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USER EXPERIENCE RESEARCH FOR BOOKS FOR STL KIDS

by

Danielle Nicole Randall

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Art and Design
at
Lindenwood University

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USER EXPERIENCE RESEARCH FOR BOOKS FOR STL KIDS

A Project Report Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
at
Lindenwood University

By

Danielle Randall

Saint Charles, Missouri

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Abstract

Title of Thesis: User Experience Research for Books for STL Kids

Danielle Nicole Randall, Master of Arts in Art and Design, 2023

Thesis Directed by: Jason Dude Lively, Professor, Art and Design

This project focuses on how to improve Book for STL Kids website experience. The primary focus is to study how key users utilize and interact with the organization's website. The final deliverable is a list of user experience improvement recommendations for the organization.

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Introduction

User experience is all about having a deep understanding of the user's values, behaviors, abilities, and challenges. A UX designer is responsible for promoting and improving the quality of user interactions and their perceptions of products and services. Designers must ensure they are in alignment with business goals and objectives. In order to have meaningful interactions, it is believed that designers must ensure their designs are useful, usable, desirable, findable, accessible, and credible. Taking into consideration effective user design and desired business outcomes leads to an effective user experience strategy that solves customer and business challenges, creates value innovation, and produces a return on investment. For success, a company's UX strategy must be specific and define measurable metrics to determine improved user engagement, increased purchase conversion rates, and quicker task completion.

The subject of this research project is Books for STL Kids, a local nonprofit whose vision is to expand children's literacy through book ownership. Their mission is to increase access to new books for children of under-resourced families and to inspire their love of reading. The organization is 100% volunteer-run and reaches children through existing preschool and after-school programs, thus assisting these organizations in tackling illiteracy by providing new books to the children they serve. All books distributed by Books for STL Kids are brand new and are provided at no cost. Books for STL Kids has given away more than 204,000 new books to children in the greater St. Louis area. They provide books to children through summer and winter book grants to qualifying organizations and directly to children at various community events throughout the year, including their signature project, The Largest Book Party in St. Louis.

This thesis project identifies how users currently utilize the Books for STL Kids website while uncovering their likes, pain points, and challenges when interacting with and navigating

the website. Through website engagement surveys and user interviews, this research identifies the key users of the Books for STL Kids' website, their importance to the organization, and how improving the website's user experience for these key users will lead to increased engagement and quicker completion of tasks.

As a public relations professional, it is incredibly important to understand psychological and human behavior principles when developing communications and marketing campaigns. To create memorable experiences for audiences, one must understand their needs, behaviors, motivations, attitudes, and pain points. Once having a good understanding of who the target audience is and their behavioral and cognitive functions and changes to content, one can develop more efficient and effective communication strategies and marketing campaigns. This fundamental step is the same when developing engaging products and websites.

The psychology behind the user experience of websites and personal connection with the Books for STL Kids mission has led to the selection of this research project topic. The objective of this research study is to identify the user engagement and sentiment of the current Books for STL Kids website, examine the current user pain points and drawbacks of the website's features and functionality, and determine what, or if, changes need to be made to improve the user experience of the Books for STL Kids website.

Literature Review

This project examines the user experience of Books for STL Kids' website to understand better how users understand the organization's mission, vision, and impact through overall web content and navigation. This literature review aims to understand how psychological and user experience research principles and processes can lead to an effective user experience that causes specific responses and actions from target users and solves user challenges. To evaluate and test

the user experience of the organization's website, designers must understand how different psychological principles influence human behavior and its relations to user experience design.

The Psychology of User Experience Design

The experience a person receives when interacting with a company's products and services is known as user experience. User experience designers are tasked with ensuring these products and services meet the user's needs and expectations. Before discussing user experience further, it is important to understand the definition of experience and experience design.

According to *Designing Experiences* (2019), by Rossman and Duerden, "experience is consciousness of ongoing interaction" between people and their surroundings (para. 18). For an experience to occur, it must be immersive, engaging, and the mind must be aware that something is happening and contribute to the outcome. The authors further argue:

First, experiences are multiphased: each experience consists of an anticipation phase, a participation phase, and a reflection phase. Second, within each phase multiple sequential interactions occur between the participant and the elements of the designed experience...Third, interactions between the participant and the elements of the experience co-create a variety of potential results driven largely by the participants perceptions and reactions in the experience. (para. 19)

Ultimately, experiences are constructed from conscious awareness and the interpreted perception and reaction of elements sustained by the engaged person.

