

Project Proposal: Sharon Public Library (MA)

1 July 2020

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Website Redesign — Sharon Public Library

11 North Main Street | Sharon, MA 02067

Background | Introduction

Sharon Public Library (SPL) is located about 22 miles outside of Boston and serves a population of around 18,000ⁱ. The library houses over 80,000 books in addition to magazines, music CDs, audio books, videotape; and provides access to email and internet for its patrons.

SPL's current website is hosted by librarywebsites.com (*Piper Mountain*) which develops content management (database-driven) systems for its customersⁱⁱ and they currently manage over 150 sites for libraries in 26 states.

Piper Mountain also helps its customer libraries connect with database providers (*such as research services*) a library may wish to offer their patrons. Piper Mountain also proffers opinions from other libraries re which database providers to chooseⁱⁱⁱ; suggestions for calendars; and, registration services.

Request Summary:

SPL has requested that we provide a proposal to:

- **Redesign their website** from the ground up with
- Emphasis on **easy access to information**, i.e., to organize the site better.

Goal:

The goal of this site redesign and the reorganization of information is to allow patrons **to quickly and easily find the exact information / items for which they are searching.**

Constraints:

- SPL will continue to use librarywebsites.com as their host provider, and
- Modifications to the site will be orchestrated with [developers at librarywebsites.com](http://librarywebsites.com) as necessary.

Current State SPL Website

The SPL site is template-driven with the goal of easy updatability by library staff—and having the content of the site easily maintained and updatable by library staff is still a main goal.

Librarywebsites.com provides the following services:

- Web hosting and domain management
- Website design
- Email
- Service and Support

They also provide additional offerings of:

- Content added pages
- Book displays
- Content catalog

Site Content—Organizational Schemes and Structures (*How information is categorized and structured*):

The SPL site uses several types of organizational systems, i.e., categories, which are both subjective and exact:

- By Audience (*ex: Adult / Youth*)
- Chronological (*such as "Monthly Features"*)
- Alphanumerical (*databases, some menus*)
- Priority, or Most Used / Accessed (*some menus*)

ⁱTown of Sharon, <https://www.townofsharon.net/about-sharon>, (2020)

ⁱⁱPiper Mountain Webs, <http://www.librarywebsites.com/learnmore>, (2020)

ⁱⁱⁱibid, <http://www.librarywebsites.com/community>, (2020)

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Site Labeling:

Labeling for the SPL site is descriptive, i.e., labels are named for the functionality they represent.

Site Navigation:

Navigation on the SPL site consists of:

- Top-down Hierarchical
- Persistent Global Primary Navigation (masthead)
- Secondary Navigation (section-specific; left side)
- Utility Navigation (top right):
 - ~ Search link (to external site)*
 - ~ Account link (to external site)*

*SPL uses *Old Colony Library Network*,ⁱ an organization of 28 independent libraries (26 public, 2 academic) to handle account set-up / maintenance and for searching the entire catalog of all the libraries. There is no site-specific search for just the SPL website.

Assessment:

The "Vision" statement for SPL declares that it is a *"destination which serves as a civic space encompassing the roles of public library, cultural arts center, and civic center"*ⁱⁱ, so along with all of the duties of a physical library, the SPL's website mission is to provide ease of access to all of their materials online via:

- The SPL website
- Connected to: Old Colony Network website; Massachusetts Libraries, etc., which provide many services
- Other additional connected (paid for) databases / learning experiences such as "Fine Arts" from Gale OneFileⁱⁱⁱ

Site Improvement Recommendations:

SPL offers a tremendous amount of data and services to their users. Following are our suggestions for site improvement and accessibility:

- **Redesign the Home / Landing page** to be more inviting and colorful with thematic elements that allows the user to quickly "scan" the page for relevant information.
- Design the page with "containers" that are **easy for staff to edit**.
- **Redefine the menu structure** for consistency and ease of use by analyzing the data content, doing user research to determine the best navigation and organization of menus and material.
- Define **content labeling** to be consistent.
- **Update all menus and contextual links** so that user does not get to a page where there is "no way back" except to use a browser's "back button".

Other Issues:

The following issues need to be developed now as they would be very difficult to add later, and at much cost:

- **Develop a visible search window for the SPL site** independent of the partnered 28 library shared catalog. This search would be local to the SPL site and links contained therein. This local search window should be labeled accordingly and distinctly from the "search" for the partner sites.
- **Develop a footer menu** which has information such as "hours open" and other frequently accessed / requested information. This area can also serve as a "site map" for SPL.
- **Add "breadcrumb" navigation menu** so that users always know where they are in the site.

