



THE
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and
Hamilton County

Catalog

Kidspace

Teenspace

MakerSpace

Fifty · Five +

Digital Library

My Librarian

The Library
Foundation

The Friends

Anderson
Township Library
Association

Volunteers



**2013 NATIONAL
MEDAL FOR MUSEUM
& LIBRARY SERVICE**



LIBRARY JOURNAL
**FIVE-STAR
LIBRARY**

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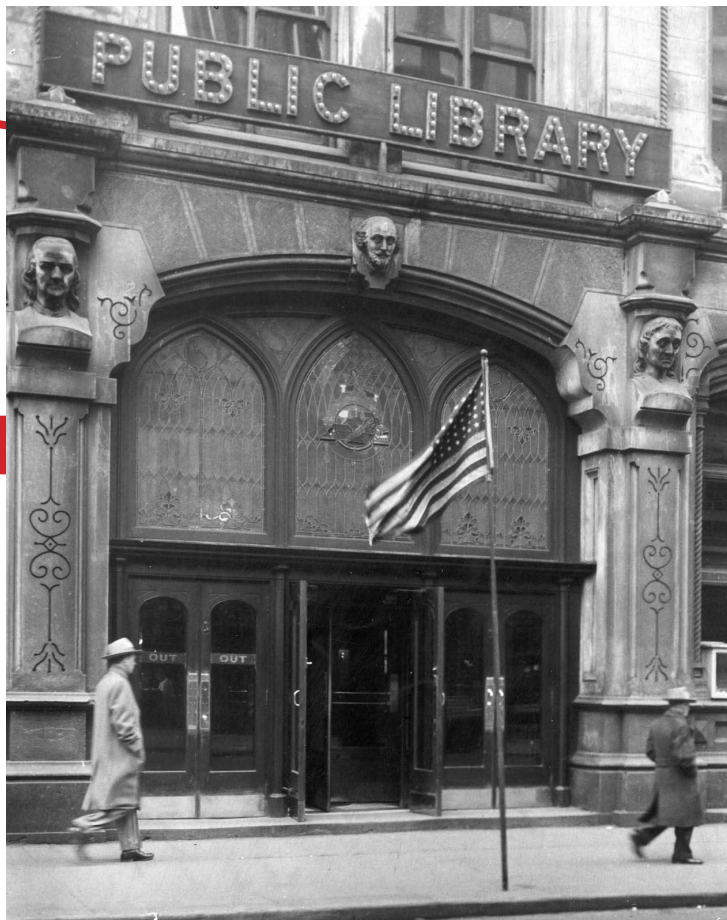
PLCH Web Redesign: Final Report
Prepared by Anne Sawyer
9 December 2018



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Project Overview

As part of its 5-year strategic plan, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (PLCH) has identified a need to reimagine a more dynamic, mobile-friendly web presence that will better meet the rapidly evolving needs of its customers. As users move towards more web-based forms of interaction and access to services, it is critical that the quality of their online library experience match that of a physical library visit. This can be achieved in large part by creating inviting, usable content that is structured enough to support key user tasks, and organizing it to meet users at their point of need, just like staff do when a customer is standing in front of them.

The design team first assessed the current state of the PLCH website, identifying the most important problems to address in the redesign project:

- **Findability** of start points for common tasks, such as Account Access, the Catalog, Meeting Rooms, Event Calendars, etc.
- **Searching** that is split into site and catalog zones, rather than a global search box as users expect of modern websites.
- **Main menu categories** that lack a resilient organizing logic, resulting in haphazard groupings and “New” label attachments that don’t stand the test of time.
- **Content** that lacks the necessary underlying structure to facilitate efficient governance, device-agnostic rendering, ease of access, and reuse.

