

Implementing a User-Centred Approach in Drupal with the Ottawa Public Library

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Contents

- Background: Why Drupal for Us?
- Key usability concepts
- New custom modules
- Rollout notes and next steps

Why Drupal for Us?

- Kids' site launched in Drupal 5, 2008 - outsourced to design firm.
- Solid library community support (Drupal4Lib, <http://drupalib.interoperating.info/>).
- Decent bilingual support.
- Taxonomy system appeals to library's core mission - 'If you liked that, why not try this...'

Our Challenges

- Vendor soup: third-party catalogue, licenced databases, downloadable content.
- Users don't differentiate between them. It's all "the library's site."
- Drupal is great but daunting - we had built small sites, without custom theming.
- We knew we needed help from a neutral third party on usability issues.

Our Challenges cont.

- Cradle-to-grave audience is as wide as it gets.
 - Our working personas included job-hunting immigrants, teenagers, tech workers and voracious readers with little patience for the Web.
- Our imperatives were:
 - To appeal to new users without alienating our ‘base.’
 - To give the library more of a human face and show off staff expertise.

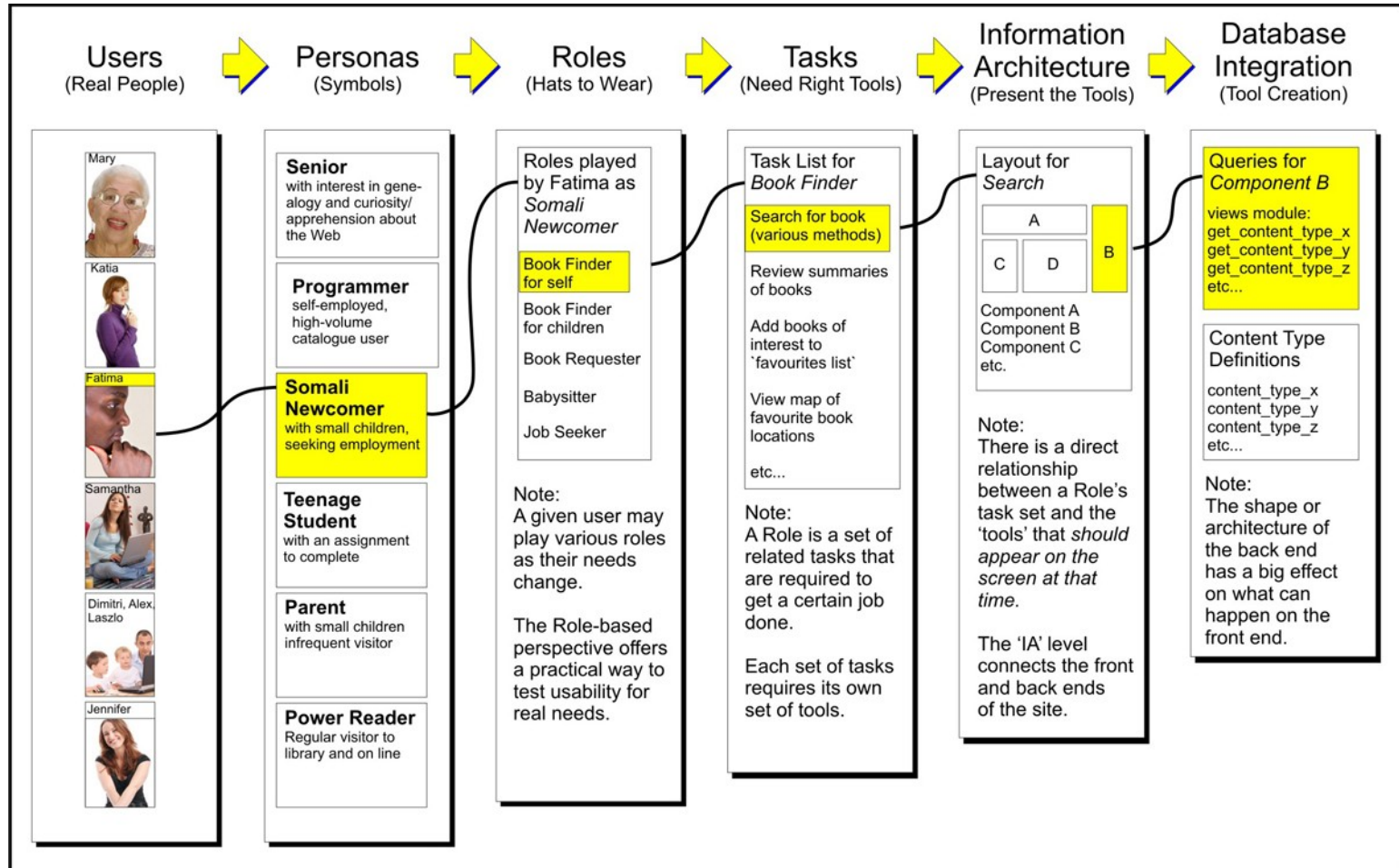
Key Usability Concepts

- The Drupal Platform, mostly designed and built by a community of developers, has powerful functionality but it is also beset by usability obstacles.



Community
Plumbing?

The Usability Roadmap

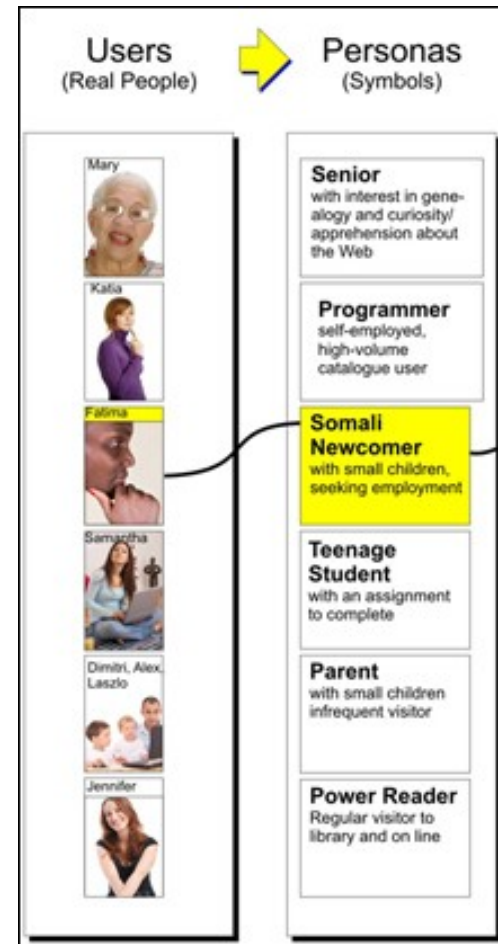


Targeting Users

If the aim is to achieve simplicity in an interface, 'simple' means different things to different people.

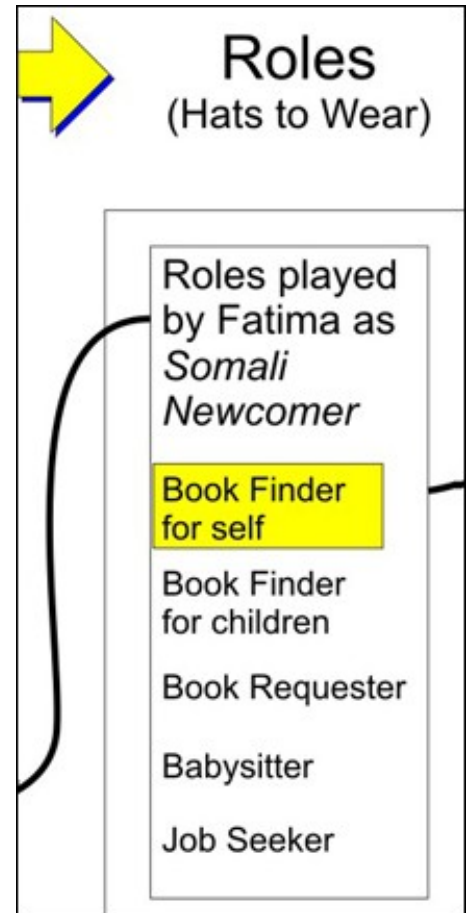
Interfaces can only be made simple when designed for a clearly targeted user group.

