

ENVIROSELL PRESENTS

WHY WE BORROW

BORROWING RETAIL STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARY SUCCESS

29 April 2008

Research Objectives

- ✓ Explore the dynamics of visitor behavior at four Chicago area libraries, including both public and academic libraries
- ✓ Measure visitor interactions at touch points in the library
- ✓ Generate ideas to increase the effectiveness of signage and physical functionality
- ✓ Determine how libraries in the Chicago area can better service and educate their visitors, thereby creating a more satisfactory library visit

Research Methodology

- **Four libraries in the Chicago area were studied for two days each**
 - 3 Public Libraries:
Frankfort, Acorn and Indian Prairie
 - 1 Academic Library:
North Park University
- **Research involved a combination of observation, interviews and video**
 - **424** visitor groups were observed; patrons were tracked for up to 30 minutes of their visit
 - **267** patrons were interviewed after their library visit
 - Over **750** hours of video footage were generated for analysis



Getting Familiar

- **What factors contribute to behavioral differences?**

- *Age*
- *Gender*
- *Visitor Group Composition*
- *Ethnicity*

- **What did these factors influence?**

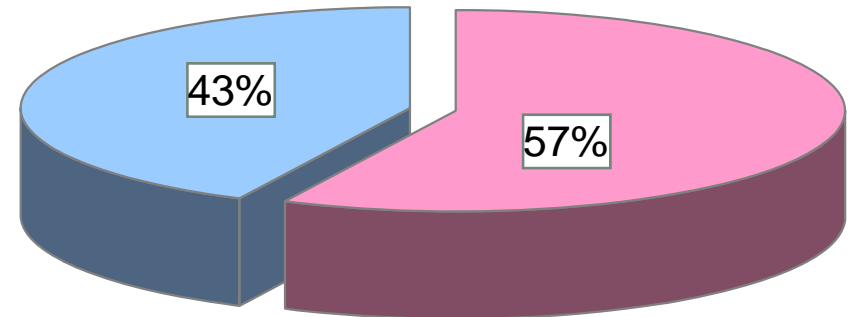
- *Signage Viewed*
- *Length of Visit*
- *Section Types Visited*
- *Number of Sections Visited*



Patron Profile

- Slightly more patrons are **female (57%)**
- The **age group** with the largest representation at the Public Libraries was **35 to 44 (20%)**
 - *Academic Library Patrons were primarily 18-24 (37%).*

Gender Demographics



Envirosell Benchmarks

Percentage Who Visit Alone

Library Study A:	69%
Library Study B:	59%
Bookstore:	58%
Mass Market:	65%
Grocery:	79%

Envirosell Benchmarks

Percentage Who Visit for Leisure

Library Study A:	53%
Library Study B:	52%

- **82%** of patrons visit the library **alone**
- **61%** visit **weekly** or more often
- **62%** visit the library as a **leisure** activity

