPLICATION
The data from these various research methods was gathered for the explicit purpose of redesigning the UCF Libraries website on a new platform. But in the eighteen months since the project began, the data collected for this project has had a much wider impact than just the library's website. It has also affected staff communication, library visibility, technology resources, and online services.

Staff Buy-in: An important part of this process was to get library staff to buy into

the changes made to the website. As mentioned previously, staff was surveyed early in the process. The taskforce held two open all-staff sessions, attended a library faculty meeting, visited individual department meetings, and distributed progress reports via email throughout the project. One of the taskforce's key recommendations was to break down the silos between various library departments.

In the past, every department maintained its own group of website pages, and the information was often inconsistent across pages. For example, on the old website there was information about checking out books on at least ten pages. This is a common trend in libraries, both for websites and services.

Marquez, Downey, and Clement note that "it is clear that users do not see the various departments or silos in a library. They do not see the bureaucratic barriers between public services, access services, or collections services, or the difference between a librarian and a paraprofessional."[6] The results from the card sort activity made a strong argument for this confusion, with one user sorting information into two categories: "Stuff I care about" and "Library things that mean nothing to me."

A change in library culture away from these silos was cemented on the redesigned library website by creating pages such as Books, which required representa-

unsorted
Ask A Librarian
Borrowing Books
Branch & Regional Campuses
Catalog
Collection Development
Computers Availability
Course Reserves
Digital Collections
Disability Services
Employment Opportunities
Faculty Services
Get Off-Campus Access
Giving to the Libraries
Government Resources
Information Literacy Modules
Instruction
Interactive Floor Maps
Interlibrary Loan

Events

Online Research
Do Research
Scholarly Research
Research

Find Articles
Databases
OneSearch
Online Journals
Research Assistance
Research Guides

Library Main Information
General info

Address & Phone
Directions & Maps
Hours

Figure 3: A representative grouping from the card sort.

tives from Circulation, Electronic Resources, Acquisitions & Collection Development, Interlibrary Loan, Cataloging, and the branch/regional campuses to collaborate on a single page. In addition, a Policies page was created to display all policies relating to library usage. A short code was developed to insert these policies into relevant pages; now, an update to a policy only has to take place in one location.

The culture shift away from silos is reflected in the formation and structure of the libraries' Web Working Group (WWG). The initial taskforce that began the website redesign process was tasked with developing policies and procedures for the ongoing maintenance of the website. The taskforce created an Admin Manual for the WWG, which states "Because maintaining the UCF Libraries' web presence is an ongoing collaborative, shared endeavor, the WWG shall include members from all departments within the library." This sent a clear message that collaboration would be the rule, not the exception.

The WWG met monthly as content was added to the new website and continued meetings through 2015. These meetings allowed the taskforce to communicate the results of user research, along with important developments to the WWG members. It also created a space for staff from various departments to discuss library-wide issues that occur outside the website in a setting that leaves room for each department to take agency and initiate change.

The communication that resulted from these joint efforts has affected services and processes in other areas of the library. One example is a partnership between the Circulation and Teaching & Engagement departments, which work together to plan and set up outreach activities in the entrance of the main campus library. Prior to the website project, the Teaching & Engagement librarians worked alone on this project and had to spend time setting up tables, greeting on-campus partners, and tracking statistics. These tasks are now performed by Circulation staff members who are located directly across from the outreach area. This collaboration also resulted in a joint project during finals week to provide a coloring table and supplies for students.

Library Visibility: The UCF Libraries' old homepage displayed hours and had a rotating carousel image that would often display upcoming events. When users were asked which items should appear on the homepage in the various surveys, many mentioned events and library news. Although the UCF Libraries held some events, this was not a priority for outreach efforts. The old library website also had a blog feature for news that was under-used by library staff.

The new website was designed to prominently feature Events and News on the home page. When exploring display options for the Events calendar, it was discovered there was a campus-wide Events calendar on which the library was not featured. During the design phase of the website project, the UCF Libraries' Webmaster and User Engagement Librarian requested access to use the campus calendar. This calendar system not only provided a clean, usable display, but also helps promote library events by making them part of the daily emails distributed to all UCF-affiliated users.

