



Website Competitive Analysis Report

Team Members: Calvin Calvo, Rosie Fisher-Sergent, Haben Haftu, Adam Kozie, Naomi Nosek

Project Goals/Objectives

The objective for this Competitive Analysis is to evaluate the Snohomish/Island County Library website performance and structure compared to the Seattle Public Library and the Salt Lake City Public Library's sites. We will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the competitor sites to extract information and techniques that will benefit the Sno-Isle's site structure. Our team will gather data to inform a redesign of the Sno-Isle site using usability methods. The research will be conducted to make recommendations benefitting the library economically and structurally.

Questions to be Answered

We will begin by asking questions to gather information about the site structure, effectiveness and faults of the competitor's web sites.

1. What is the overall feel of the site?
2. What message is the library trying to convey?
3. Does the site have the required features? What are the features?
4. How easy is it to put a book on hold?
5. How easy is it to sign up for a library card?
6. How effective is the events/calendar?
7. Is the site responsive?

Competitor Sites

The competitor sites we will analyze are those of The Seattle Public Library and The City Library of Salt Lake City.



The Seattle Public Library

Seattle Public Library

<http://www.spl.org>



The City Library

THE SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The City Library

Salt Lake City Public Library

<http://www.slcp.l.lib.ut.us/>

Assessment Criteria

We will be assessing the competitor's sites for general ease of use, specifically the user's ability to find and gather desired information. To do this we will look at the overall branding, mobile responsiveness of the sites, organization of information including usability, navigation structures and information architecture, and the interactivity of features. In addition we will be view the sites on both Mac and Windows technologies and on different internet browsers (Safari, Chrome, Firefox, IE/Edge).

We have grouped our points of criticism on the slides below into the categories:

1. Interactivity (features/CTAs/apps etc)
2. Branding (overall look/feel)
 - a. Location
3. Navigation structure
 - a. Main navigations
 - b. User paths
4. Responsive

Seattle Public Library Main Page Assessment

The screenshot shows the Seattle Public Library website homepage as of April 28, 2016. The page features a blue header with the library logo and navigation links. Below the header is a 'Welcome' banner with a child reading. The main content area is divided into several sections: a search bar, a browse menu, a library locator, and a news/events section. The news section includes articles about a reading event, the library's 125th anniversary, and poetry month. A sidebar on the right contains quick links, audience information, and promotional banners for library cards and donations. Four blue boxes with white numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) are overlaid on the page to highlight specific areas of interest.

1) Callout pointing to the 'INVESTING IN EXPERIENCES' banner.

2) Callout pointing to the 'Welcome' banner.

3) Callout pointing to the 'Audiences' navigation link in the top header.

4) Callout pointing to the 'CELEBRATE NATIONAL POETRY MONTH' article.

- 1) CTAs are plentiful but unorganized. Some are well labeled and some are more obscure which makes them overall less effective.
- 2) Branding is sloppy and virtually non-existent. No cohesive color scheme, just random colors assigned to different elements of the page.
- 3) The labels of the navigation structure are adequate, but some, such as 'Audiences' are vague and unhelpful.
- 4) The site is not responsive which makes using the home page on a phone extremely difficult.

Seattle Public Library Search and Catalog Assessment

The screenshot shows the Seattle Public Library website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Audiences, Using the Library, Library Collection (highlighted), Calendar of Events, Locations, and About the Library. The date April 30, 2016 is displayed on the right. Below the navigation bar is a green header for 'Library Collection' with a large number '2' in a blue box. To the right of this header is a photograph of a library interior. Below the header, there are three main sections: 1) 'SEARCH THE LIBRARY' (numbered '1') with radio buttons for 'Catalog' (selected), 'This Site', and 'Articles', a search input field, and a 'Find' button. 2) 'BROWSE' with a list of links: 'Articles & Research', 'E-books & Downloads', and 'Books & More'. 3) 'LIBRARY LOCATOR' (numbered '4') with a dropdown menu for 'Select a Branch' and a 'Go' button. Below these sections is a sidebar (numbered '3') with a 'LIBRARY COLLECTION' header and a list of categories: Library Collection, Library Catalog, Articles & Research, E-books & Downloads, Books, Movies & Music, Podcasts, Special Collections, SPL Hotspot, Museum Pass, First Folio, and SPL Voices. The main content area below the sidebar contains text about the library's collection of over 2 million items, a list of item types (books, audiobooks, music, movies, magazines, newspapers), and sections for 'Articles & Research', 'Books, Movies & Music', and 'Digital Books & Media'.

1) The most helpful CTA on the search page is the search option itself. There is a lot of valuable information presented in list form that could be organized in a more useful and visually pleasing fashion.

2) The search pages color appears to be 'green', giving each individual pages from the main nav its own color scheme is not helpful in this instance and does not help the overall branding.

3) The main search function is easy to find and use but there are a lot of options given as to how to search the site. A lot of options is good, but having them organized well is even better. The organization of what this part of the site has to offer is lacking.

4) The site is not responsive. Using the search function on a phone would be extremely difficult.

