

NYPL Report

Opportunity Too

Jill Hackett
Veronika Kostova
Felicia Tu
Wenjun Zhou

Prof. Sandra Davila

Methodology

Insights

"All the fluff is annoying and boring. I just want to get into it."

"I'm gonna search for enamel pins and pick what looks interesting... This one looks like a logo. ... What else do they make? Oh, just t-shirts. So back to pins. ... Look, they all have three colors. I wonder why?"

"Sometimes you'll get that one question that someone's asked but no one's answered, and you feel alone and adrift in the universe."

Oct. 2, 2018

The New York Public Library (NYPL) is seeking to create a "window" into the resources available on the NYPL website (nypl.org). Resources range from online courses to photo collections. The diversity of subjects and media presents a challenge to deliver this content to the right patrons.

To gain insight into the needs of patrons, Team Opportunity Too conducted **8 interviews and observations**, outlined below.

Interviews / Observations

A preference was placed on **NYPL patrons** unrelated to the team, but some friends and family were included. Participants were approached in a range of environments including the library and workplace.

- **Interviews [~20 mins]** - Semi-structured. See appendix.
- **Observations [~10 mins]** - Participants were asked to locate a new resource related to their topic, using any method.
- **Records** - voice-only recording, note-taking.

Archetypes / Outlined by NYPL

- **The Explorer [2 participants]** - passionate about learning a given subject. Explorers may not know what they are looking for.
- **The Researcher [3 participants]** - requires authoritative sources. Not intimidated by process and often self-identifies as professional or academic researchers.
- **The Self-Improver [3 participants]** - desire to improve skillsets or well-being, whether personal or professional.

1) Researchers seek to experience *flow*.

Participants consistently selected resources by scanning the content first. This was often explained as a need to determine relevance and quality, but potentially useful resources that could not be easily scanned were skipped over entirely. This behavior is better explained by a desire to be enthralled by the subject as quickly as possible.

2) Researchers seek to experience *progress*.

Participants frequently began their search for resources with a broad search term or category and progressively narrowed the scope of their focus. This "funnel" pattern appears to be driven by the desire to feel progress at each step. Researchers who did not feel progress toward deeper understanding would switch research paths.

3) The deeper researchers get, the more alone they feel.

Across the board, participants mentioned social media, curated lists, and sharing their findings with online communities. This social aspect to research was driven by a need to connect with others who share their passion and provide a sense of community around niche subjects.