Over the course of 7 weeks, the design team performed and documented several activities:

1. **User Research.** We conducted stakeholder interviews, observed users at the library, and reviewed relevant literature to gain a more complete understanding of user needs and business context.
2. **Personas.** We composed archetypal library users from the distilled needs, motivations, and pain points of a larger subset of customers.
3. **Content Analysis.** We performed a focused audit of critical areas of the website to assess whether and how much content needs to be removed, repurposed, or created anew.
4. **Classification Scheme.** We reorganized content to better support user tasks.
5. **Sitemap.** We created a blueprint for major content groupings and labeling systems.
6. **User Testing.** We tested the sitemap on 4 users to assess the soundness of content categories and their labels.
7. **Iteration.** We revised the sitemap based on the results of user testing.
8. **Wireframing.** We sketched pencil-and-paper mock-ups to form the “skeleton” of the final website.
9. **More User Testing.** We tested the wireframed pages on 4 more users to assess content placement and key workflows.
10. **Final iteration.** Wireframes and sitemap were revised once more based on user testing.



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User Research

As part of the research phase of this project, the design team conducted 3 interviews with library leaders, observed user behaviors at various branch locations, and reviewed PLCH business literature. Stakeholders were asked a series of questions related to their perceptions and knowledge about library users as well as their opinions about how well the current website serves user needs.

General Stakeholder interview: the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director

From the Director's perspective, circulation activities and catalog searches are among some of the most important tasks that the Library's website should help people accomplish. She observed that the website's biggest shortcomings concern findability: "Discoverability of library materials is not as intuitive or customized as it should be."

Marketing Stakeholder interview: the Web Services Manager

The Web Services Manager noted that a successful library website would be "customer-focused" and be "stable" and reliable, with good SEO." She observed that because the current site was built in-house several years ago, it suffers from a lack of up-to-date technology.

SME Stakeholder interview: the Green Township Branch Library Manager

Green Township's manager reported that some of the biggest challenges faced by branch staff in helping customers use the Library's website are:

- Assisting with meeting room and ebook issues over the phone
- Educating customers on the best way to use the Catalog, i.e., how to use filters and view results
- Teaching customers how to use their account information
- Raising awareness about all the information available through the website
- Unfriendly terminology

2017 Annual Cardholder Satisfaction Report Top 10 Uses of the Library Website

1. Place holds **91%**
2. Renew items **84.5%**
3. Use the Catalog **77.3%**
4. Look up hours **65.8%**
5. Download materials **56.5%**
6. Read about new and featured items **45.6%**
7. Learn about services **40.2%**
8. Find a library location **39.3%**
9. Use a database **36.5%**
10. Find out about upcoming events **33.9%**



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Persona 1: Gwendolyn



*About the age of 7 or 8,
I remembered walking to the Price
Hill Branch Library to get my first
Library card. After 61 years I have
never let it expire.*

68 years old
Retired teacher
Married with 2 kids and 5 grandkids
Uncomfortable with technology, but wants to learn
Owns a desktop computer and iPad

Goals

1. Wants to read the latest books by her favorite bestselling authors.
2. Wants to learn more about how to download ebooks onto her new iPad.
3. Wants to start a book club with some her retiree friends.

Behaviors

- Checks the catalog for books she heard about on TV or read about in the paper.
- Checks her account for current due dates and to see when her holds will arrive.
- Browses new arrivals and book club resources and reading recommendations.
- Checks library hours.
- Asks for help from staff, but usually calls rather than using Chat service or My Librarian.

Pain Points

- When her holds don't arrive when she expects. "It's always feast or famine!"
- When she can't figure out how to download a book. "Where the heck are the directions?"
- When it looks like something is available in the catalog, but she can't access it. "How do I know when a book is available at my branch?"

Potential Interests

- My Librarian, Curbside Pickup, and Book Hook Up
- Events: genealogy, children's events for the grandkids
- Volunteering at the Library
- Friends of the Library membership



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Persona 2: Sylvia



Our weekly trip to the library is such a treat. My kids love story time, and I love getting to meet other moms and bringing home new books for me and my kids.

37 years old

Homemaker, works part-time as a medical coder

Married with 3 kids, ages 2, 5, and 9

Comfortable with technology

Owns a desktop computer, tablet, and smart phone

Goals

1. Wants to foster a love of reading in her kids.
2. Wants to help her oldest find books and resources for his school assignments.
3. Wants a cheap alternative to renting a party facility for her kids' birthday parties.