Personas are helpful to



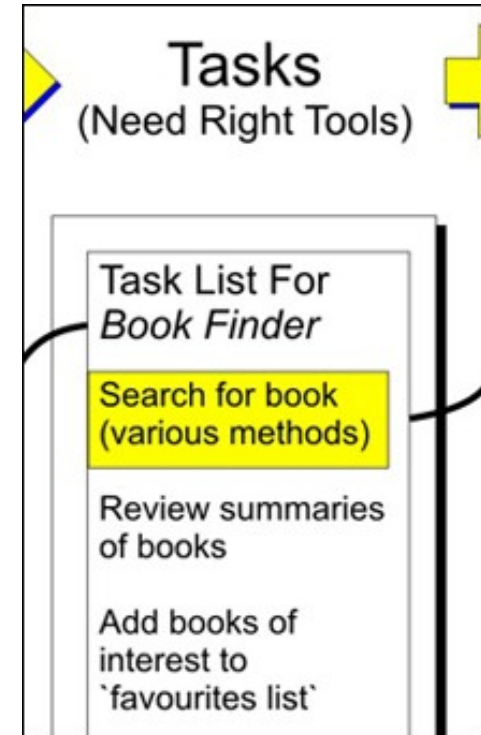
The Important Role of Roles

- Roles are all about what *hat* the user is wearing at any given time.
- Key concept - a particular user may undertake *a variety of Roles* within a single session.



Establishing Real User Contexts

- By working with a set of well-defined Roles, we can facilitate specific tasks.
- Meet the user's context by presenting the right tool at the right time.
- Define simplicity.



The Drupal Challenge

- However, usage oriented contexts are not easily achieved in a system like Drupal, which inherently relies extensively on the use of generic functional components or ‘modules’.
- In order to achieve sharper precision in designing a user interface built upon the Drupal development platform, a degree of customized programming is required.

New Custom Modules


- A custom information architecture module. Includes contextual help system and customized menus.
- Single Sign On / Catalogue Integration (<http://drupal.org/project/bibliocommons>).
- A new translation system based on variables and strings, instead of the t-function.
- A simplified admin interface for portions of content management.


Information Architecture

- Instead of individual page or arbitrary template urls, the module establishes a new URL system.
- The parts of the URL are used to build appropriate menus based on the url context.
- The url is also passed to Views as a series of arguments to filter and display content based on the location fields assigned in the content type.





http://bibliottawalibrary.ca/en/main/find/online

Support the Library Login English Français

 **Search the catalogue or site**

Please enter your search terms **SEARCH** 

Catalogue Website Articles

 **Catalogue**  **Reserve a Computer**  **Visit Our Kids' Site**  **Your Opinion Counts**

Home **Find an Item** **Using the Library** **Of Interest** **Programs** **About OPL**

Highlights about this site | Books, magazines, movies and more... | Branches, borrowing services | Staff guides & recommendations | Events and workshops | Board, news and operations



Search for: **Catalogue Items** **Digital Media** **Online Articles**

Look Up Online

- Quick Search**
- Browse all Databases
- Browse Databases by Format
- Browse Databases by Subject
- Search for Specific Magazines and Newspapers
- Virtual Reference

Quick Search

Search multiple databases and library catalogue.

Title  **SEARCH** 

[Search by Subject - Basic and Advanced](#)

Help Note

Can we help you with your search? [Ask a Librarian....](#)

Contextual Help

Website Catalogue Integration

- Single-Sign-On Authentication
 - Shared cookie across a common domain.
- Search results
 - Catalogue indexes Drupal content through taxonomy / search keyword link.
 - Currently indexing blog posts and databases.
- Blogging
 - WYSIWYG editor includes catalogue search and book-jacket selector. Indexed in catalogue as “Explore Further...”

A Bridge between Worlds...