The prominence of this display on the homepage had a corollary effect of increasing the importance of holding and advertising library events. Six coming events from the library's events calendar display on the homepage and, as the fall semester drew to a close in 2015, the calendar came close to being empty. This issue was addressed at the monthly meeting of the Web Working Group. One representative from a branch library was not aware they could display their events on this calendar, and without this forum and proactive attempt to deliver what users asked for, the good work of library staff would be overlooked.

Similarly, the News section of the homepage is now driven by the blog feature and displays the four most current stories. The News section was also experiencing a dearth of content prior to addressing the issue in a WWG meeting. Upon discussion, it was revealed that some members of the WWG were unaware of how to post blog entries or that they were allowed to contribute. Instructions for posting to the blog were made more explicit in the WWG style manual, and several departments made an effort to designate someone to contribute regular blog content.

This effort has increased communication within library departments as blog authors develop post ideas. A majority of library staff regularly use the library's website, and having stories from across the library displayed prominently on the homepage has increased library-wide awareness of what is happening in other departments. This knowledge is reflected at service desks, where library staff can pass the information to users who aren't aware which desk is responsible for which piece of information. Blog authors are also asked to email a subgroup of staff responsible for library public relations and social media.

The UCF Libraries maintains an active presence on social media, and several departments have their own social media accounts. The increased frequency of blog posts, coupled with the renewed push to hold events, has provided more content for social media editors. The change in culture toward collaboration has engendered collaboration on social media efforts, and a focus on user research resulted in a modi-

fication of the platforms and strategies used for social media.

The environmental scan phase of the user research process identified the popularity of the Instagram platform on campus and at other libraries. The UCF Libraries joined Instagram shortly after the new website rollout. Instagram has been used during library events and to promote library news. The Special Collections and University Archives maintains a separate Facebook and Twitter presence from the main library, but works with the social media team to post items from University Archives for the popular #tbt, or Throwback Thursday, movement. This communication channel and collaboration did not exist before the website redesign project.

Technology Resources: Perhaps the most significant shift from the old homepage to the new was the choice to highlight non-traditional library services on the main page. The old homepage featured various resource access points and hours. The new homepage adds prominent links to the availability of [correct?] computers, study rooms, and print/copy/scan services. This change was not popular among some librarians who see the resource and research services as being more important than technology services. The user research helped to convince skeptics.

The Google Analytics analysis showed the importance of library computers as a resource. Main and branch library computers used a separate portal page that was trackable via Analytics. That page was in the top eight pages for traffic, and that set of pages accounted for 70 percent of overall website traffic. Studying and study rooms were popular responses to survey questions, and the main library study rooms are constantly booked. Finally, print/copy/scan services are frequently asked questions at service desks and in online support.

Beyond placing these technology-related items on the homepage, the research has led to changes to library space and planning. One of the most humorous moments from the user research process was student

responses via sticky notes to the third posted question, "What is the one thing you would change about the UCF Libraries website?" Many students answered this question in regard to the physical building, and there was a rash of answers relating to power outlets (a precious resource in an academic library). In the time since this response, outlet stations have been added throughout the library, and future space projects plan to include extra power outlets.

Online Services: The website was the main priority of this project, but the UCF Libraries has an online presence outside the confines of the website. Much of the data gathered for this project were applied to other online services and platforms. The UCF Libraries' LibGuides, for example, were modified during this project to appear more seamless with the new website and were chosen as the best solution to organize and present library databases. A new taskforce is beginning work to apply the same usability principles to the LibGuides and will be able to skip some of the initial research. Similarly, there have already been some modifications to the link resolver pages, but a more thorough review is planned.