Behaviors

- Checks the preschool Storytime schedule, and signs up for programs.
- Browses the catalog for kids' materials and reading recommendations.
- Reserves the meeting room for social events.
- Looks up location information for nearby branches.
- Asks for help with reservation software and for help finding materials.

Pain Points

- When she can't tell if she has to register for a program and if it's full or not.
- When she can't find what her kid needs for school using the Catalog.
- When she thinks she's signed up for an event or space, but she can't tell for sure if it went through.

Potential Interests

- Homework Help
- Discovery Pass
- Reading recommendations
- Used book sales



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Persona 3: Dylan



The library is like my home away from home. Free WiFi, study rooms, 3D printing... there's so much more here now than just books.

22 years old
Culinary Arts student at Cincinnati State, and aspiring entrepreneur
Experienced with technology
Owns a laptop and smart phone

Goals

1. Wants a quiet place with reliable WiFi to study away from home.
2. Wants a cheaper alternative to Kinko's for his creative and entrepreneurial projects.
3. Wants to find reliable and trustworthy sources of information for his school assignments.

Behaviors

- Reserves study rooms to get his work done more efficiently.
- Reserves MakerSpace devices to make business cards, menus, and other marketing materials for his new business.
- Searches the Catalog, Research Databases, Sites by Subject, and Newsdex.
- Downloads articles and requests ILLs on items not available at PLCH.
- Looks up library hours.
- Asks for help using Maker technology.

Pain Points

- When he has to interrupt his work to troubleshoot a technology issue.
- When he can't find available dates and times to book a space or Maker station.
- When he can't find the information he needs in the place he expects to find it.

Potential Interests

- .index for young professionals
- My Librarian
- Careers databases like JobNow



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Tasks by Priority

Task	Subtask	Persona	Gwendolyn	Sylvia	Dylan
		Retired Teacher (Primary)	Homemaker (Secondary)	Student (Secondary)	
Finding Libraries & Materials	Searching the Catalog	✓	✓	✓	
	Looking up locations/hours	✓	✓	✓	
	Requesting materials	✓	✓	✓	
	Account access	✓	✓	✓	
	Request help from staff	✓	✓	✓	
	Reading recommendations	✓	✓		
Accessing Downloadables	Downloading materials	✓		✓	
	Learning about downloadables	✓		✓	
	Browsing downloadable collection	✓		✓	
Reserving Spaces & Equipment	Reserving study rooms		✓	✓	
	Reserving meeting rooms		✓	✓	
	Reserving equipment			✓	
Attending Events & Storytimes	Signing up for events		✓		
	Browsing event calendar		✓		
Researching Topics of Interest	Using Research Databases, Sites by Subject, Newsdex, etc.			✓	



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Organization Schemes

Header: Task-based scheme

The area above the horizontal navigation ribbon on the Home page (the header) is organized primarily by task. This is where users can access their library card accounts, sign up for a card, contact the Library, view Hours & Locations, and Search for content. A task-based scheme works well here because of the frequency in which these areas are accessed to perform critical cardholder tasks. Adding a task for signing up for a library card also supports the library's business objectives by encouraging the acquisition of new customers. Finally, placement of these tasks near the top of the page is consistent with most membership-based homepage typologies, and thus, is also more closely aligned with customer expectations. This assertion was confirmed during user testing, when users commented about expecting to see the global search tool above the navigation menu rather than below it.

