This is an abridged version of the results of user experience testing conducted by Multnomah County Library in summer, 2014, through a user experience design agency.

Presented by Sarah Mead and Alison Kastner, PLA 2016
Executive Summary

Based on 5 days of usability testing (behavioral observation and interviewing) of 25 users.

1. **Overall My Librarian was liked and the high touch service offered by contact options appreciated.** Many users commented how cool it was to talk to a librarian or to browse personal profiles (faces and interests resonated the most). The key issue was finding the My Librarian page and problems initiating a Chat (interface issue).

2. **Simplifying contact options will aid access and discovery of MyLibrarian.** Many users went straight to Contact. Even when finding options in a search result, users skimmed past them or just saw Chat or Email. We recommend centralizing ML features under one ‘Ask a Librarian’ button. This would open a choice of Personalized Recommendation vs General fast help.

3. **Shortening MyLibrarian contact forms will increase access.** Many users ignored the multiple form fields and just entered a question with contact info. Also reducing the amount of words on all contact option pages (and increasing warmth of the page- visual of the librarian from previous page) will improve scanability and reduce perceived effort.

4. **Improving and optimizing MyLibrarian for disabled users will also benefit universal access by all users.** Blind and low vision users struggled with navigating to MyLibrarian and interacting with Chat primarily. They had the same issues as sighted users but the access gap was magnified.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Blind and low vision users struggled with Online Chat the most (same usability issues as sighted users had).
- Many users did not find MyLibrarian initially and fewer drilled down to librarian profiles. Many users felt mining librarian profiles was too time consuming (and wanted a way to search or match interests).
- My Librarian and contact options overall were received very positively by most users.
- Most users didn’t mind waiting to chat with a librarian but almost all opened a new tab to multi-task, often forgetting about the session in progress.
Who we interviewed

Results of My Librarian usability test conducted by Experience Dynamics. Task based walk through of live website; 25 Total users (qualitative research).

Card Holder:
16: Active card households
9: Dormant or non-card holders

Checked out items per week:
1-5 items (13)
6-10 items (12)

Active card holders:
3 primarily print
3 AV
19 both print and AV

Dormant or non-cardholders:
10 Information searchers (online research, buying from online bookstores or physical bookstores)

Frequency:
7 - weekly consumption
14 - monthly consumption
4 - once every 6 months

Disability:
6 Low vision or Blind users

Internet usage:
25 moderate/heavy internet users

Branch Location:
5 Gresham
5 Hillsdale
2 Hollywood
13 Central

Researchers:
5 Participants who use the library to research topics

Content Discovery/Behavior:
17 Participants who look for or need help looking for information

Age: 20-25 = 3
26-34 = 4
35-44 = 11
45-55 = 1
56-65 = 4
66+ = 2

Gender:
15 Female
7 Male
Data Overviews
## Tasks

1. Looking for spy novels; is there a story on the Enigma machine?

2. Want to cook vegetarian, anything for beginners for 1-2 people; anti-cancer cookbooks (prostate cancer); Chat with librarian for help.

3. Books for your kids. Boys don’t like to read but like comic books age 7-9; dyslexic daughter. Way connect with a library staff person to get reading recommendations?

4. Audio books. Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. Any librarians who like dark Scandinavian mysteries? Check who librarians are; Email a request.

5. Paper for school; SEO topic; Call a librarian for help.

6. Vegetarian cooking for lactose and gluten free. Best option to ask a librarian (Chat).

7. Next read for beach, ask librarian: love thrillers, no violence, some romance. What does librarian recommend?

## Chart

**Blind and Low vision users**

**Effort completing a task**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>AVG SUCCESS RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=6

*Note: Due to MCL IT issues, half the users were unable to complete the entire test.*
Subjective Satisfaction

Perceived Ease of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think finding My Librarian is...</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think contacting a Librarian was...</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I think getting recommended reading from a staff person...</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I think asking a librarian about Scandinavian mysteries was...</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I think calling a librarian for help with research was...</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I think chatting with a librarian was...</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I think getting a suggestion for what to read form a librarian was...</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I found My Librarian unnecessarily complex:</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I think that I would need technical support to be able to use this system:</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I felt very confident using the system:</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel My Librarian is a valuable service:</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also see user verbatim

N=25
This is so weird in a good way! Good for people that can't get to the library...reads transcript emailed—that's a bit useful...I don't mind waiting— it should be expected (s3)

