BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Guiding Users Through Multiple Discovery Platforms

Final Report 2023

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

PROJECT OVERVIEW & GOALS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Boston Public Library mission is dedicated to four main areas, including "reading and literacy, spaces and programs, reference and instruction, and special collections and cultural heritage." In order to uphold these principles, the Special Collections department wishes to improve their digital catalog search and guide patrons to their desired research materials. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the library took initiative to make more of their materials available digitally and thus began the long process of adding a variety of items to their digital catalogs. With this came updates and increased usage of the online search system and a need to make Special Collections more accessible to patrons, which was one of the platforms that was digitized.

BPL currently uses several discovery systems in order to organize their Special Collections materials digitally. This has caused issues wherein patrons are unable to identify different materials and artifacts that they are looking for. Currently, these platforms cannot be unified into a single one, so the goal is to improve the online navigation experience of the BPL Special Collections website to inform users about what these unique platforms contain and how they work, so it's been the case that individuals, especially those new to the platforms, struggle with using and navigating the systems. In the past, there was not a condensed online space that informed users about what these unique platforms contain and how they work, so it's been the case that individuals, especially those new to the platforms, struggle with using and navigating the systems. Thus, Special Collections' staff have often had to provide guidance, which can be time-consuming. As of now, however, the BPL has attempted to resolve this issue by creating a web page (www.bpl.org/special-collections/search/) that describes and provides links to each of their discovery platforms.

PROJECT GOALS

For this project, our primary goal is to provide a way for the BPL stakeholders to **more easily access and navigate Special Collections materials** offered through the multiple discovery platforms, which has discoverability effects on users as well as having impact on how staff assist users in finding content. This should allow users to spend less time figuring out the search system and more time accessing their desired content.

Another goal is to center our research and design around user needs and complaints. By conducting extensive user research, we hope to **highlight the primary concerns of current BPL patrons**. We will attempt to measure the success rates of users when finding desired materials and aim to make this process more intuitive.

Our final goal is to **improve the experience of Boston Public Library staff** wherein they will be able to spend less time directing patrons on how to use the Special Collections search catalog. One of the aims of our project is to ensure that the staff are able to similarly navigate the Special Collections pages easily.

Some of these goals can be summarized as:
- Assess users understanding of Special Collections mission, who they are, and what they offer
- Determine issues and pain points that familiar and new users encounter when finding and requesting materials
- Improve navigability and accessibility of information

02

RESEARCH PHASE

Research Plan, User Study Design & Materials

Usability Test/Interview Design

Usability Test/Interview Notes

Survey Design

Research and Requirements Report

RESEARCH PHASE

Research Goals

1. Gain insight on what motivates familiar users to use the Special Collections over other resources and positive aspects of the website

2. Better understand how familiar users go about finding and requesting materials

3. Better understand first impressions and assumptions of new users to the Special Collections search

4. Get a user flow that demonstrates how people (new and returning) find and request materials

5. Determine issues and pain points that familiar and new users encounter

Research Questions

1. What motivates users to access the BPL Special Collections materials?

2. Are users satisfied with the current process for finding and requesting Special Collections items online?

3. Do new users find the BPL Special Collections search intuitive? Can they successfully locate and request to access these materials either digitally or in the Reading Room?

4. What are the main pain points of using the current Special Collections search?

5. Can new users figure out how to ask for help if needed?

PLAN & METHODOLOGIES: SURVEY

Familiar Users

Familiar users are BPL Staff and BPL patrons, specifically authors, artists, and scholars who have **successfully identified what they are looking for and made it into the in-person reading room.** BPL used a list of people who have successfully made it to the in-person reading room in order to email out the survey to patrons. Additionally, they sent out the survey to other BPL staff members. The survey opened 1/25/2023 and closed roughly 3 weeks later.

Purpose

Because familiar users have experience navigating the Special Collections page and understand how they work, the survey questions focused on gaining insights into familiar users' thoughts, issues, and pain points from their **past experiences** rather than identifying specific usability issues with the Special Collections page.

Research Materials/Methodology

To learn more about familiar users' thoughts, issues, and pain points with using the Special Collections page, we used online surveying utilizing **Qualtrics**. We recruited members from the list of BPL patrons given to us by the Special Collections coordinating team. The questions asked whether patrons have been satisfied with their experience with the online search catalog, what aspects they like, what parts they found confusing, and how they have gotten help if needed (see survey link for entire list of questions). After revising our surveys according to instructor and peer feedback, we used Qualtrics to build the survey for optimal data analysis features. The survey link was sent out twice to staff.

Research & Requirements Report

SURVEY FINDINGS

Demographics

- BPL staff
- BPL patrons who successfully completed a Reading Room visit (emails saved by staff)
- BPL patrons who have recently visited the Reading Room (QR code in physical library)

Theme	Findings
Finding materials/discovery tools	- Difficulties with filtering through collections and accessing information quickly "I had trouble understanding how to accomplish the several steps." - Familiar users find that clear discovery tool headers and descriptions are majorly important - Images and descriptions may not be recognizable to all demographics "Well, I am old enough to know what a card catalog is, but I suspect other users won't know..." "I'm old enough to know what a card catalog is and how it works, but I wonder if others are...."
Getting Help	Several users either access or search for tips on the Special Collections web pages and/or talk to a librarian, archivist, or curator
General Navigation Issues	- Users believe that BPL's Special Collections web pages are mostly easy to navigate, but general confusion about Special Collections' tools still exists "I think the images for the different departments and research centers help communicate their purpose..." "Satisfactory, but not as accessible as other archival searches" - Users don't believe that Special Collections is featured prominently on the BPL main website

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Familiar Users

Affinity Diagramming

Preliminary Analysis

Based on our quantitative findings from our survey, users had the least success with the tasks that pertained to getting started with finding items and requesting the item for a Reading Room visit. We had originally assumed most participants would have the most difficulty making the connection between the Special Collections page and the Reading Room Request page; however, **our findings suggest that most participants struggle with the initial steps of how to find or how to request items.**

Where familiar users understand special collections and how to navigate between the website, different platforms, and discovery tools to find what they want, unfamiliar users aren't aware of how to use special collections and navigate the complexities of the different platforms. With this in mind, our design requirements had a heavy focus on discovery tools and general navigation as well as the process of requesting materials.

