

**MLA
DCMS
Laser Foundation**

**A Research Study of 14-35 year olds
for the
Future Development of Public Libraries**

Final Report

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Preface

Public services are being encouraged to be inclusive and reach out to all members of the community to provide them with opportunities to develop both socially and economically. Framework for the Future, a strategy for developing *public library services* in this direction, was published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in February 2003.

To continue this work and understand future requirements from libraries more clearly the **Museums and Libraries Archive Council (MLA), DCMS and the Laser Foundation** decided to explore, through a dedicated research project, the needs of 14-35 year olds. This group was identified as important given that under-usage is highest for this age range and the rapid changes and developments in technology and lifestyles can make their 'universe' quite different to that of older generations.

This project was overseen by a Steering Group which included a marketing expert from COI (Central Office of Information), representatives from DCMS, MLA and the Laser Foundation, and a head of library services.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- A comprehensive qualitative study involving 15 group discussions with 14-35 year olds in a range of locations across England was conducted in Autumn 2005. The primary objective of the research was to develop full understanding and provide evidence for potential future strategies for the public library service that will result in increased usage amongst the 14-35 age group.

Key Findings

- For non-users, negative perceptions of libraries are fairly deeply entrenched and there is a strong sense that libraries are ‘not for me’. In order to begin to consider libraries as an option, these barriers need to be addressed through service development and through facilitating understanding of changes within the service.
- Responses to the modernised¹ libraries included in this study demonstrated that efforts to update library services have made some libraries more compelling for both users and potential users in this age group and overcome some barriers.
- Even modernised services still need to work, however, to raise awareness of their services and the benefits of libraries generally, as well as demonstrate their relevance to the local community. It cannot be taken for granted that the presence of a refreshed service will be noticed or is sufficient to overcome existing negative perceptions. A range of non-users within the study did change their perceptions of libraries and decide to become users when they were taken to a modernised library as part of the project and were encouraged (within the research setting) to consider what libraries have to offer. Without this experience, however, they are likely to have remained unaware.
- It appears that without any such ‘modernisation’ libraries services hold no interest for this age group. Therefore, there is a baseline which libraries need to achieve. The most modernised libraries within the research come close to requirements but others require further development still, on aspects such as:
 - transformation in the range and quality of stock in terms of media, subject matter and currency, as well as reform of its presentation, accompanied by proactive support by library staff (and potentially collaborative work with partner agencies to stimulate interest in bringing stock alive to the interests and motivations of users)

¹ ‘Modernised’ is a general term used throughout this report for libraries and library services that were noticed by respondents to have undergone a recent change or development. The term ‘modernised’ is not quantifiable as it refers to any library that respondents perceived as having had recognisable investment and as such appears more up-to-date. This means there is an inevitable scale within this description of those libraries that were perceived as ‘more’ or ‘less’ modern. Examples of changes that denoted a description of ‘modernised’ included (either in isolation or as a range of changes) refurbishments or redecoration, a new building and introduction of new services or technology such as computerised self service for locating or loaning books.

- increased accessibility via electronic access (e.g. to resources across the whole of the UK and direct delivery to the home or work, networked access to support through websites and other emerging communications systems)
 - dispelling the culture of predominant quiet and replacing it with optional areas for quiet reading or dialogue and discussion between users and with staff who are active around the library interacting with users on a free and easy basis
 - introducing a growing range of activities in the library and elsewhere to create in the library a destination as well as an outlet
-
- Clearly, such developments will bring benefits to the wider library-using audience too.
 - For libraries to become truly compelling to this 14-35 audience, however, and a destination of choice, developments also need to take into account the specific needs of five different segments² within the target audience.
 - The extent of change and development for these different user groups vary. Some groups (such as ‘Borrowers’ and ‘Students’) require little beyond the baseline requirements above. Other groups (‘Family Activity Seekers’ and ‘Functional Dabblers’) require more effort but their needs are in line with what libraries currently offer. ‘Teenage Space Seekers’ require more radical developments and thus further consideration needs to be given as to the best way to accommodate them in the future, e.g. through general or more dedicated facilities, based on strategy objectives.
 - Of course, decisions as to which needs are taken into consideration will need to take local populations/markets into account alongside the physical constraints of any particular library.

* * * * *

² While six segments were identified overall, one (the ‘Disconnected’) is discounted as it has needs that are difficult to meet and low to no interest in libraries as a solution to those needs

Main Report

I Introduction

A Background

Public libraries have been providing services to the public for some hundred and fifty years. These include lending and information services for users through a wide variety of library outlets (from large urban libraries to small part time community libraries and mobile providers). It has become apparent, however, that over recent years there has been decline in book borrowing, signalling a change in library user behaviour or a less appropriate fit of current library provision with what users require.

This change has come at the same time as a general requirement for public services to be more socially inclusive, reaching out to all members of the community to provide them with opportunities to develop both socially and economically.

With these two strands in mind, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published Framework for the Future, a new strategy for the development of the public library services in England. This work identified the mission of libraries to be:

- **promotion of reading and informal learning**
- **giving access to digital skills and services including e-government**
- **adopting measures to tackle social exclusion, build community identity and develop citizenship**

DCMS and their partners intend that this mission is achieved by libraries through: reflecting and assisting the evolution of the traditional core skills; focusing on maximising public value by placing energy in areas where intervention will deliver the largest benefits to society and being distinctive from other public services; and by developing local flexibility within a national framework.

Framework for the Future identified public libraries as having four key strengths:

- Offering a neutral welcoming community space and supporting active citizenship
- Holding large stocks of both information and recreational material in a range of formats (including books, DVDs, videos, CDs and computer software)
- Offering internet access
- Operating as community centres for formal and informal learning by promoting reading and offering access to information and advice

The initial evaluation of Framework for the Future indicates that libraries potentially occupy a central role in ensuring everyone has access to the resources, information and knowledge they need. To achieve this, however, and become more accessible to

all, the way in which libraries develop must take into account the needs and expectations of the groups who most under-utilise the services (whilst obviously also accounting for the full range of library user needs).

As detailed within the Specification supplied by DCMS, the majority of current library users are 'older'. Usage is reasonable amongst pre-school and primary children probably largely as a result of the good partnerships many libraries have with local schools. Research shows, however, that usage drops quite dramatically at 14. Indeed, lightest (or under-) use is amongst the 14-35 year old age group. Framework for the Future has been specifically tasked with addressing this issue.

The starting point for increasing participation amongst this age group is to understand why the decline in usage occurs, where libraries currently fit into the wide context of lifestyle, culture and learning and how public libraries can best develop to optimise usage amongst this group.

A range of projects have been conducted to date amongst the younger end of the 14-35 spectrum (under 20). 'Fulfilling Their Potential' (MLA/Reading Agency September 2004, in collaboration with the National Youth Agency) was a national based project including an audit of current national policies; a review of partnership potential offered by libraries; consultation with key stakeholders; and three group discussions with 11-19 year olds. This work identified positive and weak aspects of the public library service now. Positive aspects included range of free books, support for reading and finding books, computer access, and somewhere to be away from home. Weaknesses included the negative image of 'dull' and 'boring', attitude of staff, poor stock, poor access and lack of awareness of what is on offer from libraries. While this offers a national perspective, this study was restrictive due to the relatively low involvement of the actual users/potential users and the age group coverage of 11-19 years.

The findings of much of the other research recently conducted supports the findings of 'Fulfilling Their Potential', and some proactive authorities have been actively addressing the younger age groups. The majority of research, however, has been conducted with the under-20 age group, at a local level (either local authority or individual library based) and with small samples. While these research projects and consultations are valuable in their own right they do not provide a comprehensive national picture of the 14-35 age group in relation to public libraries and an understanding of how and where best public libraries could fit into the developing lifestyles of this diverse age group.

As such, a focused research project, to meet this requirement and generate a comprehensive national picture was commissioned with the following overall objective: to build on work to date by developing a full understanding and providing evidence for potential future strategies for the public library service that will result in increased usage amongst the 14-35 age group. This report details the findings of this study.

B Research Objectives

To achieve the primary objective outlined above, the research needed to specifically:

- Fully understand target audience lifestyles and related interests in the context of what libraries are able to offer, i.e. where the following activities fit within current behaviour: reading, internet, watching DVDs/videos, listening to music, learning/research/homework, etc
 - Where do they access or undertake these activities?
 - What conditions are essential for them to happen?
 - What encourages any of these activities and makes the experience more or less satisfying/enjoyable?
 - What puts them off pursuing any of these activities?
 - Understand amongst current and lapsed users what libraries are (and have been) used for, including:
 - What activities are they used for any why? Why is the library preferable to other sources?
 - Which activities/services have lapsed? What have they been replaced by and why?
 - Understand the rational barriers to visiting their local library
 - Perceptions of what libraries offer
 - How this fits with similar resources from other sources
 - Other conscious reasons for not using a library
 - Understand the psychological and emotional barriers to library use
 - Perceptions of library users
 - Perceptions of the nature of the library experience (across different usage occasions)
 - Perceptions of the value of the library experience versus other sources (what do they get from elsewhere that they feel a library cannot deliver, or what do they feel a library is actively detracting from their experience of certain activities?)
 - Thoroughly explore how libraries could be developed for the future to encourage/increase their own use
 - Services they could offer
 - Other potential roles (e.g. place to meet friends, 'portal' to other activities)
 - 'Ideal library' (in terms of look, feel, layout, services, accessibility, staffing, accommodation of essential lifestyle requirements (e.g. mobile phone use), etc
-

C Method and Sample

1. Method

A qualitative method was selected as the most appropriate approach for this kind of work, where experiences and attitudes need to be explored in depth.

Group discussions were used as the means of interviewing respondents. The group forum allows for detailed discussion and debate but also for more creative thinking as respondents are able to ‘bounce’ ideas off each other. Each group was set a task which they needed to complete before attending the discussion:

- Half of the groups visited a local library and completed an open-ended questionnaire based on the experience
- The other half completed a semi-structured lifestyle questionnaire

All respondents were asked to gather ‘collage material’ – pictures and words from magazines and other sources – which they felt reflected their current lifestyle and key interests.

Prior to developing the discussion guide and conducting the fieldwork, a workshop was held with the client team and a range of participants drawn from organisations involved in library services and Framework for the Future activity.

The purpose of this workshop was to enable the research team to understand existing knowledge about the target for this study (14-35s) as well as detail around what libraries currently and potentially can offer in the way of services. The findings of the workshop were used to develop stimulus material (concepts) to help facilitate thinking amongst respondents about how libraries could be positioned or structured in the future to meet their needs. [Note: these concepts were not ‘tested’ as specific options for development, they were simply used to help respondents to stretch the boundaries of their own thinking.]

2. Sample

The sample for this research was required to be substantial to allow thorough representation of different dimensions and criteria within the target audience. To this end, 15 group discussions were commissioned - allowing more homogeneous groups to be interviewed together but also key differences (such as gender, lifestage, socio-economic grade, current library usership, etc) to be separated between groups. This approach allowed for needs by narrow target group to be articulated clearly and therefore, overall, a comprehensive range of variables to be analysed within the target population.

Each group discussion amongst the younger element of the sample (14-19) was comprised of 2-3 smaller groups of friends. These groups operated in the same way as a more standard group discussions where respondents do not know each other – for this age group, however, the inclusion of friends allows for both better dynamics and is a good ‘honesty check’ for young people who can be afraid to voice their own opinions or tend towards giving what they think is the right or required answer (a natural response from school).

Sample Structure

The total sample for this project was designed as below: a total of 15 group discussions, each of 1½ hours with 7-8 respondents.

<i>Group</i>	1	2	3	4*	5
<i>Age</i>	14-16	17-18	19-21	22-25	26-35
<i>Gender</i>	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
<i>Lifestage</i>	Pre-family	Pre-family	Pre-family	Family	Family
<i>SEG</i>	ABC1	DE	C1C2	ABC1	DE
<i>Library Usership</i>	Current	Lapsed	Lapsed	Current	Non-User

<i>Group</i>	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Age</i>	14-16	17-18	19-21	22-25	26-35
<i>Gender</i>	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
<i>Lifestage</i>	Pre-family	Pre-family	Family	Pre-family	Family
<i>SEG</i>	C1C2	ABC1	DE	C1C2	C1C2
<i>Library Usership</i>	Non-User	Non-User	Current	Lapsed	Current

<i>Group</i>	11	12	13	14*	15
<i>Age</i>	14-16	17-18	19-21	22-25	26-35
<i>Gender</i>	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
<i>Lifestage</i>	Pre-family	Pre-family	Family	Family	Pre-family
<i>SEG</i>	DE	C1C2	ABC1	DE	ABC1
<i>Library Usership</i>	Lapsed	Current	Non-User	Non-User	Lapsed

- General criteria across the sample:
 - All library usage relates to public libraries only
 - A mix of working full and part-time (including a spread of job type) and those not working/unemployed were represented in working age groups
 - In younger groups a mix of education (school, college, university) and working was represented
 - A representative spread of ethnic minorities (appropriate to location) was included across the sample

- Respondents used a wide range of other public services (e.g. sports facilities, cinemas, baby/child facilities etc)
- In family groups, a spread of age of children, number of children and gender of children were represented
- In pre-family groups, a spread of those living independently and those living with their parents were represented
- Current users represented a spread of level of usage (from 3 times a year upwards) and a spread of reasons for usage (covering lending, internet usage, book clubs etc)
- Lapsed users were to have previously used library facilities but stopped using in the last 1-3 years (appropriate to age)
- Non-users were not to be using library facilities and to have not used them for a long period of time (appropriate to age) but did not reject the idea of using a library in the future
- Locations included
 - A spread of urban, suburban and rural areas
 - Areas with a spread of different library facilities (including a large modern city library, smaller town library, small village library with restricted opening hours, mobile libraries, etc)
 - Libraries of varying age, size and extent of modernisation

An additional mixed gender family group was held to account for a shortfall in respondent numbers in the asterisked groups.

Sample Considerations

Age breaks within the groups were set to bring together those who are most similar in terms of the lifestyles, attitudes and needs. There can be enormous differences between those at the younger and older end of the teenagers relevant to this sample thus it was important to allow some degree of homogeneity with relatively narrow breaks.

Different lifestages were also separated between groups as this is fundamental to lifestyle requirements. As such, to mix lifestages would have hindered discussion around the optimal delivery of libraries to different targets.

The sample included a mix of single sex and mixed gender groups as there is a benefit in both approaches. Separating genders allowed for clarity around differences in needs, while combining genders meant male and female respondents could work together to explore common ground in more depth.

Current library-usership was split out between the groups. This is because it was likely that there are differences (either attitudinally or in needs) between current, lapsed and non-users. Rejectors of libraries per se were excluded as they would obviously have less to offer discussion and potentially inhibit overall energy within the group. Current users included a spread of people who used libraries in different ways and with different levels of involvement e.g. lending, internet usage, book clubs, etc.

Socio-economic grade was split out as far as possible within the limits of the sample. The sample, however, allowed for a degree of differentiation which had value in highlighting any differences and specific requirements from those in less economically comfortable or more deprived communities.

Fieldwork took place between 20th September and 6th October 2005 and covered the following locations: London, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Hampshire.

The project team included: Joceline Jones, Claire Vernon, Zoe Lewis and Jill Swindells.

II Detailed Findings

1. Overview of Findings

Within this study, the issues that arose for users and potential users³ fell into **two main areas**, both equally important as to a large extent they drive each other.

