

UPPER SANDUSKY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

LIBRARY WEBSITE REDESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

The Upper Sandusky Community Library has asked us to evaluate and rework their website to better support their patrons goals of finding and accessing information. Their current website provides a wealth of information, but the website looks quite dated and the organization of content is not straightforward.

The Library serves a wide range of patrons. These patrons take advantage of all of the Library's services and must be able to easily find information relating to their tasks, including accessing the online catalog, finding information about preschool story-times or downloading a meeting room application form. The reorganization of content on Upper Sandusky Community Library's website must support the many different patrons and their information needs.

This report documents the entire project, from research, design, study results, to final recommendations.

STATE OF THE SITE

Before starting any design tasks, the team took a quick inventory of Upper Sandusky Community Library's website to understand the content offered to patrons. After the content inventory was completed, it became clear to the design team that the library and its website provides a wealth of information to patrons.

Upper Sandusky Community Library's website used two main organization schemes to organize content found on the site: topical and task. The task-based organization scheme was found on the right menu of every page on the site and contains links to offsite library resources. Topical organization of content exists in the site's main menu (contained in the header) as well as the menu running down the left side of every page of the site. Each topical link loads in the content portion of the website, while the task-based links open third-party websites in new tabs.

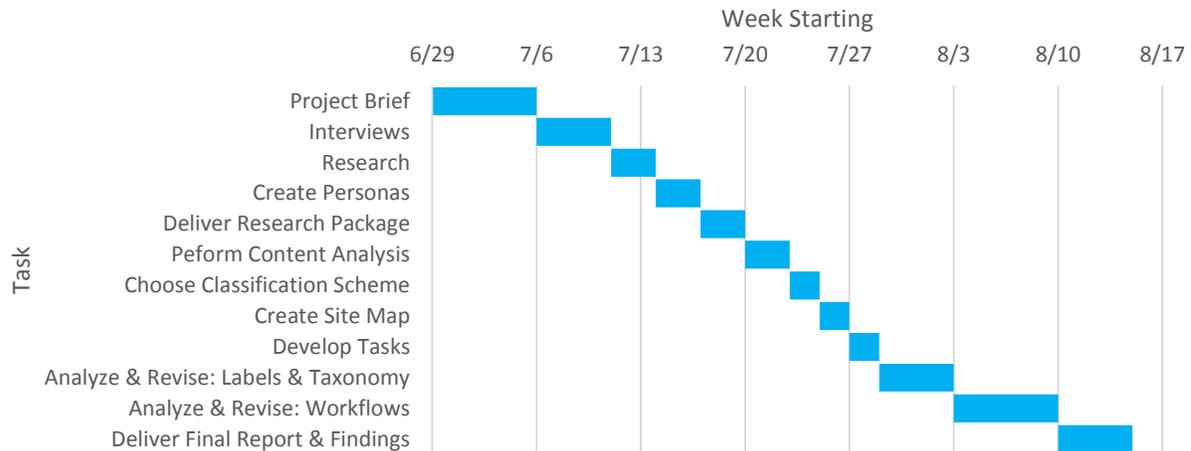
The design team found a few minor issues that could be remedied by a reorganization of site content on the library's website:

- Labeling & Link discovery – Links did not have a consistent style across the site which made it hard to discern what was and was not a link.
- Duplication of menu items – Some menu items were duplicated, but the items didn't link to the same place.
- Inconsistent content placement – Most menu items loaded content into the center content area on the website, allowing a user to click from link to link with ease. Some

links loaded PDFs or other resources as a new page, forcing the user to click the back button to get back to the library's website.

PROJECT PLAN

The project plan below was followed by the design team to complete the project on time and on budget while adhering to the users' and library's needs.



RESEARCH

METHOD

To gain a holistic understanding of the users of a typical library website, the design team performed three forms of research: interviews, a literature review, and click testing.

