

# NYPL CARD SORTING BRIEF

OPPORTUNITY  
TOO

## TEAM

Jill Hackett  
Veronika Kostova  
Felicia Tu  
Wenjun Zhou

## PROFESSOR

Prof. Sandra Davila

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this card sort was to determine whether amateur researchers organize NYPL items by media-type, topic, or some other method. This card sort additionally determines whether different user archetypes (Explorers, Researchers, and Self-Improvers) use different methods.

## METHODOLOGY

To create items for this card sort, 11 topics were selected from the NYPL “Articles & Databases Topics” and distributed randomly across 19 different media-types (selected from among 32 media-types identified on the website), resulting in 57 fictional catalog items. The card sort was organized and distributed through Optimal Workshop. The card sort also included a brief survey to categorize participants by archetype.

## ANALYSIS

The card sort returned 46 participants, 16 of which sorted all cards. The findings of this study are based on these 16 participants, which includes 4 Explorers, 6 Researchers, and 6 Self-Improvers.

## FINDINGS

### 1) MOST PEOPLE SORT BY TOPIC, BUT SOME BY MEDIA-TYPE

Across all archetypes, the majority of participants sorted most NYPL items by topic. However, some exceptions were made for “unusual” media-types such as maps, illustration, and patents. Additionally, participants who sorted by media-type felt strongly about their decision to do so, citing personal organization methods.

### 2) “LEARNING RESOURCES” ARE SPECIAL

Any media-type related to “homework help” or “self-improvement” in nature were categorized together, regardless of their potential relationship to other topics. This included media-types as broad as blogs, books, and events.

### 3) ALL THREE ARCHETYPES ORGANIZE GENERALLY THE SAME WAY

Some subtleties exist between archetypes, but in general all participants sorted cards either by topic (majority) or by media-type (minority) without a distinct division across archetype.