Estimated time 1 in that's pretty cool! (s3)

You can totally call librarian—that's pretty cool! (s3)

Usually it says you're connected but I don't see that on the screen... (s4)

Chat—smiling face—I think that means he's still searching...so he must be doing something... (s7)

Let's try chat...how do you send this? Don't know where to put the text (s1)

I probably wouldn't use the service if it's for someone who isn't search engine savvy (s5)

My librarian—if I want to contact them that would take too long!! (s2)

I like to go to library and speak to a human—and they could tell me how to do it online in the future (s11—older user)

These white boxes are not easy to see in chat (s4)

Chat, email—I should have been using this before (s18)...

She is very nice—she recommended a link...she is very knowledgeable this is very cool I've never used this before (s8)

Downloadable audio books—can't tell if it's an MP3 (s2)

That's interesting—why would you limit someone to 3 questions per day! (s20—blind user)

Karen—she is into mysteries and an urban chicken farmer just like me! (s7)

Someone is always online—that's pretty cool (s8)

Staff picks—nope can't remember where it's at (s2)

ML hasn't been useful—profile pages (s2)

Librarian says—no cookbooks, search on your own (s1)

Chat—I don't know what chat information/handle (s13)

It would be cool something to see if he was still checking—or to see his path so I could get to it... (s7)

That would make it harder—(Skype/Google handle) it would be nice if they had a chat like they did with librarian (Contact page) (s1)

I am def likely to use this in future!...I am not one to talk to people but I would use this... (s8)

ML—I feel like I can't search all the tags on this page—I don't know how to look for that—can't tell—wants to search contents of the ML (s2)

Note sure how to get to talk librarian from search results...This is so frustrating I would want to give up! (s11—older user)
TASK 1
DATA

1. Looking for spy novels; is there a story on the Enigma machine?

Test Findings:
Findings:

1. Many users found the list of Contact Librarian options on no results or from the Advanced Search page.
2. Issues with BiblioCommons:
   - Broaden search didn’t work as expected (users wanted filters)
   - Search subject locked in results = deadend (also dropdown was confusing)
   - Advanced search pop up was annoying.

Recommendations/Changes:

1. With the high incidence of mixed success searching, the MyLibrarian or Chat options would fill the need.
2. Put MyLibrarian on top and bottom of search results. Consider moving to a standard Internet website model for chat where the Chat option is triggered by eg more than two failed searches.
3. Note: it helped to put ML in the Explore and Contact sections but many users did not find ML easily- especially disabled users. It needs to be in all top level menus and in the main menu for JAWS.
3. Books for your kids. Boys don’t like to read but like comic books age 7-9; dyslexic daughter. Way connect with a library staff person to get reading recommendations?

**Test Findings:**

**Findings:**
1. Many users got the offer to contact in no results buy many didn’t read all the options or scanned it and moved on.
2. Most users were looking for reading lists for age ranges and most were unsuccessful finding them.
3. Most users who filled in contact options from MyLibrarian—only filled in one form and name/email (the form was overwhelming to most).

**Recommendations/Changes:**
1. Put MyLibrarian and Contact options (position as Chat) on key pages, such as Recommended Reading.
2. "Chat" option needs to be in main menu for JAWS users.
4. Audio books. Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. Any librarians who like dark Scandinavian mysteries? Check who librarians are; Email a request.

**Test Findings:**

**Findings:**
1. Most users did not see My Librarian and instead looked to Contact for help. Many who saw it backed out initially to rediscover it later.
2. Users who did see My Librarian earlier in the tasks remembered the name, face or attributes of that librarian— but many had trouble finding it again.
3. Almost all users wanted to search the contents of Librarian interests, recommended reads etc. and found it time consuming to read each bio.
4. Many did not see the profile pages.
5. Many users reacted to personal interests (chicken farmer, Denmark, Scandinavia etc) as a way to connect with a librarian.

**Recommendations/ Changes:**
1. Make MyLibrarian searchable for interests, tags, recommended reads. Match librarian to user interests.
2. This page needs to be accessible from the main contact as a split path: Get Tailored Suggestions or Get General Help.
3. Optimize the ML details pages (see Usability Expert Review recommendations).
4. Accessibility- Check contact- it is difficult to enter text on forms (using Voice Over), user had to turn VO off to type.
Task 5 Data

5. Paper for school; SEO topic; Call a librarian for help.

Test Findings:

Findings:
1. Call a librarian was easy for many users to see.
2. Users who did actually call indicated satisfaction with the service.
3. Page layout requires users to read and sift through the content for the contact number.
4. Many users read the example question and were confused or disoriented temporarily.