Two interviews were conducted with two different local community library employees. The first interview was with an Assistant Librarian in charge of the website at Lakewood Public Library in Lakewood, Ohio. The second interview was with the Branch Manager of the Aurora Memorial Library in Aurora, Ohio. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. Questions were broken up into three major themes: patron demographics, patron behaviors, and the library website from a library employee perspective.

After the two interviews were conducted, a literature review was performed to complement the information learned during the interviews. There have been many articles and publications authored studying library website design, user experience, and library patrons, but rarely are all three subjects intertwined in the same report. The design team found useful information in the following publications during the research phase of the project:

- The IMLS National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums, and the Internet by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, by the ILMS.
- Public Libraries in the United States Survey (Fiscal Year 2012), by the ILMS.
- Service Trends in U.S. Public Libraries, 1997 – 2007 by Everett Henderson.
- How Americans Value Public Libraries in Their Communities, by the Pew Research Center.
- Library services in the digital age, by Pew Internet.

After the interviews and the literature review informed the initial site redesign, the design was tested in Treejack, a popular online tool used to test site structures and taxonomies. The results of this study were used to refine the design before creating wireframes of the new site. The wireframes were then tested in Chalkmark, another popular online tool used to test user's first-clicks while navigating wireframe and website screenshots.

FINDINGS

After conducting the interviews and literature review, the design team explored and analyzed the results and discovered a few key findings.

The first finding is library users are plentiful and diverse with a wide range of goals and common tasks. 70% of adults in the United States visited a library in 2007, with 46% of those visitors visiting the library's website. These numbers have been increasing year over year up until the last available year of data in 2007. These numbers are backed up by the interviews, where the design team learned that users are increasingly using a library's website before they visit.

Library patrons used library resources to:

- Register for a program (either themselves or a child)
- Check availability of a book in the library catalog
- Placing a catalog item on hold
- View or download e-books or articles
- Obtain information from a librarian or from the library
- Book and use a library meeting room

Use of a library's website is sporadic – the site is usually used in short bursts and commonly on a tablet or computer in a non-mobile setting. Distractions are typically minimal. Patrons of all ages use library websites, with the majority of users between the ages of 15 and 55 years old. The majority of users employ an exploratory (or browsing) style of information gathering on library websites. This isn't always the case, as users after new releases know exactly what they are looking for and prefer a known item style of search.

Library patrons are not the only group of users who benefit from a well-designed website. Librarians and other library staff members need a website that is easily maintainable and promotes information findability. The librarians interviewed both stated that they like the ability to perform as many update and maintenance tasks as they can without calling the IT department. Most librarians have little to no experience coding or web development and prefer to make updates to their library website using a content management or what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) interface.

The Treejack and Chalkmark studies produced actionable results that the design team used to refine the site. In both studies, the participants were able to complete the seven tasks (the high and medium priority tasks defined in section Tasks, p. 8) with a high degree of success overall. After the Treejack study, the design team tweaked the labels and location of some of the site content. The Chalkmark study allowed the design team to understand how patrons start finding information, and led to a few minor wireframe tweaks.

PERSONAS

Using the information learned during the research phase of the project, the design developed personas to represent real end users during the duration the design phase of the project. The personas developed for this project were categorized into primary and secondary personas. Primary personas represent main users of the library website, while secondary personas represent other users of the website whose main goals are satisfied by primary personas, but may require extra accommodations.

PRIMARY PERSONAS



SEAN

"What can the library offer my family?"

Sean pulls double duty as a stay at home dad while working for himself out of his home office as a technical consultant. Since Sean has a relative freedom to make his own hours, he can spend a day with his three children, aged 9, 12, and 15. On days where Sean needs to get work done, he needs to find something his kids can do. He's tired of hearing his kids complain that they are bored after the first week of summer vacation and is looking for low-cost activities that can spark an interest in his kids.