The first area is the actual **services** offered by libraries:

- Potential users as a whole felt that the services offered by their library had little or no advantage over other sources of similar services – and in some cases were second rate by comparison.
- They also felt that any recognisable strengths of libraries (e.g. free Internet access) met a minority need and were not unique.
- Current users were often of the same opinion, considering libraries to offer little that was better than could be found elsewhere.
- However, current users did feel that libraries offer some specific benefits and that usership has its own ‘feel good’ factors.

This points to a need for service development and improvement but also for explicit marketing of the benefits of using libraries.

The second key problem area was of **Image and Identity**:

- Potential users overall were of the view that libraries were simply ‘not for them’. While this partly stemmed from the idea that libraries have nothing to offer them, it is also based in the view that users of libraries are the sort of people that they do not want to be like.
- While current users recognised that library users included people like themselves, there was a sense that in the main they were used by people they did not want to be like.

While various efforts at modernisation are combating the image and identity issues to a degree, there is still a lack of real clues and evidence for the 14-35 age group that libraries are for them and accommodate their needs.

³ Within the body of this report, the terms *potentials* and *potential users* refer to lapsed and non-users.

Furthermore, awareness of new and improved facilities was very low, even where modernised facilities were ‘on the doorstep’.

Given these issues it is unsurprising that potential users (i.e. lapsed and non-users) are strongly disconnected from libraries at present. Furthermore, however, the current users within this sample have only a weak connection to libraries.

A good proportion of non-users and lapsed users within this sample claimed they would use libraries again or more often in line with Framework for the Futures remit for libraries, i.e.

- To access reading material
- To access informal and formal opportunities for learning
- To access digital skills and services
- And to use the public space as citizens and members of the community

For this to be the case, however, the conditions in which library services currently are offered do need to change in two key ways.

Firstly, the value of the library as a destination needs to be improved because enhancing the experience or widening/increasing the opportunities for satisfaction will help overcome negative perceptions and beliefs that are often deeply rooted. To achieve this, services themselves need to be adjusted (rather than radically changed) to offer a better match with the various needs of this age group. This will make the library a real option versus the ‘competition’ because it would not be disappointing or second rate.

Consideration obviously needs to be given to the structure and location of different libraries as it is clear that for some libraries, due to physical constraints, meeting the variety of needs may be difficult to achieve and decisions will need to be taken in terms of priorities within the local ‘market’. However, optimal sites and locations can make significant difference to both improving accessibility and value of the library as a destination therefore in some instances a move of location may be worthwhile.

Secondly, marketing is required to communicate and demonstrate to potential users that libraries have something to offer them. Specifically, consideration needs to be given to the way services are presented within the library – to show that the needs of users and potential users have been taken into consideration and the content of libraries is relevant. This will work to counter barriers to use and make users/potential users feel that the library is a competitive option for them.

Furthermore, the benefits of public libraries also need to be spelled out to potential users in external marketing material. Indeed, these benefits are difficult to dispute for many users and potential users but have often been forgotten or are overshadowed by negatives.

The extent of change for any library clearly depends on its own circumstances. The indications are, however, that for any given library **all** the above need to be addressed to create a connection with current and potential users that really allows library services to compete with alternatives. Furthermore, it also appears from this sample that without changes potential users simply will not be engaged and usage will drop away for some current users as they change lifestage – reducing the library population further.

The scope of change is consistent and there are some ‘universal’ requirements for the 14-35 age group, including the following:

- Modernisation of style/ambience
- Enhanced environment (added services)
- Improved stock
- Electronic access
- Improved access (and location)
- Improved assistance and support from technical facilities, signage and staff

These issues are unlikely to be unique to the 14-35 age group and therefore addressing them positively will bring benefits to the wider library audience.

The 14-35 age group, however, also represents some very diverse users. This research highlights how needs differ (see Section 4, Audience Segmentation, p.44) and how specific needs must be factored into the above development to make services relevant and able to achieve their objectives.

2. Media and Learning Lifestyles amongst 14-35s

2.1 Overview

To understand current habits of this target and the extent to which library services both currently fit and need to evolve, the research looked at media consumption and learning within current lifestyles.

Even though individuals within the 14-35 group can vary considerably, findings showed consistency in terms of key media consumption and activity.

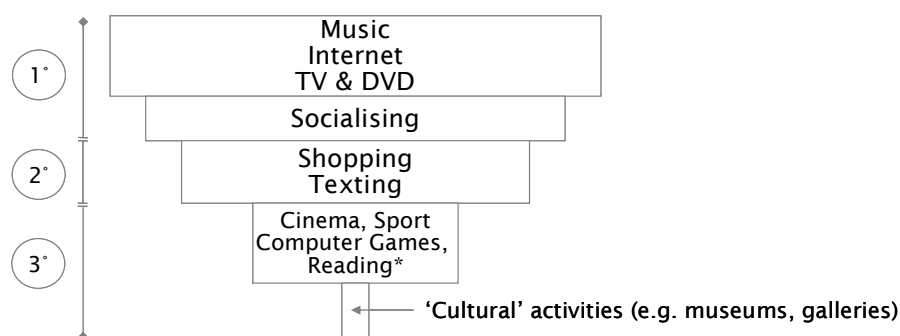
As Diagram 1 below indicates, activity broadly fell into three categories. Music, Internet and TV and DVD consumption were primary as they took place most often, usually daily. Socialising was also a key activity, although slightly less time was spent doing this overall.

At a secondary level - involving less time, but featuring very regularly – were shopping and texting/SMS.

Activities such as cinema, sport, computer gaming and reading of books and magazines fell into a third category – for most undertaken with some regularity, but much less frequently overall. While reading did fall into this lower frequency or lower volume category for the sample as a whole, it did vary between different individuals, with some respondents reading more often than others.

For most, cultural activities such as visiting museums and galleries were far more occasional than the other activities.

Diagram 1



Looking at how media consumption maps out generally, it is clear that the core areas of provision by libraries are still relevant and can potentially meet the needs of the 14-35 age group. For library services to be accepted and perceived as relevant/useful and a potential option, however, they need to tap more strongly into the way in which these activities are part of this age group's lives.

High satisfaction with home provision around the top activities, however, also indicates that the offer from a library needs to go beyond provision and find differentiation.

The different activities and their potential as strands of library services are described in more detail below.

2.2 Music

Music was claimed to be very important across the sample and was generally listened to daily.

"Music is really important, I listen to it all the time, wherever I am, on my ipod"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

TV music channels were watched or listened to extensively. Mostly they were not focused on, but acted instead as 'visual radio' in rooms where other activities were taking place (homework, reading, socialising, etc).

The music channels were very important for teenagers who used their ‘choices’ to define their own time and space in the home. Music channels also featured for older respondents within the category, either similarly as visual wallpaper or as an active choice versus other forms of television.

“I watch the music channels. It’s my time after the kids have gone to bed and I can do other things too – easy viewing.”

Current users, Males (22-25) ABC1, Family

Most used **personal listening devices** at least some of the time. Music tended to be both listened to on PCs and transferred from here to a range of digital devices; and managed and updated in this way. iPods in particular were very common, especially for those under 25 (including those in more deprived communities).

Across the 14-35 age groups, most music was obtained “free” or for very low cost. Many respondents were downloading their music from the Internet. It was quite common to borrow and copy CDs too: mostly from friends and, for some, occasionally from libraries.

“I download most of my music for free, what’s the point in paying when you can do it that way?”

Non-users, Females, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

Most respondents under 20 were very comfortable with the notion of owning ‘intangible’ digital music. Those over 20 tended to be more mixed in both knowledge and attitude to this newer way of owning music. However, they were learning fast, feeling already that buying CDs was outmoded (and a waste of money). As such, behaviour was changing in line with the younger teens and clearly, as this population ages, digital music will become the norm.

“I have just got into digital music but am not sure about how to download or what sites to use so I still buy most of my music on CD”

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35,) ABC1, Pre-Family

While downloading music free from the Internet was felt to be established practice, there was some perception that access could be easier. It could take a long time to find what they were looking for. A minority of respondents (mostly female) also had issues around the legalities of downloading music which prevented more widespread use. These issues, however, were not a major source of irritation. For most, legal issues were either unknown or felt to be irrelevant and unenforceable and therefore did not influence behaviour.

“I do download music and someone said you can get done using the illegal sites, so I’m not sure about doing it”

Non users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

A bigger issue was not being able to access brand new or the latest music immediately.

"If it's new out and a lot of people are trying to download it, it takes two or three days to find one that can be downloaded straight away. Other than that, if it's not brand, brand new then yeah you can get it downloaded in about 2 minutes.."

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

The offer from many libraries of loaning CDs does have a weak fit with needs - borrowing and copying is established behaviour. For more deprived communities where broadband Internet access is less widespread, access to the Internet is also a helpful source for accessing music.

For those with Internet access (most within this sample), however, the ease with which they can access music, without the need for a journey or loan fee, means for the library offer to be compelling it needs to offer something different.

In the context of CDs this is about having the newest and latest available immediately. There was a perception, however, that library stock would be limited (few copies available) and not up to date.

More useful and interesting 'gaps' which libraries were felt potentially able to fulfil were in relation to:

- Exclusivity: collections of music where clustering and sorting allows users to immediately access choice within a category and saves much work in seeking material; and knowledge can help users find new ideas.
- Learning/skills development and activity: many within this age group (particularly at the younger end) aspire to being musical or experts in the area and sought opportunities to help them achieve this.

There was an awareness that opportunities for the latter are hard to come by through other channels. It was felt, however, that libraries with the right expertise, stock (and potentially equipment) could provide them. Certainly building services around music would allow for the promotion of informal learning but also provide a means to build community identity and develop citizenship amongst young people seeking access to and sharing these opportunities and facilities.

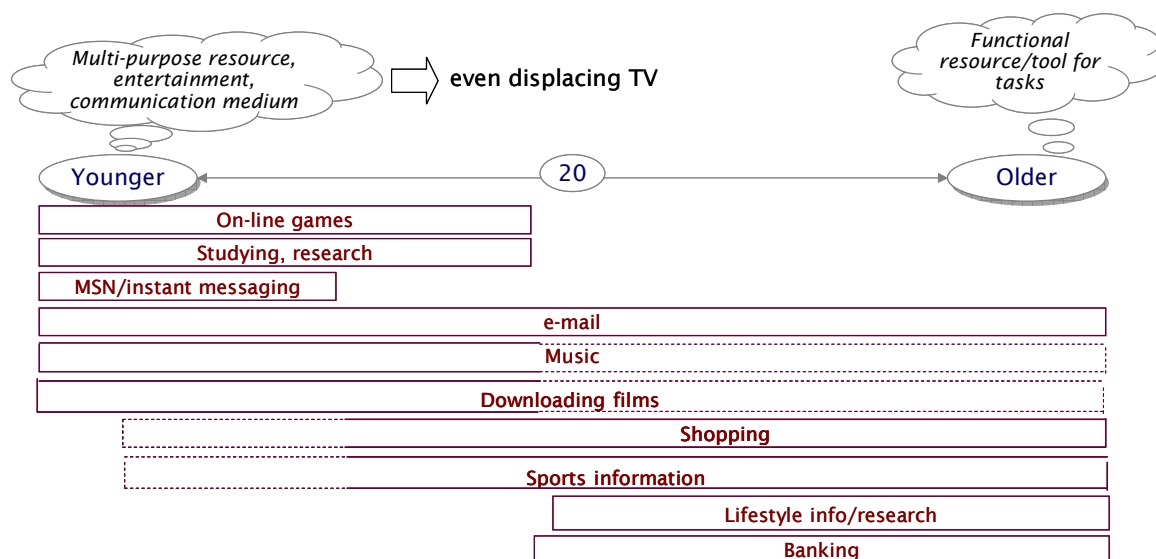
[This interest was borne out by users of the Powerhouse in Manchester. A key benefit of the facility was the access to music and equipment. Interestingly, the library part of the facility was felt to offer a poor complement to the other facilities and could do better in terms of relevant material – see Section 5.2 Reactions to some recently developed libraries, p 54 for more detail.]

2.3 Internet

For almost all respondents in the sample, using the Internet was firmly entrenched behaviour across a range of different activities.

There were clear differences, however, in the focus of internet activity and the way in which it is used generally, between younger and older respondents (see Diagram 2 below).

Diagram 2



While some activity is shared (email, accessing music and films) other purposes for using the Internet and key activities vary considerably.

Amongst the over 20's in the sample, usage was very much task focused. For these respondents the internet was often used in small or planned windows of time – with a view to getting these tasks done.

This older group used the internet extensively for sourcing lifestyle information (things to do/places to go, reviews, etc) as well as other research (a first port of call for more information on new topics, e.g. health issues, local issues, hobbies, etc). It was interesting that there was very little spontaneous criticism about difficulty in finding information or the information found not being specific enough.

A key benefit of the internet was being able to access it at home and at leisure – without any need to plan the activity in advance or have constraints on time.

"I prefer to use the Internet at home in my own time"
 Non-users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

For younger respondents, particularly those under 17 and at school, use of the Internet tended to be tied into longer windows of time where it supplemented other activities on the PC. Indeed, there was often simultaneous use of entertainment, tasks (research) and instant messaging for periods of up to 2 or 3 hours at a time.

"I spend like 3 hours a night on the Internet talking to my friends and downloading music and stuff while I'm doing my homework"

Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

"If it's pretty straightforward and if your search engine is good – or you use Ask Jeeves"

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

Access to the internet per se was an issue for respondents from the most deprived communities only. Lack of broadband connection at home, however, meant that for some others it was sometimes preferable to use other internet services (e.g. at work, school, internet café, library) for speed.

"I use the Internet café to download 'cos its so slow at home without broadband"

Lapsed, Males, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

Providing broadband services thus does facilitate access to digital skills and services – especially in deprived areas. To be optimally useful to teenagers, however, and encourage use in an informal learning environment, consideration needs to be given to how 'time slots' are managed and run – for example by providing dedicated workstations for their use.

2.4 TV and DVDs

Unsurprisingly, TV screen viewing was very common amongst these 14-35 year old respondents. Interestingly, however, proliferation of choice means that many respondents have developed focused or themed viewing habits. Rather than all simply watching mainstream terrestrial TV at certain times, a range of respondents had a tendency to focus on particular types of programming, to the exclusion of others.

"I only really watch films now."

Users, Males, (22-25), ABC1, Family

"You have your favourite channels and just go between them. All the music ones and then some programmes on Living and films."

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

For most respondents, DVDs featured heavily within their TV screen viewing, with DVDs being watched between one and four times a week.

Many respondents found satisfaction in **owning** DVDs. Given their relatively low cost but high 'emotional value' (being able to watch them time and again, kudos from having the newest/latest or niche films, etc) many respondents sought a collection of their own.

"My son (7 yrs) has over 100 videos, we just keep buying them and he likes his collection, he watches them a lot over and over"

Current users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

The perceived short wait until latest releases were available and generally low prices and easy accessibility (supermarkets, frequent discounts, etc) meant purchase was often seen as a relatively good option versus renting. For not much more than the cost of rental, a DVD could be watched repeatedly and owned long term. Furthermore, buying a DVD meant that it was *on hand* to be watched when a spontaneous viewing window emerged.

"I buy DVDs, they're not so expensive these days, renting is a bit of a hassle"
Non-users, Females (17-18) ABC1, Pre-Family

Multiple viewing of films and lending within friendship or family circles was very common. It was also established habit to borrow a DVD for 'a while', again to allow an appropriate viewing window to arise.