Experience design is a broad term that focuses on the process of creating experience elements in an effort to construct opportunities and interactions that lead to the desired outcome for both the participant and the designer. Since experiences can be complex and ever-changing, user experience designers must create stand-out experiences that produce desired results in a

meaningful and purposeful way. Experiences are directly related to a person's emotion and attitude toward a product or service. According to Yablonski's *Laws of UX: Using Psychology to Design Better Products & Services* (2020), "we remember intensely emotional events more than less emotional events, and this has an effect on how we perceive an experience" (p. 55). Emotions are the drivers of people's perceptions, and negative emotions toward digital products can taint their awareness, learning, and motivation.

When it comes to engagement, just because something is interesting, it doesn't mean it will be purposeful and meaningful to the user. According to Allison Posey's *Engage the Brain: How to Design for Learning That Taps into the Power of Emotion* (2019), "background experience and emotions help tag important information deemed relevant for high-order cognitive processing" (p. 85). Posey also explains:

One of the first steps in the brain for information that has been attended to is the reticulating activation system (RAS). It is located in the brain stem and channels sensory information to the thalamus, in the middle of the brain. The thalamus sorts information by function: visual information such as color, texture, and depth goes to visual centers in the occipital cortex; auditory information such as pitch, tempo, and sound frequency goes to the temporal lobes; and tactile information such as temperature, pressure, and touch goes to the somatosensory cortex in the parietal lobe. Chemicals such as acetyl-choline alert the brain to pay attention to those tagged details for long-term processing. (p. 84)

In order for digital products to have strong engagement and adaption scores, it's important to understand how information is collected and stored in the brain. UX designs need to ensure that their designed product's content and processes are authentic and purposeful. Designers need to

pay attention to what matters to the user and understand that only relevant and useful information and processes will result in long-term engagement.

The User Experience Design Process

Human-centered Design Principle:

Most designers make sure their designs follow the human-centered design principle of using their creativity to solve problems for their audiences. The human-centered design principle has three phases. Firstly, the Inspiration Phase is when designers learn directly from the people they're designing for and what their needs are. Secondly, there is the Ideation Phase, when they make sense of what they learned, identify opportunities for design, and prototype possible solutions. And, finally, the Implementation Phase, where designers bring their solution to life and eventually market it. The human-centered design principle is successful for UX designers due to the focus being on "end-users" from the very beginning of the design production phase and completed user testing at each phase of the process. As a result, the designers have created digital products that satisfy the users' wants and needs.

UX Research:

User experience designers conduct UX research to better understand their target audience's needs, behaviors, attitudes, and pain points. This systematic investigation allows user experience designers to collect and interpret data and feedback. UX designer's knowledge of their users comes from observation, interviews, and usability tests. UX designers must conduct both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research— including usability testing, user groups, and user interviews— answer why people are doing it (Travis & Hodgson, 2019). Whereas quantitative research, like online surveys, is best at answering the how much and how many questions. According to the *Handbook of Usability and User-Experience Methods*

and Techniques (Soares et al. 2022), quantitative research “can be employed when the main goal is to generalize or validate some piece of data” (p. 84). Having a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods helps disclose beneficial insight and information needed to create an effective and innovative product.

User Personas:

Based on conducted research and observations, user personas are an imaginative description of a user archetype. Designers create user personas from their user data to better understand and categorize user characteristics, needs, goals, pain points, and more. This insight provides valuable insights into user journeys as a means to produce prototypes. Personas are more than people; they are a refined essence of real users who will interact with the products. Personas allow designers to foster empathy with target users and an insight into their world, creating a common consensus of user traits and make logical decisions that reflect the exact needs of users (Yablonski, 2020). Using goal-directed personas allows designers to understand the perspective and experiences of their users. Making sense of these characteristics, goals, and experience of users allow designers to identify who their users are, why they are utilizing their product or service, and how they will potentially interact when using their products.