Horizontal Navigation: Topic-based scheme

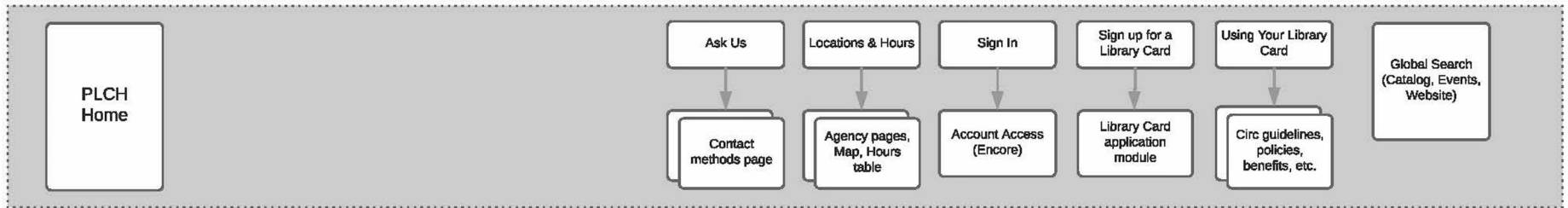
Organization by topic reflects the physical organization of library collections, and further supports user tasks by providing ready access to the materials, resources, and services users come to the website to find. For the most part, the existing order of topics was retained, both for continuity and because top customer uses of the website were already reflected in the organization of many topics, such as Books, Music & Movies, Research & Homework, and Services. Creating topic-based content hubs such as Events & Programs and Spaces & Technology helps users more easily find container-agnostic information. For example, a customer looking for help with getting a job doesn't just want resume books, she also might be interested in the JobNow database, Ohio Mean Jobs programs, or setting up an appointment with library staff for one-on-one assistance. A topic-based organization scheme will help people like her locate the resources they need all in one place. The design decisions for category groupings and labels were further reinforced by the results of user testing for both wireframes and the sitemap: users were consistently successful in finding critical information such as Events, Spaces, and downloadable materials.