PLAN & METHODOLOGIES: USABILITY TESTING

Unfamiliar Users

Unfamiliar users are BPL patrons who **don't have previous experience with navigating the department's corresponding website**. These individuals include students, scholars, authors, and artists who are interested in using BPL's Special Collections.

Purpose

These users had **varying experience using library services,** especially with Special Collections and Reading Room services for in-person appointments. Their unfamiliarity with using the website means that they had no background on how the discovery platforms or Reading Room appointment creation for BPL worked.

Research Materials/Methodology

We recruited interviewees through convenience sampling due to time constraints and difficulties with reaching out to those living in Boston remotely. Our team tried to find users with varying degrees of knowledge with library and technical systems, ranging from working adults outside the university, students with research experience, to Special Collections Librarians at the University of Michigan. Questions focused on **qualitative observations and initial impressions of the search catalog.** We created a script that explains our list of tasks, research objectives and follow-up questions after the tests are complete. We conducted interviews both in-person with close observation of task completion and remotely on Zoom with screen sharing capabilities. Tasks included finding specific areas of the Special Collections page, completing specific search tasks, and scheduling a Reading Room appointment.

Research & Requirements Report

USABILITY TEST FINDINGS

Demographics

- 5 University of Michigan students
- 2 University of Michigan Special Collections librarians
- 2 Adults with less research/library experience

Quantitative Findings - Task Success Rate

Navigating to where to get help from BPL staff

9/9

Creating a request for a Reading Room appointment

3/9

Locating where to make a Reading Room appointment for the first time

3/9

Navigating to the "Search & Discover" page (and finding the discovery tools)

3/9

Finding a department's search guide

4/9

Locating where to make a Reading Room appointment after finding an item

8/9
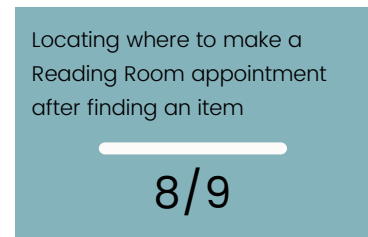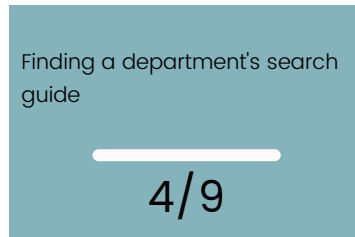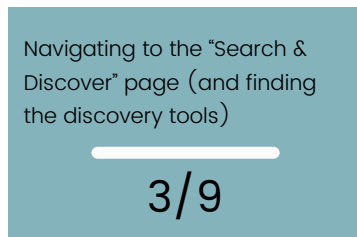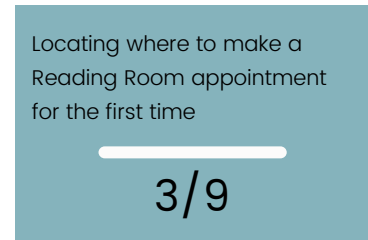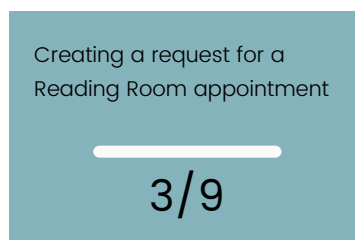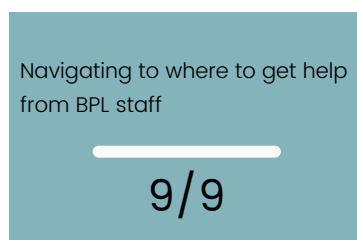
Rainbow Spreadsheet

Based on the below rainbow spreadsheet and comments from our participants, we developed quantitative and qualitative findings that informed our design requirements.

Interview Rainbow Spreadsheet	P1 Jason	P2 Alex	P3 Maddie	P4 Alex	P5 Jason	P6 Dani	P7 Dani	P8 Alex	P9 Maddie	General Comments / Observation
Collections page from BPL Home	X		X				X			P3 - Took a long time, scrolled through whole page, tried footer first and tried "visit" link before finding it under "Books & More"
arch & Discover" page (finding the Discovery Tools)			X	X			X			P7 - Went to Use Our Collections page because they thought it made more sense to go there to search for items
de					X		X	X		P7 - Went to archives.bpl.org and thought searching guide was the search bar on the page
help and support from staff										P4 - Mentioned making in-person appointments rather than email request
ke a Reading Room appointment	X		X						X	P1 - Made appointment through normal BPL (didn't understand difference between BPL and Special Collections
: Special Collections' item		X	N/A		X				N/A	P5 - Had issues with finding an item due to filtering (took a while)
in Reading Room account after finding an item				X						
ling Room request		X		X		X				P6 - Needed suggesting to go back to New Requests page to find correct link for requestin materials form

USABILITY TEST FINDINGS

Qualitative Findings

FInding	Evidence
Confusion regarding information on the "Search & Discover" page	• Many users (P1, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8) found images and descriptions not informative enough in differentiating the multiple platforms and explaining what they include (ex. Digital Commonwealth)
Issues finding and using the multiple discovery tools	• A few users (P3, P4, P7, P9) struggled with knowing that they could go to the "Search & Discover" page to learn about and/or proceed to the different discovery platforms (ex. one user thought that it was more obvious to go to the "Use Our Collections" page to search for items) • Some users (P3, P7) weren't sure how to use the tools after navigating to them
Navigation problems with requesting to view materials via the Reading Room	• Users sometimes struggled with knowing that they had to go to their Reading Room account to request an item (P6) or how to get there (P2) • Many users (P2, P5, P6, P8) had difficulties with knowing where to go within their Reading Room account to request an item because they thought the links were hard to find • One user (P1) didn't know the difference between Special Collections and the general BPL
General navigation difficulties on the BPL's website and Special Collections pages	• Users (P1, P2, P3, P5, P7) would often head to incorrect pages due to misunderstanding labels • Many users (P1, P3, P4, P9) struggled with finding the Special Collections section from the BPL's website home page • Some users either didn't know what departments within Special Collections were (P5, P8) or were unfamiliar with what research guides were (P7) • Users (P2, P8) experienced difficulty in navigating between pages

ANALYSIS OF USABILITY TEST FINDINGS

Unfamiliar Users

One new insight we garnered was that getting to the Special Collections page itself from the BPL home was challenging for a majority of our users. This likely tells us that we need to alter the navigation bar and labeling on the Special Collections pages to be more clear.