Scenarios:

User scenarios are fictitious stories of a user completing a goal or action by way of a product or system. The primary focus of user scenarios is to understand the user’s *motivations* and document the process of which the user may use the product. These fictitious stories are a useful consideration for ideation and usability testing, as they help designers understand what motivates the user while they are interacting with the product. A part of the ideation phase of the

human-centered design methodology, user scenarios are a keyway UX designers visualize how a user will use their product.

User scenarios are typically established from conducted research or user personas that are based on current or prospective users. To be as accurate and identifiable as possible, these scenarios provide plenty of context and detail. Like user personas, it is important that user scenarios are inclusive and avoid stereotypes in order to represent target users in the truest form. According to the authors of *Think like a UX Researcher, how to observe users, influence design, shape business strategy* (2019), scenarios should include:

- The primary goals that people have
- The mental models people build
- The tools people use.
- The environments people work.
- The terminology people use to describe what they do (p.14).

By working through these enriched user scenarios, designers are able to project their designs' strengths and progress and point out the problems and weaknesses of their designs. User scenarios can also help determine which areas of the designs are the most important to test during usability testing.

User Flows

In UX, designers often create user flows that are visual representations of the many pathways that can be taken using the product. User flows also identifies key interactions and touchpoints between the user and a website and uncovers in detail the user's goal motivations and emotion at each step. These pathways always begin with an entry point – typically the homepage – and end with the final outcome, when a user makes the desirable action. This action

could be signing up for a membership, making a donation, purchasing a product, or scheduling a meeting. According to *User Research: Improve product and service design and enhance your UX research* (2022) by Stephanie Marsh, user flows “can be used to identify problem areas and opportunities for innovation” (p. 295). User flows allow UX designers to evaluate and advance the experience of the user to increase outcome conversion rates – the percentage of users who have completed a desired action.

Prototyping

One of the most important phases of the design process for UX designers is prototyping their products. It is the initial sample of the product and can be in the form of sketches, wireframes, mockups, and medium and high-fidelity prototypes. In *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design*, the authors recommend designing on a 12-column sketch sheet to make it easy to transition from sketches and mockups to an actual working prototype (Beard et al., 2020). The 12-column grid is the most common website grid structure due to its flexibility of being divisible by 1,2,3,4, and 6. Additionally, it allows for a variety of arrangements for the identity navigation, content, and footer blocks (Beard et al., 2020). Prototyping designs is about taking what is learned during research and conceptualizing it into useful designs that will help improve the user’s experience when navigating through a product.

Responsive Design

When designing and developing digital products, it’s important to consider how users are going to access it. Will they be browsing through social media on their mobile devices? Sketching away their latest ideas on their tablet? No matter what device a user uses to access a product, the experience should be effectively tailored for all devices. Responsivity is the future of the industry, and without it, products quickly lose credibility, not only in the consumer's eyes

but in search engines, as well. Search engines, like Google, and algorithms now factor in a website's mobile presence when ranking results. Researcher Bianchi (2020) found that mobile devices "generate 59.16 percent of global website traffic, consistently hovering around the 50 percent mark since the beginning of 2017 before permanently surpassing it in 2020" (para. 1). When a user accesses a website via mobile devices, it is imperative that images load in a timely manner and are clear and crisp. If the users don't have a pleasant experience when accessing apps, websites, or any product for that matter, they will more than likely take their business elsewhere.

Research Methodology

The methodology of this research can be broken down into three parts similarly to the human-centered design methodology. An initial nine question survey was administered to the five research participants, referred to throughout the study as "users" or "user." This survey asked users to share their overall experience, likes, frustrations, and perspectives when navigating through Books for STL Kids current website. The outcomes of this survey informed the next phase of this study.

