Using journey mapping to rethink and improve common Library activities

BC Libraries Conference May 2019

Janis McKenzie, User Experience Librarian, SFU Library. [janis@sfu.ca](mailto:janis@sfu.ca)

# Why this technique?

Journey mapping:

* helps us to get a fresh perspective on services and activities that we are too familiar with (defamiliarization)
* is simple (no special tech or tools required)
* helps you break down a user activity into small manageable (and actionable) pieces
* can help you link issues to appropriate areas of responsibility in your library
* breaks down silos when done collaboratively across library areas

# Our activity: creating a quick and dirty journey map

1. **Choose a “journey” (a specific activity).**

**Some examples:**

* 1. renew a book
  2. find out open hours for a specific day and/or location
  3. place a hold
  4. suggest a purchase
  5. request an interlibrary loan
  6. access an ebook (perhaps download an ebook)
  7. use a library workstation to create and print a document

1. **Create a “hypothesis map.”**

**Lay out ALL the steps a person (aka “actor” or “persona”) would need to take to complete this journey.**

For example, here are some possible steps\* for the journey “find a book on the shelf”:

* 1. get access to the Library catalogue (remotely or in person)
  2. search for the book in the catalogue
  3. identify the right item
  4. find the location and availability information
  5. interpret the location and availability information (e.g. “is it at this branch?” “is it in right now?” “what’s the popular reading collection?”)
  6. record the identifying and location information (e.g. call number and location – if necessary)
  7. log out of catalogue (if log in was required)
  8. find and go to the area of the library where the book should be
  9. find the section and shelf where the book should be
  10. find the book on the shelf.

\*Note: some of these steps are worth mapping as journeys of their own.

1. **Discuss with someone else. What surprised you? What did you miss?**

Use journey mapping to improve user experience at your library

# The process

1. **Choose a “journey”** (specific activity) – like renewing a book.
2. **Create a "hypothesis map" or list laying out ALL the steps our person (“actor” or a persona) would need to take to complete this journey.** Spell out what “should” happen, with all the details we usually forget about or put out of our minds.

For best results:

* do this collaboratively with staff who have responsibility for different parts of the process.
* create robust and complex **personas\*** to test out the journey.

1. **Get "real" data**, by observing users, or interviewing them, or by using other techniques (or a mix of them). This is where we usually discover that:

* real people don't do things the way we expect them to.
* our processes are more complicated than we expected.

1. **Write up the results** and create a new map.
2. **Review and share the results** in an active and participative way -- not just by sending out a report.
3. **Address the problems you’ve** **discovered**, working collaboratively with staff across areas of the library.

# \*Create robust and complex personas to test out your journey

Before you test with real people, write up some personas.

Make them as “complete” as possible by adding details about them, their lives, their work, their use of the library (or what they do instead of using the library), etc. What additional issues come up for these different personas?

Some examples and sample personas as starting points to flesh out:

* a keen/regular library user
* a student who is a single parent with multiple part-time jobs
* a business person who isn’t eligible for a free card and needs some quick research help
* someone who used to be a regular user but “everything has changed since then”
* someone who’s never been in your library before.

Add details about (for instance):

* the person’s work and/or studies
* family responsibilities
* cultural background, place of origin
* spoken and written language(s)
* how they usually get information (or leisure reading, or other library-type services)
* possible barriers to using library services, for instance:
  + anxiety about libraries or past bad experience with libraries
  + financial hardship
  + trouble using a mouse or a pen
  + visual impairment
  + using crutches
  + autism spectrum disorder
  + living with a new baby and sleep-deprived.