eBook Usability Report
November 2019
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Summary

The usability study investigates how users of eBooks and audio are discovering and downloading titles made available from the Glen Ellyn Public Library. The study was conducted at the Glen Ellyn Public Library on November 14, 2019. Five participants brought with them five different devices to participate in the study. Robin Hofstetter, SWAN Electronic Resources Consultant, and Tara Wood, SWAN UX Manager, prepared and conducted the testing with assistance from Susan DeRonne from Glen Ellyn Public Library.

Although we recruited participants who had experience using eBooks and some within the past few days of the test, all participants without being prompted, stated they prefer print books. They expressed frustrations around hold times. All participants searched for titles using the online catalog within a browser. Only one had used the BlueCloud Mobile app, for easy scanning of their library card. While scrolling the length of the page of results, they searched for words like eBook, Kindle, and OverDrive. They didn't sort or filter easily or at all. None of the participants could remember how they heard of or knew the library had access to eBooks.

Because participants are driven by their device, we recommend changing the language in Enterprise to represent more app and device language rather than library and technical terminology. We also recommend providing eBook download instructions through an improved patron help site, as well as encouraging use of the BLUEcloud Mobile app. In the long run, we recommend offering a discovery layer that can combine records for different material types (I.e. "FRBR results") and an all-inclusive eBook app such as SimplyE. It is up to the individual library on how they wish to market their eBooks and audiobooks. Still, marketing could play a key role in recognition by patrons. Patrons prefer devices and apps with which they are familiar but are willing to try new.

Methods
We recruited participants through the Glen Ellyn catalog using a banner that acted as a clickable volunteer form. We asked if the participants had used eBooks and audio, what type of device they use to download titles, and if they would be willing to bring their device with them. We recruited adults using a variety of devices. We met at the library for about forty-five minutes for each participant. We gathered data by taking notes on ten interview questions, five tasks, and two follow up questions.

Participants

Five participants of varying ages were recruited with a variety of devices. All are avid users of the Glen Ellyn Public Library.

Participant	Device
A	iPad
B	Kindle Paperwhite
C	Samsung Galaxy tablet
D	Macbook
E	Kindle Fire

Testing Discovery and Access through Interfaces

Glen Ellyn provides access to the eBook and audio collections primarily through three possible access points including; the online catalog, (1) Enterprise for Glen Ellyn, (2) the heading for Digital Library on their website, and (3) directly through the vendor apps made available in the app stores.

Library Catalog

Figure 1 Enterprise online catalog for Glen Ellyn

Library Website

Figure 2 Digital Library drop down from the Glen Ellyn Public Library website

Library Apps

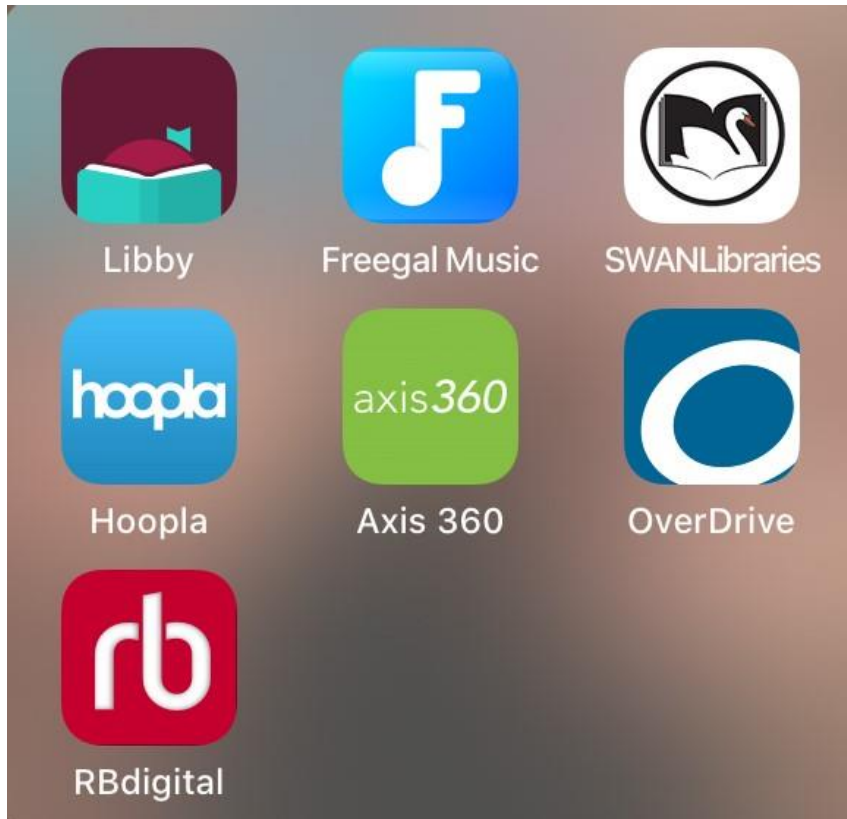*Figure 3 Library apps downloaded to a device*