"You can buy DVDs really cheap now, it's not worth renting or we borrow off each other as well"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

Access to DVD **rental** facilities was most important for films which were either brand new or, less often, niche (and thus not available in shops or friendship and family circles).

The rental decision was also often spontaneous, late in the evening and from home – generated from needing something to do.

"The time you think about getting a film is 9 o'clock or something."
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

Current library facilities in relation to DVD have some fit with current habits within this age group – in particular the extended rental period having some parallels with borrowing a DVD and allowing for a spontaneous viewing moment to arise. The idea of an extensive DVD collection also offers something of interest to users and potential users if it offers something they cannot access elsewhere.

The idea of using libraries for DVD rental, however, is far from current practice. There is a high level of satisfaction with other solutions for accessing DVDs and awareness of library services in this area is low. Therefore, to be considered as an option, users and potential users would need to be explicitly told of why the library provision is a good fit with their current habits and the potential benefits of a common collection.

Low expectations from what the library DVD service offers, however, generated by general negative perceptions about library stock as out of date or limited in availability, would also need to be addressed within the publicity/marketing for this part of the service to be compelling. Availability of this service would also need to be publicised outside of the library environment in order to reach potential users.

Of course, any claims would need to be supported in delivery of the service for it not to be disappointing – including range of stock and opening hours.

This is particularly the case given there is a rental charge. While ‘cheap’ versus rental outlets, loaning from a library still involves a cost that is traded off what is only a slightly higher payment for ownership.

For these respondents, DVD collections of real value that could be offered by libraries are likely to focus on the more differentiating aspects of what libraries can offer. As with music, exclusivity or value to learning/skills development fits with both the remit/strengths of libraries and gives a reason to use. However, while DVD rental can loosely assist with building community identity by giving additional reasons to use the library and promoting informal learning through some stock, the impact is likely to be minor. The primary source for DVDs is likely to remain outside of libraries.

2.5 Studying

In the main, locations and resources for studying were felt to be well catered for. School or college students did their non-classroom work either at home or their friends’ homes or at the school or college itself (in the classroom or library, during free periods or even during lessons themselves).

There were, however, key times when teenagers were highly motivated to seek support/assistance and alternative places to study.

For 14-17s this was, unsurprisingly, around exam time. Certainly for GCSE, but to some extent A Level as well, many students within the sample felt they needed access to help with both revision and course work.

These respondents were specifically seeking mentoring or assistance from people who either understood their course or could help them move forward in what they needed to do by giving ideas or direction to sources of information that could really help.

Libraries, as a ‘place of knowledge’ were a potential solution, but requirements from staff go beyond traditional librarian services to a more active/interactive role (e.g. in a dedicated session). External staff are thus likely to be required for the service to have real value. The idea of a source outside school, however, was often very compelling and an incentive to work.

For older students (17+, and including mature students) the library fulfilled a different role. When privacy or quiet was difficult to come by in the home (through family or sharing with other students) the public library could offer a peaceful, quiet and relatively empty place to study.

"I came here when it's a riot at home and I needed to get something done."
Lapsed users, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

It was clear, therefore, that public libraries can perform several important roles in encouraging reading and learning when directly related to study. In addition to providing relevant space, real value could also be provided through provision of timely support services – which has the potential to tackle social exclusion and build community identity.

2.6 Reading

In terms of reading, reading of books was more marked amongst the older respondents in this sample (25-35) and those in the higher socio-economic brackets (ABC1), although not exclusively.

There was, however, a broad group of people for whom books held no interest at all. The reasons for rejection were varied and often differed between respondents but included: a perception that books are boring; that they are very time-consuming or that there is insufficient time to read them; and low confidence in enjoying a book and not finding it a difficult experience.

"Books are daunting, too big, I really don't have the time"
Non-users, Mixed, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

Amongst these respondents, however, there was often relatively frequent reading of magazines and non-fiction books (such as 'how to' reference books or other lighter weight information-based books).

"Reading's boring innit ... I like real life stories, yeah, like gangsta stories ... how they got there and what their music is about"
Current users, Male, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-family

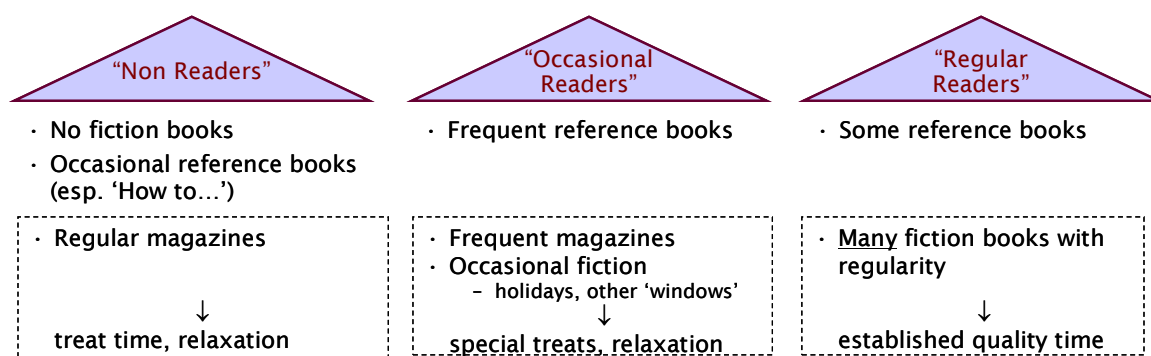
"I read a bit but you have to do that for school"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

"I don't read books much, I'm too busy with the kids and when I get a break I'd rather flick through a magazine"
Current Users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

Interestingly, it was clear that respondents defined themselves as "readers" by their consumption of fiction books, which did not reflect the extent to which they actually consume or need written material (see Diagram 3 below). There was also a notable lack of traditional 'book' language across the sample. Respondents spoke of books which related to their specific interests and or 'stories' they liked and rarely used terms such as autobiography, fiction, science fiction, etc.

"I like books sometimes but you have to do that, like on your own ... I prefer magazines"
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

Diagram 3



The diagram also shows (in the boxed areas underneath each reader type) that across respondents, reading does present a ‘treat’ or quality moment.

“I tend to read on holiday, buy a couple of good books before I go, but don’t find the time otherwise”

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

“Books...stretch your imagination. A good way to relax and way to use your free time”

Current users, Mixed, (17-19), C1C2, Pre-Family

It was clear that for the ‘lighter’ group of occasional readers (but not exclusively) a level of self-indulgence is part of the reading experience. Book retailers are successfully meeting this need for indulgence by providing: lots of ‘brand new’ variety in the books and magazines they offer; comfort and an enhanced experience (eating and drinking); and in some cases personalisation (through recommendations and suggestions).

For an occasional past-time, this is far more satisfying and compelling than the current offer of many libraries for respondents. There is some recognition, however, of ‘paying’ for the enhanced experience in a commercial environment.

In contrast to bookshops, the common perception of libraries, especially amongst non and lapsed users, is of a stock of books only, and within this mostly dated fiction or heavyweight theory books. As explained in detail later (3.3 Barriers to Library Use, p. 32), the experience of reading within a library is also expected to be less than pleasant, which is at odds with needs for treating and indulgence.

To offer a better match with this target’s requirements for reading – essential if libraries are to successfully promote reading and informal learning amongst this group – libraries need to ‘redefine’ how they are relevant to their reading.

Specifically, they need to place some emphasis on more transient, lighter material (such as magazines) and on lighter weight reference books (useful, ‘how to’ material) as this is where initial interest lies.

Fiction can also be made more appealing by drawing on some of the elements that facilitate and encourage reading (enjoyment, comfort, indulgence) and which the competition (in the form of bookshops) do so well.

For example, rather than encouraging people to borrow books, a more accessible 'sentiment' would be encouraging people to enjoy their favourite magazine or a good story/book or to find out more about something (probably a lifestyle issue).

The library environment also needs to be made more conducive to a pleasurable experience. Some mirroring of seductive 'book shop windows' and provision of comparable, subsidised comfort is likely to make libraries an option that is competitive, if not preferred.

"They [bookshops] are lovely ... something I choose to do in my lunch hour, it's peace and a really nice coffee ... If there was a library that did the same, why not? It would be a bargain too – so better in that respect"
Current users, Male, (22-25), ABC1, Family

Furthermore, as a preferred free destination of shared public space libraries can help tackle social exclusion and build community identity - as residents want to keep hold of it.

3. Library Usage amongst 14-35s

3.1 Current Usage and Awareness

Across the **current users** of libraries within this sample there was a spread of different usage patterns. Only a minority were utilising the full range of services. Most respondents demonstrated a more specific use by need, for example:

- Students utilising computers and Internet services with some *ad hoc* book borrowing
- Many families (especially lower SEG) using children's services
- Others simply borrowing books and/or occasionally using computers

There was much lower use of DVD/video/CD rental which tended to be perceived as 'not good enough'. Local information services were also only used occasionally – largely because they were not needed.

Lapsed and non-users tended to be aware of the key service offerings: book borrowing; computer use; local information; photocopying; and, for some, videos/DVDs and CDs. Their focus, however, was mostly on books and reading with generally lower awareness of: activities that are available; newer services (such as DVD collections or computer game rental); level of range in

larger libraries (magazines and newspapers, cafes, amount of computers, broadband internet access, etc); and modernisations (including new technology).

“There’s more in the library than I remember.. didn’t used to get a café or Internet access.. Much better”

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

Overall, it was clear that assumptions cannot be made that local residents will be aware of the latest additions and developments to library services in their area.

3.2 Triggers and Barriers to Using Library Services

3.2.1 Overview

Exploring perceptions of the benefits of libraries and triggers to using them highlighted that there are indeed a range of benefits to libraries which are differentiating from the ‘competition’.

The benefits are clearly very important to current users but they are also credible and compelling to some potential users too. As such, reintroducing these benefits in marketing material will provide beliefs and interest that will help overcome barriers to use (see Section 3.3, Barriers to Library Use, p. 32). The benefits are detailed below.

It is important to note, however, that these benefits are not compelling to all. These potential users need both new services/service improvements and a stronger matching of identity through image and presentation for libraries to be seen as relevant and a real option to them (see Section 4, Audience Segmentation, p. 44 and beyond). Furthermore, even for those who believe in the benefits, barriers still persist which need to be addressed for ongoing usership to be considered worthwhile and ‘for me’.

3.2.2 Trigger: ‘Offers a service I want to use/need’

Several rational reasons exist to use the library, based in the fact that services do have a useful function and can assist in achievement of tasks.

- **Media resource** - Libraries are seen by some as a one stop shop for a wide range of different media resources: books to read and borrow (fiction, theory, reference, etc); DVDs/videos/CDs; computers/Internet access; photocopying; newspapers; local and historical data, etc)
-

"The library has a lot in it, its more than books... you know they've got DVDs, CDs and computers with Internet access"
Current Users, Female, (19-25), DE, Family

"I've never seen so many leaflets about local services and stuff that's going on ... I've never heard of half this stuff"
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

- **Assistance/expertise** – Libraries are also recognised as a place to get help in information search, which can save time and effort.

"I like the idea of advice from the staff in the library ... you've got the information on one hand and I would trust them ... they are knowledgeable"
Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

"I've always found the staff helpful, if you can't find something then you only have to ask ... they are really nice... and they usually know the answer"
Current Users, Mixed, (17-19), C1C2, Pre Family

These rational benefits, while true and in line with Framework for the Future's mission, were recognised as not unique to libraries and sometimes less efficient or less preferable to other options (see Barriers to Library Use, Section 3.3, p. 32).

3.2.3 Core Trigger: 'Looking after me and mine'

A combination of rational and emotional reasons lie behind an overarching belief that the purpose of libraries is to accommodate or facilitate quality 'me time'.

- **Educational** – In the first instance, as an archive of knowledge, libraries were recognised as facilitating the acquisition of skills and learning for adults, teenagers or children, either through reading or using other services offered.

"It is nice to think that you can help your kids in life ... not just with the normal stuff, but with books and reading and things"
Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

- **Peace and quiet** – Many recognised that there are few places where you can be undisturbed and away from distractions. This relative peace was perceived as certainly good for study but also just for a break from day to day stresses. For some, the specific aspect of being able to be quiet but still in company was appealing.

"It is nice that there is somewhere where you can go and it's quiet and peaceful"
Lapsed Users, Mixed, (22-25), DE, Pre-Family

"I used to work at home when I was at school but when I did my course I found it really hard to concentrate there ...too many distractions ... so I preferred to do it at the library to get some peace"
Current Users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

"It's a nice place to go.. I find it very peaceful and relaxing...easy to study there"
 Current users, Mixed, (17-19), C1C2, Pre-Family

- **Personal space** – As an extension of the above, it was recognised that libraries are places where privacy is largely respected. For women on their own, there was felt to be relative safety, or less chance of unwanted attention, versus commercial venues.
- **Legitimises being alone** – Similarly, for either men or women, a library was felt to be a place where it was acceptable to be on your own (although this was less the case in urban areas).

"It's like a park, you can go there on your own and sit and read and not feel like a loser"
 Lapsed Users, Male (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

These benefits are clearly in line with the objectives of Framework for the Future by allowing the space for informal learning and reading and allowing for social inclusion and developing citizenship through respect for others. Tapping into what individuals experience means these benefits also connect with the target at a level where they think the library may well have something to offer them.

3.2.4 Core Trigger: 'The Library is a clever choice'

Aspects of library services are also thought to potentially present a better solution than some alternatives – particularly versus purchasing books and other reading material, DVDs, etc.

- **Free/value** – The idea of the library as a free service was motivating especially when considered alongside commercial 'pay' options.

"I was really surprised you could use the Internet for free, I expected a cost... that is a real reason for me going"
 Current Users, Female (17-18), C1C2, Pre-Family

"It's somewhere you can go and just sit without having to do anything ... and it doesn't cost you anything"
 Current Users, Female (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

However, this benefit is offset by the perception of an inferior offer in terms of stock: respondents thought there was simply not the same choice available. Free internet access is also laudable but overall need is low.

- **Try before use** – Users in particular were aware of the benefit of being able to borrow multiple books and 'dip in' before committing to reading a book in full. Where they have been disappointed by a book they have bought in the past this is a real benefit that allows a greater degree of exploration than would be given in a purchase situation and reduces

perceptions of value for money in the commercial environment. The idea of ‘trying before use’ extended to other resources too.

“It would be really good if they rented out games or you could come and try them before you make the mistake of buying them ...I get bored of them quickly so borrowing would help”
Current Users, Mixed, (17–19), C1C2, Pre-Family

- **Space saving** – Many respondents could see the benefit of not cluttering their homes with large stores of books/DVDs/CDs (varies by person), especially when they felt they would be unlikely to use them more than once or twice.

“What’s the point of reading a book twice?”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

For younger families, borrowing and returning toys was a particular bonus for this very reason, as well as keeping down their spend.

- **High trust** – The heritage of libraries means overall they are institutions of high trust. Respondents generally felt that, given the lack of commercial interest, if charges were made they were for good reason and they were not going to be ripped off in any way. The trust extends to a feeling of safety in general – with only a minority concerned about ‘oddballs’ or ‘tramps’.

“...somewhere you know what you can expect and it doesn’t change”
Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

“The library is safe, isn’t it, to take your children, you know you can trust them to do it right”
Lapsed Users, Mixed (22-35), ABC1, Family

Again, these perceived benefits present a good fit with the mission for libraries. Furthermore, many can see how these aspects differentiate libraries and make them a smart option.