Affinity Diagramming

Preliminary Analysis

On tasks relating to the "Search & Discover" page and the discovery tools, unfamiliar users faced difficulties with both due to confusion regarding the content and purpose of the page and tools. This was a clear indication that the images, descriptions, and general content was not informative and clear enough to the user – they were unable to understand what was on the page and how to select and navigate the tools available. This suggests that, as the main aspect of Special Collections for finding materials, **the images, descriptions, and content on the "Search & Discover" page and the discovery tools need to be clearer and more recognizable to the user.**

PERSONAS

Familiar Users

Primary Persona | Familiar BPL Patron

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION   BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

George Fisher, *Researcher & Scholar*

"The BPL's Special Collections contains historical documents vital to my research, including documents not held anywhere else. This makes it an invaluable resource."

About
- Local Boston native and BPL patron
- Passionate about history, books, and archival materials
- Specific focus around U.S. History during the Revolution and Civil War time period

Goals
- Discover and gain information for various research projects and work
- To learn and expand knowledge on various history and art topics
- Find specific rare materials that can't be viewed elsewhere

Motivations
- Wants to discover and research historical documents and archives
- Find historical information through primary resources for research projects and work
- Explore BPL's vast collection

Needs & Frustrations
- Needs to access information quickly
- Needs to better understand
- Has difficulty finding Special Collections because it's not featured clearly on main BPL page
- Difficulty understanding content in Special Collections

Primary Persona | BPL Staff Member

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION   BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mary Reed, *Librarian, Archivist, Curator*

"I usually just direct them to the Special Collections reception area either by phone or in person visitors. I also try getting callers to email the Special collections department."

About
- Local Boston native and a BPL staff member
- Passionate about archival and art materials
- Often helps BPL Patrons discover, find, and request archival materials

Goals
- To help BPL patrons find, identify, and request materials that they are looking for
- Create a positive experience for patrons when searching and viewing archival materials

Motivations
- Help patrons find what they are looking for in an efficient and supportive way
- Make the Special Collection pages easier for patrons to use
- Motivated by passion for sharing and learning about special collections materials

Needs & Frustrations
- Special Collections page is difficult to use at times (even for familiar users)
- Not being able to find the correct information to help patrons
- Needs an easy way to direct patrons to the correct staff member or department

Unfamiliar Users

Primary Persona | Unfamiliar BPL Patron

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION   BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Anna Harte, *Full-time business women*

"Finding Special Collections took me a bit of time because the tabs didn't match my assumptions of what it would be under. Now that I know what the Special Collections are it makes more sense."

About
- Local Boston native and occasional BPL visitor
- Passionate about their work and learning new things
- Less experience and familiar with library systems and special collection materials

Goals
- Explore unique archival and arts materials that can't be found elsewhere
- Expand knowledge in areas of interest from a unique historical perspective

Motivations
- Wants to learn more about Special Collections and BPL more generally
- Wants to explore BPL's vast collection
- Wants to feel more connected to BPL and support local libraries

Needs & Frustrations
- Doesn't know the Special Collections exists
- Needs to know the difference between BPL and Special Collections
- Unfamiliar with search and filtering functionalities

VALUE PROPOSITIONS & USE CASE SCENARIOS

Value Proposition	Use Case Scenarios (As a user, I want to...)
Have Special Collections page more accessible from BPL home	As a user, I want to be able to find desired tools from the home page without trying multiple navigation bar options.
Iconography to improve ease of navigation	As a user, I want to have clear indications of where links and buttons go on the website.
More clear images, headers, and descriptions	As a user, I want to be able to find desired tools from the home page without trying multiple navigation bar options.
Make the bottom of the Search & Discover Page more interactive	As a user, I want to be able to quickly navigate at both the top and bottom of the page.
Have a link to the Reading Room instructions page on the Search & Discover Page	As a user, I want to be able to quickly be able to make appointments.
More easily identify, find, and request archival and arts materials	As a user, I want to be able to quickly find what I am looking for.
Clarifying different departments within Special Collections	As a user, I want to filter my search based on departments to better narrow in on what I am looking for
Include breadcrumbs to easily back track	As a user, I want to easily go back to previous pages that I was on.

DESIGN/UX REQUIREMENTS

No. 01 — Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)

The Search & Discover page has the Discovery Tools, which is the main way for users to find what they are looking for. Users struggled to discern differences between the tools and figuring out which ones to access. Based on this requirements we will helped address the main paint points relating to the clarity and navigation issues with the Discovery Tools.

No. 02 — Requesting Materials

To access Special Collections materials, patrons need to request to view them in-person in the Reading Room or online. We found that there was confusion regarding where to find information on requesting materials. This requirement aims to make the system more intuitive for users to make appointments for the Reading Room after finding materials.

No. 03 — General Navigation

General navigation was a common issue. Users struggled to find the Special Collections and Search & Discover pages, looking for information about making Reading Room appointments, and scrolling through content. To address these navigational issues, we prioritized making information more recognizable through hierarchy and visuals.

No. 04 — Design Aesthetics & Emotional Response

Issues regarding organization and aesthetic preferences were raised in our user tests. This requirement aims to address issues with image clarity, descriptions, organization of the Search & Discover page, and other adjustments with the intention of making information more appealing.