Footer & Contextual Navigation

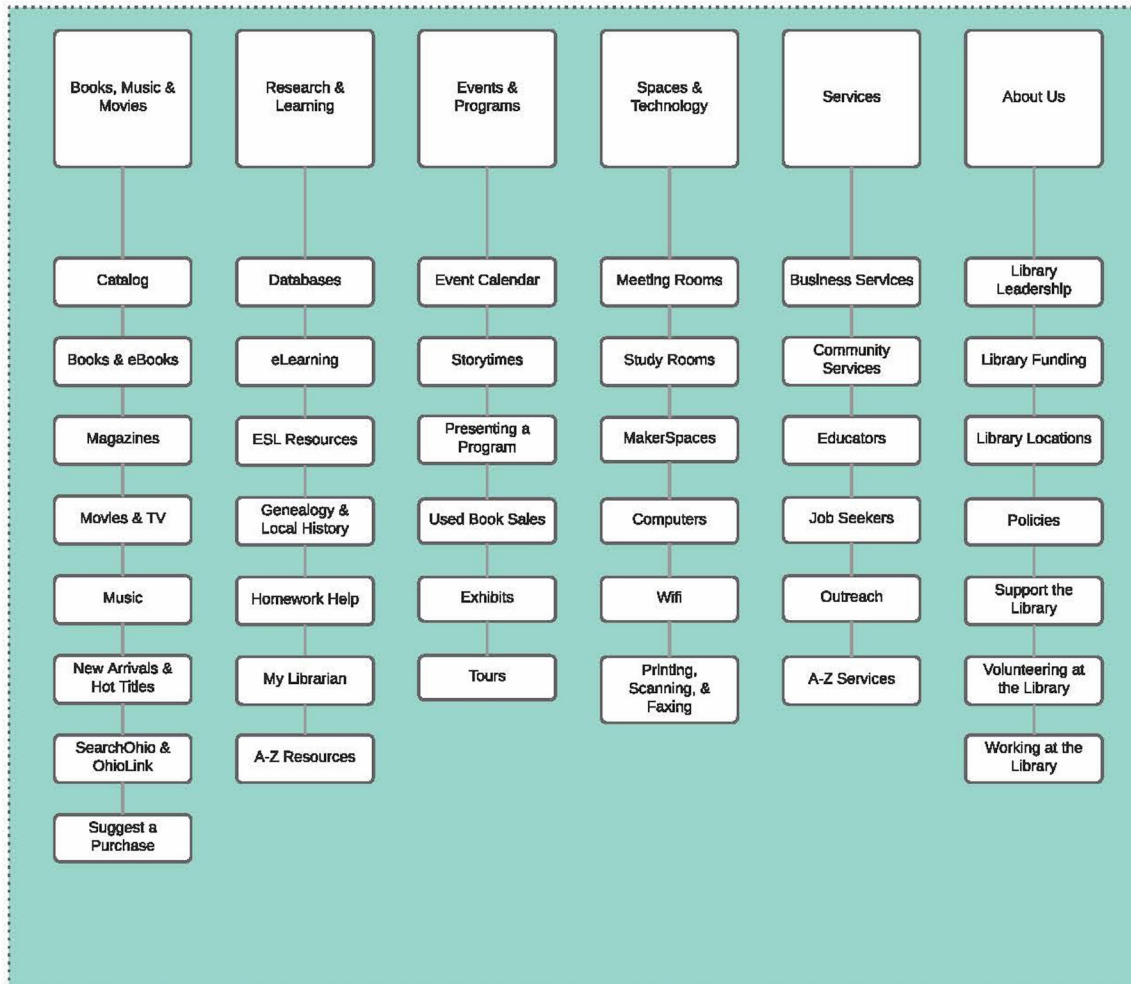
Redundant access points for contacting the Library, viewing Hours & Locations, and learning About Us are included in a "fat footer" as part of the persistent navigation structure. This provides an added convenience for users as they move deeper into the site's content and scroll further down its pages. If the user wants to ask a question or call the Library, they can do so immediately, without having to lose their place or move to another page. Special access points are also included on general pages in the form of Popular Links tables, which are localized by content area. From the home page, users can light upon common tasks and resources such as Lynda.com, Passports, Meeting Rooms, MakerSpaces, and others. Additional access points for critical user needs, such as downloadables, reading recommendations, and event calendars are provided in the form of contextual navigation on the home page. Users consistently recognized and identified these contextual navigation elements as alternative means to complete tasks during user testing.