Pre-visit Intentions

- **87%** of patrons **planned** to visit



- **30%** visited the library to **browse materials**

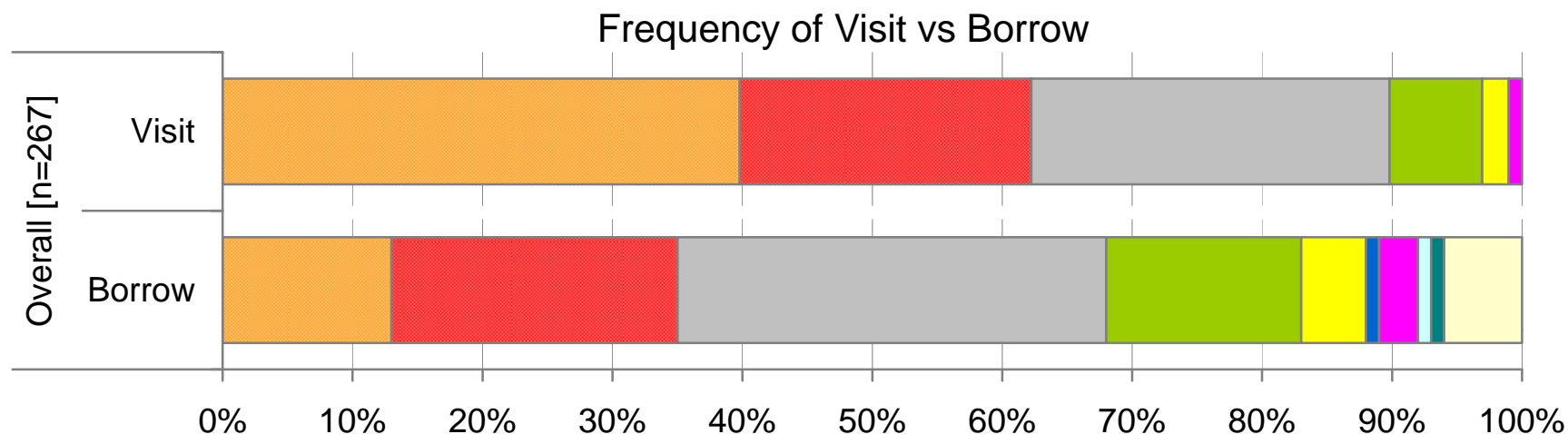
- **54%** to browse **books**
- **40%** to browse **audio visuals**



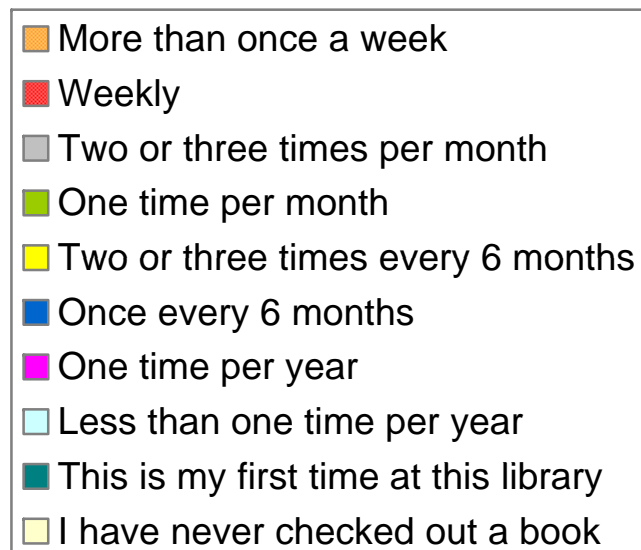
- **30%** had a **specific item** in mind for checkout