03

DESIGN PHASE

Design Ideation FigJam

Figma Low/Mid Fidelity Prototype

Figma High Fidelity Prototype

Design Report

DESIGN PROCESS
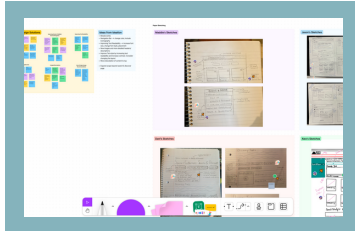
Unfiltered Ideation & Sketching
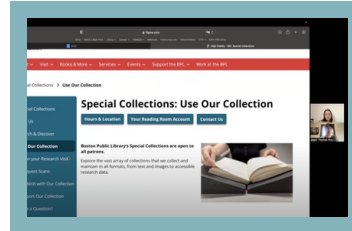
Low/Mid Fidelity Testing

1 — 2 — 3 — 4
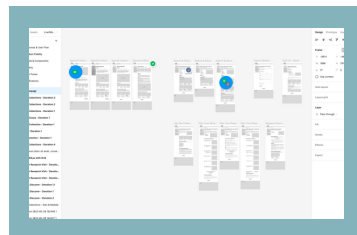
Low/Mid Fidelity
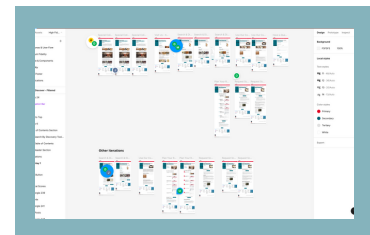
High Fidelity

After conducting our UX research and defining several key Design/UX requirements (including navigation, material requests, and aesthetic decisions), we started our process by doing unfiltered ideation and sketching out several ideas of how to redesign the Special Collections portion of the Boston Public Library website. Our progression then moved onto low and mid fidelity prototypes where we worked as a team to utilize the feedback from our surveys and usability testing as well as feedback from classmates and professors. This was in order to make sure we took into account as many perspectives as possible and reflected on our work.

Our final design also used insights from informal Qualitative Assessment with the mid fidelity prototype using convenience sampling. Finally, we cleaned up the prototype to follow the style guidelines as closely as possible with final adjustments made from the testing and class standup feedback. This was done in order to constantly improve and iterate on our initial ideas and research results.

UNFILTERED IDEATION & SKETCHING

Our team started with conducting unfiltered ideation based on our research results to identify potential solutions and improvements that we could incorporate into our redesign. Through this exercise we compiled these various design ideas discussing the ones that we collectively believe would be most effective and in line with our UX Requirements.

Requirement	Design ideation Theme	Idea
Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)	• Improving Search & Discover • Images/Descriptions	• Emphasize search by department/ tools • Clarify descriptions of tools • Specify tools purpose
Requesting Materials	• Improve System Visibility/General Navigation • Improve Text Readability	• Highlight buttons quick links • Bold or highlight information • Breadcrumbs
General Navigation	• Images/Descriptions • Left Navigation Bar • Improve System Visibility/General Navigation	• More clear headers • More visible back to top button • Breadcrumbs
Design Aesthetics & Emotional Response	• Images/Descriptions • Visual Identifiers • Text Readability	• Recognizable or representative images/visuals • Break up large text

UNFILTERED IDEATION & SKETCHING

We took these ideas and translated them into wireframe and main screen sketches doing them individually by hand then compared and discussed them as a group. They were used in order to inform our lo-fi wireframes and prototype by finding common themes and connections that we wanted to use. Our persona needs and use case scenarios also helped inform what common threads and improvements.