In the second phase of this study, desktop and mobile high-fidelity prototypes of an improved Books for STL Kids website were developed. These mockups provided solutions to the user challenges and pain points that were identified during the existing website evaluation results. The latest Adobe XD software was used to produce and test the desktop and mobile mockups. Once the mockups were complete, user interviews were facilitated with each user participant to gather their feedback and perspective on the user experience and functionality of the mockups. Each interview started off with a 5 second test that measured how well the design was communicated and understood. Users then performed the tasks based on scenarios to test the

user journey, functionality, and ease of use of the website. After reviewing each mockup and sharing verbal feedback throughout the process, participants completed additional user experience evaluation surveys for the desktop and mobile mockups.

Part three of the study was developing a user experience strategy for Books for STL Kids that encompassed the research and findings from phases one and two. This strategy aligns the organizations mission and vision with the user needs identified in this study and the technical capabilities of the Books for STL Kids website. As a result of the user research, the user experience strategy for Books for STL Kids included user persona, user scenarios, user flows, and recommendations for website improvements. The three developed user persona archetypes identify key user group's needs, goals, background, and main barrier to achieving its goal. Archetypes are based on Books for STL Kids key demographic audiences: donors, volunteers, recipient groups. The user scenarios describe paint the picture of each user persona journey when using the organization's website. These scenarios help the organization understand the practical needs and behaviors of the user archetypes through realistic situations. The user flows outline the path the user personas take to complete a task (e.g., make a donation, volunteer for an event, apply for a grant).

Findings and Recommendations

Existing Website Experience

The first survey administered to the user participant group gathered their perspectives and experience of Books for STL Kids' existing website. The 9-question experience evaluation survey included a series of free response, multiple choice, and five-point Likert scale questions.

Question one asked participants to describe their overall experience using the current website. The majority of the participants expressed their overall experience as "good" and noted

that the website is “easy to navigate.” One user felt that although the website has a good structure and is easy to navigate, a few areas need more depth and explanation. Another user mentioned that the website looks outdated and includes photos that may have been taken in the 90s. The same user also felt the donate page can be a bit confusing and has experienced being double charged due to the website being a little weird. The grants page was mentioned as needing improvements by two users. One user felt the text on the page was too small and included too much information that people may not be reading. The second user who mentioned the grants page said they could never find the post-grant report survey and would like it to be included on the page. The mobile version of the website was mentioned as not rendering great by one user. They also shared the content hierarchy becomes awkward and the navigation is glitchy with some sub section options disappearing.

The second question asked how users rate their overall experience, where one is very unsatisfied, and five is very satisfied. 80% of the users rated their overall experience as a 4 with a satisfied experience. 20% of the users rated their experience as five very satisfied experience. The responses to this question confirm that even with mobile site rendering challenges, lack of content depth and explanation, and design pain points, users still have a positive overall experience on the current website.

The third and fourth questions of the survey asked users what they loved most about the current website and what they found was the most frustrating about the existing website. Overall, users loved the pictures and ease of use of the website. One user noted that they loved the upfront, clear, and engaging delivery of what the organization does and what it stands for on the homepage. Another user pointed out that the existing website is pleasing to look at, and their reason for visiting it is easy to access. Frustrations with the current website include insufficient

information in certain sections, a glitchy mobile website, and an outdated look and feel. Several users noted that the content and information are obsolete and slow to be updated. One user wrote the amount of historical content on the website makes it hard to find upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. At the same time, another user wished the website highlighted the grant recipients and the organization's impact more. One of the users was frustrated by the lack of pictures from recent events, including the organization's signature project, The Largest Book Party in St. Louis.

Question five asked users whether it takes more or less time than expected to find what they are looking for on the website. 40% of users indicated that it takes the expected time to find what they are looking for, while 40% indicated it takes less time than expected. 20% of users said it takes a little more time than expected to find what they are looking for on the website.

The sixth question focuses on understanding how users access the website. 80% of users typically access the website through a desktop or laptop, while 20% of users typically utilize a mobile device or smartphone to access the organization's website. None of the users usually visit the website on a tablet.

The following questions uncovered the user's thoughts about the content and visual appeal of the website. Question seven examined how informative the information on the current website is, where one is not all informative and five is very informative. 20% of users selected neutral, 60% felt the information on the website was informative, and 20% felt the information was very informative. The eighth question asked users to share how visually appealing the current website is, where one is not at all appealing and five is very appealing. 20% of users said the website was not so appealing, 30% selected neutral, and 20% felt the website was visually appealing.