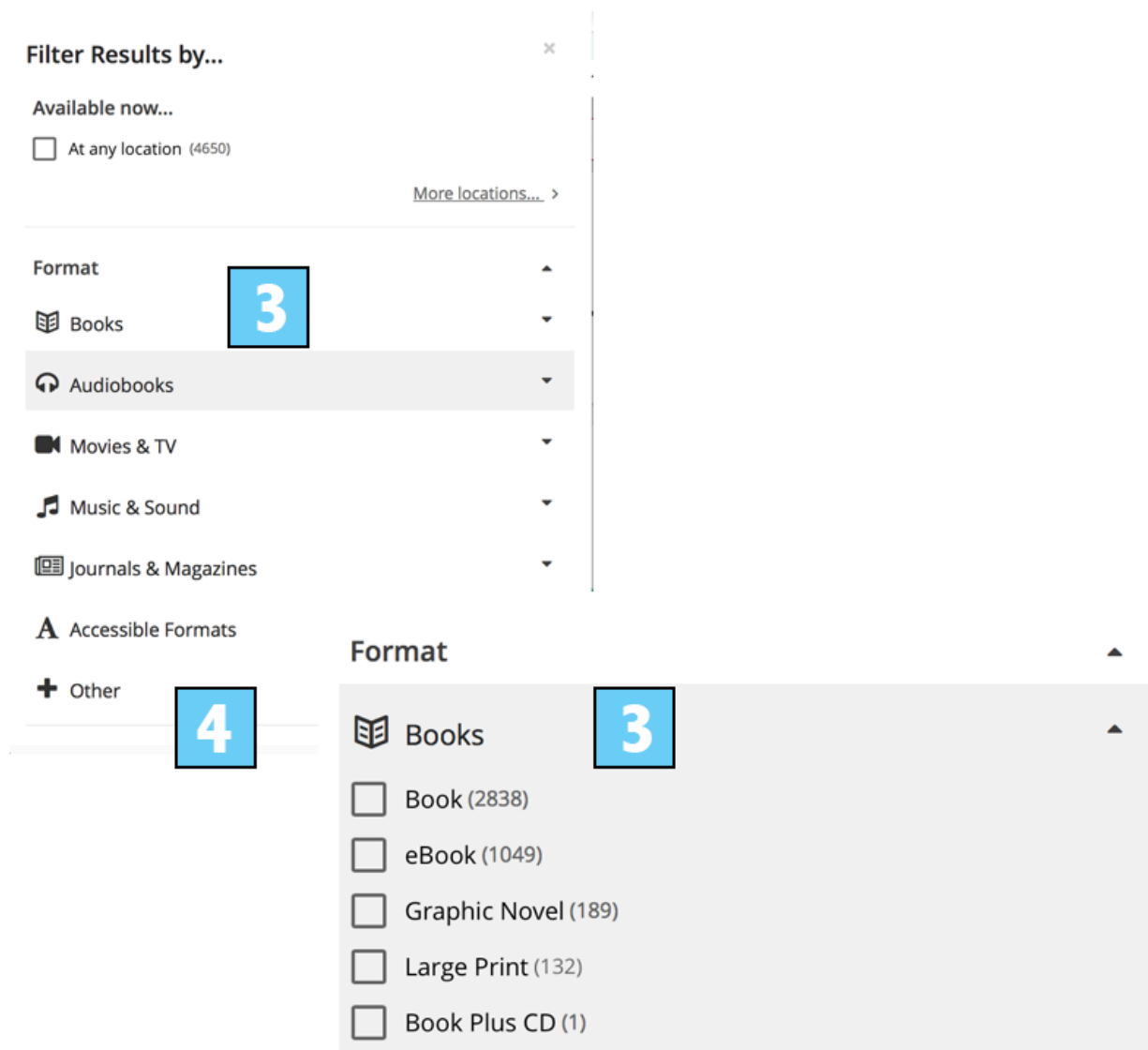
The screenshot shows the website interface for The Seattle Public Library. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the library logo, language selection (English), and a search bar containing the keyword 'cats'. Below the search bar is a menu with options like Home, My SPL, Explore, eBooks Now!, Downloads, Research, Locations, Library Card, and Get Help. A red banner at the top right contains a message: 'The Ballard Branch will close May 9 for up to two months for improvements.' The main content area displays search results for 'cats'. The first result is a DVD titled 'Cats: Choosing, Caring & Training' with a star rating of 4.5 and a 'Place a Hold' button. The second result is a book titled 'Cats' by Simon, Seymour, also with a star rating of 4.5 and a 'Place a Hold' button. Below the search results is a 'Related Resources' section with two columns: 'BLOG POSTS' (linking to 'Movies and DVDs - ShelfTalk Blog') and 'ONLINE RESOURCES' (linking to 'Hoopla Streaming Video', 'Getting started with e-books', and 'Freemal Downloadable Music'). Numbered callouts are placed on the page: '2' is on the 'Filter these results' button; '3' is on the 'Sort By: Relevance' dropdown; '1' is on the 'Place a Hold' button for the DVD; '4' is on the 'Place a Hold' button for the book; and another '1' is on the 'BLOG POSTS' link.