Design Ideation FigJam
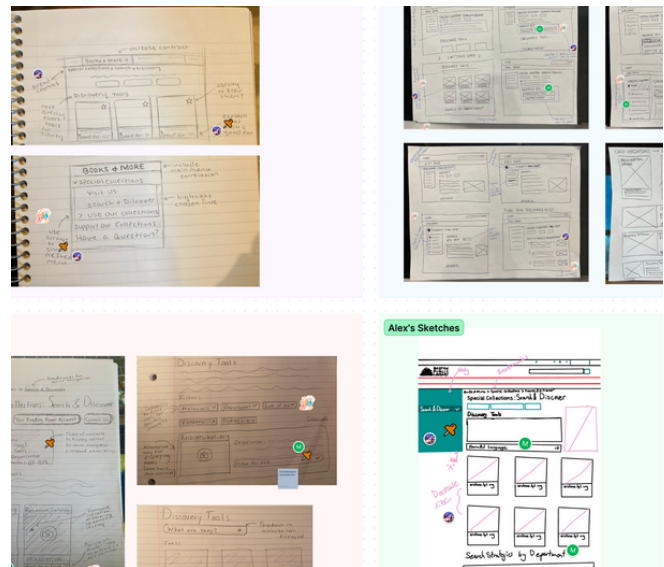
LOW/MID FIDELITY

Based on our unfiltered ideation and sketches we translated these ideas into low/mid fidelity wireframes. We made created a high level user flow to ensure that we focused our design on the main screens. We also didi various iterations of the main screens for both feasibility in regards to BPL constraints as well as exploring different design ideas.
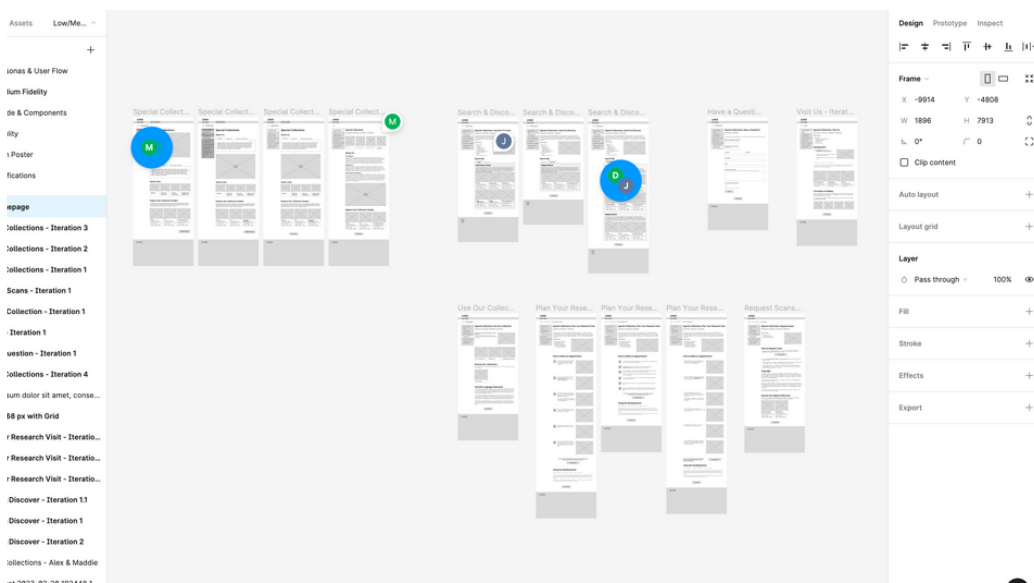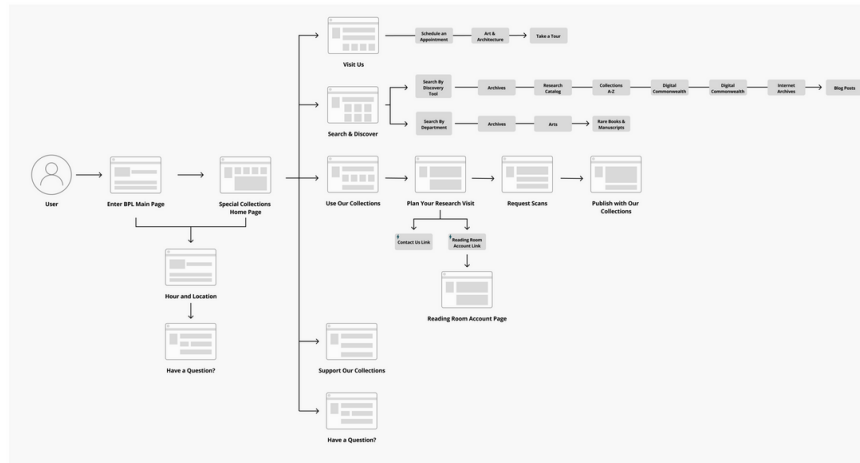
[Figma Low/Mid Fidelity Prototype](#)

LOW/MID FIDELITY TESTING

For user testing, we used convenience sampling due to time and material constraints. We asked users to give their impressions of the low/mid fidelity prototypes compared to the current webpage design. Participants specifically look at the Search & Discover, Special Collections Home, and Plan Your Research Visit pages that we provided our first iterations of. From this, we were able to provide a list of common themes that users liked in our designs or still found confusing.

Webpage	Requirement Addressed	Findings
Search & Discover	Discovery Tool Navigation, General Navigation	• Table of Contents was strongly liked • Back to Top button was more clear in new position • Liked how condensed tab view was but should be more clear why it is broken into two sections
Special Collections Home	General Navigation	• Quick links at top is good (possibly consider getting rid of images and making them buttons or icons) • About Us at top was preferred • Tab view preferred
Plan Your Research Visit	Requesting Materials, Aesthetic & Emotional	• White Space helps break up the text • Big numbers helpful but balance between size of numbers and text ◦ "seems a bit overwhelming"; "maybe because not colored" • Alter the layout and sizes of the images with text to be more proportional • Have a Question Button is good but in awkward positioning
General	General Navigation, Aesthetic & Emotional	• Use icons to balance visuals and text • Breadcrumbs were useful • Users less likely to read when heavy text • Minimize large bodies of text ◦ "When a bunch of writing on page I'm just not gonna read it" • Likes pictures that are representative

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The second part of the user testing further helped address our requirement regarding aesthetic & emotional. It included an image sorting exercise to determine the aspects that make an effective visual. We selected 7-16 images for each of the main Discovery Tools and Departments on Special Collections and asked users to choose the one they thought best represented the category after reading out a brief description of each. From this, we were able to find some recognizable images to suggest as well as some suggestions for additional photos that BPL can take in the future to improve the images. We late did a second round of qualitative assessment.

Disocvery Tool	Findings
Archives	- People interacting with the materials - Older books relate to archives - Interactive and is warm (more inviting). Demonstrates what someone would be doing.
Research Catalog	Thinks card catalogs represent searching for something
Collections A-Z	- Images that demonstrate categories - Images that show a whole library are a representation of all collections
Digital Commonwealth	- Mix between physical and digital is more abstract/interpretive - Logo is more clear and helps to distinguish between digital commonwealth and internet archives
Internet Archives	Liked logo when unsure of what the tool was
Blog Posts	Participants liked pictures relating to writing, specific artifacts, stuff that is at the Special Collections reading room

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Department	Findings
Archives	• General collections are ok • Departments represent a variety • Has a vintage vibe that fits BPL
Arts	• Images with more color • Images that show a collection of art or a variety of what was labeled as such.
Rare Books & manuscripts	• Shows old collections. Shows the rare books feel. How rare and special these collections are • Gloves caught participants attention (demonstrate rarity of archives) • Old books were shown - feels more like they are rare that way

Based on our qualitative assessments above, the key aspects that contribute to the improvement of the images on the BPL Search & Discover page when it comes to the Discovery Tools and Departments include:

- Warm color scheme/style and editing because it is inviting and what they imagined archival department to look like
- Interactivity is important because showing people Interact with items is a visual representation of demonstrating what someone would be doing
- For Digital Commonwealth and Internet Archives Logos were effective and help distinguish between the two with the help of a clear description
- Department images can be more general and should represent a wide variety of materials

1st Round QA Notes

2nd Round QA Notes

Website Images for QA

HIGH FIDELITY

Our final prototype design was created using the user testing feedback from our low and mid fidelity models. We also finalized our prototype using additional style guidelines and information from the official BPL website standards.