A neighbor has told Sean about the programs hosted by the local library. He told him that the library offers a wide-range of educational topics available for different age ranges at many

different times throughout the day. Sean is intrigued and would like to look into the programs and possibly register his kids in a few sessions, if any spark their interest. Heck, while his kids are attending the programs, maybe he can book the library's video conference meeting room for his next presentation and really make an impression on his clients.



SARAH

"How can the library satisfy my research needs?"

Sarah just wrapped up her sophomore year in college and moved back home. To stay on the four year plan, she enrolled in a few courses required by her degree over the summer. These writing-intensive summer courses are delivered in an online setting, but require a lot of research at the university's library. The hour drive between home and the school's campus library has become tiring, and she really would like to cut the two hour round trip drive out of her day a few times a week if she can; she's got better things to do with her time – her summer job keeps her busy and she'd like to hang out with her friends.

Last week, as she was making her way out of her town on the way to her school's library, she passed the local library. "Duh!" she thought, "I bet I could find what I need there, and it's only 5 minutes away from my house!" She pulled into the library's parking lot and made her way inside. A librarian helped her find all the books she needed for the week and mentioned she might be able to find the scholarly articles she needs on the library's website. Sarah drove home happy she was able to save two hours of her time. At home, she found the library's website and placed a hold on the books she'll need next week using the library catalog, but couldn't find access to research databases the librarian was describing. "This is frustrating," she thought, "Why are only half of the resources offered by the library found on its website?"

SECONDARY PERSONA



MIKE

"I need the library's website and its workflows to support me doing my job."

Mike is a librarian at the small local library. All librarians at this library have a lengthy list of day-to-day responsibilities that include helping patrons find materials, planning programs, checking in and out books and related materials, answering patrons questions, and relaying website updates to the IT department. Mike has worked in libraries for the past ten years, so he has a pretty good grasp on his responsibilities, but requesting website updates always seems to be a pain.

The current process has Mike fill out a (not very flexible) form detailing the change – which page, the copy to use, and due date. He then has to scan the form and send the PDF version to the IT department’s email inbox. Due to the inflexibility of the form, he usually has to write a bunch of notes in the email as well. This process has resulted in misspellings, late changes, lost requests, and wrong updates. Mike understands that the changes require coding, but he doesn’t understand why the website can’t employ the type of easy to update interface his blog provider uses. This would allow him to copy and paste his copy updates without spelling mistakes and make changes in a timely manner. Mike knows other librarians would be comfortable with this type of system, since they already use a similar one when updating or adding books and materials to the library catalog.

TASKS

The following tasks were developed from the above personas and research findings. These tasks describe typical behaviors and goals the personas would like to accomplish while visiting a library website.