Measuring Success

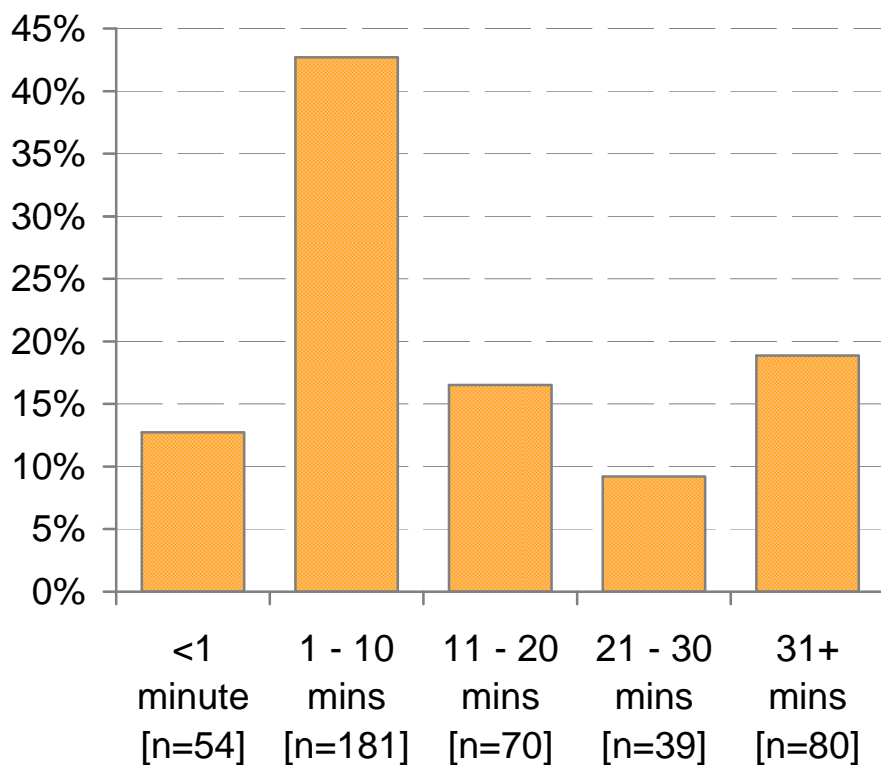


- The most frequent visitors don't borrow materials every time they come to the library.
 - **61% visit at least once a week**
 - **35% borrow at least once a week**
 - **6% of respondents have never borrowed from the library**
- **85% don't borrow** because they “**don't need anything**”
 - **5% reported the item they wanted to borrow was already checked out**
 - **3% couldn't find their title of choice**



Window of Opportunity

Time in Library



Overall [n=424]

EnviroSell Benchmarks

Average Time In Store

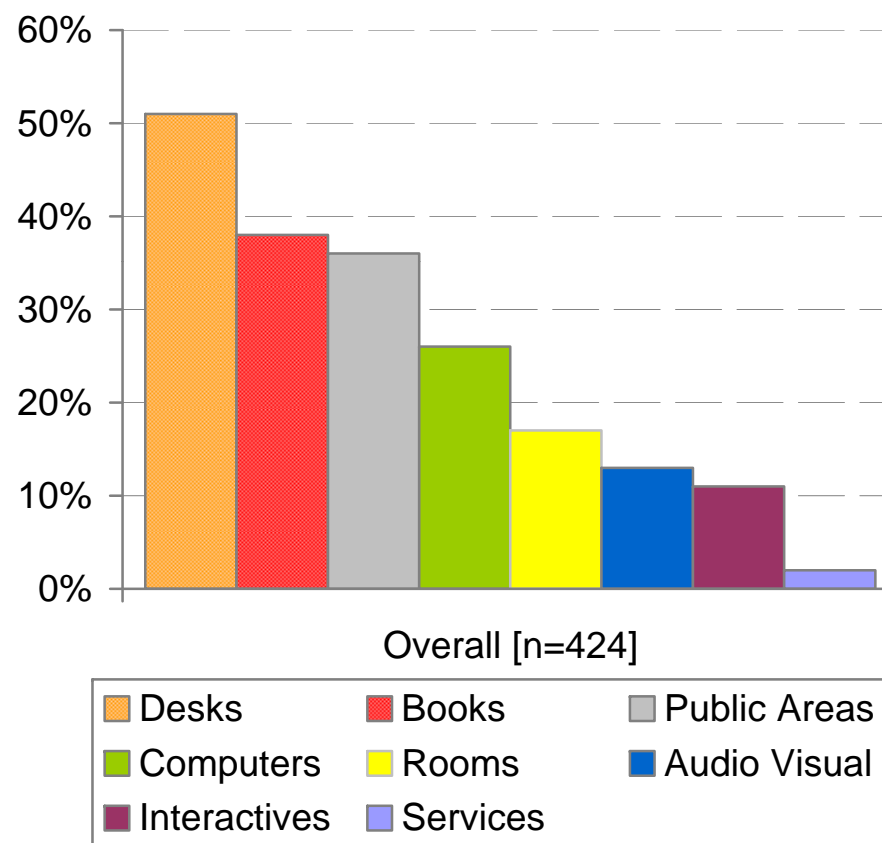
Bookstore:	7:34
Mass Market:	25:02
Grocery:	14:43

- **56%** of patrons' library visits were **under ten minutes**
- **Communicate quickly**
 - Target patrons on their pathways
 - Minimize distracting clutter

