



Proposal to Allen Public Library:

Information Architecture Re-design Project Plan

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Background & Introduction

This document is a proposal for design services by Mariann S. Huff in response to a inquiry by Allen Public Library. The inquiry states that the following pain points need to be addressed:

1. Site is outdated in visual appearance
2. Information is difficult for end user's to locate
3. In-house employees lack knowledge of information organization, so they need something easy to upkeep in the future

Evaluating the way the site's information is currently organized will help identify areas of success and areas with the most issues. The evaluation will cover the following areas of information architecture:

- Organization Scheme & Structure
 - *How is content grouped together and what is the relationship from one group to another?*
- Labeling System
 - *How is information represented in terms of language and terminology?*
- Search System
 - *What is content searched by?*

Current Site State

Organization Scheme & Structure: Figure 1

- Hybrid scheme, with the main use of alphabetical, audience-based, topical, functional schemes
 - Alphabetical: content ordered from A-Z
 - Audience-based: groups content by definable type of end user (e.g. Teen Book Suggestions)
 - Topical: groups content by theme or subject matter (e.g. Events)
 - Functional: groups content by task (e.g. Find It)
- Top-down polyhierarchal structure
 - Content is structured in a way where pages are divided into headings, sub-headings, and paragraphs
 - *Polyhierarchal*: Some content can be found in multiple areas of the site

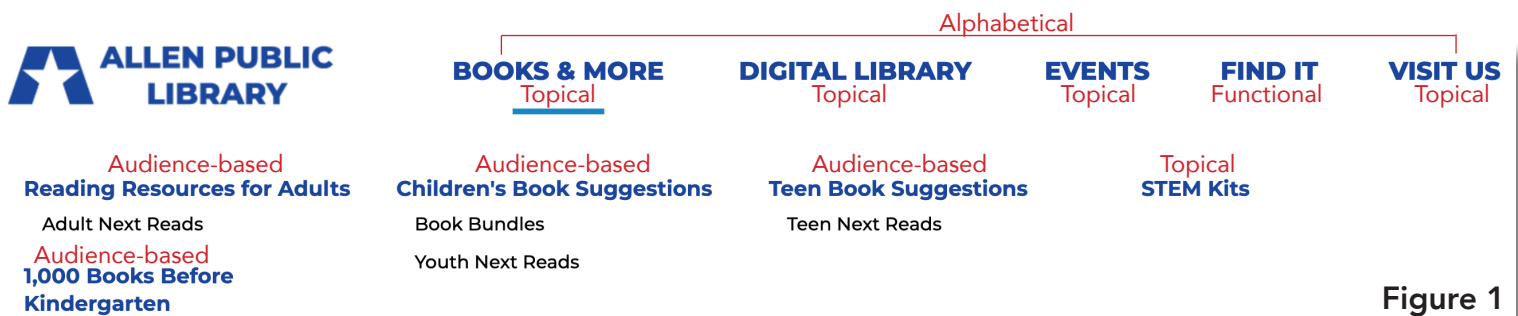


Figure 1

Labeling System: Figure 2

- Labels are found throughout the site as navigation and headings
 - Navigation labels: global and specific concepts used
 - Global example: Visit Us
 - Specific example: Digital Library
 - Heading labels: hierarchy is distinguished by use of font size, color, and style

BOOKS & MORE **H1**

Top-down hierarchy

Reading Resources for Adults **H2**

Get personalized book suggestions, browse past book club selections, recommend books to others and take a quiz to find out what you should read next!

Figure 2

Search System: Figure 3

- Initial keyword search for Allen Public Library database
 - Can search by 14 other options (e.g. Title, Author, ISBN)
 - Can limit search by 16 available categories (e.g. Book, DVD, Map)
 - Other databases available (Interlibrary Loan - Texas World Group)
- Browse and Advanced Search available

