

The User-Centered Library and Services

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Group Charge

Create an environmental scan taking both short term and long term perspectives. Research literature about library services and renovations, and provide an integrated vision of the future of user-centered libraries and services. Look at the following questions as a guide.

1. What do and what will people want and what should libraries provide?
2. How do users experience the library both now and into the future?
3. What is the role of Main Library as a resource vis-à-vis the branches and as a District Resource Center?
4. How do we market library resources and services so that more people will value the library of the future?

Library of the Future

Where we are now: What people want and what the library provides

CLP historically has been a leader in the field of innovation, best practices, and meeting and exceeding customer expectations. We have been the benchmark for libraries around the world and are regularly consulted as experts in the field, especially in the area of information architecture.

- CLP is recognized for its dynamic signage.
- CLP is recognized for its computer-printed static signage system that uses various templates to ensure consistent signage throughout the library system.
- CLP signage in the physical locations matches terminology on the website to make the library easier for patrons to use and understand, i.e. “Ask A Librarian”.

CLP recognizes the important role that libraries play in the community and provides libraries that serve as destinations, community centers, and gathering places. Our libraries are recognized as the community anchor and the oasis in many neighborhoods.

CLP is recognized for providing the following services:

- Reference services at Main, in branches, and online
- Computer access: Libraries bridge the digital divide, libraries provide access to information that is now only available on the Internet, such as
 - job search
 - governmental information and services
 - medical information
 - banking / personal finance
 - start / grow a new business
 - homework
 - social networking
- Access to objective, reliable, current and appropriate resources not freely available on the Internet
- Literacy and education-based programming for all ages
- Bestsellers

Children’s services serve as benchmarks for Pennsylvania libraries and are ahead of many in the U.S.

- We’ve been achieving best practices for many years.
- Our librarians are role models for caregivers.
- Programs and services emphasize the importance of early literacy to develop early language skills.

Teen services have grown and developed during the past ten years.

- Teen specialist in every location
- Training includes latest trends in teen services and its challenges
- Solid book and magazine collections established in each location

The Main Library building, with its rabbit-warren layout, is not the most efficient design for delivering library services and requires staff in many locations. The layout of Main provides challenges in directional signage.

In 2005, the library partnered with Carnegie Mellon University's Center for Economic Development to explore the many ways that Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh impacts the economic vitality of the region.

- The report examined both the library's value to the economy in terms of return on investment as well as its contributions to people and their communities.
- Such community benefits include literacy and learning, quality of life issues, and activities for children and teens, among others.
- Exploration of usage and demographic statistics helps inform discussions on market penetration within the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. This includes the number of people served and the types of materials and technology being used, especially in response to the renewed investment the library is making in renovating its neighborhood facilities.

Research

Research demonstrates that other libraries are currently providing services similar to CLP's and that they provide little that is new or different. CLP is recognized as a benchmark library in many areas, such as innovation, information architecture, best practices, children's services, and meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

Methodology:

- Researched and read professional journals and books, library websites and blogs. Bibliography attached.
- Interviewed CLP staff, colleagues in Allegheny County and elsewhere
- Discussed Libraries of the Future with colleagues at CLP Managers' meetings on March 17 and April 21, 2010
- Created matrix of library systems to reflect the user experience in libraries throughout the U.S.

Where Do We Need to Go?

Service priority: Library as learning destination for all ages

CLP recognizes the importance of the library as a destination for learning, literacy, and educational opportunities. We provide lifelong educational opportunities for people of all ages, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. To this end, libraries should provide access to:

- Computers and online information
- Information in a variety of formats
- Job search resources and assistance to improve job skills
- Resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Expert, professional staff in all locations to locate information, recommend reading, and provide learning and literary experiences
- Adult services including a wide variety of program and educational opportunities covering a large selection of subjects, interests, and special events to draw the community together
- Children's services in all locations, including programming, early literacy opportunities, outreach, collections