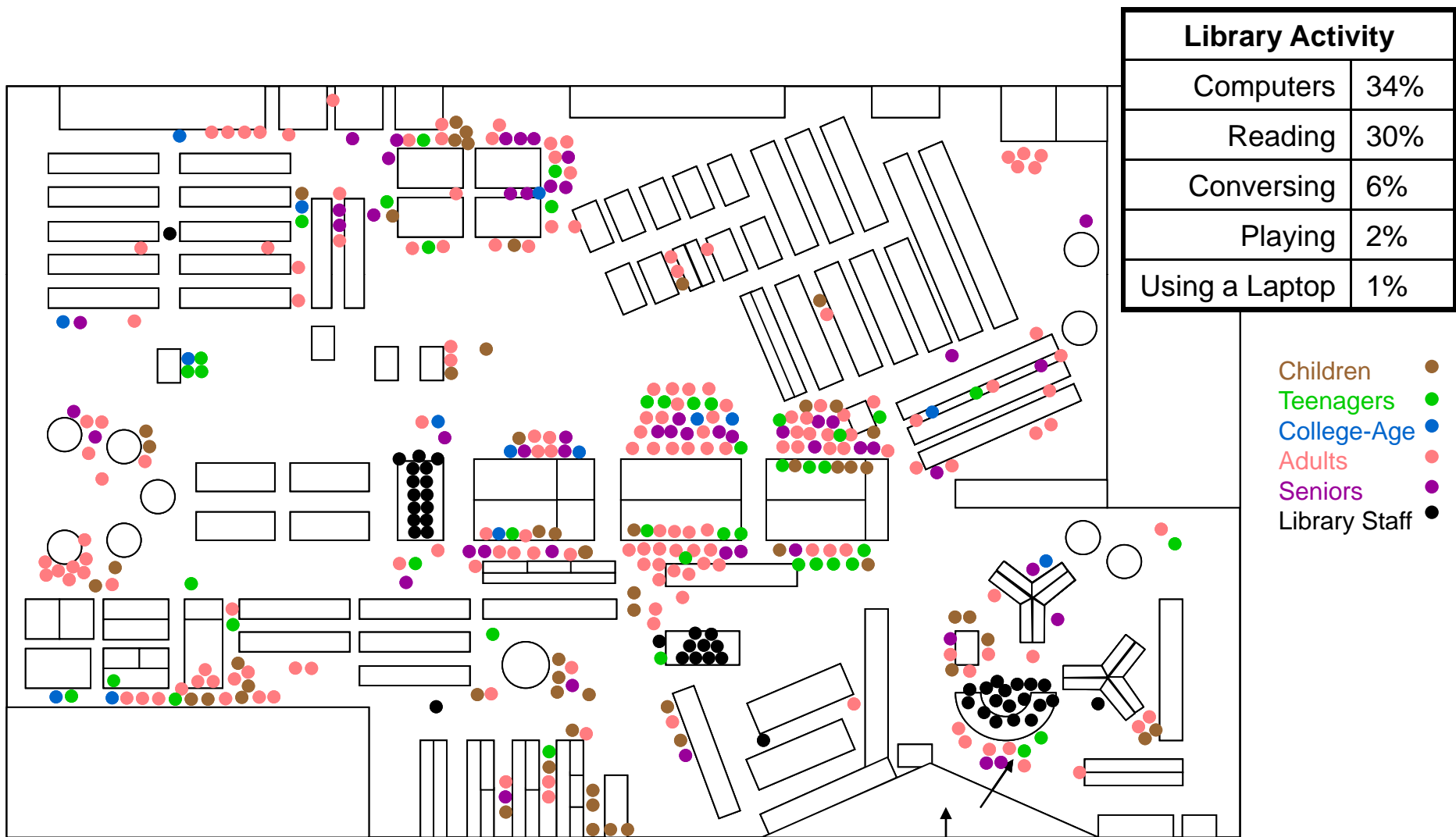
Age Demographics Influence Section Popularity