THE GOAL? ENHANCED UX EXPERIENCES

Library websites, services, and buildings would not exist without users. Libraries have control over the experience a user has when interacting with service points online or in person, and librarians can work to improve the delivery of service across these areas. Many user research techniques can be performed at low or no cost with a single person. Of course, this work can be scaled up to a larger budget and team. In the UCF Libraries' experience, a thorough user experience research project has brought a trickledown effect on the library as a whole, and the information gathered on user behavior and preferences has endless applications. ∎

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carrie Moran is the user engagement librarian at the University of Central Florida. She

can be reached by phone at 407/823-2590 or by email at carrie.moran@ucf.edu. To explore the UCF Libraries website, see https://library.ucf.edu.

FOOTNOTES

[1] De Troyer, O. (2005). Audience-driven web site design. In Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, edited by M. Khosrow Pour, p. 187, Vol. 20. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Reference.

[2] Neilsen, J., & Norman, D. (2016). The definition of user experience. Nielsen Norman Group. Retrieved from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/

[3] To further explore the methods outlined in this article, plus additional methods, visit the Usability.gov site "User Research Basics." Retrieved from http://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/user-research.html

[4] Bedford, A. (2015). Personas make users memorable for product team members. Nielsen Norman Group. Retrieved from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/persona/

[5] Idoughi, D., Seffah, A., & Kolski, C. (2012). Adding user experience into the interactive service design loop: a persona-based approach. Behaviour & Information Technology, 31(3), 287-303. doi:10.1080/0144929X.2011.563799

[6] Marquez, J. J., Downey, A., & Clement, R. (2015). Walking a mile in the user's shoes: Customer journey mapping as a method to understanding the user experience. Internet Reference Services Quarterly, 20(3/4), p. 135-150. doi:10.1080/10875301.2015.1107000

RELEVANT WEBSITES

Usability.gov. (2016). Card sorting. Usability.gov. Retrieved from http://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/card-sorting.html

University of Texas at Austin. (2007). Usability testing. University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/learn/usability/index.html

Specialty Libraries Go Digital

» Two case studies showcase how specialty libraries meet the evolving needs of their constituents.*

BY BRIAN BYRNE AND CLAUDIA WEISSMAN

Known as the digital content partner of more than 34,000 public libraries, schools, and retailers worldwide, OverDrive also works with hundreds of corporations and non-profit organizations around the globe to provide a corporate lending library of eBooks, audiobooks, and streaming video to their employees and members.

This diverse list of corporate libraries and learning centers includes international businesses like Delta Air Lines, Motorola and Rakuten; governmental institutions such as the United States Air Force, U.S. Department of Commerce, and embassies abroad; churches; professional associations; and court systems and law firms through a partnership with LexisNexis.

Like their public and academic library counterparts, these reading centers are seeking out new ways to engage their users and offer alternatives to print publications. Consider how both American Prison Data Systems, based in New York City, and St. Joseph Hospital in Denver, CO, developed their digital libraries.

AMERICAN PRISON DATA SYSTEMS' CHALLENGE

The mission of American Prison Data Systems (APDS) is to "bridge the digital moat that has surrounded correctional facilities" to make these institutions safer, cheaper, and more effective in reducing recidivism and improving inmate outcomes **(see Image 1)**. How are these goals achieved? In a nutshell, inmates at APDS partner facilities are provided Android-based tablets, typically using a one-to-one model, to access a broad suite of digital resources, including online education, job training, rehabilitation, library and legal content.

Based in New York, NY, this public benefit corporation works with prisons (minimum and maximum security), jails, probation de-

Image 1: The logo used by the American Prison Data Systems.

partments, re-entry facilities, and alternative-to-incarceration programs serving male, female, adult, and juvenile populations.

APDS partners with leading content providers for its educational, vocational, and mental health programming, but also creates its own customized tools to solve specific problems when there's no clear third-party answer. Such was the case when it sought to add a digital library to its product suite. "Historically, correctional institutions have been badly under-resourced when it comes to providing educational or rehabilitative programming to inmates. Libraries are a prominent example of that," says APDS Founder and CEO Chris Grewe.

According to Grewe, APDS was looking to address three primary issues with a digital library offering: breadth and depth of titles, accessibility, and security. Grewe explains that library collections at correctional facilities are traditionally extremely sparse and outdated, and they struggle to provide ADA-compliant text for the visually impaired. Access to these titles is also minimal.