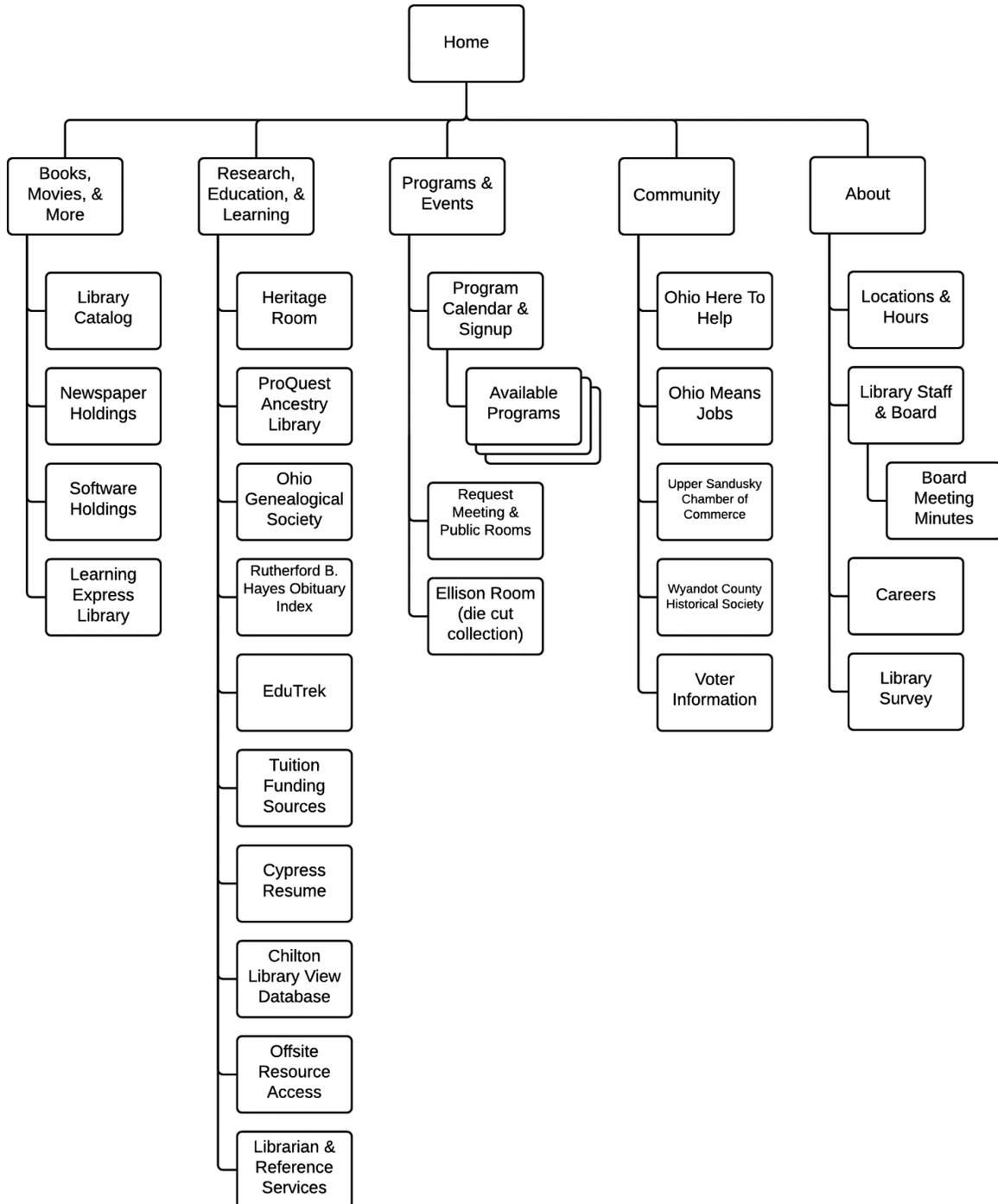
TASKS	PERSONA		
	SEAN (PRIMARY)	SARA (PRIMARY)	MIKE (SECONDARY)
HIGH PRIORITY TASKS			
Find and sign up for an upcoming program	Yes		
Find and reserve a public room	Yes		
Find a book in the library catalog		Yes	Yes
Reserve a catalog resource		Yes	Yes
Access research resources offsite		Yes	
MEDIUM PRIORITY TASKS			
Find library open hours	Yes	Yes	
Find location of library catalog resource		Yes	Yes
Book a Librarian		Yes	
LOW PRIORITY TASKS			
Update program details			Yes
Add/remove programs			Yes
Update website text			Yes
Find out what services are available	Yes	Yes	

The tasks used to test designs and develop wireframes are based on the high and medium tasks in the above table. The tasks developed are:

1. You'd like to check the availability of a book at the library. How would you check the availability of a resource?
2. You'd like to place a book on hold at the library. How would you place a resource on hold?
3. You need to perform research for a project, but can't make it to the library. Is there a way you can access the library research databases outside of the library?
4. You have an important meeting coming up and would like to hold it at the library. How would you view the availability of rooms and sign up for one?
5. You'd like to browse the programs offered by the library and register for one. How would you browse and register for a program?
6. You need to pick up some books at the library, but you aren't sure if it is open. How would you check if the library is open?
7. You've got a complex research topic and aren't sure where to start. How would you look into booking the services of a librarian to help you get started?