ⁱ Old Colony Library Network, https://catalog.ocln.org/client/en_US/ocln/?, (2020)

ⁱⁱ Sharon Public Library, <https://www.sharonpubliclibrary.org/aboutmission.asp>, (2020)

ⁱⁱⁱ Gale, <https://www.gale.com/about>, (2020)

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Project Plan — Scope and Order of Activities

Scope

In the redesign of the Sharon Public Library website, we will provide “deliverables” at each stage of the design process. These deliverables will usually be in the form of a report that SPL stakeholders will approve before work begins for that phase of site development.

Each of the deliverables outlined in the phases below is necessary to correctly assess and develop the site for usability and accessibility. Timely approvals from SPL stakeholders will ensure the project stays on track and meets deadlines.

The “**Schedule of Activities**” on the next page outlines 5 phases that the redesign of the website will encompass and their timelines. Immediately below is a further explanation of each of these phases.

Phase 1:

The proposal submission and approval process. (*Work will commence when proposal is accepted and approved.*)

Phase 2:

- Field Research—done from the library side re observed usage of patrons.
- Literature Research—what/how other libraries have constructed their sites to serve library patrons.
- Draft Research Deliverables—draft of above research which includes: findings; developed persona(s), i.e., what a “typical” user-type is for various patrons; tasks the site should support.
- Final Research Deliverable
- Client Approval of Research Deliverable

Phase 3:

- Content Analysis—what current site content can be used “as is”; what will need to be “reworked” or “repurposed”; and what needs to be “created”.
- Choose Primary Classification Scheme—how the site will be organized.
- Client Approval of Primary Classification Scheme
- Develop Site Map—how the website will be constructed, i.e., what links to what; category naming; menus.
- Client Approval of the Site Map

Phase 4:

- Assess Information Architecture—using “Treejack” software, we will perform an analysis to determine the effectiveness of the labeling and taxonomy, i.e., have we named things correctly and can users find the information within the groups as designed?
- Client Approval of Information Architecture

Phase 5:

- Finalize Information Architecture design:
 - ~ Wireframes—hand- or computer-generated low-fidelity drawings that show the skeletal outline of the site pages, i.e., showing simple shapes with labels showing the functionality of the site.
 - ~ Results of Participant Sessions—our research on the effectiveness of the wireframe/site design.
- Client Approval of Wireframes
- Finalize and Submit Report

Project Proposal: Sharon Public Library (MA)**1 July 2020****Schedule (Order) of Activities**

The following chart is our agreed schedule of activities*.

Activity:	Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Phase 1 (Module 1)								1 July 2020
Proposal Submission and Acceptance		X						
Phase 2 (Module 2)								15 July 2020
Field Research: Interview Librarians (2) re: • Online Patrons and their Usage of the Library Site, (What they want to do and Why)			X					
Literature Research: • Archival Resources of Patron Usage			X					
Internal Draft Research Deliverable that includes: • Scope and Key Resources of Research • Copy of Research Protocol (Questions Asked) • Findings/Conclusions of Research • Persona(s) Developed • List of Tasks Site Should Support (by Task Priority and Persona)			X					
Final Research Deliverable: • See above.				X				
Phase 3 (Module 3)								22 July 2020
Perform a Content Analysis: • Existing Content — What can be used “As Is” or Re-purposed • Existing Content — Needs to be “Reworked” • Missing Content — Needs to be “Created”					X			
Choose Primary Classification Scheme: • Provide a description of the Classification Scheme chosen and why.					X			
Develop the Site Map • Labeling • Taxonomy for Classification Scheme					X			
Phase 4 (Module 4)								29 July 2020
Assess Information Architecture: • Analysis by “Treejack” software which will “Determine Labeling and Taxonomy effectiveness” • Make changes as necessary						X		
Phase 5 (Module 5)								2 August 7 August 12 August 2020
Finalize Information Architecture design: • Wireframes (2 August) • Results of Participant Sessions (7 August)							X	
Finalize and Submit Report (12 August)								X

*Above is our current agreed on schedule and is subject to change based on timely feedback from Sharon Public Library regarding deliverables, i.e., any delay in feedback can impact the timeline resulting in a revised timeline.

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Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to present this project proposal. We realize that redesigning the Sharon Public Library's website for functionality and accessibility will benefit many patrons and have a far-reaching impact.

The estimated timeline for the website redesign (after project approval) is 6 weeks with timely approval from stakeholders. Revisions of approved deliverables may add additional time to the schedule, and we will always let you know if changes have/will impact the timeline.

We look forward to working with you.