"For the inmates, a typical correctional library is going to be very limited, both in terms of the materials offered and the accessibility of the physical library," says Grewe. "Depending on the level of security, inmates may only have access to books a few times a week or less."

Aside from taking up much-needed

space and requiring staff supervision, physical libraries in correctional facilities also offer key vehicles for the distribution of contraband, Grewe adds, which promotes increased violence and the consequences to the incarcerated that follow, such as solitary confinement, sentence extensions, or cycles of retribution. As a result, "From a security perspective, [physical] libraries can be a risk," he says. "Any time we're able to use digital resources to replace paper and other material being passed back and forth, we have an opportunity to make an institution safer."

APDS' SOLUTION

APDS teamed with OverDrive to develop the first-of-its-kind National Corrections Library (NCL), which launched in September 2014. Based on the digital lending platform used by public libraries, the NCL was branded and tailored to meet APDS' unique needs. At the top of this list was building layers of permissions that would allow adult and juvenile facilities to access only age-appropriate and relevant content for both their populations.

In addition to offering an all-digital solution that eliminates the security risks associated with physical books, Grewe says the digital National Corrections Library met the initiative's other critical goals:

Breadth and Depth of Titles. The catalog offers engaging, informative, aspirational,

and inspirational titles to meet the reading needs of inmates at all reading and educational levels. Since literacy is a major problem with this audience, a focus has been put on providing diverse, age-appropriate literature spanning a wide range of Lexile levels. An OverDrive staff librarian who formerly served as a corrections librarian has offered continued support in developing a collection that both appeals to inmates and is non-threatening to APDS clients.

Access. Inmates can access the NCL at any time using their daily-issued tablets. They're each issued individual log-in credentials and connect via a secure, high-speed wireless network provided by APDS. "The introduction of our solution, and especially of the NCL, is a massive paradigm shift in corrections. We offer inmates newfound access to a breadth of critical resources, including unprecedented access to books," Grewe says.

The NCL allows inmates to browse titles in private, at their own pace and with their own font and contrast settings. These features are important for those who may be low-literacy; in need of mental health or other self-help titles that would, in a physical library, reveal an underlying diagnosis, condition or experience they'd like to keep to themselves; or have learning interferences, such as vision impairment or dyslexia.

INCREASING READING AND REDUCING TENSION

APDS reports that the NCL has seen tremendous acceptance by both its facility clients and the populations they serve, with thousands of checkouts registered across all user types since the launch. Grewe said APDS has received ongoing feedback from staff and inmates with thanks and encouragement to continue the program now utilized by about a dozen institutions across the country, including, most recently, the Rikers Island juvenile and young adult facilities **(see Image 2)**.

"I'm happy to say that the National Corrections Library is one of the most-used resources on our tablets," says Grewe. "It empowers our users to access content at their own reading level and involving subject matter that appeals to them. The relative anonymity of tablet reading also protects our users from harassment that might arise based on certain reading choices."