- Full-time Children's specialist in all locations, fully trained with opportunities for ongoing professional development
- Teen services in all locations, including programming, outreach and collections. Teens are our customers and our future. Full-time teen specialist in each location who advocates for teen services, use of technology for marketing, age-appropriate and age-specialized programming, and participates in system-wide initiatives
- Immediate and in-depth answers, accessed in a convenient and easy to use search method
 - Zipf's Law of Least Effort states that as related to libraries, an information-seeking customer will tend to use the most convenient search method, in the least exacting mode available. Information seeking behavior stops as soon as minimally acceptable results are found (Matthews)
- To succeed, we must know what our customers want, and then create or provide programs and services and to meet those needs.
 - According to the U.S. IMPACT Public Library Study (*Opportunity for All*) released in March, 2010, nearly 33% of adult (age 14 and older) computer users accessed the Internet in 2009 via public library computers or wireless networks even when they had access to computers at work, home, or school. We need to understand and build on this reality.
 - More and more, customers are seeking computers and internet access combined with the librarian's expertise to help them navigate the online world.
 - The main purpose or value of the public library (in reverse order of importance) according to U.S. respondents for a 2005 OCLC Customer Survey:
 - Building (Environment) – 4%
 - Reading – 6%
 - Materials – 10%
 - Entertainment – 11%
 - Research – 16%
 - Books – 32%
 - Information – 52%
- Information is a means to an end. What benefits do we supply to our users? We help users get the resources they need to achieve their objectives: complete homework, get a job, plan a wedding, build a deck, apply for college, start a business, apply for Social Security, etc. (*Designing Better Libraries Blog*)

Service priority: Library as Place

CLP recognizes the importance of Library as Place and provides libraries that are destinations and community centers. Strengths include core central facilities (Main Library in Oakland, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and the Business Library Downtown) as well as neighborhood locations that are widely recognized anchors in the communities.

Libraries will continue to meet and exceed customer expectations by providing:

- Neighborhood locations with full service resources, staffing, robust and consistent hours
- Core central facilities with access to significant collections and resources
- Library as destination for children (Allegheny and Main Library are benchmarks)
- Library as destination for teens (Main Library is benchmark)
- Quiet, safe oasis for homework, reading, and reflection
- Flexible spaces that can be used for programming, classes, community meetings
- Customer-focused libraries that eliminate library jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms to avoid frustration in first-time library users

- Excellent and consistent library service.

How Do We Get There?

In the past several years, CLP conducted significant research and invested considerable time and resources to identify the most effective model for the User Experience. The success of this model has been clearly demonstrated by dramatic increases in usage in all renovated locations. Furthermore, CLP's success has been demonstrated as other libraries look to CLP as a benchmark library in many arenas.

In the future, CLP needs to apply these same principles and service models to all locations in order to maximize the User Experience system-wide.

At this point in time, CLP needs to identify:

- Goals and priorities:
 - The role of library as place and the significance of neighborhood locations
 - The role of library as learning destination and the significance of lifelong educational opportunities
- Core services:
 - collections, computer access, trained professional staff to assist with research and recommendations
- Facility-based efficiencies, such as:
 - self service, reference services, outreach, partnerships and collaborations, downloadables, telecommunications system upgrades, swipe cards for photocopiers

As we make decisions, the process needs to be informed by an awareness of the impact of libraries in neighborhood locations, needs and expectations of the community, and trends in delivering library services as reflected in a review of the professional literature.

What is the role of Main Library as a resource vis-à-vis the branches and as a District Resource Center?

Where we are now?

- Historically, CLP Main has served as a repository for several significant research collections that either developed through library staff efforts to meet customer requests, or through donations, or by state mandate.
 - These include science, music, children's, and local historical collections.
 - Also, the Downtown branch has evolved into a center for business materials.
 - Over the years, CLP has selected professional staff with subject expertise in these fields to support these specialized collections.
 - Subject specialists at Main also drive system-wide collection development of new materials in a variety of subject areas.
 - Their knowledge and experience guide the careful weeding of rare and out-of-print materials.
 - CLP branches and district libraries within Allegheny County call or refer their customers to librarians at Main when in-depth research is required.
 - With the advent of the Internet, this occurs less frequently as customers may be satisfied with the results of their own personal searches.
- CLP currently serves as one of four **Statewide Resource Centers (SRC)** in Pennsylvania as mandated by state law in 1961.