Sitemap

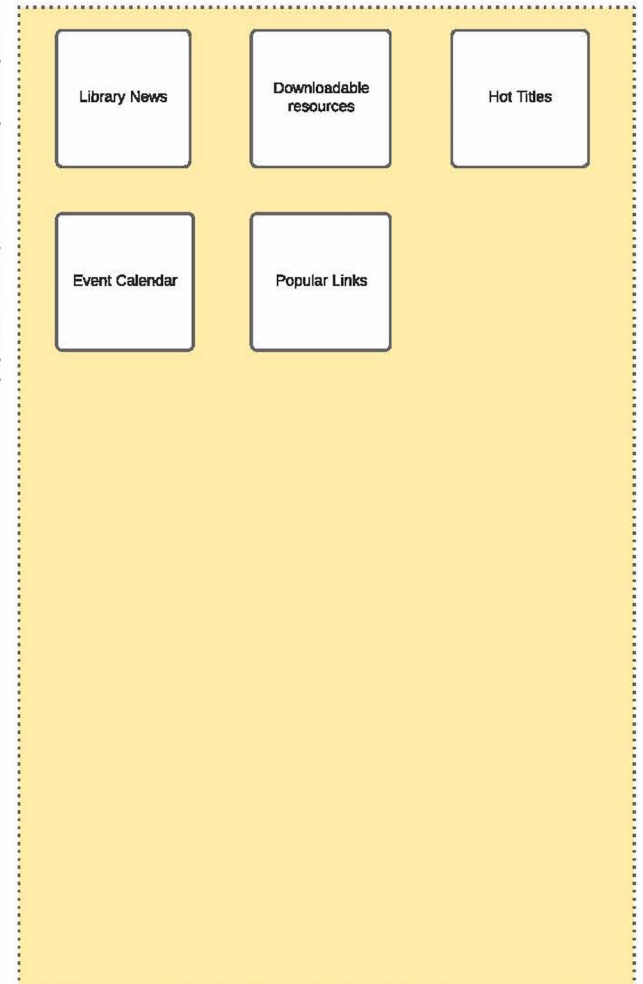
HEADER



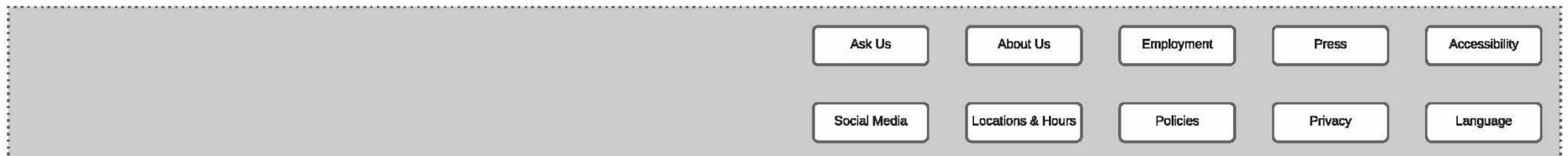
GLOBAL NAVIGATION



CONTEXTUAL NAVIGATION



FOOTER





Wireframes: Home Page

Task-based
Header area

Main navigation
ribbon

Content area

Fat footer

The wireframe illustrates the layout of the PLCH Home Page. It features a task-based header with the PLCH logo, 'ASK US', 'LOCATIONS & HOURS', 'SIGN IN', and a prominent 'SEARCH EVERYTHING' button with a 'GO TO THE CATALOG' link. Below the header is a main navigation ribbon with links for Books, Music, & Movies; Research & Learning; Events & Programs; Spaces & Technology; Services; and About Us. The content area is divided into several sections: a 'LIBRARY NEWS (slideshow)' placeholder, a 'DOWNLOAD & STREAM FOR FREE AT YOUR LIBRARY' section with links to Overdrive, Hoopla, Kanopy, and RBDigital, a 'HOT TITLES' section with a grid of book covers, an 'EVENT CALENDAR' for November 2018, a 'FILTER BY' section with dropdowns for Location, Event Type, and Age Level, and a 'POPULAR LINKS' section listing Book Clubs, Makerspaces, Passports, Meeting & Study Rooms, and Hot Authors. The footer, labeled 'Fat footer', contains contact information for the Main Library, a 'CONNECT WITH US' section with social media links, an 'ABOUT US' section with links to Locations & Hours, Employment, Policies, Press, and Privacy, and an 'ACCESSIBILITY' section with a language dropdown.

PLCH
LOGO
(Home
Link)

ASK US

LOCATIONS
&
HOURS

SIGN IN

SIGN UP
USING YOUR
LIBRARY CARD

SEARCH EVERYTHING Q

GO TO THE CATALOG

BOOKS
MUSIC, &
MOVIES

RESEARCH
&
LEARNING

EVENTS
&
PROGRAMS

SPACES
&
TECHNOLOGY

SERVICES

ABOUT US

LIBRARY
NEWS
(slideshow)

DOWNLOAD & STREAM FOR FREE AT YOUR LIBRARY

OVERDRIVE

HOOPLA

KANOPY

RBDIGITAL

HOT TITLES

TITLE
AUTHOR

PLACE A
HOLD

SEE MORE V

EVENT CALENDAR

< NOVEMBER 2018 >

FILTER BY

LOCATION
ALL V

EVENT TYPE
ALL V

AGE LEVEL
ALL V

POPULAR LINKS

BOOK CLUBS

MAKERSPACES

PASSPORTS

MEETING & STUDY ROOMS

HOT AUTHORS

MAIN LIBRARY
800 NINE ST.
CINCINNATI, OH 45202
(513) 369-6900

ASK US

CONNECT WITH US

Social
Media
Links

ABOUT US

LOCATIONS & HOURS

EMPLOYMENT

POLICIES

PRESS

PRIVACY

ACCESSIBILITY

LANGUAGE

Moving the global Search tool closer to the top of the page improved findability by more closely matching the modern standard for a membership-based home page typology.

Contextual navigation for key tasks is provided via contextual links in homepage content.

The footer repeats key navigation links such as About Us and Locations & Hours for users who have scrolled well past the "fold" of the homepage.



Wireframes: Global Search

Navigation menus and elements that remain consistent across the website help anchor users within the information space.

Search results are now arranged in one column based on results of user testing. The original tiled layout confused some users, who expected to see something more akin to Google search results.