Findings & Recommendations

Print Preferences and Combined Catalog Records

Each participant was a frequent visitor to the library. Although we specifically recruited participants who have experience using eBooks, they still prefer print. All five participants said they search the catalog in a web browser, and although one person had the Blue Cloud Mobile App loaded on their device, they still looked to the web browser for searching the catalog. All are looking for specific titles they've heard about and want to read. None of them were interested in browsing titles that are available now unless the title they specifically hoped to find was unavailable. For example, if the participant wanted to borrow the new Stephen King book, but the title is unavailable, they would borrow another Stephen King title that is available.

When they search the catalog, they do so from the Glen Ellyn search box on the library website that has a default setting to search all fields from all libraries. They scroll down the page looking for the title and expect to see different versions such as a book, large print book, ebook, audiobook, and DVD. Unprompted, four of the five participants said they would put the large print book on hold if they think they will be able to get that quicker. One also stated that although they believed SWAN was a great resource, but it slowed down the time of receiving the book they had placed on hold. Participants use eBooks not because they prefer the format, but because of convenience – they're available or easy to take on a trip. One participant who used Kindle said they like the convenience of the Kindle but would still prefer print. The participant was frustrated by seeing the same entry for the same title in multiple formats.

Four of the five participants scrolled up and down the results page looking for eBooks when given the task to find an eBook available now. Only one of the four who scrolled up and down the results page used the limit search results successfully, and one participant unsuccessfully used the limit search results. That participant limited to the author facet, which excluded eBooks, and struggled with the include and exclude functions. The fifth participant who didn't search the catalog for eBooks went directly to Hoopla on the Digital Resources page of the Glen Ellyn website. None of the participants were interested in audiobooks.

Recommendations

Combined records (4) has been a focus of the SWAN UX Team in research and development. In addition, the UX team should work with SirsiDynix to improve facets, many of which only apply to MARC records (e.g. Author, Fiction/Nonfiction).

Instruction on using the BLUECloud Mobile app (5) and how to download eBooks from the catalog will be available on the SWAN patron site in 2020.

The Clarity Task Force has tackled the issue of holds and has recommended both immediate corrective actions and long term strategic actions.
https://support.swanlibraries.net/system/files/SWAN_Clarity_Task_Force_Report.pdf
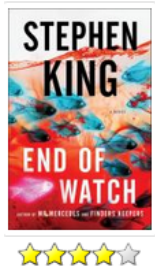
End of watch: a novel

Author:	Stephen King
Series:	Bill Hodges novels volume 3.
Pub. Date:	2016.
Language:	English

Book
Show Edition

On Shelf
Annex - Adult Fiction has 3 — Fiction King
Bellevue - Adult Fiction has 4 — Fiction King
Bordeaux - Adult Fiction has 2 — Fiction King
Quick Copy View