The final question in the existing website evaluation survey asked users for other thoughts on how the organization can improve the website. One user shared that, as a donor, they would like to see the organization include its charitable match information and 501©3 tax identification number on the website. A couple of the users noted how they would like to see more pictures. Another user recommended the organization hires a professional photographer. One user even said the website should use bright and cheerful colors as the current color scheme is nice but gives more of a nursery vibe, not of school-aged children.

Desktop and Mobile Mockup Experience

After examining how users used and interacted with the desktop and mobile mockups, users were asked to share their perspectives and feedback by completing an experience evaluation survey. Each user completed a separate 8-question experience evaluation survey for desktop and mobile versions. Like the first survey that evaluated the current website, these surveys included a series of free responses, multiple choice, and five-point Likert scale questions.

The first question asked users to discuss their overall experience using the desktop and mobile mockups. The overall feedback for the desktop mockup was positive. Users felt the mockup was easy to navigate, well-designed, and informative. Most users mentioned that they noticed an improvement in the flow and visual appeal of the website, with one user noting how they enjoyed the playfulness of the mockup. Two users mentioned how they liked that the pages were divided into different sections, separated by different colored backgrounds. The two users felt the modular feature makes it easier to skip to the section users are looking for and helps makes the web pages more appealing. Users also enjoyed the increased use of photos and the reading quotes at the top of each webpage. The overall experience for the mobile mockup was

also positive, with users expressing that it is easier to navigate on the phone or tablet than the existing website.

The second question asked users to rate their overall experience using the desktop and mobile mockups, where one is very unsatisfied, and five is very satisfied. When rating the overall experience using the desktop mockup, 60% stated they were very satisfied, while 40% of users were satisfied. The overall experience of the mobile mockup was mostly similar with 60% feeling very satisfied, 20% of users said they satisfied, and 20% had a neutral sentiment to the mobile mockup.

The third question asked users what they love most about the desktop and mobile mockup. Most users mentioned that they loved the picture and ease of use. One user mentioned they loved the emotional connection gained by using photos, claims, stats, and information. This user also expressed that these additions and improvements highlighted the breadth of support the organization provided to the community over the years. Another user shared how they loved that the desktop mockup is more engaging and now demonstrated a more children-need-focused organization and website. Feedback for the mobile mockup was very similar to those for the desktop mockup. Users expressed that they loved the use of colors, pictures, quotes, and modular sections and that these features contributed to the overall positive experience.

In contrast, question four asked users what they found most frustrating about the desktop and mobile mockups. Overall, the feedback varied across the user participant group. One user expressed that they did not like the repeated content call-to-action modules on the web pages and felt it was confusing. Another user felt some areas were still too text heavy and could have been broken up more for easier consumption. Two users felt nothing was frustrating about the desktop mockup, but one user did express that they would have liked to see a current picture of the board

of directors to help put a name to a face when volunteering. For the mobile mockup, two users expressed frustrations with the content hierarchy on the mobile mockup. One user said The Largest Book Party should be listed first, with the recap of the event afterward. Another user did not like that you first see the donate module on the homepage. The other users did not express any frustrations using the mobile mockup.

The following question asked users if it took them more or less time than they expected to find what they were looking for on the desktop and mobile mockups. 60% of users stated it took a little less time finding what they were looking for on the desktop mockup. 20% said it took the same time as expected, and 20% selected a lot less time. For the mobile mockup, 40% of users expected the time to be the same, 40% expressed it took a lot less time, and 20% stated it took a little less time to find what they were looking for on the website. These results show an improvement as compared to the time it took to complete tasks utilizing the organization's current website.

The sixth question asked users to share how informative the information on the desktop and mobile mockups are compared to the current website, where one is not at all more informative and five is very more informative. Most users rated the desktop mockup as more informative than the organization's existing website, with 40% expressing it as informative and 40% stating it was very informative. 20% of users said the desktop mockup was not more informative compared to the current webpage. The results were the same for the mobile mockup.