Users can also go straight to the Catalog. This is particularly important for PLCH, where one of the most critical user tasks is searching for materials to place on hold.

The wireframe illustrates the layout of the Global Search page. At the top, a navigation bar includes a 'PLCH Logo' with a left-pointing arrow, and links for 'ASK US', 'LOCATIONS + HOURS', 'SIGN IN', and 'SIGN UP FOR A LIBRARY CARD USING YOUR LIBRARY CARD'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'BOOKS, MUSIC + MOVIES', 'RESEARCH + LEARNING', 'EVENTS + PROGRAMS', 'SPACES + TECH', 'SERVICES', and 'ABOUT US'. The main content area features a search bar with the text 'DIANA GABALDON' and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar is a 'GO TO CATALOG' link. Below the search bar, the results are organized into three columns. The first column, titled 'SEARCH RESULTS BY CATEGORY:', contains three sections: 'BOOKS, MUSIC, + MOVIES' with a list of items (each with a checkbox, a book icon, and a 'PLACE HOLD' button), 'EVENTS + PROGRAMS' with a 'BRANCH BOOK CLUB' item, and 'RESEARCH + LEARNING' with 'NOVELIST' and 'GOOD READS' items. Each section has a 'MORE V' link. The second column is empty. The third column contains two sections: 'POPULAR LINKS' with five horizontal lines and 'RECOMMENDED FOR YOU' with four items (each with a checkbox and a book icon). A 'FOOTER' section is at the bottom.



Wireframes: Catalog & Sign In

The account dashboard allows users to see basic card info at a glance. My Book Shelves adds capabilities for users to customize and more easily track their reading.

Navigation remains consistent even in vendor-provided services like the OPAC. The Catalog header next to the home link tells users they are in a different but closely-related subsite.

A faceted system enhances browsing with added filters for specific e-formats, Content Type, and Available: Anywhere.

Personalized reading recommendations can be made for users, along with related content of potential interest based on their recent search history.

The wireframe illustrates the layout of the PLCH Catalog and Sign In page. At the top, the PLCH logo and 'LOGO' are on the left, and 'ASK US' and 'SIGN IN' links are on the right. The main header features the 'CATALOG' title. Below this, a search bar allows users to search by 'AUTHOR' (selected) with the example 'DIANA GABALDON'. A 'SAVE SEARCH' button and 'VIEW OPTIONS | PRINT' link are also present. The search results are displayed as a list of items, each with a placeholder image and text like 'TITLE', 'AUTHOR', 'FORMAT', and 'AVAILABLE'. A '9 RESULTS' indicator and navigation arrows are shown. To the left of the results, a faceted navigation system includes filters for 'AVAILABLE' (Anywhere, Main Library, Anderson Branch), 'FORMAT' (Books, Audiobooks), 'CONTENT TYPE' (Fiction, Non Fiction), 'GENRE', 'TOPIC', 'PUBLISH DATE', and 'TAGS'. To the right, a sidebar contains links to 'MY LIBRARY CARD', 'CHECK OUTS', 'HOLDS', 'FINES', 'MY BOOK SHELVES', 'SAVED FOR LATER', 'READ IT', 'WANT TO READ IT', 'LISTS', and 'READING HISTORY'. A callout points to this sidebar, stating: 'Expanded view of account dashboard'. Below the sidebar, there are links for 'DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?', 'SEARCH OHIO', 'OHIO LINK', and 'SUGGEST A PURCHASE'. At the bottom, there are sections for 'RECOMMENDED FOR you' and 'RECENTLY VIEWED', each with placeholder images and a right arrow. A 'BROWSE NEARBY ON THE SHELF' link is also present. The footer is labeled 'FOOTER'.



Wireframes: Spaces & Technology

The page is split into 2 main sections for each type of service. Consistent structuring and placement of content and navigation provides the necessary information scent to guide users towards task completion more quickly.