Place Hold

CD audio book
Show Edition

On Shelf
Bordeaux - Adult Audiobook — CD AUDIO Fiction King
Edmondson Pike - Adult Audiobook — CD AUDIO Fiction King
Green Hills - Adult Audiobook — CD AUDIO Fiction King
Quick Copy View

Place Hold

eAudiobook
Show Edition

Available Online
Online OverDrive Collection has 9
Quick Copy View

Check Out OverDrive

eBook
Show Edition

Available Online
Online OverDrive Collection

Check Out OverDrive

Large Print
Show Edition

On Shelf
Inglewood - Adult Large Print — Fiction King Large Type
Thompson Lane - Adult Large Print — Fiction King Large Type

Place Hold

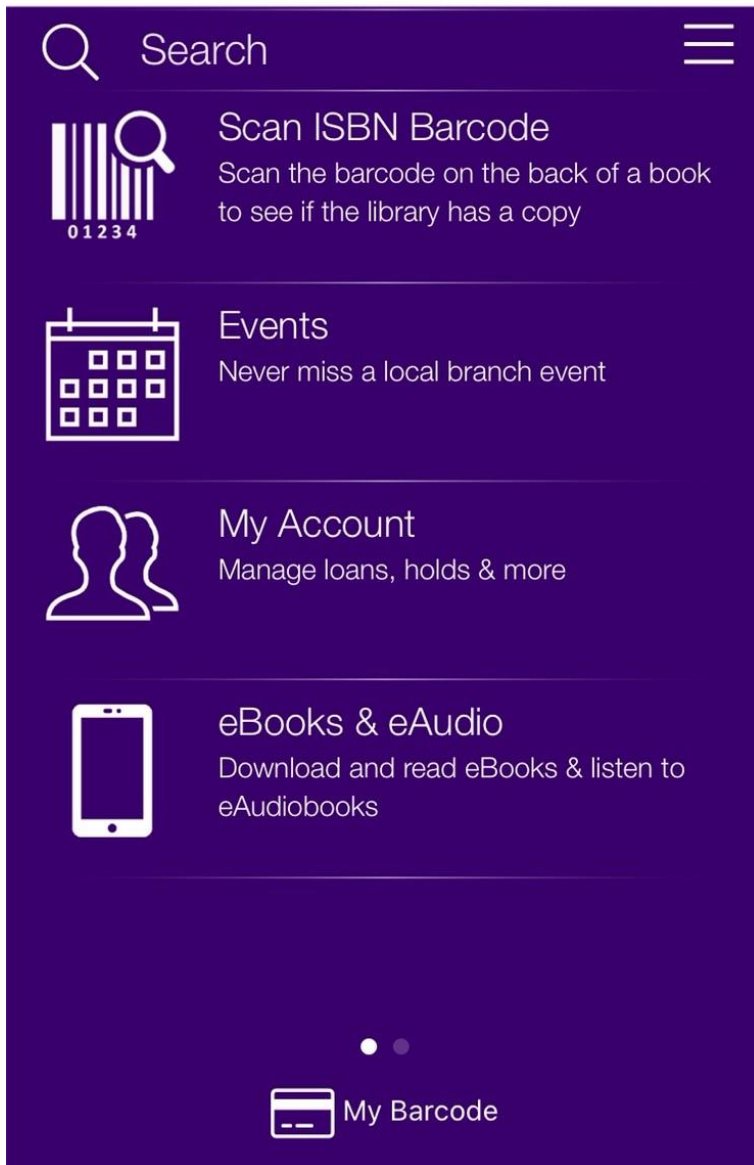*Figure 4 Nashville Public Library search results for Stephen King in PIKA*

Figure 5 Glen Ellyn BlueCloud Mobile App interface

Electronic Format

All participants said they prefer the device they brought with them. Kindle users prefer Kindle and Amazon, Apple users prefer Mac and iPhone, and the Samsung user prefers Samsung. There was confusion around what electronic format was compatible with their device, excluding Kindle. Kindle users understand to look specifically for Kindle in the downloadable format limiter because it is easily recognizable. The participant with the Kindle Fire did have Axis 360 loaded on their device but doesn't use it. The three other participants who did not use Kindle were using OverDrive, Axis 360, or Hoopla.