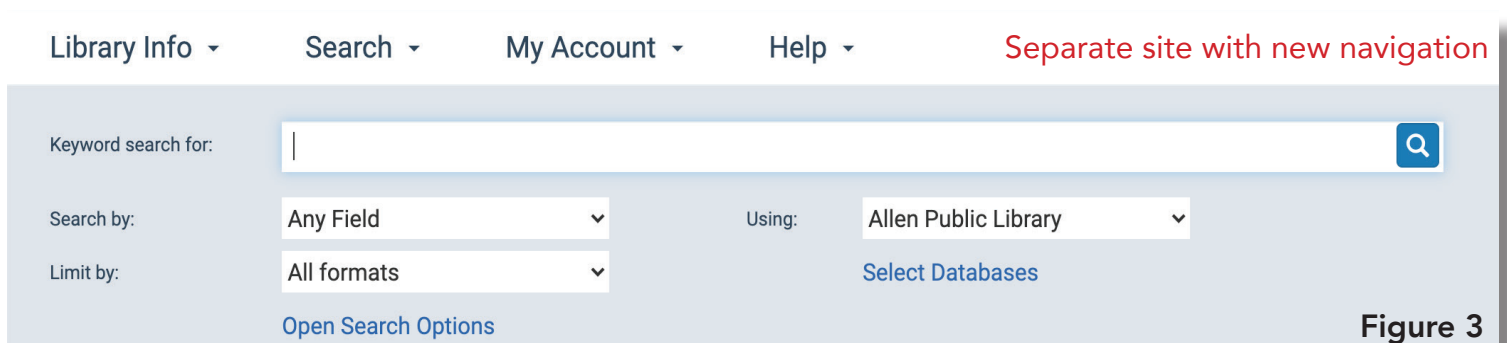


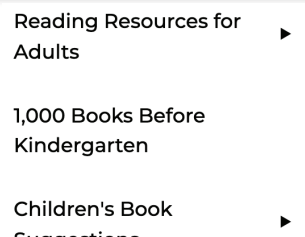
Figure 3

Additional Points

1. A breadcrumb component is used on some pages to help the user understand where they are within the site. This can be a helpful component, but it is not used consistently.

[Home](#) › [Departments](#) › [Allen Public Library](#) › [Books & More](#) › [Reading Resources for Adults](#)

2. Secondary navigation is located on the left-hand side of various pages. This, just like breadcrumbs, can be helpful, but it not used on every page. This can cause user confusion and frustration.



3. Some options in the navigation take the user to the larger City of Allen website without warning them that they are leaving the library micro-site. Users can lose track of where they are, which can increase their cognitive load trying to figure out why they are on a different site.

Project Plan

Week 1: Draft Project Proposal

This current document serves the purpose of summarizing stakeholder concerns, identifying the site's current IA state, determining additional areas of the site that need improvement, and laying out a project plan for the design team to follow. This establishes a clear understanding of the project timeline and structure.

Week 2-3: Learning & Understanding Users and Context

This section of the project will help highlight what library users are looking for and why. Interview 2 users that are knowledgeable of library users. Learn about the users and context of what they do and why they do it. Conduct a literature search to find additional resources to help with the analysis of library users. Create a persona table to illustrate findings.

Week 4: Supporting Tasks with Content, Labeling, and Taxonomy

This phase will allow the design team to begin designing the new IA for the site. Perform a content analysis to identify what content is good to keep and what needs to be re-evaluated. Choose a primary organizational scheme that best suits library users. Create a site map to indicate where the key tasks are accessed.

Week 5: Analyze Data

This portion serves the purpose of assessing the new IA design to determine if it's the best fit. Use Treejack, an online tool, to assess labeling and taxonomy. Run sessions with 4 users. Analyze the data and create a short report summarizing the session results and updated design.

Week 6-7: Putting it All Together

This final stage of the project will finalize the ongoing IA research and design. Create wireframe sketches of the home page and select workflows. Run sessions with 4 users to test the navigation. Evaluate the results and make revisions to the navigation wireframes as needed. Build the final deliverable for the project and present to stakeholders.

Timeline

Project Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Draft Project Proposal	X						
User Interviews		X					
Conduct Literature Search		X					
Draft Persona Table		X	X				
Content Analysis				X			
Create Site Map				X			
Write Tasks & Assess Taxonomy					X		
Run Sessions & Report Findings					X		
Create Wireframe Sketches						X	
Re-run Sessions						X	
Build Final Deliverable						X	X