PLCH LOGO

ASK US

LOCATIONS & HOURS

SIGN IN

SIGN UP
USING YOUR
LIBRARY CARD

SEARCH EVERYTHING

GO TO THE CATALOG

BOOKS, MUSIC & MOVIES

RESEARCH & LEARNING

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

SPACES & TECHNOLOGY

SERVICES

ABOUT US

SPACES AT THE LIBRARY

RESERVE A MEETING ROOM v

RESERVE A STUDY ROOM ^

DATE [] []

TIME [] - []

LOCATION []

FIND A SPACE

BROWSE SPACES

FILTER BY:

ROOM TYPE v

CAPACITY v

EQUIPMENT v

LOCATION v

AVAILABLE NOW

MAKERSPACES & COMPUTERS

RESERVE A COMPUTER v

RESERVE A MAKER STATION ^

LOCATION []

STATION []

DATE []

CHECK AVAILABILITY

MAKER STATIONS

RESERVE NOW

LEARN MORE v

CONNECT WITH US

ASK US

FOLLOW US

ABOUT US

LOCATIONS & HOURS

EMPLOYMENT

POLICIES

PRESS

PRIVACY

ACCESSIBILITY

LANGUAGE



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Wireframes: Events & Programs

PLCH LOGO

ASK US

LOCATIONS & HOURS

SIGN IN

SIGN UP FOR A LIBRARY CARD

USING A LIBRARY CARD

SEARCH EVERYTHING

GO TO THE BLOG

BOOKS, MUSIC & MOVIES

RESEARCH & LEARNING

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

SPACES & TECHNOLOGY

SERVICES

ABOUT US

EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY

THIS WEEK AT THE LIBRARY

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

SEARCH THE CALENDAR

POPULAR LINKS

Promoted Content

(Footer)

Events for the current week are displayed here. Users can choose how they want to display event listings (as tiles or a list).

Personalized content could enhance user engagement with the library by increasing visibility of upcoming events, and making it easy to register for them.

Event Calendar may be enlarged as well as searched or browsed by Location, Event Type, or Age Level.

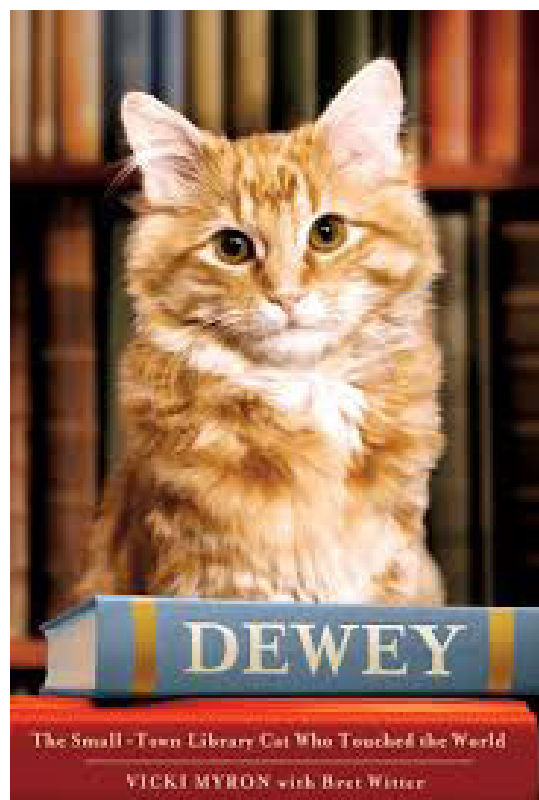


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Next Steps

Due to constraints of time, our team focused on the most critical tasks, content, and organization of the PLCH website for this project. In the future, we highly recommend that the Library initiate additional projects to complete what we started. The following suggestions provide a starting point for future strategic initiatives:

1. Perform a complete content inventory to more thoroughly weed outdated, redundant, and irrelevant content.
2. Wireframe additional pages to more thoroughly tease out the most usable workflows for users.
3. Perform additional user testing to assess workflows and page content.
4. Become fully compliant with WCAG accessibility standards. More usable content for users with disabilities will necessarily be more usable for the general public.
5. Iterate and test again! The necessity of user testing cannot be understated.
6. Assign a rescue cat for each library location and post their pictures on the website.*



*The last recommendation has nothing to do with improving the website. We just think it would be awesome to see cats in the library again.