



SWAN Catalog Platform

Focus Group Overview and Recommendations

Sept 1, 2017

Overview



INTRODUCTION

Over the course of two days we conducted four focus groups at two different SWAN library locations. Overwhelmingly, participants loved the SWAN online catalog and used it several times a week, if not everyday. These patrons are experts at the system that works very well for them most of the time and when it does not, they have workarounds to find what they need.

Even though the feedback was mostly positive, we did discover some areas for improvement within the system. The following pages will hone in on feedback to address, ranging from simple fixes to more complicated back-end improvements.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **USERS ARE HAPPY**
Participants rated the catalog highly—consistently rating it a 7 or higher on a scale of 1-10.
- **SEARCH AND HOLD**
They use it primarily to search for and hold specific books.
- **THEY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT**
Participants use sources like Amazon, the New York Times Best Seller List/Book Review, and Goodreads to find ideas on what to read and then they try to find them in the SWAN system.
- **PRINTED AND AUDIO BOOKS MOST COMMON**
Printed books and audio books are the most common format types checked out by patrons. DVDs are next on the list.
- **EBOOKS HARD TO DOWNLOAD**
Patrons do not often download eBooks as they prefer printed books to reading on an iPad or Kindle, and patrons find downloading eBooks difficult in the SWAN system.
- **PLATFORM IS NOT RESPONSIVE**
Usability is not good on tablet or mobile phone. The system is not responsive.
- **SEARCH NOT HELPFUL TO USERS**
Most complaints fall within the site's search functionality. It is not particularly helpful or forgiving.
- **RESULTS ARE HARD TO PARSE AND SORT**
Within the search results, the sort feature is extremely slow and underutilized by patrons.
- **DVD INVENTORY**
Users complained about DVDs for television series not having all seasons. This is more an inventory issue, but thought it was worth mentioning.

Recommendations for Improved Usability



On the following pages, UI/UX and development recommendations are rated on a scale from 1-5—1 being the easiest/less time to complete and 5 being the most difficult/more time to complete. We suggest discussing these changes with SirsiDynix to further assess what is possible and the associated development costs.



SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY

Work with the company who created the SWAN online catalog to improve the search feature in the following ways:

- **SUGGESTED SEARCH -4**
Add suggested search as a feature when the user begins typing in their search.
- **INTUITIVE SEARCH - 4/5**
Modify the search back-end to be more forgiving of misspellings and imperfect entries and add auto-complete functionality as user types in search.
- **SEARCH RESULTS VISUAL TWEAKS -2**
Clearly show in the interface how the search results are populating (is it most relevant? If yes, then display that clearly at the top, near other ways to sort results.)
- **TWEAK/IMPROVE LEFT SIDE FILTERING -4**
There are more clicks and choices than necessary to filter results. Users expressed confusion with the “include/exclude” option. Many users did not realize its true function. Recommend simplifying this area to be more user friendly.
- **IMPROVE SORTING OF RESULTS -3**
Within search results, improve sort feature to work faster and/or add a “loading” overlay to show that sort is occurring. Currently there is no indication that anything is happening and could leave patrons to believe the sort doesn’t work.
- **HOME LIBRARY DEFAULT -2**
Within search result details, have the user’s default “home” library show first if a title is available there.
- **ADD LIBRARY ADDRESS/PHONE -2**
Within search result details, when libraries are listed to show where titles are available, add the ability to get address and phone number. Possible solutions are a tool-tip hover so show this information so users don’t have to search for the address on their own.



SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY CONT.

Work with the company who created the SWAN online catalog to improve the search feature in the following ways:

- **FORMATS FOR SAME TITLE - 5**
Within search results, use details to show different formats available (perhaps a drop-down to select) instead of having separate listings for the same title but just different formats.
- **USER RECOMMENDATIONS - 3/4**
In a search result detail, add feature to recommend other titles based on that title, ie. “You may also like...”
- **STAR RATINGS - 2**
Add star ratings to titles so user know if something is in bad condition.
- **FORMAT LABELS - 1**
Add word label to download icon to be consistent with other formats.
- **ADD AN “ADD TO MY LISTS” BUTTON - 1**
Within search results, add a button to “Add to My Lists” so users can easily save a book they may not be ready to put on hold yet.



ACCOUNT IMPROVEMENTS

There are several ways to improve the My Account functionality and add features that would help patrons in their day-to-day use of the site.

- **USER LOGIN - 2/3**

Change login from library card number to username or email—easier to remember when logging in.

- **FAMILY ACCOUNTS - 3**

Allow the ability for children to be listed within their parents account with separate lists.

- **HOME LIBRARY - 1**

Add ability to chose a default or “home” library.

- **HOLD END DATES - 3**

Within list of holds, add a column for end date for hold.

- **QUEUE FOR HOLDS - 3**

Within list of holds, add column to show status within queue for a hold, ie. Status number is 3 meaning there are 2 other people waiting to get the book before you.



MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS

Below is a list of improvements that don't fall into the larger categories already listed.

- **HOMEPAGE REDESIGN - 5**
Redesign the homepage to bring more curated, personalized content to the forefront. Users would like to see New York Times Best Sellers, Pulitzer, Amazon and Goodreads lists to help them find a book if they don't already know what they want and we should not hide this within a drop-down. Would also like to include recommendations to the user based on past checkouts.
- **ONLINE TUTORIAL - 5**
Tutorial click-through to show new users how to use the site and or existing users new features. Could also be executed by showing how-to videos.
- **EMAIL UPDATES TO USERS - 3**
Send email updates to users noting new features and functionality.
- **USER INTERFACE TWEAKS - 3**
Overall, the interface could have larger buttons and brighter colors to guide the user through the experience. Also consider taking out unnecessary elements that cause clutter.
- **FILE FORMATS - BOOKS - 3**
Add the distinct formats of Hard Cover and Soft Cover and allow users to chose. Many patrons voiced a preference and currently users are not able to filter or sort based on that.
- **FILE FORMATS - DVDS - 3**
Add the distinct formats of DVD and BluRay. Users mentioned receiving BluRays when they wanted DVDs and couldn't play BluRays on their device.
- **BOOK PREVIEW - 4**
Users mentioned they would like to be able to read first few pages of book like on Amazon or iBook.
- **RESPONSIVE DESIGN - 5+**
The SWAN online catalog is not responsive. Users expressed some frustration with this and express the desire for an app version. Either one of these are large endeavors and would take a very large rework of the catalog. It is worth thinking about wanting to take this leap at this juncture.



CONCLUSION

As you can see, we've received real, tangible feedback from these focus groups. Of all the feedback, improving the search functionality and results will have the greatest impact on users, like the ones we talked to.

There are other changes that would be easy to implement and some things that are more difficult and time-consuming. The next steps would be to meet with SirsiDynix to see which improvements are feasible and then discuss which things to focus on going forward.