- Over one-third of patrons visited a **Books** section
 - *Books were especially popular among patrons over 35.*
- Patrons **under age 34** were **more likely** to visit the **computers** than a books section
- **Public areas**, such as lounge seating, study carrels and work tables were used by **one third** of all visitors
 - *Half of 35-44 year old patrons used a public area, as compared to one-quarter to one-third of patrons in all other age breakouts.*

Section Types Visited



Density Analysis



Public and Academic Differences

- Naturally, there were some differences between **Public** and **Academic** library users.
- Average number of sections visited:
 - **Public: 2.8**
 - **Academic: 1.4**
- Percentage of patrons who **received assistance**:
 - **Public: 54%**
 - **Academic: 20%**
- Percentage of patrons who **borrowed materials**:
 - **Public: 68%**
 - **Academic: 21%**
- Percentage of patrons who **viewed signage**:
 - **Public: 12%**
 - **Academic: 1%**

EnviroSell Benchmarks

Average Number of Sections Visited

Library Study A:	2.6
Library Study B:	2.9
Bookstore:	2.1
Mass Market:	4.7

EnviroSell Benchmarks

Percentage Who Receive Assistance

Library Study A:	11%
Library Study B:	15%
Bookstore:	19%
Mass Market:	13%

EnviroSell Benchmarks

Percentage Who Borrowed Materials

Library Study A:	54%
Library Study B:	57%

EnviroSell Benchmarks

Percentage Who View Signage

Library Study A:	16%
Library Study B:	15%
Bookstore:	20%
Grocery:	68%

Key Findings: What's Working

- **Lounge Areas and Public Work Spaces**

- *Approximately **two-thirds** of patrons who **used the public spaces** were observed **reading**.*
- ***Lounge areas** work especially well when **located near the computers and periodicals***
 - ➡ Creating a “Waiting Area” for patrons who are waiting for a computer to become available will likely introduce these people to more of the library’s offering, and become part of their routine when they visit.



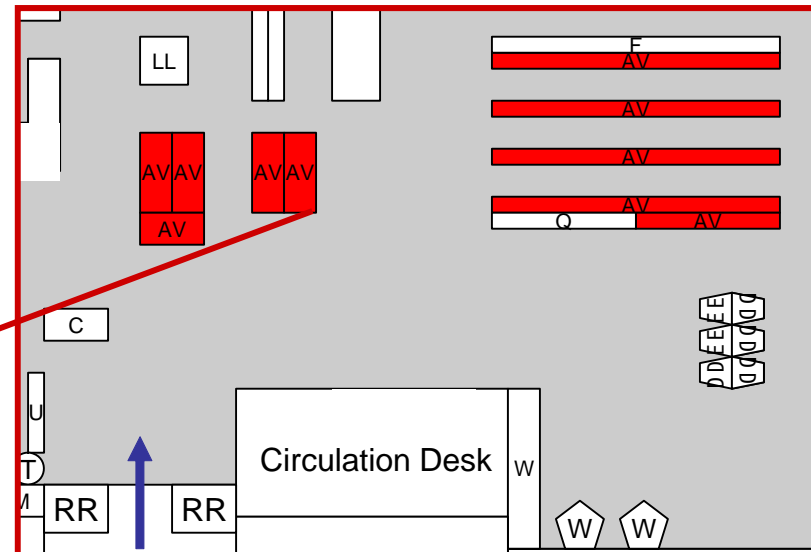
Key Findings: What's Working

- **Assistance and Library Staff Interactions**
 - **43%** of survey respondents interacted with library staff
 - The most popular interactions were:
 - Checking Out Materials
 - Assistance in finding an item on the shelves
 - Assistance in locating a section
- **Knowledgeable and friendly staff adds to the community feel of the library**
 - **88%** rated their interaction as **“Very Good”**



Key Findings: What's Working in Other Libraries

- **Audio Visual Section adjacent to Check-Out**
 - **Three times** as many patrons browse **Audio Visuals** when it is located near **Check-Out/Circulation Desk**
 - **40%** of respondents came to browse **Videos/DVDs, Music CDs or Audio Books**
 - **Audio Visuals is an excellent area to increase circulation**



Areas of Opportunity: Connecting Visitors to the Offering

70% don't know what title they want when they walk in the door

- **Less than one in ten** patrons uses the **Public Catalogue**
- Average length of catalogue interaction **3 minutes**
 - **Visitors need more help generating ideas on what to read, listen to and watch**
 - ➔ *Prominently displayed **Top Ten Lists** for books, music and movies*
 - ➔ *Use **fixtures** to **display materials** for browsing*
 - ➔ ***Visuals** to connect readers to the stories and information available to them*

Communicate to the patrons that the Public Catalogue connects readers to books.