1) Offers 'Related Resources' links within the search results feed. The results feed offers a pleasing amount of options for narrowing down your search or pursuing additional information. There are well sized pictures of the book covers for visual recognition as well as a star rating system for each title. The 'Place Hold' button and other important user features are clearly marked. To place a hold the user clicks the button, a popup appears to log-in if they are not already, and then click the confirm hold button.

2) The branding for the search results page is altogether different and much more pleasing than it is on the main pages. The color scheme and design are much more cohesive and modern.

3) There are many options for users to use while looking for books in the search results feed, which is good. See next image for the 'Filter Results' option.

4) Not responsive, very small text and buttons on a phone.



3) The 'Filter These Results' button produces a pop out side menu that offers more options to narrow down the user's search.

4) The pop-out menu is not specifically formatted for use on a phone, but the buttons and fonts are big enough to read and use.

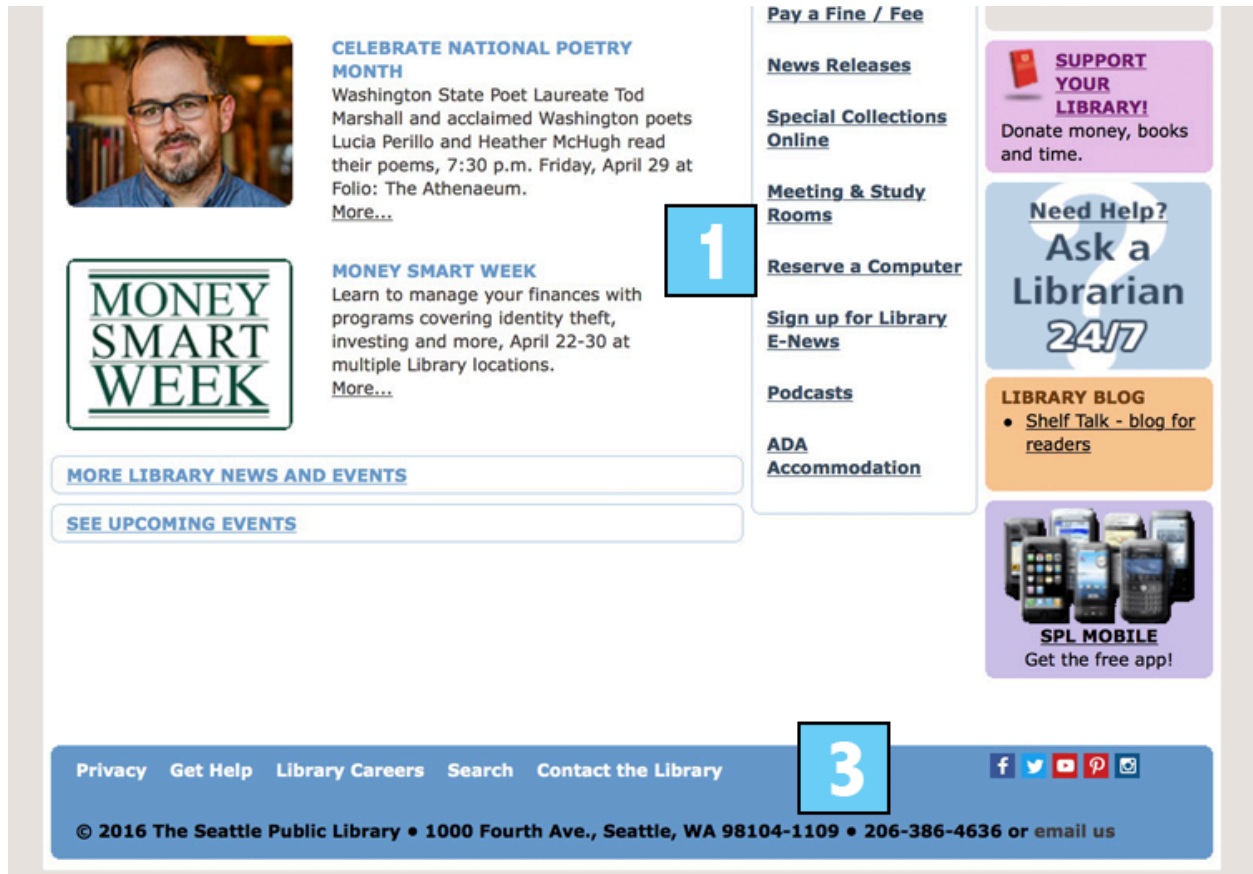
Seattle Public Library FAQ Assessment

The screenshot shows the Seattle Public Library website. At the top right, it says "Your Account | Print-Friendly" and "April 30, 2016". The main navigation bar includes "Home", "Audiences", "Using the Library", "Library Collection", "Calendar of Events", "Locations", and "About the Library". A purple banner for "Using the Library" has a "Get Help" button. Below this is a search bar with "SEARCH THE LIBRARY" and options for "Catalog", "This Site", and "Articles". There is a "LIBRARY LOCATOR" section with a "Select a Branch" dropdown and a "Go" button. A "Sign up for your FREE Library Card!" banner is also present. The "GET HELP" section features a list of services: "Ask a Librarian", "E-Books & Downloads", "Your Next 5", "Homework Help", "Literacy & ESL (English as a Second Language)", "ADA / Special Services", and "Help in other languages". A sidebar menu on the left lists "Using the Library", "Get Started", "Explore the Collection", "Using the Catalog", "Attend Events & Classes", "Visit the Library", "Library on the Go", and "Get Help". The "Get Help" section includes a "Need Help? Ask a" button.