All participants, while searching the catalog looked to "Electronic Format" in the record to determine if or how the title was available to them but didn't vocalize the terms "Adobe EPUB, or Read in Browser (HTML)," they specifically were looking for vendors they recognized as app names. When given a list of vendors as a task and asked to tell us what they know on the list, the app names and OverDrive were known. Baker and Taylor and Axis 360 are the same vendor, but only Axis 360 is recognizable. Although all participants had seen and recognized OverDrive, only one was familiar with Libby, and none had used it.

Recommendations

Include less library terminology such as "Adobe EPUB," "Read in Browser (HTML)," and "PDF" in individual title records and more easily recognizable app terms such as Hoopla, OverDrive, Libby, RB Digital, and Kindle.

Rename the limiter (6) from "device" to "app" or "reader" and move it up to second in the limiter list underneath "format." Change the vendor name from Baker and Taylor (7) to Axis 360.

Include   Exclude

Years

Holds: 3   Copies at All Libraries: 1
No copies at Glen Ellyn Public Library. View copies at other libraries.

7. ☐   **The shining [videorecording]**   Place Hold
        Series Stanley Kubrick collection.
        by Johnson, Diane, 1934-
        Edition Standard version.
        Publication Date 2001

        DVD

        Holds: 0   Copies at All Libraries: 12
        No copies at Glen Ellyn Public Library. View copies at other libraries.

Any - Any

Device

Include   Exclude

☐ Axis 360   (45)
☐ Odilo App   (44)
☐ Kobo   (43)
☐ Nook   (43)
☐ Sony Reader   (41)
  ▸ More
  ▸ View All

8. ☐   **The shining [DVD videorecording]**   Place Hold
        Series Stanley Kubrick collection.
        by Johnson, Diane, 1934-
        Edition Full screen edition.
        Publication Date 2001

        DVD

        Holds: 0   Copies at All Libraries: 3
        No copies at Glen Ellyn Public Library. View copies at other libraries.

Language

Include   Exclude

☐ English   (1461)
☐ Spanish   (26)
☐ No linguistic content (21)
☐ French   (16)
☐ Japanese   (7)
  ▸ More
  ▸ View All

9. ☐   **The Shining**   Download
        by Laura Mee

        eBook

        Electronic Format: Hoopla eBook
        Available: 1

Subject

Include   Exclude

☐ Electronic   (442)

10. ☐ **The shining**   Place Hold
        by King, Stephen, 1947-
        Edition First Anchor Books trade paperback edition.

Figure 6 Limiter in Enterprise for "Device"

Figure 7 Baker and Taylor listed in the Vendor section of limiters in Enterprise

Discovery of New and Reintroduction of Older Platforms

None of the participants knew when or where they had heard of the apps they were using. One question asked if they would recommend to a friend to use the library eBooks. All of them responded that they would but wouldn't have a reason or avenue to tell anyone about the eBooks. One person said they had heard about Libby from a friend but didn't try it.

Recommendations

Library marketing and placement could be beneficial in discovery if eBook usage is essential to the library. One participant said she had heard of Freegal in a "seminar," and another said, "oh yes, Freegal, that's music." None of the participants remember how they heard about what they were using, and because none of them browse, they are unlikely to discover new apps on their own without introduction. Website placement, bookmarks, social media, and promotion through the catalog are good options for marketing. This is a great topic to explore in the E-Resource Advisory beginning 2020.

Additional Research

The participants would like to see their digital checkout history. SWAN can work with SirsiDynix to make this available.