Grewe notes that the NCL has been successful in meeting APDS digital library objectives, which, in turn, has resulted in decreased tension in facilities where it's used.
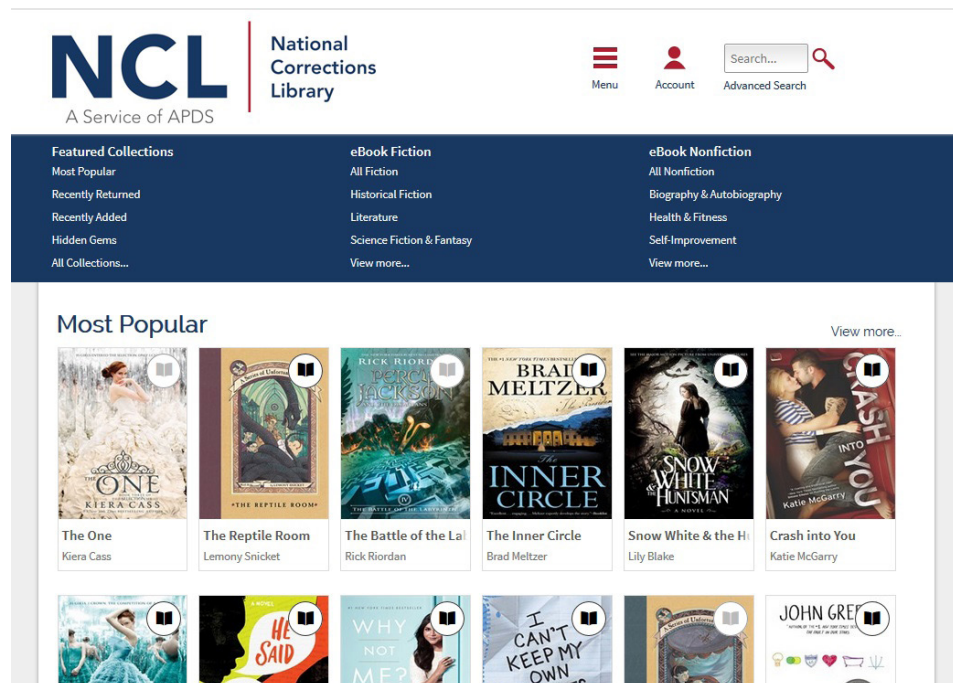

Image 2: The National Corrections Library's portal includes links to six categories of featured collections as well as eBook fiction and nonfiction. It also showcases the most popular titles selected by the diverse users.

A prime example of this effect can be seen at a juvenile girls' maximum security prison in the Indiana State Department of Corrections, an APDS client. Grewe says these girls are among the most active NCL users and that grievances in the facility have dropped substantially since APDS' tablet solution and the NCL were introduced there. "The introduction of resources like the NCL catalyzed a major positive shift in the institution's atmosphere," he adds.

To ensure engagement and ongoing use by each of its unique audiences, APDS continuously adds content to the NCL collection based on data showing which titles and categories are most popular, and sunsets those that aren't getting much traction. Staff is also exploring adding different types of media, such as streaming video.

ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL'S CHALLENGE
Located in the heart of Denver, St. Joseph Hospital is the largest private teaching

hospital in Colorado, offering accredited training in family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, and surgery to more than 100 residents each year **(see Image 3)**.

The Saint Joseph Hospital Libraries is comprised of both a clinical and a consumer library. For well over a decade, the Clinical Research Library has offered digital versions of medical textbooks, pharmacology books and nursing titles, a practice that has become standard for medical libraries.

In 2013, The Gervasini Health Library—focused on consumer health, wellness and personal growth titles—had yet to make the digital shift. Recognizing an increased interest in eBooks, especially for use on mobile devices, Consumer Health Librarian Amy Six-Means, MLIS, began exploring options for a digital library solution.

"It's just become smart for libraries to think of what types of content do we own that we can also make available digitally," she says.

Image 3: The logo used by the Saint Joseph Hospital System, which includes both a Clinical Research Library and the Gervasini Health Library.
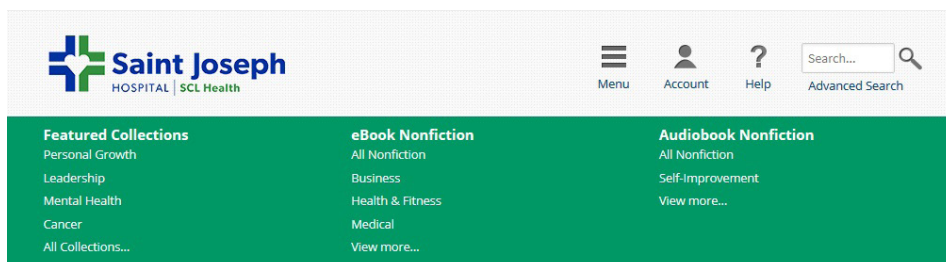
Image 4: The Saint Joseph Hospital portal includes links to its featured collections along with eBook non-fiction and audio nonfiction titles. Titles recently added to the collection include books of special interest to Gervasini Health Library patrons.