1) CTAs are over abundant, making it seem unorganized and overwhelming. It is a great idea but would recommend relocating it. It also follows the pages color scheme, purple.

2) Branding looks like unsuitable. The purple color scheme is for this specific page of “Using the Library” (random colors have been assigned to different elements of the site). There are so many boxes all with different content, narrowing it down will be less hectic.

3) The labels of the navigation structure is not usable. “Using the Library” is not quite clear on what that page is indicating. Renaming it to “Get help” or “FAQ”.



1) Inconsistent styling on the CTAs and functions makes it difficult for the user to find what they are looking for.

3) ‘Contact’ should be on the main nav or somewhere more apparent. Social media buttons are very small, should be bigger.

1. The calendar feature is clear and easy to use with a search engine below it with drop down options of Where, Audience, and Event Type. However, when hovering over the calendar dates, it shows a list of events for that day that blocks the search engine until moved again. This could have a better flow by relocating the search engine if this featured wanted to be kept.

2. Branding is not consistent with SPL's color scheme. It did not have a legend as to why each event had a specific color, it just seems random and unorganized.

3. The title for the page is a colored block with "Calendar of Events" on it makes it look juvenile with a small image next to it. Possibly creating a banner with the title on it would add pizzazz. Also, a simple title as "calendar" or "events" would still work.

The Seattle Public Library

Your Account | Print-Friendly

Home Audiences Using the Library Library Collection **Calendar of Events** Locations About the Library

Calendar of Events

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND CLASSES

April 2016

S M T W T F S

27 28 29 30 31 1 2

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Where: [All Values]

Audience: [All Values]

Event Type: [All Values]

Search: [Go]

10:15 am

10 am

Tech Help

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Where: Southwest Branch

Summary: Come to the Library for up to an hour of free, one-on-one help with technology and library services. **Registration is required.**

2

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2016

S M T W T F S

27 28 29 30 31 1 2

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2016

S M T W T F S

27 28 29 30 31 1 2

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Search: [Go]

10:30 am

An Investment Plan

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Central Library

Summary: Don't have

Salt Lake City Public Library Main Page Assessment



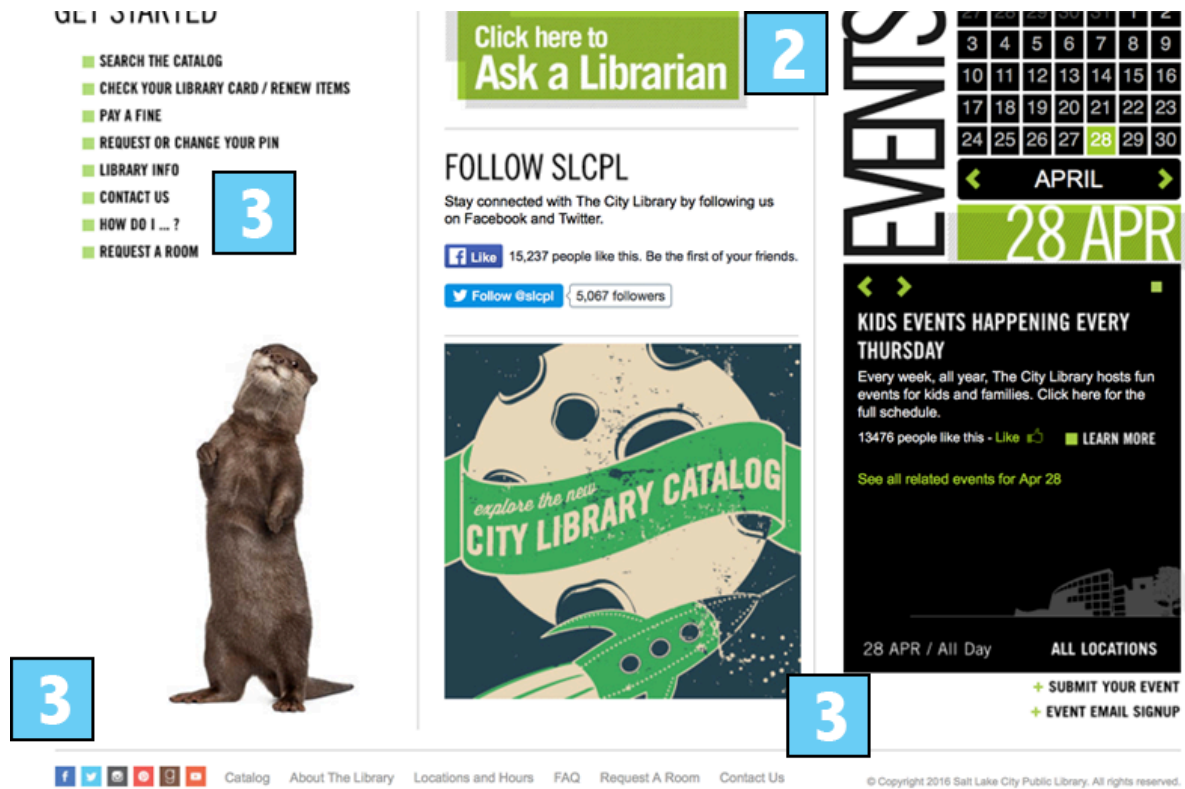
1) Search function is very prominent.