3.2.5 Core Trigger: ‘Entitlement’

- **Community resource** – Some respondents felt it was important to have publicly funded shared space, with services made accessible to everyone. These individuals had the view that having shared resources would allow ‘everyone’ access to the materials and services offered by libraries but also that, given the ‘educational’ or ‘self-development’ capacity of what is being offered, it was right for this to be subsidised for everyone.

“You need to make these sorts of provisions accessible to everyone, libraries are more important now as they do offer more services”
Lapsed Users, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

“Anyone can come to a library ... it’s hard to think of somewhere else which is so available to so many different people ...”
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

The concept of community, however, is polarising between different sections of the 14-35 target. As a word, ‘community’ can be tarnished with negative values drawn from other associations.

“Community makes me think of churches and old ladies ... or those hippies”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

3.2.6 Presenting Benefits

As mentioned at the start of this section, these benefits are motivating but many lapsed users have forgotten about them and some non-users need to be introduced to them – signalling a **need for marketing the benefits of libraries**.

However, some benefits are undermined by more negative aspects from the experience of using a library, which serve to reduce the perception of benefit overall. Furthermore, some ‘beneficial’ aspects of libraries to some users are in fact a deterrent to others.

These ‘barriers’ are described in detail below. A table summarising how the barriers sit against or conflict with potential barriers is detailed in Section 3.4, Overview of triggers and barriers, p.43.

3.3 Barriers to Library Use

3.3.1 Overview

The barriers to using libraries across the 14-35 target audience fall into two core areas:

- **Rational barriers** – These tend to relate to the content of the services and the way they are executed/delivered.
- **Emotional barriers** – These relate to image and identity and drive the perception that libraries, while possibly for others, are not ‘for me’.

While the rational barriers need to be addressed through the adjustment of services, the emotional barriers require both adjustment of services and specific countering through external messages and ‘evidence’ in the way that services are marketed and presented.

The barriers are unlikely to be unique to the 14-35 age group and therefore addressing them is likely to also benefit the wider library customer community.

The different rational and emotional barriers are described in detail below.

3.3.2 Rational Barriers: Stock Issues

Stock issues related to all materials offered by the library for borrowing or use with the following key issues:

- **Out of date**

Many felt the stock was not contemporary enough. New releases were hard to come by and there tended to be little evidence of current trends and interests (particularly important for teens).

"I don't expect to see anything I would want to read in the library ... the books are all from 1980"

Lapsed Users, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

"It's true that you won't find a recent best seller in here ... they are probably about a year behind, so it's not terrible but I never expect to see a new book really"

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I don't think there's any new book you can get out there "

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

The implication is straightforward: to ensure that libraries do hold stocks of the latest material and that this is arranged in a way that is meaningful and demonstrates connection to young people.

- **Insufficient copies**

There was a widespread perception that stock was limited to very few copies. While this was not an issue for older publications, it was thought likely to make borrowing of a newer publication unlikely, possibly having to wait months for it to be available.

"Even if they have the latest book you want to read, it will be rented out for ages, so you can't get hold of it anyway."

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

"It's not books we would like, it's all old stuff and ones you have to read for school"

Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16,) C2DE, Pre-Family

"If I wanted to read a book or borrow a DVD I'd want it to be there when I want to borrow it ... like in Waterstones or at Blockbusters where they have loads of copies"

Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

"If they did have something new in and I really wanted to borrow it but it was always out, I'd probably end up buying it, you just miss the moment otherwise, don't you"

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

Increasing access to stock of interest (more copies, advance reservation, library only copies, etc) are clearly one way of addressing this issue. There is a

persisting danger of disappointment, however, especially if availability is over-promised.

Structuring libraries so that other forms of ‘immediate gratification’ are possible (what people are seeking if they want something ‘new’) would go a long way to reducing disappointment and reducing the perception that visiting the library may be a wasted journey (if the required item is not there). Examples given in the research included: good coffee and cake from a café; book sales; displays introducing other related reads or materials with reasons why they are a good option; or other ‘surprises’ (e.g. retail opportunities, exhibitions) that would make the visit worthwhile (see Section 5, Ideal Library for more detail, p. 65).

- **Type of stock**

Limited breadth of stock was also felt likely or perceived to be the case. Teenagers in particular assumed libraries only offered ‘traditional’ books and authors rather than those who were more ‘edgy’, or focused on their interests (such as material on street culture or celebrities). Other respondents, who had interests in what they felt to be more ‘niche’ areas, also felt that library stock would be limited to the mainstream only.

In response to this it is clearly helpful to include a greater breadth of collections but also to make this availability known and easy to access.

Disappointment was considered a key reason for lapsing. Not offering ‘the latest’ is a specific barrier as it is often the main driver to read a book or consume new material in the first instance. Importantly, if the competition offers this when libraries do not, libraries are likely always to be dismissed as an option.

3.3.3 Rational Barriers: Usage Issues

- **Borrowing Process**

Many felt the traditional way of borrowing books and other materials was inconvenient – focusing on the need to visit the library twice during opening hours to collect and return the item. As such the newer processes of online checking, reserving and renewing, self-scanning checkouts and drop boxes were all welcomed.

*“It would be nice to not feel you have to rush back to return a book, or rush to finish it cos you gotta return it”
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family*

For some, the pressure of needing to finish with an item within the loan period was off-putting, as for most time was felt to be at a premium. Fines were also a

real deterrent so the prospect of these amplified concerns about meeting a deadline.

"I can't be bothered to return it ... that's twice I've had to come out to the same place and I probably haven't had a chance to read it yet"
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

Email reminders of approaching deadlines, together within a renewal facility if possible, was felt to be a solution to the problem.

A few respondents also had concerns about maintaining the condition of a book that was not theirs, and whether there would be repercussions for wear and tear. This was particularly the case if going on holiday or for children's books.

Overall, recent developments go a long way to overcome these particular usage issues but lack of awareness of changes amongst potential users in this sample means they persist as a barrier. Spelling out convenience and ease of use, alongside reasons to believe it (such as how the new processes work), is essential to overcome this problem.

The joining process did not arise as a barrier – either spontaneously or when prompted. If a service was perceived as valuable, then joining was felt to be a valid procedure and worthwhile effort. For those who had joined, very little hassle had been experienced, given the process was no more difficult than other common activities such as joining a video rental shop.

- **Navigation**

Many respondents also felt that it was difficult in a library environment to find what they wanted. This made the process time-consuming. While help was theoretically available, staff were not always on hand and some specifically wanted to be able to use the library without help.

"It's a lot of hassle finding what you're looking for ... they need better signs, better labeling, clearer sections ... so it doesn't take you ages"
Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I think it would take too long to find anything ... and I'm not sure I would find anything that I want anyway"
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

They also often felt that libraries were difficult to browse. Lack of display and supporting information on books (versus bookshops) made it difficult to seek ideas or be inspired. In this way libraries were in stark contrast to retail environments which have been made very easy to use.

"It looks hard to find anything in here ... it's not somewhere I'd come to browse really"
Non-Users, Female, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

"It's a lot of hassle at a library ... it's easier to go to a book shop and buy it"

Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

In terms of searching for information, using the Internet was so familiar that a 'manual' process was often difficult to imagine and use. As such, electronic forms of searching on a screen were preferable to seeking within the physical environment. This was borne out by experiences in Sutton where computer system assistance was welcome by current and potential users alike.

Overall, it appears important that a variety of ways to navigate the library are given - utilising staff, signs and technology. The idea of remote online searching and booking also appealed to many users and potential users.

- **Access**

There were also criticisms that libraries were often difficult to get to. They were either far from home or work or not en route. Car parking facilities were sometimes difficult to come by and opening hours were widely criticised as not long enough or at not when leisure time was available.

"If you ever do think about it, it's always closed."

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

Our research in other areas has often shown that inconvenience is an 'amplifier' of other barriers. If other factors stand against a service or destination then effort to get there/use it is a real issue that prevents use. Where a service is seen as worthwhile, however, inconvenience is almost always overcome or re-evaluated.

As such, overcoming 'inconvenience' without addressing other issues is likely to be of low impact.

That said, opening hours are critical and need to allow for evenings at least some days of the week and weekends. Access is a real issue for working people that needs to be overcome if libraries are to offer a valuable service.

3.3.4 Rational Barriers: A low value option

As mentioned briefly in the Section 1, there is widespread belief that the library is low value compared to other destinations for the self or family. This covers several dimensions:

- **Unmodernised design**

Libraries were perceived as, or assumed to be, old and unappealing in their physical form. The norm was seen as old, unattractive buildings in need (or in dire need) of refurbishment and updating.

Specifically, non-users thought library buildings were likely to be reminiscent of schools. Many, including both non-users and users considered the interior and furnishings to be not very comfortable and uninviting, certainly not somewhere they would choose to linger and very much a second choice versus smart, comfortable commercial environments.

“It’s dark and green and horrible – makes me feel sick.”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

“The lights in these places freak me out ... they’re really harsh and nowhere else does it ... I mean you don’t feel oppressed in Waterstones”
Lapsed Users, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

Those ‘modernised’ libraries within the areas researched that had had recent physical updating (from redecoration/new furniture through to more structural updating) were unsurprisingly much more positively received. At the least, a sense of refreshment in the surroundings captured attention and prompted a reassessment of the library offer.

- **Limited Destination**

Versus other destinations used in leisure time (for example shopping destinations or leisure centres) libraries were felt to offer comparatively little choice in things to do. Where time was a premium, this inevitably meant that the library was a poor choice compared to other options which allow a broader range of activities/task to be achieved or enjoyed.

“It’s a trip to go to the library – it’s got to be worth it. That Marcus Garvey’s got it right – it’s in a complex with swimming and a really good and cheap café – you can make a morning of it”
Lapsed Mixed (26-35) ABC1 Family

“More things to do – you’re gonna wanna do more than just get a book if you go out.”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

There is clearly likely to be value in tying in library services to other ‘high value’ leisure services. This could either be within a leisure complex or through adding non-library services, activities and interests (e.g. café, sponsored events such as technology exhibitions). An association with leisure has the added benefit of implicitly tapping into the sense of treat and indulgence that reading occupies for this age group.

“Libraries are hardly appealing places to spend time.. they are boring and dull”
Non-Users, Female, (17-19), ABC1, Pre-Family

- **One size fits all**

As a corollary of the above, it was clear that respondents were used to both variety and to recognising services as relevant to them through overt targeting. It follows that seeing a library as ‘for everyone’ means it ‘can’t be for me’.

As a result there was often a requirement to offer and demonstrate options, as well as evidence of consideration and provision for different needs.

Overall, low awareness of recent developments in areas where this has taken place, again highlights the need for marketing local services.

Improving the value of any particular library will of course also be driven by the limitations and opportunities of the specific location as well as the profile of any particular catchment area.

- **Ownership**

Some respondents did express a desire to keep books and other material as they valued collections highly. For those wedded to this idea it is obviously not possible to overcome this with a library services.

"If I could afford it I suppose I would buy all the books I'd like to read instead of coming to the library"

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I like my book collection, it shows what I've read"

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

For some, however, there were indications that they were willing to have their views changed about the benefits of a common collection (for example, not having to clutter their home, being able to spend money on other items and use time and again if desired).

3.3.5 Emotional Barriers: Anxiety

A wide range of respondents within the sample (including both current and lapsed users) claimed to feel **intimidated** within a library environment. As well as feeling self-conscious and out of place, there was often a general perception of being 'judged' – either by the rather formal and distant library staff, stern security staff or even other users. This experience led to embarrassment over asking for help or making selections.

"It's one of those places where you feel naughty when you walk in and you haven't even done anything ... it's cos it feels like all eyes are on you"

Lapsed Users, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

"It's hard enough getting them [children] to be quiet at home but in a library, I think I'd just be embarrassed"

Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

Greater warmth both in physical surroundings and a welcoming approach from staff were felt likely to make a significant difference. It was also felt that an area on the way into the library which allowed for relative noise or 'normal' speech levels and more staff interaction with users would reduce inhibition about both speaking to staff and moving into a quiet area.

Having clearer navigation and signposting would also make users more self-reliant and reduce the need for interaction. Signifying this ease of use would also give an implicit message about how the library operated as a whole.

The sense of intimidation and potential judgement fed directly into anxiety over **rejection and exposure** by both staff and other users. Lapsed and non-users were concerned that they ‘would do something wrong’ or ‘look silly’ and would be made to feel ‘stupid’ as a consequence. This was particularly the case for the lower socio-economic groups and those who were or had been lower achievers at school. For these individuals it was particularly important that staff were approachable and friendly and proactive in appearing accessible (e.g. through smiling or asking if any help was required).

There was evidence that experience of the more ‘modern’ libraries in the areas researched was already reducing anxiety. No disapproval had been experienced from librarians on these visits and availability of a wider range of more accessible services had been highlighted (e.g. activities for children and support/assistance services) which helped to reduce niche and academic associations.

Again, it was clear that progress can be made in library design, ambience and staff attitude and sensitivity to different users to reduce the experience of anxiety. It is also essential, however, that a more inclusive and accessible positioning is evident in marketing for lapsed and non-users to be able to start to overcome this issue.

3.3.6 Emotional Barriers: Restriction

The **rules and regulations** experienced or expected in a library environment were off-putting for many respondents. For some this related to negative nostalgia and regression as their adult rights and responsibilities were undermined in being treated like a child.

“When I think of libraries, I think Shhhhh, SILENCE!!”
Lapsed Users, Male (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

“It’s like school, you get shouted at for talking to your mates”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

“I imagine an old battle-axe, like the teachers you got in school who don’t take no shit”
Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

“Oh god, it’s like school ... I’m an adult, I don’t want to be told what to do all the time anymore ... don’t talk, bring that back, pay that fine, read that book, arrgggh, no way”
Lapsed, Mixed, (22-25), DE, Pre-Family

Most respondents were not asking for completely unregulated space. The level at which the current environment of some libraries was ‘contained and

structured’, however, was overwhelmingly formal and led people to feel they were unable to behave ‘normally’. Understandably, this was a deterrent to use.

“... it’s a bit more like a school environment – a bit formal and regimented”
Non-Users, (22-25), Female, C1C2, Pre-Family

“You do anything and they just tell you off – literally if you do anything.”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

“It feels like you’re back at school to be honest, someone always saying ‘ssshhh’”
Non Users, Female, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

As above, alterations to environment or staff interaction can overcome these issues. Relaxed seating areas (with adult décor) would help reduce cues of formality. Modern design and exhibitions or activities could also enhance the sense of fun and energy attached to the library. Specific efforts could also be taken to dissociate the décor and the staff from school (see Section 5, p.57 for more detail).

Confining restriction and silence to specific areas only would also allow more reticent users to ‘buy in’ when ready and/or for appropriate activities.

“There’s nowhere where noise is OK which is difficult if you’re trying to get to the kids section – a 3 year old doesn’t understand. You want to do your bit so you can do without people scowling at you.”
Current Users, Mixed, (25-35), BC1C2, Family

3.3.7 Emotional Barriers: Social Isolation

Some respondents not used to spending much time on their own had concerns about being ‘solitary’ and in social isolation.

Some simply did not want to spend time on their own and needed social contact.

“You wouldn’t sit in the pub on your own would you ... I mean you see old men in the corner with their pint and you feel sorry for them”
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

“I would never go anywhere on my own ... have a coffee on my own, no way, can you imagine, no I just wouldn’t do it”
Lapsed, Mixed, (22-25), DE, Pre-Family

Many were not comfortable with silence. Not used to it, it made the library feel empty and the respondents feel awkward. For these respondents it is essential to facilitate and demonstrate a greater level of activity; and to give permission to socialise and talk in some areas – possibly separate rooms/areas or even just in the café.