SAINT JOSEPH HOSPITAL'S SOLUTION

Saint Joseph Hospital selected OverDrive as its partner to build the digital complement to its Gervasini Health Library. Six-Means discussed some of the contributing factors in this decision:

Consumer health catalog. Titles, available for purchase individually, closely mirror the physical collection, allowing patrons to access their desired subject matter regardless of their preferred reading or listening format. The hospital's consumer health digital library now features collections spanning personal growth, leadership, mental health, cancer, food and nutrition, grief and loss, heart disease, parenting, and spirituality.

Patron familiarity with the platform. More than 90 percent of public libraries in the United States, including the Denver Public Library, offer a digital library, so many of Six-Means' patrons were already familiar with the platform.

THEIR RESULTS

Saint Joseph Hospital's consumer health digital library went live in June 2014 (see Image 4). "It was pretty seamless," Six-Means said of the implementation process. Six-Means has seen a diverse group of employees checking out eBooks on a variety of devices, the most common being smartphones and tablets. She does one-on-one training sessions with patrons not yet familiar with the platform, and the library has hosted a number of group sessions, the next of which will be recorded and posted online for convenient reference. "It fits the lifestyle of so many people these days," she says of digital reading. The most popular titles to date include:

- *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle
- *Crucial Conversations...in 30 Minutes* a part of the 30 Minute Expert Series
- *Bald is Better with Earrings* by Andrea Hutton
- *Help Me to Heal* by Bernie Siegel
- *Daring Greatly* by Brené Brown

As an example of the digital library's broad appeal, Six-Means remembers fondly a physician in his 70s who contacted her for more information about the service. Over the phone, she was able to walk him through getting started using both the hospital's and his public library's digital collections.

Adding new titles has been fast and easy, Six-Means says. When patrons have requested specific titles, she's been able to make them available almost immediately. "They love how quickly they can get access to the books," she adds.

PEOPLE ARE READING

Readers borrowed more than 169 million digital books from OverDrive libraries last year, an increase of 24 percent over 2014. Consider these additional 2015 statistics:

- eBook circulation: 125 million (19 percent growth over 2014)
- Digital audiobook circulation: 43 million (36 percent growth over 2014)
- Streaming video circulation grew 83 percent over 2014
- Introduced in late 2014, the circulation of digital magazines and newspapers also grew significantly in 2015
- 33 library systems circulated 1 million or more digital books
- 750 million readers visited library and school websites (14% percent growth over 2014)

Without a doubt, 2015 was a breakthrough year for libraries of all types—public, academic, and specialty—offering their readers anytime, anywhere access to their digital catalogs. ∎

Copyright 2016 by OverDrive

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Brian Byrne is a communications specialist at OverDrive. He can be reached at bbyrne@overdrive.com. Claudia Weissman, director of library and international sales for OverDrive, can be reached by phone at 216-573-6886 or by email at cweissman@overdrive.com.

Strategic Library™

Strategic Library focuses on innovation, best practices, and emerging trends in the complex and rapidly evolving library landscape.

Published monthly from January to October, Strategic Library assists administrators and managers in all types of libraries as they deal with day-to-day and strategic challenges. In-depth articles, written by highly regarded professionals in the field, focus on leadership, management, evaluation, assessment, marketing, funding, and more to promote organizational success.

Strategic Library is delivered direct to your desktop, as adigital download.

Special Charter Subscriber Offer!

Yes! Please enter my subscription to Strategic Library at the special charter subscriber rate of $99 for one year (10 issues), a $60 savings, or $299 for a site license (save $200).

Pay Online
Subscription Options
Single Subscriber $99.00 USD

Pay by Mail
Please complete and mail this form to:
LibraryWorks, Inc.
7823 Stratford Rd, Bethesda, MD 20814

(Make check payable to LibraryWorks, Inc.)

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

TITLE: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Bill Me

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

TITLE: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

PO # (IF APPLICABLE): _____

Thank you! Your subscription will begin upon receipt of your payment.

Strategic Library™

Mary Alice Davidson
PUBLISHER
madavidson@charter.net
240.354.1281

Jennifer Newman
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
jenny@libraryworks.com
240.354.1281

LibraryWorks®