1) Login/Register link is made prominent by allowing its own space at the top.

1) Toggle between searching catalog and entire site is very handy, easy to understand and saves space on the page.

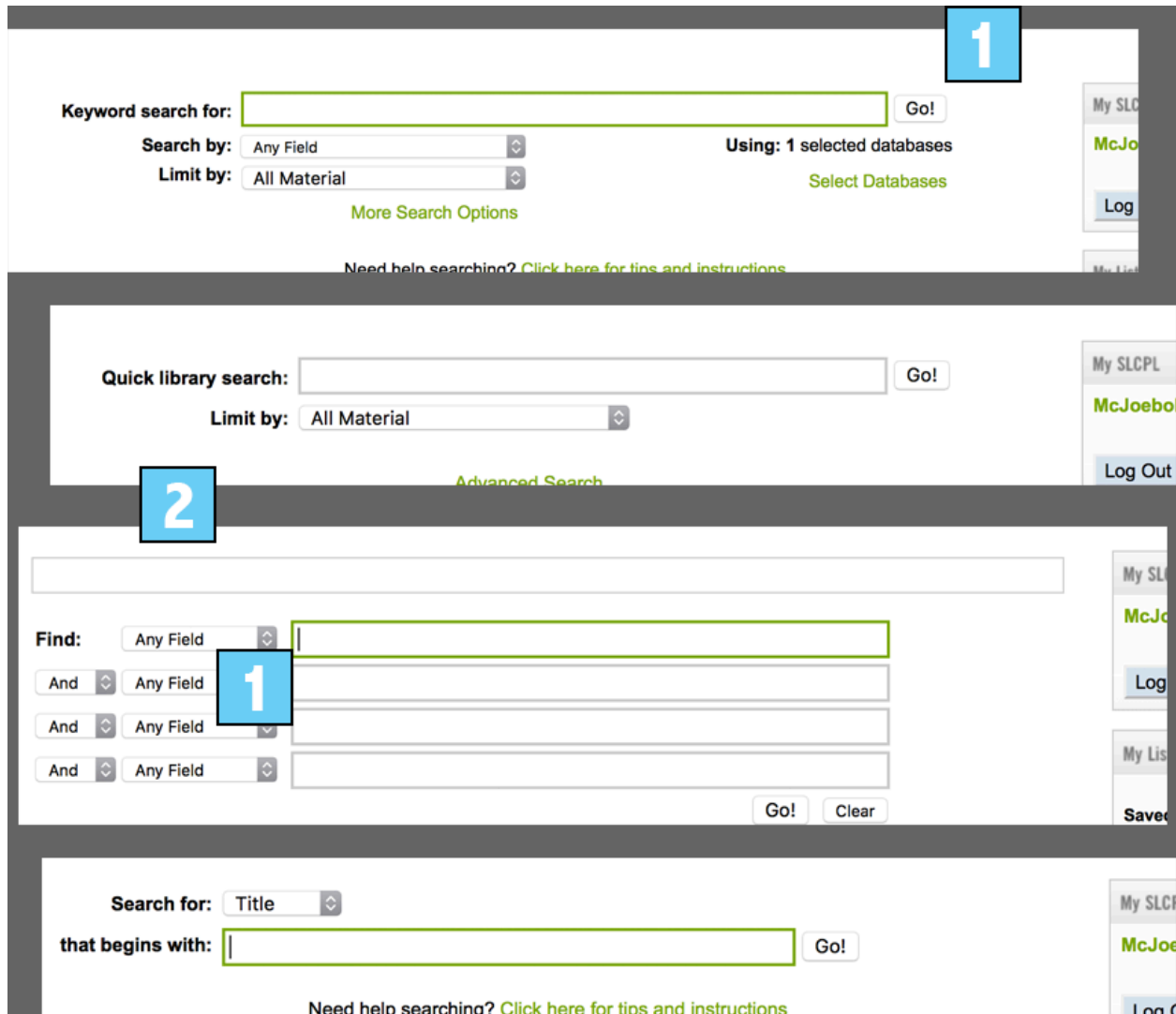
3) Drop menu is useful but not overwhelming. Very specific task links are left to inner navigation elsewhere.