SimplyE is an app that joins all eBooks and eAudiobooks using Adobe ID through one interface. SimplyE is a user-friendly option to the confusion over multiple apps and multiple logins. Connecting the BlueCloud Mobile app to SimplyE would further improve user experience.

Appendix:

Usability Testing Script

Introduction

Hello, and thank you for volunteering to be a part of our study today.

My name is Robin, and this is my colleague, Tara. We work for SWAN. You might be familiar with SWAN if you use the interlibrary loan service. We also work on access and discovery for the eBooks and audiobooks that are provided by Glen Ellyn. We make them available in the online catalog. Today we are here to study how those eBook and audiobook services are utilized. We are working to make that process more user-friendly, so thank you for being a part of this.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

Thank you for bringing your device. Today we are testing the methods used to download items from the library. The testing should take about forty-five minutes. We are not testing you but rather these specific library services. I'm going to ask you a series of questions that involve the process of downloading eBooks and audiobooks from Glen Ellyn. As we go through these questions and tasks, please let me know how you are doing, and please feel free to ask questions at any time. Also, if you don't want to perform the task or if you feel like quitting, please let me know. To understand more clearly, I would like for you to speak out loud anything you think or feel. Please say everything that is on your mind. I might also ask to follow up on questions about the statements that you have made. Again, we are not testing you, but instead, we are testing our process and how we can make that more user-friendly. The results of this test will be shared with the library, with other SWAN staff, the board, and vendors to improve our process. The results of this test are entirely anonymous. Any results we share will not have any personal information attached to it.

How does that sound?

Let's get started by signing this consent form that states that you are here to help us test the eBooks and audiobooks and that you consent to be here today.
[Insert consent form]

Interview Questions

1. Will you tell us about your device? When did you get it? Do you prefer one tablet, phone, device maker over another?

2. Do you use your library frequently? What types of material do you borrow? How often? When was the last time you borrowed an eBook or audiobook?

3. How did you find out that the library has access to eBooks and audiobooks?

4. How do you find the library's eBooks and audiobooks? For example, do you primarily use the device you brought with you, or you search the online catalog?

5. Do you have any frustrations about the experience of borrowing eBooks or audio, or is it typically easy for you? Would you recommend borrowing eBooks or eAudiobooks to a friend?

6. Have you ever placed holds on an eBook or an audiobook? How are you notified when your item is available?

7. When you have something that you've finished reading or listening to, do you let that title expire, or do you return it early?

8.   What apps have you used from the library? Are you open to trying new apps as the library adds them, or would you prefer to use the app you are most familiar with?

9. We're going to show you a list and tell us if you recognize anything on it. (Show a list of Freegal, Hoopla, Baker and Taylor, Axis360, Overdrive, RBDigital, Libby) Have you used any of these? How would you describe them? If you were searching in the library catalog and saw something you wanted that said Hoopla, what would you do?

10. Do you have a particular genre or favorite topic you enjoy reading or listening to?

Tasks

1. Our first task involves the favorite genre (if they don't have a favorite, then use Stephen King). Show us how you would search and download an eBook or eAudiobook.

2. Let's say you want to borrow something available right now and not have to wait. How would you find a title that is available now?

3. You mentioned that you (either had or had not) placed a title on hold. Please show us how you would place a hold on a title that is not available.

4. You mentioned that you (either had or had not) returned a title early once you had read or listened to it. Would you show us how you would return that first time that you downloaded? You don't need to return the item! Please borrow and enjoy it.

5. You said you've never used____ (vendor/app in interview questions 8 and 9). How would you start using ebooks from ____? (walk us through the process of starting with a new vendor).

Post-Test Questions

1. Do you have any comments or questions about our testing today?
2. After you completed all our questions and tasks, are there any suggestions you would like to give for improvements for access to eBooks and audiobooks?

Thank you so much for being a volunteer in our usability study today!