UP FOR A CHALLENGE?

*T*oby Greenwalt aims to encourage design thinking in the library world and to make online environments more human. Greenwalt recently called on librarians to design an online library card signup on his blog theanalogdivide. ALIA Sydney Co-Convenor Amy Croft and former ALIA State Manager (NSW) Julia Garnett were ready for the challenge.

We met for two hours in the State Library of NSW. Armed with paper, coloured pens and sticky notes, we set out to design an uncomplicated online form.

Without the constraint of designing for a specific library, we began our collaboration by comparing notes on libraries we had used or worked in to reach a core set of requirements. We included proof of residency, as set in the challenge (beyond the scope of our task were language barriers, PINs, and youth membership).

Our hypothetical library service was a public library, and we looked to ALIA's *Little Book of Public Libraries* and Michael Shanks' *An Introduction to Design Thinking: Process Guide* for inspiration.

A membership mindmap helped us to identify member needs and the library's needs. We agreed that library membership doesn't necessarily require a physical card, as long as we can provide a unique identification number or barcode to allow members to access library resources.

We created a workflow for online membership sign up for those using computers and those using mobile devices. Common features are an easy to find Join Here button on the homepage, followed by a brief outline of membership benefits and conditions of membership.

Potential members agree to the listed conditions to get to the membership form itself, where signing up is a four step process involving providing a name, identification and contact details (phone number and/or email address) and concluding with a confirmation of sign up which generates a barcode and unique membership number.

The identification step is completed by uploading scanned document(s) or using a computer webcam or mobile device camera to provide an image of the documents. One identification document must include a photo, while a second document such as a bill or bank statement must show a current address (if this is not already on the photo identification).

The final screen confirms membership, displaying the membership number and barcode, which the new member can print, or receive by email or SMS. These barcodes would be compatible with many systems already in place in libraries, accessible as an image file that could be stored on a mobile device. A library app that integrates membership details with access to econtent, loan history, and more could be developed. Members who prefer physical cards can visit the library to have one made.

While these are only prototypes, this was a very useful exercise in really thinking about how to make things easier for our users, rather than making our users fit in with our requirements.

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Note: Toby Greenwalt is Director of Digital Strategy and Technology Integration at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The opinions on his blog do not necessarily reflect those of his organisation. At time of printing, Greenwalt had not published other entries from the Librarian Design Challenge.