“Selection/Assortment” received the lowest ratings among surveyed visitors

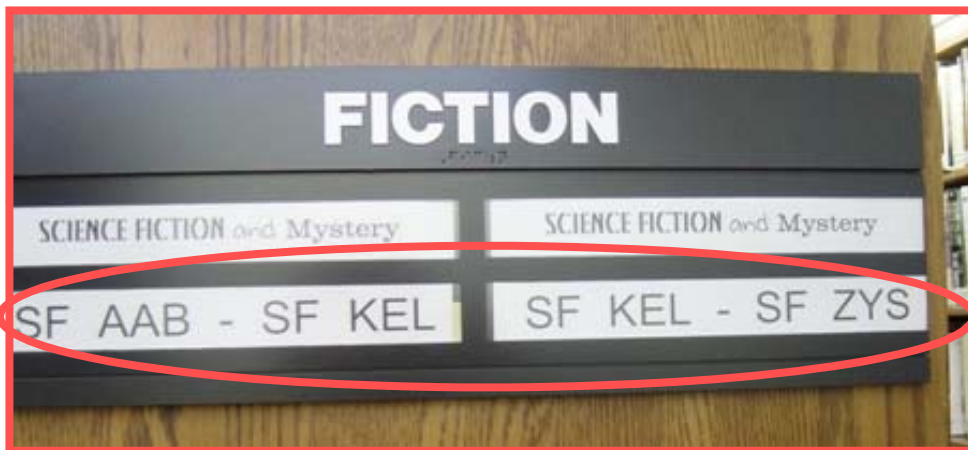
EnviroSell Benchmarks

Percentage “Looking for a specific item.”

Library Study A:	26%
Library Study B:	14%
Bookstore:	40%

Areas of Opportunity: Communications

The most frequently viewed signage type should also be the most user-friendly.



- Just under half of signage viewers looked at Stacks/Dewey signage during their library visit (45%).
- Does this **help** a browser **generate ideas**?
 - *Author names would be better for Dewey signage*
 - *Consider listing many authors or topics that may be found in the aisle*



Computer Generated signage must be kept fresh, or else it loses **capture power** among frequent visitors. Laminate the signs or use plastic frames to ensure durability.

Areas of Opportunity: Communications

Signage Hierarchy

Level One

Section Identification

—Text signage and visible from the main path through the library

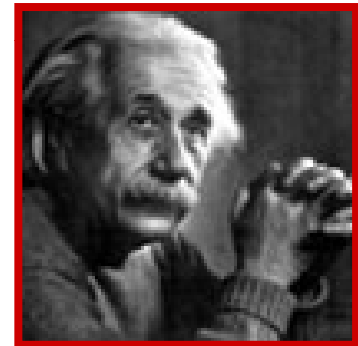
Biographies

Level Two

Theme

—Images are immediately accessible information to the viewer, use them to convey the topics and content of the section

—Theme signage should be visible from outside the section in order to attract patrons



Level Three

Dewey Identification

—Keep the Dewey signage on the ends of the stacks, as patrons know where to look for this information

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Level Four

Shelf Talk

—Face Out titles on the shelves, use framed easel signs to direct readers to similar titles

**Find Einstein's
books in Science!**

Signage strategies to put into practice



- Follow a Signage Hierarchy
- Less Is More
- Keep it Concise
- Position in-depth signage in wait areas
- Viewing signs from back to front
- Odd Shapes and Sizes
- A Sense of Movement