“Do you know, I’ve just realised I’ve never spoken to anyone I’ve seen in here in all the years I’ve been in here, I guess it’s because you’re not allowed to talk”
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"If I want to go somewhere quiet I go to my bedroom ... but I never want to be in silence, I always have music on, all the time"
Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

"I went in there and it was empty, no-one there really, no life to it, who wants to spend time in a place like that?"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

Most respondents recognised that peace and quiet is a reason for many to use the library. The discomfort of many, however, in this kind of environment means that the ability to have some social interaction and for noise to be acceptable in some areas is essential for them to entertain usage.

3.3.8 Emotional Barriers: Staid

The general image of libraries was often criticised as unappealing. Descriptions were very consistent across the sample and highlighted a range of negative dimensions that many wished to dissociate themselves from. Specifically, library environments, staff and users were felt to be:

- boring/dull and uninspiring
- old-fashioned (to the point of 'musty' and 'tatty')
- serious and not somewhere to have fun
- 'uncool' and out of touch

"You say library and I just think boring, nothing for me in there"
Non-Users, Mixed, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

"Libraries are boring, time consuming, not appealing and you have to be silent"
Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

"Libraries are helpful and all that, but they are a bit boring"
Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

The negative image of libraries cannot be underestimated. As the diagrams below illustrate, the extreme stereotypes of 'personifications' generated by respondents (Diagram 4) and illustrations from an attribute exercise (Diagram 5) illustrate the extent to which libraries are seen as 'not me':

Diagram 4

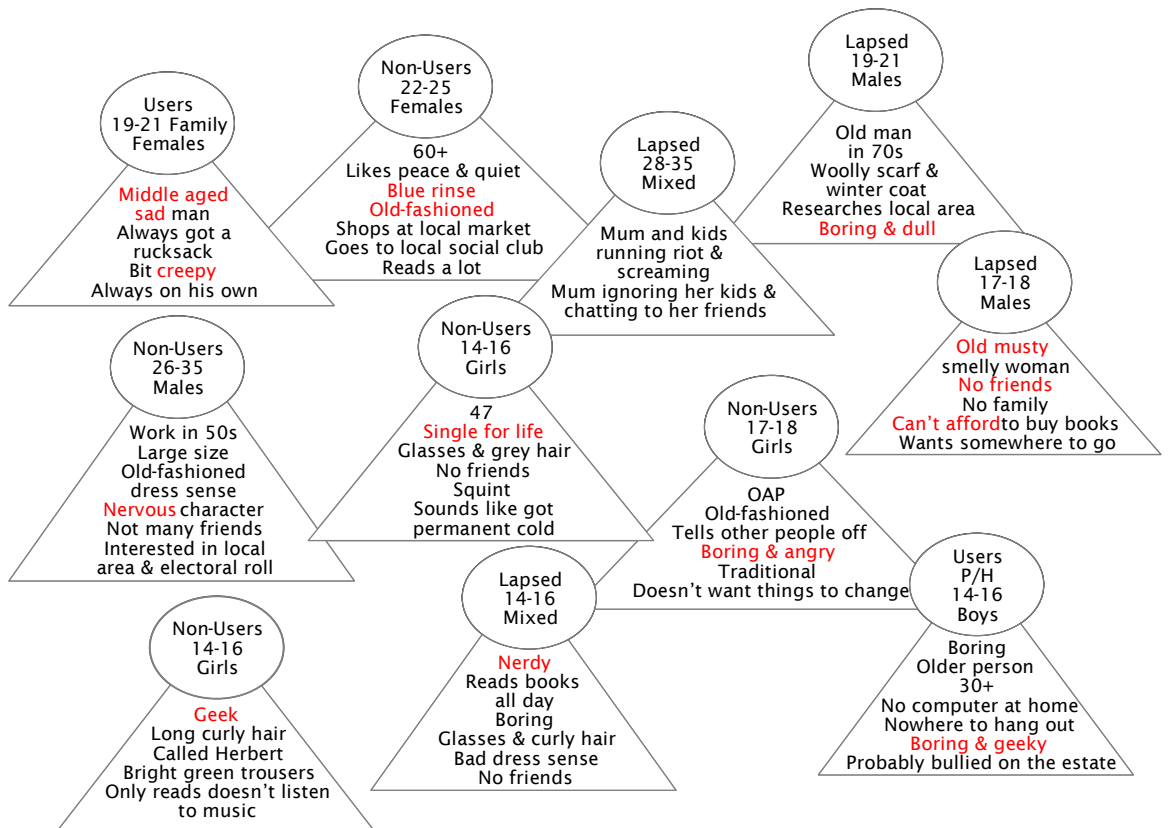
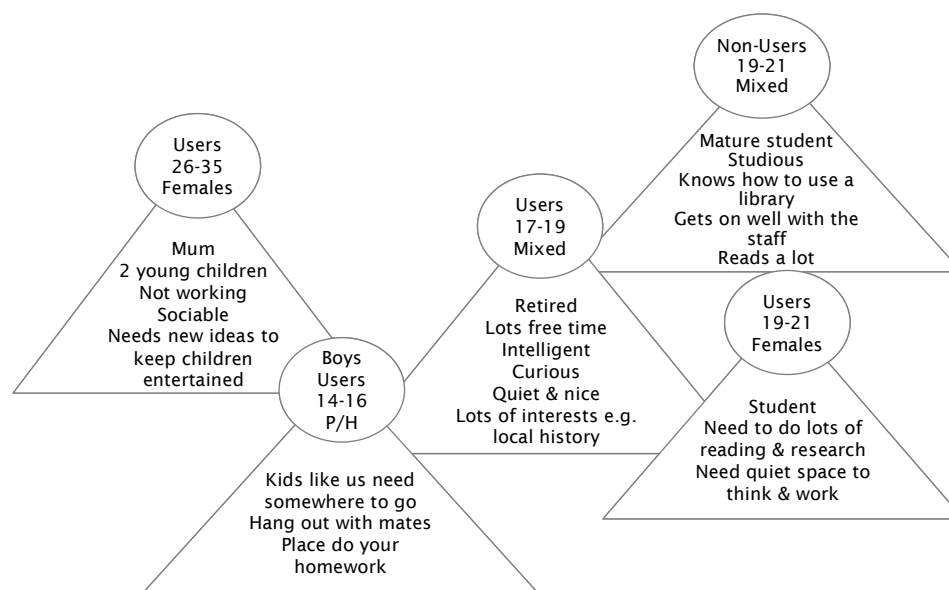


Diagram 5



However, some minority neutral or positive profiles do illustrate the potential to buy into libraries (see Diagram 6 below):

Diagram 6



3.4 Overview of triggers and barriers

As the summary table below illustrates, it is clear that there is some conflict between the triggers and barriers to using libraries.

In some cases the conflict arises because needs are not being met. Overcoming the barriers (through developing services or raising awareness of what is available) would therefore allow the triggers to be experienced more successfully and to be believed.

In other cases, the elements that encourage usership and interest for some in the age group are similar to those that push others away. The issues that arise vary: in some cases work to raise awareness and knowledge of benefits will help overcome the barriers (e.g. around ‘clever choice’); in others, work needs to be done to both reduce anxiety or to provide alternatives or options that can meet different needs (e.g. in providing both quiet and less quiet space and proactive customer approaches).

Table 1

Triggers		Vs	Barriers	
<i>Offers a service I use/ need</i>	Media resource	→	Stock issues (Does not offer a service I need/want)	Out of date stock Limited stock Type of stock
	Assistance expertise	→	Usage overly difficult	Borrowing process issues Navigation problems Access problems
<i>Clever choice</i>	Free/value services	→	Low value option (vs competition)	Limited destination
	Try before use Space saving Trust/safety			One size fits all No ownership of goods Unmodern design
<i>Looking after me and mine</i>	Educational	→	Being there/experience... Anxiety	Intimidated → rejection & exposure
	Peace & quiet Personal space Legitimises being alone	→	Restriction	Rules & regulations → formality & learning
		→	Social isolation	Silence Alone Emptiness
<i>Entitlement</i>	Community resource	→	Staid	Boring & dull Old fashioned Serious Uncool Sharing space with 'typical' users

In providing a service that people want to use the task is complicated. For this sample, the wide range of existing negative perceptions (barriers) are currently traded off against the positives to leave many thinking the library is not a place they want to go. As such, addressing the negatives is as important as highlighting the benefits – in the way services are structured and through marketing messages – for libraries to become an option for the 14-35 age group. In doing so, however, this is likely to bring benefits to the wider library community too.

4. Audience Segmentation

4.1 Overview

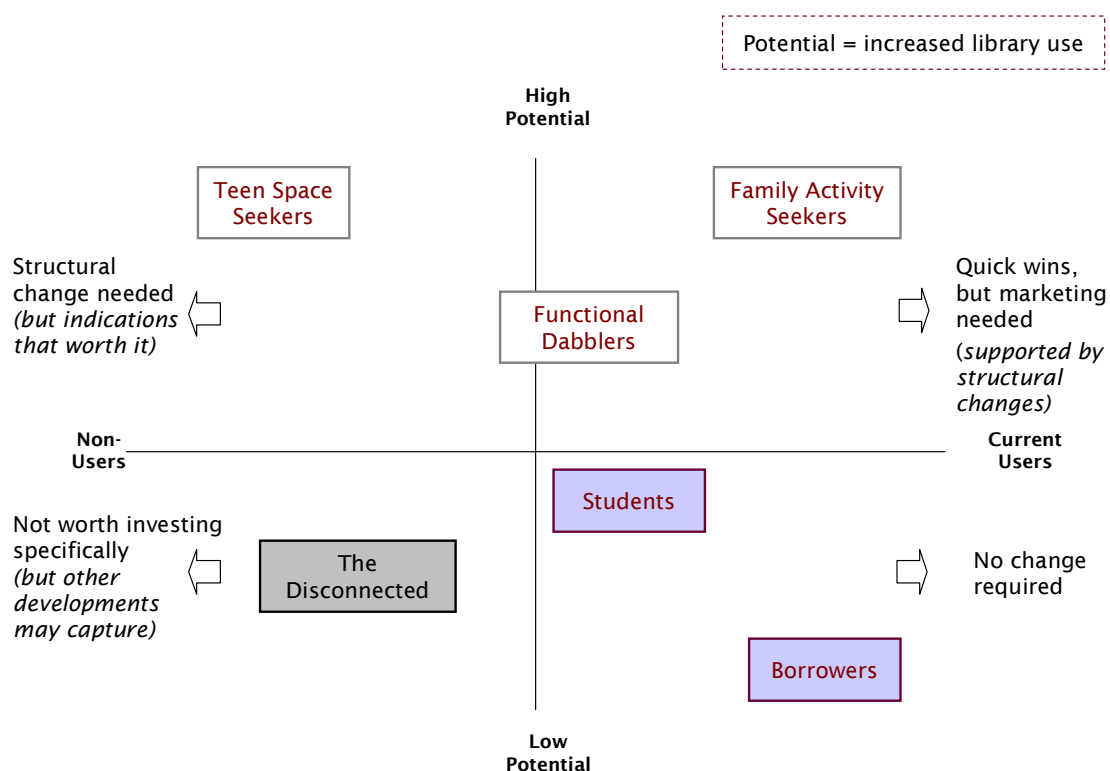
While the barriers outlined above can be seen across different ages, life stages and socio-economic groups within the 14-35 target, feedback from this sample

indicates that the 14-35 audience separates into clusters based on their attitude to libraries (and to some extent demographics).

These clusters (or segments) have different potential in terms of their library use. They vary in their overall focus on what libraries can offer them, on triggers and barriers to use and, as such, have different specific needs which service adjustment and marketing need to take into consideration.

The map in Diagram 7 below summarises against the vertical axis which audience segments have most potential for increased library use in the future. The horizontal axis gives an indication of current level of usage of each segment. The text beside the arrow at the side of each quadrant highlights the extent of change required to make a difference to this group and achieve the potential of increase usage.

Diagram 7



Each of the segments and their relative needs are detailed in the following sections.

4.2 The 'Disconnected'

There were a range of non-users and lapsed users within this sample who were simply not interested in libraries, as the alternatives were always seen to offer a 'better option'.

These respondents could justify the existence of improved libraries as ‘for others’ but, for themselves, they were an emergency option only. The lack of overt negativity towards an improved library service, however, indicates that they may become more open as they change life stage (and move to another audience segment).

These ‘disconnected’ users did share common characteristics:

- High internet usage – These individuals generally felt this answered all their information needs.

“You can just find out things at home nowadays rather than having to come here all the time ... the Internet is much faster”

Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

- Very busy/spare time poor – Time tended to be split between working, shopping and socialising with little time for anything else.

“I just don’t have the time .. I can’t see myself making time for it either”

Non-users, Females, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

- Rich social life – These respondents tended to have many choices to socialise already and felt they did not need more opportunities.

- Quality lifestyle focus – Both spending money (e.g. socialising and indulging for relaxation) and ownership (accumulating and collecting) were important for this group.

“I would just prefer to buy my books to keep them and have them on the bookshelf”

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

- Convenience oriented – Given their feeling of being time starved, respondents in this category strongly disliked ‘processes’ (e.g. borrowing) which felt intrusive and unnecessary in a busy life.

“I don’t like borrowing from the library ... I feel under pressure to read it and get it back ... so I prefer to buy books although I don’t do that very often ... so I can read it in my own time and don’t feel anxious about it”

Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

- Not focused on self-development – Development was not necessarily resisted but was not a current priority for these respondents.

- No social/community view – The ‘universe’ of this group tended to be self-focused and very limited in relation to collective considerations.

The Disconnected within this sample were spread across different ages, lifestages and SEGs, but reflected an overall bias towards 17-25 pre-family. Any development explored with these respondents, while potentially adding

value for others, was insufficient for the library to be a destination of choice for themselves.

4.3 Borrowers

Overall view: ‘the library is a really important resource that enriches my life’.

Who were they?

This segment was a minority within this sample. Representing a spread of ages they tended to share a more academic focus and come from the higher socio-economic categories.

Library usage

Unsurprisingly this group were regular current users who borrowed a high volume of material, mostly books. The tendency was to borrow more books than they actually read. Less frequently they used other library services such as DVD/CD rental and computer facilities.

“I usually take about 10 books out each time I come here ... I generally get through 4 or 5 and the others were probably ones I wasn't that keen on but just picked up at the library while I was there”

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

Key motivations for using the library included having bought into the library ethos of shared resource. They were also clearly focused on benefits around saving money and low wastage.

Their focus in terms of what libraries can offer was often on media and books as a core interest. Big readers, they were familiar with different book genres. It was not uncommon for them to have other, individual hobbies or interests (e.g. photography, metal detecting) and/or a cultural focus (enjoying film, theatre, art and music).

Key barriers to using the library versus other sources of material was disappointment in breadth and depth of stock and availability of the latest material.

In the main, Borrowers were satisfied with library services as they are, and demonstrated anxiety about modernisation and change. Retaining the current core offer in some capacity is likely to be sufficient for needs to continue to be met.

4.4 Students

Overall view: ‘the library is an option when I need some quiet time to study. Plus the facilities are cheap/free’.

Who were they?

This segment was also a minority within this sample. Mostly aged 17 to 21, there were also some mature students within this category. Respondents in this group had either no or low income and were either studying full time or part-time, or doing their first job alongside training. They reflected a mix of different socio-economic grades.

Library usage

This group were not very frequent users of public libraries. Given the availability of college/university libraries (more appropriate for course resources) and studying at home at least sometimes, the library was a back up option for a place to work.