In order to address the project and UX requirements, we had a high priority of making sure that users could quickly navigate to Search & Discover and other key pages from the side navigation.

Some of the key design choices that we made throughout the design phases:

- **Special Collections Home:** We reorganized the hierarchy and order of information to better convey to patrons what Special Collections is, the purpose, and who they serve.
- **Search & Discover:** We organized the Search By based on Discovery Tool and Department using the Tab system as well as incorporated a filter by tag system to make finding items more clear for users.
- **Plan Your Research Visit:** We separated the steps with larger numbers, headers, and annotated images to clarify the find and request process and allow for easier readability.
- **General:** We incorporated more representative visuals and iconography for increased ease of navigation. We also added a Table of Contents as a way for users to preview the information on the page.
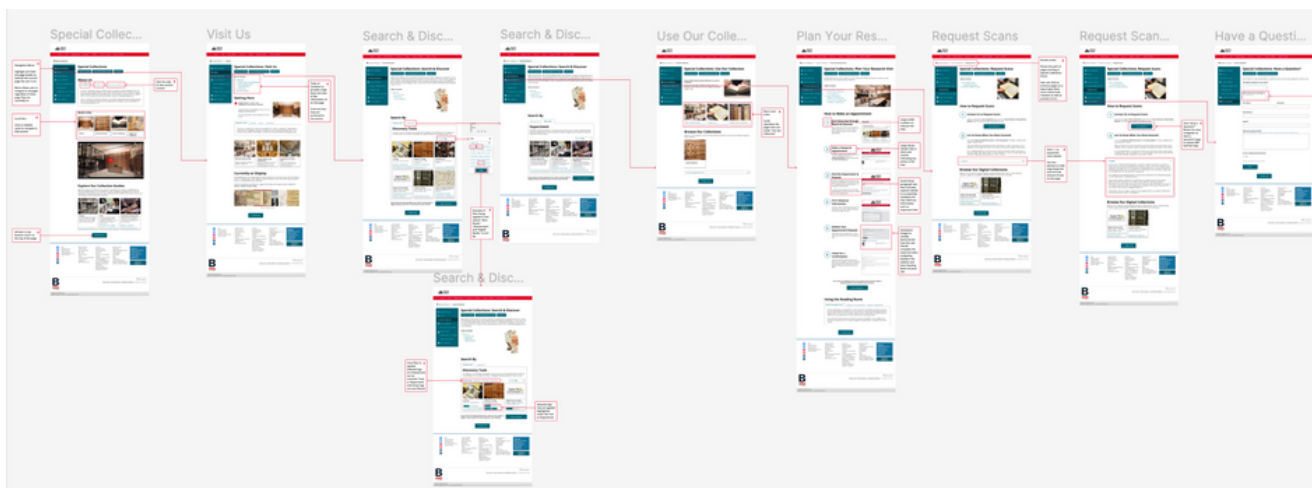
Figma High Fidelity Prototype

04

EVALUATION PHASE

Usability Testing Study Design

Design Ideation FigJam

PROCEDURE & MATERIALS

Study Design

Usability Testing

The usability test starts with a short introduction to the study and Boston Public Library website. We then asked screening questions about their experience with library materials and research for demographic purposes.

The tasks for this section includes users going through the prototype to access the redesigned pages and making judgments about how easy it is to find them and access information. Our interview script is an adapted version of our initial user research script in order to evaluate how effective the changes made to the website were to improve user concerns. Materials for this interview are the Figma prototype and Zoom for any remote interviews.

We attempted to mitigate bias by alternating whether we showed the current BPL website or our prototype screens first for the qualitative assessments. Additionally, we tried to recruit those who had some knowledge of library systems in order to more accurately judge comprehensibility compared to other platforms or services.

After conducting our usability tests and qualitative assessments, we came together to compile our research findings. From our usability tests, we calculated the success rate of the tasks and connected them to our previously mentioned UX requirements.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

UX Requirement	Task	Completion Rate
Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)	Navigating to "Search & Discover" page	6/8
Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)	Using the Filter System to narrow in on correct tools to search	4/8
Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)	Finding department's searching guide	8/8
General Navigation	Finding where to go if one has a question	8/8
Requesting Materials	Learning about how to make a Reading Room appointment	8/8
Requesting Materials	Following appointment instructions to Reading Room Account page	7/8