SITEMAP

The conceptual sitemap below provides a high-level representation of the redesigned library website and organization of information. Instead of using three different menus, the redesign contains everything in one easy to navigate menu.



SITE NAVIGATION

The redesigned site employs a single horizontal drop-down navigation bar in the header of the site. Consolidating the navigation from three to one menu allows all of the information and links to major places to be contained in one consistent location – no more trying to remember which menu contains links to which pages. For consistency, this bar is present on every page of the site. Consolidating the three navigation menus on the old site into one main navigation menu presented a problem to the design team: how do you fit the wealth of content in the navigation bar without it becoming unwieldy?

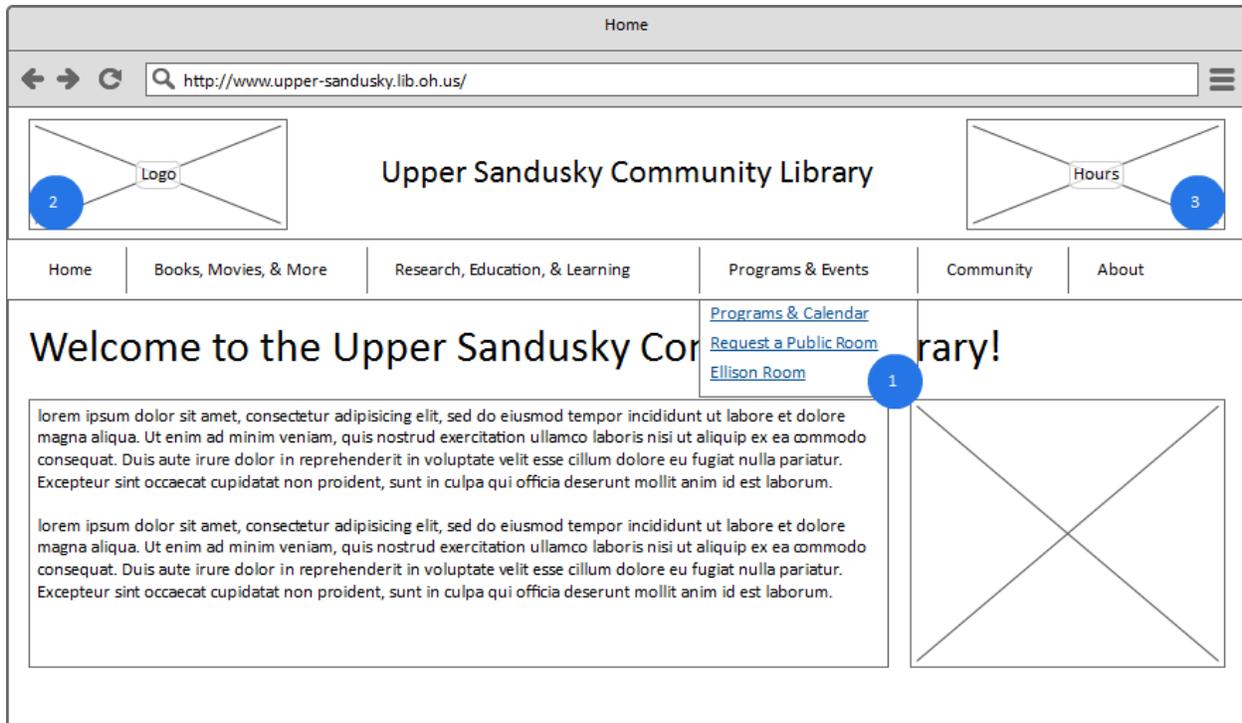
The dropdown navigation menu allows you to hover over a main navigation menu label and see what content is included within it, without clicking the main label. This allows to navigate more efficiently and understand what each category is about by looking at the sub-categories. It also allows the design team to fit all of the needed content in the menu.

Examples of the newly designed navigation menu can be found in the wireframes in the next section.