“College can get quite busy in the library, more like a common room, so I work at the public library quite a bit for some space”

Current users, Mixed, (17-19) C1C2, Pre-Family

Key motivations for using the library included access to free technological and communications facilities and quiet space.

Their focus in terms of what libraries offer them tended to be on accessing cheap resources. In terms of material, books tended to focus on their study/course but they were also interested in light entertainment or suggestions for low cost living and entertainment.

The key barrier to using the library was accessibility, with opening hours not extending into the evening when required. Limited periods on computers were also occasionally problematic, but overall need was low.

Students’ needs from libraries are very simple and they are likely to be easy to retain.

4.5 Family Activity Seekers

Overall view: ‘My child will get something (skills and fun) from going to the library and I’ll feel good about it (and I may benefit from it too).’

Who were they?

This segment was comprised of parents with children under the age of 8. Across socio-economic grades they also represented a spread of ages. In the main, they tended to be the main carer with responsibility for daytime care – but also included some weekend carers.

Library usage

There were a mix of current, lapsed and non-users in this category – their status in this respect depending on their awareness and experience of their local library service. Users tended to focus their use on their children but occasionally used the library for themselves at the same time.

There were a range of motivations for using the library. Primarily it presented ‘something to do with the children’ which allowed for a degree of involvement between parent and child. The learning environment (i.e. presence of books and reading material) made the library an educational (and thus wholesome) option versus commercial alternatives.

“It is nice to think that you can help your kids in life ... not just with the normal stuff, but with books and reading and things”
Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

Many also felt children would have fun there too and the fact that it is free or cheap was also widely valued. Libraries were felt to be particularly safe and trustworthy versus commercial children’s venues (while not explicit, this included not being ‘tapped’ for money and tempting children with unnecessary goods).

“I get books on tape, she loves those and it’s only 50p and I get them kids videos and music too”
Current users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

“I like the idea of being able to do something with my boys ... even if it’s a simple story time at the library, it gets us out and they’d love the adventure of it”
Lapsed, Mixed, (22-35), ABC1, Family

“We go to the kids club after school every Friday, they get help with homework, read books and I can take the younger two and it’s all free!”
Current users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

“They did a treasure hunt for different books last time and they loved it. They get excited about going.. makes me feel I’m doing a good thing for them”
Current users, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

Respondents from the higher socio-economic grades (ABC1) also sometimes felt visiting the library allowed for development of some more ‘traditional’ values through: the idea of borrowing rather than buying; taking responsibility in a public place; interacting with (and learning how to use) a service and contributing to community spirit.

“Going through the motions of borrowing helps them learn some general skills and teaches them respect for property. They also value things more sometimes, like when they get something given to them, that’s theirs to own.”
Current users, Male, (22-25), ABC1, Family

Their focus in using the library was contributing to their children’s development and having personal impact as the parent. Parents who were using (or were interested in using) specific child services were also seeking support (either socially or in their parenting).

A key barrier to using the library was often awareness. Some parents did not consider using the library as they were either unaware of the breadth of services on offer or simply had not thought of it as they were non-users themselves.

Other parents had stronger barriers. If they had had a negative experience of libraries themselves it was difficult to imagine how it could be positive for their children. Some current users also felt that the library, while offering services for children, were not well structured to accommodate children – having experienced disapproval from librarians and other users (particularly in small libraries).

Where family services are extensive and well delivered they were widely appreciated by users. It was clear, however, that many parents simply do not know what their library can offer and/or need assistance in changing their views of libraries generally.

In developing messages to target Family Activity Seekers, core sentiments to echo are as follows:

- Overall focus on ‘quality activities ...’
- Libraries develop children’s skills
 - mental, physical and emotional development
- Share quality time with your child
 - it’s learning and fun for both of you
- Meet other parents and friends in a comfortable place
- Libraries can help you develop your own skills
- Get some time to yourself

4.6 Functional Dabblers

Overall view: ‘I think/thought of the library as a place where I can have a look for specific information to help in a task or decision’

Who were they?

This segment was comprised mostly of older respondents (over 25). They also tended to be from the higher socio-economic grades (ABC1 and occasionally C2) and working. In the main they were pre-family (either single or couples) although some family males fell into this category too.

Library usage

As users they tended to be ‘lighter’ users than other groups, visiting (or having visited) a library between 3 and 10 times a year. Although there were some current users in this category, most were lapsed. Borrowing and browsing included or had included a range of material: books (both fiction and non-fiction/lifestyle); DVDs and magazines/newspapers.

This group had a wide range of motivations for using the library. Visits were often based around a specific task or purpose. Borrowing material or making investigations/enquiries before committing to a purchase or new activity was common and represented a way of saving time and money long term. Personal

development was also key, with libraries offering a source of material to use directly, or inspiration for other ideas.

"My boyfriend and I love walking so I do look at the 'where to walk' type books in the library ... it's good to get out in the fresh air after a week at work"
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I often look at health and fitness books in the library ... fads can change and I don't want to spend a load of money on a book unless it's what I want"
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I'll always come and look at books here when I'm deciding where to go on holiday ... sit and research where to go"
Current Users, Male, (22-25), ABC1, Family

"I would use the library to look at reference books that I don't really want to spend a lot of money buying, especially if it was a more comfortable place to sit and read"
Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

Some respondents in this category also enjoyed the comfort of being able to use a service on their own, and liked the peace and quiet.

Their focus for library material and services tended to be in the area of lifestyle, for example, holidays and home (DIY, cooking) or self development, for example sport/exercise, mind/body/spirit, languages, technical skills, other 'how to', etc.

Key barriers for this group included a wide range of rational issues. Accessibility was often a problem – being workers, library opening times presented a mismatch with their needs. Many had also been disappointed with stock or with ageing library environments which were unpleasant to spend time in (relative to bookshops). Awareness was also a problem, however, with many lapsed users unaware of new borrowing processes in modernised libraries.

"I like going into Waterstones to browse the books and its better because you can sit and read the books in a nice environment"
Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

Functional Dabblers had a real conviction about what libraries offer but big issues around stock and accessibility meant they were easily disappointed and had often lapsed.

If needs can be met, marketing messages that will be meaningful to Functional Dabblers include the following core sentiments:

- Overall focus on 'find out ...'
 - Libraries have been modernised and updated
 - Libraries offer easy browsing of a wide range of contemporary reading
 - Libraries are quiet, relaxed and comfortable places to read
 - Libraries can help you develop your own skills
-

- Libraries offer access to and learning about latest technology

4.3 Teen Space Seekers

Overall view: ‘You need to have libraries but they aren’t places we want to go – you can’t relax and be yourself there.’

Who were they?

The teenagers in this segment tended to be aged 14 to 16 (with some ‘younger’ 17 years olds also appearing here). Representing the range of socio-economic groups, all were pre-family and were either in full time education or had recently left.

Library usage

Most were not using public libraries currently. They might be using their school library, however, for either word processing or obtaining relevant books for projects.

Potential motivations of this group for using the library were varied. With very few options in terms of places to socialise, the library, if offering permission to be there and dedicated space, was somewhere to go. If offering activities and material which matched with their interests this was compelling as with little disposable income, it was again something to do independently of adults and family. Support with homework and study, and guidance and support from aspirational people/mentors, was also motivating for some as well as access to the latest and best material and technology.

“It’s somewhere to hang out (Powerhouse) ... that’s not on the street”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

“You feel uncomfortable in there sitting on your own”
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

“I like it for the computers ... you can get on the Internet and check MSN”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

Their focus for using the library was socialising with their peers in the first instance. Boys in particular also sought access to music and both sexes wanted material and services that fitted with their particular current ‘lifestyle’ interests. For boys this tended to be sports focused. For girls, this included fashion, health and beauty, celebrity and shopping and café culture.

“I love going to Café Neros it’s a bit expensive but they’ve got really nice lattes and hot chocolate – nice sandwiches and things. If it was like that and you could read a magazine or even a book .. Almost like an internet café with books on one side”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

A key barrier to using public libraries was the perception that they offer nothing relevant to this age group. As with other audience segments, the stock

was also considered to be not contemporary and equipment offered (while this had a use) was something respondents, except the most deprived, had at home.

“But I’ve got the Internet at home, and they don’t have any new books .. And you can’t have a laugh. You want to be able to chat, and eat ...”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

There was also a conflict between what was expected and experienced in libraries and their needs as teenagers. Wanting to be treated as adults, they felt treated as children in a library environment. Some users felt that library staff actively did not want the presence of teenagers and went out of their way to be ‘cold’ and disapproving. Others felt that the library staff they knew of were simply too ‘old’ or out of touch with youth issues to have anything to offer.

“I prefer to be somewhere I can socialise with my friends, have a chat without being told to shhhh .. like being at school”
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

“They glare at you don’t they? Like ‘what are you doing here?’”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

The image of libraries generally also tended to be wholly unappealing and an understanding that no ‘groups’ or noise was allowed was at odds with the way they exist at this age.

“Libraries are depressing, full of old people, quiet and boring”
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

Overall, there were extensive emotional barriers to use for teens but the potential motivations are also there if changes can be made to accommodate this group’s needs.

Therefore, if needs *can* be met, marketing messages that will be meaningful to Teen Space Seekers include the following core sentiments:

- Overall focus on: ‘a place you can find out about all sorts of things, do things you need to and have fun ...’
 - Socialise with friends
 - Access latest and state of art technology
 - Get help with homework/course work/revision - a distinct alternative to school
 - Find interesting facts and stories about what interests you
 - Get advice about your future aspirations
 - Develop and share your interests (in music)
- N.B. Having a say was important to this group but there was aversion to overt responsibility/getting strongly involved

Equally important for this group, however, is avoidance of certain notions or aspects when positioning library services.

Firstly, overt use of teen language was rejected. To buy into this would mean teenagers are demonstrating naivety within their peer group - as library services are not offered by teenagers and are therefore trying to masquerade as 'cool' rather than being really relevant.

References to 'community' also really distanced the teenagers in this sample who were generally not interested in the concept (which they see as adult and 'not me').

Overt links to schools also tended to distance these teenagers. Even with respect to study support the motivation was to access something different, which can bridge a gap they feel is not being fulfilled by school. To link with schools creates either an identity issue (they don't want to be identified as a 'nerd' or needing support) or weakens perceptions of the value of the service ('it's no different to school').

Overt messaging regarding 'involvement' is also likely to be problematic. The teenagers in this sample, while wanting access to library services, did not want to have to take overt responsibility for them. That said, if they were able to find a space and service that had real value to them they demonstrated a willingness to protect and look after it – encouraging community identity and citizenship at an implicit level.

"You could sign your name so they know who it is ... or you could pay a deposit like £5 and if anything goes wrong you don't get your deposit back."
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

5. Moving Forward: Developing Libraries to Meet Needs

5.1 Overview

Taking the needs and requirements of the range of current and potential users into consideration, it is clear that there are **six areas** in which changes and improvements can be made to public libraries to make them more compelling and a real option for the 14-35 age group. Broadly in order of priority:

- Modernisation of style
- Enhanced environment
- Stock
- Electronic access
- Location and access
- Assistance and support

These developments are detailed below. For these to have real impact, however, the specific needs of the different audiences must be accounted for

within the development (therefore specific requirements of each of the audience segments are also outlined).

Some of the respondents within this sample were exposed to libraries where developments have already been made in these areas. Indications are that while current changes may be making some difference, they could also go a lot further – particularly for libraries which have a more general or wide ranging target (see Section 5.3, Reactions to some recently developed libraries p. 63 for more detail).

5.2 Areas for Development

5.2.1 Modernisation of style

In the first instance, for libraries to be compelling their décor and furnishings need to be updated to create a pleasant environment which is distinctly different from dated, school-like environment.

Signifying up to date and modern through light colours, new furniture and technology helps present the services the library offer as modern and relevant.

“The latest best computers ... Or more computers so you don’t have to wait ... share with other people”

Current Users, Male, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

“It would be nice if the displays could be more interesting and colourful than they are now ... it would make it easier to find a book ... you could browse more”

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

5.2.2 Enhanced Environment

Creating more of a destination will help match the commercial competition but also match the best public spaces (e.g. leisure centres) which are a real draw to the same target.

A library destination was felt to have the following essential components:

- **Café**

A café was felt to add enormous value to a library. It may offer a place to read a borrowed book in greater relative comfort than in the library itself (i.e. with a drink). It is also a place to congregate and socialise in its own right. Proximity to the library, however, means using services becomes more likely to be considered and thus more likely to be used. It also shows recognition of the need of many to feel less restrained in relation to library services.

“If it’s also more of a social place with a café people would be drawn in and they’d stay longer”

Current users, Mixed, (17-19), C1C2, Pre-Family

“A café is a really good idea ... it’s the kind of place you could go and meet up with friends ... have a coffee or a cold drink and maybe a snack ... or just sit and read the newspaper by yourself ... or pick up a book and have a read of it while you’re there”
 Non-Users, Mixed, (19-21), ABC1, Pre-Family

A café, however, would need to be compelling in itself. For most this meant being comparable with new style cafes such as ‘Starbucks’ or ‘Costa Coffee’.

As with the library itself, a café would also ideally allow for some separation between users and would take into account their specific needs.

For ‘Family Activity Seekers’ and ‘Functional Dabblers’ the café was felt to be an important relaxed, comfortable adult area where they could either read and relax on their own (especially ‘Functional Dabblers’) or socialise as desired (especially ‘Family Activity Seekers’). Different usage times, however, mean conflict is unlikely.

The café was also, however, a very important aspect for teens and somewhere they expected to be able to relax and socialise. Wanting some separation from adults, the idea of ‘booths’ which allowed some privacy was particularly appealing. It was also important for teens, if the café was to be accessible and a real draw, that prices were generally lower than on the high street.

“Yeah, you can get hot food in the winter ... beans and chips ... that’s good ... keep that, it’s better than vending machines for chocolate and crisps”
 Current Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

- **Variety and Separation**

As a public service it was felt libraries should probably deliver to everyone’s needs. However, it is essential that users can recognise something for themselves in the overall offer. As some users within this category (e.g. teens and families) felt they had very specific needs that sat outside of the majority, some degree of separation (in terms of space and services) was thought essential for them to experience the library positively, and to believe the library has something to offer them in the first place.

“It would be better if they had separate areas for different things ... somewhere nice to sit and read ... not amongst the books ... somewhere quiet to study where people are not walking about ... somewhere to meet up with friends ... etc”
 Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

Variety also helps create the perception of high value as there are potentially many different things to take advantage of within a visit.

“It would be much more interesting as one big building with lots of different areas for different things like a café, internet use, a social place, a quiet area, information points..”
 Non-users, Mixed, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

That said, the extent to which variety and separation is possible will obviously depend significantly on the size and scope of the particular library, with larger and more ‘flexible’ buildings being at an advantage overall. (See Section 5.4.1 Structure p.65, for detail on suggestions for smaller scale libraries.)

In terms of the different needs to be taken into account, existing satisfied users (Borrowers and Students) need some core aspects of the traditional offering to be retained – specifically **peace and quiet and places to study**. This was not exclusive, however, other segments also valued access to this when it suited – ‘Functional Dabblers’ for their reading and research and Teens at ‘crunch’ study times such as homework and exams.

Teens, however, did require their **own area** in order to feel welcome and that the library was a place they really wanted to be. It was very important that any area was designated with ‘signifiers’ of teen rather than overtly labelled. Signifiers included: items of teen interest; multi-media; relevant décor, furnishings (bean bags, sofas); MTV as ‘wallpaper’ (optional headphones) etc.