- The SRCs are tasked with providing specialized materials and services to all Pennsylvania residents
- CLP has developed historically strong collections in science, history, technology, engineering, and business.
- CLP also serves as a **District Library Center** (DLC). There are currently 29 such centers within the Commonwealth.
 - CLP serves the Pittsburgh District which includes all of Allegheny County.
 - The state provides money (District Aid) for staffing and resources of the DLC. This amount was \$1.3 million in 2009.
 - The DLC is charged with providing the following services: consulting, reference, ILL, delivery or shipping, continuing education, professional collections, and collection development and programming assistance for librarians serving adults, children and teens.

Research:

- Conducted personal interviews with CLP managers including Mary Frances Cooper, Sheila Jackson, Mary Monaghan, Tina LaMark, Connie Galbraith, and Jacalyn Mignogna
- Conducted phone interviews with colleagues in Allegheny County as well as in other states.
- Discussed the issue with colleagues at a Branch/Main Managers' meeting held on April 21, 2010
- Reviewed state reports on **Statewide Resource Center** and **District Library Center** issues

Where Do We Need to Go?

- CLP branches and district libraries will continue to call or refer their customers to librarians at Main when in-depth research is required.
 - It must be understood that specialists play a significant role in providing reference services both locally, regionally, and even nationally
 - It is important to continue to support and enhance the special collections at Main with professional staff expertise
 - Main staff will continue to review the special collections now in place to determine if they are necessary or unique or regionally significant.
 - Staff will determine if truly unique collections can be reformatted or digitized and thus preserved and made available and searchable via the library's website.
 - Staff will continue to review and elect licensed databases
 - Staff will continue to create specialized local databases that support collections such as the Music Department's "Pittsburgh LP Collection" and the Pennsylvania Department's "Orphanages of Allegheny County"
- CLP will continue to serve as one of four **Statewide Resource Centers** in Pennsylvania and thus receive state funding to maintain the strength and depth of our specialized collections.
 - CLP applies the SRC money to purchase specialized licensed databases and to continue to build major research collections in the areas of science, humanities, and the social sciences
 - The state desires more use of the money for digitizing and providing access to Pennsylvania resources
 - The state also places emphasis on virtual reference service where CLP continues to be a lead participant in the AskHere PA project, the Commonwealth's virtual reference cooperative
 - In 2009, CLP staff continued to provide approximately 12-15 hours per week of coverage, with almost half of that servicing the 24/7 national queue.
 - CLP users are still the biggest Quidget (an online chat box) users in the state, relying more on the chat box rather than the sign-in procedure.

- As a result, CLP modified its virtual reference schedule, adding additional hours because of this documented increase in local use of virtual reference.
 - State funding for CLP as Resource Center has declined:
 - 2006 \$722,272.68
 - 2007 \$868,200.00
 - 2008 \$868,200.00
 - 2009 \$859,704.58
 - 2010 \$687,683.17
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- CLP's role as a **District Library Center**
 - The 29 public library districts within Pennsylvania have been grouped into eight regions.
 - The Pittsburgh District is now within the South West Region which also includes the Aliquippa, Monessen, and Washington Districts.
 - The 29 public library districts across PA will remain, but have been directed to work more cooperatively within regions to maximize resources and services in the face of strained local and State funding.
 - What will be CLP's role in the new network?
 - What will be the funding levels going forward?
 - Will ILL and Delivery services be funded adequately?
 - What will be the expectations of the other libraries in the South West PA region?

How Do We Get There?

- If more collections are to be digitized or reformatted, then more funding must be secured. CLP has recently benefitted from several grants: Carnegie Corporation Grant, the Iron and Steel Grant, the Sloan Grant.
 - Future grants should include monies for extra staff and / or training of current preservation and reference staff to properly handle these projects.
 - Grants should also include monies for extra shelving and/or special compact shelving.
- Thought must be given to storage issues and how the next generation of digital software may require the eventual harvesting of materials onto a future new medium.
- As a **Statewide Resource Center**, will funding to purchase online databases and new resources to support the core reference services at Main continue to come from the statewide Library Resource Grant? These state funds have fluctuated in recent years.
- State funding levels may affect the role of CLP as the Pittsburgh District Library Center.
 - Will CLP's responsibilities change?
 - What will be our role within the new South West Region?