4) Modern full-width design on home page that would look good on mobile if page was made responsive.



- 2) Color scheme and appearance is very consistent across the site
- 3) Social navigation is tiny
- 3) Extra 'Get Started' navigation on the home-page makes common tasks more visible
- 3) Footer nav is minimal and unobtrusive, but typography is too small

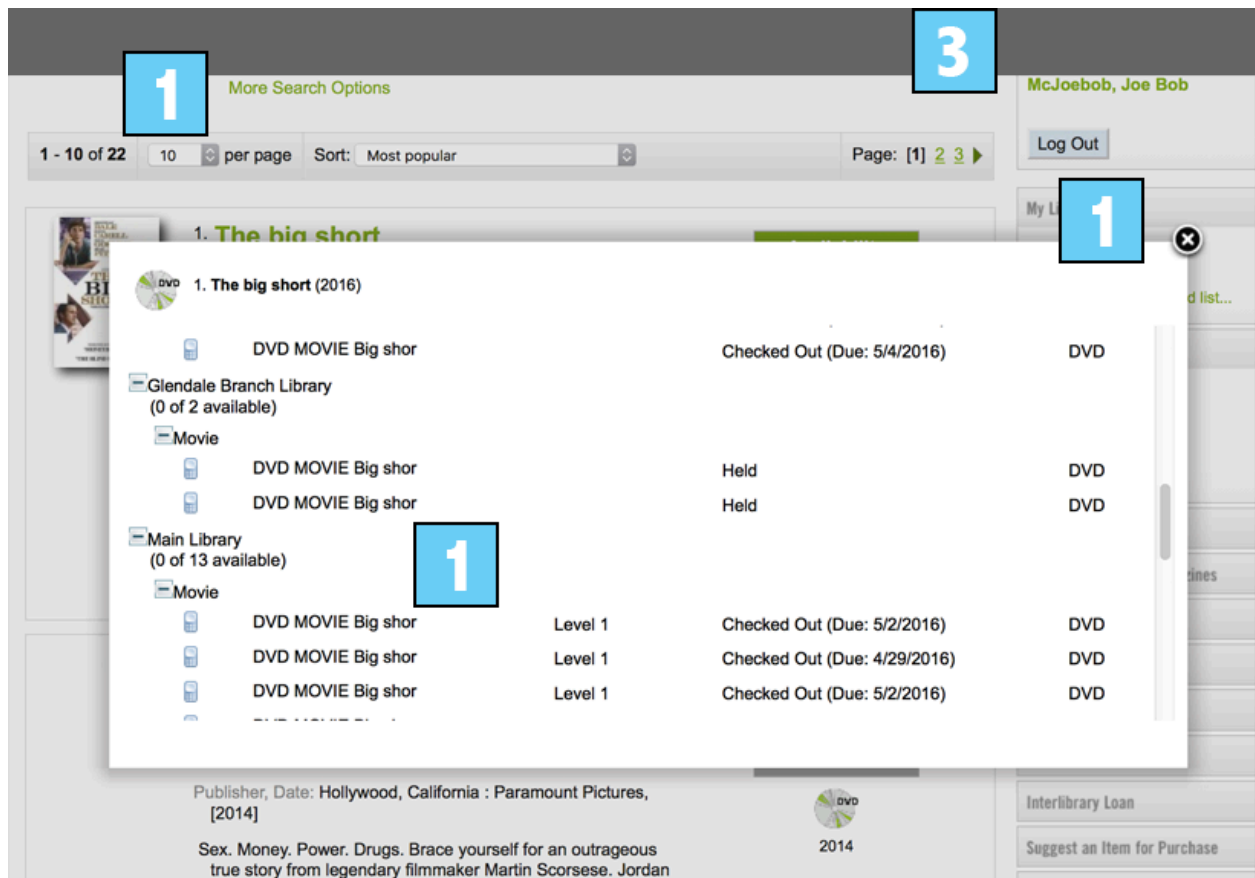
Salt Lake City Public Library Search and Catalog Assessment



1) Go! is not an optimal naming convention for executing a search.