“A room for groups of people, for themselves to be in ... where we can chill”
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

An area would be substantially more compelling if some level of noise was acceptable, given a key need of this group was finding somewhere to socialise.

“Places to sit with your mates to have a chat listen to music, MTV playing would be good”
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

“If it was really modernised and it had music playing you had people talking then it would be so much better – there can be a completely different rooms where people can actually go and be quiet if they want to ”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

Ideally, teens also wanted discrete areas (whether within their own zone or separate) which allowed them to access music or other entertainment media. For example, booths which allowed one or several users to listen to music, watch films or play console games that were available for hire were considered high value.

“A music room ... with decks and mixing desk and a piano and other instruments ... would be cool ... like a recording studio so we could record what we did ... save it and keep working on it in the music workshop”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

“A games room that doesn’t get smashed up ... where you can hang out ... with beanbags and XBOX and a television, that works”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

“They should have a place where you could actually go and watch DVDs ... but not where everyone is trying to read – you have to be able to talk.”
Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

'Family Activity Seekers' also ideally wanted a dedicated area. A corner was felt to be acceptable but a room or floor was vastly preferred. There was a perception that it was likely to be safer and permission to make noise would be clear and credible.

Ideally these respondents were seeking a mix of shared (parent and child) activity and supervised child participation, the latter providing personal space/semi-childcare through creche trained supervision for younger children.

"I really liked the idea of a kids corner ... not just for someone else to read to my boys, but for me to be with them as well"

Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

All current and tested activities and sessions appealed for pre-schoolers: story telling; bounce and rhyme; baby signing; toddlerobics, etc. For primary school age classes and clubs were also welcomed, after school, Saturday and in holidays, and including a mix of educational and fun/creative activity, e.g. drama, art etc.

"Great idea to have more kids focus especially if you have kids ... and it's a good way to get children started off with reading young"

Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I really like the idea of story time ... someone dresses up in a costume and reads to the kids for half an hour, I know my boys would just love that"

Lapsed, Mixed, (22-35), ABC1, Family

Libraries were also thought ideal to host children's art exhibitions, and in doing so involve local community and schools.

"Having more arts and exhibitions would be great for the kids ... gives them something to look at, a bit of culture and I really enjoy going to exhibitions"

Lapsed, Mixed, (22-35), ABC1, Family

Appropriate general facilities were also important, such as toilet, baby changing etc. Ideally, however, parents also wanted equipment dedicated for use by younger children, for example to explore relevant childrens' software (art, paint and create, games etc). Other interactive toys or displays were also welcomed.

- **Comfort**

Real comfort is also essential to encourage reading and overall library use as it will become a real option versus home or commercial environments.

Arm chairs ... sofas ... coffee tables ... more like a new coffee shop ... somewhere nice and relaxing where you'd want to go ... you could just read or meet up with friends"

Non-Users, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

"It should be more comfortable.. not so quiet that you feel you can't breathe.. more like a home from home than back to school"

Non-users, Mixed, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

“A good seating area either in a café or just with the books where you can really relax and have a read.. on a sofa”
Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

It is also important, however, to have no restrictions on noise (within reason) in certain parts of the library to accommodate a range of users across the different segments.

5.2.3 Stock

More up to date and contemporary stock was required by all segments. This needs to be supported, however, by displays or clear information that demonstrate the presence and availability of this stock. Near the entrance (or café) is ideal as it presents an invitation to explore further.

“If they had more of what we want to read that would be good – maybe you could put in requests for things – it would be cheaper to borrow them”
Non-user, Female, (22-25), C1C2, Pre-Family

A request service was felt to be one way of ensuring that new stock would at least be considered and introduced.

“You could put your ideas forward about what books and DVDs you want them to get in, say on-line to make it easy – if they did that you’d know they had some up-to-date stuff even if they didn’t have all the stuff you asked for”
Non-Users, Mixed, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

Teens in particular felt stock needed to more accurately reflect their interests. Recommendations of ‘good stories’ were thought likely to help for some who were overwhelmed, but others required less traditionally book-based material (general and specialist magazines, comics, ‘annual style’, etc) to capture their attention.

“More comics ... Marvel comics ... and rappers and gangsta stories are good ... how they all get where they are and what they do ... yeah, like ‘Gangs of War’”
Current Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

‘Family Activity Seekers’ were broadly satisfied with library provision. Most important was a good range of children’s books and a range of children’s audio tapes/CD stories, DVDs and computer games. Education software also had value as did borrowing toys.

5.2.4 Electronic Access

A library website, allowing online reservations and extension of loans was thought to be an effective way to overcome inconvenience and bring library services in line with current habits and expectations.

“It would save a journey ... which might be wasted anyway if they don’t have what you want or you can’t find it”
Non-Users, Mixed, (19-21), ABC1, Pre-Family

"It would be good to search on-line ... I mean you know that the library has loads of info so it would be useful to see what they have before you come down and try and find something"
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

"It would be good to be able to reserve a book over the Internet ... then you know you've got it ... that would be great actually"
Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

In support of this, options for delivery (postage) would assist those for whom visiting the library is difficult.

Electronic access was a particular benefit for 'Functional Dabblers' as it helped overcome accessibility issues and enhanced their existing perceptions that libraries could be a truly valuable service.

5.2.5 Location and Access

Visible and prominent buildings will obviously help position the library as central to local life and a worthwhile place to go. If centrally placed, near shops, this would also assist in creating more of a 'destination'. Being part of the commercial landscape helps soften some emotional barriers but also presents the library as a competitive option (as it is 'subsidised' or free).

For some groups, smaller very local libraries were recognised as having an advantage of 'convenience', mostly to Teen Space Seekers and Family Activity Seekers. Given their more significant needs for activity and separation, however, there was some disbelief in this sample that this type of library (with physical and financial constraints) could evolve to meet their needs sufficiently. If they can, of course, they have the potential to be a compelling option.

Opening hours were very important to many respondents. To be accessible to the full range of potential users, evenings and weekends are important usage windows that need to be catered for (especially for Functional Dabblers and Teens) as well as mornings and afternoons for families.

"I would pop in after work as that's easier for me if it was open to about 9pm"
Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

"In Bromley it's in the shopping centre and it's not as quiet in there.. better atmosphere, and McDonalds is next door"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

Easier or free parking will, of course, help those with cars.

5.2.6 Assistance and Support

Respondents across the sample were keen for improved accessibility to assistance and support if they needed it. At one level this was in terms of easy to use technology to help them navigate the library and find what they want.

There was also, however, a requirement for staff to be more friendly and welcoming - particularly for 'Teen Space Seekers' but not exclusively. Youth and expertise in different fields (e.g. technology, music) were also felt to improve the service with some indications that youthful staff would help in lending this 'expertise' credibility. 'Functional Dabblers' were particularly keen for staff to be more 'interactive' if required.

"It would be nice if the staff were more like they are in Waterstones, where they walk round and ask you if you are ok, or if you need any help ... it would just have a nicer feel than having them sat behind that desk all the time ... I mean what are they doing back there?"

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"Someone who's nice, happy and chatty but also know what they're doing and is strict if they need to be, stand their ground – just not grumpy ..."

Non-users, Females, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

"Someone who we can talk to ... young and experienced"

Current Users, Male, (14-16), C1C2, Pre-Family

5.3 Reactions to some recently developed libraries

5.3.1 Reactions to more 'Modernised' Libraries

Several of the group discussions were held in areas where libraries have had recent investment and were considered more modern as a result. The dimensions on which this modernisation was seen varied – ranging from structural changes, revamped décor and furnishings to changes in service provision. Respondents included current users, lapsed users and potential users of these services.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of respondents were impressed with these libraries which showed evidence of updating, and which went a long way to overcome their negative preconceptions of unpleasant, dated facilities.

"It was great, I decided to become a member (Sutton)"

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

The improvements had greater impact on 'Functional Dabblers' and 'Family Activity Seekers' than 'Teen Space Seekers' (see Section 4, Audience Segmentation, p.44 for detail) as they were closer to their needs.

Improvements

For those exposed to these updated library facilities, all agreed that the ambience had improved enormously. Natural light and spaciousness countered preconceptions of claustrophobic spaces and allowed the library to feel airy and clean.

"It's nice and airy in here (Bournemouth)"

Lapsed, Males, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

"I wanted to stay there (Sutton) a couple of hours and look at the books, it was so much better than before"
Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

The use of some colour was also welcomed to 'cheer up' the space and Sutton Library in particular was considered to have a very impressive children's area.

The provision of extra services (such as a café and education focused advice) was welcomed and endorsed the spontaneous view that this would make a significant difference.

"In Peckham they have advisors and they helped me think about courses and that, she was really good"
Current user, Females, (19-25), DE, Family

Technology was also impressive. With lots of units, access was good and facilitation of self-service within the library was enjoyed.

"It was impressive (Sutton), loads of computers and computers to look up where things were and if they were available"
Non-users, Female, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

Respondents were also impressed with the large media collections (DVDs and videos).

Further development

While improvements were extensive, respondents felt they could have still been better. This was not just to meet their own needs more closely but to counter general barriers about usability.

In terms of ambience, the lightness and openness could feel empty, cold and uninviting. Where people had anxieties around use, this environment could exacerbate rather than quash concerns.

"It looks good from the outside (Peckham) but inside it's the same as other libraries, I can't feel relaxed in there, it's grey everywhere"
Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

Respondents also often felt that comfort was still missing. To utilise the space for reading, more comfortable seating and areas to relax were required.

Cafes were felt to be most useful when providing an actual link (entrance) to the library as they really helped bring positive attributes to the library itself.

Similarly, providing real social space in the library itself was felt essential. As mentioned, separation was considered very important – especially for children and teenagers – both to meet their own requirements and to keep them away from those who want to experience some of the traditional aspects of libraries (e.g. peace and quiet).

Some respondents still experienced difficulty with navigation and layout. Furthermore, issues with staff persisted for some teenagers.

“It’s still too quiet in there and you feel people are looking at you.. and the staff are very snooty”
Non-users, Female, (17-18), ABC1, Pre-Family

5.3.2 Reactions to Specialised Youth Facility: Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse

Within this study, it was decided that inclusion of one group discussion (with 14-16 year old boys) of current Powerhouse users would be beneficial to explore this specifically tailored youth resource that also includes a library - given its acclaimed success with local young people.

Description of Service

The Powerhouse is a custom-built centre for young people, based in a Connexions service building, in a multi-cultural estate in Manchester. The service building contains a variety of facilities including:

- gym, sports hall, basketball court
- canteen area
- seating area
- computing room
- library/homework room
- workshops e.g. in music recording studio

The ambience of the library is closer to a common room than a traditional library. Generally quite noisy, rowdy and cluttered there was also felt to be very positive relations between the staff and the teenagers who use the facility. Staff were considered to have authority but also to be friendly – a valuable combination as control was felt to be essential at some level.

There were some specific security issues given the area and strategies had been taken on board to reduce problems.

Security... we have a dress code – no hoodies man... keep the bad kids out, they trash everything, even the TV room, so no more TV
Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

Users

Users of the service were described as mostly under 16 and mostly male with a bias to ethnic minorities. Attitudes ranged from those who were hard working and wished to place effort within school/studies to achieve qualifications and mobility and those who were less school focused and had more behavioural issues (including some currently excluded from school).

Perceptions of Powerhouse

The users interviewed were very positive about the value of the Powerhouse facility. It offered them a place to hang out and socialise that they wanted to use as well as a place to do homework and get support from staff with their work and on a range of other issues.

Somewhere to hang out, so not on the streets
Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

No Internet services at home for these users also meant the library in particular was a valuable source of Internet access, leading to high usage of the computer facilities for: research/homework; chat/MSN; music/entertainment news, and downloads.

Using the computers here is good... for MSN, not supposed to but she (staff) has to catch you first!
Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

Reading activity was very low but the books offered by the library were felt to be un compelling. There was felt to be little that was relevant to their interests and lifestyles and little alternative written material to books.

Reading's boring innit... but I like real life stories about rappers and gangsters
Users, Male, (14-16), DE, Pre-Family

The venue offered them a place to do sports, which clearly raised the value of the Powerhouse as a whole.

This facility is clearly delivering many of Framework for the Future's objectives: encouraging learning; giving access to digital skills and services; and adopting measures to tackle social exclusion, build community identity and develop citizenship.

It is interesting to note, however, the extent to which the expanded destination value of the Powerhouse assists in making it a compelling proposition for its specific target audience.

Furthermore, reading could be encouraged more strongly through the provision of more relevant and compelling material.

The specialised youth oriented approach appeared to meet the needs of teenagers very successfully with no 'uncool' or negative associations at all. Replication in a larger 'shared' library is clearly more difficult, but principles of what is successful in Powerhouse can assist in considering development if areas can be separated.

An alternative approach would be to target this section of the 14-35 audience with this model of library – building library facilities into other dedicated

As mentioned, the size and scope of the library will potentially restrict the ability to cover all separate areas indicated above and meet all target user needs. Therefore, smaller operations would obviously benefit most from identifying their key local audience and focusing on the needs of the largest target group(s).

There are, however, other ways that smaller libraries can incorporate aspects of the ideal, for example separation can be achieved with dedicated time slots for family/children or teenagers, especially if the 'rules' are reset within these times to meet their needs. Similarly, while it may not be possible to present marketing displays in easy view or reach of a café, these can be positioned where they are most likely to find a captive audience (in entrances, even external to the building in a display mechanism or other public organisation where the audience can be reached, e.g. school, council services, etc).

Within the research respondents were asked to do an exercise involving tearing out imagery and words from magazines (then explaining the 'values' of the images that are relevant) to illustrate the sort of feel they would ideally like within a library. Diagram 9 below (drawn from their work) illustrates overall preferences:

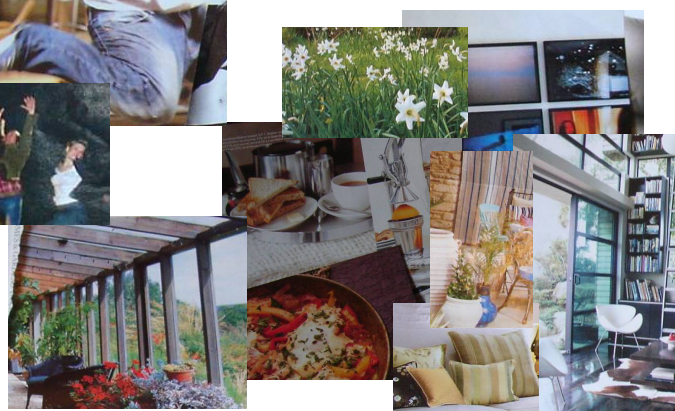
Diagram 9

Tear Outs: Ideal Imagery Themes

Energy, freedom of expression, socialisation, creativity, personality



Modern style, comfort, freshness, indulgence



Contemporary variety, technology

5.4.2 Service Development

A range of potential services (based on existing services offered by some libraries, pilot services, new ideas, etc) were explored with respondents to understand the extent to which they were appealing and could make the library service a better option.

Four ‘services’ emerged as likely to add value and enhance perceptions and experience of library services across the target audience – all as supplements to the core library services rather than substitutes. Each was considered (not explicitly) to also deliver objectives of Framework for the Future by encouraging reading/informal learning, giving access to digital services, and encouraging inclusion and citizenship:

- E-service
- Multi-media interactivity
- Support services referral
- Classes

These are described in more detail below.

- **E-service**

A 24 hour, seven day a week library service that could be used remotely (from home or work) was felt likely to be very useful.