How do we market library resources and services so that customers of the future will value the library?

We are addressing this question within the realm of reference services because marketing is integral to the role of the library and to the delivery of library services. CLP will continue to educate and inform the public of the value of library resources and services in the 21st century.

This report is a general overview of marketing, rather than a comprehensive study of marketing practices. While marketing professionals were consulted, the perceptions and recommendations are those of staff librarians.

Where we are now:

- A Marketing / Brand study of CLP was conducted in 2000
 - The purpose was to prepare for the creation of the system-wide strategic plan
 - Sought information regarding how CLP is perceived, how and why it was used, and with what entities it competes
 - Brand was created to consist of concepts such as nostalgia, historical, emotional, pleasurable, with rich collections and programs for children. Brand includes a new logo.
- The Communications and Creative Services Department (CCS) actively conducts the library's marketing efforts
 - Library marketing is currently driven by the library's strategic plan
 - CCS maintains visual consistency and messaging throughout all library communications, including publications, stationery, and the website
- CCS has conducted several major marketing campaigns
 - Target audience is identified for each marketing plan
 - Campaigns are often geared toward "influencers," defined as those members of the greater Pittsburgh community who are in a position to publicly advocate for and/or financially support the library
- Goals in 2008 and 2009 were designed to raise money and to raise awareness of the value the library provides, economic impact in community, return on investment
- Tools used include annual reports, donor newsletters, advertising (TV, radio, billboards, direct mail) annual appeal letters, and email marketing for announcements and newsletters
- CCS launched a multi-media marketing campaign for awareness, advocacy and financial support, which included print in selected publications and a radio ads timed to coordinate with the Spring appeal letter and annual report. Negotiated advertising added value worth approximately \$50,000 per year.
- A media partnership with the Post-Gazette in 2008, provided print and online exposure.
- A media partnership with WYEP was established in 2009, providing underwriting value and potential for ongoing event sponsorship. Another media partnership was initiated with WTAE, which will culminate in 2010.
- Funds for marketing will currently allow for a limited amount of paid advertising
- Library programs and services also promote the library
- It is important to note that the issue of successful marketing of libraries and their services is one of national concern and not unique to CLP
- CCS has been nationally recognized for its excellence in marketing of library programs and services for all ages. In addition, CCS has been promoting the value of libraries to communities.

Research:

- Conducted personal interview with Trina Walker
- Listened to and collected ideas suggested by CLP Branch Staff
- Reviewed variety of printed and online material that related to this topic
- Reviewed benchmark libraries' websites
- Interviewed a library director outside the CLP system

Where Do We Need to Go?

- Marketing strategies are already changing; CLP will need to be nimble and bold to keep pace
- Electronic marketing utilizes email and e-newsletters to target customers and tracks if emails and parts of e-newsletters are opened
- Banner ads on TV and newspaper websites can be tracked
- Staff will continue to promote library events via email, text messages, Twitter, Facebook, library blogs, Flickr, tagging, and YouTube

- Our website is one of our best marketing tools
 - With more than 900 business plans, CLP-Downtown & Business's Business Plans & Profiles Index is the most visited Business Web page (averaging 5,042 visits per month) and the most visited CLP content page. The Index is listed as a core competency for business reference by ALA's RUSA and is linked to by more than 60 public and academic libraries, including the Library of Congress and Boston's Kirstein Business Library.
 - Could this model be duplicated for other CLP content pages?
 - Customer searches via Google and other search engines should lead directly to CLP's website when the search is for subjects and collections that are unique to or are an integral focus of CLP.
 - Such successful hits promote the viability of the collections and the integrity of the library and, hopefully, will encourage online customers to return to our website again.
 - Research indicates that if the library is not in the top 10 results on a particular Google search, it is effectively invisible to community residents who do not already know the library offers these services (*Ex Libris*).
 - Our website could also be linked by other agencies. These include local government, hospitals, schools, chamber of commerce, YMCA, family-centered organizations, museums, universities. This could turn non-users into users (*Ex Libris*)
- Library's message also will continue to be delivered by consistent staff involvement in community outreach, meetings, and through local publications
- Research indicates that staff is the best advocate for the value of libraries
- The library will continue to strenuously promote the library's role in the educational process of people at all ages – reading readiness, viable ready workforce, curriculum support, adult learners, appreciation of reading
 - School districts are reducing or eliminating school libraries and librarians
 - Governmental agencies now refer their customers to the library for services previously provided by the governmental offices
 - Employers require individuals to access their website for a variety of uses including payroll records and searching and applying for jobs
 - Without the public library and its team of librarians, students and adults will be unable to successfully complete homework assignments, access government services, or find employment.