Retail Examples Successful Signage

A Sense of Movement



Odd Shapes & Sizes



Add Dimension



Incorporate Thematic Visuals with Text



Use Books as Signs



Areas of Opportunity: Desk Management

- **Circulation line waits were exacerbated by the high percentage of patrons who:**

- *Needed a question regarding availability or location answered*
- *Wanted to drop off materials*
 - ➡ Re-name the Reference Desk **Information** and the Circulation Desk **Check-Out**
 - ➡ Install book drops **inside** for entering patrons to easily return all materials at once



- **25% of patrons visit the Circulation Desk first**

- *41% stop at Circulation at some point during their visit*

- **31% of patrons had to wait in line**

- Average wait time was 27 seconds
- Average transaction time was 1:24 minutes
 - ➡ *Average total time at Self-Checkout was 1:00 and no line wait!*

Envirosell Benchmarks

Percentage of Patrons/Shoppers Who Wait in Line

Library Study A:	24%
Library Study B:	16%
Bookstore:	36%
Mass Market:	83%
Grocery:	87%

Envirosell Benchmarks

Average Total Wait Time

Library Study A:	0:55
Library Study B:	1:36
Bookstore:	0:43
Mass Market:	1:36

Areas of Opportunity: Desk Management



- Often times the Circulation Desk's proximity to the door attracts first destinations and questions.
 - *Identifying signage can clear up confusion.*



- This Reference Desk is overflowing with work, is it projecting the wrong impression?
 - *Too busy to help?*
 - *Too intimidating to ask?*



- Is the signage intuitive to the patron?
 - *What does Readers Services mean to the infrequent or uninitiated user?*

Revisiting the Relationship



Areas of Opportunity: Staying Current

- **The Ethnic Demographics of the Community are not always reflected in the Library Collections**
 - Advocate **Inter-Library Loans** to Non-English Language readers
 - **Increase Foreign Language Collections**
 - **Multi-Lingual Signage**



Areas of Opportunity: Staying Current

- **The 3rd Space**
 - *It's not home...*
 - *Its not work...*
 - *It's what Starbucks wants to be...*
- **Being Green**
 - **Borrow instead of buy**
 - **Re-use and recycle**
 - **Local is hip**
- **The New base**
 - *Information base + Entertainment base = New Base*
 - *As trends turn towards entertainment rather than information, how is the library addressing the change?*

Next Steps

Short Term/Low Cost

- Bring images into the space to create more visually stimulating environment.
 - *Consider ways to work within the Dewey Decimal System in order to free up how books are displayed. Face out more books to take advantage of cover art and increase capture power.*
- Offer more ways to pair patrons with materials—Best Sellers, New Releases and a designated area for Staff Recommendations are a good start.
 - Email lists with updates on New Releases, Best Sellers and Hot Topics are a good way to reach out to patrons while they are not at the library.
- Group all AV materials together (Music CDs, DVDs/Videos and Audio Books) and position the section close to Circulation to encourage impulse borrowing.
 - *Consider placing AV materials for all ages in the same location, rather than having a separate Children's and Teen's sections, thus creating a "store-within-a-store" concept.*
- Group computer workstations, lounge seating and periodicals to create a "waiting area" for patrons who are waiting for a computer to become available.

Next Steps

Long Term/High Cost

- New fixtures should focus on displaying circulating materials rather than storing the materials.
 - *This will facilitate cover art functioning as a sign.*
- Investigate flexible signage and fixture packages for future renovations or new libraries that enable easy asset reallocation as individual library needs evolve.
- Create a large site map for each library and clearly identify sections on both the map and through signage, preferably in view from the map location.
 - *Position the map near the online catalogue to enable patrons to look up specific items or browse by section.*
- Expand the Audio Visual section both in terms of the amount of space allocated to the section as well as the materials carried.
 - *Consider adding console games and other new technologies that combine learning with entertainment.*
- Recognize the un/underutilized spaces in the library and adjust the layout accordingly.
 - Sections with little or no visitation should be re-evaluated in terms of necessity, location and aisle space. When possible, condense these sections to add room in high-traffic areas.

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