Question seven focused on examining how users visually perceived the desktop and mobile mockups compared to the current website where one is not at all more appealing and 5 very more appealing. 60% said the desktop mockup was far more appealing compared to the existing webpage. 20% expressed the desktop mockup was more appealing, and 20% stated it

was neither more nor less appealing than the current website. The results were the same for the mobile mockup.

The final question in the survey asked users to share any other comments or feedback about the desktop and mobile mockups. Two users shared how they felt the desktop mockup was very engaging. One user expressed how the pictures and quotes made them want to spend more time navigating through the mockup. Two users provided helpful feedback on the functionality. One user recommended the contact information page on the contact us page move below the form depending on how the organization prefers people contact them. The second user felt the distinction between the get involved and events page wasn't clear. The user also recommends the page name in the top navigation change colors when on a particular page. One user said they would like to see the impact spotlighted more on desktop and mobile mockups. For the mobile mockup, two other users expressed their love for the mockup, with one user sharing they loved the focus on the most relevant content at the top of the pages. This user also expressed how they liked upcoming events highlighted and prioritized over events that already occurred.

Overall, the desktop and mobile mockups received a higher overall user experience rating than the current Books for STL Kids website. 80% of users rated their overall experience as a 4 – satisfied, while 20% rated their overall experience as a 5 – very satisfied. When rating their overall experience using the desktop mockup, 40% of users rated it as a 4 – satisfied, and 60% rated their overall experience as a 5 – very satisfied. The mobile mockup received mixed views, with 20% of users rating their overall experience as a 3 – neutral, 20% as a 4 – satisfied, and 60% rated their overall experience as a 5 – very satisfied.

The research results in this study prove that by identifying the key users of the Books for STL Kids' website and understanding their importance to the organization, the overall user

experience for these key users improved and led to an increased engagement and quicker completion of tasks.

Recommendations

Based on conducted research and user interviews, the following eight recommendations will help Books for STL Kids improve the user experience of its website.

1. **Add More Fun & Playfulness:** Books for STL Kids is a childhood education focused organization and the website should reflect the fun and playful spirit of being a kid.
 - a. Fun and playful elements to consider adding to the website:
 - i. Incorporate quotes from renowned books and authors.
 - ii. Add a fun-loving flare by using a spirited font.
 - iii. Utilize the full breath of the organizations brand colors.
 - b. User Sentiment: In this study, 100% of the users mentioned they loved the book-related quotes in the mockups. While 80% of users complimented the added use of colors, playful font, and fun-like aesthetic of the mockups.
2. **Add More Pictures:** Images are powerful and can not only attract attention, but also spark an emotional connection. Adding more photos to the Books for STL Kids can improve the user experience by contributing to the storytelling process of the organization. Although content is essential to explain the organization's purpose and services, images help reinforce key messages and information.
 - a. Recommendations:
 - i. Increase the volume of pictures on the website.

- ii. Use images to help break up information so that it can be consumed in a more digestible way.
 - iii. Update the website to include photos taken within the last year or two.
 - b. **User Sentiment:** While users loved the pictures of smiling children with their new books, 80% of users mentioned they wished the website included more photos.
- 3. **Adopt a modular web design:** Modules in websites are common website components that are like the” building blocks” to creating a webpage. A modular web design enables customization and engaging interactions. This modularity helps transform content complexity into smaller and digestible components that are easier to develop and understand.
 - a. **Designer Benefits:** A modular design helps web designers maintain websites more quickly. Adding or removing a module does not affect other parts of the website or require a complete code rewrite. Modular designs also promote visual consistency.
 - b. **User Benefits:** Modular designs promote visual consistency and content repetition for users.
 - c. **User Sentiment:** In this study, 80% of users mentioned they loved the modular/block look of the website mockups, noting that it helped them digest content more easily, added a visual appeal to the mockups, and consistently encouraged key call-to-actions.
- 4. **Highlight the Impact More:** Books for STL Kids makes a profound impact in the community by increasing access to books for children. And while sharing a great

story can demonstrate the impact the organization makes in the community, it's not the only type of information that can inspire people to support its mission and vision.

a. Recommendations:

- i. Create an impact stats section.
- ii. Include thank you notes from recipient groups.
- iii. Develop a video testimonial highlighting the organization's impact.

b. User Benefits:

- i. Builds trust among donor and recipient groups.
- ii. Encourages volunteers to want to be part of the mission.
- iii. Reinforces key messages.
- iv. Demonstrated the organization's potential to even more.

c. User Sentiment: 80% of users in the study felt the website needed to highlight the organization's impact more. Additionally, 100% of the users in the study complimented the 'our impact', 'note from a recipient' and thank you card modules in the mockups.