The screenshot shows the Ottawa Public Library website interface. At the top, there is a language selector for 'Français', navigation links for 'Take a tour', 'Help', and 'Log In', and the library logo. A search bar contains the text 'newspapers' with a 'Search' button. Below the search bar are radio buttons for 'Catalogue', 'Website', and 'Articles', and a link for 'Advanced Search'. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'My OPL', 'Explore', 'Using the Library', 'Of Interest', 'Programs', and 'About OPL'. The main content area displays 'Subject search results for... newspapers' and 'Found 486 items'. A 'Narrow Results' sidebar on the left offers filters for Format, Availability, Audience, and Acquired. The search results list two items: 'East Ottawa Star' and 'Orléans Star', both marked as 'Available in some locations'. On the right, an 'Explore Further' section includes a link for 'Library Press Display'. A vertical line connects this link to a callout box.

Newspapers
online through
website

Newspapers
in Print from
catalogue

Rollout Notes



Before



After

Marketing Services and Promoting Roles

Preview Selectors intended to give a quick overview of library services - an appeal to new users.

The screenshot shows the Ottawa Public Library website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Support the Library', 'Login', 'English', and 'Français'. Below this is the library logo and a search bar with the text 'Search the catalogue or site' and 'Please enter your search terms'. There are also buttons for 'Catalogue', 'Reserve a Computer', 'Visit Our Kids' Site', and 'Your Opinion Counts'. The main navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Find an Item', 'Using the Library', 'Of Interest', 'Programs', and 'About OPL'. A red box highlights a central section titled 'I'm looking for...' which contains several sub-sections: 'Getting the most out of my library card...', 'Reviews and Recommendations', 'Digital Media', 'Articles and Research', 'New Titles', 'Are you interested in...', 'Planning my trip to the library...', 'For teens...', and 'This just in...'. To the right of this section is a 'My Account' area with fields for 'Username / Library Card Number' and 'PIN', and a 'LOG IN' button. Below the 'My Account' area is a 'Find it online' section with a 'LearningExpress Library' banner and a 'View all our databases' link. At the bottom, there is a 'Branch Closures' section, a 'Library Awareness Campaign' section, and a 'Get Sm@rt' section with a sign-up form for a Capital Sm@rtLibrary card.

Marketing Services and Promoting Roles

A parallel menu containing the information architecture for the site: attempting to link concepts with active-menu states.

The screenshot shows the Ottawa Public Library website homepage. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search the catalogue or site" and a search button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Find an Item, Using the Library, Of Interest, Programs, and About OPL. A red box highlights this navigation menu. Below the navigation menu, there are several content blocks: "I'm looking for..." (Books, Movies, Music and More), "Reviews and Recommendations", "Digital Media", "Articles and Research", "New Titles", "My Account" (Username / Library Card Number, PIN, LOG IN), "Find it online" (LearningExpress Library), "Branch Closures", "Library Awareness Campaign", "New DVD lending policy", "Improving our Buildings", and "Get Sm@rt" (Sign up for a Capital Sm@rtLibrary card!).

Rollout Notes cont.

- Single Sign On is a work in progress.
- Staff are beginning to see the potential of the Help Note system. (Still rolling this out.)
- We're getting a lot more news out about library services, and blogging has taken off.
- Feedback ranges from the site 'is great' to 'too busy and a waste of my time.'

Rollout Notes cont.

- Administrative challenges:
 - New content must be accommodated in the IA module, and within the fixed info architecture. Constraint = benefits for the user = challenges for the developer.
 - Menus must be edited directly in module code. Intimidating for non-developers. Messy for developers.
 - Custom Information Architecture module is in an early evolutionary state.

Next 5 steps

- More user testing this summer to get a broader base of usage data.
- Pursue modularization of whole or part of IA system. Ongoing work by TUAG with input from OPL.
- Examine additional integration opportunities via vendor's APIs.
- Address site's accessibility (Mostly CSS adjustments).
- Develop a mobile platform for site, coordinating with catalogue vendor

Thank you. Questions?

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