How Do We Get There?

- In order to remain relevant, CLP will continue to identify our message and our audience
 - Marketing for libraries communicates our values to our customers – and research indicates the message must be clear, concise and consistent (Dowd)
 - What is the traditional role of the library?
 - Has this role changed since the advent of the Internet?
 - Who is our competition?
 - What do we do better than our competition?
 - Who is our audience?
 - We will continue to target our marketing efforts to different audiences. Teens? Baby Boomers? (Smallwood)
 - How do we reach non-users?
 - Survey people who don't use libraries / focus on telling nonusers what we offer / provide incentives to get folks to respond (*Marketing Library Services*)
- We promote: our skills, our resources, our trustworthiness
 - Librarians have been described as committed “intellectual social workers.” (Johnson)

- Promote our traditional strengths: childhood and adult literacy, job services, health information, current books, magazines, and reference materials, and knowledgeable and helpful librarians
- Promote special items: DVDs, music CDs, and foreign language materials
- To deliver our message to our audience, we will continue to keep abreast of and evaluate the latest trends in technology. For example,
 - In May, 2010, the Seattle Public Library released a mobile app through boopsie.com for reserving books and accessing online services from a phone. Other public libraries utilizing the same or similar service include: Santa Clara County, Los Gatos, Los Angeles, and Long Beach public libraries as well as WorldCat and ALA.
 - We have already secured a Domain for a mobile website, but have not yet activated it (Hughes)
 - The eiNetwork has created GoCAT for our mobile catalog website (Hughes)
 - Enhancements to the web site will continue to include such features as an improved search tool, chat widgets, RSS feeds of library programs on resource pages, redesigned Tools & Research page, and a share bar for users to mail, tag, or recommend any page of our site to their friends (*Preliminary 2009 Annual Report*)
 - Continue to frequently monitor our Online Catalog and possibly alter or refine it.
 - Continue to reach those who are increasingly technologically savvy via social networks, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, text messages, blogs
- Seek outreach through new partners / collaborations, such as
 - Partner with Verizon/Comcast to provide via cable service our programs, storytimes, booktalks, community service announcements, etc. to schools, hospitals, doctor's offices, elder care residences (CLP Branch Staff)
 - Record our programs and download them to YouTube (*Library Journal*)
- Utilize the expertise of the CCS staff to organize, spotlight, and promote multiple events at several locations (local authors, booksignings, presentations, lectures, etc.). We will explore ways to make it easier to get local authors' works in the collection. (CLP Branch Staff)
- Tap into the creativity of other staff to help develop innovative methods to get the word out about the value of the library
- Continue to promote the library as community anchor to make the library more visible
 - "Libraries must be seen as dynamic community resources and tools for urban renewal." (Henry Myerberg, Architect, Rockwell Group, *Long Overdue*)
 - High marks are given by 74% of Americans who see libraries as services that local communities do well (*Long Overdue*)
- Realize that the library will continue to be a place for books for individuals of all ages, especially for the very young.
 - Books are tactile and pediatricians recommend no screened activities until two years of age (Richey).
 - A recent survey found that 86% of Americans felt that when it comes to reading for pleasure, the physical book is preferred to something digital (*Long Overdue*)
- Educate public and legislators about the value and cost of library services and remind them how their constituents use the computers in public libraries to access their government websites because these departments now require citizens to retrieve services and forms only online
- Research suggests that targeting marketing messages to the right segments of the voting public is key to driving increased support for U.S. public libraries (*From Awareness to Funding*)
 - The public is not always aware that their libraries are under financial stress
 - Elected officials are often aware of the varied and important services offered by their libraries, but they are not necessarily inclined to increase library funding

- It may be necessary to change the perceptions of the established library brand from books to how libraries can transform lives

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