5. **Update Website Content:** "Content is King" is a renowned saying that emphasizes the role high-quality and relevant content has on the success of an organization's website.

a. Recommendations:

- i. Review current content and make certain that it's up to date.
- ii. Ensure that content on the website is relevant for key stakeholders (donors, volunteers, recipient groups, etc.).
- iii. Identify content gaps and create engaging content for users.

- iv. Develop a monthly or quarterly content review process.
 - b. User Sentiment: Multiple users noted that there was a lot of “historical, outdated, and old content” on the website.
- 6. **Add More Language About Opportunities to Get Involved: Books for STL Kids** is a 100% volunteer-run organization with several volunteer opportunities throughout the year.
 - a. Recommendations:
 - i. Add an events calendar to inform donors, volunteers, and recipient groups of upcoming events.
 - ii. Add events registration feature to encourage people to sign-up for events.
 - iii. Add language around how someone can apply to join the board of directors or committees.
 - b. User Sentiment: 80% of users in the study complimented the multiple event touchpoints on the mockups and recommended the organization add more information about upcoming events to the website.
- 7. **Ensure Responsivity Across All Platforms:** Books for STL Kids should ensure their website is responsive across a wide range of devices. Ensuring the organization’s website is responsive will improve its overall user experience, especially since over 59% of global website traffic is generated over mobile devices.
 - a. Recommendations:
 - i. Establish a plan to routinely test the website’s responsiveness across multiple devices and screen types.

- ii. Be sure also to test the website from a vertical and horizontal viewpoint.
 - iii. Don't forget to check the responsiveness of images on the website.
 - b. User Sentiment: In this study, one user mentioned the mobile version of the existing site is very glitchy and rearranges content in a non-sensical way.
- 8. **Establish a Maintenance Plan:** Books for STL Kids should develop a website maintenance plan to ensure content and images on the website are kept up-to-date.
 - a. Recommendations:
 - i. Establish a bimonthly or quarterly review.
 - ii. Assign a person or committee to be in charge of conducting the website maintenance plan.
 - iii. The plan should include how to address content reviews and updates, security updates, server updates, speed/performance testing and UX updates.
 - iv. Make a backup and disaster recovery plan to ensure that you can quickly get your website back up and running in the event of a major problem.
 - b. User Sentiment: In this study, one user said that the current website feels “outdated, updates are slow, and there appears to be a lot of outdated information on it.” Establishing a website routine maintenance plan will ensure all website content is accurate and performs properly for users.

Conclusion

The components of this user experience research and strategy recommendations include research outcomes and developed user personas, scenarios, user flows, and insightful prototypes based on the user study and its results. The user experience evaluation survey of Books for STL Kids' existing website provides the organization with insightful perspectives and feedback on user likes, challenges, and pain points when navigating the site. The desktop and mobile mockups offer examples of how the organization can incorporate user feedback into an engaging, visually appealing, and easy-to-use website. The desktop and mobile mockups survey results also provide the organization with content and verbiage recommendations. Since the website enhancement recommendations are based on the presented UX research and user participant's feedback, Books for STL Kids can improve its website user experience by implementing these data-proven suggestions. Books for STL Kids can conduct further research and testing of its website's content depth and storytelling as users consistently provided feedback and suggestions throughout the user experience research process.

A strong user experience strategy effectively aligns the organization's mission and vision with the end user's needs and technical capabilities. For Books for STL Kids to have an engaging and positive user experience on its organization's website, it must adopt a compelling user experience strategy that plans and determines the appropriate approach for the design and experience of its website. The strategy must also consider the website's responsiveness across all device types, including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. This critical combination will assist Books for STL Kids in prioritizing their resources and focusing on solving the right user experience challenges and pain points.

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