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Furthermore, we came together to use affinity diagramming to find consistent themes across our interviewees. Our results gave us a set of small adjustments to be made as well as new features that showed improvement in user experience.
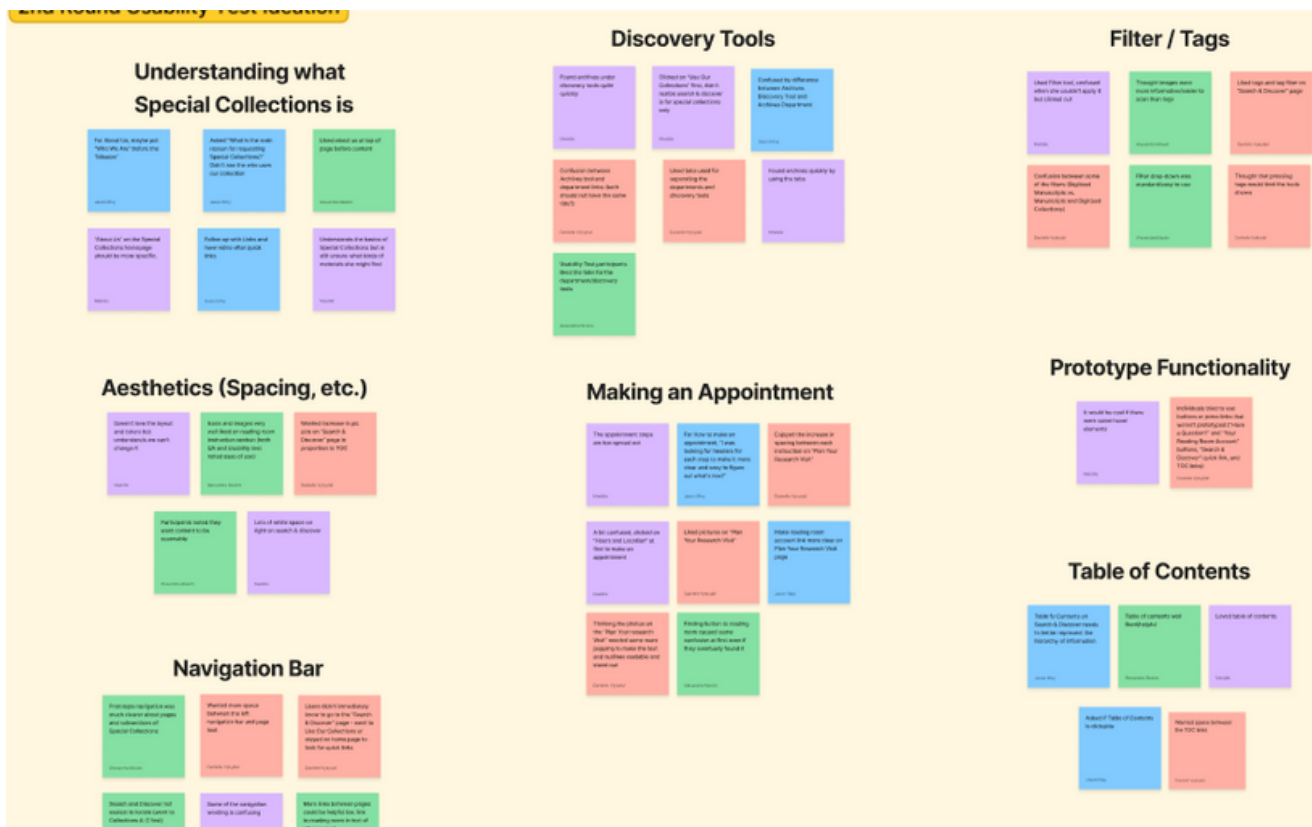
We were able to find numerous similarities between our participants and matched these to our UX Requirements. We focused on issues of navigation, aesthetics, material requests, and discovery tool adjustments in order to determine which prototype additions were most well received.

Design Ideation FigJam

RESEARCH PATTERNS

No. 01 — **Discovery Tool (Search & Discover)**

Discovery Tools
- Confused about the difference between Archives Discovery Tool and Archives Department
- Wanted increase in pic size on "Search & Discover" page in proportion to TOC

Filter/Tags
- Clarify filter system and allow users to apply the filter
  - Thought pressing tags would limit the tools shown
- Confusion about what some of the tags are

No. 02 — **Requesting Materials**

Making an Appointment
- Appointment steps a little too spread out
- "I was looking for headers for each step to make it more clear and easy to figure out what's next"
- Photos need more emphasis to make the text and outlines readable and stand out

No. 03 — **General Navigation**

Understanding What Special Collections is
- For About Us, maybe put "Who We Are" before the "Mission" to give more context on what Special Collections offers
- Follow up with Links and have video after quick links
- "About Us" on the Special Collections homepage should be more concise and specific.

Navigation Bar
- More space between navigation bar and page content
- Confusion with wording of sections and ...
- Users didn't immediately go to Search & Discover. Went to Use Our Collection first to find materials

RESEARCH PATTERNS

Table of Contents
- Table of Contents on Search & Discover needs to better represent the hierarchy of information
- Asked if Table of Contents is clickable
- Wanted space between the TOC links

Prototype Functionality
- It would be cool if there were some hover elements
- Individuals tried to use buttons or press links that weren't prototyped

Breadcrumbs
- Thinks breadcrumbs should be on home page to maintain consistency

No. 03 — **Aesthetics & Emotional Response**

Iconography
- "Because I am a fast reader, I would look to the icon immediately"
- The 3 arrows under use our collections "why are the 3 arrows part of the navigation menu?" instead or arrows different icons, maybe more color

Table of Contents
- Table of Contents on Search & Discover needs to better represent the hierarchy of information
- Asked if Table of Contents is clickable
- Wanted space between the TOC links

Prototype Functionality
- It would be cool if there were some hover elements
- Individuals tried to use buttons or press links that weren't prototyped

Breadcrumbs
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ADJUSTMENTS TO FINAL DESIGN

According to our affinity diagramming exercises, there was the most room for improvement in the general hierarchy of pages and contents. In other words, the clarity of the distinction of page elements and the relationship between page elements. This mostly manifested in the discovery tools/departments, "How To Make An Appointment" steps, and table of contents.

The adjustments to our final design will be primarily informed by the suggestions and common themes found in our final round of usability testing and qualitative assessments.

Some changes we plan to make include:

- Introducing headers to make step by step directions to reading room reservations easier to follow
- Make a collection of suggested images for BPL
- Edit selected images to exhibit consistent warmth, saturation, sharpness, etc.
- Alter table of contents on each page to better reflect page content and structure
- Add functionality for "apply" button for tag filter

These changes will ultimately increase the usability of navigation, improve image quality, and generally refine the prototype so that it is ready to hand off to our clients. Introducing headers to step-by-step directions for reading room reservations and altering the table of contents on each page will help make content more easily scannable and make content hierarchy more intuitive. By making a collection of suggested images for BPL and editing selected images for warmth, saturation, sharpness, etc., we will make images more descriptive, consistent, and visually appealing. Lastly, in adding functionality for the "Apply" button for tag filter, we will tie up any loose ends in our prototyping and interactions on Figma.

05

FINAL DESIGN/PROTOTYPE

[Figma High Fidelity Prototype](#)

[Interaction Flow](#)

[Figma UX Specifications](#)

[UX Specifications Detailed Slide Deck](#)

HOME & VISIT US PAGE

Navigation Menu:

Highlight and bold the page header to indicate the current page the user is on.