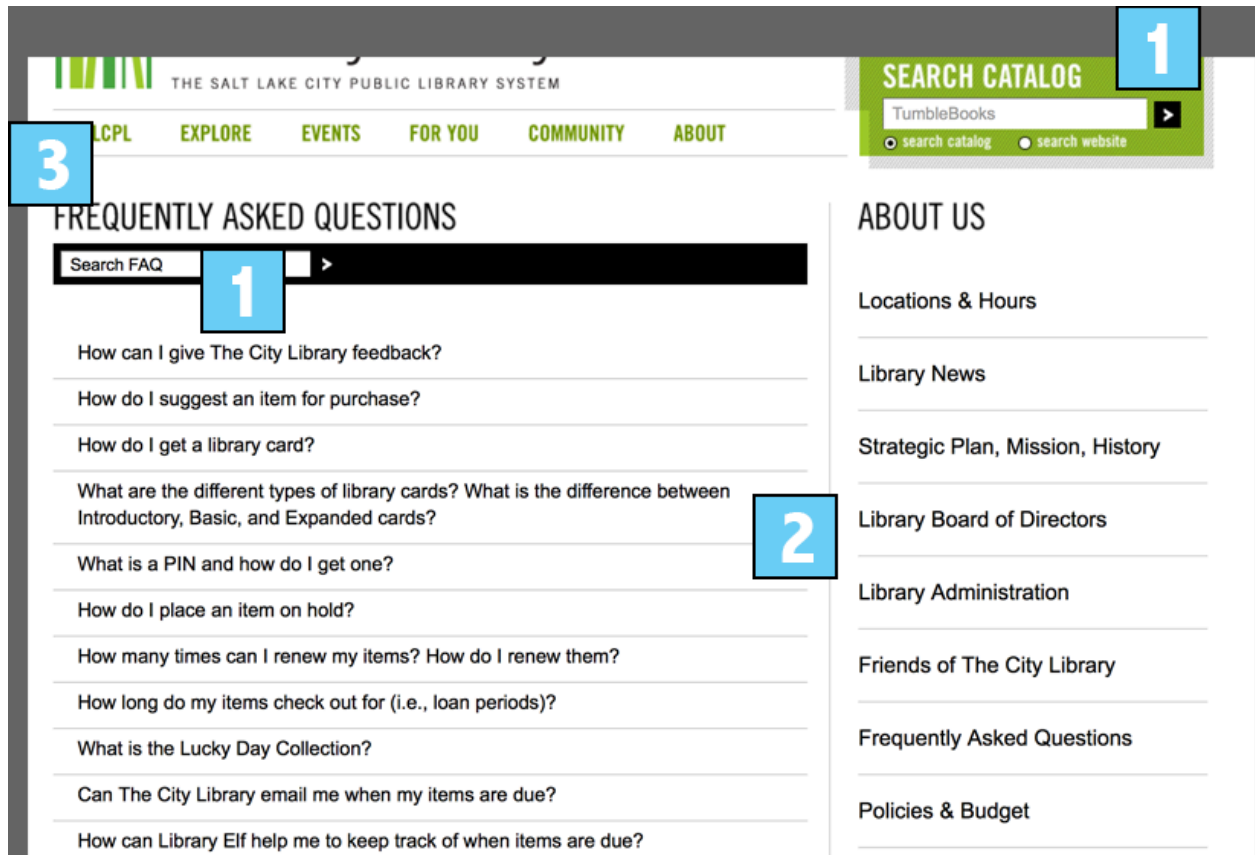
1) Browsing by genre must be done via the advanced search. This is very difficult to find and somewhat arcane to use. Placing the browse-by-genre option so far inside the search navigation badly neglects one of the most essential parts of a library website.

2) Multiple search options are powerful but confusing and possibly daunting for inexperienced users.



- 1) Catalog details can be viewed clearly as a pop-out on click in search results.
- 1) Multitude of details listed for each unique entry, including media type, availability date, branch location, and even shelf location in some cases.
- 1) Sorting and pagination options are flexible and powerful for the user.
- 3) Log out option is available and clearly visible on most inner pages but not home page or primary navigation pages.

Salt Lake City Library FAQ Assessment



1) Multiple page-specific search functions improve functionality in different areas of the site.

1) Excellent search bar at the tops of most pages. Toggling between search catalog and website generally makes it doubly powerful, without taking up additional space. The toggle button text is a bit small.

2) In the main sections, typography is generally good and very readable, with good kerning, line height and letter size.

3) 'Frequently asked questions' and 'How do I?' links go to the same place.

Salt Lake City Public Library Calendar Assessment

2

Search Events

Community Shred Day
180 people like this - Like

Book and Boots with Tracy Aviary
182 people like this - Like

Money Smart Week for Kids
204 people like this - Like

Minecraft Tech Club
1,987 people like this - Like

Community Shred Day
176 people like this - Like

Marmalade Summer Concert Series Call for Entries
11,373 people like this - Like

Alt Press Fest Call for Entries
4,786 people like this - Like

Rhythms at Riverside Call for Entries
5,855 people like this - Like

West High School 2016 International Baccalaureate Visual Art Show
3,147 people like this - Like

African Journey: Photography by Gabby McBride
1,366 people like this - Like

Consciousness and Imagination: Works by Clayton Middle School Students
6,514 people like this - Like

I'm a Barbie Girl in a Barbie World
3,424 people like this - Like

10:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M. SAT, APR 30
ANDERSON-FOOTHILL
FEATURED EVENT

11:00 A.M. SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY STORY ROOM
FEATURED EVENT

1:00 P.M. SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY, CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
FEATURED EVENT

2:00 P.M. TO 3:00 P.M. SAT, APR 30
ANDERSON-FOOTHILL
FEATURED EVENT

2:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. SAT, APR 30
DAY-RIVERSIDE BRANCH
FEATURED EVENT

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
MARMALADE BRANCH
FEATURED EVENT

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY URBAN ROOM
FEATURED EVENT

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
DAY-RIVERSIDE BRANCH
FEATURED EVENT

