



How and Why to Bring End Users Into the Service and Web Design Process

Theory into practice

Involving users :

One library's experiences

- **What do you want out of this experience?**
- **Do you have a vision for your services/web site?**
- **Does your vision translate into strategic directions?**
- **SMART objectives – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time sensitive**
- **Are you receptive to changing things based on user feedback? How and why will you do this?**

Examples of what we have done

One off

- Public consultation – branch renovations
- Public consultation – budget – survey and in person
- Project related – development of web services vision, usability of current website, information architecture for a new website
- Usability testing of new services and products

Periodic

- Public consultation – strategic plan – surveys and in person
- Telephone survey (done on a regular basis every X years)

Ongoing

- Youth Advisory Groups
- Planned blog and user panels

Vision becomes strategy

From the Toronto Public Library Web Service s Vision

“We keep abreast, anticipate and adapt to evolving technologies and use and leverage them to continuously improve how we share and deliver information to our patrons. Our users’ experience is enhanced by technology”.

Turning this into a strategy

“Facilitate interaction amongst audiences through the use of an interactive environment and tools such as blogs, more online author chats, by allowing user created rankings and reviews, and expanding Book Buzz online book club interactive areas”

Who is your site for?

- Organizational buy in to concept of user centred design
- Identifying primary personas and their usage scenarios – who are your users and what do they come to your site to do/find?
- How can you find this out?

Personas

TPL Website Persona – Omar; Recreational Material User



Computer skills

Familiar with accounting software, spreadsheets, email. Uses the web sporadically

Education

M.A., Accounting and Finance

Work place

Works at a downtown medium-sized accounting firm. High speed access; computer equipment adequate. Similar computer setup at home shared by the family.

Background

- Omar lives in North York, Ontario, is 55 years of age, married and has two children, Steve (19) and Becca (17).
- He has worked as an accountant for 32 years. Upper-middle class earner.
- Omar is a seasoned reader who tends to read a single author through to completion, as well as books in a series. He is also interested in borrowing CDs and DVDs
- Omar was a TPL user when his children were younger. Now that his nest is emptying, he is starting to read recreationally again and is just getting back into using the library again
- English is his first and only language.

Motivation and Goals

- Omar wants to find books, CDs and DVDs using the TPL website. He wants to find material and information quickly and easily – otherwise it is not worth using the website.
- He also wants to be able to find relationships between books (e.g. books in a series, books by a favourite author)
- He uses the website to find out if his branch has a particular book. If the book is not at his branch, he wants the website to indicate whether it is easier to order the book in to his local branch or to go pick it up at another branch, depending on proximity of branch location.
- He also uses the website to find hours and locations of branches, especially those that are unfamiliar to him.

Experience with the Site

- Use so far has been sporadic as Omar is just starting to use the library regularly. Omar uses the site to:
- Search the catalogue for books and DVDs
 - Find out about branch locations and hours
 - If he finds a book is only available at a branch with which he is unfamiliar, he finds it is too much work to find out its location and so he has stopped trying. Instead he puts a hold on the book and transfers to his home branch, Fairview. He would like to be able to get materials more quickly by borrowing from other nearby branches.

TPL Website Persona – Aastha



Computer skills

Intermediate level of computer skills in Internet searching and Office applications.

Education

In Grade 12, High School student

Work place

Internet access at school, but limited access

Busy school schedule

Home

High speed Internet access

Does most of work at home in late evenings

Background

- Aastha lives in Toronto, Ontario, is 17 years of age, and lives with her mother and 2 brothers
- Aastha is a grade 12 student at Thistletown Collegiate.
- Aastha has intermediate level computer skills and has used libraries irregularly throughout her schooling, when she needed information for projects and to get novels to read
- Aastha's mother speaks Hindi and while Aastha understands it, she does not read or speak it
- Aastha lives 10 blocks away from the Rexdale branch of Toronto Public Library


Motivation and Goals

- Aastha's prime motivation is getting materials for an Independent Study Project for her politics class. Her research is focused on the role of women in the history of Canadian politics
- Aastha has some experience in doing research for school but the expectations in her grade 12 courses are higher than those in previous years
- Aastha's teacher has told her to use a variety of resources including books, articles in magazines and journals and the Internet. Aastha is most comfortable with finding things on the Internet.
- Aastha also wants to find a book to read while she is taking the bus to and from her part-time job in a dollar store at a mall
- There is a library in her school but the material is very old and the computers are always being used by students. Aastha believes she will have more luck getting the material she needs from the public library.

Experience with the Site

- Aastha has had a Toronto Public Library card since she was in elementary school. She has used the online catalogue.
- On a couple of occasions when Aastha borrowed books, she renewed her items through the website
- High School Outreach Librarians from TPL visited Aastha's class last year and showed students some research sources, but Aastha does not really remember how they worked. She does remember that you could get magazine articles using one of them.

Usage scenarios

Persona		Usage Scenario: Parent is looking for material for her son's grade 6 project on Canadian Trading Partners	
Sonya Parent 			
Description	Tasks	Context of Use	
<p>Sonya wants to help her 12-year-old son, Martin, find some information on Canada's trading partners for his grade 6 project.</p> <p>She wants Martin to learn to use the library by himself but knows he is not interested in this.</p> <p>Sonya has already spent several hours searching the Internet but has not found much information that she or Martin can understand.</p> <p>She plans to take Martin to their local branch, which they have used regularly over the years, but thinks it will save time if she can search to see if the branch has anything before they go.</p> <p>Sonya knows that Martin needs book and Internet resources for this project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She goes to the TPL homepage, using Google to locate it, and clicks on the link for the library catalogue, a resource she has used to find things such as bestsellers she wants to read before • Sonya types "Canada's trading partners" into the search box • One result comes up and there is a copy at the Jones branch • Sonya decides to phone the branch to see if they can put the book aside for her • She does not know the library's phone number • She clicks on the Home tab that she sees • It does not take her to the library homepage, so she goes to Google to get to the homepage again (she does not notice the link for the website nor does she try clicking on the logo) • She clicks on the link for About the Library. She does not see how to get to information with phone numbers so gives up and uses the phone book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to do some research from home to save time, but usually goes to the branch and asks staff for assistance • Has some experience with the library catalogue but little doing more complex research searches • She wants to find something that she can get fairly quickly so Martin can get his project done • Sonya wants her children to understand the power of computers to do research • She is frustrated from her Internet search and is concerned about getting resources that she and Martin will be able to use 	

User research

- Who?
 - Using your personas
- When?
 - Often, throughout projects but also outside of special projects
- How?
 - Surveys (on or off-line), focus groups, user panels, comments/complaints, user testing/usability testing, metrics, dialogue – on or off line

Some surprising and not so surprising findings

Not surprising

- Many people think that the catalogue is the library website, they bookmark it and never see the actual website
- People are not aware of many services

Surprising

- The way people see and label some services
- People are eager to interact with library staff online

Staff skills

- Usability – understanding of this and of how to test for it
- Information architecture – building on our understanding of classifying and structuring information
- Communication
 - Facilitating – web forums, focus groups, user panels
 - Writing - web writing, blogging, etc.

Potential bumps in the road

- Conflicting priorities
- Accepting user feedback
- Creating a new culture
 - Will involve learning new skills
 - Will involve taking on new tasks
- Being willing to experiment – always in beta

Is it worth it?

YES

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