Recommendations/Changes:
1. Clean up the layout of these pages so the main info is at the top in huge text with explanation text below.
7. NEXT READ FOR BEACH, ASK LIBRARIAN: LOVE THRILLERS, NO VIOLENCE, SOME ROMANCE. WHAT DOES LIBRARIAN RECOMMEND?

Test Findings:

Findings:
1. Most users ignored the number of fields available and expected one box with question and contact details.
2. Many users (especially older and disabled users) were confused with jargon such as “Handle” or Skype contact option.

Recommendations/ Changes:
1. Consider an Arrange a Call Back service instead of the Skype or Call a Librarian option (to allow for better 1:1 servicing).
2. Clearly set expectations about what to expect and how librarians can be of value (the implicit value of a librarian encounter is only discovered with an actual positive experience). The site should educate users how a librarian can identify resources, search strategies and precise materials for patrons.
What would you change?

Subjective feedback

Didn't't see MyLibrarian - had a bad experience with chat (s11)
The site is huge — app narrows down few things you really need (s1)
MyLibrarian - this part was hard, email question --- they are starting a conversation - what if it's one way - I need to know something... tell us about - I don't have time (s1)
Nice to search everybody on here... didn't see the Ask button... didn't know there were options on here... Scan this looks interesting, picture seems like a cool lady - like recommendation but can't sort or scan it... Clicking through to a second page is no fun - rather just scroll down... My trust in her recommendations would grow - but I wouldn't be able to find her as easily... If I could know I could zip her an email that would be awesome (s2)
Contact options — too many (immediate: chat and call) (s4) My Librarian — I don't know where she is...
Chat box - can't see dialog - why is this so big at top (s4)
Put MyLibrarian in search results (s5)
A lot of forms to fill in when want to ask a librarian... One form field with question (s8)
Way to easily get back to Contact - from chat had to use Back button. Also on Chat - ENTER keyboard for form (s9)
More clear that - to navigate to it (didn't click Contact - clicked Account Services then left nav) (s10)
Forms - Surprised they wanted to know what books I liked, what made them great --- just asking for a book list (simple question) not all that (s13)
Searching the site for a book list is not intuitive - I would more likely go email (a librarian) (s14)
If they want people to use the chat there should be a link on the front page or on the top menus - otherwise it gets lost - not super accessible (s15)
I've seen other sites provide chat while you are doing other things... (s15)
Wanted to be able to search more, narrow without reading so much (s16)
Contact and My Libraraiian are different - why not in Explore?? Or centralized... (s17)
Forms - Thought it would be faster and easier to have an answer but was a bit disappointed - filling in forms gets boring (s17)
Create a Chat icon ... better if it came to you... (s18)
To have to find the ML page a little trick (s18)
Leave phone number and they can call you back... (s19)
What would you keep the same?
Subjective feedback

- Like the site...with a site like Facebook is so user friendly- this one you have to navigate through... (top menu or big bold letters, ask a librarian) (s1)
- The photos on My Librarian- personalized feeling (s2, s8, s12, 15, s16, s18, s19)
- Lot of options to get in touch- keep chat in real time (s3)
- This is great I could as her what to read...(s11)
- Call it Expert (Get Expert Recommendations from a Librarian) (s5)
- Bullet points about what librarians can do... (s5)
- Chat- its really fast (s6, s9)
- Different options for contact- This one fill in and don’t have to wait—can send it in and get it later (s7)
- I liked the My Librarian a lot esp if looking for a more personalized list... (s10)
- Chat seemed efficient- except Librarian who said we have lots of books! (Belmont)- it was vague (s13)
- Contact tab (s14, s20)
- These links to ask a specific person- finding someone who has similar interests as you and asking specifically is better than asking Sarah the volunteer... (s15)
- ML profiles- Not really interested in what they love- more interested in what they know...if you tell me you are a specialist of this or that--- just cause you love something doesn’t mean you are knowledgeable about it! (s17) Showing people nice and smiling fine--- but what do you know, can you already give me some ideas... (s17)