Menu allows user to navigate to all pages regardless of what page they are currently on

Card links:

Click on labeled cards to navigate to that section

All back to top buttons return to the top of the page.

Click the tabs to view section content

Table of Contents

Table of Contents to provide a high level overview of the information of on the page.

Click the links that are anchored to the section

SEARCH & DISCOVER PAGE

Example of filter being applied if user selects "Rare Books", "Manuscripts", and "Digital Books" to sort by.

Once filter is applied selected tags are showed and can be removed. Tools or Department with those tags are now filtered

Selected tags that are applied highlighted under the Tool or Department

USE OUR COLLECTION PAGE

Boston Public Library

About ⌄ Visit ⌄ Books & More ⌄ Services ⌄ Events ⌄ Support the BPL ⌄ Work at the BPL

🏠 Special Collections > Use Our Collection

Special Collections: Use Our Collection

[Hours & Location] [Your Reading Room Account] [Contact Us]

🏠 Special Collections

📍 Visit Us

🔍 Search & Discover

📖 Use Our Collection

> Plan your Research Visit

> Request Scans

> Publish with Our Collection

ℹ️ Support Our Collection

❓ Have a Question?

Boston Public Library's Special Collections are open to all patrons.

Explore the vast array of collections that we collect and maintain in all formats, from text and images to accessible research data.

Plan Your Research Visit   Request Scans   Publish With Our Collections

More Card Links: ⚡

Cards represent the pages that are under "Use Our Collection"

Browse Our Collections

Browse our vast collections of archival and arts materials available to visit in person or digitally through our online collections.

Search & Discover

Harmful Language Statement   +

↑ Back to Top

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Branch Libraries
Central Library
Holiday Closures
Art & Architecture Tours
Capital Projects

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Concerts in the Courtyard
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Library Card Registration
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ask@bpl.org

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PLAN YOUR RESEARCH VISIT PAGE

Large visible numbers to indicate the step

Large (36 pt) Header that is short and concise indicating key action in the step

Small (20 pt) paragraph text that concisely explains details to successfully complete the step. Bold key information such as important links

Annotated images to visually demonstrate how the user should complete the step/click when navigating between the website and Aeon Reading Room Account site.

REQUEST SCANS PAGE

Breadcrumbs:

Shows the path of pages starting at Special Collections Home

User can click to previous pages as a way to give them more control and freedom as well as prevent errors.

Click "+" to expand for more details.

Use this element to hide large body text and limit the amount of text on the page.

Click "Have a Question?" Button for easy navigation to Have a Question? page to contact BPL Staff for help.

HAVE A QUESTION? PAGE

BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

About ∨   Visit ∨   Books & More ∨   Services ∨   Events ∨   Support the BPL ∨   Work at the BPL

🏠 Special Collections   >   **Have a Question?**

Special Collections: Have a Question?

Hours & Location | Your Reading Room Account

Fill out this form to ask a question about our special collections, and the appropriate person will contact you.

What type of assistance do you need? *
Select the options that's the closest match to your question.

What items are you searching for?
Select the tag(s) that apply.

> Click dropdown ⚡ and select tags for materials or items that you are looking for or inquiring about.

First Name *   **Last Name ***

Email Address *

Subject *

What can we help you with? *
Please tell us a little about what you are having trouble with, want to know, or want to share, and the appropriate person will respond to you.

Are you a Massachusetts Resident?
☐ Yes

This information will be submitted via email. Learn More

Submit

↑ Back to Top

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🔍 Search & Discover
📚 Use Our Collection
  › Plan your Research Visit
  › Request Scans
  › Publish with Our Collection
ⓘ Support Our Collection
❓ Have a Question?

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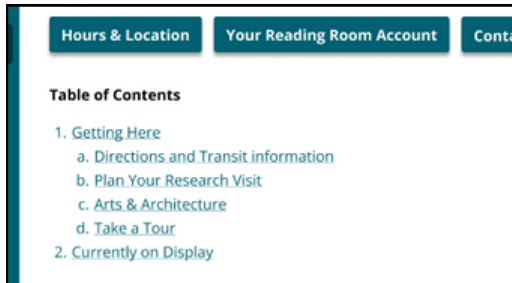BiblioWeb: webapp02 Version 4.9.1 Last updated 2023/02/16 09:35

06

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Our final recommendations can be considered more general suggestions with consideration to the constraints of BPL's website template software, Bibliocommons. Recommendations aim to help improve overall usability in a feasible way.


Include clear hierarchy of information as it is important for understanding what Special Collections is and finding desired materials
- Use table of contents or something similar
- Utilize headers, bullets, tables, tabs, etc.
- Consider content relevance and element relationships
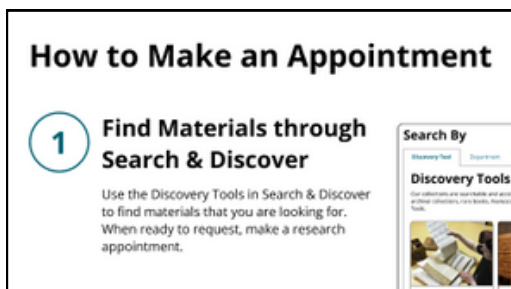
Keep information simple and concise
- Avoid long chunks of text
- Keep any options at a minimum
- Break elements up into steps, tabs, slides, etc.
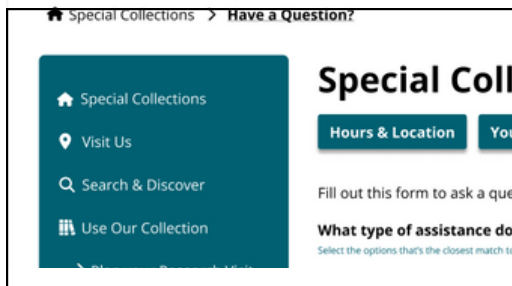
Utilize intuitive visual cues
- Add icons for quick association
- Make images as relevant as possible

In addition to communicating our final recommendations to BPL in our client briefing, we plan on conducting a photoshoot with clients to include more representative images of Special Collections and its tools.