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY, LOWER URBAN ROOM GALLERY

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY CANTEENA, LEVEL 2

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
MAIN LIBRARY, CHILDREN'S GALLERY

ALL DAY SAT, APR 30
DAY-RIVERSIDE BRANCH

1

EVENTS

27 28 29 30 31 1 2
3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

APRIL

DATE RANGE:
Apr 30 2016 to
Apr 30 2016

UPDATE LIST

EVENT TYPES ALL

- ACCESSING TECH.
- ART EXHIBITS (10)
- BOOKS & AUTHORS
- BRIDGING DIVIDES
- COMPUTER CLASSES
- EARLY LITERACY (1)
- ENJOYING LIFE (1)
- EXPLORE NEW IDEAS (1)
- GENERAL AUDIENCE (3)
- GET INVOLVED (4)
- KIDS & FAMILY (4)
- LOCAL SOLUTIONS
- MOVIES
- MUSIC (2)
- SENIORS
- SPANISH
- TEENS (2)

LOCATIONS

- MAIN (9)
- ANDERSON-FOOTHILL (2)
- CHAPMAN (0)
- SWEET (0)
- DAY-RIVERSIDE (4)
- GLENDALE (0)
- MARMALADE (2)
- SPRAGUE (1)

+ SUBMIT YOUR EVENT
+ EVENT EMAIL SIGNUP

4

1) The interactivity is very organized and helpful for the user. It shows that they can pick locations and event types using check boxes and see how many events are going on per event type. This ease of use really gives the user a clear way of finding things without frustration. The calendar has a list of events in order as its main content. By clicking on the + will show more details about that event.

2) Branding is very modern and up-to-date. It stays consistent with the color scheme. The readability is easy and clear to understand and search for events. Text looks a bit blurry but does not hinder the user.

4) Although the site is very well put together, the calendar is not responsive for mobile use.

Findings & Results

Seattle Public Library

The Seattle Public Library site does not have a clearly individual theme, it is a barrage of excessive color and options. The site touts a digital entertainment section however the site is also unresponsive which alienates mobile users which seems antithetical to their collection of ebooks. The design and organization of the page did not have the user in mind, as the call to action for an everyday user is unclear. The CTA is unclear for many reasons such as the obnoxious collection of loud colors, or the confusing category names in the main navigation bar, and more; these things contribute to the site looking busy and cluttered. Proportion is also a large issue for this main page as well.

The organization of the search options is adequate for simple searches but could be better overall. The array of search options available is excellent when the user can find them. It is very simple to place a book on hold from the search results.

The calendar has a somewhat consistent theme however there is no apparent reason for the color coding. But the events for a given day are listed in chronological order which is helpful in navigation. There is also more info displayed if the mouse is hovered over a certain day on the calendar however.

Salt Lake City Public Library

The Salt Lake City Public Library website, has a simple but vibrant theme with pop-art-esque graphics. The theme is consistent throughout the site and lets users know what site they are on, on any given page. The typeface is clean working in tandem with the minimal theme to give the site an overall professional feel in addition to easy readability and navigation. The design for this site was clearly made with the front end user in mind. Although one gripe is that their bold text headings look a bit blurry but it doesn't hinder readability. It is also non-responsive however mobile users are made

aware of an app for the library. However pages load quickly and information is displayed clearly even though the content text is small.

Multiple forms of search functionality aids users in finding the exact thing they are looking for with ease and speed, while taking into account homophones and misspellings. Error prevention and demographic design are also evident on the homepage as well, this is seen in the homepage's links one in the footer labeled *faq* and the other labeled *how do i....* (made for younger/older users who may not know the term "faq") beneath the "get started" heading, both leading to the same page. The site's organization works with the navigation's labeling to create an intuitive path for users to follow. The strengths of the site far outweigh its shortcomings for the average user and as such needs minor improvement.

Design Recommendations

Our first recommendation is to update the entire site to be mobile responsive. Having a mobile site is key to user satisfaction and accessibility. As of 2015 Google reported that "more Google searches take place on mobile devices than on computers in 10 countries including the US and Japan."¹ This means that library users and potential users are trying to access the site through their phones more than ever before. The frustration of trying to use a web site that is not mobile responsive will turn away users and may potentially dissuade them from seeking library services in the future. The current system of having a separate app for users to use on their phones is helpful, but may alienate some users who do not wish to download additional apps onto their phone when they could just use an internet browser to complete the same task.

Our second recommendation is to implement an update for the sites branding. The current branding lacks the necessary coherence to effectively convey Sno-Isle Library's desired public image. Adopting a sleeker design and a more modern, simple color scheme will help with both the organization of the available information and the consistency of the site. The Salt Lake City Public Library's site is a good example of cohesive and modern branding.

The third recommendation is to reorganize the navigation in order to make it easier for users to find what they are looking for. Clear and recognizable navigation labels are imperative for usability and user satisfaction. Having the advanced search options available on the initial search page cuts down on time spent trying to find the specific search option the user is looking for.

¹ <http://adwords.blogspot.com/2015/05/building-for-next-moment.html>