WIREFRAMES

The wireframes in this section detail the workflow for the seven high and medium priority tasks detailed in the Tasks section (p. 8). Wireframe annotations are designated by a blue circle with a number and can be found below the wireframe.

BROWSING AND REGISTERING FOR A LIBRARY PROGRAM



1. The single main navigation menu consists of dropdowns to effectively categorize and display links to content.
2. The header contains the library logo.
3. The Hours text also acts as a link to the Locations & Hours page. This header and main menu is present on every page on the website.

Programs & Events

http://www.upper-sandusky.lib.oh.us/

Logo Upper Sandusky Community Library Hours

Home Books, Movies, & More Research, Education, & Learning Programs & Events Community About

Programs & Events

◀ AUGUST 2015 ▶

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	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	31					

Program Name

Description: lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Date & Time: 8/13/2015 7:00 PM

[Register](#)

Program Name

Description: lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Date & Time: 8/13/2015 7:00 PM

[Register](#)

1. The Programs & Events page contains a calendar of events.
2. A listing of programs and their descriptions, with links to register. Clicking a program's 'Register' link takes the user to the wireframe on the next page.

Programs & Events

http://www.upper-sandusky.lib.oh.us/

Logo Upper Sandusky Community Library Hours

Home Books, Movies, & More Research, Education, & Learning Programs & Events Community About

Program Registration

Program Name

Description: lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Date & Time: 8/13/2015 7:00 PM

Location: Room 302

Registration

Attendee First Name:

Attendee Last Name:

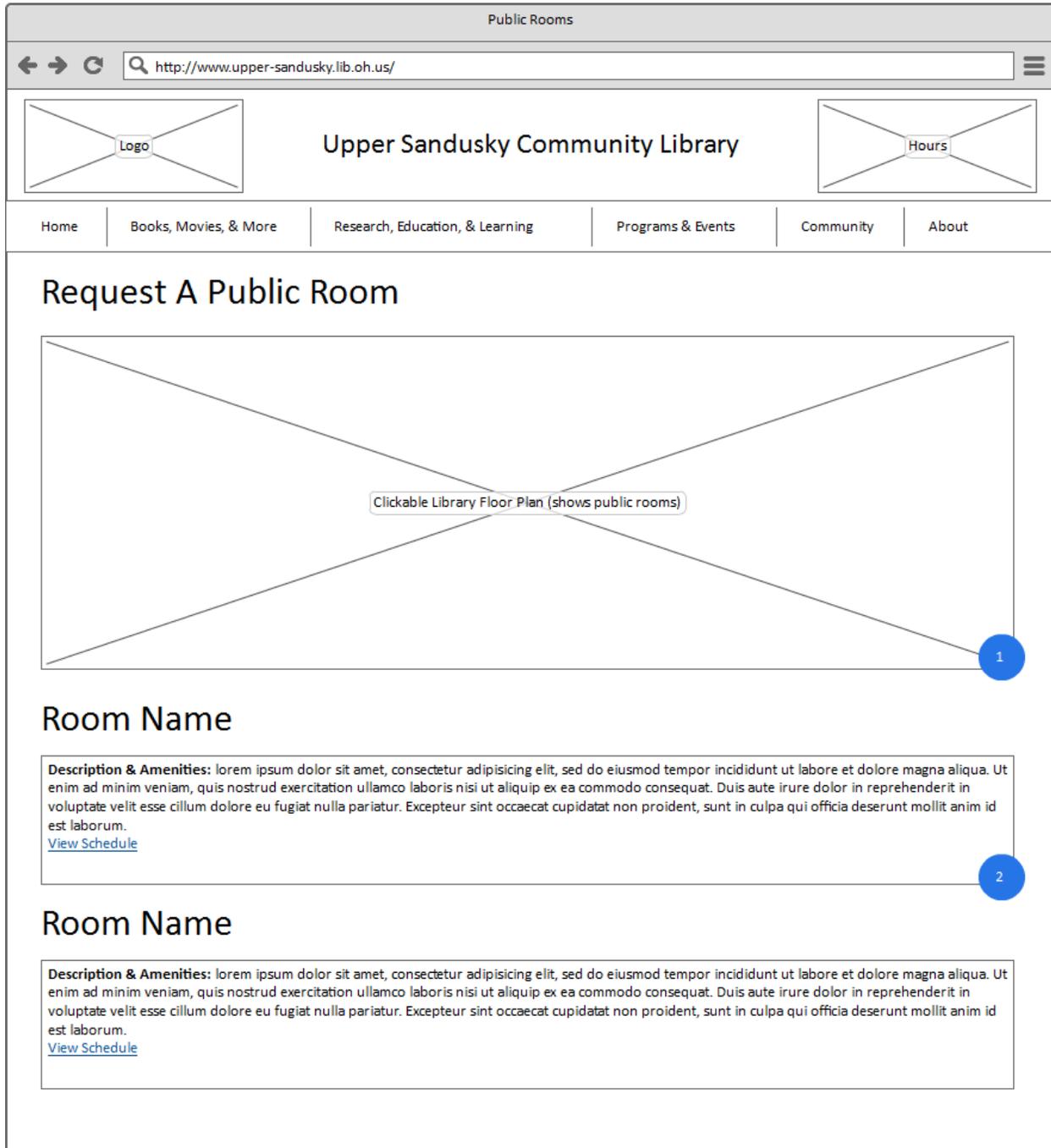
Attendee Phone Number:

Attendee Email Address:

2 Complete Registration Back

1. The Program Registration page contains the program name, description, date & time, and location.
2. The sign-up form allows the patron to sign up for a program.

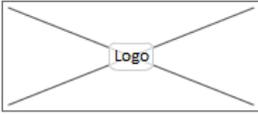
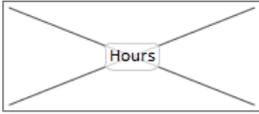
RESERVING A PUBLIC ROOM



1. The clickable library floor plan is a birds-eye view of the library. Clicking on a room in the image takes the patron to the schedule page for that room.
2. Similar to the programs page, public rooms are listed with a description and amenities and a link to view their schedule. Clicking a room's 'View Schedule' link takes the user to the wireframe on the next page.

Public Rooms

← → ↻

 **Upper Sandusky Community Library** 

Home | Books, Movies, & More | Research, Education, & Learning | Programs & Events | Community | About

Room Name

AUGUST 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	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	31					

Registration

Reservation Date:

Reservation Hours:

First Name:

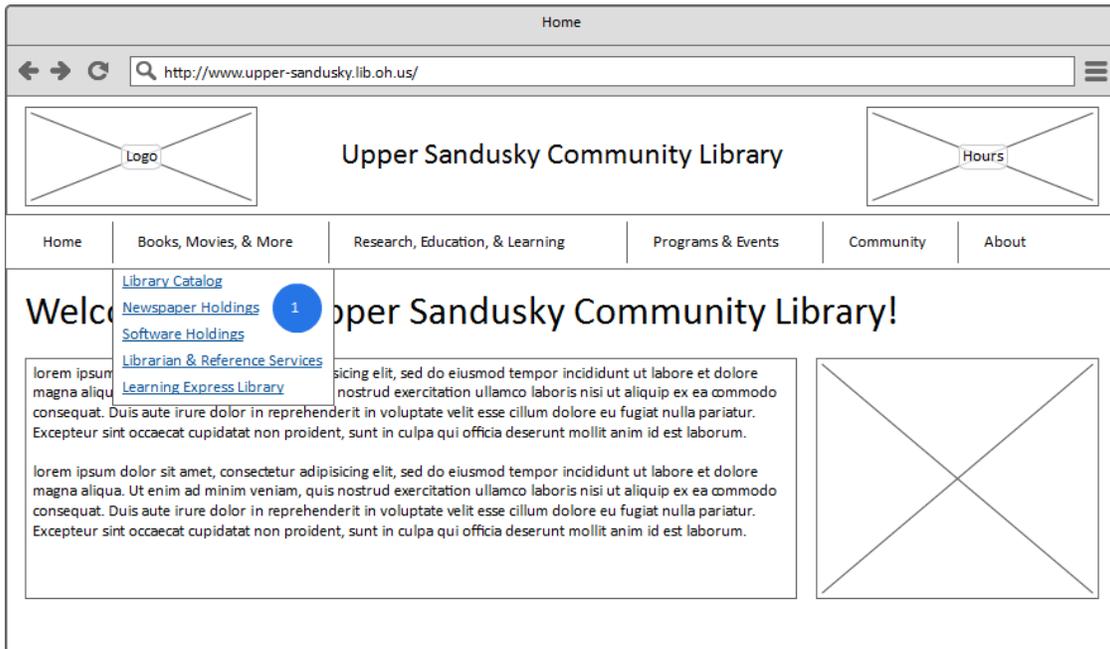
Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