This service was expected to include the ability to explore and read books or material at the screen itself. This was particularly useful for reference texts in order to find task-based information and thought likely to be of real benefit versus the alternatives (Internet) which could often be time-consuming and not fruitful. Younger respondents, especially teens, also indicate a preference for reading at the screen rather than from the page and this therefore had more appeal and relevance to them.

It also had value in terms of selecting books before borrowing or buying.

“If you could download the first few chapters ... or a review, that would be great, you could get a taste of books before you buy”
Lapsed, Male, (19-21), C1C2, Pre-Family

The service proposition even had appeal to non-users who were unlikely to ever use the library as a destination (the ‘Disconnected’, see Section 4, page 45).

- **Multi-media interactivity**

Access to new, latest and state of the art technology was thought to bring real benefit in that being publicly available, skills in using it could be developed by anyone. Ideally, demonstrations were wanted as well as opportunities to ‘have a go’. The specific focus varied by age and segment but the general idea was

thought likely to have a significant halo effect on the library image as futuristic, contemporary/in touch, and possibly youth oriented.

The technology expected went beyond computers to any new digital or electronic devices that were difficult to find out about without being exposed to commercial pressures (e.g. MP3s, mobiles, palmtops, interactive TV etc).

"I'd like to be shown how to use MP3 players and how to download music without feeling an idiot"

Non-Users, Mixed, (19-21), ABC1, Pre-Family

Opportunities to trial and develop skills on the latest software were also appreciated.

Staging exhibitions of new developments and their use and platforming learning was felt to be a real point of difference with value across different targets. Teens in particular appreciated the notion of attaching exhibitions to commercial ventures/activity via brand sponsorship. The endorsement of commerce and brands was felt to add real value and assistance in altering the image of libraries.

Both Students and Teens were keen to see the availability of more technical equipment such as computers and scanners etc. Given their low disposable income, opportunities for free access to perks available to others (e.g. downloading music and films) were very valuable and a real service.

Functional Dabblers felt introduction to and exploration of new technology was a benefit in terms of keeping up to date and allowing evaluation before personal commitment.

- **Support services referral**

The traditional role of libraries as provider of 'all information in relation to public services' meant there was a good fit with the idea of providing a more extensive referral service.

As well as furnishing enquirers with the basics, libraries were felt to be an appropriate place to receive advice and support. Some had experience of using services of other agencies within libraries (e.g. Connexions) and felt this raised the value of the library overall.

Education and careers/jobs advice were felt to be particularly appropriate areas of support given the implicit link of libraries to learning and self-development. Teenagers in particular had a need for good advice, feeling this was a serious shortfall in schools; but some adults too felt this would be of benefit to themselves.

"Yeab, a careers advisor would be good ... someone like you get at Connexions, who knows about jobs and stuff"

Lapsed, Male, (17-18), DE, Pre-Family

However, this is a soft benefit rather than a key draw, with indications that face to face services are likely to be used only very occasionally as a substitute for the internet.

- **Classes**

Unsurprisingly, areas of interest for classes varied but expectations and requirements included the following:

Short demonstrations of 10-30 minutes

These were expected to fit into useful timeslots such as lunch hours, after school or while a child was taking part in an activity. Demonstrations of basic new skills to update knowledge (e.g. computer use tips, how to download, how to use new software such as for digital photography, etc) were felt to have real value across the audience and offer opportunities for self development that could be hard to come by.

For Family Activity Seekers short classes which allowed them to increase their parenting skills were also of interest: first aid, child development, assisting homework, etc.

"Kids first aid would be brilliant ... I would definitely pay for that ... but it would have to be a couple of sessions cos it's impossible to commit much when you've got kids"
Non-Users, Male, (26-35), DE, Family

Similarly, learning to assist progression in careers/jobs/opportunities away from the 'Job Centre' was considered a bonus, especially for younger mums, e.g. help in writing CV.

Samplers/taster classes

Libraries were also considered to be an appropriate place to get new ideas and a general flavour of classes that might be available at educational establishments. As well as providing some learning themselves it was felt they could potentially help inspire and overcome fears about committing to the 'wrong' course.

Longer courses/sessions

General skills and lifestyle needs such as computing, languages, cookery etc were felt to be appropriate areas for library services to offer more concentrated learning programmes.

Practical workshops

Workshop based sessions allowing skills and knowledge development in different topics were particularly appealing to Teens who felt this offered opportunities that they would otherwise be unlikely to come by. Specific suggestions from teenagers included: cultural activities such as making music,

street dance and street art; as well as practical and vocational skills such as mechanics.

Across the range of expectations, local libraries being quick and easy to access were felt to warrant much less hassle and effort than colleges. As such, offering classes seems likely to increase the likelihood of adults adopting informal learning and self-development and the provision of opportunities to mix with others can facilitate inclusion and development of community identity.

Family respondents, short of personal time in their particular lifestage, could see specific opportunities for personal development.

"I'd be quite interested in classes if I knew the boys were being supervised, like an hours reading time or something ... maybe I could do an arts and craft type course once a week so there would be something for me as well"

Lapsed, Mixed, (22-35), ABC1, Family

Both shorter and longer sessions with learning opportunities were of particular interest to 'Functional Dabblers' for both their easy access learning and social value.

"I'd feel better about evening classes at the library.. I would go there"

Lapsed, Mixed, (26-35), ABC1, Pre-Family

"It would be nice to be able to talk to other people about the books you've read ..."

Current Users, Female, (26-35), C1C2, Pre-Family

"It would be great to have art and craft classes ... it's my sort of thing"

Current Users, Mixed, (17-19), C1C2, Pre-Family

In addition to classes, the Borrowers segments expressed a particular interest in reading and book clubs but also in cultural events and activities such as specialist film (e.g. art house style) or music nights.

While not strictly classes, as discussed earlier many Teens were keen to access study support through library services or similar at key times. Importantly, however, they expected this to be from mentors they could relate to rather than librarians or even teachers. This does signal an opportunity to develop services with other partners in local education authorities and to base them in libraries.

"I would definitely go the library if they did revision workshops to help you with exams and with coursework cos you don't get much help at school – if I could go with my friends"

Lapsed, Mixed, (14-16), C2DE, Pre-Family

III Conclusions and Recommendations

1. This research study highlighted a range of barriers that need to be overcome in order for most potential users within the 14-35 sample to start to consider libraries as an option, and for interest in and use of libraries to continue with current users.
 2. For appeal to really increase, however, and for libraries to compete successfully against the alternatives for this audience, there are other needs and perceptions to take into account in services development and marketing – which reflect the varying and more specific requirements of different segments within the user audience (see below).
 3. Overall, therefore, to bring libraries to a ‘baseline’ for consideration within this age group, barriers need to be addressed as follows:
 - Improve stock to place a greater focus on contemporary material. If supported by displays and other mechanisms to raise awareness and assist users in finding inspiration this would increase relevance and interest as well as the perception of invitation to use. Request services were felt to be one way of ensuring that new stock would at least be considered and introduced.
 - Refresh library interiors (décor and furnishing) to be welcoming, comfortable and modern/up to date. This would counter perceptions of old-fashioned, oppressive environments and presenting the service in a positive and relevant light would make the library a more real alternative to seductive retail environments (which while enjoyed are not ‘free’).
 - Roll out/extend and raise awareness of up to date borrowing processes (email reservation, loan extensions, drop boxes) to improve access and usability.
 - Improve the ‘destination value’ of the library by attaching or combining additional services that users wish to use and fit with both a leisure and reading or self-development mindset, e.g. the provision of a very good yet subsidised café, inclusion of exhibitions and other events (either regular or occasional).
 - Allow for some variety and separation within the library (in terms of more or less noisy areas) to accommodate the range of users but also to reduce inhibitions of those with more barriers. Within this, proactivity and openness of staff towards users, to reduce anxiety and experience of intimidation and rejection/exposure is also important.
 - General marketing activity to: communicate the benefits/value of libraries; raise awareness of the service that is developed within an area and the
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specifics that it offers; and to give assistance in overcoming a range of more emotional barriers by supplying ‘evidence’ that the services are relevant to a range of typical people (and even aspirational people) within this age group.

4. Clearly, these developments are also likely to benefit the broader library using audience.
 5. The six different audience segments identified (as mentioned above) differ in both demographics and attitude and are likely to be reflected in the broader population. Importantly, they also vary in their predisposition towards using library services and in their specific needs for libraries to be truly appealing.
 6. The extent of change and development for different users (beyond the general requirements outlined above) also varies. Some groups (such as ‘Borrowers’ and ‘Students’) require little beyond the baseline requirements above. Other groups (‘Family Activity Seekers’ and ‘Functional Dabblers’) require more effort but their needs are in line with what libraries currently offer. ‘Teenage Space Seekers’ require more radical developments and thus discussion is required as to the best way to accommodate them in the future, e.g. through general or more dedicated facilities. The final group of ‘Disconnected’ have needs and desires which do not fit well with library provision and are thus discounted as a potential audience.
 7. The specific segments, and their different requirements are outlined below:
 - a. ‘Family Activity Seekers’, as their name implies, are seeking things to do with their children (generally under age 8). Within the options available to them, libraries can offer activity of great value where it is delivered well.
 - Activity is potentially three-fold. Firstly, parents see a benefit in interactivity and involvement with their child through choosing books/toys, using equipment and reading on the premises. Secondly, in some instances it is possible for children to be occupied with minimal input from parents allowing for a ‘break’. Thirdly, a visit can allow the parent to source material, browse on their own behalf or relax and in doing so achieve some hard-pressed ‘me time’ while still involving their child.
 - The value of library services for this group increases further where there are opportunities for socialising and support (e.g. via a café or through group sessions) or for treating themselves (through being able to read books, magazines or newspapers in a comfortable environment).
 - Making use of the library with children also brings a ‘feel good’ factor for many parents who feel the activity is implicitly wholesome – being based around ‘education/development’, community and responsibility in borrowing and being away from the commercial environment.
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- While low awareness of available services was sometimes the key issue for this group for others the barriers were more deep-rooted; either such services were not available in their area or previous poor experience of the parents themselves meant that negative emotional barriers dominated perceptions of libraries *per se*. There were also real concerns around tolerance of children and families within the library environment. Optimum solutions for Family Activity Seekers allowed for some separation of children's activities to allow for comfort and confidence in using the services.
 - Clearly the general developments outlined above will have some impact on this group. In developing messages to target Family Activity Seekers, core sentiments to echo are as follows:
 - Overall focus on 'quality activities ...'
 - Libraries develop children's skills
 - Mental, physical and emotional development
 - Share quality time with your child
 - It's learning and fun for both of you
 - Meet other parents and friends in a comfortable place
 - Libraries can help you develop your own skills
 - Get some time to yourself
 - b. 'Functional Dabblers' were those who are less predisposed to consuming fiction and see libraries as a resource for assisting in task or decision-making. Mostly aged 25 to 35 within this sample, they also tended to be from upper socio-economic grades, currently working and pre-family (although not exclusively).
 - This group saw a range of benefits in library use. Borrowing material or making investigations/enquiries before committing to a purchase or new activity was common and represented a way of saving time and money long term. Personal development was also key, with libraries offering a source of material to use directly or inspiration for other ideas.
 - Some respondents in this category also enjoyed the comfort of being able to use a service on their own, and liked the peace and quiet.
 - Indeed, libraries stand out as potentially offering a rich resource (abundance of sorted information sources) at no cost and a potentially rewarding individual experience of peace and quiet and focused 'me time'.
 - Their focus for library material and services tended to be in the area of lifestyle, for example, holidays and home (DIY, cooking) or self development, for example sport/exercise, mind/body/spirit, languages, technical skills, other 'how to', etc.
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- As such, marketing messages that will be meaningful to Functional Dabblers include the following core sentiments:
 - Overall focus on ‘find out ...’
 - Libraries have been modernised and updated
 - Libraries offer easy browsing of a wide range of contemporary reading
 - Libraries are quiet, relaxed and comfortable places to read
 - Libraries can help you develop your own skills
 - Libraries offer access to and learning about latest technology
 - Recent changes in borrowing processes have theoretically made library services more accessible. However, awareness of these processes was very low and accessibility remains an issue. As most are workers, library opening hours often do not meet with their needs – with some evenings or weekends likely to be essential to allow use.
- c. ‘Teen Space Seekers’ included the younger teenagers within the sample. Library services at present offer a poor match with their needs/desires which generally require dedicated territory.
- Current library services have some interest to this group but need developing and tailoring to be compelling. Internet provision can be important, especially to those in more deprived communities, but the desire to spend a long time at the terminal, multi-task and socialise means teenagers want to be away from the main library-using population when doing so.
 - Interesting ‘reading’ material for this group is also not traditional. There are higher levels of interest in lighter weight material based around their own lifestyle interests than in fiction.
 - A focus on music does highlight where libraries can really capture attention for this group and both encourage consumption of written material and skills acquisition. Teenagers seek sources of both ‘niche’ and general material that keeps them informed and entertained and are keen to learn more about the industry and how they can develop the skills to enter it.
 - Similarly, ‘technology’ in general is of interest to this group, such as access to latest hardware (computers and other) and software. Perceived as relevant to many particular interests (now and in the future) ‘technology’ offers access to worthwhile activity and skills acquisition and is implicitly ‘contemporary’ or even cutting edge – placing libraries as providers in an important position.
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- Overall, this group felt some degree of segregation is important to accommodate their needs but also to sanction their use of the facilities (i.e. without being disapproved of by other users). This might be through dedicated areas or through dedicated time slots in general facilities or through a dedicated venue (which can potentially combine the service with other facilities that will improve the 'destination value' for them appropriately).
 - If needs can be met, marketing messages that will be meaningful to Teen Space Seekers include the following core sentiments:
 - Overall focus on: 'a place you can find out about all sorts of things, do things you need to and have fun ...'
 - Socialise with friends
 - Access latest and state of art technology
 - Get help with homework/course work/revision - a distinct alternative to school
 - Find interesting facts and stories about what interests you
 - Get advice about your future aspirations
 - Develop and share your interests (in music)
 - N.B. Having a say was important to this group but there was aversion to overt responsibility/getting strongly involved
- d. 'Borrowers' are the current more frequent users of libraries within this age group and represented a minority within this sample. They had a reasonable level of satisfaction, given they were still using the services and a greater awareness of evolving services. There was still some disappointment, however, in breadth and depth of stock plus availability of the latest material.
- e. 'Students', a small minority within this particular sample, have few needs other than access to free technology and communications and quiet space in which to work. Generally well provided by libraries, their key need is for this to be retained.
- f. The 'Disconnected' represented a mix of lapsed and non-users who were simply not interested in libraries as the alternatives are always seen to offer a better option. As such any developments of interest moves very far away from a library offering and this group are not worth targeting.
8. Considering the needs of each of the potential and current user segments means larger libraries are clearly at an advantage. For different segments to believe their needs are catered for, and to experience what they want, a library will ideally allow some degree for separation in the way that it is laid out and services are delivered for those groups who need it (Family Activity Seekers, Teen Space Seekers as well as more traditional users such as the Borrowers and Students in this sample, and other users within the wider library community).
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9. Locations which allow a library to benefit from other services in the vicinity can also help in creating a compelling destination.

10. For libraries with greater constraints, an evaluation of the local market and the extent to which any segments within the 14-35 age group feature more strongly or need to be catered for should drive priorities and decision-making on whether specific changes need to be made. There is no doubt, however, that the general developments suggested would be an essential start point to assist in increasing interest and use for this age group.

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