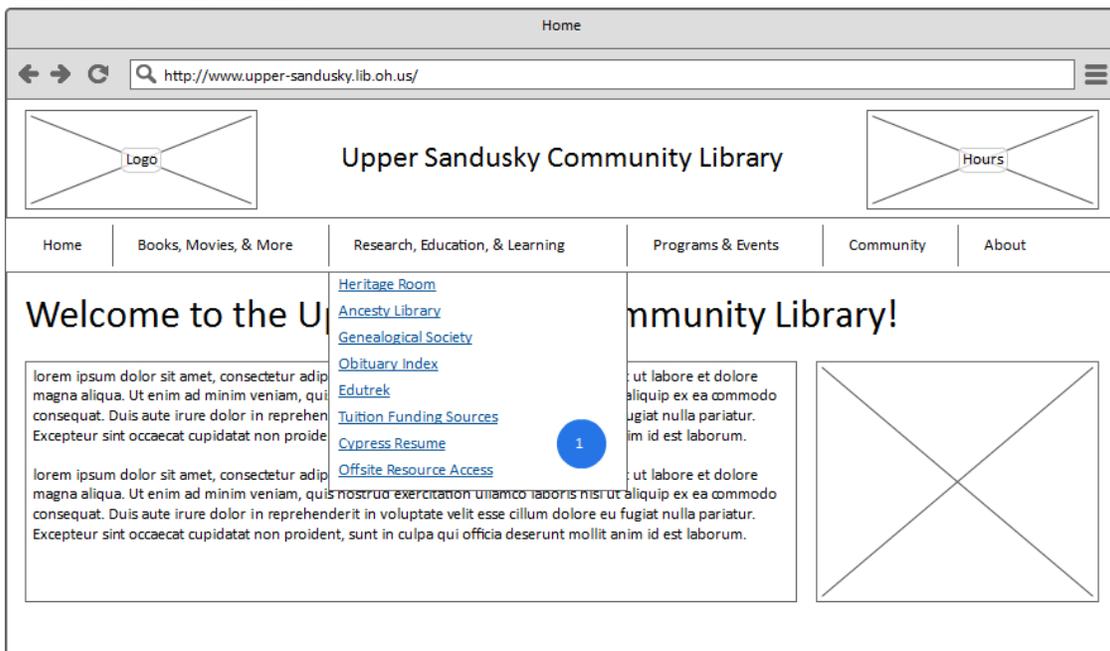
1. The room sign-up page contains a calendar showing when the room is booked.
2. The sign-up form allows the user to sign up for the room. The Reservation Date & Hours textbox use date and time pickers for easy input.

ACCESSING THE LIBRARY CATALOG & BOOKING A LIBRARIAN



1. The library catalog and library & reference services can be accessed from the main navigation.

OFFSITE RESOURCE ACCESS



1. Information about accessing resources offsite can be obtained via the "Offsite Resource Access" page from the main menu.